

INVEST ROCHDALE

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Chairman

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Why manufacturing
is in Rochdale's DNA

Respond, Recover, Thrive



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Is open for business

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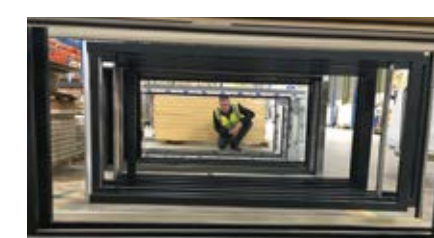
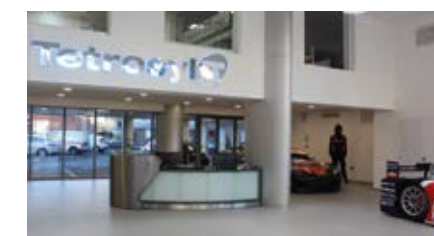
 Greater Manchester
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INVEST **ROCHDALE**

WELCOME!

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Rochdale Riverside is open for business



As a construction project, Rochdale Riverside could hardly have gone more smoothly. By April, the town's new retail and leisure complex had been completed on time and on budget. The high quality design was widely praised. There was a buzz of activity inside the building as retailers and leisure operators fitted out premises in anticipation of the grand opening.

Although delayed by COVID-19 Riverside is bursting into life once more. As soon as lockdown eased, shop fitters returned to the development's wide, bright and well designed avenues.

The original vision for Riverside was of a retail and leisure hub that would draw visitors from Rochdale borough and much further afield.

Modernised transport links would whisk them smoothly to and from the town centre. New and restored attractions, re energised neighbourhoods and a calendar of seasonal events would give them further reason to linger. None of that has changed.

"The idea behind Riverside really goes back 10 years, when the council asked the RDA to help deliver a project that would be part of a larger plan for the redevelopment of the town centre," says Gary Davies, programme manager for the scheme. "It was part of a package that would see increased footfall in the town, and give people reason to come and spend money in Rochdale".

Riverside is just one part of a £400 million regeneration scheme that included the creation of Number One Riverside (the town's central library and information hub) and a modern transport interchange.



The River Roch has been reopened in the town centre, revealing a stunning medieval bridge. Work will soon begin on the £16 million restoration of Rochdale's magnificent Gothic-revival style Town Hall. And that's to name just a few.

"Part of the RDA role on the Riverside project was to make sure it fitted in with all these other things happening in the town," says Gary. "We couldn't think of Riverside in isolation. It had to work with all these projects to create a compelling reason to come to Rochdale."

A central role

In fact, the RDA has played a central role in the Riverside project since day one, acting as the delivery agent for Rochdale Borough Council. At the start, that role was to create the site by buying up parcels of land and relocating current businesses, as well as fulfilling the complex legal requirements of any major construction project and securing external funding.

Later, the RDA acted as an enabler for the team that would make the Riverside vision a reality. Developer Genr8 and construction contractor Willmott Dixon have "performed brilliantly", says Gary. The smooth transition of a rubble-strewn building site into the state-of-the-art complex that stands there today has been a lesson in effective, efficient collaboration.

Through it all, the RDA helped coordinate the work, minimising business disruption and ensuring all the pieces of a complex jigsaw

fitted snugly together, from transport links and pedestrian walkways to Riverside's relationship with the town's other retail and leisure hubs.

More to come

As the phased, opening of Riverside continues, the smooth running of the project has set a template for the next stage of the development. The RDA and Genr8 are in the process of creating detailed designs for the next phase of the transformation of the town centre - Riverside 2, which is likely to include over 200 apartments and a hotel, bringing more life and bustle to the town centre.

That's for the future. For the moment, Riverside is open for business. "Riverside will bring a whole raft of benefits to Rochdale," says Gary.

"It will help to make Rochdale a primary town for shopping and leisure. That's why Riverside is important. Rochdale couldn't have achieved that without it."



A centre for everyone

The restoration of Rochdale's magnificent town hall is as much about the community as it is bricks, mortar and exquisite wood paneling

In 2023 the citizens of Rochdale and beyond will be able to wander the wood-panelled halls and ornate staircases of the town's magnificent town hall and see history unfold before them.

Plans to fully restore the building and surrounding square have started. One round of funding has already been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and an application for further funding was submitted in May. A decision on this will be made later this year, but the restoration will go ahead to some extent regardless of the outcome.

The Grade I listed building will close in December, in time for work to begin in January 2021. It will reopen in 2023 as a world class visitor attraction drawing people from across the UK and beyond, as well as a centre for the local community, with an opening event and a new programme of activities.

"That, more than anything, is the driving force behind the restoration," says Emma Robinson, senior project officer at the Rochdale Development Agency (RDA). "We want to give the town hall back to the people and the community."



The town hall project is being delivered by Rochdale Development Agency and the consultants working on the town hall project are:

Donald Insall Associates
Conservation Architects

Max Fordham
MEP Engineers

Frank Whittle Partnership
Cost Managers

Price and Myers
Structural Engineers

Focus Consultants
Business Planners

Redman Design
Interpretation & Exhibition Designers

The Heritage Angel Ltd &
Minerva Heritage
Activity Planners

Consulting the community

Community involvement is at the heart of the project. The RDA consulted the local population widely before formalising plans for the restoration, and found that many people were not aware of the building's history, architectural importance and - most surprisingly - its role as a community hub.

The project aims to restore the building to its original glory, and make it an open and accessible space. A new glass entrance way will welcome visitors. Information panels and trained volunteers will guide them through its storied history. Visitor numbers are predicted to be in the region of 150,000 in the 12 months after reopening, compared to just 2,000 today.

Emma believes that even those who are familiar with the building's current layout and decoration will be surprised at its new interpretation.

Many of the rooms never seen by the public will be returned to their original state, including Bright Hall on the second floor which is currently partitioned into offices. It is a smaller version of the Great Hall on the ground floor. The architects have already found some original decorative paneling in the hall that nobody knew existed!

Building momentum

Work on the building will be completed in two stages. The first, starting early next year, will make the building fit for restoration. asbestos will be stripped out and leaks fixed. The crumbling drainage system will be replaced.

The second phase will see the restoration of some of the 500 windows, many of which have intricate stained glass, and the building's highly decorative interiors. Wood panelling and furniture will be rejuvenated, and the outside of the building cleaned. In all this the RDA will work with a number of highly regarded specialist companies from across the UK.

And there will be significant local benefit. "We're looking at ways to engage with as many people as possible during the restoration, and part of that will be to offer specialist training opportunities in stained glass restoration, painting cleaning and so on," says Emma.

"We're working with local education providers to offer work

experience placements and we're working with local schools to introduce the pupils to subjects such as construction, the built environment and heritage conservation."

2023 is a long time away but the RDA will build momentum for the reopening. A dedicated website and social media channels will keep the community updated on the progress of the work and there are plans to introduce construction tours for interested members of the public, who will be able to witness the on going restoration first hand.

At the end of it all, the success of the project will be measured by the level of community engagement and visitor numbers. Weddings, festivals and regular community events will be housed in the spacious and grandiose surroundings, offering everyone the chance to experience one of the UK's most important Victorian buildings. Easier access and better facilities will ensure the building can be enjoyed by every member of the community.



Chris Gilmartin

Rochdale business leader Chris Gilmartin retired earlier this year after 20 years on the RDA board, the last two as Chair.

“When I first became involved with the organisation, as a member of the board, there was no Metrolink and no bus station link. Kingsway was being developed and homes were being built, but a huge amount has been achieved in the last 20 years,” he says.

In his time on the RDA board he has helped steer projects including the opening of Middleton Arena, the Logic development at Kingsway Business Park and phase one of the £150 million investment in Rochdale town centre.

“I’m looking forward to seeing so many of the projects we have worked on come to fruition. In particular I’m really excited about the development of south Heywood, which will be of regional and national significance and a major contributor to the economies of Rochdale and Greater Manchester in the next 5 – 10 years.”



Long-term ambitions

Chris believes there is much to be optimistic about in Rochdale.

Plans are in place that will help Rochdale attract business and investment in the long term. I’m talking about things like the development of the stations in Rochdale, Castleton and Littleborough and the new houses that are being built around them to create a very quick link to central Manchester.

For me the completion of phase one of Rochdale Riverside was a big moment, I always said I’d do the job of RDA chair until that was complete. Rochdale has a high quality retail and leisure complex that is bringing visitors into town.

Chris thinks that one element still missing from Rochdale town centre at the moment is homes. When people live in or near the centre of towns and cities, they support both the daytime and evening economies. Phase two of the Riverside scheme, which is now underway, includes the provision of over 200 town centre apartments on its initial phase.

RDA plays a central role

Chris also believes the RDA is central to the rebirth of Rochdale as a vibrant and progressive place to live and work. He says the organisation provides a vital link between the private and public sectors in the town, and between business and Rochdale Borough Council.

“It’s about working together to create a successful story,” adds Chris. “The RDA works because it is staffed with excellent professional people who know what business needs. The private sector wants to work with people who think like them and understand the challenges they face.” Chris believes that, with the help of the RDA, Rochdale “gets things done”.

He cites the example of Rochdale station, which has been in need of regeneration for years. Businesses worried that the tired station buildings presented an outdated and unhelpful image of Rochdale to new visitors. The redevelopment of the station is now going ahead.

“That’s the beauty of the RDA - it lets private business discuss issues with the public authority at a high level, and with people who understand their concerns,” says Chris.

He’s also enthusiastic about the Rochdale Ambassadors, a voluntary association of local business leaders who share a desire to promote Rochdale as a destination for business, and whose meetings are facilitated by the RDA.

“It’s great to get informed people together like that in a forum for new ideas and new approaches. You never know where the next good idea is going to come from.”

Chris will remember his two decades with the RDA fondly, as a time when real progress was made in making Rochdale borough a better place to live and work.



“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time with the RDA, and it’s wonderful to have played some small part in the regeneration of the area. I wish Paul Ormerod - my successor as chair - all the very best.”

Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) has announced that distinguished economist Paul Ormerod will be the organisation's next chair following the retirement of Chris Gilmartin.



Paul Ormerod

Distinguished economist Paul Ormerod named new RDA chair

Paul was born and grew up in Rochdale. He has been the President of Rochdale Hornets Rugby League club since 2009. He studied at Cambridge and Oxford and is a visiting professor at University College London. He is the author of several influential books including *Why Most Things Fail*, named Business Book of the Year for 2006 by BusinessWeek magazine. He is currently a partner at economics consultancy Volterra Partners.

Paul said: "As a proud Rochdalian I'm delighted to be named as RDA chair. The RDA has done a brilliant job over a long period in delivering successful regeneration projects and promoting the economic well-being of the borough. I hope my own experience will help the RDA to shape the future economic prosperity of Rochdale through promoting innovation and re-shaping the image of what the town does. These are key to the delivery of inward investment, physical development and the creation of new jobs."

Councillor John Blundell, Rochdale Council cabinet member for Regeneration, Business, Skills and Employment, and RDA board member said: "It's testament to the reputation of the RDA that someone with Paul's standing is willing to take on the job as chairman. Paul brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts to the role. His appointment is really exciting news for the economic development of the borough."

John also paid tribute to outgoing Chair Chris Gilmartin. "Chris

has been on the board of the RDA for nearly 20 years, including the last two as chair, and has helped deliver projects including the redevelopment of Middleton Town Centre, the development of Kingsway Business Park and the completion of Phase One of the Rochdale Riverside retail and leisure scheme. We'd like to thank him for the tireless work he has done to make Rochdale a better place in this time."

Paul Ormerod took over as chairman on Wednesday 29th April and is helping the RDA to refine its strategy for development beyond the current coronavirus crisis.

Chris Gilmartin, the former managing director of Heywood-based Gilwood Fabricators Co Ltd, said: "It's been an honour and a privilege to be on the RDA's board all these years and I am looking forward to seeing so many of the projects we have worked on come to fruition. In particular I look forward to the development of a new business park at South Heywood, which will be a major contributor to the local economy in the next few years. I wish Paul the best of luck in his new role."



Lancashire Farm Dairies prepares for £500k expansion work

Rochdale-based yogurt brand Lancashire Farm Dairies is about to start work on a £500,000 expansion to its main production facility.

The two-storey expansion will include a mezzanine floor and building work is expected to start within a month after receiving planning permission from Rochdale Borough Council.

The company, which was founded in 1984, has recruited an extra 20 staff during Covid-19 and the expansion is needed to help the company meet an increase in demand for its products.

Chief Operating Officer Sarfaraz Akram said: "It's really important to press ahead with the investment. It will create additional capacity to help us keep the shelves fully stocked during this critical time. We submitted the planning application before Covid-19 but the increase in demand has meant we've accelerated our plans. We've got a lot of other exciting plans in the pipeline."



"We're really proud to be from Rochdale and being based here is one of the reasons for our success. We've got a fantastic workforce and the excellent transport links are vital for our delivery fleet. We have provided a number of opportunities to provide further training to develop and up skill our staff."

"We also have an excellent relationship with the RDA and Rochdale Borough Council. There's a feel-good factor in the borough when it comes to business."

Last year the award-winning manufacturer announced it was on course to hit a record turnover of £40m as it looks to take on its biggest rivals.

The local business covers the length and breadth of the country with its yogurts which are made with free-range milk, which guarantees the cows used are grazing for a minimum of 150 days a year. Last year the firm actually achieved 180 days, half the year grazing outdoors.

In response to Covid-19 the firm has increased the speed in which it pays its farmers providing them much-needed cashflow to run their businesses during the period. This is in stark contrast to other parts of the dairy industry who were delaying payments causing financial hardship for farmers.

Akram added: "We are really proud to support local British dairy farmers, they are the lifeblood of our business. Many of the farmers we've been working with for as long as we can remember so we wanted to provide them with much-needed stability for them during the period."

The company has recently invested £5m in new machinery at its Rochdale base, which processes upwards of 130,000 litres of milk a day, 365 days a year.

Akram added: "Our commitment on grazing has really resonated with customers, at a time when animal welfare continues to be such a focus. We're a proud Rochdale business and the continued improvements are essential if we're going to continue to grow and fulfil our ambitions."

COVID19 REPORT



How the borough stepped up during this time of crisis

- P14 Rochdale Manufacturer steps in to meet NHS order
- P15 Foam firm helps make 25k mattresses for Nightingale hospitals
- P16 Rochdale firm involved in ventilator drive to beat Covid
- P17 Tetrosyl produce range of sanitisers to combat Covid-19

Businesses praise Council's & RDA's Lockdown response

Rochdale's response to Covid-19 has been praised by members of business community across the borough. When the pandemic first struck, Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Development Agency swung into action with a series of measures to support businesses get through the crisis.



The comprehensive package of initiatives included the £43m that was handed out in coronavirus business continuity grants, daily email bulletins in the form of the RDA's Business Matters newsletter, a series of webinars by the Ambassadors group, This is Rochdale and press releases on areas such as returning to work, physical and mental well-being along with weekly virtual Rise & Shine meetings all designed to keep businesses in touch and informed.

Several businesses have praised the council and RDA's response during the initial three-month lockdown.

Louise Killeen, founder of Louise Killeen Translations, said: "Right from the outset of the pandemic, the support provided to businesses by Rochdale Borough Council and the RDA has been second to none. The regular business briefings issued by the RDA team have contained vital and reliable information. The council's handling of the distribution of grant money couldn't have been more efficient – the funds hit our account within 48 hours of submitting an application."

Tony Rollins, group CEO at Atlantic & Pacific Insurance Group & Rollins Group Companies, said: "We have had nothing but the best support and guidance for our companies through Covid-19 from both the council and RDA and we continue to get support far in excess of anything offered by Oldham or Manchester from my experiences. I have found other councils hard to access and lacking in support and guidance. This is certainly not the case with Rochdale. Thank you again to RDA and RBC for all of their priceless support."

Clare Coria, owner of Coria Commercial Finance, said adversity had brought out the best in Rochdale. "I have really felt part of the Rochdale business community and made new friendships and business connections

during these difficult times," she said. "Rochdale has really stepped up and been there to support both the large manufacturers and the one man band businesses alike. The business WhatsApp group, the Rise & Shine meetings and the Business Matters emails have been both educational and fun."

George Brigham, general manager at Ibex Marina said the help he'd received from the council and the RDA had been 'absolutely first class' during the Covid-19 crisis. "Nothing has been too much trouble, with a real proactive 'can do, will do' attitude prevailing throughout times of uncertainty," he said.

Paul Dixon, partner at Molesworths Bright Clegg and Chair of This is Rochdale, said: "Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, Rochdale Borough Council and RDA have led by example in reaching out and supporting all of Rochdale's communities in ways that very few local authorities have been able to match."

"By their actions they have saved lives, supported businesses, and protected the vulnerable. As the borough emerges from the worst of the pandemic, we do so stronger and more supportive of one another than ever before."

The bulk of the £43m given to local businesses in coronavirus business continuity grants was paid out under the first two government business support schemes, based on business rates, and benefitted over 3,600 local businesses.

In addition, a total of £1.17m has so far been given to 153 local companies in discretionary grants, with the size of payouts varying between £2,000 and £10,000.

While some payments were processed automatically, the RDA and council have also been proactively identifying and contacting

eligible businesses to help them apply for government aid. In addition, council staff were redeployed to make sure applications were processed quickly.

Councillor John Blundell, an RDA board member and Rochdale Council cabinet member for Regeneration, said: "We were keen to progress the grant payments as soon as possible, recognising that many businesses desperately needed the money to enable them to stay afloat. The council and the RDA's understanding of the private sector – the result of working closely with business over many years – allowed grant decisions to be made quickly and ahead of some other local authority areas."

RDA chair Paul Ormerod said: "The value of the RDA as a contact point between local businesses and the Council has never been more apparent. Through remote meetings and webinars, regular publications and phone calls, the RDA's professionals have kept in constant contact with companies during a very challenging period, offering advice, practical guidance and unwavering encouragement."

The RDA is here to try and help you, both now and in the future as lockdown measures continue to ease. We can offer a range of support, including through our key partners such as the Business Growth Hub.

Rochdale Manufacturer Crystal Doors stepped in to meet NHS order

Managing director Richard Hagan had been contacting his customers to say he was closing the factory down when he received the emergency order from Lancashire based Teal HealthCare & LifeCare, who are a key supplier to the NHS. He explained: "We do a lot of work with hotels, restaurants, shopfitting, retailers and even prisons but 10 per cent of our work is in the healthcare sector.

"We were preparing to close the factory down and I did a final ring-round of our customers when Teal said they needed several thousand items of furniture for the NHS and they needed them now." The value order was £140,000 and included overbed tops, side tables and cupboards required by the NHS to create makeshift treatment centres.

"Crystal Doors use a special anti-bacterial material to make our furniture and that's vital in the NHS." Hagan immediately contacted his 34-strong workforce and asked for volunteers to make up the order.

"The health and safety of our staff is the most important thing and nobody was under any pressure," he said. "Because we're a heavily automated manufacturer we don't need a big staff so we're able to run it with 10 staff and four in reserve in case they get ill." Because we only have 10 staff in the factory there's no problem with social distancing. It makes me incredibly proud that Crystal Doors is able to play part in the national response to coronavirus."

Paul Goodall, managing director of Teal HealthCare & LifeCare, said the role of suppliers like Crystal Doors was vital. "We need your

support and for this not only will Teal be sincerely grateful but (so will) the nation," he wrote in an email to Hagan.

John Blundell, cabinet member for regeneration, business and skills at Rochdale Borough Council and board member of the Rochdale Development Agency said:

"It was great to see Rochdale's exceptional business community really stepping up to the plate and using their skills and innovation to support the NHS in its hour of need. I'm particularly impressed that Richard and his dedicated staff team changed their plans at the last minute to ensure that this vital work is delivered for the NHS. Crystal Doors was yet another example of a Rochdale company stepping up to help in the fight against coronavirus. It demonstrates that the Rochdale business community is 100 per cent committed to playing its part."

I'm proud to see everybody pulling together in this crisis and it's very much what Rochdale is all about."



Vita Group helps make 25k mattresses for Nightingale hospitals

A Rochdale manufacturer played a key role in supplying +25,000 mattresses needed for the new NHS Nightingale hospitals used to treat Covid-19 patients.

Nightingale hospitals were built in across the UK in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Harrogate, Bristol, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast and provided thousands of extra beds at the peak of the coronavirus.

Rochdale-based Vita Group was one of the companies tasked with manufacturing the polyurethane foam which was used in the majority of the mattresses required by the NHS.

The company, which is headquartered in Middleton, was also involved in the manufacture of face and visor masks and filters used in ventilators.

Ian Robb, chief executive of The Vita Group, said: "I'm incredibly proud of the way our teams have responded to the call for materials to support healthcare, care homes and medical sectors during the Covid-19 emergency.

"It's a huge logistical operation across multiple sites including Middleton, Dukinfield, Stakehill and Wythenshawe in Greater Manchester and our sister plants in Accrington, Bedford, Chelmsford and Milton Keynes.

"The UK faces an unprecedented challenge from Covid-19 and The Vita Group has been delighted to play its part."



The company normally make foam used in office and household furniture, bedding and is a major player in the supply the new bed in the box sector but has now diverted the bulk of its efforts into the manufacture of medical mattresses.

Robb said: "The NHS required over 25,000 additional mattresses and associated products in the fight against Covid-19 and The Vita Group and our subsidiary Vita UK met the challenge for increased demand for medical foam.

"The block production line in Middleton, Rochdale, prioritised the manufacturing of critical medical foam grades required by our healthcare partners. "Conversion units at Bedford, Dukinfield and Stakehill manufactured a further 8,000 mattresses. The Vita Groups employees did everything they could to deliver on the critical products which supported the country's Covid-19 response."

The Vita Group, which employs 2,700 people across Europe, is also manufacturing filters for ventilators and a key component of PPE face masks. Robb explained: "The heat, moisture and exchange (HME) filters involve our sites across the Netherlands and Greater Manchester. HME filters are designed to replicate the functions of the body's upper airway by conserving expired heat and moisture and returning these to the patient during inhalation.

The Nightingale hospitals are part of a nationwide effort to respond to the greatest global health emergency in more than a century.

Councillor John Blundell, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Business, Skills and Employment at Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Development Agency board member, said: "Whether its springs for ventilators, vinyl wrapped furniture or mattresses that aid breathing, the incredible talent and innovation of Rochdale businesses have proved vital in the fight against Covid 19. There's a substantial skills base across our business community and I'm very proud of the work they did which made such a positive difference at a very unsettling time."

Hanson Springs involved in ventilator drive to beat Covid

Hanson Springs produced 30,000 emergency ventilators to help the NHS deal with coronavirus. The equipment is critical in the care of some of the most seriously ill coronavirus patients but the spread of Covid-19 has led to a national shortage.

Rochdale-based Hanson Springs was drafted in to supply specialist springs to JRE Precision, which was one of the companies which helped to meet the shortfall of ventilators. The springs are used in the equipment's control panels which supply oxygen and were used directly to treat coronavirus patients.

John Hanson, a director in the family-run business, said they offered to supply the springs to JRE Precision for free once they knew what they were being for but were told that wouldn't be necessary. He said: "This is a normal product for us but we only know the end use as our client told us. Once we knew the importance of them we rushed the production through."

"We were classed as a critical supplier and operated throughout the shutdown. We extended our operating times to reduce the number of people on site at any one time, asked people to work from home wherever

possible and muddled through each day like every other business."

"What allowed us to react so quickly is that we hold a vast range of wire sizes and grades in stock, so no matter what the spring design is we can normally accommodate it." Hanson Springs was founded in 1963 by John's father Malcolm and traditionally supplies springs to the oil, gas, nuclear, power generation and flow control industry. It took the decision to diversify into new products, including providing springs to buildings to make them more resilient to earthquake. The move has helped the company report a record turnover of £28m, around 80 per cent of which comes from exports.

"I'm really proud to see a Rochdale business turning its talent and expertise to such an important task. Our business community is second to none and the fact that it has responded to this crisis by pulling out all the stops is something that doesn't surprise me at all. A huge well done to Hanson Springs and keep up the excellent work."



Tetrosyl produced a range of sanitisers to combat Covid-19

Rochdale-based manufacturer Tetrosyl produced a new range of cleaning and sanitising products in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tetrosyl is the largest producer of car care products in Europe but transitioned into manufacturing antibacterial cleaners to help homes and businesses stay virus-free as the UK gradually emerges from lockdown.

It took less than two months to produce the new range and was only possible after the 2019 acquisition of James Briggs, which is one of the region's oldest and largest consumer chemicals businesses for an undisclosed sum.

The new range - sold under the Nilco brand - belonged originally to James Briggs but has been developed by Tetrosyl and includes antibacterial multi-surface cleaners, fabric cleaners and car sanitisers. It also includes a powerful hand sanitiser, something which is still in short supply in some areas of the UK.

Tetrosyl moved into its new headquarters in Rochdale in 2016. The company's main distribution centre is in Castleton, employing around 250 staff across both sites. Its main manufacturing facility is in Bury.

David Rogers, group general counsel for Tetrosyl, said: "It's important to be agile and we recognised there was a global shortage of sanitisers. Normally it would take a year or so to produce a new range so to be able to do that in around two months is remarkable.

"The acquisition of James Briggs significantly increased our manufacturing capacity and when Covid-19 hit, we realised we could use that capacity to produce a range of cleaning and sanitising products that were effective against the virus.

"It's testament to the skill of our team that this innovative and exciting new range has been created, tested and produced in just a matter of months."

Mr Rogers said Rochdale was the perfect place to base a business because of first class transport connections and skilled labour pool.

He said: "Our move to Rochdale has provided enormous benefits both in terms of cost to the business and benefits for our staff. We have acquired a fantastic building for an extremely competitive price which has enabled us to free up resources to further expand the business.

"Rochdale also has an excellent transport infrastructure which is important from a recruitment perspective and the recent improvements to the town centre make it an attractive place for our staff to enjoy during breaks from work."

Trade Mouldings opens 75,000 sq ft distribution centre on six acre site

Trade Mouldings' has officially opened their new 75,000 sq ft distribution centre on a six acre site at Kingsway Business Park in Rochdale. The design and build premises has nearly trebled the space available to the manufacturer of kitchen and bedroom unit doors and MDF wrapped mouldings, and has created around 30 new jobs.



Northern Ireland-based Trade Mouldings has been distributing across the UK since 2002. The growing business needed extra capacity and flexibility that its new tailor made unit at Kingsway offers. Director Damien Connolly says Rochdale was the perfect location for the business as it sought to expand.

"Rochdale and Kingsway are close to three junctions of the M62 J19, J20 and J21, Manchester is on the doorstep, Liverpool and Leeds are within an hour and Birmingham is just over two hours away.

That's a huge population base within easy reach. We have been based in the area for 15 years and wanted to remain close to our existing site as we have many key staff in the area who have been with us from the start."

The significant increase in capacity means the business can be more efficient, with an expanded stock range, a larger showroom and trade counter and a more complete service for customers, all under one roof.

After discussions with the developer at Kingsway, Wilson Bowden the company opted for a complete design and build solution, rather than buying an existing unit, as Damien explains:

"We wanted a tailor made solution for our products and a building designed exactly for our needs, with high eaves height, showroom and

office space to our requirements and loading bays in the most efficient locations. We also wanted the option of additional land to future proof the business and we have further room for expansion next to the unit we are acquiring at Kingsway".

Kingsway Business Park has been developed through a joint venture partnership between Wilson Bowden, Homes England, Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Development Agency.

Councillor John Blundell, Cabinet Member for Regeneration at Rochdale Borough Council and Board Member of the Rochdale Development Agency said: "We're delighted that an ambitious, growing company like Trade Mouldings has chosen to stay in Rochdale and develop a site at Kingsway Business Park. This shows the confidence they have in both Kingsway and the area".

Planning consent issued for major regeneration scheme

A game changing development to create a new link road, 1,000 new homes and over 135,000m² of employment space at junction 19 of the M62 has moved up a gear, after planning consent was issued by Rochdale Borough Council.

The application was approved by the council's planning committee in 2018, subject to the completion of a section 106 agreement, which has now been signed by all parties, giving applicant Russell Homes the green light to move forward. The scheme is estimated to be worth £175m a year to the local economy once complete, and is set to create around 2,800 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs.



The section 106 agreement outlines in more detail what will be delivered as part of the project, includes:

- An allocation of £4.6m and land within the site for the creation of a new primary school
- 15 per cent affordable homes provision
- The creation of eight hectares of public open space, including a multi-use games area and sports pitches and a cash contribution to improve facilities at Heywood Sports village
- More than £1.8m towards the creation of a new bus route, new stops and cycle and walking routes throughout the area

The scheme, is the first development to come forward as part of the Northern Gateway site, which aims to create new housing and employment opportunities along the M62 corridor to rebalance the economy of Greater Manchester. If developed, the Northern Gateway, which covers Bury and Rochdale, would be the biggest employment site in the region, bringing 1.2m² of employment space, around 10,000 new jobs and up to 3,900 new homes.

Councillor John Blundell, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Regeneration at Rochdale Borough Council, said: "This development will unlock millions of pounds of investment for our borough and kickstart the crucial Northern Gateway project, which, if it goes

forward, will create the biggest opportunity site in greater Manchester within our borough.

We are confident this site will attract significant interest from major companies who are looking to invest here and create thousands of new jobs and homes."

Council leader Allen Brett, said: "Times are very challenging at present, but we want Rochdale to emerge from this even stronger. That's why it's vital that we plough ahead, wherever we can, with long term regeneration projects like this, which will be the source of major future prosperity for our borough and its residents."

The scheme is also set to bring additional highways benefits, with the link road creating

direct access to Heywood Distribution Park, reducing motorway congestion at Simister and taking HGVs away from Heywood town centre.

Tenders have been received for building the new road and a main contractor is expected to be appointed within the next two months, with plans to start on site towards the end of summer.

The road and employment space is expected to be complete sometime in 2022, with the entire project due for completion by 2035.



PDS to expand into new sectors

Fire door manufacturer PDS is pressing ahead with its expansion plans. Based in Littleborough, PDS – which stands for Performance Doorset Solutions – currently employs 97 people but managing director Tim Fairley said that number will increase.

“We are still on a recruitment drive and are just in the process of taking on another large manufacturing unit to expand into two other sectors for our product,” he said. “Watch this space.”

Fairley co-founded the company in 2003 and grew to a turnover of £13.5m and a workforce of 148 people when it was acquired by US-based door manufacturer Masonite International Corporation.

However, partly due to a production realignment, by 2018 turnover had dropped to £7m and the workforce to 60 when Masonite announced it was considering closing the Littleborough facility altogether.

Rather than see it close Fairley formed part of a 14-strong consortium that bought the business back in March 2019 and set about transforming its fortunes.

The company is a specialist in the manufacture of FD30 and FD60 security fire doors, with the number indicating the minimum minutes of protection the doors must offer against fires.

Fairley said momentum had picked up after they reopened their factory after the lockdown and had this message for the public: “Be positive and try to carry on as before if at all possible, within the rules of the ‘new normal’. Embrace change, but keep doing all of the good things you did prior to Covid-19.”

Fairley said Rochdale had forged a reputation for the strength of its business sector.

“Rochdale is a brilliant place for business and has a long history of manufacturing,” he said. “There’s a real community and we’re also blessed with being close to the motorway network. We know the talent pool in Rochdale but for those who don’t we’re Greater Manchester’s best kept secret.”

Why manufacturing is in Rochdale’s DNA

In the UK, manufacturing makes up 11% of GVA, 44% of total UK exports, 70% of business R&D, and directly employs 2.6 million people.

When it comes to placemaking, manufacturing is a crucial platform of Rochdale’s business sector and it was the subject of Rochdale Development Agency’s sixth monthly roundtable, held at the offices of Trelleborg.

A diverse panel of Rochdale manufacturers and sector experts looked at the importance of the sector to the borough and Greater Manchester.

Robert Lovelace, managing director, Trelleborg Rochdale, said: “Rochdale is clearly a centre of co-operative manufacturing. It’s a great way of generating a high value economy.”

Martin Shepherd, operations director, | JA Harrison, said: “Manufacturing is in your blood. I’m very proud when people say ‘what do you do?’ and I say ‘we make things.’ We manufacture from start to finish. It’s in your blood and it’s definitely in this area.”

Reet Dhallu, lead regional membership manager (GM North & South), Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, said: “We’re the largest chamber of commerce in the UK. Manufacturing is important for Great Manchester as a whole because we make things. Without that we can’t really move forward as an economy. It puts us on

a global scale in terms of export as well.”

Daniel W Shackleton, director, Salt Separation Services, said: “Rochdale has a historical legacy of manufacturing that was probably born out of the Industrial Revolution. The manufacturing sector is under the radar a bit in Rochdale and we have quite a strong export presence.”

Jane Campbell, business partnership manager at North West Engineering UK, said: “We want to inspire the next generation about the exciting careers in engineering and manufacturing because we know there is a shortfall of 59,000 engineers. We need them to fulfil the roles of the future and bring the UK forward.”

Dan Taylor, managing director, Kerf Developments, said: “Manufacturing is very important. Rochdale has a real history in manufacturing going back a number of years. It’s a good base for manufacturing. There are a lot of historical industrial premises here with the opportunity to build more. There is a skillset of manufacturing people within Rochdale and I think it has a good future for manufacturing.”

Andrew Wilding, managing director of NEMA, said: “Manufacturing is the backbone of Rochdale going back many years. What I do feel is that with the right training and encouragement the people of Rochdale can turn their hand to anything. They’ll produce you anything and they’re the best people in the country.”

Phil Burgess, finance director of Marathon Belting, said: “Manufacturing is Rochdale’s

proud heritage. We came to Rochdale from the West Midlands for that skillset. We have a can-do attitude.”

Joe Stockton, director of E4 Structures, said: “We make plastic products out of recycled plastics for the infrastructure industry. Traditionally manufacturing has been important for Rochdale for a long time, well over a century. We’ve got everything from the very basic types of manufacturing right through to the high tech and that’s what people don’t realise. There’s a large high tech manufacturing industry in Rochdale and I think we need to sell it out there. We need to sell Rochdale manufacturing throughout the UK and beyond.”

Phil Cornell, managing director of K P Industries said: “Rochdale has a great base of manufacturing companies, putting the borough’s DNA into world class products such as aeroplanes and the car industry.

We should sell Rochdale as much as we can, offering a career path to young people, demonstrating that if you go into manufacturing you can get a great quality of life out of it that will get them a nice house, a nice car, nice holidays and a good way of life for the future.”





RESPOND, RECOVER, THRIVE

CEO of Rochdale based Zen Internet, Paul Stobart looks at the three key phases of managing a business through a crisis with a focus on his approach to keeping things going at Zen during lockdown.

“Your people need to believe in you, especially in a time of crisis. Be authentic, lead from the front and be open, honest and transparent with all communications.”

PAUL STOBART
ZEN INTERNET

RESPOND – create a sense of team spirit and keep everyone engaged

Over the course of ten days in March Zen successfully redeployed 95 percent of its people to a homeworking environment. A skeleton crew remained on site at the company's headquarters at Sandbrook Park in Rochdale to look after the facility and the data centre.

With the vast majority of people redeployed, Paul recognised that open and honest communications was going to be essential to keep everyone engaged. “Having regular contact with everyone, which is easy to do when you are all in one location, becomes impossible when you're dispersed, so we spent a lot of time in the early days of lockdown working out the best way to communicate with and engage our people.”

That is how Paul came to introduce a twice-weekly internal vlog to help keep everyone informed.

“From the outset, I determined to be honest and transparent in sharing all news, whether good or bad. I went into a greater degree of detail than would otherwise have been the case. This was quite deliberate to ensure that everyone had as clear a view as possible as to exactly how we were doing during the crisis and as the weeks unfolded. I knew that people were worried as to how we were doing, so it made sense to me to tell it straight.”

Increased transparency and communication didn't just stop there. “Having a consistency of perspective, internally and externally, was

important. That's why I did vlogs for our customers and channel partners, particularly in late March and early April when the crisis was at its most uncertain, as I knew these audiences would be concerned about the impact of the crisis on the services we were able to provide.”

Acutely aware of the pressures being exerted on many of Zen's channel partners, Paul and his team shared weekly webinars on a range of issues including leadership, crisis management, and business continuity. These were well received.

RECOVER – have belief, passion, purpose and confidence, but with lashings of realism

The Recover phase is in many ways more difficult than the Response phase. In Response you are focused on survival, but in Recovery you have to plan for the future whilst at the same time recognising that the crisis is not yet completely behind you.

“You reach a really tricky crossover point: on the one hand you can't suggest or pretend that the crisis is behind us, but on the other hand you can't just put your head in the sand either – you have to take risk, plan for the future, and make judicious investments. But

you make these decisions in the sure knowledge that the crisis is still going and that you might need to change tack in a heartbeat.”

Paul's firm view is that any crisis will produce winners and losers, and, to be a winner, you need to get ready for the post-crisis world with a set of new and relevant propositions that will resonate with customers. At the same time, you have to factor into your planning the very real likelihood of having to put all plans into reverse should the external

situation deteriorate.

“In Zen's case, we have chosen to introduce a number of new propositions for our customers, particularly around home and flexible working, as well as high quality ultrafast broadband and these have been very well received. In parallel we have been investing in upgrading our exchange network, ensuring that the quality of our services remains best in class.”

THRIVE – a flight to quality

While Paul remains optimistic that a lot can be done in the Recovery phase, his thinking is turning more towards the Thrive phase that will follow.

“Right now, we are balancing Recovery against response, making investments in propositions and infrastructure where we believe we need to make a move, but we are cautious elsewhere. And that's for good reason, as a second wave of this virus could be very damaging. Also, we don't really know what will happen to the wider economy

once furlough support for jobs comes to an end in the autumn. With all this uncertainty we have to be careful. But it's still important to look beyond the crisis and to plan for that Thrive phase; the more planning we do now, the better.”

“We are fortunate at Zen in that we have enjoyed a surge in demand for high quality broadband services. As people, working and locked down at home, have become more reliant on their connectivity, they have sought out the best possible solutions. Our

Which? rating as most recommended broadband provider has really helped us justify our claim to be the best at what we do.”

Paul concludes, “At the end of all this there are going to be winners and losers. By leading your business confidently, but sensibly, through each phase of the crisis, you can shape yourself to become one of the winners.”

Rochdale Mayor officially opens The Trade Centre UK at Sandbrook Park

The ribbon was cut and the store officially opened by Mayor Sheerin late last year, to a round of applause from staff, onlookers and eager car shoppers. Trade Centre Group Chairman and founder Mark Bailey and Chief Executive Andy Coulthurst accompanied the Mayor and other Rochdale Council dignitaries on a tour of the former Homebase DIY store, now transformed into the region's largest car superstore.



The showroom stocks 1,000 used cars, all ready to drive away in an hour with the assurance of them probably being the UK's cheapest.

The Trade Centre UK has also acquired a nearby ex-Honda dealership on Queensway to facilitate vehicle logistics and also a state-of-the-art customer care suite.

Chairman and founder of The Trade Centre Group, Mark Bailey, said: "The welcome we have had in the borough is amazing, no matter who you speak to, whether it be the mayor, council leaders or the dozens of customers buying their new car on our opening day, everyone has been so welcoming and friendly.

"We founded this business in 1999 and have opened numerous stores in Wales and across the West Midlands; we are proud to have chosen Rochdale as the location for our first car superstore in the North West."

The Trade Centre UK's entry into Rochdale creates 130 jobs for the area along with significant investment in supply chain and support services.

Andy Coulthurst, CEO of Trade Centre Group said: "I have lived in or around Rochdale all of my life, so it was no surprise to me that value-driven car shoppers inundated us on our opening

day.

"Modern day consumers want immediacy of delivery and a no-fuss retail process, we fulfil this with our 'drive away in one hour concept' which is backed by a panel of 12 finance lenders, enabling our customers to have their new car on their driveway on the very same day they choose it."

The Mayor of Rochdale, Billy Sheerin, said: "We welcome Mark and his team to the borough, such a long-established business is sure to be a huge success, not only serving the people of Rochdale but also car buyers from across the North West.

"We met many of the staff, all recruited locally, during our tour and they all seemed engaged and excited to be part of the team; the showroom looks wonderful."

Mark Robinson, Assistant Director, Rochdale Borough Council, said: "We are really pleased to welcome Trade Centre UK to Rochdale for what it the company's first site in the North West. I am sure that they will be a valued member of the local community and wish the company every success with this new site."

The Trade Centre Group was founded by Mark Bailey in 1999 and remains 100% owned by the Bailey family. The company has grown considerably over the last few years and sits at number 90 in the Sunday Times Top Track 250.

Addisol 3D printing specialist moves into Logic at Kingsway

3D printing specialist Addisol is the latest arrival at Rochdale Council's Logic development at Kingsway Business Park – meaning the site is almost fully let just 12 months after completion.

The company has signed a five-year lease for a 4,677 sq ft industrial unit as it ramps up production of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the NHS and other customers. It will initially employ six people on the site and has ambitions to increase staffing to 24 in the next two years.

Logic is a new development of 11 industrial units at Kingsway Business Park in Rochdale, adjacent to Junction 21 of the M62 motorway. It is managed by Rochdale Development Agency (RDA), on behalf of the council.

RDA chairman Paul Ormerod said: "It's very encouraging that a high-tech business with an ambitious plan to grow has chosen Rochdale as its home. With brand new units and a superb location, Logic at Kingsway is exactly the right place for new and expanding businesses like Addisol."

Councillor John Blundell, an RDA board member and Rochdale Council cabinet member for Regeneration, said: "This is another scoop for Logic, which is fully justifying the council's investment in the scheme and the work of the RDA to deliver it."

Addisol will spend the next six months focusing on the production of PPE to help in the fight against Covid-19. It supplies CE-approved protective face shields for the NHS through a distribution deal with a number of NHS suppliers across the UK.

The expert team behind Addisol had previously helped set up a national network of 3D printing specialists that currently supplies the NHS with 4,500 protective masks a day.

Addisol director Mason Rowbottom said: "We're delighted to open our central 3D hub at Logic which will allow us to continue supplying much needed PPE to the NHS and other organisations as frontline staff battle the coronavirus epidemic. Kingsway is a great location for us, superbly connected to Greater Manchester and the North of England."

Of the 11 units at Logic, six are now occupied and three are under offer with a deals close to completion. The two last remaining units which range from 6,185 to 12,663 sq ft are fully available.



Other tenants at Logic include KP Industries, which designs and manufactures, automated handling and conveying systems and Commercial Blinds and Glazing, which is one of the UK's leading manufacturers and suppliers of high-quality blinds and glazing solutions for business.

An architectural rendering of a modern, curved glass building with a white, wave-like roof. The building is illuminated from within, showing multiple floors and a large interior space. The sky is a deep blue with some clouds. In the foreground, there is a paved area with some greenery and a small pond.

Boost for Rochdale Manufacturing Institute

The National Physical Laboratory (NPL), in partnership with Rochdale Development Agency, Milnrow-based PTG Holroyd Precision, the University of Huddersfield and University of Salford, have secured £50,000 early-stage funding for the AMPI in Rochdale through the UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Strength in Places Fund (SIPF). The institute will drive innovation for the UK's advanced machinery manufacturers and will generate around 660 new direct jobs and 530 indirect jobs across the region.

Tony Bannan, CEO of Holroyd and Precision Technologies Group, has long campaigned for the creation of an Institute in Rochdale to meet the rising skills gap facing manufacturers.

He said: "Our ambition is for AMPI to become a practical, accessible and potentially transformative resource for regional and national manufacturing companies – of all sizes. If your company needs machines, new technologies, advanced processes or integrated systems to make your products, or if you need targeted innovation and skills to improve productivity and competitiveness, then AMPI will help you.

"Paul Ormerod, chairman of the Rochdale Development Agency, said he was delighted at the news. "As a forward-thinking and innovative manufacturing location, Rochdale is pleased to have been a long-term collaborative partner of the AMPI," he said. "We recognise that the institute will be the catalyst that drives a manufacturing technology revolution. It will foster the innovation that will generate wealth, improve skills and deliver prosperity for Rochdale and North of England."

AMPI is seen as a potential catalyst for an innovation district which could be located at Kingsway Business Park. The industry-led project has the support of Rochdale Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Manchester architects Fairhursts Design Group have advised the team and produced an artist's impression of what the new facility might look like.

The £50,000 seed funding from the UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Strength in Places Fund (SIPF) is seen as crucial because it could potentially unlock up to £50m once the project has been fully delivered.

The AMPI will provide a safe space, technical resources and the skills pipeline needed for advanced machinery innovation to flourish.

Its skills focus will provide a channel for local education providers to develop a sustained cohort of skilled staff. They, in combination with the more resilient and innovative supplier base, will make the region a more attractive place for inward investment.

National Physical Laboratory's (NPL) head of engineering, Paul Shore, added: "The AMPI initiative is a direct response to the need for the UK to improve its productivity. AMPI will support UK companies in developing machinery and automation products. It is these intelligent production systems that will facilitate UK productivity improvement through greater digitisation and automation within our future manufacturing landscape."

UKRI's Strength in Places Fund is a pathfinder programme investing in research and innovation projects to boost research and innovation capacity in specific areas of the UK, driving economic growth in those areas.

The AMP Institute will engage with over 40 companies across the region, with more being added nationwide, and work in partnership to improve the resilience of UK Advanced Machinery Manufacturing innovation and supply chains.



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