mosaic
town planning

Open Space Assessment

Cotefield Road, Wythenshawe
Wythenshawe Community Housing Group

November 2013

mosaic
town planning

Prepared by:	Daniel Whitney
Version:	Draft
Date:	21 November 2013

Mosaic Town Planning
Lowry House
17 Marble Street
Manchester
M2 3AW

0161 638 8657

enquiries@mosaictownplanning.co.uk

mosaic
town planning

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 2

2 POLICY 3

National Planning Policy 3

Local Planning Policy 4

Background Documents 5

3 ANALYSIS 6

Principle 6

Loss of Open Space 6

Housing Supply and Regeneration 9

4 CONCLUSION 10

mosaic
town planning

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Open Space Assessment accompanies an application by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group for 40 affordable dwellings on the former Corporation Yard and adjacent open land off Cotefield Road in Wythenshawe.

1.2 During pre-application discussions, the Council requested that an Open Space Assessment is submitted with the application as part of the site is currently used as open space, although it has no formal allocation.

1.3 The Corporation Yard is a former Manchester City Council storage and maintenance depot and the building on the site has recently been demolished; it is therefore brownfield land. This section of the site is 0.45ha in size.

1.4 The open space section of the site forms only 0.72ha of the wider open space area. It is grassland with a flat topography and an irregular shape which is of some limited visual benefit as part of a wider area. It serves no formal function and there is a footpath running through it.

1.5 The overall open space area is approximately 3ha is size and runs from Cotefield Road at the northern end to Portway to the south and is surrounded by residential development.

1.6 The loss of a section of the open space will be considered in this assessment in terms of overall supply in the Wythenshawe area, along with the benefits of the proposal which weigh in its favour.

2 POLICY

National Planning Policy

2.1 Paragraph 14 of NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Where the development plan is out-of-date, LPA's should grant permission for new development unless the ***"adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits".***

2.2 An overarching principle is to "***encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value***" (parag. 17).

2.3 Paragraph 47 of NPPF provides guidance to LPA's to meet housing requirements, stating that they ***"use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area"***. Councils are expected to ***"identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land."***

2.4 Paragraph 49 states that "***Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites***."

2.5 Paragraph 50 states that "***To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should….plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community"***.

Local Planning Policy

City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP; 1995)

2.6 The proposal site is unallocated within the UDP.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

2.7 **Policy H1:** Overall Housing Provision

2.8 **Policy H7:** Wythenshawe – "***The Council expects that Wythenshawe will accommodate only around 3% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. New high quality high density development will be encouraged within the district centres of Northenden, Baguley and Wythenshawe and upon small infill sites where it contributes to the stock of affordable housing and where it complements Wythenshawe's garden city character."***

2.9 **Policy EN10**: Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities:

The Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to the standards set out above and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces…..Proposals on existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:

- ***Equivalent or better replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities will be provided in the local area;***

or

- ***The site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sport or recreation function and the City wide standards set out above are maintained, and***
    - ***it could not fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sport or recreation needs, and***
    - ***a proposed replacement will remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area;***

2.10 **Policy EN12**: Area Priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

"***The priorities for open space, sport and recreation in the City set out in Manchester's Strategic Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and within the regeneration areas include….Wythenshawe: improve existing facilities and sites***."

Background Documents

2.11 The following documents have also been referred to in the analysis of this report:

- **City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (2009)**
- **Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Framework (2004)**
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA; 2010)**
    - Within the SHLAA, the former Corporation Yard section of site is identified as having capacity for 17 residential units (ref: WOOD_CAP_009).

3 ANALYSIS

Principle

3.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan for Wythenshawe is the Saved Policies of the Manchester UDP and the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

3.2 The site has no allocation within the UDP or Core Strategy. Given that other sites have been allocated as open spaces, the open space section of this site has therefore not been deemed adequate to gain for such allocation. This is likely to be because of its poor quality, low amenity value and as it has no special significance for sport or recreation.

3.3 However, during pre-application discussions, the Planning Officer stated that Policy EN10 of the Core Strategy has relevance to the determination of the application. Proposals on such open space can be permitted in particularly circumstances which will be considered below. However, it should be taken into account that full weight may not continue to be given to such policies which impact upon housing land supply, as will be explained in more detail below.

3.4 The former Corporation Yard section of the site has also been identified within the SHLAA (2010) as being deliverable for residential development. The site is vacant brownfield land and its redevelopment for residential use is therefore consistent with paragraph 17 of NPPF which seeks to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

Loss of Open Space

3.5 Within Policy EN10, exceptions are provided to allow development on open space where it is demonstrated to be surplus to requirements, cannot fulfil other unsatisfied open space,

sport or recreation needs and where a proposed replacement would remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area.

3.6 Only approximately 0.72ha of the open space will used for the proposed housing development. The rest will remain to the benefit of existing and future residents of the area. The open space totals approximately 3ha and it is therefore a relatively small area that will be used for the development.

3.7 In terms of demonstrating the site to be surplus for its use, the *City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study* can be used to assess this. This study was produced by PMP in 2009, and forms part of the evidence base which informed the Core Strategy. The study includes a full audit of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities, and highlights areas where there is sufficient or insufficient quantity and/or quality of open space.

3.8 The subject site is identified as forming a part of an Amenity Green Space in Wythenshawe. Map 6.3 shows that the site has a quality score of 0-61, which is the lowest quartile, and therefore a poor score. It has no functional purpose and offers only limited qualitative amenity and visual benefits to local residents. The Council decided that it was not worthy of allocation and protection within the UDP or Core Strategy.

3.9 The study identifies a total of 42.07ha of Amenity Green Space available to residents across 52 sites within the Wythenshawe area (see Table 6.2 below). This equates to 0.6ha per 1,000 of the population. When compared to the Manchester average of 0.4ha per 1,000 of the population, the area of Wythenshawe is relatively well catered for. There is therefore a significant over-provision and no quantitative reason for the retention of the proposal site.

3.10 Paragraph 18.18 also concludes that there are high levels of open space provision in Wythenshawe in comparison to other areas of the City.

Table 6.2 – Provision of amenity green space across Manchester

Area	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (Hectares)	Current provision per 1000 (hectares)
City Centre	4.40	18	0.04	0.54	0.44
East	56.60	119	0.07	7.55	0.78
Central	31.58	60	0.07	2.79	0.42
South	8.75	29	0.06	1.02	0.06
North	39.31	87	0.02	6.26	0.44
Wythenshawe	42.07	52	0.08	8.15	0.60
Overall	**182.70**	**365**	**0.02**	**8.15**	**0.40**

3.11 There are a number of open spaces close to the site and within a 10 minute walk for local residents. This includes the remaining Amenity Green Space attached to the proposal site, open space off Longhope Road which contains sports pitches and children's play facilities, an area of land off Pitchcombe Road and Painswick Park to the south.

3.12 We have demonstrated above through the Study that there would be no qualitative or quantitative reason to prevent development of the site.

3.13 There is plentiful amenity space available across Wythenshawe, which goes beyond the Manchester average. To retain the site solely for the purpose of amenity value for immediately adjacent residents would represent the inefficient use of land within the urban area. It would also create an onerous maintenance and security requirement for Manchester City Council, with little benefit to justify this.

3.14 The size and irregular shape of the proposal site means that it would not be capable of fulfilling any sporting or recreational needs in compliance with the remaining criteria of Policy EN10. In any case, the only deficiency identified within the *City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study* is for City Parks and this is stated to be offset by the presence of

Wythenshawe Park which is a regional facility which negates the need for a City Park in Wythenshawe.

Housing Supply and Regeneration

3.15 The latest SHLAA undertaken in Manchester was in 2010 and is therefore out of date. However, evidence is available from an appeal decision which was upheld on the 4th April 2013 for the development up to 80 residential units on Clarkesville Farm in Crumpsall (ref: APP:B4215/A/12/2178279).

3.16 In the Inspector's report, it was stated in paragraph 26 that "***There is an absence of a 5 year housing land supply***" and that this was common ground between the parties. In accordance with paragraph 14 of NPPF, permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

3.17 The proposed development on Cotefield Road will contribute to addressing this shortfall in housing land supply for the city.

3.18 In addition, the Inspector stated that given the lack of a 5 year supply, as stated in paragraph 49 of the NPPF, in such situations local policies that govern housing land supply should not be considered up to date (paragraph 26). Full weight should therefore not be given to current development plan policies including Policy EN10, in accordance with paragraph 215 of NPPF, given the policy's restrictive impact upon housing land supply.

3.19 The proposed development would facilitate the wider regeneration of the local area. Its redevelopment for housing would contribute regeneration benefits to Wythenshawe, an area which has been subject to regeneration initiatives designed to stabilise the local housing market, including the Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder programme and the Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Framework.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 This statement has demonstrated that the open space section of the site is surplus for this use in compliance with Policy EN10 of the Core Strategy, while the redevelopment of the former Corporation Yard will make effective use of vacant brownfield land within an urban area in accordance with paragraph 17 of NPPF. This brownfield land has also be identified for residential development within the SHLAA.

4.2 The open space area has not been deemed adequate to gain allocation for any open space use which is likely to be because of its poor quality, low amenity value and as it has no special significance for sport or recreation.

4.3 There is an over-provision of Amenity Green Space in Wythenshawe identified in the *City Wide Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study*, which also gave it a poor quality score. It offers only limited qualitative benefits and there is little prospect of resources being used to fund its improvement. There are also high levels of general open space in Wythenshawe in comparison to other areas of the City.

4.4 Its shape and size means that it would not be capable of fulfilling any sporting or recreational needs in compliance with the remaining criteria of Policy EN10.

4.5 Only a 0.34ha section of the wider open space will be used for the proposed development, while the rest will remain as Amenity Green Space.

4.6 The reduction of the open space should also be weighed against the significant benefits that the proposed housing will bring, including helping to address the undersupply of housing across Manchester and bringing much needed affordable housing to West Wythenshawe.

4.7 The proposal will help to support the efficient use of under-used land within the urban area and the rationalisation of open space to accommodate affordable housing needs.

4.8 For the reasons above and those discussed in the accompanying documents submitted alongside this application, we believe there is a strong case to grant permission.