

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

31 March 2022



**Review of the Durham Light Infantry
(DLI) Collection and Archive –
Feasibility Study Outcomes**

Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with an opportunity to comment on the outcomes of further feasibility studies regarding the refurbishment and re-use of the former DLI museum and art gallery building reported to Cabinet on 16 March 2022.

Executive summary

- 2 Cabinet at its meeting on 16 June 2021 agreed to undertake a review to reconsider options for the future use of the DLI collection and archive, including the use of the former DLI building at Aykley Heads. The overview and scrutiny function of the Council was asked to contribute to the review by way of an open session with elected members and key stakeholders. A special meeting of COSMB was held on 28 July 2021 to consider the review.
- 3 Key stakeholders were given the opportunity to put forward their views by attending the meeting or making written representations. A presentation was made by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth setting out the context, current position, and overview of the review scope.

- 4 A summary of the key issues identified were reported to Cabinet in September 2021, where a decision was taken to undertake further work to develop a business case to consider whether to reopen the former DLI building as a cultural venue, with some permanent display of the DLI collection on site but with the DLI collection and archive being housed in the new History Centre as originally envisaged.
- 5 On 16 March 2022 Cabinet considered the outcome of the additional work that had been undertaken. A copy of that report is attached at Appendix 2.

Recommendation(s)

- 6 COSMB is recommended to:
 - (a) Consider and comment on the outcome of the options appraisal report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 March 2022.

Background

- 7 In 2015 Cabinet considered proposals on the future arrangements for the DLI Museum. Cabinet agreed to new arrangements for the storage and display of the DLI collection which included the storage of items at the Sevenhills facility and proposals for the loan of items to a number of venues including Palace Green Library, Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe and Seaham. This was part of an approach to widening the exposure of the history of the DLI to wider groups whilst also achieving Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings.
- 8 Further arrangements were agreed by Cabinet on 17 January 2018 as part of consideration of a report on the development of the Aykley Heads site as a Strategic Employment Site, the relocation of the DCC Headquarters to the city centre and the new History Centre development which would include storage, care and display for the DLI collection and archive.
- 9 Following the election in May, the new Cabinet requested a review of the proposed arrangements for the care, storage and display of the Durham Light Infantry Collection, archive, museum building and grounds. This was a key priority to review and ensure that the proud and significant military history of County Durham is recognised.
- 10 An options appraisal was produced to include a full assessment of opportunities, costs, risks, other funding availability. This included an impact assessment on the plans for the new History Centre, with the outcome considered by Cabinet in September 2021.
- 11 The Cabinet review scope posed two high level questions:
 - Question 1: Can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI collection?
 - Question 2: What are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for an alternative use?

Role of COSMB

- 12 Scrutiny's role is to scrutinise decisions of the executive, to hold them to account and make recommendations on policy development and implementation. Cabinet recognised the importance of an independent minded scrutiny function and requested scrutiny's support by holding an open consultative session of members and key stakeholders.
- 13 The outcomes from the COSMB review session were referred back to Cabinet for inclusion within their considerations.

- 14 This meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is to update members on the outcome of the options appraisal and decision made by Cabinet at their meeting on 16 March 2022.
- 15 The report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth is attached at Appendix 2.

Background papers

- Review of DLI Collection Archive and the Future of the DLI Building and Grounds - report to Cabinet and minutes 16 June 2021
- Review of DLI Collection Archive and the potential future use of the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery and grounds at Aykley Heads - report September 2021

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Consultation

Key stakeholders were invited to participate in the COSMB special meeting in July 2021.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None

Appendix 2:
