



Committee: Funding Committee of the City Bridge Foundation Board	Date: 9 December 2024
Subject: CBF Chief Funding Director's Update Report	Public
Report of: Sacha Rose-Smith, CBF Chief Funding Director	For Information

Summary

To support the Funding Committee in the discharge of its duties, this regular report provides an update on key areas of activity to note and agree, where necessary. Specifically, the report provides details on the following: Suicide Prevention, End to End Review, £200m Uplift, Budget Reallocation, Funder Plus (Bridge Programme), Propel, Women & Girls Consultation, Additional One-year Grants, Complaints and Feedback Received Following Full Programme Closure, Social Investments, Feedback from Funded Organisations, Spotlight Talk for Funded Organisations, EDI Training, Director of EDI Recruitment Update, Black History Month, and Media Coverage.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Funding Committee of the City Bridge Foundation Board, in discharge of functions for the City Corporation as Trustee of City Bridge Foundation and solely in the charity's best interests:

- i) Note the contents of the report.

Main Report

Funding Updates

1. Suicide Prevention – Recommendations for Suicide Prevention Strategic Partnership applications are presented to Committee on today's agenda.
2. End to End Review – Implementation of E2ER recommendation 4, 'to deliver pre-application calls' is currently being progressed with the legalities of using the Calendly software being explored with the City Corporation's legal team. Work has begun on E2ER Recommendation 5, 'to revisit the funding-related web pages, so they map the user's journey', with CBF's Communications team, which will be closely aligned with the website developments planned in relation to the Future Funding Policy (FFP).
3. A new risk-profiling tool has been developed, which will support implementation of E2ER recommendation 6, to 'offer differentiated application and grant management pathways, determined by risks and applicants' needs. The risk-profiling tool will also support the development of the Grant Agreement, enabling different versions of the Agreement to be used in different circumstances. Staff engagement with the E2ER recommendations has been facilitated through an in-person session, delivered with colleagues from the Impact and Learning and Governance and Strategy Teams, on Monday 18 November, with a further session planned for December 2024.



4. £200m Uplift – The finance report on today’s agenda includes a table summarising the spend to date and forecast for remaining spend. A report will be submitted to the February meeting collating impact and learning from the work funded so far.
5. Budget Reallocation – When the partial and full programme closures were announced, up to £11m was diverted from other budget lines to be used for one-off core grants to organisations with a grant end date in the next year. Of this, £6m has been used and the remaining budget has been added back into the responsive grants budget to be used towards the c.£98m of applications which have not yet been fully assessed. Similarly, there was £3.9m of budget remaining from the original £30m allocated towards the Anchor Programme once all recommendations and rejections had been made. This has also been added back into the responsive grants budget. This is reflected in the latest forecasts and budget for 2025/26.
6. Funder Plus (Bridge Programme) – Over the last three months, we have conducted an in-depth review of the finances and operating model of the Bridge Programme, now part of our Funder Plus offer. The Bridge Programme provides funded organisations with access to free support and services beyond their grant, aimed at enhancing their capacity, resilience, and long-term sustainability. Historically focused on areas such as organisational development, governance, fundraising, and business planning, the offer is now being reshaped to align with the priorities of the FFP.
7. The revised Funder Plus will integrate CBF’s emerging justice priorities, with a strong focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and climate sustainability, while continuing to address critical needs like suicide prevention training. Key elements of the evolving offer include equipping organisations with future-focused skills (e.g., advocacy, systems thinking, and storytelling), fostering peer-based learning networks, retaining eco audit principles to embed environmental sustainability, and empowering Funding Managers to play a pivotal brokerage role, connecting organisations with tailored support. A refined proposal will be brought to Committee once a preferred approach has been identified.
8. Propel – Currently there are rolling assessments for Expand grants (two years’ continuation funding following an initial 12-month Explore grant) and Extend grants (one year additional funding for Deliver and Develop grants that only secured two-years funding, rather than three, from other Propel funders), with a projected spend of £8.4m for this financial year. A Propel Network Day took place on 21 November which brought together funders, funded organisations, equity partners and IVAR (the Propel learning partner) to start the process of codesigning the longer-term, seven-year Propel grant offer, which is due to launch in April 2025.
9. Officers are working with other key Propel partners to explore the option of transferring some or all remaining unallocated Propel funds within their respective organisations to a collaborative vehicle operated as a subsidiary of London Funders called Collaboration Circle. This will allow the funders to truly pool their funding, reducing the burden on applicants and grantees of having multiple funders, and reducing the barriers of aligned funding (such as being limited by each funder’s budget cycle/political cycle, barriers to integrating community voice in decision making processes, etc.).



10. LocalMotion – CBF is a key partner in LocalMotion, a strategic collaboration with other funders operating outside London. In 2023/24, CBF contributed £5M over the next seven years to support on-going activities in Enfield and towards the administration of LocalMotion, including learning capture and dissemination, for the benefit of Londoners. Recently a new learning partner has been appointed, and the next few months will be spent developing a learning framework. This will include in-person co-creation sessions, in-person framework testing sessions, and online sessions to iterate in response to feedback. A set of tools including overarching learning framework, learning materials and user guides, and sense-making tools will then be developed.
11. External communications are also being developed to support local places to communicate the work of LocalMotion effectively, including potentially through the production of a film. In Enfield specifically, a learning day was convened in September which covered amongst other things how to widen participation, gaps and priority areas and how to include missing/hidden voices. It also workshoped internal and external communications.
12. Women & Girls Consultation – At the Funding Committee meeting on 4 March 2024, the adoption of the Trans Inclusion Policy was discussed (with the decision to formally adopt delegated to the Managing Director of CBF). The policy had been produced via consultation with trans led organisations, as the group directly impacted. Officers confirmed after the meeting that as part of the work to consult with groups both directly and indirectly impacted by the policy, a consultation via survey would be undertaken with women and girls' groups also. Responses from 29 women and girls' organisations have been received and reviewed.
13. Following the consultation, the policy wording will be reviewed by officers and legal experts a final time, and it is anticipated that some minor amendments will be incorporated. A paper summarising the results of the consultation and detailing subsequent changes made to the policy will be submitted to the February Funding Committee, with a recommendation that the policy be adopted.
14. Additional One-year Grants – To support funded organisations during the transition to a new funding policy, those with fewer than five years of continuous funding and whose grants end within the next 12 months of the announced programme closures, were invited to apply for 1 Year Additional Core Funding. This funding was calculated as $(Total\ grant\ amount / Number\ of\ years\ of\ grant) + 2\%$ to account for inflation. A simplified application and fast-tracked assessment process were implemented.
 - **Cohort 1:** Organisations holding a grant under the five programme areas closed on 3 July 2024 ('Support and services for older people', 'Support for children and young people', 'Mental health services', 'Voice and leadership', and 'Increasing the quality and scale of giving'), with grant end dates from 30 September 2024 to 1 July 2025 were invited to apply. 51 grants totaling £1,973,601 were awarded.



- **Cohort 2:** Following the 8 October rolling programme closures, organisations with grant end dates between 1 January 2025 and 7 January 2026 will also be invited to apply. Cohort 2 will be administered in three waves with 100 organisations invited to apply. If all applicants are approved, the total awarded will be £3,894,201.

15. The combined forecast total for Cohorts 1 and 2 is £5,867,802.

16. Complaints and Feedback Received Following Full Programme Closure – Following the full closure of responsive funding programmes on 8 October 2024, the Foundation has received a few formal complaints and some general feedback from applicants and funded organisations. The key themes emerging from these responses include concerns about delays, transparency, and the impact of the closures. Below is an overview of the main issues raised:

- *Delays in the Application Process:* Both complaints and feedback raised concerns about the lengthy decision-making process, which impacted organisations' ability to pursue other funding opportunities. Several organisations felt the delays hindered their ability to plan effectively.
- *Feedback on Rejection:* Several applicants, including smaller organisations, requested detailed feedback after being rejected. They felt that receiving specific feedback would help them improve future applications and provide clearer communication to their boards regarding the reasons for their unsuccessful outcomes. This was particularly important for organisations with limited capacity for future applications. CBF has had to pause providing individual feedback (if requested) due to the sheer volume of applications.
- *Impact of Programme Closures:* Organisations were disappointed with the closure of programmes, especially those dependent on specific types of funding. For instance, infrastructure and capital funding were critical for some, and the closure led to uncertainty about future opportunities. Some also felt that more notice should have been given about the closure to allow them to plan accordingly.
- *Concerns About Future Funding:* Several respondents raised concerns about the uncertainty around future funding opportunities, especially after the programme closures. Organisations were particularly worried about the availability of funding for capital projects and infrastructure support, which many rely on to continue their work. There were concerns that the closure of certain programmes would limit their funding options going forward.
- *Perceived Changes in Criteria:* Some organisations expressed frustration over what they perceived as changes in funding criteria mid-process. While the Foundation had focused the criteria, some applicants felt these changes were unclear and impacted their eligibility.

17. Geraldine Page, Funding Director, has been overseeing responses to complaints and feedback, ensuring all complaints and feedback are addressed



comprehensively. CBF remains committed to transparency, clear communication, and responsiveness as it works through the ongoing challenges posed by the surge in applications. Feedback from both complainants and those providing feedback will inform future processes to ensure improvements where necessary, particularly around communication, decision-making timelines, and due diligence procedures.

18. Social Investments – There are two social investment recommendations for decision today. These are not contingent on the proposed additional social investment criteria on the agenda. Today’s papers also include the first portfolio report on the charity’s current social investment holdings. Feedback on the format would be much appreciated. The report notes that the Commonweal Vanguard investment approved at December 2023 Committee has, unfortunately, been cancelled before funds were drawn.

Impact and Learning Updates

19. The Impact and Learning Team have been managing the research and leading the consultation for the Future Funding Policy, details of which are in the FFP paper.
20. Feedback from Funded Organisations – Officers gather and share feedback on how the funding team delivers funding as well as issues in London and the impact of projects from all funded organisations via annual impact and learning reports. Anonymous feedback is also sought via Grant Advisor.
21. Spotlight Talk for Funded Organisations – On 14 November, the Impact & Learning team hosted a Spotlight talk for funded organisations on the topic of volunteers, a topic frequently highlighted by funded organisations as one with which they need support. The session was held with James Lee, Bridge Programme Lead and with the support of Karen Mangan, Volunteer Manager at the Corporation. Funded organisations applied to speak on a panel and were paid for their time. The chosen panel was Carol Akiwumi MBE (The AVOCADO Foundation), Ellie Alvarez (Hope for the Young), Janet Thorne (Reach Volunteering), and Maddy Mills (Family Volunteering Club), around successful ways to work with volunteers and how to make volunteering more accessible.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Updates

22. EDI Training – CBF continues to make progress on embedding EDI as a cross-cutting strategic ambition within all its activities. Since the last the report to the Board, officers have commissioned [brap](#), a charity that that supports organisations with meaningful approaches to equalities learning, change, research and engagement, to continue working with CBF throughout 2025. In 2023/24, brap have delivered EDI training to all staff and held sessions with the Board. brap also undertook specific training with the Funding Team on equitable funding practices and delivered training to the Leadership Group on the topic of ‘power’. Through discussion with brap, officers have agreed that further work with the Executive Leadership Team, Leadership Group and Funding Team would support an exploration of power to support CBF continue its work to create more equitable experiences across CBF and support it in becoming a leader in this area of work.



23. The proposal for 2025 includes a focus on leading on equity, supporting the leadership teams to develop a shared understanding and value around equitable practice, and to have space to develop personal and professional understandings. Interventions will therefore include individual coaching sessions with the Executive Leadership Team (which may then be rolled out to the Leadership Group), a group coaching session with the Leadership Group to support the connection between individual and collective practice, and a further session with the Funding Team to consider the use of power within CBF's funding practices (building on the introductory work completed in 2023/24).
24. Director of EDI Recruitment Update – CBF have recently commissioned a recruitment agency, Saxton Bampfylde, to lead on the search for a new Director of EDI for the charity. Following initial briefing meetings with the recruitment agency, at the time of writing, it is proposed that they will commence their search in the second half of November with a timetable for final interviews early February. Subject to the notice period of the candidate, it is anticipated that the successful candidate may be able to start in Spring 2025. The main objective of the Director of EDI will be to ensure that CBF has a clear EDI strategy and delivery plan in place, so that everyone who interacts with CBF's services (employees, customers, workers, volunteers, suppliers, partners and funded organisations) has an inclusive experience that values and celebrates diversity and equity. As the role is new and will have clear time-limited objectives, the appointment will initially be for a period of 3 years, after which it will be subject to review.
25. Black History Month – During October, CBF celebrated Black History Month. This year's theme was 'reclaiming narratives' – shining a light on the achievements of Black individuals here in the UK and globally; embracing, educating and empowering one another through the stories that shape Black identity. CBF offered several opportunities for staff to share, celebrate and understand the impact of Black heritage and culture throughout the month – including a Black History Month quiz (organised by members of the CBF team, Lara Rufus-Fayemi, Nkechi Adeboye and Stella Brown, in conjunction with the City Corporation's CLEAR Network), providing a series of books in the office on Black history, promoting poetry from Black British poets, highlighting the City Corporation's CLEAR Network events and shining a light on Black History through speech and song during all staff Stand Up team meetings. The celebration of Black History Month culminated in a staff lunch on 31 October organised by Emma Whitton, CBF Events Manager, with a reading from, and discussion with, a Black British Poet, [Vanessa Kissule](#), and food provided by a Ghanaian catering company. The event was well attended by staff across CBF and was an excellent celebration of Black history and culture.

Communications Updates

26. Media Coverage – In September and October there were 68 items of City Bridge Foundation media coverage, of which 38 related to bridges and 30 to funding work. This included coverage on [BBC Breakfast](#) and [BBC London News](#) of the visit to London Bridge by the grandson of the American who bought the old bridge, with interviews from Tower Bridge director Chris Earlie. Further coverage appeared in [The i Newspaper](#), [BBC News Online](#) and [Southwark News](#).



27. There was extensive coverage of the foundation's announcement it was closing its rolling grants programmes for a year, including an exclusive in [Charity Times](#) along with an [opinion piece](#) by Sacha Rose-Smith, chief funding director. Coverage also included an interview with Sacha in an in-depth article in [Third Sector](#).
28. Meanwhile, [Londonist](#) carried a feature on the secret hidden space inside London Bridge, following a behind-the-scenes visit organised by the foundation, while [Ham & High](#) and [Islington Gazette](#) (print editions) reported on a £100,000 grant to St Saviour's Church in Finsbury Park, to enable it to fix its dilapidated 125-year-old community hall roof and reduce its carbon footprint.

Conclusion

29. This report provides a high-level summary of CBF activities since the Funding Committee last met in September 2024. The Funding Committee is asked to note the content of the report. Further information on any of the updates given in this report can be provided to the Funding Committee orally in the meeting or in written format in advance of or as a follow-up to the meeting.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Non-Public Updates

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