



# **Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund**

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**Assessment Pack – November 2021**

**James Lee & Jack Joslin**

**New Diorama (ref. 18871)****Amount requested: £154,640****Amount recommended: £154,640**

**Purpose of grant request:** Support for NDT Broadgate: a new, large, free-to-use creative hub in the City supporting independent artists' recovery, including training, knowledge/skills exchange, and public commissions.

**Type of cost:** *Revenue*

**Ward(s) benefitting:** *Bishopsgate*

**The Applicant**

New Diorama is a registered charity established in 1979 that has operated as a theatre and artist development hub since 2010. Its theatre located in West Euston has received multiple industry awards and has been dubbed 'a must-visit destination for London theatregoers' by Time Out. On top of its mission to support emerging theatre companies and ensembles, being situated within British Land's Regent's Place development with Section 106 obligations, it has a responsibility to serve the surrounding area's residents. New Diorama provides free working space for local artists and runs numerous cultural events, often in partnership with other charities and targeting different groups of the community, for which it has received recognition from Camden Council.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Through its ongoing relationship with British Land, in 2017/18 New Diorama offered eight subsidised studio spaces in Regent's Place to the creative community, attracting a footfall of over 30,000. Recognising the need for a similar initiative in a post-covid environment and being able to utilise British Land's vacant office space in the City's Broadgate Campus, it now wants to replicate and build on this model of cross-sector collaboration. This project has received support from the Lord Mayor William Russell, who acknowledged the value of partnerships between the culture and business sectors in revitalising London's economy as it emerges from the pandemic.

The site (2 Finsbury Avenue) housing the NDT Broadgate creative hub is located on the northern fringe of Bishopsgate Ward, neighbouring Hackney Borough and close to its established creative industry. Being situated within Broadgate Campus, the hub benefits from the large pedestrianised Campus space and multi-use occupancy, with one of the tenants being Theatre Deli, an NDT Broadgate project partner charity with similar objects to New Diorama's. As part of a larger redevelopment plan for the area, a British Land and GIC joint venture was granted permission in February 2021 to demolish the 2 Finsbury Avenue office building to erect a new tower. The hub was therefore envisaged as a temporary activation of an unused space and designed accordingly, using modular furnishings with the aim to relocate the hub to a new

location in the future. New Diorama has signed a nominal rolling lease with British Land and soft launched the space in August 2021, gaining access to 20,000sf of premises with 29 creativity spaces, anticipating a footfall of 80,000 artists per year. However, it could not provide an estimated move-out date from the building, but the lease is expected to last at least until August 2022.

New Diorama is seeking £154,640 from the CILNF programme towards the total project cost of £1,173,652. British Land is providing £885,000, of which £590,000 is an in-kind valuation of the rent charge. The rest of the funding has been secured from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Arts Council, Jerwood Arts, and Maitland, a corporate donor. The majority of the CILNF award is earmarked as a contribution towards salary costs, overheads, and artist commissions and workshops. As part of the project, three full and four part-time staff will be employed at the hub, all of whom will be paid at least the London Living Wage, with the proposal budgeting for nine months' salary costs. CILNF funding is requested to be spent between December 2021 and August 2022.

Access to the working space will be provided free of charge for independent artists but will exclude those in receipt of Arts Council's National Portfolio funding. The hub's 16 studio units will be allocated via an online application process, which will not assess the merit of artists' work but will instead rely on a lottery system.

Providing ten meeting rooms, communal workspaces, and a shared studio, New Diorama hopes that the hub will foster creativity and forge new networks by allowing artists to collaborate after a period of isolation caused by the pandemic. As well as hosting a variety of events for its users, it will engage the public by commissioning performances, open workshops, and outdoor installations.

New Diorama has consulted, liaised, and partnered up with several stakeholders to deliver this initiative. British Land has been a long-term supporter of its work, and in addition to providing the premises, it has funded most of the capital costs associated with the set-up of the hub. New Diorama will work with the City of London Corporation's Culture and Commerce Taskforce and Jerwood Arts to monitor and evaluate this cross-sector venture and its impact on urban creative reactivation and hub working. The findings will be shared publicly. When designing the project, New Diorama referred to Arts Council's and GLA's recent reports on how to best support artists in a post-covid era, many of whom are currently on reduced or no income because of the pandemic's impact on the events economy. Acting on the recommendations, freelance background will be considered in the hiring process of the hub staff, and a portion of the available studios will be ringfenced for Black, Asian and Global Majority-led, and D/deaf and disabled-led projects. Moreover, an access audit has been carried out for the premises, and Deafinitely Theatre has been consulted to ensure that BSL signers' needs are met.

## Financial Information

New Diorama reported a deficit of £54,726 in its 2020 signed accounts, with the coronavirus pandemic being a major contributing factor. However, this did not result into a lasting issue as the organisation is showing a modest surplus for both its 2021 forecast and 2022 budget. The figures show that the organisation is slowly building its free reserves. The NDT Broadgate project is reflected in the significant income increase for 2022. Following the increase, a more noticeable growth of free reserves should be expected, but it is reassuring to see that 74% of income has been secured for the year. Your officer has no reservations that this organisation will remain financially viable throughout the grant period.

Year end as at 31 March	2020 Signed Accounts	2021 Management Accounts	2022 Budget
	£	£	£
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	684,641	557,122	1,081,319
- % of Income confirmed as at 15 October 2021	N/A	100%	74%
Expenditure	(739,367)	(554,407)	(1,077,382)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>(54,726)</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>3,937</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(22,475)	(17,700)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(32,251)	20,415	3,937
	<b>(54,726)</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>3,937</b>
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free reserves	113,085	133,500	137,437
Reserves policy target	100,000	100,000	100,000
Free reserves over/(under) target	13,085	33,500	37,437

## Recommendation

This is a thoroughly planned application coming from a well-established charity with a demonstrable track record in providing support to artists and delivering cultural content that consistently receives positive reviews and industry awards. Its work with the local community around its West Euston base and knowing that it successfully ran a similar project to this proposal, albeit on a smaller scale, makes a case for its ability to successfully manage NDT Broadgate and attract a wide audience of both creatives and visitors to the City. Its continuing partnerships with British Land, Camden Council, and several charities display its capability to collaborate across different sectors. New Diorama has been able to receive funding and support for this project from a variety of donors, which is appreciated. The application aligns well with the recommendations of the City Corporation's 'Fueling Creative Renewal' report and its wider cultural strategy. Funding is recommended as follows:

**£154,640 over nine months towards salary, operational and related project costs at the NDT Broadgate creative hub.**