

The background is a collage of three images: a historic stone building with Gothic windows and heraldic shields on the left; a modern glass skyscraper on the right; and a white, geometric, lattice-like structure in the bottom left corner. The entire image is overlaid with a pattern of overlapping orange and red triangles of various sizes.

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 /2020

FOREWORD

This Annual Report covers the period 6 April 2019 to 5 April 2020, the final year of Midtown Business Improvement District's third term. Following the successful re-ballot in February 2020 – we were delighted to have secured a fourth term mandate from our levy-payers.

So much has changed compared to just over a year ago. Whilst the business landscape has seen challenging times before – including the global financial crisis of 2008 and then the uncertainty following the 2016 Brexit referendum – many of us have never before lived through a pandemic, with all the tragedy and upheaval it has brought.

We know that Covid-19 has changed many of the patterns and routines of our daily lives – both at work and at home. How we travel, shop, relax and work have all been affected. Working practices in particular may emerge much altered as changes that were underway have been “supercharged” by the numerous lockdowns we have experienced.

As I write, the UK has been leading the way in its roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccine. If all goes to plan, we may well see a return to something approaching business as usual by the summer of 2021. Many commentators are anticipating that a so-called “hybrid model” of working will become the norm. Office workers (and their employers) – perhaps comfortable with more working from home – may well spend less time in offices in the city; perhaps on average doing only three days a week. In the short term, that means that our hard-hit hospitality, retail, culture and leisure sectors face a challenging future – particularly in the continuing absence of international business travel which is so important to many of the enterprises in our part of the city.

But with change, as they say, comes opportunity. Office space may become more affordable to companies that to date have found it too expensive to locate in central London; the structural shift from retail may lead to more forms of entertainment and activity springing up at street level; and Crossrail is now finally close to opening – bringing an additional one and half million people to within 45 minutes of our area.

So whilst there are many challenges that our businesses and London as a whole will have to navigate, with a combined effort from both the public and private sectors, we can and surely must shape the sort of recovery we want to see – rather than just taking a “wait and see approach”. For me, this means a renewed focus on two core themes for Midtown. The first is our public realm. We need to ensure our district is safe, clean and welcoming. That means getting stuck in to activities such as cleansing, security and making inroads into long standing challenges such as homelessness. I am delighted that we have now let contracts to top-up Camden and Islington's cleaning services (including jet washing) as well as patrols to help keep an eye on your business premises and report problems to the relevant authorities. We are also thinking

about how we can best support activities designed to bring people back to the area. For example, we are planning to have Christmas lights in winter 2021, and there are various cultural festivals we may be able to sponsor.

The second theme is around better decision-making. To this end, we want to renew our partnership working with Camden and Islington councils as well as City Hall, the police and other public service providers. We know that quality of life issues such as road works co-ordination, traffic management, air quality and the broader sustainability agenda will only happen if we work across administrative boundaries. We want to work collaboratively with the other business improvement districts that surround us; aiming as far as possible to have more of a single voice on all the issues that matter to our members and indeed all those with a stake in the centre of the city. As the recovery gathers pace, it is likely that pressures on our infrastructure will once again start to build. So we will continue to commission targeted consultancy support to help lobby for longer term improvements – such as to our Tube stations, the roads and the public realm more generally. We want to provide our members and others with more insight into what is going on in the area to help inform their decisions around investment, when to open up and so forth. To this end, we have recently let contracts to collect data on footfall that we hope to be in a position to share later this year.

We recognise that 2021 is going to be a challenging year for many of our members and public sector partners. And for sure we are not out of the woods yet. But you can be assured that my fellow board members and I – along with our executive team – will be looking to take every opportunity to contribute and lead on the recovery for Midtown. Please do feel free to contact any of us with your thoughts, suggestions, ideas or observations. We welcome feedback – good or bad – that allows us to improve what we are trying to achieve and deliver.

I look forward to presenting our 2020/21 Annual Report to you this autumn. But in the meantime, on behalf of Debbie Akehurst, our Chief Executive, and my fellow Board Directors, thank you for voting to renew Midtown's mandate. We do not take your support for granted.

You can stay abreast of our current work and projects, including news of our exciting rebrand, by subscribing to our newsletter and following us on social media.

With best wishes for a very successful year.

Alexander Jan
Non-Executive Chair



SUPPORTING GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

Midtown BID is the local Business Improvement District for the area covering two of London's most successful, dynamic and historic postcodes – WC1 and EC1 – which collectively are Midtown.

We represent c400 businesses with the aim of making Midtown the Destination of Choice for Business, and the positioning of EC1 as London's Design District.

Following our re-election consultation, and ballot which concluded at the end of February 2020, Midtown BID was delighted to have received a strong YES from its district businesses to continue to a fourth term for Holborn, Bloomsbury and St Giles; and a second term for Farringdon and Clerkenwell.

The vote provides us a mandate to continue to drive the development and regeneration of Midtown, which is now on a par with the West End in a ranking of London's most important economic hubs.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had an unprecedented effect on all aspects of life and business, our plans are being comprehensively revised to fully focus on supporting our Members, through the transitional lockdown into the recovery period.

Source: HatchRegeneris, based on ONS2019



AREA-WIDE PUBLIC REALM AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

◆ **Land Use Study** – as part of our work supporting the upgrade of Holborn underground station, Midtown BID, in consultation with Camden Council and TfL, commissioned Arup to work with us in developing and delivering a land use study identifying variant development schemes, offering additional and alternative funding options to TfL and Central Government.

◆ **Ground Floor Use Study** – we have completed a Ground Floor Use Study – supporting the area's growth through identifying alternative models for viable ground floor venues. The study looked at a more holistic economic model for investment, which included curated streets, more engaging facades, temporary activities in underused spaces, outdoor sitting areas and temporary event spaces.





◆ **Midtown Vision Project** – at the Institute for Economic Development conference in December 2019, Arup and Midtown BID beat 14 other submissions in the *Most Innovative Strategy* category, which “celebrates those strategies which brought something considered to be new or innovative to the economic development sphere.”

The project developed a strategy to make Midtown a safer place for active travel, to relieve congestion around public transport and to encourage investment through a better quality of place.

◆ **Princess Circus** – part of Camden Council’s West End Project and supported by Midtown BID, the area 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 to stop and rest. New pedestrian crossings will make the area easier and safer for people to navigate.



DISTRICT PROFILE AND REPUTATION BUILDING

◆ **Clerkenwell Design Week** – we continued to support Clerkenwell Design Week sponsoring and promoting the food and beverage sector of the district throughout the event. We have also collaborated with Midtown BID member, University of the Arts London, through a competition to design water flasks using Midtown as the inspiration for the creative executions.

◆ **London Real Estate Forum** – Midtown’s stand in the main exhibition area showcased our new economic data sets showing the growth in the district’s performance as London’s commercial centre.

We also took to the stage and hosted a lively and engaging panel discussion, ‘Midtown Value: Building Capital for London’s Future’, which included participants from member organisations LSE and Mishcon de Reya, and Camden Council leader, Georgina Gould.

Our Future London Plastic-Free campaign, in partnership with the *Evening Standard*, aiming to reduce single-use plastic in Midtown, has continued to promote local businesses to assist with supply chain management, best practices, and support innovative interventions to make Midtown plastic free. As the campaign comes to a finish in 2020, our initiative has had both environmental and reputational success with Londoners.

- 89% say the project raises their belief that Midtown is committed to green issues and sustainability in London.
- 79% believe that Midtown is central London's cleanest, greenest district.
- The Plastic Free channel has generated over 357,577 page-views and 213,823 unique visitors.
- Midtown on-line destination profile activity amassed over 4,385,241 impressions.

* Source: ESI Media 30.01.20



midtown
**BIG IDEAS
EXCHANGE**

Using the UN Sustainable Delivery Goals (SDGs) our series of debates over 2019/2020 focused on the growing shift in sustainable business practices and how these are driving business growth.

Attendees took part and debated with their peers, as well as sustainable development specialists, about the practical steps that are already being taken in Midtown to bring about positive change. A series of video and podcasts was produced in addition to complement the programme.

BE THE CHANGE

As a consequence of the pandemic, the homeless on our streets are more at risk of harm than ever before. Our COVID-19 initiated Security Patrols include a remit to report and seek urgent care and assistance for anyone found to be sleeping rough within our district.

Our BE THE CHANGE homeless campaign has been re-purposed as a dedicated portal for on-street reporting with links to WC1 and EC1 support services.



BEE WILD
POLLINATING BIODIVERSITY
IN MIDTOWN

Our rooftops project combining pollinator friendly planting with urban bee keeping continues to expand across the district. 2020 saw the BEE WILD project join up with the Wild West End initiative creating green stepping stones through a combination of green roofs, green walls, planters, street trees, flower boxes and pop-up spaces across London.



2020 - 2025 PRIORITIES

Midtown BID'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-focused on supporting our Members and wider district throughout the long term transitional and recovery period.

WE WILL ACTIVELY DEVELOP INITIATIVES TO RAISE THE REPUTATION AND PROFILE OF MIDTOWN

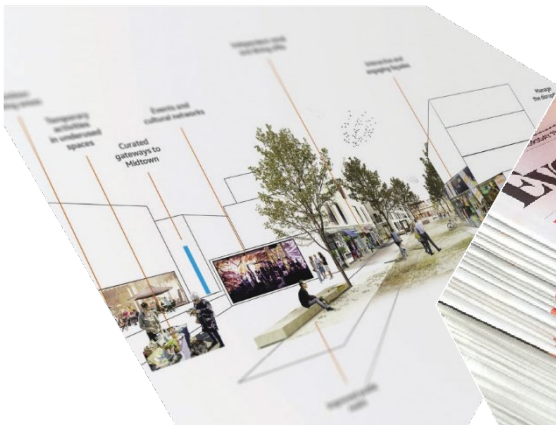
WE WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE AREA-WIDE PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

WE WILL DELIVER A CHANGING PORTFOLIO OF CAMPAIGNS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRICT WIDE PROSPERITY

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEMBERS, WE WILL SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT WILL ENHANCE SOCIAL VALUE PRIORITIES AND SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES

By representing the collective voice of business, we will secure further legacy projects:

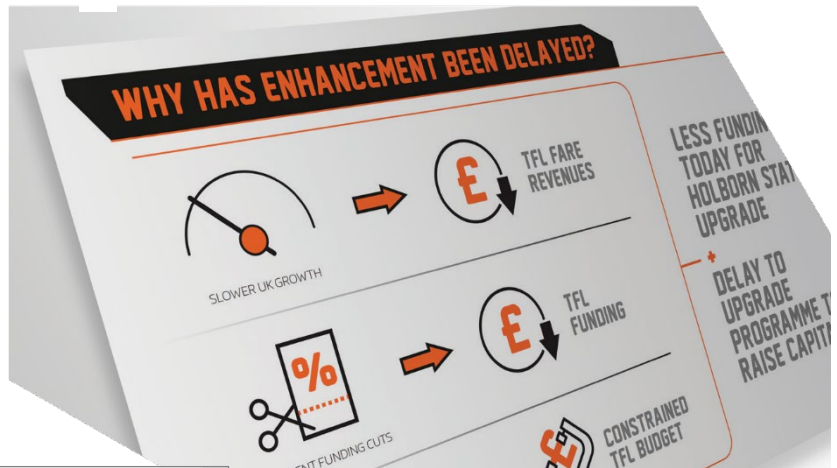
- Supporting completion of improvements to New Oxford Street and Shaftesbury Avenue pavements, crossings and traffic flow movements.
- Supporting completion of new public space at Princes Circus with seating, pollinator friendly planting and safe cycle routes by 2021.
- Progressing proposals for changing the WC1 area's gyratory systems to make the streets calmer and safer by 2025.
- Supporting and progressing investment to ensure a holistic quality and experience across the whole of the district by 2025.



Ground Floor Study



Clerkenwell Design Week



Land Use Study

- Progressing the Land Use Study and supporting TfL on any future plans to upgrade Holborn Station.
- As a consequence of COVID-19, provide a permanent district wide street cleansing programme.
- Introduce on-street 'Ambassador' patrols, welcoming and directing visitors, adding to the overall safety and security of the district.
- We will continue to monitor street environment issues and area-wide security needs, supporting the Metropolitan Police, Camden Council and Islington Council

- Supporting and enabling public realm enhancements across EC1 and WC1, making our district a greener and healthier place for workers and visitors.
- Progressing alternative models for viable ground floor use solutions across EC1 and WC1 – curating the offer and supporting local character.
- Embedding EC1 as London's Design District – quantifying and celebrating the B2B value of incumbent industries.
- Year on year active participation in Clerkenwell Design Week to acknowledge the area's contribution to EC1 design brand leaders.
- Year on year showcasing of Midtown at the London Real Estate Forum to acknowledge the area's economic contribution and community value.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Midtown Business Improvement District (BID)

Income and Expenditure	2019–20
INCOME	
Levy Income	1,728,679
Other Income	14,767
TOTAL	1,743,446
EXPENDITURE	
Campaigns and Services	139,169
Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure	1,387,598
Marketing and Communications	852,407
Management and Overheads*	376,187
TOTAL	2,755,361
Post Tax Surplus (Deficit)	(1,006,635)
Closing 19–20 Reserves**	3,319,489
Surplus to be carried forward to 2020–21	£2,312,854

* There is one management team in place to cover both EC1 and WC1 areas

** Included within closing reserves is a ring fenced £1m to be spent on infrastructure projects

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alexander Jan, Arup – Chair

Julie Rogers, Mitsubishi Corporation – Deputy Chair

Joe Edwards, British Museum

Tony Matharu, Grange Hotels

Austin Casey, Midtown Executive Board Director

Ruth Duston, Midtown Executive Board Director

Tass Mavrogordato (resigned 31.03.2020)

If you wish to get involved with Midtown BID or to know more, please do not hesitate to get in touch at info@bee-midtown.com.



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