

SPORTING BENEFITS SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Planning Application [142986/VO/2025]

INTRODUCTION

This Sporting Benefits Supporting Statement is to articulate the sporting benefits of the proposed youth centre and to present evidence that the proposal provides 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 to satisfy Manchester's Strategic Sport Objectives, Exception E5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance and paragraph 104 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the construction of a new single-storey modular youth centre. The facility is designed to be a multifunctional indoor space that provides safe, accessible, and supervised activities for young people – including those with disabilities, up to the age of 25. The centre will incorporate internal space suitable for indoor sport and physical activity programmes such as fitness classes, informal games, and inclusive exercise activities. The main hall offers an internal area of 84m² (6.9m x 12.2m) and features folding partitions to enable the space to be divided for simultaneous activities, offering flexibility to accommodate a range of uses.

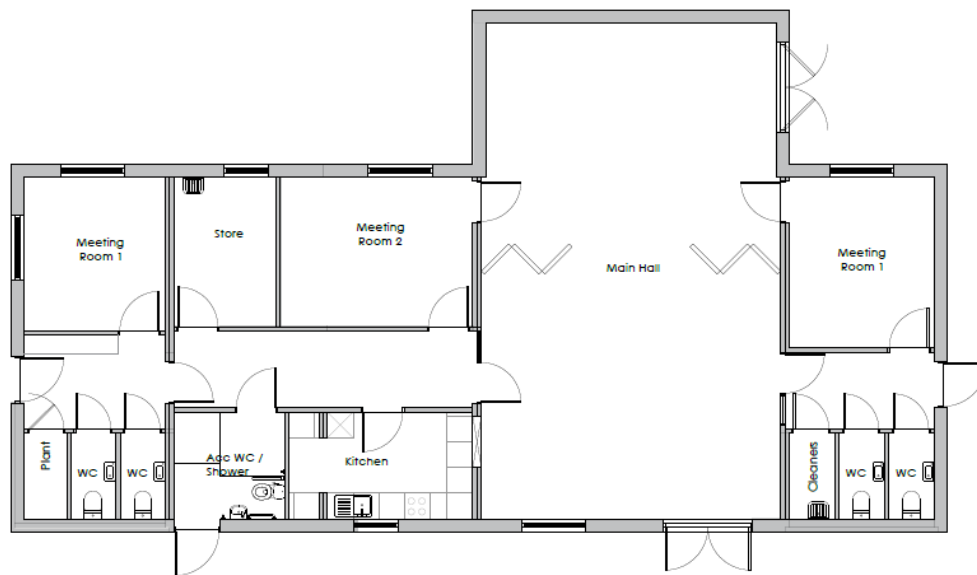
No formal outdoor pitches are proposed as part of the development; however, the retained greenspace will continue to support informal play and physical activity. The inclusion of an external tap, secure equipment store, and level access to a DDA-compliant shower and WC will further enhance the usability of this space for informal or programmed outdoor sport and recreation.



Location Plan



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Floor Plan

The youth centre will be positioned on the playing field within the eastern portion of the Field of Os Pocket Park, accessed via Claridge Road, and on an area of land that has historically accommodated an informal grass playing field previously associated with Oswald Road Primary School, but which has not been used or marked as a playing pitch for over 20 years (with no delineation visible since 2000).

PLANNING POLICY

As the location of the youth centre is on the playing field which results in the loss of natural turf playing field, the sporting benefits of the youth centre need to be clearly set out. The relevant planning policies are:

SPORT ENGLAND PLAYING FIELDS POLICY AND GUIDANCE (UPDATED 2021)

Sport England will not be a statutory consultee on this planning application but may be consulted in an advisory capacity. The following details are provided to enable Sport England's informed assessment of whether the proposed youth centre provides 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 to satisfy Exception E5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (UPDATED 2024)

The planning system encourages and promotes the retention of existing and the provision of additional, outdoor sports facilities, both public and private. Specifically, paragraph 104 (concerning open space, sport, and recreation) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

"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."*

MANCHESTER CORE STRATEGY

Core Strategy policy EN10 (Safeguarding Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Facilities) reflects the objectives of the NPPF and Sport England Playing Fields Policy at a local level. The policy seeks to protect and enhance existing open space, sport, and recreation facilities.

PLACES FOR EVERYONE: A JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT FOR 9 GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL AUTHORITIES (2024)

Places for Everyone Policy JP-P7 requires new development to provide new and/or improved existing sport and recreation facilities commensurate with the demand they would generate. The policy continues to state that this provision will be determined by individual local authorities through an evidence based approach.

SPORTING BENEFITS

The proposed youth centre will deliver wide-ranging benefits to young people across Chorlton-cum-Hardy, including enhanced access to physical activities, sports-based development programmes, and wellbeing services. Oswald Road Primary School will benefit from the proximity of supervised enrichment activities, and the facility is designed to host after-school clubs, informal fitness sessions, inclusive sport activities, and seasonal programmes. While the facility will primarily support ages 10–19, extended provision for SEND youth up to age 25 will be included.

Recent consultation undertaken by Manchester Active identified a need from community disability groups to access safe and secure sport and physical activity spaces. The indoor space will create a usable activity space which lends itself to community use for targeted disability groups in the locality. Manchester Active has a Physical Activity Referral Service (PARS) which works with local GPs to help people with mental or physical health issues become more active. Sessions range from one to one for people with long term health conditions (Pathway One) to small group sessions for people needing more time or confidence before joining a local gym or attending open community sessions (Pathway Two). It is envisaged the activity spaces will be utilised by the PARS team and targeted disability groups.

Community access will be secured through a Community Use Agreement supported by Manchester Active. Discussions are ongoing with local youth services, the Physical Activity Referral Service, and community groups to establish programming and partnerships.

Table 1 – Exception E5 Justification

REQUIREMENT	DETAIL PROVIDED
Impact the proposed development would have on playing pitch provision including proposed summer / winter playing pitches	The area proposed for development is part of a field that has not hosted any delineated playing pitches since at least 2000. Remaining green space (over 50%) will continue to support informal play, with additional facilities to enhance its usability.
Existing community use	Used informally for dog walking and passive recreation; no formal sport bookings recorded in recent years.

	The area is used by the adjacent primary school for outdoor learning activities, which will continue.
Proposed community use	Dedicated multipurpose indoor space for youth-based physical activity, sport, and health & wellbeing programmes, with opportunities to create partnerships with community clubs. Whilst sports and physical activity clubs are sparse within the ward, including the closure of the ward's only leisure centre a few years ago, the new centre creates opportunities for the development of local sports clubs in-line with MCR Active community club development strategy.
Community access formally secured through a community use agreement	This can be secured via a planning condition prior to first use of the facility and Manchester Active will assist.
Sport related benefits of the proposed facility for the applicant and the community. This explanation should provide detail on the deficiencies of the existing facilities and set out how the new facilities will address such deficiencies and help with the delivery of sport and meet community facility needs. Furthermore, the explanation should provide details regarding which sports the new facility will accommodate.	The youth centre addresses a well-documented gap in safe, structured spaces for youth engagement in Chorlton. Its multipurpose design allows for fitness, movement, and sport programmes targeting underserved groups including SEND young people. It enhances indoor provision, complements existing school sports spaces, and is responsive to Manchester's Youth Strategy and Physical Activity priorities.
Explanation of which sports the new facility will accommodate	Indoor space will support light fitness (e.g. yoga, circuit training), informal games (e.g. table tennis, soft ball), and movement-based classes. The facility is not designed for formal ball sports such as basketball or football due to size constraints.
Proposed surface type	Resilient multiuse vinyl (contractor specification to be provided). Suitable for indoor movement and sports activities. The provision of a youth centre on the site will encourage and supplement the future development of the outdoor area for sports and physical activity, with provision of welfare facilities to support this.
Sustainability	A long-term Business/Resilience Plan is being developed with an appropriate management model overseen by

	Manchester City Council and partners. The Ongoing maintenance and operations funding will be supported through an effective long-term grant funding strategy, including a revenue budget for the 1 st year of operation to build capacity.
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CONCLUSION

The evidence provided in this statement demonstrates the sporting benefits to the school, and potential community users are considerable and will help the school deliver their PE Curriculum and after school activities.

The proposed youth centre will provide a sustainable sports facility which will be supported by a Business Plan and a Community Use Agreement supported by Manchester Active.

It is considered the proposed youth centre meets the requirements of paragraph 104(c) of the NPPF, Sport England's Playing Fields Policy Exception E5 and Core Strategy Policy EN10.

In addition, the proposal complies with Manchester's strategic sports objectives by addressing issues and themes around increasing physical activity in:

- Making Manchester Fairer Plan
- Our Manchester Strategy
- Addressing deficiencies identified in Manchester's Indoor Built Sport Facilities Strategy
- Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

The key sporting and community benefits of this proposal are:

- Aims and objectives for improving health and well-being, tackling inequalities, and increasing participation in sport and physical activity.
- Development and coordination of sports development and physical activity programmes in response to local need, in communities with the greatest need.
- Long-term sustainable facilities.
- Accessible indoor physical activity space to support and encourage use by disabled people and people with limited mobility.
- Safe, inclusive and welcoming community spaces for all priority groups.