

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

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## Welcome

It is no understatement to say that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both the city, and NE1's annual programme was swift and has been significant.

Just as the city's businesses were forced to adapt and change at pace, so too did NE1.

Working with our Board, the NE1 Executive Team, our businesses, and our partners, we quickly defined a clear set of strategic priorities built around the needs of our businesses and the huge challenges they faced.

These priorities not only focused the output of the NE1 team, but also the need to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners, both regionally and nationally, to provide as comprehensive a response as possible in what has been a rapidly changing environment.

Underpinning NE1's programme for this year, these priorities were:

- · Communication: supporting and promoting the city's businesses that were open and able to trade, combined with consistent public safety messaging through NE1's wide range of
- Disseminating information and access to funding: ensuring the rapid dissemination of information on restrictions, their impact on businesses and how to access funding swiftly (informing businesses of the parameters for financial support)
- Lobbying and advocacy: providing the strongest possible voice for business', representing their views at both local and national levels of Government and working with regional and national organisations to provide consistent feedback and a comprehensive and concise set of requests to ensure Government policy supports business effectively

Looking to the year ahead and the phased reopening of the city's economy, these priorities will continue to be an important part of NE1's delivery programme, coupled with the ambition and determination to ensure that the forthcoming year will be the most significant in NE1's history, delivering on NE1's strategic and operational priorities to support business, maximise commercial opportunities and ensure that businesses, and the city, bounce back with confidence.

Over the past year, the pandemic has certainly dominated both the headlines and the economic environment, but we should not be shy in recognising our strengths. Newcastle continues to be a resolute, robust, and enterprising city. A place where under pressure, the community does not fragment and fold, it comes together and grows stronger. It remains a city of belief and ambition. These qualities have been essential in navigating the frequent 'downs' and all too rare 'ups' over the past year but will be even more critical in rebuilding and bouncing back from this crisis.

Furthermore, it would be remiss of us not to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors to pay tribute to the many city centre businesses who have contributed considerable time and effort to respond to surveys, attend webinars and workshops, and provide in-depth one-to-one feedback on the acute pressures facing their business and sectors. This has been crucial in providing a clear steer for NE1 and a concise set of policy requests for the city's businesses when representing their views to both local and national Government at every stage through the pandemic.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report and now, more than ever, if you would like to become more actively involved with NE1 and pushing forward the agenda, helping the city respond, rebuild, and prosper, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



**Adam Serfontein** Chairman, NE1 Managing Director, Hanro Group





**Adrian Waddell** Chief Executive, NE1

## **Team**

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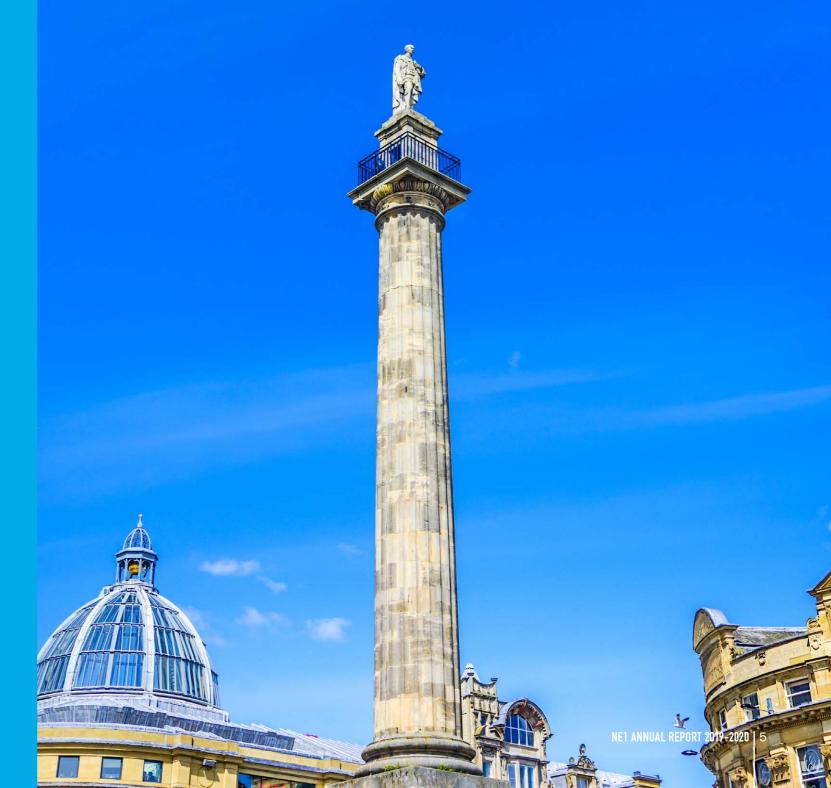
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**JUST AS THE CITY'S BUSINESSES WERE FORCED** TO ADAPT AND CHANGE AT PACE, SO TOO DID NE1.
WORKING WITH OUR BOARD, THE NE1 EXECUTIVE TEAM,
OUR BUSINESSES, AND OUR PARTNERS, WE QUICKLY
DEFINED A CLEAR SET OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES BUILT
AROUND THE NEEDS OF OUR BUSINESSES AND THE
HUGE CHALLENGES THEY FACED.



# **Lobbying and Advocacy**

Providing a stronger voice for business was one of the founding principles of NE1 over a decade ago. This year, more than any other, it has been the driving force of the business, guiding our response to the pandemic and focusing our lobbying efforts on business priorities.

Understanding the need for prompt action, NE1 quickly adopted a sectoral webinar format, featuring private sector experts and specific Police and council officers where appropriate. This was not simply a 'transmit/receive' format, rather, it acknowledged that in a fast-paced environment all parties needed to be working together to understand, apply and enforce guidance and legislation in a pragmatic and progressive manner.

Having established this ongoing dialogue, it quickly became clear that there were issues and pressures facing businesses that were not being addressed. Equally, it was clear that in order to affect meaningful change for business, that a wider co-ordinated effort beyond NE1's direct representations to HM Treasury and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government was required. As such, NE1 worked with regional and national trade bodies such as UK Hospitality, BIDs Foundation, British BIDs and Northern BIDs Group to provide rapid feedback on the key issues and foster a broad consensus on the potential solutions. This collective approach led to a concise set of policy requests from Government at each stage throughout the pandemic and resulted in significant changes to policy, such as;

- Abolition of the £51,000 rateable value cap for grant funding
- Introduction of flexible furlough and reinstatement of the 80% furlough scheme
- VAT reduction from 20% to 5% for the hospitality and leisure sectors
- Quicker and more cost-effective pavement cafes process
- £115,000 of discretionary pavement café grants for hospitality and leisure businesses

This work was further supplemented with a high-profile communications programme to highlight issues and provide opportunities to amplify and maximise the impact of key messages from the city's business community. This concerted effort achieved sustained and significant regional coverage, combined with national exposure on the likes of BBC, Sky News and ITV.

Looking to the year ahead and the phased reopening of the city's businesses, and as we shift from survival to bounce-back and growth, NE1's advocacy and lobbying work will remain a hugely important element of our delivery. Businesses need a period of certainty and stability. An operational and tax environment that catalyses investment and enables businesses to have the best possible chance of recouping losses sustained over the pandemic. We look forward to working with our businesses, partners, and Government to deliver this.

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THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN HORRIFIC FOR THE CITY'S LEISURE SECTOR. NE1'S SERIES OF WEBINARS HAVE HELPED GREATLY IN ASSISTING BUSINESSES TO UNDERSTAND CHANGES TO REGULATIONS, ENFORCEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AS WELL AS PROVIDING DIRECT ACCESS TO KEY INDIVIDUALS TO FEEDBACK ON THE ISSUES WE HAVE FACED. IT HAS MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

Jack Taylor CosyJoes/Chair of Pubwatch





## **Retail Core**

Newcastle's retail core would ordinarily be a hive of activity throughout the year, especially across the summer and winter months. The impact that COVID-19 has had on trade and footfall has been significant, with footfall over the past 12 months down 75% against the previous year.

Lockdowns and social distancing restrictions resulted in the cancellation or postponement of NE1's annual programme of events including the hugely popular summer closures of Blackett Street and the city's **Christmas Markets.** 

The focus of NE1's work in the retail core over the past year has been on proactively planning for post-lockdown reopening, and responding to the operational needs of businesses in the area. This significant piece of work required a multi-organisational approach including the city council, Nexus, the Police, and businesses, all working together to provide the safest possible environment to welcome customers back.

This work initially focused on ensuring businesses were fully briefed on creating COVID-safe trading environments internally, and that the external environment, the city's public realm, was well organised and managed regarding pedestrian flows and queuing requirements. The introduction of City Hosts to welcome, direct and assist customers with the new arrangements combined with a high-profile communications strategy ensured high levels of compliance and efficient management of the retail core as shops reopened. That the city recorded positive year-on-year growth in footfall in the runup to Christmas is a testament to the hard work of the many partners involved.

In addition, a partnership comprising NE1, Newcastle University (NIC-D and the Urban Observatory) and Newcastle City Council, secured £67,500 funding from MHCLG's COVID-19 Digital Fund to create the 'How Busy Is Toon' website that provided customers with real-time footage and footfall data to provide reassurance and information to visitors planning their journey into Newcastle.

Beyond the immediate response to COVID-19, the past year has been a busy period for the longer-term aspirations of the area and securing funding to invest. Now more than ever, the city's retailers need support and a bold vision for the future direction of the area.

Having commissioned landscape specialists LDA to work on the vision for the Retail Core and the distinct characteristics and requirements of each of the streets, the city council have also been successful in securing £20m of funding for the retail core. With this funding now in place, businesses should expect the rapid prioritisation of investment in selected areas. We look forward to providing information and further consultation on the detail as these plans progress.

NE1'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE RETAIL CORE'S COVID PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY, PARTICULARLY REGARDING MANAGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC REALM. ENSURING THAT BUSINESSES WERE KEPT FULLY IN THE LOOP AND USING THEM TO INFORM PLANS HELPED HUGELY IN THEIR SUCCESS.

Operations Manager, Fenwick

## **Bigg Market**

Following the transformation of the Bigg Market's public realm last year which won the Lord Mayor's Design Award for Landscape, the focus over the past 12 months has been on refurbishment of the area's historic buildings.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not halt the ongoing building restoration and 2020 saw two brand new venues open their doors following investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund project.

In February, the much talked about 'WC Newcastle' welcomed visitors underground for the first time as it opened to the public as a new wine bar. The high-quality restoration and fit-out very much reflects the new-found confidence operators have in the Bigg Market.

In June, following the restoration of 41-43 Groat Market, Meat:Stack continued their expansion plans by opening their first bricks and mortar premises, having successfully established themselves in the Grainger Market, as well as taking part in NE1's 2019 Bigg Foodie Friday events. As hospitality businesses looked for new and creative ways to continue to operate within COVID-19 guidelines, NE1 worked alongside Meat:Stack to secure the closure of a loading bay and subsequent build-out of a bespoke pavement café parklet, complete with a vibrant planting scheme that further demonstrates NE1's commitment to greening the city.

Following the completion of the restoration of the Pumphrey's building, the Blues Café opened in the summer providing another high quality and quirky venue to the area. Perhaps most importantly, this is one of the first of the area's restored buildings to bring back into use the previously vacant upper floors.

Work to what is perhaps the Bigg Market's most famous building, the iconic Balmbras, began in September 2020 and achieved practical completion of the restoration work in December 2020. The new venue is set to open in Spring 2021.

Further showing the diversification of the Bigg Market's offer and bringing the upper floors back into commercial use, HiveTree, a stunning serviced-office development, has completely transformed 9 Bigg Market and is providing a home to a growing roster of eclectic companies. Further phases of development are underway.

To assist with post-COVID recovery, NE1 secured a huge increase in the use of the public realm, with 6 businesses taking advantage of the super-sized pavement café licenses to maximise revenue over the summer when they were permitted to reopen and trade. Seeing the Bigg Market come to life, both during the day and on into the evening with customers taking advantage of these newly found leisure environments shows both the demand and desire from consumers, but also the commercial benefits to businesses investing in their outdoor space. With these areas fitted out with electricity points, the positive cumulative impact this had on the atmosphere and ambience of the area overall is very much a sign of things to come throughout the year.

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SINCE WE FIRST DISCUSSED THE PROSPECT OF SCALING UP AND RELOCATING TO THE BIGG MARKET, THE SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM NE1 HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE AND HAS GONE WAY BEYOND THE RESTORATION OF OUR PREMISES. DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS THE BIGG MARKET FELT VIBRANT AND ALIVE, AND WE ARE ABSOLUTELY THRILLED TO BE PART OF ITS CONTINUING RESURGENCE THANKS TO NE1'S BIGG MARKET PROJECT.

Tom Westman
Owner, Meat:Stack





## **Marketing and Events**

One of the biggest advantages in having established an extremely strong social media presence over the years has been that in this rapidly changing and challenging environment, NE1 had highly effective digital channels to respond, promote our businesses and keep our customers fully informed of the changing restrictions. This ensured that as businesses adapted their offer and continued to trade, NE1 could amplify and maximise the impact of that message to customers.

As restrictions began NE1 increased the frequency of our posts on social media channels by more than 60%, and from April to August amplified business messages and offers generating over 350,000 engagements, with a reach of over 6.3 million.

In addition to digital channels, NE1's fortnightly listings magazine, which paused briefly when the lockdowns were announced with short notice, pivoted quickly to promote businesses that were still able to trade, or had adapted their offer to the restrictions. Distribution of the magazine also changed quickly to suit the trading environment, switching to postal delivery direct to customers in key households within the city's catchment area.

The Reopening edition of the magazine in July featured bespoke artwork created by a local artist, and 40,000 copies were printed and distributed across the region, an uplift of 135% above the usual print run. Our November Lockdown special featured 169 businesses, a 65% increase on the average number of business featured in each issue of the magazine.

As with all events, the pandemic had a huge impact on NE1's annual events programme, with all having to be either cancelled or postponed. Whilst the dramatic plans for New Year's Eve had to be scaled back due to rising COVID-19 rates, the stunning 'Laser Light City' installation created by Seb Lee-Delisle will return in October 2021, kicking off half-term and the opening of the Rugby League World Cup.

Looking forward, the next year should be, COVID-19 permitting, a bumper year for delivery of events focused on boosting trade and welcoming people back into the city. NE1's annual programme of events such as Newcastle Restaurant Week, Screen on the Green and the Family Fun Days on Blackett Street will return, complemented by major events that NE1 has long been a key partner in delivering, such as Magic Weekend. In addition, the city will also host the Rugby League World Cup at St James' Park in October.

We look forward to providing information and further consultation on the detail as these plans progress.

OVER THE SUMMER AS THE CITY REOPENED, NE1'S SUPPORT THROUGH THEIR MAGAZINE, WEBSITE, AND SOCIAL CHANNELS HELPED TO ENSURE THAT OUR MESSAGES WERE AMPLIFIED TO A CONSIDERABLY WIDER AUDIENCE THAN WE CAN REACH ALONE. WE FELT A TREMENDOUS IMPACT FROM THIS, SO MUCH SO THAT I EXPERIENCED MY BEST EVER TRADING WEEK IN THE 23-YEAR HISTORY OF THE BUSINESS.

Daniel Stamas Owner, Kafeneon

# **Street Rangers and Rapid Response Clean Team**

Given the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, the focus for NE1's highly regarded Street Rangers and Rapid Response Clean Team has been on flexibility and the need to respond to changes in the business environment rapidly.

Work patterns, resource levels and duties were adapted quickly to reflect changes in footfall, business opening hours and COVID-19 restrictions throughout the year. By necessity, these roles needed to flex and adapt as the situation changed such as introducing regular premises checks for businesses temporarily closed to comply with insurance obligations, switching the Clean Team from jet-washing to sanitising key touchpoints around the city centre, and working closely with partner agencies to plan, agree and manage queuing and social distancing requirements for high footfall areas in the retail core.

The significance and importance of this work was underlined with footfall in December being 36% higher than the previous December as non-essential retail reopened for Christmas trading.

A major factor in delivering this need for flexibility has been forging new partnerships with contractors who provide the Street Ranger and Clean Team services on behalf of NE1. Benefiting from local knowledge of the city centre with increased staff flexibility and a new identity for the teams enabled them to maintain a safe, welcoming, and reassuring environment for both staff and customers.

As restrictions are lifted and we emerge from the COVID-19 lockdown, the Street Rangers and Clean Team will continue to be an important and essential element of reopening the city.

- Completed over 12,000 premises checks
- Sanitised over 8,000 touch points per month
- Removed over 400 bags of rubbish per month from the city's streets

NEWCASTLE REQUIRED A STRONG PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE IN RELATION TO THE CHALLENGES THAT FACED US ALL DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC. THIS 'ONE CITY' APPROACH MEANT ALL KEY PARTNERS COMING TOGETHER, WORKING ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER COLLECTIVELY TO ENSURE THAT NEWCASTLE REMAINED A SAFE AND WELCOME CITY TO VISIT. NE1 HAVE BEEN A KEY FEATURE IN THIS APPROACH. WHOSE CONTRIBUTION OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN INVALUABLE.

Inspector Karen Madge, Northumbria Police



## **NE1 CAN**

Delivery of NE1's youth employment programme, NE1 CAN, has not been hindered by the global pandemic. Whilst the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on in-person sessions was immediate, responding to demand from both education providers and employers, NE1 CAN's small and agile team quickly pivoted to deliver its range of high-quality youth engagement sessions online. This move has resulted in a huge increase in take-up of the services.

Figures show that over the course of the past year the number of educational providers engaging with the initiative doubled, the number of attendees rose by 138%, and the number of employee encounters grew by a staggering 238%.

There can be no doubt that the change in delivery format has reduced barriers and made it easier and more cost-effective for schools and their pupils to engage. Planning is already underway for the forthcoming year, working with NE1's businesses, schools and their pupils to deliver a packed and high-quality programme.

WE ARE PROUD TO BE PART OF THE NE1 CAN PROGRAMME AND HONOURED TO TAKE PART. WE'RE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO MAKING LAW EXCITING AND ENGAGING.

Sharon Boyd CEO, Samuel Phillips, LLP

THIS IS A FANTASTIC AND AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT IN AN UNPREDICTABLE YEAR — A TREMENDOUS TESTIMONY TO NE1 CAN'S VISIONARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACROSS NEWCASTLE.

Ronnie Burn Head of Careers Education and Student Progress, Newcastle College

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Image taken from one of NE1 CAN's last events prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

# **Financials**

#### **Statement of Comprehensive Income**

for the year ended 31 March 2020

	2020 £	2019 £
Income	2,366,451	3,226,179
Programme expenditure	(1,774,091)	(2,944,945)
Gross balance	592,360	281,234
Administrative expenses	(348,098)	(351,186)
Net balance	244,262	(69,952)
Other interest receivable and similar income	2,504	2,090
Balance on ordinary activities before taxation	246,766	(67,862)
Corporation tax	(476)	(397)
Balance for the year	246,290	(68,259)
All the activities of the company are from continuing operations.		

#### **Statement of Financial Position**

at 31 March 2020

	£	2020 £	£	2019 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	150,395		157,628	
Current assets				
Debtors	251,398		251,665	
Cash at bank and in hand	878,768		636,803	
	1,130,166		888,468	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(235,097)		(246,921)	
Net current assets		895,069		641,547
Total assets less current liabilities		1,045,464		799,175
Net assets		1,045,464		799,175
Capital and reserves				
Profit and loss account		1,045,464		799,175
Members funds		1,045,464		799,175

The above is an extract from the audited financial statements, a full copy of which is available on request.

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## Governance

Newcastle NE1 Limited is a company limited by guarantee and operates within regulations set by government on Business Improvement Districts. The Board of Directors provides direction and strategic input and is responsible to the company's members for the conduct and performance of the company. The primary goal of the Board is to ensure that the company's strategy creates long-term value for business. The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis. There are 17 Directors and the Board is chaired by Adam Serfontein, the Managing Director of Hanro Group.

There are three elements to the NE1 investment criteria, as follows:

#### 1. BID Business Plan

Each individual project should fall into one of NE1's core programme areas, which are:

- Business Leadership: arguably the most important of the three areas, which relates to the opportunity afforded by NE1 for businesses to come together around a shared agenda with the resources necessary to back it up. Examples include the work around the Bigg Market and Alive after Five
- Operations: this involves delivery of large-scale projects such as the Newcastle City Marina and practical, dayto-day projects such as the Street Rangers, Clean Team and greening schemes
- Marketing and Events: these items are largely selfexplanatory, but have included the Get into Newcastle and Alive after Five campaigns together with supporting events such as NE1 Newcastle Restaurant Week, NE1 Screen on the Green and Magic Weekend
- 2. That there is commercial benefit to business, while recognising that each of the projects NE1 delivers will benefit different business sectors and geographical areas within the city centre more or less directly. The overriding requirement is that each delivers commercial benefit as widely as possible, with the combined package benefiting all.
- 3. That the portfolio meets the needs of all geographical and sectoral constituencies:

An extension of point 2 above, the third of the three investment criteria recognises that NE1 has a very broad constituency ranging from professional services (24%), to retail (23%), to leisure (32%), and public sector (10%), and includes not only commercial enterprises but the RVI, the City Council, both universities and Newcastle College. The range of projects delivered by NE1 is therefore necessarily diverse.

Directors (as at 31 March 2020):

Adrian Waddell

Chief Executive, Newcastle NE1 Ltd

Stephen Patterson

Director of Communications, Newcastle NE1 Ltd

Tariq Albassam

Operations Director, Newcastle NE1 Ltd

Adam Serfontein

Managing Director, Hanro Group Chairman, Newcastle NE1 Ltd

**Gavin Black** 

Partner, Naylors Gavin Black Vice-Chairman, Newcastle NE1 Ltd

Ged Bell

Cabinet Member, Investment and Development, Newcastle City Council

Tania Love
Director.

FaulknerBrowns

Georgie
Collingwood-Cameron
Managing Director,
Admiral Associates

**Arwen Duddington** 

Chief Operating Officer, ZeroLight

Jo Feeley

Founder and Chief Executive, Trend Bible

Steven Kyffin

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business and Enterprise), Northumbria University

Tom Caulker

Owner,

World Headquarters

Michelle Percy

Assistant Director, Commercial Development, Newcastle City Council

Jules Quinn

Managing Director, Popaball and The TeaShed

Darren Richardson

Co-founder and Company Director, Gardiner Richardson

**Carl Milton** 

Store Director, Fenwick

Michael Capaldi

Dean of Innovation and Business, Newcastle University



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