

Committees:	Date
City Bridge Trust Planning and Transportation	8 July 2020 14 July 2020
Subject Bridge House Estates Strategy: <i>Bridging London</i> , 2020 – 2045	Public
Report of David Farnsworth, Chief Grants Officer and Director of City Bridge Trust	For information
Report Author Amelia Ehren, BHE Project Manager	

Summary

This report presents the proposed final version of the Bridge House Estates (BHE) Strategy: *Bridging London*, 2020 – 2045. The strategy represents an exciting moment in BHE's long history, providing a framework for all of the charity's activities and outlining the collective impact it wishes to have through its primary and ancillary objects. It also sets out a new vision for the charity which that 'every person in London becomes truly connected' and outlines three new aims to be: catalytic, sustainable and impact driven.

The paper also sets out the next steps required to progress the approval and implementation of the strategy. It seeks Members' endorsement of the strategy, subject to any feedback received being incorporated, for onward approval by Policy & Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council, for the City Corporation as the sole corporate Trustee of the charity.

Recommendations

Members are asked, acting in the charity's best interests for the City of London Corporation as Trustee, to:

- i. Endorse the proposed final version of the BHE Strategy, subject to any feedback received being incorporated, for onward approval by the Court of Common Council; and
- ii. Note the proposed next steps for the Strategy's delivery.

Main report

Background

1. BHE is currently the 7th largest charity in the UK in terms of asset valuation. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation), acting by the Court of Common Council, is the charity's Trustee, with the administration of BHE being undertaken in accordance with the charity's various governing documents, and the City Corporation's usual procedures and governance framework.
2. The "primary object" of BHE is to maintain and support the five bridges crossing the River Thames – London Bridge, Blackfriars Bridge, Southwark Bridge, Tower

Bridge and Millennium Bridge. A cy-près scheme of 1995 permits income surplus to that required for the bridges to be used for broader, and more general, charitable purposes within Greater London (“the ancillary object”). Any available income surplus is distributed through a policy approved by the Court of Common Council and notified to the Charity Commission, following considerable consultation with external and internal stakeholders. The current such policy is ‘Bridging Divides’ delivered by City Bridge Trust (CBT), the charity’s “funding arm”.

3. As part of the BHE Strategic Governance Review, which was initiated to assess how the governance of BHE could be enhanced, it was identified that there was a need to develop a new overarching strategy for BHE, with the purpose of providing a framework for the advancement of both the charity’s primary and ancillary objects.

Current position

4. In late 2019, work began on the development of a BHE overarching strategy which has been led by the BHE Project Manager, in conjunction with the Chief Grants Officer & Director of CBT. The thinking and ambition of the scope, purpose and measures of success of the proposed Strategy, attached at **Appendix 1**, have also been developed in consultation with the BHE officer Task & Finish Group, other key officers within the City Corporation, and with the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees that have responsibility for the discharge of BHE functions.
5. The Strategy seeks to provide a framework for all of BHE’s activities and outlines the collective impact the charity seeks to achieve through the charity’s maintenance and support of the five Thames bridges, and through its further charitable funding activities delivered in the name of CBT. The proposed Strategy highlights BHE’s commitment to London and Londoners through its newly defined vision towards a future where *‘every person in London becomes truly connected’*. By this, the charity means it wants to see a flourishing society where people are physically connected by world-class sustainable bridges and connected socially and digitally through thriving communities that have access to a diversity of social, cultural and economic opportunities. Ultimately, the Strategy outlines the positive and sustainable role that BHE intends to have in bridging and connecting London, for the benefit of Londoners today and generations to come.
6. The vision, aims and length of the proposed Strategy articulate a high level of ambition for the charity, which is built upon all that BHE has learned and achieved over its more than 900-year history and through its relationship with the City Corporation as its Trustee. The benefits of BHE having the City Corporation as its sole Trustee have been recognised in the development of this Strategy and will be central to its implementation.

Next steps

7. Members are asked to review, discuss and endorse the proposed final version of the BHE Strategy: *Bridging London* at **Appendix 1**, for onward approval by the Policy & Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council for the City Corporation as Trustee of the charity. Any feedback received today will be

incorporated before the Strategy is presented for approval, following the timetable set out below.

Committee	Date	Purpose
Policy & Resources	24 September 2020	For decision
Court of Common Council	8 October 2020	For decision

8. It is the intention that a high-level implementation plan will also be presented alongside the proposed final version of the Strategy to the Policy & Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council. This will outline the steps that will be taken in the first year of the Strategy in pursuit of the aims and vision and will include high-level measures. The high-level implementation plan will also include details of how the Strategy will be communicated effectively both internally and externally.
9. If the Strategy is approved, further time and resource will be dedicated to further develop a more detailed implementation plan for the Strategy. For example, this will include details of the review cycle that will be implemented over the course of the 25-year strategy, to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and aligns with the development of CBT's funding strategy which is reviewed every five years.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

10. A charity of the size of BHE would be expected to have in place an over-arching strategic plan for the charity's administration and vision. This proposed Strategy, which is before Members for consideration, therefore achieves one of the objectives of the BHE Strategic Governance Review, namely, to enhance the governance of the charity and to align it with best practice in the sector. The Strategy sets out a framework for all of BHE's activities and is supported at an operational level by several of the charity's other existing strategies and plans, including its: Bridge Replacement Strategy, 50-year Bridge Maintenance Plan, charitable funding strategy 'Bridging Divides', Philanthropy Strategy and the developing BHE Investment Strategy.
11. The Strategy is also supportive of, and supported by, the vision set out within the City Corporation's Corporate Plan (CP) for 2018-23 and reinforces the CP Outcomes 3, 4, 5, 9, 11 and 12 as these are considered by officers to be aligned with outcomes which are in the best interest of the charity to support. Similarly, the BHE Strategy is also supportive of, and supported by, a number of the City Corporation's strategies including the Responsible Business Strategy 2018-23 and the developing Climate Action Strategy.
12. Any learning and/or synergy between the City Corporation's own strategies, and those of BHE, will continue to be explored as relevant to the charity's own objects and activities, and always having regard to what it is in the charity's best interests.
13. Security implications: there are no direct security implications for this overarching Strategy.

14. Financial implications: funding for the development of the Strategy is within already allocated resources. Financial resources may be required to implement certain actions outlined in the proposed Strategy. Where appropriate, it is proposed that funding for key activities in the first year of implementation are met by the BHE Strategic Review Fund. Any future funding requirements in support of the 25-year Strategy will be considered as part of the regular budget setting process.
15. Equalities and resources implications: A test of relevance was conducted and indicated that a full EQIA was not needed.

Conclusion

16. Members are asked to endorse the proposed BHE Strategy: *Bridging London* at **Appendix 1**, for onward approval by the Court of Common Council for the City Corporation acting in its capacity as Trustee of the charity. The Strategy is a key outcome for the BHE Strategic Governance Review, which will support the charity in enhancing and demonstrating its impact and reach across London, by working towards its vision of a future where '*every person in London becomes truly connected*'.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – BHE Strategy, Bridging London 2020 – 2045.

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