

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee – For decision	Dated: 25/06/2025
Subject: Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund – Applications for Decision	Public
This proposal delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Engaged Community • Vibrant Thriving Destination • Flourishing Public Spaces 	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Simon Latham, Interim Managing Director of City Bridge Foundation	For Decision
Report author: Sheena Etches, Funding Manager, Central Funding and Charity Management Team	

Summary

The City Corporation adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2014. National CIL Regulations require that 15% of CIL receipts be reserved for neighbourhood funding. Management of the City of London's Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF) process is aligned with the City's existing grant allocation process through the Central Funding & Charity Management Team (CFCMT). Members are asked to make decisions on CILNF Officer Panel recommendations from their meeting in May 2025, and to note the grants approved under delegated authority from February 2025 when this Sub-Committee was in recess.

Recommendations

Members are recommended:

1. To note the current position of the CILNF with respect to funds available.
2. To approve the grant recommended at the meeting of the CILNF Officer Panel in May 2025 (**Appendix 3**): £246,479 to Volunteer Centre Hackney (£122,105 Year One; £124,374 Year Two) to deliver two 2-year strategic programmes - Community Befriending for residents experiencing loneliness and isolation and Volunteering Brokerage to increase volunteering opportunities and grow and strengthen the City of London's voluntary community sector.
3. To note the grants approved under delegated authority whilst this Committee was in recess (**Appendix 4**).

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2014. National CIL Regulations require that 15% of CIL receipts be reserved for neighbourhood funding. Local authorities are required to engage with communities on how this neighbourhood funding should be used to support development of the area, and are required to report annually on the collection and use of CIL funds, identifying separately the amount of funds allocated to neighbourhood funding. The Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF) application process is managed by the Central Funding & Charity Management Team (CFCMT). Community priorities for the CILNF were established in January 2024 through extensive public consultation. Funded applications must meet at least one of the Community Priorities, be delivered within the City of London and benefit City of London residents and/or City of London workers.
2. An Officer Panel drawing expertise from Senior Officers from across City of London services assess applications and provide support to Committee in the consideration of larger applications. The administrative cost incurred in operating the CILNF is recoverable from the 5% of City of London CIL funds allowed to cover such costs in the Regulations.
3. The City of London's CILNF Funding Policy is set out at **Appendix 1**. Since the launch of the City of London's CILNF in September 2020, Members and Officers have worked together to commit £9,978,009 in funding to City communities.

Financial year	Funds committed as at 3.6.2025
2020/21	£484,231
2021/22	£1,906,663
2022/23	£2,982,964
2023/24	£1,606,600
2024/25	£2,766,995
2025/26	£230,556

4. The balance of the General CILNF and Barbican & Golden Lane Neighbourhood Funds as at 3 June 2025 was £8,102,464 with a grant for £246,479 being presented to this Sub-Committee for decision. Since the launch of the new Community Priorities, the CFCMT has been actively undertaking outreach work to support applications from grassroots and community organisations seeking to deliver services in the City of London. The team are currently working with 18 organisations who are in the process of submitting applications with an estimated ask of £1.44m and a further 27 organisations who are developing grant bids for an estimated £960k.

Current Position

5. Management of the City of London's CILNF process is aligned with the City's existing grant allocation process, through the CFCMT. Applications to the CILNF undergo a process of due diligence and assessment by Funding Managers with

detailed financial assessment undertaken by the Charity Finance Team before sign off by the Funding Director. (Details of the assessment process and Funding Officer Panel are provided at **Appendix 2**). Eligible applications are then presented to the CILNF Officer Panel for recommendation or delegated decision. The CILNF Officer Panel comprises of 11 Senior Officers from across the spectrum of CoL Services (Community & Children's Services, Libraries, Environment, Planning, Green Spaces, Town Clerk's, Chamberlain's, EEDI, Culture) and is chaired by the Assistant Director - Planning. At the Officer Panel consideration is given to each proposal's outputs and outcomes, value for money in terms of social, environmental as well as financial value and equality considerations.

6. As agreed at your Sub-Committee on 22 February 2024, CILNF Officer Panel was given delegated authority to approve applications for up to £100,000 with decisions for all applications above £100,000 to be undertaken by this Sub-Committee. This delegation was agreed to keep CFCMT decision-making in line with the increased delegations across CoLC. Importantly, it also allows for the quick (12 week) turnaround of smaller grants to community and grassroots organisations to increase the diversity of applicants to the CILNF programme, with the decision-making for grants for over £100,000 taking up to 6 months. As agreed at your Sub-Committee on 3 February 2025 delegated authority was given to the Town Clerk to consider two specific CILNF applications of £100+k, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman whilst this Sub-Committee was in recess.
7. At its meetings in May 2025, the CILNF OP considered a strategic application from Volunteer Centre Hackney that had been developed in collaboration with Officers from Community & Children's Services and are recommending that members approve the application for funding. A full assessment report is available at **Appendix 3**.
8. Volunteer Centre Hackney (VCH) is seeking funding to launch two new bespoke programmes for the City of London to address social isolation and improve the mental health of older residents and those with caring responsibilities and to build a strong volunteer network for the City. Both programmes are strategically important for the City of London. The Community Befriending programme, through its focus on addressing social isolation and improving mental health will substantially contribute to the delivery of the City's Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-28.
9. VCH's Volunteer Brokerage programme is also of significant strategic importance, given it will be instrumental in strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of the City's Voluntary & Community Sector. Through a separate CILNF application the City has established the VCSquared Network bringing together voluntary and community organisations working in the City of London and those interested in bringing their services to the City of London. VCH's Volunteer Brokerage is the next step in developing this sector providing local volunteers to increase organisational capacity to meet City based demand for services and activities. The proposal strongly meets the CILNF priority to address the needs of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, minoritised communities, older people, and those living in poverty firstly by supporting City residents who are identified as isolated to access activities and services and

secondly through volunteer development to increase the capacity of the organisations delivering these services.

10. Funding is recommended as follows: £246,479 to Volunteer Centre Hackney (£122,105 Year One; £124,374 Year Two) to deliver two 2-year strategic programmes - Community Befriending for residents experiencing loneliness and isolation and Volunteering Brokerage to increase volunteering opportunities and grow and strengthen the City of London's voluntary community sector.
11. A schedule of the grant decisions that were made under delegated authority by the CILNF OP during this Sub-Committee's recess is available in **Appendix 4** for information.
12. Members should note that during Committee recess two applications over the £100,000 threshold were considered under delegated authority (Ozero Arts and XLP) which had been highlighted at RASC in February as needing decisions before its next meeting in July.
13. In relation to the proposal from Ozero Arts, the CILNF Officer Panel initially recommended a grant over a 3 year period but highlighted some concerns as part of the assessment. Mitigations were recommended which would have required more Officer time spent on managing the grant. The Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of RASC initially rejected the application.
14. After some discussion and given that the project met the criteria of the fund, it was agreed that one year of funding of £85,590 to support the costs of Classical Pride 2025 would be offered subject to various conditions being met. An update on the progress of this grant can be provided at the meeting of the Sub-Committee.
15. In response to the CILNF outreach work there has been a 61% increase in the number of CILNF grants awarded during 2024/25 compared to the previous year and a 72% increase in the total value of funds awarded. This reflects the increase in pre-application advice sessions which have more than tripled each month. The outreach programme is still in full swing and a further increase in the number of funded applications and funds distributed is anticipated with larger, longer-term funding requests to support successful CILNF-funded pilot projects.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. **Strategic Plan Implications:** The CILNF can resource community-led infrastructure improvements and activity across the City and contribute towards meeting the four aims of the Corporate Plan 2024-29 - Diverse Engaged Communities, Providing Excellent Services, Vibrant Thriving Destination and Flourishing Public Spaces.
17. **Financial Implications:** The CILNF makes use of that proportion of City CIL monies which are required by statute to be used to assist in the delivery of new infrastructure to meet community needs (15% of CIL funds). The costs of management of the grant application process is met through the 5% of CIL funds set aside by statute to cover CIL administration.
18. **Resource Implications:** None
19. **Legal Implications:** None

20. **Risk Implications:** None

21. **Equalities implications:** The CIL Neighbourhood Fund and revised CILNF Policy have been subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment. The Equalities Impact Assessment has concluded that there are no adverse impacts arising for equality groups and social mobility. The CFCMT has developed an Equalities Action Plan outlining the actions it will take to improve the positive equalities impact of the CILNF.

22. **Climate implications:** None

23. **Security Implications:** The CILNF fulfils a statutory requirement for the spending of CIL. There are no direct security implications, though future funded projects may bring security benefits.

Conclusion

24. Community Infrastructure Levy legislation requires local authorities to reserve between 15% and 25% of CIL receipts for neighbourhood funding. The CILNF application process is managed by the City Corporation's CFCMT, with the CILNF Officer Panel assessing applications and providing support to Committee in the consideration of larger applications. Members are asked to approve the grant award recommended and note the delegated decisions of the CILNF Officer Panel whilst this Sub-Committee was in recess.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – CIL Neighbourhood Fund Policy (Nov 2004)
- Appendix 2 – Summary of CILNF grant assessment process & Officer Panel membership
- Appendix 3 – CILNF Assessment Pack May 2025: Volunteer Centre Hackney
- Appendix 4 – CILNF Applications Approved and Rejected under Delegated Authority February 2025 to May 2025 whilst RASC was in recess

Background Papers

Report to Policy & Resources Committee 02/05/2019: City of London Community Infrastructure Levy – Approval of Neighbourhood Fund

Report to Policy & Resources Committee 22/02/2024: Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund – Approval of updated Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund Policy

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