

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 143890/VO/2025

Date registered valid: 3 September 2025

Proposal: City Council Development for the temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days.

Address: Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester

Ward(s): Piccadilly Ward

Applicant: Robert Hutchinson, Manchester City Council

Agent (if any):

Case officer: Jack Naven
Tel: 0161 219 2095
Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 21 October 2025

Application Details

Type of application: Regulation 3 Consent

Development type: Change of use

Date of site visit: 15 September 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 11 September 2025 Expired: 2 October 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 11 September 2025 Expired: 2 October 2025

Site notice

Posted: 15 September 2025 Expired: 6 October 2025

Press advert

Published: 16 September 2025 Expired: 7 October 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of Site/Area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Smithfield Conservation Area 1987

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application relates to a site within Piccadilly Gardens in the City Centre. Piccadilly Gardens is a formally laid out square incorporating areas of grass, high quality glazing and a modern water feature. It was reconfigured in 2002 to designs by Tadao Ando. Parts of the concrete walls that were part of the design remain.

There is a modern mixed-use building at One Piccadilly Gardens, which has office accommodation on the upper floors and commercial units at ground floor level. There are also commercial units within the gardens that are within the curve of the concrete wall.

Piccadilly Gardens is also home to the Queen Victoria Monument, the Sir Robert Peel Statue, the James Watt Statue and the Duke of Wellington Statue, which are all Grade II Listed.

The Piccadilly Gardens Transport Interchange with bus and Metrolink services is located between the formal gardens and Piccadilly Plaza, which is a complex constructed in 1965 that includes a 30-storey office building currently named City Tower, the Mercure Hotel and a number of ground floor commercial units.

The Gardens are not within a Conservation Area but are adjacent the Smithfield Conservation Area and the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The Listed Buildings surrounding the Gardens include a Grade II Listed department store that is occupied by Debenhams and Grade II Listed Buildings at 1-3 Piccadilly, 15-17 Piccadilly, 38-50 Piccadilly, 47 Piccadilly, 49

Piccadilly, 51-53 Piccadilly, 59 and 61 Piccadilly, 69-75 Piccadilly, 77-83 Piccadilly and 97 Piccadilly.

The site lies within the Piccadilly area of the City Centre, and the surrounding area contains a variety of uses including retail, bars, cafes, restaurants, offices, commercial, residential and hotel uses.

The City Council has made it publicly clear its intention to significantly regenerate the area in future, with LDA Design having been appointed to map out the £25 million regeneration.

Related Applications

143873/VO/2025 - City Council Development for temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 73 days at Cathedral Gardens.

143879/VO/2025 - City Council Development for the temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days at Market Street.

143885/VO/2025 - City Council Development for the temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days at King Street.

143891/VO/2025 - City Council Development for the temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days at Corn Exchange & Exchange Square.

143900/VO/2025 - City Council Development for the temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days at St Ann's Square & Exchange Street.

143906/VO/2025 - City Council Development for temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market for a period of 46 days at New Cathedral Street.

143948/VO/2025 - City Council Development for temporary change of use of public open space for the purpose of a Christmas Market alongside high end fairground attractions for a period of 59 days at Albert Square.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. A site notice and local press advert were also produced. At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received due to this publicity.

Greater Manchester Police Design for Security and Counter Terrorism Unit Teams - Have no concerns with the proposal.

Environmental Health - Had no objections to the proposal. Advised that a condition should be added to control the hours as applied for.

Highway Services - Confirmed that the proposals are acceptable to Highways.

Transport for Greater Manchester/Metrolink - Originally had concerns over the layout of the markets in this location and the impact it may have on the safe operation of the tramway. Following discussions with the City Council and a minor amendment to the layout, TFGM confirmed that they had no objection.

Policy

The **Places for Everyone Plan** - Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the ten boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:

- Policy JP-Strat1 - Core Growth Area
- Policy JP-Strat2 - City Centre
- Policy JP-P1 - Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-P2 - Heritage
- Policy JP-C5 - Streets for All

The **Manchester Core Strategy** - Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th July 2012:

- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy C1 - Centre Hierarchy
- Policy C10 - Leisure and the Evening Economy
- Policy CC1 - Primary Economic Development Focus (City Centre and Fringe)
- Policy CC2 - Retail
- Policy CC4 - Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy CC9 - Design and Heritage
- Policy CC10 - A Place for Everyone
- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy EN19 - Waste
- Policy DM1 - Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester - The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC10 - Food and Drink Uses
- Policy DC18 - Conservation Areas
- Policy DC19 - Listed Buildings
- Policy DC26 - Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Other Legislative Requirements

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- National Planning Policy for Waste
- S17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Issues

Principle of the Development

The submitted planning application forms part of the formalisation of the use of a number of sites across the city centre for a temporary change of use.

The proposal would see the temporary siting of Christmas Markets for a period of 46 days.

The provision of such markets is a key source of tourism and economic growth for Manchester City Centre during the festive period that help increase the profile of the City. This temporary change of use has been carried out for a number of years in these locations to great success.

All of the markets would be located in appropriate retail areas, thus leading to an increase in foot traffic for other local businesses. The markets draw in additional local, regional, national and international visitors to the city centre, promoting the city's facilities and enhancing the city's reputation as a host to quality, cultural markets offering a diverse and complimentary retail product.

The retail offer for visitors to the city during the Christmas Markets will be enhanced and the additional visits that this would result in are considered to help to increase the profile of the City as a tourist destination, particularly during the festive period.

The event organisers, Manchester Specialist Markets have experience in the delivery of this and other outdoor events and are familiar with the requirements when designing and managing events in the City Centre.

The layout for each of the market sites has been agreed in consultation with Manchester Specialist Markets, Greater Manchester Police, Transport for Greater Manchester, and MCC Neighbourhood Services, with input from the access audits that have been undertaken for each site.

Whilst the permanent siting of such structures on a pedestrianised road would not ordinarily be supported, as the proposals are only temporary, it is considered the principle of the development accords with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1 and JP-Start2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC1, CC2, CC4, C10 and DM1, in principle, subject to the matters discussed below.

Visual Amenity and Heritage

The Manchester Christmas Markets will be a temporary feature with all associated works being easily reversible without damage to the surfaces and materials of streets or buildings. None of the units will be attached to buildings and all cabling runs will be over the ground and clearly marked.

The majority of the units generally consist of two designs, a 'walk-in' unit and a countertop service unit, which are generally purpose-built wooden structures that are easily erected and dismantled. To complement these, there is also a number of larger, bespoke units across each of the sites (locations detailed on layout plans) that are again generally purpose-built wooden structures.

Whilst comprising of temporary structures, the stalls would be a high-quality design appropriate on a temporary basis to the character and the setting of the conservation area and adjacent listed buildings.

It is considered any impact caused to the appearance of the street scene or neighbouring heritage assets would be minor in nature and would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

On this basis, the development complies with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC18 and DC19, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Residential Amenity

The application site is located within a key thoroughfare of the City Centre and Primary Shopping Area, where background noise levels are high at most times, and the number of nearby residential dwellings is low. The proposed development would operate from 10:00 till 21:00, which is not considered to be unreasonable hours given its location.

Generators used on sites to power the various units will be low noise generating. A condition has been attached to ensure that only these low noise generating generators are utilised. This, in combination with the proposed hours of 10am - 9pm Monday to Sunday, will mitigate any impact noise might have on the amenity of local residents.

Given the proposed hours of operation and the use of low noise generating generators, the development is therefore acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC10 and DC26, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Crime and Disorder / Public Safety

The markets would see the change of use of a public footway to that of Christmas Markets, which would see food and alcohol consumed on site, and would be likely to attract a high number of visitors. As part of these proposals, general best practice measures would be in place, this includes the use of megaphones to relay public messages, on site security and first aid, emergency evacuation plans. No objection has been received by the Counter Terrorism Policing North West unit. Greater Manchester Police's Design for Security do not object to the proposal and do note that after liaising with the Counter Terrorism Security Adviser and that they had no objection. On this basis, the proposal is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Accessibility

The layouts of each of the sites have been designed to accommodate pedestrian movement and full level access around the site, whilst respecting the surrounding buildings and businesses.

Given the above, it is considered that the access arrangements would be consistent with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-C5, Core Strategy Policies C10 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway Safety

The application site is a pedestrianised area that can only be accessed by services vehicles.

During business hours no vehicular access through the site will be permitted, deliveries will then take place overnight between 10pm and 8am. Highways do not object to the development. On

this basis, the proposal is acceptable in regard to its impact on Highway Safety and therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Waste Management

The waste management plan for the Christmas Markets has been developed with city centre contractor Biffa and complies with the authority's guidelines on event waste management and sustainability.

Excess waste is prevented through the use of re-usable mugs and hard plastic glasses on all sites of the market.

All collection points have been carefully selected in co-ordination with Biffa, the City Centre contractor, and have been signed off by Manchester City Council's Highway Services department.

Given how the development is temporary in nature, the development is acceptable in this instance, and the proposal complies with Core Strategy Policies EN19 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy for Waste.

Conclusion

In light of the above and subject to appropriate planning conditions, it is considered that the development is acceptable and is therefore in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2, JP-P2 and JP-C5, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC1, CC2, CC4, CC9, CC10, C10, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC10, DC18, DC19 and DC26, the National Planning Policy for Waste, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

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 policies 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: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) The permission hereby granted is for a limited period only, expiring on 22 December 2025, and the use comprising the development for which permission is hereby granted is required to be discontinued on that date.

Reason - The use hereby approved is of a temporary nature only and pursuant to Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC1, CC2, CC4, CC9, EN3 and DM1 and saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC26.

2) The structures hereby permitted shall be discontinued no later than the 23 December 2025 and the fixings and works comprising the development are required to be removed no later than one week from the use ceasing.

Reason - The use and buildings are required to cease and be removed from site within a specified timescale in order to allow reinstatement of the site pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

3) Within two weeks prior to the expiration of the temporary period, a scheme to restore the land shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented within one month of the use ceasing and thereafter retained and maintained in accordance with this scheme.

Reason - To ensure that the land is reinstated to an appropriate standard in the interest of visual amenity and to restore the recreational value of the site pursuant to policies SP1, EN9, EN10 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

4) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents, received by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 11 September 2025:

- Design and Access Statement

And received by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 01 October 2025:

- Location Plan MCC-XX-DR-B-008
- Proposed Layout Plan MCC-XX-DR-B-016

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

5) The development shall be open in accordance with the following hours:-

- 10am - 9pm Monday to Sunday

Reason - In interests of residential amenity in order to reduce noise and general disturbance in accordance with saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

6) The generators used at the market site shall be 60kVA Stage V Generators provided by John F Hunt Power, as outlined in 60kVA Stage V Generator specification document received by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 09/10/2025.

Reason - In interests of residential amenity in order to reduce noise and general disturbance in accordance with policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policies DC10.1 and DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

7) The details of the Waste Management scheme as set out in the approved 'Design and Access Statement Manchester Christmas Markets 2025' document received by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 11/09/2025 shall be implemented as part of the development and shall remain in situ whilst the use or development is in operation.

Reason - In order to ensure that adequate provision is made within the development for the storage and recycling of waste in accordance with policies DM1 and EN19 of the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Greater Manchester Police
Transport For Greater Manchester
Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW)

Piccadilly Bus Station, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ
Sixth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Second Floor, Cobden House, 12 - 16 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
Unit A, The Exchange, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 4BT
Superdrug, 7 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LZ
Flat 7, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
First Floor, 17 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LS
Ask Italian, Ground Floor Unit B, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Flat 13, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Unit E, 35 - 36 Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AJ
Piccadilly Bus Station, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 4AJ
SHORYU, Ground Floor Units C2 To C3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Unit G2 And G3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
4 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GS
Franco Manca, 12 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
EE PICO CELL (1587302), Communication Station Outside 7, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LZ
128 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1WA
Nando's, 27 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LU
Flat 8, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
29 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LU
Forrest Media Ltd, City Screen, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BT
The Thrift Shop, 45 - 50 Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AJ
Ground Floor Unit E2, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
First Floor Commissionaires Room, Royal Buildings, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB
Third Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
Fourth Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
First Floor, Cobden House, 12 - 16 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
Flat 10, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 18, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 5, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Fourth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
2A Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
Third Floor, Cobden House, 12 - 16 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
130 Market Street, Manchester, M60 1AY
1 - 3 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LZ
Seasonal Events Area, Piccadilly Gardens, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LS
BARBURRITO, Ground Floor Unit D1 To D2, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Unit 3, 11 - 13 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LY
Flat 9, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 14, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Ground Floor Unit E1, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
PIZZAEXPRESS, Ground Floor Units C1 And D3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Second Floor, 4 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GS
First Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB
Royal Buildings, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB
Unit 2, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1AF

Flat 12, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 3, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
35 - 36 Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AJ
Third Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Unit G1, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
GREGGS, 7 - 9 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LZ
Flat 6, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 1, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 16, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 15, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
First And Second Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Fifth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Betfred, 10 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
Tesco Express, Unit D, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AJ
6A Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AH
130 - 132 Market Street, Manchester, M60 1AY
132 Market Street, Manchester, M60 1AY
Halifax, 5 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LZ
Flat 4, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 11, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
BYRON, Ground Floor Unit A, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Flat 17, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Flat 2, 15 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LT
Unit 8, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AJ
Ground Floor Unit F, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Second Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
First Floor Suite 3, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
Fourth Floor, Cobden House, 12 - 16 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AQ
17 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LS
19 - 25 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LU
Travelodge, 31 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LU

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Smithfield Conservation Area 1987
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (More) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (More) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL