

Report – City Bridge Foundation Board

Bridging London Strategy Refresh

To be presented on Thursday, 7th March 2024

To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.

SUMMARY

This report presents to the Court of Common Council the refreshed version of City Bridge Foundation’s overarching strategy, *Bridging London 2020-2045* for approval, for implementation from April 2024. The strategy refresh follows an internal review, overseen by the City Bridge Foundation Board, to reflect operational and governance changes, and external contextual developments since 2020 and better articulate parts of the strategy that can now be defined in more detail. The strategy refresh was considered and endorsed by the City Bridge Foundation Board and is recommended to this Court for approval.

Recommendations

Following the City Bridge Foundation Board’s consideration of this report, it is recommended that the Members of the Court of Common Council, acting for the City Corporation as the charity trustee of City Bridge Foundation (Charity No. 1035628) and solely in the charity’s best interests:

- i) Agree the refreshed version of the charity’s overarching strategy, *Bridging London 2020-2045*.

Main Report

Background

1. City Bridge Foundation (CBF), the working name for the charity Bridge House Estates, is an unincorporated charitable trust and a registered charity (reg no. 1035628) for which the City Corporation acting by the Court of Common Council is Trustee. Except for several matters reserved to the Court of Common Council, CBF’s day-to-day management and administration is delegated to the CBF Board. Amongst the matters reserved to the Court is the approval of the charity’s strategy, including its overarching strategy.
2. In October 2020, the Court of Common Council approved the charity’s current overarching strategy, entitled “*Bridging London 2020-2045*”. Prior to this, at least in recent decades, there was no single strategy that articulated the overall vision and aims of the whole charity. Rather, there were strategies and plans for different parts of the charity’s activities. The new overarching strategy therefore

set a framework for all the charity's activities and outlined the collective impact the charity sought to make.

3. When the 25-year strategy was originally approved, it was agreed that it would require regular monitoring and evaluation to remain relevant. Ahead of the planned five-yearly in-depth review of the strategy, the CBF Board agreed in 2023 that an earlier 'refresh' be undertaken, to reflect the internal operational and governance changes, and external contextual developments since 2020.
4. The Board agreed that the intention of the refresh was not to rewrite the strategy entirely, but rather to articulate better those parts of the strategy that could now be defined in more detail following the implementation of the Strategic Governance Review outcomes. It was agreed that the refresh would also provide the opportunity to streamline existing strategies and plans and to articulate the charity's purpose and vision in a more concise way in line with the new brand narrative. Furthermore, the refresh provides an opportunity to develop in greater detail an impact framework for the charity – articulating better what 'impact' means to CBF across all its activities.

Bridging London Strategy Refresh

5. Over the past 12 months, CBF officers have worked collaboratively across the charity to deliver the refresh of the *Bridging London Strategy*. This has included working with teams leading other significant strategic reviews and workstreams, including the development of the Tower Bridge Long Term Development Plan for the visitor attraction, the Future Funding Approach, the Philanthropy Review and the implementation of the new Investment Strategy Statement.
6. For ease of reference, a summary of the main changes and updates to the strategy is provided below:
 - a. A new foreword from the Chair of the CBF Board and Managing Director, which will be updated annually.
 - b. A streamlined background section which has been updated with the new brand narrative for City Bridge Foundation.
 - c. Re-positioning the focus of the strategy by framing all activities around three outcomes:
 - 1) We maintain and promote world-class bridges,
 - 2) We develop and deliver world-class charitable funding, and
 - 3) We embed and encourage world-class responsible business practices.
 - d. Adding an additional section to enhance commitments to the charity's cross-cutting strategic ambitions on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Climate Action, as well as outlining further commitments to exploring themes that are relevant and important to our work, including Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM), suicide prevention, and mental health.

- e. Adding a new section on the charity's values.
- f. Incorporating the high-level objectives of the Investment Strategy Statement and Social Investment Policy, the Tower Bridge Long Term Development Plan for the visitor attraction, the Future Funding Approach, and the Philanthropy Review into the actions.
- g. Including greater reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been previously identified by the Board as having a direct impact on the charity.

Values

- 7. A key workstream integral to the refresh is the development of new values for CBF. The original version of the *Bridging London Strategy* did not articulate values for the charity, as it was agreed that further work was first required to bring together the charity's operations and activities through the development of a 'one-charity culture'.
- 8. Significant effort has been made over the past two years to embed the 'one-charity culture', culminating in the development of new values for the charity.
- 9. The creation of new values was developed through various inputs over the past 12 months, including discussions on culture at team away days, an all-staff away day at the Barbican Centre in July 2023, surveys, the brand consultation and research, and engagement with staff Steering Groups. Member engagement was also undertaken at the Board's Strategic Away Half-Day in October 2023.
- 10. Following analysis of the initial inputs, a further round of consultation with CBF staff in November and December 2023 was undertaken on the proposed value statements. There were high levels of staff engagement in the consultation sessions and a strong sense of support for developing new values that will guide the way we work together to deliver the charity's activities.
- 11. Resulting from the consultation, five values were proposed by CBF staff. These are:
 - a) Service
 - b) Collaboration
 - c) Inclusion
 - d) Innovation
 - e) Ambition
- 12. The CBF Board considered the five values outlined above and endorsed their inclusion in the refreshed *Bridging London Strategy* and adoption for the charity going forward. The Board further agreed that developing a 'statement' alongside the values would provide greater definition to what is meant by each value. Value statements were therefore incorporated into the final version of the refreshed strategy.

13. The proposed refreshed version of the *Bridging London Strategy, 2020 – 2045*, is provided at **Appendix 1**. On the recommendation of the CBF Board, the Court is asked to approve the refreshed overarching strategy for the charity. If approved, a designed version of the strategy will be prepared for roll-out to all staff from April 2024, to be available both internally and externally.
14. As part of the ongoing implementation of the strategy, officers are currently working to develop a new impact framework for the measurement of the impact of the strategy and the charity's activities.
15. The refreshed *Bridging London Strategy* provides a framework for all the charity's work and all activities should align with the vision, outcomes and values set out in the document. The operating model for the charity will continue to be kept under review to ensure that it is structured in a way to deliver on the outcomes and activities outlined in the strategy.

Conclusion

16. The CBF Board has considered and endorsed the proposed refreshed overarching strategy for City Bridge Foundation, *Bridging London 2020-2045*, and recommends it to the Court of Common Council. The strategy outlines the charity's ongoing commitment to bridging London and connecting communities in furthering the charity's purposes. The CBF considers the strategy refresh to be in the best interests of the charity, and asks that the Court of Common Council approve it, to best support continuation of the charity's important work.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 7th day of February 2024.

SIGNED on behalf of the Board.

Deputy Dr Giles Shilson
Chair, City Bridge Foundation Board

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – *Bridging London 2020-2045: Refreshed Strategy*