



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



Pamela Donnelly
Chief Executive
Colchester Borough Council
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road
Colchester
CO3 3WG

21 November 2022

Dear Pam,

Re: Military Museum, Colchester

Further to our recent conversations regarding a military museum in Colchester, I am writing to formally ask that steps be taken to explore turning parts of Colchester Town Hall into a museum.

Colchester has a magnificent Town Hall but as you will be aware, apart from the Moot Hall, it is not a very well-used building and several parts of it including the ground floor, old library, courts and cells are rarely used. Even the Council chamber itself is only used on a handful of occasions per month. This is a crying shame.

Colchester has some brilliant attractions in the town centre including The Castle, The Mercury Theatre, Hollytrees Museum, Firstsite, The Minories Gallery, Colchester Arts Centre, The Natural History Museum, the Roman Circus Centre and much more. As good as these attractions are, when Colchester formally becomes a city on Wednesday, we need to think bigger and look at ways in which we can enhance Colchester as a city break destination. The news that Jumbo will be developed into a new visitor attraction is welcome news but in my view the perfect location for an additional visitor attraction is right in the centre of town and inside the Town Hall.

I would therefore be grateful if you would explore turning what is now a massively under-used palace for politicians into a much needed visitor attraction for our city which will also bring in additional revenue for the Borough Council to spend on the people's priorities. As we have discussed, I am keen for there to be a military focus where we can not only mark and celebrate Colchester's military heritage but also demonstrate our pride at being the home of 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team.

As a former Colchester Borough Councillor, I am equally proud of our town's civic heritage and anticipate that some councillors may object to this proposal. However, a museum in Colchester town hall would still allow the Moot Hall to be used for civic functions and council meetings as appropriate but the Council's other building, Rowan House, could be used for more of the less formal meetings. I also hope that councillors will see the opportunity to add a new jewel in the crown of Colchester's visitor attractions and bring in revenue to support the Council's activities.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR COLCHESTER

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