

Cabinet

21st October 2015

Future DLI Museum Arrangements



**Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services
Cllr Neil Foster, Portfolio Holder Economic Regeneration**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present a proposal for a new approach to the storage, display and access to the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) museum collections. The current approach is both expensive and ineffective in continuing to tell and maintain this important history of the County. The story of the former DLI is central to the history of the County and it remains important that this is preserved for future generations. This report explores alternative ways of ensuring this legacy is maintained.
- 2 Whilst recognising the current financial environment, the report proposes an alternative approach to managing the collections that seeks to:
 - a. Ensure the collection is stored safely and appropriately
 - b. Facilitate as wide as possible access to the collection
 - c. Maintain a broad educational programme
- 3 The future plans for Durham Art Gallery, located within the current DLI museum building, will be subject to a separate report.

Background

- 4 This proposal has been developed in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the former DLI Regiment who are the owners of the collection but place it under the care of DCC through a Deed of Trust.
- 5 The Trustees have recognised the constraints of, and difficulties in, sustaining a static museum based collection and have responded positively to the opportunity to reimagine the collection and to retell the stories of the DLI. A letter of support from the Trustees is contained at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 6 The DLI has been open since 1968. The collection dates from 1758 – 2011 and comprises of firearms, uniforms, medals and ceremonial items among many others and is historically significant for the county and to military history in general. The collection is curated by DCC. The archival collection, i.e. diaries and photographs, is stored and taken care of by Durham County

Record Office, who also answer all family history related enquiries through a paid for enquiry service.

- 7 The DLI museum which currently houses the collection had 39,359 visitors in 14/15, which includes the DLI collection, art gallery visitors and approximately 1,500 school children who participate in formal education programmes on site. Whilst it is recognised that the WW1 commemoration is having a positive effect on visitor numbers, this level of interest is unlikely to be sustainable in the future.
- 8 Despite the museum also occupying a city centre location on the Aykley Heads site, visitor numbers are low compared with many other museums and attractions in the County; Locomotion 170,000, Beamish 600,000, Cathedral 600,000 and Bowes 110,000. The current location of the building is away from the main visitor footfall in the city which would encourage linked trips and increased dwell time.
- 9 The DLI building is currently expensive to maintain and would require investment to ensure the building is safe and economical to continue to operate as a museum. In particular, appropriate conditions and storage for the collection is proving difficult to achieve and displays are in need of renewal. Whilst the collection is currently stored at the DLI it has progressively outgrown the capacity of the secure stores.
- 10 The DLI is one of 5 museums supported by Durham County Council (DCC).
- 11 In October 2013 the service proposed a future funding profile for all museums. This included a three year funding profile with a reduction in funding for all museums by 2016/17 (NS 24.6). For the DLI this included savings in 14/15 and 16/17 as set-out below. The first saving formed part of MTFP4 and the proposals within this report could contribute to the service's MTFP6 savings proposals.

Table 1

13/14 DCC Contribution	14/15 Savings	15/16 Savings	16/17 Savings	Future DCC Contribution
£396,984	£105,000		£241, 984	£50,000

- 12 The cost of operating the DLI in 2013/14 was £396,984 which was a subsidy of approximately £10.05 per visitor based on 39,500 visits in that year (including education visits). This was significantly higher than the average museum subsidy across the county of £1.58 per visitor.
- 13 The first phase of savings for the DLI in 2014/15 of £105,000 were successfully achieved by reduced building opening hours and a restructure. The remaining subsidy for the DLI is now £291,984 and the reduced cost per visitor now £7.41, based upon 14/15 visitor numbers (39,359), but this cost per visitor still remains significantly higher than the county average.

- 14 The second phase of savings planned for 2016/17 presents a further saving of £241,984 and requires a significant rethink about how the collection can be managed to maximum effect.
- 15 Possible alternatives for the Durham Art Gallery will be the subject of a separate report.

Material Considerations

- 16 Given the importance of the collection any available resources must be deployed effectively in storing, conserving and displaying it. The existing museum is not the only vehicle through which this can be achieved and the following sections set out alternatives that will ensure the collection and its stories are brought to life for future generations.

Improved Collection Storage

- 17 In the first instance it is important that suitable proposals are developed to safely store and manage the collection in keeping with the Deed of Trust with the DLI Trustees, ensuring effective collection management.
- 18 The proposal is to relocate the DLI collection to Sevenhills at Spennymoor, to a store that is secure, environmentally controlled and suitable for the size of the collection and its anticipated growth. This will sustain and improve the condition of the collection for future generations and for historical research.
- 19 Sevenhills would require some modifications to ensure it has the right racking, security and environmental conditions; this is anticipated to be a one off cost of approximately £76,000. This would predominantly allow for suitable and safe storage to be installed into two areas, allowing the collection to be safely stored and accessed within a controlled environment.
- 20 Further internal adjustments at Sevenhills would also enable a new collections study area to be provided for curators, conservators and volunteers to work on the collection, and a space for visitors and researchers to access and use the collection for study and education. This would be a more modern and accessible space compared to the current DLI museum and helps to add value to the current work.
- 21 Initial exploratory work would suggest this is achievable in the space and timeline required of the project, although it is noted the incoming collection will require the adjustment to the current storage of other collections at Sevenhills.
- 22 At Sevenhills, the collection would be cared for by the Principal Museums Heritage and Collections Manager in the Growing and Learning Team of Culture and Sport. This would include the administration of the existing collections management database in keeping with the Deed of Trust. There is also a number of long standing and specialist volunteers who support the cataloguing and research of the collection. Their support and work would not be impeded by this approach and they would remain supported by the Manager.

Increased Access to the Collection

- 23 The use of temporary loans and exhibitions would be an opportunity to widen access to the collection. It should be re-emphasised that within any temporary loan, DCC would retain responsibility and custodianship of the collections relating to the Durham Light Infantry, ensure the collections are cared for appropriately and the collections database is maintained.
- 24 It would be the responsibility of the Museums, Heritage and Collections Manager to seek key partnerships and loans to curate temporary exhibitions to continue to display elements of the collection and expand its access to both the public and researchers alike. The remaining £50,000 subsidy to the DLI collection would enable the Manager to broker arrangements and jointly curate exhibitions. Partners would most likely also bring funding and expertise to the arrangements, adding further value.
- 25 In this respect it is proposed that a loan to Durham University, covering the remainder of the World War 1 commemoration period, is entered into. This will result in the collection being displayed at Palace Green Library, within the city centre, attracting new audiences and presenting new narratives and stories from within the collection, whilst being situated in a historically significant location for the regiment.
- 26 Essentially the initial University loan will include:
- a. A semi-permanent gallery for five years, containing the 'History of the Durham Light Infantry' within the Palace Green complex which would be free to access by visitors.
 - b. Storage of medals not on initial display and their delivery on demand to the 'Barker Reading Room' for viewing for the 5 year period of the collection loan.
 - c. A First World War learning package delivered on site, supporting a wider outreach learning package delivered by DCC.
 - d. 5 DLI-related temporary exhibitions, commencing with the large-scale Somme exhibition in 2016 utilising other gallery space within Palace Green Library with the potential to tour into other local spaces, which might form part of a range of joint ticketing opportunities with wider exhibitions in the city.
 - e. A package of advice on conservation to the Trustees and information to visitors. This approach will further develop our partnership with Durham University and allow greater access to academics to help curate new exhibitions.
- 27 In order to deliver this initial loan partnership the implications are as follows:
- a. A contribution towards the curation of the initial exhibition to be negotiated and resourced from within the remaining DLI budget. The income generated from the temporary exhibitions would be retained by

the University to help contribute to these costs and reduce support from DCC.

- b. In addition a grant contribution would be required towards the physical development of the exhibition spaces. DCC contribution would be £175k. The new semi-permanent gallery space and associated temporary exhibitions would be jointly curated between the University and DCC. A capital bid has been submitted in order to support this investment.

28 The opportunity to work with the University in the first instance will provide a timely solution through the WW1 commemoration period. It will also help support the likely increased interest in this period and will situate an exhibition of the collection at a meaningful historical DLI site; close to the DLI Chapel and garden within the Cathedral and the new DLI memorial in the market place. It is estimated that this area of the city reaches over 600,000 visitors and pilgrims per year and will provide greater proximity and exposure to the collection than it currently enjoys.

29 In addition to the university loan, it is intended to look at the use of the collection to support the County Council's proposed heritage programme to commemorate World War 1. It is anticipated that this will include:

- a. *The Weeping Window* - This contemporary visual arts project presents the opportunity for Durham to host an element of the world renowned HM Tower of London installation 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red'. This is a competitive process in which the county's wider programme will be presented to illustrate commitment and context. It is not guaranteed, but clearly has huge appeal and benefit.
- b. *Durham Hymns* - This musical project will work with a number of composers and poets to create at least 8 new hymns inspired by the events and personal experiences of WW1, performed by local artists and schools in the Cathedral and across community venues. It is hoped the initial performance of the hymns at the Cathedral will be during the Poppy display period.
- c. *'Sights and Sounds' Exhibition* –This focused family exhibition will present the 'Sights and Sounds of WW1', providing connection to both the proposed Poppy display and the University exhibition at Palace Green across the same period. This will be the first major exhibition to utilise the Gala Theatre as an exhibition space.
- d. *The Fighting Bradford's* –This performing arts project will commission a writer to develop a unique play and a series of outreach workshops to specifically focus upon the story of the Bradford Brothers. The play will be performed by both professional actors and young people at the Gala Theatre.

30 Essentially, this more dynamic approach to the use of the collection has the opportunity to reach a much wider audience than could be hoped for at the current fixed DLI museum location. By example, the close proximity of offering two supported exhibitions in Summer 2016, albeit temporarily, would present

opportunities for joint ticketing and expanding the reach and affordability across the city.

Outreach Education

- 31 One of the key approaches to extending access to the collection is raising awareness and understanding of the DLI story. A key component of this is the ability to research and tell the stories of so many, during the period of the regiment. Traditionally the education team have played a key role in supporting the research and interpretation, at the same time creating education packages suitable for primary and secondary school children, which deliver key components of the national curriculum.
- 32 In developing the detail of this proposal it was felt that the retention of the educational aspects of the service was very important in order to continue to help animate and bring to life the rich stories behind the collection.
- 33 This will also support a wider loan approach with the collection, as supporting display and education material will be a common request to accompany suitable loans.
- 34 There is also an opportunity to take a more dynamic and multi partner approach to education, where the education staff of different organisations could collaborate to deliver joint packages to schools who so often have limited curriculum time.
- 35 On this basis, consideration is required to retain the revenue funding for this function amounting to the two 15 hr weekly posts at an annual cost of £20,000. It would be the intention of Culture and Sport to identify this shortfall in savings from wider savings plans. The education staff would report to the Museums, Heritage and Collections Manager, and would be relocated to Sevenhills alongside the collection, although would more than likely play a strong outreach role, alongside partners and collection loans.

Financial Implications

- 36 The proposals of this report have a number of financial implications of both a revenue and capital nature.
- 37 Revenue Funding: The future funding profile identified in table 1 required savings of 87% from the 13/14 DLI budget of £396,984 which should result in a budget of £50,000 by 16/17.
- 38 The proposals of this report achieve this saving with the exception of £20,000 given the strong wish to retain the educational staff and provide a more creative approach, which it is felt the DLI collection is worthy. The approach still provides significant reduced costs and most significantly increased visibility and profile reducing the subsidy/head significantly. The additional savings will be identified from the wider Culture and Sport offer.
- 39 The remaining £50,000 budget will be utilised to facilitate temporary loans with partner organisations as all other costs, associated with the management of the collection could be absorbed within both the Sevenhill's establishment

costs and the wider Collections budget. These would be minor costs associated with maintenance of databases and collections care materials.

- 40 The DLI collection is currently awaiting revised professional valuation. It is expected that this value could be approximately £10 million. DCC would continue to retain responsibility to insure any collections in storage and on exhibition sites as appropriate and this is covered by the relevant corporate budgets.
- 41 Capital Funding: In order to facilitate the new arrangements it would be necessary to make capital improvements to storage at Sevenhills and the fit-out of the first loan arrangement with the University on Palace Green.
- 42 The Sevenhills storage improvements are estimated at £76,000. The design and development of the spaces will be achieved through units which can be relocated if ever required, preserving the Council's investment. Initial discussions with the University have suggested that a contribution of £175,000 would be required to support the fit out of the space intended for the collection on a 5 year loan and they would request support towards this partnership opportunity. A capital request has been submitted to support this investment.
- 43 In summary, table 2 shows the financial implications. The initial capital investment of £251,000 would show a return on investment within one year of the DLI museum closure on the current revenue subsidy.

Table 2

	Revenue per annum for collections	Capital
Collection relocation inc removal and installation of roller racking and appropriate flooring		70,000
Additional security to entrances and ICT points		£2,000
Humidifier		£2,000
Contingency		£2,000
Education Staff – ongoing development of offer	£20,000	
Revenue to support the temporary loan of objects and exhibition spaces	£50,000	
One off capital grant to support the Palace Green installation		£175,000
Total	£70,000	£251,000

HR Implications

- 44 The proposals contained in this report will affect 9 employees, equating to 5.4 FTE posts within the Culture and Sport Localities Team. The Principal Museums Heritage and Collections Manager post (1 FTE) sits outside the DLI structure and is not included in the figure of 5.4 fte posts and is not affected.

- 45 Alongside the Principal Museums Manager post it is proposed that the 2 part time educational staff (1 FTE) would be retained to support the loan, interpretation and education services with the collection. Whilst currently based within the building, their role is essentially dedicated to the collection itself, as opposed to the building operations.
- 46 Whilst there will, in the future, be a series of temporary displays with a range of partners, the operation and purpose of the building and its function will cease as a result of these proposals. Following HR and legal advice it is deemed that future delivery will not remain fundamentally the same and therefore it is concluded that TUPE would not apply in these circumstances.
- 47 Given this to be the case, the proposals may result in a compulsory redundancy situation and therefore the appropriate consultation with affected staff and their Trade Union Representatives will follow the timescales and protocols laid down by the Council's Change Management Toolkit.
- 48 Casual workers have not been included within the scope of this report. A recent assessment has been completed to ensure that none of the casual employees working within the DLI have acquired employment rights equal to that of an employee, but this will be further reviewed as part of the formal consultation process of this proposal.
- 49 Should this proposal be approved, a detailed project plan will be developed to manage the appropriate consultation processes and potential implementation implications of this report. This will be used to project manage the process and ensure all appropriate actions are taken, including the consideration of available redeployment opportunities within the Council, and consideration of any associated expressions of interest in Early Retirement and/or Voluntary Redundancy from affected staff to mitigate against a compulsory redundancy situation. All actions resulting from this proposal moving forward will be managed in line with the Council's Change Management Toolkit.

Legal Implications

- 50 In order to progress the proposal there are a number of legal agreements that would need to be put in place with regards to the collection itself. Essentially these would include:
- a. The Deed of Trust between DCC and DLI Trustees would require revising in line with the closure and care of collections.
 - b. A formal partnership agreement and loan of objects between DCC and Durham University and future partners.
 - c. DCC would need to cover insurance of the DLI collection exhibited at Durham University or other venues.
 - d. Clear guidance from the DLI Trustees regarding requests for returned donations would be needed to mitigate any complaints or requests regarding the building closure.
- 51 Details of the proposal that impact on employees have also been discussed with HR and Legal. Those staff who are essentially dedicated to the function(s) of safely operating the building for admitting customers, and its presentation and cleanliness, are all directly affected by the proposal to close the building. The new approach to collections storage and temporary loans

with partners would no longer require this same service. Having taken HR and Legal advice it is the view of the service that TUPE would not apply to any future partner loans which may be established and this would not see the new service remaining fundamentally the same, which is a requirement under the regulations for a service provision change.

Accommodation Implications

- 52 Under the proposals the existing DLI Museum building would close to the public on 1st April 2016. This would render the current building on Aykley Heads surplus to requirements for Culture & Sport. It is anticipated the building would be vacated by December 2016. The site would then come under consideration for a range of alternative uses for which it may be suitable, including for example those that may emerge from the Office Accommodation Strategy, such as archiving. Further consideration of development, disposal and demolition, would in turn, follow depending upon the response.
- 53 Alternative storage for the collection would be required and relocation could start from February 2016. Secure storage at Sevenhills would be provided for the remaining elements of the collection to go into storage.
- 54 Alternative accommodation would also be required for the Durham Art Gallery. Whilst this will be addressed under a separate report it is anticipated that this will be achieved within an existing Culture & Sport venue or in collaboration with other cultural partners such as the University or partner museums with relatively minor adaptations, therefore not requiring the purchase or development of an additional building. Programming resources for the gallery are contained within the arts budget and are unaffected by the DLI budget changes.
- 55 The transition of the collection across to new storage, specifically items of very high value, should be managed swiftly. The storage area must be fully prepared to achieve this in good time. Post closure a range of security measures and inspections would be put in place to cover any period during which the building would be unoccupied. The costs for which would be met from the existing general maintenance budget, which sits outside the DLI budget. The cost of maintaining a mothballed building is significantly less than maintaining an operational one and therefore would not jeopardise the proposed saving.

Other Risks

- 56 In order to progress the proposals there are a number of potential risks. In order to ensure the smooth implementation it is important that these are recognised and appropriate mitigating actions undertaken. These are outlined below:
- 57 Trustees of the former Light Infantry: In developing this proposal there has been significant discussion with the lead Committee Members of the Trustees of the Former Durham Light Infantry Regiment. The Trustees understand the challenges ahead and, following significant consultation with officers, are comfortable to receive a proposal of this format. A letter of support for the proposals is given at Appendix 2.

- 58 Reduced Exhibition Space: It is anticipated that there may be some adverse public reaction to the closure of the building by people who feel a connection to the DLI regiment and would perceive the loss of the current building as a negative step. It is hoped that the approach to temporary loans will expand access to the collections and continue the important DLI story.
- 59 Scattered ashes and memorials: Several families have ashes scattered or benches located within the current site boundary and communication with these stakeholders will require sensitivity. Where families can be identified they will be contacted as part of the communications plan.
- 60 Closure period and timing: In order to achieve this programme it would be necessary to start moving the collection to its new locations from around April 2016. This would result in a period of around 3 months when there would be limited access to the collection. The closure in April 2016 is also just prior to the national commemoration of the Battle of the Somme. This may attract a disproportionate volume of media interest. However, there is a wider commemoration programme supported by Durham County Council which should provide some reassurance of the importance the County places on this period.
- 61 Objects: Donors may be concerned with the varied approach to exhibition spaces which could result in a smaller proportion of the objects being displayed in any one place, particularly the medal collection. Whilst there are many duplicate medals it is the stories that are interpreted and the names commemorated via their display that for many keeps the names alive. There may be a number of 'claims' or 'returns' requested which would need handling sensitively in partnership with the Trustees.
- 62 Lottery Funding Conditions: Whilst assets have previously been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England which can result in the need to return funding, the initial indications are that this is unlikely to be the case with the proposal.

Next steps and Timetable

- 63 Should the Council wish to move forward with the proposals set out in this report, an indicative timetable would be as follows:

ACTION	DATE
Formal notification to staff and unions of proposals in line with change management toolkit	October 2015
Formal agreement from Trustees	October 2015
Wider public and stakeholder communications plan begins	October 2015
Enter agreement with Durham University or associated display partners	November 2015

Design, procurement of storage	November-January2015
Movement of collection to new secure storage	March 2016 onward
DLI Museum and Art Gallery Closes	End of March 2016
Collection access available at Sevenhills and Palace Green	July 2016
Palace Green Library DLI & Somme Exhibitions open.	July 2016
Vacate DLI building	March 2016 September 2016

Recommendations and reasons

64 It is recommended that:

- a. Approval is given for the closure of the DLI museum building and movement of the collection into new storage at Sevenhills.
- b. The first loan from the collection is made to Durham University as set out in sections 25-28 and agreements to facilitate the future loan(s) are put in place.
- c. Capital provision is identified for the fit-out of Sevenhills storage and for the capital grant allocation for the initial first object loan as set out in section 26.
- d. The Trustees of the former Durham Light Infantry are formally notified and DCC continues to work with them as the project progresses.
- e. Wider communications with stakeholders and staff consultation is commenced and an appropriate communications plan developed.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – These proposals would save £221,984 from the revenue budget but would incur a one-off capital expenditure of £251,000. When implemented the DLI budget would be reduced to £70,000.

	Revenue per annum for collections	Capital
Installation of roller racking and appropriate flooring		70,000
Additional security to entrances and ICT points		£2,000
Humidifier		£2,000
Contingency		£2,000
Education Staff – ongoing development of offer	£20,000	
Revenue to support the temporary loan of objects and exhibition spaces	£50,000	
One off capital grant to support the Palace Green installation		£175,000
Total	£70,000	£251,000

Staffing – As per the main body of the report

Risk – As per the main body of the report

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal.

Accommodation – As per the main body of the report

Crime and Disorder – The empty DLI building could be a focus for vandalism and crime. The DLI building is alarmed and has CCTV but could be a focus for vandalism and crime once empty.

Human Rights – None from this report

Consultation – As per the main body of the report

Procurement – Normal procurement protocols would be followed

Disability Issues - The new collection storage and temporary display and access arrangements will be fully DDA compliant and accessible by public transport will be an improvement in terms of accessibility to that of the present location.

Legal Implications – As per the main body of the report

Report of Steve Howell

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Appendix 2 : Letter from The Trustees of the DLI

Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment