

Midtown Integrated Economic and Public Realm Vision

December 2018

ARUP

Executive Summary

Midtown sits at the heart of London's centre. It is host to over 130,000 of London's workers, and more than 14,000 people call it home.

Midtown is many things to many people:

- **Business and commerce.** It is a vibrant hub of 14,000 businesses and 150,000 employees generating a GVA of £15.7 billion a year. It hosts specialisms in high-value sectors such as head offices and legal and accounting, and sees high growth in the Media and Creative sectors.
- **Tourists.** Midtown is home to the British Museum, the UK's number one tourist attraction with over 6 million annual visitors, as well as leading quality hotels
- **Commuters.** It forms a vital link in their journey to and from work, or to other parts of London. Holborn Station saw over 100,000 daily entries and exits on weekdays in 2017.
- **Residents.** Home to some of the most deprived areas in the country, with an average income of £35,000 per year, above the London average of around £31,000.

Midtown's growth following the 2008 recession demonstrates its expanding contribution to London and the country's economy. Of crucial importance to securing Midtown's potential, Camden's new draft Supplementary Planning Document for Holborn lays out a trajectory of growth and development for Midtown.

For Midtown to reach its potential, investment in sustainable transport modes and the public realm must complement investment in commercial property and homes. The number of workers in the area grew by 12 per cent between 2011- 2016 (Figure 5). Despite some investment, Midtown's amount and quality of public space has lagged behind demand. Connectivity to other parts of London, accessibility in the district, and high quality public spaces, are at risk of holding back growth.

This report, commissioned by Bee Midtown, has been produced by Arup in close collaboration with the London Borough of Camden and the business community of Midtown. It sets out the case for investment in the district.

To build on Midtown's successes, public and private partners must work together to remove the barriers to growth by investing in:

- **Linking businesses** with the rest of London to sustain strong commercial networks
- **Making the most of the Elizabeth line**
- **Growing the leisure offer**, for the benefit of workers, residents and tourists
- **A public realm** that leverages the cultural and heritage assets of the area
- **Managing development** as the area grows, minimising disruption
- **Increasing the extent and quality of pedestrian spaces**, to provide more and better room for people
- **Ensuring pedestrian safety**

- **Reducing congestion** to improve air quality, safety and bus reliability
- **Improving cycling conditions** to encourage active travel

Midtown is a world-class business district but it faces challenges associated with its growth. To maximise its contribution to all Londoners and keep it on a solid trajectory, public and private partners must work together to deliver a vision of good growth and prosperity

Figure 1. Objectives to fulfil Midtown's potential

To build on Midtown's successes, public and private partners must work together to remove the barriers to growth, guided by five main objectives:

- Grow and adapt commercial space for a diverse economy
- Put people first in the public space, prioritising walking, cycling and intuitive wayfinding for businesses and residents.
- Build identity of the area through investing in places that highlight heritage, character and charm.
- Optimise connections – physical and business – with neighbouring districts with common economic interests and residential amenities.
- Manage Midtown's evolution through placemaking, programming and servicing to minimise disruption

Welcome to Midtown

The local context

Midtown is home to both sides of London—the everyday and the extraordinary. Situated in the centre of the city, it links the City of London with the core West End on an east-west route, and King's Cross with Waterloo on the north-south axis. It is a growing cultural, leisure and educational centre, home to the British Museum and neighbouring some of the country's greatest universities. The mix of contemporary and heritage assets give the area a distinct charm, but streets account for 30 per cent of the area's land, making permeability and public realm management critical to the quality of Midtown.

The London context

Midtown is distinct from the rest of central London. While other parts of the city focus on one key sector, like banking or culture, Midtown brings together the strength of all its neighbours. The district complements the heart of the West End while offering a home to professional services near the City. Midtown is also growing, with high levels of density compared to the rest of the West End and expected growth in daytime population upon completion of Crossrail.

The evolving place

London Borough of Camden aims to deliver transport and public realm solutions to ensure the accessibility and quality of infrastructure matches the growth of Midtown. These interventions will make Midtown a safer place for active travel, relieve congestion around the public transport system (at Holborn Station, in particular) and to encourage investment through a better quality of place. Camden is also developing supplementary planning guidance to enable Midtown to be a leading centre for living, business and cultural activity, celebrating the area's distinctiveness with world class public realm, and transport network that supports active travel.

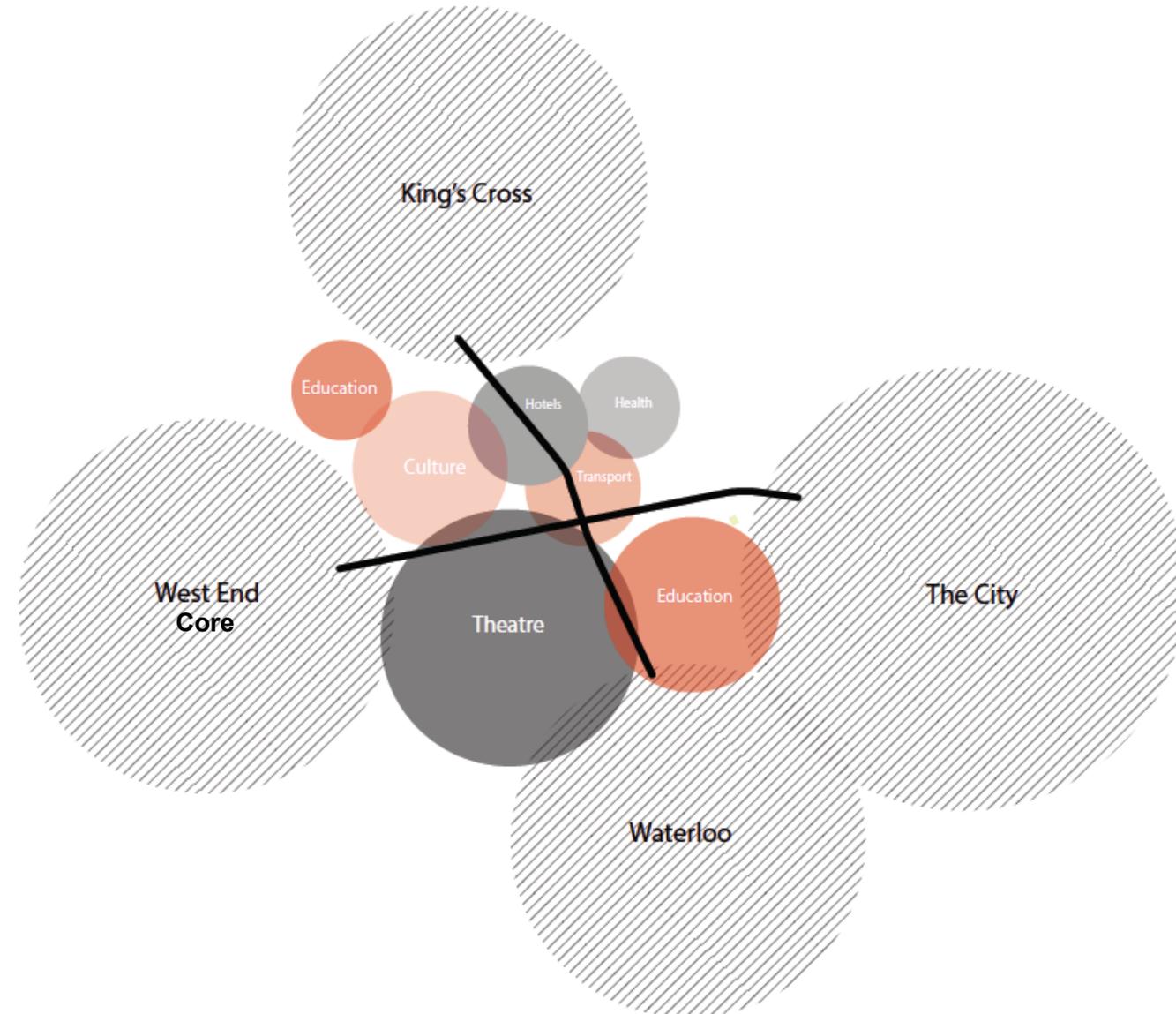


Figure 2. Midtown in the locational and economic context

Midtown— the heart of London’s centre

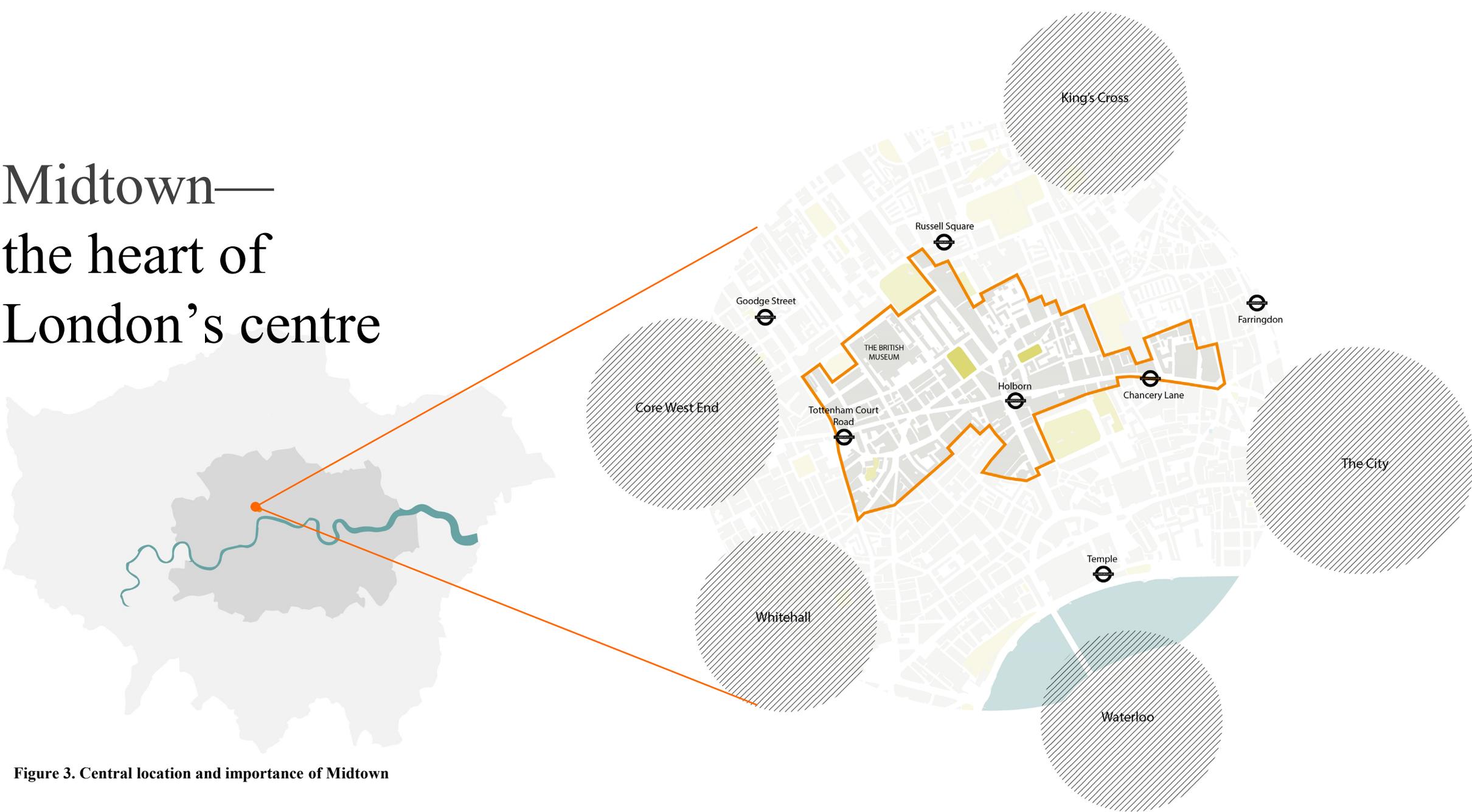


Figure 3. Central location and importance of Midtown

Midtown today and looking forward

Midtown is a thriving commercial hub, strategically situated between the City of London and the West End.

There are however substantial challenges which the area will need to adapt to in order to thrive in the long term. An economic baselining exercise has been carried out to identify trends in the area, from the perspective of residents, businesses and visitors.

Alongside this, a public realm baseline has also been carried out, using results from primary research, as well as utilising findings from a number of other placemaking reports which have been undertaken in the past few years.

To consolidate and summarise these two baselines, a 'SWOT' analysis has been conducted, which pin-points the most significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which our final vision will endeavour to enhance or mitigate as required. These are presented thematically.

For the purposes of this section, 'Midtown' will be used when describing the geographic study area shown in the map to the right. However, the economic baseline has

predominantly used the Holborn and Covent Garden ward-level data, unless stated otherwise. This ward boundary can also be seen below. Whilst the study area extends beyond the ward boundary, the data gathered is felt to be indicative of the wider area.



Midtown is an area of growth, investment and expansion

- Over 100 million passenger exits at Holborn, Chancery Lane, Russell Square and Tottenham Court Road per annum
- Increased footfall and growth will increase attractiveness for leisure and evening uses
- There were nearly 6 million total visits to British Museum in 2017, the UK's number 1 tourist attraction, as well as a host of other museums and galleries
- A diverse mix of uses, including 26% retail, 24% cultural and education, and 22% business services
- The area has a large hotel industry which continues to grow, with the 5* L'Oscar recently opening next to Holborn station, nine 4* hotels and nine 3* hotels
- 64% of tenancies are coming up for review by 2021
- 30 development sites are ready to provide 1,000,000 square feet of new office accommodation, four new hotels, and a growing number of leisure / retail occupiers
- Part of the £120 billion Central London economy
- Potential for £1 billion of visitor spend per annum by 2025

Where London's most successful clusters come together

Midtown sits at the epicentre of a number of high-value, high-skilled employment areas in the capital. The district is awash with creative, educational, scientific and high-tech jobs. In the north, Kings Cross has experienced an unprecedented revival over the last five years, and is establishing itself as a tech hub; it will soon play host to the headquarters of Facebook and Google.

Further south, there are the scientific sectors, including world-renowned institutes such as the Francis Crick Institute, the Wellcome Collection, and Great Ormond Street Hospital. Towards Soho and Covent Garden, there is an agglomeration of creative and media sector jobs. Indeed in 2016, of all the jobs in film, television and music production* in London, 26% were located in the Midtown area and some 22% of jobs in programming and broadcasting in England could be found in Midtown in 2016.

Holborn has traditionally been home to a thriving law industry, which still exists in the Lincolns Inn area. There are a number of world-class higher education facilities which can be found

throughout Midtown, including Kings College London, the Courtauld Institute, University College London and the London School of Economics.

There is a thread of culture and creativity which weaves throughout the district, including the Makerversity at Somerset House, the British Museum, the British Library, and the imminent arrival of the new Museum of London in Smithfield. Farringdon and Clerkenwell in the east is fast becoming known as a vibrant tech hub, both for established companies, as well as start ups. This same area is also home to a number of architectural and building practices; in 2016, 15% of all jobs in this field** in the capital were in Midtown. Towards the City, there are the usual mix of banking and financing - Goldman Sachs is currently building their new headquarters on Farringdon Street.

From a commercial property perspective, Midtown is performing strongly, not only due to this multitude of strong sectors, but also because of its central location, entertainment offer and strong transport links.

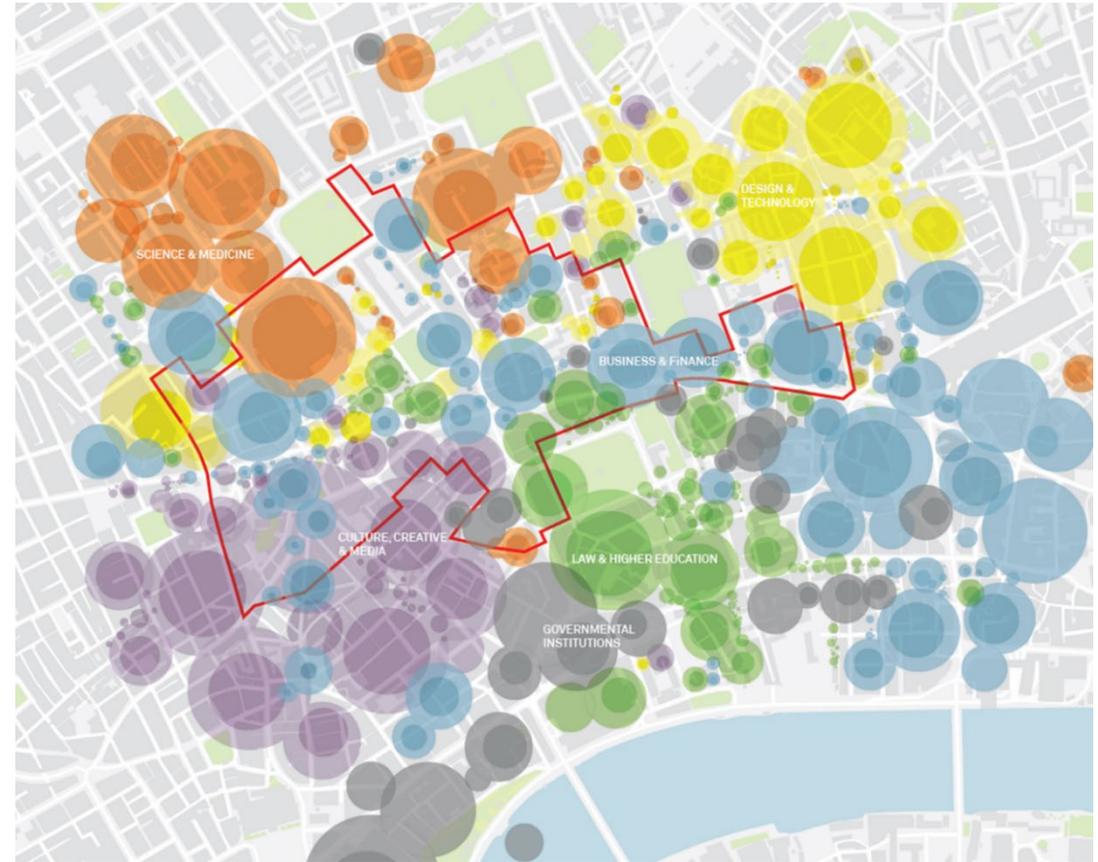


Figure 4. Illustrative representation of employment sectors in Midtown

*Based on industry category 59: Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities

**Based on industry category 71: Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis

Midtown in the London Context

In the context of wider London, Midtown ranges high or in the middle of each of the indicators presented in Figure 5. It ranks second in London, equal to the West End, in employment count, making it one of the most important areas for jobs throughout London. In terms of employment growth, Midtown has grown by 12% between 2011-2016, ranking 6th of the 10 included areas. Business counts has grown by 35% between 2012-2017, 5th of the included areas.

Midtown represent 5% of the employment in Inner London, and about 3% of the total London employment. It is *slightly* below the averages of both in employment growth and GVA per employee, but exceeds Inner London (+28%) and London (+29%) averages in business growth.

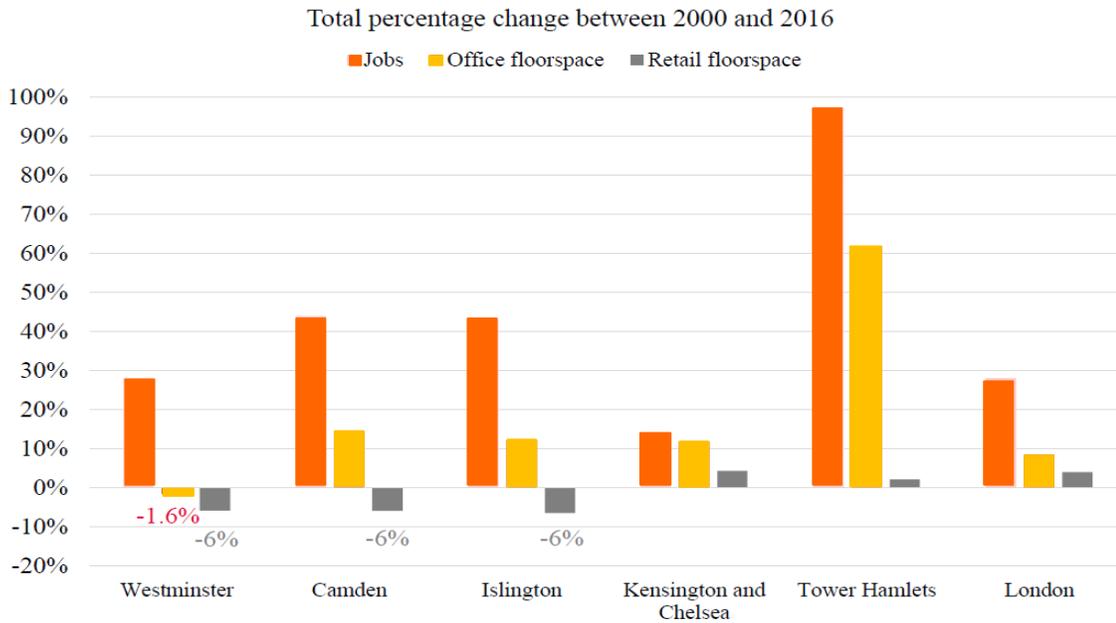
For this analysis, the geographical definition of Midtown is the LSOA and MSOA statistical boundaries are used, which are slightly wider than the BID boundaries, both in WC1 and EC1. This is based on analysis made by Hatch Regeneris for BEE Midtown. When referencing this chart, please note that the "Midtown" data represents the combined EC1 and WC1 BID areas.

Figure 5. Economic performance of Midtown in the London context

Rank	Employment 2016	Employment Growth 2011-16	Business Growth 2012-17	GVA per employee 2016
1	City of London (313,000)	Euston (+20%)	Stratford (+78%)	City of London (£114,000)
2	West End (157,000)	London Bridge (+19%)	South Bank (+44%)	Stratford (£105,000)
3	Midtown (157,000)	Paddington (+18%)	City of London (+44%)	Hammersmith (£90,000)
4	Victoria (63,000)	South Bank (+17%)	Euston (+40%)	West End (£88,000)
5	London Bridge (42,000)	Hammersmith *+15%	Midtown (+35%)	Midtown (£85,000)
6	South Bank (36,000)	Midtown (+12%)	London Bridge (+25%)	Paddington (£81,000)
7	Paddington (33,000)	Stratford (+11%)	Hammersmith (+23%)	South Bank (£81,000)
8	Hammersmith (27,000)	Victoria (+10%)	Paddington (+18%)	Euston (£71,000)
9	Euston (15,000)	West End (-1%)	West End (+17%)	Victoria (£76,000)
10	Stratford (9,000)	City of London (-5%)	Victoria (+16%)	London Bridge (74,000)
Inner London	3,135,000	14%	28%	£93,000
London	5,151,000	13%	29%	£87,000

A highly sought-after commercial centre

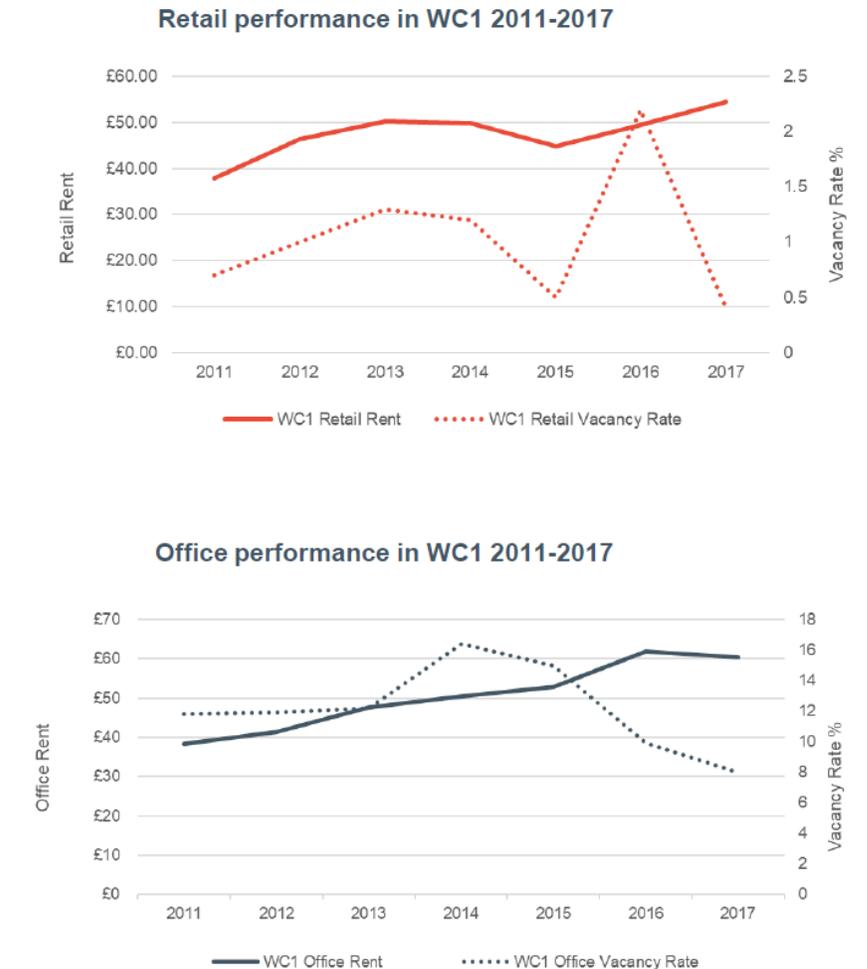
Figure 6. Change in jobs and commercial floorspace at key centres in London



Source: Arup analysis (2018) based on data from the Valuation Agency Office.

Retail floorspace has decreased by 6% across Camden between 2000 and 2016 while office floorspace has increased by approximately 13%. Kensington and Chelsea has, in comparison, seen an increase in both, but with higher growth in retail than office spaces. This is a trend to be aware of, particularly in relation to the overall trends and uncertainties facing the retail sector now and in the future.

Figure 7. Retail and office performance in WC1 area, including Midtown (prices in nominal terms)



Source: Hatch Regeneris Analysis for BEE Midtown (2018)

A successful place—with room to grow

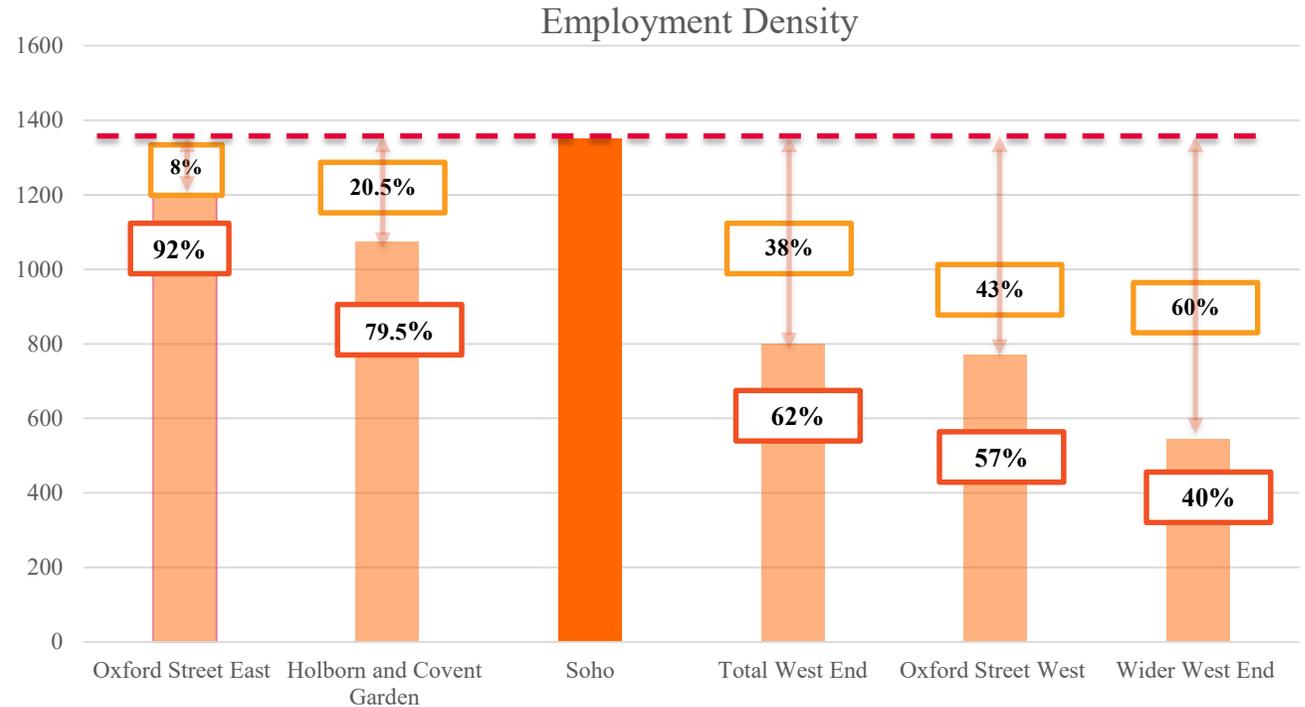
Within the West End, Soho is the area with highest employment density, with approximately 1,350 jobs per hectare (estimated using BRES data from 2016 and apportionment to specific study boundaries). The employment density in Holborn and Covent Garden Ward (HCG) is also quite high with 1,075 jobs per hectare, 79.5% of the employment density of Soho.

Should HCG ward reach similar levels to Soho, it could host an additional 276 jobs per hectare, which in total would be 33,100 more jobs within the ward, and a total of 162,100 jobs, compared to the existing baseline of 129,000 jobs (BRES, 2016).

Oxford Street East (OSE) would perhaps be a more helpful comparison, as it has space allocation to streets similar to HCG. HCG currently reaches 87.3% of OSE's employment density. The potential additional jobs per hectare in this density is 156, and a total of 18,700 more jobs (147,700 in total across the ward).

While this analysis is not meant to provide a new 'target' for Midtown, it can still be useful to provide an illustration as to what employment growth might look like with familiar density levels of adjacent areas. The high employment density also illustrates the business of the area, and the need to accommodate for this in projects and investments.

Figure 8. Midtown's employment density compared to the rest of the West End



Midtown's sector strengths

Midtown hosts creative, professional and technical sector specialisms of both **national** and **London** significance. This rich mix of sectors draws on the area's central location, neighboured by the creative hub of Soho, business and banking hub of the City, legal centre at Fleet Street and technical from Old Street and Clerkenwell.

How specialised is Midtown's economy?

Location Quotients are a measure of specialisation of a sector in a place, like Midtown, compared to a wider area, like England.

A score of 2 means that Midtown has twice the employment in a sector than would be expected if local employment matched the England average. The score of 2 is also traditionally the marker of specialisation.

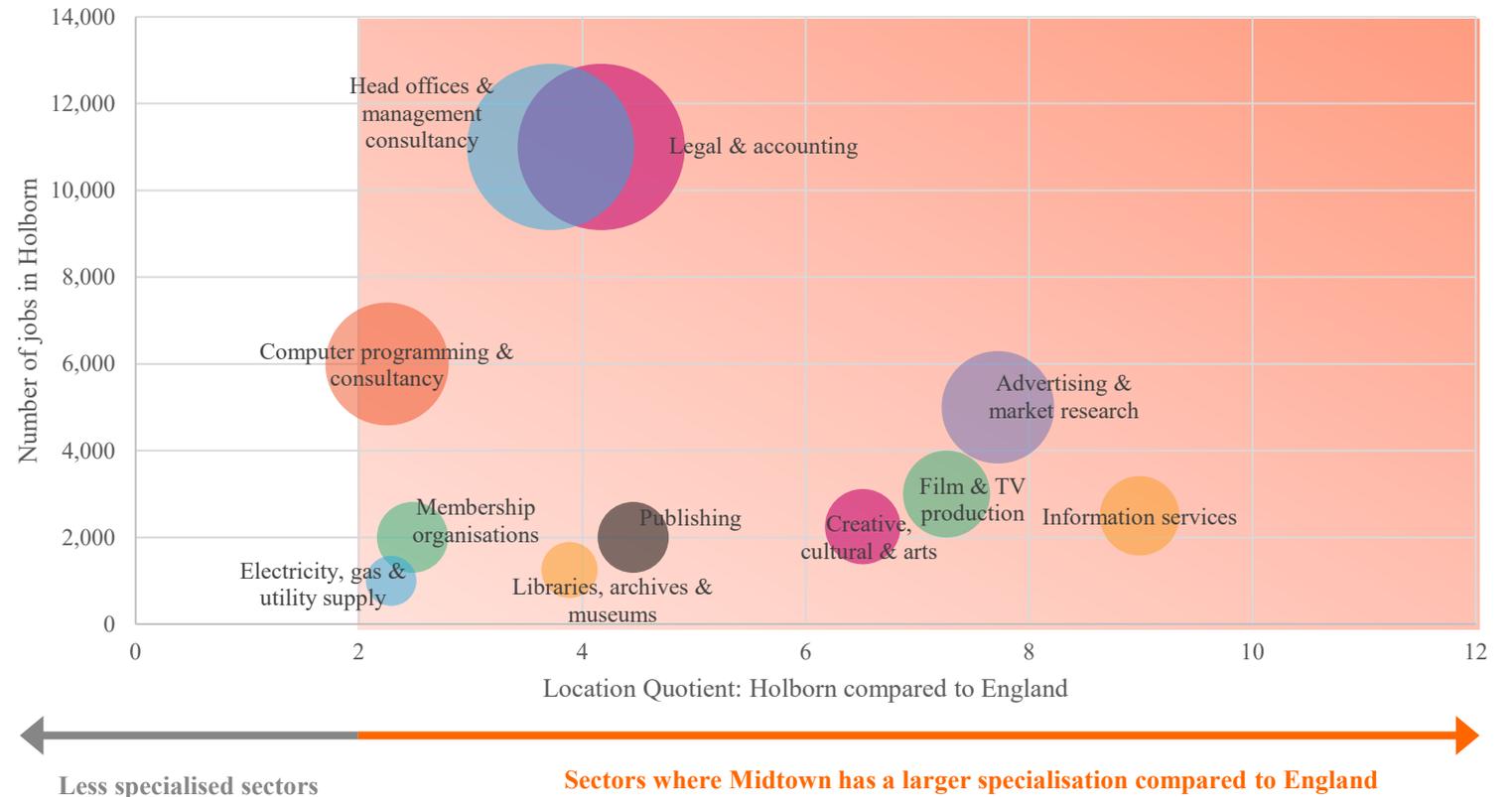
The higher the Location Quotient, the greater the specialisation of the sector in Midtown.

The chart opposite demonstrates that Midtown is specialised in a number of high value and creative sectors. Two sectors in which they are relatively specialised in – legal and accounting services and head office and management consultancy – both employ around 11,000 people each in the Holborn area.

Figure 9. Sectoral strengths in Midtown compared to England, 2017

(Source: Business Register and Employment Survey for Camden MSOA 028)

Note: based on sectors with employment of 100 or more



A place of growth and change

Holborn is identified in Camden’s Local Plan as a key growth area and is expected to make a substantial contribution towards meeting the borough’s identified needs, including a minimum of 200 new homes and 2000 additional jobs by 2031.

Additionally, many external projects of potential influence are in the pipeline. The Elizabeth line and the possible upgrades to Holborn station will lead to passenger increase and connectivity to new in- and out-commuter areas.

50% increase in passengers at Holborn station by 2026

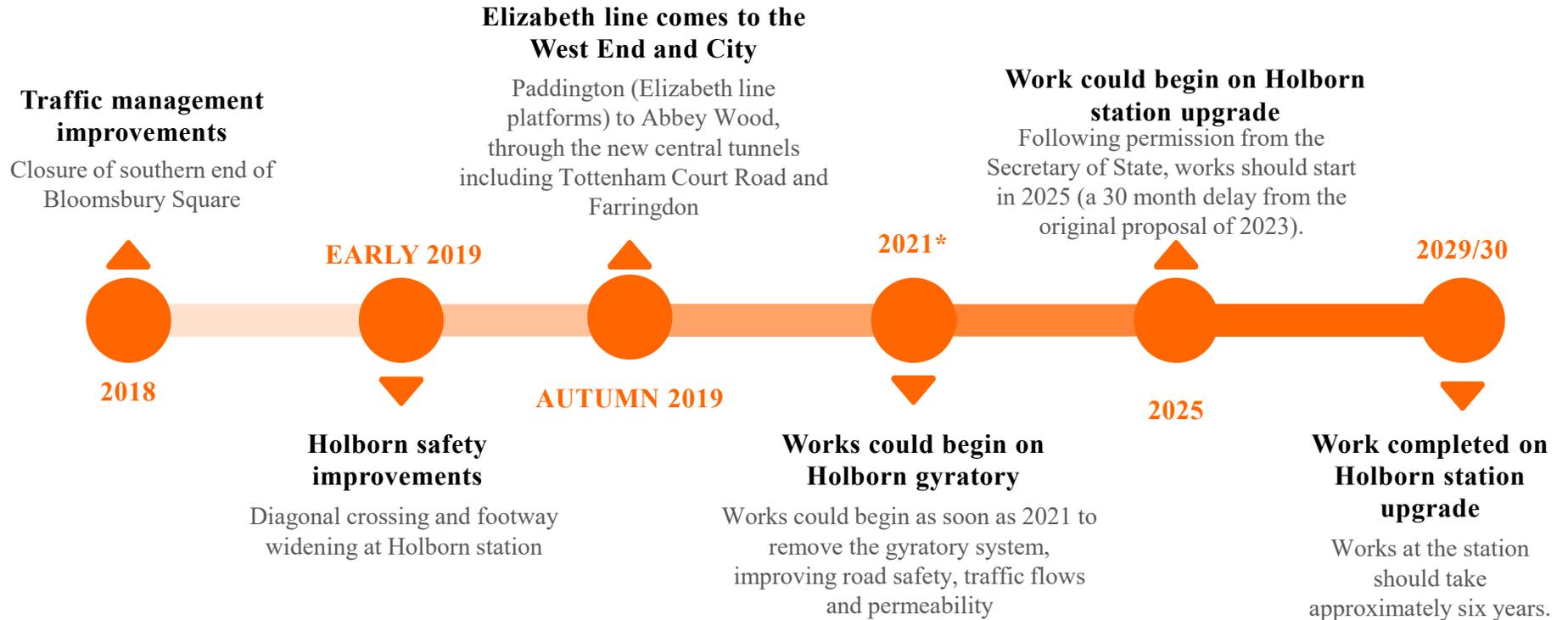
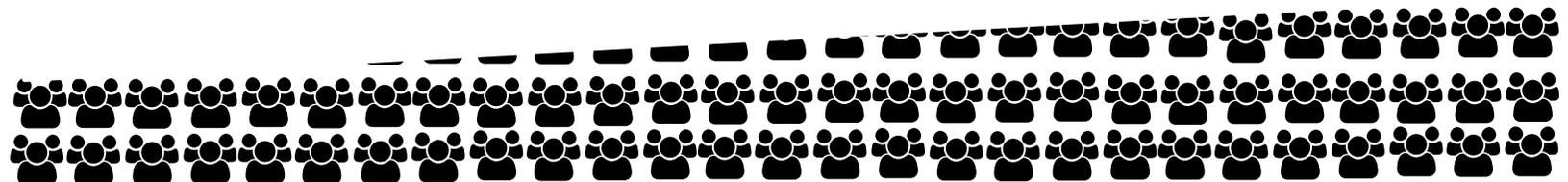


Figure 10. Major infrastructure projects in Midtown

Adapting to a changing world

Midtown is constantly evolving in response to macro-changes to the urban environment, London policy and the economy. Some of the most important changes for realising Midtown’s opportunity can be categorised into wider drivers of change in the following categories:

Sense of place.

- Midtown should strive for and encourage a healthy mix of chains and independent businesses to ensure that the area offers both familiar brands and places which reflect Midtown’s unique character and charm.
- The increasing need for private funding for public and shared spaces can either improve or diminish sense of place depending on the quality of management and the parameters set out for the design of these spaces.
- Structural changes in the retail sector due to e.g. online commerce are changing the habits of customers. The level of disruption to high-streets and retail units depend on the intensity of this evolution but there is little doubt that the key to success is how well the area adapts to these changes. An example to look to is the presentation of Westfield Stratford City as a leisure destination, rather than a retail mall, following the demand for more ‘experiential’ shopping.

Local Economy.

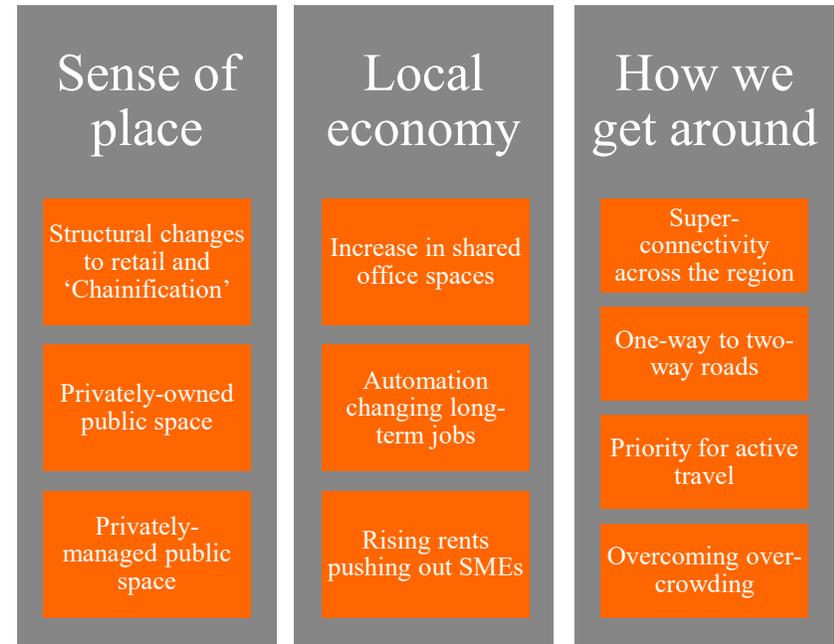
- Growth and redevelopment has had the unintended consequence of Midtown is losing some small, affordable office spaces and rising rents. These factors can put pressure on some businesses and encourage densification of offices. Shared, flexible office spaces play a role in reinvigorating the SME community. Actions should be taken if necessary, to allow for a continued diverse and robust Midtown economy.
- The long-term threat of automation may reduce the number of workers and space required for business—even those highly skilled sectors such as Legal and Accounting which is highly represented in Midtown. Growth in sectors with low automation vulnerability, such as Media and Creative is a positive development for the future of Midtown.

Getting around.

- Central London’s continued economic growth will be bolstered by the Elizabeth line, bringing 1.5 million more people within a 45 minutes commute of the existing major employment centres of the West End, the City and Canary Wharf (up from five million currently). That, combined with continued development, means that more public space will be required to accommodate the increase in footfall.

- Priority for active travel on local journeys and traffic reduction investments to make the streets safer and less congested, air cleaner and area more attractive—including the move from one-way to two-way road systems, which are better for pedestrians and for active travel.

Figure 11. Wider drivers of change



Key moves for Midtown

Midtown is a dynamic place—constantly evolving in the heart of one of the world’s greatest cities. That dynamism creates incredible opportunities to be seized and challenges to be managed.

Midtown outperforms the rest of the economy as a location for highly-skilled jobs, from head offices to technical (information services and programming) and creative jobs in advertising, films and television. This success has seen the commercial vacancy rate fall from over 10 percent in 2015 to around 4 percent today. And rents per square foot have almost doubled since the recession (from around £35/sqft in 2009 low to over £60/sqft in 2018).

But, the area is challenged to cope with such high demand and to make the most of the economic ecosystem that has evolved in the area. The public spaces are congested – up to 23 people per minute per metre at peak times around Holborn station, more than double advised pedestrian comfort levels - and

the main road thoroughfares pose congestion and safety challenges for all modes of transport. To make the most of Midtown’s economic momentum, significant investment will be required in the public realm and transport system to ensure it is still a liveable neighbourhood for its residents, attractive business district and pleasant tourist destination. There are many gems in ‘hidden Holborn’ yet to be discovered.

The following section provides a detailed SWOT-analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the district. The analysis is rooted in the economic and social purpose of the district and considers the built environment implications therein.

Figure 12. Four areas assessing Midtown’s potential



Key moves—Local economy



Figure 13. Key local economic indicators in Midtown

Strengths and opportunities

Midtown is home to specialisations across a wide range of sectors, largely connected to neighbouring areas. Compared to London, Midtown is particularly strong in legal and accounting, information service, advertising and market research companies, and creative industries. Compared to England, there is also a much higher growth in Midtown of headquarters and management consultancies. World-class educational facilities such as Kings College and parts of the London School of Economics, create a vibrant student environment and attract skilled residents (46% of residents have received higher education).

Midtown also leads in London in cultural services such as museums, arts and entertainment activities, publishing activities and motion picture, video and television programme production and sound recording. A number of these sectors are also growing at a higher rate than England averages, which indicate further strengthening. Midtown's local economy has low vulnerability to automation due to the presence of knowledge-intensive industries.

Maintaining accessibility and connectivity between Midtown's diverse group of strengths and the rest of London is key to its success. Creative links to Soho and professional services links to the City, for example, are a big part of Midtown's attractiveness to businesses.

Weaknesses and threats

Investment in Midtown's public realm has not kept up with the increased investment in its residential and business development. Congested streets and heavy traffic add on to the challenge, providing an unattractive streetscape for potential shoppers, as well as employees.

The commercial vacancy rate has, according to CoStar, decreased quite dramatically over the past five years, from 10.5% to around 4%, coupled with rise in rental prices. There is a risk that increased commercial prices could lead to a lower diversity in the area, particularly regarding SMEs.

Legal Services has historically had a strong presence in the area, however, the sector is currently shrinking compared to British and London levels. This can have a number of explanatory factors such as a 'legal services' firm moving nearby and their space taken up by 'head office.'

To maintain attractiveness, affordable, accessible business space will be key, as well as leisure offer that create opportunities for businesses to network and have informal meetings.

Key moves—connectivity and public realm



Strengths and opportunities

Midtown is very well connected in terms of public transport, benefitting from the Central line running east-west and the Piccadilly line running north-south. By 2020, it will be situated between two stops on the Elizabeth line, Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon, boosting its accessibility further. Midtown's strategic location draws people from across London, providing essential accessibility for workers and footfall for retail. The Elizabeth line is an opportunity for further growth; shorter commutes for example could provide a boost to the evening economy, which could be supported by better street lighting, and a safer pedestrian environment. This, in addition to the planned improvements to Holborn Station provide an opportunity to alleviate congestion and increase accessibility.

Midtown is also an area with a rich heritage, mixed with modern architecture of good quality, Sicilian Avenue being a clear example. The area has character, open green spaces, and well established trees and green spaces, such as Lincoln's Inn and Bloomsbury Square. There are opportunities linked to both improving accessibility to these areas, and to activate large lanes and squares with better lighting and greening to draw people in. The existing Legible London marking could also be built upon for better wayfinding in the area.

Weaknesses and threats

The streets of Midtown are heavily congested, with narrow walkways and heavy traffic. The most congested streets range from unpleasant to dangerous at peak times, which has had serious consequences in the past, with accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians. This is a public realm in crucial need of improvements, in particular with the expected growth of visitors due to the arrival of the Elizabeth line. In its current state, it does not represent an optimal environment for high-value added jobs, architecture, parks and public assets in the area.

There is plenty of room for improvement regarding streetscape and public realm as well. Streets account for over 30% of the space in the area. That means that well-managed streets and pavements are essential for quality of the built environment as well as for accessibility and permeability. According to the Greenspace Information for Greater London, published by the GLA in 2012, just 2% of homes in this area have good access to nature – the lowest percentage in Camden (average of 71%). The streets also have too much clutter and street furniture, which exacerbates congestion and low pedestrian comfort, particularly outside of Holborn station. There is lack of accessibility to places to dwell, and inadequate seating provision. Investments in projects addressing these issues is key, for example through the new pocket parks, the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Kingsway improvements.

Entries and exits at Holborn Underground Station between 2007 and 2017 (Source: TfL)

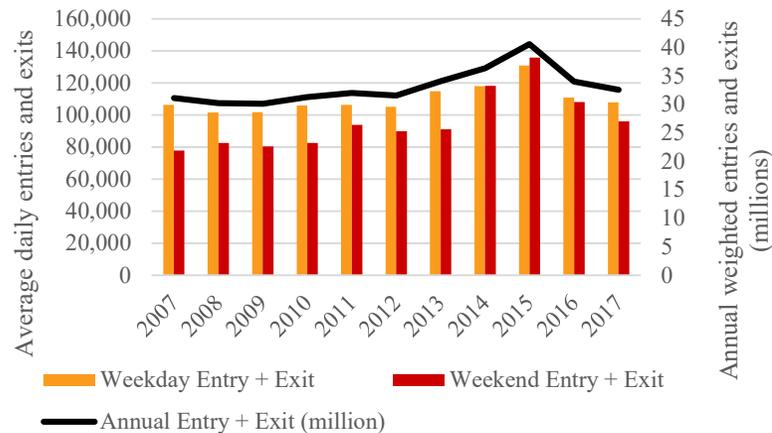


Figure 14. Key information on Midtown's connectivity and accessibility

Key moves—culture & tourism and wellbeing

Culture & tourism

Figure 15. Visitor numbers at the British Museum

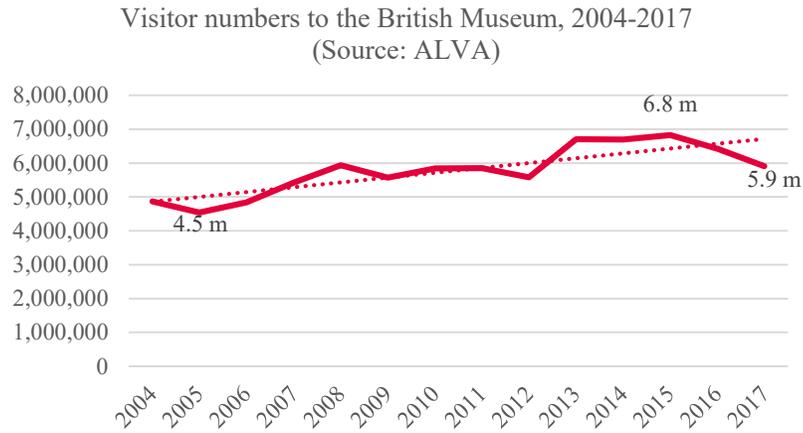
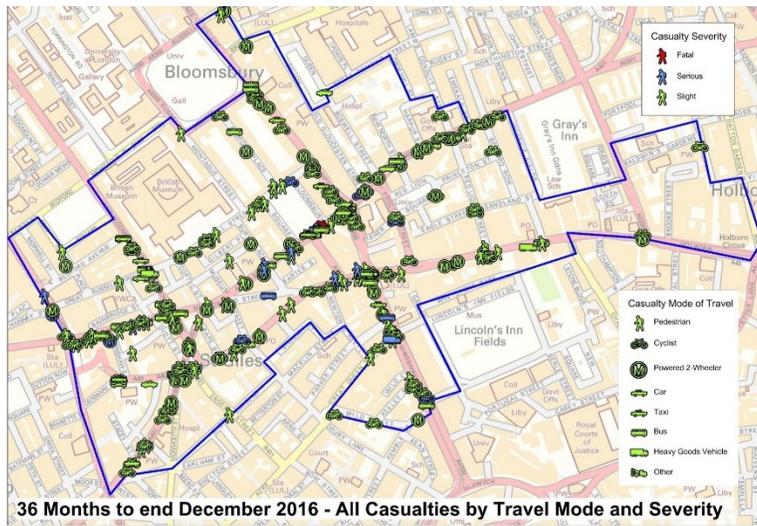


Figure 16. Road casualties in the Midtown area



Wellbeing

Strengths and opportunities

Midtown already has a strong tourism draw, with the British Museum as the corner stone of this, as the most visited tourist attraction across the UK for the last decade, peaking at 6.8 million annual visitors in 2015. The area is historic, with an abundance of valuable and protected heritage assets and land mark buildings, adding to the area’s attractiveness to visitors. Holborn is also known for its leisure and hospitality industry, with nine 4* hotels, a recently opened 5* hotel next to Holborn station, and London’s only super-brand hotel, the Rosewood.

Weaknesses and threats

London is experiencing a falling trend in domestic tourism, like due to high cost of visiting and competition from overseas options. The rise in rental prices, could in turn mean that entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs search for cheaper and more vibrant areas to locate. So, Midtown will need to continue to draw visitors from near and far and stand out among the crowd for the area’s cultural and tourism assets. For Midtown in particular, poor wayfinding also creates obstacles, with visitors struggling to locate landmarks such as the British Museum due to poor signposting and hard-to-find through routes. Creativity, leisure and culture represent strong identity markers for the business community locally, but this has not been fully exploited in relation to tourism.

Strengths and opportunities

Midtown has lovely public parks and enclaves with calming and pleasant landscapes, including historic trees. Better access and more legible wayfinding to green spaces and squares in Midtown could facilitate better health. Improvements to pavements could allow for more space to ‘breathe’, better experiences for retail customers and visitors. If these opportunities are acted upon, the area would also be better prepared for the arrival of the Elizabeth line, which could potentially increase the number of people working, living, and visiting Midtown. Analysis from LB Camden shows that some major streets in Midtown average 4,000 pedestrians and 600 cyclists per hour during evening peak. This demonstrates the high demand for active travel within and through the district. Widening pavements, creating pedestrian crossings, improving cycling infrastructure and introducing speed restrictions on the “urban motorways”, is another opportunity to improve safety and encourage active travel.

Weaknesses and threats

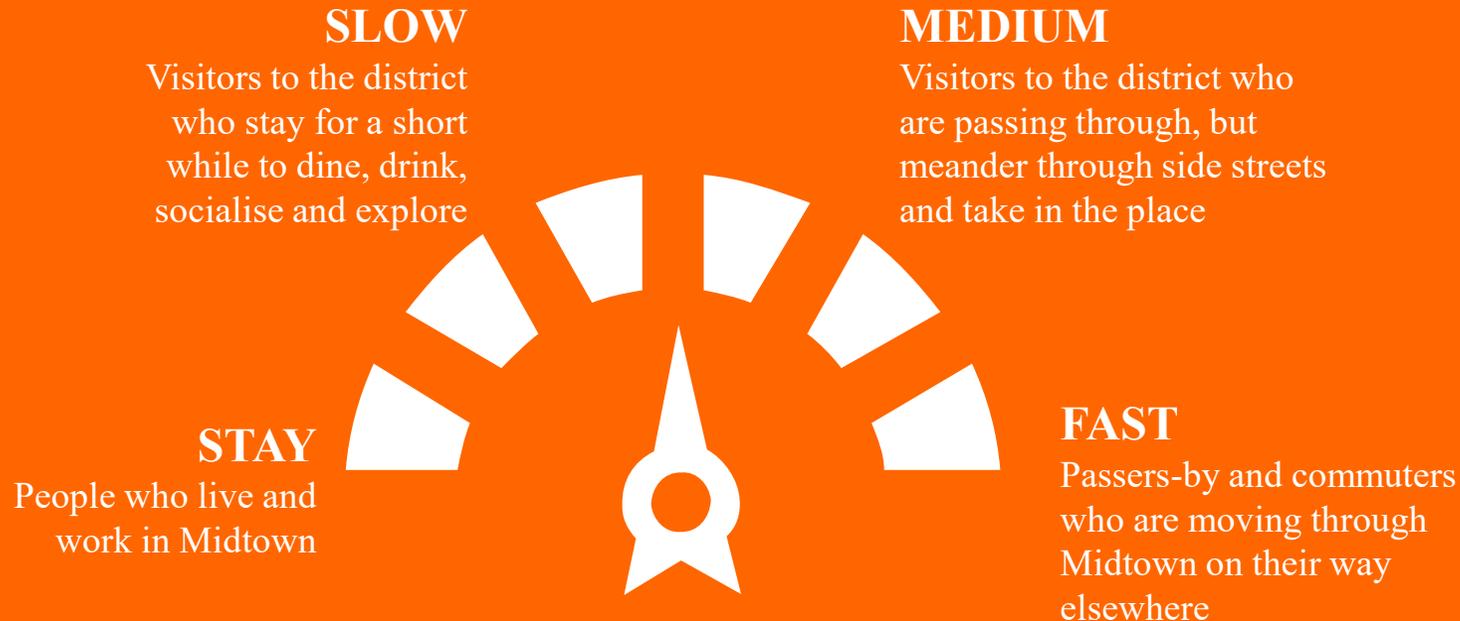
Midtown suffers from high air pollution due to traffic on its thoroughfares, and this congestion also disincentives active travel. An additional threat that needs to be addressed, is the costs an pressures on the public realm associated with climate change effects, such as more extreme weather, which increases the need for more resilient infrastructure.

Safety is a key concern, with over 350 recorded traffic casualties in the 36 months to December 2016; 29 of those were serious and two fatal, as well as an increase in pedestrian casualties. Both the High Holborn/Kingsway junction and the junction of Southampton way/Bloomsbury way high-risk areas. The cycling network overall is regarded as disconnected. There is also an issue with dangerous crossings due to a combination of crowded streets, lack of sufficient marking and high vehicle speeds along urban motorways such as Kingsway.

The paces of Midtown

Midtown is at the heart of it all. That means this bustling part of the city is used by all types of people. It is a business hub, a tourist hotspot, and a home. For many people, though, midtown is also simply an area they pass through to get from A to B.

In this section, we consider the paces of Midtown—how different groups of people experience the district. This, in turn, informs our understanding of the degree to which Midtown—as it is today—is able to meet their various needs.



Fast pace: The passer-by



Who is this person, and what are their experiences?

Commuters, Londoners and visitors passing through the area on their way to somewhere else, either by public transport, car, taxi, bike or foot. They want to pass through Midtown safely and efficiently, with minimal traffic or pavement congestion and decent air quality.

In Midtown today, they will encounter high levels of congestion during peak time and very risky intersections at the gyratory and cruciform. The air on main thoroughways is some of the most polluted in London. There is high competition for space on the streets—between buses, taxis, cars and cycles—and on the pavements—between pedestrians, vendors, street furniture, signage and refuse waiting for collection.

The paces and people of Midtown



The tourist / visitor: medium and slow pace

Who is this person, and what are their experiences?

Tourists and visitors are visiting briefly, either for a work, holiday, or meandering through the city, stopping off along the way. For many, they may have a specific objective like visiting the British Museum, attending a business meeting, or seeing friends for dinner or drinks. Ultimately, they want to have an enjoyable visit, potentially discover the area a bit more, and find their destination easily.

In Midtown today, they will experience road and pavement congestion, especially on core thoroughfares. It may be easy to get lost along the way with challenging wayfinding, the confusing gyratory and many small, winding streets. There are many interesting and unique destinations, which they will enjoy during their visit, and coffee shops and other meeting places are available for business.



The investor: medium to slow pace

Who is this person, and what are their experiences?

Investors want to earn a return on their property in Midtown. But increasingly, they recognise that thinking ‘outside the red line’ of their property can bring wider value to the district, their occupiers and their investment in the long-term. Many investors are willing to contribute to improving the public realm and transport of the area, so long as they have greater certainty their contributions will support investment in the district.

In Midtown today, investors may face challenges with branding. Because of the area’s diversity of sectors—at the crossroads of City banking, Strand legal, West End entertainment and retail, Universities and tourism—there is something for everyone, but not a sense of cohesion.



The worker and business: stay

Who is this person, and what are their objectives?

People who work in Midtown and businesses who are looking to locate in Midtown want to have a safe, accessible, and attractive location for conducting business. Easy access to public transport is essential. Quality spaces to spend time during lunch breaks, evenings and meetings adds social network value and enjoyment to their workday.

In Midtown today, high levels of congestion on the roads, pavements and tube entrance can make commuting challenging, stressful and sometimes unsafe. To reduce this, workers may use side streets to get where they are going. Easy and accessible food and beverage offer is welcome during daytime, but unique and lively pubs and restaurants are appreciated in the evening. High accessibility to local parks during nice weather is a bonus.



The resident: stay

Who is this person, and what are their objectives?

Holborn is home to some of the wealthiest and most deprived areas in London and the UK. Many working residents commute to nearby boroughs. They tend to be younger than the London average and more ethnically-diverse. They want to have a safe, pleasant and enjoyable home and neighbourhood. They want to be able to get to their work, run local errands and enjoy local public parks and restaurants easily.

In Midtown today, they either choose to live in the area for the central location and access to amenities or they have been allocated social housing. These two groups may have very different experiences of the place, based on their financial ability to access the local entertainment offer and how much they use local public spaces (compared to other neighbourhoods in London).

The perspectives of Midtown

Improvement for worker and business: “Stay”

Improving the main point of entry and exit at Holborn will dramatically improve the start and end of commuters' days. Reducing road and pavement congestion is key, but increasing attractiveness, safety and amenity offer on smaller streets and lanes workers use more often can bring more of a village feel away from the bustling thoroughfares. More quality places to network in over dinner or drinks and curated cultural activities, could add value to their workday as well as boosting the evening offer in Holborn.

Improvement for residents: “Stay”

Safety and pleasant public spaces are essential. Well-lit, animated smaller lanes greening will allow them to avoid the busier thoroughfares when possible and have a more enjoyable home experience. Removal of the gyratory and improvement of the main North-South and East-West routes will make their journey home safer and more pleasant.

Improvements for the investor: “Slow/medium”

The congested roads and pavements make navigating the area challenging for potential tenants, and congestion at Holborn Station does not provide a sufficient 'shop front' to the district. Opening up side streets, making them more accessible and attractive throughout the day and into the night, could help increase the overall attractiveness of the district and open up new opportunities for investment and re-development in 'hidden Holborn' including a more vibrant evening economy.

Improvements for the tourist/visitor: “Slow/medium”

The same improvements to main thoroughfares and pavement apply as with passers-by, but tourists and visitors may require additional wayfinding assistance. More outdoor space for casual dining, interesting shops and cafes as well as leisure opportunities along the way can encourage more exploration of the area. Easier access to parks and green spaces can lead people to their destination off the busier streets and through cleaner, greener and more pleasant places.

Improvements for the passer-by: “Fast-pace”

More priority should be given to cyclists in the street and removal of the gyratory system for safer roads and traffic reduction. Safety improvements at the cruciform will help vehicles and pedestrians. Widening pavements where possible and a 'clutter-free' policy will make more room for people to get from A to B, safely and pleasantly.

Defining the objectives and principles

Economic and placemaking objectives

Based on the opportunities and challenges of midtown, and the ‘paces’ at which different stakeholders interact with midtown, the guiding principles for how public realm and placemaking should support the local economy and social wellbeing have been developed.

These principles integrate the economic and social interests of these stakeholders alongside public realm and design principles. The design principles are born out of the built environment assets and structure in the area, and with the 10 objectives, define the priorities for investment in Midtown.



Five objectives for fulfilling Midtown’s potential

1. Grow and adapt commercial space and business ecosystem for a diverse economy for London



2. Put people’s wellbeing first in the public space, including improved air quality and prioritising pedestrians and cyclists



3. Build identity of the area through investing in places that highlight and preserve heritage, character and charm



4. Optimise Midtown’s central position through intuitive wayfinding and improving accessibility of physical and social networks



5. Manage the evolution of Midtown for residents and employees through careful placemaking, programming and servicing to minimise disruption and seize opportunities during periods of growth and change

ARUP

Grow and adapt commercial space and business environment for a diverse economy

Midtown is a mix of businesses with particular strengths in interrelated sectors—all coming together at the epicentre of neighbouring clusters.

This presents an amazing opportunity to collaborate, innovate and grow London's key growth sectors in creative and cultural, banking and finance, law, design and other high value-added firms.

To meet the growing need of these firms, and encourage those interactions that spark innovation, the commercial space of Midtown needs to grow in line with the needs of these businesses. SME space should sit alongside space for large head offices to continually cultivate this highly productive economic centre of London and the largest employment area of Camden.

Businesses also require amenity spaces—restaurants, coffee shops, pubs and parks. They may host formal networking events or act as informal meeting spots. In either sense, these amenity spaces are required for conducting modern business and building the social capital that helps make this area so productive.

Put people first in the public space, prioritising walking and cycling and intuitive wayfinding for businesses and residents

Midtown is crowded. There is high competition for public space. With 30 percent of space being roads, cars dominate the main thoroughfares and the existing gyratory system.

Today, walking and cycling can be crowded and, at times, dangerous. Crossing the street can be daunting, and large queues regularly form outside Holborn underground station during peak hours.

People must be given the priority in public space. This means more room for walking and cycling along major roads and making routes on smaller streets more welcoming. Increased capacity at Holborn station and higher footfall from the Elizabeth line will exacerbate this need.

Almost 6 million people visited the British Museum in 2017, and Midtown hotels host thousands guests each year, who may be unfamiliar with the area. Improved, intuitive wayfinding will be critical to helping everyone — visitors, workers and residents — get where they need to go safely and efficiently.

Build identity of the area through investing in places that highlight heritage, character and charm

Holborn is incredibly charming, beyond the bustle.

Heritage buildings and Victorian squares and gardens bring the picturesque London scenes attractive to workers and tourists. This is the home of the New Bloomsbury Set, the free thinkers and artists of the 1900s.

Independent restaurants, shops and cafes are dotted around the district. Characterful pubs and shops line Sicilian Avenue, and more unique streets highlight the area's charm, hidden just off the well-worn paths.

These places should be enhanced and celebrated. Many of the green spaces need improved accessibility and livening up, and side streets should nudge people into welcoming environments.

ARUP

Optimise connections – physical and business – with neighbouring districts with common economic interests and residential amenities

Midtown is in the middle of London's central activity zone. It is surrounded by other districts with clusters of business excellence and areas of national cultural and leisure significance.

A major attractor for firms is the access to these neighbouring clusters and amenities, while maintaining a diverse and accessible location in Midtown.

In making the most of midtown's position in the city, the area needs to ensure it is accessible and permeable to those other areas of commercial and cultural significance. This also means that residents and workers have access to the restaurants, museums, shows and greenspace of the neighbouring areas, such that the charm and amenity does not end at Midtown's boundary.

Manage the evolution of Midtown through careful placemaking, programming and servicing to minimise disruption

Midtown is constantly evolving and growing. It's attractiveness as a business location in London has grown massively in recent years, with commercial vacancy rates falling sharply now after the recession.

With the advent of the Elizabeth line and commercial and residential development, Midtown's evolution will also lead to disruption.

Development can lead to new opportunities to open up charming spaces and pocket parks, teach people new routes through the district and use temporary installations to reveal the history, character and future of the area.

This goal is as much about minimising the disruption from construction and development as it is about making the most of the hidden opportunities of Midtown.

What might success look like?

London is an ever-changing and incredibly complex city. The following section seeks to learn from other districts in other cities which face similar challenges and opportunities.

Three districts are assessed to understand what Midtown can share and learn from its peers. These districts are:

- Midtown, Manhattan
- Boulevard St-Germaine, Latin Quarter, Paris
- Friedrichstrasse, Mitte, Berlin



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Midtown, Manhattan

A vibrant and economically significant business district; a public realm as iconic as its buildings

Three programmes in Midtown, Manhattan have transformed the district so that the public realm matches the prominence of the architecture and economic significance of the businesses.

THRU Streets Programme

The street programme was a reaction to congestion from commercial vehicle loading, double parking and poor travel times.

Interventions:

- Designated streets for cross-town travel
- Designated loading areas on “non-thru” streets
- Improved travel time reliability

Impact:

- Improved wayfinding
- Reduced friction from turning movements
- Reduced crashes; a 31% decline

Bryant Park Regeneration

The area had issues of poor design, crime and vandalism.

Interventions:

- Improved sight lines and perceived security
- Modified entrances and inclusive access
- Configured for free circulation

Impact:

- 92% reduction in crime over 7 years
- Transformation from a “needle park” to a Manhattan landmark
- Revenues through sponsorships and events
- Demonstrated improvement in local rental activity

Curbside Management

The interventions came as a response to street-clutter, congestion and poor wayfinding

Interventions:

- Improved sight lines and perceived security
- Modified entrances and inclusive access
- Configured for free circulation

Impact:

- Increased loading/unloading efficiency for business
- Shorter parking durations: from 160 to 45 minutes
- Reduced vehicle circulation (and air pollution, noise, and emissions)
- Reduced administrative costs to the City

Because of its thoughtful and well-executive approach addressing road traffic, pedestrian traffic, wayfinding and maintaining public spaces, Midtown has transformed its position in the city as an attractive place to visit and work.



Image: Rhododendrites, from Wikimedia Commons

Boulevard St-Germaine, Latin Quarter, Paris

A thriving high-street and cultural centre renowned for nightlife, shopping, dining, and historic attractions.

Issues

- Numerous small, narrow streets impacting upon traffic circulation
- Overcrowding relatively high density
- High rates of crime and low quality public space

Recent strategies and natural progress

- Retaining and maintaining intimate side streets
- Boulevard tree planting
- Street based markets
- Consistent kiosk design
- Building lighting
- Pedestrian friendly with regular crossings
- Generous footways with consistent material and furniture palette

Impact

- Improvements to safety, security and amenity
- Significantly improved connectivity
- Increased traffic capacity and circulation
- Introduction of light, space and air into the precinct
- Retaining unique cultural heritage of the precinct, attracting visitors and promoting development
- Consistent and uniform design (kiosks, material and furniture palette, building lighting) contributing to precinct identity
- Enhancing safety and security through crossings and effective lighting
- Ease of movement and wayfinding



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Image: [Sergey Meniaienko de Cupertino](#), Wikimedia Commons



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Friedrichstrasse, Mitte, Berlin

Activated historic streetscapes, large-format squares and integrated rail transportation; a bustling mixed use precinct with seasonal attractions.

Issues

- Unkempt, crowded railway station with surrounding areas reflecting the wartime decline
- Segregating steel and glass barriers on platforms and maze-like corridors
- Wartime flood damage
- Deserted, shadowy 'ghost' subway stations

Example interventions

- Decades worth of maintenance and repairs dating back to the post-war era
- Reopening and restoration of the 'ghost stations'
- Integrated above- and under-ground stations
- Restoration of station walls and tiling to original condition
- Erection of monuments and plaques
- Addition of tunnels, elevators
- Transformation of the 'Palace of Tears' to a performance space and exhibition gallery, then later a museum

Impact

- Improvements to safety, security and amenity
- Reduced economic barriers through enhanced connectivity
- Laying the prerequisite conditions for subsequent redevelopment into an education, business, cultural and residential district
- Enhanced safety, security and amenity for visitors and business
- Improved wayfinding
- Enhanced connectivity
- Activation and tourism from cultural heritage
- Significant increases in business activity; 5,200sqm of retail space on ground floor with 50 businesses



De-okin (talk) 02:44, 7 February 2009 (UTC) [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons



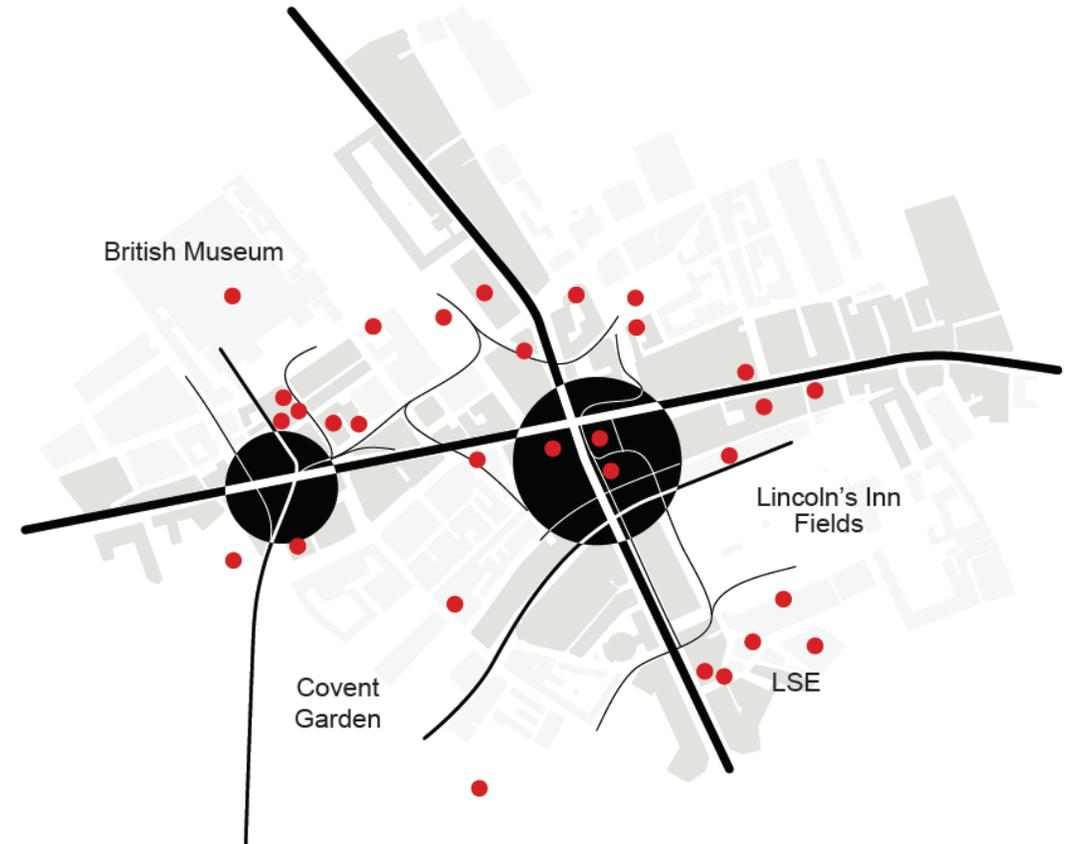
Achieving the Vision

To unlock Midtown's strategic location as a leading centre of business and cultural activity, public and private partners must implement a mosaic of site wide and area based interventions.

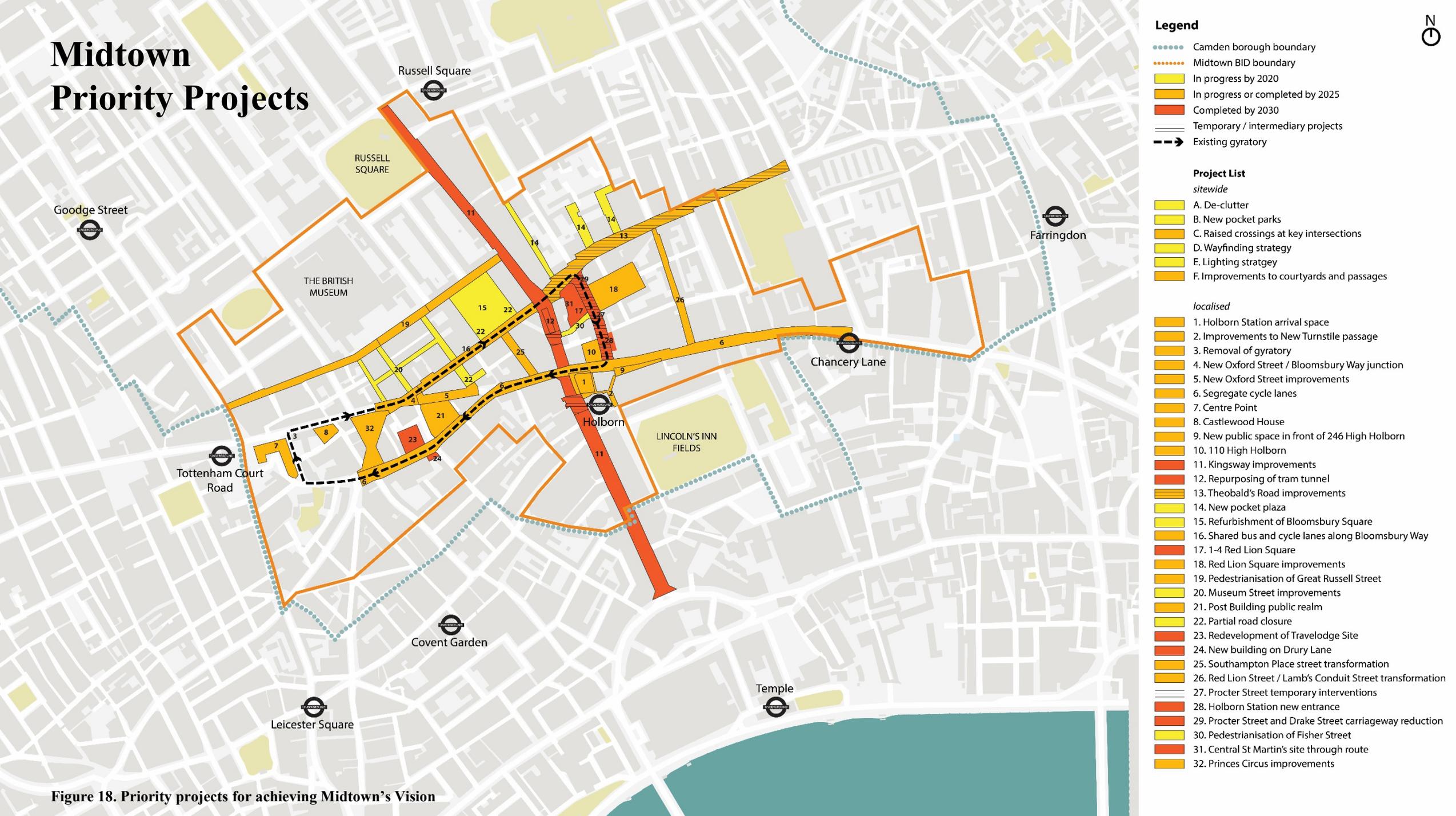
- The priority projects outline a “mosaic” of complementary projects and schemes
- Overcoming the major transport challenges that create distinct challenges including safety, permeability, air quality and overall quality of place
- Includes low-cost, high impact catalyst for the transformation of the area
- Recognises the assets of the area
- Aims at rediscovering the grandeur and cultural and economic importance of Midtown
- Designed to be flexible and incremental in its implementation

A complementary combination of site-wide and area-based transformations will provide transformational change for the district. These are outline on the next page.

Figure 17. Schematic of interventions in Midtown: Major and minor nodes



Midtown Priority Projects



- Legend**
- Camden borough boundary
 - Midtown BID boundary
 - Yellow box: In progress by 2020
 - Orange box: In progress or completed by 2025
 - Red box: Completed by 2030
 - Temporary / intermediary projects
 - - -> Existing gyratory
- Project List**
- sitewide*
- Yellow box: A. De-clutter
 - Yellow box: B. New pocket parks
 - Orange box: C. Raised crossings at key intersections
 - Yellow box: D. Wayfinding strategy
 - Yellow box: E. Lighting strategy
 - Orange box: F. Improvements to courtyards and passages
- localised*
- Orange box: 1. Holborn Station arrival space
 - Orange box: 2. Improvements to New Turnstile passage
 - Orange box: 3. Removal of gyratory
 - Orange box: 4. New Oxford Street / Bloomsbury Way junction
 - Orange box: 5. New Oxford Street improvements
 - Orange box: 6. Segregate cycle lanes
 - Orange box: 7. Centre Point
 - Orange box: 8. Castlewood House
 - Orange box: 9. New public space in front of 246 High Holborn
 - Orange box: 10. 110 High Holborn
 - Red box: 11. Kingsway improvements
 - Red box: 12. Repurposing of tram tunnel
 - Orange box: 13. Theobald's Road improvements
 - Yellow box: 14. New pocket plaza
 - Yellow box: 15. Refurbishment of Bloomsbury Square
 - Orange box: 16. Shared bus and cycle lanes along Bloomsbury Way
 - Red box: 17. 1-4 Red Lion Square
 - Orange box: 18. Red Lion Square improvements
 - Orange box: 19. Pedestrianisation of Great Russell Street
 - Yellow box: 20. Museum Street improvements
 - Orange box: 21. Post Building public realm
 - Yellow box: 22. Partial road closure
 - Red box: 23. Redevelopment of Travelodge Site
 - Red box: 24. New building on Drury Lane
 - Orange box: 25. Southampton Place street transformation
 - Orange box: 26. Red Lion Street / Lamb's Conduit Street transformation
 - White box: 27. Procter Street temporary interventions
 - Red box: 28. Holborn Station new entrance
 - Red box: 29. Procter Street and Drake Street carriageway reduction
 - Yellow box: 30. Pedestrianisation of Fisher Street
 - Red box: 31. Central St Martin's site through route
 - Orange box: 32. Princes Circus improvements

Figure 18. Priority projects for achieving Midtown's Vision

Project details

Project	Location	Description	Objective(s) addressed
De-clutter	Site wide	De-cluttering of the public realm in order to improve pedestrian experience	 
New pocket parks	Site wide	Integrate temporary or permanent pocket park in areas of underutilised or waster space to provide an amenity that allows people to dwell and rest in a comfortable environment	 
Raised crossings at key intersections	Site wide	Raised crossings at key pedestrian intersections to improve connectivity and legibility	 
Wayfinding Strategy	Site wide	New tree planting, Temporary interventions, Green roofs on new developments / retrofit of existing developments, Window boxes	  
Lighting Strategy	Site wide	Lighting strategy would transform Holborn after dark and provide a setting for an animated, safe evening environment	 
Holborn Station arrival space	Holborn Station precinct	Improvements to area around Holborn Station entrance in order to provide a new identity	
Improvements to New Turnstile passage	New Turnstile / Little Turnstile / Gate Street	Provide a high quality, attractive route that responds to pedestrian desire lines and improves legibility and wayfinding	   
Removal of gyratory	High Holborn / New Oxford Street / Bloomsbury Way / Proctor Street / Drake Street	Removal of the Holborn gyratory to unlock new areas of public realm, reduce the impact of traffic, and provide safer and more pleasant walking and cycling routes	  
New Oxford Street / Bloomsbury Way junction	New Oxford Street / Bloomsbury Way junction	Transformation of the junction to reconnect Holborn with the West End, removing large amounts of vehicular traffic and providing a pedestrian friendly walking environment	 
New Oxford Street improvements	New Oxford Street	Improvements to New Oxford Street to provide better pedestrian connectivity East-West	

Project details

Project	Location	Description	Objective(s) addressed
Segregated cycle lanes	High Holborn and Oxford Street	Segregated cycle lanes along High Holborn and New Oxford Street where dimensions allow	 
New public space in front of 246 High Holborn	High Holborn	Resurfacing using high quality paving, additional seating and lighting	
110 High Holborn	High Holborn	Investigate redevelopment that removes air rights bridge and that integrates new station entrance	 
Kingsway improvements	Kingsway and Southampton Row	Improvements to Kingsway and Southampton Row to create a formal boulevard feel and provide a comfortable walking experience	 
Repurposing of tram tunnel	Southampton Row	Repurposing the tram tunnel could provide a wide range of innovative uses for new public space or leisure offers that could be a unique highlight of Midtown. Examples could include bars, pubs and clubs, leisure facilities, museum or gallery spaces.	 
Carriageway reduction	Theobalds Road	Reduction of carriageways to improve pedestrian connectivity and reduce impact of vehicles	 
Amended street layout	Theobalds Road	Improvements to GI along Theobalds road, and the introduction of pocket parks, will contribute to wider green network and improve air quality, as well as creating places for people to dwell and rest	 
Realignment of cycle lanes	Theobalds Road	Realignment of cycle lanes to encourage active transport and connect to wider cycle network	 

Project details

Project	Location	Description	Objective(s) addressed
Raised crossings at key intersections	Theobalds Road	Raised crossings at key pedestrian intersections to improve connectivity and legibility	
New pocket plaza	Side streets adjacent to Theobalds Road	Introduction of pocket parks where side roads have been closed	 
Refurbishment of Bloomsbury Square	Bloomsbury Square	Refurbishment of existing historic garden square to reduce impact of traffic and provide improved pedestrian experience	 
Shared bus and cycle lanes	Bloomsbury Way	Improvements to the quality of Bloomsbury Way in order to increase pedestrian links to the British Museum and provide a comfortable walking environment	 
1-4 Red Lion Square	Red Lion Square	Reinstate Grange Street and create new public space as part of redevelopment site	 
Increase existing facilities and amenities	Red Lion Square	Improvements to Red Lion Square to help transform the square into a 'new type of garden square' with a distinct and inclusive offer	
Pedestrianisation	Great Russell Street	Pedestrianisation of Great Russell Street in order to create an improved arrival experience to the British Museum and reflect historic context	 
New pocket plazas	Underutilised side streets	Introduction of pocket parks where side roads have been closed	 
Improvements to, and around, Museum Street	Museum Street	Improvements to Museum Street and side streets which improve pedestrian movement and legibility, revealing the historic and cultural asset of the British Museum, and providing places to dwell and rest.	  

Project details

Project	Location	Description	Objective(s) addressed
Post Building: public realm	Museum Street, south of New Oxford Street	Includes improvements to Museum Street south of New Oxford Street provided by the Post Building development.	   
Raised crossings at key intersections	Various areas of the Museum quarter	Raised crossings at key pedestrian intersections to improve connectivity and legibility	
Partial road closures	Southern ends of Bloomsbury Square, Southern Bury Place and Barter Street	Partial street closures to improve pedestrian connectivity, activate street frontages and accommodate flexible use	 
Street transformation	Southampton Place	Transformation of Southampton Place to emphasise this as a key route to the British Museum and improve links between Bloomsbury Square Garden and Holborn Station	
Street transformation	Red Lion Street and Lamb's Conduit Street	Interventions to improve north-south pedestrian connectivity and create a new destination for people to eat and shop	 
Temporary interventions	Procter Street	Closure of Procter Street during redevelopment of Holborn Station provides an opportunity for meetings, or to enjoy food and leisure offer as well as increase the attractiveness of Red Lion Square	 
Holborn station new entrance	Procter Street	New and improved entrance to Holborn Station	  

Project details

Project	Location	Description	Objective(s) addressed
Carriageway reduction	Procter and Drake Streets	Reduction of carriageways to improve pedestrian connectivity and reduce impact of vehicles	
Raised crossings at key intersections	Procter and Drake Streets	Raised crossings at key pedestrian intersections to improve connectivity and legibility	
Pedestrianisation of Fisher Street	Fisher Street	Pedestrianisation of Fischer Street in order to provide improved pedestrian connectivity and create a tranquil environment to gather and meet	 
Diagonal through route	Central St Martin's Site	Opportunity to improve pedestrian links to Red Lion Square and reveal historic frontages on Theobalds Road by adding a through route through the development	 
Improvements to courtyards and passages	Various	Improvements to the network of passages and courtyards will contribute to a more comfortable walking environment	   
Princes Circus	Princes Circus	Redesign of Princes Circus will improve pedestrian connectivity and provide a high quality amenity space for users to gather, rest and dwell	

Midtown Priority Projects

now to 2020

Implementing quick wins that put pedestrians first

These projects—which could be delivered before the end of 2020—focus on providing quick wins that

- increase pedestrian wellbeing and
- build upon Midtown’s character and charm.

This phase provides a series of smaller interventions which collectively make a much larger impact.

The emphasis is on improving the quality, provision and comfort of public space for pedestrians through initiatives such as decluttering of pavements, partial road closures and in some instances pedestrianisation. This helps alleviate the immediate pressures of pedestrian congestion and safety and prepares the area for the arrival of the Elizabeth line.

This period also focuses on setting the scene for future mid-term and long-term improvements. Wayfinding and lighting strategies for Midtown will direct and inform future projects and provide a framework for delivery.

Temporary and intermediary works along Theobalds Road and Kingsway will act as precursors to larger scale improvements further into the future.



Figure 19. Priority projects in progress by 2020

Midtown Priority Projects 2021 to 2025

Strengthening physical and social connectivity

Between 2021 to 2025, a number of significant priority projects will be implemented. Notably, the removal of the gyratory will bring about positive change to permeability throughout Midtown and connectivity with neighbouring areas.

Improvements to the arrival space around Holborn Station will ensure continued prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists and provide a safer and more attractive key transport node. Active travel will also be enhanced through new cycle lanes along High Holborn, pedestrianisation of Great Russell Street and permanent works along Theobalds Road.

This period is important in providing an enhanced and resilient public realm ahead of large scale construction works associated with the arrival of a new station entrance at Holborn on Proctor Street, which will bring about traffic disruption to the area for a number of years. In turn, these enhancements will minimise disruption and improve accessibility and quality of place during the transformative phase.

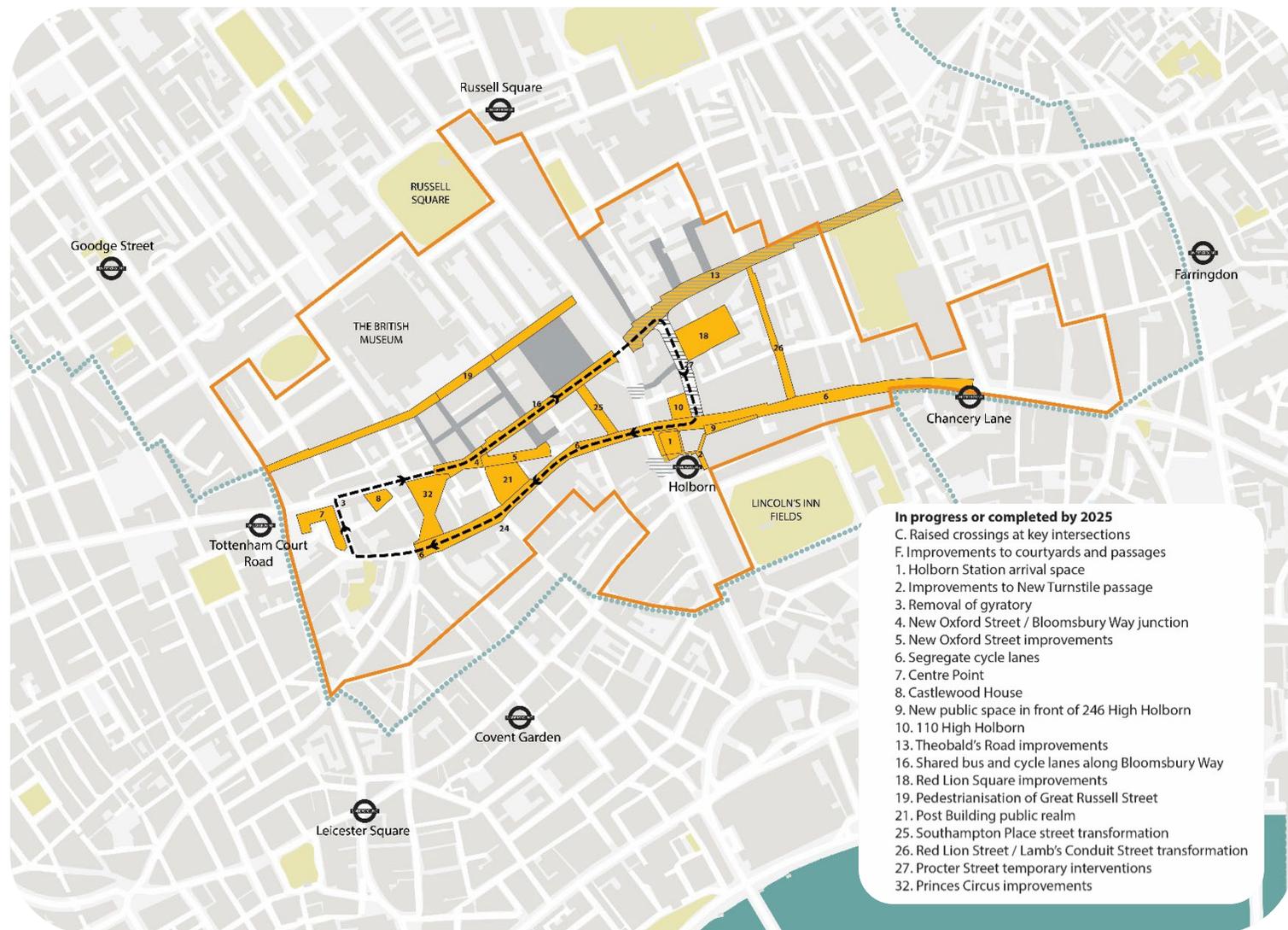


Figure 20. Priority projects in progress or completed by 2025

Midtown Priority Projects 2025 to 2030

Seizing long term opportunities for growth and diversification

Between 2025 to 2030 will see the implementation of a smaller number of priority projects with impact that should help to secure Holborn's longer term capacity for growth.

A new station entrance at Holborn will increase the capacity of the heavily constrained station and provide a new gateway and sense of place for the district. These changes support more capacity for workers and visitors, bringing about new commercial and business opportunities. The public realm improvements before the station works begin will support continued increase in demand for the station prior to its upgrades.

Permanent improvement works along Kingsway and Southampton Row will deliver the final piece in prioritising pedestrians throughout Midtown and will strengthen physical connections to Kings Cross and Euston in the north and Waterloo in the south.

Together, these projects round out the connectivity and accessibility of Midtown—ensuring that for decades to come, Midtown is a powerhouse for thriving businesses and able to evolve to increase leisure offer through improved pedestrian capacity and public realm.



Figure 21. Priority projects completed by 2030

Midtown Priority Projects

Legend

- Project in progress by 2020
- Project in progress or completed by 2025
- Project completed by 2030
- Priority project packages

In progress by 2020

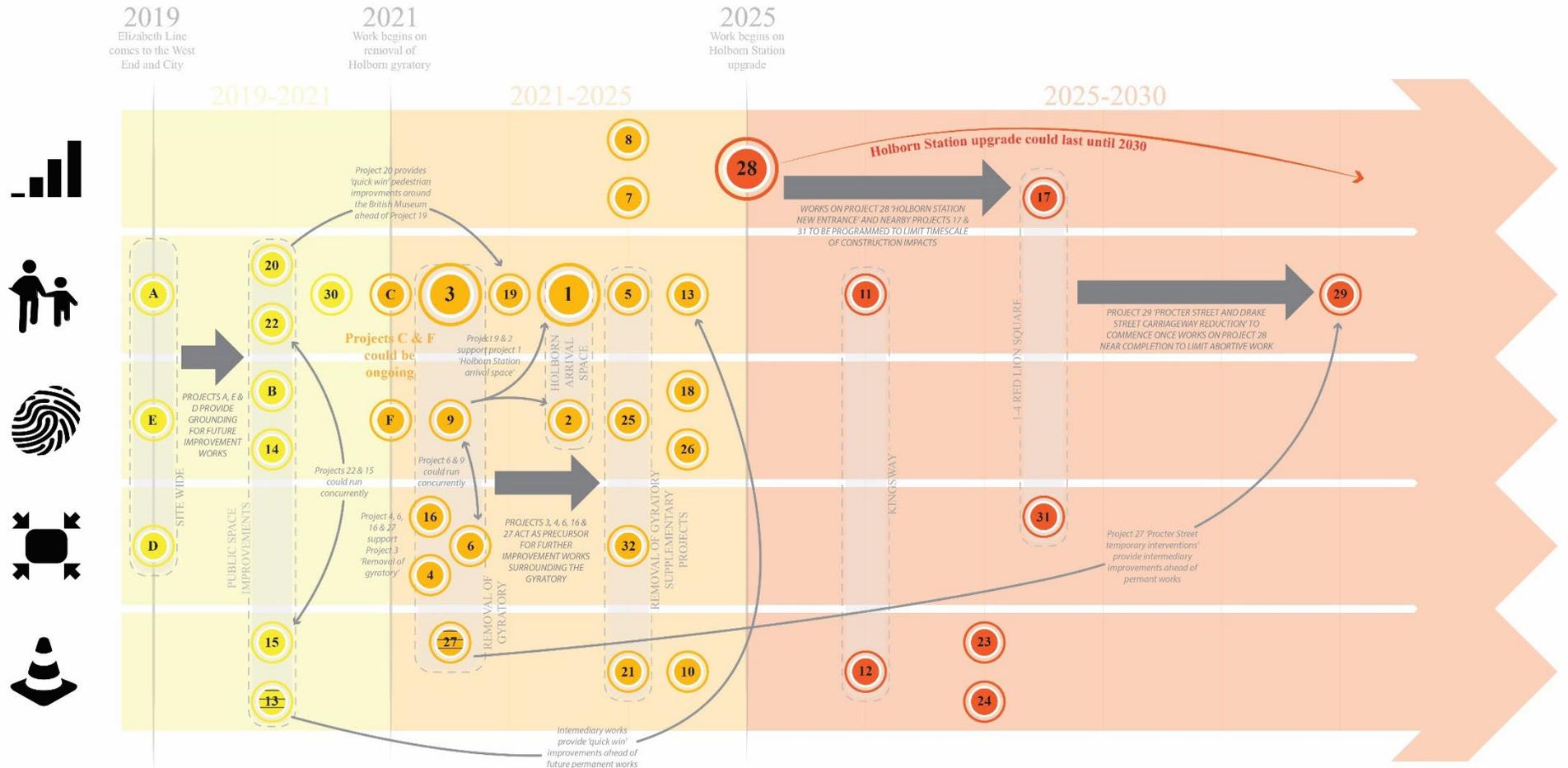
- A. De-clutter
- B. New pocket parks
- D. Wayfinding strategy
- E. Lighting strategy
- 13. Theobald's Road improvements
- 14. New pocket plaza
- 15. Refurbishment of Bloomsbury Square
- 20. Museum Street improvements
- 22. Partial road closure
- 30. Pedestrianisation of Fisher Street

In progress or completed by 2025

- C. Raised crossings at key intersections
- F. Improvements to courtyards and passages
- 1. Holborn Station arrival space
- 2. Improvements to New Turnstile passage
- 3. Removal of gyrotary
- 4. New Oxford Street / Bloomsbury Way junction
- 5. New Oxford Street improvements
- 6. Segregate cycle lanes
- 7. Centre Point
- 8. Castlewood House
- 9. New public space in front of 246 High Holborn
- 10. 110 High Holborn
- 13. Theobald's Road improvements
- 16. Shared bus and cycle lanes along Bloomsbury Way
- 18. Red Lion Square improvements
- 19. Pedestrianisation of Great Russell Street
- 21. Post Building public realm
- 25. Southampton Place street transformation
- 26. Red Lion Street / Lamb's Conduit Street transformation
- 27. Procter Street temporary interventions
- 32. Princes Circus improvements

Completed by 2030

- 11. Kingsway improvements
- 12. Repurposing of tram tunnel
- 17. 1-4 Red Lion Square
- 23. Redevelopment of Travelodge Site
- 24. New building on Drury Lane
- 28. Holborn Station new entrance
- 29. Procter Street and Drake Street carriageway reduction
- 31. Central St Martin's site through route



Achieving the vision

The priority projects will provide necessary investments to support the continued growth and success of Midtown. Although each project is matched to the particular objectives they best align with, it is important to note that the force of true improvement across Midtown lies in the collective result of small and big improvements across all areas.

Growth for a diverse economy

Midtown will continue to grow as a district of successful clusters benefitting from a synergistic relationship.

Business growth and the attractiveness of midtown is closely linked with public realm initiatives and accessibility improvements. New offices and leisure space will help ensure there are affordable spaces for a range of large and small businesses. Improved connectivity—both roads and smaller lanes—between Midtown and neighbouring areas of economic activity is equally important to incentivise growth, development and innovation.

People's wellbeing first Build identity of the area

Increased wellbeing is tackled by over half of the priority projects for Midtown.

The area is currently congested for pedestrians, and the footfall is expected to increase. The collective force of small and big investments is vital to the overall success of Midtown.

Wider pavements and improved crossings will help with pedestrian safety and comfort. Increased capacity at Holborn station and the redesign of the gyratory system will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage public transport use.

Midtown's cultural and heritage assets draw over 6 million people each year. Investments in new pocket parks, Holborn's arrival space and overall street transformations highlight these assets and strengthen identity of the area as a mix of London's heritage and growth.

Strengthening Midtown's identity facilitates growth for a diverse economy and improved wellbeing. It is a broad and often intangible objective, but contributes to Midtown's success in the physical spaces as well as the business attractiveness and culture.

Connectivity and wayfinding

Connections and accessibility to neighbouring areas is an essential part of Midtown's USP. The rise of the creative industry, professional services, and tech are complementary to the economic ecosystem of neighbouring districts; so maintaining safe and welcoming connections is key to business.

Investment in better walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as wayfinding, creates improved physical connections for business. Investments in informal meeting spaces and quality public realm sets a platform for social connections between firms.

Managing Midtown's evolution

Major infrastructure and development projects have the potential to cause disruption to day-to-day life. But careful placemaking will lead Midtown through this necessary change, and these disruptions can be turned into opportunities to drive improvements in public realm.

The removal of the gyratory system will pave the way for TfL's construction of the new Holborn Station entrance on Proctor Street. Temporary street closures will open opportunities for pocket parks or plazas that improve wellbeing and identity.

Next Steps

The BEE Midtown district is one of the most economically successful areas in London— with over 100,000 people coming from across the capital and beyond to work there. The businesses in the area are parts of successful clusters of creative, professional services and scientific and technical sectors of national importance.

But Midtown is under pressure. Economic growth and development have not been matched by improvements in public spaces, places and transport. More people than ever are exposed to the negative effects of road traffic including poor air quality, unreliable bus services, and experience the challenge of poor connections into and throughout the district. The number of road casualties in the area are symptomatic of a “distressed” urban environment and associated conflicts between users. There is a pressing requirement to re-prioritise people and sustainable transport in public streets and spaces.

Historical under-investment has not helped to protect the cultural and heritage assets of the area.

To tackle these challenges, BEE Midtown will continue to work closely with the London Borough of Camden, TfL, the GLA and private partners to deliver the best possible future for Midtown.

The programme of public realm improvements set out in this vision has sought to unlock the economic potential of Midtown with a compelling case for investment.

In identifying the varying paces of the people who choose to spend time in Midtown, we have developed a series of priorities for making Midtown work for them. If successfully implemented, for everyone who passes through the district, it will be safer to walk and cycle. Public transport will be more attractive.

With sustained effort and partnership working, Midtown will grow into one of London’s most successful and diverse economic clusters.

Recognising that Midtown’s continued success relies on managing its evolution carefully, BEE Midtown and partners are working to secure new opportunities to make lasting improvements. Where spaces are underutilised or unloved, this plan seeks to bring them to life.

Midtown is many things to many people. It is part of a remarkable past and the bright future of London. It is a product of the pooling of influences from Soho, the City, and Clerkenwell. As sophisticated, district where creative, cultural, technical and professional worlds sit side by side and engage, now is the time to invest in this unique environment to enable its continued growth to benefit London and Londoners together.

Fulfilling Midtown’s potential



1. Grow and adapt commercial space and business ecosystem for a diverse economy for London



2. Put people’s wellbeing first in the public space, including improved air quality and prioritising pedestrians and cyclists



3. Build identity of the area through investing in places that highlight and preserve heritage, character and charm



4. Optimise Midtown’s central position through intuitive wayfinding and improving accessibility of physical and social networks



5. Manage the evolution of Midtown for residents and employees through careful placemaking, programming and servicing to minimise disruption and seize opportunities during periods of growth and change

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Much of the analysis in this report is based on stakeholder consultation. We have satisfied ourselves, so far as possible, that the information presented in our report is consistent with published information and the information provided to us, however, we have not sought to establish the reliability of the sources by reference to other specific evidence.

We emphasise that any forward-looking projections, forecasts, or estimates are based upon interpretations or assessments of

available information at the time of writing. The realisation of any prospective financial information is dependent upon the continued validity of the assumptions on which it is based. Actual events frequently do not occur as expected, and the differences may be material. For this reason, we accept no responsibility for the realisation of any projection, forecast, opinion or estimate.

Findings are time-sensitive and relevant only to current conditions at the time of writing. We will not be under any obligation to update the report to address changes in facts or circumstances that occur after the date of our report that might materially affect the contents of the report or any of the conclusions set forth within.

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