

Notice of:	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Decision Number:	PH77/2021
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Decision:	26 November 2021

BLACKPOOL TOWER CIRCUS CEILING – URGENT AND ESSENTIAL WORKS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To seek delegated authority allowing the Director of Communications and Regeneration to undertake a scheme of urgent and essential works identified as required to the Blackpool Tower historic Circus ceiling, to include the completion of all due diligence associated with the project.
- 1.2 To obtain authority to allow the Head of Legal Services to enter into any such documentation as may be necessary and to consider and deal with such due diligence as may be required to provide for completion of the Scheme of urgent repairs identified as required to the Blackpool Tower historic Circus ceiling.
- 1.3 To request authority to complete the project-funding package through debt finance in the form of Prudential Borrowing, as detailed in the financial appendix to this report.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 That the Director of Communications and Regeneration be provided with delegated authority to undertake a scheme of urgent and essential works identified as required to the Blackpool Tower Circus historic ceiling, to include the completion of all due diligence associated with the project and as set out in this report and financial appendix to this report.
- 2.2 To authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into any such documentation as may be necessary and to consider and deal with such due diligence as may be required to provide for completion of the scheme of urgent repairs identified as required to the Blackpool Tower historic Circus Ceiling.
- 2.3 That authority is provided to complete the project-funding package through debt finance in the form of Prudential Borrowing, as detailed in the financial appendix to this report.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the continued operation of the Blackpool Tower Circus, limiting disruption to the attraction and impact on visitor experience and helping to maintain the improvement in performance during 2021, of the Blackpool Tower visitor attraction. This will contribute toward attaining the Council vision for Blackpool of being the UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 An alternative option is not to undertake the works, for which authority is sought in this report. This option would not allow the Circus to continue to operate and would therefore have a significant negative impact on a range of considerations including the visitor experience and income generation and reputational damage.

4.2 Another alternative option is the installation of a temporary restraining net to the ceiling. This option, if feasible, is not considered to provide value for money as permanent repairs would still be required later.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool".

6.0 Background information

6.1 Survey work to the historic Blackpool Tower Circus ceiling has revealed the ceiling and support structure to be in poor condition. As a result the ceiling has been closely monitored for some time and this has included the undertaking of a number of condition surveys. Following the results of the condition survey findings temporary repairs and remedial works were undertaken during 2020 in order to stabilise the ceiling however, these works were limited to providing only short term stability.

- 6.2 Further significant deterioration to the ceiling has occurred since the implementation of the temporary works referred to at 6.1 above and following this, another detailed survey of the ceiling and support structure has been undertaken. The findings of this latest condition survey require that permanent works are to be completed, in order to stabilise and safeguard the ceiling on a more permanent basis, and these works would be undertaken during the winter close down period 2021/22.
- 6.3 The permanent works for which authorisation is being sought through this report will ensure the Circus, which contributes significantly to the overall visitor offer of Blackpool Tower and the resort as a whole, can continue to operate from 2022. If the works are not undertaken, specialist historic ceiling contractors are no longer able to certify the ceiling condition.
- 6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 1: Finance – Exempt Information

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The estimated capital cost of the scheme is £643,629.00.

Subject to authority, costs are to be funded through Prudential Borrowing, which will be met by an annual contribution from the Strategic Leisure Assets portfolio. Table 1 below sets out the debt repayment estimates in summary form.

Table 1 - Estimated Debt repayments Summary

£'000's

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6 - 25	Total
Debt finance costs	57	55	54	53	51	759	1,030

It should be noted that should this scheme be authorised additional works may be identified as required once the works commence and more survey work is completed. There is a risk this could lead to increased cost.

Further financial information is set out in the financial appendix to this report.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 When commissioning contracts for the procurement of goods, services, or the execution of works, the Council must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and its own Contractual Standing Orders (CSO's), failing which a contract may be subject to legal challenge from an aggrieved provider. The Council's Corporate Procurement department together with Property Services have developed a compliant procurement route for the appointment of specialist historic ceiling Contractors.

9.2 The Council's contracting and commissioning procedures will apply when entering into works contracts associated with this scheme and a suitable contract will be put in place. The award of the contract will commit the Council to the formal arrangement with the contractor and once awarded Legal Services will assist with preparing any contractual documentation upon receipt of instructions to ensure the Council's position and interests are protected.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 As set out at 8.1 above it should be noted that, should this scheme be authorised, further works may be identified as required once the known works to the ceiling commence and more survey work is completed. There is a risk this could lead to increased cost.

Reputational risk is a factor should the Circus be forced to close due to not undertaking the ceiling works set out in this report.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Timely rectification of identified works on the grounds of professional integrity, health and safety and confidence of the public to keep the Circus running safely.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Options for considerations in this regard are limited due to the Blackpool Tower building being of a Grade I listed status and requiring replacements on a like for like basis however, high levels of environmental and sustainability standards will be implemented and maintained where possible.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Professional surveys undertaken by plasterwork specialists and heritage accredited engineers, the outcome of which is reflected in the recommendations to this report.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

ONLY APPLICABLE FOR REPORTS WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE/CABINET MEMBER

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: Not Included on the Forward Plan

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? Yes

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

These significant works to the Blackpool Tower Circus ceiling are required to commence as a matter of urgency during November 2021 so as to be completed with minimal impact to the operation of the Circus during 2022.

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? Yes

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

These significant works to the Blackpool Tower Circus ceiling are required to commence as a matter of urgency during November 2021 so as to be completed with minimal impact to the operation of the Circus during 2022.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 24 November 2021 Date approved: 24 November 2021

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Leader of the Council agreed as an urgent decision the following decisions:

1. That the Director of Communications and Regeneration be provided with delegated authority to undertake a scheme of urgent and essential works identified as required to the Blackpool Tower Circus historic ceiling, to include the completion of all due diligence associated with the project and as set out in this report and financial appendix to this report.
2. To authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into any such documentation as may be necessary and to consider and deal with such due diligence as may be required to provide for completion of the scheme of urgent repairs identified as required to the Blackpool Tower historic Circus Ceiling.
3. That authority is provided to complete the project-funding package through debt finance in the form of Prudential Borrowing, as detailed in the financial appendix to this report.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 26 November 2021

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 To ensure the continued operation of the Blackpool Tower Circus, limiting disruption to the attraction and impact on visitor experience and helping to maintain the improvement in performance during 2021, of the Blackpool Tower visitor attraction. This will contribute toward attaining the Council vision for Blackpool of being the UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 26 November 2021

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1