

PROSPERITY & RESILIENCE STRATEGY

THE BAY





Foreword

Partnership working across the three areas of Barrow, Lancaster and South Lakeland is building momentum. We comprise an exciting and successful partnership that has acted on many policy issues in recent years. This important new strategy document shows, for the first time, how we plan to collaborate on economic prosperity and economic resilience across our Bay area economy.

Data shows the Bay area is an integrated economic area, and has been for many years with strong historical, community and supply chain linkages binding us together. Each area provides a different but complementary contribution to our economic offer. Together we provide a base for world class sectors with exceptionally high levels of innovation, and a unique lifestyle offering with one of the UKs most rapidly developing cultural offers.

We are certain we can achieve more by working together on economic prosperity than by acting individually. We bring the same working style to economic issues as we do all our partnership activities – our residents are at the heart of all we do and we embrace fully our public and private anchor institutions. No-one will be left behind nor excluded.

In line with many other places we have a firm commitment to build our economic base sustainably and equitably. Our partnership is committed to:

- **Tackling the climate emergency and building a greener economy.** We have all the economic assets and appetite required to play a leading role in the UKs response to the biggest change facing society in the modern era.
- **Building wealth across our communities.** This is central to our ambitions, to keep more of the wealth we generate in the hands of our residents and reduce inequality.
- **Encouraging active and healthier citizens.** The health and well-being of our residents is vital. COVID has taught us that positive physical and mental well-being is an essential ingredient in building resilient places and resilient economies.

Our partnership wants to build momentum. We have scope to quicken the pace of our collaborative work and deliver the economic benefits of joint work promptly. We have set out what initial investment we require from government to help us make this happen, and will move quickly to secure this first phase of financial backing.



Newcastle Upon Tyne

Carlisle

Durham

Purpose of the Strategy

The three adjacent authorities of Barrow, South Lakeland and Lancaster comprise a dynamic, functional economic area with world class assets. Tackling our core economic issues collaboratively is both efficient and impactful.

This strategy outlines our exciting proposals for collaborative work on economic issues, centred on eight themes. The initiatives we will work on jointly will drive up prosperity and build resilience in these challenging times.

It is essential that we secure immediate interest and investment from UK Central Government in our growth agenda. We have set out a series of immediate requests that we hope will initiate meaningful and progressive dialogue. Our collaboration on economic issues is the latest development in our joint work. The three authorities are already collaborating successfully on issues such as climate change, community engagement and health inequalities.

NORTHERN POWERHOUSE



Preston

Leeds

Manchester

Liverpool

Sheffield



CLLR ANN THOMSON
Leader of the Council
Barrow Borough Council



CLLR DR ERICA LEWIS
Leader of the Council
Lancaster City Council



CLLR GILES ARCHIBALD
Leader of the Council
South Lakeland District Council



SAM PLUM
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Contents

1 Why We Have Formed this Economic Partnership	1
2 A Special Economic Area	5
3 Our Strategy for Prosperity and Resilience	15
4 Our Immediate Requests	23


Kendal College
a brighter future

Welcome
to Kendal College



01 Why We Have Formed this
Economic Partnership



1 | Why We Have Formed this Economic Partnership

We Are a Functional Economic Geography

Our population stands at 320,000 and we are home to 13,000 businesses. There are daily interactions between communities and commerce across our three component areas. Virtually all of our employed residents work within the Bay area, and the area represents a defined housing market area. These are both key measures of an integrated economic area.

Business and community leaders already recognise the economic linkages within the Bay area. Our commuting patterns, our supply chains, our travel to learn patterns, family ties and our retail catchments all defy administrative boundaries and operate on a Bay area level.

Our three authorities signed a statement of intent in 2017 to work collaboratively on economic and prosperity issues. This has recently translated into a fully constituted Joint Committee that brings public accountability and democratic scrutiny to our shared work. The establishment of the Committee has been approved by all three authorities and we held our first meeting on July 22 2020. The committee was established using powers under the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000 and under the Local Authorities Regulations 2012.



The local authorities are really just catching up with reality. We have been treating the Bay area as a single economic area for years

Business Leader at Stakeholder Event, Autumn 2019



Realising our Potential

A growing and prosperous Bay area economy can make a huge impact on the performance of the Northern Powerhouse. We want to play our full role and be recognised for the role we play. This means developing a greater understanding of our world class sectors, the role our infrastructure plays across the north of the UK and our drive to attract and retain talented individuals

The authorities of Barrow and South Lakeland have a successful working relationship with Cumbria County Council and the Cumbria LEP. Likewise, Lancaster City Council works successfully with Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire LEP.

We are proud to be part of these county structures and will continue to work with our county colleagues on numerous economic issues.

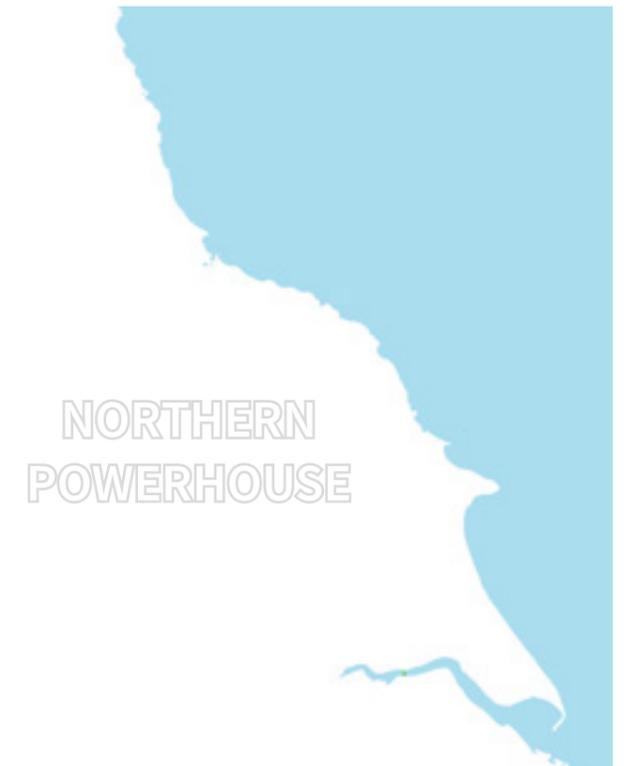
Both our counties are large entities and we sit at the geographical extremes of both - at the southern edge of Cumbria (the 3rd largest county by size in England) and at the northern tip of Lancashire (the 7th most populated county in England).

As communities who are closer to each other than we are to many other communities in either Lancashire or Cumbria, it is unsurprising that we combined to form our own community.

We feel that by focusing more policy making on our real-life economic area we will achieve greater returns and contribute more effectively to the levelling-up agenda of UK government.

The three authorities working in tandem will shine a brighter light on our economic role and deliver added recognition and investment. We don't want to replace or replicate the work of our County colleagues, but rather to amplify it.

Together we will succeed in using our joint partnership to better promote the Bay area as a critical part of the northern economy and to secure substantial public and private sector investment.



Building on our Wider Partnership Work

In recent years we have been working collaboratively, and partnership working across the three authorities is building momentum quickly. We are already collaborating extensively on issues such as climate change, community engagement and health inequalities.

Our approach aligns with configuration of other existing Bay-area partnerships. We have an established environmental and heritage partnership – the Morecambe Bay Partnership – who help conserve our world class natural assets, our NHS Trust spans the Bay area and we have a bespoke Bay area tourism branding initiative.

More recently our joint cultural assets have been recognised by UK government and Arts Council England, with the Bay area selected - alongside major cities – as a new Cultural Compact to achieve greater growth and recognition of our shared cultural assets.

**MORECAMBE BAY
PARTNERSHIP**



NHS
Morecambe Bay
Clinical Commissioning Group

Our Working Style

We operate a flexible and agile economic partnership, utilising the resources and structures of our three component authorities.

Our goal is to act as the key strategic forum for economic development issues in the Bay area. We will actively engage with a range of businesses and our local communities in relation to economic development decision making. We will use our resources to co-ordinate the development of wider place-making policy within the Bay area to bring economic and social benefits to our people.

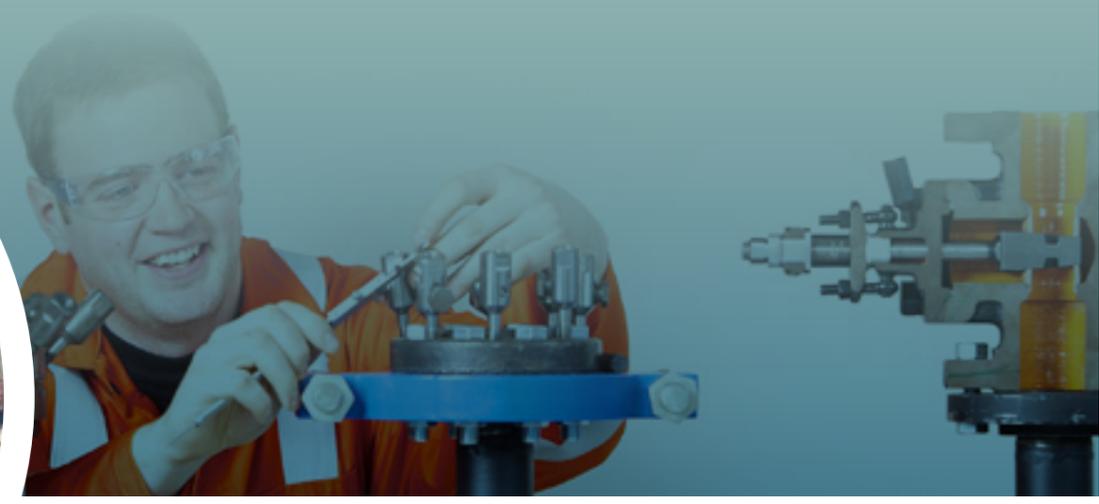
We believe it is more impactful and more efficient to collaborate on issues of mutual interest, as opposed to each working in isolation. Isolated working can lead to duplication and unnecessary internal competition. Our collaboration is designed to lead to a powerful voice and to build our work around a genuine functional economic area.

Robust and meaningful community engagement is central to all the work we do. We need to ensure local people benefit from economic growth across the Bay and have a role in the future of our area. Speaking with our communities regularly to understand their priorities and how we can best achieve inclusive growth together will be paramount to achieving this.



02 A Special Economic Area





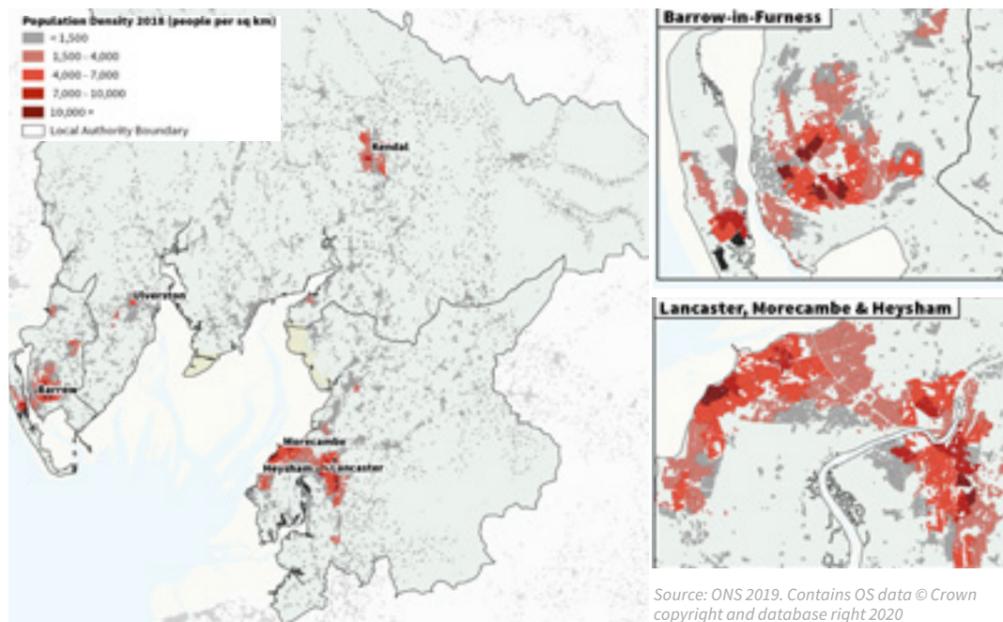
2 | A Special Economic Area

Our area offers a unique opportunity for investment. We are a key driving force in the national economy due to our industrial and commercial strengths, our platform for innovation, nationally significant infrastructure assets and our unique cultural and lifestyle offering.

Importance of the Bay

Our area has a unique economic geography with a clear focus of activity around the coastal area running from Heysham in the south to Barrow-in-Furness in the west and Kendal in the north.

Business and employment activities immediately around the Bay and in Kendal drive the economic activity of our wider functional economic area. 76% of employment and 77% of businesses in the three local authority areas are located within a narrow 6-7km buffer around the Bay and in Kendal. This area is also home to almost 90% of our population. In addition to the concentrations shown in the map below we are home to a range of smaller settlements and an established land-based economy.



BAE Systems, Barrow

Global leaders in military, aerospace and security capabilities. Responsible for delivering the £44bn Dreadnought submarine programme in Barrow-in-Furness

GVS Filters, Morecambe

World leading manufacturer of filters and components for use in healthcare, life sciences, and automotive industries.

EDF Energy, Heysham

EDF are the UK's largest producer of low-carbon electricity, the biggest supplier of electricity by volume in Great Britain and the largest energy supplier to British businesses

Gilbert, Gilkes & Gordon, Kendal

A small, local Kendal business who are world leaders in hydropower, engine cooling and industrial pumps.

Kimberley-Clark, Barrow

Paper mill producing products for international brands, including Kleenex and Andrex.

James Cropper, Kendal

Manufacturer of technically advanced products since 1845 including paper and technical fibre products.

GSK, Ulverston

Global pharmaceutical company with a manufacturing plant at Ulverston. The site manufactures and supplies active ingredients for antibiotics.

World Class Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Capabilities

We are home to world leading businesses within the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors, who together support over 18,000 local jobs. This is 13% of all the employment in our area.

With an LQ of 1.35, we house nearly 40% more advanced manufacturing and engineering employment than the national average

The Bay economy is driven by expertise in marine engineering, manufacturing, energy generation and distribution, and pharmaceuticals – and their associated supply chains. This concentration of diverse, yet very specialist sectors sets us apart from economic areas across the rest of the UK. For example, we boast some of the world's largest windfarms, the extensive East Irish Sea gas fields and specialist submarine manufacturing capabilities.

Our most specialised sectors:

Top Sectors	Location Quotient*
Export of petroleum and natural gas	12.6
Manufacture of other transport equipment	11.6
Manufacture of paper	4.3
Manufacture of electrical equipment	3.6
Electricity, gas, steam & air conditioning supply	3.1
Manufacture of pharmaceutical products	2.1
Other manufacturing	1.6
Manufacture of computer, electronic products	1.4

Source: Morecambe Bay Sub-Regional Economic Development Study, Mickledore 2017.

*A Location Quotient above 1 means the Bay has a higher proportion of employment in this sector than the national average. E.g. export of petroleum is 12.6 times as specialised

The strength of these sectors is underpinned by a talented and highly skilled local workforce, with specific skills in advanced manufacturing, electronics, pharma-life sciences, mechanical engineering, chemical processing and marine engineering. We know that businesses chose to locate here in order to capitalise on the pool of local talent available. For example, just under half of all the national employment in the manufacture of ships/submarines is in our Bay area (c.7,000 jobs).

Our nationally important sectors have ambitious aspirations to grow, and we want to support them to expand locally and attract talent to our area. Right now, they face a number of barriers to achieving this with specific requirements for higher level and technical skills and leadership and management skills.

A Wider Base of Research and Innovation

We already have over 11,000 people working in the health sector across our three local authorities, and we are rapidly becoming a key national centre for health-related research and innovation. This is underpinned by strong assets in the region including the Ulverston GSK site which manufactures pharmaceuticals. The £41 million Health Innovation Campus at Lancaster University, the first phase of which has already been built, will enable the Bay area to further specialise in the health, medicine and wellbeing industries.

Building strengths in the health innovation sector will place us in a strong position to support the COVID recovery. Already Lancaster University, in partnership with industry and two other universities, is playing a key role in developing an innovative rapid diagnostic testing kit for coronavirus. We want to continue to use our skills and expertise in health to safeguard a healthy future for our communities.

We also have a strong cluster of environmental and digital businesses across our area. We have seen a network of digital start-ups emerging to support and supply our established business expertise, such as specialisms in digital shipyard skills. Our track record in this area will be further enhanced by major investments like the new digitalisation business incubator facility at Lancaster University.

We also have outstanding environmental resources and assets which offer their own economic growth opportunities, and underpin our growing environmental business base. Our reputation as a 'green' region which delivers resource-efficient and low carbon solutions extends across many sectors, from sustainable energy generation and construction practices to innovative housing delivery and agri production processes. Key strengths that we want to capitalise on and expand include activities in the forestry industry, ecosystem management and biodiversity services, and flood risk and upland land management expertise. These sectors are essential in supporting us to deliver against our wider environmental and climate change agenda.

A Leading Arts, Culture and Lifestyle Destination

Our area is one of the most desirable places to live in the UK. The combination of natural assets such as Morecambe Bay SSSI² and the Lake District UNESCO world heritage site, and the cultural heritage in our towns and city creates a distinctive offer in our three areas unlike anywhere else.

We are proud of our diverse and inclusive creative and cultural scene which includes large scale events, theatres, restaurants, comedy clubs and concert venues. This is underpinned by a thriving creative and cultural production sector which plays an important role in providing employment and generating livelihoods for our residents. This is predominantly driven by the activities of local entrepreneurs, the self-employed and small enterprises across the region. In particular, the high concentration of small creative industries in South Lakeland, particularly in The Factory creative hub, has made it a priority investment area for the Arts Council in the North West. We are also home to renowned grassroots events with a strong national and international appeal, such as the Kendal Mountain Festival.

In addition, our unique offer means that tourism and the visitor economy are a key driver in our local economy. Around 30 million visitors come every year to Lancaster and South Cumbria from all over the world, which is worth almost £2bn to the local economy.

Whilst all of this activity underpins a good quality of life for our residents, we want to go further and build on our key strength as a leading cultural and lifestyle destination to create an outstanding quality of life for our communities, focused on health, wellbeing and a work-life balance.

² Site of Special Scientific Interest



Nationally Significant Infrastructure

Our area is home to critical infrastructure which underpins our local, regional and national economies. This includes strategic connectivity, energy infrastructure and world class education institutions:

- The two international gateway ports at Barrow and Heysham are industrial centres for cargo (from vehicles to energy products), as well as operation / maintenance hubs for renewable energy assets. The area is also well connected through a number of local airports.
- National energy assets at the gateway to Britain's Energy Coast - five major windfarms comprising one of the largest renewable energy assets globally, oil and gas operations and a nuclear power station.
- Proximity to the M6 and other key arterial roads, as well as excellent rail links, which provide vital connections between our area and major population centres in the UK.
- Leading higher education institutions and colleges across our region attracting students from around the world to study degrees, NVQs and apprenticeships with a STEM focus. Lancaster University offers a world-renowned education and research offer, placing it in the top 4% of worldwide universities.³ In addition to its academic courses, the University of Cumbria in Barrow also runs specialist skilled vocational courses, helping to create the skilled workforce of the future. Across the region our education institutions work closely with local business, creating the highest level of apprenticeship take up in England.

The presence of these assets creates significant opportunities for economic and employment growth, as well as major public and private investment in our area.

³ Centre for World University Rankings, 2016



A Unique Urban-Rural Juxtaposition

Urban-life in the Bay area sits adjacent to a large and significant land-based economy. This close combination of built up areas and large expanses of countryside creates a vital relationship that, in part, defines our area.

Our town centres are vital to our success, and like all town centres they face fundamental challenges. We have a solid platform to build on. Our main network of town centres – Barrow, Ulverston, Kendal, Morecambe, Heysham and the City of Lancaster – provide numerous functions for our communities and each provide a natural hub around which daily life is configured.

The relationship between our built up areas and their rural hinterlands is increasingly important as community interest in food provenance and wider local materials grows and as interest in home-base working expands.

Data from DEFRA shows that across our area over 4,300 people are employed in the agricultural labour force, supporting 1,800 agricultural holdings. In addition, between 2013-2016 there was a +13% increase in farmed land in the area, with now over 164,000 hectares of land being farmed locally. Hill farming is a particularly important part of this.

Within this broader agricultural base, we have a small but significant agri-tech sector. Lancaster University is part of the N8 AgriFood Research Programme across northern England, and we host a range of highly innovative agri-tech businesses. The University of Cumbria is also convening a new land-based steering group to develop a land and agriculture skills strategy.

Our Main Assets



Ports



Places (Cities/Towns/Settlements)



Some Key Employers



Education



Offshore Energy Assets



Digital Connectivity



Road



Natural Assets

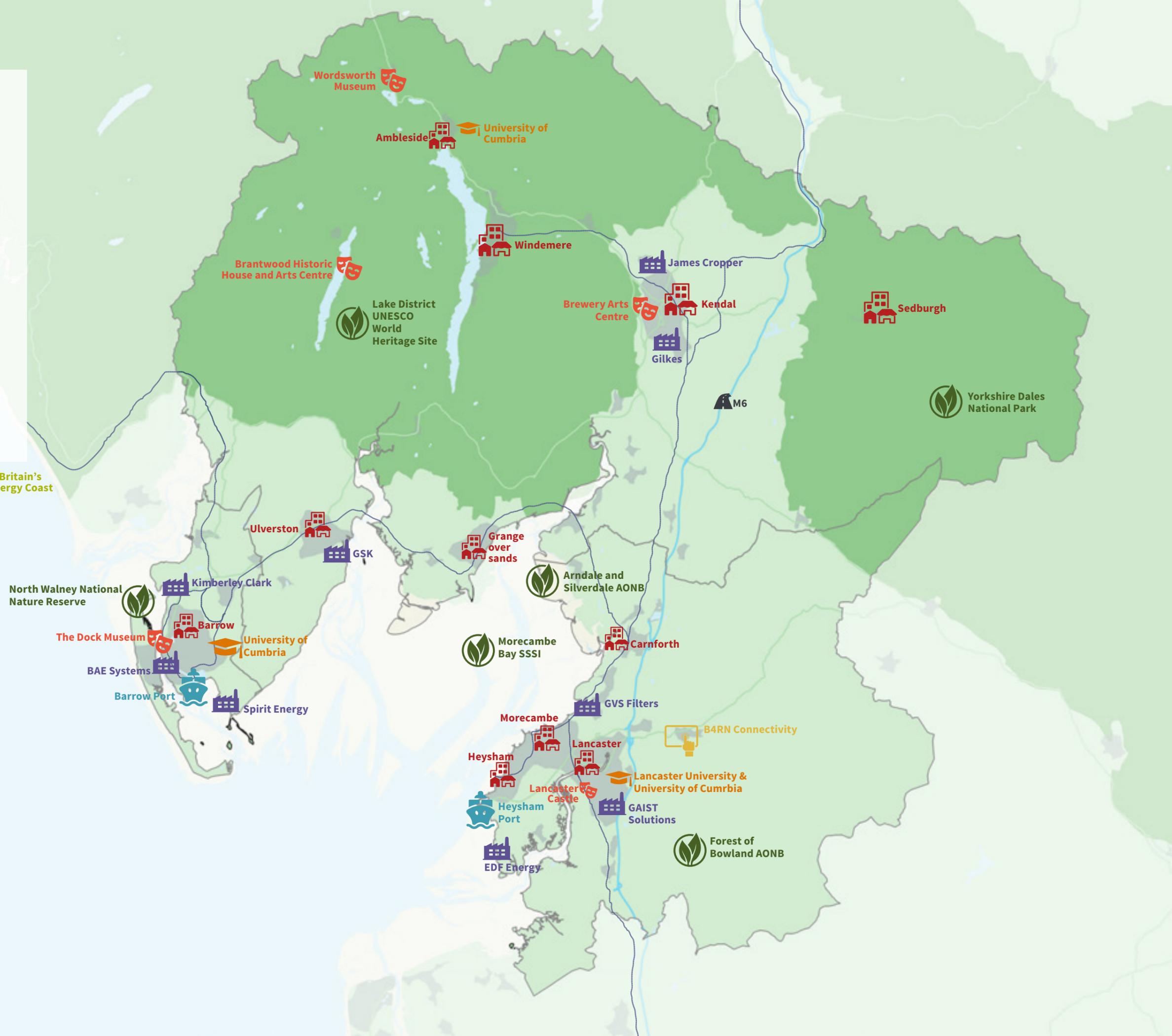


Cultural Assets



Major Rail Lines

Britain's Energy Coast



Time to Re-Calibrate

In the midst of the current pandemic, our three local authorities are rightly focusing their time and resources on minimising the economic and social costs of COVID-19 and delivering essential services. Whilst the full extent of the impact is unlikely to be known for a long time, it is essential that this strategy considers the immediate and longer-term impact of COVID-19, as well as approaches for re-building and ensuring resilience in the future. Our Bay economy is uniquely positioned in that it is both vulnerable to immediate negative impacts, but has significant opportunities for recovery and to re-calibrate for a greener, more equal future.

Analysis of vulnerability to COVID-19 shows that across our three local authority areas, we were most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic due to high levels of health deprivation, the prominence of impacted businesses in sectors as leisure and tourism, poor digital connectivity and a large elderly population.

Whilst we can't measure the true impact of COVID-19 on our people and economy at the moment, the latest data is starting to show the real time impact in a number of

areas. Claimant count data shows a dramatic increase in claimants (+108%) from February 2020 to May 2020 and, as of June 2020, over 12,300 local employees were on the government's Job Retention scheme. This is around 9% of total employment. Although this scheme is protecting jobs, unemployment in our region could be heightened when the scheme ends in October. This could be a particular challenge for Lancaster, which had an unemployment rate (4.5%) over twice the rate in South Lakeland (1.7%) before the pandemic.

Whilst we know that there will be variations in vulnerability and impact across our towns, cities and rural areas, we also know that we share a number of pre-existing challenges across the Bay area that have been amplified by COVID-19. We need to address these as a priority and build on the lessons learned from responding to the pandemic. This includes capitalising on the positive changes that have emerged over the last 6 months, such as the emergence of a strong social capital and community capacity, significant increase in the use of digital technologies and a renewed focus on place.

Over 12,300 local jobs are on furlough

The number of claimants has increased 108% between February and May 2020, with the number still rising significantly

Recent conversations with major employers in Barrow reveal how productivity levels have fallen as a result of skilled staff in the manufacturing sector being unable to work due to social distancing requirements

Exposure indicators covering Economic, Societal and Health exposure

	% of businesses impacted by COVID	% self-employed	% who do not use internet	% aged 70+	Health deprivation rank
Barrow-in-Furness	Exposed	Least exposed	Most Exposed	Exposed	Most Exposed
Lancaster	Exposed	Exposed	Most Exposed	Exposed	Most Exposed
South Lakeland	Most Exposed	Most Exposed	Exposed	Most Exposed	Least Exposed

Source: ONS, NHS and Ofcom datasets. Analysis by Hatch Regeneris

Although much of the COVID-19 response will be at a national level, locally tailored solutions are likely to deliver more positive socio-economic benefits. The self-containment and concentration of activity in the Bay, as well as existing sector strengths in renewable energy and health innovation enable us to respond in a way that not only has positive implications locally but leads the way nationally.





03 Our Strategy for Prosperity
and Resilience



3 | Our Strategy for Prosperity and Resilience

Our partnership is about collaborative work, shared assets and collective opportunities.

We have established a series of eight themes on which we will focus our economic collaboration. All eight themes represent areas in which we have a shared agenda and where the concept of collaboration will deliver bigger, better and more effective solutions.

The eight themes have been arrived at through a careful distillation of the evidence and from the view and opinions of our core stakeholders. All eight are important to us and need to be advanced in parallel.

Three cross cutting principles will also govern our collaborative work. These are central to our ambitions:

- **Tackling the climate emergency and building a greener economy.** We have all the economic assets and appetite required to play a leading role in the UK's response to the biggest change facing society in the modern era.
- **Building wealth across our communities.** This is central to our ambitions, to keep more of the wealth we generate in the hands of our residents and reduce inequality.
- **Encouraging active and healthier citizens.** The health and well-being of our residents is vital. COVID has taught us that positive physical and mental well-being is an essential ingredient in building resilient places and resilient economies



Becoming a UK Leader in Renewables & Clean Growth

Very few places in the UK can boast the same array of clean energy assets as we have in the Bay area economy. Our presence in wind, solar, hydrogen, nuclear and marine energy leave us uniquely placed to be a clean energy trailblazer. In addition, all three of our Council's have declared a climate emergency.

The combination of private sector expertise and academic excellence spans the whole Bay area. We benefit from five operational wind farms in the Irish Sea, including the Walney Extension operated by Orsted which is the world's largest operational offshore wind farm, generating clean electricity for nearly 600,000 homes.

We are also a key part of the national nuclear supply chain with a key presence at EDF Heysham and supply chain linkages into the neighbouring Sellafield plant. The nuclear technology underpinning the nuclear submarine industry has scope for diversification into the civil nuclear market.

Energy Lancaster combines cutting-edge research with expertise from across Lancaster University and beyond. Working with global, regional and local organisations, Energy Lancaster aims to address societal challenges around sustainability and security of low carbon energy supplies.

Much of the Bay area economy is coastal, which means we are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly the effects of sea level rise and coastal erosion. We need to play our part in the decarbonisation agenda and maximise the transition to clean energy in partnership with our local communities. We also need to support our businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.

We are committed to putting the Bay on the map for our clean growth agenda and for developing local solutions in partnership with local people.



Building on our Arts & Cultural Offer to Create a Destination with a Difference

We are proud of our recent Cultural Compact award. Our outstanding cultural and heritage offer has been recognised by central government and the Arts Council as leading the way nationally in relation to the creation of inclusive cultural opportunities and governance.

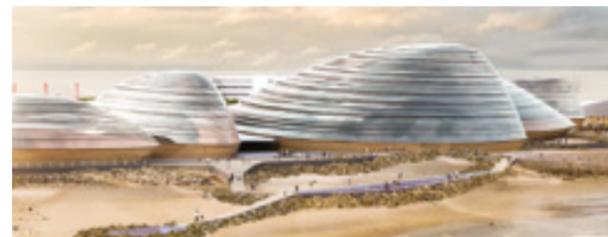
Our arts and cultural offer is founded in our local history and heritage, and is underpinned by a network of diverse and extremely talented entrepreneurs and small enterprises across our region. We are home to a range of creative businesses and their supporting supply chains, creating a cluster of creative and cultural production activities.

We also have a wide range of public-facing arts, cultural and heritage assets spanning across the Bay. All of this is enhanced by the world-class natural landscapes right on our doorstep. This includes the Lake District which is UK's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site and is the largest tourist destination in the UK outside London.

We want to celebrate our arts, culture and heritage,

and support these activities to grow across the Bay. But we know these businesses and activities are dynamic and rely on access to good-quality digital connectivity, flexible spaces and a talented workforce to thrive. We are committed to meeting these needs, retaining economic benefit for our communities and fulfilling our potential of becoming a leading destination with an offer unlike anywhere else.

Eden of the North will go a long way in helping us to achieve this. This ambitious project seeks to re-imagine the seaside resort of Morecambe and create a unique visitor attraction in our Bay. **Eden of the North would deliver far reaching environmental, social and economic impacts for the Bay, the North West, the UK and internationally**, including attracting 760,000 visitors a year to our area and supporting 6,500 local jobs.



Delivering New Roles for Our Ports and their Hinterlands

Ports are the foundation of the entire marine economy and are increasingly supporting other types of valuable economic activity, from leisure to fishing, offshore energy and marine aggregates. It is estimated that in 2017 the UK ports industry directly contributed approximately £9.7 billion in GVA and 115,000 jobs.

Within the Bay area we host two significant ports at Barrow and Heysham. The Port of Barrow plays a key role in serving the offshore energy industry in the north and is the site of BAE Systems' submarine design and manufacturing facility. 110,000 tonnes of cargo are handled by the Port of Barrow each year. The Port of Heysham also has a wealth of experience working with offshore wind, gas and nuclear energy industries. Heysham Port is at the heart of the Irish Sea RoRo hub and caters for numerous daily sailings from providers like Seatruck, Stena Line and Isle of Man Steampacket.

Both Port facilities, and the wider portfolio of industrial land that sits around them, have considerable growth

potential. Our plan is to work creatively and imaginatively with the two Port operators to develop complementary growth strategies. These growth strategies will help the Ports, and their immediate hinterlands, consolidate on their existing roles and potentially expand into others.

Northern ports are faced with some significant challenges and to date they have not featured prominently enough in the concept of the Northern Powerhouse. **We propose to use the two main Bay area ports as a key location for growth and to better define our economic identity.**



Retaining and Attracting Talent and Diversity

Across the Bay area we have a considerable shared challenge in retaining and attracting talented individuals. Data shows that this is an issue for all parts of the Bay area and is confirmed via discussions with our key employers – many of who struggle to fill certain types of vacancy.

The Bay area is a wonderful location for a long and happy lifestyle. The combination of our natural assets, competitive sectors, network of town centres and accessibility to major northern cities all serve us well. The presence of world class universities also helps, as they are often the starting point in building affinity and affection for our area.

Despite all of the above, we need to raise our game if we are genuinely to compete. We need to work on our brand and identity so that more people know where we are and what we offer, and this is something that our three areas can work on both individually and collectively. We will

make sure that all our stakeholders – including councils, business, communities and anchor institutions – are able to persuasively promote the area as a place to live and to invest in.

We also need to work on our residential offer so that we can provide the range of housing that both existing and incoming families demand.

We will build on our existing assets and we will develop the Bay area as a successful lifestyle location of choice for large volumes of talented individuals and their families.



Facilitating Food-Agri Innovation Expertise

The UK agri-tech sector is worth more than £14 billion, and it is one of the fastest growing sectors in the national economy. The government's Industrial Strategy wants to put the UK at the forefront of the global move to high-efficiency agriculture, and lists agri-tech as one of just six sectors that can lead the application of artificial intelligence to industry.

The Bay area economy can and will play a major role in this agenda. We have an established food, beverage and agricultural supplies industry, a world class engineering and technology sector and a network of FE and HE institutions with specialisms in the land based economy and/or engineering.

Crucially, urban-life in the Bay area sits adjacent to a large and significant land-based economy, and we are at the forefront of sustainable agriculture and responsible land and water management approaches that can help to tackle climate change.

This close combination of built up areas and large expanses of countryside creates the opportunity for localised food production and resilient supply chains.

Our plan is to put in place initiatives across the Bay area, working with our county colleagues, that facilitate the growth of the agri-tech sector and drive innovative activity within our established agricultural sector. This will be central to achieving our climate change agenda. We have specific plans to create a bespoke hub that will be a marker of our intent and serve as the centre-piece of our push.

We will ensure that the Bay area economy is one of the UKs leading sustainable agri-tech locations.



Enhancing Digital Connectivity

We know that strong digital connectivity will underpin our economy in the future, and is already so important for supporting the activities of our businesses and residents across the Bay. We have a thriving tech sector and network of digital start-ups that support and supply our established business expertise, and we want to support this sector to grow further.

However, our area does face connectivity challenges due to the very rural location of some of our communities. Whilst we boast brilliant local assets such as the community-run Broadband for Rural North (B4RN), a proportion of our residents still don't use the internet (16% in Lancaster, 12% in Barrow and 8% in South Lakeland).

Our ambition is to unlock the considerable socio-economic opportunities that are currently constrained by poor access through the delivery of new and enhanced digital infrastructure. Creating a connected Bay area through the roll out of a fast fibre network and 5G will be a key enabler for inclusive economic growth and improved productivity across the region, connecting businesses to growth opportunities and enhancing quality of life.



Growing Healthy Communities

Whilst we boast world-class natural assets that make our area a desirable place to live with a good quality of life, we still face a number of challenges around the health and wellbeing of some of our communities.

Residents of the Bay suffer from large health inequalities. Morecambe and Barrow are home to some of the most deprived areas in the country, with challenges around overcrowding, low incomes, poor mental and physical health and lower life expectancies than the national average. These communities have also been some of the hardest hit by COVID-19.

Conversely, parts of South Lakeland are home to some of the least deprived communities nationally. We want to close this gap and ensure all our residents have equal opportunities and a great quality of life. Some parts of our Bay are also experiencing a decline in population, particularly a loss of young people, because of a perceived lack of local opportunities. We are committed to changing the perceptions of these areas and making our Bay a place young people want to live, work and enjoy.

To achieve better health outcomes for our residents we will need to support the Morecambe Bay NHS Trust to meet its needs and aspirations. These include improving the quality of local, easily accessible health services right across the Bay and ensuring the local labour pool enables the recruitment of the right people with the right skills.

We also need an economy that supports good health and wellbeing, which requires good quality housing and jobs.

We want our community to be healthy, prosperous and for everyone to have a good quality of life.



Building Resilient Town Centres

Our network of towns, and the City of Lancaster, are home to some of our key businesses and employers and they host some of our world-leading assets. They serve as important centres and community hubs for their surrounding areas, with shopping and leisure facilities and other services drawing in people from Bay area villages and rural areas.

Our appreciation and pride in the towns we call home is greater today than ever before. With this in mind, towns in the Bay area need to better develop some of the fundamental building blocks of a strong local economy rooted in place.

Bay area towns need to attract more investment, sustain their high streets, deliver new roles and functions including more cultural, learning and community activities and become more attractive places to live. Growth is held back where we suffer from with poor transport, poor accessibility and movement corridors and digital connectivity.

We believe a sustained and co-ordinated approach to

improving Bay area town centres will help improve our image and profile as a place to invest. The sustainable economic regeneration of our towns will underpin long-term economic and productivity growth.

Our aims are to increase residential density in town centres, make full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change, strengthen local economic assets including local cultural and learning assets, ensure our towns have the space to support small business development and to develop local transport schemes and improved digital connectivity.

We are clear that towns should be at the heart of our drive for prosperity and resilience. They will help make the Bay area a better place for everyone to live and work.





04 Our Immediate Requests





4 | Our Immediate Requests

Our partnership wants to build momentum. We have scope to quicken the pace of our collaborative work and deliver the economic benefits of joint work promptly. This will require investment from government to help us make this happen.

Ask 1 : Project Development Fund

Our experience of bidding for resources like Future High Street Fund and Towns Deal is that short term capacity building support is vital in developing up our prosperity agenda. This is even more important now that our individual authorities are under increasing financial pressure due to the effects of COVID-19. We simply don't have the resources to channel into feasibility studies, project development and business case preparation.

We have also seen how the Borderlands partnership benefitted from early stage capacity building resource to help work up its agenda for change.

We need a two-year commitment from central government to be directed into our Joint Partnership. Our ask is for at least £750,000 per annum to support what is a new and exciting economic partnership based on a fully functioning economic geography.

This fund will enable us to:

- Identify a small number of genuinely cross-authority projects that will drive prosperity and serve to further reinforce collaboration and economic integration.
- Develop up business cases for these priority investments so that we are ready when opportunities emerge for additional government funding.
- Work on some of the immediate issues that are holding back growth in our functional economic area – our brand and identity is one of these issues and we can achieve some quick wins on this with the right financial support.
- Continue building the evidence base to inform our joint work and allow us to assess and monitor the impact of our interventions



We have some emerging ideas on the collaborative projects that this Project Development Fund will help us mobilise. These will be limited to those initiatives that make most sense at a Bay area geography and could include:

- A programme of enhanced digital connectivity across the Bay area towns and communities
- A co-ordinated process of setting a renewed development trajectory for our two main Ports, supporting the Port operators to set out ambitious growth plans
- Creation of a nationally significant agri-innovation hub, with a site earmarked at J36 of the M6
- The creation of new cultural/creative/leisure assets that will serve the whole Bay area – Eden of the North and a Stadium for the Lakes are two examples
- A new approach to building the brand and identity of the Bay area to help attract investment and talent
- Putting new impetus into our emerging cultural events programme. Whilst we have made a good start there is much more we can do
- Working with our existing Bay Area NHS Health Trust to begin the long process of reducing certain health inequalities that have been exposed via COVID-19
- Using the Bay area as a test bed for new small scale approaches to clean power generation. We have numerous assets and ideas that we need to bring together.

As soon as we receive government commitment for the Project Development Fund we can start working up these initiatives in more detail.



Ask 2 : Approval For Existing District Level Asks

In recent months the three component authorities within the Bay area partnership have each presented to government a series of significant funding asks that have the potential to significantly boost our economic performance.

It is essential that government backs these existing funding requests alongside our request for an additional Project Development Fund to help us mobilise new collaborative projects.

The existing funding requests that we require support from government are listed below. On some of these we have very recently been provided with a positive indication of support, which is greatly appreciated:

- **Barrow Town Investment Plan**
- **Barrow Future High Streets Fund**
- **Morecambe Future High Streets Fund**
- **Lancaster High Streets Heritage Action Zone and the Barrow High Streets Heritage Action Zone**
- **Community Housing Fund Lancaster**
- **Homes England investment in Barrow Marina Village**
- **Barrow Electric Bus Fund bid**
- **Feasibility funding for the Kendal Northern Access Route and further works to improve the A590**
- **Institute of Technology bid at Furness college**
- **Kendal Futures/Vision**
- **Kendal's role in the High Street Task Force**

The projects listed above, both those for which we have individually submitted funding applications already and the new collaborative projects we propose to develop, will deliver a step change in the performance of our local economy. In return for capacity building resource we are prepared to sign up to ambitious performance targets for the Bay economy.





THE BAY
PROSPERITY &
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