

Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation



Strategic Business Plan 2021 – 2026

Chair's Foreword

Ensuring our town centres have a vibrant future has never been more important. As places to live, centres of employment, leisure destinations, and places that shape our identities town centres are at the heart of our social and economic future as we move into a post-COVID recovery.

The Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) continues to provide a blueprint for how town centres - with the right vision, partnership commitment, and political leadership - can be transformed to the benefit of their communities and the wider economy.



This Strategic Business Plan 2021-2026 is the second such document the MDC has produced since I became Chair shortly before the COVID pandemic began and I am pleased to say that, during a year of unprecedented uncertainty, the redevelopment of Stockport Town Centre has not only continued but gone from strength to strength.

The market confidence we have seen in Stockport throughout the pandemic has been enormously encouraging with developers and investors backing the ambition of the public sector which allows us to accelerate work on housing delivery, generating additional investment capacity, and delivering the infrastructure the town needs.

The MDC's ability to drive delivery has increased over the last year through its ongoing relationship with Homes England and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and through the appointment of three nationally-recognised delivery experts to the Board; all of which ensures that we are well-placed to continue delivering on the ambition the people of Stockport, the Council's political leadership, and the Greater Manchester Mayor share for the future of the town centre.

All of work in the MDC is shaped by our ambition to be Greater Manchester's newest, coolest and greenest neighbourhood. We are committed to delivering genuinely

inclusive growth that benefits the benefits all those who live, work and visit Stockport Town Centre.

Lord Bob Kerlake

March 2021

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Stockport Town Centre West – A Unique Regeneration Opportunity

Stockport Town Centre is Changing

Over recent years Stockport has led the way on town centre regeneration through a £1bn investment programme that has brought forward new housing and commercial development, led to major transport infrastructure enhancements, and redefined the town as a leisure, food and beverage, and visitor destination.

But the scale of our ambition for Stockport does not stop there. The achievements of the last ten years have generated significant momentum and give us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the town for the coming decades.

The Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation has been created in response to the specific challenges and opportunities in Stockport, the town's potential as a centre of housing and economic growth in Greater Manchester, and as a nationally significant exemplar

for how large-scale regeneration can be delivered in a town centre context.

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.

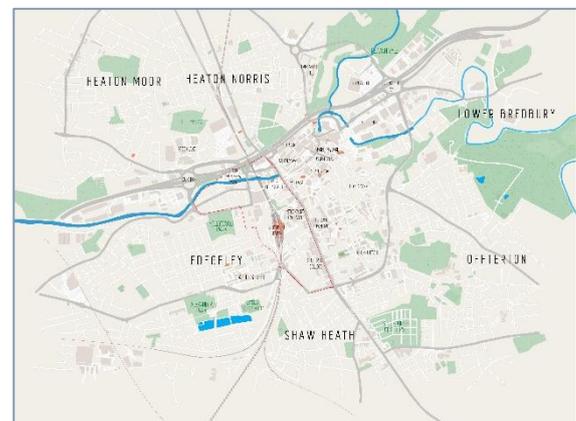
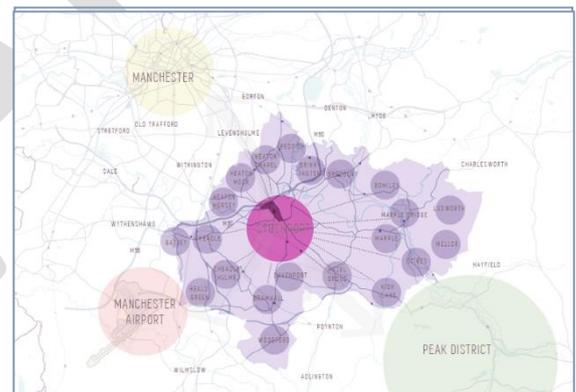
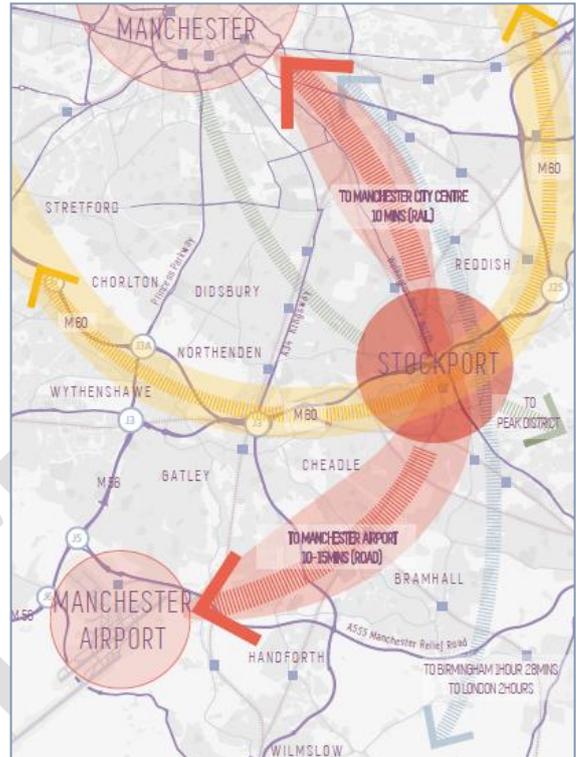
Stockport's success is in part due to its location and exceptional transport connectivity to Manchester city centre, Manchester Airport, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, and London. But its easy access to the Peak District, the Trans-Pennine Trail, and its rivers, canals, and walking routes all contribute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

These advantages mean that Stockport is ideally positioned to benefit from changing patterns of investment and urban re-population and to capitalise on the impact of major economic growth in Manchester city centre and the wider City Region, creating a demand for high quality homes which has been mainly fulfilled by new City Centre schemes.

These factors combine to create a compelling case for Stockport as the location for a significant new residential community to address the borough’s planning, housing, and economic challenges and to offer an alternative to the City.

This opportunity underpins the vision and masterplan set out in the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for Town Centre West produced by Stockport Council in 2019. The SRF responds to the unique spatial characteristics of Town Centre West – as well as its proximity to the amenities and opportunities in the wider Town Centre – and provides a compelling, credible, and deliverable plan for how the area can be transformed.

Town Centre West is shaped by its industrial land uses and major infrastructure while the River Mersey and Hollywood Park provide exceptional natural assets. In common with other town centres, however, 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.



The Mayoral Development Corporation

The Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is one of the key initiatives in Greater Manchester's approach to reviving its town centres as part of the city region's overall housing and employment ambitions. It is the first Mayoral Development Corporation in Greater Manchester – and the first in the country to focus on a town centre location - and will address some of the biggest challenges facing towns and urban centres in the UK today.

The MDC has a clear mission to build Greater Manchester's newest, coolest, and greenest urban neighbourhood building upon our guiding principles of Community, Sustainability and Innovation.

Over an anticipated lifetime of up to fifteen years, the MDC will re-purpose the 130 acres of Town Centre West, providing up to 3,500 much-needed new homes in a sustainable brownfield location alongside new employment floorspace and the social infrastructure and amenity needed to support a growing community. The success of the MDC will make a vital contribution to wider plans to reshape the whole of

Stockport Town Centre for current and future residents alike.

By creating the MDC as a dedicated regeneration vehicle, Stockport has the delivery focus and single institutional platform to tackle the full range of issues faced by town centres from increasing housing supply and tackling viability constraints to raising design quality, pioneering low carbon development, and providing the employment space and infrastructure improvements needed to future-proof Stockport Town Centre as a place of choice to live, work, and visit.

The MDC is ideally placed to lead this activity but delivering this scale of ambition, in a brownfield location with the complexity of Town Centre West, will need the support and engagement of multiple Government departments and agencies, the development and investment sectors, infrastructure providers, the health and education sectors, innovators and research institutions, and the local community to make it a reality.

The Strategic Business Plan 2021 - 2026

This Strategic Business Plan covers a five year period and sets out the MDC's guiding purpose and objectives, the workstreams it is undertaking in the plan period to deliver those objectives, and how the organisation functions. It is supplemented by an annual action plan which contains an additional level of detail about what the MDC will achieve over the coming financial year.

The Strategic Business Plan builds on the momentum created in Stockport over recent years and sets the framework for accelerating the pace and scale of delivery across Town Centre West through the MDC in a way that gives confidence to residents, the market, and the MDC's partner organisations. This document is an update on the 2020-2025 Strategic Business Plan that was prepared prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The revisions ensure that the Plan remains current and relevant but do not change the fundamental aims and objectives of the MDC.

The imperatives to accelerate housing delivery on brownfield sites, to reduce pressure for the release of greenbelt land for housing development, to

enhance the whole of Stockport town centre as a residential and employment location, and to find new ways to address the difficulty of leading regeneration in a town centre context remain and the economic impact created by this Plan has potential to help drive forward the post-COVID recovery in Stockport.

The Strategic Business Plan should be read in the context of the Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework as the blueprint for how Stockport will realise its potential and take advantage of the once-in-a-generation opportunity it faces.

The MDC's Commitments 2021 – 2026

This Strategic Business Plan sets out the objectives and guiding principles that inform the MDC's activity. The response to those objectives and guiding principles is a set of specific delivery commitments (described in detail in the section **Scaling Up Delivery: Key Workstreams for 2021 to 2026** on page 20) that are summarised in the table below:

Theme	#	Commitment
Community	1	The MDC will, as a minimum, maintain its current pace of delivery and successfully achieve its initial target of 1,000 new homes by 2023. It will aim to continue this level of delivery by completing at least 250 new homes per year until 2026. The delivery of new homes will include housing of all types and tenures for all income groups.
	2	The MDC will support wider planning for future health and education facilities and will produce a credible and deliverable plan for the social infrastructure investment requirement in Town Centre West.
	3	Through its communications partners, the MDC will raise its profile as an exemplar regeneration delivery vehicle and scale-up its community engagement work.
Sustainability	4	The MDC will engage with infrastructure providers to work up into feasibility and delivery the infrastructure schemes – including digital infrastructure - identified through the Stockport Central Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
	5	The MDC will bring forward the project interventions that enable it to deliver significant carbon reductions and ensure that Town Centre West is an exemplar green urban neighbourhood.

	6	The MDC will bring forward the redevelopment of Stockport Station and the surrounding area in line with the vision set out in the Station Growth Prospectus to maximise the economic significance of Stockport Rail Station and its role in the Greater Manchester and North West transport network.
	7	The MDC will work closely with Stockport Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and all other partners to progress the business case for the Metrolink extension and twin track work to secure the funding with work to ensure appropriate legal powers using the MDC status are in place to fast-track delivery of Metrolink in advance of the standard timescales.
Innovation	8	The MDC will work closely with a broad range of partners and funders to develop new funding models to deliver development, infrastructure, and carbon reduction schemes in Town Centre West.
	9	The MDC will engage with leading consultancies, the development sector, the technology and academic sectors, and with innovation funders to establish Town Centre West as an exemplar for innovation in town centre regeneration across issues such as digital and data, infrastructure management, connected and low carbon homes and vehicles, assisted living, modern construction techniques and building management.
	10	The MDC will use its direct and indirect influence to drive up design quality and originality in Town Centre West.
	11	Through its commitment to delivering new employment floorspace the MDC will contribute to both job creation and the overall economic growth of Stockport Town Centre as a strategic growth location within Greater Manchester. We will also seek to match the provision of employment floorspace with new inward investment opportunities as they come forward (e.g. Whitehall relocation).

The Stockport MDC's Objectives

The Stockport MDC's mission is to create Greater Manchester's newest, coolest, and greenest urban neighbourhood.

The scale and nature of this ambition is rooted in the analysis masterplanning that informed the Strategic Regeneration Framework for Town Centre West undertaken by Stockport Council in 2019 and which set clear guiding principles at the heart of the regeneration plans for the area.

- **Community** - An increased population and enhanced quality of life for all
- **Sustainability** - A more attractive place and sustainable environment
- **Innovation** - A place of progress and an environment shaped for the future

The MDC Board and its partner organisations are committed to the regeneration of Town Centre West in a way which sets new standards for place-

shaping, urban design, and the built environment while ensuring that the way people live, work, interact, access public services, and come together as communities, both now and in the future, is central to how Town Centre West will be different from other regeneration initiatives.

The MDC is delivering against those guiding principles by addressing the following themes.

Supporting Health & Sustainability

The growing urgency to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change - not least through the Greater Manchester Mayor's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality across the city region - means that sustainability is critically important for Town Centre West.

Ensuring that urban design and transport planning create improved walking and cycling opportunities and design out car

dependency is key to delivering our sustainability ambitions. Equally, maximising renewable energy sources, facilitating the wider use of electric vehicles, and prioritising low carbon construction and high energy efficiency in building design will help achieve a new model of cleaner and greener living in Town Centre West.

Embedding sustainability and carbon reduction in all aspects of design and delivery will be vital to enabling people to live in healthy communities. But the MDC is committed to ensuring that the principles of social connectedness help guide regeneration to guarantee that the built environment facilitates a sense of community, encourages social interaction that increases health and wellbeing, and contributes to the long-term redesign of health and social care systems.

What has become even clearer during the pandemic is the value that communities place on their outdoor space. The objective of doubling the amount of greenspace in the wider Town Centre set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in 2020 has become even more relevant and the MDC is committed to playing its part in making this a reality.

Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth

The MDC is firmly committed to ensuring there is no net loss of employment in Town Centre West as a result of its regeneration plans. The provision of new employment floorspace – as is already being created at Stockport Exchange by Stockport Council and Muse - is crucial to delivering on that commitment.

But the MDC will play a key role in ensuring that place-shaping, infrastructure, and new residential development redefines Stockport's potential as a place of innovation, employment, and enterprise.

Innovation & Future Proofing

We know that the way people live and interact with each other and with places is changing rapidly. That is why the MDC is determined to be at the forefront of innovation across technology, construction, design, infrastructure, and place management to ensure that Town Centre West is an early adopter for new and challenging approaches to town centre living.

This commitment will see us testing out and embracing new solutions from

innovative construction processes and waste management to carbon capture technologies, smart transport networks, advanced communications technologies, and new local logistics solutions.

The increasing importance of understanding how places function in order to improve the relationship between people and the urban environment will be a key driver for the MDC over its lifetime. This will require the intelligent use of data and digital technology to ensure that the built environment in Town Centre West is able both to anticipate and respond to the needs of the community.

Enhancing Connectivity

Key to the opportunity in Town Centre West is its connectivity. But the existing network and patterns of movement require new investment to promote modal shift, increase walking and cycling opportunities, improve links with surrounding communities, improving integration between all modes of transport (including the recent announcement of the submission of the business case for Metrolink), and improving key transport infrastructure assets such as Stockport Rail Station to create a southern hub for the City Region.

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.

It is imperative that the development in Town Centre West provides a broader 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.

The MDC will 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.

Importantly, this community will take its place and weave itself into the fabric of the existing residential and business community which is already firmly established within the Town Centre and wider Borough.

Integrating Neighbourhoods

Creating a flagship 'connected neighbourhood' for Greater Manchester requires a legible urban fabric with direct linkages to the station, town centre, and Interchange as well as to Edgeley and the Heatons. It requires the provision of greater amenities in locations that are accessible to all residents inside and outside the Town Centre West boundary; and it requires new approaches to traffic and car parking, improved public realm, and a high quality environment which promotes sustainable movement and biodiversity and puts people at its heart.

Raising Design Quality

To realise its ambition for Town Centre West the MDC must ensure there is proper consideration of quality and good design standards in all development in the area.

The importance of development designed at a human scale, responsive to the town's topography and historic assets, is central to the MDC's vision of creating safe and attractive streets and spaces.

Responding to Character

Town Centre West is a diverse area with a host of characteristics which give it an authenticity that should be celebrated through its regeneration. The MDC is firmly committed to maximising the potential of the area's character to shape its future.

The character of the area provides great opportunity to showcase heritage assets such as its mills and the viaduct; increase the prominence of the River Mersey as a vital but under-used natural feature with enormous potential as a recreational and ecological asset; and reimagine Hollywood Park as an exceptional green setting which unites existing and new communities, together with the exciting, once-in-a-generation opportunity to plan and build a new two acre green park on the Interchange scheme.

Delivering our Ambition: The MDC's First Eighteen Months

Establishing the MDC as a Delivery Vehicle

The MDC was created by the Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, in September 2019. In its first eighteen months it has become firmly established as an effective delivery vehicle led by a Board which has provided multi-agency public sector commitment, cross-party political support from Stockport Council, while benefiting from the prominence and interest generated by the involvement of the Greater Manchester Mayor as Chair.

The informal support provided by a number of prominent North West business, development, infrastructure, and place-shaping leaders as Strategic Advisors ensures that the MDC board can draw on a flexible base of industry experience and expertise as it undertakes its responsibilities.

As the MDC has grown into a delivery vehicle that is fully established in the North West market, its board has changed to ensure that it has the leadership it needs in the next phase of

its life. The Greater Manchester Mayor's appointment of nationally recognised regeneration expert, Lord Kerslake, as Chair in January 2020 gave the MDC unique prominence and credibility with which to broaden and deepen its relationships with the development and investment sector and with Government. While the appointment in September 2020 of Louise Brooke-Smith, Debbie Francis, and Simon Marshall as board members brings significant private sector delivery capacity with nationally-acknowledged expertise across place-shaping, infrastructure delivery, and investment.

The MDC now has in place an expert operational team with the right skills and experience to turn ambition into delivery. This core team is complemented by aligned staff resource from Homes England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Stockport Council to ensure that it benefits from the broadest possible expertise and capacity.

Stockport Council has restated its long-term commitment to providing the MDC with a revenue budget of £0.5m per annum to fund its running costs and give its operations a secure footing.

Local communications agency Marketing Stockport has been retained to establish the MDC brand, manage its website, and handle communications with local stakeholders and, moving forward, the MDC will look to raise its profile at a national level.

Capital Investment

Since its creation, the MDC has been successful in attracting significant capital investment to unlock delivery of the first wave of schemes in Town Centre West.

Homes England has awarded grant funding through the Marginal Viability element of Housing Infrastructure Fund for the Weir Mill and Interchange schemes with further investment opportunities being jointly progressed by Homes England and the MDC team.

To accelerate the pace of delivery in this phase of the MDC's life, Stockport Council has created a £100m investment facility with the scale and flexibility to support a broad range of potential interventions including land acquisition to facilitate site assembly, gap funding to overcome viability issues, and funding in the form of loan, grant, or equity investment. This investment facility has given the MDC significant influence in its discussions with developers and

landowners to unlock sites and bring forward the types of schemes that fit with the MDC's vision and ambition for Town Centre West.

The MDC is currently working to increase its investment capacity in support of its future development and infrastructure ambition for the town with early stage discussions underway with a range of public and private sector funders.

Scheme Delivery

The MDC's ambition for Town Centre West is grounded in the momentum built up over recent years through a strong track record of delivery in the town. Market sentiment towards Stockport has been transformed entering the new decade and the town is starting to see the conditions for accelerated growth improve as a result of the delivery currently underway.

Stockport Council's partnership with Muse to deliver a new commercial quarter at **Stockport Exchange** – attracting major employers Stagecoach, Music Magpie, and BASF into the town centre - has already brought forward two new Grade A office buildings, a successful hotel, and new car parking to capitalise on the exceptional transport

connectivity provided by Stockport Railway Station and transform perceptions of the town as a business location. The success of the scheme has led partners to begin work developing out the fourth phase of the masterplan and further funding support from the Council.

Major transport infrastructure investment in Stockport through Local Growth Fund has allowed Transport for Greater Manchester, Stockport Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Homes England to progress the transformative **Interchange** development that showcases how infrastructure investment can leverage residential development through partnership with Cityheart and Rise Homes and public open space improvements in a single iconic scheme which will start on site in 2021.

Stockport's attractiveness as a location for residential development has moved to a new level with the completion and opening in February 2020 of the **Mailbox**. Rise Homes' 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 marks a major step

forward in reshaping Stockport's residential market.

Similarly, Capital&Centric are progressing their plans to redevelop the historic **Weir Mill** for residential use following their acquisition of the site in 2020 reflecting the growing potential for Stockport's heritage assets to play an ever-greater role in defining Stockport's future while respecting and preserving its past.

The long-term future of Stockport College has been secured through a merger with Trafford College and the Stockport campus is undergoing major redevelopment as part of a wider approach to reshaping the further education offer in the town centre. Investment in the FE estate, and in strengthening both the sector and the educational offer, has brought about private investment by Investar who have acquired the surplus 2.9 acres of the campus in order to bring forward 442 new homes in a prime location in the southern part of Town Centre West. The resulting Royal George Village scheme has received planning consent in November 2020 and is due to start on site in 2021.

In addition, the Council and Stockport Homes are working together on the St.

Thomas' Gardens scheme which is currently in planning and will be on site in summer 2021 delivering 68 affordable homes which incorporate re-use of heritage buildings, intergenerational living, sustainability and shared greenspace to create its own sense of community. Alongside this will be the provision of 70 beds of intermediate care which is based on a new operational model and improving the quality of the offer within the Borough.

In total, the schemes underway in the MDC's early pipeline of delivery are contributing approximately 120,000ft² of new employment floorspace along with 1,000 new homes. This scale of delivery at this early stage gives the MDC a very solid foundation to move forward.

Current public and private sector delivery in Town Centre West provides a basis for forecasting a delivery trajectory and related investment requirement over the period of this Business Plan:

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
New Home Starts	702	250	500	250	250
New Home Completions	0	266	351	601	300
Capital Investment in Schemes in MDC Area (£m)	126.5	38	75	40	50
Revenue Funding	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

Land Acquisition & Site Assembly

Side by side with the schemes already in delivery is a clear focus on acquisition of key land assets in Town Centre West to ensure that the MDC has a robust delivery pipeline for the coming years. Negotiations with multiple landowners in the area are underway in the context of the £100m investment facility approved by Stockport Council and a proactive approach from Homes England to maximising uptake of existing programmes. The MDC and its partners are in the process of securing control over a growing number of sites particularly around Brinksway and Royal George quarters. The MDC will be in a position to make announcements on specific transactions in first half of 2021.

Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework

The Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) was produced by Stockport Council in its capacity as Local Planning Authority for the area and approved in its final form in November 2019 following a 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.

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Scaling Up Delivery: Key Workstreams for 2021 to 2026

Community

To achieve improved outcomes for the existing and future communities in Town Centre West, the MDC is focused on: progressing the delivery of housing schemes; planning for and providing the place that people want to live, work and visit with all the social infrastructure and amenity needed to support a growing town centre population; and ensuring that the MDC's purpose and objectives are clearly communicated to enable real community engagement in the long-term regeneration of Town Centre West.

- **Delivering the Initial Pipeline of Development & Site Acquisition**

The MDC is firmly on track to deliver its initial target of 1,000 new homes by March 2023 through an initial pipeline of residential schemes all of which are progressing well.

Delivery of the schemes that make up the initial pipeline is summarised below.

The **Stockport Interchange**

development is a partnership between Stockport Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, and GMCA. It will provide a much-needed upgrade to the town's transport infrastructure through a new bus station with an improved link to the railway station to enhance multi-modal connectivity via a new pedestrian and cycle bridge. The scheme also delivers a new two-acre park accessible from the A6, designed in line with Sustainable Urban Drainage principles, along with 196 new homes. It received planning consent in March 2019 and the main contractor and development partner were appointed in early 2020. Start on site is anticipated in early 2021.

The **Mailbox** development on the site of the former Royal Mail Sorting Office has now opened and provides 119 new homes in a scheme supported by the GMCA Housing Investment Fund. The mailbox is the first new scheme to complete in Town Centre West since the creation of the MDC and sets a new standard for the area in terms of ambition and quality.

Since its merger with Trafford College and development of its campus refurbishment plans, **Stockport College** disposed in August 2019 of 2.9 acres of surplus land to Investar whose plans for

the Royal George Village scheme of up to 442 new homes in a mixed used development have received planning consent from the Council. Start on site is anticipated in 2021.

The Council and the MDC have worked closely with Homes England to secure Housing Infrastructure Fund that will support redevelopment of the iconic and strategically important heritage site **Weir Mill** by Capital&Centric who have undertaken public consultations on the redevelopment proposals and submitted a full planning application. The developer has a track record of successfully redeveloping and repurposing historic buildings into iconic and desirable residential schemes.

Stockport Council and Stockport Homes are progressing the **St. Thomas' Gardens** development on the site of the former St Thomas' Hospital. The planning application was submitted in autumn 2020 and is due to be determined in late March. The redevelopment will create an all-age residential scheme which will include an exemplar intermediate care scheme – the Academy of Living Well built with sustainability at its heart - to support the Borough's approach to health and social care integration. The site will also deliver 68 new affordable homes

through a combination of the restoration of the historic buildings on the site and new homes which will incorporate HAPPI principles and Passivhaus standards.

Commitment No. 1

The MDC will, as a minimum, maintain its current pace of delivery and successfully achieve its initial target of 1,000 new homes by 2023. It will aim to continue this level of delivery by completing at least 250 new homes per year until 2026. The delivery of new homes will include housing of all types and tenures for all income groups.

- **Social Infrastructure**

To support the needs of a growing community in Town Centre West the MDC and the Council will jointly progress planning for new health, social care, and educational facilities in the context of the healthcare estates planning, and the review of schools capacity led by Stockport Council, that is currently underway.

Commitment No. 2

The MDC will support wider planning for future health and education facilities and will produce a credible and deliverable plan for the social

infrastructure investment requirement in Town Centre West.

- **Communications, Community Engagement, and External Relations**

After an initial partnership with a single communications and marketing agency to handle all the MDC's media, website, and branding requirements, a more tailored approach to communications at local and national levels is being developed. For the local market, the MDC is creating a steady stream of positive news items to maintain a consistent level of interest in Town Centre West which will increase the coverage that can be achieved for major announcements.

The MDC is also actively building relationships with government Departments and agencies to position the MDC as a delivery vehicle that addresses numerous government agendas with a view to establishing greater collaboration.

For the national market, the MDC is developing a highly targeted approach based on maximising impact by tying in key delivery milestones to improve the MDC's prominence with the property and investment sectors, and with policy-

makers, beyond Greater Manchester and the North West.

The MDC recognises that the support of the local community is vital to the success of the long-term regeneration of Town Centre West. The MDC will therefore increase its engagement programme to improve engagement with businesses and residents in Town Centre West and in surrounding communities who stand to benefit from a thriving Town Centre.

Commitment No. 3

Through its communications partners, the MDC will raise its profile as an exemplar regeneration delivery vehicle and scale-up its community engagement work.

Sustainability

The low carbon and sustainability agendas are critically important for the future success of town centre living and for Stockport's ability to drive economic growth over the coming decades. The MDC's commitments to delivering its sustainability ambitions run through the work it will undertake through the period of this Business Plan on delivering the infrastructure needed to

reduce carbon emissions and identifying new models for low carbon development.

- **Infrastructure Delivery**

The future infrastructure needed to support our growth ambitions for Town Centre West and the wider town centre are set out in the Council's Stockport Central Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The plan covers the interventions required across transport, energy, waste, digital, and public realm in light of existing capacity, anticipated additional demand, and changing patterns of town centre living over the coming decades. It informs an emerging delivery programme which will take proposals in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan through feasibility, business case development, planning, and into delivery.

Commitment No. 4

The MDC will engage with infrastructure providers to work up into feasibility and delivery the infrastructure schemes – including digital infrastructure - identified through the Stockport Central Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- **Sustainability & Carbon Reduction**

Through its infrastructure planning for the town centre and Town Centre West, Stockport Council and the MDC have identified the energy, waste, transport, water, and green infrastructure interventions needed to support a future town centre.

In relation to the energy capacity required for Town Centre West, this work is focussed on low carbon energy generation, energy storage solutions, feasibility testing of emerging energy sources to reduce fossil fuel dependency, potential creation of a local energy market, and use of smart energy management systems.

In parallel with the MDC's approach to making Town Centre West an exemplar carbon neutral and sustainable location through infrastructure provision, the MDC is currently assessing the viability implications of transition to carbon neutral development.

Commitment No. 5

The MDC will bring forward the project interventions that enable it to deliver significant carbon reductions and ensure that Town Centre West is an exemplar green urban neighbourhood.

- **Stockport Rail Station**

Stockport Rail Station is the single most important economic asset in the Town Centre and is at the heart of the Mayoral Development Corporation area. The connectivity it provides to Manchester, London, and a number of other regional cities is invaluable to the town, to the city region, and to the wider northern and national rail networks.

Enhancing the Station’s role as a transport hub for the south of Greater Manchester while maximising its role as an economic driver for Stockport is a longstanding ambition for the Council and the MDC.

The Stockport Station Growth Prospectus – published concurrently with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan - sets out a vision for the future redevelopment of Stockport Station and its surrounding area as a key infrastructure enhancement with the potential to transform the town as a transport and economic location.

Agreement has now been reached with Network Rail, Homes England, Stockport Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Transport for the North to create an industry working group directed by a high-level group of

the senior strategic leaders in each organisation to lead the next phase of work on station redevelopment.

Commitment No.6:

The MDC will bring forward the redevelopment of Stockport Station and the surrounding area in line with the vision set out in the Station Growth Prospectus to maximise the economic significance of Stockport Rail Station and its role in the Greater Manchester and North West transport network.

- **Metrolink**

The MDC, Stockport Council, Greater Manchester, and Transport for Greater Manchester continue to working together to progressing the business case for extension of the Metrolink network to Stockport Town Centre in response to the commitment made in January 2020 by the Greater Manchester Mayor and Leader of Stockport Council.

The significance of new orbital 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.

Commitment No.7:

The MDC will work closely with Stockport Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and all other partners to progress the business case for the Metrolink extension and twin track work to secure the funding with work to ensure appropriate legal powers using the MDC status are in place to fast-track delivery of Metrolink in advance of the standard timescales.

Innovation

The MDC’s ambition is to be at the forefront of the place-shaping agenda in every aspect of its delivery lifecycle. To ensure it is effectively tackling the systemic barriers to brownfield regeneration it will progress innovative approaches to public and private sector capital investment and funding as well as to design quality and innovation across all aspects of place development and place management.

• **Investment Strategy**

To deliver the overall ambition the MDC has for Town Centre West, capital investment of over £1bn is likely to be required over a ten to fifteen-year timeframe. A capital investment requirement of this scale poses a significant challenge to the MDC model even though significant capital investment to kick start regeneration in the early phase of the MDC’s lifetime has already been secured through a £100m investment facility from Stockport Council and through £12m investment from Homes England. Those investment commitments are complemented by further Council investment in a number of development schemes in the area (including Stockport Exchange) and GMCA investment (in Interchange and, through the Housing Investment Fund, in the Mailbox).

The MDC has now produced a comprehensive Investment Framework which provides a strategy for accessing new sources of funding from both public and private sector partners to support the next phase of infrastructure and development.

Discussions are now underway with public sector partners and institutional investors around the appetite for

significant investment in Stockport and potential funding structures.

Commitment No. 8:

The MDC will work closely with a broad range of partners and funders to develop new funding models to deliver development, infrastructure, and carbon reduction schemes in Town Centre West.

- **Innovative Place-Making**

The MDC is committed to putting innovation at the heart of its regeneration of Town Centre West. The infrastructure planning currently underway for Stockport Town Centre as part of the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Plan includes an assessment of future trends in town centre living and will help shape our approach to embracing cutting edge practices and new forms of urban place-shaping.

The potential for technological innovation to fundamentally change our approaches to the management of the built environment and its responsiveness to people’s needs and lifestyles is immense. The MDC needs to be fully engaged with emerging trends and opportunities to benefit from innovation

in housing delivery in the context of viability.

Commitment No. 9:

The MDC will engage with leading consultancies, the development sector, the technology and academic sectors, and with innovation funders to establish Town Centre West as an exemplar for innovation in town centre regeneration across issues such as digital and data, infrastructure management, connected and low carbon homes and vehicles, assisted living, modern construction techniques and building management.

- **Design**

As part of its new Local Plan, Stockport Council is currently producing a Residential Design Guide – written by 5plus architects and Planit IE urban designers - for Stockport Town Centre which will become a material planning consideration. This document will provide greater clarity to the market and ensure that design quality is more strongly embedded in the local planning decision-making process.

Commitment No. 10:

The MDC will use its direct and indirect influence to drive up design

quality and originality in Town Centre West.

- **Employment**

Successful delivery of the MDC's development and infrastructure ambitions for Stockport will have a significant economic impact on the town as a centre of employment and as a strategic growth location for Greater Manchester.

In the post-COVID economic recovery enhancing Stockport's potential for employment growth will become increasingly urgent both as a policy priority and as a fundamental part of the future viability of the town centre.

Commitment No. 11:

Through its commitment to delivering new employment floorspace the MDC will contribute to both job creation and the overall economic growth of Stockport Town Centre as a strategic growth location within Greater Manchester. We will also seek to match the provision of employment floorspace with new inward investment opportunities as they come forward (e.g. Whitehall relocation).

Finance & Governance

Stockport Council has made a long-term commitment to funding the MDC's running costs and set aside a cash limit revenue budget of £0.5m per annum. This funding allows the MDC to cover the following costs:

- One-off costs such as initial set-up costs and fit-out of the MDC office
- Salary costs for the MDC team
- Communications, marketing, and branding support
- Commissioning of specialist consultancy support across workstreams set out in the Strategic Business Plan (e.g. investment planning)

Since its creation Stockport Council has approved significant capital funding to kick start the regeneration of Town Centre West and a £100m investment facility is now in place to provide a range of investment options to unlock and accelerate development. This investment facility is complemented by Homes England investment through

Housing Infrastructure Fund and commitment to close collaboration to maximise up-take of funding from existing programmes.

The investment capacity the MDC has now unlocked combined with the long-term stability of its operational funding coincides with an increase in private sector investment through developers committed to bringing forward schemes in the area.

Leadership, Governance, and Capacity

The Stockport Town Centre West MDC has purposely been created in light of local political circumstances and to operate with as streamlined a bureaucracy as possible. All MDC partners have committed to ensuring the MDC board is politically balanced, gender balanced, has the right level of seniority, and has private sector representation to maximise its delivery capacity and credibility.

The membership of the MDC board will be reviewed annually to ensure that it maintains the right public and private sector representation and the right expertise to lead delivery.