

Support for users of the Barbican Auditorium

Three organisations are recognised as having a special civic status in the arrangements for the Barbican auditorium: The Guildhall Orchestra, the Lord Mayor's Carol Concert, and the Festival of Remembrance. These organisations have traditionally had free / discounted days at the Barbican and these arrangements are perpetuated in the lease with Absolute Leisure for the new Barbican. All three will suffer financial loss caused by:

- the delay in refurbishing the Barbican
- the fact that, as the refurbishment is now due to start, the auditorium will not be available this year due to the building works.

The Guildhall Orchestra have suffered:

- Loss of free days, costing the orchestra on average an additional £3k per concert, in respect of 12 of the 14 concerts scheduled since the Barbican first closed and up to and including February 2009
- Severe decline in the audience (60% has been lost over this period) due to i) the disruption and uncertainty caused by changing venues, ii) the unsatisfactory nature of the substitute venues

As a result of these two factors the orchestra has incurred deficits on its concert programme of £42k over this period (compared to surpluses in previous years that were reinvested in the orchestra).

This voluntary organisation is not in a position to absorb these losses. (Any additional income it can generate, e.g. from sponsorship or the Council's ongoing annual funding of £2.7k, has to be directed to specified purposes such as instrument purchase, educational work, or hire of soloists and cannot be used to cover the basic costs of the concert programme). It is therefore proposed that the Council should pay the orchestra compensation equating to this deficit. The Council has already paid £20k of compensation in February 2005 leaving £22k outstanding.

However, given the difficult financial circumstances in which the orchestra finds itself, reflecting the fact that it has not had the surpluses that were previously available to it to reinvest in the fabric of the orchestra, it is proposed that an additional payment is made upfront of £4k. This would be in lieu of the orchestra receiving its annual grant of £2.7k in future years. The total compensation payment recommended is therefore £26k.

Festival of Remembrance and the Carol Concert: It is recommended that £1k is made available to each organisation to assist with any additional costs that they may incur.