

Covid-19:

**R**ENEW

**I**NVIGORATE

**S**UPPORT

**E**VOLVE

11/2020

## A WORK IN PROGRESS

In July 2020 we saw our hospitality, retail and leisure sectors slowly reopen, so although many workplaces stayed closed, it was a step in the right direction. By early September, coinciding with the start of the new school year, confidence was beginning to return, commuter numbers picked up, as did the number of office workers, university students and visitors.

Then came the second nationwide lockdown. Though not as restrictive as the first, it still had repercussions to businesses the length and breadth of the country but especially in central London. The impact of the closure of the workplace has had massive repercussions on the face-to-face economy, as demonstrated in our research project with Arup on the impact of the absence of office workers in the capital.

The team at Midtown BID has worked through the pandemic, researching, planning ahead and offering support wherever we could, getting to grips with the new normal.

With the initial drafting and this update to our **R I S E – RENEW INVIGORATE SUPPORT EVOLVE** Strategy we have trained our focus on the opportunity we have next year to build back better, ensuring our district and London as a whole is in the best economic and social position not just to survive but to thrive.

The Team and I at Midtown BID look forward to working with you all on the delivery of our **Covid-19: RISE Strategy**.

**Debbie Akehurst**

Chief Executive

November 2020

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Midtown BID Board and Executive Management met to review the BID's priorities and objectives in order to establish how to best support its members in such uncertain times.

The result was the **Covid-19: RISE** strategy, setting out short and medium-term goals to get the area back fully functioning.

The RISE strategy seeks to:

**Renew:** Establish a sustainable and revitalised Midtown through an agile and holistic approach to collaboration and partnerships, supporting our members on a sector-by-sector basis.

**Invigorate:** Give businesses, employees, staff and visitors confidence to return to Midtown, emphasising it as a vibrant, safe and welcoming district.

**Support:** Provide assistance and advice reflective of our strength as London's second largest contributor of **Growth Value Added (GVA)** to our commercial and wider local community.

**Evolve:** Work towards securing central and local government support, including funding towards new public realm opportunities, and building a wide base of support to create social value for the communities in which we operate.

This document will also continue to evolve as we respond to each new challenge, with one thing remaining certain, we will not stand still.

We commend all of our member businesses, and all of their employees, for the strength and resilience they have shown during the crisis. And now, with the reported discovery of a vaccination for Covid-19 and the possibility of its roll out starting early next year, we have reason to be cautiously optimistic.

Establish a sustainable and revitalised Midtown through an agile and holistic approach to collaboration and partnerships supporting our members on a sector-by-sector basis.

Midtown BID will coordinate with borough and pan-London stakeholders to ensure a well-rounded approach to supporting our businesses.

- > Work with the Greater London Authority (GLA), Camden Council, Islington Council and Transport for London (TfL) on the Mayor of London's Streetspace pedestrianisation and cycle routes scheme.
- > Develop and expand upon Midtown BID's public realm research, scoping and feasibility studies.
- > Lobby for the acceleration and realisation of approved public realm works, made possible through the awarding of c£9m of TfL funding, achieved as a result of Midtown BID's active support, funding contributions and partnerships with local authorities.
- > Coordinate with landlords, residents, and the relevant local authority to activate and regenerate vacant ground floor spaces. Use the results of the **Meanwhile Use Consultation** to guide planning and appropriate use of vacant space.

Give businesses, employees, staff and visitors confidence to return to Midtown, emphasising it as a vibrant, safe and welcoming district.

Midtown BID will work to ensure that the area is safe, clean and hospitable for returning businesses and visitors, and well prepared for the 're-opening' of London.

- > Work with Camden Council and Islington Council on appropriate wayfinding signage and other information such as safe walking and cycling routes to aid social distancing.
- > Identify locations where hospitality and leisure providers can expand into and operate from outside areas, working with the relevant authorities to seek fast-tracked planning and licensing approvals.
- > Provide a new district-wide **Daily Street Cleansing Programme** as well as new weekday **On Street Security Patrols**.
- > Re-introduce the uniformed **On Street Ambassadors** to help pedestrians and tourists with queries. At the first opportunity re-establish the series of free, open air, guided **Midtown Walks**.

Provide assistance and advice reflective of our strength as London's second largest contributor of **Growth Value Added (GVA)** to our commercial and wider local community.

Midtown BID will step up its dialogue and interaction with each of its stakeholders, whilst also actively encouraging members to connect with each other.

- > Continue to offer **1-2-1 meetings** with Debbie Akehurst, Midtown BID Chief Executive through the **online member booking platform**, with *real-time availability options*, instant confirmation, diary invite and Zoom link notifications.
- > Form sector-specific roundtables to identify areas where Midtown BID can collectively work together on the delivery of targeted business and marketing campaigns.
- > Work with other London BIDs and wider stakeholders to lobby local and national government to support the economic recovery of London.
- > Work in partnership with Camden Council and Islington Council, developing and delivering a sustainable approach to the district's homeless and rough sleepers.

Work towards securing central and local government support, including funding towards new public realm opportunities, and building a wide base of support to create social value for the communities where we operate.

Midtown BID will develop and expand upon all existing initiatives, seeking to maintain momentum in the delivery of the projects outlined in its 2020 Manifesto.

- > Identify new areas for seating and cycle storage.
- > Expand the number of rooftop gardens, individual planters and pollinator habitats, and look to introduce and install parklets and green walls throughout our area, making Midtown a cleaner and greener environment.
- > Develop the **Midtown Land Use Study** to seek self-financing options to help deliver Holborn tube station improvements.
- > Work with the relevant local authorities to identify safe pedestrian routes, flows and additional wayfinding.
- > Develop our **SEE (Social, Economic, and Environmental) Strategy** to position Midtown BID as a champion for sustainable social and economic growth.



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