

THE
NORTHBANK



TRAFALGAR SQ · STRAND · ALDWYCH

On behalf of all my colleagues at the Northbank BID, I am heartened by the PM's announcement. It gives us a clear vision of the future, and one where we can hopefully build a recovery without fear of further lockdowns.

Businesses want certainty and we can now plan for our recovery with some confidence, thanks to the ongoing vaccine roll-out and a cautious but ambitious re-opening plan from the Government. Now we have to all play our part to deliver it.

Partnership is key and at the Northbank BID we stand ready to continue to work with Westminster, the GLA, TfL, Network Rail and others to secure the best recovery for London.

For me, there are three key areas we can focus on, demonstrating where BIDs – acting on behalf of their business communities – can make a real difference.

First of all, we must be bold in how we use and invest in our public spaces. For us in Northbank, the transformative Strand Aldwych scheme, funded by Westminster City council, will see meanwhile uses inject new life into the area from later this year, creating a new cultural hub for central London. It embodies what is possible when the public and private sectors work as one and we are proud delivery partners with WCC on this project. This approach could be replicated elsewhere to ensure London's public realm reaches its potential.

This approach must also extend to the welcome we offer people as they start to return to the city centre. BIDs have made great strides over the years in providing now essential on-street services, from additional cleansing to Ambassadors. We can now plan to ensure these services resume in good time to coincide with the easing of restrictions. After almost a year away, habits have been changed and new ones formed, and cities are now playing second fiddle to smaller urban centres. The city has a great future though, and we must remind people of the attractions, beautiful buildings, public spaces, museums, galleries, theatres, restaurants, bars and pubs that they have been missing.

This brings me to my third area of focus. While we want to get back to some sort of normality, this does not mean we aspire to simply go back to the way things were before COVID. There are some unintended positive impacts we should aim to retain; from better air quality to thinking more about mental health and wellbeing. I urge my colleagues, and our partners in Government, to embrace the opportunity to do things better.

As a nation we have adapted and as a BID we have changed the way we operate to better serve our businesses. This approach must continue. Our online events and support services will continue for the foreseeable future in order to meet the needs of our members and, in time, we will be on hand to help businesses as they re-open. As the PM said today, this recovery is irreversible, and we only get one shot. Let's work together to get it right.

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