

Ambitious Stockport: Creating Opportunities for Everyone

**Council Plan
2024-27**

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Leader of the Council's Introduction

In Stockport, we have big ambitions for our borough and our people, and we always put people at the heart of what we do. This refreshed version of our Council Plan has been produced to reflect key developments over the past 12 months. As I look back on the past year, it is fantastic to see the progress that has been made.

Stockport is a great place to be right now and 2024 has been a big year for us. The borough is turning heads as it continues to be recognised regionally and nationally, from becoming the feel-good capital of Greater Manchester to being named as the best place to live in the North West by the Sunday Times.

This year alone we have seen the completion of our award-winning Interchange and two-acre Viaduct Park; the culmination of our year as Greater Manchester Town of Culture and the re-opening of the Hatworks Museum; the opening of new special schools, adding 133 secondary and 208 primary places; the opening of 'The Crescent', our newest Children's home; and, so many other things that we can be incredibly proud of.

March 2024 also saw the launch of One Stockport: One Future, our 15-year plan, which shows how we're working across our communities to make Stockport the best place to live and work. One Stockport: One Future is at the heart of this Council Plan and it is being delivered together with partner organisations

In 2023, when the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Team revisited us, they saw the incredible progress and hard work of colleagues. They praised the 'strong leadership' that we give Stockport as a place and the high-performing services that meet the needs of the local population well.

However, we are not complacent, and we want and need to go further. We know that times continue to be hard for many people and there is inequality across our borough. We are seeing increased demand on our services; local people are being impacted by the increased cost of living; we face the ongoing challenge of climate change; and over the summer the country witnessed racism, Islamophobia, far-right activity and community tension. Like many councils, we also face significant financial challenges. We remain committed to tackling these challenges head on through our strong leadership, a commitment to prevention, and by working collaboratively with our public and third sector partners, local communities and businesses.

The Council Plan 2024-27 was originally published in February 2024. It is intentionally longer term than in previous years, placing transformation at the heart of our ambitions and making sure that we're working to our medium-term financial plan. As we move into the second year of our three-year plan, we remain committed to working with our partners to deliver our big ambitions so that Stockport can be the best place for everyone to live happy and healthy lives.

Thank you again to everyone who makes this possible. None of this can be delivered without the skills, passion and commitment of our workforce, members, and partners.

Cllr Mark Hunter

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

WE'RE STOCKPORT COUNCIL.

One team on a mission to create opportunities for Stockport.

Ambitious Stockport. A place that everyone is proud to call home.

We work together with our partners as ONE Stockport.

Our Values define how we work, we always think about Stockport first, achieve as a team, work with ambition and show everyone respect.

Ambitious Stockport...

ONE VISION

Ambitious Stockport. a place everyone is proud to call home



ONE MISSION

To create opportunities for Stockport



ONE TEAM VALUES

Doing the everyday makes every day better



Thinking
Stockport



Achieving
as a **Team**



Working with
Ambition



Showing everyone
Respect

What we do as a Council

Stockport Council provides more than 800 services to support and improve the lives of residents, businesses, and visitors.

We visit every single street in the borough every week, keeping them clean by collecting bins, sweeping streets, and removing litter.

We provide and maintain the leisure facilities, parks, libraries and cultural venues that make Stockport the vibrant place that it is. We keep Stockport moving by maintaining and continually improving our networks of roads, cycle paths, footpaths, and parks.

All of our residents benefit from the lifelong support we provide. From the birth and death registry service, to schools, housing, skills programmes, and information, advice, and guidance.

Our planning procedures make sure residents get the best from any new buildings, or changes to existing buildings and public spaces (such as roads and squares) to improve the town. We work hard to make sure there is housing to meet growing demand.

We support Stockport's economy by helping businesses to grow strong, productive and generate good jobs. This includes providing support to new businesses.

We enforce trading standards across Stockport to protect residents and businesses, making sure retailers offer fair pricing and product descriptions and that food standards are maintained. We work closely with the police to keep everyone safe. This ranges from tackling anti-social behaviour to overseeing taxi licensing.

We provide specialist support to those who need it most. We're the corporate parent to over 500 children registered in care, as well as supporting adults with lifelong disabilities and older people with care requirements.

We support residents to live healthy lives and stay well. When people do need care, we work with partners, like the NHS, to make sure that people get the support they need locally and can go home from hospital safely.

All these vital services are essential to us achieving our vision of Stockport as a place everyone is proud to call home.

Delivering our Council Plan, progress so far

Since we launched our Council Plan in 2024 we have made some great progress.

Investment, regeneration and creating jobs

We're leading one of the UK's most ambitious urban transformations, supported by £1bn in investment.

- **Award-winning Interchange:** Our new transport interchange is the UK's first with a rooftop park and opened in March 2024. It's Metrolink-ready and provides pedestrian access to the River Mersey for the first time in a generation.
- **Creating jobs:** Around 3,500 new jobs have been created in construction and Stockport Exchange continues to go from strength to strength as a workplace. No.2 Stockport Exchange is fully let and there is lots of interest in No.3 Stockport Exchange. The Merseyway Innovation Centre has opened and is attracting lots of interest from businesses looking for high-quality space in Stockport Town Centre. The centre is currently over 80% full.
- **More Homes:** Working with our cross-party Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) we're delivering 8,000 homes, reversing decades of town centre decline. Construction continues on Weir Mill and Stockport 8 is progressing well with planning submitted for the first 1,300 homes.
- **Cultural revival:** Stockport's time as Greater Manchester's Town of Culture in 2023-24 saw record-breaking footfall and £300k invested in grassroots cultural initiatives, leaving a lasting legacy. The Council-run *Hatworks* – the UK's only hatting museum – reopened after a £100k renovation, boosting visitors by 54%. And we're transforming 135,000sqft of vacant retail space into *Stockroom*, our new cultural and creative venue.

Education, Work and Skills

We want to ensure that everyone can access the best education, skills, and qualifications at all stages of their lives.

- **Strong exam results:** We had some of our best exam results with brilliant outcomes at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Educational attainment is improving; it is consistently above national and regional averages with the biggest improvements being made by our most disadvantaged children. We have set aspirational targets for educational attainment to support our ambition for Stockport schools to be the best in the country with every child included in their success. We have seen significant improvements in many of the areas outlined in our Covid Recovery Plan, especially in reading, outcomes for boys, outcomes for disadvantaged learners and for children at SEN Support.
- **Investing in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** In line with national trends there has been a significant rise in demand for SEND services. We were proud to open two new special schools in 2024, adding 133 secondary and 208 primary places for children with complex needs. We have also been working hard to increase the number of Educational Health and Care Plans completed on time, but we know we have more to do and this continues to be a priority.
- **Stockport Skills Plan:** Launched in September 2024, the Stockport Skills Plan shares how we will build a more sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy that benefits everyone.

Wellbeing in neighbourhoods

The gap between the most and least affluent areas of Stockport is one of the biggest in the UK, and we have the fastest ageing population in Greater Manchester. To address this, we're making sure everyone in Stockport benefits from our ambitious transformation.

- **One Stockport Local:** We are reimagining how we work with communities and reforming public services through our Neighbourhoods and Prevention programme. We have developed Neighbourhood profiles and launched One Stockport Local online directories, which provide easy access to the range of services we offer.
- **One Stockport Family Hubs:** Our redesigned model of family help has now been in place for a year. Over the past 12 months, One Stockport Family Hubs have brought existing help and support services and community offers together to create open access to information, help and support on all aspects of family life. We have established 7 family hub networks, 3 Family Hub buildings and 24 bridge sites to support families, from pregnancy through to adulthood.
- **Supporting independence:** The One Stockport Local offer for Adult Social Care continues to develop, with appointments on offer at libraries, leisure centres and council offices. The Virtual House and a wide range of information and advice is available online. Our bid to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for supporting people with multiple disadvantages was also successful, and we anticipate to launch this from January 2025.
- **The Stockport £:** We have continued to partner with Sector3 and businesses to maximise social value, connect regeneration benefits, and provide local jobs (94 work placements and 82 construction roles). We have also launched Match My Project to make sure we get the most out of our contracts.
- **Homelessness and rough sleeping:** Challenges are being experienced across the region and the country as a whole and are not unique to Stockport. We are working closely with the GMCA, landlords and Stockport Homes to address the significant challenge of homelessness and to reduce the need to use hotels to accommodate homeless people and families.

Delivering for those who need it most

Helping people to stay independent, safe and well so they can live the lives they want to remains at the heart of our work. Addressing significant demands and financial pressures across children's services and adult social care are key to achieving this, so this remains a big focus for us.

We have made progress over the past 12 months across adult social care and our children and young people's recovery and transformation plans. Our achievements include:

- **Innovative programmes:** Our role in developing the pilot for New Beginnings has been praised by the chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care as an 'exemplar'. We are now trialling a reunification arm to the programme which uses the trauma-informed approach of New Beginnings and intensive

support from Stockport Family to help parents overcome challenges and work towards safely reuniting with their children.

- **Home First:** There has been good progress among system partners to improve out-of-hospital flow and discharge giving people the right care and support to get them back home quickly and safely. At the same time, community adult social work teams are proactively helping people to stay in their own homes for longer. This leads to better outcomes for people and communities, and makes sure that residential care is available for those who need it most.
- **Putting people at the heart:** The Making it Real (MIR) Board has been working closely with Adult Social Care to develop Stockport's Adult Social Care Charter which sets out how we will work with people and keep them at the heart of everything we do. We know that people want to work with us in a different way, so we have also started further training and development with the national programme of 'Gloriously Ordinary Lives'.
- **New strategies:** We have launched our Think Carers Strategy 2024-2029 developed with Signpost for Carers; and our Stockport Learning Disability Strategy, which was produced in partnership with the Valuing People Partnership Board and the Speaking Out Group.
- **New Children's Homes:** We are continuing to deliver our two-year children's homes programme, which includes approval for three new homes. The first new home, 'The Crescent,' opened in September 2024.

Cross-cutting themes:

Fair and inclusive: Making sure that everyone can live happy and healthy lives is at the heart of our council plan and our One Future big ambitions. Some of the progress we have made this year includes:

- Adopting the socio-economic duty.
- We have continued with our 'trusted partner' model, working with trusted community partners to support residents. Including supporting 49,000 vulnerable residents since April 2023, writing off £3m in debt and enabling them to secure almost £20m in benefits. This work won Stockport Council and our partners a Resolve Poverty award for 'maximising the financial resources available to households'. This recognised the approach to supporting vulnerable households via the Resident Advice and Support Alliance.
- We have continued to invest in and support our community and equality networks (for example: Stockport Race Equality Partnership; Women and Girls Network; Stockport LGBTQ+ Network amongst others) who have helped to shape our One Stockport, One Future Plan. We've also worked together on other important projects, including organised celebration and awareness events.
- We have been reviewing our equality diversity and inclusion objectives and action plan – working closely with our community and equality networks and employee equality groups to build upon and strengthen the work we are doing.

Climate Action: Responding to the impacts of climate change continues to be a top priority for many residents and businesses. We are continuing to work towards our commitment to create a climate and nature friendly Stockport that is carbon neutral by 2038.

Strong community momentum and youth leadership are vital to our approach. During 2024, our Climate Action Now (CAN) Schools Climate Assembly entered its fourth year with representation from over half the schools and colleges in the borough; we invested in a Stockport Green Network which has run campaigns including Carbon Literacy and set up the Greenstock community fun day; and we held our annual cross-sector and intergenerational CAN summit.

Our Enabling Programmes:

- **Our Workforce**

- **Top-Performing teams:** Multiple teams have been recognised, including HR, finance, MDC and legal services. We have also won awards for excellence in planning (RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup) and Senior Leadership Team of the Year (MJ 2024).
 - **Opportunities for all:** In partnership with Pure Innovations, the council offers work placements for SEND young people. Six interns graduated during a celebration event on 11 July 2024 and the next cohort of eleven started in September 2024. The council also launched its Jumpstart scheme for care leavers with three participants. Two have successfully secured apprenticeship positions with the council, while another has earned a place at university
 - **Inclusive workplace:** Supported by 73 Wellbeing Champions, we've reduced employee turnover and sickness. Our seven employee networks work alongside leaders to help us become a truly inclusive workplace. According to our 2024 EDI survey, 86% of staff believe in our commitment to diversity, and 90% feel treated fairly by their manager.
 - **Inclusive leadership development:** Apprenticeships and coaching are helping us to develop a talented team to take Stockport forward. This year, colleagues have won 'Rising Star' at the MJ Awards and 'Head of Service of the Year' at the LGC Awards.
- **Radically Digital Stockport:** We are using data to help us deliver even better services, from neighbourhood profiles that give us a better insight into residents' needs to our award-winning civil resilience dashboard that supports contingency plannings (Digital Leaders 100). We have also continued to develop our nationally recognised DigiKnow (digital inclusion alliance), which now involves over 90 partners working across the borough, offering devices, training, and support with technology and getting online.

The GM One Network is now live. The network, built upon the Local Full Fibre Network, creates a unified digital infrastructure across public sector organisations in Greater Manchester. Stockport and partners have collaborated to lay 2,700km of dark fibre right across the whole region, connecting 1,600 sites.

- **Working with others:** during 2024 we launched One Stockport, One Future. This is our shared partnership borough plan describing the big things we will do together with our partners to make Stockport the best place to live happy and

healthy lives. Lots of work is already underway to deliver the ambitions in One Stockport, One Future.

- **Delivering change and spend wisely:** We continue to be financially robust and resilient, which is reflected through the setting of balanced budgets, our achievement of saving targets and the delivery of our ambitious three-year Capital programme.

Delivering efficient and effective services

As well as delivering against our big ambitions we continue to focus on providing brilliant basics for Stockport, making sure we are delivering efficient and effective council services for local people and businesses. Here are some of the things we have done over the past year:



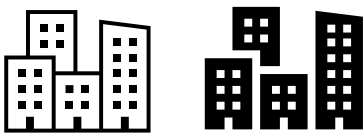
Around 150,000 enquiries from local residents and businesses resolved



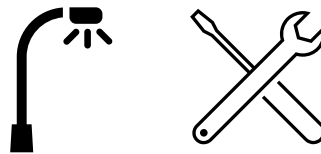
Over 12,000 school applications supported



Acted as corporate parent for more than 500 children in care



Over 600 new homes built in Stockport



Over 3,200 streetlight repairs completed



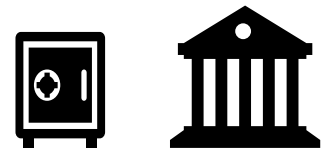
Registered more than 7,000 births and deaths



More than 15,000 children supported through household support vouchers



Approximately £15m additional income from benefits estimated to be secured for Stockport residents in 2024/25



More than £210m in council tax collected

You can find out more interesting facts about the borough by visiting our open data portal:

<https://bigstockportpicture.co.uk/>

And yet we are still striving for further transformational improvement

In November 2022 we invited the LGA peer team to Stockport to carry out a Corporate Peer Challenge. This process is designed to provide robust challenge and support to councils. The review described Stockport Council as “an impressive organisation” and identified areas for further development.

During October 2023, we welcomed back members of the Peer Team to look at the progress we had made over the past 12 months. The team provided very positive feedback and noted that we have gone further than expected in delivering on their recommendations.

Key points from the peer team’s revisit report include:

- Praise of our strong leadership of Stockport as a place and how this is enabling real and ambitious change. They also mentioned how we work closely with local partners to commission and deliver high-performing services that meet the needs of the local population.
- Noting that we are looking to the future, focusing on longer-term transformation and that we have been busy exploring opportunities to open up and share new ideas across our organisation and partners from inside and outside Stockport.
- The Peer Team was impressed at the ‘sophistication’ of our approach to neighbourhood working, and how it incorporates a mixture of areas and functions. Peers say they have seen elements of our approach in other councils, but not brought together to this extent.
- They were impressed for the purposeful and targeted approach we have taken to develop our workforce, instilling our core values and a sense of pride in our employees.
- They were impressed with the strength of cross-party working and relationships across councillors and officers. They could see that we put a ‘great deal of thought and capacity’ into our member induction programmes and that we have clear priorities, big ambitions, and strong financial management.
- They were ‘pleased to hear that the council is unashamedly focused on doing the basics well’; and recognised our ‘strong financial position’ as demonstrated through the setting of balanced budgets, the achievement of savings targets and underspends in recent financial years.
- Concluding that we have well established mechanisms to support our continued improvement. They encouraged us to continue to focus on equality, neighbourhood working and performance management as we move forward.

We are proud of everything we have achieved so far but we know there is more to do and we want to make sure we continue to deliver even better and more resilient

services and support for Stockport. Addressing ongoing financial and demand pressures within our council, driving equality across the borough, making sure we are responding to the climate emergency, and supporting people when they need us most will continue to be the focus of our Council Plan.

Council Plan 2024-27



Delivery of Efficient and Effective Services

The delivery of efficient and effective services is at the very heart of this plan. We know that alongside our longer-term ambitions, we must deliver good quality services every day for the people of Stockport.

Our 800 services are vital to the borough. We want to make sure that they are delivered in a good quality, timely and responsive way. This also means good customer service and working to our values: we always think about Stockport first, achieve as a team, work with ambition, and show everyone respect.

Local councils up and down the country are facing severe financial challenges. We are seeing increased complexity and demand for our valuable and essential core services, so it's more important than ever that we deliver them in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To put people at the heart of what we do

We will be a listening organisation that puts local people first. We will drive high standards of customer service across the council to make sure residents are given the support they need when they need it. We will continue to put voice and lived experience at the core of our work.

To continue to drive performance improvement

Our performance framework makes sure that we regularly monitor our performance and take action quickly to address challenges. We will continue to effectively manage performance and complete three-year business plans for all directorates and services. We will also make sure that all services are delivering high levels of productivity

To effectively allocate and prioritise our resources

We need to make sure residents get the most out of the 'Stockport pound'. Alongside this we know that allocating resources to reduce inequalities and support independence can support better outcomes for our residents.

The delivery of all our enabling programmes set out later in this plan will be key, making sure we make the best use of digital technology, support our workforce to provide excellent services and explore opportunities to work more effectively with partners.

We will also explore opportunities to work with partners in Stockport to share support services like Human Resources, Digital, Communications and Finance to provide better value for money.

We know we have had an impact when we see

- High performance on all key indicators that measure the timeliness of our response e.g. resident response times, social care assessments, planning applications and council tax support.
- High levels of customer satisfaction and a reduction in stage 2 complaints.
- Good performance across all core indicators

Four Big Ambitions

Our four big ambitions represent our key programmes of work over the next year and are focused on helping us achieve our mission 'to create opportunities for Stockport'.

1. Investment, regeneration and creating jobs

2. Education, employment, and skills

3. Wellbeing in neighbourhoods

4. Delivering for those who need it most

Ambition 1 – Investment, regeneration and creating jobs

Stockport is already an attractive place to live and work. We want Stockport to continue to deliver the opportunities that make us one of the best towns in England to live, learn, work and play.

We want to grow Stockport's economy to create and support strong, resilient, and productive businesses that generate sustainable, accessible, and well-paid jobs. We are proud to continually driving investment for key regeneration projects.

We also take great pride in building homes on previously developed land. Our ambitious housing development plan includes developing a whole new residential neighbourhood of 4,000 homes, right in the middle of town.

This ambition supports the 'One Future' ambition of the One Stockport Borough Plan to create an enterprising and thriving Stockport, with a prosperous economy that works for everyone. The activities we describe below are part of the 'route map' that will help us to deliver the 'jobs and homes' strand of One Stockport, One Future.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To drive investment in regeneration projects

Continued investment in regeneration is critical to give partners and external investors the confidence, to bring investment forward from across the public and private sectors. While we have achieved a huge amount, we know we have more to do, particularly to make sure all of our communities benefit from the opportunities created by growth and regeneration.

Key to this will be the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) and the ongoing development of Stockport Town Centre. In addition to the 4,000 homes, the MDC aims to deliver a million square feet of new employment floorspace and 5,300 new jobs by 2035. In 2024 we announced our intention to expand the MDC into a further 280 acres of the town centre, in the area known as Town Centre East, with the ambition to build a further 4,000 homes. In total, the development will deliver 8,000 homes across the town centre.

Major schemes include:

- **Weir Mill:** redevelopment of this building in Stockport Town Centre (situated alongside the River Mersey and the town's iconic viaduct) will include 253 apartments as well as great commercial units and modern, lively leisure space. It will also include extensive, well-designed and vibrant public areas
- **Stopford Park (formerly known as Royal George Village):** work on this redevelopment of the site adjacent to Stockport College is underway. When complete it will create 442 residential apartments, with car parking provision, as well as new offices, start-up space, public areas, and landscaping on a three-acre site.

- **Great Places Chestergate:** this scheme secured planning permission in 2024 and will create 144 new affordable homes as part of the expanding town centre.
- **Stockport8:** is one of the largest town centre regeneration schemes in the UK. The eight-acre site will be transformed into a new digitally enabled, fully walkable neighbourhood with 1,300 new homes and brand-new public spaces. Sitting alongside both the historic viaduct and the new transport Interchange, Stockport8 is an important part of the MDC's ambition to see Stockport become the most sustainable, liveable town centre in the region. A planning application was submitted in 2024 and, subject to approval, construction will begin in 2026.
- **Stockport Exchange:** is a game changer for our town and is home to major businesses including Music Magpie, BASF, Stagecoach, legal firm ONP and CHEC optometrists. The council, alongside development partners Muse, has already completed four phases featuring a 1,000-space car park, 115-bedroom Holiday Inn Express hotel, three Grade A office blocks with around 175,000 square feet of office space and a 398-tenant multistorey carpark. Outline planning permission for the remaining three phases of the site plus a detailed planning application for Phase 5 was secured in 2024.
- **Stockroom:** an exciting new cultural and creative space for Stockport in the heart of the town's busy shopping area, Merseyway, Stockroom is for anybody and everybody. Due to open in Spring 2025, visitors will find a library, a children's creative learning space, a café bar and Stockport's historical archives. Stockroom's unique culture programme will feature collaborations with a range of partners, from local community groups to major international arts organisations. It will be the place in Stockport for getting together, getting involved or just popping by for a brew.
- **The St Thomas' Community of Living Well:** the redevelopment of the Grade II listed St Thomas' Gardens site will create a new 82-bed care facility, providing support for people transitioning between hospital and home, alongside 68 new affordable homes. Work on the care facility began in 2024 and is due to complete in 2026.

To support the business base in Stockport

To keep Stockport's economy confident, resilient, and growing, and able to meet increased demand for great quality jobs from Stockport's current and anticipated future residents, we need to increase the number of new businesses. We also need to improve support provided to new businesses to help them to start, grow and survive. As part of One Stockport, One Future we are committed to creating 1,500 new businesses and getting another 6,500 people into employment, creating and producing jobs in growing industries such as the green economy, digital, construction, health and care and transport. We are also committed to promoting the GM Good Employment Charter for these new jobs. Significant projects are:

One Stockport Business Support Hub: we will continue to develop the business support hub in the new Merseyway Innovation Centre. The Hub provides a drop-in facility in the town centre staffed by partners including Job Centre Plus, Stockport College and the Greater Manchester Growth Company. The Hub helps Stockport

businesses to understand the support they need and co-ordinate a response to the needs identified. We'll develop this offering further over the year by joining up with Stockroom, which will offer support for residents seeking work, for example referring them to businesses with vacancies.

- **Cheadle Eco Business Park:** a redevelopment of around 115,000 square feet that will create a low carbon, highly sustainable employment park for engineering, manufacturing, and technology businesses. The scheme benefits from Government Town Fund grant funding that will bring forward up to 200 jobs, depending on nature of tenant businesses. Planning permission was granted in June 2024 and construction is due to start in 2024/25 for completion in 2025/26. The aim is for Cheadle Eco Park to be fully occupied by 2027.

To deliver our ambitious housing projects

Continuing with our 'Brownfield First' approach to new housing, we will build on previously developed land that is no longer being used. We will work with partners to unlock sites for new homes where delivery has stalled, and we will continue work with owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use.

As well as the 4,000 new homes being created through the MDC in the Town Centre West, we have more housing schemes in the pipeline including Fletcher Street and the former Greenhale House site. We also have ambitious plans for the east of our town centre to create 4,000 more accessible and affordable homes so everyone can live and succeed in a community they can be proud of.

To implement transport projects

Stockport already boasts some of the best connectivity in Greater Manchester, with regular train links into both Manchester and London, as well as a fast-growing network of walking, wheeling, and cycling routes and a state-of-the-art transport interchange which will soon be home to a fleet of clean, green electric buses.

Our ambition is to invest further in our future transport options to develop infrastructure that is green, inclusive, resilient, and safe and helps to reduce air pollution and lower our overall carbon emissions. Improved public transport infrastructure will also give more people access to affordable and reliable travel for their commute to work, helping businesses to recruit a high-calibre workforce from across the borough and beyond and fostering more economic development. As well as the Stockport Interchange, described above, major public transport initiatives include:

- Bringing the Metrolink to Stockport, giving residents another fast and efficient public transportation option.
- Facilitating a zero-emissions bus network which connects all our neighbourhoods, including the introduction of the Bee Network bus franchising across the borough in early 2025.

- Securing further national investment in Stockport Railway Station to maintain its status as one of the best-connected stations in the North.
- Building a new railway station at Cheadle.
- Improving accessibility to Stockport's local rail stations, using government funding to support some of this work.

Stockport is also continuing to improve its pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to encourage people to walk and cycle more, including developing cycle and improved pedestrian facilities along the A34 corridor.

We know we have had an impact when we see

- The MDC create 1500 new homes by 2027, including 500 affordable homes built across the borough.
- A year-on-year increase in the number of Stockport businesses signed up to the Real Living Wage and more Stockport employees receiving the Real Living Wage.
- A year-on-year increase in the number of Stockport-based businesses being members of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.
- A narrowing of the gap between the overall employment rate and the employment rates for those furthest from the labour market (because of identity, where they live or level of poverty).

Ambition 2 – Education, work, and skills

This ambition is about how we support our residents to access the best education, skills, and qualifications at all stages of their lives, as well as supporting the people who need it most access to the work and skills they need to succeed.

We will work with partners to raise standards in schools and support young people to successfully transition out of secondary school ‘life ready’, equipped for work and lifelong learning.

For our vulnerable young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), we will focus on preparation for adult life from the earliest points.

This ambition supports the ‘One Future’ ambition of the One Stockport Borough Plan to create a skilled and confident Stockport. The ‘best place to grow up’ strand of One Stockport, One Future will help us to deliver it.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To create the conditions in which great school leaders can run great schools

Our strong partnerships with schools and school leaders are helping us to achieve our ambitions for children and young people. While we have many great schools and that children in Stockport achieve well, we also know that there is more we can do. Our ambition is to have the best schools and colleges in the country, with every child included in their success.

Our Schools Strategy and Post-16 Plan aim to build on the strengths of our current offer to children by providing a roadmap that guides our partnership work over the next three years. We are committed to making sure all schools have the opportunity to join a sustainable and successful local multi academy trust and we will develop a clear strategic and proactive plan to manage fluctuation in pupil numbers. Through our Stockport Family model, we remain focused on delivering the earliest support for all children and families, recognising the important role that schools and similar settings play at the heart of our communities.

To improve opportunities and outcomes for residents with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We want to make sure that children and adults with SEND are supported to thrive and flourish. We will do this by providing educational and job opportunities, improving communication with SEND residents and further developing cross-sector collaboration across Stockport, including through Family Hubs.

During 2024 we worked with our partners, especially parents, carers and children and young people, to refresh our SEND Strategy and joint commissioning plan and now we’ll focus on delivery. We have also finalised our SEND sufficiency plans; we will have created 600 new SEND places between September 2020 and September 2025, and we will continue to deliver more specialist places, including post-16 provision.

We have invested in our Educational Psychology and Education, Health, and Care Plan statutory assessment team and we've launched our Neurodiversity team to make sure we have enough capacity to meet current demand. We will work with colleagues to improve the offer for neurodiversity, with a particular focus on needs-based support at the earliest point and reducing waiting times for diagnosis.

In partnership with the Department for Education, we will also implement our Delivering Better Value Plan and maximise the £1 million investment to improve SEND services. We've also carried out a review of SEN transport practices during 2024 and we will now focus on implementing the agreed recommendations to make sure we're getting value for money.

To work with employers to increase opportunities for young people to experience the world of work and understand the range of career opportunities

This includes more work experience opportunities, career talks in schools and promoting apprenticeships and other vocational options, emphasising that they are of equal value to more academic options. We will continue to develop the new One Stockport Education and Careers Forum and to improve careers education, information, advice and guidance for young people and their parents/carers. We will deliver our new Skills Plan for Stockport that will clearly show the range of positive choices available for young people in Stockport.

Within three years, we aim to have improved relationships between businesses and schools/colleges/training providers in Stockport, encouraging employers to contribute to co-designing curriculum and qualifications for their sectors. Young people will have significantly more and better-quality opportunities to learn and make decisions about their career options by being exposed to the world of work, so they are better prepared for employment when they finish their education.

We launched the Construction Skills Academy during 2024. This will provide a one-stop shop for residents, businesses, and contractors to connect people with jobs, skills, and local businesses opportunities.

To improve access to work for adults and support for those re-entering the job market

We will do this by signposting and promoting the many support offers available through our partners in the Department for Work and Pensions, across Greater Manchester and Stockport Homes. We will hold four Jobs Fairs each year and work with Jobcentre Plus to offer employability support sessions for people aged 50 and over who are looking for work.

We will contribute to a local online Jobs and Careers portal with labour market information and advice about different job roles, including links to online jobs boards that list current vacancies. We will also encourage more businesses to sign up to the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, securing more opportunities for good work with good pay and conditions for local residents. We will also work with Stockport Race Equality Partnership to target support to people that have high levels of skills and qualifications but have been struggling to secure employment.

We know we will have had an impact when we see:

- An increase in the proportion of children who are on track to be 'school ready' when they begin their formal education, including an increase in children achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Higher attainment levels at Key Stage 2 (years 3-6, when the students are aged between 7 and 11) and Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11, when children are working towards GCSEs).
- A lowering of the attainment gap for pupils from a deprived background, looked after children, children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), and those who speak English as an additional language.
- A reduction in the use of external independent school placements for children with SEND.
- Fewer fixed-term exclusions from school.
- An increase in education, work experience, apprenticeships, training, and job opportunities for 16-24-year-olds including those with SEND and care leavers.
- An increase in the proportion of 16-64-year-olds qualified to at least Level 2 (GCSE grade 4-9).
- Continued high levels of adults accessing continuing education, including people from priority areas.
- Increased employment rates and reductions in the number of people receiving out of work benefits.

Ambition 3 – Wellbeing in neighbourhoods

Stockport's neighbourhoods are unique. They are brilliant, distinctive, and diverse; the places we meet friends and bring up our families, the places we call home. People value a sense of community, and they want to feel safe and proud of where they live.

Whilst Stockport is an amazing place to live and work in, we know that there are inequalities: Stockport is the eighth most polarised borough in England, and this can be seen in different ways in each of our communities. This is why we are taking a neighbourhood approach to create a fairer and more inclusive Stockport, where residents are healthier, happier, and more resilient.

Our ambition is for all Stockport's neighbourhoods to be clean, green, and safe places to live and visit. They should be welcoming and healthy environments for people to spend time together and access sport, culture, and leisure.

One Stockport Local, our approach to neighbourhood working, helps us to focus on the specific strengths and needs of different areas. It is about changing the way we plan and deliver services, starting by asking our residents what matters most to them. Collaboration is vital with public services, communities, businesses, and residents working together. This is how we will achieve better outcomes for local people and make better use of public resources.

This ambition supports the 'One Heart' ambition of the One Stockport Borough Plan to create a Stockport where people live the best lives they can. It will help to deliver the 'thriving neighbourhoods' and 'best health and care' strands of One Stockport, One Future.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To deliver our ambitious neighbourhoods and prevention programme, 'One Stockport Local'

We are intentionally covering the whole spectrum of place, communities, health, and social care. Core components include:

- Workforce – we want the people who work in communities to work as one team, regardless of which organisation they are a part of. This will be supported by a One Stockport Induction and shared development programme.
- Neighbourhood networks and coordinators – bringing people together in one place. It involves working with people, not 'doing to' people, or 'doing for' people.
- Neighbourhood profiles that allow us to better understand local areas and make sure that people can access help and support when they need it.
- Improving access to services, whether in person, over the phone or through digital platforms so it is easier to find information, advice, and support. This will make sure that our communities and residents get the right help, at the right time and in the right place.

To create thriving places

One Stockport Local includes the physical spaces and places that make each of our

neighbourhoods special. Our physical environment has a huge impact on our health, wellbeing, and sense of community. We will focus on:

- Making sure our public spaces are safe, clean, attractive, and support health and wellbeing in our communities.
- Making the most of public buildings by opening them up or giving them over to communities and the Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.
- Working with businesses and residents to improve our district centres and boost the local economy, animating spaces through events and activities to increase footfall.
- Working with communities to maintain and improve our amazing green spaces, as places where nature thrives and where people can be active and improve their health and wellbeing.
- Making it easier for people to travel around Stockport and promoting greener travel such as public transport, cycling and walking.
- Delivering our Active Communities' Strategy, 'Stockport Moving Together', to encourage healthy, physically active lives and enjoyment of culture and green space. We'll particularly focus on residents who struggle to be active for whatever reason.

To support connected communities

Evidence shows that strong ties with family, friends and the local community provide people with happiness, security, support, and a sense of purpose. Through One Stockport Local, we want to make the most of what is strong in our communities. We will:

- Co-create, implement, and embed Stockport Local hubs (including Family Hubs) and networks.
- Bring professionals and communities together to focus on what matters to our residents.
- Provide support for people to become financially, digitally, and socially included to prevent and reduce the impact of poverty and social isolation.
- Make sure professionals work together effectively to support people and families facing a wide range of challenges or crisis.

We will also build on our transformational year as Greater Manchester Town of Culture in 2023/24 and work with residents and our creative partners to deliver engaging cultural opportunities for people who live and work in Stockport.

We will further develop our libraries and leisure centres as community hubs with a range of activities and support on offer.

Our vibrant VCFSE Sector is integral to all our ambitions, and we will work with the sector to achieve our collective ambitions through delivery of the VCFSE strategy.

To deliver collaborative health and care

We will focus on preventing ill-health and promoting wellbeing and independence while also making sure that people who need access to health and care services get the help they need quickly. We will continue to bring our health and care professionals together in neighbourhoods, to work as one team, with a focus on early intervention and joined up support.

To achieve this, we will focus on the following priorities:

- Improving the experience of care for residents who transition between services like moving from hospital to community care or those who receive more than one service.
- Reducing admissions to residential care and increasing the amount of supported housing in the borough.
- Improving support for people who are frail or at risk of frailty, have diabetes, suffer from alcohol-related harm, or have cardiovascular disease.
- Working collaboratively through multi-disciplinary teams and networks of professionals, local experts and service providers in each of our neighbourhoods so that people stay healthy, well and independent in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Targeting help and work with communities to reduce health inequalities.
- Improving out of hospital urgent care services.

We will know we have had an impact when we see:

- Reduced health inequalities and health improvements for people who experience frailty, have diabetes, alcohol related harm and/or cardio-vascular disease.
- Reduced hospital readmission rates and more people living well at home for longer.
- Better outcomes for children, young people and families with more children being ready for school at age 5.
- Reduced numbers of children in care.

- More people tell us that they feel safer in their community and reduced crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Our VCFSE sector is even more resilient and sustainable with more people involved in volunteering and more people participating in cultural activities in our communities.
- More people able to get early advice and information, improved access to online information and an increase in community appointments.

Ambition 4 – Delivering for those who need it most

This ambition focuses on helping people to stay independent, safe, and well so they can live the lives they want. This includes people who are older, have disabilities, neurodiversity or mental health issues, as well as the people who care for them.

It also means protecting everyone's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This could mean supporting people who have experienced domestic abuse or safeguarding those with care and support needs. It also means protecting children from abuse, and identifying and stopping abuse that might already be happening.

We have a particular responsibility for our children in care and care leavers. As corporate parents, we need to make sure that our children are safe, happy, and given opportunities to achieve their full potential.

This ambition supports the 'One Heart' ambition of the One Stockport Borough Plan to create a Stockport where children have the best start in life and people live the best lives they can – happy, healthy, and independently. This ambition will be driven by all five strands of One Stockport, One Future.

Our key areas of focus over the next 3 years will be:

To protect, keep safe and support our residents with care and support needs

We will continue to work through our Safeguarding Boards to make sure residents and their families can report concerns relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation, feel confident that their concerns will be addressed appropriately and that those affected are offered the appropriate support or services.

To lead the borough's response to tackling poverty

We will continue to develop an understanding of the impact of cost of living in Stockport using data and intelligence. We will work together with partners to deliver against our six anti-poverty objectives. This means providing easy access to information and advice, supporting people to increase their income, and providing help to those in crisis.

To support residents with mental health, mental wellbeing, learning disabilities and autism

We will deliver our all-age Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Autism Strategies. We will also deliver our One Stockport Learning Disability Strategy and Building the Right Support action plan. This involves working closely with local people and partner agencies including NHS services, housing, VCSFE organisations and groups, and wider partners, including schools and employers, as they all have a role to play. Our Autism Strategy supports our aim for Stockport to become a place where autistic people and their families are understood, valued, and supported to achieve their individual ambitions.

To support the children in our care and care leavers

The number of children in care and care leavers in Stockport is increasing, exacerbated by the increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. As corporate parents, we will continue to explore innovative care models to make sure that all children are cared

for in the borough within a family home wherever possible. We will focus on increasing the number of foster carers and acquiring new properties to expand our current stock.

We continue to embed our Care Leaver Covenant to optimise social value with local businesses and improve education, employment, and training opportunities for care leavers. In addition, we will widen our local offer to give care leavers support with food, fuel, Wi-Fi, bus travel and warm winter packs.

We will treat care leavers as if they were a 'protected characteristic group' to help redress the inequalities that care leavers face. We will work with colleagues across the council to measure the impact of service changes on carer leavers' lived experiences.

To have safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led adult social care services

We will enable more people to live independently in their own home for longer and reduce the number of people who are supported in residential care. We will work with our partners towards having a range of housing options that meet the needs of our residents.

Technology enabled care will become the first choice to help people to maintain independence and wellbeing at home. We will continue to embed the principles of Gloriously Ordinary Lives across our service to help people to live fulfilling lives within their community. Through our Making it Real Board, we will work with people who have lived experience and deliver the Working in Partnership action plan.

Residents will have easy access to a range of good information, advice, and guidance in their neighbourhood. When people with care and support needs require long term support there will be a diverse offer available, and they will experience seamless, integrated pathways and support. Together with our partners we will deliver the Think Carer strategy and associated action plan to make sure that carers of all ages have access to the help and support that they need.

We know will have had an impact when:

- There is an increase in the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation and employment, education, and training.
- There are improved outcomes for children in care. For example, in educational attainment.
- There is a reduction in the number of long-term care home placements, which demonstrates that we are supporting people to stay in their own homes as long as possible.
- We have achieved a positive outcome in our first Care Quality Commission inspection.
- There is a reduction in the levels of unclaimed benefits, and a reduction in the number of people needing to access crisis support.

- Mental health and wellbeing improves at all ages, and the inequality in premature mortality of people with serious mental illness decreases.
- The number of people with learning disability living in their own home increases and more people with learning disabilities will have opportunities for paid employment.

Two Cross-Cutting themes: Fair and Inclusive Stockport and Climate Action Now

Our Council Plan has reducing inequality and responding to climate change at its heart, recognising that these are our biggest challenges. These two cross-cutting themes are the lenses that all our activity will be developed, tested, and progressed through.

Theme 1: Fair and Inclusive Stockport

Our vision is for Stockport to be a great, diverse place to live where everyone can thrive.

We know that experiences of poverty, where people live, and other factors can interact to affect wellbeing and quality of life. To building a fair and inclusive Stockport, we want to make sure that the needs of all our residents are considered when services are designed and delivered, and that where particular groups face additional barriers, these are addressed. A fair and inclusive approach underpins all the ambitions of the One Stockport Borough Plan and specifically supports the 'One Home' pillar which aims for a Stockport that's a great, diverse place to live and where everyone can thrive.

Our key areas of focus over the next 3 years will be:

To root our equalities and anti-poverty work in the lived experience of people and communities across Stockport

We will strengthen our community-based equity networks and support them to guide our priorities and design our services. We will develop an anti-poverty network of people with lived experience of poverty to inform service design and decision making. We will work closely with VCFSE groups to achieve our vision of a fair and inclusive Stockport.

To deliver against our Equality and Anti-Poverty Objectives

We will deliver against our four equality objectives and six anti-poverty objectives. We will continue to strengthen equality-based community networks and work together to create positive change. We will also focus on improving how we work as an organisation through more inclusive service delivery, supporting and empowering our workforce and increasing diversity across the council.

To embed best-practice on equalities and anti-poverty across the council

We will work with others to deliver programmes and projects that will have a direct impact on poverty and inequality and act as examples of good practice. All directorates will complete Equality, Diversity and Inclusion self-assessments and make sure that actions are built into business plans.

We will support all services to use equality and socio-economic data and qualitative intelligence as the basis of planning and decision making. We will consistently analyse

existing service level data by protected characteristic groups and use the insight provided to reduce under or over representation of some communities in our services.

To work with partners and businesses across Stockport to have a visible commitment to a fair and inclusive approach

We will support businesses across Stockport to become supporters and members of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, and work with them to increase the numbers of Real Living Wage Employers. We will also ensure our jobs fairs are inclusive and provide opportunities to people who are currently disadvantaged in the labour market.

To model good practice on a Fair and Inclusive approach as a significant employer and anchor institution in Stockport

We will maintain our current membership of the GM Good Employment Charter and accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer as well as promoting these to other Stockport employers. We have also committed to fully deliver the Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework and Inclusion Standards.

We will support the delivery of our People Plan, creating a more diverse workforce at all levels that is reflective of the communities we serve. We'll also make sure all employees have equal opportunities to thrive and develop.

We know we will have had an impact when:

- Health, educational and employment outcomes for disadvantaged groups including those living in less well-off neighbourhoods have improved.
- Increased numbers of businesses based in Stockport sign up to the Greater Manchester Employment Charter and the Real Living Wage.
- Council services regularly and routinely analyse their equalities and socio-economic considerations and make service changes as a result.
- Numbers of people needing to access crisis support reduce, and there's a reduction in the levels of unclaimed benefits.
- The council's gender and ethnicity pay gaps reduce. The workforce at all levels reflects the local community.
- The council's All Colleague Survey shows increasing numbers of colleagues who report that we respect differences, at both an organisational and team level, and that they are confident that policies are applied without bias.

Theme 2: Climate Action Now

The council's climate emergency declaration means that we recognise urgent action is needed to reduce emissions and adapt to the effects of extreme weather and warming temperatures. Climate Action Now (CAN) is our strategy and work programme to tackle climate change and enhance the natural environment. To achieve this, our ambition is for Stockport to be carbon neutral by 2038 and for Stockport Council to be operationally net zero by 2030. Many of the areas of focus for CAN are especially powerful because they sit in the sweet spot of interventions which reduce carbon, tackle poverty, and improve health – e.g., green jobs, active travel measures, energy efficiency.

Climate Action Now (CAN) cuts across all council work and is a core priority in the One Stockport Borough Plan.

Our key areas of focus over the next 3 years will be:

To embed and mainstream Climate Action across the council

We will work with teams across the council to put climate action at the heart of decision making. We will measure and monitor environmental data to allow for climate change impacts to be factored into future decision making, works undertaken by the council and to influence our supply chain to reduce their own emissions. We will continue to develop an engaging and inspiring Climate Action Now (CAN) programme to enable and support the transition to a climate-friendly borough, including our annual CAN summit; schools climate assembly project; Climate Action Business Forum; Stockport Green Network (VCFSE); CAN fund; climate change training for businesses; and the development of green skills programmes.

To improve energy efficiency and uptake of renewable energy sources across the council's estate and the borough more widely

To achieve our carbon reduction targets, we need to reduce the amount of energy from fossil fuels used in the borough. We will work in partnership, seek funding, and develop innovative, forward-thinking solutions to meeting the borough's retrofit and energy needs. We will seek new funding and finance models for solar photovoltaic (PV) in schools and explore opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure within the borough, including the use of solar farms and other forms of energy for a district heat network to heat buildings in the town centre A6 corridor via renewable energy sources.

To move to low-carbon and active transport options like walking, cycling and use of public transport

We will continue to develop new walking, cycling and wheeling routes and work with partners and regional bodies to improve public transport options to make sustainable transport options easier for everyone. We will continue our ongoing involvement in increasing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure capacity across the borough, working in partnership with private investors and delivery partners. We are also seeking major investment in the borough to strengthen Stockport as GM's southern gateway

with a modern connected railway station in the town and Metrolink line extended to Stockport, connecting to the brand-new interchange with electric buses. We will also continue work to develop the new train station in Cheadle.

To protect and enhance the natural environment

We will continue to accelerate our natural environment programme, including tree planting and creation of grasslands and orchards. We will utilise nature-based solutions for flood alleviation and addressing the urban heat island effect. This will mean actively delivering on biodiversity net gain legislation, maximising funding opportunities and working in partnership with organisations and other local authorities to address climate impacts.

To read more about CAN actions and progress, go to our Climate Change webpages: www.stockport.gov.uk/climate-change

We will know we have had an impact when we see:

- More energy efficient homes and buildings across the borough.
- An increase in the amount of renewable energy generated in Stockport.
- More residents benefitting from green skills and jobs programmes and being employed in high-quality green jobs.
- Nature-based solutions to address climate change impacts that also help nature to recover
- A reduction in Stockport Council's organisational greenhouse gas emissions in line with our 2030 net zero target.
- More active and public transport journeys.

Four Enabling Programmes

To achieve our ambitions, it is vital that we have the right support in place. This means having an engaged workforce, robust finances, dynamic approach to change, good use of data and digital technology and strong communications. It is also about working in partnership – with other public services, businesses, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector and local people.

1. Our Workforce

2. Working with others

3. Radically Digital Stockport

4. Delivering change and spending wisely

Enabler 1: Our Workforce

Our colleagues' passion, resilience and dedication to local people and places is central to our ability to being able to deliver excellent services for residents as well as our ability to innovate and improve. It is also what makes Stockport council an amazing place to work, grow and thrive.

Our All Colleague Survey was completed for the second time in September 2023, showing a significant increase in engagement. The survey showed that a high percentage of colleagues are passionate about Stockport's people and an even higher amount recognise our values and Council Plan. It showed that people were working well as a team and that our line managers do an incredible job to support people.

However, we are not complacent: there is more to do. Feedback from our 2024 EDI survey and the events of the summer of 2024 showed us we need to continue to focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Working with our employee network groups and trade union colleagues as well as our wider organisation is integral to this work.

We will continue to review how we lead change and transformation, improving how colleagues are consulted and engaged in a meaningful way, both within and outside of formal processes. We are further developing our approach to employee wellbeing and introducing new measures that enhance reward and recognition.

Our 'One Team' People Plan is our workforce strategy, showcasing the way we work in Stockport Council as an inclusive and values-driven organisation. It has five pillars that include measures to embed our values, think innovatively about recruitment, and become a more inclusive organisation.

OUR FIVE PILLAR PLAN ONE TEAM



JOIN US

Stockport council is employer of choice providing local employment for our communities



GROW AND THRIVE

Everyone thrives, has access to learning and development and can reach their potential.



FEEL SUPPORTED

Wellbeing is a priority, and everyone feels supported and valued. People first, professional second.



BELONG HERE

There is an inclusive culture where all individuals are respected and treated fairly, where diversity is celebrated and where everyone can be themselves and thrive



LIVE OUR VALUES

Our values and behaviours are at the core of how we work to deliver our One Stockport Borough Plan

Over key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To support more people to Join Us

We will continue to develop our Team Stockport approach to showcase Stockport Council as an employer of choice. A big focus for this year is growing our offer for those who are at the beginning or early stages of their career and developing career pathways for people to develop within the organisation. As one of the borough's biggest employers, we will continue to focus on inclusivity and providing job opportunities to those who need them most.

To enable all colleagues to Grow and Thrive

We will continue to foster a culture of continuous development so that colleagues have the tools and resources they need to reach their full potential and also see how their work benefits Stockport residents. Over the next three years we'll embed our new 'My Conversation' approach to annual personal development reviews and we will increase the number of successful apprenticeships completed further. We will also increase our pool of qualified internal coaches and deliver a data skills academy to improve our use of data and intelligence.

Our Leading Stockport leadership development programme will continue to equip managers and leaders across the organisation with the skills to lead in a supportive and inclusive way.

To ensure that everyone Feels Supported

Over the next three years we will continue to take a strategic approach to wellbeing so that we have an inclusive workplace where colleagues feel not only supported but also valued. We will continue to develop and strengthen our culture of recognition where our employees feel genuinely appreciated. We will increase the number of Wellbeing Champions and empower them with the knowledge and skills to support colleagues. We will take a targeted approach to managing sickness by using data and prioritising health, safety, and wellbeing. We will continue to add to our employee support offer and create opportunities for people to connect socially at work, building on the success of the staff choir and wellbeing walks.

To have an organisation where everyone Belongs Here

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a big priority for us. We want to ensure that we have a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation and will use inclusive targeted recruitment and leadership programmes to ensure there is a demonstrable improvement over the next three years. We want to foster an environment where everyone is respected and included so we are transforming our approach to EDI training and development, mandating activity at different levels. We are introducing a new zero tolerance dignity at work policy which will support colleagues and help them to report incidents that they experience in the workplace. Combined with a range of awareness campaigns and open forums, this will continually strengthen our inclusive culture so that everyone has a voice and is heard.

To ensure that in everything we do, we Live Our Values

At the heart of our approach are our core values and we will continue to embed them in everything we do. Over the next three years, we will move to a more inclusive approach to recruitment, making sure that colleagues' values and behaviours align with our ambitions, and increasing the diversity of our workforce. We will work with partners as part of the neighbourhoods and prevention programmes to deliver cultural change that enable joint working and puts the people of Stockport at the heart of what we do. We will continue to prioritise colleague engagement, ensuring that the voice of our colleagues actively shapes and influences organisational changes.

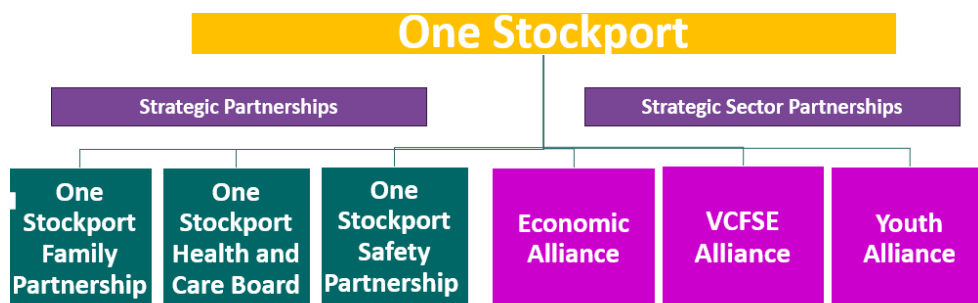
Enabler 2 – Working with others

We could not do the work we do without working closely with our partners and always taking a collaborative approach. In Stockport, we have a clear shared vision and strong relationships with our partners, communities, and residents.

This approach is brought to life in One Stockport, One Future - the next phase of our Borough Plan. It sets out the five big things that we will focus on over the next 15 years to ensure that Stockport is the best place to live happy and healthy lives, a place where anything is possible, a place that everyone, right across the Borough can be proud of. It outlines how we will work together to tackle inequalities and has been shaped by the voices of our communities and residents.



To support this work, there are six strategic partnerships in Stockport bringing together different partners to deliver the priorities in the Borough Plan. Over the next three years we will focus on strengthening and supporting the development of our key strategic partnerships



Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To deliver One Stockport: One Future

One Stockport, One Future is focused on change over the next 15 years and a call to action for us and our partners to do even more around the ‘5 big things’ that will act as long-term catalysts for change. Over the next three years we will work with our partners to deliver the plan and attract external investment into the borough.

To strengthen our approach to communication

We will continue to promote Stockport, locally, regionally, and nationally as a fantastic place to live, work and invest. We will deliver a programme of targeted campaigns and establish a more comprehensive approach to place marketing. We will communicate the council’s work more widely focusing on clear and consistent language, so we are accessible to all. We will continue to improve our website and other communication channels as a vital source of information and advice.

To improve our approach to participation and coproduction

We will put people at the heart of what we do by continuing to improve our approach to participation, engagement, and co-production. Over the next three years we will continue to build on the best practice that exists across the council. We will continue to strengthen our Community Networks, including our Equity Networks. These bring people together to help collaboration on key issues. Our Equity networks have an important relationship with the Greater Manchester Equity panels providing vital advice, support, and challenge to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage.

To working collaboratively across Greater Manchester and beyond

We are proud of our collaborative relationships with the other nine local authorities within Greater Manchester (GM) and we work closely with them through our membership of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. We will continue to foster and strengthen these relationships over the next three years through working together

to deliver the priorities in the Greater Manchester Strategy and collaborating to make the most of the opportunity presented by the GM Trailblazer Deal commitment to a Single Funding Settlement from the next Spending Review period.

Enabler 3 - Radically Digital Stockport

We have an award-winning approach to digital and data. Digital can help us to change the way we work and the way we engage with people. It opens up new opportunities for jobs and our local economy. It can provide better customer service more efficiently. We need to make the most of the possibilities that digital brings. We launched our Radically Digital Strategy in 2022.

The Digital Strategy is set out into three key pillars: Digital Communities, Digital Place and Digital Council. We will spend time reviewing and refreshing our strategy over the next three years to make sure it remains aligned to our council priorities and reflective of emerging technologies.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To continue our journey to be a radically Digital Council

We will continue to evolve our digital offer, using agile working practices and digital tools to improve our processes and user experience. We will review and deliver our data strategy to ensure that we use and share more of our data to improve planning and decision making and increase the interconnectivity of systems to improve services and collaborative working. We will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics to support service delivery, understanding both the risks and opportunities in doing so. Key workstreams include digital practice, digital data, digital architecture, and digital IT systems.

To support Digital Communities

We will improve the online experience for residents and professionals looking for help and support. We will deliver a redesign of our stockport.gov.uk website and a new online directory of support that provides comprehensive information in one place. We will expand our online portals to enable residents to track progress and reduce administration. We will also reduce the number of websites we have, eliminating the impact these have on the climate.

We will support people to live independently for longer through our Tech Enabled Living programme. Technology solutions will enable us to deliver personalised, cost-effective health, care, and support. Our 'Virtual House' product provides an interactive tour showing examples of Occupational Therapy, Assistive Technology and Sensory aids, equipment and solutions that will enable residents to live independently for longer.

We will continue to work with our DigiKnow partners to increase the number of Digital Champion volunteers in all of our communities and tackle digital exclusion.

To plan for the future so that Stockport is a Digital Place

Digital is a key enabler to our One Stockport Economic Plan. The plan outlines our shared approach to the economy over the next ten years. It's about making sure that

Stockport has the infrastructure, skills and networks for digital start-ups, scale-ups, and established businesses to thrive and grow our local economy.

We will continue at pace to build on the successful Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) programme that delivered hundreds of kilometres of high-speed low-latency fibre across the region to join up 120 sites across the borough (including education, local authority and partner sites). We are already seeing the benefits of connected networking, which enables us to work more collaboratively, efficiently and securely. This work creates the foundation for future smart place initiatives and further opportunities for collaboration with a wider group of partners.

We are leveraging our GMAOne network infrastructure to deliver 5G advanced wireless/digital infrastructure to deliver smart energy, smart transport systems, regional connected public wi-fi and a shared security platform for Stockport and GMAOne partners – leveraging economies of scale and ultimately resulting in a more resilient, connected, accessible and sustainable place for everyone.

Enabler 4 - Delivering change and spending wisely

We take pride in our ability to make a difference to the people of Stockport, drive change and transformation while spending our money wisely.

We provide over 800 services to support and improve the lives of residents, business, and visitors, with an annual revenue budget of £336 million in 2024/25. Every year we must deliver a budget that balances our spend with the income we receive.

We are shaping our budget within an uncertain, unstable, and complex environment. We continue to see increasing demand for services and this, combined with the rising cost of providing services, is adding further challenges in delivering a balanced budget.

However, despite these challenges we are an ambitious council, committed to making a difference to the residents and communities we serve. This means that change and transformation has to be at the heart of our council plan.

Achieving a sustainable budget means that we can continue to make improvements across services and change the way we work through programmes such as the Neighbourhoods and Prevention programme. It also means that we are well placed to attract external investment that has helped to regenerate our borough, grow the business base, and create jobs.

Our key areas of focus over the next three years will be:

To align our transformation programme with our financial planning

To focus on longer-term change and sustainability, our work is shaped by our strategy, not the budget. We will continue to improve our approach to transformation and change. We will deliver our three-to-five-year transformation programmes and prioritise resources accordingly.

To deliver of a three-year savings programme and recovery plans.

The financial context is likely to continue to be unstable and uncertain. It's vital that we have three-year savings plans that are delivered on time to meet the financial challenge. We also need to have robust recovery plans where the costs of services like social care placements or Information Technology system costs are increasing.

To implement of our ambitious capital strategy

This is helping to regenerate the borough by building homes, services, and infrastructure. That, in turn, grows the local economy, creates jobs, and develops strong communities. Our estates and assets strategy supports this work by ensuring the right property in the right locations at the same time as progressing against our plan to be operationally net zero by 2030.

To ensure that every penny we spend benefits the people of Stockport.

We want to take every opportunity to make a difference to the people of Stockport. Where possible, we will procure goods and services in a way that benefits local businesses, the VCFSE sector and local supply chains. We will also step up our approach to social value to ensure that we get the most out of contracts. This includes

implementing the 'Match My Project' portal that helps to connect businesses to community organisations.

Delivery of our Council Plan

Our ambitions, cross-cutting themes and enabling programmes will be included in the Portfolio Performance and Resources Agreements. These agreements include clear measures that allow councillors and residents to monitor progress and performance. We will continue to report on measures and milestones on a regular basis to the council's scrutiny committees, ensuring clear and transparent accountability.

Priority	Portfolio
Efficient and Effective Services	All Cabinet Members
Jobs and investment	Economy, Regeneration & Housing / Communities and Transport/ Parks, Highways & Transport Services
Education and skills	Economy, Regeneration & Housing / Children, Families & Education
Wellbeing, prevention, and neighbourhoods	Health and Adult p Care / Communities, Culture & Sport/ Children, Families & Education/ Parks, Highways & Transport Services
Supporting those who need it most	Health and Adult Social Care / Children, Families & Education
Enabling programmes	Finance and Resources
Cross-cutting themes	Climate Change & Environment/ Communities Culture & Sport

In Summary

The Stockport Council Plan 2024-2027 outlines the important role that the council plays in supporting the borough by providing and delivering services that are essential to everyday life. It outlines our four big ambitions over the coming three years, which will create opportunities for everyone. We will build on the progress achieved over the last year and continue to deliver and implement these ambitions.

We recognise that we face challenges. Inequalities are increasing as residents are impacted by the cost of living and, as a council, we are facing rising costs and increased demand on our services.

However, we remain an ambitious council. We are ambitious for local people and ambitious for Stockport. This is even more important in the current landscape. We must keep striving for improvement and making positive change.

We have an extensive regeneration programme that is among the largest nationally, and we continue to attract even more investment.

We are ambitious for our children and young people, and we want our schools to be even better. We recognise the importance of education, work, and skills at all points in life so that everyone can access good, fulfilling employment and careers.

We understand that communities and neighbourhoods are our greatest strength and we have placed our One Stockport Local neighbourhoods and prevention programme front and centre of our transformation work in Stockport.

We will support people to live good lives and continue to be there to catch people when they fall, by providing vital care and support when people need it the most.

All our work with is underpinned by our aim to create a fairer and greener Stockport. We will strive to address inequality and tackle climate change with everything we do.

We will keep on supporting and motivating our workforce, making sure they can do the best job they can. We'll also carry on using our resources wisely to drive forward transformation in the borough, particularly considering the increasingly difficult financial climate.

We are aware that we cannot achieve our ambitions alone and that working in partnership, is fundamental. We will build on our existing relationships and continue to work with other public sector organisations, businesses and the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to deliver positive change for the borough.

We have already seen lots of progress on these ambitions. From the newly adopted socio-economic duty, to delivering new SEND school places, the continued progress of our town centre regeneration including opening Viaduct Park to the renovation of the Hatworks museum and our ongoing work with communities on climate action (such as Greenstock, CAN seed and Catalyst Funds and the CAN summit).

Last year we also launched **One Stockport, One Future** – a call to action for us and our partners to do even more around the ‘five 5 big things’ we consider will act as long-term catalysts for change.

Our ‘5 big things’ do not cover all our activity but are the things that will have a big impact across many other areas, making Stockport stand out as one of the best places in the country to live a happy and healthy life.

We will also continue to work collaboratively with the other nine boroughs in Greater Manchester, as we truly believe we are stronger when we work together. Most importantly of all, we will continue to serve the people of the borough to ensure that Stockport is a place everyone is proud to call home.