



Flood Risk Assessment

Ryebank Fields, Rye Bank Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy,
Manchester M21 9WW

June 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared on behalf of Ryebank Fields Community Group to accompany a change of use application in respect of the land known as 'Ryebank Fields', Rye Bank Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, M21 9WW. This report identifies and evaluates the current flood risks relevant to the site location and outlines how this may relate to the development proposal.
- 1.2. In doing so, it is concluded that the proposed new use of the site is appropriate to the level of flood risk which currently exists, does not require on-site mitigation and will not lead to an increase in the risk of flooding to neighbouring land or property.
- 1.3. In undertaking this assessment, a range of national and local planning policy has been reviewed and considered. This includes:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Chapter 14, published December 2024.
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), 'Flood Risk and Coastal Change' published 6 March 2014 and updated 25 August 2022 and 'Preparing a Flood Risk Assessment: standing advice' published 1 April 2012 and updated 10 April 2025.
 - Places for Everyone, policy JP-S4, adopted March 2024.
 - Manchester Core Strategy, policy EN14, adopted July 2012.

Development Site and Location

- 1.4. The site to which this assessment relates is an area of existing open green space within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council, commonly referred to as 'Ryebank Fields', Rye Bank Road, M21 9WW. A location plan indicating the site and its surrounding context can be found within Appendix A.
- 1.5. Last formally used by Manchester Metropolitan University in connection with its sports facilities and wider education offer, the site was abandoned by the landowner in 1996 and has since been unused for an extended period. The site does not feature any buildings, instead consisting only of natural habitats and ecological features including grassland, trees, and hedgerow, except for a small area of tarmac hardstanding within the southern portion of the site. which have established and gained maturity because of natural succession processes taking place over the last 30 years.
- 1.6. The site is bound by residential properties to the north, east and south, with Longford Park adjacent to the site to the west. In respect of topography, the site lies approximately 27m AOD and is level, with no readily identifiable change in elevation throughout the site with exception for a ditch which runs across the centre of the site at its shortest point.

- 1.7. A small section of the site falls within Flood Zone 2 (as evident within Appendix B) which predicates the need for this assessment. This does not relate to a fluvial risk but instead relates to a surface water flooding risk which has been identified, presumably due to the presence of the 'Nico Ditch' – a linear, archaeological earthwork (or ditch) running across south Manchester.
- 1.8. Older mapping within Manchester City Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) from 2011 does not indicate that the site is at risk from any source of flooding (Appendix C) but does indicate a linear waterbody consistent with the path of the Nico Ditch. It should be noted that the Nico Ditch is not a watercourse in itself and is only becomes host to a waterbody in instances of severe rainfall. An updated SFRA undertaken in 2019 as part of the preparation of the joint development 'Places for Everyone' identifies the same risk.

Development Proposal

- 1.9. The current development proposal is a proposed change of use from private playing fields to a community woodland and meadow. Whilst still under private ownership, the Ryebank Fields Community Group seek to formalise the future use of the site as open green space to be accessed and used by the local community. The proposal does not involve any operational development, and there are no existing buildings within the site – the only man-made structures being a small area of hardstanding to the south of the site. Appendix D indicates a vision for the site's future, but at this stage the current proposal simply relates to the use of the land and does not involve the provision of any structures.
- 1.10. With regard to the proposal's vulnerability to flooding, it is understood that both existing and proposed uses are classed as water-compatible developments (as defined by annex 3 of the NPPF) under the heading of '*Amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms*'. That said, there may be a small theoretical change in the use vulnerability of users as a result of the change in manner that the space will be used – moving from a formal and organised use associated with the university to an informal use by local residents who could access the space at any time.
- 1.11. More information in respect of the proposal can be found within the planning statement and mission statement, both forming part of the application package.

2. Sequential and Exception Tests

- 2.1. Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework outlines that a sequential, risk-based approach should be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding. The aim of this test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source, and development should not be permitted if there are available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.
- 2.2. This notwithstanding, the application of the *sequential test* is not considered to be necessary or appropriate for this development proposal for the following reasons:
 - Footnote 62 of the NPPF specifies changes of use as an application type which should not be subject to the sequential test; and
 - No operational development is being proposed, and therefore it can be demonstrated that no built development within the site boundary would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future.
- 2.3. Similarly, paragraph 176 of the NPPF in conjunction with footnote 62, also states that change of use applications should not be subject to the *exception test*, stating:

‘Applications for some minor development and changes of use should also not be subject to the sequential test, nor the exception test set out below, but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments set out in footnote 63’.
- 2.4. The proposal and the contents of this Flood Risk Assessment are also consistent with the contents of footnote 63 and therefore both sequential and exception tests do not need to be undertaken.

3. Site Specific Flood Risk

Existing Flood Risk

- 3.1. As previously outlined, the Flood Risk Map for Planning¹ indicates that a small portion the site subject to the development proposal is located within Flood Zone 2 because of a surface water flooding risk which has been identified. This risk is present within models of 30-, 100- and 1000-year events.
- 3.2. The Government's long term flood risk service map² identifies a small part of the site to be at a high chance (more than 3.3% chance per year) of surface water flooding of a depth up to 20cm. This risk, which is observed as the most prevalent risk within the site, is confined entirely to the location of the Nico Ditch. Even smaller sections of the site, again within the area of the Nico Ditch, possesses a medium and low chances of surface water flooding to depths of 30cm and 60cm respectively. Importantly, all pedestrian access points into and out of the site do not fall within any Flood Risk zone. Maps indicating the specific surface water flooding risks can be found within appendix E.
- 3.3. No fluvial risks have been identified which implicate the site and no other sources of flooding which may affect the site are known.

Risk Management and Safety

- 3.4. Given that the proposal does not propose any operational development, the residual flood risk in the future is understood to be the same as that which already exists and which has been identified. However, it is considered that the use of the site can be managed in a way which ensures that the identified flood risk does not implicate users of the site or put them at undue risk in the future. Primarily, it is considered that any combination of the following mitigation measures could be used to ensure safe use of the site from a flood risk perspective:
 - Use all social media outlets to communicate flood risk warnings and weather warnings to the local community;
 - Providing ongoing updates in relation to the site's condition through newsletters and social media, warning of any surface water flooding which may exist; and
 - Temporarily removing access to certain areas of the site in the event of a flood.
- 3.5. Bearing in mind the very confined part of the site which is identified as being at risk of flooding, these measures are considered both appropriate and proportionate to mitigate and manage the site relative to the risk which exists.

¹ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

² <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>

Climate Change

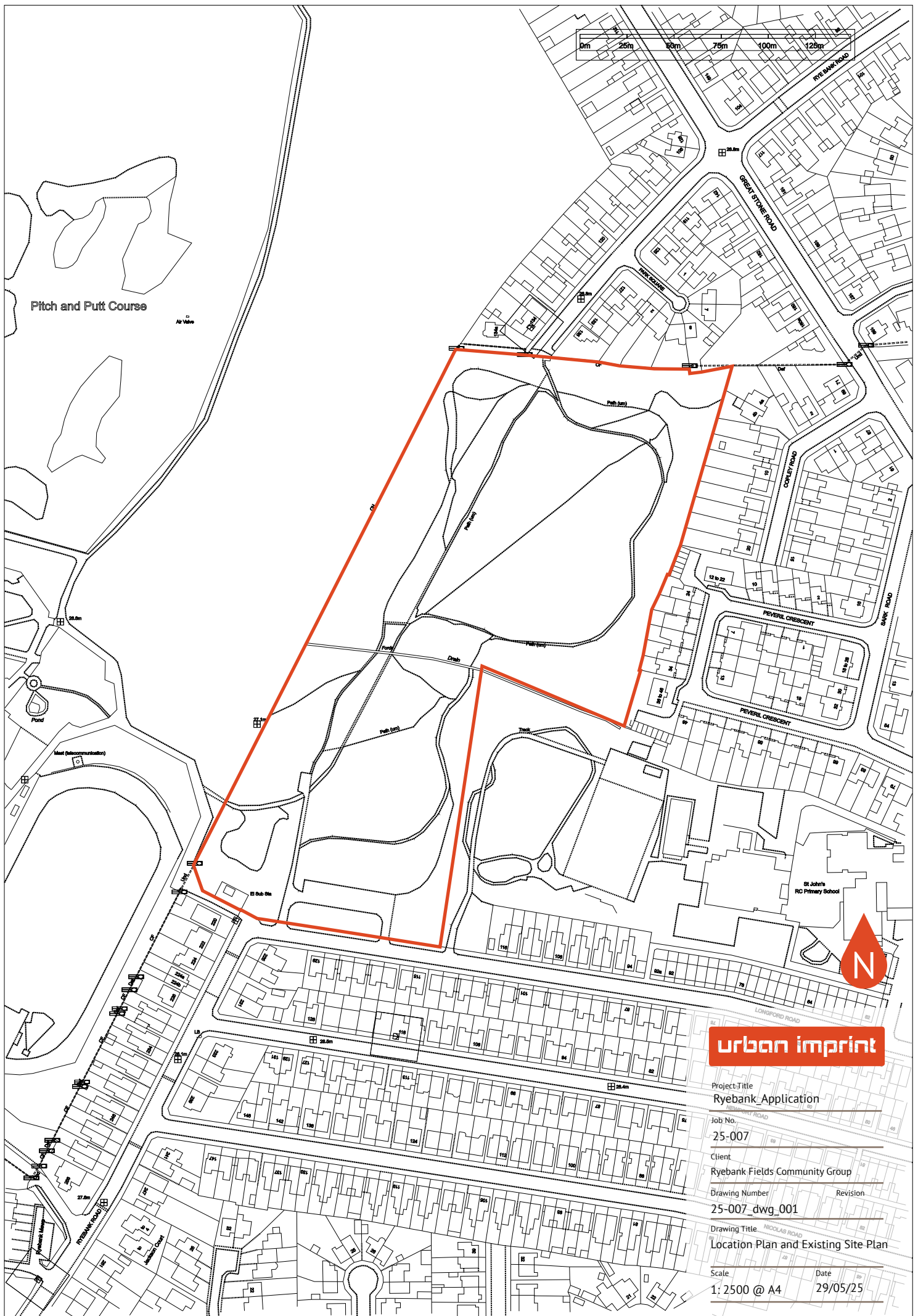
- 3.6. Whilst conscious of the need to consider flooding events within the context of climate change, applying climate change allowances and uplifts to existing surface water flooding models is not considered represent a proportionate assessment of the flood risk which exists within this site, particularly within the context of the change of use which is being proposed and the localised nature of the flood risk.
- 3.7. Despite this, in proposing the change of use to a community woodland and meadow the applicant is acutely aware that the regularity and severity of flood events will increase in the future. In a broad sense, it is considered that maintaining the existing role and character of the site as a series of ecological habitats provides the best opportunity to manage this increased risk over the long term.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The site to which this assessment relates is a greenfield site located within the administrative boundary of Manchester, primarily consisting of semi-mature and mature grassland, hedgerow and trees which have grown following the abandonment of the site's last formal use as playing fields in 1996.
- 4.2. The development proposal relevant to this assessment is a proposed change of use application which seeks to formalise the site's future use as a community woodland and meadow. No operational development is required to facilitate the change of use.
- 4.3. A small section of the site is identified as being within Flood Zone 2. This is as a result of a surface water flooding risk which has been identified.
- 4.4. The proposed use of the site is considered 'water-compatible development' and sequential and/or exception tests are not required, as set out by the NPPF and planning practice guidance.
- 4.5. The risk to users of the site in the future is considered very low, however, a proportionate series of mitigation measures have been identified and will be enforced in the event that planning permission is granted. This could be secured by way of a condition.
- 4.6. On the basis of the above, and given that the proposal will also not increase the likelihood or severity of flooding within the site's vicinity, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable from the perspective of flood risk.

Appendix A

Location Plan for the development proposal.



Project Title	Ryebank Application
Job No.	25-007
Client	Ryebank Fields Community Group
Drawing Number	25-007_dwg_001
Drawing Title	Location Plan and Existing Site Plan
Scale	1: 2500 @ A4
Date	29/05/25

Appendix B

Flood Risk Map – extracted from the Flood map for planning. Taken 12 June 2025.



Flood map for planning

Your reference

Unspecified

Location (easting/northing)
381090/394589

Scale
1:2,500

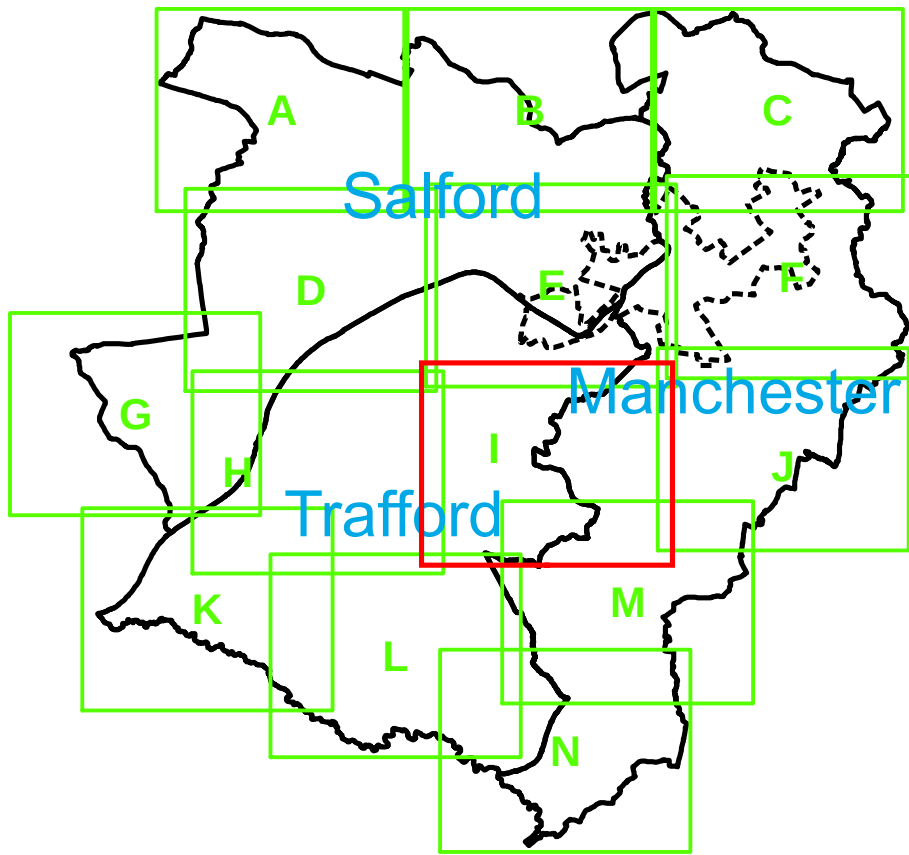
Created
28 May 2025 14:52

-  Selected area
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Flood zone 1
-  Flood defence
-  Main river
-  Water storage area


0 20 40 60m

Appendix C

Extract from Manchester City Council's SFRA.



- Council Boundary
- Lost Watercourses
- High Susceptibility
- Intermediate Susceptibility
- Low Susceptibility
- Employment
- Housing
- Mixed Use
- Other
- Regional Centre Boundary
- Ashton, Bridgewater and Rochdale Canals
- Manchester Ship Canal / Grey Inwell
- Other Waterbodies
- Main Rivers (V8.0)**
 - Culverted
 - Open
- Digitised River Lines**
 - Culverted
 - Open

This map has been produced in accordance with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.

The map refines the Environment Agency's map of 'Areas Susceptible to Surface Water Flooding' based on more detailed modelling outputs produced for this SFRA.

The Main River information shown in the SFRA is provided by the Environment Agency; the centreline data may deviate from that shown on basemapping due to inherent differences in data resolution. Further information on Main Rivers is provided on the Environment Agency's website. The mapping of culverted sections of watercourse is a strategic screening only based upon Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 mapping and should be confirmed for more detailed studies such as site specific Flood Risk Assessment. The canals layer does not necessarily cover all the canal arms, but the modelled overtopping/breaching and hydraulic interactions with rivers and other waterbodies is complete and accurate as appropriate for a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

This map should be used to apply the Exception Test and to scope what the Flood Risk Assessment should consider in its placement of surface development and the management of runoff.



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Manchester City, Salford City and Trafford Councils Level 2 Hybrid SFRA

Susceptibility to Surface Water Flooding - Current Scenario

Drawn by: J Cheetham	Date: 29/01/2011	This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence number: 10001666-2011
Checked by: J Dimelew	Date: 01/02/2011	
Approved by: J Cooper	Date: 01/02/2011	
File Name: ...ArcViewMapping\Level2MST_SurfaceWaterFlooding_Current_V1.1.mxd		
Drawing Number: SS_4.1 I	Status: FINAL	Scale: 1:10,000

Appendix D

Illustrative masterplan accompanying the development proposal.

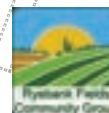
RYEBANK FIELDS COMMUNITY GROUP PLAN TO KEEP THE LAND AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

- ① Aspen Grove
- ② Native Black Poplar
- ③ Millennium Oaks
- ④ Enriqueta's Trees
- ⑤ The Fairy Thorn Tree
- ⑥ The Wishing Tree
- ⑦ Natural Play Area
- ⑧ Community Orchard
- ⑨ TRRA Community Garden
- ⑩ Access to Longford Park



Legend

- Proposed wildlife only zone
- Nico ditch
- Proposed wildlife pond
- The Labyrinth
- Log seating
- Access points
- Proposed community raised bed planting
- Hedgerow of importance
- Proposed accessible path/ cycleway
- Existing natural paths



urban imprint

Project Title
Ryebank_Application

Job No.
25-007

Client
Ryebank Fields Community Group

Drawing Number
25-007_dwg_002

Drawing Title
Proposed Masterplan

Scale
1:1500 @ A4

Date
29/05/25

Appendix E

Extracts from the Government's long term flood risk service map. Taken 12 June 2025.





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