



Carlisle BID - Business Support Tender

The new Great Border City Business Improvement District (BID), which covers the greater Carlisle area, is seeking to appoint an experienced organisation to design, manage and deliver a comprehensive business support programme that enhances business performance, promotes collaboration, supports workforce development, and strengthens the overall business community within the BID area.

The appointed organisation will act as a trusted delivery partner, working closely with the BID Board, levy payers and local stakeholders to ensure businesses have access to relevant support, resources, networks and opportunities that contribute to sustainable growth.

About The Great Border City

The Great Border City is a new (BID), operated through The Cumberland BID Company Limited. BIDs are privately managed organisations funded by a levy on businesses within the BID area. More information can be found [HERE](#)

Following a successful ballot in the autumn of 2025, The Great Border City BID has a secure 5-year term (started February 2026). Its manifesto can be downloaded or viewed [HERE](#)

The BID includes 900 levy paying businesses spread across greater Carlisle and has projected income of circa £925,000 a year.

Our Corporate Aim

In its manifesto, The Great Border City BID aimed to support a vibrant, welcoming and economically strong city centre by bringing businesses together to invest collectively in Carlisle's future. It aimed to do so by:

Animating the Streets: Bringing life to the city with year-round festivals, public art, and creative initiatives that engage locals and attract visitor.

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.

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.

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A key outcome of all BID actions needs to be renewed interest in Carlisle as a place to be and a place to visit.

Objectives

The BID is seeking to appoint an experienced organisation to help deliver the business support programmes in the business plan, including:

- Acting as a strong advocate for businesses and ensuring they have the support they need to succeed.
- Consulting with businesses to gather feedback and understand their needs.
- Advocating for policies and initiatives that support business growth.
- Providing networking events, workshops and mentorship opportunities.
- Connecting businesses with potential collaborators to help them access funding and growth opportunities.
- Supporting staff and development and wellbeing within business parks, through training and workplace wellness.

The appointed organisation must demonstrate the ability to operate both strategically and tactically, delivering consistent, high-quality outputs while responding to emerging opportunities.

Scope of Services

1. Business Engagement and Representation

The appointed organisation will:

- Undertake structured consultation and feedback exercises to gather business intelligence and inform BID activity.
- Identify common issues affecting businesses and communicate these to relevant stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Maintain accurate records of engagement activities and business feedback.

2. Business Advocacy and Policy Influence

The appointed organisation will:

- Represent the interests of BID businesses to local authorities, public sector agencies, business organisations and other relevant stakeholders.
- Identify policy developments, funding programmes and initiatives that may impact BID businesses.

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- Support the BID in developing evidence-based positions on matters affecting the business community.
- Facilitate dialogue between businesses and key stakeholders to help address barriers to growth and investment.

3. Business Growth and Development Support

The appointed organisation will:

- Develop and deliver a programme of business support activities tailored to the needs of businesses within the BID area.
- Provide access to specialist advice, guidance and signposting on topics including business growth, funding, innovation, sustainability, recruitment and skills.
- Support businesses in identifying and accessing grant funding, investment opportunities and business support programmes.
- Facilitate introductions and connections that encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and commercial opportunities.

4. Networking, Events and Peer Learning

The appointed organisation will:

- Design and deliver a programme of networking events, workshops, seminars and peer-learning opportunities.
- Create opportunities for businesses to build relationships, share best practice and collaborate on common challenges.
- Secure expert speakers and facilitators where appropriate.
- Ensure events are accessible, relevant and reflective of the diverse needs of the BID business community.

5. Skills, Workforce Development and Wellbeing

The appointed organisation will:

- Develop and coordinate training and professional development opportunities for businesses and their employees.
- Support workforce development initiatives that address identified skills gaps.
- Deliver or facilitate workplace wellbeing programmes that promote employee health, wellbeing and retention.
- Work with relevant partners to maximise access to training resources, qualifications and support programmes.



Reporting and Performance Management

The appointed organisation will be expected to:

- Develop an annual delivery plan aligned with BID priorities.
- Agree key performance indicators with the BID Board.
- Provide regular performance reports detailing activity, outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Attend BID Board and relevant working group meetings as required.
- Monitor participation levels, business satisfaction and programme effectiveness.
- Make recommendations for continuous improvement based on feedback and performance data.

Tender Requirements

Anyone wishing to be considered should, at this stage, put forward a proposal including:

- Track record of their organisation, with similar case studies.
- Proposed delivery team, including for any collaborating organisations.
- A detailed explanation of the approach, including how it will support businesses and the BID objectives and how it will generate measurable outcomes
- Proposed evaluation processes.

The anticipated budget is between £50,000 and £100,000 for the first year of operation. The proposal should identify the proposed costs of the programme and options to extend the core deliverables. The final award decision will be primarily based upon the quality, reach, ambition and practicality of the proposal (60%), its appropriateness and relevance to Carlisle (20%), and the value for money offered (20%).

Proposals must be sent in writing and emailed by no later than **Friday 17th July 2026** to chris@locusms.com. Please also feel free to email Chris ahead should you have any questions or concerns.



Appendix - Procurement Policy

The Board of The Cumberland BID Company is the BID (Business Improvement District) Body for Carlisle. It receives most of its income from an additional business rates' levy placed on businesses. The levy is collected by the local billing authority and passed to the BID on receipt. Income is forecast to be in the region of £900,000 per annum.

Given that the Company is using levy receipts paid by businesses to fund improvements to the area, it is imperative that the procurement of goods and services is undertaken with transparency, efficiency, value-for-money and that the organisation acts in an accountable manner.

This document sets out the procurement rules that will apply. All Company directors and officers are covered by the Policy. Additional restrictions will apply to directors under the Companies Act.

Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that procurement is undertaken in a manner that:

- Is performed ethically and fairly – always in an open and transparent manner.
- Delivers value for money – which may not necessarily be the lowest price.
- Minimises risk, including through compliance with all relevant legislation.
- Places emphasis on sustainable procurement with a focus on social responsibility and value, seeking to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing
- Pursue economic wellbeing whilst ensuring value-for-money, with local suppliers used where possible.

Ethics and conflicts

Anyone engaged in any aspect of procurement must never use their authority for personal gain and shall seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the organisation by:

- Maintaining unimpeachable standards of integrity
- Exhibiting professional competency
- Rejecting any practice that may be deemed to be improper
- At all times complying with the law and contractual obligations
- Declaring personal interests which impinge (or may be deemed by others to impinge) on any procurement matter.
- Reporting suspected incidents of anti-competitive behaviour.
- Reporting all offers and actual gifts
- Not sharing pricing or other commercially sensitive information with anyone outside the organisation.
- Not splitting single contracts into separate elements to evade thresholds of approval authority.

Modern slavery

The organisation has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery. This Policy places emphasis on the role that procurement can have within the Company's wider approaches.

Thresholds

The organisation is registered for Value Added Tax (VAT). The figures in this section are, therefore, exclusive of VAT.

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Contract value	Requirements	Approach and evidence
Less than £5,000	A minimum of one quote	Email to supplier setting out requirements, evidence of request and quotation, copy of contract or purchase order details. CEO to have delegated responsibility.
Between £5,000 and £30,000	A minimum of three quotes	Email to supplier setting out requirements, evidence of request and quotation, copy of contract or purchase order details. CEO and at least one director to be given delegated responsibility.
More than £30,000	Production of a 'request for tender.' Advertise on the BID's website and via its communication channels. Consideration given to using compliant tender portal frameworks if the value exceeds £50,000.	Request for tender documentation to be approved by at least two directors. Tender responses to be referred to a sub-group of directors (no less than three) who will score each tender and determine the most appropriate award processes. Award always to be made via a formal contract with the supplier (£1,000 + vat in addition to the contract value to be allowed for legal advice, if required)

Note: reflecting the desire to foster positive relationships with suppliers, the company will make clear the timetable associated with any tender request and, where practical, a 10-working day turnaround period for the consideration of and response to tenders will guide the decision-making process.