

Comments for Planning Application 126431/FO/2020

Application Summary

Application Number: 126431/FO/2020

Address: Site South Of Sportcity Way, East Of Joe Mercer Way, West Of Alan Turing Way And North Of The Ashton Canal At The Etihad Campus Manchester

Proposal: Erection of a multi-use arena (Use Class D2) (61082 sqm) with a partially illuminated external facade together with ancillary retail/commercial uses (Classes A1, A3 and A4), with highways, access, servicing, landscaping, public realm and other associated works.

Case Officer: Jennifer Atkinson

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Group

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Aviva Investors are a major investor and supporter of economic growth within Manchester.

Aviva Investors would like to raise their concerns about the proposed new arena and vast proposed 181,000 sq ft of A1, A3 and A4 use class space. It is national planning policy for a proposal of this size to have an impact assessment on town centre vitality and viability. No impact assessment has been included within this application which is highly unorthodox at best. We politely request the council insist on an independent impact assessment on this proposal on Manchester's city centre retail and leisure industry and also from an environmental prospective.

A key part of the success of Manchester City Centre is its appeal as a leisure and cultural destination with a thriving night-time economy; the increasing loss of physical retail to ecommerce is likely to make this more important for a prosperous city centre in the future. Added to that the Covid-19 crisis is the biggest challenge to businesses and communities within the UK for a generation. Sadly, not all city centre businesses will survive. The crisis has and will continue to have profound impacts on even great cities such as Manchester. The situation in the city centre and its businesses is vastly different to what it was at the start of this year. We believe it is in everyone's interest to protect and support the recovery of the city centre. The basis of the Eastland Arena application was written before the full scale of the economic impact on Manchester was understood. This further emphasizes the need for an independent impact assessment so that the vitality and viability of livelihoods within the city centre are protected.

In Manchester's Core Strategy the city centre is reiterated as the focus for retail, leisure and tourism. District centres including Eastlands, on the other hand, are a focus for the city's residential neighbourhoods providing readily accessible and more local services. In paragraph 10.55 it states that 'a key priority for the council's approach to retailing is to safeguard and enhance the city's existing centres. This application is clearly not compliant to the Core strategy.

The Factory is an example of an excellent addition to the city centre adding a completely new attraction space for Manchester for a sector not currently provided for. The same cannot be said for this proposal which only doubles up what can already be provided for at the Manchester Arena; but only this time outside the city centre with inferior public transport connections. This raises serious environmental questions which need answering - is an extra arena in this location going to help Manchester achieve its climate change objectives? Will the applicant be funding zero carbon transport improvement in wider Manchester to mitigate their carbon footprint?

We would also like to draw your attention to the analysis from global consultants Charles River Associates who have found significant flaws in the evidence supporting this planning application. It raises legitimate concerns around the impact of a second major venue. While having two world class football teams within Manchester is good for sporting rivalry; two arenas will likely mean both will lose out with neither being fully booked. Surely there is better use for the Eastlands Arena site, for new housing or employment space supporting permanent jobs rather than the majority part time jobs offered by another arena.