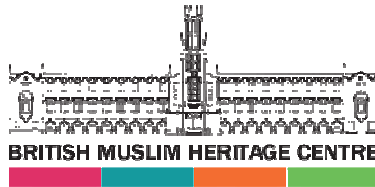




The BMHC Marquee Management Strategy Planning Application Renewal 2025





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The BMHC Marquee - Management Strategy 2025

1. Our Work

Challenges in the community

Over the years, the Muslim community has faced many challenges. Prejudices in education and employment are manifesting with higher rates of unemployment and crime in the community. Studies and reports highlight that Muslims, particularly women, face significant barriers in accessing job opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace. This discrimination can stem from various factors, including religious or ethnic bias, Islamophobia, and misconceptions about Muslim employees.

Data indicates that Muslims experience higher unemployment rates compared to other groups. Incarceration rates also show a disproportionate level of Muslims in UK prisons.

Health inequalities were also made more apparent through the Covid pandemic, where the Muslim community had higher rates of death. Health and wellbeing concerns have been a concern for many years.

[Report reveals difficulties British Muslims face accessing healthcare](#)

More recently, reports show a continuous rise in Islamophobia, with Muslims consistently being one of the highest targeted groups for hate crimes.

A recent report highlighted that Anti-Muslim hate in the UK surged to record levels last year.

[Report shows record-high levels of anti-Muslim hate in UK – Islamic Research and Information Center \(IRIC\)](#)

This level of Islamophobia was ever more apparent during the community riots in 2024, where Muslims and refugees were being falsely blamed for crimes. Harmful and false stereotypes are fuelling divisions in our society, through propaganda about Muslims, particularly on social media.

The centre itself has been the target of Islamophobic threats. with a bomb threat in 2024 and threatening Islamophobic graffiti sprayed outside the centre in 2025. Such hate crimes highlight the need for more work by centres like the BMHC which aim to create more awareness and understanding about Muslims and build bridges between communities.

[Islamophobic and anti-Semitic hate crimes rising across the West - BBC News](#)

Another concern for all communities is the continually increasing crime rates, particularly in regard to youth and knife crime. The centre is situated between Moss Side, which has one the highest crime levels for violent and gang-related offences,

and Old Trafford, which sees elevated crime linked to youth anti-social behaviour and deprivation.

The focus of our work

In light of the above, a key focus of our work is our community work and how we serve the local residents and community. Our welfare, wellbeing, humanitarian, outreach, education, humanitarian and youth work aims to fulfil the needs of the community and tackle many of the inequalities that are prevalent in the community, acting as a true community hub.

With almost 50 services now being delivered from the centre, with over 30 of these activities being added in the past 18 months, the demand for such activities is clear and ever increasing. Recent new events such as the Boys football club, Girls and Women self-defence, education initiatives and others have had a high uptake, some services being sold out within days, highlighting the need to do more.

As the BMHC continues to grow, it is imperative that we have the space and facilities to accommodate the needs of our expanding community.

Existing Building Usage

We currently deliver nearly 50 key services and activities, most of which operate on-site. Our core services occupy much of the building, which include accommodation for the homeless (over 60 bedrooms), subsidised community housing (4 one-bedroom apartments for individuals and families), and low-rent community office space (more than 12 offices currently let).

However, the structure and heritage status of the **building imposes significant** limitations. The layout does not support the demands of our growing services, and changes to the building are constrained due to its listed status. As a result suitable spaces and room shortages frequently lead to cancelled or rescheduled services.

A clear example is the shared reception area, currently used both by SSG (organisation managing the homeless housing programme) for the homeless project and as the main reception for the Centre. This creates safeguarding concerns, particularly for children attending youth and educational programmes, as we are unable to physically separate user groups.

2. Need for marquee renewal

Current Marquee Usage

The marquee was constructed over 10 years ago. Although originally approved as a temporary structure, the trustees invested in a strong and robust build designed to last many years.

It undergoes regular operational site checks, including an annual Health and Safety inspection, to ensure it remains structurally sound and fit for purpose.

The marquee currently has temporary planning permission. As part of the BMHC's new-build masterplan, it is intended to be replaced with a permanent structure.

At present, the marquee is rented out to MyLahore, a restaurant and events management company, which uses it primarily for weddings and other functions. Summer is the busiest period for weddings, with the marquee frequently booked during this season.

In addition to commercial hire, the marquee is used extensively for community and religious purposes:

- Friday Prayers – Every Friday, around 800 people attend the weekly Muslim congregational sermon and prayer, lasting approximately 30 minutes.
- Ramadan Iftar Service – During the month of Ramadan, the marquee hosts daily iftar meals (the breaking of the fast) for around 200 people each evening, free of charge. This vital community service supports those who may struggle with daily costs during the month.
- Ramadan Evening Prayers – Following iftar, evening congregational prayers are held every night during Ramadan, with up to 800 attendees on the busiest nights, including both men and women.
- Eid Prayers – On each of the two annual Eid days, the marquee accommodates part of the large congregational prayers. Due to growing demand, three/four sittings are held on each Eid, with around 800 people attending the busiest session.
- Community Events – The BMHC also hosts large-scale events in the marquee, such as the annual Gala Dinner and Community Awards Ceremony, which attract over 400 attendees.

Currently, for large religious gatherings, men are accommodated in the marquee while women are hosted in the main building halls. This arrangement is not ideal. The future redevelopment will replace the marquee with a purpose-built prayer facility, providing improved, inclusive, and accessible space for all attendees.

The current marquee has proven itself as a vital multi-purpose space for worship, community gatherings, and commercial hire—demonstrating consistent, year-round demand.

This vision aligns with Manchester City Council's priorities to improve community facilities, promote inclusion, and support spaces that strengthen social cohesion and cultural engagement.

Financial viability and economic need

The Centre's financial position is increasingly precarious. Current income from rentals, fees, grants, and community fundraising only just sustains operations. Community fundraising has become less effective due to donor fatigue, particularly from repeated appeals for ongoing repairs and maintenance.

The marquee generates over £275k per year in rental revenue, representing a significant income stream for the Centre. With total revenue for 2024 (draft accounts) at £1.3m and operating costs also at £1.3m, the Centre is currently breaking even. If income from the marquee were lost, the Centre would fall into a loss of approximately £260k—a gap that would be extremely difficult to cover. This could potentially lead to the closure of the Centre and its services, severely affecting service users, including the 60 homeless people housed on-site.

There is no alternative income stream capable of replacing the marquee rental, making its continued operation essential to the Centre's financial sustainability.

3. Marquee concerns

Concerns

The marquee does come under considerable scrutiny. In the past, there have been complaints about:

- events going beyond the planning restriction of 10.30pm
- event attendees releasing fireworks
- congestion on the local road due to cars waiting for the bridal-car for photo and video purposes
- Kitchen staff making too much noise when cleaning in the kitchens, late at night after events

Recently we have had several meetings with our marquee tenants, who have implemented new measures and controls, such as a new security team, to prevent such incidents. This has helped dramatically and convoys and fireworks are now under control.

It is worth noting that many complaints directed at the BMHC come from the same individuals, some of whom strongly oppose the Centre's presence. While we have made efforts to accommodate neighbours, we have even received complaints about mowing the lawns on a late Saturday morning, noise from waste removal vans, and children playing in the grounds.

On other occasions the marquee is held responsible for anything happening in the area. On many occasions, fireworks from individual home, noise from local homes having celebrations and parties have been attributed to the centre, incorrectly.

As a centre, we do recognise the genuine concerns and are continuously cautioning others or our staff where things aren't managed appropriately.

Recent changes to mitigate concerns

We have made some significant changes over the past twelve months to ensure that we more tightly control things. These have included:

1. Implemented fines for event hirers who contravene any of the rules (e.g. excessive noise)
2. Changed the security company so that we have more experienced security guards on-site
3. Noise control: installed a noise limiter on our PA system, which is regularly checked by an independent sound engineer to ensure it is functioning correctly.
4. Security and monitoring: trained new staff on the rules and regulations such as ensuring no car revving or other disturbances. Allocated a dedicated security person on the main road to keep an eye on the nearby streets to prevent any excessive car noise around these roads.
5. Relocated the cutlery polishing machine to a back room and ensured doors remain closed to reduce noise at night.
6. Respect for prayer times: during prayer times, all music is switched off and guests are informed of the prayer time.
7. Communication with guests: event management staff are now responsible for informing their allocated tables of the house rules, including avoiding any loud noise when leaving the premises. This is in addition to several other reminders on noise.
8. Reducing the frequency and duration of the building works and using quieter equipment whenever possible.
9. Installing a quieter kitchen fan and limiting its use to essential times.
10. Fitted bike racks to encourage more cycling and environmentally friendly means of transport
11. Contracted a parking company to monitor car parking on-site and restricted parking to four hours. This has included fitting signs and cameras to enforce the new rules.

12. Established a 'Neighbours of the BMHC' WhatsApp group to allow for better communications. We have approximately 58 local neighbours in the group, including local counsellors. It is used to inform them of major events like Eid and Open Days etc.
13. Provided a dedicated person for residents to report any disturbances promptly. They have also been given the emails for the CEO and our info desk to raise complaints.
14. Met with neighbours and neighbours' groups on many occasions to improve communications and relationships

We continue to seek ways of reducing incidents and any disturbances for our neighbours.

4. Future changes to marquee management

We believe that if needed, we can make some further drastic changes to the current marquee's activities and management. However, some of these changes would need a more detailed plan to ensure a smooth handover:

Change in booking strategy

We believe that the current issues relating to the marquee are largely the result of shortcomings in management. Over a period of time, we have been closely monitoring the situation and holding regular meetings with the marquee tenants to address concerns. While there have been some improvements, there have also been occasions where we believe they have inadvertently overstepped certain boundaries.

To address these challenges and improve the overall operation, we are now considering drastic changes, which include:

- A strict cap of 500 guests per event.
- A ban on any previous bookers linked to past complaints.
- A third-party monitor will conduct unannounced checks and audits.
- Clearer contracts with penalties, leading to fines and booking bans.

We are having discussions with the existing tenant to consider further changes to the management of the marquee.

If the marquee were to be prevented from operating after October 2025, the centre would face a significant financial shortfall, losing up to £23,000 per month in revenue. Given the centre's limited financial reserves, absorbing such losses would be extremely challenging and could place the organisation in a serious financial crisis within a matter of months.

It is therefore essential that the marquee is allowed to continue operating under current bookings until a suitable, sustainable alternative solution is planned, agreed, and implemented. This approach would safeguard the centre's financial stability, protect community services.

We remain committed to reducing incidents and minimising any potential disturbances, and we believe that taking greater control of the marquee operations will allow us to achieve this more effectively.

Change in future operations and events

We also intend to reduce the number of large weddings on site by pivoting towards corporate and community events, supported by a new website and marketing strategy. We will offer discounted or subsidised rates for non-profit, resident-led or community- focused events, making it an attractive event site.

This will allow stricter event scheduling and a tighter control on closing times.

The trustees have already agreed to this approach at the last AGM in August 2025.

Depending on the impact to booking income, there could be a possible further reduction of opening hours, ensuring staff leave the premises by 10.30pm, which means that events are completed earlier or cleaning takes place in the morning.

These changes will allow the marquee events to be more in line with our objectives by holding corporate and community events that more directly benefit the wider community.

Lighting changes

Changes to lighting, to prevent light pollution to neighbours can include:

- Downward-facing, shielded lighting to minimize light pollution
- Turn off non-essential outdoor lights immediately after events.

Additional changes

We are continuing to take proactive steps to minimise disturbances and ensure a positive relationship with our neighbours.

Firstly, we plan to remove the speed bump located on the driveway directly outside a neighbour's home. This will help reduce noise generated by waste collection trucks and other vehicles during the week.

Additionally, we recently engaged an audio-visual specialist to review the soundproofing of the marquee. Based on their recommendations, we are currently exploring the following measures:

- Installing additional sound walls and insulation in and around the marquee
- Installing special speakers
- Creating natural noise buffers by planting additional trees and shrubbery

To further reduce potential disturbances, we are also considering:

- Implementing a buffer zone to prevent vehicles from parking adjacent to boundary walls
- Reducing the maximum number of attendees for certain events, particularly those held late in the evening or on weekends
- Install noise-reducing enclosures or barriers around noisy equipment like kitchen fans, refrigeration units, or waste disposal areas.

These steps form part of our ongoing commitment to managing noise levels effectively and ensuring that the centre remains a respectful and considerate neighbour.

Future changes

As part of the larger future build application, we are proposing a comprehensive transport plan aimed at encouraging more sustainable travel to the centre. The plan will focus on promoting walking and cycling.

In addition, we are considering introducing specific rules during busier periods to help manage traffic and parking more effectively. For example, we are proposing an enforced car-sharing policy during peak times, under which anyone wishing to park on-site would need to have at least two additional passengers in their vehicle, unless they are disabled. This measure is designed to discourage single-occupancy car use and help reduce congestion.

We believe these steps would be particularly beneficial during high-demand periods such as the Weekly Friday congregational prayer, Ramadan, and other busy seasons. Furthermore, if considered necessary, some of these measures could be accelerated and implemented ahead of the full development plan to start delivering benefits sooner.

We are committed to implementing practical solutions to address concerns and ensure that our activities have minimal impact on our neighbours.

5. Future Master Plan and new build

Benefits of the new build

The BMHC Master Plan represents a transformative investment in the future of the Centre and the wider community. This expansion will not only revitalise the Centre but also deliver modern, accessible facilities that meet the growing needs of a diverse and dynamic population.

By introducing new, sustainable income streams—such as residential lettings—the Centre will be able to fund the long-term upkeep of the Grade II listed building without relying solely on public donations. This will safeguard one of Manchester's important heritage assets for generations to come, while reducing ongoing financial vulnerability.

The development will also allow for a significant expansion in service delivery, creating more space, more capacity, and a better environment for:

- Education services – expanded classrooms, training facilities, and cultural learning programmes.
- Youth work – dedicated spaces for youth engagement, skills development, and sports/recreation.
- Welfare and wellbeing initiatives – including mental health support, advice services, and community cohesion programmes.

This project will directly address local needs identified by Manchester City Council, including:

- Tackling inequalities and promoting inclusion.
- Supporting young people with safe, positive opportunities.
- Enhancing cultural facilities and heritage assets.
- Increasing access to affordable housing.

Through these enhancements, the BMHC will be better equipped to serve both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, offering services and opportunities that strengthen social cohesion, improve wellbeing, and promote cultural understanding.

Future removal of the marquee

We intend to replace the marquee with a permanent events hall in the future Master plan. As a temporary structure, it cannot offer the long-term durability, comfort, and accessibility that the BMHC's growing community requires. Replacing it with a permanent, purpose-built facility will futureproof this capacity, provide enhanced safeguarding for mixed-gender events, improve the visitor experience, and create a more attractive, versatile venue that strengthens both community cohesion and maintains the income generation for the charity.

Timeline

We are aiming to submit the full Master Plan application in January 2026. Over the past year, progress has been delayed due to several iterations of the design, made in response to feedback from planners, stakeholders, neighbours, and the wider community.

Significant changes made in the last twelve months to address concerns include:

1. Removal of two large side buildings
2. Removal of the glass atrium connecting the old and new buildings
3. Reduction of residential accommodation from 112 to 56 apartments
4. Breaking up residential blocks from 3 to 8, with a design more in keeping with the surrounding streetscape
5. Aesthetic changes to ensure the style and appearance of the new building are sympathetic to the site and area

While these adjustments have caused delays, we believe they have resulted in a more considerate and balanced scheme. We are hoping to secure approval by March/April 2026, after which we will begin large-scale fundraising, plan the construction phases, and award the main works contracts.

6. Summary and Request

The BMHC is a key community hub, offering nearly 50 services and activities for local residents. The existing building is fully utilised, and the marquee hosts events that cannot be accommodated elsewhere, including religious services, community gatherings, and weddings.

The marquee plays a vital role in supporting the centre's financial sustainability. The marquee generates £275k annually, a critical income stream for the Centre. This revenue directly funds the operations, maintenance, and sustainability of the building and centre, enabling us to continue providing valuable services to the community. Any loss of income could threaten its financial stability.

The consequences of planning being refused would also result in:

- A major source of income for local small businesses and suppliers disappearing
- 50 staff being directly affected, many from the surrounding area
- The wider perception of the centre as a place of opportunity and inclusion being undermined

Neighbour concerns about noise and traffic are being actively managed, and the BMHC plans to take more involvement in the future management of the marquee to better control activities and prioritise community and corporate events over weddings.

Looking forward, the Master Plan will expand the Centre, providing modern, accessible facilities and additional space for education, youth work, and welfare services, while introducing sustainable income from residential lettings to support the long-term maintenance of the Grade II listed building. Ultimately, the temporary marquee will be replaced by a purpose-built events space with improved soundproofing and attendee management. There will also be an underground car park for better traffic management of the area.

Due to design revisions to address community feedback, the planning application submission is now expected in January 2026.

The BMHC requests a three-year extension of the existing marquee to ensure continuity of services and income until the permanent facilities are completed.