



Collar Site, Etihad Campus
Response to the Green and Blue
Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester

March 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This ‘Response to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester’ (“the Statement”) accompanies an application for Full Planning Permission for a three-storey approx. 600 capacity entertainment venue (Sui Generis), associated infrastructure, access servicing, management, and public realm improvements (the “Proposed Development”).
- 1.2. The Applicant is Manchester City Football Club (‘MCFC’) (the ‘Applicant’).
- 1.3. The Statement sets out how the Proposed Development responds to the vision and objectives set out in the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022) (‘The G&BI Strategy’).
- 1.4. In turn, this Statement also demonstrates how the Proposed Development addresses the following policies from the Local Development Plan:

Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and its Addendum (2024)	Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure
	Policy EN15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
The Places for Everyone Plan (2024)	Policy JP-Strat13 – Strategic Green Infrastructure
	Policy JP-G2 – Green Infrastructure Network
	Policy JP-G3 – River Valleys and Waterways
	Policy JP-G6 – Urban Green Space
	Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland
	Policy JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 1.5. It should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement (prepared by PRP Architects) submitted in support of the Application.

The G&BI Strategy

- 1.6. Manchester’s Great Outdoors: A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester 2015-25 was adopted by MCC in July 2015 and subsequently updated in 2022, highlighting approaches, challenges and projects that will help bring the Strategy to life over the coming years.
- 1.7. MCC recognises that green and blue infrastructure is an essential part of creating a successful, liveable city. Parks, river valleys, gardens, street trees, green roofs, canals and many other components all form part of a rich network that is integrated with the built environment in the world’s most popular cities.
- 1.8. The overarching vision for the Strategy remains as follows:

“By 2025, climate-resilient well-maintained green and blue spaces remains an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The city’s communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and green spaces, and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the city. Green and blue infrastructure will be supporting Manchester’s growth.”
- 1.9. Four objectives have been established to enable the vision to be achieved:

- Improve the quality and function of existing green and blue infrastructure;
- Use appropriate green and blue infrastructure as a key component of new developments to help create successful neighbourhoods and support the city's growth;
- Improve connectivity and accessibility to green and blue infrastructure within the city and beyond; and,
- Improve and promote a wider understanding and awareness of the benefits that green and blue infrastructure provides for residents, the economy and the local environment.

- 1.10. Section 3 of the updated G&BI Strategy outlines the progress to date and notes that the G&BI Strategy has acted as catalysts for some of the most groundbreaking environmental projects in Manchester. The Strategy has encouraged collaboration, bringing together organisations in order to deliver bold, innovative action that will benefit Manchester for many years to come.
- 1.11. Section 3.4 of the G&BI Strategy recognises that Manchester is a growing city, with plans for significant growth and development over the coming decade. High quality, green and open space that is appropriate to its location, well designed and well maintained will be an important and integral part of creating successful developments and supporting the city's growth.
- 1.12. The G&BI Strategy provides initial guidance on how developers can achieve this and recognises that different approaches will be required for different types of development and that different solutions, appropriate to the location, will be needed on each scheme. By considering green infrastructure from the beginning of the design process, developers will be able to understand the surrounding landscape, opportunities to enhance and link to it, and the types of green and open space that could be incorporated within and add value to the development itself.

The Application Site

- 1.13. The Site is circa 0.63ha and currently used as a temporary construction compound for the North Stand Expansion scheme at the Etihad Stadium (Ref: 136763/FO/2023). It is bound by the Metrolink line to the north, Alan Turing Way to the east, Gibbon Street to the south, and Loverose Street to the west.
- 1.14. The Site mainly consists of hardstanding, there is negligible scattered ruderal vegetation and there are no existing trees located on the Site. Therefore, it does not currently contribute to Manchester's Blue and Green Infrastructure.

The Proposed Development

- 1.15. The Applicant has partnered with PopHouse (an entertainment company) to bring Mamma Mia! The Party (MMTP) – an immersive theatrical dining experience created by Björn Ulvaeus – to Manchester. The overarching intention is that guests will be seated within a “Greek taverna” for a meal whilst a live theatrical performance of Mamma Mia! take place around them.
- 1.16. This new venue is the next exciting step in the Etihad Campus's journey, building on its success as a global hub for sport and entertainment. The immersive events space will enhance its offering and further cement the campus as a premier destination for unparalleled entertainment 24/7, day and night.
- 1.17. Full detail of the Proposed Development is discussed within the Design and Access Statement prepared by PRP Architects submitted in support of this Application.

Etihad Campus G&BI Vision

- 1.18. The Etihad Campus aspires to be a pioneer for the whole of Manchester in pursuing its twin objective of realising locally-inclusive, globally-competitive economic growth, whilst

simultaneously transforming to a zero-carbon campus. A key theme that underpins the delivery of this vision is for the campus to be a beacon of Manchester's rapid transition to a zero-carbon city, rich with wildlife and green infrastructure.

- 1.19. The vision for the Campus masterplan centres on creating an accessible and enjoyable public realm connected to the existing green and blue infrastructure, particularly the Ashton Canal. The public realm proposal of the Proposed Development is designed in this context so as to fully integrates into the future Masterplan.

The Proposed Development

- 1.20. The Proposed Development will contribute to the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure vision for the Etihad Campus and has been designed in the context of forming a piece of the wider Etihad Campus Public Realm Masterplan.
- 1.21. The planting scheme will contribute, albeit of a modest scale, by introducing green infrastructure to an existing hardstanding site.
- 1.22. Landscaping is proposed in the following areas:
- Along Alan Turing Way – Buffer planting is proposed to enhance the visual connection from Alan Turing Way into the Site and complement the existing trees. Planting will be used to help screen the back of house facilities.
 - Along Gibbon Street – Increased planting is proposed along Gibbon Street to complement the existing pallet.
 - Arrival Plaza (area facing the Etihad Stadium) – Different surface material (compared to what is there as exist) is proposed to denote the arrival space for the Site. Use of the existing trees and planting would frame the Arrival Plaza and detailed banding within the surface material indicates the front entrance to the Proposed Development.
- 1.23. The softworks strategy aims to enhance the existing planting along Gibbon Street and elevate the greenery along the gateway to the Site and the Etihad Stadium. Tree planting alongside Alan Turing Way will help improve the visual connection from the road through to the Site whilst screening the back-of-house facilities of the Proposed Development.

2. Assessment of the Proposed Development

2.1. This section outlines the vision and objectives of the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2022 and response from the Proposed Development.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives

2.2. As set out in Section 1, the G&BI Strategy establishes four objectives to enable the vision to be achieved. Table 2.1 below considers the Proposed Development (as described in Section 1) against these objectives.

Table 2.1 The Proposed Development's Response to Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives

Objective:	Responses:
Improve the quality and function of existing Green and Blue Infrastructure to maximise the benefits it delivers.	<p>The Proposed Development delivers an enhancement to the quality and function of existing Green and Blue Infrastructure, within the Etihad Campus. It transforms a currently underutilised, temporary construction compound into an active, leisure and entertainment together with provision of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Moreover, the Proposed Development protects blue infrastructure through a comprehensive sustainable drainage strategy that incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) principles, reducing run-off and safeguarding water quality.</p>
Use appropriate green and blue infrastructure as a key component of new developments to help create successful neighbourhoods and support the city's growth.	<p>The Proposed Development integrates green and blue infrastructure as one of the core components, directly contributing to the creation of a successful neighbourhood and supporting the City's continued growth.</p> <p>This Proposed Development introduces a unique, year-round immersive entertainment venue, significantly activating the Etihad Campus. Its high-quality architectural design and integrated public realm improvements, including the new Arrival Plaza and enhanced planting along Alan Turing Way and Gibbon Street, create vibrant frontages and accessible spaces. These enhancements will draw both event-day and non-event day visitors and the general public, encouraging engagement with the existing green and blue infrastructure.</p> <p>Serving as a crucial next step in the Etihad Campus's evolution, the Proposed Development acts as a catalyst for further investment, solidifying its status as a premium, 24/7 entertainment destination. Its year-round operation broadens engagement beyond major event days, providing a consistent</p>

Objective:	Responses:
	<p>cultural and leisure offering for the local community and the wider GM region.</p> <p>The Proposed Development prioritises a strong sense of place by introducing an active use onto the Site and encouraging community interaction. By enhancing local character through thoughtful design, the Proposed Development makes a positive contribution to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Proposed Development incorporates a robust sustainability strategy, encompassing energy efficiency, waste management, and water resilience, aligns with Manchester's net-zero ambitions. This, coupled with significant job creation during both construction and operation, stimulates commercial growth and ensures the viable use of brownfield land, directly supporting the City's economic and environmental objectives.</p>
<p>Improve connectivity and accessibility to Green and Blue Infrastructure within the City and beyond.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development significantly enhances connectivity and accessibility to green and blue infrastructure, both within the City and beyond.</p> <p>Located within the highly accessible Etihad Campus, the Proposed Development capitalises on its proximity to key green and blue routes. The proposed public realm and landscaping improvements, particularly along Alan Turing Way and Gibbon Street, are designed to improve the visual connection to the Site and integrate seamlessly with the future wider masterplan at the Etihad Campus. This creates a more inviting and legible environment, encouraging greater use of the existing pedestrian and cycling networks, including the Ashton Canal towpath and cycle lanes.</p> <p>By introducing a unique, year-round entertainment venue, the Proposed Development will generate consistent footfall, increasing activity and natural surveillance along these routes. This enhances safety whilst raise awareness among visitors and residents of the valuable green and blue infrastructure in the City. The Applicant's commitment to sustainable travel, with a high proportion of trips expected by foot or public transport, actively promotes active modes of travel.</p>
<p>Improve and promote a wider understanding and awareness of the benefits that Green and Blue Infrastructure provides to residents, the economy and the local environment.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development improves and promotes awareness and appreciation for green and blue infrastructure to residents, the economy, and the local environment.</p> <p>The Site is currently a temporary construction compound which mainly consists of hardstanding. The Proposed Development aims to transform the Site into a unique leisure and entertainment venue and incorporate a vibrant landscaping scheme, thereby actively draws people to the City's green and blue infrastructure. Enhanced planting</p>

Objective:	Responses:
	<p>scheme along Gibbon Street and Alan Turing Way and the Arrival Plaza create attractive spaces whilst softening the key gateways to the Site.</p> <p>Operating year-round, the Proposed Development ensures continuous engagement, increased footfall and interaction with the City's green and blue infrastructure. Its accessible location promotes active travel and boosts wellbeing.</p> <p>By integrating a unique leisure and entertainment venue at the Site within the Etihad Campus, the Proposed Development serves as a tangible demonstration of how green and blue infrastructure could deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits.</p>

Relevant Local Development Plan Policies

Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and its Addendum (2024)

Policy EN9 Green Infrastructure

- 2.3. Core Strategy Policy EN9 sets out that new development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and multiple function. Where the opportunity arises and in accordance with current G&BI Strategy, the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure.

Policy EN15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

- 2.4. Core Strategy Policy EN15 states the Council will seek to maintain or enhance sites of biodiversity throughout the City and that developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate.

Places for Everyone Plan (2024)

Policy JP-G2 – Green Infrastructure Network

- 2.5. Policy JP-G2 states *“a strategic approach will be taken to the protection, management and enhancement of our Green Infrastructure in order to protect and enhance the ecosystem services which the Green Infrastructure Network provides, including flood management, climate change mitigation and adaptation.”* Where it is deemed feasible, new and existing green infrastructure should be integrated into new development so as to protect, enhance, and expand the green infrastructure network.

Policy JP-G3 – River Valleys and Waterways

- 2.6. Policy JP-G3 states *“river valleys and waterways will be protected and improved as central components of our Green Infrastructure Network and a vital part of a Nature Recovery Network, making a major contribution to local identity, quality of life and the natural environment.”*

Policy JP-G6 – Urban Green Space

- 2.7. Policy JP-G6 stipulates that existing urban green space will be protected whilst new urban green space is encouraged to be delivered. Development should be designed to support the positive use of nearby green spaces, such as by offering a high-quality setting, providing natural surveillance, and facilitating easy access by walking and cycling.

Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland

- 2.8. Policy JP-G7 references there should be a considerable increase in provision of street trees within urban areas, and public access to trees should be enhanced particularly by sustainable travel models.

Policy JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 2.9. Policy JP-G8 promotes biodiversity enhancement through various initiatives and put strong emphasis on nature conservation, access to nature, and habitats enhancement.

Applicant's Response to Relevant Planning Policy

Green Infrastructure

- 2.10. The Proposed Development delivers a significant enhancement to the quality and function of existing green and blue infrastructure, building directly on the assets enjoyed by the Etihad Campus. It transforms a currently underutilised, temporary construction compound into an active leisure and entertainment venue, integrating new green and blue infrastructure provisions. This directly responds to Core Strategy Policy EN9 and PfE Policy JP-G2 by enhancing the quality and quantity of green infrastructure and improving its functions.
- 2.11. The proposed landscaping scheme, including new planting along Alan Turing Way and Gibbon Street, alongside a new Arrival Plaza (area facing Medlock Square), significantly improves visual appeal and the pedestrian experience. This introduces new green spaces, directly contributes to the City's green infrastructure, in line with PfE Policy JP-G6 and support the increase in provision of street trees as encouraged by PfE Policy JP-G7. Furthermore, the Proposed Development protects blue infrastructure through a comprehensive Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) strategy, reducing run-off and safeguarding water quality, thereby contributing to the protection and improvement of waterways as central components of the Green Infrastructure Network, as outlined in PfE Policy JP-G3.
- 2.12. This Proposed Development builds on the excellent connectivity and accessibility currently enjoyed by the Etihad Campus, fostering active travel and encouraging greater engagement with the existing pedestrian and cycling networks, including the Ashton Canal towpath. The Applicant's commitment to sustainable travel, with a projected 65% of trips expected by foot or public transport, will ensure these existing routes are better utilised, supporting the objectives of Core Strategy Policy EN9, PfE Policies JP-G2 and JP-G6 by improving linkages and facilitating easy access.
- 2.13. The Proposed Development directly contributes to creating a successful neighbourhood and supporting the City's continued growth. It introduces a unique, year-round immersive entertainment venue, significantly activating the Etihad Campus. Its high-quality architectural design and integrated public realm improvements create vibrant frontages and accessible spaces, drawing both event-day and non-event day visitors and the general public, thereby encouraging engagement with the existing green and blue infrastructure. This aligns with PfE Policy JP-G6 by supporting the positive use of nearby green spaces through a high-quality setting.
- 2.14. The Proposed Development acts as a crucial next step in the Etihad Campus's evolution, by acting as a catalyst for further investment, solidifying its status as a premium 24/7 entertainment destination. Its year-round operation broadens engagement beyond major event days, providing a consistent cultural and leisure offering for the local community and the wider Greater Manchester region. The Proposed Development prioritises a strong sense of place by introducing an active use onto the Site and encouraging community interaction. Therefore, enhancing local character and making a positive contribution to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community, consistent with the aims of PfE Policy JP-G3 for local identity and quality of life.
- 2.15. Moreover, the Proposed Development incorporates a robust sustainability strategy, encompassing energy efficiency, waste management, and water resilience, aligning with Manchester's net-zero ambitions. This, coupled with job creation during both construction and operation stages, stimulates commercial growth and ensures the viable use of brownfield land. By

transforming a hardstanding temporary compound into a vibrant leisure and entertainment venue with a comprehensive landscaping scheme, the Proposed Development actively draws people to the City's green and blue infrastructures, promoting its awareness.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.16. The Environment Act 2021 mandates a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) for most new developments, calculated using a standard metric. This involves assessing pre-development habitats and planned enhancements, aiming to balance development needs with environmental protection. Developers must either create new habitat or offset losses elsewhere, while still adhering to the established mitigation hierarchy. Exemptions apply to developments with minimal habitat impact (less than 25 square metres) or where the existing biodiversity value is zero.
- 2.17. In relation to the Site, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was prepared by Niche and submitted in support of this Application. The PEA confirms the Site's pre-development biodiversity value as zero habitat units, classifying it as urban, sealed land with negligible vegetation. The PEA also confirms that the Proposed Development benefits from the 'de minimis' exemption under the Biodiversity Gain Regulations 2024, meaning no Biodiversity Net Gain assessment or compensation is required.
- 2.18. Notwithstanding, biodiversity enhancement is expected as part of the landscaping and public realm works proposed as part of this Application.

3. Summary

- 3.1. Building on the green and blue infrastructure already delivered at the Etihad Campus, the Proposed Development creates further enhancements by delivering a vibrant leisure and entertainment at the heart of the Campus whilst incorporating a well-designed public realm landscaping proposal.
- 3.2. The Proposed Development will incorporate soft landscaping, mostly along Gibbon Street and Alan Turing Way to soften the key gateways leading onto the Site. In addition, an area of public realm “Arrival Plaza” (area facing Medlock Square) has also been proposed to improve overall visual and pedestrian experience.
- 3.3. The Proposed Development aligns with the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy's vision and objectives, as well as relevant local planning policies, by improving the quality and function of existing green and blue infrastructure, integrating it into new development, improving connectivity, and promoting awareness of its benefits.
- 3.4. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the vision and objectives of the G&BI Strategy and the relevant Local Development Plan policies when taken as a whole.



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