

BIRMINGHAM
COLMORÉ

Annual Report

April 2025 - April 2026

COLMORE EXECUTIVE

**Ensuring every levy-paying business
sees clear value from their investment.**

Lead: Nicola Fleet-Milne, Fleetmilne

Southside District partnership

Building a more unified Birmingham city-centre

Over the past year, Colmore Executive has worked closely with other city-centre BIDs to explore how collective working can deliver greater efficiency and amplified impact.

- April 2025: Following discussions between both Boards, we agreed to support Southside with a small range of services.
- August 2025: We stepped in to caretaker their services and deliver their ballot.

A strong ballot result

The ballot, held in October, delivered exceptional support:

- 96% voted yes by rateable value, compared to 94% in their BID3 ballot
- With a turnout of 50.5%, compared to 46% in the BID3 ballot

A new operating model

Since the successful ballot, we have been working with the Southside Board to formalise a long-term partnership that will enable greater efficiency, better joint working, stronger advocacy and a more unified voice for Birmingham's business community.

In January 2026, both BIDs formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the inaugural Birmingham Colmore Summit, witnessed by more than 100 civic, cultural and commercial leaders. This landmark partnership mirrors successful BID models in cities such as Liverpool and Bristol and represents a bold, collaborative future for the city centre.

Rebrand & strategic direction

A new identity for the next chapter

In January 2026, we launched our refreshed brand at the Birmingham Colmore Summit, attended by over 100 leaders from across the city. The summit explored themes including economic growth, inward investment, public realm, culture and the future of the city centre.

Strategic foundations

This year, we completed a comprehensive strategic programme including:

- A renewed vision, mission and values
- A refined tone of voice
- A new Colmore Life website (colmorelife.co.uk)
- A redesigned Colmore Life magazine, procured through competitive tender
- A high-energy brand launch video
- The launch of the Colmore Life app, providing live access to events and offers across the district

This work marks a significant strategic shift. We are moving from a project manager to a placemaking champion. This is not a cosmetic update; it is a business strategy and a place strategy. It shapes how we advocate, how we collaborate and how we lead on behalf of the district and wider city-centre.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all levy payers who contributed to workshops, interviews, surveys and testing. Your insights informed every part of our new direction.



COLMORE PLACEMAKING

Curating public spaces that reflect
Colmore's exceptional character.

Lead: Melanie Williams, DWF

Our Colmore Placemaking Working Group continues to enhance the character, identity, and everyday experience of the District, strengthening our connection to culture, heritage and community.

Championing creativity

Our 'Open' art competition returned for a second year in 2025 and once again continued to support and champion emerging Birmingham artists, offering real-life opportunities for over 80 artists' work to be exhibited in the public, as well helping emerging talent on their creativity journeys through portfolio reviews with curators and creatives.

For the 2025 competition, we also extended the prize with an additional exhibition at Birmingham City University's School of Art running in April 2026. We're excited to reveal that the Open will be returning again for the third year in 2026.

Celebrating heritage

This year marked the launch of the first phase of our work celebrating George Shaw, an outdoor exhibition installed in October 2025 at the Paradise Street Metro stop. Positioned at the site of the first photograph ever taken in Birmingham, A White House on Paradise Street, the installation connects the District's present-day environment with its esteemed history. Following a fantastic initial response, we are exploring a phase two of the project, to be launched early 2027.

Livery Street Subway

The Livery Street Subway transformation was also completed and unveiled in 2025. Through a £120,000 revitalisation project, led by Birmingham Colmore in partnership with Moda Living, Birmingham City Council and JQ BID, the once dark underpass has been reimaged with a vibrant installation of colourful ceramic tiles designed by artist Adam Nathaniel Furman, creating the illusion of three-dimensionality and turning the space into a welcoming, civic-minded corridor.

Brum Transport Fest

In 2025 we also began early work on the Brum Transport Fest, establishing partnerships with industry leaders, media companies and vehicle clubs. These relationships lay the groundwork for a future flagship event coming this September, celebrating Birmingham's transport heritage.

Property Owners and Agents Forum

This year, we relaunched our Property Owners and Agents Forum, strengthening engagement with commercial owners and agents. This renewed collaboration ensures placemaking continues to reflect the needs and ambitions of those who shape and invest in Colmore.

Colmore Square Garden

We initiated work on a new community garden project in Colmore Square, supporting local stewardship and expanding green space at the heart of the District, delivering four volunteer planting sessions in partnership with the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.

Floral programme and festive lights

We continue to invest each year £40,000 to deliver year-round floral installations and our much-loved festive lighting returned to the District's streets, ensuring Colmore remained vibrant, welcoming and full of seasonal atmosphere.



COLMORE CULTURE

Bringing the district to life this week, next weekend, and anytime of day or night.

Lead: Alex Tross, Carter Jonas

This year, Colmore Culture strengthened its role as the creative and social engine of the District; driving footfall, boosting business visibility and offering memorable experiences for workers, residents and visitors alike.

Colmore Food Festival

Our flagship event returned for its 12th year, with record-breaking success:

- 75,000 visitors across two days
- 93.8K Instagram views, with profile visits up 745%
- 16.6K landing-page visits, including 2.6K direct clicks to traders
- 124K+ impressions from our first Sky TV campaign
- 54 pieces of media coverage, reaching 1.5M+ people
- Traders reported up to £10,000 in sales

The festival continues to be one of the most impactful hospitality showcases in the region and will return in July 2026.

Birmingham Cocktail Weekend Summer Edition – Bab About Town Collaboration

- 3,800 wristbands distributed
- 91 participating venue recommendations
- 95% of attendees visited a new venue
- Partnership reel reached 21.8K views
- Colmore venues included: Tiger Bites Pig, Hotel du Vin, The Alchemist, 24 Stories and Dishoom

Leisure & Hospitality Instagram Competitions

Since March 2025 (12 competitions in total, one per month):

- 145.6K total views
- 3,864 likes, 7,691 comments
- 1,250 saves and nearly 1,000 new followers
- Prizes ranged from £50 dining vouchers to a Christmas stay at The Grand Hotel.

Colmore Taster Tours

Three tours held in January 2026, with all nine venue tickets sold out (30 tickets each).

Participants consistently reported discovering new venues in the District and marked the events as a great introduction to book a return visit.

Seasonal Hunts

Easter: 5 venues, 5.5K views, plus an F1 Arcade repost generating 15K views

Christmas: 3 venues, 49.5K views via sponsored post.



SAFER COLMORE

Safety in the heart of Birmingham.

Lead: Kate Bailey, Squire Patton Boggs

Safer Colmore continued to lead, innovate and influence public safety across Birmingham and beyond. We drove national conversations, supporting local businesses and championing safer environments for all.

National and Local Leadership

Our Safer Colmore Project Manager Paul Street now chairs The BID Foundation's Counter Terrorism & Protective Security subgroup, giving Birmingham a national voice in safety policy and best practice. We have provided extensive business support for Martyn's Law, including workshops, vlogs, legislative updates and a growing online knowledge hub.

Licensing, Vulnerability & Personal Safety

- Safer Licensing work strengthened with new vulnerability and personal-safety resources.
- Partnership with Stamp Out Spiking improving awareness and preventative measures.
- Collaboration with Ask For Angela UK enabling wider rollout across multi venue types including restaurants, bars, cafés and gyms.

Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

- Strong growth of the Women's Safety Forum and our virtual network.
- Increasing national interest in our strategic VAWG approach.
- Ongoing partnership with The Hollie Gazzard Trust, providing consultancy, free training and advocacy for the Hollie Guard app.
- Innovative projects include safe space tags for Hollie Guard, development of a Women's Safety Charter, and becoming the first to launch a new online Stalking Awareness Toolkit.
- Birmingham Colmore awarded Business Ambassador Award at the Hollie Gazzard Trust *Celebrating Excellence Awards 2025*.

Workshops & Training

- Personal Safety Workshops led by martial arts expert Fay Goodman (voice, legislation, planning, disengagement tactics).
- Safer Colmore Talks with West Midlands Police, delivered directly to businesses, covering ASB, homelessness support, crime, and reporting.
- Trauma Equipment Awareness Sessions with West Midlands Fire Service, which led to a life being saved in 2025.

Community Operations Team

Increased visibility through variety of lunchtime pop-up events in local businesses.

Operational statistics:

- 648 footways cleaned
- 340 graffiti or sticker removals
- 254 fly-poster removals
- Managed 326 ASB incidents involving drugs or alcohol
- Managed 58 ASB incidents involving aggression
- Managed 976 cases of begging
- And 1,202 rough sleepers were supported

Safer Colmore continues to lead with compassion and conviction, shaping a District where safety is visible, trusted and evolving.



COLMORE COMMUNITY

Transforming 75,000 professionals
into a connected, thriving community.

Lead: Tim Hall, Hays

This year, our Colmore Community has continued to grow, creating tangible impact both within the Business District and in the neighbourhoods surrounding it.

Strengthening local connections

We delivered our annual Colmore Community Games, bringing together teams from 15 businesses for a day of connection, collaboration and friendly competition. Hays were crowned Community Games champions for 2025.

The event highlighted the strong relationships and shared purpose at the heart of our District, with entry fee donations being donated to the Ladywood Community Project.

Supporting Ladywood

Our work with local organisations and schools in Ladywood remains one of our most important community commitments. This year we have:

- Supported 40+ children across 16 families through direct experiences and family-focused initiatives.
- Reached a further 60+ children during Easter with donations including chocolate eggs and school uniform support.
- Delivered six Ladywood-focused events, including our ongoing support for Leadership Through Sport and Business (LTSB), helping young people access opportunities that broaden horizons and build confidence.

Partnerships with impact

Our community projects are strengthened by collaboration. This year we partnered with:

- Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
- NatWest
- Barclays
- Eversheds
- Phoenix Business Club
- LTSB
- Ladywood Community Project
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Each partner has brought something unique, and together we've created impact far greater than any one organisation could achieve alone.

Celebrating culture and representation

In October, we proudly hosted our first Black History Month event, welcoming over 80 attendees for an evening of insight, storytelling and celebration. This marks an important step in our wider work to champion diversity and representation within the District.



COLMORE NEXT GEN

Helping young professionals thrive.

Lead: Hannah Voogd, HBD

Colmore Next Gen continues to grow as a platform that supports the district's emerging talent, ensuring new voices and future leaders are recognised and encouraged.

Collaboration that amplifies

This year, we partnered with the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce's Future Faces Network to deliver a major networking event, welcoming over 100 young professionals into the District. The event strengthened relationships, spotlighted ambition, and broadened opportunities for early-career professionals across the region.

Showcasing the next generation

Working alongside Colmore Marketing, we gave prominence to our District's award-winning young professionals through Colmore Life magazine and Colmore's social media channels. These features have helped raise visibility, celebrate success, and highlight the depth of talent within the Business District.

New faces and fresh voices

To support the next phase of development, we relaunched recruitment for Colmore Next Gen with a focus on new projects, new perspectives, and renewed ambition.

As a result, we have welcomed five new members who will help shape the future direction of the group and expand its impact across the District.



Birmingham is a city built on ambition, and its future is in safe hands.

In this feature, we celebrate five inspiring individuals who represent the next generation of talent shaping our region. Each of them is a recent winner of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce BYPY Awards, recognised for their innovation, leadership, and commitment to making a difference. From driving business growth to championing creativity and community, these rising stars are redefining what success looks like in Birmingham.

ZOYA ALAM, SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS

Tell us about your career journey so far and how Birmingham has shaped it.

I have always believed the best way to learn is by doing - and that belief shaped my career journey. After completing my A Levels in 2020, I began studying Geography at the University of Birmingham, but I knew the degree apprenticeship route was the right fit for me. During my first year, I applied for several programs and secured a Paralegal Apprenticeship at Squire Patton Boggs in 2021.

That transition was a turning point - challenging but incredibly rewarding. Today, I am well into a four-year Solicitor Apprenticeship that combines academic study with hands-on experience. Birmingham has been central to this journey - the city's vibrant legal community and the supportive culture within my firm have given me the chance to learn, grow, and take on real responsibility early in my career.



JAY DHALIWAL, CHASE DEVERE

Why do you believe Birmingham is a great place for the next generation of talent?

Birmingham offers diversity, opportunity, and affordability, making it ideal for the next generation of talent. Its growing business sector, strong universities, and collaborative culture, fosters learning and networking. With ongoing regeneration and innovation (there seem to be new buildings popping up every year), the city provides a dynamic environment where ambitious professionals can build successful careers and shape the future.



Nonetheless, if managed properly, HS2 has the chance to properly bring in the investments that Birmingham needs and be the catalyst for a real growth in the local economy and communities.

ALISTAIR COWEN, KPMG

Why do you believe Birmingham is a great place for the next generation of talent?

Birmingham offers a diverse mix of employers across sectors, creating real opportunities for career growth. The cultural and social scene has gone from strength to strength. Networks like Future Faces provide young professionals with platforms to connect, learn, and develop their careers. Above all, Birmingham's collaborative and welcoming community makes it a great base to thrive.



DANIELLA CAMPBELL, FORVIS MAZARS

Where do you see yourself in five years? How does this city fit that vision?

In five years, I see myself continuing to grow in a role that allows me to contribute to Birmingham's evolving story, through leadership and mentoring others. Birmingham fits perfectly with that vision because it's a city that rewards ambition and values community. I want to be part of shaping its future, and I know that the opportunities here will allow me to keep building a career that's both impactful and connected to the city's progress.



GEORGE MANDE, KPMG

What opportunities in Birmingham excite you the most right now? Probably will sound like a cliché, but I do hope that HS2



ACCESSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE COLMORE

Connecting Colmore for everyone.
Now and forever.

Lead: Alison Kilby, Arup

This year, our efforts to build a more inclusive, low-carbon district have continued to accelerate. Through collaboration, practical action and a commitment to long-term change, we've helped create a more accessible and environmentally responsible Colmore.

Clean Air Day 2025

We delivered an engaging and interactive programme for Clean Air Day 2025 in June, with high participation on our in-person gym-style cycling machines. This initiative encouraged active travel through incentives and helped raise awareness of the positive impact of low-carbon transport choices.

Building the Birmingham Energy Community

To drive forward a more sustainable, resilient and community-powered future for Birmingham, we have significantly accelerated the development of the Birmingham Energy Community (BEC).

Over the past year, we have taken key steps to transform the concept into a tangible and growing movement:

- We have formally created a CIC to give BEC a clear organisational structure, strengthen its governance, and ensure it can operate with transparency, accountability and long-term purpose.
- Obtained £40,000 grant funding that enables BEC to build capacity, deliver pilot projects and undertake essential research and stakeholder engagement. This funding acts as a catalyst, ensuring the organisation can progress from concept to action and lay the groundwork for future investment.
- Delivered a series of engagement events across Colmore and two other city centre BIDs, helping businesses and individuals understand the benefits and opportunities of community-focused energy transition.

Collectively, these activities are helping to grow a well-connected, well-informed energy community that is motivated to act. They also reinforce Birmingham's position as a leader in place-based, citizen-centred approaches to net zero.

Innovating urban logistics

We have taken an active role in a public-private partnership exploring new approaches to kerb-side delivery, working alongside:

- Connected Places Catapult
- Grid Smarter Cities
- Birmingham City Council

This collaboration aims to improve delivery efficiency, reduce congestion, and support cleaner, more sustainable city centre logistics.



Birmingham Energy Community



COLMORE MARKETING

Putting Colmore on the map and
keeping it there.

Lead: Victoria Osgood

2025 was a landmark year for marketing, communications and place-brand storytelling across Colmore, delivering strong digital growth, high-performing campaigns and deeply engaged content in preparation for our new rebrand launched in January 2026.

Digital & press growth

- LinkedIn: Followers grew by 20% (from ~5,000 to 6,000).
- Instagram: Followers grew by 62% (from 5.5k to 8.9k).
- Website: 125,000 new users — a 70% increase from 2024.
- Press Office: 260 pieces of coverage, driven by Birmingham Super Weekend, Birmingham Light Festival and increased place-based brand visibility.

Printed publications

Colmore History Magazine (first edition since 2020): delivered £1,800 promotional value, with 2,000 copies distributed across Heritage Week and cultural venues.

Colmore Life Magazine (3 issues since March 2025):

- Summer 2025: 58 promotions (£3,700 value)
- Autumn/Winter 2025: 39 promotions (£6,750 value)
- Spring 2026: 47 promotions (£9,150 value)

Colmore Cookbook 2025 (printed June 2025):

- 13 venues featured
- £6,500 promotional value
- 1,000+ copies distributed at Colmore Food Festival

Levy payer communications

We keep our levy-payers in the loop to ensure they can run their business smoothly. We delivered 12 monthly update emails, 572 weekly bite-size mailers, three decision-maker updates and 54 resilience emails (road closures, travel disruption, protests).

Major events and campaigns

- International Day of Birmingham: Hosted activation in Colmore Square; 200+ attendees.
- Christmas in Colmore: District dressing, lights, competitions, choirs, advice content and donations to Ladywood Community Project.

Experiences and engagement

A summer “surprise and delight” ice-cream giveaway with La-Pop saw 600 ice creams distributed to local businesses for free. The Working Group part-funded the new Colmore Life app launch as part of rebrand project, and we also delivered free, fully booked walking tours (Art Walk, History Tour, Gods & Monsters) with 50+ participants.

Alright Bab social media campaign

Six 30-second videos, produced and posted weekly from 24 September–29 October 2025.

Content focused on authentic, positive conversations about Birmingham and its people, including key voices across business, hospitality, leisure and culture. The content achieved 133,040 views in October alone, and all videos placed in the top 15 posts for the month.



CITY CURATOR

Strategic curation for a cohesive city experience.

Lead: Alex Nicholson-Evans

Working two days per week, this year Alex has focused on delivering ambitious, high-profile public programmes while laying important strategic foundations for Birmingham’s long-term cultural growth.

Across all activity, City Curator projects generated over 350 pieces of positive news coverage, resulting in more than 2.6 billion opportunities to see. This figure does not include PR for wider projects that Alex supported throughout the year, meaning the true positive reach figure associated with City Curator activity is significantly higher.

To deliver City Curator projects, approximately £300,000 was fundraised. This investment into culture in Birmingham only happened as a result of Alex’s work and was unlocked by Birmingham Colmore’s investment into the role of City Curator and by seed funding the programme itself.

Birmingham Light Festival 2026

The 2026 edition of Birmingham Light Festival delivered its most ambitious programme to date, transforming the city centre into a free, open-air gallery of illuminated artworks.

Festival in numbers: 58 partners | 13 artworks | 4 festival days | 86% of visitors felt more connected to the city as a result of the festival | 58% of festivolagoers spent money in local hospitality | The average spend per head increased by £4 vs 2025 | 99% of audiences expressed strong support for its return | 100% of partners want to remain involved in future editions.

Work also continued on developing the Birmingham’s legacy of permanent light artworks. This included commissioning a new piece by Richard O’Gorman in Edgbaston Village, delivered in partnership with Calthorpe Estates. The artwork will join existing installations including All Right Bab, Ideas Happen Here and Roof of Stars. The Birmingham Light Festival Legacy Programme is part-funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Food & Drink Tourism Strategy

A collaboration of private business and public sector organisations enabled the first development stage of a new Food & Drink Tourism Strategy for Birmingham. This project is being delivered with the World Food Travel Association in partnership with The Relationship. The research phase has now concluded and will provide insight to strengthen Birmingham’s profile as one of the UK’s most exciting food destinations.

Birmingham Jewellery Biennial

Work progressed on the development of the Birmingham Jewellery Biennial, set to launch in 2027. This new festival is set to become the UK’s Jewellery Festival and will celebrate the city’s world-renowned jewellery heritage and contemporary innovation. This work aligns with Birmingham’s recent World Craft City designation, which Alex was thrilled to support.

City Curator Library

Initial groundwork began on the City Curator Library, a new concept for a shared creative resource designed to support organisations and communities in activating Birmingham’s public spaces. Further development will continue in 2026.

Citywide Support & Collaboration

Alongside core projects, support was provided across a wide range of initiatives including:

- Delivery of the second Bright Brum event
- Speaking engagements and panel contributions
- Consultation support and sector insight
- Partner matchmaking for cultural projects
- Input into the International Day of Birmingham, including the United States of Birmingham tourism itinerary and promotional film

In total, over 100 partners were brought together through City Curator activity this year, demonstrating the role’s collaborative reach.



BIRMINGHAM COLMORE

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

SPEND TO DATE 2026/2027

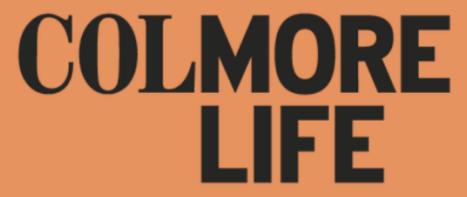
INCOME	
BID/Levy	£1,589,639
Other incomes	£194,390
TOTAL INCOME	£1,784,030
EXPENDITURE	
Colmore Executive	£331,321
Colmore Placemaking	£574,070
Colmore Culture	£156,184
Safer Colmore	£261,410
Colmore Community including Next Gen	£41,834
Accessible & Sustainable Colmore	£40,130
Colmore Marketing	£188,187
Overheads	£368,878
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,962,714
SURPLUS REMAINING	£1,000,000

Additional expenditure has been supported through strategic use of our cash reserves.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Our weekly **Colmore Life** newsletter is packed with the latest district news and events. Sign up by emailing felicity.blades@birminghamcolmore.co.uk.

Download the **Colmore Life** app on all app stores for events, activity and food and drink offers.



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