

BRIDGE HOUSE ESTATES BOARD
Tuesday, 11 January 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Bridge House Estates Board held at Committee Rooms, Guildhall and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 11 January 2022 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Dr Giles Shilson (Chair)
Henry Colthurst
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem
Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Paul Martinelli
John Petrie
Judith Pleasance
Deputy Henry Pollard

Officers:

David Farnsworth	- Managing Director of Bridge House Estates
Simon Latham	- Town Clerk's Department
Karen Atkinson	- Chamberlain's Department
Amelia Ehren	- Town Clerk's Department
Anne Pietsch	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Dept.
Paul Monaghan	- Environment Department
Chris Earlie	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Nicholas Gill	- City Surveyor's Department
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyor's Department
Neil Robbie	- City Surveyor's Department
Sam Grimmitt-Batt	- City Bridge Trust
Catherine Mahoney	- City Bridge Trust
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for lateness were received from Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman and Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATION UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The Chair suggested that the formal election of a Deputy Chair for the BHE Board and the Grants Committee be deferred until the 27 April meeting, to account for any changes to the Board arising from the March elections and

April Court meeting. The Chair proposed that until the 27 April meeting, the Board formally acknowledge Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman as the Deputy Chair of the Board and the Grants Committee until, noting that by convention it would fall to her to chair or be consultee in the event that either the Chair could not attend a meeting or consultation was required on a delegated or urgent decision, in the absence of a Deputy Chair. This proposal was agreed by the Board.

In response to a question from a Member, the Board was advised that a report reviewing the Board's governance would be submitted to the February meeting of the Board for consideration.

RESOLVED – That Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman be formally acknowledged as the Deputy Chair of the BHE Board and the Grants Committee of the BHE Board until the 27 April meeting of the BHE Board.

4. **MINUTES***

The Chair advised that a number of amendments had been proposed since the publication of the agenda, and sought authority from the Board to agree these amendments following the meeting, and approve the minutes pending those corrections.

RESOLVED – That, pending amendments to be agreed by the Chair, the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

5. **MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Board received a report of the Managing Director of BHE providing an update on key areas of activity across the whole charity since the Board's last meeting in November 2021 and outlining upcoming activities for the Board to note. The Managing Director of BHE introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the key updates. Members were encouraged to complete the skills audit and Board effectiveness evaluation which had been circulated to Members ahead of the meeting.

The Chair then drew Members' attention to the update in respect of Communications and encouraged Members to feed in to the three major strategic areas of work for the BHE Communications team which would be the focus of the first six months of 2022. The Board further noted the appended BDO Audit Completion report and its outcomes.

Supplemental Royal Charter

The Comptroller and City Solicitor advised that it was still hoped that the proposed Supplemental Royal Charter could be presented and agreed before the end of the financial year, with Privy Council approval outstanding. The Chair added that the issues raised by the Charity Commission, which had been the most significant remaining obstacle, had now been resolved.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. **UPDATE ON BHE CONTINGENCY FUNDS**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director of BHE and the Chamberlain providing the Board with an update on the 2021/22 Central Contingencies uncommitted balances held by Bridge House Estates (BHE). The Chamberlain introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the updated uncommitted balances available for 2021/22, as well as the total commitments to be considered for approval later on the agenda.

RESOLVED – That the BHE Board, in discharge of functions for the City Corporation as Trustee of Bridge House Estates (charity reg. no. 1035628) and solely in the charity's best interests:

- a) Note the central contingency budgets currently held by BHE for 2021/22; and
- b) Note that an amount between £138,000 – £230,000 is being requested from the central contingency provision at Item 16 on the agenda for a feasibility report relating to the bridges.

7. **MINUTES OF THE GRANTS COMMITTEE OF THE BHE BOARD***

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the Grants Committee of the BHE Board meeting on 6 December 2021 be noted.

8. **ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS - GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY (18980)**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director of BHE requesting funding of £720,000 towards the collaborative funding programme being led and administered by the Greater London Authority (GLA) for programme specific costs to provide additional support to funded organisations, and onward grant-making to grass-roots charities led by and for London's communities as an "Alliance Partnership" funding programme. The Board noted that the recommendations were supported by the Grants Committee.

RESOLVED – That the BHE Board:

- a) Note the update on the proposed focus on Alliance Partnership fund arrangements, including the proposed application of funding from the designated grant-funding budget uplift towards this collaborative funder activity, in furthering the charity's ancillary object; and
- b) Agree that a restricted grant of £720,000 be made to the Greater London Authority (GLA, devolved regional governance body of the London region) for the Civil Society Roots 3 programme as an Alliance Partnership programme, with up to £120,000 to be spent on administration costs including the salary of a coordinator (the job description of the coordinator to be provided as a condition of the grant). A payment schedule will be drawn up, allowing the funds to be paid to the GLA in instalments, with payments to be received by the GLA prior to onward grants being committed and/or paid.

9. **BAOBAB FOUNDATION (19019)**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director of BHE requesting funding for phase two (incubation phase) of the development of the Baobab Foundation (Baobab), the first funder dedicated explicitly to growing, supporting, and strengthening groups and organisations led by and serving Black people and communities affected by racism and racial disparities in the UK. The Chair introduced the item and advised that the Grants Committee had supported the recommendations. The Chair added that it was intended that BHE would commit the grant funding once certain conditions had been met, with a letter of comfort to be provided in the interim should the grant be agreed. The commitment would be made in either the current or the next financial year depending on when the conditions were met.

A Member commented that they had raised the matter of process for reporting to both the Grants Committee and the BHE Board, as the report had been amended between submission to the Committee and subsequently to the main Board, which was potentially confusing and a duplication of efforts. The Member advised that they were content with the explanation for doing so on this occasion but suggested that the process be reviewed going forward with a view to identifying any improvements that could be made.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the fundraising target, the Managing Director of BHE confirmed that the recommended £2million grant would go towards the £10million target for onward grant-making, with a separate grant of £200,000 towards Baobab's running costs having been directly awarded by the Grants Committee. The Managing Director of BHE added that the recommended £2million grant would be in addition to the £3.6million already raised by Baobab, bringing them significantly closer to their target. However, the funding could still be used for onward grant-making if the £10million target was not reached.

RESOLVED – That the BHE Board approve:

1. A restricted grant of £2,000,000 (payment schedule to be agreed at the point of funds being committed) to the Baobab Foundation towards onward grant-making for the benefit of Londoners provided that the following conditions are met:
 - i) The Baobab Foundation becomes a constituted organisation registered in a manner which meets City Bridge Trust's usual eligibility criteria, and your officers are satisfied that appropriate governance and management practices are in place; and
 - ii) Subject to the condition at (i) above being met, the Chamberlain (through the Charities Finance Team) is satisfied with the financial position of the organisation;
2. A letter of comfort be sent to the Baobab Foundation to confirm the intention to make the grant of £2m subject to the stated conditions being met and also subject to a grant agreement being entered into;

3. Should the Bridge House Estates Board approve Recommendation 1 above and the relevant conditions be met, that authority be delegated to the Managing Director of Bridge House Estates in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Bridge House Estates Board and the Chamberlain, to award the grant of £2,000,000 to the legally constituted Baobab Foundation subject to any additional conditions which might be considered prudent at that time; and
4. Should there be substantive alterations to the arrangements set out in this report and/or to matters affecting the decisions taken, that this matter will be reported back to the Grants Committee and Bridge House Estates Board.

10. **BHE GRANTS COMMITTEE - OFFICER DELEGATIONS**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director of BHE setting out matters for the Board to consider and endorse to the Court of Common Council in respect of the BHE Grants Committee proposal on officer delegations that was considered by the Committee at its meeting in December 2021. The Chair introduced the item and outlined the recommended levels of delegation and associated process for approving grants via delegated authority. The Chair added that the recommended scheme would be reviewed after 6 months or two Committee cycles, with a view to the process being as efficient as possible and in the best interests of the charity.

In response to a question from a Member, the Managing Director of BHE advised that the aim was to achieve an appropriate balance between strategic focus and efficient decision-making, adding that officers had raised points to be considered in agreeing the delegations within the report. Furthermore, it was worth noting that the option recommended would require agreement to deviate from existing internal governance procedures. The Managing Director of BHE commented that officers would naturally favour higher levels of delegation, but it was most important to ensure that London and its communities got the funding needed.

The Chair then drew Members' attention to the options considered by the Grants Committee and the recommendation, as well as the points raised by officers. The Chair added the Board should consider the best interests of the charity and what would represent an appropriate balance. The Board then agreed the option recommended by the Grants Committee, on the basis that this would be reviewed in 6 months time.

RESOLVED – That the BHE Board:

- i) To consider the recommendation from the Grants Committee to amend the current officer delegations to allow for the involvement of the full Grants Committee in the exercise of officer delegated authority for grants of a value of between £100,001 and £250,000 (as set out at paragraph 11c); and

- ii) Recommend to the Court of Common Council the approval of the change on a permanent basis, subject to a six-month review period (i.e., lasting two Grants Committee cycles).

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a question from a Member regarding agenda format, the Board was advised that Questions on Matters Relating to the Work of the Board and Any Other Business had been merged into a single default agenda item, and that this would be retitled on future agendas so that it was clearer.

The Managing Director of BHE then advised that there had recently been some confusion regarding the operational status of Tower Bridge, due to operational issues involving Tower Bridge in Sacramento, California. The Managing Director of BHE confirmed that there had not been any recent issues with London's Tower Bridge.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That with the Court of Common Council for the City Corporation as Trustee of Bridge House Estates (Charity No. 1035628) having decided to treat these meetings as though Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 applied to them, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that their consideration will in each case disclose exempt information of the description in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A, being information relating to the financial and business affairs of any person (including the City Corporation as Trustee of the charity) which it would not be in the charity's best interests to disclose.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Board considered the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021.

14. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES - MANAGING DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REPORT**

The Board received non-public appendices in respect of Item 5.

15. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES - CENTRAL CONTINGENCIES BUDGET UPDATE**

The Board received non-public appendices in respect of Item 6.

16. **BHE BUDGET UPLIFT REQUEST - BRIDGES FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Board considered a report of the Managing Director of BHE.

17. **SECURE CITY PROGRAMME (SCO) - CCTV & TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKSTREAM: GATEWAY 3-4: OUTLINE OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Environment.

18. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE GRANTS COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGE HOUSE ESTATES BOARD***

The Board received non-public minutes of the Grants Committee of the BHE Board.

19. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY***

The Board received a report of the Town Clerk.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE BOARD AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were three items of other business.

The meeting ended at 2.46 pm

Chair

Contact Officer: Joseph Anstee
joseph.anstee@cityoflondon.gov.uk