

barbican

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy

An overview

May 2022

Background

The Barbican is a major international arts and learning centre, pushing the boundaries of all major art forms. We are home to a concert hall, theatres, cinemas, art galleries, the largest conservatory in Central London, restaurants, retail spaces and fully equipped conference facilities.

The City of London Corporation is our founder and principle funder and we work closely with colleagues at the City on the development and delivery of this sustainability strategy. Our work in sustainability should be viewed in conjunction with the City of London Corporation's [Responsible Business Strategy](#) and [Climate Action Strategy](#). We have also consulted and workshopped this strategy with members of staff and other external organisations in order to ensure best practice and full representation as well as better understanding of the challenges and opportunities.

We recognise that the climate crisis brings major challenges for the planet and all of its inhabitants. Through our creative vision and cultural programme, we believe we can have a positive impact by raising awareness and encouraging both conversation and action around this important agenda. We also acknowledge that our operations and activities have an impact on the environment and we are committed to reducing this impact by setting and achieving clearly defined objectives and targets, as well as developing frameworks to achieve continual improvement.

This document is a summary of our full sustainability strategy, which is a comprehensive overview of the work that we have done and the work that we are doing to reduce our impact on the environment. This summary is designed to be a slimmed down version for those just looking for an overview.

Our full strategy, with more detailed aims for each area of focus, is available on our website.



Photo @ Max Calsomn



Photo @ Max Calsomn

Our Strategy Themes

We know that we have a lot of work to do to realise our ambitions and therefore there is a necessary urgency to this work in the organisation and we are dedicated to radically transforming our systems and working practices.

To help us ensure that we are thinking holistically about all of the opportunities that are available to us to address our impact and make a positive difference, we've considered the following four themes throughout our strategy. All of our aims sit within at least one of these.

We will work closely with our neighbours, in particular the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the City of London Corporation, as well as our artistic partners, communities and our staff to achieve the commitments and aims we have set ourselves.



Photo @ Max Calsorn

An Overview of our Aims

Our aims are broad and varied. To help us communicate them, we have categorised them into eight focal areas for this summary:

1. Using Our Platform: Through our ambitious arts programme, community events and learning activity, we will continue to support innovative artistic work that reflects and responds to the climate crisis and today's world. The launch of this strategy coincides with the opening of our exhibition, *Our Time On Earth*, on Thursday 5 May 2022 – a major show celebrating the power of global creativity to transform the conversation around the climate crisis.

2. Our Targets And Baseline In line with the City of London Corporation, we are aiming for Net Zero Carbon of our building and on-site operations (scope 1 & 2 emissions) by 2027. We will continue to evolve our strategy to put the next milestones in place with the ambition of reaching Net Zero Carbon across all our work and supply chain (scope 3 emissions) by 2040.

3. Our Impacts: Across all aspects of our business, we aspire to reduce our impact on the environment, reduce our waste and move to a circular economy model and a more regenerative economic framework which will see us keep our resources in use for as long as possible and consider reuse wherever possible. We will work closely with partners, staff and our wider community to make progress across all our priority areas.

4. Biodiversity And Our Environment: We will protect our local environment, encourage biodiversity and prevent pollution and waste in our building and operations

5. Enabling Our Staff And Stakeholders: We want our staff community to be advocates for this work, to feel empowered to make sustainable choices and ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including our visitors and third parties, feel the same.

6. Enhancing our Building: Through the forthcoming Barbican Renewal project, a major infrastructure upgrade in the coming years, we will look to address the environmental performance of our building delivering a replacement and upgrade programme for major components of our core operational services to bring them up to 21st century standards.

7. Best Practice: Our ambition is to achieve accreditation to an internationally recognised standard such as ISO:14001 Environmental Management Systems or ISO 20121 Sustainable Events Management. Crucially, we will also share our knowledge, successes, failures and expertise both inside and outside our sector. We are aware that we are part of a wider community and know that we be more effective when working together.

8. Continual Improvement: We will develop our management systems and frameworks to allow us to meet or exceed the requirements of all relevant legislation, regulations and other compliance obligations. This will also include monitoring, measuring and reducing our environmental impacts as well as continually looking to create efficiencies.



1. Using our Platform

Through our artistic programme, creative learning activity and community events we have a unique opportunity to highlight environmental issues to the general public, thereby raising awareness. Below are a few examples of our recent activity across our artforms.

Art and creativity have the power to drive change and we will ensure that we continue to showcase sustainability issues in our programme in order to engage artists and audiences with environmental issues and the critical conversations that need to take place around them.



Photo © Claudia Andujar

The Yanomami Struggle

In 2021, we presented *The Yanomami Struggle*, an exhibition devoted to the life and work of Claudia Andujar and her collaboration with the Yanomami, one of Brazil's largest indigenous peoples that is threatened by climate change in the Amazon basin.



Photo © Amos Chapple

Our Time On Earth

Opening in May 2022, *Our Time On Earth* celebrates the power of global creativity to transform the conversation around the climate emergency, through art, design, science, music and philosophy presenting radical visions for the future of all species.



David Attenborough: *A Life on Our Planet*, A Netflix Original Documentary, 2020

Cinema

Our cinema programme regularly features films exploring our relationship with nature and climate change. Recent examples include documentaries *The Race to Save The World* and *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*



Photo © Mark Allan

Become Ocean

In 2018, we stage a performance of John Luther Adams' *Become Ocean* by the London Contemporary Orchestra and Choir, a landmark fusion of orchestral music and AI generated visuals exploring the planet submerging due to rising sea levels.



Photo © Gar Powell-Evans

Walthamstow Garden Party

In 2020, the community festival Walthamstow Garden Party was named one of the world's greenest events for banning single use plastic, recycling 75% of the waste and more than half of traders serving vegetarian and vegan food



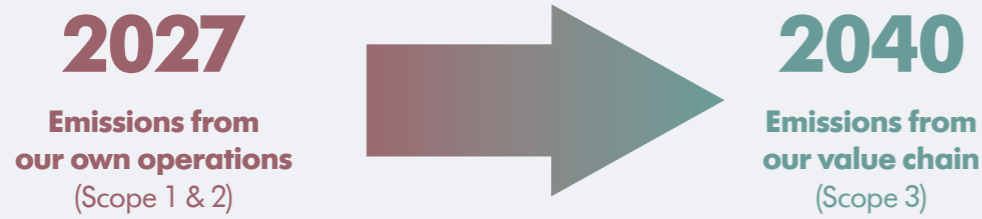
Photo © David Hewitt

Can I Live?

Can I Live?, produced by Complicité in association with the Barbican and filmed on our stage, was streamed during COP26. Hip hop, spoken word and visual effects charted Fehinti Balogun's experiences with climate activism as a young Black British man.

2. Our Targets and Baseline

This strategy sets out our role as part of the City of London Corporation’s ambition to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions by the following two milestones:



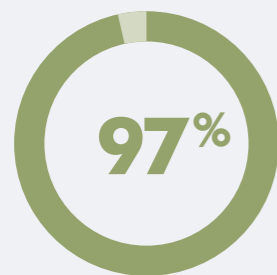
These are in line with the City of London Corporation’s targets. Net Zero Carbon emissions are achieved when emissions of greenhouse gasses caused by human activity are balanced by removals by human activity over a specified period. This means to reach our targets we should be emitting no more carbon than we are removing from the atmosphere.

Our baseline was built in consultation with, and using the same tools as, the City of London Corporation, with whom we will maintain close links to ensure consistent methodology across the Corporation in ongoing monitoring, measurement and implementation of solutions.

Barbican Centre Emissions Baseline 2018/19

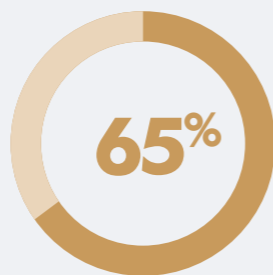


Scope 1 & 2 (by 2027)



97% of our emissions from our own operations (Scope 1 & 2) consist of our use of electricity, district heating and cooling plus the use of gas with the remaining emissions generated through leakages in our air conditioning equipment.

Scope 3 (by 2040)



The majority of our emissions from our value chain (Scope 3) are generated from our procurement and purchasing activities. This category includes our artistic programme and accounts for **65%** of total Scope 3 emissions. The remainder is made up of emissions generated through our capital projects, waste disposal, our use of water plus staff business and commuter travel.

To monitor progress and to ensure we are well placed to reach our targets we have set a milestone target of:



Photo © James Deavin May

3. Our Impacts

Our priority impacts

Our action plan for reducing waste, encouraging re-use and creating a circular economy will focus on five priority groupings where we can have the most significant positive impact.



Energy, Heating and Cooling, Gas, and Electricity

Our use of electricity, district heating and cooling plus the use of gas is the major source of our Scope 1 & 2 emissions, in 2018/19 amounting to 3,425 tonnes of CO₂e. Our urgent focus until 2027 will be to ensure we reach Net Zero on these emissions by our target date. We will continue to procure 100% renewable electricity.



Circular Economy, Procurement, and Waste

We are working towards a circular economy model in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible whilst considering the final disposal route during the procurement stage. We are examining our procurement activity to establish what we buy, identify any quick wins, and plan for the longer term. We are also reducing emissions through our zero-landfill policy.



Biodiversity, Travel, and Water

Our open spaces provide an "oasis" in the heart of the city. We will continue to protect and develop these important biodiversity spaces as a sanctuary in a busy urban environment.



Travel

The use of fossil fuels in travel is a significant contributor to carbon emissions worldwide, not only this, it can have detrimental effects on air quality.



Water

We are addressing unnecessary wastage of water through a number of measures both operational and public-facing, from waterless urinals to drinking fountains throughout the Barbican



4. Biodiversity and our Environment

Our open spaces offer an “oasis” in the heart of the City of London where our staff, residents, and visitors can relax away from a busy urban environment. We’re proud that visitors can take a moment to wind down in our open spaces, and to stop and appreciate the natural world around them. The Barbican’s outside areas also provide us with the opportunity to have positive environmental impact with the different habitats they provide for local pollinating wildlife and with the biodiversity they encourage.

Our open spaces open out to the Barbican Lakeside, an area providing both water and reeds, which create a habitat for a variety of wildlife including fish, coots, mallards, herons and moorhens. Significant investment has taken place to date including repairs and replacement of pumps, pipes and associated aerating equipment, plus over 600 maintenance jobs to the surrounding brickwork as well as working on reed beds and planters so as to encourage more wildlife and breeding pairs of waterfowl. Results have so far have been well received and have enhanced the environment for the wildlife. We will continue to work with residents, the City of London Corporation and staff and students from the Guildhall School to further enhance this environment.

Our Conservatory, the largest in central London, is home to 1,500 species of sub-tropical plants and trees (some of which are endangered in their native habitat). Not only is the Conservatory a setting for numerous events, it is also open to the public at weekends, serving an educational purpose and bringing visitors closer to plants and nature.

We take every opportunity to incorporate sustainability into the management of our Conservatory and open spaces, with many initiatives underway including:

- IPM (Integrated Pest Management), introducing natural pest enemies in the Conservatory to limit overall use of pesticides to a bare minimum
- the introduction of a greater diversity of plants across our open spaces - especially pollinator-friendly ones to attract birds, bees and other pollinating insects
- Elimination of the use of peat-based compost, with it being replaced with a loam-based alternative to help to preserve the integrity of crucially important peat bogs

We also have an in-house bee colony as well as bug hotels to provide homes for other insects, including pollinators such as solitary bees and ladybirds.

During the period of focus for this current strategy (-2027), we will continue to work to ensure better measurement of biodiversity as well as identifying ways to increase biodiversity on the Barbican Estate - with particular regard to target species outlined in the City of London Corporation’s [Biodiversity Action Plan](#).



5. Enabling our Staff and Stakeholders

We work with many partners to deliver our programme of events and activities. These partners and third parties can range from facilities and catering contractors to our visiting companies and artists. They, like us, have an opportunity to commit to change, and as such we will work with them to achieve our targets and collaborate to encourage similar activity in reducing their direct carbon emissions – in turn reducing our Scope 3 emissions from our supply chain.

We will take every opportunity to join formal networks and make informal connections. Recent activity has seen us working with organisations as diverse as London and Partners, the Mayor of London's promotional agency who are working with a number of London's tourist destinations, including the Barbican, to implement the Mayor of London's sustainability strategy throughout the sector as well as Julie's Bicycle - Arts Council England's sustainability partner who work with the sector to provide information and expertise to reduce environmental impacts in the arts. We've recently also joined the highly regarded Accelerator Programme, run by Arts Council England and Julie's Bicycle to develop new and innovative ways for cultural organisations to collaborate with local communities to take local action against the climate emergency and are looking forward to progressing this work.

We are aware that environmental sustainability is becoming an ever-higher consideration for business events clients when choosing a venue. To respond to this, we are enhancing information disseminated to these clients by developing a journey map so that our customers can easily see what we are doing to

improve our environmental impact at every stage of their visit - from initial enquiry through to leaving site. This will also include information on what they can do whilst on site to help reduce our overall impacts.

Our Barbican International Enterprises team are also collaborating on a pilot study with Julie's Bicycle to develop a set of guidelines for sustainable touring exhibitions. The team have, alongside this work, developed a sustainability manifesto for our exhibition *Our Time on Earth* to ensure all involved in delivery of the exhibition are working to the highest possible environmental standards. We plan to develop this practice in collaboration with other departments across the Barbican to ensure continually evolving sector defining standards.

We know that our staff are our greatest advocates. Our sustainability strategy has been shared with all staff alongside drop-in sessions to allow staff to ask questions and to learn more about the work we are committing to. We are creating opportunities to help our workforce operate in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable way.



6. Enhancing our Building

Barbican Renewal

The Barbican was designed at a time when sustainability wasn't a major consideration in architectural design and construction. One of the major drivers of the Renewal project is therefore to deliver major improvements to the Barbican's environmental performance.

The project aims to significantly reduce the Barbican's carbon footprint and deliver a replacement and upgrade programme for major components of our core operational services to bring them up to 21st century standards.

In April 2022, we appointed architects Allies and Morrison and Asif Khan Studio, alongside engineering and sustainability consultants BuroHappold, to help us deliver design solutions that will preserve and respect the complex's original architectural vision and heritage, while adapting it to respond to the creative opportunities and urgent challenges of today's world. Allies and Morrison and Asif Khan

Studio's proposal demonstrates the importance of reusing and retrofitting existing spaces to uncover our building's full potential, prioritising sensitive and sustainable interventions that will retain, celebrate and accentuate the Barbican's Grade II listed architecture.

This approach will also minimise the project's embodied carbon and wider environmental impact by making the most of the Centre's current spaces rather than constructing significant new additions to the complex.

Additionally, we are delighted to be able to update our infrastructure to be less energy intensive through the delivery of £3.4 million of works made possible by the **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme**, which we are grateful to have been awarded alongside the City of London Corporation. We will use this grant to upgrade our lighting and heating and ventilation systems and associated controls.



Photo @ Katie Hession



Photo @ Max Colsom

7. Best Practice

We are ambitious in our approach and, due to the nature and scale of the Barbican, we recognise that we have a leadership role to play, both within our sector and beyond. We know we have a long way to go however and so we are developing our systems with the ultimate aspiration of being acknowledged as exemplars of best practice in environmental management.

8. Continual Improvement

We understand the impact that our operations and activities can have on the environment and the wider world around us and always look to reduce these impacts by developing our environmental sustainability management systems in line with best practice and by ensuring frameworks are in place for setting environmental objectives, taking into account environmental impacts plus our legal and any other obligations.

This strategy and associated action plan is overseen, developed, coordinated and communicated by our Sustainability Steering Group which, under our alliance, is made up of members of staff from both the Barbican and The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, it also includes representation from the School's student body. Our environmental impacts will be assessed and monitored continually by the Sustainability Steering Group which will inform the review process for this strategy and our action plan.

This strategy and associated action plan will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Sustainability Steering Group who will produce an annual report and report at least annually to management and then on to Barbican Board or any delegated sub committees.

To further develop this strategy we have undertaken extensive consultation, both formal and informal throughout our workforce to ensure we understand and reflect the concerns and aspirations of our employees. We also maintain a close relationship with the City of London Corporation to ensure strategic alignment.



How We'll Achieve our Aims

This document is a summary of our full strategy which is also available on the Sustainability page of our website. To provide a topline indication of the actions we are taking - as well as those we are investigating - we've included consolidated high-level actions below taken from our full strategy.

All of the actions that will help us to meet our aims sit within one of our four focal themes of **Inspire, Innovate, Improve, and Invest**.

We know that this strategy will need to continue to develop and, as such, some of the aims are explorative as we look into methods for continual improvement. We are also investigating annual reporting mechanisms and looking at how we breakdown what we need to achieve between 2027 and 2040 as well as setting ourselves realistic milestones to help address all of our Scope 3 impacts.

This strategy is a living document and will continue to develop, be updated, and grow as we progress on our journey of continual improvement.

We're always interested to hear from anyone who might be able to inform our strategy as it develops. We know that by working together, as a community, and with our artists, partners and other third parties, we will have a more meaningful impact.



Photo @ Max Calsomn



Photo @ Katie Hession

Some of our actions

INSPIRE people to live and work more sustainably

- Promoting environmental awareness and information to our staff, audiences, visiting artists, contractors and others working on our behalf to encourage them to work in an environmentally responsible manner and creating opportunities for them to take ownership of initiatives that support environmental and sustainable practices, to include:

- Ensuring that all Barbican staff understand their sustainability obligations, impacts and opportunities and that the appropriate actions are incorporated into appropriate annual business planning cycles

- Developing and running an annual programme of awareness raising initiatives to increase staff understanding of sustainability issues, both at work and at home and to develop a culture of shared responsibility

- Providing regular internal and external sustainability updates and communications to facilitate action at an individual and institutional level

- Communicating our environmental and sustainability impacts, commitments and practices to all relevant third parties in order that they are aware of our policies, procedures and what action they can take to help the Barbican reduce its impact on the environment to include the development of guidelines for visiting artists and contractors as appropriate

- Information on all our major impacts including practical methods staff can use to reduce their environmental impact at work and home to include information in carbon emissions and their effects in a variety of formats to grab attention

- Promoting circular economy principles where resources are kept in use for as long as possible, the adoption of the waste hierarchy and to ensure any waste is correctly stored and disposed of

- Promoting sustainable procurement and efficient use of resources including providing appropriate guidance and training for staff who are involved in purchasing decisions

- Highlighting our living estate and the biodiversity it contains

- Actively seeking formal and informal partnerships and opportunities for collaboration with regional, national and international stakeholders to facilitate the sharing of best practice including continued linkage with organizations (such as Julie's Bicycle) ensuring we continue to share best practice throughout the sector

- Ensuring continued linkage between the City of London Corporation and the Barbican's teams to ensure joined up approach to environmental responsibility

- Working with City of London Corporation, as well as the local community to play our part in their wider initiatives

- Continued engagement with the City of London Corporation to ensure collaboration on transport solutions



Some of our actions

INNOVATE to achieve continual improvement

- Listening and responding to staff and other stakeholder concerns about environmental issues as well as supporting our staff in staff-led environmental activities. For example, an annual employee attitudes survey will be disseminated to understand what is important to our staff to help us shape our ongoing strategy and to encourage greater ownership of sustainability issues amongst the workforce
- Developing a sustainability communications strategy aimed at all internal and external stakeholders
- Producing guidelines for visiting artists on the Barbican's environmental impacts, strategy and what they can do whilst on site to assist the centre in reducing our environmental impact
- Continually improving our understanding of sustainability and social value to ensure that we take opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of procurement activities.
- Exploring ways to measure and increase biodiversity across our estate
- Keeping up to date with advancements in sustainable horticulture to ensure best available techniques are used at all times
- Investigating opportunities for the installation of renewable energy at the Barbican
- Working with artistic teams to explore ways to implement more energy-efficient stage lighting
- Exploring the possibility of developing an internal resource sharing site and evaluate opportunities to use external resource sharing initiatives
- Developing and implementing a targeted supplier engagement programme to promote continual improvement, drive net zero and strengthen our requirements and supplier engagement to drive performance in delivering sustainable products and solutions

- Specifying sustainable and environmentally friendly products where possible
- Ensuring, where appropriate, sustainable environmental criteria are used in the award of contracts and that suppliers' environmental credentials are considered when making purchasing decisions, as far as is reasonably practicable
- Evaluate opportunities for installing water management measures such as rainwater harvesting and sustainable urban drainage systems
- Prioritising the use of reusable, non-toxic and renewable materials and substances
- Continual evaluation of hazardous substances and whether less environmentally harmful alternatives can be used
- Being ambitious in our approach and reach including setting stretch targets wherever appropriate
- Exploring how to integrate climate considerations in all our decisions
- Ensuring sustainability, social value and supply chain transparency considerations are included at each stage of the procurement process in line with the City of London Corporation's Responsible Procurement Policy
- Actively consulting with staff and other relevant stakeholders on the development and implementation of this strategy plus operational policies, plans and procedures
- Developing sustainability standards for productions in line with the systems currently being developed by Barbican International Enterprises team and other relevant standards such as the Theatres Green Book
- Ensuring we have explored methods of carbon removal for any remaining carbon by 2027
- Evaluating opportunities for improving facilities for cyclists and walkers e.g. further cycle racks, showers and clothes drying facilities
- Exploring opportunities for provision of additional electric car charging points

IMPROVE efficiencies across our estate and operations

- Using our procurement processes and purchasing power to influence our supply chain, through local and ethical procurement, where appropriate. We will work with our suppliers to encourage the highest standards of sustainability performance
- Ensuring efficient use of materials and resources including energy, water materials and other resources
- Reviewing and monitoring all waste streams and work to minimise waste generation to maximise recycling and minimise unnecessary consumption. This will include evaluating our current recycling and waste disposal facilities and upgrading, as appropriate, to ensure the adequate provision of disposal facilities for all who might need to use them
- Prioritising sea freight over land freight for all transportation of goods including those related to our artistic productions and exhibitions
- Exploring methods for introducing sustainability standards for refurbishment of building infrastructure, plant and equipment
- Encouraging business travel to be made as mindfully as possible, also encouraging staff to make the most of trips by fitting in as much activity as possible, especially if air travel is involved

INVEST in our infrastructure and processes

- Providing appropriate training, both general and role specific, to support staff to effectively contribute to achieving our environmental sustainability aspirations including finding ways to include environmental sustainability in staff inductions
- Monitoring technological and other advancements to identify opportunities for greater reduction of environmental impact. To also ensure the use of best appropriate techniques and, where appropriate, upgrading our infrastructure and systems (including delivering £3.4million of works under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to upgrade our lighting and heating and ventilation systems)
- Continual assessment and undertaking of surveys to monitor where further efficiencies can be made
- Continuing to procure 100% renewable electricity
- Working with the City of London Corporation to ensure decarbonisation of the district heat network which supplies space heating and cooling
- Continuing to send zero waste to landfill
- Facilitating active networks of staff and students such as our Sustainability Steering Group and more informal sustainability group
- Ensuring sustainability criteria remain high on the agenda for the forthcoming Barbican Renewal project
- Continuing to maintain the established habitats within our open spaces to ensure a safe environment for the flora and fauna in the area



Photo @ James Deavin May