

National recognition for Transforming West Cumbria

Monday 1 December, 2025

Transforming West Cumbria, led by Sellafield Ltd and Cumbria Community Foundation, has been honoured as Social Value Initiative of the Year at the prestigious Institute of Economic Development (iED) Annual Awards 2025.

The awards, which were hosted at The Lowry Hotel in Manchester on 25 November following the iED Annual Conference, [Good Growth: Driving the UK economy with investment in our regions and communities](#), celebrate achievers in the public and private sector through a series of individual, team and organisational categories.

This year saw a record-breaking number of entries across seven categories, and shortlisted nominations were assessed by an expert judging panel in September.

The Social Value Initiative of the Year award, which this year was sponsored by The Growth Company, recognises projects, teams or individuals which have championed and made a significant contribution to social value creation, developing best practice in their field and making positive impacts in their communities.

The partners' submission detailed how Transforming West Cumbria, a £6.5 million place-based five-year social investment programme co-created by Sellafield Ltd and Cumbria Community Foundation, has addressed the root causes of disadvantage across West Cumbria and generated exceptional social value. Success is not only measured in numbers but in lives changed, futures secured, and communities strengthened.

iED Director and former Chair Bev Hurley CBE, who hosted the awards honouring achievements across the public and private sectors, said: "Our judges praised Transforming West Cumbria as a benchmark for place-based social investment. Co-created by Sellafield Ltd and Cumbria Community Foundation, the programme exemplifies strategic vision, deep collaboration, and measurable impact. With £19.9 million in social value generated, it addresses disadvantage through innovative, thematic delivery, empowers communities across generations, and serves as a replicable model of inclusive growth. This benchmark initiative in social value demonstrates how strategic design, inclusive delivery, and measurable outcomes can transform lives and communities."

Tracey West, Head of Social Impact, Sellafield Ltd, commented: "We are honoured that the Transforming West Cumbria programme has been recognised nationally by the Institute of Economic Development in the 'Social Value Initiative of the Year' award category. Co-created with Cumbria Community Foundation, we know that the programme has had wide-ranging, lasting impact on local communities since it was launched in 2020, as confirmed by the independent mid-programme evaluation. The programme has directly supported hundreds of local organisations and thousands of individuals and families, achieving significant outcomes in mental health support, financial wellbeing, early years development and many, many more areas. We are grateful for the support of all our delivery partners who have helped make Transforming West Cumbria such a success."

Dr Jenny Benson, Director of Programmes & Partnerships, Cumbria Community Foundation, shared: "We are absolutely delighted to have won the iED's Social Value Initiative of the Year award for the Transforming West Cumbria programme. Thanks to Sellafield Ltd's significant investment we have been able to co-create and deliver the programme with a range of voluntary, community and social enterprise partners. Our collaborative approach has ensured that Transforming West Cumbria has remained responsive to community's needs, whilst bringing about real and lasting change. Importantly this prestigious award recognises the work and passions of everyone involved, from those delivering key services, skilled volunteers, expert mentors to match funders and steering group members."

iED Executive Director Nigel Wilcock commented: "When we first created these awards during the Institute's 40th anniversary celebrations, our ambition was clear: to recognise excellence – individuals, teams and organisations making a real difference in economic development across the UK. Every year since, the quality, innovation and commitment displayed has been extraordinary, and this year is no exception.

"Shortlisting the finalists was no easy task for our judges. My congratulations go to all those who were shortlisted, to each of our winners, and my sincere thanks to everyone who submitted entries. Their work showcases the diversity, creativity and impact of economic development in action – precisely what these

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awards exist to celebrate. It was wonderful to welcome so many familiar faces, along with new colleagues, to share in this special evening."

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