

Stockport Town Centre MDC

DRAFT Strategic Business Plan, 2026-31

Foreword from the Chair

To follow

About this document

This document sets out the next chapter in the regeneration of Stockport town centre and the role of the expanded Stockport Town Centre Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) in turning long-term ambition into delivery between 2026 and 2031. It builds on more than a decade of sustained leadership and investment that has repositioned Stockport as a national exemplar of town centre renewal, and reflects a step change in both the geography covered by the MDC and the scale of ambition it is charged with delivering.

At its heart, the Plan is about creating a thriving, inclusive and sustainable town centre that works for the people of Stockport. It sets out how the MDC will help unlock the delivery of new homes, good jobs, critical social infrastructure and greener, better connected neighbourhoods—harnessing regeneration investment to make a meaningful contribution to borough-wide goals of tackling inequality, supporting wellbeing and creating opportunity.

The Plan explains the strategic context within which the MDC operates, including its alignment with Stockport Council's *One Stockport, One Future* vision and Greater Manchester's priorities for inclusive, place-based growth. It sets out five strategic outcomes that describe what success will look like, alongside a clear set of delivery commitments that define the actions the MDC will take over the next five years to achieve them.

Together, these commitments provide a framework for partnership working with local communities, public sector partners, investors and government. They demonstrate how the MDC will use its convening power, investment approach and track record of innovation to unlock transformational change—supporting the continued renewal of Stockport town centre as a shared asset for the whole borough, now and in the years ahead.

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Introduction

Over the last decade Stockport has pioneered the UK's biggest town centre regeneration programme, defining what a modern thriving town centre can be. Since 2019, Stockport MDC has played a key role in that success, turbocharging the delivery of Stockport Council's bold vision for the town. Over 1,200 new homes have been created alongside state-of-the-art, award-winning infrastructure and multiple phases of Grade A office space at Stockport Exchange. As the first MDC in Greater Manchester and the first in the country to focus on a town centre, Stockport has been a pioneer, moving quickly from innovative concept to proven delivery vehicle.

As we enter this new chapter, bold ambition and local leadership continue to define the MDC's development. In 2025 Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, agreed to triple the area covered by the MDC and double the target number of homes from 4,000 to 8,000. This Plan sets out how the expanded MDC will turn that ambition into delivery over the period 2026 -31.

The driver for these ambitions is Stockport Council's long term vision for regenerating the town centre, as set out in the *One Stockport, One Future* Plan. This vision focuses on the transformation of the town centre as a place to live through the delivery of thousands of new homes by 2040 alongside critical social infrastructure, including a new town centre school and health hub.

The role of this MDC as delivery vehicle for this vision is informed by two Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) adopted by the Council: one for Town Centre West (adopted in 2019) and one for the area to the east of the A6 (adopted in 2025). These high-level illustrative masterplans, together with the Council's wider planning policies, provide a spatial vision to guide the transformation of the town centre over the next fifteen years.

The Frameworks and the wider *One Stockport One Future* vision provide the foundation for the MDC's strategic outcomes and delivery commitments for the next five years that are set out in this Plan. These outcomes and commitments have been further refined through extensive engagement with local people and partners to ensure the Plan reflects the voices, ambitions and expertise of those invested in Stockport's future.

Continued strong cross-party leadership, innovation, partnership working and meaningful engagement with local communities underpin the Plan. It is intended for residents, communities, partners, investors and government—anyone with a stake in the future of Stockport town centre and a shared ambition to see regeneration deliver real benefits for local people.

What is Stockport Town Centre MDC?

Established in 2026 by the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, Stockport Town Centre MDC is an expansion of the previous Stockport Town Centre West MDC which was established in 2019. Stockport was the first place in the UK to expand its MDC, testament to the success of the approach and the continued ambition of Stockport Council, backed by the Greater Manchester Mayor and the GMCA. The MDC is a statutory organisation created to bring forward the regeneration of Stockport Town Centre. The MDC Board has overall responsibility for all aspects of the organisation's business. It is made up of representatives of Stockport Council's main political parties and Homes England along with senior-level private sector Board members who provide specialist expertise and experience of large-scale regeneration. The leaders of the Council's smaller political parties all attend Board meetings as associate Board members, along with senior officers of the Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Strategic context

Stockport Town Centre MDC is a delivery vehicle for Stockport Council's vision for its town centre, backed by the Greater Manchester Mayor and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. It exists in a wider strategic context which has shaped our objectives and approach, including:

The One Stockport, One Future Plan: Developed in 2024 by Stockport Council in partnership with local people and organisations, the Plan sets out how the Council will work together with partners so Stockport can be the best place to live happy and healthy lives, a place where anything is possible, a place that everyone, right across the Borough can be proud of.

The Plan established a clear framework of strategic outcomes to guide this ambition, underpinned by commitments to tackle inequality and deliver sustainable, inclusive growth. In this the town centre is identified as a key driver of delivery.

The Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) for Town Centre West and East: SRFs are Planning Policy documents which set out illustrative masterplans to guide development of a defined area. In Stockport they have been key tools to drive delivery of Stockport Council's vision for its town centre, providing a credible vision and confidence for investors. Although they cover distinct areas, both Frameworks seek to support town centre wide transformation, enhancing east-west connectivity across the A6:

- In 2019 the Council produced the **SRF for Stockport Town Centre West**. It was approved in its final form in November 2019 following public consultation. The SRF sets out the vision and ambition for the regeneration of Town Centre West that the MDC was created to deliver.
- In 2025 in response to the vision and ambition set out in the One Stockport, One Future Plan, the Council produced an **SRF for Stockport Town Centre East** to reimagine the area into a series of vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods that set a new standard for urban living in the UK.

The SRFs sit alongside **wider Stockport Council Planning Policies**, including:

- The **Stockport Town Centre Residential Design Guide** sets out a framework to ensure new residential development delivers high-quality, well-designed homes that support sustainable, inclusive town centre living and reflect Stockport's distinctive character. It includes design principles for layout, density, built form and placemaking across the town centre.
- The **Stockport Character Area and Urban Density Study** provides a framework to guide how different parts of the town centre should evolve, ensuring new development responds positively to local character, heritage and townscape. Its scope defines appropriate building heights, densities and typologies across distinct character areas, helping to balance growth with design quality, liveability and the protection of Stockport's unique identity.

At a Greater Manchester level, the **Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) 2025–2035** sets out a vision for the city region to become a *thriving place where everyone can live a good life*, bringing together economic growth, social progress and improved public services across all ten boroughs.

The Strategy promotes sustainable, inclusive and place based growth, with housing recognised as a foundation for economic opportunity and healthy lives. Through its delivery plans, the GMS commits to increasing housing supply across Greater Manchester, including new energy efficient homes for social rent, improving existing housing, and aligning development with public transport, social infrastructure and low carbon objectives. The revitalisation of town centres is a key priority, promoting

higher density, well connected, mixed use development that strengthens public realm and supports vibrant, resilient centres.

Live Well sits at the heart of the GMS and is a central priority for Stockport Council, providing a shared framework for neighbourhood working, prevention and improving outcomes for residents. Aligning with the goals of the programme will ensure that the MDC contributes to these system-wide objectives:

- **An opportunity to put Live Well at the heart of place making”:** Greater Manchester and Stockport Live Well define a prevention-led, neighbourhood way of working; in creating new neighbourhoods, the MDC presents a powerful opportunity to put Live Well at the heart of place making - creating the places, spaces and everyday environments which embody Live Well goals
- **Enhancement and creation of Live Well infrastructure:** The public realm, social infrastructure and enhanced green spaces we're creating have the potential to function as flagship centres and spaces bridging into everyday support.
- **Regeneration is a health and wellbeing intervention:** Our focus on generating new town centre jobs, connecting people to opportunities, active travel and enhancing and extending green infrastructure directly supports Live Well goals around wellbeing, economic inclusion and reducing inequality.

As Greater Manchester’s first Mayoral Development Corporation, Stockport has been a pioneer of locally led solutions to nationally significant regeneration challenges. From unlocking housing delivery on complex brownfield sites to pioneering the early delivery of social infrastructure, the MDC has demonstrated how devolution can translate ambition into impact. As a new generation of MDCs emerge across the city region, we will continue to work closely with GMCA to deploy the full potential of Greater Manchester’s trailblazing devolution settlement—testing, proving and scaling approaches that matter not just locally, but nationally.

Stockport town centre in context

Stockport is an exceptional place to live, work and visit. The borough is one of the most successful local economies in Greater Manchester – itself the UK’s fastest growing city region¹. The borough accommodates the third largest workforce in the city region alongside great schools, cultural attractions, and amenities.

Over more than a decade, unparalleled investment, strong cross party leadership and bold vision have enabled our historic town centre to buck national trends and emerging as an exemplar of a new era of vibrant and resilient centres. New homes, jobs, public spaces and social infrastructure have redefined the town centre as a place to live, not just to shop.

However, Stockport is not immune from the big challenges of our times. While the borough overall is flourishing, it has some very deprived areas including the most deprived small area in Greater Manchester.²

A combination of assets and challenges create a compelling case for Stockport as the location for a significant new residential community to contribute to meeting our need for more housing and ambitions for our thriving town centre.

Connectivity: Stockport’s success is in part due to its exceptional transport connectivity to Manchester city centre, Manchester Airport, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, and London. Easy access to the Peak District, the Trans-Pennine Trail, alongside rivers, canals, and walking routes.

Natural assets: The town centre is home to fantastic natural assets, from defining features such as the Rivers Goyt, Tame and Mersey to green and blue spaces such as Hempshaw Brook, Heaton Norris and Hollywood Parks. The enhancement of these spaces is key to realising our goals of wellbeing, ecological quality, and placemaking.

Heritage: The town is home to a rich concentration of historic buildings, industrial structures, medieval street patterns, and landmark Victorian and Edwardian civic architecture. Its distinctiveness comes from the *layers* of history visible in the built environment — from medieval origins, through the industrial revolution, to 19th–20th century civic expansion and a corridor of historic industrial land along the Mersey. The regeneration of the town centre is already breathing new life into these buildings and spaces, enhancing and protecting them into the future.

Housing market: Historic development of the town centre means that it has a higher baseline of social housing compared to the borough’s wider districts. The high proportion of private rented homes also plays a key role in the borough’s wider housing market, particularly for younger adults seeking first homes. In the borough’s wider districts, the ageing population is creating under occupation of houses, contributing to local housing need. Within the wider regional economy, the town centre is relatively affordable, making it attractive compared to Manchester City Centre.

People in our town centre are more likely than Stockport residents as a whole to:

- Be renting their home – 77% compared to 27% in Stockport in as a whole
- Be living in a social rented home – 42% compared to 13% in Stockport as a whole

¹ [Invest in Manchester | Greater Manchester named productivity growth capital of UK](#)

² Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2025

- Be living in a private rented home – 34% compared to 14% for Stockport as a whole

Population

Our town centre population is changing fast. It's relative affordability and access to amenities mean that it is attractive to younger adults seeking their first home in the borough. The growth in apartments and first homes is helping to address a recognised shortage, enabling Stockport to retain more younger adults within the borough as they establish their own homes.

People in our town centre are more likely than Stockport residents as a whole to:

- Be a young adult (18-29) - 21%, compared to 11% in Stockport as a whole
- Be living alone – 54% compared to 30% in Stockport as a whole

Deprivation

Our regeneration ambitions recognise that the town centre is both home to and adjacent to some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Stockport. Narrowing that gap is a strategic outcome of the Council and a driver for the MDC's approach to

People in our town centre are more likely than Stockport residents as a whole to:

- Be unemployed – 8.3% compared to 4.5% for Stockport as a whole
- Be living in a deprived neighbourhood – 66% live in a small area (LSOA) in the top 10% most deprived in the country, compared to 10% for Stockport as a whole

The UK's biggest town centre regeneration programme: Our journey so far

Over the last decade Stockport has emerged as a national exemplar of town centre regeneration. Through the strong and sustained leadership of the Council, a hugely ambitious £1bn investment programme has delivered new housing and commercial developments, major transport infrastructure enhancements and creation of new public realm. Together these have redefined the town as a cultural, leisure, food and beverage, and visitor destination.

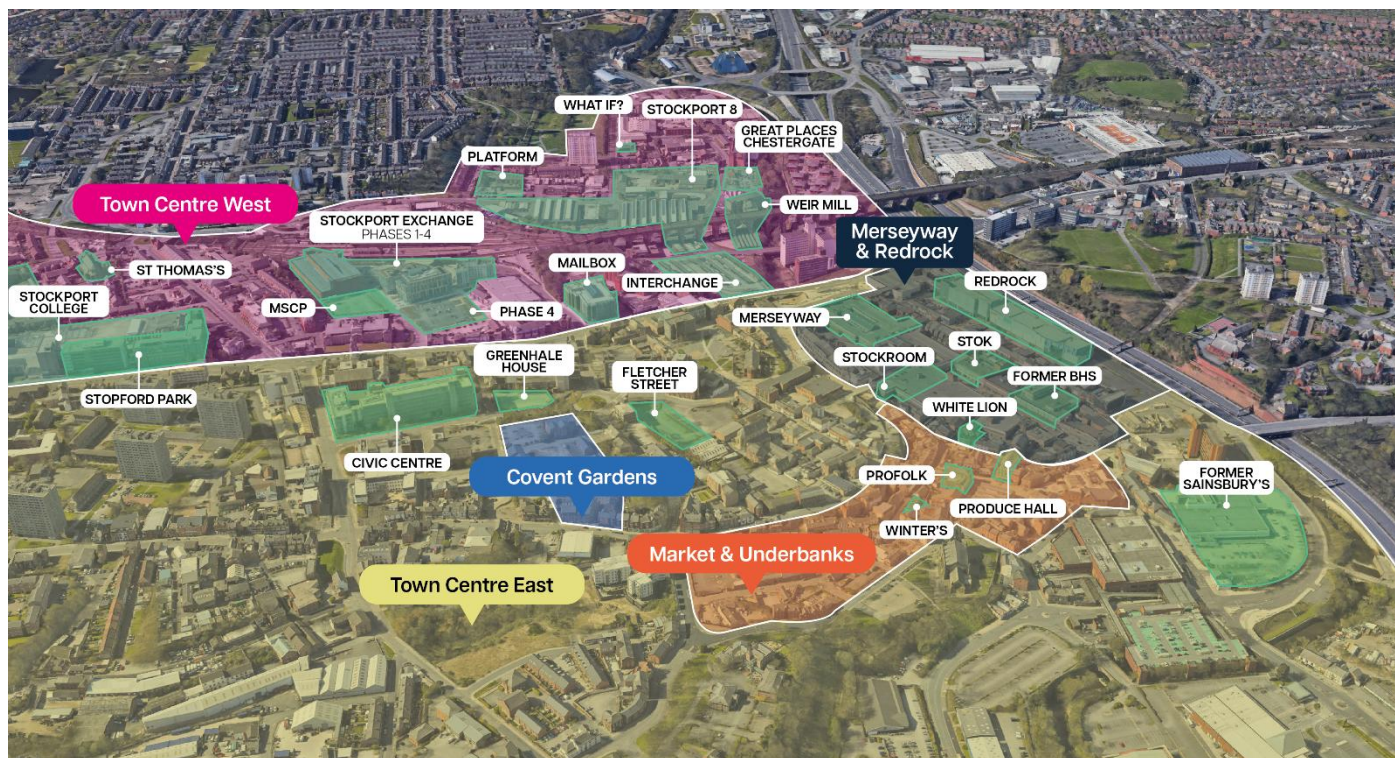
The Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) was established in 2019 to accelerate and amplify this success by creating a new, exemplar residential neighbourhood in an area of previously developed land to the west of the town centre. The purpose was to support the regeneration of the wider town centre – providing homes for a growing population who will in turn support the success of the town which serves all Stockport residents and acts as a strategically important economic centre for Greater Manchester. In just seven years the MDC brought forward:

- Over 1,200 new homes, with a further 1,300 due to start on site in 2026
- 170,000 sq. ft. of new Grade A office space at Stockport Exchange
- State-of-the-art and award-winning infrastructure at Stockport Interchange – the town's new transport Interchange with two acre roof top park, Mersey riverside walkway and brand new active travel routes connecting Stockport train station to the town centre

The success of Stockport's regeneration has been recognised through a growing number of national accolades and positive media coverage. Stockport was named the best places to live in the North West by *The Sunday Times* in 2024 and highlighted as one of the best places to buy a first home reflecting the town centre's combination of affordability, quality of place and connectivity. Major

schemes delivered through the MDC have also received multiple national awards for planning, design and delivery, reinforcing Stockport's reputation as a leading example of town centre renewal. Together, this recognition has helped reposition Stockport as a confident, investable place, strengthening interest from residents, businesses, partners and government.

The image below demonstrates the diversity and scale of regeneration activity across the whole of the town centre since 2013:



Mailbox by Rise Homes, 117 homes for private rent - completed in February 2020.

- High quality repurposing of disused buildings

This was the town's first new high quality private rental scheme (PRS) for a number of years. This conversion of the former Royal Mail Sorting Office – long derelict and occupying a prominent location in the town centre – as a striking modern apartment block of 117 new homes with ground floor employment use marked a major step forward in reshaping Stockport's residential market.

Interchange by Stockport Council, Stockport MDC, Cityheart, City Rise, TfGM, GMCA and Homes England, 196 homes – completed in May 2024.

- New 2 acre public park
- New and enhanced sustainable transport infrastructure
- 196 new homes

Originally conceived as a transport scheme, Stockport Interchange demonstrates the vision and ambition of the MDC, Stockport Council and partners. Alongside a new bus station, it delivers new homes, major infrastructure and high-quality public spaces, including a two-acre park, a riverside

walkway, a new walking and cycling bridge to Stockport Station and 196 new apartments. Delivered through a partnership between the MDC, Transport for Greater Manchester, Stockport Council, GMCA, Homes England and developers Cityheart and Rise Homes, the scheme shows how devolved infrastructure funding can unlock significant public and private investment. The Interchange has received extensive national recognition, including winning the RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup for Best Planning Scheme of the Year and Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy at the 2024 RTPI Awards, as well as Best Financial Structure at the International Partnership Awards and Design, Engineering and Construction Project of the Year at the National Transport Awards. The transport element opened in March 2024, with homes completed in June 2024 and now fully let.

Weir Mill by Capital and Centric, 253 homes – on site and due for completion in 2026.

- Breathing new life into heritage buildings
- New public realm at Weavers Square

Capital & Centric's redevelopment of the historic Weir Mill is one of the most distinctive and characterful regeneration schemes in Stockport town centre. Following the acquisition of the site in 2020, the scheme reimagines a landmark heritage asset as a vibrant new residential neighbourhood—celebrating the Grade II listed mill's industrial character while introducing high-quality new homes, contemporary architecture and new riverside public realm. The transformation demonstrates how Stockport's historic buildings can play a central role in shaping its future, creating places that are rooted in history but designed for modern living.

Stopford Park by Cityheart, 442 homes – on site and due for completion in 2026.

- New public realm through the Stopford Park 'art park'
- High quality repurposing of disused buildings

In 2018 a merger with Trafford College prompted a major redevelopment of the Stockport College site. Investment in the site made a major contribution to strengthening further education provision in the town centre. It also released 2.9 acres of surplus land adjacent to the campus. Cityheart's Stopford Park scheme is transforming this strategically located site in the southern part of the town centre into a new mixed-use neighbourhood. The scheme will deliver 442 new homes across three residential buildings, alongside shared workspace and commercial space supporting around 300 jobs, new public realm and an art-led landscape strategy that reflects the area's heritage and cultural significance. Construction commenced in autumn 2024, with the first phase now on site and phased completion expected through to 2026.

Platform, delivered by **Great Places**, 73 'Rent to Buy' affordable homes, completed 2025

- Delivery of new homes for affordable rent

This scheme marked an early step in the transformation of the Brinksway neighbourhood. Completed in spring 2025, the scheme supports access to high-quality, genuinely affordable homes for local people and helps establish a more mixed and inclusive residential neighbourhood alongside wider regeneration activity.

Chestergate, delivered by Great Places, 148 homes for affordable and social rent, in construction and due for completion in 2027

- Delivery of homes for affordable and social rent
- New public realm with pedestrian link to the River Mersey

This scheme brings forward a mix of social rent and Rent to Buy homes. Currently under construction, the scheme will support inclusive town centre living while improving connectivity through new pedestrian links to the River Mersey, helping to extend the benefits of regeneration to existing and new communities.

St Thomas' Gardens, delivered by Stockport Council and Stockport Homes Group, Intermediate care facility and 68 affordable homes, in construction

- New social infrastructure
- Age-friendly living
- Breathing new life into heritage buildings

The Council and Stockport Homes are working in partnership to deliver the St Thomas' Gardens scheme, which secured planning permission in March 2021. The first phase of the scheme includes the Academy of Living Well, providing 82 beds of intermediate care and 8 supported living homes, making a significant contribution to improving adult social care provision and supporting independent living in the heart of the town centre. Planning consent has also been secured for 68 affordable homes, incorporating the re-use of heritage buildings and intergenerational living.

Stockport Exchange, by Stockport Council with Muse Developments, 170,000 sq. ft. Grade A office space, 2 multi-story car parks and a 115 bed hotel

- Securing new jobs and investment
- New public realm at Stockport Exchange
- Meanwhile sports uses

Stockport Exchange, delivered through a joint venture between Stockport Council and Muse Developments, is a high-quality, employment-led commercial quarter at the gateway to the town centre, immediately adjacent to Stockport railway station. Rare in a town centre context, it provides Grade A office accommodation in a highly accessible location with direct rail connections to Manchester, London and the wider region, helping to attract and retain high-value jobs outside a core city centre. Since 2017, more than 170,000 sq. ft. of office space has been delivered across multiple phases, all of which are fully let or performing strongly, with occupiers including national and international firms, professional services and fast-growing digital and tech-enabled businesses. The success of Stockport Exchange has played a catalytic role in reshaping perceptions of the town centre as a place to do business, concentrating jobs, footfall and investment in a walkable, well-connected location.

What if? Hub by An Action Commons with Stockport MDC, Resilient Cities Network and Stockport8 LLP

- New social infrastructure
- Repurposing of disused buildings

The What if? Hub is being delivered in partnership with local communities and VCSFE partners and is a flagship example of the MDC’s approach to building strong, connected and resilient neighbourhoods alongside major housing growth. Located adjacent to Hollywood Park in Edgeley, the Hub repurposes the former Park View building to create a community led ‘third space’ that supports connection, skills, wellbeing and climate resilience for existing and new residents. Launched in summer 2024, What if? has piloted a model of locally shaped social infrastructure, bringing together community activity, urban greening and cultural programmes, and is now informing the MDC’s ambition to develop a wider network of Live Well Spaces across the town centre as regeneration continues.

Stockport8, by Stockport8 LLP – a joint venture of Stockport Council and English Cities Fund, c. 1,300 new homes. Detailed planning consent for phase one secured 2025 along with outline consent for phases 2 & 3.

- Delivery of new homes, including homes for affordable rent
- New public realm including two new public squares

Stockport8 is Stockport’s flagship, area-based regeneration project being delivered through a joint venture between Stockport Council and English Cities Fund, transforming an 8-acre brownfield site at the heart of the town centre into a new, sustainable neighbourhood. The scheme will deliver around 1,300 new homes alongside new public spaces, improved connections to Hollywood Park and the River Mersey, and supporting social and community infrastructure. As one of the largest town centre regeneration sites currently being brought forward in the UK, Stockport8 demonstrates the MDC’s ambition and innovative delivery approaches —using land assembly, partnership and patient public investment to unlock complex sites and create a walkable, inclusive neighbourhood that supports long-term growth and resilience.

The vision for the town centre in 2040:

The One Stockport, One Future Plan builds on the transformation to date and sets out a long term vision for a thriving town centre at the heart of the best borough in the country to live happy and healthy lives:

- 8,000 new homes
- 1m sq. ft. new employment space
- A new town centre school
- A new health hub

Below we summarise the key elements of this vision:

Excerpts from One Stockport, One Future

Building more homes in the town and district centres using already developed land. Through our interventionist approach we are successfully tackling the barriers to regeneration that have held back towns for generations, delivering on a scale of ambition that is unmatched by any other town in the country.

Over the next fifteen years we want to build on our regeneration success by becoming a national leader in urban living of the future. Our sights are now turning to the east of the town centre and our district centres where we believe there is potential to deliver an even greater number of new homes, with an emphasis on affordable homes for people at all stages of life. Town centre living at this scale is rare in the UK but is crucial to the long-term challenge of housing our growing population, breathing life back into our high streets and to achieve net zero.

Being the best place to start a new business. Creating 1,500 new businesses and getting an additional 6,500 people in employment. Working with partners across Greater Manchester's Southern Growth Corridor, over the next fifteen years we want to unlock the potential for Stockport to become home to thriving businesses creating high quality jobs and driving economic growth.

Stockport Exchange has demonstrated Stockport's appeal to major businesses. Building on this momentum and with the necessary investment in our transport and digital infrastructure and start up space, we believe our town and district centre business base could be transformed, with clusters of business and professional services companies benefiting from our quality value proposition relative to the city centre and the global investment opportunities being created around Manchester Airport and the wider Southern Growth Corridor.

Creating jobs and skills in growing industries such as - the green economy, digital, construction, health and care and transport. Our One Future ambitions for a new hospital and health hub in the town centre and major expansion of housing development on already developed land have the potential to act as powerful generators of economic opportunity. We want to harness these opportunities to maximum effect, making this investment the driver of sustained growth of good jobs and long-term career options for local people at scale.

Bringing these investments to the heart of our borough provides a powerful opportunity to build long-term skills and employment pathways into these key sectors for people in the borough. Our commitment is to create a local skills approach which mirrors these priority sectors, providing world class opportunities for Stockport residents and the skills and expertise needed for employers to thrive here.

Having excellent inclusive schools right across the borough which support all children to achieve their potential. We will build a new inclusive secondary school in the town centre and create more outstanding specialist provision for children and young people with autism and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. We will also tackle the challenge of recruitment and retention of teachers through joined up approaches across housing, work and skills.

Brand new hospital and health-hub at the heart of the town centre. The new proposed hospital gives us the opportunity to design our health and care provision so it will work for us in the future. The hospital alongside the new primary care health hub will give access to a range of services providing the right care at the right place and right time. As well as providing the best health and care, the new hospital and primary care health hub will be a site for health innovation with opportunities for greater collaboration with universities, research and businesses, bringing jobs, increased footfall and activity in our town centre.

Our strategic outcomes

As an MDC our role is to deliver on the One Stockport, One Future vision for the continued regeneration of the town centre. Our five strategic outcomes describe what success will look like.

Housing a growing community

- Pioneer urban living in the UK, delivering 8,000 new, quality homes in the town centre
- Bring forward a diverse range of homes - from apartments to town houses for families and accessible homes so that people of all ages and backgrounds can put down roots and thrive in our borough
- Play a key role in meeting local housing need by delivering affordable homes for Stockport residents within the town centre

Good jobs and a strong local economy

- Bring forward 1m sq. ft. of new employment space, creating the conditions for thousands of high-quality jobs and providing room for local businesses to grow.
- Triple the town centre population, boosting footfall and spending, helping the local economy to thrive.
- Harness Stockport's major construction pipeline to create transformational opportunities for local residents and businesses.

Thriving people at the heart of regeneration

- Pioneer early delivery of much needed, high quality healthcare and education facilities for the benefit of town centre and wider Stockport residents
- Collaborate with local people to develop community-led self-sustaining social infrastructure to connect existing and new residents and communities neighbouring the town centre
- Curate a place where everyone feels welcome, safe, and included and where there is strong sense of belonging

Great connectivity for all

- Make it easier for everyone to get around the town centre —whether by bus, train, bike, or on foot.
- Support the delivery of the Metrolink extension and the redevelopment of Stockport Station.
- Collaborate with Stockport Council to improve roads and active travel routes, creating east-west connections and addressing the severance created by the A6 to shape a safer, more accessible and vibrant environment.

A clean, green Stockport town centre

- Developments will be carbon neutral in operation and we'll encourage innovation in green construction.
- Protect and promote investment to enhance the town centres parks, rivers, and greenspaces to maximise ecological and wellbeing impacts now and for future generations.

Delivering benefits beyond our boundary

Key to our success is delivering benefits that extend out beyond our boundary. We are committed to ensuring that regeneration benefits people across Stockport, particularly communities facing the greatest disadvantage. We're not just leaving this to chance, we're working with Stockport Council to create the mechanisms and approaches needed to deliver. These will evolve as we drive innovation but currently include:

1) Social infrastructure which serves the town centre and neighbouring communities

- Our **new town centre school** will serve both the growing communities of the town centre and neighbouring areas with high levels of deprivation including Brinnington. The aim is to provide an outstanding new choice which will define and demonstrate new standards and practice within mainstream schools and improve attendance, outcomes and inclusion.
- Our **health hub** will address the health impacts of the inequality in our borough and the growing pressures on healthcare services. These challenges mean that people in the town centre and its neighbouring communities are more likely to experience ill health and face barriers to accessing the care and support they need, close to home. The hub will operate as an exemplar neighbourhood health hub providing the right care at the right place and right time.

2) Connecting people to the jobs and training opportunities being created through town centre regeneration

The MDC initiated the creation of the **One Stockport Construction Hub** in 2024. The Hub is now a borough-wide partnership that connects local residents and businesses with the growing construction jobs and skills opportunities created by Stockport's major regeneration programme. Bringing together contractors, training providers and VCSFE partners, it provides a single, inclusive route into pathways to good jobs in the industry. The Hub aims to strengthen the Stockport construction sector and ensure that regeneration delivers long-term social value and transformational opportunities for communities across the borough.

3) Creating connection between people in growing communities

We recognise that the scale of population growth in the town centre is a major change for those living in and around the town centre, and that there is a risk of a disconnect between new and existing communities. We also know that communities with strong social bonds and high levels of trust are better able to thrive in good times and better withstand stresses and shocks. In response to that the MDC has co-created a model for neighbourhood Live Well spaces and centres, built on clear evidence that communities with strong social bonds and high levels of trust are better able to thrive in good times and better withstand stresses and shocks. These spaces and centres are vital 'third spaces' where local people come together to build connections, confidence and practical skills. By strengthening social infrastructure and

creating locally-owned spaces for co-design and problem-solving, the centres and spaces foster belonging and trust and empower communities to shape solutions to local priorities.

Our first Live Well space has been co-designed and developed with communities and local, regional, national and international partners at the What if? Hub in Edgeley. The aim is to support the development of similar spaces and centres across the town centre.

4) The town centre as a great place for everyone in Stockport

Over the last decade we've seen how the growing success of Stockport town centre delivers benefits for people across the whole borough, not just those who live there. Our thriving town centre is driving job growth, investment in public services and wider services and facilities that residents from all neighbourhoods rely on—whether they are travelling in for work, education, healthcare, shopping or leisure. By bringing homes, workplaces, schools, health services and public transport together in one well-connected place, the town centre serves a wide catchment. Concentrating investment also ensures public funding is used effectively, through shared infrastructure, stronger transport links and busier, more viable town-centre streets. In this way, the town centre functions as a shared asset for the whole borough, supporting economic growth, access to essential services and a better quality of life for people wherever they live in Stockport.

Our investment approach

The delivery of our ambition for 8,000 new homes and 1 million sq. ft of employment floorspace will require / an estimated **£2 billion of investment by 2040**³. Key to the success of the Stockport Town Centre West MDC was the development of a highly effective investment approach which utilised public funding to unlock growing levels of private sector investment. Building on this approach will be key to delivering on our expanded ambition to 2040.

Stockport MDC Investment Facility

To kick start development in Town Centre West, Stockport Council created a £100m investment facility in 2019 which has been used to support a number of development schemes in the area (including the Interchange, Stockport Exchange, Weir Mill and Stockport8). The Facility will remain live throughout the Plan period and will continue to be used to service development within the expanded MDC area.

Stockport MDC's Investment Framework

Produced in 2021, the Framework was developed to unlock the scale of investment needed to deliver thousands of new homes, employment space and major infrastructure in Town Centre West. It sets out a four pillar strategy, designed to unlock Council and wider public funding alongside private sector investment. Key to the Framework is the aim of addressing viability challenges at a programme scale rather than site by site.

The Framework in action

In line with this Framework over the first seven years of the Town Centre West MDC we successfully utilised the MDC investment facility to leverage significant public and private sector funding, including:

- £12m Homes England grant (in the Interchange and Weir Mill schemes)
- £17m Brownfield Housing Fund contributions (in Interchange, Stopford Park, and St Thomas' Gardens).
- We have also secured private sector investment from developers and Joint Venture Partners including Muse.
- A further private investment of approx. £250m is anticipated in the next phase of the MDC pipeline, alongside public investment from Stockport Council.

The Town Centre West MDC has also sought to partner at a regional and national level to pioneer innovative approaches to investment, including the Stockport Interchange scheme (summarised below).

- Investment case study: Stockport Interchange
- Original proposal: A TfGM funded £40m bus station replacement
- Reworked into a **c.£140m transformational regeneration scheme**, delivering 196 new homes, 2-acre rooftop park & state of the art transport Interchange
- Enabled by **innovative c. £18m patient equity investment from GMCA** - closed viability gap and provided confidence for private sector investment

³ Stockport Town Centre Benefits Assessment (2025), GC Insight Ltd.

- **Successful completion** (to time and budget) in Spring 2024, has exceeded 94% occupancy and remains on track to deliver anticipated returns to the public sector
- **Exemplar scheme:** RTPI Jubilee Cup winner (2024), Best Financial Structure in Partnership Awards (2024)

The MDC has established a strong track record of combining local and regional public investment in innovative ways to **leverage growing levels of private investment**, accelerating delivery and improving viability across the town centre. Building on this foundation, the MDC will go further by maximising the opportunities of the **Integrated Settlement** and the next generation of devolution—pioneering place-based investment approaches that go beyond funding individual schemes to target public investment where it can best secure long-term strategic outcomes, including high-quality social and physical infrastructure to support a sustainable, thriving town centre.

Our delivery commitments 2026-31

This section of the Plan explains what the MDC will do over the next five years to deliver its strategic outcomes. The delivery commitments turn the MDC’s long-term ambitions to 2040 into a clear and practical programme of action for 2026–31, with each commitment designed to support more than one outcome – for example the establishment of a new town centre school is intended to drive up the quality of education facilities serving the town centre and neighbouring communities, improving educational outcomes while at the same time catalysing residential regeneration at scale and contributing to a strong shared sense of belonging. These five-year commitments are supported by an Annual Action Plan, which sets out in more detail what the MDC will deliver in each individual year.

Delivery commitment 1: Housing a growing community

Over the next five years, the MDC will work to drive the delivery of **3,500 new homes** across the town centre, in line with our target of 8,000 new homes by 2040. We will approach this through a combination of **area-based regeneration** (focused on creating new neighbourhoods at scale) and proactive support to bring forward market-led schemes on **individual sites**. Working in partnership with landowners, developers and Registered Providers, the MDC will act as a convenor and enabler—shaping a clear housing pipeline, supporting market-led schemes, and targeting public sector intervention where needed to overcome constraints, accelerate delivery and maximise delivery of our strategic outcomes. Together, these complementary approaches will ensure that we maximise the potential of the diverse opportunities of the town centre, supporting inclusive growth and sustaining momentum across the whole town centre.

Delivering diverse tenures

Since 2019, we have established Stockport MDC as a credible delivery vehicle for new homes at scale, including above Stockport Council planning policy levels of homes for affordable and social rent^[1]. Build to rent schemes have played a critical role in delivery and de-risking of this early phase of regeneration and made an important contribution to meeting the need for rented homes in the borough. As we move forward, we will seek to explore all delivery routes and funding models available to evolve the mix of tenures and housing types with an aim to support long-term affordability, community stability and inclusive growth including:

- Social rent and affordable rent, particularly for local households and key workers
- Families, including larger apartments and town-house style lower density housing typologies

^[1] Stockport Planning Policy currently sets a requirement for 5-15% affordable homes in town centre residential schemes the MDC has delivered c. 20%

- Older people, including age-friendly and specialist housing

Securing a diverse future mix of housing types and tenures will help lock in affordability as regeneration succeeds, supporting long-term stability and inclusive growth. In doing so, it will ensure the town centre continues to work for existing communities while welcoming new residents.

Area based transformation

Through this workstream we aim to drive redevelopment across multiple sites in targeted areas of the town centre to create new neighbourhoods with shared character and complementary uses. In this section we set out the areas which we will focus on this Plan period.

Our areas

Royal George Quarter

“A new all-age, mixed tenure neighbourhood with a historic heart”

Royal George Quarter is a new neighbourhood, shaped around a historic heart. By reusing and celebrating heritage buildings alongside high-quality homes, shared green spaces and inclusive social infrastructure, it will create a sustainable, people-centred place to live.

Status: With two significant schemes currently due to complete in the early part of this Plan period, Royal George Quarter is already transforming with an exciting pipeline of future housing and cultural developments coming forward in later years.

- **Existing schemes:**
 - **St Thomas’ Community of Living Well.** The Council and Stockport Homes are working together to deliver St. Thomas’ Gardens. The first phase of the scheme is 82 beds of intermediate care which will contribute to improving the quality of the adult social care offer within the borough.
 - **Stopford Park.** Located adjacent to the Stockport College campus, Cityheart’s Stopford Park scheme will bring forward 442 new homes, shared workspace and a new public art park adjacent to the Stockport Art Gallery War Memorial. The shared workspace, known as ‘Cheers and Smith’, is located in the Grade II listed former Metropolitan Girls School. Construction began in autumn 2024 with phases due to complete in 2026 and 2027.
- **Future pipeline:**
 - Planning consent has also been secured for 68 affordable homes on the St Thomas’ site which incorporate re-use of heritage buildings, intergenerational living, sustainability and shared greenspace to create a strong sense of community. In the early part of this planning period we will work with partners to explore viable delivery route for these homes.

Delivery commitment 1.1: By 2031 the Community of Living Well and Stopford Park will complete and further schemes delivering additional new homes will be site.

Brinksway

“Parkside living for people and place”

The regeneration of Brinksway will transform this former industrial riverside area into a welcoming and inclusive neighbourhood that builds on its history to create resilience. Our ambition is to create a mixed community of market, affordable and social rent homes, woven together with improved green spaces and shared places. This will be anchored by the What if? Hub and the renewal of Hollywood Park, supporting strong connections, local pride and active community stewardship across Brinksway, Edgeley and the wider town centre.

Status: With one affordable housing scheme already complete and another started on site in 2025, the transformation of this area is already underway. Investment in the What if? Hub adjacent to Hollywood Park is supporting the existing communities of Edgeley as well as new residents to participate and shape the future of the area. In the early part of this Plan period the first phase of Stockport8 will start on site, with additional phases coming forward over coming years.

- **Completed:** Platform (Great Places), 73 Rent to Buy homes
- **On site:**
 - Chestergate (Great Places) 148 homes, including 101 for social rent and 47 Rent to Buy homes
 - The retrofit and repurposing of the Park View building into the What if? Hub
- **Future pipeline:**
 - **Stockport8:** Detailed planning consent has been secured for phase 1 Stockport8 (435 homes, including 82 for affordable rent) and outline consent for phases 2 & 3 (c. 865 homes).
 - **Hollywood Park investment framework**

Delivery commitment 1.2: By 2031 we will have completed Phase1 of Stockport8 and the What if? hub will be operating as a flagship, self-sufficient Live Well space.

Piccadilly

“A people-friendly gateway for Stockport town centre”

Piccadilly is our opportunity to turn a vehicle-dominated cut through into a people-friendly place—with new homes and reshaped people-centred public realm designed to create a safer and more welcoming environment. By improving the A6/Piccadilly crossing environment and aligning it with a stronger east–west route, we will better stitch Piccadilly into Stockport Station / Exchange and the town centre core, supporting the ambition for a connected, walkable town centre.

Status: Piccadilly sits in the eastern side of the town centre, newly covered by the expanded Stockport Town Centre MDC and is therefore a new area of focus. With several existing planning consents for both residential and commercial schemes in the area, we anticipate that development will begin to come forward in the early part of this Plan period. Fragmented ownership present some challenges to future opportunities and landowner engagement will be a key area of focus as we develop the pipeline of schemes and wider place making activity in this area.

- **Future pipeline:**

- The Fletcher Street scheme being brought forward by Progressive Living and residential operator Picture This. The scheme will create 245 new homes as well as shared community spaces on a landmark site adjacent to the Piccadilly roundabout. Designed to Passivhaus principles and explicitly shaped by Greater Manchester Age Friendly guidance age-friendly principles, the scheme is intended to promote health and wellbeing for residents and surrounding communities alike.
- Planning consent has been secured to transform Greenhale House, a Council owned vacant and underused site, into 164 new homes for affordable rent.

Delivery commitment 1.3: By 2031 Greenhale House & Fletcher Street will be on site

Other first phase area-based transformation areas in the east of the town centre.

Reflecting the recently expanded boundary of the MDC, in the early part of this Business Plan period we will be exploring potential of areas in the east of the town centre as appropriate locations for transformational regeneration. This will involve a specific focus on identifying opportunities for the delivery of the SRF ambitions to bring forward homes for all stages of life, including town houses and medium density homes suited to families.

- **Future pipeline:**

- We have secured revenue funding to identify and assess potential areas for area-based transformation approach in the the east of the town centre during 2026-27. This funding will enable us to identify a priority area and develop a high level delivery strategy for that area.

Enabling residential opportunities on individual sites

Through this workstream we will focuses on enabling residential delivery across a range of individual sites, particularly in the east of the town centre, where a targeted approach is needed to complement area-based transformation. Working with the existing urban fabric and patterns of ownership we will seek to understand constraints and align delivery partners, including Registered Providers. Acting as a convenor and enabler, we'll work closely with developers to support them to bring forward market-led schemes in line with the principles set out in the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for the town centre. We will also work in close collaboration with Stockport Homes Group and Registered Provider partners to maximise the delivery of affordable homes and ensure smaller sites make a meaningful contribution to our ambitions.

The MDC has begun an early analysis to understand the delivery prospects of individual sites across the town centre. This work is aims to establish a high level overview of site readiness, constraints and indicative tenures across multiple sites.

Drawing on this analysis, in the early part of the Business Plan period we will carry out engagement with landowners and potential delivery partners to shape a clear housing pipeline which identifies priority sites for delivery, with a particular focus on opportunities for Registered Provider-led affordable housing. In a coordinated approach underpinned by close partnership working, we will seek to enable schemes to come forward through:

- **Targeted engagement with landowners and delivery partners**
Engagement will build on the delivery prospects work to address identified barriers, support momentum where market interest is emerging and improve coordination across fragmented ownerships, with early consideration of suitability for Registered Provider delivery of affordable homes.
- **Aligning sites with delivery partners and funding opportunities**
Development opportunities and the prospect of land sales will be aligned with appropriate delivery partners, particularly Registered Providers, and advocated into relevant public sector investment programmes to support the delivery of genuinely affordable homes.
- **Acting as convenor and advocate**
The MDC will support market-led schemes where possible, advocating for public sector interventions for priority schemes where necessary to unlock delivery in line with our Strategic Outcomes and the Council's One Stockport One Future vision.
- **Maximising affordable housing outcomes**
Ongoing collaboration with Stockport Homes Group and wider Registered Provider partners will ensure that individual sites make a meaningful contribution to meeting housing need through the delivery of genuinely affordable homes across the borough.

Delivery commitments:

1.4: By 2031 we will have identified and enabled delivery of a range of individual sites, ensuring that market-led schemes contribute to our overall housing target

1.5: By 2031 we will have collaborated with Stockport Homes Group and Registered Providers to identify and bring forward affordable housing schemes

Delivery commitment 2: Delivering critical social infrastructure

Early delivery of high-quality social infrastructure has been central to the success of Stockport's regeneration to date, including the new two-acre Viaduct Park and Stockroom, Stockport Council's award-winning creative and cultural centre. With the doubling of our housing ambitions, this has become even more pressing. Schools, health facilities and community spaces are fundamental to enabling both new and existing communities to thrive and live well. Through this commitment, the MDC will bring forward state-of-the-art social infrastructure that benefits all Stockport residents and makes regeneration a driver of a more fair and inclusive borough. Nationally, this remains a key challenge, and Stockport MDC is well placed to pioneer new approaches to early delivery through innovation and partnership working.

Strategic context

This commitment supports Stockport's and Greater Manchester's shared Live Well ambitions, recognising that health, wellbeing and life chances are shaped by place as well as services. The Council's *One Stockport, One Future* Plan places particular emphasis on the role of schools and health facilities as foundations for thriving neighbourhoods. By prioritising the early delivery of this social infrastructure, the MDC is addressing the wider determinants of health and supporting preventative, place-based models of support. Integrating enhanced health, education, parks, public spaces and community infrastructure with housing growth will create inclusive, accessible environments and state-of-the-art facilities, ensuring regeneration contributes to healthier lives, reduced inequalities and stronger communities across the borough.

Delivery priorities

Under this delivery commitment we have identified three priorities. These are described below:

New town centre school

The One Stockport One Future Plan set the ambition for a new town centre school. In 2025 the MDC and the Council worked closely to shape a detailed vision for the school as an exemplar, supporting inclusive education, improving outcomes for underserved communities neighbouring the town centre, and helping to transform the town centre into a place where families can establish their lives and thrive. This vision in turn informed initial design work undertaken by BDP. Over this Business Plan period we will translate this high level vision into a deliverable scheme through:

- Completion of design work for the school
- Development of an innovative investment model aligned to evolution of the GM Integrated Settlement and in partnership with government
- Identification of a delivery partner for the school

New town centre health hub

Like the town centre school, the new town centre health hub is an ambition of the One Stockport One Future Plan, contributing to the wider vision to make the borough the best place to live happy, healthy

lives. Shaped around local needs and priorities, the hub will bring together primary care, community and preventative services in a single, state-of-the-art facility, supporting integrated, place-based models of care and helping to tackle health inequalities. It will also make a significant contribution to town centre footfall. This locally led approach aligns closely with Stockport and Greater Manchester Live Well neighbourhood models and emerging national policy on neighbourhood health hubs, positioning Stockport to help shape and test new models of delivery as part of town centre regeneration. Over this Business Plan period we will translate this high level vision into a deliverable scheme through:

- Collaboration with local Primary Care Networks, the Integrated Care Board and the wider VCSFE sector to shape the vision for the Hub and a route to delivery.
- Collaboration with Stockport Council to identify potential sites and design the scheme.

A necklace of Live Well Spaces and Centres

As described in earlier sections of this Plan, Live Well Spaces and Centres are a part of the MDC's approach to enabling strong, connected and resilient communities alongside significant town centre growth. Building on the approach piloted in Town Centre West through the What if? hub, these community-led spaces provide practical, everyday support for connection, skills, confidence and wellbeing, particularly for communities experiencing significant population growth. By scaling this model across the town centre, the MDC will support the development of a network of locally shaped hubs that bring Live Well ambitions to life on the ground—demonstrating how national and global agendas around prevention, resilience and community capacity can be delivered in practice through place-based regeneration.

Over this Business Plan period we will seek to enable the growth of a network of places and spaces developed with and by the local community to support existing and new communities to thrive, together:

- We will build on community engagement work around places and spaces that matter most to the community in Town Centre West undertaken in 2023 to carry out a similar exercise in the area to the east of the town centre.
- From that work we'll work with VCSFE partners to identify potential places and spaces which could become Live Well spaces or centres recognising that these will look different in each location – co-designed with local communities and underpinned by self-sustaining operating models
- We'll leverage social value investment to support the fabric of hubs as well as engagement and community programmes.

Delivery commitments

2.1: By 2031 construction will be underway on a new town centre school

2.2: By 2031 construction will be underway on the new town centre health hub

2.3: By 2031 two Live Well spaces / centres will be in operation

Delivery commitment 3: Securing transformational social value

Through this commitment, the MDC will ensure that Stockport’s regeneration programme delivers lasting social value for local people, not just new development. Our approach focuses on two complementary strands: harnessing the scale of construction activity to create inclusive jobs and skills pathways through the One Stockport Construction Hub, and channelling social value investment into long-term social infrastructure, particularly the development of community-led Live Well Spaces and centres. Building on the MDC’s Social Value Framework, this moves beyond short-term, scheme-by-scheme activity towards a coordinated, place-based approach that links regeneration investment to opportunity, resilience and wellbeing—embedding a legacy that benefits communities across the borough long after construction is complete.

The MDC Social Value Framework

The MDC Social Value Framework was adopted by the Town Centre West MDC in 2024, reflecting learning from the early years of delivery and recognising the limitations of short-term, scheme-by-scheme social value activity. The Framework will now be taken forward by the Stockport Town Centre MDC and applied across all MDC-enabled regeneration activity, including development schemes, construction projects and professional services, providing a consistent approach to how social value is defined, delivered and measured.

The Framework focuses on moving beyond individual contractor commitments towards shared delivery routes that can harness the scale and longevity of Stockport’s regeneration programme. Central to this are two core implementation mechanisms which partners are encouraged to support:

- **One Stockport Construction Hub:** The One Stockport Construction Hub undertakes a range of activities to knit the jobs and skills opportunities generated by individual development schemes into inclusive, long-term pathways into good quality construction jobs for local people.
- **Investment in social infrastructure,** including Live Well Spaces and Centres, enabling partners to “plug into” long-term community-led resilience rather than delivering fragmented interventions.

Through this approach the MDC seeks to secure transformational, long-term social value, linking regeneration investment to embed a lasting social legacy from regeneration that benefits Stockport residents well beyond the life of individual development schemes.

Meanwhile use

While skills and job opportunities and financial and in kind investment are the primary focus of the MDC Social Value Framework, it links to our approach to meanwhile use of sites awaiting redevelopment. Under the Town Centre West MDC the Framework was used to guide the selection of GRIT Studios as an operator for a site acquired by Stockport Council as part of the land assembly for the later phases of Stockport8 in 2025. Under this initiative vacant buildings are being repurposed to provide affordable workspace for local artists, supporting local creatives and activating the King Street

West area while longer-term schemes are progressed. By treating meanwhile use as part of a wider system of social infrastructure—rather than a temporary or ad-hoc intervention—the MDC is using regeneration sites to further our strategic outcomes.

This work is being strengthened by a PhD studentship embedded within the MDC, focused on evaluating meanwhile use models in practice and building the evidence base for their social, economic and community impact. The research enables Stockport both to learn from, and contribute to, a field that has historically been dominated by the experience of core cities, helping to test how meanwhile use can operate differently in towns. In doing so, Stockport is positioning itself as a place-based testbed—translating nationally and globally relevant research around place-making and regeneration into practical, replicable approaches grounded in real places.

Delivery commitments

During this Plan period we will continue to promote the MDC Social Value framework to developers, contractors and wider partners, including through:

3.1: Channelling social value investment into the community hubs being developed as part of the Social Infrastructure delivery commitments, delivering a long term legacy for regeneration schemes

3.2: Promotion of the One Stockport Construction Hub to all developers and contractors to ensure MDC schemes make a powerful contribution to the Hub's objectives

3.3: Seek further opportunities to bring forward meanwhile use schemes which align with the Social Value framework and our wider strategic outcomes.

Delivery commitment 4: Collaborating to create sustainable infrastructure

This delivery commitment focuses on the sustainable infrastructure needed to future-proof Stockport's growth. Working in close partnership with Stockport Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and infrastructure providers, the MDC will support coordinated investment in **sustainable travel, green and blue infrastructure and utilities** to ensure development is resilient both to growth and external challenges, particularly extreme weather. Building on the Town Centre East and West Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, this approach puts climate resilience and connectivity at the forefront—leveraging investment in green infrastructure, active travel, public transport and to ensure that connectivity remains an enabler of growth rather than a constraint, while supporting long-term housing and economic development.

Sustainable transport

The economic potential of Stockport town centre - and the heart of its potential as a place to live, work, and visit - is its exceptional connectivity. But existing transport networks and patterns of movement require new investment in order to protect and enhance Stockport's strategic transport connectivity while increasing sustainable modes of transport.

Transport infrastructure

In 2022, Stockport Council and the MDC jointly commissioned an options appraisal to identify potential highways improvements to consolidate traffic flow within Town Centre West and create dedicated active travel infrastructure. Elements of these proposals were incorporated into the Stockport8 masterplan and will be brought forward during this planning period, with opportunities to progress remaining elements through future schemes and investment.

Reflecting the expansion of the MDC boundary and the ambitions set out in the Town Centre East Strategic Regeneration Framework, a renewed focus will be placed on improving east-west connectivity across the town centre, with consideration to the severance created by the A6. This includes prioritising safer, more legible and inclusive intersections and crossings, improving links between neighbourhoods to the east and west of the town centre, and supporting the delivery of people-centred streets that enable walking, wheeling and cycling as everyday travel choices.

Stockport Rail Station

Stockport Rail Station is the single most important economic asset in the town centre, acting as a gateway to the borough and the Southern Gateway to Greater Manchester. Its connectivity to Manchester, London and other regional cities underpins Stockport's local, regional and national role.

Recognising that the poor quality of the station environment is constraining capacity, undermining economic potential and acting as a barrier to growth, the MDC has been an active supporter of work by Stockport Council, Network Rail and TfGM to develop a robust business case for its redevelopment. Inclusion within the Greater Manchester Priority Stations Strategic Partnership provides a strong platform for securing regional and national investment, and the MDC will continue to support this work during the plan period.

Metrolink

In parallel with Stockport Rail Station redevelopment, the MDC, Stockport Council, GMCA and Transport for Greater Manchester continue to work together to finalise the preferred route for the Metrolink extension from East Didsbury to Stockport and to progress the Outline Business Case. Extending Metrolink to Stockport is critical to strengthening sustainable travel options, complementing existing rail connectivity and supporting higher-density growth in the town centre. Delivering this investment at pace remains a shared priority for the MDC and its partners.

Sustainable travel, mobility hubs and wayfinding

Alongside strategic rail and light rail investment, the MDC will support the delivery of a **comprehensive package of sustainable travel infrastructure**, including active travel routes, inclusive wayfinding and exploring the potential for mobility hubs.

Improved wayfinding and legibility across the town centre will support inclusivity, helping residents, workers and visitors of all ages and abilities to navigate the town centre safely and confidently. Together, these interventions will ensure that connectivity remains an **enabler of growth rather than a constraint**, supporting the delivery of new homes, jobs and services while creating a town centre that is accessible, resilient and fit for the future.

Sustainable infrastructure

Responding to environmental challenges—particularly the climate emergency and biodiversity loss—is critical to the success of the MDC and to the long-term prosperity of Stockport’s economy. As the MDC’s role expands to include the east of the town centre, these challenges are becoming more acute, with increased exposure to flood risk and the need to ensure new growth supports adaptation as well as mitigation.

Decarbonisation and biodiversity net gain

Reflecting the stretching carbon neutrality targets adopted by both Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, carbon reduction was a core focus for the Town Centre West MDC since its inception. Alongside ensuring that individual development schemes are designed to maximise energy efficiency and minimise embodied carbon, the MDC has sponsored a series of innovative, place-based initiatives to support the transition to low-carbon neighbourhoods. This has included detailed feasibility and commercialisation work to develop an investable proposition for a district heat network serving the area and the wider town centre, powered by renewable energy.

As the MDC expands eastwards, this approach will increasingly be applied at a town-centre-wide scale, reflecting the ambitions of the Town Centre East Strategic Regeneration Framework. During this Business Plan period, the MDC will ensure that all new development are net zero carbon in operation by 2029, with an ambition to accelerate this by exceeding building regulation standards across all schemes. We will also use the MDC’s leadership role to promote innovation in the following areas:

- Low- and zero-carbon construction methods and building design
- Sustainable transport and reduced car dependency
- Maximising the environmental performance of streets and public spaces
- Climate change adaptation in the design of buildings and infrastructure

Enhancing natural assets and expanding green infrastructure

The town centre contains a rich network of under-used natural assets, from the River Mersey and its tributaries to parks, green corridors and residual spaces shaped by historic infrastructure. In Town Centre West, regeneration has already begun to transform these assets into focal points for recreation, wellbeing and ecological enhancement, including increasing access to the River Mersey, enhancing Hollywood Park and shaping new green spaces alongside major development at Stockport8.

Building on this, and drawing on the Town Centre East Strategic Regeneration Framework, the MDC will take a more integrated approach to enhancing green infrastructure across the expanded town centre. This includes working closely with Stockport Council to invest in greener streets and public spaces, manage water in more natural ways, better connect parks and waterways, and ensure that new development delivers clear, local benefits that people can see and use.

An inclusive and accessible town centre

Inclusion and accessibility are at the heart of the MDC's approach to placemaking in Stockport town centre. Through the use of the MDC's **Inclusive Design Framework**, and by working closely with Stockport communities, access groups and partners, we are committed to ensuring that lived experience helps shape the design of new development and infrastructure. By promoting the embedding of inclusive design principles from the outset—and listening to those who use the town centre every day—the MDC will help create streets, spaces and buildings that are safe, accessible and welcoming, supporting a town centre where everyone feels included and able to belong.

Delivery commitments

During this Plan period we will:

- 4.1: Collaborating with key partners including Stockport Council, Network Rail and TfGM to support delivery of the redevelopment of **Stockport Station Redevelopment** and the business case for **Metrolink extension**
- 4.2: Work closely with SMBC to secure **comprehensive packages of highways improvements and active travel infrastructure** in line with the SRF visions.
- 4.3: Promote Stockport's emerging **District Heat Network** to developers bringing forward schemes in the town centre
- 4.4: Promote incorporation of **Sustainable Urban Drainage** throughout the design process for town centre developments and support developer partners and SMBC to secure investment in SUDs
- 4.5: Increasing the **prominence and accessibility of the River Mersey** and **enhancing Hollywood Park** as an exceptional green setting which unites existing and new communities through the promotion of the Hollywood Park Investment Prospectus
- 4.6: Promote the MDC Inclusive Design Framework in all developments and infrastructure projects, enabling its application on specific schemes and wider place making

Delivery commitment 5: Enabling economic success

This delivery commitment focuses on enabling long-term economic success in Stockport town centre by supporting the creation of new, high-quality employment space and strengthening the town centre’s profile as a place to invest, do business and grow. Building on the success of Stockport Exchange, the MDC will work with the Council, development partners and investors to unlock further commercial development, attract inward investment and generate sustained interest in the town centre. Alongside this, the MDC will work closely with Stockport Council to ensure that investment works hard locally—supporting business growth, clustering opportunity, and translating development activity into good jobs, skills and wider economic benefits for Stockport residents.

Creation of new employment space

The creation of new, high-quality employment space is critical to the continued success of the town centre, attracting businesses, supporting good jobs and driving activity throughout the day. Building on an established track record in this area, the MDC will use this Plan period to strengthen the town centre’s economic role—working with the Council and partners to support inward investment, business growth and the creation of good, accessible jobs for local people.

Stockport Exchange

“South Manchester’s fastest growing new business district”

Stockport Exchange is a high-quality, employment-led commercial quarter at the gateway to the town, delivering Grade A workspace alongside new public realm in a highly accessible, station-adjacent location. A catalyst for town centre regeneration, it concentrates jobs, investment and activity in a well-connected, walkable neighbourhood that supports wider vitality and long-term economic growth. Delivered via a joint venture between Stockport Council and Muse Developments, Exchange is home to mix of growing Stockport businesses and national and international firms. supports over 2000 jobs, and generates an estimated £180m/year of GVA uplift.

Status: With four phases of development already complete and fully let, Stockport Exchange is already well established as the town’s commercial heart. Over this plan period and beyond we will bring forward the remaining four phases of the masterplan, completing the vision for the wholesale redevelopment of the Grand Central area and delivering a pedestrianised spine running from Stockport Railway Station to the A6.

- **Completed:** Since 2013 four phases of development have delivered over 170,000 sq. ft of Grade A office space, new public realm, a new 115 bed hotel and two multistorey car parks.
- **Future pipeline:**
 - Detailed planning consent has been secured for phase 5 of Stockport Exchange (65,000 sq. ft. office space) and outline consent for further three phases (200,000 sq. ft. office

space plus c. 100 new homes). Alongside Stockport Council we are exploring potential alternative uses to cross subsidise viable development.

Delivery commitment 5.1: By 2031 we will deliver future phases of Stockport Exchange.

Beyond Stockport Exchange, the MDC will work with Stockport Council and partners to identify and bring forward opportunities for new and enhanced employment space across the wider town centre, aligned with the priorities of the refreshed Stockport Economic Plan. This will include shaping and supporting spaces suited to the borough's key growth sectors, ensuring the town centre can accommodate a diverse range of businesses as it continues to evolve. By taking a strategic, place-based approach, the MDC will seek to maximise the economic potential of the town centre—strengthening its role as a driver of investment, innovation and long-term economic growth for Stockport.

Delivery commitment 5.2: By 2031 we will have brought forward a diversity of new employment spaces aligned to Stockport Council's Economic Plan.

Place marketing and generating investment

The MDC will continue to play a key role in raising the profile of Stockport town centre and attracting investment, building on the strong momentum and national recognition achieved over recent years. Through high-quality delivery, effective partnerships and a clear long-term vision, Stockport has been repositioned as a confident, investable place, attracting growing interest from developers, businesses, partners and government. During this Plan period, the MDC will build on that success—working with the Council and partners to promote the town centre's strengths, generate sustained investor confidence and secure the investment needed to support long-term economic growth.

Delivery commitment 5.3: By 2031 the MDC will have strengthened the profile of Stockport town centre as an investable place—working with the Council and partners to attract inward investment, secure development interest and support long-term economic growth.

Connecting Stockport residents to economic opportunity

Alongside enabling growth, the MDC will work to ensure that the opportunities created by the regeneration of the town centre are accessible to those who need them most. Building on the success of the One Stockport Construction Hub in connecting local people to jobs and skills in construction, this Plan period will see a broader focus on linking residents to employment, training and career pathways across a wider range of sectors. In particular, as new health and education facilities come forward, the MDC will work with the Council and partners to help ensure that investment in the town centre supports inclusive access to good jobs, skills and long-term opportunities for local people.

Delivery commitment 5.4: Over this Plan period the MDC will contribute to improved access for local people to the jobs, skills and career opportunities created by town centre regeneration, working with the Council and partners to ensure growth supports inclusive employment outcomes across construction and a wider range of sectors, including health and education.

Enablers

The enablers set out in this section are not ends in themselves, but the foundations that allow the MDC to deliver its ambitious strategic outcomes. They ensure we are working effectively, efficiently and in the right way—supporting strong delivery, good decision-making and long-term impact.

Communications and engagement

The MDC is a unique delivery partnership that is successfully tackling the systemic barriers to regeneration faced by town centres across the country. The success of our approach is gaining profile both regionally and nationally which is in turn helping strengthen Stockport's reputation as a credible and ambitious delivery partner and helping to build pride in Stockport locally.

Building on these achievements and our work in Town Centre West, the MDC is refreshing its approach to communications and engagement to reflect the expanded geography and the different character, communities and opportunities across the wider town centre. The driver for this shift is a clear commitment to take people with us—working alongside local communities, businesses and partners to shape plans, ensure lived experience and local aspirations inform our decisions, and build shared ownership of change as it happens. Alongside this, we will use our communications to build pride in Stockport as a place, celebrating progress and quality of delivery, while strengthening the town's reputation with partners, investors and government as a confident, credible and ambitious organisation capable of delivering at scale.

Innovation

Innovation has been central to the success of the Town Centre West MDC to date, enabling Stockport to overcome barriers that have held back town centre regeneration elsewhere. From pioneering investment models at Stockport Interchange to creating new delivery mechanisms such as the One Stockport Construction Hub, the MDC has consistently used innovation to turn ambition into delivery and to maximise the social, economic and environmental impact of regeneration. As the MDC expands to cover the whole town centre, this innovative approach remains critical: we are taking on new challenges—such as the early delivery of social infrastructure—where established delivery routes do not yet exist, and will work with regional and national government to pioneer and test new approaches on the ground as a proven, place-based delivery partner.

Governance and accountability

Good governance is critical importance to ensuring that the MDC is focused on securing the best outcomes for our stakeholders and adhering to the highest ethical standards in our operations. Building on the external governance review of the MDC in 2024 and the annual governance and accountability reporting process, during this Plan period we will commission internal governance reviews on a biannual basis to ensure the highest standards of governance.