

SUBJECT:	Replacement of theatre floor at Beacon Centre
REPORT OF:	Cllr Paul Kelly – Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Martin Holt – Head of Healthy Communities
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WARD/S AFFECTED	Beaconsfield

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the options detailed in the report for replacement of the Beacon Centre theatre floor and seating.

RECOMMENDATIONS to Cabinet to agree to;

1. Install Bleacher seating on a Sprung Floor enabling the Beacon Centre to be used for theatre style events and meetings.
2. To tender for the installation of Bleacher seating on a Sprung Floor, the final agreement on costs to be delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
3. Recommend to GLL to raise the hire charges for Theatre events to enable reinvestment in to lighting and other equipment needs.
4. Improve the marketing of the centre to encourage wider community use of the theatre/events space.

2. Report

- 2.1. The theatre at the Beacon Leisure Centre is currently used as a multi-functional space used for theatre hire, event hire and a range of keep fit aerobic activities. The main use of the facility is aerobic activities which accounts for 94% of the block bookings.
- 2.2. Over many years the bleacher style seating has caused point loading damage to the floor area to such an extent that it is no longer repairable and requires replacement. Specialist advisors advised that the repaired floor was at significant risk of failing when a full load was applied to the bleacher seating. The bleacher seating also became bowed in its central area and for health and safety risk reasons deemed unsafe to use.
- 2.3. A semi sprung floor is required to safely provide high impact aerobic exercises, specialist suppliers of seating have advised that bleacher seating is compatible with a semi sprung floor

providing the floor is designed to withstand the weight and point loading of the seats. Quotes to replace the floor range between £21,980 and £32,772.

- 2.4. The cost to replace the bleacher seating is between £30,556 for 162 seats and £53,793 for 208 seats
- 2.5. Increasing hire charges and providing bleacher seating and a semi- sprung floor would allow GLL to expand their offer to customers and increase throughput and operating revenue
- 2.6. In deciding to replace the bleacher seating officers would be required to retender the works to enable the appropriate floor to be installed the meets the requirements of the seating type. The quotes in Appendix 1 are for flooring without bleacher seating being installed.

3. **Content of Report**

3.1. **Current Position**

- 3.1.1. The Beacon Sports Centre and Theatre is owned by South Bucks District Council and operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) under the Leisure Management Contract until 20th October 2021. The centre consists of a sports hall, 40+ station gym, outdoor football pitches and a 209 seat theatre.
- 3.1.2. The theatre is currently used by 9 groups, over the last year the seats have been used 42 times for 9 different events. 8 of these times were by Beaconsfield Theatre Group, 10 were used for one off events and 24 were used by U3A. Not all 24 of the U3A meetings used the bleacher seats, sometimes they used round cabaret style seating.
- 3.1.3. The theatre floor is a semi-sprung 'Gransprung' floor which has a 6mm gap between the top layer and the concrete base.
- 3.1.4. The floor has suffered substantial point load damage in the area of the tracks of the bleacher seating unit. The damage is in the form of cracked and broken Granwood tiles, track marks and depressions etc. There are now also a number of sharp edges currently present and these may be a possible risk of injury to users particularly if barefoot (there are currently no activities where users would be barefoot at the centre).
- 3.1.5. The damage has been sustained both when the bleacher seating is opened and when additional stresses are being placed on the floor when the seating is in use. The construction of the existing floor doesn't provide sufficient strength and flexibility to accommodate the weight and movement of the bleacher unit. An external inspection has advised 'it is reasonable to accept that the current floor is not fit for purpose and further damage or total collapse are inevitable'. Should this occur when the seats in use there is a significant risk of injury.
- 3.1.6. A joint risk assessment undertaken by SBDC and GLL resulted in the seats being taken out of use and not being deployed until appropriate systems are installed. Members of Community PAG agreed at the meeting held on 15th September to remove the existing bleacher seats.

The seat removal was carried out in February 2017 by a specialist company at a cost of £4,670.

3.1.7. The current position is the floor needs to be replaced to enable continuation of sport activities and the use of the theatre.

3.2. **Product options**

Floors:

3.2.1. An options appraisal of the flooring has been undertaken by GLL. There are three different types of floor that have been considered; traditional wooden sprung floor, sprung floor with lino and Pulastic floor. Information about each quote, type of floor, seating that can be used on the floor is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

3.2.2. A sprung floor is the most popular flooring in sports facilities, it is the most suitable floor surface for exercise activities as it reduces point of impact pressures on the body. An underfloor batten system is installed on the floor base surface, foam based cradles are used on the battens to give the sprung effect. A sprung floor with lino is the same product but with an additional 2.5mm linoleum surface. Two quotes have been provided for a sprung floor, the costs are £21,980 and £27,730

3.2.3. A Pulastic floor is a 2mm elastic polyurethane top layer which is applied to a plywood layered flooring base. The surface offers good rebound and shock absorption qualities with a matt coating. The cost of a Pulastic floor is £32,772

3.2.4. It is recommended to install a sprung floor which meets the needs of all users.

Seating:

3.2.5. The recommendations from the Building Surveyor is to select seating before any decision is made about the flooring as the flooring can be designed to accommodate the chosen seating.

3.2.6. Two options appraisals have been carried out for seating options. The first is a direct replacement consisting of 208 seats. The second being a scaled back version of the existing seats which will offer either 162, 172 or 182 seats. Both options are tiered, upholstered benches. **Appendix 2** details the seating quote appraisal carried out.

3.2.7. The Senior Building Surveyor in the Estates Team has been asked to look at the quotes received from a technical point of view and comment on the suitability of each proposal. The full response is detailed in **Appendix 3**

3.2.8. Senior Building Surveyor also looked into the option of repairing the existing Gransprung floor and hiring mobile tiered seating when needed. The report states 'It is possible to undertake localised repairs to Gransprung floors. However, the extent of the damage to the floor at the Beacon Centre means it is not cost effective to undertake repairs when compared to the cost of full replacement.'

Temporary seating

3.2.9. There are a number of companies who hire event and auditorium seating. One of the largest suppliers of temporary seating in the country has quoted for the cost of hiring a tiered system of 200 individual tip up seats in plastic. During the popular months of June, July and December the cost is in the region of £3,000 plus VAT plus insurance for one week's hire.

3.2.10. Another temporary seating option which has been considered is the use of flat seats which can be used in the theatre hired by GLL or the venue hirer. Flat seats have been used in the theatre since the bleacher seats have been taken out of use.

3.3. Impact

3.3.1. A variety of fitness classes, including judo, circuits, dance, kickboxing, karate, body conditioning, children's rugby and the rock choir also use the theatre space but without the seats. When the theatre seats are in use these classes have to move to the sports hall. If the sports hall is also occupied the classes are cancelled.

3.3.2. Current income generated from the theatre is £5,736. The cost to manage the theatre per year is £7,312, the breakdown of these costs is below:

Income	
Theatre hire	£5,136
Bar sales	£600
Total income	£5,736
Expenditure	
Staffing	£1,344
Current class cancellation	£1,545
Repairs & Maintenance	£4,423
Total	£7,312
Total Profit/loss	-£1,576

3.3.3. Under the current contract GLL is required to increase throughput for classes and sporting activities which is linked to both the council and GLL's performance indicators and supports GLL to deliver increased income to the council.

3.3.4. The replacement of the bleacher seats will enable GLL to continue to operate fitness classes with improved decoration that can still be used by the theatre groups. Such a facility could increase customer throughput and by enabling GLL to increase hire charges additional income to GLL would support the improved provision of the equipment and decoration.

3.4. Consultation

3.4.1. Theatre seats are currently used by nine theatre groups and in the last year the seats have been used thirty nine times over eleven bookings. Each user of the theatre (non-exercise users) has been contacted and asked for their feedback on how they would be impacted should the seats be removed. Two groups responded to the consultation, Beaconsfield Theatre Group (BTG) and Through the Wardrobe Children's Theatre Company (TTW). Both

groups use the theatre as it has bleacher seating and feel removing the seats altogether would impact their bookings, full details of the user response can be found in **Appendix 4**.

4. Options

4.1. Option 1: Replace floor and continue use of flat seats at no cost to SBDC.

4.2. Option 2: Replace bleacher seating and install a new floor. Seating unit to be selected first, flooring to be designed around the chosen seating option.

4.3. Option 3: Replace floor and hirer or GLL provides temporary arena seating which prevents other use of the theatre for the period of hire. This would cost an additional £3,150 for the seats and insurance and a hire cost of the theatre at £3,349, resulting in a weekly cost of hire £6,499.50. This option will also impact other users of the theatre leading to potential class cancellations. This would appear to be uneconomic but may still be an option for hirers to consider.

4.4. Indicative Seating Options:

Option	Product	Price
1	Organisation G 162/172 seats	£30,556
2	Organisation E 162/172 seats	£31,973
3	Organisation F 162/172 seats	£35,566
4	Organisation D systems 162/172 seats	£38,653
5	Organisation G 208 seats	£39,236
6	Organisation E 208 seats	£44,320
7	Organisation F 208 seats	£52,772
8	Organisation D 208 seats	£53,793

4.5. Indicative Flooring Options:

Option	Product	Price
1	Organisation B Junkers New Era floor	£21,980
2	Organisation C Pulastic Elit Classic 20	£32,772
3	Gransprung	£27,730

4.6. Budget:

4.6.1. There is £120,000 in the budget for the replacement of the floor; Option 1 and 2 will enable the works to be carried out within the current financial year.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial – As referred to above there are sufficient funds in the capital budget to carry out flooring replacements. There is no income return to the Council from the centre and so the additional cost of the sprung floor and bleacher seating would not be repaid back to the Council.

5.2 Legal – There is no obligation on the Council to provide bleacher style seating but if provided the Council will be responsible for the repair and maintenance

5.3 Health & Safety – the floor is not currently fit for purpose, however this is being mitigated by the use of mats. Whilst it is possible to undertake local repairs the extent in damage means it is not cost effective compared to full cost of replacement.

6 Links to Council Policy Objectives

6.1 Promote Healthier Communities. The provision of a semi-sprung floor at the Beacon Centre will assist in promoting physical activity in line with the Active Bucks programme and the Councils Community Objectives.

6.2 Equally, the provision of drama space enables drama groups to supports social interaction and skill development through art and drama.

7 Next Steps

Commence project to replace the floor and seating as decided replacement works as soon as possible, should members recommend replacing the seating units quotes will be sought to line up with the flooring product selected. Seating options will be brought back to members for consideration. . If members recommend replacing the seats a request for additional budget allocation will be made to Cabinet and Full Council.

Background Papers:	Seating and flooring quotes. Seating/flooring report
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