



Barbican Centre Board

Date: WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2023
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members:

Tom Sleigh (Chair)	Zulum Elumogo (External Member)
Tobi Ruth Adebekun (Deputy Chairman)	Wendy Mead
Alderman Sir William Russell (Deputy Chairman)	Mark Page (External Member)
Munsur Ali	Jens Riegelsberger (External Member)
Deputy Randall Anderson	Jane Roscoe (External Member)
Michael Asante (External Member)	Despina Tstatsas (External Member)
Stephen Bediako (External Member)	Irem Yerdelen
Farmida Bi, Barbican Centre Trust Chair (Ex-Officio Member)	Deputy Alpa Raja
Tijs Broeke	

Enquiries: Ben Dunleavy
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<https://www.youtube.com/@CityofLondonCorporation/streams>

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Whilst we endeavour to livestream all of our public meetings, this is not always possible due to technical difficulties. In these instances, if possible, a recording will be uploaded following the end of the meeting.

Ian Thomas CBE
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

A number of items on the agenda will have already been considered by the Board's Sub Committees and it is therefore proposed that they be noted without discussion. These have been included in the separate information pack along with other items marked 'For Information' and appendices to reports. Any Member is able to request that an item be subject to discussion; Members are asked to inform the Town Clerk or Chair of this request prior to the meeting.

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

3. **BOARD MINUTES**

To approve the public minutes and non-public summary of the Barbican Centre Board meeting held on 12 July 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 7 - 10)

4. **SUB-COMMITTEES**

a) *Finance and Risk Committee

To receive an update on the public section of the meeting of the Finance and Risk Committee of the Barbican Centre Board meeting held on 11 September 2023.

b) *Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee

To receive an update on the public section of the Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee of the Barbican Centre Board held on 13 September 2023.

5. **WORKPLAN**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Information
(Pages 11 - 14)

6. **CEO REPORT BY THE BARBICAN'S DIRECTORS**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Decision
(Pages 15 - 32)

7. **BARBICAN CENTRE – CINEMA ANNUAL STRATEGIC UPDATE**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Discussion
(Pages 33 - 46)

8. **BARBICAN CENTRE – COMMERCIAL ANNUAL STRATEGIC UPDATE**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Discussion
(Pages 47 - 72)

9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION – That under Section 100A 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

For Decision

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

12. **NON-PUBLIC BOARD MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the Barbican Centre Board meeting held on 12 July 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 73 - 76)

13. **SUB-COMMITTEES**

a) Finance and Risk Committee

To receive an update on the non-public section of the meeting of the Finance and Risk Committee of the Barbican Centre Board meeting held on 11 September 2023.

b) Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee

To receive an update on the non-public section of the meeting of the Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee of the Barbican Centre Board held on 13 September 2023.

14. **UPDATE ON THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT**

For Discussion

15. **CEO REPORT BY THE BARBICAN'S DIRECTORS**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Decision
(Pages 77 - 98)

16. **BARBICAN IMMERSIVE FUTURE PLANS**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Decision
(Pages 99 - 108)

17. **BARBICAN CENTRE - AUDIENCE STRATEGY 2023-2026**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Discussion
(Pages 109 - 118)

18. **BARBICAN CENTRE - DRAFT CODE OF ETHICS**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Discussion
(Pages 119 - 122)

19. ***BARBICAN EXHIBITION HALLS ENABLING WORKS**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Information

20. ***RESOLVE COLLECTIVE REPORT**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Information

21. ***ARTS PROGRAMMING & BUSINESS EVENTS RISK REGISTER**

Report of the CEO, Barbican Centre.

For Information

22. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

23. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Part 3 - Confidential Agenda

24. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

To approve the confidential minutes of the Barbican Centre Board meeting held on 12 July 2023.

For Decision

BARBICAN CENTRE BOARD

Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Centre Board held at Frobisher Rooms,
Barbican Centre on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Tom Sleigh (Chair)	Zulum Elumogo (External Member)
Tobi Ruth Adebekun (Deputy Chairman)	Mark Page (External Member)
Alderman Sir William Russell (Deputy Chairman)	Jens Riegelsberger (External Member)
Deputy Randall Anderson	Despina Tstatsas (External Member)
Michael Asante (External Member)	Deputy Alpa Raja
Tijs Broeke	

In Attendance

Officers:

Claire Spencer	- CEO, Barbican Centre
Nick Adams	- Barbican Centre
Cornell Farrell	- Barbican Centre
Will Gompertz	- Barbican Centre
Shaney Jhaveri	- Barbican Centre
Ali Mirza	- Barbican Centre
Mercy Welbeck	- Barbican Centre
Emily Williams	- Barbican Centre
Udhay Bhakoo	- Chamberlain's Department
Sarah Wall	- Chamberlain's Department
Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Mead and Jane Roscoe.

The Chair congratulated Sanweep Dwesar MBE and Dame Kathryn McDowell on their recent honours.

The Chair welcomed Shaney Jhaveri, the new Head of Visual Arts at the Barbican Centre.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **BOARD MINUTES**

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4. **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

a. **Finance and Risk Committee**

The Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee provided Members with an oral update on the Committee's meeting on 27 June 2023.

b. **Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee**

The Chair of the Board provided Members with an oral update on the Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee's meeting on 28 June 2023.

5. **WORKPLAN**

Members noted the Board's future workplan.

6. **CEO REPORT BY THE BARBICAN'S DIRECTORS**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, providing an update on the Centre's activities.

RESOLVED, that – the Board endorses Management's approach.

7. **VISUAL ARTS AT THE BARBICAN CENTRE**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, relating to the Visual Arts department.

Members also received a presentation from the new Head of Visual Arts. The Board praised presentation as being exciting and bringing a fresh perspective.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Members encouraged the Head of Visual Arts to consider how he could link with other institutions. Officers confirmed they would have events and collaborations with communities in the City and beyond.
- A Member asked how outside space would be utilised in programming. Officers replied that there was a tremendous opportunity to use outside spaces. The CEO confirmed that the Centre was working collaboratively with residents of the Barbican Estate on the impacts of any outside programming.
- A Member encouraged the Head of Visual Arts to harness the Board and let Members know how they could support their work.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

8. ***CONCERT HALL 2016 REFURBISHMENT WORKS**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, relative to the Concert Hall refurbishment.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

9. ***DIRECTOR SHARED OBJECTIVES 23/24**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, relative to the objectives for the Centre's directors.

RESOLVED, that – Members approve the Director Shared Objectives for 2023/24.

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 was no other business.

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.

13. **NON-PUBLIC BOARD MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

14. **SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

a. **Non Public Minutes of the Finance and Risk Committee**

The Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee provided Members with an oral update on the non-public elements of Committee's meeting on 27 June 2023.

b. **Non-Public Minutes of the Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee**

The Chair of the Board provided Members with an oral update on the non-public elements of the Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee's meeting on 28 June 2023.

15. **BARBICAN YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS - LIFT OFF**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, concerning the Barbican Young Changemakers programme.

16. **CEO REPORT BY THE BARBICAN'S DIRECTORS**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, providing an update on the Centre's activities.

17. **BARBICAN CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN (DRAFT)**

Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, concerning the draft Strategic Plan.

18. ***CONTROVERSIAL ARTS PROGRAMMING & BUSINESS EVENTS RISK REGISTER**
Members received a report of the CEO, Barbican Centre, concerning the controversial arts programming and business events risk register.
19. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**
There were no questions in the non-public session.
20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There was no urgent business in the non-public session.
21. **CONFIDENTIAL BOARD MINUTES**
The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.
22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There was one item of confidential business.

The meeting ended at 13.51

Chairman

Contact Officer: Ben Dunleavy
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Annual Planner - Barbican Board - Version 7 (updated September '23)														
Goal Area	Board Coverage													
PEOPLE	Finance and Risk	PCI	Renewal Working Group	Main Board	July	September	November	January '24	March '24	May '24	July '24	September '24	November '24	
Overview of activity	n/a	n/a	n/a	Headlines every meeting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
EDI	n/a	every meeting for discussion	n/a	For noting	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Directors' Performance KPI	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting	n/a	For noting		X						X		
Safeguarding	n/a	Annual for discussion and endorsement	n/a	n/a				X						
Team Survey	n/a	Annual for discussion	n/a	n/a			X						X	
Networks in Attendance	n/a	July and January	n/a	September and March		X		X	X		X	X		
Change Business Cases as Required (CONFIDENTIAL)				An option for every board where necessary	x	x	x							
PLACE	Finance and Risk	NEI	Renewal Working Group	Main Board	July	September	November	January '24	March '24	May '24	July '24	September '24	November '24	
Overview of activity	n/a	n/a	n/a	Headlines every meeting	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Barbican Renewal	n/a	n/a	Every meeting	Major Updates and Decisions (as required)	X	?	X	?	?	?	?	?	?	
Annual Plan for CWP and Maintenance	Annual Plan for Decision	n/a	n/a	Major Updates and Decisions (as required)	X	?	X	x	?	?	?	?	?	
Building Projects updates	Evey meeting							x	x	x	x	x	x	
Health and Safety	For Noting - annual January	n/a	n/a	Major Updates and Decisions (as required)	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Gateway Papers	For discussion and endorsement	n/a	n/a	For noting	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Sustainability	6 monthly for Discussion	n/a	n/a	For noting in CEO report		x			x			x		

ART	Finance and Risk	NEI	Renewal Working Group	Main Board	July	September	November	January '24	March '24	May '24	July '24	September '24	November '24
Overview of activity	n/a	n/a	n/a	Each meeting - Report of the Artistic Director	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x
Theatre	Financial/deep dive into numbers (March)	n/a	n/a	Annual					x				
Music (inc LSO)	No BCpaper in Nov 23 - LSO will present	n/a	n/a	No paper in Nov 23 (LSO only)			LSO only	Financial/deep dive into numbers (Jan)	Annual				x
Visual Arts	Financial/deep dive into numbers (July)	n/a	n/a	Annual	X						x		
Creative Collaboration (inc Barbican Futures)	Financial/deep dive into numbers (Sept)	n/a	n/a	Annual			x					x	
Cinema	Financial/deep dive into numbers (Sept)	n/a	n/a	Annual		X						x	
Programming Risk	For discussion and noting each meeting	n/a	n/a	every meeting for noting	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x
Production	n/a	n/a	n/a	CEO report				x	x	x	x	x	x
Barbican Immersive ACE (2023 only)	Financials/deep dive into numbers (Sept)	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting		X						x	
Barbican Young Changemakers	n/a	Ends October 23	n/a	n/a									
	Financials/deep dive into numbers (July)	n/a	n/a	Annual	X						x		
AUDIENCE	Finance and Risk	NEI	Renewal Working Group	Main Board	July	September	November	January '24	March '24	May '24	July '24	September '24	November '24
Comms Strategy	Financial/deep dive into numbers (May)	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting						x			
Marketing Strategy	Financial/deep dive into numbers (Jan)	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting				x					
Audience Strategy	n/a	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting		X							x
Annual Audience Analysis	n/a	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting			X						x

BUSINESS and GOVERNANCE	Finance and Risk	NEI	Renewal Working Group	Main Board	July	September	November	January '24	March '24	May '24	July '24	September '24	November '24
Babrican Enterprises (Events, Food and Beverage, Retail)	Finacial/deep dive into numbers (Sept)	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting		X						x	
Development	Finacial/deep dive into numbers	n/a	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting						x			
Food and Beverage Tender	Possible	n/a	n/a	Approval of tender strategy apporach and bid		X	X					x	
Board Performance	n/a	Proposed format July Annual - for Board Sept	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting	X	X					X	x	
Board Terms of Reference	n/a	n/a	n/a	Approval Annual / as required			X					x	
Board Appointments	n/a	Annual / as required	n/a	Approval Annual / as required						x			
Directors Performance	n/a	Annual - May for appraisal, July for Objectives	n/a	Annual for discussion and noting	X					x	x		
Strategic Plan	n/a	n/a	n/a	Approval Annual	X						x		
Annual Budget	Annual - endorse for Board	n/a	n/a	Approval Annual			X						x
Financial Results and Outlook	For discussion and noting each meeting	n/a	n/a	Noting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement	For discussion and noting each meeting	n/a	n/a	Annual Board Review and Noting			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Event Risk	For discussion and noting each meeting	n/a	n/a	n/a (unless escalated)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
System Strategy	n/a	n/a	n/a	TBC									
Cyber Security	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a (unless escalated)			x						x
Internal Audits	Each Meeting	n/a	n/a	n/a (unless escalated)				X	X	X	X	X	X
Ethics	Discussion and Endorsement	n/a	n/a	Approval Annual / as required		CEO Report	X						x

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Agenda Item 6

Committee(s)	Dated:
Barbican Centre Board	27 th September 2023
Subject: CEO Report by the Barbican's Directors	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Claire Spencer, Chief Executive Officer	For Decision
Report authors: Chief Executive Officer and Directors, Barbican Centre	

Summary

The CEO Report comprises current updates from across the Centre.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

NOTE the Report and ENDORSE Management's approach to future activities.

Chief Officer Report

It's been a busy summer at the Centre and a number of pieces of work have developed since our last meeting and are presented for discussion and decision in this meeting. It's hard to believe that it's a year ago that I shared my 90 Day reflections with the Board – much of the work we are now doing sprung from that discussion. This report continues to be structured to mirror Our Goals: Fuel Creative Ambition, Excite and Engage Audiences, Invest in our People and Culture, Revitalise our Place, Build an Enterprising Business and Work in Line with our Values.

Highlight of the meeting are:

- A deep dive into our Cinema business – where it has come from and where it is headed
- A strategic options paper around Barbican Immersive with a recommendation for the future of that business
- A deep dive into the businesses that contribute to the Barbican bottom line and enable us to invest back into our programming activities, culture and facilities
- A draft Ethics Code for discussion
- A draft Audience Strategy for discussion and approval

It is particularly gratifying to see the Audience Strategy come forward for discussion. This is an important piece of work that sprang from our EDI Strategy and Strategic Framework, and we dedicated both time and resource to its development. The Ethics Code is similar, coming out of the workshop we undertook with the Board and Foundation Trustees in July – and both of these have been developed under the umbrella of a newly revitalized management team.

This next quarter is a busy one for financial, business and programme planning, as we evolve the Barbican into a more sustainable organization. This will entail a good deal of critical thinking, forces and change, which can be unsettling for the Team.

Our Artistic Director Will Gompertz resigned in August and leaves us at the end of September. Will leaves a legacy of new thinking – which emerged in the Creative Vision he shared on his arrival at the Centre. Barbican Productions takes its first steps through the agreement with Trafalgar, Barbican Immersive sees us developing the Intellectual Property anticipated in Barbican Ventures, the Barbican Creative Academy began its life as Barbican Masters and the Barbican School has developed into Barbican Curriculum. We will miss Will's enthusiasm and optimism and wish him the very best for his future adventure at the Sir John Soames Museum, where he takes up his post in early 2024.

Finally, we look forward to seeking 3 extraordinary individuals to join our ranks in 2024 – a new Artistic Director, a Director of Audiences and a Director of Building and Renewal. We have a plan that we have started to deliver. Now we need new skills and capabilities to build momentum, drive change and deliver the outcomes that make up our ambition.

Claire Spencer, CEO of the Barbican Centre.

Fuel Creative Ambition

Purposeful Programming Activities

Creative Collaboration's Young Changemakers programme concluded phase one. The nine-month pilot project invited participants to be critical friends and challenge us on how we better reach young people as audiences, creatives and artists. The appetite to engage in these conversations was high with 250 applicants competing for seven places. The changemakers created a collaborative practice exhibition *The Lift Off* in the Level G hub which introduced the participants, provided insight into their process and a snapshot of the recommendations which emerged.

In the Autumn, the Encounters talk series (curated for younger audiences) will present two discussions: - the first with Turner Prize-nominated artist Sin Wai Kin and singer-songwriter, producer, and composer Planningtorock who will explore world building at the intersections of visual arts and music. The second event is with multidisciplinary artist Ronan Mckenzie talking to artist and designer Mac Collins about their processes from ideation to realisation.

Partnership development to deliver Creative Collaboration's first Club Stage gigs in the autumn is underway – establishing a new strand of music programming aimed at a younger and a more culturally diverse demographic.

In July, a special charity event at which conductor Oliver Zeffman and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra presented the first *Classical Pride* concert given by a major orchestra in Europe. As part of our commitment to inclusivity, the performance featured an LGBTQ+ community chorus and top international soloists, celebrating the profound contribution that the LGBTQ+ community makes to classical music and plans are in place to include this event in our 2023/24 programme with the LSO.

Contemporary music continued to go from strength to strength - in July the UK's renowned Sound System, Rampage, presented a special evening of *Carnival Classics* – bringing the spirit of Notting Hill Carnival to the Hall. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra played songs hand-picked by Music Director, Wynton Marsalis and the GRAMMY award winning jazz legend, Herbie Hancock, returned to the Hall for two exclusive UK shows. Finally, in collaboration with Serious Ltd, we saw the return of the *EFG LJF Summer Series* to the Barbican with performances from Kandace Springs + Artemis, An Evening with Branford Marsalis and the Abdullah Ibrahim Trio.

Barbican Outdoor Cinema 2023 was bigger than ever, with eleven events in August and with an increased capacity of 650. Over 50% of the screenings sold out with great attendance across the whole run. Audiences enjoyed the newly improved wrap around offer of food and beverages, including free drink from sponsor Campari. A full post-season review will now be completed to allow us to build on success and capture learnings for other events.

During August, the Visual Arts dept worked in the Conservatory with the Indian sculptor Ranjani Shettar and a team of abseilers to install her spectacular new site-specific commission (in partnership with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art) – *Cloud Songs on the Horizon*. The commission opened with a private view on Friday 8

September and the Conservatory is now open to the public on Sundays and Fridays and on at least one Monday per month to schools and community groups. A film has been created weaving in footage from Ranjani's studio in India with installation footage from the Barbican, which will be released across all Barbican channels and used in advertising.

Julian Knxx: Chorus in Rememory of Flight (Co-commissioned with WePresent by WeTransfer) opened with a Private View in the Curve on Wednesday 13 September. A studio film with julianknxx will be released across all Barbican channels in early October and the team are working closely with WePresent to collaborate on Instagram reels and videos for TikTok, cross promoted across both channels.

RE/SISTERS: A lens on gender and ecology will open with a Private View in the main gallery on 4 October. We are partnering with earthrise studio to create an introduction film to RE/SISTERS, working with Polyester on social content and collaborating with Vestiaire Collective on fun and engaging social media content around the exhibition and an interactive game element in the shop.

In our Theatre, performances of the brilliant *A Strange Loop* continued right through July and August with the final show on 9 September. A great summer season of standing ovations and much critical praise. The upcoming autumn season features an intriguing array of international shows from Korea, Canada, Belarus and the USA in the main house and innovative UK work in the Pit started in early September. The RSC's *My Neighbour Totoro* will return with its much anticipated second season on 21 November. Planning for the Spring 2024 programme is nearly complete and will be announced in November 2023.

Barbican Immersive's *Our Time on Earth* is performing above expectations at the co-production venue the Musée de la civilisation in Québec City, Canada. Over 30,000 visitors have seen the exhibition in the first 1.5 months with a very positive press response. Preparation continues well for the future venue, the Peabody Essex Museum in March 2024. Future venues are also in discussion to continue the tour.

Content Reach and Intellectual Property Development

Isamu Noguchi (Barbican Art Gallery in 2021) finished its tour of Europe in July. This collaboration with the Noguchi foundation has enabled Noguchi's practice to reach over 260,000 visitors across the four venues of the tour – Barbican Art Gallery, Museum Ludwig, Cologne (Germany), Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (Switzerland) and Lille Métropole Museum of Modern, Contemporary and Outsider Art, Lille (France). The collaborating partners have produced three new publications about Noguchi's work providing thousands of readers of English, German and French with new writing and insights into Noguchi's practice. Over 8,721 English language copies have been sold to date and Prestel are now printing the third edition. The Visual Arts team are collaborating with ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Denmark to show Soheila Sokhanvari's *Rebel Rebel* exhibition from Jan - June 2024. *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art* (opening Barbican 14 February 2024) is produced in collaboration with the Stedelijk, Amsterdam where it will open in September 2024, Amsterdam). Francis Alÿs will have a major exhibition at the Art Gallery in summer 2024, which will be a collaboration with Museum Ludwig, Cologne and Kiasma, Helsinki.

BI's *Game On* is now confirmed to travel to Doncaster Dome, opening in January 2024 before travelling to the National Museum of Scotland in the summer of 2024. Both projects are now moving into the development stage. These will be the beginning of the new consolidated *Game On* and mark a new stage in the touring production. *AI: More than Human* moves into the final stages of development before an opening in October. The exhibition has been updated in collaboration with the host venue, CCCB and the Barcelona Supercomputing Centre. Initial workshops and feasibility studies have begun for the extension of the tour beyond 2024, with renewed international interest for future venues. Production work has begun on *Mangasia*, which is now in development with Bowers Museum, USA, and opening in March 2024 with future venues in North America now in discussion. *The Fundamentals of Music (FoM)* project development continues, with preparations to test concepts with external groups. *FoM* will be the first of the new programming for Barbican Immersive, which is anticipated to begin in summer 2025. The committed co-producing partner, The Institute for Cultural Innovation in Japan are committed to hosting the project in 2026 and final contract discussions are now ready to be finalised.

Artistic Talent Development

In July 2023, Cinema held its third Emerging Film Curators Lab. Consisting of eleven emerging curators, this year's cohort worked closely with the Barbican Cinema team, including Marketing and Press. Four projects were selected for the Barbican Cinema programme and will take place from Jan-Mar 2024.

In early September 2023, Music presented the *Touching Bass* co-promoted concert in Milton Court - a special evening with Frech-Senegalese artist anaiis supported by Paris-based artist Astrønne bringing us a spellbinding blend of R&B, soul and folk.

Lebanese-American indie-rock musician Hamed Sinno debuted their solo material for this year's Shubbak Festival. This was Sinno's first solo material and was jointly commissioned by the Barbican and Shubbak festival.

In Theatre, the final two companies who were part of this year's Open Lab held their sharings of very interesting work. This year's Pit programme has included four companies who have come through the Open Lab process - all have commented on the impact it has made on their approach to the work and on opportunities for them for the future. Applications opened for the next iteration of the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award and our judges this year are Travis Alabanza and Nickie Miles-Wildin. Interviews for the short list will take place this September and two sets of artists will be selected to present a short showcase of their work in January 2024. The successful artist will receive the full prize money to present a season of the winning show in the Pit in October 2024.

Spotlight moment

Creative Collaborations co-produced the critically acclaimed *Differently Various* exhibition by [Headway East London](#) member-artists for nine days in the Curve. This group exhibition was the first of its kind by artists living with brain injury and was the culmination of a 4-year partnership. Receiving 5* review in the Guardian, it successfully brought the energy of the Headway East centre to the Barbican with a full

programme of participatory and public events. The exhibition was visited by 5516 people with 750 participating in the workshops.

Excite and Engage our Audiences

Audience Figures

Barbican Marketing visitor figures indicate approximately 1,718,985 tracked visits from April 2022 to March 2023.

There are some programme-related peaks, most notably October-December 2022 when My Neighbour Totoro was on, but for 2022/2023 we were at 85% of what we were pre-pandemic, which is in line with most other London attractions.

For the period April 2023 through to June 2023, the estimated total visitor figure is 410,238.

Retail Visitors

In total for 2022/2023, circa 500,000 people visited the Foyer Shop and with a conversion of over 21%, or 106,000, into a sale.

To date this year (2023/2024) there have been 128,608 visitors to the Foyer Shop, tracked through a people counting system on the doors on the ground floor and mezzanine. This does not include visitors to theatre Pop-Up, although we would hope that a portion of these will have also visited the shop. We have converted roughly 18%, or 23,000, into sales so far this year. Compared to 2022/2023 for the same period, we had 115,062 visitors into the shop.

The Gallery Shop, for the financial year 2023/2024 to date, has converted 10,658 visitors to sale. Direct comparisons year on year are exhibition and date specific and measured accordingly.

Business Events Visitors

Of the total amount of visits to the Centre in 2022/2023, 167,000 were business event visitors representing just over 9% of all visits to the Centre.

For the period April to July 2023/2024, business event attendance figures were 65,973, compared to 2022/2023 where they were 70,837. This currently represents 16% of overall visits year to date and whilst lower than this STLY can be attributed in part to the additional capacity required by Universities to catch up on graduation ceremonies not held during the Covid period.

Business Events, however, have seen an increase of 29% in the total number of events year on year (from 145 to 187), which is attributed to the trend of smaller, last minute meetings as businesses reassess business needs post Covid. A resurgence in larger events is being seen for Q3 and Q4 2023 and 2024/2025.

Food and Beverage Visitors

Currently the traffic flow to the bars and restaurants is largely dictated to by the programme. Below are the covers for the first 3 months of this financial year 2023/2024, in comparison to 2022/2023.

Brasserie 2022	Brasserie 2023
3,582	4,806

Bonfire 2022	Bonfire 2023
9,883	4,932

Benugo figures are as below and it is interesting to note that despite the removal of the Cinema Cafe and GSMD (which were taken in-house), the numbers for this year are pacing ahead of last year which can be attributed in part to the ASL crowd.

April 2022 - June 2022 110,203 transactions
April 2023 - June 2023 116,603 transactions

Bars Visitors

The inhouse bars (including performance bars, (Martini bar, members/late lounge, Cinema Café, Milton Court and student union bars) are measured by transactions, which total 48,879 from 1st of April – 30th June 2023. We have changed our system and can not yet report like for like comparitors for 2022.. The lack of an interval during ASL has impacted overall takings – we can report back on the final outcome in the next quarter.

Headlines for the Audience Strategy:

A three-year Audience Strategy has been developed and tabled in this meeting. It will provide a holistic and targeted approach to audiences at the Barbican; enabling us to work collaboratively to increase, diversify and retain our audiences and deliver exceptional experiences. This will be led by the Director of Audiences once in post.

Audience Plan for Conservatory and My Neighbour Totoro

As we head towards the Autumn and the Gallery installation, Audience Experience (AEX) has been making some changes to the experience of public opening days in the Conservatory with two key objectives in mind – customer experience and income growth.

With our value ‘to excite and engage audiences and communities’ open day visits were lack-luster and functional in feel with focus on services rather than experience. Leading up to the installation opening to the public on 11th Sep, changes have been made to the visitor journey to enhance the experience, along with creating more dwell-time spaces and offering up-selling opportunities. Greater emphasis on donation points, along with clearer factsheets for hosts who are currently providing the dialogue to visitors explaining how the donations are used, have been supplied and there is an emphasis on clearer messaging to enable this during a visit.

The audience plan for the Ranjani Shettar installation will see the entrance remain in its new position with vinyl’s added to the external entrance point. The same approach to delivering the experience will continue along with a continual improvement plan taking into account access to more spaces, further sales opportunities, child-friendly options and improving access to information.

The initial release of tickets for the Conservatory sold out within days and we are now re-looking at inventory management and session times. A terrific problem to have!

Communications Update

Significant programming announcements that we facilitated since the last update include the spring 2024 classical music programme, the forthcoming Visions of Haiti film festival, and the Barbican line-up for EFG London Jazz Fest; alongside a number of other contemporary music events and further details of autumn cinema and theatre programmes. In Corporate news, in July we coordinated the announcement of the £25m funding allocated by the Corporation for Barbican Renewal, and in August we announced both the new three-year theatre partnership with Trafalgar Entertainment and the departure of Will Gompertz as Artistic Director.

Across the period we continued to deliver press support for the full range of current Barbican programming. Particular highlights include: ongoing coverage for *A Strange Loop* and *Carrie Mae Weems: Reflections for Now*, both of which caught the attention of media and were critically well received; and priority campaigns for *Eat the Screen* and for *differently various*, which was a major success with media including TV coverage on both BBC and Channel 4. In early September (after the time of writing) we expected to deliver media-view events and associated media campaigns for *Ranjani Shettar: Cloud Songs on the Horizon* and *Julianknxx: Chorus in Rememory of Flight*, and a media event to mark the concerts by the Bayerische Staatsorchester.

We brought a new media focus to our talented Barbican people with Cathy Newman interviewing CEO Claire Spencer on Times Radio about her early life and career development, Head of Visual Arts Shanay Jhaveri interviewed for the Art Newspaper about his vision for Visual Arts at the Barbican, and Cinema Curator Tamara Anderson appearing on both Soho Radio and Hoxton Radio talking about *Eat the Screen*.

In internal comms we shared the new Barbican Strategic Framework (now known as *Our Shared Goals*) with staff at a Town Hall meeting on 18 July (deferred from June) and held a staff breakfast event in the Conservatory on 5 September to preview *Cloud Songs on the Horizon*.

Marketing

The Barbican has plenty to excite our audience and communities over the coming months with some marketing highlights including:

- *Ranjani Shettar's Cloud songs on the horizon* in the Conservatory – the first Barbican Conservatory exhibition in three years will be promoted as an important free art exhibition as well as a key reason for visiting the Barbican
- The launch of the Classical Musical Season for 2024 which features co-ordinated member and patron events
- Key theatre campaigns for Belarus Free Theatre, *Mahabharata* and Inua Ellam's week-long poetry event, 05Fest. For *Mahabharata* in particular, we're working closely with key influencers, publications, and community leaders

- The Darbour Indian Classical Music Festival
- Two exclusive in-house curated cinema programmes - Hidden Figures: Binka Zhelyazkova, and Visions of Haiti that includes some exciting digital content

In addition to this during September Bonfire re-launches as Barbican Bar & Grill, Barbican Kitchen hosts an influencer event that highlights our architecture tours, all of our brand POS will be updated across the centre and our membership scheme will benefit from a new look and feel.

Our audience strategy work continues with a review of both our concessions policy and data collection approach taking place.

Finally, the competitive tender process for the DCMS Museums & Galleries media buying framework which includes the Barbican and fifteen arts organisations, including Tower Bridge is also underway with a single full-service media agency, plus a group of smaller digital and specialist agencies to be appointed by October.

***differently various* – Headway East London Co-Production**

Collaboration between Headway East London and Barbican began in 2019. This has been a two-way exchange, acknowledging and celebrating the expertise and creativity of both partners. This year is 25th anniversary for Headway East London, transforming the lives of those living with brain injury over 13 boroughs and believe that every one of their members has something to contribute to both Headway East London and the wider community. Curated by a steering group of 11 members and volunteers who met monthly for over a year to plan the exhibition actively contributing as both artists and decision makers. Members hired Art et al as curatorial advisers, no Barbican curator led this show. The steering group led on key decisions such as creating the vision for the show, deciding on the title of the show, hiring the architects, and curating the public programme. This was the first of its kind - largest exhibition co-produced with people living with brain injury.

The vision of the steering group was to recreate the HEL Centre in the Curve Gallery so the space is relaxed, informal, social and warm where everyone is welcome and can show up as their full self. Create a place for experimentation, creativity, learning, seeing neurodiverse art and learn about brain injury.

The front of house teams in the Curve and wider Barbican working in close collaboration with Creative Collaboration team and Headway East London staff and artists has proved to be a highly successful, fulfilling, and transformative experience for those who participated. Creating an environment where we could hold and support Headway East London artists and their audiences informed the changes in approach to the audience experience requiring careful consideration of the Curve space, including building an access ramp. Other spaces in the Barbican were repurposed to create a quiet space with soft furnishings and a green room for artists that also housed workshops as part of the run of the exhibition. It was a priority to ensure the welcome at the entrance to the Barbican and the Curve was designed for this audience to feel comfortable and that this space was their space too. Excellent training was provided by Headway East with fantastic facilitation by the Creative

Collaboration team whose commitment to this work enabled the front of house teams to perform at a more enlightened and engaged level.

Two front of house teams were created specifically to provide a consistent experience for artists, visitors and staff who were given detailed training on adapting communication styles and supporting audiences with physical challenges. communications cards are one of the several legacies of this work. The feedback from our host and invigilator teams has been overwhelming positive with lasting benefits from the training and with one of our neurodiverse staff members saying for them, this kind of inclusive programming and training meant his connection to the Barbican deepened and enriched his experience.

Revitalise Our Place

Barbican Renewal, Development and Operation

Design development

Design and business case development continues on the five projects being taken to RIBA Stage 2 as part of the current phase of the Renewal programme. Barbican teams are actively involved in this process through the project groups that have been set up. An update and discussion of some of the initial design and utilisation ideas is planned for the Renewal Board Working Group meeting on 25 September.

Procurement on a number of key services to support the current and potential future stages of work is also underway, with the aim of securing the necessary expertise in areas including planning, inclusive and experiential design and design review.

Both condition and measured surveys are currently taking place across the Barbican site. Once completed, these surveys will inform the prioritisation of infrastructure and fabric replacement works and enable further progression of design proposals.

Infrastructure Works

A Programme Board has been set up across the Barbican and City Surveyors departments to establish a shared understanding and approach to current and future planned infrastructure works. This has now met twice and is finding its cadence.

Currently there are over 50 building upgrade projects planned across the Barbican Centre, ranging from small lighting projects to the £13m fire safety project that is critical to the safe running of the Centre, alongside the recent funding confirmed for early Renewal works. The purpose of the Programme Board is to establish how projects can be delivered in a way that ensures value, limits abortive works and is compatible with longer term Renewal plans. A proposal outlining the recommended approach to delivering these works is planned to be submitted to the Barbican Centre Board for approval at its November meeting.

In the meantime, City procurement will release a PIN (Prior Information Notice) on the City Procurement Portal that will invite potential building services infrastructure contractors to express their interest in the Barbican Renewal Infrastructure programme. This will invite contractors to express their views on the tendering opportunity likely to be available in the near future and establish the level of market interest. This response will assist in determining the most appropriate procurement route for the renewal of the Barbican infrastructure. This procurement process will be in the public domain.

Invest in our People

People and Leadership

We have several Leadership positions in market or in development.

Interviews for the Head of Music commence in September, and we are pleased with the number, quality and diversity of the 60+ applications we received. Internal interviewers are being complemented by external experts in this field. An appointment is anticipated in October.

A new Interim Head of Marketing was appointed in July and has commenced to address matters raised in the Marketing Review undertaken earlier this year.

We have three Director roles in development which will be released to the market in the coming weeks – Artistic Director, Director of Audiences and Director of Buildings and Renewal. The latter two of these were approved by the City of London Corporation in September 2023 and we thank the Corporation for their support.

Talent and Workforce

The development of Leadership Team continues with consideration of skills and approaches for leading through change. Additional training is commencing in September around Leadership behaviours, actions and skills to take strategy to action.

Casuals and Freelancers

Our casual team are valued members of the Barbican Team. In September we were delighted that an idea from that cohort for a Casual Worker Lead Forum came to reality in the Fountain Room. The meeting agenda was set in response to needs of the Casual Team and management invited along to respond to a set of pre-prepared questions that ranged from business language to pensions to preferred forms of engagement. It was a respectful and valuable session which we hope the team will want to repeat.

Build an Enterprising Business

Business Events

The Searcys team are currently planning their Autumn and Winter menu pack for Business Events, with seasonal amendments in line with their sustainability pledges. These will take effect from the 1st October 2023.

Amongst these changes will be a wine pricing review. This is necessary following the recent increases in excise duty on liquor ABV (alcohol by volume). The largest affect will be on 'still wines' (per 75cl bottle) between 11.5% - 14.5% ABV where duty will increase by 20%. Still wines and fortified wines with higher ABV's will also see further increases.

New initiatives include attending the London Venue Summit which although not a new show, Barbican had representation for the first time. Yielding 7 firm enquiries for the autumn onwards, it also included a presentation from a member of the Business Events Team (Glenn Mainwaring) on EDI and the benefits of being an inclusive venue.

It is increasingly important for venues to communicate their sustainability credentials demonstrated by enquiries from bookers such as The Economist as to our sustainability initiatives. There are a number of new trade fairs this year around sustainability, including the Event Sustainability Live show organised by Event Industry News. We are returning to exhibit at the Sustainable Event Show via Prestige Events this year but attended Event Sustainability Live to explore for future years.

We are receiving an increased number of 'in conversation' talks following suite from Fane, Intelligent Square and Guardian, endorsing the return of face-to-face events since the pandemic.

Business Events - Significant events

July has been a busy, joyful month of celebration with 9 graduation ceremonies taking place during the month in the Barbican Hall. Long standing clients London Metropolitan University, St Georges University of London and City University of London, as well as The Caultauld Institute of Art holding their first ceremony at the Barbican.

Summer parties continue to perform strongly this year, predominantly for new clients of the Barbican, therefore engaging with new audiences.

There was also a strong focus on sustainability at 'Business Events for Meaningful Business' and a sustainability accelerator event for one of the world's largest retailers.

Looking forward, a strong start to September is planned with 12 Hall events, a mix of corporate conferences with New London Architecture, graduation ceremonies from the Open University and public talks for Fane planned, as well as an active programme of events on other venues.

Retail

We have launched a new Conservatory range this summer, updating our current offer. Working with a local artist, Cat Sims, we have a vibrant new range that includes prints, textiles and accessories featuring her illustrations.

'A Strange Loop' pop-up is operating on the ground floor of the Foyers, and to support the activity in the Theatre inside the Foyer Shop, we have curated a selection of books that represents LGBTQIA+ authors, as well as books by Black authors talking specifically about the realities of being a Black creative or working within the creative industries.

We have been working collaboratively with the Submit to Love Studio at Headway East London to create a range of products with their members, some of which was available during the differently various exhibition, with additional lines arriving later in August. This range will become part of our core offer and sit alongside our creative story in store. We are paying a royalty to Headway East London on all products we produce, as well as supplying products at cost for HEL to sell via their own channels. The products we had available during the exhibition were incredibly well received, we are looking forward to the rest of the range arriving ahead of Christmas.

We are at the testing phase of our new online Print on Demand offer, which has been delivered in collaboration with our print supplier King & McGaw. This will allow us to offer a wide and varied print offer to our customers, who can choose the size and whether to frame, and receive the finished item direct to their door. The 'on demand' service means that we can explore our archive and add prints to our offer without the risk of stock commitment or the struggle of finding space for storage or for display. It will allow us to test images without a minimum commitment to stock, that we may have once ruled out because we were not sure of their commercial appeal. This offer will be broadened over time and we hope to see an increase in our online footfall as a result.

Restaurants & Cafes

Following a successful refresh of the Level 2 restaurant in latter part of 2022 from Osteria to Barbican Brasserie, in September the Level 1 restaurant (Bonfire) is getting a similar refresh and will become the Barbican Bar & Grill. Still aimed at our younger audience and visitors, but with a clearer identity that is more easily recognised and a refreshed interior, we expect a wider and more diverse audience to be attracted to it.

The takeover of Cinema Café & Bar on Beech Street by the in-house bars team has given a new lease of life to a tired space. Since the return from Covid and the reduction in footfall from the local offices, the venue has struggled to work as a café outside of the cinema audience. Since we took over in April this year the daytime business has started to return, and the cinema audience is better catered for with a more responsive management presence. We have plans in the short term to increase sales and improve the food and drink offer when we have a permanent Café Manager recruited, which is in progress.

Barbican Bars

In Q4 of 2022-23 we took over running of the Members Lounge from Searcys. With dedicated management from the Martini Bar team, we turned around a loss-making contractual liability for Searcys to a Barbican asset. It is very performance reliant, but generally now provides a small contribution to the Barbican.

For the run of A Strange Loop, we introduced the Late Lounge, Piano Bar after the Members Lounge closes at 9.30pm, providing a late ticketed venue open till midnight with live background music on Friday and Saturday evenings. It was a successful trial with a clear demand, especially from the contemporary music audiences, with tickets often selling out. We are looking at ways to make it more financially and operationally sustainable to operate the Late Lounge in the future.

The increase in Excise Duty on liquor (Alcohol By Volume) from 1 August, has had an impact on profit margins that can't be absorbed. Our bar prices will be reviewed and some increases passed on from 1 September.

Car Parks

The CoL car park re-tender enabled us to replace and upgrade the barriers and ticket machines in our car parks, with ticketless operation and enhanced numberplate recognition. The handover was delayed but smoothly done with minimal disruption to visitors.

New EV charging points have been installed in some of the City car parks and after a trial we will be working with Qwello (the EV operator) to bring to the Barbican. The plan is to replace the existing charging points in Car Park 3 with ones that we can charge for and the expectation is to increase the number of points into Car Park 4 in due course.

Development

Individual Giving

- Since the last Board report in June, we have been delighted to welcome new Patrons such as James and Louise Arnell to the Director's Circle, and Abdullah Al-Saud as a Premier Patron.
- Additionally, we are deeply grateful for the renewal of existing Patrons Martin and Celestina Hughes, Christina and Ben Perry, and Director's Circle supporters, Trevor Fenwick and Jane Hindley.
- We have received a generous gift from the SHM Foundation and further support towards the Carrie Mae Weems exhibition from Goodman Gallery and Jack Shainman.
- We have seen organic growth in the Audience Giving, which we project will peak towards the end of the year with increased footfall in the Centre.

Corporate

We are delighted to confirm that with the help of Farmida Bi, we have successfully secured renewal of corporate membership by Norton Rose Fulbright. On 23 August we launched this year's Outdoor Cinema in the Barbican's iconic Sculpture Court. Throughout the 10-night run which will showcase films such as Barbie and Paris is Buring to 650 people every evening, our partner Campari is

offering ticket holders and Frobisher Crecent residents a complementary Campari Spritz or non-alcoholic aperitivo Cordio to enjoy during their film. Campari are long standing champions of Cinema and we are thrilled to be launching this new partnership with them.

We are planning for the exciting launch of our partnership with Vestiaire Collective, the luxury resale platform who are lead sponsors of the RE/SISTERS exhibition launch in September. Vestiaire are champions of sustainable fashion and we couldn't ask for a better partner for this exhibition that explores themes sustainability and eco feminism. As part of our collaboration Vestiaire will be installing an interactive installation to celebrate and promote the launch of their impact report, which measured the environmental effects, emissions and positive changes their business model of fashion resale has been making.

Trusts and Grants

Since the last board meeting, we have been fortunate to secure grants towards our international programme from Fluxus Art Projects, Italian Cultural Institute, and the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria in the UK.

We have recently submitted reports on the achievements of our learning and community work in the 2022/23 academic year and are in the process of discussing further funding with frequent supporters. We are also preparing applications to the Autumn meetings of several major charitable funders.

Working in Line with our Values

Finance

Work on the 24/25 budget continues across all departments, ironing out latest worked-through expectations on income targets, expenditure, spend per head, attendance capacities and utilisation of spaces. This will be finalised for presentation in November's F&R committee. As part of this, we will also be producing a 5-year plan, with the last 2 years in high level. There will be a director's and management team session prior to November committee.

EDI

We're almost a year on from launching our Zero Tolerance Statement and associated training.

Over 800 colleagues have completed the sessions. That's a major achievement, but we will not rest on our laurels just because we've been through training. Now we live it. We must continue to proactively engage with creating safe, welcoming spaces for everyone (staff and visitors included) and hold ourselves to high standards.

Ethical and Transparent Business

A draft Ethics Code is presented for discussion at this meeting.

Agenda Item 7

Committee	Dated:
Barbican Centre Board	27 September 2023
Subject: Barbican Centre – Cinema Annual Strategic Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y/N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Claire Spencer, CEO Barbican Centre	For Discussion
Report author: Gali Gold, Head of Cinema, Barbican Centre	

Summary

This paper outlines Cinema programming activities at the Barbican Centre since April 22 and considers opportunities and challenges faced by the department.

Barbican Cinema is at the forefront of cinema appreciation, joy and transformative experience through our commitment to film viewing as a collective, in person experience. The global pandemic hit the core of our modus operando, as it did across the cultural sector.

The last two years have been our journey of recovery as we returned to our venues, reviving that unique immersive film experience. All that while, learning and adjusting to changes within the film industry and audience behaviour, alongside organisational changes, from the ramifications of Barbican Stories, through to changes in leadership, organisational culture and priorities and, flexible working patterns.

Recommendation

The Board NOTE the report.

Main Report

Barbican Cinema overview

We are London's creative catalyst for arts, curiosity and enterprise. We spark creative possibilities and transformation for artists, audiences and communities – to inspire, connect and provoke debate. We are the place to be in this Destination City, where everyone is welcome. Our impact is felt far outside our walls and ripples before the experiences we offer – locally, nationally and internationally.

Barbican Cinema is at the forefront of cinema appreciation, joy and transformative experience through our commitment to film viewing as a collective, in person experience. The global pandemic hit the core of our modus operandi, as it did across the cultural sector. The last two years have been our journey of recovery as we returned to our venues, reviving that unique immersive film experience. All that while, learning and adjusting to changes within the film industry and audience behaviour, alongside organisational changes, from the ramifications of Barbican Stories, through to changes in leadership, organisational culture and priorities and, flexible working patterns.

We have seen gradual but consistent increase of audiences retuning to our venues to watch New Release titles; an encouraging strong engagement with our exclusive arts programme and bespoke screening events; record numbers for our family film offer and notable success of our unique training programmes for Emerging Film Curators.

We focused our work in creating a consistent and truly comprehensive access offer which addresses barriers to cinema film viewing from disabilities, to neurodiversity, through to financial barriers (Pay What You Can). We are working towards a truly inclusive approach through our diverse, international film programme, partnership work, team make up and marketing strategies, holding our commitment to the popular and artistic merits of cinema the world over.

Barbican Cinema

About the cinema

Barbican Cinema holds a unique position within the UK film exhibition sector, integrating a curated New Release and Event Cinema slate alongside a unique Art House curated programme of thematic seasons, specialised film festivals, regular subject/region or mode specific series; a dedicated programme for families and young audiences, as well as flagship training schemes for the next generation of cinema curators.

We focus on contemporary international cinema and elevate marginalised cinema from past decades through our Cinema Restored series, Hidden Figures programmes and thematic in-house curated seasons.

We're tuned to the most topical issues of our day and connect audiences with those through the artistic expressions of engaged filmmakers the world over, who delve into those issues in the stories they tell via films, cinematic provocations, and immersive experiences occurring in the unique setting of collective film viewing.

Our programme takes place across the 3 Barbican Cinema venues with a 4th Outdoor Cinema, set up at the Barbican Sculpture court at the end of each summer.

Barbican Cinema works in collaboration with the other Barbican Art forms, when our curatorial team responds to programmes taking place in the Barbican Gallery and the Curve; through engagement with the musical talent brought to the fore by our colleagues in Barbican Music, with highlights in the Theatre programme and through the involvement of the other art forms in the outdoor cinema programme.

We work closely with Creative Collaborations on our provision for young audiences, including schools and in our engagement with communities for our Senior Community screenings and disabled filmmakers screening events.

Barbican Cinema 22/23 Programme Highlights

Journeys Across Afro-Futurism

This programme in June 2022 was looking at the origins of Afro-Futurism and the traditions of this aesthetic - imagining a future cinema abundant with arts, science and technology, as seen through a Black lens – and how it impacts cinema today. The 6-part series gained momentum alongside Hayward Gallery's *In the Black Fantastic* which opened in late June. Tipping into the zeitgeist captured some prominent press attention with coverage in the New Scientist, BBC World Service, Sight & Sound and Time Out.

Silent Film and Live Music: GSMD Japanese early animation

In June 2022 we hosted a sold-out event in our largest cinema with regular partners, Guildhall School's Electronic and Produced Music Studio. We curated a selection of early Japanese animated shorts from the 1920s and 1930s, loaned from the National Film Archive of Japan.

This innovative pairing of silent anime and modern electro-acoustic music worked beautifully well and was complemented by live Benshi narration by Tomoko Komura. It was a popular addition to our ongoing Silent Film & Live Music strand, reimagining how silent film can be presented in cinemas today.

Refugee Week 2022 and 2023

For the last 2 years, Barbican Cinema has held events for Refugee Week in collaboration with the UK for UNHCR. Launching in 2022 with a single screening of the film *Simple as Water* followed by a Q&A involving the filmmaker, UNHCR representatives and ambassadors, the project expanded in 2023, to include two screening events, alongside a three-week run of a photography exhibition by and about refugees, in the Barbican Foyer.

New Strands

Two new strands were launched in 2022, ***Cinema Restored*** and ***Experiments in Film***, seeking to create spaces for works previously less visible across the Barbican cinema programme. In different ways they have been able to celebrate and give visibility to figures on the margins of cinema.

In ***Cinema Restored*** we draw from the excellent work being done by cinema archives and restoration laboratories to share with London audiences those which have fallen outside western cinematic canons. Highlights included ***Boat People*** Among the most important films to come out of the Hong Kong New Wave, Ann Hui's drama focuses on the aftermath of the Vietnam War, a period in which many Vietnamese would flee from the country by sea; and, ***Losing Ground*** by the late Kathleen Collins, a rare example of a Black independent film depicting the ennui of a Black middle class, focusing on a community of professional well-educated artists.

Experiments in Film pushes at conventional understandings of what film is and what it could be. This strand gives a platform for exciting filmmakers/artists, both classical and emerging.

Highlights include: *Taking the Horse to Eat Jalebis* (Ghode Ko Jalebi Khilane Le Ja Riya Hoon) an elusive, uncategorizable film by veteran theatre director, Anamika Haksar, which brings multiple modes of register to create a portrait of Old Delhi. and *Where Were You in 1992* (see details in cross-departmental collaborations section), a programme bringing together works that challenge institutional violence and racism, exploring the legacy of resistance marking 30 years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

Post Horror

Every Thursday night in August 2022, our Post-Horror Summer Nights season dedicated to Art House independent films subverting common generic tropes, attracted strong numbers

and gained critical attention. Author Steve Rose, who coined the term in a Guardian article back in 2017, gave an extended introduction to the opening night and also revisited the concept in a new article referencing and thus promoting the programme just before it opened. The series featured bespoke recorded introductions from director Robert Eggers (*The Witch*) and David Church (author of *Post-Horror; Art, Genre and Cultural Elevation*), plus extended in-person introductions by Cinema Curator Sonia Zadurian.

In May 23, ***Snapshots: Caribbean Cinema Up Close*** explored Contemporary Caribbean Cinema and self-representation.

It was curated by Patrice Robinson, the team's Cinema Administration Assistant. An emerging film curator in her own right who proposed the season following a (non-Barbican related) trip to Trinidad & Tobago film festival in 2022.

Taken on as a development opportunity, the season had 3 sellout events out of 4, welcomed in new and varied audiences to the Barbican and attracted exceptional press interest with coverage on *The British Blacklist*, *The Voice*, the popular *Shade* podcast, and an extensive feature in the Guardian on Kavery Kaul's film *One Hand Don't Clap*.

"I wanted to drop a quick note just to see we were incredibly delighted and impressed with the event and proud to see Caribbean cinema on at such an esteemed institution. The selection of films ranged from funny to moving and everything in between. Well done to the curator and we would certainly love to see and support more events like this in the future." – Cinema Booker

The curation of *Snapshots: Caribbean Cinema Up Close* provided a rare opportunity for a team member without a curatorial role to add to the main programme.

Whilst proving to be a major success, the season has prompted the Cinema team to have further discussions about new and innovative approaches to staff development in lieu of clear internal paths of progression.

Queer 90s

In June 2023 we presented *Queer 90s*, exploring LGBTQ+ representation in 1990s cinema from around the world. While most discussions on queer films in this decade of great change focus on movies associated with the New Queer Cinema movement, with a bias towards English language North American stories, *Queers 90s* featured films from Austria, China, Cuba, Germany, Guinea, India, Japan and Spain. Filmmakers Hiroyuki Oki, Ursula Puerrer and Monika Treut joined us for Q&As, while experts such as Tara Brown, Bidisha Mamata and Tony Rayns were invited to introduce the films.

The programme featured 8 films, including the UK premieres of two newly restored features. *Queer 90s* received great press attention, with a long feature in the Guardian by Ryan Gilbey and articles in *Little White Lies*, *Pink News* and *i-D*. Half of the events sold out, and all enjoyed diverse and very engaged audiences. The average capacity across all *Queer 90s* screenings was 83.6%.

Eat the Screen July-August 2023

An in-house curated season of short- and long-form films, many with live introductions and Q&As engaged with some of today's most urgent topics relating to food such as: the cost-of-living crisis, climate change and biodiversity. The season tipped into a number of the department's programming priorities – on gender parity (21 of the 41 films in the season were directed by women) and accessibility (bespoke HOH captions were produced for one programme; one screening was offered on a Pay What You Can basis) – and existing programming strands, notably Senior Community Screenings, and Family Film Club. The season attracted significant media attention with interviews on BBC London Radio, Times Radio and previews in both the *Evening Standard* and *The Guardian*. Audiences were very engaged with half the events selling out, including a key event in Cinema 1, with 75% attendance overall.

Outdoor Cinema

Barbican Outdoor Cinema returned in 2021 after a 4-year hiatus and has continued to go from strength to strength in the years following. 2022 saw the run of 6 films go out to an increased audience of 550 people each night. The wonderfully eclectic programme was complimented for the first time by an exciting food offer of street food vendors, adding to the festival vibe. In 2023 the programme was expanded further to include 11 films and audiences of 650. The recent edition drew its first sponsorship with Campari. Both years have been very successful, with many of the events selling out and others drawing large audiences.

The programme received an extensive press coverage in the run up and during the events including three previews in the Standard, Time Out, Radio Times and Metro.

“If you prefer your outdoor cinema a bit more vintage, the Barbican’s striking Sculpture Court is where to head this summer. On the bill are a feast of five-star treats, from Tarkovsky’s headtrip cine-memoir Mirror to Hitchcock’s Rear Window, and Studio Ghibli’s lesser-seen gem Nausicaä and the Valley of the Wind to LGBTQ+ classic Paris is Burning. Look out, too, for a dose of cinematic serotonin in the shape of Monsoon Wedding and Singin’ in the Rain – perfect starlit crowd pleasers, both.” – Time Out

“whether you’re watching it for the first or the 100th time, the opportunity to laugh, cry and sashay along at Barbican’s open-air cinema is too good to miss”. – I Newspaper

Charles Gant (who gathers and assesses indie cinema box office) reported on Barbican Outdoor Cinema, noting that it showed the road to success with such screenings, gaining numbers strong enough to add the films to his chart: *“Not many venues are blessed with an outdoor space to match Barbican’s Sculpture Court, but the success certainly provides an inspiration to cinemas able to explore similar ideas for late summer.”*

ScreenTalks Highlights

Our New Release ScreenTalk programme continues to bring a wide variety of filmmaking talent into our Barbican cinemas. We’ve had sold out screentalks for BAFTA winning dramas *All Quiet on the Western Front* + director Edward Berger and stars Daniela Brühl and Albrecht Schuh, *Aftersun* with director Charlotte Wells, as well as Academy Award nominated *Close* with director Lukas Dhont and *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* with director Laura Poitras.

A creative approach was developed by our cinema curator Sonia Zadurian instigating non talent based thematic ScreenTalks provoked by New Release titles. Such exciting event took place alongside *Spider-Man through the Spider-verse* release. Amon Warmann (Contributing Editor, Empire Magazine, in-person), Paul Taberham (Associate Professor, Arts University Bournemouth, via Zoom) and Tiffany Lam (Visual Development Artist on the film, via Zoom) discussed the significance of both the Spider-Verse cinematic offerings after a screening of this latest production. As part of Oscar Week, we held a special presentation by Delphine Lievens on diversity, inclusion and the Academy Awards.

Family Film Club and Family Film Week

These young audience targeted programmes had their most successful iterations this past year and look set to only increase in popularity going forward. Weekly Saturday morning screenings and our annual October Family Film Week have had numerous sell-outs and ongoing teamwork with the Creative Collaboration department has seen workshops buzzing with families getting creative before the film on the last Saturday of every month and over half term. Highlights have included rarely seen international gems such as *The Bear’s Famous Invasion of Sicily* (a timely anti-war allegory, screened in the early stages of Ukraine

conflict), bespoke curated shorts programmes unavailable anywhere else in the UK, the latest from Hollywood including the recent smash hit *Matilda: The Musical*, as well as archive events with silent slapstick legend Buster Keaton accompanied by live keyboard. The range and drive of our Family programme was also one of the main influencers behind Film London focussing their Film London exhibitor Forum around how to reach family audiences and choosing our venue to host the event.

Cross departmental collaborations

Visual Arts

Carolee Schneemann: Body Politics

Running from September to November 2022, the Carolee Schneemann Film Series was an in-house curated five-part season complementing the Gallery exhibition *Carolee Schneemann: Body Politics*. It offered audiences the opportunity to watch all of Schneemann's films in a cinema setting, plus a selection of film work by Schneemann's contemporaries in the 1960s and 70s, women directors making taboo-busting body-centred films; two documentary profiles of the artist; and a programme of work by contemporary film and media artists responding to themes in Schneemann's work (including politics of gender and rituals of embodiment). The latter included a drag performer, performing live with her on-screen avatar – a first for our cinema!

In 2023 cinema curated film programmes along the exhibition of *Alice Neal: Hot Off The Griddle* and *Carrie Mae Weems: Reflections for Now*, forming part of the exhibitions public programme.

Music

Silent Film & Live Music: Clare Hammond – Ghosts and Whispers

In October 2022 Cinema and Music collaborated to host a silent film and live music screening featuring images and film created by The Quay Brothers with live music from pianist Clare Hammond. The screening sold out in Cinema 1 and both departments have been in discussions over how to build on this success in the future.

Theatre

RSC's *My Neighbour Totoro* production in the Theatre last Autumn and in the coming one allowed us a fantastic opportunity to explore several Studio Ghibli titles on screen. We screened Ghibli titles *Ponyo* and *Princess Mononoke* – the latter on our giant outdoor screen to a sell-out crowd (in August 22) joined by *Nausicaa's* sell out Outdoor screening in August 23. The original film version of *My Neighbour Totoro* was followed by a discussion in partnership with the RSC team, welcoming the director of the theatre show Phelim McDermott to the Cinema 1 stage for an incredibly insightful, and often emotional discussion.

Creative Collaborations

Our work with our Creative Collaboration team is at its most entwined when delivering the Chronic Youth programme. Beginning in September with the recruitment of a group of Young Programmers, who then meet regularly until they deliver their festival weekend in April, the project has become well known as an exciting opportunity for young people taking their first steps into a film career and is used as a case study in Film London's resources for working with Young Audiences. This past year saw the Young Programmers deliver an incredibly rich selection of films that spoke to their self-titled theme, 'A Time and A Place' including a sell-out London Premiere screening of *How to Save A Dead Friend* a groundbreaking and

challenging documentary pieced together from twelve years of footage, followed by a live Q&A with the director Marusya Syroechkovskaya, as well as a preview screening of the re-released 1986 film *The Passion of Remembrance* from directors Isaac Julien and Maureen Blackwood, followed by a live Q&A + BSL, with the producer Martina Attille and original cast member Antonia Thomas.

Our work with schools included both our collaboration with the Into Film Festival and our own in-house curated screenings. We have aimed to deliver at minimum of 2 schools' screenings per term and include live speakers for many events. A highlight this year was a showing of the Japanese anime title, *Belle*, for secondary schools and colleges followed by a Q&A session with a designer on the film, Eric Wong, who gave great insight into the creative process and practical advice on non-traditional career pathways. In addition to our work with Into Film, we hosted our in house curated annual shorts programme for primary schools for international Women's Day, featuring films directed and written by women filmmakers. This programme has become so popular in only its second year that a repeat screening was needed to keep up with demand.

Public Programme

Cinema has developed its collaboration with the Public Programme team, instigating and producing joint high profile programmes. One exciting example is *Where Were you in 1992?* Which included a foyer installation and a ScreenTalk cinema event bringing together works by Amanda Egbe, Rastko Novaković and Paul Halliday that challenge institutional violence and racism and explores legacies of resistance.

This collaboration continues in our future programme.

Programme Partners

Our arts programme includes established and new Collaborations with creative partners: film festivals, independent curators and third sector organisations which seek audience engagement through film.

Barbican Cinema plays a vital role in the ecosystem of London's film exhibition and as such we dedicate much time and thought in instigating and cultivating these partnerships. In the period reported these included: The London Indian Film Festival; The Arab British Centre for Safar The Arab Film Festival: New East Cinema; The London Mathematical Laboratory for Science on Screen; Palestine Film Festival; The Architecture Foundation for Architecture on Film; UNHCR for Refugee Week; LUX; Human Rights Watch Film Festival; Doc'n Roll; London Animation Film Festival; Film London for The Jarman Award; ERG Jazz Festival; Reclaim the Frame; Fringe Queer Film and Art Festival; Queer East; Oska Bright; Age UK. We are guided by our curatorial priorities and voice making sure that these partnerships are rooted in our commitment to EDI, through the diverse programme they offer, the variety of voices and points of view expressed and the teams which programme and produce the selected film programmes.

Changes in our Marketing approach

From September 2022 we changed our approach to digital advertising and moved to a longer runs of advertising, with larger budgets given to the media buyers to run digital ads for longer periods of time. This had contributed to a large increase in ticket sales for Family Film Club in particular, which has sold out most events since November 2023 until it paused for summer break in 2023.

Since late 2022, our marketing team has worked alongside cinema curators to produce in-house promotional videos which have been used on the Barbican's cinema screens before new release films, website, and social media platforms.

Featuring footage from the films alongside commentary from many of the cinema's curators, and the Head of Department, these in-house trailers have taken advantage of the Barbican Cinema's captive audience and have helped to bring the work of the curators into the public eye.

Campaigns that have featured this new style of in-house content include Oscar Week, Queer 90s, Snapshots: Caribbean Cinema up Close, Eat the Screen, Hidden Figures: and the upcoming programmes Hidden Figures: Binka Zhelyazkova and Amazing Grace restoration's screening.

Dedicated in-house content has also been created for the Barbican's social media channels. Once per month, a 'Barbican Film Picks' post is published on Instagram and TikTok, highlighting a favourite film of a curator.

In the past year we have moved to fully harnessing the work of the Barbican's design team to produce animated graphics, for both the in-cinema assets and, for the first time, for our digital ads which lead to improved conversion rates.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Programme and partnerships

Demonstrated through the highlights noted above, our cinema programme champions the rich diversity of cinema cultures from around the world and exercises targeted programming to highlight film talent, stories and cinema modes that have been marginalised. In addition to focused programmes such as Queer 90s, Snapshots and Afro Futurism, each of our in-house curated programmes is an outcome of curatorial process attentive to the historical inequalities of our cinema culture and with an aim to give stage to cinema work by and about women, LGBTQ and the Global South.

Our partnership work echoes the same principles as can be demonstrated in the variety of selected creative partners we collaborate with.

Accessible Cinema

Barbican Cinema continues to develop the breadth and depth of its accessible programme. We have recently increased the number of captioned screenings in our new release programme by 100% to 4 per week, and we continue to include captioned events within our curated and family programme.

Relaxed Screenings in Barbican Cinema continue to go from strength to strength. With the 2 monthly New Release screenings continuing to attract audiences and receive great feedback. In recent months Cinema have heard from individuals and groups who praise the format and its ability to allow them to access spaces they had previously felt locked out from. We have built on this legacy by continuing our partnership with Oska Bright, the world's leading learning-disabled film festival, hosting 2 screenings each year. In addition to this, November 2022 saw Barbican Cinema work in collaboration with local young filmmaking group In Focus from Mouth That Roars. The group hosted a screening of their work with quizzes, panel discussions and in-depth conversations around visibility in the arts. Finally, in August 2023 we hosted a screening with Headway East London as part of their programme extending from their exhibition in the Curve Gallery. This screening was well attended, and the engagement of the audience was passionate and warm.

"I went to the relaxed screening of Barbie and had an amazing time, it was the first time I got to see a film in cinema in years without getting a meltdown and I'm so grateful you're putting in the work to provide these screenings for people with differing sensory needs like myself."
– Barbican Cinema Booker

In May 2022, Barbican Cinema started a new strand of Senior Community Screenings. welcoming 60+ cinema goers to watch the latest new releases every second Monday morning for a reduced ticket price and with a tailored community ambiance. Though the screenings are targeting the over 60s and retirees, they are not exclusive, and we welcome bookers to bring family or friends under 60 to the events. One of the primary goals of this

strand is to combat loneliness, and every year there are 3 to 4 free events, curated and produced with a wraparound offer in the foyers, to facilitate time to Socialise and converse.

“My friend and I attended the senior cinema today and just wanted to let you know that we thoroughly enjoyed the film which was entertaining and thought provoking plus the refreshments and dominoes rounded off a very pleasant event where we met lots of interesting people.” – Cinema booker

Also in May 2022, Barbican Cinema started a trial run of its Pay What You Can screenings. 1 screening every Friday evening is selected from the new release programme and given the PWYC pricing structure, starting from £3 and going up to £15 (higher than our standard price in order to keep the screenings sustainable). The messaging is based on our own donation messaging, encouraging bookers to select the price that works for them. The screenings have been successful both in increasing attendance and economically, proving to be a sustainable addition to the cinema programme.

Our offer for young audiences is designed to spark a love of the big screen experience and the Barbican from the youngest age possible. Each programme is designed to welcome young people, giving them time and space to develop and explore cinema and the Arts, feel comfortable and relaxed in our venues and access affordable titles and curated events unavailable anywhere else. The Young Barbican offer is available across all cinema programmes and has a very high take up.

Emerging Film Curators Lab

The crucial role of cinema curators in shaping cinema programmes and their audience led us to expand our EDI work to our young Creative programmes, in particular our Emerging Film Curators Lab where the ambition in developing new talent is rooted in our approach to EDI. The lab has taken place for the third time in summer 2023, following the impressive success of the last editions as well as the sold-out screenings of the selected projects in winter 2023. This initiative aims to develop and diversify this critical aspect of film exhibition, namely cinema curators, who impact our film culture through the films and events they develop for cinema audiences.

We have identified this aspect of the ecosystem in which we operate as a critical one to have input onto, drawing on our commitment to cinema appreciation; the importance of championing international cinema and the vital role of cinema curators in influencing what ends up on our screens and in turn, the engagement of diverse audiences with cinema screenings.

The cinema team at large, including cinema marketing and comms were all involved in the training, as well as a selection of external film professionals who contribute through their knowledge and varied curatorial experiences/settings to the cohort's skillset.

Our callout attracted just under 200 applicants from which we selected 10 projects of individuals and collectives. The breadth of backgrounds and experiences of the cohort proved the importance of this training opportunity, while the projects proposed demonstrated authenticity of perspectives and creativity, we feel privileged to support.

In August 23 four projects were selected to be developed into cinema events which will take place at the Barbican between January and March 2024.

Employee Resource Groups

Barbican Cinema team is highly engaged with the ERGs and members of the team play key roles in the 4 currently working within the Barbican to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace.

Industry Review

Overall, the health of the cinema industry has slowly improved but not yet to pre-pandemic levels, sitting closer to 70%-80% of pre pandemic performance. Just before cinemas' closure, back in March 2020, Barbican Cinema achieved its best ever year of attendance and income, finishing with the most successful new release in our history, *Parasite*.

Returning to that level of attendance may never be possible as many new challenges, from streamers to the cost-of-living crisis impact audience behaviour. However, in recent months, cinema has seen a return to numbers similar to pre-pandemic with the release of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, which helped us achieve over 200% of our target for July 23'. It will be interesting to see if future titles such as *Killers of the Flower Moon* and *Dune Part II* received a boost of attendance now so many more have returned to Cinemas, as audience tracking noted that *Barbie* was the first time back to the cinema for a large part of the audience. The major distributors with streaming services have gently started to change their approach, with exhibition windows increasing and the wisdom of moving straight or quickly on to streaming platforms being questioned. It is an era of much change for cinema, but the last 12 months have indicated that physical venues will continue to be a key part of this landscape.

The Barbican is routinely the number one UK venue for art house films. Between September 2022 and March 2023, Barbican has been the number one venue across opening weekend for 9 films, including *Blonde* (Netflix), *Emily* (Warner Bros), *Aftersun* (Mubi) and *Alcarras* (Mubi). However, most significantly, we were the number one UK venue for *The Eight Mountains* and *The Beasts* (in weekend 2 of release) titles released by Picturehouse and Curzon respectively, who have their own chain of cinemas, thus increasing their reach.

Team updates

We have implemented some changes to our administration roles to better reflect the level and scope of the work carried out. The Cinema Administrator role was changed through job evaluation process to Senior Manager for Cinema while the Cinema Assistant Role changed title to Cinema Administrator Assistant.

New people have joined our Cinema Marketing Team bringing and implementing fresh and innovative approach to our event marketing and campaigns while our Comms team has benefitted from the recent changes in the Comms department, enabling clearer management lines and support.

Workload Review

The recent changes across the Barbican, its newly implemented clear purpose and goals as well as the strategic plan, EDI and Audience strategies, changes in leadership and the more recent events around the Resolve Collective - have all demanded renewed attention to the way we work. The importance of the 'how' (how we work, how we deliver) alongside our continuous commitment to the 'what' (our programme).

In response, Barbican cinema team has gone through a period of introspection in relation to our workload, our processes and procedures and our priorities and focus. All this in order to make sure we can deliver a successful, diverse and exciting cinema programme within our resources and while making sure we maintain our wellbeing.

Individuals were asked to interrogate their projects in light of their working patterns (3 out of 7 team members are working part-time); suggest changes and future planning. These were discussed with the Head of Department before putting forward to the team in dedicated meetings where we all discussed and agreed the next steps.

The result is a better understanding across the team of roles and the impact of programmes on the wider team with an emphasis on long term planning and thoughtful spread across the calendar year. We have made changes to our work with several partners; to the structure of our offer to young audiences; the frequency of strands and scheduling of major in-house curated programmes. This process will enable us to make more informed decisions about what we focus on and what we leave aside. This will inform our programme from the start of 2024.

Barbican Renewal

We take an active part in the input for the Exhibition spaces given our successful cinema 2/3 venues and the potential development of that activity into the redesigned exhibition halls.

The success of Outdoor Cinema demonstrates the potential use of 'hidden' spaces and thus invites further thinking in the development and incorporation of these spaces into the Barbican's core venues and civic purpose as part of Barbican Renewal.

Cinema Café/Bar Changes

Both the bar in Cinema 1 and the Café/Bar in Cinema 2/3 have been brought in-house by Barbican Bars. This has immediately improved the offer and the look and feel of both spaces, whilst warming the welcome considerably. Though both are still works in progress, the communication and collaboration of the bars team with cinema has already had a direct positive effect on the audience experience of our venues.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Cinema, along with the rest of the Barbican Centre, continues to drive down the use of print marketing and materials. We also continue to opt for digital formats and transmission of films in order to reduce delivery vehicles where appropriate. This is also true when considering live events, opting to use a live-stream to avoid unnecessary travel.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

Post Covid recovery period: reduction in audience numbers and changes in behaviour have been addressed through adjustments of targets and further thinking about the important role of presenting a unique programme of events; keeping our standard tickets price below our art house competitors and putting extra effort into audience experience, from front of house through improvements to our cinema café & bar to the personal welcome and presence of cinema curators in a large number of our bespoke programmes.

Streamers and online competition We have prioritised the in-venue programme and experience and have put Barbican Cinema on Demand platform on hiatus until a clear digital strategy is implemented.

Cost of Living Crisis The reduction in audience attendance is often related to the cost of living crisis. We are keen to keep cinema as an affordable experience to all and thus keep our ticket prices at the lower end of art house cinemas in central London while trialling Pay What You Can screenings.

Brexit and Rising Costs continue to affect our operations, from the increase in cost of print transport, including border difficulties, to the cost of hiring vital equipment for the Outdoor Cinema. The rising costs continue to put pressure on our budget and what we are able to deliver.

Capacity/Workload The ambitious programme targets alongside the organisational changes have presented challenges to people's workload. We have addressed these through our workload review and changes implemented to our programme as well as exercising flexible working patterns in a tailored manner, responding to individual needs.

Changes in Creative Collaborations

The current changes in Creative Collaborations and their effect on our collaborative work are yet to be determined with some risk around our family offer and young creatives schemes. We are working closely to adjust the current offer in the interim period.

Technical Challenges Due to ongoing lack of investment in the sound and projection equipment, Barbican Cinemas lag behind our competitors. This has a significant reputational damage in a very technical artform, and potential loss of income with audience and distributors potentially opting elsewhere. Recently we were approached to be part of an exclusive run of a high-profile title which was taken away as we did not have the technical specifications required. The negative impact is likely to occur more often were we not to invest in our technical equipment infrastructure.

International Travel Budget

Cinema research and travel budget is extremely limited. Consequently, the team has little presence at international festivals, resulting in potential loss of profile, future collaborations and programming opportunities. We have been given a 'one off' small increase this year to enable us to do the bare minimum. An increase in this budget would have a positive effect on our programme and the international reputation of Barbican Cinema.

Opportunities

Team

Flexibility in working patterns enables better adjustments to individual needs and maximise wellbeing within the team. Cinema developed a good system which allows for the team to be together for key meetings while making the best use of working remotely for part of the week.

Audience

The demonstrated renewed desire to get together and enjoy the collective experience of cinema creates new urgency around our bespoke programmes.

The centres focus on **audience strategy** and clarity around priorities enable better strategic work and is in line with cinema's approach to audiences at the heart of our work. We look forward to being informed by comprehensive audience data.

Our developed **access programme**, partnerships with Oskia Bright and research into best practice, together with our positive trail of Pay What you Can enable us to further develop our ambition to becoming a truly accessible cinema across our programme, facilities and modes of engagement with audiences.

Income through Screen Advertising

In April 2023 Barbican Cinema changed the pre-show advertising provider for the first time in its history, moving from Pearl & Dean to DCM. This change was made given the opportunity to further sponsorship income and increased advertising income. Additionally, changing over to DCM has helped our scheduling, as we now have the option to cut our pre-show programme down to just 12mins max of ads. With the release of films around the 3-hour mark showing no signs of slowing down, the flexibility of this 10min reduction option has been hugely helpful.

Outreach Work Project

With the help of Film London funding, Barbican Cinema was able to conduct some research and development, resulting in targeted outreach for our Relaxed Screenings programme.

Corporate and Strategic implications

The future plans of the Cinema team support the delivery of the City's Corporate Plan by:

Contributing to a Flourishing Society

Our programme connects people and stimulates discussion through engagement in the captivating experience of cinema viewing. Barbican Cinema's accessible cinema programme fosters inclusivity and breaks down barriers across a number of demographics. We look to engage new audiences and foster new film curation talent as well as giving a platform to independent films and filmmakers.

Relevant Corporate Plan Outcomes

- People are safe and feel safe
- People enjoy good health and wellbeing through engagement in the joyful collective experience of film viewing
- People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Support a Thriving Economy

We look to bring the best work from around the world of cinema on to screens in London, supporting a diverse and engaging range of films. We bring renowned talent and fresh new voices to our cinemas, with our curation ranging from the biggest new releases to international art house cinema. We support our talented team to curate the best programme possible and provide a trusted source of entertainment and provocation for audiences, ensuring they have access to our whole programme. Our operations are financially sustainable while we aim to generate income for the centre.

Relevant Corporate Plan Outcomes

- Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible
- We have access to skills and talent we need

Shaping Outstanding Environments

Our art form allows us to respond to current issues and trends and we plan to stay nimble and flexible in a challenging industry. We work with other departments across the centre on exciting programmes and draw on each other's skills and experience.

Relevant Corporate Plan Outcomes

- We are digitally and physically well connected and responsive
- We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration

Financial implications

None

Resource implications

Refer to Challenges

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications

Refer to Equity, diversity and inclusion

Climate implications

Refer to Sustainability and climate change

Security implications

None

Conclusion: a note from Gali Gold, Head of Cinema

Barbican Cinema is going through a period of post pandemic recovery, adjusting to the changes in the cinema exhibition sector, audience behaviour and the internal leadership and strategy shifts within the Barbican. We have taken the challenges of these changes as an opportunity to reflect on our programme offer, our programming priorities, our working patterns, partnership work and engagement with existing and new audiences.

A particular attention is given to our strategic objectives amidst our limited resources, enabling us to focus our work on improving the cinema experience in our venues, programming a truly international and timely film programme, deepening our understanding and delivery of an accessible cinema experience, while looking after our teams and contributing to the growth of a new generation of cinema programmes.

We have demonstrated the potential attraction of our exclusive offer to sponsors, in the recent successful Campari's sponsorship for our flagship Outdoor Cinema programme. Putting more effort into such partnerships across our programme will enable us to further demonstrate our ambition and expertise, elevating our cinema programme further with a potential for income and audience growth.

Report Author

Gali Gold – Head of Cinema

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Barbican Centre Board	27 September 2023
Subject: Barbican Centre - Commercial Strategic Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 5, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	n/a
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Claire Spencer, CEO Barbican Centre	For Discussion
Report author: Jackie Boughton, Acting Director Commercial, Barbican Centre	

Summary

This paper outlines the status and opportunities in the three areas of the Barbican's business: Business Events, Retail and Commercial Development (which incorporate restaurants, cafes and bars and car parking).

These businesses are significant contributors to both our financial performance (they make up around a third of our income and deliver a net positive contribution of £4.6m in 22/23 which is invested back into the core purpose of the Centre) but are also major contributors to the audience experience (current audience touchpoints exceed 1 million) and our aspirations to be a positive contributor to Destination City.

We measure success by revenue and profitability, with lead indicators around sales lead and conversion rates. Qualitative measures include feedback, benchmarking and industry recognition.

Strategically, they sit across the Strategic Framework, with participation in the following programmes:

- Audience Strategy
- Building Renewal Development and Operation
- Proactive and strategic optimisation of space
- Reviewing our Operational Support of GSMD (we provide services)
- Growing our Income Streams
- EDI
- Ethical and transparent business (who we chose to do business with)
- Responding to the Climate Crisis

Barbican Renewal will be a strategic and operational game changer for these businesses in the medium term but there are opportunities to be explored in the meantime which with some modest investment and review of operators may lead to an uplift in revenues. This paper explores both. Immediate opportunities also exist through improved marketing of

the food and beverage and retail offers and these are being explored with our new Interim Head of Marketing who has significant food and beverage experience.

Current challenges include macro impacts of cost inflation and cost of living driven reduction in spend per head, the localised impact of a failing asset and the competition for space across the Centre.

Organisationally these businesses are well lead, with additional opportunities to be explored by the proposed new Director of Audiences, and this paper should be read with reference to the CEO report on the agenda.

There are 5 senior leaders who are also part of the Management Team.

Recommendation

That the Board NOTE the report.

Main Report

Commercial Overview

The Commercial operation at the Barbican covers several distinct business operations:

Business Events – covering all commercial conferencing, meetings, graduations, private functions and banqueting. The concert hall, theatre, cinemas, conservatory, garden room, foyers, Frobisher meeting rooms and other spaces across the Centre are utilised for these activities.

Public Catering – including the restaurants, bars, coffee points, and pop-up catering points.

- Under contract, Searcys manage two restaurants – Barbican Brasserie (formerly Osteria) and Barbican Bar & Grill (formerly Bonfire) and their associated bars.
- Under contract, Benugo manages Barbican Kitchen and the foyer coffee points.
- The three performance bars in the Barbican, two bars in Milton Court, the Martini Bar along with the GSMD Student Union Bar are managed in house and in the past year, the team have also taken over the operation of the Members Lounge (which was trialled as a Late Lounge/Piano Bar during Strange Loop) and the Cinema Cafés.
- The Green Room, which is currently closed and which previously was managed by Baxter Storey is now operated on request by theatre companies by Benugo, who also operate the Artist Bar for Music.

Retail – includes the foyer and gallery shops, ‘pop-up’ shops and an online portal.

Barbican Car Parks – approximately 375 spaces across four car parks.

Business Stream	Revenue 22/23 £'000	Contribution 22/23 £'000	5 year Growth (17/18 to 22/23) %		# Audience Touchpoints
			Revenue	Contribution	
Business Events	4,388	2,963	33%	39%	167,000
Catering	720	646	-21%	-17%	576,003
Bars	1,868	604	51%	65%	187,376
Retail	2,502	318	-2%	-56%	132,253
Car Parks	633	293	-22%	-44%	0
Head of Commercial Development	0	-195	0%	21%	0
Total	10,111	4,629	15%	6%	1,062,632

All the above functions have seen transformational change over the past 8 years, adapting from passive non-essential ‘nice to have appendages’ which the Barbican previously categorised these areas as, into revenue focused ventures fully supporting the overall vision.

Each Head has been engaged with industry specific external experience and teams are made up of professionals proficient in their subject, and despite a previous infrastructure which was not aligned to development of these areas, the division has become a financially sustainable model.

Whilst there are still challenges across some of the areas particularly as we grapple with a building not originally designed to meet the needs of a fully integrated hospitality, retail and business approach, the Commercial team are committed to creating a dynamic and revenue driven approach in line with the new Strategic Framework and at the same time looking towards a Barbican Renewal future, which will see the Hospitality, Retail and Event become an integral part of the offer.

The above progress has allowed the organisation to set substantial financial targets and subsequent net contributions across these functions. With Commercial targets forecast to continue at this increased level (circa £1m more than 19/20) for 23/24.

This paper looks at how each area is developing, focusing on 23/24 and reviewing future strategy in alignment with the Strategic Framework model as we strive to become financially sustainable, grow and diversify our audiences and improve the audience experience.

Barbican Business Events

Business Events - Sales

Forward Planning

Securing base business going into new financial years continues to be fundamental to success for Business Events. The market remains competitive with many unique venues or even office spaces being repurposed to event spaces as well as new developments. Thus, the sales team are required to negotiate harder and within fixed budgets as well as manage client increased expectations on venue capabilities including technology.

A key strategy of ensuring income growth, is to contract larger, repeat events at least 3-5 years in advance incentivising them to rebook by offering fixed annual increases to secure business. With limited dates in the Barbican Hall (60 in the Hall annually) and Theatre (on request only), clients are encouraged to secure preferred dates to avoid disappointment. Business mix is important to ensure a good balance of repeat business while still allowing dates available for new (business).

Since Covid, clients requirements run to more than interest in event spaces. Being able to provide information on the Barbican's sustainability and ED&I journey with their respective initiatives, have become important factors when a customer is deciding on a venue. In light of this, we aim to incorporate our sustainability and ED&I messaging within all our communication (social media and proposals) and press releases.

Barbican Renewal continues to drive a lot of interest, as was demonstrated by our latest [press release](#) on the £25m investment. This was published by 15 different event industry publications resulting in it being our most successful release of the year thus far. As mentioned, with the increased pressure within our industry of new and refurbished venues, Barbican Renewal is key to a successful future for Business Events and how our spaces are designed and repurposed are going to be important for future proofing our growing income.

Current Trends

Lead times continue to be short, creating additional pressure on our operations and catering teams around the building to deliver high-valued, complex events, but within a reduced timeframe. With the future of instant booking being developed in other industries, there are expectations that events can operate at the same level. Historically, what was considered a short lead is now being reduced to 2 weeks to 2 days.

The desire for adding creative elements to events has grown and organisers are being tasked to make their event unique and stand out. We are fortunate enough to work within a vibrant Centre with many additional services available to offer, including our backstage and architecture tours. We provide our clients with the “something extra” which some of our competitors are unable to do easily.

Sustainability and CSR continue to be on the top of many organisers’ agenda. Ahead of booking, organisers are being required to gather supplier’s sustainability policies and credentials before confirming as the importance continues to grow. With a dedicated Sustainability resource in the building, we are fortunate enough to be able to provide them with this information easily along with ongoing consultations with team members and suppliers onsite.

Post pandemic, as the international market has returned post Covid, the industry has seen an increase in business attendees attaching leisure activities to their visit. This emerging “Bleisure” market gives us an opportunity to extend the business delegate experience of the Barbican, into the shoulder nights and weekends, encouraging them to visit a theatre show or concert or exhibition. This also provides the Barbican with a unique selling point (USP).

The trend for fully Hybrid events has lessened as face to face in person events have returned to pre Covid levels, although we have seen a continued interest in hosting elements of events in a hybrid format as organisations look at costs and CSR pledges. This is particularly popular with our ‘in conversation events and larger conferences with an international audience who don’t want to travel to the venue.

As an international venue, there is an expectation that with the hybrid facilities we offer, these are state of the art however, although the Barbican can offer this service, we are doing so in venues that are flexible and therefore we must install the equipment on an event-by-event basis which adds strain to our current resources.

Clients hiring Barbican venues with complex ‘broadcast quality’ hybrid requirements are recommended to an external provider to supply these services and the Barbican retains an introductory fee for this provision. The Barbican are not currently able to provide these ‘broadcast quality’ arrangements owing to the equipment and staffing that is needed, although we are exploring options for providing this facility ourselves however the current risks outweigh the benefits, i.e. labour costs, equipment costs and replacement. Whilst it is anticipated that Barbican Renewal will address this, to remain competitive, we need to find a solution to bridge the gap before Renewal work commences.

Business Outlook

Enquiry levels continue to grow as well as our conversions. Currently we sit at an average conversion rate of 13.2% compared to 22/23 which was 10.26% which is in line with industry sentiment. The MIA (Meeting Industry Association) cites that 79% organisations found they had the same or greater conversions compared to the previous year, following a recent survey in June.

This is a great achievement, as with a drive to increase activity across the Centre there is the inevitable “race for space” internally. To combat this, we are trying to encourage our

clients to expand their typical Tuesday – Thursday pattern to increase the 5-day usage of the spaces. Barbican users of the spaces also fall into the same pattern making it increasingly difficult to accommodate all requests. With this and the challenges around staff resources for operational departments, we find ourselves in discussions around priority.

Of the total amount of visits to the Centre in 22/23, 167,000 were business event visitors representing just over 9% of all visits to the Centre.

So far in 23/24 we have seen a small decrease in the number of attendees at events compared to the same 3 months last year (65,973 versus 70,837 in 2022) however, this represents 16% of overall visits year to date and whilst lower than this same time last year (STLY), can be attributed in part to the additional capacity required by Universities to catch up on graduation ceremonies not held during the Covid period.

And despite lower than STLY attendees, we have been able to grow our venue hire income by 2% YOY. This is partly due to more clients wanting to host their events in a hybrid format allowing attendees to join offsite.

We have seen recovery and growth in our income since the Covid years and we are now ahead of our pre covid figures from 19/20 where we achieved £2,993,759 with last year 22/23 resulting in an outcome of £3,845,166.

Following Level 4 investment, Business Events have seen an increase of 29% in the total number of events year on year (from 145 to 187), which is attributed to the trend of smaller, last minute meetings as businesses reassess business needs post Covid (see below). A resurgence in larger events is being seen for Q3 and Q4 '23 and 24/25.

Key strategic opportunities to explore:

- Lead times: Create a short lead offering to package together most aspects of the event but suitable for minimal planning time. This includes package AV and Chef's selection menu options.
- Creative thinking: the increasing importance of collaboration and innovation during events. Ways in which organisers can create a different experience for their delegates through incorporating different aspects to an event. Expand on barbican tours, including architecture and back-stage and gallery tours.
- CSR: the Mayor of London's target for net zero carbon by 2030 (the City equivalent is 2040) has seen many organisations increasing their focus on sustainable event management processes. We have already updated our SOP (standard operating procedures) focussing on sustainable event sales and management practices. We are also in the final stages of developing a Sustainable Event Management guide and a sustainability event planners guide highlighting our sustainable practices during the event organisers journey from initial enquiry through to post-event. Not only is this a good showcase for sharing best practice, but it also allows us to be accountable of our own pledges and processes.
- Consideration of changing the use of the Level 2 Restaurant to an event space (see more below)
- Working with the City of London Corporation to share our expertise in this area as well as creating a pipeline for sharing event leads where we cannot accommodate them at the Centre.

Brief update of YTD

Successes

Since 2019, the Business Events team have been focusing on growing our wedding portfolio and have at our disposal a unique selling point and significant asset for growth in the popularity of the Conservatory.

Year	Number of Weddings Delivered	Venue Hire Income (total)	Average VH Revenue (per event)	Catering Revenue (total)	Average Catering Revenue (per event)
2019/20	12	£39,855	£3,321	£134,177	£11,177
2020/21	3*	£6,000	£2,000	£1,444	£481
2021/22	17	£77,490	£4,558	£139,347	£8,196
2022/23	23	£137,607	£5,982	£331,184	£14,399
2023/24	32	£199,300	£6,228	£380,814*	£11,900**

* Covid restrictions resulted in wedding cancellations or postponement.

** Current income figures based on contracted minimum spend beyond September 2023, the current figure will increase as scheduled events take place throughout the remainder of the year.

This focussed approach has delivered significant growth in the number of Weddings and revenue to the Barbican and Searcys far beyond the period when postponed weddings had been rescheduled.

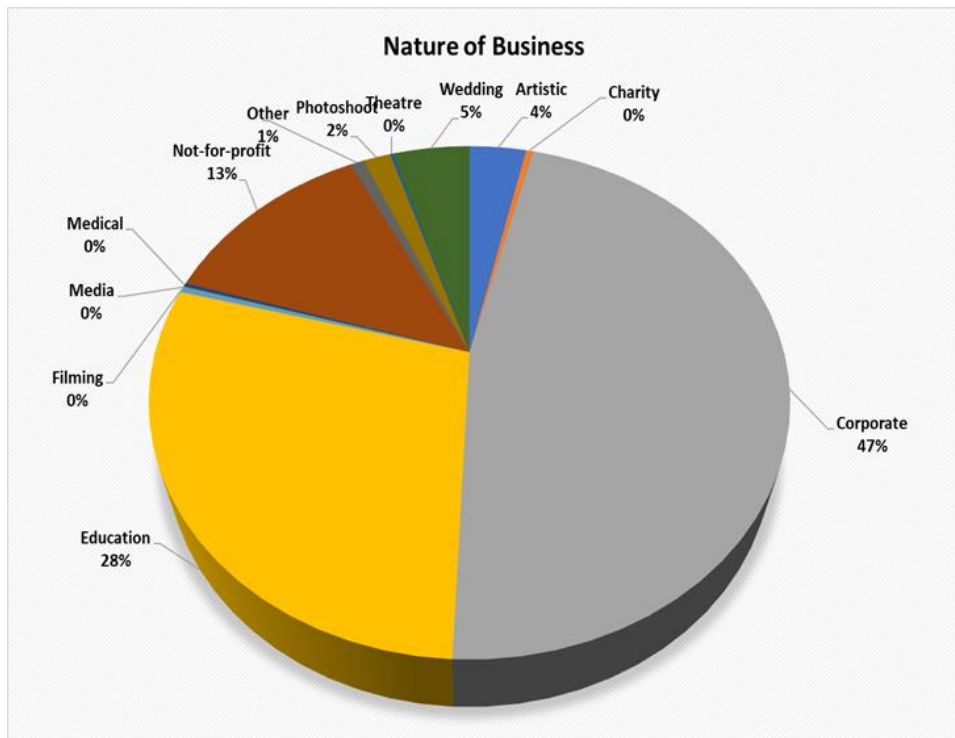
We continue to see a high number of enquiry levels. Since the pandemic, the source of enquiries has changed slightly, with many of the larger event agencies downsizing and some choosing to go freelance but managing large corporate accounts with high booking value. This has led to the team needing to build stronger connections with individuals as well as new employees at agencies which we do through trade fairs and agent engagement events.

Since April '23 we generated £2.3m worth of enquiries for 2023 – 2027 and so far, have converted £222k worth of revenue.

Another route to market, is through industry associations and building connects in these forums. We have a member of the team assigned to the following associations, which vary in their industry type and purpose. These include MIA (Meetings Industry Association), Beam (Business events, accommodation and meetings), AEV (Association of Exhibition Venues) and ABPCO (Association of British Professional Conference Organisers) and ICCA (international Congress and Convention Association).

The association market for us continues to grow and we see an increase in enquiries year on year. In 2023, we have seen a 70% increase on 2022 with 10% of these enquiries coming from ABPCO. We recently hosted Ecocity World Summit which took place during London Festival of Architecture and Barbican has very recently been confirmed as the venue to host the next London conference for Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitats, due to be announce w/c 18th October. Both of these were with the support of London & Partners (London's business growth and destination agency) of which we are members and join when exhibiting at international trade fairs such as IMEX and IBTM.

Outline of industry types



The strategic approach to our business mix is to establish a good coverage of sectors which ensure we are never over reliant on one type. This allows us to react and adapt strategy dependent on trading conditions. We monitor the types of business we attract through our CRM (customer relationship management) system and focus attention on relevant industry types.

£327K was delivered from our relatively new income stream of filming and photography in 2022/23 and we continue to build upon this area with £135K contracted so far in 23/24

Key Clients

In 22/23 63% of our business came from repeat clients. This was somewhat higher than previous years based on the large number of graduations in the period as a result of universities catching up with their ceremonies post Covid along with businesses taking time to recover hence a lower than normal new business ratio.

Our key and repeat business is based on strong relationships, especially those booking the Barbican Hall which includes our academic clients where there is a correlation between the Barbican's values as a not-for-profit as well and as an inspiring venue, feeds into the ethos of the university institutions.

A relationship that has also grown since their first event with us in 2018, has been Fane Productions. Fane Productions work with publishers and authors to put in 'in conversation with...' style of events during book promotion from certain artists and authors. These have included Stanley Tucci, Fran Lebowitz and Dame Judi Dench' upcoming show in the Autumn. Many of these shows fill the Barbican Hall, bring in new audiences as well as driving good spend per head.

Feedback and Recognition

The Business Events team had several successes with Award recognitions in 2022/23. These include:

- London Venue Awards – Bronze - The Sustainability Award
- London Venue Awards - Bronze - Best Event Venues over 750 attendees
- Conference & Event Awards – Bronze - Sustainable Venue Award
- Searcy's Team Awards – Team Spirit Award, Support Manager Award & Exceptional Support Person Award

AIM Gold

In November 2022, we once again secured the MIA (Meeting Industry Association) AIM GOLD accreditation again. This is the highest level of venue accreditation in the meeting and events industry and is only held by a minority of UK venues.

The accreditation process audits and reviews all areas of the business operations including interviews with members of the wider Barbican team. These areas are all independently examined through onsite assessment and interrogates business planning, customer needs, customer environment, booking information and procedures, service delivery, customer service standards, business recovery and steps to continuous improvement.

Aim Gold accredited venues provide first class facilities with the very highest level of services, exceptional catering and consistent results.

This achievement is the fourth consecutive time the Barbican has been recognised as a Gold Standard venue, spanning a 12-year period and is testament to the team's tireless work on establishing strong working practices, SOP's (Standard Operational Procedures) and delivering seamless customer service to our clients.

The examiner feedback is included in Appendix 1. The venue was deemed to be 'Outstanding.' The main areas of focus and recommendation were around maintenance and event flow for people, during works, something that will need to be carefully considered during Barbican Renewal.

Additional customer and industry recognition is included at Appendix 2 and 6.

Event Wins

In June 2023, the Barbican hosted the Ecocity World Summit 2023. With a sales to planning process of 3 years, (beginning in 2020), the summit was won by the Barbican in a joint bid with London & Partners, the City of London, the NLA and MCI (a professional organising company). With the event in London for the first time in its 32-year history, its aim was to unite people through new ways of living on the planet that provides the best possible cities while enhancing, not destroying the biosphere. The conference scheduled over 3-day period brought together speakers and delegates from all over the globe, including keynote sessions from Sir Norman Foster and Yasmeen Lari.

The Higher Education sector continues to be a growth market for the Business Events team, with new Graduation ceremonies for Northeastern University London, The Courtauld Institute of Art and Coventry University holding recent events.

We have also seen an increase in the number of clients, especially repeat clients since the upgrade of our facilities on Frobisher Crescent Level 4, particularly from the financial services sector.

April – July Activity Levels	No. of Business Events	No. of Business Event Days	No. of Searcys Concert Hospitality Events	Total No. of Events
2022	115	150	30	145
2023	167 – 45% increase	193 – 28% increase	20 – (-) 33% decrease	187 – 29% increase

Looking forward, we are also delighted to have secured an event for the ‘Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat’ for September 2024.

The event promises to join global thought leaders in high-density living to engage in premier conversations on best practices in tall buildings and sustainable cities and address the most pressing challenges that urban areas face, such as equity, climate change, and the demand for better social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

We are also looking at events as far ahead of 2027 such are the lead times for events in many of the markets in which we operate.

Space and Venue Investment

In recent months, some significant refurbishments and improvement projects have taken place and we have invested in various areas to improve our venues and our product offerings:

- **Frobisher Rooms Recarpeting** - We have invested in replacing the Level 4 carpets in all of the Frobisher Rooms, Frobisher Boardroom, and the connecting circulation spaces. This work has really lifted the spaces visually and acoustically. This has been done sympathetically and also sustainably as the materials used for the project have all been sourced including using a Milliken carpet product, which is carbon neutral and made from recycled yarns and materials. In addition to its sustainable credentials, the new carpet will also greatly improve acoustics throughout.
- **Heating, Cooling and Environmental Controls** - To improve the visitor experience, comfort and as a result adding significantly to the Barbican’s sustainability credentials are upgrades to the heating system throughout the Frobisher Level 4 spaces. In particular, the introduction of the Barbican Centre’s first air source heat pumps have replaced the inefficient and life expired electric fan and storage heaters. The changes will provide year-round comfort for delegates and will also vastly improve the environmental impact and efficiency in these areas of our operations.
- **AV Installations** - All of the Frobisher Rooms have seen significant investment in Audio Visual equipment. This includes installing new HD projectors in the spaces and replacing the cabling from the control panels with higher grade cabling, which will provide greater image clarity with vivid brightness and clear contrast. The new projectors also benefit from ultra-low noise operation, whilst being more sustainable through low power consumption and eco filters.
- **Garden Room** - The Garden Room PA system has been replaced, removing the sound dead spots in the area from the previous sound system. The blown glazing to the vista over the Lakeside Terrace has also been replaced with double glazing and a revolutionary hammer glass for additional security and clear views out to the City skyline.

Team Resilience

The entire team has enjoyed much success this past year from the sales journey to the delivery. They have done so despite the circumstances that have been evident through the building infrastructure challenges that have at times threatened our capabilities for event conversion and delivery.

On one of the busiest days of the Business Events calendar, the team delivered event catering for over 2000 people without the use of two key goods lifts, one of which was our catering goods lift used to transfer food to the many event spaces in the Barbican. This meant our Searcys colleagues had to be resourceful and transfer food and equipment over many levels on foot. This was an incredible achievement, considering several other challenging situations that were conspiring against them at the time.

Barbican Renewal

The announcement of Barbican renewal and recent investment has provided us with much positive press coverage and interest from our clients. With the competition growing in London and as we compete on an international level for larger congresses, this has been a welcome interest at a time of much development within the Events Industry. So far this year, we have seen a growth in interest from the international event markets in our communications versus national. This is the first time in since April 2021 the gap between the two has started to close, for the better.

As we progress through the development of Barbican Renewal, the logistical impact will become greater. With international and national events needing to contract 4-7 years in advance, the impact Renewal will have on our income generation, our business model and ability to forward plan, will become more prevalent.

During this period, it will be vital to have open and in regular communication with our clients on our ability to deliver their events within the timeframe, venue and level they need. Detailed scenario planning will commence with the Renewal Team early in October (when we will have more detail from the site surveys on which work packages need to commence first).

Sustainability and climate change

Business Events continue to secure event wins on the back of our sustainability principles, as highlighted in the Event Wins section with the Ecocity World Summit event.

Client demand for venues that demonstrate and deliver on their sustainable promises continues to be a frequently asked question for venues within the Meetings and Events Industry and is a key focus for decision makers. We continue to secure business because of our Environmental Strategy and the targets that have been set around Net Zero compliance for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2027. The Business Events team have three representatives on the Barbican and Guildhall Sustainability Steering Group, as well as representation on the BEAM (Business Events, Accommodation & Meetings) action group for Sustainability. BEAM is built on best practice in business, and supported by the four pillars of Resilience, Innovation, Ethics and Quality.

Working with Searcys, it is evident they share our values on sustainability. They have completely eliminated all single use plastics from their Barbican operations and their current focus is on Progressive Partnerships through their supply chain. Searcys aim to continue to raise the bar on sourcing standards. This will run across all elements of the business, from **reducing the emission impact of dishes by 30% by 2026** and ensuring **plant-based dishes make up at least 25%** of their menus, to using **100% cotton uniforms from certified sustainable sources**, and exclusively using FSC-certified wood and paper products by end of 2025. See Appendices 3 and 4.

Some recent examples of events held at the Barbican with a pure sustainability focus include:

- Astrid & Miyu utilising the Conservatory for a conference and awards event, aligning with their sustainability journey.
- The Bureau Veritas sustainability conference.
- WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) Summer conference.
- Meaningful Business held a sustainability event bringing together a collective of sustainability champions within their own fields to share best practice.
- One of the world's largest retailers also held a sustainability accelerator demonstration day where a high number of eco products were demonstrated.

With Net Zero targets and commitments around scope 1 & 2 emissions quickly approaching, the sustainability trend continues to gain traction and further opportunities and progress is needed in this area, therefore we are exploring the opportunities for environmental standards, including ISO 14001 and more specifically ISO 20121. This standard is more aligned with Business Events and is the standard of choice for event planners, providing a framework of guidance and best practice to help manage events and control social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

As with sustainability, ED&I is a focus for the full team. As customer facing representatives of the Barbican, we align ourselves with the audience strategy when working with Business Event clients to ensure that we monitor progress in this area against targets.

The Event industry's shift to virtual events during the pandemic highlighted the importance of improving inclusivity of events in online settings and as a diverse range of speakers, audiences and subjects have emerged from the Covid period, attention is being paid more than ever to the consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion within the live Events industry and is a subject now firmly on organisers and venues agendas.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill Publication (Martyn's Law) – There will undoubtedly be an impact on the Barbican operations going forward with publication of the draft bill for the legislation presented to Parliament in May 2023. We are yet to understand the full force of this and what it will mean for our clients and our internal teams going forward. We will be working through this in detail in the next period to determine what our actions are, and these will be communicated to our teams and clients in due course. Although we are already focussed and well versed in establishing potential events that could cause a risk to our reputation, and have security protocols, proactive measures and reactive plans in place, there will be a greater focus on ensuring our premises and event security and operations are fit for purpose given our status of an 'Enhanced Duty Premises'.

Building Infrastructure – Challenges with the building infrastructure continue to have an impact on some events. An acceleration and delivery of some current and future pipeline projects will improve the current situation and will provide comfort for the teams delivering events and services across the Barbican venues.

Recruitment – Although the current Barbican Business Events team appears settled and focussed on delivering on our income and service targets, the market for recruitment within the sector is heavily challenged. There are plans to further strengthen the team, however, recent recruitment drives for sales and events roles within the Searcys team have proved very difficult to convert, due to the number of vacant roles and shortage of

suitable applicants available. There is a pay gap within the public and private sectors which is also adding to the challenges.

Opportunities

Flexible Working - The ability for our team to work from home has created opportunities for flexible working which helps with staff motivation and retention, although a balance has to be achieved within a team that is operationally focussed.

Venue Management System Review/Replacement

In the Autumn we will conduct a department wide review into the current working practices of the team to understand where efficiencies can be made in our administration and workflow processes as we look to replace our current Venue Management System (VMS), which is currently Artifax.

Recommendations from the review will identify areas where there is unnecessary administration, duplication and lack of standardisation and will help inform the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for the team going forward. This is in line with our organisational goal of investing in our own people and culture, while finding sustainability in our workload and work patterns.

Retail

Our retail operation covers our Foyer Shop, The Gallery Shop and an online shop. From time to time we also add Pop ups into the mix.

Relative revenues are shown below:

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Income	1,203	998	2,560	1,268	1,365	298	1,104	2,488	2,427
Expenditure	(714)	(579)	(1,433)	(753)	(764)	(190)	(706)	(1,694)	(1,545)
Salaries	(263)	(308)	(411)	(409)	(433)	(294)	(390)	(476)	(570)
Retail	226	111	716	106	168	(186)	8	318	312

Foyer Shop -

The Foyer Shop is performing well year to date (up to July 30th at time of writing), sales are currently 20% ahead of our YtD budget. Our net ATV (Average Transaction Value) in the Foyer Shop is tracking at £15.15, 4.5% ahead of our ATV target. Conversion in store, shop footfall vs. transactions, is also tracking ahead of our target at 18.31%, target is 14%. This has been positively impacted by Theatre merchandise sales from the pop-up which trades as part of the Foyer Shop location.

Compared to the same time last year, we are trading slightly ahead with cumulative sales 5% ahead of 22/23 actuals.

Gallery Shop – Carrie Mae Weems

Our conversion in store has been very positive, with visitors vs. transactions currently averaging 24%. The budget conversion for this show was 18% with a target ATV of £13.00. for this show to date, the ATV is tracking just ahead of budget at £13.23.

However, due to lower than anticipated visitor numbers this means we are behind budget for the show despite the positive metrics. Catalogue conversion has been very positive, with an average of 7% vs. a budget of 6%. There is some risk however, as that is

conversion of a much lower visitor number than expected, meaning we are likely to have catalogue stock remaining.

Gallery Shop – Alice Neel

Alice Neel exceeded our budget expectations, with an excellent conversion average over the exhibition run of 31.5%, vs. a budget of 30% and an ATV of £11.72, vs. a budget of £11.50. Catalogue conversion for the duration of the exhibition was 9.8%, customers were encouraged to purchase by the attractive price point, £15.00, and small and easy to carry format. Over 5,500 copies were sold during the exhibition run and we continue to sell post show. Excess stock of catalogues poses a low risk as we can return additional copies that were purchased direct from distributor for credit.

Online Shop

The online shop is tracking 6% behind budget year to date, falling behind in June and July. Additional lines are being added to the online offer regularly, with regular seasonal 'edits' promoting programme relevant products.

Work is almost complete on our new print on demand offer, in collaboration with our main print supplier King & McGaw. We hope to soft launch the online offer in late August with a selection of archive prints that can be ordered to size, with a choice of framing options and delivered direct to your door.

Totoro lines will return to the shop in August as we begin to receive stock ahead of its return in November. This may help to boost sales ahead of the Christmas peak.

Pop-Up's

The A Strange Loop pop-up, selling the production's own merchandise and programme, has not performed as well as we would have hoped for. We take a commission on these sales, so there is no risk to us in stock holding. It is worth noting that we do have to staff the unit, and taking this into account, this show will deliver a smaller than anticipated return. However, the uplift in the Foyer Shop in general retail sales has been very positive and offset any commission sales we have not been making.

And finally, we invited Moorgate Flowers back to the centre to trade at the bottom of the Silk St ramp during graduations this summer. Again, we work on a commission basis and take 15% of net sales and so have no risk in holding stock or wastage, nor do we have to face 4am trips to the flower market, or run the flower stall whilst it is in situ, this is all managed by Bob, the owner of Moorgate Flowers. Over a period of 3 weeks we were able to earn commission of just over £2k from the sales made by Bob. It is great to be able to support a longstanding local business and it is a welcome sight at the entrance when all the blooms are on display.

Future Operating Outlook

A varied programme ahead, as always, means that we have some interesting opportunities to refresh our retail offer over the coming months, work on new product development and continue to offer our customers a joyful and inspiring shopping experience.

The next key period for the Barbican Shop is the winter gifting season, starting in November and running through into the new year. This uplift in trade used to traditionally begin around October but in recent years we have seen the impact of Christmas start to

hit much later, although with customers watching their budgets we may see purchasing begin earlier.

We have an optimistic outlook for this winter, with Totoro returning to the Theatre late in November, running through to the end of March. This had an incredible impact to our sales figures last year which we hope to replicate again this year with a new approach to the RSC merchandise sales. We need to achieve approximately 75% of our overall budget in the Foyer Shop for 23/24 in the final 6 months of this financial year, over £1.4m turnover.

We know that the increased footfall from Theatre attendance has the potential to be hugely beneficial to the Foyer Shop, an uplift that we do not often see during other programming.

Coupled with a strong retail offer for Christmas, whilst also catering to the Totoro fans with licensed products and publications (which we do not pay commission on), and the draw of the RSC's merchandise (which we do pay commission on) we hope to convert more customers with additional merchandise sales points and improve the shopping experience instore and on the Foyers.

There is a risk associated with the reliance on this audience to help drive sales over this period, however. We are relying on similar levels of ticket sales as last year. Merchandise fatigue, with potentially repeat audiences coming to see Totoro again, there is also a risk that they may not buy in the same quantities as before, already having purchased previously. The RSC and their merchandise partner, Playbill, are working on new lines to encourage those visiting again to buy something new.

The other potential risk to our trading over this Theatre run, compared to the previous run of Totoro, is the bulk of the shows are post Christmas. The first performance is the 21 November, which is quite late into our Christmas season. Last year Totoro opened in October, boosting our seasonal trading period early on. With the majority of shows in the new year, when spending is traditionally slower after the seasonal peak, we are hoping to buck the trend.

We still have room to grow our Online Shop audience, this would need to happen with the relevant Marketing support for us to reach beyond our visiting audiences and help to build a new retail audience.

The Barbican Shop as a destination for shopping in the City is a real possibility, again with help from Marketing to promote and grow our reach, using strategic social media and marketing to engage with a destination shopper, who may not be an audience member or ticket holder.

Product development & range planning

The Retail Buying Manager is currently working on several future buying and product development projects. The '*RE/SISTERS*' range is underway, and we have begun range planning for 'Unravel' in order to have products sourced and developed ready for the opening in February 2024.

We allow approximately six months to plan a Gallery Shop range, this includes development of our own 'exhibition products' such as prints, postcards, magnets, tote bags and other items that carry the Barbican branding and exhibition imagery alongside sourcing 'off the shelf' lines that are relevant to any exhibition.

The tight time-line of six months allows for design and product concepts to be agreed between curators, estates and retail; allows for the design process to happen in house, artwork and credit approvals; research into products to be sourced direct from suppliers; and finally allows for production lead times which can be as long as 12 weeks for some lines.

This work happens alongside continual product development, sourcing and range refreshes for the Foyer Shop. Seasonal planning, for example Christmas, began in April to secure products for our peak trading period. Developing new ranges for the Foyer Shop or adapting and refreshing current ranges takes place throughout the year. These changes and additions will be driven by sales analysis as well as responding to wider Barbican events such as Theatre or Music programming.

Whilst it is worth noting that it is not always possible to create a viable supporting commercial offer; responding to and supporting the programming with a relevant retail offer becomes easier the longer the time frame we must work within. There are occasions when, given more time, we can be bolder and more daring and connect the retail offer in a more meaningful way, but this does take some planning.

Christmas and the return of *My Neighbour Totoro* in the Theatre 23/24 are already being planned for in store. This year, as part of our winter range planning, we have 'reserved' bulk stocks and are placing bigger orders following learnings on lines where we sold products in large volumes or where we struggled to keep consistent supply due to high customer demand and suppliers running out of stock last year. This way, we will ensure we have good and constant stock availability on the shop floor throughout Christmas and during *My Neighbour Totoro*, as well as reducing the administration and operational time involved in placing and then receipting multiple smaller orders during a very busy trading period.

All the stock orders have been forecast based on sales analysis from last year's Christmas/MNT period. Where possible, we have stock on 'reserve' and will start to receive initial quantities in August and September, ready for the gifting season.

In the autumn we will begin to look ahead to next year's programming, outside of the planned Gallery exhibitions, to look at opportunities or themes that could translate into a commercial retail offer.

With a new Retail Book Buyer in post, we are also now forward planning our book offer presented in our reading area on the mezzanine of the Foyer Shop and across the whole offer. The reading area allows us to support events and activity in the centre, as well as highlighting broader social/global issues that are relevant to our audiences through a curated offer of publications.

Operations

The return of *My Neighbour Totoro* has required us to look ahead to our wider retail operation over the winter period. Following the success of last years show, we want to improve the retail offer and the accessibility of the RSC merchandise. We are expanding our pop-up footprint and a change of location, putting retail at the start, middle and end of the customer journey, we are confident that we can offer an improved customer experience whilst capturing more sales, generating more commission.

This year we are recruiting for a dedicated team of Theatre Merchandise staff, a mix of fix term contracts and casuals, to run the operation, giving consistent supervisory cover and helping us to manage our workloads sustainably during an extremely busy time of year. It

is also offers a development opportunity for Barbican staff to step up and gain new skills and experience.

A new pop-up unit is being prepared for a new location at Silk Street, with merchandise available at a secondary pop-up on level G and available in the Foyer Shop.

The commercial and operational feasibility of a semi-permanent retail presence in the Barbican Conservatory is being considered and worked through, with an aim to have a retail presence in the space by the end of Summer in time for the Gallery installation. This requires us to balance operational costs with limited opening times and the need for this to be a fully flexible and mobile point of sale. The conservatory is a popular theme in store, with prints and conservatory related products performing well throughout the year. The chance to add value to the visitors journey with a opportunity to purchase whilst in the space will no doubt help to increase our average spend.

Archive opportunities

With our Print on Demand offer almost ready to launch online, we can begin to explore further opportunities within the archive, to increase our 'on demand' selection and give our customers a much broader choice of images online than would be possible in store.

There is also the opportunity to offer image for use under licence, which is underway and will allow us to test the demand for image licensing and begin to catch up with our cultural and creative peers by having a licensing offer for the first time.

RETAIL TRENDS

Cost increases

Over the past 6 to 12 months there have been significant increases to the cost of goods, predominantly on the production of our own branded/developed goods.

This means that we have either had to accept a decrease in margin or, where we can, we have increased the retail price and passed this on to our customer.

As an example, we have seen the cost of two of our best selling own brand lines jump, narrowing our margins:

- Barbican tote bags, a perennial best seller for the Barbican Shop, at the start of the year were £1.20 per unit, but the cost of a one colour/one sided print has risen to £1.75 in the last few months. A 31% increase. We have been able to retain the £5 selling price but are considering an increase in the new year as we expect costs to continue to inch up as the supplier passes on their own increased costs to us.
- Brutal T-Shirts were previously £5.53 per unit. These would be ordered in bulk to obtain the best price, but for a repeat order using the same specs we were quoted £9.87 per unit this year. That is a 78% increase in 12 months. We have switched suppliers to obtain a more competitive price, but at £8.75 per unit this is still a 60% increase. This item has retained the selling price but any further considerable increases would mean we need to re-consider this item. The customers price expectation of T-Shirts is normally £20 to £25 and we are already at the top end of

this, any further increases to the retail price would likely damage sales giving the price perception that we are expensive.

- The increase to costs has been exacerbated since the Brexit changes to imports and compounded by fragile supply chains, as well as increased transportation and energy costs. We have seen this especially with fabric goods, 'blanks' on which UK suppliers print were regularly imported from Portugal or Turkey. As the cost of doing this has become prohibitive, many UK suppliers are switching to UK sources. This is great from a sustainability point of view, but UK production is generally much more expensive.
- Our own developed/branded products have always been margin leaders for us, historically achieving margins over 60%. We are now seeing this margin decrease and are more frequently seeing margins of 50% to 55% if we want to retain acceptable retail prices.
- 'Off the shelf' products, these are all the non branded items that we do not design or produce, have also seen price increases. Typically we could expect to achieve 52% to 55% on the RRP, but this has dropped to 50% to 52% on average.
- Ultimately, this is going to lead to us to consider the feasibility of lines if costs continue to rise, price increases where we think we have the capacity to pass on the cost increase to the customer and the likelihood that we will be working to narrower margins overall.

Cost of living – impact to purchasing?

Following on from the increase costs to buy and produce goods, our customers are being squeezed elsewhere in their lives as the cost-of-living crisis remains with us and impacting individual purchasing decisions across the board.

One risk of passing on price increases, is we begin to damage our average transaction values, with customers choosing to 'shop smaller and stricter', buying lower priced and/or less in order to manage their own budgets; or choosing not to shop at all, making a choice between maybe a food and beverage purchase over a souvenir or gift.

Anecdotally, the audience for *A Strange Loop* has not been as open to spending, both in the shop or at the bars. Although the impact of the Theatre being open has helped to boost sales, the propensity for this audience to buy Theatre merchandise has been low. This is a young, diverse audience far more likely to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

This adaptation of behaviour by customer, putting value at the centre of their decision making, means that the overall perception of value has been reshaped. Key 'recessionary' behaviours include: trading down to cheaper alternatives; delaying large purchases; focusing on essentials, and discount hunting.

Sustainable retail

The focus on repair, recycling, reuse, and thrifting has grown. Customers are actively trying to buy less and are becoming more invested in product life cycles. Investing in pre-owned or pre-loved fashion pieces is a growing market. The Vestiaire Collective will showcase their pre-loved clothing platform during the *RE/SISTERS* exhibition, having a space in the Gallery Shop and a Foyer Shop window, promoting the benefits of pre-loved clothing and promoting a more sustainable way of shopping in the future.

We actively look for products that have been produced sustainably or have a sustainable story, where possible choosing to stock items with sustainable credits over less eco-friendly (but maybe cheaper) alternatives. Whilst we have a long way to go in having a

fully sustainable retail offer, we can continue to seek ways in which we can shift towards offering more and more sustainable options.

There may also be opportunities to facilitate 'swap shops' for fashion lovers looking to update their wardrobe, as well as the potential to deliver up-cycling workshops and other creative ways of renewing items of clothing or homewares. These types of activity may not deliver a huge profit, but creating a space and connecting groups who are leading the field in these areas with our customers is an important part of our journey to becoming more sustainable.

DECISIONS FOR 2023/2024

Shop revitalisation

- With increasing footfall, the shop has sustained some heavy usage over the past 6.5 years and units are starting to suffer from obvious wear and tear. But beyond expected wear and tear, the fixtures that were designed back in 2015 no longer fit the purpose they were built for. Our product offer has developed and changed and so have our display needs, as have the expectations of our customers.
- Work has been done, and is ongoing, to improve how we display products as well as fix units that have been damaged or are in disrepair. Some units have been retro-fitted to offer more dynamic display options for the new and varied merchandise we have. However, the current fixtures are not that easily adaptable without serious intervention, and this means they are restrictive in terms of display, offering a very flat and 2D merchandising space.
- With the prospect of Barbican Renewal still some years away, we now have an ageing shop fit that needs to be refreshed and revitalised in order to give us at least another 5 years of service, allowing us to reach our full potential in terms of creating the best product displays; showcasing our ranges, maximising sales through innovative merchandising and offering an enjoyable customer experience.
- What do we want to achieve?
 - Extend the life of the current shop for a further 5 years (or more)
 - Create new display opportunities for dynamic merchandising, ultimately improving sales opportunities
 - Lighting - improvements and additions

We have now engaged a London based design firm [STAMP](#) to start exploring a light refresh.

Commercial Development

The Commercial Development team currently look after Car Parks, and Bars, Restaurants and cafes – some of which are run under operating contracts with third party operators.

Current Status

Bars and car parks bounced back relatively quickly after Covid, however, the restaurants and cafes took longer to recover. The industry as a whole has taken a big hit and is still not fully recovered, with challenges in recruitment, cost of goods and utilities impacting their ability to operate efficiently and profitably.

Our catering partners have done remarkably well and in most areas are exceeding financial expectations, whilst also pushing ahead with initiatives and improvements in all their operations around the Barbican. Following a successful refresh of the Level 2 restaurant in latter part of 2022 from Osteria to Barbican Brasserie, revenue has increased by 49% year on year and the venue is being used by a wider audience. In the 3rd quarter the Level 1

restaurant (currently Bonfire) is getting a similar refresh and will become the Barbican Bar & Grill. Still aimed at our younger audience and visitors, but with a clearer identity that is more easily recognised and a refreshed interior, we expect a wider audience to be attracted to it.

In April of this year, we took the Cinema Cafes in-house from Benugo. The initial phase to resolve service issues has been a success and it is clear that the customer and cinema audience experience has significantly improved. We have plans in the short term to increase sales and improve the food and drink offer when we have a permanent Café Manager recruited, which is in progress. To date marketing the café has been minimal however, with the appointment of a new commercially and hospitality minded Head of Marketing, we are hopeful that a greater focus will attract new customers to the café.

Trends

The “cost of living crisis” has certainly had an impact on hospitality as a whole and at the Barbican, although surprisingly not necessarily in terms of reduced revenues, which have remained buoyant when compared with like-for-like audience profiles. The most significant impact on businesses is the squeeze of margins as prices increase exponentially without this being fully passed on to the consumer.

Small businesses are putting up prices, but not at the rate needed due to fear of being outpriced by the bigger corporations with deeper pockets and long-term purchasing deals. This has benefited the Barbican in recent months as Benugo and Searcys have been able to keep prices well below similar venues and in many cases the high street.

Business Outlook

Our F&B offer needs to adapt in line with our desire to grow and diversify our audiences and improve our audience offer. This is influencing our thoughts on both short-term improvements (for instance the refresh of the Level 1 restaurant) and longer-term strategy and planning.

In late summer 2024 the catering contracts are due for re-tender. We have extended them twice, so this is now a procurement requirement. However, we would like to explore ways that the tendering process can be done differently this time, to achieve our objectives for this interim period in preparation for the more radical opportunities that will be provided by Barbican Renewal.

Objectives:

- Create a diverse food and drink offer for our audience, visitors and neighbourhood for the next 5 years.
- Review the sustainability and financial viability of operating 2 restaurants and the opportunities this creates to repurpose one of these spaces
- Maximise income from the profitable areas of the business (Barbican Kitchen and Hospitality), to enable us to be more experimental with the foyer cafes and restaurant spaces on Levels 1 and 2.
- Seek out SME businesses and/or partnership to operate our restaurant/s
- Focus on sustainability, quality and equity

- Ensure that there is a balance between innovation and financial security in the mix of offers
- Mindful that the building disruption during Renewal will be an unknown factor that tenderers will be concerned over and will want to protect themselves through their financial offer

Key strategic decisions to be made

Restaurants & Cafes

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
Income	847	789	915	915	899	31	276	720	778
Expenditure	(86)	(52)	(138)	(68)	(69)	(14)	(43)	(74)	(67)
Salaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	761	737	777	848	830	17	233	646	711

- The most significant decision to be made is to reconsider the use of the Level 1 & 2 restaurants. The reality is that for the last 35 years these restaurants have never been successful. They are hard to locate within the building and despite many incarnations have never been distinct enough to become destinations. As a result, they lose money for the operators and only exist as they have been subsidised by the events and hospitality contracts that they are linked to. The income we make from both these spaces is minimal and entirely offset by the maintenance costs of keeping the failing kitchen equipment and infrastructure going. If we tender in the same way as we have always done, this will continue as no business will take on the restaurants on their own.
- The solution, whilst dramatic, is to focus our efforts and resources on creating one lively and accessible bar and restaurant on Level 1, which will be more attractive to SME operators and provide us the opportunity to do something truly exciting in this space. This also then enables us to repurpose the Level 2 restaurant. Different options for that space are being explored, with the most profitable in terms of income, is as a multi-purpose events space, which can be shared with other departments such as Development, that we have modelled and could have the potential to bring in around £400k incremental contribution to the Barbican.
- This has been proposed to the board in previous papers prior to Covid but was shelved when Barbican Renewal was announced. However, this was based on creating a 200-cover restaurant by building on the Level 1 terrace overlooking the lakeside. This was very controversial and an expensive exercise that was by no means assured, so we are no longer proposing this and believe that the existing footprint on Level 1 can still work for the following reasons;
 - One restaurant is enough to service our needs – when combined with the café and bars.
 - Our audiences are changing - the demand for the audience that currently uses the Brasserie has altered. During A Strange Loop and Totoro it is clear these audiences are being drawn to the Barbican Kitchen and Bonfire. The trend here is that there will be increased demand for more accessible dining options with less emphasis on ‘fine dining’.

Barbican Bars

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Bars	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
Income	636	957	1,237	1,252	1,587	20	1,076	1,868	2,022
Expenditure	(246)	(337)	(442)	(398)	(621)	(7)	(353)	(560)	(677)
Salaries	(219)	(370)	(430)	(428)	(517)	(212)	(511)	(704)	(740)
Total	171	250	366	426	449	(200)	212	604	605

- The Martini Bar has been described as ‘the best bar in the worst location’ and this is something we wish to address. The Martini Bar has evolved over the years and long since outgrown the space it is in now. The options are to relocate the bar to another space, or do something with the space it is in. The current mezzanine is not conducive to an intimate cocktail bar, but it could be with some investment in furniture and lighting. The furniture in use is all reclaimed from parts of the foyer and leftovers from restaurant refurbishments. It is shabby, uncoordinated and to be frank, embarrassing!
- However, by reducing the overhead lighting and creating a dedicated fixed seating plan of intimate booths and sofas with feature lamps, will give it a real cocktail bar look and feel, transforming the space.
- The investment to do this will not be insignificant but would enable the Martini Bar to truly flourish and turn around an otherwise wasted, unattractive and underutilised area of the foyers.

Members Lounge

- Since taking this area in-house, we have turned around an underutilised and unappreciated loss-making operation into a profitable one. However, we are now the victim of our own success as the infrastructure is unable to support the demands of a busier operation. Like the Martini Bar, when originally installed did not include running water and waste. The facility needs to be upgraded to meet requirements.
- To ensure the ongoing sustainable operation of this venue, investment in the region of £30k is required to install water, update the electrical supply and extend the bar to include a glass washer and ice machine.

Car Parks

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Car Parks	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Season Tickets	204	238	338	185	256	224	225	225	216
Ticket Sales	406	353	462	483	348	92	253	408	416
Income	610	591	801	668	604	316	478	633	632
Expenditure	(272)	(276)	(282)	(302)	(273)	(313)	(288)	(339)	(342)
Total	338	315	519	366	331	3	190	294	290

- The car parks contribute around £300k a year to the Barbican, so they are a valuable asset. However, their use has been declining over the last 10 years and will continue to do so over the coming years due to the general reduction in car use in London. There is enough capacity to consider alternative uses and this is something that we are actively pursuing.
- Meanwhile, we are working with the CoL to increase the number of electric charging points. This will be financed by replacing the existing units with chargeable ones, which will increase revenue in that area.

Successes

Restaurants & Cafes

- The refresh of Osteria to the Barbican Brasserie in Q4 of 2022-23 has been well received by everyone. The dining room now looks fresher, less stuffy and the plants enliven and soften the space. Changing the name has also had the benefit of widening the menu options and attracting a more diverse age group who identify with the familiarity of a 'brasserie'. A lesson we have learned and the reason for the change from Bonfire to Barbican Bar & Grill by the end of September.
- The takeover of Cinema Café & Bar on Beech Street by the in-house bars team has given a new lease of life to a tired space. Since the return from Covid and the reduction in footfall from the local offices, the venue has struggled to work as a café outside of the cinema audience. Since we took over in April this year the daytime business has started to return, and the cinema audience is better catered for with a more responsive management presence.

Barbican Bars

- In Q4 of 2022-23 we took over running of the Members Lounge from Searcys. With dedicated management from the Martini Bar team, we turned around a loss-making contractual liability for Searcys to a Barbican asset. It is very performance reliant, but generally now provides a small contribution to the Barbican.
- For the run of A Strange Loop, we introduced the Piano Bar/Late Lounge after the Members Lounge closes at 9.30pm, providing a late ticketed venue open till midnight with live background music on Friday and Saturday evenings. It was a successful trial with a clear demand, especially from the contemporary music audiences, with tickets often selling out. We are looking at ways to make it more financially and operationally sustainable to operate the Late Lounge in the future.

Car Parks

- The CoL car park re-tender enabled us to replace and upgrade the barriers and ticket machines in our car parks, with ticketless operation and enhanced numberplate recognition. The handover was delayed but smoothly done with minimal disruption to visitors.
- New EV charging points have been installed in some of the City car parks and after a trial we will be working with Qwello (the EV operator) to bring to the Barbican. The plan is to replace the existing charging points in Car Park 3 with ones that we can charge for us and the expectation is to increase the number of points into Car Park 4 in due course.

Cinema Café progress

- We proposed a 3-phase approach to the take-over of the Cinema Café and bars (1 and 2/3);
 - Phase 1 – refresh the space, develop a food and drink offer in keeping with the audience and limited facilities, engage with Cinema to create a more seamless experience.
 - Phase 2 – recruit a permanent Café Manager and focus on developing the evening bar and food offer.
 - Phase 3 – develop and business case to invest in new furniture, lighting, counters and electrical infrastructure to enable us to rival the competition in this sphere (Everyman, Curson etc who have really invested in their F&B offer), creating a destination venue.

- We are in the beginning of Phase 2, now in the final stages of appointing a permanent Café Manager.
- We have struggled with marketing of the café and look forward to working with the new Interim Head of Marketing to help us drive income generation.

Implications of Renewal programme (short and long term)

- All our forward planning is considered around the Renewal programme, which whilst unknown at this stage will have implications for all the secondary income generation departments. However, in reality we expect the biggest impacts will come in the latter half of the timeline and so will not have significant impact over the next 3-5 years.

Corporate and Strategic implications

The future plans of Commercial team support the delivery of the City's Corporate Plan by:

- Contributing to a flourishing society. All aspects of the Commercial team's work feeds into a growing and prosperous community. Our aim for our restaurants and bars is to become integral to the local area by bringing communities and individual together to share experiences. at central meeting points and at the same time be strong enough to appeal to draw customers from beyond that community. We want our shop to be unique yet accessible. And through our Business Events programme we want to build upon weekend public events which will animate the building and draw the local population to the building whilst at the same time providing a solid base of potential customers for our commercial offerings.

Relevant Corporate Plan Outcomes

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
- Support a thriving economy. Through Business Events we will continue to drive income to the Barbican and environs by driving events into the Centre and the City which in turn will support local businesses. As a hub for connecting commerce at the Barbican through business event attendance from national and international audiences, we will continue to cement our positioning as one of the key locations in the City and in London, in which to do business.

Relevant Corporate Plan Outcomes

- We are a global hub for innovation in financial and professional services, commerce and culture
- Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible
- To shape outstanding environments. Our building will be governed by our sustainability commitments from our event spaces to our public spaces including our restaurants and bars and retails outlets. We will ensure that our contractors observe our pledges. We will work alongside the City's environmental stewardship and advocacy to create harmonious environments where all who meet are inspired.

Financial Implications

Income growth potential may require some initial investment to generate future return (“pump priming”)

Resource implications

Refer to Team structures - Appendix 7

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

As we saw with the pandemic, or national or worldwide events such as recession, wars, ash-clouds etc, the risk of a b2b or b2c face to face business always carries a degree of risk which can unexpectedly skew visitor numbers. That can be mitigated by risk proofing by diversification of some of the business areas.

There is risk in delivery due to our aging building infrastructure as alluded to earlier in the document and in the conclusion notes.

Equalities implications

As outlined.

Climate implications

As outlined.

Security implications

As outlined.

Conclusion: a note from Jackie Boughton – Acting Director, Commercial

Despite the challenges of the past few years, since Covid, the Commercial Team have remained business focused which is demonstrated by the fact that in 22/23, the income generated by these areas accounted for 36% of the Centres revenues.

The changes in our leadership and subsequent key positions around the building has ensured that there is a greater emphasis on supporting the component parts of the Commercial business model and with the Strategic Framework in place there is a clear commitment to supporting secondary and incremental income across the Centre.

We are committed to finding ways to work with our arts and education teams to ensure that we leverage all commercial aspect of shows, be it music, theatre or galleries, and that these areas are considered as part of the programming voyage from the outset.

Barbican Renewal is a beacon of hope as we journey through the next few years. In the interim, we need to address ways of ensuring that the building remains fit for purpose throughout the intervening years, as the impact an aging building has on delivery and our teams could be loss of business and loss of resource.

- In the case of retail, restaurant and bars; audience levels; intervals and demographics for the hall and theatre influence customer spend. This has been addressed through the creation of projects such as the Late lounge Piano Bar during A Strange Loop and, during the next run of Totoro – a pop up shop strategically placed in the Silk Street entrance.
- The balance of the artistic offer, education needs and commercial business event use of spaces around the building continues to present a ‘race for space’ scenario where each area jostles to take over areas. Despite this, Business Events is

outperforming its compset with consecutive growth since the pandemic and have already overtaken 2019/2020 figures which was the best year on record.

- The building. An aging building is creating numerous operational challenges which cannot be underestimated when it comes to delivery of all aspects of the commercial offer. Without investment there are limitations on growth and delivery across all areas as teams struggle to deal with the numerous failures across the site which are daily in some cases. In many areas teams are working with areas which were never designed for the purpose they are now, and whilst Barbican Renewal will address this in the long term, there needs to be consideration given to investment in areas which will provide a bridge to enable interim financial sustainability.

Jackie Boughton - Acting Director Commercial, Barbican Centre
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Appendix 1 – AIM Assessment Feedback

Appendix 2 – BDRC Event planner feedback July 2023

Appendix 3 – Searcys Sustainability pledges 2023

Appendix 4 – Searcys Second Nature 2023

Appendix 5 – 2023 Board Report Buying Slides

Appendix 6 – Business Events Customer Feedback examples

Appendix 7 – Commercial Team Structures

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