
The Curve Remedial Works

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken by: 21 November 2024

Lead Officer: Tom Lo'Monte

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: Tom Lo'Monte
- Author contact details: tom.lomonte@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 2

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to gain the necessary approval to undertake urgent remedial works to the Brise Soliel panel system installed on The Curve façade.

2. Recommended actions/decision

The City Mayor is recommended to:

- approve the scheme outlined within this report at a cost of £2.2m, with £1.468m of this financed from the existing operational estate capital maintenance programme.
- approve the addition of the remaining £732k as an immediate start to the 2024/25 capital programme, to be financed from capital receipts.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

As these are urgent reactive works, key neighbouring businesses have been contacted along with the relevant Ward Councillors.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

The Curve Theatre is located within the St. George's Conservation Area in the city centre, covering approximately 12,920 square meters. Designed by Rafael Viñoly Architects, built by Bovis Lend Lease, the construction of the building began in 2006 and it was officially opened on 11th November 2008. The theatre features an exterior with a transparent, four-storey louvered curtain wall, allowing visibility into the production and technical areas. The façade includes large metal shutters and glass walls, enabling views of the stage from the lobby and even the street. Additionally, the building includes rectangular volumes on the North and West sides, housing administrative offices, production facilities, rehearsal spaces, and other support functions.

On Saturday 4th May 2024, one of the louvres fell from the exterior of Curve into the Orton Square area. Nobody was injured and the area around the building was cordoned off with the assistance of the Fire Services. At the time of the incident there were no inclement weather conditions, and the cause of the incident was unknown. Following the initial investigations, it was found that the original fixing strategy had failed in certain areas.

All health & safety precautions were immediately put into place and remain in place directly outside the Curve and the surrounding area including the road closures and fencing to the front of the building.

Although the building is generally covered with glazed curtain walling, it is surrounded by horizontally oriented brise soleil façade elements which are approximately 1m wide and 5.5m long. Although they are not as numerous as the 5.5m panels, there are also some panels with dimensions of 6m and 6.4m.

The Curve carries approximately 42 brise soleil blades connected to the building at each row. There are 17 rows from top to bottom totalling approximately 700nr blades. Each blade weighs approximately 150kg, and it was one these which fell back in May 2024. Work is now required to ensure the secure fixing of the remaining blades.

The façade contractor, Norman & Underwood, who installed the façade and brise soleil system went into administration in 2023. This, coupled with the age of the building (i.e. outside of the standard 12-year limitation period for contract executed under seal) means it falls within the Council's responsibility to resolve as Landlord.

Since the part closure of Orton Square, we have engaged with a specialist façade engineer, alongside a specialist facade contractor to evaluate remedial options and the quickest and safest way to rectify the issue.

The specialist contractor has now provided a proposal for the re-fixing strategy of the brise soleil which involves the removal of each panel and the re-fixing in one operation which will negate the need to scaffold the whole building as this will be done via mobile elevated working platform's (MEWPS). The re-fixing will include for additional fixings to each panel and allow the correct width for thermal movement.

Including contingency, surveys and fees, the total cost of the works is estimated to be £2.2m.

We are presently aiming to be on site remediating the entire façade late 2024, with a completion forecasted during Autumn 2025.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The total cost of the work outlined within the report is estimated to be £2.2m. To finance this, it is proposed that £1.468m is reallocated within the existing operational estate budget. The remaining £732k will be financed from capital receipts, in effect top-slicing resources which would have been available to support the 2025/26 capital programme.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy

Dated: 27th August 2024

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 The Authority's internal Contract Procedure Rules allow for exemptions where competition is absent for technical reasons, i.e. due to the requirement that a specialist contractor is required to complete the type of work set out in this report. Legal and procurement approval will be required.

5.2.2 Obtaining a waiver without formalised competition may pose a risk of challenge from other potential contractors however given the nature of works this risk is likely to be low.

5.2.3 Legal services should be engaged at an early stage to draft the contract.

Signed: Seema Patel

Dated: 23/08/24

5.3 Equalities implications

There are no specific equality implications arising from this report. People from across all protected characteristics should benefit from the remedial work to the Curve infrastructure being proposed.

Signed: Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager

Dated: 22/08/24

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Refurbishment and maintenance of buildings is a significant source of carbon emissions. Following the council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions addressing these emissions is important, particularly for the council's own buildings, where it has the greatest level of control. The council's sustainable procurement guidance should be applied to this project as relevant, to minimise the emissions associated with procuring materials and carrying out works to the building.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 22 August 24

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

N/A

6. Background information and other papers:

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

N/A

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Yes

In excess of £1m