

APPENDIX TO AGENDA (LATE REPRESENTATIONS)

Planning Committee	24 September 2026	Item No.	5
Application Number	143413/FO/2025	Ward	Chorlton

Description and Address

Change of use of former university playing fields to community woodland and meadow.

Land Bound By Longford Park, Peveril Crescent, Rye Bank Road and Longford Park (commonly Referred To As Ryebank Fields) Manchester, M21 9WW.

1. Applicant

Have written in to state that the application would secure the long-term management, accessibility and ongoing protection of this land in the interests of:

- Biodiversity and ecological value - the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries of the world. 15% of species in the UK is now threatened with extinction (UK State of Nature report 2019).
- Delivering the environmental and social outcomes sought by current planning policy – specifically as per the objectives of sustainable development set out in Paragraphs 17.b. and c. of the National Planning Policy Framework, (August 2026).

They set out that the application represents an example of grass roots participation in the planning process, the first application of its kind which demonstrates how communities engage constructively with the planning system, developing their own vision for where they live and how they live.

Reference is made to a Working Research Report on Ryebank Fields that assesses and confirms the vitality of Ryebank Fields for everyone and refers to a short film available on YouTube.

The group encourage the committee to stand on the right side of history.

2. Local Residents

Since publication of the Committee report, a further objection has been received. Comments are summarised below:

The desire to retain open green space is understandable, the application fails to satisfy critical material planning considerations regarding land safety, strategic utility, and long-term viability:

Environmental and Ground Contamination Risks: Ryebank Fields is a historical clay pit and unregistered landfill site. Developing a public-access community park without an exhaustive, highly funded, and legally binding remediation framework poses long-term public health and safety liabilities regarding ground contaminants and toxic materials. The application lacks a robust, technically sound mechanism to manage these structural environmental risks safely.

Lack of Viable Site Management and Long-Term Deliverability: The application relies heavily on community management without a clear, legally secure funding infrastructure to maintain the woodland, handle ongoing ecological conservation, or guarantee public safety in the long term. Without robust financial backing, the site risks falling into neglect, presenting an amenity and safety risk rather than a community asset.

Conflict with Strategic Housing and Development Goals: By locking the site exclusively into non-development usage, this proposal conflicts with Manchester's broader strategic vision to optimize land use for sustainable growth, inclusive spaces, and structured partnerships that address local infrastructure demands.

A comment is made that the area is largely grassed and used by dog walkers and states that there is a lovely park next to the land.

3. Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing

It is considered that the additional comments objecting and in support to the application have been addressed in the main report and the recommendation remains one of approval.