



Manchester City Council
Field of Os, Claridge Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester

Full planning application for erection of new single youth centre

Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement is prepared by Peacock + Smith in support of a full planning application for the erection of a new youth centre at Field of Os, Claridge Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester. It has been submitted on behalf of the applicant, Manchester City Council, as part of and funded by the Social Infrastructure Bureau who are providing funding as part of a wider national scheme to invest in youth facilities.

1.2 The site is currently used as a playing field within a 'pocket park'. The proposal seeks to erect a modular single storey youth centre. This proposal will improve the provision for community-based youth services in the ward, namely sport, arts, education, culture, health and wellbeing.

Purpose and Structure of Report

1.3 The report seeks to address all relevant planning considerations prior to drawing conclusions as to the merits of the application.

1.4 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** describes the site and considers any planning history;
- **Section 3:** describes the proposed development;
- **Section 4:** positions the proposals in the context of planning policy;
- **Section 5:** considers the key planning issues in the context of the relevant planning policy and analyses the planning considerations relevant to the proposal;
- **Section 6:** outlines the benefits of the proposal; and
- **Section 7:** provides a summary and conclusions, taking account of the planning balance

1.5 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement prepared by Corstorphine + Wright Architects along with other supporting documents which form the basis of the planning application.

2. Site Description and Planning History

- 2.1 The purpose of this section is to describe the application site and its context and explain the planning history of the site.

Site Description and Local Context

- 2.2 The site is located within the Field of Os Pocket Park, at the edge of Chorlton-cum-Hardy district centre, within the inner city of the Manchester built-up area. The topography of the site is flat. The site is shown in **Figure 1** below. It extends to approximately 0.18 hectares.

Figure 1: Site Location



- 2.3 The site is rectangular in shape. There is vehicle access from Claridge Road and Fielden Avenue. Pedestrian access is also available directly from Claridge Road and Fielden Avenue, as well as a short path from Oswald Road and alley linking to Oswald Lane and towards the district centre on Manchester Road.

- 2.4 The immediate context of the site is characterised by the pocket park, as well as the surrounding residential properties. The site is bounded to the north by Claridge Road, across from which is a residential terrace, with more residential properties to the east and southeast, the stub of Fielden Avenue to the south, and the remainder of the Pocket Park to the west.
- 2.5 The site is currently occupied entirely by the playing field, bounded by chainlink fence on the north, south and west, with a brick wall on the eastern boundary. The boundary also has scattered trees and shrubbery.
- 2.6 The surrounding context is largely residential at the edge of the district centre, with the high street on Manchester Road to the east and residential properties to the north, south and west.
- 2.7 There are public footpaths adjacent to the south and east of the site. However, there are no public rights of way on the site.
- 2.8 There are no watercourses running on or near the site. The site is entirely located within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.9 The site is not located within any Conservation Areas. The nearest Listed Building is the grade II listed Former Temperance Billiard Hall located just over 150m south of the site, separated by various residential and civic buildings. This building is not related to the site.
- 2.10 Key facilities within a 1km radius of the site include foodstores and other shops in Chorlton district centre, including a Tesco Express, Morrisons supermarket and various independent foodstores and convenience shops, with various pharmacies and a post office on Wilbraham Road (300-400m south), as well as Chorlton Family Practice GP, Chorlton library, five primary schools, a secondary school, several churches and various food and drink places throughout the residential area.
- 2.11 There are bus stops on Manchester Road approximately 100m east of the site, which provide services on the 86 service every 12 minutes in each direction towards Manchester City Centre and the edge of West Didsbury. Chorlton Metrolink station is also a 9-minute walk south of the site, which provides services on the Navy Line (Manchester Airport – Victoria via Market Street) and Pink line (East Didsbury – Rochdale Town Centre via Exchange Square and Oldham), which each provide services every 12 minutes in each direction.
- 2.12 In summary, the application site is in a sustainable location in Chorlton-cum-Hardy. The site is in a pocket park within an inner-city residential area. The site benefits from great accessibility to frequent bus and tram services and is within walking distance of the town centre.

Relevant Planning History

2.13 In order to fully understand the development context of the site in the preparation of this planning application, a full planning history search of the site, using publicly available sources, has been undertaken. From a review of available online records at Manchester City Council, the following applications are considered relevant:

- 073333/FO/2004/S1 – Increase in height of existing chain link fencing from 2.7m to 5.1m to the Claridge Road frontage including removal of 2 trees – Approved 20 December 2004

Key Summary

2.14 The application site is occupied by a playing field within the Field of Os pocket park. The prevailing character of the area is residential, adjacent to Chorlton district centre. It is located in a highly sustainable location in good proximity to public transport and pedestrian connections, as well as local services, homes and schools.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement prepared by Corstorphine and Wright.

Manchester City Council

- 3.2 This application is submitted on behalf of Manchester City Council to increase the provision of youth services in Chorlton-cum-Hardy.
- 3.3 Manchester's currently adopted youth strategy document is 'Manchester's Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2024', as well as the slightly outdated 'Our Manchester Youth Offer Strategy 2020-2023. These strategies do not go into great detail regarding planning, however point 6 of the children and young people's plan states that innovation, creativity and learning will be at the centre of planning and decision-making. The youth offer strategy's theme 1, 'Thriving Young People', aims more specifically to continue to provide access to safe places and spaces for young people to socialise, with the council aiming to *'shape and influence the universal youth offer in all neighbourhoods, reducing barriers to participation.'*

Background to the playing field

- 3.4 The playing field is currently associated with Oswald Road Primary School, originally used by the school as a playing field for sport and recreation. However it is noted that the field has not been marked as a playing field for a significant period of time – if ever (Google Earth demonstrates that the site has not been laid out as a playing pitch since the earliest visible records in 2000. Previous iterations are not of sufficient resolution to be sufficiently legible). It is currently shared space with the wider community and is most frequently used for dog walking.
- 3.5 The field is part of the wider Field of Os pocket park, which is maintained and supported by the Friends of Field of Os Pocket Park group. The friends of the park have stated their support for the proposed development.

Proposed Development

- 3.6 The application proposes the erection of a single-storey youth centre on part of the existing playing field, with associated access and boundary treatment. A full description of the site is included within the Design and Access Statement prepared by Corstorphine and Wright. The footprint of the works will take up a portion of the existing greenspace on the eastern portion of the site, retaining over half of greenspace to the west of the site.

- 3.7 Three new pedestrian access points into and within the site will be introduced with 2 no. disabled parking spaces with associated turning space and access onto Claridge Road, 5 no. Sheffield Cycle Stores enabling the parking of up to 10 cycles, a patio area, external storage for associated equipment and refuse stores, and a fenced external plant. New fencing and a gate will split the new building from the retained open space.
- 3.8 The proposed building will be used as a multipurpose youth centre, predominantly used to provide youth work activities and targeted towards young people aged 10-19 and up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The youth centre will provide a safe space with a range of positive, enriched activities for young people in the locality which will support their physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing development.

Key summary

- 3.9 The proposed development seeks the erection of a new single-storey youth centre sited on an existing underutilised playing field. The development seeks to improve the identified need for an improved youth offer across the city, providing a new youth facility which will continue and enhancing the youth-oriented use of the field.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This section outlines the relevant national, strategic and local planning policies against which the proposals will fall to be considered.
- 4.2 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act require that planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

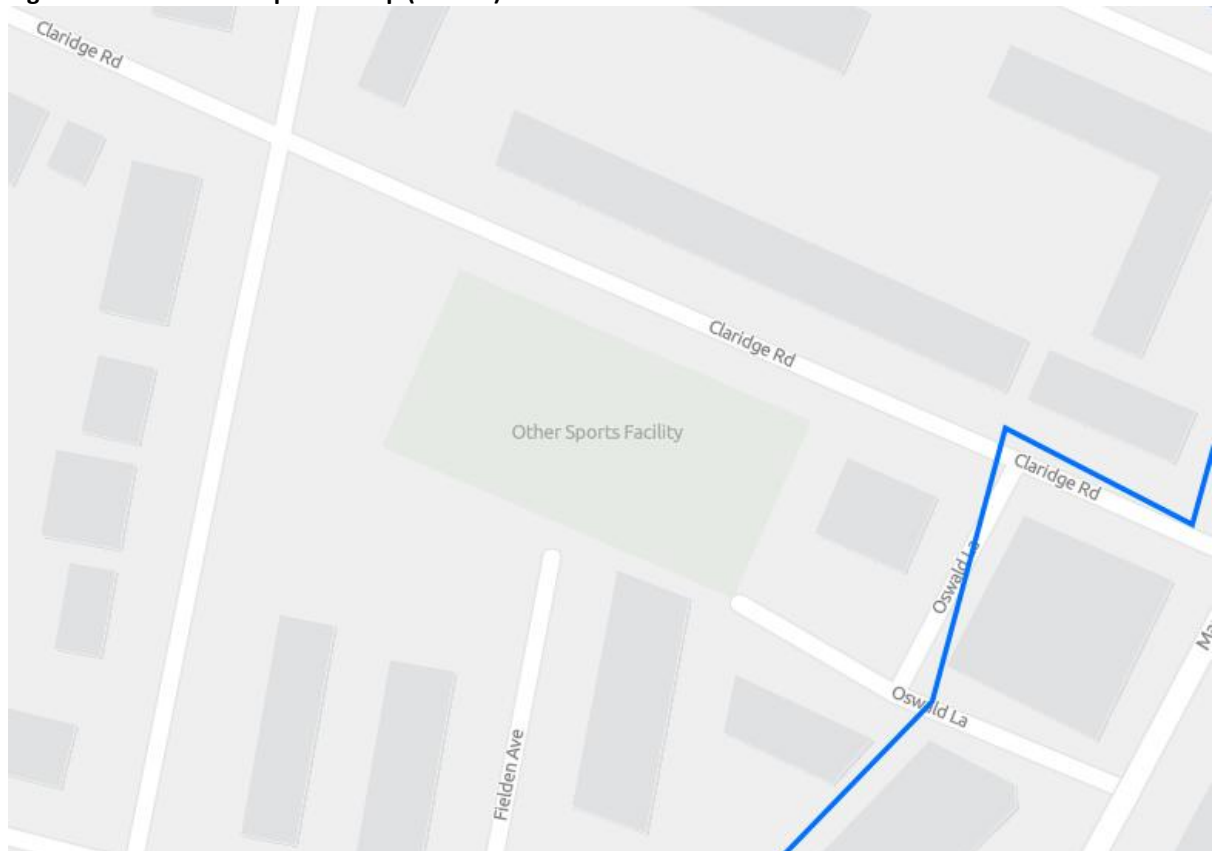
The Statutory Development Plan

- 4.3 The Local Development Framework for Manchester consists of:
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (Adopted March 2024);
 - Core Strategy (Adopted July 2012);
 - Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies (Adopted July 1995);
 - Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD (Adopted April 2012); and
 - Greater Manchester Joint Minerals DPD (Adopted April 2013).
- 4.4 Material policy considerations include any emerging local plan document, the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) which is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (as updated), and the National Design Guide (October 2019, as updated January 2021). Other local material considerations would include any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and any emerging neighbourhood plan.

Development Plan

- 4.5 An extract from the Interactive Proposals Map is provided in **Figure 2** below:

Figure 2: Interactive Proposals Map (extract)



- 4.6 The Policies map reflects the spatial policies within the Core Strategy and extant UDP policies, as well as allocations contained within the Places for Everyone joint plan.
- 4.7 The proposed development site is located within the South Manchester area (not pictured for legibility), for which Core Strategy policies EC9 and H6 apply where relevant. The blue lined area depicts Chorlton district centre, however the application site is outside of the area and not for town centre use, and therefore will not be considered relevant to this application.
- 4.8 Taking account of the Interactive Proposals Map and the Development Plan as a whole, it is considered that the following planning policies are relevant in determining the application.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (Adopted March 2024)

- 4.9 The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) sets out a spatial development framework for nine Greater Manchester boroughs with a focus on jobs, new homes and sustainable growth. It also sets out Development Management policies for use in the consideration of planning applications. The following policies are considered relevant to this development proposal:

- 4.10 **Policy JP-Strat5 – Inner Areas** – sets out the strategy for continued regeneration in the inner city areas surrounding Manchester’s urban core, with new development to be predominantly residential and to enhance the quality of places and their local character, and infrastructure to facilitate the growth of the inner city area including high quality open spaces.
- 4.11 **Policy JP-S1 – Sustainable Development** – sets out that development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits while minimising adverse impacts and seeking net gains across different objectives,
- 4.12 **Policy JP-S2 – Carbon and Energy** – sets out the strategy to support the aim for a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038 through a range of measures including that development will minimise resource and energy consumption, secure sustainable building standards, aim to incorporate renewable energy/heating/cooling, and future proof long-term demand.
- 4.13 **Policy JP-S4 – Flood Risk and the Water Environment** – sets out strategy to manage flood risk with an integrated catchment-based approach, including locating development to minimise current and future flood risk, using sustainable drainage systems where possible to alleviate increased runoff, and achieve greenfield runoff rates unless impracticable.
- 4.14 **Policy JP-S5 – Clean Air** – sets out measures to support improvements in air quality, particularly on locations where people live, children learn and play, where there are impacts on the green infrastructure network and where air quality targets are not being met, including by locating and designing development to maximise sustainable transport usage and reduce transport by modes which generate air pollution, and following relevant guidance on construction dust management.
- 4.15 **Policy JP-S6 – Resource Efficiency** – sets out strategy to aim towards a circular and zero-waste economy, including by using sustainable design and construction techniques to reduce carbon emissions and adapt and future proof to the impact of climate change.
- 4.16 **Policy JP-G2 – Green Infrastructure Network** – sets out a strategic approach to the protection, management and enhancement of green infrastructure, including that development within and around the green infrastructure network should be consistent with delivering major green infrastructure improvements within them and should contribute to improvements.
- 4.17 **Policy JP-G6 – Urban Green Space** – sets out that development should be designed to support the positive use of nearby green spaces such as by offering high-quality setting, natural surveillance and facilitating easy access by walking and cycling.

- 4.18 **Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland** – sets out that councils will work to deliver the aims and objectives of the Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy, aiming to significantly increase tree cover, protect and enhance woodland and connect people to the trees and woodland around them, including by requiring two new trees per each lost, and protecting trees and woodland during the construction phase of development.
- 4.19 **Policy JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – sets out how development is expected to provide a net gain, including that development should avoid harm to biodiversity and mitigate or compensate for any harm, achieve a measurable gain of no less than 10%, and that proposals should be informed by findings and recommendations in the PfE evidence base.
- 4.20 **Policy JP-P1 – Sustainable Places** – sets out general strategy for liveability and placemaking, including that development should be distinctive with a clear identity which responds to its locality, visually stimulating, socially inclusive, resilient, adaptable, durable, resource-efficient, safe, functional, legible, accessible and comfortable, being well-maintained and of high-quality design with good accessibility and connectivity.
- 4.21 **Policy JP-P5 – Education, Skills and Knowledge** – sets out that enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted, including by enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities.
- 4.22 **Policy JP-P6 – Health** – sets out strategy to tackle health inequality, including by facilitating greater integration of health and social care and the provision of integrated wellness hubs, including the co-location of health, community and wellness services.
- 4.23 **Policy JP-P7 – Sport and Recreation** – sets out how sport and recreational facilities will be protected and enhanced, including by locating and designing recreation facilities in relation to housing so that they are accessible but minimise the potential for complaints.
- 4.24 **Policy JP-C1 – An Integrated Network** – sets out how councils will provide world-class connectivity, including through delivering a pattern of development that minimises the need to travel and distance travelled by unsustainable modes and locating and designing development to deliver an increase in the proportion of trips made by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.25 **Policy JP-C8 – Transport Requirements of New Developments** – sets out general strategy for transport in new developments, including requirements for design, parking infrastructure and access and servicing.

- 4.26 **Policy JP-D1 – Infrastructure Implementation** – sets out how necessary infrastructure will be provided, including ensuring that development does not lead to capacity or reliability problems in the surrounding area.
- 4.27 **Policy JP-D2 – Developer Contributions** – sets out how developer contributions will be secured and how viability will be weighted.

Core Strategy (Adopted July 2012)

- 4.28 The Core Strategy is the key document in Manchester’s Local Development Framework covering the period from 2012 to 2027, describing the council’s vision for the city in 2027.
- 4.29 The plan provides strategic spatial policies and development management policies for the city. In terms of this development proposal, the most relevant policies are:
- 4.30 **Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles** – sets out general spatial principles, including that there is an emphasis on regeneration and residential development outside of the central and airport areas with regard for the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area, and maximising the city’s transport infrastructure, along with core principles, including that development should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice, minimise emissions and improve access to jobs, services, education and open space located with good sustainable transport provision.
- 4.31 **Policy EC9 – South Manchester** – sets out economic expectations for development in South Manchester, as a lesser priority for employment with a focus on mixed-use development in employment locations and district centres.
- 4.32 **Policy C1 – Centre Hierarchy** – sets out the hierarchy and expected uses in centres, including that district centres have an essential role in providing key services including shopping, commercial, leisure, public and community functions.
- 4.33 **Policy C6 – South Manchester District Centres** – sets out expectations for district centres in South Manchester, with retail and development focused on increasing retail and other commercial and community services in Chorlton district centre and supporting redevelopment in Chorlton to provide a substantial increase in retail, alongside improvements to other commercial and community services.
- 4.34 **Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport** – sets out how the council will deliver sustainable transport goals including by supporting proposals that promote regeneration by improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need and for those without a car.

4.35 **Policy T2 – Accessible areas of opportunity and need** – sets out strategy for managing the pattern of development to improve accessibility in the city, stating that car parking standards are maximums and cycle and disabled car parking standards are minimums, with account for circumstances at the council's discretion.

4.36 **Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas** – sets out that all development proposals are expected to follow the seven urban design principles included in national planning guidance, as well as describing specific strategic character areas, with the Southern Character Area described below:

There is a notable presence of older development (1750-early 1900) at key junctions and along historic radial routes such as Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road, often but not exclusively associated with District Centres. The largely flat terrain has enabled the subsequent infilling of land between these routes with a more regular layout of predominantly residential development up to the 1960s. Much of this subsequent development was associated with the purpose built radial parkways, serving the City Centre. Princess Parkway now forms the principal road link between the City Centre and the Airport. The area contains pockets of formal open space including some significant historic parks.

- *New development needs to retain the identity and focus of activity associated with the historic District Centres.*
- *Where appropriate development along the radial routes such as Princess Parkway should be commensurate in scale with the prominence of its location.*

4.37 **Policy EN4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development** – sets out how the council will seek to reduce carbon emissions through development, including through following the principle of Energy Hierarchy favouring more passive and low-carbon energy, heating and cooling systems, and the use of materials with low embodied carbon.

4.38 **Policy EN8 – Adaptation to Climate Change** – sets out that all new development is expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout, siting and function of both buildings and external spaces, including by minimising flood risk, passive energy and heating design and providing linked and diverse green space.

4.39 **Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure** – sets out how green infrastructure assets are expected to be maintained through new development with aims to enhance existing greenspace and mitigate the loss of any greenspace where the loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, with key features including new green infrastructure assets and improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing assets.

- 4.40 **Policy EN10 – Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities** – sets out that the council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sports and recreational facilities, supporting proposals that improve the quality and quantity of accessible open space and facilities, with proposals on existing open spaces and facilities only permitted in circumstances including where a better replacement will be provided in the local area, the site has been demonstrated to be surplus or the development will be ancillary to the open space and complement the use or character.
- 4.41 **Policy EN12 – Area priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities** – sets out the priorities for open space in each of the five key areas of the city, including that development involving open space, sport and recreation facilities in the south area should enhance the quality of existing provision and use opportunities to address deficiencies.
- 4.42 **Policy EN15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation**– sets out that developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity either on-site or adjacent to the site, with any adverse impacts on biodiversity needing to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal.
- 4.43 **Policy PA1 – Developer Contributions** – sets out how the council will secure developer contributions for a range of issues assessed on a site-by-site basis relative to the nature and scale of the development and its potential impact on the surrounding area.
- 4.44 **Policy DM1 – Development Management** – sets out issues such as material concerns which developers should have regard to, of which some may provide guidance within a supplementary planning document.

Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies (1995)

- 4.45 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 1995 and sets out guidelines for all development in Manchester and a framework to base development management decisions. The document is in two parts, covering city-wide strategic policies in part one and area-specific and development management policies in part two.
- 4.46 Much of the UDP has now been replaced, however some policies which were not superseded by the Core Strategy in 2012 remain extant, and still hold weight in decision making. The following extant policies are considered relevant:
- 4.47 **Policy DC26.1** – sets out that the council will reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the city, giving consideration to developments likely to generate noise and their implications.

4.48 **Policy DC26.5** – sets out that the council will require development to provide high levels of noise insulation where appropriate.

4.49 **Policy DC26.6** – sets out that exceptions to the general policy concerning noise will be considered on their merits.

Material Considerations

4.50 The material considerations consist of:

- National Planning Policy Framework;
- National Design Guidance;
- Any emerging Local Plan; and
- Any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

National Planning Policy Framework

4.51 The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024. There is a sub-section with specific policy regarding open space and recreation, covering paragraphs 103-108 of the NPPF. Namely, paragraph 104 provides that:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”*

4.52 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines that in order to achieve sustainable development, the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.

4.53 The three objectives to achieving sustainable development relate to economic, social and environmental factors. Of particular relevance to the proposed development is the social objective which is outlined in

Paragraph 8b of the NPPF as being to *“support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by... fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”*.

4.54 Paragraph 20c of the NPPF outlines that in order to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, strategic policies should make sufficient provision for community facilities.

4.55 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF outlines how weight may be given to relevant policies in emerging plans.

4.56 Section 8 of the NPPF relates to promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 96c states that decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which: *“enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments, and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”*

4.57 Paragraph 98 goes further to describe that:

“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

- 4.58 Section 11 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of land, with Paragraph 124 providing that decisions should promote effective use of land in meeting the needs for certain uses while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 4.59 Paragraph 125 goes further to guide on these decisions, in particular sub-paragraph d stating that decisions should *“Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively”*
- 4.60 Section 12 focuses on achieving well-designed places, with paragraph 135 specifically ensuring that developments:
- a) “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*
- 4.61 Paragraph 200 seeks that new development can be integrated effectively with existing business and community facilities.

National Design Guide (2019, as updated 2021)

- 4.62 The National Design Guide (NDG) was published on 1st October 2019, and updated in January 2021, and sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.
- 4.63 It forms part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate guidance on design process and tools.
- 4.64 The Design Guide gives guidance on Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.
- 4.65 The guide also sets out the components of good design in paragraph 20, stating that:

"Buildings are an important component of places and proposals for built development are a focus of the development management system. However good design involves careful attention to other important components of places. These include:

- *the context for places and buildings;*
- *hard and soft landscape;*
- *technical infrastructure – transport, utilities, services such as drainage; and*
- *social infrastructure – social, commercial, leisure uses and activities".*

- 4.66 In terms of context, paragraph 41 describes features of the context which should be used to inform well-designed new development, with particular relevance in this proposal to:

- *the existing built development, including layout, form, scale, appearance, details and materials;*
- *access, movement and accessibility;*
- *the pattern of uses and activities, including community facilities and local services; and*
- *how it functions*

With non-physical factors including:

- *social characteristics, including demographics;*
- *economic factors; and*
- *the aspirations, concerns and perceptions of local communities*

- 4.67 Paragraph 43 goes further to describe how well-designed new development should be integrated into its wider surroundings and be demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation, including:

- *uses and facilities, including identifying local needs and demands that well-located new facilities may satisfy; and*
- *public spaces, including their characteristic landscape design and details, both hard and soft.*

4.68 Paragraph 63 sets out criteria for well-designed places in terms of built form, including:

- *compact forms of development that are walkable, contributing positively to well-being and placemaking;*
- *accessible local public transport, services and facilities, to ensure sustainable development;*
- *recognisable streets and other spaces with their edges defined by buildings, making it easy for anyone to find their way around and promoting safety and accessibility; and*
- *memorable features or groupings of buildings, spaces, uses or activities that create a sense of place, promoting inclusion and cohesion.*

4.69 Paragraph 100 sets out criteria for well-designed places in terms of public spaces, including:

- *Include well-located public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being, social and civic inclusion; and*
- *Have public spaces that feel safe, secure and attractive for all to use.*

4.70 Paragraph 111 sets out criteria for well-designed places in terms of use, including:

- *a mix of uses including local services and facilities to support daily life; and*
- *well-integrated housing and other facilities that are designed to be tenure neutral and socially inclusive.*

4.71 Paragraph 112 goes further to describe a good mix of uses:

“Successful communities require a range and variety of local services and community facilities including schools, nurseries, workplaces, healthcare, spiritual, recreational, civic and commercial uses. These:

- *represent the varied needs and aspirations of the existing and future local community, including all ages and abilities;*
- *support everyday life and encourage sustainable lifestyles;*
- *are convenient and within walking or cycling distance on accessible routes to local homes and other facilities; and*

- *are located to complement rather than conflict with neighbouring uses in terms of noise, servicing and ventilation.*

Emerging Development Plan

- 4.72 Manchester started work on its Local Plan Review to inform a new Local Plan in February 2020. According to the Local Development Scheme, a consultation on a Draft Local Plan was due to take place in Autumn 2024, however no such draft has been published at the time of writing.
- 4.73 With consideration for the early stage of development and lack of an available Draft Local Plan, it is therefore considered that the emerging Local Plan cannot carry weight in this development proposal.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 4.74 Within Manchester and along with relevant national guidance, there are three key SPDs considered relevant to this development proposal.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted April 2007)

- 4.75 This SPD provides general principles and requirements for development covering issues of design, accessibility, environmental standards, street hierarchy, parking guidelines, housing density, safety, health and internal design principles, as well as providing guidance on character.

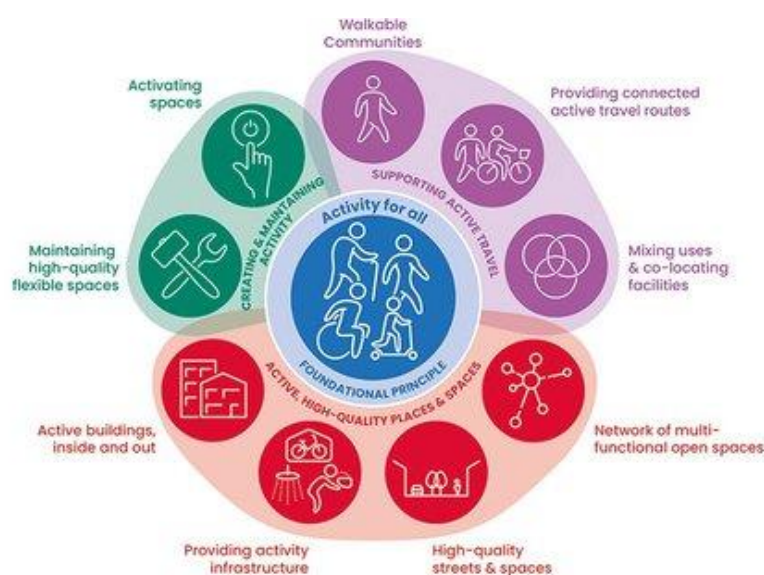
Planning for Sport (June 2019, as updated April 2024)

- 4.76 This SPD was made by Sport England provides guidance on planning applications relevant to formal and informal opportunities for sport and physical activity, as well as guiding Sport England's engagement with the planning system. The document contains twelve planning-for-sport principles to guide planning applications relating to opportunities for sport.
- 4.77 The following principles are considered especially relevant to this development proposal:

2. Undertake, maintain and apply robust and up-to-date assessments of need and strategies for sport and physical activity provision, and base policies, decisions and guidance upon them. This sets out that authorities should keep an up-to-date assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities, with developers taking into account the existing provision of space when development concerns such space and facilities.

3. Plan, Design and maintain buildings, developments, facilities, land and environments that enable people to lead active lifestyles. This sets out the Ten Principles of Active Design which should be promoted in relation to planning for healthy and active lifestyles. Guidance for applicants focuses on ensuring that these principles are embraced in the design of developments and that supporting documents show how the design and layout of the proposal provides opportunities for people to take part in sport and be physically active.

Figure 3: the Ten Principles of Active Design



6. Support improvements to existing sport and physical activity provision where they are needed. This sets out how improvements to existing facilities should be approached, including improvements to accessibility, the range and quality of sport activities, the ancillary infrastructure associated with the facility and the enhancement of the experience to new users through making facilities more attractive.

7. Encourage and secure wider community use of existing and new sport and physical activity provision. This sets out ways that existing and new facilities can broaden the provision of sports and physical activities. This includes ensuring that facilities can accommodate for a wide range of needs, user groups and bodies, with relevant agreements to ensure and secure community use.

8. Support new provision, including allocating new sites, for sport and physical activity which meets identified needs. This seeks to ensure that sports and recreation facilities are located where they need to be, with particular reference to the location of sports facilities to be integrated or co-located with other community facilities and to be located in appropriate currently under-utilised spaces.

10. Provide sport and physical activity provision which is fit for purpose and well designed. This seeks to ensure that facilities for sport and physical activity are of a high quality, adhering to good design in planning as well as to sports requirements, while also being accessible to the widest range of potential users. This includes through the provision of improved opportunities for sport, and ‘designing in’ shared and community use, through the provision and improvement of relevant facilities.

Playing fields policy and guidance (2018, as updated 2021)

- 4.78 This SPD was made by Sport England and provides specific guidance on applications affecting playing fields.
- 4.79 Paragraph 4 of this SPD outlines that there is a requirement to consult Sport England on all development which:
- i) *is likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, or land being used as a playing field; or*
 - ii) *is on land which has been –*
 - a. *used as a playing field at any time in the five years before the making of the relevant application which remains undeveloped; or*
 - b. *allocated for use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement; or*
 - iii) *involves the replacement of the grass surface of a playing pitch on a playing field with an artificial, man-made or composite surface*
- 4.80 Paragraph 5 defines a playing field as ‘the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch’, where a playing pitch is defined in paragraph 7 as ‘a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is 0.2 hectares or more...’
- 4.81 A delineated area is further defined in paragraphs 10 and 11 as a marked out area of 0.2 hectares or more for the use of any sports listed in the definition of a playing pitch, where a marked out area refers to delineation by painted lines, cones, ropes, or a pair or permanent or temporary goalposts.
- 4.82 Paragraph 15 highlights that Sport England will still be required as a consultee for applications concerning playing fields used over five years ago, albeit as a non-statutory consultee.

4.83 The SPD provides a single general policy for playing fields, which provides a presumption against development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, any or all of land which makes up an existing, former or allocated use as a playing field, with five exceptions.

4.84 Exception 4 provides that development on playing fields will be acceptable which provides a new area of playing field:

- *of equivalent or better quality, and*
- *of equivalent or greater quantity, and*
- *in a suitable location, and*
- *subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.*

4.85 Exception 5 provides that development on playing fields will be acceptable where the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

Key Summary

4.86 From a review of the planning policy framework and background planning checks undertaken, it appears that the main issues in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development including Provision of Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Development on Open Space Areas/Parks;
- Design and impact on the character of the area; and
- Other material considerations.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 The planning policy review at section 4 has established the local and national planning policy considerations which are key in the consideration of the aspects of this application. Based on this background work, it appears that the main issues in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development including Provision of Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Development on Open Space Areas/Parks;
- Design and impact on the character of the area; and

- Other material considerations including noise, ecology and BNG

5.2 Each of these issues are considered in turn below.

Principle of Development

- 5.3 The application proposes the erection of a single storey youth centre on an existing area of open space. The open space is currently associated with Oswald Road Primary School, some 80m south of the site via Fielden Avenue. It is now more closely associated with the Field of Os Pocket Park and is maintained by members of the community.
- 5.4 With consideration for the loss of open space, policies JP-G6 and JP-P7 of PfE, EN9, EN10 (reflective of NPPF para. 104) and EN12 of the Core Strategy are relevant.
- 5.5 These policies outline that there is a general presumption against the loss of greenspace and open space, however, the loss of open space can be justified where equivalent or better replacement facilities will be provided in the local area, the site is demonstrated to be surplus, or the development is ancillary to the open space. The playing fields policy as contained within the Playing fields policy and guidance SPD additionally provides a provision specifically against development which would lead to the loss of playing fields unless one or more of five exceptions apply, of which exceptions 4, 1 and 5 respectively are reflected as exceptions to development on open space, sport and recreational facilities in policy EN10 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.6 With reference to Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Playing fields policy and guidance, the site does not, and has not, had a delineated playing pitch since at least 2000 (see **Figures 4a, b, c and d**), with historic satellite imagery providing no delineation as described within paragraph 11 as far as reasonably viewable records on Google Earth provide. With consideration for this, Sport England would not be considered a statutory consultee under paragraph 15 of the SPD.

Figures 4a, b, c and d: Satellite imagery the application site in 2000, 2003, 2016 and 2023 (left to right, above then below)



- 5.7 The development is for the erection of a new single-storey youth centre. The use of the youth centre will be largely multifunctional, notwithstanding its focus on supporting the physical, mental and social wellbeing of youth within the locality, which will include use for sport and other physical activities. The benefits of providing a multifunctional indoor facility, including increased accessibility and safe, supervised activity for vulnerable youth and those with disabilities up to age 25, in line with Principle 7 of the Planning for Sport SPD, would therefore contribute to exception 5 within the playing fields policy and guidance thus complying with policy EN10 and EN12 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF; this facility will provide an indoor facility with improved provision of sport and physical activity, the benefits of which would outweigh the loss of a non-delineated former playing field.

5.8 Furthermore, the site is currently associated with Oswald Road Primary School, formerly used by the school as a playing field; improvements have been made to playing field facilities within school grounds since the establishment of the application site as a playing field. The school grounds previously contained three playing pitches delineated on a tarmac yard (**Figure 5a**). Goalposts and fencing were erected over this area sometime up to 2003 (**Figure 5b**), improved further between 2013 and 2016 with resurfacing and new delineation, providing three multisport pitches with delineation on two for football and one for netball, including new basket hoops (**Figure 5c**). The latest improvements include a running track around the pitches, delineated sometime between April 2020 and March 2021 (**Figure 5d**). With consideration for the complications of using the field on the application site, off the school complex itself, these improvements have since seen the redundancy of the application site as a playing field, with its main use now commented as dog walking. While the aforementioned improvements were not part of the proposed development, it is considered that the improvements to the school's sport facilities off-site would fall under exception 4 within the playing fields policy and guidance thus complying with EN10 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF, by virtue of the application site as a redundant part of the school's facilities.

Figures 5a, b, c and d: Satellite imagery of Oswald Road Primary School's on-site sport facilities in 2000, 2003, 2016 and 2023 (left to right, above then below)





- 5.9 As detailed in the submitted site plans, more than half of the existing open greenspace will be retained by the development, with existing access to this part of the site retained.
- 5.10 With consideration for previous improvements to sport facilities associated with need in relation to the application site and partial retention of open space, the development proposal is in accordance with policies JP-G6 and JP-P7 of PfE, policies EN9, EN10 and EN12 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 104 of the NPPF.
- 5.11 In terms of Sport England Playing Field Policy, it is considered that the proposal represents an exception predominately under Exception 5, in that the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field. It is proposed that the community use which will be agreed between stakeholders including Manchester City Council and the school will ensure that the community usage would deliver an overall sporting benefit over and above the low level usage at present. This overall betterment will comply with the provisions of the Exception 5.
- 5.12 Furthermore, as outlined above, the proposal would also comply with Exception 4 in that the area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development has already been replaced. As demonstrated in Figure 5 above, improvements have been made to the school playing provision within the former playground/ parking area with new all weather surfacing being provided in a location closer to the school. This is of a better quality, in a more suitable location with lower management requirements by being closer to the main school buildings and not requiring children outside the secure school grounds or having to cross the public highway.

- 5.13 It is considered that the proposed development would meet Sport England requirements.
- 5.14 The general principle of development is also considered to be appropriate. The proposed development is for a new community youth service, with an identified need for youth service provision in the borough, with the Youth Offer Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan both in support of improved provision of and access to spaces where young people can socialise and access relevant youth services.
- 5.15 While Core Strategy policies C1, C6 and C9 refer to community uses as town centre uses, which are preferred within the district and local centres, the site is less than 50m from Chorlton district centre, making it an edge-of-centre location, and is extremely unlikely to have any adverse impact on the existing offer within the district centre. With consideration for this, policy C6 supports redevelopment for uses including community uses in Chorlton district centre, with PFE policy JP-P7 additionally providing that sport and recreation uses should be located near to homes, with consideration for disturbance to residential amenity.
- 5.16 The site is within the residential area of Chorlton at the edge of the district centre, therefore making its multifunctional uses including community services, youth recreation and physical activity entirely suitable at this location. Residential amenity is not considered to be adversely impacted on account of activities within the facility being situated indoors, providing more protection from nuisance than the site's most recently permitted use as a playing field regardless of its redundancy.
- 5.17 It is considered that the principle of development is entirely suitable.

Design and impact on the character of the area

- 5.18 The site is within a small area of greenspace, with the predominant character of the wider area being residential. There are residential properties on all sides of the site, beyond roads to the north and west, adjacent to the east and southeast, and beyond pocket park areas to the southwest and west.
- 5.19 The proposed development fronts onto Claridge Road, which is lined with Victorian terraces. The design and access statement provides further information on the building quality standards, which meet the sustainability goals set by the Core Strategy and Places for Everyone plans.
- 5.20 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will be in keeping with the neighbouring development and will represent an improvement to the site, therefore the proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies JP-S2 and JP-S6 of PFE, policies EN4 and EN8 of the Core Strategy, paragraph 20c of the NPPF and the relevant guidance as contained within the National Design Guide.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.21 All other material considerations have been considered. The application is supported by a suite of documents including ecology. Consideration has also been paid to wider matters such as potential for impact on residential amenity.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.22 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken by Ascerta. This report considers all potential ecological issues. It highlights that the development would have very limited impacts on local ecology subject to recommendations.
- 5.23 These recommendations include minor measures to protect nesting birds and hedgehogs and against invasive species, with enhancements to meet biodiversity protection and enhancements including the provision of 2 bird boxes, 2 bat features and suitable landscaping that provide food or shelter resource to wildlife.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.24 A Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment has been undertaken by Flood Risk and Drainage Solutions Ltd. This report considers a variety of potential Flood Risk and Drainage impacts. It highlights that the only significant source of flooding on-site is Pluvial (Urban Drainage).
- 5.25 The report recommends that a new SUDS drainage strategy should be implemented following development. The report also recommends that all finished floor levels should be set no less than 150mm above existing ground levels.

Noise

- 5.26 Extant policies DC26.1, DC26.5 and DC26.6 concern noise levels of all development. With regard to this development, an open space which is, in planning terms, used as a playing field, bares a significant amount of noise, whereas the proposed use for community and youth services indoors will be much quieter by comparison, especially with consideration for the building quality. Noise can therefore be discounted in policy terms.

Impact on residential amenity

- 5.27 The development proposes a compliant use within a park setting. Although it will improve existing services, it is not considered that the application in itself would represent an issue with regards to residential amenity.
- 5.28 Notwithstanding this, the proposed building is bounded directly by a residential property to the east, as well as properties across a residential road to the north of the application site and across a footpath to the south. It is not considered that the development would increase any impact from the existing use of the site on residential amenity by way of overlooking or overshadowing due the existing boundary treatments, or any impact on noise and disturbance as discussed above.
- 5.29 In terms of wider disturbance, the proposed development would be operational during normal hours of operation of the park, with parking spaces provided as necessary to ensure accessibility. It would not introduce any significantly altered use, and it is considered the levels of noise and activity would remain in keeping with that expected in such a location. Therefore, it is considered that there would be no issues in regard to residential amenity.

Key summary

- 5.30 This section provides an analysis of the planning issues considered by Section 4. It is considered that key issues are the principle of development including need for the proposed development; whether there are any adverse impacts in terms of accordance with the local plan and design and character.
- 5.31 In terms of the principle of development, the site covers an under-utilised open space formerly used as a playing field by the nearby primary school, which has already compensated for its local need on-site. The location is considered wholly sustainable, close to the district centre and within an area characterised by a pocket park and associated recreational activity. Therefore, the principle of development is considered entirely suitable. Furthermore, the proposal would meet and identified need for additional youth service provision in Manchester.
- 5.32 It is considered that the development would not have any adverse impact on design and character within the area. The development would introduce a contemporary structure within a site characterised by recreational facilities, which is largely shielded from adjacent residential properties, therefore there would be minimal adverse impact on the street scene and other character features.
- 5.33 Furthermore, there would be no impact in terms of any other material considerations including ecology, flood risk, noise and disturbance and residential amenity.

5.34 On this basis, there is no reason why the proposal should not be supported. Therefore, planning permission should be granted.

6. Benefits of the Proposed Development

6.1 The purpose of this section is to consider the benefits arising from the development, were the scheme to gain planning permission and be implemented. The proposed development will deliver a range of benefits which are considered to be material to the determination of the planning application. The benefits include:

- The proposal will meet identified needs to improve access to and provision of youth services in Manchester;
- The proposal would improve access to a place-based programme of youth work activities including sports, arts, education, culture, health and wellbeing;
- The proposal will provide a range of fun, positive and enriching activities that contributes to the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of young people in Chorlton;
- The proposal would provide access to opportunities to learn and develop new skills that contribute to young peoples' educational and career development;
- The proposal will provide access to locally available young people's information, advice and guidance services;
- The proposal would provide a safe and supervised place for young people to build positive relationships with young people;
- The proposal will develop a sense of belonging and cohesion for young people in their community, as well as increasing social value through the provision of community activities and events that draw the community together;
- The proposal would provide new employment opportunities associated with Manchester's youth services;
- With regard to residential amenity, the proposal would not adversely affect nearby building occupiers in terms of visual outlook, overlooking, overshadowing, acoustic impact and general disturbance;
- In terms of good design, the proposal would visually improve the field and its surroundings;
- The proposal would not create a significant increase in adverse traffic effects to highways and make the most of nearby public transport and pedestrian links;
- The proposal would erect a new building which complies with the latest Health and Safety Regulations and the Equalities Act, including compliant disabled access arrangements.

6.2 It is considered that the proposed development accords with the Development Plan and National Planning Policy and represents a sustainable development.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 This Statement is prepared by Peacock + Smith in support of a full planning application for the erection of new single storey youth centre at Field of Os, Claridge Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester. It has been submitted on behalf of the applicant, Manchester City Council, as part of and funded by the Social Infrastructure Bureau who are providing funding as part of a wider national scheme to invest in youth facilities.
- 7.2 The site is currently used as a playing field within a 'pocket park'. The proposal seeks to erect a modular single storey youth centre. This proposal will improve the provision for community-based youth services in the ward, namely sport, arts, education, culture, health and wellbeing.
- 7.3 The report seeks to address all relevant planning considerations prior to drawing conclusions as to the merits of the application.
- 7.4 Section 2 of the report describes the site and considers any planning history. It provides that the application site is occupied by a playing field within the Field of Os pocket park. The prevailing character of the area is residential, adjacent to Chorlton district centre. It is located in a highly sustainable location in good proximity to public transport and pedestrian connections, as well as local services, homes and schools.
- 7.5 Section 3 provides an overview of the proposed development. The proposed development seeks the erection of a new single-storey youth centre sited on an existing underutilised playing field. The development seeks to improve the identified need for an improved youth offer across the city, providing a new youth facility which will continue and enhancing the youth-oriented use of the field.
- 4.87 Section 4 of this report outlines the relevant national, strategic and local planning policies against which the proposals will fall to be considered. It considers the Development Plan and other material considerations. From a review of the planning policy framework and background planning checks undertaken, it appears that the main issues in the determination of the application are:
- Principle of Development including Provision of Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Development on Open Space Areas/Parks;
 - Design and impact on the character of the area; and
 - Other material considerations.
- 7.6 Section 5 analyses the planning policy framework and the considers the issues necessary to outline whether the application is acceptable. It concludes that the principle of development is wholly acceptable. The proposed development would locate new youth services on a former playing field

associated with a primary school, which has since provided sufficient on-site provision of sports facilities. The location is within a pocket park characterised by community uses, within a wider residential area close to the district centre. Furthermore, the development would meet an identified need for youth services. The development is not considered to have any significant adverse impact on design and character, ecology, flood risk, noise and disturbance or residential amenity.

- 7.7 Set against this, planning decisions should consider the planning balance and the significant benefits of the proposal including meeting an identified need for improved youth service facilities within Manchester and all other material considerations as set out in Section 6 of this report.
- 7.8 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable as it would meet an identified need for the development. Furthermore, the proposal fully complies with the provisions of the Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.9 On this basis, there is no reason why the proposal should not be supported. Therefore, it is requested that planning permission be granted.