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6 August 2025

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

FAO Jennifer Atkinson

Dear Jennifer

**Guitar Park, Co-op Live Arena, Manchester**
**Full Planning Application and Advertisement Consent Application for the Installation of External Artworks**

Please find enclosed an application (the "Application") submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the 'Advertising Regulations'). This Application is submitted by Eastlands Arena Ltd (the "Applicant").

The Application is for Full Planning Permission and Advertisement Consent to install a series of 8no. external artworks along the Ashton Canal Tow Path in front of the Co-op Live Arena, in Manchester (the "Proposed Development").

## The Site

The Site, spans 33.6 sq. m., comprises 8no. areas of landscaping along the Ashton Canal Tow Path in front of the Co-op Live Arena.

Please refer to Site Location Plan (Ref: GUI-101 Rev B) submitted as part of this Application for a detailed illustration (an extract of which is provided over the page).

## Site Surroundings

To the north of the Site, is the Co-op Live Arena and surface level car parks as part of the Etihad Campus.

To the east, is Alan Turing Way which comprises of a four lane boulevard with segregated cycle lanes. The area to the east of Alan Turing Way is also characterised by a number of residential dwellings, with the National Cycling Centre and Eastlands District Centre, located further to the east and south-east respectively, adding a positive contrast to and supporting the clusters of sports and entertainment facilities in this area.

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To the south, the Site is restricted by the Ashton Canal, with the Etihad Stadium located south of the Canal. The North Stand development (Ref. 136763/FO/2023), which includes an extension to the North Stand of the Etihad Stadium, a new hotel and commercial building and City Square, is currently under construction.

To the west of the Site is Joe Mercer Way, an elevated pedestrian boulevard route to the Etihad Stadium, separating the Site from the adjacent Manchester Tennis and Football Centre located further to the west. It provides a key pedestrian route, over the Metrolink line and the Ashton Canal towards Sportcity Way and the surface car parks to the north of the Etihad Campus and Co-op Live.

## Background

Since the opening of the Co-op Live Arena (as approved under Planning Permission Reference: 139501/JO/2024) in May 2024, it has been reshaping Manchester's entertainment landscape being the largest arena in the United Kingdom. This privately funded, 23,500-capacity venue is a world-class destination for music, sports, and entertainment, attracting top-tier events and artists. This versatility has cemented Manchester's position as a leading host for events, boosting the city's economy and global reputation.

To build upon the success of the Co-op Live Arena, the Applicant proposes the installation of 8no. artworks, in the form of individually design guitars each with their own designs to represent key musical icons linked to the Co-op Live Arena and also link into a Manchester-wide charity initiative which honours Manchester's thriving music scene. The proposals will also further activate the public realm areas around the Co-op Live Arena.

## Pre-Application Consultation

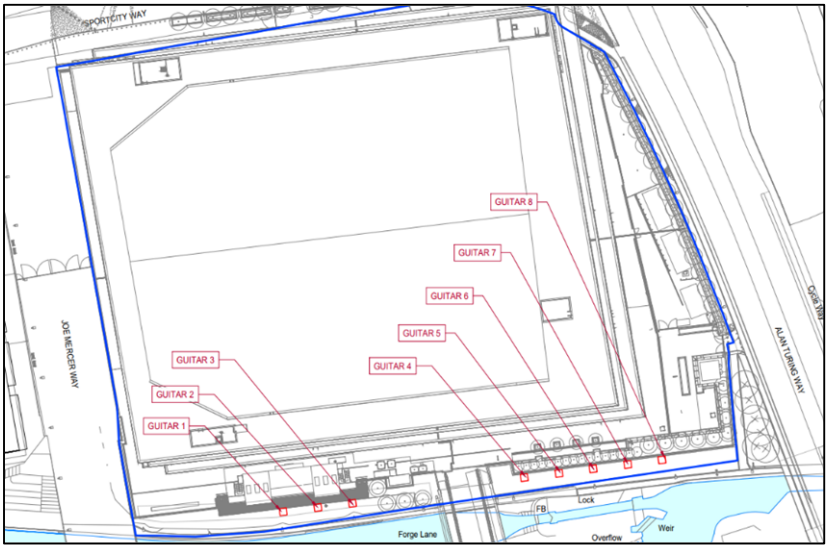
This Application is submitted following pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority's (the "LPA") Principal Planning Manager via virtual meeting on 30 May 2025.

The scope and format of this Application were subsequently confirmed via email correspondence (dated: 12 June 2025).

## Proposed Development

The Application seeks Full Planning Permission and Advertisement Consent for 8no. external artworks, located as indicated on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Location of Each Artwork Installations




This Application seeks to agree:

1. Detailed design for 3no. artwork installations (Ref: GUITAR 01, GUITAR 02, and GUITAR 03)

2. Location, height, scale, materiality and massing details for 5no. further artwork installations (Ref: GUITAR 04, GUITAR 05, GUITAR 06, GUITAR 07 and GUITAR 08), is set out on drawing NS2515_04_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A. It is expected the individual design detailing of the 5no. artwork installations will be submitted to the LPA for approval by way of a Planning Condition before they are installed on-site.

For completeness, further details of the proposed artwork installations can be found in Appendix 1 and illustrated in the Design and Access Statement prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE submitted with this Application.

## Operational Management and Maintenance

This Application is supported by an Operating Schedule and Management Plan prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE which sets out how the Proposed Development will be operated and maintained.

All the artwork installations which include lighting, will be supplied with a Pharos architectural lighting controller that can be managed, operated and integrated within the venues content management system. The system will be fitted with an ambient light sensor allowing real-time adjustment in response to local conditions and to minimise energy consumption / avoid excessive amount of illumination. It will be supplied with remote control, allowing lighting to be altered in response to any issues identified by any stakeholders in an efficient manner.

The Proposed Development has been designed in collaboration with all key stakeholders, including the Greater Manchester Police. Given the location of the trail, and that it provides access to a major events site, security has been a key design consideration. Considerations include:

- All installations are robust structures, engineered with consideration of the potential need to withstand attempted vandalism.

- Using purpose built, vandal proof, electrical pillar boxes, to secure the electrical connections to each feature.
- The elimination of unsecure voids and hatches, so as to reduce the risk of the feature being used to conceal.
- Ensuring all installations are not easily climbable.
- Using IK10 rated (vandal impact resistance) components where available.

A full schedule of preventative maintenance and inspection procedures are set out within the Operating Schedule and Management Plan which sets out measures to be carried in different timescales (i.e. weekly, quarterly, and yearly) ensuring that the Proposed Development will be operated without causing any undue negative impact to local amenity, and that preventative maintenance measures are in place.

## Planning Policy Considerations

This Section sets out the key legislative requirements, local planning policies and material considerations for the Proposed Development.

### Legislative Requirements

Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires all advertisements to be installed subject to the following conditions:

- No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the highway authority, if the sign is to be placed on highway land);
- No advertisement is to be displayed which would obscure, or hinder the interpretation of, official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport;
- Any advertisement must be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site;
- Any advertisement hoarding or structure is to be kept in a condition which does not endanger the public; and
- If an advertisement is required to be removed, the site must be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Legislative Requirements Assessment

The Proposed Advertisements meet the five standard conditions as set out under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. The Applicant is the sole owner of the Site of which the Proposed Development is situated. The Proposed Development has been thoughtfully designed to bring forth improvement to the public realm area around the Co-op Live Arena.

The Proposed Development has been carefully designed and positioned to avoid obscuring or hindering the interpretation of any official road, rail, waterway, or aircraft signs. The Site is located along the Ashton Canal Tow Path, in an area of landscaping which is currently underused. The Proposed Development will be maintained in a condition which does not impair the visual amenity of the Site, nor will it endanger the public.

The Proposed Development is proposed to form a permanent installation on the Site to further activate the public realm area around the Co-op Live Arena. However, if the Proposed Development is to be removed, the Applicant will ensure that the Site will be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

In light of the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not have an adverse impact on amenity or safety and are therefore in line with legislative requirements.

### Relevant Planning Policy Documents and Material Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)
- Places for Everyone Plan (2024)
- Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and Addendum (2024)
- Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006)

Relevant Policies

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible. This is pertinent to the proposals outlined as part of this application as the installation of signages in the Cluster ensures that the buildings are easy to navigate and therefore accessible to users.

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF notes the importance of quality and design of advertisements in affecting the quality and character of places, emphasising on the impact of advertisements on amenity and public safety.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraphs 212-215 place great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets, emphasising the need to avoid "substantial harm" unless that harm is clearly justified (via four specific tests) or there are substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm. 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.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy DM1 'Development Management' states that development proposals should have regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and details, considering the surrounding context, character of the area and impact of the proposals.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy SP1 'Spatial Principles' states that development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods through the creation of well-designed places that enhance or create character whilst protecting the built environment.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy CC9 'Design and Heritage' states that development should preserve or enhance heritage assets, and development proposals should be complementary of the existing function and form of the city centre. Particular attention should be paid to the city centre context and character.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy EC 5 'East Manchester' outlines the criteria that the Council will uphold in promoting development in this area, which prioritises non-car links to residential areas, accesses key transport infrastructure, and leverages the open space network such as the Rochdale and Ashton Canals.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy EC 7 'Eastlands Strategic Employment Location' encourages developments in the area to utilise waterways and canals such as the Ashton Canal to create a sense of place and attracting investment.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN 3 'Heritage' states that the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. The policy text was amended in 2024 to take account of the Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2, set out below. The policy supports the delivery of positive benefits to sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place.

Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN 9 'Green Infrastructure' states that new development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and multiple function, and introduce improvement where feasible. Places for Everyone Policy JP-G8 'A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity' encourages development to increase the quality, quantity, extent and diversity of habitats.

Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2 'Heritage' states that Local Planning Authorities should seek to set out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making and ensure that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national planning policy. Further to this, creative architectural responses to the enhancement and conservation of heritage assets and their settings, that contribute to their significance and sense of place is supported.

UDP saved Policy DC15 'Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters' states that applications for advertisement consent should have consideration for the safety and amenity of the public. Proposals should not harm the character or architectural features of a building and should be in scale with the locality and relevant building. Proposed advertisements should be unobtrusive and should not adversely affect traffic flow or public safety.

Policy Assessment (Principle of Development)

The Proposed Development is of high quality design, using robust and high quality materials which enhances the character of the public realm area around the Co-op Live Arena. The Proposals address the surrounding open space network i.e. the Ashton Canal to create a sense of place, and to activate an area of landscaping which is currently underutilised.

A robust maintenance regime is in place for the ongoing upkeep of the Proposed Development. Materials have been chosen to ensure robustness and longevity of the Proposed Development, such that they are capable of being maintained in good condition as long as they are in situ.

The Proposed Development's scale, massing, and siting are thoroughly thought out as part of the design development process to ensure there is no negative impact imposed to local amenity.

Policy Assessment (Amenity and Safety)

Elements of illuminations are incorporated into each of the artwork installations and will be supplied with a Pharos architectural lighting controller that can be managed, operated and integrated within the venue's

content management system. The system will also be fitted with an ambient light sensor allowing real-time adjustment in response to local conditions and to minimise energy consumption / avoid excessive amount of illumination. The illumination is proposed to be static, and will be limited to 95 cd/$m^2$, except for Guitar 03 (corresponding drawing reference: NS2515_01_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A) with expected luminance level at 450 cd/$m^2$.

The usual hours of illumination will be limited to 16:00 – 23:59.

The Proposed Development has been intentionally placed with accessibility for all, and is designed to be viewed from this length of the Ashton Canal Tow Path. The Proposed Development has been positioned away from the Ashton Canal Tow Path / canal edge as far as reasonably practicable such that there is sufficient space for viewing the installations and no obstruction to the pedestrian path.

Policy Assessment (Ecology / Biodiversity Enhancement)

Upon discussion with the LPA, it was agreed the Proposed Development would be exempted from delivering 10% biodiversity net gain under the Environment Act 2021 as it falls below the de minimis threshold.

In spite of this, the Applicant is dedicated to introducing enhancement to the public realm area around the Co-op Live Arena, in the form of placing topsoil and seeds around the proposed artworks under this Application. This would enhance visual appeal and integration of the proposed artworks within their surroundings.

In terms of impact on ecology, in particular lighting impact on bats and other wildlife, this Application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Survey prepared by Helen Hamilton Ecology. It is concluded that the lighting proposal of the Proposed Development will not bring forth significant impacts on bats or other wildlife on basis that the area is strongly impacted by existing lighting and canal towpath illumination, and there will be lighting controllers that can be managed, operated and integrated within the venue's content management system.

Policy Assessment (Heritage)

The Site is not located within a conservation area, and does not contain any designated heritage assets. There are, however, 4no. designated heritage assets located close to the Site (within 75m radius). They are listed as follows:

- Ashton Canal Lock Number 6 Immediately East of Forge Lane – Grade II (Ref: 1207666).
- Ashton Canal Lock Number 9 Over Ashton Canal (Mill Street Bridge) at West End of Lock Number 7 – Grade II (Ref: 1279613).
- Ashton Canal Lock Number 7 with Roving Bridge Immediately East of Mill Street Bridge – Grade II (Ref: 1197831).
- Ashton Canal Lock Keepers Cottage on South Side of Lock Number 7 of Ashton Canal – Grade II (Ref: 1283049).

The Proposed Development is visible from the designated heritage assets identified and may impact the setting of the assets. However, the Proposed Development represents continuous investment into East Manchester and further enhancement to the public realm area around the Co-op Live Arena. The Co-op Live Arena, and other enhancement schemes i.e. the Canal Activation Scheme (Ref: 143097/FO/2025 and

143098/AOH/2025) sets the precedence for positioning modern structures / interventions near the identified designated heritage assets.

The Proposed Development also will not impact the assets' intrinsic settings i.e. within the functioning Ashton Canal, their roles in Manchester's industrial revolution, and the function of the assets. Despite the Site's proximity to the identified designated heritage assets, no intervention / direct physical impact to the heritage assets will be resulted by the Proposed Development. Sufficient care will also be given during construction period to ensure the heritage assets will not be impacted in any way. For further details, please refer to Construction Management Plan prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE and submitted in support of this Application.

Should the Proposed Development be removed in future, the Applicant will ensure that the Site will be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity, so that the setting to the heritage assets will be intact.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development will result in no harm to the heritage assets.

Policy Assessment – Summary

Overall, the approval of this Application is crucial in enriching the area of landscaping around the Co-op Live Arena, which leverages on the Ashton Canal to create a sense of place, and to activate an area of landscaping which is currently underutilised.

As such, the Proposed Advertisements are in accordance with prevalent legislations, planning policies, and material considerations, as outlined above.

## Summary

In addition to this Covering Letter, the Application also comprises the following supporting information:

- Application Form and Notices prepared by Deloitte.
- Site Location Plan (Ref: GUI-101 Rev B) prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Construction Management Plan prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Operational Management Plan prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Logistics Plan prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Ground Condition and Excavation Summary prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE.
- Ecology Survey (incl. Bat Survey) prepared by Helen Hamilton Ecology.
- Suite of drawings, prepared by NEWSUBSTANCE, with references:
  - GUI-102 Rev B
  - GUI-103 Rev B
  - GUI-104 Rev B
  - NS2515_01_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL Rev A (contains lighting specification)
  - NS2515_02_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL Rev A (contains lighting specification)

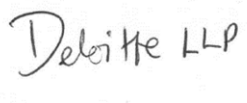
- NS2515_03_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL Rev A (contains lighting specification)
- NS2515_04_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL Rev A (contains lighting specification)

This Application is submitted via the Planning Portal under reference: PP-14132231.

A fee has been paid to Manchester City Council for £886, in addition to any administrative fees by the Planning Portal, in respect of the requisite application fee.

We request the Local Planning Authority's confirmation that the application has been validated. If you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact Eve Grant (0161 455 6483 / evgrant@deloitte.co.uk) or Matthew Lam (0161 455 8448/ mlam@deloitte.co.uk).

Yours sincerely



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Encl.
Appendix 1 Proposed Signage Details

## Appendix 1 – Details of Proposed Artwork Installations

### Guitar 1

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| Detailed Drawing Reference | NS2515_02_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A |
| Height from the ground to the base of the advertisement(s) | 40mm |
| The dimensions of the proposed advertisements (h x w x d) | 4199 x 1520 x 657 mm |
| Maximum projection from building / structure | N/A |
| The maximum height of any individual symbols and letters | N/A |
| The colour of the text and background | N/A |
| Material of the proposed sign | Fabricated steel construction of steel plate and a CHS central column. And sculptural elements. |
| Internal / External Illumination | External |
| Illumination levels (cd/m) | 95 cd/$m^2$ |
| Static or intermittent illumination? | Static |
| Times of Use | 16:00 - 23:59 |

### Guitar 2

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| Detailed Drawing Reference | NS2515_03_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A |
| Height from the ground to the base of the advertisement(s) | 40mm |

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| The dimensions of the proposed advertisements (h x w x d) | 4587 x 2566 x 2249 mm |
| Maximum projection from building / structure | N/A |
| The maximum height of any individual symbols and letters | N/A |
| The colour of the text and background | N/A |
| Material of the proposed sign | Fabricated steel construction of steel plate and a CHS central column. And sculptural elements. |
| Internal / External Illumination | External |
| Illumination levels (cd/m) | 95 cd/$m^2$ |
| Static or intermittent illumination? | Static |
| Times of Use | 16:00 - 23:59 |

Guitar 3

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| Detailed Drawing Reference | NS2515_01_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A |
| Height from the ground to the base of the advertisement(s) | 40mm |
| The dimensions of the proposed advertisements (h x w x d) | 4446 x 1624 x 1676 mm |
| Maximum projection from building / structure | N/A |
| The maximum height of any individual symbols and letters | N/A |

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| The colour of the text and background | N/A |
| Material of the proposed sign | Fabricated steel construction of steel plate and a CHS central column. And sculptural elements. |
| Internal / External Illumination | External |
| Illumination levels (cd/m) | 450 cd/$m^2$ |
| Static or intermittent illumination? | Static |
| Times of Use | 16:00 - 23:59 |

Guitar 4. 5. 6. 7 and 8

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| Drawing Reference (Parameter with detailed design provided via Planning Condition) | NS2515_04_CONSTRUCTION_DETAIL_REV_A |
| Height from the ground to the base of the advertisement(s) | 40mm |
| The dimensions of the proposed advertisements (h x w x d) | 4446 x 1623 x 1677 mm |
| Maximum projection from building / structure | N/A |
| The maximum height of any individual symbols and letters | N/A |
| The colour of the text and background | N/A |
| Material of the proposed sign | Fabricated steel construction of steel plate and a CHS central column. And sculptural elements. |
| Internal / External Illumination | External |

| Criteria | Detail |
|---|---|
| Illumination levels (cd/m) | 95 cd/$m^2$ |
| Static or intermittent illumination? | Static |
| Times of Use | 16:00 - 23:59 |