

Response to MCC Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 stage consultation by Ryebank Fields Community Group

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to Q1 (Intro), Q44 (Policy EN1green and blue infrastructure), and Q56 (Policy SI1 protection of open space) we hereby request designation of Ryebank Fields in Chorlton as a local Green Space within the next draft of the Local Plan, as per the evidence submitted in 2020 and 2024 by the Friends of Rye Bank Fields.

We believe community engagement in local planning decisions is essential to reflect the needs, aspirations and values of people directly affected by changes and create more sustainable and liveable environments. Local authorities have a responsibility to engage with communities and consider their views when making planning decisions. Public views can be material planning considerations when they relate to planning issues.

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. MCC has consistently exceeded central government targets for new homes and with Manchester having the least green infrastructure of all boroughs within the GMCA (attached figures provided by Dr. Matthew Dennis, Lecturer in Geographical Information Science, University of, via the GHIA Mapping Tool for the GHIA project, 2020 <https://ghia.org.uk>), it is imperative that the few green spaces we still have are preserved and protected.

MCC's policy of withholding comments and information on planning applications until 5 days before planning committee meetings could be interpreted as secretive and undemocratic. Local authorities can clearly display all steps of the planning process in an uncomplicated and transparent manner as per the policy adopted by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. Recently the community had to use FOI's to obtain information on planning application reference 142223/FO/2025. This information could have been published and freely available. To encourage community confidence, involvement, and participation in local planning it should be simple, open and transparent.

Is any additional funding or scheme available in the draft Local Plan to bring unoccupied properties back into use? According to the latest date provided by Action on Empty Homes,

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6553693f7d629a133b6a4ece/t/69163d4e9a170f152fd287f0/1763065166521/TotalVacancy2025AtoZandRegionsWeb%5B38%5D.pdf>

Manchester has over 12,500 long-term unoccupied properties that could be brought back into use to help alleviate the housing crisis. MMU want to put 120 houses on Ryebank Fields. Therefore, MCC could save Ryebank Fields a hundred times over if they invested funds into repurposing these properties. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information regarding our comments on this consultation for the Draft Local Plan.

Yours faithfully,

Ryebank Fields Community Group



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We are a National Council Voluntary Organisation member