

Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund: 2023 Consultation Key Findings

Context

1. Local authorities are required to engage with communities on how CIL neighbourhood funding should be used to support development of the area. The process and nature of this engagement for the City of London is outlined in the City Corporation's Statement of Community Involvement (May 2023) Section 3.30.
2. The CILNF and the CILNF consultation are managed within the City Corporation by the Central Grants Unit. The Central Grants Unit undertakes consultation on community funding priorities to inform changes to the CILNF structure and funding regime. The City's Statement of Community Involvement requires that consultation will take place over a minimum six-week period, with information published on the City Corporation website and information sent to consultees on the City Plan consultee database, plus other interested parties identified by the Central Grants Unit.
3. CGU's previous consultations and updates to the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF) policy were undertaken in May 2019 and Spring 2022.
4. The current consultation sought to engage with City communities to determine their priorities for the CILNF and to seek their views on the introduction of potential cross-cutting criteria as a mechanism to support decision-making of equally strong applications and ensure that the CILNF embedded and delivered the City Corporation's EDI objectives. In anticipation of growing demand for funding, the survey also asked members of the City's communities their views on the potential introduction of a fallow period for applicants who had received five years' continuous funding. The consultation also sought community views on how to improve the delivery of the CILNF and asked about the current challenges communities were facing.

Structure

5. The 2023 CILNF survey was timed to miss the school summer holidays. The survey was open from 6 September and ran for seven weeks until 25 October 2023.
6. In preparation for initiating improved promotion and outreach for the CILNF in 2024, CGU worked through 73 third-party audience owners to cascade information to residents and City workers through e-newsletters, organisation websites, direct email and social media. In addition the survey was promoted through newspaper advertising alongside a tightly focused poster and leaflet distribution campaign. For communities with no access to the internet hard copy questionnaires in English and Bengali were distributed through community centres and group organisers.

	Audience Owner to cascade/Specific Comms Channel
Reaching individual Residents	
Via CoL Teams/Members	CoL Members Briefing ; City Resident Newsletter; City Plan Consultation Database; Home Newsletter; Golden Lane & Middlesex St Socials; Barbican Bulletin; Golden Lane Community Centre Newsletter; Estate Notice Boards; City Family Arts Network; Guildhall Newsletter; Family Information Service; eShot newsletter; Library Notice Boards; DCCS Internal Newsletter; Family of Schools Newsletter; Golden Lane Community Centre & Portsoken Community Centre notice boards; CoL Corporation social media; CoL website CGU & Consultation pages; Central Grants Unit previous grant applicants (last 3 years)
Via Commissioned Services	Healthwatch; Age UK East London; Carer Connections; Age UK City of London; City Connections; St Luke's Newsletter; Family Action
Via Local Networks & Groups	Portsoken Community Centre Advisory Board; City Parents & Carers Group; Golden Lane Estate Residents Association Newsletter; Middlesex Street Estate Residents Association; Guinness Trust (Mansell Street Estate); Portsoken Gardening Club; Toynbee Art Club (Artisan Library); Forget Me Not Memory Group; Golden Baggers Gardening Club; Hive Curates; Library User Groups; Friends of City Gardens
Via Neighbourhood Forum	Barbican & Golden Lane Neighbourhood Forum
Via Grantees	Age UK London; East London Dance; London International Festival of Theatre website; Learning Through the Arts; Imagine Golden Lane; Pollinating London Together; Barbican Communities
Reaching individual Residents/Workers	
Via Religious Groups	PwC Hindu Network; City Hindus; City Sikhs; Bevis Marks Synagogue; St Pauls Cathedral; Dean for the City of London; St Mary Le Bow
Via Commissioned Services	Business Healthy Network; City Advice;
Via Adverts	City Matters; City AM
Reaching individual Workers	
Via CoL Teams	City Network Group; CityHR Network; Small Business Enterprise Centre; CoL Livery Website & Livery Newsletter; City Belonging Project; Destination City Hotels & Attractions
Via BIDs	Eastern City Partnership BID; Primera; Aldgate Connect BID; Cheapside Business Alliance BID; Fleet Street Quarter BID; Culture Mile BID
Via Local Networks	The Heart of the City
Via grantees	Whizz Kidz Sponsor Newsletter; Historic Royal Palaces Sponsor Newsletter

Response

7. Completed surveys were received from 207 respondents. This represents a 550% increase on the number of respondents compared to the 2022 survey and a 1,200% increase on the number of respondents compared to 2019.
8. 12% of responses were collected as hard copy surveys, 88% of responses were collected through the online survey.
9. Respondents were evenly spread between those that lived and those that worked in the City. 40% of respondents live in the City, 38% of respondents work in the City and 22% of respondents both live and work in the City.

CIL Neighbourhood Fund Priorities

10. The CILNF funds projects that deliver community benefit and value for money. As the number of good quality applications for funding increases, we need additional criteria to help steer decision making whilst still ensuring that the fund remains responsive to changing community needs.
11. Respondents were asked to score how important they felt three cross-cutting criteria would be in informing the final decision-making between similarly strong proposals: Prioritising proposals that enable everyone to flourish and reach their full potential regardless of their socio-economic background; Prioritising proposals that create a greener City by addressing climate change and managing our environment for this generation and generations to come; Prioritising proposals that ensure community engagement and empowerment in decision making about activities and services offered. These cross-cutting criteria reflect key themes from the City of London's Corporate Plan and the City of London's EDI objectives.
12. 71% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with prioritising proposals that enable everyone to flourish and reach their full potential regardless of their socio-economic background. 16% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The 71% who strongly agreed or agreed were comprised of 27% residents, 28% City workers and 15% who were both residents and City workers.
13. 72% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with prioritising proposals that create a greener City by addressing climate change and managing our environment for this generation and generations to come. 11% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The 72% who strongly agreed or agreed were comprised of 30% residents, 27% City workers and 14% who were both residents and City workers.
14. 75% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with Prioritising proposals that ensure community engagement and empowerment in decision making about activities and services offered. 15% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The 75% who strongly agreed or agreed were comprised of 32% residents, 26% City workers and 17% who were both residents and City workers.

15. There was strong alignment between the views of residents and City workers in support of all three cross-cutting criteria.
16. In addition to the introduction of cross-cutting criteria, respondents were asked to list any other priorities they thought the Neighbourhood Fund should consider when distributing funding.
17. Priorities identified by over 5% or more of respondents were (in descending importance): Preserving existing and creating of more green space in the City including estate gardens and gardening clubs (9%); Prioritise proposals that address the needs of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, minoritised communities, older people, disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people and those living in poverty (7%); Sport, exercise and health activities including promoting walking and cycling (6%); Activities and services for children, young people and families (6%); Making public spaces and services fully accessible for disabled people and the elderly (6%); Prioritise proposals and activities that have been co-designed by engaging the community in the development of the proposal and/or proposals that demonstrate community support (5%); Mitigating climate change & enhancing biodiversity & wildlife (5%); Improving street cleanliness (5%).
18. The eight community identified CILNF priorities closely align with the challenges that respondents reported their communities were facing.
19. The most pressing challenge reported (17% of respondents) was the lack of trees and green space (with seating), poorly maintained green spaces & lack of biodiversity. An important aspect of this issue was the need for additional seating so that these spaces could be enjoyed by workers, residents and the elderly.
20. This challenge is directly addressed within the community identified CILNF priorities and suggested cross-cutting priorities.
21. Significant challenges for communities (in descending order of importance were): High levels of air pollution (14%); Lack of well-maintained playgrounds, sports facilities, pitches and activities for children and young people (13%); Noise pollution from vehicles, construction & late licence bars (12%); Lack of community centres/spaces for people to gather (11%).
22. Other challenges, identified by over 5% or more of respondents, were (in descending importance): Lack of services, activities and day centre for elderly residents (9%); Social isolation, loneliness and lack of community cohesion events and networks (9%); Poor traffic management, congestion, bus re-routing (9%); Overdevelopment and poor planning decisions (9%); Littering, lack of bins & lack of street cleanliness (9%); Antisocial behaviour (8%); Struggling retail especially at weekends (8%); Lack of step-free access, narrow pavements and unsafe uneven pavements causing difficulty for wheelchair users, older people and prams (7%); Cost of living increases including rise in service charges, heating costs and food poverty (7%); Lack of consultation with residents about their needs and how best to deliver them (7%); Dangerous use of bikes & e-scooters including riding and discarding on pavements (6%); Need to bring workers back to the City to work (6%); Closure and lack of local amenities including banks, local shops, family

businesses, difficulty accessing doctors and NHS dentists (6%); Poor maintenance and repair of housing & poor estate management (5%). Many of these issues fall outside of the remit of CILNF but might inform other areas of the City Corporation's work.

Eligibility for CIL Neighbourhood Funding

23. Currently organisations can apply for funding for up to five years either as a single grant or a series of grants. To ensure new applicants have access to funding, members of the City's communities were asked how strongly they agreed with the proposal to introduce a 12-month fallow period before organisations who have received continuous funding for five years can reapply.
24. 39% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with the introduction of a 12-month fallow period. 37% neither agreed nor disagreed. 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The 39% who strongly agreed or agreed were comprised of 17% residents, 14% City workers and 8% who were both residents and City workers.

Suggested improvements to how CILNF operates

25. Respondents to the survey were asked whether they had any suggestions on how the Neighbourhood Fund could improve how it operates. This question only received responses from 52% of respondents with a further 2% stating they had no suggestions. This reflects the fact that many respondents had little or no prior knowledge of CILNF.
26. Suggested improvements identified by over 5% or more of respondents were (in descending importance): Actively identify and reach out to potential applicants including grassroots community groups, sole traders, independents and businesses to make sure their needs are met (14%); Improve awareness of the fund through improved comms and promotion of success stories (11%); Transparency in relation to investment decisions (8%); Provide more information about the CILNF's funding criteria (6%).
27. These suggested improvements will inform and shape our future CILNF comms and engagement work.