

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 144196/AOH/2025
Date registered valid: 30 September 2025
Proposal: Installation of 2no internally illuminated digital display screens.
Address: Outside No. 9 Stevenson Square , Manchester, M1 1DB
Ward(s): Piccadilly Ward

Applicant: Ms Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC
Agent (if any): Mr Oliver Taylor Dalcour Maclaren
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: 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/building

The application relates to a section of public footway to the front of no9 Stevenson Square. As existing, the application site is paved in tarmac 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, which is expanded during the summer months, as well as several planters and an anti-ramming bollard.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Stevenson Square Conservation Area 1987

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The neighbouring area forms that of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area, and Stevenson Square itself, a large partly pedestrianised public space within the heart of Manchester's Northern Quarter neighbourhood, a thriving mixed use area that serves as the epicentre of cultural production and consumption within Manchester City Centre. Neighbouring built development is typically of older Victorian and Edwardian stock; this includes the Grade II listed Sevendale House and 49 Newton Street. Local uses are largely comprised of commercial class E restaurant and café uses, as well as Sui Generis drinking establishment uses that benefit from outdoor seating areas. Local regeneration efforts have seen the remodelling of Stevenson Square, with the provision of street trees and the removal of vehicular access through the square from west to east and vice versa. During the spring and summer months of the year, Stevenson Square is home to expanded provision of outdoor seating areas to the aforementioned commercial units to the point

where much of the square is dedicated to said seating. The Stevenson Square Conservation Area features relatively few LED screen advertisements, with the majority of said advertisements being located at the Conservation Area's southern tip along Piccadilly. 2no LED screen advertisements are then located to the north of the application site along the eastern side of Lever Street outside of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area.

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 onto Lever Street and the northern pavement that runs along the northern side of Stevenson Square, with the existing screens on site having a width of 889mm and a height of 1215mm.

Planning History

144144/FO/2025 - Installation of digital LED totem – Application under consideration.

134583/FO/2022 - Creation of external seating area, installation of wall mounted lights, front entrance door and rear ventilation equipment – Approved October 2022.

121599/AO/2018 - Installation of 2 no. digital LED display screens to associated InLink (related planning application ref no. 121598/FO/2018) – Approved January 2019.

121598/FO/2018 - Full planning permission for installation of 1 no. 2.9m high InLink following removal of 2 no. telephone kiosks – Approved January 2019.

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-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 – 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

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Design for Access 2

Streets for All Design Guide

Issues

Amenity

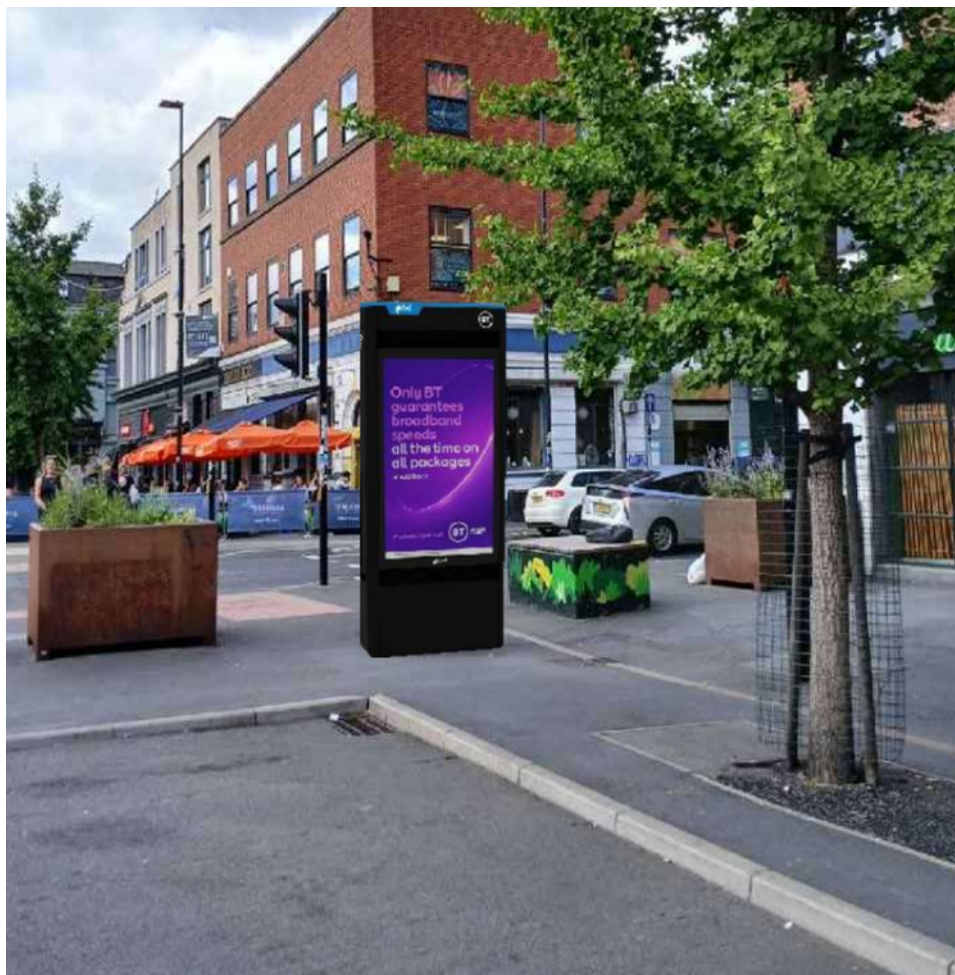
The proposal would see the replacement of the InLink model screens with those of the Street Hub 3 model.



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 Sevendale House and 49 Newton Street.

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 Stevenson 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 that lies adjacent to a busy road and cycle lane. 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.

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, 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 Stevenson Square conservation area and nearby listed buildings. 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, 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.

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 Stevenson 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 Stevenson Square. 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

Ground Floor, 9 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
Second Floor, 9 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
Advertising Right BT Inlink Outside 9, Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
Basement And Ground Floor, 23 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 15, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 14, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 13, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 12, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 11, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 10, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 9, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 8, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 7, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 6, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 5, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 4, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 3, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 2, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
Flat 1, The Bradley, 23 - 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1EL
First Floor Unit 2, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Fourth Floor Unit A1, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Third Floor Unit A3, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Ground Floor, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
First Floor Unit 1, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Basement, 49A Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Basement And Ground Floor, 25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1ET
55 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1ET
Third Floor Unit 3B, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
Fourth Floor, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FR
Third Floor, 9 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
First Floor, 9 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
9 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DB
20 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FR
GLORIOUS CREATIVE, 10A Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1FB
5A Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DN
Second Floor, 18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
5 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1DN
18 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
25A Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1ET
10 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1FB
Ground Floor, 10 Stevenson Square, Manchester, M1 1HR
49A Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT
22 Little Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1HR
25 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1ET

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(c) To C3
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
Conservation Area - Stevenson Square Conservation Area 1987
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
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