

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	23 April 2015
DIRECTOR	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER:	OCE/15/009
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2015-2016 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2015-2016:

- i) Contribution of £7,000 towards 'Cultural Connections' – an event between partners in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg which will be held in Aberdeen, 24-27 September 2015
- ii) Contribution of £7,000 towards the University of Aberdeen's Impact Project which engages audiences in Aberdeen and Bulawayo on maternity care issues faced by mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 May 2015 – 30 April 2016
- iii) Contribution of £2,300 towards an exchange by Aberdeen 21st Scouts to Gomel to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the twinning link between the scout group and Gomel, 7-14 October 2015
- iv) Contribution of £1,500 towards an exploratory visit by three staff from within the Education Department to Regensburg to develop future secondary school partnerships, 17-21 June 2015
- v) Contribution of £7,000 towards Grampian Concert Orchestra, an Aberdeen-based amateur orchestra, performing in a concert in Regensburg to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning agreement, 5-10 August 2015
- vi) Contribution of £1,000 towards the participation of musicians from Aberdeen at Stavanger's Mai Jazz Festival, 8-11 May 2015
- vii) Contribution of £2,500 towards a delegation from Aberdeen attending a civic reception in Regensburg to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning agreement, 19-22 June 2015

That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following amendments to the International Twinning Grant:

- i) That the maximum amount available from the International Twinning Grant is increased from £7,000 to £10,000
- ii) That wording of the criteria be changed to enable applications from individuals/organisations which have previously received three grants – and are therefore no longer eligible to apply for funding – to be duly considered if the applicant can demonstrate that funding is being sought for a new project which engages different audiences

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2015-2016 of £147,250. The approved budget from the Common Good Fund provides £102,000 of monies towards the support of twinning projects and/or visits. An additional £10,000 has been made available to support projects which celebrate twinning anniversaries in 2015. A total of £112,000 is available to support projects in 2015-16.

	<b>Balance of budget available as at April 2015</b>	<b>£112,000</b>
	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£112,000</b>
i)	Contribution of £7,000 towards 'Cultural Connections' - an event between partners in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg which will be held in Aberdeen, 24-27 September 2015	<b>£7,000</b>
ii)	Contribution of £7,000 towards the University of Aberdeen's Impact Project which will engage audiences in Aberdeen and Bulawayo on maternity care issues faced by mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 May 2015-30 April 2016	<b>£7,000</b>
iii)	Contribution of £2,300 towards an exchange by Aberdeen 21st Scouts to Gomel to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the twinning link between the scout group and Gomel, 7-14 October 2015	<b>£2,300</b>
iv)	Contribution of £1,500 towards an exploratory visit by three staff from within the Education Department to Regensburg to develop future secondary school partnerships, 17-21 June 2015	<b>£1,500</b>
v)	Contribution of £7,000 towards Grampian Concert Orchestra, an Aberdeen-based amateur orchestra, performing in a concert in Regensburg to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement, 5-10 August 2015	<b>£7,000</b>
vi)	Contribution towards the participation of musicians from Aberdeen at Stavanger's Mai Jazz Festival, 8-11 May 2015	<b>£1,000</b>
vii)	Contribution towards a delegation from Aberdeen attending a civic reception in Regensburg to mark the 60th anniversary of the twinning agreement, 19-22 June 2015	<b>£2,500</b>

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£28,300</b>
	<b>Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)</b>	<b>£83,700</b>

#### 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 of £7,000 towards 'Cultural Connections' – an event between partners in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg which will be held in Aberdeen, 24-27 September 2015**

Twinning Aberdeen has recently been awarded funding from the European Union to support an event in the city which brings together cultural partners from Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg. 'Cultural Connections' will enable cultural providers to develop future creative projects between the cities. This project has received support from twin city administrations as well as other internal ACC departments, such as the Culture Department.

Aberdeen City Council became the first local authority in Scotland – and second in UK – to successfully apply for the EU's Europe for Citizens funding strand for the event 'The Impact of WWI on Aberdeen and its Twin Cities' which took place in March 2014. Twinning Aberdeen have again collaborated with the External Funding, Policies and Partnerships Team to create a successful application from the same EU funding strand – being awarded €5000 towards the event.

'Cultural Connections' is a two-day programme which encourages collaboration and partnership working between cultural bodies in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg. The programme consists of three main events: A cultural conference in the city with organisations and individuals presenting cultural programmes and events from their city; a networking opportunity for individuals to enable creative thinking and stimulate future projects between twin city organisations; and a tour of venues and bodies in Aberdeen to highlight creative industries in the city to partners.

Stadt Regensburg and Ville de Clermont-Ferrand have already committed to the project and will send a total of 25 delegates to Aberdeen for the event. This delegation will include representatives from cultural organisations, such as Court Metrage in Clermont-Ferrand, as well as a civic delegation from Regensburg consisting of the Mayor who is in Aberdeen to mark the 60th anniversary between the two cities.

Three twinning anniversaries are being celebrated in 2015, including the oldest relationship between that of Aberdeen and Regensburg. 'Cultural Connections' has been developed to celebrate Aberdeen's relationships with her twin cities by celebrating the cultural offerings of these cities and enabling the creation of future partnerships. The project seeks to encourage cultural, social and economic dialogue and understanding between the European twin cities in order to increase citizen participation in twinning projects and initiatives.

This project has several benefits to Aberdeen City: Dialogue created by participants will enable the creation of future projects and events which will engage with future city audiences; the event promotes professional development and networking opportunities to Aberdeen's creative community; the programme will be free for the public to attend which encourages people interested in, but not necessarily employed by the creative industries, to engage in cultural programmes and volunteering opportunities; hosting the event in Aberdeen showcases the creative industries in the city to international partners; and the event demonstrates Aberdeen's commitment to its Vibrant Aberdeen vision and Smart Aberdeen 2020 Strategy.

This application seeks a total of £7,000 to cover essential costs of hosting international delegates in Aberdeen City, such as accommodation, transport and subsistence.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Flights	£10,000
Accommodation	£3,750
Subsistence	£2,000
Internal Transport	£2,000
Event costs, ie venue hire	£2,250
Contingency	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21,000</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg and Ville de Clermont-Ferrand	£10,000
EU funding	£4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,000</b>
Expenditure-Income	£21,000-14,000
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£7,000</b>

**ii) Contribution of £7,000 towards the University of Aberdeen's Impact Project which will engage audiences in Aberdeen and Bulawayo on maternity care issues faced by mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 May 2015 – 30 April 2016**

The University of Aberdeen's Impact Programme works with partners from low and middle income countries to develop healthcare knowledge and best practices. With experience of partnership projects in Sub-Saharan countries, Impact has recently been made aware of Aberdeen's links with the twin city of Bulawayo and are working with partners in the city to develop a project. This is the first time Impact has approached Aberdeen City Council for funding assistance with a project in Bulawayo.

The project aims to engage the public in the twinned cities of Aberdeen and Bulawayo on the issues of transport and referral barriers faced by

pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa during childbirth. A delay in reaching a suitable health facility can often be fatal for both mother and baby, particularly for women living in remote areas as there is a chronic lack of suitable transport. The project is centered on the creation and performance of a play in Aberdeen to dramatise the experiences of pregnant women. It will bring together the health sector and the performing and photographic arts to raise international understanding on health and social issues, and promote socio-economic well-being and public services. Health representatives from Bulawayo will be in attendance at the event in Aberdeen and members of Aberdeen's Impact Team will take the play to Bulawayo along with other educational material and healthcare supplies.

This year-long project has several strands and will:

- Create a live performance for audiences in Aberdeen city as part of the University's 2015 May Festival. The play will dramatise the barriers pregnant women in low resource settings face when trying to reach a health facility to deliver their babies safely. As an adjunct to the play, there will be interactive displays, a photography exhibition and information stalls to increase the awareness of the public in Aberdeen about maternity and health issues concerning women in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Generate images of women's lives and experiences in Bulawayo, including an online video of the play and photographs depicting pregnancy, healthcare and wellbeing in Bulawayo as resources for public engagement.
- Support the visit of 2 people from Bulawayo to Aberdeen. The purpose of this visit is to initiate the partnership, attend the play and other Mayfest events and visit health/maternity services in Aberdeen. The visitors will be senior representatives of health and maternity services in Bulawayo.
- Support a follow-up visit of 3 people from Aberdeen to Bulawayo after the Mayfest event. The aim of this visit will be to cement and further links in Bulawayo with the health and arts communities in Bulawayo, plan for a future public engagement exercise in Bulawayo in 2016/2017 and develop links in higher education, the arts and public sector services such as healthcare and transport.

This project benefits Aberdeen in several ways:

- It aids with the professional development of healthcare professionals in the city
- It increases Aberdeen's international development profile
- It demonstrates Aberdeen's continued support of the twinning agreement with Bulawayo
- It enhances the diversity of public programmes within Aberdeen
- It supports creative talent in the city as the play is written, directed and acted by local residents

The project also benefits the lives of women in childbirth in and around Bulawayo through public engagement activities in both cities. This goal

will be realised through a cascade of events which stimulate the interests of a public audience, generate awareness of barriers faced by pregnant women in low resource settings, influences policy makers to catalyse priority setting, find solutions and take action.

This application seeks a total of £7,000 towards travel expenses incurred by partners in Aberdeen and Bulawayo during the project as well as contributing towards the creation of public engagement activities in Aberdeen City during MayFest. The remaining costs of the project will be met by the University of Aberdeen Immpact Programme.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Project management	£6,500
Visas and immunisations	£500
Printed materials	£1,000
Venue Hire	£2,000
Flights	£4,000
Accommodation & Subsistence	£3,450
Aberdeen public event	£2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19,950</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contribution from University of Aberdeen	£12,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,950</b>
Expenditure-Income	£19,950-12,950
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£7,000</b>

**iii) Contribution of £2,300 towards an exchange by Aberdeen 21<sup>st</sup> Scouts to Gomel to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the twinning link between the scout group and Gomel, 7-14 October 2015**

Aberdeen 21<sup>st</sup> Scouts celebrates the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of its' twinning links with educational establishments in Gomel this year. This also coincides with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cities' official twinning agreement. A delegation of scouts intends to visit Gomel in October to celebrate these anniversaries and further strengthen twinning links.

The Aberdeen/Gomel Scout Project aims to help teach conversational English to school pupils in Gomel. The Young Leaders will visit schools throughout the city and, under the guidance of the English teaching staff, will work in classrooms with pupils on English language projects. The project started in January 2015 with the scout group and schools identifying suitable projects, such as the Doric language and the Scout movement in Aberdeen, which will be studied throughout the year before culminating in joint presentations in October. Both groups of

young people will study their partners' language prior to the visit in October.

The group visiting Gomel consists of nine Explorer Scout Young Leaders and two Scout Leaders. This is the first visit to Gomel by the Young Leaders which, for the first time, includes two young females in the delegation. The Young Leaders will fundraise throughout the year to support their visit by organising jumble and book sales and will collect educational material to donate to the schools. The Young Leaders have adopted Gomel State Children's Centre and will visit the Centre to meet the young people and donate toys, clothing and stationary.

This project provides young people from Aberdeen with the opportunity to engage with new cultural experiences which they may not otherwise have. It also allows them to share their knowledge and teach English abroad whilst promoting ownership of a project as they take responsibility for fundraising to support the endeavour. Access to native English speakers will be greatly beneficial to the Gomel pupils for their own language skills and for learning about different cultures. It is estimated that the Young Leaders will engage with over 200 Belarusian school pupils whilst in the city. The donations of educational material, clothing and toys will also enhance the development of young people in Gomel.

Supporting this project promotes and develops the link between Aberdeen and Gomel in its' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. It provides young people from both cities with new international experiences, providing them with the opportunity to become 'global citizens'. It also demonstrates a commitment by the groups to maintaining the twinning links that was first established 21 years ago.

This application seeks a total of £2,300 to contribute towards the air fares of the scout group to Gomel. All other costs will be met through fundraising and personal contribution.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Flights	£3,410
Accommodation	£1,815
Subsistence	£880
Internal Transport	£495
Visa	£990
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,590</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Other sources of income	£5,290



<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,290</b>
Expenditure-Income	£7,590-5,290
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£2,300</b>

**iv) Contribution of £1,500 towards an exploratory visit by three staff from within the Education Department to Regensburg to develop future secondary school partnerships, 17-21 June 2015**

Educationalists from Regensburg have extended an invitation to staff from within schools and the Education Department in Aberdeen to visit Regensburg in June 2015 to further explore the potential for establishing school partnerships between the two cities. This is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Aberdeen's twinning agreement with Regensburg and the development of new school partnerships between the cities would celebrate this. The creation of new school partnerships ensures that future generations are aware of the twinning relationship and that it is still relevant to young people today.

Staff from Von Mueller Gymnasium and Stadt Regensburg's Department for Education, Culture and Sport visited Aberdeen in February 2015 with the aim of creating key contacts with groups in the city who want to develop youth partnerships between the two cities. Their programme included meetings with staff from the Education Department, local secondary schools and youth education enterprises, and included visits to Harlaw and Torry Academies and The Big Sing Project. The delegation received a positive response from the individuals they met and have extended an invitation to them to visit Regensburg to discuss the development of partnerships.

The Aberdeen delegation will spend two days at Von Mueller Gymnasium, meeting staff across various departments and developing knowledge of the German education system. They will also spend one day at BuergerFest – the city's biannual citizens' festival – where students from Von Mueller Gymnasium will be performing. During their three days in Regensburg the Aberdeen colleagues will work with their Regensburg counterparts to develop a plan which will lead to the creation of future school partnerships. Ideas have already been discussed involving the topics of modern languages, music and social enterprise.

The teaching staff expected to travel are the Head Teacher and Head of Modern Languages from Harlaw Academy and the Head of Modern Languages at Torry Academy. Neither of these schools has an active twinning exchange programme and establishing such a link with a secondary school in Regensburg would enable the creation of educational partnerships which will directly benefit young people from different geographical areas in the city. Both schools cover catchment areas with a wide social background and the development of an exchange programme would allow pupils to travel internationally and experience a different culture – an opportunity which they might not

otherwise have. This demonstrates Aberdeen City Council's commitment in aiding the development of young people to become 'Global Citizens' which is a core strand of the national Curriculum for Excellence.

Providing staff with the opportunity to visit the school will instil within them a confidence to establish a partnership which will allow school pupils to participate in future exchanges. Enabling education staff to visit Regensburg also demonstrates Aberdeen City Council's commitment to continued professional development. Local secondary school teachers will gain first-hand experience of the German education system and meet with colleagues to share best practice and discuss challenges within the education profession.

This application seeks a total of £1,500 to support the flights and any incidentals of three education staff to Regensburg. Stadt Regensburg will contribute towards the accommodation, meals and transport of the group whilst in Germany.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Flights	£1,200
Accommodation	£1,200
Subsistence	£450
Internal Transport	£200
Contingency	£300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,350</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£1,850
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,850</b>
Expenditure-Income	£3,350-1,850
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£1,500</b>

- v) **Contribution of £7,000 towards Grampian Concert Orchestra, an Aberdeen-based amateur orchestra, performing in a concert in Regensburg to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning agreement, 5-10 August 2015**

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aberdeen's twinning links with Regensburg is being commemorated this year with a series of public and civic events. Stadt Regensburg is hosting an outdoor concert to celebrate its' twinning relationships this summer and has extended an invitation to Grampian Concert Orchestra to represent Aberdeen at the public event.

Grampian Concert Orchestra is an amateur orchestra based in Aberdeen. The group comprises of members from a wide social background in Aberdeen including professionals, students, unemployed

and retired members. The orchestra was established in 1998 and through playing regular concerts in Aberdeen has established itself as a major part of the classical music scene of the city.

Stadt Regensburg is hosting an open-air festival on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August to celebrate the city's various twinning anniversaries this year. As well as musicians from Regensburg and Aberdeen, Stadt Regensburg has also invited classical music groups from Odessa and Budavar to mark their 25<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversaries respectively. The concert will take place in the historic courtyard of the Old Town House. To engage and promote the twinning relationship with Aberdeen to as many audiences as possible a range of free outdoor performances has also been arranged for the orchestra outside landmark venues throughout the city on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August, such as outside Thon-Dittmer-Palais.

Grampian Chamber Orchestra's attendance at this event will raise the profile of the cities' twinning agreement in this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Through performing at free, outdoor public concerts the Aberdeen musicians will engage with a variety of audiences who may not be aware that such a relationship exists. It provides an excellent media opportunity, increasing twinning awareness in both cities.

The musicians will meet with their counterparts from Germany and other countries and work to increase international relations so that a similar concert may take place in Aberdeen later this year at Aberdeen City venues. Many of the orchestra members play in other music groups within Aberdeen, such as Aberdeen Chamber Orchestra, Learig Orchestra, Concordia, Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society, Aberdeen Sinfonietta and Aberdeen University groups. This breadth of experience and network of contacts would ensure that any future partnerships with classical music groups from Regensburg could be made available and shared with a number of other Aberdeen City groups.

Aberdeen Concert Orchestra wish to send 27 members to play in the ensemble. The funding available from Aberdeen City Council and Stadt Regensburg will not cover expenses for all of the group but members will personally contribute to their participation in the event to ensure that as many members as possible can share in the experience and create an exceptional performance with a balanced orchestral sound for audiences.

This application seeks a total of £7,000 to contribute towards the travel costs of members of Grampian Concert Orchestra's performance at a

twinning festival in Regensburg in August. Stadt Regensburg and members of the orchestra will contribute towards all other travel costs and accommodation arrangements.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Travel to Regensburg	£7,798
Accommodation	£7,320
Subsistence	£6,750
Internal Transport	£1,300
Instrument transfer	£1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>£24,368</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Other sources of income	£17,368
<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,368</b>
Expenditure-Income	£24,368-17,368
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£7,000</b>

**vi) Contribution of £1,000 towards the participation of musicians from Aberdeen at Stavanger’s Mai Jazz Festival, 8-11 May 2015**

The organisers of Stavanger’s Mai Jazz Festival have invited a jazz group from Aberdeen to participate in the city’s annual jazz festival. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aberdeen and Stavanger’s twinning agreement and enabling the participation of a group from Aberdeen at this event will highlight the partnership and opportunities available to a large Norwegian audience.

Mai Jazz is a leading event in Stavanger’s cultural calendar. Since it started in 1989, the event has become one of the largest jazz festivals in Norway with over 14,000 people attended various performances over the five-day programme in 2014. The programme features local and national jazz musicians and has an international element with various performers attending from countries including France. An invitation was extended to jazz groups from Aberdeen to participate in the event to enhance the festival’s international programme and highlight the twinning relationship between the two cities.

The Graeme Stephen Trio are a long-established and well-known ensemble that will represent Aberdeen’s jazz community at the Norwegian event. The Trio consists of award-winning local musicians who have won various accolades, such as Ensemble of the Year at the 2013 Jazz Awards. The musicians will perform at the city’s jazz club Jazz Arkivet on the Saturday night as well as other “pop-up” outdoor stages throughout the festival.

Enabling the musicians to perform at Stavanger’s Mai Jazz Festival will expose local artists to international audiences, which aids their professional development. Future opportunities for collaboration and performance will also be developed between the twin cities as the

group will also meet with the festival organisers whilst here to discuss creating more links between the cities. Developing local musicians and creating diverse culture events demonstrates Aberdeen City Council's commitment to creating a vibrant cultural scene in the city.

This application seeks a total of £1,000 to support the flights of the group to Stavanger and any incidentals incurred by travelling to the airport. Mai Jazz will arrange for accommodation, food and transport for the group whilst in Stavanger.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Flights	£900
Accommodation	£900
Subsistence	£450
Internal Transport	£100
Travel to airport	£100
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,450</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contribution from Mai Jazz	£1,450
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,450</b>
Expenditure-Income	£2,450-1,450
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£1,000</b>

**vii) Contribution of £2,500 towards a delegation from Aberdeen attending a civic reception in Regensburg to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning agreement, 19-22 June 2015**

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aberdeen and Regensburg's twinning agreement is being celebrated with a series of public and civic events this year. Stadt Regensburg is hosting an official civic reception to mark the occasion in June and has invited the Lord Provost and up to four other delegates from Aberdeen to visit Regensburg to commemorate this.

The relationship with Regensburg is Aberdeen's oldest twinning link. Twinning agreements between European cities was established following World War II to unify nations and encourage closer understanding and collaboration between states. Many successful partnerships have been established over the years between the cities involving local organisations, such as schools and community groups.

An excellent civic relationship between the two cities has been maintained over the previous 60 years. This has in part been due to the continued support for civic visits over the years with delegations visiting the cities to mark 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversaries. Stadt Regensburg has invited a delegation from Aberdeen to attend a civic reception during its biannual BuergerFest event. BuergerFest is a citizens' festival which takes place throughout the town. Free public performances occur throughout the city in outdoor spaces and indoor venues. These

performances are led by citizens with local bands and school groups actively engaging with the city and participating in performance art.

To capitalise on this opportunity, the Lord Provost wishes to send a delegation to Regensburg that would gain from this experience and encourage a similarly vibrant events programme in Aberdeen City. This delegation would consist of a civic representative of the Lord Provost, council officers and city citizens involved in co-ordinating events and festivals programmes. The Twinning & International Partnerships Officer would be in attendance as the representative who communicates regularly with Stadt Regensburg to promote the cities' twinning relationship and encourage future collaborative work. The Twinning and International Partnerships Officer has been in Regensburg and has met with key contacts in the city, including the Mayor, so can readily communicate between the two parties aiding relations and developing future programmes.

The Lord Provost has also requested the presence of the Head of Communications & Promotions within the delegation. The Director is responsible for overseeing Aberdeen City Council's Events and Promotions service, which includes the development of the city's summer and winter festivals. The Head of Communications and Promotions has also requested to meet with key tourism representatives to understand Regensburg's approach to tourism. As well as an active summer programme which includes festivals such as BuergerFest, Regensburg has also developed an extensive winter festival programme featuring markets and events which attracts over 100 000 people to the city over the winter months.

As well as a civic representative and two officers, the Lord Provost would also like to extend an invitation to two individuals who help to shape the wider city events and festivals programme: The Aberdeen Festivals Manager; and the organiser of Celebrate Aberdeen Weekend. Both these individuals work with Aberdeen City Council and wider city organisations to develop events and festivals throughout the city which promote Aberdeen as a place to visit. Supporting the travel of two people from outwith Aberdeen City Council in this delegation will enable best practices learnt from this experience to be disseminated to a wider audience and aid the development of a diverse events programme in the city. The Lord Provost wishes for this civic invitation to Regensburg to have a wider, long-lasting effect on the city's events programme and has, therefore, selected a varied delegation to visit based on their own experiences of delivering city-wide events and festivals programmes.

BuergerFest is an excellent example of the local community engaging with a city event and the Lord Provost hopes that by sending a varied delegation a similar event will be developed for Aberdeen City. Accepting the invitation ensures that civic relations are maintained between the two cities. An extra £10,000 has been allocated to the International Twinning Budget this year to support such projects that celebrate significant twinning anniversaries.

This application seeks a total of £2,500 to allow five delegates from Aberdeen to represent the city at an official civic reception which celebrates Aberdeen and Regensburg's 60<sup>th</sup> twinning anniversary. This budget will allow for flights and any incidentals incurred when travelling to Regensburg, such as travel to airport. Stadt Regensburg will contribute towards the accommodation, food and airport transfer costs once the delegation is in Germany.

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Flights	£2,000
Accommodation	£1,500
Subsistence	£750
Internal Transport	£250
Contingency	£500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,500</b>
Expenditure-Income	£5,000-2,500
<b>Total requested</b>	<b>£2,500</b>

That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following amendments to the International Twinning Grant:

- i) **That the maximum amount available from the International Twinning Grant is increased from £7,000 to £10,000**

The maximum amount currently available from the International Twinning Grant is £7,000. It is recommended that this be raised to £10,000. Evaluations from previous applicants who have managed large twinning projects, such as schools and sports organisations, noted that fewer participants have engaged with the projects due to rising costs restricting the number of people who can actively take part in twinning exchanges. Increasing the level of funding available enables more citizens to participate in twinning projects and encourages higher quality projects.

Since the £7,000 limit was set in 2012 expenses incurred during twinning projects have substantially increased: travel costs to/from Aberdeen have increased due to taxes on air fares; accommodation for hosting visiting delegations in Aberdeen City Centre has also markedly increased due to high demand in the city, particularly on weekdays; and subsistence costs, such as internal travel and meals, have also risen with inflation and demand.

Increasing the amount available will allow for more participants to engage in twinning projects. Groups with large numbers who travel to twin cities, such as school and youth groups, will benefit from such a

change. This enables more people from Aberdeen to travel to twin cities and experience a different culture. It also contributes to providing groups visiting Aberdeen with a better experience in the city, which will promote Aberdeen as a tourism and business destination to other countries.

An increased level of funding also supports a higher calibre of project which benefits audiences in the city. Higher grants would result in funds being available to support the production of projects. For example, the total cost of a unique collaboration between Sound Festival and Musiques Demesurees in Clermont-Ferrand was £80,000. Increasing the funding available to support such projects encourages a higher quality project which exposes more residents to new cultural experiences in Aberdeen.

- ii) **That wording of the criteria be changed to enable applications from individuals/organisations which have previously received three grants – and are therefore no longer eligible to apply for funding – to be duly considered if the applicant can demonstrate that funding is being sought for a new project which engages different audiences**

The International Twinning Grant criteria states that:

‘Individuals, groups and organisations can only apply to the International Partnerships & Twinning Fund up to a maximum of three times starting from the 1st May 2012 after this time no further monies will be made available from this fund to support new or existing projects you as an individual, group or organisation may be involved in. The maximum three times is not time bound.’

Committee are asked to consider approving the following amendment:

‘Individuals, groups and organisations can only apply to the International Twinning Grant for project support up to a maximum of three times. After this time no further monies will be made available from this fund to support applications made for existing projects you as an individual, group or organisation make. Where individuals, groups and organisations have reached three strikes, due consideration will be given to applications which can demonstrate that a new project will engage with different audiences. New projects are defined as those with different delivery methods and outcomes to previous applications.’

Changing the wording of the criteria allows large organisations to facilitate projects which target different audiences. Organisations which would benefit from this amendment include schools and city council departments. Schools which have developed exchange links with twin cities would continue to receive International Twinning Grant funding if they could demonstrate that different pupils are benefitting from a new experience.



Kincorth Academy, for example, has established a successful 10 year exchange project with a secondary school in Gomel through the drama department. They have expressed an interest in developing a business enterprise partnership with Von Muller Gymnasium in Regensburg, but are exempt from financial support from the International Twinning Grant under current procedure. Such a project would involve new pupils under the direction of a different department. A change in procedure would result in the school being able to apply for funding as they can demonstrate that the International Twinning Grant is being used to support a new international project which targets a different audience.

Only supporting projects that involve new participants ensures that a wide and diverse audience from Aberdeen are given the opportunity to benefit from the cultural experiences that the International Twinning Grant supports and would ultimately result in more applications to the fund.

## 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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