

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	145096/FO/2026	
Date registered valid:	3 February 2026	
Proposal:	Installation of replacement Street Hub unit.	
Address:	Outside No. 20 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 3AW	
Ward(s):	Deansgate	Ward
Applicant:	Mr Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC	
Agent (if any):	Tom Hayes	
Case officer:	Lea Tel: 0161 227 Email: lea.joseph@manchester.gov.uk	Joseph 3644
Recommendation:	Refuse	
Date of recommendation:	26 March 2026	

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit: 13 February 2026

Standard consultations:

Printed: 10 February 2026 Expired: 3 March 2026

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 10 February 2026 Expired: 3 March 2026

Site notice

Posted: 3 March 2026 Expired: 24 March 2026

Press advert

Published: 17 February 2026 Expired: 10 March 2026

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site and area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Upper King Street (Extension) Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order:

The application pertains to an area of pavement outside of no.20 Fountain Street. The application site lies between Marble Street and Market Street.

The site lies between the Central Business District and the Retail Core of Manchester, two sensitive areas with high levels of footfall. The application site is bordered by Pheonix Street and Marble Street. The site is within the Upper King Street Conservation Area. Though not within the setting of the application site, the area includes the Grade II Listed Rylands Building at no. 109-127 Market Street, the Grade II* Estate Exchange at 46 Fountain Street, and the Grade II* former Westminster Bank building on York Street. There is a strong mix of historic uses, and new office buildings that form the Central Business District. Market Street intersects with Fountain Street, and constitutes the core of Manchester's Retail Area, seeing high levels of footfall. The non-designated former Lewis's Buildings is adjacent to the site.



Description of development

Full planning consent is sought for the replacement of 1no. InLink unit with a Street Hub 3 unit.



Planning History

118435/FO/2017 | Full planning permission for installation of 1 no. 2.9m high InLink following removal of 2 no. KX100 telephone kiosks. (Approved June 2018)

145097/AOH/2026 | Installation of 2no. digital 75-inch LCD display screens in association with replacement Street Hub unit. (Refused in conjunction with this application).

Relevant nearby planning history:

126251/FO/2020 | Use of part of pavement in front of building on Fountain Street as external seating area in association with drinking establishment within ground floor of building, together with installation of retractable awning. Seating area to be demarcated by removable planters with associated perspex screens. (Approved December 2020)

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity

A notice was posted at the site. Letters were also sent to neighbouring businesses and residents. No representations were received.

Highway Services – No formal objection. Highways noted the MCC goal of removing barriers on footpaths, improving accessibility and pedestrian safety and encouraging active travel. The service expressed concerns about the proposed advertisement totem's increased footprint negatively impacting the accessibility, legibility and inclusivity of walking routes. This area accommodates high levels of pedestrian movement and there is other street furniture in the vicinity, since the pedestrianisation of the adjacent Market Street, Fountain Street has experienced an increase in footfall. During Christmas Markets the street can be used as 'spill out' for vendors, the proposed hoarding would harm the accessibility of the footpath during these congested periods. The proposed unit would not contribute to the rationalisation of street clutter but would instead exacerbate issues associated with street clutter.

Environmental Health – No objections. If approved, conditions should be attached to control lighting and display on the unit's screen, a Noise Management Plan should be submitted, and a maintenance plan would also be required for review.

Greater Manchester Police – No objections. There are no crime or antisocial behaviour concerns, but consultee noted potential for the kiosk to block visibility of vehicles and put pedestrians at a greater risk.

Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW) – No comments or objections.

Policy

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-C5 Streets for All

Manchester Core Strategy

SP1 Spatial Principles

DM1 Development Management

EN3 Heritage

CC10 A Place for Everyone

T1 Sustainable Transport

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy

DC18 Conservation Areas

DC15 Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters

DC22 Footpath Protection

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 16 Protecting and enhancing the historic environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72

Streets for All Design Guide (Adopted 2023)

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025)

The government has published a consultation National Planning Policy Framework which is intended to improve housebuilding rates through a clearer, more predictable and faster policy basis for decision and plan making.

Whilst this is a draft NPPF for consultation it is considered that the development proposals are in accordance with the general thrust of policy contained within it. As set out in the printed report no adverse impacts have been identified through consideration of the application proposals that would outweigh a positive decision in this instance.

Issues

Design issues – visual amenity, area character and impact on the historic environment



Policy DM1 requires consideration of the siting, scale, appearance, details and materials of a proposed development. Policy DM1 places significant weight on the impact of a development's appearance on the surrounding area in design terms. Chapter 12 of the NPPF also attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The larger bulkier structure proposed fails to respond to the

context of the surrounding area and would constitute an overly dominant, dark incongruous addition to the street scene.

In addition to the increased size of advertisement screen the proposed totem would have an increased footprint of 347mm in width, 90mm in height and 71mm in depth. In comparison to the existing structure, the proposed would have a wider base, galvanized steel structure and black powder coated cladding. The overall appearance of the development is modern and utilitarian.

The existing unit was approved in 2017 (118435/FO/2017) as a rationalisation of clutter at the application site. 2no. phone boxes removed and replaced with 1no. In Link unit, the proposed unit would be a larger, more dominant structure than the existing, and would contrast negatively with the surrounding environment.

As per policy JP-P1 all development should be distinctive with an appearance that 'respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, scale, size and materials. The proposed hoarding's darker and larger appearance would be out of character with the architectural and historic character of the street scene.

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework includes local assets (non-designated heritage assets) in its guidance and states encourage the sustainment and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and the importance of development's to positively contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Policy JP-P2 requires conservation and enhancement of historic character in development proposals.



Image: Previous 2no. phone boxes.

The Primark Building, formerly Lewis's, which is parallel to the application site was constructed in 1877 with an extension completed in 1885. The building was designed by Horton and Bridgeford, who designed building throughout the North East including the Grade II Listed Woolton Baths in Liverpool. This non-designated heritage asset brings value to the area, it's scale and massing dominates the intersections of Market Street, Mosley Street and Fountain Street. The first, second and third floors are clad in stone; at ground floor the façade is finished in black marble. The structure was designed in a Baroque style, at Fountain Street various Baroque details can be observed including ornamentation across the façade, a meander (*meandros*) pattern between the ground and first floors, decorative aedicules above first floor

windows, decorative pilasters at fourth floor level and trabeation between the third and fourth storey.



Image 2: Primark building, 1960 (Manchester Archives); Image 3: Application site in foreground and non-designated heritage asset in background. Image 4: Former Lewis's building from Fountain Street. (Present day)

At 16 Fountain Street, The Shakespeare public house is located near to the site. One of Manchester's oldest public houses, the structure originally built in 1656 in Chester, in 1928 the building was disassembled and rebuilt on Fountain Street. The pub has a distinct Tudor appearance, with a 15th century timber frame, and wooden decoration at the upper storeys. At ground floor decorative pilasters and ornamentation are present on the primary building façade. Adjacent to this is a white stone building in the Italian palazzo style.





Image 5: Shakespeare's Public House, 1961(Manchester Archives) Image 6: Shakespeare's Public House, present day. Image 7: No.14 Fountain Street

Modern buildings within the street scene include 11 Fountain Street, composed of white cladding, and the red brick of 35 Fountain Street, which is covered with scaffolding at the present.

The materiality of the proposed unit fails to preserve the character of the existing environment, the area would contrast with the modern, dark appearance of the proposed structure. The development would therefore be contrary to the requirements of policies DM1, SP1, EN3, JP-P1, JP-P2 and DC15.

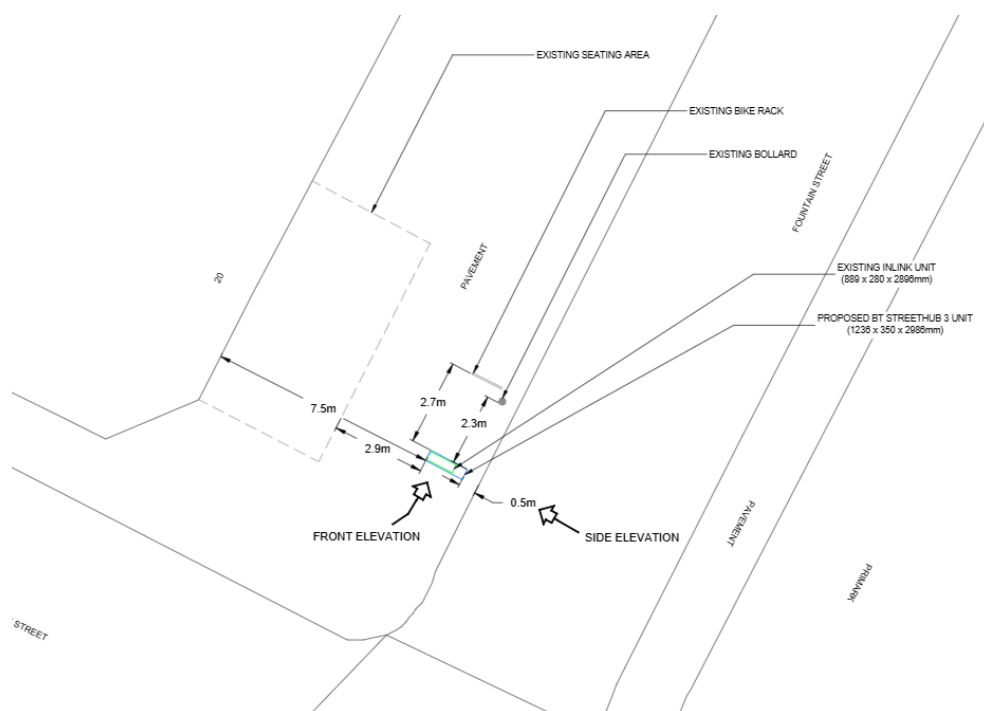
It is acknowledged that advertisements and signage are present in the vicinity of the application site, but these advertisements are fixed to building, facades, small projecting signs, or high level building signs, the proposed Hub, with it's consistent rotation of advertisements and large structure would contrast starkly with the subservient, static nature of the existing advertisement environment on Fountain Street.

Highways Impact

Policy DC22 mandates consideration of the impact of a development on pedestrian routes, the policy states development that would result in 'an unacceptable inconvenience' to pedestrian movement should not be supported. Policy T1 requires planners to improve and enhance the pedestrian environment and pedestrian routes.

Multiple policies within the development plan place significant weight on the comfort and inclusivity of footways for disabled and ambulant disabled individuals as well as those using prams. Core Strategy policies SP1 and CC10 require high standards of accessibility across spaces in the City Centre, development proposals are expected to 'consider the needs of all members of the community' in their design.

Policy JP-P1 requires that developments incorporate inclusive design principles and are 'easy to move around for those of all mobility levels'. Policy JP-C5 requires that streets all 'welcoming for all', allow for easy navigation with minimal clutter.



At present the pavement between Marble Street and Phoenix Street includes 7no. Sheffield cycle stands, 1no. waste bin, 1no. electric box, 2no. road signs, 1 no. streetlights and 7no. bollards. A large outdoor seating area associated with no. 18-20 Fountain Street is also present in the street scene. With the installation of the Street Hub unit, just 2.9m of pavement would be available for pedestrians. The GMCA Streets for All Design Guide, has a minimum prescribed width of Connector Street footways as 2.5m, the existing would only exceed this minimum by .4m. Further, the encroachment of the new hub would harm the navigability of the pavement as pedestrians would bottleneck when passing between the proposed hub and the other various elements of street furniture along the footpath. The outdoor seating area, which limits the available pavement space was approved in 2020 (126251/FO/2020) after the existing InLink unit's approval. The outdoor seating area is considered to be lively addition to the street scene, that brings vibrancy and visual interest to the area, the proposed totem does not offer the same benefits.

An appeal at 174 Monton Road, M30 9GA (APP/U4230/H/25/3375781, APP/U4230/W/25/3375783) was lodged after a refusal of a Street Hub Unit by Salford City Council. In the appeal decision the Inspector noted the following when assessing the impact of the Street Hub 3 unit:

[The development] would result in a pinch-point which would make the pavement difficult to navigate, particularly for pedestrians with prams, small children, wheelchair users, or those with visually or cognitively impaired mobility. There is also a risk that pedestrians would step onto the carriageway to avoid the pinch-point or, given the proliferation of street furniture, cross Monton Road at this point. This would be to the detriment of the safety of pedestrians

Fountain Street is a City Centre connector street, linking Market Street and the Central Retail Area, St Peter's Square, and the Northern Quarter. Fountain Street leads to Market Street, which is pedestrianised and sees 90,500 visits on weekdays and more than 200,000 visits on weekends. As noted in Highways comments, the proposed hoarding would be harmful to existing MCC goals around the rationalisation of street furniture and clutter, and the prioritisation of pedestrian routes particularly in this busy area of the City Centre.

The totem is expected to result in an unacceptable level of impact on the pedestrian environment, by limiting available space for a range of users and its potential to create safety issues as pedestrians attempt to avoid the various obstacles within the application site.

Conclusion

In appearance, the larger, darker modern totem proposed would conflict with the existing visual character of the site, the hoarding would be overly dominant in its scale to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area thereby conflicting with the provisions of Core Strategy policies SP1, DM1, JP-P1, EN3, JP-P2, DC15 and DC18. Moreover, the structure would harm pedestrian comfort and accessibility in the area as street clutter at a key connector route to one of the City Centre's busiest areas, which is acceptable under policies DC22, JP-P1, JP-C5, CC10 and T1.

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 policies 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

Article 35 Declaration

In assessing the merits of a planning application, officers will seek to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. All such issues have been resolved due to the discussions within the applicant and the conditions.

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1. The proposed totem, by virtue of its siting, scale, materiality, and appearance, would form an overly dominant, incongruous and visually obtrusive feature within the street scene. In addition, the totem would also add to clutter, alongside other street furniture and fixtures, within a prominent location in the City Centre which sees high levels of footfall. The proposal would have a negative effect upon current efforts by the City Council to de-clutter, regenerate, and improve the public realm and adopted highway within the City Centre environment in the interest of optimising the pedestrian environment and public realm. The proposal would therefore result in an unduly harmful impact on local visual amenity, the character of the street scene, and the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage asset and wider Conservation Area. The totem would be read as a dark, modern and incongruous structure in this setting forming an unduly harmful juxtaposition and low-quality addition to the area. . The totem is therefore contrary to the provisions of policies JP-C5, JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Plan, policies SP1, CC10, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC18 and DC22 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and Section 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.
2. The proposed totem by virtue of its location within an active commercial district which experiences high levels of daily footfall, as well as its scale, footprint, position on the footway and siting adjacent to other items of street clutter would be to the detriment of pedestrian environment, forming a further obstruction along the footway and failing to minimise barriers and obstacles to movement. The proposed totem would therefore be contrary to Places for Everyone Policies JP-C5 and JP-P1, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC10, T1 and DM1 and saved UDP Policy DC22; Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Streets for All Design Guide 2023.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Greater Manchester Police
Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW)

BETFRED, 18 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AA
35 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AN
36 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2BE
106 - 122 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1WA

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Upper King Street (Extension) Conservation Area 1985
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL