

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	22/01/2026
REPORT OF	Chair, Library Services Select Committee
SUBJECT	Interim Select Committee Report
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The ongoing review of our Library and Archives Service will contribute to priorities across the Council's Outcomes Framework, supporting the delivery of our 'Stronger Economy' and 'Stronger Communities'. The review process, including the work of the Library Services Select Committee in formulating recommendations, will inform the future development of the Library and Archives Service, based on consultation and engagement with local communities and other stakeholders to deliver the future service in line with the needs of our residents, the Council's strategic priorities and available resource.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the work done by the Library Services Select Committee to date, and makes an interim recommendation to the Economy, Culture & Tourism Scrutiny panel for consideration.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

It is recommended that the Economy, Culture & Tourism Scrutiny Panel:

1. Accepts this report and notes the contents.
2. Considers making an interim recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

'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.'

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- The Library Services Select Committee was formed following a Full Council meeting in July 2025, with Terms of Reference drawn up by the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the political group leaders. The members are Cllrs S.Holland, (Ind) (Chairman), R.Augusta (Lab), S.Beasant (LibDem), J.Cairns (Con), E.Clough (Lab), N.Pettigrew (Con), K.Swinburn (Con).
- The Select Committee expects to complete its work by the end of February

2026, with a full report and recommendations being presented to the Economy, Culture & Tourism Scrutiny Panel in March.

- The work scope has been divided into three key areas so as to provide focus:
 - The future of library services in North East Lincolnshire.
 - The functionality of the contract for services with Lincs Inspire Ltd who provide library services on behalf of NELC
 - The future of the Grimsby Central Library Building
- For each of the three work scope areas, the process will be to gather evidence, analyse the results and benchmark if appropriate and then make recommendations that are deemed necessary.
- Work to date has included:
 - Site visits to Grimsby Central Library and Immingham library. Site visits to the remaining two permanent locations and the pop-up library are planned.
 - Meeting held with Lincs Inspire Ltd management
 - Meeting held with Waltham Parish Council
 - Receipt of a cost estimate report from WT Partnership Ltd for repairs and regeneration works for Grimsby Central Library
- With respect to the WT Partnership cost estimate report, this was considered in detail at a meeting of the Select Committee held on 14th January, at which a representative of WT was present.
- Grimsby Central Library continues to suffer from water ingress, mainly through leaks in the roof. Previous roof repair works carried out in recent years have not solved the problem. To prevent further deterioration of the building and increased water damage, the Select Committee considers it imperative to fix the roof. Although the full extent of roof repairs is not known at this time, it is considered prudent to allow sufficient funding to carry out a full roof replacement. This will inevitably have to happen at some point in the near future in any event due to the age of the building.
- Asbestos problems throughout the building have been a long-standing problem. Officers advise that detailed survey works cannot safely take place until all asbestos has been removed, and that this is therefore a block to making further progress. The Select Committee considers it essential that problem of asbestos is removed as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- The WT Cost estimate reports indicate a total cost for roof replacement and asbestos removal of £2.846m plus 20% contingency of £569K bringing a total of £3.415m, although this is subject to full access, further inspection and subject to being tendered to the open market.
- Cabinet received a report on 11th December 2024 (Library & archives service review phase 1) which stated that there was £2.4m of identified backlog maintenance required for Grimsby Central Library. This report recognised that this figure may fluctuate when further intrusive surveys are undertaken and more detailed costings established.
- The current capital spend plan indicates a backlog maintenance budget of £3.06m for 2025/26, of which £0.34m was allocated to Grimsby Central Library – the latest forecast indicates spend will be in line with budget. When a building is closed for major works, a backlog maintenance budget is not usually allocated for that period as the property is temporarily out of operational use. Due process will then be followed to secure funding for

backlog maintenance or major works as required.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

The key risks of not accepting the proposal are:

- That there will be further, and perhaps accelerating water ingress to the Central Library building which may lead in time to structural damage which will be expensive to remediate
- Asbestos presence will severely curtail access to the building to enable extensive survey works and subsequent repair works
- Whilst the future of the building has not yet been fully determined, it cannot be used for any purpose whatsoever until these basic elements of repair have been completed

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

There are potential positive/negative reputational implications for the Council resulting from the proposal. The information contained within this report is largely already in the public domain. An NELC press release was made immediately after the Select Committee Meeting of the 14th January which quoted the proposal to be made in this report. The future of Grimsby Central Library is a key reputational issue at this time and of significant public interest.

A potential positive reputational implication is that NELC will be seen as taking necessary and positive action to protect a heritage asset. Negative implications are likely to be centred around the costs being perceived as high.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Indicative costings for the recommended works, inclusive of contingency, are currently estimated at £3.415m. Whilst there has been no allocation of Backlog Maintenance to Grimsby Central Library in 2026/27, the capital programme incorporates an element of capital investment capacity which could be partially assigned to this project. However, any proposal for capital investment will be considered through the Council's established governance and prioritisation processes to ensure alignment with organisational priorities and the effective use of resources. The Select Committee considers the recommended works to be very high priority.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The review of library and archives service covers a wide range of groups across the population with a particular focus on children given the large proportion of existing library users who are 12 years and under at 24%. This includes considering opportunities for connecting children and young people with learning, literacy and wider enrichment activity across services and facilities. There is an opportunity through the proposals to develop co-located services, building cross sector working to deliver wider outcomes that includes children's health, literacy and social interaction recognising the benefits of early engagement with books and developing the enjoyment of reading from a young age. The Select Committee will

be looking at further opportunities to expand library use and services offered for the benefit of children and young people.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of Library and Archives service and work of the Select Committee will consider environmental implications and opportunities to ensure sustainability and low carbon initiatives are incorporated. The proposals that include co-location of services support in developing services under one roof, with the benefit of more efficient use of building space and utility consumption.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

The Library Services Select Committee have planned to meet with Council Officers, specifically from Public Health and Adult Social Care, who have agreed to come and share how their service would benefit from expanding the library facilities. Covering details on services that would help promote public health and Marmot.

8. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

9. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The review of the library and archives service will cover all wards across North East Lincolnshire.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Library and Archives Review Phase 2

[5.-Library-and-Archives-Review-Phase-2-Cabinet-Report.pdf](#)

WT Partnership Cost Estimate Report

[Microsoft Word - Grimsby Library Cost Estimate Report 060126 Rev B SUMMARY](#)

11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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**COUNCILLOR STEVE HOLLAND
CHAIR OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE SELECT COMMITTEE**