

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	21 January 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/255

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2013-2014 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Enterprise, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee recommend the approval of the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2013-2014:

- i) £5,000 towards the “Doppelganger Writing Project” to celebrate the Sixtieth anniversary of the twinning of Aberdeen and Regensburg in 2015. This project element will take place during March to August 2014.
- ii) £3,540 contribution towards the visit of six conference committee attendees from the twin city of Clermont Ferrand to attend the 9th joint symposium between The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health, University of Aberdeen and INRA-Theix, Clermont Ferrand in Aberdeen, 16th to 19th June 2014.
- iii) £1,000 contribution towards premiere of the film festival of short films the Court Metrage Festival, Clermont – Ferrand, 5th February 2014. The Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Councillors, consuls and representatives from international societies will be attending this premiere.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2013-2014 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.

	Balance of Budget Available at April 2013	£39,351
i)	Contribution towards the “Doppelganger Writing Project” to celebrate the Sixtieth anniversary of the twinning of Aberdeen and Regensburg in 2015, March to August 2014.	£5,800
ii)	Contribution towards the visit of six conference attendees from the twin city of Clermont Ferrand to attend the 9 th joint symposium between The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health, University of Aberdeen and INRA-Theix, Clermont Ferrand in Aberdeen, 16 th to 19 th June 2014.	£3,540
iii)	Contribution towards the funding of premiere of the film festival of short films from Court Metrage Festival, Clermont – Ferrand, 5th February 2014.	£1,000
	TOTAL	£10,340
	Amount remaining in budget if recommendations approved:	£29,011

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 the “Doppelganger Writing Project” to celebrate the Sixtieth anniversary of the twinning of Aberdeen and Regensburg in 2015, March to August 2014.

The “Doppelganger Writing Project” will involve the creation and publication of a new collection of creative writing (poetry and short stories) written in English and German (and the Doric and Bavarian dialects) along with side by side translations.

Writers in both cities will be encouraged to take pen to paper and write new work about contemporary city life with the best

works being selected for publication and translation. As well as the launching of a competition open to all residents of Aberdeen (around March 2014), a new writing group for published writers will be set up by the this organiser in the Summer 2014 to write new works for the project and promote a culture of professional creative writing in the city. A similar process will take place in Regensburg.

In the Autumn of 2014, the best and the most representative works from both cities will be selected and translated for publication. Artwork for the publication may also be commissioned if the budget allows.

The final product will then be published in 2015, with launch events taking place in both cities.

The project will encourage literary production within the city through the open competition, foster professional writing within the writing group and promote literacy through the final publication. It will also provide a platform for the selected writers to be recognised locally and internationally.

The published book itself will allow Aberdeen residents to learn more about their Twin City of Regensburg, as well as their own city in a way that has never been approached between Aberdeen and one of its Twin Cities before. Vice versa, residents of Regensburg will learn more about Aberdeen in a more varied and personal manner.

The application requests a total of £5,800 to contribute towards the cost of the competition and workshops, translation costs, publication/printing costs and promotion and running events for the project. Other funding will be sought from Old Possum's Practical Trust, Split Infinitive, Fenton Arts and Jerwood Charitable Foundation. Groups that are involved in Regensburg are also sourcing funding in Germany for launch events in their city. A full break-down of costs has been given below.

Expenditure	
Competition and workshops	£1000
Translation	£1,500
Publication/Printing costs	£3,500
Promotion & event running costs	£800
Total	£6,800
Income	
Other sources of income	£1,000

Total	£1,000
Expenditure-Income	£6,800-1,000
Total Applying For	<u>£5,800</u>

- ii) **Contribution towards the visit of six conference attendees from the twin city of Clermont Ferrand to attend the 9th joint symposium between The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health, University of Aberdeen and INRA-Theix, Clermont Ferrand in Aberdeen, 16th to 19th June 2014.**

RRI-INRA 2014 'Gut Microbiology: from Sequence to Function' is an International Conference that aims to promote understanding of the role of the complex microbial ecosystems present in the digestive tract of man and animals, in maintaining health of the host. The conference is of interest to those working to improve human and animal health and nutrition through dietary manipulation.

Building on the success of their previous symposia they expect in excess of 250 delegates drawn from an international field of gut microbiologists, microbial ecologists, molecular biologists, immunologists, animal nutritionists, and clinical nutritionalists.

The biennial conference alternates between Clermont-Ferrand and Aberdeen. In order to strengthen relations between the two institutes, they request financial funding of the French organising committee. The conference organisers committee is made up of 6 from Clermont-Ferrand and 6 from Aberdeen.

The application requests a total of £3,540 to contribute towards the cost of hotel accommodation for four nights and cost of an organisers dinner attended by both Rowett and INRA members. This was a reciprocal arrangement from the last conference and the organisers would like to return this gesture.

Expenditure	

Hotel accommodation x6 @£130 per night.	£3,120
Organizing committee dinner x12 @ £35 per person.	£420
Total	£3,540
Income	
Contribution by Participants	£11,940
Total	£15,480
Expenditure-Income	15,480-11,940
Total Applying For	<u>£3,540</u>

iii) Contribution towards the funding of premiere of the film festival of short films from Court Metrage Festival, Clermont – Ferrand, 5th February 2014.

A request is made to assist with the premiere of the film festival, which is a joint twin city project between Clermont – Ferrand and Aberdeen. There will be 9 short films that have been classified as PG,12A and 15.

The request is to assist the event with promotion, theming and hospitality for invited guests attending the film premiere of the festivals opening night. The Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Councillors', consuls and representatives from the international societies will be invited to the premiere, it is estimated that 60 to 80 people will be invited.

Following this screening there will be public screenings, as well as school screenings during the mornings.

It is proposed that this event could lead to future film festivals at Belmont Cinema or other Aberdeen cinemas with the representation of our other twin cities such as Regensburg and Stavanger.

Expenditure	
Theming of the theatre and reception room	£500
Hospitality costs	£200
Promotion of event	£300
Total	£1000
Total Applying For	<u>£1,000</u>

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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