

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE 19th March 2013

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Twinning & International Partnerships

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/13/048

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2012-2013 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 2012-2013:

- i) £2,500 contribution towards a visit by members of the Grampian Fire & Rescue Team in support of Operation Florian who will be continuing their development work with the Fire & Ambulance Services in Bulawayo from the 14th March to 5th April 2013.
- ii) £4,402 contribution towards the reciprocal visit of a group of hip hop dancers from Clermont-Ferrand to the Hip Hop School in Aberdeen from the 23rd to 28th July 2013.
- iii) £1,800 contribution towards the Friends of Gomel Committee visit to Gomel to support on-going projects between the two cities from the 21st to 28th May 2013.
- iv) £1,000 contribution towards the travel costs for the Lord Provost and International Partnerships Officer to attend Bürgerfest, Regensburg from the 21st to 23rd June 2013.
- v) £2,500 contribution towards the participation of a choir from Clermont-Ferrand at the City of Aberdeen Highland Games from the 15th to 17th June 2013.
- vi) £2,400 contribution to support a group of Aberdeen performers participation in Constitution Day, Stavanger, on 17th May 2013.

- vii) £2,000 contribution towards Aberdeen Kilt Kickers participation at the Smiling Bavarians Club Dance from the 25th to 30th April 30th 2013.
- viii) £1,665 contribution to the French Society to accept the invitation to a language and intercultural exchange with students at Blaise Pascal University and to teach English within local schools in Clermont-Ferrand from the 25th to 30th March 2013.
- ix) £1,500 contribution towards the cost of air travel for the Lord Provost and up to two officers of Aberdeen City Council to visit Clermont-Ferrand to mark the 30th Twinning Anniversary, 30th June to 3rd July 2013.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2012-2013 of £137,350. The approved budget from the Common Good Fund, provides £102,000 of monies towards the support of twinning projects and/or visits.

An annual review of the twinning budget detailing expenditure, benefits achieved and future projects will be presented to the Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee for consideration on 21st May 2013.

	Balance of Budget Available at March 2013	£28,284
i)	Contribution towards a visit by members of the Grampian Fire & Rescue Team in support of Operation Florian who will be continuing their development work with the Fire & Ambulance Services in Bulawayo from the 14 th March to 5 th April 2013.	£2,500
ii)	Contribution towards the reciprocal visit of a group of hip hop dancers from Clermont-Ferrand to the Hip Hop School in Aberdeen from the 23 rd to 28 th July 2013.	£4,402
iii)	Contribution towards the Friends of Gomel Committee visit to Gomel to support on-going projects between the two cities from the 21 st to 28 th May 2013.	£1,800
iv)	Contribution towards the travel costs for the Lord Provost and International Partnerships Officer to attend Bürgerfest, Regensburg from the 21 st to 23 rd June 2013.	£1,000
v)	Contribution towards the participation of a choir from Clermont-Ferrand at the City of Aberdeen Highland Games from the 15 th to 17 th June 2013.	£2,500
vi)	Contribution to support a group of Aberdeen performers participation in Constitution Day, Stavanger, on 17 th May 2013.	£2,400
vii)	Contribution towards Aberdeen Kilt Kickers participation at the Smiling Bavarians Club Dance	£2,000

	from the 25 th to 30 th April 2013.	
viii)	Contribution to the French Society to accept the invitation to a language and intercultural exchange with students at Blaise Pascal University and to teach English within local schools in Clermont-Ferrand from the 25 th to 30 th March 2013.	£1,665
ix)	Contribution towards the cost of air travel for the Lord Provost and up to two officers of Aberdeen City Council to visit Clermont-Ferrand to mark the 30 th Twinning Anniversary, 30 th June to 3 rd July 2013.	£1,500
	TOTAL	£19,767
	Amount remaining in budget if recommendations approved:	£8,517

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 all 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 strong link between Aberdeen and our twin cities who also provide organisational support, advice and guidance when required.

They will also make recommendations on funding available to the group and offer support to foster a relationship with the city so that it is long lasting and beneficial to the people of Aberdeen without requiring on-going 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 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 a visit by members of the Grampian Fire & Rescue Team in support of Operation Florian who will be continuing their development work with the Fire & Ambulance Services in Bulawayo from the 14th March to 5th April 2013.

As a charity, Operation Florian has been working in Bulawayo since 2010. The purpose of this project is to revitalise the Fire and Ambulance Service in Bulawayo. Zimbabwe continues to suffer from a severe economic crisis, meaning the local Government has been unable to maintain funding and resources that ensure a robust, responsive Fire and Ambulance Service to meet the needs of the community of Bulawayo and surrounding area.

Members of Grampian Fire and Rescue participating in Operation Florian first received funding from the International Partnerships & Twinning Fund in January 2012 to help contribute towards Phase 2 of their development work in Bulawayo. This engagement with Bulawayo City Council and Fire & Ambulance Service saw a reactivation of the Aberdeen-Bulawayo link which had previously been dormant. Further support of this project will strengthen the importance of this work which has proven to save lives due to the increased capability of the emergency services and support staff. It will also demonstrate ongoing support from the city of Aberdeen.

Operation Florian continues to receive excellent media coverage, with members having been interviewed for Radio Scotland and local media in Bulawayo. One soundbite said;

'His Worship, the Mayor, added that the donation of equipment was coming in at the most opportune moment for the City of Bulawayo, as the economic recession had affected the city's civic protection capacity'

During Phases 1 and 2 of the project five fire engines were donated, along with 2 x 20 foot containers of surplus firefighting equipment. The members also introduced a number of community fire safety schemes, including the introduction of smoke alarms for vulnerable members of the community. During Phase 2 training courses were given to the local firefighters in the following:

- Breathing Apparatus
- Road Traffic Accident
- Command and Control
- Technical Fire Safety
- First Aid Training

Through the training courses, a total of 5300 student hours of training were achieved. The volunteers presence in Bulawayo has ensured that all work undertaken is sustainable by showing the firefighters first hand how the equipment should be used and maintained.

In Phase 3 a further three fire engines have been shipped out along with a specialist Turn Table Ladder. Two containers of equipment have also been shipped out. The Operation Florian team will fly out the 14th March 2013 in order to train the local firefighters on how to use the additional equipment. It is anticipated that in 2013 the project will achieve the following outcomes:

- Continue training in operational procedures and risk assessment
- Further develop community based fire safety schemes within schools and for vulnerable members of society
- Introduce high rise firefighting, decontamination, hazmat, ventilation and fire investigation procedures
- Possible opening of a new fire station due to additional equipment to reduce turnout and attendance times to certain areas within the city
- Introduce internal training for Bulawayo Firefighters to become trainers in their own right to build on sustainability
- Increase the capacity of the emergency services to meet the needs of a developing and increasing population
- Develop project aims and objectives for Phase 4 in 2014 through evaluation, consultation and scoping report.

The example set by the members of Grampian Fire & Rescue can be used as a beacon in the education of children to demonstrate the importance of helping and showing consideration to other, global communities. Their work in Africa has highlighted Aberdeen on the world map through the media of the benefits of this project which can

only go from strength to strength. Not only has the link developed capacity in Bulawayo, but also of their development to meet the demands placed on them to protect the community of Aberdeen through their continued professional development to meet the needs that their job places on them. A further plus of the project is that it decreases the carbon foot-print that Aberdeen produces by recycling used equipment and uniforms.

The application requests a total of £2,500 to contribute towards the cost of shipping the equipment. The total cost of the project for Operation Florian has not yet been finalised, however initial calculation of costs for the shipping of appliances, purchasing, shipping of containers, fuel costs, insurance and purchase of equipment is in excess of £65,000. A further £17,000 is estimated for the cost of flights for all the Operation Florian team members. Most of these costs are being paid for by Bulawayo City Council and through fund-raising by Operation Florian members.

ii) Contribution towards the reciprocal visit of a group of hip hop dancers from Clermont-Ferrand to the Hip Hop School in Aberdeen from the 23rd to 28th July 2013.

In November 2012 the organisers of the 'Trans'Urbaines' Festival, which is a week long event of hip hop dance workshops, dance battles and performances, invited a group from the Hip Hop School Aberdeen to participate. The young people who attended from Aberdeen were excellent Cultural Ambassadors for the city and for majority of them it was their first experience of a being in a different country, way of life and language. It has encouraged many of the young Aberdeen people to continue with French language at school so they can converse with French friends made during their visit.

The Hip Hop School in Aberdeen wishes to reciprocate and continue the sustainability and legacy of the dance link by hosting a group of dancers from Clermont-Ferrand for six days in July 2013. The group visiting from Clermont-Ferrand will be made-up from ten children and two accompanying adults. The visit is arranged to coincide with the Aberdeen International Youth Festival (AIYF), which will enhance the festival offering by showcasing the close working relationship between Aberdeen and its twin city Clermont-Ferrand.

During the November 2012 visit, the young people from Aberdeen were very impressed and inspired by the dancing they saw in the 'Trans'Urbaines' Festival. They are now eager to showcase Aberdeen to their Clermont-Ferrand counterparts and demonstrate our vibrant cultural scene.

Both groups will benefit from the group visit to Aberdeen as it will allow the continuation of exchange of ideas and skills and engagement with street arts and dance workshops. It will also allow the Aberdeen hip

hop dancers who did not go to Clermont-Ferrand to experience French hip hop style and partake in the Master Class workshops. Not all dancers could attend 'Trans'Urbaines' due to financial difficulties and funding constraints.

A programme is currently being organised and consultation is being undertaken with the Learning Manager for Museum, Education and Arts Development to allow the French group discover more about Aberdeen's history and culture and provide our local pupils learning French access to native French speakers. It is anticipated that through our work with the schools that the wider Aberdeen community will benefit from the French group's visit.

During the week the groups will practice hip hop together and create a piece of joint work which will be performed during the AIYF at various venues. The Aberdeen group will host workshops with the local young people in Aberdeen Community Centres and, subject to approval, perform in various city centre locations.

Their joint performance will help celebrate the 30th Twinning Anniversary between the two cities and portray to Clermont-Ferrand we continue to be supportive of twinning exchanges.

The anticipated project outcomes are as follows:

- Build self-confidence of the young people
- Encourage the young people to meet and make new friends
- To encourage the sharing and development of talent, to learn and to develop new skills
- Improved language and communication skills
- Learn to work better as individuals as well as a team
- Continued work to global citizenship
- Enhance the experience of people from a disadvantaged background and young people who did not get to travel to Clermont-Ferrand.

The application requests a total of £4,402 to help support the cost of accommodation, transport and food. In the future the Hip Hop School will be applying to Awards for All and continue fund-raising to ensure the sustainability of the twinning link. A full break-down of costs is given below:

Expenditure	
Flights	£5,400
Transport in Aberdeen	£300
Accommodation	£2,520
Some subsistence in Aberdeen	£972
Hire Dance Studio	£210
Publicity and Uniform	£400
Total	£9,802

Income	
Contribution by Participants	£5,400
Total	£5,400
Expenditure-Income	9,802-5,400
Total Applying For	<u>£4,402</u>

iii) Contribution towards the Friends of Gomel Committee visit to Gomel to support on-going projects between the two cities from the 21st to 28th May 2013..

The Friends of Gomel, formed in 1991, was established to help raise funds which would be used towards supporting a variety of activities both in Aberdeen and in Gomel. The Friends of Gomel also operate a 'friendship in action' where members work to provide the means, ideas, materials, transport, skills and resources. In 2011 The Friends of Gomel became a registered charity with a very active Management Committee of fourteen Trustees drawn from a membership of over fifty individuals. Additionally, the Friends offer hospitality to visitors from Gomel and support projects in both Aberdeen and Gomel such as medical, cultural and sport exchanges. The Friends work alongside others in Aberdeen who have an interest in Gomel including the Universities, Rotary, Soroptimists, Chernobyl Children's Lifeline, North East Sensory Services and Aberdeen Gomel Trust.

The main objectives of The Friends of Gomel is:

- To increase interest and awareness of Aberdeen's twin city
- To foster and encourage links between Aberdeen and Gomel at all levels, individual, group or organisational
- To raise funds and provide goods and services for the alleviation of distress in Gomel
- To work in close co-operation with statutory, voluntary and private organisations in Aberdeen and Gomel to ensure best possible co-ordination of activities.

The Friends of Gomel Management Committee have submitted an application to request financial support for their Committee visit to Gomel during May 2013. The Friends of Gomel Management Committee last visited Gomel in April 2010.

The purpose of the visit in 2013 is:

- To view the many projects in Gomel which the Friends are associated with and to meet with the people involved
- To promote and develop existing projects and seek new ones
- To sustain and develop long-term social and economic aid to the citizens of Gomel

- To meet with representatives of Gomel City Council, hospitals, women's groups, businesses, technical college and children's centre in Gomel.

The Committee will also be providing support for Hope and Homes for Children in Gomel and Home-Start Gomel, providing medical equipment, technical books and parts for medical and other equipment as well as meeting and supporting Chernobyl Children's Lifeline; diabetic sufferers and hearing impaired children and adults.

If funding is approved, the work covered by previous Committee visits will be enhanced and maintained. It is important for the Committee to meet the people involved in their project work, especially in recent projects such as Home-Start Gomel and the apprenticeship/lecturer exchange scheme between Tullos Training Ltd and Gomel Technical College No.67. The Friends will maximise their 2013 visit by strengthening their links with Home-Start, which is the UK's leading family support organisation whose volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families. The Friends have contributed financially to start-up Home Start Gomel over the past three years. The proposed visit to Gomel this year will be the first opportunity to visit the Home Start volunteers in Gomel gain a better understanding of the project on the ground and help promote and develop it. They will also build on their link with Technical School 67 as the development of this project has currently stalled, which can only be resolved by a visit to the school to assess the situation and how to bring the project back on track.

In the future the Friends of Gomel will continue providing social programmes for visitors from Gomel and maintaining links with representatives of the Friends projects in Gomel. Through the work and visit of the Friends it will encourage others to become members of the Friends of Gomel and to support the Friends fund-raising and other activities for the benefit of the Friends partners in Gomel. It will highlight the excellent work and successful development projects which Aberdeen is involved in to help in improving the quality of life and medical care for others.

At the end of the visit the Friends will submit a report of their visit to Gomel to Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen's Third Sector Interface, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations E-Bulletin and include it in the Friends of Gomel newsletter. The wider Aberdeen Community will be made aware of the Friends work by its presence at various events in the Duthie and Hazlehead Parks, and by the annual hire of the Aberdeen City Council Charity Shop for a week.

The application requests a total of £1,800 to help cover some of the air flight costs. A break-down of the costs are provided below:

Expenditure	
Airfare	£270
Hire of Mini-Bus	£50
Belarus Visa Costs	£90
Basic Accommodation	£170
Total per person	£580
Group Total	£4,060 (580 x 7)
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£2,260
Total	£2,260
Expenditure-Income	4,060-2,260
Total Applying For:	£1,800

iv) Contribution towards the travel costs for the Lord Provost and International Partnerships Officer to attend Bürgerfest, Regensburg from the 21st to 23rd June 2013.

The Mayor of Regensburg Oberbürgermeister Herr Hans Schaidinger has extended an invitation to the Lord Provost of Aberdeen and the International Partnerships Officer to attend the bi-annual Bürgerfest in Regensburg between the 21st and 23rd June 2013.

Bürgerfest is a Citizens' Festival with a series of cultural events taking place throughout the weekend. Regensburg wishes the attendance of each of its twin cities to demonstrate their international connections.

This will be the first visit of the Lord Provost of Aberdeen to a twin city and meeting with the Mayor of Regensburg. It is important for the Lord Provost to have an understanding of the twin city relationships and develop good communication links in order to develop Aberdeen's international profile and willingness to effectively co-operate with other countries. It will also provide the Lord Provost the opportunity to network and meet with representatives of other international countries, opening potential development and business opportunities for Aberdeen.

The International Partnerships Officer will accompany the Lord Provost as they have travelled to Regensburg and met with Herr Hans Schaidinger before, therefore making travel and communications arrangements easier. The Officer will take advantage of the visit to meet with organisations and individuals who have an interest in, or interested in beginning, co-operation projects with Aberdeen.

Regensburg Stadt will cover the cost of accommodation for the Lord Provost and International Partnerships Officer, as well as subsistence costs. This application asks for a contribution of £1,000 to cover the cost of air travel and a float for any unanticipated costs. In twin city civic

visits the normal arrangement is for the outward delegation to cover the cost of air flights and the host city to cover the cost of accommodation and food.

An estimated break-down of costs is given below:

Expenditure	
Flights	£800
Float	£200
Accommodation	£700
Food	£200
Transport in Regensburg	£150
Total	£2,050
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£1,050
Total	£1,050
Expenditure-Income	2,050-1,050
Total Applying For:	£1,000

v) Contribution towards the participation of a choir from Clermont-Ferrand at the City of Aberdeen Highland Games from the 15th to 17th June 2013.

Aberdeen Highland Games is an integral part of the Grampian Games Circuit and also an important event within the Aberdeen City Council's Summer Festival programme. The organisers are looking to enhance and add value to the event which this year is being held on Sunday 16th June through the participation of Aberdeen's twin city of Clermont-Ferrand. The involvement of Clermont-Ferrand will also highlight the 30th Twinning Anniversary of the two cities this year.

Aberdeen Highland Games is a very popular event within the Summer Festival programme and depending on the weather attracts over 10,000 visitors on a regular basis. The event is widely publicised through the local and national media, radio and Aberdeen City Council website.

This year a choir of eight members from Clermont-Ferrand will travel to Aberdeen to participate and perform at the Aberdeen Highland Games, adding to and enhancing the event for the local people and visitors to the city. It will also demonstrate the strong twinning link between the two cities by involving them in such a popular event. The choir's participation will also be an excellent way to mark the 30th Twinning Anniversary.

The participation of the choir will be highlighted to local French businesses as well as the French Consul in Aberdeen to ensure that they are aware of the French involvement and to encourage them to

come to the event increasing the audience figures and awareness of the twin cities and Summer Festival programme. The event will also be publicised to French communities in Aberdeen through organisations such as the Franco-Scottish Association and L'Echo Ecossais.

The choir will arrive on Saturday 15th June. During the Saturday other performances around Aberdeen will be organised to allow the Aberdeen locals and visitors other opportunities to see the choir perform. They will then perform at the Highland Games on the Sunday before returning to Clermont-Ferrand on Monday 17th June.

The organisers of the Aberdeen Highland Games and the choir will be asked for feedback to determine the success of their participation and when the visit will be reciprocated.

The application requests a total of £2,500 to cover the cost of accommodation, some transport and food whilst the choir is in Aberdeen. The remaining balance will be met through Clermont-Ferrand and the choir.

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£3,600
Transport	£400
Accommodation	£1,280
Food	£560
Contingency	£260
Total	£6,100
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£3,600
Total	£3,600
Expenditure-Income	6,120-3,600
Total Applying For	£2,500

vi) Contribution to support a group of Aberdeen performers participation in Constitution Day, Stavanger, on 17th May 2013.

Following the participation of the singers from Stavanger at the Christmas Tree Switch-On Ceremony in Aberdeen 2012, Stavanger have reciprocated with an invitation for a group of Aberdeen performers to participate in Constitution Day on the 17th May 2013.

Constitution Day is a national celebration which recognises Norway's 'birthday' from Danish rule. It is celebrated through a parade with people of different generations, but mostly children in costume.

Stavanger has asked for a group of musicians or performers to participate from Aberdeen. This will be an excellent opportunity for Aberdeen to showcase its local talent and make the Norwegians aware of their twin city in Scotland, creating interest and potential tourism opportunities. It is also a further way to strengthen the business and cultural ties which the two cities enjoy.

In the past Aberdeen and Stavanger have benefited from strong economic links through the oil and gas industry. New links are being formed in education, sport and culture and this invitation is an opportunity to continue developing the twin city relationship.

Discussions are already taking place for involvement of a Stavanger choir or music band in the Aberdeen Summer and Winter Festival's in 2013, including the Re-Opening of Duthie Park, the Christmas Light Switch-On Parade as well as exchanges with the Music Department at the University of Aberdeen.

The application requests a sum of £2,400 to help towards the cost of air travel and contingencies for 10 individuals to travel out to Stavanger and participate in the Constitution Day parade, whilst promoting Aberdeen City and Scotland as a tourist destination with unique culture and traditions.

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£2,000
Contingency	£400
Accommodation	£1,500
Food	£1,000
Total	£4,900
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£2,500
Total	£2,500
Expenditure-Income	4,900-2,500
Total Applying For	<u>£2,400</u>

vii) Contribution towards Aberdeen Kilt Kickers participation at the Smiling Bavarians Club Dance from the 25th to 30th April 2013.

Aberdeen Kilt Kickers was established in 1986 and was the first American Square Dance Club to be formed in Scotland. Their aim is

to have 'Fun and Friendship set to music'. The objectives of Aberdeen Kilt Kickers are to:

- Promote and foster an interest in American Square Dancing
- Provide facilities for the participation in American Square Dancing
- Hold regular American Square Dance sessions
- Welcome any UK or International member or caller to join and participate in local club nights

The Aberdeen Kilt Kickers Club has well established links with two of Aberdeen City's twin cities, Stavanger and Regensburg. In 2012 the Aberdeen Kilt Kickers were awarded funds from the International Partnerships & Twinning Fund towards their participation in Stavanger's Jamboree Dance event.

Ten members of the Aberdeen Kilt Kickers this year have been invited to perform and participate in the Smiling Bavarians Square Club Dance on Friday 26th April, the annual 'Protzenhopper Dance' on Saturday 27th April, as well as a Plus/A1 dance on Sunday the 28th April. There has been a close link between the two dance clubs since 2009 when Aberdeen Kilt Kickers first visited the Smiling Bavarians Club for the 'Protzenhopper Dance'. As a direct consequence of the Aberdeen group visits to Regensburg and the friendships which have been formed, the dancers from Regensburg previously visited Aberdeen in April 2012. During this visit twenty-two dancers from Regensburg attended the Aberdeen Kilt Kickers six day long 'International Square Dance Festival'. The next 'Squarefest' Dance in Aberdeen will take place in 2014.

At previous International Square Dance Festivals in Aberdeen, the event has been attended by 250-300 visitors from all over Europe and elsewhere. The Aberdeen Kilt Kickers presence at the Smiling Bavarians Square Club Dance will encourage visitors to Aberdeen not only from Regensburg, but also from Germany and Czech Republic to attend the next Aberdeen Dance Festival in 2014. This will promote tourism within Aberdeen City and encourage economic generation through accommodation, food and drink and shopping to Aberdeen local businesses. The group who will travel to Regensburg in 2013 will secure participants and visitors for their event in 2014, as well as promote Aberdeen as a welcoming and culturally vibrant city.

The application requests a total of £2,000 towards some travel costs and accommodation for the members travelling out. The members will be in Germany for a longer period than the Regensburg Dance Festival but expenses incurred then are not included in the application. During this additional period the members will be visiting other Square dance clubs to encourage their members to come to Aberdeen for the event in 2014. A full break-down of costs is given below:

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£137
Accommodation	£154
Food	£120
Dances	£10
Total per person	£421
Total for 10 dancers	£4,210
Plus Hire of Mini Van	£810
Total	£5,020
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£3,020
Total	£3,020
Expenditure-Income	5,020-3,020
Total Applying For	£2,000

viii) Contribution to the French Society to accept the invitation to a language and intercultural exchange with students at Blaise Pascal University and to teach English within local schools in Clermont-Ferrand from the 25th to 30th March 2013.

During the visit of the Clermont-Ferrand delegation in October 2012, the delegates met with the French Department and French Society of the University of Aberdeen to discuss potential partnership exchanges between Aberdeen University and the University of Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand. At the meeting, the Clermont-Ferrand delegation invited members of the University of Aberdeen's French Society to meet and exchange with students at the University of Blaise Pascal, as well as to visit and teach English within the local schools in Clermont-Ferrand and Auvergne region.

The French Society at the University of Aberdeen exists to provide events to practice and promote French language for students and individuals in the community. They have organised visits to France in the past, but this will be the first time that a link will have been created with the twin city of Clermont-Ferrand.

The twinning visit to Blaise Pascal University and to Clermont-Ferrand would provide an invaluable opportunity to the five French students participating in the project to practice and improve their French language. This will be achieved through discussion with students at Blaise Pascal of topical issues taken from the media (such as newspaper articles, current affairs programmes) and debate about these with their fellow French students. The visit will also allow students from Aberdeen to gain insight into potential career paths. Through the language exchange, the French students would be able to practice their English and the Aberdeen students will expand this opportunity to the wider Clermont-Ferrand population, including school children in the

Auvergne region. This will be a particularly important experience for some of the participants who are going to complete a postgraduate degree in teaching French by allowing them to practice teaching to a variety of different age groups. Furthermore, it would also provide the opportunity for the other students to develop essential, transferable skills such as communication, organisation, time management and public speaking which will be required when they enter the employment market.

Currently, there is a chronic lack of British students who learn a foreign language/study abroad, therefore this trip will encourage students to widen their horizons through realizing the social and economic impact that knowing another language and culture can bring. Many of the local companies and businesses in Aberdeen City and throughout Scotland see a second language as a vital skill for gaining employment and enhancing international business relations. Through this visit the students control of French language will be greatly improved, making them more employable and will also continue to promote Aberdeen City as an international city that welcomes French business links. For the students that study to become a French teacher, it would enhance their teaching methods and accuracy in the French language, as well as a deeper appreciation of French culture. This in turn will encourage more students to learn French, thus having an impact on the economic and international business future of Aberdeen and encourage the uptake of learning a language or undertaking a study abroad visit at University.

Whilst in Clermont-Ferrand, the students will act as Ambassadors of Aberdeen and will promote the city by informing those they meet such as fellow students, council staff, schools pupils as well as community members, about the vibrancy of Aberdeen City. In the local schools of Clermont-Ferrand, the students will give presentations on Aberdeen to teach the school children about Aberdeen's history, culture, traditions and also about the University of Aberdeen and the courses offered. All in all, both sides will benefit from this intercultural exchange leading to a better understanding of the two cities and cultures.

On their return to Aberdeen, the students will communicate the information learnt to their French Head of Department to see if any more formal links could be established between the universities, as well as to wider society in Aberdeen through the Franco-Scottish Society and French Institute. The students plan to invite a group from Blaise Pascal to Aberdeen on a reciprocal visit to continue to further promote Aberdeen City and University of Aberdeen. This will forge stronger links between the cities and lead to the co-ordination of student exchanges in the future.

The application requests a total of £1,665 to help cover the cost of return travel to Clermont-Ferrand. Clermont-Ferrand will cover the cost of accommodation and food for the five members of the French Society visiting. A full break-down of the costs is given below:

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£1,125
Return Train	£540
Accommodation	£1,200
Food	£1,000
Total	£3,865
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£2,200
Total	£2,200
Expenditure-Income	3,865-2,200
Total Applying For	£1,665

ix) Contribution towards the cost of air travel for the Lord Provost and up to two officers of Aberdeen City Council to visit Clermont-Ferrand to mark the 30th Twinning Anniversary, 30th June to 3rd July 2013.

The Mayor of Clermont-Ferrand, Serge Godard, has extended an invitation to the Lord Provost to visit Clermont-Ferrand to mark the 30th Twinning Anniversary between the two cities. Up to two officers of Aberdeen City Council have been invited to accompany the Lord Provost. It is anticipated the International Partnerships Officer will form part of the Aberdeen delegation as they speak French fluently and can translate for both the Aberdeen and Clermont-Ferrand sides, making communications easier.

For the 25th Anniversary delegates from Clermont-Ferrand visited Aberdeen therefore their invitation is reciprocal from 2008. As for the visit to Bürgerfest, Regensburg this will be the first visit of the Lord Provost to Clermont-Ferrand and to become acquainted with our Clermont-Ferrand working partners. There are many projects which are currently being planned between Clermont-Ferrand and Aberdeen for 2013/2014 including Manor Park, Aberdeen Highland Games and the Hip Hop Exchange and this will provide the Lord Provost an excellent insight as to the importance and strength of the twin city links, as well as to how La Ville de Clermont-Ferrand operates. Knowledge of how our twin cities operate and their procedures is vital to the success of twin city exchanges and development work.

Whilst in Clermont-Ferrand there will be media interest in the Aberdeen delegation, therefore allowing the promotion of Aberdeen City as a tourist destination and in publicising and creating future development projects between the cities. The International Partnerships Officer will take advantage of the visit by undertaking meetings with groups who have an interest in projects involving Aberdeen.

Clermont-Ferrand will pay for the accommodation, transport and food for the Aberdeen delegation during their visit. This application requests £1,500 towards the cost of air travel to Clermont-Ferrand and contingency fund for any unanticipated costs. A break-down is given:

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£1,350
Contingency	£150
Accommodation	£900
Food	£450
Transport	£150
Total	£3,500
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£1,500
Total	£1,500
Expenditure-Income	3,000-1,500
Total Applying For	£1,500

6. IMPACT

Aberdeen – the Smarter City

- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.
- We will ensure that Union Street regains its position as the heart of the city and move cultural activity centre-stage through re-invigorated cultural leadership.

Smarter Living (Quality of Life)

- We aspire to be recognised as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.

Smarter Economy (Competitiveness)

- We will work with partners to promote the city as a place to invest, live, work and export from.

Community Plan

- Work with other organisations, agencies and groups, including Visit Scotland and Visit Aberdeen, to encourage tourism and the provision of facilities for tourists.

Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest, significantly contributes to Aberdeen City Council Vision as outlined above 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 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 used

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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