



Greening Theatres: A 'quick win' for a sustainable future

Theatre: A growing sector

A recent study conducted on behalf of SOLT & UK Theatre suggests that the **UK theatre sector generates £2.39bn GVA and supports 205,000 workers**. This is made up of £1bn of direct turnover in the UK theatre sector, generating £1.3bn worth of turnover in the broader economy.

Theatre audiences also contribute additional spending in local economies up and down the country when visiting a performance. **For every £1 spent on a theatre ticket, an additional spend of £1.40 is generated in local economies**, resulting in up to £1.94bn per annum of extra value added to local economies by theatre audiences.

Impact of economic downturn and energy prices

The sector's recovery from the impact of COVID-19 has been hindered by the economic downturn and rising energy prices, with some electricity and gas renewal quotes up by over 500% and 1500% respectively. Recent research from Ecclesiastical Insurance found that 9 out of 10 theatres in the UK fear for their future survival due to the cost-of-living crisis.¹ It is also worth noting that by the end of September 2022, theatre audience attendance was at only 73% of the level recorded in official statistics from 2019 – 2020² and attendance of West End theatres shows was down by 6% in January to March 2022 compared to 2019, with revenue down 3%, representing a real terms loss for the sector.³

1 thestage.co.uk/news/nine-out-of-10-theatres-face-closure-due-to-rising-costs-survey

2 campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Arts-attendance-in-England-Oct-2020-to-Sep-2022.pdf

3 SOLT Box Office Data Report 2022

Securing a more sustainable future

Our theatres are leading international best practice on energy efficiency and sustainability and in 2021 the sector worked with sustainability experts Buro Happold to develop the **Theatre Green Book**, which sets out practical advice for the performing arts sector on achieving zero-carbon status in relation to productions, theatre buildings and front-of-house operations. Over one hundred theatre companies have already signed up for the Sustainable Production Standard. The book is currently being translated into six foreign languages (Finnish, French, German, Italian, Korean and Spanish).

Finance is the main barrier to energy efficiency

Research shows that 86% of theatres said finance was a major barrier to making energy efficiency improvements, with this figure rising to 92% for historic theatres.⁴ In order to address this problem and empower the sector to adopt the practices outlined in the Theatre Green Book, we are proposing a Theatre Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme. This initiative would provide theatres with capital to make immediate 'quick win' energy efficiency adaptations.

Most theatres do not carry big reserves and are unlikely to have the funds to invest in energy efficiency adaptations. In May 2020 the Theatres Trust's research using Charity Commission data on reserves levels held by small, charity-run theatres (less than 400 seats) found that 136 small theatres (57%) held less than either 3 months' reserves in March 2019.

How the Theatre Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme would work

We propose a low-cost intervention to improve energy efficiency across the sector, supporting the Treasury's aim to reduce energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030, which was announced by the Chancellor in his Autumn Statement.⁵ The scheme would be open to small (fewer than 400 seats), medium (400 - 800 seats) and large venues (over 800 seats) and would support them to implement 'quick win', high impact energy efficiency measures in time for winter 2023. To qualify for the grant, theatres would use the **Theatre Green Book Home Survey Tool** to identify improvements that would make their buildings more energy efficient. The tool identifies 'easy wins,' such as the installation of LED lighting, insulation of doors & windows, and the introduction of smarter building management including motion sensor heating and lighting systems.

4 theatrust.org.uk/latest/news/1626-more-than-1bn-needed-to-make-the-uks-theatre-buildings-sustainable

5 [gov.uk/government/speeches/the-autumn-statement-2022-speech](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-autumn-statement-2022-speech)

The Theatre Green Book Home Survey Tool is also an effective mechanism to properly assess the carbon reduction and financial benefits of grant applications when making grant decisions and is already being used for this purpose for the Greater London Authority's Creative Enterprise Zones sustainability improvement grants for creative workspaces and cultural infrastructure. By utilising the Theatre Green Book Home Survey Tool as a qualifier to access this support, we believe we will be able to minimise compliance concerns and speculative use.

Estimated impact

The total value, and support hoped for from the Government, of the scheme would be £56.7m, and the grants would range from £50,000 to £300,000 depending on the size of the venue. The scheme would support 472 theatres, half of all theatres in England and would save these venues between £4.3m and £6.2m per annum depending on future energy costs. We estimate that the scheme would provide a 100% return on investment from between 9 to 13 years, depending on energy price variations.

See the Cost Savings Analysis on the next page for details on the projected savings.

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Cost Savings Analysis

Theatres Trust & SOLT/UKT Theatre Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme Proposal: Summary Cost Benefit - 50% Theatres (England) 12 Jan 2023

					Based on EBDS base price threshold = £302 (electricity) & £107 (gas)				Based on EBDS base price threshold + 50% less max discount = £433 (electricity) & £154 (gas)			
Theatre capacity	No. in this category (50% of all theatres in England at this scale)	Grant range	Average grant	Total value of grants	Cost savings per annum	Cost savings over 10 years	Cost savings per annum	Cost savings over 10 years	Cost savings per annum	Cost savings over 10 years	Cost savings per annum	Cost savings over 10 years
					Per theatre	Per theatre	All theatres	All theatres	Per theatre	Per theatre	All theatres	All theatres
<400 seats	312	£50-£100k	£75,000	£23,400,000	£4,688	£46,880	£1,462,656	£14,626,560	£6,734	£67,340	£2,101,008	£21,010,080
400-800 seats	94	£100-£200k	£150,000	£14,100,000	£12,261	£122,610	£1,152,534	£11,525,340	£17,609	£176,090	£1,655,246	£16,552,460
>800 seats	66	£200-£300k	£250,000	£16,500,000	£25,575	£255,750	£1,687,950	£16,879,500	£36,732	£367,320	£2,424,312	£24,243,120
		Est. admin / delivery costs @ 5%		£2,700,000								
Total theatres	472	Total value of grants programme		£56,700,000			£4,303,140	£43,031,400			£6,180,566	£61,805,660

ROI in
x Years: 13

ROI in
x Years: 9