

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 144201/AOH/2025
Date registered valid: 30 September 2025
Proposal: Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens.
Address: Outside No. 8-10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EF
Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC
Agent (if any): Tom Hayes
Case officer: Michael Pearson
Tel: 0161 219 2735
Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Refuse
Date of recommendation: 25/11/2025

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 7 October 2025 Expired: 28 October 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 7 October 2025 Expired: 28 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/building

The application relates to a section of public footway to the front of no8-10 Exchange Street. As existing, the application site is paved in York Stone paving and features a double sided LED totem. Said totem is coloured grey, with both digital displays making up roughly half of the height of the total unit. The site is then flanked by an outdoor seating area and street trees.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: St Anns Square Conservation Area

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The site is located within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area, and St Anns Square itself, a large pedestrianised public space within Manchester City Centre's Primary Shopping Area. Neighbouring built development is largely characterised by a mix of Victorian and Edwardian properties, including the Grade II listed Royal Exchange, Boer War Memorial and no16 St Ann's Square. Local uses are largely comprised of commercial class E restaurant and café uses that benefit from outside seating areas. St Ann's Square Conservation Area features several LED screens within its heart, this being St Anns Square itself, that are due to be removed by 2026.

Description of development

The application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens.

The proposed screens would be 975mm wide by 1675mm high and would face out north and south along the footway on Exchange Street, with the existing screens on site having a width of 889mm and a height of 1215mm.

Planning History

144118/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem – Application under consideration.

118434/AOH/2017 - Installation of 2 no. digital LED display screens to associated InLink - (related planning application ref: 118433/FO/2017) – Approved November 2018.

118433/FO/2017 - Full planning permission for installation of 1 no. 2.9m high InLink following removal of 4 no. KX100 telephone kiosk – Approved November 2018.

Relevant Neighbouring Applications

137115/AOH/2023 - Replacement of an existing interactive totem with a 2.42m x 1.27m totem including full motion LED display of digital advertising – Approved August 2023.

137114/AOH/2023 - Replacement of an existing interactive totem with a 2.42m x 1.27m totem including full motion LED display of digital advertising – Approved August 2023.

130164/AOH/2021 - The replacement of 11 freestanding advertising units comprising five columns and six x 6 sheet advertising panels with 11 "Forum" Smart City CIP advertising units within the Core City Centre (Group 1) – Approved August 2021.

103223/AO/2013/C1 - The installation of an interactive totem including display of digital advertising – Approved October 2013.

103206/AO/2013/C1 - The installation of an interactive totem including display of digital advertising – Approved October 2013.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – Neighbouring properties were notified of the proposals by letter. No representations were received.

Councillor Marcus Johns – The proposals are located in an area where the City Council is actively trying to reduce street clutter. The proposal would reduce available pavement space and contribute to criminal and anti-social behaviour by reducing sightlines.

Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions relating to the submission of an external lighting scheme, the prohibition of any use of external speakers and a maintenance and management plan.

Highways – Should the proposals be approved, conditions requiring the control of the content of the advertisement and a construction management plan, as well as informatives relating to any required licensing and highway hoarding, should be attached.

Policy

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 Places for Everyone Plan – Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:

- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage
- Policy JP-C5 – Streets for All
- Policy JP-C6 – Walking and Cycling

The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012 – 2027 (“the Core Strategy”) was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:

- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy CC10 – Places for Everyone
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

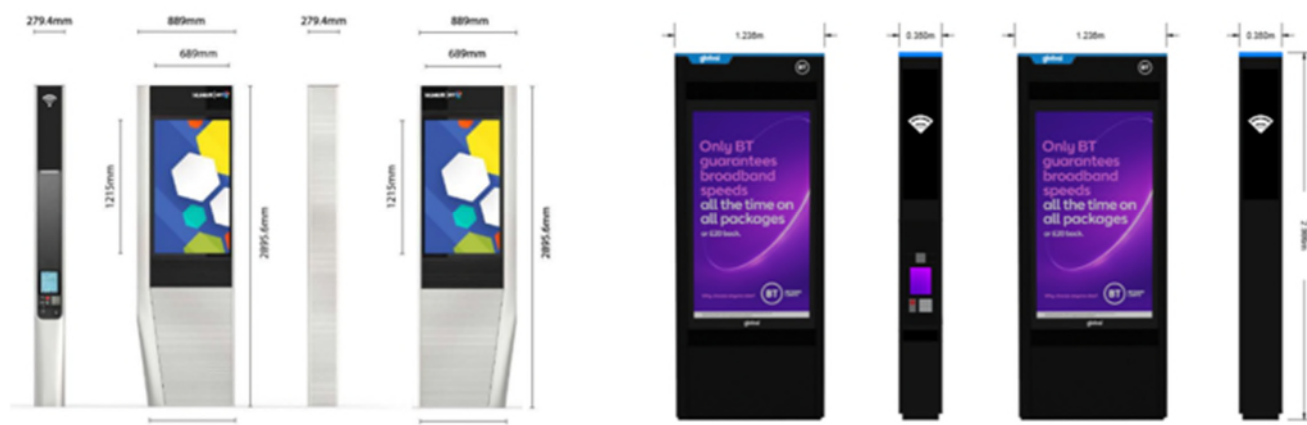
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and Beautiful Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving the Historic Environment

Other Legislative Requirements

Issues

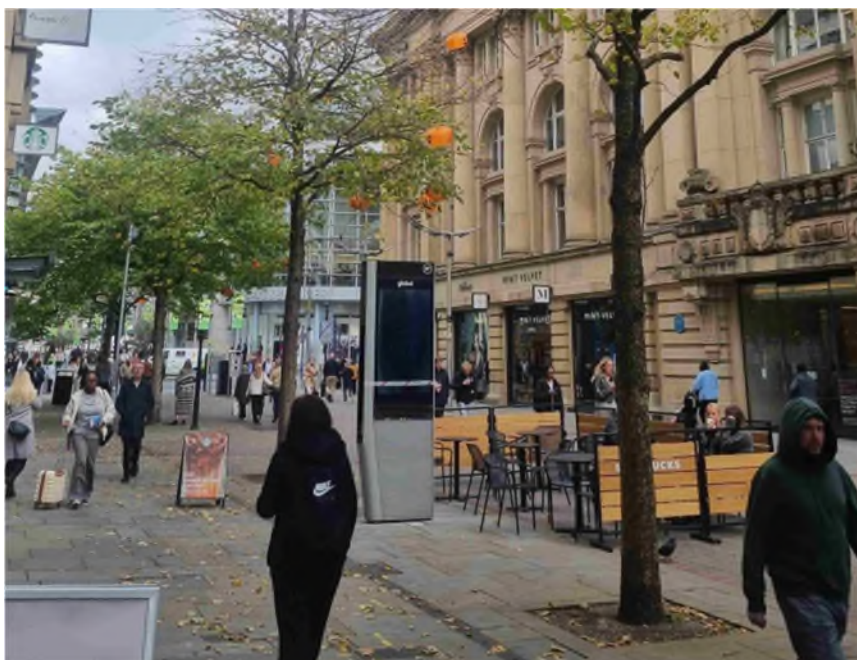
Amenity

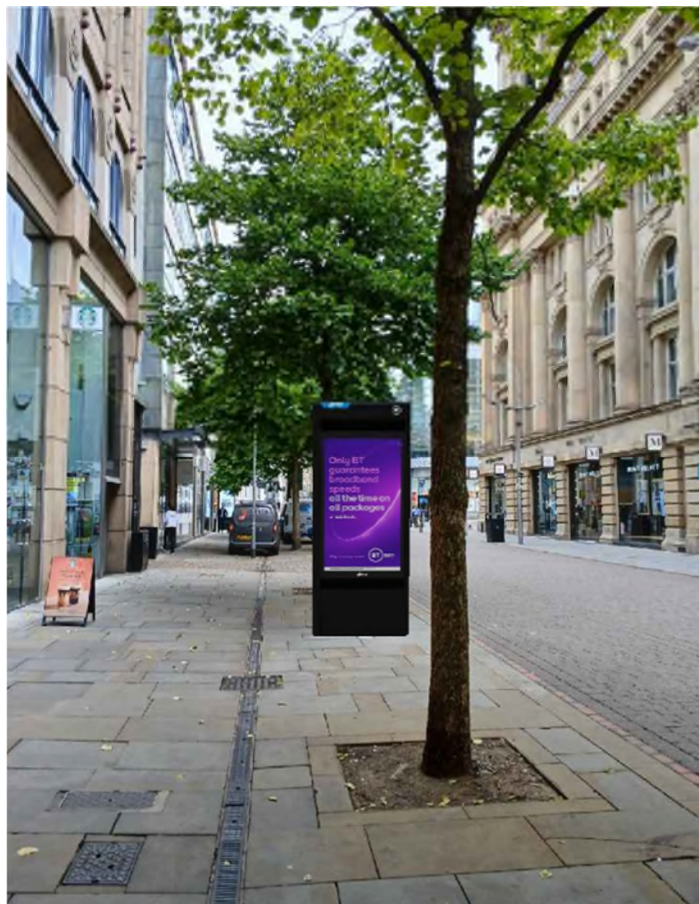
The proposal would see the replacement of the InLink model screens with those of the Street Hub 3 model.



Existing (left) and proposed (right) totem with advertisement screens sizes and design

The proposed LED screens would be larger at 75", measuring 950cm x 1670mm, as opposed to the screens on the existing InLink model, which are 69mm x 1210mm (Images of the existing totem site and a visualisation of the proposed totems are shown above).





Existing and proposed views of the application site

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, undermining local public realm regeneration efforts within Stevenson Square.

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 other advertisements within the setting, intensifying advertisement clutter which would detract from the appearance of the street scene.

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.

In addition to this, the intensified level of advertisement would also detract from the setting of the Grade II listed Royal Exchange and Boer War Memorial.

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.

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.

Sections 66 and 72 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. 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 the St Anns Square Conservation Area, and setting of nearby listed buildings. Therefore, the advertisement is therefore contrary to the provisions of Places for Everyone Plan Policy 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 section of busy footway. Highways note that the totem's impact on pedestrian accessibility could cause an unacceptable impact, however, they do not comment upon the impact of the larger screen itself. Subject to appropriate planning condition that would see the luminance level of the advertisement limited to 600cd/m² during hours of darkness and inclement weather, and 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. It is considered the imposition of 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. As such, subject to conditions that would restrict the illumination of the advertisement and its content, the proposal is considered would accord with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-Strat2, JP-C5 and JP-C6, Core Strategy Policies CC10 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC22, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

In light of the above it has been found that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity by virtue of its siting, design, size and digital nature. The development is therefore contrary to Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC18 and DC19 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. Therefore, the application is recommended for refusal.

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 St Anns Square Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. The advertisement would also contribute to advertisement clutter in a sensitive location in the City Centre as well as undermining current efforts to de-clutter the City Centre environment, particularly wider place making objectives in the City Centre. The proposal would therefore result in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity of the area as well as the setting of the designated heritage assets. The advertisement is therefore contrary to the provisions of Places for Everyone Plan Policy 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.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Fifth Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
First Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Units 2 And 3, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Unit 1, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
STARBUCKS COFFEE, Unit 4 At, 8 - 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Part Sixth Floor FRT, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Unit 5, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Ground Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Fourth Floor And Fifth Floor, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Third Floor, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
First Floor, 8 - 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Second Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Sixth Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
5 Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Unit 4, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA

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