

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources
DATE	20 September 2017
REPORT TITLE	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/217
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring before Committee applications for financial assistance from the International Twinning Budget 2017-18 and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approve the following grants from the International Twinning Budget 2017-18:
- (a) Contribution of £2,280 towards 3 staff members from Education & Children's Services travelling to Clermont – Ferrand, 19 – 22 November 2017.
 - (b) Contribution of £4,002.50 to support the visit to Kincorth Academy of staff and students from Albert – Magnus Gymnasium, Regensburg in October 2017.
 - (c) Contribution of £150 towards a Lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at Gray's School of Art (photography specialist) travelling to the 2nd Symposium of Contemporary Photography in Regensburg, 26 – 28 October 2017.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 These recommendations involve the allocation of funds made available from the 2017 -18 budget:
- 3.1.1 Contribution of £2,280 towards 3 staff members from Education & Children's Services travelling to Clermont – Ferrand, 19 – 22 November 2017

- 3.2 This is the return visit to Clermont-Ferrand following the one by French colleagues in November 2016 and the one scheduled to take place from 6th till 9th November 2017 to Aberdeen by an education delegation from Clermont-Ferrand.
- 3.2.1 During their stay in Aberdeen, the delegation visited Quarryhill and Muirfield primary schools. Their emphasis was on the teaching of Modern Languages, observation of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence methodology and establishing new links for schools.
- 3.2.2 They discussed the Singing project between Aberdeen and Clermont-Ferrand primary schools held on 21st June 2017, and will evaluate the event to take place in June 2018.
- 3.2.3 The returning ACC delegation will visit primary and secondary schools in Clermont-Ferrand with the aim of establishing new links. They will attend meetings with education partners: head teachers, teachers, education officers and school inspectors to familiarise themselves with the French school system.
- 3.2.4 Visit to the CAVILAM language school in Vichy (part of Clermont-Ferrand Local Authority) where a group of ACC primary school teachers will attend French immersion courses during school holidays from July 2017 till July 2018.
- 3.2.5 Meeting with Helene Lucchesi (Pole des Relations Internationales de Clermont-Ferrand) to evaluate the impact of the summer camp, held in Aberdeen in August 2017, on young people from Aberdeen, Regensburg and Clermont-Ferrand.
- 3.2.6 Plan a WWI educational project between schools in Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg during the session 2017-18, ending with an exhibition in November 2018 to mark the centenary of the Armistice of WWI.
- 3.3 This visit aligns to the following criteria:
- Promoting the Scottish Government 1+2 Modern Languages initiative in ACC primary schools
 - Reinforcing existing schools' partnerships and establishing new ones.
 - Evaluating the visit from Clermont-Ferrand delegation due in March 2017 including head teachers and school inspectors coming to look at Scottish educational developments including: Inclusion and Bridging the Gap
 - Liaising with French colleagues to host the 2017 international summer camp
 - Meeting with Modern Languages Education Officers to share methodology in learning and teaching modern languages
 - Planning summer camp 2017 following successful first event in France in 2016: giving opportunities to ACC young people in secondary schools to take part in an international exchange
- 3.3.1 This will also support ACC's approach to promoting culture and improving staff experiences.

3.3.2 The educational links between the cities of Aberdeen and Clermont-Ferrand have strengthened since 2015 following a visit by French education officers.

3.3.3 Since then, visits have happened on a yearly basis leading to strong and durable school partnerships, projects which enhance ACC pupils' awareness of languages and cultures, cultural and practical exchanges and opportunities to ACC teachers to acquire a wider knowledge of education systems for the benefit of pupils in Aberdeen.

3.3.4 The French education authorities and Education Scotland wish to strengthen encourage working relationships and partnerships between Scottish local authorities and French regions. The main objectives are:

- Promote language learning and global citizenship
- Support CPD, peer learning and staff mobility
- Encourage creativity and awareness of other cultures

3.3.5 This is the third exchange visit from ACC Education and Children's Services reciprocal visit to Clermont-Ferrand.

3.3.6 Following the summer camps in August 2016 in France, 2017 in Scotland, we are hoping to offer opportunities for 12 young people from Aberdeen to travel to Germany in 2018 and ensure that the project becomes a triannual regular event, open to more young people from Aberdeen in the future.

3.3.7 Total applying for:

Expenditure	
Aberdeen group outbound to Clermont Ferrand - Flights - 3 x £400 Clermont Ferrand group inbound to Aberdeen – Flights – 3 x £400	£2,400
Aberdeen group accommodation in Clermont Ferrand - 3 nights @ £70 x 3 guests Clermont Ferrand group accommodation in Aberdeen - 3 nights @ £70 x 3 guests	£1,260
Aberdeen group in Clermont Ferrand - subsistence @£150 per person Clermont Ferrand group in Aberdeen - subsistence @£150 per person	£900
Total	£4,560

Income	
Ville de Clermont	£2,280
Total	£2,280
Expenditure-Income	£4,560 - £2,280
Total Applying For	<u>£2,280</u>

- ii) **Contribution of £4,002.50 to support the visit to Kincorth Academy of staff and students from Albert – Magnus Gymnasium, Regensburg in October 2017.** This visit will be reciprocated when Kincorth Academy travel to Regensburg in June 2018. 2 teachers and 15 pupils from each school will participate.
- 3.4 This cultural exchange partnership will develop curricular projects in both schools including Language, Literacy and Social Subjects specifically, with other projects being introduced as appropriate.
- 3.4.1 By developing this European partnership and embedding the exchange opportunities for future students, this project will be seen as beneficial in advance of the move to Lochside Academy in August 2018.
- 3.4.2 Students participating in the exchange will spend time in both schools experiencing student life as well as being given opportunities to experience the history and culture of Aberdeen and Scotland, and Regensburg and Germany.
- 3.4.3 Students will support the development of global citizenship in both schools and share their experiences with other students, staff and parents.
- 3.4.4 Work will be undertaken to develop this partnership and create a sustainable link for the future which will provide opportunities for pupils in Lochside Academy to experience a cultural link, and participate in joint projects with Regensburg students.
- 3.4.5 This project began in 2014 but due to staffing issues at Kincorth Academy did not progress as hoped.
- 3.4.6 The outcome will be that this will become a sustainable project for future generations of students.
- 3.4.7 The experience and further project working will be shared with the entire school community, and students would be able to present to the Aberdeen community. It would also be hoped that further links could be developed working with Harlaw Academy and their partnership with a different Regensburg school which again would support sustainability.
- 3.4.8 Funding is being sought from our twin city partner Stadt Regensburg and students will participate in a number of fundraising activities to raise awareness and fund activities.
- 3.4.9 Total applying for:

Expenditure	
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Flights - 17 x £240	£4,080
Hostel accommodation	£2,000
Airport transport – Regensburg to Munich Airport	£300
Transport in Aberdeen/Shire for Kincorth Academy and Albert – Magnus Gymnasium staff/students	£825
Circular development activities/entrance fees	£800
Total	£8,005
Income	
Stadt Regensburg/Fundraising	£4,002.50
Total	£4,002.50
Expenditure-Income	£8,4002.50 - £4,002.50
Total Applying For	<u>£4,002.50</u>

iii) **Contribution of £150 towards a Lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at Gray’s School of Art (photography specialist) travelling to 2nd Symposium of Contemporary Photography in Regensburg, 26 – 28 October 2017.**

3.5 As part of the Aberdeen Regensburg Twinning relationship, Gray’s School of Art has been invited to represent Aberdeen at a Symposium of Contemporary Photography, to give a lecture and to participate in the two-day event. The lecture title is “Conquest of Photography: A Tale of Abstraction Versus the Richness of Images” and is a reference to a posthumously published book by Paul Feyerabend: “Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction Versus the Richness of Being.”

3.5.1 This symposium will allow the nominated Lecturer to forge new relationships with the photographic community of Regensburg and to build a network of important contacts.

3.5.2 Gray’s School of Art are planning a similar symposium of photography in 2019 and would like to discuss with our partners in Regensburg how this might offer possibilities for a reciprocal and continuing arrangement.

3.5.3 The purpose of this symposium and the twinning application is to build new, and strengthen existing relationships between the photographic communities of the two cities. Gray’s School of Art will also discuss the possibility of bringing some of the representatives of the Regensburg photographic community over to Aberdeen for a similar event in the future.

Expenditure	
Flights, Accommodation &	£600.00

Transportation	
Total	£600.00
Income	
RGU & Regensburg	£450
Total	£450
Expenditure-Income	£600 - 450
Total Applying For	<u>£150.00</u>

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Full council approved the International Twinning Budget for 2017-2018 of £137,250. The approved budget from the Common Good Fund provides £102,000 of monies towards the support of twinning projects and/or visits. Remaining funds support the infrastructure of the programme, such as salary and ICT costs.

	Balance of budget available as at April 2017	£102,000
	Opening Balance	£69,224
i)	Contribution of £2,280 towards 3 staff members from Education & Children's Services travelling to Clermont – Ferrand, 19 – 22 November 2017.	£2,280
ii)	Contribution of £4,002.50 to support the visit to Kincorth Academy of staff and students from Albert – Magnus Gymnasium, Regensburg in October 2017.	£4,002.50
iii)	Contribution of £150 towards 1 Lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at Gray's School of Art (photography specialist) travelling to 2nd Symposium of Contemporary Photography in Regensburg, 26 – 28 October 2017.	£150.00
	TOTAL	£6,432.50
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£62,791.50

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 **Financial**

6.1.1 .A review of the financial systems used to administer the Twinning Grant was undertaken in July 2016. As per recommendations in the Local Code for Practice (Approved FPR Committee September 2015), Following the Public Pound Tier 4 procedures are adhered to:

6.1.2 “Where annual funding is less than £15,000, an officer may still chose to ` follow the procedures laid down for Tier 4, as although the level of funding does not fall within the following the public pound guidance, the level of risk may be such that it would be prudent to follow these procedures.”

6.1.3 Following this review, existing measures were strengthened and new practices implemented to ensure that the Twinning Grant is fully accountable in its allocation of the public pound.

6.2 **Employee**

6.2 No risk identified.

6.3 **Customer/Citizen**

6.3.1 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

6.4 **Environmental**

6.4.1 No risk identified.

6.5 **Technological**

6.5.1 Twinning partners are encouraged to develop and maintain relationships through various technology platforms including web, Facebook and Instagram.

6.6 **Legal**

6.6.1 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 receives automatic updates with regards to situations in countries from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and is in close contact with counterpart officers in the twin cities to ensure information provided to participants is accurate and up-to-date. All travel guidance issued by the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer is based upon the advice of the FCO and local intelligence, such as the police and local government authorities. All individuals/groups that have been supported by the Twinning Grant must follow the advice of these authorities when visiting the twin cities, including changing travel or programme arrangements if required. If any of these

authorities advice against travel to an area, then travel and the project must be postponed with immediate effect until it is deemed safe to continue.

6.1.2 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.

6.7 Reputational

6.7.1 Twinning & International Partnerships upholds the principles of the Common Good Fund. The cessation of the programme could result in failure to 'uphold the dignity of the city' and a breakdown in projects 'which are good for the community as a whole'.

6.7.2 Should this diverse and engaging programme not continue, then Aberdeen could potentially cease to be an attractive destination for visitors and local residents with economic spend being distributed elsewhere in Scotland and international partnerships could be at risk.

6.7.3 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.

6.7.4 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.

6.7.5 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.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 This section demonstrates how the proposals within this report impact on the strategic themes of Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen, as set out in the [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#) and the [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan](#).

7.2 Economy

7.2.1 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.

7.2.3 Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest, significantly contributes to Aberdeen City Council's vision and ambitions. This twinning project also aligns 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.

7.3 People

7.3.1 Twinning & International Partnerships supports the principles of the Common Good Fund:

- Upholding the dignity of the City: The expense of civic ceremonies; and of the provision of suitable hospitality on appropriate occasions and for appropriate persons, and guests would fall under this purpose;
- Any other purpose which, in the bona fide and reasonable judgement of the Council, is for the good of the community as a whole, or in which the inhabitants at large may share: to be distinguished from the separate interest or benefit of any particular individual or group of people, however deserving or needy.

7.3.2 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.

7.3.3 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.

7.4 Place

7.4.1 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.

7.5 Technology

7.5.1 Twinning partners are encouraged to use technology to develop and maintain relationships with a number of partners developing websites, blogs and video diaries to keep dialogue open and continuing to share experiences.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

None

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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