

Committee	Date
Bridge House Estates Grants Committee	6 December 2021
Subject: BHE Managing Director's report	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?	All
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Managing Director, BHE	For information

Summary

To support the BHE Grants Committee in the discharge of its duties, this regular report provides an update on key areas of activity for you to note and agree, where necessary.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the report.

Main Report

1. Interim Bridging Divides Review implementation- City Bridge Trust (CBT) continues to implement the recommendations arising from the early 2021 interim review of the *Bridging Divides* funding strategy. Most notably:
 - a) The Anchor Partners initiative seeks to develop a long-term, collaborative approach with key civil society organisations in London .Anchors are organisations with a cross community/cross-locality remit which often support smaller civil society organisations and are the backbone of the voluntary and community sector. Such organisations facilitate crucial work tackling inequality across the capital, supporting the mission and vision of *Bridging Divides*. CBT has identified a long list of potential partners with whom to co-design the programme and will host a meeting with them to share initial thoughts on shaping a programme of significant, long-term support. CBT aims to award developmental grants, to resource further participation, before the end of the financial year.
 - b) CBT's funding programmes continue to be updated, with 11 of the 19 pre-Covid strands now open to new applicants, having been reviewed and updated considering the current context in London, taking lessons

learnt from the pandemic into account. The remaining eight funding strands are being reviewed as part of a wider exercise to ensure learning from the health crisis is reflected in CBT's grant making. CBT is offering transitional funding support to organisations who would otherwise seek support through the strands that remain on pause from Monday 29th November. Transition funding is available for up to two years, with a maximum grant amount of **£50,000 per annum**. CBT's standard funding criteria will apply. Building on learning from the LCRF, CBT will undertake regular equity reviews – monitoring where applications are coming from, where funding is awarded, and how we can do better at reaching and engaging communities that are especially disadvantaged or marginalised. It is anticipated that the review of paused strands will conclude by the end of March 2022, following which transition funding will close.

- c) CBT's "Funder Plus" offer, *The Bridge Programme*, relaunched in October and is receiving a steady stream of applications. "Funder Plus" is an approach connecting grant funded organisations with a range of free, non-financial support to help address a specific issue, whilst enhancing capacity, resilience, and longer-term stability. Areas of support include Fundraising and Business planning, Management Systems, HR, and Governance. A learning session for the CBT team took place in November and this, along with an evaluation of the programme, will inform future recommendations to the Grants Committee.
- d) CBT continues to work with partners from the London Community Response (LCR) collaboration, shaping a further programme of work which builds on the learning of funding waves one to five in identifying ways to continue collaborating in a non-emergency context. LCR was an unprecedented collective emergency response grant programme, coordinated by London Funders, which saw collaboration between over 60 funders to respond to the emergent needs of Londoners during the Covid pandemic. CBT played a key role, operating a fund into which other funders, independent, public, and private, could donate – the London Community Response Fund (LCRF). LCRF awarded more than half of the grants (c.£30m of a £57m total) eventually made. By working together, funders were able to pilot more progressive approaches to funding, testing their individual and collective appetite for embracing greater levels of risk and shaping appropriate mitigations. Most awards made by the LCRF were to user-led organisations (run by people with direct experience of the issues the organisation is seeking to address). See Appendix 1 – LCRF All-waves precis report.
- e) London Funders is co-ordinating this new phase of work, convening several workshops with key players and drafting an initial set of principles, aims and objectives. Officers are now working with London Funders and a handful of other statutory, corporate, and independent funders, to shape how the model might adapt for non-emergency

contexts with a soft launch seeking new partners imminent. There is clear enthusiasm within this core group to support the evolution of LCR and to contribute funding in support of it with a likely focus on Children and Young People, in the immediate term. Whilst development work continues, CBT, along with around ten other funders, is in talks to sign a shared partnership agreement which sets out a desire to continue to collaborate, achieving impact which is greater than the sum of our parts.

- f) CBT is likely to request approval to make a leading contribution. The cost base for the model reflects that it will continue to trial a range of collaborative innovations and will also incorporate a dynamic process of learning and evaluation to ensure agile adaptations are made and learning consolidated for the benefit of the funding sector. The amounts that each contributor might allocate are still being discussed - a paper is planned for agreement via the urgency process (due to the requirement for a decision between Committee meetings) early in 2022 to seek approval to allocate funds to the initiative.
 - g) New collaborations with funders outside of the LC R have also been scoped, and a paper relating to this "Alliance Funding" can be found elsewhere in your papers today.
2. LocalMotion - is a collaboration between six funders joining forces to tackle economic, environmental, and social inequality in six places, utilising the resources of all six funders and places to have an impact which is greater than the sum of parts. So far, £585,000 has been allocated by CBT towards the initiative, and the second phase started in November 2021, when the new Memorandum of Understanding was signed by all six funders. Grant agreements are now being drawn up with places, so that funds can begin to be drawn down. Each funder is linked with one place, with CBT being connected to Enfield.
3. At your last meeting expressions of interest were sought from Committee Members to engage with LocalMotion to become a "board champion." William Hoyle has kindly accepted the role and attended the six-monthly LocalMotion learning event on 25th November. The online event was attended by funder trustees and staff, interim learning partner Renaisi, communications partner Barley Communications, and representatives from the places "core groups" (the organising groups responsible for generating strategy and distributing funds in each of the six areas). A series of presentations and workshops highlighted joint aspirations to utilise LocalMotion as a convening and catalysing opportunity.
4. London Councils Grants Committee: The London Councils Grants Programme enables boroughs to tackle high-priority social need where this is better done at pan-London level. As Chair of the BHE Grants Committee, Paul Martinelli has been invited to sit on their committee to represent the City of London Corporation including Bridge House Estates. Yolande Burgess, London Councils Strategy Director, passed on thanks to Dhruv Patel for his contribution during his time on the committee and said they were looking forward to welcoming Mr Martinelli to their March meeting. The programme has a budget of around £25 million for the

period 2022-2026 and will have of focus on the housing and homeless and domestic abuse sectors.

5. Renaissi Mid-Year Review, Year 4: CBT engaged Renaissi as a learning partner in 2018, to support the Trust's work by developing an organisational culture of learning. As part of this work, Renaissi provides annual and mid-year learning reviews. For the year 4 mid-year review, officers requested a more extensive report than usual, given the degree to which the funding landscape had changed and CBT had pivoted its activities. The scope included providing an overview and commentary on the planned and potential recovery efforts of other London funders, reviewing the effectiveness of CBT's own planning towards recovery and reopening its funding strands and reviewing the extent to which CBT is achieving its ambition of becoming a more equitable funder. Staff interviews and a survey were conducted as well as a review of relevant documentation.
6. Staff engagement was again lower than optimal, and an action plan has been put in place to continue to increase engagement.
7. The report concluded with eight recommendations including providing an internal update on the outcomes of the prioritisation exercise and implementation of workstreams more generally, identifying further funding streams to unpause, developing a communications strategy to ensure that the wider funding sector and funded organisations are made aware of CBT's priorities during the recovery period, considering how CBT can prioritise and support collaborative working, to ensure that relationships and effective working practices developed during the pandemic are maintained, continuing to develop the focus on equitable funding, exploring participatory approaches to grant making, reflecting further on delivering a more ambitious approach to the climate crisis, and reviewing how a total assets approach can be more fully embedded into CBT's recovery plan, to ensure that it is drawing on the wider CoLC assets at its disposal.
8. All of the proposals have either been completed or integrated into the Interim Review of Bridging Divides implementation workplans.
9. BHE Website: Work has begun to build a new website that will reflect the work of all the Teams within BHE including CBT. The priority will be to ensure the website is engaging, simple to navigate, and makes grant applications easy. The site will also provide clear links to other teams in BHE, from the Bridges to social investment to our property portfolio. The process to create the site will be collaborative, via interviews and workshops conducted with officers, Members and end users to achieve the optimum solution.
10. Philanthropy House: prior to the pandemic, significant work was undertaken by your Philanthropy Director in collaboration with Officers from the City Surveyor's and Comptroller's departments to scope and explore the potential of a charitable co-location project (with a working title of 'Philanthropy House') in partnership with a couple of respected funder-membership bodies (the 'Project Partners'). Initial thinking focused on 21 Aldermanbury, close to the Guildhall Estate, but officers were subsequently instructed to develop business modelling for another nearby

location within the BHE portfolio, 74 Moorgate, owing to operational challenges with the original building.

11. Shortly before the pandemic, this work was paused pending further clarity on 74 Moorgate's post-development footprint. Your Philanthropy Director was then seconded to co-chair, on a full-time basis, the Funder, Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors' input into the Pan-London Strategic Response during the pandemic. Since that time, Officers have regrouped and concluded that;
 - a. it is too soon to undertake business modelling on the charitable co-location market with any level of accuracy owing to the shift in working patterns resulting from the pandemic; and
 - b. It would be more prudent to wait until the conclusion of deliberations relating to BHE's Transitional Investment Strategy Statement and the grant of additional powers to the trustee being sought by way of Supplemental Royal Charter, as this would ensure that account is taken of both the most up-to-date policies and available powers in terms of identifying and evaluating potential options to pursue in support of this project.
12. With this in mind, no specific action is being undertaken at this stage to progress this project pending the outcome of the Privy Council's decision-making on the Supplemental Royal Charter, noted in 11b above. At that point, officers will then review the Project Partners' ongoing appetite for engagement and determine whether the co-location market has settled sufficiently to enable more robust business modelling to take place, with decisions being taken in accordance with the charity's Investment Strategy in effect at that time.
13. Beacon Collaborative: Beacon Collaborative is a strategic initiative funded by CBT within the context both of the *Bridging Divides* strategy and the joint Philanthropy Strategy which focuses on the giving of time, assets, money and skills across BHE and the wider City Corporation. The Collaborative hosted its annual strategic conference at the Guildhall in late October with the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the BHE Board and its Grants Committee attending. The Chair of the BHE Board gave the welcome speech followed by a speech by Danny Kruger MP, who is now a Principle Private Secretary in the Department for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up. A funding recommendation for Beacon is included in your papers for today's meeting.
14. Prince's Trust: A £10m grant was awarded in principle over a 10-year period to the Prince's Trust. The initiative started in 2015 and is due to end in 2025 with break clauses at years three, six and nine. CBT approved the first £3m in 2015, a further £3m in 2018, and in March 2021 a third grant commitment, covering years seven to nine (2021-2024). This third grant commitment, covering years seven to nine (2021-2024) was made in principle subject to satisfactory performance of conditions set by CBT. The Prince's Trust has now met the conditions, a Grant Offer Letter has been sent, and an initial payment will be released.
15. Learning Case Study: A learning case study is provided at appendix 2. This paper is a learning case study about Interlink Foundation, an infrastructure organisation that exists to support Charedi (Orthodox Jewish) community organisations, a current grant holder. The grant funds the running costs of their project supporting

capacity building and resilience amongst Charedi organisations; partnership and collaboration with other sectors and communities in North London; and training and development for community leadership. This case study aims to understand the challenges Interlink Foundation has faced during Covid-19, how they have adapted and what CBT and others can learn from their example. It draws on information provided in Interlink's Impact and Learning report and an interview with their Chief Executive, Chaya Spitz.

16. Learning Visits: In March 2020, CBT's programme of learning visits with funded organisations paused and as of November 2021 are still paused due to COVID. The learning and impact team are in the process of reviewing their processes for funded organisations including learning visits and plan to start afresh in April 2022 with a more equitable, mutually beneficial approach than previously. However, the team would like to provide opportunities for each Member of this committee to visit a funded organisation with one of your officers before this point, in early 2022 (your Chair, for instance, is due to visit the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association in January).
17. The impact and learning team will be in contact directly with each Member to arrange suitable dates. These visits will clearly need to be subject to the situation with Covid at the relevant time.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – LCRF All-Waves Precis Report

Appendix 2 – Learning Case Study

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Appendix 2: Learning Case Study

Summary

1. This learning case study demonstrates the issues faced during Covid-19 by organisations you support and highlights ways they are adapting their services and approaches. The purpose of these case studies is to identify good practice that CBT, and others, can learn from during this crisis period and as the sector starts to rebuild.
2. This case study focuses on Interlink Foundation, which you awarded £250,000 over five years in October 2019 under Bridging Divides. The grant funds the running costs of their project supporting capacity building and resilience amongst Charedi organisations (strictly orthodox Jewish); partnership and collaboration with other sectors and communities in North London; and training and development for community leadership. Interlink also received £44,007 through the LCRF as part of Wave 3 of the London Community Response to cover the staff costs of translating and disseminating culturally-appropriate Covid information.
3. This report draws on information provided in Interlink's Impact and Learning report and an interview with their Chief Executive Chaya Spitz. Interlink Foundation's website is: <https://www.interlink-foundation.org.uk/>, their address is: Fourth Floor Offices, 97 Stamford Hill, London, N16 5DN and their BBGM reference 15169.

What made Interlink Foundation unique before the crisis?

4. Interlink Foundation is an infrastructure organisation which supports charities working with London's Charedi community. They have a membership of 200 Orthodox Jewish-led organisations, in addition to non-Charedi associate members such as representatives from Hackney Council.
5. Interlink began as a grassroots, needs-led organisation in the 1990s and continues to hold to its original values of being community-focused and championing interfaith empowerment. Their Chief Executive says, *"I still hold onto the story of how we were founded because it shows our values of community empowerment but also cross-community and interfaith sharing ... there is not a dichotomy between empowering specific communities and community cohesion, they actually both happen together."*
6. Interlink's community-facing services include consultancy, training, capacity-building and legal, accreditation and governance support for Charedi organisations. Interlink also coordinates and manages consortia for member organisations to work together on joint funding bids and has helped them secure approximately £300,000 of contracts per year. They also facilitate information sharing and networking across the Charedi sector.

7. Interlink's more outward-facing work involves building connections between the Charedi community and external organisations, to promote community voice and bring different stakeholders together to share in joint problem solving and community support. This is what much of CBT's funding has been dedicated to over the last 18 months, as their Chief Executive explains: *"Helping the community to organise, bringing partners from outside the community and joint, effective, shared problem solving. There seems to be a real increase in understanding that to solve the problems communities face, the community itself needs to be involved."*
8. One example of this is their work with Sunbeams, a small grassroots organisation providing mentoring and befriending services to Charedi girls. Interlink had already acted as an incubator for Sunbeams, supporting them with their governance, legal requirements, accreditation and quality assurance processes. They then supported them to secure and deliver Hackney Council's contract for mental health support in Charedi schools, working with the local authority and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to pilot an approach that parallels the offer in mainstream schools but is effective for its specific cultural context.
9. Their Chief Executive highlights the importance of the work: *"Had this not happened, either you'd have had all these thousands of children simply not benefitting from these services, or you would have had CAMHS and the local authority trying to do it themselves and being very frustrated, not getting why it's not working, because they don't have the right networks."*
10. Interlink played a crucial role, not only in helping Sunbeams develop but also using its connections to bring together expertise from the community and the local authority, ensuring that the initiatives were effective: *"On the back of longstanding trusted relationships, the local authority and us knowing each other, we're able to bring the right people in contact with each other and have the doggedness to spend a year developing this."*

How has Covid-19 affected Interlink Foundation?

11. The London Charedi community was hit particularly hard by the virus, with one of the highest infection rates in the world at 64%, compared to the UK average of 7%.¹ Interlink's Chief Executive says they had already seen a breakdown in trust across society, influenced by Brexit and social media, and the stresses of the pandemic further intensified this. Views around issues such as the Covid vaccine were particularly contentious. This meant Interlink had to work doubly hard to maintain the community's trust, whilst also supporting its members to adapt and meet demand: *"It makes it more emotionally difficult to work when you face that kind of hostility and challenge, that can be really difficult."*
12. On the positive side, however, the pandemic led to growing understanding from local authorities and other external organisations of the importance of working with the local community. Their Chief Executive says, *"I think somehow Covid has sharpened the recognition that the communities have the solutions, and we need to work with them to make them happen."*

13. Many of Interlink's member organisations were unable to provide their services; for instance Sunbeams' work was put on hold for nine months as schools closed and organisations pivoted to crisis response. However, the increased awareness of mental health issues during the pandemic meant that when schools did reopen, there was a greater appetite and support for the project.

How did Interlink Foundation adapt its provision?

14. Knowing the importance of earning and maintaining the community's trust, particularly during such a difficult time, Interlink used the funding they received from LCRF to diversify their team to include speakers of different community languages. This was crucial to their ability to communicate effectively with different parts of the community around Covid support, guidelines and needs. As a women-led organisation, they were also careful to ensure male voices were heard and that they recognised their own limits in representing the wider community. This self-reflectiveness meant they were able to continue acting as a trusted convener in bringing people together and ensuring people received the support they needed.
15. Their Chief Executive explains: *"One of the pieces of learning for us has been about our own community comms, we haven't rested on our laurels... No community is homogenous, there are different groups within it, there are some people who are better reached by different community languages."*
16. Interlink also moved their training and services online. Although this presented some challenges and exposed the limits of their IT system, it also enabled them to do more training for organisations than they could before.

What made Interlink Foundation particularly resilient during Covid-19?

17. As their Chief Executive points out, it is not only during Covid but throughout its history that Interlink has demonstrated its resilience, continuing despite the many challenges infrastructure organisations face: *"So many other infrastructure organisations have folded. When we started there was a really vibrant BME infrastructure sector and all of that became rationalised."*
18. Much of Interlink's success comes from their deep understanding of the different needs of the community, their commitment to building productive relationships and their dedication to earning the trust of all those involved. Their work to maintain this during the pandemic and to reach people with different languages exemplifies this ethos and their unique position at the intersection of the public and community sectors.
19. Their Chief Executive explains: *"There is something very delicate about the community's belief in you, that you're there for them, fighting their corner, that you're extraordinarily careful about conflicts of interest. Once you've got the community's trust you become a kind of gift for the public sector and for the wider society, because there are many people out there who have got such an*

appetite to work together and to build bridges, but they need to feel confident that they're building bridges with the right people."

What can City Bridge Trust learn from Interlink Foundation?

20. Interlink Foundation is a powerful example of the importance of infrastructure organisations, in incubating grassroots organisations, facilitating cross-sector collaboration and enabling community empowerment. CBT should continue its support of infrastructure organisations and consider how best to develop this in different communities.
21. Interlink's experience also shows that it takes time and commitment to build effective relationships and collaborative working. CBT's provision of five-year grants is helpful in enabling this to evolve, and CBT could also consider additional ways to support such longer-term work.
22. Interlink's success depends partly on its recognition that no community is homogenous and that communications and services need to be tailored to different groups; CBT could consider how best to identify and meet different needs within communities, as well as across them.
23. Lastly, Interlink highlights the importance of listening to and understanding the community they support; CBT should recognise this in its own work and dedicate time to developing its understanding of the different communities it exists to serve. As Interlink's Chief Executive says, *"Make sure that you keep your ear to the ground and don't ever lose your community's trust and faith."*

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