

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of Executive Director Place

Appointment of Poet Laureate for Barnsley

1. Purpose of report

Establish the criteria for the appointment of a Poet Laureate for Barnsley and make the inaugural appointment to this position.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Establish the position of Poet Laureate for Barnsley, the process and criteria for the appointment and review.
- 2.2 Appoint Ian McMillan as the inaugural poet Laureate for Barnsley.

3. Introduction

The Culture Service has received a grant of £110,000 over three years from registered Charity Barnsley TUC Training to deliver a three year programme – Hear my Voice - centred on poetry and the spoken word. The aims of the programme are to:

- 1) Increase participation by residents within the Borough of Barnsley in 'cultural activities';
- 2) Increase engagement from new audiences;
- 3) Improve wellbeing;
- 4) Improve reading and writing skills
- 5) Promote a position of Poet Laureate (Barnsley) to act as champion for the programme

4. Proposal and justification

- 4.1 The role of Poet Laureate is traditionally an honorary position for which no payment is made. In Barnsley it is envisaged that the role will:
 - i. Promote Barnsley by creating verse for significant occasions in the Borough, a minimum of 6 per year.
 - ii. Act as an inspiration to residents of Barnsley
 - iii. Provide a figurehead to champion the "Hear My Voice" Programme
- 4.2 The Poet Laureate shall be appointed by Cabinet on recommendation based on the following criteria:

The Poet Laureate for Barnsley should:

- i. Have a connection with Barnsley, e.g. be from Barnsley or live in Barnsley
 - ii. Demonstrate a commitment to the Borough
 - iii. Have a significantly high profile to generate media interest and provide an inspiration to others
 - iv. Be willing to fulfil the requirements of the role description outlined at 5.1
- 4.3 The success of the role of Poet Laureate will be evaluated towards the end of the tenure and a decision made whether to continue with the role. Evaluation will take into account positive media coverage generated, using the AVE (advertising value equivalent) indicator
- 4.4 It is proposed that the first Poet Laureate be appointed for a period of two years.
- 4.5 Based on the criteria outlined at 5.2 it is recommended that Cabinet appoint Ian McMillan to the role of Poet Laureate for Barnsley for a period of two years.

Criteria	Ian McMillan
i. Connection with Barnsley	Born in Barnsley and still lives in Darfield
ii. Commitment to the Borough	Generous with his time in support of the Borough, Trustee on Barnsley Museums and Heritage Trust and a regular volunteer at Darfield Museum
iii. Media Profile	High profile poet and broadcaster of considerable standing, regularly presenting and appearing on Radio and Television and having been poet in residence for Barnsley Football Club, the Academy of Urbanism and the English National Opera
iv. Ability to fulfil the role	Regularly writes poems in support of Council initiatives, for example, for Experience Barnsley, the Cooper Gallery, and a recent initiative to reduce fuel poverty

5. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 5.1 The “Hear My Voice” programme has been made possible by grant funding provided by Barnsley TUC Training. This programme will be championed by the Poet Laureate for Barnsley, if a Poet Laureate was not appointed it is likely that the initiative would have a lower profile and be less likely to be effective in engaging residents and raising the profile of Barnsley.
- 5.2 Although there are other poets from Barnsley, Ian McMillan meets the proposed criteria, has a very high profile and has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to Barnsley, making him the ideal choice to be appointed as the inaugural position of Poet Laureate for Barnsley. The Borough has also recognised Ian’s achievements and commitment by proposing him for the honour of freeman, which will be considered at a special Council meeting on 7 June.

6. Implications for local people / service users

Local people will benefit from the initiative as the role will raise the profile of Barnsley and its residents creating a sense of civic pride.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Consultations on the financial implications have taken place with representatives of the Director of Finance, Assets & IT.
- 7.2 There are no direct costs from the appointment of the Poet Laureate, however projects will be delivered based on poetry and the spoken word in Barnsley through the “Hear My Voice” Programme
- 7.3 The costs of the “Hear My Voice” projects will be £43K in 2016/17, £32K in 2017/18 and £35K in 2018/19, totalling £110K. This will be contained within the grant funding of £110,000 received from Barnsley TUC Training.
- 7.3 The financial implications are shown on the attached appendix A.

8. Employee implications

There are no direct employee implications arising from the appointment of the Poet Laureate for Barnsley. Project management costs for the “Hear My Voice” programme will be contained within the grant funding allocated.

9. Communications implications

The announcement of the “Hear My Voice” programme and the appointment of the Poet Laureate will take place at a date to be confirmed before the end of May or beginning of June 2016.

10. Consultations

Consultations have taken place with Barnsley TUC Training who have provided the funding for the “Hear My Voice” programme and with Ian McMillan, who has confirmed his availability and willingness to take up this role.

11. The Corporate Plan and the Council’s Performance Management Framework

The initiative will contribute to the Council’s corporate plan by helping to raise aspirations, providing inspiration and increasing civic pride in Barnsley. The project will help people to achieve their potential through engagement with the “Hear My Voice” Programme including by widening participation in cultural activities, improving wellbeing and literacy skills.

12. Tackling health inequalities

One of the stated aims of the programme is to improve wellbeing.

13. Climate Change & Sustainable Energy Act 2006

No issues arising

14. Risk management issues

If a poet Laureate were not appointed, the Hear My Voice Project would have a lower profile.

15. Health, safety, and emergency resilience issues

No issues arising

16. Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights

No issues arising

17. Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion

The programme will seek to drive up participation in cultural activities and to develop new audiences, and will reach out to engage a wide range of people in their local communities.

18. Reduction of crime and disorder

No issues arising

19. Conservation of biodiversity

No issues arising

20. Glossary

[Only to be included if there are any terms or acronyms to explain]

21. List of appendices

Appendix A financial implications

22. Background papers

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