

Stockport. Change here.

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We're falling in love again with the heart of Stockport. Our town centre revival started some time ago but now it's full steam ahead, with a radical and exciting £1billion programme of investment.

In our town centre you'll find beautiful heritage buildings next to great new architecture. Businesses are relocating here, residents are moving in and jobs are being created.

Public spaces are improving, transport connections are being boosted and a buzz is in the air.

On the pages that follow we'll outline the people and projects that are making this transformation happen. Led by Stockport Council but with a wide range of partners involved, a renaissance is sweeping across Stockport town centre including new events, great attractions and fantastic reasons for people to venture back into town.

From underbank to overpass, viaduct to brewery visitor centre, Stockport town centre is bouncing back to life.





Stockport offers a great quality of life, with a quirky, original town centre. It is close to city centre Manchester but also on the edge of the Peak District.

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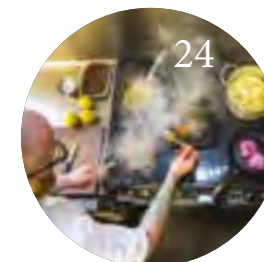
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Our transformation at a glance







The centre of Stockport is undergoing a radical  
£1billion programme of investment.

## Live.

The heart of Stockport is becoming a really great place to live with new residential developments and improved public spaces. The town centre living offer is changing. The architectural story is old meets new with unique topography and great proximity to transport links. Interesting and varied green space and public parks can be found all around Stockport, with the River Mersey flowing right through the town, all adding to its appeal. There are outstanding educational establishments from pre-school through to sixth form and beyond.





Hopes Carr resident Emma Nosurak, who also owns local business Plant Shop; the former Peaches building; and external views of the Hopes Carr housing development.

## Wherever I lay my hat

### Improving the residential offer in the town centre

Moving house is supposed to be one of the most stressful things you can do in your life, but for Emma Nosurak, she moved house and relocated her business to Stockport within a matter of weeks. "I was walking around Stockport one day and I just thought 'it's really nice. I'm going to end up living here,'" says Emma. "I like the charm of the place. It reminds me of somewhere like York or Harrogate, it has a lot of potential."

"I have settled in to the town and work is going well. Plant Shop is a great environment and because I had already established my business, the move has gone well and customers have followed me here."

Emma moved into the Hopes Carr development in Stockport this summer. Hopes Carr is the first element in the Covent Garden Village, a mixed-tenure residential urban village that will deliver 250 new homes, new shops and a park in the heart of the town centre.

Stockport Council is working in partnership with Seddon to deliver the new neighbourhood. Designed by architects Bowker Sadler, the five-storey block of 46 new apartments is owned and managed by Stockport Homes.

Emma says: "It suits me. I can walk to work. It's in a great location, close to the town centre. The train station is a few minutes away with direct links to London and I can get to Manchester Airport when I need to go to Europe."

**"I was walking around Stockport one day  
and I just thought I'm going to end up  
living here. I like the charm of the place."**

Emma Nosurak, Hopes Carr resident and owner of Plant Shop

As well as running Plant Shop, Emma is also bookings manager for Craig Charles and was part of the team producing his BBC 6 Music radio show, The Craig Charles Funk and Soul Show.

"It is busy. I have worked with Craig for a few years now and he's very popular. Plant Shop doubles up as my office and, when I need to, I can get to Manchester or Liverpool easily. I also manage a band and that means I sometimes go to Europe, too."

Emma doesn't have a lot of free time but says that she likes to get her breakfast at the nearby Tandem café.

"I'm still exploring and discovering new places. Working here is great. It's fresh and people are friendly. Selling plants is a great thing as people buy them and look after them and that is rewarding."

#### Some of the town's recent and future housing developments

- 30  
units

**Edward Street**  
*New*  
**Tenure**  
Private rent  
**Property type**  
1 & 2 bed apartments
- 53  
units

**Lee Street Police Station**  
*On site*  
**Tenure**  
Private rent  
**Property type**  
Apartments
- 74  
units

**Covent Garden**  
*On site*  
**Tenure**  
Private rent, market sale and shared ownership  
**Property type**  
Houses and apartments
- 113  
units

**Charles Street**  
*On site*  
**Tenure**  
Shared ownership and affordable rent  
**Property type**  
Houses and apartments
- 17  
units

**Hopes Carr**  
*Both phases are part completed/part planning*  
**Tenure**  
Shared ownership and affordable rent  
**Property type**  
Mostly houses, with two apartments
- 36  
units

**St Thomas Hospital**  
*On site*  
**Tenure**  
Shared ownership and affordable rent  
**Property type**  
Houses and apartments





Unique architectural and topographic detail from Stockport's Market Place and Underbanks.

## A question of restoration

### The past and future of the Market Place and Underbanks

"It's the ups and the downs that define Stockport, the steps and the brows," explains Kevin Dranfield of Stockport Heritage Trust from their centre at St Mary's Parish Church in the Market Place – parts of which form the oldest building in the town.

Stockport has the longest running market in its original location in the North West of England. Kevin explains, "Its location is a natural trading place: sited on a promontory close to the ford that crossed the River Mersey. That would have enabled people to cross the river and set out their wares.

"It became more official in the thirteenth Century when the Earl of Chester created a charter for the market, making Stockport the most important market town in the area. Then the Victorians came and created the glass umbrella over the covered market in 1861."

One stallholder was Ephraim Marks whose brother became one half of Marks & Spencer. It is rumoured that Ephraim requested the glass umbrella be filled with timber to create a more weather-proof structure, which was developed in the 1890s to create the market hall of today.

Nearby is Staircase House, a Grade II listed building which has undergone restoration. It gets its name from its distinctive Jacobean cage newell staircase and offers a glimpse into medieval Stockport.

If you take a turn out of the Market Place and descend Mealhouse Brow passing the Old Dungeon, which was used as Stockport's lock-up from medieval times, you will come to Little Underbank. This was historically the main road to London, and the retail and financial centre of Stockport.

Working with the Heritage Trust, Stockport Council has now secured £1.8million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Rediscovering the Underbanks'. This project will focus on the repair and reuse of the historic buildings, working in partnership with property owners, investors and local businesses.

St Petersgate Bridge crosses Little Underbank and from here, children have stood on the structure to watch the automaton clock on the old Winter's jewellery shop, which is now a pub.

Nearby is the huge White Lion pub, the upper floors of which are now being transformed into residential accommodation as part of a wider redevelopment programme for Stockport, with £7million investment from Stockport Council into the Market Place and Underbanks. The investment will see more residential development, creating new homes in Lower Hillgate, Russell Morley House and Dumville Brow.

Turning into Great Underbank, you approach Underbank Hall, an imposing fifteenth century building that still stands.

The Grade II listed Produce Hall has a new anchor tenant, enhancing the award-winning and vibrant events programme, which currently includes Foodie Friday and the Vintage Village.

The conservation and investment into the area will all help to create a thriving town centre.

Working with the Heritage Trust, Stockport Council has now secured £1.8million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Rediscovering the Underbanks', a project focusing on the repair and reuse of the historic buildings



## Take five

### Arts and cultural assets

From heritage attractions to newly commissioned art, Stockport can boast a diverse cultural offer. But it's not just about 'having' arts and culture; Stockport is also driving community engagement and exploring opportunities for involvement, education and training to develop further cultural events and activities. Here, we take a look at five venues and attractions that highlight the town's unique cultural assets:

#### Hat Works SK3 0EU

All hail the hat! With everything from bowlers, berets, top hats and trilbies, the Hat Works takes visitors through a recreated workshop and hatter's cottage to bring the world of hat design and production to life. And the creation of hats is important to this day, with a unique programme of professional millinery courses.

#### Air Raid Shelters SK1 1NE

The sandstone cliffs upon which Stockport stands provided the perfect place to carve out almost a mile of air raid shelters. Opened as a visitor attraction in 1996, these award-winning shelters proved a safe place for 6,500 Stopfordians during the Second World War, and prove a fascinating glimpse into 1940s life.

#### Staircase House SK1 1ES

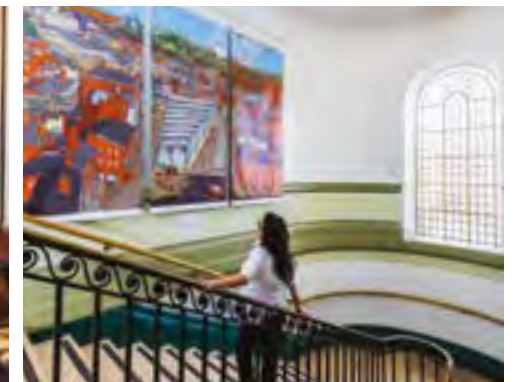
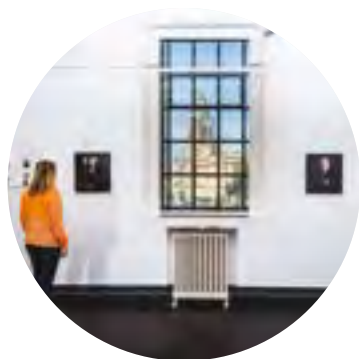
One of Stockport's oldest town houses, Staircase House showcases what life has been like in Stockport from 1460 up to the twentieth Century. And it's a truly interactive experience where visitors can wander the rooms, try on clothes and sit on the furniture. The star attraction is undoubtedly the Jacobean cage newell staircase, one of only three in the country.

#### Vernon Mill Studios SK1 2HX

Since its inception back in 2000, Vernon Mill has established itself as a hotbed of talent. It welcomes artists from a whole range of disciplines, creating a diverse and vibrant artist community. Vernon Mill opens its doors to the public every weekend, giving people a chance to discover new artists, and for artists to sell their work.

#### Stockport War Memorial Art Gallery SK3 8AB

An imposing Greco-Roman building, this war memorial and art gallery hosts a programme of exhibitions, displayed amidst the marble columns. The special exhibitions programme, often centred on Stockport and the North, provides the chance to see contemporary art in a historic gallery space.



From heritage attractions to newly commissioned art, Stockport boasts a diverse cultural offer.





Two of the exhibition spaces and workshops at the Hat Works.  
The museum also runs a unique programme of professional millinery courses.

## A vibrant future for Stockport's retail offer

### Improving the retail experience for everyone

Merseyway Shopping Centre in the heart of Stockport is out performing many of its North West shopping rivals in terms of occupancy levels, and there are big plans for its continued success. In 2017 Merseyway welcomed 9,072,853 visitors.

Merseyway Shopping Centre boasts more than 330,000 square feet of retail space and is let to over 90 tenants including Topshop, Clarks, Waterstones and Boots. Next to the centre is also a very successful Primark.

The vision for Merseyway will see a reconfiguration, improved access and enhanced shopping experience. The plans are part of a wider programme to continue developing not only the retail offer of the town but Stockport as a whole.

Merseyway will be better integrated into other key developments such as the historic Market Place and Underbanks as well as Redrock Stockport.

Through Stockport's Business Improvement District, over £2million is being generated over the next five years to deliver projects that will improve the offer and experience and in Stockport town centre for all: visitors, residents and businesses.

Paul Taylor, Stockport's BID Manager, says, "We want people to come into the town centre and see how things have changed.

"We are looking to encourage people to stay longer. The night time economy of Stockport is picking up with events like Foodie Friday, the high end restaurants Where The Light Gets In and Allotment, as well as the new cinema and food offer at Redrock Stockport which will appeal to families."

Occupancy rates in Merseyway have already increased and new tenants include Trespass and Christy, the longstanding Stockport manufacturer of household linens.

Added to this, an app, 'Totally Stockport', has been developed, which will give shoppers discounts at stores in Merseyway and offers a rewards scheme for shopping in Stockport.

"Merseyway is already a popular shopping centre.

The opening of Redrock and further investment into both Merseyway  
and the town itself will only enhance the visitor experience."

Brendan Webb, Centre Manager, Merseyway Shopping Centre

National retailers at  
Merseyway Shopping Centre.







Staff at Sky's new regional headquarters in St.Peter's Square. It is just one major business that has chosen to be based in the town; others include Stagecoach and musicMagpie.

## Work.

Stockport town centre is arguably one of the UK's prime and best connected business locations. A growing number of jobs are being created as businesses recognise the skilled workforce and key location. Stockport is growing and looking to the future, creating new commercial districts, that will complement the heritage of the town. It is home to both big business and creative industries, making it an interesting place to be based.

## Stockport Exchange

Stockport's new £145million business district is shaping the town's future

Stockport has always been a well connected town. London is just two hours away by train, Manchester ten minutes by train in the opposite direction, and Manchester Airport a few junctions along the M56.

Stockport Council is building on this reputation with ambitious plans to make it easier to travel to, from and within Stockport.

Stockport Exchange is a £145million development transforming passenger perceptions by modernising the area around the Station, with a new twenty-first Century gateway to the town. In partnership with Muse Developments, the public-private partnership has won plaudits for its brave, transformational work, which has rejuvenated a tired area of the town by creating a new commercial district.

Passengers leaving the station are now greeted with a tree-lined, landscaped area that includes a taxi rank and drop-off zone, and a clutch of new buildings. These include a 115-bed Holiday Inn Express hotel, Cafelito and Sainsburys Local, and One Stockport Exchange, a high quality office development, which recently welcomed 200 staff from Stagecoach, the UK's biggest bus operator, and global e-commerce business, musicMagpie.

As part of the wider Stockport Exchange initiative, Stockport Council is also working with Transport for Greater Manchester to create a new transport Interchange for the town. The old bus station is being completely remodelled and replaced with a modern, covered central concourse, improved security and easier access to tickets and travel information.

The new Interchange will create a safer environment for pedestrians by limiting traffic in Mersey Square. There will be better access for passengers with a lift up to the A6 and railway station and a new bridge across the River Mersey. As part of Stockport ongoing commitment to sustainable travel, a Cycle Hub offers secure bike storage to commuters and shoppers.

### Stockport stopovers

In a prime location, right in front of the train station, the Holiday Inn Express is a real Stockport success story.

With 115 bedrooms in the heart of the modern Stockport Exchange development, the hotel taps into both the weekend leisure and weekday business trade. Since opening in December 2016, occupancy levels have been consistently high. It's not just overnight stays that are attracting people to the Holiday Inn Express. The hotel also has two meeting rooms for businesses to get together at an accessible location.

Carl Butterworth, General Manager, sees the hotel's location as a key factor in its success to date, "There's a lot of industry in Stockport and being right by the train station is really helpful. In fact, I don't really understand why a hotel like ours hasn't been put into Stockport before."

It's not the only hotel chain to see the benefits of opening in Stockport. Just a few minutes down the road, Travelodge has taken three floors in Regent House, a further 86 bedrooms for visitors.

Stockport Exchange has an independent coffee shop, Cafelito, as well as a Sainsbury's Local, making it easy for visitors and guests to commute from the station in comfort. From the train station it's a mere ten minutes to Manchester city centre, or there's a direct route to London Euston in just two hours. For those travelling by road, it's easily accessible from the A6 and M60 with an NCP car park next door. And for international business, it's only seven miles to Manchester Airport.

With two new hotels flourishing, the time is now right for a four-star or boutique hotel in Stockport.

Holiday Inn Express, a local success story

#### Occupancy rates

August 2017  
= 90 per cent

#### Rooms sold

April to August 2017  
= almost 15,000

#### Dinner covers

April to August 2017  
= just under 5,000



The 115-room Holiday Inn Express is part of the £145million Stockport Exchange development which includes One Stockport Exchange offices; both are directly outside Stockport Station.



## musicMagpie

### The global e-commerce phenomenon

From their new headquarters at Stockport Exchange, musicMagpie founders, Steve Oliver and Walter Gleeson, discuss their thriving business and future ambitions.

“It’s a little known fact, but we are the world’s biggest seller on both eBay and Amazon Marketplace in terms of the number of transactions,” says musicMagpie co-Founder and Group CEO, Steve Oliver.

“Recently we were the first ever seller to hit five million positive feedbacks. No-one has sold more than us globally on either of those platforms and we are extremely proud of that fact, which is testament to the hard work of all our colleagues over the years.”

musicMagpie, now located to a new office building at Stockport Exchange, is a global e-commerce phenomenon. Born at the start of the global recession in 2007, Steve and his business partner, Walter Gleeson, banked on the idea that people would use a quick and easy service that buys and sells a whole range of items including CDs, DVDs, games and, more recently, books, as well as consumer electronics such as phones, games consoles and tablets. The growth of the business over the last decade has been nothing short of phenomenal, with annual turnover growing from £500,000 in the first year of trading to in excess of £100million today.

After years working in the music business, the entrepreneurial duo set up their musicMagpie empire in Steve’s garage in Hazel Grove, Stockport. That space was to quickly prove too small as customers flocked to them from all over the world. To date they have sold to over 200 different countries including North Korea and Vatican City. Luckily, the commercial property infrastructure of Stockport is strong enough to support success stories like

musicMagpie, allowing them to grow and maintain their position in the market whilst employing a loyal and hardworking workforce.

“I’m looking out of our new office window and straight onto the gates of Stockport train station,” says Steve. “We’re 10 minutes from Manchester by train, and the road and air links are ideal for national and international travel. In 2014, we expanded our business to open an American musicMagpie model in Atlanta, Georgia, which we branded Decluttr, so accessibility is crucial.”

The future is looking even brighter for musicMagpie as the business constantly evolves into new markets for the recycling and reselling of goods.

“We’re proving time and again that with smart research there are new product markets we can move into all the time,” says Steve. “Lego is a recent addition to the product categories, which has been hugely successful, but who’s to say where we might go next... white goods, musical instruments, sporting equipment, even kids stuff that they’ve outgrown. We now have over four million registered customers and a Trust Pilot score of 9.1, which reflects the trust that people have in our brand.

“We talk to our customers all the time to find out how we might service their needs in the future, especially now we can sell to people directly in the musicMagpie shop. We are not a business that’s ever short of opportunities; we just need to prioritise wisely and continue to grow our business rapidly from our new fantastic Head Office facility.”

The entrepreneurial duo started their  
£100m musicMagpie empire in Steve’s  
garage in Hazel Grove, Stockport



“I’m looking out of our new office window and straight onto Stockport train station. We’re 10 minutes from Manchester by train and the road and air links are ideal for national and international travel. In 2014, we expanded our business to open an American musicMagpie model, Decluttr, based in Atlanta, Georgia, so accessibility is crucial.”

Steve Oliver, musicMagpie co-Founder and Group CEO

## The Sky's the limit for business in Stockport

### Putting faith in the town with the first regional contact centre

With a renewed commitment to growth in Stockport, Sky has taken all but the ground floor of BAM property in St Peter's Square to meet increased demand for its TV, broadband, mobile and home phone services.

Sky moved to the town centre seven years ago and has quickly established itself as a major employer with 900 staff. Stockport was the first regional contact centre in England for Sky, and centres in Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle have followed.

"We have confidence in Stockport. We are close to Manchester and on the train line to London, with easy access to Manchester International Airport," explains Sarah Holden, Office Manager at Sky.

"We have recruited locally but also have staff that travel in from all over the North West, so location is really important. We also have staff in senior management roles that travel nationally, so they need to be in a well connected location."

Sky prides itself on a great working environment with lounge and games areas. The environmental credentials of the building were also important and the striking BAM property boasts a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating.

Sky is one of a number of businesses that has chosen to locate in Stockport town centre. Another is Capita Travel and Events, which recently moved into Orbit Developments' commercial property, Regent House. The specialist business travel and events service employs 220 people over two floors. Travelodge has also taken three floors in Regent House for an 86-bed hotel.

Orbit Developments owns and manages a portfolio of 12 commercial properties in Stockport town centre. Rhys Owen, Leasing Director, says, "Stockport is

proving to be a great location for new and existing business. The last two years have seen the most activity ever. There is still opportunity, too, with our property at Number One St Peter's Square which would suit a business looking to house over 100 people."

Renewed confidence and a billion pound investment in Stockport is bringing new developments such as Stockport Exchange, which comprises 45,000 square feet Grade A BREEAM excellent office space. Alongside this are high quality retail and leisure facilities, a 115-bed Holiday Inn Express Hotel and multi-storey car park.

Urban regeneration specialist, Muse Developments, is delivering the £145million Stockport Exchange regeneration scheme next to Stockport train station. Managed in partnership with Stockport Council, the first two phases have been completed and Stagecoach, Britain's biggest bus operator, has taken three floors at Stockport Exchange.

Other new tenants include musicMagpie, the most popular e-commerce website in Europe. Phase three is now underway.

Wes Erlam, Development Director at Muse, is positive about the future, saying, "The development has already physically transformed the area and these lettings, along with the Holiday Inn Express, Sainsbury's Local and Caf  lito, are really putting Stockport Exchange on the map as the town's newest, most exciting commercial district – with the building now fully let."

"Stockport is proving to be a great location for new and existing business. The last two years have seen the most activity ever. Renewed confidence and a billion pound investment in Stockport is bringing new developments."

Rhys Owen, Leasing Director, Orbit Developments



Staff at Sky's Stockport offices in St. Peter's Square. The regional contact centre helps meet demand for its TV, broadband and telephone services.



## Empowering the next generation

### The businesses offering training and development opportunities

Aurora Stockport is a new employment site located close to Junction 1 of the M60. The site, formerly known as Gorsey Bank, has been developed into 10 light industrial units, providing a variety of employment space for a diverse mix of businesses.

Known for its commitment to offering a range of training and development opportunities, Seddon is the main contractor for the council development.

“Seddon nurtures talent from the ground up. It’s in the DNA of the company,” explains Kat Healey, Training Manager at Seddon.

“We train apprentices not only for ourselves, but for the industry as a whole, meaning the next generation has the right qualifications to suit their needs and meet any challenges head on.”

In the last 13 years, Seddon has recruited more than 300 apprentices, with a retention rate of 97%.

“Our apprenticeship programme gives young people the skills to make lasting, valuable contributions to the built environment, and the right attitudes and professionalism to forge a life-long career in this incredibly diverse industry,” adds Kat.

One of the success stories comes from Lauren Shenton, Business Admin Apprentice at Aurora

Stockport. Lauren has been a Seddon Apprentice for 18 months and is progressing with her Level 3 Business Administration course.

“I registered my interest in an apprenticeship with recruitment company Reed, based in Stockport College at the time,” explains Lauren. “They sent my CV to Seddon, who then invited me for an interview at Stockport College, and I was successful.”

“I feel an apprenticeship was the right choice for me,” explains Lauren. “I never get bored and understand the benefits of being able to work and gain experience, whilst also earning a qualification. You can learn anything by completing a course but without the experience of the role you won’t gain full knowledge or reach your full potential.”

“You can also earn while you learn, and there is always the opportunity for progression, especially with Seddon. My role is challenging and every day there’s something new to do or learn.”

“Our apprenticeship programme gives young people the skills to make lasting, valuable contributions to the built environment, and the right attitudes and professionalism to forge a life-long career in this incredibly diverse industry.”

Kat Healey, Training Manager, Seddon

Local  
workforce

Stockport supports the third largest workforce in Greater Manchester with 120,000 people employed in the borough.

New  
businesses

Latest data shows that Stockport was home to 12,645 businesses in 2015, an increase of 810 on the previous year.

Diverse  
economy

Over the next 10 years, ICT, construction, professional and scientific and technical activities are expected to be the main growth sectors.



Laura Shenton, Business Admin Apprentice, on site at Aurora.

## Old town, new tricks

### The pioneering restaurants bringing destination dining to Stockport

Building on major investment in the restoration and regeneration of the area, and Portas Pilot funding, Stockport's historic Market Place and Underbanks area has been revitalised into what is sometimes known as Stockport Old Town, a thriving community of specialist restaurants, bars, markets and creative businesses pioneering an alternative leisure and retail offer for Stockport's residents and visitors.

Amongst them is The Allotment Vegan Restaurant, a unique, award-winning eatery serving up locally sourced, plant-based dishes including their signature Confit D'aubergine, which owner Matt Nutter claims tastes "better than steak".

The Vernon Street restaurant has achieved great success since opening in 2016, with outstanding reviews and wins at the 2017 Manchester Food and Drink Awards, including Best Vegetarian Offering of the Year and Chef of the Year for Matt.

"This first year has been excellent, we couldn't have asked for better."

Allotment began as a pop-up in Manchester and quickly grew a loyal fan base thanks to social media.

Matt Nutter, Head Chef at  
The Allotment Vegan Restaurant.  
Matt was voted Chef of the Year in the  
Manchester Food and Drink Awards, 2017.

"We were confident when we first opened because of the support we were getting on Facebook and Twitter. Promotion on those channels is really important for any business and helped us get two months of solid bookings before we'd even opened."

Matt has just acquired a license and invested profits from year one into a refurbishment by local interior design and antique shop, Agapanthus Interiors.

"Our business offer is strong now and the refurb will definitely help improve it," says Matt. "It's a subtle yet effective tweak on our original garden theme with mood lighting and reclaimed wood paneling.

"We did love the idea of BYOB but we also wanted to grow our offer and put real ales on the menu that complement the food, and quality wine you can't buy in the shops."

Alongside other independent bars and restaurants, Allotment is leading a new movement that has seen Stockport's historic Old Town transform into a fashionable destination, attracting people of all ages and



backgrounds as well as new businesses to the area.

"We actually came across this location by accident. None of us had been to Stockport before but the moment we saw it we knew it was perfect," explains Matt. "There's a great community of business owners here and no sense of competition. Everyone wants to support each other and bring customers and other businesses into the area so we can all do well.

"What's so unique about Stockport is that it's not trying to compete with cities like Manchester; it's

discovering its own identity and that's happening all around the town. That, and cheaper rent prices make it a perfect time for small businesses to come here."

And what does Matt think the future looks like for The Allotment Vegan Restaurant?

"Our aim is to grow sustainably, keep improving our offer, keep our staff happy and generally keep the business going. We may try and open another place within the next year, another Allotment or perhaps something different – who knows!"





## Destination: Stockport

### Where The Light Gets in

Another restaurant helping to boost Stockport's profile on a national scale is Where The Light Gets In, Sam Buckley's inventive, fine dining bistro. The chef sources the finest locally grown produce to "tell a story through a selection of plates".

"We do a lot of foraging and use what's on our doorstep when we can," says General Manager, Emma Underwood.

"We have links with a farm in Marple and all our greenery is grown close by. It's really important to celebrate local produce whilst being environmentally conscious."

Much like their friends and neighbours at The Allotment Vegan Restaurant, WTLGI considers itself to be a unique attraction in Stockport.

"We're a destination restaurant, somewhere that encourages people to travel and make that journey, and that's an important part of the whole process," explains Emma.

WTLGI has been recognised in the Good Food Guide 2018 and was awarded Newcomer of the Year at the Manchester Food and Drink Awards, 2017. The restaurant has also garnered praise from influential critics across the country, with a recent 10/10 review from The Guardian newspaper.

"We really like Stockport, it offers such a unique setting and you don't have the rent pressures you get in bigger cities. We've been so welcomed and supported by the people here and the pride they have in their town is amazing."

**"Where The Light Gets In serves the most exciting food I've had in years. And it's not in London, Copenhagen or Portland, Oregon. It's in Stockport."**

Marina O'Loughlin, The Guardian



Above: A dish from Where The Light Gets In;  
Opposite: Where The Light Gets In ready for dinner service.





## Business is brewing

### A national reputation for variety and quality

Greater Manchester's flourishing beer industry is leading the way in the UK, with over 80 independent breweries and more than 400 different cask ales on sale in pubs and bars across the region.

With the region's rich brewing heritage and growing community of independent bars and microbreweries, Stockport is spearheading the movement.

"The pub and beer scene in Stockport has a growing national reputation for the quality and variety of both," explains John Clarke, Chairman of Stockport CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale).

"We have everything from historic heritage pubs community locals, multi-beer freehouses and craft beer bars.

"These enterprises offer employment opportunities and contribute to the local economy both directly and indirectly by attracting an increasing number of visitors to the town."

Famous local brewing company, Robinsons, is the most featured cask brewery in Greater Manchester, with product lines in 36 venues and over 340 pubs under their ownership right across the North West of England.

The family-owned business traces its history back to 1838, when William Robinson took over the lease of the 100-year-old Unicorn Inn on Lower Hillgate.

Robinsons is now one of only 30 traditional family brewers still brewing in Britain, and one of only a

handful still run by the family six generations later.

"Family for us is key, and has been essential to our success," says Director, Dennis Robinson.

"Our shareholders are restricted to blood relations of the founders and their spouses, which generates a strong sense of ownership and continuity within the business."

The brewing pioneers were one of the first to realise the role of pubs in providing a social occasion for the whole family.

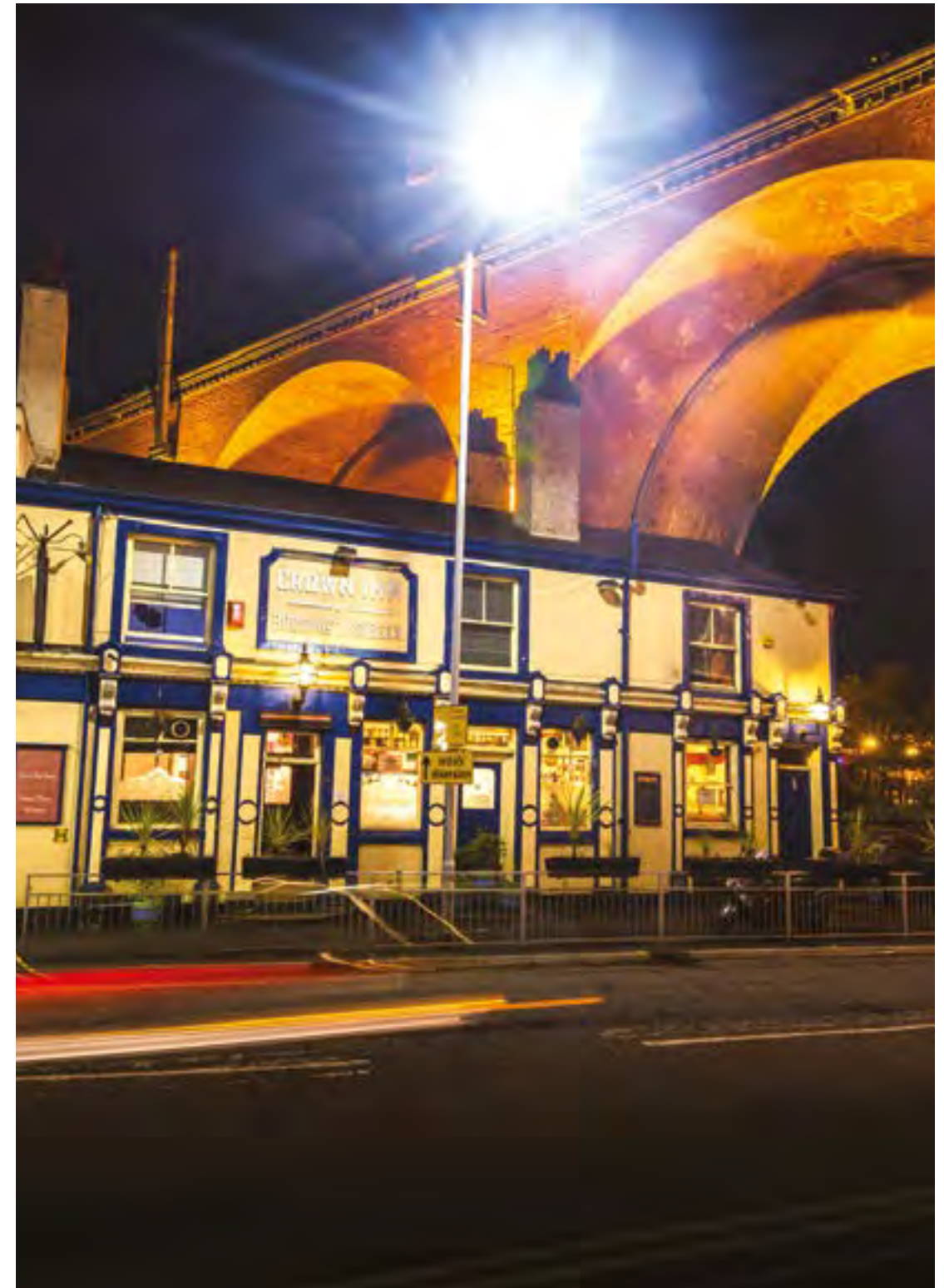
"People here are known by their name; they are not dispensable," adds Dennis.

"We pride ourselves on giving our tenants and managers a point of contact that they know and can rely on for support and in turn they feel empowered. Everyone wins."

As the home of a major brewer, it isn't surprising that the recent beer boom across the region, coupled with reasonable rent prices and a growing leisure scene, has seen more local breweries and independent bars popping up in Stockport than ever before.

"The growth in micropubs is a real success story, with nine now open across the borough," says John. "Robinsons is, of course, a significant family brewer

William Robinson, Chairman of Robinson's Brewery 1920–1933; Robinson's Visitor Centre, opened 2013.



The Crown Inn, tucked under the famous Viaduct. The recent beer boom across the region has seen more local breweries and independent bars popping up in Stockport than ever before.



and they have been joined by six newcomers – from Stockport Brewing Company to Thirst Class Ale and the intimate Remedy Bar & Brewhouse.”

“Stockport is a beer tourism destination, so within that context, we always feel it’s important to support local brewers,” explains Alan Gent, owner of craft beer and real ale taproom, the Petersgate Tap.

“We try to showcase the best of local beer. We’ve forged a close relationship with Thirst Class Ale in Reddish and many of the Manchester-based brewers, as well as those a bit further afield like the Cumbria-based Hawkshead Brewery.”

“People are once again seeing the value in sourcing their goods locally from independent shops and bars, confident that the owners have sourced items that have been produced by people who are passionate about what they do,” adds Richard Conway of Thirst Class Ale.

“The beer industry is no exception to this and we are definitely seeing more people choosing locally produced, high quality beer from breweries like us that really care about the product.”

And, as Robinsons successfully demonstrates, not only do breweries and bars champion local products and services and boost the local economy, they also create social hubs as well as an important community-building function.

The Petersgate Tap opened last year inside a former betting shop, where Alan, wife Carol and son Chris serve up cask ales and keg beers, as well as a selection of food. And the family business owners very much echo the Robinsons sentiment about inclusivity within the industry.

“We thought Stockport needed somewhere with a slightly different offer. We’re approaching our first anniversary and we’re steadily building trade and establishing our own ‘regulars’ who come from a mix of age groups and backgrounds,” says Alan.

But it’s the support amongst new and established pubs and bars that’s giving Stockport a reputation as an attractive and unique business location, as Alan explains, “There’s no element of trying to shut anyone out; quite the reverse. We all want to work together to make Stockport a success.”

#### These Stockport pubs will give you a taste of what’s on offer



**The Magnet Freehouse SK4 1HJ**  
Voted ‘Best Pub’ in the Greater Manchester Beer Awards



**The Crown Inn SK4 1AR**  
Tucked under Stockport’s famous viaduct, with product lines from Stockport Brewing Company



**Bakers Vaults SK1 1ES**  
Built on the foundations of the old Stockport castle, serving up craft beer, ale and live music



**The Hope Inn SK4 2LL**  
Home of award-winning Fool Hardy Ales – from the pub’s own in-house microbrewery



**The Blossoms SK2 6NU**  
Landmark pub that gave local band Blossoms their name



**Arden Arms SK1 2LX**  
Multi-award-winning and one of CAMRA’s most listed pubs, little changed in 200 years



**Remedy Bar & Brewhouse SK1 1EW**  
This modern, steam-punk inspired bar in Stockport’s Market Place is also home to a microbrewery



**Petersgate Tap SK1 1EB**  
Family run real ale bar, the most recent addition to the town’s craft beer scene



F. Robinson/Unicorn Brewery, the most featured cask brewery in Greater Manchester.



Bakers Vaults, which sits on the site of the old Stockport Castle.





One of the studios at Vernon Mill, which houses diverse and vibrant artist community.  
Stockport boasts a diverse cultural offer; there is something for all ages to enjoy.

## Play.

Stockport's historic Market Place and Underbanks is being revitalised into a thriving community with new bars, coffee culture, microbreweries, specialist restaurants and events. There is a lively independent shopping scene with creative businesses offering a diverse retail and leisure offer, complemented by the well known high street names. With a new 10-screen cinema now open as well as The Plaza, an art deco gem, there is something for all ages to enjoy.





Redrock is at the heart of Stockport, adjacent to the M60. The complex includes eateries including Zizzi and Pizza Express.

## The Light, movie, action

### The leisure complex improving the town's retail market potential

Stockport residents and visitors wanting to see the latest Hollywood blockbusters can visit the brand new multiplex Light Cinema, part of Redrock Stockport – the latest leisure development in the heart of the town centre.

Redrock boasts a new 10-screen, 1,500-seat cinema scheme along with eateries such as Pizza Express and Zizzi.

The Light Cinema not only shows the latest blockbusters, but a mixed programme including arthouse cinema alongside light arts where viewers can enjoy theatre, ballet, opera and music events streamed from across the globe.

Mike Thomson, The Light Cinema's Commercial Director, says, "This is very exciting for Stockport. The auditorium are of the highest quality with larger seats and more legroom, and the cinemas are all licensed so you can take your drink into the cinema with you.

"We are a cinema for all. We have a fantastic foyer that is a social space, which can be used for meeting up whether you are watching a film or not. In other cinemas that we manage, these have become popular meeting places for community groups from Rotary Clubs to Netmums groups."

As part of the programme, The Light Cinema also shows 'Too Good to Miss' films.

"These are the films that didn't get programmed initially, but have since become popular, in-demand titles," says Mike.

"We also have event cinema," he adds. "This is when a classic, such as Jaws, reaches a milestone like 30 years and we plan a screening with an event around it to make it more engaging."

With three million people living within a 30-minute catchment of Stockport, Redrock hopes to see more people spending longer in the town centre – in turn boosting the local economy. And with a 360-space multi-storey car park plus an additional 835 spaces in Merseyway Shopping Centre, Redrock Stockport is accessible to all.

Mike says, "We know that cinema attracts people and helps to develop a night time economy. This will be a great thing for Stockport."

Situated alongside the M60 motorway and a few minutes from the mainline train station, the complex is part of the £1billion transformation of Stockport, which aims to make the town a better place to work, live and visit.

Research suggests that the town's total retail market potential is £469million following the completion of Redrock Stockport.

### Three other Stockport cinemas to visit



#### The Plaza

This 1939 art deco gem is pure Hollywood glamour. Classic films, live variety theatre and opera and classic theatre live-streamed.

*See p38 for more on The Plaza*



#### Savoy Cinema

Bought and rejuvenated by a family of film enthusiasts, The Savoy shows arthouse and mainstream shows.

*Heaton Moor, SK4*



#### Regent Cinema

This small neighbourhood picturehouse shows mainly new blockbusters plus some live-streamed theatre shows.

*Marple, SK6*



## Feast of fun

### Boosting the economy and uniting the town

Stockport is fast becoming a leading destination for residents and visitors seeking high quality, inventive food and drink outlets.

From speciality restaurants like Where The Light Gets In and The Allotment Vegan to local street food market stalls, the demand not just for food, but for an experience or event is growing and flourishing.

Successful restaurateur Steve Pilling has been selected as the new anchor tenant for the Produce Hall in Market Place and he will be bringing over 30 years of culinary experience to the venue, transforming it to a must visit eatery.

A diverse selection of food and drink events is creating a buzz on social media and attracting more people to the town. One of these events is Foodie Friday, a popular street food and entertainment event which takes place on the last Friday of every month in and around the iconic Victorian Market Hall.

The event sees hundreds of people come together to enjoy food from a wide variety of vendors, from woodfired pizzas at I Knead Pizza to eastern inspired dishes at Wallace & Sons.

“It’s about bringing people into the town centre and creating a social occasion where they can meet family and friends and sample interesting international cuisine,” explains Joe Barratt of Foodie Friday.

The event also serves up craft ales and live music performances into the evening, creating a unique buzz that spreads around the Market Place and surrounding area, where there are many other food and drink venues for people to explore.

“The markets give people a unique experience they can’t get from a normal restaurant,” adds Joe.

Visitors will find themselves spoilt for choice with places such as Bakers Vaults, Remedy Bar & Brewhouse, The Cocked Hat, The Arden Arms and more, all in the centre or within walking distance.

Another popular eatery drawing in visitors and expanding across the region with premises now in Macclesfield and Chorlton is Lord of the Pies.

The award winning business, which has featured at Foodie Friday, was founded in Stockport in 2011 and serves up traditional handmade pies, including their very own ‘Stockport Pie,’ a firm favourite with locals and made using Old Tom Ale from neighbouring brewery, Robinsons.

And much like Robinson’s, Lord of the Pies is a business based on family tradition – owner Oliver Doyle’s grandfather was a famous baker and master pie maker.

His pies are made using only the best quality local ingredients, matched with skills honed in kitchens over many years, and customers say they’re some of the best pies they’ve ever eaten.



Stockport is becoming well known for its animated Friday nights, with street-food, vintage stalls and live music bringing crowds into the area around the Market Place.



## The Plaza: When the penny drops

“Every day is 7th October 1932,” says Ted Doan, General Manager at The Plaza, the date when the art deco theatre first opened.

The design of The Plaza was attributed to architect William Thornley with the purpose of providing a super cinema and variety theatre to the people of Stockport and beyond.

“It was democratic and inclusive. Previously you had theatres and music halls and there was a division of class. The Plaza was a glamorous, elegant venue, welcoming everyone,” says Ted Doan.

With 1,314 seats upholstered in blue and gold moquette cladding in an auditorium influenced by Egypt and a Mediterranean garden, it is pure Hollywood glamour. The curtains are appliqued with a bee and hollyhocks and the magnificent Compton Organ rises up from the stage for all to see and hear.

More than three decades of performance took place at The Plaza, continuing through the Second World War, where it was considered a safe place as the design of the building means the stage is located beneath street level.

When the air raid sirens went off, guests were asked to leave and go into the nearby shelter. Performers would then entertain them before resuming their show on stage when the all-clear was given.

The venue declined in the 1960s, but, in 2000, the Plaza was saved by The Stockport Plaza Trust with support from Stockport Council and has undergone a loving restoration. It is now a busy and atmospheric landmark in the town centre.

Ted has seen The Plaza go from strength to strength with a willing team of volunteers, Board of Directors and some high-profile patrons including The Right Honourable Baroness Bakewell DBE, Sir Ken Dodd OBE and Leslie Phillips CBE.

“Seeing Hollywood legend Mickey Rooney talk on stage about his career was quite something. He was sitting on stage in this beautiful building which was built to show films that he starred in. There was one moment where he was watching a clip of himself alongside Ava Gardner on our screen. That was just magical,” says Ted.

The projection room is home to classic projectors including a KALEE 8, which features a turntable. The first talkies and other classic films would be screened through machines like this one.

“The phrase ‘the penny has dropped’ is thought to come from the history of projection. Projectionists would place a penny in the reel and when they heard it drop they knew it was time to change it!” says Ted.

“It is a fairytale working here. The building is a huzzah for architecture, internationally significant, and it is great that it is in Stockport.”

“It is a fairytale working here. The building is a huzzah for architecture, internationally significant, and it is great that it is in Stockport.”

Ted Doan, General Manager, The Plaza



General Manager, Ted Doan; The Compton organ, now restored to full working order, sits pride of place front and centre.





This page: The painstakingly restored Art Deco Plaza; The Plaza Café; the Compton Organ in action.  
Opposite: Projectionist Paul Shuttleworth with a KALEE 8 projector.







## The legacy of Strawberry Studios and its influence today

with Jane Weaver and Andy Votel

Stockport holds a unique and remarkable place in the history of British music as the home of recent chart-topping stars Blossoms as well as members of Blondie, Muse and Girls Aloud.

But the institution that really put Stockport on the global music map was the legendary Strawberry Studios Recordings Studios, an innovative sonic playground established with the enthusiastic support of the inventive local rock stars 10cc.

Chock full of fascinating audio inventions to make the studio the envy of any in New York, LA or London, Strawberry Studios attracted famous artists as diverse as Paul McCartney, The Ramones and even Neil Sedaka to record there.

In its later incarnation, it became the studio of choice for maverick Factory Records producer Martin Hannett, who helped redefine the Manchester sound through his work with New Order, Joy Division, The Buzzcocks and The Stone Roses. He also worked with other artists here, such as U2, ESG and The Psychedelic Furs.

Stockport-based artist Jane Weaver and Andy Votel, her husband, are huge fans of the work produced

at the studios and recently took a guided tour of the Strawberry Studios exhibition at Stockport Story Museum with Janny Baxter, Exhibition Curator.

"I love the very idea of Strawberry Studios," explains Jane Weaver. "It's remarkable music history. The fact that it's slightly out of the way is important. There's a lot to be said for recording in a studio that's off the beaten track. It allows you the time and space to experiment, which is certainly what they did at Strawberry."

"It's how I like to work with my band. As a musician, a space like that is all you could ever want for. Seeing the equipment and gadgets they bought over the years and the inventions they made, you get a sense of the unique nature of Strawberry Studios that you could never recreate anywhere else in the world."

Jane's first forays into music saw a deal with Manchester Records, owned by the legendary Rob Gretton, manager of New Order and Joy Division.





"It was through Rob that I really got into Martin Hannett's unique take on production," Jane says pointing to the studio racks and microphones that Hannett owned, now part of the exhibition. "I love old equipment and hand-built effects. They make music sound unique. They come from a time before computers where the engineer would come to work with a soldering iron and build equipment to make the sounds they wanted to hear. Martin was clearly into the technical side to the music he made. You listen to Joy Division records even now and you can hear how unique the sounds he created in Strawberry still are. He was always tweaking and hacking the equipment, which is why what he did was as important as it was obsessive."

"One of the truly remarkable things about Strawberry Studios is that they brought synthesisers and kit like the Mellotron to the North West for the first time. They invested in Stockport and attracted musicians from all over to come here. To me, this place is up there with the BBC Radiophonic Workshop in terms of pure innovation," says Andy.

Jane's music has taken her to many of fascinating musical places over the years, from folk and pop through psychedelia, prog and Krautrock. But wherever she has travelled musically it's always been underpinned by a fascination for the possibilities of music that's exemplified by what was achieved here.

"Strawberry Studios helped you sound unique and that's a romantic ambition to fulfil as an artist. It's what Strawberry offered musicians – the chance to make music that was out of the ordinary."

Jane Weaver

"Before Rob Gretton died he gave me a box set of Joy Division's music that he'd helped compile," she says. "The unique sound of the music had a huge influence on me and the way I would subsequently make music. I like to record in interesting environments because of the possibilities offered by Strawberry Studios."

"Places like Strawberry Studios helped you sound unique and that's a romantic ambition to fulfil as an artist. It's what Strawberry offered musicians – the chance to make music that was out of the ordinary."



Opposite page: Jane and Andy in Stockport market; Janny Baxter, Exhibition Curator at Stockport Museum; the exhibition space.  
This page: Jane and Andy in the exhibition; Eric Stewart's guitar.



#### 10 top tracks recorded at Strawberry Studios

- 1 **The Smiths** *Hand in Glove*  
An early Morrissey and Marr masterpiece recorded in one day for the princely sum of £250 according to legend.
- 2 **10cc** *I'm not in Love*  
One of their most remarkable and clever pop songs to grace the charts, 10cc recorded and engineered 'I'm not in Love' in-house at Strawberry Studios.
- 3 **Godley & Creme** *Gizmotron flex disc*  
A rare funky piece released as a promo flexi-disc to showcase the guitar effects device the Gizmotron, created by 10cc's Godley & Creme.
- 4 **Joy Division** *Interzone*  
One of the legendary bands most powerful songs, recorded by Martin Hannett.
- 5 **The Sisters of Mercy** *Temple of Love*  
A post-punk masterpiece by the Leonard Cohen/Stooges obsessed Leeds rockers.
- 6 **Buzzcocks** *Everybody's Happy Nowadays*  
Post-punk perfection from Bolton. Produced by Synthpop legend Martin Rushent.
- 7 **Neil Sedaka** *That's When the Music Takes Me*  
Backed by future members of 10cc, the legendary New York entertainer recorded his Solitaire album in Stockport.
- 8 **ESG** *Moody*  
Recorded in one take by Martin Hannett, 'Moody' is one of the most recognised samples in hip hop and house music. A masterpiece of New York funk and disco.
- 9 **Ramases** *Space Hymns*  
Backed by the future 10cc, the psychedelic Ramases was a central heating engineer from Sheffield who considered himself the reincarnation of the Pharaoh.
- 10 **St Winifred's School Choir** *No One Quite Like Grandma*  
The chart-topping 80s hit, featuring children from the Stockport primary school, was recorded at Strawberry Studios and stayed at number one for two weeks, only beaten by John Lennon's 'Imagine'.



# BLOSSOMS

## Homegrown talent

**Blossoms: the best-selling band, defined by their home town.**

Five-piece Blossoms is one of Stockport's new cultural icons – a young, vibrant indie band that draw hugely adoring crowds up and down the country. Indeed, their first album was the UK best-selling debut album of 2016. They rehearse in the town and also have family and friends in the town.

“Stockport has everything to help make a great band successful,” says Conrad Murray, manager of rising rock ‘n’ roll stars, Blossoms. “Its musical history is fascinating and deserves more recognition. It’s got rehearsal spaces and venues to play and, for a town of its size, it has amazing transport links assisting any bands that need to get out there and put themselves in front of audiences across the country.”

And, like so many other famous bands, they’ve let their home town help define their identity as a true Northern band.

“The band was really embraced by their home town right from the start,” explains Conrad. “In turn, they’re really proud of where they come from. I feel the same about Stockport and Blossoms as people felt about Hull and The Housemartins and Paul Heaton. If you live in a place it’s really empowering to know that your favourite band is getting behind their home town and in return the town is getting behind the band. And that’s the case here. All the lads are local,” he continues. “They were brought up in Offerton,

their name comes from a local pub and they’ve held residencies at pubs in Heaton Moor. Last year they put on a spectacular one-off show at the beautiful art deco cinema, The Plaza.”

Blossoms is the latest in a fine tradition of great bands and musicians that are associated with Stockport. From Motorhead’s Lemmy (who lived on Heaton Moor Road), to members of Blondie, Girls Aloud, The Buggles, The Hollies, 10cc, Martin Fry and even Muse, there are a thousand tales to tell and that’s before you get onto the small matter of Strawberry Studios’ remarkable legacy.

“From my perspective as the band’s manager,” admits Conrad, “there’s a strong infrastructure of venues, promoters like SJM, media, lawyers and accountants to mean that we can get on with making Blossoms a huge national success without having to traipse up and down the country to do business.”

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Conrad Murray, manager of Blossoms, SJM



## A fine vintage in Stockport

The town's unique independent shops

Forecasting and developing trends is something Maxine Laing knows all about. Before setting up her vintage, antique and salvage shop, Hobson's Choice in Stockport's historic market place, her career was in fashion and design.

“Working in fashion and advertising you are two or three years ahead of whatever the current trend is. I think that has given me an edge in predicting what people will like. Also you learn what people respond to. These are all good skills to have when you are working in retail.”

Hobson's Choice is part of the vintage emporium 20th Century Stores, which was set up by Alan Lowe with funding from the Portas Pilot in 2012. Alan also came up with the idea for the award-winning Vintage Village, which runs on the second Sunday of each month at Stockport's covered market.

Maxine is part of a growing movement of vintage retailers that have chosen Stockport as a base, with shops Grasshopper and Brass Monkey opening on Mealhouse Brow, the nearby Vintage Emporium at Pear Mill and Agapanthus Interiors, which sources and restores antique lighting.

Maxine says, “I wanted to have a shop, rather than just doing this online. Stockport has a good network of people who are all into vintage but offer something different. I like the location here. It has a tremendous rail network with a direct route to London and it's making a national name for itself in vintage furniture and clothing.”

Vintage clothes, furniture, costume jewellery, posters and pictures, textiles and books are for sale, but the joy is in the unique and rare finds.

“It has taken a lifetime of planning,” says Maxine, who has been collecting since she was a child, starting out with cocktail dresses and progressing to her more unusual items for the home. There are clues to her background with a 1940s Form-o-Matic dressmaking dummy up for sale and posters that she designed when she worked for theatre and television in Manchester.

“The dressmaking dummy would probably have come flat-packed in the post, and it is adjustable so it would be up to you to put it together in the correct size. I like the look of it and how it has aged. Its design is in the style of an Alexander McQueen garment.

“There are many items from my personal collection; most of the furniture has come from my home. I like to think that you won't find these things anywhere else. They are unique investments.”



Tim Gilbert and Chris Collier, Squound;  
Maxine Laing sitting amongst her finds at Hobson's Choice.





Maxine arranges items at Hobson's Choice, many of which come from her home. The shop is within the 20th Century Stores, a vintage emporium in the Market Place.

A little further down the corridor, tucked away in a corner in 20th Century Stores, you can find mid century German and Scandinavian ceramics and glassware at new outlet, Squound.

Tim Gilbert and Chris Collier formed the creative partnership, Squound. Chris explains, "Our passion is to collect from the 1960s and 1970s. We came along to Stockport to sell at a Vintage Village event and Alan, who runs it, suggested we become part of the shop. It's great for us.

"There's a real buzz in Stockport. We sell everything from pocket money priced egg cups up to high end pieces, such as the set of four Herman Miller, Eames, German DSW chairs, which retail at £800. There is something for everyone."

Plant Shop is an independent retailer specialising in house plants, cacti and succulents along with a few beautiful flower bouquets, and candles. It's located on Mealhouse Brow and run by Emma Nosurak who has relocated from Cheadle. In the spirit of independents helping each other out she has been in discussion with Squound to display each other's products in their respective shops.

"It's a great way of making people aware of what there is in Stockport. Someone may come in here for a plant, but if I can show them how they can display it in a mid century plant pot that they can buy a few hundred yards away, then that is a whole new experience for the shopper."



Alan Lowe at 20th Century Stores; some of the eclectic mix of items on offer here and at Plant Shop.



## Go outdoors

### Exploring Stockport's natural environment

There is a great selection of parks and green space in and around Stockport, with the River Mersey flowing right through the town centre and easy access to the Peak District National Park further afield. This creates a mix of leisure opportunities and encourages people to get out and explore the natural environment.

**Woodbank Memorial Park** *Offerton SK1 4JR*  
Woodbank Memorial Park was donated to the town as a memorial park after the First World War. Situated next to Vernon Park, it connects with the River Goyt and the Goyt Way, The Midshires Way and Fred Perry Way. The park is home to Woodbank Sports Stadium, the base for Stockport Harriers Athletic Club, and is the end destination for the Stockport Carnival. There is a nature walk, a community orchard and two small ponds. It's also used by community organisations for horticultural activities.

**Bramall Park** *Bramhall SK7 3NX*  
This beautifully landscaped parkland was created in the 1890s and surrounds the recently restored Bramall Hall. The park has a café, lawns, ornamental gardens and the Ladybrook River flows through its grounds. Bramall's woodland and small man-made lakes provide an excellent environment for habitats to develop.

**Reddish Vale Country Park** *Reddish SK5 7HE*  
Spanning 161 hectares along the River Tame in the heart of Stockport, The Vale provides a green corridor linking the town centre with Denton in Tameside at the north and Woodley to the west. There are walks, cycle and bridleways that link with the Goyt, Etherow, Saddleworth and Longdendale trails, as well as long distance routes such as the Trans Pennine Trail.

**Etherow Country Park** *Romiley, SK6 5JD*  
Etherow Country Park lies at the heart of the Etherow-Goyt Valley and was one of Britain's first country parks. It is one of the most widely visited parks in Stockport and its 240 acres boast a river, reservoirs, and woodland. There are opportunities for sailing and angling and there is also a café on site.

**Vernon Park** *Offerton SK1 4AR*  
Vernon Park is Stockport's oldest public park, lying just to the east of the town centre. Once known as Pinch Belly Park, or the People's Park, it was built by Stockport Corporation on land donated by Lord Vernon and opened in 1858. In 2000, the park was restored with a £1.6million Heritage Lottery Fund grant to return it to its former Victorian and Edwardian splendour.

Stockport has over 1,000 hectares of greenspace across the borough

#### Natural spaces

Includes 14 local nature reserves, 417 hectares of woodland and 63 Sites of Biological Interest. Stockport is also adjacent to the Peak District.

#### 'Friends of groups

Stockport has over 60 volunteer groups that support a range of green spaces by undertaking practical tasks, raising funds and organising events.

#### Community spaces

Stockport boasts more than 300 parks and green spaces, play areas, sports fields, allotment sites, woodlands and community orchards.



There is great selection of parks and green space in and around Stockport. The River Mersey flows right through the town centre, and the town offers easy access to the Peak District.



## The great outdoors at your back door

### A unique location for active leisure

Stockport's landscape is diverse and unique and as a result there are lots of opportunities for people to try a variety of outdoor activities, from walking and cycling along the Trans Pennine Trail, to canoeing on the River Mersey.

Unlike many other town centres, Stockport's natural geography has helped to create some unique leisure opportunities. The River Mersey flows through the heart of the town and is considered to be one of the cleanest rivers in the UK. It plays host to a diverse array of plant and animal life, whilst also providing a mix of recreational opportunities for people in Stockport. People can cycle, walk and run along its banks, or try their hand at canoeing or sailing.

Venture Out is a local outdoor adventure centre connecting people to these outdoor opportunities. Based in Heaton Mersey, just a few miles from the town centre, the company boasts its proud motto 'great outdoors at your back door' to encourage people to get out and explore Stockport's natural world, from the River Mersey to surrounding parks and green spaces.

The centre is run by school teachers, Ian Sheldrake and Kevin Beattie, who, alongside a team of staff, lead exciting outdoor activities for people of all ages.

Their most popular activity is paddling by canoe on the Mersey, where people can choose to journey from Stockport to either Northenden or Sale with a guide or – for those brave enough – unaccompanied.

Venture Out also offers archery, kayaking, bush craft, bouldering, orienteering, problem solving, mountain biking and Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions in the Stockport area.

"When I first established Venture Out, my wife told me I should be setting up a canoe business in the Lake District, not Stockport," explains Ian.

"But I wanted to make the outdoors accessible right here in Stockport where the rivers and green spaces are available to all."

The centre welcomes a diverse mix of people, from school and college students to businesses and smaller groups. They offer an adventure packed programme for the half term and summer holidays for children aged between seven and 13 to have fun and immerse themselves in the outdoors.

Those keen to get active outdoors can also take to the Trans Pennine Trail, a scenic, largely traffic-free route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders that stretches the breadth of northern England in its entirety and links Stockport town centre with some top destinations.

"I wanted to make the outdoors accessible right here in Stockport where the rivers and green spaces are available to all."

Ian Sheldrake, Founder, Venture Out



Ian Sheldrake kayaking on the River Mersey, just one of the many outdoor activities on offer in Stockport.





Stockport has unrivalled connectivity,  
making it a prime location for international business.

## Connect.

Stockport is an unbeatable location. Under two hours from London and only 10 minutes from Manchester city centre by train, the town is also close to Manchester International Airport, and directly off the M60 Motorway making it a prime location for international business. Connectivity is the town's key offer and it is a winning one.



## A transport renaissance in Stockport

### Improving Stockport's transport infrastructure

The centre of Stockport is undergoing transformational change, making it a great place to live, work and invest. In order to ensure that Stockport retains its unrivalled connectivity, plans are in place to revitalise the town's transport infrastructure.

The number of visitors to Stockport railway station is growing each year, with 3.5million passengers in the last 12 months. From Stockport, passengers can travel to and from London in under two hours, and to and from Manchester in less than 10 minutes on the West Coast Main Line. Work is already underway with Stockport Council, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Network Rail and Virgin Trains to ensure that this hub for regional rail services is ready for the arrival of high-speed rail in the North West.

The station, which is conveniently located next to the M60 Motorway, is a pivotal asset for the 290,000 residents of Stockport and for the wider catchment area of around 1.5million people. It is also a main Interchange for the Greater Manchester, Cheshire East, Derbyshire and West Yorkshire regions.

Stockport Council's Rail Station Masterplan sets out an ambitious vision with redeveloped concourses, better access to platforms via a new footbridge and improved waiting facilities.

In partnership with TfGM, there are also plans to develop a new modern Transport Interchange with improved bus services.

Stockport Exchange has created a new gateway to Stockport railway station with improved public realm, a 1,000 space multi-storey car park, popular 115-bed Holiday Inn Express, independent café and Sainsbury's Local already in place. Plans for the next phases are well underway.

The new Interchange, on the site of the existing bus station, will complement the railway station gateway. With a covered passenger concourse, seated waiting area and a ticket and information outlet, shop and café, the new Interchange will provide greater access for all passengers, residents and businesses. Cycle parking and improved passenger security, including CCTV, will also be installed.

These developments, along with road improvements planned for Stockport town centre, will reduce traffic in Mersey Square, one of the prime entrances into the town centre's main shopping centre, creating a safer and more enjoyable space for pedestrians.

Funding for the Interchange is being supported by the Government through the Greater Manchester Local Growth Deal. A phased delivery will see a new road bridge built across the River Mersey at Astley Street linking Heaton Lane to the Interchange.

Stockport is also the location for a pilot programme, Project Synergy, testing driverless electric cars. The project will see three low-carbon electric sports cars driven in close formation between Stockport railway station and Manchester International Airport.

Project Synergy is expected to be trialled at the end of 2018 and is being led by a consortium made up of Westfield Sports Cars, Conigital, Fusion, Harper Adams University and partners in Greater Manchester including Manchester Airports Group, Manchester City Council and Stockport Council.



“Great connectivity is a really important selling point for Stockport town centre. The number of rail services available taking passengers to a wide range of destinations is astounding. The plans are looking to the future, making sure that people can travel for business and pleasure with ease. The thought and detail that is going into this transport transformation will ensure that Stockport is a key gateway and ultimately a great destination.”

Sue Stevenson, Head of Highways & Transportation, Stockport Council



## Transforming the daily commute

### Living in a greener, leafier town

Stockport has a great mix of the rural and urban. The town centre is the hub of commerce and business, while outlying areas such as The Heatons, Marple, Hazel Grove and Bramhall offer great places to live in a greener, leafier setting.

Increasingly the cycle ways and off-road trails that cross the borough are offering an alternative way to get to work, as well as something for everyone to enjoy at the weekend.

The Alan Newton Way, named after Stockport's Olympic medal winning cyclist, leads from Marple to Stockport via the Goyt Valley, providing a safe off-road route towards the town centre. The National Cycle Network Route 55 also runs from Marple through Romiley and Lower Bredbury, and a seven mile stretch of the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) crosses the north of the borough.

"The TPT enters via the Tame Valley in Reddish Vale Country Park and goes through the town centre before continuing along the Mersey Valley and has become a popular route for people to get to work," says Don Naylor, Senior Transportation Officer at Stockport Council.

Stockport's new landmark, Aurora industrial park, which sits close to junction one of the M60, not only has great links to the motorway, but also has car-free access to the site from the TPT. With a bridle bridge over the River Mersey that can be used by cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders, too, the route continues on to the Kings Reach Business Park.

The closeness of the TPT has been popular with businesses and a recent upgrade of part of the trail, with the addition of picnic benches and seats, has made it a popular place for people to enjoy their lunch.

"Businesses are becoming more and more conscious of the benefits for their employees of having direct transport links that utilise greenspace," says Naylor. "It's something that Stockport's lucky to have a lot of. We expect to carry on joining up the various projects and create continuous links."

Further measures are included in the Council's new cycling and walking strategy and other initiatives are being developed through the Cycle City Ambition Grant and Town Centre Access Programme (TCAP).

Cycling is also being encouraged on Stockport's roads, with cycle lanes introduced to new road schemes and junctions remodelled to make them safer for both cyclists and pedestrians. The town also has a growing number of cycle hubs, offering cyclists somewhere secure to store their bikes.

A number of TCAP schemes are helping to make the town centre easier for walking and cycling, with vehicle access being restricted on a number of streets.

"Of course, walking and cycling aren't a panacea for everything but they can both bring significant benefits," adds Naylor. "It's about recognising the positive roles they can play in a number of key areas."

"Take health; travelling actively to work, rather than relying on the car, means people take more exercise. Environmentally there are wins: better air quality and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. In terms of personal economy, it's cheaper to walk or cycle than it is to run a car. It's about showing that there are alternatives."

**"It is the Mayor's ambition for Greater Manchester to be the best place to live and grow up. Changing how we travel, by enabling significantly more people to walk and cycle short journeys will help us do this and to clean up our polluted air. Stockport town centre has so much potential to become a star attraction by becoming a cleaner, greener, healthier destination."**

Chris Boardman, Walking and Cycling Commissioner, Greater Manchester

#### Dave Butler

Dave Butler is Policy Officer at the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign and has lived in Heaton Moor for 40 years.

#### Will's Wheels

A6, Stockport

"I buy equipment from Evans Cycles or Will's Wheels, just off the A6 in Stockport."

#### Trans Pennine Trail

Pyramid Roundabout to King Street West

"I use the TPT when I cycle into Stockport town centre. If I head out on a leisure ride, I'll access it further west from Vale Road or Green Pastures."

#### BSpoke Coffee

Heaton Chapel Station

"BSpoke Coffee at Heaton Chapel station is actually run by a cyclist."



## On the right track

### Investing in transport, investing in jobs

Improving Stockport's connectivity and transport infrastructure, providing greater access to Manchester International Airport and jobs for the next generation.

The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road is a new 10km stretch of dual carriageway that connects the A6 near Hazel Grove to Manchester Airport and the link road to the M56.

Stockport Council has developed the £290million scheme with Manchester City Council, Cheshire East Council and Transport for Greater Manchester.

Designed to ease congestion on minor roads, the route will improve traffic flow in congested local areas. Importantly, it will also provide better access to Manchester Airport's thriving Airport City and other key centres of employment, education, health, leisure and retail. A segregated pedestrian and cycle route also runs adjacent to the new road.

The joint venture has provided crucial employment opportunities for local, young people. These include Technician Apprenticeships, with people employed directly with additional training support from the Learning Skills Partnership.

Sixteen young people have secured work placements and six apprentices were chosen to launch their professional careers in construction. They were recruited following a tough selection process that tested their knowledge and skills for the sector.

Working across different areas of the relief road scheme, each of the apprentices has the opportunity to gain a wealth of hands-on experience as well as formal training during their 30-month placement.

Among them is 21-year-old Liam Redwood from Bredbury, who is currently working towards a Level 3 Diploma in civil engineering.

"It's the mixture of work that I really enjoy," he explains. "One minute you're out on site, the next you're back in the office completing all the paperwork and checking drawings. There's something different to do every day."

Liam's enthusiasm for the role also saw him named as the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Young Apprentice of the Year. "I was asked to speak to an apprenticeship panel in the House of Commons as part of National Apprenticeship week."

Now his thoughts have turned to the future. "I've got so many options," he says. "I could become a setting out engineer on site, or could go to the commercial side, health and safety, or even environmental. The apprenticeship has opened up many of different paths for me."

Liam Redwood working towards his Level 3 Diploma in Civil Engineering.



### Stockport connectivity to Manchester, London and the rest of the world



#### 14 Manchester trains per hour

Trains run to central Manchester 14 times per hour at peak times, including weekends.

*Trains take an average of 10 minutes*

#### Under two hours to London

With direct trains to Euston, Stockport to London takes approximately two hours.

*All London trains stop at Stockport*



#### Eight miles from Airport

With its location adjacent to the M60, Stockport is less than eight miles from Manchester Airport.

*Stockport is within a two-hour drive time of one-third of the UK*



#### Most UK and Ireland routes

Manchester Airport has the most UK and Ireland routes of any UK and Ireland airport.

*Just an hour to Dublin, Belfast and Edinburgh*



#### 200 destinations worldwide

Over 200 destinations can be reached on direct flights from Manchester Airport.

*Including New York, Paris, Berlin and Abu Dhabi*



#### 60 airlines

There are 60 airlines offering direct flights out of Manchester Airport.

*Manchester is the largest airport in the UK outside London*



## Improving access for all

### The Town Centre Access Plan

Caroline Simpson, Corporate Director of Place at Stockport Council, talks through the Town Centre Access Plan.

What is the Town Centre Access Plan?

The Town Centre Access Plan (or TCAP as we call it) is an ambitious programme of investment to improve access and ease congestion in and around Stockport town centre. It is a key part of the wider ongoing investment in the town centre, which includes Redrock and Stockport Exchange.

What are the key aspects of the proposal?

The programme includes a number of projects across the town centre, including road junction improvements, upgrades to cycle facilities, and improvements to pedestrian routes.

Phase 1 is already underway. Twenty six projects have either been completed or are in development. In Phase 2, a further 19 projects will be delivered including the new link road between the A6 and Travis Brow.

Why are you delivering the TCAP?

TCAP is a vital component of wide investment in Stockport and central to our ambitious plans for the redevelopment of the town centre. Approximately £1billion worth of investment is being delivered including works at Stockport Interchange, Merseyway and the Market Place. TCAP is playing a crucial role in ensuring that the necessary transport and highway improvements are made to enable this investment and development to take place.

What are the benefits of doing this?

TCAP will have a number of benefits for Stockport including improved access to and around the town centre, to the M60, the transport Interchange and the rail station, and to key sites within the town centre. It will also improve access to the town centre from surrounding residential areas, making it easier for people to access shops, services and leisure facilities. Crucially, TCAP will also reduce the impact of traffic congestion and improve the efficiency and reliability of the highway network. We know this is something that will make a big difference to businesses, residents and visitors alike.

What are the project timescales?

Work has been going on since 2015 and Phase 1 is due to be completed later this year. The whole programme will be completed in 2020.

Who is delivering the TCAP?

Stockport Council is delivering TCAP in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester, with the work being undertaken by the Stockport Strategic Alliance. The Alliance is a framework of specialist contractors and consultants that work with the Council's Design and Project management teams.

What is the long term vision for TCAP?

TCAP is just one element of 'Investing in Stockport', which is seeing a range of ambitious projects launch across Stockport to ensure the town continues to grow and meet the needs of modern day life.

How is it being funded?

TCAP is being funded as part of the Greater Manchester Growth Deal.





## Stockport stories

Live. Work. Play. Connect.



### Travel to London and Manchester

An unbeatable location just two hours from London and 10 minutes from city centre Manchester. Close to Manchester Airport and located right next to the M60 motorway.

### BID

New Business Improvement District, Totally Stockport, with an annual programme of events and promotion for businesses.

Connect

A £1billion programme of investment to deliver a true town centre renaissance

An ambitious, transformative redevelopment of Merseyway Shopping Centre

### Town centre living

A Town Centre Living Plan is being developed for the heart of Stockport and a programme of new residential developments is already delivering new homes.



Live

£145 million new business district...

...attracting 2,500 new jobs

### Town Centre Ambassadors Project

Launched with local people and businesses, a network of advocates for our town centre revival.

Play

### New town centre leisure offer

Redrock Stockport is now open, a £45million new leisure and cinema complex in the heart of the town centre, alongside the M60 motorway.

### Stockport Exchange

Stockport Exchange is our £145million new business district immediately adjacent to Stockport Rail Station. 45,000 square feet of Grade A office space was fully let six months following completion. The Holiday Inn Express has surpassed all expectations for occupancy levels.

### Quirky and original Stockport

A great quality of life with a quirky, original town centre close to city centre Manchester but also on the edge of the Peak District National Park.



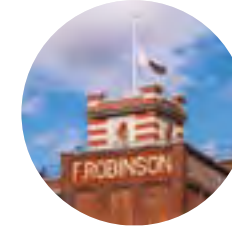
### Market Place and Underbanks

Our heritage district has new food and drink attractions, and a street-food style Produce Hall to be operated by restaurateur Steve Pilling.



### Food and Drink

Home to award winning restaurants, lovely new cafés, craft ales and even the Robinsons brewery and Visitors Centre.



Work

Major businesses based here...

Stagecoach, Sky and musicMagpie have all chosen Stockport



£73 million access plans

### Stockport Railway Station

Plans for major renovations including making the Station 'HS2 ready' by 2026.

£73million is being invested in access plans for the town centre and measures to reduce congestion, and a new transport Interchange is planned, built around £42million from the Local Growth Fund.

A bold new strategy is being created for the town centre's public realm, and for major changes to the A6 artery.

## Colophon

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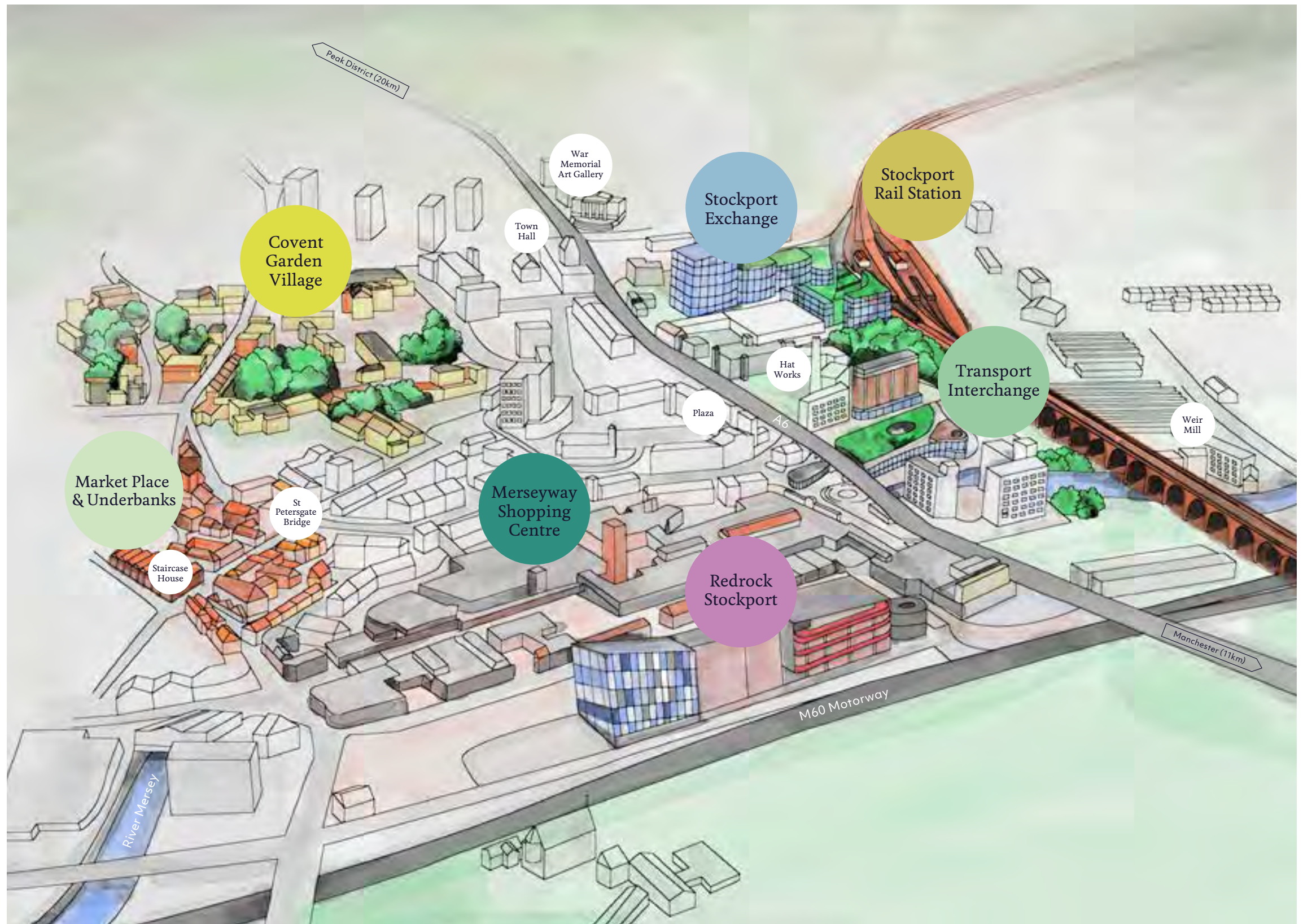
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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy the content of this prospectus. All content correct at time of printing.

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## Stockport. Change here.

### Stockport Central

*Retail and leisure at the heart of Stockport Town Centre*

The Council's recent acquisition of Merseyway Shopping Centre has sparked significant redevelopment proposals with bold plans to attract new, more diverse tenants, as well as improving frontages, parking and access. Works are expected to commence in 2018 and will be completed in 2019.

Redrock is a leisure development that provides larger floorplates attracting national food and drink operators and a 75,000 square feet 10-screen cinema, alongside a 360-space car park. Since it opened in late 2017, Redrock expands Stockport's foray into the evening economy and has created a plethora of other leisure opportunities.

### Market Place & Underbanks

*The historic core of the town centre*  
With medieval streets populated with characterful buildings and a rich history, this quarter is an attractive setting for a variety of thriving businesses.

The Underbanks area will soon undergo further transformation and restoration with the Council's £7million investment and Stage One approved Heritage Lottery Fund £1.8million investment. These funds will target gap sites and see the historic fabric of the area restored.

The investment has begun, with the works now underway with the White Lion, a Grade II listed building located on a key gateway site into the Underbanks. Once complete, it will provide another key food and beverage anchor opportunity and enhance the town centre living offer.

### Stockport Exchange

*An unrivalled position opposite the mainline train station*

A £145million development that will deliver up to 370,000 square feet of office space and a further 28,000 square feet of commercial floor space. These developments are complemented by a hotel, new public realm and leisure facilities.

Stockport Council has given the green light to the development of the next phase of Stockport Exchange, a 60,000 square feet office building. Phase Three is expected to commence late 2018 and be completed mid-2020.

### Town Centre West

*The gateway into Stockport town centre with the rail station, bus station and A6 all converging*

This area is set for a huge uplift with the £50million redevelopment of the bus station; a proposal for an extensive refurbishment to the train station, with better access to platforms and improved links between rail station and town centre; and works to improve the road and highway networks.

Alongside critical connectivity, there are significant opportunities to deliver extensive residential developments, comprised of new build and sensitive restoration and conversion. There is potential to deliver over 1,000 residential units in this area in partnership.

### Civic Quarter

*The bridge between the other town centre zones linking cultural, retail, business, historic and transport hubs*  
Significant investment is already underway, with the completion of the Council offices and Stockport Homes headquarters.

This area has the opportunity to deliver large-scale residential, with the Council keen to enhance the liveability of the town centre. Notable examples of housing developments include Hopes Carr, Covent Garden and Archer House. There are also several large office blocks within the Wellington Street and Piccadilly area, which offer opportunity for conversion to residential.

### Knightsbridge

*A potential key gateway site*

Stockport Council is looking for potential partners to redevelop this key gateway site. The site is within mixed ownership and the council would lend its support to acquire further properties, to ensure a complete development of the area.

### Former College

*Potential residential development*

The consolidation of Stockport College has created an opportunity for a large housing development in the town centre.



