

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	3 December 2015
DIRECTOR	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/15/042
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	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 ahead of the Priority Based Budgeting and Common Good Fund Reviews.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

- i) Contribution of £1,000 towards the attendance of organisers of Mini-Regensburg at the Aberdeen Learning Festival, 15-18 February 2016
- ii) Contribution of £3,400 towards an exchange by four education staff to Clermont-Ferrand to explore new partnerships with primary schools, 15-18 February 2016
- iii) Contribution of £2,000 towards a visit by organisers and ambassadors of the Aberdeen Golden Games to Regensburg to promote the event and encourage participation of international delegates at the 2016 games, 1-4 March 2016
- iv) Contribution of £3,000 towards the participation of musicians from Stavanger at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival, March 2016

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
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	Opening Balance	£39,730
i)	Attendance of organisers of Mini-Regensburg at the Aberdeen Learning Festival, 15-18 February 2016	£1,000
ii)	Exchange by four education staff to Clermont-Ferrand to explore new partnerships with primary schools, 15-18 February 2016	£3,400
iii)	Visit by organisers and ambassadors of the Aberdeen Golden Games to Regensburg to promote the event and encourage participation of international delegates at the 2016 games, 1-4 March 2016	£2,000
iv)	Participation of musicians from Stavanger at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival, March 2016	£3,000
	TOTAL	£9,400
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£30,330

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.

Grants provided through the twinning budget provide individuals and communities from throughout Aberdeen City with the opportunity to engage with international twinning activities. 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

These recommendations are made ahead of the Priority Based Budgeting and Common Good Fund Reviews and involve the allocation of funds made available from the 2015-16 budget:

i) Contribution of £1,000 towards the attendance of organisers of Mini-Regensburg at the Aberdeen Learning Festival, 15-18 February 2016

Primary school pupils from Aberdeen participated in Mini-Regensburg for the first time in August 2015. Local teachers said that it was the greatest example of inter-disciplinary learning that they had seen and have devised a seminar to present at the Aberdeen Learning Festival to describe their experience and highlight the opportunities available to schools and pupils in future years. They have invited two of the organisers of Mini-Regensburg to present at the event alongside them.

Mini-Regensburg is a three week event which takes place in Regensburg every two years. An area of the city is converted into a “model town” which young people aged 8-15 manage – from cleaning the roads, to presenting local radio and electing council representatives. Young people from across Europe attend the event and manage embassies which represent their countries. The presence of a delegation from Aberdeen has been requested for several years and young people from Aberdeen travelled to Regensburg to take part in the event for the first time this year.

Eight pupils and three teachers from Seaton Primary School represented Aberdeen at the event. Whilst there they took part in the everyday civic life of Mini-Regensburg – working for and spending the towns’ own currency – and acted as an Embassy explaining their life and country to international audiences. As well as developing language skills, the pupils also developed a greater knowledge and understanding of other cultures and economy, such as taxation. The teachers noted that it was the best

example of inter-disciplinary learning that they had participated in and fully encompassed the aims and objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Aberdeen Learning Festival is a key development opportunity for local teachers – with approximately 1000 participants attending in one day. The day comprises of a series of seminars with information booths and networking areas for education practitioners and supporting organisations to meet. Teachers from Seaton Primary School have devised a seminar where they will reflect from their experiences at Mini-Regensburg – detailing evaluations and feedback from pupils as well as practical issues, such as travel arrangements. They will also highlight the benefits of attending Mini-Regensburg to their pupils' learning experience and link the experiences to Curriculum for Excellence attainment.

Organisers from Mini-Regensburg have been invited to attend to give a detailed overview of the event and answer questions from interested parties. The delegates will attend the Learning Festival on the 16th and a program to meet with Education staff will be created for them on the 17th. The participants who have been invited to attend include Regensburg's Manager for Municipal Youth Activities and an Education Officer who managed the event.

The seminar aims to inform local teachers and support staff about Mini-Regensburg and the opportunities for local young people to participate in an exemplary interdisciplinary learning experience. The attendance of representatives from Mini-Regensburg at this event promotes the project to a wide teaching audience, encouraging them to participate in future similar projects. Meeting the organisers will instil interest in attending the event in the future and generate confidence in future participation.

This application seeks a total of £1,000 to support the costs of hosting two representatives from Mini-Regensburg at the Aberdeen Learning Festival. Stadt Regensburg will cover the transport costs of the delegates travel to Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Travel to Aberdeen	£1,000
Accommodation	£600
Subsistence	£300
Internal Transport	£100
Total	£2,000
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£1,000
Total	£1,000
Expenditure-Income	£2,000-£1,000
Total requested	£1,000

- ii) **Contribution of £3,400 towards an exchange by four education staff to Clermont-Ferrand to explore new partnerships with primary schools, 15-18 February 2016**

A new approach to learning languages is being implemented in Scotland making it compulsory for all primary school pupils to learn languages from an earlier age. Aberdeen City Council's Education Team are working closely with primary school teachers to ensure that they are supported within this new curriculum framework. They are working with partners from Clermont-Ferrand who are responsible for developing languages within primary schools to share knowledge and establish links between schools in the two cities. Two education officers and two head teachers from Clermont-Ferrand are visiting Aberdeen in December 2015 and reciprocal visit of officers from Aberdeen City Council is planned for early 2016.

A Scottish Government Report published in 2011 marked the introduction of the '1+2 Approach'. It noted that there had been a steady decline of pupils studying languages to SQA level in recent years. Pupils were not sufficiently motivated to engage with language learning as there was a culture that knowing English was sufficient.

The '1+2 Approach' aims to counteract this trend. It will ensure that access to languages is available to young people at primary level. To support primary teachers with this there needs to be closer collaboration between different education sectors and more extensive use of technology to support learning. Access to native or fluent speakers is also essential to stimulate interest in learning languages and engaging with new cultures.

Establishing a partnership with primary-level language learning providers from other cities demonstrates Aberdeen City Council's commitment to implementing the '1+2 Approach'. Exchanging knowledge with colleagues from other cities provides CPD opportunities for teachers and other education staff within the city. The delegation visiting Clermont-Ferrand will include the Language Development Officer for Modern Languages (1+2 Approach) who has been instrumental in developing links with partners in Clermont-Ferrand. She will be accompanied by three teachers from different primary schools in Aberdeen who have demonstrated active interests in developing links with schools in Clermont-Ferrand.

The delegation from Clermont-Ferrand will consist of two Language Development Officers for Primary Level Education and two headteachers from local primary schools. Whilst in Aberdeen the group will meet key staff from the Education Department and visit primary schools who are keen to develop new exchange programmes, such as Mile End and Abbotswell. The officers from Clermont-Ferrand will introduce ideas for future collaborative projects with teachers and education staff from Aberdeen with the aim that future partnerships between schools in both cities will be formed. These projects will be further developed when the Aberdeen City Officers visit Clermont-Ferrand. The successful implementation of future collaborative programmes will ensure that

teachers and young people in Aberdeen are directly engaging with peers in different cultures who speak different languages. A similar exchange between secondary school teachers from Aberdeen and Regensburg took place last year and this has led to the successful development of two new projects with Harlaw and Kincorth Academies, both of which began in October 2015.

Supporting this exchange provides young people in Aberdeen to become 'global citizens' who are able to communicate in more than one language. It is of economic interest to have a workforce that can engage with a global world and converse with international trading partners. Exploring the potential with partners from Clermont-Ferrand also supports the teachers implementing this strategy – developing the existing education sectors.

This application seeks a total of £3,400 to support the exchange of one development officer and three teachers to Clermont-Ferrand. Ville de Clermont-Ferrand will support the participation of two officers and two teachers from Clermont-Ferrand.

Expenditure	
International travel	£3,200
Accommodation	£2,000
Subsistence	£1,200
Internal Transport	£400
Total	£6,800
Income	
Contribution from Ville-de-Clermont-Ferrand	£3,600
Total	£3,600
Expenditure-Income	£6,800-3,600
Total requested	£3,600

- iii) **Contribution of £2,000 towards a visit by organisers and ambassadors of the Aberdeen Golden Games to Regensburg to promote the event and encourage participation of international delegates at the 2016 games, 1-4 March 2016**

The Golden Games is an annual event which promotes health and wellbeing to local audiences aged over 65. Over the past five years, the programme has significantly raised the profile of Active Ageing in the city. The Golden Games is a model example of a social programme for older generations and this year the organisers wish to visit twin cities to share their experiences and encourage attendance by a group from a twin city in 2016.

The Golden Games is organised by a city partnership consisting of the Adult Social Care Wellbeing and partners from NHS Grampian, Aberdeen

Sports Village, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen Football Club Communities Trust. The partnership has taken an innovative, creative and future focussed approach to tackling the projected increased pressures on services due to the ageing population. In 2011, they launched the Golden Games – a two day event offering free classes in 10 different activities to 80 over 65s. Now in its fifth year, the Golden Games attracted 425 over 65s to its five day programme. The popularity of the programme continues to increase and next year it is planned to extend the programme to seven days.

The Golden Games not only provides older people with the opportunity to engage in physical activity, it has also creates a platform for people to meet and make lasting friendships; which in turn can help assist in the reduction of social isolation – which is widely recognised to have a significant negative impact on health. Links with organisations, such as North East Sensory Services and Alzheimer's Scotland, have enabled access to focus groups of service users. This has allowed the games and ongoing activities to become more inclusive to a wider range of people, by listening to more people's requirements and wishes.

The Golden Games has brought opportunity for innovative partnerships and service developments that will bring lasting change to the way over 65s are supported at achieving a physical, healthy lifestyle. The group wish to share their experiences with similar groups in other twin cities to highlight this model of partnership working in Active Ageing and promote the attendance of international groups in future years.

A delegation of four people will travel to Regensburg to meet with organisations in the city which have an active interest in the project, such the city's social wellbeing department and university. This delegation will consist of a leader from the Wellbeing Team, representative from a partner organisation and two ambassadors – over 65s who have taken part in the Games and can present the personal benefits of the experience.

Promoting the event to international audiences highlights the work that is being done with ageing populations. It provides the opportunity for health and wellbeing professionals to share best practice. It is also intended that if a group from Regensburg attend the 2016 Golden Games that communications will be maintained between the participants – such as through Skype and video conferencing – that will ensure the social legacy of the project to over 65s participants is maintained.

This application seeks a total of £2000 to support the travel of four people from Aberdeen Golden Games to Regensburg. Stadt Regensburg will cover the associated hosting costs whilst in the city.

Expenditure	
International travel	£2,000
Accommodation	£1,200
Subsistence	£600
Internal Transport	£200

Total	£4,000
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£2,000
Total	£2,000
Expenditure-Income	£4,000-2,000
Total requested	£2,000

iv) Contribution of £3,000 towards the participation of musicians from Stavanger at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival, March 2016

Aberdeen Jazz Festival is an annual event in the city's cultural programme. It is one of the city's top music festivals, bringing world acclaimed jazz musicians to the city as part of an exciting and varied programme. As part of the 2016 programme, the organisers have invited a group of musicians from Stavanger to perform during the festival.

Jazz Scotland organise the Aberdeen Jazz Festival. Jazz Scotland is an independent promoter which organises high quality events that engage audiences with jazz music. The five day Aberdeen Jazz Festival programme has a diverse programme which includes a free one-day event at various indoor venues and in the Merchant Quarter - 'Jazz on the Green'. The festival attracts international jazz artists who play at a variety of venues throughout the city, including the Blue Lamp and Lemon Tree.

This year the organisers have invited a six-piece group from Stavanger to perform at the event. The group will perform a mixture of popular jazz at various events throughout the weekend – including ticketed events and the free public event 'Jazz on the Green'. One of the musicians is a leading music tutor from the University of Stavanger and he will also assist with delivering masterclass workshops in association with the National Jazz Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

The Aberdeen Jazz Festival has established a collaborative creative partnership with jazz musicians and organisers in Stavanger. Earlier this year, MaiJazz – the Stavanger Jazz Festival – requested the presence of a jazz group from Aberdeen at their event. The organisers have continued to stay in contact and are currently working on a Creative Europe bid for a large-scale collaborative jazz project between the cities in 2016.

Facilitating the attendance of a group of musicians from Stavanger at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival will enhance the city's cultural programme – developing Aberdeen's vibrant music and culture scene and allowing local audiences to engage with new cultural experiences. It provides a professional networking experience for local musicians which often results in invitations for local musicians to play at international music festivals, such as MaiJazz in Stavanger and Jazz-En-Tete in Clermont-Ferrand. The continued support for such programmes demonstrates the value of twinning relationships and benefit to local residents.

This application requests a total of £3,000 to support the associated costs of hosting the group in Aberdeen, including accommodation, meals and internal transport, and a contribution towards the artist fee. Flights of the group to Aberdeen will be met by Stavanger Kommune and Jazz Scotland will support programme costs, such as marketing and venue hire, through internal revenue and ticket sales.

Expenditure	
International travel	£1,200
Hospitality costs	£1,550
Artist fee	£1,750
Programme costs	£1,600
Total	£6,100
Income	
Contribution from Stavanger Kommune	£1,200
Contribution from Jazz Scotland	£1,300
Ticket sales	£600
Total	£3,100
Expenditure-Income	£6,100-£3,000
Total requested	£3,000

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

The International Twinning Grant is available to all residents and groups within Aberdeen.

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.

Improving Staff Experience –

The Twinning and International Partnerships Officer works closely with internal departments to create partnerships and projects between

Aberdeen City Council and twin cities, regularly working with the Education, City Events and Civic Teams amongst others.

Improving our use of Resources –

The International Twinning Grant is funded through the Common Good Fund. Recommendations for grant allocations are presented to council committee and all reports detailing grant allocations are readily available through the council website. The International Twinning Grant is due for Priority Based Budgeting and Common Good Fund Reviews in 2015-16.

Corporate -

Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest, significantly contributes to Aberdeen City Council's Smarter City Vision 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.

Public –

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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