Advice to the local planning authority

Advice to the local planning authority (LPA) from the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) as a statutory consultee for developments that include a relevant building.

To LPA	Manchester
LPA planning ref no	144791/FO/2025
Our ref	26-0052
Site address	Weston Student Halls and Pendulum Hotel, 78 Sackville Street, Manchester M1 3BB
Proposal description	Phased development comprising : (a) Partial removal of existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 50 storeys and one of 17 storeys with an 8-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, highways works, and change of use of the Pendulum Hotel to purpose-built student accommodation; and (b) Removal of remaining existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 33 storeys and one of part-24 and part-8 storeys with a 1-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, and highways works
Date on fire statement	17/09/2025
Date consultation received	15/01/2026
Date response sent	05/02/2026

1. Substantive response for the local planning authority

Thank you for consulting the BSR about this application.

Headline response from the BSR
Headline Response **'Advice to LPA' - Concern**

Scope of consultation

1.1 The above full planning application relates to a new residential development located in Manchester. The *Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel* development includes the phased construction of purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) use class C3 and will deliver 2.511 beds with associated servicing and ancillary floorspace.

Previous consultation

1.2 The BSR received a consultation request on 19/12/2025 for the above planning application and responded on 09/01/2026, under the BSR reference 25-1136, with the headline 'Concern'.

Current consultation

1.3 A further consultation was received from the LPA on 15/01/2026, providing a letter dated 13/01/2026 as a response to BSR (previously HSE) advice. For the avoidance of doubt, this substantive response relates to the information provided in the latest consultation.

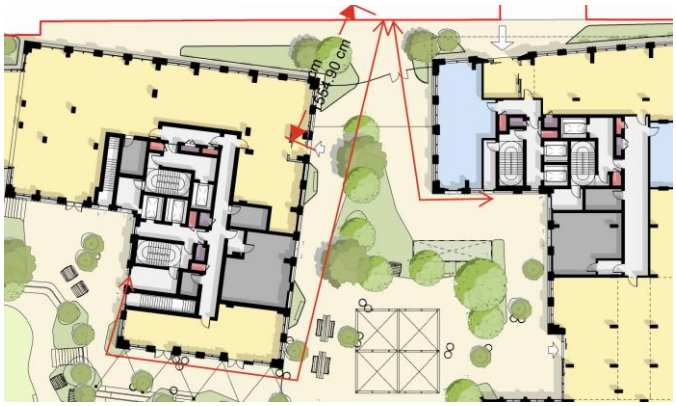
1.4 Section 6 (building schedule) of the *Fire Statement* confirms that the design standards used are: BS9991:2024 ('*Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings – Code of practice*'), BS9999:2017 ('*Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings – Code of practice*'), and BS7974:2019 ('*Application of fire safety engineering principles to the design of buildings*'). BSR has assessed the application accordingly.

1.5 Following a review of the information provided by the applicant, the BSR maintains the concerns below.

Concern: Fire Service Access

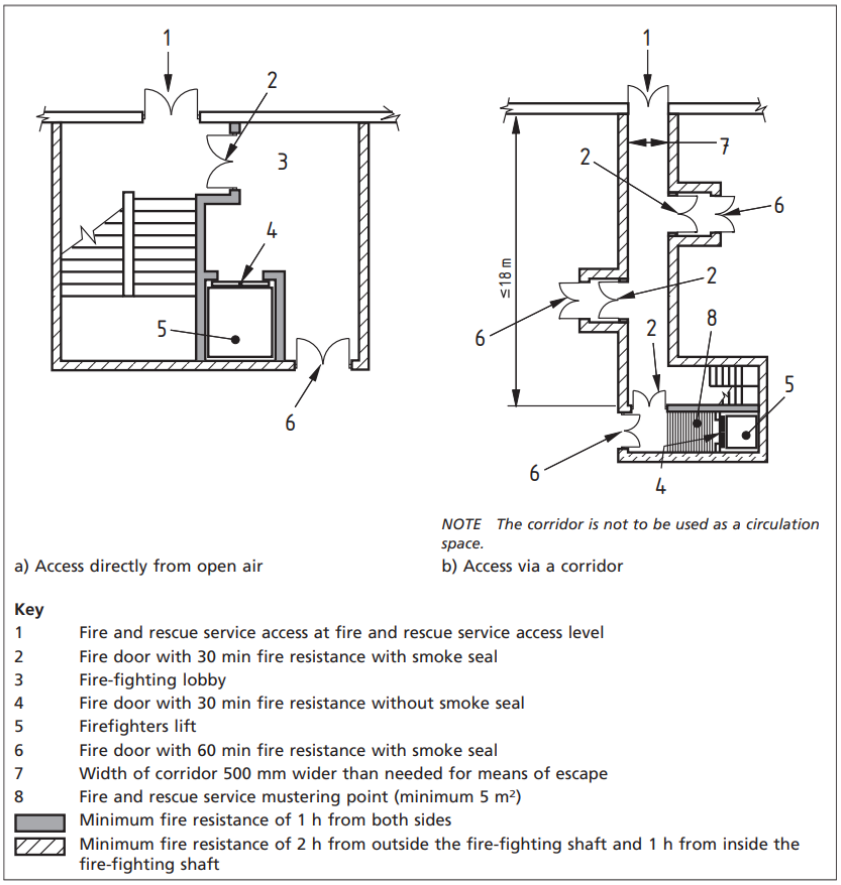
Firefighting shaft access

1.6 Section 7 of the *Fire Statement*, states: "*The main access to the central firefighting cores from the access road for Towers A2 and B2 will be via the main reception*." The applicant proposes access to the tower B2 firefighting shafts via the open reception area, or from the rear which is approximately 67m from the fire appliance parking position (see drawing extract below):



1.7 Firefighting shafts and corridors giving access to firefighting shafts, should be separated from the building by 2 hours fire resistance. The corridors should not be circulation spaces and should be accessed directly from outside. This is necessary to ensure that firefighters have rapid and safe access to the firefighting shaft for extended durations (it is likely they will access the shaft to check upper floors regardless of fire location). This can be seen in the diagram below (extract from BS9999:2017):

Figure 20 **Typical fire-fighting shaft layout at fire and rescue service access level – Fire and rescue service access at lowest storey**



1.8 Additionally, the adopted standard PD7974-5:2014, states: "*The distance between the fire appliance pump and any rising main inlet connections should be kept to a minimum. This distance from the* ***fire appliance to the base of a firefighting stair should also be within acceptable parameters, taking firefighter physiology into account.***"

1.9 Accordingly, the proposed access route via the reception or via a 67m route to the rear is not considered acceptable. Design changes necessary to resolve this issue will affect land use planning considerations such as appearance and landscaping, depending on the design response. For example, if a new external entrance is required to provide access to a protected corridor near the proposed front entrance in Tower B2, or a new vehicular route is provided to serve the rear firefighting shaft in Tower B2.

Fire Service access to the Tower B2 basement

1.10 The ground floor plan drawing provided, shows that access to the tower B2 basement is only available to the rear, approximately 67m from the fire appliance parking location. Accordingly, in case of basement fire scenario in Tower B2 , the firefighters should travel carrying heavy equipment, the same distance from the parking location to reach the basement entrances, which takes time and causes fatigue, hindering firefighting operations.

1.11 Design changes will be necessary to mitigate the distance between the fire appliance parking location and the building's rear entrance, improving the fire service access. This is likely to affect planning considerations such as the landscaping of the development if a route for the fire appliance is provided to serve the rear firefighting shaft and basement access in Tower B2.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
[redacted]
Fire Safety Information Assessor

Guidance on Planning Gateway One is available on the Planning Portal: Planning and fire safety - Planning Portal.

This response does not provide advice on any of the following:

- **matters that are or will be subject to Building Regulations regardless of whether such matters have been provided as part of the application**
- **London Plan policy compliance**