



Committee: Funding Committee of the City Bridge Foundation Board	Date: 17 February 2025
Subject: 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: closed funding programmes, the Future Funding Policy (FFP), Service Design and the End-to-End Review, Social Investments, the Anchor Programme, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) updates on Director of EDI Recruitment and Anti-Racism Coaching, plus updates on the Governance Review and a comms update on 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.

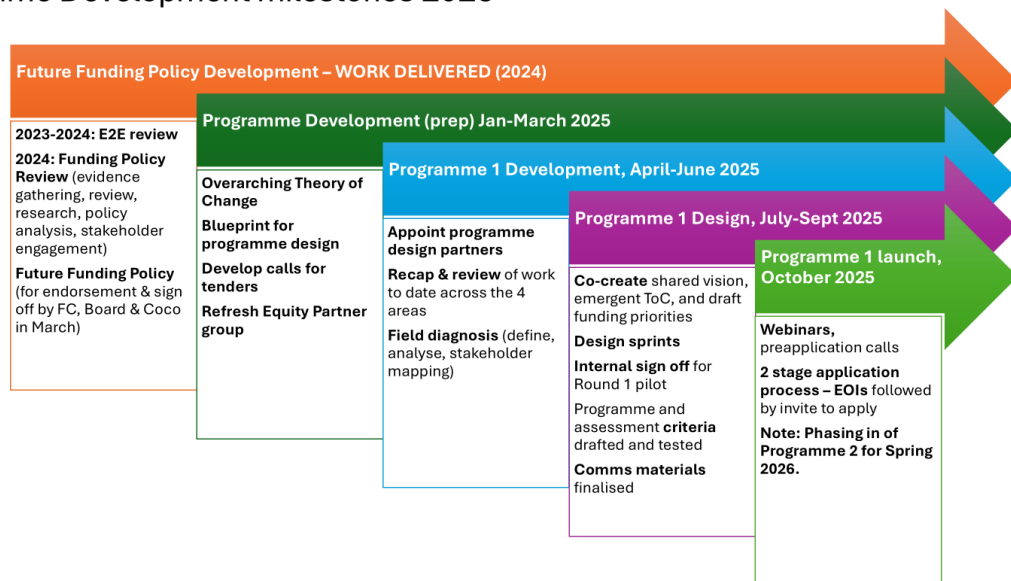
Main Report

Funding Updates

1. Closed Funding Programmes Update – City Bridge Foundation closed its open and responsive funding programmes to new applications for one year on 8 October 2024, following an earlier partial closure in July 2024. This decision, approved by the Funding Committee and CBF Board in September 2024, was necessitated by a surge in applications exceeding available funding and the need to prioritise strategic programmes such as the Future Funding Policy (FFP), the Suicide Prevention Programme and the Anchor Programme. Following the closure announcement, CBF received 339 additional applications in a two-week window, bringing the total number of applications in the system to 928, with a total requested amount of £173.6 million.
2. As of mid-January 2025, significant progress has been made in processing the backlog. Applications have been reduced from 928 to 404 (totalling £60 million) representing a reduction of over 56%. Of these, 198 applications (totalling £31.3 million) are currently under assessment, leaving 206 (totalling £28.7 million) to be sifted and allocated if suitable for full assessment. The team is on track to process all remaining applications by summer 2025, to enable full focus on the implementation of the FFP, ahead of its planned launch in autumn 2025. The team's flexible and proportionate approach has facilitated rapid progress in processing applications, and we would like to thank staff for their diligence and commitment during this period of high demand.

3. Future Funding Policy – Following endorsement by the Funding Committee in December 2024 and subject to approval by the City Bridge Foundation (CBF) Board in February 2025, the FFP is at the final point of sign-off and will be presented to the Court of Common Council on 6 March 2025. After the FFP is approved, Officers will initiate the detailed programme and service design phase through 2025-26.
4. As outlined in December papers to the Funding Committee, work has commenced to scope the key workstreams for implementation. Preparatory work is underway to progress the programme design phase in April (see graphic below). We will share more detailed implementation plans following sign-off of the policy by the Court of Common Council.

Programme Development milestones 2025



5. Service Design and End-to-End Review – Planning work has begun in earnest to deliver the service design elements of the FFP, incorporating the End-to-End Review recommendations. A Service Design Plan has been developed, encompassing general updates, End to End Review (E2ER) updates, IT infrastructure updates, and Data updates. Three working groups have been scoped and are currently being recruited to, overseen by Funding Director, Sam Grimmett. An interim Service Design role is being appointed, to lead on service design which falls outside of the E2ER. A draft timeline has been developed, mapping key milestones and deadlines, this is being tested with key stakeholders over the coming weeks.
6. Work continues on developing a new grant agreement, differentiated grant management pathways, and website development amongst other E2E recommendations, and a facilitated session on core funding was held at a Funding team away day in December 2024, the outputs of which will be incorporated into work already undertaken to begin to develop an approach to core funding.
7. Social Investment – As of end December 2024, CBF had committed just under £3.5m (15.9%) of its social investment allocation, with some of this capital still subject to legals. A further £1m of investment recommendation is included in

today's papers and several smaller investment reviews are underway which would fall within the scheme of delegated authority to variously address the historic under-funding of Black-led social enterprises; affordable childcare for low-income families; and the quality of accessibility data for disabled Londoners. Two larger investment recommendations to follow for Committee in early 2025/26 concentrate on climate and technology.

8. Officers are updating the CBF social investment webpages, related listings on third party sites (such as Good Finance) and attending networking events to promote our support. The CBF communications team has drafted [an article](#) showcasing one of our recent investments, highlighting the relational way the charity works, and the supportive legal approach pioneered by Bates Wells. We are arranging a site visit with an investee and will plan others over the coming months so Members can see some of the work enabled by the charity's social investments.
9. Anchor Programme – Round Two of the Anchor Programme was launched in May 2024 with a total of 73 expressions of interest (EOIs) applications received by the deadline in June 2024. Once EOIs were reviewed, 13 organisations were invited to submit a stage two application form in July 2024 and following the assessment period 9 applications were taken to full assessment. Assessments have now been completed, 8 recommendations were endorsed at the Funding Committee in December 2024 and subsequently approved through delegated approval by the CBF Board. There is a final recommendation under consideration at today's meeting. Once that recommendation has been considered, all 9 applications will have received a decision. A total of four applications were recommended for rejection as officers felt they did not sufficiently meet the programme criteria. It is expected that the final round of the Anchor Programme will award a total of £10.9m and have an underspend of £3.9m. In total, combining the first and second rounds, the Anchor Programme will have awarded around £26m to equity-led infrastructure organisations.
10. Funded organisations from Round One have completed the first year of learning sessions led by the Learning Partner TSIP. The monthly sessions explored a wide range of topics such as Systems Change and how to develop a Theory of Change. The funded organisations also attended an in-person and online Funder Feedback session in September 2024, to share honest feedback with CBF about funding in general, as well as their experience so far in managing a long-term core grant. Funded organisations from Round One will be attending an in-person session with TSIP at the end of January 2025 to reflect on the first year of the learning partnership, to agree on the visual for the Theory of Change and to set the objectives for the second year. The majority of funded organisations from Round One will be in the process of completing the impact and learning report which will be due at the end of January 2025.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Updates

11. Director of EDI Recruitment – Recruitment for the new CBF Director of EDI is underway (led by the recruitment agency Saxton Bampfylde). The closing date for applications was on 10 January 2025 and approx. 40 applications were received. Longlisting and shortlisting took place in January 2025, with final interviews

scheduled to be held at the end of February 2025. Subject to the notice period of the successful candidate, it is anticipated that the post-holder will be in place by Spring 2025.

12. Anti-Racism Coaching – The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) have begun a series of anti-racism coaching sessions with EDI specialists, [brap](#), as part of its ongoing commitment to becoming an anti-racist charity. Further training for the Leadership Team and wider CBF staff is planned for 2025/26.

Strategy & Governance Updates

13. Governance Review – At the September CBF Board meeting, the Board noted that officers intended to review CBF's internal governance arrangements. Areas for review include Reporting (to CBF Board & Committees), Officer Decisions, Corporate Governance and Compliance. As part of this work, a Board/Committee Effectiveness Survey was sent out to Members of the CBF Board and Committees, with thanks to those that responded. The feedback received will act as a stimulus for revising the governance arrangements from the 25/26 civic year. Several priorities were identified as areas wherein alternative arrangements can be progressed and implemented for the new civic year:

- a. CBF Board Reporting Format: Following the Board effectiveness exercise, the length of reports and papers to the Board and Committees was identified as a key area for improvement. In response, the CBF Strategy & Governance Team will be trialling from April 2025 an alternative reporting template that is distinctive from the reporting provided by the City Corporation. The new reporting template will seek to maintain focus on clear and concise reporting.
- b. Compliance: A CBF Strategy & Policy Review Cycle document has been drafted to enhance accountability in reporting. The survey results highlighted Members' desire for greater clarity in CBF's compliance procedures, particularly in reporting to the Charity Commission. Additionally, Members emphasised the need for clearer and more comprehensive overview of Risk Register reporting.
- c. Follow up Processes: The survey indicated that Members would prefer an enhanced follow up process following meetings, particularly in the circulation of minutes. Minutes of the meeting will now be circulated ahead of the next Board/committee. With regards to officers, a decision summary is now circulated widely via email following each meeting.
- d. Member Engagement: In addition to the follow-up process outlined above, members emphasised the need for improved communication between meetings from the Chair and Acting Managing Director of CBF to Board/Committee members. Officers are currently reviewing these processes, with changes anticipated before the first Board of the new civic year.
- e. Member Induction: Newer Members noted that it would have been helpful to gain an understanding of the skills and experience contributed by other members to the Board and Committees. This feedback has prompted the team

to explore incorporating this aspect into the induction process, aiming to foster a more cohesive and informed Board and Committees.

14. Areas of development scheduled for further work in the new civic year include:

a. EDI and Impact Assessments: While the appointment of the new EDI Director is still underway, officers will begin conducting preliminary research ahead of their arrival. This research will focus on understanding how and when other charities carry out assessments, as well as evaluating their overall impact, to ensure a solid foundation for collaboration once the Director is in post. Members have emphasised the need for greater focus in this area, with survey results reinforcing the importance of viewing EDI and Impact assessments as intersectional, rather than focusing on individual strands in isolation.

15. The Board/Committee Effectiveness exercise has provided valuable feedback from Members and will serve as a catalyst for ongoing improvements to Governance arrangements in the 2025/26 civic year. Nevertheless, a well-defined and reliable network of internal governance processes is fundamental to the structure of the charity. These improvements will enable officers to deliver high-quality, consistent support to CBF Members, as well as Executive Leadership Team, while effectively carrying out the charity's functions.

Communications Updates

16. Media Coverage – In November and December there were 36 items of City Bridge Foundation media coverage, of which nine related to funding, 10 to bridges, 12 to Tower Bridge specifically, and three were on the topic of the Foundation generally.

17. Coverage included a Jewish News report on a £155,550 City Bridge Foundation grant to Jewish charity Kisharon Langdon, to provide extra staff and vital community activities at Child's Hill Library, in north London. There was further coverage in Islington Tribune and Haringey Community Press on a £100,000 grant to St Saviour's Church, in Finsbury Park, for the replacement of the roof of its community hall. Board Deputy Chair Giles Shilson was quoted.

18. Meanwhile, Bridge Design & Engineering carried a four-page feature on the foundation, which featured its funding work as well as its history and bridges. Acting Managing Director Simon Latham and engineer Tom Creed were quoted.

Conclusion

19. This report provides a high-level summary of CBF activities since the Funding Committee last met in December 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.

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