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## Council

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008

### Report of the Head of Civic, Legal & Democratic Services

#### Holocaust Memorial Day

##### Summary

1. This report has been provided to Council in follow-up to its debate on the subject of Holocaust Memorial Day which took place at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and at which it was agreed in principle that this event should be recognised fully within the city. Accordingly, Council requested that the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services set out detailed proposals, including costings, for holding annual commemorations to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

##### Background

2. In 2005, United Nations Resolution 60/7 established the 27th January, the date of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day and urged every member nation of the U.N. to honour the memory of Holocaust victims, and encourage the development of educational programs about Holocaust history to help prevent future acts of genocide.
3. The Resolution rejects any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event and condemns all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief.
4. It also calls for actively preserving the Holocaust sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labour camps and prisons, as well as for establishing a U.N. programme of outreach and mobilisation of civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education.
5. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) is a national charity formed in 2005 and is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Its vision is that the Holocaust and subsequent genocides are known; that victims are commemorated and lessons learnt are translated into contemporary action in the UK.
6. HMDT is responsible for the annual, national commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day. In addition it aids, promotes and supports HMD events and projects in local communities, schools and educational institutions.
7. HMDT raises awareness, informs and educates about the Holocaust, subsequent genocides and their contemporary relevance – especially to issues of racism; prejudice and discrimination. It prompts action in the UK in favour of diversity; equality and harmony between communities.
8. The theme for HMD09 is ‘Stand up to Hatred’ which explores the expression of hatred in speech and propaganda, how hatred can be enshrined in legislation, the impact of

hatred on those who are regarded as different, hate crimes in Britain today and what we can all do to stand up to hatred in our own communities.

### **Commemorations in York**

9. This January, York will mark this important day with a range of events in keeping with the commemorative and educational ethos of HMD. Whilst York has previously marked the day, this year will be the first in which any significant costs are associated. The planning of these events has been steered by a planning group which has met on six occasions since the summer and includes among its members the Chair of the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association, HE institutions and faith group representation. The project is being managed by Heather Rice with officer support and cross party representation on the planning group from Councillors Crisp, Looker and Vassie.
10. The centre piece of the city's commemorations will be a ceremony at the Guildhall on the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> January. A detailed programme for the event has been agreed by the group and is complemented by additional events based on the theme of 'Stand up to Hatred' and organised with the involvement of schools and city partners.

The ceremony will include

- An address by the Lord Mayor
  - York students who have visited Auschwitz or sites of other former Nazi camps – they will speak about their experiences and how the trip affected them
  - Representatives from a variety of faiths marking their support for HMD and the theme 'Standing up to Hatred'
  - Holocaust survivor Eugene Black speaking about his life
  - Former Ethiopian imprisoned student leader Fasil Demsash speaking about his life
  - The keynote speaker on the night will come from the CPS Chief Crown Prosecutor for York, Rob Turnbull who will speak about hate and hate crime in the city
  - Music will be provided by a string quartet and choir from All Saint's School and a drumming group from York St John's. Rudi Leavor will also sing the Jewish prayer of mourning El Male Rachamin
11. After completing their part of the ceremony, each one of the above participants will light a candle and recite one of the seven commitments which makes up the statement of commitment developed by the UN
  12. Prior to the Guildhall ceremony, council members will be invited to attend a short ceremony at Clifford's Tower at which Group Leaders have been asked to each make a short statement of support, there will also be a reading from the plaque to commemorate the persecution and death of York's Jews who perished in the pogrom of 1190, followed by the mourners' Kaddish which is said as part of the mourning rituals in Judaism.
  13. A lunchtime event to which council staff as well as the public will be invited is planned to take place in the Guildhall for the 28<sup>th</sup> January. This will feature an exhibition provided by the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association, art work provided by York St John students inspired by their trip to Auschwitz, material on hate crime from the CPS and screening of the film Double Portraits which shows Holocaust survivors in conversation with contemporary refugees. There will also be music by Lesley Schatzberger, from music therapy charity Jessie's Fund and people on hand to speak about Holocaust Memorial Day and its themes.

14. On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>, City Screen Cinema will show 'Sophie Scholl' – the story of a young German woman who was a member of the white rose non-violent resistance movement in Germany and who was prosecuted and executed for standing up to hatred. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Mark Herman, Director of the film The Boy in Striped Pyjamas will introduce a screening of his film at the cinema and conduct a Q&A session afterwards.
15. To coincide in late January, the city's Art Gallery will be highlighting the work of Joseph Herman and Jankel Adberg who fled from persecution in Poland before the second world war. There will also be a curator's talk on the artists and their stories.
16. Schools have also been engaged in order that they can get HMD on the agenda and build related work into the curriculum for next January. Speakers from the film Double Portraits are available also to form a discussion group at a secondary school and evacuees from Germany, who came to Britain as children as part of the Kindertransport project are also available to talk to younger children about their experiences of leaving their homes in the months running up to the war.

### Costs

17. The cost of this years event is set out below and the funding has already been identified for that. Without an identified budget on which to draw, the planning of HMD commemorations has been fiscally conservative and whilst some activities have been arranged free of charge, thanks in large part to the generosity of contributors, others have inevitably had costs attached. In addition to which other costs have been borne by existing budgets including those associated with facilitating the meeting of the planning group and in the demands made on officer time.
18. In the event that Council resolves to include this event within the annual Civic calendar of events, a source of funding will be required as there is no budget available within the Civic Services area. The amount of such budget may be estimated on the basis of the costs of this years event which are set out below.
19. The following have been incurred or will be incurred in the course of organising commemorations for 2009

Hire of Alpha Sound audio visual services for Guildhall ceremony	£500
Refreshments for attendees at Guildhall ceremony	£480
All Saint's School musicians for performing at ceremony	£200
Musicians from Jessie's Fund charity performing at lunchtime event	£200
Hire of Guildhall for ceremony	£150
Yorkshire Film Archive for filming Guildhall ceremony	£125
Printing of programmes for ceremony	£70
Cost of running the HMD planning group (hire of Mansion House and catering costs)	£720
<b>Total External costs</b>	<b>£2,455</b>
Estimated cost of officer time (including Civic Support staff at Guildhall events)	£7,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,445</b>

**20. Implications**

Legal	There are no legal implications arising from this report or the proposals it contains.  Quentin Baker <a href="mailto:quentin.baker@york.gov.uk">quentin.baker@york.gov.uk</a>
Financial	There is currently no budget available within the Civic Services area to fund this event. The costs in 2008/09 have been absorbed within the Chief Executive's budget. Should council resolve that this event should become a part of the annual Civic calendar it will be necessary to provide funding for that purpose.  Patrick Looker <a href="mailto:patrick.looker@york.gov.uk">patrick.looker@york.gov.uk</a>
Human Resources	There are no human resource implications arising from these recommendations.

**21. I recommend that Full Council resolves as follows:-**

- a. To incorporate HMD as an annual event within the annual Civic Calendar subject to sufficient resources, as identified above, being provided for that purpose within the budget process for the relevant year.**

**Contact Details****Author:**

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

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Head of Civic, Legal and Democratic Services

**Policy & Performance Team**

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Report  
Approved



Date 13th January 2008

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *List information for all***Financial**

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**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**