

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

28 July 2021



**Review of the Durham Light Infantry
(DLI) Collection and Archive**

Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) an opportunity to contribute to a review by Cabinet of the options for the future storage, care and display of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection, archive, museum buildings and grounds.

Executive summary

- 2 At the Cabinet meeting on 16 June 2021 it was agreed to hold a review to reconsider options for the future of the DLI collection and archive. The overview and scrutiny function of the Council was asked to contribute to the review by way of an open session with elected members and key stakeholders.
- 3 The role of overview and scrutiny is to scrutinise decisions of the executive, to hold them to account and make recommendations on policy development and implementation.
- 4 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board provides strategic oversight and co-ordinates the work of overview and scrutiny and the five thematic committees. Where a subject is crosscutting across a number of scrutiny committees, COSMB is the appropriate forum as the chairs and vice chairs of the thematic committees are members of the Board.

- 5 Key stakeholders have been given the opportunity to put forward their views by either attending this meeting or making written representations.
- 6 A presentation will be made by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth setting out the context, current position, and overview of the review scope.
- 7 A summary of the key issues identified at the meeting will be reported to Cabinet on 15 September 2021 to inform their review.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 COSMB is recommended to:
 - (a) Consider and comment on the information presented and agree key issues and considerations for inclusion in a report to the Cabinet meeting on 15 September 2021.

Background

- 9 In 2015 Cabinet considered proposals on the future arrangements for the DLI Museum. Cabinet agreed to new arrangements for the storage and display of the DLI collection which included the storage of items at the Sevenhills facility and proposals for the loan of items to a number of venues including Palace Green Library, Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe and Seaham. This was part of an approach to widening the exposure of the history of the DLI to wider groups whilst also achieving medium term financial plan (MTFP) savings.
- 10 Further arrangements were agreed by Cabinet on 17 January 2018 as part of consideration of a report on the development of the Aykley Heads site as a Strategic Employment Site, the relocation of the DCC Headquarters to the city centre and the new History Centre development which would include storage, care and display for the DLI collection and archive.
- 11 The Council's Joint Administration has requested a review of the proposed arrangements for the care, storage and display of the Durham Light Infantry Collection, archive, museum building and grounds. This is a key priority to review and ensure that the proud and significant military history of County Durham is recognised.
- 12 An options appraisal will be produced to include a full assessment of opportunities, costs, risks, other funding availability. This will also include an impact assessment on the plans for the new History Centre, with the outcome considered by Cabinet by September 2021.

- 13 The Cabinet review scope poses two high level questions which inform scrutiny's review.
- Question 1: Can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI collection?
 - Question 2: What are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for an alternative use?
- 14 The key stakeholders that have been invited to attend the COSMB meeting or make written representations are as follows:
- DLI Trustees
 - The Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT)
 - The Faithful Durham
 - National Lottery Heritage Fund
 - National Army Museum
 - The National Archives
 - Veterans representatives – DLI Association and DLI Friends
 - Arts Council England
- 15 The relevant portfolio members have been invited to the meeting to hear the views of key stakeholders and members firsthand.

Role of COSMB

- 16 Scrutiny's role is to scrutinise decisions of the executive, to hold them to account and make recommendations on policy development and implementation. Cabinet have recognised the importance of an independent minded scrutiny function and requested scrutiny's support by holding an open consultative session of members and key stakeholders.
- 17 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is the appropriate forum to undertake a review session as requested by Cabinet as it brings together representation from all five thematic scrutiny committees.
- 18 This meeting is a special meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board with a single item agenda to consider recommendations to support Cabinet's review on the options for the future of the DLI collection and archive.

- 19 Members will have the opportunity to ask questions on the information presented by the key stakeholders and the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth.
- 20 The Board will identify and agree key issues and recommendations for inclusion in a report to the Cabinet meeting on 15 September 2021.

Format and scope of meeting

- 21 A presentation will be made by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which will cover:
 - The context and history of previous decisions regarding the DLI museum, collection and archive
 - The development of the Durham History Centre project
 - The current context of the DLI Collection and archive
 - An overview of the review scope and key implications
- 22 Key stakeholders will be asked to present their views. They have been asked to consider framing their presentation based on the following structure:
 - History of the organisation with the DLI Museum and Art Gallery before and since 2015
 - Views of the move of the DLI collection from Sevenhills and archive from County Hall to the History Centre
 - What you would want to achieve for the DLI collection and/or archive?
 - What would you like to achieve for the former DLI museum and art gallery at Aykley Heads?
 - What would you like to see the Council take into account in making its recommendations?
- 23 The key issues suggested for consideration by COSMB are set out below although these are indicative only and are not an exhaustive list:
 - Engagement work and outcomes before and after the museum closure
 - Communication and messaging across the relevant decision-making processes
 - National policy, practice, and funding trends
 - Key features of the collections and/or archives
 - Key features of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery

- Issues relating to the grounds
 - Current standards for collection and archive storage, conservation and display and their relationship to each other
 - High level financial issues such cost per visitor (CPV) benchmark
- 24 The meeting will be held in person at County Hall. Members of the public are entitled to attend all meetings of the council including scrutiny committees. Every effort will be made to accommodate those who wish to attend the meeting. It is anticipated that due to the restrictions in place for COVID-19 the strict limits on how many people are allowed in the Council Chamber where the meeting will take place will still be in place. The meeting will also be broadcast live on the Council's YouTube channel.
- 25 The presentation by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth is attached at Appendix 2.
- 26 Written representations have been received from the DLI Trustees, the National Archives and the Arts Council and these are attached at Appendices 3, 4 and 5.

Background papers

- Review of DLI Collection Archive and the Future of the DLI Building and Grounds - report to Cabinet and minutes 16 June 2021

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Consultation

Key stakeholders have been invited to participate in the COSMB meeting.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None