

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Nominations, Effectiveness and Inclusion Committee	28/06/2023
<b>Subject: Industrial action planning</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1,3,4,9,12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	
<b>Report of: CEO, Barbican Centre</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author: Ali Mirza, Director of People, Culture and Inclusion</b>	

### **Summary**

This discussion follows the planning and management of the industrial action that took place at the Barbican on 25<sup>th</sup> May as part of the wider industrial action across the City of London Corporation, coordinated by the main Unions of GMB and Unite.

The core strike action planning group were invited for their views on 31<sup>st</sup> May as part of a wash-up session and to gather learning for any subsequent industrial action. Representatives from LSO were also invited to the first portion of the meeting.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- i. Members are asked to NOTE the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. On 11<sup>th</sup> May, the Barbican received notification via the City of London Corporation that the GMB/Unite Unions would be holding a one day strike on the 25<sup>th</sup> May.
2. Following this, a core strike action planning team was assembled drawn from those areas that were likely to be impacted most. After having reviewed the schedule for the 25<sup>th</sup> May, the following actions and remediation activities were identified:-
  - 2.1. **Music** – The LSO concert planned for the 25<sup>th</sup> May was moved to the 24<sup>th</sup> May with ticket holders offered refunds if the new date wasn't suitable. Returned seats were put back on sale.
  - 2.2. **Business Events** - Of the three commercial business event bookings scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> May, two were moved to other venues and one was postponed to a later date at the Barbican.
  - 2.3. **Cinema** – The Cinema was closed
  - 2.4. **Theatre** – There were no shows but rehearsals were planned. These were rearranged.
  - 2.5. **Commercial** – As we had decided not to close the venue the Bars, Restaurants, Shop and Curve Gallery remained open (albeit with some local changes to opening hours).

### **3. On the day:**

- 3.1 The protest outside Silk Street was peaceful and good natured; At its peak there were around 80-100 protestors, who moved on to the Guildhall by about 11.40am (where a larger group convened) to coincide with Court of Common Council.
- 3.2 There were no major issues reported during the day.
- 3.3 In the evening, around 10 audience members, from 5 separate bookings (from an overall number of 1700 ticket holders) showed up for the LSO concert in the Hall. They were clearly upset and disappointed. This was managed carefully and locally by the Audience Experience Team, and we are currently working on a response with Music and LSO, while also looking to use learnings for the future.

### **4. Lessons Learned**

- 4.1 The team reviewed what worked well, what could have been better to help inform subsequent industrial action planning activity
- 4.2 **What worked well** – The group identified a number of areas in terms of what worked well, as follows:-

- 4.2.1 The core team and subsequent teams managing the above changes across the Barbican worked in an agile, collaborative, constructive and open way.
- 4.2.2 It was felt that the tone, content and timeliness of communications was good. An early all-staff message from the CEO landed well as did the tone around compassion and understanding.
- 4.2.3 Following on from the above pre-strike reinforcement of messaging and advice to teams and managers was also received well.
- 4.2.4 Convening the strike action planning team quickly with open and regular communication.
- 4.2.5 The Director of People, Culture and Inclusion as first point of contact and lead.

### **4.3 What could have been better**

- 4.3.1 Delays in City advice/communications/guidance to the Barbican created some initial internal tension. There was also some positioning of communications initially coming from the City around speaking to staff pre-strike that was not accurate and then subsequently changed.
- 4.3.2 Whilst the core group was identified from those most likely impacted there was a feeling that this could have been extended to include a representative from each artform.
- 4.3.3 Whilst we focussed understandably initially on the most affected areas, e.g., music, there was a view that we could have asked all business areas to complete the same 'planning/impact table' to understand broader implications.
- 4.3.4 Following on from the above and whilst the big decisions were made early in discussion, there were some delays in reaching a decision on other areas (e.g. Curve or Gallery).

**4.4 Next steps** - The following were identified as key to include in future planning:

- 4.4.1 Identify and confirm clear working principles.
- 4.4.2 Identifying the key individuals enabled and empowered to make decisions (after understanding 'what's happening at the Barbican' on the affected day) as soon as possible.
- 4.4.3 Carrying out a cost/benefit/risk assessment as well as resource requirement for any mitigation options being considered.
- 4.4.4 Decide quickly – to allow time to prepare and engage with audience, artists and related operations.
- 4.4.5 Prepare list of people needed to make programme decisions in advance and engage with them about their roles and expectations.
- 4.4.6 Prepare order of steps/action in advance and communicate to relevant stakeholders.
- 4.4.7 Prepare and share checklist of actions and clear responsibilities across the team and extended group as needed.
- 4.4.8 Ensure communication and signage is prepared well in advance, particularly around the restaurants.

## **5. Key Data**

**5.1** There were 105 individuals that were recorded as having taken industrial action on the day.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

**Strategic implications** – This exercise aligns with the City of London Corporate Plan and supports points 1,3,4,9 and 12. The planning and learning from this exercise particularly support Point 12 around '*Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained*'

**Financial implications** – Any industrial action will by its nature cause disruption with an associated financial implication. By preparing and planning in advance, including through exercises like this, it is hoped that we mitigate against levels of unplanned disruption and reduce financial impact.

**Resource implications** – Convening of key individuals will be required for subsequent planning associated with future strike action

**Legal implications** – None

**Risk implications** – These are touched upon in this report and include cancelling and/or postponing programmes or events planned for any strike days with the subsequent disruption to partnering organisations and audiences. Clearly these decisions also have a financial implication. From a Casual staffing perspective by cancelling events there is a subsequent knock-on effect on reduced numbers of casual staff being needed.

**Equalities implications** – None

**Climate implications** - None

**Security implications** – With any protest, we work closely with the Barbican security team to ensure the safety of audience, artists, staff and in this case protestors as well.

## **Conclusion**

The industrial action on the 25<sup>th</sup> May has provided a number of practical learnings that we will adopt for future strikes. It also provided the opportunity for key teams to work together and plan key responses.

### **Ali Mirza**

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