URBAN FUTURE LTD
PLANNING CONSULTANCY

‘Kickair’ 61 Great Ducie Street, Manchester M3 1RR

PLANNING STATEMENT

Continued use of site as an indoor trampoline park leisure facility (Class D2)

March 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Urban Future Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the Applicant, to accompany a planning application seeking consent for the continued use of 61 Great Ducie Street, Manchester as an indoor trampoline park leisure facility (Use Class D2). This Statement should be read alongside the accompanying plans and other supporting information and documentation submitted alongside the application.

1.2 Consent was first granted (LPA Ref no. 115056/FO/2017) in April 2017 for the change of use of the commercial unit to an indoor trampoline park branded as 'Kickair'. Kickair has since become a highly regarded leisure facility attracting custom from across Greater Manchester. It comprises of a thriving local business with excellent online customer reviews[1] and a local source of employment. The business has also been involved in local charity work, is popular with students and a common place to have a birthday party[2].

1.3 A condition was attached to LPA Ref no. 115056/FO/2017 providing for a temporary consent of up to three years. The consent was renewed in 2020. Given that the Applicant has invested considerably in bringing a successful business to fruition and given the continued growing success of the facility, this application understandably seeks consent for another three years. There are no operational changes proposed within the application.

[1] See Appendix 1 showing online Customer Review summary scores

[2] See promotional material in Appendix 2

1.4 The Applicant is keen to work proactively with the City Council and has shown a sign of confidence in the City's economy whilst having created a notable number of jobs. Given that the use has operated for some time now with no adverse impacts, an additional three years is sought. More details of the merits and acceptability of the proposal will be set out subsequently.

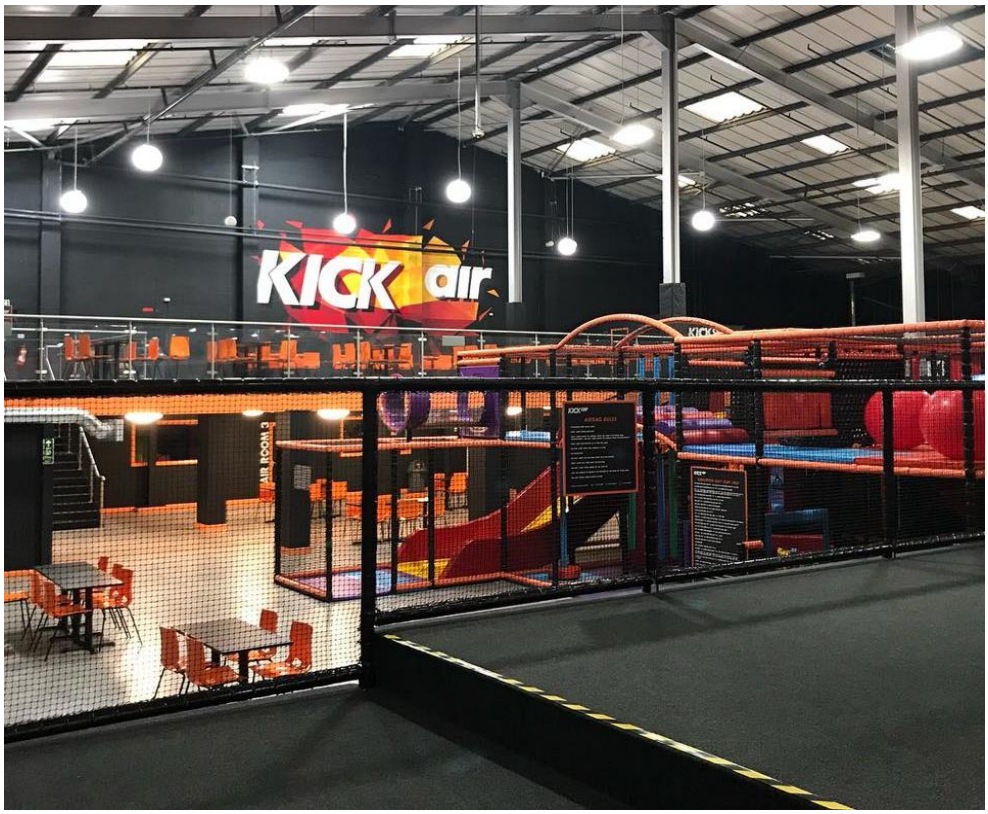


Figure 1. The Kickair facility

1.5 The Statement describes the site and its surroundings before setting out the relevant local and national planning policy. An assessment of the material planning considerations will then be discussed before arriving at the conclusion that the business represents an acceptable commercial entity which makes a valued contribution towards the area's leisure offer without resulting in adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the area, on amenity or on the local highway network. The Statement concludes that permission ought to be granted.

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site is located at 61 Great Ducie Street, at the north-western corner of the junction of Trinity Way and Great Ducie Street, at the edge of Manchester city centre. The commercial unit comprises approx. 5130sqm and has been occupied by an indoor trampoline park with an associated café area since 2017. Internally there is a freestyle trampoline play area, large foam cube pits and an under-5's soft play zone. There are a number of party rooms together with facilities such as a kitchen, toilets, baby changing, first aid room and an office.

Figure 2. Application premises

2.2 The locality is highly commercial in nature with several leisure venues nearby including the Manchester Arena, a snooker centre and an indoor climbing centre. There are a

number of hotels and pay-and-display car parks as well as a prison in the vicinity. As identified on the adopted proposals map[3], the site is located in 'North Manchester' and within an 'Economic Improvement Area'. The site also falls in to the Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) Area.

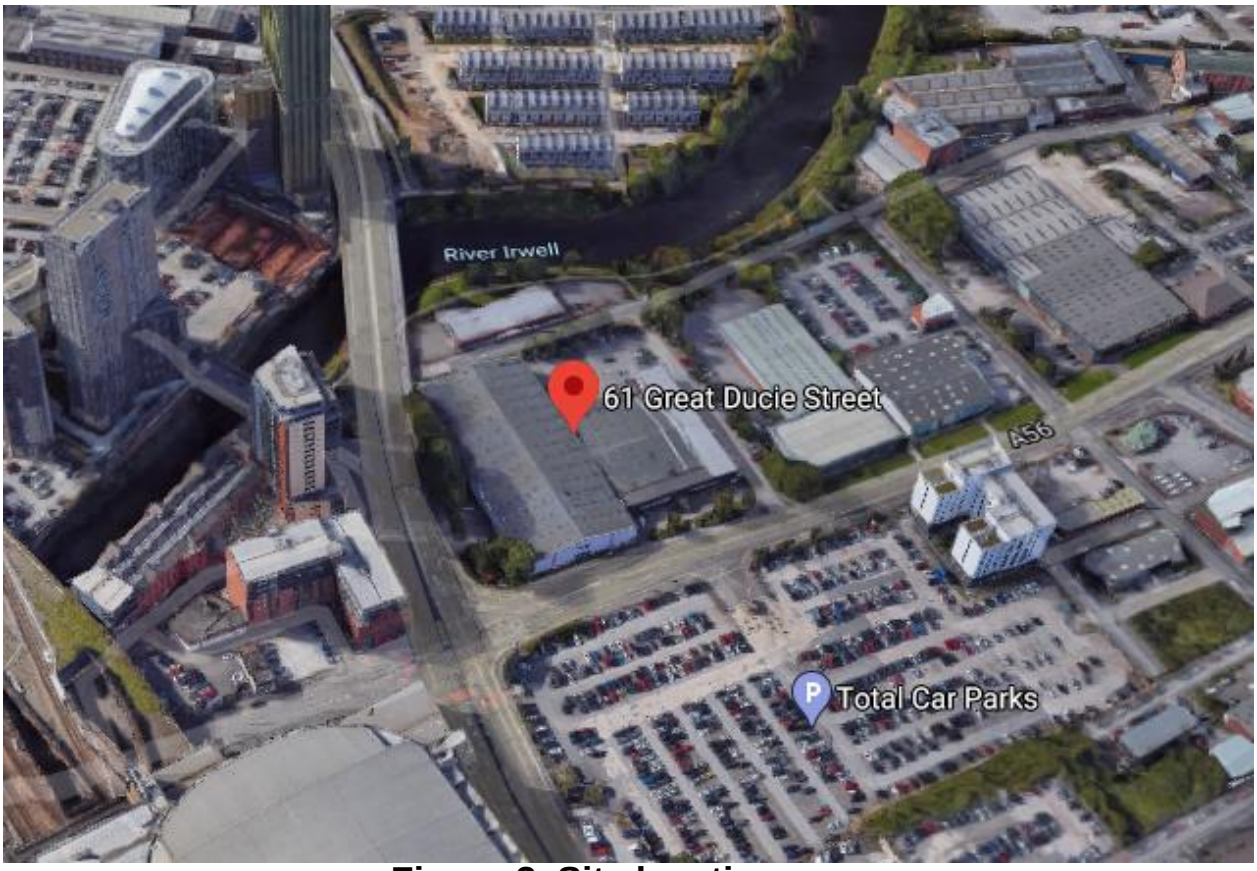


Figure 3. Site location

2.3 The site is located within a sustainable location which is readily accessible. Manchester Victoria Train Station is just 0.2miles from the site to the southeast. The nearest bus stops on Great Ducie Street are within less than a 1-minute walk whilst Shudehill Interchange is just 0.7 miles to the southeast of the site. Car parking is available within the site for around 70 vehicles.

[3] See Appendix 3 for proposals map extract

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

3.2 The Development Plan for the purpose of this application comprises the Manchester Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and Saved Policies from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester adopted in July 1995. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning agenda and should also be considered.

Manchester Core Strategy (adopted 2012)

3.3 **Policy SP1 *Spatial Principles*** sets out the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of the city. There will be an emphasis on the creation of neighbourhoods of choice, which meet local needs, in a distinct environment. Proposals should make a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income. Development should enhance and protect the built environment and re-use previously developed land wherever possible and improve access to jobs.

3.4 **Policy DM1** ***Development Management*** is also relevant and states that proposals should have regard to a range of specific issues such as impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity, accessibility, highway safety, access and car parking provision. **Policy EN 1** ***Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas*** is also considered to be of relevance and states that development in Manchester must follow the seven principles of urban design and should have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.

3.5 **Policy C *9*** ***Out-of-centre development*** states that proposals for town centre uses outside of a centre should not have unacceptable impacts, either individually or cumulatively with recently completed and approved schemes and having regard to any allocations for town centre uses, on the vitality and viability of the City Centre and designated district and local centres and should be appropriate in terms of its scale and function to its location.

3.6 **Policy EC1** looks to ensure priorities for economic growth. The Council will support contributors to economic growth. **Policy T2** looks to manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development is located in accessible locations. The policy also states that all new development should provide appropriate car parking facilities.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1995)

3.7 Policy CC10 of the UDP, although significantly time-expired, covers the Strangeways and Lower Cheetham Hill

Road Area and seeks to encourage ‘high level of economic activity’ in the area, particularly for ‘the needs of wholesale trades in the area’.

Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (July 2018)

3.8 The SRF was published in July 2018 and provides an illustrative framework for the strategic regeneration of the Great Ducie Street area. The area at present is primarily commercial and largely dominated by textiles, wholesales and distribution sectors. Much of the SRF area is of poor visual quality and characterised by properties in decline, vacant plots, and dereliction. The framework sets out an approach to transform the quality of the built environment into a better-quality sustainable community for all. The indicative masterplan envisages the creation of a mixed-use neighbourhood with a focus on employment uses, as well as hotel, retail, leisure and residential development.

Strangeways Local Plan

3.9 This document was considered and approved by the Council’s Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 15th October 2008. Although now 12 years old, it outlines aspirations for the Strangeways area and recognises the economic importance that the area plays in the wholesale trades.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.10 The NPPF is also relevant and sets out the Government's planning agenda. According to the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The general perspective from the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive growth and support sustainable economic development.

3.11 It also states that planning should make effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and this should be taken into consideration when assessing the application proposal.

3.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines main town centre uses as:

> *'Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).'*

3.13 The NPPF states, to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

4.0 PLANNING STATEMENT

4.1 The purpose of this section of the Planning Statement is to identify and assess the main planning considerations raised by the application proposals in the context of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. The key issues are;

- the principle of the development, having regard to the provisions of the adopted Development Plan and the provisions of national planning policy and guidance;
- the effect of development on the local highway network.

4.2 Each of these matters is considered below.

The principle of development

4.3 As previously set out, Kickair is a highly regarded leisure facility attracting custom from across Greater Manchester. It comprises a thriving local business with excellent online customer reviews[4] and a local source of employment. Understandably, having invested a considerable amount of resources into the unit and the business entity, the Applicant seeks to renew the permission for an additional three years. It is hoped that the Council will take a pragmatic view of the proposals in these respects, in line with S.38(6) of the Act.

[4] See Appendix 1 showing online Customer Review summary scores

4.4 The general perspective from the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive growth and support sustainable economic development. It also states that planning should make effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and this ought to be a key material consideration in assessing this application.

4.5 Whilst 'leisure' is considered a town centre use as per the NPPF, the application site is located at the very edge of the city centre[5] and in any case, has been in active use for three years already. As such, the principle of development is well established and a sequential site assessment is therefore not considered to be needed, not only because the site is more or less within the city centre but also because there will naturally be a lack of premises within the city centre that could possibly accommodate the proposal. Moreover, the Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) seeks to promote the area as having a leisure offer.

4.6 Indoor trampoline parks by their nature require huge, unimpeded internal floor areas with high ceilings which is why commercial units - usually found on industrial or retail parks - are the most common types of accommodation for such uses across the UK. The defined city centre of Manchester has few properties which would broadly fit in to this category given the core retail and office predominance in the city centre. Moreover, permitting the proposal would not see the introduction of a new town centre use to the site

[5] See Appendix 3 for proposals map extract

but would simply see the ‘renewal’ of a consent for an existing one. In these respects, there would be no conflict with Policy C9.

4.7 As previously set out, the leisure venue has been involved in local charitable events and is popular with students. The venue caters for individuals of all ages, as well as group events including birthday parties and is considered a highly regarded venue. The NPPF promotes facilities which allow communities to socialise. Moreover, the establishment promotes physical activity which is considered a health benefit. Proposals which promote physical activity ought to be welcomed in Manchester where almost 25% of reception children and 41% of Year 6 children are overweight or obese[6].

4.8 As previously set out, the site is located within a highly commericalised setting where there are other leisure uses including the Manchester Arena, a snooker centre and an indoor climbing centre as well as other commercial entities including hotels. The application proposal adds to the area’s vibrant offer and its well-established clientele base associate the business with this particular location.

4.9 It is acknowledged that the site falls within the Great Ducie SRF Area (which seeks a large-scale regeneration agenda) and the Strangeways Local Plan. The Strangeways Local Plan was however approved 12 years ago in 2008 and the document makes no reference to specific timelines or delivery objectives. Similarly, whilst it is recognised that the Great Ducie Street SRF was more recently approved (in

[6] Children and Young People JSNA - Childhood obesity 2017

2018), there is no reason to suggest that the use of the property as an indoor trampoline park for an additional three years would conflict with the overall regeneration ambitions for the locality.

4.10 Even if the regeneration objectives started today, it would take a number of years for future schemes to be brought to fruition. During the next three years, there is nothing preventing key stakeholders starting the process of getting developers onboard, drafting potential schemes, obtaining planning consents etc. This in itself would take a number of years. An additional three-year consent on a relatively small section of the SRF area would in no way undermine the City Council's overall objectives for the entire area. To the contrary, the development proposal would in fact contribute towards a 'leisure' offer which is sought by the SRF.

4.11 Although significantly time-expired, Policy CC10 also covers the Strangeways and Lower Cheetham Hill Road Area and seeks to encourage 'high level of economic activity' in the area, particularly for 'the needs of wholesale trades in the area'. However, in granting LPA Ref no. 115056/FO/2017, the LPA have already confirmed the acceptability of the use at this site, having taken into consideration the provisions of Policy CC10.

4.12 In any case, there is an abundance of available commercial units within the locality which would suggest an oversupply, and this should be taken in to consideration by the LPA. In a recent Appeal Decision (Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/17/3186654, 33-41 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M4 4FT) where the Council refused an

application for a hotel as it conflicted with Policy CC10 and the area's 'whole sale trades' function, an Inspector assessed the impact of the introduction of a Class C1 use on the 'Wholesale Trade Function' of the area, in light of Policy CC10 of the UDP, concluding the following:

"The appeal site is within the Strangeways and lower Cheetham Hill Road area, as identified in Policy CC10 of the UDP, which seeks to encourage the continued high level of economic activity in the area, particularly the needs of wholesale trades which dominate the area.

Neither the appeal site's current apparently unauthorised use, nor its authorised use as a car wash, are employment ones for the purposes of the development plan.

Moreover, I saw that in the adjacent streets running toward Strangeways from Cheetham Hill Road that buildings of varying ages, sizes and types which could meet the needs of the wholesale trade are in plentiful supply, many with marketing boards in place. As a result, I consider that it has not been established that pressure for such development in the area would be likely to lead to demand for the appeal site for wholesaling uses. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development would not cause an adverse effect to the wholesale trade function of the area."

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/17/3186654

4.13 The above assessment is of relevance to the application proposal in several ways. The application site is located within the Strangeways and Lower Cheetham Hill Road Area and within an Economic Improvement Area. The continued use of the site for up to three years as a leisure use would in no way jeopardise the area's overall ability to cater for the needs of wholesale trades or similar uses. There are currently 15 commercial properties to let within half-a-mile radius of the application site and 15 available for sale[7]. This would suggest that there is an oversupply of such properties and the likelihood of the application site being redeveloped for a commercial occupant within the next few years is considered low. Within Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/17/3186654, the Inspector acknowledged the availability of other properties for such purposes and the LPA is kindly requested to consider the same, were the LPA inclined to consider the provisions of Policy CC10.

4.14 The NPPF advises that proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. The proposal clearly adds to the already diverse range of uses evident within the area and is a complementary addition which would in no way impact on the viability and vitality of the city centre. Instead, the proposal represents sustainable economic development that would support jobs and promote consumer choice and should be granted planning permission. It will not result in any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of its approval. This is confirmed in the following assessment of the detailed material considerations relevant to the application.

[7] See Appendices 4 and 5

The effect of development on the local highway network

4.15 The accompanying Transport Note sets out the site's accessibility and should be referred to. The site benefits from a large car park and the Applicant confirms that a large number of users arrive via public transport given the proximity to the railway station and the bus network. The use has operated successfully for three years without any adverse impact on highways.

4.16 The accompanying Transport Note demonstrates that the application site benefits from excellent accessibility by non-car modes of travel, including on foot, by cycle and public transport and that the proposal would not generate significant trips during the network AM peak hour and the trips predicted to and from the site can be accommodated by the local highway and transport networks without materially affecting their operation. It is therefore concluded that the proposal is not expected to cause any adverse impact to the local highway in line with Policy T2 and no concern was raised in these respects during LPA ref no. 115056/FO/2017.

5.0 CONCLUSION

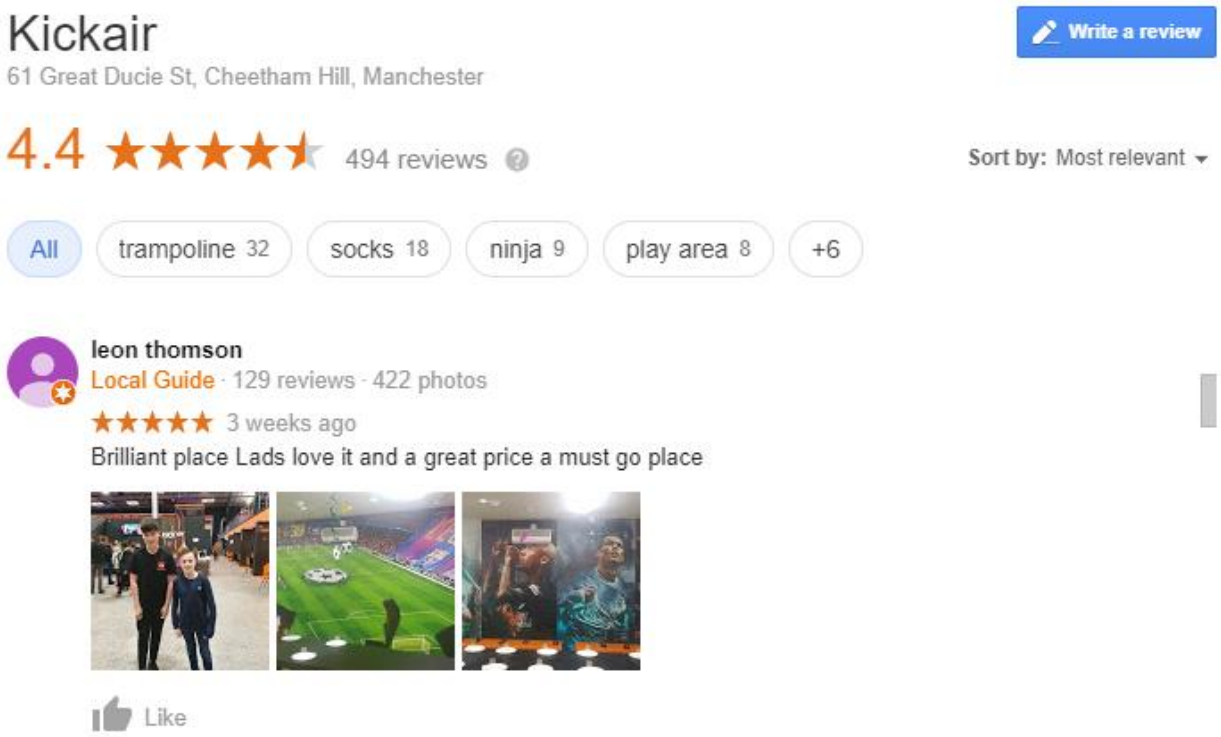
5.1 This Statement has justified the merits and acceptability of the proposed continued use of 61 Great Ducie Street, Manchester as an indoor trampoline park leisure facility (Use Class D2). It has clearly been demonstrated that the business represents sustainable economic development, promotes consumer choice and supports job creation whilst not impacting the ‘function’ of the area.

5.2 The use has operated in a compliant manner for six years and it is hoped, given the amount of resources invested into the site that the Council adopt a pragmatic approach in dealing with this application in line with the general aspirations of the NPPF which is to not overburden business with the complexities of the planning system.

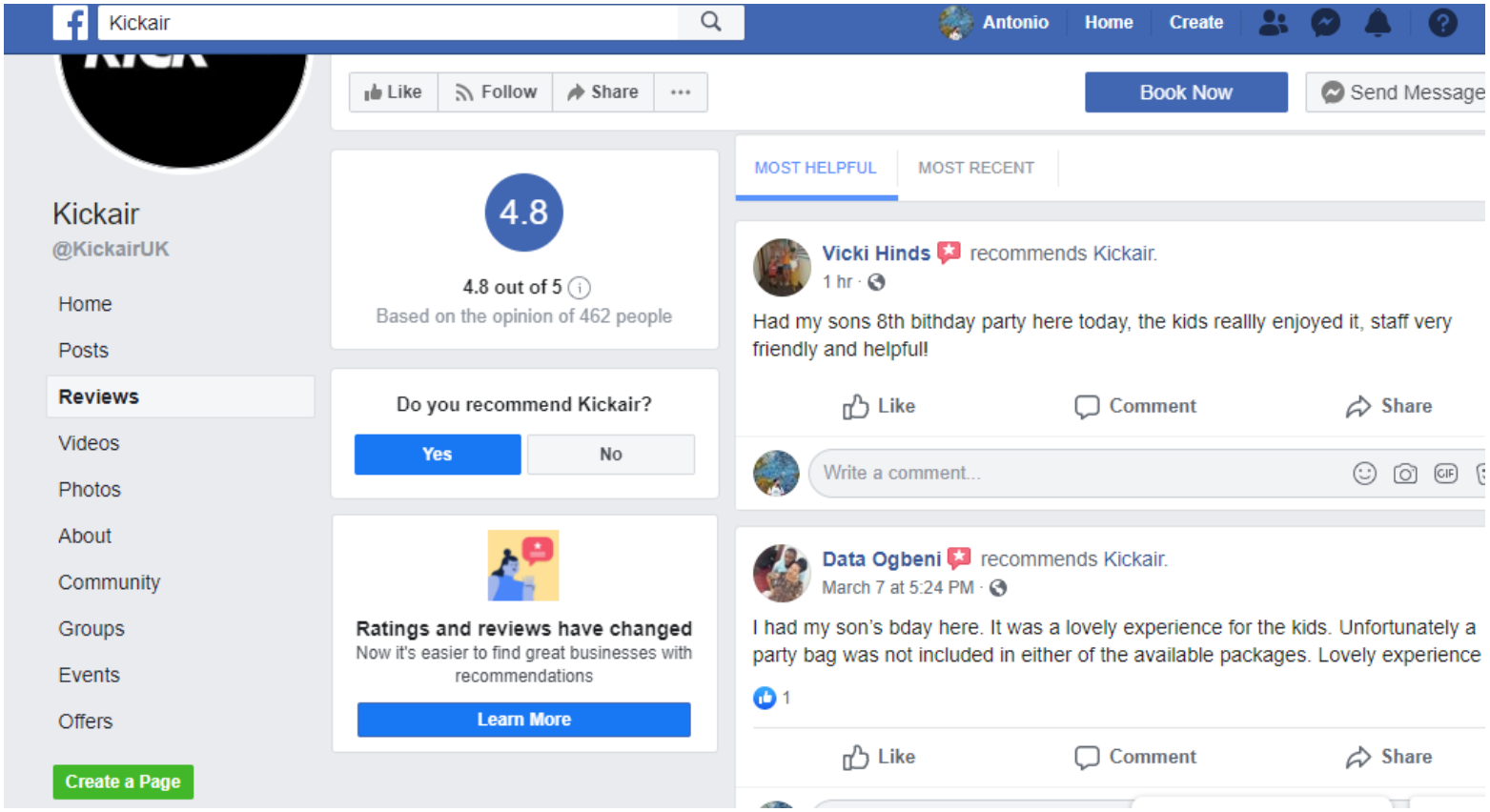
5.3 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development and requires them to look for solutions rather than problems and seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible.

5.4 For the reasons set out in this Statement and the supporting application plans and documentation, the Council is kindly requested to grant planning permission.

Appendix 1. Online reviews

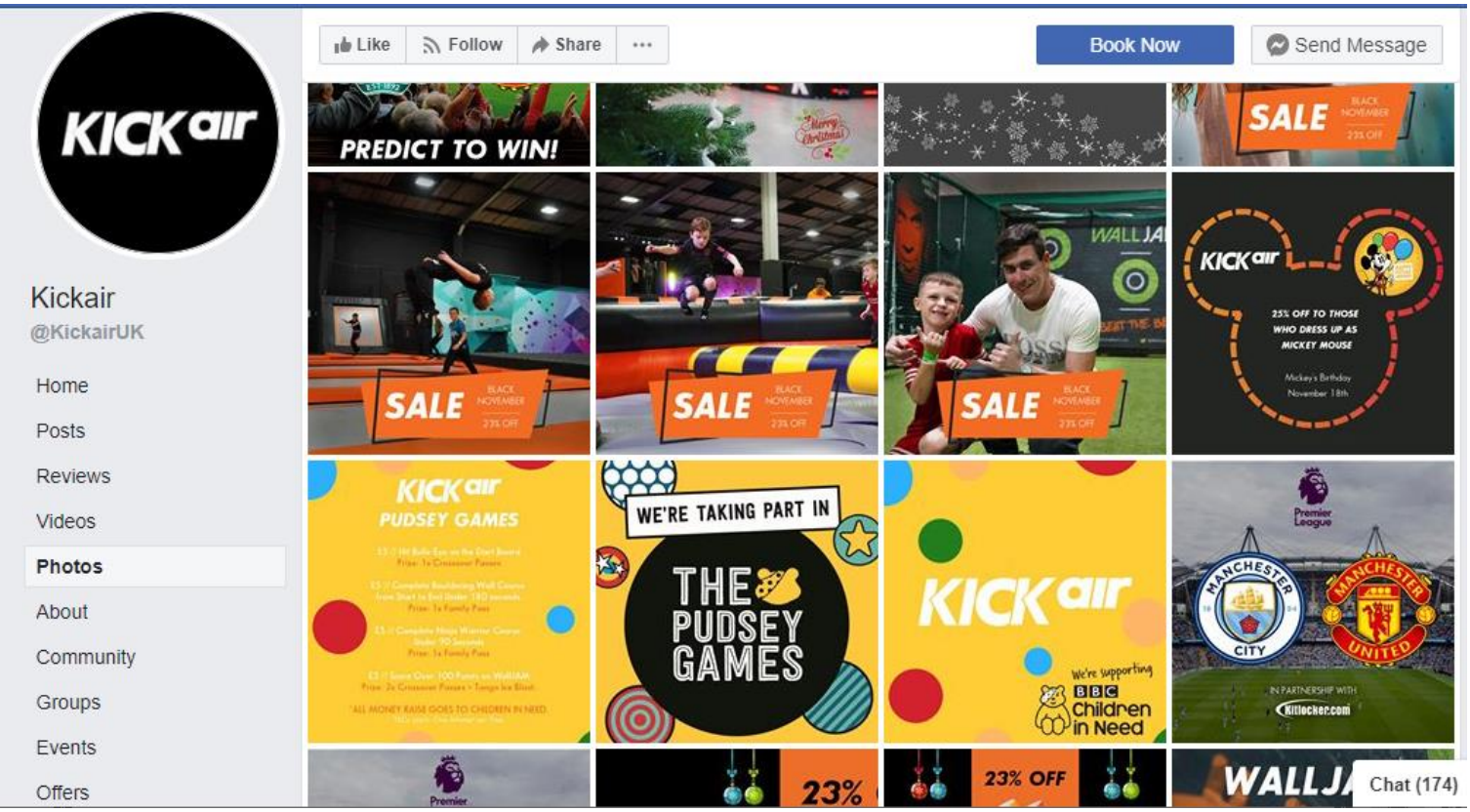


Source: Google

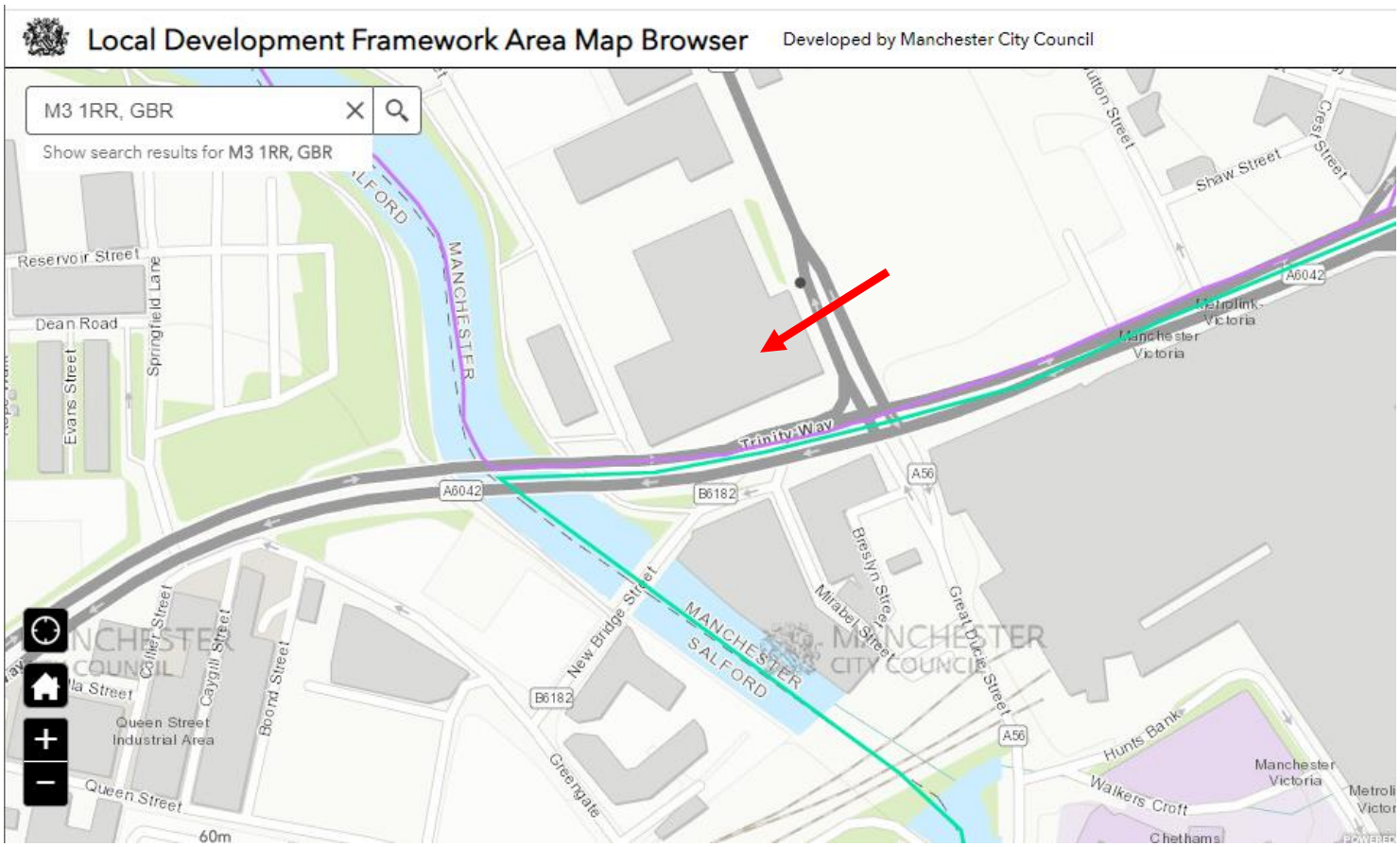


Source: Facebook

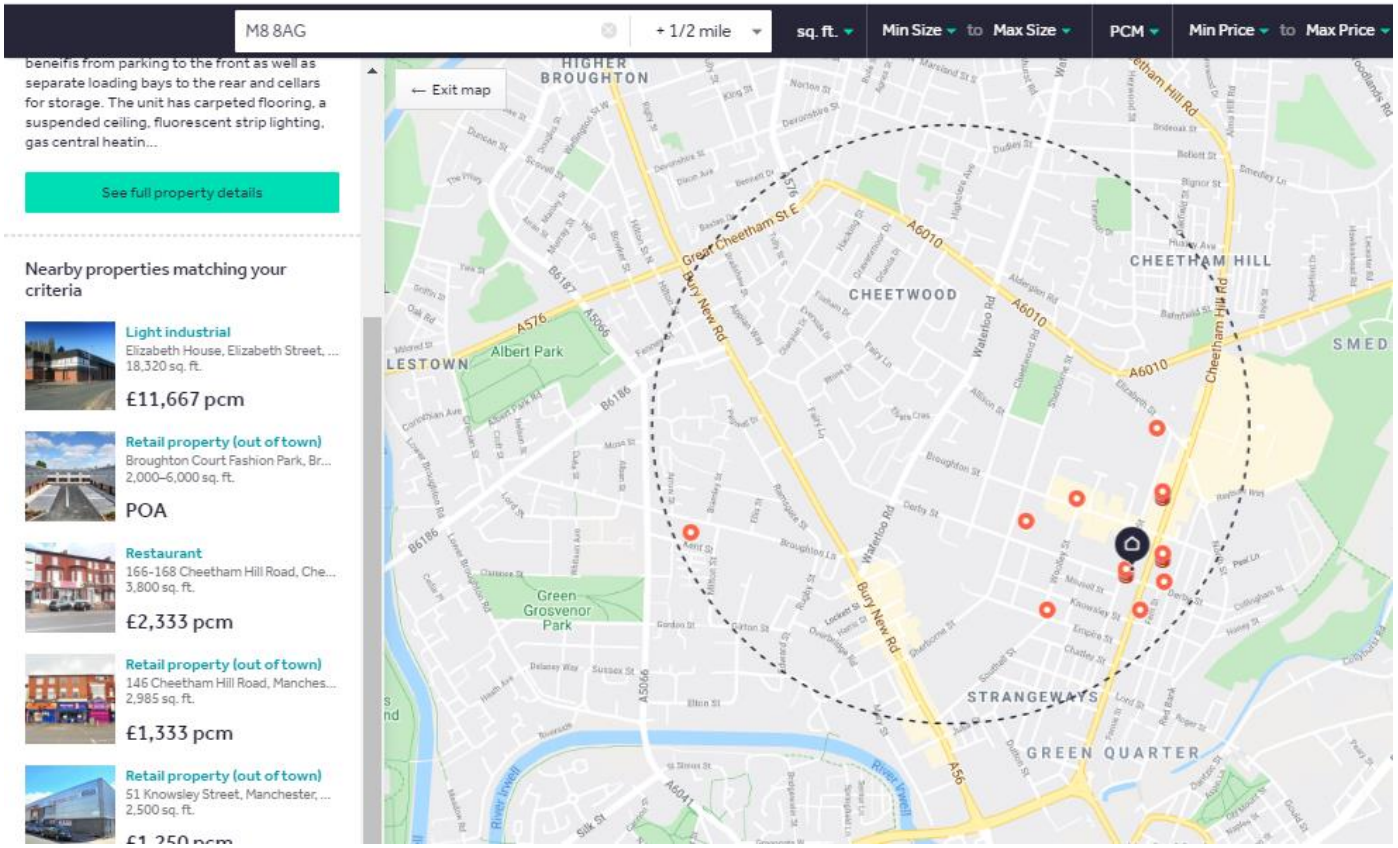
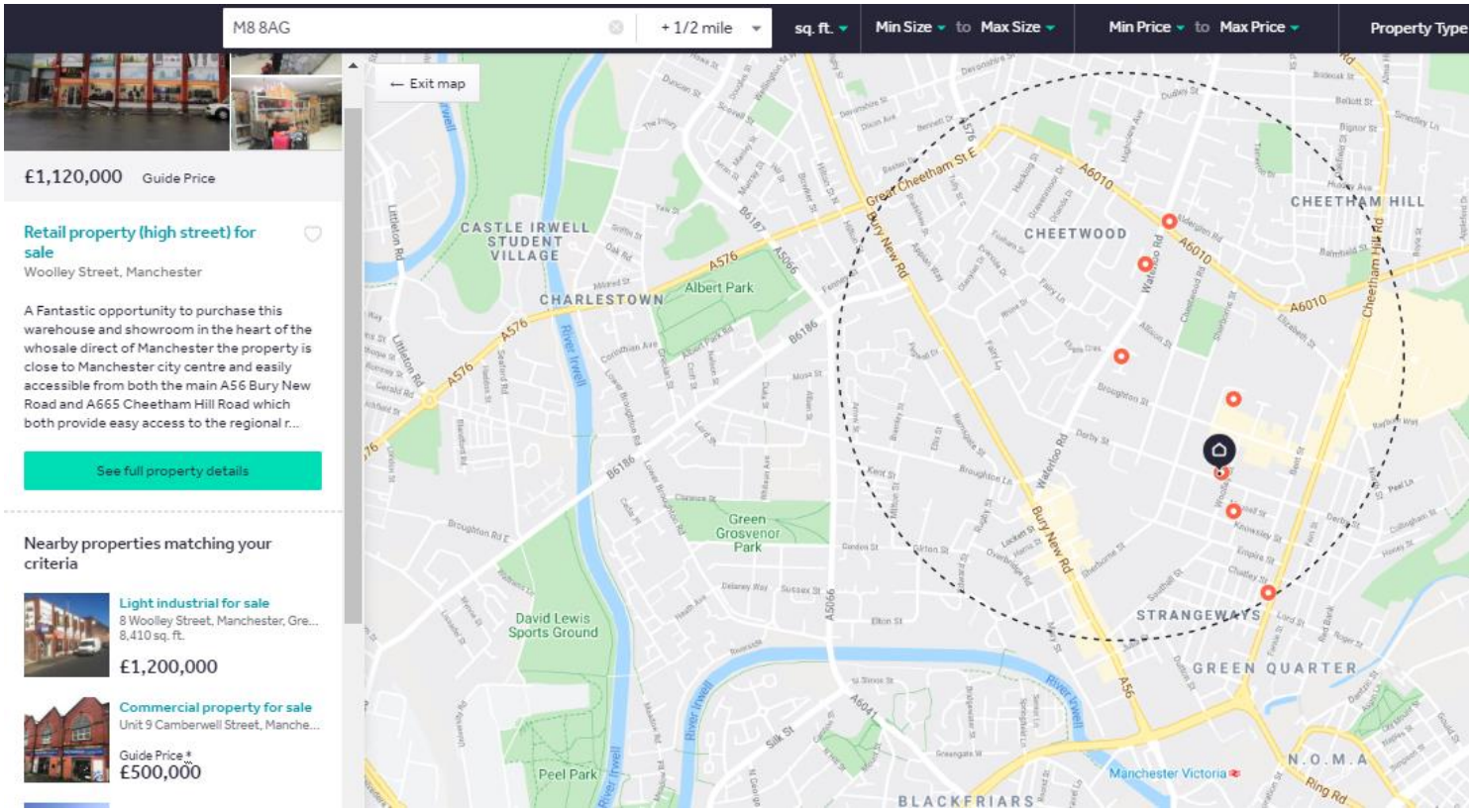
Appendix 2. Kickair promotional material



Appendix 3. Proposals map extract



Appendix 4. Commercial properties available to let within half-a-mile radius of the application site



Appendix 5. Commercial properties available for sale within half-a-mile radius of the application site