

REPORT OF THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report brings the findings to date of the Holocaust Memorial Sub-Committee to the parent Committee.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee were as follows:-

"To consider the commissioning of an art project to commemorate the Holocaust and other conflicts and to report to the Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation."

- 2.2 The Sub Committee has considered matters and are now seeking full Member endorsement to a modern art project.

3 THE PROJECT

- 3.1 The Sub-Committee had a number of meetings to consider the way forward and the Minutes of these meetings are appended at Appendix 2. As a result:-

- A public competition was launched
- Response was limited to a local architect
- A design was offered
- A possible site for the Memorial was selected
- Pledges of support from a number of providers of materials indicate a small residual cost only to the Council if the design is taken forward.

The Design

- 3.2 Mark O'Neill Architects have offered a design to the Council. This is shown at Appendix 1 to this report. Sketches and a photo-realistic image will be on display to the Committee. The architect will attend the meeting to present the design.

- 3.3 The interpretation of the design, supplied by the Architect, is as follows:

- The stone plinth represents a solid foundation upon which Society rests.
- The three finish concrete slab reflects the ability of man to repair what has been damaged, i.e. rough to smooth, but reminds us that we can also destroy the perfect finish.

- The three steel posts in alternative finishes represent the technological progress of man, and the diverse states of development throughout the world.
- The rough sawn and smooth posts running through the structure reflects the ability of man to turn raw products with a finished product, and the unity of our manmade and shaped society by organic and living materials.
- The Star of David, which would only be viewed in full when standing in front of the memorial, is a direct reference to the Nazi Holocaust, but reminds us that looking at it from another viewpoint leads to fragmentation and separation of this iconic symbol, reflecting persecution.
- The horizontal element of the concrete slab and its relationship with the constancy of the plinth is to remind and encourage us from the solid basis of society, man can shape and reshape society, but not always for the good.
- The vertical steel plates, whilst reflecting a straight line upwards, (the conventional approach to seeking a higher power regardless of faith or religion), also create open spaces between them, perceived as people choose.
- Planting to each side, centrally, and the centre plate are intended to remind us that the living world has the ability to grow in even the most barren places, usually the first visible step to reconciliation and reconstruction following conflict and persecution.
- The orientation of the structure should be on an East-West axis, the conventional orientation of churches and western faiths with the dedication stone in the east reflecting the altar position, also recognising that the sun rises in the East. At the same time, the structure can be viewed from all points, to remind us that we all have different perceptions.

- 3.4 It is proposed that an explanation of the Memorial be available with the structure, if the project proceeds.

A possible Site

- 3.5 The sketches and the photo-realistic image place the proposed Memorial on the frontage to the Mill, Rayleigh.

Pledges of Support

- 3.6 The Architect has secured a number of pledges of support and is himself undertaking design work for a nominal fee. These are reflected in the itemised costs shown below.

4 THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 The components for the project appear to be in place, namely a design, a site, and pledges of funding (in kind), leaving a small residual cost to the Council.

- 4.2 Members are asked to consider the project, with a view to determining whether or not the project proceeds.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Risk

The cash cost to the Council appears to be minimal. The Architect has prepared an estimate, on an open contract tender basis. This shows the approximate full costs to a purchaser of services etc. The estimate is shown at Appendix 3 to this report. Officer time is currently running at approximately one person-day. Subsequent maintenance would fall to the Council.

5.2 Reputation Risk

The Council is considering a piece of modern art, reflecting a memorial to the Holocaust, and other atrocities since. Such pieces can be controversial.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Memorial could be the victim of vandalism, regardless of its symbolism.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It would be prudent to ensure that pledges outlined were met in order to avoid an unexpected cost to fall to the Council.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Chairman of the Council wrote to Parishes. The responses are noted in the Minutes of the Sub Committee meeting held on 14 November 2003.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **recommends to the Policy & Finance Committee** whether or not the project proceeds.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

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