

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND

**Barbican Centre Trust Limited**  
**(ref.18557)**

**Amount requested: £737,807**

**Amount recommended: £737,807**

**Purpose of grant request: To deliver a Creative Communities programme, collaborating with partners across the City to strengthen connections with and between neighbours and the culture on their doorstep.**

**Type of cost: Revenue**

**Ward(s) benefitting: All Wards**

### **The Applicant**

Barbican Centre Trust Limited (BCTL) is an entity registered under charity number: 294282 and company number: 01962950. First established as a charitable company limited by guarantee in November 1985 and subsequently registered as a charity in May 1986. The Barbican is one of Europe's largest multi-arts venues, based in London. The Barbican creates space for people and ideas to connect, championing and providing a home for the artistic community at the heart of the UK's cultural life and internationally.

This application is led by BCTL but has been created and will be delivered in partnership with all of the Culture Mile stakeholders. Culture Mile: established by the City of London Corporation in partnership with the Barbican Centre, the Guildhall School, the LSO and the Museum of London to bring culture and commerce together in the north-west part of the City, has become an internationally recognised part of the City of London's cultural life. It has played a valued part in sustaining cultural and community activity during the recent months of the pandemic.

### **Background and detail of proposal**

This is an application for funding that builds on work that has been initiated by the Culture Mile partnership. The CILNF is being asked for funding to support the 'Creative Communities' programme being delivered by Culture Mile. The funding required consists of activity costs (£341,747 over three years), development and delivery costs (£226,040 over three years) a contribution towards management costs (£85,799 over three years) and marketing & evaluation costs (£84,221 over three years). It is anticipated that this programme will deliver nearly 150,000 engagements with culture in the City and beyond over the course of three years.

This application aims to provide three main outcomes:

- **Creative Participation:** Living near Culture Mile unlocks opportunities for residents to enrich their lives by participating in creative activities. Sharing stories, experiences, hopes and fears with others in imaginative and playful ways, strengthens connections with and between neighbours, nurturing

emotional resilience, belonging and mental well-being and supporting a flourishing society.

- Creative Citizenship: Representation, visibility and civic engagement of the City's diverse communities is increased. People from all communities have the agency to play an active role. There are clear ways for people to meet and share ideas, resources and skills with each other and the organisations on their doorsteps.
- Cross-sector Collaboration: To achieve the outcomes above, partners work, learn, and innovate together. A cohort of supported peers from the Culture, Community and Public Sectors collaborate to shift thinking, evidence impact and influence change. The Culture Mile partnership is recognised for the value it brings to its local communities.

To achieve these outcomes, 'Creative Communities' will deliver three main strands of activity:

- Play & Imagine Programmes: Delivery of an annual programme of creative activities, events and resources, co-produced with local people and the City's cultural organisations. Projects will be accessible to all, inviting people to get creative at home and in their neighbourhoods as well as at live events in Culture Mile.
- Creative Citizens Lab: An ambitious new initiative, testing ways for residents to come together, share and contribute actively to local change. Building on the pilot of our first resident-led community grants programme, the "Imagine Fund", we will deepen the exploration of participatory decision-making models and develop spaces for peer-to-peer exchange.
- Community Collaborators: Each year 10 professionals from the culture, health, community sectors will come together to form a peer cohort. The cohort will meet regularly, focusing on strengthening evaluation approaches, developing shared measures of value and building a stronger evidence-led case for the impact of community led work.

Each activity strand is composed of a number of elements that are detailed below.

The Play & Imagine Programmes build on Culture Mile's existing activities which engage lower-income families and isolated older people. These activities are delivered at home and in the community. The activity costs the CILNF is being asked to fund for this strand of work will total £88,407. Overall, it is anticipated that this strand of activity will have 31,200 engagements per year.

This strand of work consists of a number of activities that reach people at home, on the streets of their neighbourhoods and across the City.

Radio Local provides a platform for local businesses, residents, guest artists and young people to tell their stories about the City. Radio Local has been a valuable form of connection for its 10,000 listeners, featuring the voices of 120 local

participants, 11 local businesses, several guest artists and involved two groups of local young people as presenters.

Play Packs were created with local cultural institutions and artists to provide families at home with materials and resources that they would not have otherwise been able to access during lockdown. So far, 12,000 Play Packs have been distributed via foodbanks, community centres, schools, refugee services, housing associations, charities, playgrounds and more. Feedback on this provision has noted how valuable they have been to low-income families that would have otherwise struggled to entertain their children during lockdown. The Play Packs are a great example of how Culture Mile activities responded to the pressures of the pandemic and are also a way of engaging people in digital poverty by providing a range of offline cultural resources.

Imagination Packs are aimed at the City's older population and provided creative inspiration and connection through poetry, music & visual art activities and materials to support creativity and well-being. The Imagination Packs also encouraged participants to share their creative responses and write encouraging messages to other local residents. Nearly 2,000 Imagination Packs have been distributed and the feedback from recipients has been positive, noting the way in which they have helped combat social isolation.

In addition to these at-home activities, Play Packs In The Streets and Play Streets provided accessible and inclusive play activities and opportunities for families to connect with their local area. Taking place prior to the pandemic, the first two Play Streets sessions attracted 1,000 visitors, an estimated 60% of whom were children and young people.

The Play & Imagine Programmes the CILNF is being asked to fund will build on the existing work that has been well received by participants, residents and local businesses in the Square Mile. The applicant has provided many examples of positive feedback for this work: it is clear that a range of communities value and appreciate the activities and resources offered through this work.

The Creative Citizens Lab strand of activities provides spaces to test ways for residents to come together, share and contribute to their neighbourhoods. There is a strong streak of co-production with local communities that runs through all of the proposed activities in this strand. The activity costs the CILNF is being asked to fund for this strand of work will total £223,160. Overall, it is anticipated that this strand of activity will have 18,280 engagements per year.

Within the Creative Citizens Lab, The Imagine Fund will support the creative ideas of local people by providing small amounts of seed funding. The design and delivery of this activity reflects some of the best practice in participatory grant making. The Imagine Fund will bring together a panel of local people to design the process and then make decisions on the distribution of small amounts of funding to support community-led projects. This is a really strong element of the proposed work that the CILNF is being asked to fund as it places members of the community right at the heart of the decision-making process. Feedback on the existing work of the Imagine Fund has noted the valuable community spirit that it fosters, and the learning gained

from this process can be hugely valuable to other funds: it has been agreed that should this application be successful, the Central Grants Unit will be part of the process to provide support and learn from this place based participatory grant programme.

The Creative Citizens Lab also provides a Peer to Peer support network for local creative freelancers. Initially started as a way to include freelancers in the wider conversation about culture, commerce and recovery – the work has since evolved to respond to the needs of the freelance community that it supports by providing spaces and opportunities to work and learn together.

The final element of the Creative Citizens Lab will be the Community Commissions programme, which works with cultural and community partners to deliver co-designed projects to meet local needs identified by the partners involved. Previous commissions have included work with Age UK to reduce social isolation, creative workshops with children in playgrounds and online creative workshops with Women for Refugee Women.

The third strand of activity that the CILNF is being asked to support is called Community Collaborators. The activity costs the CILNF is being asked to fund for this strand of work will total £30,180. Whilst this strand provides a smaller number of engagements per year (110) the work has the potential to impact on thousands of lives through its intention to create a peer learning cohort of community engagement leads who work in the City. Providing the space and encouragement to share resources and good practice amongst practitioners working in any given sector is widely recognised as a valuable thing. Whilst this strand of work will have the lowest number of engagements, it is arguably one of the most meaningful ways in which the City and CILNF can support communities in the Square Mile.

Underpinning all of the work that will be delivered is a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that the applicant has supplied with their application. Using a mixture of methodologies to capture and share information, the applicant will analyse qualitative and quantitative data about the impact of the proposed programmes and the people they will reach. The indicators of success are linked to the outcomes articulated and there is an emphasis on monitoring the impact of this work on the most disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Alongside more established methods, the applicant also proposes what they have described as a 'storytelling methodology' as part of the monitoring framework. The intention behind this approach is to reflect the values that underpin how the applicant wishes to work: with a commitment to creative participation, collaboration, sharing power and learning. The methodology involves recruiting and training a team of 'story-collectors' who then have structured conversations with people involved in the various programmes (the 'storytellers') about what has changed for them as a result of participating; how that change has occurred and why that change is important to them. These conversations are then written up into stories, retaining the teller's voice, and discussed in a facilitated meeting by a group of people involved in the work to draw out and understand the themes and learning they reveal and what that means for the ongoing development of the work.

## Financial Information

The applicant has a relatively stable level of income that has ranged from £1.19m to £1.59m over the last five years. BCTL's latest accounts show income of £1.2m for the financial year 2019/2020 and whilst this is expected to fall to £996k for the financial year 2020/2021, this is attributed to lost income and donations from visitors to the Barbican Centre as a result of the pandemic.

BCTL holds no liabilities beyond money that it has committed in the form of grants. BCTL is governed by 11 trustees but has no staff as support services for the day to day running of BCTL are provided by the City of London Corporation. The cost of providing support services to the Trust amounted to £253,879 in 2020 (2019: £309,228) and is based on a portion of the salary costs of fourteen City of London Corporation employees. Support services are recognised as 'donated services' and are cited in BCTL's annual accounts as donations within Incoming Resources and Charitable Activities within Resources Expended.

As a consequence of how the operations of BCTL are managed and its low operational costs thanks to support from the City of London Corporation, the Trustees consider it necessary only to retain a relatively low level of unrestricted reserves. It is the policy of the Trustees at all times to maintain sufficient reserves within the Trust to meet all future commitments in full. The Trustees have a policy of only committing to grants once income has been received into the Trust and has low net expenditure on running costs. BCTL appears to be on a stable financial footing and the financial controls outlined in their governance documents follow recognised good practice.

Year end as at 31 March	2020 Signed Accounts £	2021 Forecast £	2022 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	1,264,686	996,421	1,206,591
- % of Income confirmed as at	N/A	75%	0%
Expenditure	(1,171,608)	(1,142,538)	(1,206,591)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>93,078</b>	<b>(146,117)</b>	<b>0</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	34,473	(39,596)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	58,605	(106,521)	0
	<b>93,078</b>	<b>(146,117)</b>	<b>0</b>
Cost of Raising Funds	235,199	235,000	244,701
% Income	19%	24%	20%
Operating Expenditure (unrestricted)	553,059	657,873	1,206,591
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	123,074	16,553	16,553
No of months of operating expenditure	2.7	0.3	0.2
Reserves policy target	138,265	164,468	301,648
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(15,191)	(147,915)	(285,095)

## **Recommendation**

This is a large application for an ambitious, multi-year programme of activities that are grounded in the Square Mile but with an impact that reaches far beyond the borders of the City.

The applicant has demonstrated its ability to deliver these activities at the proposed scale with feedback from participants and other stakeholders that has been positive and points to the value of this work. The impact of the pandemic on Culture Mile has shown the adaptability at the heart of this work, which is led by the needs of the communities it wants to reach. The emphasis on co-production and working with communities is a particularly strong element of this application and the recommendation is for this application to be fully funded.

**£737,807 over three years (£191,067; £273,370; £273,370) to deliver a Creative Communities programme, collaborating with partners across the City to strengthen connections with and between neighbours and the culture on their doorstep.**