

City Bridge Foundation
Draft Funding Policy, 2025-2035
(January 2025)

This section is included to provide context to the Draft Future Funding Policy for readers who may not be reviewing alongside the Board Report.

About this document:

1. This is an **internal document** setting out City Bridge Foundation's (CBF) draft 10 year funding policy.
2. This draft policy is recommended to the CBF Board for sign-off and onward approval by the Court of Common Council in March 2025 – with a request to delegate authority to adapt and enhance the policy in response to lessons learned and user feedback during programme development and implementation.
3. The foundations of the policy draw significantly from CBF's strategy, Bridging London 2020-2045.
4. This draft policy, the funding approach and priorities sets out the charity's ten year funding policy to specifically further its 'ancillary object'.
5. Within this document:
 - the term "funding" encompasses grant-making, collaboration, social investment and other activity to further the charity's ancillary object.
 - references to 'London' and the 'Capital' refer to 'Greater London'
6. City Bridge Foundation will launch its new funding policy in autumn 2025, with an adapted version of this document and language, appropriate for external audiences.

Developing a new funding policy:

7. In early 2024, CBF started the process of developing a new funding policy to replace our existing one, Bridging Divides.
8. We have reflected deeply on the effects of multiple crises over the last five years and the reduction of available resources from independent and statutory bodies, against a backdrop of growing need among London's most marginalised communities. Bridging Divides was written for a significantly different external context to the one that has emerged since its launch in 2018, which places even greater responsibility on us to put in place a new policy that can maximise the impact of the resources we have available to us.
9. Development of the policy has been informed by a review of CBF's past funding practice, research, evidence-gathering and a wide-ranging consultation — which has included funded organisations, funders, civil society, local government, young Londoners, policy and research specialists, businesses and a cross section of the public.
10. This document will be the basis on which CBF, in collaboration with London's charitable sector, develops the details of funding programmes over the course of 2025 and 2026. During that period, we will also produce a theory of change and implementation plan.

(January 2025)

1. Context

Introduction

City Bridge Foundation was set up around 900 years ago for the maintenance of the old London Bridge. Our primary aim as a charity remains the maintenance of our five bridges – Tower, London, Southwark, Millennium and Blackfriars. Whilst much has changed over the centuries since we were established, the focus on London and Londoners has always been central to our work.

Through bridge tolls, rents, bequests and charitable donations, along with sensible investment and management, our endowment has grown over the years. Since 1995 we have allocated our surplus income for the benefit of disadvantaged and marginalised communities in London.

As London's largest independent charitable funder, over the next decade we will continue and evolve our approach, harnessing the Foundation's resources, assets and networks to catalyse lasting social change.

This Future Funding Policy is guided by CBF's overarching strategy, Bridging London 2020-2045, which sets out an ambitious vision for a connected capital - delivered through our world-class bridges, charitable funding and responsible business practices.

Bridging London 2020-2045

Our vision: For London and Londoners to be truly connected

Outcomes:

1. We maintain and promote world-class bridges
2. We develop and deliver world-class charitable funding
3. We embed and encourage world-class responsible business practices

Our values:

- **Service:** We stand for London and Londoners in everything we do
- **Collaboration:** We connect to learn and achieve more together
- **Inclusion:** We work towards equity, diversity and inclusion for all
- **Innovation:** We embrace new ways to drive positive change
- **Ambition:** We challenge ourselves to deliver the best for our communities

We develop and deliver world class charitable funding

As London's largest independent charitable funder, we want London to be a city where all individuals and communities can thrive, especially those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. Through our funding programmes and collaborations, we support London's civil society organisations and connect them with each other and the communities they serve.

To achieve these outcomes, Bridging London sets out commitments to:

- Use our funding, expertise and leadership to help **support the reduction of inequality in London** and grow more cohesive communities for a London that serves everyone.
- **Remain accountable** by regularly reviewing and refining our funding offer, consulting widely with our stakeholders to ensure our funding priorities reflect the needs of London's communities.
- **Recognise our power and privilege**, adopting an equitable approach to our funding and **integrating lived experiences** into our practices.
- **Identify opportunities for greater alignment** between our role in maintaining and supporting the five bridges and in our funding priorities.
- **Work more collaboratively** with other funders, joining or leading funding initiatives that draw on our collective strengths and assets so that, together, we can tackle the issues facing London.
- **Offer tailored support** to our funded organisations, designed to enhance an organisation's capacity, resilience and long-term sustainability.
- **Provide accessible, long-term, and flexible finance** for social change through social investments, as well as providing opportunities for organisations to connect with others who can support their work.
- **Create time and space to focus on impact and learning**, so that we can deepen the impact of our funding and use the learning to evolve our practices.
- **Build, sustain and leverage partnerships** across different sectors to catalyse greater levels of giving across London.
- **Contribute to contemporary debates** within the charitable sector on the complex challenges facing Londoners and **amplify the voices of London's communities** in these discussions.
- **Commit to continuous improvement**, striving for greater transparency, equity and accountability in our funding practices and participate in initiatives that hold us to account.

Embedded across our work is a commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and climate action, which are fundamental to what we do.

2. Our role as a social justice funder

Bridging London's vision is of a Capital that is truly connected, a city where all individuals and communities can thrive, particularly those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. This is a vision of social justice that infuses everything CBF does – guiding the world-class charitable funding we deliver, aligned with our values of service, collaboration, inclusion, innovation and ambition.

For CBF, being a social justice funder means prioritising the empowerment of people and communities in the Capital directly affected by inequality and injustice, to play a central role in shaping the future we all want to see. It also means recognising the need to tackle the root causes of inequality, so that ultimately no intervention (allocating resources or opportunities) is necessary for the achievement of equal outcomes.

For CBF, social justice involves both the process and the impact related to the pursuit of **equity** (the distribution of resources and equality of outcomes), **empowerment** (equal access to systems of power), and **rights** (access to dignity and rights). For us, it means supporting efforts to tackle the underlying systems that cause injustice.

CBF recognises that systems change is a complex and long-term process. As a funder, it is vital we offer support to people and communities impacted by injustices who need help now, balancing this with funding toward long-term prevention and solutions.

Achieving impact and change at scale, requires meaningful, intentional coordination across a field's actors — by 'field' we mean all the stakeholders working to address common social justice issues. We want to play our part, through our funding, our investments and our activities, to support the field's mission and movements. We will do this by **Meeting needs, connecting communities** and **catalysing change**. Activities funded in each of these areas, form part of a continuum of effort towards social justice.

For the next decade, we will work on four priority areas – **climate justice, racial justice, economic justice** and **access to justice**. Within and across these four areas are some of the most critical issues facing London's most disadvantaged and marginalised communities. They are vital entry points to combat inequality and achieve social justice.

Our funding processes and practices will adapt to the needs of those whose work we seek to support. We will listen more, deepen our relationships and work alongside our strategic partners in London's communities, funded organisations and the wider sector.

3. Our funding priorities

City Bridge Foundation commits to playing its part, through our funding, our investments and our activities, in building the fields, missions and movements that drive both the impact and scale of change.

Framework for Change

We will deploy resources through grants, 'funder plus', social investment and enterprise support, to support the following activities:

- **Connecting Communities**, through funding civil society infrastructure, building capacity, networks and convening;
- **Meeting Needs**, through funding advice, support and crisis interventions;
- **Catalysing Change**, funding advocacy, campaigns and community organising.

Across City Bridge Foundation, we will also **Stand with Londoners** by using our voice, assets and networks to advocate for social justice across our priority areas. We have a unique trustee in the City of London Corporation which will strengthen our ability to influence key stakeholders and mobilise resources across the capital to support those we fund to achieve their goals.

A fairer London

City Bridge Foundation has identified four visions for a fairer London around which we will shape and develop our future funding programmes; **climate justice, racial justice, economic justice and access to justice**.

Climate justice seeks to create fair and equitable opportunities for all communities to thrive in a changing climate. It recognises the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues, advocating for sustainable solutions that benefit everyone.

Climate justice highlights how communities already facing systemic inequalities are hit hardest by climate change, environmental hazards and pollution. These impacts deepen existing disparities, particularly affecting minoritised groups, children in deprived areas, older adults, disabled people and low-income households.

Climate justice means delivering equitable solutions that not only address the immediate impacts of climate change but also tackle the root causes of environmental harm and social inequality. It emphasises the importance of empowering communities to organise and advocate for a just transition as London works towards sustainability and net-zero goals.

Access to justice ensures that everyone, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised communities, can seek support and redress to access their rights, through formal and informal means.

People should be supported to find solutions to issues whether through civil, legal or community-based processes without facing barriers like cost, discrimination or complexity.

Access to justice supports people by helping them navigate systems that should offer protection, freedom and rights on a range of issues, for example, housing, social security, employment, immigration and criminal justice.

It includes empowering organisations and communities to organise and advocate for approaches to address systemic barriers and tackle the root causes of these issues to prevent them from arising in the first place.

Racial justice* is about creating a society where systemic and historical inequalities based on 'race' are not only addressed but transformed. It goes

beyond simply opposing racism and processes of racialisation — it is a core part of social justice, focusing on collective action to dismantle systemic racial inequalities. It promotes policies that address disparities in areas such as employment, housing, education, mental health and the criminal justice system.

Achieving racial justice also requires understanding that race is a social construct and experiences of racialisation intersect with other identities, such as gender and class, creating different forms of oppression. Addressing these intersecting inequalities is essential to creating a racially just society.

City Bridge Foundation will explore opportunities to address historic barriers and underfunding of racial justice work in London.

Economic justice refers to the fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and economic benefits, ensuring that all Londoners — regardless of their background or circumstances — can thrive.

Achieving economic justice in London requires targeted policies that dismantle systemic inequalities and barriers rooted in race, gender, class, disability, and other intersecting identities.

This could include approaches to tackle poverty, reduce income gaps and wealth inequalities such as ensuring the real living wage, protecting workers' rights and guaranteeing access to social security, housing, and social protections.

** Race and racial justice is a contested term. Whilst we will consult and engage on all our funding policy programmes, we are particularly mindful of the need to work closely with partners and experts in the field to define our goals, funding practice and programmes in relation to racial justice.*

We will deploy our Framework for Change to deliver this – **Connecting Communities, Meeting Needs, Catalysing Change and Standing with Londoners.**



Implementation and iteration of our funding policy is key. City Bridge Foundation will continue to build its knowledge and networks to focus on finding solutions to tackle inequality in London at a systemic level. To achieve lasting change, we will work closely with communities, civil society, funders and key partners to co-produce and adapt our programmes over the next ten years.

Our cross-cutting priorities

Bridging London 2020 – 2045 commits CBF to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and climate action.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is fundamental to our approach in tackling inequality and delivering social justice for marginalised Londoners. This includes identities such as race, disability, religion, socioeconomic background, gender and sexuality. Intersectionality is also taken into account, recognising a range of intersecting identities including factors such as migration status, disability or age, which can affect the types of discrimination or unfair treatment faced by communities and individuals.

We are working to embed EDI in the design and delivery of all our activities, promoting the representation and participation of marginalised and underrepresented groups. This includes embedding an inclusion and equity lens across our funding practice. Where appropriate, we will build on the work of Anchor and Suicide Prevention programmes to co-produce with experts by experience, ensuring lived experience informs how we work and what we fund.

EDI is not just a moral imperative—it's a strategic necessity that strengthens our role as a funder and drives us closer to achieving our mission to create lasting, transformative change.

Climate action and sustainability is embedded across all our work, including bridge management, funding and investments. We want to play a leading role in the transition to net zero and in building climate resilience for London and Londoners.

We have signed up to the ambitious Climate Action Strategy of our trustee, the City of London Corporation, which commits us to reaching net zero in our operations by 2027 and across our investments by 2040. We are also a signatory to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, managed by the Association of Charitable Foundations.

4. Impact and learning

Impact and learning are fundamental elements of the Future Funding Policy, ensuring CBF measures and understands the impact of its funding. We have bold ambitions as a social justice funder and will put in place processes to help us continue to learn and adapt over the next ten years to serve London and Londoners.

Our impact and learning framework will cover all aspects of this policy, including how we fund and the impact of our funding practice, the four emerging justice areas, legacy and transition arrangements, crisis interventions and funder plus.

Key elements of our approach:

- **Theory of change:** Tendering sector partners to develop theories of change for the FFP, including each justice area, defining clear impact goals, outcomes, measures and data collection approaches so we can understand the change we want to make and how we will achieve this.
- **Sharing our learning:** Openly share and learn from our successes and challenges along the way, evolving our offer and approaches to learning which complement our systems change focus.
- **Insight and analysis:** Baseline and continuously improve the funding team culture, by making better use of the insights we capture using external quality standards such as the Foundation Practise Rating and IVAR's Open and Trusting Grant making.
- **Learning and networking for funded groups:** Deliver high-quality learning and networking activities for funded organisations and London's civil society. These will be carefully devised to meet the support and skills needs of groups so they can strengthen their capacity and achieve the best outcomes for Londoners.
- **Maintaining a learning ethos:** Develop the funding team's learning ethos, making learning everybody's business and sharing knowledge better. This will include a comprehensive learning programme prioritising skills and knowledge needed for the initial stages of the FFP, building understanding of systems change, field building, the new assessment and support approach, as well as ongoing learning about the emerging justice areas. Elements of the programme will be extended to other CBF teams and Members.

5. Our funding offer

CBF will offer a range of funding and support options designed to enhance the capacity and resilience of funded organisations. We will prioritise organisations led by and for members of the communities they serve, that are experiencing specific forms of disadvantage and marginalisation; and efforts that deliver impactful outcomes for Londoners.

Our practice and processes will continue to evolve over the lifetime of this policy, responding to feedback, learning, best practice and needs.

- **Our grants:** We will prioritise long-term, core and unrestricted funding wherever possible and appropriate. The majority of our grants will be 3-5 years in length, with some longer grants. Micro-grants and project-based funding will also be

available, recognising that some activities or groups will find short-term or targeted support more appropriate.

- **A more equitable funder:** Our funding will accommodate the needs of marginalised groups by directing more of our time and resource towards their support, through differentiated application and grant management pathways. We will introduce greater flexibility in how we receive applications, e.g. accepting non-written formats for those with disabilities or for whom English is not a first language. We will also engage in proactive outreach to ensure we reach communities and organisations that have been overlooked historically, targeting equity-led groups and grassroots organisations.
- **Our approach to risk:** We are developing how we assess and manage risk in our funding practice, realising the values of CBF's overarching strategy, Bridging London.
- **High service standards:** We are committed to building effective relationships with the organisations and sectors with which we work. CBF will engage more proactively with the sector through outreach; we will offer pre-application calls, and constructive feedback to groups that are unsuccessful. We aim to be responsive to feedback, applicants' needs and sector developments.
- **Assessment process:** We will streamline our application and assessment processes to be faster, more efficient and inclusive. As part of our journey to adopting a more equitable approach to funding, we will move to a two-stage application process. We will also explore opportunities to integrate lived experience into our grant-making practice.
- **Improved service levels, transparency and accountability:** We will continue to consult widely with our stakeholders, regularly reviewing and refining our funding offer, ensuring our priorities respond to the needs of London's communities. We will publish data about our funding activity, and we will introduce a regular applicant and grantee satisfaction survey.
- **Collaborations:** We will build, sustain and leverage partnerships across different sectors, working collaboratively with other funders, joining or leading funding initiatives that draw on our collective strengths and assets to work together.

Social investments and social enterprise

CBF's social investment work falls under the new funding policy. Our offer will align with the proposed four justice areas and ambitions, as well as the framework for change.

We will apply relevant commitments from our broader funding offer where appropriate, recognising that it is likely different organisations at different stages of their development will seek repayable as opposed to grant finance. As we have to date, CBF will continue to work closely with other funders in its social investment activities.

Funder plus

City Bridge Foundation's Funder Plus offer (previously called the Bridge Programme), has long provided essential support to help organisations build resilience and adapt to changing circumstances. Funder Plus will evolve to align with our justice priorities and reflect the skills, capabilities, and systemic approaches

needed to address London's most pressing challenges. This transformation will embed CBF's cross-cutting themes of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Climate, while maintaining a focus on critical areas such as suicide prevention training. Our Funder Plus offer will continue to adapt to meet the needs of funded organisations and the wider sector:

- **Future-focused skills development:** Expanding support to include skills in advocacy, storytelling, policy engagement systems thinking empowering organisations to amplify their impact and address systemic challenges.
- **Enhanced peer-based learning:** Building peer networks and communities of practice to encourage collaboration, shared learning, and co-creation.
- **Embedding environmental sustainability:** Retaining eco audit principles as a key component, alongside initiatives to help organisations integrate sustainable practices into their work.
- **Strengthening connections:** Empower the team to play a pivotal role in connecting organisations with tailored support and resources, enabling them to thrive and contribute to systemic change.
- **Field building:** Place greater emphasis on strengthening connections across organisations, funders and communities to catalyse collective action and systemic change.

Crisis and Emergency

During times of crisis and emergency CBF will build on its extensive reputation as an agile and responsive funder. We will allocate a ring-fenced budget for a Crisis and Emergency Fund, to allow for timely and effective responses to crisis and emergencies that impact Londoners and/or London's voluntary sector.

Applying our learning from previous crises including the Grenfell fire, Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, CBF will:

- Work closely with other funders and the sector to enable collaboration and, where appropriate, pool funds, to ensure resources are deployed effectively.
- Support one-off timebound initiatives in support of communities and organisations prioritised or funded under our funding policy. Funding will be used where there is an urgent need and where immediate funding is essential to Londoners or the voluntary sector.
- Allocate funds proactively as emergencies develop for new or significantly escalating situations that pose substantial risks to the well-being of Londoners and the sustainability of London's voluntary sector. These could be London specific, national or international but must be affecting Londoners significantly.

6. Conclusion

City Bridge Foundation has long supported infrastructure and connection in London – both through our bridges and over the last three decades, our charitable funding. With thirty years' experience as a funder, we know our funding alone will not achieve the change we want to see. Such change will need concerted effort and collaboration

across London's civil society, charities, communities, funders, government and business.

This funding policy marks a critical step forward in City Bridge Foundation's journey as a social justice funder. Building upon the work of our previous funding policy, Bridging Divides, and guided by the charity's vision in *Bridging London 2020 - 2045*, it sets a clear direction for the next decade. Our focus will be on systems change, while also meeting needs, in order to address key social justice issues. We will deliver this through collaboration and coordination across London's civil society, charities, communities, funders, government and business.

Our Framework for Change will ensure that our approach is aligned with the evolving needs of the communities we serve. By supporting them and the wider social justice movement, we will play our part in delivering greater impact towards the vision of London we have committed to.

We have bold ambitions as a social justice funder and will continue to learn and adapt over the next ten years to serve London and Londoners. As we move into the implementation phase of this funding policy - pending approval from the Funding Committee, CBF's Board and the Court of Common Council - we will continue to refine our strategies to ensure equity and effectiveness in our funding.

This marks an exciting new chapter in our mission to drive lasting change and support organisations and communities working on the frontlines of social justice in London. City Bridge Foundation will stand shoulder to shoulder with London's communities, its change-makers and visionaries.