



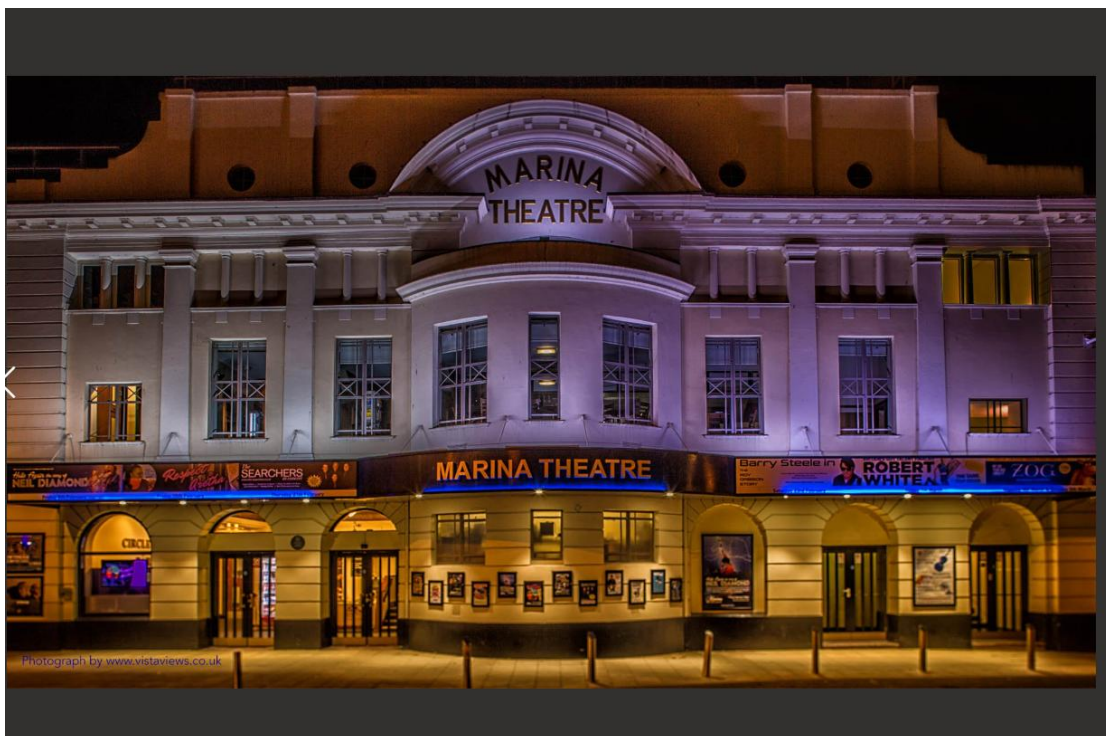
Consultant Brief: Options Appraisal for Marina Theatre, Lowestoft

Introduction and background

Lowestoft Town Council is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to undertake an appraisal of options for the future operation of the Marina Theatre.

The Marina Theatre is an 800 seat venue, currently undergoing a £3.4m refurbishment to improve accessibility and the visitor experience. The theatre is owned by the Town Council and is leased and operated by a charity, overseen by a Board of Trustees.

The theatre offers a wide range of performances and events throughout the year, including touring productions, community performances and educational activities. It is supported by an annual grant of £150,000 from Lowestoft Town Council.



Objectives and scope of work

Both the lease for the Marina Theatre and the Management Agreement for operation are under consideration at this time. Therefore, the Town Council is seeking a review of options to ensure the Theatre remains financially sustainable and is best aligned to wider Town Council operations and services.

The objective of this commission is to carry out a comprehensive and impartial **options appraisal** to assess the benefits, risks, costs, and feasibility of alternative operating models for the theatre. This will support the Council in making an informed decision on the most effective and sustainable way forward.

The Council is not reviewing the programming mix or artistic quality of the theatre.

Scope of Work

The consultant will be required to:

1. Review the current operating model for the Marina Theatre, including:
 - Governance and legal structure
 - Financial performance and funding arrangements
 - Staffing structure
 - Key partnerships (including other theatres located in the wider area)
2. Identify and assess alternative operating models, including but not limited to:
 - Option 1: No change to current arrangements: the Marina Theatre Trust continues to operate the theatre and receive the current grant from LTC.
 - Option 1.a: The consultants should consider the effect of retaining the current management model but with the potential for any reduction in the level of annual grant based on a review of generated income.
 - Option 2: Bringing the theatre operation in-house under direct Town Council management
 - Option 3: Outsourcing to an established external theatre operator or commercial provider
 - Option(s) 4+: other options as proposed by the consultant
3. Evaluate each option against a set of agreed criteria, to include:
 - Financial sustainability and value for money
 - Governance and accountability
 - Staff implications and organisational capacity
 - Alignment with wider Town Council objectives and operations
4. Produce a final report that includes:
 - Summary of findings and insights
 - Detailed option appraisals with SWOT analyses and financial implications
 - Comparative assessment and scoring against agreed criteria
 - Risks and mitigation strategies for each option

- Clear recommendations and rationale
5. Present findings to Council officers and/or elected members as required.

Deliverables

- Draft option appraisal report
- Final option appraisal report with executive summary and recommendations
- Presentation of findings

Timescales

The appraisal should commence as soon as possible and be completed within seven weeks. Key deadlines will be agreed at project initiation, but it is anticipated that a full draft report should be available for early December 2025.

Budget

The total available budget for this commission is £10,000, inclusive of all fees and expenses. Value for money will be a key consideration in the selection process.

Consultant Requirements

We are seeking a consultant or consultancy team with:

- Demonstrable experience of conducting option appraisals in the cultural or public sector
- Knowledge of theatre operations and different operational and management models
- Strong stakeholder engagement
- Excellent analytical, financial, and reporting capabilities
- Familiarity with local council operations and governance
- The consultant(s) must confirm they are not currently engaged in work with Lowestoft Town Council, the Marina Theatre Trust or another partner which could constitute a conflict of interest.

Submission Requirements

Please provide a short proposal, of no more than five pages (A4), that includes:

- A brief overview of your understanding of the brief
- Proposed methodology and approach, including a timeline for delivery
- Fee proposal (including breakdown of costs)
- Relevant experience, including case studies, and summary CVs | profiles for key personnel
- Two references

Proposals should be submitted by Monday 6th October 2025, by 12pm to Sarah Foote, Town Clerk, Lowestoft Town Council at sarah.foote@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk.