

9th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly

City Tower Unit Trust

Planning and Design and Access Statement

CBRE Limited
On Behalf of City Tower Unit Trust

April 2022

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1.0 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning and Design and Access Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited on behalf of City Tower Unit Trust c/o Schroder Real Estate Investment Management(the 'Applicant') in support of a full planning application submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC).
- 1.2 The application seeks Full planning permission for the change of use of the 9th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AH ('the Site') from Office use (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)).
- 1.3 The description of development is as follows:

'Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 9th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.'

Contextual Background

- 1.4 The Applicant purchased City Tower in 2014 and since acquiring the asset has been fully committed to working with MCC and partners to improve the building and its environs to ensure the building's maximum potential can be realised.
- 1.5 The 9th floor of City Tower has been vacant since June 2019. The Applicant has extensively marketed the Site for over a year in an attempt to secure a new occupier; however, no firm interest has been received from prospective tenants and it remains vacant. In total 19% of workspace element of the building is currently vacant (equating to 6,226 sq m).
- 1.6 Due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is limited demand for office suites between 500 and 1,000 sqm in Manchester City Centre as office occupiers within this size band have typically downsized due to changing working practices. This dynamic has exacerbated the Applicant's ability to let vacant floorspace at City Tower.
- 1.7 This Full planning application for office and education use is therefore being progressed in the context of these challenging market conditions. The education provider LSC has been identified as a prospective tenant at the 9th Floor and as such a change of use to education is required. However, a dual permission for office and education is being sought to bring a degree of flexibility to the operations which can take place at the site.
- 1.8 A dual planning permission for office and education would ensure that there would be no loss of employment provision with an office tenant able to occupy the Site should one be identified.

Pre-application Engagement

- 1.9 Prior to the submission of this Full planning application, the proposed development has been discussed with MCC as part of pre-application engagement. Planning Officer James Hughes confirmed via email on the 5th of January 2022 that a planning application seeking a dual permission for office and education use at the 9th Floor of City Tower would be considered appropriate, and that it would not result in the loss of employment floorspace and therefore an Economic Statement would not be required.

Application Submission

1.10 The following information has been submitted in support of the application together with the requisite planning application fee:

Table 1.1: Submission documents

SUBMISSION DOCUMENT	PREPARED BY
Planning Application Form	CBRE Limited
Planning and Design and Access Statement	CBRE Limited
Waste Proforma	CBRE Limited
Site Location Plan	Cumming Group
Existing Ninth Floor Plan (10405/008/16)	Cumming Group
Proposed Ninth Floor Plan (907-SK141220 Rev B)	Cumming Group
Transport Statement	Cora IHT

1.2 Statement Structure

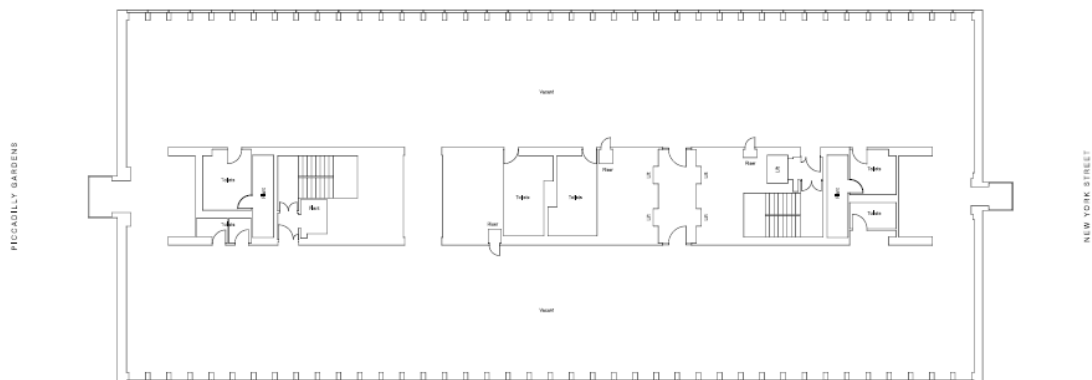
- 1.11 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2: Site and Surroundings** – describes the application site, its wider context, and sets out its relevant planning history;
 - **Section 3: Proposed Development** describes the proposed development for which planning permission is sought;
 - **Section 4: Planning Policy Context** – sets out the relevant policies of the statutory development plan and other material considerations;
 - **Section 5: Planning Assessment** – assesses the proposed scheme against planning policies and other material considerations; and
 - **Section 6: Summary Conclusions** – summarises the key matters raised in the Statement and provides a conclusion.

2.0 Site & Surroundings

Site Context

- 2.1 As shown on Figure 2.1 below, the application site extends to 847.5 sqm and comprises the 9th Floor of City Tower. The Site is bound to the north by Parker Street, to the east by Portland Street, to the south by New York Street, and to the west by Mosley Street.

FIGURE 2.1 : EXISTING SITE LAYOUT PLAN



- 2.2 Despite marketing efforts by the applicant to attract new office occupiers, the unit has been vacant since June 2019. The current condition of the space is illustrated in Fig. 2.2 - Fig.2.3 below.

FIGURE 2.2

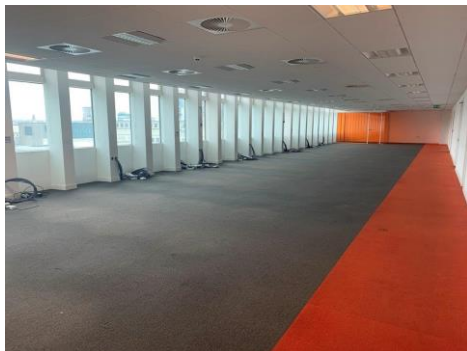
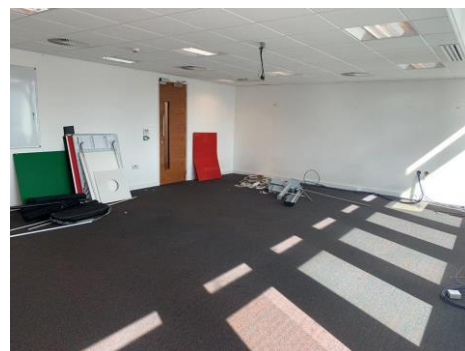


FIGURE 2.3



- 2.3 City Tower is a 28 storey, 57,175 sqm office-led mixed-use building located at the heart of Manchester City Centre. It is let to a wide-range of tenants including Amey, Sheppard Robson, the University of Law, Oodle Car Finance, Access Pay, Plexus Legal, Hempsons and Hays Recruitment.
- 2.4 Pedestrian access to the building is provided from Parker Street and New York Street. Car parking and cycle storage provision at City Tower is strictly controlled. A secure car-deck and NCP car park is accessible by vehicles from New York Street. From the car-deck there is access to a reception area and the office accommodation.

Statutory Designations

- 2.5 The site is not subject to Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, or Schedule Ancient Monument heritage constraints. However, the Upper King Street Conservation Area is adjacent to the site to the north-west. The site is not located in an area at risk from flooding, as confirmed by the Environment Agency flood maps.

Planning History

- 2.6 A search of the Council's online planning register has been undertaken and planning history relevant to the proposed development is set out at table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Planning History

APPLICATION REF. NO.	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	DECISION
124466/FO/2019	Sixth Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Change of use of 6th floor from office (Use Class B1) to non-residential educational facility (Use Class D1)	Approved 01/11/2019
103675/FU/2013/C2	Fourth Floor 2 New York Street Manchester M1 4HJ	Change of use of 4th floor from gymnasium use (D2) to non-residential education and training centre (D1) (extension of D1 use on third floor)	Approved 05/12/2013
084081/FO/2007/C2	Piccadilly Plaza Units At Basement, Ground And First Floor On York Street, Portland Street And Parker Street Below Hotel City	Elevational alterations and change of use as follows: (a) Basement Level to Class A1, A2, A3 or B1 use with 36 car parking spaces; (b) Ground Floor Level Units K, L, M and N to Class A1, A2, A3 and D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium); (c) Ground Floor Level - office entrance to Class B1, D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium); (d) First Floor Level to Class A1, A2, B1, D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium)	Approved 10/10/2007

- 2.7 The planning applications identified above demonstrate that the principle of a change of use to non-residential education at City Tower has previously been considered acceptable by the Council.

Other Relevant Planning History

- 2.8 In addition to the above, the Council has recently permitted the conversion of office provision to education use in the City where suitable justification has been provided, as detailed at table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Planning History

APPLICATION REF. NO.	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	DECISION
128064/FO/2020	3 Universal Square Devonshire Street North Manchester M12 6JH	Change of use of part of first floor from offices (Class E) to education facility (Class F.1)	Approved 18/12/2020

126193/FO/2020	3 Universal Square Devonshire Street North Manchester M12 6JH	Change of use of part of block 4, third floor from offices (Class B1) to education facility (Class D1)	Approved 20/08/2020
124419/FO/2019	3rd Floor Bridgewater House 58 - 60 Whitworth Street Manchester M1 6LS	Change of use of part of 3rd floor from offices (Use Class B1) to non-residential education and training (Use Class D1)	Approved 11/11/2019

Site Surroundings

- 2.9 The surrounding area is characterised by a range of uses, reflecting the Site's location at the heart of Manchester City Centre. The surrounding buildings share similar characteristics and uses as City Tower, comprising a range of uses at ground floor level with office provision above.
- 2.10 The Site is adjacent to Piccadilly Gardens, a central node in Manchester's transport network. Piccadilly Gardens benefits from a Metrolink tram stop and is a key location in the bus network, with various bus routes along Parker Street immediately to the north of the site, and Piccadilly to the north of Piccadilly Gardens.
- 2.11 Piccadilly Gardens also acts as a key civic space, comprising grassed areas, a fountain, and a Pavilion building with local amenities. A number of monuments and statutes are also located at Piccadilly Gardens, all of which are Grade II Listed, and a Pavilion building.
- 2.12 In October 2021, MCC launched a design competition to revitalise Piccadilly Gardens into a world class space with a strong sense of identity. It envisages a space that retains a strong cultural function while providing more generous open space and biodiversity enhancements. The design competition is a staged process, with Stage 2 currently underway.

Accessibility and Sustainability

- 2.13 The Site is in a highly sustainable location with City Tower scoring 8 out of 8 in the Greater Manchester Accessibility Level model. This score reflects how the Site is immediately adjacent and in close proximity to a variety of transport modes.

Walking

- 2.14 The Site is highly accessible on foot and is situated within easy walking distance of a range of places of employment, services, and amenities. There is considerable pedestrian infrastructure close to the site, all of which is well maintained.

Cycling

- 2.15 City Tower benefits from a Cycle Hub, located in the basement of the building which includes 200 cycle spaces, showers, and cycle storage facilities.

Metrolink

- 2.16 The site is immediately adjacent to the Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink tram stop, a tram stop at the centre of the network which either directly serves or is in close proximity to tram stops which serve the entire Metrolink network including Greater Manchester towns Oldham, Rochdale, Aston-under-Lyme, Bury, and Altrincham.

Bus

- 2.17 Piccadilly Gardens Bus Interchange on Parker Street is a key node in the local bus network. The franchises which serve Parker Street include Stagecoach Manchester, Arriva, and First Manchester. Bus services at Parker Street provide travel opportunities throughout Greater Manchester and the north west.

Train

- 2.18 Manchester Piccadilly station, a major transport interchange, is an 8-minute walk from the site (0.4 miles to the south-east).

Car

- 2.19 The existing second floor car-deck comprises 172 car parking spaces, as well as motorcycle and cycle spaces (circa. 200 in total).
- 2.20 In addition to the above, Manchester Piccadilly Gardens NCP Car Park is located within City Tower. This car park has 712 car parking spaces, 8 disabled bays, and car-electric charging points. It is open between the hours of 05:30 and 23:30 Monday to Sunday and benefits from a 24hr contact centre.

Summary

- 2.21 In summary, City Tower is situated in a highly sustainable location within the City Centre and is accessible in terms of walking, cycle, and public transport. Furthermore, City Tower has a Travel Plan in place with car parking / cycle storage being strictly managed.

3.0 Proposed Development

Description of Development

3.1 As detailed in the introduction, full planning permission is sought for:

‘Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 9th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.’

Use

3.2 It is proposed to change the lawful use of the 9th floor of City Tower from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)).

Occupier

3.1 The proposed use will be occupied by the London School of Commerce (LSC), an independent higher education provider. LSC deliver a range of business and management degree programmes.

3.2 The proposed facilities at City Tower will facilitate the provision of Levels 4-6 undergraduate and Level 7 business and management postgraduate programs.

Amount

3.3 The proposed F1(a) use would occupy the entirety of the 9th floor and would extend to 847.5 sq m (9,123 sq ft).

3.4 It is proposed that the facility will accommodate a maximum of 200 people at any one time, with the average occupancy being around 175 students and up to 8 no. members of staff.

Layout

3.5 As shown on the accompanying Proposed General Arrangement Plan (907-SK141220 Rev B) the 9th floor will be fitted out to provide the following educational facilities:

- Class room x 5
- Office
- Reception Area
- Kitchen
- Library and IT Area
- Breakout Area

3.6 The above would be arranged around the central core comprising plant rooms, stair and lift provision and separate men's and women's WC's.

3.7 The kitchen would contain fridges but no cooking appliances (i.e. microwave/ ovens). The extraction for this area would be the same for other kitchen spaces provided within the building and therefore no additional extraction provision is considered necessary.

Access

Pedestrian

3.8 Pedestrian access to the property will be taken via existing entrances on New York Street or Parker Street.

- 3.9 Students will be provided with passes that will enable access through the security barriers and into the lift core. Lifts will be pre-programmed to take students directly to the 9th floor.

Disabled Access

- 3.10 Access to the 9th floor will be via a lift from the existing access point off Parker Street. Safe level access can be achieved into and throughout the building.

Parking

- 3.11 As detailed in the accompanying Transport Statement, vehicular parking is not proposed to be provided as part of the application although there is a Travel Plan in place for the building and access will be made available to the secure cycle storage facility for those students who wish to cycle.
- 3.12 The site is sustainably located and is accessible by public transport. The site is located a short walk from Manchester Piccadilly station. A bus interchange is also located at Piccadilly Gardens, directly adjacent to the site where buses serve the wider Manchester area tend to start and end. Additionally, Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink stop is located immediately adjacent to the site.
- 3.13 A series of public car parks are located within close proximity to the site.

Management Plan

Security

- 3.14 Ensuring the safety of occupiers is of paramount importance to the applicant. As such, the proposed development will be subject to existing security arrangements for City Tower which are actively managed by the facilities management team.
- 3.15 Each student will be issued with an ID card and pass to operate the reception barriers/ lifts during teaching hours, manned at all times by a staff on reception. Lifts will be pre-programmed to take students/ staff directly to the 9th floor where there will be a further reception within the educational facility.
- 3.16 Students will have a building induction which will include information on the fire alarm procedure and other relevant matters. Students will be encouraged to avoid congregating outside the building, something that will be monitored by staff and the facilities manager.

Hours of Operation

- 3.17 It is proposed that the standard teaching hours will be Monday to Friday 8.30am – 18:30pm, while the building would open from around 8am for staff/ student arrivals. During exam periods, students may wish to study in the library until 19:30pm. The facility would be closed on weekends and bank holidays.
- 3.18 The above opening hours are in line with current business hours observed by other offices within City Tower.

Waste and Servicing Management

- 3.19 As detailed in the accompanying waste proforma the proposed use will be subject the existing waste management and serving strategy at the building overseen by the facilities management team. Waste and recycling will continue to be stored as existing on the ground floor within the loading bays as shown in Appendix A. Waste storage is currently arranged as follows:
- Loading Bay 1 & 2 – 10 no. general waste and 6 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers;
 - Loading Bay 3 – 9 no. general waste and 3 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers;

- Loading Bay 4 – 1 no. general waste 1,100 litre container
- Total – 20 no. general waste and 9 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers. In terms of local waste storage, recycling and general waste bins will be provided in the kitchen area.

Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers – Noise

- 3.20 No amplified sounds will be played as part of operations at the facility and it is considered that noise from the floor would be confined to that usually expected in an office environment.

External Works

- 3.21 No external works are proposed as part of this application.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

Planning and Policy Context

- 4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“The Act”) establishes the legislative background for town planning in England and Wales. Section 38(6) of The Act requires that proposals are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The statutory development plan documents for MCC which are relevant to the proposed development comprise:
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012); and
 - ‘Saved’ policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted 1995).
- 4.3 In terms of emerging policy, MCC are preparing a Local Plan. Once adopted, the Local Plan will replace and Core Strategy and saved UDP policies. The Local Plan is in its infancy with an Issues Consultation having taken place in Spring 2020.
- 4.4 The Site’s land-use allocation and development plan policies of specific relevance to the proposed development are set out below.

Allocation

- 4.5 The Site is located within the Regional and City Centre policy areas and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), as displayed on the Council’s adopted proposal map.

Core Strategy

- 4.6 The Core Strategy (2012) is the primary document in MCC’s Local Development Framework. It seeks to guide development in the City and provides the starting point for planning applications, establishing the overall vision, spatial objectives, and strategic planning policies.
- 4.7 A review of the associated Proposals Map confirms that the application site is located within the Regional and City Centre policy areas and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA). It is considered that the following planning policies are most pertinent to the site and the proposed development.

Economy

- 4.8 Manchester benefits from a strong economy, major higher education institutions and a good transport network. However, the Core Strategy acknowledges that there are still a number of major challenges faced by the City. As noted at paragraph 2.28, *“improving access to employment and education”* is a key challenge to be addressed.
- 4.9 **Strategic Objective SO2 ‘Economy’** supports improvements to the City’s economic performance to reduce economic, social, and environmental disparities. It states that (CBRE emphasis in bold):
- 4.10 *“The Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for business, retail, **higher education**, leisure, cultural and tourism development, to further develop its role as the main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region”.*
- 4.11 **Policy SP1 ‘Spatial Principles’** seeks to guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity alongside high-quality city living.

- 4.12 **Policy EC1 ‘Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester’** confirms that the Council will support other significant contributors to economic growth and productivity, including educational facilities, in the City Centre in line with Policy C1 ‘City Centre and Fringe’.
- 4.13 **Policy CC7 ‘Mixed Use Development’** states that the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development. Proposals for a mix of uses will be promoted as a means of using land as efficiently as possible.
- 4.14 **Policy CC 10 ‘A Place for Everyone’** identifies that the City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors.

Amenity

- 4.15 **Policy DM1 ‘Development Management’** seeks to ensure that all proposed developments have regard to specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention, vehicular access, and, green infrastructure.

Transport

- 4.16 **Policy T2 ‘Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need’** outlines how the Council will manage development to ensure a level of car parking within the City Centre which reflects the highly accessible nature of the location. All development should have regard for the need for disabled and cycle parking in line with these standards.

‘Saved’ Policies of the Unitary Development Plan

- 4.17 The UDP was adopted in 1995 with the majority of policies ‘saved’ by a Secretary of State direction. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012, the majority of its policies were superseded.
- 4.18 Those ‘saved’ policies that remain extant will be replaced by the emerging Local Plan which will guide development in the city until 2038

Noise

- 4.19 **DC26.1 ‘Development and Noise’** states that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. The Council will consider both the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise and the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.

Material Considerations

- 4.20 The following are considered to be of specific relevance to the proposed development.

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021);
- Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007);
- Emerging Manchester Local Plan; and
- MCC Validation Requirements (2018)

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.21 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

- 4.22 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan ‘without delay’ (paragraph 11c).
- 4.23 Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking this means:
- “...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
- i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

Section 4 – Decision Making

- 4.24 In terms of decision-taking, Paragraph 38 is clear that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should approach decisions on proposed development in a “*positive and creative way*”. LPAs should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The NPPF advises that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Section 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 4.25 Paragraph 81 requires that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

- 4.26 Paragraph 120 states that planning decisions should “*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings*”.
- 4.27 Paragraph 123 states that LPAs should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

Guide to Development in Manchester (April 2007)

- 4.28 The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD was adopted on 11 April 2007. The document reflects and provides guidance on the importance of creating attractive, well designed, well maintained neighbourhoods. It includes a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development which is anticipated in Manchester.

Emerging Manchester Local Plan

- 4.29 As set out in the Council’s Executive Reports dated 15 January 2020, the new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the remaining ‘saved’ UDP policies, taking account of the Our Manchester strategy, the emerging GMSF, the NPPF, and Greater Manchester’s new devolved planning powers.
- 4.30 The new Local Plan will seek to respond to key strategic issues including achieving a zero carbon Manchester by 2038 at the latest; delivering a sustainable transport system that supports existing and further

development; balancing competing demands for space; ensuring critical infrastructure requirements are addressed; and creating neighbourhoods that promote and enable healthy lifestyles.

- 4.31 The Issues Consultation document was consulted on for a period of eight weeks from 7 February 2020. Consultation on an Integrated Appraisal as part of the development of the new Local Plan ran for five weeks from Friday 25 August 2021 to Friday 1 October 2021.

MCC Validation Requirements (September 2018)

- 4.32 In September 2018 MCC published its updated validation checklist. Of particular relevance to the proposals are the following provisions:

Applications involving educational facilities

- 4.33 Applications for D1 (now F1(a)) Education Facilities need to be accompanied by the following information:
- Which subjects would be taught here and how would they be taught?
 - At what level would subjects be taught?
 - How does this fit in with educational provision in Manchester?
 - How many students would attend this facility in total? Additionally, how many students would be in each class, how many classes would take place at once and how many students would be in attendance in total at any one time?
 - Provision of a management plan detailing how students congregating outside the building would be prevented.
 - Confirmation as to who the educational facility is regulated by and registered with, e.g. is it licensed/recognised by the Home Office or Ofsted?
 - Confirmation if any amplified sounds are to be played.
 - Confirmation of when the units will be in operation.
 - Photographs of the proposed locations.

5.0 Planning Assessment

Assessment of Scheme Proposals

- 5.1. The following section summarises the relevant planning considerations that should be taken into account when determining this planning application.

Principle of Development

- 5.2. The lawful use at the Site is Use Class E office. Planning permission is therefore not required for office provision at the Site.
- 5.3. Planning permission is sought for office and education use to bring a degree of flexibility to the Site. A flexible planning permission for office and education use would not result in the loss of employment provision but would enable vacant floorspace to be occupied, with the education provider LSC lined up to occupy the unit.
- 5.4. Despite marketing efforts, the Site has been vacant for since June 2019. The Site currently makes no beneficial contribution to the City's economy and hasn't done for some time. The proposed development would bring the space back into beneficial use, securing additional employment in the City, and contribute to economic growth in Manchester. In the longer term, students of the proposed educational facility may seek to remain within the City creating an additional pool of highly qualified and employable people needed to maintain the Council's growth aspirations. Furthermore, the proposals would secure indirect economic benefits through the additional spend of students in the local area.
- 5.5. Manchester's Core Strategy provides a strong policy position for educational use at the site. Strategic Objective SO2 positions the Regional Centre, encompassing the site, as the main focus for higher education. Core Strategy Policy SP1 states that the Regional Centre is the primary economic driver for the city region, and establishes that a range of uses are considered to be acceptable in planning terms.
- 5.6. Mixed use development is encouraged as a way of ensuring land and buildings are utilised efficiently (Core Strategy Policy CC7). Policy EC1 confirms that the Council will support other significant contributors to economic growth and productivity, including educational facilities, in the City Centre. Furthermore, Core Strategy Policy CC10 encourages the development of the City Centre in terms of its appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors.
- 5.7. The proposed development would bring back into use vacant floorspace and is therefore considered to represent an efficient use of land. By extension, the proposed development would facilitate economic benefits for the City Centre and the wider city region. It will further enhance the mixed-use nature of City Tower and its immediate surroundings, helping to bring a wide range of users into the area.
- 5.8. Furthermore, the principle of the acceptability of 'non-residential education facility' at City Tower has already been established by the conversion of the sixth floor from office use to educational use (ref. 124466/FO/2019). There are also recent examples elsewhere in the City Centre where the Council has approved the change of use of vacant office premises to non-residential educational facilities, including two separate floors at 11 Portland Street which is within 100m of the site (ref. 125143/FO/2019 and ref. 114788/FO/2016), and at the listed St James' Buildings (ref. 112022/FO/2016/C2).
- 5.9. Section 6 of the NPPF lends support to the expansion of the educational provision at City Tower. Paragraph 81 requires planning decisions to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Generally, there has been limited demand for office suites between 500 to 1,000 sq.m in Manchester City Centre as office occupiers within this size band have typically downsized due to changing working practices as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The change of use of the site to education use would be in the spirit of paragraph 81 and would ensure that vacant floorspace can be brought back into use.
- 5.10. In light of the above, the principle of the proposed educational use is considered to be entirely acceptable in this highly accessible City Centre location. The proposals therefore fully accord with Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC7, CC10 and EC1, and the various provisions of the NPPF.

Accessibility

- 5.11. Core Strategy Policies T2 and DM1 outline the need to provide sustainable access to proposed development, including the need to ensure an appropriate level of car parking in highly accessible locations.
- 5.12. The site is located within the City Centre and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport (including train, Metrolink and bus) and therefore it is anticipated that trips to the application site would likely be made by sustainable modes of transport. Given the sustainable location of the Site, no allocated car parking provision is proposed, however secure cycle spaces will be made available as required.
- 5.13. An accompanying Transport Statement has been submitted with this application which provides further detail of the site's highly accessible location and the transport options available.
- 5.14. The proposed development is therefore considered to fully accord with Core Strategy Policy T2 and DM1 together with provisions of the NPPF.

Amenity

- 5.15. Core Strategy Policy DM1 requires that effects on amenity are taken into account in proposed development, including noise, light and community safety. 'Saved' UDP Policy DC26.1 specifically requires development to reduce the impact of noise on City Centre residents, workers and visitors.
- 5.16. As stated in Chapter 3 of this statement, no amplified sounds will be played as part of operations at the proposed educational facility. It is considered that noise from the floor would be confined to that usually expected in an office environment. As such, there would be no material change to any noise impact which might reasonably be expected from the site's previous use by an office occupier.
- 5.17. In line with the existing security arrangements at City Tower, access to the site will be securely monitored to ensure that only registered students and staff are able to operate the security barriers using a designated pass. All students will have a building induction to ensure they are aware of the safety and security procedures at the building.
- 5.18. Students will be instructed not to congregate outside the entrances to the building to ensure the amenity of surrounding building occupiers and those visiting the area. The proposed development will be actively managed to ensure that these standards are upheld and maintained.
- 5.19. Furthermore, the proposed development is set to have a positive impact on vehicle movements at the site, with a likely reduction in vehicular trips anticipated as a result of a change of use to education, as set out in the accompanying Transport Statement.
- 5.20. Taking the above measures into consideration, the proposed change of use to an educational facility fully accords with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy DM1 and DC26.1.

6.0 Summary Conclusions

Summary and Conclusion

- 6.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited, on behalf of City Tower Unit Trust c/o Schroder Real Estate Investment Management, in support of a Full planning application submitted to MCC in relation to the 9th floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AH.
- 6.2. Full planning permission is sought for:

‘Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 9th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.’
- 6.3. The proposal seeks the change of use of vacant office floorspace to office and a non-residential education facility. As a change of use application, the proposed development relates to internal alterations only. The proposed development would bring a degree of flexibility to the unit to ensure it can be occupied in the long-term whilst enabling LSC to occupy the unit for education purposes.
- 6.4. The proposed development will result in vacant floorspace, which currently doesn’t contribute to achieving economic aspirations in the City, being brought back into beneficial use. The proposals will also contribute to achieving improved educational attainment in the City, creating an additional pool of highly qualified and employable people needed to maintain the Council’s growth aspirations.
- 6.5. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) requires applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.6. The proposed development has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the development plan and other material considerations and it is considered that the proposal is in accordance, and therefore we respectfully request the application is approved without delay.