

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCIVIC HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE12 February 2020Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveREQUEST FOR CIVIC HOSPITALITY  
VISIT BY DELEGATION FROM MUNICIPALITY OF HASVIK, NORWAY**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To consider the provision of civic hospitality associated with a visit by a delegation from the Municipality of Hasvik, Norway. The visit is to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rescue of 502 civilian refugees from the Island of Soroya, Norway, during World War 2 who, having arrived at Greenock, were taken to Neilston Camp where they stayed until September 1945.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the committee considers the request referred to in this report and the accompanying Appendix.

**BACKGROUND**

3. On 26 June 2013 the Council agreed to establish a Civic Hospitality Committee with the following terms of reference:-

To be responsible for all civic hospitality matters on behalf of the Council including the:-

- consideration and determination of all requests for the provision of civic hospitality by the Council with an estimated cost of over £400;
- consideration and determination of any proposed new Council events to be funded from the civic hospitality budget; and
- consideration and approval of all protocols and procedures associated with civic hospitality.

**REPORT**

4. A request for civic hospitality has been received which requires to be considered by the Committee in view of the estimated cost of the proposal exceeding £400. Details of the request and related proposals are set out in the remainder of this report.

**VISIT BY DELEGATION FROM MUNICIPALITY OF HASVIK, NORWAY**

5. In December 2019 correspondence was received from the Municipality of Hasvik, Norway and their Mayor, Mayor Eva Danielson Husby, who were planning an official trip to

Neilston to commemorate a mission in February 1945 during World War 2, led by the Norwegian Military Services and the British Royal Navy, when 502 civilian refugees were rescued from the Island of Soroya, Norway. Having arrived in Greenock, the refugees were taken to Neilston Camp where they stayed until September that year. The purpose of the visit is to pay homage and express gratitude, on behalf of the Municipality of Hasvik, for the operation and the reception provided to the refugees, including by the people of Neilston and those in the wider East Renfrewshire area. The Mayor extended an invitation to local Elected Members to participate in their programme for the visit, such as the visit that is being organised to the site of the Camp and an official reception.

6. It is proposed to extend hospitality to the delegation through the provision of transport during their visit. It is also proposed that an Afternoon Tea is hosted for the delegation and other relevant local guests, at which a film would be screened amongst other things. In addition, it is proposed that the Provost host a dinner for the delegation during their visit.

## **BUDGET**

7. The 2019/20 budget for civic hospitality is £18,000, as in 2018/19. As well as being used to fund events organised in response to external requests for civic hospitality, the decision was taken previously that those annual events organised by the Council such as the Holocaust event, Remembrance and the Senior Citizens' Concerts, are to be funded from this budget. Examples of other things also funded from this budget are the costs of attendance at various charity events on approval of requests such as fundraising dinners; the costs associated with school debates; and the purchase of flowers for those known to be celebrating a special wedding anniversary or birthday (e.g. 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, diamond wedding anniversary etc.).

8. Some events which it was anticipated would proceed during 2019/20 have not done so. When this and the costs of the above events and others for which civic hospitality has already been approved are taken into account, the amount of funding remaining in the 2019/20 budget to deal with new requests for civic hospitality is currently estimated to be £10,914.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

9. It is recommended that the committee considers the request referred to in this report and the accompanying Appendix.

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Background Papers – Correspondence relating to the request for civic hospitality

**REQUEST MADE FOR CIVIC HOSPITALITY****VISIT BY DELEGATION FROM MUNICIPALITY OF HASVIK, NORWAY****UNALLOCATED 2019/20 BUDGET BALANCE AT 7 FEBRUARY 2020 - £10,914**

Details of Group making request for civic hospitality	In response to correspondence from the Municipality of Hasvik, Norway and Mayor Eva Danielsen Husby from the Municipality, it is proposed that civic hospitality is provided in relation to the visit to East Renfrewshire of a small delegation from Hasvik.
Why the request is being made	The visit by the delegation is to officially mark the 75 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of a mission in February 1945 when 502 civilian refugees from the Island of Soroya, Norway, were rescued during World War 2. Having arrived in Greenock, they were taken to Neilston Camp where they stayed until September 1945.
When would the event be held	Delegation visiting from 1 – 5 March 2020.
Details of any specific hospitality requested	The delegation wish to visit the site of the Camp where the Norwegian refugees stayed; meet local Elected Members and a few local residents; and pay homage and express gratitude, on behalf of the Municipality of Hasvik, for the operation and the reception provided to the refugees in Neilston and the surrounding area. It is proposed that transport is provided to the visiting delegation, such as to enable them to visit the site of the Camp and a local graveyard where a few former members of their community are buried. It is also proposed that an Afternoon Tea (for approximately 20 people in total) is hosted for the delegation and other relevant local guests, during which a film would be screened. In addition, it is proposed that the Provost host a dinner for the delegation in Barrhead (approximately 16 attending in total).

Where would the event be held	To complement visits within the local area as referred to previously, the Afternoon Tea would take place at a local venue which remains to be confirmed; and the dinner would be organised at the Dalmeny Park Hotel, Barrhead.
Who would be invited to participate	The visiting delegation of senior local dignitaries and officials from the Municipality of Hasvik, Norway.
Other Guests	Chief Executive; representatives of Merchant Navy and Neilston War Memorial Association; a local historian; and appropriate local residents.
Which elected Members would be invited	In addition to Provost Fletcher, all Elected Members from the Newton Mearns North and Neilston Ward.
What catering would be appropriate	Dinner (for Approximately 16 in total) and Afternoon Tea (for Approximately 20 in total).
Would a gift be required	The Provost is intending to present civic gifts to the delegation in recognition of the visit
Approximate cost of event	Excluding civic gifts, approximately £828 for the Afternoon Tea and Dinner. Costs of transport to be confirmed at the meeting.