
COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	26 November 2009
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
TITLE OF REPORT	Applications for Funding from the International Twinning Budget 2009/2010
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/09/041

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to bring before the Committee applications for financial assistance from the 2009/2010 International Twinning Budget and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1 - Approve a contribution of £4,100 towards the travel of 4 delegates to Regensburg and towards translation and marketing costs involved in the delivery of the arts workshops at Regensburg's Social Initiatives Christmas market.
- 2 - approve a contribution of £1,600 towards the costs of the civic dinner (20 participants) as well as for accommodation and hospitality for the visit of the Mayor of Stavanger.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council approved the International Budget for 2009/2010 at the Council meeting of 12 February 2009. The approved budget, which is from the Common Good Fund, earmarked £72,000 in grants available for financial year 2009/2010.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY 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. In the policy statement "Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking", the Council sets out how it aims to make Aberdeen an even better place to live and work. Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest, contributes to this aim and to the

actions of the Single Outcome Agreement. Furthermore, the Council's Vision is to be recognized widely as a leading local authority in Northern Europe by 2010. To achieve this Vision, the Council needs to have a visible profile on the international stage and twin city partnership projects contribute significantly to this. 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 City groups and organisations to access twin city projects and possible funding are advertised through the Council's website, press releases, school circulars where appropriate and the ACVO e-bulletin.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Health and Safety: The health and safety implications of all visits are taken into account during planning, with any exceptional implications to be addressed at the time of application. Officers regularly review the travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and are in close contact with counterpart officers in the twin cities to ensure information provided to participants is accurate and up-to-date. Participants are offered comprehensive pre-visit briefings by the International Strategist 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 advised to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. The International Strategist carries out a risk assessment process for officer and Elected Member travel on twin city initiatives.

Risk Management: Aberdeen City Council will not be able to achieve its stated vision of being recognized widely as a leading local authority in Northern Europe by 2010 if it does not support activity that raises the profile of Aberdeen on the international stage. Long-established community links will not be maintained without support from the international budget and people in Aberdeen would lose a wide range of opportunities to engage effectively with the international community. In addition, incoming visitors to the city on twin city projects support the local economy through their use of the hospitality and retail sectors in particular, and it is important to maintain and build on this added value.

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.

6. REPORT

Ref	Balance of Budget available 2009/2010 List of applications	£14,708 *
6.1	<i>Participation to Regensburg Christmas market</i>	£4,100
	<i>Visit to Aberdeen by Mayor of Stavanger to mark 20th anniversary of twinning</i>	£ 1600
	TOTAL	£5700
	Amount remaining in budget if awards approved	£9008

6.1

Anticipated applications

Participation at Regensburg Social Initiatives Christmas market

The Arts Development Team has been working closely with partners in our twin city of Regensburg. They have been invited to take part in this year's Social Initiatives Christmas Market in the Cathedral Square over a long weekend in December, 10 – 13th December (travel 9-14th December), to introduce the citizens of Regensburg to a new model of working with hard to reach and socially excluded citizens through Arts Engagement. It is important to highlight that Regensburg's Cathedral market is not the city's commercial Christmas market. It is operated by Regensburg Social Initiatives which is supported by the city council. This market provides a platform for charitable organisations, social enterprise and for groups who are most socially disadvantaged to share the services they provide and sell items to raise funds for the organisation. There is representation from childrens' care homes, older peoples groups and disability groups as well as organisations such as Amnesty International and Save the Children.

The grant is required to travel to Regensburg and to deliver workshops at a market venue and two public presentations in the twin city (travel and subsistence costs amount to £2600, accommodation will be organised by Regensburg). The Arts Development team has been asked by the city of

* Instead of **6,758 initially reported in the draft version**, due to savings and underspends in projects earlier this financial year

Regensburg to deliver a daily workshop and two public sessions on the service they deliver in Aberdeen. This service is a model which our partners in Regensburg hold in high regard and wish for organizations in their city to embrace as a positive model of working.

3 free-lance tutors from the Arts Development Team and one Community Arts Officer will travel to Regensburg to man an information and participatory workshop stall during the social initiatives and volunteer organizations' market at the Cathedral in Regensburg. Regensburg city also has organised two high profile and widely advertised public presentations on Aberdeen's Arts Engagement work.

The organisations in Regensburg use arts and crafts to make items to sell at the market to raise funds for their charity. However this work is of poor quality as the artists working for the charities are mainly self taught volunteers. The Arts Development Teams staff are fully qualified practising artists and makers and will help raise the quality of the local craft. The group would not be selling any work only providing information on the service and allowing citizens to take part in a craft activity. This would be Christmas Crackers. This activity has been chosen as Christmas Crackers are not available in Regensburg and will provide an opportunity for dialogue as to what a cracker is and our festive customs.

Two information sessions will be delivered by Aberdeen's Community Arts Officer (with help from a translator) for elected members, organisations and citizens of Regensburg to present the work of the Arts Development Team and how it operates within the framework of Aberdeen City Council, the service that is provided and examples of best models of working within themes of community planning health and well being, education and lifelong learning. These sessions will promote Aberdeen as a vibrant city in which to live and work.

The grant is also required to cover some translation costs for literature and marketing of the service (£950 and £550 respectively).

The benefits to the citizens of Regensburg will be measured by the success of a workshop to organizations which the team has been asked to deliver prior to the market opening. It is hoped this invitation will bring about more partnerships with groups from more socially deprived areas from both cities. The opportunity to showcase and highlight the Aberdonian arts and crafts skills and Aberdeen City Council's arts engagement work through its Arts Development Team can only have a positive impact on the city and strengthen our twinning with Regensburg. It is important for Aberdeen as this will raise morale within the group participating, highlighting the quality of the work which the Arts Development team provides, and making the group proud to live and work for the city. It will enable the Aberdeen group to understand the structure in Regensburg and learn about child protection and data protection legislation in another country. It will also give the participants from Aberdeen some useful insights into how volunteers in Regensburg are attracted to working for organisations and retained to support the community groups, with possibly some lessons to be learned as to how to enhance voluntary participation here.

Additionally, during this winter visit, a common digital project to develop online communication between citizens and community groups from the twin cities will be discussed. The Volkshochschule (Regensburg's College) have developed a link with their twin city in Austria who is interested in this digital web based project suggested by Aberdeen.

The total amount applied for is of £4,100. In kind contributions to this project from the Arts Development team (staff and admin) and the city of Regensburg (accommodation) are estimated at £9640.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £4,100 from the 2009/2010 international twinning budget towards the travel of 4 delegates to Regensburg and towards translation and marketing costs involved in the delivery of the arts workshops at Regensburg's Social Initiatives Christmas market.

Visit to Aberdeen by Mayor of Stavanger to mark 20th anniversary of twinning (early 2010, date TBC)

2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the twinning between the cities of Aberdeen and Stavanger. In the past year the links with our Norwegian partners have continuously developed and intensified through cultural events in both cities and visits to and from Stavanger such as the AIFF, the AIYF, Christmas Festivities, visits from choir and from Scouts, the Sports Council's visit and the Waste Management study visit to Stavanger, among others.

To celebrate our thriving twinning relationship a civic visit by the Mayor of Stavanger is being planned for early 2010.

The visit would include a civic dinner and an accompanying hospitality program for Mayor Leif Sevland and his wife to meet some of the actors of our twinning projects in the council services and among Aberdeen's communities.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £1,600 from the 2009/2010 international twinning budget towards the costs of the civic dinner (20 participants) as well as for accommodation and hospitality for the Mayor's visit.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None