



Report to:	Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee
Date:	13 th March 2024
Subject:	British Library North
Director:	Liz Hunter, Director of Policing, Environment and Place
Author:	Kate Thompson, Head of Economic Implementation

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on progress with the British Library North capital project.
- 1.2 To seek comments from the Committee on future engagement preferences in respect of the British Library North capital project.

2. Information

Background

- 1.1. On 11th March 2020, the Combined Authority and district partners agreed a devolution deal with HM Government which included £1.8bn of government investment and new responsibilities together with a range of devolved functions and powers. From this, a £25 million Heritage Fund was allocated to support the establishment of a potential British Library North in Leeds on the following terms:

“In recognition of West Yorkshire's ambition for the conservation and re-use of heritage buildings, the government will provide West Yorkshire combined Authority with £25m to establish a Heritage Fund. This will support the work of Leeds City Council with the British Library on establishing a potential 'British Library North'. The funding will be paid into the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Investment Fund in 2020/21. It is provided by Government on the understanding that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority will

provide this funding where needed to enable the British Library to find an appropriate site in Leeds for a British Library of the North.”

- 1.2. Working with Leeds City Council, the British Library assessed potential locations across the city and in 2020 it was announced that Temple Works was the preferred site for the new British Library North with an aim to establish a new 8,000m² facility, including learning, community, research, business incubation, events, and exhibition space.
- 1.3. At the Combined Authority meeting on 29 July 2021, the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the project was approved, together with £5.35 million development costs. The £5 million development costs were allocated in order to determine affordability of the scheme at Temple Works as well as to work up the Outline Business Case. The approval included a further £0.35 million for programme management costs within the Combined Authority to support the scheme over the lifetime of the project.
- 1.4. The second phase of funding is subject to further approval and will request the remaining Devolution funds of £19.65 million for the delivery of a new British Library facility either at Temple Works or an alternative location in Leeds if Temple Works proves unviable.
- 1.5. Temple Works is a Grade I listed building and one of the most significant industrial heritage assets in the north of England. The building has been vacant since 2004 and suffered a partial collapse in 2008, severely restricting safe access to the building due to the risk of sudden catastrophic structural failure. The building was acquired by Commercial Estates Group (CEG) in 2018, and prior to its acquisition, there had been efforts to find suitable alternative uses, but the significant costs associated with its restoration has prevented the development of a viable commercial proposition to date.
- 1.6. Temple Works is in the Holbeck South Bank area of Leeds City Centre and is a key spatial priority area for the Combined Authority. The site has a significant role to play in addressing disconnect and deprivation challenges in one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the region. The British Library, with support of the Council, have an ambition for a high quality and culture-led development that will enhance the built environment through a people-centred approach to placemaking and growth. The scheme is aligned with local strategic growth priorities as identified in the Leeds Local Plan Core Strategy and in wider planning and regeneration policies in the area.

Current status of the British Library North project

- 2.7 CEG have completed enabling works to the Counting House, adjacent the main Temple Works building, as part of their own investment activity and in order to facilitate the first cohort of Forging Futures¹ students in early 2024. This work has been funded by CEG.

¹ The Forging Futures Campus is CEG's pioneering skills centre based at Kirkstall Forge. The Campus provides trade and professional apprenticeships, employability skills training courses as well as site visits and work experience for students and local people.

- 2.8 The British Library has completed RIBA Stage 1 concept design to help shape the design and development of a British Library North facility and better contextualise what a British Library North is (for any location). This work has been funded through the development costs detailed in paragraph 2.3.
- 2.9 In parallel to the capital infrastructure project at Temple Works, the British Library are delivering a range of revenue projects with communities in Leeds and the wider West Yorkshire region, including projects focused on Holbeck communities, adjacent to the Temple Works site. A few examples of recent and forthcoming projects include:
- The British Library's weekly creative engagement programme for young people aged 10-14 who live in Beeston and Holbeck, 'Get Creative', which began in February 2024, with the programme inspired by British Library collections.
 - 'Myths and Legends of South Leeds', a film co-created with students at Elliott Hudson College, and with showings in community venues and libraries.
 - A primary school workshop programme supporting literacy outcomes for key stage two children across Leeds.
 - 'Mapping our Better Life' exhibition and therapeutic arts project, with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people - in partnership with Leeds Playhouse.
 - 'Becoming the Brontës' exhibition of rare, original items relating to the Brontës - in partnership with the Brontës Parsonage Museum.
- 2.10 All partners remain committed to unlocking and progressing the British Library North project, together with the opportunity that Temple Works provides. The main capital infrastructure project is extremely complex and since SOC approval, partners – including the British Library, Leeds City Council, the Combined Authority and CEG – and technical advisors have been working hard to determine the best route to safely access the building at Temple Works to undertake the necessary feasibility work and surveys. The next steps are likely to require an update to the scope of the existing Combined Authority funding approval in order to move the project through to the next stages of feasibility work.

Committee Oversight

- 2.11 The Combined Authority approved delegation of approvals for the British Library North scheme to the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee on 29 July 2021. Due to the wider regeneration focus and place-making opportunities of the capital scheme, at its meeting on 14th March 2024 an updated delegation is being sought from the Combined Authority to the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee for future approvals in relation to the British Library North capital project. It is proposed that the Combined Authority's Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee will then be able to utilise its insight and expertise in relation to the cultural opportunity that the end use of the British Library North scheme

provides to the region. On that basis the Committee are asked to consider how they wish to be engaged with the capital project and its progress beyond the formal committee cycle.

2. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Whilst there are no immediate Climate Emergency implications from this decision, the British Library North project as currently envisaged at Temple Works involves the reuse of an 'at risk' Grade I Listed Building on a brownfield site and works to the building could incorporate a range of energy efficient design solutions. Temple Works is in a central location close to Leeds railway station and is accessible by public transport, and well-established walking and cycling routes. A Carbon Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the project business case development to ensure the project delivers on key organisational and legislative policies.

3. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Whilst there are no immediate Inclusive Growth implications from this decision, the regeneration of the South Bank forms a key part of the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and is a priority area of growth in Leeds City Centre. This provides an opportunity to address historic disadvantage in south Leeds and to generate inclusive growth outcomes in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods of West Yorkshire and nationally.

4. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The British Library is committed to supporting economic growth, innovation, and social and cultural renewal, as part of its mission to make its intellectual heritage accessible to everyone. This includes establishing a second city-centre presence in the UK to enable it to reach communities that are not well served by the library's existing culture, research and learning provision, which is primarily accessible on site in London (St Pancras). The British Library identified Leeds as their preferred location based on its catchment, accessibility, the diversity of the population, its connectivity, and the ability to be supported by their existing storage and research facilities located at Boston Spa, near Wetherby.
- 5.2 A project level equality impact assessment (Stage 1) was completed as part of the Strategic Outline Case and will be updated to Stage 2 assessment as the project progresses through the Assurance Framework.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Combined Authority has previously agreed development funding for £5.35 million to progress the project. The Combined Authority has entered into a grant funding agreement (up to £283,554) with Leeds City Council to cover the RIBA Stage 1 costs of the British Library and the Council's reasonable project management costs.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications resulting from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no immediate staffing implications resulting from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the report and provides any comments, including on the Committee's future engagement with the British Library North capital project outside of the formal committee cycle.

11. Background Documents

11.1 There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

12.1 None.