

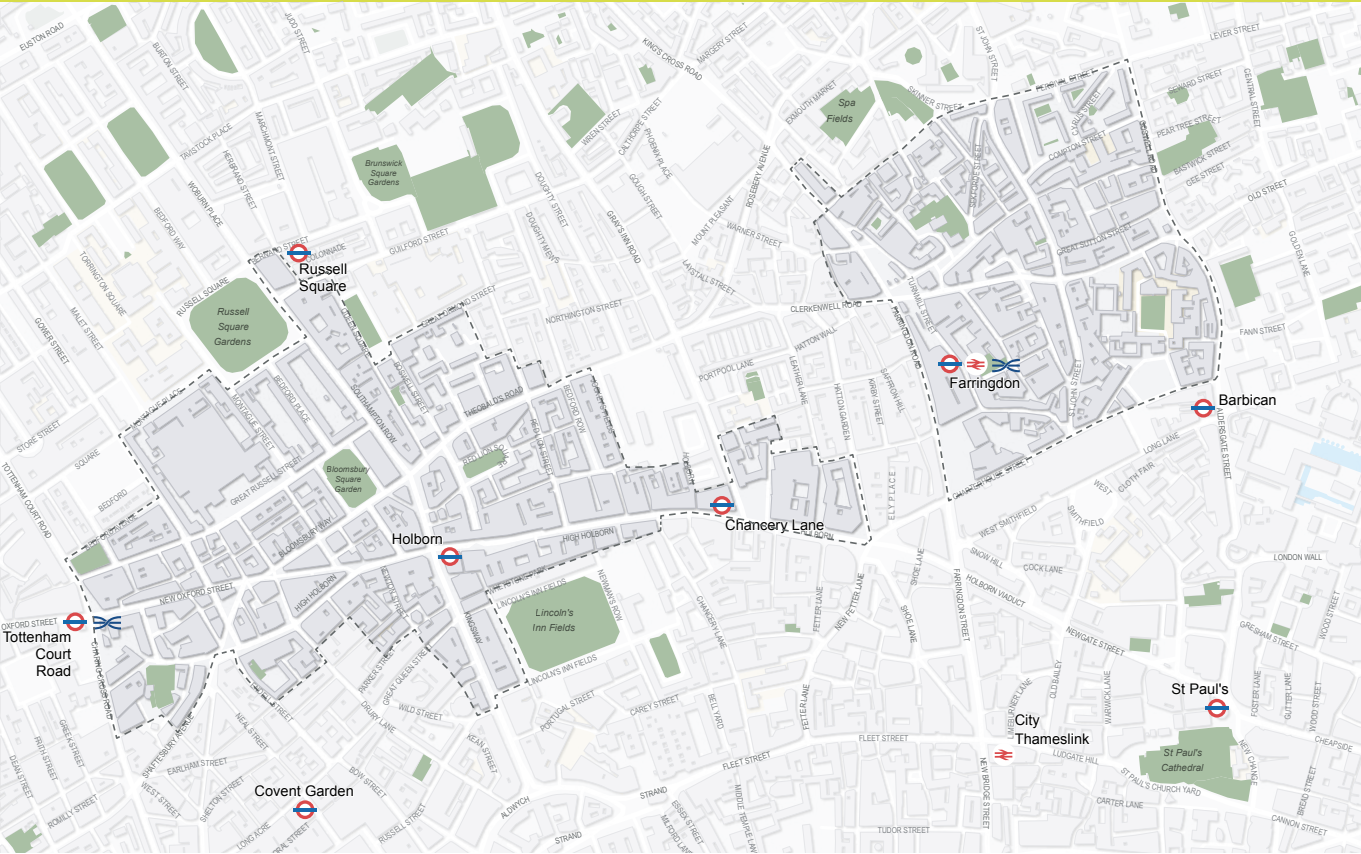
Central District Alliance

The BID for Holborn
and Clerkenwell

Annual Report

2020-2021

BID map



Contents

Foreword	3	Supporting Growth and Prosperity	18
Welcome	4	Sustainable business solutions	20
Rise: Renew, invigorate, support, evolve	7	Governance and board	24
Clean, Green, Safe and Welcoming	10	Income and expenditure 2020-2021	27
Communications, Marketing, and Lobbying	14	History of the BID	28

Foreword

The Central District Alliance (CDA) is the new name for the Business Improvement District (BID) for the areas in and around Holborn and Clerkenwell. Prior to June 2021 we were known as Midtown BID.

Our footprint extends to Charing Cross Road in the West End running through the main roads of New Oxford Street into High Holborn, reaching Gray's Inn Road towards Hatton Garden and the City. The BID covers a large part of Southampton Row, including Russell Square tube station, and the most southerly tip extends over half-way down Kingsway, reaching towards Aldwych and our close neighbours at Northbank BID.

The easterly part of the BID covers an area sometimes known as City Fringe. It encompasses Bowling Green Lane to the north, Farringdon Road to the west, Charterhouse Street to the south and Goswell Road to the east – within the London Borough of Islington.

As Crossrail (the Elizabeth line) gets set to arrive in 2022, the CDA sits more than ever at the very heart of greater and indeed central London. The BID is anchored by two major Crossrail stations, Tottenham Court Road, WC1 and Farringdon, EC1. That makes them the CDA gateway for an estimated 900,000 commuters each day and provides direct access to no fewer than five London area airports. Some 44% of working age Londoners will be able to reach Farringdon station within 45 minutes. The CDA is committed to ensuring we maximise on the opportunities that will come with the anticipated opening of the Elizabeth line next year.



@CDALDN @CDALondon
www.centraldistrictalliance.com

Welcome

This annual report covers the period 6 April 2020 to 5 April 2021, year one of the fourth term of the Central District Alliance (formerly Midtown) Business Improvement District. Following the successful re-ballot in February 2020, we were delighted to have secured a renewed mandate from our levy-payers.

As was noted in our previous annual report, much has changed in the world of business and beyond. The government has come off its emergency footing with a relaxation of many restrictions but Covid-19 continues to have an impact on many people's lives. A new landscape of working practices, travel patterns and investment priorities is emerging. This is an unprecedented period of change and in some cases we are sailing into largely uncharted waters.

With a predominantly office-based economy, CDA's neighbourhoods along with the City of London and large parts of the West End are experiencing impacts that - at least in the short to medium term - could prove very challenging. I believe it is right that we should ask questions around whether they are to be universally encouraged.

This is because, for the last thirty or so years, London and other world cities have been pursuing policies to increase the number of people working (and living) in their centres. This is a reflection of policy-makers' recognition of the compelling economic case surrounding so called agglomeration benefits that come from increasing the depth and breadth of labour markets to employers and employees alike. Concentrating economic activity in city centres has generated productivity gains of perhaps as much as twenty percent. There are social equity and sustainability benefits of these policies too. Theatres and museums thrive on being in close proximity to each other as do hotels, retailers, restaurants and their complex supply chains.

Allowing a more dispersed, car-dependent, lower density London to drift beyond its current economic footprint raises questions about the viability of central London. With huge investment in public transport to facilitate central London growth, including major private sector contributions, many thousands of businesses - small and large - have invested on the basis of a density-based model of economic growth. Hospitality, retail, culture and our hard hit leisure sectors are far more dependent on commuters than might appear the case at first glance. And that is before taking into account the toll that a collapse of international business and leisure travel has taken on these sectors.

The CDA's response to these challenges is a combination of familiar and new ideas. During 2020, when our area was so very quiet, we maintained security patrols and some cleaning activities. Now we are working hard

to make our area as safe and welcoming as possible as footfall returns. This means continued investment in basic things such as street cleansing activities, patrols and removing graffiti. We are on track to have our first seasonal lights in winter 2021 - providing a welcome boost to encourage people to visit and stay longer in our neighbourhoods. Furthermore we have an advanced plan of street level "greening" that is being finalised and will be implemented over the coming months. And we are talking to our boroughs and the Greater London Authority (GLA) about where we could help accelerate plans for street improvements around a variety of themes including safety and sustainability.

The BID remains committed to providing our members and other stakeholders with more insight into economic activity in the CDA area on footfall, uptake of floorspace and real estate investment. We believe this is a valuable service to those looking to invest in the area, expand existing premises or review opening times and so on. Progress has been made albeit more slowly than we would have liked. But we are determined to get this onto a proper footing in the coming months.

Internally, we have implemented a number of improvements to our governance arrangements. In 2020, we strengthened our board membership by recruiting new directors, reviewed our Articles of Association and more recently have set up a Performance and Remuneration Committee to support the board in delivering its oversight obligations.

We know 2021/22 is going to be a challenging year for many of our members and public sector partners. The government's political attitude towards central London remains at best uncertain. So we will be working with other BIDs and London government to try and ensure that London receives its fair share of investment and resourcing from Westminster particularly in areas such as transport, skills and housing. Further devolution to London government is also important to try and secure.

Finally, with social distancing restrictions largely out of the way, we will be making renewed efforts to meet with our levy payers and other partners face to face more frequently.



Alexander Jan

Alexander Jan
Chairman

“On behalf of Debbie Akehurst, our chief executive and my fellow board directors, we thank so many of you who continue to support CDA and its activities. As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions as to what we should be doing and where we could be making improvements, or would like to get more involved, please do get in touch. With best wishes for a very successful trading future.”

Alexander Jan, Chairman, Central District Alliance

The Central District Alliance, is the Business Improvement District spanning some of central London's most iconic, influential, and historical areas. We represent the interests of the 400 strong levy-payers in the area along with other members of the business community. Our primary aim to ensure the BID area is

- Clean
- Green
- Safe and
- Welcoming

We use data to drive long term sustainable, commercial and social growth. We draw upon the UN Sustainability Development Goals (UNSDG) as our guide to deliver these priorities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a once in a generation experience that has impacted dramatically the way we live and work. So called hybrid ways of working risk upending the long-held model of commuting and every day activities in the centre of London and indeed other cities. Whilst there was for sure some trend towards more homeworking before the pandemic, the prospective scale of change now confronting us is unprecedented and risks the long term vitality, productivity and competitiveness of our city centres along with our public transport networks.

Our BID covering Holborn and Clerkenwell has been a champion of the area for over 15 years. Whilst we have seen major changes throughout that time, the current settings offer challenges and opportunities the like of which have rarely been seen before.

We must rise to them and we are here to support you in doing so.

The annual report is here to provide details of our achievements over the last year as we navigated through the pandemic and supported our business community in an unprecedented operating environment.



Debbie Akehurst

Debbie Akehurst
Chief Executive



Rise: Renew, invigorate, support, evolve

In April 2020 we saw our major tourist, hospitality, retail, and entertainment sectors shut down almost overnight, with many offices closely following suit. What we were seeing was the start of something that no one could be prepared for – the complete shutdown of our economy. Throughout this period, the BID supported our business community as best we could, providing up to date communications on government grants, the furlough scheme, and local authority communications and more.

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 returning. The impact of the closure of the workplace has had massive repercussions for the face-to-face economy. This was demonstrated in our research project with Arup on the impact of the absence of office workers in the capital. Back in September 2020, we were hopeful of a reopening but this unfortunately was just the beginning of two more lockdowns resulting in further unrest to our sectors.

Throughout this pandemic we have focused on the opportunity to build back better, ensuring our district and London is in the best economic and social position to recover and thrive.





“At the Welcome People, we support the Central District Alliance’s priorities of a clean, safe, and welcoming area. This is why we work with them to provide a friendly, experienced, and dedicated On Street Team. We are excited to continue working with CDA to deliver these priorities.”

David Miller, Partner, Welcome People

Clean, Green, Safe and Welcoming



At the heart of any BID's offer is the responsibility to build on the work carried out by local authorities, keep the area clean, safe, and welcoming.

The BID introduced an On Street team working in partnership with the Welcome People. Our teams are out across the district every day – in their distinct CDA uniforms. We hope you have seen them undertaking their duties.

The Clean Team provides an extra layer of litter picking and jet washing along our public highways. It operates Monday to Friday.

Our Security Patrol operates Monday to Friday and is there to offer all manner of support to help encourage a safe atmosphere, including sensitively dealing with anti-social behaviour. During the quiet months of the first lockdown the patrol was reconfigured to focus

attention on looking after empty premises in the close-to-deserted city. Crucially, the team has forged links with the local police service and other relevant agencies.

The third element of our on-street presence is our ambassador, Greig. He has an important role to play being another set of eyes and ears on the street, helping people with wayfinding and directions, and making sure our streets are presentable. An important task during the quieter months of lockdown has been the collation of a street furniture audit which will help us prioritise jobs to enhance the area's appearance as more workers come back to the city.

Overall, our On Street Team give confidence to business owners and individuals alike, ensuring a welcoming environment for our community.



Security

39,043
Street Audits
Conducted

334
Rough sleepers
reported

519
Begging
reported

47
Anti-social behaviour
reported

21
Incident forms
completed

Ambassadors

3,801
Visitor
welcomed

Cleaning

10,401
Areas
cleaned

618
Jet
washes

281
Janitorial
services



“CDA provides an informed and effective voice representing the business in London’s Central District. At the Shaftesbury Theatre this gives us confidence that, as we rebuild our business post pandemic, there is a passionate voice speaking up for both our needs and the wider business community. An effective partnership that enriches and grows London’s Central District.”

James Williams, Chief Executive, The Shaftesbury Theatre

Communications, Marketing, and Lobbying



The BID is the area's champion, seeking to reveal its talents and share its often hidden assets. The priority was and continues to be supporting our members as they safely assist their employees back to the workplace. As we seek to support attractions for both the local and domestic audience, we will develop actively initiatives to raise the profile of the area.

Destination Modelling

The BID developed a Destination Plan to enhance the area and support business members across sectors. We are keen to see the area as not just a place to come to work but a visitor destination as well – we want to see a vibrant day and night-time economy that is beneficial to all – business, employees, visitors and resident communities. We have been working to raise the profile of the area highlighting and identifying 'hidden gems' – walking maps – items of cultural and artistic value – green space.

Digital communication

The BID uses a variety of digital marketing tools including newsletters and social media to communicate news. Alongside our revamped website we will be able to increase interaction with our members and stakeholders. We will ensure a broad range of points of contact and the widest possible dissemination of information to guarantee the maximum level of connection with our communities.

Online events

The BID has worked with local stakeholders including the Midtown Business Club, the Greater London Authority, and local companies to provide our members with a variety of content on themes supporting business recovery and employee wellbeing.

A respected voice

The BID has joined a number of highly-respected organisations such as the Cross River Partnership, London First, Cities Restart, the London Real Estate Forum and the London Property Alliance to place the BID firmly at the heart of build back better campaigns.

Debbie Akehurst sat on the London Recovery Board Central Activity Zone Steering Group and has spoken at numerous roundtables and events raising the profile of the BID and its importance in the London economy.

Research

At the end of 2020 the BID co-sponsored a report by Arup, the widely-respected professional services consultancy, looking into the effect of the absence of office workers on the central London economy. We will continue to commission research with leaders in their fields to give us meaningful statistics to inform our work.



Twitter

178,475
Impressions

2.2% engagement rate
190% increase
from previous year

360 posts
62% increase
from previous year

24
Audience growth

3,985 engagements
249% increase
from previous year

954 video views
68% increase
from previous year

LinkedIn

39,046
Impressions

1,311
Engagements

134
Audience growth

Christmas Cocktail Campaign

In December 2020, the BID delivered a social media Christmas campaign on LinkedIn and Twitter. This campaign consists of the BID sharing 'How to Make' video of various cocktails created by the BID to increase social media engagement and BID awareness.

Social media statistics of the campaign (1st Dec 2020-Jan 5th 2021):

14,544
Impressions

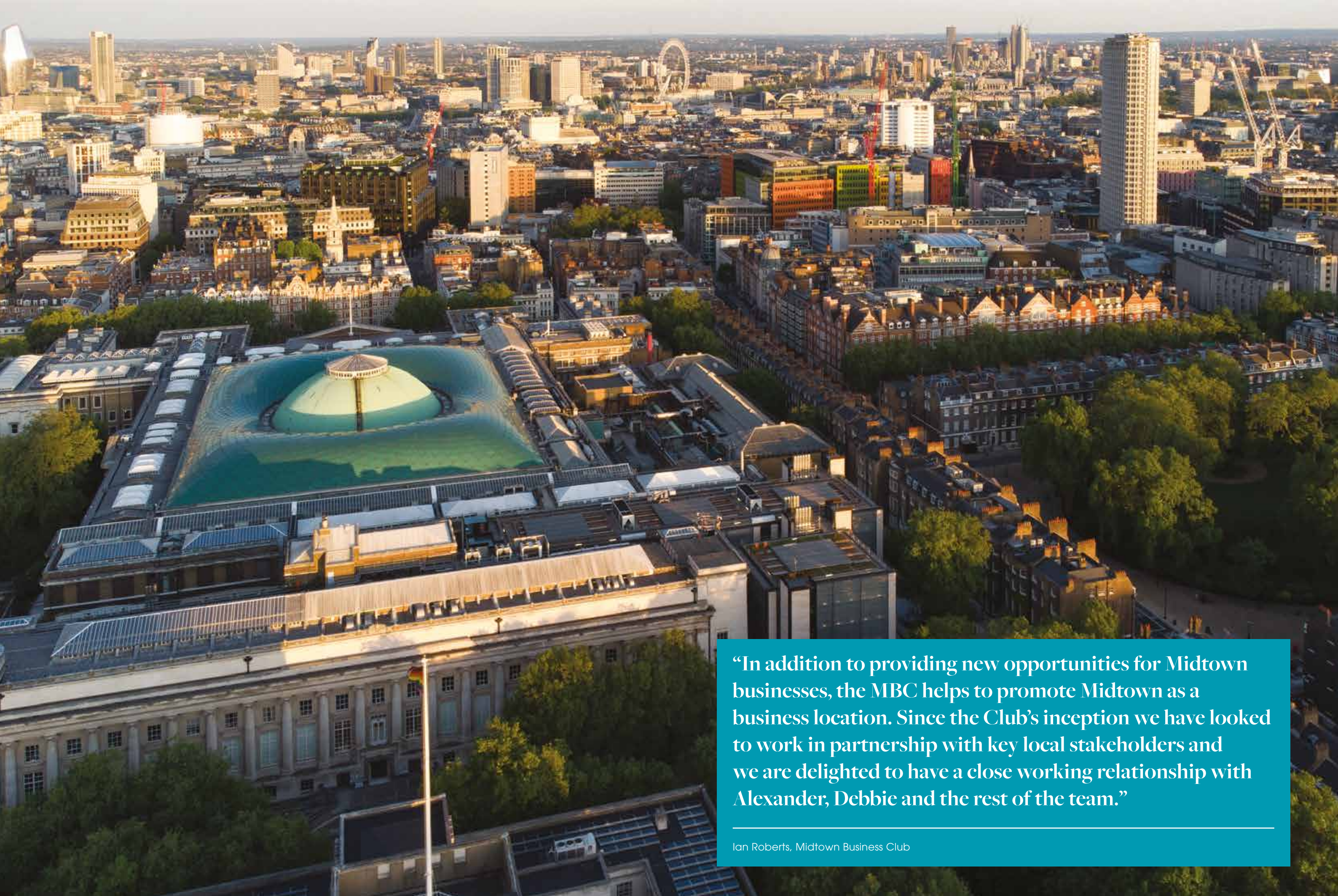
52
Tweets

3,945
Impressions

461
Engagements

66 video views
247% increase
from previous year

171
engagements



“In addition to providing new opportunities for Midtown businesses, the MBC helps to promote Midtown as a business location. Since the Club’s inception we have looked to work in partnership with key local stakeholders and we are delighted to have a close working relationship with Alexander, Debbie and the rest of the team.”

Ian Roberts, Midtown Business Club

Supporting Growth and Prosperity



Holborn, Clerkenwell and the surrounding areas are some of the best, if not the best, connected areas in central London. The CDA area also has a distinct look and feel compared to the City of London and the West End. Our architecture spans centuries with beautifully kept green spaces with well-loved gardens such as Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Bloomsbury Square and Red Lion Square.

The look and feel of our streets form key aspects of making our neighbourhoods welcoming and as we emerge from the pandemic there are continuing practical considerations relating to how we help workers and visitors to navigate the district.

We will continue to work with our local authorities and Transport for London (TfL) to ensure a high-quality public realm. As workers and visitors ask for more from their surroundings, including, cleaner air, less congestion, cleaner spaces, and more places to dwell outside, this strand of our work will become increasingly important.

Ground Floor Use Study

In 2020 we completed a Ground Floor Use Study with Camden Council looking at options for ‘Meanwhile Uses’. Over 100 people responded to the consultation, spanning charitable groups, residents, and businesses, with ideas ranging from bike repair shops to art space to create meaningful uses for vacant ground floor spaces. With some high vacancy rates in shops, finding temporary and permanent creative and meaningful uses will be key to bringing life back to our high streets.

Liveable Neighbourhoods

We support Camden’s proposals for changing the gyratory system outside Holborn Tube station to make the road calmer and safer. We need to invest into our streets to make them safer and more welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy as they go through our district.

Princes Circus

We have continued to support Camden Council’s West End Project. Princes Circus has been redesigned to improve the pedestrian route between Covent Garden and the British Museum. Distinctive “woodland” style planting with new places to sit and enjoy the area will make the space inviting and provide places for pedestrians to rest. New pedestrian crossings will also make the area easier and safer for people to navigate, as will improvements to New Oxford Street and Shaftesbury Avenue pavements, crossings and traffic flow movements.



Brexit Webinars

In March 2021, the BID partnered up with the London Business Hub and Mischcon de Reya to deliver three webinars around Brexit. These webinars covered the topics of People, Data and Trade.

People

Data

Trade

Wellbeing Series – up to April 2021

In light of Covid-19 and mental health awareness, the BID commissioned a wellbeing series in partnership with Pure Sports Medicine who have a Chancery Lane branch close to our footprint, to run from February to August 2021. Below are the sessions that ran between February and April 2021.

Healthy Living Resolutions Webinar

Online Pilates

Other events included:

Mental Health Awareness Webinar

Online Strength and Conditioning

Exercise as a Pill

Sustainable business solutions



Most businesses today are engaged in creating wider social value through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes. The idea that companies can be profitable and do good at the same time has never been more relevant as we come together now in the effort to rebuild our lives and the economy.

Our BID will deliver a changing portfolio of campaigns to support sustainable business development and district-wide prosperity. Working in partnership with members and Camden Council and Islington Council, we will support projects that will enhance social value priorities and support our diverse audiences.

For the past three years we have used the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UNSDG) to inform campaigns that will drive long-term sustainable, commercial and social growth. By providing hyper-local knowledge and driving collective action, we will transform the SDGs from theory into practical, immediate, and tangible actions.

We have identified four SDGs where we as a BID and our members can achieve the biggest impact and value:

- Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)
- Sustainable cities (SDG 11)
- Responsible consumption (SDG 12)
- Partnership for the goals (SGD 17)

SEE Strategy

We are creating a Social, Environmental and Economic Strategy to deliver a comprehensive approach to sustainability based on circular economy principles which redefine growth around society-wide benefits.

Plastics reduction

We will retain our commitment to reducing the use of plastics in our footprint.

Healthy eco-system and improved air quality

We will encourage a healthy pollinator friendly eco-system through the support of roof top beehives and street level planting.

Footfall monitoring and analysis

We have partnered with experts to capture footfall data which will be made available our members to help inform policymaking.

Steering groups

We are ensuring our business community has the opportunity to feed into the work of the BID and so we are expanding our steering groups to include Property, Security and Business Resilience, Placemaking, and Marketing and Events.

Charitable giving

At the end of 2020 we made a £10,000 donation to both Camden Giving and Islington Giving to support their inspiring work in their respective communities.

Air quality

We monitor the air quality in the Holborn area via our monitor at Holborn Station in partnership with Kings College London.

Clean Air Villages

In partnership with Cross River Partnership the BID joined the Clean Air Villages 4 project looking at how we can make London are more sustainable environment.



Donations

At Christmas 2020, the BID donated the below to various charities.

£10K to Islington Giving' Covid-19 Crisis Fund	£10K to Camden Giving's Future Changemakers Fund	96 umbrellas to Single Homeless Project that were distributed over their shelters in London	200 chocolate bars to Islington Foodbank
200 chocolate bars and notebooks to The Peel Institute	400 chocolate bars to Divine Rescue Holborn Foodbank	200 pens to Pens for Kids UK	125 notebooks to Action for Children

Memberships

This year the BID has joined or renewed their membership with the following organisations:

London First	Museum Mile	CLA	MBC	CAV4 (CRP)
--------------	-------------	-----	-----	------------



“Individually we can achieve great things but working in partnership, as a collective, we can achieve so much more – the impact on sustainability – social, economic, and environmental can have real and lasting change for all.”

Debbie Akehurst, Chief Executive, Central District Alliance

Governance and board

Governance

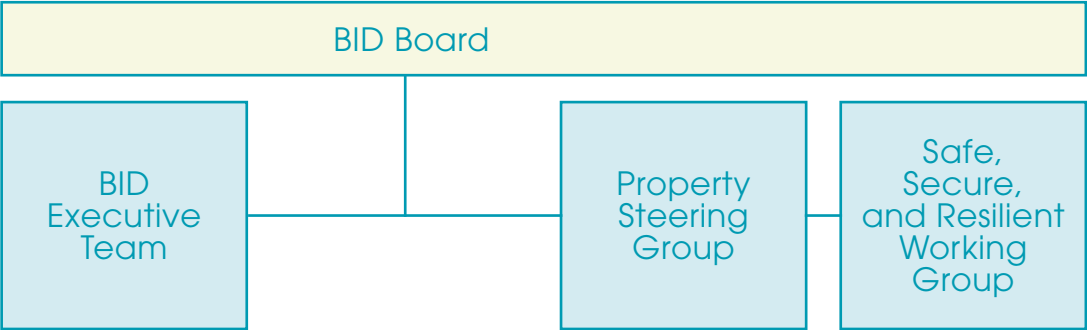
2020 saw the renewal of the BID's governance structures under Chairman, Alexander Jan. Susan Freeman from Mishcon de Reya and Lisa Humphreys of WPP were both welcomed to the Board in the autumn. The BID is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee led by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from across sectors within the BID area and an Executive Team.

Board

- Alexander Jan Chairman
- Julie Rogers Deputy Chair, Mitsubishi Corporation
- Tony Matharu Blue Orchid Hotels and Integrity International Group Ltd
- Lisa Humphreys WPP
- Susan Freeman Mishcon de Reya
- Joe Edwards British Museum

Executive Directors

- Ruth Duston Primera Corporation
- Austin Casey Primera Corporation





Income and expenditure 2020-2021

Central District Alliance’s mission is to drive long-term economic and social growth by aligning corporate strategy with responsible and sustainable business practices. In light of the unprecedented consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst our objectives remain, they will be re-focussed.

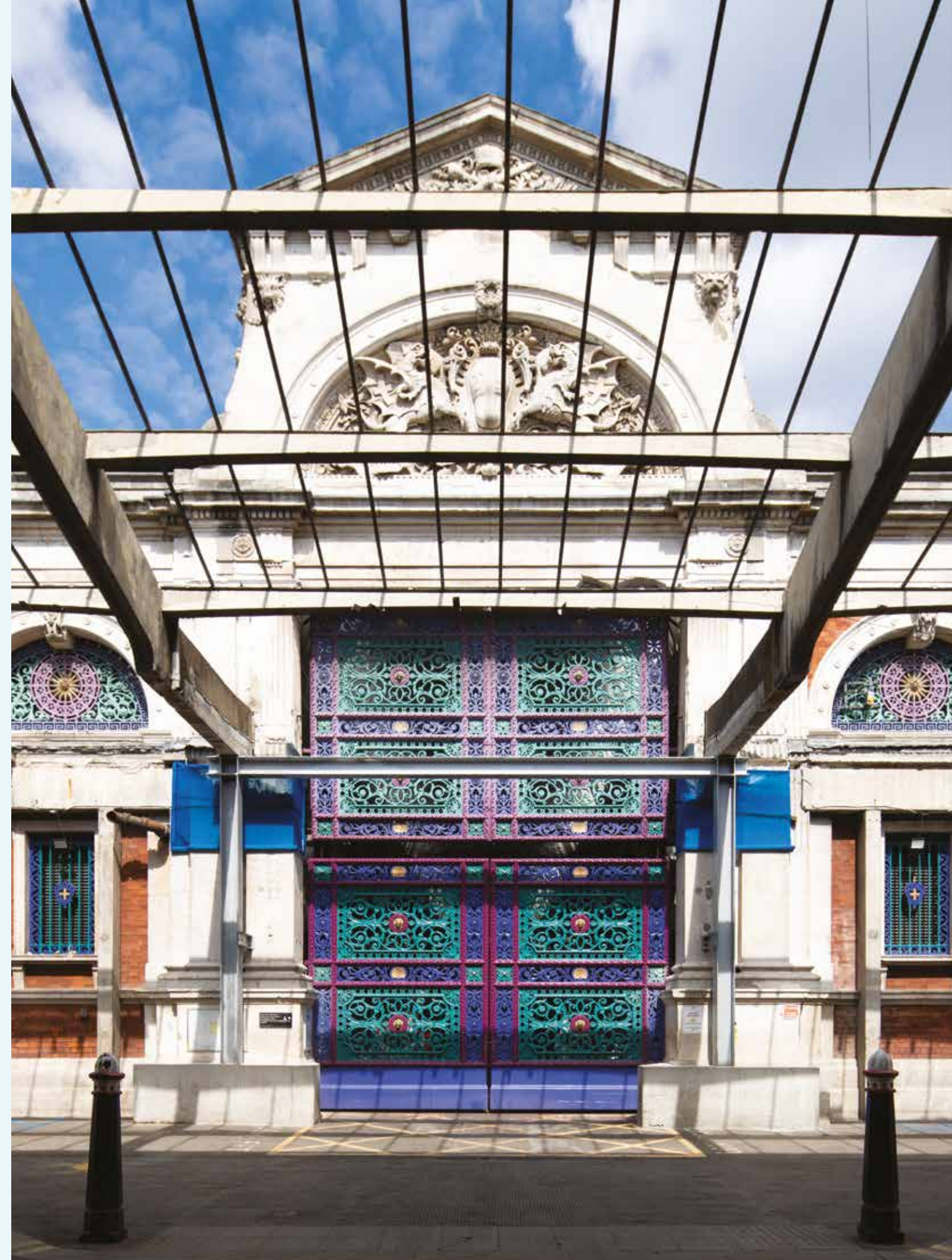
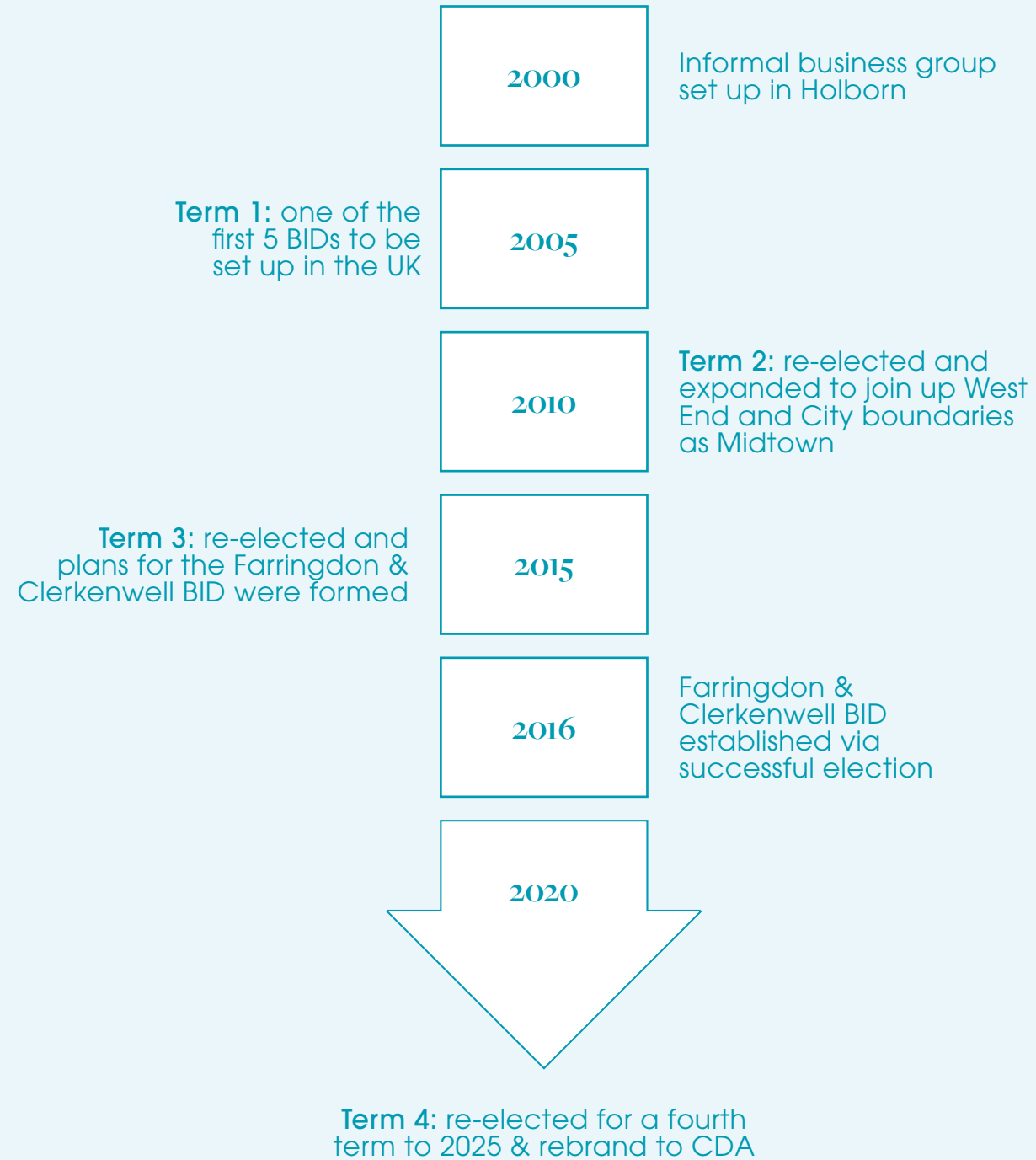
The coming year will be critical in ensuring our area thrives within the wider London ecosystem. Our main aim during the 2021 – 2022 delivery period is to be a stabilizing influence for member businesses and a focal point for activity.

We will help to safely encourage the maximum number of workers back to the area, providing the life blood for the face-to-face sector so that once again our theatres, gyms, shops, bars and restaurants can thrive, adding to the rich tapestry of life in the central district.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	
INCOME	
Levy income	1,902,865
Other income	95,625
TOTAL	1,998,490
EXPENDITURE	
Campaigns and services	385,917
Public realm and transport Infrastructure	96,952
Marketing and communications	257,009
Management and Overheads*	297,838
TOTAL	1,037,715
Post Tax Surplus (Deficit)	960,189
Closing 19 -20 Reserves**	2,313,029
Surplus to be carried forward to 2021-22	3,273,218

* There is one management team in place to cover EC1 and WC1 areas
** Included within closing reserves is a ring fenced £1m to be spent on infrastructure projects

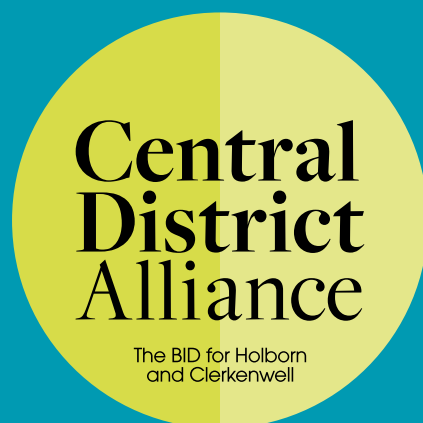
History of the BID





“As a partner at Mishcon de Reya, a longstanding Holborn based business, it is a real pleasure to work with Central District Alliance in promoting the area and in supporting local businesses. These activities have been more vital than ever as businesses emerge from lockdown. One of our highlights this year was our collaboration to provide a series of Brexit related seminars for the benefit of CDA members.”

Susan Freeman, Partner, Mishcon de Reya



 @CDALDN  @CDALondon

 www.centraldistrictalliance.com