

John Bowker
Chief Executive
Southway Housing Trust
Southern Gate
279 Princess Road
Manchester
M20 2LT

Dear John

Planning Application Reference: 142223/FO/2025

Your organisation actively encourages community engagement. Ryebank Fields Community Group would welcome an opportunity to engage with yourself and other members of your management team to discuss the above referenced planning application which Southway Housing have consented to be a party to. Our main issues for discussions are:

- The site is classed as Greenfield and Manchester City Council (MCC) has a published policy of prioritising Brownfield sites for housing development.
- There have been over 1000 objections made to MCC regarding planning application 142223/FO/2025 and over 700 objections made to Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council regarding planning application 115688 (Road access to Ryebank Fields from the Trafford side Ryebank Road cul-de-sac).
- The site was until 1949 used for industrial activity by Jacksons Brickworks and for some years was an unregistered tip. Consequently, there are considerable sub-surface pollutants and hazardous materials. The current planning application 142223/FO/2025 does not include a remediation plan for the site. The scale and costs associated with remediation could make development financially unviable. Remediation would necessitate removal and transportation off-site of huge quantities of unearthed contaminated materials through narrow and densely populated local roads. This would pose unacceptable health risks for the communities of Chorlton and Stretford and cause further reputational damage to Manchester Metropolitan University, Step Places and Southway Housing.
- A proposal to designate Ryebank Fields as a Local Green Space was submitted to MCC in April 2020, during the council's initial consultation period for their Local Plan and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. MCC's own planning officers have confirmed Ryebank Fields meets all the criteria for Local Green Space designation, which if approved will provide further protection from development.

- The area of South Manchester which includes Ryebank Fields is the only area of the city where current provision of green space is below the minimum standard, with the shortfall equating to 45.17 hectares. Maintaining Ryebank Fields as an open, rewilded green space will help to alleviate the biodiversity crisis, will improve access to nature and accord with the local and wider communities who wish to prevent development.
- This is the third occasion in thirty years that MMU has attempted to sell public land that was gifted to them for sports and recreational purposes. Their behaviour indicates a preference for profit over environmental and ecological concerns; this contradicts their claims to be a green and sustainable organisation.

We submitted a community-led and funded planning application reference: 143413/FO/2025 to retain Ryebank Fields as a community woodland and meadow which has been validated by MCC, details are available on their planning portal. The application received an unprecedented level of support during the pre-planning consultation process.

We hope you will agree to a meeting with us in order to discuss the future of Ryebank Fields and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Rhetta Moran
Chairperson
Ryebank Fields Community Group



Website: <https://ryebankfieldscommunity.co.uk>

Email: ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com

We are a National Council Voluntary Organisation member