



Belfast District Council

Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Invitations to attend the 2015 Somme and Gallipoli Pilgrimages
Date:	Friday, 20th February, 2015
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Correspondence has been received from the Somme Association enquiring if the Council would wish to be represented on the 2015 Pilgrimages to the Somme, France from 28th June until 2nd July, 2015 and to Gallipoli, Turkey from 4th until 10th October, 2015.</p> <p>The Somme Pilgrimage, to mark the 99th Anniversary of the battle, will follow the route taken by the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions during their service in the First World War. Services of Commemoration will be held in both Thiepval and Guillemont, in addition to attendance at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres.</p> <p>This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign and the Somme Association, as part of their Centenary Commemoration Programme, plan on making a return pilgrimage to the peninsular. It is proposed that a special commemoration service will take place on this visit and will be attended by VIP guests. In March 2010, the Association, in partnership with the Irish Government, unveiled a new memorial to the 10th (Irish) Division and a number of Belfast City Councillors were in attendance at the commemoration service.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>In previous years, the Committee has authorised the attendance on the Somme tour of a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council. Members who have attended have found the event to be informative and worthwhile in that several of the ceremonial occasions were attended by many other dignitaries and officials, which afforded an opportunity for contacts to be made and relations to be developed on a range of topics and for the profile and image of Belfast to be promoted.</p>

	<p>The Council, in 1997, 1999 and 2000, decided that it should not be represented on the Gallipoli Pilgrimage as those visits had not marked any particular anniversary. However, in 2002 and in 2010, the Council had approved the attendance of an All-Party deputation.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Somme Pilgrimage tour coincides with the Council's own Somme Remembrance Ceremony as well as the monthly meeting of the Council on 1st July and accordingly Members who attend the Pilgrimage would be unable to be in attendance at those events.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p><u>Somme Pilgrimage</u></p> <p>The approximate cost of attending is approximately £580 per person plus the appropriate subsistence allowance, provision for which has been made within the Revenue Budget.</p> <p><u>Gallipoli Pilgrimage</u></p> <p>The approximate cost of attending is £1350 per person plus the appropriate subsistence allowance.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no Human Resource implications associated with this report.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations

5	Call In
	This decision is subject to call in.

6	Recommendations
	<p>(i) Given the fact that the Council, by holding its own Somme Remembrance Service, recognises the importance of the Battle of the Somme to the people of Belfast and that Members normally attend the Somme Pilgrimage to recognise the sacrifice of the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions, the Committee is recommended to approve attendance on the Somme tour of a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council and the Chief Executive (or her nominee) and authorise the payment of the appropriate travel and subsistence allowances in connection therewith; and</p>

- (ii) Since this year marks the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign, the Committee is asked to consider whether it would like to accept the invitation to send a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council and the Chief Executive (or her nominee) on the Gallipoli Tour.

7	Decision Tracking

8	Documents Attached