



# PLANNING STATEMENT

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## ISG (ON BEHALF OF MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL)

VARLEY STREET SEND SECONDARY SCHOOL



An isometric illustration of a cityscape with various buildings, streets, and vehicles, rendered in a light teal color. A semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

# PLANNING STATEMENT

**On behalf of:** ISG (on behalf of Manchester City Council)

**In respect of:** Varley Street SEND Secondary School

**Date:** March 2023

**Reference:** KD/LF/CW/5279MA/R001

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement ('the Statement') has been prepared on behalf of our client, ISG (on behalf of Manchester City Council), to assist Manchester City Council ('the LPA') in the consideration of a full planning application for the erection of a SEND Secondary School (Use Class F1) with outdoor sports area, access, parking, landscaping and drainage ('the Proposed Development') at Sawley Road in Miles Platting, East Manchester ('the Site').
- 1.2 This Statement provides an assessment of the Proposed Development having regard to national and local planning policy. Section 2 provides a brief description of the Site, whilst Section 3 details the Proposed Development. Section 4 outlines the relevant planning policy at national and local level. Section 5 sets out an Open Space Assessment before Section 6 considers the Proposed Development in respect of the relevant policy. Finally, a summary and a conclusion are presented at Section 7.
- 1.3 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents which accompany the planning application package:
- Application Forms
  - Application Fee
  - Plans pack prepared by jmarchitects:
    - Site Location Plan (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ 00-DR-A-90001 S3 Rev. P06)
    - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ 00-DR-A-00001 S3 Rev. P18)
    - Proposed Roof Plan (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ RF-DR-A-27001 S3 Rev. P08)
    - Typical Building Sections 1 (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ ZZ-DR-A-00101 S3 Rev. P05)
    - Proposed Building Elevations (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ ZZ-DR-A-00201 S3 Rev. P13)
  - Landscape plans prepared by DEP:
    - Landscape General Arrangement (ref: VAR-DEP-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0001 Rev. P07)
    - Proposed Illustrative Layout (ref: VAR-DEP-XX-XX-DR-L-00002 Rev. P04)
    - Proposed External Security Strategy (ref: VAR-DEP-XX-XX-DR-L-00003 Rev. P04)
    - External Access and Circulation strategy (ref: VAR-DEP-XX-XX-DR-L-00004 Rev. P04)
    - Landscape Sections A + B (ref: VAR-DEP-XX-XX-DR-L-00005 Rev. P02)
    - Landscape Sections C + D (ref: VAR-DEP-XX-XX-DR-L-00006 Rev. P03)
  - Planning Statement by DPP (this Statement)
  - Construction Method Statement by ISG
  - Access and Maintenance Strategy by jmarchitects (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-00005-S3 Rev. P01)
  - Air Quality Impact Assessment by Stroma Built Environment (ref: PRO-085352)
  - Coal Mining Risk Assessment by EnviroSolution (ref: CL101 ver. 1.0)
  - Fire Engineering Review by Jensen Hughes (ref: GM2151/R1 Issue 1)
  - Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report by EnviroSolution (ref: CL101 ver. 1.0)
  - Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Site Assessment Report by EnviroSolution (ref: CL102 ver. 1.0)
  - Crime Impact Statement by Greater Manchester Police (ref: 2023/0051/CIS/01 ver. A)

- Design and Access Statement by jmarchitects (ref: VAR-JMA-ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-00004-DAS-P02)
- Ecology Scoping Survey by EnviroSolution
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report by Ridge and Partners LLP (ref: 5020683 ver. 2.0)
- School Travel Plan by Ridge and Partners LLP (ref: 5020509 ver. P01)
- Transport Assessment by Ridge and Partners LLP (ref: 5020509 ver. P01)
- Environmental Noise Assessment by Stroma Built Environment (ref: 092958 – AC – rev. 1v1)
- Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment by EnviroSolution

## 2.0 Site Description and Planning History

### Site Description

- 2.1 The Site is in the Miles Platting area of Manchester and is approximately 1.5ha. in size and sits south of Sawley Road which connects to the main highway - Varley Street that the school is to be named after.
- 2.2 The Site comprises brownfield land in Miles Platting to the northeast of Manchester, lying approximately 2.57km from the City Centre. Nicholas Varley Community School was previously located to the west of the Site and the Site itself was the associated outdoor space for the school; before the school was relocated to the site of the former St Marks Church of England Primary School on Holland Street, and renamed Park View Community Primary School.
- 2.3 The Site is relatively flat, but largely consists of overgrown vegetation and trees.
- 2.4 The Site is not located within or adjacent to a conservation area, nor does it contain any listed buildings.
- 2.5 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is, therefore, at low risk of fluvial flooding. Moreover, the Site is at low risk of flooding from all other sources.

### Surrounding Area

- 2.6 The Site is bound to the north by a Sawley Road which is a residential street and to the south by industrial land uses. It is bound to the west by vacant brownfield land that, as discussed above, was the site of the former Nicholas Varley Community School. To the east, Vickers Street bounds the Site beyond which lies an area of industrial units on the opposite side of the A6010.
- 2.7 There is a Grade II Listed Building (Listing ID: 1270661) approximately 127m north-west of Site. This is the former Corpus Christi Basilica on Varley Street which is largely screened from the Site and whose setting does not relate to the Site. There is a second Grade II Listed Building (Listing ID: 1247475) approximately 145m north-east of Site which is a Public Laundry on Rhodes Street which is also completely screened from the Site and located the opposite side of the A6010. These listed buildings are, therefore, unlikely to be impacted by the proposals.

### Planning History

- 2.8 An online search of the LPA's application portal indicates that the Site has the following planning history:

| Application Reference | Description                                               | Decision              |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 067829/FO/2003/N1     | Erection of 2.4m high palladin fencing to school boundary | Approved June 2003    |
| 051390/VO/NORTH2/97   | Environmental improvements to                             | Approved January 1997 |

| Application Reference | Description                                                                                                                                   | Decision |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|                       | school grounds including safety surface & fence to nursery, ground surfaces, playful structures, seating, earthworks planting and sports area |          |

### 3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The Proposed Development will see the construction of a new SEND Secondary School (Use Class F1) with outdoor sports areas, access, parking, landscaping and drainage.

#### Layout and Design

- 3.2 A full plans pack accompanies the application which provides full details of the proposals, however a copy of the proposed illustrative site layout plan is shown below.



*Figure 1 – Illustrative Site Layout*

- 3.3 In summary, the school building will comprise the following:

- Secondary Classrooms x 15
- Science Studio
- Art Room
- DT Workshop
- Sports hall
- Quiet / Calming rooms x 2
- SEN Therapy rooms
- Life Skills Kitchen

- Sensory Regulation Room
  - Main hall
  - Staff rooms/offices
  - Changing rooms
  - Dining hall
- 3.4 To summarise, the new teaching block will comprise of a one-storey building with 2 teaching wings extruding southwards from the main building corridor. Situated slightly towards the northeast of the Site, the Proposed Development will maximise effective use of land and the building is orientated to maximise natural light to teaching spaces. The proposed new build will be modern in design.
- 3.5 Internally, the building will accommodate specific subject classrooms with store cupboards and small group rooms, SEN therapy/sensory rooms, a main hall and dining hall and other necessary facilities to provide the best possible resources for its pupils. The design team have worked closely with Manchester City Council to ensure that the building and overall redevelopment of the Site is suitable to meet the complex needs of its pupils. This has included ensuring well-connected and considered circulation both internally and externally, optimised teaching environments and focal spaces that will promote calm and order for the pupils.
- 3.6 Externally, there will be hard play provision in the form of a 38m x 18m sports court to the southwest of the Site whilst the westernmost corner of the Site will be used as a staff and visitor car park. An area of hardstanding is proposed to the south of the proposed new teaching block which will be accessible from the main hall and main teaching wings. The classrooms all being on the ground floor/the building only being one-storey tall will also promote outdoor learning and recreation.
- 3.7 In terms of the materials, the design proposals have been designed to be elegant and to use a robust palette of materials. Externally these materials will include a combination of grey brick and cladding, of which, both the cladding and the bricks will follow a subtle colour palette.

### **Access and Movement**

- 3.8 Vehicular and pedestrian access into the Site will be provided via Sawley Road (from the north of the Site).
- 3.9 It is proposed that a total of 68 car parking spaces will be provided which will include 8 accessible parking spaces and 8 EV charging spaces. Informal drop-off areas are also provided to the north of the Site/adjacent to the main entrances and there is also parking provision for 16 minibuses.
- 3.10 A secure cycle shelter will be introduced and will provide 14 cycle spaces both for staff and pupils.

### Landscaping

- 3.11 In terms of landscaping, one area of hard and soft informal social space involving planting is proposed located to the east of the building. Additionally, there will be a habitat area further to the east of this area/towards the northeast of the Site.
- 3.12 The proposed landscaping scheme will retain existing trees where possible and will enhance planting through the clearance of dense overgrown scrubs and replant with an understory mixture of native and ornamental shrubs, herbaceous perennials and bulbs.
- 3.13 Existing trees along the boundary will be cleared to facilitate access and construction. Trees of particular value will be retained otherwise replanted with large native street tree specimens. A native hedgerow will be planted along the southern boundary to provide soft screening to adjacent industrial area.
- 3.14 Landscaping is proposed along the drop-off area in order to create an attractive entranceway to the school for both users and visitors. Tree planting is also proposed in these areas to assist in breaking up the hardstanding of the car park and mitigate for the limited tree loss required to accommodate the proposals.

## 4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Applications for planning permission should be considered in terms of policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Development Plan, which comprises the Manchester Core Strategy, Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan, Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan and the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Extant/‘saved’ policies.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 A revised version of the NPPF was published in July 2021, superseding the February 2019 version, and sets out the Government's proposed economic, social and environmental planning policies for England.
- 4.3 The NPPF also carries forward the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or where the policies most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless the adverse impacts of allowing development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 4.4 The following sections are most relevant to the Proposed Development:
- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
  - Section 4 – Decision Making
  - Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
  - Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
  - Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
  - Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
  - Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- 4.5 These sections are summarised below.

### Achieving Sustainable Development

- 4.6 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to “*contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*”.
- 4.7 The NPPF also states that at a very high level, “*the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*”
- 4.8 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are:

- An economic objective;
- A social objective; and
- An environmental objective.

### The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.9 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that *“so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.”*

4.10 As set out at paragraph 11, with regard to decision taking this means:

*“Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:*

- The application of policies in this NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this NPPF taken as a whole.”*

4.11 The NPPF is split into a number of thematic areas some of which are relevant to the Proposed Development. These are considered in further detail below.

### Decision Making

4.12 The NPPF establishes that local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive and creative way to foster the delivery of economic, social and environmental improvements in the area. It also states that they should work proactively with applicants and seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 38).

### Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

4.13 Section 8 of the NPPF seeks to ensure planning policies and decision aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.

4.14 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:...*

*c) 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.”*

- 4.15 Paragraph 95 of the NPPF is of the particular relevance in the determination of this planning application as it states that:

*“It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development will widen choice in education. They should:*

- a) Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter school through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) Work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”*

- 4.16 Further, at Paragraph 98, the NPPF states *“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.”*

- 4.17 Turning now to the loss of playing fields, the NPPF at paragraph 99 states 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.”*

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 4.18 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to accessibility; it places particular emphasis on reducing the need to travel and providing a real choice of sustainable modes of transport. Development proposals are required to promote sustainable modes of transport, provide safe and suitable access and undertake improvements to limit any significant impacts.

- 4.19 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF confirms that:

*“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*

### Making effective use of land

- 4.20 Section 11 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of making effective use of land and Paragraph 119 states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’”*

### Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 4.21 Section 12 of the NPPF identifies that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 130 a list of design-based criteria against which policies and decisions should aim to ensure that development achieves. These are as follows:

- a. *“Will function well and ass to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short terms 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 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.”*

### Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.22 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF asserts that new and existing development should not contribute to, be put at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affect by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- 4.23 Paragraph 179 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

## Other Ministerial Guidance

### Ministerial Planning Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development

- 4.24 This Planning Policy Statement (PPS) was published in August 2011 and sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet the growing demand for state-funded school places, increasing choice and opportunity in state-funded education and raising educational standards.
- 4.25 The PPS stipulates that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, in accordance with the NPPF.
- 4.26 The PPS also asserts that LPAs should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions and that they should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools.

## Sport England Policy

- 4.27 As stipulated by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (DMPO), Sport England are a statutory consultee for planning applications where development is likely to affect the use of land as playing fields. The DMPO defines a playing field as a site which contains at least one playing pitch. A Playing pitch is defined in the DMPO as:

*'a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.'*

- 4.28 The Site has been vacant for over 10 years and is no longer considered to fall within the definition of a playing field. This is set out further within the Open Space Assessment and Planning Assessment in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.
- 4.29 For context, the body's playing pitch policy is contained within its document: 'Playing Field Policy and Guidance Update (2021)'. The aim of Sport England's policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The policy states that:

*"Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or land allocated for use as a playing field unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.*

- *E1: A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain*

*the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.*

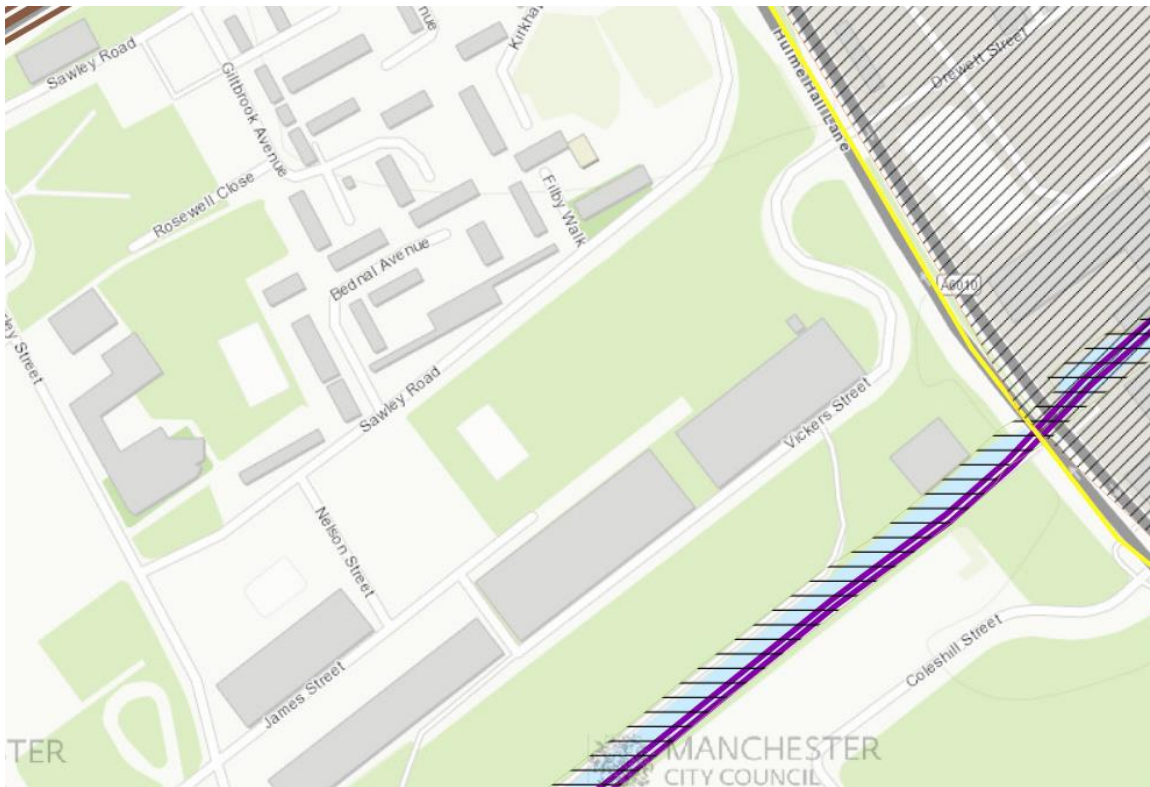
- *E2: The Proposed Development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.*
- *E3: The Proposed Development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:*
  - *reduce the size of any playing pitch;*
  - *result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);*
  - *reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;*
  - *result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or*
  - *prejudice the use of any part of a playing field and any of its playing pitches.*
- *E4: The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the Proposed Development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by 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.*
- *E5: 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.*

## The Development Plan

- 4.30 As discussed above, the Development Plan for the Site comprises the Manchester Core Strategy, Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan, Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan and the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Extant/'saved' policies. The relevant policies are set out below:

### Proposals Map

- 4.31 The Interactive Proposals Map illustrates the Core Strategy and the extant/'saved' Unitary Development Plan policies.



*Figure 2 – Policy Map Extract*

- 4.32 According to the interactive map, the Site is not allocated or subject to any other site-specific constraints. However, the interactive map does not have a layer that allows users to see which sites are formally allocated (or not) as open space. Open space allocations are instead set out in the City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study; where the Site is shown as an ‘Outdoor Sports Facility’.

### **Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027**

- 4.33 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on the 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan.
- 4.34 **Policy SP 1 – ‘Spatial Principles’** sets out the key spatial principles to guide the strategic development of Manchester and states that outside the City Centre and the Airport, the emphasis is on the creation of neighbourhoods of choice. The City's network of open spaces will provide all residents with good access to recreation opportunities. It also sets out the core development principles, including:
- creating well designed places;
  - making a positive contribution to health, safety and well-being;
  - considering the needs of all members of the community;
  - protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment; and
  - improving access to education by being located to reduce the need to travel.

4.35 **Policy EC 5 – ‘East Manchester’** states that the Council will promote development which:

- ensures major employment opportunities are connected via non-car modes to residential neighbourhoods within East Manchester and North Manchester;
- takes advantage of key transport infrastructure such as arterial roads and public transport networks;
- creates links to the Rochdale and Ashton Canals and links to the open space network providing opportunities for walking and cycling; and
- has regard to listed buildings and conservation areas and the industrial heritage of the area.

4.36 **Policy T 1 – ‘Sustainable Transport’** seeks to support proposals that deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public/active transport. The Council will particularly support proposals that -

- Improve choice by developing alternatives to the car.
- Promote regeneration and economic vitality by relieving traffic congestion and improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need and for those without a car.
- Improve access to transport services and facilities in order to enable disabled people and people with mobility impairments to participate fully in public life.
- Improve pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment

4.37 **Policy T 2 – ‘Accessible areas of opportunity and need’** confirms that the Council will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development: is located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers and to ensure good national and international connections; is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; and connects residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities.

4.38 **Policy EN 1 – ‘Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas’** outlines how all development in Manchester will be expected to follow seven principles of urban design and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the city should be fully realised.

4.39 **Policy EN3 ‘Heritage’** states that proposals for development must preserve or enhance the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of heritage assets.

4.40 **Policy EN 8 – ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’** describes how all new development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of the design, layout, siting and function of both buildings and associated external spaces.

4.41 **Policy EN 9 – ‘Green Infrastructure’** states that development should maintain green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and function. Developers should enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure.

- 4.42 **Policy EN 10 – ‘Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities’** indicates that the Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces. Proposals on existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
- equivalent or better replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities will be provided in the local area; or
  - the site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sport or recreation function and the citywide standards set out above are maintained, and
    - it could not fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sport or recreation needs, and a
    - proposed replacement will remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area.
- 4.43 **Policy EN 12 – ‘Area priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation’** confirms that the priority for open space, sport and recreation in the East Manchester area of the city, as set out in Manchester's Strategic Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study is to enhance existing facilities and provide new spaces and facilities in accessible locations.
- 4.44 **Policy EN 15 – ‘Biodiversity and Geological Conservation’** states 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, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate.
- 4.45 **Policy EN 18 – ‘Contaminated Land and Ground Stability’** describes how the Council will give priority for the remediation of contaminated land to strategic locations as identified within this document. Any proposal for development of contaminated land must be accompanied by a health risk assessment. Additionally, all new development within former mining areas shall undertake an assessment of any associated risk to the proposed development and, if necessary, incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to address them.
- 4.46 **Policy DM 1 – ‘Development Management’** outlines how all development should have regard to specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document. These issues include appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail; effects on amenity; and community safety and crime prevention.

#### Saved Policies of the Manchester UDP

- 4.47 The remaining/extant policies from the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) were saved on the 11 July 2012 and remain applicable to development proposals.
- 4.48 **Policy DC26.1-2** relates to Development and Noise:
- 4.49 **Policy DC26.1** confirms that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City and, for this purpose, the Council will consider both:

- a. the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and
  - b. the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.
- 4.50 **Policy DC26.2** states that new noise-sensitive developments (including large-scale changes of use of existing land or buildings), such as housing, schools, hospitals or similar activities, will be permitted subject to their not being in locations which would expose them to high noise levels from existing uses or operations, unless the effects of the noise can realistically be reduced.
- 4.51 **Policy E3.3** relates to Environmental Improvement and Protection:
- 4.52 **Policy E3.3** outlines how the Council will upgrade the appearance of the City's major radial and orbital roads and rail routes. This will include improvements to the appearance of adjacent premises; encouraging new development of the highest quality; and ensuring that landscape schemes are designed to minimise litter problems.

## 5.0 Open Space Assessment

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 At a national level, the NPPF supports the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure in Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 92 states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

- (a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- (b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- (c) 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.”*

- 5.2 Paragraph 63 goes on to state 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.”*

- 5.3 Paragraph 98 outlines the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity. Paragraph 99 goes on to state:

*“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”.*

## **National Planning Practice Guidance (‘the NPPG’)**

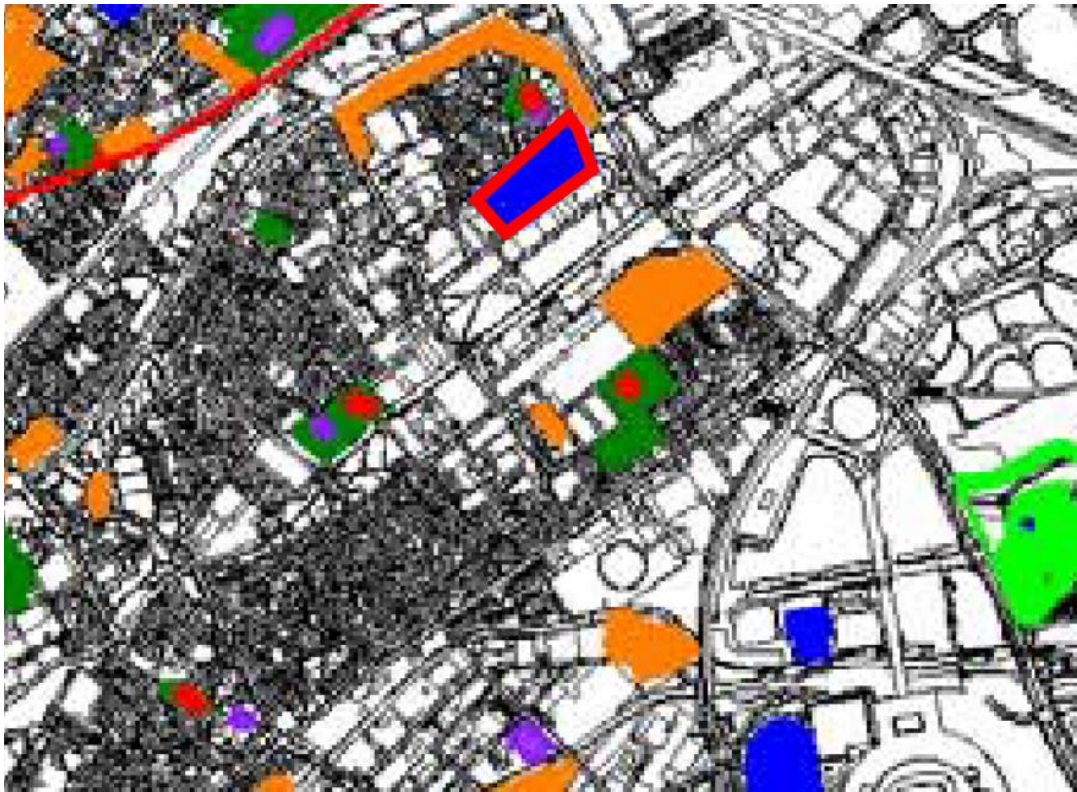
- 5.4 The NPPG outlines that open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It highlights that open space can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks.

## **Local Development Plan**

- 5.5 **Policy EN 10 – ‘Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities’** indicates that the Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces. Proposals on existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
- equivalent or better replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities will be provided in the local area; or
  - the site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sport or recreation function and that citywide standards are maintained, and
    - it could not fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sport or recreation needs, and
    - a proposed replacement will remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area.
- 5.6 **Policy EN 12 – ‘Area priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation’** confirms that the priority for open space, sport and recreation in the East Manchester area of the city, as set out in Manchester's Strategic Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study is to enhance existing facilities and provide new spaces and facilities in accessible locations.

## **Existing Area of Open Space and Assessment**

- 5.7 The interactive policy map does not have a layer available to illustrate whether sites are allocated (or not) as open space within the Development Plan.
- 5.8 However, in the Council’s City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study (published in August 2009) (‘the OSSRS’), the entire site is identified as an ‘Outdoor Sports Facility’ (represented by the blue shading inside the red line boundary).



*Figure 3 – Extract of Council's City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study – East Manchester Map*

5.9 Section 8 of the OSSRS defines Outdoor Sports Facilities as:

- Playing pitches (including football, rugby, cricket, hockey)
- Synthetic turf pitches
- Tennis courts
- Bowling greens
- Athletics tracks

5.10 Paragraph 8.7 of Section 8, recognises that schools can play a part in improving existing sites as well as new provision (albeit this was noted in relation to the former Building Schools for the Future Programme).

5.11 The OSSRS is somewhat outdated and from a time when the outdoor space allocation would have been linked to the former Nicholas Varley Street Community School. As discussed further below, the Site no longer reasonably falls within the OSSRS definition of an Outdoor Sports Facility. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (DMPO), defines a playing field as a site which contains at least one playing pitch. A Playing pitch is defined in the DMPO as:

*'a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.'*

5.12 The Site has been vacant for over 10 years and does not contain any delineated playing pitch, as such it is not considered to fall within the definition of a playing field. The DMPO states that a Local Planning Authority shall consult Sport England on “Development which:

*(i) is likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of 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 and 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, manmade or composite surface.”*

5.13 Whilst the Site has historically been outdoor space and possibly a playing field associated with the former school, it is understood that the entire site is private council land which has been gated off since at least August 2012 following the demolition of the former school building occupying the Site. Additionally, the grassed area has become unusable as it has naturally become overgrown in this time (as illustrated in **Figure 4** below).

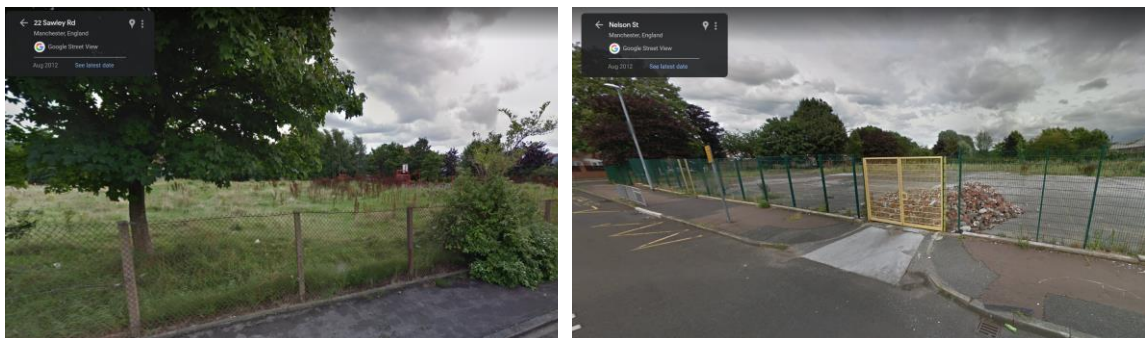


Figure 4 – Lack of Access to Site and Overgrown State of Grassed Area since 2012.

5.14 It is therefore clear that a major part of the Site is unusable in its current state and, given that it is not publicly accessible, the Site is, in fact, not ‘open’ space in any meaningful way.

5.15 Additionally, the allocation as an ‘Outdoor Sports Facility’ is also highly out dated given that the only visible remnants of a sports facility on the Site is the hard sports court located towards the south-west (illustrated below), that only represents a very small proportion of the Site’s total area.



*Figure 5 – Aerial Photo of the Site*

- 5.16 Notwithstanding the above, we will now assess the Proposed Development against the relevant national and local open space policies.

#### **Assessment against NPPF Paragraph 99**

- 5.17 The NPPF at paragraph 99 supports the retention of open space, however, does set out a number of exception criteria that development should meet to justify the loss of open space/playing pitches to new development which will discuss in turn below.

*“(a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements...”*

- 5.18 At table 8.5, the OSSRS sets out that at the time of publication in 2009, there was a 4.6ha deficiency in Outdoor Sports Facilities in the East Manchester Area. Of the available Outdoor Sports Facilities, the average quality score was 83%. Although it is acknowledged that a deficiency was identified (even when the previous primary school was operational at the Site), the primary school land itself would have provided a limited, publicly accessible open space function. The

open space has clearly become surplus to requirements in the sense that it has not been publicly accessible or maintained over a period of more than 10 years.

*“...(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...”*

- 5.19 The Proposed Development will result in the loss of 13,444sqm of allocated open space. Given the requirements of the SEND school needing a larger, single storey footprint, it is not possible in quantitative terms to provide equivalent or better replacement open space on the Site. However, it should be noted that when the former Nicholas Varley Community School relocated to its new location (now known as Park View Community School), this new development site included its own associated outdoor sports provision, which provides better MUGAs and courts, and partly off-sets the loss of provision on the Application Site. Whilst the Proposed Development will result in a partial loss of allocated open space, the Proposed Development will mitigate this through the introduction of hard and soft informal social spaces (complemented by landscape planting) to the south and to east of the school building. The proposals also include the introduction of a habitat area and soft landscaping within the proposed drop-off/pick-up area.
- 5.20 The existing sports court (which is approximately 34m x 15m) and understood to be entirely made of concrete is proposed to be replaced by a new 38m x 18m sports court which will be constructed of porous macadam surface and that will accommodate a range of standard line markings (to be agreed).
- 5.21 This replacement play area will achieve a very high standard in terms of size, technical specifications and materials. This represents a clear betterment on the current sports court which appears to be a number of years old and has not been maintained over a significant number of years.
- 5.22 Similarly, the main hall is a further addition that, available via a community use agreement, has the potential to provide local residents with a recreation facility that is much improved on what the Site offers in its current state.

*“...(c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”*

- 5.23 Further to the above, although the proposal is not for a specific sports and recreational development, there are clear benefits that would result from the Proposed Development in terms of provision of new improved sports and recreation facilities that form part of the school. The Proposed Development will bring the Site into active use and introduce new facilities such as the main hall and sports court that could be made available for the public to use via a community use agreement.
- 5.24 It is acknowledged that wider grassland area would technically be lost to the Proposed Development, however, as has made clear above, this has not been usable or publicly accessible for a number of years.

- 5.25 It is therefore considered that this is, in practice, a very minor loss that is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the introduction of new sports and recreation facilities and hard/soft informal social spaces and the additional landscaping elements of the scheme.

### Assessment against Local Policy

- 5.26 Policy EN 10 states that proposals on existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
- Equivalent or better replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities will be provided in the local area; or
  - The Site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sport or recreation function; and citywide standards are maintained; and
  - the Site could not fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sport or recreation needs; and
  - a proposed replacement will remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area.
- 5.27 Starting at criteria 1, equivalent or better replacement open space will not be provided in the local area as part of this Proposed Development. However, as outlined above, when the former Nicholas Varley Community School relocated to its new location (now known as Park View Community School), this new development site included its own associated outdoor sports provision, which provides better MUGAs and courts, and partly off-sets the loss of provision on the Application Site.
- 5.28 In relation to criteria 2, at the time the OSSRS was published in 2009, there was a deficiency in Outdoor Sports Facilities in East Manchester, however, the Site has been vacant for over 10 years and therefore, the Proposed Development would not worsen the situation, it would indeed improve it, by opening up the site back into beneficial public use. It has been demonstrated in the previous subsection that the current open space/sport and recreation facilities have clearly become surplus to requirement due to the overgrown nature and the longstanding closure to the public of the Site and that better quality on-site sport or recreation facilities will replace the existing ones in accordance with Policy EN 10.
- 5.29 Regarding criteria 3, the Site could not reasonably fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sports and recreation needs as the Council have identified a need for a new SEND school to support local schooling requirements. Notwithstanding this, the Site will fulfil other deficient open space, sports and recreation needs such as 'natural and semi-natural open space', as the retained tree belt to the east of the Site will be managed and enhanced as a habitat area for the school. Although this would not be accessible to the general public, it does not alter the level of accessibility that the OSSRS was based on, and would nevertheless be an improvement for the Site. Further, as set out earlier, the Proposed Development will also improve the sports court provision on Site, which could be made publicly available via a community use agreement. The Proposed Development will also provide a main hall which could be used for public recreation through a community use agreement.

- 5.30 In terms of the final criteria 4, the Proposed Development will not remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area; but for the reasons set out above, is nevertheless considered to result in significant benefit.
- 5.31 Overall, the Proposed Development would result in a departure from Policy EN 10 as there would be a loss of allocated open space which is not being replaced by an equivalent proposal in quantitative terms. However, the LPA should give weight to the fact that the allocation of the Site is outdated and directly related to the former use of the Site as a school, which has been vacant, and therefore surplus to requirements, for over 10 years. Whilst the Proposed Development will not provide replacement provision in quantitative terms, it will result in significant qualitative benefits associated with the proposed new sports court, main hall, habitat area and associated landscape strategy.
- 5.32 Turning to Policy EN 12, this policy confirms that the priority for open space, sport and recreation in the East Manchester area of the city is to enhance existing facilities and provide new spaces and facilities in accessible locations. As per the above, the Proposed Development will accord with Policy EN 12 by introducing new high-quality sport and recreation facilities which bring a vacant site in an accessible location back into active/community use.

#### **Assessment against Sport England Policy**

- 5.33 As set out within the Policy Review at Chapter 4, Sport England seek to safeguard playing field land in accordance with its 'Playing Field Policy and Guidance Update (2021)'. The Proposed Development does not technically meet any of the 5 exceptions set out within Sport England Policy, however, the Site cannot be reasonably defined as playing field land given that it has been vacant for at least 10 years and does not contain any delineated playing pitch. Sport England's statutory remit is to prevent development which would prejudice the use, or result in the loss of, existing playing field land; but given that the Site is vacant, overgrown and not accessible to the public, the Proposed Development cannot be seen as prejudicing an existing facility.

#### **Summary**

- 5.34 The existing open space and hard sports court have been demonstrated to be surplus to requirements and unusable/unavailable to the public for over 10 years.
- 5.35 Whilst the Proposed Development will technically result in a partial loss of allocated open space, weight should be given to the fact that the allocation of the Site is outdated and directly related to the former use of the Site as a school. The Proposed Development will mitigate the loss of open space through the introduction of a main hall, sports court, habitat area and hard and soft informal social spaces (complemented by landscape planting) to the south and to the east of the school building, as well as soft landscaping along the proposed drop-off/pick-up area.
- 5.36 Furthermore, the quality of the replacement sports court, new main hall and new soft/hard informal spaces will be to a very high standard which again (along with the availability of the hall

and sports court via community-use agreement) will offset the impact on the open space allocation.

- 5.37 Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the aims of Policy EN 12 of the Local Plan in that it seeks to introduce new high-quality sport and recreation facilities which bring a vacant site in an accessible location back into active/community use. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Proposed Development conflicts with parts of Policy EN 10 and Paragraph 99 of the NPPF, the benefits of the SEND school and upgraded open space provision is considered to allow for a justified departure.

## 6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 The planning policy review in Section 4.0 has established the local and national planning policy considerations which are relevant to the consideration of the Proposed Development. This section will go on to consider the Proposed Development against the following wider planning policy framework:

- The Principle of Development
  - Education Use
  - Making Efficient Use of Land
  - Loss of Open Space
  - Loss of Playing Fields
- Sustainable Development – Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts
- Other Material Planning Considerations:
  - Design and Layout
  - Amenity
  - Highways and Parking
  - Flood Risk and Drainage
  - Ecology and Biodiversity
  - Trees and Landscaping
  - Ground Conditions
  - Crime
  - Energy

6.2 These matters will be addressed in turn below.

### The Principle of Development

6.3 The starting point for the assessment of planning applications as set out by S38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, is the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the adopted Development Plan comprises the Extant/'saved' Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (as saved in 2012) and the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

#### Education Use

6.4 The need for new schools is vital and this is evident in planning policy at all levels seeking to provide new educational facilities to meet the needs of an expanding population. Indeed, paragraph 95 of the NPPF acknowledges the importance of providing a sufficient choice of school places and requires that great weight should be given to the need to create new schools.

6.5 The Site forms part of the former Nicholas Varley Community School, therefore the principle of education use in this location has previously been deemed acceptable.

### Making effective use of land

- 6.6 Paragraph 120 of the NPPF states that substantial weight should be given the use of suitable brownfield land within settlements for identified needs, and to support appropriate opportunities to remediate contaminated land.
- 6.7 The Proposed Development, in delivering a remediation scheme and in bringing a vacant former school, brownfield site back into active use clearly accords with the NPPF in this regard and substantial weight should be afforded to this.

### Loss of Open Space

- 6.8 The Site constitutes existing open space and is allocated as an outdoor sports facility under the Manchester's Strategic Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.
- 6.9 This point was explored extensively in Section 5.0 (Open Space Assessment) which concluded that:
- the existing open space and sports court have been demonstrated to be surplus to requirements and unusable/closed off to the public for over 10 years;
  - the loss of allocated open space has been partly mitigated by the relocation of the Former Nicholas Varley Community School (now Park View Community School) and will be further mitigated by the Proposed Development through the introduction of a main hall, sports court, habitat area, hard and soft informal social spaces and further soft landscaping;
  - the quality of the replacement sports court, new main hall and new soft/hard informal spaces will be to a very high standard representing a clear qualitative betterment on the existing provision; and
  - the availability of the hall and sports court via community-use agreement will offset the impact on the open space allocation.
- 6.10 Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the aims of Policy EN 12 of the Local Plan in that it seeks to introduce new high-quality sport and recreation facilities which bring a vacant site in an accessible location back into active/community use. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Proposed Development conflicts with parts of Policy EN 10 and Paragraph 99 of the NPPF, the benefits of the SEND school and upgraded open space provision is considered to allow for a justified departure.

### Loss of Playing Fields

- 6.11 As set out within the Policy Review at Chapter 4, Sport England seek to safeguard playing field land in accordance with its 'Playing Field Policy and Guidance Update (2021)'. The Proposed Development does not technically meet any of the 5 exceptions set out within Sport England Policy as the Proposed Development results in a loss of 13,444sqm open space and re-provides for 3,441sqm of open space. However, as explained in Chapter 5, the Site cannot be reasonably defined as playing field land given that it has been vacant for over 10 years and does not contain

any delineated playing pitch. Sport England's statutory remit is to prevent development which would prejudice the use, or result in the loss of, existing playing field land; but given that the Site is vacant, overgrown and not accessible to the public, the Proposed Development cannot be seen as prejudicing an existing facility.

- 6.12 The loss of allocated open space has been partly mitigated by the relocation of the Former Nicholas Varley Community School (now Park View Community School) and will be further mitigated by the Proposed Development through the introduction of a hall, sports court, habitat area, hard and soft informal social spaces and further soft landscaping.
- 6.13 It is acknowledged that some of the land that would have previously been playing fields will be lost to the building footprint and car park, however, as established in Chapter 5, these playing fields have not been publicly accessible for a number of years.
- 6.14 Similarly, there is an existing sports court on Site that has not been maintained for a similar period of time.
- 6.15 To mitigate this, the Proposed Development includes both an indoor and an outdoor facility for sport which could be made available to residents via community-use agreement in the form of a hall and a replacement games court.
- 6.16 Further, these new facilities will be built to modern specifications and to a very high quality.
- 6.17 It is clear that these facilities would, therefore, provided more than a sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of former playing pitch land which is overgrown and inaccessible to the public.

### Summary

- 6.18 In light of the above, we have demonstrated that both national and local planning policy support the creation of new school facilities and that the NPPF places substantial weight on development involving reuse of brownfield land and remediating contaminated land. The Site is a former school site, therefore the principle of education use in this location has already previously been deemed as acceptable.
- 6.19 We have also demonstrated that the proposals result in significant benefits towards publicly accessible, open space and sports provision to justify the loss of open space and loss of former playing pitches.
- 6.20 Given that the principle of development has been accepted on this site, we will now turn to address the other planning considerations below.

## Sustainable Development – Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts

- 6.21 The NPPF highlights at paragraph 11 that *'at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development'*.

6.22 The emphasis is on Local Planning Authorities to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and to work proactively to secure developments that improve the social, environmental and economic circumstances of an area.

6.23 The application proposals contribute to all three dimensions of sustainable development and the application will deliver substantial benefits in each area.

### **Economic**

6.24 The proposals will result in a significant amount of investment into education provision in Manchester, which will benefit families in the area.

6.25 The new school will also provide new jobs both during the construction and operational phases, which will have knock-on positive benefits to local supply chains.

6.26 The economic benefits of the Proposed Development are significant, as ultimately the proposal seeks to bring a vacant, former school site back into active use and provide a state of the art facility. Therefore, weight must be given to this in the planning balance.

### **Social**

6.27 Socially, the Proposed Development will enhance the education offer within the city by providing high quality specialist education provision for families.

6.28 As the Site has been vacant since the previous school closed, the Proposed Development will bring it into active use and will provide a betterment to the current state of the Site.

6.29 The Site will be opened back up to the local community and there could be scope for community use of the hall and games court through a Community Use Agreement. Therefore, the Proposed Development will provide enhanced sports facilities for the area.

6.30 Significant social and public benefits will be delivered by the Proposed Development. In all respects, the Proposed Development will deliver enhancements in social sustainability and this consideration must be significantly weighted in the planning balance.

### **Environmental**

6.31 The school is to be delivered in compliance with the Manchester Low Carbon Build Standard and therefore, the Proposed Development will result in the creation of a high quality, sustainable development in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable construction.

6.32 The proposed wildflower grassland, native tree, and native hedge planting, will encourage the creation of habitats on the Site.

6.33 Provision will be made on the Site for cycle parking and the Site is also accessible by public transport. These factors seek to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport to access the Site.

### Summary

- 6.34 The Proposed Development falls wholly within the definition of sustainable development and consequently the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development is fully engaged. Specifically, the Proposed Development will deliver much needed new SEN school facilities for the city on a previously developed school site. The Proposed Development accords with the principles held with the NPPF in relation to the need for sufficient choice of available school places and the effective use of land.
- 6.35 The Proposed Development fulfils the three strands of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental) and as such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 11d) should be applied and decision takers, at every level, should seek to approve opportunities for sustainable development wherever possible (NPPF paragraph 38). Therefore, significant weight should be given to this in the planning balance.

## Other Material Considerations

### Design and Layout

- 6.36 The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to ensure that the building integrates sympathetically into the surrounding area and care has been taken to ensure that the scale, massing and materials chosen for the building are appropriate.
- 6.37 The proposed building aims to deliver a modern, high-quality education facility. The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, prepared by JM Architects, which further demonstrates that the design, layout, scale, massing and landscaping of the Proposed Development will deliver an accessible, vibrant and thriving development which is sympathetic to its context. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development complies with Core Strategy Policies DM 1 and EN 1.

### Amenity

- 6.38 An Environmental Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment have been prepared by Stroma Built Environment and accompany this planning application.

### Noise

- 6.39 The Environmental Noise Assessment explores control of building services external noise, the proposed external sports facilities operational noise impact, and the proposed car park.
- 6.40 Firstly, the Assessment recommends that noise limits for new sources of building services plant are controlled such that they are at least 5 dB below the prevailing background sound levels at the closest noise sensitive premises and confirms that building services plant equipment will operate only when the building is in use, therefore there will be no building services plant operation at night.

- 6.41 Additionally, it confirms that, based on the relatively low calculated noise levels meeting Sport England and WHO guidance, mitigation of noise transfer from external sports facilities in the form of noise barriers is not considered to be necessary. Further, on the basis of the predicted noise levels, it is not considered necessary to provide mitigation to reduce noise levels from the car park.
- 6.42 The noise survey results, site observations and assessment indicate that typical operational noise from the Proposed Development is not predicted to significantly impact the local area and identified noise sensitive receptors. It is, therefore, concluded that the proposed Site is suitable for development of an educational building.

### **Air Quality**

- 6.43 The Air Quality Assessment (AQA) outlines the possible impacts from construction activities and assesses that the likely impact of dust soiling and PM10 are negligible. Nonetheless, it outlines mitigation measures and confirms that implementation of these Best Practice Measures will ensure that the likelihood of nuisance dust episodes occurring at receptors adjacent to the Site are considered low to negligible.
- 6.44 Categories of construction activities and their associated recommended mitigations include but are not limited to; site management, monitoring, preparation/maintenance of the Site, operating vehicles/machinery, and earthworks. The complete list of mitigation measures is presented in Table 17 of the AQA.
- 6.45 The report additionally assesses the impact of vehicle emissions travelling to and from the Site and confirms that, in terms of introducing new exposure, predicted NO2 and PM10 concentrations across the Proposed Development are below the relevant air quality objectives. Further, all additional modelled receptors are having a negligible impact in the future year.

### **Summary**

- 6.46 The Proposed Development therefore accords with Core Strategy Policy DM 1 and the NPPF.

### **Highways and Parking**

- 6.47 A Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP) have been prepared by Ridge & Partners LLP and these accompany the planning application for the Proposed Development.
- 6.48 The Transport Assessment notes that the Site is situated in a sustainable location, within a 20-minute walk, cycle, or public transport ride from various residential areas.
- 6.49 The Assessment also describes how a review of collision data demonstrated there are no highway safety issues in the vicinity of the Site, as no accidents were recorded at Sawley Road or local junctions around the Site.

- 6.50 The total people trip generation was calculated using the number of future pupils and staff (150 pupils and 60 staff), arrival and departures patterns (based upon school operation hours), and estimated percentage of pupil arriving by minibus (75%). A mode share was then applied, using 2011 Census data, to estimate the number of trips by key modes. The school is expected to generate a maximum of 85 vehicle arrivals and 40 vehicle departures during the 08:30 – 09:00 period, and 40 vehicle arrivals and 85 vehicle departures during the 15:00 – 15:30 period.
- 6.51 The results of the junction modelling undertaken show that the priority Varley Street / Sawley Road junction will operate well within capacity with very low levels of queuing and delay predicted, and low Ratio of Flow to Capacity (RFC) values. The scenario and time period with the largest RFC is the PM peak hour (15:00 to 16:00) '2024 Opening Year + Development' which resulted in an RFC of 0.22 and small queues that do not exceed one vehicle.
- 6.52 Therefore, the findings presented in the Transport Assessment conclude that safe access can be provided to the Site with no significant traffic impact caused to the surrounding highway network.
- 6.53 The purpose of the Travel Plan is to encourage sustainable and healthier travel alternatives for staff and pupils to and from the school, and reduce the impact of car travel on the surrounding environment.
- 6.54 The Travel Plan includes targets, measures, action, and management and monitoring, tailored to the requirements of the school, to encourage and promote sustainable travel alternatives to reduce reliance on the private car.
- 6.55 These measures seek to minimise the transport and travel impacts of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area and include but are not limited to:
- monitoring car park usage and considering prioritising car parking spaces for those who car share, promoting car sharing by staff;
  - developing a Travel Pack with information on sustainable travel to be shared with all staff;
  - raising awareness of the Council's Travel Support Options for pupils and parents/carers; and
  - offering personalised travel planning for staff to find the most sustainable way to travel to work.
- 6.56 A key element of the Travel Plan is the nomination of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator (TPC) who will act as the "champion" for the Travel Plan. The TPC role will be allocated by the Headteacher of the school and confirmed upon within 3 months of occupation of the site.
- 6.57 The TPC will be responsible for carrying out monitoring of the Travel Plan during its lifetime. The TPC will be responsible for the conduction of travel surveys and will also be responsible for the preparation of the Baseline, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 Monitoring Reports, which shall be submitted to the Travel Plan Officer at MCC for approval.

- 6.58 Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy T 1.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 6.59 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy have been prepared by Ridge & Partners LLP and accompanies the planning application for the Proposed Development.
- 6.60 The report found the Site to be at low risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1) from all sources and describes how the surface water drainage strategy will aim to discharge surface water flows via connection into the existing 300mm diameter combined sewer located in James Street.
- 6.61 Attenuation has been proposed in the form of a geocellular storage tank. The new surface water networks will be designed in line with current British Standard and Design & Construction Guidance up to the 100-year storm return period including an allowance for climate change.
- 6.62 The system will restrict runoff from the Proposed development to maximum 7l/s prior to discharge into the UU combined water sewer. The use of SuDS in the form of source control and site control measures, with controlled (restricted) outflow, will help to minimise the flood risk impact to the surrounding sewer network.
- 6.63 Out of chamber or gully flooding for the events in excess of the 100-year plus 45% climate change event may occur within the Site and is classed as exceedance flows. Flood water from this event will be contained within the Site and directed away from the buildings to the external hard and soft landscaped areas.
- 6.64 The outline foul water drainage strategy is to connect to the existing combined water sewer located in James Road via existing private drainage on site.
- 6.65 In terms of geology, the report confirms that there is no evidence of unrecorded shallow unrecorded mine workings. Further investigation in that regard is recommended, as well as BRE infiltration testing. It is understood that these further investigations can be secured by way of a planning condition.
- 6.66 The report confirms that there is no increase in surface water flood risk resulting from the development site to the surrounding district since the existing storm water flow rates are to be maintained. Therefore, the Proposed Development does not increase the risk of flooding to adjacent properties and roads.
- 6.67 The Proposed Development, therefore, accords with Core Strategy Policy DM 1, Policy EN 14 and section 14 of the NPPF.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

- 6.68 An Ecology Scoping Survey has been prepared by EnviroSolution and accompanies this planning application.

- 6.69 In terms of habitats, the survey confirms that they principally comprise of unmanaged amenity grassland which has developed into a species-poor, semi-improved grassland habitat. Therefore, the current habitats present are considered to be of limited botanical value in their own right.
- 6.70 The survey outlines that, in order to enhance the biodiversity value of future development, it is recommended that significant areas of green space are retained at the Site and are managed to promote their biodiversity value. Retained areas of green space should ideally be located adjacent to the Site boundaries and should seek to retain trees and areas of woodland. Other recommended measures include wildflower grassland planting and native tree species planting.
- 6.71 These recommendations have informed the proposed landscaping and site layout and, accordingly, the soft landscaping scheme will include native hedge planting, and a combination of two types of grass seeding mix of (eco-rich amenity seed mix and a flowering meadow mix).
- 6.72 Regarding protected species, the survey confirms that the trees present at the Site are considered to be of limited suitability for roosting bats as they do not support bat roosting features. Therefore, further works are unlikely to affect any roosting bats. However, it is recommended that a bat and lighting mitigation plan should be produced to limit impacts on retained areas of woodland habitat. Additionally, it is confirmed that it is considered unlikely that any other protected species would be present at the Site.
- 6.73 Therefore, the Proposed Development is in accordance with Section 15 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN 15.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

- 6.74 A Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment has been prepared by EnviroSolution and accompanies this planning application.
- 6.75 The quality rating for the trees on or affecting this Site is summarised as follows: 18 category U trees/groups, 12 category C trees and 14 category B trees/groups, with no category A trees/groups present.
- 6.76 In general, the trees of the Site were found to be in reasonable condition for their age and species apart from the very large Crack Willows (T12, T13, G3 & G5), which were found to be in very poor structural condition and a hazard to the adjacent highway. There were also a number of insignificant adventitious scrub trees of low quality.
- 6.77 The existing trees along the boundary will be cleared to facilitate access and construction. Trees of particular value will be retained or otherwise replanted with large native street tree specimens proposed. A native hedgerow will be planted along the southern boundary to provide soft screening to the adjacent industrial area. Ornamental shrubs, herbaceous perennials and bulbs are also proposed.

- 6.78 In terms of landscaping, one area of hard and soft informal social space incorporating planting is proposed to the east of the building. Additionally, there will be a habitat area further to the east of this area, towards the north-east of the Site.
- 6.79 Landscaping is also proposed along the drop-off area in order to create an attractive entranceway to the school for both users and visitors. Tree planting is also proposed in these areas to assist in breaking up the hardstanding of the car park and mitigate for the limited tree loss required to accommodate the proposals.
- 6.80 Given the above, the Proposed Development accords with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN 9 and Policy DM 1.

### Ground Conditions

- 6.81 A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report, Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Site Assessment Report and Coal Mining Risk Assessment have been prepared by EnviroSolution and these accompany the planning application for the Proposed Development.
- 6.82 The Phase 1 / preliminary environmental site assessment indicates that the Site can be classified as a moderate risk in terms of contamination and the risks to the identified receptors (e.g. human health, controlled waters, buildings) following redevelopment are considered to be moderate. As such, the Phase 1 concludes by recommending that a Phase 2 intrusive ground investigation is undertaken prior to site redevelopment to obtain additional information on the ground conditions and the contamination status.
- 6.83 The Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Site Assessment Report summarises the findings of the subsequent intrusive ground investigation undertaken and shows that Made Ground is present beneath the Site with a variable thickness of between 0.50m and 3.30m. Several substances were detected in the Made Ground beneath the Site and these substances could present a long-term exposure risk to human health of the future site users if they remain present in the shallow soils within the areas of soft landscaping following redevelopment.
- 6.84 Subsequently, remedial measures will be required in areas of proposed soft landscaping in order to eliminate exposure risks, for example a clean topsoil cover system.
- 6.85 Risks to controlled waters (i.e. groundwater aquifer) were assessed to be low and the risk from the contaminants of concern to the identified receptors is considered to be negligible.
- 6.86 The site can be classified as Characteristic Situation 2 (CS2; low risk) in terms of ground gases and therefore, ground gas protection measures need to be installed.
- 6.87 The report concludes that a remediation strategy should be prepared prior to redevelopment to detail the remediation requirements. It is understood that this report could be secured by way of a planning condition.

- 6.88 The Coal Mining Risk concludes that the risk associated with coal mining related issues is significant. Information obtained from the Coal Authority and the assessment made by EnviroSolution has concluded that risks remain, including potential recorded shallow abandoned coal mine workings, unrecorded workings and recorded and unrecorded coal mine shafts.
- 6.89 It is therefore recommended that further intrusive ground investigations are undertaken. These might include the drilling of up to 6 no. rotary probe boreholes across the Site to determine the proximate coal seam positions along with obtaining evidence of unrecorded and recorded coal mine workings, and a programme of probe drilling to locate a specific mine shaft. A trial trenching programme should be undertaken to find evidence of two other specific mine shafts. Additional mitigation measures would be required for the area that lies within the zone(s) of influence around the mineshaft(s). This may include utilising a geotextile layer for soft play areas or relocating buildings from this area. It is understood that further intrusive ground investigations required in relation to mining could be secured by way of a planning condition.
- 6.90 It is also noted that prior to the commencement of intrusive works, a Coal Authority Permit will be required for intrusive activities, that will disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits). Again, it is understood that this could be secured by way of a planning condition.
- 6.91 Therefore, the Proposed Development is in accordance with Section 11 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN 18.

### Crime

- 6.92 The application is supported by a Crime Impact Statement, prepared by the Greater Manchester Police.
- 6.93 The report confirms that the layout of the proposed scheme is considered acceptable. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that the whole school site should be securely enclosed out-of-hours, with secondary fencelines/gates to secure external teaching/play/habitat spaces and parking areas during operational hours.
- 6.94 A particularly robust specification of fencing should be used to prevent damage and scaling and control of access should be ensured into and around the site/building during operational hours, as well as to the main hall/facilities are to be available for community use. Further, unauthorised access to the roof of the single-storey building should be prevented.
- 6.95 Overall, the statement concludes that the proposed application and its design is broadly supported by the Manchester Police. It is considered that the design is efficiently and well aligned with the principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design'. As such, the Proposed Development is in line with Section 12 of the NPPF, and Core Strategy Policy DM 1.

## Energy

- 6.96 The Part L 2021 regulations generally require a 27% reduction over Part L2a 2013 CO2 emissions targets for non-domestic buildings and Part L 2013 implemented an improvement of 9% over Building Regs Part L 2010 targets.
- 6.97 Accumulatively, the building regulations have forced roughly 36% improvement over the notional targets since 2010 as such for the Proposed Development which improves on the 2021 Part L regulations by circa 17.57%, therefore, the scheme is at a circa 53.57% betterment over the 2010 part L regulations.

## 7.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, ISG (on behalf of Manchester City Council), to assist the LPA in the consideration of a full planning application for the erection of a SEND Secondary School (Use Class F1) with outdoor sports area, access, parking, landscaping and drainage at Sawley Road in Miles Platting, East Manchester.
- 7.2 This Statement has demonstrated that:
- All planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise;
  - The principle of the Proposed Development is acceptable as the proposals have been demonstrated to provide significant benefit for open space, sport and recreation, which results in a justified departure from NPPF, Core Strategy and Sport England policy criteria in terms of the loss of open space and loss of former playing pitches. Further, the Proposed Development is in line with the NPPF and local policies set out in the Manchester Core Strategy that support the delivery of educational facilities and the reuse/remediation of brownfield/contaminated land.
  - The Proposed Development of the Site clearly constitutes sustainable development, and the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore fully engaged in favour of this application and permission should be granted without delay.
- 7.3 It has also been demonstrated that there are no other material considerations which would weigh against the Proposed Development.
- 7.4 Overall, the Proposed Development represents sustainable development and accords with national and local planning policy. As such, planning permission should be granted without delay.