

Great British Railways HQ Expression of Interest - Heywood

Why Heywood?

Rail History at the Heart of the Town!

Greater Manchester is the home of the world's first intercity railway, George Stephenson's Liverpool and Manchester Railway of 1830. This line was also the first to rely entirely on steam-powered locomotives, the first to be double tracked in its entirety, the first to have a signalling system, the first to be fully timetabled and the first to carry mail.

A station opened in Heywood in 1841 as part of the Manchester and Leeds Railway, linked to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway via Manchester Victoria. It later becomes the East Lancashire Railway and in 1859 is absorbed into the Lancashire and Yorkshire **(Image 1)**.

At the heart of the industrial revolution, rail orientated industry grew in Heywood, the most well known being Standard Waggon Works, which operated in the town from 1863 to 1989. One of the world's earliest railway warehouses can still be seen within Heywood Station Conservation Area.

Riley and Son (E) Ltd Locomotive Engineers are an established employer in the town and a significant provider of engineering apprenticeships.

A victim of Dr Beeching's famous report, the line through Heywood closed in 1966. The East Lancashire Railway heritage line opened in 1987, between Bury and Ramsbottom and in 2003 with huge public support, was extended to Heywood. The preservation of the heritage railway is overseen by the East Lancashire Railway Trust comprising the three host authorities of Rochdale, Bury and Rossendale. Rochdale Borough Council chairs the ELR Trust Board with three Members of the local Township Committee acting as Trustees of the Board.

The East Lancashire Railway is now the fourth most visited Heritage Railway in the UK with over 200,000 visitors a year, with many of those visitors coming from the communities along the historic line **(Image 2)**. The Council and local community are supporting plans to extend the heritage railway through to Castleton to provide a connection with the national rail network, growing passenger numbers and increasing public accessibility to this heritage asset.

Best Places for Business!

Heywood is part of the Borough of Rochdale, one of the best-placed business locations in the UK. It lies at the heart of the Greater Manchester City Region, one of the fastest growing areas of the country. In addition, first class transport links put the whole of the UK, and most of the world, within easy reach.

- Three international airports within one hour's travel, connecting to 232 destinations.
- The UK's largest light rail system, with six tram stops within the Borough.
- At the centre of the M62 corridor, connecting the Borough to three of the five largest urban areas in England.
- Fifty trains a day, to and from London (via Manchester Piccadilly).

This means fast and efficient access to all of the UK's largest economic and population centres.

Employers in the Borough of Rochdale have access to a labour pool of 1.6 million talented people living within a thirty-minute drive. The borough also boasts a high concentration of labour with the kind of skills that businesses need, with 51% of the local population qualified to Level 3 or above.

The town's Further Education colleges are amongst the very best not just in the North West, but in the whole country. Along with dedicated training providers like Rochdale Training Association, they ensure a continual flow of talented people to help fuel the borough's economic resurgence.

The borough is young and ambitious. It has more residents under the age of 24 (33.2%) than the England and Wales average (30.7%). It is a place of innovation and entrepreneurialism, with the number of business births per 1,000 of the working age population outstripping the average for both the Greater Manchester region and England as whole.

- Rochdale Sixth Form College (RSFC) teaches over 800 students and is rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted, and was recently named the highest ranked Sixth Form College in the country for value added performance, for the fifth time.
- Hopwood Hall College and University Centre is focused technical and vocational subjects. The college has over 8,000 students and is in the top 10% of Further Education colleges in England for Level 3 progress, and last year achieved a 100% pass rate for 124 of its courses. The college is currently extending its advanced manufacturing and construction capacity through a £6.1m extension to its Technology Centre, part of successful £24m bid to the FE Capital Transformation Fund (**Image 3**).
- Business training provider Rochdale Training Association have around 2,000 learners on programmes at any one time. Those programmes range from apprenticeships and traineeships to workplace learner schemes and pre-employment courses. The company works with over 450 employers in the borough and across Greater Manchester.

In addition, there are 20 universities within an hour's drive, with a combined student population of over 400,000.

The Borough of Rochdale offers incredible value for money. The cost of doing business is less than in many equivalent areas in the north of England and across the country. Performing particularly well in relation to premises and staffing costs.

Overall, figures from the Office for National Statistics show that companies moving to Rochdale Borough or starting up in the town make operational savings of up to 25% in comparison to other key locations in the North West and the UK as a whole.

A Centre for Growth and Innovation!

Heywood is at the heart of Greater Manchester's North-East Growth Corridor, **Atom Valley**, which will deliver a nationally significant area of economic activity and growth (35,000 jobs), supported by a significant increase in residential offer (18,000 new homes). Its location on strategic transport corridors, east-west to Liverpool, Leeds and Hull and north to Lancashire, makes it an attractive location for new and growing employment in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and logistics (**Image 4**).

Developed across the Boroughs of Rochdale and Bury, Atom Valley, includes the development of the Northern Gateway; Kingsway Business Park and the Advanced Manufacturing and Productivity Institute (AMPI); Stakehill Business Park; Heywood Distribution Park; Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy; Places for Everyone and the development of town centres within the growth area.

The Northern Gateway will deliver 6,000 new homes, 1,200,000 square foot of employment space across Rochdale and Bury. The first phase of which is the South Heywood development (1,000 new homes, 135,000 square foot of employment space), which is being facilitated by a 2.2km link road from junction 19 of the M62, with £10m of support from the Getting Building Fund. There are plans to utilise the ELR line to operate tram – train services as an extension of the

Manchester Metrolink system reopening the former Broadfield station in Heywood to serve this employment growth area (**Image 5**).

We are able to offer a number of site options within the South Heywood development, accessed via the reopened Broadfield station that could be brought forward, quickly, efficiently and make Great British Railways a key anchor of one of the most exciting developments in the region. An opportunity also exists to develop a new office HQ adjacent to the Calder Valley line to the east of Heywood on land to the north of Stakehill Industrial estate as part of plans for a new rail station at Slattocks.

AMPI is an industry led project, devised by a consortium of regional businesses collaborating with the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), the Rochdale Development Agency (RDA), the UK's Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA), Universities of Manchester, Salford, Huddersfield and Leeds and local further education providers such as Hopwood Hall College and Rochdale Training. With a landmark building on Kingsway Business Park, AMPI has a clear focus to offer market-oriented services including business and supply chain development, people and skills development alongside product development and technical services. The development of AMPI has been supported by the Towns Fund and UKRI Strength and Places Fund. Consortium partners are developing technologies to support the electrification of transport and light weighting of locomotives (**Image 6**).

The Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy seeks to exploit the asset of the railway which splits the Rochdale Borough with 5 existing stations and plans for a sixth station at Slattocks. The strategy will capitalise on the growth of travel along the Calder Valley line through the Borough of Rochdale, with journeys from Rochdale Station rocketing to 2.7m a year over the last decade. The strategy identifies capacity for 7,000 new transport orientated homes along the corridor, 76 percent of which is on brownfield land. Alongside employment and leisure opportunities.

From Well-Connected to Better-Connected!

It is recognised that to support this growth, in a way that improves quality of life and works towards shared net zero targets, there is a need for major investment in sustainable transport infrastructure in places like Heywood, which whilst benefiting from excellent road links, have become too reliant on private vehicles.

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 supports the delivery of a tram-train pathfinder between Rochdale and Heywood, via Castleton and onward to Bury. This innovative technology, provides capability to operate on both light and heavy rail lines, including re-establishing and commuter service from Heywood for the first time in more than half a century, connecting with Rochdale and onwards to Manchester and Leeds and beyond.

Heywood will also benefit from Quality Bus Transit investment, providing improved travel times between Heywood, Rochdale, Bury and Manchester and employment growth areas; Streets for All investment improving walking and cycling infrastructure for local journeys; and motorway improvements on the M60, M62 and M66.

A Potential not yet Reached!

The Borough of Rochdale is 15th most deprived (rank of average score) local authority area in England and Wales according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. 15th most deprived (rank of average score) in terms of income, 16th most deprived (rank of average score) for employment and 21st most deprived (rank of average score). However, deprivation indicators for barriers to housing and services (231st most deprived by rank of average score) and living environment (149th most deprived by rank of average scores) indicate a high degree of livability despite economic challenges.

North Heywood and West Heywood wards have seen population growth over the last decade of 7.4% and 9.5% respectively, both above the Borough average of 5.1% for the same period. This population increase has substantially been from the 0-15 age group, which has increased in both wards by 18%, in comparison with the Borough average of 8%.

A third of Rochdale's residents live in wards that are in the 10% most deprived in the country, this includes North Heywood and West Heywood. The median estimated net household income for North Heywood is £24,400 and for West Heywood it is £26,800; these are 16% and 7% respectively below the average for the Borough. Despite lower earnings than the Borough average, both youth unemployment and all age unemployment in each ward is close to the Borough average.

Six of the eight schools in these wards are Ofsted 'good' or 'outstanding', including two of the best performing primary schools in the borough, and young people are able to access the high quality 16-19 education offer in the borough in addition to institutions in neighbouring towns. However, 33% of adults have no formal qualifications.

Bringing an office HQ of Great British Railways to Heywood will be a significant boost to the local economy and will support associated infrastructure investment, such as public transport within the Town Centre as well as increase footfall and business.

The Levelling Up White Paper identifies Rochdale borough, along with neighbouring Oldham, as the priority area in Greater Manchester for Levelling Up. Asking the question "Which places are most left behind? It is identified as one of the few places in the UK where performance is in the bottom quartile for each of the four measures of Level 3+ equivalent skills in the adult population, Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked, Median Gross Weekly Pay and healthy life expectancy.

Ambitious and Bold, with a Track Record of Delivery!

This document sets out a level of ambition for the Borough of Rochdale, which includes leading the world in manufacturing innovation; attracting and growing high skilled and well-paid jobs; enabling and developing our residents; and providing of thousands of high quality homes, in sustainable and transit orientated locations.

Bold ambition is in our DNA. Be that the Co-operative Pioneers and the Rochdale Principles, "an idea that changed the world"; our grandest of Town Hall's, described by Pevsner possessing a "rare picturesque beauty", which is currently undergoing an ambitious restoration and repurposing; or more recent successes, transforming our principal town centre and attracting investment in AMPI and high value employment sites across the borough.

Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Development Agency's bold approach to regeneration and job creation and success in delivery, was recognised in 2021, when it won the prestigious Economic Support category at the Local Government Chronicle Awards. The award judges said: "Proactively securing £179 million in investment combined with a strong focus on outcomes and benefits demonstrated a truly inclusive growth agenda".

Image 1: Heywood Station, early 20th Century.



Image 2: The Flying Scotsman on the East Lancashire Railway



Legend

- Greater Manchester boundary
- Local Authority boundaries
- Growth Sites
- Employment area
- Land supply - housing
- Land supply - offices
- Land supply - I&W
- PfE Allocations - residential
- PfE Allocations - employment
- Metrolink stations
- Metrolink lines
- Railway stations
- Railway lines
- Proposed South Heywood Link Road
- Proposed S4A and QBT (Bolton-Bury-Rochdale)
- Proposed bus routes
- Phase 1 - Option 1 train/tram
- Phase 1 - Option 2 train/tram
- Phase 2 train/tram
- Proposed Metrolink line to Middleton
- Motorway improvements
- Key bus routes

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Image 5: South Heywood.



Image 6: Artists impression of AMPI.

