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More than half a billion pounds needed to sustain the UK's theatre buildings over the next five years

Research conducted by the **Theatres Trust**, in conjunction with **UK Theatre and SOLT**, has found that more than **£550million is needed over the next five years for capital projects** to upgrade and maintain theatres across the UK¹.

This figure is based on responses from almost 150 theatres, which represents 10% of active theatres in the UK. Collectively they have spent almost £312million upgrading and maintaining theatre buildings in the past five years.

But continued investment is vital for many of these theatres to continue to serve their local communities with **30% of responding theatres** stating that the **theatre would be at risk of closure** if the works are not carried out.

The main focus of works is to **improve long-term viability** as 63% and 64% of respondent theatres said the focus was improving income generation and audience appeal respectively, and 52% said the need was in order to reduce operating costs.

Excluding major projects and new builds², these theatres predict they will require an average of **£1.15million in capital works over the next five years**. These works will ensure theatres continue to attract audiences and can run more efficiently by ensuring technical equipment and audience facilities are modernised, including improved disabled access and environmental performance.

The **total amount of investment in theatre buildings** needed over the next five years for the UK to meet its cultural and social aspirations is likely to be closer to **£1billion**, taking into account planned major building projects outside of the theatres who responded³.

In spite of the challenging economic and funding environment 50% of respondents were either confident or very confident they could raise the funding required for the works, although 24% were unconfident or very unconfident.

Theatres Trust Director, Jon Morgan says “Theatres make an outstanding contribution to local life, culturally, socially and economically and are often at the heart of town and city-centre regeneration. Theatres of all ages and scales need continued investment to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet modern audience needs. The theatres sector is remarkably resilient and resourceful and much of this investment is focused on generating more revenue and reducing costs so they can develop more robust business models. However, with falling public revenues it can be challenging to raise the capital funds required and we risk losing some of our wonderful network of theatres if funding cannot be found. Support for our theatre infrastructure must be addressed in the UK's local and national culture, planning and regeneration strategies”.

NOTES TO EDITORS

¹ The survey conducted between July and September 2018 received 148 responses. There are approximately 1,100 active theatres in the UK, so this represents more than 10% of active theatres. As theatres undertaking or who have recently completed major capital projects are more likely to respond, the data has not been extrapolated further. The split of responses across the UK was comparable within the number of theatres in each region. However, London's West End was under-represented and the cost of any work by these theatres is likely to be higher than the average.

² A major project is defined as being more than £5million. These have been excluded from the average spend as these type of the projects tend to happen every 30-40 years, rather than the more typical projects falling within a five-year span.

³ There are a number of large theatre building projects planned for the next five years which, on account of not yet having an operational team, were unable to respond and making a small allowance for other non-responding theatres, it is reasonable to predict that more than £1billion will be spent on theatre capital projects in the next five years.

[Theatres Trust](#) is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance.

We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities.

We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants.

[SOLT](#) and [UK Theatre](#) are the trade associations and members' organisations representing the interests of those engaged in the production and presentation of medium to large-scale dramatic and lyric theatre in the UK. Their memberships are drawn from both subsidised and commercial theatre.

SOLT represents approximately 200 London-based producers, theatre owners and managers, including all the major subsidised theatrical organisations in London.

UK Theatre represents approximately 230 theatres, concert halls, dance companies, producers and arts centres throughout the UK. UK Theatre also operates as a professional association, supporting over 1,400 individuals working professionally in theatre and the performing arts in the UK

MEDIA CONTACTS

Justine Harvey, Theatres Trust, Marketing and Communications Manager

Justine.harvey@theatrestrust.org.uk, 020 7836 8591 or 07866 742879

Mary Rahman, MRPR, Press & PR Consultant

maryrahmanMRPR@gmail.com 07958 399740