

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): People, Culture & Inclusion (PCI) Subcommittee to the Barbican Centre Board – For decision	Dated: 23 September 2025
Subject: Progress update on External Member recruitment	Public report: For information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides statutory duties • Provides business enabling functions
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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:	David Farnsworth, Interim CEO
Report author:	David Farnsworth, Interim CEO

Summary

This paper provides a progress update on recruitment to the Barbican Board, the Barbican Renewal Working Group, and the Barbican Centre Trust.

Further work will be done to complete the appropriate Equalities Analyses to ensure that final decisions on the recruitment processes will be equitable and in line with our values.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- To note progress to date on recruitment of an External Member to the Barbican Centre Board as set out below.

- To note the proposed recruitment process to the Barbican Renewal Working Group.

To note the update concerning recruitment to the Barbican Centre Trust

Main Report

Main Report

Background

Barbican Centre Board

1. The Barbican Centre Board is responsible for the activities and services of the Barbican Centre. The Barbican Centre was founded by the City of London Corporation, who remain the principal funder of the Barbican Centre and the activities which take place within and without its walls. The Board Terms of Reference (as approved in April 2025) can be found at Appendix 1.
2. The Board comprises of up to eight City of London Corporation Members and up to eight External Members, plus the Chair of the Barbican Centre Trust. The full membership can be found at Appendix 2.
3. At present, there is a vacancy among the External Members to be filled. Any new External Members to the Board must be approved by the Board, and at least two must be drawn from the arts world.

Barbican Centre Trust

4. The Barbican Centre Trust, established in 1985 by the Court of Common Council as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity (no. 294282), supports fundraising for the Barbican Centre. While it operates independently from the City of London Corporation and has its own Board of Trustees, the Trust includes ex officio appointments such as the Chairman of the Barbican Centre Board and the Centre's CEO. It works in close partnership with the Barbican Centre, receiving support services and collaborating to achieve shared objectives.
5. Following the retirement of the previous Chair, the Trust currently has an Interim Chair. There is a need to recruit a new Chair, and four vacant Trustee positions.

Barbican Renewal Working Group

6. At their respective meetings on 8 May 2025, the Board and the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to establish a Working Group to support the Board in its key decision making around Barbican Renewal, given the scale of the buildings Renewal work at the Barbican over the next five years (noting that it is an advisory group, not a decision making body).

7. The Barbican Renewal Working Group's terms of reference can be found at Appendix 3. Recruitment is required to 3 external positions.

Skills and diversity needs

8. We centre our values and behaviours (Appendix 4 for noting) in all we do, including recruitment. A component of recruitment will be assessing candidates' alignment with our values and behaviours.
9. An audit of existing skills on the Barbican Board has been undertaken. This identified the most significant gap in skills is in the depth of experience in arts management and executive leadership skills in an arts organisation (Art Form Expertise, Arts Policy & Advocacy, Curatorial & Artistic Direction), Health & Safety, People – Human Resources, and Sustainability. The audit in full is attached as Appendix 5 (non-public).
10. Members have been asked to complete a Diversity Monitoring Form to help us gain a better understanding of diversity at all levels of the organisation, including the Board. This information will be useful to inform recruitment to the Board, Barbican Centre Trust, and Barbican Renewal Working Group.
 - 10.1. To date, two thirds of members have responded to this form. We need to have a full set of responses to better understand the data and trends. Members are asked to complete this if they have not yet done so.

Barbican Renewal Working Group

11. In line with the draft terms of reference in Appendix 3, the Barbican Renewal Working Group is a non-decision-making advisory body and therefore can be comprised of elected members, external members and officers, in consultation with the City Surveyor and Barbican Director for Buildings and Renewal. The recommended skillsets and experience required from External Members to the Working Group are as follows:
 - Architecture and Design, with a focus on Sustainability
 - Capital Planning and Procurement
 - Arts and Communications Leadership
 - International Perspective and Experience (desirable)

Any applicant should be able to demonstrate at least one of the first three skillsets. Appointments will be for a four-year term, in line with the City of London's standard

standing orders, with an annual review to ensure the balance of expertise on the group remains relevant.

Process and timeline

Barbican Centre Board

12. Our ambition is that recruitment to the Barbican Board will go live in November 2025 and will complete in time for approval of the successful candidate at the Board meeting on 28 January 2026. in alignment with the incoming permanent CEO's arrival at the Barbican. The recruitment process will be informed by the Equalities Assessment that will be undertaken (which will include analysis of the Diversity Monitoring Data once complete).

Barbican Renewal Working Group

13. External and Internal Member positions are required for the Barbican Renewal Working Group.
14. To ensure the necessary assurance and guidance is in place to support the programme, and to make recommendations to the Barbican Centre Board, when necessary, we will proceed with a targeted recruitment approach for internal members of the Working Group. Chairs of each respective committee will be invited to nominate representatives to serve on the Barbican Renewal Working Group. These nominations should reflect the mix of capabilities and experience required to support the programme effectively, whilst being mindful of our values and behaviours.
15. The ambition is to complete recruitment for the External Members to the Working Group by November 2025. The recruitment process will be informed by the Equalities Analysis and agreed by the Chair of the Barbican Board and Elected Member Deputy Chair of the Barbican Board (as per City of London Corporation governance).

Barbican Centre Trust

16. Given the work on the 10-Year Plan, which includes consideration of the best legal structure for the Barbican Centre, and given the incoming permanent CEO, recruitment of the new Barbican Centre Trust Chair and Trustees will be revisited at the beginning of 2026.

Strategic implications – Barbican governance supports not only the Barbican, but also the wider Corporation.

Financial implications – To be determined if recruitment will come with a financial cost (e.g. employing an agency or recruiter to support).

Resource implications – Recruitment will require resources. Exact nature to be determined.

Legal implications – A necessity to follow Equalities Analysis.

Risk implications – Given the visibility of the Barbican we may be subject to challenge if we do not follow good practice with recruitment.

Equalities implications – Will be worked through in detail through the Equalities Analyses.

Climate implications – None.

Security implications – None.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Order of the Court of Common Council
- **Appendix 2:** September Board Terms and Expiry
- **Appendix 3:** Draft Barbican Renewal Working Group
- **Appendix 4:** The Barbican Way
- **Appendix 5:** Board Skills Audit (non-public)

David Farnsworth
Interim CEO, Barbican Centre