

CABINET

DATE	11 th March 2026
REPORT OF	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills.
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Carolina Borgstrom, Director of Environment, Economy & Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Central Library building asbestos removal.
STATUS	Open Report. Appendix NOT FOR PUBLICATION Exempt information within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	Not included on the Forward Plan – to be considered under the Special Urgency procedure with the agreement of the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The removal of the majority of asbestos containing materials in the Central Library building is essential to enable in depth survey work and a detailed business case to be developed. Undertaking the works contributes to the Council's aim of being an Effective & Engaging Council by undertaking essential works to the property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the steps required to allow the majority of the asbestos removal from the Central Library building, including any ancillary works, together with pre-tender cost estimates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the report and appendix and the figures contained therein.
2. Approves the commencement of a procurement exercise for removal of the majority of the asbestos containing materials.
3. Delegates authority to the Director of Environment, Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders for Culture, Heritage & Visitor Economy and Finance, Resources & Assets to commence the above procurement and carry out all necessary activities, including award of

contract, mobilisation and implementation, together with any other ancillary activity reasonably arising.

4. Authorises the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) to complete and execute all requisite legal documentation in relation to the matters outlined above.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To allow the necessary removal of asbestos containing materials in the Grimsby Central Library building.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The background to the closure of the Central Library building has been well rehearsed which, alongside the Library & Archives Review, led to the formation of the Library Services Select Committee.
- 1.2 Following a number of meetings, the Select Committee made interim recommendations which were accepted by the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel. That Panel then made the following recommendation to the Cabinet meeting of 11 February 2026 *'That in order to prevent further damage to the Central Library building, and in order to provide full, safe access, capital funding should be agreed on an urgent basis, sufficient to allow roof replacement, appropriate remediation to prevent significant water ingress through other openings, and asbestos removal (where appropriate) from the full building, and for the above works to be completed on an urgent basis.'* This flowed from the work of the Select Committee which received a report from independent specialists, WT Partnership, on the likely costs and timeframes for work to the building which noted that removal of the asbestos (where necessary) was essential to allow required intrusive and non-intrusive surveys to be undertaken to inform designs, detailed costings and a full business case to be developed for consideration.
- 1.3 Cabinet subsequently resolved the following *'That Cabinet receive a report to outline the associated costs to enable the central library to be made watertight to allow the appropriate removal of the asbestos.'*
- 1.4 Since Cabinet met on 11 February, the initial removal of the asbestos from the plant room has been completed and this has allowed access to the differing roof structures. These have now been surveyed, and the high-level findings are that the lower roofs are in a better condition than expected although the upper roof is severely deteriorated. It is possible to make the roofs reasonably watertight through temporary means to the extent it would make asbestos removal possible. This would avoid immediate roof replacement in advance of a business case and moreover, allow for a swifter resolution of the asbestos challenge, in turn allowing the required detailed intrusive and non-intrusive surveys to be undertaken sooner.
- 1.5 The estimated pre-tender costs are contained in the closed appendix to this report on the basis contractors will be competitively bidding for these works in the foreseeable future. These estimates are within the global indicative costs in

the published WT Partnership report.

- 1.6 On this basis, it is considered prudent that the Council proceed on the basis of the removal of all required asbestos together with any necessary ancillary works to facilitate such activity. It is feasible that scaffolding will be required and if so, it is expected that the strategy will be to enhance the scaffold frame so as to facilitate any future works. Whilst involving a premium, this would result in efficiencies in the future, assuming further works are undertaken to the building post full business case following the detailed design works.
- 1.7 There are heritage features within the building, and the recommended starting point is that these are preserved where reasonably practicable to do so. In this regard, the Select Committee is recommending to Scrutiny (and subject to the views of Scrutiny, one would expect onwards to Cabinet), that *'throughout the regeneration works of Grimsby Central Library, including the asbestos removal phase, there should be constructive engagement with the NELC Heritage Officer and Historic England to ensure that the protection of key heritage assets within the building can be advised on and appropriately prioritised.'*
- 1.8 This recommendation appears reasonable and proportionate and officers will be meeting Historic England and the Heritage Officer. In relation to the asbestos removal, officers will do all they reasonably can to ensure these key heritage assets and features are preserved during a live contract. In this regard, following engagement with Historic England and the Heritage Officer, it is envisaged a process will be included within the contract which requires the contractor to engage with the Heritage Officer prior to the removal and/or damaging of any heritage features and to pro-actively discuss what mitigation measures are available within the budget envelope. In any emergency situation health and safety will clearly need to prevail but the likelihood of such an event is considered relatively low.
- 1.9 A tender specification has been developed and subject to approval, it is expected that a tender pack would be issued as soon as possible.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 The removal of asbestos is bound in health and safety legislation and by its very nature confers a level of risk. The Council will undertake a tender exercise and will only appoint a suitably qualified and experienced contractor that can demonstrate its ability to remove asbestos in a safe manner.
- 2.2 There will also be an inherent cost risk for such works. The contractor will be provided with an up-to-date asbestos survey and be required to tender on the best information available. The cost estimates outlined are based on the Council's current understanding of the building. Further information is provided in the closed appendix.
- 2.3 The opportunity is that removal will allow safe access to the full building and allow required intrusive and non-intrusive surveys, detailed designs and ultimately, a full business case to be developed.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Council could decide to do nothing or wait. However, it is essential the asbestos is removed regardless of the future use of the building. On this basis, waiting would risk further asbestos release and wider deterioration and this is not recommended.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There is strong public interest in the provision of library services and the Central Library building. It is envisaged that taking the next required step of essential works may be viewed positively or negatively based on the varying views on how best to proceed. The recommended approach is an essential stage of work to complete, and a communication plan has been established to clearly explain this chosen route forward.
- 4.2 The internal heritage features have been mentioned and there is some interest in these being preserved. Section 1.7 of this report outlines how this is expected to be approached.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of the works are as per the closed appendix to this report. A business case has been submitted to the Business Development Group and the cost estimates are within the range provided by WT Partnership.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no relevant implications arising from the removal of asbestos.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no relevant implications arising from the removal of asbestos.

8. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no relevant implications arising from the removal of asbestos other than ensuring it is undertaken in a safe manner.

9. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 9.1 The recommendation this report is responding to is based on a Scrutiny recommendation to Cabinet on 11 February 2026.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Subject to approval, project costs will be incorporated into the capital programme and monitored in accordance with established governance arrangements.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The procurement exercise will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 and supported by relevant officers.
- 11.2 The delegations sought are consistent with an exercise of this nature.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no human resources implications arising from the report.

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Central Library building is situated in the West Marsh ward.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 23rd November 2023 – Review of Library and Archives Service Tourism and the Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel - [8.-Library-Archives-ReviewPDF-108KBicon-namepaperclip-prefixfa.pdf](#)
- 14.2 11th December 2024 – Library and Archives Review Phase 1 Cabinet Report - [Library and Archives Review Phase-1 Cabinet Report](#)
- 14.3 8th October 2025 – Library and Archives Review Phase 2 Cabinet Report - [Library and Archives Review Phase-2 Cabinet Report](#)
- 14.4 8th October 2025 – Scrutiny Recommends Library and Archives Cabinet Report - [Scrutiny Recommends – Library and Archives Cabinet Report](#)
- 14.5 22nd January 2026 - Library Services Select Committee Interim Report Economy, Culture, and Tourism Scrutiny Report - [Library Services Select Committee – Interim Report](#)
- 14.6 22nd January 2026 – WT Partnership Grimsby Library Cost Estimate Report (Dated 6th January 2026) - [Microsoft Word - Grimsby Library Cost Estimate Report 060126 Rev B SUMMARY](#)
- 14.7 11th February 2026 - Scrutiny Recommends Library Services Select Committee Interim Recs Cabinet Report - [Scrutiny Recommends – Library Services Select Committee Interim Recs](#)

15. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Damien Jaines-White – Assistant Director, Regeneration
Nick Browning – Head of Culture, Heritage, Leisure & Tourism

COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY, REGENERATION, DEVOLUTION
AND SKILLS**