

PLANNING STATEMENT

1. Introduction and application context

1.1 Purpose of the Planning Statement

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application at 11 Sherborne Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, M3 1JS. The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of an existing industrial unit from its current B2/B8 employment use to an indoor sport and wellness facility within Use Class E(d), together with an ancillary café.

This Statement demonstrates that the proposal is acceptable. It does not represent an unjustified loss of employment activity. It replaces a lower-intensity industrial/storage use with a more active, public-facing, employment-generating commercial use which delivers significant social, economic and regeneration benefits. The proposal makes effective use of an existing building, responds to an identified deficiency in health and fitness provision, supports the regeneration of the Strangeways and Great Ducie Street area, and accords with the relevant objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, the Draft Manchester Local Plan 2025, the Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework and the Cheetham Hill District Centre evidence base.

1.2 Nature of the Proposed Use

The proposed use falls within Use Class E(d), which relates to indoor sport, recreation and fitness uses where the activity is principally undertaken indoors. The facility will provide indoor sport and wellness provision within the existing building envelope, supported by ancillary café provision that is subordinate to the main use and intended to serve users of the facility rather than operate as an independent destination.

The development does not involve external courts, external activity areas, external plant, amplified outdoor sound, or any form of use that would materially intensify impacts beyond the existing urban and commercial context. The proposal is contained, managed and commercially structured. Its operational model is compatible with the surrounding mixed commercial and employment area and materially less intrusive than a range of lawful industrial or storage activities that may otherwise occupy the building.

1.3 The Correct Planning Question

The correct planning question is not whether the former B2/B8 use is retained, because it is not. The correct question is whether the proposed replacement use is acceptable having regard to the development plan and material considerations. That assessment must recognise that the site is located in a highly accessible inner-urban area undergoing regeneration, that the existing building is suitable for large-format indoor sport use, that Cheetham Hill has an identified deficiency in health and fitness provision, and that the proposed use remains employment-generating, commercially productive and compatible with the strategic direction of the area.

The proposal should therefore be assessed as a justified transition from a traditional industrial/storage use to a modern commercial leisure and wellbeing use. That transition is consistent with the evolution of the Strangeways and Great Ducie Street corridor and with the policy objective of diversifying and intensifying urban land uses where this supports economic, social and environmental outcomes.

1.4 Statutory Framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan includes the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan. The Draft Manchester Local Plan 2025 is an emerging plan and is a material consideration, with weight to be applied having regard to its stage of preparation, consistency with national policy and relevance to the proposal. The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration of substantial weight.

When assessed against this framework, the proposal is acceptable. It accords with the strategic direction of policy, delivers sustainable development, and gives rise to no adverse impacts that would justify refusal.

2. National planning policy framework

2.1 Sustainable Development and the Presumption in Favour

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires development proposals that accord with the development plan to be approved without delay. Where the most important policies are out of date or silent, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

The proposal constitutes sustainable development. It satisfies the economic objective by introducing a viable employment-generating commercial use into an existing building. It satisfies the social objective by delivering accessible indoor sport and wellness provision that supports healthier lifestyles. It satisfies the environmental objective by reusing an existing building within an accessible urban location without requiring new land take, demolition or significant physical expansion.

The proposal therefore falls squarely within the type of development that national policy seeks to support. It is not speculative, isolated or environmentally harmful. It is a managed and beneficial reuse of existing urban floorspace.

2.2 Economic Growth and Business Adaptation

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. The proposal directly satisfies this requirement. It allows an existing building to respond to modern commercial demand and enables investment in a use that is viable, active and employment-generating.

The former industrial/storage use represents a traditional employment function, but national policy does not require employment land to remain frozen in its historic form where a more productive and beneficial commercial use is proposed. Planning policy supports economic adaptation. The proposed Class E(d) facility is a business use. It will generate direct employment through management, reception, coaching, maintenance, cleaning, administration and café operations. It will also generate indirect economic benefits through servicing, equipment supply, customer expenditure and increased activity in the surrounding area.

Paragraph 87 requires planning decisions to recognise the specific locational requirements of different sectors. Indoor padel and wellness facilities require large, open-span buildings with sufficient floor area, internal height, structural capacity and parking/servicing arrangements. These physical requirements are not typically available within small district centre units. The existing industrial

building is therefore particularly well suited to the proposed use. Its conversion to indoor sport is not an arbitrary loss of industrial space, but a rational and policy-compliant response to the operational requirements of the sector.

2.3 Effective Use of Land and Existing Buildings

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to promote the effective use of land, including the reuse of previously developed land and existing buildings. The proposal achieves this in a direct and practical manner. It makes use of an existing building, avoids unnecessary demolition, avoids expansion onto undeveloped land and increases the productive occupation of the site.

The application does not rely on new-build development or significant physical intervention. The existing building is retained and repurposed. This is an efficient and sustainable approach to land use. It is also consistent with the wider direction of national planning policy, which supports brownfield reuse, urban intensification and the optimisation of existing assets in accessible locations.

2.4 Health, Wellbeing and Recreation

Paragraphs 96 and 98 of the NPPF place clear weight on the role of planning in supporting healthy and inclusive communities. The Framework requires planning decisions to support access to sport, recreation and community facilities and to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities.

The proposal delivers new indoor sport and wellness infrastructure in an area where such provision is limited. It supports physical activity, social participation and wider wellbeing. This is a significant public benefit. The health and wellbeing case is not secondary to the proposal; it is central to its planning justification.

The facility will broaden access to indoor sport in a dense urban area and provide a year-round recreational offer unaffected by weather. That is an important consideration in a city context where access to suitable indoor space can be limited. The proposal therefore aligns closely with the social objectives of the Framework and attracts substantial positive weight.

2.5 Town Centre and Sequential Policy

The proposed use is a main town centre use for the purposes of national policy. The sequential approach is therefore relevant. However, the sequential test must be applied with realism and flexibility, having regard to the nature and format of the proposed use.

The facility requires a large-format building with adequate internal height, open floorplate, structural capacity, parking, servicing and operational management space. The Cheetham Hill District Centre evidence base confirms that the centre is predominantly made up of smaller-scale units, with limited larger-format opportunities. It also identifies the absence of gym or health/fitness club provision within the centre.

The proposal therefore satisfies the sequential approach. It addresses a deficiency in provision while being located close to the district centre, in an accessible urban location, in a building that is physically capable of accommodating the use. Requiring the facility to locate within small-format centre units would be unrealistic and inconsistent with the proper application of sequential policy. The proposal complements the centre rather than competes with it.

2.6 Transport and Accessibility

Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF require development to prioritise sustainable transport and confirm that refusal on transport grounds should only occur where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. The application site is located in a highly accessible inner-urban location, close to Manchester City Centre, Cheetham Hill and established public transport routes.

The proposed use will operate on a managed and pre-booked basis. Trips will be predictable and structured. Unlike B2/B8 uses, the proposal does not generate HGV movements, industrial servicing patterns or heavy logistics activity. The transport profile is therefore compatible with the location and materially less harmful than many industrial/storage operations that could otherwise take place within the building. There is no evidence that the proposal would result in severe residual highway impacts. The national policy threshold for refusal is not approached.

2.7 Amenity and Environmental Protection

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to ensure that development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution, including noise. Paragraph 187 requires adverse impacts to be mitigated and reduced to a minimum.

The proposal complies with these requirements. All activity is internal. No external courts are proposed. No external plant or amplified external sound is proposed. The building envelope provides containment and separation from sensitive receptors. The proposed use is materially different from outdoor sport or late-night entertainment uses. It is an enclosed, managed and commercially supervised facility.

In amenity terms, the proposal is acceptable. The surrounding context is urban, commercial and employment-led. The use is compatible with that context and does not introduce unacceptable noise, disturbance, odour, overlooking, privacy or environmental impacts.

2.8 Overall NPPF Compliance

The proposal accords with the NPPF when read as a whole. It supports economic growth, makes effective use of land, delivers health and wellbeing infrastructure, satisfies sequential requirements in a realistic and proportionate manner, promotes sustainable transport and avoids unacceptable amenity impacts. The presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, and there is no national policy basis for refusal.

3. Places for everyone joint development plan

3.1 Statutory Status and Strategic Role

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan forms part of the statutory development plan and carries full weight. It establishes the strategic framework for growth across Greater Manchester, including the need to focus development within sustainable urban locations, support economic growth, optimise the use of brownfield land and improve access to services and facilities.

The application site lies within the wider Core Growth Area and Inner Area context associated with Manchester's continued urban expansion. These areas are expected to accommodate growth, intensification, mixed-use development and regeneration. The proposal aligns with that strategy by repurposing an existing building for a commercially productive and socially beneficial use.

3.2 Core Growth Area and Urban Intensification

Policy JP-Strat 1 identifies the Core Growth Area as the principal focus for economic growth, regeneration and development. The policy seeks to maximise the potential of accessible urban land and support the continued growth of Manchester as the economic driver of the conurbation.

The proposal is consistent with this strategy. It does not involve peripheral expansion, greenfield development or inefficient land use. It brings an existing building into an active commercial use that supports employment, activity and urban vitality. The change from B2/B8 to Class E(d) does not undermine the Core Growth Area strategy. It supports it by introducing a modern commercial facility that reflects the changing land use character of the area.

3.3 Employment and Economic Development

Places for Everyone seeks to provide sufficient employment land and premises to support economic growth. That objective must be applied with proper regard to the nature of the proposal. Although the scheme no longer retains B2/B8 use, it does not remove the site from economic use. It replaces one commercial employment use with another.

The proposed Class E(d) use will generate direct employment and economic activity. It is likely to be more labour intensive than many B8 storage operations, which can operate with low staffing levels and limited day-to-day public interaction. The proposal will support staff roles across management, reception, coaching, customer service, café operations, cleaning, maintenance and administration. It will also support indirect jobs and expenditure through local supply chains.

The policy purpose of protecting employment land is to ensure continued economic function, job generation and business activity. The proposal satisfies those underlying objectives, even though the specific B2/B8 use is replaced. It is therefore not a harmful loss of economic function, but a justified change to a different employment-generating commercial use.

3.4 Diversification and Modernisation of Urban Employment Areas

Places for Everyone supports the modernisation and diversification of employment locations where this contributes to economic resilience and sustainable growth. Urban employment areas cannot be treated as static land banks for historic use classes where market demand, regeneration priorities and community needs point towards more productive uses.

The proposal is an example of appropriate diversification. It replaces a traditional industrial/storage use with an indoor sport and wellness facility that remains commercial, active and employment-generating. It contributes to a wider mix of uses, supports regeneration and improves the functionality of the area without introducing a sensitive residential use or sterilising surrounding employment activity.

This is a key distinction. The proposal does not create land use conflict. It does not introduce residential amenity constraints. It does not prevent nearby commercial or industrial premises from operating. It is therefore compatible with the economic role of the area.

3.5 Sustainable Development and Accessible Location

Places for Everyone promotes sustainable patterns of development by directing growth to accessible locations and requiring the efficient use of land. The proposal complies with this strategic objective. The site is within an established urban area close to Manchester City Centre, Cheetham Hill and existing transport infrastructure. It is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and does not require new strategic highway infrastructure.

The reuse of the existing building also supports spatial efficiency. The proposal avoids unnecessary land take and makes productive use of an existing urban asset. This is consistent with the plan's objectives for compact, sustainable and infrastructure-led growth.

3.6 Health, Wellbeing and Access to Facilities

Places for Everyone supports development that contributes to healthier communities and improves access to services and facilities. The proposal directly delivers on this objective by providing a new indoor sport and wellness facility within an accessible part of Manchester.

The health and wellbeing benefits of the scheme are significant. The proposal provides opportunities for regular physical activity, social interaction and active recreation. It addresses a gap in local health and fitness provision and supports wider public policy objectives around reducing inactivity and improving wellbeing.

This benefit carries substantial weight in the planning balance and reinforces the proposal's compliance with the strategic aims of Places for Everyone.

3.7 Overall Compliance with Places for Everyone

The proposal accords with Places for Everyone when read as a whole. It supports sustainable urban growth, makes effective use of existing land and buildings, provides employment-generating commercial activity, contributes to diversification within a regeneration area and delivers health and wellbeing benefits. The fact that the B2/B8 use is not retained does not result in policy conflict, because the site remains in productive commercial use and the wider economic function of the area is not undermined.

4. Draft Manchester local plan 2025

4.1 Weight and Relevance

The Draft Manchester Local Plan 2025 represents the Council's most up-to-date expression of its spatial strategy and policy direction. It is therefore a significant material consideration. The draft plan clearly supports regeneration, economic growth, health and wellbeing, active travel, efficient use of land, and diversification within inner urban areas.

The proposal should be assessed against this forward-looking policy context. It would be wrong to apply a rigid or outdated interpretation of employment protection where the emerging plan recognises that areas such as Strangeways are changing and that mixed-use, active and employment-generating development is part of that transition.

4.2 Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles

Policy SP1 directs growth towards Manchester's Core Growth Area and Inner Areas, where regeneration, development and better use of land are strategic priorities. The site is located within this wider inner urban context, where the plan supports diversification and intensification.

The proposal complies with Policy SP1. It brings an existing building into active use, supports economic activity, and contributes to the evolving character of the Strangeways and Cheetham Hill fringe. It is exactly the kind of urban reuse that Policy SP1 is intended to encourage.

4.3 Policy SP2 – Development Principles

Policy SP2 requires development to make a positive contribution to health, safety, wellbeing, inclusive access, efficient land use and neighbourhood quality. The proposal complies with these principles in a clear and measurable way.

It supports health and wellbeing through the provision of indoor sport and wellness facilities. It improves safety through active occupation, management and surveillance. It makes efficient use of an existing building and reduces the need for new development elsewhere. It improves access to services by providing a new recreational facility in a sustainable urban location. The proposal therefore does not merely avoid harm under Policy SP2. It positively advances the policy's objectives.

4.4 Strategic Growth Location – Strangeways and City Centre Expansion

The Draft Manchester Local Plan identifies Strangeways and the Great Ducie Street area as part of the city's growth and regeneration agenda. The area is expected to transition towards a broader mix of uses, improved activity, better connectivity and more productive urban land use.

The proposal directly aligns with this direction. It introduces an active commercial leisure use in an existing building. It supports footfall, economic activity and urban vitality. It contributes to the ongoing regeneration of the corridor without introducing a use that conflicts with surrounding commercial activity.

The proposal should therefore be viewed as part of the area's planned evolution, not as an isolated or inappropriate departure from its context.

4.5 Policy EC3 – Existing Employment Space

Policy EC3 is central to the assessment. The policy seeks to protect employment space while also recognising the need for employment areas to evolve, diversify and modernise. The proposal must therefore be assessed on whether the loss of B2/B8 floorspace causes unacceptable harm to the employment function of the area.

It does not. Although the B2/B8 use is no longer retained, the proposal replaces it with a commercial use that generates employment and economic activity. The building remains in productive use. The proposal does not convert the site to residential use, does not introduce a sensitive use that constrains surrounding operations, and does not fragment or undermine a strategic industrial estate.

The employment function of the wider area is not harmed. The proposal represents a transition from one form of employment-generating activity to another. It increases public activity and is likely to create a higher employment density than many storage and distribution uses. On this basis, the proposal is consistent with the objectives of Policy EC3.

A refusal based solely on the fact that the B2/B8 use is not retained would be an overly narrow and mechanistic reading of Policy EC3. The correct policy test is whether the proposal undermines the employment function of the site or area. It plainly does not.

4.6 Policies C4 and C9 – Leisure Provision and Centre Compatibility

Policies C4 and C9 support leisure uses in accessible locations, particularly where they complement existing centres and address gaps in provision. The proposal satisfies these policies.

The Cheetham Hill evidence base identifies a deficiency in health and fitness provision. The proposed facility responds directly to that deficiency. It is located close to the district centre and will support the wider vitality of the area through increased activity and linked trips.

The proposal does not compete with the retail function of Cheetham Hill. It provides a different and complementary form of leisure provision. Its large-format spatial requirements mean it cannot reasonably be accommodated in the smaller units that dominate the district centre. The proposal is therefore sequentially appropriate and consistent with the objectives of Policies C4 and C9.

4.7 Policies T1 and T2 – Transport

Policies T1 and T2 require development to support sustainable travel and be located where access to walking, cycling and public transport is available. The proposal complies with both policies.

The site is in an accessible inner-urban location. It benefits from proximity to public transport and active travel routes. The proposed use operates through structured bookings, reducing unmanaged peaks and allowing activity to be controlled. On-site parking and cycle provision are provided to support safe and efficient operation. The proposal does not generate the heavy servicing requirements associated with B2/B8 use. It therefore represents a more compatible transport profile for this urban location.

4.8 Policy EN11 – Waste

Policy EN11 requires development to minimise waste and provide suitable storage and collection arrangements. The proposal complies with this policy. Waste generation will be limited to general commercial waste, recyclable materials and modest café-related waste. These streams are materially simpler and less intensive than those associated with industrial or storage uses, which can involve pallet waste, packaging, shrink wrap, bulk cardboard and irregular servicing. Waste can be stored and managed appropriately within the site, with no unacceptable visual, amenity or highway impact.

4.9 Policy D1 – Design, Safety and Functionality

Policy D1 requires development to be safe, functional, legible and responsive to context. The proposal reuses an existing building without harmful external alteration and creates a managed internal layout suitable for sport and wellness use.

The proposal enhances safety through occupation, supervision, controlled access and CCTV. This is a material improvement over the vacant or low-activity character often associated with storage uses. The development therefore complies with Policy D1 and contributes to a safer and more active environment.

4.10 Overall Compliance with the Draft Manchester Local Plan

The proposal complies with the Draft Manchester Local Plan when read as a whole. It supports regeneration in an Inner Area, delivers health and wellbeing infrastructure, provides employment-generating commercial use, makes efficient use of an existing building, supports sustainable travel and avoids unacceptable amenity impacts. The replacement of the B2/B8 use is justified by the nature, benefits and policy alignment of the proposed Class E(d) use.

5. Great Ducie street SRF and Cheetham hill district centre context

5.1 Material Weight of the Frameworks

The Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework and Cheetham Hill District Centre evidence base are important material considerations. They provide local context for the evolution of the area, the changing role of the Strangeways corridor, and the current composition and deficiencies of Cheetham Hill District Centre. The proposal aligns strongly with both. It supports the regeneration of Great Ducie Street and Strangeways through active commercial reuse and responds directly to the lack of health and fitness provision identified in Cheetham Hill.

5.2 Great Ducie Street SRF and the Regeneration Vision

The Great Ducie Street SRF promotes the transformation of the area into a more active, mixed-use and economically productive urban environment. It recognises that the corridor is changing and that successful regeneration requires a broader mix of uses, enhanced footfall, improved activity and better integration with the expanding city centre.

The proposal contributes directly to this vision. It reactivates an existing building, introduces a managed leisure and wellbeing use, increases footfall and supports the transition of the area towards a more dynamic urban character. It does not introduce a use that conflicts with regeneration objectives. It provides the kind of active, commercially viable use that supports them.

5.3 Replacement of B2/B8 within the Regeneration Context

The fact that the B2/B8 use is no longer retained must be considered in the context of the area's planned regeneration. The Great Ducie Street and Strangeways corridor is not being treated as a static industrial zone. It is an area of transition where employment, leisure, residential, commercial and community uses are increasingly expected to coexist.

The replacement of a traditional industrial/storage use with an indoor sport and wellness facility is consistent with that transition. The proposal maintains economic activity and employment while reducing the heavier operational characteristics associated with B2/B8 use. It therefore supports regeneration without undermining the broader commercial function of the area.

5.4 Cheetham Hill District Centre Evidence and Leisure Deficiency

The Cheetham Hill evidence base identifies a clear imbalance in leisure provision. The centre contains a concentration of food and beverage uses but lacks larger-format health and fitness facilities. This is a material deficiency. The proposal responds directly to that deficiency. It provides a facility that is absent from the existing centre offer and does so in a location that is close enough to support linked trips and wider vitality. The development therefore strengthens the local leisure offer and contributes to a more balanced range of services for residents, workers and visitors.

5.5 Sequential Suitability

The proposal is sequentially appropriate because the operational requirements of the use cannot realistically be accommodated within the available small-format units in Cheetham Hill District Centre. Indoor padel and wellness facilities require a substantial floorplate, internal height, structural capacity, circulation space, parking and operational management areas.

The existing industrial unit is suitable precisely because of its scale and form. The proposal therefore reflects a realistic and flexible application of the sequential test. It would be unreasonable to require the use to locate within units that cannot physically or operationally accommodate it.

5.6 Compatibility with Local Character

The proposal is compatible with the mixed commercial, industrial and regeneration character of the area. The activity is internalised, the building is retained, and the operation does not introduce unacceptable noise, traffic or amenity impacts. The use is active but controlled. It supports vitality without creating the impacts associated with late-night entertainment, alcohol-led leisure or outdoor sport. The proposal therefore sits comfortably within the evolving local character and contributes positively to the area's transition.

6. Transport, amenity, environmental quality and technical compliance

6.1 Transport Baseline and Change in Use

The proposal no longer retains the B2/B8 use. However, the existing lawful use remains relevant as the baseline against which the effects of the proposed change should be understood. B2/B8 uses are capable of generating HGV activity, servicing movements, deliveries, loading, staff trips and variable operational traffic. These characteristics are typical of industrial and storage uses and can produce more disruptive patterns of movement than a managed indoor sport facility.

The proposed Class E(d) use produces a different and more controlled transport profile. Customer attendance is structured through bookings. Arrivals and departures are predictable. HGV movements are not part of the ordinary operation. This creates a more compatible pattern of movement for an accessible inner-urban site.

6.2 Highway Impact

The proposal does not result in a severe highway impact. The site is served by existing roads capable of accommodating commercial traffic. The proposed use is materially lighter in servicing terms than B2/B8 use and does not rely on heavy goods vehicle access. On-site parking and cycle provision support the operation of the facility. The internal layout allows vehicles to manoeuvre safely and avoids reliance on the public highway for parking or servicing. The proposal therefore complies with national and local transport policy.

6.3 Sustainable Access

The site's location close to Manchester City Centre and Cheetham Hill provides strong opportunities for access by walking, cycling and public transport. This is consistent with the NPPF and Draft Manchester Local Plan policies seeking to locate development in accessible places and reduce reliance on private vehicles. The proposed use is suitable for this location because it serves a local and city-wide catchment and is capable of being accessed by a range of modes. The provision of cycle parking further supports active travel.

6.4 Noise and Amenity

The proposal is acceptable in amenity terms. All sporting activity is contained within the building. There are no outdoor courts, no external amplified sound and no external plant proposed as part of the development. The building envelope provides acoustic containment and the surrounding context is urban and commercial in character.

Compared with B2/B8 use, the proposal removes the potential for industrial processes, HGV loading noise, reversing alarms, forklifts and other operational noise sources. It therefore presents a lower-risk amenity profile. There is no evidence that the proposal would give rise to unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

6.5 Waste and Servicing

The proposed waste profile is modest and manageable. Waste will primarily comprise general commercial waste, recyclable materials and limited café-related waste. This is materially simpler than the waste profile associated with industrial or storage operations, which can involve bulk packaging, pallets, shrink wrap and irregular collection requirements.

Waste storage and collection arrangements can be accommodated within the site without causing obstruction, odour, visual harm or highway conflict. The proposal therefore complies with Policy EN11 and the environmental objectives of national policy.

6.6 Crime, Safety and Management

The proposal improves safety and natural surveillance. A low-activity industrial or storage use can leave buildings inactive for significant periods, particularly outside working hours. The proposed sport and wellness facility introduces active occupation, staff presence, controlled access and surveillance.

This improves site security and contributes positively to the wider perception of safety in the area. The use is not alcohol-led, does not create uncontrolled public congregation, and does not have the risk profile associated with late-night entertainment. It is a managed sport and wellness facility and is compatible with the objectives of safe place-making.

6.7 Overall Technical Compliance

The proposal is technically acceptable. It does not give rise to severe transport impacts, unacceptable noise, harmful waste impacts, crime risk or amenity conflict. The technical evidence supports the conclusion that the change of use is suitable for the site and compatible with the surrounding area.

7. Planning Balance

7.1 Development Plan Compliance

The proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole. It supports the strategic objectives of Places for Everyone by delivering sustainable urban reuse, economic activity and health infrastructure within an accessible location. It aligns with the Draft Manchester Local Plan by supporting regeneration, efficient land use, health and wellbeing, active travel, environmental management and safe design.

The proposal involves the loss of the B2/B8 use, but that loss is justified. The building remains in productive commercial occupation, the replacement use generates employment, and the development does not undermine the economic function or regeneration trajectory of the area. The correct conclusion is therefore that the proposal is acceptable in policy terms.

7.2 Weight to the Loss of B2/B8 Use

The loss of B2/B8 floorspace should be given limited negative weight in this case. The site is not being lost to residential use. It is not being sterilised. It is not being left vacant. It is being converted to a commercial leisure use that generates employment, increases activity and provides clear public benefits. The relevant question is whether the loss causes unacceptable harm to employment land supply or the function of the area. It does not. The proposal replaces one employment-generating use with another and does so in a location where policy supports diversification and regeneration.

7.3 Economic Benefits

The proposal delivers significant economic benefits. It creates direct jobs, supports indirect expenditure and brings an existing building into active and viable use. It is likely to generate higher employment intensity than many storage uses and will support activity across a wider spread of hours. This benefit attracts substantial positive weight and aligns with national and local policy objectives for economic growth.

7.4 Health and Wellbeing Benefits

The proposal delivers substantial social benefits through the provision of indoor sport and wellness facilities. It supports physical activity, social interaction, mental wellbeing and healthier lifestyles. It also addresses an identified deficiency in health and fitness provision in the Cheetham Hill area. These benefits attract significant weight in the planning balance.

7.5 Regeneration Benefits

The proposal contributes to the regeneration of the Strangeways and Great Ducie Street corridor by increasing activity, footfall and commercial diversity. It supports the planned transition of the area towards a more mixed, active and economically resilient urban environment. This regeneration benefit is directly aligned with local strategy and carries significant positive weight.

7.6 Absence of Harm

There is no unacceptable harm in transport, amenity, waste, crime, design or environmental terms. The proposed use is contained, managed and compatible with its surroundings. Any limited harm arising from the loss of B2/B8 use is clearly outweighed by the substantial benefits of the scheme.

7.7 Overall Planning Balance

The planning balance is firmly in favour of the proposal. The development delivers economic, social and environmental benefits and gives rise to no unacceptable impacts. It represents sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and is consistent with the direction of the development plan and emerging policy. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

8. Overall Conclusion

8.1 Final Assessment

The proposed change of use from B2/B8 to Class E(d) indoor sport and wellness facility is acceptable in planning terms. The proposal no longer relies on retention of the industrial/storage use, and the planning case has therefore been assessed on the correct basis: whether the replacement use is justified, policy compliant and beneficial.

The answer is clearly yes. The proposal replaces a traditional industrial/storage use with a modern, active, employment-generating commercial leisure use. It makes efficient use of an existing building, supports regeneration, provides health and wellbeing infrastructure, addresses a deficiency in local provision and operates without unacceptable technical impacts.

8.2 No Unacceptable Employment Harm

Although the B2/B8 use is not retained, the proposal does not result in unacceptable employment harm. The site remains in productive commercial use. Employment is generated. The wider economic function of the area is not undermined. The proposal is therefore materially different from a loss of employment land to residential or inactive use. The change is justified by the nature of the proposed use, the site context, the area's regeneration trajectory and the substantial public benefits delivered.

8.3 Decisive Planning Balance

There is no policy basis for refusal. The proposal accords with the NPPF, aligns with Places for Everyone, supports the Draft Manchester Local Plan 2025, responds positively to the Great Ducie Street SRF and addresses deficiencies identified in the Cheetham Hill District Centre evidence base.

Any limited weight attached to the loss of B2/B8 use is clearly and decisively outweighed by the economic, social, environmental, health, wellbeing and regeneration benefits of the proposal. On a proper planning balance, the development constitutes sustainable development. Planning permission should therefore be granted without delay.