

**Review of Durham Light Infantry (DLI)  
Collection and Archive and the potential  
future use of the former DLI Museum & Art  
Gallery and Grounds at Aykley Heads**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth**

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships**

**Councillor James Rowlandson Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources Investment and Assets**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 This report presents the findings of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) review. It outlines an approach to bring back into use the former building as an exhibition centre, gallery and café venue.
- 2 It sets out the benefits of this approach which include providing dedicated exhibition space for the DLI collection items to complement the History Centre exhibition plans; provision of storage capacity for smaller non DLI Council collections as well as the provision of an art gallery facility in the city, which would meet a current gap in our cultural offer. Benefits also include the provision of a new cultural visitor attraction and café which would contribute to the county's City of Culture 2025 bid and fill an identified gap in the visitor economy in the city

**Executive summary**

- 3 The DLI object and archive collection is one of the most coherent regimental collections in the UK with full chronological coverage from its 1750s origins to amalgamation of the Regiment in the 1960s and beyond.
- 4 The collection is owned by the trustees of The Regimental and Chattels Charity of the Former Durham Light Infantry (referred to as the DLI

Trustees). Its managed and cared for under a partnership arrangement with Durham County Council.

- 5 The DLI Museum & Art Gallery was built at Aykley Heads to house the DLI collection and was opened in 1969. The DLI Museum & Art Gallery stored the object collection and displayed around 5% of the collection. A contemporary art gallery displaying touring exhibitions was a key feature of the facility along with education space and a café.
- 6 In December 2015, Cabinet considered and agreed a report that recommended closure of the museum and a new model of service delivery for the collection, agreed in consultation with the DLI Trustees.
- 7 The building subsequently closed in March 2016, and a new 'deconstructed museum' model of operation commenced - rebranded as the DLI Collection. The new operating model comprised a research and study centre open to the public, with secure object stores and a public programme of temporary exhibitions, outreach and learning opportunities. A new permanent DLI gallery and display was opened at Palace Green Library in Durham City and access to the medal collection through the Barker Reading Room was made possible via a formal agreement with Durham University.
- 8 In 2019, it was confirmed that the DLI Collection would become part of plans for a new state-of-the-art History Centre to be developed on the site of Mount Oswald Manor House in Durham City. This was fully supported by the DLI Trustees.
- 9 In preparation for the plans to move the DLI collection and archive to the new Durham History Centre, updated terms have been agreed with and signed by the parties. Whilst these terms were agreed in April 2021, the agreement needs to be formally executed to satisfy the requirements of the NLHF in respect of grant funding awarded for the History Centre project.
- 10 In June 2021, Cabinet agreed to review options for the potential future use of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building and surrounding grounds. The review addressed two key questions:
  - (a) can the former DLI Museum be brought back into use to house the DLI collection?
  - (b) what are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for alternative uses?
- 11 The review was undertaken throughout July and August 2021 and has been supported by two separate independent reports that were commissioned to underpin the review. The Director of the National Conservation Service provided an assessment of the current and planned care and storage of the collection and archive, as well as a high-

level observation of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building from a conservation perspective. Global real estate advisors, Avison Young, provided architectural, planning and market appraisals for the building and its prospective potential uses should it be brought back into use.

- 12 A meeting of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) took place on 28 July 2021. The meeting was open to the public and was broadcast live. It provided an opportunity to consider the review questions and key stakeholders were invited to submit representations on the issues from their perspectives. The outcome of that meeting has been fully considered as part of the evidence base for the review.
- 13 The review has considered the current condition of the building and options for displaying, storing and care of DLI collection in the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building, including a full assessment of risks, financial, legal and value for money issues.
- 14 The review has also considered the impacts on the new Durham History Centre, including impact on funding and on the storage, display and care of other DCC collections.
- 15 It has been established that returning the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building to its former use would not have the full support of key stakeholders such as the Army Museum Ogilby Trust and the DLI Trustees, who are committed to the History Centre proposals.
- 16 The DLI collection and archive is integral to the Durham History Centre project and withdrawing in its entirety would present significant risk to the Durham History Centre – a £19.6 million investment that is currently under construction and for which significant National Heritage Lottery Funding has been secured.
- 17 In light of the numerous implications of reopening the building to house the DLI collection in its entirety, the review has concluded that this is not practicable or recommended.
- 18 In answering the second question, the review has considered high level options assessments for suitable alternative uses for the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building and the grounds and environment around the site.
- 19 The options for repurposing the building were found to be relatively limited, primarily due to location, market conditions and planning restrictions. The analysis identified that repurposing the building in line with cultural use presented the only real feasible approach, though more work is required to firm up the costs and other implications associated with bringing the facility back into use.

- 20 This approach would have the following benefits:
- (a) provide dedicated exhibition space for the DLI collection items to complement History Centre exhibition plans;
  - (b) provide storage capacity for smaller non-DLI Council collections;
  - (c) provide an art gallery facility in the city which is a current gap in our cultural offer; and
  - (d) provide a new cultural visitor attraction and cafe which would contribute to the county's City of Culture 2025 bid and fill an identified gap in the visitor economy in the city.
- 21 The review also concluded that the grounds surrounding the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building should be considered sensitively, as they had been used over a number of years as an informal site for the scattering of veteran's ashes. The report identifies the opportunity to develop a peace and contemplation garden in the grounds.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 22 Cabinet is recommended to:
- (a) note the review process, and the evidence and analysis that underpins it.
  - (b) note the options to bring the building back into use as a wider culture and visitor destination, incorporating a significant dedicated space for items from the DLI collection.
  - (c) request officers to commission further detailed feasibility work into:
    - (i) refurbishment of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building as an exhibition centre, gallery, exhibition and café venue including dedicated space for display of DLI collection items that will complement plans for exhibitions in Durham History Centre (DHC), noting the purpose built DHC will be the permanent base for the collection and its storage care and curation;
    - (ii) an appropriate funding strategy, operational model, and business plan including a marketing strategy for the venue and an assessment of the wider opportunities of connections to new and existing sites in the city such as Wharton Park and the new History Centre; and
    - (iii) an appropriate peace and contemplation garden in the grounds;

- (d) agree that the outcome of the further feasibility (which includes full consideration of the MTFP and revenue and capital budgetary impacts) of bringing the building back into use, should be presented to Cabinet for consideration on this option in early 2022;
- (e) delegate authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to execute the agreement between the Council and the DLI Trustees, which is a pre-condition of National Heritage Lottery Funding awarded for the Durham History Centre Project.

## **Background: History and Context**

### *The Collection*

- 23 The Regimental Collection of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) has collected objects and archive material since the 1920s. Comprising over 15,000 objects and thousands of archive items, the collection is one of the most extensive and coherent Regimental collections in the UK, with full chronological coverage from its 1750s origins to amalgamation of the Regiment in the 1960s and beyond.
- 24 Dating from 1758 – 2011, the object collection includes firearms, uniforms, medals and ceremonial items including key objects of significance such as the Wakenshaw 2lb anti-tank gun, Somme Memorial and Victoria Crosses.
- 25 The Regimental Archive consists of documents, manuscripts and photographs covering the entire history of the Regiment. Of particular importance in the archive are the collections of material on the Durham Militia, local Napoleonic Volunteers, and the extensive collection of War Diaries, battalion records, personal papers and ephemera from the First and Second World Wars and from the Korean War. Both the DLI object collection and archive are historically significant for the county, however, they are not Designated Collections under the national Designation Scheme.

### *Timeline and context of DLI Museum & Durham Art Gallery*

- 26 For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the collection moved with the Regiment to various barracks and headquarters around the region, including Fenham Barracks and Brancepeth Castle.
- 27 The collection was briefly in storage at the Bowes Museum between the closure of Brancepeth Castle and the move to the former museum building at Aykley Heads in 1968.
- 28 In 1960, the DLI Collection was established as a charity with trustees appointed to manage and care for the collection on behalf of the Regiment.
- 29 The new museum building, whilst winning many architectural plaudits at the time, did not provide ideal conditions for the display of the Regimental collection, as the floor-to-ceiling single-glazing provided minimal physical security and an unstable environment, whilst allowing unfiltered sunlight to flood the two galleries, irreparably damaging textiles and other sensitive materials (Figure 1). During the 1980s, plastic film was applied to the glass in an attempt to limit the effects of sunlight,

whilst the windows at ground level were lined with wooden boards to improve perimeter security.<sup>1</sup>



*Figure 1. The DLI Museum & Durham Art Gallery circa. 1974*

- 30 In 1997, an environmental and collection condition survey of the DLI Museum and Art Gallery was carried out by an independent conservator from the Conservation Advisory Network. This survey recommended that the archive collection should be relocated to more appropriate storage, as the archive could not be satisfactorily housed within the existing building.
- 31 Discussions led to an agreement between the Durham County Record Office (DCRO) and the DLI Trustees regarding a move of the archive to the DCRO strongrooms at County Hall, which fully met the British Standard BS5454. The agreement also covered that the Record Office would catalogue the collection to archival standards, which would provide greatly improved public access. In 1998, the archive collection was moved from the DLI Museum and Art Gallery building into the DCRO in County Hall and was subsequently catalogued over the next five years by a professional archivist; a post part funded by the DLI Trustees.
- 32 In 2013, a review of funding to museums was carried out. This was in response to the significant budget challenges the Council faced at that time as a result of reductions to public spending and the austerity programme that was implemented nationally in response to the banking crisis. The review and subsequent report set out a strategy to achieve a range of MTFP savings associated with the provision of museums,

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<sup>1</sup> In March 1972, a lower ground floor window was smashed, and a Bren gun stolen from open display. The machine gun was not recovered by the Police, in spite of an extensive search. In 1980's there was a further theft of silver objects, thieves broke in the same way as in 1972 through the glazed façade.

including the DLI Museum & Durham Art Gallery, Killhope Lead Mining Museum, Locomotion, Beamish Museum and Bowes Museum.

- 33 Following this, in early 2014, a further saving review set out the broader approach and actions to deliver a £105,000 of efficiency savings from 2014/15. This was achieved through reducing the days and hours of the DLI Museum and Art Gallery was open to the public from seven to five days a week.
- 34 Later in 2014, work commenced on the options for the relocation of DCRO in response to the Office Accommodation Programme that was progressing at that time, which would potentially see the Council's headquarters relocated away from Aykley Heads to release the site as a strategic employment site. This work would later lead to the creation of the Durham History Centre Project.
- 35 In late 2015, Cabinet considered and agreed a further report on 'Future DLI Arrangements,' which analysed the cost and visitor numbers and sought agreement for closure of the DLI Museum and Art Gallery building and the development of a new service delivery model. This followed extensive discussions with the DLI Trustees.
- 36 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings of £241,984 were realised from the closure of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery and were factored into the budgets, with an ongoing annual revenue cost of £50,000 for the storage and display of the Collection under the revised arrangements proposed and £20,000 for learning staff support being required going forward. In addition, there were one off capital costs of £76,000 to create new collection storage at Sevenhills in Spennymoor, and one-off costs of £175,000 for the creation of a new DLI gallery within Durham University. The provision for a new visual arts offer was not included in the service going forward.
- 37 By 2016, the Council had entered into a partnership agreement with Durham University which included:
  - (a) creation of a new DLI Gallery in Palace Green Library, '*Courage, Comrades and Community*' showcasing key items from the collection including the Lambton Cap, Victoria Cross and Somme memorial cross;
  - (b) loan of the medal collection, to be housed in secure strongrooms and available to view by request in the Barker Reading Room;
  - (c) the creation of five temporary exhibitions and delivery of outreach and learning experiences related to the collection. The first of these temporary exhibitions '*Somme 2016*' ran from March-October 2016 and attracted 30,000 visitors – higher than the visitor numbers that were being attracted to the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building.

- 38 In 2016, extensive and positive discussions with Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT), the national representative body of all regimental museums, took place regarding the new museum model and support was gained for the new proposal which was seen as a sector leading approach at a time when several regimental museums across the UK were at risk due to funding constraints.
- 39 The former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building at Aykley Heads closed at the end of March 2016, and the new 'deconstructed museum' model of operation commenced thereafter. The new operating model comprised a research and study centre open to the public, new secure stores, collections access room, temporary exhibitions, learning and outreach programme, volunteering programme and a partnership with Durham University creating a new dedicated DLI gallery at Palace Green Library in Durham City and access to the medal collection through the Barker Reading Room.
- 40 Over the next 6 months the DLI object collections were carefully packed and relocated to the new gallery and medal storage at Durham University, to venues which loaned objects including Locomotion and North East Sea Land & Air Museum (NESLAM), and to an existing DCC facility at Sevenhills in Spennymoor, where the reserve collections were transferred to new stores with enhanced security and fitted out with museum standard racking and storage furniture. The DLI Research & Study Centre, notwithstanding recent pandemic restrictions, is normally open to the public two days a week to use the research library or to view objects by appointment. The centre is facilitated by DLI volunteers, DLI Friends and members of the DLI Association.
- 41 In 2017, the Trustees of the Former Durham Light Infantry underwent a change in their charitable status and became known as The Regimental and Chattels Charity of the Former Durham Light Infantry (referred to as the DLI Trustees).
- 42 During 2017, as plans for the Durham History Centre Project progressed it was recognised that there was an opportunity to bring together several heritage assets and related services, including the DLI Collection, with the DCRO collection and archives in a new and innovative service model delivered through the new venue at Mount Oswald in Durham City.
- 43 A public consultation in early 2018 asked members of the public and key partners and stakeholders for their views on proposals to bring the following five services together under the History Centre Scheme:
- (a) Durham County Records Office (including DLI archives);
  - (b) DLI Collection;
  - (c) the Historic Environment Record;

- (d) Local Studies Collection; and
- (e) Registration Service, including Historic Registration Records, the register office function for Durham City and Registrars HQ for County Durham.

- 44 High level results from this survey indicated that 83% of respondents were in favour of the proposals.
- 45 At the same time Arts Council England (ACE), which had replaced MLA as the arms-length body of central government for Museums undertook a review of the new DLI Collection model with regards to the Accreditation status of the DLI Collection. ACE agreed the new model met the criteria for Museum Accreditation and updated the status of the DLI Collection to Provisional Accreditation ahead of a full accreditation review to be carried out in 2019. This has since been submitted but the accreditation review panel has been delayed as result of the Covid-19 pandemic and as such the status remains provisional at this point.
- 46 Over the course of 2019 and 2020, significant progress was made on the History Centre project, two further rounds of public consultation were carried out and planning permission for the capital scheme was granted. Mount Oswald was legally transferred to DCC ownership for the nominal sum of £1 in December 2020. Kier Construction Ltd was appointed as the main contractor for the scheme in early 2021 and construction began on site in April. The project represents a significant capital investment of £19.6 million. In June, the project received news that it had been successful with a stage 2 bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) of £1.207 million as part of a £2 million project for a five-year activity programme; the DLI Collection and its inter-relationship with the other collections is intrinsic to this funding approval.
- 47 At the point that the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building closed, the display cases and lighting were inadequate and did not meet museum standard, many of the large cases could not be accessed and contents therefore could not be changed.
- 48 The building also included the Durham Art Gallery, which had a focus on contemporary visual art. The art gallery was situated on the second floor and occupied around 43% of the total display area of the building. It was the only dedicated contemporary gallery space in the city. The art exhibitions regularly tied in with wider events in Durham such as Brass and some artistic commissions were paid for by funding from such events.
- 49 Between 2009 and 2012 the Northern Rock Foundation funded a three-year programme of contemporary art exhibitions, totalling £60,000. Following this, project funding was required from the core DLI Museum and Art Gallery budget to continue the programme. Exhibitions from

2012 onwards required additional fundraising to cover costs, engagement activities, commissions, and marketing.

- 50 From 2012 onwards, the Durham Art Gallery changed exhibitions three to four times a year, with a maximum of 12 different exhibitions in any given year across three gallery spaces. Art forms could be in various media including print, audio visual, sculptural, and interactive, and be a combination of touring exhibitions, commissions and speculative requests by artists. The galleries were curated by a specialist Art Curator who was contracted on a part time basis at that time.

### **DLI Archive displays and exhibitions**

- 51 Before the transfer of the DLI Archive into the DCRO only a few archive based exhibitions featuring the DLI had been delivered. However, since 1998, the DLI Archive has featured in almost every display the record office has curated. Exhibitions are prepared for in-house and event display, loan to community heritage groups, community centres, libraries etc.
- 52 Joint exhibitions have also been curated with the DLI Collection and individual archives have been loaned to venues with suitable environmental conditions and security.

### **DLI Collection display and exhibitions since 2016**

- 53 As part of the partnership arrangements with Durham University, two exhibition elements were included to provide a permanent exhibition and a changing programme of temporary exhibitions.
- 54 The permanent exhibition based at Palace Green Library and curated by Durham University but funded by DCC, 'Courage, Comrades and Community' includes objects, audio-visual display, interpretation panels and a family friendly game. The gallery is free and open to the public seven days a week.
- 55 The gallery is situated in an area of historical significance to the DLI, in close proximity to the DLI Chapel, DLI Memorial Garden and several DLI memorials inside the Cathedral. There are multiple memorials on Palace Green including the Boer War Memorial and VC Memorial. Palace Green is also the area where DLI parades, events, commemorations and celebrations have taken place over many years and is still host to DLI Remembrance events today. Just a short walk to the marketplace there is also a DLI Memorial, installed in 2014.
- 56 Three temporary exhibitions have been delivered so far with the exhibition in 2020 postponed due to Covid-19. The exhibitions vary in size and content depending on the venue, object selection, story and interpretation. More than 76,500 people have visited these temporary exhibitions since the closure of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building.

## **Engagement and visitor figures DLI building, DLI Collection & DLI Archive**

- 57 Prior to its closure, the number of visitors to the DLI building varied between a high of almost 70,000 in 1977/78, to a low of just 28,597 in 2015/16 (excluding 1999/-000 when the museum was closed for refurbishment).
- 58 On average, between 1969-2016, the museum and art gallery attracted 39,618 visitors per year. There is no data available to give an accurate split between visitors to the DLI collection and exhibits vs those that came to view the various art exhibitions.
- 59 Visitor data does, however, show that the years with the highest footfalls correlate with key art exhibitions. They also show that the change in opening hours from seven to five days a week in 2014 had little effect on the overall volume of visitors.
- 60 The data also indicates that footfall has not reduced since the closure of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building and that in-person visits to the deconstructed museum model have performed better than the footfall in the 20 years before closure, and since the refurbishment in 2000 (excluding during closures for Covid-19 restrictions).
- 61 Although the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building had an admission charge, the vast majority of visitors did not pay, either because they were independent visitors to the café, annual card and culture card holders, DLI Association members, VIPs, or were attending previews, events or conferences.
- 62 Peak educational visit numbers in the period 2005-2007 and in 2014-15 can be attributed to special education programmes with additional resources and funding provided at that time. These included DLI anniversaries, such as the anniversary of the end of WW2 and WW1, and specific art gallery exhibitions.
- 63 In years without additional external funding and special programming, the numbers of visits were not sustained. Declining numbers also coincide with periods where there was no dedicated learning officer support to drive development.
- 64 Since 2016, almost 13,000 school pupils have been directly engaged by visits to the deconstructed museum model. School visits have grown year on year, with almost 4,500 pupils engaged in programmes in 2020/21. It should be noted that these figures do not capture the number of school visits to the permanent DLI gallery at Palace Green.
- 65 In addition to in-person and school visits each year both the DLI Archive and DLI Collection respond to a significant number of public and research enquiries.

## **Durham History Centre Project: planned display, exhibitions and interpretation**

- 66 The development of exhibition and interpretation content for the new Durham History Centre has been ongoing through the last two years. The interpretive offer is split across the main exhibition space and the level one digital forum, as well as the external landscape and through small installations/ interventions around Oswald House.
- 67 Rather than being divided along collection lines, the exhibitions will be designed around a thematic approach, which will enable the Council to use the collections to tell more holistic stories of the county. This approach aligns to modern practice and visitor expectations.
- 68 The aim is to bring the five collections (DLI, DCRO, Historic Environment Record, Local Studies & Historic Registration) together under the overarching theme '*Record of a Lifetime*' and to present '*personal lifetimes*' at the forefront of the exhibition and interpretation.
- 69 The exhibition is being designed around a thematic approach that is geared towards a person-led style which will focus on the stories of everyday people and families and will introduce and inspire local audiences to connect with their collective heritage.
- 70 The centre's dynamic and state of the art exhibition space featuring the story of working lives in County Durham, of which the story of military lives is a key part, will tell the stories of the people of the Regiment represented in displays through objects and archive, including medals, uniform, historic film, photographs and everyday items, across seven of the eight exhibition themes; the key themes are:
- (a) *Who am I?* - Visitors will encounter a number of real peoples' 'lifetimes' and will be encouraged to consider what makes them who they are and how the different types of information our collections hold allows us to build up an image of a person;
  - (b) *Transformation* – focussed on exploring the changing connections and physical transformation of the County over time utilising the significant map collections held by DCRO;
  - (c) *Living together* - looking at how community spirit has developed in the County, especially in times of need, including during war time, and focussing on local communities to learn about how life has changed over the years;
  - (d) *Making a living* - delving into the most valued industries and exploring some of the newer industries continuing Durham's legacy as an industrial county;

- (e) *Making connections* - exploring the relationship between County Durham and the world, exports, immigration, achievements;
- (f) *Changing perceptions* - challenging the perception that County Durham's story is only industrial and military, showcasing Durham's other achievements;
- (g) *In focus* - a deeper look into stories that have garnered interest from visitors through a programme of temporary exhibitions. The in-focus theme is being designed to change on a regular basis. This will allow us to create temporary exhibitions responding to key events such as the Stockton and Darlington Railway 200th anniversary in 2025, or the anniversary of the Battle of Kohima in 2024;
- (h) *Hidden Treasures* - Using an object-led approach, we will display the hidden treasures that best represent the five collections, including interesting and surprising objects. This area will also encourage visitors to explore and engage with the opportunities that the search rooms on the first floor provide for heritage discovery, building of heritage skills and deeper visitor interaction with the collections.

71 The use of the different collections, their inclusion and the rich diversity of stories they represent, is a key component of the interpretive approach. Because the exhibition is being designed thematically, display cases will not be assigned to individual collections but to the key stories that will be told. It is expected that all cases, except those which make up the Hidden Treasures topic, will have objects/ archive from more than one collection displayed in them.

72 The DHC project is currently in RIBA Stage 4<sup>2</sup> (detailed technical design) for the exhibition design development and work is being undertaken on the 3D scheme design. At this stage of the design development, the exact number of cases for the exhibition space is not finalised so it is not possible to say exactly how many cases will include DLI objects and archive. However, at this stage, 65% of the identified exhibition stories include DLI objects and archive – with the collection being an intrinsic and fundamental part of the proposals.

73 The thematic approach was specifically developed so these collections could appeal to the broadest of audiences creating new encounters with heritage, history, collections and archives. The DLI stories are integrated and intrinsically woven through the thematic approach to the DHC interpretive design. They are part of a narrative that offers unique interwoven stories of the whole of County Durham over its full recorded

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<sup>2</sup> RIBA Plan of Work: [2020RIBAPlanofWorktemplatepdf.pdf \(architecture.com\)](https://www.architecture.com/2020RIBAPlanofWorktemplatepdf.pdf)

history making it the only Heritage Centre to offer a complete picture of an evolving county, documenting changing ways of life, death and work.

### **Collection Storage and Access**

- 74 By 2015, storage for the DLI object collection within the DLI building had become problematic. The collection had progressively outgrown the capacity of the secure stores and the stores themselves did not meet the then British Standard (BS5454) for the care of heritage collections.
- 75 The collection was relocated to Sevenhills in 2016 and there are currently 85m<sup>2</sup> of strongroom space allocated to it, more than twice the storage space of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building. In addition, Sevenhills also provided dedicated collection access and working spaces as well as an area for the display and storage of the DLI reference library and spaces for volunteers to engage with objects and work with curatorial and engagement staff.
- 76 The DLI archive collection has significantly grown since it was moved into the DCRO in County Hall in 1998 and now occupies more than twice the volume of space from when it first moved in.
- 77 As well as state-of-art archive strongrooms, there is also 209m<sup>2</sup> of strongroom space allocated to the DLI Collection in the DHC; this is almost five times the object storage of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building. The DLI Collection and Archive will benefit from 252m<sup>2</sup> of collection working rooms planned for the DHC, including a conservation suite, digitisation studio, processing rooms and drop off and isolation stores.

### **Projected visitor figures Durham History Centre project**

- 78 Estimating annual visitor numbers, particularly for new attractions, is difficult although it is possible to use data from similar centres where the attraction, existing infrastructure and demographics are comparable, combined with market research to establish potential numbers.
- 79 Independent consultants have forecast 70,000 in person visits per annum to the History Centre, this forecast is supported by considerable audience research and visitor market segment analysis.
- 80 The forecast of 70,000 visitors per annum places the expected performance of the History Centre within the top ten visitor attractions within County Durham<sup>3</sup> (Figure 8.). The projected visitor footfall for the

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<sup>3</sup> Data from Visit Britain: Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions 2019; and 2019 visitor figures from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA). Data on Oriental Museum, Museum of Archaeology and Durham Castle Museum provided by Durham University. Note that this list excludes those which do not report their visitor numbers to the attraction monitor or ALVA.

History Centre is more than twice the average number of visitors attracted to the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building in its last three years of operation and is 1.75 times the average number of visitors to the current deconstructed museum model.

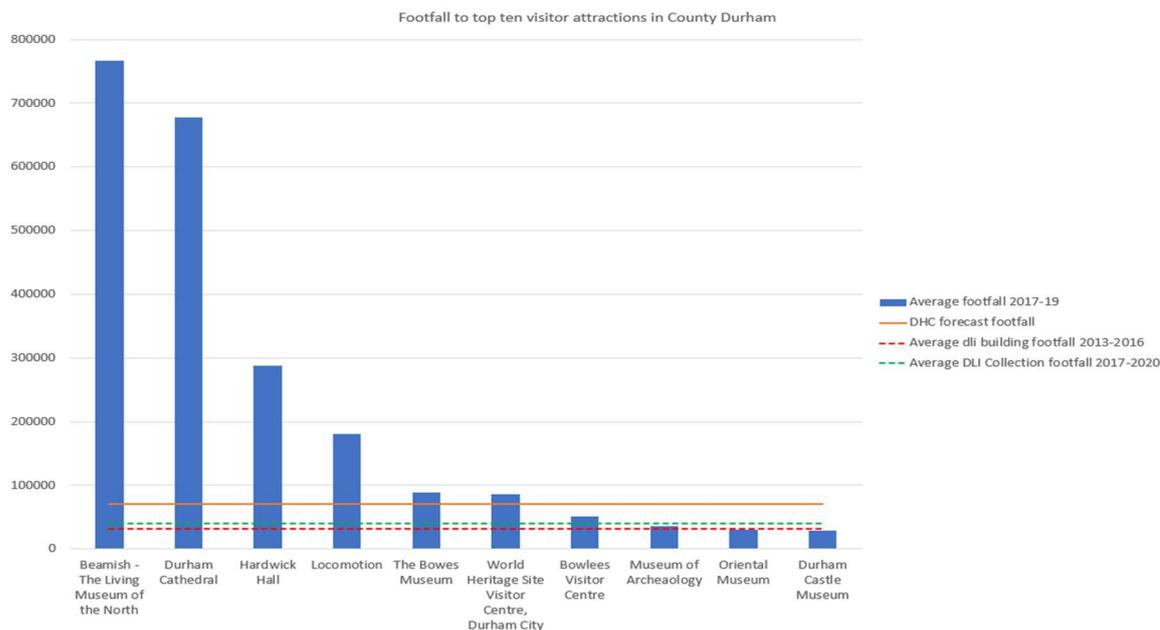


Figure 8. Average visitor figures to County Durham's top ten visitor attractions 2017-2019. Beamish - The Living Museum of the North is the number one attraction over the measured period with an average of 766,560 visitors per year.

## Durham History Centre Project: Public Consultation

- 81 There have been three major rounds of public consultation for the History Centre project. The first, in early 2018, asked about respondents current use and engagement with the five collection areas which the History Centre proposed to bring together, which functions respondents thought should be included in the History Centre, what activities and learning opportunities they would consider using (e.g. archive and heritage skills learning, exhibitions), what facilities respondents thought were important in a History Centre (e.g. parking, space for hire), and whether respondents agreed or disagreed with proposed project.
- 82 In addition to feedback from focus groups and stakeholder interviews, 607 individual survey responses were received with 83% of respondents in favour of the proposals to bring the five services, including the DLI Collection, together into one venue, while 11% disagreed with the proposals.
- 83 21% of other comments in a free text area were positive towards the full DLI collection being co-located as part of the History Centre scheme.
- 84 The second public consultation took place in 2019. The purpose of this consultation was to inform the development of plans for how services could be delivered at the History Centre, whether that be from the new

centre, digitally/virtually or as community outreach. Views were sought on the proposed design and layout of the building, themes for exhibitions, digital access to the collections and use of the register office services. This consultation was supported by an external independent consultant as part of the development of the Stage 1 NLHF bid.

- 85 In addition to feedback from focus groups and stakeholder interviews, 195 individual survey responses were received. Respondents were positive about the proposed designs with the exhibition space being the most liked element. 71% of respondents wanted to learn about local history, including the story of the DLI at the proposed History Centre.
- 86 The most recent round of public consultation took place in autumn 2020. Results from this consultation were used to support and develop the stage 2 National Lottery Heritage Fund bid and focussed on making a visit and public programmes. 356 individual survey responses were received in addition to feedback from focus groups and stakeholder interviews. To support and inform the on-going exhibition and interpretation development for the History Centre, this consultation also asked respondents to comment on what comes to mind when they think about the heritage of County Durham. The top 5 answers (in popularity order) were: mining, DLI, religion, industry and natural heritage.

### **Running costs of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building**

- 87 In the last four years of operation, the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery net annual revenue costs averaged £421,157. This included expenditure on staffing, supplies and services, premises and management costs, and costs and income associated with the café and small retail operation.
- 88 Since 2016, revenue costs for the DLI Collection have averaged £146,000 annually. These costs include expenditure associated with the formal agreement with Durham University, engagement and collection staff, costs of the DLI Research and Study Centre at Sevenhills, and a small amount of expenditure related to collections management.
- 89 In addition, empty property costs of £23,274 per annum have been incurred in respect of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery since it was closed.

### **Review Questions**

- 90 The following sections answer the two key questions considered as part of this review:
- (a) can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI Collection?
  - (b) what are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for alternative uses?

- 91 In order to collate the necessary evidence to address these issues, the review has utilised the services of the Director of the National Conservation Service (NCS) and has been supported by independent reports from global real estate advisor, Avison Young.
- 92 A high level review of the suitability of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building for the permanent storage and display of archive and object collections has been provided.
- 93 Avison Young is a global real estate advisor, which provides a comprehensive suite of commercial real estate services, including transaction, management, financial and advisory services. The company has provided services for over 316 local authorities in the UK.
- 94 Avison Young has carried out an assessment of the options for repurposing the building and also provided costs for various options to inform the answer to both key questions that the review sought to address.
- 95 The following sections should be read in conjunction with the relevant technical reports from both consultants. These have been included at Appendix 2 and 3.

### Stakeholder views

- 96 In addition to independent views from the National Conservation Service and the findings from the Avison Young report, the review has also considered stakeholder feedback, expressed in the special meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) held on 28 July 2021.
- 97 The special meeting of the COSMB was held as an open consultative session for both members and key stakeholder organisations. Senior officers from the Council presented an update and stakeholders were asked to either provide a statement or attend to offer their views. Members of the public were also invited to ask questions and the debate and the discussion on the day was very engaged with a number of questions from the well-attended meeting.

**Table 9.** Summary of the views of key stakeholders represented at the special Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28 July 2021

Stakeholder	Context	Position
National Lottery Heritage Fund	Heritage funder & development agency; funded DHC & DLI museum	That they support the development of the DHC project and would wish to see education engagement as part of any outcome

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Position</b>
The National Archives	Archive funder, developer and accreditation agency	Recognise the importance of the dli archive and note the development of the DHC as a significant achievement
Arts Council England	Arts & Museums funder, developer and accreditation agency	That any option for the collection should maintain strong curatorial values and that the closure of the art gallery left a gap in the visual arts infrastructure
DLI Trustees	Legal owners of the DLI collection & archive	That the collection be professionally conserved and cared for, and that DHC offers the best option for this
Army Museums Ogilby Trust & National Army Museum	Development & support for regimental museums; have an MOU with DCC; funder DLI projects	That the History Centre is a model for the future of regimental museums and they reject the return of a DLI museum on the Aykley heads site
The Faithful Durhams	Community/campaign group to keep the memory of The Durham Light Infantry in the hearts and minds of the people of County Durham	That the Council closed the former museum without consultation and it should re-open to store and display entire DLI collection and archive

- 98 There was support from all committee members and stakeholder organisations, except the 'Faithful Durhams' group, for the History Centre and recognition that it would be the appropriate setting for a permanent DLI collection and archive.
- 99 Strong support was given to a suggestion that a memorial garden or protected space should be established in the former grounds of the DLI Museum, with a potential monument, in recognition that the site has become perceived as a memorial, as members of the public have scattered ashes nearby.

- 100 There was support for investigating the feasibility of repurposing the existing building, for alternative use which could include a DLI component, alongside suggestions for an art gallery.
- 101 No committee members and only one stakeholder group supported the reinstatement of the DLI museum to its original format, as it was prior to 2015. A copy of the COSMB report on the outcome of their meeting is attached at Appendix 4.

### **Current condition of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building**

- 102 The former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building was closed in March 2016 and since that date only essential maintenance has been carried out to maintain the integrity of the building.
- 103 The last asset condition survey was undertaken in April 2015, which identified not insignificant capital investments required to replace or upgrade the heating systems, drainage and lifts, together with major works required to the roofing.
- 104 Building condition surveys do not provide a detailed intrusive survey of key building elements and are utilised to provide a desktop and visual assessment of the general condition of a property. These surveys identify potential defects and items of disrepair and offer an indicative cost for a like-for-like replacement. No improvements are factored into these surveys and, importantly for heritage collection purposes, adherence to the key technical museum standards is not included.
- 105 In light of current carbon emission targets, the proposed works to the heating system within the survey would need to be revisited by a mechanical engineer should the building be brought back into use.
- 106 It is therefore not appropriate to rely on the previous condition survey information as part of this review.
- 107 Both NCS and Avison Young have provided comments on the condition of the building as part of their assessments and these comments have been referenced in the following sections.

### **Options Review Assessment Question 1: Can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI Collection**

- 108 In addressing the first question the review gathered evidence on key issues:
- (a) Planning implications;
  - (b) Building issues;
  - (c) Collection implications;

- (d) Staffing, visitor and business model implications;
- (e) Impact on Durham History Centre; and
- (f) Legal implications.

### *History Centre Planning implications*

109 The building has previously been used for the purpose of housing the DLI collection and both permanent and temporary exhibitions/display, therefore reuse under planning regulations would be permitted. The building / site does not form part of the proposed development of the Aykley Heads site as a strategic employment site as it sits outside of the permitted development area. However, early engagement with planning officers will be necessary to ensure that, should the building be re-opened, the proposed future use and any re-modelling meets planning requirements.

### *Condition issues*

- 110 Evidence of water ingress is prevalent in a number of areas with the build-up of calcite deposits and emergence of stalagmite identified. The boiler plant, lifts and mechanical services have also not been utilised extensively and may no longer be suitable for sustained use. There are capital investments required to bring the building back into operation regardless of its potential use – to address backlog maintenance requirements. The cost of these investments will need to be determined by revisiting the condition surveys and undertaking more detailed feasibility work. This work has not been undertaken at this stage of the review but will be considered in detail at the next stage.
- 111 The specific types of heritage materials which form the DLI Collection are vulnerable to extremes and fluctuations of humidity and temperature. Due to their historical importance and value, a high level of security and protection from flooding, fire and related hazards would be required.
- 112 Therefore, in order to correctly appraise the potential to reopen the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building to house the DLI collection, the requirements of the relevant standards BS 4971:2017 and BS EN 16893:2018 must be considered. The necessary standards for management of collections and the buildings which house such collections, are detailed in these two standards respectively. It is when examining the suitability of the building against the requirements within these standards, that its inadequacy emerges and the need for significant additional investment becomes apparent.
- 113 Since it was closed, the remaining display facilities on the lower ground floor have been partly dismantled. Relative humidity cannot be stabilised in these cases. The glass to some of the cases is large and presents risks to staff when removing it to access the display space within. These

cases, in conjunction with the presence of air conditioning vents in the ceiling, support the suggestion that temperature and relative humidity of the whole room was controlled through mechanical means as opposed to using modern standard display cases. This situation is unsuitable for the safe display of heritage collections.

- 114 BS EN 16893 details specific requirements regarding building specifications and states consideration in new or refurbished buildings should be given to protecting collections through passive or low energy means where possible. As the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building was constructed in the late 1960s, significant building alteration would be required to achieve the specification detailed within the standard.
- 115 The building's storage areas have also been assessed, with one of the storage areas, formerly used for objects, textiles and framed items, now in a dilapidated state. The storage equipment in this area fails to meet the standards for heritage shelf equipment under BS 4971:2017. Additional issues with this area include a door which provides low attack, and minimal fire, resistance, again below the standards required under BS EN 16893. A single-skin construction and heating pipework – which would affect the internal climate – are also present. This area could not be used as a store in its existing condition, failing to meet BS EN 16893.
- 116 A second store area contains no racking and would also only provide limited storage capacity, given its small size of circa 3m x 5m. This room, without investment, could never achieve accreditation.
- 117 Given the storage areas are inadequate, a new store would need to be constructed elsewhere within the building; specifically, a heavily insulated, air and watertight structure with a four-hour fire resistance rating. A security resistance class of RC4 would ensure compliance with BS EN 16893:2018; however, a higher level of RC6 is both advisable, given the building's remote location and this level of security may ultimately be necessary for firearms storage licensing. The storage facility would also require improved fire detection and response systems over what is currently installed within the building.
- 118 Additionally, display areas would need to be carefully considered. The nature of the DLI collection demands secure casing capable of displaying high value items in accordance with the necessary standards for such items, or for items loaned under the Government Indemnity Scheme. Such secure display cases can cost thousands of pounds each and financial, security and space implications may ultimately dictate how much of the collection can be displayed at any one time.
- 119 Consideration must also be given to the potential growth of the collection and archive. The archive has approximately doubled in size since 1998,

which equates to an average annual increase of 5 linear metres since relocation to the Durham County Record Office.

- 120 The former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building is not currently fully compliant with part M of the building regulations (access to and use of buildings. Should the building be re-opened, it will need to meet the relevant standards.
- 121 The former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building is therefore, in its current condition, **not** suitable for and would require significant refurbishment to meet the required technical standards and to achieve accreditation of the DLI Archive and Collection. The impacts of not meeting the required technical standards and/or losing accreditation are significant and are addressed fully later in this report.
- 122 In addition to any capital costs associated with bringing the building back into use, and the associated ongoing cost of facilities management, there would also be ongoing operational costs associated with the building and an appropriate staffing model would need to be formulated. When considering options to re-open the building, an estimate of future operating models and running costs will need to be developed, taking into account the future operating model and ongoing building related costs. This will be a material factor in any future decision to reopen the building and will include exploring opportunities for franchising of the café facilities and the ability to attract external investment and support through a friends / voluntary sector operation to minimise the ongoing revenue impacts on the Council's budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

### *Risks*

- 123 The review has evidenced that building in its current condition not be reopened without additional capital investment and without additional investment on top of this will not meet the national standards and requirements to store heritage collections. The required heritage collection standards BS4971.2017 and EN 16893.2018 are found at Appendix 2. Cultural heritage collections are intended to be kept for future as well as current generations. Their long-term conservation can only be achieved if the sites and buildings that house them support this goal and do not place them at risk.
- 124 Building features that are intended to protect collections are primarily structural, involving resilience against external and internal hazards including fire, water, pests, criminal activity and environments that interact with heritage materials. Environmental considerations for collections are influenced by the nature of their materials, their condition and the uses to which they are put. They are also influenced by policies relating to conservation objectives, such as longevity of collections, and by the nature and costs of energy required to achieve these objectives.

- 125 The DLI deconstructed museum model and collection currently has Provisional Museum Accreditation Status – with an application outstanding to achieve full accreditation pending. The Museum Accreditation scheme is run for museums and galleries of all sizes and types across the UK and has led the way in raising museum standards in the UK. The Accreditation Scheme does this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors, and are governed appropriately by encouraging all museums and galleries to meet an agreed standard in how they're run; how they manage their collections and how they engage with their users. Accreditation is the benchmark for a well-run museum / archive.
- 126 The DLI Archive as part of DCRO also has Accredited Status awarded by The National Archive, however, it should be noted that this is dependent on continuing progress towards rehousing the archive collections in as part of the History Centre project.
- 127 If the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building was brought back into use to store and display the DLI Collection and Archive without meeting the required technical standard it is likely that both the DLI Collection and DLI Archive, and by extension DCRO, would lose their accredited status.
- 128 Loss of accreditation would have several implications for the Council including, but not limited to:
- (a) significant reputational damage;
  - (b) loss of access to external funding from bodies that require grantees to hold accreditation;
  - (c) loss of approval as a 'Place of Deposit' status for DCRO; and
  - (d) loss of museums firearms licence.
- 129 Although the DLI Archives do not constitute 'Public Records' under the meaning of the Public Records Act 1958, while in the care of DCRO, the DLI archives benefit from the same level of statutory protection that must be provided for other public and local authority records, and which is required for Archives Accreditation by TNA. Were Accreditation to be lost, the Council would be required to bear the cost of alternative, accredited storage arrangements for items covered by the Public Records Act 1958, such as the records of courts, prisons, Coroner, hospitals and formerly nationalised industries.
- 130 Loss of *Approval as a Place of Deposit* for Public Records carries a reputational as well as a financial risk. The Council would be seen to be unfit to care for archives, uncaring of its heritage, meaning potential depositors would look elsewhere for a safe home for their collections, and some may choose to remove highly significant archives from its care.

- 131 The firearms and related weaponry content of the DLI object holdings are the subject of statutory controls in the form of firearms licensing law for museums, which in addition to mandatory procedures, requires that a museum is accredited in order to be granted a license. Were this licence to be revoked the Council would be required to bear the cost of alternative storage arrangements within an appropriately licenced premises.
- 132 The grant from the NLHF of £1.207 million as part of a £2 million project to support a five-year activity programme would be at risk if the DLI Collection and Archive are withdrawn from the History Centre scheme as the DLI Collection, and its inter-relationship with the other collections being brought together in the DHC, is intrinsic to this funding approval.
- 133 A range of financial grants, advice, training and professional support have been provided by AMOT and the National Army Museum (NAM) in respect of the DLI museum and collection/archive. Over the last five years the DLI Collection and archives have received over £100,000 in direct grants and matched funding. In a joint statement provided to the special Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Board (28 July 2021) AMOT and NAM stated their strong support for move of the DLI Collection and Archive to the new History Centre and indicated that they may look to recover grant funding awarded to the collection and archive following the closure of the DLI building in 2016, should a decision to re-open the dli building as it was in 2015 be taken.

### *Legal implications*

- 134 A review of the legal title has confirmed that there are no issues which would prevent the building reopening under its former use.
- 135 The DLI collection is owned by the DLI Trustees. In 2017, the Trustees and the Council entered into an agreement whereby the Council displays and stores the content and exhibits of the DLI collection. Since the closure of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building, the Council has continued to store the collection and the location and duration of displays have been agreed in partnership with the Trustees. In preparation for the move to the DHC, updated terms have been agreed with and signed by the parties.
- 136 The principles under which the two parties have worked together and which are included in the revised terms include the following:
- (a) the Council will house the Regimental Collection (RC) and properly display the whole/part of the collection to the public in accordance with the requirements of an Accredited Archive/Museum Service;
  - (b) the Charity and the Council shall work in partnership to determine which items in the RC shall be displayed, in which locations and

for what durations. The Council has editorial control so long as it adheres to the requirements of Accreditation;

- (c) the Charity has a right to inspect and if it deems that items are not properly displayed it will notify the Council in writing of any concerns;
- (d) items cannot be removed from the custody of the Council or disposed by the Council without written consent of the Trustees; and
- (e) the Charity can give notice to remove items for display in temporary exhibitions.

137 Whilst these terms were agreed in April 2021, the agreement needs to be formally executed to satisfy the requirements of the NLHF in respect of grant funding awarded for the History Centre project. A delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable officers to complete the relevant formalities.

138 The decision as to whether to re-open the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building is a matter for Cabinet to consider and as part of this fully consider the revenue and capital implications arising from that course of action. However, if it wishes to use the re-opened building to display parts of the DLI Collection, this needs to be agreed with the DLI Trustees in accordance with existing arrangements. The Council would also need to ensure that the display/storage arrangements at the re-opened museum meet the required accreditation.

139 The Council entered into partnership arrangements with Durham University in 2016 when the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery closed and continues to work collaboratively with the University to deliver a programme of temporary exhibitions and public engagement programmes utilising the DLI Collection. It was envisaged that this partnership working would continue at least until the opening of the History Centre, when the medal collection is planned to move to the new collection stores. implications of any changes to these plans will need to be explored further in light of the options to be considered.

### *Indicative forecast of demand / visitors*

140 It is difficult to estimate potential demand and in person visits to a reopened facility without detailed market research and a clear understanding of the service offer. However, given the average footfall over the life of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building it is possible to make an estimate based on previous performance. Between the refurbishment of the building and displays in 2000, and the closure in 2016, on average 36,262 in person visits were made to the dli building each year. This compares well with other similar museum and heritage attractions within Durham City, for example the Oriental Museum which

attracts around 30,000 visitors per year and the University's Museum of Archaeology which attracts around 36,000 visitors per year. This suggests that if the DLI Museum and Art Gallery building were to re-open in line with its former offer that it might also be expected to attract around 36,000 visitors per annum.

### *Impact on plans for the new History Centre*

- 141 The DLI Collection has been a key part of the plans for the Durham History Centre Project (DHC) since its inception in 2018. The History Centre represents a significant capital investment of circa £19.1 million, with construction underway. In the current plans, as well as new exhibition and interpretation spaces, the History Centre will also provide new state-of-the-art strongrooms, collection working rooms and public research facilities for the DLI Collection and Archive which meet, and in some cases exceed, the minimum requirements of BS EN 196893.
- 142 There would be a significant cost impact for the removal of DLI storage requirements from the DHC scheme as design and production of the bespoke storage systems required is well underway, removal of the DLI Collection and Archive from this scheme to re-store and re-display at the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building would also have a significant impact on the interpretation plans for the History Centre.
- 143 The development of interpretation content has been ongoing for more than two years based around a thematic arrangement of stories and collections. The DLI stories are integrated and intrinsically woven through this thematic approach.
- 144 When developing the initial narrative and criteria for what stories are included a series of curatorial principles were agreed. One key principle states: 'stories must be supported by a tangible object from the collections held'. The removal of the DLI collections from the DHC would invariably lead to all references to the DLI potentially being removed within the main narrative if this principle is to be upheld.
- 145 The omission of DLI stories would not only reduce the overall quantity of the offer, but more importantly, it would remove some of the perspectives, human stories and voices that are woven into the narrative. These voices are seen as an important part of creating content that connects to the diverse range of audiences identified as part of the project's development. Alternative 'peopling' would need to be researched and added in to ensure a broad range of human stories from a diverse range of backgrounds and eras is included.
- 146 The interpretive design also considers how specific audience groups will use and engage with the displays. Spaces and resource are included that will appeal to schools and young learners. Some curriculum links are specifically catered for using collections across the proposed thematic arrangement. The omission of a specific portion of the DLI

content could reduce the appeal to those visiting with specific educational needs.

- 147 The thematic arrangement of content within the interpretive scheme does allow for change within stories and collections without too great an impact on the overall narrative. However, the 3D objects and the diversity of stories within the DLI collections will leave significant gaps in several areas across the exhibition space.
- 148 As an initial assessment there are different approaches that could be considered when looking at how the removal of these collections could be accommodated. These have implications for budget, space and visitor experience in varying degrees:
- (a) *Spatial reallocation* - this would be the easiest to identify and make changes from a design perspective and would involve removing all infrastructures dedicated to the DLI collections and adjusting the other areas to suit. It would also, however, remove some of the impactful displays and key 3D objects creating a screen heavy experience with smaller 2D material resigned to drawers or flatter display cases. This would have impact only in the curatorial development of content and some spatial reallocation. There are drawings and schedules to amend, alterations to digital strategies and accommodation of potential replacement content to consider which will require additional design fees and there would also be costs associated with master programme delay;
  - (b) *Virtual collections* - DHC has a strong digital agenda and the integration of virtual DLI collections could fill in some of the gaps that taking out the main content and collections relating to the DLI creates. This would go against some of the principles of interpretation that were established early on in the process whereby stories and collections were selected based on some simple criteria, the main one being representations of the actual collections held at DHC. Virtual collections could slot onto existing media and interactive AV exhibits. This would have impact in the curatorial development of content and some spatial reallocation. Signposting to where the DLI collections are held would be required within the exhibition. Additional design fees would be incurred and there would also be costs associated with master programme delay;
  - (c) *Change Thematic Approach* - This would be the most time consuming and create the most amount of aborted work from a design and content perspective. It would have serious impact on the critical path of the master programme and would incur the greatest additional cost;

- (d) *Partial Removal of DLI* - This option could consider some of the DLI collection remaining at the DHC. The stories of soldiers, their lives, families and impact in and out of the County are an intrinsic thread through the identity of County Durham. The DHC's thematic approach would allow some DLI stories to be told from very different perspectives than a more dedicated military museum. Additional design fees would be incurred and there would also be costs associated with master programme delay.

- 149 Regardless of the options noted above, to assess, respond and reorganise the content and design it is anticipated a minimum period of six months would be needed over the current content and design programme to accommodate the potential loss of the DLI collection and stories from the scheme. This would include reevaluation of the thematic approach, research, identification and inclusion of substitute content, provision of updated design schemes and associated representations for approval.
- 150 There would also be costs incurred in abortive design works and additional design team resource needed. Additional costs would be incurred as a result of the delay to the critical path for the delivery of the DHC.
- 151 The DLI is also represented on the external concrete artwork design, which as part of the curtain walling for the new extension at Mount Oswald is on the critical path. Part of the design brief for the external artwork has always been to reflect the County but also to draw inspiration from the collections held within the DHC. There may be expectation issues on the centre representing the human story of the DLI in the design if those collections aren't present in the main centre.

### *Impact on storage, display and care of other DCC collections*

- 152 The DLI Collection is one of several heritage collections in the Council's care. In addition to the DLI Collection and DCRO holdings, the Council owns the following heritage collections:
  - (a) DCC Art & Heritage – wide scope ranging from art (with paintings by Tom McGuinness, Norman Cornish and Clement Burlison), to civic regalia and the suit and effects of the Little Count;
  - (b) Durham Learning Resource (DLR) – includes some high value art works by artists such as Lowry and Hockney;
  - (c) The Hackworth Collection – social history artefacts relating to Timothy Hackworth and early railways;
  - (d) The Killhope Collection – minerals, spar boxes and industrial heritage objects and structures; and

- (e) Archaeology – at least 43,000 artefacts and the Historic Environment Record. DCC is the Statutory County Repository for Archaeology and the collection continues to grow year on year with a significant volume of archaeology objects deposited in the last 2-3 years.

153 The Council also currently provides storage space for some social history and architectural items for the Bowes Museum. With the exception of the DLR collection, which is managed by Children’s Services, these collections and the DLI Collection, are all cared for and managed by the Museum and Heritage Manager (1 full time equivalent) within the Council’s Culture, Sport and Tourism service area. Additional collection support comes from volunteers and occasionally via externally funded grants. For example, there is currently a fixed term curatorial assistant role supporting project work on the DLI Collection fully funded by AMOT.

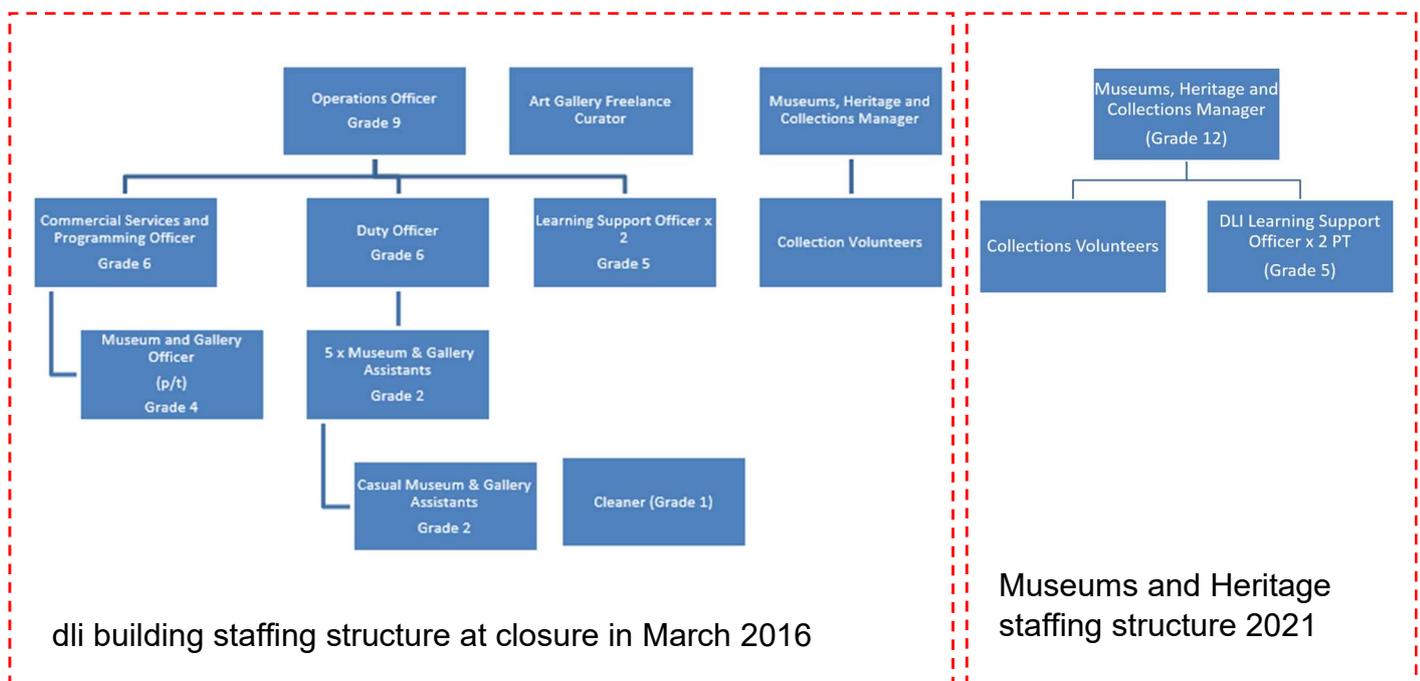


Figure 11. Organograms showing the staffing structure for the dli building and the current structure of the Museums and Heritage Team

154 If the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building was brought back into use to store and display the DLI Collection, additional staffing resource would be required. Any proposed staffing model would need to take account of the requirements of other collections as well as the DLI Collection.

## Options Review Assessment Question 2: What are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for an alternative use?

### *Options Appraisal*

- 155 The following categories of use have been considered as part of an options appraisal to consider potential alternative uses for the building:
- **Retail;**
  - **Residential** (Including Apartments and Single House Conversions);
  - **Community** (Including community Art & Sculpture Exhibition Centre & Gardens, Community Group Use, Sports Facilities, Youth Centre & Art House Cinema);
  - **Education** (Including Higher, Further, School Age and Pre-School Age Uses);
  - **Commercial** (Including Café/Restaurant, Small Hotel, Office, Gym and Social Club);
  - **Museum or Art Gallery with café.**
- 156 Avison Young has assessed each of the above categories of use against **Planning, Architectural, Environmental and Market Demand** considerations, providing a rating for each category. These ratings have been included as individual tables within each subsection below, however full details for each are available in the relevant section within the Avison Young Report attached at Appendix 3. A final options appraisal grid comprising all categories and considerations, is included at the end of this section as **Table 6**. For the full reasoning behind each finding, this section should be read in conjunction with the Avison Young Report.

### *Planning Implications*

- 157 The site is located within the Green Belt and therefore policy 20 of the County Durham Plan states that development proposals will be determined in accordance with the NPPF.
- 158 The site is also located within a number of areas designated within the County Durham Plan. The areas have been summarised in **Table 2** below and additional considerations include the number of trees on site (Planning Policy 40) and the site location within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. These considerations and the considerations in Table 1 will apply to the site regardless of any development. A list of policies relevant to the categories are set out in the Avison Young report.

**Table 2.** Showing the Areas Designated Within the County Durham Plan Applicable to the Former DLI Building and the Relevant Policy:

County Durham Plan Designated Area	County Durham Plan Policy
Green Belt	Policy 20
Safeguarded Area	Policy 28
Coalfield Development High Risk Area	Policy 32
Area of High Landscape Value	Policy 39
Conservation Area	Policy 44

- 159 The suitability of each of the options considered has been appraised against the relevant planning considerations. Avison Young has considered **Retail** use to be unsuitable. **Museum** use and some **Community** uses are considered suitable, with **Residential, Education** and **Commercial** uses also considered suitable but with issues to be resolved should these uses be progressed.
- 160 **Table 3** below summarises the suitability for each category and full details for each rating can be found in the **Planning Assessment** section of the Avison Young Report.

**Table 3.** Showing a Summary of Avison Young’s Assessment of Suitability of Uses Based on Planning Considerations.

Category and Sub-Category of Use		Suitability
Community	Art and Sculpture Exhibition Centre & Gardens	Suitable
	Community Groups and Combined Club House	Suitable
	Sports Changing and Club House	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
	Youth Centre	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
	Art House Cinema	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
Museum/Art Gallery (including hybrid option of including café/restaurant)		Suitable (display/exhibition)

Education	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
Commercial	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
Residential	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
Retail	Unsuitable

### *Architectural Review*

- 161 The building was constructed in 1966 and there are a number of issues which would need to be addressed from an architectural perspective for any repurposing.
- 162 The building was purpose designed and the findings in the independent consultant's report is that any repurposing would require a significant amount of alteration. It is also considered that the building does not embrace or maximise the potential of its surroundings. The building is also deep plan, which makes natural lighting and ventilation difficult. The vertical circulation of the building would need to be addressed with the accessibility of the building carefully considered when planning any future use.
- 163 The services of the building would need to be addressed if the building was brought back into use, with the roof and lifts reported to be nearing end of life and one of the oil fired boilers being inoperable, whilst the other is also approaching end of life. Additionally, the small and basic nature of the current kitchen/dining facility would need to be enhanced in order to accommodate larger demand and/or repurposing of the café / restaurant offer.
- 164 In relation to architectural issues, a summary of the suitability of repurposing the building in line with the specified options has been included below in **Table 4**. Full details for each rating can be found in the **Architectural Assessment** section of the Avison Young Report.

**Table 4. Showing a Summary of Avison Young's Assessment of Suitability of Uses Based on Architectural Considerations**

Category and Sub-Category of Use		Suitability
Community	Art and Sculpture Exhibition Centre & Gardens	Suitable
	Community Groups and Combined Club House	Suitable
	Sports Changing and Club House	Suitable
	Youth Centre	Suitable
	Art House Cinema	Suitable
Museum (including hybrid option of including café/restaurant)		Suitable
Education	Full time school	Unsuitable
	Pre-School or Nursery	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
	Further/Higher	Suitable
Commercial	Leisure Facility or Venue	Suitable
	Hotel	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved
	Office	Unsuitable
Residential		Unsuitable
Retail		Unsuitable

### *Market Demand*

- 165 The Avison Young Report sets out high level demand considerations for the uses identified.
- 166 The report states there would be a limited demand for **Retail** use. The limited footfall potential and remoteness of the former DLI building significantly impacting on its retail viability.

- 167 The report concludes that demand for **Residential** use would be limited due to the size of the building and significant alteration and costs required. Additionally, environmental considerations would inhibit measures required to safeguard and 'privatise' the property.
- 168 It is noted that since the building closed, no community groups have made expressions of interest to manage the building therefore the demand for **Community** use (as this is a market demand assessment, this is also defined as 'community-led') is considered unlikely.
- 169 A range of **Education** uses has been considered, however the building would not be suitable for use as a full time school due to the lack of a large multi-purpose hall. Avison Young has considered the potential for the building to be used by a pre and post-school age educational establishments and although there is potential for the building to be adapted for these uses, the report states the demand for either option is likely to be limited.
- 170 **Commercial** uses, comprising café/restaurant, hotel, office accommodation and gym options, have been considered. However due to reasons such as the level of adaptation required, location, changing office use trends and hotel operators in particular mostly now operating 'asset-light' strategies, demand from commercial organisations is considered unlikely and therefore not viable. Avison Young does however, consider there would be demand for a café/restaurant offer alongside other usage of the building which has the ability to create higher footfall.
- 171 The use of the building as a **museum/gallery** with café / restaurant to display visual art and to potentially house other Council collections has been considered. Currently, the Council stores part of the DLI Collection (along with other collections) at Sevenhills; which is leased accommodation. Following the relocation of the DLI Collection from Sevenhills to the new History Centre, the future location of remaining collections (*The Hackworth Collection, DLR, DCC Archaeology, Part of the Killhope Collection and part of the DCC Art & Heritage Collection*) will need to be more fully considered. In addition, there are other collections or objects elsewhere that the Council is responsible for that will require conservation and storage, including items currently stored in County Hall such as paintings from the art collection.
- 172 The independent professional advice is that there is likely to be demand for a quality café/restaurant offer as part of a use for the building which has the potential to generate higher footfall through gallery visitors, tourists and professional research activity being undertaken in the building
- 173 The Durham Tourism destination plan highlights that in comparison to other historical cities, Durham has too few visitor attractions and a

cluster of visitor attractions in Durham City is required. Premier historic cities such as York, Bath, Oxford and Chester have more than one nationally recognised attraction, while York has three very high profile attractions and fourteen within walking distance of the city centre. All comparator locations have a city art gallery. While the UNESCO world heritage site is undoubtedly a draw, Durham lacks critical mass and, as a result, struggles to keep people in the city for longer than half a day. A gallery, exhibition and café venue would potentially make a significant contribution to a critical mass.

- 174 Moreover, a venue of this nature could provide dedicated display space for items from the DLI collection. This would support curatorial connections with the History Centre and other institutions, further adding to critical mass and dwell time in the city.
- 175 Durham is bidding to become UK city of Culture 2025. The bid aims to double the number of overnight stays by visitors, and improved cultural infrastructure such as a new gallery would make a key contribution to this aim.
- 176 A summary of the Consultant’s Market Demand Assessment of the building in line with the specified categories has been included below in **Table 5**. Full details for each rating can be found in the **Market Demand Assessment** section of the Avison Young Report.

*Table 5. Showing a Summary of Avison Young’s Assessment of Market Demand of Uses*

Category and Sub-Category of Use		Level of Demand/Need
Community Led		No Demand / Need
Museum/gallery (including hybrid option of including café/restaurant)		Proven Demand / Need
Education	Full time school	No Demand / Need and Unsuitable
	Pre-School or Nursery	No Demand / Need
	Further/Higher	No Demand / Need
Commercial	Gym	No Demand / Need
	Hotel	No Demand / Need
	Office	No Demand / Need

	Restaurant/Café	No Demand / Need
Residential		No Demand / Need
Retail		No Demand / Need

### *Environmental Considerations*

- 177 Avison Young has carried out a high-level assessment of the external areas around the building and also carried out an environmental appraisal against the range of identified uses.
- 178 The site is considered detached and slightly remote to other functions, heavily wooded to the north/west and with steeply sloping terrain.
- 179 The external areas, although considered adequate, do require some renewal, principally to paving, tarmac and tree encroachment. Further investigation is recommended to the soil/leaf coverage of hard surfaces and retaining walls.
- 180 An important consideration when proposing any works to the external environment is, despite a lack of consecration, that the grounds have served a memorial purpose.
- 181 **Retail** and **Residential** uses are considered to be unsuitable from an environmental perspective. **Education** use would be suitable if issues regarding the exposure of the site could be mitigated, **Community** and **Museum** uses are both deemed suitable and within **Commercial** uses. The Consultant does not deem a hotel to be suitable but considers a leisure facility or venue to have suitability with the grounds utilised to the building's advantage.
- 182 A summary of the Environmental Assessment of the building in line with the specified categories has been included below in **Table 6**. Full details for each rating can be found in the **Environmental Assessment** section of the Avison Young Report.

**Table 6.** Showing a Summary of Avison Young's Assessment of Suitability of Uses Based on Environmental Considerations

Category and Sub-Category of Use	Suitability
Community	Suitable
Museum/gallery (including hybrid option of including café/restaurant)	Suitable
Education	Suitable with Issues to be Resolved

Commercial	Leisure Facility or Venue	Suitable
	Hotel	Unsuitable
	Office	Unsuitable
Residential		Unsuitable
Retail		Unsuitable

### *Legal Title Implications*

- 183 The review has not identified any restrictions or legal impediments which would prevent the building being repurposed for an alternative function. However, should alternative functions be considered, a full and detailed assessment would need to be undertaken.
- 184 There are no known leases or licences which significantly affect the property, other than current use of the car park for Covid-19 testing and the various charity events and runs which take place around the grounds.
- 185 As detailed in the planning implications section, there are a number of Designated Areas which apply to the building. Should repurposing be considered, a detailed appraisal against the relevant policies relating to these Designated Areas and the proposed alternate use must be undertaken.

### *Options Appraisal*

- 186 Within the report, Avison Young has summarised the findings from the planning, environmental, architectural and market demand considerations against the identified categories of use. A summary of the appraisal is included below in **Table 7**, and full details are found in the **Shortlist of Feasible Options** section of the report.

**Table 7.** Showing a Summary of Avison Young's Shortlist of Feasible Options

Category of Use		Environmental	Architectural	Planning	Market Demand	Legal Title Review	Overall Feasibility
Community (Community managed in the case of market demand)	Community Arts Exhibition Centre & Gardens	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
	Community Group and Club House	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
	Sports Changing and Club House	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Youth Centre	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Art House Cinema	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
Museum/gallery(including hybrid option of including café/restaurant)		Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Education	Primary or Secondary	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Pre-School or Nursery	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Further/Higher	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
Commercial	Standalone Restaurant/Café	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Leisure Facility or Venue	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
	Hotel	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red

	Office						
	Residential						
	Retail						

- 187 **Table 7** above shows the Consultant’s appraisal of suitability for each category, with the exception of Market Demand where it reflects an assessment of the level of demand/need. Additionally, the Market Demand assessment for the Community Building Type refers to a Community managed venture as well as the Community building category.
- 188 The assessment by Avison Young has concluded that a Museum/Gallery option is the most suitable option for any potential future use of the building should the decision be taken to reopen it, though there are a number of cost and operational considerations that need to be considered further.
- 189 Repurposing the building as an art gallery and cultural venue capable of displaying and storing collections and art would increase the Council’s cultural offer and would offer a location for other DCC collections to be displayed. This could include a permanent display of some of the DLI collection on site. Additional facilities such as a catering and small retail offer would add value to the visit and such a facility would potentially support the Council’s bid of being named UK City of Culture 2025.
- 190 However, given the current condition of the building, a significant refurbishment would need to be undertaken and any proposal would need to acknowledge the sensitive nature of the surrounding grounds. The costs for various refurbishment options will need to be carefully considered as part of the next phase of the review. In addition, the operating model and revenue implications arising from reopening the building will need to be carefully considered and taken into account as part of any future decision to reopen the building.

### *Grounds of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery Building*

- 191 When considering any future use of the site, planning considerations must be taken into account as outlined in the planning implications section above.
- 192 The grounds of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building have historically been an important space for the residents of Durham and contain footpaths and walkways which link with many surrounding areas. This is supported by heatmaps, which show the site and surrounding areas with are well used for recreation purposes. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the positive contribution of being outdoors

towards people's mental health and wellbeing. The site is seen as an important green space to the north of the city.

- 193 As previously mentioned, the grounds have been used as a location to place the ashes of loved ones.
- 194 Given these factors, there is a strong argument to provide, within the grounds an area for reflection and contemplation. Further work will be required on the most appropriate location for such a space along with more detailed work to understand the design, extent and management of the ground along with consideration to any financial, legal and staffing implications.

## History Centre Conclusions

- 195 This report outlines the findings of the review into the options for display and storage and care of the DLI collection and considers the key issues and implications in terms of potential uses of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building, based on the evidence gathered as part of the review and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in the review process. The report includes an impact assessment on the plans for the new History Centre, the impact on the care of other DCC collections.
- 196 These considerations are discussed in detail, to answer the key questions of whether the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building can be brought back into use to store and display the DLI Collection and if not, what are the options to repurpose the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building and site for an alternative use.
- 197 Firstly, when considering the viability of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery DLI building to be brought back into use to house the DLI Collection, it is important to consider not only the technical standards required to achieve this purpose from a collections and building suitability perspective, but also the wider impacts on other Council collections. These include accreditation and the potential impact upon the Durham History Centre and the County Record service. As part of these considerations, there are numerous implications identified, with the overall conclusion being that it is not considered appropriate to house the full permanent DLI collection in this building going forward.
- 198 The independent advice received demonstrates that the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building currently **does not** meet the required technical standards for both storage and display of the DLI Collection and that there will be additional capital costs incurred in meeting those standards should the Council wish to proceed along those lines. There are capital investment requirements to bring the building up to standard regardless of the use to which the building might be use.

- 199 There are also financial commitments to consider in terms of revenue operations. Whilst the previous running costs of the building are set out in this report, future costs will be dependent on the efficiency of the building and the business model used to provide services from the building. Further work is required to assess the viability of franchising the café / restaurant facilities and to explore alternative delivery models. Any ongoing revenue implications would need to be accommodated in the councils Medium Term Financial Plan in due course.
- 200 If the building was refurbished in a manner which met the required technical standards and renewed display and storage options were purchased, there would still be implications to consider if the decision was made to return the DLI Collection to the former dli building. These include risks to funding and the cost and time implications necessary to amend the key themes of the new History Centre and programme delay as well as reputational damage from abortive work. Funding bodies will review the financial support provided towards the History Centre, having made their original decision based on the inclusion of the DLI collection and archive.
- 201 Additionally, the Council may also lose its museum and archive accreditations which have been provisionally awarded based on current plans. This would be a significant loss, which could lead to the loss of access to external funding, loss of approval as a 'Place of Deposit' for the DCRO, and the loss of the Council's museums firearms licence. The latter two implications would mean the Council could no longer legally store and display firearms from the DLI Collection and Public Records and would need to cover the costs of storage with an alternative licence/ accredited holder.
- 202 Secondly, when addressing the key question of repurposing the building, a range of alternative uses for the building and the grounds has been considered. As part of this assessment, the independent external consultant, Avison Young, has examined considered a museum and/or art related venue to be the most suitable when assessed against the likely market demand and environmental, architectural and planning considerations.
- 203 Repurposing the building as a gallery, exhibition and café venue with dedicated space for display of items from the DLI collection would increase the Council's cultural offer and would offer a location for other DCC collections and potentially other national and international touring exhibitions and would support the Council's bid of being named UK City of Culture 2025.
- 204 In light of the numerous implications of reopening the building under its previous use, this is not recommended but consideration should be given to utilising the building for a similar art, collection or other cultural venue.

- 205 However, even if the building were not to be used for the storage and collection of heritage artefacts, it would still require a substantial refurbishment.
- 206 A suitable feasibility study would need to be undertaken to determine the full extent of works to be carried out, in line with a detailed brief specific to the proposed use of the building.
- 207 Should the building be repurposed and footfall be maintained, there is likely to be demand for a catering offer to supplement the venue. This will require some investment as the existing facilities are inadequate. All options will be explored including leasing to external operators, although the Avison Young report indicates potential limitations for a commercial offer due to location and availability of city centre sites.

### **Background papers**

- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board - Review of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection and Archive.

### **Other useful documents**

- Cabinet Report October 2015
- Cabinet Report June 2021

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Council has the power to operate museums and art galleries under s12 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Whilst there is no lawful impediment to prevent the Council reopening the DLI Museum in its former guise, doing so may place the Council in breach of its agreements with the DLI Trustees, the consequence of which may be the loss of the DLI Collection and Archive and the associated reputational loss.

### **Finance**

The review has necessitated the commissioning of external independent consultancy support, through the engagement of Director of National Conservation Service and Avison Young. The cost for this is being met from corporate contingencies in the current year.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings of £241,984 were realised from the closure of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery and were factored into the budget, with an ongoing annual revenue cost of £50,000 for the storage and display of the Collection under the revised arrangements proposed and £20,000 for learning staff support being required going forward. In addition, there were one off capital costs of £76,000 to create new collection storage at Sevenhills in Spennymoor, and one-off costs of £175,000 for the creation of a new DLI gallery within Durham University.

The report identifies that there will be a need for capital investment to address backlog maintenance and refurbish it to an acceptable standard to facilitate the re-opening / potential repurposing of the building.

A further feasibility study is to be commissioned the cost of which will be met from corporate contingencies. The outcome of that study will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in early 2022. This will include full consideration of the MTFP and budget impacts of bringing the building back into use – both revenue and capital.

### **Consultation**

In addition to independent views from the National Conservation Service and the findings from the Avison Young report, the review has also considered stakeholder feedback, expressed in the special meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) held on 28 July 2021.

The COSMB meeting was open to the public and was broadcast live. It provided an opportunity to consider the review questions and key stakeholders were invited to submit representations on the issues from their perspectives. The outcome of that meeting has been fully considered as part of the evidence

base for the review and the report prepared by the COSMB is attached at Appendix 4.

## **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

An Equalities Impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the more detailed feasibility.

## **Climate Change**

The current building does not meet relevant BREEAM standards. Before being brought back into use this will be addressed.

## **Human Rights**

None specific to this report.

## **Crime and Disorder**

None specific to this report.

## **Staffing**

The review to date has been undertaken using existing staffing resources, through reprioritising activity, supplemented by the support of external consultants to undertake the independent assessment of the options being explored.

## **Accommodation**

The review has considered the current condition of the building and options for displaying, storing and care of DLI collection in the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building, including a full assessment of risks, financial, legal and value for money issues.

The review has also considered the impacts on the new Durham History Centre, including impact on funding and on the storage, display and care of other DCC collections.

It has been identified that significant investment would be required to bring the building back into use and that the level of investment would be significantly increased in order to bring storage areas up to the relevant British standards. The current storage footprint is too small to reasonably store and conserve the DLI collection.

The review to date has also established that returning the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building to its former use would not have the full support of key stakeholders such as the Army Museum Ogilby Trust and the DLI Trustees, who are committed to the History Centre proposals.

The DLI collection and archive is integral to the Durham History Centre project and withdrawing in its entirety would present significant risk to the Durham

History Centre – a £19.6 million investment that is currently under construction and for which significant National Heritage Lottery Funding has been secured.

The options for repurposing the building are relatively limited, primarily due to location, market conditions and planning restrictions. The analysis has identified that repurposing the building in line with cultural use presented the only real feasible approach, though more work is required to firm up the costs and other implications associated with bringing the facility back into use.

## **Risk**

The review has evidenced that the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building in its current condition could not be reopened without additional capital investment and that additional investment on top of this would be needed to meet the national standards and requirements to store heritage collections. There are also some significant reputational and other risks associated with reopening the building in line with its previous use – not least of which the impact on the Durham History centre project and a range of external funding arrangements.

All options considered have been assessed against the evidence available including an assessment of key issues such as planning, building, collection implications, future viability / market assessment and any legal considerations.

Based on the work undertaken the refurbishment of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery building as a gallery, exhibition and café venue including dedicated space for display of DLI collection items – to complement the displays at the History Centre (noting the History Centre will be the permanent home of the DLI collection) is considered to be the preferred solution.

Further detailed feasibility studies are required to progress this option. This will include full consideration of the MTFP and budget impacts of bringing the building back into use – both revenue and capital – and will include the viability of franchising the café / restaurant facilities and explore alternative delivery models. Any ongoing revenue implications would need to be accommodated in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan in due course.

## **Procurement**

The review has necessitated the commissioning of external independent consultancy support, through the engagement of Avison Young. Further consultancy support will be required to help complete the next stage of the review. The procurement of any consultants to support this review has been undertaken in line with the Council's Contract Procedure rules.

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## **Appendix 2: Report of National Conservation Service**

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Attached as a separate document.

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## **Appendix 3: Report of Avison Young**

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Attached as a separate document.

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**Appendix 4: Minutes of DCC Corporate Overview and Scrutiny  
Management Board meeting on 28 July 2021**

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Attached as a separate document.