

Principles that might be used in selection of events to be marked in Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022

Agreed by Centenaries Working Group 17 October 2011 and by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee 21 October 2011

The decade in question marks a number of particularly significant dates that have shaped the history of Northern Ireland and Ireland and therefore our own identities and cultures – see list previously circulated.

The marking of these events provides the Council with an excellent opportunity to broaden our understanding of the past and our respect for the complexity of our shared history.

As a shared city in the twenty-first century, we should be able to deal with difference in a positive and constructive manner, demonstrating openness on the basis of shared civic values within a democracy and a mature respect for cultural diversity within our heritage.

These principles are suggested in draft only, for initial discussion, based on reports previously submitted and comments made by the Working Group.

- Events supported by the Council should provide opportunities to include a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, aiming to increase understanding and appreciation of other perspectives and identities
- They should be based on historic accuracy, robust academic expertise and critical analysis – engagement with universities, museums, libraries, PRONI etc is essential to ensure this evidence base
- The interpretation of events should be in a broad historical context and understanding of the national and European setting of the time
- The Council should develop strong links with other institutions – i.e. museums, libraries, PRONI and other relevant organisations, to ensure that there is no duplication and that events and programmes are complementary
- We will provide/support a range of different types of events – from lectures, discussions, debates to films, drama, activities that attract schools and children/families etc – so that events can not only be educational but participative, creative and enjoyable
- We will provide/support events and activities that are not exclusive¹ but are welcoming to all sections of our increasingly diverse community in Belfast

This set of principles, if agreed, should be applied corporately to any key anniversaries being marked by the Council.

¹ The Council, committed both to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in the City, will not support events or activities that could be deemed to be triumphalist, to deepen or harden existing divisions, or belittle or demonise other groups.

(Adapted from the Irish School of Ecumenics, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism* research)