

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out the background, key issues and proposal in relation to the sports planning considerations in respect of Land off Wilbraham Road, Chorlton. The report considers the options to mitigate the proposed loss of playing field land at the application site, as part of plans for residential development at the site.
- 1.2 Consultation has been undertaken with Manchester City Council ('MCC') planning and MCRAActive, the not-for-profit organisation established and overseen by MCC, which is responsible for driving sport and physical activity across Manchester. Information provided by MCRAActive has informed this report.
- 1.3 An initial pre-application meeting held with Manchester City Council (MCC) planning department in March 2022. A Planning Strategy was then prepared by Asteer Planning and issued to MCC Planning in April 2022. The Applicant was advised to engage with MCRAActive to identify replacement playing field land which could mitigate for the loss proposed at the application site.
- 1.4 This prompted a meeting with MCRAActive in June 2022, following which Alexandra Park was proposed by MCRAActive. A site visit was then held at Alexandra Park in July 2022 which was attended by the Applicant and MCRAActive. This paper should be read alongside the Issues and Options paper (July 2022), which sets out the background to the mitigation proposal and site appraisal work, which have led to the proposed solution.
- 1.5 This paper deals solely with sports planning mitigation, it sets out the findings of the Agronomy Report for Alexandra Park, the *sporting benefits*, which will accrue from the development of the site and how the proposals will meet the priorities of the *Manchester City Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Assessment and Strategy Report* (PPOSS), dated June 2022.

Context

- 1.6 The site at Wilbraham Road, Chorlton is owned by The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Manchester (recently renamed "The Greater Manchester Youth Federation¹").
- 1.7 The origin of GMYF dates to the mid 1800's. The founding *Lads Clubs* were established in Manchester and Salford by groups of businessmen as a solution to the growth of *Scuttling Gangs* which had come to prominence in many of the poorest communities in the area. Representing and defending particular streets, these gangs would meet on waste ground and battle one another using a variety of lethal weapons. The original clubs, some more than 500 members, were formed to provide a basic education and positive recreational opportunities in a safe and secure environment.
- 1.8 Although many of the original clubs have disappeared or are under new ownership, the movement continues today with the same ethos of providing a broad programme of positive, focused activities and training for the young people and volunteers of our affiliated clubs. As well as clubs in Manchester and Salford, they can now also be found across Trafford, Stockport, Tameside, Rochdale and Oldham.
- 1.9 GMYF currently work with a wide variety of voluntary youth groups and projects throughout the most disadvantaged communities of Greater Manchester. These provide a diverse range of opportunities for young people and volunteers. The programmes aim to provide as many opportunities as possible for young people to grow and be the best that they can be, helping them to move beyond their boundaries. In simple terms, it is about getting young people off the streets, into youth clubs and doing something positive with their time.

¹ <https://www.gmyouthfed.org/>

- 1.10 The Charity owns land across Manchester and Salford, including the application site. GMYF also holds the lease on Norbrook Youth Club, Whitemoss Youth Club, Jimmy Egan's Boxing Academy and Partington Youth Centre.
- 1.11 The Charity is required by law to re-invest any proceed from the sale of assets (such as land or buildings) back into the charity and therefore proceeds from the sale of the application site will be used to enhance the public benefit provided by the Charity, locally and across the City and Greater Manchester Boroughs. The future of the charity is to be centred around *Supporting Aspiration, Creating Opportunities* and the Trustees have already identified a number of initiatives to fulfil this aim:
- New premises in Partington, Trafford – the site has recently opened as a hub for all activities and to run youth club and related activities on as many evenings as possible
 - Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – give all affiliated clubs the chance to participate in this programme
 - Creation of a grant funding stream for affiliated clubs to apply for equipment on a quarterly basis
 - Funding for 40 nights of accommodation at Ormside, a residential activity centre, during 2022 so that clubs can take groups of young people into the outdoor environment at Ormside and experience canoeing, climbing, teamwork and other activities
 - Provide Youth Leaders where possible in all affiliated clubs.

2.0 Land off Wilbraham Road

- 1.12 Land off Wilbraham Road is bound by existing housing to the north, west and south and bound by St Margaret's Parish Centre and Sport Field leased in part to Maine Road Football Club to the east. There are no existing buildings or structures contained within the site boundary. The site is accessed from Wilbraham Road which is a key route into Manchester City Centre.
- 1.13 A summary of the history of the fields is set out below:
- April 1968 – GMYF purchased the land
 - **November 1994** – the charity leased the field to Manchester County Football Association on a 20-year lease
 - **1999** - the lease was transferred to St. Bede's college
 - **2014** - the lease with St Bede's college ended with no request for its renewal
 - **June - August 2015** - Maine Road Football Club paid for to use the field for overspill training on a Thursday evening and some Saturday's
 - **17 September 2016** - The field was last used for football
 - **November 2017** - the Charity received a business rate bill from the Council. The Charity explained that the field was no longer leased to the school and was no longer being used for sports. The Council applied a 100% exemption and no business rates have been paid since.
- 1.14 The fencing and gates were erected over 5-years ago and the site is secure and inaccessible to the public. A signage strategy has also been implemented making it clear that the site is private land. From time to time the Charity has undertaken maintenance and removed waste deposited by fly tippers, but the site is largely overgrown and un-managed.
- 1.15 The site is unallocated land within South Manchester. It was formerly in use as a football pitch but has been unused for over 5 years, as evidenced above. The site is listed in the MCC PPOSS as a disused site. The Assessment Report lists disused football sites, but does not mention the land off Wilbraham Road, reflecting that the site has no special significance.

- 1.16 The *usable* playing field area is indicated in the figure below and is measured at 1.33 hectares (ha). There is also an old non-turf cricket wicket on-site. No cricket club was ever based there and the owners have no recollection of cricket ever being played on the site. The size and configuration of the site is not compatible for cricket. The site was not serviced by any changing or ancillary provision e.g., car parking.

Figure 1.1 – Playing Field Area



3.0 Policy and Evidence Base Position

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.17 Paragraph 99 of the NPPF is the most up to date policy for assessing the loss of open space and outdoor recreation however it is also acknowledged that Policy EN 10 is also a consideration. Furthermore, as the site is a former playing field, we recognise that Sport England's Playing Field exception policies are also relevant, although on a non-statutory basis.
- 1.18 National Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph seeks to protect existing playing fields. 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.'*

- 1.19 Whilst the site is not allocated within the Development Plan as local open space, the last known use therefore means that it falls under the above policy and one of the above exception criteria must be met if development is to be acceptable in policy terms. This paper sets out how the above criteria will be met and the option agreed with MCC and MCRactive to deliver a policy compliant and sustainable solution, which meets PPOSS priorities.
- 1.20 Criteria (c) of paragraph 99 is not relevant because the proposals are not for alternative sports or recreation provision and the third bullet point of Policy EN 10 is not relevant because the proposed residential development will not be ancillary to the fields. Therefore, the relevant criteria are Paragraph 99 (a) or (b) and the first and second bullets of Policy EN 10.

Sport England Policy

- 1.21 Sport England has a statutory responsibility for planning applications involving playing fields. Sport England will oppose any proposals that will result in the loss of playing fields unless one of 5 specific exceptions apply. A summary of the 5 exceptions is set out below:
- **Exception 1** - 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.
 - **Exception 2** - 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.
 - **Exception 3** - The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch.
 - **Exception 4** - 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.
 - **Exception 5** - 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.
- 1.22 Sport England will be a non-statutory consultee on any proposals affecting or prejudicing the playing field element of the site and will seek to protect all facilities on site unless one of the above exception criteria is met.

Evidence Base

- 1.23 The key evidence base in assessing the policy exceptions is the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPOSS). The June 2022 PPOSS provides an evidence base for decision making relating to playing pitch provision across an area and provides an understanding of the balance between the local supply of, and demand for, playing pitches. The PPOSS was endorsed by the Council in October 2022.

Manchester City Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Assessment and Strategy Report – June 2022

- 1.24 The key findings of the June 2022 Assessment suggest that there are still pressures on existing pitches across Manchester:
- For football, the assessment highlights a future deficit of 11v11, 11v11 youth and 9v9 overall. Currently there is enough adult spare capacity, and supply is just equal to demand for youth and 9v9.
 - The area where there is less pressure on pitches remains the South Area, where the application site and Alexandra Park are located
 - There is now limited unmet demand for 3g provision, except in the South Area / Wythenshawe. Contributions towards 3g provision could present an alternative strategy
 - There is insufficient cricket provision across the board
 - Rugby League demand can be met by 3g provision but there is potential need for grass rugby league provision across the City
 - Rugby Union provision is constrained with no spare capacity at peak times.
- 1.25 However, as highlighted in table 2.3 of the Assessment Report, there are 20 unmarked pitches on sites that have historically had more pitches than are currently marked. This does not include anything on Alexandra Park, where only one current playing field is listed. Any additional area on Alexandra Park could therefore be considered new playing field area.
- 1.26 20 unmarked pitches on existing sports sites is a significant amount and suggests that replacement provision is of limited value. To add to this most competitive football matches in Manchester are now played on 3g. 450 teams play 57% of matches across the City on 3g. There is clearly more limited focus on grass, creating new grass pitch sites rather than increasing provision on existing sites with infra-structure already in place, would appear to be contrary to needs and priorities.
- 1.27 There is therefore no clear argument to suggest that the application site should not be replaced in some form. However, there is also no clear opportunity to replace on new land and lots of existing sites are only partly used highlighted in the PPOSS. Alongside the increasing importance of 3g provision the proposals at Alexandra Park therefore reflect a sensible approach in-line with the PPOSS findings and unique Manchester context.
- 1.28 The PPOSS also highlights the approach adopted at Wythenshawe Park, which align with the Alexandra Park proposals:
- 'There is also a parcel of playing field to the south west of Wythenshawe Park, annexed from the area where football pitches are currently marked. Agronomy reports evidence that area is not able to form usable playing field land, however there are proposals to improve and reinstate this area to increase the number of operational pitches, as mitigation for the playing field proposed for loss at Manchester College (Northenden Campus) which had one 11v11 size pitch. '*

Summary

- 1.29 Overall, the PPOSS promotes a flexible approach. The PPOSS suggests that proposals will be assessed on a *case by case* basis, this recognises the Manchester context specifically and that there is no land for replacement, and that some investment into sport from disposal might be of benefit.
- 1.30 Despite the shortfalls that are identified, the Assessment shows that all currently used outdoor sports sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because shortfalls would occur both now and, in the future, if they were lost. The Application site is not currently used. This means it is not clear that it is protected.
- 1.31 In relation to developer contributions there are clear statements around making sure that contributions lead to sustainable facilities, by highlighting where facilities are unsustainable, e.g., *'single grass pitch football sites without adequate ancillary facilities or new cricket/rugby grounds located away from existing clubs.'* Multi-pitch and multi-sport sites should be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which also consider the potential for future artificial grass pitch development.
- 1.32 This is exactly what would be created by replacing the application site at Alexandra Park, creating further pitch provision on Alexandra Park to turn this into a non-single pitch site is more in-line with the PPOSS than a direct replacement, it avoids the concerns raised in the PPOSS and promotes a sustainable solution.
- 1.33 Paragraph 9.5 of the PPOSS committee report promotes the notion of flexibility:
- 'All proposed developments for alternative use of playing field land would need to refer to the PPOSS to help determine what impact the development will have on the current supply and demand of playing field facilities in the area. The PPOSS outlines the need to protect, enhance or provide playing field facilities to address current and future demand. If alternative plans are to be brought forward a mitigation plan will need to be agreed and signed off by Sport England and relevant NGB's as statutory consultees for replacement of loss of recreational green space and / or playing field land. In this case, a sum will be agreed to re-provide and /or improve sport facilities in the locality area.'*
- 1.34 This is a key point, it confirms that there is flexibility and that direct replacement is not required or always the right solution. So whilst replacement may be required, in terms of the solution, things should be considered on a case by case basis and there should be flexibility, there is a clear desire not to create new / additional pitches and develop sustainable provision on multi-pitch sites.
- 1.35 In view of this, it is accepted that it is unlikely that the proposals for residential development at the application site could be justified against criteria (a) of Paragraph 99 or the second bullet of Policy EN 10 because the findings of the updated PPOSS, does not demonstrate a *surplus* of playing pitches in Manchester. It is however relevant that the deficiencies in the South Area are not as significant therefore the opportunity to take a *balanced* and flexible approach to replacement is relevant.
- 1.36 Criteria (b) of Paragraph 99 and the first bullet of Policy EN 10 therefore require the loss resulting from the proposals to be replaced with equivalent or better provision to be provided in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Sport England policy exception E4 is also relevant.

Case History

- 1.37 We understand the Sport England requirement for replacement relates to new pitches however as set out in the recent case of Northenden College (*planning permission reference 131147/FO/2021*), it was accepted that the delivery of a new site in Manchester for playing field provision was not deliverable. Furthermore, there are no sites allocated in the Manchester Development Plan for new pitches and creating new standalone playing field provision, as a replacement for the application site was also not considered sustainable or in-line with policy priorities.
- 1.38 As with Northenden College we have undertaken significant engagement with MCRAActive to identify replacement options in South Manchester, within the application site catchment, which have either lapsed, disused or could be extended, and once identified to make a financial contribution (secured through a Section 106 agreement) to replace the existing facility with an equivalent or better provision.
- 1.39 This approach was supported by the Council at Northenden College² and a financial contribution was secured to improve the quality of existing pitches which had lapsed and bring back into use and deliver additional pitch provision at Wythenshawe Park. As with the Northenden College scheme it is therefore recognised that Paragraph 99 (b) and Sport England policy exception E4 is applicable, and a replacement strategy is appropriate.
- 1.40 The mitigation proposal represents the outcome of consultation with MCRAActive and MCC to identify a site similar to Wythenshawe Park where extending areas not currently capable of forming playing fields and / or providing qualitative improvement can increase capacity and bring back an area on a site back into use, creating replacement playing field provision to mitigate for the loss of the Applicant site.
- 1.41 In addition, we recognise the site has formally had a cricket wicket (although was never used for cricket), as part of the development of the options we have also consulted with MCRAActive to develop options for cricket mitigation. Current proposals, focus on the potential to invest in a Non-Turf Pitch (NTP) at one of the priority cricket club sites in the South Area, or if preferred, a public park site in order to off-set this loss of the former cricket wicket, if this is required. The updated PPOSS could further be used to identify a priority site. The rationale and final option is set out later under the sporting benefits section.
- 1.42 It is understood that any identified sites will be subject to feasibility work via an appointed agronomist, this work has been undertaken at Alexandra Park.
- 1.43 Further relevant guidance from the Northenden College scheme, in relation to the nature of replacement sites, is set out below:

'The applicant has submitted a Feasibility Report prepared by STRI, dated 16th May 2021 for an area of land to the west of Wythenshawe Park. It is proposed to improve this area to bring back into use as playing field. The area of land was formerly marked out with pitches but became disused around 9 years ago because of drainage issues. Sport England do not accept qualitative improvements to land that is considered playing field land, whether in current use or disused, unless an Agronomy Report shows the land is incapable of being used as playing field without significant works being undertaken. The Report advise regrading works are required as well as the installation of a primary and secondary drainage system across the whole playing field area, this constitutes a genuine creation of playing field land. The area that would be brought into use is approximately 2.5ha.'

- 1.44 As set out the June 2022 PPOSS (para 1.28 of this report) reaffirms this position.

² Planning permission reference: 131147/FO/2021

1.45 Given this we increased our search to include sites where pitches may have already existed on playing fields but where, through our site visits, we believe that they are not currently capable of forming a playing field, have been lapsed for some time and will require significant work to bring them back into use.

1.46 It should be noted that whilst Sport England policy requires direct replacement in terms of both quantity and quality, recent appeal decisions demonstrate that the correct application of the NPPF Paragraph 99 is a balance between quantity and quality. A recent Planning Inspectorate decision (APP/W4325/W/22/3291997) and associated costs decision confirms that the NPPF paragraph 99b does allow for planning judgement in terms of the amount of new provision provided and qualitative improvements.

1.47 Specifically, paragraph 5 notes that:

‘the Mapledurham case addresses the test at Paragraph 99 b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). It provides an exception relating to the protection of sports fields when ‘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’. It confirms that the test is whether ‘equivalent or better provision’ arises. It clarifies that, quantitative and qualitative aspects of open space provision should be assessed and are potentially interchangeable as a matter of planning judgement.’

1.48 This means that there may also be an opportunity to create a package that does not directly replace all of the playing field land, but that instead offers improvements delivered through qualitative investment alongside new provision.

4.0 Issues and Options

1.49 Based on the proceeding issues an appraisal was undertaken of various replacement sites. A long list was developed, which assessed sites in the South Analysis Area, where improvements were identified as being required in the PPOSS, this included:

- Cringle Fields, Chorlton Sport and Social Club, Didsbury Sports Ground (Simon Playing Fields), Mersey Bank Playing Fields, Hollyhedge Park and Painswick Park.

1.50 These sites were visited and in the main presented a position where existing capacity of the sites seemed greater than the number of marked pitches i.e., large areas of the playing fields were already unmarked, meaning extending further, even where possible, was not considered effective or required, e.g., Cringle Fields. Furthermore, it was also evident that the South Analysis area is large and several of the sites were a significant distance from the application site. Conscious of Policy EN 10 these were not considered to be in the local area, e.g., Painswick Park, which is a significant distance from the Application site.

1.51 Discussions were also held with ward councillors to get their feed into potential investment opportunities. This along with local intelligence helped to arrive at a shortlist of potential replacement sites:

1. Didsbury Sports Ground (Simon Playing Fields)
2. Parkway Playing Fields (opposite Mersey Bank Playing Fields)
3. Land off Withington Road (Temple site).

1.52 Following consultation with MCRAActive a further site was added, Alexandra Park.

- 1.53 On the 9th June the consultant team met with Louise Harding and Michelle Saycell from MCRactive and David Boothroyd from the MCC Parks team. The meeting was positive and the partners were keen to support to find a solution. It was stressed that any solution must meet the aims of the Parks Strategy / Plan and the updated PPOSS, and be sustainable.
- 1.54 The initial suggested sites were discussed briefly. Didsbury; they were supportive given there was an existing infra-structure in place and saw this as a potentially good sustainable option, with established clubs with additional pitch needs. In terms of delivery it was envisaged extending the lease of the site would be required to cover Simon Playing Fields and we would need to ensure that the clubs had the capacity and finance to take on the extra playing field area to ensure long-term sustainability. Parkway; not averse to this in theory but they would need to do some further work on this site. The site might need more work / costs i.e., creating parking, changing etc, would also need to find an anchor club, so sustainability could be an issue. Temple site; did not really know the site, although owned by MCC it was not a parks or leisure site.
- 1.55 As indicated, additional sites were also discussed and we were encouraged by MCRAActive to look at Alexandra Park, as this was a key priority in the Parks Strategy and considered a sustainable solution, in-line with the PPOSS.
- 1.56 Based on this, Alexandra Park was subject to a subsequent joint site visit on 11th July 2022, by the consultant team and, MCRAActive to discuss the potential. At Alexandra Park there is a keenness to create a second pitch, which it was believed would require significant work to achieve and improve the quality of the existing pitch through drainage and levelling work. This site also benefits from having a current infra-structure i.e., changing and parking and a club on-site.

5.0 Alexandra Park

- 1.57 Alexandra Park is a key site within the Council's Parks Strategy. There has been recent investment in the site but significant further potential to develop the site. In term of football the site has only one adult pitch of standard quality, by replacing the application site at Alexandra Park and creating further pitch provision at Alexandra Park to turn it into a non-single pitch site is in-line with the PPOSS priorities.
- 1.58 Moss Side FC currently use the existing adult pitch but report they cannot deliver current and future growth aspirations given the quality and restrictions of the current pitch provision at Alexandra Park. Powerhouse FC were also former user of the site but they left owing to the poor conditions of the pitch. The need for expansion and investment is therefore evident and MCRAActive are keen to see further investment to create a sustainable hub.
- 1.59 The analysis set out below demonstrates how investment at Alexandra Park will deliver and meet PPOSS priorities and how the new pitch provision will be utilised to ensure it is sustainable. Key users have been also identified for the new pitches and analysis undertaken of how the greater capacity created would be utilised

Agronomy Report

- 1.60 Sport England confirmed that an Agronomy Report would be required for Alexandra Park to ensure the works required to bring a replacement site into use as a playing field was viable. It was further advised that the Agronomy Report and any subsequent pitch specifications should be undertaken by a specialist sports turf specialist. The Agronomy Report would need to clearly demonstrate that the area in question was not capable of supporting a pitch at present and that extensive works would be required to bring it into use. Assuming an Agronomy Report does demonstrate a new area of playing field would be created, Sport England further advised that the tangible *sporting benefits* would also need to be set out.

- 1.61 Given the Council priority to invest in Alexandra Park, the STRI were appointed to undertake a feasibility study in-line with Sport England recommendations. The study was undertaken in September 2022 and the key findings are set out below. The full report is attached as an appendix.
- 1.62 The report concludes that the proposed area is not capable of forming a playing field in its current condition and that significant work will be required to create a pitch. Set out below are the key findings:
- There is space available within the northern half of the Alexandra Park site to develop a new playing field area.
 - The area of space available to develop a new playing field is estimated at 1.21 hectares, although the area is constrained by the presence of mature trees around the periphery of the site. This is currently being investigated further.
 - The existing natural grass surfaces within Alexandra Park are not currently capable of supporting a playing field which can be utilised all year round. This is largely due to a combination of the poor-quality site topsoil, the absence of an effective drainage system, the agronomic condition of the turf, and the absence of suitable surface levels to promote surface water drainage and safe play.
 - Given the above, the STRI report concludes that there is a requirement for *significant* development works to ensure any new playing field area can withstand the proposed level of use.
- 1.63 In conjunction with the development of a new playing field area in the northern half of the site, it is recommended that improvement works are carried out in the southern half of the site (the existing pitch) to provide consistent playing surfaces, and to improve the quality and capacity of the existing sports pitch and surrounding areas.

Sporting Benefits

- 1.64 Key to delivering the *sporting benefits* is the alignment with the Council's June 2022 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPOSS). Key extracts to support the Alexandra Park proposal have been used to make the sporting benefits case.
- 1.65 By replacing the application site at Alexandra Park and creating further pitch provision at Alexandra Park to turn it into a non-single pitch site is more in-line with the PPOSS than a direct replacement, it avoids the concerns raised in the PPOSS and promotes a sustainable solution.
- 1.66 The analysis set out below demonstrates how investment at Alexandra Park and other sites will deliver and meet PPOSS priorities and how the new pitch provision will be utilised to ensure it is sustainable. Key users were also identified for the new pitches and analysis of how the greater capacity created would be utilised.
- 1.67 Discussions with MCRAActive made it clear that the priority sports were football and to a lesser extent cricket.

Football

- 1.68 The PPOSS notes there is currently an adequate supply of adult pitches to meet demand, with an overall 9.5 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity per week. However, it is noted that the North Analysis Area is played to capacity and there are levels of overplay in the Wythenshawe Analysis Area. When considering future demand all analysis areas, apart from

the South, become overplayed resulting in an overall shortfall of six match equivalent sessions per week. Taking into consideration actual spare capacity and current levels of overplay youth 11v11 pitches are considered to be played to capacity within Manchester. When accounting for future demand, shortfalls become evident across all analysis areas equating to an overall 9.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

- 1.69 The PPOSS findings therefore confirm that the South Area is well served in relative terms, but that youth provision is deficient across the City.
- 1.70 Football was identified as a priority for Alexandra Park given the PPOSS findings. The emerging PPOSS notes provision on the site to be a single adult pitch of *standard* quality. The reality is that the quality is closer to poor with significant issues with surface drainage in the winter.
- 1.71 Moss Side FC currently use the existing adult pitch but report they cannot deliver current and future growth aspirations given the quality and restrictions of the current pitch provision at Alexandra Park. Powerhouse FC were also former user of the site but they left owing to the poor conditions of the pitch. The need for expansion and investment is therefore evident.
- 1.72 The PPOSS states the existing single pitch at Alexandra Park has a capacity of 2. The proposed works would increase this to 6, taking the existing pitch from *standard* to *good* and creating a new additional pitch of *good* quality, with a carrying capacity of 3. This represents a significant uplift in capacity at the site and will enable Moss Side FC to deliver on their aspirations
- 1.73 As set out Moss Side FC currently use the existing pitch. MCRAActive working with the Council Parks team have consulted with local football clubs in the South Area to understand if demand for match play and training can be met from existing sites. Consultation findings identified that Moss Side FC cannot deliver current and future growth aspirations from existing sites and would be keen to become a partner club at the Alexandra Park site, following any investment.
- 1.74 Moss Side FC currently have one adult team who wish to be play their home matches every second week at Alexandra Park, this could increase with cup matches and additional rearranged fixtures, and wish to train two days per week at the venue as daylight permits. They also have ambitions of reforming a second Adult 11-a'side team which disbanded a couple of years ago due to the lack of suitable and available facilities in the local area. They also wish to a grow their junior section with several teams established but play nomadically and constantly struggle for suitable venues (U14's and younger).
- 1.75 The pitch requirements to deliver Moss Side FC's aspirations therefore include:
 - One x 11 a'side good quality grass football pitch
 - One x youth 11v11 (U14's) good quality grass football pitch.
- 1.76 The proposals for Alexandra Park would therefore deliver Moss Side FC needs and align with PPOSS priorities.
- 1.77 The changing rooms on-site are accessible to Moss Side FC as part of the offer from the Park, making this a sustainable solution. Other comments from the club include:
 - One of the newly proposed (their) 11v11 adult pitch to have removable posts to protect the pitch and the main areas being goal mouths from becoming damaged from overuse outside

of their structured programme. Storage is confirmed on-site to accommodate the posts in-between usage

- The other proposed pitch to have fixed posts to facilitate casual play outside of organised football
- If the space is big enough (and at a right angle to the full-sized pitches) to accommodate a flexible junior pitch; marked out to support the development and growth of the junior section. STRI Report indicates how this could be accommodated
- To have a bike rack/park installed near the new football provision for users to park their bicycles safely and to encourage more sustainable travel to the site.

- 1.78 **The above would be delivered as part of the overall package of mitigation proposed in discussion with the club and MCC Parks. The overall package of mitigation will include creation of a new playing field area of 1.21ha to accommodate flexible pitch provision but including 11 a'side youth pitch (the STRI Report illustrates how a senior pitch can be accommodated), facilitating the development of youth teams with a home and flexible training area for junior teams. Levelling and drainage of existing standard quality adult pitch to good, to increase the carrying capacity and enable delivery of Moss Side FC vision for a second team on-site.**

Cricket

- 1.79 As set out the cricket provision at the application site is also an old non-turf cricket wicket. No cricket club was ever based there and the owners have no recollection of cricket ever being played on the site. The size and configuration of the site is not compatible for cricket. The single grass cricket wicket at Alexandra Park has been obsolete for nearly 20-years, with all cricket activity moving to the main square in the centre of the park. None of the facilities feature in the PPOSS.
- 1.80 Within the emerging PPOSS, there are seven sites in Manchester considered to be overplayed by a total of 28 match equivalent sessions per season on senior wickets and 63 match equivalents sessions on junior wickets. In the South Area the site where there is overplay include Alexandra Park, Didsbury Cricket Club, South West Manchester Cricket Club and Whalley Range Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club.
- 1.81 The PPOSS notes that improving the quality of the squares from either poor or standard to good quality would fully alleviate overplay at Blackley Cricket Club, Newton Heath Cricket Club and Wythenshawe Cricket & Sports Club. It would also reduce levels of overplay at Alexandra Park to a sustainable level. There is therefore a case for investment in the square at Alexandra Park through quality improvements.
- 1.82 In terms of investment in a Non-turf Pitch (NTP), MCRAActive have engaged with the sites geographically relevant in the South Area, based on this engagement MCRAActive recommend that provision of a NTP be directed into the South West Manchester cricket club site.
- 1.83 The club have long sought to develop an NTP. The club development plan sets out the need and rationale, the club have sought a pitch for some time but have never been able to find the funding to realise the vision. As set out in the clubs development plan the NTP would support adult and junior training and alleviate some match play pressures. The pitch would also support wider revenue generation for the club and the delivery of ECB programmes such as Last Man Stands.
- 1.84 Development of a NTP at South West Manchester CC, therefore delivers PPOSS priorities and the club development plans.

- 1.85 The club also have aspirations to develop a second NTW in the corner of their ground well beyond the boundary for the purposes of batting and bowling training.

- 1.86 A package of mitigation for cricket based on the PPOSS and MCC / MCRAActive priorities is therefore proposed to comprise NTP provision at South West Manchester CC and improvements to the square at Alexandra Park to move the quality rating from *standard* to *good*. This would bring significant benefits to cricket in the area. Subject to discussion and final confirmation with the ECB.**

Other

- 1.87 The funds from the sale of the application site will also enable GMYF to continue with their support of over 50 affiliated clubs across Greater Manchester through provision of Youth Leader support and offering of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1.88 The mitigation proposals therefore entail the creation of a new playing field area of 1.21ha to accommodate flexible pitch provision but including an 11 a'side youth pitch, facilitating the development of youth teams with a home and flexible training area for junior teams. Levelling and drainage of existing standard quality adult pitch to *good*, to increase the carrying capacity and enable delivery of Moss Side FC vision for a second team on-site.

- 1.89 The combination of *quantitative* replacement of 1.21ha, along with significant investment in *qualitative* improvements to the existing pitch on-site, which will further improve capacity presents a comprehensive mitigation package, which meets local needs and priorities as set out in the PPOSS and MCC Parks Strategy. It will deliver a home site for Moss Side FC and enable the club to develop sustainably at Alexandra Park.

- 1.90 The proposals is supported by MCRAActive who have commented:

'I can confirm that no suitable sites have been identified in the locality area that would be considered for sustainable replacement. As a result, MCR Active and the Council have been in dialogue to consider if replacement can be met from existing playing field sites. Alexandra Park site was identified by the Council as the preferred site, with an opportunity to bring a new playing field into use on the Northern part of the park. The feasibility report sets out the extensive works required to bring a second football pitch in to use and additional works to improve quality of existing football pitch at Alexandra Park. In addition, replacement of a non turf cricket wicket has been considered from Southwest Manchester Cricket Club. The proposals present opportunities to alleviate existing shortfalls in the locality area, supporting to address sport specific needs identified in the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy.'

- 1.91 The applicant are keen to discuss and confirm final detail with the relevant ngbs as part of the planning application process.

- 1.92 The costs and scope for the works are set out in the STRI Report and are estimated at £350,535.63. This includes 12 month maintenance. Further discussions will be held with MCC regarding on-going maintenance by way of a commuted sum. Costs will be subject to tender and related costs.

- 1.93 A package of mitigation for cricket based on the emerging PPOSS and MCC / mcraactive priorities is therefore proposed to comprise NTP provision at South West Manchester CC and improvements to the square at Alexandra Park to move the quality rating from *standard* to *good*. This would bring significant benefits to cricket in the area.

- 1.94 The costs are estimated at £25,000 for a NTP, based on Sport England Facility Costs 3Q2022.
- 1.95 It should also be noted that a significant investment package for sport will also be invested by GMYF, in-line with their aims, in the local area, the initial ideas of which are set out above under *other*.
- 1.96 The overall proposals to mitigate for the loss of Land off Wilbraham Road, Chorlton will therefore be planning policy compliant, replacing the playing field area lost and investing in cricket in the local area. Additional proposals by GMYF will result in a further significant investment package for sport delivering to local and PPOSS priorities.
- 1.97 In terms of delivery vehicle it is envisaged the Council would hold the s106 monies based on finally agreed feasibility costings, circa £375,535.63. As part of this there would need to be a consideration for project management fees as part of the overall cost (circa 13.5%) and an element of commuted sum for maintenance.
- 1.98 As well as mitigation for loss it is also understood that contributions towards indoor and outdoor sport based on the additional demand created by the circa 60 houses would also be sought. This will be part of the overall s106 negotiations.