

Committee	Date
Bridge House Estates Board	24 November 2021
Subject: <i>Bridging London Strategy 2020 – 2045</i> ; Year One Annual Progress Report, 2020/21	Public
Which outcomes in the <i>BHE Bridging London 2020 – 2045 Strategy</i> does this proposal aim to support?	1, 2 and 3
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: David Farnsworth, Managing Director of BHE	For decision
Report Author: Amelia Ehren, Strategic Project Lead, BHE	

Summary

This report provides Members with a short Annual Progress Report of Bridge House Estates' overarching strategy, *Bridging London*, for 2020 – 21. It outlines the progress made in delivery of the strategy to date and the future strategic direction which will be reflected in the Year 2 (2022) Action Plan. Additionally, it proposes a new foreword to be signed by the Chair and Deputy of the Bridge House Estates Board to reflect the changing environment and ensure that the Strategy remains relevant. The report also provides Members with a newly designed version of the Strategy which will be published online and made available to stakeholders.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members, in discharge of functions for the City Corporation as Trustee of Bridge House Estates (charity no.1035628) and solely in the charity's best interests:

- i) Note the progress made in delivery of *Bridging London*, in 2020-21, as outlined in the Annual Progress Report at **Appendix 1**;
- ii) Endorse the proposed strategic direction for 2022 as set out in the Annual Progress Report and at paragraphs 9-11;
- iii) Approve the updated foreword at page 1 of **Appendix 2** to be signed by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Bridge House Estates Board for use in 2022; and,
- iv) Note the new designed version of the Strategy at **Appendix 2**.

Main Report

Background

1. In October 2020 the Court of Common Council, acting in its capacity for the City Corporation as the Trustee of Bridge House Estates (BHE), approved a new overarching strategy for the charity, *Bridging London 2020 – 2045*. The purpose of the strategy was to provide a framework for all of BHE's activities and to outline the collective impact it seeks to have through the advancement of its primary and ancillary objects.
2. The *Bridging London Strategy* sets out a vision for the charity where "every person in London becomes truly connected", and outlines three aims to be "catalytic",

“sustainable” and “impact-driven” in its approach to becoming a world-class bridge owner, charitable funder and responsible leader.

3. The *Bridging London* Strategy is supported at an operational level by several of the charity’s other existing strategies and plans, which provide further detail of the delivery of the primary and ancillary objects, including the Bridge Replacement Strategy, 50-year Bridge Maintenance Plan, charitable funding strategy ‘*Bridging Divides*’, Joint Philanthropy Strategy, Joint Climate Action Strategy and the charity’s ‘transitional’ Investment Strategy Statement.

Current position

4. The *Bridging London* Strategy was agreed for a 25-year period to represent the charity’s need as a permanently endowed charity to think for the long-term and to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining and supporting the bridges on that basis (the charity’s primary purpose), as well as its on-going work to address the needs of Greater London and Londoners (the charity’s ancillary purpose). Given that the operating context will be ever evolving over the 25-years, it was agreed that the Strategy would be evaluated on annual basis to summarise the progress made within the year against the vision, aims and defined measures of success. Additionally, it is now also proposed that the foreword is updated each year to reflect the current position and ensure the Strategy remains relevant. A detailed in-depth strategic review of the Strategy will also be carried out every five years to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of the charity and its beneficiaries over time.
5. The last 12-months has been a period of significant change for BHE. This report therefore provides a summary of activity that has been delivered in support of the *Bridging London* Strategy and as part of the Year One Implementation Plan. A short Annual Progress Report is attached at **Appendix 1**. Members are asked to note the progress made in the delivery of the charity’s strategy over the past year.
6. In particular, the Annual Progress Report for 2020/21 highlights progress against seven ‘beacon projects’. In the Year One Implementation Plan, ‘beacon projects’ were identified as key deliverables that would support the delivery of the high-level activities articulated in the Strategy and that would largely contribute towards the success of achieving the aims and overarching vision. The seven ‘beacon projects’ summarised in the report are listed below:
 - i) Governance Changes
 - ii) Brand Positioning
 - iii) Climate Action
 - iv) Investment Strategy
 - v) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - vi) Tower Bridge: Cultural and Learning Offer
 - vii) London Community Response/Fund
7. In addition to the short Annual Progress Report, Members are asked to approve a new foreword for the Strategy, to be signed by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the BHE Board at page 1 of **Appendix 2**. Subject to any comments from Members,

this foreword will be included in an amended version of the Strategy to be published from January 2022.

8. A designed version of the Strategy has now also been produced which will be used in communications going forward (**at Appendix 2**). The designed version of the Strategy is currently only available in digital copy. This version includes the proposed new foreword which is subject to approval from the Board today and can be amended prior to publication for any comments received.

Proposed Strategic Direction for 2022

9. Building upon the lessons learned in 2021, in 2022 BHE will continue to fulfil its role in bridging and connecting London, for the benefit of Londoners today and for generations to come.
10. BHE will use a joined up strategic approach to advance its primary and ancillary objects, collaborating more cohesively as one charity across all its activities, and working closely with the City Corporation as its Trustee. BHE will continue to keep its own governing document and its operating governance structure under review to ensure that it operates effectively and efficiently, and in accordance with best practice in charity governance; delivers excellent bridge engineering management services for all five Bridges; and utilises its expertise in charitable funding to support a reduction in inequality in London and to foster strong, more resilient and thriving communities.
11. It is proposed that, with the endorsement of the BHE Board, the charity will focus on the following actions in 2022:
 - i) Embedding a comprehensive BHE Leadership Team and continuing to review the resourcing needs across the charity to ensure the operational structure works in the best interests of the charity, and supports the creation of a strong team culture;
 - ii) Implementing the more modern, flexible and broader governance powers for the charity following the anticipated grant of the Supplemental Royal Charter, e.g., introducing new express conflict of interest and trustee benefit provisions, a power to apply, or borrow against, the permanent endowment to meet costs of replacement bridges, Total Return Accounting for permanently endowed funds and a new delivery model for Social Investments;
 - iii) Reviewing the Bridge Replacement Strategy and factoring in wider considerations that will inform the decision of when to replace the Bridges;
 - iv) Implementing the recommendations from the *Bridging Divides* Interim Review and further considering our funding programmes;
 - v) Considering the future management arrangements for the charity's investment portfolio; and,
 - vi) Further developing our brand positioning to ensure that BHE's story is clearly understood by all its stakeholders to enable greater positive impact.
12. If the proposed strategic direction for 2022 is endorsed by the BHE Board, these actions will be built into business plans for 2022/23 which will be presented to the Board for approval in due course.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. Strategic Implications: The progress made against the delivery of the *Bridging London* Strategy in Year 1 is clearly outlined in **Appendix 1**. Additionally, the Strategy is also supportive of 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. These outcomes for the City Corporation's own Corporate Plan are considered to be aligned with outcomes which are in the best interest of the charity to support in pursuing its own strategic objectives.
14. Equalities and resources implications: As part of the BHE TOM Proposal approved by the BHE Board in September 2021, it is proposed that a new permanent Head of Strategy & Governance is recruited to in January 2022. The Head of Strategy & Governance will be responsible for leading the implementation and monitoring of *Bridging London* and ensuring that all BHE functions are aligned with the strategy and working towards the vision and aims set out within it.
15. Security implications: There are no direct security implications.
16. Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications.
17. Legal implications: The City Corporation as charity Trustee of Bridge House Estates has a duty *inter alia* to ensure that the charity is operating effectively and fulfilling the purposes for which the charity was established, and to ensure that the charity is complying with its governing document and the law. The annual review of progress against the charity's long-term Strategy as reported demonstrates the Trustee's positive actions in this regard.
18. Risk implications: There are no direct risk implications.
19. Climate implications: The Strategy outlines BHE's commitment to being net zero by 2040.

Conclusion

20. This report provides a summary of the progress made against the delivery of the *Bridging London* Strategy in its first year of delivery in 2021. The report also highlights the proposed strategic direction for 2022 and presents to the Board for approval a new foreword to be included in a newly designed version of the Strategy for publication in 2022.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2020/21 Annual Progress Report for the *Bridging London* Strategy.
- Appendix 2 – New designed version of the *Bridging London 2020 – 2045* Strategy.

Amelia Ehren

Strategic Project Lead, Bridge House Estates

E: amelia.ehren@cityoflondon.gov.uk