Principal Decision Report – PART A

Subject:	Royton Library - Approval of Expenditure for Urgent Asbestos Remediation and Associated Enabling Works
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	30th November 2026
Report author:	Gary Turnock – Property Safety Compliance Manager
Ward (s):	Royton South

Reason for decision

Approval is sought for the expenditure required to undertake urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works at Royton Library. The works will be instructed under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

Procurement has confirmed that the existing DDR approval can be relied upon as the supplier has been awarded a Council wide contract for the Removal & Remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials and this project falls under the Removal & Remediation of Asbestos. Additionally, the localised concrete stabilisation works required for Royton Library are integral to the asbestos remediation works and is not a separate building repair project.

The current work comprises controlled removal of asbestos-contaminated material, affected flooring and debris, environmental cleaning and clearance testing, together with localised concrete stabilisation required to facilitate and complete the asbestos remediation safely.

Completion of this package will provide safe access for a specialist timber survey, which will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any subsequent remedial or structural works.

Recommendation(s)

1. Approve the expenditure outline in the Part B report for the urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works described in this report.

2. Approve the instruction of the preferred contractor, outlined in the Part B report, under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

   Procurement has confirmed that the existing approval can be relied upon because the localised concrete stabilisation is integral to the asbestos remediation and is not a standalone building repair.
3. Note that the proposed instruction is within the inclusive-of-VAT limit of the existing DDR approval.

4. Note that the specialist timber survey, subsequent dry rot remediation, structural repairs, reinstatement works and any further works required to reopen Royton Library are outside the scope of this approval.

   These future stages will be separately scoped and brought forward through the appropriate budget, procurement and governance approval route.

Background

Royton Library recently underwent a major refurbishment scheme, which concluded in September 2024. In July 2026, library staff reported that flooring in certain areas was becoming 'bouncy'. An initial visual survey confirmed severe signs of dry rot.

Due to these unforeseen circumstances, the library was closed to the public from 24 August 2026 to ensure public safety and allow for immediate investigation.

Further physical inspections revealed that the undercroft beneath the library footprint contains asbestos insulation debris to pipework, contaminated items, rubble, and a contaminated soil base.

A small section of the undercroft is already exposed because of the dry rot, meaning an immediate clean-up exercise must be instigated before further dry rot damage spreads throughout the library and adjacent Town Hall.

Before the dry rot specialist can access the area to assess the full extent of the damage and scope out remedial works, the asbestos and contaminated debris must be removed under fully controlled conditions.

The approval of this work will facilitate the necessary dry rot assessment and recommended remedials.

Property Services will oversee cost management and quantity surveying for the project.

Completion of the asbestos remediation and associated enabling works will provide safe access to the undercroft so that a specialist timber survey can proceed.

The survey will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any subsequent remedial or structural works.

The estimated timescale for the current asbestos remediation package is 5 to 6 weeks.

Proposal

To address the immediate health, safety and building risks, the preferred contractor will be instructed under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

Procurement has confirmed that the existing approval can be relied upon because the concrete stabilisation is integral to the asbestos remediation and is not a standalone building repair.

A new exemption under rule 21 of the Contract Procedure Rules is not required.

The proposed asbestos remediation and associated enabling works are programmed to take approximately 5 to 6 weeks. The primary deliverables are:

- Removal of asbestos-contaminated soil using enclosed, lockable asbestos skips.
- Removal of existing carpet tiles, dry rot-contaminated plywood, affected floorboards and the minimum affected timber necessary to provide safe access for the asbestos remediation.
- Fully controlled environmental cleaning of the undercroft and affected library areas, followed by air testing and four-stage clearance.
- Localised concrete stabilisation within the undercroft where required to facilitate and complete the asbestos remediation safely. This forms part of the asbestos remediation package and is not a standalone building repair.
- Before the asbestos works commence, the fixed shelving and movable fixtures will be relocated. The cost of this specific element is included in the Part B report and must be supported by its own appropriate budget and procurement route.

Following completion of the asbestos remediation, environmental cleaning and clearance process, a specialist timber survey will be undertaken through the appropriate approved route.

The survey will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any associated structural or remedial works.

As the scope and cost of those future works cannot be determined until the specialist investigation has been completed, the timber survey, dry rot remediation, structural repairs, reinstatement works and any further works required to reopen Royton Library are outside the scope of this decision.

They will be separately scoped and brought forward through the appropriate budget, procurement and governance approval route.

Summary:

The costs associated with the proposed works are included in the Part B report.

Alternative option(s) to be considered

Do not proceed with the works. This is not recommended because the asbestos-contaminated undercroft would remain inaccessible, delaying the specialist timber investigation and increasing the risk of deterioration and prolonged closure.

Undertake a new procurement exercise for the works. This is not recommended because Procurement has confirmed that the works can be instructed under the existing DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements, provided the concrete stabilisation remains integral to the asbestos remediation package.

If the scope changes so that the concrete stabilisation becomes a separate building repair, the existing DDR must not be relied upon for that element and an alternative compliant approval and procurement route will be required.

Consultation

The Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts, the Senior Communications Manager, Ward Members, and Estates have been briefed regarding the immediate closure of the library and the exploration of temporary service provision.

Risks

- Structural Deterioration: Failure to complete the clean-up promptly will prevent the dry rot specialist from accessing the undercroft, allowing the rot to spread unabated through the site.
- Cost Overruns: Remedial costs following the dry rot specialist's assessment are currently unknown. Regular cost monitoring will be enforced to mitigate financial drift.
- Health and Safety: Delays in removing the asbestos debris, especially with sections of the undercroft already exposed, pose a severe containment risk.

Implications

Financial	The finance implications are included in the Part B report.
Procurement	The procurement implications are included in the Part B report.
HR	N/A
Legal	The legal implications are included in the Part B Report.

Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The assessment identifies strong positive impacts for Age, Disability, Poverty and Low Income, and Pregnancy and Maternity, arising from the timely reopening of Royton Library and the restoration of access to learning, digital, wellbeing and community services Subnum Hariff-Khan

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers):

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Interim Contract Direct Award – Removal & Remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials

Report author sign-off	Gary Turnock
Role	Property Safety Compliance Manager
Date of sign-off	04/11/2026

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors:

Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders