

Public Benefit Statement

Piccadilly Gardens Redevelopment

Client: Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council

13/08/2026

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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 This Public Benefit Statement (hereafter referred to as "the Statement" or "the PBS") has been prepared by Enabl for Galliford Try on behalf of the applicant, Manchester City Council. The Statement accompanies a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens ("the Site"), one of Manchester's most important public spaces and transport interchanges.

1.2 This Statement identifies and assesses the public benefits arising from the Proposed Development. It considers the economic, social and environmental benefits that may result from the redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens and the contribution those benefits make towards relevant planning objectives and the overall planning balance.

Proposed Development

1.3 Piccadilly Gardens is a key gateway into Manchester for thousands of people entering the city from Piccadilly Station and beyond as well as a public open space situated in the heart of the city centre. Piccadilly Gardens is an open public realm space and transport hub located in central Manchester, bordering the Northern Quarter. The Site is approximately 0.93 hectares in area and is a highly visible part of the city-centre public realm network.

1.4 A full planning application is being submitted for the proposed redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens, with the following description of development (hereafter referred to as "the Proposed Development):

> *Redevelopment and reconfiguration of Piccadilly Gardens comprising works to the public realm including public open space and use of space for events, together with decommissioning and removal of the existing fountain; creation of play space, lawn area, hard and soft landscaping; lighting; and drainage and other associated infrastructure; and a severable plot for a future ancillary structure with associated interim landscaping.*

1.5 Piccadilly Gardens is a prominent civic space within Manchester city centre. It functions as a place of movement, interchange, meeting, rest, play, civic identity and everyday public use. The quality of the Gardens therefore has relevance beyond the Site boundary, influencing the experience of residents, workers, visitors, families, students, businesses and public transport users across the city centre.

1.6 The proposals will comprehensively improve Piccadilly Gardens through new planting, a central lawn, upgraded public realm, improved movement routes, a family-friendly play space, and measures to support safer, more active everyday use. The Proposed Development is therefore a comprehensive renewal of the Gardens rather than a single-purpose landscape intervention. Its core components include a central lawn, enhanced planting, re-provided and expanded play provision, improved public realm surfaces, lighting, drainage and SuDS, and associated infrastructure to support everyday use and curated small-scale events.

1.7 The proposals seek to enhance the environmental quality, accessibility, safety and functionality of Piccadilly Gardens, creating a high-quality civic destination that reflects its importance within Manchester City Centre.

The Vision for Piccadilly Gardens

1.8 Piccadilly Gardens is one of Manchester's most important public spaces and transport interchanges, acting as a key gateway for people arriving in the city from Piccadilly Station and beyond. It has been the subject of extensive public consultation in recent years, which has informed the vision for its regeneration.

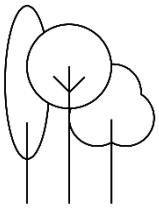
1.9 A renewed Piccadilly Gardens needs to reflect who we are as a city – diverse, welcoming, creative and full of life. The proposed redevelopment is the first step on the journey to transform Piccadilly Gardens into an attractive, well-managed and welcoming space.

1.10 As Manchester's front door, Piccadilly Gardens is where first impressions are formed, where journeys begin and end, and where the energy, diversity and character of the city are on display every day. As one of Manchester's most important public spaces and transport gateways, it performs a unique civic role, connecting people, places and experiences at the heart of the city. Today, those first impressions are not what we all need and expect them to be. Structures and behaviours have crept in, meaning the gardens of today hold all the wrong associations and do not speak positively to the city and its citizens.

1.11 Shaped by extensive public engagement and informed by a renewed ambition for the city centre, this vision looks to reimagine Piccadilly Gardens as a greener, safer, and more welcoming destination that reflects modern Manchester: confident, inclusive, creative, and cosmopolitan. The proposals will transform the Gardens from a place people simply move through into a destination where people of all ages and background choose to spend time, meet, play, relax and connect.

1.12 The regeneration is far more than a physical redesign. It is an investment in Manchester's social, environmental, cultural and economic future - creating a landscape that celebrates nature, supports wellbeing, encourages activity, and opens opportunities for all. New tree planting, vibrant gardens that respond to our ever-changing climate will reconnect the space to Manchester's growing network of green infrastructure, contributing to a more resilient, healthy, and resilient city centre.

- The new Gardens will significantly increase tree cover in an area of the city with an identified shortfall, introducing a diverse range of quality species to provide character, define space and support a healthier environment.

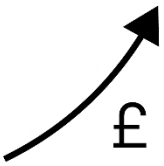


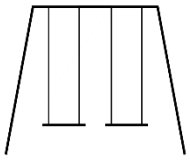
- The redevelopment will create and sustain construction jobs, deliver new apprenticeships and support local supply chains with a Manchester-first approach.



- Broader skills and employment initiatives including support for young and unemployed Mancunians, meaningful work placements or pre-employment training, work trials for Manchester job seekers, community projects with skills and employability.

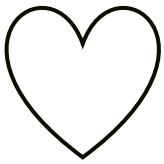
- The physical enhancement of Piccadilly Gardens will encourage future investment into the area, providing an economic boost to the city and supporting the continued regeneration and vitality of the city centre.





- Enhanced play facilities will knit into a network of provision for children and young people, making the city more inclusive and support healthy, active lifestyles.

- The scheme would contribute positively to the function and quality of an important civic space and support the creation of a welcoming, accessible and socially inclusive destination capable of accommodating a broad range of users.



- Hard and soft landscaping will uplift the environmental quality of the space, responding to desire lines, creating opportunities for social interaction and dwell and celebrate Manchester's history while looking towards the future.



Trees

1.14 **49no. new trees** are proposed to be planted in the Gardens, tying into a botanical network spanning across the city.

1.15 Mature trees across a diversity of species have been selected for robustness and to reference horticulture across Manchester.

Work and Skills

1.16 During construction, a Local Labour Agreement will secure the creation of **two new jobs**, support for **eight sustained jobs**, delivery of **two new apprenticeships** and a commitment to prioritise local employment outcomes through a Greater Manchester approach with a Manchester-first focus. There is also a strong commitment to supporting local supply chains through the procurement process.

1.17 In addition, **60 hours of support for Manchester young people up to the age of 24, 40 hours of support for unemployed Manchester adults, four weeks of meaningful work placements or pre-employment training, four weeks of work trials for Manchester job seekers, 100 hours of community projects with skills and employability outcomes and five site visits for local people** will be provided.

Play

1.18 A **state-of-the-art, 455m^2 play area** for children ten and under, inspired by the topography of Manchester and surrounds and incorporating inclusive play facilities, replaces an outdated and unfit for purpose play area.

1.19 Complementing recently completed play facilities at Mayfield Park and Ancoats Green, and future planned play areas at the Central Retail Park, City River Park and Great Northern Square, the new play area will draw together **a city-wide network of play** for children and young people of all ages.

Economic Investment

1.20 The regeneration of Piccadilly Gardens will reinvigorate inward investment into the city core.

1.21 This will be complimentary to the circa **£500 million** of investment being made across new developments in and around Piccadilly Gardens, including the Rylands Building, 1 Picadilly and extending outwards to developments such as at Church Street.

Social Value

1.22 The new Gardens will be **fully accessible to all,** with facilities to cater to people from all backgrounds, including street furniture, play equipment and step-free routes.

1.23 The redevelopment will **instil pride in our city**, creating a destination befitting of one of Manchester's premier civic spaces.

Environmental Quality

1.24 Piccadilly Gardens will be transformed with a thoughtful planting strategy which see the **Gardens bloom year-round**, providing **colour and vibrancy**, in combination with a palette of **durable, high-quality materials**

in the local vernacular.

1.25 Planted areas will double up as **sustainable drainage systems**, furthering the area's resilience. It will be sought to store rainwater within the former water feature storage tanks which can be reused to irrigate trees, planting and lawn areas.

1.26 New **lighting installations, CCTV and a wider management strategy** will make Piccadilly Gardens a safe and welcoming place for people to pass through, meet up and spend time.

Structure of the Public Benefit Statement

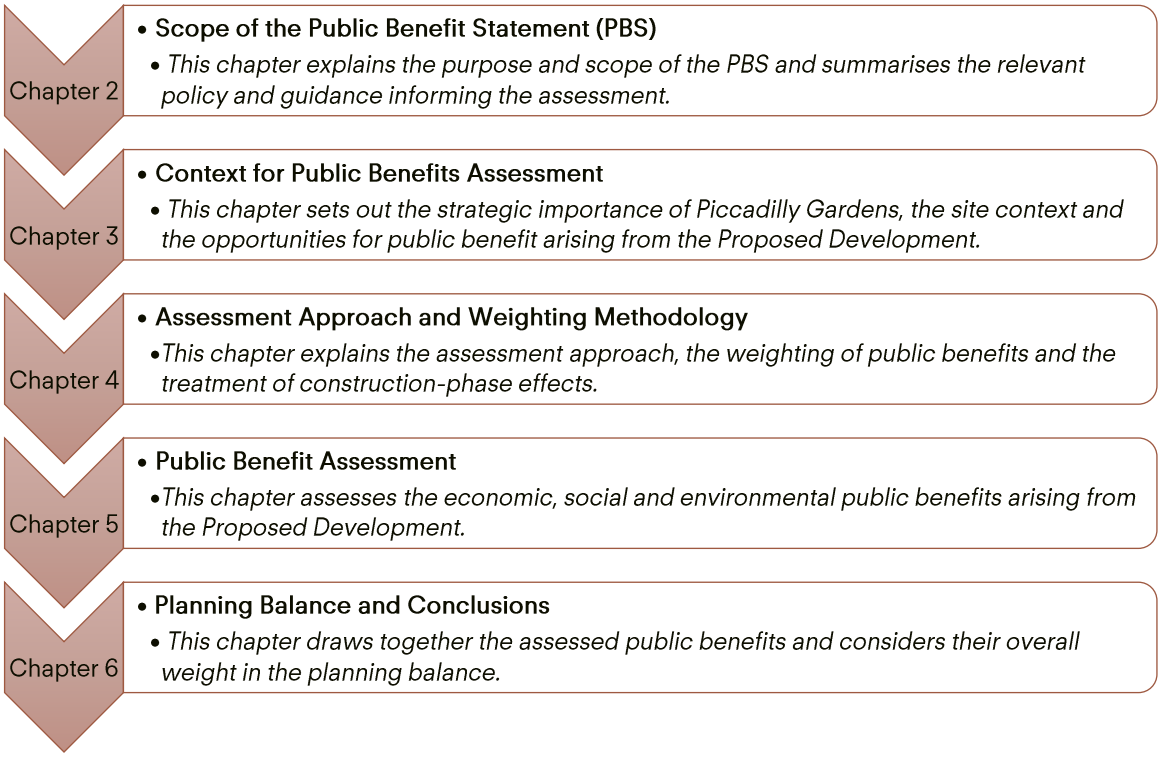


Figure 1- Structure of Public Benefit Statement

Application Documents

1.27 This Public Benefit Statement should be read alongside the architectural plans / drawings and supporting documents submitted to accompany the planning application. The relevant application documents to this Statement include the following:

- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Planit;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Arbtech;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, prepared by Civic;
- Blue and Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by Planit;
- Carbon and Environmental Standards Statement, prepared by Civic;
- Crime Impact Statement, prepared by Design for Security;

- Statement of Community Involvement, prepared by Counter Context;
- Construction Management Plan, and Construction Environmental Management Plan, prepared by Galliford Try;
- Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by Civic;
- Heritage Statement, prepared by Civic;
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment, prepared by Civic;
- Lighting Strategy, prepared by Hoare Lea;
- Local Labour Agreement, prepared by Galliford Try;
- Health Impact Assessment, prepared by Enabl;
- SuDS Strategy, prepared by Civic;
- Highways Note, prepared by Civic; and
- Planning Statement, prepared by Enabl.


2

2. Scope of Public Benefit Statement

Purpose of the Public Benefit Statement

2.1 The purpose of this Statement is to provide a structured assessment of the public benefits arising from the Proposed Development and the extent to which those benefits contribute towards relevant planning objectives.

2.2 The Statement focuses on the themes of economic, social, and environmental overarching benefits

2.3 It draws together the social, environmental, economic, health, inclusion and civic benefits that would arise from the comprehensive renewal and redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens as a prominent space in Manchester city centre and as part of the wider civic identity.

2.4 These benefits are identified through holistic consideration of the planning application material and detail of the Proposed Development and, using professional judgement, considers the weight that should reasonably be attributed to those benefits in the overall planning balance.

2.5 In doing so, the Statement seeks to identify benefits that are experienced by the public, or a substantial section of the public, and to provide a transparent framework for understanding their scale, significance and relevance to the determination of the application.

2.6 Public benefits in this context are defined as benefits experienced by the public, or a substantial section of the public, rather than benefits accruing principally to the Applicant or other private interests. Given the role of Piccadilly Gardens as a civic space and transport interchange of city-regional significance, the beneficiaries of the Proposed Development are expected to comprise a wide and diverse cross-section of society, including:

- People who use, visit or pass through Piccadilly Gardens;
- City centre residents;
- Manchester residents;
- Visitors and tourists;
- Families and children;
- People with diverse mobility and accessibility requirements;
- People who work, study, and commute into Manchester;
- Occupiers, employers and businesses operating around Piccadilly Gardens and the city centre.

Relevant Policy and Guidance

2.7 Policy and guidance relating specifically to the identification and assessment of public benefits is relatively limited. The majority of guidance on what constitutes a public benefit, and how public benefits should be weighed in planning decision-making, has emerged through heritage policy and associated balancing exercises. Whilst the application of public benefits extends beyond heritage matters alone, this remains the most established and relevant body of guidance available and has therefore informed the approach taken within this Statement, combined with professional judgement.

2.8 The Public Benefits Statement has been prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723), which confirms that:

"Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 8. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit."

2.9 Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 describes these three overarching objectives as follows:

"a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

2.10 A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published consultation in December 2025. While a final version is yet to be formally published for planning decision making and plan making, this version is currently anticipated to be published later in 2026.

2.11 The draft NPPF maintains the three overarching objectives (economic, social, environmental) while making minor additions to the wording to reflect changing priorities within the planning system. The draft "social" objective places greater emphasis on accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces, in addition to services more generally. The draft "environmental" objective gives greater prominence to climate change mitigation and adaptation, reflecting the increasing importance of carbon reduction, resilience and climate adaptation within planning decision-making.

2.12 Similarly, Emerging Draft NPPF Policy HE6, in considering public benefits for heritage assets, recognises that

Important public benefits can include enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.

2.13 Taken together, national planning policy and guidance establish that public benefits may encompass a broad range of economic, social and environmental outcomes that are experienced by the public at large. Accordingly, this Statement adopts a broad and evidence-based approach to the identification and assessment of public benefits, having regard to both current national policy and the direction of emerging policy.

2.14 Guidance relating specifically to the identification and assessment of public benefits is relatively limited. While the majority of policy and guidance on what constitutes a public benefit is contained within the heritage planning framework, it remains the most developed and widely accepted body of guidance available to inform such assessments. As such, it provides a useful and relevant basis for the consideration of public benefits arising from the Proposed Development, notwithstanding that the benefits identified extend beyond heritage matters alone.


3

3. Context for Public Benefits Assessment

Strategic Importance of Piccadilly Gardens

3.1 Piccadilly Gardens is an established public realm and transport hub within Manchester city centre. It is located in a densely developed urban environment characterised by very high pedestrian and public transport activity, with surrounding commercial, retail, hotel, leisure, cultural and transport uses. The Site forms an important interface between Market Street, Piccadilly, the Northern Quarter, Piccadilly transport connections and wider city-centre movement routes.

3.2 Piccadilly Gardens also holds longstanding civic significance within Manchester. The Gardens have served as a publicly accessible civic space for more than a century and have evolved through successive phases of the city's development, from formal public gardens associated with the former Manchester Royal Infirmary to its current role as a major city-centre public space and transport interchange. Throughout these changes, a consistent characteristic has been its function as a place for public gathering, meeting, recreation, events, civic activity and everyday social interaction. As one of Manchester's most recognised public spaces, Piccadilly Gardens forms part of the city's civic identity and provides an important setting for public life.

3.3 Given its strategic location at the heart of the city centre, and its longstanding role as one of Manchester's principal civic spaces, the quality, functionality and perception of Piccadilly Gardens influence how Manchester is experienced by a substantial section of the public, on a local level and beyond. The Gardens form part of the daily experience of people travelling through the city, accessing public transport, visiting surrounding businesses and attractions, working within the city centre and spending leisure time in Manchester. The importance of the Site is reflected in the significant number of people who pass through and use the Gardens each day, underlining its role as one of the city's most visible and heavily used public spaces.

Site Context

3.4 The existing Gardens are extensively used but do not fully reflect their strategic and historic civic importance. The evidence base submitted in support of the application, including the Statement of Community Involvement, Health Impact Assessment, Crime Impact Statement, ecological assessments and wider technical studies, identifies a clear and longstanding need for intervention.

3.5 Previous consultation exercises, stakeholder engagement and the current pre-application consultation process have consistently highlighted concerns regarding the quality, management, perception and performance of Piccadilly Gardens as one of Manchester city centre's most important civic spaces.

3.6 Despite its role as a major public space, transport interchange and gateway into Manchester city centre, Piccadilly Gardens faces longstanding challenges relating to reputation and public perception, crime and

anti-social behaviour, safety, environmental quality, biodiversity value, climate resilience, play provision and the overall quality of the user experience.

3.7 Piccadilly Gardens accommodates high levels of pedestrian activity throughout the day and evening. Its strategic location, concentration of surrounding commercial, leisure and transport uses, and role as a destination, interchange and meeting place mean that it experiences many of the pressures commonly associated with busy city-centre environments, including crime, antisocial behaviour, public disorder and negative perceptions of safety. Recorded crime levels within the surrounding area are high, with violence, theft, robbery and criminal damage representing particular challenges.

3.8 The Crime Impact Statement identifies crime, anti-social behaviour, public disorder and negative perceptions of safety as important considerations affecting the operation and experience of the space. The Health Impact Assessment and Crime Impact Statement identify the influence that perceptions of safety, environmental quality, natural surveillance and management can have on how different groups experience and use the Gardens.

3.9 Evidence gathered through technical assessments and engagement demonstrates that concerns relating to crime, antisocial behaviour and personal safety can influence how the Gardens are used and experienced by different groups. Existing physical features, including areas with limited natural surveillance, cluttered street furniture, poor sightlines and fragmented public realm, have contributed to negative perceptions of the space and have reduced its attractiveness for some users, including families and those spending longer periods within the Gardens.

3.10 The Health Impact Assessment identifies the importance of accessible, high-quality public spaces in supporting health, wellbeing, active travel, social interaction, inclusion and everyday comfort. Piccadilly Gardens is particularly important in this regard because it is encountered by a very large and varied population, including people passing through the city centre as well as those using the Gardens as a place to pause, meet, play or rest.

3.11 Consultation and engagement have consistently identified concerns regarding the attractiveness of the space for families, opportunities for recreation and longer dwell periods. Engagement identified that concerns regarding anti-social behaviour can make existing play facilities less attractive, while some parents and carers were unaware that the Gardens currently contain play facilities, and that families often choose alternative parks for recreation. This evidence demonstrates that there are perceptions and usability barriers affecting the role of Piccadilly Gardens as an inclusive, family-friendly and welcoming civic space.

3.12 The ecological baseline identifies the Site as a highly urbanised public realm environment dominated by hardstanding and transport infrastructure, with biodiversity value concentrated in areas of modified grassland and urban trees. The existing baseline ecological value is modest in statutory metric terms, but this also indicates the opportunity for measurable enhancement.

3.13 The need for intervention is therefore both physical and social. The Proposed Development responds to the current condition of the Gardens and to a wider public interest in creating a more inclusive, accessible,

healthy, family-friendly, environmentally resilient and positively used civic space.

Additional Opportunities for Public Benefit

3.14 Given the strategic role of Piccadilly Gardens within Manchester city centre, improvements to its quality, accessibility, environmental performance, management and civic function have the potential to generate benefits extending well beyond the Site itself. Enhancements to the Gardens can influence perceptions of Manchester, improve the experience of residents, workers, visitors and public transport users, and contribute positively towards wider economic, social, environmental and placemaking objectives.

3.15 The Proposed Development comprises a comprehensive package of interventions including public realm renewal, landscape enhancement, enhanced play provision, biodiversity improvements, sustainable drainage infrastructure, improved movement routes and a renewed management and stewardship approach. The nature of these interventions creates the potential for a range of public benefits to arise. Given the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, these benefits have the potential to be experienced by a substantial and diverse section of the public, including residents, workers, commuters, students, visitors, families and tourists.

3.16 In economic terms, opportunities for public benefit may arise from the introduction of new facilities and active uses within the Gardens, improvements to the quality and attractiveness of the public realm, and enhancements to the role of the Gardens as a key city centre destination and transport interchange. There is also potential for these interventions to contribute to wider regeneration objectives by improving perceptions of the area and supporting confidence in surrounding commercial, leisure and investment opportunities. Given the strategic location of the Site within Manchester city centre, the quality and perception of Piccadilly Gardens may influence the attractiveness of surrounding development opportunities and commercial premises, creating the potential for benefits extending beyond the application site itself.

3.17 In social terms, opportunities for public benefit may arise through the provision of new community and event space, enhanced play opportunities, improvements to accessibility and inclusivity, and the creation of a more welcoming, comfortable and functional public space capable of supporting a wider range of activities and users. The proposals also create opportunities to improve perceptions of safety and comfort through enhanced lighting, improved sightlines, active uses, natural surveillance and an enhanced public realm environment. Collectively, these interventions have the potential to support health and wellbeing, social interaction, recreation and everyday civic activity within the city centre.

3.18 In environmental terms, potential opportunities for public benefit include landscape renewal, increased planting and tree canopy cover, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage measures and improvements to the environmental quality and climate resilience of the Gardens. There may also be opportunities associated with the introduction of blue-green infrastructure, habitat creation and long-term landscape enhancement, including measures which contribute towards increased shade, improved thermal comfort, reduced susceptibility to urban overheating and greater resilience to the effects of climate change.

3.19 The Proposed Development also provides opportunities to strengthen the civic role of Piccadilly Gardens through the delivery of new facilities and a more flexible public realm capable of accommodating community activity, informal events and everyday use. The proposals further create opportunities to improve the setting, visibility and appreciation of monuments and heritage assets that are currently obscured or experienced within a fragmented public realm environment.

3.20 The extent to which these opportunities translate into public benefits, and the weight that should be attributed to those benefits, is considered in the sections that follow. The assessment is structured around the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and considers the nature, scale and significance of the public benefits arising from the Proposed Development. The extent to which these opportunities translate into public benefits, and the weight that should be attributed to those benefits, is considered in the sections that follow.

3.21 Construction is anticipated to be phased and temporary in nature, with a duration of approximately 12 to 18 months. Construction-phase effects such as temporary disruption, noise, dust, hoarding, pedestrian routing and temporary changes to the transport interchange environment will need to be managed through appropriate construction, access, environmental and communication measures. These effects are temporary and should be weighed against the substantial long-term public benefits delivered by the scheme.

Baseline issue	Public benefit opportunity
Strategic civic role, city-centre gateway and transport interchange function	Enhance one of Manchester's most important public spaces and transport interchanges, strengthening its contribution to civic life, city-centre identity and the experience of residents, workers and visitors.
Public perception, safety, anti-social behaviour and management concerns	Create a more positive, active, visible, welcoming and well-managed public realm that supports confidence, social interaction and longer dwell times.
Limited ecological value and access to high-quality green infrastructure	Increase habitat diversity, planting quality, tree value, biodiversity and long-term ecological functionality within one of the city centre's principal green civic spaces.
Limited and under-recognised play offer and barriers to family use	Create a clearer, more inclusive, accessible and family-friendly play destination that encourages broader use of the Gardens by children and families.
Hard urban environment and limited opportunities for nature, recreation and wellbeing	Introduce lawn, garden planting, rain gardens, evergreen planting, seasonal interest and spaces that support recreation, relaxation and everyday wellbeing.
Climate resilience pressures and environmental quality challenges	Embed shade, planting, SuDS, biodiversity and water-management measures into the public realm, supporting climate resilience and user comfort.

Baseline issue	Public benefit opportunity
Movement, accessibility and interchange role	Improve pedestrian comfort, accessibility, legibility, inclusivity and the quality of movement through and between key city-centre destinations.

4

4. Assessment approach and weighting methodology

Assessment approach

4.1 This Statement adopts a structured and evidence-led approach to the identification and assessment of public benefits. The assessment considers whether identified benefits arise directly from the Proposed Development, whether they would be experienced by the public, or a substantial section of the public, and the extent to which they contribute towards relevant planning objectives and the achievement of sustainable development.

4.2 The assessment draws upon the wider planning application material identified in Chapter 1. The Public Benefit Statement does not seek to replicate the technical findings of those documents. Instead, it draws together the principal public benefits identified through the application package and applies professional judgement

to the extent and weight of those benefits within the overall planning balance.

4.3 The assessment is structured around the key public benefit themes which emerge from the application documents and the agreed project narrative. These themes are grouped broadly under the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development, while recognising that some benefits, particularly those relating to civic identity, public realm quality and gateway function, cut across those categories.

4.4 The assessment considers each theme by reference to the following matters:

- the relevant baseline issue, need for intervention or opportunity identified through the supporting documents;
- the elements of the Proposed Development which respond to that issue or opportunity;
- the public benefit that would arise from that response;
- the groups or sections of the public likely to experience the benefit;
- the extent to which the benefit contributes to relevant planning objectives; and
- the weight that should reasonably be attributed to the benefit in the overall planning balance.

4.5 This approach is consistent with the Health Impact Assessment style of assessment, in that it moves from baseline and need, through scheme response, to public benefit outcome and planning judgement. It does not seek to create a numerical scoring system, as this would imply a level of precision that is not appropriate for the assessment of public benefits. Instead, it provides a transparent framework for applying planning judgement to the nature, scale and significance of the benefits identified.

Weighting of public benefits

4.6 The attribution of weight is a matter of planning judgement. In assessing the weight of each public benefit, regard has been had to the scale of the benefit, the number and diversity of beneficiaries, the geographic extent of the benefit, the certainty of delivery, the duration and permanence of the outcome, the extent to which it responds to an identified need or deficiency, and its relevance to adopted and emerging planning policy objectives.

4.7 The following broad terms are used in this Statement to express the weight attributed to public benefits. These terms are intended to aid consistency and transparency, but should not be read as a rigid scoring mechanism. The following broad terms are used to express the weight attributed to public benefits. These terms are intended to aid consistency and transparency, but do not represent a rigid metric-based scoring system.

Weight	Indicative meaning
Limited weight	A public benefit that is positive but relatively localised, short-term, ancillary to the main effects of the Proposed Development, or uncertain in its scale or delivery.
Moderate weight	A clear public benefit that flows from the Proposed Development,

	contributes positively to planning objectives and would be experienced by a meaningful proportion of users or a defined section of the public.
Significant weight	A substantial public benefit that responds to an identified need or deficiency, would be experienced by a large or diverse section of the public, and would endure over the long term.
Substantial weight	A substantial public benefit that responds to an identified need or deficiency, would be experienced by a large or diverse section of the public, and would endure over the long term.

Treatment of construction-phase effects

4.8 The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to be phased and temporary in nature. Temporary construction employment, social value initiatives such as apprenticeship opportunities, and supply-chain expenditure are anticipated to generate limited economic benefits. Whilst these opportunities are time-limited in nature, some benefits may extend beyond the construction period through the creation of skills, qualifications and employment experience.

4.9 Temporary construction-phase effects, including changes to pedestrian movement, hoarding, servicing, noise, dust and disruption, are relevant considerations in the overall planning balance and should be managed through the relevant construction, environmental and traffic management processes. However, these effects are temporary and reversible in nature, whereas the majority of the public benefits identified within this Statement would be experienced over the long-term following completion of the Proposed Development.

Future Civic Pavilion Structure

4.10 The proposals make provision for a future structure within the Gardens, which will complement the ongoing investment in and refurbishment of the Piccadilly Gardens landscape. The structure does not form part of this application and will be brought forward under a separate full planning application. While the provision of a future civic pavilion is anticipated to significantly enhance the benefits of the existing scheme, the assessment within this Public Benefit Statement is based solely on the Proposed Development for which permission is sought and does not attribute any public benefits to the future structure.



5

5. Public Benefit Assessment

5.1 The assessment below considers the principal public benefits arising from the Proposed Development. It is structured around economic, social, civic and environmental themes, reflecting the objectives of sustainable development and the particular role of Piccadilly Gardens as a major civic space, transport interchange and city-centre destination.

Economic benefits

Supporting City Centre Vitality and Regeneration

5.2 The strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens influences not only the experience of those using the space directly, but also wider perceptions of the city centre and the attractiveness of surrounding commercial, retail, leisure and visitor destinations.

5.3 The Proposed Development seeks to address longstanding issues relating to the quality, functionality and perception of the Gardens through a comprehensive programme of public realm renewal.

5.4 The enhanced public realm, improved seating, landscape infrastructure, enlarged play provision, improved routes through the Gardens, and capacity to support curated small-scale events, will improve the experience of residents, workers, visitors and city-centre users.

5.5 By creating a more attractive, welcoming and functional environment, the Proposed Development has the potential to encourage increased use of the Gardens, support longer dwell times and strengthen its role as a destination and transport interchange. These outcomes have the potential to support surrounding businesses and contribute positively to city-centre vitality.

5.6 The proposals also have the potential to support wider regeneration objectives. Improvements to the quality, usability and perception of Piccadilly Gardens may contribute positively to confidence in surrounding investment opportunities, commercial premises and development sites. Given the prominence of the Site within Manchester city centre, benefits arising from improvements to the Gardens have the potential to extend beyond the application boundary and contribute to the continued vitality, attractiveness and economic competitiveness of the wider city centre.

5.7 The redevelopment sits alongside substantial investment in the surrounding area, including the continued refurbishment and enhancement of neighbouring commercial buildings and development sites such as 1 Piccadilly and the Rylands Building. In this context, improvements to the quality, appearance and reputation of Piccadilly Gardens have the potential to reinforce confidence in the wider area, complement ongoing regeneration activity and support the continued vitality and attractiveness of Manchester city centre as a destination for investment, business, visitors and residents.

5.8 Whilst it is not possible to quantify the precise scale of these socioeconomic or wider regeneration effects at this stage, the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, together with its role within an area experiencing significant ongoing public and private sector investment, means that improvements to its quality, reputation and perception may reasonably be expected to contribute positively to wider economic, placemaking and regeneration objectives. This represents a public benefit attracting **moderate weight** in the planning balance.

Employment and Social Value

5.9 The construction of the Proposed Development would generate temporary construction activity and associated supply-chain expenditure. The proposed employment and labour targets will support the delivery of local employment, apprenticeships, training and skills opportunities during the construction phase, helping to ensure that investment in Piccadilly Gardens delivers wider social value benefits alongside the physical redevelopment of the Site.

5.10 A Local Labour Agreement will provide a clear framework for securing employment, skills and social value outcomes during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. The targets include the creation of 2 new jobs, support for 8 sustained jobs, delivery of 2 new apprenticeships, and a commitment to prioritise local employment outcomes through a Greater Manchester approach with a Manchester-first focus. The template also identifies a local supply chain commitment, with local suppliers to be identified through the procurement process.

5.11 In addition to employment and apprenticeship outcomes, the proposed labour targets include wider employability and skills targets. These comprise 60 hours of support for Manchester young people up to the age of 24, 40 hours of support for unemployed Manchester adults, 4 weeks of meaningful work placements or pre-employment training, 4 weeks of work trials for Manchester job seekers, 100 hours of community projects with skills and employability outcomes, and 5 site visits for local people.

5.12 These outcomes would ensure that investment in Piccadilly Gardens generates wider social value benefits alongside the physical redevelopment of the Site. The benefits should be treated as positive construction-phase and social value outcomes, but proportionately weighted as supporting benefits rather than the principal economic justification for the Proposed Development.

5.13 These economic benefits are considered to attract **moderate weight**. They are positive and flow from the Proposed Development, but are not the principal economic justification for the scheme.

Social benefits

Social, Health and Wellbeing Benefits

5.14 The Proposed Development would significantly improve the quality, attractiveness and functionality of Piccadilly Gardens through enhanced public realm, improved seating and street furniture, landscape-led renewal, enlarged play provision and improved routes through the Gardens.

5.15 Together, these interventions would support increased activity throughout the day, longer dwell times, greater social interaction, informal recreation and an improved visitor experience. The proposals therefore have the potential to increase the attractiveness and functionality of the Gardens for residents, workers, visitors, students, commuters and wider city-centre users.

5.16 A substantial body of evidence demonstrates the relationship between high-quality public spaces and positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Piccadilly Gardens plays an important role within the city centre as a place to move through, dwell, rest, socialise, undertake informal recreation and spend time outdoors.

5.17 The Proposed Development would contribute positively to health and wellbeing by improving access to high-quality public space, landscape, seating, play, recreation, social interaction and opportunities to spend time outdoors within the city centre. These matters are particularly relevant within a dense urban environment where public spaces play an important role in supporting everyday comfort, social wellbeing and inclusion.

5.18 The benefits would be experienced by a broad and diverse population, including children and young people, older people, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, people experiencing loneliness or

social isolation.

5.19 The public benefit is not that the Proposed Development would directly resolve population-level health inequalities. Rather, the benefit is that it would improve the physical and social environment of a widely used public space in ways that support inclusive use, everyday comfort, recreation, social interaction and access to nature.

5.20 Given the strategic location of the Gardens and the scale and diversity of users likely to benefit, these social, health and wellbeing benefits attract **significant weight**.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

5.21 The Proposed Development would improve the quality, legibility and functionality of the public realm within Piccadilly Gardens. The scheme would provide a more coherent public space, improved movement routes, enhanced seating and resting opportunities, better integration of landscape and public activity areas, and a more accessible everyday environment for people using and passing through the Gardens. Consultation and engagement identified a desire for enhanced accessibility and inclusivity across the Gardens, recognising the importance of ensuring that one of Manchester's principal civic spaces can be comfortably used and enjoyed by the widest possible range of people.

5.22 Accessibility and inclusivity considerations have informed the design process throughout. Specialist access and inclusivity advice was provided by Arup and the proposals have been reviewed against a range of factors including movement routes, gradients, surface materials, seating, edge treatments, play provision, lighting, wayfinding and long-term management arrangements. The design has evolved in response to this review and wider consultation feedback to ensure that accessibility considerations are embedded throughout the scheme rather than being limited to individual features.

5.23 The proposed layout has been designed to provide clear, comfortable and accessible movement throughout the Gardens. Generous circulation routes, accessible gradients, step-free connections and clear pedestrian routes would support independent movement for wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, older people, families with prams and other users with a range of accessibility requirements. The proposals would also improve legibility and wayfinding across the Gardens, helping users navigate the space more easily and confidently.

5.24 Inclusive design principles are reflected throughout the public realm. The scheme incorporates accessible seating and resting opportunities distributed across the Gardens, including seating designed to facilitate wheelchair transfer. Materials, edge treatments and public realm detailing have been developed to support visual contrast, legibility and cane detectability, while interpretation features would be designed in accordance with accessibility best practice. Inclusive play opportunities have also been integrated within the wider public realm, ensuring that children of different ages and abilities can participate in shared play experiences.

5.25 The lighting and landscape strategies also contribute to accessibility and inclusivity objectives. Improved lighting would support safe movement, visibility, wayfinding and comfort during the evening, while long-term

management and maintenance arrangements would help ensure that routes remain clear, accessible and unobstructed. Ongoing stewardship of planting, seating, routes and public realm features would assist in maintaining accessibility benefits over time and support the continued usability of the Gardens for all users.

5.26 Collectively, these measures would help create a more equitable and inclusive civic environment capable of being used, understood and enjoyed by a diverse cross-section of the public. On a daily basis, the benefits would be experienced by a substantial and diverse population using one of Manchester's principal public spaces and transport interchanges.

5.27 Given the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, the scale of use it accommodates and the extent to which the proposals embed inclusive design throughout the public realm, these accessibility and inclusivity benefits attract **significant weight**.

Families, Play and Child-Friendly City Centre

5.28 The existing play provision within Piccadilly Gardens is limited in scale and visibility. Consultation and engagement identified that some families are unaware of the existing play offer and concerns regarding safety and anti-social behaviour have affected how the space is used.

5.29 The Proposed Development includes enhanced and more visible play provision integrated within a wider programme of public realm improvements. New planting, improved seating, enhanced landscape infrastructure, improved routes, better lighting and a strengthened approach to management and stewardship would create a more attractive, comfortable and welcoming environment for families and children.

5.30 The proposals therefore create opportunities for Piccadilly Gardens to function more effectively as a family-friendly civic destination and support greater use of the city centre by families with children. The integration of play within a renewed, better-managed and more comfortable civic environment has the potential to support family-friendly use of Manchester city centre, increase opportunities for children to spend time outdoors, and support informal recreation and social interaction. In doing so, the proposals respond directly to consultation feedback seeking a safer, more welcoming and family-friendly environment, improved opportunities for children and families, and enhanced inclusivity across the Gardens.

5.31 The play area has been developed as an inclusive play destination that supports children of different ages, abilities and needs to play together within a shared environment. The play strategy incorporates a range of physical, sensory and social play experiences, including wheelchair-accessible equipment, varied levels of challenge and opportunities for exploration, imaginative play and social interaction. This approach helps to ensure that the benefits of the play space can be experienced by a broader range of children, families and carers, supporting inclusion and encouraging longer dwell times within the Gardens.

5.32 The scheme would provide a more coherent public space, improved movement routes, enhanced seating and resting opportunities, better integration of play and landscape areas, and a more accessible everyday environment for people using and passing through the Gardens. The public realm within the Proposed Development has been designed to support comfortable use by a broad range of users, including families

with young children, through clear movement routes, accessible gradients, distributed seating and resting opportunities, and routes capable of accommodating prams and a range of mobility needs.

5.33 The proposed public realm improvements would support low-impact, regular and small-scale community events and activities, further contributing to social interaction and inviting new users of the space.

5.34 The public benefits would be experienced by a wide and diverse range of users, including residents, workers, students, visitors, commuters, families, children, older people, disabled people and people with a range of mobility and accessibility requirements. The improvements would support the role of Piccadilly Gardens as both a civic destination and a movement space within the wider city-centre network.

5.35 These benefits respond directly to identified concerns relating to family use, perceptions of safety, accessibility, comfort and public realm quality and support the creation of a more inclusive and family-friendly civic space. Given the strategic location of the Gardens and the number and diversity of users likely to experience the improvements, these benefits attract **significant weight**.

Safety, Perception and Stewardship

5.36 Public consultation identified longstanding concerns regarding perceptions of safety, crime and anti-social behaviour within the Gardens. Whilst wider social issues cannot be addressed through physical redevelopment alone, the Proposed Development is capable of supporting a more welcoming, active and positively used public space.

5.37 The enhanced public realm, improved street furniture, landscape-led renewal, enlarged play provision and improved routes through the Gardens would create a more attractive, welcoming and functional civic environment. Together, these interventions would support increased activity throughout the day, longer dwell times, greater social interaction and a more positive visitor experience. The creation of a more family-friendly and inclusive environment, supported by ongoing stewardship and management, would also contribute to increased positive use of the space, helping to improve perceptions of the Gardens and reinforce their role as a welcoming civic destination.

5.38 Improved lighting, enhanced sightlines, better public realm quality, clearer movement routes, increased positive activity and a renewed approach to management and stewardship would support natural surveillance, day-to-day activity and a more comfortable public realm experience.

5.39 The associated management and stewardship arrangements are an important supporting element of the overall regeneration of Piccadilly Gardens. Whilst physical improvements will deliver immediate benefits, the long-term success of the Gardens will also depend upon effective management, maintenance, activation and coordination between relevant stakeholders. This is particularly relevant given that a number of the existing issues associated with Piccadilly Gardens relate not only to the quality of the physical environment but also to its ongoing management, use and perception.

5.40 The benefit is important because perceptions of safety, comfort and welcome directly influence how different groups experience and use the Gardens. Effective stewardship has the potential to support increased positive activity, broader and more diverse use of the space, improved perceptions of safety and comfort,

and the long-term success of the Gardens as an active, inclusive and welcoming civic destination.

5.41 The proposals therefore have the potential to increase the attractiveness and functionality of the Gardens for residents, workers, visitors and city centre users. This benefit arises directly from the Proposed Development and would be experienced by a substantial section of the public.

5.42 Given the strategic role of Piccadilly Gardens, the scale of public use and the importance of perceptions of safety, comfort and welcome to the success of the space, these benefits attract **significant weight**.

Strategic Civic and Place-Making Benefits

5.43 The Proposed Development would deliver a comprehensive programme of public realm renewal and landscape enhancement capable of transforming the quality and perception of the Gardens whilst reinforcing their role as one of Manchester's principal civic spaces.

5.44 The improvements would be experienced not only by people choosing to spend time within the Gardens, but also by the substantial volume of people who pass through the space as part of daily journeys. The benefit arising from the scheme is therefore significantly broader than the provision of individual physical interventions.

5.45 It arises from the enhancement of one of Manchester's most important public spaces, the strengthening of civic identity and the improvement of a gateway location that helps define the experience of the city centre.

5.46 Given the strategic role of Piccadilly Gardens and the scale of the population likely to experience these improvements, these benefits attract **significant weight**.

Heritage Setting and Appreciation

5.47 The proposals seek to reveal and enhance assets that are presently experienced within a fragmented public realm setting, whilst strengthening the overall civic identity of Piccadilly Gardens as one of Manchester's principal public spaces.

5.48 The Proposed Development also creates opportunities to improve the setting, visibility and appreciation of existing monuments, civic landmarks and heritage assets within and around the Gardens. The benefit arises from the potential for a more coherent, legible and high-quality public realm to improve how these features are experienced.

5.49 The benefits extend beyond the physical enhancement of heritage assets themselves. Piccadilly Gardens has long performed an important civic role within Manchester city centre, and the proposals provide opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to better experience and engage with the historic character of the space as part of their everyday use of the Gardens. The improved setting of monuments and civic landmarks would strengthen the connection between the Gardens, Manchester's history and its contemporary role as one of the city's principal public spaces.

5.50 By creating a more welcoming, accessible and attractive environment, the Proposed Development has the potential to encourage greater use of the Gardens and increase opportunities for people to appreciate the site's historic and civic significance. These benefits contribute positively to local identity, sense of place, civic

pride and the overall experience of Manchester city centre.

5.51 These benefits should be understood primarily as civic, cultural and place-making benefits arising from the enhancement of a strategically important public space. They attract **moderate weight** in the planning balance.

Environmental benefits

Landscape Renewal and Urban Greening

5.52 The existing Gardens are located within a highly urbanised city-centre environment and include areas of hardstanding, transport infrastructure, modified grassland and urban trees. The baseline condition demonstrates both the current limitations of the Site and the opportunity for enhancement through comprehensive landscape-led renewal.

5.53 The Proposed Development delivers a substantial programme of landscape renewal through new planting, increased tree canopy cover, enhanced lawns, planting beds and associated public realm improvements. The proposals respond directly to identified issues concerning fragmented lawns, limited planting quality and the overall environmental character of the Gardens. The introduction of substantial new planting and landscaping would improve the visual quality, functionality and environmental performance of the Site.

5.54 A central objective of the Proposed Development is to restore the role of landscape, planting and horticulture within Piccadilly Gardens and to reinforce the qualities that originally defined the space.

5.55 The Proposed Development would provide substantial landscape renewal through new planting, improved lawns, enhanced horticultural interest, rain gardens, increased biodiversity value, improved tree planting and the delivery of a greener and more environmentally responsive public realm.

5.56 These interventions would significantly improve the visual quality, environmental quality and functionality of the Gardens. They would support wider objectives relating to health and wellbeing, biodiversity, climate resilience, shade provision and public amenity whilst helping to re-establish a stronger sense of place and identity within the city centre.

5.57 Importantly, the benefits of landscape renewal extend beyond visual enhancement. Green infrastructure performs a range of environmental functions, including improving biodiversity, providing opportunities for urban cooling, assisting with sustainable drainage, supporting climate resilience and improving the everyday experience of those using the space.

5.58 The landscape and urban greening benefits are considered to attract **significant weight**. They arise directly from the Proposed Development, would be long-term in nature and would be experienced by a substantial section of the public using or passing through the Gardens.

Biodiversity Enhancement

5.59 The existing ecological value of the Site is relatively modest, reflecting its highly urbanised character. However, this also creates substantial opportunities for enhancement.

5.60 The Proposed Development incorporates a substantially more diverse and resilient landscape strategy, including new tree planting, rain gardens, planting beds, biodiverse landscaping and habitat creation measures. These interventions would improve habitat diversity, strengthen ecological resilience and create a richer and more varied urban landscape capable of supporting a broader range of species over time.

5.61 The accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment confirms that the Proposed Development is predicted to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10.47%, exceeding the statutory minimum requirement and contributing positively towards local and national biodiversity objectives. These benefits are long term in nature and attract **moderate weight**.

Climate Resilience and Adaptation

5.62 Climate resilience and adaptation are increasingly important planning considerations, particularly in dense urban environments where overheating, limited shade and surface water management can affect public comfort and usability. Piccadilly Gardens has a role to play in supporting a more resilient city-centre public realm.

5.63 The Proposed Development includes a range of measures intended to improve resilience to climate change, including increased tree canopy cover, enhanced shade provision, sustainable drainage infrastructure, blue-green infrastructure and landscape interventions capable of improving environmental performance within a dense city centre location.

5.64 These measures create opportunities to reduce overheating, improve thermal comfort, manage surface water more effectively and improve the resilience of the Gardens to future climate conditions. Given the strategic role of the Site and the long-term nature of these interventions, these benefits attract **significant weight**.

Sustainable drainage and water management

5.65 The Proposed Development includes drainage infrastructure and sustainable drainage measures as part of the wider public realm works. These measures form part of the environmental response to the redevelopment of the Gardens and contribute to the long-term functionality and resilience of the Site. The proposals also introduce sustainable drainage infrastructure and associated environmental improvements designed to support water management and environmental performance.

5.66 The public benefit arises from the contribution these measures make to environmental quality, surface water management and the creation of a more resilient and better-functioning public realm. While these benefits may be less immediately visible to the public than play or planting, they are integral to the long-term performance of the Gardens.

5.67 These measures contribute to a broader programme of environmental enhancement that improves the functionality, resilience and long-term sustainability of the Gardens whilst providing benefits that are experienced by the public through a higher quality and more resilient public realm environment. This benefit attracts **moderate weight**.

Long-term management and durability of the public realm

5.68 The redevelopment creates the opportunity for a more coherent and resilient landscape and public realm structure that can be managed over time. However, the public benefits of the Proposed Development depend not only on the initial delivery of physical works, but also on the long-term management, maintenance and durability of the completed public realm.

5.69 A Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan will establish an ongoing framework for the management of planting, trees, rain gardens, play areas, lighting, surfaces and other public realm infrastructure. The Plan includes management objectives, monitoring arrangements and maintenance requirements intended to support the successful establishment and long-term performance of the landscape, including the maintenance of biodiversity enhancements and sustainable drainage features over time.

5.70 This benefit is considered to attract **moderate weight**, provided that appropriate management and maintenance arrangements are secured through the application process or associated management documentation.

Summary of Public Benefits

5.71 The table below summarises the principal public benefits identified through the assessment and the indicative weight attributed to each. The final weight should be reviewed once the supporting technical documents are fixed for submission and any scheme commitments are confirmed.

Theme / topic	Principal public benefits	Assessment weight
Economic: Supporting City Centre Vitality and Regeneration	• Improved city-centre gateway and transport interchange • Increased attractiveness, activity and dwell time • Support for surrounding businesses and visitor economy • Positive contribution to wider regeneration and investment confidence	Moderate weight
Economic: Employment and Social Value	• Construction employment and supply-chain expenditure • Apprenticeships, training and work placements • Local labour and skills development • Community engagement and social value outcomes	Moderate weight
Social: Social, Health and Wellbeing Benefits	• Improved public realm quality and comfort • Greater opportunities for recreation and relaxation • Increased social interaction and community wellbeing • Better access to green space in the city centre	Significant weight
Social: Accessibility and Inclusivity	• More accessible and legible public environment • Improved movement routes and wayfinding • Inclusive design embedded throughout the scheme • Better access for people with mobility, sensory and accessibility needs	Significant weight

Theme / topic	Principal public benefits	Assessment weight
Social: Families, Play and Child-Friendly City Centre	• Enhanced and more visible play provision • Inclusive play opportunities for a range of ages and abilities • More welcoming environment for families and carers • Support for family-friendly use of Manchester city centre	Significant weight
Social: Safety, Perception and Stewardship	• Improved perceptions of safety and comfort • Increased positive use and activity throughout the day • Better lighting, visibility and natural surveillance • Long-term stewardship supporting the success of the space	Significant weight
Social: Strategic Civic and Place-Making Benefits	• Renewal of a major civic space • Strengthened civic identity and sense of place • Enhanced role as a gateway to Manchester city centre • Improved experience for residents, workers and visitors	Significant weight
Social: Heritage Setting and Appreciation	• Improved setting of monuments and civic landmarks • Enhanced visibility and appreciation of heritage assets • Stronger connection between the Gardens and Manchester's history • Contribution to local identity and civic pride	Moderate weight
Environmental: Landscape Renewal and Urban Greening	• Significant increase in planting and greening • Enhanced tree canopy and horticultural interest • Improved environmental quality and visual amenity • Stronger landscape character and sense of place	Significant weight
Environmental: Biodiversity Enhancement	• Habitat creation and ecological enhancement • More diverse and resilient planting strategy • Increased biodiversity value and ecological resilience • Delivery of 10.47% Biodiversity Net Gain	Moderate weight
Environmental: Climate Resilience and Adaptation	• Increased tree cover and shade provision • Urban cooling and thermal comfort benefits • Blue-green infrastructure and climate adaptation • Improved resilience to future climate conditions	Significant weight
Environmental: Sustainable drainage and water management	• Integrated SuDS and rain gardens • Improved surface water management • Enhanced environmental performance • Greater resilience to rainfall events	Moderate weight
Environmental: Long-term management and durability of the public realm	• Long-term management of landscape and public realm assets • Ongoing maintenance of biodiversity enhancements • Support for long-term SuDS performance • Ensures environmental benefits continue to be realised over time	Moderate weight



6. Cumulative Assessment of Benefits

6.1 This Statement has identified and assessed the principal public benefits arising from the Proposed Development. The assessment demonstrates that the redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens would deliver a wide-ranging package of economic, social and environmental benefits that flow directly from the proposals and would be experienced by the public at large.

6.2 The Proposed Development comprises far more than a programme of physical landscape improvements. It represents the comprehensive renewal of one of Manchester city centre's most important civic spaces and transport interchanges, delivering a coordinated package of public realm, landscape, play, accessibility, environmental and stewardship interventions capable of generating substantial and long-lasting public

benefits.

6.3 The key social benefits arise from the civic and place-making benefits of the redevelopment. Piccadilly Gardens occupies a unique position within Manchester and forms part of the city's public face. As a place of arrival, interchange, movement and gathering, its quality influences the experience of Manchester for a substantial section of the public. The Proposed Development would strengthen the civic role, identity and functionality of the Gardens, helping to create a public space commensurate with its strategic importance within the city centre. Through the comprehensive renewal of the public realm, landscape and movement environment, the proposals would enhance the experience of one of Manchester's principal civic spaces and reinforce its role as a gateway, destination and focal point within the city centre.

6.4 These civic and social benefits are closely linked to wider economic outcomes. A more attractive, accessible and actively used civic space has the potential to support increased footfall, longer dwell times and confidence in the surrounding area, contributing positively to Manchester city centre's wider regeneration and economic success.

6.5 In economic terms, the redevelopment would strengthen the role of Piccadilly Gardens as a city-centre destination, gateway and transport hub. The improved quality, attractiveness and functionality of the Gardens, together with enhanced opportunities for activity, recreation and dwell time, would support city-centre vitality and contribute positively towards wider regeneration objectives. Given the prominence of the Site and its role within the daily functioning of Manchester city centre, these benefits have the potential to extend beyond the application boundary and support wider economic activity, investment confidence and the continued attractiveness of the city centre.

6.6 Socially, the Proposed Development would deliver significant benefits through the creation of a more inclusive, accessible, welcoming and family-friendly public space. Enhanced play provision, improved accessibility, better public realm quality and opportunities for recreation, walking and social interaction would support a broader range of users and activities within the Gardens whilst contributing positively to health and wellbeing. These benefits would be experienced by the diverse population that uses Piccadilly Gardens on a daily basis.

6.7 In environmental terms, the proposals would deliver substantial landscape renewal, enhanced planting, habitat creation, increased biodiversity value, improved climate resilience, sustainable drainage infrastructure and a greener, more environmentally responsive public realm. The more diverse and resilient landscape strategy would improve environmental quality, support ecological enhancement, strengthen climate adaptation and contribute positively towards long-term sustainability objectives. The accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment confirms that the proposals would exceed the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, while ongoing management and maintenance arrangements would help ensure these benefits continue to be realised over time.

6.8 Whilst temporary construction-phase disruption will occur during implementation, this would be limited in duration and appropriately managed through construction and environmental management measures. These temporary effects do not alter the substantial long-term public benefits that would arise from the completed

redevelopment.

6.9 The public benefits identified through this assessment are wide-ranging, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Collectively, they would contribute to the renewal of Piccadilly Gardens as a more attractive, accessible, inclusive and resilient civic space capable of serving a broad range of users and functions. Improvements to landscape quality, biodiversity and climate resilience contribute not only to environmental objectives but also to health and wellbeing, accessibility, public amenity and civic identity. Similarly, enhancements to accessibility, inclusivity, play provision and public realm quality support wider social, economic and place-making outcomes. The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development is therefore greater than the sum of its individual components.

6.10 Taken individually, a number of the benefits identified above attract significant weight. Taken together, the cumulative package of public benefits is considered to attract **substantial weight in the overall planning balance.**

6.11 This cumulative assessment reflects the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, the breadth of users affected, the long-term nature of the proposed interventions and the extent to which the Proposed Development responds to identified baseline conditions and opportunities for public benefit.

Conclusion

6.12 The assessment undertaken within this Statement demonstrates that the Proposed Development would generate a substantial package of economic, social and environmental public benefits that flow directly from the comprehensive redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens.

6.13 The scheme responds to identified deficiencies and opportunities relating to public realm quality, accessibility, biodiversity, climate resilience, family-friendly provision, civic function, public perception and the overall experience of one of Manchester's most important public spaces. In doing so, it would create a greener, more inclusive, more attractive and more resilient civic environment capable of serving the needs of existing and future users.

6.14 A number of the individual benefits identified throughout this Statement attract significant weight. When considered collectively, and having regard to the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, the breadth of beneficiaries, the permanence of the interventions and the extent to which the scheme responds to identified needs and policy objectives, the cumulative package of public benefits should be afforded substantial weight in the planning balance.

6.15 Overall, the Proposed Development would deliver enduring and meaningful public benefits across all three dimensions of sustainable development. The redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens would reinforce its role as a principal civic space, gateway and destination within Manchester city centre and would provide a substantial public benefit for current and future generations. The cumulative package of benefits attracts Substantial weight in the planning balance due to the strategic importance of Piccadilly Gardens, the scale and diversity of beneficiaries, the permanence of the interventions and the combination of social, environmental and economic outcomes.

6.16 Taken together, these benefits would be experienced by a wide range of current and future users of Manchester city centre and represent a compelling package of public benefits that attracts substantial weight in the planning balance.

6.17 The proposal is considered to be in compliance with the Development Plan and any Material Considerations. To summarise this position, the below sets out the scheme against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined by paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

Economic Benefits



The Proposed Development would support the continued regeneration of Manchester City Centre through the comprehensive renewal of Piccadilly Gardens, enhancing the quality, attractiveness and functionality of one of the city's most important civic spaces and transport interchanges.

- The Proposed Development would secure the long-term future of Piccadilly Gardens through significant investment in public realm, landscape, community infrastructure and ongoing stewardship.
- The Proposed Development would support the continued regeneration of Manchester City Centre by improving the experience of a key gateway location used by residents, workers, businesses and visitors.
- A Local Labour Agreement will support local employment, apprenticeships, training, skills development and wider employability initiatives during the construction phase.
- The regeneration of Piccadilly Gardens will support economic activity, investment and city-centre vitality through the creation of a more attractive, welcoming and actively used civic space.

Social Benefits

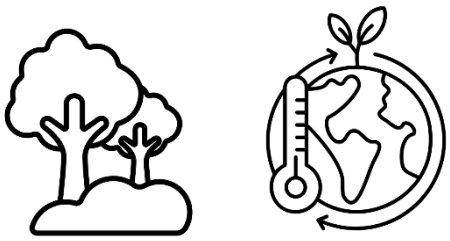


The Proposed Development would transform Piccadilly Gardens into a safer, greener and more inclusive civic destination, delivering substantial benefits for health, wellbeing, recreation, community activity and the day-to-day experience of residents, workers and visitors.

- The Proposed Development would transform perceptions of Piccadilly Gardens through the creation of a safer, greener and more welcoming civic space, encouraging positive day-to-day use by residents, workers, visitors and families.
- The Proposed Development would provide new opportunities for recreation, play, relaxation and community activity through the delivery of a central lawn, enhanced seating and a family-friendly play area.

- The Proposed Development would improve health, wellbeing and social inclusion through enhanced accessibility, increased greening, improved perceptions of safety and the long-term stewardship and management of the Gardens.

Environmental Benefits



The Proposed Development would deliver significant environmental enhancements through increased greening, biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable design within one of Manchester's most important civic spaces.

- Delivery of a predicted **10.47% Biodiversity Net Gain**, exceeding the statutory minimum requirement.
- 3:1 tree replacement, diversity of species, and references to horticulture across Manchester.
- Increased tree canopy cover, new planting and rain gardens that enhance biodiversity, environmental quality and climate resilience.
- Integration of SuDS and blue-green infrastructure to improve surface water management and support adaptation to climate change.
- Support for sustainable travel through improvements to a highly accessible city centre location and major public transport interchange.

6.18 Overall, the proposed development would deliver valuable economic, social and environmental benefits such that would deliver sustainable development. It would make a valued contribution to the offer within the locality and support employment opportunities within the area.

6.19 In considering the planning balance on the proposals, the scheme has been evidenced to providing a sustainable development for a sector of society with specific needs such that the benefits of allowing the proposal would outweigh any adverse impacts which may arise as a result. It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the Development Plan and consequently the proposals should be approved without delay in accordance with paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF and MCC Local Plan.