

<b>Committee(s):</b> City Bridge Trust (CBT)	<b>Date(s):</b> 21 March 2019
<b>Subject:</b> CBT's Approach to Climate Action – Position Paper	
<b>Report of:</b> David Farnsworth – Chief Grants Officer and Director of City Bridge Trust	
<b>Report Author:</b> Sufina Ahmad – Corporate Strategy Manager, Town Clerk's	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

There is increased awareness and profile being given to the urgent need to limit carbon emissions globally in order to avoid catastrophic impacts to society, the economy and environments worldwide. This has been highlighted recently in different ways including through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in 2018 warning that the next 12 years is crucial in limiting temperature rise to below 2 degrees. The City of London is a world leader in green finance and insurance, therefore reducing climate impacts and responding to climate threats and its implications for individuals and communities is key to its position as a global financial centre. To contribute to this, the City Corporation has adopted a Responsible Business Strategy and set up a Climate Action officer group. The City Corporation has a complementary role to play through its trusteeship of Bridge House Estates and the charity's funding arm CBT.

Building on the work CBT has done to date to encourage improved environmental practice this paper suggests further steps to strengthen the charitable sector's knowledge and capacity. The options are based on CBT's value of 'care for the environment', as set out in Bridging Divides. Options include the potential leadership and support role that CBT could play on climate action across London's civil society sector (alongside London Funders), as well as steps to deliver climate mitigation activities in CBT's day-to-day operations. This latter point dovetails in to the City of London Corporation's work to be an environmentally responsible business, as set out in its Responsible Business Strategy for 2018-23, as well as relating to outcomes one, five, 11 and 12 in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan for 2018-23. CBT and the City Corporation currently define climate action as '*positive action to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to changed weather patterns due to climate change*'.

### Recommendations

The CBT Committee is asked to:

- Provide feedback on the proposed next steps for CBT to pursue on climate action.
- Approve the development of a costed plan on climate action for consideration at a subsequent Committee.

# Main Report

## Background

1. The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, has shown significant scientific and political consensus on climate change, pointing to the urgent need to limit carbon emissions globally in order to avoid catastrophic impacts to society, the economy and environments worldwide. The urgency of the climate agenda has been further reiterated in recent months through the following:
  - [IPCC report](#) which warned that the next 12 years will be crucial in limiting temperature rise to below 2 degrees;
  - [UK climate projections 2018](#) which predict temperature rises of up to 5 degrees if urgent action is not implemented;
  - [UK Committee on Climate Change Land Use report](#) calling for a radical change in diets to address the climate impacts of eating meat;
  - [David Attenborough's](#) intervention at the UN climate change talks in Poland in Dec 2018 through the "People's Seat": stressing the real-life consequences of climate inaction by governments and administrators for individuals and communities; and
  - The Schools 4 Climate Action 'Climate Strikes' by school children to draw attention to their 4 key demands: 1) The Government should declare a climate emergency; 2) It should inform the public about the seriousness of the situation; 3) The national curriculum should include 'the ecological crisis'; and 4) the voting age should be lowered to 16 so young people can be involved in decision making around environmental issues.
2. At this point, even the most ambitious carbon reduction scenario will result in climate impacts. For the City of London and Greater London this includes an increased risk of flooding, more frequent heatwaves and an increase in extreme weather events<sup>1</sup>. There is widespread global political consensus that climate change is the largest global threat to individuals and communities, including Londoners. The connection between climate change and social justice issues and inequalities is well-evidenced too, with communities experiencing the highest levels of poverty and inequality likely to experience the most negative impacts in terms of food shortages, disease, reductions in physical and mental wellbeing, insecurity of housing etc.
3. The City of London is a world leader in green finance and insurance, therefore reducing climate impacts and responding to climate threats is key to the City's position as a global financial centre. Furthermore, CBT as London's largest independent charitable funder plays a key strategic role in highlighting the issues that will most significantly impact on individuals and communities. Therefore, for the City Corporation and CBT to remain credible in their roles working across the public, private and civil society sectors in London, the UK and beyond they must be at the forefront of climate action through their own activities and spheres of influence. CBT and the City Corporation define climate action as '*positive action*

---

<sup>1</sup> UK Climate projections 2018

*to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to changed weather patterns due to climate change’.*

## **Current Position**

4. CBT has a longstanding history of supporting charitable organisations to improve their environmental practice through its eco-audits scheme, and of funding greening programmes in areas of disadvantage and exclusion. ‘Care for the environment’ is one of the five values that CBT has set for its 2018-23 Bridging Divides strategy.
5. In 2018, the Department for Built Environment commissioned AECOM to complete research in to the City of London becoming a [Zero Emissions City](#) by 2050. Based on this research and internal expertise, there is now an emerging vision that the City Corporation must lead on climate action in order to deliver a steady reduction in carbon emissions across the City and a climate resilient environment where people and businesses can flourish for generations to come. This vision is alongside an aim to be a zero-emissions, zero-waste City by 2050 anticipating and responding to new climate norms as they emerge. Work is now underway internally to determine how these ambitions could be delivered, with the Director for the Built Environment assigned as the Senior Responsible Officer, and the Director of Economic Development chairing an internal climate action officer group.

## **Options**

6. CBT’s current environmental practice and support for the sector will remain central to the organisation’s work over the coming years. This paper suggests that, in addition to this, CBT examines what more it could do to champion improved practice across London’s civil society sector. Alongside this, CBT could deliver additional environmental action to help build the charitable sector’s capacity as well as supporting the City Corporation to fulfil its ambitions around climate action and being an environmentally responsible business.

## **Proposal**

7. Members are asked to consider 13 specific proposals to strengthen CBT’s environmental work. Depending on which of the proposals Members prioritise, officers would bring a costed plan to a subsequent meeting for approval.

### **Leadership, support and advocacy:**

- a. Work with London Funders to survey London’s funding bodies to map the work they do to support improved understanding and awareness of the issues that climate change presents Londoners.
- b. Deliver a learning event / series of learning events on environmental practice for civil society.
- c. Work with the Charity Commission, civil society infrastructure organisations, charitable funders, civil society organisations and other interested parties to consider how civil society organisations can be supported to rise to the global climate challenge.

- d. Work with the Charity Commission to make environmental reporting a SORP requirement.

**Climate mitigation in CBT's day-to-day activities:**

- e. Continue to educate and train CBT staff on climate action and environmental sustainability, enabling them to apply this knowledge in their work with applicants and current grantees.
- f. Work towards greener purchasing in our supply chains, e.g. for stationery etc in line with CoLC procurement regulations.
- g. Have a 'Green Champion' for all events to ensure that they are as environmentally sustainable as possible.
- h. Disseminate the learning from eco-audits with other relevant external partners.
- i. Examine how environmental sustainability considerations could be incorporated in capital grant funding.

**Support the delivery of the City Corporation's ambitions to be an environmentally responsible business:**

- j. Support the development of the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.
- k. Continue to work with the City Corporation to improve the carbon efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of its corporate assets and venues.
- l. Support the City Corporation with its transition to wholly responsible investments, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- m. Support Bridge House Estates to report annually on environmental data and performance – namely work relating to reduction of its carbon emissions within the property portfolio.

## **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

8. Corporate and Strategic Implications: Bridging Divides 2018-23 highlights that CBT will continue to deliver Eco-Audits as part of its total assets approach and identifies 'care for the environment' as one of CBT's five values that it will seek to deliver.

Climate Action is reflected in the following outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2018-2023:

- **Outcome 1:** People are safe and feel safe  
**High level activity** – Prepare our response to natural and man-made threats
- **Outcome 5:** Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible  
**High level activity** – Model new ways of delivering inclusive and sustainable growth.  
**High level activity** – Support, celebrate and advocate responsible practices and investments.
- **Outcome 11:** We have clean air, land and water and a thriving sustainable natural environment  
**High level activity** – Provide a clean environment and drive down the negative effects of our own activities.

**High level activity** – Provide environmental stewardship and advocacy, in use of resources, emissions, conservation, greening, biodiversity and access to nature.

- **Outcome 12:** Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained  
**High level activity** –Build resilience to natural and man-made threats by strengthening, protecting and adapting our infrastructure directly and by influencing others.

Climate Action is linked with several other City Corporation Strategies and Plans:

- **Responsible Business Strategy 2018-2023** – the overarching ambition is that the City Corporation’s actions will contribute to a healthier planet. It identifies a series of priorities including air quality, waste, plastics and packaging, climate change, biodiversity.
- **Air Quality Strategy 2015-2020** – this strategy addresses pollution emissions and must align with the City’s climate actions so that addressing pollution does not cause an increase in carbon emissions
- **Draft Transport Strategy 2018** – promotes a move to cleaner electric vehicles, which coupled with decarbonisation of the City Corporation’s electricity supply will reduce carbon emissions associated with transport.
- **Local Plan 2015 and emerging City Plan 2036** - provides the spatial strategy for the City requiring development in the City to be zero carbon from 2019 and incorporating climate resilience into development and the public realm.
- **Waste Strategy 2013-2020** – actions to reduce the level of waste generated in the City will result in lower emissions associated with waste transport and disposal.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2014-2020** – provides a framework of actions to reduce the City’s flooding risks through flood resistance which aims to prevent water ingress into premises, and flood resilience which limits the damage and enables speedy recovery when floods occur.

9. Security Implications: Not acting on climate action presents security threats to individuals and communities, in terms of risk of flooding, food shortages, loss of homes etc.
10. Financial Implications: Climate change has been evidenced as having negative financial impacts on global markets, the financial and professional services sector (particularly the insurance industry) and local, regional and national governments.
11. Equalities and Resourcing Implications: The impacts of climate change tend to most negatively affect individuals and communities that are experiencing higher levels of inequality and poverty.

Consideration needs to be given as to whether or not the action plan for this work can be designed in-house through existing resource, or if dedicated resource needs to be procured on a time-limited basis.

12. Legal Implications: None identified.

## **Conclusion**

13. The risks posed to communities by climate change are significant and evidenced clearly through global political decision-making and scientific research. CBT has committed through Bridging Divides to a vision for London to be a city where all individuals and communities can thrive, especially those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation, by removing the challenges and barriers they experience. Further investment in and prioritisation of CBT's climate action work is a key way in which it can fulfil this vision. This additional work can be summarised as an ambitious and cross-cutting approach that involves investment in CBT:

- n. taking on a leadership, support and advocacy role for London's civil society sector;
- o. prioritising climate mitigation in its day-to-day activities; and
- p. supporting the City Corporation's climate action work.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

Eco-Audit Update Report – November 2017

### **Sufina Ahmad**

Corporate Strategy Manager

T: 020 7332 3724 (Int. Ext. 3724)

E: [sufina.ahmad@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:sufina.ahmad@cityoflondon.gov.uk)