Deloitte LLP
100 Embankment, Cathedral Approach,
Manchester, M3 7FB

Phone: +44 (0)161 832 3555
Fax: +44 (0)161 829 3800
www.deloitte.co.uk

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Viadux Phase 2: NPPF Note

Date:	February 2025
To:	Manchester City Council
From:	Deloitte LLP
Subject	Viadux Phase 2 (Application Ref. 139715/FO/2024) - 2024 NPPF Note

This Note has been prepared by Deloitte LLP in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for the redevelopment of Viadux Phase 2. The Applicant is Salboy Central Ltd.

An application with reference 139715/FO/2024 was submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC) in April 2024, following this revised details were submitted in November 2024 for:

"Full Planning Permission for the phased construction of 2 buildings to include: a tall mixed-use building to include residential (Use Class C3) and hotel with associated bars and restaurant (Use Class C1) (Plot 2a), a second tall building with residential accommodation (Use Class C3) with flexible commercial units (Use Class E) (Plot 2b), landscaping and public realm, servicing, drainage and access arrangements, highways alterations, and other associated works." ("Proposed Development")

Alongside this, an application for listed building consent was submitted in relation to works to the Viaduct and Great Bridgewater Street bridge (ref: 139716/LO/2024).

The Applications are currently being considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Since the submission of revised details, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 12 December 2024.

This note considers the implications of the new NPPF for the Proposed Development. It provides an overview of the relevant NPPF updates that specifically relate to the Proposed Development and provides a justification for the proposal's compliance.

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The planning application is supported by a Planning and Tall Building Statement ('PTBS') that considers the Proposed Development in its strategic and local urban context and assesses its acceptability in the context of the Development Plan and other material considerations.

1 Relevant NPPF Amendments

A series of amendments were made to the NPPF in December 2024. Relevant updates to the Proposed Development are as outlined below:

1. Paragraph 11 d):

   [Paragraph 11 relates to the presumption in favour of sustainable development]

   For decision-taking this means:

   c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

   d) where there are no relevant development plan policies ~~*for the supply of land*~~*, 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 **strong** *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, ***having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.***

   [amends highlighted in bold]

2. Paragraph 125 c):

   Planning policies and decisions should:

   c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be ~~*regarded as acceptable in principal*~~ ***approved unless substantial harm would be caused****, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*

   [amends highlighted in bold]

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Justification of Proposed Development Against Updated Policies

The updates to the NPPF have derived out of the Government's overarching objective to re-build the economy and deliver more homes. The updates to Paragraph 11d) create a stronger presumption in favour of development in sustainable locations. The amendment to Paragraph 125c) gives additional strength to the presumption in favour of the redevelopment of brownfield land, providing that development should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused.

Importantly, there is no change to paragraph 11c) of the NPPF which provides that decision takers should approve proposals that accord with up-to-date development plans without delay. The submitted provides a full assessment of the Proposed Development and concludes that Proposed Development accords with Development Plan as a whole.

Taking into consideration the change to paragraph 125c) of the NPPF, the Proposed Development represents the redevelopment of a long-term under-utilised City Centre brownfield site to deliver a high-quality scheme including 585 homes including 133 Affordable homes. The principle of housing development in this location is supported by the long-standing aspiration of Manchester City Council, to create a high-quality residential area. Specifically Core Strategy Policies CC3, CC4, CC6, CC7, CC10, EC3 and H1. The delivery of 585 homes will also help Manchester meet its housing targets as identified in Policy JP-HA1 (Places for Everyone). The Proposed Development also provides a policy complaint level of on-site affordable homes in accordance with Core Strategy Policy H8. In addition, the hotel and commercial uses are also fully supported in this location. The development of this previously developed brownfield site will provide homes in a highly sustainable well-connected location, that fully aligns with the updated NPPF.

There are no instances of substantial harm identified, and the Proposed Development will result in a number of economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits, as outlined within the originally submitted PTBS. Those benefits that relate to the changes to the NPPF can be summarised as:

- A viable use of an underused brownfield site: The Site has been historically underutilised, with the arches and area of hardstanding above associated with Plot 2a being used for car parking / servicing. In addition, Plot 2b has remained undeveloped since planning permission was granted in 2003. The Proposed Development is viable and deliverable, it ensures the most efficient use for this brownfield site through high density residential-led mixed use development. The redevelopment of the Site for residential-led uses positively contributes towards the ongoing regeneration of Manchester and the expansion of the City Centre. It will provide an attractive environment and will encourage further investment in the surrounding area.

- Meet Residential Demand: The proposed residential development will help to meet the recognised demand for City Centre living. The Site is ideally located for residents to reach a wide range of facilities including work, leisure, a wide range of social infrastructure and numerous transport options.

- Provision of Affordable Homes: The commitment to providing 133 affordable homes is proposed to be secured via a planning obligation attached to any subsequent planning permission. The Applicant is committed to building the affordable units at cost for them to be transferred to a Registered Provider. The Applicant has designed the affordable homes through engagement with Registered Providers to ensure that they are to be provided to a high standard and meet with market demand. The provision of affordable housing represents 22.7% of the total housing offering, this represents a significant offering for a constrained City Centre Site and is above the Local Policy of 20% affordable provision as set out within the Manchester Core Strategy.

In line with the NPPF, the Proposed Development is high-quality in design and delivers much needed homes, including affordable homes, on brownfield land. It continues to transform the new neighbourhood and wider city centre in becoming a place and setting for people to enjoy over the longer term.