

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 143731/FO/2025
Date registered valid: 26 August 2025
Proposal: Retention of containers for storage use (Use Class B8).
Address: 7 William Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 5FX
Ward(s): Ardwick Ward

Applicant: StoreBox Self Storage Limited
Agent (if any): Mr Jordan Bishop, Turley
Case officer: Ian Jarvis
Tel: 0161 234 4079
Email: ian.jarvis@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve
Date of recommendation: 3 December 2025

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Major Industry

Standard consultations:

Printed: 27 October 2025 Expired: 17 November 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 27 October 2025 Expired: 17 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

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: No

Tree Preservation Order: No

This application, for retrospective planning permission, relates to a site at the junction of Fairfield Street, which is an extension of Ashton Old Road, and the A635 dual carriageway, which leads onto the Mancunian Way, two busy routes into, and around, Manchester City Centre. The site is therefore on the edge of the City Centre, and lies in a small industrial estate in a mostly commercial location. There is a large Class E unit, to the north, across Ashton Old Road and the site otherwise adjoins commercial units including garages and parking lots.

The site is one of a number that the applicant operates across the country that uses automated technology to enable self-storage, and the applicant states that the site has operated as a self-storage facility, incorporating single stacked containers, since November 2017, and retrospective consent is sought, to retain the use. There are approximately 70 containers on site, which have dimensions of 2.4 metres x 6 metres, which have an internal storage floorspace of approximately 14 square metres, although 4 of the containers are each divided into 4 smaller units, each with an internal storage floorspace of 3.4 square metres. All the containers are approximately 2.6 metres in height. The containers are set in rows, with space in between to allow a motor vehicle to access any unit for temporary loading/unloading, although no parking spaces are provided on site.

Access to the site is from William Street, which is itself primarily accessed from Chancellor Lane. The site slopes down, from East to West, so the cabins, at the west of the site, viewed from the A635, are largely hidden behind the existing boundary fencing. Moving along Fairfield Street, from west to east, the cabins start to rise, above the fence line, so there are currently clearer views, of the cabins, along Fairfield Street.

As these are self-storage containers, there are no employees on site, although the site is equipped with lighting, and security cameras, mounted on the containers. Access is available to customers, on a 24/7 basis.

The site lies in the HS2 safeguarded area.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local residents/adjoining occupiers - No comments received.

Highway Services - Made the following comments:

- Further information is required to understand the level of vehicular trips generated by the development site.
- Proposed Plans indicate that an internal road is provided to accommodate vehicles - Clarification is sought on the internal road width and should be shown on an updated plan with dimensions included.
- No car parking spaces is to be provided.
- It is understood that vehicles will be unloading and loading goods at the internal road.
- The largest anticipated vehicle to access the site is a box van.
- Further information is required on the internal site operation, particularly the management of vehicular movements internally when multiple vehicles are to load/unload on the same day - How will vehicles navigate past each other within the site?

In response, the applicant commented as follows:

In relation to trip generation, the development generates the following maximum levels of activity:

- 1 arrival and 1 departure during weekday AM peak hour (8-9am)
- 1 arrival and 1 departure during weekday pm peak hour (5-6pm)
- Daily - 15 arrivals and 15 departures

A site layout plan was provided, showing internal route widths and dimensions.

In relation to any potential vehicle conflict on site, the applicant stated that, from on-site experience and analysing site usage the trip rate provided (above) is higher than actual usage and there is unlikely to be any conflict with more than 1 vehicle being on site at any one time. Should that be the case, the average vehicle time on site is very limited (usually at most 10minutes) and there is sufficient space (as per the dimensions) for multiple vehicles to be on site and navigate safely. Usually vehicles will park up outside their container (load/unload container) and move off. As noted, due to the limited dwell time it is unlikely that parked vehicles on site will block others and as per the submitted plan, there is the ability to perform larger or smaller circuits around the centrally stored containers to exit the site should this be necessary.

In response, Highway Services considered the submitted information to be satisfactory, and no Highways concerns were raised.

Strategic Area and Citywide Support Manager - No objections to the proposal.

HS2 - Made the following comments:

- It is noted that the site lies entirely within the HS2 Safeguarded Area.

- In October 2023, the Prime Minister announced the cancellation of the Crewe to Manchester section of the HS2 link, but it is not currently the case that safeguarding has been removed.
- Accordingly, HS2 Ltd raises no objections in planning terms, to the proposal, but as safeguarding remains in place, in event the Council are minded to grant consent, it is requested that an informative is included on the decision notice.

Issues

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) - Sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these should be applied. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives:

An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land, of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

An environmental objective - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

It states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visibly attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 12 'Achieving Well Designed Places' states that 'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential

for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants. Communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process (paragraph 131).

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.

Policy SP1 identifies the City Council's Core Development Principles and states that development in all parts of the City should:-

Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-

- Creating well designed places that enhance or create character
- Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
- Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment

Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.

Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy EC2 relates to existing employment space and states that the Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites. Alternative uses will only be supported on sites allocated accordingly, or if it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The existing use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format;
- ii. The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses;
- iii. The existing use is unsuitable for employment having regard to the Manchester-Salford - Trafford SFRA; or
- iv. On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.'

The Council wishes to ensure there is provision of a wide selection of business space, types, sizes, quality and cost. Although the Council values employment land, there are circumstances where it will be appropriate to support alternative uses. These circumstances are outlined in the policy, and broadly aim to acknowledge situations in which it would be unproductive to protect the land for employment uses, either because:

- Employment is un-viable, particularly if the site has remained empty or vacant for a period of time although it has been marketed and the employment space no longer serves the needs of businesses due to its age and the conditions of the property; or,
- An alternative use would bring more benefits to the City, either because the employment use is not the optimum use for the site or because any harm is outweighed by the benefits of the new use. Judgements on the net value of such benefits will be based on the key strategic objectives in the Core Strategy

Policy T2 states that outside the City Centre all new development should provide appropriate car parking facilities, taking account of the guidance in Appendix B (of the Core Strategy). In all parts of the City proposals should have regard to the need for disabled and cycle parking, in line with appendix B (this indicates maximum car parking standards for various uses).

Notwithstanding the above, Policy T2 requires that consideration is given to the particular circumstances of each proposal to determine the appropriate levels of car parking that may be required. Policy T2 requires the provision of proportionate Traffic Impact Assessments and Travel Plans for all major applications and for any proposals where there are likely to be access or transport issues.

Policy DM 1 states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed

guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

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

Unitary Development Plan - The site is unallocated in the plan.

Saved Policy E3.3 relates to sites along radial and orbital routes, which includes Kingsway, and seeks to ensure that all new development, along these routes, is of the highest quality.

Saved Policy DC26 relates to noise and states that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in the City. In particular, consideration will be given to the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise.

The site lies in the Ardwick Yards and Kay Street Sub Area13, as identified in the UDP, which is identified as an industrial area comprising uses which require large sites, such as car dealerships, maintenance depots and recycling facilities.

Saved policy EM17 states that, within the Ardwick and Kay Street area development will be permitted which includes:

- i. Class B2 General Industrial development and Class B8 Storage and Distribution uses;
- ii. Relocation of "bad neighbour" uses to Ardwick West;
- iii. Environmental improvement to the Kay Street industrial area;
- iv. Provision of a high quality frontage along Pottery Lane to form a gateway to Beswick and Sportcity;
- v. Employment uses, which would take advantage of the existing rail infrastructure;

- vi. Provision of visual enhancement measures, such as landscape buffers and boundary treatments;
- vii. Provision of new local roads to open up sites for use;
- viii. Improved permeability within the area including access to Ardwick and Ashburys railway stations, West Gorton, Beswick, and Sportcity.

Places for Everyone - The approved Places for Everyone Plan is a Joint Development Plan Document, providing a strategic plan and policies, for 9 of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester.

The Plan identifies the essential aspect of the efficient and effective use of land with the preference to be given to making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed brownfield land and vacant buildings when meeting development needs.

Relevant policies of PfE in this instance are:

JP-S1: Sustainable development

JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development

JP-P1: Sustainable Places

Principle of use - The proposed use is a Class B8 storage use, which is considered in an area, which consists of other industrial, storage and commercial uses, and which is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Permanent/temporary nature of use - Cabins of this type are generally viewed as temporary units, rather than permanent additions to the site, although the applicant maintains that these cabins are made of rust resistant steel, to give the maximum life span. The applicant has also indicated that the application is for the permanent retention of the units/use and wishes a determination on this basis, rather than a temporary permission. In considering this, it is noted that the cabins/use have been in existence for 8 years and granting a temporary consent of 2 years, or more, would potentially lead to the development becoming lawful. As this is a use, which is considered to be appropriate in this location, consideration has therefore been given to how the visual impact of the site could be improved, as discussed below.

Landscaping/screening - In order to address the visual impact of the site, a landscape planting solution is proposed that the applicant states will be able to screen the containers immediately following planting. The proposed landscape solution proposes 16 x *Prunus Lusitanica* 'Angustifolia' to be planted on the northern and western boundaries between the rear of the containers and the existing fencing. It is indicated that these trees would be sized equivalent to c. 4-4.5m height, in order to achieve a day one screening that matches the height of the top of the containers. The trees will grow at a rate of c. 30cm each year subject to weather and ground conditions, and gradually fill out to close the gaps between each one.

The majority of these trees would therefore be located along the Fairfield Street boundary, of the site, which is the area most in need of screening, and based on the details provided by the applicant, it is expected that these would form sufficient screening of the site.

Accordingly, subject to the provision of landscaping/screening, of the level proposed, it is accepted that the cabins would have a much reduced visual impact, upon the adjoining streets, and a permanent permission is considered to be acceptable.

The applicant has also provided a landscape management and maintenance plan, indicating regular hand watering during the tree establishment and pruning of the trees every three years.

The nature of the self-service operation, means that only single stacked units are suitable, but a condition is nevertheless proposed, to prevent any future stacking of cabins.

Employment - It needs to be noted that there are no employees who work on site full/part time, although management and maintenance of the site is needed, so there are employees who maintain operations remotely and who need to visit the site when required.

Highways - On-street parking, on William Street, appears to be an issue, potentially with vehicles being parked there by people working in the City Centre, However, the applicant has identified a low level of activity at the site, with vehicles able to access and manoeuvre within the site. There are also no permanent on-site employees, so there should be no need for any vehicles, associated with the operation of the site, to park on any nearby streets, or add to existing on-site parking difficulties, and Highways Services have no objections to the proposal.

Residential amenity - The nearest residential properties are located approximately 400 metres from the site, and separated from it by other buildings/uses and busy roads. Given the indicated low level of activity, at the site, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on local residents. In addition, the use has operated on site with no apparent residential amenity issues. Environmental Health Officers have reviewed the application, and no conditions are recommended. Allowing this use to operate permanently is not therefore considered to have a detrimental impact upon local residents.

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

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. Discussions have taken place with the applicant through the course of the application, particularly in respect of the number of the temporary/permanent nature of the use, highways matters and the screening of the site. The current proposal is considered to be acceptable and therefore determined within a timely manner.

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

1) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

Drawings numbered ARD_PE-00, ARD_PP-03, ARD_PP-04 and ARD_PP-05

Drawings titled '40' Multistore Container Standard Height 4-Bay' and '20' Standard Container' Design and Access Statement

All stamped as received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 13 August 2025

Drawings numbered ARD_PP-02 rev A, STE-ARD-EEN-01 Rev A, STE-ARD-EEW-01 Rev A and STB-ARD-SP-01

Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan

All stamped as received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 24 November 2025

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

2) The soft landscaping scheme approved by the City Council as local planning authority shown on drawings numbered STE-ARD-EEN-01 Rev A and STE-ARD-EEW-01 Rev A, and indicated in the Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan, all stamped as received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 24 November 2025, shall be implemented not later than 6 months from the date of this permission. If within a period of 15 years from the date of the planting of any tree or shrub, that tree or shrub or any tree or shrub planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree or shrub of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place.

Reason - To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is carried out that respects the character and visual amenities of the area, in accordance with policies SP1, EN9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

3) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawings and documents, within three months, of the date of this permission a detailed landscape maintenance plan, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. The content of the plan should include ongoing maintenance proposals for the maintenance of the planting/landscaping measures proposed, and the opportunity for the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, to require additional planting measures, if the planting provided does not provide an adequate level of site screening. The development shall then be maintained in accordance with these approved details.

Reason - To ensure that a satisfactory appearance, for the development, is maintained through its presence and operation on site, pursuant to policies SP1, EN9 and DM1 of Manchester's Core Strategy.

4) The site shall only be used for self-storage facility purposes only and for no other purposes including any other use within Class B8 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification.

Reason - In interests of highway safety and residential amenity, in order to reduce noise and general disturbance in accordance with saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, T2 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

5) The development hereby approved shall comprise of single stacked containers only, as indicated in the approved drawings, and no additional cabins should be installed above the existing single stacked cabins.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure the satisfactory development of the site, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, and saved policy E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Informatives

1) The applicant is advised that the application site is located wholly within land that is covered by HS2 Safeguarding Directions, which remain in place on the former Phase 2b Western Leg route (between Crewe and Manchester). As such, the applicant is advised to monitor future Government announcements on this subject.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Environmental Health
Highway Services
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited
Highway Services
Environmental Health

1 Dark Lane, Manchester, M12 6FA
Unit 1, 1 Dark Lane, Manchester, M12 6FA
Hillaire Electronics Ltd, Dark Lane, Manchester, M12 6FA
Ideal Printing, Mill Green Street, Manchester, M12 6FB
197 Fairfield Street, Manchester, M12 6EE
COONEEN TEXTILES LTD, Unit 2, 1 Dark Lane, Manchester, M12 6FA
Gerrards Ice Cream, William Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 6RQ
Awan Autotech, Mill Green Street, Manchester, M12 6FB
Unit 3, Gerrards Ice Cream, William Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 6RQ
Unit 2, Gerrards Ice Cream, William Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 6RQ
Unit 1, Gerrards Ice Cream, William Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 6RQ

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - North Manchester PD Restriction - Class B1(c) 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
HS2 Phase 2b Safeguarding Zones - HS2 Safeguarding Zones (June 2022)
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH AREA