



Nominations Committee of the Barbican Centre Board

Date: WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2013
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: ALDERMEN'S DINING ROOM - 4TH FLOOR WEST WING

4. SKILLS AND EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY 2013
Report of the Town Clerk.

Item received too late for circulation in conjunction with the Agenda.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

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Agenda Item 4

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Nominations Committee of the Barbican Centre Board	06 November 2013
Subject: Skills and Effectiveness Review 2013	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information

Summary

Members of the Barbican Board have recently undertaken a skills and effectiveness review. This review asked Members to comment on various aspects around the work of the Board and the management of meetings. It explored Members' understanding of the Board's role, the input into and quality of meetings, the governance and clerking support received by the Board, and Member thoughts on communication from the Centre. It went on to assess personal attributes such as the level of training received by Board Members, the interaction of Board members with the Centre and its affiliates outside of formal meetings, and the skills that Members feel they bring to the Board.

The results of the survey are annexed to this report and Members will note that the data is split in to red, amber and green areas. The results demonstrate that Members are satisfied with the administration of the Board and that the role of the Board is understood. Concerns were raised over the type of decisions the Board were taking, with thoughts expressed on how strategic the Board currently is.

Members did express concern around information coming from the Barbican Centre. The results show that Members thought reports to the Board can be confusing and that communication to and training for Members could be improved.

The results of the skills audit demonstrate that the Board is strong in areas of governance and an interest and knowledge of the arts. It also highlighted an interest from Members in creative learning and widening participation. There is, however, a lack of identified skills in fundraising, property matters and equal opportunities. This final point may not be identified as a direct skill and could be mitigated through training opportunities, as expressed above.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Appendices

- Results and analysis – Barbican Centre Board Skills and Effectiveness Review 2013

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Barbican Skills and Effectiveness Review Response Log

Question	No. of respondents	Results	Comments
Is the role of the Board clear?	10	90% = Yes 10% = Needs Improvement	<p>We should be less rubber stamping, more constructive</p> <p>There is some confusion as to the role of board members: is it a committee of management, or representatives of our largest donor? There is not enough "we" and "ys" and too much "you"</p>
Understand the Vision?	10	80% = Yes 20% = In Part	More information about comparators - other arts bodies
Clarity over decisions expected?	11	63% = Yes 36% In Part	<p>but care not to diminish the value and variety of board contributions by too much delegation to TC and chair/deputy chair unless true urgency</p> <p>Overall, governance is very strong...it is not clear whether the Board's role is to take decisions... strategic advisory capacity (more common). Both are valuable...sign-posting might help.</p> <p>Sometimes things seem to have been decided already rather than being open to input/discussion.</p> <p>We embark on conversations sometimes without clarity of whether we are just trying to assist with advice or are responsible. Good example: the change of name of Gin Joint!</p>
Sufficient skills on the Board?	10	90% = Yes 10% = No	<p>not sure we hear sufficiently from the elected members</p> <p>though would welcome more experience from the cultural sector; also more youth and diversity</p> <p>Areas of external expertise to consider adding for the future might include visual arts and digital media/marketing.</p>

			Too many people round the table makes for not a very good discussion.
Is the Chairman effective?	8	100% = Yes	
Structure of agenda?	10	60% = Good 30% = Adequate 10% = Needs Improvement	Suggest use "starred items" system as for Guildhall School. Would prefer fewer presentations The relative formality of agenda structure....more discursive matters are arrived at later in the meeting than would be ideal...discussion can be curtailed. It takes us a long time to get to the meat of a meeting. There seems (to this outsider) to be too much bureaucratic stuff during the first hour
Paper content?	10	50% = Good 30% = Adequate 20% = Needs Improvement	Financial information difficult to understand, with questions like "Did event X break-even" unable to be answered. Treatment of overheads mystifying! Much improved Generally good....more concise language is always welcome! Vary - but have improved steadily in recent years I am not used to the format of the papers. Not a lot you can do about it but they don't make for good discussion.
Clarity of Minutes?	10	70% = Good 30% Adequate	
Agenda Timeliness?	10	70% = Good 30% Adequate	Could really do with longer to review the papers before they are circulated Late Papers

			At times, too many late papers but again improved
Clerking arrangements?	9	100% = Good	
Own meeting attendance rating?	10	70% = Good 30% = Adequate	I do my best not to miss meetings...there have been unavoidable clashes.
Own input at meetings	9	55% = Good 33% = Adequate 11% = Needs Improvement	When we do genuinely discuss I am sure I am not perfect!
Own outside interaction with Centre?	10	40% = Good 60% = Adequate	My interactions with the team, while always positive, are relatively limited. Partly...diary pressure...keen and ready to engage with all aspects of the arts, digital and communication agendas. Not sure management does enough to invite Board to events
Did you receive an induction?	11	63% Did 37% Didn't	
Did you get an induction pack?	11	46% Did 54% Didn't	
Centre Communications helpful/good?	10	30% = Good 60% = Adequate 10% = Needs Improvement	Getting much better but the board would benefit for a better flow of information about what is happening, as it happens Probably Improved but more [something] than strategic
Other Centre Communications	9	55% = Good 33% = Adequate 12% = Needs Improvement	Press briefings have improve but cannot be enjoyed much between meetings
General Effectiveness Comments			finance committee is more focused than the board meeting; we must always bear down on overlong presentations and repetition of material already circulated to read It functions, but are we having enough time to debate the "big issues"? We are a large diverse and well skilled Board but we are not having those skills utilised - it is a bit of [something] show!

			<p>The Board provides stable and strong governance of an exceptional creative and management team. It would benefit from growing the number and diversity of external members ...creative, cultural and business sectors.</p> <p>Pretty good - currently well chaired and with enthusiastic members. Meetings are very long and work could be more efficiently dealt with.</p> <p>Insufficient engagement between Board and artistic activities.</p> <p>A "normal" board would have fund raising at its heart - and we don't do that</p>

Least Skilled = high aggregate score

Most Skilled = low aggregate score

Member Indicated Skills = skills recorded to demonstrate Board skills in this area but form not filled out correctly.

Skills Area	Expertise		General Interest	
	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Arts Administration	5			
Charity Organisation	2			4
Creative Learning		3	10	5
Equal Opportunities				
Facilities Management		Member indicated skills		
Film	5		8	7
Finance	4			
Fundraising	Member indicated skills	Member indicated skills		
Governance/Trusteeship	2			
Health & Safety		Member Indicated Skills		
Legal	6			
Local Authorities	3	4		
Marketing	4			
Music	4	5	7	

Other Business expertise (please state below)	1 (Media) 4 (General Company Management)			
Personnel Matters		Member Indicated Skills		
Project Management		Member Indicated Skills		
Public Relations			6	
Public Sector Organisations	5		1	
Quality Systems				
Risk and Audit	5			
Theatre	2		7	
Visual Arts			11	
Widening Participation	4		1	