

Committee	Date
Bridge House Estates Grants Committee	30 September 2021
Subject: Bridging Divides Funding Strategy Interim Review – Implementation update	Public
Which outcomes in the <i>BHE Bridging London 2020 – 2045</i> Strategy does this proposal aim to support?	1
Which Bridging Divides Funding Strategy priority does proposal aim to support?	Connecting the capital, Reducing inequalities, Positive transitions, Advice and support, Every voice counts.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Managing Director, BHE	For Decision
Report Author: Scott Nixon, Head of Director's Office, CBT	

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the 11 recommendations that were approved by the former City Bridge Trust (CBT) Committee in March 2021 following the Interim Bridging Divides Funding Strategy Review carried out from December 2020 to March 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended, taking its decisions in the best interests of Bridge House Estates (Charity Reg. No. 1035628) to:

- a) Receive and note the report
- b) To recommend to the Bridge House Estates' Board and Court of Common Council to re-commit to the overarching vision and mission of Bridging Divides 2018-2023 and recommend extending it for a further five years to 2028.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. In March 2021, the former CBT Committee approved 11 recommendations which sought to enhance the support provided to CBT grantees and develop the Bridging Divides Funding Strategy further. The 11 approved recommendations are in bold below with a progress update provided against each recommendation.

Main Report

Recommendation 1: To re-commit to the overarching vision and mission of Bridging Divides 2018-2023 and recommend extending it for a further five years to 2028.

2. The vision and mission for CBT's Bridging Divides Funding Strategy 2018-2023 is provided at Appendix 1 for reference.
3. The Bridging Divides Funding Strategy 2018-2023 was approved by Court of Common (CoCo) in July 2017. In order to make any further changes approval is required by this Committee, the BHE Board and CoCo.
4. A recommendation to extend the existing vision and mission was submitted and approved by the former CBT committee in March 2021. However, a subsequent recommendation was not submitted to CoCo for final approval because of the impending changes to BHE governance. It is therefore requested that this committee recommend to the BHE Board and CoCo to re-commit to the overarching vision and mission of Bridging Divides 2018-2023 and to extending it for a further five years to 2028.

Recommendation 2a: To continue to fund the small grants programme (including to agree to increase from 3 to 5 years the maximum duration for a small grant and to instruct officers to consider future development plans of the programme)

5. Organisations applying for the Small Grants Programme can now apply for an increased term of five years funding, providing more sustainable support to a part of the sector that was disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Organisations that previously held three years of funding can apply for a further two to continue successful projects. The website has been updated accordingly.
6. The fallow period for rejected Small Grant applications has also been reduced from 12 to 6 months, as a further show of support to the sector. The Trust is planning regular advice sessions for smaller organisations to learn about the Small Grants Programme and ask questions before making an application. In addition to providing support to potential applicants, this will also increase the programme's visibility.

Recommendations 2b and 2c: To continue to fund continuation grants for current funding partners; and the Stepping Stones Programme

7. Applications for CBT continuation funding and Stepping Stones remained open throughout the pandemic. 55 continuation funding applications were submitted to CBT between 1st April 2020 and 15th September 2021 (46 of which were approved, 5 declined and 4 are still pending awaiting decision). 14 Stepping Stones applications were received during the same period with 6 approved, 2 declined and 6 still pending.

Recommendation 2.d: To continue to fund strategic initiatives, including further funding, subject to the usual assessment and due diligence, of the Responding to the Resilience Risk 2, The Cornerstone Fund, Local Motion and London's Giving (ensuring all future strategic initiatives are explicitly anchored in tackling inequality);

8. Funding to Responding to the Resilience Risk 2, and Local Motion were agreed. The Trust's work on strategic initiatives continues (including further consideration of the development of the Cornerstone Fund and London's Giving) and Members have seen some high value examples at recent Bridge House Estates Board. Officers are reviewing the current Strategic Initiative portfolio and procedures to ensure the process is firmly anchored in the vision and mission of Bridging Divides.

Recommendation 2.e: To continue to fund the Funder Plus support through The Bridge and Strive Programmes

9. The Bridge Programme (which seeks to reduce inequality and foster stronger communities by using all of our assets and resources (financial and non-financial) for a London that serves everyone) is still in its second pilot stage and remains under review. Officers from CBT and the Central Grants Unit have been working with the Bridge Programme delivery partners Rocket Science, Cranfield Trust and Locality to ensure that the offer to funded organisations is accessible, functional and supportive. The Bridge Programme received a lot of demand earlier in the year from LCRF beneficiaries, therefore as part of the relaunch of the scheme it will initially be promoted to CBT Funding partners. Once the programme is running successfully the plan is to extend the promotion to beneficiaries of the Central Grants Unit and other CBT programmes.
10. CBT continues to support the Strive Programme offered by Cranfield Trust. STRIVE provides independent, confidential business advice and guidance to City Bridge Trust grant holders whose primary purpose is addressing the issues of poverty, disability or social exclusion. With its services running remotely during lockdown, it has reported an extremely busy year with high demand. CBT is exploring ways to consolidate all funder plus offers as well as 'cold spot' targeting.
11. Work has been done with the Communications Team to ensure that the Funder Plus offer is communicated effectively and that the user experience is improved. Updates have been made to the CBT website to reflect this.

Recommendation 3: To continue and further develop the Greening London Programme, including unpausing applications for eco-audits

12. The eco audit programme was un-paused on 1st July 2021. It was paused in mid-2020 alongside most of your other Bridging Divides funding strands as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, allowing the Trust to pivot quickly to London Community Response emergency funding. At the time of pausing there were

9 pending eco audit applications which were put on hold (eco audits normally require a site visit which was not practical during lockdown). As Covid restrictions started to ease earlier this year these organisations were asked if they would like to continue with their eco audit application, to date 6 have accepted and are being assessed.

13. Prior to March 2020 your officers had started to look at ways of expanding the eco audit programme. Following increased interest in eco audits and discussions with other funders there was a clear appetite to explore possible funder collaboration not only on the audits but also whether the programme might include capital funding to help implement recommendations. This research slowed during lockdown but is now being explored as part of CBT's Environmentally Responsible Working Group. CBT is commissioning an environmental consultancy to research, develop and implement an ambitious and forward-looking environmental action plan. Environmental responsibility remains one of the Trusts core values and this work is essential in helping it understand how it can use its specific assets to the greatest possible effect in tackling the climate crisis.

Recommendation 4: To continue and further develop the Access Programme, including unpausing access audits.

14. The access audits were re-opened to applications on 1st July 2021 and funding for Capital Grants to make access improvements was re-opened on 13th August 2021.

Recommendation 5: To extend the core costs conversion offer for a further 12 months to 31/3/2022. i.e. the offer to funded organisations to switch their agreed programme funding to core funding.

15. The core cost conversion offer was first launched in June 2020 as part of its response to Covid-19 and as a result of the ongoing impact of the pandemic the former CBT Committee approved an extension to the offer until March 2022.
16. In June 2020 as part of its COVID-19 response, CBT invited 385 holders of Bridging Divides revenue grants and Small Grants to convert a proportion of their current grant funding from specific project funding to core cost funding for up to a year. Approximately 50% of funded organisations who responded to the offer accepted, and 50% declined. Approximately 130 organisations did not respond to the core conversion offer
17. Subsequently, funded organisations were offered a further twelve months of core conversion funding and any possible extension or further development will be considered as part of a wider review of CBT's core funding offer in 2022/2023.

Recommendation 6: In principle, to long-term (up to 10 years) core fund a cohort of London's representative anchor organisations vital to supporting the conditions for a progressive and inclusive London civil society. Also, to

request officers to prepare a short-list of such organisations for consideration (CBT would then work with them to learn how to further improve its own funding approaches, including how best to support localities in response to the ascendance of communities, rise in collaboration, increase in volunteering, role of Place Based Giving Schemes and development of Mutual Aid Groups)

18. The implementation of this recommendation is in development. A long list of London's civil society organisations has been collated, with a view to hosting an initial roundtable to co-design a process for developing the funding further. The aim is to launch the 1st tranche of the programme in Jan 2022 awarding a number of developmental grants before the end of the financial year, and then to recommend further significant grant funding in the next financial year.

Recommendation 7: In principle, a further substantial (multi-million pound) contribution to the London Community Response/Fund (LCR/F) providing flexibility for more crisis response (if needed) as well as embedding this collaborative funding approach to reduce inequality as part of the pan-London recovery

19. Senior officers have been working with a number of LCR contributors, convened by the membership charity London Funders, to explore the next steps for the collaboration beyond the pandemic response phase. A cross-sectoral group including independent funders (both regional and national), public sector funders, corporate funders, and representatives from equity and inclusion groups are undertaking a series of workshops, the next being in October.
20. During this scoping work, the group will align around the principles and primary benefits of the collaboration, the issues and goals, the process and platforms, and develop a shared narrative and compelling case for engagement. This will maximise the potential to leverage additional resource beyond the group and embed lessons from the emergency response. The aim is that a programme of funding which supports long term, systemic collaborative action for recovery in London will be scoped, and officers hope to approach the committee between October and January with more developed plans and to seek approval for funding a funding allocation, potentially at a significant level.

Recommendation 8: To adopt and apply a 'Test and Discover' approach generally; and to use this approach to identify at least one, and no more than three, ambitious outcome(s) with the intention of deploying the Total Assets Approach, committing a long-term multi-million pound investment(s) and working collaboratively and cross-sectorially to leverage CBT's contribution in achieving this outcome(s) for Bridge House Estates.

21. A test and discover style of approach has been adopted during the development of the Anchor Funding Programme. Further work to develop the test and discover approach is planned in 2022/23 and it is anticipated that the intelligence and expertise of key anchor organisations funded by the Anchor

Funding Programme could inform the development of any Test and Discover approach.

Recommendation 9: To the development of an ‘Every Voice Counts’ funding programme – converting this original Bridging Divides 2018-2023 overarching priority area into a specific priority strand to target resources to support the development of voice and leadership in those communities experiencing deep-seated structural inequalities.

22. To be considered as part of a wider review which will develop a funding framework and theory of change. Under the Connecting the Capital priority, CBT does currently have a Voice and Leadership funding strand, which is currently paused but still open to continuation applications. The review will consider whether this should be relaunched as a stand-alone priority funding area, and/or potentially re-named/re-drafted.

Recommendation 10: To further consider to what extent the three pre-pandemic primary funding programmes should be re-described/un-paused (including consideration of relevance; priority; how to ensure any future iteration is more intentionally focused on reducing inequality; the duration and type of any future funding (unrestricted/not); whether there should be a funding ‘boost’ attached to some grants (i.e. an additional funding premium if particular communities/issues are the focus); and to what extent a collaborative funding approach and mechanism can be used - including an analysis of the merits of participatory grant-making and City Bridge Trust partnering with Trusted Intermediary Grant Makers to distribute a proportion of funding.

23. Following approval by the Chair and Deputy Chair by urgency in August 2021, the following CBT funding strands have been un-paused:
- a) Provision of advice and support to disadvantaged individuals (adapted to include fuel poverty and states specifically funding agencies demonstrating inclusion of marginalised communities in design and delivery of services)
 - b) Food poverty (adapted to include provision for culturally specific foods)
 - c) Capital funding for access improvements
 - d) Place-based giving schemes
24. The following funding strand is being reviewed by the Associate Director and Funding Directors, with a view to improving the types of support that can be supported and ensure that applications from a diverse range of potential applicants are encouraged:
- a) Capacity building support for civil society organisations funding strand (informed by learning from The Cornerstone Fund).
25. Other current paused strands listed below will be reviewed alongside the development of a Funding Framework and Theory of Change ensuring they remain relevant and targeted to have the greatest impact and contribution to meeting the CBT vision and mission, whilst responding to the identified needs of Londoners.

- a) Voice & leadership
- b) Growing, greening and environmental projects, with specific reference to the European Regional Working Group (ERWG)
- c) Arts, sports, health and/or well-being projects for deaf and disabled people
- d) Arts, sports, health and/or well-being projects for older people
- e) Specialist support services working with children and young people: affected by domestic abuse; with mental health needs; in care moving into adulthood; who are disabled transitioning into adulthood; who are carers
- f) Support for migrants and refugees to access mainstream services and widen participation in the community in which they live
- g) Specialist support services for deaf and disabled people to increase choice and control in their lives
- h) Specialist support services for older people, including people with dementia, to increase choice and control in their lives
- i) Services which improve the accessibility and range of mental health support and services for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness or are vulnerably housed

Recommendation 11: To instruct officers, on the basis of the discussions and any recommendations agreed at this committee, to produce a Bridging Divides 2018-2023 Interim Review implementation plan including costings, resource implications, and prioritisation mindful of existing commitments under the current City Bridge Trust Business Plan.

26. Immediate (2021/22) and future (2022/23) work plans are being prepared in the context of the BHE business/budget planning work.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The vision and mission for CBT's Bridging Divides Funding Strategy 2018-2023

Background report:

- Interim Bridging Divides Review Recommendations, March 2021, CBT Committee.

Scott Nixon
Head of Director's office
020 4526 1213, Scott.nixon@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1:

Vision and Mission: City Bridge Trust Funding Strategy 2018-2023 BRIDGING DIVIDES

We are London's largest independent charitable funder, and our vision is for London to be a city where all individuals and communities can thrive, especially those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation.

Our mission is to reduce inequality and grow more cohesive communities for a London that serves everyone. We will do this by using all of our knowledge, networks and assets to champion London's biggest asset - its people. The City of London Corporation (CoLC) is our trustee, and supports us to serve Londoners and the communities they are part of. We make connections directly, as well as through civil society, local, regional & national Government, the private sector and the wider funding ecology.