

Sankey Valley Industrial Estate, open space

Introduction

This note has been prepared in response to action number 7 recorded in the Matters 10 and 11 hearing session, as follows:

“Undertake a sense check of the open space designations on the Policies Map that have been challenged to ensure they are correct.”

This is in response to comments received at the Regulation 19 stage relating to an identified open space to the east of the Sankey Valley Industrial Estate, Newton-le-Willows, challenging the proposed open space designation of the land.

The area of land is currently designated on the Policies Map for the Local Plan Submission Draft (SD002) as the ‘Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities (including Playing Fields, Golf Courses, Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts and Sailing Spaces) (OSR)’ open space typology under Policy LPC05.

Extract from the Policies Map (SD002, page 16) showing the open space proposed for designation, and subject to this note, circled in red:

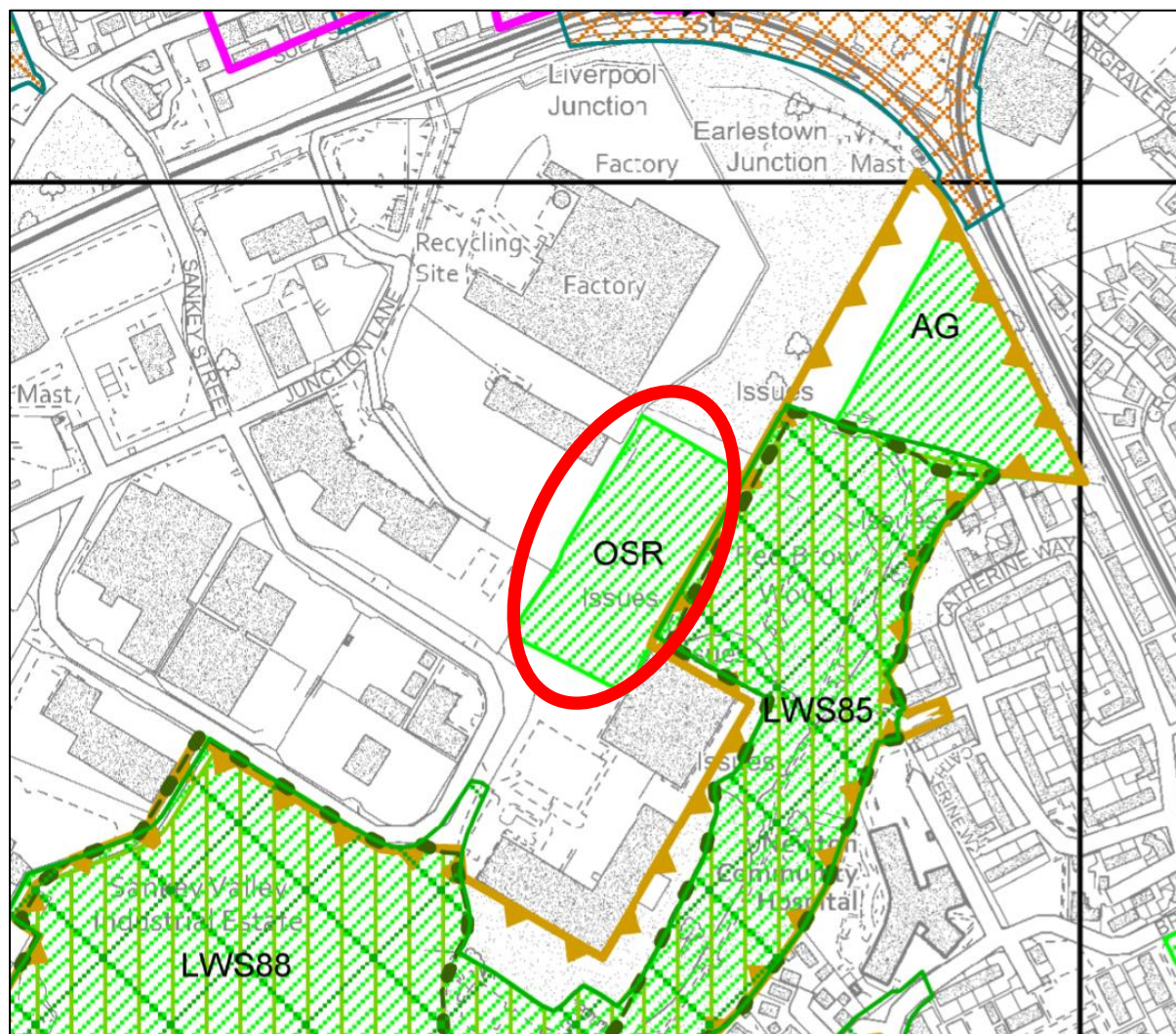


Image 1: Policies Map extract

Following the recorded action, Council Officers have reviewed the designation, including undertaking a site visit, and conclusions are set out in this note.

Site visit

A site visit was undertaken on Tuesday 7 September 2021. The site was approached via the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (marked as LWS85 on the Policies Map) to the east of the proposed open space, accessed from Catherine Way.

The following image provides the context of the site visit and the findings that will be set out in this note:



Image 2: Explanation of site visit

(NOTE: the numbers marked on the image correspond to the photo references provided in this note to show the position where the photos were taken, and the arrows show the direction of the camera from each position. The locations and directions are all approximate. Photos 3,4,5 were taken from various positions along the boundary marked out by the red dashed line, but have been grouped together for ease.)

A number of photos were taken on this site visit, and are provided below.

Photo 1:



The location of this fencing is shown on Image 2 above by the orange line.

Photo 2:



This fence is identified by the blue line on Image 2 above.

Photo 3:



Photo 4:



Photo 5:



Photos 3,4 and 5 were taken from the boundary with the neighbouring Local Wildlife Site to the east (labelled as LWS85 on the Policies Map extract provided above in image 1), and marked by the red dashed line on image 2.

Findings

Site character

As per the photos above, the site does not appear to be in use for formal outdoor sports at the current time. Indeed, it is far more of a natural green space in character. Therefore, the assigned open space typology on the Policies Map of 'Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities' (OSR) needs to be amended.

Given the characteristics of the site, as is clearly shown in the photos, it is suggested that the site would be better categorised in the 'Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces' (NSN) open space typology on the Policies Map.

As can be seen on the photos (particularly 3,4 and 5), the proposed open space is better related to the neighbouring LWS than it is to the industrial estate on the far side, both in terms of its natural, green character and its access.

Public access

Public access is achievable from the Local Wildlife Site to the east of the site. Whilst there is some substantial metal fencing down part of the western edge of the LWS, this is to the north of the proposed open space designation boundary, as shown by the orange line on image 2, and photo 1. The northern boundary of the proposed open space designation, shown by the blue line on image 2 and photo 2 is also clearly bordered by the same style of

fencing. Neither of these fence lines restrict access into the proposed open space from the LWS to the east.

Regarding the boundary of the LWS and the proposed open space, shown by the red dashed line on image 2, there is no physical fence in place preventing a person from moving between the LWS and the open space. There do appear to be some old fence posts in places along this stretch, but any fenced boundary that may have been in place previously has not been maintained at all as there is no fence. It is therefore an accessible open space site in the Borough.

Conclusion

The proposed open space site is very different in character to the neighbouring industrial estate, and is accessible from the LWS. The Council is therefore of the view that its open space designation should be retained. However, the identified open space typology of the site does need to be amended, and the Council would suggest this should be 'NSN' (natural and semi-natural green space) rather than 'OSR' (outdoor sport and recreation facilities) on the Policies Map.