



## Glasgow City Council

## **Contracts and Property Committee**

## Item 8

5th February 2026

## **Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

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**AUTHORITY TO COMMENCE OFF MARKET NEGOTIATIONS WITH  
GLASGOW THEATRES LTD (GTL) FOR A LEASE OF THE KINGS THEATRE  
297 BATH ST, GLASGOW G2 4JN**

## **Purpose of Report:**

To seek Committee authority to commence off market negotiations with GTL for a lease of the Kings Theatre 297 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4JN

## Recommendations:

### **Recommendations:**

1. notes the content of this report.
2. approves authority to commence off market negotiations with GTL for a lease of the Kings Theatre 297 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4JN; and
3. notes that the agreed terms and conditions of the proposed lease will be reported back to the Contracts and Property Committee for approval.

Ward No(s):10- Anderston/City/Yorkhill Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No     consulted: Yes  No

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## **1      Introduction**

1.1 This report relates to the request for authority to commence off market negotiations with GTL for a lease of the Kings Theatre 297 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4JN

## **2      Subjects**

2.1 The subjects comprise a Category A Listed Building of predominantly sandstone structure on the corner of Elmbank Street and Bath Street shown on the attached plan.

## **3      Background**

3.1 The King's Theatre was commissioned by the theatre company Howard & Wyndham at a cost of over £50,000 and opened on 12 September 1904.

3.2 Glasgow City Council operated the Theatre for a number of years however the experience required to run such a specialised venue was not held by the Council and this impacted the running costs and potential revenue putting pressure on the sustainability of the theatre.

3.3 In 2002 the theatre's day-to-day management was transferred to Glasgow Theatres Limited (GTL) and operated by the Ambassador Theatre Group, becoming their first venue in Scotland, although they have since also taken over the management of the Theatre Royal at the opposite end of the city centre as well as the Edinburgh Playhouse.

3.4 Glasgow Theatres Limited (GTL) is the legal entity that leases the Theatre Royal and the Kings Theatre which the Ambassador Theatre Group operate.

3.5 The existing lease and subsidised management agreement expires in 2029 and includes, and exclusivity granted at Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023. [Kings Theatre Committee Report](#)

3.6 GTL have undertaken restoration and improvement work including new carpet within the auditorium, new orchestra pit railing, and preparations for the installation of air conditioning.

3.7 Façade retention was also undertaken.

3.8 As the largest capacity (1900 seat) and highest profile receiving house in the city, it is the means through which the majority of 'number 1' touring shows are presented in the city.

3.9 The theatre opened in 1904 and sits in a confined footprint. It is increasingly unable to present the larger productions, which are becoming both more numerous and desirable. This means the King's will lose its key status without investment and a programme of change, and those highest profile shows will,

for the most part, only be able to be accommodated in Edinburgh due to the significantly lower seating capacity at the Theatre Royal which makes it economically unviable for most producers of these 'premium' productions.

- 3.10 Discussions have been taking place to bring the theatre to a standard to host larger productions. In addition to contributing to the city's cultural and social life this would also have a socio-economic impact, attracting visitors and spend to the city.
- 3.11 The Council would seek to continue to work in partnership with GTL to achieve the aims noted and would seek to provide security in this location via a longer-term lease.

#### **4 Upgrading Discussions**

- 4.1 The council and GTL have been in discussions regarding the future redevelopment of the theatre and further information in this regard would be provided in a future paper detailing the terms agreed, should authority be granted.

#### **5 Off-Market Proposal**

- 5.1 ATG Entertainment (ATGE) is one of the UK's leading theatre operators as well as being a major producer of work in the West End and across the UK's nations and regions. ATGE is a highly experienced, stable, reputable and well-resourced partner. It has unparalleled depth of experience in theatre operations, and an exceptional suite of relationships with producers and stakeholders.
- 5.2 GTL also has a strong track record of understanding and celebrating the local context of each of its theatres. It has been operating in Glasgow since 2002 when the King's Theatre lease began and has operated the Theatre Royal on behalf of Scottish Opera since 2006—giving it unmatched insight into Glasgow's theatre ecosystem.
- 5.3 GTL brings substantial expertise, investment capacity, and operational resilience. Its long-standing presence in Glasgow, combined with its commitment to developing local leadership, skills, and creative engagement, ensures that the King's Theatre functions not only as a major cultural asset but also as an important driver of employment, city-centre footfall, skills development, and wider economic activity. The organisation's continued investment in the venue and its creative ecosystem directly supports Glasgow's cultural ambitions and reinforces the city's reputation as a leading destination for world-class performing arts.
- 5.4 GTL is therefore well placed given its position the UK live space entertainment field, whilst also having experience of operating from this location to assist in

delivering an improved viable theatre experience and contributing to the local economy.

5.5 The off-market proposal supports the Council's inward investment and socio-economic objectives as detailed below:

a. An Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted by The Moffat Centre in August 2024 confirms King's Theatre's significant contribution to Glasgow's economy:

- i. Annual customers spend attributable to King's Theatre: £34.6 million.
- ii. Additional annual revenue from more people attending and staying overnight is estimated to be £6.8M.
- iii. Gross Value Added (GVA): £14.8 million, including £9.8 million direct GVA.
- iv. Visitor numbers: 456,415 ticketed attendees in FY 2023/24.
- v. Average spend per attendee: £75.88.
- vi. 17.7% of customers stay overnight, mostly in Glasgow city centre hotels.

b. Employment

GTL sustains a significant number of local jobs through its theatre operations, technical services, and hospitality functions. This includes 34 FTE permanent staff and around 200 casual workers, and seasonal roles that support major productions.

c. Supply Chain

- i. The organisation engages approved contractors and local suppliers for maintenance, production, and specialist services. This creates a ripple effect of economic benefit across Glasgow's creative and construction sectors.

d. Audience Development

- i. King's Theatre attracts over 450,000 visitors annually, driving footfall in the city centre and supporting local businesses. This level of audience engagement reinforces Glasgow's position as a leading cultural destination.

e. Community Engagement – GTL via ATGE

- i. delivers education programmes, offers discounted ticket schemes, and builds partnerships with local schools and cultural organisations. These initiatives ensure that the theatre remains accessible and inclusive for diverse communities.

ii. has also pioneered a number of active, funded, employee networks to foster diversity and inclusion. These include Pride, Neurodiversity, Women's and Global Majority networks.

f. Creative Learning Programme - GTL via ATGE

i. ATGE's Creative Learning Programme provides workshops, outreach activities, and participatory projects that connect audiences with the performing arts. It focuses on skills development, creative expression, and inspiring young people and community groups to engage with theatre beyond the stage.

g. Economic Contribution

i. The theatre generates substantial turnover through ticket sales, ancillary services, and tourism-related spending. Its operations have strong links to hospitality and accommodation sectors, amplifying the overall economic impact on Glasgow.

5.6 Based on the above we are seeking authority to commence off market negotiations with GTL

## 6 Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* There would be financial benefit to the council as they would receive a rental for the property

*Legal:* All transactions will be subject to review and conclusion by the Council's Corporate and Property Law section.

*Personnel:* No personnel implications

*Procurement:* There are no procurement issues.

**Council Strategic Plan:** The proposal supports the theme of Resilient and Empowered neighbourhoods.

### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* The proposal does not directly support the Equality Outcomes

<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	There are no direct equality impacts.
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i>	The proposal will encourage jobs within the local economy and improve visitors' numbers to the City Centre.

#### **Climate Impacts:**

<i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:</i>	The proposal does not directly support Climate Plan actions
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<i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>	At present there are no potential climate impacts
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<i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>	Not at present
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#### **Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:**

## **7 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the committee:

1. notes the content of this report.
2. approves authority to commence off market negotiations with GTL for a lease of the Kings Theatre 297 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4JN; and
3. notes that the agreed terms and conditions of the proposed lease will be reported back to the Contracts and Property Committee for approval.