

Delegated Decision Report

13 May 2020

Planning Submission Durham History Centre



Report of Jenny Haworth, Head of Strategy

Electoral division(s) affected:

All electoral wards are covered by the History Centre Project however, the centre's location is within the Neville's Cross division of Councillor Liz Brown and Councillor Elizabeth Scott.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an overview of the critical programme path in relation to planning and to agree to submit the planning application for Durham History Centre
- 2 To advise on the key considerations and implications of a delay to submitting planning;

Executive summary

- 3 Following completion of the History Centre design work to RIBA Stage 3, all necessary documentation is now developed and in place for submission of the planning application for the centre. The work has been subject to extensive external and internal advice, review and challenge, and is now in a position for submission and consideration by the planning authority. Any delay would impact on the critical path of the project at this stage.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 The Corporate Director is recommended to:
 - note the progress to the design and construction programme for the Durham History Centre
 - Approve the submission of the planning application for the Durham History Centre to be considered at the Planning Committee 28 July 2020.

Background

- 5 The Durham History Centre project will bring together five archive and heritage collections, with the registration service, in the grade II listed Mount Oswald Manor House, which will be restored and extended creating a facility where people can discover and explore nationally and internationally significant collections. The History Centre will house the county's archives, historic registration records, environment and archaeology records, local studies collections and the Durham Light Infantry collection.

- 6 In January 2019, Cabinet agreed to fund the core capital costs of the Durham History Centre project and confirmed a contribution of £17.7 million to the capital scheme.
- 7 Following completion of RIBA Stage 3 design, development work on RIBA Stage 4 has begun. As part of RIBA 4, detailed design work is now underway which will form the basis of tender documentation to recruit a main contractor on a design and build basis through a restricted OJEU process

Summary of Planning Critical Path

- 8 Following completion of RIBA 3 design a full planning application for the Durham History Centre has been prepared. This is a comprehensive set of documents, has been reviewed by the programme lead and programme director prior to recommendation for submission. During preparation of the planning submission, wide ranging advice has been sought and taken both internally and externally, including on conservation requirements of the historic building, travel requirements, landscape conservation and internal building specifications to meet agreed programme requirements.
- 9 In order for construction works to begin on site in February 2021, in line with the master programme for the Durham History Centre, a planning decision is required by early August.
- 10 If we do not submit planning in early May, we will miss the 28 July 2020 planning committee and the subsequent planning committee isn't until September. A delay of two months in determining the planning decision will impact on the critical path of the project leading to a delay to procurement of the contractor and a delay to our start on site.

Considerations and Implications

- 11 A delayed planning decision will in turn delay the master programme resulting in a later completion date which will have implications for the decant of collections and services from existing venues. This may lead to increased costs to maintain existing venues and loss of income from improved service facilities as well as new income streams and efficiencies.
- 12 A delay to the construction programme will also impact on the overall capital budget as increased inflation costs will need to be accounted for. This in turn will lead to a requirement to explore value engineering options potentially reducing the volume and quality of the overall scheme
- 13 In addition, a delay to construction may put external funding streams at risk, e.g. £1.46 million from ERDF to support low and zero carbon measures (in progress but unsecured), if we are not able to complete works within their timeframes.

Conclusions

- 14 The submission of the planning application for the Durham History Centre is now on the Critical Path to achieve a decision by early August.
- 15 A delay to submitting will have an impact on financial and programme considerations which could affect the overall quality and volume of the scheme

16 To ensure that the programme progresses on time, to budget and to the agreed quality it is recommended that the planning application is submitted to be considered at the Planning Committee 28 July 2020.

Background papers

- Durham History Centre Master Programme

Other useful documents

- January 2019 Durham History Centre Cabinet report

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Procurement will be carried out in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Finance

Final capital costs will be firmed up once a construction contractor is appointed.

Consultation

none

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Disability access considerations are being built into the centre design.

Climate Change

The ERDF grant funding which could be put at risk will support low carbon design, including ground source heat, solar panels and solar collectors.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

The History Centre will provide transformed facilities for the Council's Historic Collections and Registration Services, members of the public accessing the services and the staff working within the relevant services.

Risk

A detailed risk register is maintained and regularly reviewed by the History Centre project team and board.

Procurement

Procurement of the main contractor will be through a Design and Build approach through a restricted OJEU process