



20th November 2025
For immediate release
PHOTOS attached – taken at daybreak this morning

Ryebank Fields: They're Local, Green, and Spacy! Let's Keep Them! What say YOU Mayor Burnham?

On Monday 17th November, in response to Manchester City Council's (MCC) Draft Local Plan¹, Ryebank Fields Community Group (RFCG) requested the designation of Ryebank Fields in Chorlton as a local Green Space², as per the evidence submitted in 2020 and 2024 by the Friends of Ryebank Fields.

RFCG's response points out that: *"Including Greenfield sites such as Ryebank Fields in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is at odds with a planning policy of prioritising Brownfield sites for development. Greenfields sites equate to less than 5% of the land included in the SHLAA; in conjunction with this there is a surplus of brownfield land available, equating to over 30% of the total housing target. Removing greenfield land from the SHLAA will therefore have no tangible impact on the number of proposed homes."*

The response also profiles Dr. Matthew Dennis's figures³ which show that MCC has consistently exceeded central government targets for new homes and that Manchester City has the least green infrastructure of all boroughs within the GMCA, making it *"imperative that the few green spaces we still have are preserved and protected."*

Since 2022, via the Greater Manchester Green Spaces Fund launched by GM Mayor Burnham, nearly 400,000m² of existing green space has been improved and this year Mayor Burnham has personally endorsed Northern Roots Local Green Space⁴. Today, RFCG Chair Dr Rhetta Moran asks Mayor Burnham: *"In light of your expressed commitment to **think[ing] differently about green space**" will you publicly pledge your support Andy, for Ryebank Fields' preservation as a Local Green Space and for our alternative planning application, submitted in October, to retain Ryebank Fields as a Community Woodland and Meadow?"*

Next Wednesday, 26th November, at 10am, RFCG will be in MCC's public gallery to witness the notice of a motion at Full Council entitled **Manchester: Enough brownfield land for every home and green space for every child.**

ENDS

¹ (Regulation 18) consultation, specifically Q1 (Intro), Q44 (Policy EN1green and blue infrastructure), and Q56 (Policy SI1 protection of open space)

² <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/a8dcccb49-a355-49a7-afd9-efb23d784c2/RFCG%20-%20Comments%20on%20the%20Draft%20local%20Plan.pdf>

³ Via the GHIA Mapping Tool for the GHIA project, 2020 <https://ghia.org.uk>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17YR86Fh5m/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Photos Credit: Jay Clarke

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com; Dr Rhetta Moran on 07776264646

Ryebank Fields is public land that was gifted to Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)) as a sports facility in the mid-1970s. The area was formerly a clay pit for Jackson's Brickworks; it then became an unregistered tip and was remediated in 1972 under the publicly funded 'Operation Eyesore' to make it safe to walk and play on. The University abandoned Ryebank Fields in 1996, since which time this Local Green Space has naturally re-wilded into a richly biodiverse wildlife 11-acre haven tended, over four generations, by local people. Developers acting on behalf of MMU, want to destroy the land for expensive housing. Local residents and their supporters are determined to stop this attempt to cash in on this public land at the expense of wildlife and the community.