

Manchester Digital Campus confirmed

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Approval has been given for a cutting-edge Civil Service campus in Manchester to drive forward world-class digital capability and services for the public.

The government has taken a major step forward with the Manchester Digital Campus (MDC) today, with the outline business case formally approved by the Treasury.

Built on brownfield land in central Manchester, the Campus will bring together approximately 8,800 people from multiple government departments with a focus on digital work. It is a significant driver for the government digital and data strategy and a key commitment by the government's Places for Growth programme.

It will be delivered by the Cabinet Office and Government Property Agency in close collaboration with the multiple government departments involved.

Once operational - targeted for 2032 - MDC will provide approximately 900,000 square feet of purpose-built workspace across two buildings. The new campus demonstrates Places for Growth in action, helping to harness the North West's digital expertise and fostering collaboration across departments and the wider digital sector in the region.

Construction is expected to support approximately 4,900 direct jobs over a four-year build period.

The Campus will also help the government reach its ambition of having one in ten civil servants in technology and digital roles by 2030 - currently just over five per cent. The wider MDC delivery programme will play a highly significant part in galvanising technology and digital functions and operators in the region in anticipation of the Campus opening, which will shift momentum towards meeting this ambition.

Cabinet Office Minister Anna Turley said:

We are turning disused land into a digital centre for government, boosting local growth and supporting regeneration of Manchester's vibrant city centre.

I am a firm believer that the best ideas often come from those on the frontline. Our plans will move decision-making out of Whitehall and into cities like Manchester, to ensure national policy is informed by local expertise. This will deliver real, tangible benefits for communities across the North, as well as saving the taxpayer billions of pounds.

Philippa Harvey, Senior Responsible Owner for the MDC Programme:

This is the end of the beginning for a programme that has required extraordinary commitment from a huge number of people across government, in Manchester, and across the wider region. MDC is not just a new building - it is a transformation of how government works, bringing together digital expertise at scale in a world-class environment, fully embedded in the community we serve. I am enormously proud of what has been achieved by all involved and excited about what comes next.

Cllr Bev Craig OBE, Leader of Manchester City Council, said:

This is a significant announcement for our city. The Manchester Digital Campus will be a landmark programme that cements Manchester's growing global reputation in Digital and Cyber industries, creating major opportunities for residents and a huge boost to our city.

Transforming a derelict site will see thousands of Government jobs concentrating in Manchester, as well as supporting 4,900 construction jobs and an unprecedented £2.3bn in social value investment that will directly improve the lives of Mancunians and the communities they call home.

This is also a clear commitment by this Government to invest in Manchester and a statement that northern investment is good for our city and our region, and it's also good for the economic growth of the UK.

Background

The Campus will be located on a brownfield site in Ancoats, central Manchester. The land, a former retail park, was acquired by Manchester City Council in 2017. The Cabinet Office, GPA and MCC have worked in close partnership to develop a Strategic Regeneration Framework for the area, with the GPA planning two government office hubs (MDC) on 5.5 acres, whilst the council aims to create a public park within the remaining site. Planning permission was granted for both schemes in February 2025 and the GPA's planning was updated in February 2026.

Enabling works are planned for MDC in 2026/27, with main construction following in 2027/28 to 2028/29.

The North West is already home to 25,000 civil servants and is recognised as a growing and internationally competitive digital and cyber corridor. MDC builds on that foundation, supporting the government's wider growth mission and its ambition to ensure opportunity is spread across every part of the United Kingdom.

The outline business case for MDC demonstrates a benefit-cost ratio* of 4.32 and a Net Present Social Value** of £2.345bn.

Compared to maintaining dispersed leasehold office accommodation across the region to meet this technological and digital space requirement for civil servants, the new single-site Campus is freehold and will drive an estimated £4.7bn in long-term estate efficiencies over 60 years. At full operation, estate savings are projected at £240m per annum.

*Benefit/cost ratio (economic viability calculation) - £1 spent yields £4.32 in benefit over the project lifetime.

**NPSV is used to assess policies and projects, going beyond financial returns to include social and environmental impact.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/manchester-digital-campus-confirmed>