

BARBICAN CENTRE BOARD

Wednesday, 16 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Centre Board held at Virtual meeting on
Wednesday, 16 September 2020 at 11.00am

Present

Members:

Deputy Tom Sleight (Chair)	Deputy Wendy Hyde (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Dr Giles Shilson (Deputy Chairman)	Emma Kane (Ex-Officio Member)
Munsur Ali	Vivienne Littlechild
Randall Anderson	Jeremy Mayhew
Stephen Bediako (External Member)	Wendy Mead
Russ Carr (External Member)	Lucy Musgrave (External Member)
Zulum Elumogo (External Member)	Jenny Waldman (External Member)
Alderman David Graves	

In Attendance

Officers:

Sir Nicholas Kenyon	- Managing Director, The Barbican Centre
Jonathon Poyner	- Director of Operations & Buildings, Barbican Centre
Sandeep Dwesar	- Chief Operating & Financial Officer, Barbican Centre
Natasha Harris	- Director of Development, Barbican Centre
Leonora Thomson	- Interim Artistic Director, Barbican Centre
Sean Gregory	- Director of Innovation & Engagement, Barbican Centre
Niki Cornwell	- Head of Finance and Business Administration, Barbican Centre
Nick Adams	- Acting Head of Communications, Barbican Centre
Steve Eddy	- Head of HR, Barbican Centre
Laura Whitticase	- Strategic Lead, Barbican Centre
Andrew Buckingham	- Communications Team, Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Gerard Grech and the Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor Alderman William Russell.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

a. Board Minutes

The public minutes and summary of the Board meeting held on 22 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

b. **Finance & Risk Committee**

The draft public minutes of the Finance & Risk Committee meeting held on 7 September 2020 were received.

c. **Nominations Committee**

The public minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 22 July 2020 were received.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND WORK PLAN**

The Board noted the various outstanding actions and the updates provided thereon. The workplan for Board meetings in 2020/21 was also noted.

5. **MANAGEMENT REPORT BY THE CENTRE'S DIRECTORS**

Members received a report of the Managing Director providing updates from the Barbican Directors on their respective areas. The following comments were made:

- The Managing Director stated that this was an important moment for the Centre as it worked to gradually reopen to the public and gain public confidence. Thanks was given to all staff that had worked tirelessly to make the building safe and to the City Corporation for their continued help and support throughout.
- A recent public survey reported that 95% of attendees felt safe at the Centre which had now raised to 97/8%. The Managing Director regarded this as an important step for culture and showing the Barbican as a big contributor in bringing people back to the Square Mile.
- With regards to the cinemas, it was noted that Cinema 1 viewings would increase to two viewings a day from Friday. Cinemas 2 and 3 were planned to reopen in November.
- Members were advised that the normally split classical and contemporary offer would now be brought together to provide a stronger programme.
- Members were encouraged to attend the Leytonstone Loves Film event which began today and would last for three weeks delivering screenings, workshops and talks both live and online.
- Michael Clark: Cosmic Dancer opens on 7 October in Barbican Art Gallery.
- Cross-departmental thinking continues to take place looking at how the narrative of their work was shared and what more could be done to sell the Barbican's story and fundraise.
- The new 12-month creative learning programme has launched and been well received.

- Creative Learning took part in the virtual London Careers Festival on 29 June 2020, with a Q&A targeted at the post-16 age group discussing careers in the arts. On the discussion panel were a range of Barbican staff, with representation from Art Gallery, Cinema, Music and Theatre.
- Recruitment for new creative cohorts 20/21 has begun including Young Creatives programmes for Young Poets, Programmers, Visual Arts Group and National Open Youth Orchestra.
- A new online short course, A Brief History of Brutalism at the Barbican, has been developed through the Barbican Guildhall Creative Alliance and will be launched in September over six seminars.
- The first Barbican Association meeting since lockdown will take place on 12 October 2020.
- The Barbican Kitchen has reopened, and it was hoped that Osteria and the Martini Bar would follow soon.
- Members were advised that developing a programme of events had been difficult due to the uncertain financial impacts of Covid, loss of funding opportunities, phased reopening of the building and the overall changed landscape. A five-year plan was in development.
- Members were encouraged by the positive stats concerning returning audience and visitors perception of safety at the Centre.
- A Member felt that it would be useful to publicise to visitors exactly what the physical arrangements at the Barbican were and what to expect. Officers confirmed information regarding visitor experience, safety procedures and how the Centre was being managed was available on the website.
- The Chair noted that City Corporation leaders had joined a round table with MPs and requested clarity concerning confusing rules and information to the public around travel, visiting cultural institutions and the new rule of six.
- A Member queried how residents further than the unique local Barbican residents were engaged with and welcomed more engagement with other Wards and residents throughout the City. Officers agreed there was a strong relationship with those residents immediately close to the Centre who particularly engaged through the Barbican Association on local issues and Barbican Residential Committee. The Barbican remained committed to engaging with all City residents and bordering Boroughs through its Creative Learning and Beyond Barbican projects and general civic ambitions. Officers were also working within Culture Mile on a hyper local project to join resources and efforts to encourage

all residents to come into City and enjoy culture, including the Barbican, making it accessible to all.

- The Chair agreed to join the next Barbican Residential Committee meeting and felt that transport specifically was the goal to target to encourage wider residents in the City to visit the Barbican.
- Members felt that it was important to know where visitors were coming from to help capture different audiences and where to target marketing. Communicating and sharing messaging through local/ City newspapers was suggested.
- In response to a question concerning the value of in-kind support, it was confirmed that the Barbican supported and highly subsidised various ventures and was also approached by artists for support.

6. **BARBICAN CENTRE BOARD: REVIEW OF COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Board considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning a review of the composition and Terms of Reference for the Barbican Centre Board. The following comments were made:

- The Chair gave context for the report, the aim of which was to make the Board the best it could possibly be and resolve any unclarity within the terms of reference. This would work alongside the recommendations of Lord Lisvane's Governance Review, open up conversations and dovetail into the wider review work to come.
- A Member did not feel that the City Corporation representation should be in the majority which would align better with other arts organisations. It was noted that this had been discussed previously for this Board and other City Corporation arts and culture Boards and the decision by Court had always been that Court Members should be the majority.
- Another Member added that it was conceivable to move away from a majority of Court Members; however, the Centre would need to accept that the City Corporation was no longer the "bank of last resort". Members agreed that there was a trade-off between the benefits and disadvantages, and it was acknowledged that the Corporation would be put in a very difficult position if there were financial difficulties in the future. Members ultimately agreed that without a clear alternative strong source of funding available to replace the City Corporation, the Court Members should keep its majority.
- It was accepted that the report was not asking for a loss of City Corporation control, it was advocating for membership with artistic experience. It was agreed that the Board's membership needed relevant expertise and increasing the number of external members would achieve this.

- A Member felt that more time was needed for Members to consider the profound implications of the report and Lisvane's recommendations, both of which Members only received yesterday and may make the recommendations irrelevant. The Chair disagreed arguing that it could take up to 2022 before changes were made based on Lord Lisvane's recommendations.
- With regards to terms, a Member thought it was very important to strictly limit terms in order that all Board Members provide their expertise and not rejoin when the term ended allowing new people to come through and increase diversity of voices and appropriate refreshing of board expertise.
- This was supported by another Member who advocated for a representative Board and diversity of leadership and a succession process was recommended.
- Members discussed the proposal to introduce Board placements, the uncontentious overlap with the Education Board and the possibility for the Board to add two more external Members. Members supported the recommendations within the report and the Town Clerk confirmed a report would need to go the P&R to approve these changes to the Board's terms of reference.
- Members heavily debated the issue of term limits. Whilst all agreed clarity was required to avoid ambiguity, not all Members agreed with a flat ban on Members re-joining the Board after 9-years continuous service. It was acknowledged that there was a difference between ex officio Members from a committee such as the Finance Committee which could be represented by anyone on the Committee or a Chairman of a culture Committee with shared interests that would benefit from being on the Board.
- For clarity, it was ultimately agreed that there should be a hard 9-year term limit for all Members with the exception of incumbent Chairmen and Deputies so as to not cut them off during their term if impacted by the 9-year rule. Members agreed to grant delegated authority to the Chair and Deputy Chairman with the Town Clerk to take forward the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED:–

- That Members consider:
 - An alteration to the composition of the Board, to allow for additional external expertise to be utilised (see paras 6-18);
 - Recommendations to clarify the application of term limits (see paras 19-28);
 - The introduction of "Board Placement" roles (see paras 29-39);

- A clarification in respect of the Board's Terms of Reference (paras 40-46);
 - To recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee and Court of Common Council accordingly.
- That Delegated Authority be granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to take forward the recommendations on behalf of the Board.

7. **EQUALITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE**

The Board considered a joint report of the Head of HR, Interim Artistic Director and Director of Innovation and Engagement providing an update on the Equality and Inclusion work now underway.

The Chair highlighted the paramount importance of the subject now more than ever and wanted the Barbican and Board to be as inclusive as possible. It was acknowledged that whilst lots of work was happening, there was still more to do.

Officers confirmed a successful Equalities and Inclusion Subgroup meeting took place last week and the next steps would be to take forward the short-term actions of the report produced by Challenge Consultancy as a result of their Listen and Learn sessions held with Barbican staff. This included ensuring there were safe forums, support for any incidents or microaggressions, increased conversations and dialogue across all staff members building trust and key training for Heads. A Task & Finish Group would also be set up shortly with terms of reference that were not oversubscriptive, but supportive and enabling ownership.

A Member stated that the right balance was needed to steer the process and ensure staff were given agency to inform policies and ensure things were done differently in future.

In response to a query asking for a timeline, Officers confirmed the Taskforce would hopefully be established in the next few weeks and the recommendations completed by the end of 2020. A new Equality and Inclusion group would be established to hold the Centre to account. It was noted that the Centre would also coordinate with the City Corporation's broader efforts and the Tackling Racism Taskforce.

A Member was keen to engage and consult in the process and was invited to join the Taskforce.

RESOLVED – That Members review the information presented.

8. **BREXIT PLANNING**

The Board received an oral update of the Managing Director concerning the Barbican Centre's preparations for a possible no-deal Brexit.

Members were informed that key risks of concern included movement of people which in the short term was being mitigated by creatives being allowed to attend the country for 90 days without a visa. However, in the long term, this could become a more significant issue and hinder the UK's creativity. Officers also noted inclusivity concerns and a worrying reported rise in racism and hostility throughout Europe.

Officers identified movement of product as the highest concern which was difficult to resolve as the rules for the new customs system were changing on a daily basis. Extra bureaucracy and measures coming in would lead to freight delays at ports and increased admin. The Centre was also focussed on protecting its global British role within the culture and arts sector and saw its continued representation within Europe a key to this. Data transfer, catering and intellectual property were other concerns.

Members were alarmed by racism and diversity concerns and agreed a holistic approach was needed to ensure a varied portfolio and artwork, artists and audiences. The Chair felt it was particularly critical to support emerging artists despite changes brought in by Brexit. Officers confirmed they were continuing to plan for the Brexit deadline based on all eventualities and burdens including the worst case no-deal scenario.

9. *PROJECTS UPDATE REPORT

The Board received a report of the Director of Operations and Buildings providing Members with an update on the Centre's maintenance and refurbishment projects that fall under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and additional projects funded from other sources.

RECEIVED.

10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD

There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No.

13-25

Paragraph No.

3

13. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

a. Board Minutes

The non-public minutes and summary of the Board meeting held on 22 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

b. **Finance & Risk Committee**

The draft non-public minutes of the Finance & Risk Committee meeting held on 7 September 2020 were received.

c. **Nominations Committee**

The non-public minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 22 July 2020 were received.

14. **BARBICAN STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director providing Members with an update on the Barbican's revised Strategic Plan and Business Plan.

15. **COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE**

The Board considered a report of the Chief Operating and Financial Officer providing Members with an update on the current situation for the Centre as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

16. **BUSINESS PLANNING UPDATE**

The Board received an oral update from the Chief Operating & Financial Officer providing an update on business planning.

17. **BARBICAN CAPITAL PLAN 2021/22**

Members were advised that this report no longer needed to come to the Board and was now going through the capital bids pathway.

18. **TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Innovation & Engagement providing Members with an update on the technology programme.

19. ***BUSINESS REVIEW - AUGUST 2020 (PERIOD 4 - 20/21)**

The Board considered a report of the Chief Operating & Financial Officer setting out the Business Review for the August 2020 (Period 4 – 20/21) accounts.

20. ***PROJECTS UPDATE: NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Board received the non-public Projects Update appendix to be read in conjunction with item 9.

21. ***COMMERCIAL UPDATE**

The Board received a report of the Chief Operating & Financial Officer setting out the impact of Covid-19 on the Barbican's commercial activities, the mitigating steps being taken to minimise lost income and strategies for business recovery.

22. ***PROGRAMMING RISK REGISTER**

The Board received a report of the Interim Artistic Director updating Members on the Programming Controversial Risk Register and the identified potential risks that occur as a result of specific programmed events and activities, as well as outlining the mitigation processes in place for each.

23. ***RISK UPDATE**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Operations and Buildings updating Members on the risk management system in place at the Barbican, the significant risks that have been identified and measures for mitigation of these risks.

24. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

25. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 1.24pm

Chairman

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