

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Risk Committee of the Barbican Centre Board	24 July 2019
Subject: Editorial guidance on use of potentially offensive language	Public
Report of: Louise Jeffreys, Artistic Director Report Author: Nick Adams, Senior Policy and Communications Manager	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>The Barbican’s ethics policy sets out the Barbican’s approach to programming potentially controversial work that sometimes puts us at the centre of difficult, nuanced and sometimes controversial debates. In addition to the Ethics Policy, which has been in operation since July 2017, the Barbican recently took the decision to develop guidance for staff around the organisation’s approach to use of potentially offensive language in the editorial and copy that the organisation publishes. This document is being submitted to the Risk Committee for comment and approval.</p>	

Main Report

Background

The Barbican’s ethics policy sets out that when programming work we do not set out to offend, however, one of our core values is to be brave and sometime provocative and we aim to sometimes programme work that responds to our fast-changing world.

The Barbican feels that these guiding principles should also be reflected in our editorial approach, whereby we do not deliberately set out to offend or provoke controversy but that we recognise that in some cases artists will want to present work that engages with challenging themes and that at times this involves the use of language that may cause offense, including in stage names and in titles and descriptions of artworks. By adopting this guidance, the Barbican aims to ensure it has a consistent and considered approach to dealing with editorial that includes potentially offensive terms.

Current Position

The Barbican does not currently have set editorial guidance around potentially offensive terms in copy and editorial.

Options

The Barbican Board Risk Committee is asked to agree the suggested guidance, with the option of suggesting any necessary amendments.

Proposals

The current draft of the guidance has been approved by the Barbican's Management Team with the recommendation that the organisation adopts it, subject to approval of the Barbican Board Risk Committee.

Adopting the policy would ensure the Barbican has a consistent and considered approach to dealing with editorial that includes potentially offensive terms.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

The Editorial guidance on use of potentially offensive language is to be used alongside the Barbican's Ethics Policy, which was approved by the Barbican board in July 2017 and was a project identified as part of the organisation's strategic plan.

The guidance responds to the following areas of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan:

Outcome 2 – People enjoy good health and wellbeing by promoting equality and inclusion through ensuring the materials we produce do not alienate certain groups and audiences.

Outcome 3 – People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential through promoting and championing diversity in our programme and removing institutional barriers to people engaging with our work.

Outcome 4 – Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need through ensuring the language we use promotes mutual respect and tolerance.

Outcome 5 – Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible through ensuring we have a consistent and considered approach to how we use potentially offensive language in our editorial.

Outcome 10 – Inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration through using the guidance to promote our world class cultural experiences to the widest possible audience.

Implications

The policy will be used in conjunction with the existing Barbican Ethics Policy and Risk register and will help inform risk assessments and mitigate against reputational risks.

Conclusion

- The Barbican has developed guidance for staff around the organisation's approach to use of potentially offensive language in the editorial and copy.

- This guidance aims to ensure we have a consistent and considered approach to dealing with editorial that includes potentially offensive terms.
- We are asking the Risk Committee to approve to agree the suggested guidance, with the option of suggesting any necessary amendments.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Editorial Guidance on Use of Potentially Offensive Language

Appendix 2 – Barbican Ethics Policy

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