

Report of: Chief Officer Communities

Report to: Community Committee Chairs Forum

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Commemorating the First World War: Battle of the Somme

1. Purpose of report

To inform Community Committee Chairs of the planned programme of activity in the city to commemorate the centenary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme. In particular, the historical significance and the role played by the city's volunteer battalion the Leeds Pals and to seek views on proposals for local commemoration events on 1st July 2016.

2. Background

The programme of events to mark the centenary of the First World War is led by Leeds Museums and Galleries. Leeds Library and Information Service have also covered a wide range of topics and have run a range of events.

There are a number of activities already organised by Leeds City Council to mark the commemoration in 2016 including:

- An evening concert on 30th June at Leeds Town Hall which will feature a performance of 'The Armed Man' - a work by composer Karl Jenkins which was originally premiered at Leeds Town Hall and which has a strong anti-war theme. It is anticipated that this concert will mark the main civic commemoration.
- An exhibition looking at Leeds during WW1 will opening at Leeds City Museum on 30th June. It is curated by young people from around the city and is supported by museum staff.
- Services led by Parks and Countryside are working together to support a community led event in Meanwood Park on Saturday 8th July 2016.
- The Carriageworks Theatre has programmed a new play 'Leeds Lads', produced by Red Ladder Theatre about three Leeds Pals and their descendants.
- West Yorkshire Playhouse has commissioned a play by Leeds Playwright Alice Nutter which looks at the story of the 'Barnbow Lasses' and the explosion in the Barnbow munitions factory which in 1916 caused the greatest single loss of life in the City during World War One. It will run at the Playhouse at the time of the commemoration.

- Executive Board will consider the proposed programme of events at their meeting on 10th February 2016.

3. Local commemoration events

In addition, there is a proposal to mark the contribution made by the Leeds Pals Battalions by employing buglers to play the 'Last Post' to mark the point in time at which men went 'over the top' at 7.30am on 1st July.

It is proposed that these buglers would be in prominent positions in the city with at least one bugler located in each Community Committee area. The exact location of the bugler in the area would be determined by each Community Committee.

There is a budget of £20,000 to deliver the whole programme of events including support of up to £1,000 for each Community Committee.

This funding of up to £1,000 will include the cost of the buglers and the balance of the £1,000 funding will be available to support additional locality events.

Community Committees are requested to identify and support additional local events on the 1st July which they feel would be most appropriate to their communities.

4. Next steps

It is proposed that each Community Committee identify the exact location of buglers in each community committee area and determine local commemoration events on the 1st of July that support the contribution of the Leeds Pals Battalions in the Battle of the Somme.

Publicity for all the programme of events will be developed by Museums and Galleries and the deadline for submissions is the end of March 2016.

5. Recommendations

Community Committee Chairs are asked to:

- Discuss and comment on proposals to develop a programme of local commemoration events on the 1st of July.
- Request the Chief Officer Communities to agree the detailed arrangements with each community committee and report back on the outcome at a future meeting.

For Information