

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144340/AOH/2025
Date registered valid:	22 October 2025
Proposal:	Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens.
Address:	Outside No. 48 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AF
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Ms Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC
Agent (if any):	Mr Oliver Taylor Dalcour Maclaren
Case officer:	Sam Elliott Tel: 0161 219 2856 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	10/12/2025

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 24 November 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 28 October 2025

Expired: 18 November 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 28 October 2025

Expired: 18 November 2025

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

The application site relates to a section of pavement outside no.48 King Street. King Street is a pleasant commercial street with ground floor shop frontages on both sides and interspersed with mature trees. To accommodate associated footfall, the footway is approximately 12m wide and is pedestrianised. The pavement consists of larger paving stones to either side and abutting the commercial units, with a cobbled effect central section running through the middle. This cobbled band of paving is split into three sections running the length of King Street.

In this location, there is an existing InLink totem with two advertisement screens that forms the subject of this application.



(Figure 1: Existing totem)

Pursuant to the Council's strategy to improve the attractiveness of the City as a retail centre, create stronger linkages to the Primary Shopping Area, and to enhance the City's image more broadly, the Council has worked to reduce the number of, and space taken up by, advertisement clutter. To this end, 2no. telecommunications boxes were replaced with the smaller InLink totem, reducing the scale and number of advertisements, as well as the footprint of structures required to host them.

InLinkUK | BT

Existing & Proposed Views



Existing



Proposed

Site Address: King St (OS No.48 Karen Millen and Sharps)

Reference: MNC-023-EP-V1

(Figure 2: Site condition before implementation of 118445/FO/2017 scheme (left) and after (right))

Notwithstanding the above, the Council views that King Street as a whole remains visually cluttered, with advertisement along market street seen in conjunction with items of street furniture. As a linear pedestrianised route this clutter is experienced cumulatively when walking the route.

Along King Street advertisement predominantly comprises of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia signage and hanging signs, in keeping with the traditional shopfront approach along King Street. Commercial advertisement is therefore relatively restrained, however the route does feature 5no. existing totem structures with large LED advertisement screens. These large LED screens appear as a distinctly modern digital element within the setting. The application site is seen in this context, as well as together with street clutter including: a number of contemporary and historic bollards, lighting columns, signage poles, bins, trees, electrical cabinets of varying sizes, a number of trees and various A-board signs scattered along the route.

In addition, in recent years it has become more commonplace for restaurants along King Street to operate ancillary external seating areas within the centre of the street, adding a number of chairs, tables, large canvas umbrellas and boundary treatment at their perimeter.





(Figures 3-8: Remaining items of street clutter within the street scene)

While there is a lack of strategic rationalisation to the overall positioning of these items, larger items, including existing totems and trees, tend to be sited within the cobbled central area of paving, similarly positioned within the confines of the darker paving stones which define its three sections.

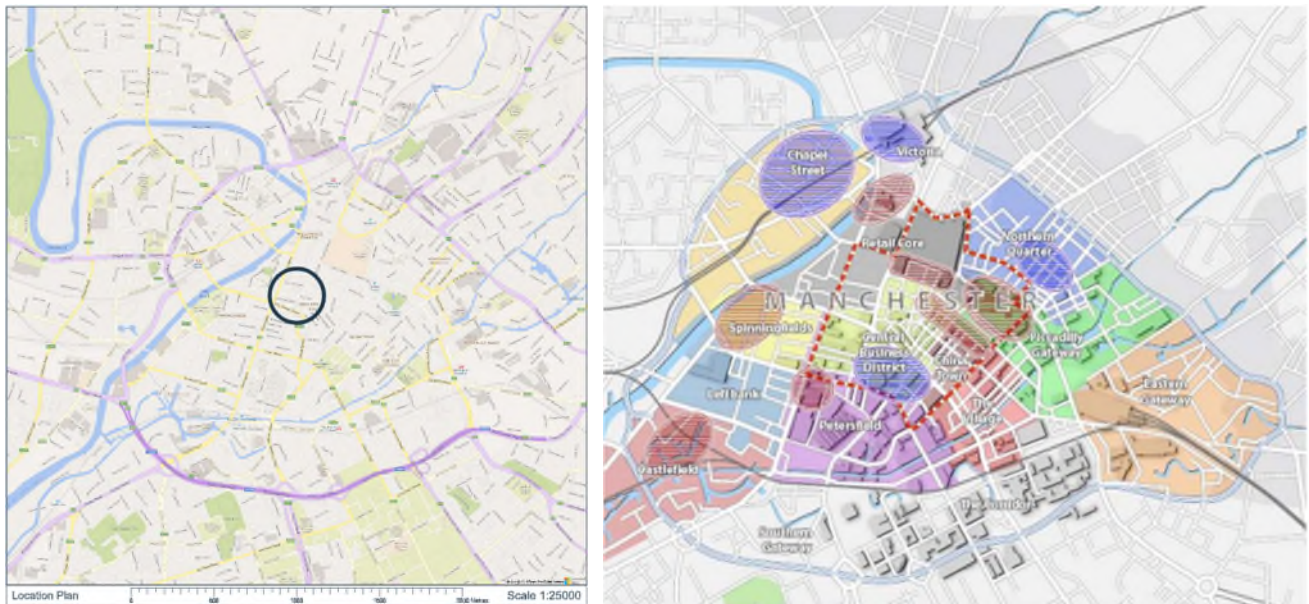


(Figures 9-11: Remaining items of street clutter within the street scene)

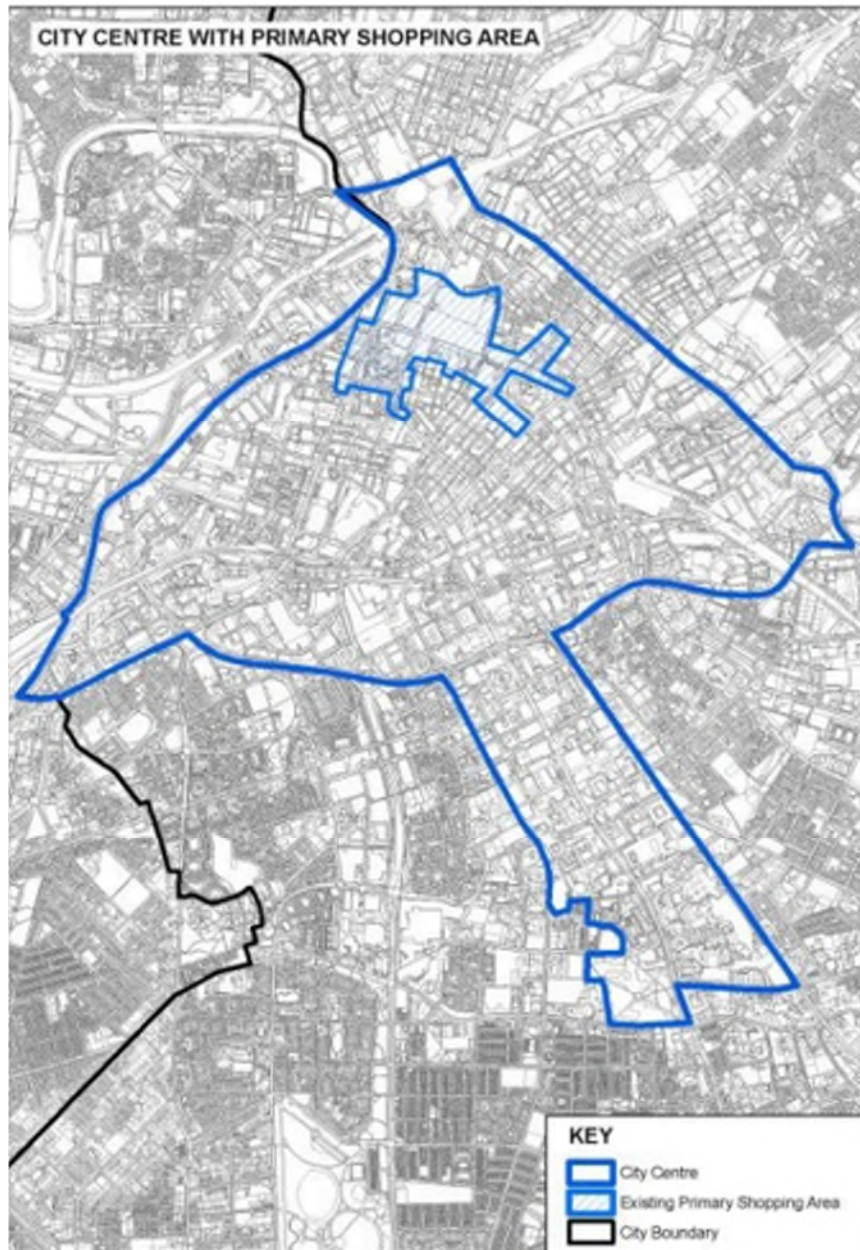
Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The site is located along King Street, a prominent pedestrianised commercial street within the City's Retail Core and Primary Shopping Area, linking Cross Street to Deansgate. For these reasons, the site experiences a high level of daily footfall and is a highly visible location within the City Centre.



(Figure 11-12: Application location plan (left) and map of Retail Core (right))



(Figure 13: Primary Shopping Area as per Core Strategy Policy CC2)



(Figure 14: Application site along King Street, within Primary Shopping Area/Retail Core)

The site is also within the St Anns Square Conservation Area. A number of the buildings along King Street within this part of the Conservation Area are Grade II listed, positively contributing to the setting of the Conservation Area and the retail and pedestrian experience. Within the immediate vicinity are nos. 33, 35 and 37 (and attached railings), 48, 54 and 56 King Street, as well as the Old Exchange. Further east along King Street is no 62 King Street, and further west along are nos. 15 and 17, 19, and 28 King Street, as well as the Warehouse Shop building, which are usually experienced together when walking the route.

The significance of these listed buildings partly derives from their architectural features. The Old Exchange is eclectic styled, decorative and lighter red sandstone façade, with a traditional shopfront design with red sandstone pilasters, ornamental terracotta panels, moulding and wooden mullion-and-transom glazing.

No.33 King Street features decorative crocket capitals atop light ornamental sandstone pilasters at ground floor, rounded bay windows in white with moulded detail to their underside, with further white moulded detail and arched masonry above.

No.48 King Street derives exhibits a shopfront framed by original columns with crocket caps and entablatures, and moulded frieze. Nos. 35 and 37 King Streets' feature Flemish bond red brick, white moulded architraves and triple keystones, with nos. 54 and 56 King Street having light stucco façades and white moulded architraves.



(Figure 15-19: Listed buildings in vicinity)

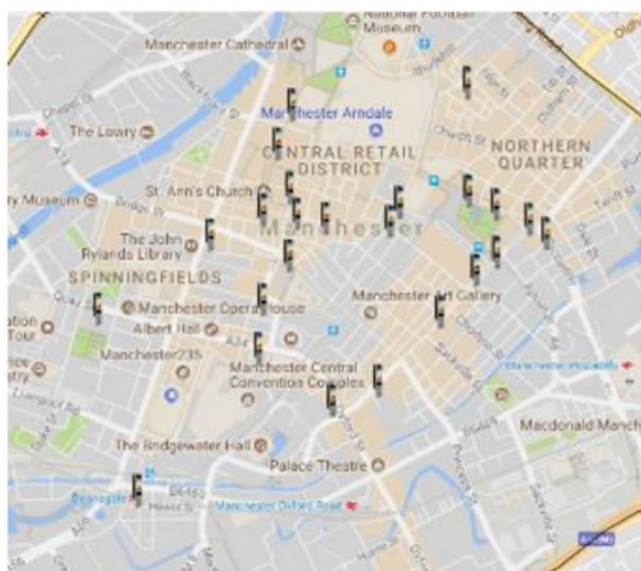
Background

Applications 118445/FO/2017 and 118446/AOH/2017 at the application site formed part of a series of applications received in 2017 for the installations of the Inlink model across the City Centre, now proposed to be replaced as part of the current application.

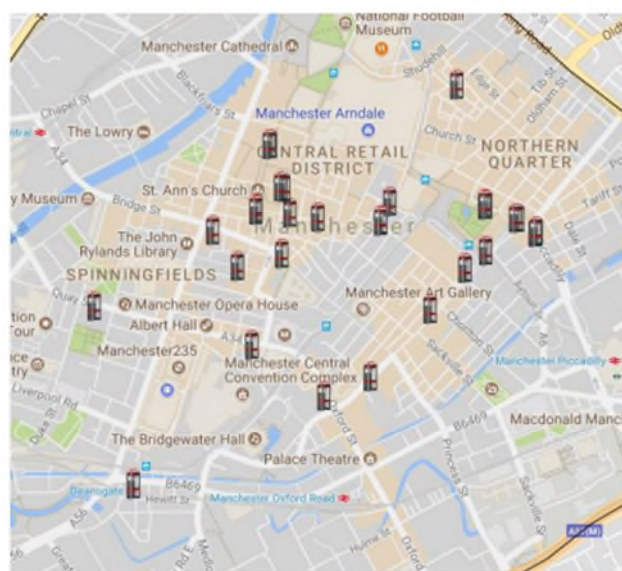
As part of the decluttering approach the Council has undertaken across the City Centre, and according to the planning statement submitted for applications 118445/FO/2017 and 118446/AOH/2017, this series of applications was premised on the existing Inlink model replacing former telecommunications kiosks to reduce the overall level of visual clutter and around the City:

The application package... includes a rationalisation schedule, which sets out the locations of existing BT KX100 kiosks which are to be removed as part of the roll out of InLinks, either through conversion or by removing kiosks in proximity to new sites.

An InLink's footprint in comparison to an existing payphone kiosk covers 75% less surface area on the pavement... Through a collaborative approach with BT's payphones team we are looking to rationalise the current estate in Manchester which currently stands at 508; removing more payphones than InLinks being installed.



Proposed InLink Locations



Associated BT Kiosk Removals

(Figure 20: Image of proposed 2017 InLink totems and corresponding BT kiosk removals, from planning statement submitted for applications 118445/FO/2017 and 118446/AOH/2017)

At the application site, 2no. telecommunications boxes were removed and replaced with the Inlink unit, significantly reducing the scale and number of advertisements, as well as the footprint of structures required to host them.



Existing



Proposed

Site Address: King St (OS No.48 Karen Millen and Sharps)

Reference: MNC-023-EP-V1

(Figure 21: Existing and proposed render for 2017 InLink totem and corresponding BT kiosk removals, from MNC-023-EP-V1 document submitted for applications 118445/FO/2017 and 118446/AOH/2017)

This decluttering approach has been a consistent feature of the Council's regeneration strategy for the City Centre. In 2020, 17no. applications were received for the installations of JCDecaux Communications Hubs across the City Centre, one of which was sited along King Street in proximity to the application site.

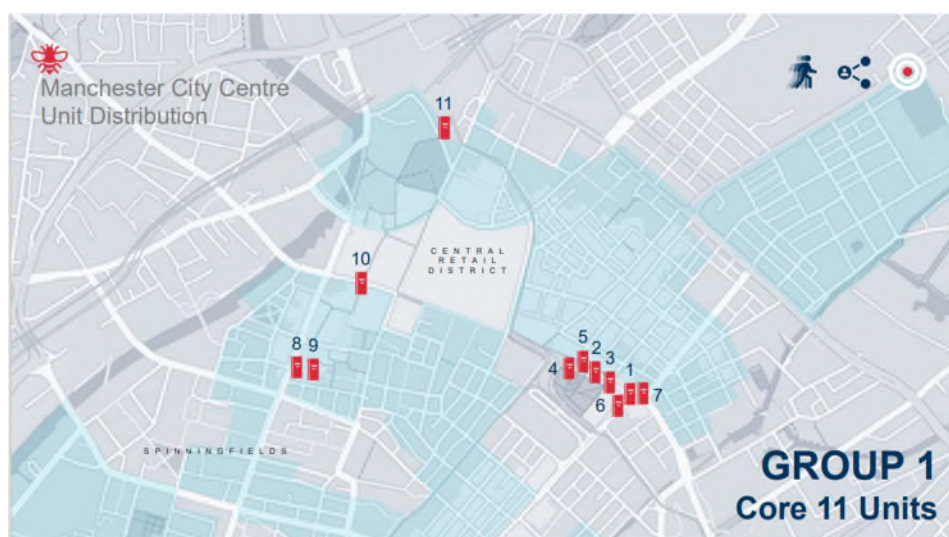


(Figure 22: JCDecaux Communications Hubs model at King Street in proximity to the application site)

Pursuant to the decluttering approach the Council has undertaken, and according to the planning statement submitted for application 127634/FO/2020, the JCDecaux proposal was also premised on the net reduction of street clutter across the City:

As part of the Proposal, notwithstanding the reduction in unit numbers, the applicant has agreed with the Officer recommendation to remove all of the 26 existing and outdated phone boxes in Manchester. The Proposal will result in a net reduction of nine phone boxes, with the currently occupied pavement being reinstated and brought back into public use.

Further to these efforts, application 130164/AOH/2021 was the first of six groups of applications which related to the installation of 11no. JCDecaux 'Forum Smart City CIP' totems, 2no. of were along King Street (totems 8 and 9).



(Figure 23: Map showing 2021 JCDecaux models)



(Figures 24-25: Totems 8 (left) and 9 (right) King Street, approved in application 130164/AOH/2021)

Pursuant to the decluttering approach the Council has undertaken, and according to the planning statement submitted for application 130164/AOH/2021, the proposal was also premised on a rationalisation of infrastructure and an overall net reduction of street clutter across the City:

The existing estate comprises 90 advertised structures at separate locations across the City, with a mix structure types that includes 17 of the tall cylindrical columns in three different designs. The remainder of the estate is made up of the standard freestanding 6 sheet displays or commercial information panels (CIPs), which include the Paris 2 design and a lesser number of the totem structures. All of the existing advertising structures will be removed and replaced with 86 units of identical design in order to maintain a consistent quality and look across the entire MCC estate.

As per comments from the Council's Neighbourhood Team, the Ocean Loop totem at the Western end of King Street is marked to be discontinued by the end of 2026 as part of the Council's decluttering works to prevent the over proliferation of these structures and associated advertisements.



(Figure 26: Loop totem to be removed as part of decluttering efforts, King Street)

A new strategic package of similar devices is now proposed across the City Centre, with a number of applications for Street Hubs and associated advertisement consent application received to replace the existing InLink models:

144066/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No. 71 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BS.

144067/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No. 71 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BS.

144106/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside 51 Piccadilly Street, Manchester, M1 2AP.

144107/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside 51 Piccadilly Street, Manchester, M1 2AP.

144108/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Footpath Outside 1 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4AJ.

144109/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Footpath Outside 1 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4AJ.

144110/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside H&M Brown Street, Manchester, M2 1DA.

144211/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside H&M Brown Street, Manchester, M2 1DA.

144112/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No.98 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX.

144200/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No.98 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX.

144114/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside Deansgate Station, Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WY.

144115/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside Deansgate Station, Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WY.

144116/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside Primark, Mosley Street, Manchester , M60 1AY.

144117/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside Primark, Mosley Street, Manchester , M60 1AY.

144118/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No. 8-10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EF.

144201/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No. 8-10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EF.

144120/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Footpath Outside No. 11-13 Piccadilly, Manchester, M60 1AY.

144199/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Footpath Outside No. 11-13 Piccadilly, Manchester, M60 1AY.

144122/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No.15 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5AE.

144198/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No.15 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5AE.

144124/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Opposite No. 60 Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3BU.

144197/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Opposite No. 60 Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3BU.

144144/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No. 9 Stevenson Square , Manchester, M1 1DB.

144196/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No. 9 Stevenson Square , Manchester, M1 1DB.

144337/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Portland Street, Outside Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, M1 4AL.

144338/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Portland Street, Outside Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, M1 4AL.

144339/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem at Outside No. 48 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AF.

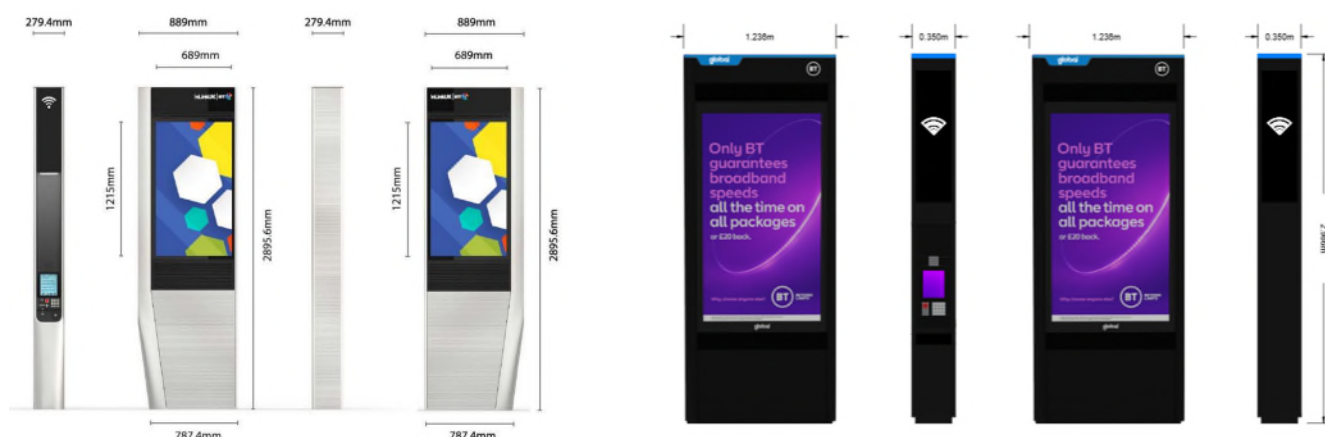
144340/AOH/2025 - Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens at Outside No. 48 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AF.

Description of development

Advertisement Consent is sought for 2 no. LED screen adverts associated with the digital kiosk application 144339/FO/2025 on the footpath outside no.48 King Street, replacing the existing 2no. screens associated with the existing InLink model.

The existing InLink model's two screens (front and back) are each 55", measuring 689mm x 1215mm. As per the decision notice for application 118446/AOH/2017, the light settings are changed throughout the day based on a timer and dusk/dawn timings with the night setting set to 326 cd/m2.

The proposed Street Hub 3 model's front and back screens would each be 75", measuring 950cm x 1670mm. As per the submitted 'Street Hubs Beyond Connection' document, the intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens would not exceed 600 cd/m2 between dusk and dawn.



(Figures 27-28: Existing totem screens (left) and proposed Street Hub 3 totems (right))

Consultations & Notification Responses

Notification/Advertisement:

Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified of the proposal via notification letters. At the time of writing this report, one objection has been received, from a Local Ward Councillor, who stated that the advertisement totem is in a busy location, does not contribute to the Council's objective to reduce street clutter, reduces pavement space and sightlines and makes pedestrians feel more enclosed in locations where we should be prioritising pedestrians.

Highways Services

Concerns raised:

- King Street has been pedestrianised and features a high level of footfall.
- Seating areas associated with restaurant units feature within the middle of the footway, as well as other street furniture in proximity.
- King Street hosts Christmas Market events, contributing to congestion.
- Application does not follow Council's decluttering approach to footways, does not contribute to rationalisation of street furniture, exacerbates issues with street clutter in a busy city centre environment.
- Previous proposal approved on premise of rationalising telecoms estate.
- Increased totem footprint will impede pedestrian movement and accessibility in an area with significant pedestrian movement with other street furniture nearby.
- The above will reduce pedestrian comfort, increase navigation/confusion and safety issues, particularly for those with accessibility needs.
- Given the surrounding TROs, it is unclear how safe servicing/maintenance will take place.

Environmental Health:

No objection, subject to condition.

- A condition is recommended to control light pollution.
- A management plan for maintenance to ensure agreed light levels continue to be in accordance with the above condition.

Policy Context

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

The Local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
- (b) any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

(a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;

(b) factors relevant to public safety include—

(i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

(ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

(3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.

(4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone

- JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- JP-C5 – Streets for All
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC2 – Retail
- CC5 – Transport
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- T1 – Sustainable Transport
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC15 – Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters
- DC18 – Conservation Areas
- DC19 – Listed Buildings
- DC22 – Footpath Protection

NPPF

- Section 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)

- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Section 66 and 72

Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide (adopted November 2023)

The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted 2007)

This Supplementary Planning Document supplements guidance within the Core Strategy with advice on development principles including on design, accessibility, design for health and promotion of a safer environment.

Paragraph 141

The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Issues

Amenity – Impact on the General Characteristics of the Locality

Policy Context

The Control of Advertisements Regulations require an accounting of the general characteristics of the locality, having regard to the material provisions of the Development Plan. Historic and architectural features are important considerations when assessing amenity.

Amongst other things and in general terms, Paragraphs 117 and 135 of the NPPF, PfE Policies JP-Strat2, JP-C5 and JP-P1, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EN1, T1 and DM1; Section 2.41 of the Guide to Development; and the Streets for All Design guidance by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in November 2023 emphasise the 'movement and place function' of streets, requiring that development in the City Centre is has good design and is visually stimulating, improving the appearance of the area to create interesting environments, taking account of matters including siting, layout, form, massing, materials and detail.

Pursuant to these policies, streets must be well designed to make a significant positive contribution to the quality of a place and avoid unnecessary clutter. Accordingly, the Council will support schemes where they improve pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment to ensure that they are welcoming to all.

With specific regard to advertisements and free-standing hoardings, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC15.1 and DC15.2 further require the Local Planning Authority to have consideration to their contribution to locality and the effect on visual amenity.

The site is also located within the Primary Shopping Area outlined in Core Strategy Policy CC2, which further emphasises that development must make a positive impact on the built environment and the public realm, of the highest design quality, creating strong linkages to the primary shopping area, especially on foot as part of the strategy to expand the City's retail offer.

Additionally, Paragraph 210 of the NPPF, PfE Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1, and JP-P2; Core Strategy policies CC9, EN1 and EN3; saved UDP policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC18 and DC19; Sections 66 and 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; and guidance contained in sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework outline the assessment of heritage assets and the desirability of preserving, sustaining and enhancing the significance of Conservation Areas, as well as the settings of Listed Buildings. Developments are expected to consider the City's historic environment, continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area, sustain and enhance these identified heritage assets and integrate with their setting.

Site Context

As outlined above, the application site is located within a premier commercial street within the City's Retail Core and Primary Shopping Area, with pedestrianised footways extending along King Street. The site is therefore in a highly visible location within the City Centre by virtue of the high level of associated daily footfall where the pedestrian environment is highly prioritised.

The Council would reiterate that in previous years the application site was cluttered with a number of elements of visual clutter, predominantly items of street clutter given the context of restrained advertisement. The immediate vicinity contained 2no. telecommunications boxes, 1no. public bin and an external seating area directly outside a restaurant. These features had not been rationalised, failing to be positioned along the same lines within the street and appearing haphazardly scattered along the footway in this highly prominent location. Additionally, vehicles were permitted along King Street, further detracting from the street scene and pedestrian environment, limiting views into frontages and forming further obstacles along the route.



(Figures 29-30: Photos of on-street parking, 2no. telecommunications boxes and associated street scars, public bin and tree, constituting obstacles in the street scene and lacking rationalisation, May 2017)

Pursuant to the Council's strategy to improve the attractiveness of the City as a retail centre and to enhance the City's image more broadly, the Council has sought to create pleasant pedestrian corridors along key shopping routes and create resilient linkages within the Primary Shopping Area. Through the Council's decluttering efforts and full pedestrianisation of King Street, the street scene of the application site has markedly improved, seeing the removal of the public bin, the relocation of the restaurant seating area to the centre of the street, as well as the replacement of the 2no. telecommunications boxes with the smaller InLink screens that are now the subject of this application, and the remediation of the cobbled paving area associated with the infrastructure. These works have reduced the footprint and number of distinct items of street furniture along the footway.

Additionally, the placement of street furniture has been rationalised, with existing street furniture now primarily sited within the central cobbled section of the street, in line with the tree line/tree pits. On the whole, fixed street furniture, including all totems on the street, follows this placement strategy and appears more orderly. Notably, the existing InLink totem is one of the only remaining fixed elements to still encroach onto the paved section of the footway.





(Figure 31-35: Listed buildings in proximity to application site)

Notwithstanding this, the Council views that the street scene as a whole contains an excessive amount of visual clutter and remains committed to further decluttering and rationalisation works pursuant to the policy context outlined previously.

King Street still features contemporary and historic bollards, lighting columns, signage poles, bins, trees, 5no. existing totems, electrical cabinets of varying sizes, a number of trees and various A-board signs scattered along the route.

While the full pedestrianisation of King Street and the associated trend towards outside seating areas are welcomed by the Council, new challenges over their siting and prevalence have arisen. New ancillary external seating areas have added a number of chairs, tables, large canvas umbrellas and boundary treatment at their perimeter, which when poorly managed contribute to the impression of clutter within the setting.





(Figures 36-43: Remaining items of street clutter within the street scene)

The street also features 5 no. existing totems and associated digital advertising screens, which are sited within the street away from traditional commercial signage, having a significant stark modern presence on the otherwise traditional street, detracting from King Street's character and overall appearance.

Proposed Advertising Screens

In this context, the proposal would see the replacement of the InLink model screens with those of the Street Hub 3 model.

Existing InLink

King Street, Outside No. 48, Manchester, M2 6AF

**Proposed BT Street Hub 3**

King Street, Outside No. 48, Manchester, M2 6AF



(Figure 44: Render comparison of existing Inlink totem and proposed Street Hub totem)

As outlined above, the proposed LED screens would be larger at 75", measuring 950cm x 1670mm. As per the 'Street Hubs Beyond Connection' document, the intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens would not exceed 600 cd/m² between dusk and dawn. They would also be brighter at night, with the proposed cap on luminance between dusk and dawn at 600 cd/m².

Visual Impact on the General Characteristics of the Locality

King Street's character is defined by its linear street layout, with continuous facades on both sides exhibiting a varied pattern of architectural styles and detailing along the commercial avenue. While at ground level there are commercial frontages, these shopfronts predominantly correspond to the architectural cues of the main building, with a higher level of ornamentation and traditional shopfront styles than other commercial areas within the City Centre. For these reasons, in the long and short-range views along King Street the eye is drawn to the building facades where this visual interest is located.

While it is acknowledged that 2no. advertising screens exist in this location, the Street Hub advertising screens would be larger and brighter than the existing InLink totem (when viewed at night). It is also noted that unlike the application for the existing InLink model, the proposal

would not reduce the scale of existing advertisement and provide no additional associated visual benefit weighing in favour of the scheme.

The existing InLink advertising screens are relatively restrained in scale, occupying less surface area of the totem's faces. By contrast, the Street Hub advertising screens are wider and taller, and would present a more prominent form of advertisement visible along the route. It is acknowledged that adverts are intended to attract attention, however digital advertisement displays have a greater brightness than traditional advertisement and are by design highly visible in the street scene. It is not considered that the proposed Street Hub advertisements represent a like-for-like replacement within the street scene and the adverts' digital luminance, covering a greater surface area of the totem, would add to their prominence in the setting, having a more dominant and obtrusive visual presence than the existing InLink model.

It is also considered that the increase in the size of the advertisement screens would contribute to the visual clutter along King Street. The larger digital advertisement would form part of a procession of large LED totems sited along King Street and would intensify the visual prominence of such advertisements along the route. It is considered that the visual prominence of these totems, which are experienced together when walking down the route, would draw a disproportionate degree of attention, having an overly dominant impact on the street scene. The adverts would be seen in the context of the items of street furniture clutter outlined above, adding to the number of discordant visual elements within the street.

Even when compared to similar totem advert screens exist along King Street, which the Council views as excessive in number, they are sited to follow the tree line to minimise their presence and integrate with the setting. By contrast, the proposal's position would not be rationalised and would instead encroach further into the centre of footway, with the associated totem structure spanning over the pavement detailing around the cobbles. It would thereby awkwardly appear as one of the sole advertisements along King Street positioned this far into the footway, appearing haphazardly placed and incongruous in its siting. It is considered that the proposal would work against the removal and rationalisation of visual clutter that has occurred in this location.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the advertisement would detract from the appearance of the street scene in a highly visible location within the Primary Shopping Area and Retail Core, against policy considerations which require the improvement of this area's pedestrian environment.

The proposed Street Hub advertisement screens are moreover considered to detract from the setting of the Conservation Area. The totem, by virtue of its larger, bright screens in an awkward siting out of line with other street furniture and a more central siting within the street as a whole, would result in an overly prominent piece of advertisement clutter that draws attention away from the visual interest of the street's facades to an obtrusive modern element in the middle of the street. It is similarly not considered to blend in with the commercial ground floor frontages at the street's peripheries for these reasons.

Additionally, the advertisement would form an obtrusive modern element seen directly in conjunction with a number of Grade II-listed buildings.



(Figures 45-46: Existing street clutter context (left) and totem in the setting of the listed Halls Building (right))

The screens would be seen directly with the eclectic styled, decorative and lighter red sandstone façade of the Old Exchange. There would be a jarring contrast at ground floor level, with the building's shopfront having a traditional design with red sandstone pilasters, ornamental terracotta panels, moulding and wooden mullion-and-transom glazing.

The screens would similarly be seen with no.33 King Street, which features decorative crocket capitals atop light ornamental sandstone pilasters at ground floor, rounded bay windows in white with moulded detail to their underside, with further white moulded detail and arched masonry above.

They would similarly be seen with no.48 King Street, with its shopfront framed by original columns with crocket caps and entablatures, and moulded frieze. They would also be seen with nos. 35 and 37 King Streets' Flemish bond red brick, white moulded architraves and triple keystones of both, as well as the light stucco façade and white moulded architraves of nos. 54 and 56 King Street.

While these listed buildings range in age and architectural style, they each exhibit a high level of ornamentation which positively contribute to the setting of King Street as a traditional shopping avenue within the St Anns Square Conservation Area. Against these respective backdrops, the totem's large, bright digitally illuminated screens would appear as conspicuously modern elements, resulting in harm to the settings of these buildings and reading as an obtrusive element with no regard to their significance or architectural language.

In view of the above, the proposal would detract from the traditional commercial appearance of the street scene, increase the existing level of visual harm to the character of the St Anns Conservation Area and settings of the listed buildings.

In coming to this view, the Council takes note of recent appeal decisions for similar Street Hub 2 totems and advertising screens.

In an appeal decision for application 142696/AOH/2025 (Appeal ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369448) in the Eastlands area of the City, though much less populated by advertisement and street

clutter the Inspector found that the totem and advertisement's large digital advertisement panels would contribute to their dominant and obtrusive presence:

Due to a combination of its height, width and freestanding position close to the edge of the carriageway, the proposed hub, with its large digital advertisement panels on both sides, would represent a dominant and obtrusive feature on the pavement.

In an appeal decision for application 142706/AOH/2025 (Appeal ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369504) relating to the footpath outside 15 Oldham Road, the Inspector found that despite 'the largely commercial character of the area... [with] various signs and adverts on nearby buildings' the totem and advertisement's dominant and obtrusive presence would add further visual clutter and result in cumulative harm:

it would add further visual clutter, making this busy pedestrian route a less pleasing place to walk, and its siting close to the edge of the carriageway would only exacerbate its visual prominence and dominance at this busy junction.

the addition of the rotating digital images on the proposed hub, in conjunction with the rotating images on this existing advert, would result in cumulative visual harm from digital advertisements within the immediate locality.

In the same appeal decision the Inspector also found that the similar LED screens would harm the setting of the listed Former Midland Bank and features of architectural interest which contribute to its significance.

the frequently changing digital advertisement images on the hub would compete with the visual prominence of this listed building on the street scene.

It is noted in the example above, the Inspector concluded that there would be harm when the totem and adverts appeared together with a single decorative listed building. The Council views that this proposal would be within a premier commercial area within a conservation area, and in the setting of a much greater number of listed buildings than in the appeal case.

In consideration of the above, and in the context surrounding the current application whereby there are material differences between the circumstances of the InLink and Street Hub advertising screen applications, it is viewed that the proposal would be visually detrimental to the street scene, fail to appear as an integrated advertisement within a cohesive overarching street design and fail to respect the character of the Conservation Area, with no factors outweighing the visual harm.

Amenity – Lighting

While contributing to the visual prominence of the adverts, the luminance of the digital screens is not considered to be at a level where there would be a harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Environmental Health have reviewed the scheme and are satisfied that:

- the luminance level would be controlled by a light sensor to adjust the screen brightness to reflect the ambient levels during the daytime and set to a maximum brightness of 600cd/m² during hours of darkness
- In the event of breakdown or malfunction the screen will automatically switch off.

- The advertisement shall display no special visual effects of any kind during the time that the advertisement is displayed or on transition between advertisements.
- The displayed image shall not include animated, flashing, scrolling, intermittent or video elements and the transition between successive images shall not include fading, swiping or other animated transition method.
- The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds.
- The interval between each piece of content on the digital display screens shall take place over a period no greater than one second; the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays

Comments note that no provisions are included should a fault be detected or reported with the screen or advertisement, to ensure the screen would automatically switch to a blank screen with black background. A condition is recommended in the event of an approval to require the above measures to control levels of luminance, as well as a condition for a maintenance management plan.

Public Safety – Highways

Highways comments note that the footway experiences high footfall and the adverts forming part of the totem structure as a whole would exacerbate this, though have not objected to the scheme on safety grounds.

While the proposal's siting would form an obstacle on the footway and contributes to an clutter, it is not considered that there would be significant likelihood of a public safety impact for pedestrians.

Conclusion

In consideration of the above factors, the proposed Street Hub advertising screens are not considered to harm amenity by virtue of light pollution or highways safety, though are considered to be detrimental to the general characteristics of the locality, as well as the historic and architectural features of the St Anns Square Conservation Area and listed buildings along King Street in the vicinity. The adverts are therefore considered to be contrary to the material provisions of the Development Plan, failing to comply with PfE Policies JP-Strat2, JP-C5 and JP-P1; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC2, EN1, T1 and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC15.1 and DC15.2; Section 12 of the NPPF; as well as guidance contained within The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance and Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide as they relate to visual amenity, the street environment and the effects of advertisements.

They are furthermore considered contrary to Sections 66 and 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, PfE Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1, and JP-P2; Core Strategy policies CC9, EN1 and EN3; saved UDP policies DC15.1, DC15.2, and DC18; and guidance contained in sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework as they relate to the desirability of protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

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:

Refuse

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

- 1) The two-sided digital screen, by virtue of its siting, scale, design, appearance and means of illumination, would form a highly prominent item of advertisement awkwardly sited towards the centre of the footway along a premier commercial street in the City's Primary Shopping Area and Retail Core. It would add further prominence to the digital totem advertisement screens along King Street, increasing the advertisement clutter they form together along a key commercial route, also increasing visual clutter when seen together with existing street furniture in this location. This would be to the detriment of the visual amenity and pedestrian experience of the locality. The proposal would therefore result in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity of the St Anns Square Conservation Area, within the setting of a number of listed buildings. The proposed advertisements would therefore be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007; Sections 66 and 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-C5, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC2, CC9, EN1, EN3, T1 and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC18 and DC19; as well as guidance contained in Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 2.41 of The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Advertising Right JC Decaux Adjacent To 42, King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
54 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LY
Advertiing Right BTinlink Outside 48, King Street, Manchester, M2 4LG
Third Floor, 39 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
Second Floor, 39 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
First Floor, 39 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
Rear Part Ground First Second And Third Floors, 33 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AA
Flat 3, 33 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
Flat 2, 33 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
Flat 1, 33 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
Third Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Second Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Suite 3C Part Third Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Suite 3B Part Third Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Suite 1B Part First Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
35 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
42 King Street West, Manchester, M3 2WY
Neals Yard Remedies, 27 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AF
35 King Street, Manchester, M2 7AT
1 - 3 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AB
Second Floor, 6 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AB
40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
31 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AA
5 - 7 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AB
52 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LY
Suite 1A Part First Floor, 40 - 44 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Basement To First Floor, 33 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AA
39 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
33 King Street, Manchester, M2 6AA
OLD EXCHANGE BUILDINGS, 6 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6BE
38 - 42 King Street, Manchester, M2 6BA
Ground Floor And First Floor, 1 - 3 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AB
Basement, 1 - 3 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AB
Third Floor And Fourth Floor, 6 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6BE
Fourth Floor Office, 6 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6BE
First Floor, 6 St Ann's Passage, Manchester, M2 6AD
50 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LY
48 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LG
46 King Street, Manchester, M2 4LG

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Multiple

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 27 October 2025 by **R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th November 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/B4215/W/25/3369503 Footpath outside 15 Oldham Road, Greater Manchester M4 5EQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Simon Warner of BT Group PLC against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref is 142705/FO/2025.
- The development proposed is described as installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369504 Footpath outside 15 Oldham Road, Greater Manchester M4 5EQ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
- The appeal is made by Simon Warner of BT Group PLC against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref is 142706/AOH/2025.
- The advertisement proposed is described as installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.

Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission to erect a street hub unit (the hub). Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for advertisement panels on either side of the hub. I have considered each appeal on its individual merits, however, as they raise similar issues, I have combined both decisions into a single decision letter.
4. In respect of Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken account of the policies that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

5. The appeal site is located within the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings known as the Former Midland Bank and the Crown and Kettle Public House. In determining Appeal A I have a statutory duty, under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of these listed buildings, and any features of special architectural and historic interest which they possess.
6. An initial site visit was made on 13 October 2025. A follow-up site visit was undertaken on 27 October 2025.

Main Issues

7. The main issues in respect of Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area, including its effect upon nearby listed buildings and conservation areas; and
 - highway and pedestrian safety.
8. The main issues in respect of Appeal B are the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity and public safety.

Reasons

Character, appearance and visual amenity

Character, appearance and significance of heritage assets

9. The appeal relates to a wide section of pavement located to the northwest of the busy junction of Oldham Road, Swan Street and Great Ancoats Street, at the northern end of Manchester's Northern Quarter. The site is situated along one of the City's major radial and circulatory routes, and is within a predominantly commercial setting, consisting of a range of food and drink establishments, offices, and car parks, as well as residential apartments.
10. There are various items of existing street furniture within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, including lighting columns, a CCTV column, bins, street cabinets, railings, bollards, and columns housing pedestrian crossing signal boxes. The presence of street furniture is therefore an established characteristic of this area, and I found the balance between the proliferation of items on the pavement and a clear and welcoming area for pedestrians to be delicately poised.
11. Additionally, due to the largely commercial character of the area I observed various signs and adverts on nearby buildings, and directly adjacent to the appeal site is a large LED advertising display, set at the back of the pavement.
12. Immediately to the southwest of the appeal site is the Former Midland Bank at 2 – 4 Swan Street, which is a Grade II Listed Building. This listed building occupies a prominent location at the corner of the junction and is visible from long distances along both Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road. Its visual prominence is accentuated through its Portland Stone finish which stands out amongst the surrounding building materials. These long views along these busy highways positively contribute to this listed building's setting.
13. Furthermore, this listed building has a distinctive curved front façade, with round headed windows, in a regular arrangement, at ground floor-level. At first floor level the windows

are square headed, with decorative stonework features above, and its roof is concealed behind a balustrade parapet. These are features of architectural interest and collectively contribute to, as does the building's visual prominence on the street scene, the significance of this designated heritage asset.

14. To the southeast, on the opposite corner of Oldham Road and Great Ancoats Street, is the Grade II Listed Building of the Crown and Kettle Public House. This hipped roof property has a buff brick finish with stone dressings. Whilst two-storey in height the building has very tall ground floor windows which include gothic tracery and linked hoodmoulds above. These features of architectural interest contribute to the significance of this listed building. However, due to the street layout, I observed that views of this listed building are somewhat limited to its immediate locality.
15. The appeal site is not located within a conservation area, however the boundaries of the Smithfield Conservation Area (SCA), Stevenson Square Conservation Area (SSCA) and Ancoats Conservation Area (ACA) all lie immediately adjacent to the appeal site. The SCA and SSCA are situated on the other side of Swan Street and Great Ancoats Street, with the ACA positioned on the other side of Oldham Road. These are relatively large conservation areas consisting of buildings of varying use, scale, form and character. I found that the significance of these CAs in-part derives from their reflection of the prosperity, evolution and industrial success of the city of Manchester.

Effect of the proposal

16. The appeal proposal seeks to erect a street hub unit with advertisement panels on either side. The proposed installation would be an upstanding rectangular structure and would house features that provide free Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging, access to emergency services and other facilities.
17. The proposed hub would be relatively utilitarian in its appearance and through a combination of both its height and width would represent a visually intrusive and bulky addition to this section of the footway in comparison to other existing items of street furniture in the immediate vicinity, which are mainly of a slimmer design. Furthermore, it would add further visual clutter, making this busy pedestrian route a less pleasing place to walk, and its siting close to the edge of the carriageway would only exacerbate its visual prominence and dominance at this busy junction.
18. I therefore find that the proposal would be visually detrimental to this section of the pavement and would cause harm to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the immediate surrounding area.
19. The proposed hub would also be prominently sited in front of the adjacent listed Former Midland Bank building, especially when viewed from Oldham Road and Great Ancoats Street, which both afford long, straight views of this listed building and its distinguishing curved frontage. The siting of the proposal would therefore affect this listed building's significance through its setting. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
20. I find the above mentioned bulky and utilitarian appearance of the hub would not be in keeping with the traditional form and design of this listed building and would introduce an incongruous feature within its setting. Additionally, as a result of its siting in front of this listed building the proposal would impede and dominate views of its distinctive, curved front elevation, as well as obscure and disrupt views from Oldham Road of its defining round-headed ground floor windows. Furthermore, I find the frequently

changing digital advertisement images on the hub would compete with the visual prominence of this listed building on the street scene.

21. The proposal would therefore harm the setting of this listed building, and features of architectural interest which contribute to its significance. Paragraph 213 of the Framework states that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification.
22. In this regard, I note the appellant refers to the removal of 2no. kiosks outside no.30 High Street. The Council however state these kiosks have already been removed and this has not been disputed by the appellant. Furthermore, at the time of my visit there appeared to be no kiosks in the location shown on the photographs provided within the appellant's submission.
23. In any case, this location on High Street is not visible from the appeal site and is therefore visually unrelated to it. The above matters therefore limit the weight I can attribute to the removal of these phone kiosks at High Street in favour of the appeal proposal's effect on the immediate surrounding area and the setting of the listed building.
24. The appellant has drawn my attention to the large, digitised advertisement directly adjacent to the appeal site, which was allowed at appeal¹². This existing advert is however set at the back of the pavement and does not obscure views of this listed building from Oldham Road. I find its siting is therefore not comparable to the appeal proposal which seeks to install a hub on the section of pavement to the front of this listed building.
25. Additionally, when allowing that appeal I note the previous Inspector's decision specifically states that *"...its relationship to the road means it would not be readily appreciated when approaching the city centre..."*. I do not consider the same can be said of the scheme before me, as a result of its prominent siting close to the edge of the carriageway.
26. Moreover, it is clear from that decision letter that the permitted advert replaced an existing advertisement. With the Inspector commenting that its relationship with the listed building *"...would be notably improved..."* as a result of alterations to a fence which would provide a greater separation between the display panel and the listed building.
27. In the appeal before me however, the hub would introduce a new and additional feature to the street scene, which for the reasons given earlier, would cause harm to the setting of this listed building, as well as the character and appearance of the immediate surrounding area in general.
28. Furthermore, I also find the addition of the rotating digital images on the proposed hub, in conjunction with the rotating images on this existing advert, would result in cumulative visual harm from digital advertisements within the immediate locality, as both screens would be visible at the same time from various vantage points.
29. The appellant has also referred to hubs that have been approved by the Council close to the appeal site, outside 6 – 14 Great Ancoats Street and 61 Great Ancoats Street², as

¹ APP/B4215/H/13/2189817

² /AOH/2023

well as other decisions³ of the Council for hubs in commercial areas, and appeal decisions⁴ from elsewhere in the UK.

30. Whilst I have had due regard to these decisions, issues relating to the impact of a proposal upon the character, appearance and visual amenity of an area, and

designated heritage assets, are matters of planning judgement based on the sitespecific circumstances and surroundings.

31. In this regard, I have been provided with limited information in respect of these decisions that would enable me to draw any direct comparisons with the specifics of the appeal site and scheme before me, including any potential relationship those proposals shared with any nearby listed buildings.
32. Furthermore, in respect of the nearby hubs on Great Ancoats Street, I observed on site that these are located at the side of a straight section of the highway and their siting is therefore not comparable to the appeal proposal which would be prominently located on the corner of a busy junction. Additionally, I have also not been provided with any details of the existing hubs on Great Ancoats Street relationship with any adjacent listed buildings.
33. Consequently, the above referenced appeal decisions, and decisions of the Council, carry limited weight in my consideration of this main issue.
34. In view of the above, I do not find that the removal of the kiosks at High Street; the existence of the adjacent advertisement hoarding; and the various decisions referenced by the appellant, provide clear and convincing justification for the identified harm that would be caused to the significance of this designated heritage asset from the proposed development within its setting.
35. With regard to the proposal's impact upon the listed building at the Crown and Kettle Public House and the nearby CAs, I note that the Council expressed no concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on the significance of the CAs and setting of this listed building.
36. I nonetheless observed on site that the proposal would be visible from these nearby CAs, and this listed building. However, given the size of the proposed hub, and the separation distance created by it being located on the other side of the wide highway, I found that the proposal would not harm the significance and/or setting of the Crown and Kettle Public House. Furthermore, during my visit I saw similar hubs and digital displays within parts of these nearby CAs and the proposal would not therefore harm the significance of these CAs.
37. Consequently, I find that the proposal would have a neutral effect upon these nearby CAs and this particular listed building. The proposal would therefore preserve their significance as designated heritage assets.
38. Nevertheless, for the reasons given earlier, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the immediate surrounding area and cause harm to visual amenity. Furthermore, the hub would cause harm to the significance and setting of the listed Former Midland Bank.

³ Council Ref: 136215/FO/23 and 136213/FO/2023

⁴ APP/J2373/H/22/3305072; APP/N0590/Z/21/3287174; ADA-180-2016 and ADA-180-2017

Public benefits and conclusions

39. In view of the above, I find the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance and setting of the Former Midland Bank listed building, with the level of harm being at the middle to lower end of that spectrum. Nevertheless, mindful of my statutory duty, I give this harm considerable importance and weight.
40. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
41. In respect of Appeal A, paragraph 119 of the Framework states that an advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The Framework also seeks to support the expansion of electronic communication networks. The hub would therefore support the Government's aim of improving digital infrastructure.
42. The proposal would include ultrafast public and encrypted wi-fi, access to public services, multiple accessibility options, secure power-only USB ports for rapid device charging, free phone calls, a direct emergency call button, community and emergency awareness messaging, and environmental sensors to measure air quality, noise and traffic. The hub would also provide improved 5G coverage to local communities through the installation of small cell mobile connectivity providing faster and more reliable connection for calls and internet access, as well as free screen time for council advertising.
43. The hub would provide some indirect lighting and be powered by 100% renewable carbon-free energy, which is an environmental benefit. I also note the appellant's view that the proposed unit could assist in encouraging shoppers to return to the city centre.
44. When taken together, I find that all the above-mentioned public benefits attract moderate weight in favour of the appeal proposal. However, these public benefits do not outweigh the considerable importance I must attach to the designated heritage asset.
45. In respect of Appeal B, the Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. As such, most of the proposed benefits put forward by the appellant cannot be taken into consideration in my decision for Appeal B. Nonetheless, even in a scenario whereby I accepted that use of the advertisement to display emergency messages and public messaging campaigns was a public safety matter relevant to the control of advertisements, the benefits derived from it would not overcome the harm I have identified to visual amenity.
46. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area. Furthermore, it would harm the significance and setting of the nearby listed Former Midland Bank building.
47. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies DM1, EN1, EN3, CC9, SP1 and T1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and amended 2024) (CS), saved Policies E3.3, DC15 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) (UDP) and Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) (PfE). These policies together require amongst other things, that development is appropriate, respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used; incorporates high quality in the design and finish of the public realm; improves the pedestrian environment; upgrades the appearance of major radial and orbital roads; preserves heritage assets, the historic

environment and the setting of listed buildings; and that the heritage significance of a site is considered in accordance with national policy.

48. The proposal would also fail to satisfy the relevant sections of the Framework and, in respect of Appeal A, the requirements of the Act.

Highway, pedestrian and public safety

49. To the northeast of the appeal site is a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing point allowing pedestrians to cross Oldham Road. I observed that this crossing point was well used.
50. All vehicles travelling through this crossing point, on this side of Oldham Road, do so via Great Ancoats Road. Due to a combination of the curved nature of the highway, the road layout and the proposed hub's distance from this crossing point, I find that the proposal would not impede or obstruct pedestrians' views of vehicles on the carriageway as they use this crossing. Additionally, the siting of the hub would ensure that road users' views of pedestrians using this crossing are also not obscured.
51. I acknowledge that the proposed hub would potentially obstruct views between some pedestrians and road users for a brief period as they approach this crossing point from the southwest. Nevertheless, based on my observations on site, given the perpendicular orientation of the hub to the carriageway and the curved nature of the road for approaching vehicles, as well as the distance between the proposed hub and the crossing point, I find there is sufficient time and distance for pedestrians and road users to both safely react before they reach the crossing point once visibility is restored.
52. Furthermore, given the distance between the proposed hub and the signal-controlled crossing to the southwest, as well as the road layout, I also find that the proposal would not unacceptably impact upon visibility between road users turning onto Swann Street from Oldham Road and pedestrians using this crossing point.
53. The Council has also commented that there is a large night-time economy in this area, and pedestrians may cross without use of the crossing point and under the influence of alcohol. Be that as it may, it is unclear how this proposed hub would create any more of a danger in this respect in comparison to other similar hubs I observed within the city. Furthermore, I have been provided with no evidence that other existing hubs elsewhere have caused a highway safety danger for the reason suggested by the Council.
54. In view of all the above, based on the information before me and my observations on site, I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to highway, pedestrian and public safety. I therefore find no conflict with CS Policies T1, DM1 and SP1, UDP Policy DC15, and PfE Policy JP-P1, where they together seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development is safe and easy to move around; has regard to road and community safety; and would not be injurious to public safety. The proposal also accords with the provisions of the Framework where it states that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
55. In coming to my conclusion, I have also taken into consideration paragraph 141 of the Framework in so far as it is material in respect of its aim of controlling advertisements in the interests of public safety.

Conclusion

56. I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have a harmful impact upon highway, pedestrian or public safety. However, for the reasons given, I have concluded that the proposal would harm the significance and setting of the adjacent Former Midland Bank

listed building, and would cause harm to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area.

57. Appeal A therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, to suggest the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Appeal B would harm visual amenity.

58. Therefore, for the reasons given, both Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

R Major

INSPECTOR