



PRESS RELEASE

21 September 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release PDF attached

Picture of campaigners yesterday, attached

Images Credit: Jay Clarke

WE WILL SPEAK!

Ground-level mobilisation compels Trafford Council to listen to local voices committed to Saving Ryebank Fields

“Representatives elected by us should make the decisions about Trafford that directly affect us... We'll ask them to stand by the position they've held since 2024 and agree to formally object to the development proposals for Ryebank Fields.”

— Friends of Longford Park, Friends of Ryebank Fields and Trafford Ryebank Residents Association

“I will be speaking against the recommendation to delegate, and in favour of objecting to the main application. There is an identified shortage of open space in the north of the borough... The Fields are a unique, beautiful and much-loved community space, as well as being a miraculous example of re-wilding in action.”

— Gareth Twose, Longford Ward Councillor, Green Party

“I am the locally and democratically elected member for Longford Ward in Trafford and I will be speaking against the delegation [to Manchester City Council].”

— Sarah Haughey, Facebook Page, Longford Labour Councillors

Tomorrow, Tuesday 22 September at 6.30pm, Trafford Council's Planning and Development Management Committee will consider its position on the proposed development of Ryebank Fields.

The proposed scheme by Manchester Metropolitan University and its would-be development partners is for **120 expensive houses on Ryebank Fields**. A separate planning application to Trafford Council concerns the proposed vehicle access from Rye Bank Road into the Fields. That access is necessary for the would-be housing development to proceed.

Trafford Council has received **786 public representations from 565 addresses**, together with a **petition containing 4,250 signatures**, concerning the proposals and the proposed access through the Rye Bank Road Community Garden, a Trafford Asset of Community Value.

Despite this substantial public response, on Friday 11 September Trafford Council published its Planning Officer's recommendations:

- **Agenda Item 7:** to delegate determination of the Trafford access application to Manchester City Council; and



- **Agenda Item 8:** to raise **“No Objection”** to Manchester City Council in relation to the main housing application, subject to the matters set out in the officer report.

The recommendations prompted an immediate mobilisation by local residents and community groups. Within 24 hours campaigners had prepared and begun distributing materials encouraging local people to contact their elected representatives, including the **Trafford residents' leaflet**:

[Ryebank Fields Trafford Residents' Leaflet](#)

In addition, on Monday 14 September, informed that residents would not ordinarily be able to address the Planning Committee, Trafford Ryebank Residents Association (TRRA) subsequently submitted a written request through Democratic Services asking the Chair to exercise discretion to allow public speakers.

Within approximately 24 hours, TRRA received confirmation that **“speakers will be able to address the committee.”**

Those speakers will include members of the public alongside local councillors representing both the Green Party and Labour Party.

In a joint statement **Friends of Longford Park, Friends of Ryebank Fields and Trafford Ryebank Residents Association** say:

“We're pleased that after lobbying by the community, Trafford Planning Committee agreed to us having a platform to speak at this meeting. We'll firstly make the case as to why representatives elected by us should make the decisions about Trafford that directly affect us. Then we'll ask them to stand by the position they've held since 2024 and agree to formally object to the development proposals for Ryebank Fields.”

Newly elected Green Party Longford Ward Councillor **Gareth Twose** says:

“I will be speaking against the recommendation to delegate, and in favour of objecting to the main application. To try and delegate the decision over this decision to Manchester City Council [was] a betrayal of residents in every sense... Residents [were] outraged and disgusted by this decision... There is an identified shortage of open space in the north of the borough... The Fields are a unique, beautiful and much-loved community space, as well as being a miraculous example of re-wilding in action.”

Labour Party Longford Ward Councillor **Sarah Haughey** states:

“I recognise the importance of Ryebank Fields and the longstanding interest in it... Delegating the decision on Ryebank Fields to Manchester City Council... removes my ability to represent my residents on a matter of huge importance to all of us... I will be speaking against the delegation on Tuesday.” (Sarah Haughey on Longford Labour Councillors Facebook Page)



The local community has also called for a lobby of the Trafford Council Planning and Development Management Committee.

Supporters are asked to **gather outside Trafford Council, Talbot Road, Stretford, M32 0TH, from 5.45pm on Tuesday 22 September.**

The committee meeting begins at **6.30pm.**

Manchester City Council – Thursday 24 September

Two days later, on **Thursday 24 September at 2pm**, Manchester City Council's Planning Committee is scheduled to consider **Ryebank Fields Community Group's planning application, 143413/FO/2025**, which proposes the retention of Ryebank Fields as a **community woodland and meadow**. Manchester City Council's planning information confirms the application reference and proposal. A second lobby has been called for **Thursday 24 September at 1.30pm outside the chamber.**

ENDS

For further information:

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About Ryebank Fields

Ryebank Fields is public land that was gifted to Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)) as a sports facility in the mid-1970s. The area was formerly a clay pit for Jackson's Brickworks and subsequently became an unregistered tip. It was remediated in 1972 under the publicly funded 'Operation Eyesore' to make it safe to walk and play on. The University abandoned Ryebank Fields in 1996, since which time this Local Green Space has naturally re-wilded into a richly biodiverse wildlife 11-acre haven and corridor, tended over four generations by local people. Developers acting on behalf of MMU, want to destroy the land for expensive housing. Ryebank Fields Community Group has submitted an alternative community-led and community-funded planning application, 143413/FO/2025, proposing its retention as a community woodland and meadow. The application is scheduled for consideration by Manchester City Council's Planning Committee on 24 September 2026. Local residents and their supporters continue to campaign for the Fields to remain a community green space.