

THE GREAT BORDER CITY

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT (BID) FOR CARLISLE
MANIFESTO 2026-2031





“it’s a really good opportunity for businesses to come together and take the lead. It will have a massive impact on attracting more people to visit and live in Carlisle, staff retention, tourism and the night-time economy”

Joe Harrison, West Walls Brewing Co.

FOREWORD

Carlisle is growing and changing. There's new investment coming in, a university on the rise, and big opportunities ahead—from the Garden Village to a growing creative and visitor economy. We think it's time for the community of local ratepayers—industry, shops, social enterprises, offices, independents and employers of all kinds—to help shape what happens next.

Across the UK, hundreds of places have formed a Business Improvement District (BID). They're independent of the local council, funded by those who pay business rates, and focused on doing additional things to improve the places they serve. This is Carlisle's moment to do the same.

This manifesto is about bringing the city to life: through better events, bolder marketing, stronger support for local enterprise, and a shared voice that gets things done. It's about making Carlisle not just a good place to do business, but a brilliant place to live, work and visit too; making Carlisle a place that people aspire to live in, making it easier to recruit to and a place that has a reputation for success, innovation and progress.

We hope you'll read it, talk about it—and **vote YES** to making it happen.

Kevin Beaty & Adrian Lochhead
Co-directors of Cumberland BID Company

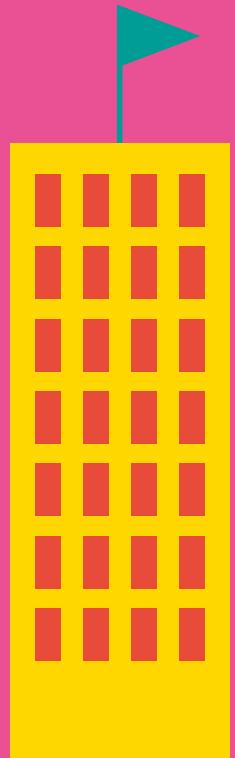


THE GREAT BORDER CITY

INTRODUCTION

Carlisle is at a critical moment in its evolution. With its rich heritage, vibrant business community, and its strategic location on the West Coast Mainline and M6, the city is poised for significant growth. The Business Improvement District for Carlisle (BID) will be the catalyst for transforming the city into a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready destination. The BID will unlock the full potential of Carlisle by bringing businesses, residents, and visitors together, creating a vibrant cultural and economic hub.

The BID will take a proactive approach to listen to businesses, acting as a key point of consultation between the business community and strategic bodies like Cumberland Council and Enterprising Cumbria. We are committed to ensuring the voice of the business community is heard, and the needs and aspirations of businesses are effectively represented in strategic decisions.





VOTE
YES



OVERALL VISION & STRATEGIC AIM





A thriving city is a liveable city. The BID is about securing Carlisle's future – making it a place where people want to live, work, study, invest, and build a life. Through better events, stronger marketing, and focused business support, we'll drive visible change and long-term benefit. Together, we'll shape Carlisle as a more vibrant, attractive and competitive city.

THE 'PITCH'

The Great Border City initiative was established as a broad-based consortium of businesses, community organisations and civic stakeholders under a shared commitment to make Carlisle a premier place to visit, work and live.

By leveraging Carlisle's unique position as a historic border city, the ambition is to celebrate the area's rich cultural history while driving forward-looking economic growth.

Through collaboration, the consortium aims to enhance the city's appeal for new businesses, to attract more visitors from across the region and beyond, and to broaden its appeal to residents.

To achieve these ambitions, the Great Border City project needs to be sustainable by leveraging the funds required to implement the improvements that recent research and consultation have informed us are essential to achieving the

goals. The fairest way to achieve this is to ask businesses to make a small amount available each year as their contribution which, when combined, will provide the annual budgets required for the first 5 years.

A steering group has been formed and has decided to propose to businesses that the Great Border City initiative transitions to a BID (Business Improvement District) and is then managed by local businesses and stakeholders.

If successful, the BID will provide funding for:

- ▲ Annual events and cultural animation of the city
- ▲ Strategic marketing campaigns to promote Carlisle as a great place to live, work and visit
- ▲ Business support services to help start-ups and grow existing businesses

Over 340 UK towns and cities already have BIDs. Carlisle must not fall behind. The Great Border City initiative provides a pivotal opportunity for sustained collaboration and investment to build a better future for Carlisle.





**“it’s about working
together as a whole”**

Vicky Hutchinson, Creative Hutch

OUR VISION

The Carlisle BID will create a city that is energised, entrepreneurial, and people-focused. This vision will be realised by:

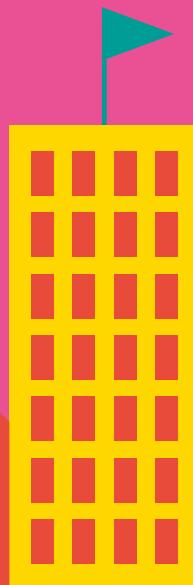
- ◎ **Animating the Streets:** Bringing life to the city with year-round festivals, public art, and creative initiatives that engage locals and attract visitors.
- ◎ **Supporting Business Growth:** Working with other agencies to help provide businesses with the tools, resources, and support they need to thrive in a competitive environment.
- ◎ **Creating a Great Place to Live and Work:** Making Carlisle an even better place to live, work, and recruit talent. A vibrant city will attract workers, stimulate business, and drive long-term economic growth.

Through a collaborative, consultative approach, the BID will ensure businesses are at the heart of decision-making, and their voices will be integral in shaping the city's future development.



BUSINESS PARKS

Help provide business support by working with relevant agencies such as Cumbria Chamber of Commerce.



Making Carlisle a Better Place to Live and Work

- ▲ Boost recruitment through “A Great Border City” – enhancing Carlisle’s appeal helps attract and retain the best talent.
- ▲ Work with other stakeholders such as Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) – collaboration to improve security such as extending the city’s CCTV network.
- ▲ Address site-specific challenges – tackling individual business park issues.
- ▲ Improve streetscape and identity – upgrading public spaces to brighten the area and give business parks a stronger, more distinctive presence.
- ▲ Support staff development and wellbeing – working with partners such as the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce to deliver training and promote workplace wellness.
- ▲ Establish and respond to further needs eg environment, through consultation with businesses in business park area.
- ▲ Create a collective voice when negotiating with Business Park stakeholders.

ANIMATING CARLISLE

**Bringing Life
to the City**

The BID will turn Carlisle into a bustling hub of activity by:

- **Major Regional and International Festivals:** Curating a series of vibrant festivals that celebrate the arts, culture, and heritage of the city. From international street art to live performances, these events will engage locals and attract visitors from near and far.
- **Public Art and Interactive Spaces:** Installing public art projects and creating interactive spaces in key city areas, bringing more energy and creativity to the streets.
- **Celebrating Local Talent:** Support local artists, creatives and digital makers, hospitality and food businesses across the city region by providing platforms to showcase their work, while drawing national and international talent to the city.

**GREAT
IDENTITY**

“it won’t take much to tip Carlisle into something really special... I think a BID for Carlisle can help us all understand each other better, for the good of the city, and transform us”

Anna Smalley, Tullie

GREAT CONNECTIVITY



Prosperity for All

Working alongside Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, the BID will be a strong advocate for businesses and ensure they have the support they need to succeed:

- **Business Consultation and Representation:** The BID will act as a key point of consultation for businesses, gathering feedback and ensuring their needs are represented in conversations with local authorities, strategic partners, and funding bodies. We will work directly with Cumberland Council and Enterprising Cumbria to advocate for policies and initiatives that support business growth.
- **Networking and Development:** Providing businesses with access to networking events, workshops, and mentorship opportunities. We will connect businesses to potential collaborators and help them access funding and growth opportunities.
- **Talent Attraction and Retention:** Working to improve the quality of life in Carlisle to attract and retain skilled workers. This includes aligning with the strategies of Cumberland Council to ensure the city is seen as a top destination for talent.



SUPPORTING BUSINESS

MARKETING CARLISLE

A Regional and International Destination

**GREAT
STORIES**

The BID will raise Carlisle's profile as a must-visit destination, both for tourism and investment:

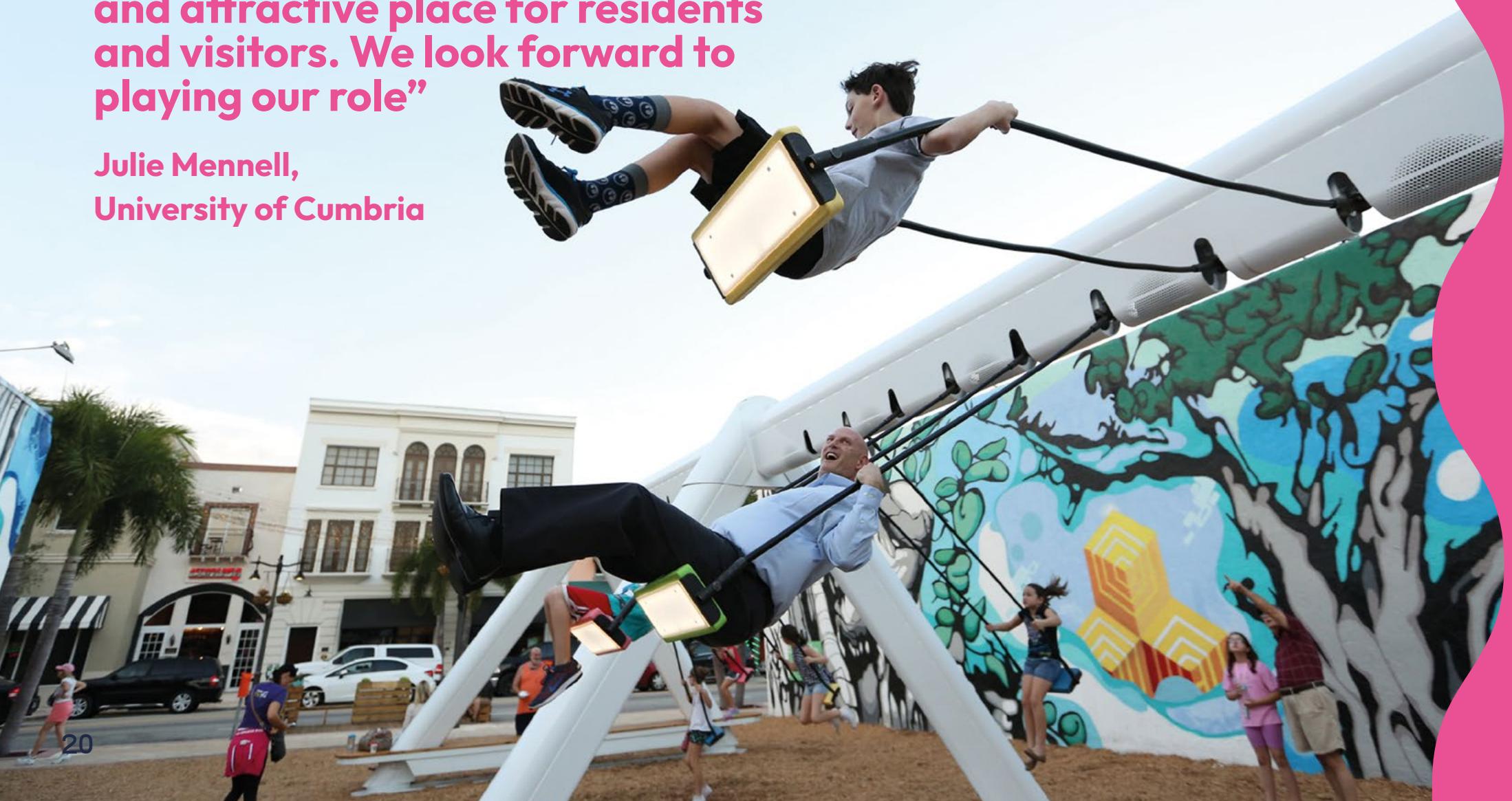
- **Capitalising on Carlisle's Strategic Location:** Emphasising the city's position on the West Coast Mainline and proximity to the M6, positioning it as an easily accessible hub for business, leisure, and tourism.
- **Leveraging Carlisle's Unique Border City Status:** Promoting Carlisle's unique cultural and historical status as a border city, emphasising the city's significance as a cross-border hub of trade, culture, and innovation.
- **Unified Marketing Strategy:** Working alongside relevant agencies such as Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce to develop a strong brand for Carlisle, with coordinated digital campaigns and international marketing efforts that target tourists, investors, and businesses.

Key Principles and Objectives



“We are delighted to support the establishment of a Carlisle BID. We all have much to gain from making our city a more vibrant and attractive place for residents and visitors. We look forward to playing our role”

**Julie Mennell,
University of Cumbria**



A key focus of the BID is improving the city's livability to attract talent and create a sustainable environment for business growth:

- **Urban Regeneration:** Supporting major regeneration projects, including the Garden Village development, which will bring new residential areas and increase the city's population, further stimulating the local economy.
- **Improved Infrastructure for Quality of Life:** Collaborating with Cumberland Council on projects that enhance public infrastructure, such as pedestrian-friendly streets, improved public spaces, and recreational areas.
- **Fostering Inclusive Growth:** Ensuring that growth benefits all parts of the community. This includes working with local education providers, such as the University of Cumbria, Carlisle College and other training providers, to ensure the workforce is future-ready, and businesses can access the skilled workers they need.

CARLISLE AS A GREATER PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

BUSINESS CONSULTATION AND STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

A fundamental role of the BID will be to act as a key liaison between businesses and strategic bodies like Cumberland Council and Enterprising Cumbria. The BID will regularly consult with the business community to ensure that:

- Business needs are clearly understood and represented in discussions with policymakers and stakeholders.
- The perspectives and challenges of businesses from all sectors—retail, hospitality, industrial, and more—are heard and addressed.
- The BID remains responsive to the needs of the business community, acting swiftly to address concerns, advocate for change, and bring forward initiatives that benefit all.

ALIGNING WITH REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES

This BID proposal aligns with and complements the most current strategies for growth and development in the region:

- **Enterprising Cumbria's Economic Strategy:** The BID will support the economic priorities of Enterprising Cumbria, focusing on innovation, digital transformation, and business growth. We will champion key industries like nuclear, digital, and creative sectors, while driving the local economy forward through cultural and tourism initiatives.
- **Cumberland Council's Economic and Inclusive Growth Strategy:** The BID will collaborate with Cumberland Council to support inclusive growth and sustainable development. This includes aligning with council initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life, attracting talent, and fostering a diverse and resilient local economy.

WHAT THE
BID WILL &
WON'T DO

THE BID WILL:

- Enhance and add value by delivering projects that improve business conditions and attract more visitors.
- Be ambitious and forward-thinking, positioning Carlisle as a leading regional capital, recognized for its innovative businesses and vibrant cultural scene. Act as a key point of consultation for businesses, ensuring that their needs are represented in discussions with regional bodies.
- Work with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumberland Council to support business growth through networking, mentorship, and access to resources.
- Champion inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of the BID reach all sectors and communities within Carlisle.
- Advocate for policies and initiatives that create a better place to live, work, and do business, including contributing to regional and local strategic initiatives.
- Make Carlisle a better place to live: Improving public spaces and supporting local events will enhance the city's appeal to workers, contributing to the attraction and retention of talent for businesses in all sectors.

THE BID WON'T:

- Replace or pay for statutory services that are already covered by local government responsibilities, such as waste collection, street cleaning, or policing.
- Operate in isolation, but will work in collaboration with stakeholders to complement existing initiatives.
- Be a short-term fix, but instead focus on long-term, sustainable improvements that drive business growth.
- Favour one sector over another, ensuring fairness and inclusivity for all businesses within the BID area.



FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

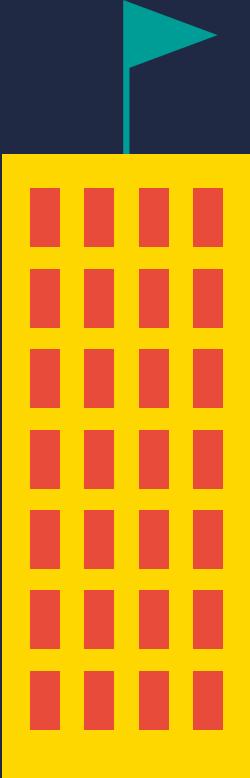
The BID will be funded by a levy on eligible businesses, calculated transparently and reinvested into strategic initiatives. The governance structure will include a board representing the diverse business sectors of Carlisle, ensuring accountability and continuous engagement with the business community. Regular performance reviews and feedback mechanisms will ensure the BID stays focused on delivering impactful outcomes.

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ACTION



The Carlisle BID is a bold step toward a dynamic and prosperous future. By creating a vibrant, business-friendly environment and listening to the needs of the business community, the BID will ensure that Carlisle becomes a competitive, attractive place to live, work, and do business. We invite all business owners and stakeholders to join us in making Carlisle a city of opportunity, ambition, and growth.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



- 1. What is a BID?**
A BID (Business Improvement District) is an area in which businesses cooperate and co-invest to plan and fund improvements.
- 2. How is a BID created?**
Businesses are asked to vote on the proposal. If a majority — by both number and rateable value — vote yes, the BID begins.
- 3. How is the proposal developed?**
Through research and consultation, leading to a detailed business plan which outlines how priorities can be delivered.
- 4. How is the BID funded?**
Only businesses within the BID area and subject to the BID rules pay. The plan will detail the charges. If the ballot passes, all eligible businesses are charged annually regardless of how they voted.
- 5. Who collects the annual charges?**
The local authority, which then passes the receipts across to the BID Company.
- 6. How long does a BID last?**
For a maximum of five years, after which businesses will have the opportunity to vote again.
- 7. Who runs the BID?**
A private, not-for-profit company made up primarily of local businesses and stakeholders.
- 8. How does the BID differ from business rates?**
The BID does not replace services funded by business rates. It funds additional services based on what local businesses prioritise. The funds are ring-fenced and managed by the BID Board.
- 9. What if a property is vacant or untenant?**
The ratepayer at the time remains liable for the charge until the property is re-let.



APPENDIX A). CARLISLE ECONOMIC SUMMARY (2023)

Overview

Carlisle is the largest city in the Cumberland unitary authority, located in north-west England near the Scottish border. It serves as a regional economic hub, with strong links to logistics, manufacturing, health, education, and tourism. The area benefits from proximity to the Lake District and excellent transport connectivity via the M6 and West Coast Main Line.

Population

Carlisle City:

~73,000 residents

Cumberland Unitary Authority:

~270,000

Population within 100 miles / 2 hours:

Over 10 million

(includes Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Lancaster, and more)



Key Economic Indicators

▲ Total Businesses in Carlisle:

~5,180

Micro (0-9 employees):	89.6%
Small (10-49 employees):	8.3%
Medium (50-249 employees):	1.7%
Large (250+ employees):	0.5%

▲ Average Annual Salary:

£30,560

~8.5% below the UK national average (£33,384)

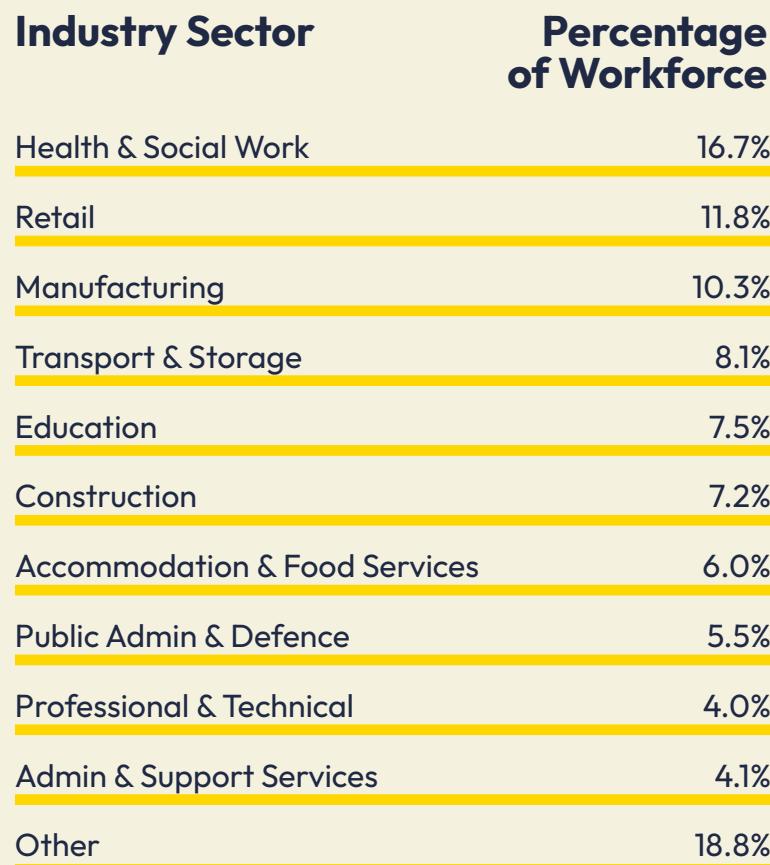
▲ Estimated Local GDP (Cumberland):

£6–7 billion annually

Health and nuclear sectors are among the largest contributors

Strong performance in logistics, retail, and manufacturing

Employment by Industry in Carlisle (2023)



Occupational Breakdown

Occupation Group	Carlisle (%)	UK (%)
Managers, Directors & Senior Officials	9.9%	11.1%
Professional Occupations	22.3%	26.9%
Associate Professional Occupations	11.0%	15.3%
Administrative & Secretarial Occupations	13.2%	9.3%
Skilled Trades Occupations	11.5%	8.6%

Tourism Overview

- Major attractions include **Carlisle Castle, Hadrian's Wall, and Tullie House Museum**
- Acts as a key gateway to the **Lake District**, which attracts over **18 million visitors annually**
- Carlisle benefits from both domestic tourism and international visitors en route to Scotland or the Lake District
- Tourism supports a significant number of small businesses and seasonal jobs

Exploiting Arts and Culture,

£390 million in a year and now contributes

£10.8 billion a year to the UK economy.

The sector contributes £2.8billion a year to the Treasury via taxation, and generates a further £23billion a year and 363,700 jobs.

Productivity in the arts and culture industry between 2009 and 2016 was greater than that of the economy as a whole, with gross value added per worker at £62,000 for arts and culture, compared to £46,800 for the wider UK economy.



Income

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Levy	£896,265	£923,152	£950,847	£979,372	£958,316	£4,707,953
Total Income	£896,265	£923,152	£950,847	£979,372	£958,316	£4,707,953
Expenditure						
City Animation	£350,000	£360,500	£371,315	£382,454	£374,232	£1,838,501
City Marketing	£175,000	£180,250	£185,658	£191,227	£187,116	£919,251
City Support	£200,000	£206,000	£212,180	£218,545	£213,847	£1,050,572
Operating Costs	£160,000	£164,800	£169,744	£174,836	£180,081	£849,462
Total Expenditure	£885,000	£911,550	£938,897	£967,063	£955,276	£4,657,785
Surplus	£11,265	£11,602	£11,951	£12,309	£3,040	£50,168
Reserves	£11,265	£11,602	£11,951	£12,309	£3,040	£50,168

1. A cautious approach has been adopted to budgeting for the BID term.
2. A levy collection rate of 92.5% has been assumed.
3. On this basis, the average annual levy available to be spent by the BID for the term is £941,591.

BALLOT ARRANGEMENTS AND BID RULES



The Ballot

1. Cumberland Council will send those responsible for properties or hereditaments to be subject to the BID a ballot paper prior to 31st October 2025.
2. Each property or hereditament subject to the BID will be entitled to one vote in respect of the BID Proposal in a 28-day postal ballot which will commence on 31st October 2025, and close at 5pm on 27th November 2025. Ballot papers received after 5pm on that date will not be counted. The result of the ballot is due to be announced on the following day.
3. In order for the proposal to be successful at ballot the result will need to meet, as a minimum, two independent criteria which are: (a) of those ballots returned by the close, those voting in favour of the proposal must exceed those voting against it, and (b) of those ballot papers returned by the close, the total rateable value (RV) of those properties or hereditaments which vote in favour, must exceed the total of those voting against.
4. If successful at ballot, the BID will commence delivery of services on 1st February 2026 and will continue for a period of 5 years to 31st January 2031.

The Levy

1. The levy rate to be paid by each property or hereditament is to be calculated as 1.58% of its rateable value (RV) as at each 'chargeable day' (1st January each year). The charge will apply to all hereditaments, including any that may be added to the ratings list after each chargeable day with an effective date of the chargeable day or prior.
2. Organisations receiving charitable relief on business rates will be charged at the lower rate of 1.0% of RV.
3. State-funded and Academy Schools will be exempt. Privately funded schools receiving charitable relief on business rates as of 31st March 2025 will be charged at the lower rate of 1.0% of RV. NHS hereditaments will be subject to the same lower rate.
4. The Eden Valley Hospice will be exempt from the levy.
5. The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be February to January each year, starting in 2026. No refunds will be made.
6. In all instances, any national ratings revaluation during the BID term will be disregarded and the RV assigned to each hereditament will be the value assigned as of 30th November 2025.
7. If a revised or new RV is applied because of any change of use or a physical change to a property or hereditament including, inter alia, new construction, merger, subdivision, extension, and refurbishment. For such premises, the revised RV would be applied as at the next 'chargeable day'.
8. Only properties or hereditaments with a RV of £15,000 or more will be eligible for payment of the levy.
9. If, during the term, RV assigned to a property or hereditament falls below £15,000 for whatever reason (either through physical change, change of use, or revaluation arising from the adoption of the 2026 Rating List or any subsequent national revaluation), the property or hereditament will be exempt from the levy from the next chargeable period.
10. If, during the term, either; (a) a new property or hereditament enters the list or (b) a property or hereditament with a RV which had previously been below the £15,000 threshold is assigned a RV which is £15,000 or more due to a change of use or a physical change including, inter alia, new construction, merger, subdivision, extension, or refurbishment, the property or hereditament will become liable from the first chargeable day after the effective date of change.
11. The maximum sum payable by any one hereditament will not exceed £15,000 in any year. Likewise, any ratepayer (including those ratepayers able to provide evidence of common ownership) with more than one hereditament, will have their total levy capped at £15,000 annually. The number of properties or hereditaments liable for the levy is approximately 977.
12. From Year 2 onwards, the prior year's levy rate for each hereditament will be increased by the fixed rate of inflation of 3% per annum (rounded).
13. The ratepayer for any untenantied properties or hereditaments will be liable for payment of the levy.

Accountability and Transparency

1. The BID Body will be The Cumberland BID Company (Company Number 15213901) a not-for-profit organisation, limited by guarantee.
2. The Directors of the BID (the 'Board') shall be primarily representative of levy-paying businesses with representation from across the BID area and business types. The Board will have responsibility for governance matters such as financial arrangements, contractual obligations, human resources, standards, performance, and compliance.
3. From time to time, the Board shall appoint one of the Directors as Chair.
4. The Board may form such sub-groups that from time to time become necessary.
5. Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives, the Board shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of levy payers. However, any change to the BID boundary or to the levy rate proposals may require an Alteration Ballot.
6. The Company shall meet with the Council, as the Billing Authority, every 3-months to monitor service delivery, levy collection and financial management issues.
7. Any business that is not liable for a levy may contribute to the BID by way of a voluntary contribution.
8. The BID will file annual accounts compiled by independent accountants with Companies House. In addition to regular communications, an annual report and annual meeting will outline activities and finances.
9. An Operating Agreement will be agreed including a statement of the Council's baseline service commitments.
10. Notification of the intention to hold a ballot was sent to the Secretary of State on 12th February 2025.

Finances

1. A cautious approach has been adopted to budgeting for the BID term.
2. A levy collection rate of 92.5% has been assumed.
3. On this basis, the average annual levy available to be spent by the BID for the term is £941,591.

Vote YES for Carlisle BID – Return your ballot between Wednesday 31st October 2025 and Thursday 27th November 2025

By voting **YES** in the Carlisle BID ballot, you're joining a collective effort to strengthen and grow our city centre. Together with fellow city centre businesses, you'll help unlock at least **£4.6 million** over the next five years—funding that will be invested directly into projects designed to help **Carlisle thrive**.

This investment will come from an annual levy paid by businesses within the Carlisle BID area with a rateable value over £15,000 ([see map on page 28](#)). Every penny raised will be reinvested into **ambitious local initiatives** aimed at making Carlisle a more successful place to do business.



Cast your Vote

On **31st October 2025**, **Cumberland Council** will send a ballot paper by post to the designated voter for each eligible business premises (hereditament). Each qualifying property with a rateable value of **£15,000 or more within the Carlisle BID boundary is entitled to one vote**.

This is a **28-day postal ballot**, closing at **5pm on Thursday 27th November 2025**. Simply mark your vote and return your ballot in the post to make sure your voice is counted. **Ballots received after 5pm on 27th November will not be included** in the count.

For the BID to be approved, the result must meet two conditions:

1. A majority of those who vote must vote **YES**.
2. The total rateable value of those voting **YES** must be greater than that of those voting **NO**.

Ballot results will be counted by **Cumberland Council** and announced on **Friday 28th November 2025**.

Our vision is to advance Carlisle city centre through **collaborative partnerships, dynamic leadership, and strategic investment**. With a successful **YES vote**, Carlisle BID will launch a five-year programme starting **1st February 2026**, delivering initiatives that support local businesses and amplify the city's strengths.

A majority YES vote is essential to securing this united, business-led opportunity to deliver real, lasting economic benefits for Carlisle.

Please note: If the BID is approved, the **BID levy becomes mandatory** for all eligible ratepayers—regardless of how or whether they voted.



OUR STEERING GROUP



KEVIN BEATY

Co-Director Cumberland BID Company

Kevin has worked in the rural sector for most of his life, as a farmer and more recently in Natural Capital markets across the north of England delivering nature recovery projects to offset carbon for the business community and creating biodiversity net gain units to aid development. I was leader of neighbouring Eden District Council where a Business Improvement District has brought much needed business led investment to help make Penrith a better place to live and work for the past decade or so.

I have lived in and around Carlisle all my life and its prosperity and future as a place to enjoy my leisure time and also as a viable administrative and commerce centre are hugely important to me.



ADRIAN LOCHHEAD

Director Eden Arts and Co-Director
Cumberland BID Company

Adrian's work is in the culture sector, creating projects that draw people together with the outcomes of improving places and enriching people's lives. He is also very committed to working with the business sector as the economy is a huge part of making places successful. He is passionate about the relevance of art and culture in enriching all of our lives. He has worked with/alongside the Penrith BID since its inception, so he is very experienced in how BIDs work and benefit their places.



GRANT CONNON

Director at Daniel Johnstone (1982) LTD

Director at Daniel Johnstone (1982) Ltd with 10+ years in commercial and residential property. Committed to contributing to making Carlisle's high street thrive through local investment and development.



MAX CONNON

Director at Daniel Johnstone (1982) LTD

Carlisle is home - I was born and raised here, and improving its high street has been a personal and professional passion. My master's in real estate and construction focused on just that, and I'm committed to seeing our city thrive through smart, sustainable development.



ANDY GIBSON

Commercial Relationship Manager/
New Business Development Manager

I have over 30 years experience in the banking sector and I am Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland. For the past 20 years I have worked in Cumbria in SME/Commercial banking for several of the High Street Banks before joining the Cumberland Building Society in June 2023 as Commercial Relationship Manager/New Business Development Manager.

I am passionate about supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs and making a positive contribution to the local economy and local communities.



JOE HARRISON

Co-Founder of West Walls Brewing Co.

Joe is the co-founder of West Walls Brewing Co., a brewery and taproom based in Carlisle city centre. Since launching in 2024, West Walls has quickly built a strong local following through quality beer, a vibrant venue, and a focus on community events. Joe leads on strategy, operations, and marketing, and brings a hands-on perspective from running an independent business in Carlisle's core. He's passionate about growing footfall in the city and making it a more attractive place to live, visit, and do business



SIMON HARRISON

Director of Burge Halston LTD
and co-founder of The Halston

From a Cumbrian farming background, I am a developer based in Carlisle with almost 40 years experience in construction of residential, commercial and leisure based property. Co-founder and developer of the Halston and Halston homes.



ANDREW MACKAY

Director Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery (trading as Tullie)

Andrew became Director of Tullie in 2016. He joined in 2010 as Head of Collections and Programming and led several gallery developments. He leads the Cumbria Museum Consortium, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and is leading Project Tullie, the museums major capital investment programme.

Previously Andrew was Head of Cultural Services for Craven District Council, where he created a new department combining museums, arts development and heritage and managed three volunteer-run museums. He was at Northampton Museum 1988 to 1994 and General Manager of the Norfolk Rural Life Museum after this. In Norfolk he managed a £4m capital redevelopment, which led a 40% visitor increase. Andrew has post-graduate diplomas in Museum Studies and Management & Leadership and Prince 2 project management certification. He is a Fellow of the Museums Association, is a member of the National Museum Directors Council and is a Trustee of Sunderland Culture.



STEPHEN McCULLOUGH

Head of Business Development & Marketing at Armstrong Watson LLP

Stephen was born and raised in Blackpool, Lancashire and has worked within the Newspaper publishing industry for over 20 years, working for some leading news groups including Johnston Press and Newsquest in a number of senior positions. In 2006 he relocated with his family to Cumbria where he joined CN Media Group as Business Development & Advertising Director.

Stephen joined Armstrong Watson in January 2018 where he heads up the Business Development and Marketing teams for the firm responsible for firm wide Marketing and Business Development based in their Head Office, James Watson House, Rosehill, Carlisle



PROFESSOR JULIE MENNELL

Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Cumbria

Professor Mennell has held the position of Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Cumbria since 2016. Prior to this, Professor Mennell held the positions of Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development) and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for the University of Sunderland, leading on portfolio and partnership development, academic and research provision, student experience and outcomes.

Externally Professor Mennell is a Deputy Lieutenant of Cumbria and is involved in a range of regional and sector groups with a particular focus on people and place. These include: Sponsor of Barrow Education, Employment and Skills, Barrow Delivery Board; Vice Chair of Cumbria Economic Growth Board; Chair of the Carlisle Youth Zone; Patron of Brathay Trust; member representative for the Energy Coast University Technical College; and a member of the Brilliant Barrow Board. Nationally she is Vice Chair Cathedrals' Group of Universities and member of the MillionPlus university group.



LESLEY ROBINSON

Head of Business Support Cumbria
Chamber of Commerce

Lesley has worked for Cumbria Chamber of Commerce for 17 years and is responsible for the business support arm of the Chamber, Cumbria Business Growth Hub.

Lesley's role is very varied with direct line manager responsibility for the project team, team of 36 business advisers and 7 mentors, trainer pool and project delivery partners.

As part of her role Lesley oversees all projects including grant funding and business support delivery to both entrepreneurs and existing businesses, designs and implements new activity, manages commercial training alongside sourcing and bidding for new funding opportunities.

One of three members of the Chamber's Senior Management Team, Lesley is also a qualified APM project manager.

Over 17 years Lesley has developed key contacts within the local area and is committed to ensuring entrepreneurs and businesses prosper, develop and grow. Lesley has also worked on and delivered a number of crisis support programmes including Foot & Mouth, Covid and the Carlisle floods.



TRACEY SLAVEN

Chief Transformation Officer at the
University of Cumbria

Tracey Slaven is the Chief Transformation Officer at the University of Cumbria. Her role is focused on enabling the University community to make the transformational changes needed to achieve our strategic ambitions, for the University, the region, and our students.

As CTO, Tracey draws on her initial training as an economist and over 20 years of experience in addressing governance and operational challenges and leading change across higher education, charity, public and private organisations. This work has included major governance transformations, post-merger integration and the statutory and operational creation of a new public body.

As well as holding senior level roles at the University of Edinburgh, and most recently as University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer at the University of Aberdeen, Tracey has experience within government, having led the Higher Education policy team in Scotland. She has been an accountable officer as the Chief Executive of the Student Awards Agency for Scotland and as a HESA Board Member, supported the transition of the charity into JISC.



VOTE
YES



VISIONS + FUTURES

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