

Stockport Town Centre West
Mayoral Development
Corporation

**DRAFT Strategic Business
Plan, 2024-2029**

Chair's foreword

In July 2023 I was invited to take on the role of Interim Chair of Stockport MDC following the death of Lord Kerslake. Through his leadership of the MDC Board since January 2020 Bob was the driving force behind the MDC's early success. His experience, direction, insight and passion for tackling some of the biggest challenges of our times shaped the culture, strategy and operations of the MDC from the outset. The Business Plan that follows, the fifth since the MDC was created in 2019, records achievements across many of the programmes of work which Bob championed and, in a number of cases, instigated. It also sets out credible but ambitious plans which bear the hallmark of his vision and unparalleled expertise. His commitment to Stockport and the MDC was rooted in a belief that what was being created here was a model of national significance. The plans set out below are intended to create a legacy worthy of his belief.

Since its creation in September 2019, the MDC has successfully transformed from novel concept to proven delivery vehicle. As we enter 2024/25 I'm delighted that several first phase schemes are now complete, including the state of the art transport Interchange, Viaduct Park and the latest phase of Stockport Exchange, the town centre's new business district. In total over 1,100 new homes and over 170,000 sq. ft of office space are now in use or nearing completion. The quality of the schemes behind these numbers demonstrate the ambition of the MDC and our partners to bring forward development in line with our vision, whether that be the restoration of the eighteenth century Weir Mill or the cutting edge engineering methods being applied in the transport Interchange.

The context of these achievements has continued to be hugely challenging with historically high rates of inflation and linked rises in building costs creating significant delivery challenges. At the same time the national housing crisis is playing out in Stockport with rapidly rising housing costs intensifying an already severe homelessness crisis. In environmental terms we are moving rapidly towards the limits of the carbon budgets which will keep us to 1.5 degrees of global warming. Far from knocking us off course, these challenges have redoubled the resolve of MDC partners to continue the long term work of supporting Stockport's transformation into a 'town of the future', a place which is resilient to future shocks.

The progress being made is garnering increased national recognition, with positive coverage of both Stockport and MDC in property industry and wider national press. In 2024 Stockport secured the huge accolade of being named the best place to live in the North West by The Sunday Times. This recognition and profile makes a vital contribution to building local pride in the town.

At a local level, the positivity towards the new facilities, homes and amenities being created is palpable. The opening of the new transport Interchange and Viaduct Park in March, combined with the finale of Stockport's year as Greater Manchester Town of Culture, created an unprecedented buzz with thousands of local residents and visitors flocking to the town. Increasingly local businesses who can now see a future for their growing businesses in the borough as new residents begin to arrive and new high quality office space comes on stream. More and more local people are getting involved in shaping the design of our next phase of development, including homes, new public spaces and community facilities.

As I write the first new residents are moving into the new homes we have created. This is a pivotal moment for the MDC. While our focus has and continues to on delivering hard infrastructure, it is the creation of new communities where people can live happy and healthy lives which is our ultimate goal. Over the last twelve months the MDC Team has moved to a new phase of activity, widening its focus to include:

- Collaboration with private, public and VCSFE partners on the use and animation of the new public spaces and facilities that have been created, ensuring that they are used in ways which realise our ambitions of environmental sustainability, thriving communities and the wider vitality of Stockport town centre.
- Seeking opportunities to develop the social infrastructure which will enable existing and new town centre residents have access to a range of informal and formal facilities, services and organisations they need to thrive.

This work has taken place in parallel with activity already well underway to bring forward the second phase of development in Town Centre West. Over the last twelve months the MDC Team have seen through the creation of a joint venture with English Cities Fund to develop Stockport8, an eight acre site which will create a new neighbourhood of approx. 1,200 new homes along with supporting infrastructure. In the next twelve months the team will complete design work and submit a hybrid planning application for the scheme.

This track record of delivery and credible pipeline for the next phase of development means that confidence is high that we can meet our ambition of delivering 4,000 new homes over the next decade – as well as the facilities and amenities which will make Town Centre West a great place to live.

Restoring civic pride in our towns and rebuilding town centres which are sustainable, inclusive and resilient so they are fit for future generations are among the most important public policy priorities we face. For too long regeneration has focused on city centres but Stockport is leading the way, demonstrating that a complementary relationship between cities and towns can be harnessed for great mutual benefit.

The MDC is a key vehicle for delivering on this potential and the years ahead are very exciting indeed.

Eamonn Boylan

Interim Chair, Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation

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 five 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 2024-29.

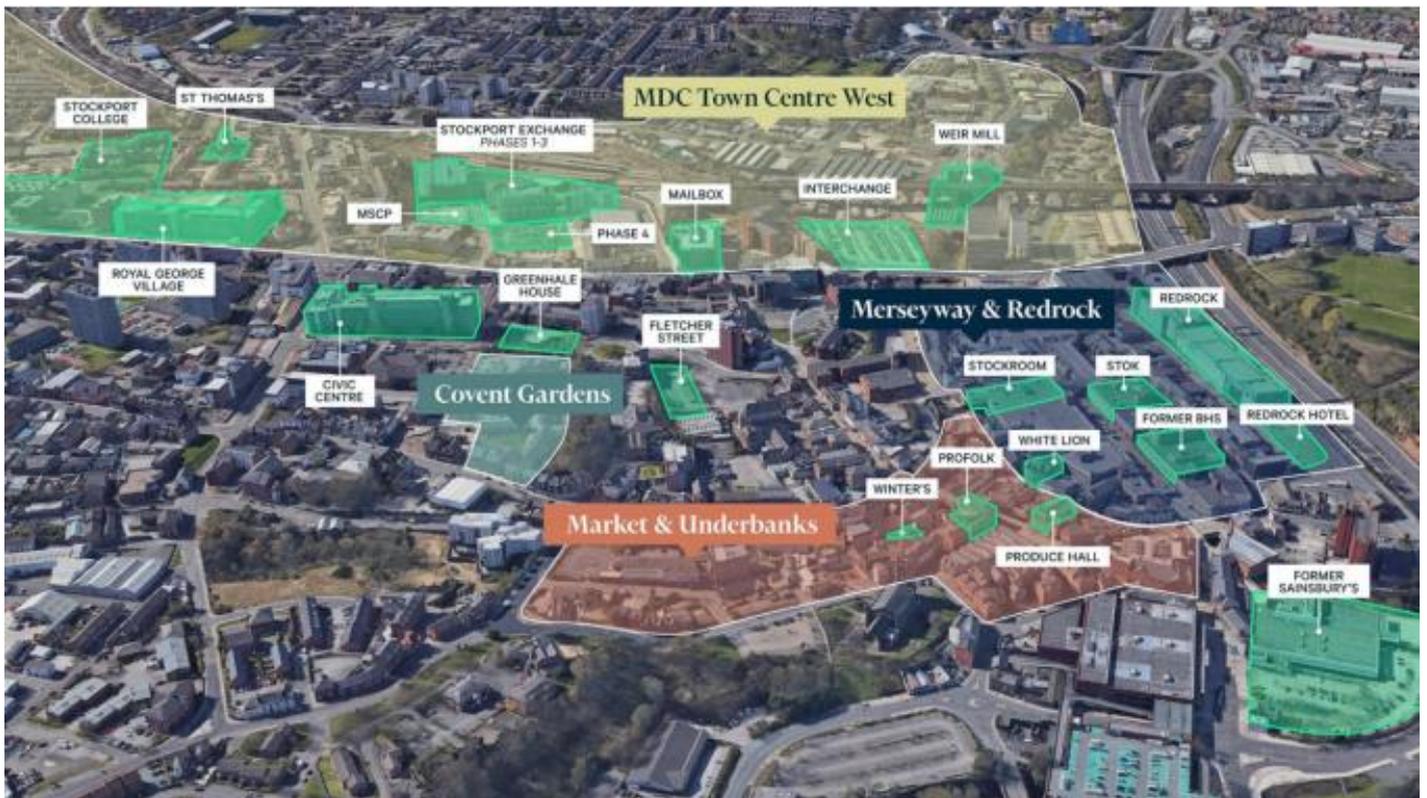
Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation in context

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

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



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 Town Centre West. The interim chair of the MDC is Eamonn Boylan (Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)) and the Board consists of representatives of the Council's main political parties on Stockport Council, GMCA, Homes England and private sector experts. 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.

These advantages mean that Stockport remains ideally positioned to benefit from changing patterns of investment and urban living and to capitalise on the economic growth in Manchester City Centre and the Greater Manchester region. These factors combine to 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.

Town Centre West itself is currently 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 Borough Plan

The One Stockport Borough Plan was developed in 2021 by Stockport Council in partnership with people and organisations across Stockport. It sets out a shared vision for the borough for 2030, so that together we can continue to create a place that works for everyone – businesses, residents, community organisations and charities. It offers an ambitious strategy to improve the lives of everyone who lives, or spends time, in Stockport.

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 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:

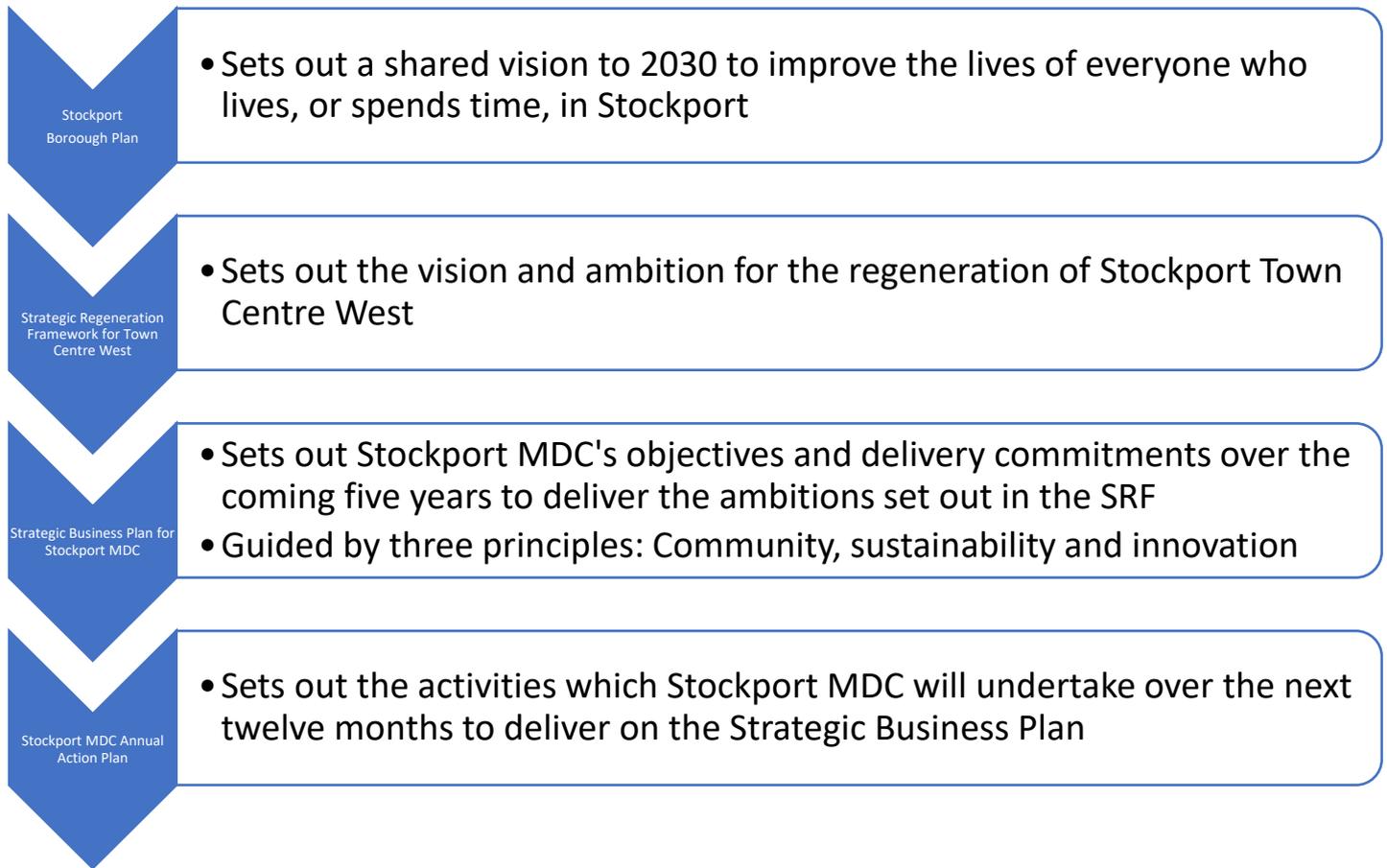
Guiding principles

- **Community** – an increased population and enhanced quality of life for all
- **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
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

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



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, 2019-2024

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 service transformation. These fully-delivered and on-site schemes are part of a wider 'first phase' pipeline that has seen c.1,100 new homes and 170,000 sq. ft. new commercial floorspace move into advanced stages of delivery. In the section that follows we describe the progress made over the last five years as well as highlighting specific progress over the last year.

2023-24: Stockport MDC's year in pictures

2023-24 was a huge year for Stockport MDC. We've seen the completion and opening of the transport Interchange and its rooftop park, the completion of the latest phase of Stockport Exchange, construction work start on Royal George Village, the conclusion of a hugely ambitious 6 month procurement process to select a joint venture partner to develop our £300m Stockport8 scheme and the successful establishment of the joint venture. New tenants have moved into Stockport Exchange and people are already registering their interest in the homes being created at the Interchange and Weir Mill. This progress has been in the context of a packed programme of activity and events across the town centre, including as part of Stockport's year as Greater Manchester Town of Culture.

The scale of change and growing pride in the town has attracted recognition and accolades, with the town ranked as one of the UK's top places to buy a first home, shop and retire! In March 2024 the borough was named the best place to live in the North West. We have also been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle Small Team of the Year and The Pineapples Awards 'Place in Progress 2024'.

The images below capture some of the moments along the way:



Press coverage of the announcement of English Cities Fund as preferred joint venture partner for Stockport8, May 2023



Stockport Exchange: Stockport accountancy firm, Hursts, sign up for new headquarters at 3 Stockport Exchange, October 2023 (left); 3 Stockport Exchange completes, December 2023 (right)



Topping out ceremony at Weir Mill, November 2023



Stockport Interchange and Viaduct Park: Stockport Interchange and Viaduct Park, March 2024 (left); Local school children celebrating the opening of Viaduct Park, March 2024 (right)

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 in construction.

In just five years the MDC has moved rapidly from master planning to delivery of the first phase of development. By March 2024 1,081 new homes will be either completed or in construction across the following schemes and we are on track to exceed our target of 1,100 new homes completed or on site by the end of 2024:

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.

Capital&Centric's Weir Mill scheme, 253 homes – on site and due for completion in late 2024.

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.

Stockport Interchange, 196 homes – transport elements and park completed March 2024; residential element due for completion 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 has 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 is due to complete in summer 2024.

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 'Royal George Village' scheme will bring forward 442 new homes on this site, a prime location in the southern part of Town Centre West. Construction began in December 2023 and the scheme is due to complete in 2026.

Great Places schemes: King Street West (73 homes) and Chestergate (144 homes)

These two affordable housing scheme will between them bring forward 217 affordable homes, with a mix of rent to buy and affordable rent properties. The King Street West scheme started on site in 2022 and is due for completion in 2024. The Chestergate scheme XXX at Stockport Council's Planning Committee and is due to start on site in Spring 2024 (*to be updated following Committee on 21st March*).

Phase 2: Our delivery pipeline for 2024-29

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 make up our second phase of development

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

The Council and Stockport Homes are working together on the St. Thomas' Gardens scheme which secured planning permission in March 2021 and we anticipate will commence on site in 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.

Stockport8, estimated 1,200 homes

In parallel with delivering the first phase of development described above, the MDC made major progress in 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 has an estimated potential to deliver c.1,200 new homes and 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. Since autumn 2023 work has been underway on the design of the scheme and the intention is to submit a hybrid planning application in summer 2024.

People at the heart of regeneration

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. Over the last five years work in this area has focused on unlocking this potential 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 Climate Action Now.

To unlock this opportunity, in June 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 8-12 week programme to support participants with barriers to employment to progress into apprenticeship or employment in construction, including an opportunity to complete a level 2 multi-trade accreditation
2. A brokerage service – linking candidates with skills and employment opportunities
3. A green technology and construction growth programme involving pre-market engagement activity with local suppliers, from design stage through to supply chain procurement
4. A Stockport construction training network to coordinate and expand skills opportunities

These proposals were approved by the MDC Board in December 2023 and will move into delivery in 2024.

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 been strongly committed to utilizing the development of appropriate social infrastructure as a route to ensuring that investment in Town Centre West has a positive impact on people living in the wider town centre and neighbouring communities.

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.** Our aim in creating Town Centre West is to create an exemplar urban neighbourhood but also to integrate the people and facilities we’re creating into the wider town centre. Supporting investment in social infrastructure in the wider town centre provides an opportunity to directly benefit 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.
- **Sustainability.** We will seek to ensure that enhancing or creating new infrastructure will create facilities which bring environmental benefit rather than contributing to environmental breakdown.

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. The MDC is collaborating with colleagues to refine these propositions and secure the investment needed to bring these forward.

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** – 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

In early 2024 we invited proposals for meanwhile uses which would deliver on these outcomes in three buildings acquired as part of the assembly of land for Stockport8.

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 two editions of the Stockport. Change here. newspaper which we created and delivered to all Stockport households in early 2023 and early 2024, alongside supporting digital promotion.

Sustainability and carbon reduction

Sustainability is at the core of the TCW 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 set out in the SRF for Town Centre West. The Transport Interchange features a unique two acre rooftop park as well as the first phase of the new riverside walkways. 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 TCW 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 £310,000 contributions from the government, public service partners and the GMCA to fund the final stage of feasibility work – Detailed Project Delivery – which will establish the optimal technical and commercial solutions to deliver the Network. This work commenced in spring 2023 and is due to conclude in summer 2024.

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. Over a number of years there has been strong collaboration between Transport for Greater Manchester and Stockport Council and joint work to prepare the economic assessment needed to underpin the business case for investment is underway. 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

Over the last two years 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 allocation to realise the first phase of these improvements, linked to the Stockport8 development, has been made within the Stockport local element of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

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. The outcome of this work will inform the MDC Business Plan delivery commitments for 2024-29.
- 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 October 2023 we secured a pre-let on the top floor of No. 3 Stockport Exchange from locally accountancy firm Hursts.

Investment

In 2019 Cushman & Wakefield estimated that the delivery of 4,000 new homes and 1,000,000 ft² 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, Royal George Village, and St Thomas' Gardens). We have also secured private sector investment from developers and Joint Venture Partners including Muse. A further private investment of approx. £250m is anticipated in the next phase of the MDC pipeline, alongside public investment from Stockport Council.

In addition to these capital investments we have secured significant revenue funding from a variety of public and private sources to support the operations of the MDC which in each of the last three years has allowed the MDC to go further than its annual revenue budget on its own would allow.

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.

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, 2024-29

Introduction

This section of the Plan sets out the activity that the MDC will undertake over the coming five year period to deliver the ambitions 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 fifth 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. For the coming five year period, Stockport will continue to address the imperatives of achieving net zero, accelerating a mix of housing delivery on brownfield land (recognising the need for continued delivery of affordable homes) thereby reducing pressure on the greenbelt, enhancing the whole of Stockport town centre as a residential and employment location of choice, improving the town's infrastructure, and attracting public and private investment into Stockport.

The fundamental regeneration opportunity in Stockport – a combination of the town's exceptional transport connectivity, market conditions, and advantageous location between Manchester City Centre, Cheshire, and the Peak District – has enabled the MDC not only to maintain Stockport's regeneration momentum despite the macro social and economic challenges of recent years but also to increase land assembly, investor engagement, infrastructure planning, and construction. This Strategic Business Plan reflects the improved position that the MDC has been instrumental in creating.

Objectives and delivery commitments

Stockport MDC's overall mission is to lead the redevelopment of the 130 acres of brownfield land that make up Town Centre West as a thriving new community in the heart of the town centre that exemplifies local character, the vital importance of sustainability and carbon reduction, and maximise the benefit of Stockport's transport connectivity.

Below we set out our objectives and delivery commitments for the period 2024-29. These have been developed in line with the overarching themes of the Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework and provide specific, measurable targets for the MDC. Collectively they enable the MDC to be held to account effectively by the Board and by the democratically elected Members of Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

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.

It is imperative that the development in Town Centre West provides 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. The MDC recognises the need to build on delivery to date to ensure that affordable developments are as viable as possible and will work with Homes England to thoroughly explore all options for delivery.

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 early years of this plan period will see the completion of our first phase of development and 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, as a minimum, bring forward 1,100 new homes by 2024. 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 2029.

Objective 2: People at the heart of delivery

One of the key factors in the success of Town Centre West is ensuring that we have a clear focus on how our Stockport's diverse residents – both existing and new - will benefit from the regeneration of Town Centre West at all stages of development.

Social value through the development process

The MDC has an important role to play in leveraging and coordinating social value from development to maximise traction in key priority areas for the MDC and Stockport Council. It is recognised that the MDC cannot deliver all of this in isolation and will work with the Council and other partners to ensure this objective is realised.

Construction jobs and skills

The scale of development in Town Centre West is a major driver of economic opportunity, one element of which is the huge investment in construction which is and will continue to create thousands of job opportunities over the next decade and beyond. The scale of this investment represents a powerful opportunity to drive progress on two key challenge linked to the MDC's guiding principles of community and sustainability:

- **Inequality.** Stockport is the ninth most polarised borough in the country, with extremes of both household incomes, educational attainment, employment and health outcomes. Deprivation is largely concentrated in the northern part of the borough, in the neighbourhoods close to Town Centre West. Connecting people from these communities with the economic opportunities being created through the regeneration programme is critical to its success.
- **Climate Action Now.** Stockport Council has agreed an ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2038. In both their construction and their operation, residential and commercial buildings account for very significant volumes of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. Driving innovation in construction is therefore a key enabler of the MDC's objective of creating an exemplar future proofed urban neighbourhood. This is not only a critical environmental goal but also represents a powerful opportunity to stimulate the growth of local sustainable construction businesses and jobs.

To unlock this, in June 2023 the MDC team convened a partnership working group which developed proposals for a Construction Hub 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 MDC Board approved these proposals and these will be mobilised within this plan period.

Meanwhile use

The development process also 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 the early phase of this plan period we will use these outcomes to assess proposals for meanwhile uses of several sites and buildings acquired as part of the land assembly for Stockport8.

Social infrastructure

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 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

Another important element of social infrastructure is **inclusive public space**. In order to ensure Town Centre West is fully responsive to the needs and aspirations of its different communities, the built environment will be designed to prioritise safe and attractive streets and spaces that, responsive to the town's topography and historic assets, enhance liveability. While we have a strong track record of embedding accessibility considerations into the design of individual developments, it is crucial that we broaden the scope of this work to ensure that the neighbourhood is accessible and inclusive. Over the early part of this Business Planning period we will work with local and regional accessibility experts to 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 creation of a 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
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 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.

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.

As the second phase of MDC development moves into delivery, 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 as they are brought on stream
 - 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 focuses on articulating the features which distinguish us from other locations.

Community engagement

In addition to the communications activity described above we will support our work to put people at the heart of regeneration through increasing engagement with local stakeholders. The first phase of this will focus on the residential communities within and bordering Town Centre West and engaging with them to understand:

- The existing ecosystem of informal and formal organisations, networks and services, supported by different types of buildings and physical spaces which underpin their communities.
- Where opportunities investment in Town Centre West, and specifically Stockport8, could be channelled to enhance what is already in place and, where appropriate, provide new infrastructure that addresses gaps.

Delivery commitment 6

Through its communications partners, the MDC will:

1. Raise its profile as an exemplar regeneration delivery vehicle
2. Continue to raise awareness of the transformation taking place with new and existing residents
3. 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

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 future environmental 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 Authority¹, 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.

¹ 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 2022-24 work 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. Over this planning period this work will support funding applications for highways schemes and inform master planning for the Stockport8 development.

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 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.

Delivery commitment 10

The MDC will work closely with partners including Stockport Council and TfGM to maximise the ambition around sustainable transport in and through Town Centre West.

Objective 6: Employment and economic growth

As outlined in the 'Putting People at the heart of regeneration' section above, 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 firmly 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 – as is already being created at Stockport Exchange by Stockport Council and Muse - is crucial to delivering on that commitment. Beyond this, and in line with the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter (created by GMCA and supported by Stockport Council), we will also seek opportunities to ensure that the job opportunities created 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:

- Various elements 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, seeking 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 11

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**

-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 12

The MDC will carry out annual innovation deep dives into priority built environment innovation use cases, starting with building management in 2024-25.

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, sets 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 Town Centre West. To date we have successfully leveraged significant public and private sector funding to support the delivery of the Town Centre West masterplan.

In this plan period we will continue discussions with Homes England and GMCA to create a place based long term investment partnership for Stockport8.

Delivery commitment 13

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 internal audit of the MDC in 2021 and the annual governance and accountability reporting process, during this planning period we will commission an external governance review which will consider the following themes and present its findings to the MDC Board:

- Structure of the MDC
- Governance requirements and processes
- Decision making
- Information and Transparency
- Accountability
- Oversight
- Scrutiny

Delivery commitment 14

Stockport MDC will maintain the highest standards of governance including commissioning an external governance audit.

Appendix 1: Summary of delivery commitments

Theme	Delivery commitment	Draft new commitment
Housing a growing community	1	The MDC will, as a minimum, bring forward 1,100 new homes by 2024. 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 2029.
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 creation of a 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
	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Environmental sustainability	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.

Enhancing connectivity	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.
	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.
	10	The MDC will work closely with partners including Stockport Council and TfGM to maximise the ambition around sustainable transport in and through Town Centre West.
Employment and economic growth	11	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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. <p>Collaborating with Stockport Council and other partners to attract major employers to the town centre, including the relocation of Stepping Hill hospital.</p>
Innovation and future proofing	12	The MDC will carry out annual innovation deep dives into priority built environment innovation use cases, starting with building management in 2024-25.
Investment	13	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, leadership and capacity	14	Stockport MDC will maintain the highest standards of governance including commissioning an external governance audit.
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