

Ashton Canal Bridge

Planning and Consultation Statement

August 2021

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1. Introduction

This Planning and Consultation Statement (the “Statement”) accompanies an application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent, submitted by Manchester City Council (MCC), for a new pedestrian bridge over Ashton Canal in New Islington.

- 1.1 Improvement works are proposed by Manchester City Council (MCC) Major Projects to install a new walking and cycling bridge and provide an additional connection across the Ashton Canal. This is part of a wider strategy to facilitate better connections needed as a result of recent and planned activity taking place in the Ancoats and New Islington area, and is an aspiration of the Beelines network, Strategic Regeneration Frameworks relevant to the area, and the city more broadly.
- 1.2 The Site is located on Ashton Canal in New Islington in Manchester, 200m to the north east of Great Ancoats Street, 75m west of Pollard Street and close to the New Islington Tram Stop, as identified on the site plan (Figure 1). The new bridge proposes to sit alongside the existing Grade II Listed canal lock (Lock No. 3), where existing pedestrian access is currently provided.

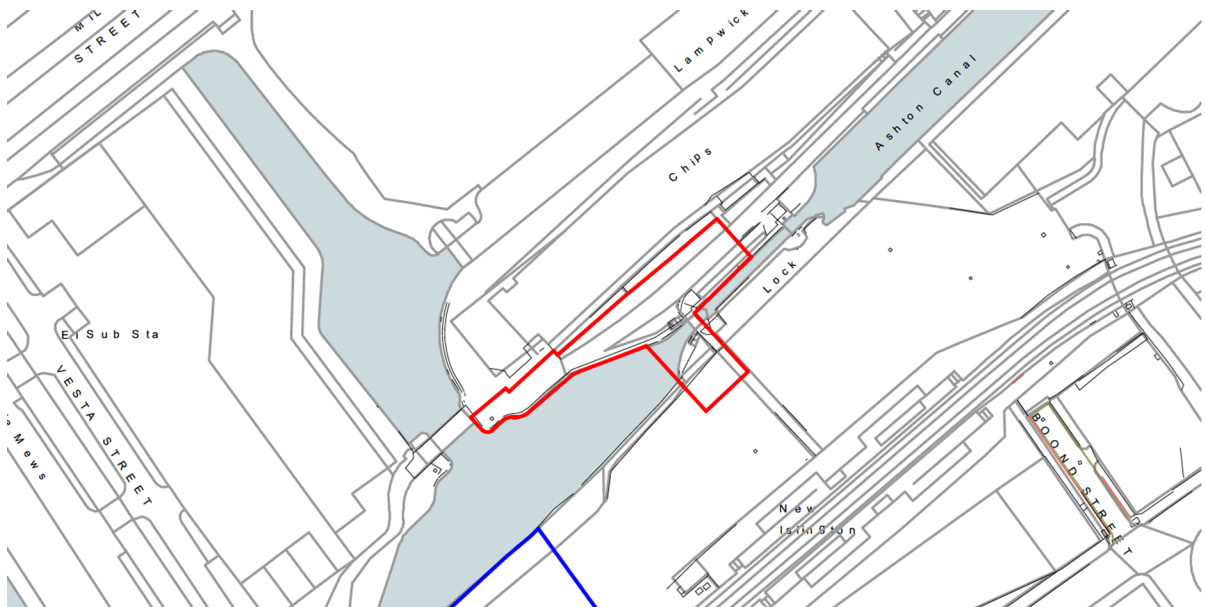


Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

- 1.3 The Site is seen as an essential connection to build on the transformative work that has taken place to date in the local area, which is planned to continue with the delivery of further residential and commercial properties nearby. The bridge is located within the Regional Centre, designed with the purpose of supporting the strategy to provide better and readily available car-free cycle routes into and around the city centre.
- 1.4 Infrastructure planning of this type has a critical role to play in supporting sustainable transport mode usage for accessing the city centre, which acts as a key driver of economic growth across sectors to enhance productivity for Manchester and the wider city region.

Proposed Development

- 1.5 The Proposed Development comprises a 3.6m wide pedestrian and cycle bridge with ramps, with works proposed to the Ashton Canal towpath in order to deliver the necessary ramping gradient to ensure maximum accessibility. Ramping and gradients, to get to the necessary levels and clearance over the existing canal, takes place on the Chips building side of the Ashton Canal, thereby allowing for level access onto the Pollard Street side of the Ashton Canal.
- 1.6 The bridge detailing includes a woven powder coated aluminium design for the balustrade and seeks to reflect the industrial heritage of the existing canal locks by adopting a design inspired by the traditional detailing of canal bridges. This woven design is complemented by a simple and elegant wooden handrail, which will be lit on the underside to improve both usability and safety during the evening and night-time by subtly lighting the new path.
- 1.7 The ramps leading up to the bridge crossing will be purposefully simple and robust to provide a complementary modern interpretation of existing materials, reduce ongoing maintenance cost and to recognise the adjacency to the existing canal lock and mooring on the existing canal coping stones. As such, the ramps will be clad in a stylised and textured pre-cast concrete treatment to complement the existing canal towpath.
- 1.8 Based on the above works, the description of development as set out in the enclosed Application form is as follows:
- “Construction of a new walking and cycling bridge crossing the Ashton Canal and delivery of new ramped access on the Ashton Canal towpath, including earthworks, landscaping and other associated works.”**
- 1.9 The new bridge is located next to the current Grade II Listed canal lock, which is listed as Lock 3 and forms a series of locks along the Ashton Canal. The extent of this listing does not form any physical interaction with the new bridge proposed, but the ramping structure leading to the new bridge cross and works to the towpath shares an adjacency to the listed structure.
- 1.10 Therefore, in order to acknowledge and make good any physical interaction and works that may be required to the listed structure, listed building consent is required. The description for the works requiring Listed Building Consent as set out in the enclosed Application form is as follows:
- “Listed Building Consent for interface and abutment works to the Ashton Canal Lock (No. 3) to facilitate the construction of a new walking and cycling bridge.”**
- 1.11 The bridge connecting the two sides of the Ashton Canal in this location is vital for delivering on strategic objectives for the city. It supports the use of non-car modes of transport and seeks to improve health outcomes by supporting active travel by offering car-free and segregated transport routes.
- 1.12 Critically, it will provide the primary pedestrian and cycle connection between two rapidly developing areas in Ancoats and New Islington and is a key element of Manchester Northern and Eastern Gateway cycle route, which seeks to connect this part of the city centre and significantly improve accessibility. This strategic importance is set out in Section 2 of this Statement.

Pre-application Consultation

- 1.13 The Proposed Development has evolved through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the local community; MCC as the planning and heritage authority; the Canal and River Trust; Greater Manchester Police Design for Security; MCC’s Access Officer; adjacent landowners and developers.

- 1.14 Considering the significant impact that Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on the ability to engage with residents on development proposals, specifically the restrictions around physical consultation events due to social distancing measures, the main consultation platform for engagement has been digital including online surveys, email correspondence and virtual meetings with key stakeholders.
- 1.15 This consultation approach adheres to the requirements set out by national and local policy. A full description of the pre-application stakeholder engagement process, including responses to the key issues, are set out within Chapter 4 of this Statement.

Application Documentation

- 1.16 In addition to this Planning and Consultation Statement, this Application is supported by the following documentation, agreed in advance with Manchester City Council and prepared in accordance with the Local Validation Checklist:
- Covering letter prepared by Deloitte;
 - Planning application form and ownership certificates prepared by Deloitte;
 - Design and Access Statement prepared by Hawkins/Brown;
 - Application site plan and location plan prepared by Hawkins/Brown;
 - Planning application drawings, sections and elevations prepared by Hawkins/Brown;
 - Heritage Statement prepared by Deloitte;
 - Topographical Survey prepared by MCC Major Projects;
 - Phase 1 Desktop Ground Conditions note prepared by Wilde;
 - Outline Construction and Logistics Plan prepared by MCC Major Projects;
 - Bat Survey prepared by NWCC; and
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by NWCC.

Document Structure

- 1.17 The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 – strategic and economic context of the proposals;
 - Section 3 – site description and physical context of the Site;
 - Section 4 – Statement of Consultation;
 - Section 5 – summary of the Proposed Development;
 - Section 6 – summary of planning policy and other material considerations.
 - Section 7 – planning assessment of the key site-specific planning considerations relevant to the determination of the application; and
 - Section 8 – summary and conclusions of the overall merits of the proposals.

2. Strategic Context

This chapter details the socio-economic, planning and regeneration context of Manchester City Centre as a whole, and sets out the key drivers of change and development within areas of New Islington, Ancoats and the City Centre.

2.1 Following the adoption of the updated City Centre Strategic Plan (2017), as summarised in this Section, the City Centre boundary was extended to the north to include Ancoats and New Islington and reflect its current and future development ambitions. A number of key facets of the city centre and its strategic and regeneration context are set out below as related to the proposals for the Ashton Canal Bridge:

- **Manchester – A growing city:** the City's is on an ambitious growth trajectory, which has significantly accelerated since 2014 in particular. This growth in residential population and employment opportunities in the city centre has put pressure on the existing road network and the public transport options. In order to maximise accessibility to opportunities to live, work and play, alternative and well-designed cycle options are considered fundamental to the sustainable growth of the city.
- **Manchester – A mobile and skilled city:** The city region offers a high quality and growing workforce of some 7.2 million people within a one-hour commute of the City¹, with an opportunity for an increased number of trips to be undertaken by public transport, walking, cycling, or multi-modal transport. There is access to a pool of skilled people across a wide range of industries, and over 100,000 students in four universities across Greater Manchester². In order to maximise access to employment opportunities, a network of car free and separated cycle routes is required to reduce existing pressures on the highway network, improve health outcomes as a result of increased cycling take up and improve accessibility to and from the city centre.
- **Manchester – A connected city:** Manchester has continued to invest significantly in its transport infrastructure, delivering major improvements in terms of accessibility to and within the Regional Centre. This increases the city's capacity of its travel to work area and enhances connectivity between businesses. It also makes the city easier to get around and a better place to live. The northern parts of the City Centre, from NOMA and New Cross through to New Islington, are subject to benefit from proposals to deliver a major transformation of connectivity in Manchester, bringing local, regional, and even international connections closer than ever. The Ashton Bridge is fundamental in this route to provide better connections between neighbourhoods and key transport infrastructure such as the Metrolink station that provides connections to Ashton and East Manchester as well as the city centre network.

Regeneration Context

2.2 The Site is in an area undergoing significant economic investment and material change, driven by several growth and regeneration strategies. This enhances the need for better connections between neighbourhoods using a range of different transport modes.

¹ Invest in Manchester, Workforce, <https://www.investinmanchester.com/why-manchester/workforce>.

² Invest in Manchester, Universities in Manchester, <https://www.investinmanchester.com/why-manchester/education>.

- 2.3 The key strategic regeneration documents and framework to which the new bridge relates are summarised below:

Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan (2017)

- 2.4 Manchester city centre has changed dramatically over the past 15 years and is now one of the most dynamic centres in Europe. To capture the pace and scale of change and to reinforce the strategic direction for the City Centre as a whole, the City Council produced the City Centre Strategic Plan.
- 2.5 The Strategy identifies the expansion of the City Centre boundary to include areas to the north and east, including Ancoats and New Islington. In addition, it identifies priorities for the expanded city centre:
- For the city centre to act as driver of economic growth and a major employment centre. The city centre accounts for over 40% of Manchester's total employment base, and is a significant driver of regional economic growth, hosting more than 10% of all jobs in Greater Manchester.
 - Provide an increasingly popular residential centre by creating neighbourhoods of choice that seek a growth in employment and leisure opportunities and creating an attractive, vibrant and welcoming environment. The growth is directly related to the city's economic growth, which has been driven by the considerable expansion of the key employment sectors.
 - Support Manchester's reputation as a visitor destination for both residents of the UK and abroad and create high-quality public realm that is essential to the character and appeal of the city centre for residents, visitors, and workers alike.
 - Delivering on these strategic priorities **will result in the need for improved access into and across the city centre by an enhanced public transport system, as well as good walking and cycling routes**, therefore requiring considerable further improvements to public transport, and cycling and walking routes are planned over the short term to support the continued growth of the city centre.
- 2.6 The Strategic Plan shapes the activity that will ensure the city centre continues to consolidate its role as a major economic and cultural asset for Greater Manchester and the North of England.

Eastland's Regeneration – A New East Manchester (1999, 2008, 2011, 2017)

- 2.7 The site forms part of the Eastland's Regeneration Framework and has done so since 1999. The area has been promoted for strategic development since the 'New East Manchester: A New Town in the City' was first published. This was eventually superseded by 'The East Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework 2008 – 2018', published in 2008.
- 2.8 Following the winding down of the Development Corporation and funding for New East Manchester in 2011, a new strategy was required to develop a range of partnership structures that would take the area forward following the national economic recession. The Abu Dhabi United Group entered into a partnership to commit to the regeneration of the area and the delivery of the 2011 Eastland's Framework has since helped to guide in excess of £400m of private and public investment in the area, utilising the Etihad Campus as a driver of economic activity.
- 2.9 The 2017 Eastland's Regeneration Framework was developed by the Eastland's Strategic Development Company Ltd, the joint venture formed between the City Council and ADUG to guide and develop recommendations for future regeneration activities that will enable new social, community, commercial and development initiatives in and around the Etihad Stadium, with the emphasis on guiding development activity westwards along the Ashton Canal Corridor to connect the Etihad Campus with the established eastward expansion of the city centre.

- 2.10 The 2008, 2011 and 2017 Frameworks offer **a focus for better connecting the neighbourhoods within East Manchester to the city centre, which is critical to supporting economic growth by unlocking opportunities for work and spending time.** The Framework³ notes that **cycle facilities, well-lit streets and paths, as well as access to the tram, are critical to the overall success of the Eastland's area.** Strategic cycle routes and footpaths provide opportunities for adjacent communities to be tied into greenspace.
- 2.11 The canal is recognised as a critical spine of the public realm structure, taking pedestrian and cycle routes east-west and directly into the city centre, including Ancoats and Piccadilly Station, and out east to the Etihad Campus, Clayton and beyond. The ongoing vision is for the New Islington area to contribute to the seamless integration between the mixed uses along Great Ancoats Street and the City Centre, through to the residential areas of Miles Platting and Holt Town. This **vision demands a significant upgrade in the public realm adjacent to the canal, high quality lighting, security systems, additional bridges and access points,** as well as new links to neighbourhoods north and south.
- 2.12 The proposed pedestrian bridge will act as a key link between the northern and southern parts of the Eastland's Regeneration Framework, and provide a crucial link in proposed active transport routes around the edge of the city centre. This will support the growth of both office and residential as it provides a safer and quicker route for pedestrians both to other parts of the Framework area, and to

Ancoats and New Islington Regeneration Framework (2016, 2020)

- 2.13 Originally endorsed in 2016 and updated in 2020, this Framework has guided the continued regeneration of New Islington and Ancoats within the wider context of the Eastland's Framework, described above. It covers an area from Oldham Road to the west through to the Lower Medlock Valley to the east and includes the Ashton Canal.
- 2.14 A more recent update has been drafted and endorsed by Manchester City Council that relates to the Back of Ancoats, known as the Poland Street Zone, and does not relate to the Site. The overall relevant aims of the Framework are:
- New development should exploit the area's locational advantage, contribute towards the creation of a neighbourhood that is spatially integrated and should not be considered in isolation but contribute towards **a coherent experience across the neighbourhood with character areas, streets and spaces feeling intuitively part of a wider whole, supporting a high quality of life.**
 - New development should also **promote connectivity to the Ashton and Rochdale Canals. These routes should be treated as key linkages as well as a leisure and amenity resource.** They should be viewed as a character feature presenting the opportunity to create a special setting for new buildings.
 - More generally, new development should contribute towards **a walkable, pedestrian and cycle - friendly environment** and buildings should be designed to **support active streets particularly around key public spaces and pedestrian desire lines.**
 - Opportunities for new areas of open space or public realm treatments will be encouraged where that can **contribute to sense of place and encourage movement through the area.**
 - To ensure that the area is fully accessible to all and **create a safe and secure environment using the principles of "Secured by Design".**
 - A sustainable development should be promoted by both by **maximising its locational advantages and proximity to public transport nodes** and through building design.

³ Eastlands Regeneration Framework (2017) Manchester City Council

- 2.15 Within the 2016 Framework, the Site forms a key part of the Ashton Canal Corridor character area. The Framework states that **the Ashton Canal Corridor has the potential to become a more effective and sustainable location for commercial activity through the creation of improved linkages**. It recognises that the forms part of a key connection between the Etihad Campus and the core of Manchester City Centre and, more immediately, between Ancoats and New Islington.
- 2.16 The canal bridge has been designed to highlight and celebrate the heritage of the canal in its form and use of materials and will therefore encourage visitors to appreciate these historic remnants of Manchester's industrial heritage. Again, **the bridge provides a key part of the proposed connective links in active transport routes for the area** and in particular provides a direct link between Ancoats and New Islington Marina to the tram stop – providing onward to the rest of the city.

Nearby Strategic Frameworks

- 2.17 In the area as a whole, there has been significant new developments perhaps most significantly the regeneration of New Islington Marina including new areas of public realm, employment opportunity and housing. Recently proposals have come forwards for a number of projects in the Back of Ancoats; and the Dispensary is currently under development. As mentioned, there is the General Projects Pollard Street Scheme, which will provide new office space in the area, attracting further investment.
- 2.18 Connection between these projects and tram links to the rest of the city are crucial for the further development of the area; and making both the offices and residential units attractive to businesses and tenants. The improved active transport network will also provide links to other regeneration areas in the city, as detailed below.

Piccadilly SRF (2014, 2018)

- 2.19 Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Regeneration Framework, most recently endorsed in March 2018, seeks to respond to the opportunities presented by HS2 and the Northern Hub. It is located to immediately to the south west of the Site. The arrival of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) into Manchester will be the catalyst for a 'once-in-a-century' opportunity to transform and regenerate the eastern side of the city centre.
- 2.20 It is essential that full advantage is taken of this opportunity to maximise growth benefits for the Piccadilly area, wider city, and UK. Fundamental to this, is that the station is appropriately designed such that it forms a gateway to the city, seamlessly connects into the surrounding townscape, and fully integrates all transport modes.
- 2.21 The Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) offers a structured approach to capturing these regeneration and growth benefits. This 2018 SRF builds on the 2014 SRF and incorporates key changes such as the realignment of HS2 and the advent of NPR, as well as strengthening the sense of place and adding detail to plots and overall quantum of development.
- 2.22 There is a clear positive synergy to be capitalised upon by supporting for an excellent walking and cycling route to Piccadilly Station from areas to the north and east. The area between the Ashton Bridge and HS2 includes the Portugal Street East Framework area, described below, which forms part of the overall HS2 area and is located directly opposite the Site on Great Ancoats Street.

Portugal Street East SRF (2018)

- 2.23 The Portugal Street East SRF, endorsed in 2018, seeks to be supported heavily by pedestrian and cycle friendly routes and an offers an opportunity to deliver landmark taller buildings that will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of this area. The network of public spaces envisaged within the SRF is as follows:
- The Green Boulevard will be a green pedestrian route alongside the existing tram lines with a mix of soft and hard landscaping. The lower levels of the boundary plots will respect the scale of the

Crusader Works and provide active frontage and potentially main entrances to activate the street scape.

- The Avenue will be a major thoroughfare with generous pavement widths and high-quality hard landscaping. There is opportunity for the street to incorporate tree planting. Main building entrances will face onto this route. There is also potential for other uses such as retail or commercial units facing onto this route.
- The main public space (The Green) will be a high-quality amenity for the surrounding area. A mix of hard and soft landscaping will be used. The surrounding plots are to be of a high quality and to reinforce the edge of the public space through careful consideration of mass and scale. Plots A and B are a key site for a landmark tall building of high quality with active frontage and a main entrance facing onto the public space. Within the SRF it is stated that this square 'is the public focal point for the masterplan with sympathetic soft and hard landscaping that will be designed to draw people into the space.'
- A second public space (the Square) is proposed adjacent to plots D, G and F. This is required in order to support high density forms of development within the adjoining blocks including some landmark, taller components.

2.24 It is considered that this additional greenspace provision in Portugal Street East, near to the proposed bridge, will support the increased use of walking and cycling between areas like Ancoats, New Islington and wider East Manchester and the city centre through increasing greenspaces through this area of the city. Creating a network of safe and sustainable routes to those destinations is critical to increasing cycle trips in the city, and this will be further supported by the bridge providing a link from this area to New Islington and Ancoats beyond.

Mayfield SRF (2018)

2.25 The Site is within a 10 minutes' walk of the Mayfield SRF area, which was most recently endorsed by Manchester City Council's Executive Committee in 2018. It is located to the south west of the Site and Proposed Development on the opposite side of Piccadilly Station. At its heart is a new 2.6 acre park, which is due to be delivered by 2022.

2.26 The Partnership has already invested in several temporary 'meanwhile' uses to help kick-start regeneration and facilitate economic and social activity ahead of any long-term development. The core development principles set out within the Mayfield SRF include:

- Quality of place – creating a quality environment that people want to work, live and socialize in;
- Place Making, Park and Public Realm – the Park is recognized as key to the character of this new neighbourhood and placemaking; and
- Temporary Uses – a commitment to continue to support temporary 'meanwhile uses' to ensure the Mayfield regeneration story continues.

2.27 The first phase of the development commenced in early 2021, which will see the delivery of new commercial offices, the park and a multi-storey car park, sitting alongside the existing meanwhile uses that have developed the renewed profile of Mayfield in the city.

2.28 This significant project, with its own internal network of walking and cycle networks that connect adjacent neighbourhoods, provides increased impetus to deliver improved walking and cycling connections from areas to the north to areas into the city centre and beyond.

Strategic Context

- 2.29 As detailed in the below strategies, there are ambitions for Manchester to be a cleaner, more sustainable and more active place, offering improved quality of life for all residents, as well as meeting key carbon reduction targets set by the city. Delivering an improved walking and cycling routes throughout the city centre area and to adjoining boroughs is critically important to achieving these goals, and to providing opportunities to all residents of Greater Manchester

The Greater Manchester Strategy (2017)

- 2.30 The Greater Manchester Strategy ('Our People, Our Place') was produced by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and replaces the former 'Stronger Together: Greater Manchester Strategy', published in 2009. It sets out a very clear vision for the city region, stating that Manchester will be:
- A place where all children are given the best start in life and young people grow up inspired to exceed expectations.
 - A place where people are proud to live, with a decent home, a fulfilling job, and stress-free journeys the norm. But if you need a helping hand you'll get it.
 - A place of ideas and invention, with a modern and productive economy that draws in investment, visitors and talent.
 - A place where people live healthy lives and older people are valued.
 - A place at the forefront of action on climate change with clean air and a flourishing natural environment.
 - A place where all voices are heard and where, working together, we can shape our future.
- 2.31 Delivering an improved walking and cycling routes throughout the city centre area and to adjoining boroughs is critically important to providing opportunities to all residents of Greater Manchester. This ambition is supported by the creation and delivery of the Beelines networks, which this bridge forms a key part of, as described later in this Section.

Our Manchester Strategy 2016-25

- 2.32 The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-25 was adopted by Manchester City Council in January 2016 and sets the ambitions for the City for the next decade. The Strategy sets out a vision for Manchester to be in the topflight of world-class cities by 2025, when the City will:
- have a competitive, dynamic and sustainable economy that draws on our distinctive strengths in science, advanced manufacturing, culture, and creative and digital business – cultivating and encouraging new ideas;
 - possess highly skilled, enterprising and industrious people;
 - be connected, internationally and within the UK;
 - play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change;
 - be a place where residents from all backgrounds feel safe, can aspire, succeed and live well; and
 - be clean, attractive, culturally rich, outward-looking and welcoming.

- 2.33 The Our Manchester Strategy also commits to giving the local community and other stakeholders the opportunity to be involved in decision making, with a primary focus on a continuous approach to engagement.
- 2.34 The ‘Our Manchester’ approach seeks to build a different relationship with residents and communities, recognising that this also means undertaking a different approach to engagement; engagement that is sustainable and driven by the City’s communities.

‘Made to Move’ Beelines Strategy (2018)

- 2.35 The Made to Move Beelines Strategy is a strategy set out by TfGM to provide 1,000 miles of walking and cycling routes across Greater Manchester, both promoting sustainable transport and connecting communities.
- 2.36 The overall objective is to encourage sustainable, active modes of transport as the primary choice for residents and visitors in the city. To achieve this, it seeks to provide 1,400 new crossings that remove physical barriers dividing communities and provide safer walking routes through the city. Much of these changes are to be primarily community-led in terms of demand, location and function.
- 2.37 The strategy seeks to address problems with connectivity, air quality, and improve the propensity for cycling and other alternative modes of transport to reducing commuter traffic. It also presents the possibility to deliver new temporary street improvements to trail new schemes for local communities, and public realm improvements with walking and cycling routes integrated.
- 2.38 In the January 2020 investment plan for Beelines⁴, a route was announced that will utilise the proposed bridge, known as the Northern and Eastern Gateway. This is seen as one of the earlier projects to deliver and is critical for connecting NOMA to New Islington. Consultation began on the proposed route in March 2021 to establish the principle route that cyclists and pedestrians would take.

Revised City Centre Transport Strategy (2021)

- 2.39 A refreshed City Centre Transport Strategy has been set out by Manchester City Council, following adoption of the original strategy in 2010. The City Centre Transport Strategy needs to support the city’s ambition to grow, become carbon neutral by 2038 or sooner, whilst ensuring that it is well-connected to the wider area that it serves.
- 2.40 Consultation on the draft strategy closed in November 2020 and the final strategy has now been updated following 2,400 comments received. The final strategy was published in March 2021 following approval from Salford, Manchester and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities. This strategy will be reviewed and refreshed periodically but is intended to guide transport-related investment and initiatives in the region through to 2040.
- 2.41 The central aim of the Strategy, for 90% of all trips to the city centre to be made by sustainable travel before 2040 in the morning peak, is critical to the successful and sustainable growth of the city centre. The City Centre should be well-connect zero-carbon city centre at the heart of the North, offering residents, employees and visitors a great place to live, work and visit. The seven core ambitions that support this overall ambition is set out as follows:
1. Walking is the main way of getting around the city centre.
 2. The city centre is cleaner, greener and less congested.
 3. More people choose to cycle to destinations within the city centre.

⁴ Beelines Network Delivery Plan (2020) Transport for Greater Manchester [19-1950_Bee_Network_delivery_plan-style - website version.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](https://www.ctfassets.net/19-1950-Bee-Network-delivery-plan-style-website-version.pdf)

4. The city centre benefits from better public transport connections.
 5. Parking in the city centre is smarter and integrated with other modes.
 6. Goods are moved and delivered sustainably and efficiently in the city centre.
 7. Innovation is embraced where it benefits the city centre and its users.
- 2.42 In relation to the proposals set out in this Statement, the first three core ambitions are of most relevance. Routes ought to be high quality, well maintained and accessible no matter what age or mobility. This has been a core consideration in the development of the location and design of the bridge, which seeks to ensure all ramps and widths meet accessibility requirements. The current crossing point in this location is suitable only for pedestrians, with insufficient widths and protection to safely accommodate disabled people with any form mobility constraint or cyclists.
- 2.43 In order to create a city centre that is cleaner, greener and less congested, a key aim is to remove non-essential car trips by prioritising pedestrian and cycle route improvements. The bridge is part of a wider strategy and connection that seeks to provide a car-free and improved route from NOMA and New Cross and through to New Islington and East Manchester in order to support this ambition.
- 2.44 The bridge will facilitate better, car-free and safer connections between local neighbourhoods and the city centre core, which will in turn reduce the propensity for local trips made by car. Car free cycle routes are critical to the successful increase in take up of trips made by bicycles in order to accommodate all levels of cycling ability and ages.

Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2015)

- 2.45 Manchester City Council recognises that green and blue infrastructure is an essential part of creating a successful, liveable city. Parks, river valleys, gardens, street trees, green roofs, canals and many other components all form part of a rich network that is integrated with the built environment in the world's most popular cities.
- 2.46 The vision for green and blue infrastructure in Manchester is that by 2025 high quality, well maintained green and blue spaces will be an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The city's communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and green spaces and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the City. Businesses will be investing in areas with highly attractive surroundings, enjoying access to a healthy, talented workforce. New funding models will be in place, ensuring that progress achieved by 2025 can be sustained and provide the platform for ongoing investment in the years to follow.
- 2.47 Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure (G&BI) Strategy, together with its Stakeholder Implementation Plan, was approved in July 2015. The strategy is founded on the basis that attractive, multi-functional green and blue infrastructure is a key component of shaping and delivering the quality of life people expect and enhancing the City's global image as a place in which to live, work and invest.
- 2.48 Proposals such as the bridge crossing the Ashton Canal will better utilise the waterways as a multifunctional space, providing better access by a range of non-car transport modes and users. Improvements to the area through the delivery of the new bridge will also provide new planting to support biodiversity improvements along the canal, which will complement with the extensive new planting proposed as per the Pollard Street development.

Manchester Zero Carbon Framework: Playing Our Part on Climate Change (2020)

- 2.49 There is increasing evidence of global temperature rises and the an increased volatility in the changing climate that is increasing recorded incidences of extreme weather as well as risk of water and food shortages and flooding, all causing increasing insecurity for humans and the habitats that are critical

to the sustainable function of our planet. Whilst Manchester may not feel these direct weather effects as severely as other areas globally, significant indirect effects are anticipated if global action isn't undertaken. There is an identified urgent need for all cities to consider what they need to do to play their full part in addressing climate change.

- 2.50 In November 2018, Manchester City Council made a series of commitments, informed by the Manchester Climate Change Agency's (MCCA) work with the world-renowned Tyndall Centre for Climate Research based at University of Manchester. The key commitments are as follows:
- To becoming zero carbon by 2038, significantly accelerated from the original target of 2050;
 - To adopt a carbon budget and emit only a maximum of 15 million tonnes CO₂ for the period 2018-2100. This has been transposed from a global carbon budget which has been calculated as "likely" to maintain global temperature change within 2°C as agreed in the Paris Agreement; and
 - To achieve a 13% year-on-year reduction in citywide CO₂ emissions from 2018 to achieve this carbon budget.
- 2.51 A draft Manchester Zero Carbon Framework was developed that sets out the City's overarching approach to meeting its science-based climate change targets over the period 2020-38. On 10 July 2019, a motion asking Manchester City Council to formally declare a climate emergency was unanimously agreed. The motion declares that climate change is a serious risk to Manchester's future and committed to embedding the issue as an integral part of council decision-making – making sure that all key decisions are taken with the city's target of becoming zero-carbon by 2038 in mind.
- 2.52 In March 2020, the Executive adopted the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-2025. The five-year framework sets out measures that MCC will take in order to reduce carbon emissions from its buildings, energy use and transport.
- 2.53 In relation to transport, the Climate Change Framework sets out that increasing walking and cycling through a combination of significantly more safe, well-designed routes and changes in travel behaviours is essential. This initiative should work in tandem with increasing public transport and reducing private vehicle trips and flights in order to allow transport activity to correspond with climate change framework initiatives.
- 2.54 It is considered that the proposed bridge, in the context of a new east-west route to the north of the city centre and providing further connections to an integrated Bee Network, could significantly increase the propensity for take up of walking and cycling as an active mode of transport. This is encouraged by providing safe, well managed and car free routes across the city.

Contribution to Regeneration and Strategic Context

- 2.55 As demonstrated by the regeneration context that needs to be supported by key infrastructure investments, as set out in the strategy documents; there is a significant amount of ongoing change and renewal in the area which means there are higher numbers of workers and residents than ever before.
- 2.56 The provision of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes is crucial to the further development of the area, providing a direct link from New Islington Marina to new offices on Pollard Street; building on active transport links across the neighbourhood and encouraging further investment in the area.
- 2.57 The above documents discuss aspirations for an improved city centre, one of the key aspects of which is high quality sustainable transport links. The cycle bridge will also build on aspirations to:
- Achieve carbon reduction goals through encouraging increased uptake of sustainable modes of transport;

- Offering health benefits to local residents through providing improved active transport routes;
- Linking the improved public realm on the future Pollard Street Site; and the Marina to improve Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure network; and
- Building on the unique architectural language of New Islington area, in providing a bridge that will link both heritage features, and new modern blocks.

2.58 The remainder of this Statement provides the detail around the specific location of the site and its immediate context (Section 3), consultation that has been undertaken to date to develop the design (Section 4), the proposals (Section 5), the assessment of the proposals against adopted planning policy and other material considerations (Sections 6 and 7), and concluding with the case for the grant of planning permission and listed building consent.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 The site is located on Ashton Canal in New Islington, Manchester, in close proximity to Great Ancoats Street, Pollard Street and the New Islington Tram Stop. It currently comprises canal infrastructure dating from circa 1792, as well as a towpath running adjacent to the Ashton Canal.
- 3.2 The canal and its locks are an important part of Manchester's physical heritage, due to its connection to the industrial history of the city and importance to the contextual setting of the nearby nineteenth century historic buildings. The lock adjacent to the north east of the site is Grade II listed, with four other listed buildings and structures located within the immediate canal basin.

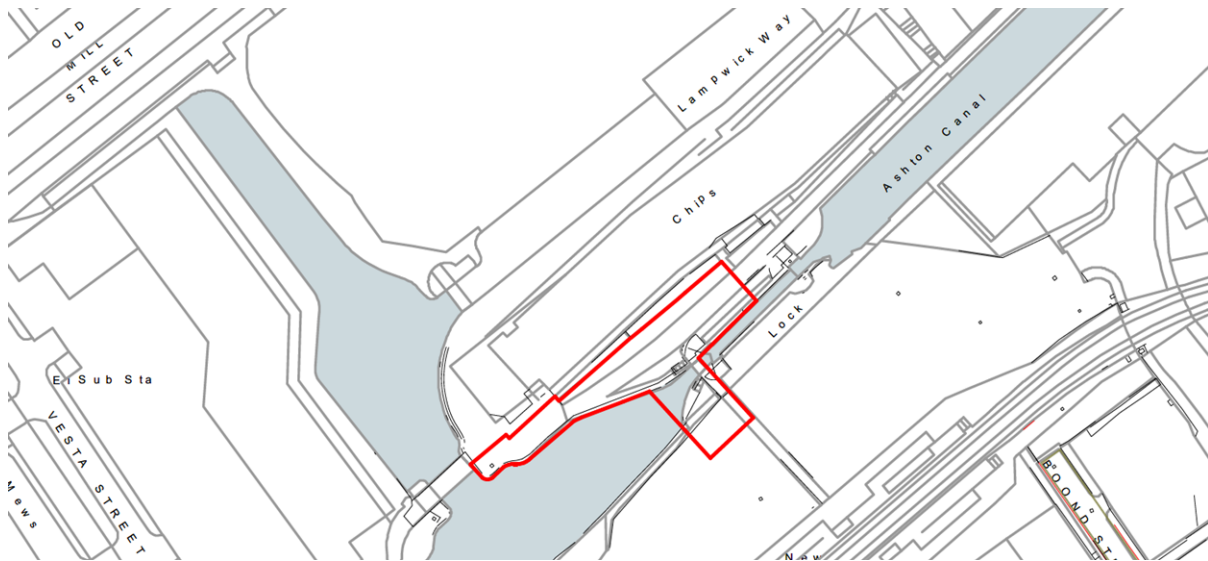


Figure 2: Site plan

Surrounding Uses

- 3.3 The Site is within and surrounded by neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the City Centre are medium and high-density in character and varied in their use, with residential and workspace developments supported by a range of ground floor active leisure and retail uses. These neighbourhoods include Ancoats, New Islington, Holt Town and Lower Medlock Valley.
- 3.4 This series of higher-density mixed-use residential neighbourhoods extend east along the canal corridors within the Alan Turing Way intermediate ring road, acting as a natural extension of the city centre and supporting a greater range of households and neighbourhood uses.
- 3.5 As such, this has developed the Site surrounds into an area with a mix of converted warehouses mixed with newer, more contemporary-style commercial and residential developments. The surrounding area is as a result relatively densely built up, with surrounding buildings generally 5 storeys or taller.
- 3.6 The General Projects 'Pollard Street' Development, approved at Planning Committee on 17 December 2020, will occupy what is currently an open space immediately adjacent to the canal, known as new Islington Green. This will be an office-led mixed-use scheme, and work on this is expected to start in early 2022.
- 3.7 The approved scheme notes the aspiration to deliver a new bridge in this location, as the vision for the Pollard Street scheme's public realm is to improve its relationship with water, provide high quality

green space and become more people friendly. The bridge is envisioned to strongly relate to this new public space, and this therefore this development will form an important element of the future site context. Further east and beyond New Islington, there is significant development around the Etihad Campus, most significantly a proposal for a new entertainment arena, which was granted Planning Permission in September 2020.

- 3.8 To the north west of the proposed bridge lies the New Islington Canal basin and Ancoats, which is a rapidly developing part of the city centre comprising new and refurbished residential and commercial developments. Further beyond to the north west lies the districts of New Cross and NOMA, which are emerging residential and commercial areas to the north of Manchester City Centre and sharing a boundary with Salford.
- 3.9 The bridge seeks to improve connections east and west between these key regeneration areas in order to improve the take up of trips being made by bicycle and on foot and reduce traffic generated by private car trips. This east-west connection that is to be improved by the bridge offers onward connections into the city centre and the wealth of employment opportunities, social connections and cultural activities and supports active travel.

Site Description

- 3.10 The remaining parts of this section sets out the current qualities of the Site including access and transport, ecology, flood risk and other environmental conditions. The proposals in relation to this context are set out in detail in Sections 6 and 7 of this Statement to summarise how the proposals accord with material considerations in response to the site conditions set out below.

Access and Transport

- 3.11 The wider area benefits from good quality pedestrian accessibility within neighbourhoods and offers exceptional linkages through a variety of multi-modal public transport connections to other parts of Greater Manchester as described below.
- 3.12 The Site is however bisected by the Ashton Canal that forms a hard barrier to east-west connections. There are alternative east-west connections along Great Ancoats Street and Carruthers Street across the Ashton canal, but these are located 250m from the Site either north east or south west of the proposed bridge, which represents a detour that could deter local trips being made on foot or by bike. These routes are also not currently fully segregated in terms of connections for cyclists and walkers, and particularly those with additional accessibility needs.

Cycle Routes

- 3.13 Cycling is an increasingly popular mode of transport and is an effective mode for short trips and take up is anticipated to increase in the coming years. There are several designated cycle routes and facilities in the area that are in the process of being joined up, with the network continuing to develop as a result of initiatives, adopted strategies and direct investment.
- 3.14 This includes regional cycle network 86 that runs along the Ashton Canal before following the River Medlock from the eastern edge of the city centre, near Piccadilly, through Phillips Park and Clayton Vale. To the north of the site, national cycle route network 66 can be reached via Old Mill Street, which runs from central Manchester to Spurn Head via Bradford, Leeds, York and Hull. Further afield, national cycle network route 60 can be accessed via Alan Turing Way that runs between the north and east of Manchester, with its southern most segment forming part of the Fallowfield Loopline.
- 3.15 Cycle parking is currently provided at New Islington Metrolink station in the form of 5 cycle stands, providing parking for 10 bicycles. No other cycle parking within public areas are provided within the existing site boundary nor in the immediate vicinity. However, secure cycle facilities are now typically found within existing and proposed residential and commercial developments to ensure door to door cycle facilities for commuters.

Pedestrian Routes

- 3.16 Given the 'edge of city centre' location of the building, pedestrian accessibility to the surrounding area is very good. Most of the streets within the vicinity of the sites have footways on both sides enabling the site and an array of local amenities to be easily accessible by foot. Broadly speaking, most of the city centre is accessible within a 30-minute walk from the site.
- 3.17 Existing pedestrian links are present around the Site that lead towards the centre of Manchester along Great Ancoats Street, Old Mill Street, Pollard Street and into nearby areas, such as the New Islington canal basin. However, only the routes that provides pedestrian routes that are car free is the Ashton Canal and within the New Islington Canal basin and therefore there is scope for improving this. The existing pedestrian link over the Ashton Canal in this location is only sufficiently wide to allow one pedestrian to use it at a time and is not suitable for those with any form of mobility impairment.
- 3.18 In the future, as per the City Centre Transport Strategy and recently consulted Northern and Eastern Gateway Cycling Scheme, there are proposals to enhance walking and cycling routes by making them car free. The bridge forms a key linkage to this proposal and is therefore critical to the success of the project, as is highlighted in the plan below.



- 3.19 Consultation closed on the proposals for the Northern and Eastern Gateway Cycling scheme on 17 March 2021 and the details of the feedback received during that consultation period is set out in the consultation section of this report (Section 4).

Metrolink Network

- 3.20 Manchester Metrolink services are also highly accessible from the Site, with New Islington Metrolink tram stop located c. 20m from the proposed bridge. The stop is served by Metrolink services towards Ashton-under-Lyne to the east (East Manchester line) and Eccles via Media City to the north west of the site (Eccles Line).
- 3.21 New Islington is a three-minute journey away from the Piccadilly Station Metrolink station, which provides regular services to Altrincham-Bury Line, Bury-Piccadilly Line and South Manchester-Oldham Line. Services arrive to the New Islington Metrolink stop every 6 minutes at peak times and every 12 minutes during off peak, providing regular, reliable trips and live-update travel information at each station. Each Metrolink stop is full accessible for those with mobility impairments or additional accessibility needs.

Rail

- 3.22 Services to destinations across the UK are accessible from Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly train stations which are 1.2 miles (a 23-minute walk) and 0.7 miles (a 13-minute walk) from the site respectively. Cycle Both offer regular services both throughout Greater Manchester, and beyond to cities across the UK.
- 3.23 Manchester Piccadilly is one of three train stations located in the centre of Manchester, with Piccadilly the principal station for Manchester. The station is served by six train operating companies, Northern, Transport for Wales, CrossCountry, East Midlands Railway, TransPennine Express and Avanti West Coast. The station is served by both long-distance, regional and local commuter rail services. It is also a major interchange for Metrolink trams with two tram platforms located in the station.
- 3.24 There are also 43 cycle parking spaces provided within Piccadilly Station, which are accessed via Fairfield Street, Ducie Street and the station front entrance. There is also a Brompton bike hire docking station at the station providing the option to rent bicycles daily.

Bus

- 3.25 The roads adjacent to the site are well-served by existing bus services with a total of 33 two-directional peak hour buses serving the nearest stops in the peak period.
- 3.26 The Pollard Street bus stop is served by one service (216), which is a Stagecoach service running between Ashton-under-Lyne and Piccadilly Gardens (Manchester city centre). Both the Old Mill stops are also served by the 216 service and the 230 and 231 services, both of which also run between Ashton-under-Lyne and Piccadilly Gardens and are run by Stagecoach.
- 3.27 On Great Ancoats Street (A665) and 100m from the proposed bridge, is a stop that also provides a stop on the 216 bus route, as well as the 230 and 231 bus routes that provide connections between Ashton via Beswick and Droylsden. The 217 also operates from Great Ancoats Street near to the Ducie Street stop, which provides connections between Ashton and Wythenshawe Hospital.
- 3.28 Further afield, Piccadilly Gardens (a 18-minute walk / 0.9 miles from the site) is the main bus interchange in Manchester city centre, alongside Shudehill Interchange (an 20-minute walk / 1 mile from the site) where both bus and coach services can be reached. Both provide connections to local bus services across Greater Manchester.

Highway Network

- 3.29 To the east of the site, Pollard Street (A662) provides onward connections to Alan Turing Way (A6010), the Etihad and other parts of east Manchester. Great Ancoats Street (A665) is located 250m to the south west of the Site and forms part of Manchester's current inner ring road for vehicular traffic. Old Mill Street is a relatively quiet street to the north west of the site that provides a connection to Great Ancoats Street.

- 3.30 For the section of the A662 known as Merrill Street, approximately 250m the carriageway is shared between vehicles and Metrolink trams as part of the East Manchester Link. The footways adjacent to the carriageway are shared pedestrian and cycle footways. The road is single carriageway in both directions.
- 3.31 Great Ancoats Street (A665) forms a circular route around the city centre and provides onward connections toward Manchester City Centre, A56 and A6 to the north and towards A57 and M60 to the south. Great Ancoats Street is subject to a 30mph speed limit.
- 3.32 There are two surface car parks located on Pollard Street. These pay and display car parks provide a total of 80 car parking spaces and none specifically for blue badge holders. There are 31 multi-storey and surface car parks within a 15-minute walk of the Site, which indicates that there are around 2,500 spaces within a 10-minute walk, and around 5,000 spaces within a 15-minute walk.

Environmental Designations

Heritage

- 3.33 The Site is not located within a Conservation Area and the nearest Conservation Area is Ancoats, which is located c.450m to the north west of the Site. However, along the stretch of the canal where the bridge will be located there are a number of listed buildings or structures that must be taken into consideration in a Heritage Statement submitted with the planning application, as follows:
- Ashton Canal Lock Number 1 Immediately East of Great Ancoats Street - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1197829)
 - Ashton Canal Towpath Bridge over Junction with Islington Branch Canal West Of Lock Number 2 - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1197830)
 - Ashton Canal Lock Number 2 off south end of Vesta Street - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1207654)
 - Ashton Canal Lock Number 3 on South Side of Ancoats Hospital - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1283048)
 - Bridge Number 4 over Ashton Canal - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1197777)
 - Ashton Canal Lock Keepers Cottage beside Lock Number 2 at Islington Branch Junction Basin - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1279636)
 - Cooperative Warehouse - Grade: II (List Entry Number: 1247018)
- 3.34 This is discussed in more detail within the planning assessment section (Section 7) of this report. In addition, a Heritage Statement has been prepared by Deloitte LLP and is submitted in support of this application. This concluded a minor negative to neutral (less than substantial) impact on the significance of the identified heritage assets, setting out the full details regarding the potential impact on the above designated heritage assets.

Flood Risk

- 3.35 According to the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Map, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the bridge is proposed to span the existing Ashton Canal watercourse above flood levels.
- 3.36 The site is also located within a critical drainage area as like the majority of Manchester City Centre.

Air Quality

- 3.37 The Site is located partially within an Air Quality Management Area, which means that any future development should seek to improve air quality conditions on site and on the surrounding network as much as is reasonably and practicably possible, including reducing the reliance on the car.

Ecology

- 3.38 The Site is located within Manchester in an urban environment and enclosed by existing residential and commercial land uses.
- 3.39 The Ashton Canal is designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). SBIs are non-statutory areas of substantive ecological and biological local importance.
- 3.40 The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species approximately 450m east of site for common pipistrelle species. Four other EPS licenses are within 1km, all for bat species.
- 3.41 A Bat Survey report was prepared by Conservation Contracts North West (NNWC). No bat roosts were present. No offence in law relating to bats would be committed in the construction of an additional structure immediately adjacent to it. The existing lighting, volume of disturbance from public and regular usage of the lock gates made the adoption of the structure by bats unlikely.

4. Statement of Consultation

- 4.1 This section summarises the relevant national and local level policy guidance in respect of consultation. Due regard has been had to this policy context as part of the formulation and implementation of the pre-application consultation process in respect of the application.

National

Localism Act

- 4.2 The Localism Bill was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010, and was given Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, becoming an Act ("the Act").
- 4.3 The main aim of the Act is to shift power from Central Government back into the hands of individuals, communities and Councils. It includes five key measures as follows:
- Community rights.
 - Neighbourhood planning.
 - Housing.
 - General power of competence.
 - Empowering cities and other local areas.
- 4.4 Part 6 of the Act specifically deals with planning and Chapter 4 sets out requirements in relation to consultation before applying for Planning Permission.
- 4.5 Section 122 of the Act amends the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to include a new Section 61W, which sets out a requirement to carry out pre-application consultation as follows:
- (1) Where—
- (a) a person proposes to make an application for planning permission for the development of any land in England, and
 - (b) the proposed development is of a description specified in a development order, the person must carry out consultation on the proposed application in accordance with subsections (2) and (3)."
- 4.6 Subsections (2) and (3) state:
- The person must publicise the proposed application in such manner as the person reasonably considers is likely to bring the proposed application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land.
 - The person must consult each specified person about the proposed application.
- 4.7 Subsection (4) outlines the requirements in regards to publicity of applications:
- (4) Publicity under subsection (2) must—

- set out how the person (“P”) may be contacted by persons wishing to comment on, or collaborate with P on the design of, the proposed development, and
 - give such information about the proposed timetable for the consultation as is sufficient to ensure that persons wishing to comment on the proposed development may do so in good time.
- 4.8 The Act also sets out a duty to take account of responses to consultation. Section 61X requires a developer to have regard to any comments or responses generated by the consultation undertaken in accordance with Section 61W, when deciding whether to make any changes to proposals before submitting a planning application.
- 4.9 Section 61Y enables the Secretary of State to set out further provisions as to how the consultation required under new section 61W should be undertaken in practice.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (adopted in March 2012 and updated in 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England, including guidance in relation to the undertaking of public engagement and consultation on proposed developments.
- 4.11 Paragraph 39 sets out that early engagement on design with all parties produces the greatest benefits for the overall outcome of a scheme. It notes that Local Planning Authorities should have local design review arrangements in place and should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel.
- 4.12 The NPPF also promotes the use of the Local Planning Authority Pre-Application Service in order to encourage a partnership approach to applications. It is considered that early engagement with the Local Planning Authority is often conducive to the best result for the application, as it highlights where further work is required.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 4.13 In March 2014, the Government issued a new National Planning Practice Guidance as an on-line resource, which is designed to bring together planning practice guidance for England in an accessible and useable way. This Guidance provides further detail to assist in the understanding of planning policies set out within the NPPF, including requirements for pre-application engagement.
- 4.14 In particular, Paragraphs 008 and 009 of the ‘Consultation and pre-decision matters’ section identify that:
 - In line with the policies of the NPPF, statutory consultees have an important role to play in the pre-application stage and should be engaged early; and,
 - Pre-application consultation with the local community is encouraged where it adds value to process and outcome.
- 4.15 In terms of design, the NPPG sets out in Paragraph 30, 33 and 35 of the ‘Design’ section set out methods which can be adopted to promote good design at all stages of the planning process. These include pre application discussions, and design and access statements. Paragraph 33 sets out that pre-application discussions are an opportunity to discuss the design policies, requirements and parameters that will be applied to a site.
- 4.16 The local authority can explain the design issues they feel are most important and the developer can explain their own objectives and aspirations. Being able to inform and influence the design of a proposed development early in the design process is more efficient than trying to implement suggested revisions at a later stage – particularly if this relates to a major proposal.

Local

- 4.17 Manchester City Council (MCC) adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on 31 January 2007.
- 4.18 The SCI sets out how and when MCC will involve the community in relation to the preparation and revision of the Local Development Documents, and in the process of making decisions on planning applications.
- 4.19 Chapter 11 of the SCI provides guidance on involving the community in planning applications. It identifies that pre-application consultation is beneficial to both the community and the developer, as it allows the developer to design a proposal that takes on board the opinions of the community.
- 4.20 Developers are encouraged to liaise with the MCC development control officers to determine the nature and scale of consultation that will be appropriate for the proposals.
- 4.21 Developers are encouraged to submit a record of the consultation that took place with their planning submission, which is detailed within this section of this Statement.
- 4.22 On 11 June 2018 the Council adopted a refreshed Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how residents and other stakeholders can get involved in the preparation of planning policies, frameworks and neighbourhood planning processes in Manchester and also how you can make comments on planning applications received by the Council. This document reflects the principles set out in the Manchester Strategy 2016-25, which commits to giving the local community and other stakeholders the opportunity to be involved in decision making, with a primary focus on a continuous approach to engagement.

Consultation Accordance with National and Local Policy

- 4.23 Pre-application consultation has been focused upon engaging key stakeholders during the design evolution of the proposals, as well as explaining how the proposals have responded to the site's social, economic, and environmental context. In summary, the following consultation has taken place:
- Throughout the preparation of the application, regular dialogue has taken place with senior officers at Manchester City Council within Planning, Highways, and Environmental Health departments, to ensure that they understand and support the proposals in principle.
 - Key stakeholder group, the Canal and Rivers Trust, were consulted in order to successfully incorporate a new Manchester Peace Garden and to generate proposals for plaques to be installed.
 - Greater Manchester Police's Design for Security team has been consulted, and their advice in terms of safety and security has been addressed within the application proposals, as detailed in the Crime Impact Statement. The proposals have also been discussed in detail with the Counter Terrorism Unit at Greater Manchester Police and their recommendations have been incorporated into the design.
 - Local Councillors, land owners and businesses within the vicinity of the site were issued letters, which provided details of the proposals including timescales and offered a briefing session.
 - Correspondence has taken place with Historic England to explain the initial design and ascertain whether further, detailed pre-application involvement was required. HE confirmed that no further engagement was required during the pre-application stage.
- 4.24 Further discussion and consultation will take place as required throughout the period of formal consultation on the planning application following its submission.

- 4.25 The sections below further describe the consultation activity undertaken in relation to each stakeholder and a summary of the feedback received, and how this has been addressed as necessary.

Public Consultation

- 4.26 A public consultation took place on proposals for the entire route of the proposed MCC Northern and Eastern Gateway Scheme in March 2021 of which the Canal Bridge is a key part, asking for comments both on the route as a whole and the new bridge.
- 4.27 These comments were taken into consideration in the design development of the bridge by Hawkins Brown. The most common comment on the bridge was that it wasn't wide enough – particularly for cycles, but the Canal and Rivers Trust had previously noted that a wider bridge would have greater impact on canal function. In addition, the bridge is wide enough to meet all required regulations for its intended use, as detailed in the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.28 Other comments were more general comments on the entire route of the Northern and Eastern scheme, including inclusion of a separate cycle lane, and the route itself, which were important context to note on the approach to the bridge, but as they are not directly relevant to the design of the bridge they were beyond the scope of these proposals.

Manchester City Council

Local Planning and Conservation Authority

- 4.29 The proposals described in this Statement are considered to be a core development objective for Ancoats and New Islington, the proposed Pollard Street scheme and the overarching Northern and Eastern Gateway cycle route proposals. The bridge is considered to be critical in linking these key developments supported by MCC at a strategic level.
- 4.30 The proposals have been developed through further detailed consultation with senior planning officers at MCC as follows:
- Pre-application meeting was held on 23rd February 2021 to discuss the proposals in principle and the proposed locations being considered, and the initial design concepts. The heritage assets near to the site were also discussed in detail, including potential impact on these and the scope of the heritage assessment.
 - A follow up meeting was held 8th June 2021 with Hawkins Brown, who had taken up the role as lead architect. At this meeting, previous design iterations were discussed alongside the revised proposals for the bridge in principle. The key considerations that should be worked through during the design development stages were discussed in order to refine the proposals given the sensitive nature of the site and physical constraints. Follow up emails were sent to provide an update on the emerging scheme proposals and to provide an update in relation to feedback received from the consultation events and online engagement; and
 - Meetings on 24th June and 5th July 2021 provided an update from Hawkins Brown on the final proposals for the bridge, which were presented to Manchester City Council Planning and Heritage Departments to seek their views and present further consultation feedback received from Canal and River Trust.
- 4.31 At the above meetings, and since inception of the project more generally, the Local Planning Authority have expressed their continued support for the proposals. The City Council consider that the proposals have the ability to provide a coherent public realm strategy and crucial links between two rapidly developing areas of Manchester that would improve the use and quality of this area for the benefit the public.

- 4.32 MCC officer's essential requirement for a more sensitive design has been taken on board, and Hawkins Brown were engaged to develop the design further from the concept proposals. The design-led approach took what had been a utilitarian design and made it something that would celebrate the area, tying in with both heritage assets and modern developments nearby.
- 4.33 Hawkins Brown addressed a number of the further discussion points raised during pre-application meetings, including altering the shape and location of the bridge to reduce pinch points, alongside integrating the tow path and ramp to make this connection less obtrusive visually. Refinements were also made to the materiality of the bridge to make it contextually appropriate yet distinctively modern, robust and fully accessible.
- 4.34 In summary, the overall feedback from these pre-application discussions has been positive and have informed the evolution of the proposed design. The scheme has built upon the designs of the extant consents and built form in the area to provide coherent proposals that seeks to blend old and new together.

Local Councillors

- 4.35 As part of the consultation process, a meeting was held with the ward members on 13th January 2021 where the initial concept and proposed location for the bridge were presented. The level of detail regarding the bridge was limited at that stage of the process, with the location of the bridge being the principle point of discussion. The feedback from this initial session were that all Councillors were happy with the improvement to the current crossing and the location of the bridge, subject to seeing further details of the design prior to submission.
- 4.36 MCC Major Projects, who are the Applicant and are responsible for the delivery of the bridge, met with Local Councillors on the 1st July 2021 to provide an update on the progression of the detailed design, and provide a summary of the responses received following further consultation with key stakeholders and departments within MCC. Generally, all were comfortable with the proposals and the developed design.
- 4.37 It was however recommended by Local Ward Councillors that a good alternative route to cross the canal would be required whilst the bridge is under construction. The alternative route has been reviewed, as there are limited options of either Carruthers Street or Great Ancoats Street for alternative access without creating a new temporary bridge. The feasibility of providing a temporary structure will be tested with an appointed contractor, who will deliver the scheme and set out the temporary routes that will be provided during the works in a Construction Management Plan, secured by way of condition.

Other Consultees

Canal and River Trust

- 4.38 An initial meeting was held with the Canal and River Trust ('CRT') on 6th October 2020, following an initial briefing letter issued in September 2020 to provide an update on the potential new bridge. The CRT welcomed in the principle the concept of creating a pedestrian and cycling route that would provide connectivity across and with the Ashton Canal. However, CRT did express concerns related to the initial design and its interaction with their assets.
- 4.39 In particular, CRT considered that the preliminary design of both the ramp and crossing was too functional and utilitarian in appearance, and that it had paid little regard to the special and sensitive canal setting. They suggested that the original proposal failed to recognise the waterway wall alignment and obscures the elegant stonework at the tail of the listed lock and therefore requested that the design of the new bridge adhere to the following principles:
- Simple, clean design with continuity across the locality;

- Minimal structure to ensure lightweight visual appearance;
- Material palette in keeping with lock setting;
- Open balustrade to allow visibility to listed lock;
- Lighting to tow-path to be consistent and sufficient for safety and access;
- Access to mooring dock; and
- Height/clearance underneath the bridge should be no lower than the existing lock bridge.

4.40 In order to refine the design development of the bridge in light of comments received from CRT and other stakeholders, Manchester City Council engaged Hawkins Brown to review the proposals and seek to deliver a more sensitive approach to the design.

4.41 Hawkins/Brown have since undertaken a significant amount of research into canal bridges in the UK and abroad, as well as a review of the local area's current and future proposed architecture and the immediate historical context. This is detailed in full within the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application and has aided significantly in the improvement of the proposed design set out in this application.

4.42 The key moves since the initial meeting was held with CRT include:

- Refining the detailing of the railings and balustrades to be more in-keeping with the canal side furniture and railings around the lock, as well as the visibility through the proposed balustrade to ensure the lock is visible;
- The height of the bridge has been raised due to the necessary clearance height of 2.1m and the location has been moved further from the lock itself in order to improve the visibility of the existing designated heritage asset;
- Inclusion of a balustrade along the canal edge to reduce the risk of collision and the ramp shape has been altered to discourage this action;
- Lighting has been included as part of the proposals in order to maintain a consistent approach to lighting along the extent of the canal network in Manchester and make sure it feels safe; and
- Access to the mooring was retained through stepped access via the new bridge and the materials proposed seek to add robustness to the active canal uses at this location.

4.43 A further meeting was held with CRT on the 30th June 2021 to present the designs to be submitted for planning to seek their views on the designs and seek further input. It was considered at this meeting, as summarised above, that the proposed bridge design was acceptable from their perspective.

TfGM

4.44 Prior to submission, Transport for Greater Manchester were engaged via email on the 28th April 2021 and the team discussed the operation of the tramline at New Islington, as well as its future potential development. The key consideration was how the Pollard Street and the bridge would interlink to ensure none is compromised by the other, as well as managing the construction impacts of delivering the new bridge and the access that may be required over TfGM's Metrolink line.

4.45 In particular, it was requested that any relevant parameters or restrictions on construction vehicles crossing the tracks be provided and how any potential safety conflicts between the tram lines and cyclists would be managed. A meeting was subsequently held 6th July 2021 and designs were

presented to seek the views of TfGM and present further consultation feedback received from MCC and Canal and River Trust.

- 4.46 Generally, TfGM were onboard with the proposals and suggested a unique, standout design that was in keeping with eclectic context would be appropriate. This was taken on board in the design development of the bridge as reflected in this Statement. TfGM also noted the bridge should be fully DDA and DMRB compliant, which has been reflected in both the design of the ramp sloping, gradients, widths, and consideration of appropriate materials palette.

Greater Manchester Police

- 4.47 Dialogue with GMP took place in February and March 2021 via an exchange of written correspondence. Information was issued to provide an overview of the proposals and the strategic context of the site.
- 4.48 Following this initial briefing and exchange of correspondence, a meeting was held with a representative from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) on 8th July where the initial proposals for the site were tabled to seek their views and understand safety and security requirements and improvements.
- 4.49 As a follow up, plans and design information for the new bridge were issued to GMP on 9th of July to inform their views on the best way in which to manage anti-social behaviour on and around the bridge. GMP confirmed that no formal Crime Impact Statement would be required for the application and instead have provided thoughts by consultation.
- 4.50 On this basis, GMP have provided the following feedback on the proposals prior to the submission being made:
- Positive aspects of the proposal:
 - The proposal seeks to make connections across the Ashton Canal linking existing & future buildings, social settings and their surrounding environments. In doing so the project will identify new and emerging opportunities across the site for a whole new range of social and commercial developments with the new public realm at the centre of the growth.
 - The overall proposal will see the redevelopment of the area which has been a generator of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.
 - The reduction of existing foliage and self-seeded landscaping on the Pollard St side of the canal will greatly increase visibility across the site thus promoting better natural surveillance around the area. The increased number of users across the site, addressing the visibility across the site will all vastly help to reduce feelings of insecurity around the area. The greater the use of these spaces the less likely they will be populated by those acting anti-socially.
 - The physical architecture of the bridge will incorporate a lightweight metal structure within the design allowing greater visual links across the site during day.
 - The main public realm circulation routes are obvious, leading people directly to where they need to go. The proposals are intended to integrate with surrounding circulation routes and future developments of the Pollard Street consented scheme.
 - There are good levels of natural surveillance offered by the neighbouring residential buildings onto the site. The future development of the Pollard Street commercial scheme will further enhance natural surveillance of the proposed public realm developments of this project.

- Further Recommendations to Improve Security & Safety:
 - Lighting to access road and pedestrian routes around the site. Effective lighting should be included to allow users to feel secure in the hours of darkness. Lighting should be considered to the underside of the bridge discouraging loitering and anti-social behaviour taking place on the canal tow path below the bridge.
 - The management of such areas is essential to encourage active use and enjoyment, whilst making abuse less likely to occur.
 - Given the high levels of graffiti within and around the site, it is important that materials are sealed, protected and/or supports the removal of graffiti.
 - Security measure carefully incorporated into the public realm design can ensure that the environment is reasonably secure, without visibly announcing that the design was concerned about crime or safety.

4.51 These comments set out by GMP have been considered in the latest design by Hawkins/Brown as set out in the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application.

4.52 Features of the bridge, in light of the comments made by GMP, include lighting integrated into the design of the bridge, on-going management and maintenance of the bridge by Manchester City Council and CRT, sealing the materials of the proposed façade for protection and passively designing out crime rather than the creation of an oppressive environment. Further details of the scheme are set out in this Planning Statement as discussed in Section 5.

Neighbouring Properties and Landowners

General Projects

4.53 On 26th February 2021, the team met with General Projects (GP) as an adjacent landowner and discussed how the design would integrate with their proposed Pollard Street Design and to get their initial comments on the proposed location.

4.54 In order to co-ordinate the design of the bridge with nearby developments and provide a contextually appropriate response to the local existing and committed development, Hawkins/Brown have since been engaged with leading the design of the bridge. As Hawkins Brown are involved in the design of both the bridge and were lead architect on the Pollard Street scheme, their involvement ensured seamless integration between the two schemes, including links with the pedestrian routes proposed and building entrances.

4.55 Further meetings have since been held with General Projects and information has been issued in order to provide an update on the scheme's design.

Little Learning Ladder

4.56 On 16th July 2021, Little Learning Ladder (LLL) was contacted via email with a brief description of the proposals, the location of the bridge, and documents detailing the design at this stage, with an offer for a follow up meeting.

4.57 It was noted in particular that the works being proposed may cause some minor disruption for a short period of time whilst the new bridge is installed, as access along the towpath would be restricted whilst the new ramp is being delivered, and would therefore require a temporary diversion of pedestrian traffic alongside the existing ramp directly adjoining the CHIPS building.

4.58 There was no response to this initial communication, or from a follow up email sent 27th July. However, engagement will continue to take place following submission of this application and prior to any works commencing on site.

CHIPS

- 4.59 CHIPS building leaseholders were contacted via email with a brief description of the proposals, the location of the bridge, and documents detailing the design at this stage, with an offer for a follow up meeting. A further email was sent 27th July 2021. A response was received prior to submission confirming that they had reviewed the proposals and had no further questions at this stage.

Consultation Summary

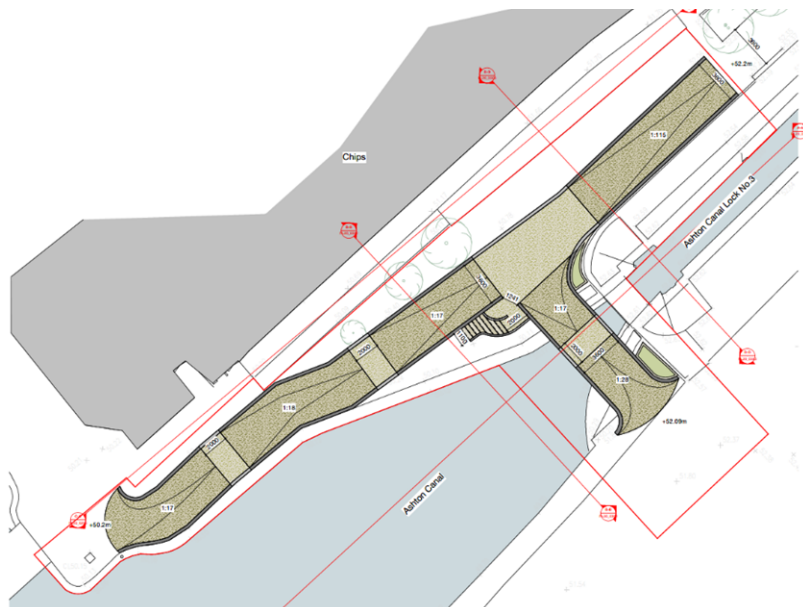
- 4.60 The proposals have been prepared in collaboration with MCC Planning and Conservation Officers and have been the subject to pre-application consultation with Local Ward Councillors, GMP, Canal and River's Trust, key interest groups, adjoining owners, occupiers, and members of the public.
- 4.61 In particular, consultation with Planning and Conservation Officers at Manchester City Council has focused on developing an improved design, both aesthetically to be more in keeping with the heritage features on the canal and it's infrastructure, but also to make it more useable in reducing potential pinch points and working with the active uses of the canal.
- 4.62 The proposed strategy, height, location and design of the bridge has been discussed at length with Canal and Rivers Trust. The approach to the lock height, balustrade design and the location of the lock has been refined in discussion with MCC and councillors in light of heritage assets and site constraints.
- 4.63 Pre-application engagement with local residents and businesses has been principally focused through direct engagement via email, telephone correspondence and virtual meetings. A more general consultation on the entire Northern and Eastern route was held, but the majority of the comments were focussed on the route as a whole, rather than feedback on the design of the bridge.
- 4.64 The consultation process will also continue as part of the formal statutory planning procedure managed by the Local Planning Authority. During this process, the Applicant and the project team will carefully consider any comments received from consultees and will respond as appropriate through the Local Planning Authority.
- 4.65 In summary, consultation feedback has broadly been supportive of the proposals and detailed comments have been fully considered and addressed in this Section.
- 4.66 Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of national policy (the Localism Act and the NPPF) and MCC's Statement of Community Involvement. Full details of the design response is set out in Section 5 of this Statement and the Design and Access Statement prepared by Hawkins/Brown.

5. Proposed Development

- 5.1 The Proposed Development comprises the erection of improvement works to install a new walking and cycling bridge to better connect both sides of the Ashton Canal and support recent and planned activity taking place in the area.
- 5.2 The bridge is both an aspiration of both the Beelines network and Strategic Regeneration Frameworks relevant to the area. The brief for the bridge design was that it must:
- Be fully accessible for all pedestrians and those with mobility requirements in line with both local and national policy.
 - Enhance the current pedestrian routes to and through New Islington and beyond.
 - Be robust and hard wearing.
 - Be contextual and sympathetic to its surrounding context.
- 5.3 Whilst full details of the design are in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Hawkins Brown, a summary is included below in this Section. The merits of the scheme in planning terms are set out in Section 7 of this Statement.

Layout

- 5.4 The proposed bridge is to be strategically located south of Ashton Canal Lock No.3, sited between the CHIPS Building and the consented Pollard Street scheme. Given the physical and heritage constraints of the site, need to provide level access between the two sides of the canal and parameters that have been agreed with statutory consultees, a number of options were considered. This process is set out in the Design and Access Statement in full.



width of this point on the canal. In addition, locating the bridge at this point will have lesser impact on the heritage of the canal as this option has moved further from the Lock 2 grouping, which includes the lock keeper's cottage, and the towpath bridge. Instead, the proposed bridge is located adjacent to one asset (Lock no.3) and has sought to refine its layout and elegance to minimise the impact.

- 5.6 Hawkins\Brown undertook a review of the concept bridge and location, alongside the feedback received, in order to distil the key design criteria. One of the key changes from this review was to alter the design to maximise visibility of the lock and emphasise alignment by raising the height of the centre of the bridge, referencing traditional humped canal bridges, and to lift the bridge away from listed lock to ensure adequate clearance from lock steps and wall without creating 'dead' space.

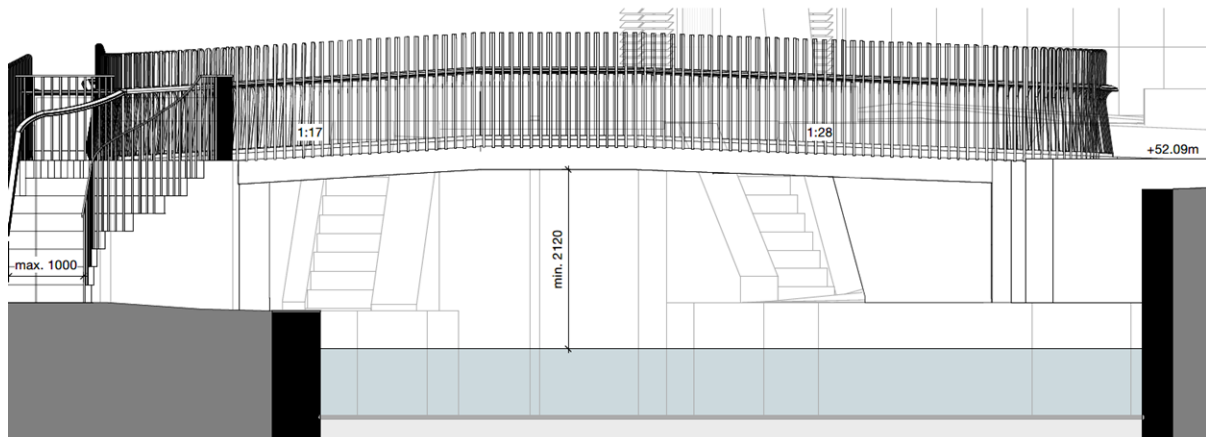


Figure 4 - Bridge clearance height

- 5.7 The layout of the bridge results in some physical interaction between the proposed works and the existing listed lock. Whilst the works are considered to be incidental and non-intrusive, it was considered pertinent to apply for Listed Building Consent to allow for remedial works to be undertaken to the existing lock if required.

Access

- 5.8 The scheme has been developed to help promote walking and cycling to benefit health and wellbeing. This is to link in with proposed improvements to the walking and cycling network, existing and proposed developments and existing high-quality public footpaths leading to the site, particularly through New Islington Marina. The New Islington Metrolink stop located to the east of the bridge location provides excellent public transport links with additional bus, cycle and walking connections linking through to the Etihad, the city centre and beyond.
- 5.9 The bridge utilises a series of ramps along the towpath, with interim landings to provide respite to the incline toward bridge crossover. The proposed bridge aims to utilise the existing level difference and ramping gradient to minimise the impact of the bridge on the surrounding area, as the ramp would align to co-ordinate with the existing towpath.
- 5.10 The ends of the ramps to the south-west and east are flared to facilitate access and egress for all user groups, while the central T-landing is increased in length to encourage cyclists to slow down and provide greater manoeuvrability as users change direction. While ramped access isn't possible to the mooring area, generous 1.2m wide steps with a double landing provides ample room for canal users to disembark and access the lock gates.
- 5.11 The historic lock steps are oriented parallel to the canal, with the new proposed steps to the mooring area also mirroring this alignment. This not only echoes the historic structure, but also means that canal users alight at the central landing, providing direct to any of the three directions of travel. The 1.2m wide steps have a 2m long landing at the top, with an extra landing providing a pausing point for

passers-by, while also safeguarding the steps from cyclists and making sure users have space to navigate the stairs.



Figure 5 - Landing point next to CRT

- 5.12 It is considered that the location and onward connections of the proposed bridge is likely to attract a higher number of pedestrians compared to cyclists, particularly at night. It is also likely that the approaches to the bridge on both sides of the canal will not have dedicated cycle lanes as they form part of the proposed Pollard Street linear canal park and existing Ashton Canal towpath.

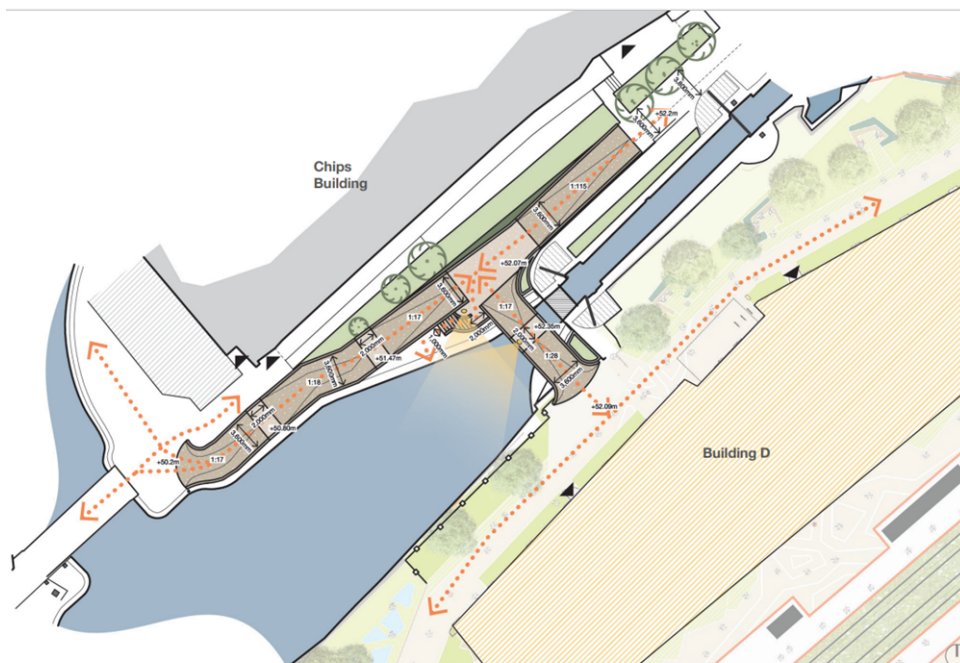


Figure 6 Access and movement to surrounding schemes (Hawkins Brown, 2021)

Accessibility

- 5.13 The proposal for the Ashton Canal Lock No.3 Bridge is developed with consideration of the Equality Act (2010) and Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure that the project affords an accessible and inclusive environment for all users.

- 5.14 The scheme considers codes, standards and best practice documents in relation to accessibility that will promote levels of accessibility and maximise participation. The slope of the ramps and the width of the bridge is therefore suitable for the needs of all users, including those who require the use of wheelchairs or prams. Further details of this can be found in the Design and Access statement

Construction Period Access

- 5.15 Due to the narrow width of the path at this point on the canal, an alternate route will be signposted, round the Ancoats Dispensary and along Lampwick Lane, leading to the towpath on the far side of the works.
- 5.16 There is also a level access route that runs along the CHiPs building that may be used as alternative to get down to the canal basin and along the towpath. However, this option is still being explored. As a fallback option, the existing bridge will be kept in situ and access will be maintained to allow for a crossing point to be provided whilst the works are taking place.
- 5.17 Further details are contained in the Construction Management Plan prepared by MCC Major Projects, which will be developed further and submitted to discharge relevant planning conditions once a contractor is appointed.

Appearance

- 5.18 The bridge spans the Ashton Canal landing at different levels on each bank, as well as having passers below on different canal boats. It is therefore important that the bridge has a degree of transparency so that lines of sight are not impeded by the necessary structural elements, and that the view of the lock is maximised. At the same time, the setting of the bridge, amidst large scaled buildings, will benefit from some solidity, giving it the appearance of appropriate human-scale mass in proportion to the surroundings.
- 5.19 Materiality of the proposed bridge was also a key consideration during design development. As part of the materiality study, traditional UK canal bridges were analysed. A number of materials and approaches are used across canal bridges in the north-west, including ornamental balustrading with contrasting colours; exposure the structural member to accentuate this; and regular, permeable structures with often contextual colour to create a more lightweight appearance. These key features are referenced in the design, to create a link with historic canal crossings, and to make the bridge as unobtrusive as possible.



Figure 7 Visual of Proposed Bridge from Chips Entrance (Hawkins Brown)

- 5.20 Looking at the architectural context of the site, the material palette is eclectic, ranging from the traditional Manchester red brick of the Lock Keeper's Cottage, to the more colourful GRC panels used

on the surrounding office and residential blocks. The consented General Projects scheme for Pollard Street will introduce a rich palette of colours, counterpointing the rustier and buff tones on the western bank.

- 5.21 The proposed bridge makes use of the opportunity for the bridge to have its own identity that enhances its setting, whilst also sensitively referencing the rich history of the site. For the proposed Bridge it was also considered key that there was an element of 'lightness', so as to not be overly obtrusive to views of surrounding historic assets, and therefore careful use of materials is essential, as detailed below.

Ramps

- 5.22 The canal edge is emphasised and highlighted by the ramped approach, which follows the canal coping stones up to the mooring area. The proposed steps to the mooring area echo and mirror the lock steps orientation, while the bridge deck has been optimised to be as slender as possible and maximise the view of the lock and gates, especially for canal users.
- 5.23 The proposed bridge consists of two main parts: the ramped towpath approach and the bridge itself. Simple, elegant balustrades flowing along both structures unite them and connect the two sides of the canal. The slight curvature of the bridge deck ensures that the minimum clear height for the canal is achieved, while creating an experience for users both above and below the bridge. The hump of the bridge highlights the canal orientation, references traditional canal bridges, and most importantly maximise visibility of the lock.

Balustrade

- 5.24 The balustrade will be perhaps the most visual element of the bridge, and so material options and styles were identified that all had a positive impact on the look and feel of the bridge and the surrounding context. The lightest of the considered options whilst still providing an industrial solidity, was simple repeating, elegant metal uprights with lower level leaning rail, which has been taken forward as the final proposed design.
- 5.25 The 'hairpin' shape of the balustrade is both modern and unobtrusive, allowing views through and along the canal to be maintained. The material choice also maximises views by utilising contrasting colours to help vertical element fade and soften the visuals of the bridge from different perspectives.

Surface treatment

- 5.26 The ramp faces have been designed to 'celebrate' New Islington by utilising materials that reflect the industrial aesthetic of the surrounding buildings, creates a distinct aesthetic for the mooring area and doesn't blur the lines between historic lock and new structure. Using a similar approach as to the balustrade, a range of material finishes were discussed during engagement with consultees and the iterative design process.
- 5.27 The existing tapestry of materials along the towpath means that no one material is dominant within the palette. The ramp faces also still needed to meet a number of key criteria, both technical guidance and maintenance requirements, including material longevity within a marine environment, resistance to vandalism, and meeting all technical guidance, as required.
- 5.28 A range of material were considered for the ramp, and it was decided that a textured, pre-cast concrete panel system would both offer a distinct material palette and be able to tie in with the context, without homogenising the two structures together.



Figure 8 Visual of Proposed Bridge looking East up Ashton Canal (Hawkins Brown)

Lighting

- 5.29 It is proposed to treat the bridge and its approaches with different types of lighting in order to provide the appropriate lighting levels for security, and to accentuate the features of the bridge.
- 5.30 Lighting across the bridge will comprise LED light in stainless steel casing integrated into the balustrade design, highlighting the route at night for pedestrian users. Additional lighting will be used to accentuate the structure, including a lighting strip flush with the decking. Up-lighting from the abutment and down lighting from the balustrade provides a considered design that emphasises and celebrates the design of the bridge.
- 5.31 Incorporating lighting into the deck structure will also ensure areas beneath the deck are well-lit and less likely to become antisocial behaviour hot spots.

Soft Landscaping

- 5.32 The public realm scheme will comprise hard and soft landscaping to help embed the bridge within its context and to reduce the impact on the listed lock; utilising landscaping opportunities to ensure there are no 'dead spaces' between the proposed bridge and the lock. A planted area borders the existing towpath, with a mixture of shrubbery and semi-mature trees and will be retained.

6. Planning Framework and Material Considerations

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

6.2 This Section details the relevant documents that make up the Development Plan and material considerations such as guidance and MCC Strategic objectives.

6.3 Detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the Development Plan and material considerations is provided within this Section 7 of this Statement.

Local Development Plan

6.4 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a collection of statutory Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that together set out the vision and spatial strategy for the future development of Manchester. To-date only the Core Strategy DPD has been adopted by Manchester City Council. Within this context, the Development Plan comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy (2012);
- Manchester Proposals Map (2012);
- Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007)
- Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (2005);
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (2012); and
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (2013).

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

6.5 The Core Strategy was adopted on 12 July 2012. It sets the overall strategic direction for planning in Manchester over the plan period from 2012 to 2027. The policies of the Core Strategy establish where major development and other forms of investment should be located in order to be sustainable, meet local needs and take full advantage of opportunities.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (1995)

6.6 The Unitary Development Plan was adopted in July 1995. Coinciding with the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 significant proportions of the UDP have been replaced, however, a number of policies were saved on 11 July 2012 and remain extant.

Material Considerations

6.7 The following published policy, executive reports and guidance documents are of material considerations relevant to the Proposed Development:

- National Planning Policy and Guidance:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, and
 - Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- Supplementary Planning Guidance:
 - Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007) and Technical Guidance (2015);
 - Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025;
 - Eastland's Strategic Regeneration Framework (2017)
 - Ancoats and New Islington Framework (2016)
 - Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
 - Climate Change Emergency and Playing Our Full Part on Climate Change (2018);
 - Manchester Climate Change Framework: 2020-2025 (2020);
 - City Centre Transport Strategy to 2040 (2021); and
 - Design for Access 2 (2003).

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised version published July 2021), articulates the priorities of the Plan for Growth within planning policy.
- 6.9 At the heart of the 2021 revised NPPF lies the 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development, which supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up to date Development Plan. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.
- 6.10 The NPPF states that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (paragraph 7). It summarises the objective of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.11 The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that to achieve this, there are three overarching objectives, which need to be pursued mutually. Firstly, the economic role should contribute to sustainable development by building a strong, responsive and competitive economy and ensuring sufficient and the right type of development to support growth.
- 6.12 Secondly, the social role is required to support communities by creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services to reflect the needs of the community. Lastly, the environmental role should protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
- 6.13 Specific policies from the NPPF are highlighted in Section 7 of this Statement and a policy response is provided along with other development plan policies and material considerations.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.14 The Planning Policy Guidance ('PPG') was published in March 2012 and is regularly updated. It sets out advice, information, and best practice on a wide range of planning issues with the overall objective of becoming a single source for planning guidance which is maintained as a live resource.
- 6.15 The PPG stresses the importance of well-designed places and good design that takes the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following characteristics:
- Context;
 - Identity;
 - Built form;
 - Movement;
 - Nature;
 - Public spaces;
 - Uses;
 - Homes and buildings;
 - Resources; and
 - Lifespan.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007) and Technical Guidance (2015)

- 6.16 The Guide to Development in Manchester - Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (SPD) was originally 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.
- 6.17 In addition, technical guidance for developers was published in December 2015. It is composed of two documents, GD03 Environmental Protection and GD05 Planning and Noise.
- 6.18 The documents reflect and provide 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.

Design for Access 2

- 6.19 The Design for Access Manual was published in January 2000, it provides a practical guidance to inclusive design. It requires developments to be fully inclusive and accessible and the Council's vision is for Manchester to be recognised as the most accessible City in Europe. MCC recognises that inclusive design needs to take account of cross-impairment and community-based issues.
- Design principles that will help to achieve accessible development that are relevant to the Proposed Development include:

- MCC has agreed a hierarchy of road users, which prioritises the needs of pedestrians and disabled people, cyclists, public transport and finally other users. This hierarchy should be respected in the design and layout of all new developments.
- Streets should be designed for local people to use. They should be attractive, accessible social spaces, which encourage use by all sections of the local community. Street furniture must be well designed, with clear function and positioned to avoid the creation of obstacles, clutter or confusion.
- Whatever form of car parking takes, adequate provision is required for disabled people with clear, safe, accessible footways leading to the main door.

6.20 The Design for Access Manual provides further details and design standards for external areas and for within buildings. These have been considered and incorporated into the development, alongside more up to date statutory accessibility requirements.

Summary

- 6.21 A full appraisal of how the Proposed Development addresses the specific planning policy considerations and other material considerations, is set out within the following section of this statement.
- 6.22 Taking all of this into account, it is demonstrated that the Proposed Development is supported by the aims and objectives of the Development Plan taken as a whole. It is further supported by the assessment of other material considerations including the NPPF and it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will deliver the overarching economic, social and overarching objectives of sustainable development.
- 6.23 As such, it is demonstrated in Section 7, and this Statement as a whole, that the Proposed Development merits of the support of the local planning authority due to being in accordance with the Development Plan and other material considerations.

7. Planning Assessment

7.1 This section assesses the Proposed Development against the Planning Policy Context set out in Section 6 of this Statement and other material considerations that are relevant to the proposed development, such as those strategic documents referenced in Section 3. A policy-by-policy assessment is also provided for completeness. The following planning considerations are considered most relevant to the Application:

- Contribution to Manchester’s Vision and Spatial Objectives;
- Design;
- Heritage and townscape;
- Sustainability;
- Traffic, transport and accessibility; and
- Environmental considerations and amenity.

Contribution to Manchester’s Vision and Spatial Objectives

7.2 **Paragraph 10 of the NPPF** outlines that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. Paragraph 11 further clarifies that for decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

7.3 Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, Planning Permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas of assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

7.4 Positive place-making is a vital part of an urban environment, as noted in **Policy SP1** of the Manchester Core Strategy. Successful places are typically centred on civic, leisure, business and retail cores which add to the City’s vibrancy, but these need to be supported by local infrastructure. Provision of high-quality active transport routes creates connections to economic and leisure locations, and in creating a safe accessible route is making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents considering the needs of all members.

7.5 The bridge will form a key part of a newly developed cycling route part of the ensures major employment opportunities are connected via non-car modes to residential neighbourhoods within East Manchester and North Manchester. Furthermore, by improving the public access across the canal, the bridge will link the open space network including the Rochdale and Ashton Canal and the General Projects Pollard Street Scheme. Linking Ancoats, New Islington and the residential areas to the south of the canal provides opportunities for walking and cycling to economic development opportunities.

Design

7.6 **Section 12 (Paragraphs 124 to 132)** of the NPPF states that the planning process is fundamental to creating high-quality buildings and places. Good design is key to sustainable development and

contributes to creating better places in which to live and work. It outlines that developments should aim to:

- Add to the overall quality of the area and function well over the lifetime of the development.
- Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- Optimise the potential of the Site, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses.
- Create safe, inclusive and accessible environments which promote health and well-being.

7.7 Positive place-making is a vital part of an urban environment. Successful places are typically centred on civic, leisure, business and retail cores which add to the City's vibrancy, but these need to be supported by local infrastructure.

7.8 The high-quality design of the bridge will support the further regeneration of the distinctive New Islington Marina, adding to the quality and function of the area over the lifetime of the development and those existing and proposed in the surrounding area by delivering new high quality walking and cycling routes.

7.9 Hawkins/Brown are an exceptional award-winning architecture practice and understand the local context of the proposals, and their proposed bridge design seeks to maintain a strong sense of place and character. The lighting designs proposed seeks to create an attractive and welcoming environment whilst respecting local neighbourhood amenity. Overall, increased propensity for walking and cycling within the city that will be encouraged by the bridge will help to promote health and well-being.

7.10 The introduction of a new bridge, particularly at this regeneration area near the City Centre; is a key part of improving access to jobs for all via public transport, walking and cycling, and is therefore crucial to ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.

Heritage and townscape

7.11 The NPPF stresses that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (**NPPF paragraph 199**), emphasising the need to avoid substantial harm, in terms of demolition, alteration or the compromise of an asset's setting. Paragraph 202 states that *"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*

7.12 **Policy EN1** in Manchester City Council's Core Strategy states that the City Centre contains a rich legacy which reflects its urban evolution to the current day and includes listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and an historic street pattern. Its core area presents a particularly dense environment that accommodates a wide and closely integrated range of uses including commercial, civic and residential activities. Therefore, developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area, developments should also contribute positively to the experience of all at street level.

- 7.13 **Policy EN3** also states that 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.
- 7.14 Overall, the proposals will have a minor negative to neutral impact on the significance of the identified heritage assets, resulting in less than substantial harm. The public benefits of the proposal are outlined below, as per the three core tenets of the NPPF:

Economic

- 7.15 The bridge forms a key part of the proposed Manchester Northern and Eastern Gateway cycle route, which seeks to connect this part of the city centre and significantly improve accessibility, supporting regeneration objectives to connect edge of city neighbourhoods.
- 7.16 This route ensures the new developments in the area; particularly Chips; Pollard Street and Ancoats Dispensary are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; connecting residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities.
- 7.17 The bridge will also provide a direct pedestrian link from residential developments New Islington and Ancoats to the New Islington Tram stop, providing connections to the rest of the city, and Piccadilly train station, again linking residents with jobs and educational opportunities and supporting the regeneration of this area.

Social

- 7.18 The current bridge at this location is not fit for purpose – the width is too narrow to allow wheelchair users or those with prams to cross, and the stairs and rough ground leading to the bridge make it inaccessible. The new bridge design has been developed to promote levels of accessibility and maximise participation and is therefore suitable for the needs of all users, including those who require the use of wheelchairs or prams.
- 7.19 This improved accessibility of the scheme ensures wider access to both historic and environmental assets, allowing members of the public to enjoy and appreciate these more easily. Attractive and useable active transport links, such as the proposed bridge, will help to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking, offering health benefits to local residents.

Environmental

- 7.20 The design of the bridge reflects the unique architectural language of New Islington area, in providing a bridge that will link both heritage features, and new modern blocks such as the Chips building immediately adjacent. The design of the bridge will add to the distinct character of the area, and the high quality design will create a landmark within the neighbourhood.
- 7.21 By improving the public access across the canal, the bridge will link the open space network including the Rochdale and Ashton Canals and the General Projects Pollard Street Scheme.
- 7.22 The proposed bridge is a key element in a wider strategy to facilitate better connections around the edge of the city centre to prepare for carbon free modes of transport, working toward carbon reduction targets both nationwide and locally.
- 7.23 In summary, the proposals have been designed in mind of the adjacent heritage assets. Throughout the design process, the location and design of the bridge were changed in order to this has been mitigated by moving the location of the bridge so that there is no physical interaction with the lock structure.

- 7.24 As discussed in the DAS and Section 5 of this Statement, the design of the bridge form and balustrades have been inspired by canal bridges around Manchester, and the chosen materials make reference to these and to the historic warehouses surrounding the area, further tying the bridge in to the historic character of the area.
- 7.25 The location chosen was considered to have the least impact on the surrounding heritage assets. In particular this avoids significant impact on the larger grouping on canal infrastructure at lock 2 – the Canal Keepers Cottage and the towpath bridge (both Grade II), limiting the impact on the number of heritage assets. Ashton Canal Lock 3 is the most impacted heritage asset, and again the design has been amended from a heavier structure so that the bridge would be less obtrusive in this context. The balustrade has been designed to be visually permeable in order to maintain views both ways of the heritage assets on and surrounding the canal.
- 7.26 Full details relating to the impact of the proposals in heritage terms is set out in the Heritage Statement prepared by Deloitte and submitted with the Application.

Sustainability

- 7.27 MCC Core Strategy **Policy T1** notes the aim to deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking, to support the needs of residents and businesses and to prepare for carbon free modes of transport.
- 7.28 Provision of high-quality active transport routes creates connections to economic and leisure locations, and in creating a safe accessible route is making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents considering the needs of all members. Attractive and useable active transport links, such as the proposed bridge, will help to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.
- 7.29 Following the rapid regeneration and development of the New Islington area, these improvements will support the needs of residents and businesses and to prepare for carbon-free modes of transport, working toward carbon reduction targets both nationwide and locally.

Traffic, transport and accessibility

- 7.30 Core Strategy **Policy T2** notes that the Council will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development is located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers, including the Regional Centre, the Oxford Road Universities and Hospitals and the Airport and to ensure good national and international connections and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; connecting residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities.
- 7.31 The bridge will form a key part of a newly developed cycling route part of the ensures major employment opportunities are connected via non-car modes to residential neighbourhoods within East Manchester and North Manchester. The addition of new infrastructure connecting active transport routes around Manchester will encourage the increased uptake of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.32 Improving the active transport routes through and around New Islington ensures the new developments in the area, particularly Chips, Pollard Street and Ancoats Dispensary are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Proposals for the new bridge will connect residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space, their neighbours, and educational opportunities.
- 7.33 The **Design for Access** Manual was published in January 2000, it provides a practical guidance to inclusive design. It requires developments to be fully inclusive and accessible and the Council's vision is for Manchester to be recognised as the most accessible City in Europe. MCC recognises that inclusive design needs to take account of cross-impairment and community-based issues. Any

changes made to ensure alignment. In addition, the **Equality Act (2010)** requires that the project affords an accessible and inclusive environment for all users.

- 7.34 The current bridge at this location is not fit for purpose – the width is too narrow to allow wheelchair users or those with prams to cross. In addition, the stairs and rough ground leading to the bridge make it inaccessible.
- 7.35 The design has been developed in line with codes, standards, and best practice documents in relation to accessibility, which will promote levels of accessibility and maximise participation. The slope of the ramps and the width of the bridge is suitable for the needs of all users, including those who require the use of wheelchairs or prams.

Environmental considerations and amenity

- 7.36 **Policy DM1** set out in the Core Strategy requires all planning applications to have due consideration of all matters that may affect residential amenity, including light, noise, air quality, crime, safety and littering, amongst other factors.
- 7.37 A key objective is for the bridge to unite communities both sides of the canal and to express a sense of inclusion, openness, and accessibility. The scheme has also been discussed in detail with Greater Manchester Police Design for Security and their recommendations have been incorporated into the submitted design.
- 7.38 The design of the proposed bridge has been developed with the objective of creating a secure crossing that promotes safety and security with subtle handrail lighting. The bridge design also maintains low light levels through this feature to ensure that residents are not disturbed due to light spill, with all lighting downcast.
- 7.39 The Canal and Rivers Trust has given input throughout the process on how the bridge should be placed and designed to ensure the ongoing operation of the canal will not be impacted. The existing green infrastructure around the towpath will be maintained.

8. Summary

- 8.1 This Planning and Consultation Statement (the “Statement”) accompanies an application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building, submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC), to deliver a new bridge that is seen as a critical link to the success of the Northern and Eastern Gateway pedestrian and cycle route.
- 8.2 Current access at this point in the canal is inadequate and is in need of improvement due to the on-going regeneration of the area that is planned to continue over the coming years. The existing crossing point is not suitable or safe for cyclists, those with prams, or users with mobility requirements. This hindrance to permeability currently restricts movements between communities that could be undertaken on foot or by bike and the new bridge connection seeks to address that.
- 8.3 The bridge will deliver a truly distinctive and important part of the public infrastructure and reflects the standards that are expected in this sensitive context. The new bridge seeks to improve the setting of existing buildings and improves the quality of the connections between them, whilst minimising the extent of the impact on the existing Grade II Listed lock located on site. This has been achieved by numerous options being tested and engagement with statutory consultees and seeking views from key stakeholders.
- 8.4 The creation of a new linkage within the local community will provide enhanced accessibility of the existing and committed developments and the delivery of the new bridge will help to knit together adjoining sides of the canal. Critically, the bridge sits within New Islington and helps to connect that community with Ancoats, as well as adjoining areas such as Eastlands and the City Centre. It will contribute significantly to an improved walkable and cyclable environment in the city centre within a network of new and existing public spaces.
- 8.5 The proposals have been prepared in collaboration with Manchester City Council and have been the subject of a significant amount of pre-application consultation with key stakeholders. Consultation feedback has been welcomed, incorporated into the design and has resulted in significant design improvements during the pre-application period.
- 8.6 The Core Strategy and all material considerations identified have been considered in the preparation of the application and evolving the design of the development, alongside site-specific considerations. Policies and guidance contained within these documents are assessed in more detail within other technical reports submitted with the Application.
- 8.7 A detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the Development Plan and material considerations is provided in the Section 7 of this Statement.
- 8.8 Overall, the Proposed Development is in accordance with policies and guidance at both local and national levels. The proposals have been assessed in detail within the following section of this document, where any deviation from the principles of the Development Plan has been fully justified.

Deloitte.

Real Estate

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