

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

17 December 2015

Request for Call-In – Future DLI Museum Arrangements



Report of Colette Longbottom, Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board of a request for call-in of a Cabinet decision, and of the decision made by the Chairman of the Board not to call-in the decision.

Background

- 2 On 29 October 2015, a request was received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for call-in of Cabinet decision agenda item number 7 of the Cabinet meeting of the 21 October 2015. The report related to future arrangements for the DLI Museum. A copy of the request is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3 On 2 November 2015, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consulted the Chairman, who decided not to call the decision in. In doing so, he took into account the advice of the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, that delaying the implementation of the decision would not be likely to cause significant damage to the Council's interests.
- 4 Having considered this, he then considered whether a case had been made out for calling in the decision, and concluded that it had not.
- 5 His reasons were as follows:-
 - The Members signing the request for call-in had time to present questions to Cabinet and local Members were advised before the Cabinet Agenda was dispatched, of the plans for the Museum.
 - The lead group were not told of the decision in advance, and contrary to the statement made in the request for call-in, Councillors from other groups were briefed.
 - Consultation with the Trustees has taken place, and the Trustees submitted correspondence supporting the proposal.
 - The proposal before Cabinet did not involve ending the arrangements with the Trustees or ceasing the Council's services to the DLI collection. The report refers to the constraints and difficulties in sustaining a static museum based collection, and of the proposal to improve the collection storage and increase access to the collection

using loans to Durham University, and other activities referred to within the report. The Service is not therefore ceasing, but is being enhanced.

- The Chairman noted proposals for advertising the facility to be transferred to a volunteer/community organisation, is not appropriate in the context of an arrangement made with the Trustees.

6 Whilst of the view that this was not an appropriate case for call-in, the Chairman was of the view that there should be added to the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, a meeting to enable Members to explore with chief officers and Trustees, how the Council can continue to meet the desire of the public to have access to this valuable collection in a meaningful way.

Recommendations and reasons

7 The Board is asked to note this report.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None specific in this report.

Staffing - None specific in this report.

Risk - None specific in this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None specific in this report.

Accommodation - None specific in this report.

Crime and Disorder - None specific in this report.

Human Rights - None specific in this report.

Consultation - None specific in this report.

Procurement - None specific in this report.

Disability Issues - None specific in this report.

Legal Implications - None specific in this report.