

Land at Moseley Road, Fallowfield

Open Space Assessment

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Open Space Assessment (“the Assessment”) has been prepared on behalf of NHS Property Services Ltd (“the Applicant”) in support of submitting a full planning application for a delivery of a health hub (Use Class E(e)) in relation to Land at Moseley Road, Fallowfield, Manchester (“the Site”).
- 1.2 The Site is currently identified as an outdoor sport facility in the Manchester City Council City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study (2009) and therefore the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Manchester City Council, has asked for the submission of an Open Space Assessment as part of the application.
- 1.3 Policy EN10 of the Manchester Core Strategy relates to the safeguarding of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and states that proposals on existing open spaces may be permitted where the Site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sports, or recreation function and the city wide standards are maintained. The purpose of this Assessment, therefore, is to evaluate the Site’s value as an open space in line with this policy.
- 1.4 This Assessment therefore considers a range of factors including:
- The planning policy framework (national and local);
 - The Site’s locational characteristics and context;
 - The Site’s credentials and existing function as open space; and
 - The range and accessibility of other open spaces within the locality.

2. Policy Context

2.1 The context of policies relevant to the Assessment are outlined and summarised within this section.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2.2 The NPPF was updated on 12 December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies and guidance and how these are to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2.3 The NPPF definition of 'open space', as presented in Annex 2, is land of public value which includes land which offers opportunities for sport and recreation and land which can act as a visual amenity.

2.4 Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

"Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

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

2.5 Of these criteria, only (a) is likely to be achievable at the Site, given that the loss of the open space is an inevitable result of the Proposed Development.

Manchester Local Plan

2.6 The Manchester Local Plan guides development within Manchester. It was previously known as the Local Development Framework, and comprises the following documents:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2022–2039), adopted in 2024, which provides the strategic spatial planning framework across nine Greater Manchester authorities including Manchester;
- Manchester Core Strategy (2012–2027), which remains the principal document for local planning policy in the city, read alongside the Core Strategy Addendum (2024);
- Extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies (1995), which continue to apply where not superseded by the Core Strategy, as identified on the Interactive Proposals Map;
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (2012); and
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document (2013).

2.7 At the neighbourhood level, there is currently no adopted Neighbourhood Plan covering the Site.

**Manchester's Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2012)
(Also referred as the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027)**

- 2.8 The Site is located within South Manchester, where the Core Strategy places emphasis on enhancing the quality of existing open space and addressing deficiencies wherever possible (Core Strategy Policy EN12).
- 2.9 The Proposed Development therefore engages a number of key core strategy policies, including:
- Policy DM1 – Development Management;
 - Policy EN10 – Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities;
 - Policy EN11 – Quantity of Open Space and Recreation; and
 - Policy EN12 – Area Priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.
- 2.10 Policy DM1 provides the overarching framework against which all development proposals in Manchester are assessed. It requires high standards of design and development that respects local character, responds positively to its context, and safeguards residential amenity. The policy highlights a wide range of issues, including:
- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, massing and materials;
 - Impacts on the character of surrounding areas;
 - Amenity issues such as privacy, daylight, noise, air quality and safety;
 - Accessibility, including sustainable transport connections and disabled access;
 - Adequacy of external amenity space and refuse storage;
 - Biodiversity and landscape considerations, including protection and enhancement of green infrastructure; and
 - Flood risk, drainage, and sustainable construction standards.
- 2.11 In relation to this proposal, Policy DM1 is relevant insofar as it requires consideration of the site's existing open space function, its amenity role, and its contribution to local green infrastructure.
- 2.12 Policy EN10 seeks to retain and enhance existing open space, sport, and recreation facilities, supporting the delivery of a diverse, accessible and multi-functional network across the city. Development on existing open space will only be permitted where:
- Equivalent or better replacement provision is secured within the local area; or
 - It is demonstrated that the site is genuinely surplus to open space, sport or recreation requirements, and the city-wide and local standards will still be met; or
 - The development is ancillary to the open space and complements its character and function.
 - The policy also supports proposals that improve the quality and accessibility of the open space network, including innovative solutions to enhance green corridors, biodiversity, and inclusive access for disabled people.
- 2.13 Policy EN11 states that, as opportunities arise, new open space, sport and recreation facilities will be created across Manchester. The Council will particularly seek provision where:
- there is a quantitative shortage of a particular type of open space or facility per head of population in the local area (including any additional demand created by new development), as identified in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and the Playing Pitch Strategy; and

- significant levels of development are proposed, including within Strategic Housing Locations.

2.14 The policy also requires that new open spaces are interconnected to:

- improve links for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists across and between sites; and
- enhance the biodiversity of the city.

2.15 Policy EN12 identifies area-specific priorities across Manchester. The site lies within the South Area, where the priority is to:

- Enhance the quality of existing provision; and
- Address identified deficiencies where opportunities arise.

2.16 This reflects the Council's strategic approach of focusing on qualitative improvements and maximising the value of existing sites in South Manchester. Proposals that detract from these aims will be resisted unless clear justification is demonstrated in accordance with Policy EN10.

2.17 In addition to the statutory Development Plan, several local strategies and assessments are relevant to open space considerations and carry material weight. These include:

- Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2015–2025);
- The City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (CWOSSRS) (2009);
- Manchester Parks Strategy and Open Space Standards (2017-2027); and
- Manchester Climate Change Action Plan (2020).

3. Site Location and Description

- 3.1 The Site comprises approximately 0.7 acres (2,833 sqm) of land located on the north side of Moseley Road, Fallowfield, approximately 3.5 miles south of Manchester city centre. The Site is bound by the University of Manchester Armitage Sports Centre and playing fields to the north and west, with residential properties along Birchfields Road to the east. The Site fronts Moseley Road to the south, where there are existing bus stops and pedestrian footways.

Figure 3.1.1 Photo of Site, fronting Moseley Road



Figure 3.1.2 Photo of Site, showing proximity to existing sports pitch



Figure 3.1.3 Photo of Site from access point, showing existing boundary with residential dwellings to the east



- 3.2 At present, the land forms part of the wider curtilage of the Armitage Sports Centre but does not comprise formal sports pitches or play facilities. The land is currently unused and is enclosed by fencing, with evidence of proper maintenance.
- 3.3 The Site lies within a well-established urban area with a mix of residential, educational, and commercial uses. To the west lies the Fallowfield Campus and a large area of formal sports pitches, whilst to the east and south are dense residential neighbourhoods with strong access to local services, including supermarkets, pharmacies, and public transport connections.
- 3.4 The locality benefits from excellent accessibility by sustainable transport modes. Several bus routes operate along Moseley Road and Wilmslow Road, providing frequent services to Manchester city centre and the wider urban area. The Site is also well connected to the local pedestrian and cycle network, including routes through the University's sports grounds.
- 3.5 In terms of open space provision, the Site is directly adjacent to a large concentration of high-quality sports and recreation facilities, including the Armitage Sports Centre (indoor and outdoor facilities), the University playing fields, and nearby public parks such as Platt Fields Park, located around 600m to the north-west.

4. The Site's Open Space Credentials

- 4.1 The City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (CWOSSRS) (2009) remains the most recent assessment of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities within Manchester. However, the document does not provide detailed site-by-site assessments and therefore does not explicitly identify the application Site.
- 4.2 To provide a comparable evaluation of the Site's role and quality as open space, it has been qualitatively reviewed against the categories in the CWOSSRS assessment.
- 4.3 This assessment is based on a site visit undertaken in August 2025 (see [Appendix A](#)), supported by Google Maps and Street View imagery, and an understanding of the Site's association with the adjoining University of Manchester Armitage Sports Centre and its playing fields.

Assessment

Accessibility

- 4.4 The Site is prominently located on the northern side of Moseley Road, benefiting from direct street frontage and close links to Wilmslow Road, one of Manchester's principal public transport corridors.
- 4.5 Despite its accessible frontage, public access to the Site itself is restricted. The Site is enclosed by a boundary wall to the south, with only a locked gate providing a link to the adjoining playing courts to the west. As such, the Site functions as ancillary space to the Sports Centre rather than an accessible area of open space for the wider community.
- 4.6 The restricted access and absence of any footpaths or desire lines confirms that the land is not currently utilised for circulation, recreation or community activity.

Quality

Cleanliness and Maintenance

- 4.7 The Site comprises managed grassland interspersed with a small number of trees. It is kept in a clean and tidy condition with no evidence of overgrowth, fly tipping or vandalism.
- 4.8 While the land is well maintained, it lacks features that might encourage public use, such as benches, play equipment or landscaping.

Vegetation

- 4.9 The Site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory biodiversity, heritage or conservation designations.
- 4.10 The grassland and occasional trees provide minimal biodiversity value, with the habitat of low ecological interest given its close-mown nature and heavy association with the surrounding sports complex.

Security and Safety

- 4.11 The Site does not provide any formal or informal recreational facilities and there is no evidence of use for sport, play or general amenity.

- 4.12 The Site functions primarily as a buffer strip to the adjacent all-weather pitches, contributing little to the provision of community health and wellbeing beyond its visual role as part of the wider sports complex.
- 4.13 The Site does not act as a public community space and its value to the community is negligible. Its enclosure, lack of access and absence of facilities mean it is not used for recreation or amenity.
- 4.14 Natural surveillance is limited, with the adjoining sports fencing and nearby residential properties providing only partial overlooking. At night the absence of lighting reinforces its lack of functional role.
- 4.15 Facilities which might enhance usability such as seating, footpaths, toilets or refreshments are absent, and the space is not promoted as an accessible community asset.

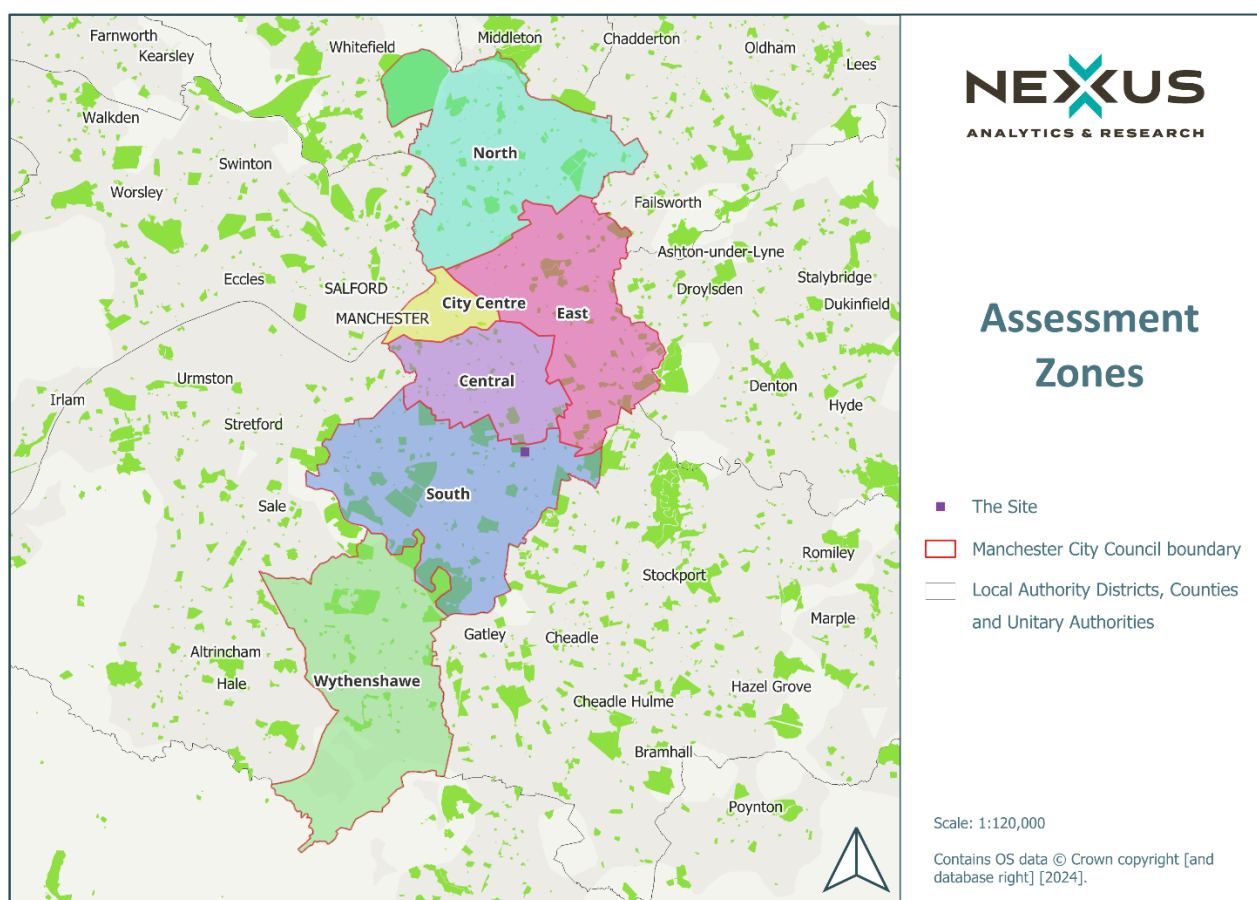
Summary

- 4.16 The assessment demonstrates that, although clean and maintained, the site does not perform the function of accessible public open space. Its main role is ancillary to the adjoining sports centre and playing pitches, with restricted access and no community use.
- 4.17 In terms of open space credentials:
- The Site is not designated as open space in any evidence base.
 - It is not publicly accessible and therefore does not contribute to meeting local open space needs.
 - It provides negligible biodiversity or ecological value.
 - It lacks facilities, equipment and features that would support its function as recreational or amenity space.
- 4.18 The surrounding area is well served by accessible, higher-quality open spaces including Platt Fields Park (approx. 600m away) and the extensive sports pitches of the Armitage Centre itself which fulfil a far more important community role.
- 4.19 The findings confirm that the Site makes no meaningful contribution to Manchester's open space network and its redevelopment would not result in the loss of valued open space provision.

5. Open Space Provision in the Wider Area

- 5.1 To provide a more comprehensive understanding of local provision, this Assessment considers open space provision in the wider area. This broader context helps to assess the quantity, accessibility, and quality of open spaces in the wider area, and to understand how the Site relates to existing open space networks and wider strategic priorities.
- 5.2 The map below illustrates the Site in relation to the variety of Open Space provision across the wider area. The analysis is subdivided the city into six regeneration areas, specifically: Central Manchester, City Centre, East Manchester, North Manchester, South Manchester and Wythenshawe based on the Manchester City Council City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study (2009).

Figure 5.2.1 Map of Open Space provision in the Wider Area Manchester City Council



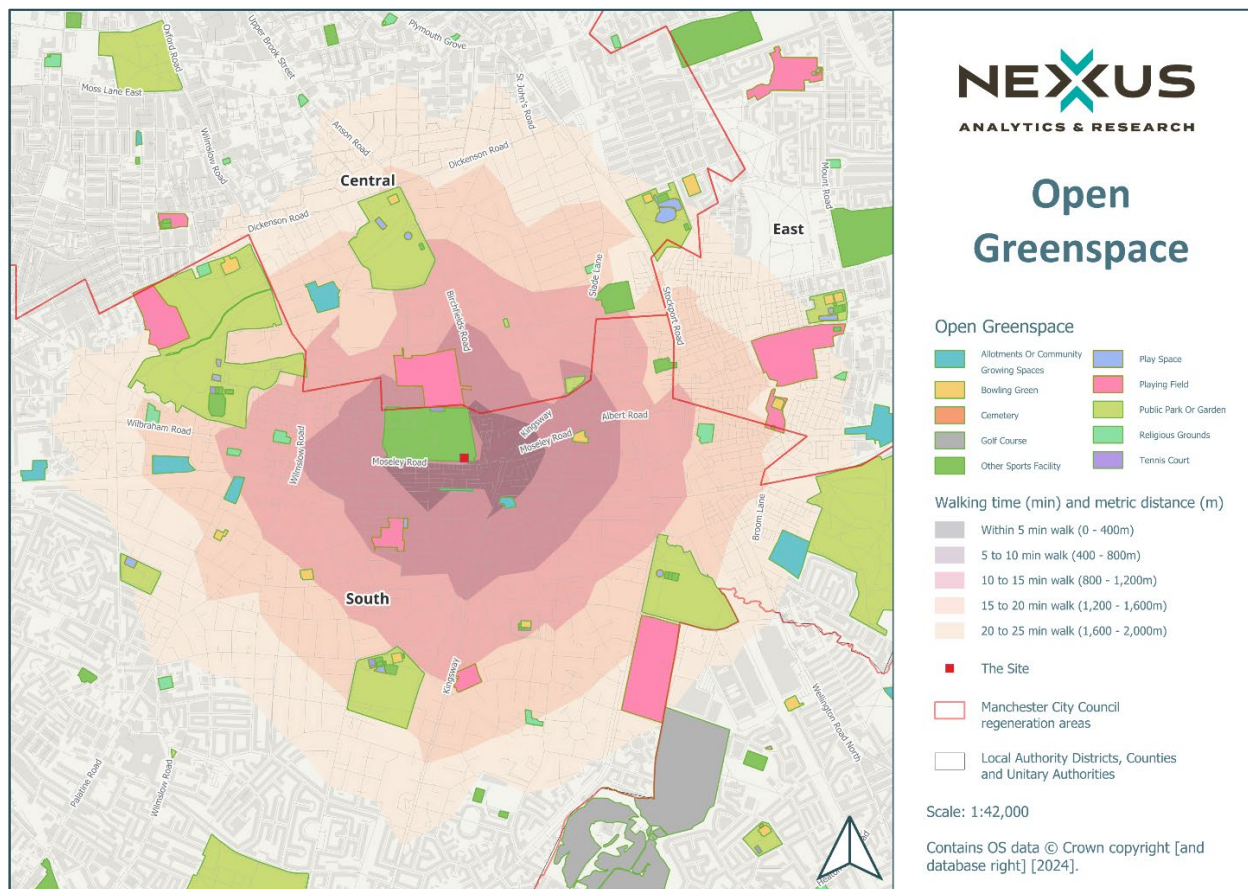
- 5.3 With reference to Manchester City Council City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study (2009) ("the Study"), the area of South Manchester in which the site is located benefits from the below areas of Open Space. According to the Study, the South area includes the Wards: Burnage, Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Didsbury East, Disbury West, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, Old Moat, Whalley Range and Withington. The population of the South regeneration area in 2006 mid-year estimates was 139,112.
- 5.4 As shown in Figure 5.4.1 and outlined in the Study, open space provision within the South Manchester Regeneration Area is dominated by natural and semi-natural open space, which represents the largest category by total area. Among outdoor sports facilities, grass pitches make up the most extensive type of provision.

Figure 5.4.1 Open Space provision in South Manchester regeneration area

Type	Number of sites	Hectares (total)	Hectares per 1,000 population
Open Space type			
City Parks	2	37.55	0.28
Local Parks	14	59.04	0.44
Natural and semi natural open space	22	197.27	1.46
Amenity green space	29	8.75	0.06
Children's play areas	15	1.67	0.01
Provision for young people	16	2.26	0.02
Allotments	15	20.12	0.15
Outdoor sports facility type			
Grass pitches	44	138.79	1.03
Synthetic turf pitches	11 (9 full size pitches)	7.14	0.05
Bowling greens	17 (20 greens)	3.75	0.03
Tennis courts	18 (70 courts)	4.60	0.034

5.5 The Site is located at the northern edge of the South Manchester regeneration area and is classified as an outdoor sports facility in the Study (Map 16.2 – Open space, sport and recreation facilities in South Manchester of the City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study). To provide a more comprehensive understanding of open space provision in the wider area, we have, where applicable, considered cross-boundary provision, particularly where catchment areas or standards extend beyond the defined boundary.

Figure 5.5.1 Map of Open Space provision in South Manchester regeneration area



5.6 The quality standards are set as part of the Study are intended to provide information on the key features of open space that are important to local residents. Sites are assessed and given a score for a range of factors including cleanliness and maintenance, security and safety, vegetation and ancillary accommodation.

5.7 Our assessment combines several sources and tools, including Google Maps, Street View, OS Open Greenspace (published by Ordnance Survey, last updated 16 April 2025), and the Study's catchment area maps (16.3 – 16.12). Street View has been used to support the qualitative assessment of open spaces. While the Study defines buffer zones to indicate accessibility, we have supplemented this with street-level analysis via Google Maps to reflect more accurate walking distances and to account for potential barriers to movement, such as the existing fencing around the Site and access to pedestrian crossings. Given the absence of current pedestrian routes through the Site, we have used its boundary with Moseley Road as the starting point for measuring accessibility.

Quantity

5.8 The population for the South Manchester regeneration area (Burnage, Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Didsbury East, Disbury West, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, Old Moat, Whalley Range and Withington wards), based on the Census 2021 ONS data is 154,956. The population has increased by 11.4% from 2006.

5.9 The Core Strategy highlights Policy EN 12: Area priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The priorities for open space, sport and recreation in the City, as outlined in Manchester's Strategic Open Space and Recreation Study, specifically within the South Manchester regeneration area is to focus on enhancing the quality of existing provision and using opportunities to address deficiencies.

- 5.10 Quantity is measured across the entire South Manchester regeneration area, as seen in Figure 5.4.1.
- 5.11 We have reviewed planning permissions in the South Manchester regeneration area that have been granted permission, searching terms 'open' and 'green' space. However, identifying the evolution of open space provision between 2009 (when the Study was published) and 2021 (the date of the most recent Census data) is challenging, as the data primarily reflects proposals currently being brought forward, rather than providing a comprehensive historical view.
- 5.12 We have identified open space provision within the outline planning application for the phased demolition and redevelopment of The University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus. As the campus already includes open space and was accounted for in the original Study, we have not counted this provision again in order to avoid double counting.
- 5.13 It was identified that the Former Station Buildings And Adjacent Lane 975 – 977 Stockport Road was not included in the Study, therefore, we have included this in the forthcoming supply. This includes a Community Garden, and a Performance, Event and Informal Play Area. The indicative plan has been measured and included as additional supply for Allotments (0.007 ha) and informal play area to the children's play (0.040 ha).
- 5.14 This increases Allotment total area in the South Manchester regeneration area to 20.13 ha and Children's play areas to a total 1.71 ha.

Figure 5.14.1 Forthcoming developments with open space

Planning Reference	Address	Application notes
138126/OO/2023	University Of Manchester Fallowfield Campus Wilmslow Road Manchester	Outline planning application (with access only in detail) for the phased demolition of existing buildings and phased development of up to 3,300 Purpose Built Student Accommodation bedrooms (Sui Generis use class) with associated facilities including waste storage, laundry and cycle storage; up to 4,500 sq m of floorspace to be used for ancillary purposes associated with the student residential use of the site within Use Class F1a, Class E(a), E(b), E(c), E(d), E(g), Sui Generis (drinking establishment and hot food takeaway); ancillary supporting staff accommodation (up to 55 bedrooms) (Sui Generis use class), and up to 1,200 sq m of ancillary residential dwellings (Use Class C3), plus associated car parking, hard and soft landscaping, open space , utilities, footpaths and roads.
125563/FO/2019	Former Station Buildings And Adjacent Land 975 - 977 Stockport Road	Proposed conversion and use of former station building and external areas as mixed use development comprising: assembly, leisure and retail space, restaurant / cafe bar, offices, and basement storage and ancillary facilities with external seating and recreational areas , community garden , ancillary outbuildings and structures , cycle storage, car parking, play and events space, boundary fencing, gates and a new cycle path linking the site to the Fallowfield Cycle Loop

- 5.15 The updated quantity and therefore hectare size added to Allotment and Children's play areas is reflected against the 2021 Census data.

Figure 5.15.1 Open Space Assessment Quantity

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Number of Sites	Minimum Size (standard)	2006 midyear estimates	2021 Census data
City Parks	2 City Parks: Alexandra Park and Platt Fields Park	0.2 ha per 1,000 population	0.28 ha per 1,000 population Above the minimum standard	0.24 ha per 1,000 population Above the minimum standard
Local Parks	14 Local Parks including Cringle Park, Chorlton Park, Fletcher Moss Gardens, Ladyburn Park, Old Moat Park, Didsbury Park and Parsonage Gardens	0.49 ha per 1,000 population	0.44 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard	0.38 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard
Natural and semi natural open space	22 natural open spaces, including Mersey Chorlton Nature Reserve	1.90 ha per 1,000 population	1.46 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	1.27 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard
Amenity green space	29 amenity green spaces	0.40 ha per 1,000 population	0.06 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	0.06 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard
Children's play areas	15 children's play areas	0.0265 ha per 1,000 population	0.01 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	0.01 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard
Provision for young people	16 facilities for young people including MUGAs, skate parks and BMX tracks	0.035 ha per 1,000 population	0.02 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	0.01 ha per 1,000 per population Below the minimum standard
Allotment	N/A	No standard set	0.15 ha per 1,000 population	0.13 ha per 1,000 per population
Outdoor sports facilities	1 athletic track 17 bowling green sites 18 tennis court sites 9 synthetic turf pitches 44 grass pitches	0.98 ha per 1,000 population	Grass pitches 1.03 ha per 1,000 population Above the minimum standard	Grass pitches 0.90 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard
			Synthetic turf pitches 0.05 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	Synthetic turf pitches 0.05 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard
			Bowling greens 0.03 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	Bowling greens 0.2 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Number of Sites	Minimum Size (standard)	2006 midyear estimates	2021 Census data
			Tennis courts 0.0345 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard	Tennis courts 0.03 ha per 1,000 population Below the minimum standard

5.16 The additional hectare size supply for Allotment and Children’s play areas remains unchanged and is below the minimum standard.

5.17 The increased population shows City Parks continue to exceed the minimum standards, while Grass Pitches have fallen below the minimum standard due to higher demand.

Accessibility

5.18 Google Maps walking distances have been used to determine accurate travel times. Regarding accessibility, the Site falls within the catchment area or standard walking distance for various open space types including city parks, local parks, natural and semi-natural open spaces, children’s play areas, youth provision, and outdoor sports facilities, as outlined in the Study.

5.19 The three closest facilities to the Site have been identified and compared in terms of walking time. The ranking of accessibility is based on proximity and walking time from the Site, using both the Study maps and real-time data from Google Maps (starting point: 227 B5093, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6PD).

5.20 While the catchment standards vary for the City Centre, the analysis focuses on the South Manchester area, and therefore City Centre standards are excluded. Facilities are colour-coded to reflect their accessibility:

- a. Green: Within the catchment area or standard
- b. Orange: Slightly beyond the standard, and
- c. Other: Outside the catchment area.

5.21 Access to Amenity green space is further than the catchment area or standard. The most accessible green space is in the form of outdoor sports facilities. However, there is general accessibility within the catchment area to city parks, local parks, natural and semi-natural open spaces, children’s play areas, youth provision, and outdoor sports facilities.

Figure 5.21.1 Open Space Assessment Accessibility

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Catchment Area or Standard	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
City Parks	15 minute Public Transport Time City Centre – 15 minute drive time (Public Transport)	Platt Fields Park (No public transport - 17 minute walk time) Alexandra Park (total 24 minute Public Transport time (including 16 minute walk))
Local Parks	10 minute walk time (480m)	Kingswood Park (11 minute walk time) Ladybarn Park (21 minute walk time)

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Catchment Area or Standard	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
		Old Moat Park (27 minute walk time) Central area West Point Gardens (14 minute walk time) Birchfields Park (19 minute walk time)
Natural and semi natural open space	15 minute walk (720m) City Centre – 15minute drive time (Public Transport)	Rodney Fields (8 minute walk time) Platt Fields Park (17 minute walk time) Highfield Country Park (28 minute walk time) Central area Birchfields Park (19 minute walk time)
Amenity green space	10 minute walk time (480m)	Erwood Road (24 minute walk time) Haldon Road (28 minute walk time) Heathside Road (33 minute walk time) Central area Worsley Court, Wilmslow Road (22 minute walk time)
Children's play areas	10 minute walk time (480m)	Kingswood Park (11 minute walk time) Platt Fields Park (17 minute walk time) Ladybarn Park (21 minute walk time) Cringle Park (22 minute walk time) Central area Birchfields Park (19 minute walk time)
Provision for young people	15 minute walk time (720m)	Kingswood Park (11 minute walk time) Platt Fields Park (17 minute walk time) Ladybarn Park (21 minute walk time) Cringle Park (22 minute walk time) Central area Birchfields Park (19 minute walk time)
Allotment	No standard set	Belvedere Road / Brailsford Road (3 minute walk time) Acorn Close Allotments (8 minute walk time) Wellington Road Allotments (17 minute walk time) Central area Brighton Grove Allotments (21 minute walk time)

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Catchment Area or Standard	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
Outdoor sports facilities	15 minute walk time – grass pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens 20 minute drive time for athletics facilities and STP's Golf Courses – 30 minutes drive time	Grass pitches Armitage Sports Centre (10 minute walk time) Platt Fields Park (17 minute walk time) Central area MEA Central (education) (8 minute walk time) Birchfields Primary School (education) (10 minute walk time) Bowling greens Platt Fields Park (17 minute walk time) Beech House Bowling & Social Club (12 minute walk time) The Klondyke (15 minute walk time) Tennis courts Armitage Sports Centre (10 minute walk time) Kingswood Park (11 minute walk time) UOM Tennis Club (20 minute walk time) Central area Manchester Grammar School (education) (16 minute walk time)

Quality

- 5.22 We have assessed the quality of open spaces in the South Manchester regeneration area are using the key themes from the City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study – Appendix C Site Assessment Matrix (Cleanliness and Maintenance, Security and Safety, Vegetation and Ancillary Accommodation), supplemented by our own professional judgement and observations, including a review of Google Street View.
- 5.23 To support a robust assessment directly related to the Site, we have focused on the open spaces identified in the Accessibility section.

Figure 5.23.1 Open Space Assessment Quality

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Characteristics	Principles	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
City Parks	City parks are large, regionally significant facilities that contain a variety of facilities and may have one or more of the other types of open space within them. For example, Heaton Park, Wythenshawe Park.	• Informal recreation • Community events	Cleanliness and Maintenance <i>The parks are well maintained, with no evidence of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.</i> Security and Safety <i>Fencing separates the parks from nearby vehicular roads, providing a clear boundary. Each park has gated access points, and lighting is provided by lamp posts throughout the grounds, enhancing safety.</i> Vegetation <i>The green spaces feature well-maintained grassed areas and planting beds, including a community garden that adds to the visual and ecological value of the parks.</i>

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Characteristics	Principles	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
			Ancillary Accommodation Facilities include the Pavilion Café in Alexandra Park and the Lakeside Centre in Platt Fields Park, both offering access to public toilets. Pathways are wide and generally accessible, with park benches available for seating. Bins for litter disposal are present, though somewhat sporadically placed. Overall Character The parks offer a variety of large, attractive open spaces with diverse facilities and landscaping. These features support a wide range of recreational and social activities, meeting the needs of both the local and wider community.
Local Parks	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Neighbourhood parks serve the local community and are smaller in size than City parks. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities, and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.	• Informal recreation • Community event	Cleanliness and Maintenance The parks are well maintained, with no signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter. Security and Safety Each park has gated access points, providing secure and controlled entry. Vegetation Large grassed areas are well maintained and suitable for informal recreational activities. Ancillary Accommodation Facilities include park benches, picnic tables, litter bins, children's play areas, and at least one designated sports area. Overall Character These local parks serve as valuable community assets, located between residential and urban areas. Their well-maintained green spaces support a range of informal activities and offer accessible, welcoming environments for local residents.
Natural and semi natural open space	Includes publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands and wastelands eg Medlock Valley.	• Wildlife conservation • Biodiversity • Environmental education & awareness	Cleanliness and Maintenance There is no evidence of vandalism, graffiti, or litter, indicating that the spaces are well maintained. Security and Safety • Rodney Fields: Access is via an underpass, which is not easily visible. The space is located behind residential buildings and borders a main road, which may affect perceived safety and visibility. • Platt Fields Park: Access is available from the main road, though entry may be restricted in the late evening. Vegetation Both sites feature well-maintained grassy areas, with trees lining the pathways. Platt Fields Park also includes a pond, contributing to its natural character. Ancillary Accommodation There are limited benches and bins, suggesting the space is more commonly used as a

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Characteristics	Principles	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
			pedestrian route rather than a destination for rest or recreation. However, the quality of the pathways is good and clearly defines movement through the area. Overall Character These natural and semi-natural open spaces appear to function primarily as connective routes between urban areas, rather than as places for prolonged use. The presence of trees along the paths adds to the visual appeal, but limited seating and amenities indicate that the primary use is for movement rather than leisure.
Amenity green space	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.	• Informal activities close to home or work • Children's play • Enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas	Cleanliness and Maintenance The spaces are well maintained, with no signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter. Security and Safety These areas have open access directly from the surrounding streets, offering good visibility and passive surveillance. Vegetation The green spaces feature well-kept grassed areas and planted flower beds, contributing to their visual quality. Ancillary Accommodation There are limited benches and bins. No formal pathways are present within the green space, though adjacent pavements provide pedestrian access. Overall Character Although located beyond the defined catchment area, these open spaces appear closely integrated with the surrounding residential areas. They are clean and well maintained, with a wide, open layout that provides clear sightlines and contributes to a sense of openness and safety.
Children's play areas	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children below aged 12. While it is recognised that a wide variety of opportunities for children exist (including play schemes and open spaces not specifically designed for this purpose), as per PPG17, this typology considers only those spaces specifically designed as equipped play facilities.	• Children's play	Cleanliness and Maintenance The play areas are clean and free from vandalism, graffiti, or litter. However, some of the play equipment appears outdated and may benefit from refurbishment or replacement. Security and Safety Access is controlled by public gates, which are likely secured during the evening to enhance safety. Vegetation Surrounding surfaces and green areas are well maintained, contributing to an overall tidy and welcoming environment. Ancillary Accommodation Bins and picnic benches are available, supporting short-term visits and informal gatherings. Overall Character These children's play areas provide valuable

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Characteristics	Principles	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
			<i>local facilities for families in nearby residential areas. While they are clean and well-kept, the aging equipment may limit their appeal or functionality over time.</i>
Provision for young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 and above. While it is recognised that a wide variety of opportunities for young people exist (including youth clubs and open spaces not specifically designed for this purpose, as per PPG17, this typology considers only those spaces specifically designed for use by young people eg: • teenage shelters • skateboard parks • BMX tracks • Multi Use Games Areas.	• Activities or meeting places for young people	Cleanliness and Maintenance <i>The area is well maintained, with no signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.</i> Security and Safety <i>Public access is gated, with gates likely secured during the evening, providing a level of safety and controlled use.</i> Vegetation <i>Surfaces and surrounding green areas are well kept, contributing to a clean and orderly environment.</i> Ancillary Accommodation <i>Facilities include a basketball court, the Platt Fields Park BMX Track, and a skate park—amenities designed to support recreational activity for young people.</i> Overall Character <i>These gated spaces are purposefully designed for youth engagement, offering targeted recreational opportunities within a secure and well-maintained environment.</i>
Allotment	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. May also include urban farms. This typology does not include private gardens.	• Growing vegetable, fruit and flowers (drop root crops).	<i>Allotments are typically privately accessed, gated spaces located to the rear of residential properties. Maintenance responsibilities generally lie with individual plot holders, resulting in varying levels of upkeep across sites.</i>
Outdoor sports facilities	Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned used for sport and recreation. Includes school playing fields. These include: • outdoor sports pitches • tennis courts and bowls greens • golf courses • athletics tracks • playing fields (including school playing fields) • water sports.	• Facilities for formal sports participation	Cleanliness and Maintenance <i>The facilities are clean and well maintained, with no evidence of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.</i> Security and Safety <i>Access is gated and typically managed through a sports centre or school, ensuring a controlled and secure environment.</i> Vegetation <i>Surfaces are well maintained and clearly marked, supporting a range of outdoor sports activities.</i> Ancillary Accommodation <i>Amenities include access to toilets, car parking, benches, and clearly defined pathways that support both users and spectators.</i> Overall Character <i>These outdoor sports facilities are associated with educational or leisure centres and are maintained to a high standard. They provide not only quality playing surfaces but also</i>

Categories of Open Space/Facilities	Characteristics	Principles	Open Space Assessment Analysis Commentary
			<i>supporting infrastructure that enhances the usability and accessibility of the space for both participants and observers.</i>

Summary

5.24 By analysing Quantity, Accessibility, and Quality, we have developed a weighted matrix to evaluate open spaces in relation to the Site.

5.25 Allotments and synthetic turf pitches have been excluded from the matrix due to incomplete information for these categories in the Study, as this would make weighting and cross-comparison unreliable.

Figure 5.25.1 Open Space Wider Area weighting matrix

Type	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality	Total	Scoring
Open Space type					
City Parks	5	5	5	15	5
Local Parks	1	3	5	9	3
Natural and semi natural open space	1	5	4	10	4
Amenity green space	1	1	3	5	2
Children's play areas	1	3	4	8	3
Provision for young people	1	5	5	11	4
Allotments	-	5	-	-	-
Outdoor sports facility type					
Grass pitches	1	5	5	11	4
Synthetic turf pitches	1	-	-	-	-
Bowling greens	1	3	5	9	3
Tennis courts	1	5	5	11	4

Source: Nexus Analytics & Research

Quantity ranked 1 to 5 (1 – Below the minimum standard, 5 – Above the minimum standard)

Accessibility ranked 1 to 5 (1 – Outside catchment area or standard, 3 – Slightly beyond the standard, 5 – Within the catchment area or standard)

Quality ranked 1 to 5 (1 – Very poor, 3 – Average, 5 – Very good) – With reference to City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study – Appendix C Site Assessment Matrix

5.26 The City Parks are performing well, exceeding the minimum standards for quantity in the South Manchester regeneration area. They offer good quality and are easily accessible from the Site. In contrast, Amenity Green Space scored the lowest in performance falling below the minimum quantity standard in the area, located outside the Site's catchment area, and offering only average quality, largely due to its association with existing housing provision.

- 5.27 There is an insufficient number of children's play areas in the South Manchester regeneration area, and those that exist are not easily accessible from the Site.

6. Assessment and Conclusions

- 6.1 The Assessment has been commissioned to evaluate the Site's value as an open space in line with Policy EN10 of the Manchester Core Strategy, which relates to the safeguarding of open space, sport and recreation facilities. The policy states that proposals on existing open spaces may be permitted where the Site has been demonstrated to be surplus of its current open space, sports, or recreation function and the City wider standards are maintained.
- 6.2 Following a site visit in August 2025 (see [Appendix A](#)), and applying the City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study ("the Study") Site Assessment Matrix, the Site's open space attributes are summarised as follows:
- The Site is not designated as open space in any evidence base.
 - It is not publicly accessible and therefore does not contribute to meeting local open space needs.
 - It provides negligible biodiversity or ecological value.
 - It lacks facilities, equipment and features that would support its function as recreational or amenity space.
- 6.3 The Site is located at the northern edge of the South Manchester regeneration area and is identified as an outdoor sports facility in the Study. However, on-site observations and supporting evidence indicate that the Site is privately enclosed, lacks formal sporting provision, and does not function as an accessible open space. Therefore, its designation does not reflect its current use and its role as an open space provision.
- 6.4 To provide a more comprehensive understanding of open space provision in the wider area, we have, where applicable, considered cross-boundary provision, particularly where catchment areas or standards extend beyond the defined boundary. Since the Study classifies the Site as an outdoor sports facility, we consider it within this category and evaluate it accordingly.
- 6.5 In accordance with Policy EN10, the following test and conclusion is drawn regarding the Site's value as open space within the context of the wider open space network:

Table 6.5.1 Policy EN10 test

Policy EN10	Assessment
Equivalent or better replacement provision is secured within the local area, or	The Site is designated as an outdoor sports facility. Within the wider provision of open space, the Armitage Sports Centre serves as the main outdoor sports facility encompassing the Site. Currently, the Site is fenced off and not used for sporting activities, and functions as ancillary space to the Centre. The wider provision of outdoor sport facility includes marked pitches (football, rugby), tennis courts, and access to the facilities through the Centre entrance. The Centre is within 10 minutes' walk from the Site, which is within the accessibility standard (15 minutes' walk). Platts Field Park, which includes bowling green facilities, is just over the standard by 2 minutes (17 minutes). These facilities are clean, surfaces are well-maintained and offer defined pathways that support both users and spectators. Given that the Site functions as ancillary land, and considering the presence of well-maintained, and diverse outdoor sports facilities nearby, existing provision within the local area is considered sufficient to meet this requirement.
It is demonstrated that the site is genuinely surplus to open space, sport or recreation requirements, and the city-wide and local standards will still be met, or	In terms of quantity relative to the 2021 Census population, outdoor sports facilities fall below the minimum recommended size per population. However, by total number, outdoor sports facilities represent the highest provision, with 89 facilities in total in the South Manchester regeneration area.

	The Site is approximately 0.7 acres (2,833 sqm), currently forms part of the wider curtilage of the Armitage Sports Centre and does not comprise formal sports pitches or play facilities. The land is fenced off, with no access provided for sport or recreation, and is maintained only as ancillary space to the Centre. As the Site is not in active use for sport or recreation (formal or informal purposes), its release would not result in the loss of any functional open space. In this context, and considering the availability of the wider provision, the Site is considered functionally surplus to open space and outdoor sports facility requirements.
The development is ancillary to the open space and complements its character and function.	The proposal is for the development of a health hub (Use Class E(e)) on Land at Moseley Road, Fallowfield, Manchester. The Proposed Development does not replace the ancillary uses of the adjacent open space, particularly the outdoor sports facilities at Armitage Sports Centre.
The policy also supports proposals that improve the quality and accessibility of the open space network, including innovative solutions to enhance green corridors, biodiversity, and inclusive access for disabled people.	The Assessment identifies the lack of Amenity Green Space in the local area in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity. There is opportunity to address this shortfall at the Site.

6.6 As outlined in the Policy EN10 test above, the Site is currently fenced off by a boundary wall and functions as ancillary land to the nearby Armitage Sports Centre. It is not actively used as an outdoor sports facility (as designated in the Study) or for recreation and is therefore considered surplus to outdoor sports facility requirements. While outdoor sports facilities in the local area are generally sufficient, there is a noted shortfall in Amenity Green Space within the wider area's open space provision, presenting an opportunity to address this at the Site.

Appendix A – Site Audit Form

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