

1st Floor Podium, City Tower, Piccadilly

Planning and Design & Access Statement

CBRE Limited / Planning & Development proposal for
City Trust Unit Trust

February 2025

Contents

1 Introduction.....3

2 Site & Surroundings.....6

3 Proposed Development11

4 Planning Policy Context.....14

5 Planning Assessment.....18

6 Summary Conclusions.....21

Appendices

A Ground Floor Loading Bays.....23

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning and Design and Access Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited on behalf of City Tower Unit Trust c/o Schroder Real Estate Investment Management (the 'Applicant') in support of a full planning application submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC).
- 1.2 The application seeks Full planning permission for the change of use of the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AH ('the Site') from Office use (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)).

- 1.3 The description of development is as follows:

'Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.'

Contextual Background

- 1.4 The Applicant purchased City Tower in 2014 and since acquiring the asset has been fully committed to working with MCC and partners to improve the building and its environs to ensure the building's maximum potential can be realised.
- 1.5 The NHS was the previous tenant of the first floor podium however their lease expired at the end of 2024 and it has been difficult to let the space and find an occupier for its current office use.
- 1.6 The joint office letting agents of JLL, Cushman & Wakefield and OBI marketed the podium office space at City Tower throughout 2024 ahead of the previous tenants' lease expiry date.
- 1.7 The letting agents initiated a pro-active pre-leasing strategy to advertise and promote the floorspace across the Manchester city centre office market through the use of marketing videos, letting brochures and social media content.
- 1.8 Throughout the marketing period, limited office-specific interest was generated due to the size and layout of the space due to it being self-contained with dedicated entrances and therefore limiting the potential target occupier audience.
- 1.9 The number of transactions above 3,716 sqm, of a similar size to the application site, in the Manchester city centre market are limited and in 2024, there were just four transactions above 3,716 sqm (ARM at St Michael's, Virgin at The Island, Cubo at No. 1 Spinningfields and BYM at 4 Angel Square NOMA).
- 1.10 Within these transactions, both ARM and Virgin were pre-let agreements and all four are best-in-class, Grade A buildings. In total, these transactions represent just 2.5% of the total number of office transactions in 2024.
- 1.11 Other changing working practices including an increase in hybrid working have exacerbated the Applicant's ability to let large office floorspace at City Tower.
- 1.12 This Full planning application for change of use for office and education use is therefore being progressed in the context of these challenging market conditions. An education provider, LCA Education Limited (LCAE) is the proposed tenant for the 1st Floor Podium and as such a change of use to education

- is required. However, a dual permission for office and education is being sought to bring a degree of flexibility to the operations which can take place at the site.
- 1.13 A dual planning permission for office and education would ensure that there would be no loss of employment provision with an office tenant able to occupy the Site should one be identified.

Pre-application Engagement

- 1.14 Prior to the submission of this Full planning application, the proposed development was put forward to MCC as part of pre-application engagement via an email to Planning Officer Jennifer Atkinson.
- 1.15 The email outlined that a planning application seeking the change of use at the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower would be submitted over the course of the week and sought confirmation on the requirements for submission. At the time of submission, a response had not been received, however ,the Applicant wished to submit in order to meet challenging programme requirements which mean that the space is required to be ready for incoming students in September 2025.

Application Submission

- 1.16 The following information has been submitted in support of the application together with the requisite planning application fee:

Table 1.1: Submission documents

SUBMISSION DOCUMENT	PREPARED BY
Planning Application Form	CBRE Limited
Planning and Design and Access Statement	CBRE Limited
Waste Proforma	CBRE Limited
Site Location Plan (907 – 609)	Cumming Group
Existing First Floor Podium Plan (072)	Robertson Elliot
Proposed First Floor Podium Plan (33260)	Maris Interiors
Transport Statement	Cora IHT

Statement Structure

- 1.17 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2: Site and Surroundings** – describes the application site, its wider context, and sets out its relevant planning history;
 - **Section 3: Proposed Development** describes the proposed development for which planning permission is sought;
 - **Section 4: Planning Policy Context** – sets out the relevant policies of the statutory development plan and other material considerations;
 - **Section 5: Planning Assessment** – assesses the proposed scheme against planning policies and other material considerations; and

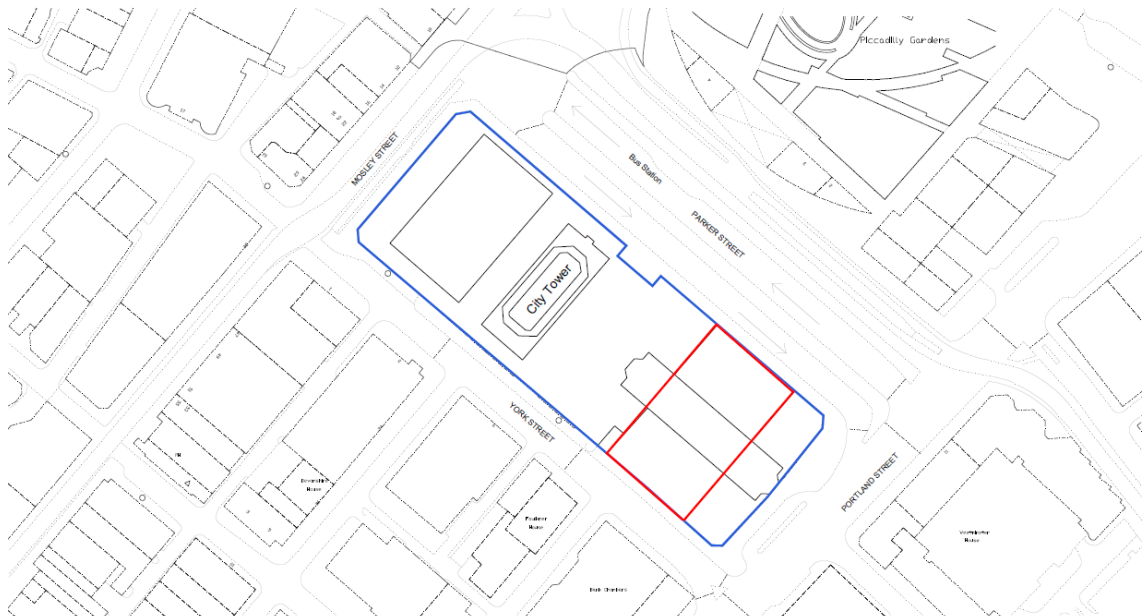
- **Section 6: Summary Conclusions** – summarises the key matters raised in the Statement and provides a conclusion.

2 Site & Surroundings

Site Context

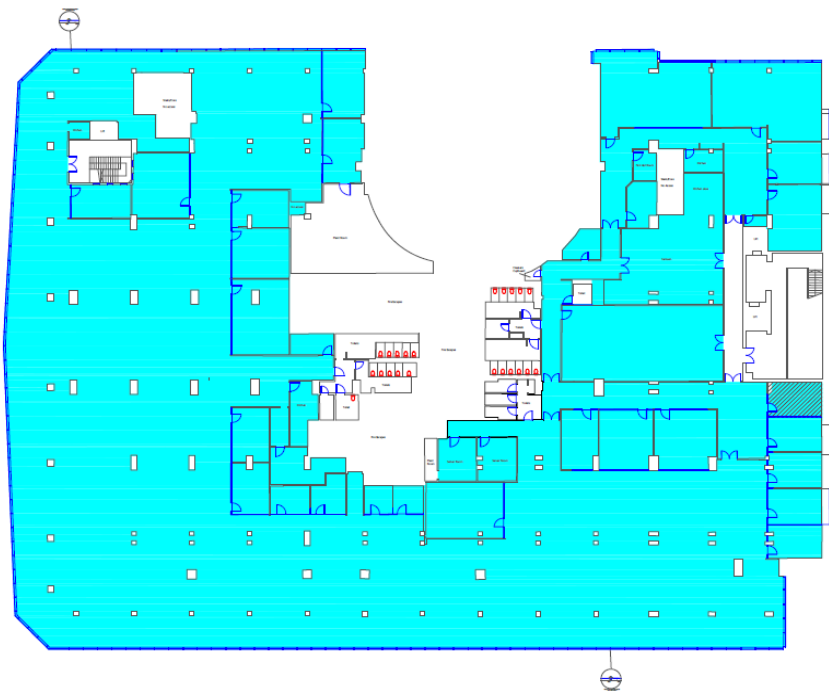
- 2.1 The Site comprises the first floor podium (46,000 sq ft) of City Tower - a 28 storey, office-led mixed-use building with adjoining 2 storey podium building located at the heart of Manchester City Centre. It is let to a wide-range of tenants including Amey, Sheppard Robson, the University of Law, Oodle Car Finance, Access Pay, Plexus Legal and Hays Recruitment.
- 2.2 It is bound to the north by Parker Street, to the east by Portland Street, to the south by New York Street, and to the west by Mosley Street. A site location plan is shown by Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 : Site Location Plan



- 2.3 As shown by Figure 2.2 below, the application site extends to 46,000 sq ft and comprises the 1st Floor Podium of the City Tower building

Figure 2.2 : Existing Site Layout Plan



2.4 Pedestrian access to the building is provided from Portland Street and New York Street. Car parking and cycle storage provision at City Tower is strictly controlled. A secure car-deck and NCP car park is accessible by vehicles from New York Street. From the car-deck there is access to a reception area and the office accommodation.

Statutory Designations

2.5 The site is not subject to Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, or Schedule Ancient Monument heritage constraints. However, the Upper King Street Conservation Area is adjacent to the site to the north-west. The site is not located in an area at risk from flooding, as confirmed by the Environment Agency flood maps.

Planning History

2.6 A search of the Council’s online planning register has been undertaken and planning history relevant to the proposed development is set out at table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Planning History

APPLICATION REF. NO.	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	DECISION
142020/FO/2025	Fourteenth Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M14BT	Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 14th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza	Pending Approval
134910/FO/2022	First Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Installation of glazed louvres to the 8th and 9th floors on the north-west and south-east elevations of City Tower together with replacement of existing aluminum louvres to other floors	Approved 28/02/23

135136/FO/2022	Eighth Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 8th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza	Approved 30/11/2022
133577/FO/2022	Ninth Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 9th Floor of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza	Approved 06/06/2022
132114/FO/2021	City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Installation of window louvres to levels 3-27 to the northwest and southeast elevations	Approved 06/01/2022
124466/FO/2019	Sixth Floor City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4BT	Change of use of 6th floor from office (Use Class B1) to non-residential educational facility (Use Class D1)	Approved 01/11/2019
103675/FU/2013/C2	Fourth Floor 2 New York Street Manchester M1 4HJ	Change of use of 4th floor from gymnasium use (D2) to non-residential education and training centre (D1) (extension of D1 use on third floor)	Approved 05/12/2013
084081/FO/2007/C2	Piccadilly Plaza Units At Basement, Ground And First Floor On York Street, Portland Street And Parker Street Below Hotel City	Elevational alterations and change of use as follows: (a) Basement Level to Class A1, A2, A3 or B1 use with 36 car parking spaces; (b) Ground Floor Level Units K, L, M and N to Class A1, A2, A3 and D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium); (c) Ground Floor Level - office entrance to Class B1, D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium); (d) First Floor Level to Class A1, A2, B1, D1 (Conference or Training Centre) or D2 (Gymnasium)	Approved 10/10/2007

- 2.7 The planning applications identified above demonstrate that the principle of a change of use to non-residential education at City Tower has previously been considered acceptable by the Council on multiple occasions.

Site Surroundings

- 2.8 The surrounding area is characterised by a range of uses, reflecting the Site's location at the heart of Manchester City Centre. The surrounding buildings share similar characteristics and uses as City Tower, comprising a range of uses at ground floor level with office provision above.
- 2.9 The Site is adjacent to Piccadilly Gardens, a central node in Manchester's transport network. Piccadilly Gardens benefits from a Metrolink tram stop and is a key location in the bus network, with various bus routes along Parker Street immediately to the north of the site, and Piccadilly to the north of Piccadilly Gardens.

- 2.10 Piccadilly Gardens also acts as a key civic space, comprising grassed areas, a fountain, and a Pavilion building with local amenities. A number of monuments and statues are also located at Piccadilly Gardens, all of which are Grade II Listed, and a Pavilion building.
- 2.11 Piccadilly Gardens is currently undergoing significant changes as part of a £25 million overhaul being undertaken by Manchester City Council. In August 2024, part of the concrete wall was removed as part of the transformation works which are also set to include the provision of lighting and public art installations.

Accessibility and Sustainability

- 2.12 The Site is in a highly sustainable location with City Tower, scoring 8 out of 8 in the Greater Manchester Accessibility Level model. This score reflects how the Site is immediately adjacent and in close proximity to a variety of transport modes.

Walking

- 2.13 The Site is highly accessible on foot and is situated within easy walking distance of a range of places of employment, services, and amenities. There is considerable pedestrian infrastructure close to the site, all of which is well maintained.

Cycling

- 2.14 City Tower benefits from a Cycle Hub, located in the basement of the building which includes 200 cycle spaces, showers, and cycle storage facilities.

Metrolink

- 2.15 The site is immediately adjacent to the Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink tram stop, a tram stop at the centre of the network which either directly serves or is in close proximity to tram stops which serve the entire Metrolink network including Greater Manchester towns Oldham, Rochdale, Aston-under-Lyme, Bury, and Altrincham.

Bus

- 2.16 Piccadilly Gardens Bus Interchange on Parker Street is a key node in the local bus network. The franchises which serve Parker Street include Stagecoach Manchester, Arriva, and First Manchester. Bus services at Parker Street provide travel opportunities throughout Greater Manchester and the north west.

Train

- 2.17 Manchester Piccadilly station, a major transport interchange, is an 8-minute walk from the site (0.4 miles to the south-east).

Car

- 2.18 The existing second floor car-deck comprises 172 car parking spaces, as well as motorcycle and cycle spaces (c.200 in total).
- 2.19 In addition to the above, Manchester Piccadilly Gardens NCP Car Park is located within City Tower. This car park has 712 car parking spaces, 8 disabled bays, and car-electric charging points. It is open between the hours of 05:30 and 23:30 Monday to Sunday and benefits from a 24hr contact centre.

Summary

- 2.20 In summary, City Tower is situated in a highly sustainable location within the City Centre and is accessible in terms of walking, cycle, and public transport. Furthermore, City Tower has a Travel Plan in place with car parking / cycle storage being strictly managed.

3 Proposed Development

Description of Development

3.1 As detailed in the introduction, full planning permission is sought for:

‘Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.’

Use

3.2 It is proposed to change the lawful use of the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)).

Occupier

3.3 The proposed use will be occupied by LCA Education Limited (LCAE) – a private company which has an agreement with the University of Bolton to offer undergraduate and postgraduate university courses within Greater Manchester.

3.4 LCAE currently operates a 37,000 sq ft campus at BASE within Manchester Science Park and now intends to expand its activities to Manchester city centre due to an increased demand for its courses, which include but are not limited to the following:

- BSc (Hons) International Business Management
- BSc (Hons) Business and Marketing
- BSc (Hons) Business and Tourism Management
- BSc (Hons) Finance and Accounting
- BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care
- BSc (Hons) Computing
- BSc (Hons) Mental and Health Wellbeing
- MBA International (Postgraduate Programme)

3.5 The proposed facilities at City Tower will facilitate the provision of these courses.

Amount

3.6 The proposed F1(a) use would occupy the entirety of the 1st Floor Podium and would extend to c

3.7 It is anticipated that no more than 850 people would occupy the space at any one time. This is a maximum figure and due to the fluid nature of students’ classes, will typically be around 600 people.

Layout

- 3.8 As shown on the accompanying Proposed General Arrangement Plan, the 1st Floor Podium will be fitted out to provide classrooms, computer labs, students' breakout area, administrative offices, a multi-faith prayer room, a first aid room, reception and toilet provision.
- 3.9 Please refer to accompanying plan 'City Tower Floor 1 Podium - Proposed Floor Plan (33260)' which shows the proposed layout.

Access

Pedestrian

- 3.10 Pedestrian access to the property will be taken via existing entrances on New York Street or Portland Street.
- 3.11 Students will be provided with passes that will enable access through the security barriers to the staircase or lift core. Lifts will be pre-programmed to take students directly to the 1st floor and they will not be able to access other floors of the building.

Disabled Access

- 3.12 Access to the 1st Floor Podium will be via a lift from the existing ground floor reception off Parker Street. Safe level access can be achieved into and throughout the building.

Parking

- 3.13 Vehicular parking is not proposed to be provided as part of the application although there is a Travel Plan in place for the building and access will be made available to the secure cycle storage facility for those students who wish to cycle.
- 3.14 The site is sustainably located and is accessible by public transport. The site is located a short walk from Manchester Piccadilly station. A bus interchange is also located at Piccadilly Gardens, directly adjacent to the site where buses serve the wider Manchester area tend to start and end. Additionally, Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink stop is located immediately adjacent to the site.
- 3.15 A series of public car parks are located within close proximity to the site.

Management Plan

Security

- 3.16 Ensuring the safety of occupiers is of paramount importance to the applicant. As such, the proposed development will be subject to existing security arrangements for City Tower which are actively managed by the facilities management team.
- 3.17 Each student will be issued with an ID card and pass to operate the reception barriers/ lifts during teaching hours, manned at all times by a staff on reception.
- 3.18 Students will have a building induction which will include information on the fire alarm procedure and other relevant matters. Students will be encouraged to avoid congregating outside the building, something that will be monitored by staff and the facilities manager.

Hours of Operation

- 3.19 It is proposed that the facility would typically be operational between the hours of 08:00-18:00. Evening classes will also take place from 18:00 to 21:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on Saturdays from 08:00 – 18:00 during term time.
- 3.20 Students will be unable to access the floor out of hours (unless a specific and supervised event such as an open evening was scheduled).
- 3.21 The above opening hours are in line with current business hours observed by other businesses within City Tower.

Waste and Servicing Management

- 3.22 As detailed in the accompanying waste proforma the proposed use will be subject to the existing waste management and serving strategy at the building overseen by the facilities management team. Waste and recycling will continue to be stored as existing on the ground floor within the loading bays as shown in Appendix A. Waste storage is currently arranged as follows:

- Loading Bay 1 & 2 – 9 no. general waste and 8 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers; 3 no. glass and 7no. food 240 litre containers
- Loading Bay 3 – 6 no. general waste and 5 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers; 1 no. glass and 2 no. food 240 litre containers
- Total – 15 no. general waste and 13 no. recycling 1,100 litre containers; 3 no. glass and 7 no. food 240 litre containers. In terms of local waste storage, recycling and general waste bins will be provided in the kitchen area.

Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers – Noise

- 3.23 No amplified sounds will be played as part of operations at the facility and it is considered that noise from the floor would be confined to that usually expected in an office environment.

External Works

- 3.24 No external works are proposed as part of this application.

4 Planning Policy Context

Planning and Policy Context

- 4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“The Act”) establishes the legislative background for town planning in England and Wales. Section 38(6) of The Act requires that proposals are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The statutory development plan documents for MCC which are relevant to the proposed development comprise:
- The Places for Everyone (PFE) Plan (adopted 2024);
 - Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012); and the Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy 2024 (following adoption of the Places for Everyone); and
 - ‘Saved’ policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted 1995).
- 4.3 The Site’s land-use allocation and development plan policies of specific relevance to the proposed development are set out below.
- 4.4 The Local Plan is currently under review and the formal consultation of it completed on 01 May 2020. The next stage will be the draft Local Plan which will include more detail on how the city will deal with the main issues it is facing.

Places for Everyone

- 4.5 Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts and was formally adopted on March 21 2024.
- 4.6 **Policy JP-Strat2: City Centre** states that the City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester. A broad range of commercial accommodation will be delivered, helping the City Centre to capture growth across key economic sectors.
- 4.7 **Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development** states that to help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.
- 4.8 **Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth** states that a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought in all Greater Manchester boroughs, with an emphasis on maintaining a very high level of economic diversity and facilitating development of high value clusters in key economic sectors such as business, financial and professional services and the large pool of graduates within the city.
- 4.9 **Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises** states that a diverse range of employment sites and accessible premises, both new and second-hand, will be made available across the Plan area in terms of location, scale, type and cost. This will offer opportunities for all kinds and sizes of businesses, including start-ups, firms seeking to expand, and large-scale inward investment, which will help to tackle inequalities.

4.10 **Policy JP-J3: Office Development** states that the City Centre will account for more than half of all new office floorspace in the sub-region, taking advantage of existing and proposed public transport connectivity.

4.11 **Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge** states that significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted, including by enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure our workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities.

Allocation

4.12 The Site is located within the Regional and City Centre policy areas and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), as displayed on the Council's adopted proposal map.

Core Strategy

4.13 The Core Strategy (2012) is the primary document in MCC's Local Development Framework. It seeks to guide development in the City and provides the starting point for planning applications, establishing the overall vision, spatial objectives, and strategic planning policies.

4.14 A review of the associated Proposals Map confirms that the application site is located within the Regional and City Centre policy areas and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA). It is considered that the following planning policies are most pertinent to the site and the proposed development.

Economy

4.15 Manchester benefits from a strong economy, major higher education institutions and a good transport network. However, the Core Strategy acknowledges that there are still a number of major challenges faced by the City. As noted at paragraph 2.28, "improving access to employment and education" is a key challenge to be addressed.

4.16 **Strategic Objective SO2 'Economy'** supports improvements to the City's economic performance to reduce economic, social, and environmental disparities. It states that (CBRE emphasis in bold):

"The Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for business, retail, **higher education**, leisure, cultural and tourism development, to further develop its role as the main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region".

4.17 **Policy SP1 'Spatial Principles'** seeks to guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity alongside high-quality city living.

4.18 **Policy EC1 'Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester'** confirms that the Council will support other significant contributors to economic growth and productivity, including educational facilities, in the City Centre in line with Policy C1 'City Centre and Fringe'.

4.19 **Policy CC7 'Mixed Use Development'** states that the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development. Proposals for a mix of uses will be promoted as a means of using land as efficiently as possible.

4.20 **Policy CC 10 'A Place for Everyone'** identifies that the City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors.

Amenity

- 4.21 **Policy DM1 ‘Development Management’** seeks to ensure that all proposed developments have regard to specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention, vehicular access, and, green infrastructure.

Transport

- 4.22 **Policy T2 ‘Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need’** outlines how the Council will manage development to ensure a level of car parking within the City Centre which reflects the highly accessible nature of the location. All development should have regard for the need for disabled and cycle parking in line with these standards.

‘Saved’ Policies of the Unitary Development Plan

- 4.23 The UDP was adopted in 1995 with the majority of policies ‘saved’ by a Secretary of State direction. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012, the majority of its policies were superseded.
- 4.24 Those ‘saved’ policies that remain extant will be replaced by the emerging Local Plan which will guide development in the city until 2038.

Noise

- 4.25 **DC26.1 ‘Development and Noise’** states that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. The Council will consider both the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise and the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.

Material Considerations

- 4.26 The following are considered to be of specific relevance to the proposed development.
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024);
 - Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007); and
 - Emerging Manchester Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.27 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

- 4.28 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan ‘without delay’ (paragraph 11c).

- 4.29 Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking this means:

“...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

Section 4 – Decision Making

- 4.30 In terms of decision-taking, Paragraph 39 is clear that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should approach decisions on proposed development in a “*positive and creative way*”. LPAs should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The NPPF advises that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Section 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 4.31 Paragraph 85 requires that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. 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.

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

- 4.32 Paragraph 124 states that planning decisions should “*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings*”.
- 4.33 Paragraph 127 states that LPAs should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

Guide to Development in Manchester (April 2007)

- 4.34 The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD was adopted on 11 April 2007. The document reflects and provides guidance on the importance of creating attractive, well designed, well maintained neighbourhoods. It includes a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development which is anticipated in Manchester.

Emerging Manchester Local Plan

- 4.35 As set out in the Council’s Executive Reports dated 15 January 2020, the new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the remaining ‘saved’ UDP policies, taking account of the Our Manchester strategy, the emerging GMSF, the NPPF, and Greater Manchester’s new devolved planning powers.
- 4.36 The new Local Plan will seek to respond to key strategic issues including achieving a zero carbon Manchester by 2038 at the latest; delivering a sustainable transport system that supports existing and further development; balancing competing demands for space; ensuring critical infrastructure requirements are addressed; and creating neighbourhoods that promote and enable healthy lifestyles.
- 4.37 The Issues Consultation document was consulted on for a period of eight weeks from 7 February 2020. Consultation on an Integrated Appraisal as part of the development of the new Local Plan ran for five weeks from Friday 25 August 2021 to Friday 1 October 2021.

5 Planning Assessment

Assessment of Scheme Proposals

- 5.1 The following section summarises the relevant planning considerations that should be taken into account when determining this planning application.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The lawful use at the Site is Use Class E office. Planning permission is therefore not required for office provision at the Site. Planning permission is sought for office and education use to allow for a degree of flexibility.
- 5.3 Despite extensive marketing efforts, the letting agents have had limited interest in office occupiers to take over the space from the previous tenant who exited at the end of 2024. The proposed change of use would allow the space to resume having an operational use, securing employment in the City, and contribute to economic growth in Manchester. In the longer term, students of the proposed educational facility may seek to remain within the City creating an additional pool of qualified and employable people needed to maintain the Council's growth aspirations. Courses include Business Management, Finance and Accounting, Health and Social Care and Computing – all of which are skills needed in the City. Furthermore, the proposals would secure indirect economic benefits through the additional spend of students in the local area.
- 5.4 Manchester's Core Strategy provides a strong policy position for educational use at the site. Strategic Objective SO2 positions the Regional Centre, encompassing the site, as the main focus for higher education. Core Strategy Policy SP1 states that the Regional Centre is the primary economic driver for the city region, and establishes that a range of uses are considered to be acceptable in planning terms.
- 5.5 Mixed use development is encouraged as a way of ensuring land and buildings are utilised efficiently (Core Strategy Policy CC7). Policy EC1 confirms that the Council will support other significant contributors to economic growth and productivity, including educational facilities, in the City Centre. Furthermore, Core Strategy Policy CC10 encourages the development of the City Centre in terms of its appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors.
- 5.6 PFE Policy JP-Strat2 states that the City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business activity in Greater Manchester while Policy JP-J1 states that there should be a high level of economic diversity in sectors including business and professional services, particularly those which may attract graduates. The proposed development would continue to diversify the City's employment and services offering while enabling students to develop skills in business, finance and computing which are all highly sought after skills.
- 5.7 While PFE Policy JP-J3 states that the City Centre will account for more than half of new office floorspace, this application would not inhibit from the 1st Floor Podium being used as office space in the future.
- 5.8 Policy JP-P5 states that significant enhancements in education and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted – including by enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities. The provision of a bespoke teaching facility within the 1st Floor Podium will support this policy in providing space for students to study for their degrees.

- 5.9 The proposed development would allow the floorspace to continue with an operational use and is therefore considered to represent an efficient use of land. By extension, the proposed change of use would facilitate economic benefits for the City Centre. It will further enhance the mixed-use nature of City Tower and its immediate surroundings, helping to bring a wide range of users into the area.
- 5.10 Furthermore, the principle of the acceptability of ‘non-residential education facility’ at City Tower has already been established by the conversion of the eighth floor (135136/FO/2022), ninth floor (ref. 133577/FO/2022) and sixth floor (ref. 124466/FO/2019) from office use to educational use. There are also recent examples elsewhere in the City Centre where the Council has approved the change of use of vacant office premises to non-residential educational facilities.
- 5.11 In light of the above, the principle of the proposed educational use is considered acceptable in this highly accessible City Centre location. The proposals therefore accord with Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC7, CC10 and EC1; PFE Policies JP-Strat, JP-J1, JP-J3 and JP-P5; and the various provisions of the NPPF.

Accessibility

- 5.12 Core Strategy Policies T2 and DM1 outline the need to provide sustainable access to proposed development, including the need to ensure an appropriate level of car parking in highly accessible locations.
- 5.13 PFE Policy JP-S1 states that development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits and minimize its adverse impacts.
- 5.14 The site is located within the City Centre and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport (including train, Metrolink and bus) and therefore it is anticipated that trips to the application site would likely be made by sustainable modes of transport. Given the sustainable location of the Site, no allocated car parking provision is proposed, however secure cycle spaces will be made available as required.
- 5.15 The proposed development is therefore considered to fully accord with Core Strategy Policy T2 and DM1, PFE Policy JP-S1 and the NPPF.

Amenity

- 5.16 Core Strategy Policy DM1 requires that effects on amenity are taken into account in proposed development, including noise, light and community safety. ‘Saved’ UDP Policy DC26.1 specifically requires development to reduce the impact of noise on City Centre residents, workers and visitors.
- 5.17 As stated in Chapter 3 of this statement, no amplified sounds will be played as part of operations at the proposed educational facility. It is considered that noise from the floor would be confined to that usually expected in an office environment. As such, there would be no material change to any noise impact which might reasonably be expected from the site’s previous use by an office occupier.
- 5.18 In line with the existing security arrangements at City Tower, access to the site will be securely monitored to ensure that only registered students and staff are able to operate the security barriers using a designated pass. All students will have a building induction to ensure they are aware of the safety and security procedures at the building and the amount of students anticipated to occupy the space at once is broadly similar to that of the previous occupier whereby 500-600 people occupied the space on a typical day.
- 5.19 Students will be instructed not to congregate outside the entrances to the building to ensure the amenity of surrounding building occupiers and those visiting the area. The development will be actively managed by current building management staff to ensure that these standards are upheld and maintained.

- 5.20 Taking the above measures into consideration, the proposed change of use to an educational facility fully accords with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy DM1 and DC26.1.

6 Summary Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited, on behalf of City Tower Unit Trust c/o Schroder Real Estate Investment Management, in support of a Full planning application submitted to MCC in relation to the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4AH.
- 6.2 Full planning permission is sought for:
- ‘Change of use from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) and Education use (Use Class F1(a)) at the 1st Floor Podium of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza.’*
- 6.3 The proposal seeks the change of use of office floorspace to office and a non-residential education facility. As a change of use application, the proposed development relates to internal alterations only, and no external alterations are proposed including changes to the access arrangements of the building. The proposed development would bring a degree of flexibility to the unit and ensure it can be occupied in the long-term whilst enabling LCAE to occupy the unit for education purposes.
- 6.4 The proposed development will result in floorspace being enabled to continue with an operational use. The proposals will also contribute to achieving improved educational attainment in the City, creating an additional pool of qualified people supporting the Council’s growth aspirations.
- 6.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) requires applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.6 The proposed development has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the development plan and other material considerations and it is considered that the proposal is in accordance, and therefore we respectfully request the application is approved without delay.

Appendices



A Ground Floor Loading Bays

