

Dear Bev and Tom

GMCA Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Ryebank Fields

We would be grateful if you can provide an explanation regarding Manchester City Council's planning policy decision to exclude Ryebank Fields from the GMCA Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) list of sites.

Inclusion of Ryebank Fields in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy list of sites will provide recognition of the site as potentially important to Greater Manchester's Nature Recovery Network.

We believe the council's planning policy decision to exclude Ryebank Fields from the LNRS list of sites is unsound because:

Lancashire and Cheshire Wildlife Trusts, Friends of Longford Park, and Save Greater Manchester Greenbelt have all advocated for the inclusion of Ryebank Fields in the Local Nature Recovery Network, in recognition of its own intrinsic biodiversity, and also of its importance to the ecological integrity of the adjoining Longford Park which is included in the LNRS.

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. Retaining Ryebank Fields as a rewilded local green space will help to alleviate the biodiversity crisis and improve access to nature.

MMU/Southway Housing/Step Places Planning Application Ref: 142223/FO/2025

The Environment Agency has objected to the scheme for housing development of the site unless fundamental changes are made to the planning application. A comprehensive management plan for remediation of the site is required. The extensive scale and associated costs of remediation could make any housing development scheme financially unviable. United Utilities and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit have also objected to the scheme for housing development. Copies of their letters to Manchester City Council are attached. The letters were obtained as a result of Freedom of Information requests by Friends of Ryebank Fields. Manchester City Council does not publish details of planning applications until 5 days before planning committee meetings. We believe this policy should be changed as the process should be open, clear and transparent at every stage.

Future of Ryebank Fields

As well as meeting all the criteria for inclusion in the Local Nature Recovery Network Ryebank Fields meets all the criteria for Local Green Space designation.

Manchester City Council have further delayed their Local Plan consultation period. This means a proposal to designate Ryebank Fields as a Local Green Space is prevented from receiving due consideration. Ryebank Fields Community Group

submitted a community-led and funded planning application on the 9th of July 2025 to retain the site as a community woodland and meadow; the application is awaiting validation.

The people of Chorlton and Stretford as well as the wider communities in Manchester wish to see Ryebank Fields retained as a rewilded local green space. This is the third time in thirty years the community has had to fight to save Ryebank Fields from development. Community involvement in environmental and planning considerations is essential to ensure that decisions reflect the needs, aspirations and values of people directly affected by changes; in order to create sustainable liveable environments.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ryebank Fields Community Group

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Email: ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com



We are a National Council Voluntary Organisation member