MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142698/AOH/2025
Date registered valid:	14 April 2025
Proposal:	Two digital 75 inch LCD display screen, one on each side of the Street Hub unit.
Address:	Footpath Outside 720 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Ward(s):	Didsbury West Ward
Applicant:	Simon Warner, BT Group Plc
Agent (if any):	Mr Martin Brown, Telent
Case officer:	Holly Wright Tel: 0161 219 6381 Email: holly.wright@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**3 June 2025**

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 8 May 2025

Standard consultations: Printed: 6 May 2025 Expired: 28 May 2025

Neighbour notifications: Printed: 29 April 2025 Expired: 21 May 2025

Site notice: No site notice has been produced

Press advert: No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building/area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application relates to a portion of pavement located outside No.720 Wilmslow Road in the Didsbury West ward of Manchester. The site is located on the main stretch of a busy high street bordered with commercial shopping facilities, bars and restaurants, outside Thornley Groves Estate & Letting Agents.




THORNLEY GROVES
DS Colour Labs
BEST PRICES PAID
FOR YOUR UNWANTED
GOLD & SILVER
GOLD COINS & BARS
SUPPLIED


THORNLEY GROVES
THORNLEY GROVES
MANCHESTER'S
LEADING
INDEPENDENT
ESTATE AGENT
PASSPORT
PHOTO


ongley Farm
DAF
YT21 EKR
Ultima
Vitality
MEDICAL CLINIC
FRESHSAVE
Welcome to Aladdin's Cave
INTERNATIONAL / CONTINENTAL
GROCERS

Description of development

The applicant is seeking advertisement consent for the display of 2no. digital 75" LCD display screens in association with a new BT street hub (142697/FO/2025).

BT street hubs are free-standing structures featuring a fully accessible tablet interface and digital HD display screens on two sides. Overall, the dimensions of a BT street hub are: 2.98m in height, 1.236m in width (with a reduced, tapered base of 1.201m) and 0.35m in depth. The screens are to display commercial, community and council-based content at 10-second intervals with illuminance levels of 5,000cd/m2. Displays are set to automatically dim at night to 600cd/m2, following daylight hours. Each unit will also feature a video camera above each screen as well as one built into the tablet.

Each BT Street hub aims to offer:

- Opportunities for advertisements
- Ultrafast public and encrypted Wi-Fi
- Access to public services
- Free phone calls
- Multiple accessibility options
- Secure power-only USB ports for rapid device charging
- Free phone calls
- Direct 999 call button
- Useful real-time information (including community and emergency awareness messaging)
- Environmental sensors to measure air quality, noise, traffic etc.
- Maps and wayfinding

The supporting information states that noise emanating from the hubs should not exceed: 41dB at a distance of 3m during the day, 35dB at a distance of 3m during the night and operational volume should not exceed 60dB at a distance of 1m.

Relevant planning history

135376/FO/2022 - Installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 75" LCD advert screens plus the removal of associated BT kiosks – Refused (11.01.2023).

Reason(s) for refusal:

1) The proposed structure, by reason of its size, height and siting on the public footpath in a prominent position would create a visually discordant and obtrusive feature in the street scene which would create an appearance of street clutter detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.

As such the proposal is contrary to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies E3.3, DC15.1 and DC15.2, paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework and paragraph 2.42 of the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007).

2) The proposed structure, by reason of its size, height and siting on the public footpath in a prominent position would reduce the availability of pedestrianised footways to an unacceptable degree, thereby negatively affecting the accessibility and residential amenity of the area.

As such, the proposal is contrary to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies DC15.1 and DC15.2, paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 2.42 of the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007) and chapters 3 and 4 of the Design for Access 2 (2003).

135377/AOH/2022 - Advertisement consent for the display of 2no. digital 75" LCD display screens – Refused (11.01.2023).

Reason(s) for refusal:

1) The proposed advertisement display and structure, by reason of its size, height, siting and digital display on the public footpath in a prominent position would create a visually discordant and obtrusive feature in the street scene along one of the City's main radial routes, which would create an appearance of advertisement clutter detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.

As such the proposal is contrary to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies E3.3, DC15.1 and DC15.2, paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework and paragraph 2.42 of the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007).

Associated applications

142697/FO/2025 - Installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local residents, as per appendix 1 – no representations received.

Councillor Kilpatrick objected to the proposal due to the impact it would have upon an already congested high street. The screens will be situated at a location that has been subject to several accessibility issues in the past. The high street must be made as clear of obstruction as possible.

Highways Services made no objection to the proposal, indicating that two digital LCD screens would be provided on each side of the proposed digital communication totem to be located on the adopted footway on Wilmslow Road. The proposed luminance of the totem sign is noted as 5000 cd/m2 and is to automatically reduce to 600cd/m2 during non-daylight hours. It is noted that the screens will display content at 10-second intervals. A condition relating to the control of the display and brightness was requested to be attached to any approval.

TfGM made the following comments in relation to the proposal:

- As a result of the installation and removal works the affected footway will need to be reinstated in accordance with Manchester City Council (MCC) standards and specifications.
- The Site Plan appears to indicate that the apparatus will be installed 0.5 metres from the edge of the carriageway.
- A minimum footway width of 2 metres (where the apparatus is positioned) needs to be retained to ensure pedestrian movements are unimpeded.
- Sightline visibility for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians needs to be maintained and should not be impinged upon by the siting of the apparatus.
- Servicing arrangements associated with the apparatus should not impact upon the highway and result in traffic conflicts. Service vehicles should park appropriately and should not use bus lay-bys or footways.
- A Construction Traffic Management plan should be employed as part of the proposals to reduce any likely impacts.
- In terms of the proposed luminance of the LED screens, the application forms submitted alongside each application confirm that the luminance will not exceed 600cd/m2 in an evening. This should be checked against recommendations contained within the Institute of Lighting Professionals Lighting Guide Technical Report 5.
- Additionally, the LED screens should not feature any moving images.

Cadent Gas made no objection to the proposal, requesting an informative note be attached to any approval.

Greater Manchester Police made no comments in relation to the proposal.

Environmental Health - conditions relating to the control of external lighting, noise from speakers, and submission of a maintenance management plan were requested to be attached to any approval.

Didsbury Civic Society objected to the proposal on the basis that it would limit the availability of the pavement and could potentially act as a distraction to vehicles along Wilmslow Road.

This application is one of 40 applications that have been submitted. Manchester City Council Digital Strategy team have made comments in relation to the applications as follows:
As a user leaves the 150m range, they lose WiFi access. Success of public Wi-Fi delivered in this way depends on density and frequency of similar Wi-Fi devices on streets.

Smart Hubs are an addition to connectivity in the city, but do not meaningfully solve urban connectivity issues.
The Manchester Digital Strategy's focus is on the provision of small cell infrastructure on street lighting rather than through free Wi-Fi installations such as the proposal.

Policies

The following policies are considered relevant in the consideration of this application.

Local Development Framework

The principal document within the framework is the Manchester Core Strategy which sets out the spatial vision for the City and includes strategic policies for development during the period 2012 – 2027.

'The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.

A number of UDP policies have also been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must therefore be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.'

The following policies within the Core Strategy are considered relevant:

Core Strategy policies

Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) - refers to the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester together with core development principles. It is stated that developments in all parts of the city should create well designed places which enhance or create character, make a positive contribution to the health, safety and well-being of residents, consider the needs of all members of the community and protect and enhance the built environment. Further, development should seek to minimise emissions, ensure the efficient use of natural resources, reuse previously developed land wherever possible, improve access to jobs, services and open space and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy DM1 (Development Management) states that new development should have regard to more specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within supplementary planning documents. Issues include: the appropriate siting and appearance of development, the impact upon the surrounding area, the effects on amenity, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention, health, the adequacy of internal accommodation and amenity space and refuse storage/collection.

Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) - All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the city should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes.

Saved UDP policies

Policy DC15 (Advertisements, hoardings and posters) - requires that applications for advertisements be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining applications for free standing hoardings and wall mounted posters the Council will take account of a number of matters in assessing these interests: The main matters to be considered in the context of this application are:

- The general location of the proposed advertisements and the effect of visual amenity.
- The number of advertisements in the locality and their cumulative effect on visual amenity.

Policy E3.3 (Environmental Improvement and Protection) - refers to the Council looking to upgrade the appearance of the city's major radial routes.

Places for Everyone Greater Manchester Joint Development Plan (March 2024)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was published in March 2024 and has been produced by Greater Manchester Combined Authority to provide a long-term plan for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth for nine of Greater Manchester's districts.

The Plan and its policies form part of the development plan and are now a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Plan and its policies must therefore be given significant weight in the planning balance.

The Plan identifies the essential aspect of the efficient and effective use of land with the preference to be given to making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed brownfield land and vacant buildings when meeting development needs.

The following policies are consideration relevant for this application:

attractive to potential visitors and investors.

Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) - seeks to raise the quality of all places in a way that is sustainable in the long-term, to enhance the wellbeing for residents, as well as making Greater Manchester more attractive to potential visitors and investors.

National Planning Policy Framework

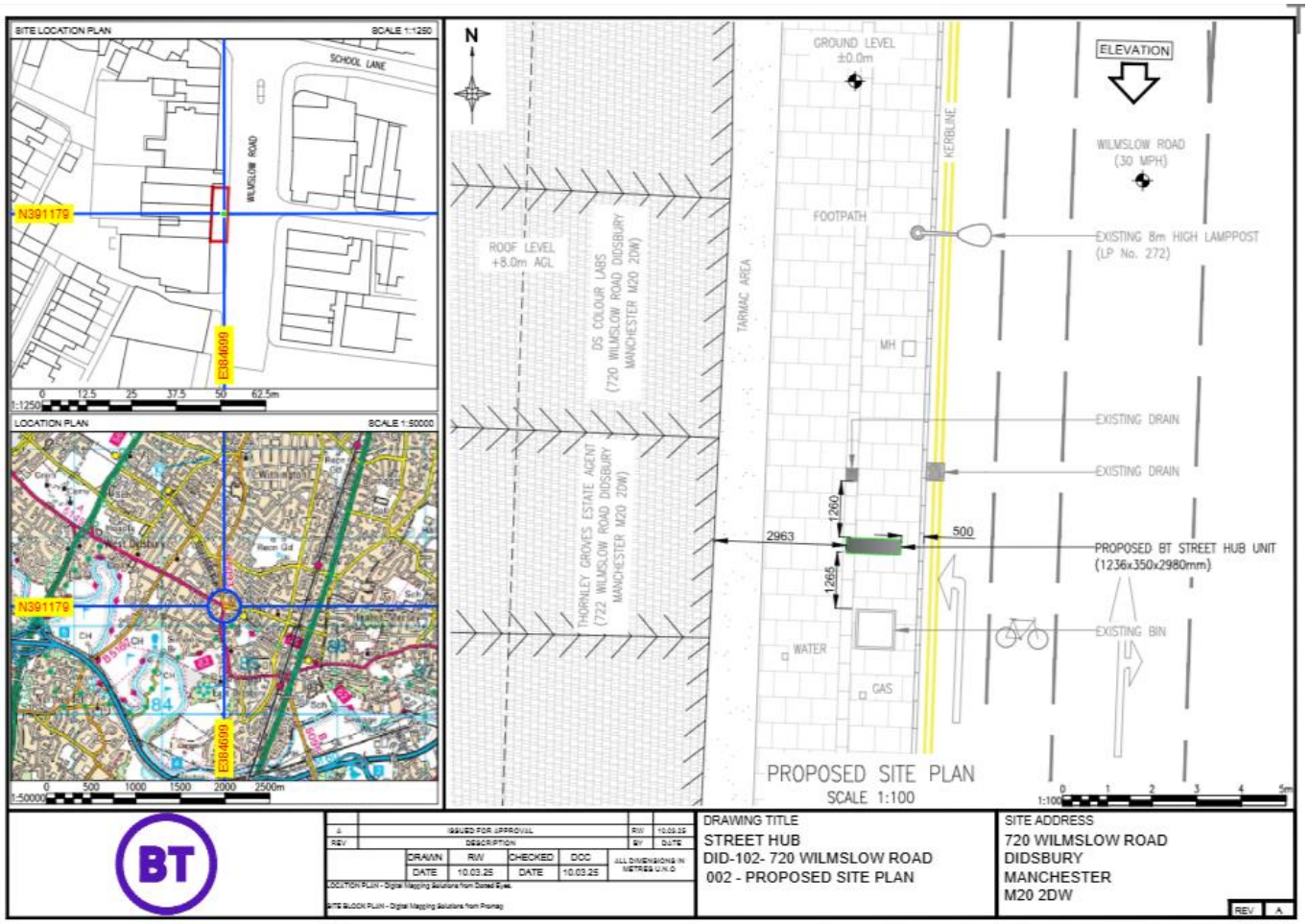
The central theme to the revised NPPF is to achieve sustainable development. The Government states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.

Section 4 (Decision Making) provides guidance on the decision-making process and mirrors legislation in stating that planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

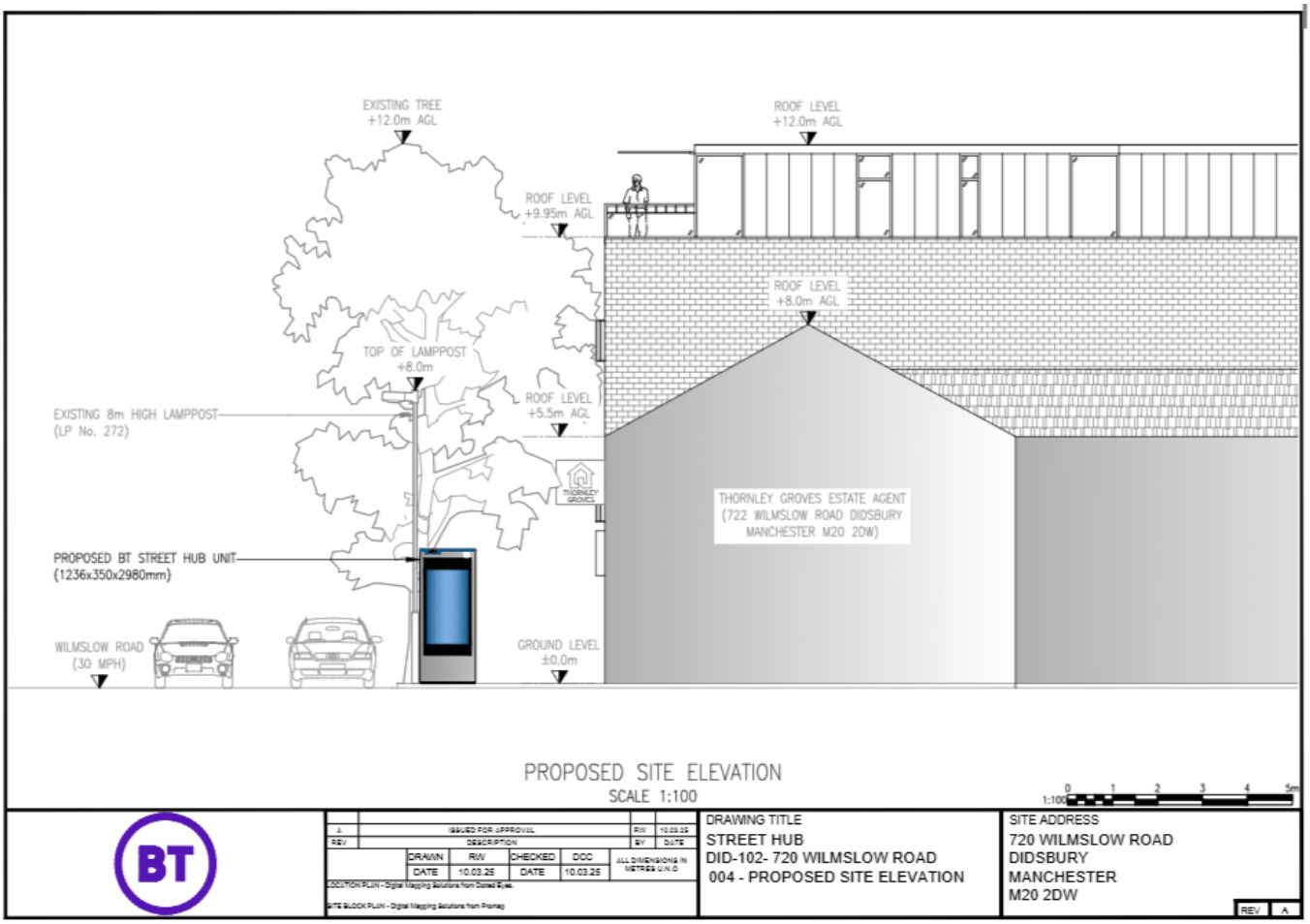
Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places) provides guidance on achieving well designed places to ensure new development functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area.

> *Paragraph 141 states that 'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts'.*

Planning Practice Guidance - The Government produced a suite of documents to act as a live resource which set out advice and best practice on a wide range of planning issues following a detailed review of planning policy guidance as a way of streamlining policy.



Submitted proposed site plan



Submitted proposed site elevation

Issues

Principle

In this case, it is considered that the proposed advertisements would be visually intrusive and would present a negative feature in the street-scene contrary to The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) and the aforementioned development plan and policy.

Visual Amenity

The street hub would be located adjacent to Wilmslow Road (A5145), on the edge of the pavement outside No.720 Wilmslow Road. It would be made of galvanised mild steel, with a powder coated external grade aluminium exterior. Displays would be made of tempered and toughed laminated glass. There would also be RF transparent compartments. The dimensions of the unit would be 2.98m in height, 1.236m in width and 0.35m in depth, whilst the dimensions of the advertisement screens would be 1.67m in height and 0.95m in width. The maximum height of any individual letters and symbols would be 167cm with various colours of text and images which would change regularly. The advertisement would be internally illuminated, with static illuminance levels of 5,000cd/m².

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations), the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) require that decisions on advertisements be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety.

This is reflected within City Council Development Plan policy in the form of saved policy DC15 of the Unitary Development Plan and policies DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy which seek to guide the general location of advertisements, with close regard to the impact upon visual amenity and the character of an area. Policy E3.3 also seeks to improve the appearance of the city's major radial routes.

These policies form important material consideration in the determination of advertisement applications.

In terms of national planning guidance, paragraph 141 of the NPPF advises that 'the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed'.

In this case, it is considered that the proposed siting, dimensions of the advertisements to each side of the associated street hub, would form prominent, visually intrusive features, noticeable from many vantage points. The impact would be heightened by the vertical emphasis of the proposed advertisements, their location in the middle of the footway and the digital means of illumination, which would be unduly intrusive and insensitive, particularly during the hours darkness.

Advertisements by their very nature are intended to attract people's attention, but in this case, it is considered the proposed advertisements are poorly placed and would form discordant features and be excessively large, disproportionate with the immediate surroundings.

Whilst there are other advertisements in the area, these are at fascia level attached to local shops and are positioned at a lower high, commensurate with the street level.

The advertisement in this instance would only serve to add to advertisement clutter in the area and form overbearing and conspicuous features, harmful to visual amenity.

The City Council are striving to improve the appearance of its radial routes and proposed advertisements would only serve to introduce negative and visually intrusive features which would conflict with this objective.

Accordingly, the siting and appearance of the proposed advertisements would be harmful to visual amenity.

Public Safety – the agent has confirmed that the internally illuminated advert will have an illuminance level of 5,000cd/m², dimming to 600cd/m² between dusk and dawn, and LED-backlit LCD screens with reduced glare. These specifications accord with the guidelines set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in the 'Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements' and is thus considered acceptable as the units should not cause an unreasonable amount of light pollution during hours of darkness.

Whilst there are no safety concerns regarding the proposed advertisements, issues surrounding highway safety have been raised in relation to the supporting structure. This is referred to in the accompanying application referenced 142697/FO/2025.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Refuse

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The proposed advertisements, by reason of their position, size, appearance, means of illumination and method of display, would create visually intrusive features in the street-scene along a key radial route, which would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area, whilst contributing towards advertisement clutter in the locality, contrary to saved policies DC15 and E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies DM1, EN1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policy JP-P1 of Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Greater Manchester Police
Transport For Greater Manchester
Environmental Health

2 School Lane, Manchester, M20 6RD
Costa Coffee, 691 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
David Pluck, 693 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
Aguile Search, Second Floor, 736 - 740 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
PURO SEARCH LIMITED, First Floor, 736 - 740 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
706A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
718 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
722 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 2, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 4, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 7, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 9, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
724 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 1, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 10, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 3, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 5, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 6, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Apartment 8, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Mark And Spencer Simply Food, 726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Santander, 712 - 716 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6DQ
2 Kings Lynn Close, Manchester, M20 6WD
Boots, 736 - 740 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Ultima Vitality, First Floor, 718 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
Ground Floor, 718 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
713 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
711 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
711A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
Second Floor, Barlow House, 708 - 716 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
First Floor, Barlow House, 708 - 716 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2FW
Barlow House, 708 - 716 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
707 - 709 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
706 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
703 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
703 - 705 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
701 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6RE
695 - 699 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6NW
720A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW
726 - 732 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA