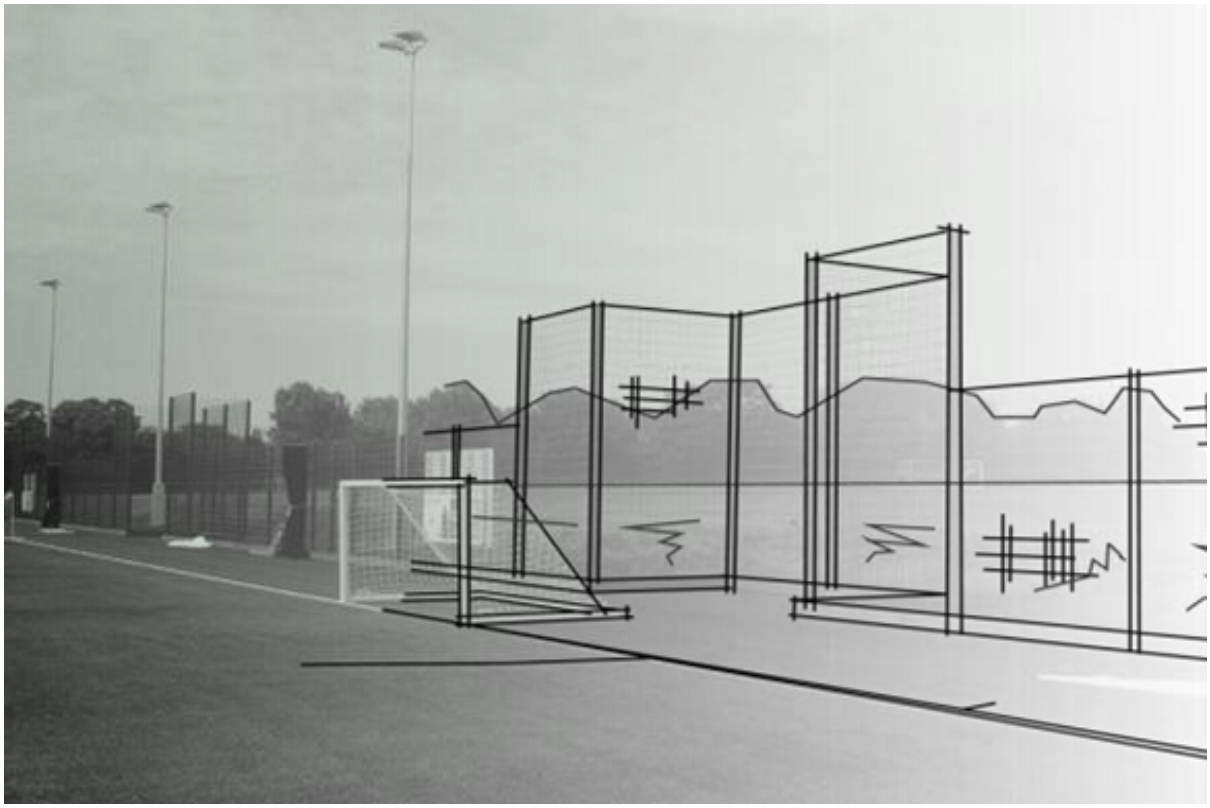
Wythenshawe Sports Ground

Creation of 4Nr. 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, 18Nr. floodlights, a maintenance storage container and a 20ft F&B Container

Design and Access with Planning Statement



Site	Wythenshawe Sports Ground Willenhall Rd, Manchester M23 0BD		
Project	Creation of 4Nr. 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, 18Nr. floodlights, a maintenance storage container and a 20ft F&B Container		
SSL project code	G-229824		
Document title	Design and Access with Planning Statement		
Document control	Revision	By	Date
	1st issue	ME	2nd March 2026

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Introduction

This application will be linked to the refurbishment of existing sports pavilion (**144600/VO/2025**) which was submitted and approved in 2025 and forms the second part of the wider site development plans.

Purpose of the report

This Design & Access with Planning Statement has been prepared by Surfacing Standards Ltd on behalf of Wythenshawe Sports Ground to accompany a full planning application for the development of new sports facilities at:

Wythenshawe Sports Ground
Willenhall Rd,
Manchester
M23 0BD

The proposal includes the creation of a Creation of 4Nr. 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, 18Nr. floodlights, a maintenance storage container and a 20ft F&B Container. The development has been carefully designed to comply with the FA and Sport England guidance, with the intention of enhancing the site's infrastructure. The scheme will provide a modern, durable, and inclusive all-weather sports facility, enabling year-round football activity for the wider community, regardless of seasonal or weather-related constraints.

Wythenshawe Sports Ground

The addition of 4Nr. AGPs will support the growth and development of community and grassroots football by offering improved training and playing surfaces for various age groups and teams. Furthermore, the facility will be available for community use, allowing the club's to serve as a hub for local sports and recreational activities.

This site has been chosen for its strategic location within a well-established urban community and its history as a recreational site. The redevelopment reuses existing open space to deliver much-needed grassroots football infrastructure for Wythenshawe Sports Ground and the wider Manchester area.

The proposal has been developed to ensure it will offer significant benefits in terms of sport, health, community access, and education. The design reflects best practice in safeguarding, accessibility, sustainability, and local policy alignment, and will deliver a step-change in the quality and availability of local football facilities.

By providing a high-quality all-weather sports facility comprising of 4Nr. AGPs, the development will enhance the club's ability to offer consistent and reliable training and match play opportunities. It will also support the broader community by offering a venue for various sports and recreational activities, promoting physical activity and wellbeing among residents of all ages.

Site Description

The proposed development site comprises a large playing field located off Willenhall Road. The scheme proposes the construction of four artificial pitches within this field. The wider sports

complex contains four additional surrounding playing field segments which serve both football and softball/baseball.

To the north lies an additional football field, beyond which are a topsoil supplier, an electrical substation, and a golf course, with the River Mersey running east–west just north of the substation. To the east is the largest field within the complex, with Kenworthy Woods located just beyond the site boundary. To the south the site is bordered by the M60 motorway, beyond which lies the large residential areas of Northern Moor and Wythenshawe Park and Gardens. To the west the site, beyond the M60, is bordered by residential properties and the B5166.



Figure 1 - Site Location

Planning and Policy Context

Relevant Planning History

Proposal: Installation of 4 portakabins for use as toilets and showers in connection with sports events for the University for a period of 3 months
Ref. No: 059420/FO/SOUTH2/00
Approved: Fri 07 Jul 2000
Status: Approved

Proposal: Siting of 4no. new cabins after removal of existing temporary accommodation for a period of 5 years.
Ref. No: 061511/FO/SOUTH2/01
Approved: Fri 30 Mar 2001
Status: Approved

Proposal: Erection of sports pavilion with agricultural store following demolition of existing sports hall with associated parking and landscaping.
Ref. No: 076490/FO/2005/S2
Approved: Thu 20 Oct 2005
Status: Approved

Proposal: City Council Development - Refurbishment of existing sports pavilion (Class F2) involving a partial change of use to provide: a weightlifting gym (Class E), ancillary cafe and community room, external alterations, CCTV and lighting, reconfiguration to the existing hard landscaping to enable a widened pedestrian footpath, installation of external plant and enclosure and other associated works.
Ref. No: 144600/VO/2025
Approved: Fri 16 Jan 2026
Status: Approved

Local Planning Policy

The Manchester City Local Plan 2012–2027 is the adopted Local Plan document guiding development across Manchester. It sets out strategic policies to manage sustainable growth, promote regeneration, and ensure infrastructure provision in line with population and economic trends. The plan supports the enhancement of community facilities, open spaces, and access to sport as part of delivering healthier, more inclusive places.

Following a review of the interactive policies map, the development site is categorised within the following relevant policies:

- **Policy EN 13 - Green Belt**
- **Policy EN 20 - Minerals**
- **Policy EC 10 - Wythenshawe**
- **Policy H7 - Wythenshawe**
- **JP-G 10 - The Green Belt (Places for everyone)**
- **Policy 3: Primary Extraction of Minerals – Aggregates**
- **Policy 8: Prior Extraction of Mineral Resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas**

- **Local Playing Pitch Strategy**

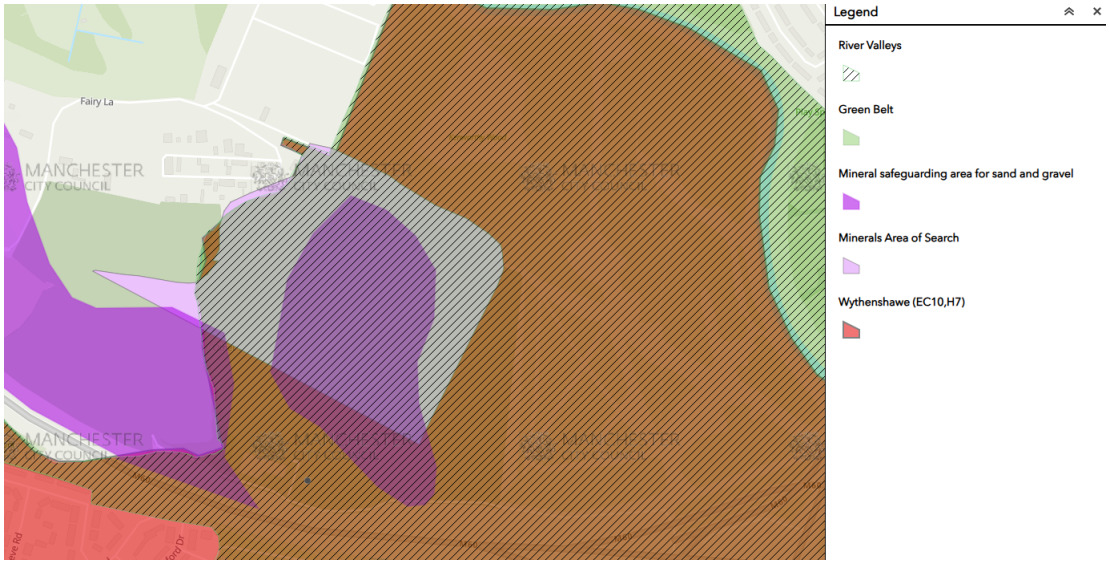


Figure 2 - Local Plan Policies Map

In relation to Policy EN13 – Green Belt, the proposal represents the provision of outdoor sport and recreational infrastructure within an established playing field complex. The development maintains the open character of the site through the use of permeable surfacing, low-profile sports infrastructure and open mesh perimeter fencing, ensuring that views across the wider landscape are retained. As such, the scheme does not result in a significant loss of openness and remains consistent with the policy's objective of protecting the character and function of Green Belt land while allowing appropriate recreational uses.

The development also aligns with Policy EC10 – Wythenshawe, which supports investment and regeneration within the Wythenshawe area, including improvements to community infrastructure and recreational facilities. The proposed AGP enhances the quality and reliability of an existing sports site, supporting both organised sport and community participation. In a similar context, Policy H7 – Wythenshawe seeks to improve neighbourhood environments and access to local facilities; the scheme contributes positively to these aims by delivering a high-quality, year-round sports facility that supports the wellbeing of local residents.

The proposal has also been considered against the broader open space, environmental and recreation policies within the Core Strategy, including Policies EN11, EN12, EN14 and EN15. Whilst these policies do not specifically allocate the site for development, they remain relevant in guiding how proposals affecting open space, flood risk and biodiversity should be assessed. The scheme supports the overall intent of these policies by enhancing the quality and usability of an existing sports facility, maintaining the recreational function of the land, ensuring appropriate drainage and surface water management measures are incorporated, and avoiding significant ecological harm. As such, the development represents a positive enhancement of existing recreational provision while maintaining the environmental function of the wider open space network.

At the Greater Manchester level, the proposal is consistent with Policy JP-G10 – The Green Belt (Places for Everyone). The development supports outdoor sport within an existing playing field context and does not introduce substantial built form that would undermine the openness or strategic purpose of the Green Belt.

The scheme has also been considered against Policy 3 – Primary Extraction of Minerals (Aggregates) and Policy 8 – Prior Extraction of Mineral Resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas. Given the limited excavation depth associated with the construction of the artificial grass pitch and the established recreational use of the land, the proposal does not represent a significant sterilisation of mineral resources. As such, prior extraction is not considered necessary or practicable in this instance.

Overall, the proposed development represents an appropriate enhancement of existing sports infrastructure that supports community wellbeing, recreational participation and sustainable land use. The scheme accords with the relevant policies relating to Green Belt protection, recreational provision, environmental considerations and mineral safeguarding, ensuring the site continues to function as an important recreational asset for Wythenshawe and the surrounding community.

With regard to Policy EN20 – Minerals, a separate mineral Resource Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted within Appendix J.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Dec 2024)

The proposed development aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) by promoting sustainable development that delivers social, environmental, and economic benefits. It supports inclusive community access to sport (para 96) and contributes to improved health and well-being through year-round physical activity (para 98). The scheme mitigates flood risk through SuDS (para 181), ensures design quality and integration with its surroundings (para 131), and reduces environmental impact via sustainable materials and biodiversity enhancements (para 187). It also encourages sustainable travel through active and public transport options (para 110). These principles are embedded throughout the design and long-term operation of the AGP.

Development Description

Development Outline

- 4Nr. 97x61m AGPs with 3G artificial grass designed to accommodate a variety of youth football pitches and training areas.
- Macadam hardstanding viewing and goal storage areas.
- 4.5m high fencing to the perimeter of the facility with a 1.2m and 2.0m high internal fence.
- 18Nr. 15m high floodlighting columns.
- Maintenance / sports equipment store located within the fenced facility enclosure.
- Macadam access pathways.
- 20ft F&B Container.

Purpose and Use

The 4Nr. AGPs will deliver a significant improvement in pitch durability and availability when compared to the existing natural grass playing field, enabling extended use throughout the year. The facility is intended to serve a broad user base of football clubs, organisations, and other community sports groups, all through structured and pre-arranged access agreements.

Designed as a flexible and inclusive football development space, the new AGP will accommodate a variety of pitch formats within a single enclosed playing area. In accordance with current Football Association (FA) technical guidance, multiple pitch markings will be applied to maximise both participation and training opportunities across a wide range of age groups.

The 97x61m AGP dimensions meet (and exceed) minimum pitch dimensions as per FA guidance and are sufficient to meet local league requirements for senior community football.

The intended programme of use is not detrimentally impacted (there is no loss of functionality, or displacement of any teams/groups as a result of the pitch being provided at 91x55m versus 100x64m).

The smaller footprint of the facility reduces the impact on the remaining playing field, allowing more space for other formal and informal activity.

The artificial pitch being provided meets the dimensions of the existing natural grass pitch, whilst also providing significantly increased capacity which supports the application in ensuring the benefits outweigh the loss.

The AGP will support the following formal pitch arrangements:

Table 1 - AGP Football Provision

Pitch Size	Colour	Age Group	Quantity
91x55m	White	Over 18 / Adult Football (11v11)	1
73x46m	Blue	U11 / U12 (9v9)	1
54.8x37m*	Yellow	U9 / U10 (7v7)	2
37x25.32m	Red	U7 / U8 (5v5)	4

Amount

The overall scale of development is summarised below:

Table 2 – Scale of the Development

Aspect	Area (m2)
3G Artificial Grass Surface	23,668
Porous macadam areas	2,118
Total	**25,786**

Layout

The optimum location for a proposed AGP was carefully considered. Key considerations included:

- Avoidance of impact relating to noise and lighting.
- Maximising the available playing field to accommodate natural grass pitches including athletics facilities.
- Flood risk for the facility itself and ensuring the development does not increase the flood risk to other nearby areas.
- Convenient proximity to changing facilities/welfare/site services.
- Convenient proximity of vehicular parking areas.
- Convenient proximity to transport routes.
- Minimising impact on nearby trees and ecological considerations.

The proposed location will afford pedestrian, maintenance and emergency access and providing for suitable management, supervision and security.

It was concluded the proposed location for the new 3G pitch provides the best solution for the above considerations.



Figure 3 - Proposed Development

Appearance

NPPF - Achieving Well Designed Places

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process."

General Appearance

The AGP is designed to have minimal visual impact, ensuring it is sympathetic to its surroundings and does not affect the visual amenity of the area, in line with local policies. The choice of materials reflects the materiality and conformity of similar AGP installations, ensuring high performance and a high-quality, enduring appearance. These materials have been selected for the following reasons:

- High performance.
- High quality enduring appearance.
- Suitability within the local character.
- Durable and robust with low maintenance.
- Energy efficient and sustainable.

3G Artificial Grass Pitch

The installed appearance of the playing surface will comprise a 3G artificial grass system featuring a 40mm pile, partially in-filled with silica sand for stability and granulated rubber for performance. The grass will be coloured grass green to replicate the look of natural grass and maintain visual consistency within the surrounding open space.

This surface will be installed over a shockpad and is recognised as the most suitable artificial playing surface for community football and youth football development.



Figure 4 - A Typical Example of a 3G Artificial Surface

LED Floodlights and Columns

The proposed floodlighting will comprise 18Nr. 15m high galvanised steel columns, each equipped with energy-efficient LED luminaires. The galvanised (Z275) finish is acknowledged to be the most discreet in the predominantly grey UK sky.



Figure 5 - A Typical Example of Philips Luminaires and Columns

Ball Stop Fencing

The appearance of the perimeter ball stop fencing will be polyester powder coated RAL6005 Moss Green, which provides the most discrete appearance within the surrounding landscape.

The 4.5m, 2.0m and 1.2m high fencing will be steel open mesh with a 200x50mm aperture, maintaining visibility while reducing visual impact. Fence panels are insulated from the posts using neoprene washers to be fitted to every fence post / mesh fixing point to aid noise reduction and acoustic attenuation by reducing rattle and vibration from ball impacts.



Figure 6 - A Typical Example of Perimeter Ball Stop Fencing

Macadam Hardstanding

The appearance of new hard standing areas including areas for pedestrian access and circulation, vehicular maintenance and emergency access, and open-air storage for portable football goals; will comprise grey black coloured porous macadam.



Figure 7 - A Typical Example of a Spectator Area

Storage Container

The new storage container will be utilised to store maintenance equipment and sports kit. The appearance of the new storage container (2.53m high x 6.06m long x 2.44m wide) within the facility enclosure will comprise high tensile profiled steel, finished polyester powder coated RAL 6005 moss green to match the perimeter fence.



Figure 8 - A Typical Example of a Storage Container

Environmental Considerations

NPPF – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Pollution)

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

(a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;"

Noise

Noise impact can be considered against the following guidance:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Guidelines for Community Noise' advises that the noise level outside a residential property during the daytime about 1 metre from façades of any living spaces should not exceed 50 decibels.

Sport England design guidance and noise modelling data (as per Artificial Grass Pitch Acoustics Design Guidance Note – 2015) advises that the typical noise emitted from use of a AGP that is in an open area reduces below 50 decibels when you are more than 40 metres away from the pitch perimeter. This is based at the noise calculated at a height of 1.5m above ground level.

The site is located within the open fields well away from residential properties. The closest houses are over 135 metres away from the development, beyond the M60. The Sport England Acoustic Guidance has been provided within Appendix I.

Appendix I - AGP Acoustics Planning Implications

Additional measures are implemented as part of the proposed development to reduce the noise impact:

- Neoprene Washers: Fitted to fence panel fixings to reduce rattle and vibration from ball impacts, minimizing noise emission.
- Playing Lines: Set a minimum of 3m from the pitch perimeter to limit ball impacts against the fencing.

Lighting

The proposed AGP requires floodlights to facilitate sports activities from dusk up to the requested curfew time. The permitted times of operation will be determined via planning consultations, and these reasonable hours of use are requested to maximise football opportunities and public benefits via pre-arranged and structured access.

Modern sports area lighting using LED technology is very different to old-fashioned sports floodlights (using sodium and / or HID), with much advanced light control to ensure it is directed

downwards towards the playing pitch surface; and does not over-illuminate the surrounding environment.

In addition to the above, the lighting impact will be controlled by the strict management of permitted operating times. Automatic time clocks will be installed to ensure lights are extinguished at the curfew hour every night of use.

- Time Clocks: Time clocks will be set to operate within a pre-programmed time including a seasonal changeover facility for BST and GMT.
- Floodlighting System: The floodlighting system will operate within permitted times only. These hours will be controlled by a photocell detector and timer switch to prevent any adverse impact local amenity.

Usage of the floodlighting system will be solely within permitted times and these hours will be controlled by a photocell detector and timer switch to ensure that any lighting does not adversely impact local amenity.

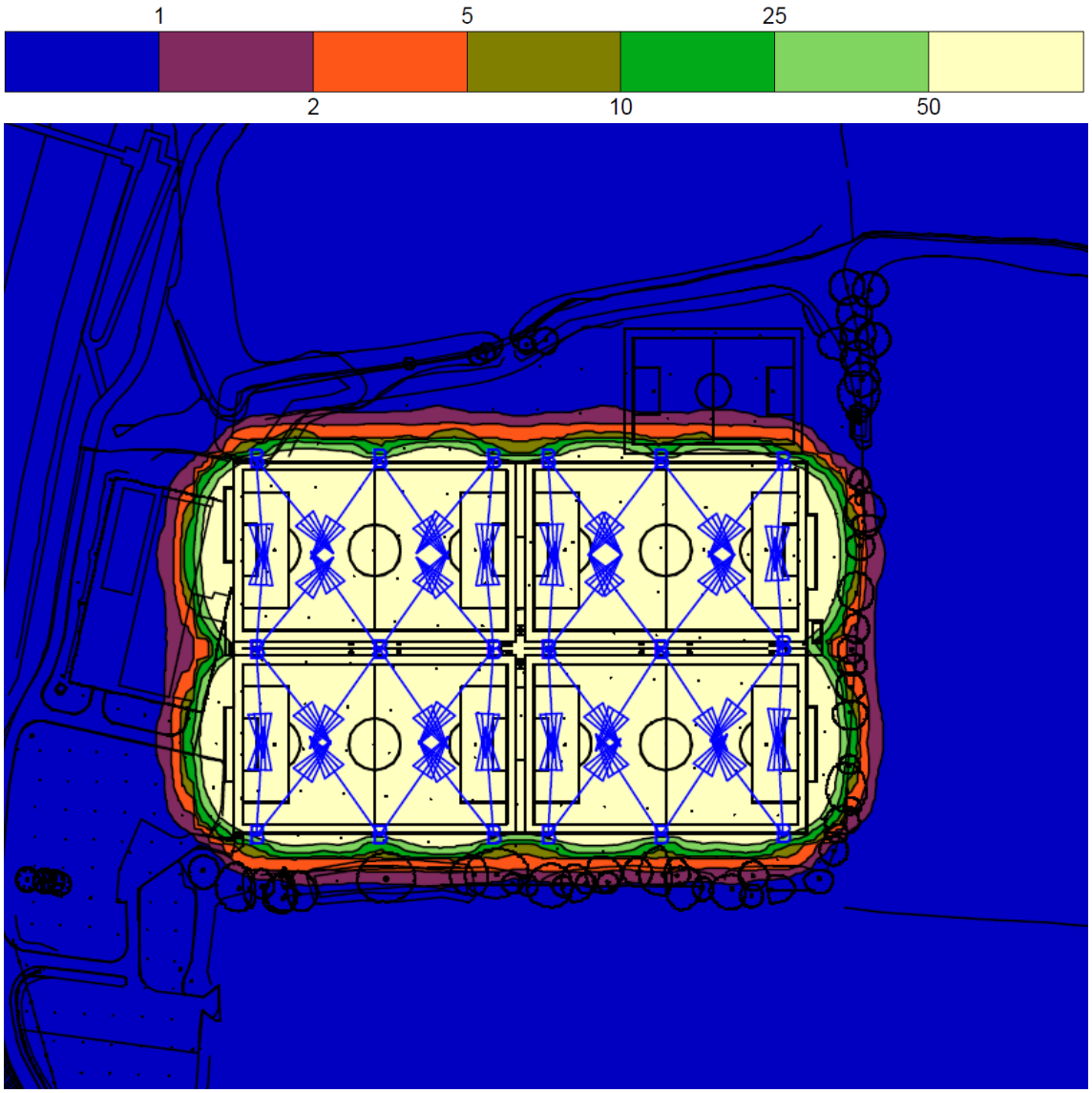


Figure 9 - Floodlighting Illuminance (Lux)

A sports lighting statement has been provided as a separate document:

Appendix C – Sports Lighting Statement

NPPF - Climate change, flooding and coastal change

Paragraph 181 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment63. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:

(a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
(b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;
(c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
(d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
(e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

Flood Risk from Rivers and Sea

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Sustainable Drainage Systems Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems March 2015

"The surface water drainage scheme must be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no surface water shall discharge to the public sewerage system either directly or indirectly."

The site is located in Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers or sea.



Figure 10 - Flood Map for Planning

Surface Water Flooding

The below shows the surface water flood risk map for yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060. The majority of the proposed development location has a very low chance of surface water flooding (<0.1% chance each year). To the south of the site the surface water flood risk increases to medium (>1% and <3.3%) and high (>3.3%).

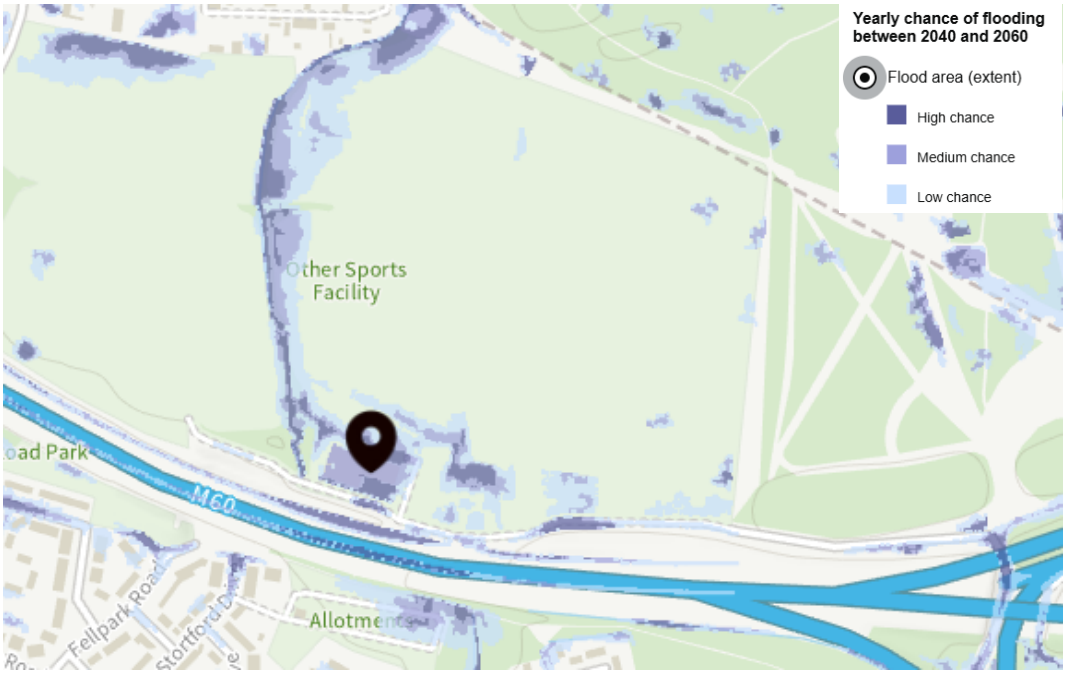


Figure 11 – Surface Water Flood Map

Drainage Strategy

The AGP will incorporate a permeable playing surface and granular sub-base, enabling surface water to infiltrate and be temporarily stored within the pitch construction. A network of Hydraway strip drains will collect and convey runoff to perimeter drainage channels, which direct surface water to a final outfall chamber with a restricted discharge. The final outfall chamber connects to an existing outfall chamber located to the south-west of the site. Discharge from the system will be restricted to 5.7 l/s, calculated using the HR Wallingford method to replicate greenfield runoff conditions.

The system has been designed to accommodate storm events up to the 1 in 100-year plus climate change allowance, ensuring flood risk is effectively mitigated. The drainage solution follows the surface water disposal hierarchy set out in Planning Practice Guidance.

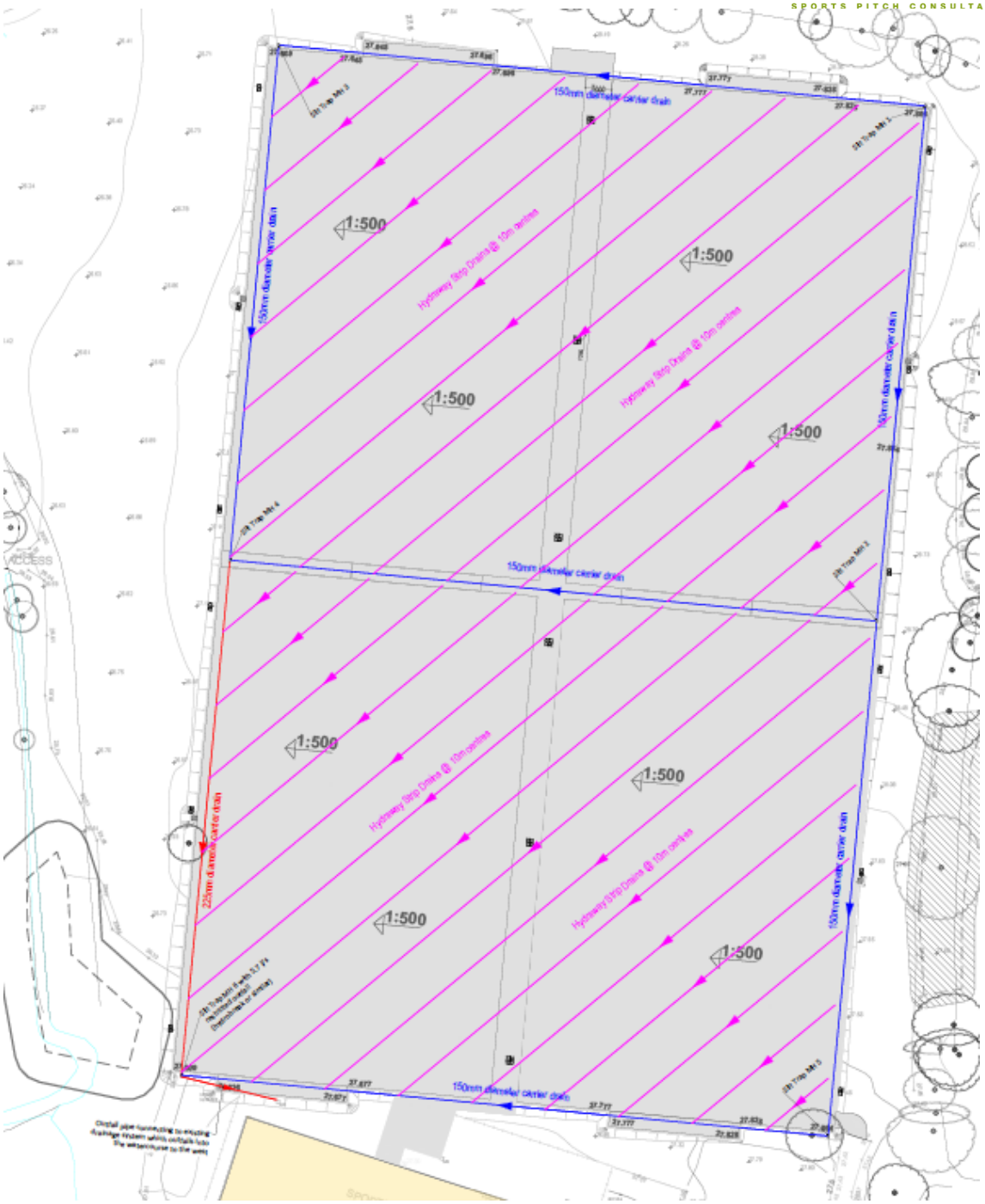


Figure 12 - Drainage Layout

A detailed surface water drainage strategy has been developed for the AGP as a separate document:

Appendix E – Flood Risk Assessment

Ecology and Landscape

NPPF – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

Arboriculture

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been undertaken to assess the impact of the development to the surrounding arboriculture. The purpose of the AIA is to identify any vegetation requiring removal, pruning and how retained trees are to be protected during the implementation of the development. The AIA has been provided as a separate document:

Appendix M - AIA

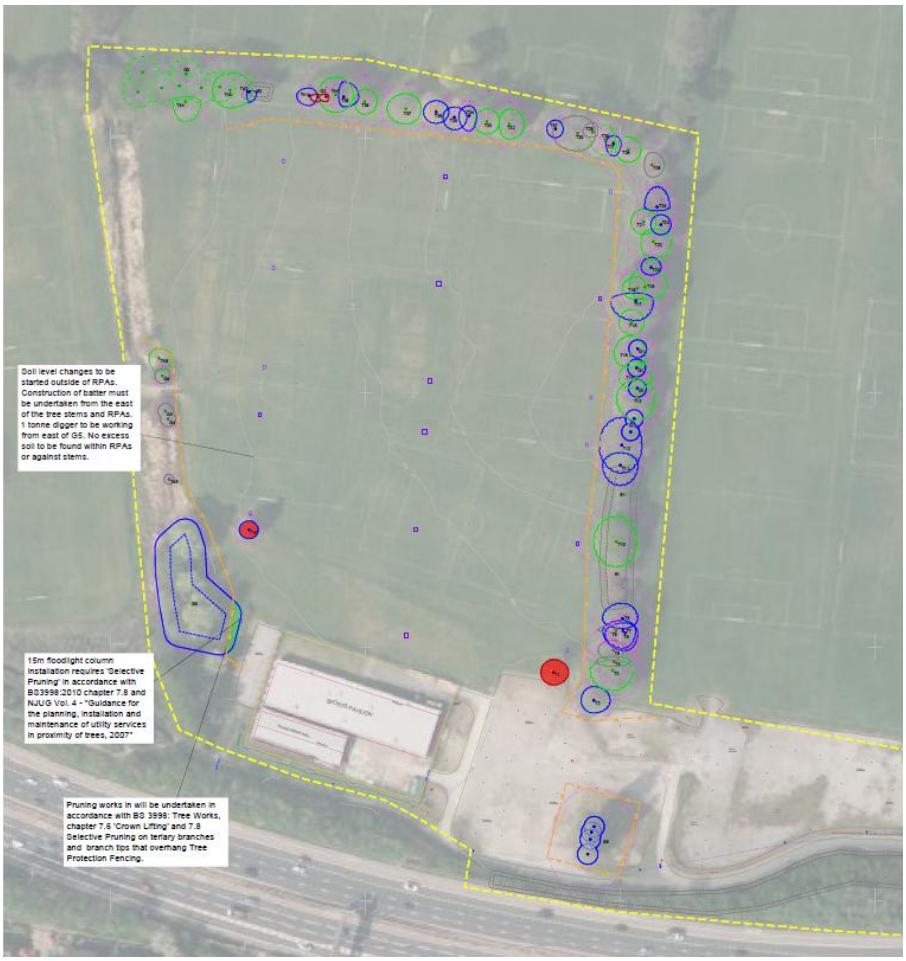


Figure 13 - Tree Constraints Plan

Ecology

An Extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken in July 2025, supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) habitat assessment and Phase II bat survey work. The site is predominantly formed of intensively managed modified grassland of low ecological value, assessed as being in poor condition under the statutory biodiversity metric, together with two sycamore trees proposed for removal. No protected or notable plant species were identified within the development footprint, although a small stand of Himalayan balsam was recorded to the west and precautionary controls are recommended during construction.



Figure 14 - PEA Habitat Outline

While two Local Nature Reserves and one Site of Biodiversity Importance lie within 1km of the site, the ecological reports confirm that the proposal would not directly affect any designated site. The principal ecological sensitivity relates to bats, due to the relationship between the proposed floodlighting and surrounding treelines and woodland edges. Bat survey work identified activity to be dominated by lighting-tolerant species, with only low levels of more sensitive species recorded, and concludes that the overall impact would be low subject to the

proposed mitigation. The wider site boundaries also provide some limited potential for breeding birds, hedgehog, amphibians, reptiles and water vole, and standard precautionary mitigation is recommended accordingly. Overall, the ecological reports conclude that, subject to mitigation, the development would not result in significant adverse ecological effects.

The associated ecological reports have been provided as separate documents and lists the key findings and recommendations:

Appendix O - PEA Report
Appendix P - Phase II Bat Surveys
Appendix S - BNG Cover Report

Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

NPPF - Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

(a) “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy...;
(b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities...; and
(c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment…”

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF (2024) also sets out:

"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity..."

This proposal aims to contribute to these areas:

- Economic Role: Provide a self-funding facility for Wythenshawe Sports Ground and partner groups.
- Social Role: Enhancing health and wellbeing through inclusive football provision.
- Environmental Role: Minimise impact through sustainable design and resource reduction and reuse where possible.

Sporting Context

In a sporting context, the AGP will play a key role in supporting local football development by enabling structured, year-round participation. It will provide a high-quality playing surface for use by affiliated clubs, schools, and inclusive organisations, with a focus on increasing opportunities for underrepresented and low-participant groups. The facility will promote lifelong engagement with sport, help reduce dropout rates, and support skill development among young people.

The pitch will also strengthen club and school partnerships, foster new team formations, and contribute to wider FA and Football Foundation objectives for grassroots growth. It will be used for both competitive fixtures and recreational training, supporting a range of age-appropriate formats. The AGP will be added to The FA Register of Football Turf Pitches following compliance testing and managed with a sustainable business plan to ensure its long-term community benefit.

Environmental Context

The AGP has been designed to minimise environmental impact through its construction and operation. Sub-base aggregates will be locally sourced to lower the facility’s carbon footprint.

Cradle-to-cradle developments now allow artificial grass surfaces to be fully recycled into raw materials for new turf or secondary plastic products, eliminating their classification as single-use plastics.

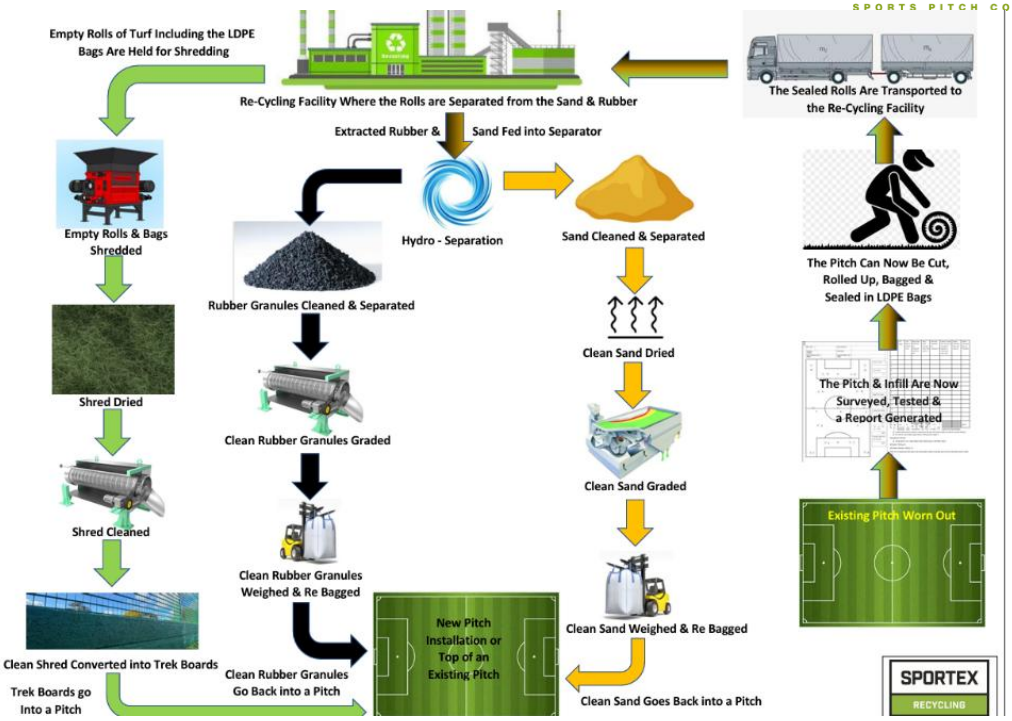


Figure 15 - Example Cradle-to-Cradle AGP Lifecycle

To minimise the migration of rubber crumb, infill containment measures including boot wipers, kickboards, and hardstanding will be installed to adhere with Football Foundation and SAPCA guidance. Details on the containment measures are provided within a separate document:

- **Appendix H - Infill Retention Measures**

In conclusion, the development will replace part of a grass playing field with a high-quality, all-weather facility that increases access to football and supports wider participation. Located in a suitable community setting, it will be managed sustainably and delivered using best-practice construction methods to minimise waste and environmental impact.

SBR (Rubber Crumb)

A range of performance infill materials were considered during the development of this proposal, including SBR, EPDM, TPE, encapsulated SBR, and organic alternatives. Currently SBR is the preferred performance infill due to its performance, durability, cost-effectiveness, fibre-free composition, and recyclability.

The SBR material will accord with the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) Quality Control Protocol for Sports Performance Infill. This protocol provides a robust framework of obligations which suppliers and installers must follow to meet current legislation and regulatory requirements. Developed by the Football Foundation and key stakeholders, the protocol applies to the use of Sports Performance Infills. An extract from the protocol states:

“SAPCA, the UK trade body for the sports pitch industry, has developed a voluntary industry standard that will provide minimum requirements that go above and beyond what is currently required for rubber crumb under European regulation. Sport England and leading sport governing bodies all support this approach and will continue to work with the industry to provide reassurance that pitches in this country are safe.”

Further information with regards to the stance towards rubber crumb taken by the Football Foundation, Sport England and other governing bodies can be found via the following link: https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/position-statement-on-3g-pitches



Figure 16 - Example 3G pitch with Rubber Crumb

Operation and Management

Football is a key driver of social and health outcomes. This project will boost participation and enjoyment and is supported by the Football Foundation to expand access, particularly for disadvantaged groups. It represents a major investment in local sports provision.

The AGP is designed to generate sufficient income to cover all running costs, including staffing for maintenance and management. It will expand English Accredited Club provision, offering a high-quality environment for football development. The AGP will meet the FIFA Quality Programme standards and be registered on The FA Register of Football Turf Pitches prior to use. Ongoing performance testing will ensure safety throughout the facility's lifespan.

Management Structure

Leisure United will oversee the operation and maintenance of the AGP. Their responsibilities will include:

- Overall Responsibility: Leisure United will ensure compliance with funding terms and financial sustainability.
- Facility Maintenance: Leisure United team will manage upkeep and assign staff for maintenance.
- Staff Management: The management team will oversee staff responsible for the day-to-day operation of the AGP.
- Financial Management: A sinking fund will be established to ensure the AGP will be refurbished in the long term.
- Community Use: The management team will coordinate community access and lettings.
- Monitoring: Usage, maintenance and finances will be monitored during the AGP lifecycle to ensure that the AGP and the sinking fund are adequately maintained.
- Policy Implementation: The management team will establish, monitor and ensure compliance with health and safety policies.

Operating Times

The proposed Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) requires floodlighting to support scheduled use, particularly during darker winter months, ensuring safe evening training and matches. After the final session, a short illuminated period allows players, coaches, and spectators to vacate safely and for staff to store equipment and secure the facility. To minimise impact, lights will be dimmed to 10% during this time, signalling session end and facilitating a safe, efficient shutdown.

The proposed hours of use requested is as follows:

Table 3 - Proposed Hours of Use

Day	First Activity	Final Activity	Final Curfew*
Monday-Friday	08:00	22:00	22:15
Saturday	08:00	22:00	22:15
Sunday (inc bank holidays)	08:00	22:00	22:15

*Lighting extinguished and facility locked.

These hours will allow for structured football activities, training sessions, and community events, ensuring the facility is used to its full potential.

Maintenance Plan

Regular maintenance activities will be carried out by Leisure United grounds staff and specialist contractors. This will include routine cleaning, inspection, and repairs to ensure the AGP remains in optimal condition. A detailed maintenance plan will be implemented to address both routine and periodic maintenance needs.

Financial Sustainability

Maintenance budgets to renovate, refurbish, and replace the facility at end of its functional life will be allocated accordingly. Income collected from community hire will be put towards a sinking fund to cover all operating costs, thereby ensuring financial sustainability, including:

- Regular and periodic maintenance work, staffing, and supervision.
- Electrical power consumption from floodlighting.
- Periodic floodlights testing with inspections and maintenance work.
- Replacement goals and netting.
- Periodic performance testing to ensure the field of play remains safe for play.
- Refurbishment of the AGP surface, fencing, floodlights, and other associated works at the end of an initial life cycle (e.g. ten years).

Sport England

Sport England will be a statutory consultee for this application due to the proposal involving the replacement of a natural grass pitch with a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP).

Policy Context and Justification

The proposal results in the loss of a natural turf pitch with a high-quality, all-weather facility that supports year-round use and addresses issues such as waterlogging and seasonal unavailability. The facility will comply with Sport England's Exception Policy E5:

"The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field."

Community Use and Access

The AGP will serve both the football club and a wider network of community users, including grassroots clubs, partner organisations, and inclusive sports programmes. A Community Use Agreement (CUA), prepared in line with Sport England templates, will formalise and safeguard community access as a pre-first use planning condition.

It is requested that the Community Use Agreement, conditioned by Sport England, would be a pre-first use condition rather than a pre-commencement condition to allow the council and Leisure United time to develop the CUA in conjunction with Sport England.

Developmental Benefits

The pitch supports age-appropriate formats for training and matches, enabling affiliated clubs, schools, and inclusive organisations to deliver structured programmes. This will boost participation, team growth and access for players of all backgrounds and abilities.

Access and Transport

NPPF - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

"Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes…"

Accessibility

Wythenshawe Sports Ground It is well connected to nearby residential areas and benefits from existing access and transport links that make it easily reachable by foot, cycle, and car.

The proposed facility has been designed to ensure it is accessible to all users. All pedestrian paths and hardstanding shall be compliant with Equality Act 2010 regulations and Sport England's Technical Design Guidance Note 'Accessible Sports Facilities 2010'. The Equality Act 2010 replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in England, Scotland and Wales.

The new hardstanding areas surrounding the AGP ensure inclusive circulation space for players, coaches, officials and spectators

Onsite Parking

The site provides free dedicated onsite parking facilities for all users of the facilities, ensuring safe and efficient traffic circulation within the site. The site boasts a large informal car park of over 9,000m2 providing ample parking provision for all users. The site has 7 formal DDA spaces and 12 cycle parking spaces.

Active Travel Opportunities

All existing active travel modes including walking, cycling, and public transport will continue to be available for everyone visiting the AGP, and the site will continue to encourage players, officials, parents, and all community visitors to travel actively wherever possible.

Transport Assessment

A Transport Assessment has been undertaken to consider the accessibility, trip generation and operational impacts of the proposed development. The site is located within an established urban area and benefits from a range of sustainable transport options, including pedestrian links, cycle routes and access to public transport services.

The assessment confirms that the local highway network is suitable to accommodate the anticipated level of traffic associated with the development. Trip generation has been derived using comparable leisure uses and demonstrates that vehicle movements would be modest and largely confined to peak evening and weekend periods associated with community use.

Access to the site will continue to be taken from the existing arrangements, with no requirement for significant alterations. Parking provision is considered appropriate for the scale and nature of the development, with capacity available to accommodate peak demand.

Overall, the Transport Assessment concludes that the proposed development would not result in a severe impact on the local highway network and is therefore acceptable in transport terms.

The transport assessment has been provided as a separate document:

Appendix N - Transport Assessment

Construction Stage Traffic Impact

Subject to approval, a construction logistics plan can be provided to ensure construction vehicles will not have a detrimental impact on the vicinity of the site including the provision of adequate parking for construction vehicles onsite and to prevent on-street conflict and impacts to the highway safety and to prevent pollution and the protection of residential amenity.

The proposed times of construction, demolition and site clearance operations will be limited to the following hours:

Table 4 - Proposed Construction Hours

Day	Operating Hours
Monday to Friday	07:00 to 18:00
Saturday	07:00 to 13:00
Sunday	No Operation
Public Holidays	No Operation

HGV movements and installation of equipment on site will not be permitted outside these hours during the construction phase without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

Project Benefits

Project Aims

The aims of this project are to:

- Provide a vital training and match play facility for local football and community sport.
- Provide a reliable sports surface to ensure safe and consistent use and guaranteed all-weather play.
- Support grassroots football development programs.
- Support continued growth of football within local teams.
- Ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion across the development programmes.
- Reduce pressure on existing facilities locally.
- Work strategically with other facilities and organisations locally to support football growth and development.

NPPF - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

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

(a) promote social interaction...;
(b) are safe and accessible...; and
(c) enable and support healthy lifestyles..."

Paragraph 98 and 99 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

“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…
(b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being…

Paragraph 103 and 104 of the NPPF (2024) sets out:

“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… Existing playing fields should not be built on unless the benefits of alternative sports provision clearly outweigh the loss”

Project Outcomes

The proposed AGP will enhance football activities at Wythenshawe Sports Ground, meeting local demand for artificial pitches. It will expand accessible sports, recreation, and community facilities, providing valued training and competition spaces for curriculum and community football during weekdays, and club matches in the evenings and weekends. The improved facility will attract widespread appeal, contributing positively to social and health priorities through accessibility, inclusivity, sustainability, engagement, and usage.

Community access and football growth and development is critical to the success of this proposal. With an improved sporting amenity, the facility will become a prized resource for the local football community, offering inclusive access, long-term sustainability, and meaningful health and social benefits. The delivery of the facility would provide a year-round training and competition venue for affiliated football clubs, individuals, and targeted groups.

The facility will allow player pathways to be augmented and reinforced — from mini soccer advancing through youth football into open-age football — all at one venue via pre-arranged and structured community access. As described above, there is widespread support and significant demand for this facility within Manchester.

This proposal would encourage and support healthy lifestyles, with the facility being playable throughout the year, unlike grass pitches which become water-logged during wet winter weather or excessively hard in dry conditions. Furthermore, given the under-supply of similar facilities locally to meet current and future requirements, this development would significantly reduce the need for footballers, visiting teams, and local groups to travel long distances to access appropriate provision.

The plan is to provide long-term sustainable benefits by increasing grassroots football development and encouraging whole-life sport for young and older aspiring footballers. It will also promote increased physical activity and improved mental wellbeing to support healthier lifestyles. Once implemented, the facilities will provide opportunities for more people to be more active, more often.

A managed relationship with community guests and visitors will be arranged before the development is occupied, by way of a Community Use Agreement (CUA) which will be prepared in consultation with Sport England.

Photos of Site















