

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer - Regulatory & Regeneration

Meeting of the Cultural Committee: 27 January 2021

Subject: Town Twinning and 80th Anniversary of Clydebank Blitz - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To provide the Committee with an update on town twinning and to seek decisions in respect of preparations for 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) note that the planned visit to meet with the Mayor of Letterkenny will take place at some point in the next financial year when it is safe to do so;
- (b) approve the recommendations of the Member/Officer Working Group on the Clydebank Blitz (the Working Group), as follows:
 - (i) to postpone the planned concerts by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) in the Town Hall and local churches until 18 November 2021 and notify all relevant parties accordingly;
 - (ii) to agree, due to current Covid -19 restrictions, that the unveiling of the plaque at Solidarity Plaza, the laying of wreaths at Old Dalnotter Cemetery and the presentation of medals cannot take place as previously planned and therefore delegate authority to the Manager of Democratic and Registration Services, in consultation with Provost Hendrie and Bailie Agnew, to organise a scaled down version of these events providing this is permitted within the level of restrictions in place at that time;
 - (iii) to approve the proposal by the RSNO to commission, record and film a piece of music to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz as outlined in the Appendix to this report at a cost of approximately £21,550 subject to agreement being reached between the Council and the RSNO on the co-commissioning of the music and appropriate sharing of rights on its use;
 - (iv) to approve, in principle, the production of a booklet to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz up to a maximum cost of £1,999 and delegate authority to the Manager of Democratic and Registration Services, in consultation with Bailie Agnew, to progress the matter;

- (c) agree that the £10,000 previously earmarked for the purchase of art from the 2019/20 Cultural budget and the £500 set aside for the visit to Letterkenny be used towards the costs of the Blitz in 2020/21; and
- (d) recommend that the balance of cultural funding remaining in 2020/21 (approximately £4,000) be earmarked for use towards the cost of Blitz events which have been rescheduled to take place in 2021/22.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Manager of Democratic and Registration Services has written to all town twinning and friendship partners expressing the Council's best wishes and seasons greetings. The Mayor of Letterkenny has responded and reaffirmed his intentions to meet with the Committee as soon as it is safe to do so in the new financial year.
- 3.2** At its meeting on 15 January 2021, the Working Group met to consider contingency planning for the events on the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary which had been scheduled to take place in March and also a proposal by the RSNO to commission and record a piece of music to mark the occasion. The Working Group made a number of recommendations to the Committee as outlined in 2 (b) above.
- 3.3** A zoom meeting has been scheduled to take place on 19th January 2021 with the Polish Consul General and the Convener to discuss the consulate's involvement in any plans to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Clydebank Blitz and the proposed friendship link with Gdynia and accordingly the Committee will receive a verbal update on the outcome of that meeting.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** After much discussion, the Working Group agreed that the current Covid-19 restrictions and forecasts would mean that the Council would not be able to proceed with the proposed commemoration events as planned in March 2021 and accordingly has made a number of recommendations to the Committee to determine.
- 4.2** The Working Group expressed the view that now was time to write to all VIPs and dignitaries who had been invited to the events and confirm that the events had been postponed. It was also recommended that the proposed RSNO concerts in the Town Hall and local churches should now be held on 18 November 2021 and all relevant parties informed of the new date for their diaries.
- 4.3** However, the Working Group also acknowledged that it was important to mark the actual dates in some way and it was suggested that officers should consider what could be done in terms of laying of wreaths and unveiling the commemorative plaque whilst ensuring that the rules on restrictions were followed in full. Consideration should also be given to the presentation of medals but this could prove to be more difficult to organise as travel restrictions will impact on any arrangements made to handover the medals.

- 4.4** On a more positive note, the Working Group considered a proposal by the RSNO to produce and record a piece of music to commemorate the 80th Anniversary which could be produced in time for circulation in March 2021. The Working Group supported the proposal subject to the issue of copyright being agreed with the RSNO and accordingly details of the proposal and the associated costs are shown as an appendix to the report. The Manager of Democratic and Registration Services informed the Working Group that the RSNO has been in contact with him to confirm that they were willing to co-commission the musical piece and share the rights. Officers will review the written agreement when received.
- 4.5** The Working Group also supported the proposal that a booklet be produced to commemorate the event. The booklet which would be printed in black and white and contain a few images of the Blitz, will be a collection of the thoughts and sentiments of a number of relevant senior public officials and individuals on the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz. It is recommended that the Committee agrees a budget limit of £1999 for this expenditure and that it be funded from the balance of the 2020/21 Cultural budget.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** If some events do proceed albeit scaled down, there will still be a small risk of infection and a risk assessment will be required to identify measures to be taken to mitigate any risk to the health of those staff and elected members involved. Given that the proposed events will take place over the weekend there will could be higher staff costs due to additional hours worked.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** The Committee is asked to approve that £10,500 from the 2019/20 Cultural fund which was previously earmarked for the Letterkenny trip (£500) and purchase of art (£10,000) be spent on costs associated with the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz in 2020/21. These monies, in addition to £13,023 previously earmarked toward the 80th Anniversary will mean that a total of £23,023 is available from the 2019/20 budget and the sum of £25,000 is available from the 2020/21 Cultural fund, resulting in a total of £48,523.
- 6.2** The Committee has already committed £10,000 towards the costs of silver commemorative medals and plaque and £11,750 towards a granite memorial plaque to be located in Solidarity Plaza. This leaves a balance of £27,773 available. It is recommended that the proposal by the RSNO up to a maximum of £21,550 be approved and also that a booklet be produced up to a maximum cost of £1,999. If the Committee approves these proposals then this will leave a balance of approximately £4,224 from the 2020/21 Cultural fund. It is therefore recommended that this balance be earmarked for expenditure relating to the 80th Anniversary which will be incurred in 2021/22 i.e. cost of live concerts, hospitality, etc., in November 2021.

- 6.3** If the Committee agrees to the production of the small commemorative booklet, a brief procurement exercise will be conducted to identify a printer who can deliver the booklet to the required standards, within the limited timescale and within the budget.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The 80th Anniversary of the Clydebanks Blitz is a significant event which the Council will be expected to deliver. However, due to the risk of infection and current level of Scottish Government restrictions, the Committee is recommended to postpone the main planned events and delegate officers to investigate the possibility of holding small events subject to the national and local restrictions in place at that time. If these small events proceed a risk assessment will be carried out to identify all mitigations necessary to reduce the risk of infection.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** There are no impacts on any equality groups arising from the recommendations of this report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Officers from Legal, Procurement and Finance Services have been consulted on the contents of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The development of town twinning activity could have some real educational and cultural benefits for those citizens who participate in such events and the promotion of West Dunbartonshire through these twinning or friendship links could potentially generate some economic benefit to the area through increased tourism. The involvement of local churches and communities is an important element of the Clydebanks Blitz commemorations which fits well with the Council's strategy on community involvement and engagement. It is recommended that these events be postponed and held later in the year when it is safe to do so.

Name:	Peter Hissett
Designation	Strategic Lead - Regulatory & Regeneration
Date:	20 January 2021

Person to Contact: George Hawthorn, Manager of Democratic and Registration Services, Municipal Buildings, College Street, Dumbarton. Telephone 07903010404 or email: george.hawthorn@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix: RSNO proposal and budget for recording and filming musical piece.

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: None.