MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	145422/NMC/2026
Date registered valid:	4 March 2026
Proposal:	Non-material amendment to planning permission 144260/JO/2025 to revise the wording of Condition 3 in order to amend the trigger point for the submission of external materials.
Address:	Former Co-Operative Building, The Birtles, Civic Centre, Manchester, M22 5RF
Ward(s):	Woodhouse Park Ward
Applicant:	Manchester City Council Development & Investment Estate Service
Agent (if any):	Miss Melanie Chan, Lambert Smith Hampton
Case officer:	David Lawless Tel: 0161 234 4543 Email: david.lawless@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	25 March 2026

Application details

Type of application: Non-Material Change Application

Development type: Notifications

Standard consultations:
No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications
No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
No site notice has been produced

Press advert
No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building/area

This application relates to the first and second floor of the former Co-operative Department Store in Wythenshawe Town Centre, location shown below:

The first and second floors are currently vacant but were last used as office space. The ground floor retail area would be unaffected by the proposal.

Listed building: No
Conservation area: No
Tree Preservation Order: No

Description of development

The applicant obtained planning permission in June 2025 (ref: 142287/VO/2025) to change the use of the first and second floors of the premises to form a community hub (Class F1), together with associated elevational alterations. They then amended element of the proposal under planning permission 144260/JO/2025. The applicants are now proposing to amend the wording of the *materials* condition (condition no. 3) to allow for a phased approval of the various materials and to enable the development to commence on site.

The existing wording of condition no. 3 is as follows:

> *3) No development that is hereby approved, apart from soft strip-out or associated demolition work, shall commence unless and until samples and/or specifications of all materials (including window frames) to be used on all external elevations of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority.*

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

The proposed wording is as follows:

3) Prior to the installation of the relevant external element outlined below, sample details and/or specifications of the relevant materials to be used for that individual item on the external elevation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority:

a) Window frames;
b) Doors;
c) External walls/cladding;
d) Any other elements on external elevation which is considered necessary to include

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as Local Planning Authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Consultations & Notification Responses

N/A

Policies

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (December 2025) - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. A draft revised NPPF was published for consultation on 16 December 2025. The consultation period runs for 12 weeks and will close on 10 March 2026.

The draft NPPF proposes significant changes to the structure and content of national policy. These include a move to Local Plan-style policy sections, a clearer distinction between plan-making and decision-making policies, and the reintroduction of strategic planning through Spatial Development Strategies. Other notable changes include an expanded presumption in favour of sustainable development, policies promoting higher densities around transport hubs, and support for small and medium-scale housing schemes through a new "medium development" category. The draft also integrates National Development Management Policies, strengthens climate change and biodiversity policies, and introduces measures to encourage clean energy and critical minerals development.

Once adopted, the revised NPPF will replace the current framework and form a key part of national planning policy. At this stage, as the document is subject to consultation and has not yet been finalised, while still a material consideration, it can only be afforded limited weight in the determination of planning applications. In this instance, the relevant sections are outlined below:

Policy DM3 (*Determining development proposals*) – When considering development proposals, local planning authorities should:

a) Work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals, to enable a timely decision;

b) Take a proportionate approach to the consideration of the planning matters raised by the proposals, in a way that reflects their scale, complexity and potential impact;
c) Take account of planning matters raised during any pre-application engagement, including any positive responses to this engagement, as well as representations on the proposals;
d) Consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal;
e) Consider whether otherwise unacceptable development proposals could be made acceptable through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations; and
f) Not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to its accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations.

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) – The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, i.e. the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and accompanying policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision-taking 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, 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 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.

Paragraph 12 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The Places for Everyone Plan – This plan was adopted on 21 March 2024, as such the Plan and its policies are now a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Plan and its policies must therefore be given significant weight in the planning balance. The relevant policy is set out below:

Policy JP-Strat9 (Southern Areas) – This policy states that the economic competitiveness, distinctive local neighbourhood character and environmental attractiveness of the southern areas

will be protected and enhanced. There will be a strong emphasis on making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed (brownfield) land and promoting the roles of the areas' town centres and its other key assets.

Core Strategy Development Plan Document – 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 been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. Relevant policies in the Core Strategy are detailed below:

Policy SP1, Spatial Principles – Development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including creating well designed places that enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy DM1, Development Management – This policy states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.
- Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.
- Community safety and crime prevention.
- Design for health.
- Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
- Refuse storage and collection.
- Vehicular access and car parking.
- Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
- Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
- The use of alternatives to peat-based products in landscaping/gardens within development schemes.
- Flood risk and drainage.
- Existing or proposed hazardous installations.

Policy C1, Centre Hierarchy – This 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. 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 C7, Wythenshawe District Centres - Wythenshawe Town Centre – This policy states that the Council supports the development of non-food retail and other commercial uses in Wythenshawe, including hotels and uses which maintain vitality beyond normal trading hours. 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 a number of considerations, namely cumulative impact, impact on residential amenity and the balance between daytime and nighttime uses.

Issues

Principle of the Proposal – There is no objection to the proposed amendments to the wording of Condition No. 3. The revised wording would support and facilitate the timely delivery of the community hub.

Residential and Visual Amenity – The proposed change to the trigger point for submitting details of the external materials would not result in any adverse impact on residential or visual amenity within the wider neighbourhood.

Pedestrian and Highway Safety – The amended trigger for the submission of material details would not give rise to any detrimental effects on pedestrian or highway safety in the vicinity of the site.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010 – Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations – This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved 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 recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The details of the proposed amendments are:

a) Variation of the wording of condition no. 3 to enable partial discharges of the condition and to enable building works to commence.

2) Following an assessment of the details submitted, it is confirmed that the proposed amendments to the wording of the condition are considered to be of a non-material nature and are considered to be acceptable to the City Council as the Local Planning Authority. The City Council is satisfied that the proposed changes will have no material impact upon the levels of residential and visual amenity and pedestrian and highway safety enjoyed within the vicinity of the site or the wider area.

3) Prior to the installation of the relevant external element outlined below, sample details and/or specifications of the relevant materials to be used for that individual item on the external elevation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority:

a) Window frames;
b) Doors;
c) External walls/cladding;
d) Any other elements on external elevation which is considered necessary to include

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as Local Planning Authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 15M
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA