

Stockport Town Centre West
Mayoral Development
Corporation

**DRAFT Strategic Business
Plan, 2025-30**

Section One: Introduction

This Strategic Business Plan for Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is made up of three elements:

- Firstly, an overview of the purpose of the MDC and the context in which it was established and now operates
- Secondly, a summary of the progress made by the MDC in delivering its overarching aim of regenerating Stockport Town Centre West in the six years since it was established
- Thirdly, a description of the strategic approach the MDC will take over the next five years to continue to deliver on its strategic objectives.

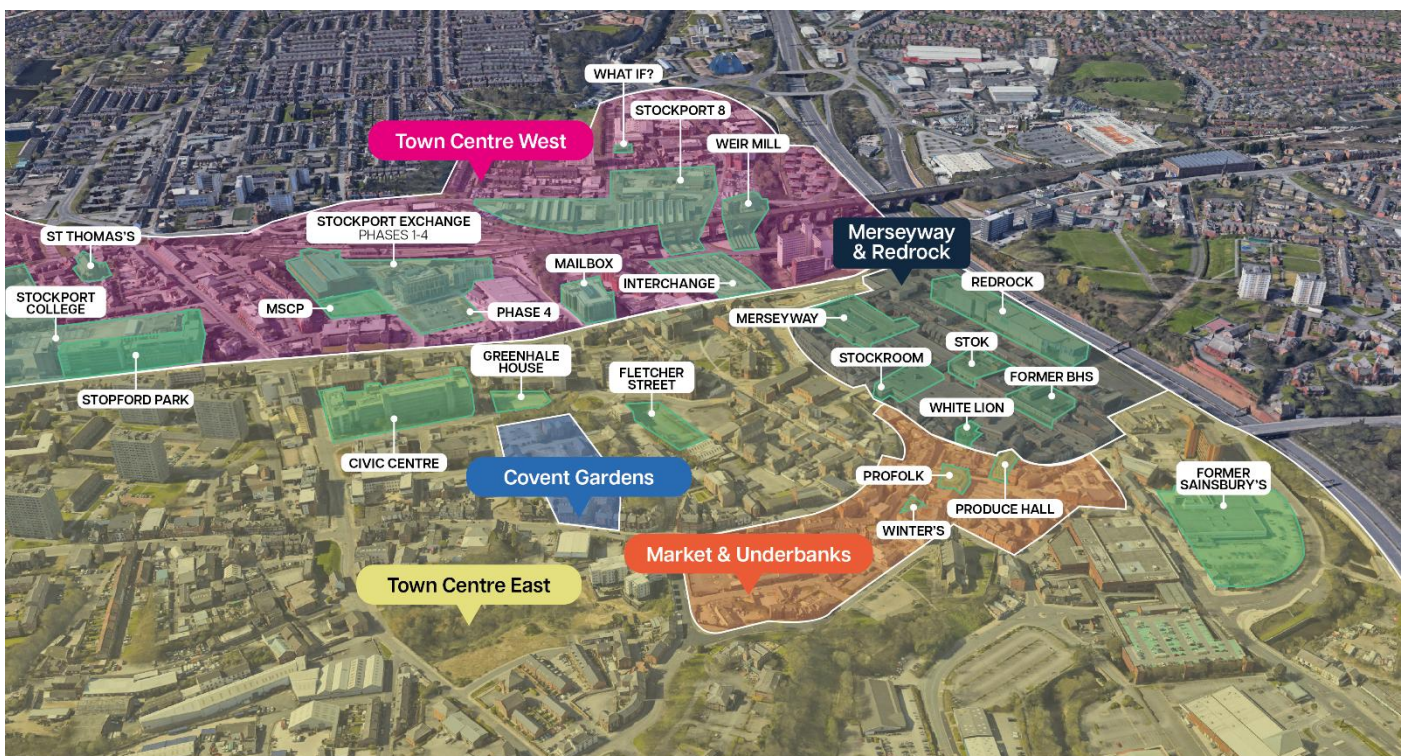
The document concludes with a series of delivery commitments against which the MDC will be held accountable during the period 2025-30.

Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation in context

The regeneration of Stockport Town Centre

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. In March 2024 Stockport was named the best place to live in the North West by The Sunday Times.

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



The Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) was established in 2019 to accelerate and amplify early regeneration success by creating a new, exemplar residential neighbourhood in an area of previously developed land to the west of the town centre. As well as being an exemplar urban neighbourhood in its own right, the intention was that Town Centre West would play a crucial role in 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.

Since its creation the MDC has established itself as a credible and effective regeneration delivery vehicle that has changed perceptions of the town with residents and visitors, the investor and developer markets, and the wider public sector. In this time the MDC has overseen delivery of a range of schemes across both commercial and residential development, infrastructure, and public service transformation. These fully-delivered and on-site schemes are part of a wider ‘first phase’ pipeline that has seen 1,081 new homes and 170,000 sq. ft. new commercial floorspace complete or move into advanced stages of delivery. The pipeline for future schemes is strong with a further 1,448 homes due to start on site in the next five years.

Recognising this success, in 2024 Stockport Council included ambitious plans to build on this progress in its One Stockport, One Future Plan. The Plan states that:

“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.”

In line with this ambition, in October 2024 the Council commissioned the production of a draft Strategic Regeneration Framework for the east of the town centre to guide the regeneration of the area and the delivery of these homes. At this time the Leader of Stockport Council, Cllr Mark Hunter, proposed that the MDC’s scope should be expanded, enabling it to become the delivery vehicle for the housing led regeneration of the entirety of the town centre. This was met positively by the Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham and proposals for the expansion will be consulted on during 2025.

What is Stockport MDC?

Created in 2019 by the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, Stockport MDC is a statutory organisation created to bring forward the regeneration of Stockport Town Centre West. 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, senior officers of the Council, Homes England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority 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 official observers.

Town Centre West in context

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

Stockport's success is in part due to its location and exceptional transport connectivity to Manchester city centre, Manchester Airport, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, and London. Easy access to the Peak District, the Trans-Pennine Trail, and its rivers, canals, and walking routes all contribute to its attractive offer.

However, Stockport is not immune from the big challenges of our times. The borough is a place of stark inequality, with extremes of both household incomes, educational attainment, employment and health outcomes. Deprivation is largely concentrated in the northern part of the borough, in neighbourhoods close to Town Centre West¹. Harnessing the social and economic opportunities being created through the regeneration programme to tackle this inequality is a key objective for the MDC.

The 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 ambition to nurture a vibrant town centre. The borough is benefiting from changing patterns of investment and urban living and has capitalised on the economic growth in Manchester City Centre and the Greater Manchester region. The MDC is one of the ways in which Stockport is harnessing these opportunities and investment flows to create a borough in which everyone can live happy, healthy lives.

Town Centre West itself has been shaped by its industrial land uses and major infrastructure (including Stockport Railway Station and the M60 motorway) while the River Mersey and Hollywood Park provide exceptional natural assets. In common with other town centres the area is strongly characterised by fragmentation of land ownership which makes large-scale change difficult to achieve without a major long-term strategic initiative that brings together the public and the private sectors.

Our strategic framework

The One Stockport, One Future

The One Stockport, One Future Plan was developed in 2024 by Stockport Council in partnership with people and organisations across Stockport. It builds on the One Stockport Borough Plan launched in 2021 and sets out how the Council will work together with partners to tackle the challenges set out 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 Greater Manchester Strategy

The Greater Manchester Strategy is Greater Manchester's ten year plan for a greener, fairer and more prosperous city region. It sets out shared commitments in areas where collective action is needed to achieve this vision, including net zero, inclusive growth, provision of safe, decent, affordable housing and the enabling of resilient, safe, and vibrant communities where everyone has access to essential services, with local centres and high streets which are successful and reflective of their populations.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework for Town Centre West

In the context of the Borough Plan and reflecting the Council's wider regeneration ambitions described above, in 2019 the Council (in its capacity as Local Planning Authority for the area) produced the

¹ Add reference

Strategic Regeneration Framework for Town Centre West (SRF). 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 has been created to deliver. The document purposely does not attempt to be prescriptive about the development that could come forward in the area but instead provides an indicative masterplan for how the area could be transformed to accommodate development at-scale while enhancing the way Town Centre West functions and serves its residents.

The Stockport MDC Strategic Business Plan and Annual Action Plan

The Strategic Business Plan sets out strategic objectives and delivery commitments that will drive the MDC's work over the coming five year period to deliver the ambitions set out in the SRF.

These objectives and commitments are developed in line with our three guiding principles and 9 strategic outcomes:

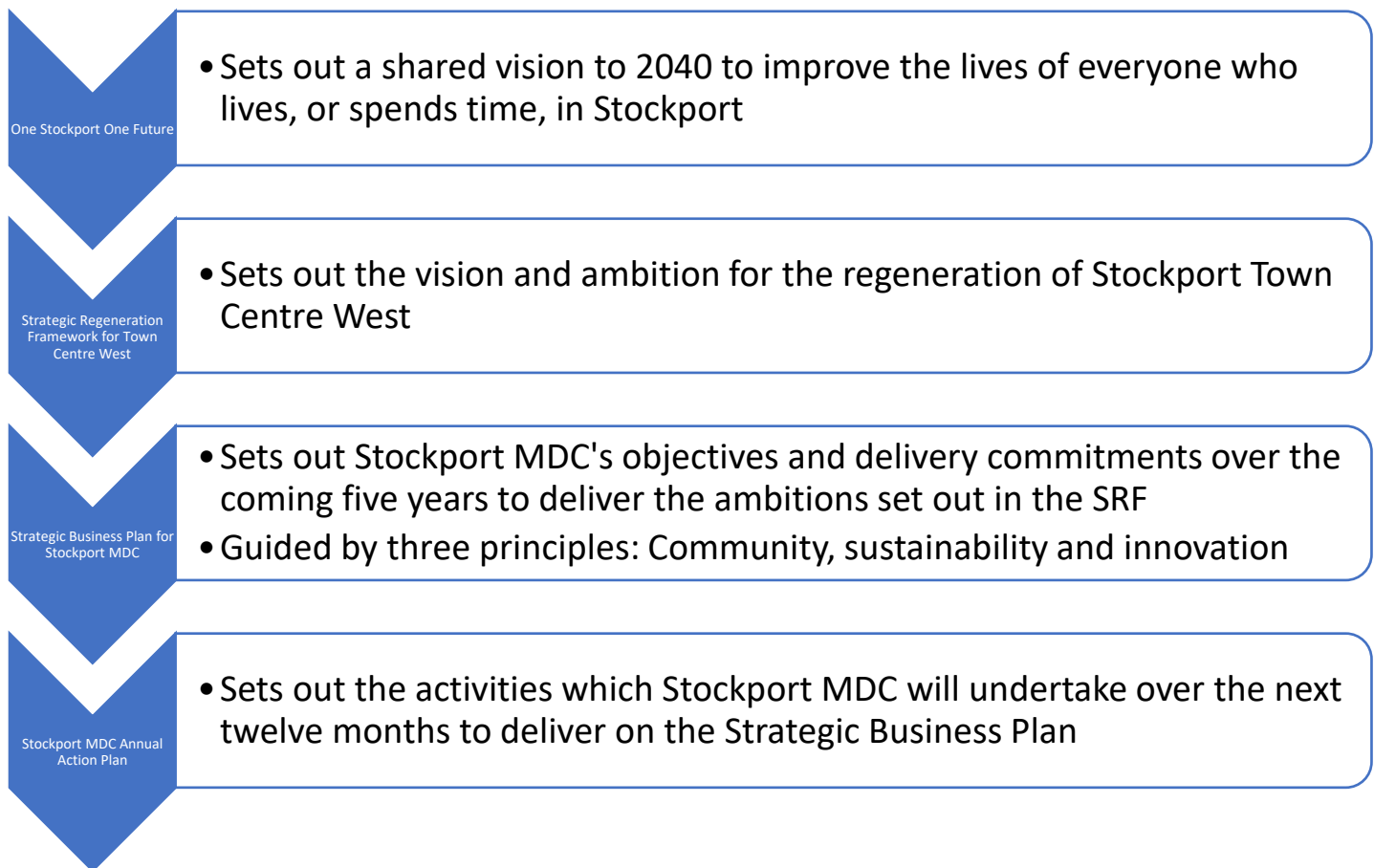
Guiding principles

- **Community** – a growing population, enhanced quality of life for all and increased equity
- **Sustainability** – a sustainable place and more attractive environment
- **Innovation** – a place of progress and an environment shaped for the future

Our strategic outcomes

1. Housing a growing community
2. People at the heart of delivery
3. Communications, external relations and engagement
4. Environmental sustainability and resilience
5. Enhancing connectivity
6. Employment and economic growth
7. Innovation and future proofing
8. Investment
9. Governance, leadership and capacity

The Strategic Business Plan is supplemented by an Annual Action Plan which contains an additional level of detail about what the MDC will achieve in each financial year.



The diagram below summarises the MDC's strategic framework:

Creating Town Centre West

STOCKPORT MDC

Creating Greater Manchester's greenest urban neighbourhood

Why we're creating Stockport Town Centre West

Over recent decades, the way that we live, work and play has changed. By transforming Town Centre West into an exemplar residential neighbourhood within our town centre we're supporting a transformation which will define Stockport for generations to come:

- ✓ **Creating much needed new homes**
- ✓ **Bringing people + vitality to our town centre**
- ✓ **Tackling inequality and enabling people in Stockport to live happy, healthy lives**
- ✓ **Protecting + enhancing our natural environment**

What changes will you see



Up to 4000 new homes



New office space for growing businesses



Construction jobs + skills opportunities for Stockport residents



A more attractive environment + access to the natural environment



More dedicated routes for walking + cycling

Community

An increased population and enhanced quality of life

- Housing a growing community
- Integrating neighbourhoods
- Supporting the provision of social infrastructure
- Harnessing investment to create opportunities for Stockport's new and existing communities

Sustainability

A sustainable place and more attractive environment

- Creating a climate friendly place to live, work and play
- Making a positive contribution to Stockport and Greater Manchester carbon reduction goals
- Supporting good quality jobs and an inclusive economy
- Utilising high quality, inclusive design to enable people to live well

Innovation

A place for progress, shaped for the future

- Resilience and adaptation to environmental change
- Embracing technology to deliver our ambitions

Our Vision



Stockport MDC is a statutory organisation created to bring forward the regeneration of Town Centre West. Established by Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, in 2019 the MDC is overseen by a Board consisting of representatives from the main political parties, Homes England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and private sector regeneration experts.

Section two: Delivery achievements, 2019-2025

Introduction

Since its creation in 2019 the Stockport MDC has established itself as a credible and effective regeneration delivery vehicle that has changed perceptions of the town with residents and visitors, the investor and developer markets, and the wider public sector. The MDC has already overseen delivery of a range of schemes across both commercial and residential development, infrastructure and public services. These fully-delivered and on-site schemes are part of a first phase of delivery that has seen 1,081 new homes and 170,000 sq. ft. new commercial floorspace delivered or move into construction. In the section that follows we describe the progress made over the last six years as well as highlighting specific progress over the last year.

Housing a growing community

At the heart of the MDC's mission is building the new homes that Stockport needs as a thriving borough in the country's fastest-growing city region.

Phase 1: Over 1,000 new homes completed or contractually committed.

In just six years the MDC has moved rapidly from master planning to completion of first phase schemes. By March 2025 1,081 new homes will be either completed or in construction across the schemes described below and with planning consent for a further 148 homes our target of 1,350 new homes completed or on site by the end of 2025 is within reach. In line with the MDC commitment to deliver a diversity of housing types, suitable for people of all income groups, across these schemes a total of 221 affordable homes (18% of the total) have been delivered or are contractually committed.

Rise Homes' Mailbox scheme, 117 homes - completed in February 2020.

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.

Stockport Interchange, 196 homes – completed in May 2024.

While originally conceived as a transport scheme, the Interchange demonstrates the vision and ambition of the MDC and Stockport Council and our partners. Alongside a new bus station the scheme delivers new homes, transformational infrastructure and public spaces for the town centre, including a two acre park, a new riverside walkway, a new walking and cycling bridge to Stockport Station and 196 new apartments. Led by a partnership of the MDC, Transport for Greater Manchester, Stockport Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Homes England alongside leading developers Cityheart and Rise Homes, the Interchange scheme shows how devolved infrastructure funding can be used to leverage large-scale public and private sector investment. The design of the scheme benefitted from significant public engagement and consultation to involve the people of Stockport in the regeneration of their town. The transport element of the Interchange opened in March 2024 and the residential element in June 2024 and is now close to being fully let.

Capital&Centric's Weir Mill scheme, 253 homes – on site and due for completion in 2025.

Capital and Centric's redevelopment of the historic Weir Mill followed their acquisition of the site in 2020. This development scheme reflects the potential for Stockport's heritage assets to play an ever-greater role in defining Stockport's future while respecting and preserving its past. Construction work began in autumn 2022 and as of March 2025 the two new build blocks are nearing completion.

Stopford Park (formerly Royal George Village), 442 homes – on site and due for completion in 2026.

Critical to the public service infrastructure of the town centre and the wider borough has been significant investment in Stockport College. A merger with Trafford College in 2018 secured the long term future of the College and on the back of this, we have seen the redevelopment of the Stockport campus. This investment in the estate and the education offer at the College has 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 will bring forward 442 new homes and shared workspace creating 300 new jobs on this site, a prime location in the southern part of Town Centre West. Construction began in autumn 2024 and the scheme is due to complete in 2026.

Great Places schemes: 'Platform' (73 homes) – on site and due for completion in 2025 **and Chestergate (144 homes)** planning consent secured and due to start on site 2025

These two affordable housing scheme will between them bring forward 217 affordable homes, with a mix of rent to buy and affordable rent properties. Construction got underway on the 'Platform' scheme in 2022 and it is due for completion in Spring 2025. The Chestergate scheme secured planning consent in March 2024 and is due to start on site in Spring 2025.

St Thomas' Gardens, 68 new homes and an Academy of Living Well with 8 supported living homes

The Council and Stockport Homes are working together on the St. Thomas' Gardens scheme which secured planning permission in March 2021 and started on site in autumn 2024. The scheme will deliver 68 affordable homes which incorporate re-use of heritage buildings, intergenerational living, sustainability and shared greenspace to create a strong sense of community. Alongside this will be the provision of 82 beds of intermediate care which is will contribute to improving the quality of the adult social care offer within the borough.

Phase 2: Our delivery pipeline for 2025-30

The delivery of the schemes described above has provided a tangible indication of the success of the MDC and creates a very solid platform, giving credibility to our longer-term ambitions and providing confidence to partners and the market about our ability to deliver. The schemes described below are part of a credible pipeline of development to 2030:

Stockport8 - estimated 1,287 homes

In parallel with delivering the first phase of development described above, the MDC has enabled land acquisitions and site assembly for the next phase of scheme delivery. Between 2020 and 2023 the MDC successfully negotiated a number of acquisitions in Brinksway and the Station Quarter to create a major new development opportunity in the heart of Town Centre West. The assembled site represents an unrivalled development opportunity in a highly-connected strategic location between Stockport Rail Station and Junction 1 of the M60 that also benefits from the natural assets of Hollywood Park and the River Mersey. In May 2022 the MDC launched a procurement process to identify a joint venture partner to develop the site. The process concluded in Spring 2023 with the selection of English Cities Fund as the joint venture partner. A hybrid planning application – with a detailed application on phase 1 and outline application on phases 2 and 3 – was submitted in December 2024, with plans for 1,223 new homes along with new public realm and active travel routes.

People at the heart of regeneration

At the heart of the MDC vision is the creation of an exemplar neighbourhood at Town Centre West which at all stages of the development process has a profoundly positive impact on the lives of people living within and beyond our boundary. This includes the people who currently live in the area and in the adjacent communities as well as the future residents. Below we set out the work done to date to translate this vision into reality.

Social value

The MDC recognises the important role it plays in leveraging and coordinating social value from development to maximise traction in key priority areas for the MDC and Stockport Council. In 2024 the MDC adopted a Social Value Framework to guide and maximise work in this area through a focused approach in three key areas: Construction jobs and skills, social infrastructure and meanwhile use of land and buildings identified for development.

Construction jobs and skills

The Strategic Regeneration Framework for Town Centre West estimated that the development pipeline would generate approx. £480m-£530m of construction investment (equating to approximately 650 construction jobs) a year for up to 15 years. The scale of this investment represents a powerful opportunity to drive progress on two key challenges linked to the MDC guiding principles of Community and Sustainability: Inequality and decarbonisation.

To unlock this opportunity, in 2023 the MDC team convened a working group involving construction contractors, VCSE organisations working with local people to secure skills and job opportunities in the construction sector, Trafford College Group and Stockport Council colleagues to develop proposals for a delivery model which will:

- Bring about a step change in the number of construction skills and employment opportunities for local people
- Drive investment into local construction firms that specialise in environmentally sustainable methods and technologies

- Create inclusive skills pathways for local people to secure good jobs in the sector

The Group developed a series of proposals to create an MDC Construction Hub to deliver on these objectives. At the heart of this model are four work packages:

1. **A shared traineeship** – a 12 week programme to support participants with barriers to employment to progress into apprenticeship or employment in construction
2. **A brokerage service** – linking contractors to candidates with skills and employment opportunities
3. **A green technology and construction growth programme** to grow existing and new Stockport businesses in these sectors
4. A **Stockport construction training network** to connect contractors and skills providers and make Stockport the best place in Greater Manchester to train in the industry

These proposals were approved by the MDC Board in December 2023 and all elements were piloted in 2024 to test this new approach ahead of mandating contractors to engage with the Hub and its programmes via Planning Policy and/or Social Value commitments from 2025.

Social infrastructure

The Strategic Regeneration Framework identified social infrastructure as critical to the success of Town Centre West as a sustainable neighbourhood:

“As an exemplar community the provision of appropriate social infrastructure will be critical to the success of Town Centre West, ensuring that the existing and new communities are well served by schools, doctors, dentists, health centres, specialist homes and public open space”

Recognising this the MDC has sought to play an active role in bringing forward social infrastructure which benefits people already living in the wider town centre and neighbouring communities as well as meeting the needs of a growing population.

In 2021 the MDC commissioned Cushman and Wakefield to carry out a social infrastructure study to map existing social infrastructure and model future need. This work created a [digital map](#) and set out a series of recommendations to inform future planning. This included several principles to guide delivery which were subsequently adopted by the MDC:

- Town Centre first. We will seek to deliver the majority of new social infrastructure in the heart of the town centre rather than in Town Centre West, supporting town centre vitality and directly benefiting wider town centre communities as well as new residents.
- Optimising the use of existing facilities. We will seek opportunities to enhance and strengthen existing facilities before replacing them.

To translate these principles into delivery in 2023 the MDC created a social infrastructure programme, working closely with colleagues across Stockport Council and wider partners. Through this programme we have developed shared population projections and used these to develop outline propositions for investment across health and care, education, leisure, community facilities and public spaces.

This work strongly aligns with Stockport’s Live Well approach which is centred on working together as partners across the borough to bring together early help and support, brilliant community spaces,

and joined up health and care services to make it easier for residents and communities to help themselves, their families, and those they care for in places close to them. The MDC is collaborating with colleagues developing the Live Well programme to ensure propositions for enhanced social infrastructure support these wider system priorities.

Meanwhile Use

The assembly of land and property in the MDC development process – specifically in relation to Stockport8 – has created the opportunity for meanwhile use of sites and buildings awaiting redevelopment. We recognise that these uses can help us to support the nurturing of new and existing communities in Town Centre West and trial new uses prior to permanent redevelopment.

In 2023 we established an MDC Board working group to explore this key area and inform our approach going forward. This group identified that the following social value outcomes could be delivered through meanwhile use opportunities in Town Centre West:

- **Promoting innovation** – encouraging the development and implementation of new ideas, processes, or technologies.
- **Fostering local economic and employment growth** – matching the provision of employment spaces with end users who are committed to the creation of good quality jobs and the flourishing of Stockport as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester.
- **Enhancing environmental sustainability** – seeking occupiers that deliver significant biodiversity net gain, carbon reduction benefits and support the MDC's ambition to make Town Centre West an exemplar green urban neighbourhood.
- **Promoting skills development** – leveraging the scale of investment in development in Town Centre West to act as a catalyst for growth of employment and skills opportunities for Stockport residents.
- **Driving place-making initiatives** – creating vibrant and inclusive spaces that reflect and enhance the identity and character of Stockport

In 2024 we invited proposals for meanwhile uses which would deliver on these outcomes in buildings acquired as part of the assembly of land for Stockport8. Through a competitive process GRIT studios (who already have a building in the town centre where they provide affordable studio space for artists, makers and creatives) were selected as our preferred occupier and they will take occupation in Spring 2025.

Also in 2024 we were successful in securing funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for a PhD CASE Studentship to be embedded within the MDC team for three years. This project will focus on evaluating meanwhile use strategies and provides the MDC with additional capacity and insight to inform our approach going forward.

Communications, external relations and engagement

Effective communication of our approach and progress is a key priority for the MDC. This has been motivated by a desire to see the scale of transformation taking place on the ground conveyed to key audiences – building pride in our town and strengthening Stockport's reputation as a credible and ambitious delivery partner. It has also enabled us to share our approach with others, contributing to peer discussions on lessons learned and ongoing challenges.

A series of communications campaigns and sustained engagement with key journalists has seen sustained positive coverage of the MDC from the property industry press, including features in major industry publications. The regeneration of Stockport more generally has also received significant coverage in national newspapers:

- In 2022 Stockport was described as “One of the coolest little corners of the country” by The Sunday Times
- In 2022 DJ Luke Unabomber declared ‘Stockport is the new Berlin’
- In 2023 Stockport featured in The Sunday Times’ Best Place in Britain to Buy A First Home
- In 2023 Stockport featured in The Telegraph’s top 25 best places to shop in the UK
- In 2023 Ranked in the top twelve best places to retire in the UK by Which?
- In 2024 Stockport was named Best Place to Live in the North West by The Sunday Times

Alongside media engagement we have developed local communications campaigns to promote the MDC and the regeneration of the town centre more generally. This includes producing three editions of the Stockport. Change here. newspaper which we created and delivered to all Stockport households in 2023, 2024 and 2025, alongside supporting digital promotion.

Sustainability and carbon reduction

Sustainability is at the core of the Town Centre West masterplan from design to operation. By completion, more than 30 hectares of challenging brownfield land will be redeveloped. The MDC’s commitment to environmental sustainability has informed the design and delivery of development schemes and driven innovative responses to place making:

- **Retrofit and materials re-use:** Throughout development, we have prioritised minimising embodied carbon emissions by retrofitting existing buildings including the 1960s Royal Mail sorting office into the Mailbox, Grade II listed Weir Mill and St Thomas’s Hospital, and advocating for the reuse of existing materials.
- **Sustainable travel:** Creating a walkable neighbourhood is a defining principle of the masterplan for Town Centre West. The delivery of the state of the art transport Interchange, with its accessible walking and cycling routes connecting it to Stockport Railway Station and the wider town centre, has created unparalleled sustainable transport connectivity in the town centre and will make a major contribution to enabling reduced car dependency.
- **Enhancement of green infrastructure:** In our first phase of development we have made major progress in delivering on the vision to double the amount of green space in Town Centre West. The Interchange features a unique two acre rooftop park as well as the first phase of the new Mersey riverside walkway. We have also secured the installation of over 1,500 sq. m. of green walls on the Mailbox, Stockport Exchange and Interchange schemes.
- **Decarbonising the energy system:** We are harnessing the opportunities created by the scale of investment in Town Centre West to accelerate the decarbonisation of the Stockport energy system. We have sponsored detailed feasibility work on a **district heat network** to serve Town Centre West and the wider Town Centre. The first phase study completed in autumn 2022 and concluded that there is potential for a commercially viable Heat Network powered by renewable energy which will make a very significant contribution to carbon reduction within Town Centre West and beyond. On the back of this work we successfully secured a further £310,000 from the government, public service partners and the GMCA to fund the final stage of feasibility work. This has in turn enabled Stockport Council to secure £1m of funding from the government’s

Green Heat Network Fund to support commercialization of the network and bid for capital funding to cover just under 50% of the estimated project delivery costs

Enhancing connectivity

The MDC recognises that Stockport's transport connectivity is vital to the town's success and future thriving.

Stockport transport Interchange

The MDC has been instrumental in delivering this transformational scheme which represents a game changing investment in the sustainable and active travel infrastructure the town centre:

- The bus station will be used by a fleet of 170 all-electric buses, following a successful funding bid from the Council and TfGM
- Walking and cycling bridges have been installed to provide direct access from Stockport Railway Station and onto the town centre
- The first section of the riverside walkway (a key piece of new infrastructure identified in the SRF for Town Centre West) has been delivered, providing town centre pedestrian access to the Mersey for the first time in a generation

Metrolink

Since its creation the MDC has been a strong supporter of work to bring the Metrolink network to Stockport town centre. Transport for Greater Manchester and Stockport Council have collaborated closely to develop the business case for investment and Stockport is now one of only three locations being considered for the next phase of expansion. In December 2023 the Council convened a roundtable of senior stakeholders to discuss and agree the next steps in developing Stockport's role as the Southern Gateway into Greater Manchester. At this event commitments were made to strengthen collaboration around investment in national rail and the public transport system of suburban rail, Metrolink and bus travel and develop joint working arrangements to oversee work to progress the business cases for Metrolink and the redevelopment of the Railway Station.

Redevelopment of Stockport Station

Of equal significance is the high-level rail industry partnership – comprising the Greater Manchester Mayor alongside the Chairs of Network Rail, Homes England, and the MDC – created to oversee the technical design work on redeveloping Stockport Rail Station as well as the feasibility work for capacity improvements on the South Manchester rail network in and around Stockport. This group commissioned the production of an Outline Business Case for the redevelopment of the station which was completed in late 2022. Further to the roundtable event described above Stockport Station was announced as part of the joint TfGM / Network Rail Priority Station Partnership for Greater Manchester – the only station outside of Manchester and Salford city centres. Discussions are now taking place with both Network Rail and Avanti to bring forward investment in station enhancements in line with the wider vision.

Highways improvements

Since 2023 the MDC Team and colleagues from Stockport Council's Highways and Planning teams have worked with WSP to identify practical schemes to improve traffic flow and walking/cycling links around Town Centre West. An application for City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding to realise the first phase of these improvements, linked to the Stockport8 development, has been made and, if successful, work will start on site in 2025/26.

Innovation

The MDC is an innovative response to the challenges of creating much needed new homes and sustaining a vibrant town centre. Innovation is integral to our strategy and operations of the MDC:

- In striving to tackle the systemic barriers to our core goals of brownfield regeneration, environmental resilience and sustainability and enabling local people to benefit at all stages of redevelopment we know that we will have to look beyond conventional approaches to delivery.
- We also know that the way people live and the economy functions is changing and demands innovation across fields as diverse as construction, design, infrastructure and place management. Being a digitally enabled neighbourhood is key to making Stockport an attractive place for people to live and for the innovation-led businesses who will shape our futures to locate.

This is why the MDC is striving to be at the forefront of innovation, continually asking ourselves whether we could do things differently to achieve our ultimate goal of making the town centre a better place for new and existing communities. It will also ensure that Town Centre West is an early adopter for new approaches to town centre living and secure its continuing relevance in the future. As the built environment innovation agenda has largely evolved in line with market conditions in cities – often global mega-cities – rather than towns, we have a unique opportunity to shape the application of new and emerging approaches in a way which is highly relevant for other UK towns. Examples of this work include:

- Since its creation in 2019, the MDC has sponsored **several innovative responses to development and wider place making**, including detailed feasibility work on a renewable energy powered District Heat Network, options appraisal for Mobility Hubs and intergenerational living housing scheme at St Thomas'.
- To further strengthen this work and enable us to proactively identify future innovation opportunities, we worked with CBRE throughout 2022 to **develop an Innovation Framework for the MDC**. This Framework was adopted by the MDC Board in March 2023.
- In 2023 we began a **series of deep dives in key thematic areas** to challenge and stimulate our thinking and delivery. The first of these focused on creating a digitally enabled neighbourhood and has led to work with mobile network operators to improve coverage across the town centre along with exploration of a LoRaWAN network.
- In 2023 we formed a relationship with the **Urban Institute at the University of Manchester, joining their Local Advisory Board and taking part in an Innovation Lab** which brought together members of the MDC team, Council colleagues and academics to develop proposals for joint projects. The team were successful in securing funding for a project to better understand the opportunities and barriers for public realm (including Hollywood Park and the

Mersey Riverside Walkway) to be a sites of meaningful encounters between people, supporting community connection and integration towards wellbeing.

Employment and economic growth

The MDC's commitment to increasing employment and economic growth in Town Centre West has supported the further development of Stockport's flagship new commercial quarter at Stockport Exchange in partnership with Muse Developments. Since the establishment of the MDC over 170,000 sq. ft of Grade A office space has been created across three phases:

- No.1 Stockport Exchange and Holiday Inn Express which both completed in late 2017.
- A 61,300 ft² 20 office building - No.2 Stockport Exchange – completed in spring 2020 and fully let and builds on the success
- In December 2023 we completed No. 3 Stockport Exchange comprising 64,000 sq.ft. of Grade A office space and a new 400 space car park which will provide all the future parking needs for the occupiers of the Exchange including the provision for all the spaces to be used for electric vehicle charging.

No 1. And No. 2 Stockport Exchange are now fully let and home to blue chip occupiers such as Stagecoach and BASF as well as rapidly growing firms Music Magpie and O'Neill Patient. In April 2024 Hursts (a local accountancy firm) moved into No. 3 Stockport Exchange and we have terms out to several potential occupiers for the remaining floors.

Investment

In 2019 Cushman & Wakefield estimated that the delivery of 4,000 new homes and 1m sq. ft. new employment floorspace set out in the Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework would require total development capital investment in the region of £1bn. A capital investment requirement of this scale posed a significant challenge to the MDC model.

To respond to this and kick start development, 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 MDC's Investment Framework, produced in 2021, set out a strategy for exploring new sources of funding from both public and private sector partners to support the next phase of infrastructure and development. In line with this framework we have successfully utilized the MDC investment facility to leverage significant public and private sector funding, including £12m Homes England grant (in the Interchange and Weir Mill schemes) along with £7.2m Brownfield Housing Fund contributions (in Interchange, Stopford Park, and St Thomas' Gardens). We have had demonstrable success in utilising public sector funding to leverage private sector investment from developers and Joint Venture Partners, including in Stockport Interchange and Stockport Exchange. A further private investment of approx. £250m is anticipated in the next phase of the MDC pipeline, alongside public investment from Stockport Council, GMCA and national agencies.

Crucially this investment has generated a sustained increase in values in the town centre, with both Stockport Interchange and the latest phases of Stockport Exchange outperforming forecast rents. This

strong performance represents an investable model which we will look to replicate in future phases of development in both Town Centre West and, if approved, in the east of the town centre.

In addition to capital investments we have secured significant revenue funding from a variety of public and private sources to support the operations of the MDC. In each of the last three years these sums have totaled more than the total annual MDC revenue budget, allowing us to amplify our impact.

Governance, leadership and capacity

Governance

The MDC completes an Annual Governance and Accountability Return each year which is independently audited along with our accounts. The Council's Internal Audit report on the MDC for 2021-2022 highlighted two areas where business operations could be strengthened in relation to risk management and oversight of Board member remuneration. The MDC has addressed these points in regular reporting to the Board.

In 2024 we commissioned an external governance review from Manchester City Council. This report identified several areas for improvement and the MDC has produced an action plan to address these points during 2025-26.

Capacity

Task and finish groups

The combined expertise, networks and influence of the MDC Board members is a huge asset to the MDC. While Board meetings are a useful forum for discussion, pressure on time limits the opportunity for in-depth dialogue to shape and inform thinking at a development stage. Since 2023 we have therefore established four task and finish groups to provide a means for MDC Board members to help shape the thinking and approach of the MDC. These have focused on four key strategic areas: Communications, innovation, meanwhile use and social value.

The aim of these groups has been to:

- Draw on the expertise of Board members to strengthen our strategic approach in key areas
- Mobilise the networks and profile of Board members to strengthen MDC activity in these areas

The outcome of these groups have informed the development of this Business Plan and further Task and Finish groups will be formed in the early part of this planning period.

Section three: Delivery commitments, 2025-30

Introduction

This section of the Plan sets out the activity that the MDC will undertake over the coming five year period to deliver the vision set out in the Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF). It is supplemented by an Annual Action Plan which contains an additional level of detail about what the MDC will achieve in each financial year. The Strategic Business Plan should be read in the context of the SRF but also the changing economic, environmental and policy context since it was developed in 2019.

This latest version of the Strategic Business Plan (the sixth since the MDC was created), is informed by the delivery that the MDC has successfully led to-date and the platform that gives Stockport to be increasingly ambitious about its future. That continued ambition was clearly articulated in the One Stockport, One Future Plan adopted by Stockport Council in 2024 which set out a vision for housing-led regeneration to the east of the town centre:

“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 ... 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.”

In line with this vision in the early part of this five year planning period, proposals will be brought forward for an expansion of the MDC boundary to cover the whole of the town centre. This will enable the MDC to expand its activities, addressing the imperatives of accelerating housing delivery on brownfield land, enhancing Stockport town centre as a residential and employment location of choice, improving the town's infrastructure, attracting public and private investment and achieving net zero.

Objectives and delivery commitments

Below we set out our objectives and delivery commitments for the period 2025-30 which have been developed in line with the overarching themes of the Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework. They provide specific, measurable targets for the MDC and enable the MDC to be held to account effectively by the Board and by elected Members of Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

If proposals for expansion of the MDC boundary to cover the entirety of the town centre are agreed the 2026 refresh of the Strategic Business Plan will reflect that wider geographical scope and the themes of the Strategic Regeneration Framework for the east of the town centre which will be finalised during 2025/26.

Objective 1: Housing a growing community

The MDC is tasked with delivering residential development on a scale which makes a significant contribution to Stockport's overall housing requirements, provides a new approach to development on brownfield land, and reduces pressure for the release of greenbelt land.

The MDC is committed to delivering a broad choice of homes across all types and tenures, including homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes, in response to the needs of the local population. In future phases of development we are looking to build on the delivery of homes for

affordable rent and sale secured to date, working closely with Registered Provider partners and Homes England to optimise the viability of affordable schemes.

We also recognise the need to ensure that the new housing offer provides for older people and families - as well as younger people - in an urban setting well served by educational and health facilities and attractive public open space across its distinct neighbourhoods.

Current and future pipeline

The first year of this plan period will see the completion of our first phase of development and several second phase schemes move into delivery, including the Stockport8 scheme which will deliver up to 1,200 new homes.

During this plan period we will also be shaping the pipeline for the remaining homes needed to bring us to our target of 4,000 homes by 2035. In parallel we will support the Council in work to bring forward plans for the delivery of an even greater number of new homes in the east of the town centre, with a continued emphasis on the correct mix of homes for people at all stages of life.

Delivery commitment 1

The MDC will bring forward 1,350 new homes by 2025. It will aim to continue this pace of delivery by completing at least 250 new homes - of all types and tenures for all income groups - per year through this Strategic Business Plan period to 2030.

Objective 2: People at the heart of delivery

The MDC recognises the key role we have in leveraging and coordinating social value from development to maximise traction in key priority areas for the MDC and Stockport Council. The MDC Social Value Framework 2024 sets out how the MDC will deliver on this commitment, ensuring that Stockport's communities – current and new – experience maximum benefit from the regeneration of Town Centre West at all stages of development. It sets out the following priority themes and outcomes (aligned to the Social Value Portal's TOMS framework) for all social value activity by developers and contractors, aligned to the MDC's strategic objectives:

MDC Strategic objectives	Priority themes	Priority outcomes
Housing a growing community	Community action	Volunteering
	Cohesion and inclusion	Events and activities that bring people together
		Social infrastructure
People at the heart of regeneration	Employment skills and opportunities	Local people in employment
		Local people upskilled
	Health and wellbeing	Physical health
		Mental health and wellbeing
Sustainability	Sustainable transport	Walking and cycling
	Renewable energy	Renewable energy generation
	Climate action	Climate mitigation
		Climate adaptation
Supporting economic growth	SME and VCFSE growth	Local SME/CSE growth
	Workforce to reflect the community	Diversity in workforce

	Local supply chain opportunities	Local supply chain opportunities secured
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The Framework also sets out two key implementation routes for partners to deliver on these priorities with the aim of linking potentially disparate activity together to maximise impact. These routes are set out below:

One Stockport Construction Hub

Sponsored by MDC Board, the One Stockport Construction Hub brings together all construction contractors with live projects in Stockport, providing them with a one stop shop to connect with the organisations that can support them to fulfil their commitments to creating life changing skills and job opportunities. Alongside this brokerage function, the Hub leads on the design and delivery of locally-led initiatives to deliver the ultimate aims of:

- Securing a step change in the number of construction skills and employment opportunities for local people
- Creating inclusive skills pathways for local people to secure good jobs in the sector
- Driving investment into local construction firms that specialise in environmentally sustainable methods and technologies

During this planning period the MDC will continue to play a key role in championing the Hub among contractors and developers and enabling it to move towards a sustainable financial model which enables long term growth and sustainability of local VCSFE organisations working in this area.

MDC Community led approach to social infrastructure

The MDC recognises that strong social infrastructure is made up of an ecosystem of informal and formal organisations, networks and services, supported by different types of buildings and physical spaces. While Town Centre West has a very small existing resident population it is adjacent to the residential communities of Edgeley and Shaw Heath and home to several key community assets. Social value investment can play a powerful role in supporting the MDC ambition to enhance these assets and provide new infrastructure that addresses gaps. This approach is crucial to ensuring that Town Centre West not only accommodates a growing population but also embraces and welcomes existing residents.

To support this approach, the MDC is developing a model for coproduction of social infrastructure which seeks to move away from conventional approaches to delivering social value (which tend to focus on short term impacts rather than long term change) and instead work with developers and contractors to direct investment towards:

- Long term investment in enhancing community assets, in line with development timelines
- Co production with local communities, supported by local delivery organisations, networked with key local partners
- Aligning professional expertise on building refurbishment / repurposing with financial / in kind investment in community development
- Opportunities to leverage wider investment and resources to amplify impact

Social infrastructure mapping work in 2024 has enabled the MDC to identify specific places and spaces which local people have told us matter most to them. Over this planning period the MDC will test and refine the approach set out above, working with developers and local communities to enhance key

places and spaces with the ultimate aim of creating cohesive and resilient communities. This work will be aligned with the Stockport Live Well vision of working collaboratively with partners to make it easier for residents and communities to help themselves, their families, and those they care for in places close to them.

Meanwhile use

The development process creates the opportunity for meanwhile use of sites and buildings awaiting redevelopment. These uses can help us to support the nurturing of new and existing communities in Town Centre West and trial new uses prior to permanent redevelopment. Through the MDC Board Working Group we have identified the following social value outcomes that could be delivered through meanwhile use opportunities:

- **Promoting innovation** – encouraging the development and implementation of new ideas, processes, or technologies.
- **Fostering local economic and employment growth** – The MDC is seeking to match the provision of employment spaces with end users who are committed to the creation of good quality jobs and the flourishing of Stockport as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester.
- **Enhancing environmental sustainability** – The MDC is seeking occupiers that deliver significant biodiversity net gain, carbon reduction benefits and support the MDC's ambition to make Town Centre West an exemplar green urban neighbourhood.
- **Promoting skills development** – leveraging the scale of investment in development in Town Centre West to act as a catalyst for growth of employment and skills opportunities for Stockport residents.
- **Driving place-making initiatives** – creating vibrant and inclusive spaces that reflect and enhance the identity and character of Stockport

During this plan period we will seek opportunities for meanwhile uses aligned to these outcomes. To support our work in this area we will collaborate with the Urban Institute at the University of Manchester to host a PhD student to undertake research on evaluating meanwhile use strategies. This will provide us with additional capacity and insight to inform our approach going forward

Social infrastructure: Health, education and public spaces

The provision of appropriate social infrastructure will be critical to the success of Town Centre West ensuring that the existing and new communities are well served by schools, early years provision, health services, and public open space. During this plan period we will develop viable propositions for the expanded and enhanced provision that we will need to:

- Meet the needs of a growing population
- Harness the opportunity of this investment to drive improvements in the quality of social infrastructure across the town centre and ultimately contribute to outcomes in key areas including health and wellbeing, education and employment

The town centre Social Infrastructure Programme Board will oversee delivery in this area, identify opportunities for joined-up solutions to provision of services and coordinate responses to cross cutting issues, including social value and communications and engagement.

Inclusive public space

Equal, easy and dignified access to buildings, places and spaces is at the heart of thriving and inclusive communities. However the MDC recognises that disabled people continue to be excluded from much of the built environment through inaccessible design, poor management and inadequate information.

We are committed to improving access for disabled people in Town Centre West, harnessing inclusive design of the built environment to help eliminate discrimination and contribute towards the creation of an accessible and inclusive town centre.

Stockport's topography and historic assets present specific challenges for accessibility. Over this plan period the MDC will collaborate with disabled people and accessibility experts to embed accessibility considerations into the design of individual developments as well as the public spaces and places that link them. Over the early part of this Business Planning period we will develop a Town Centre West wide accessibility approach.

Delivery commitments 2-5

2. The MDC will take a proactive approach to maximising the **social value** of investment in Town Centre West, ensuring that residents benefit from regeneration at every stage through the championing of the MDC Social Value Framework

3. The MDC will bring forward schemes for **meanwhile use** of sites and buildings awaiting development which support the formation of new communities and nurture existing ones within and surrounding Town Centre West. Through a partnership with the University of Manchester's Urban Institute, the MDC will contribute to generation and dissemination of learning about the role of meanwhile use in delivering regeneration.

4. Working in partnership with Stockport Council, the MDC will support ongoing work to identify and bring forward credible schemes to **expand and improve healthcare, education and early years facilities and public spaces in the Town Centre**

5. The MDC will utilise and promote **inclusive design** principles in our approach to the built environment recognising the different ways that people experience and use buildings and public spaces and identifying ways to apply these both within and beyond individual schemes.

Objective 3: Communications, external relations 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 more widely.

With the second phase of MDC development now underway, we have identified the following communications priorities:

- **Maintaining communications with local stakeholders, including new residents.** This will involve:
 - Proactive communications about the imminent and planned changes in the area to ensure that local residents and businesses are aware of new facilities and opportunities
 - Work with developers and local stakeholders to develop a common set of communications materials to be shared with new residents to communicate the vision for Town Centre West and the facilities and resources available to enable them to make the most out of living in an exemplar neighbourhood
 - Creating local ambassadors who are actively involved in shaping the future of the area

- **Maintain and strengthen the prominence of MDC and the regeneration of Stockport with national audiences**, including the property and investment sectors and policy makers. Communicating key delivery milestones will enable us both to demonstrate momentum and credibility and build industry credibility in the MDC as a delivery vehicle. Highlighting these along with the evidence and learning we are generating and the ways in which this is relevant to priority policy areas such as good growth and the housing crisis will enable us to inform national policy, share knowledge and increase opportunities for joint investment with government and wider public agencies.
- **Support wider place marketing of Stockport town centre** as a destination for prospective new residents, end use businesses, with a distinctive marketing approach which articulates the features which distinguish us from other locations.

Community engagement

Engagement with local communities is crucial to ensuring that development schemes brought forward in the MDC area reflect the experiences and aspirations of people within and bordering Town Centre West. Alongside scheme specific consultation, the MDC has undertaken engagement activity on key themes including social infrastructure and accessibility. The insight gained from these activities has informed MDC strategy (including the Social Value Framework) and delivery (including the design of Viaduct Park) and formed the foundation for emerging co-production with the local community to develop the What if? Community Hub.

Throughout this planning period the MDC will continue to bring together insight from consultation and engagement activity and use this insight to inform scheme development and design. Crucially, we will to strengthen our relationships with community partners and enable local communities to play an active role in shaping the future of their changing neighbourhoods. This shift towards co-production will be underpinned by an asset based community development approach which recognises and seeks to build the skills and expertise of local people over the long term.

Delivery commitment 6

Through its communications partners, the MDC will:

- Raise its profile as an exemplar regeneration delivery vehicle
- Continue to raise awareness of the transformation taking place with new and existing residents
- Seek opportunities to expand our understanding of the needs and aspirations of new and existing residents of Town Centre West and surrounding communities to inform our delivery
- Strengthen our relationships with local community partners and enable them to play a greater role in the shaping of the future of Town Centre West

Sustainability

Responding to the environmental challenges – specifically climate emergency and biodiversity loss - is of critical importance to the success of the MDC as a contributor to the resilience of the borough, Greater Manchester and the wider world and to the future thriving of Stockport's economy.

Objective 4: Carbon reduction and biodiversity net gain

Reflecting the stretching carbon neutrality targets adopted by both Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority², carbon reduction has been a key focus for the MDC since its inception. Alongside work to ensure that individual development schemes are designed to maximise energy efficiency and limit embodied carbon, the Board has sponsored a series of innovative initiatives to make Town Centre West a low carbon neighbourhood. This includes detailed feasibility and commercialisation work to develop an investible proposition for a **district heat network** serving the area and wider town centre, powered by renewable energy.

Given our ambition in this area and the changing legislative and regulatory context during this Business Planning period we will make the transition to all new development being net zero carbon in operation by 2029, with an ambition to deliver this earlier by bettering building regulations across all schemes by 2029. We will also look to harness the MDC's place-making opportunity to take a neighbourhood-wide view of the carbon footprint of Town Centre West as a whole and promote and embed innovative practice in the following key priority areas:

- Sustainable energy generation and local energy system management
- Zero carbon construction methods and building design
- Sustainable transport
- Maximising the environmental impact of public realm
- Climate change adaptation and the built environment

Biodiversity net gain: Enhancing our natural assets

Town Centre West is a diverse area with a host of **vital but under-used natural assets**. Through our regeneration of the area we are committed to working with local communities to **transform these into focal recreational and ecological assets**. This will include: increasing the prominence and accessibility of the River Mersey; enhancing Hollywood Park as an exceptional green setting which unites existing and new communities; work with residents to help shape the Interchange Park and new public realm being created as part of the Stockport8 development.

The broader local context to this work is Stockport Council's commitment to protect and improve the natural environment as part of the Climate Action Plan adopted in 2019. In line with these commitments the MDC is working to maximise the impact of biodiversity net gain (BNG) activity from individual developments. During this Business Plan period we will explore the potential for an integrated approach to BNG which delivers transformational benefits within the natural assets of Town Centre West and the wider borough.

Delivery commitment 7

Over this planning period we will transition to all new development within Town Centre West being carbon neutral in operation and work with key partners to support innovation in construction methods and materials to bring about transformational reductions in embodied carbon.

We will also promote and seek to embed innovative practice in key priority areas to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of Town Centre West as a whole and ensure we are playing a leading part in delivering Stockport and Greater Manchester's ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038.

² Both GMCA and Stockport Council have declared climate emergencies and stated their ambitions for Greater Manchester and Stockport (respectively) to be carbon neutral by 2038.

Delivery commitment 8

Over this planning period we will work with communities to shape opportunities to enhance the natural assets of Town Centre West, making them focus recreational and ecological assets. This will involve considering how natural assets can be harnessed to support integrated water management – a key element of climate adaptation. To do this we will seek to utilise new investment streams arising from recent biodiversity net gain legislation to contribute to this work and deliver transformational benefits for Town Centre West and the wider borough.

Objective 5: Enhancing connectivity

The economic potential of Town Centre West - 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 the proposed improvements were incorporated into the masterplan for Stockport8 and will be brought forward during this planning period. We will seek opportunities to bring forward the remaining elements via future schemes and funding applications for highways improvements.

Stockport Rail Station

Stockport Rail Station is the single most important economic asset in the town centre and is at the heart of Town Centre West. The connectivity it provides to Manchester, London, and a number of other regional cities has shaped Stockport's local, regional and national significance as the Southern Gateway to Greater Manchester.

Reflecting the shared view of senior stakeholders that the poor quality of the Station is limiting its economic potential, undermining network capacity and threatening to act as a brake on growth, the MDC has been an active supporter of work by Stockport Council, NETWORK RAIL and TfGM to develop a business case for the redevelopment of the station. The inclusion of Stockport in the Greater Manchester Priority Stations Strategic Partnership provides a strong platform for this work. Over this planning period the MDC will continue to support that work and the development of an investment approach to secure necessary regional and national funding to deliver it.

Metrolink

In parallel with Stockport Rail Station Redevelopment, the MDC, Stockport Council, Greater Manchester, and Transport for Greater Manchester continue to work together to finalise the preferred route for Metrolink extension from East Didsbury to Stockport and to progress the Outline Business Case. The

significance of light rail connectivity linking Stockport into the GM Metrolink network - and complementing the town's radial connectivity – cannot be overstated and delivering the Metrolink extension in the earliest possible timeframe is of paramount importance for the MDC and all its partner organisations.

The Council and the MDC has worked with GMCA, TfGM and Manchester and Trafford Councils to shape a shared strategy for the Southern Growth Corridor which demonstrate the economic, social and environmental opportunity created by enhancing the connectivity of Town Centre West within this wider corridor. Work is now underway to review strategic transport investment in line with the strategy.

Delivery commitment 9

Working with Stockport Council, TfGM, and the wider Rail Industry Working Group established in 2021, the MDC will support delivery of the redevelopment of Stockport Station Redevelopment and outline business case for Metrolink extension, alongside comprehensive packages of highways improvements and active travel infrastructure across Town Centre West.

Objective 6: Employment and economic growth

As outlined in the 'Putting People at the heart of regeneration' section above (see page 18), the development being led by the MDC in Town Centre West has the potential to act as a significant generator of construction sector skills and employment opportunities.

Beyond the development process the MDC is committed to ensuring there is no net loss of end use employment in Town Centre West as a result of its regeneration plans. The provision of new employment floorspace is crucial to delivering on that commitment. The creation of a new business district at Stockport Exchange is crucial to this vision, with four phases of development already complete and home to both thriving Stockport businesses (such as Music Magpie) and international businesses (such as BASF who have their headquarters in Stockport Exchange). Building on this success, in 2024 Stockport Council and Muse secured planning permission for a further four phases of development, including an estimated 245,000 sq. ft Grade A office space, retail and leisure accommodation and up to 100 homes. As part of the plans to attract further new occupiers and jobs to the town, new green, safe spaces will be included for employees, visitors, and commuters to enjoy, including a new public square.

In line with the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter (created by GMCA and supported by Stockport Council), the MDC will also seek opportunities to ensure that the job opportunities created in new employment space are secure, pay the Real Living Wage, improve conditions, deliver opportunities for people to progress and help employers in Stockport to grow and success.

Within the context of the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy there are several sectors of particular relevance to the MDC's work. Construction has been mentioned above but also:

- Sectors of the foundational economy including health and care (linked to our social infrastructure programme)
- The digital economy (linked to the opportunities arising from our work to make Town Centre West a digitally enabled neighbourhood)
- The green economy (linked to our ambition to create an exemplar green neighbourhood)

In each of these areas the MDC will seek to actively support Stockport Council and partner organisations in developing new responses to growing these sectors with the potential to act as a testbed and incubator of innovation.

Finally, successful delivery of the MDC's development and infrastructure ambitions for Stockport will have a significant economic impact on the wider town centre as a hub for employment and as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester. The MDC will collaborate closely with Stockport Council and wider partners to support moves to attract major employers to the area, including the relocation of Stepping Hill hospital to the town centre. Modelling estimates that the first phase of relocation (creating a new health hub in the town centre incorporating outpatient services) will bring 2million visitors per year, creating a game changing impact on footfall and town centre vitality.

Delivery commitment 10

The MDC will maximise its contribute to the creation of good quality jobs and economic activity both directly in Town Centre West and indirectly in the wider Town Centre through:

- Leveraging the scale of investment in development in Town Centre West to act as a catalyst for growth of **employment and skills opportunities in the construction sector** for Stockport residents, especially in relation to modern, green methods of construction
- Delivering **new employment workspace**, including future phases of the masterplan for Stockport Exchange
- Seeking to **match the provision of employment floorspace with end users who are committed to the creation of good quality jobs** and the flourishing of Stockport as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester
- Partnering with organisations in the **foundational, digital and green sectors** to utilise Town Centre West as an incubator of innovation and inclusive growth.
- Collaborating with Stockport Council and other partners to attract major employers to the town centre, including the **relocation of Stepping Hill hospital**.

Innovation

Innovation is one of three guiding principles for the MDC and since our establishment in 2019 we have embraced the opportunity to shape the application of new and emerging approaches in a way which is highly relevant for other UK towns.

In 2023 we began a series of innovation deep dives in key thematic areas to challenge and stimulate our thinking and delivery. These will continue into the current planning period. Potential topics include:

Renewable energy generation

- Integrated approaches to building management
- Sustainable energy generation, storage and local energy system management
- Zero carbon construction methods and building design
- Green infrastructure

Delivery commitment 11

The MDC will carry out annual innovation deep dives into priority built environment innovation use cases.

Investment

The scale of the overall ambition the MDC has for Town Centre West requires a comprehensive strategic approach to generating long-term investment funding in the context of Stockport's land values and outlook for value growth.

The MDC's Investment Framework, produced in 2021, set out a strategy for exploring new sources of funding from both public and private sector partners to support the delivery of infrastructure and development in Town Centre West. As set out in section 2 (above) we have had demonstrable success in applying this approach over the last six years, utilising public sector funding to leverage increasing amounts of private sector investment from developers and Joint Venture Partners, including in Stockport Interchange and Stockport Exchange. A further private investment of approx. £250m is anticipated in the next phase of the MDC pipeline, alongside public investment from Stockport Council, GMCA and national agencies.

The sustained increase in values as a result of regeneration investment not only enables us to evidence the strength of Stockport as an investment proposition but also opens up new opportunities for a diversity of investment models, including recyclable investment, alongside grant. During this planning period we will work closely with GMCA and Homes England to align our 5-10 year pipeline with the investment tools available through devolution to accelerate housing and wider delivery.

Delivery commitment 12

Stockport MDC will continue to explore private and public sector investment appetite in development opportunities in Town Centre West, including through the creation of a long term place based investment partnership.

Governance

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 planning period we will commission internal governance reviews on a biannual basis to ensure the highest standards of governance.

Delivery commitment 13

Stockport MDC will maintain the highest standards of governance including acting on the findings of the 2024 External Governance review and commissioning biannual internal governance reviews.

Expansion

As described in the introduction above (see page 19) during 2025-26 Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, proposed to expand the boundary of the Mayoral Development area covered by Stockport MDC to take in the entirety of the town centre, enabling the delivery of an additional 4,000 new homes.

The process we intend to follow to bring about the expansion is set out below:

Consultation	The Localism Act stipulates that prior to the GM Mayor designating land in the GMCA's area as a Mayoral development area the Mayor must consult with a range of stakeholders, including members of the GMCA. In line with this requirement and to ensure we capture the views of local stakeholders, a six week public consultation will take place on the proposed expansion in Spring 2025.
Report to GMCA	Following the consultation, the GM Mayor will decide whether to progress with the proposed expansion. If this is supported he will put forward a report to the GMCA proposing to designate the whole of the town centre area as a Mayoral development area and gain approval of the GMCA.
Publicity & Notification to Secretary of State	If approved the designation must be publicised and the Secretary of State must be notified of the designation and the name of the MDC.
Establishment	Once notified the Secretary of State will, by an order, establish the MDC. The order establishing an MDC is a statutory instrument which is subject to the negative procedure. This means it will automatically become law without a debate by either of the Houses of Parliament provided there is no objection from either House within a 40 day period.

Following the process we will review the MDC's Strategic Business Plan, with a view to widening the scope of the 2026-2031 Plan to cover the whole of the town centre.

Delivery commitment 14

Stockport MDC will support Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority to carry out public consultation on proposals to expand the Mayoral Development area to cover the entirety of the town centre.

Appendix 1: Summary of delivery commitments

Theme	Delivery commitment	Draft new commitment
Housing a growing community	1	The MDC will bring forward 1,350 new homes by 2025. It will aim to continue this pace of delivery by completing at least 250 new homes - of all types and tenures for all income groups - per year through this Strategic Business Plan period to 2030.
People at the heart of delivery	2	The MDC will take a proactive approach to maximising the social value of investment in Town Centre West, ensuring that residents benefit from regeneration at every stage through the championing of the MDC Social Value Framework .
	3	The MDC will bring forward schemes for meanwhile use of sites and buildings awaiting development which support the formation of new communities and nurture existing ones within and surrounding Town Centre West. Through a partnership with the University of Manchester's Urban Institute, the MDC will contribute to generation and dissemination of learning about the role of meanwhile use in delivering regeneration.
	4	Working in partnership with Stockport Council, the MDC will support ongoing work to identify and bring forward credible schemes to expand and improve healthcare, primary education and early years facilities and public spaces in the Town Centre .
	5	The MDC will utilise and promote inclusive design principles into our approach to the built environment recognising the different ways that people experience and use buildings and public spaces and identifying ways to apply these beyond individual schemes.
Communications, external relations and engagement	6	Through its communications partners, the MDC will: • Raise its profile as an exemplar regeneration delivery vehicle • Continue to raise awareness of the transformation taking place with new and existing residents • Seek opportunities to expand our understanding of the needs and aspirations of new and existing residents of Town Centre West and surrounding communities to inform our delivery
	7	Over this planning period the MDC will oversee the transition to all new development within Town Centre West being carbon neutral in operation and work with key partners to support

Environmental sustainability and resilience		innovation in construction methods and materials to bring about transformational reductions in embodied carbon. The MDC will also promote and seek to embed innovative practice in key priority areas to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of Town Centre West as a whole and ensure we are playing a leading part in delivering Stockport and Greater Manchester's ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038.
	8	Over this planning period the MDC will work with communities to shape opportunities to enhance the natural assets of Town Centre West, making them focus recreational and ecological assets. This will involve considering how natural assets can be harnessed to support integrated water management – a key element of climate adaptation. To do this we will seek to utilise new investment streams arising from recent biodiversity net gain legislation to contribute to this work and deliver transformational benefits for Town Centre West and the wider borough.
Enhancing connectivity	9	Working with Stockport Council, TfGM, and the wider Rail Industry Working Group established in 2021, the MDC will support delivery of the redevelopment of Stockport Station Redevelopment and business case for Metrolink extension, alongside comprehensive packages of highways improvements and active travel infrastructure across Town Centre West.
Employment and economic growth	10	The MDC will maximise its contribute to the creation of good quality jobs and economic activity both directly in Town Centre West and indirectly in the wider Town Centre through: -Leveraging the scale of investment in development in Town Centre West to act as a catalyst for growth of employment and skills opportunities in the construction sector for Stockport residents, especially in relation to modern, green methods of construction -Delivering new employment workspace, including future phases of the masterplan for Stockport Exchange -Seeking to match the provision of employment floorspace with end users who are committed to the creation of good quality jobs and the flourishing of Stockport as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester

		- Partnering with organisations in the foundational, digital and green sectors to utilise Town Centre West as an incubator of innovation and inclusive growth. -Collaborating with Stockport Council and other partners to attract major employers to the town centre, including the relocation of Stepping Hill hospital.
Innovation and future proofing	11	The MDC will drive forward innovation across priority built environment innovation use cases through an annual programme of deep dives.
Investment	12	The MDC will continue to explore private and public sector investment appetite in development opportunities in Town Centre West, including through the creation of a long term place based investment partnership.
Governance, leadership and capacity	13	The MDC will maintain the highest standards of governance and seek assurance through an annual programme of internal and external governance reviews.
Expansion of MDC boundary	14	The MDC will work with Stockport Council and the GM Mayor to support proposals for the expansion of the Stockport Mayoral development area to take in the entirety of Stockport town centre.