Comments for Planning Application 143413/FO/2025

Application Summary
Application Number: 143413/FO/2025
Address: Land Bound By Longford Road, Peveril Crescent, Rye Bank Road And Longford Park (commonly Referred To As Ryebank Fields) Manchester M21 9WW
Proposal: Change of use of former university playing fields to community woodland and meadow.
Case Officer: Robert Griffin

Customer Details
Name: Not Available
Address: Not Available

Comment Details
Commenter Type: Neighbour
Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application
Comment Reasons:
Comment:I am writing to express support for this planning application for the following reasons: Ryebank Fields is a unique urban Greenfield space, rich in biodiversity and local history and deeply valued by the community, as outlined in the Local Green Space application dating back to 2020. For decades, it has provided a natural environment where local people can walk, play, explore, and connect with nature. In a densely built part of Manchester and Trafford, the fields and woodlands offer opportunities for physical health, mental wellbeing, and informal education that cannot easily be replaced elsewhere. These benefits are amplified in a time of climate emergency, biodiversity crisis, and growing recognition of the importance of access to nature for urban communities.

The proposal sets out a positive, credible and deliverable alternative for the future of Ryebank Fields. Rather than erasing this space under housing development, it seeks to enhance and safeguard it as a community-led resource. This approach is consistent with national and local planning policy and also with GMCA and Council aims for Nature Recovery and Climate resilience.

Specifically:

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation: Surveys by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit have already indicated that ecological value on site has been undervalued in the developer's submission, and Cheshire and Lancashire Wildlife Trusts lobbied for it to be included in the Local Nature Recovery Network. The proposal prioritises biodiversity conservation and enhancement, consistent with the requirement for biodiversity net gain under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Contamination and remediation: The Environment Agency has raised serious concerns about the adequacy of the remediation strategy of a housing development proposed for this same piece of land. The proposal presented here avoids these risks by retaining the land in more or less its existing state, maintaining public health and safety without exposing future residents to potential contamination hazards.
Infrastructure constraints: The proposal is designed around the land's existing form and constraints, avoiding the need for disruptive and expensive interventions. United Utilities and Cadent Gas have both flagged infrastructure concerns relating to proposed housing development, including reference to easements and the presence of underground assets. These would create significant risks to the deliverability of housing on the site.
Community value: The proposal reflects the many aspects by which the fields are already used and loved by local residents, as detailed in the Local Green Space proposal we first submitted in 2020, and a refreshed version in 2024. This can be viewed on our website https://www.saveryebankfields.co.uk/localgreenspace/

This proposal builds on that history by proposing a range of improvements to make the most of opportunities for education, recreation, and wellbeing. This accords with both local policy aims for healthier communities, and with national recognition of the importance of valued open space, nature connection, and historic features.

Heritage and stewardship: Albeit not a planning consideration, it is important to note that this land was originally in public ownership and was gifted by Manchester City Council to the former Manchester Polytechnic, following publicly funded remediation to make it safe for public access. There is a strong moral case for ensuring that its future serves public benefit rather than private profit. The plan provides a clear route for community stewardship and long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, this submission is a credible, forward-looking proposal. It aligns with the Council's stated commitments on climate, health, nature recovery and community wellbeing, and it avoids the significant risks attached to the pre-existing development proposal submitted by MMU and Step Places.