# SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR WYTHENSHAWE SPORT AND HEALTH HUB

## APPLICATION 144282/VO/2025

## Response to Sport England's Additional Information Requirements

The information presented in this statement is provided in direct response to the additional information requirements set out by Sport England in their letter of objection dated 11 November 2025. Sport England highlighted several specific concerns that require further clarification and supporting details.

### 1. Provision of Baseball Pitches

Sport England requested details regarding how two baseball pitches will be accommodated on the remaining playing field land. This is to ensure that the provision for this sport is adequately maintained and that the redesign does not negatively impact existing opportunities for baseball activities.

### 2. Former Mitigation Proposal for Manchester College (Northenden Campus)

Further information has been requested concerning the need for the site to the southwest of Baguley Brook, which had previously been identified as part of a mitigation proposal for Manchester College (Northenden Campus). This clarification aims to address any potential overlap or conflict with earlier proposals and to provide a clear rationale for the current use of the land.

### 3. Wythenshawe Park Ownership – 'Blue Edge' Location Plan

Details of the wider Wythenshawe Park ownership, specifically in the form of a 'blue edge' location plan, have also been requested. This information is required to clearly delineate the boundaries of the park and ensure full transparency regarding the extent of land involved in the proposal. **A blue line plan is appended to this document.**

### 4. Consideration of Community Health Benefits

Sport England further commented on the nature of the proposed building, noting that much of the space is designed for non-sports purposes, providing a health hub, which will result in a reduction of playing field area. However, it is acknowledged that the integration of health and sports facilities may yield significant benefits for community health through their synergistic relationship. Sport England indicated a willingness to consider the proposal outside the scope of its Playing Field Policy, provided it can be demonstrated that the changes will not have a detrimental effect on the delivery of sport within the Manchester area.

In response to these concerns, additional information has been submitted to demonstrate that the health-focused aspect of the proposal is fully aligned with the principles set out in Sport

England's Community Leisure Hub guidance. The submission illustrates how the new facilities will create a pathway supporting individuals from physical inactivity to active participation in sport, thereby reinforcing the project's commitment to both community health and sporting provision.

### 5. Weightlifting Provision

Sport England commented that there are currently gaps in the submitted information as to how the weightlifting facility relocation will be dealt with.

## Provision of Baseball Pitches

We have maintained ongoing and close communication with Manchester Baseball Club since the early stages of this project. This collaboration is focused on retaining two baseball diamonds at their existing location. This new enhanced provision is necessary as the existing diamond will be affected by the construction of new 3G pitches.

We are committed to enhancing the existing retained baseball diamonds and ensuring that the construction adheres to both Sport England's requirements and the relevant design guidance. An appropriate baseball layout is currently being discussed with the Baseball Club and the Baseball Federation.

While full technical details and the precise positioning of the baseball diamonds are yet to be finalised—given that these works fall outside the scope of the main sports hub planning application—we intend to address the baseball pitch construction through investment linked to the sports hub proposal. This application will be supported by an Agronomy Report and comprehensive pitch design documents. Throughout this process, both the club and relevant stakeholders will be actively involved to ensure that the completed pitches are fit for purpose and fully meet the needs of the club. Funding has been set aside to improve the drainage of the current baseball pitches.

We recognise Manchester Baseball Club's aspiration to become a national and regional hub for blind baseball, and we offer our full support towards this ambition.

We are also aware there will be a period of disruption to regular use while the sports hub and baseball diamonds are upgraded. During this time, we will work closely with the club to ensure they have access to a suitable temporary venue to continue matches, training, and other activities.

## Mitigation Proposal for Manchester College (Northenden Campus)

### Background

The area within Wythenshawe Park identified for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was previously designated as a mitigation site to compensate for the loss of the Northenden Campus Playing Field (LPA Ref: 131147-FO-2021).

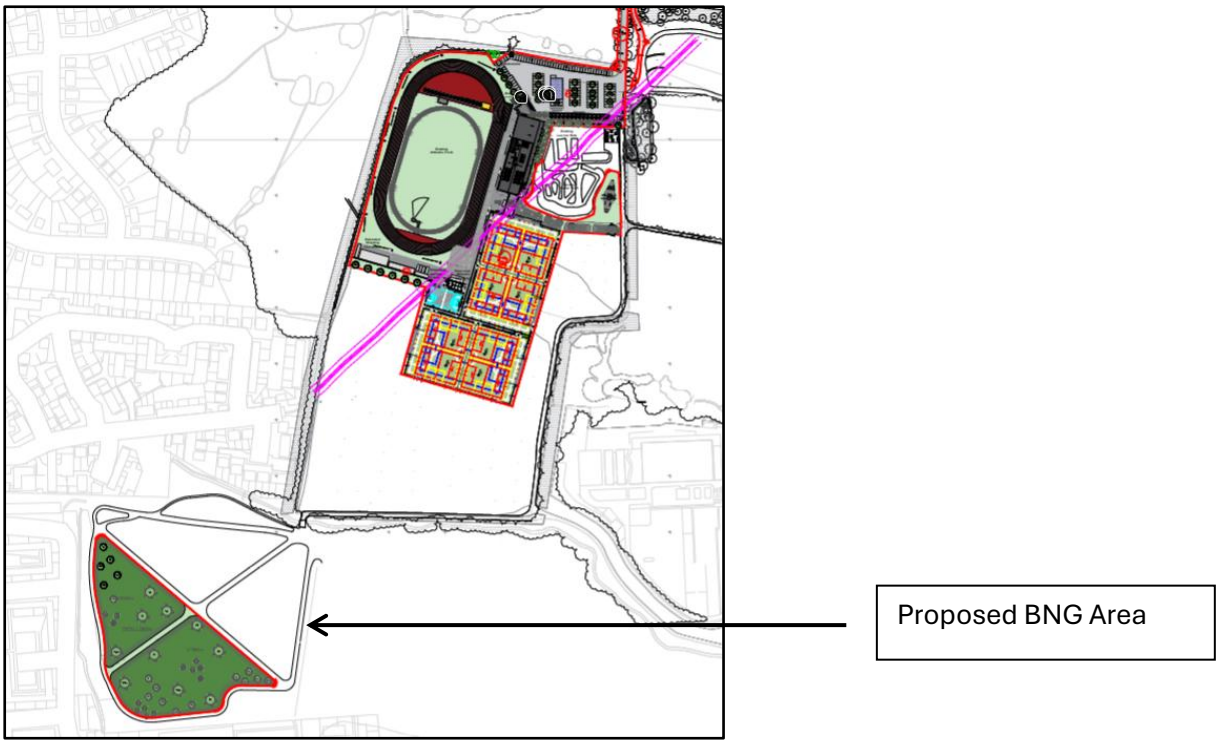


*Figure 1 Biodiversity Net Gain Area*

## Agreed Mitigation Measures

The mitigation plan comprised bringing the western portion of Wythenshawe Park into use as a playing field. The specific pitch types and sizes were to be determined in collaboration with Manchester Active at the time of implementation. An Agronomy Report, completed by STRI, informed this process. Following the report's recommendations, an index-linked developer contribution of £498,000 was secured via a Section 106 agreement for the mitigation works.

## Planning Approval and Subsequent Developments

In 2023, a planning application for the mitigation proposal (LPA Ref: 138740/VO/2023) was submitted and subsequently approved. However, upon producing a detailed cost plan for the approved pitch designs and associated works, it became apparent that constructing two pitches in the intended location was no longer viable. The estimated costs had increased to nearly double the mitigation contribution of £498,000. The primary reason for this was the deterioration of the ground condition between the initial STRI Agronomy Report and the granting of planning approval, which led to substantially higher costs than originally anticipated.

## Revised Mitigation Strategy

In light of the increased costs and ground condition issues, the updated mitigation strategy involves constructing two new pitches on the playing field situated to the south of the sports hub site, shown on the plan below.

*Figure 2 Location of Replacement Natural Turf Football Pitches*

While this revised approach is not fully policy compliant, the overall sporting benefits are significant. The proposed sports hub will deliver two new natural turf pitches in addition to two Artificial Grass Pitches, providing enhanced facilities and enabling growth in football by 121%. Further details on the sporting benefits can be found in Section 4 of the accompanying Wythenshawe Park Multi Sport Playing Field Statement.

The precise location of the two new pitches within this area will be determined by an Agronomy Report, and consultation with the Football Foundation, Manchester FA and football clubs. These works fall outside of the current planning application, and we intend to address the natural turf pitch construction through investment linked to the sports hub proposal.

# Strategic Need for the Wythenshawe Park Sport, Health and Well-Being Hub

## Development and Community Engagement

The development of the Wythenshawe Park Sport, Health and Well-Being Hub has been a collaborative process, undertaken in partnership with a range of stakeholders and members of the local community. The design and scope of the hub have been shaped by comprehensive engagement with community partners, including the Wythenshawe Housing Trust, local General Practitioners (GPs), care navigation teams, neighbourhood health teams, providers of physical activity, mental health professionals, Council officers, and Local Councillors. This engagement sought to build a detailed understanding of the current landscape regarding sport, physical activity, and community health services within Wythenshawe.

Through this process, it has become clear that the existing facilities do not adequately meet the present or anticipated future needs of the Wythenshawe community. Stakeholder feedback has directly informed the identified need for a well-being hub that would contribute to the broader community sport provision in the area.

## Guiding Principles and Research

The conceptual framework for the well-being hub draws on Sport England's Community Leisure Hub concept and its associated design guidance, which outlines the intended function of such a hub: "A Community Leisure Hub can provide access to leisure activities and other community services such as libraries, healthcare and childcare. Places and spaces are required for people of all ages and abilities to take regular exercise close to where they live." To inform the proposal, visits were undertaken to established Community Leisure Hubs and Health and Well-Being Centres across the Northwest, most notably the Jubilee Hub in Warrington, which has an established partnership with Sport England. Lessons learned from these visits have been incorporated into the Wythenshawe Park proposal to ensure best practice and maximise community benefit.

## Health Partner Elements of the Hub

The hub will include a comprehensive suite of health partner facilities designed to deliver integrated primary care and community health services. The planned elements are as follows:

- 11 GP and examination rooms, including 4 training rooms
- 1 GP supervision/triage/remote consultation room
- Dedicated GP administrative space
- 2 GP training/meeting rooms
- IT hub
- Waiting space
- 2 integrated neighbourhood rooms/reception areas, with capacity for 4–5 receptionists
- 1 neighbourhood administration/facilities management room

## Demonstrating Strategic Need

Over the past year, Manchester Active has conducted extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, including the Brooklands and Northenden Primary Care Network (PCN), Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), GPs, neighbourhood services, Manchester City Council colleagues, and Ward Councillors. The consultation has focused on understanding the broader population health needs and opportunities within the area.

MHCC has commissioned Estate Plans for all 13 Primary Care Networks across Manchester to guide priorities for new or improved health estate provision. The resulting Estates Strategy, which is in the process of being finalised, confirms that existing provision is inadequate to meet both current and future demand.

When the findings of the Estates Strategy are considered alongside the local stakeholder consultation, Wythenshawe Park emerges as a priority location for new, integrated health and well-being services. The proposal includes the full relocation and expansion of the Northern Moor Practice (NMP) into the park, to serve the projected population of the Brooklands and Northenden Wards, which is expected to reach 33,650 by 2031. The NMP has experienced notable growth, averaging approximately 7.1% annually since 2014, with the patient list rising

from its current level of 5,571 to a projected 7,000+ by 2031. (Refer to appendices C and D for NMP patient list data.)

At present, NMP operates from a converted house on Wythenshawe Road, adjacent to the park. Although the building is strategically located and has been remodelled several times to add clinical and consultation space, it now exceeds national average occupancy and is constrained by the availability of only six small clinical rooms. While the facility remains functional in the short term, it lacks the flexibility required for the delivery of modern primary care services into the future.

NMP is facing significant challenges in meeting patient needs, as the current premises are no longer fit for purpose or sufficient in size. Based on the anticipated patient list of 7,000+ by 2031, and the wider needs of the PCN, there is a clear requirement for at least 11 clinical and consultation spaces, as well as administrative and triage rooms within the Wythenshawe Park Hub.

## Integrated Health and Well-Being Offer

The new hub will provide a centralised PCN offer, with two of the 11 clinical and consultation spaces designated as shared well-being spaces for use by physician associates, care coordinators, mental health workers, nutritionists, physiotherapists, and members of the physical activity referral team. This arrangement will enable tailored referral pathways into physical activity and well-being services, with in-house social prescribing and preventative health interventions to drive improved health outcomes for local residents.

Additionally, health partners intend to make use of the community and education spaces within the hub to deliver GP and student training, providing a centralised education and training offer for the area.

## Location of Health Hub and Impact on the Playing Field

The proposed pavilion will be situated on land directly to the east of the existing athletics track. This area currently consists of hardstanding, which is occupied by several shipping containers and a modular building, alongside a section of grassland. To the south of the intended site lies the long/triple jump and throw facility. The pavilion's footprint will partially overlap with this facility.

To accommodate the new development, the small throws area and jump facility will be relocated within the perimeter of the athletics track. This relocation has received approval from England Athletics, following discussions with Ed Hunt of England Athletics and the athletics lead from Manchester Active. These consultations have also led to proposals for resurfacing the current track and potentially making certain adaptations to the infield, subject to further design development. Additionally, the existing athletics changing facility will be moved to a mutually agreed location within the boundary of the athletics facility.

The new pavilion will provide a range of ancillary facilities to support the primary sporting function of the area. These will include shower and changing rooms, a bike rental hub, and a café. The integration of the proposed GP surgery and health hub is expected to deliver substantial benefits for community health, creating opportunities for synergy between the healthcare offer and the sporting use of the site. This aspect of the proposal is considered acceptable under Exception 2, as the pavilion's functions are ancillary to the main purpose of the playing field, and Exception 4 given the athletics facilities will be relocated within the site.

# Weightlifting Facilities and Relocation

The existing changing room building, currently situated within the car park area, serves as the home for Wythenshawe Weightlifting Club. Constructed in the 1960s, this facility is now nearing the end of its usable life and is at risk of being condemned.

Engagement and consultation with both Wythenshawe Weightlifting Club and British Weightlifting have identified the Wythenshawe area as a strong candidate for the establishment of a new regional talent centre. This initiative would support the development of local sporting pathways, enabling athletes to progress from grassroots participation to performance-level weightlifting.

The existing weightlifting building, currently located in the centre of the car park, will be relocated approximately 1km from its present position to the Wythenshawe Sports Ground. The redevelopment of Wythenshawe Sports Ground into a Football Hub is progressing in parallel with the Wythenshawe Park Hub project. As part of these wider improvements, the current weightlifting facility at Wythenshawe Park will be relocated to a purpose-built facility within Wythenshawe Sports Ground. The new weightlifting centre will house a performance strength and conditioning gym, offering flexible use for the club, performance programmes, other sports groups and users, as well as the wider community.

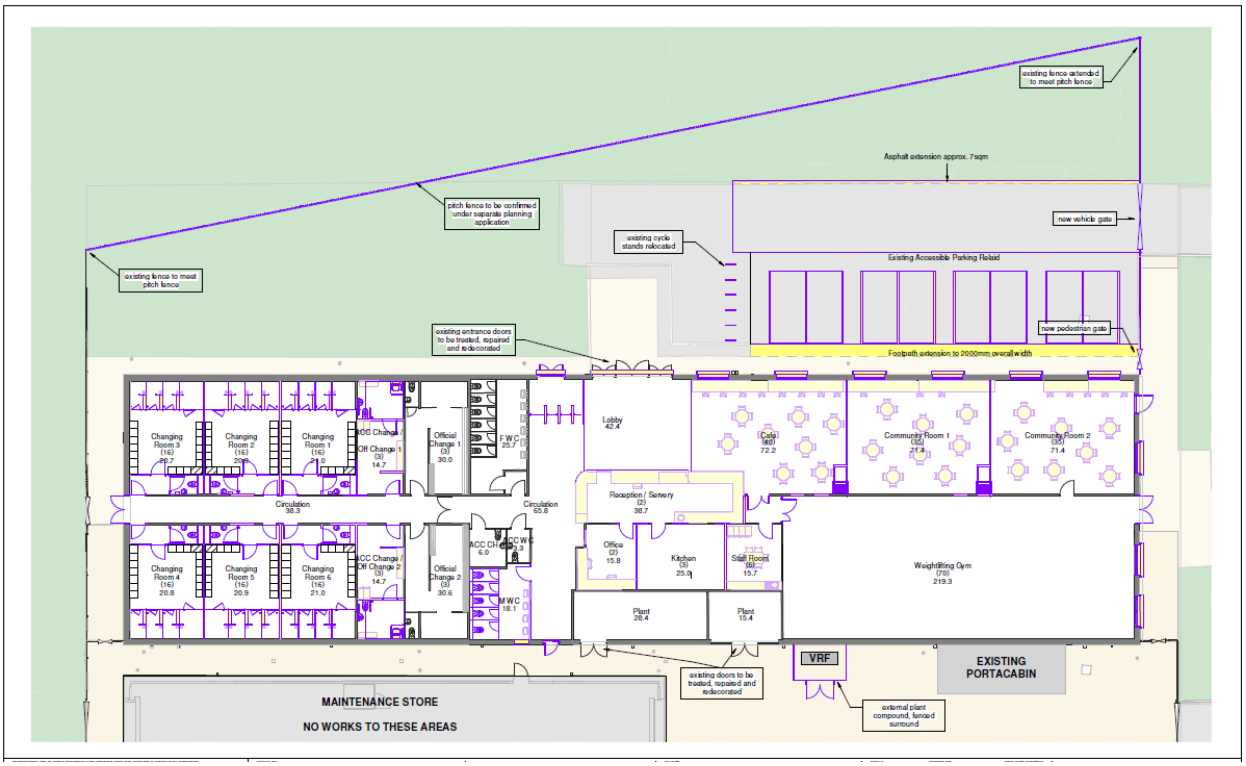


*Figure 3 Proposed Weightlifting Gym Wythenshawe Sports Ground*

A Grampian-style planning condition will be put in place, ensuring that the relocation of the weightlifting facility to the Wythenshawe Sports Ground is directly linked to the current application. The transition will be completed so that users can occupy the new facility before demolition takes place at Wythenshawe Park. This approach is consistent with Exception 4 of

Sport England's Playing Field Policy. The planning application for Wythenshawe Sports Ground has been submitted as is awaiting validation.