

Committee(s) Barbican Board	Date(s): 22 July 2020
Subject: Equality & Inclusion Update	Public
Report of: Head of HR, Interim Artistic Director, Director of Innovation and Engagement	For Decision
Report authors: Head of HR, Interim Artistic Director, Director of Innovation and Engagement, Senior Manager (Organisational Development + Policy)	

Summary

1. Since the last update to the Board (Autumn 2019), progress has been made against the existing Equality & Inclusion Strategy and work has been underway to review and update this to develop a new strategy for 2020 onwards.
2. The recent events which have seen a reignition of the global Black Lives Matter movement has prompted a more urgent and larger scale investigation into the Barbican's commitments to anti-racism and overcoming other barriers and inequalities across the organisation.
3. We are now launching a rapid-response process, with support from external consultants Challenge Consultancy to expedite this work and to inform the development of a new centre-wide strategy once this has taken place.
4. This paper sets out that approach alongside the steps already taken and those that will take place in the coming weeks.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Endorse the proposed way forward.

Main Report

Background

1. The current Equality & Inclusion Strategy was developed through consultation across the organisation, informed by best practice within and beyond the sector and in line with the City of London's Equality & Inclusion practices and policy. It was signed off by the Barbican Board in 2017. This sets out top-level plans to shift our programming and recruitment practices to be more reflective of London's communities and demographics. Plans were also made to manage access requirements across the building through a programme of capital interventions.
2. Some initial changes across the programme included the introduction of thematic seasons in the Cinema focusing on underrepresented voices on film; a new series of events in the Pit Theatre in which companies led by those underrepresented in British Theatre were given creative control of the space; a commitment to change the Curve and main Gallery programme to prioritise women and artists of colour; development of our Level G programme which includes talks, commissioned research into inequality in the cultural workforce and artist commissions which unpack and shift the dialogue around societal issues; continued development of our co-creation models to deliver community-led free activities in Waltham Forest and Barking & Dagenham; a festival-style event comprising performances, workshops and talks exploring music made by and for disabled people; plus a continued commitment to our Creative Learning activities.
3. In the building we upgraded backstage facilities to accommodate disabled artists; tested gender-neutral toilets, leading to long term plans to ensure gender neutral provision throughout the building; a plan to create a respite space for visitors.
4. Prior to recent events expediting a new process for creating an action plan, our Equality & Inclusion focus group was in the process of reviewing and making recommendations on what we need to do to improve the existing strategy.
5. Early results of that process, combined with recent discussion has confirmed that although significant work has been done on progressing with our Equality & Inclusion Strategy over the last few years, we have not been able to address some fundamental issues which lead to the presence of systemic racism and other inequalities in the organisation.
6. We have had a number of challenging conversations, written exchanges and divisional meetings with staff at all levels which have demonstrated that we must do more to address this within the organisation.

7. Our most recent reflections, prompted by the reignited global Black Lives Matter movement, has illustrated the complexity of lifting the many and differing barriers for people from different backgrounds (e.g. racially, ethnically, geographically, culturally and socially), and the importance of ensuring our understanding of the range of issues – systemic and otherwise – that affect and serve as barriers to different people from a range of backgrounds, is robust enough to find effective, sustainable solutions, resulting in measurable action and change for which we are accountable.
8. We are still committed to lifting barriers across all of our work to all groups falling within protected characteristics, but it has been agreed that setting out a roadmap, with clear commitments and outcomes to enable us to be committed to anti-racism is an urgent priority.

Steps already taken

9. The Barbican has issued two public statements on its commitment to anti-racism across the organisation, addressing issues facing staff, artists, audiences and communities. These were posted on the Barbican's social media sites, initially on Black Out Tuesday (2nd June). The Blackout Tuesday posting resulted in a negative response from some members of staff who felt strongly that the words were tokenistic. On 15th June the Barbican published prominently on its website 'A message from our Managing Director' which followed up with more specific actions and commitments.
10. Our initial public and internal commitments to removing inequalities based on race, ethnicity and other barriers to equality within the organisation are:
 - i) We commit to being transparent as to how we're delivering change. We will communicate openly how we're doing this
 - ii) We commit to removing institutional barriers and increasing ethnic minority, and particularly Black, representation across our workforce and further across our programme
 - iii) We will equip ourselves with more knowledge; learning and growing together so that we can remove processes and barriers that sustain systemic racism
 - iv) We stand for social justice, recognising the fight against inequality and racial injustice is an ongoing and everyday commitment
 - v) We will publish further details of how we're making changes and holding ourselves accountable
 - vi) We will create the space for us to have open conversations with our staff

11. Coupled with this, several all staff messages have been circulated from Nick Kenyon, Leo Thomson and Sean Gregory – on behalf of Directorate, which set out the position that the Barbican is committing to improving its record on anti-racism and the work that will be undertaken to combat inequalities across its operation.
12. A staff Black, Asian and minority ethnic network has been initiated, by the staff body, to provide mutual support and create space for dialogue for those that do not feel comfortable speaking in white-led spaces. This is encouraged and will be supported by senior management to continue. This is in addition to the Corporation Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff network and other diversity networks for all staff in the City. The Barbican network exists alongside several smaller networks consisting of colleagues within existing team structures and across departments that might not otherwise meet. This is all taking place organically – in that staff have initiated this themselves - but is upheld and supported by senior management.
13. In addition, the existing focus group, which was tasked with reviewing the 2017-22 Equality & Inclusion Strategy has continued to meet. This has provided a mechanism for staff to feedback and raise issues that might not be captured otherwise (e.g. through direct dialogue between staff and Directorate/Management Team).
14. Directors have also decided to set up a special taskforce to appraise our current situation and recommend the steps the Barbican needs to take to eradicate racism in all its forms. The taskforce will be drawn from people across the organisation and will be independently chaired by an external expert in this field.
15. Challenge Consultancy, led by Femi Otitoju, has been appointed to work with Directorate to develop a rigorous process to take this forward. The organisation has over 30 years' experience in the public and private sectors in delivering social justice work.
16. Our next steps will be informed by the work that the City of London is also doing through its Tackling Racism Taskforce, established at the end of June 2020, alongside remaining reflective of the City's wider commitments to Equality & Inclusion across the Corporation.

Next Steps

17. Following discussion at Directorate and with individual staff and teams, we have published our workforce data on the staff intranet – which shows that the organisation is made up of 11% of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (compared to the overall London figure of over 40%) – see Appendix 2.

18. From our numerous recent conversations and informed by this data, it is clear that our priority is to achieve greater representation of people of colour across our workforce – particularly in programming, curatorial and in senior positions. This change needs to result from considered long-term planning and needs to coincide with ensuring that the culture and working environment is supportive and empowering to new and existing colleagues of colour, taking into the different needs and issues facing people from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
19. We are in contact with other organisations asking them how they have actively increased representation of people of colour in their workforce and will continue to maintain this dialogue throughout the process.
20. Our workforce data is already published externally as part of the annual Arts Council report on NPOs and we will also shortly be publishing our workforce data on the Barbican website, including further breakdown of equalities information by grade when available from the City. The City currently publish the workforce profile for all staff across the Corporation including information on the pay gaps for the Corporation as our employer.
21. The pay gap data is not currently broken down further by the Corporation into individual City departments and institutions, so as an immediate action we have asked if this would be possible in future so we can understand local pay gap better, help inform our E&I plans and to share the information with staff. This will not only inform our approach to the lifting of barriers to those currently underrepresented but will be a useful method for holding ourselves to account.
22. Challenge have advised that prior to setting up the taskforce, we initially hold feedback sessions for people of colour within the organisation only, for those who would like to attend. These sessions will be facilitated by Challenge. We are aware that colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds still might not feel comfortable participating in these sessions, so we will work to ensure there are other mechanisms in place for people to voice their experiences and ideas for change.
23. We will then host a series of organisation wide “Listen and learn” workshops, which Challenge will facilitate, which will be open to all staff.
24. We will use the feedback from these sessions, and the information already gathered internally, to inform the brief for the taskforce. We will work with Challenge over the next few weeks to prepare for the brief and spec for the taskforce, which will be open to all staff to apply for.
25. We will use the progress of the taskforce to inform and renew our Equality & Inclusion Strategy and to recommend the scope and composition of a future Equalities and Inclusion working group to oversee and monitor the implementation of our strategy and our progress

26. We will report back to the Barbican Board in November with an update on the progress that has been made and the final outcome of the taskforce process.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020
- Appendix 2: Barbican Workforce Profile April 2020

Steve Eddy and Leonora Thomson

E: Steve.Eddy@barbican.org.uk ; Leonora.Thomson@barbican.org.uk

E: Laura.Whitticase@barbican.org.uk