InLinkUK Manchester Noise Management Plan

Background

As one of many features, InLinks provide free phone calls via a speaker and microphone system. The following document identifies the steps able to be taken to ensure that these calls, like all the features of an InLink, help improve the amenity of a local area whilst also respecting the expectations of local community over time.

Please note: this noise management plan refers specifically to the noise from the InLink. Noise from pedestrians, users of the InLink, or from other nearby sources are not included and would typically be considered matters for the Police and other authorities who have the appropriate and relevant powers to act on such issues if necessary.

Noise Management Objectives

Our goal
We strive for InLinks to have 'No Observed Adverse Effect' (NOAEL) on the local community as defined in the *Manchester City Council Planning & Noise Technical Guidance, December 2015*.

We will take action in the management of the InLinks wherever we believe the InLink impact exceeds the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL). This is defined in the Technical Guidance as: "Noise can be heard and causes small changes in behaviour and/or attitude, e.g. turning up volume of television; speaking more loudly; where there is no alternative ventilation, having to close windows for some of the time because of the noise. Potential for some reported sleep disturbance. Affects the acoustic character of the area such that there is a perceived change in the quality of life."

Our measure of this is where the incremental impact of the InLink is observed to be > 10dB above the background noise when observed from 3 metres away from the InLink.

Examples of background noise levels
It should be noted that the InLink's are based on public streets, in the most part close to roads where high volumes of traffic will be seen.

Noise level, dB	Example
60 - 70	Conversational speech
70 - 80	Average traffic on street corner
80 - 90	Heavy lorries at 6m

InLink design
We have designed our InLinks so that they create a 'sound cloud' for the person making a call with noise levels sufficient to make calls with background noise for the surroundings. Whilst this generates a reasonable conversational volume in proximity to the InLink, it is intended to result in minimal to no noise being noticable further away.

The maximum volume settings (100%) have been tested and deliver a 75dB maximum, and 65dB average sound volume at 3m distance from each InLink.

Users may also choose to use headphones when making calls or using the tablet, which deactivates the speaker for the duration of their use.

Default noise management - daytime
InLinks have controllable volume levels. This will default to 50% at the start of any user activity during the day and can be increased and decreased based on the preferences of the user.

Default noise management - night time
Between the hours of 21:00 to 07:00 all InLinks will be governed so that the volume cannot be increased to greater than 60% of the maximum volume.

999 call volumes
It should be noted that when the 999 is called through the tablet or the emergency button is pressed by a user the volume of calls is set to 100% to ensure that any user is able to effectively communicate with the emergency services. This volume can be lowered as requested by the user.

Exception circumstances
We manage noise by exception based on feedback from users and the local community. If we receive any feedback that the InLink may be causing detrimental environmental impact, we take the following actions:

1. Understand the reason for the issue and any extenuating circumstances. At this point we will separate out any Police or community safety matters and work directly with the relevant authorities, and support the local residents in raising these issues through official channels where appropriate.

2. We will then verify the evidence provided against the InLink's call history and other operational data as required. This will allow us to understand the number, time, and frequency of outbound calls being made and better understand the severity of the reported situation.

3. Once we have verified the situation, we will typically look to apply local bespoke volume governor controls appropriate to the situation. We have found that reducing an InLink's maximum volume to 40% during relevant periods tends to resolve issues where they have been identified.

4. We will continue to monitor the situation and listen to ongoing feedback from the community as we do take matters seriously. We continue to learn as part of our roll out how InLinks are fitting in to the community.