Application Number	Date of Appln	Committee Date	Ward
142755/FO/2025	22nd Apr 2025	3rd July 2025	Longsight Ward

Proposal Change of use from a vacant Class E unit (former Bank) to an adult gaming centre (sui generis) and associated elevational alterations

Location Former Barclays Bank, 537 Stockport Road, Manchester, M12 4JH

Applicant Merkur Slots Ltd (UK)

Agent Planning Potential Ltd

Executive Summary

The proposal is for the use of a property on Stockport Road in Longsight district centre as an adult gaming centre, providing slot machines for gambling purposes (sui generis), together with elevational alterations.

8 objections have been received, together with a petition signed by 180 signatories and objections from Andrew Gwynne MP, Ward Councillors and Councillors from adjoining wards.

The proposed development is sought to be operational between 08.00 and 23:59 hrs. Comings and goings to the premises at times, would be similar to other businesses, in particular hot food takeaways and restaurant uses in the district centre in respect of the late evening/night time hours of use.

Key Issues

The property occupies a prominent location along Stockport Road. It is noted that the premises has been vacant since November 2023. The proposal would reuse a vacant premises and create jobs.

A previous application for the same use but operating on a 24/7 basis was considered by the Planning and Highways Committee in November 2024. However, a non-determination appeal was submitted by the applicant prior to the Committee meeting, and as such Members were not able determine the application, but agreed a resolution as to what decision Committee would have made if it was still within its power to determine the application.

The resolution was for the refusal of the application on the basis that the proposed adult gaming centre use would introduce a non-traditional sui generis use that was not compatible with the retail function of Longsight district centre and would create an inactive shopfront. Furthermore, the proposal would fail to contribute positively to Stockport Road and would offer very limited visual interest and activity to this important road and pedestrian environment, provide insufficient natural surveillance and would not provide the suitably active street frontage required in this location.

In addition, the proposed development would give rise to an increased level of comings and goings in the early hours of the morning, leading to noise and disturbance when background noise is generally very low, thereby adversely affecting residential amenity. This development would therefore be contrary to policies DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan.

The Planning Inspector in determining the non-determination appeal was of the view that the re-use of the property as an adult gaming centre would not unacceptably harm the role, function vitality and viability of the district centre, nor would the proposed window display and potential customer activity associated with the appeal scheme significantly harm the overall character of the commercial uses within the district centre, and would maintain an active frontage in this location. However, on the basis of a 24/7 operation, it was felt that the planning submission did not sufficiently demonstrate that the appeal scheme's noise levels would not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of the near-by residential property and therefore, the appeal was dismissed on this basis only.

This application includes additional noise assessment information and reduced opening hours.

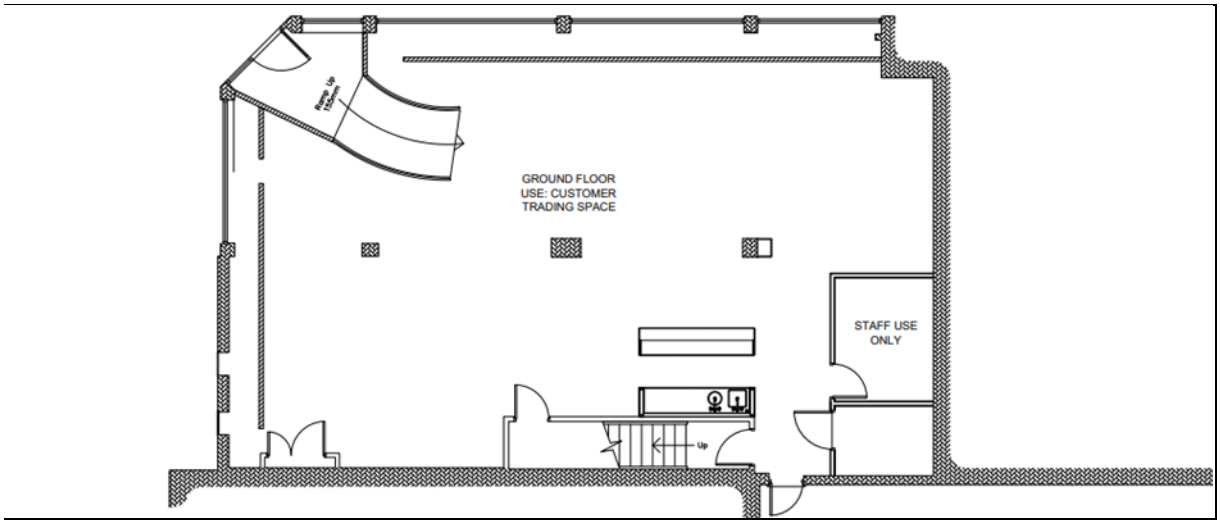
Description

The application site is a two-storey building with frontages onto Stockport Road and a pedestrian route through to the Asda foodstore. Stockport Road is a busy pedestrian and vehicular route.

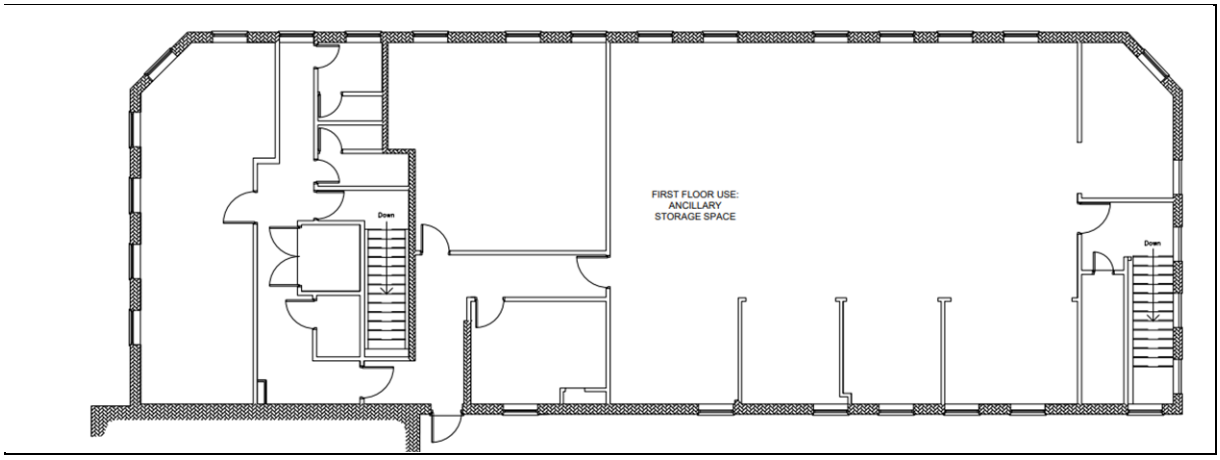
Site location and visuals of the existing frontages of the property.

Surrounding uses include retail units, betting shops, pawn shops, a dental practice, offices, Manchester Children's Services offices and a library.

It is proposed to change the use of the ground floor of the premises to an adult gaming centre (sui generis), with slot machines for gambling. This would occupy the ground floor, with the upper floor used for storage and staff facilities. The upper floor area also extends over a retail unit (in separate occupancy) at ground level to the east. The floor area would be 485 sqm. The premises would be open to the public and in use between 08:00 and 23:59 hrs each day, seven days a week, with 6 full time and 6 part time staff based at the premises.



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

The existing shopfront would be retained (with infilling of the former ATM locations), and the existing entrance would be reused. Level access would be available through the main entrance on Stockport Road, but there is no disabled access to the upper level. No secure cycle parking spaces are proposed, and no car parking would be provided.

During the course of the application revised elevational details have been received in relation to the refurbishment of the shopfront.

Consultations

Local residents – 3 objections have been received. Comments are summarised as follows:

- The introduction of an adult gaming centre in this location raises significant concerns about its effect on vulnerable individuals. Gambling establishments can contribute to 'problem gambling', financial hardship, and social issues, particularly when placed in close proximity to residential areas and community spaces. The council has a responsibility to protect residents, especially young people and those at risk of gambling-related harm.

- Areas surrounding gaming and betting establishments often experience a rise in anti-social behaviour, including loitering, disturbances, and potential crime. Stockport Road is a key commercial and residential area, and adding such a venue may negatively affect safety, public order, and community cohesion.

- The presence of an Adult Gaming Centre may deter families and local shoppers from visiting nearby businesses, reducing footfall and negatively impacting independent traders who contribute positively to the area's economy. Instead of approving gambling-related businesses, the council should prioritise developments that support a diverse and sustainable local economy.

- Stockport Road already experiences significant traffic congestion, and the proposed change of use is likely to exacerbate parking difficulties and transport pressures. The influx of visitors to the gaming centre could strain existing infrastructure, making the area less accessible for residents and legitimate local businesses.

- There is no clear evidence that an Adult Gaming Centre will provide a positive contribution to the community. Unlike essential services or beneficial commercial developments, gaming establishments tend to prioritise corporate profit over local interests, without offering tangible benefits such as job creation or public amenities.

- There are already too many gaming shops in the area, which does not help with the image of the area or other businesses.

- Adding a fourth gambling venue to Longsight shopping centre would create a harmful concentration of betting shops and gaming centres in an area already struggling with deprivation. A lack of robust safeguards in physical venues compared to online gambling makes them particularly concerning. The applicant's history of regulatory problems and their pattern of expanding gambling space after initial approval should make us question their intentions for the first floor of this property.

Concerns have been raised in relation to discrepancies between the license and planning application as follows:

- Planning application references use as an adult gaming centre, but they applied for a Bingo premises licence.
- The omission of relevant regulatory history.
- Vague on staffing levels.
- The planning application proposed vinyls to glazing, TV screen and poster boards, but the licence is related to one single poster advertising bingo only /bingo images shall be posted externally, with no other external advertising /signed to be displayed.

Concerns are also raised regarding the type and nature of gambling machines provided and impacts relating to gambling.

Permitting this venue would increase the number of gambling machines in this area from the current 12 located in the neighbouring betting shops to approximately 95.

Local businesses – 3 local businesses have raised objections which can be summarised as follows:

- The business is not in-keeping with the character of the community and may attract a rougher crowd, potentially leading to increased noise, anti-social behaviour, and a general decline in the atmosphere and safety of the area.

- There are already too many gaming shops in the area. They would like to see a business that will help to regenerate the area not attract bad habits and crime

- The applicant's cover letter states that adult gaming centres (AGCs) should be differentiated from betting shops on the basis that AGCs do not offer Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) but instead offer low stakes machines capped at £2. It is important to note that these machines are fundamentally the same as FOBTs offered by betting shops and that FOBTs have been capped at £2 stake since 2019.This cluster of betting/gambling shops would be detrimental to the retail attraction of the immediate area and would cause a reduction in terms of diversity and mix of uses within Longsight.

-The cumulative effect of several betting premises in close proximity would negatively impact upon the visual interest of the streetscene, further harming the vitality of the area.

-Due to the location of the application site on a corner abutting a pedestrian route to the nearby Asda store, it is important that the development supports natural surveillance.

Ward Councillors – An email has been received on behalf of Cllr Suzanne Richards, Cllr Abid Chohan, Cllr Rabnawaz Akbar, Cllr Jill Lovecy Cllr Ahmed Ali, Cllr Dzidra Noor, Cllr Basat Sheikh, Cllr Zahid Hussain, Cllr Tina Hewitson and Cllr Abdigafar Mohamed Muse objecting to the proposed development on the grounds of that the proposal does not comply with local planning policy or the Manchester Core Strategy.

Specifically, it would undermine the vitality and viability of Longsight district centre, which is already challenged by an overconcentration of non-retail uses and there is

no evidence that alternative, more appropriate uses have been properly considered or marketed.

It is maintained that gambling can have significant adverse effects on mental and physical health, particularly for vulnerable individuals. This includes relationship breakdowns, large-scale financial loss, crime, and in some cases, suicide. The location is a busy hub, adjacent to a supermarket and other well-used venues and close to four primary schools, two high schools, and a specialist support school which increases the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults. There are also supported housing facilities for people with alcohol and drug dependency nearby. Council and police services are already under significant pressure and further gambling provision would exacerbate these issues.

Further it is stated that there are already three bookmakers in close vicinity and granting this application would create an unacceptable clustering of betting and gambling premises, harming the diversity and character of the district centre. An additional adult gaming centre would negatively impact residents living opposite the site, generating noise and anti-social behaviour regardless of operating hours.

Andrew Gwynne MP objects to the proposed development on the grounds that the proposed development would impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents and would affect amenity, vitality, viability and diversity in an important district centre.

It is also maintained that gambling can have significant adverse effects on vulnerable people, particularly when it becomes addictive and can lead to relationships difficulties, large scale financial loss and in some cases crime or suicide - the list is not exhaustive.

Further concerns are raised in relation to the proximity of schools and supported accommodation and that the proposal would causes a clustering of betting shops and gambling premises, likely to cause harm through anti-social behaviour.

Granting this change of use could result in a significant over-provision of this type of establishment and result in a significant loss of retail space in a high demand district centre, whilst undermining nearby living conditions through noise and disturbance.

Highway Services – No concerns in relation to trip generation, given that a high level of linked-trips with adjacent uses would be expected. No on-site car parking provision is proposed, Given the site location, the nature of trips and the site's extant use, it is anticipated that the proposal would not give rise to a significant increase in parking demand. It is noted that the pedestrian access will remain as existing from Stockport Road with internally opening doors.

Additional information has been provided by the applicant which shows an internal bin store and confirms on-road refuse servicing with waste collected directly from the internal store - this is considered acceptable.

Whilst no details on other servicing/deliveries have been provided, adequate provision is available along Stockport Road.

The applicant has reviewed opportunities for internal cycle parking provision and has stated that due to on-site constraints, such provision is not possible. Given that the proposals comprise a change-of-use application (with no external space) and that external cycle parking facilities are present in the vicinity of the site, it is accepted that internal cycle parking is not required.

It is noted that TV/advertisement screens are proposed behind the glazing, fronting onto Stockport Road. It is requested that standard conditions regarding moving images and levels of luminance are attached to these screens.

Environmental Health – Conditions are recommended to in relation to waste and recycling arrangements, external lighting (designed to control glare and overspill onto nearby properties), a restriction on hours of operation to 08:00-23:59; servicing hours, external equipment and the implementation of an 'Operational Management Plan' with control measures' detailed within the submitted Noise Assessment.

Greater Manchester Police (Design for Security) – Any comments will be reported to committee.

Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework

A number of key aspects of the NPPF that impact on the considerations that need to be given to the current application are identified below. The document states that the 'purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The Government states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: an economic role, a social role and an environmental role (paragraph 8). Paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the NPPF outline a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". The document clarifies that the 'objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The Framework re-iterates that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory status of the development plan remains as the starting point for decision making.

Section 6 'Building a strong and competitive economy' states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 85). The proposal would support economic growth and create jobs, and prosperity through fit out and through the operation of the uses. Gambling uses can however slow economic growth.

Section 7 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and

adaptation (paragraph 90). The proposed use would add to existing sui generis uses in the District Centre.

Section 8 'Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities' states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, be safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles. The proposed use would not be fully accessible due to the lack of full access to the upper floor. The proposals provide gambling facilities, which have the potential to have an effect on mental health, social and cultural well-being.

Section 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' states that 'significant 'development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health'.

The scheme would not include the provision of off-street parking spaces, or cycle storage provision, but would help to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions by being accessible by a variety of modes of transport. The accommodation provided would however not be fully inclusive for the reasons considered in detail within this report. The proposal would encourage modal shift away from car travel to more sustainable alternatives through its location.

Section 12 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (paragraph 131). Paragraph 135 goes onto advise that planning polices and decisions should ensure that developments
(a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
(b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and in particular.
(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The visuals of the proposed elevations and floorplan indicate that both frontages to Stockport Road, and a pedestrian route through to the Asda foodstore would be obscured by a vinyl display and/or TV screens, together with a stud wall positioned 1m away from the shopfront glazing which would contain graphics in association with the company visuals, and to obscure the activities and the gaming machines , the views into and out of this shop front would not be the maximum active street frontage that could be achieved. Details of the appearance of these vinyls have not been submitted but it has been indicated that the graphics and colours are likely to be the same as the other premises by the same operator.

Places for Everyone

The Places for Everyone Plan is a joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester and was adopted on 21st of March 2024. The Places for Everyone Plan is a key document that updates and, in some cases, supersedes policies listed within the Core Strategy that are designed to ensure all development within Greater Manchester achieves the best possible outcomes for the area. The relevant policies are as follows:

JP-S2: Carbon and Energy – The development would involve the re-use of an existing building ensuring that there would be minimal energy usage in the delivery of the proposal. JP-S5: Flood Risk and the Water Environment – There would be no increase of hard standing on site and thus no change in the drainage of the site.

JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises – The development will see the loss of a Class E use in Longsight District Centre through the provision of an Adult Gambling Centre (sui generis use). Further consideration is given in the report below.

JP-P1: Sustainable Places – The proposal would occupy an existing building.

JP-C1: An Integrated Network – This is a highly sustainable location and is well connected to public transport.

JP-C6: Walking and Cycling – Cycle storage facilities are already present in the footways within the District Centre in proximity to the property.

JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development – The proposal would be connected to infrastructure and nearby public transport.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

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 adopted Core Strategy contains a number of Strategic Spatial Objectives of relevance to this application that form the basis of the policies as follows:

SO1. Spatial Principles provides a framework within which the sustainable development of the City can contribute to halting climate change. This development would be in a highly accessible location in relation to public transport and would reduce the need to travel by private car.

SO2. Economy supports a significant improvement of the City's economic performance to spread the benefits of this growth across the city to reduce economic, environmental, and social disparities, and to help create inclusive sustainable communities. The application forms suggest that scheme would provide new jobs during fit out and 6 full time and 6 part time jobs in operation.

S04. Provide a network of distinctive, attractive and high-quality centres, strengthening local identity, providing essential services close to homes and local access to healthy food.

S05. Transport seeks to improve the physical connectivity of the City, through sustainable transport networks, to enhance its functioning and competitiveness and provide access to jobs, education, services, retail, leisure, and recreation. This development would be in a highly accessible location in relation to public transport and reduce the need to travel by private car.

Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles - The development would be accessible by sustainable transport provision.

Policy C1- Centre Hierarchy Development of town centre uses (as defined in national planning policy) will be prioritised in the centres identified in this policy, taking account of the different roles of the City Centre, District Centres and Local Centres. In order to maintain the vitality and viability of its centres, provide services as locally as possible and minimise the need to travel by car Manchester’s centre hierarchy is:- Manchester City Centre, followed by District Centre and Local Centres.

The policy states that district centres have an essential role in providing key services to the City's neighbourhoods including shopping, commercial, leisure, public and community functions, ensuring that residents can access such services easily. They are also a focus for the City's residential neighbourhoods, providing an important opportunity to define local character. Furthermore, that development in these centres should primarily respond to the needs of the catchment and recognise the need to support the vitality and viability of other centres.

Policy C2- District Centres states that development will support thriving district centres, with distinct local character, providing a good range of accessible key services, including retail, health facilities, public services, leisure activities and financial and legal services. Furthermore, that development in District Centres should: Prioritise delivery of key 'visitor' services, including retail, public and commercial services and food and drink. In addition, that the Council will ensure that retail remains the principal use in Primary Shopping Areas, but also ensure that provision is made in District Centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to vitality and viability of centres. Also, that subject to impact on the overall character and local amenity, the Council will support development which extends the time during which District Centres are active.

Policy C5 –Central Manchester District Centres - Hulme, Longsight and Rusholme

Within Longsight the priority will be to direct opportunities for growth to improve the links between the existing foodstore and the rest of the centre.

The improvement to the quality of the environment in Rusholme and Longsight is a priority to help retain and attract shoppers and visitors.

Policy C10 –Leisure and the Evening Economy

New development and redevelopment that supports the evening economy, contributes to the vitality of district centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy will be permitted, subject to the following considerations:
1. Cumulative impact – in areas where there is already a concentration of bars (A4), hot food takeaways (A5) and other night-time uses which are detrimental to the character or vitality and viability of the centre, there will be a presumption against further facilities.
2. Residential amenity – the proposed use should not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, traffic and disturbance.
3. Balance - new uses in Manchester centres should support both the day-time and evening/night-time economies whilst not undermining the role of the primary shopping area. When considering the impact of a proposed bar or hot food take away regard will be had to the above policy and also: The existing number of similar establishments in the immediate area and their proximity to each other; The type and characteristics of other uses, such as housing, shops and public houses; The existence of vacant shop units and the condition of the unit; The importance of the location for local shopping, and the number, function and location of shops that would remain to serve the local community; The character of the centre and its frontage, and the nature of the use proposed; The potential impacts of the proposal on the wider community; and any known unresolved amenity, traffic or safety issues arising from existing uses in the area.

Policy T1 - Sustainable Transport - The proposal would encourage modal shift to sustainable alternatives by being fully accessible by public transport.

Policy T2 - Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need - The proposal would be accessible by a variety of sustainable transport modes. There wouldn’t however be inclusive access to all floors of the business.

Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas – The shop fronts would largely be obscured by vinyl and TV screens. Whilst, this would not bring an active frontage to Stockport Road or the adjacent pedestrian route to the Asda foodstore, the scheme would have similar frontages to the bookmakers within the parade of premises.

Policy EN16 - Air Quality - The proposal would be highly accessible by all forms of public transport and reduce reliance on cars and therefore minimise traffic emissions.

Policy EN19 - Waste - The application indicates that the waste storage arrangements would be the same as existing at the property.

Policy DM1 - Development Management - Outlines a range of general issues that all development should have regard to. Whilst the proposal would have an impact on the character and appearance of the shop frontage through an inactive shop front design,

it is not considered to be so unduly harmful as to warrant refusal of consent on this basis.

Saved UDP polices

In addition to the above, a number of UDP policies have also been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy.

The below saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan are also considered relevant:

Policies DC14 'Shop Fronts and Related Signs' states that the City Council will ensure that the design of shop fronts is in keeping with the character of the area within which the building is located and that inappropriate features are not permitted. The proposal, due to the need to provide privacy to the users, would result in an obscured shop frontage.

Policy DC14.2 states that shop fronts should allow full access for disabled people. The entrance into the proposals would be level.

Policy DC26' Development and Noise' - Had the application been approved, conditions would have been applied to the approval to deal with any noise impacts from the development. The proposed development has the potential to lead to increased activity through comings and goings to the premises. However, the hours proposed, in particular until 23:59 at night would be similar to the operation of hot food takeaways in the district centre and as such would not introduce activity, when activity in the district centre when levels of activity would be minimal.

The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted 2007)

This document provides guidance to help develop and enhance Manchester. In particular, the SPD seeks appropriate design, quality of public realm, facilities for disabled people (in accordance with Design for Access 2), pedestrians and cyclists. It also promotes a safer environment through Secured by Design principles, appropriate waste management measures and environmental sustainability. Sections of relevance are:

Chapter 8 'Community Safety and Crime Prevention' – The aim of this chapter is to ensure that developments design out crime and adopt the standards of Secured by Design.

Chapter 11 'The City's Character Areas' – the aim of this chapter is to ensure that new developments fit comfortably into and enhance the character of an area of the City, particularly adding to and enhancing the sense of place.

National Planning Policy Guidance (March 2014)

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. The relevant section of the NPPG in this case is as follows:
Noise - Local planning authorities should take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider:
• whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur.
• whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and
• whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved. Mitigating the noise impacts of a development will depend on the type of development being considered and the character of the proposed location.
In general, for noise making developments, there are four broad types of mitigation:
• engineering: reducing the noise generated at source and/or containing the noise generated.
• layout: where possible, optimising the distance between the source and noise sensitive receptors and/or incorporating good design to minimise noise transmission through the use of screening by natural or purpose-built barriers, or other buildings.
• using planning conditions/obligations to restrict activities allowed on the site at certain times and/or specifying permissible noise levels differentiating as appropriate between different times of day, such as evenings and late at night, and;
• mitigating the impact on areas likely to be affected by noise including through noise insulation when the impact is on a building.

Principle of development

The proposal is for a ground floor adult gaming centre with storage on the upper floor. Elevational alterations are limited to the infilling of the former ATM openings to the Stockport Road frontage. The premises would be open between 08:00 and 23:59 hrs, seven days a week.

Policy C2 recognises that provision can be made in district centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centres.

Whilst it is considered that an adult gaming centre would not significantly contribute to the vibrancy and the mix of established uses along this section of Stockport Road in Longsight, the impact to vitality and viability of the centre would not be so significant to warrant refusal on this basis.

Consideration has also been given to the impact of the development on the visual amenity of the area, together with other relevant matters.

Vitality and viability

The premises had been vacant for approximately 18 months. The uses within this section of Stockport Road between Kirkmanshulme Lane and Stanley Grove comprise a library, offices, retail uses, a dentist, an optician and three betting shops.

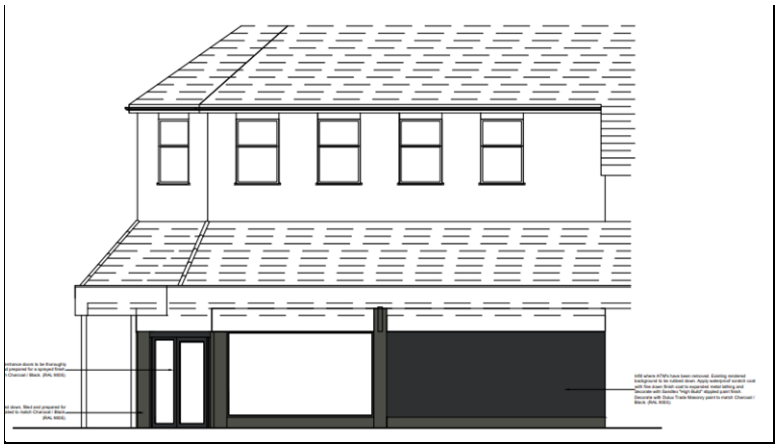
This is the only vacant unit at ground floor level. There are restaurants and takeaways in the wider district centre. There are other non-traditional sui generis uses along Stockport Road in the district centre such as betting shops, but these form a relatively low number when compared to retail, premises which dominate the high street.

Longsight district centre remains a popular and active destination for local residents. The proposed gaming use would be a non-traditional high street use. Whilst the use does not constitute a retail activity, it is acknowledged that policy C2 recognises that provision can be made in district centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centres.

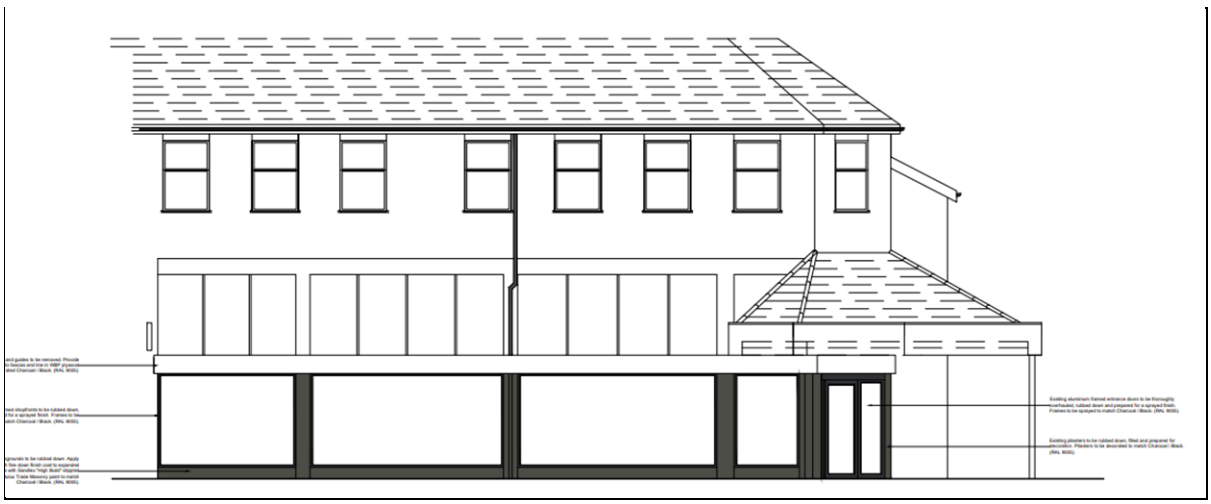
It is acknowledged that the vacant state of the premises has a negative impact on Stockport Road within Longsight District Centre.

The proposal does not include elevational alterations. However, the nature of the use, and the need to provide privacy to users, would mean that both frontages to Stockport Road, and a pedestrian route through to the Asda foodstore would be obscured by a vinyl display and/or TV screens, together with a stud wall positioned 1m away from the shopfront glazing, which would contain graphics in association with the company visuals and to obscure the activities and the gaming machines.

The applicant has confirmed the use of vinyl and TV screens to the shop fronts, and it is assumed that this would also feature details on the gaming activities which can take place inside the premises.



Proposed Stockport Road frontage



Proposed side elevation

Visual image of a scheme by the same operator in Plymouth) provided by the planning agent)

Consideration has also been had with regard to the two betting shops (sui generis) within this terrace in the district centre and account taken of the betting shop to the southern side of Stockport Road in the vicinity of the premises, with their limited active frontages. The highlighted premises in yellow on the plan below shows the locations of the betting shops and the application site outlined in red.

It is important to note that the businesses listed as takeaways in Longsight district centre was 13 and was at 11% of all businesses in 2024. The Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document dated March 2017 acknowledges that the introduction of hot food takeaways can be detrimental to the vitality and viability of district Centre and that they can affect the balance between the daytime and night time economy.

Policy 1 states that a proposal would be considered harmful to the vitality and viability of a centre if it increases the concentration of hot food takeaway ground floor frontages in a centre to more than 10% of all non – residential ground floor frontage. A further requirement is that shutters should be raised between 9am and 5:50pm to prevent any harmful effect on the visual amenity of the street scene**.**

As this policy only came into effect in 2017 there are hot food takeaways within Longsight district centre which are not subject to the requirement to open shutters as referenced above and the percentage of hot food takeaways is above the threshold whereby it is considered these uses are harmful to the vitality and viability of a centre.

Whilst Class E does include a range of uses, including non-retail, the proposal would remove the potential for retail use completely, within a prominent primary shopping frontage. A use that could provide services, jobs and amenity for all ages and abilities would be preferrable and would support the on-going success of the district centre and this particular frontage within the centre.

Within the appeal outcome relating to the previous application, it was outlined that there was no certainty that if the premises were to remain vacant that a retail shop would occupy the property, and on this basis, limited weight was given by the Planning Inspector.

In deciding that the proposed use would be appropriate within Longsight District Centre the Inspector stated the following:

'By reason of the current vitality and viability of the District Centre observed during the site visit, the lack of vacant commercial units and the use proposed being one that is found in local/district centres in other locations, in principle the re-use of the property as an AGC would not conflict with CS Policy C2 by reason of unacceptably harming the role, function vitality and viability of this District Centre. A good range of retail and other uses would remain within this District Centre and the proposed development would not result in, for example, 2 sui generis uses being sited adjacent to one another. In reaching this judgement, account has been taken that the property is vacant and the appeal scheme would bring the property, which was previously occupied by a bank rather than a shop, back into active use. The hours of opening sought by the appellant could support the evening economy in the District Centre alongside other businesses which might be open'

The above conclusions reached by the Inspector must be given considerable weight.

The proposed adult gaming centre, when considered in the context of the level of hot food take aways in Longsight district centre, in proximity to the proposed development, would give rise to a cumulative effect of limited visual interest and reduced daytime activity due to existing uses, which would be offered to this main radial and pedestrian route in the district centre.

Whilst the lack of an active street frontage, is considered to have an adverse impact on the vitality and character of Stockport Road and the district centre, this is not considered to be so significant as to warrant refusal, having taken into account the conclusions of the Planning Inspector, in particular that policy C2 recognises that provision can be made in district centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses and does not explicitly reference any limitations on the quantum or proportion of a use occupying a particular number of buildings within district centres.

Highway Considerations

It is considered that the proposal would not have a material impact upon traffic and network capacity as it is sited close to plenty of available public transport facilities. No car parking spaces, or cycle parking spaces are proposed.

The planning agent has stated that it is not going to be possible to provide on-site cycle storage for staff as there is no outside space associated with the application site and the previous use did not have internal cycle storage.

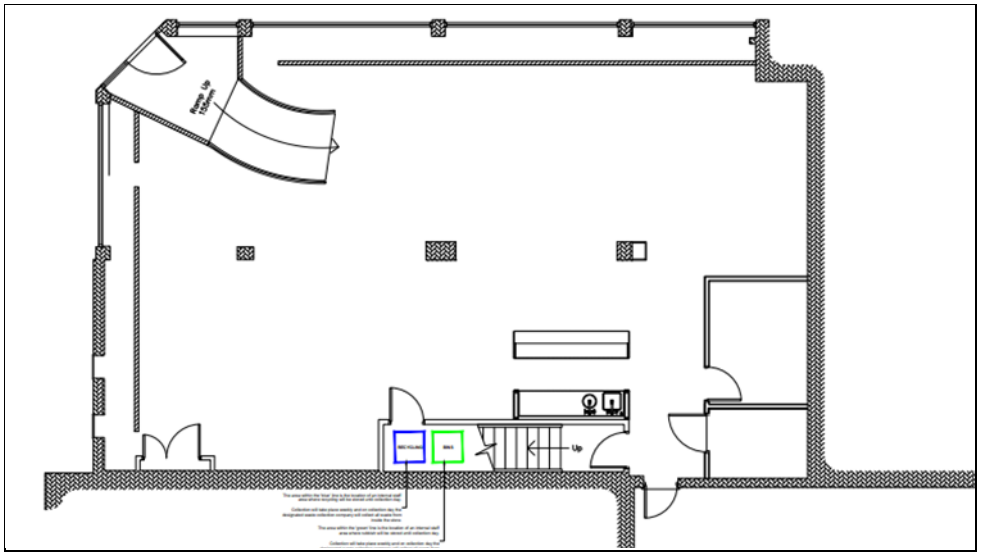
However, it is noted that the site is in a sustainable location, with 10 cycle racks within a 53m radius of the property (4 of which are directly outside of the application site). The site is also next to a bus stop (Longsight shopping Centre- Stop C) which has several bus services.

Access and Inclusive Design

Level access would be provided into the property, and the machines would be at an accessible height. There would be no lift to the first floor, which would be used for storage and staff facilities.

Waste and Recycling

The application indicates that the waste storage arrangements would be the same as existing at the property. Waste storage would be within an internal staff area within the building at ground floor level, where refuse would be stored until collection day. On collection day the designated waste collection company would collect all waste from inside the store. On the basis of comments received from consultees, a condition to require the submission of further details of waste and recycling arrangements is included.



Bin store location

<u>Residential Amenity</u>

The proposed use of the adult gaming centre between 08:00 and 23:59 hrs each day, seven days a week basis, would lead to additional ‘comings and goings’ in the late evening/night to the premises. This has been reduced from the previous application which was proposed to operate on 24 hour a day basis. There are other late night uses and take aways operating until midnight, in the district centre. Furthermore, not all patrons would travel by foot, and many would park on nearby streets with associated

car doors, conversations, car radios etc. The closest residential premises to the site are a residential use at first-floor level above commercial premises on the opposite site of Stockport Road. However, the application premises is located within a busy and popular district centre where there is lots of activity during the day and within the evening up until midnight.

The Inspector in dismissing the previous appeal concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that a 24-hour use would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity enjoyed by nearby occupiers.

It is the case that there is a hot food takeaway in closer proximity to the closest residential use than the proposed adult gaming centre which can operate until midnight on Saturdays and Sundays and 23.00 hrs m on Mondays to Fridays and other uses that operate similar times within the wider centre. Given the additional noise information accompanying the application and the comments received in relation to operating hours by the Council's Environmental Health Team, whilst the proposed use would have the potential to give rise to impacts which may have an impact on residential amenity in the neighbouring area attributable to the additional levels of noise, activity and disturbance associated with the occupation of the property, due to the hours sought and the location within a district centre which is characterised by restaurants and hot food takeaways, any impacts from noise would not be so significant as to warrant the refusal of permission. It is however, proposed to attach a condition to any approval to require that the premises and any plant are acoustically insulated in order to prevent any unacceptable noise outbreak.

It is also recommended that a condition to limit the hours of operation to those applied for 08:00-23:59 hrs, on Mondays to Sundays and servicing hours restricted to 07:30 to 20:00 hrs Monday to Saturdays.

Visual displays

The TV screens to the shop fronts are located within the premises. As such, the condition recommended in relation to illuminated signage display is considered to be inappropriate in this instance.

Other matters raised

Residents have also raised other matters, which whilst not planning issues, are of concern to the local community and include anti-social behaviour, proximity to local schools, harmful effects to children, crime involving drugs and violence and impacts on vulnerable adults.

With regard to matters raised in relation to the impact of the proposed development on vulnerable adults, consideration was given to referencing this matter as a reason for recommending refusal of the proposed development. However, regard has been had to the outcome of a planning appeal in Bradford which related to the change of use of the ground floor and basement of a property to an adult gaming centre (Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/W/22/3306518). In this case, the Local Planning Authority refused the permission with one of the reasons for refusal based on the increased exposure to gambling as a result of this change of use, given the high concentration of similar uses

seen locally, could impede on the ability of people to make healthy and informed decisions, exacerbating the concern in this area that the increased access and availability of gambling related uses, in combination with the area's high deprivation rates, is significantly and disproportionately harming the health of its residents and not supporting a healthy or vibrant community in this location.

However, the Planning Inspector was of the opinion that although the Local Planning Authority had cited data referencing an increase in the number of gambling venues with a concentration of these uses within areas of high deprivation and that this increased availability was likely to lead to an increase in problem gamblers, that on the evidence available, it had not been demonstrated that the appeal proposal would necessarily lead to an increase in problem gambling and the Council has not provided any substantive evidence that the proposed use would significantly and disproportionately harm the health of and wellbeing of citizens within the ward. A reason for refusal on these concerns has therefore not been proposed in this case.
In relation to the previous appeal decision for the application premises before members the Inspector concluded that the issues raised by residents and local businesses regarding anti-social behaviour and gambling did not alter the main issues for consideration within the appeal.

Conclusion

The proposed development would have an effect on the vitality and viability of Longsight district centre, through the introduction of a non-retail use into within a prominent primary shopping frontage and a use which has a largely inactive frontage to provide privacy to the users. However, it is considered the resulting impact would not be so significant as to warrant a refusal of permission. The proposed hours of use and activity is commensurate with other uses within a busy district centre and would not result in any impacts which would be unduly harmful to residential amenity.

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.

S17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides that in the exercise of its planning functions the Council shall have regard to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.

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 the right to a fair hearing and to this end the Committee 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 of the application 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

In assessing the merits of an application officers will seek to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Conditions

1.The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

Site location plan
Site plan
Proposed window manifestations plan ref: 899-PL-108 rev. 01
Footfall, Pedestrian Flow and linked Trips Survey Summary report
received 22 April 2025

Agent email dated 13th May 2025 regarding the infilling of ATM openings
Proposed ground floor plan ref: 899-PL-101 rev. P02
Proposed first floor plan ref: 899-PL-102 rev. P01
Received 13 May 2025

Agent email 04.06.2025 confirming that the proposals do not include provision of external lighting or the installation of external plant.

Proposed Shop front plan ref: 899-PL-104/01 and Proposed waste management plan ref: 899-PL-110 01, received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 19 June 2025

Waste Management pro form, received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

3. The floorspace at first floor level shall be used for ancillary storage space and for no other purposes, as annotated on plan ref: 899-PL-102 rev. P01 received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 13 May 2025.

Reason – To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

4. The development hereby approved shall only be implemented in accordance with the waste management scheme detailed on drawing referenced 899-PL-110 01 (proposed waste management plan) and accompanying waste management pro forma, received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 19 June 2025 and 20 June 2025 respectively. The details of the approved scheme shall be implemented as part of the development and shall remain in situ whilst the use or development is in operation.

Reason - In the interests of amenity and public health, pursuant to policies SP1, EN19 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

5.The premises shall not be open outside the following hours:-

08:00-23:59 hrs Mondays to Sundays

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), and saved UDP policy DC26.

6.Deliveries, servicing and collections, including waste collections shall not take place outside the following hours: 07:30 to 20:00, Monday to Saturday, no deliveries/waste collections on Sundays/Bank Holidays.

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), and saved UDP policy DC26.

7. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the measures set out in the submitted Archo Consulting Ltd Noise Assessment Addendum, Reference: PR2001_192_FINAL, Date: 16/04/2025 before the use commences.

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), and saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the city of Manchester.

Informative

1. The applicant should be advised that any requirements for licensing, hoarding, scaffolding, skips and any associated temporary pedestrian/traffic management arrangements, including Section 50, will need discussion and agreement with the council's Highway Network Management teams via Email - highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

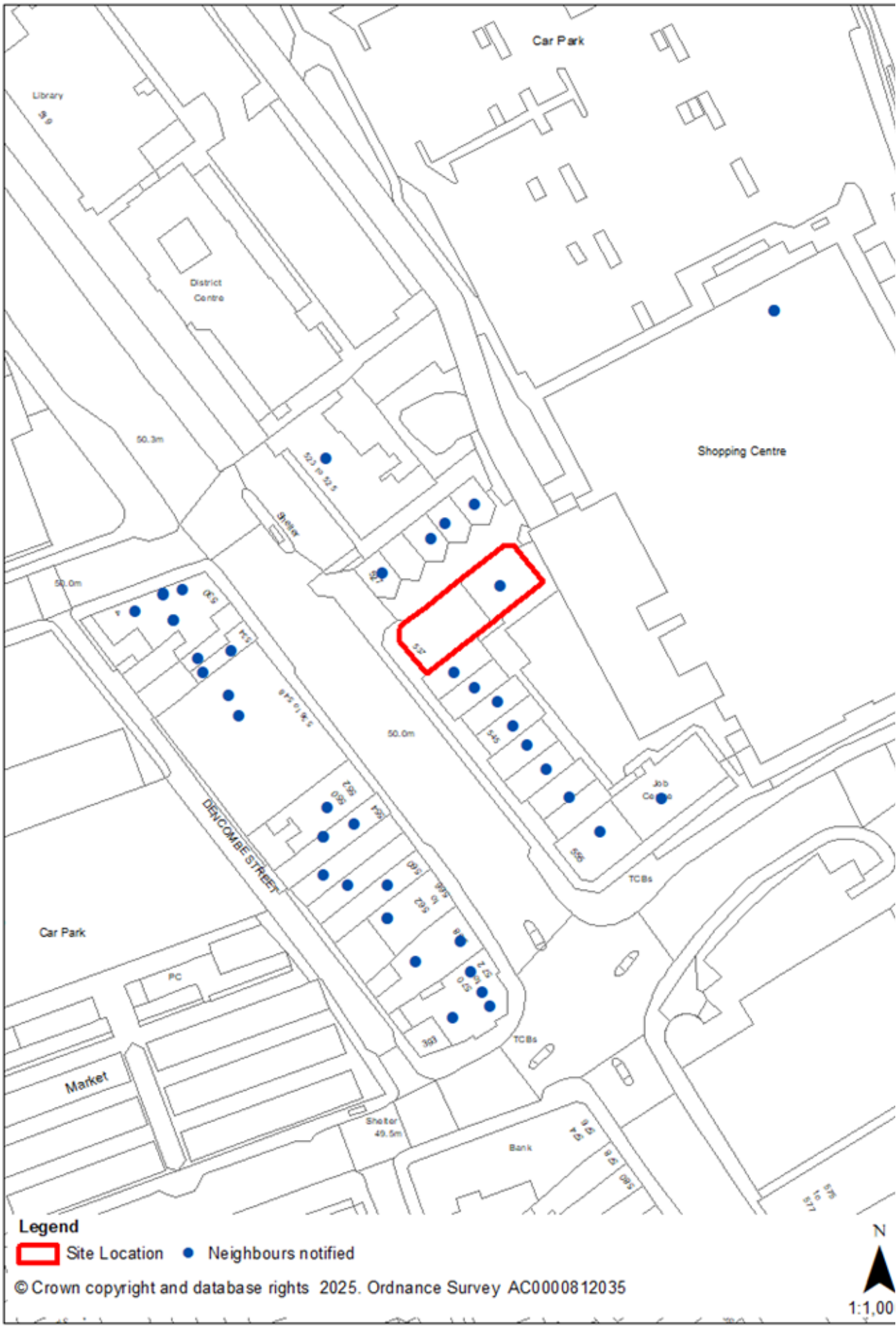
The documents referred to in the course of this report are either contained in the file(s) relating to application ref: 142755/FO/2025 held by planning or are City Council planning policies, the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, national planning guidance documents, or relevant decisions on other applications or appeals, copies of which are held by the Planning Division.

The following residents, businesses and other third parties in the area were consulted/notified on the application:

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Greater Manchester Police

A map showing the neighbours notified of the application is attached at the end of the report.

Relevant Contact Officer : Sue Wills
Telephone number : 0161 234 4524
Email : sue.wills@manchester.gov.uk


Car Park
Library
District Centre
50.3m
Shopping Centre
Shelter
50.0m
DENCOMBE STREET
Car Park
PC
Market
TCBs
Shelter
49.5m
Bank
Legend
Site Location
Neighbours notified
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