

Committees: Grants Committee of the Bridge House Estates Board Bridge House Estates Board	Dates: 26 September 2022 Delegated Authority
Subject: Strategic Initiative – London Communities Emergencies Partnership (19111)	Public
Which outcomes in the <i>BHE Bridging London 2020 – 2045</i> Strategy does this proposal aim to support?	1,3
Which outcomes in CBT's funding strategy, <i>Bridging Divides</i>, does this proposal aim to support?	Reducing inequalities., Connecting the capital
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No (£642,500 funding allocation from BHE designated grant making fund)
Report of: David Farnsworth, Managing Director of BHE	For Decision
Report Authors: Fiona Rawes, Philanthropy Director and Julia Mirkin, Funding Manager	

Summary

This report requests funding of £642,500 over four years (as per Appendix 1) for Greater London Volunteering (charity no: 1115303), a registered charity which is the legal entity for London Plus. The funding will support the establishment and operationalisation of the London Communities Emergencies Partnership (LCEP) as a strategic initiative. LCEP will be a partnership co-led by London Plus with the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP), and closely engaging a range of other organisations to enable stronger integration between funder, community, voluntary and faith-based organisations (FCVF) and the broader formal emergency preparedness and response architecture in London. Its origins are rooted in lessons learnt during the Grenfell Tower tragedy and reinforced by intensive collaboration efforts and associated learning throughout and beyond the pandemic.

As detailed in Appendix 1, this funding will be supplemented by funding of £25,000 in the first year of the partnership from London Councils (LC), with the potential for additional funding from LC over the longer term and, subject to the funding requested in this report also being forthcoming, a total of £100,000 over the funding term from the Greater London Authority (GLA). Both organisations will also play key roles in rooting this work through into the formal emergency architecture whilst also enabling, through the mechanism of the LCEP, proportionate ways of connecting into, and enlisting insight from, smaller community-based charities. LCEP will therefore enable more targeted and effective engagement with FCVF organisations to supplement and enhance the work of statutory, first responder organisations and dedicated national emergency-response charities, ensuring better localised insights, engagement, and connection, and enabling more impactful responses for the most marginalised Londoners who are often hit hardest by, and have a less resilient starting point to withstand the effects of, emergencies.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Grants Committee of the Bridge House Estates Board, in the 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) Endorse to the BHE Board a grant of £642,500 over four years to Greater London Volunteering [charity no: 1115303], the legal entity for London Plus, to support the work of the London Community Emergencies Partnership.

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

- ii) Agree the grant of £642,500 over four years to Greater London Volunteering as per the terms recommended by the Grants Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. When major emergencies occur in London, a coordinated response is needed from across the whole of the voluntary and community sector, working alongside the extensive response and intelligence provided by statutory bodies. Major incidents in the capital, not least the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017, demonstrated that it is often not sufficient for statutory agencies to work alongside emergency services and large national emergency-response charities. Rather, a multi-layered approach is required which harnesses the networks, expertise, social capital and insights of Funder, Community, Voluntary and Faith (FCVF) organisations and integrates them alongside statutory resilience structures, first responders and specialist charitable organisations in the preparation for, and response to, emergencies.
2. The pan-London response to Covid provided an opportunity to improve inter-agency emergency co-ordination. From ensuring a coordinated response on food aid, the development of community hubs, sharing intelligence on met, unmet and funding (or other resource) needs, connecting volunteering groups and sharing good practice, effective action across London involved an array of cross-sectoral organisations and expertise working in partnership.
3. The pandemic also provided numerous opportunities to reflect on and improve collaborative practice in real time within and beyond existing structures, with learning carefully catalogued. Extensive consultation has since taken place to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the cross sectoral response. The Managing Director of BHE and the Philanthropy Director, who both played leading roles in stewarding the work of the FCVF throughout the pandemic, have been closely involved throughout.
4. Reviews of the pandemic response found that:

- a. More needs to be done to ensure full representation, adequate resources, and sufficient and equal recognition to the community, voluntary and faith and funding sectors as complementary and valuable partners with statutory bodies.
 - b. Provision needs to be made to better prepare FCVF bodies in non-emergency contexts to ensure their inputs can be rapidly activated when emergencies happen.
 - c. Structural improvements for the co-ordination of emergency preparedness and response in London for the longer term have been identified, recognising that there is a plethora of different groups charged with emergency preparedness and response across different constituencies but insufficient co-ordination and intelligence sharing between them.
- 5. To achieve these ends, a more permanent structure, which is not reliant on the (temporary) activation of the London Strategic Coordination Group, has been deemed necessary to ensure adequate emergency preparedness across the voluntary, community and faith sectors, ensuring better eventual integration into pan-London emergency response efforts and, ultimately, improved responses to emergencies. The case for this is reinforced by the pan-London response to the Afghan crisis of 2021 (see Appendix 2) and recent floods which also point to the value of co-ordinated voluntary sector actions bringing together many organisations with the resources or the intelligence to tackle an emergency, working alongside and with the statutory sector.
- 6. London Plus ('LP') has worked assiduously with partners over the last year to develop the thinking behind this structure and inspire engagement and support for it. Its successes in doing so are reflected both in its partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership ('VCSEP') to deliver the proposed structure, and in the funding contributions of both the GLA and LC.

London Plus – background

- 7. Greater London Volunteering (GLV), a registered charity, is the legal entity for London Plus (LP), the hub for London's civil society. LP was established in 2017 because of the findings of The Way Ahead¹ which has strongly influenced CBT's approach to working with and supporting civil society infrastructure support in London. LP's remit is to support civil society organisations and networks across London and to build collaborative partnerships that use data, insight, and intelligence on what works (and what does not) in order to tell more fully the story of the collective impact of London's voluntary sector and unlock more impactful responses.

¹ The Way Ahead is a collaboration which aims to improve, and secure the future of, civil society support by putting London's communities at the heart of what we do

8. LP has established itself as a leading contributor to civil society resilience across London, with a track record of establishing effective, strategic partnerships, shaping emergency delivery mechanisms at speed, and ensuring its own operational foundations are as robust as possible. LP has been proactive in marshalling FCVF insights in emergencies, identifying need and working with the necessary agencies to ensure nimble and impactful responses. It was therefore identified as a natural co-chair of the LCEP, working in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP).
9. LP will be the lead applicant for funding for LCEP but will pass through around 70% of the funding to the VCSEP and a range of other key delivery partners such as the London Boroughs Faith Network and various Equity Partners well known to CBT. The VCSEP is an initiative which is hosted by the British Red Cross (BRC) and co-chaired equally by BRC and the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and funded by third parties. BRC employs any VCSEP staff who have not otherwise been seconded from other organisations and is the charity to which VCSEP funds are contributed (with all VCSEP funds held on a restricted basis within the BRC).
10. VCSEP was established to bring together national and local VCS sector and statutory organisations nationally and coordinate emergency preparedness and response. It gained momentum during the pandemic and has helped knit together a disparate sector. It has backing from central government, is co-chaired by the British Red Cross and the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action ('NAVCA') and brings together over 170 specialist, national and local agencies, and networks across the country. LP makes a leading contribution to the VCSEP's work in London alongside other local organisations.
11. The proportion of CBT funding which LP will pass through to the VCSEP is only for those costs it incurs to make LCEP work in and for London and will be supported by a memorandum of understanding as well as an LCEP partnership agreement between the two organisations. None of the funding is for VCSEP's non-London and national work.
12. If this application is successful, CBT will continue to be a significant contributor to LP's costs, contributing more than 50% overall. Whilst it is not CBT usual practice in the context of its responsive grant making to contribute more than 50% of an organisation's turnover (and requests through its open, responsive programmes would normally be scaled down on this basis), the recommendation in front of the Committee today is for a strategic venture led by a key infrastructure organisation. Officers believe LP is ideally placed to deliver this work and, as such, recommend that the Grants Committee make an exception.
13. Furthermore, officers would not recommend that this consideration should preclude LP from securing funding for LCEP, noting that LP itself will benefit from less than one third of the overall sum requested; that the resulting uplift in CBT's %

contribution is relatively modest (from 57% of LP's funding to 64%); and that officers believe there is no other organisation better placed to co-chair this work alongside VCSEP. As noted in paragraph 23 below, the increased capacity and profile that the LCEP funding should provide for LP will enhance its chances of securing a greater proportion of both core and LCEP funding from other partners over time.

Detail of proposal

14. The proposal is for a funding contribution towards a standing structure; the LCEP, to improve preparedness for, and responses to, emergencies, drive stronger connections, and improve learning about emergency responses. This structure will be co-led by LP and VSCEP to enable the best possible connectivity between the dedicated national emergency response charities who populate the VCSEP and the broad range of smaller, London-focused voluntary, community and faith-based organisations who play such an essential role alongside, enabling better-informed and more impactful responses for Londoners in emergencies. Noting that emergencies often hit the most marginalised communities hardest, the provision of funding for a structure which increases connection into, and insights from, smaller community-based charities should support the most marginalised communities who are often most closely connected to those charities.
15. The LCEP will co-ordinate, lead and deliver a single partnership of all voluntary and community organisations and groups focused on emergencies and ensure effective preparedness for, and response to, future emergencies, working alongside and with existing structures to build preparedness and resilience. The LCEP will create and deliver this partnership with the help of a secretariat, a steering group and a 'network of networks' to share intelligence and experiences, with staff sustaining and nurturing the network and partnership.
16. LCEP describes its vision as a community-centred, co-ordinated response for any Londoner impacted in an emergency, with defined goals around:
 - a. Improved responses to emergencies
 - b. Stronger connections to respond to emergencies
 - c. Improved learning about emergency responses
 - d. Greater preparedness for future emergencies.
17. In terms of the governance, the Chief Executive of LP, and the Director of VCSEP will be co-directors of the LCEP and report to the Steering Group serving as a management board for LCEP. This Steering Group will include the London Boroughs Faith Network, Equity Partners, and London Funders – ensuring these communities' intelligence, efforts, and resources are available, used, and coordinated. Senior representatives from regional and local government will also be included on the Steering Group to ensure the right connections, input, and collaboration with the statutory bodies, and, subject to an approval process in the Autumn, LCEP will be formally integrated into the London Resilience Forum, chaired by the Deputy Mayor of London. LCEP will have defined roles and responsibilities for directors and staff to ensure clarity and focus alongside other agencies when emergencies occur.

18. The Partnership Manager of the LCEP will be line managed by the CEO of LP and based within the LP team, albeit with dotted line reporting to the Director of the VCSEP. This will help mitigate against key person risk within LP and any associated concerns around the knowledge and experience amassed through the LCEP staying in London. Conversely the matrix management of all LCEP personnel between LP and VCSEP also increases the chances of the learning from any London emergency response being assimilated into, and positively informing national practice.
19. The budget for which funding is sought reflects careful engagement with delivery partners as well as sense-checking with the secretariat who led the FCVF inputs during the pandemic. A sizeable proportion (averaging just over 40% for each funding period) will be spent on supporting the engagement with, and associated insights from, key infrastructure partners who will be charged with engaging, as appropriate, with communities of identity, issue or geography in both emergency preparedness and response work as appropriate. The budget also has a level of “surge capacity” built into it, reflecting the unpredictable nature of the demands which will be placed on the LCEP.
20. As far as the chances of longer-term funding support for the LCEP are concerned, it is hoped that support from the GLA and LC will both continue and hopefully increase in the longer term as the clear potential of the LCEP is borne out by its positive contribution to emergency preparedness and response. Other funders may also wish to support its work as it becomes more established and its contribution to both harnessing the insights of marginalised communities in emergency contexts and unlocking appropriate response to support them becomes better understood. However, CBT should anticipate being asked to contribute funding in support of it in the longer term, recognising the challenges of securing longer term support for the sort of infrastructure-focused work LCEP will undertake.

Financial Information

21. Signed accounts for 2021 show that LP had a turnover of £461,320 and unrestricted free reserves of £48,605. The deficits forecast for 2021-22 and budgeted for 2022-23 are largely offset by restricted funds carried forward from 2021. LP’s unrestricted reserves are budgeted to remain unchanged during 2022-23.
22. LP has a ‘risk-based’ reserves policy in its 2020-21 accounts. This policy identified its greatest risk as being the loss of its primary funder, CBT, which commenced a 3-year core funding grant in April 2022. The low reserves policy target, therefore, reflects the low level of risk to which LP judges itself to be exposed and is based on anticipated wind-down costs, calculated in June 2021.
23. CBT’s current grant for core costs will end in March 2025, six months ahead of any potential funding CBT award for LCEP (which will end in September of the same

year as per Appendix 1), at which point the Bridging Divides funding strategy, which offers continuous funding for infrastructure bodies, will still be in place. Further revenue funding for LP is not guaranteed as any future application will be assessed under its own merits, but the option to apply will be available. Furthermore, the stability of London Plus will be monitored through CBT's strong internal grant monitoring procedures for the core grant and, if approved, for the LCEP grant as well, with payments made in quarterly instalments in line with the standard approach for grants/grant risk management.

24. Finally, as LP has been deeply involved in emergency response work since the beginning of the pandemic, and during the Afghan refugee crisis, the war in Ukraine and most recently localised climate-related incidents in London, its capacity to focus on fundraising has been depleted. If this funding is awarded today, it will provide the capacity for London Plus to develop the sustainability of its own operations, independently of its role in London's emergencies response.

Year end as 31 March	2021	2022	2023
	Signed Accounts	Management Accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	461,320	356,274	541,628
Expenditure	(358,121)	(437,439)	(587,306)
Surplus/(deficit)	103,199	(81,165)	(45,678)
Reserves:			
Total restricted	124,854	45,945	267
Total unrestricted	48,605	46,348	46,348
Total reserves	173,459	92,293	46,615
Of which: free unrestricted	48,605	46,348	46,348
Reserves policy target	32,325	32,325	32,325
Free reserves over/(under) target	16,280	14,023	14,023

Funding History

<i>ID</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Decision</i>
19410	Anchor Programme	27/5/22	£3,600 to resource LP to participate in a design group co-creating programme design for City Bridge Trust's Anchor funding programme.
18758	Bridging Divides	01/04/22	£500,000 over three years towards salaries and running costs supporting the continued development and work of LP, through the legal entity of Greater London Volunteering.
18935	Strategic Initiative	27/10/21	£12,860 to be distributed between RE:ACT (94% of funds), Little Village (4%) and Havering Volunteer Centre (2%) to cover petrol and congestion charge costs incurred while delivering essential items to Afghan evacuees in London.
18857	Strategic Initiative	28/06/21	£15,000 - payable to LP - to match fund the GLA contribution to the Festival of Ideas Access Grants programme.

17733	Covid19 Small Charity Emergency Support	27/08/20	A one-off, unrestricted grant of £15,000, equivalent to one regular quarterly payment under the organisation's current grant.
16797	LCRF wave 2	19/05/20	A grant of £50,000 so that the organisation can carry on providing support to Londoners.
15379	Bridging Divides	02/09/19	£500,000 over two years towards the continued development of LP, through the legal entity, Greater London Volunteering.
14255	As above	20/09/17	£350,000 to secure the first year of operation of the London Hub
13952	Anniversary Infrastructure Support programme	26/02/17	£48,400 towards salaries, on-costs, and operational costs to support the organisation's involvement in The Way Ahead and the development of the London Hub

Conclusion

25. This is a critical initiative which builds on in depth exposure to, and analysis of, emergency preparedness and response capability in London. By supporting the funding for a permanent structure to better harness the insights and networks of FCVF organisations across London in preparation for, and response to, emergencies, CBT will be ensuring a more impactful, community-centred, and co-ordinated response for any Londoner impacted in an emergency. As cost-of-living pressures create further hardship for communities already disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic, officers recommend support for this new structure as both timely and essential.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - split of funding across different contributors across proposed funding period
- Appendix 2 - Case Study: Afghan Crisis response
- Appendix 3 - Example Outputs for LCEP
- Appendix 4 - Strategic Initiative Filters

Fiona Rawes

Philanthropy Director

E: fiona.rawes@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Julia Mirkin

Funding Manager

E: julia.mirkin@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1- Split of funding across different contributors across proposed funding period

	22/23 (six months)	23/24	24/25	25/26 (six months)	TOTAL
GLA contribution	17,000	33,000	33,000	17,000	100,000
London Councils contribution	25,000				25,000
<i>Sub-total (other funders contributions)</i>	<i>42,000</i>	<i>33,000</i>	<i>33,000</i>	<i>17,000</i>	<i>125,000 (16%)</i>
CBT contribution	65,330	232,610	228,760	115,800	642,500 (84%)
Total grant awarded to LCEP	107,330	265,610	261,760	132,800	£767,500

Appendix 2: Case study – Afghan Crisis response

The Afghan crisis in 2021 provides an illustration of the need for the proposed partnership and how it can work well.

In August 2021, 5,000 Afghans were put into “quarantine hotels” in London having been evacuated from Afghanistan as part of the UK (and US) government’s withdrawal. They arrived with few possessions and needing support. Beyond shelter and food, none of the hotels provided this, and statutory responses were inadequate. The sudden arrival of such large numbers with significant needs required an emergency response.

Over the first weekend after the Afghans arrived, LP and the VCSEP brought together national and local organisations who worked to contact the hotels and establish the needs of the Afghans, before collecting and distributing donated goods across over 20 sites.

This effort continued for several weeks until the Afghans moved into “bridging hotels” when local authorities took primary responsibility. Guidance for local authorities supporting the bridging hotels was written by those who had worked on the voluntary sector response, drawing on the experiences and lessons from the quarantine hotels.

The collective response to this crisis was successful, with all Afghans and quarantine hotels receiving support. A host of organisations were involved from the voluntary and community sector (including City Bridge Trust), as well as the statutory sector in London (including GLA, LC and Transport for London). Fire truck and TfL vans as well as drivers, charity donation depots, volunteer centres’ shop space, children’s clothes charities, ex-military volunteers, Red Cross coordinators, Afghan charity translators - all these and more were mobilised to help.

Neither local or regional groups alone, nor national bodies operating in the capital, had the intelligence or capacity and capability to tackle such problems. By operating together, an effective response was possible. The Afghan response also reinforced the importance of partnership and a lack of hierarchy within a network, in order to achieve shared goals.

Crucially, the crisis highlighted the need for extra capacity given the scale and complexity. Significant national resources from the VCSEP were diverted to support the effort in London, as well as from LP. Inevitably this meant de-prioritising existing business as well as needs in other parts of the country. It would not be sustainable in all future emergencies. In addition, learning collated by the VCSEP shows that following a major incident like the Afghan crisis, developing the relationships, understanding and trust between organisations who played a role, makes a significant difference. Capacity and skills are needed to do this well. The successful resolution of future crises cannot be guaranteed unless these lessons are recognised and addressed.

Appendix 3: Outcomes for LCEP

Core outcomes for London will be:

- **Improved responses** to emergencies, meaning faster, more effective, and more coordinated responses across the voluntary and community sector, faith sector, bringing in funders, and working with statutory partners and first responders.
- **Stronger connections** in London, within the voluntary and community sector that deals with emergencies (as a core part of its work or an element only), with the faith sector, and funders, and with the statutory sector.
- **Improved learning** from previous emergencies, in London and beyond, so the full set of partners of LCEP (in the voluntary and community sector, in the faith sector, as well as funders) understand where things have gone well and how they might be improved; ensuring a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- **Greater preparedness** for future emergencies in London within the voluntary and community sector, with faith sector and funders too.

Appendix 4 – Strategic Initiative filters

FILTERS	
<i>Will The pro-active grant:</i>	
Further the Trust's Vision and Mission (a fairer London & tackling disadvantage)?	Y
Support work within one of existing Bridging Divides programmes (BD)?	Y
Or, meet a clear need that has arisen since (BD) were agreed?	
Have the potential for impact beyond that of an individual reactive grant or number of individual grants?	Y
Be affordable within the agreed annual budget (from the Trust alone or in combination with other funders) and, looking forward, leave sufficient budget to meet anticipated pro-active grants for the remainder of the financial year?	Y
Be made to an organisation(s) that conforms to the Trust's eligibility criteria and has the capacity and expertise to deliver the work?	Y
PRIORITISATION GUIDANCE	
Evidence	
Is there external and/or internal research and information that supports the need for the proposed grant?	Y
Is there external and/or internal research and information that indicates the approach proposed in the grant will be successful?	Y
Is there evidence that indicates the work will be hard to fund from other sources?	Y
Impact	
Will the grant tackle a root cause(s), or positively influence policy or practice?	Y
Will the work/approach funded be replicable?	Y
Does the grant provide an opportunity to strengthen Civil Society in London?	Y
Is the work sustainable beyond the period of the grant?	Y
Can the impact of the work be measured through evaluation?	Y