

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE 31st January 2012

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT International Partnerships & Twinning Applications

REPORT NUMBER EPI/12/054

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before the Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2011-2012 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee recommend the approval of the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2011-2012:

- i) £3,900 towards the popular Aberdeen Jazz Festival, 14-18th March 2012. This well established music event continues to develop in the city and by seeking to include international partners from Regensburg and Stavanger, supports the event's growth and appeal to a wider audience.
- ii) £2,000 towards the project being carried out by Operation Florian in Bulawayo, 15th March - 4th April 2012. By supporting the supply of equipment and the transfer of knowledge and skills from Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, this will aid in the 'up-skilling' of the local fire-fighting community in Bulawayo.
- iii) £5,000 towards the visit to Stavanger by the Aberdeen Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) to understand the work of similar international support organisations overseas. This visit will also develop a network of contacts to establish reciprocal exchanges between twin city partners in the future.
- iv) £7,425 towards the participation of two youth football teams from Clermont-Ferrand at the 2012 Denis Law Tournament, 15th-21st July 2012 being held at Aberdeen Sports Village.
- v) £6,116 towards the participation of two groups of performers, one from Gomel and the other from Clermont-Ferrand, to help mark the 40th

Anniversary of the Aberdeen International Youth Festival (AIYF), 1st-11th August 2012.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full Council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2011-2012 of £137,350 at its meeting on 10th February 2011. The approved budget from the Common Good Fund provides £102,000 towards the support of twinning projects and/or visits.

Following the restructuring of the Economic & Business Development Service, the vacant International Partnership Officer position was realigned to the City Events Team within City Promotions and a new officer was appointed in October 2011. Prior to this appointment the post had been vacant for 8 months, hence the lack of budget spend at this point.

		£
	Balance of Budget Available	£86,000
i	Participation of Trio Elf, from Regensburg and a group from Stavanger University Msc Music Class to participate in the Aberdeen Jazz Festival, 14-18 th March 2012.	£3,900
ii.	Support the visit of Operation Florian to Bulawayo from 15 th March - 4 th April 2012 which will see Grampian Fire and Rescue firefighters provide training to local firefighters in Bulawayo Fire Services and donate fire fighting apparatus.	£2,000
ii	Contribution towards the visit of the LGBT Aberdeen group to Stavanger, 29 th August - 2 nd September 2012 to see what support mechanisms are in place in similar organisations.	£5,000
iii	Participation of two youth football teams from Clermont-Ferrand to play in the Denis Law Tournament, 15 th -22 nd July 2012 hosted by Aberdeen Sports Village.	£7,425
iv	Participation of a group of performers from Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand in the 40 th Anniversary celebrations of Aberdeen International Youth Festival, 1 st -11 th August 2012.	£6,116
	TOTAL	£24,441
	Amount remaining in Budget if recommendations approved:	£61,559

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The health and safety implications of all visits are taken into account during planning, with any exceptional implications addressed at the time of application.

The International Partnerships Officer regularly reviews the travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is in close contact with counterpart officers in the twin cities to ensure information provided to participants is accurate and up-to-date.

Where individuals/groups from Aberdeen are travelling overseas, comprehensive pre-visit briefings are offered by the International Partnerships Officer and have the opportunity to ask questions and request support.

When participating in overseas visits, Council employees are covered by the Council's insurance policy while non-Council employees are instructed by the International Partnerships Officer to obtain comprehensive travel insurance.

Long-established twinning links will not be maintained without regular reciprocal visits and ongoing projects being initiated by communities, groups and individuals and there is the potential for the city's international image to be damaged if we don't continue to support established relationships.

Without support from the twinning budget, exchanges and visits of this nature could not take place and people in Aberdeen would lose a wide range of opportunities to engage with the international community. In addition, incoming visitors to the city on twin city projects support the local economy through their participation at events and hospitality and retail expenditure while visiting the city.

The International Partnerships Officer will provide a link between Aberdeen and our twin cities, provide organisational support, advice and guidance when required.

They will also make recommendations on funding available to the group and how they can continue to foster a relationship with the twin city so that it is long-lasting and beneficial to the people of Aberdeen without requiring ongoing financial support from the public purse.

All groups participating in twin city activities are encouraged to develop sustainable relationships with their partner groups. Links between most of the twin cities of Aberdeen are active and links which have not recently been engaged have been contacted to re-establish communications. It is important that all visits and projects through twinning are long-standing and fruitful to ensure their benefit to the people of Aberdeen, to establish and promote positively the overseas image of Aberdeen and for best practice to be shared between cities.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

i **Participation of Trio Elf from Regensburg and a group from Stavanger University Msc Music Class to participate in the Aberdeen Jazz Festival, from 14-18th March 2012.**

Jazz Aberdeen is a not-for-profit organisation which was started by the Aberdeen Jazz Group. Since its first annual Jazz Festival in 2003, the festival has helped Aberdeen in promoting jazz as it involves both local

and international artists, therefore attracting a large crowd of jazz fans to the city centre. The Festival also hosts various workshops for amateur jazz players and schools, ensuring that local people can benefit from the event.

In 2011 jazz players from Aberdeen were invited to participate in the Regensburg Jazz Festival, Bavarian Jazz Weekend. There is also a long-standing twinning link between Aberdeen and Stavanger which has been inactive in recent years. The invitation to Trio Elf, from Regensburg would be a reciprocal visit from their invitation from 2011, and the involvement of Stavanger University Music Group would re-establish the long-standing jazz link with Norway.

The participation of the two cities would attract local and international jazz fans and have a positive impact on Aberdeen by enhancing the City's event programme and from increased economic activity in retail, and the hospitality sector. The proposal is for Trio Elf to stay for one night with one performance and Stavanger Music Group two nights with three performances. The venues for Aberdeen Jazz Festival are the Blue Lamp, Lemon Tree, Tunnels and The Green.

The participation of Regensburg and Stavanger would promote the cultural and musical image of Aberdeen, reflecting differences in cultural styles of jazz. Furthermore it would project the vibrant image of Aberdeen, portraying it as a city leading an important jazz festival in Scotland. The Festival would lead to reciprocal visits by Regensburg and Stavanger, maintaining the long-term sustainability of jazz links between the cities.

The application requests a total of £3,900 as assistance with meeting the cost of accommodation, meals, local transport, and professional fee for the bands and administration fees. The total cost of the application is £6,600, with £2,700 being raised through contribution by participants and fund raising, leaving the total of £3,900.

- ii **Support the visit of Operation Florian to Bulawayo, from 15th March to 4th April 2012 which will see Grampian Fire and Rescue firefighters provide training to local firefighters in Bulawayo Fire Services and donate fire fighting apparatus.**

Operation Florian was established as a charity in 1995. It is the UK Fire Service Humanitarian charity to promote the protection of life amongst communities in need both world-wide and in local communities. They provide equipment and training to improve fire fighting and rescue capabilities.

Grampian fire-fighting members of Operation Florian teamed up with members from the Manchester base to visit the fire and rescue services in Bulawayo in 2011. There, they discovered the equipment being used was past its best and potentially harmful to those using it. Knowing their

knowledge and training from the UK could be put to good use in Bulawayo, they have submitted an application for funding to support a further visit to Bulawayo in March 2012. During their last visit to Bulawayo they also visited Bulawayo City Council and Mayor.

During this visit, Operation Florian will provide equipment and training to the local fire-fighting services in Bulawayo, thus improving the fire-fighting capabilities overseas. They also plan to meet again with Bulawayo City Council. Some of their objectives for the project are noted below:

- Breathing Apparatus course
- Road Traffic Accident Course
- Community Fire Safety
- Donation of two Fire Appliances

Aberdeen's twinning link with Bulawayo has been dormant for the past few years and this is an opportunity to maintain the relationship. It would promote the image of Aberdeen and Aberdeen's Grampian Fire and Rescue services, our support of humanitarian work overseas and benefit the people of Bulawayo in the long-term.

Operation Florian would further provide the opportunity for relationships to be forged between the participants and provide an insight into international perspectives.

The application requests a total of £2,000 to contribute towards transportation costs associated with the project.

iii Contribution towards the visit of the LGBT Aberdeen group to Stavanger from the 29th August to 2nd September 2012 to see what support mechanisms are in place in similar organisation.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Aberdeen is part of the wider LGBT Scotland group. The Aberdeen group has created a 'Zone Youth' for under 26s who meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month, providing young individuals an opportunity to meet people and make friends through various activities and events throughout the year. The LGBT Scotland holds various national projects and a National Youth Council.

The Aberdeen LGBT group has approached twinning with the view to arranging a visit to Stavanger to visit a similar organisation, such as LLH Rogaland, which is the LGBT organisation in Stavanger, to see what support mechanisms it has in place and to exchange knowledge, information and culture. Stavanger and Norway are seen to be leading on equal rights and was one of the first countries to allow gay marriage, which is why it was chosen as key location to visit in order to learn and experience what is in place there to support the LGBT youth community.

On their return to Aberdeen, they aim to install what they have learnt and seen in Stavanger to improve the service offered to members and participants through 'Zone Youth' and to report back to the LGBT National Council Scotland. If this were to happen, Aberdeen will be recognised as being proactive in trying to impart knowledge and best practice from a country who is leading the way for LGBT organisations. By improving the services which Aberdeen offers through this organisation, other twin cities may choose to visit Aberdeen in the future to learn from us.

This project would meet Aberdeen's vision of being forward-looking as it aims to improve the services and activities to a community group for the future. The project also meets with the twinning objectives of exchanging knowledge, information and best practice and fosters long-term friendships.

The proposal is for a total of eight people (two adults and six young people) to visit during the 29th August to 2nd September 2012. The application requests £5,000 to help towards flights to and from Stavanger, accommodation and meals. Fund-raising will be undertaken by the LGBT group, and they are seeking further assistance from the Drug Strategy Money fund. A break-down of costs is given below

Expenditure	
Flights (8 people)	£1,100
Accommodation	£6,240
Meals and Food	3,200
Total	£10,540
Income	
Fund-raising	£1,540
Drug Strategy Money Fund	£4,000
Total	£5,540
Expenditure-Income	£10,540-£5,540
Outstanding Costs	£5,000

iv Participation of two youth football teams from Clermont-Ferrand to play in the Denis Law Tournament from the 15th-21st July 2012 hosted by Aberdeen Sports Village.

The Denis Law Tournament is a fairly recent event established by Aberdeen Sports Village to continue to provide a football tournament for youths in Aberdeen, and to provide international and cultural opportunities for the locals taking part. It provides a range of activities such as 'Skill School', Footstars sessions for pre-school children and 'Fun Zone'. Last year a football team from the twin city Stavanger visited Aberdeen to participate in the event.

Aberdeen Sports Village would like to extend an invitation to a different twin city to participate in the football tournament and suggested the participation of two youth teams from Clermont-Ferrand. The teams would be one under 14 and the other under 16 and would be of a high standard of playing. Together, there is expected to be around 20 participants from Clermont-Ferrand to compete in the Denis Law Tournament.

Inviting players from Clermont-Ferrand it will give local players exposure to a different sporting and cultural way of life. Free activities and social outings will be offered to the players, including educational seminars which will allow players and coaches of different nationalities and culture to exchange best practice and to learn about different approaches to sport. Social outings and activities further provide the platform for cultural exposure and possibly even the chance for locals to practice their language skills learnt at school. Ensuring that youngsters have the opportunity to mix with various other cultures will give them the international relation skills and understanding of cultural differences which they will need for later life.

It is planned that players from the United States of America will be taking part, opening the football tournament from more of a European competition to an international tournament.

During the tournament the Cameroon Olympics Team will be training at the Sports Village prior to the London Olympics; it is planned for the football players to have a workshop with some of the Cameroon athletes which will be an invaluable experience for all of the participants and further develops the international element of the tournament, as well as making the tournament into an innovative and inclusive event which Aberdeen Sports Village is aiming for.

The application requests an amount of £7,425 which would cover accommodation, registration fees and travel insurance. Flight costs to and from Aberdeen will be covered by the council in Clermont-Ferrand. The break-down of costs are given below:

Expenditure	
20 x Flights	£8,000
20 x Full Board at Halls of Residence	£6,000
Tournament Registration Fee	£350
Travel Insurance	£500
Total	£14,850
Income	
Estimated Fund Raising	£1,025
Contribution by Participants	£6400
Total	£7,425
Expenditure-Income	£14,850- £7,425
Outstanding Costs	£7,425

By supporting the Denis Law Tournament through the participation of Clermont-Ferrand, Aberdeen will meet with its sport and culture vision. One of the main focuses of the tournament is the development of sporting performance and coaching skills and a strong emphasis on long-term health.

It further provides a platform to showcase Aberdeen city and our sporting facilities and for the participants and coaches to forge positive, long-lasting relationships. This unique event seeks to bring together local communities, businesses and international competitors.

v Participation of a group of performers from Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand in the 40th Celebrations of Aberdeen International Youth Festival, 1st-11th August 2012.

2012 will mark the 40th Anniversary of Aberdeen International Youth Festival. Each year, the Youth Festival has steadily attracted larger audience figures due to the level and variety of performers offered. It is recognised as one of the leading youth arts events in the world and fully supports Aberdeen's vision of being vibrant, forward-looking and dynamic.

To help mark the 40th Anniversary celebrations, AIYF would like to invite a small music group from Gomel and Les Chemin des Chevres, a folk/rock band from Clermont-Ferrand, to participate in the Festival. The project links to the community tour and will include workshop sessions with youth community music projects and performances. Their

participation in the Festival will allow spectators to witness a different cultural experience and become more culturally aware.

The performances from Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand will also allow the Aberdeen International Youth Festival to build on past relationships developed through the Strategic Music Partnership. Throughout the event new relationships can be built and will allow connections to be developed between other musicians.

Gomel in particular has been invited to perform as part of the equal opportunities policy of the Festival which encourages the application of participants from more disadvantaged communities through geographic, social and economic challenges, including groups locally, nationally and internationally.

The participation of a small group of performers from both Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand strengthens the Aberdeen International Youth Festival's commitment to the communities of Aberdeen which have limited access to arts performance and activity. The event will build on Aberdeen's reputation as one of Scotland's leading creative gatherings and would stimulate new projects between the twin city partnerships.

The application requests £6,116 in support of their participation. The Clermont-Ferrand group of three people have been invited from 2nd-6th August and Gomel participants from the 3rd-11th August. The application includes supporting accommodation costs, meals and local transport. The amount requested for the group from Gomel is higher due to the fact the City of Gomel are unable to make a contribution to their participation. A break-down of costs is given below:

Expenditure	
Cost Flights (x3) Clermont-Ferrand	£1,500
Cost Flights (x4) Gomel	£2,800
Accommodation Clermont-Ferrand	£504
Accommodation Gomel	£1,344
Festival Travel Costs Clermont-Ferrand	£200
Festival Travel Costs Gomel	£400
Festival Courier and Venue Staff Clermont-Ferrand	£250
Festival Courier and Venue Staff Gomel	£400
Venue Hire Clermont-Ferrand	£450
Venue Hire Gomel	£500
Workshop & Performance Fees Clermont-Ferrand	£720
Workshop & Performance Fees Gomel	£960
Production & Technical Support Clermont-Ferrand	£400
Production & Technical Support Gomel	£400
Total	£10,828
Income	
Estimated Fund-Raising Clermont-Ferrand	£1,500
Estimated Fund-Raising Friends of Gomel	£1,000
Box Office and Own Resources Clermont-Ferrand	£512
Box Office and Own Resources Gomel	£1,700
Total	£4,712
Expenditure-Income	£10,828-£4,712
Outstanding Costs	£6,116

5. IMPACT

The use of the International Twinning Budget to support international activity links closely to several of the Community Plan Challenges for example Learning; Arts, Heritage and Sport, Aberdeen's Image; Getting

Involved; Being Informed and Leading the City. Many of the recommendations for projects in this report create a positive image of Aberdeen internationally and provide the local communities an opportunity to learn from others, to participate in a various, exciting events and to increase local pride in our city.

In the policy statement “Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking”, the Council sets out how it aims to make Aberdeen a better place to live and work. Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest and, contributes to this aim and to the actions of the Single Outcome Agreement. The outlined twinning projects also align with the cultural strategy vision as it allows for improved communication of cultural opportunities, helps with changing the perception of the city to develop a stronger cultural identity and to have increased levels of effective partnership working.

Aberdeen’s twin city partnership initiatives:

- foster international understanding and friendship and an appreciation of cultural diversity;
- provide Aberdeen’s citizens with an awareness of and insight into international issues and perspectives and their impact on Aberdeen and Scotland;
- promote the image and raise the profile of the city overseas; and
- provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas and best practice in any given field.

Opportunities for groups, communities and organisations to access twin city projects and exchanges and for possible sources of funding are advertised through the Council’s website, press releases, school circulars where appropriate and the Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations e-bulletin.

Human Rights, Equalities and Diversity: Aberdeen City Council has in place a range of statutory and discretionary plans, schemes and policies to promote equality. Officers endeavour to target groups and communities which have not previously had experience of international visits or exchanges, or which have been under-represented in twin city activities. Applicants complete an equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the application process.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Amye Robinson
International Partnerships Officer
Tel: 01224 523749
ARobinson@aberdeencity.gov.uk