

**Decision Session – Executive Member for  
Economic Development & Community  
Engagement**

**5 February 2019**

Report of the Director of Customer and Corporate Services

**Town Crier**

**Summary**

1. This report outlines proposals to attract a volunteer to undertake the role of Town Crier for the City of York, as a result of a combined initiative involving Make it York, York BID and the Sheriff of the City of York.

**Recommendation**

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - i. acknowledge the role of the Town Crier on behalf of CYC
  - ii. approve the process for attracting a volunteer to undertake the role, as detailed in this report

Reason: In order that the individual recruited is eligible to join both the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers and Loyal Company of Town Criers, therefore attracting public liability insurance.

**Background**

3. There are around 200 Town Criers in the Country. Chester has a professionally paid Town Crier who makes daily proclamations at the City Cross. The last Town Crier in York was appointed by York Visitor Conference Bureau in 1990 and retired in 2007.
4. The current Sheriff identified a need for a Town Crier after attending several events in the City Centre where they went unannounced. They felt it was befitting that a historic City, with an active Civic Party and a

Lord Mayor of 'Right Honourable' status, have a Town Crier for special events.

5. A Task Group formed of the Sheriff of York, Councillor Ashley Mason, and representatives from Make it York and York BID held meetings in August 2018 to discuss recruiting a Town Crier for York.
6. Make it York and York BID were supportive of the idea and felt that the role would have a positive impact on tourism and promoting the City.
7. A further meeting was held and, in addition to the Task Group, was attended by Councillor Keith Aspden (Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement ), the Council's Monitoring Officer and the Civic Office. Group Leaders were also consulted. The following proposal was agreed:

### **Proposed Agreement**

#### **Income:**

- York BID have proposed a one-off payment of £2000
- York Civic Trust have proposed a one-off payment of £400
- Any income generated by the role will fund ongoing costs associated with the role (set out below). This money will be held by York Civic Trust.

#### **Initial Costs:**

- £1600 – Livery
- £150 – Clothing, scroll, bell etc.

#### **Ongoing Costs:**

- Cleaning and maintaining Livery - £120 p.a
- Fees payable to the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers and Loyal Company of Town Criers - £70p.a (appx)
- Reasonable travel costs to be reimbursed

## **Attracting a Volunteer**

The standard process for attracting a volunteer to perform the role of 'Town Crier' involves providing a role specification, an Application Form and a Trial Cry (or audition).

- A role specification has been produced by the Task Group with advice from a current Town Crier. This is attached at Annex A.
- Make it York will create an application form for the role.
- The role will be advertised in the York Press and by Minster FM and Radio York.
- Interviews will be held on a suitable date
- Auditions (Trial Cry) will be held on the steps of the Mansion House.
- A panel comprised of representatives from Make it York, York BID and the Civic Party will appoint a Town Crier following this process.

## **The Role**

8. The Town Crier will play an important role in the Civic life of the City, as well as actively promoting tourism. A volunteer is considered suitable for role and would manage their own engagements liaising with both the City of York Council Civic Office and Make it York.
9. The Civic Office will provide dates of appropriate Civic Events to the Town Crier.
10. Make it York will liaise with the Town Crier on all other events. The Town Crier may attend openings and events but businesses will not be able to approach the Town Crier directly, all requests will be dealt with by Make it York.

## **Consultation**

Consultation has taken place across the City in relation to the value of York having a 'Town Crier' once again. There is clearly support for this tradition to be re-introduced within this historic city, given the interest expressed by Make It York, the BID and the Civic Trust.

## **Options**

1. Option 1 – That the Executive Member acknowledges the role of the Town Crier on behalf of CYC, and approves the process for attracting a volunteer, allowing the individual to join both the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers and Loyal Company of Town Criers and attract the associated public liability insurance.
2. Option 2 – That the Executive Member chooses not to formally recognise the role, which would mean that any voluntary Town Crier undertaking the role in the future would not be acting in any officially recognised capacity and would not therefore attract the associated public liability insurance referred to above.

## **Analysis**

11. The Executive Member will need to consider whether he wishes to formally acknowledge the role of Town Crier, given that there is some collective city wide interest in restoring the role in York bearing in mind its historical and civic roots. In order to join the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers and Loyal Company of Town Criers the individual recruited to the role needs to have been formally recognised by at least a Parish or Town Council. This membership includes public liability insurance.

If York is to move forward with the role, it is important to consider whether there are benefits to having it formally recognised and therefore properly insured. It would seem appropriate to adopt this way forward, not only for public liability insurance and the privilege of becoming a Guild Member but in order to establish proper connections with the city in terms of what engagements a Town Crier could usefully and appropriately cover. .

## **Council Plan**

12. This proposal contributes to the economic development strategy by promoting tourism in the City.

## Implications

- **Financial** Funding for the role will initially be provided by York BID and York Civic Trust. Income generated by the role will be held by York Civic Trust and used to cover ongoing costs.
- **Human Resources (HR)** Attracting a volunteer to the role of Town Crier will be handled by Make it York in accordance with appropriate arrangements for volunteers
- **Equalities** none
- **Legal** none
- **Crime and Disorder** none
- **Information Technology (IT)** none
- **Property** none
- **Other** none

## Risk Management

Whilst there are no risks associated directly with the recommendations in this report, it is worth noting that there could potentially be risks associated with public liability insurance for individuals undertaking the role if the Executive Member decides not to formally recognise the role of Town Crier for the City of York.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

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Report  Date 28 Jan 2019  
Approved

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** List information for all

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all **All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers: None**

### Annexes

**Annex A – Role Specification**