

Committee(s)	Dated:
Barbican Centre Board	17 November 2021
Subject: Management 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: Joint Interim Managing Directors, Barbican Centre	For Decision
Report authors: Directors, Barbican Centre	

Summary

- The Management Report comprises current updates under six sections authored by Barbican Directors.
- Updates are under the headlines of:
 - Joint Interim Managing Directors' Update
 - Programming, Marketing and Communications
 - Creative Learning
 - Operations and Buildings
 - Business and Commercial
 - Development.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Endorse Management's approach to the future activities of the Centre.

Main Report

1. REPORT: JOINT INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTORS' UPDATE

With all our venues and spaces fully reopened, we have been exceptionally busy with a rich programme of activities. The success of *Anything Goes*, the *Noguchi* exhibition, a busy concert hall, our cinemas, major conferences and graduations have together delivered attendances above pre-Covid levels. Our restaurants, bars and shops are busier than they have been for years.

This is a little at odds with our sector where attendances for many remain at around 40% to 60% of pre-Covid levels. We cannot therefore become complacent as the pandemic will continue to have an impact on our activities and the way we work. And we cannot presume that our changing programme will continue to deliver exceptional audiences.

With packed foyers, venues, public spaces and facilities, the pressure on our front of house staff is higher than usual. Under ordinary circumstances this should be manageable. However, well publicised sector wide staff shortages are placing excessive pressure on managers to keep venues and facilities open. We are experiencing significant shortages in hosts, bar and retail staff with catering contractors having similar issues. Through the goodwill and immense hard work of a number of our colleagues, all our venues have remained open.

Quite apart from managing these activities through current uncertainties, our priority will be to implement the changes needed to deliver a more equitable and inclusive organisation. This is a comprehensive programme of cultural change, with a new creative vision and business model and through major investment, a renewal of our physical spaces.

2. REPORT: PROGRAMMING, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Update on Digital

This autumn we successfully delivered our online event, *Can We Talk About Power?* to over 500 households. People from across the globe attended a series of online conversations about power, with a programme that included writer *Margaret Atwood*, poet *Roger Robinson*, and cricketer *Michael Holding*. The event received significant coverage in the press, including features on *BBC Radio 5 Live*, *BBC Radio London*, *The Voice*, and *Arts Professional*.

Live from the Barbican continued into the autumn season; new titles in the series include *BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sakari Oramo*, *Academy of Ancient Music's Creation project*, *Clark & the London Contemporary Orchestra* and the *Speakers Corner Quartet*.

Theatre and Dance will present several digital projects this autumn, to run alongside our live programming, with performances from, *Split Britches*, *Jamie Hale*, *Fehinito Balogun* with *Complicité*, *Taylor Mac* and *Ballet Black* with choreography by *Will Tuckett* and *Mthuthu November*.

The *Japanese Avant Garde and Experimental Film Festival* returned to the Barbican this September. For the first time, a portion of the programme was available on Barbican Cinema on Demand. The hybrid model was further explored in October through our *New East Cinema* and *Forbidden Colours* strands screening first, as one-off events in venue, before moving online. The Cinema team is now focussing on the next steps for Cinema on Demand, assessing how it can sit alongside the in-venue programme and add further value to our offer.

Following the success of the *Leytonstone Loves Film Festival in September*, the [Watch & Listen](#) section of the festival website is now live, showcasing a range of free-to-air feature films and locally made shorts, all curated by Leytonstone Loves Film partners. The festival also received a listing in *GQ magazine* a feature on *BBC Radio London*, who spoke to festival producer, *Divya Satwani*, about this year's event.

To support the *Noguchi* exhibition in the Gallery we produced and released an exhibition trailer using archival footage from *The Noguchi Foundation*. We are working with *Annie Jael Kwan* from *Asia-Art-Activism* on a *Noguchi* digital residency, *Noguchi: Resonances*, where artists, curators, and thinkers reflect together on the themes related to *Noguchi's* artistic legacy. We also adapted the *Noguchi* family activity sheet into an animated video for families to do together at home.

Programming

As autumn fell upon us, we saw an increase in footfall to the centre, up over 50% in October compared with our July/August count. In part this can be attributed to the continuing success of *Anything Goes*, the start of the autumn music season and the encouraging performance of *Noguchi* in the Gallery. Work is being undertaken to review our brand values in response to the new artistic vision and the Barbican's visual identity is receiving a refresh in consultation with a brand agency

As *How We Live Now* enters its final months on Level G, where it has been receiving c. 100 visitors a day since it opened in May, we will be seeking external expertise to

evaluate audiences' experience of the installation specifically as well as their experience of the work's location in our public foyer spaces.

In September, *Leytonstone Loves Film* returned for the third year running, bringing 50 free film events to 20 venues in Leytonstone alongside a wide-ranging online programme. The festival is created by a collective of 30 local partners, encompassing filmmakers, exhibitors, artists and more, who we are connecting with on an ongoing basis to shape the future of the programme and create a sustainable network for the delivery of community film events. We continue to work with *Live Project Solutions* to design and deliver a new *Story Collective* evaluation framework across our work, including *Leytonstone Loves Film* and the *Culture Mile Creative Communities* programme. This is now well under way, with community members in paid roles listening to the experiences of their peers and contributing to future project co-design.

The Barbican Hall reopened to potential full capacity audiences on Sunday 12 September with the opening of the *LSO* season with *Sir Simon Rattle* after 20 months of restricted or no performances. 23 September saw our own-promoted programme re-start with a solo performance by *Nicola Benedetti*, receiving 4-star reviews in the Times and artsdesk. Since then, highlights have included the Academy of Ancient Music's performance of "The Creation" with visuals by *Nina Dunn*; the *Balimaya Project* at Milton Court; *Davone Tines*' mini-residency; the *Britten Sinfonia*'s collaboration with photographer *Sebastião Salgado*, *Clark with the London Contemporary Orchestra* and the *Speakers Corner Quartet*, with special guests including *Sampha*, *Mica Levi* and *Kae Tempest*.

Anything Goes closed its successful run on 6 November and will be followed immediately by the *RSC*'s five star *Comedy of Errors* which will run to the end of 2021. In the Pit we will premiere our co-commission of *First Light* by UK-based theatre artists *Daniel Naddafy* and *Marty Langthorne*. An immersive, intimate experience that explores the wonders of sensory development for very young babies and their adults.

Autism and Cinema was a huge success with screenings selling out and very positive feedback from a neurodiverse audience who attended our relaxed screenings after the very long pause due to Covid restrictions. The season launched its UK tour at *Lewes Depot* in October and will continue to Manchester's *Home* and *Glasgow Film Theatre* in January 2022. *Family Film Week* returned during October Half-Term for the first time since November 2019. It was an extended version of the usual Weekender, offering a curated programme of screenings, talks and workshops for our youngest audience. The first day of the week was entirely accessible to D/deaf and HOH audiences.

We welcomed more than 400 guests to the private view of *Noguchi* in the Gallery on 29 September, and hosted guests for dinner at *Osteria* for the first time in nearly two years, with much praise and delight for both. Visitor numbers are strong - well on track to achieve target, with weekends attracting in excess of 1,000 a day. The show received many excellent reviews in national publications. The Akari lamp installation in the Conservatory makes a magical addition and is immensely popular. A new Curve commission, *Shilpa Gupta: Sun at Night*, opened to the public on 7 October, with a private view on 6 October drawing just under 250 guests. Well received by the press, this exhibition is also on track to make the visitor numbers target comfortably.

AI: More than Human closed at the *World Museum*, Liverpool, on Sunday 31 October and preparations are being made to continue the tour at *Guangdong Science Centre*,

China, which will open in January 2022. *Game On* opened at *Forum Groningen* on Saturday 2 October and has received very high attendance and positive press. *Virtual Realms* continues its run in Singapore with some adaptations to the show due to local Covid restrictions.

Future Planning

As part of the public programme, we are preparing to launch, *Nine Lives*, a Wellcome-funded series of audio portraits of nine strangers, produced by creative studio, The Liminal Space. Each of the portraits depicts someone making sense of the world around them during the Summer of 2021. We're also continuing work on implementing the new vision and approach for the Public Programme.

Our January to July 2022 music programme was announced during October and is based on full capacity halls. It involves a step-up in activity levels from the autumn, as well as the return of visiting orchestras, *Santa Cecilia*, *Czech Phil*, *Les Arts Florissant*, *Leipzig Gewandhaus*, and Oslo Phil. Highlights include an artist spotlight on soprano *Lise Davidsen*, a *BBC SO Total Immersion* on *Frank Zappa*, a 24-hour concert with the *London Contemporary Orchestra*, the *SFJAZZ Collective* returning to the Barbican after more than 15 years, *Jonas Kaufmann* and *Diana Damrau* singing love songs by *Schumann* and *Brahms*, *Hannah Peel* together with *Paraorchestra*, and celebrated Egyptian singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist *Hamza Namira*.

The new spring 2022 season of theatre and dance was also launched in October. It includes an exciting array of artists. *London International Mime Festival* returns in January 2022. Compagnie 111 will present *aSH*, a piece by French theatre director *Aurélien Bory* for Indian performer *Shantala Shivalingappa*; *Interiors*, by one of Scotland's foremost theatre companies *Vanishing Point*. In The Pit UK-based *Thick & Tight* make their Barbican debut with *Short & Sweet* and *Stellaire* by French company *Stereoptik*. Barbican Open Lab alumni, *The PappyShow*, bring two performances to the Barbican. First is their Pit Party - two evenings of physical theatre, music and fun celebrating inclusivity. The following month, this playful theatre ensemble performs their award-winning production of *BOYS*, in *Silk Street Theatre*.

Barbican Artistic Associate *Boy Blue* return to the Theatre with their biennial showcase, *A Night with Boy Blue*, co-produced by the Barbican, Hosted by *Michael 'Mikey J' Asante* and *Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy*. These performances mark the company's 21st birthday in 2022 and assemble the entire company from the youngest pupils to professional dancers. After Saturday's performance, over 18s are invited to *BSI Jam: Beats, Streets & Inspiration*, an After Party in the Barbican foyer. *Belarus Free Theatre* brings a visceral, psychological drama which depicts a future dystopian super-state in which individual rights have given way to control, plus a masterclass led by the company's actors. Celebrating their 20th anniversary, *Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black* will debut a double bill by South African choreographer *Gregory Maqoma* and score by *Boy Blue* co-artistic director *Michael 'Mikey J' Asante*, and by *Cassa Pancho*, featuring choreography by the artists of *Ballet Black*.

In Cinema this November we will see partner festivals: *Palestine Film Festival*, *Doc'n Roll Film Festival*, *Fringe! Queer Arts and Film Festival*, *London International Animation Festival*, our curated programme for the *EFG London Jazz Festival* and, the opening of *Made in Prague*, with a live music performance overture to the award-winning restoration of *Gustav Machaty's* sensational *Ecstasy*.

A new edition of the *Imagine Packs*, our creative community resources for older people at risk of social isolation, is in development for distribution in December. This will include activities by *Larry Achiampong*, the Artist in Residence for *Smithfield Public Realm Transformation*, and a lantern-making activity creating pieces for a public exhibition at local community festival Aldgate in Winter.

Planning is also underway for *Headway East London's Connecting Conversations* panel discussion at Barbican on Wednesday 17 November. Using their lived experience as neurodiverse artists, members from the charity's art studio, Submit to Love, will host a lively panel discussion with a number of leading figures across arts and culture. Together, they will discuss and dissect the notion of "disabled art" and invite audience members to share their own experiences and expertise to contribute to wider sector-change. Panellists include *Will Gompertz* (Barbican) *David Tovey* (Artist, One Festival of Homeless Arts), *Kate Adams* (Project Artworks), *Chris Miller* (Headway East London Resident Artist), *Ali Eisa* (Autograph Gallery).

Barbican Futures Update

In October, a new department called Barbican Futures was set up to develop the new Creative Vision for the Barbican: a vision that will see our international arts centre becoming an international arts, education, and enterprise centre, showcasing the best artists and performers of today, whilst also supporting and investing in the best artists and creative entrepreneurs of tomorrow. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, we have created six new, R&D workstreams all feeding into the Creative Vision:

- *Barbican Masters* – a two to four year on-site, craft-based, accredited Masters programme with the guarantee of a year-long contract after graduation to make work at and for the Barbican
- *Barbican School* – a new arts-based school curriculum that puts collaboration, making, and curiosity at its centre
- *Barbican Ventures* – an incubator, venture capital fund, available to creative and cultural entrepreneurs
- *Barbican Productions* – a production company to provide a platform and a place for new voices and new work
- *Barbican Exchange* – an international exchange programme that invites individuals from other institutions to come and work at the Barbican, and Barbican staff the opportunity to work at collaborating institutions.
- *Barbican Summit* – an annual international arts summit that convenes the world's leading artists, producers, writers, thinkers and creators to consider solutions to significant global issues

The new Barbican Futures team is engaging with partners, stakeholders, the staff body, CoL Education, our communities and associates to develop the networks, methodology and strategy to drive this work forward. Will Gompertz has been working closely with the Development team, engaging stakeholders and generating new energy around the Creative Vision. On 25 October an interview with Will featured in the Times where he spoke about the new Creative Vision and the drive to create a centre that feels like home, a place of belonging, for the communities it serves. It is very early days, but the first threads of our ambitions are starting to take shape, weaving together education, access and enterprise so that they become part of the very fabric of what we do. In the new year we will be able to present, in more detail, the next phase of this new era of the Barbican.

3. REPORT: CREATIVE LEARNING

Families

Squish Space, our creative play offer for under 5s and their families, reopened the week of 18 October having been closed for 18 months. The space is now bookable in hourly slots a week in advance, with the lunch hour reserved for cleaning. It is open 2-3 days a week, and the first available slots sold out within a few days. *The Secret Life of the Conservatory* audio trail and accompanying activity book also continues its success in the Conservatory, where children and their adults can immerse themselves in a calm world of plants. Both experiences are free for families.

Schools

This term we are welcoming schools back into the building. We are continuing to offer dedicated schools slots to the Noguchi exhibition in the Barbican Art Gallery, with approximately 400 students taking part this term. For teachers, we offered a twilight CPD session on 18 October 2021 with gallery educator Neysela Da-Silva Reed. Reed also ran tour training with a selection of Gallery Invigilators to upskill them to deliver tours to visiting school groups.

In October, our primary Associate School, City of London Primary Academy Islington, visited the Conservatory and took part in the audio trail with a stop motion creature-making workshop. Children fed back that they felt “calm” in the Conservatory, and their teacher fed back that the activity was ‘well thought out and different to what they had done before.’

3.1 Preview and Planning

Upcoming activity for 21/22 will focus on a new Creative Careers programme delivered through Young Barbican; a Wellcome-funded residency in the Conservatory with artist Sam Winston, who together with participant groups, will be exploring the way that plants and the air we breathe interconnect us globally; an RSC practitioner-in-residence who will be embedded in the Creative Learning programme, designing and delivering a number of schools’ workshops in response to the RSC production of *The Comedy of Errors*; and a programme of workshops and resources for teachers and their students designed in response to the BIE exhibition *In Our Time*, focusing on young peoples’ creative response to the climate crisis.

We are continuing to plan and scope out the details of the new Artistic Vision, in particular mapping out the current Creative Learning programme against the new pillars of Barbican Masters and Barbican School. We aim to maintain and strengthen the best of the current Creative Learning programme and carry out a feasibility study for new activity.

4. REPORT: OPERATIONS & BUILDINGS

General Update: our buildings remain safe and compliant. The Centre has successfully opened many of its activities, and to great critical acclaim and audience feedback. In common with the rest of the wider sector, we have had to manage resource carefully, prioritising activities and staffing levels to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. The team have continued to deliver excellent standards against a very uncertain, and at times challenging, background and are commended for their individual and team efforts.

Operations: Barbican Protect training continues: 94% of Barbican employees and 92% of casual workers and contract partners have completed e-ACT training; SCan training has been completed by 292 front-line employees (92% of target group) and by 325 casual workers and contracted partners (96% of target group). We are grateful to the City for the investment in both training and capital, which have been a gamechanger. Work with the CTSA (Counter Terrorism Security Adviser) and City security team continues to ensure compliance with any likely findings from the Manchester inquiry. Ticketing continues to be very busy, with online being by far the largest transaction source.

Buildings: the Engineering and Project teams continue to work with the City Surveyor and other contractors to maintain the momentum and ensure that we 'maintain and enhance' our assets in anticipation of Barbican Renewal. The PSDS (Public Services Decarbonisation Scheme) investment is ongoing and will deliver savings to the City in support of its climate action strategy.

Staff and Workers (Casuals): we have recruited and trained additional staff to cope with the manning requirements needed to be Covid-secure. The extension of Anything Goes has put an additional strain on the team; we will take the opportunity after the end of the run to continue with training and other development as required.

Next Steps and Horizon: we will continue the momentum of investment in our assets via CWP, capital and PSDS funding. We have approval of our new climate strategies across our Alliance estate, meaning that we are well positioned to bid for and receive any funding released as a result of Cop26. We continue to work on Barbican Renewal, aiming to deliver a venue that will be fit for the next two generations. Members and the City are thanked for their generosity and support over this quite unique period. Thank you to the staff for enabling us to cope with the tribulations and make the most of the opportunities.

5. REPORT: BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL

Business Events: Booking levels are back to pre-pandemic levels albeit with a bit of hesitancy over long lead business. The resulting short lead enquiries are causing continuing pressure on all teams from sales to delivery. Full year target has already been reached and a further stretch target has been added.

Highlights include the successful delivery of the New London Architecture conference, several photoshoots, weddings and parties, and a welcome return to the first graduation in the Centre since 2020 - City University, which saw 3,000 attendees over a 3-day period (lower than normal as the university maintained an element of social distancing).

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, selected the Barbican as a platform to launch a city-wide call to inspire London citizens and businesses to 'take action' against a climate crisis ahead of COP26.

The team are planning for a busy Christmas party season, and a final quarter that will deliver over 21 days of graduation ceremonies, a record for such a period owing to the backlog of in-person ceremonies.

Retail: The Gallery Shop opened with the Noguchi exhibition at the end of September and has performed positively in the first few weeks of the show, with customers purchasing across the range including our selection of Akari lamps and exclusive range of Noguchi inspired jewellery. We continue to support Anything Goes in the Theatre with our merchandise pop up which continues to be busy.

We have experienced some delays with the delivery of goods and the production of goods which may impact the availability of some items of stock over the seasonal period as well as the restocking of items for the Noguchi exhibition shop. As we prepare for the Christmas shopping period, we are looking at our stocks of packaging to avoid the impact of cardboard shortages on our online fulfilment.

Catering & Bars: The success of Anything Goes continues to fill our restaurants and bars. Income is exceeding budget and forecast expectations in all areas, and for our bars, looking like a record period. However, significant challenges remain with staffing levels, as recruitment in the hospitality sector is particularly affected. The teams are working hard to deliver our core services, but often unable to take advantage of additional or last minute opportunities as there are insufficient available workers to pick up the shifts. Recruiting for casual workers is a prime focus. Our catering partner Benugo has launched a new initiative called becoming 'Climavore' that looks into how we eat as humans are changing the climate. There is significant PR resource being put into this by Benugo and is a good story to be associated with as part of our preparations for *Our Time on Earth*, the BIE exhibition next year.

6. REPORT: DEVELOPMENT

On 14 September, we hosted a reception to introduce Will Gompertz to key supports and stakeholders and to share his vision for Barbican Futures. A number of positive outcomes were born out of the evening, including pledges of support, and introductions to help with the scoping work

Our Trust and Grants team report recent successful applications with the Henry Moore Foundation (Postwar Modern), Performing Arts Fund NL (Theatre's Age of Rage 2022), PRS Foundation (Future is Female concert), Mactaggart Third Fund (Barbican Box) and Tower Hill Trust (Barbican Box). Pending applications include the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Our corporate team recently submitted an application to American Express Foundation to support our Creative Careers strand and unfortunately received a decline from a prospective Centre Partner. We are negotiating a potential art gallery relationship with a fashion retailer, and work continues cultivating sponsors for our climate change exhibition and female artists strand. The team also hosted a successful Private View for Corporate Members and Prospects for Noguchi, with some useful conversations following.

Following the opening of our Noguchi show, the individual giving team have now successfully introduced their special Patron preview before the main PV for exhibitions. We also hosted a positive cultivation event Soho House, to engage supporters for an upcoming Curve Gallery Commission. Visitor Giving is picking up pace with exhibition openings, cloakrooms operating again and reintroduction of programmes like Squish Space. Anything Goes and the Noguchi exhibition are driving donations with ticket sales online. We are also launching a fundraising campaign at the end of November focusing on a Young Creative and in support of Creative Learning