



Douglas Clinton outlined for the Committee a number of points in support of his group's request to retain funding which included the following:-

- The group had increased the number of users for the services it provided despite its funding problems.
- The Group brought in extra 'match funding' to the city.
- Over 1000 pupils in Leicester City Schools had been involved in the 'Botanica' project which focused on global citizenship.
- The Group had worked with disadvantaged pupils from the St. Matthews area.
- Various events had been held in partnership with other organisations.
- Projects were delivered to all of Leicester's communities.
- The work of the group was regionally and nationally recognised and met with standards set down by the Local Government Information Bureau and other organisations.
- The Group was a good vehicle for developing understanding of other cultures and organisations.
- The Group helped to develop Leicester as a 'Fair Trade' city.
- The Group's work supported the City's education performance.

Further to these, Mr. Clinton noted that the original request for funding was for £22,077 but they recognised the Council's current funding difficulties. They therefore proposed that a new request for funding of £9,500 be made. This would enable them to retain their development worker despite being able to undertake less development work. This level of funding would also enable the group to access further funding.

At this point the Chair invited Councillor Ross Willmott, a member of the Overseas Links Working Party to speak to the Committee. He noted that the Working Party had agreed to continue to support the Link Group. He felt it was laudable that the group had reduced their request for funding to less than half originally requested. He also commented that the budget put forward by the Labour Group proposed to reinstate the Group's funding. He suggested that this funding could be obtained by using some of the Council's furniture budget. He also felt that even though there was a funding crisis in the Council there was still money available in Council budgets. He also noted that the total budget for twinning work and the Lord Mayors work was about £210,000 and perhaps the use of this money could be reviewed with a view to providing funding for the Group.

Councillor Johnson, the Chair of the Overseas Links Working Party then spoke to the Committee. He agreed it was important to continue to support to the Group, but the problem was how to fund the group. The overall budget for twinning activities was £12,000, therefore between four twinning groups this did not go far. He also noted that in the past the Masaya Group had received a disproportionately large amount of funding and had the other twinning groups received such a level of funding then they would be able to list similar outputs as the Masaya group. He also stated there were different types of twinning and the type undertaken by the Masaya group was different to that undertaken by the other groups and was not typical of the usual post war twinning

arrangements.

Ed Brown commented that he agreed that twinning with a developing country was different, but there was more funding opportunities for funding European Union Twinning. He also commented that his group offered service delivery.

Councillor Johnson then queried the funding for the Masaya Group in relation to the work they undertook. He noted it was largely based on educational projects and international development work. Therefore he queried the relevance of the group receiving funding from the Twinning budget, stating that they should perhaps seek education funding and external funding for their international development work. He then proposed that as a compromise, the Cabinet should be asked to consider providing £4,000 which would mean parity with the other twinning organisations.

Members of the Committee then discussed what they had heard.

Councillor Waddington welcomed the presentation from the Masaya Group; she felt the proposal by the group to request £9,500 funding was a sensible compromise. She also felt there were various opportunities for European Twinning organisations to apply for other funding such as the 'CALLS' funding. She then moved the following recommendation:-

“that it be recommended to Cabinet that the Masaya Link Group retain a minimum of £9,500 funding for the next financial year and that the European twinning groups consider other funding opportunities available from the European Union such as the 'CALLS' funding”

Councillor Fitch spoke in favour of this motion stating that he felt the Council should concentrate on twinning with third world countries.

Councillor O'Brien moved an amendment to the proposed motion which stated that the Masaya Link group retain £4,000 funding for the next financial year as this would be parity with the other twinning groups which received twinning funding.

The Committee then voted on the amendment; there were FOUR votes against the amendment and TWO votes in favour, therefore the amendment was defeated.

The Committee then voted on the original motion. There were FOUR votes in favour, ONE vote against and ONE abstention; therefore the original motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

that it be recommended to Cabinet that the Masaya Link Group retain a minimum of £9,500 funding for the next financial year and that the European twinning groups consider other funding opportunities available from the European Union such as the CALLS funding.

