

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE Finance and Resources Committee

DATE 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT International Partnerships & Twinning Applications

REPORT NUMBER EPI/12/083

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### 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. International Twinning sits within the economic and business services set by Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Resources Committee approve the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2011-2012:

- i) £4,800 towards the participation of the Grampian Police Pipe Band in the 'Fête de la Rosière', from the 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2012, in Clermont-Ferrand.
- ii) £3,110 towards the visit of a group of staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy to allow them to continue and build on their existing twin city partnership link with School 71 in Gomel, 15<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June 2012.
- iii) £3,000 towards the Civic Visit by Regensburg, Clermont-Ferrand and Gomel to Aberdeen to meet with the Lord Provost, 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

		<b>£</b>
	<b>Balance of Budget Available</b>	<b>£63,559</b>
i	Contribution towards the participation of the Grampian Police Pipe Band in the 'Fête de la Rosière', from the 25 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup> May 2012, in Clermont-Ferrand.	£4,800
ii.	Contribution towards the visit of a group of staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy to allow them to continue and build on their twin city partnership link with School 71 in Gomel, 15 <sup>th</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> June 2012.	£3,110
iii.	Contribution towards the Civic Visit by Regensburg, Clermont-Ferrand and Gomel to Aberdeen to meet with the Lord Provost, 21 <sup>st</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2012.	£3,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,910</b>
	<b>Amount remaining in Budget if recommendations approved:</b>	<b>£52,649</b>

#### 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 reestablish communications. . It is important that all visits and projects through twinning are long-standing and fruitful to ensure their benefit to the local 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 **Contribution towards the participation of Grampian Police Pipe Band in the 'Fête de la Rosière', 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2012, in Clermont-Ferrand.**

Clermont Ferrand issued a letter of invitation to Aberdeen City Council seeking the participation of an Aberdeen based pipe band in their popular 'Fête de la Rosière' from the 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May 2012. Clermont-Ferrand has a population of around 140,000 people and is situated in the Auvergne region which has a total regional population of around 1.3 million people. The 'Fête de la Rosière' was established in 1886 and is a well-known and popular event in Clermont-Ferrand and the Auvergne region, drawing large crowds of audiences from both the city of Clermont-Ferrand and the surrounding areas.

Clermont-Ferrand specifically requested the participation of the Grampian Police Pipe Band as there is an established relationship that saw the band participate in the 'Fête de Montferrand' previously.

The Grampian Police Pipe Band compete at Grade 1 and are excellent ambassadors for the region and the piping tradition, competing regularly at national and international competitions.

The Grampian Police Pipe Band are available to participate in the 'Fête de la Rosière' and would welcome the opportunity to strengthen relationships with our international twinning partners showcasing Aberdeen's local talent and demonstrating our music, heritage and

culture. The band would undertake a number of performances adding to the programme of entertainment provided by Clermont Ferrand across the weekend.

Through their participation, Grampian Police Pipe Band will also promote Aberdeen as an attractive visitor destination and reach an international audience through our traditional music and national dress.

A maximum of 12 representatives from the Grampian Police Pipe Band will participate in the 'Fête de la Rosière', including pipers, drummers, and the Drum Major.

On the band's return to Aberdeen they will be required to produce a report outlining details of their visit, benefit of their participation in Clermont-Ferrand and to what extent they showcased Aberdeen and Scottish culture and traditions in the 'Fête de la Rosière'. They will also be asked to outline what impact the twinning visit had on the band and what plans they have to continue relationships with Clermont-Ferrand to ensure that the twinning link is fruitful. The International Partnerships Officer will also make contact with Clermont-Ferrand City Council for feedback on the Grampian Police Pipe Band's participation and their success in promoting Aberdeen and Scotland and for any spectator feedback on the event.

The application requests a total of £4,800 as assistance with meeting the cost of flights to and from Clermont-Ferrand. Clermont-Ferrand will be meeting all the costs associated with accommodation, meals and transport for Grampian Police Pipe Band while in Clermont Ferrand.

**ii Contribution towards the visit of a group of staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy to allow them to continue and build on their twin city partnership link with School 71, Gomel, 15<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June 2012.**

Kincorth Academy has a long-established link with School 71 in Gomel, but this link has been inactive since their last twinning project in 2009. A staff member from Kincorth Academy would like to re-activate the link with School 71 through the creation of a new joint twinning project.

The purpose of the visit and of the new project is to foster and promote the existing partnership through a Performing Arts Summer School. Previously, the aim of the partnership was to engage in active learning and teaching in each other's schools, however this was limited to individual lessons. This Performing Arts Summer School project has been designed to allow students and staff from Gomel to access native speakers delivering specialist teaching in visual arts, music and drama whilst still promoting lasting friendships and mutual understanding between the young people of the two cities.

The programme includes workshops with the Aberdeen city teachers delivering to a combined group of students from the two schools. The

focus of the project will be to perform a joint performance to an invited audience at the end of the week.

This workshop will allow Continued Professional Development for School 71 staff in active learning, the visual and performing arts and allow contemporary performance methods to be embedded within their curriculum.

The visit will involve the participation of 3 staff members from Kincorth Academy, two of which will not have been to Gomel before, and seven young people from S4-S6. Kincorth Academy stands to gain an International link in performing arts which is active, vibrant and ambitious. Already, Kincorth Academy is planning how to use their experience gained from Gomel to embed Belarusian culture, music and dance in their S1-S3 Curriculum for Excellence.

The partnership between Kincorth Academy and School 71 delivers long-term benefits to the individuals directly involved in the exchange programme as they gain perspectives into different cultures and ways of life, it develops communication skills between the young people, forging long-lasting friendships and it also develops art skills which is an important tool for later life as it encourages creative thinking. The partnership also benefits the local communities in both cities as they transfer their information and knowledge learnt during the project.

The application requests an amount of £3,110 towards the cost of flights, accommodation and visas for the group. The total cost of the visit comes to a total of £6,510 with £1,000 being raised through fund-raising events and the remaining £2,400 by the participants. Kincorth Academy has asked Gomel's permission for use of the facilities at School 71 during their visit. The school children in Gomel normally break for their summer holidays at the end of May. If Gomel allow Kincorth Academy to use the facilities of School 71 at no cost during the suggested dates of the visit this will be their contribution to lowering costs of the visit so alternative premises for the workshops are not required. Gomel City Council Education Department is backing the support of the visit between Kincorth Academy and School 71.

**iii Contribution towards the Civic Visit by the Mayors of Regensburg, Clermont-Ferrand and Gomel to Aberdeen to meet the Lord Provost, 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012.**

Prior to the current Lord Provost of Aberdeen vacating office on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012, the Mayors of Regensburg, Clermont Ferrand and Gomel will visit Aberdeen to review existing project commitments and discuss future joint working projects that will deliver mutual benefits to partner cities.

This visit provides an excellent opportunity for Aberdeen City Council to continue strengthening our twin city partnerships and to showcase the

exciting changes happening in our Aberdeen to the Mayors and representatives of the twin cities who are visiting.

The Mayors and a representative from their Council will visit Aberdeen from the 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March and will undertake a programme of partner meetings and civic engagements as well as meeting previous twin partner project participants.

Based on existing relationship arrangements where the host city meets some of the costs associated with any twinning visits, estimates for accommodation and hospitality total £3,000.

## 6. 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 living 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

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