

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	16 February 2016
DIRECTOR	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/16/001
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 2016-2017 and to make recommendations, subject to the approval of budget at Full Council Meeting on 25 February 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2016-17:
 - i) Contribution of £7,000 towards an arts in healthcare project between organisations in Aberdeen and Bulawayo, March-October 2016
 - ii) Contribution of £2,325 towards an exchange by staff from Aberdeen City Libraries to Regensburg to develop future events and programmes, 4-7 April 2016
 - iii) Contribution of £5,950 towards a visit by teachers and pupils from School 56 in Gomel to Aberdeen, 2-9 May 2016
 - iv) Contribution of £10,000 towards a visit by Culter Youth Football Club to Regensburg in a reciprocal exchange with youth football club SG Walhalla, 3-7 June 2016
 - v) Contribution of £4,000 towards a visit by scouts and leaders from Stavanger Scout Association to Aberdeen, 1-13 July 2016
- b) A Twinning Annual Review Bulletin Report will be submitted to Finance, Policy & Resources Committee on 19 April 2016.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2016-17 of £xxx. The approved budget from the Common Good Fund provides £xxx of monies towards the support of twinning projects and/or visits. The remaining funds

contribute towards the running costs of the programme, including salaries and administration costs. A total of £xxx is available to support projects in 2016-17.

	Balance of budget available as at April 2016	£xxx
	Opening Balance	£xxx
i)	Contribution towards an arts in healthcare project between organisations in Aberdeen and Bulawayo, March-October 2016	£7,000
ii)	Contribution towards an exchange by staff from Aberdeen City Libraries to Regensburg to develop future events and programmes, 4-7 April 2016	£2,325
iii)	Contribution towards a visit by teachers and pupils from School 56 in Gomel to Aberdeen, 2-9 May 2016	£5,950
iv)	Contribution towards a visit by Culter Youth Football Club to Regensburg in a reciprocal exchange with youth football club SG Walhalla, 3-7 June 2016	£10,000
v)	Contribution towards a visit by scouts and leaders from Stavanger Scout Association to Aberdeen, 1-13 July 2016	£4,000
	TOTAL	£29,275
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£xxx

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 2016-17 budget:

i) **Contribution of £7,000 towards an arts in healthcare project between organisations in Aberdeen and Bulawayo, March-October 2016**

This project brings together partners from a variety of organisations involved with arts and healthcare in Aberdeen and Bulawayo. The aim of the project is to enhance the maternal healthcare environment within Bulawayo whilst also engaging local Aberdeen audiences with the city's international development work and providing local artists with the opportunity to become involved in international projects. This project will have several facets, including the travel of individuals from Aberdeen to Bulawayo to create workshops in the city and dissemination of information to Aberdeen audiences through public events.

This proposal has evolved from a previous project by the University of Aberdeen's Immpact Programme. Immpact have collaborated with healthcare professionals and creative practitioners from Bulawayo and Aberdeen throughout 2015 to create a series of engaging events and resources including: A play to highlight maternal healthcare issues in sub-Saharan Africa which was premiered at the May Festival and is now being used as part of the University's Global Humanities Lecture Series to fifth year medical students and has also been shown nationally at the Medical

Students Conference; a platform for knowledge exchange with partners from Bulawayo visiting facilities and staff at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and continuing interactive sessions via the internet; and the development of student exchanges between medical students from University of Aberdeen to United Bulawayo Hospitals, with the first student exchange intended to take place in 2016. Impact's project has laid the foundations for future arts in healthcare projects between Aberdeen and Bulawayo.

This new project is a collaborative effort from several partners in the city involved in arts, healthcare and international development. These partners include individuals from Gray's School of Art, Grampian Hospital Arts Trust and creative practitioners as well as ongoing input from Impact. The aim of this proposal is to bring partners together, collate information for the development of future projects and disseminate information to local and national audiences through the development of events and resources. This will be achieved by professionals from Aberdeen travelling to Bulawayo to view facilities, meet colleagues and co-create workshops. Once back in Aberdeen, these experiences and findings will form a public engagement programme which will include the creation of public events and e-publications. These events and resources will be used for teaching purposes at students at Gray's School of Art and medical students at the University of Aberdeen. Resources will also be shared by both educational institutions and wider networks, including Twinning and Creative Learning, to highlight the relationships between Aberdeen and Bulawayo and make new audiences aware of the international arts and healthcare work currently being undertaken in the city.

This initial proposal is the first in a series of future plans which will include: The creation of an art presence in Bulawayo Maternity Hospitals through follow-up visits, with wider engagement and hands-on activities in and outwith the Maternal Health Spaces; complementary exchange visits involving established and emerging artists, possibly from an art institution in Bulawayo and Gray's School of Art; as well as healthcare professionals from United Bulawayo Hospitals and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary; and enhance working arrangements between partners that will strengthen the twinning relationship between Bulawayo and Aberdeen to achieve long term sustainable impact and exchange.

The project benefits the lives of women in childbirth in and around Bulawayo through the creation of safe healthcare environments. There are also several benefits to Aberdeen, including: Increasing Aberdeen's international development profile; aiding the professional development of arts and healthcare professionals in the city; enhancing the diversity of public programmes within Aberdeen; creating learning resources for at least two educational institutions in the city; supporting creative talent in the city; and demonstrating Aberdeen's continued support of the twinning agreement with Bulawayo.

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. The remaining project costs will be met by the project partners.

Expenditure	
Project costs	£6,910
Visas	£105
Consumables (inc. gifts, etc)	£455
Flights	£2,550
Accommodation & Subsistence	£2,340
Aberdeen public event	£2,300
Total	£14,660
Income	
Contribution from partners	£7,660
Total	£7,660
Expenditure-Income	£14,660-£7,660
Total requested	£7,000

ii) Contribution of £2,325 towards an exchange by staff from Aberdeen City Libraries to Regensburg to develop future events and programmes, 4-7 April 2016

Regensburg Libraries and Adult Education Team have approached Aberdeen City Council with the proposal of developing a series of collaborative projects over the next couple of years. An initial exchange is being planned by staff from both services to meet in each city to discuss the development of this partnership. Intended projects include an Erasmus+ mobility exchange for young professionals and public programmes for Aberdeen City Libraries 125 Project in 2017.

Regensburg Stadt's Director of Education, Culture and Sport visited Aberdeen in 2015 to meet with individuals and organisations with the aim of developing stronger educational and cultural links between the two cities. In the past year a series of educational links has been established including two new active exchanges for Harlaw and Kincorth Academies and the participation of Seaton Primary School at Mini-Regensburg. To further strengthen links between the two twin cities, a series of cultural events and programmes are being developed for 2016/17. Regensburg's Director of Education, Culture and Sport was previously Head of Libraries in the city and has earmarked a budget for Regensburg's Libraries and Adult Education Service to develop collaborative projects between the cities.

Initial project proposals from Regensburg include the development of an Erasmus+ project which would support staff mobility between cities. The strand that the application would sit within supports the development of

staff involved in learning outside of classroom environments, such as libraries, museums and outdoor activities. Aberdeen Libraries staff have been very enthusiastic about this project. Robert Gordon's University host a Masters course in Libraries and Information Systems and, as such, the workforce within Aberdeen Libraries consists of a number of young professionals who have recently graduated from this programme. The Libraries Service Manager envisions that it would be these young professionals who would participate in the exchange, supporting Aberdeen City Council's commitment to developing its workforce. With the return visit of professionals to Aberdeen, the Regensburg delegates will speak at Robert Gordon's University as part of the course programme to give city students the opportunity to discover more about international library services.

Aberdeen Libraries are also keen to develop collaborative events and programmes with Regensburg which would complement the Library Service's 125 Project. Aberdeen Central Library is marking its' 125th anniversary in 2017 with a series of events and programmes throughout the year. Suggested collaborations include an exchange of material for use in exhibitions and the attendance of speakers and readers from Regensburg at events, such as a Local History Conference.

The Libraries Service Manager and 125 Director intend to visit Regensburg as part of an initial reciprocal exchange to develop these projects and discuss other proposals. The Twinning and International Partnerships Officer also intends to visit Regensburg with the group. The Officer has met with and communicated with the Director of Education, Culture and Sport and has maintained communications with Regensburg Library staff. The Officer will act as an initial contact for the group and will accompany Libraries staff on that first day to develop ideas. On the second day, the Officer will split from the group and travel throughout the city to meet with a range of stakeholders to develop future partnerships, which include: the development of city-wide photography competitions which will result in public exhibitions; future academic exchanges and guest lecture series between the Mathematics and Computer Science Departments at Regensburg University and University of Aberdeen; and artist residencies and exchanges.

Travelling to Regensburg allows staff to meet face-to-face which has a significant impact on the impetus for the future delivery of projects. The projects which are being discussed will reach a variety of audiences within the city, including the development of young professionals within Aberdeen City Council and creation of international public programmes which will enhance the cultural offering of Aberdeen City.

This application seeks a total of £2,325 to support the travel of officers from Aberdeen City Council to Regensburg. All return reciprocal visit costs will be met by Stadt Regensburg.

Expenditure	
Travel	£2,400
Accommodation	£1,350
Subsistence	£900
Total	£4,650
Income	
Contribution from Stadt Regensburg	£2,325
Total	£2,325
Expenditure-Income	£4, 650-2,325
Total requested	£2,325

iii) Contribution of £5,950 towards a visit by teachers and pupils from School 56 in Gomel to Aberdeen, 2-9 May 2016

Staff and pupils from School 56 in Gomel have hosted visits from several Aberdeen organisations in recent years. The school have approached Aberdeen City Council with the request to visit the city in spring 2016 to meet with individuals who they have hosted in Gomel. During their visit pupils will meet with peers from organisations and experience life in local schools, also providing local young people with the opportunity to discover more about life in other cities through direct contact with international peers.

Several groups from Aberdeen visit Gomel every year including Aberdeen 21st Scouts, Friends of Gomel and HomeStart. Whilst in Gomel, these groups meet with a variety of different partners in the city who demonstrate cultural life in the city. One group that that delegates from Aberdeen often meet with are staff and pupils from School 56. School 56 has developed a strong English language programme within Gomel and staff and pupils can communicate in fluent English to visiting Aberdeen delegations. Whilst they have hosted several delegations in Gomel, staff and pupils are yet to make a reciprocal visit to Aberdeen.

The school intend to visit Aberdeen in spring 2016 to see city schools, meeting with peers and experiencing life as a young person in a different country. Meetings will also be arranged for teaching staff to meet with colleagues from Aberdeen to discover more about teaching initiatives in Scotland and explore the potential for developing future projects between schools, such as Skype sessions. Organisations which support

projects with Gomel, such as Friends of Gomel and the Scouts Association, will also assist with creating a social programme for the group so that pupils and teachers also have the opportunity to explore the cultural offerings of the area.

Hosting a group of teachers and pupils from Gomel exposes local young people to meeting peers from a different country. They will be given the opportunity to find out about life for a young person in Belarus through formal educational and informal social settings. This develops local young people as 'global citizens', who are able to compare and contrast life in their own country to that in once which is different. Organising meetings between teachers also allows partners to discuss the potential for developing future school partnerships, whether through a reciprocal school exchange or via year-round interactive exchanges through channels such as Skype. This ensures that there is potential for an ongoing legacy to this visit, which will benefit pupils in future years. There are currently no active exchanges between schools in Aberdeen and Gomel and this has the potential to create a new partnership for a city secondary school.

This application seeks a total of £5,950 to support the associated costs of hosting the group in Aberdeen. Flights and visa costs will be covered by participants and support organisations in Aberdeen.

Expenditure	
Flights	£4,800
Accommodation	£2,250
Subsistence	£2,100
Internal Transport	£1,600
Visas	£1,200
Total	£11,950
Income	
Contribution from other sources	£6,000
Total	£6,000
Expenditure-Income	£11,950-6,000
Total requested	£5,950

iv) Contribution of £10,000 towards a visit by Culter Youth Football Club to Regensburg in a reciprocal exchange with youth football club SG Walhalla, 3-7 June 2016

SG Walhalla are a youth football club from Regensburg. They visited Aberdeen in summer 2015 and established a strong relationship with local team Culter Youth Football Club. An invitation was extended to

Culter YFC to visit Regensburg in 2016. Whilst there the group plan to play matches against local teams and participate in cultural activities.

Over 60 adults and youths from Regensburg travelled to Aberdeen in August 2015. Players from each of the U17, U15 and U14 teams were represented and played matches against local teams in Aberdeen. They developed a particularly strong partnership with Culter YFC - playing matches over several days in both the city centre and Peterculter. Culter YFC also arranged social activities for the group when in Aberdeen – hosting a barbeque for all players and accompanying adults in their grounds.

Culter YFC and SG Walhalla have maintained contact since this exchange and a reciprocal visit is planned to Regensburg in June 2016. Sixty youths and forty accompanying adults intend to travel to Regensburg. The players consist of teams from the U14, U16 and U17 squads. Players are from a variety of areas within the city including Culter, Cults and Milltimber. Culter YFC will play against up to five Regensburg youth squads whilst in the city, engaging with up to 180 youths. The sports programme will be complemented by a social programme allowing local young people to practice German language skills and immerse themselves in German culture and traditions – enabling young people from Aberdeen to become ‘Global Citizens’.

This opportunity exposes local young people to a different sporting and cultural way of life. Playing against a team from another country increases competition levels for the local football clubs. Increased competition assists in developing the skills of local players and coaches and creates a more engaging experience. A social programme alongside the tournament ensures the team from Aberdeen have a positive experience in Regensburg and encourages future partnership working between youth football teams. Discussions are already taking place regarding making this a biannual event and perhaps also developing a link with a youth football team from mutual twin city Clermont-Ferrand.

Supporting this youth football camp between teams from Aberdeen and Regensburg meets Aberdeen City Council’s sport vision to:

- develop local athletes
- promote healthy living
- engage local communities

Culter YFC are planning a number of fundraising activities to support this trip, including fundraising through small events, local business sponsorship and grant applications to bodies such as UK-German Connection.

This application seeks a total of £10,000 to support the costs of Culter YFC travelling to Regensburg.

Expenditure	
Transport	£30,000
Accommodation	£5,000
Subsistence	£5,000
Total	£40,000
Income	
Contribution from other sources	£30,000
Total	£30,000
Expenditure-Income	£40,000-30,000
Total requested	£10,000

v) Contribution of £4,000 towards a visit by scouts and leaders from Stavanger Scout Association to Aberdeen, 1-13 July 2016

Scouts and leaders from the Stavanger squadron of the Norwegian Sea Scout Group intend to visit Aberdeen in July 2016. During their visit they will meet with and build partnerships with local Scout associations. This exchange will expose local young people to international peers and establish a rapport which will enable a reciprocal exchange in 2017.

The Norwegian delegation will consist of thirty-two scouts and eight leaders. Whilst in Aberdeen, the groups will link with local group Aberdeen 21st Scouts. For one of the two weeks the two scout groups will be based in Aberdeen, where they will work on teambuilding activities during the day. A social programme will also be arranged for the evenings which will include activities such as home visits - where Norwegian Scouts will partner with a peer from Aberdeen and spend the evening in local family homes. For the second week of the visit both groups of scouts will travel to National Scout Activity Centre, near Dunfermline, where they will continue to strengthen relationships.

It is intended that the Aberdeen 21st Scouts will make a reciprocal visit to Stavanger in summer 2017. The programme will mirror the 2016 itinerary: group teambuilding activities are planned in Stavanger; local young people will be exposed to international cultures by spending the evening with Norwegian peers in their family home; and both groups will travel together to the International Scout Jamboree due to held in Bodo, Norway, in 2017. Both scout groups will be expected to maintain contact between visits, with Skype sessions arranged to practice language skills.

Local scouts will also disseminate their experiences to peers who have not been directly involved in the project, such as presenting information to fellow school pupils in the classroom. This will encourage local young people to become involved with the exchange in future years. The scouts will also write material for national Scout publications, promoting the partnership and exchange across the country.

This partnership promotes and develops the twinning link between Aberdeen and Stavanger, making it relevant to young people in the city. It will enable local young people to become 'global citizens' – learning language skills and discovering more about life in other countries through direct contact with peers.

This application seeks a total of £4,000 to support a visit by a Scout group from Stavanger to Aberdeen in July 2016. All other costs will be met by fundraising and personal contribution.

Expenditure	
Transport	£8,000
Internal transport	£1,000
Subsistence	£3,000
Total	£12,000
Income	
Contribution from other sources	£8,000
Total	£8,000
Expenditure-Income	£12,000-8,000
Total requested	£4,000

- b) **A Twinning Annual Review Bulletin Report will be submitted to Finance, Policy & Resources Committee on 19 April 2016**

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.

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

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