MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144109/AOH/2025
Date registered valid:	30 September 2025
Proposal:	Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens
Address:	Footpath Outside 1 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4AJ
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Ms Verity Cheyne, BT Telecommunications PLC
Agent (if any):	Mr Oliver Taylor, Dalcour Maclaren
Case officer:	Jack Naven Tel: 0161 219 2095 Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**21 November 2025**

Application Details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 15 October 2025

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/Area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application relates to a site within Piccadilly Gardens in the City Centre. Piccadilly Gardens is a formally laid out square incorporating areas of grass, high quality glazing and a modern water feature. It was reconfigured in 2002 to designs by Tadao Ando. Parts of the concrete walls that were part of the design remain.

There is a modern mixed-use building at One Piccadilly Gardens, which has office accommodation on the upper floors and commercial units at ground floor level. There are also commercial units within the gardens that are within the curve of the concrete wall.

Piccadilly Gardens is also home to the Queen Victoria Monument, the Sir Robert Peel Statue, the James Watt Statue, and the Duke of Wellington Statue, which are all Grade II listed.

The Piccadilly Gardens Transport Interchange with bus and Metrolink services are located between the formal gardens and Piccadilly Plaza, which is a complex constructed in 1965 that includes a 30-storey office building currently named City Tower, the Mercure Hotel and a number of ground floor commercial units.

The Gardens themselves are not within a Conservation Area but are adjacent the Smithfield Conservation Area, the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and Upper King Street Conservation Area.

The City Council has made it publicly clear its intention to significantly regenerate the Piccadilly Gardens area in future, with LDA Design having been appointed to map out the £25 million regeneration. The most recent update on this regeneration was published in October 2025, with the intention to make Piccadilly Gardens an attractive world-class space.

The immediate plan will see Manchester City Council lead on a wide-ranging package of improvements to Piccadilly Gardens to make it more colourful, vibrant and inviting in the months ahead. Measures range from improving safety, enhancing CCTV and security, to decluttering and revamping the public realm around the Gardens.

The application site is located directly outside One Piccadilly Gardens, adjacent to Portland Street, which has a bus gate on this section of the road and therefore is only accessed by buses and black cabs and pedal cycles at all times – 24 hours a day.

Piccadilly Gardens station is located to the south-west of the site and the metrolink link that connects this station to Piccadilly runs slightly southwest of the site.

The Grade II listed Portland Thistle Hotel is located across Portland Street and the application site would be considered within the setting of this heritage asset.

The site is not located in nor is it adjacent to a conservation area.

Description of Development

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

The screens will be placed on a proposed Street Hub 3 totem would be a replacement of the existing InLink model. It would be free-standing, rectilinear in shape and have a depth of 35cm, a width of 1.23m and a height of 2.99m.

Each side would feature a digital HD screen measuring 950mm x 1670mm. It would be with a galvanised steel structure and feature a black powder coated cladding.

Related Applications

144108/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem.
To be refused in tandem with this application.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties.

One objection has been received, from a Local Ward Councillor, who stated that the advertisement totem is in a busy location, does not contribute to the Council's objective to reduce street clutter, reduces pavement space and sightlines and makes pedestrians feel more enclosed in locations where we should be prioritising pedestrians.

Highway Services - Advised that the proposal does not contribute to or align with Manchester City Council's ongoing de-cluttering strategy of the highway, fails to meet broader design standards and policies that promote inclusive access and safe, active travel, and have concerns that the increased footprint of the totem could impede pedestrian movement and inclusive accessibility and increase localised pedestrian congestion.

Environmental Health - Requested that if the application were to be approved, conditions should be attached to control the light from the digital display screens, the noise from speakers on the street hub, and for a maintenance management plan to be submitted.

Policy

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

(1) A 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-P1 - Sustainable Places
- 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 - A Place for Everyone
- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy DM1 - Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995) - The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC15 - Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters
- Policy DC19 - Listed Buildings
- Policy DC22 - Footpath Protection
- Policy DC26 - Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024):

- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide (2023)

Adopted November 2023 to ensure will ensure that our 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.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

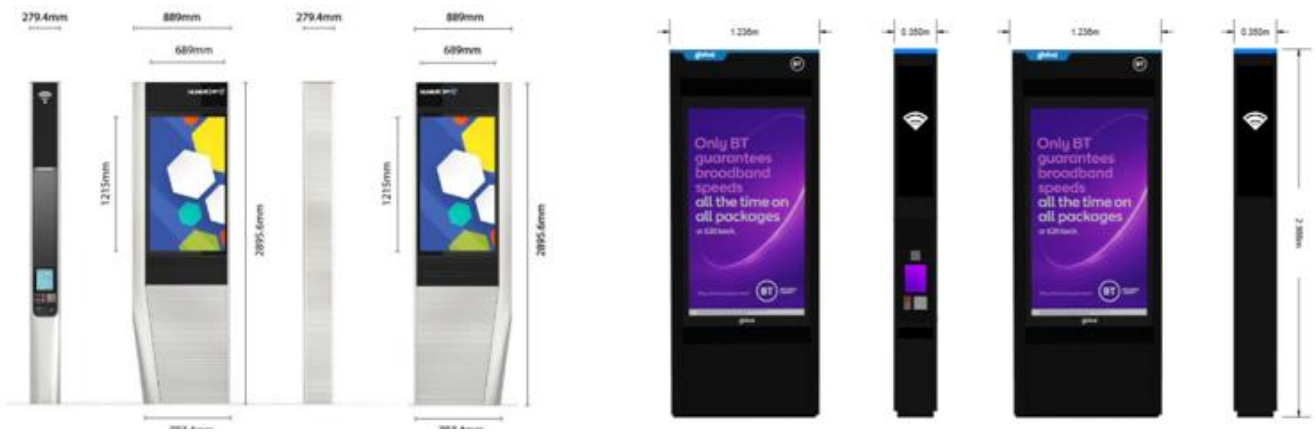
Sections 16, 66, and 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 require that special consideration is given to the preservation of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas.

<u>Issues</u>

The main issues for consideration relate to the principle of the proposal, as well as, in accordance with the advertisement regulations, the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its impact upon visual amenity and upon public safety. In judging this, the provisions of the development plan and any other relevant factors, so far as they are material, must be taken into account.

Visual 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.

Existing advertisement screen on site

The City Council has made it publicly clear its intention to significantly regenerate the Piccadilly Gardens area in future, with LDA Design having been appointed to map out the £25 million regeneration. The most recent update on this regeneration was published in October 2025, with the intention to make Piccadilly Gardens an attractive world-class space.

The immediate plan will see Manchester City Council lead on a wide-ranging package of improvements to Piccadilly Gardens to make it more colourful, vibrant and inviting in the months ahead. Measures range from improving safety, enhancing CCTV and security, to decluttering and revamping the public realm around the Gardens.

Whilst there is currently no adopted SRF for Piccadilly Gardens, the plans to regenerate the area have been clearly stated, with regeneration plans being drawn up by the City Council currently.

Existing InLink Portland Street, Outside No. 1, Manchester, M1 4AJ	**Proposed BT Street Hub 3** Portland Street, Outside No. 1, Manchester, M1 4AJ

Render comparison of existing Inlink totem with advertising screen and proposed Street Hub totem with advertising screen

The proposed digital advertisements would be significantly larger in size that the existing digital adverts in place and the contribution these larger adverts would make to advertisement clutter would significantly negatively impact upon the plans to regenerate Piccadilly Gardens, as an increase in advertisement clutter would not be visually appealing and will detract from any forthcoming efforts to make Piccadilly Gardens an attractive world-class space.

Other advertisements in the area are considered to be necessary in order to the advertise and provide wayfinding for neighbouring businesses. The advertisement totems are not required in the same manner, they do not provide wayfinding to specific businesses and do not advertise individual businesses located in the immediate vicinity.

Unlike the application for the existing InLink model, approved in 2018, the proposal would not reduce the scale of existing advertisement and provide no additional associated visual benefit weighing in favour of the scheme.

The existing InLink advertising screens are relatively restrained in scale, occupying less surface area of the totem's faces. By contrast, the Street Hub advertising screens are wider and taller, and would present a more prominent form of advertisement visible along the route.

It is acknowledged that adverts are intended to attract attention, however digital advertisement displays have a greater brightness than traditional advertisement and are by design highly visible in the street scene.

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 Portland Thistle Hotel immediately to the east of the site.

Portland Street view of Grade II listed Portland Thistle Hotel

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.

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, within the setting of listed buildings and the conservation area, and the future proposed regeneration of Piccadilly Gardens, would be contrary to the provisions of Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C5 of the Places for Everyone Plan, 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), sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

Public Safety

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

MCC's Environmental Health team have reviewed the scheme are satisfied that as long as conditions were added to control the light from the digital display screens, the noise from speakers on the street hub, and for a maintenance management plan to be submitted, then any concerns regarding luminance of the digital screens, noise from the speakers, concerns over video or moving transitions, and problems that might arise from incorrect maintenance of the displays, would be mitigated.

As these elements could be mitigated via the way of conditions, concerns over any of these impacts are not significant enough to warrant a refusal on public safety grounds.

Highways comments note that the footway is already congested and the adverts forming part of the totem structure as a whole would exacerbate this congestion.

They note that congested areas on the pavement may result in pedestrians stepping out onto the adjacent live carriageway but have not objected to the scheme on safety grounds.

Highways have neither raised concerns about the obscurement of traffic signals or blocking of sightlines for pedestrians or drivers.

While the proposal's siting would form an obstacle on the footway and contributes to an impression of clutter, it is not considered that there is evidence of enough of a public safety impact for pedestrians in order to warrant a refusal on these grounds for this particular site.

Conclusion

Any public safety concerns of the proposed digital advertising displays are not significant enough to refuse on public safety grounds.

However, due to a combination of its height, width, materiality, and appearance, the proposed hub, with its large digital advertisement panels on both sides, would represent a dominant and obtrusive feature on the pavement that would add further advertisement clutter, making this busy pedestrian route a less pleasing place to walk, with its siting close to the edge of the carriageway would only exacerbate its visual prominence and dominance at this busy junction, within the setting of heritage assets.

Therefore, the proposed digital advertising displays are refused on visual amenity grounds, due to the proposal being contrary to the provisions of Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C5 of the Places for Everyone Plan, 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), sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

<u>Other Legislative Requirements</u>

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 polices 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

<u>Reasons for recommendation to refuse</u>

1) The proposed digital advertising display, by virtue of its siting, scale, appearance, and consistent rotation of advertisement images, would form an overly dominant and visually obtrusive feature within the street scene and within the setting of nearby listed buildings. 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, particularly wider place making objectives associated with the future proposed regeneration of Piccadilly Gardens. 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 Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Advertising Right Opposite 1, Portland Street, Manchester, M1 1RG
Sixth Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
Fourth Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
Fifth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Ground Floor Unit E2, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Sixth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Huxters, Minshull Street, Manchester, M1 3EF
Ninth Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BH
Aytoun Street Wing Ninth Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BH
Fourth Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M60 1HY
Third Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M60 1HY
Third Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
Ground Floor, Westminster House, Aytoun Street, Manchester, M1 3DL
Gourmet Society, Fifth Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
Seventh Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3HU
Edwards, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3HU
First Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3PL
Fifth Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3HU
First And Second Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Second Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
New College Group, Ground And First Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BE
Ground Floor Unit F, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Fourth Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
PIZZAEXPRESS, Ground Floor Units C1 And D3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Hotel Ibis Styles Manchester Portland, 3 - 5 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 6DP
4 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GS
Ground Floor Unit E1, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Unit G1, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Unit G2 And G3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Third Floor, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
SHORYU, Ground Floor Units C2 To C3, 1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG
Eighth Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3BH
Second Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M60 1HY
Ground Floor, Westminster House, 11 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3PL
Second Floor, 4 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GS

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