

Derbyshire County Council

Cabinet Member – Health and Communities

18 July 2013

Report of the Strategic Director Cultural and Community Services

DERBYSHIRE POET LAUREATE PROJECT

1. Purpose of the report:

To inform the Cabinet Member about the progress of the Derbyshire Poet Laureate project and to request permission to continue the project for a further two years from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2015.

2. Information and analysis:

2.1 During 2005 Derbyshire County Council received an Arts Council England Lottery award to appoint a Poet Laureate for Derbyshire. This pilot project was originally planned to run for two years (September 2005 to August 2007), with two poets being offered the Laureateship as a one-year tenure. Cathy Grindrod was appointed as the first Derbyshire Poet Laureate in September 2005.

2.2 Due to the success of the original pilot it was agreed by the Cabinet Member: Cultural Services to extend the project for a further two years, until 30 September 2009, and to offer the laureateship as a two-year tenure. River Wolton was appointed as the second Derbyshire Poet Laureate in September 2007. This was reviewed in April 2009 and it was agreed to extend the scheme for a further two years. Ann Atkinson was appointed as the third laureate in September 2009. It was reviewed again in April 2011 and Matt Black was appointed as the fourth laureate in September 2011. Matt Black's tenure as laureate ends in September 2013.

2.3 The project has continued to build and develop. Over the last 18 months Matt Black has:

- appeared at 51 events, readings and conferences
- delivered 62 workshops with a wide-range of community groups and schools
- written 30 commissioned poems and 19 non-commissioned poems inspired by Derbyshire

- engaged with over 4,328 audience members and participants, of which 2,388 have been young people aged under 19 years

2.4 New partnerships have also been developed to increase the range of events and commissions, and as a means of engaging with new audiences. Examples include: writing a new poem celebrating libraries which included reflections made by library users on what their library meant to them; meeting local people to write a poem for Creswell; and working with colleagues in CAYA and Equalities and Diversity on the Lifelines project to celebrate diversity in Derbyshire. The laureates also worked together on the Derbyshire Poetry project delivering poetry workshops in Children's Homes across the county. This project was externally funded by the Clore Foundation.

2.5 The next laureateship would be offered as a two-year tenure, running from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2015. The aims of the project would continue to focus on working with local people to celebrate their communities and traditions through poetry; engaging new audiences particularly those who find it difficult to access services; and working with young people. The laureate will also be featured at high profile events such as the Derbyshire Literature Festival 2015 and DerbyShire 2015

2.6 The laureateship would include 3 core commissions; 3 event days; 3 workshop days; and a training bursary for the successful applicant. Funding of up to £8,000 from approved arts reserves will cover these core costs. Funding for additional commissions and activities will be secured through working in partnership with other Departments and external organisations.

3. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: - financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

4. Background papers:

26 April 2005 Cabinet Member/Chief Officer Report, Cultural and Community Services

5 September 2006 Cabinet Member/Chief Officer Report, Cultural and Community Services

27 April 2009 Cabinet Member/Chief Officer Report, Cultural and Community Services

24 May 2011 Cabinet Member/Chief Officer Report, Cultural and Community Services

5. Key decision:

No.

6. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision in this report?

No.

7. Strategic Director's recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member – Health and Communities agrees to the continuation of the Derbyshire Poet Laureate project for a further two years from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2015, funded from approved arts reserves.

Martin Molloy
Strategic Director
Cultural and Community Services