

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	9 June 2015
DIRECTOR	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER:	OCE/15/014
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 2015-2016 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

- i) Contribution of £6,490 towards an exchange project between Aberdeen YMCA and CVJM Regensburg to mark the 60th anniversary of the cities' twinning agreement, 25 July - 8 August 2015
- ii) Contribution of £2,500 towards the participation of a Bavarian Brass Band from Regensburg at Celebrate Aberdeen Weekend, 21-24 August 2015
- iii) Contribution of £5,460 towards the participation of a group from Seaton Primary School at Mini-Regensburg, 9-16 August 2015
- iv) Contribution of £2,500 towards the participation of musicians from a twin city at a civic reception hosted by Aberdeen City Council during Offshore Europe, 8-10 September 2015
- v) Contribution of £6,780 towards a secondary school programme involving pupils from Aberdeen and Stavanger at TechFest, 12-19 September 2015

b) That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following expenditure from the operating budget:

- i) £1,500 towards the participation of the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer at the EIPA's 'Successful Preparation and Implementation of Twinning Projects' training in Maastricht, 22-24 October 2015

c) That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve that the International Twinning Grant criteria policy wording be changed

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.

	Balance of budget available as at April 2015	£112,000
	Opening Balance	£83,700
i)	Contribution towards an exchange project between Aberdeen YMCA and CVJM Regensburg to mark the 60th anniversary of the cities' twinning agreement, 25 July - 8 August 2015	£6,490
ii)	Contribution towards the participation of a Bavarian Brass Band from Regensburg at Celebrate Aberdeen Weekend, 21-24 August 2015	£2,500
iii)	Contribution towards the participation of a group from Seaton Primary School at Mini-Regensburg, 9-16 August 2015	£5,460
iv)	Contribution towards the participation of musicians from a twin city at a civic reception hosted by Aberdeen City Council during Offshore Europe, 8-10 September 2015	£2,500
v)	Contribution towards a secondary school programme involving pupils from Aberdeen and Stavanger at TechFest, 12-19 September 2015	£6,780
	TOTAL	£23,730
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£59,970

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

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

i) **Contribution of £6,490 towards an exchange project between Aberdeen YMCA and CVJM Regensburg to mark the 60th anniversary of the cities' twinning agreement, 25 July - 8 August 2015**

Aberdeen YMCA and CVJM Regensburg are organising an exchange project this summer to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Aberdeen and Regensburg's twinning arrangement. Staff and volunteers from both organisations will tandem cycle from Aberdeen to Regensburg with the aim of raising awareness of the support the organisations provide and the existing twinning agreement. This will then be immediately followed by a volunteer exchange with a delegation from Regensburg participating in a programme of events in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen YMCA and CVJM Regensburg have engaged in over 20 international exchange programmes since their first twinning activity in 1994.

In November 2013, the success of this partnership was officially recognised by Stadt Regensburg and the Mayor with the awarding of the City Partnership Prize at the city's annual Freedom Day Ceremony. The aims and objectives of the partnership have developed over the 21 years and will continue to evolve in the future to address contemporary issues faced by the young people who the YMCA engage with including: youth empowerment; social inclusion; employability skills; volunteering; and collaboration in Europe.

To coincide with the 21st anniversary of their own twinning link and 60th anniversary of the city twinning partnership, the organisations have arranged a two week exchange programme for this summer. The first stage of this project will start in Aberdeen with staff and volunteers from both organisations participating in a week-long international tandem cycle starting at the Aberdeen Town House and finishing at Regensburg's Rathaus. The aim of the cycle is for a volunteer from each organisation to ride one tandem cycle so that the volunteers are cycling between cities "in tandem". This project is a reversal to one which took place in 2005 to mark the 50th anniversary of the town twinning relationship, when volunteers from both organisations tandem cycled from Regensburg to Aberdeen.

The Aberdeen delegation will then fly back to Aberdeen with young volunteers from CVJM Regensburg who will participate in an exchange programme with local youths for a week. Throughout the week, the young people will be involved in discussions and activities which will encourage international cooperation and collaboration. Volunteers from both YMCAs will engage in planning dialogue for a programme of activities for 2016 – 2020. A priority for discussions will focus on activity in 2019 which will be the 25th anniversary of twinning between both organisations. Young people from Aberdeen will take ownership of the youth exchange, organising and participating in fundraising activities prior to the event to raise awareness and funds for the programme.

This project is an excellent example of partnership working between twin city organisations. The project promotes city twinning in an imaginative way as the international tandem cycle will attract media awareness and promote the twinning links to audiences outside of the two cities as the organisers will make contact with YMCA and affiliated groups during their route. The exchange has a direct, positive effect on volunteers and young people in both cities: The project empowers young people to volunteer and become involved in YMCA programmes leading to them gaining Saltire Awards; volunteers will develop vital life and employment skills as young people will take ownership of the project leading them to develop leadership qualities, self-confidence, communication skills and team working abilities; local young people will have an increased awareness of intercultural understanding which leads them to become global citizens; and such a programme engages young people in civic awareness as they understand the history and importance of town twinning arrangements.

This application seeks a total of £6,490 to support the outward travel costs of a group from Aberdeen to Regensburg and inward costs of hosting a

delegation from Aberdeen in the city. Funding will be matched by both organisations, personal contribution and fundraising.

Expenditure	
Transport	£5,620
Accommodation	£2,675
Food Costs	£1,470
Project costs (inc. activities, insurance, etc)	£3,215
Total	£12,980
Income	
Contribution from YMCA	£2,614
Fundraising	£1,176
Contribution by participants	£2,700
Total	£6,490
Expenditure-Income	£12,980-6,490
Total Applying For	£6,490

ii) **Contribution of £2,500 towards the participation of a Bavarian Brass Band from Regensburg at Celebrate Aberdeen Weekend, 21-24 August 2015**

Celebrate Aberdeen Weekend is a key event in the city's 2015 Summer Festival programme. The organisers of the event have asked for the presence of a Bavarian Brass Band from Regensburg to enhance and add an international element to the event. This year is the 60th anniversary of Aberdeen's twinning agreement with Regensburg and the presence of a traditional music group highlights this relationship.

Musicians from Regensburg performed at the event last year and the popularity of the band has led the Celebrate Aberdeen organisers to request that the band play this year again. The group will be involved with all aspects of the weekend programme: They will provide entertainment at the finishing line of the 'Union Street Mile'; perform as they march down Union Street with local groups during the parade; and provide entertainment on the Sunday at both the main stages and at pop-up performances to encourage audiences to other areas of the event, such as the new food stalls in Union Terrace Gardens.

Celebrate Aberdeen is a popular summer event which has evolved over recent years. Originally a city parade to celebrate the diversity and work of the third sector, the event programme was developed last year to include free public performances throughout the city by local musicians. This year, Celebrate Aberdeen will incorporate both these elements into the event: A 'Union Street Mile' fun-run and parade will take place on the Saturday; and outdoor public performances and food stalls will be in situ in Union Terrace Gardens at a free outdoor event on both days. Based on figures from previous

years, it is expected that combined events will attract an audience of over 10,000 people throughout the weekend.

Providing the opportunity for a group from Regensburg to participate in a large city event demonstrates Aberdeen's commitment to maintaining international partnerships. The attendance of the group at the event also promotes opportunities for Aberdeen citizens to create and establish projects and partnerships with twin cities. The group's participation will be highlighted within publicity materials and in public announcements to ensure the twinning link and profile of the twin cities is raised. Having an international group attend the event introduces audiences to new music, which strengthens the promotion of cultural activities within the city.

The application requests a total of £2,500 to cover the cost of accommodation, food and transport for the group during their stay in Aberdeen. Stadt Regensburg will cover the costs of the musicians travel to Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Flights	£2,500
Accommodation	£1,800
Food Costs	£500
Transport	£200
Total	£5,000
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£2,500
Total	£2,500
Expenditure-Income	£5,000-£2,500
Total Applying For	£2,500

iii) Contribution of £5,460 towards the participation of a group from Seaton Primary School at Mini-Regensburg, 9-16 August 2015

Mini-Regensburg is a biannual event in which a 'Play City' has been developed whereby young people manage the administration of the 'town'. Stadt Regensburg has extended an invitation to a group of young people from Aberdeen to participate, acting as a Scottish Embassy for one week of the three week event. Pupils from Seaton Primary School have been learning German throughout the school year and the school would like to send a delegation to Regensburg to participate in this unique opportunity.

Regensburg was awarded UNICEF status as a Child Friendly City earlier this year. One of the initiatives which it was commended for was Mini-Regensburg which is now in its fifth year. Based on the 'Play City' model, Mini-Regensburg is an event in which a venue in the city is turned into a model town complete with shops, offices and infrastructure. Young people participate in the event by becoming actively involved in city life: obtaining a job; standing and voting

for elections; and engaging in trade activities. Groups from Regensburg's other twin cities of Clermont-Ferrand and Pilsen have previously participated in the event with young people from the cities acting as an 'Embassy' of that country. Stadt Regensburg has requested the presence of a delegation from Aberdeen to engage and enjoy the programme and act as a Scottish Embassy at the event.

Pupils from Seaton Primary School are actively engaged with learning German as part of the Scottish Government's '1+2 Approach' to modern languages. Pupils have also been learning about the culture of the country. Enabling pupils to participate in Mini-Regensburg provides young people from Aberdeen – who may not otherwise have the opportunity – to engage with learning new languages and cultures in a fun and educational manner with peers from other countries. The event also actively encourages young people to participate in civic life, which supports them in becoming active and engaged citizens aware of democratic processes.

Stadt Regensburg have invited up to eight young people and two adults to attend Mini-Regensburg. Seaton Primary School will promote the opportunity to all pupils in P7 and will choose the pupils who will attend through an application process in which pupils have to demonstrate why they should be selected to attend. The pupils who will attend Mini-Regensburg will make the transition to secondary school following the trip and, due to the catchment area of the school, it is likely that successful pupils will go to different secondary schools within the city, ensuring a wider dissemination of experiences to young people throughout the city.

Enabling an 'Aberdeen delegation' to participate in Mini-Regensburg provides young people from the city with the opportunity to experience new cultures, learn new languages and engage in democratic processes. Supporting the attendance of a delegation at this event demonstrates Aberdeen City Council's commitment to enabling young people from diverse backgrounds to become 'global citizens'. For some of the young people this will be their first trip abroad and this application includes a funding recommendation of £560 to support the acquisition of passports should the young people require them. The young people come from an economically disadvantaged area of the city and allowing a contingency for passport acquisition ensures that no pupils from the year are at a disadvantage in applying for this opportunity.

This application seeks a total of £5,460 to support the participation of pupils from Seaton Primary School at Mini-Regensburg and will cover the transport of the group to Germany, additional activities and allow a contingency for the acquisition of passports and any incidentals occurred. Stadt Regensburg will contribute towards the costs of accommodation, food and airport transfers once in Germany.

Expenditure	
Flights	£4,000
Accommodation	£4,000
Food Costs	£1,500

Airport transfers	£400
Activities	£500
Contingency for passport acquisition	£560
Contingency for incidentals	£200
Total	£11,260
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£5,700
Total	£5,700
Expenditure-Income	£11,260-5,700
Total Applying For	£5,460

iv) Contribution towards the participation of musicians from a twin city at a civic reception hosted by Aberdeen City Council during Offshore Europe, 8-10 September 2015

Aberdeen is hosting SPE Offshore Europe in September and will be welcoming delegates to the city and conference at a Civic Reception held on the opening night. Local musicians will entertain audiences as invited guests enjoy a showcase of Scottish culture and cuisine at the Beach Ballroom. Event organisers have requested the presence of a twinning group as part of the evening programme to highlight Aberdeen's international links through twinning partnerships.

The SPE Offshore Europe Conference and Exhibition attracts an international audience of over 60,000 people to Aberdeen every two years. It is the largest expo held in the city and events to support the programme are held in venues throughout the city for the duration of the conference. One such event is the Civic Reception to be held on the opening night to welcome international delegates to the city. Organised by the Civic Office and City Events Team, the event will bring local produce and entertainment to an international audience.

An invitation has been extended to Aberdeen's twin cities to send a musical group to perform at the event. Both Regensburg and Clermont-Ferrand have responded positively to the invite and are currently locating a high quality music group to perform at the Civic Reception. The participation of a twin city group at the event maximises and strengthens the links between the twin cities by allowing them a platform to raise awareness of the links not only to the locals of Aberdeen but also to visitors of the city. Visitors will be allowed to witness the international links Aberdeen successfully maintains and develops both with the twin cities and international communities. A programme will be arranged for the group to ensure that their visit to Aberdeen is maximized and will include public venues, such as the Central Library. This will ensure that locals will also benefit from the group's attendance in Aberdeen and their presence can be seen as a way of 'thanking' the locals as the city becomes extremely busy during the Offshore Europe Week.

The application requests a total of £2,500 towards the cost of accommodation, food and transport for the group whilst they are in Aberdeen.

The relevant twin city council will pay for the group to come to Aberdeen, as per normal twinning partnership arrangements.

Expenditure	
Travel to Aberdeen	£2,500
Accommodation	£1,500
Food Costs	£750
Transport	£250
Total	£5,000
Income	
Contribution by twin city	£2,500
Total	£2,500
Expenditure-Income	£5,000-£2,500
Total Applying For	£2,500

v) **Contribution of £6,780 towards a secondary school programme involving pupils from Aberdeen and Stavanger at TechFest, 12-19 September 2015**

Based in Aberdeen, TechFest is one of Scotland's leading science communication organisations. TechFest have developed a programme for secondary school pupils from Stavanger to participate in the festival and collaborate with peers from Aberdeen at a science communication event. Aberdeen and Stavanger share several common science and engineering links but this project would be the first active partnership in this field between public organisations.

TechFest 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 approximately 20,000 participants to its schools and public programmes and the festival is estimated to reach an audience of 22,000 in 2015.

TechFest visited Stavanger in November 2014 with the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer to meet with partner organisations in the city with the aim of creating future projects and partnerships between the twin cities. Rogaland Education Department arranged for a visit by the delegates to St Olaf Secondary School – regarded as being Stavanger's secondary school which specialises in STEM subjects. There was an enthusiastic response to developing a project between the two organisations which would involve secondary school pupils from both cities.

Ten pupils and two teachers from St Olaf Secondary School will visit Aberdeen for one week of the three week TechFest programme in September. The pupils will participate in formal education programmes and attend events in the public programme. During the event they will also engage in activities with secondary school pupils from Aberdeen. The pupils they will meet are from various secondary schools from across the city and are involved with TechFest's Heroes of Tomorrow programme. This programme, which launched in February 2015, encourages science communication in students at school aged S1-S6 and provides them with the opportunity to discuss the STEM topics they are passionate about. Secondary school pupils from Aberdeen and Stavanger will collaborate together on a similar project which will take place during TechFest. If successful, it is intended that this project will be reciprocated in Stavanger with secondary school pupils from Aberdeen participating in a similar event in the city.

This project provides secondary school pupils from Aberdeen with the opportunity to collaborate with international peers in a challenging and engaging environment. Pupils are enabled to become 'global citizens' – a core concept of the Curriculum for Excellence – and STEM learning is encouraged. This project promotes a key city festival to an international audience and the successful implementation of the project will lead to the development of a similar opportunity for local secondary school pupils to Stavanger. There are currently no active partnerships between science communication organisations in Aberdeen and the five twin cities. This project would be the first and raises the profile of STEM learning to wider city audiences and key industry sponsors.

This application seeks a total of £6,780 to support the accommodation, food and airport transfer of the group whilst in Aberdeen. The secondary school have successfully obtained funding to part finance their visit through a corporate company and will fundraise to obtain the full amount required to visit Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Travel to Aberdeen	£6,600
Accommodation	£4,800
Food Costs	£1,680
Transport	£300
Activities	£1,200
Total	£14,580
Income	
Participant contribution	£7,800
Total	£7,800
Expenditure-Income	£14,580-£7,800
Total Applying For	£6,780

b) That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following expenditure from the operating budget:

i) £1,500 towards the participation of the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer at the EIPA's 'Successful Preparation and Implementation of Twinning Projects' training in Maastricht, 22-24 October 2015

The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) is one of Europe's leading centres of public sector working within a European framework. The centre facilitates a course entitled 'Successful Preparation and Implementation of Twinning Projects'. This is the only course in Europe specifically engaged with the promotion of town twinning opportunities.

The seminar is led by practitioners with experience of devising and delivering twin city projects throughout Europe. The aim of the course is to develop and devise quality twinning projects. Course leaders will introduce twinning project concepts, with explanations of components of the process and ways in which to address challenges to ensure future projects are successful. People in similar positions relating to twinning from countries across Europe will be in attendance and the evenings will provide a networking opportunity.

Attending this course provides the Twinning and International Partnerships Officer with the opportunity to develop the skills which will advance Aberdeen's twinning programme. This course will enable the officer to:

- Share knowledge and practical experiences, identify co-operation opportunities and extend European network by meeting peers in similar positions from across Europe;
- Acquire an in-depth understanding of organising an international twinning project;
- Analyse the main opportunities and challenges of twinning projects which will aid with funding applications which develop projects;
- And develop the necessary skills in preparing for twinning projects when applying for EU funding, such as drafting proposals, agreements and contracts.

The acquisition of these skills will broaden the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer's network and instil a confidence to deliver larger events involving twinning partners, which is economically and culturally beneficial to Aberdeen.

The Twinning Budget has an allowance of £35,250 to support the salary, infrastructure and development of the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer. Attending this course is expected to cost £1,500 and approval is sought to fund this training course from the £35,250 allocated for such purposes.

Expenditure	
Travel	£300
Accommodation	£200
Food	£150

Subsistence	£150
Course	£700
Total	£1,500

c) That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve that the International Twinning Grant criteria policy wording be changed

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 may make a maximum of three successful applications to the International Partnerships and Twinning Fund for project support. Once an applicant has made three successful applications, any subsequent applications by that applicant shall only be considered by the Council where the subsequent applications:

- (i) are in respect of new projects (i.e. projects having delivery methods and outcomes different to those of the projects to which the applicant's previous applications related), and
- (ii) demonstrate that those new projects will engage with audiences different to those who were engaged by the projects to which the applicant's previous applications related .

References above to "successful applications" include applications that are only partly-successful (i.e. where only part of the sum sought has been awarded by the Council to the applicant).'

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;
- 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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