



**Review of Bridging
Divides:
Year One, 2018-19
April 2019**

**We are an award-winning
social enterprise that helps
people and places to thrive.**



Background

City Bridge Trust's ambition for Bridging Divides is to be 'a strategy that learns and adapts'. In support of this ambition, following a competitive tendering process Renaishi were commissioned in February 2018 as Learning Partner to the Bridging Divides strategy to act as a critical friend, and help the Trust to learn from its work in real time

About Renaishi

Renaishi is an award-winning social enterprise.

Over the past year we have supported the team to learn and reflect on the Bridging Divides strategy and implementation process, as well as to further refine and develop some elements of the strategy. This paper draws together reflections gained through this work, as well as through interviews with members of the Committee, Leadership team, and a workshop with other team members, to inform this report.

Overview of Bridging Divides strategy

Bridging Divides is City Bridge Trust's five-year strategy, launched in April 2018 and in place until 2023. The strategy was developed over 9 months in collaboration with the civil society sector through interviews, focus groups and consultation. The strategy includes seven key pillars:

- a. City Bridge Trust's Vision and Mission
- b. City Bridge Trust's Values
- c. What City Bridge Trust will fund
- d. Funder plus support
- e. City Bridge Trust's Toolbox
- f. Defining success
- g. A strategy that learns and adapts.



Summary

This report provides a review of progress in implementing the Bridging Divides strategy in its first year (2018-19). It includes an overview of what has been achieved so far, challenges experienced in the transition from the previous strategy, and key areas of learning. The first section considers progress made against each pillar of the strategy (described above and in Appendix A). The second section outlines our reflections on the key factors and challenges affecting the implementation period, and the third section provides a more detailed analysis of the applications received under Bridging Divides so far.

Despite challenges, there have been some notable achievements in the first year:

- The Trust's three main funding programmes are in place, and have been well received by the sector (see below)
- Issues arising in the first year are being addressed, and there is a sense of returning to stability after a period of change
- The team is now approaching full capacity, and interviewees we have spoken to recently expressed a sense of optimism about what can be achieved in the coming year

Table 1 summarises the status of each pillar of the Bridging Divides strategy, described in more detail in the main report.

Table 1: Progress towards implementation of each pillar of Bridging Divides

Pillar of Bridging Divides	Completed	In progress	Still to do
Vision and mission	Vision is in place		
Values	Six values are in place	Implementation of values in practice	
What CBT funds	Main funding programmes launched	Review of demand and implications of high application numbers for funding budget Theory of Change to be completed in July 2019	Response to issue of high demand will be needed Establish process to continually monitor what is being funded, feedback from organisations receiving funding, and to make changes accordingly
Funder Plus support	Two Funder Plus delivery partners have been commissioned Funder Plus learning partner has been appointed	New Funder Plus support offer under development and due to be launched this year	



Toolbox: How CBT funds	<p>Small grants offer and five-year funding now available</p> <p>Two rounds of 'Ideas Please' run</p>	<p>Work to align funding and support offered with the Philanthropy Strategy are underway</p> <p>Review of small grants to date to be presented to July Committee</p>	Core funding offer under review and due to be revised this year
Total assets approach	Some instances of funded organisations accessing wider Trust/Corporation assets have taken place	<p>Volunteer Manager has been appointed</p> <p>Draft directory of assets processed and 'in progress' meetings with Chief Officers of relevant departments underway</p>	
Defining success		Theory of Change due to be finalised in November 2019	Impact and Learning Strategy, including outcomes KPIs, due to be completed in November 2019
A strategy that learns and adapts	<p>Renaishi in place as Learning Partner</p> <p>Head of Learning and Impact post filled</p>		



Section one: Progress towards each pillar of the Strategy

Vision and mission

What has been achieved

City Bridge Trust's organisational vision and mission were reviewed and agreed in advance of the launch of Bridging Divides. These are set out in the Bridging Divides strategy document and on the Trust's website. There is consensus amongst the Trust's team members that the refreshed ambitions articulated in the vision and mission remain right for the organisation.

Work still to complete

Whilst the overall ambition articulated in the vision and mission feels appropriate, we recommend that the language used to describe the Trust's mission ('to grow more cohesive communities') is amended.

Internal consultation with the Trust's team, and desk-based research into external literature, has highlighted that the concept of 'community cohesion' is contested, and does not adequately communicate what the Trust intended to convey as its mission. This is because the term is strongly associated with ethnic or racial groups rather than all types of social groups and has connotations of a one-sided process where only certain groups are expected to 'cohere'.

Our paper on inequality and community cohesion, dated January 2019, provides more detailed information on this point and notes various alternative terms, including 'stronger communities', 'thriving communities', 'resilient communities', 'social integration', and 'social inclusion'. Therefore, alternative language for the Trust's mission statement has been agreed. The mission statement is now: *to 'reduce inequality and grow stronger, more resilient and thriving communities for a London that serves everyone'.*

Values

What has been achieved

Bridging Divides sets out an ambition for the Trust to be a values and mission-led funder. The strategy outlines six values, which are shown in Appendix A.

Renaishi has reviewed these values, with the aim of supporting the Trust to better 'live' them in practice. This work was commissioned to ensure that the Trust achieves its aim of being values-led, and in response to feedback from the team who support the ambition but feel unclear on how to implement the values in their day-to-day roles.



To inform this work, we have interviewed nine members of the City Bridge Trust team and Committee. Other team and Committee Members were able to contribute via an online survey. City Bridge Trust is in the process of implementing the amended values as a “golden thread” through all its activities.

What City Bridge Trust funds

What has been achieved

Bridging Divides sets out five funding priorities. Three of these have been developed into funding programmes: Connecting the Capital, Positive Transitions, and Advice and Support. These funding programmes were ready to launch in April 2018 and interviewees were satisfied that they are appropriate and have been well received by the sector.

As of the end of March 2019, 370 applications for funding have been received under Bridging Divides (including eco audits and small grants, as well as the three main programmes). This compares to 67 received in the first year, and 181 in the final year, of Investing in Londoners. Despite these high application rates and the challenges outlined in section two of this report, the Trust has been able to keep these funding programmes open.

The remaining two funding priorities are being considered as overarching: ‘Reducing Inequalities’, and ‘Every Voice Counts’. There is consensus that these principles are important, however it is currently unclear where these ‘sit’ and how they relate to other elements of the strategy, in particular the vision, mission and values.

Work still to complete

Renaissi has worked with the City Bridge Trust team to develop a Theory of Change which will help to address the question of how the overarching funding priorities relate to the other elements of the Trust’s strategy and approach. The Theory of Change is in draft and will be further developed by the end of 2019

Funder Plus support

What has been achieved

The Trust has provided funder plus support for many years and continues to fund the Cranfield Trust to offer their Thrive programme, as well as funding the eco audit programme. The ambition of Bridging Divides is to make the Trust’s offer more coordinated, and better tailored to the specific needs of individual organisations.

In pursuit of this ambition, a new Funder Plus support offer is in development. Cranfield Trust and Locality have been appointed in a triage and connector role, with Rocket Science commissioned as the learning partner. The offer has been developed collaboratively with other funders, support providers and in consultation with the sector. This process has been



positive. However, the collaborative approach has meant implementation has been slower than might otherwise have been possible.

Work still to complete

The new Funder Plus offer will be tested and adapted in response to feedback from organisations receiving support. Funder Plus is intended to be a foundation on which additional support using the Trust and Corporation's assets, and employee volunteering, can be built (see below).

Toolbox: How City Bridge Trust funds

What has been achieved

Bridging Divides represents a significant change in how City Bridge Trust funds. Changes have been made incrementally, and overall interviewees were satisfied with progress. However substantial work remains for the ambitions outlined in the strategy to be fully realised.

The Trust now offers small grants as well as longer-term funding (up to five years). Interviewees were satisfied that these new funding offers have been well received by the sector and are meeting a clear need. A review of small grants to date will be presented to July committee with recommendations for future development, with a view to extending the reach of this funding and working collaboratively with other small grant funders

The Trust also offers core funding and a small number of core funding grants have been made to date. Whilst there is a clear need and appetite for core funding in the sector, the team are not satisfied with how this funding offer was initially designed (tapered over the number of years offered, which usually makes the total offer lower in value than project funding, and therefore less attractive to applicants).

Work still to complete

Core funding has attracted increased interest by funders in recent months, but debates are ongoing on how best to offer this type of support (see for example Esmée Fairbairn's [recent report](#) on the topic). A review led by one of the Trust's Funding Managers is currently underway to improve the Trust's core funding offer, drawing on research into other funders' approaches to core funding. Most applicants are being advised to apply for project funding whilst the review is taking place. Once the core funding offer is re-defined and re-launched, we recommend that the Trust analyses application statistics and seeks feedback from applicants to ensure that this offer is meeting the needs of the sector.



Total assets approach

What has been achieved

Bridging Divides outlines an ambition for City Bridge Trust to have a 'total assets' approach to achieving its vision. That means taking advantage of our Trustee's assets to help us achieve our mission. This approach represents a significant change to the previous strategy.

Implementing this approach has involved two key strands of work. The Trust's Director is leading a strategic piece of work centred on supporting the Corporation to be the best possible Trustee to support delivery of the strategy. As part of this work, the Bridge House Estates Strategy and Review group is taking forward discussions on how to advance the governance and impact of the charity. This work is ongoing and through deepening the understanding and connections with the City of London Corporation as trustee, is a good foundation for the total assets approach.

The second strand of work involves mapping the Trust's and Corporation's assets (including expertise, networks, venues, training and other non-financial resources) that could be used to further support the sector. Several instances of funded organisations accessing opportunities to utilise Corporation assets (including meeting rooms and events venues) have already taken place. A draft directory of assets has been developed and will be completed this year.

Work still to be completed

The Trust has appointed a Volunteer Manager role responsible for coordinating employee volunteering opportunities, harnessing the skills of the Corporation's workforce for the benefit of funded organisations. This role will facilitate a further key element of the Trust's total assets approach.

For the total assets approach to be fully embedded, Funding Managers and others in the team will need to be proactive in making opportunities known to funded organisations, as well as aware of what opportunities exist and how these can be accessed. This shift in approach is an ongoing process, which has been easier for those with deeper connections and knowledge of the Corporation.

Defining success

What has been achieved so far

The Bridging Divides strategy defines success in terms of progress towards implementing the principles and ambitions it represents, in particular the new approach to funding, working collaboratively, using the Trust's total assets base and sharing learning. However, the strategy does not define specific measures or indicators of success.



Work still to complete

As noted above, Renaishi have developed a draft Theory of Change with members of the City Bridge Trust team, which is due to be completed later this year. A key ambition of this work is to develop clearer outcomes for the Trust's work so that it is easier to more objectively review the success of the strategy. The Theory of Change and outcomes will be presented to the Committee at an appropriate date in the coming year.

In November 2019, the recently appointed co-Heads of Impact and Learning are due to complete the Trust's first Impact and Learning Strategy, which will also address these questions, as well as outlining how to share learning about the Trust's approach with the wider sector.

A strategy that learns and adapts

What has been achieved so far

Renaishi have been supporting the Trust as Learning Partner for just over one year. We have now engaged with almost every member of the team at least once (with only those who have been recently appointed not having engaged to date). We have been able to contribute additional capacity, insights from similar work with other organisations, and specific areas of expertise, at key points in the year – particularly to help develop the Theory of Change work, the review of values currently underway, and the research for our paper on inequality and community cohesion.

Our role became easier once dedicated resource was in place to provide support and regular engagement (the co-Heads of Impact and Learning were appointed in October 2018 and February 2019). It took some time for us to get to know the Trust as an organisation and as a team, and to gain a sense of momentum behind our work. In the second year, we hope to continue to dedicate time to facilitate reflection and shared learning amongst team members in furtherance of the aim for Bridging Divides to be a strategy that learns and adapts.

The first year of Bridging Divides was dominated by the implementation process, and the challenges that that process has raised. This has helped to generate rich learning about how the implementation process could be made easier in future. However, so far there have been limited opportunities to learn about the changes brought about by the strategy, or the work funded by the Trust – the first grants were made in September and it is only recently that substantial numbers of grant awards are starting to come through. Next year we hope to offer more detailed analysis and learning from the outcomes of the strategy, as well as the implementation process.

Work still to complete

In the coming year we will complete the Trust's Theories of Change for 'what' and 'how' it funds, alongside clearer outcomes for the Trust's work. This will help to clarify how the



changes represented by the strategy lead to better outcomes for Londoners and communities, and what data is needed to monitor those outcomes.

We aim to continue embedding in the team, and regularly engage via interviews, facilitated space for reflection, and workshops on specific areas of work, to support our work as Learning Partner. We will also deliver specific pieces of work on a particular theme, for example the applications and grants analysis, as and when the Trust requires this support.

The co-Heads of Impact and Learning will develop an Impact and Learning Strategy, which is due to be presented to Committee in November. This piece of work will help to outline Trust's learning ambitions and how those will be achieved over the remaining period of Bridging Divides. A Data Analyst is also due to be recruited to support this work.



Section two: Challenges affecting the implementation of Bridging Divides

The transition from Investing in Londoners to Bridging Divides was impacted by a number of challenging contextual factors. Not all of these could have been avoided, but together they made the implementation process slower, and at times frustrating to members of the team.

The development of Bridging Divides was led by an external specialist seconded into the Trust

The strategy development process was led by an external secondee from the then Big Lottery Fund. Having the strategy developed by someone external to the Trust's team introduced some trade-offs. On the one hand, the additional capacity and experience brought in was highly valued and meant that the Trust was able to complete an extensive consultation process which would not otherwise have been possible and had never before been achieved to the same extent. However, the development process was perceived as largely separate to the Trust's ongoing work, and the team felt less engaged in the development process as a result.

There was less than three months to implement changes before the launch date

The implementation plan for the new strategy was approved by Committee in January 2018, and the strategy was publicly launched on 19th April that year. This did not leave enough time for the team to adequately plan and prepare for the implementation, which felt rushed.

The first year of Bridging Divides coincided with a staffing/organisational restructure

In 2018 the Trust underwent a restructure, which had been intended to take place before the launch of Bridging Divides, but was delayed. This process of change distracted attention from delivering the changes required by the strategy, and this meant that the implementation process was slower than might otherwise have been possible. The timing of the restructure undoubtedly made the transition to Bridging Divides more challenging and contributed to delays in application approval times (see below).

The nature of Bridging Divides means implementation must be a long-term process

Bridging Divides is not just a set of new funding programmes; it represents several large-scale changes in approach and ways of working. As such, whilst the strategy was launched on 19th April 2018, the implementation process is ongoing and will continue beyond the first year.

The Trust has not been at the required capacity to fully implement the strategy

To achieve the ambition set out in Bridging Divides, the Trust acknowledged that additional capacity would be needed in key roles, including a new Head of Chief Grants Officer's Office, Head of Charity and Philanthropy Communications, and Head of Impact and Learning. It has taken time for those posts to be filled, and it is only now that the team is approaching full capacity (with a new Data Analyst and Volunteer Manager still to be recruited). This factor,

alongside the challenges outlined above, means that the Trust is only now able to fully implement the changes outlined in the strategy.



The end of Investing in Londoners, and the launch of Bridging Divides, both attracted a surge in applications

The end of Investing in Londoners saw a peak in applications, with 148 applications awaiting a decision in May 2018. The first year of Bridging Divides has seen higher than anticipated numbers of applications, and those approved or pending approval now exceed the value of funds available (see below for further detail on this). This has had two effects: due to the high number of grants which need to go through a rigorous financial analysis process, the team, and Funding Managers in particular, experienced higher workloads at a time when the new strategy demanded changes in approach including a more relational and potentially more time intensive approach to grant management; and an increase in wait times for applicants.

In addition, there was no closure period between Investing in Londoners and Bridging Divides. This meant that there was no 'standstill period' in which applications could be processed and staff given time to adjust to the new funding approach. These factors reduced the capacity of the team to make the changes necessary to implement Bridging Divides in practice and contributed to slower progress than hoped.



Section three: Applications and grants analysis

This section provides a summary of applications and grants data for the first year of Bridging Divides, from April 2018 (when Bridging Divides was launched) to March 2019.

Application rates

In total, 428 applications were received to all of the Trust's funding programmes, with a total value of £48.7m. Of these, 317 were to the three main Bridging Divides programmes, with a total requested value of £43.1m. 27 small grants applications were received, totalling £257k requested.

Table 1: Number and value of applications received, by funding type

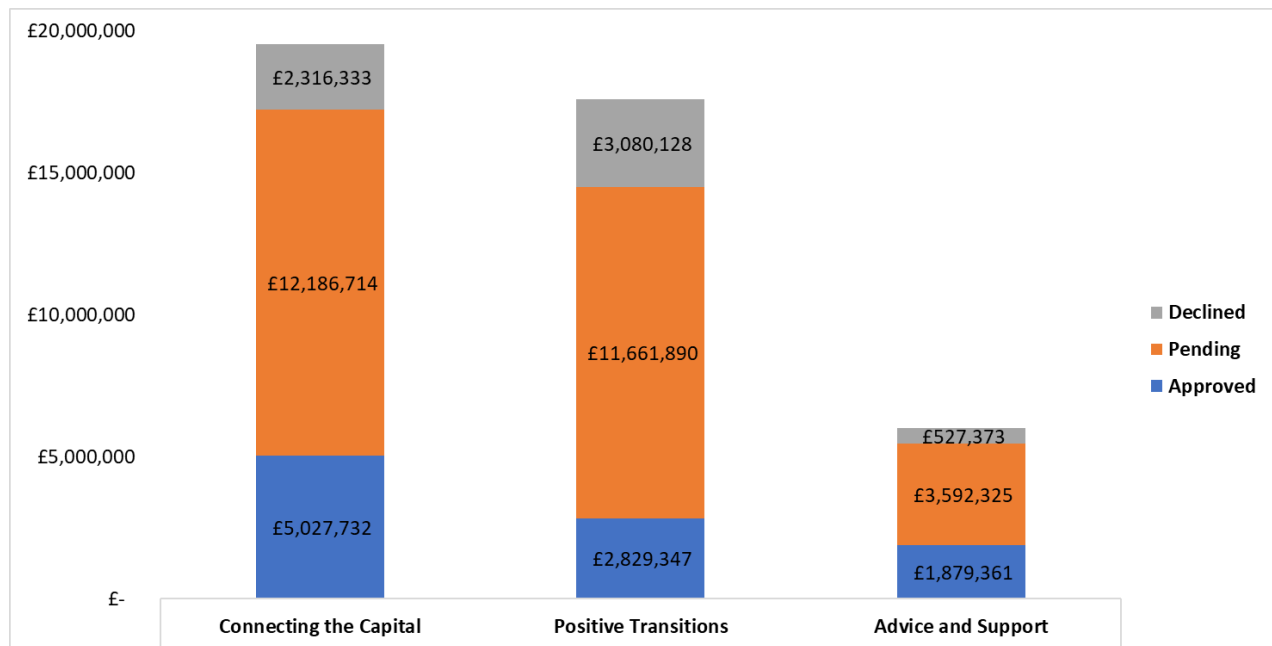
Type	Number of applications	Total £ requested
Bridging Divides - Main programmes	317	£ 43,101,203
Strategic Initiatives	23	£ 3,992,536
Eco Audits	26	£ -
Small Grants	27	£ 256,623
Stepping Stones	35	£ 1,383,836
TOTAL	428	£ 48,734,198

The total number of applications is much higher than the equivalent first year of Investing in Londoners, which saw 67 applications to the main funding programmes in the eight months that applications were open.

Connecting the Capital has been the most popular funding programme so far. This is unsurprising, as it covers the highest number and variations in project types, including access audit grants, capacity building support, and capital funds for access improvements to community buildings. The other two funding programmes, Positive Transitions and Advice and Support, are more targeted in nature and have attracted fewer applications to date.



Figure 1: Value of funding requested by funding programme and disposition



Approved grants

To date, 114 applications have been approved across all of the Trust's funding programmes, with a total value of £12.5m. Of these, 66 applications were approved under the three main Bridging Divides programmes, with a combined value of £9.1m. Eight grants totalling £72k have been approved under the new small grants programme.

Table 2: Number and value of grants approved to date, by funding type

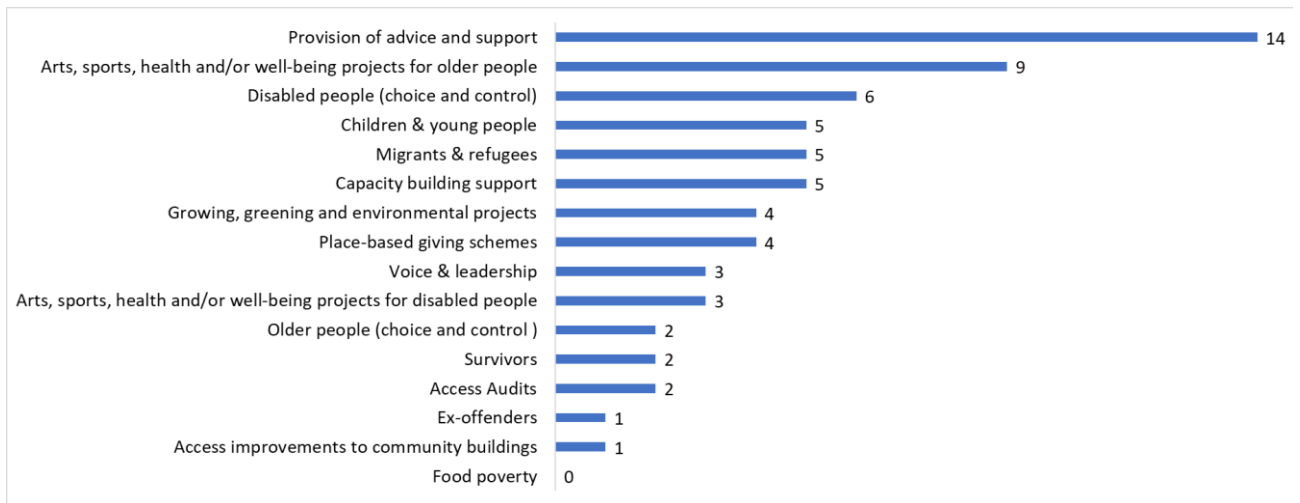
Type	Number of grants	Total grant amount
Bridging Divides - Main programmes	66	£ 9,055,360
Strategic Initiatives	18	£ 2,966,895
Eco Audits	10	£ 25,400
Small Grants	8	£ 72,037
Stepping Stones	12	£ 429,240
TOTAL	114	£ 12,548,932

Project types

The most common type of project funded has been the provision of advice and support (14 grants, under the Advice and Support programme), followed by arts, sports, health or wellbeing projects for older people (9 grants, under Connecting the Capital), and projects giving disabled people choice and control (6 grants, under Positive Transitions). It is too early to tell whether there are any trends in the most or least common projects, or whether certain types of project applications have higher success rates. However, it is notable that Food Poverty has attracted the lowest number of applications (3) and no grants have been made under this project type to date.



Figure 3: Number of grants made under each project type to date



Organisations supported

The distribution of income of the organisations supported under the three main Bridging Divides programmes to date is similar to that seen under Investing in Londoners. The majority of grants made are for medium-sized organisations, with 32 organisations with a turnover between £100k and £500k having been supported so far.

Figure 4: Number of organisations supported under three main Bridging Divides programmes, by income band



The location of organisations supported also shows similar trends to that of Investing in Londoners. Organisations based in Camden have received the highest number of grants to date (15), followed by Lambeth (10), Southwark and Islington (9 each). All these are boroughs where, of course, a number of pan-London or national charities have their HQ.



Figure 5: Number and value of grants made under the three main Bridging Divides programmes, by organisations' borough base

Borough Base	Number of grants	Value of grants
Camden	15	£ 1,773,700
Southwark	9	£ 1,099,000
Hackney	6	£ 938,240
Lambeth	10	£ 903,162
Kensington & Chelsea	4	£ 822,650
Islington	9	£ 712,200
Westminster	4	£ 707,000
City	3	£ 458,000
Tower Hamlets	7	£ 398,740
Greenwich	3	£ 260,000
Redbridge	2	£ 255,900
Newham	4	£ 237,900
Hammersmith & Fulham	2	£ 181,200
Hillingdon	1	£ 175,000
Lewisham	3	£ 140,200
Bromley	2	£ 134,200
Ealing	3	£ 119,775
Outside London	3	£ 118,800
Haringey	3	£ 114,500
Wandsworth	1	£ 86,000
Waltham Forest	1	£ 83,150
Barnet	1	£ 77,320
Richmond	1	£ 70,300
Enfield	1	£ 70,000
Merton	1	£ 69,000
Hounslow	1	£ 63,500
Brent	1	£ 3,000
Barking & Dagenham	0	£ -
Croydon	0	£ -
Harrow	0	£ -
Havering	0	£ -
Kingston	0	£ -
Sutton	0	£ -
Borough not known	13	£ 2,476,495

The primary location of beneficiaries (as identified by organisations granted funding) also follows a similar trend. Most funded activity is for London-wide beneficiaries (33 projects), followed by Camden (6) and Islington (5).

The analysis of applications and grants data to be presented to the July Committee meeting will explore in more detail the types of organisations that have been supported by the Trust, as well as more detailed analysis of early trends in geographical location.

Recommendations



Next strategy development period

In response to the challenges outlined in section one, we suggest that the Trust consider the following recommendations to inform future strategy development and implementation processes.

1. Having an external secondee lead the strategy development process brought real advantages, however we recommend introducing a more structured internal consultation process with members of the City Bridge Trust team to increase engagement in the development phase. This should take place once the overall direction has been laid out but leaving time for staff to influence and help shape the specifics. Internal staff should be delegated roles to 'operationalise' key elements of the strategy relating to their area of work, to test and refine them before the strategy is finalised.
2. We recommend allowing a period of at least six months between the final sign-off of the strategy and the launch date, to allow adequate time to plan and prepare for implementation.
3. We recommend developing a strategy implementation workplan which is shared with the whole team, to outline what changes need to happen, who is leading each change, how the process will be managed and when the changes will take effect.
4. It is unlikely that the next strategy implementation period will coincide with a restructure or similar period of change, which should be avoided if possible.
5. We recommend that the Trust develop a method to model demand for its funding from the sector, firstly to forecast demand in years two to five of Bridging Divides, and secondly to forecast demand for the next strategy period. This could be done in a number of ways, including comparative analysis of previous funding periods, and/or using a similar approach to propensity modelling (for example, by using feedback from organisations to predict how likely they will be to apply for funding). This work could be undertaken by the new Data Analyst role.

Year two of Bridging Divides



These recommendations focus on short- and medium-term actions that arise from the findings in this report and include work that is already underway or due to start imminently.

1. We recommend that together with the co-Heads of Impact and Learning, Renaissi finalise and publish two Theories of Change, one to outline 'what' the Trust funds and clarify the role of the two overarching funding priorities, the other to outline 'how' the Trust funds and what outcomes are expected as a result. These Theories of Change should be brought to Committee for approval at an appropriate date later in the year.
2. The co-Heads of Impact and Learning are developing the Trust's first Impact and Learning Strategy (due November 2019), outlining the Trust's approach to learning and how that learning will be shared with others. We recommend that this draws on the Theories of Change and other relevant work delivered by Renaissi, including our paper on inequality and community cohesion.
3. We recommend that the Trust continually monitor its core funding, small grants and five-year funding offers, and seek feedback from the sector on how well these meet their needs, how easy the application processes are to understand and complete, and whether any improvements can be made. A process should be put in place to make changes if required. This work should be undertaken in the context of the findings of the review into application rates, which may have implications for how many organisations can be offered five-year funding and how decisions about who is funded are taken.
4. The Trust's new Funder Plus offer is due to be launched later this year. We recommend that the Trust shares insights from the development of this offer with other funders, to promote shared learning.
5. We recommend that the Trust offers ongoing training and opportunities for shared reflection to engage and update the wider team on the changes reflected in the above focus areas.

Appendix A: Overview of Bridging Divides Strategy – as of April 2019

