



*A destination for business and culture*

 **Victoria  
Westminster**



**Victoria Westminster Business Improvement District**

**Address** 2nd floor, 14 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0QP

**Email** [info@victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk](mailto:info@victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk)

**Tel** 0203 872 7183 **Web** [victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk](http://victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk)

VICTORIA WESTMINSTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21





Strutton Ground hosts a local food market during the week



Our Cleaning team perform duties such as deep cleaning



Contents	
Foreword	5
Safe and Secure	6
Clean and Green	8
Public Realm	10
Destination Victoria Westminster	12
Sustainable Prosperity	16
COVID-19	19
Income & Expenditure 2020/2021	20
The BID Board	22
The BID Map	23





## Foreword

This Annual Report marks the third year of our first term, celebrating the successes of the past year up to March 2021. With three years of delivery under our belt, we are proud to represent this wonderful area and its business community. Victoria Westminster BID has worked with commitment and dedication to support the local business community and this report clearly sets out our achievements across our core strategic areas.

With the start of the COVID crisis in late March 2020 and subsequent national lockdowns, this year has been one of seismic change and numerous challenges for our businesses, the local community and the country as a whole. Even a year on from the start of the pandemic, it's clear that the world is still adapting to the new landscape before us, with changed working practices and some ongoing restrictions. While we know that the recovery will be gradual and not without difficulty, the Government's roadmap and timetable mean that we can now see the light at the end of the very long COVID tunnel.

Throughout this challenging year, the work of the BID has been arguably more needed than ever. Despite the difficulties brought about by the pandemic, our third year of delivery saw Victoria Westminster BID maintaining its position in the community as a symbol of continuity and reassurance, as we listened to the needs of businesses and worked alongside our partners to continue delivering and enhancing the footprint during a very difficult time for many. Our agility has enabled us to pivot to where the greatest need has been, while still maintaining momentum on some of our big strategic projects.

Early on in the pandemic, the Victoria Westminster BID board took prudent decisions to pause some of our day-to-day activities, focusing on providing what our diverse business community most needed. In a year that has been undeniably difficult for all businesses, we've been passionate about offering support and solutions wherever we can - from providing assistance to some of the most vulnerable people in our community; to supporting businesses as they adapted their offer and providing clear, accurate communications to our stakeholders.

As ever, partnership sits at the heart of the BID movement, and our ability to collaborate with our partners and with wider stakeholders has been vital this past year. This collective action has manifested in strategic projects like the transformation of Christchurch Gardens, which was successfully completed in September 2020. In a year when the importance of green spaces has been highlighted more than ever, this redevelopment has brought to the area a new accessible green space which celebrates the rich history of South Westminster.

We're proud to have collaborated more than ever this year with our sister BIDs in South Westminster - a particular highlight being our extensive virtual events programme, which allowed us to promote and support many local businesses and reach 3,000 attendees. We have also worked closely with other neighbouring BIDs, from the Central District Alliance to the BIDs and partnerships in the City of London. On cross-cutting issues we recognised that our collective strength was valuable, and we have partnered up a number of times, including commissioning COVID recovery research with Arup. We plan to continue this sort of collaborative work in the future.

This annual report details the ways in which we have continued to deliver in line with our core themes: our day to day operations, from our street ambassadors and on street patrols, to our sustainability work and destination marketing activity, and how we continue to add important value to businesses across Victoria Westminster.

The strength and resilience shown by the BID and our business community over the past year has been incredibly inspiring, but we know that the hard work is not over. The loss of international visitors and the prospect of a slow return to pre-pandemic levels, alongside

the massive structural changes we are seeing in workplaces, are significant challenges for London. As your BID, we will be ahead of the curve on these changes, helping businesses navigate a new course and finding new ways of re-energising our beloved capital city. It will not be easy and we cannot do it alone, but with a strategy based on genuine insights, collaboration with our partners, and a determination to continue to deliver for our wonderful business community, much can be achieved.

We hope you enjoy looking back on some of the successes and challenges of the past year. We look forward to building on the achievements outlined in this annual report, as we continue to harness the power of collaborative action to ensure the best possible recovery for the area and enhance the prospects for the businesses that make Victoria Westminster such a vibrant and exciting place to be.



**Nigel Hughes MBE,  
Chairman**  
Victoria Westminster  
Business Improvement District



**Ruth Duston, OBE, OC,  
Chief Executive**  
Victoria Westminster  
Business Improvement District





Our Security Team patrol the BID footprint each day

Safe and Secure

## Safe and Secure

This year, we have continued our work to enhance business resilience within the local business community by building on established partnerships with bodies such as the Metropolitan Police (Met Police), British Transport Police (BTP), and Westminster City Council (WCC).

### BUSINESS CONTINUITY, COUNTER-TERRORISM (CT) & MEMBERSHIPS

#### OUTPUTS / ROI

- 6 Counter Terrorism, Cyber Security and business continuity briefings were held virtually this year in partnership with CPNI, NaCTSO, Metropolitan Police and City of London Police. Over 110 business representatives attended
- The BID partnered with the Police Digital Security Centre (PDSC) to promote Cyber Security best practice and provide advice to the business community during the year

- The BID supported Protective Security Operations (PSO) with the development and launch of their interactive app called PSO London Shield
- This year we continued to provide the Victoria Emergency Notification System (VENS), which was launched in 2019
- Over 220 businesses are currently signed up to receive security alerts and the platform won the CIR Business Continuity Annual Award for Best Contribution to Continuity and Resilience in December 2020

COST £2,400

### COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- Each day a team of two security officers, patrol the BID footprint with shift hours alternating from 06.30am – 3.30pm to 2.30pm – 11.30pm. The team are equipped with radios and body worn cameras, dealing with low-level crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- Weekly joint operations have continued with Met Police, WCC Inspectors and the Victoria Security Team to tackle ASB in the area
- The BID Security officers collect intelligence which is passed on to the Metropolitan Police under our Information Sharing Agreement for counter-drug and illegal immigration operations

COST £66,455

### COMMUNITY INTERVENTION TEAM

The Community Intervention Team (CIT) is a dedicated daytime street engagement team, funded by the BID and run through The Passage, consisting of three experienced outreach workers that cover the BID footprint. The team look for, and support, vulnerable individuals in the area, in order for them to find a route off the street, in close collaboration with local homelessness services. Those who are bedded down in the area are invited into the Passage Resource Centre to be assessed and to get their basic needs met.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the BID and the CIT were also pivotal in directing individuals into temporary accommodation
- Over the past year the CIT completed joint outreach shifts with St Mungo's SOS team and engaged with 210 rough sleepers. The teams engaged with individuals they had previously interacted with or those who it was their first encounter. 38% of individuals were signposted to homelessness services within Westminster on the first encounter

COST £28,333

### RADIO LINK

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- A scheme of more than 120 local radios has been managed with operatives using an upgraded 4G radio network
- Radios are carried by the BID's on-street teams and local police

COST £3,794





Our Clean Team litter-pick in the local area to make the area more attractive for visitors, workers and residents

Clean and Green

## Clean and Green

Clean streets and open public spaces ensure that Victoria Westminster remains an inviting place for those who live, work and visit the area. Our street team work closely with the local authority, Westminster City Council (WCC), to enhance the area so it is welcoming each day.

### ENHANCING THE VICTORIA WESTMINSTER BID 108 ACRE FOOTPRINT

#### OUTPUTS / ROI

- The Victoria Westminster Cleaning team work Monday to Friday across the Victoria Westminster BID footprint

- The day-time team provide services such as street-sweeping, litter-picking, sharps-removal, graffiti-removal and flushing. They also provide a Janitorial Service to the local business community
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Cleaning team have been delivering regular deep cleaning of the footways across the South Westminster area for heightened sanitation
- Over the past year the team have submitted 11,445 cleaning reports of which, 27 were in relation to the Janitorial Service
- The team refilled and checked the 14 Victoria Westminster BID public hand sanitiser units 5,240 times
- A dedicated cleaning manager ensures the team’s efforts are best directed and that they can be more responsive to any issues

COST £42,428



Deep cleaning has been performed by the team more frequently due to COVID-19





A new lawn, new planting and trees were key elements to the transformation of Christchurch Gardens

# Public Realm

Victoria Westminster’s public realm is a vital element to people’s perceptions of the area. Over the past year the BID has continued to explore options for long-term enhancement projects presented in our ‘People Wanted’ Public Realm Strategy, from 2020.

Our work on the redevelopment of Christchurch Gardens was completed in September 2020, following extensive landscaping works. The garden is now open to the public and offers a rejuvenated green space for those who live, work and visit Victoria Westminster to enjoy.

## STRATEGIC PROJECTS

### CHRISTCHURCH GARDENS

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- We continued to work in collaboration with Victoria BID and Westminster City Council, who allocated £2.5m to the Christchurch Gardens project, and key project stakeholders to complete the landscaping project, with the garden reopening to the public in September 2020
- The scheme transformed the site and has brought to the area a new accessible green space which comprises more seating, a diverse planting palette, new lawns, new trees, a history panel, new lighting columns, new paving, bird and bat boxes, log piles, and an extensive jasmine climber wall

COST £44,700

## COMMUNICATIONS

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- Regular Steering Group meetings were held to share information with BID members and discuss project activity and inform future work
- We created a map of free cycle parking locations to aid Active Travel, surveyed businesses about our freight pilot project, and increased our understanding of green infrastructure and planning with young people to strengthen our work
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we liaised with Westminster City Council and Transport for London on initiatives to support social distancing and the local community, including widening pavements and additional cycle parking

COST £6,516



Prior to the scheme some trees in the garden were dead and obstructing the light





## Destination Victoria Westminster

Our integrated marketing and communications activities ensure that we engage with the local workforce and attract visitors to Victoria Westminster. The Victoria Westminster BID actively markets the area through the use of our digital platforms such as our website and social media to promote events and activities run by ourselves and local business partners.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted our strategy this year to focus on a digital offering for local workers and provided support to our local business community through virtual initiatives and events, along with a programme of regular content and communications support on our digital platforms.

### VICTORIA WESTMINSTER BID AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME (60%)

#### OUTPUT/ROI

- Over the past year, our Ambassador team have continued to support visitors with wayfinding. They have now greeted over 85,000 visitors since their work started in the footprint
- This year the Ambassadors also visited local businesses 262 times to gain information on the ground and provide assistance, when national restrictions were not in place

COST £21,466

### EVENTS PROGRAMME 2020/2021

COST £17,276

### VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic we launched a Virtual Event Series in collaboration with the Victoria and Northbank BIDs in April 2020

- The BIDs held over 120 events which offered support, advice and skill development for the local community
- The events were often co-hosted with local businesses enabling them to showcase their services during periods of uncertainty and closures due to restrictions
- The diverse range of events included wellbeing webinars, yoga and meditation classes, cooking and baking masterclasses with world renowned chefs, theatre acting and writing workshops, inclusion, leadership and speaker training, sustainable and craft workshops plus digital marketing advice for businesses in the post Covid-era
- The virtual events attracted over 3,000 attendees and partnered with over 18 local businesses
- Most of the virtual events have been recorded and are hosted on the South Westminster BIDS YouTube channel which was set up in April 2020 and now has over 7,000 views

### FESTIVE ACTIVITY

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- We installed a festive bauble installation outside the QEII Centre in Westminster for 4 weeks in December, where passers-by could interact with the BID on social media
- We built on our previous year's Christmas activity with an online advent calendar
- The calendar was extended across South Westminster, to include businesses within the Victoria and Northbank BID footprints, and had 28 prizes available to win over 14 days from local businesses
- Over 10,800 entries were received which is an increase of 86% on the previous year



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

- The International Women’s Day (IWD) ‘Impact of the Pandemic on Working Women’ online panel event was held virtually on 9 March, in collaboration with the Victoria and Northbank BIDs
- Five local business people took part in a wide-ranging panel discussion, which was chaired by Joy Burnford, Founder of My Confidence Matters
- The panellists included Nicholas Cheffings (Senior Counsel at Hogan Lovells), Jessica Chivers (author and CEO of The Talent Keeper Specialists), Lisa Burger (Executive Director and Joint Chief Executive at National Theatre) and Jessica Laditan (CEO of Pop Up Africa)
- The event was partnered with a grant making charity, Rosa. A fundraising link was shared with attendees to donate and be entered into a raffle prize draw. Those who entered the draw had the chance to win prizes donated by local businesses. £545 was raised
- For added interaction, we welcomed a live illustrator, Katie Chappell, who provided a time-lapse and an informative illustration for use on our website, newsletters and social media after the event

- The event was well attended with over 160 guests. The BIDs will look to build on this event for next year in a physical setting

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

- We published three issues of our local magazine: Victoria, London Starts Here, with a circulation of 25,000 per issue
- The distribution area of the magazine was extended to include more of our residential community and the magazine was also available digitally on our website
- The Victoria & Westminster Awards were curated in collaboration with the Victoria Magazine
- Awards were given in five categories: Charitable Soul, Covid Hero, Hospitality Hero, Old Friend and New Friend and the winners were judged by a panel which included our CEO Ruth Duston OBE OC, Jo Malone CBE (Founder of Jo Loves), Martin Williams (CEO of Rare Restaurants) and Cllr Rachael Robathan (Leader of Westminster City Council)

- Individuals from across Victoria and Westminster who received awards were from businesses including The Goring Hotel, Gees Chemist, Chez Antoinette, The Hotel School and a local independent greengrocer
- Materials including informative leaflets about the BID were produced during the year and uploaded to our website
- The Victoria Westminster BID website and our database was maintained over the year

COST £20,223

ONLINE PROMOTION

- We circulated monthly electronic newsletters to over 500 people about events and news in Victoria Westminster. We also circulated communications to inform businesses of COVID-19 business updates and guidance
- We worked to enhance our social media presence with a regular programme of engaging updates on local activity over Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

COST £7,187

PR SUPPORT AND MEDIA

- We engaged a consultant part-time to support with communications & PR to promote Victoria Westminster BID and the wider area
- We appointed a London communications agency during the year to provide us with additional PR and media support

COST £19,775

Our virtual events included activities such as baking masterclasses





# Sustainable Prosperity



Christmas Gift Boxes delivered to local residents included gifts from local businesses

## Sustainable Prosperity

This year the Sustainable Prosperity theme has seen an enhanced focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with activities focusing on areas such as wellbeing of local staff and education & skills.

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sustainable Prosperity theme worked in collaboration with the Destination Victoria Westminster theme to deliver a programme of virtual events to support the wellbeing of employees whilst they were working from home. The theme also worked closely with local charities to support those vulnerable within the community during the pandemic.

### WELLBEING INITIATIVES & CSR

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- In a joint initiative with the Destination theme and the Victoria and Northbank BIDs, we worked with partners on wellbeing workshops as part of our Virtual Events Series
- Workshops included mindfulness sessions, gardening workshops and sessions to support those working from home
- We also hosted events as part of the Virtual Event Series which explored topics such as cycle safety, diversity and inclusion and a week-long series curated with Pop Up Africa to celebrate Black History Month
- As part of our education and skills CSR programme we delivered two employability panel events for young people across Westminster, with panellists from the local business community
- The first, in partnership with City Lions, focused on careers in theatre and performing arts and the second, as part of Westminster City Council's Enterprise Week, explored green and sustainable careers
- Our Annual Christmas Gift drop campaign took place online this year, supporting two local charities. With your support £1,380 was raised on the Gift Drop donation form which was split equally between the two charities; Cardinal Hume Centre and The Passage
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, we supported local charities and local foodbanks by donating fresh fruit and vegetables
- At Christmas the BID contributed towards 250 Christmas Gift Boxes that were delivered to local elderly residents across the South of Westminster. Gifts inside the boxes were purchased from local businesses and included a card from a local school child

- Small grants were given to 3 local charities to deliver projects within the Victoria Westminster area focused on education and skills, in line with the Steering Group's priorities

COST £4,711

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RESEARCH

#### OUTPUTS/ROI

- The BID commissioned research through King's College London to focus on mental health in the workplace within the wider context of South Westminster
- The BID worked with Centre for London to contribute to the Town Centres Project

COST £10,208



BUSINESS NETWORKING AND SPONSORSHIP EVENTS

OUTPUTS/ROI

- Membership of the New London Architecture Networking Group was held to support local business networking

COST £1,575

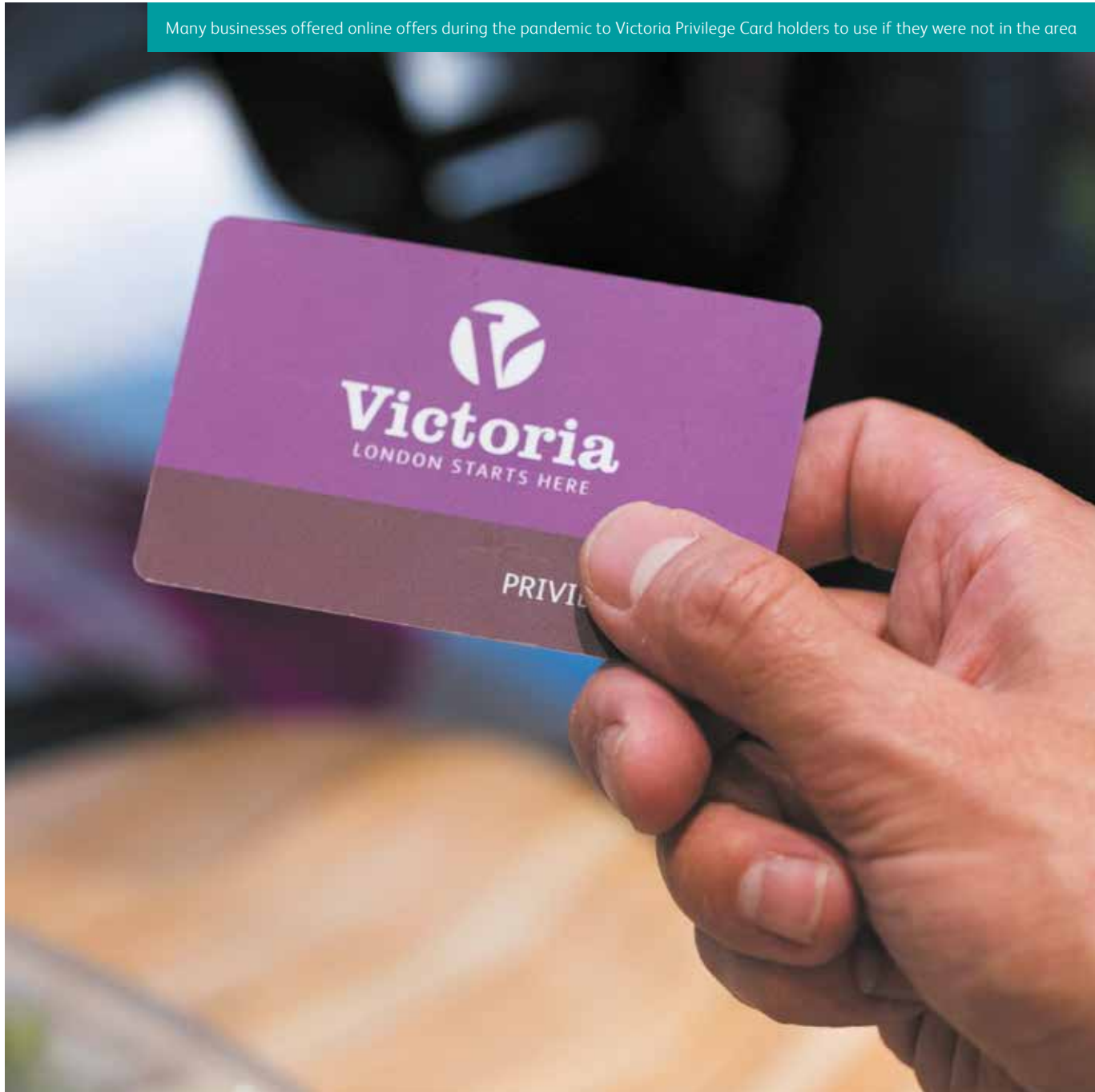
PRIVILEGE CARD

OUTPUTS/ROI

- Our popular Privilege Card scheme has grown with over 76,000 now in circulation. There are now over 200 offers and discounts for local shops and restaurants
- During the year many businesses also engaged with the BID to provide online offerings to card holders who may have been away from the area due to the COVID-19 pandemic

COST £8,665

Many businesses offered online offers during the pandemic to Victoria Privilege Card holders to use if they were not in the area



COVID-19

As we embarked on our third year as a BID, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic caused difficulties for our local business community and saw footfall in the area reduced, due to safety concerns and national and local restrictions during the year. The BID worked on several initiatives to support our local community over the past year including on-street interventions and research to assist with recovery planning.

- We installed hand sanitiser units and enhanced signage across the BID footprint to provide people in the area with access to hand sanitiser, where hand washing wasn't possible, help those in the local area to adhere to social distancing measures, ensure safe queueing and promote local walking routes

- This year, we lobbied on behalf of our business community, at the highest levels, on issues of importance to our business community during COVID-19, such as financial support, attention for rough sleepers, and a more agile approach to licensing for restaurants and cafés to help with social distancing
- The BID carried out polling at key moments of the year relating to travelling in to places of work and appetite to return to the area. This data was shared with our business community electronically to assist them in their plans during the gradual lifting of lockdown
- We commissioned economic research through Volterra and Arup to inform recovery planning and support our lobbying efforts, within the wider context of South Westminster

COST £48,066



14 hand sanitiser units were installed across the footprint



# Profit and Loss Account

For the year ended 31 March 2021

TURNOVER	TOTAL 2020/21 £	COMPARATIVE TOTAL 2019/20 £
BID Levy	811,727	966,912
Voluntary Contributions and Other Income	48,495	1,204
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>860,222</b>	<b>968,116</b>
<b>COST OF SALES</b>		
Safe and Secure	144,840	176,010
Clean and Green	53,082	144,263
Public Realm	86,701	154,648
Destination Victoria Westminster	143,426	211,030
Sustainable Prosperity	49,325	127,982
Covid-19 Recovery	48,066	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>525,440</b>	<b>813,933</b>
GROSS PROFIT	334,782	154,183
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>		
BID Team Support	83,370	99,084
Office expenses	1,017	3,648
Audit Fees	6,500	6,250
BID Levy Collection Fee	13,449	14,664
BID Statutory Requirements	3,020	-
Taxation	29	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107,385</b>	<b>123,646</b>
Surplus brought forward	71,864	40,124
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	227,398	31,740
Surplus carried forward	299,262	71,864



The area is home to many tourist attractions such as Westminster Abbey



# The Board

## Board Directors

- Ruth Duston, OBE OC (Chief Executive) [Victoria Westminster BID](#)
- Nigel Hughes MBE (Chair) [Victoria Westminster BID](#)

## Board Members

- Beverly Payne (Vice Chair) [Conrad London St. James](#)
- Charmaine Rees [Derwent London](#)
- Mark Taylor [QEII Centre](#)
- Stuart Burrows [Office of Government Property](#)

## Board Observer

- Mark Fisher [Tuckerman](#)

# The Boundary

