



Ryebank Fields Community <ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com>

Local Green Space Designation - Ryebank Fields, formerly Ryebank Playing Fields

1 message

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6 July 2026 at 17:05

To: Planning Strategy <planningstrategy@manchester.gov.uk>

Cc: julie.roscoe@manchester.gov.uk, Chantal Kerr-Sheppard <cllr.Chantal.Kerr-Sheppard@manchester.gov.uk>, Bob Phillips <bob@urbanimprint.co.uk>, Ryebank Fields <ryebankfieldsfriends@gmail.com>

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Manchester Local Green Space Assessment (June 2026) – Ryebank Road (commonly known as Ryebank Fields, formerly Ryebank Playing Fields)

We are writing to raise concerns regarding the reasoning and methodology used in the Manchester Local Green Space Assessment (June 2026) in relation to Ryebank Road, commonly known within the local community as Ryebank Fields and historically as Ryebank Playing Fields.

The assessment concludes that Ryebank Road should not be taken forward for Stage 3 Local Green Space assessment because the site is identified for residential development through the Ryebank Road Development Framework 2019 and within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2025.

We are concerned that the assessment places substantial reliance on the Ryebank Road Development Framework 2019 without adequately addressing the current statutory planning context.

Since the adoption of Places for Everyone in March 2024, the planning framework for Greater Manchester has changed significantly. Places for Everyone now forms part of the statutory development plan and carries considerably greater weight than a non-statutory development framework prepared in 2019.

The assessment repeatedly refers to the Ryebank Road Development Framework as justification for excluding the site from further Local Green Space consideration. However, it does not appear to explain the extent to which the adopted Places for Everyone plan supports development of the site, nor does it explain why reliance on a pre-Places for Everyone framework remains appropriate in a 2026 assessment.

We maintain that the report's reliance on the Ryebank Road Development Framework 2019 is insufficiently justified and that the assessment should instead have been grounded primarily in the current statutory development plan framework. In particular, the report should have clearly distinguished between:

- The legal weight of the adopted Places for Everyone development plan;
- The status of the Ryebank Road Development Framework 2019 as non-statutory planning guidance;
- The status of the SHLAA as an evidence base document rather than development plan policy; and
- The extent to which Local Green Space designation would genuinely conflict with current adopted planning policy.

The omission of this analysis risks giving disproportionate weight to older and non-statutory documents and creates the impression that they remain the primary policy basis for

development when the statutory planning position has since evolved.

We also note that inclusion within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies potential housing capacity rather than constituting a formal allocation, consent or planning permission. The SHLAA is an evidence-gathering exercise intended to identify possible development opportunities and does not, in itself, determine that development should take place. While inclusion in the SHLAA may indicate that a site has been assessed as potentially suitable, available or achievable for housing development, it does not confer development plan status and should not be treated as equivalent to an allocation within an adopted development plan. We therefore consider that reliance on the SHLAA as a reason for excluding the site from further Local Green Space consideration requires fuller justification and explanation than is provided in the assessment.

We would also welcome clarification as to whether Ryebank Road was assessed against the substantive Local Green Space criteria set out in national planning policy before being excluded from Stage 3 consideration. The assessment appears to place significant weight on the site's identification for potential housing development, but it is unclear whether a full evaluation was undertaken of the site's local significance, recreational value, ecological interest, tranquillity, community importance and relationship to the surrounding area. We would be grateful if the Council could explain how its approach accords with the Local Green Space provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and whether the site was assessed against those criteria independently of any assumptions regarding future development potential.

Given that the site is widely known locally as Ryebank Fields and has historically been referred to as Ryebank Playing Fields, we would also welcome clarification as to the extent to which its longstanding community identity, historical use, recreational value and local significance were considered as part of the assessment process.

We would further welcome clarification as to how evidence submitted by local residents, community groups and other stakeholders regarding the site's ecological, recreational, historical and community value was considered and weighed within the assessment process. Given the significant volume of community interest in Ryebank Fields over many years, it is important that the assessment demonstrates how such evidence informed the conclusions reached, particularly where the site was excluded from further consideration before a full Stage 3 assessment was undertaken.

Furthermore, the assessment appears to proceed on the basis that Local Green Space designation and future development are mutually exclusive outcomes. However, the report itself acknowledges elsewhere that it may be possible to identify and protect areas of permanent open space without preventing the delivery of identified housing needs. We are concerned that no equivalent consideration appears to have been given to whether all or part of the Ryebank Road site could satisfy the criteria for Local Green Space designation while allowing any future development proposals to be assessed on their own merits.

We therefore request that the Council reviews the assessment's treatment of Ryebank Road and provides clarification as to:

- The specific adopted development plan policies relied upon to justify the exclusion of Ryebank Road from Stage 3 assessment;
- The weight afforded to the Ryebank Road Development Framework 2019 in comparison with the adopted Places for Everyone development plan;
- The weight afforded to the SHLAA and the basis upon which it was considered relevant to the exclusion of the site from further Local Green Space assessment;
- The extent to which the conclusions would remain unchanged if assessed solely against the current statutory development plan framework;
- Whether Ryebank Road was assessed against the substantive Local Green Space criteria set out in national planning policy prior to its exclusion from Stage 3 assessment;
- How the site's longstanding community identity as Ryebank Fields and its historic use as Ryebank Playing Fields were taken into account in the assessment;

- How evidence submitted by residents, community organisations and other stakeholders concerning the site's ecological, recreational, historical and community value was assessed and reflected in the conclusions reached; and
- Whether alternative approaches, including the identification of all or part of the site as Local Green Space, were considered and, if so, on what basis they were discounted.

Given the significant community interest in Ryebank Road and its recognised value as open space, we believe that transparency regarding the policy basis for the assessment is essential. The Local Green Space process should be robust, evidence-led and clearly rooted in the current planning framework. In our view, the assessment does not adequately demonstrate this in relation to Ryebank Road.

We would therefore be grateful if this representation could be formally recorded as part of the evidence base for the Local Green Space Assessment and taken into account in any future review of the assessment or decisions concerning the site. We would also be grateful for a written response addressing the matters raised in this representation and explaining the basis upon which the assessment's conclusions were reached.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Rhett Moran, Chair, Ryebank Fields Community Group

