

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	12 January 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/10/003

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 £1,100 to Aberdeen District Coaching Group, towards the accommodation and subsistence costs of 6 participants at the Nordic Games in 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	£9,008
6.1	<i>Aberdeen & District Disabled Multisports Coaching Group's Participation to Nordic Games in Stavanger (May 2010)</i>	£1,150
	TOTAL	£1,150
	Amount remaining in budget if awards approved	£7,858

6.1

Aberdeen & District Disabled Multisports Coaching Group's participation to the Nordic Games in Stavanger (27-31 May)

The Aberdeen & District Disabled Multisports Coaching Group (ADDMCG) is dedicated "to coach disabled and non-disabled children (...) and adults with the aim to get people into sport and get fit". They have been working closely with their partners in Aberdeen's twin city of Stavanger for eight years, giving disabled and non-disabled participants an opportunity to travel abroad, exchange their experiences and connect with a different culture, an opportunity many of them wouldn't otherwise have.

Stavanger's Nordic Games constitute one of the main events for such exchanges. The Nordic Games Stavanger Festival is a multisports event for people with disabilities. The encounters, which have been organised on an annual basis since 2001, bring together teams from different countries around Scandinavia and the North Sea region. This event is organised by *Stavanger Helsesportlag*, which is the partner organisation of Aberdeen's Multisports Coaching Group.

Past applications by ADDMCG to the Council's twinning budget have been funded for amounts of £6,000 and £8,000 in 2006 and 2008 respectively. These recent visits to Stavanger, besides participating in the sports events, also allowed for a mutually beneficial exchange of experiences between coaches from the Aberdeen group and their partners in Stavanger around disabled persons' engagement in sports and cultural exchange. In both cases, the majority of people attending were different from previous occasions, though some of the organisers were the same.

On this occasion, the grant is requested to contribute towards the team registration, accommodation and subsistence costs for 6 new participants within a group of 26 people from Aberdeen attending the Nordic Games in May 2010.

The Aberdeen & District Disabled Multisports Coaching Group is aware that Aberdeen City Council's twinning grants are being prioritised towards assisting people who have not had the opportunity to participate in twinning activities before. ADDMCG has therefore achieved substantial fundraising for this visit (£6,200), and each participant will cover their air fare from Aberdeen to Stavanger (£300 per person). Additionally, the organisers of the Nordic Games Festival (*Stavanger Helsesportlag*) have secured funding of around £3,100 to cover local transport costs and a countryside excursion for the 26 participants from Aberdeen.

The total cost of the visit for ADDMCG is £17,500. Their application to Aberdeen City Council's international twinning budget therefore seeks to cover the shortfall of £1,150.

Beyond the participation in and results of the sports events, the benefits to the citizens of Stavanger and Aberdeen will be measured by the successful exchange between the coaching groups; the further development of an ongoing link between the groups of both cities in terms of coaching; and the engagement of disabled persons in an international and multicultural context through multiple sport activities.

The *Stavanger Helsesportlag*, the organiser of the Nordic Games festival, has kindly issued an invitation for the International Strategist to attend the event. Although this cordial invitation is much appreciated, the participation of a Council officer is not required for the successful outcome of the visit, given the extensive experience of Aberdeen and District Disabled Multisports Coaching Group in organising such visits.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £1,150 from the 2009/2010 international twinning budget towards the travel of 6 new delegates from Aberdeen & District Coaching Group to participate to the Nordic Games in Stavanger from the 27 to 31 May 2010.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Nicolas Ellison

International Partnerships Officer

Tel: 01224 814635; Email: nellison@aberdeencity.gov.uk

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None