

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	4 th September 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/172
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 Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee recommend the approval of the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2014-2015:

- i) £2,900 contribution to an educational visit by staff and pupils of Kincorth Academy to Gymnasium 71 in Gomel marking the tenth anniversary of the partnership, 4th-11th October 2014
- ii) £1,000 contribution towards the participation of a music group from Stavanger in the Aberdeen Christmas Tree Light Switch-On Ceremony, November 27th 2014
- iii) £2,000 contribution towards the visit of a Bavarian Marching Band in the Christmas Parade, 22nd-24th November 2014
- iv) £1,050 contribution towards the exploratory visit of three teachers from Regensburg to visit potential partner schools and organisations in Aberdeen, 3rd-6th November 2014
- v) £1,500 contribution to a reciprocal exchange by development officers of Fusion Dance Company and Danceworxxx Regensburg to explore the potential for a project in 2015 which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement, November 10th-13th, 2014
- vi) £1,800 contribution to an exploratory visit by two officers from TechFest-SetPoint and the International Partnerships Officer to Stavanger to meet with science communication professionals to share knowledge and discuss the potential of developing future educational projects between the two cities, 27th-29th October 2014
- vii) £2,200 contribution to a visit to Regensburg by teachers and pupils from Kincorth Academy to explore the potential of creating an

exchange programme with Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium, 6th-9th October 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 as at April 2014	£102,000
	Opening Balance	£91,190
i)	Contribution to an educational visit by staff and pupils of Kincorth Academy to Gymnasium 71 in Gomel marking the tenth anniversary of the partnership, 4th-11th October 2014	£2,900
ii)	Contribution towards the participation of a music group from Stavanger in the Aberdeen Christmas Tree Light Switch-On Ceremony, November 27th 2014	£1,000
iii)	Contribution towards the visit of a Bavarian Marching Band in the Christmas Parade, 22nd-24th November 2014	£2,000
iv)	Contribution towards the exploratory visit of three teachers from Regensburg to visit potential partner schools and organisations in Aberdeen, 3rd-6th November 2014	£1,050
v)	Contribution to a reciprocal exchange of development officers for Fusion Dance Company and Danceworxxx Regensburg to explore the potential for a project in 2015 which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement, November 10th-13th 2014	£1,500
vi)	Contribution to an exploratory visit by two officers from TechFest-SetPoint and the International Partnerships Officer to Stavanger to meet with science communication professionals to share knowledge and discuss the potential of developing future educational projects between the two cities, 27th-29th October 2014	£1,800
vii)	Contribution to a visit to Regensburg by teachers and pupils from Kincorth Academy to explore the potential of creating an exchange programme with Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium, 6th-9th October 2014	£2,200
	TOTAL	£12,450
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£78,740

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 to an educational visit by staff and pupils of Kincorth Academy to Gymnasium 71 in Gomel marking the tenth anniversary of the partnership, 4th-11th October 2014**

The educational partnership between Kincorth Academy and Gymnasium 71 in Gomel celebrates its tenth year in 2014. It is the only existing school partnership between the twin cities of Aberdeen and Gomel. Kincorth Academy will visit Gymnasium 71 in October 2014 to develop the educational and cultural links with this school which have been established over the previous decade.

This partnership has allowed the schools' pupils to become "global citizens" – a key element of the Scottish Curriculum. Over the previous ten years pupils have met and worked with counterparts from Gomel, building friendships outwith their school and community. Many previous pupils are still in touch with friends in Gomel they met through the exchange. Three of the pupils planning to visit Gomel were host families for the Belarussian students when they visited Aberdeen in October 2013 and visiting Gomel will provide them with a full experience of the exchange programme as they themselves are hosted by families in Gomel.

Whilst in Gomel, pupils from Aberdeen will be immersed in Belarussian culture: They will stay with host families; attend classes at Gymnasium 71; and participate in activities organised by the teachers and pupils in Gomel. Pupils from Kincorth Academy have already been studying Belarus, but visiting the country will allow them to have a greater awareness of global issues. Studying Belarus has not only made them aware of the culture and history of another country but has also raised awareness of knowledge of their home city and why Aberdeen is twinned with Gomel.

Kincorth Academy want to create a sustainable partnership with Gymnasium 71 and future exchanges will be explored during the visit. At present the Drama Department leads on the partnership but a teacher from the English Department will also be attending the exchange with a plan to discuss broader curriculum links. Pupils have already identified such cross-curricular potential and have requested a visit to Krasny Bereg – a Holocaust memorial – as the Holocaust is studied by the wider school community at Kincorth Academy. The pupils will disseminate this information back to fellow pupils and the community on their return.

Pupils from Kincorth Academy have taken ownership of this partnership. They have been involved with the planning of the programme and have also continued communications with pupils from Gomel who visited Aberdeen last year. As well as personally contributing to the project, the pupils are leading on fundraising initiatives to finance the exchange trip.

This application requests a total of £2,900 to support the fundraising initiatives of Kincorth Academy and contribute to the flight and visa costs of the exchange.

Expenditure	
Flights	£2,100
Visas	£800
Accommodation	£500
Transport	£200
Food costs	£1,200
Activities	£500
Contingency	£500
Total	£5,800
Income	
Contribution by participants	£1,200
Fundraising	£1,000
Grants	£700
Total	£2,900
Expenditure-Income	£5800-£2900
Total applying for	£2,900

ii) **Contribution towards the participation of a music group from Stavanger in the Aberdeen Christmas Tree Light Switch-On Ceremony, November 27th 2014**

Aberdeen City Council's Events Team has requested the presence of a traditional music group from Stavanger to celebrate the lighting of the Christmas Tree in the Castlegate – a gift from Aberdeen's twin city of Stavanger. Part of the Aberdeen Winter Festival Programme, the ceremony is a popular event and can attract an audience of up to 3000 people to the city centre.

The presence of a Norwegian music group at the event will engage local audiences with different music traditions and raise the profile of Aberdeen's twinning links with Stavanger. The group have been asked to dress in traditional costume and will promote Norwegian customs and traditions in keeping with the festivities. As well as playing at the Christmas Tree Ceremony in the evening, the group will perform at various venues throughout the day such as community venues and a proposed business event.

Aberdeen and Stavanger share strong business and economic links and efforts continue to build more cultural and social links into the twinning and business partnership. Our invitation to Stavanger to participate in the Christmas Tree Light Switch On will demonstrate our continued desire to work together and develop cultural and business links with their city.

The application requests a total of £1,000 to cover the cost of accommodation, food and transport of the group whilst in Aberdeen. Stavanger Kommune will cover the cost of air flights to and from Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Flights	£2,000
Accommodation	£500
Food costs	£350
Local Transport	£150
Total	£3,000
Income	
Contribution from Stavanger Kommune	£2,000
Total	£2,000
Expenditure-Income	£3,000-£2,000
Total requested	£1,000

iii) **Contribution towards the visit of a Bavarian Marching Band in the Christmas Parade, 22nd-24th November 2014**

The organisers of Aberdeen's Winter Festival have requested the presence of a group from one of Aberdeen's twin cities to enhance and diversify the city's annual Christmas Light Switch-On Parade.

An invitation to perform at the event has been extended to a traditional Bavarian marching band who participated in the 2013 Tartan Day celebrations and was well received by spectators. The band performed in the Tartan Day Parade, public venues throughout the day, the Lord Provost civic reception and also in the evening at venues across the city.

As the City Events organisers were impressed with the standard of playing and the twinning links with Regensburg were able to be promoted so publicly, they have been invited to return to Aberdeen to participate in the annual Christmas Light Switch-On Parade which takes place on Sunday 23rd November. An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 spectators are expected to watch the Parade which provides an excellent platform for promoting the twinning links. The attendance of the group contributes to the varied programme of this annual event and engages local audiences with international festive and musical traditions. During their visit, a programme will be created for the group to perform at venues in the city throughout the day to promote the event and twinning links to new and existing audiences throughout the city.

The application requests a total of £2,000 to cover the cost of food, accommodation and transport whilst the band are in Aberdeen. Stadt-

Regensburg will cover the cost of their air flights as per the normal twinning arrangement.

Expenditure	
Flights	£2,500
Accommodation	£1,000
Food	£800
Transport	£200
Total	£4,500
Income	
Contribution from Stadt-Regensburg	£2,500
Total	£2,500
Expenditure-Income	£4,500-£2,500
Total requested	£2,000

iv) Contribution towards the exploratory visit of three teachers from Regensburg to visit potential partner schools and organisations in Aberdeen, 3rd-6th November 2014

The Head Teacher and two accompanying teachers from Von Mueller Gymnasium in Regensburg plan to visit Aberdeen in autumn 2014 to explore the potential of creating a partnership with a school in Aberdeen with the aim that a project would develop in 2015 which would celebrate the 60th anniversary of the twinning of the two cities. There are no current exchange programmes between Aberdeen and Regensburg and this would be the first.

The projected outcome of such a visit would be in the creation of a pupil exchange programme between Von Mueller Gymnasium and a partner school in Aberdeen. The participating department would not necessarily have to be Language orientated, as the German pupils can communicate in English, which would allow for an exploratory cross-curricular approach over many disciplines. Von Mueller Gymnasium already have funding in place to support a reciprocal visit of teachers to Regensburg in early 2015. From these two exploratory visits, a pupil exchange programme would take place later in the year with pupils from both towns participating in 60th anniversary celebrations.

Whilst in Aberdeen, the Regensburg teachers will also meet with the Community Arts Development to explore the possibility of partnership working with a youth organisation or group in Aberdeen. Pupils from Von Mueller Gymnasium visited and worked with Aberdeen City Council's Arts Development Team in 2012. During their social-enterprise based visit, they met with several local charities and on their return to Regensburg raised money to donate to these charities. Earlier this year, more than £2000 was gifted to three Aberdeen charities by the pupils. It is anticipated that a similar beneficial project will develop from this exploratory visit.

This application for £1,050 seeks to support the accommodation, food and transport of the group whilst in Aberdeen. Stadt Regensburg will contribute to the costs of the flights to and from Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Flights	£1,200
Accommodation	£600
Food	£300
Transport	£150
Total	£2,250
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£1,200
Total	£1,200
Expenditure-Income	£2,250-£1,200
Total requested	£1,050

v) **Contribution to a reciprocal exchange by development officers for Fusion Dance Company to Regensburg to explore the potential for a project in 2015 which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement, November 10th-13th 2014**

Fusion are a youth dance company based in Aberdeen. Development Officers for the group want to develop a project with Danceworxxx, a similar organisation in Regensburg, which will culminate in public performances of this new choreography in both cities in 2015 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement.

Based at Citymoves Dance Agency, Fusion are a group of young dancers aged 12-18 who audition to join the company every September. Throughout the year the dancers create and produce works which are performed at live events. They have previously performed at DanceLive, U.Dance (London 2012) and this year participated at events in Aberdeen and Glasgow which marked the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. They also work with professional dancers and choreographers, such as Errol White, Natasha Gilmore, Smallpetitklein and Janis Claxton. Fusion provides young dancers of Aberdeen with a professional dance and choreography experience with dancers from the company often going on to study and perform at national organisations.

Danceworxxx are a similar company based in Regensburg. This project would bring young professional dancers from Aberdeen and Regensburg together on a unique collaboration. The two companies will regularly communicate and come together to create dance works which will be performed by both companies in each city in summer 2015 – complementing and adding to Aberdeen's existing Summer Festival programme. The development of such a project not only

enhances Aberdeen’s events programme – engaging new and existing local audiences with contemporary dance – but it provides an international experience to dedicated young dancers in Aberdeen and will support their future professional development.

The first step for this project is for the Development Officers from both companies to meet to research and discuss the project: co-ordinating communication plans; identifying key themes; meeting members of the dance companies; and exploring potential venues for performances in 2015. Fusion have invited officers from Danceworxxx to Aberdeen in October discuss to showcase the potential of Aberdeen’s dance companies and venues at DanceLive – Scotland’s largest contemporary dance festival. The officers from Fusion would then visit Regensburg the following month to continue developing the project and will meet with the Danceworxxx dancers and view potential venues in Regensburg.

This application supports the development of the project by contributing to £1,500 to the flights, accommodation, food and internal transport costs of two Fusion Dance Development Officers to visit Regensburg. Stadt-Regensburg will contribute to the costs of the Danceworxxx Officers’ visit to Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Flights	£1,600
Accommodation	£800
Food	£400
Internal transport	£200
Total	£3,000
Income	
Contribution from Stadt-Regensburg	£1,500
Total	£1,500
Expenditure-income	£3,000-£1,500
Total requested	£1,500

- vi) **Contribution to an exploratory visit by two officers from TechFest-SetPoint and the International Partnerships Officer to Stavanger to meet with science communication professionals to share knowledge and discuss the potential of developing future educational projects between the two cities, 27th-29th October 2014**

Based in Aberdeen, TechFest-SetPoint are one of Scotland’s leading science communication organisations. Aberdeen and Stavanger share several common science and engineering links, but there are currently no active partnerships in this field between public organisations. Two members of TechFest-SetPoint will join the Twinning and International Partnerships Officer in Stavanger to meet with fellow professionals and

organisations to exchange knowledge of current best practice and discuss the potential for future collaborative projects and events between the two cities.

TechFest-Setpoint promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to an annual audience of 45 000. This is achieved through a formal learning outreach programme to primary and secondary schools, which reaches approximately 20 000 young people throughout Scotland in one year, and attendance at other events, such as Aberdeen University's May Festival, attracts audiences of between 5 000 to 10 000. 'TechFest in September' is Aberdeen's annual STEM festival and is a major event in the city's calendar – last year the event attracted 17 000 participants to its schools and public programmes.

'TechFest in September' is widely recognised as one of the country's leading STEM festivals. Science communication professionals from JaerMuseet in Stavanger have expressed interest in discovering how the event is managed with an aim of participating in the event in future years or hosting a similar event in Stavanger. The organisers of TechFest are enthusiastic to explore the idea of a satellite station in Stavanger during the festival. This would add an international dimension to the event and bring TechFest and Aberdeen's reputation for scientific communication to an international audience.

Whilst in Stavanger, the exploratory party would also meet with other leading organisations in the city. Promoting engineering as a viable career path for females has been recognised as a key priority for organisations at national level. Norway has an excellent reputation for having already developed this from early years to university level. Whilst in Stavanger the party will visit educational institutions and other science communication organisations to see how this is implemented with a view of developing a programme which would incorporate this back in Aberdeen.

An exchange of knowledge would not only professionally develop the individuals going but would also greatly benefit future audiences whom this information is disseminated to. This exploratory visit has the great potential to create a learning programme that will meet national priorities and reach an audience of thousands. TechFest-SetPoint have already been in discussions with key sponsors about future funding potential to make this a viable, sustainable project.

This application seeks to support the exploratory visit of two TechFest-SetPoint Officers and the International Partnerships Officer to Stavanger by contributing £1, 800 to cover the flights and transport of all three and two nights' accommodation and subsistence for the International Partnerships Officer. TechFest-SetPoint will cover their own accommodation and subsistence costs.

Expenditure	
Flights	£1,200
Accommodation	£900

Internal transport	£200
Food	£300
Total	£2,600
Income	
Contribution by participants	£800
Total	£800
Income-expenditure	£2,600-£800
Total requested	£1,800

vii) Contribution to a visit to Regensburg by teachers and pupils from Kincorth Academy to explore the potential of creating an exchange programme with Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium, 6th-9th October 2014

A group of delegates from Kincorth Academy wish to visit Regensburg to explore the potential of creating a sustainable partnership with Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium. There are no existing school links between the two cities and this would be the first. The development of this relationship would provide young people in both towns with an understanding of the history of the twinning agreement and would enhance 60th anniversary celebrations in both cities in 2015.

Pupils and teachers from Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium visited Aberdeen in March 2014 as part of the city's World War I Conference, organised by the International Partnerships Officer. During this visit they met with staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy and both expressed a mutual desire to establish an exchange programme for young people in the two cities. Staff from Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium have invited a group from Kincorth Academy to discuss this project further.

Consisting of two pupils and two teachers, the exploratory party will visit Regensburg in October 2014. During their visit the delegation will spend time attending classes at Albertus-Magnus Gymnasium and participate in cultural activities in Regensburg. Particular emphasis will be placed on exploring future exchanges based on the curricular links of History and English, as well as global citizenship.

Global citizenship is one of four main components of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. Providing pupils of Kincorth Academy with the opportunity to become global citizens creates confident and successful learners. The pupils participating in this visit will disseminate learning outcomes from this visit to the wider school community and teachers will work to establish this as a sustainable learning exchange for pupils in future years. The Deputy Head Teacher is working with the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer to identify future funding sources to support this exchange programme in future years, such as through UK-German Connection.

The young people taking part in this exchange will report and present their findings to the wider Aberdeen community, such as through local church groups. This will highlight the twinning relationship between Aberdeen and Regensburg to local communities, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the relationship and promoting the International Twinning Grant to new audiences. The participating pupils have taken ownership of this project and are fundraising to support attending cultural activities whilst in Regensburg.

This application seeks a total of £2,200 to support the flights of the entire party and accommodation of two teachers whilst in Regensburg. Stadt Regensburg will support the accommodation of two pupils and food and internal transport of entire party. The participants will fundraise to support the costs of additional cultural activities.

Expenditure	
Flights	£1,600
Accommodation	£1,200
Subsistence	£800
Internal transport	£400
Activities	£400
Total	£4,400
Income	
Contribution from Stadt-Regensburg	£1,800
Fundraising	£400
Total	£2,200
Expenditure-income	£4,400-£2,200
Total Requested	£2,200

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

Laura Paterson
Twinning & International Partnerships Officer
LaPaterson@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 523749