

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources
DATE	1 December 2017
REPORT TITLE	Twinning & International Partnerships
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/263
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Dawn Schultz

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 £10,000 towards 6 adults and 36 children from the Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association travelling to Regensburg, 6 – 13th April 2018.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 These recommendations involve the allocation of funds made available from the 2017 -18 budget:
- 3.2 **Contribution of £10,000 towards 6 adults and 36 children from the Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association travelling to Regensburg, 6 – 13th April 2018.**
- 3.3 The Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association (ASRA) have been invited to Aberdeen's twin city of Regensburg to work with the established rowing community, specifically the Junior rowers and coaches from Regensburger Ruderklub and Regensburger Ruderverien.
- 3.4 ASRA are the only Junior rowing club in Aberdeen and are a well-established organisation within the British rowing community, with four current athletes representing Great Britain during 2017 and a further seven representing

Scotland. The Association intends to take a broad cross section of the age groups within ASRA to Regensburg to participate in this exciting twinning opportunity.

- 3.5 The timing of the twinning visit to Regensburg will see ASRA and Regensburger RuderKlub participate in the start of rowing season festival which is being held in Regensburg on Sunday 8th April 2018. Regensburg has two rowing clubs, which both have thriving Junior (Children) sections.
- 3.6 During the week-long visit to Regensburg, the children and coaches from ASRA will row and engage in activities with groups from Regensburger RuderKlub and Regensburger Ruderverien that will support the develop of cultural, educational and sporting relationships in the future.
- 3.7 ASRA's aim is to establish a lasting relationship with the Regensburg rowing community to enable them to create a positive image of Aberdeen City as a sporting and active city.
- 3.8 This twinning visit will provide an ideal opportunity to establish a new and lasting link between the rowing communities in Aberdeen and Regensburg, and to help further develop the existing relationships between the two cities with planned reciprocal visits.
- 3.9 The project outcomes being targeted are:
 1. To establish lasting relationships to help develop an International understanding between the two rowing communities in Aberdeen and Regensburg.
 2. To help breakdown social and economic barriers that exists across the group of children and coaches participating / attending from both Aberdeen & Regensburg.
 3. To promote the image of Aberdeen as a successful sporting and active community to the people of Regensburg & beyond.
- 3.10 If successful with this application, the twinning funding will be used to help develop sporting relationships between the two rowing communities, and in time it is hoped that the twinning visit will become part of ASRA's annual core program. Without external funding this will not be possible.
- 3.11 The impact of this twinning exchange will be to show Aberdeen as a successful and resourceful sporting community on the International stage, this may in turn encourage more overseas students from Germany to continue their studies at the University of Aberdeen.
- 3.12 It is planned that over the next three years that the twinning visits will become fully established, with ASRA planning to divert core program funding towards supporting annual twinning visits.
- 3.13 Total applying for:

Expenditure	
Flights – x 36 – Edinburgh to Munich – EasyJet - flight and hand luggage only	£5,400
Transport x 36 – Aberdeen to Edinburgh & rtn - transport from Aberdeen to Edinburgh & rtn for flights	£500
DFDS ferry – 2 x vehicles, 2 x trailers and 6 people - Newcastle to Imjuiden (Amsterdam), transport of rowing boats, safety launches and all main luggage	£1,200
Fuel for both vehicles towing boat trailers - Aberdeen to Newcastle, Imjuiden to Regensburg	£1,000
Accommodation on route from Imjuiden to Regensburg 2 rooms for 1 night both ways	£500
Hire of 2nd trailer large box trailer for safety launches and luggage	£480
Twinning visit hoodies and clear identification during travel and visit	£1,120
Transport Munich Airport to Regensburg and rtn (Coach) - cheaper than using public transport	£1,000
Accommodation and food Regensburg quote received from Regensburg Hostel for all meals and accommodation	£9,800
Total	£21,000
Income	
Fundraising and participants contributions	£2,000 + £9,000
Total	£11,000
Expenditure-Income	£21,000 - £11,000
Total Applying For	<u>£10,000</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	£62,791.50
i)	Contribution of £10,000 towards 6 adults and 36 children from the Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association travelling to Regensburg, 6 – 13th April 2018.	£10,000
	TOTAL	£10,000
	Closing Balance (if recommendations approved)	£52,791.50

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

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:

- 6.1.1 “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.”
- 6.1.2 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

- 6.2.1 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.

6.6.2 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 that also provides 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](#).

Economy

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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.

People

- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 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.

Place

- 7.7 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.

Technology

- 7.8 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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