

Castlefield Viaduct

Temporary Change of Use to Urban Park for a Period of 20 Months

Planning Supporting Statement



September 2021

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1. Introduction

1.1 The National Trust and Urban Places Programme

- 1.1.1 The National Trust is a charity and Europe's largest conservation organisation. Our estate encompasses a wide variety of heritage assets, from iconic WHS designated areas of lake and high fell landscape, to large country estates, to vernacular buildings of local historic value. Although we own no properties within the City of Manchester, we have a strong presence in the wider Greater Manchester and Cheshire area, notably the Dunham Massey Estate and Quarry Bank Mill.
- 1.1.2 Our approach to the management of these areas reflects the approach set out in paragraph 189 of the NPPF: *These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*
- 1.1.3 Conservation is at the heart of all the decisions that the Trust makes. We also place great weight upon the second part of the above quotation – the need to ensure that these assets continue to be of relevance, and enjoyed.
- 1.1.4 Our ten-year strategy, 'Playing our Part', recognises the current threats of housing pressure and reduced local authority spending, to urban green space and built heritage, and is committed to explore ways of working with others to deliver our charitable purpose beyond our boundaries. This is based on our founding principles and Octavia Hill's belief that people need historic, beautiful and natural places, and that these should be easily accessible from the places they live and work.
- 1.1.5 The Trust believes it's more important than ever that we should play our part in helping people protect the local places which are important to them. This has led to the development of our Urban Places Programme, which aims to utilise the Trust's resources and skills in heritage management to work in partnership with landowners, statutory bodies and community groups, to deliver conservation benefits beyond our land ownership. Castlefield Viaduct is a priority project for our Urban Places Team.

1.2 Castlefield Viaduct

- 1.2.1 Castlefield Viaduct is a currently unused, Grade II, 330m long, beautiful historic structure at the heart of central Manchester with great potential and capacity for repurposing. It is currently owned by the Department for Transport (DfT) and maintained by the Historic Railways Estate (HRE) which is part of Highways England (HE).
- 1.2.2 The viaduct was built in 1893 and is nationally significant in terms of Victorian era railway engineering and architecture. It was constructed by Heenan & Froude (who also constructed Blackpool Tower) and utilised cutting-edge metallurgy and construction techniques for the period. It sits within a confluence of Victorian industrial connectivity where canals, bridges, viaducts, roads and tunnels intertwine within the historic Castlefield district of Manchester.

1.3 Vision and Role of the National Trust

- 1.3.1 Aligned to the National Trust's Urban Places strategy, we are committed to the vision of bringing the viaduct back into use, reimagining the space as a free to enter, accessible, elevated urban park with integrated active travel hub. Our Vision for the viaduct is as follows:

Reimagine Castlefield viaduct as an iconic urban park destination providing nature and greenspace amenity for the local community and attracting visitors from further afield, all whilst respecting the heritage fabric of the listed structure, complementing existing plans and initiatives in the city and supporting active travel across a wider network.

- 1.3.2 The project will provide a new, walkable greenspace amenity for the city, act as beacon for urban heritage re-use and quality placemaking and provide an active travel 'stepping stone' encouraging sustainable access to nature and attractions to the south of the city. By creating a new high profile destination and dwell use it will encourage visitors into the city supporting the local economy and Manchester's profile as a premier destination.
- 1.3.3 We will work in partnership and co-create the project with others, particularly engaging with underrepresented and underserved groups within the city.
- 1.3.4 Once created, we want to activate the new park with partners and make use of the space in many ways. This could range from exhibitions, fruit and vegetable growing, sculptures, work space, onward travel information, community meeting space and quieter areas where people can meander through nature and green space.

2. The Development

2.1 Proposed Approach

- 2.1.1 The viaduct is a complex site in terms of the structure, condition, ownership, heritage, required consents for development, proximity of live railway and interests of neighbouring parties. To progress the project in a way sensitive to risk and complexity a two-phase approach to project development, delivery and acquisition is being pursued.
- 2.1.2 **This application seeks a temporary consent, only in regard to Phase One; the temporary urban park project.** The process for progressing planning permission for Phase Two is anticipated to commence in late 2022.
- 2.1.3 The approach proposed by **Phase One** is to operate a temporary urban park and visitor attraction between June 2022 and July 2023 under temporary licence from the current site owners (Department for Transport). The park will utilise approximately 50% of the current deck with one access/egress point from the car park to the East.
- 2.1.4 Phase One will:
- Provide both a wonderful destination for visits but also offer a canvas for experimentation and learning – testing the art of the possible around urban nature, heritage interpretation and community use that will inform the Phase Two design, operation and conservation strategy
 - Enable use as a venue to host co-design and collaboration events with the community and strategic partners
 - Create a practical focal point for fundraising activities and gain the needed political and broader city region support
 - Gather more intelligence regarding the property to inform future feasibility and more permanent acquisition options for Phase 2
- 2.1.5 An operations plan has been developed for Phase One and a core NT team of three FTE will be involved in running the site supported by volunteers and partner resource. Visitors will need to pre-book free of charge tours of the viaduct in groups of 20 with five slots a day, 7 days a week with some changes for seasonal demand. Special events with up to 50 attendees will be held on a regular basis.
- 2.1.6 Construction will minimise impact on the structure and all capital improvements will be demountable and removable for re-use following end of the temporary scheme. A traditional route is expected regarding construction with the client team developing designs to RIBA4 and a contractor to be appointed for construction to commence in early Spring 2022.
- 2.1.7 Peat free compost will be used, and planting will be appropriate to the local context, health and safety concerns and responsive to seasonality.
- 2.1.8 **Phase Two:** Drawing on analysis, learning and engagement from Phase One, we will in parallel progress the business case, design and acquisition options for a longer-term free for entry

urban park and visitor attraction on the site to open summer 2024. It is expected that the Phase Two urban park will:

- Develop in partnership with stakeholders and the community
- Utilise all the current deck and bring into scope relevant areas under the viaduct and further points of access and egress
- Be open to all during daylight hours and free to enter with dedicated operational staff
- Include a long terms plan for viaduct conservation and structural maintenance
- Secure relevant permanent consents and approvals

2.2 Structural Condition

- 2.2.1 As part of our pre-application consultation (see section 3), we have discussed the structural condition of the viaduct with MCC Building Control officers, who have advised as to the extent of information which will be required by the Council. Building Control approval will be dealt with under a separate consent regime, but we have provided sufficient detail with the planning application to enable a planning assessment to be made as to its inherent suitability for change of use.
- 2.2.2 The eight span, 336m long, steel lattice girder structure is maintained by Highways England (HE) on behalf of the Historic Railways Estate (HRE) within the Department for Transport (DfT). Regular asset inspection and necessary maintenance is undertaken by HE/HRE. We have undertaken an assessment to identify enabling structural works that are deemed necessary to accommodate our proposed temporary pilot scheme design and use. Primarily works focus on load distribution of new structures, including the central walkway, event space, partner plots and planters. Importantly the recent global structural capacity assessment undertaken by Arup reconfirms the *Assessment of Principal Structural Members* findings of Jacobs in 2010, that the structure retains considerable global live load capacity, typically 30kN/m². Further details are provided within the relevant supporting documents.

2.3 Construction

- 2.3.1 Constructability principles, in accordance with CDM Regulations, have been considered, including stakeholder consultations (DfT, HRE, HE, MCC Structures Office, Sustrans-Railway Paths, Metrolink and Network Rail) and fire strategies. These principles will be developed and will form the basis of a temporary pilot scheme Construction Management Plan¹. A construction project manager has been assigned to manage post-planning design development and construction management. This will include the need to coordinate and agree site access for construction vehicles, particularly from the east through the car park scheduled for use by Manchester Central. All construction materials will be demountable, and reusable aligned to the temporary nature of the planning permission sought. Methods of construction on the viaduct deck will be informed by structural assessments and assessed safe

¹ An Outline Construction Management Plan, setting out the framework for the approach we intend to take, has been submitted with this application.

loading levels. A construction strategy minimising disturbance and changes on-site will be pursued. A Phase 1 Contamination and Flood Risk Assessment is complete, plus follow-on railway ballast and viaduct paint sampling and testing.

2.4 Operation, Security and Health and Safety

2.4.1 Secure and safe by design has guided design development from inception, including a CDM principal designer embedded within the design team. Key elements include:

- Physical barriers to prevent access to areas of concerns, including balustrade security fencing at the edge of the viaduct and barriers preventing access to exposed areas of the viaduct that have evidence of potentially harmful contaminants
- A fire assessment and pre-app engagement with Greater Manchester Fire Service that has informed development of the operational management plan and scheme design
- Pre-app engagement with Greater Manchester Police, including the production of a Crime Impact Statement
- Secure fencing and barriers to prevent unauthorised site access after-hours

2.4.2 In addition, visitors on site will be limited and controlled through a booking system and always supervised by staff whilst on site.

3. Pre-Application Consultation & Advice

- 3.1.1 The Trust has been keen to ensure that the preferred approach developed iteratively, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and Council officers. We were guided by the approach set out in Manchester's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.1.2 We consulted locally on the scheme between 23 June – 25 July 2021. We ran three digital consultation events and, as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allowed one face to face event. We publicised locally through Manchester media outlets, press releases, on the radio, on posters, leaflets, door drops, through local councillors, the Castlefield Forum and the Science and Industry Museum. Overall, 95 people joined our public sessions, 320 people filled in our online survey, and 99.6% of people supportive of the scheme and 100% would visit. We provided consultation material via our website and advertised large font versions as well as alternative formats.
- 3.1.3 We have received letters of support from organisations including Historic England, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Canals & Rivers Trust, and the Castlefield Forum.
- 3.1.4 Two meetings were held with MCC Planning Officers, in March and August 2021, during which our draft plans were tabled, and officers gave initial thoughts and feedback. Meetings were also held separately with MCC's design and conservation specialists, and Building Control Officers.
- 3.1.5 A more detailed summation of our consultation and feedback received is contained in the separate Consultation Summary report.

4. Planning Considerations

4.1 The Development Plan and Material Considerations

Development Plan

- 4.1.1 To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Manchester comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy 2012
- Manchester Proposals Map 2012
- Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan 2005
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document 2012
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan 2013

The Core Strategy is the key overarching DPD within the Local Plan. The Core Strategy has replaced significant elements of the UDP as the document that sets out the long-term strategic policies for the Manchester's future development, and forms the primary framework that planning applications will be assessed against. Despite being largely superseded by the Core Strategy, a number of policies from the UDP have been 'saved' and remain part of the adopted Local Plan.

Material Considerations

- 4.1.2 The following documents include national planning policy and guidance, emerging regional plans, adopted supplementary planning guidance, non-statutory regeneration strategies, and evidence base used to inform the development of the Core Strategy. Whilst the Development Plan retains the most weight in the assessment of proposals, these documents comprise material considerations, either through providing additional guidance in support of Development Plan policy, or where Development Plan policy is out of date:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Draft Places for Everyone Plan
- Guide to Development in Manchester SPD
- City Centre Strategic Plan
- City Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework
- Manchester Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment

4.2 Relevant Policies

4.2.1 With regard to the above documents, the following policies and guidance are of specific relevance to the assessment of this proposal. These policies and guidance fall within three broad areas:

- ***Strategic Approach to Development in Manchester City Centre***
- ***Design & Heritage***
- ***Environment and Green Space***

Strategic Approach to Development in Manchester City Centre:

4.2.2 **The Proposals Map** confirms that the Site is located within the Regional Centre, and Castlefield Conservation Area.

4.2.3 **Core Strategy Figure 1** confirms that the Site lies within the defined City Centre Area. **Core Strategy Paragraph 2.36** identifies three key challenges in this area, one of which is 'Improving quality and access to open space'.

4.2.4 **Core Strategy Policy SP1 'Spatial Principles'** states that the *Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living*. The City is covered by regeneration areas including the City Centre. All development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area as described in the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and the Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan. Identified Core Development Principles include: *creating well designed places that enhance or create character; making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income; and protect and enhance the built and natural environment*.

4.2.5 **The City Centre Strategic Plan** describes Castlefield as follows: *With a unique identity and individualistic landscape, Castlefield offers an attractive residential location, a variety of popular visitor attractions, and a collection of vibrant restaurants and bars. Castlefield was Britain's first Urban Heritage Park and is characterised by the Bridgewater Canal – the world's oldest industrial canal – as well as its cobbled streets and tranquil backdrop*.

4.2.6 The importance of working closely with the Castlefield Forum and other key local stakeholders when considering future development is highlighted as a Key Priority in the Strategic Plan.

4.2.7 **The City Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework** sets out 15 Key Objectives which will lead to: *a dynamic economy; opportunities for all; flourishing communities; and a renewed urban environment*. Objective 14 is of particular relevance: *Reviving and improving the area's natural and built assets*.

4.2.8 **Core Strategy Policy EC1 'Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester'** sets out the broad approach to the allocation of employment land, but also sets out priorities to be applied to development generally. These include ensuring good access to jobs via sustainable transport, demonstrating that employment-generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide jobs for local people, ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City. The policy also states that development proposals

should have regard to climate change resilience, enhancing sense of place, and accessibility via sustainable means of transport

- 4.2.9 **Core Strategy Policy EC 3** 'The Regional Centre' states that *within the Regional Centre development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged*, going on to note that *proposals for other town centre uses will be assessed in accordance with policies C1 and C9*.
- 4.2.10 **Core Strategy Policy CC4** 'Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure' states that *the City Centre will be the focus for culture and leisure in the City Region. Proposals to improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported*.
- 4.2.11 **Core Strategy Policy CC5** 'Transport' aims to encourage sustainable means of travel, and states that developers should work with public transport providers to ensure accessibility via sustainable means.
- 4.2.12 **Core Strategy Policy CC10** 'A Place for Everyone' seeks to develop the City Centre as a location that appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors, with an emphasis on family-oriented activity and high standards of accessibility.
- 4.2.13 **Core Strategy Policy C1** 'Centre Hierarchy' states that the City Centre will be the focus for commerce, culture, leisure and tourist activity.
- 4.2.14 The Viaduct lies within **Area 27 'Rivers Medlock and Irwell/Liverpool Road/Chester Road/Egerton Street**, as defined by the **saved UDP**. **City Centre Small Area Policy RC20** therefore applies. The policy states that *This area offers considerable potential to extend the tourist related facilities planned for the area north of Liverpool Road and part has been designated an Urban Heritage Park. The basic approach in this area will be to encourage such uses and stimulate environmental improvement whilst at the same time keeping and strengthening the area's links with the past*.

Design & Heritage:

- 4.2.15 **Core Strategy Policy CC9** 'Design and Heritage' states that *development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments*.
- 4.2.16 **Core Strategy Policy EN1** 'Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas' states that *all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design² and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located*. With regard to the City Centre Character Area, the policy makes reference to a rich legacy which reflects its urban evolution, and notes that *relative to the amount of development there is limited open space and this includes a range of civic and less formal green spaces and*

² Character: a place with its own identity; Continuity and enclosure: a place where public and private places are clearly distinguished; Quality of the public realm: a place with attractive, and successful outdoor areas; Ease of movement: a place that is easy to get to and move through; Legibility: a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand; Adaptability: a place that can change easily; Diversity: a place with variety and choice

waterways. Guidance is consequently given to enhance existing and provide new areas of meaningful open space in this area.

- 4.2.17 **The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance** sets out an aspiration to create a sense of place in the city. In doing so, it recommends that development should follow the seven principles of good urban design, highlighted in Policy EN1. The SPD notes that The City's heritage is an asset, highlighting in paragraph 2.6 that *The rich urban heritage of Manchester and the distinctive qualities of its different neighbourhoods and buildings help to create a strong sense of place and should be respected in new development, to promote high quality environments that combine good design with the best architectural traditions of the City.*
- 4.2.18 **Core Strategy Policy EN 3 'Heritage'** encourages development that *complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.*
- 4.2.19 The supporting text for this policy (**Paragraph 12.16**) notes that *Manchester is the original industrial city and much of its character is derived from the physical legacy of Victorian innovation... it is important that areas of special architectural or historic interest are preserved and enhanced to create a modern and distinctive City based on its proud heritage.* **Paragraph 12.17** identifies Castlefield as a key origin point of the city, with the Roman Fort, erected in C78 AD, with **Paragraph 12.18** going on to describe the arrival in the 19th century of *railways with stations, warehouses, sidings and viaducts dominating the city fringe.* **Paragraph 12.20** states that *The historic environment is central to our cultural heritage. It contributes to the identity of Manchester through its aesthetic value and the memories of events. The original Victorian City helps create a sense of place and enhances the quality of our daily lives. Furthermore it can provide a catalyst for regeneration.* **Paragraph 12.21** states that *It is expected that developers will carry out an appropriate appraisal of issues relating to heritage assets, going on to note that Re-use of empty listed buildings will be encouraged subject to consideration of the building's special interest and significance.*
- 4.2.20 **NPPF Paragraphs 194-208** sets out the approach that planning authorities should take towards the assessment of proposals affecting heritage assets, ensuring that the potential impacts are fully understood through appropriate assessments, and that the benefits of development are given suitable consideration. Of particular note in respect to the latter is **Paragraph 206**, which states that *Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*
- 4.2.21 **Saved UDP Policy DC18 'Conservation Areas'** reaffirms the approach set out on Core Strategy Policy EN3, with regard to the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.
- 4.2.22 **Saved UDP policy DC19 'Listed Buildings'** also reaffirms the approach set out in Policy EN3, noting that *the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention,*

restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting.

- 4.2.23 Under **section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** local planning authorities have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts. Whilst there is no adopted conservation area management plan for Castlefield, the Council's website includes a description of the Conservation Area, and provides guidance on its future development. The following extracts are of particular note:

Although the variety of building materials used in Castlefield is very wide, it tends to be more rugged and industrial in character than in other parts of the city centre. Stone, brick and slate are used extensively, but the most impressive building components are the massive cast-iron columns supporting the railway viaducts and, of course, the viaducts themselves, which are constructed of iron lattice beams.

Generally speaking, as Castlefield has always been a centre of innovation, imaginative new proposals for development are likely to receive a warm welcome.

Castlefield has for a long time been an area which could claim to be the centre of tourism in the north-west. It has become a generator of prosperity for the City, and it is the City Council's intention that this should continue for many years to come.

However, there is still room for improvement in the area, and there are many disused and semi-derelict buildings for which new uses should be found.

Environment and Green Space

- 4.2.24 **Core Strategy Policy EN4** 'Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development' seeks to ensure development employs a suitable approach to design and materials, so as to minimise CO2 emissions.
- 4.2.25 **Core Strategy Policy EN8** 'Adaptation to Climate Change' states that all new development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change.
- 4.2.26 **Core Strategy Policy EN9** 'Green Infrastructure' states that the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, going on to note that key features of Manchester's green infrastructure will include the continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, canals, paths and cycleways, with priority given to those parts of the City where there is an identified existing lack of open space.
- 4.2.27 The supporting text to the policy (**Paragraph 12.49**) highlights the key role played by Green Infrastructure: *The green infrastructure of Greater Manchester is part of the City Region's life support system. The network of multi-functional open spaces and corridors together with the links between them provide multiple benefits for residents, workers, investors and visitors to the City.*
- 4.2.28 **Paragraph 12.50** refers to the Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework. The Framework (**Manchester's Great Outdoors- A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester**

2015-2025), sets out the vision, objectives and headline actions for GI in Manchester, and the approach to its delivery.

- 4.2.29 **Paragraph 12.52** highlights the multi-functional benefits GI delivers, including climate change mitigation, connections between wildlife sites, and the enhancement of an area's character.
- 4.2.30 **Paragraph 12.56** notes that *The City Centre in particular has lower levels of open space and tree cover than other parts of the City.*
- 4.2.31 **Core Strategy Policy EN 10** 'Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities' sets out the Council's aspiration to *seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to the standards set out above and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces.* Explicit support is given by this policy to proposals that: *improve the quality and quantity of accessible open space, sport and recreation in the local area; provide innovative solutions to improving the network of existing open space;; increase accessibility to green corridors; and enhance biodiversity improve access to open space for disabled people.*
- 4.2.32 **Core Strategy Policy EN11** 'Quantity of Open Space, Sport and Recreation' states that *As opportunities arise, new open space, sport and recreation facilities will be created across Manchester. The Council will seek the provision of new open space, sport and recreation facilities, in particular where a quantitative shortage of a particular use per head of population, including any expected increase of population created by the new development, based on the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation study and Playing Pitch Strategy, is identified in the local area.* The policy also stipulates that *New open spaces should also be interconnected, to allow for better links for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists both across and between sites and to enhance the biodiversity of the City.*
- 4.2.33 The Council's **Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment** identifies a shortfall in all types of open space³, other than 'Amenity Green Spaces' in the City Centre.
- 4.2.34 **Core Strategy Policy EN12** 'Area Priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' refers to the priorities for open space, sport and recreation in the City set out in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, and sets out the aim within the City Centre to enhance the quality of existing areas and integrate new facilities within the character of the area.
- 4.2.35 **Saved UDP Policy E3.4** states that *The Council will create a network of safe and attractive major linear recreational open spaces by linking and making better use of river valleys, canals, disused railways and other appropriate areas of open space. Within these areas measures will be taken to: a) achieve widespread environmental improvements; b) protect the natural environment; c) improve water quality; d) improve access for pedestrians, disabled people, cyclists and, where appropriate, horse riders; e) protect and enhance wildlife corridors.*
- 4.2.36 The **Places for Everyone Plan (August 2021)** has limited material weight, given its draft status, however, it is relevant to note in a number of respects, particularly in regard to Green Infrastructure, since it presents a very up to date position. The Plan makes reference to the **Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, the Environment Bill**, and the ecosystems services approach to green space management. All of these serve to underline the importance of multi-functional Green Infrastructure in the context of a modern, healthy and inclusive

³ Identified as comprising City parks, Local parks, Natural and semi natural, Amenity green spaces , Children's play areas , Provision for young people , Outdoor sports facilities, Allotments, Civic spaces, Cemeteries and churchyards

society. **Chapter 8 ‘Greener Places’** is of particular relevance, notably policies **JP-G 2** ‘Green Infrastructure Network’, Policy **JP-G 6** ‘Urban Green Space’, Policy **JP-G 8** ‘Standards for Greener Places’ and Policy **JP-G 9** ‘A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity’.

- 4.2.37 **Core Strategy Policy EN 14** ‘Flood Risk’ confirms the sequential approach to the development of sites set out in national policy, and outlines the requirement for site-specific flood risk assessments where applicable.
- 4.2.38 **Core Strategy Policy EN15** ‘Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the Council’s aim to maintain or enhance sites of biological and geological value throughout the City. Developers are expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity. Opportunities for enhancement include disused railway lines, and reference is made to areas where there are shortfalls identified in the Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment.
- 4.2.39 **Core Strategy Policy EN 18** ‘Contaminated Land and Ground Stability’ states that any proposal for development of contaminated land must be accompanied by a health risk assessment.
- 4.2.40 **Core Strategy Policy EN19** ‘Waste’ requires developers to follow the principles of the waste hierarchy and to submit a waste management plan to demonstrate how both construction and demolition waste will be minimised and recycled on site wherever possible.
- 4.2.41 **Saved UDP Policy DC26** ‘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.*

4.3 Planning Assessment

- 4.3.1 The Viaduct is located within the heart of the defined City Centre. Statutory policy is strongly supportive in principle of development in this area, which is recognised as the principal location for both economic development, and cultural and leisure activity. The approach proposed by this application supports policy aspirations in terms of cultural and leisure activity in particular, and will also help to foster economic activity, through creating a community and visitor hub. Policies SP1, EC1, EC3, C1, CC4 and C1 are all supportive in this regard.
- 4.3.2 The National Trust is committed to working with the MCC Work and Skills Team to ensure that employment opportunities resulting from Castlefield Viaduct are made available to Manchester residents through the existing recruitment offer and allow hard to reach groups equal opportunity to be successful in applying.
- 4.3.3 Explicit support is given to the creation of new open space and Green Infrastructure by policies EN9, 10,11 and 12. The proposed development will help to address an identified shortfall of open space/GI in the City Centre. It will deliver a multi-functional open space, consistent with the aims of the Places for Everyone Plan, and will provide a linear space, with good linkages to existing recreational open spaces, as outlined in Policy E3.4.
- 4.3.4 A separate Green and Blue Infrastructure Statement has been submitted with the application, which demonstrates how the proposed approach delivers in regard to all four objectives of the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

- 4.3.5 A planting plan has been developed that respects local flora and fauna and the seasonality of the proposed scheme as well as the project's temporary nature. The 'garden' will be planted in large scale planters and is proportional to the size and duration of the project. A sustainable approach to irrigation will be adopted, including rainwater collection on-site. A professional gardener will be assigned two days a week to maintain plants on site with the support of local volunteers whilst also forging local relationships and connecting in with wider greening initiatives in the city.
- 4.3.6 There is strong support in both national and local policy for the re-use of heritage assets, particularly within Conservation Areas, *to enhance or better reveal their significance*. Local guidance describes Castlefield as a thriving urban area, with a particularly rich cultural heritage (recognised in its informal status as Britain's first Urban Heritage Park, and an 'outstanding' Conservation Area). As noted in the aforementioned guidance however, *there is still room for improvement in the area, and there are many disused and semi-derelict buildings for which new uses should be found*. Castlefield Viaduct fits into this category. It is a dominant feature in the local townscape, surrounded by heritage assets which have been reimaged and reused in recent years. However, the viaduct has been disused since the late 1960s. Finding a new use for such a unique structure is clearly a challenge, but nonetheless needs to be done if it is to avoid falling into decay. The approach suggested by the National Trust not only addresses this challenge, it does so in a way which addresses an identified need for local open space, for people and for nature. The proposals will support the Council in fulfilling its statutory duty in regard to the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas.
- 4.3.7 Whilst there is clear support in principle in terms of heritage policy for the re-use of the viaduct, there is a need to ensure that any interventions are based upon a detailed understanding of the heritage significance of the structure, in order to conserve and enhance its historic interest. Further to this, the application is supported by an extensive heritage assessment, comprising a Statement of Heritage Significance and Heritage Impact Statement. The former has been used to underpin the design approach, and the latter confirms that construction of the Phase One urban park will have a negligible impact on the significance of the structure, with significant public benefits.
- 4.3.8 The celebration of the historic fabric and narratives associated with the viaduct is reflected within the design and will be expressed through visitor experience and information during operation. By increasing access and furthering the knowledge and understanding of the structure, this in itself increases the communal value and enhances significance. No significant conservation investment is expected as part of the initial Phase One temporary scheme, however, this is a precursor for Phase Two which will include a conservation management plan informed by engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- 4.3.9 The proposed scheme addresses the seven principles of urban design, as set out in the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD, through an approach which puts heritage at the heart of the proposed approach, incorporating and celebrating the Victorian heritage which underpins much of the Castlefield area's identity. We will create a clearly defined public space, with linkages to the wider area. Our approach also puts people at the heart of the scheme, and in so doing supports urban design aspirations in terms of legibility, and ease of movement. We aim to create a successful public area, in a location which currently has no public access. Our approach is designed to be adaptable and diverse, in order that we can test out various approaches, to inform the best approach in the longer term.

- 4.3.10 The requirements of national (NPPF Paragraphs 194-208) and local (CC9, EN1, EN3, DC18 and DC19) policy are therefore fully satisfied in terms of heritage and design.
- 4.3.11 With regard to policy requirements in regard to access via sustainable means (notably CC5), the accessibility of the site has been reviewed in detail, paying cognisance to the latest public transport infrastructure and services⁴. The site occupies a highly sustainable location, accessible by a range of sustainable travel modes, and well-placed to facilitate access on foot to a wide variety public transport services. Given the absence of car parking spaces within the proposed development, and the highly sustainable city centre location, the scheme is unlikely to generate a significant number of vehicle trips to the site. A trip forecasting exercise has been undertaken, and the great majority of trips by people at the development are forecast to be undertaken via sustainable travel modes. The small number of vehicle trips generated by the proposed development will be negligible in the context of the vehicle flows on the surrounding streets. Based on this review it is considered that this proposal does not adversely affect the operation of the highway or transport network and meets the criteria set out in national and local policy for sustainable development, and therefore it is considered that the scheme is acceptable in highways and transportation terms.
- 4.3.12 With regard to Core Strategy Policy CC10, access for all is at the heart of the project and we will be working with unrepresented groups to make sure a wide range of people are invited to the space and feel welcome. The scheme is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and a Visitor Journey Framework has been developed to look at all elements of visitor access. An operational plan has been developed drawing on National Trust's experience of successfully managing over 500 historic visitor attractions across the UK safely welcoming millions of visitors every year.
- 4.3.13 Our approach to design acknowledges the need to respond to the challenges of climate change, as set out in policies EN4 and EN8. The proposed intervention is low impact, and temporary in nature, and we have identified 'Sustainable construction and operation' as one of the key Delivery Principles underpinning our design approach. The proposal will showcase various forms of planting including green walls and roofs.
- 4.3.14 With regard to biodiversity, and the requirements of Policy EN15, we have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which concluded that designated sites will not be impacted by the development. Identified habitats on the site are widespread in the local area. Recommendations for the retention of particular areas of habitat of interest were identified, and these have subsequently been incorporated into the final design. A bat survey has also been undertaken.
- 4.3.15 With regard to other matters, a Flood Risk Assessment and Noise Survey Report have been prepared which confirm that the proposals raise no concerns in regard to policies EN14 and DC26 respectively. The requirements of Policy EN19 in regard to waste management are addressed in the Design & Access Statement. The requirements of Policy EN18, in regard to contaminated land and ground stability, have been addressed through the preparation of a Land Quality Desk Study and Preliminary Risk Assessment Report, which contains recommendations which will be followed in the implementation of the proposed scheme.

⁴ See separately submitted Transport Statement

5. Conclusion

- 5.1.1 The above assessment demonstrates that this proposal has strong support in policy terms. It meets stated aspirations with regard to the conservation and re-use of heritage assets, urban regeneration, community building, and provision of green space. It will deliver multiple benefits to the City of Manchester in social, economic and environmental terms, and therefore fully meets the purpose of the planning system, as defined by the NPPF: *to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- 5.1.2 It is recognised that the Viaduct is a valuable heritage asset, in the heart of an ‘outstanding’ Conservation Area, and as such, the submitted proposals have taken a high quality and sensitive approach to design and re-use. It is also acknowledged that as a key, City Centre site, a number of policy criteria need to be met, which the proposed approach addresses.
- 5.1.3 It is therefore considered that this proposal is fully compliant with adopted policy.