

Central
District
Alliance

Central District Alliance

Annual Report

2024/2025



CDA BID Footprint

London Borough of Islington

London Borough of Camden



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Central District Alliance



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Introduction

Central District Alliance (CDA) Business Improvement District (BID) is pleased to present the Annual Report for the fiscal year 2024–2025, a year that marked strong progress, renewed partnerships and visible impact across our five neighbourhoods of Holborn, St Giles, Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell and Farringdon.

Over the past year, CDA has continued to invest in the area’s prosperity and resilience delivering cleaner, safer, and more inclusive streets, while strengthening collaboration with public and private sector partners. Our on-street teams, marketing initiatives, ESG programmes and placemaking investments have all contributed to shaping a district that reflects the needs of modern business, culture and community.

The 2024–25 financial year also saw CDA broaden its strategic focus, embedding sustainability, inclusivity and data-driven decision making into all areas of delivery. This report highlights the outcomes achieved, the partnerships built and the foundations laid for continued success in 2025–26.

A year of results

On Street Teams

Environmental Services 20,190 Areas proactively cleaned (block swept) 7,932 Janitorial Services (jetwash, bins cleaned, fly tips, refuse collection) 312 Graffiti and fly posters removed	Community Safety 114 Significant incidents 19,638 Public interactions (Visitors welcomed) 22,238 Business taskings (Business welfare Check)	215 Anti-social issues resolved
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Marketing

23 BID events 95,806 Page and profile impressions across the social channels	7.75% Average engagement rate per post 424,525 Page and profile reach	1,000 App downloads 200 Business users
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Placemaking

Camden 119 Summer hanging baskets 32 Planters existing planters across LBC and LBI receiving on-going maintenance	Islington 12 Existing planters across our Islington footprint Funded Clerkenwell Green infrastructure (Phase 1)	Christmas 229,100 Total LED lights
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Foreword from CDA's Chief Executive

The 2024–25 year has been one of delivery, collaboration and measurable progress. From environmental improvements to social investment, CDA's focus has remained on creating a thriving, inclusive and well-managed environment for our business and the wider community.

We have strengthened our operational contracts, deepened engagement with local stakeholders and continued to position CDA as a trusted voice in Central London policy discussions. Our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) programme has delivered tangible community impact, while our on-street teams and events have enhanced the look, feel and experience of our neighbourhoods.

As we look forward to the year ahead, I remain confident in CDA's resilience and remains in a

position of strength to represent our members. The strength of our partnership and the shared ambition of our stakeholders continue to drive us forward.

I would like to thank our levy-paying members, local authority partners and our dedicated CDA Team for their continued commitment to our shared goals. Together, we are ensuring that Central London remains a world-class place to do business and to belong.



Debbie Akehurst
Chief Executive



Statement from CDA's Chair

The CDA Annual Report for 2024–25 provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the developments and achievements that have shaped the five neighbourhoods we serve. This was also the final year of the BID term that ran from 2020 to the end of March 2025. Both in-year and during that period, we saw the completion of many capital projects in partnership with Camden and Islington. These have led to the enhancement of streets and public spaces including our parks and squares. These investments only work however, if they are properly maintained. As this report highlights, CDA continued to focus on the provision of day-to-day cleaning, fault reporting and safety and security activities to complement those commissioned by our local authority partners and the Metropolitan Police Service.

It is hard to imagine today the profound impact of Covid-19 which gripped the Central London economy so hard and for so long. Footfall, economic activity, our shops, hotels, restaurants and offices all suffered. CDA's focus on sustainable and inclusive practices, particularly through our ESG initiatives, underscored our commitment to help rebuild a resilient and vibrant community and London economy. The advent of the Elizabeth line provided a timely and very substantial boost, and the Farringdon and Tottenham Court Road stations are together handling over a hundred million passengers a year. We continue to look to turn more of this footfall into lasting value for our levy payers and the wider business community. For example, our programme of activities especially around the major holidays and during the summer months allows those who work, visit and live in the district to reconnect and “dwell” within the spaces and places that make the CDA area special and attractive. Furthermore, our involvement with the Bloomsbury London Partnership is proving to be a great success. This initiative is focused at helping to increase footfall which will generate prosperity for all our businesses (large and small) in the neighbourhood. We are now looking to extend this approach to Holborn, St Giles, Farringdon and Clerkenwell.

In 2024–25 we were thrilled that CDA was able to secure strong support for both a renewal for the next five years and an expansion of the area; largely to the north and south of our previous boundaries. These changes provide us with the opportunity to contribute further to exciting

plans for improving the quality, cleanliness, safety and security of an enhanced space and renew our efforts to promote and sustain economic growth, employment and placemaking across the district. With that in mind, we are excited that our plan to introduce a Property Owners BID (PBID) for our Camden area is gaining momentum. The creation of the PBID will allow us to invest further in lasting improvements to the public realm.

At a time of continued pressure on public finances and competition from other parts of Central London and indeed other global cities for investment, the combination of an extended BID area, targeted neighbourhood partnerships and the advent of a property owner improvement district will put us in a strong position to ensure the long-term future of the areas we help look after.

I want to thank our levy payers, property owners, the boroughs of Islington and Camden, TfL, other parts of London government and the Metropolitan Police. Ongoing support, partnership and trust from all of them is valued highly and pivotal to our continued success.

In 2024–25 we said goodbye to two board members, Tony Matharu and Lisa Humphreys, and welcomed Abdual Hai OBE and Jeremy Daudin. I want to express my thanks and appreciation to Tony and Lisa for their many years of support for CDA and gratitude to Abdul and Jeremy for being willing to join us.

With the continued support of our board and executive team, I am confident that CDA can look forward with confidence to another five years of growth and progress designed to benefit all those who live, work or visit such a special and unique part of Central London.



Alexander Jan
Chair



Environmental Services

CDA's Environmental Services team delivered high-quality maintenance, consistently, across all five neighbourhoods, ensuring that the district remained one of Central London's cleanest and most welcoming environments. Working with 'The Welcome People', the team carried out intensive cleaning and maintenance operations throughout the year, including graffiti and fly-posting removal, litter collection and deep cleaning of public spaces.



This year saw the introduction of new reporting tools to capture service data more effectively, ensuring accountability and transparency for levy payers. Close collaboration with Camden and Islington Councils also allowed CDA to tackle persistent waste and cleanliness issues, particularly around key transport hubs and high-footfall areas.

Key projects 2024–25

Street Cleaning & Maintenance: Daily operations across all five neighbourhoods.

Environmental Partnership Programme: Joint interventions with Camden and Islington councils.

Sustainability Improvements: Planning for low-emission service vehicles and eco-friendly cleaning solutions.

134

fly posters
cleared

178

graffiti
removals



512 km

of streets
swept

685

jet washes
completed

1,542

bags of litter
collected



Community Safety

CDA's Community Safety team continued to deliver visible reassurance and support throughout the year, providing an approachable presence for businesses, workers and visitors. In partnership with 'The Welcome People', patrols conducted daily rounds to deter antisocial behaviour, assist vulnerable individuals and respond to business concerns.



In 2024–25, CDA worked closely with the Metropolitan Police through regular partnership meetings, aligning patrol priorities with borough-level safety initiatives. CDA also initiated the process of establishing a formal 'Data Sharing Agreement' (DSA) with the Met to enhance intelligence and reporting capabilities. The 'Secure Communications' app grew to over 40 active business users, enabling real-time alerts and improved response coordination across the district.

Key projects 2024–25

Community Patrols: Daily reassurance visits and rapid-response coverage.

MET Police Collaboration: Regular joint meetings and DSA framework development.

Secure Communications App: Expansion of network for coordinated alerts.

Women's Safety Walkabouts: Partnership work with Camden and SOAS to improve awareness and inclusivity.



3,250
public
interactions

2,780
business
checks

142
welfare
interventions

27
antisocial
incidents
managed



Placemaking

CDA's placemaking initiatives in 2024–25 focused on enhancing the physical environment, supporting community use and promoting the district's identity. We delivered new greening initiatives across the district, with planters along New Oxford Street and hanging baskets adding vibrancy and colour across High Holborn and surrounding streets.

As part of our 'Grey to Green' initiative, we were delighted to replant the two large granite planters outside Farringdon station. These planters now showcase a vibrant array of drought-resistant vegetation, creating a more welcoming and sustainable atmosphere around one of London's busiest stations. This project aligns with Islington Council's 'Highways Greening' programme and demonstrates our commitment to enhancing the public realm in Central London.

Our contribution towards the revitalisation of landscaping at St John's Garden (SJG) helped bring the project to fruition, alongside Islington Council and the Friends of St John's Garden. The garden now boasts enriched biodiversity with diverse planting, wildlife-friendly features and a new pond, which enhances the woodland character of the space. This initiative aligns with Islington's 'Parks for Health' strategy goals and the CDA vision for enriching local biodiversity, while fostering community attachment to green spaces.

In summer, following the completion of our first pocket park trial in 2023, CDA, with the support of the 'Islington Greener Together' officers, found a new home to repurpose the pocket park planters. 'Lift Youth Hub' was identified as a suitable new home for the pocket park – with the structure and planters being revitalised by young attendees of the project and planted with vegetable seeds donated by the local community.

Key projects 2024–25

Brightening up the district: New planters and hanging baskets.

Farringdon Station Area Revitalisation: Refreshed and drought-resistant planting.

St John's Garden: Landscape improvement and increased biodiversity.

Repurposed Pocket Park: Planters given new lease of life at local charity.





Marketing, Communications & Events

CDA's marketing and events programme strengthened the district's visibility and community connection throughout 2024–25. Outdoor activations included our 'Summer Party', which drew hundreds of attendees to Clerkenwell Green and Bloomsbury Square Gardens, for live music, competitions/giveaways and showcases from our local businesses.

The event also provided spaces for employees to enjoy their lunchbreak, on our deck chairs. Meanwhile, our 'Festive Fayre' transformed the front of St Giles Church, with festive lighting, craft market stalls, mulled wine, giveaways and free craft activities in the church's Vestry House.

Over Easter, CDA joined the Elephant Family and Clarence Court eggs for 'The Big Egg Hunt 2025'. As part of the world's biggest egg hunt, which invites the public to find giant decorated eggs hidden in cityscapes, we hosted eggs in Russell Square, Farringdon station and the Brunswick Centre – with over 13,000 people 'collecting' them on the App and introducing new footfall to the area.

In April and May 2024, we hosted a series of wellbeing events for local employees – including first aid training, Suzy Lamplugh bystander & harassment training, cyber security courses and Calm in Clerkenwell; Qi Gong, sound bath and yoga sessions co-hosted with the Museum of the Order of St John. These sessions were extremely well received by businesses and employees alike.

In June, we launched our 'Hidden Histories' book – a collection of tales from across the district, which showcase some of the remarkable events and buildings across our neighbourhoods.

Digital communication remained a central pillar of CDA's engagement strategy, with over 7,000 followers across social platforms and consistent engagement rates exceeding 7%. The 'CDA Club' app continued to grow as a digital hub for offers and events, connecting local employees and visitors and facilitating business growth and promotion opportunities.

Key projects 2024–25

Summer Party: Multi-location summer activation celebrating community and enlivening our open spaces.

Festive Fayre: Festive activation with local traders.

Free Activities for Local Employees: A collection of wellbeing and safety sessions.

CDA Club App: Expanded membership and improved UX features.

Social Media Growth: Continued follower and engagement increase across channels.



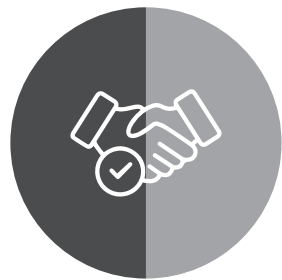
Social growth overview:

7,365
total
followers

7.75%
average
engagement rate

146,723
post
impressions

Consistent
reach across
Instagram,
LinkedIn,
and X



Advocacy & Insights

CDA continues to play a pivotal role in advocating for the needs and interests of our members and the wider community. Through strategic initiatives, partnerships and data-driven insights, we aim to influence policy and practice that benefit Holborn and Clerkenwell, ensuring our district remains vibrant and prosperous.

Public Affairs/ Conferences: Our participation in public affairs and conferences, alongside working with our local authorities, the Greater London Authority and Government, has provided us with platforms to advocate for Holborn and Clerkenwell at regional and national levels. These engagements allow us to influence broader policy discussions and align our district's needs with wider urban and economic strategies.

CDA remained an active advocate for Central London businesses throughout 2024–25. Chief Executive Debbie Akehurst continued her leadership role as Chair of the 'London Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)' advisory board, ensuring business needs shaped the future of skills delivery across the capital.

Mayor of Camden and Islington: We maintain close engagement with the Mayors of Camden and Islington, ensuring the voices of our members are heard in local government decisions. Our regular dialogues with these key figures help us advocate effectively for policies and initiatives that support the economic and social wellbeing of our district.

CDA supported the New London Architecture 'Skills for Places' report which identified career pathways into the built environment, aiming to inspire young people to enter the industry while addressing the critical challenges of building a more skilled, sustainable, and inclusive workforce. Consolidating key data on current and future skill requirements, highlighting innovative programmes, and setting out actionable recommendations to remove barriers to entry and bridge the gap between education and employment.

The organisation also contributed to research and lobbying efforts on topics including business resilience, ESG alignment, and the future of London's economic centres. CDA's data partnerships provided members with valuable insights into workforce patterns and economic performance.

Key projects 2024–25

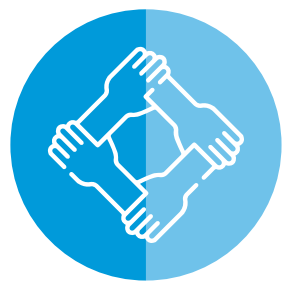
London Skills Improvement Plan: Strategic leadership on skills and employment.

Policy Engagement: Contributions to London-wide BID and growth discussions.

Data Insights Programme: Development of new district analytics and reporting tools.

New London Architecture 'Skills for Places' report.





Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)

CDA's ESG programme continued to invest in projects that enhance social value, sustainability and wellbeing across the district. Our third Social & Community Fund supported thirteen local organisations tackling food insecurity, youth violence, social isolation and access to opportunity including Islington centre for Refugees & Migrants, Holborn Community Centre, Health Coach Kitchen and Action for Kids.



CDA's 'Your Future Talent' programme encouraged partnership between local employers and education providers, connecting young people to work experience and training opportunities. These activities reinforced CDA's commitment to building a fairer, more inclusive district where businesses actively contribute to community wellbeing.

Our Christmas choir initiative helped support our hospitality partners and spread festive joy with the appearance of some of our local school choirs at hotels across the district. Meanwhile, we also helped facilitate numerous corporate volunteering projects by connecting our member businesses with local communities, who were able to assist with various projects across our green spaces and at local schools. During Global Entrepreneurship Week 2024, we facilitated an initiative that sparked creativity and ambition amongst Londoners aged 18-30, in collaboration with Capital City College Group – educating and advising them on tech and entrepreneurialism.

Key projects 2024–25

Social & Community Fund: Targeted investment in grassroots community organisations.

Your Future Talent: Programme linking employers and students for skills pathways.

Corporate volunteering: Support for local schools and community initiatives.





Governance and Board

CDA operates under the strategic leadership of its Board of Directors, representing levy-paying members and key partners from across the business community.

Board Members 2024–25

- Alexander Jan [Chair](#)
- Joe Edwards [Vice Chair](#) British Museum
- Susan Freeman Mishcon de Reya
- Abdul Hai [OBE](#) Labs Group (from February 2025)
- Lisa Humphreys Group M (resigned February 2025)
- Tony Matharu Blue Orchid Group (resigned February 2025)
- Jeremy Daudin The Zetter Hotels (from February 2025)
- Amy Brown Google
- Ruth Duston [OBE](#), OC Primera
- Austin Casey Primera



Financials 2024–2025

CDA activity covers both Camden and Islington boroughs. Income and expenditure split is in line with participating members in each local authority area as outlined here:

- Camden – Holborn, Bloomsbury and St Giles: 80%
- Islington – Clerkenwell and Farringdon: 20%

Income		£
Levy Income		2,331,361
Other Income		8,664
Total Income		2,340,025
Expenditure		
Campaigns and Services		983,728
Placemaking		1,183,003
Marketing and Communications		626,939
Management and Overheads*		413,416
Total Expenditure		3,207,086
Net Surplus (Deficit) after tax		(867,061)
Closing reserves from 2023–24		1,473,455
Surplus to be carried forward to 2025–26		606,394

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



Looking ahead to 2025–26

CDA enters 2025–26 with strong momentum and a clear strategic direction. The year ahead will see the launch of the PBID proposal, construction beginning on the St John Street public realm scheme, and the rollout of new HUQ data insights to support smarter decision-making.

We will continue to strengthen partnerships with the Metropolitan Police through the new Data Sharing Agreement, expand our ESG programme to reach more community organisations and enhance the CDA Club app as a central platform for member communication. CDA remains focused on driving measurable value for our members while shaping a cleaner, safer, more sustainable and inclusive Central London.

In the new CDA Business Plan we highlighted that we would work on elevating the uniqueness of the five districts that make up the Central District Alliance. This work has already started through the Bloomsbury London Partnership and we look forward to working with all our partners over the next year to extend this approach to other parts of CDA's area.



