

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 144115/AOH/2025
Date registered valid: 30 September 2025
Proposal: Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens.
Address: Outside Deansgate Station, Whitworth Street West, Manchester , M1 5WY
Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Miss Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC
Agent (if any): Nia Bywater Dalcour Maclaren
Case officer: Lea Joseph
Tel: 0161 227 3644
Email: lea.joseph@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: **Refuse**
Date of recommendation: **25 November 2025**

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 16 October 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 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 and area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area:

Tree Preservation Order:

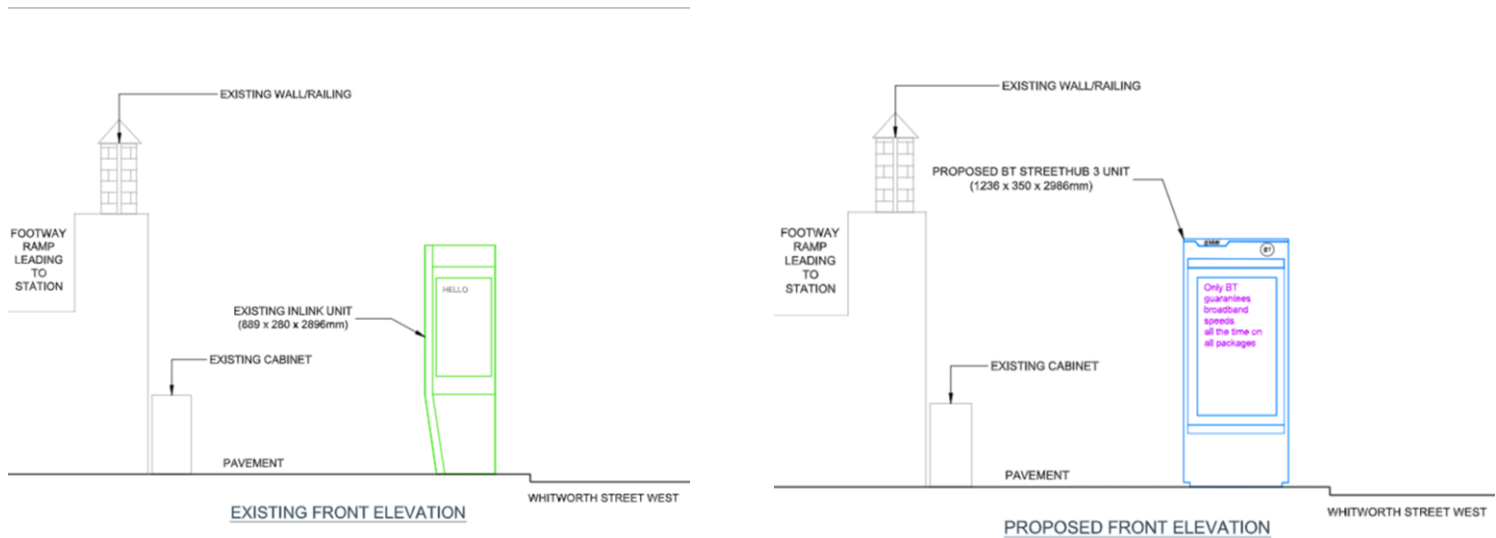
The application site pertains to a small area of pavement to the rear of Deansgate Rail Station.

The area contains a medley of historic and modern structures. The contemporary Deansgate Tram Station is parallel to the rail station and modern link bridge above the adopted highway connects the two stations. Historic rail infrastructure is also present in the area at the intersections of Whitworth Street West, Deansgate, Castle Street and Bridgewater Viaduct.

The Grade II Listed Deansgate Station (formerly Knott Mill Station) forms part of the setting for the site. The building was listed in 1998 and originally built in 1849 then reconstructed in 1896. The Station is unique for its siting on an acute angle and curved entrance. The building is primarily composed in red brick and borrows from the Gothic and Baronial architecture styles which can be seen in its arched doorways with decorative sandstone aediculas and decorative portcullis. Sandstone decoration can be seen across the building, and decorative blue brick is present at the ground floor level around the entirety of the structure's exterior.

Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of 2no. internally illuminated advertisement screens to be sited on a digital totem, to replace the existing InLink digital screens and totem.



The application is being considered alongside application ref no 144114/FO/2025 which seeks consent for the Installation of digital LED totem.

Planning History

118447/FO/2017 | Full Planning Permission for installation of 1no. 2.9m high Inlink following removal of 1no. KX100 telephone kiosk. (Approved June 2018)

118448/AOH/2017 | Installation of 2no digital LED display screens to associated InLink relating to planning application 118447. (Approved June 2018)

130410/AOH/2021 | Installation of 1 freestanding double-sided BT Street Hub advertising unit (related planning application ref no.130409/FO/2021) following removal of 2no. telephone kiosks. (Approved July 2022)

144114/FO/2025 | Installation of digital LED totem. (Refused in conjunction with this application.)

Relevant neighbouring applications:

130510/AOH/2021 | The replacement of 22 existing freestanding advertising units comprising 6 sheet advertising panels with 21 "Forum" CIP advertising units and 1 Smart City unit within the Outer City Centre (Group 5). (Approved October 2022)

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity

Notification letters have been sent to surrounding properties. No representations have been received.

Ward Members – An objection representation has been received from Councillor Johns who is concerned by the volume of applications from the applicant. Many of these are in busy locations where street clutter should be reduced. Object on the basis that they reduce available pavement space and contribute to crime and anti-social behaviour.

- Concerned by the volume of applications from the applicant. Many of these are in busy locations where street clutter should be reduced. Object on the basis that they reduce available pavement space and contribute to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Highway Services – Highways are concerned that the increased footprint of the proposed BT Street Hub Unit will impede pedestrian movement and inclusive access on the highway. This is of special concern due to the City Centre location and proximity to the rail station. The installation of a wider unit could lead to reduced levels of pedestrian comfort, navigation and safety, particularly for pedestrians with accessibility requirements. Highly congested areas could lead to pedestrians stepping into the cycle lane or live carriageway which is a safety concern. There is safety concerns related to obscured vantage points enabling anti-social behaviour. The proposal would heighten this issue and exacerbate the issues of street clutter in the environment and is inconsistent with the council-wide decluttering strategy while also failing to meet street design standards and policy related to safety, access and active travel.

Environmental Health – No objections. If approved the proposed unit must be conditioned to only display static images with a minimum display time of ten seconds. Calling and voice activated technology may not be implemented until a Noise Management Plan is submitted for review. A Management Plan would also be required for review.

Metrolink – No objections or comments.

Network Rail – No objections or comments.

Greater Manchester Police Counter Terrorism – No objections or comments.

Policy

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 relevant to consideration of this application within the development plan:

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027)

DM1 Development Management

SP1 Spatial Principles

CC9 Design and Heritage

EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

EN3 Heritage

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-C6 Walking and Cycling

JP-C5 Streets for All

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies

DC15 Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters

DC19 Listed Buildings

DC22 Footpath Protection

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 16 Conserving the historic environment

Paragraph 141 states:

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.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 require that special consideration is given to the preservation of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas.

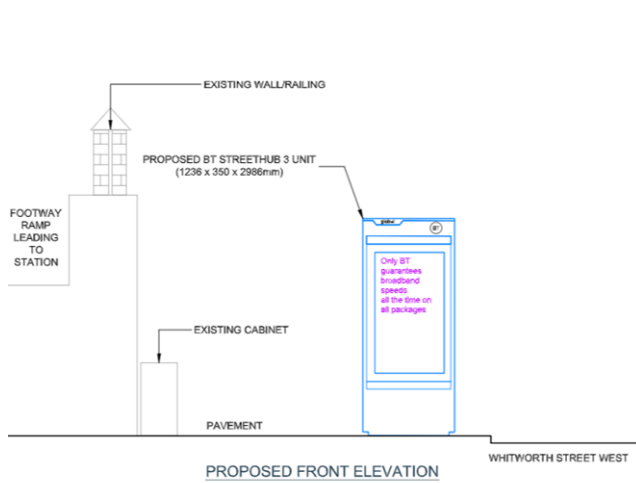
GMCA Streets for All Design Guide

Adopted November 2023 to ensure will ensure that streets are welcoming, green and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel by walking, cycling, and using public transport while creating thriving places that support local communities and businesses.

Issues

Visual Amenity

Policy DC15 requires that advertisement hoardings are unobtrusive and positively contribute to their locality. The NPPF sets out the necessity for advertisements to be well-designed and sited. Policy SP1 requires that development proposals 'enhance or create character'.



Policy DM1 states that all development should have regard for 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, and have regard to the character of the surrounding area. The size of the advertisement screen would also significantly increase. In comparison to the existing which is 0.64m x 1.14m with each side of the totem would featuring a digital HD screen measuring 0.95m x 1.67m.

These changes to scale and appearance are considered to be a negative change which would result in an unacceptable level of harm to visual amenity in the area. The adverts would become

more dominant in the street scene by virtue of this change and detract from the character of the area, which does not feature a high quantum of advertisements and signage.

In view of the above, it is not considered that the proposed Street Hub advertisements represent a like-for-like replacement within the street scene, having a more dominant and obtrusive visual presence than the existing InLink model and would contribute towards visual clutter that would detract from the appearance of the street scene.

In addition to this, the intensified level of advertisement would also significantly detract from the setting of the Grade II listed Deansgate Station due to its visual domination within its setting.

The advert would appear as modern and directly viewed against Deansgate Station which would be unduly harmful and significantly detract from the traditional highly decorative and red brick facades.

Policy JP-P2 details the importance of heritage significance to development considerations and the requirement of conservation and enhancement of the setting of heritage assets. Policy EN3 requires that development complements and 'takes advantage of' historic distinctiveness when relevant.' Policy DC19 requires that development does not adversely impact the character of the setting of Listed Buildings.

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 this part of Whitworth Street West.

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.

In view of the above, it is not considered that the proposed Street Hub advertisements represent a like-for-like replacement within the street scene, having a more dominant and obtrusive visual presence than the existing InLink model and would contribute towards visual clutter that would detract from the appearance of the street scene.

In addition to this, the intensified level of advertisement would also significantly detract from the significantly detract from the traditional highly decorative and red brick facades and impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Deansgate Station.

*Deansgate Station. (1989-1990),
Manchester Archives.*





Existing InLink totem in situ alongside raised ramp access.

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 featuring high levels of advertisement and street clutter, 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. Additionally, they noted the frequently changing digital advertisement images on the hub would compete with the visual prominence of this listed building on the street scene.

The Advertisements Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, any public benefits suggested by the applicant in their submission do not need to be weighed against the any less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets, in accordance with Paragraph 215. The accompanying decision for the totem structure itself does engage this test and make an assessment weighing the less than substantial harm against any public benefits to the proposal.

A recent appeal decided in Manchester City Council boundaries by the Planning Inspectorate for 142706/AOH/2025 (Appeal ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369504), confirms that this is the appropriate approach.

Section 66 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 require that special consideration is given to the preservation of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings. For the reasons outlined above, it is not considered that the proposal preserves of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings and the character of the conservation area.

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 for the advertisement, due to the intensification of advertisement clutter, which would be visually detrimental to the street scene, and the setting of Deansgate Station.

Therefore the advertisement would be contrary to the provisions of Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P1, JP-P2, policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC18, DC19 and DC22 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Public Safety

The proposed development would be situated along a pedestrian footpath. Highway services have not raised any significant concerns with the totem's impact on pedestrian accessibility, and they have not provided any comments in relation to the increase of the digital display.

Highway Services have recommended a condition could be secured that would see the luminance level of the advertisement limited to 600cd/m² during hours of darkness and inclement weather. Additionally, there would be other conditions that would control the intervals between advertisements, as well as prohibit moving advertisements, the proposed development would not pose any risk to public safety.

Highway Services a condition requiring the submission of a construction management plan is disproportionate to the development proposed and as such will not be attached in the event of an approval.

Conclusion

The proposed adverts are refused on the basis that they would be poorly designed, unsympathetic additions to the street scape and would have an unacceptable impact on visual

amenity by virtue of its siting, scale, appearance and consistent rotation of static advertisement images, and would form an overly dominant and visually obtrusive feature within the street scene

They would detract from the area's character, appearance and the architectural significance of the Grade II Listed Deansgate Station. The modern exterior and increased scale would be a negative addition to the site that would negatively impact public safety and accessibility on a busy road with high amounts of pedestrian and cycle users. On this basis the application is contrary to policies SP1, DM1, EN1, EN3, CC9, CC10, JP-P1, JP-P2, JP-C5, JP-C6, DC15, DC19 and DC22.

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

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

- 1) The proposed digital advertising display, by virtue of its siting, scale, appearance, and consistent rotation of static advertisement images, would form an overly dominant and visually obtrusive feature within the street scene and within the setting of the listed Deansgate Station nearby listed building. The advertisement would also contribute to advertisement clutter in a sensitive location in the city centre, as well as undermine current efforts to de-clutter the City Centre environment. The proposal would therefore result in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity of the area, within the setting of designated heritage assets. The advertisement is therefore contrary to the provisions of

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C5 of Places for Everyone Plan, policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC19 and DC22 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Metrolink
Network Rail

343 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4LG
9 Century Street, Manchester, M3 4QL
Rebellion, 2B Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WZ
Deansgate Railway Station, Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4LG
345 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4LG

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL