

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	6 th May 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/111
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2014-2015 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee recommend the approval of the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2014-2015:

- i) £600 towards the visit of a jazz group from Regensburg who will perform with a local musician in Aberdeen, May 8th – 10th 2014

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2014-2015 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 2014	£102 000
i)	Contribution towards the visit of a jazz band from Regensburg who will perform with a local musician in Aberdeen, May 8 th – 10 th 2014	£600
	TOTAL	£600
	Amount remaining in budget if recommendations approved:	£101 400

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 Twinning & 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 Twinning & 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 Twinning & 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 Twinning & 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 visit of a jazz band from Regensburg who will perform with a local musician in Aberdeen, May 8th - 10th 2014

This application supports a partnership between musicians in Aberdeen and Regensburg. Trio Elf played at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival in 2012 and collaborated with local jazz musicians, including Aberdeen guitarist Graeme Stephens. These artists from Aberdeen and Regensburg recorded their work and performed the piece together in Regensburg. The group from Regensburg are visiting Aberdeen on May 8th and 9th and are playing with Graeme at a local music venue. Graeme is then travelling to Regensburg to play with the musicians on Saturday 10th May.

This project is an excellent example of continued professional partnerships between musicians in Aberdeen and Regensburg. It provides an Aberdeen artist with the opportunity to play internationally and brings internationally renowned artists to Aberdeen, thus developing the creative and cultural scene within Aberdeen which benefits the entire city. This project will develop and maintain lasting links between musicians in both cities and encourage others to become involved in the twinning programme.

Regensburg is Aberdeen's oldest twin city, with the 60th anniversary of the partnership being celebrated in 2015. Supporting creative collaborations between musicians in the two cities demonstrates our desire to work together and build cultural links.

As this is the group's first application, they were unaware of the support available to projects which develop twin city partnerships through the Twinning Grant. For this reason, an application for support was made outwith the normal reporting cycle. It is intended that this project will continue between the musicians and they have been made aware of procedures for any future applications.

This application requests a total of £600 to support the cost of accommodation of the group during their stay in Aberdeen. Stadt Regensburg will cover the cost of the flights of the group from Regensburg to Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Air Flights	£1200
Food Costs	£300
Accommodation	£600

Local Transport	£100
Total	£2200
Income	
Contribution by Stadt Regensburg	£1200
Contribution by Participants	£400
Total	£1600
Expenditure-Income	£2200 – 1600
Total Applying For	£600

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.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None used

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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