

Committee(s): Barbican Centre Board	Dated: 17/07/2025
Subject: Barbican Renewal Updates May – July 2025	Public
This proposal delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Leading a sustainable environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N
Report of: Philippa Simpson	For Information
Report author: Philippa Simpson	

Summary

This report provides an update on the Barbican Renewal project for the period May-July 2025, highlighting significant progress, with all critical milestones archived. Key developments include completion of Riba Stage 3 design, submission of the Planning Application following extensive consultation, and a revised cost plan for the Foyers that now aligns with the overall budget. The report also notes the appointment of key personnel, the launch of new design workstreams (including Wayfinding and Furniture Design), and the formation of an Access and Inclusive Design Advisory Panel.

Members are asked to approve the continued quarterly submission of written updates alongside CORA-generated dashboards, with onward submission to Policy and Resources Committee and Court of Common Council in line with the agreed governance structure.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Barbican Renewal updates May – July 2025

Since this Board last met excellent progress has been made on the project, and all critical milestones met. Below are headlines from the period, with additional detail. This report can be read alongside the 'dashboard', generated by the City of London's newly implemented project management system CORA, also included in the papers. However, to note, this is the first of the reports generated through this system and as such is not yet as detailed or as accurate as members might expect moving forward.

It is proposed that these 'dashboards', as they develop, are generated and submitted to this Board on a quarterly basis, along with a written report. These papers, if approved, will then be submitted to Policy and Resource Committee, as per the agreed governance structure, reviewed at the May Board meeting and approved at Court of Common Council in May.

Programme

Our appointed Project management consultants Gardiner and Theobald have developed a draft programme of works which will be reviewed and revised with all Barbican teams over the next few months, to produce a final fixed programme and procurement strategy by the end of the year. Initial meetings with all key departments have already been held to inform this early work, but more detailed analysis is needed to produce a plan that minimises disruption and enables continued function of the site as far as possible.

Design (RIBA 3)

RIBA stage 3 design was completed and submitted on programme in June, and has been rigorously reviewed by the project team and relevant departments across the organisation. Following submission of the Planning application (see below) the design team will now move straight into Stage 4 design, with a view to completing within a year (see related funding drawdown request). We will at this stage move into contract tenders and delivery on site.

Planning

A Planning Application is being submitted on 11th July. All related documentation has been submitted to the project team in draft and is currently being reviewed in detail. This follows nine pre-app briefings, extensive consultation with relevant authorities (including Historic England and 20th Century Society) and wide-reaching public consultation. The final round of this generated an equally positive response of over 90% approval for the plans. We expect a decision in September, but given the positive engagement of the planning team to date, we feel confident to progress design work across the summer.

Cost and budget

Cost Consultants Aecom have generated cost plans for all projects in the programme based on Stage 3 design information. All were on or around budget, with the exception of the Foyers, which was significantly over the estimated envelope. Given the scale of this change, a third party was engaged (Pulse Consult, who have extensive experience in heritage and performing arts capital projects) to undertake a clean slate exercise, reviewing and costing the drawings. This new cost plan showed a disparity of £12m with the original, and sat within the allocated budget figure. This has been interrogated by the consultant team, and appears to be robust.

We are therefore moving ahead with plans as they stand at this stage, with a degree of confidence. We are also mid-tender for a new Cost Consultant for the remainder of the programme to 2030. When this team is appointed they will also undertake their own exercise to cost the various projects from scratch, which should act as a check and balance on the two disparate cost plans we have received in this instance.

Governance

The paper approved at last quarter's Board Meeting was approved by Policy and Resource Committee and Court of Common Council, allowing this Board full delegated authority for deployment of the £231m budget envelope for Barbican Renewal phase 1 (2025-30). Please refer to that paper for further details.

Appointments and team

Since last meeting we have appointed two new colleagues who are working directly on Barbican Renewal:

Ying Seow - Head of Sustainability: Ying's role covers far more than just capital work, but she is a critical voice in the development of designs, ensuring we are reaching the most ambitious targets for sustainability in all our plans

Aksel Nichols – Project Manager, infrastructure: Aksel is working with consultants and internal teams to coordinate major and complex MEP work across the site.

Wayfinding: a new design team have now been appointed to work on a new, coherent and coordinated wayfinding scheme.

Assemble Architects are a prize winning practice based in London, with a particular focus on Social Value, Co-design and Sustainability

Designers Unit are a Paris based graphic design and wayfinding studio, who have delivered major schemes at complex sites such as the Musee d'Orsay

Access and Inclusive Design Advisory Panel: Having selected 12 participants from 350 applications, we have now established an expert panel, with professional knowledge of design and the built environment and lived experience of a range of disabilities. This panel will be advising and challenging us on how to demonstrate best practice in

inclusive design across the site, looking at the architectural plans but also Wayfinding and Furniture design.

Furniture Design: We plan to launch an open competition for designers in October to develop a suite of furniture for all public spaces at the Centre. This will cover all Foyers and the Conservatory but not the catering block, which will be fitted out by operators.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 04 Barbican Renewal Dashboard – July

Philippa Simpson

Director for Buildings & Renewal

E: Philippa.Simpson@barbican.org.uk