Chapter Six –

Results of the Process, Irk Valley and Moston Vale

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6.1 Introduction

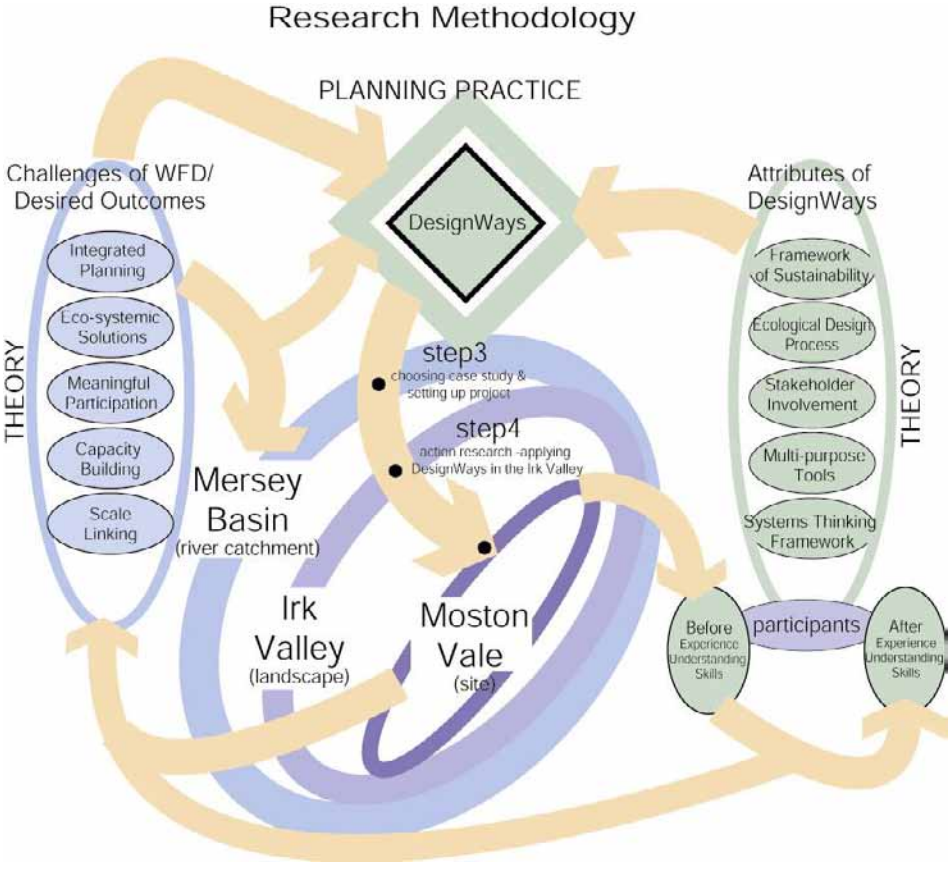
Community members and other stakeholders were invited to participate in the early stages of creating a long-term vision for sustainability in the Irk Valley in North Manchester, between February and June of 2003. Envisioning was carried out at two levels of scale. At the landscape level a framework was developed for future planning in the Irk Valley Project. At the site level a plan was developed for Moston Vale, a twenty-two hectare former landfill site, which is an area of green-space within the management remit of the Irk Valley Project. The choice of the case study areas was discussed in Chapter 3, Methodology.

The DesignWays process was used, facilitated by the author. The trial was carried out with participants from NGOs, community groups, academia, and public and private sector organisations.

6.1.1 Structure of this Chapter

This chapter analyses the workshops held in the Irk Valley and Moston Vale, and highlights the outcomes of the process. The first section describes the regional context, the Irk Valley Project, the Irk River and the Moston Vale site. The next section describes the planning process for the Irk Valley, organised around the stages of the design process. A brief summary of the results from each stage for both the Irk Valley and Moston Vale complements this description. The overall plans and key issues raised in the process are summarised at the end of the chapter.

Figure 6-1 Research Methodology - Steps 3 and 4



6.2 The Irk Valley

"At the bottom flows, or rather stagnates, the Irk, a narrow, coal-black, foul smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it deposits on the shallower right bank. In dry weather, a long string of the most disgusting, blackish-green slime pools are left standing on this bank, from the depths of which bubbles of miasmatic gas constantly arise and bring forth a stench unendurable even on the bridge forty or fifty feet above the surface of the stream" (Engels 1977, pg. 124).

The corridor of the Irk could be seen as the Silicon Valley of the 18th Century[48]. The landscape carries the legacy of centuries of industrial development (Figure 6-2), both in its historical features (especially water mills and dye works), and in areas of derelict and contaminated land. Water quality is poor and the aquatic environment is degraded (Environment Agency 2001). Rapid development in the 19th century often led to building up to the banks of the river, as it became *"marginalised within the urban landscape and ruthlessly exploited by industry"* (Environment Agency 1998, pg. 66). In 1969, the Irwell, of which the Irk is a tributary, was described as *"specially depressing, and the river itself is polluted almost beyond redemption"* (Tippett, L. H. C. 1969, pg. 143).

Figure 6-2 Example of industrial heritage

The Irk Valley has a wealth of open spaces, and whilst many are derelict and contaminated, it contains several important parks. Heaton Park for example, in the north west of the area, is a regional attraction. Queen's Park (Figure 6-3) is also significant as it was one of the first 'people's parks' in the UK, developed in the 1840's. It was popular until the 70's, when council budget cuts led to a decrease in management and maintenance, and its subsequent decline (Glen Kemp Hankinson 1997).

[48] Thanks to Peter Milner, a participant in the *Creative Futures - the Irk Valley* workshops, for this metaphor.

Figure 6-3 Queen's Park

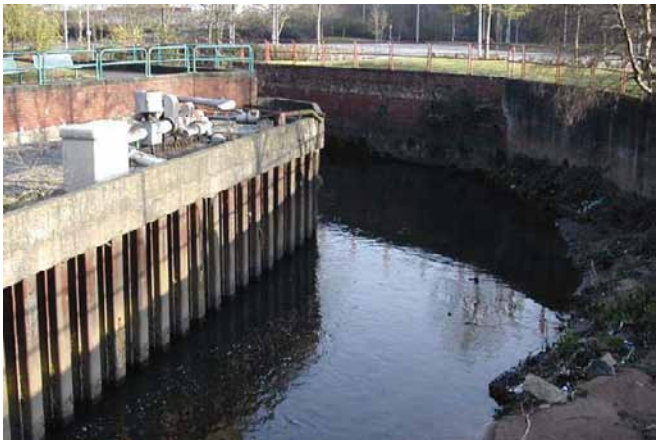
Boggart Hole Clough (Figure 6-4) is one of the principal parks in Manchester. It covers an area of 60.6 hectares, and was acquired by the City in 1890 (Glen Kemp Hankinson 1997). Paths leading along steep ravines, which still contain remnants of ancient woodland, complement sporting facilities such as an athletics track and tennis courts.

Figure 6-4 Boggart Hole Clough

The River Irk is heavily channelised, with narrow walled channels, giving few opportunities for meandering. Approximately 20% of the river is culverted (Environment Agency 1998) (Figure 6-5) which reduces connectivity and potential for wildlife. Both factors reduce habitats for aquatic life. Urban development has occurred largely on the natural flood plain. Illegal tipping adds to the potential risk for flooding. The river is somewhat hidden and largely unappreciated. There is some confusion over the source of the river amongst the practitioners working within the IVP, and it is hard to trace on current maps.

Invasive non-native plants are prevalent in the polluted urban environment, e.g. Japanese knotweed is abundant near Manchester town centre (Environment Agency 1998).

Figure 6-5 The Irk near Hexagon House



6.2.1 Social Context

> *"Filth and disgusting grime, the equal of which is not to be found – especially in the course which led down to the Irk, and which contain unqualifiedly the most horrible dwellings which I have yet beheld" (Engels 1977, pg. 123).*

Clearly, the Irk Valley has long been the site of industrial development, and is an area in which many workers were housed in appalling conditions. The Irk Valley contained poor areas historically, illustrated by St. Michaels Flags, a burial ground for orphans, who used to live in the 'Ragged Houses' near the confluence of the Irk and the Irwell.

Today there is a high level of unemployment, as much of the heavy manufacturing has moved out the area (Office for National Statistics 2003; Steele 2003). Harpurhey ranks 22 (1 is worst) in a list of the worst 100 wards for employment in the UK (Cooper 2003). There are many long-term unemployed people in North Manchester (in Harpurhey, 41.5% of the unemployed have been unemployed longer than 6 months) (Manchester Enterprises Group 2003).

Manchester and Salford have become less populous since the 1971 census, largely due to the out-migration of economically active residents (Audit Commission 2003). Most of the wards in North Manchester lost population during the 1990s, with the exception of Cheetham and Crumpsall (Community Liaison Officer for City Council, 2003, pers. comm.). The extent of disadvantage in North Manchester is revealed in health related statistics. The 'Standard Mortality Rate' in North Manchester Primary Care Trust, at 158, is well above the North West and national averages of 111 and 100 respectively (Manchester City Council 2002).

The four wards in the North Manchester Housing Market Renewal Strategy are within the 8% of the most deprived in the country in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 indicators for income, employment and health (Neighbourhood and Renewal Unit 2003).

6.3 Action Research - The Context

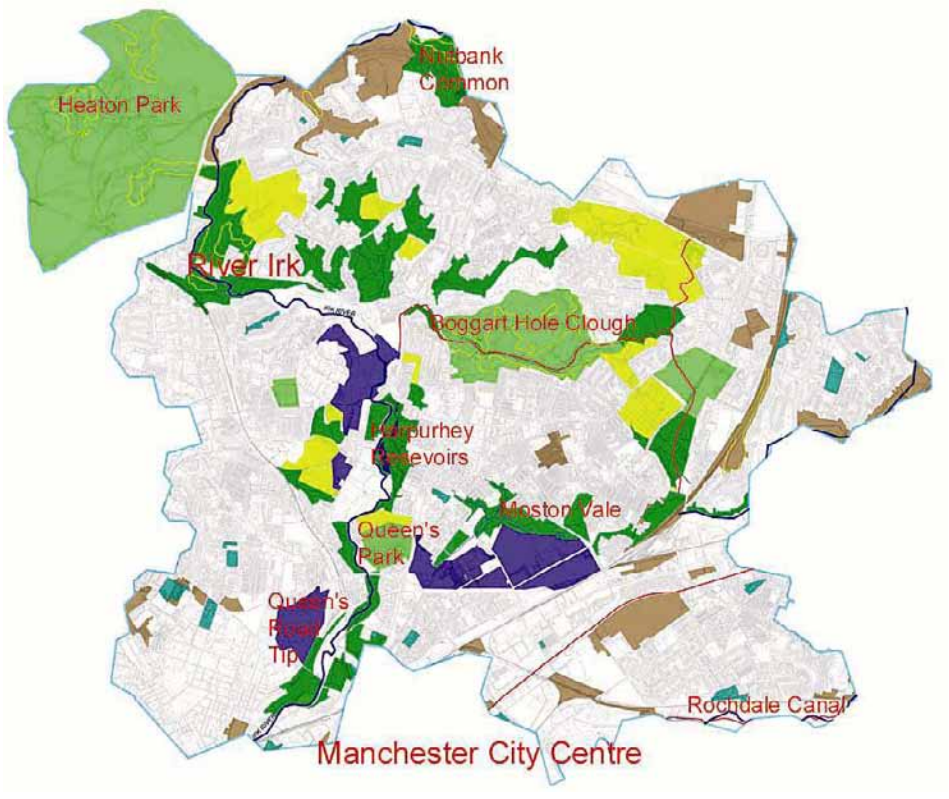
6.3.1 The Irk Valley Project

The Irk Valley Project (IVP) (Figure 6-6) is a partnership between Manchester City Council, NGOs, residents' associations, and local businesses (www.irkvalley.info/). It works to create sustainable and accessible green spaces in North Manchester, as part of the area regeneration process (Manchester City Council 2003). The project officer is on secondment from Manchester City Council, Leisure, to Groundwork Manchester, Salford & TraffordThe project began in May 2001 and covers 500 hectares of managed open space, within a 5000-hectare area. It contains seven miles of the River Irk, as well as several tributaries of the Irk. The Irk Valley Project is a partner of the Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC). It has a similar structure to the MBC's River Valley Initiatives[49], with a steering group and a Project Officer who manages the project and works with community groups. The IVP has, however, areas of land under its

[49] Whilst IVP is a partner of MBC, it is not under its RVI management structure, so does not benefit from the same catchment-wide coordination and partnerships structure as the RVIs, which can be seen in some ways as the local delivery mechanisms of the MBC, as well as a reflection of its broader structure (e.g. Kidd and Shaw 2000). The IVP is seen as part of the delivery of the Manchester WaterWays Strategy, and benefits from working with other river valley organisations in the area, such as the Mersey Valley Countryside Wardens and the Medlock Valley Project.

direct management remit (owned by Manchester City Council), whilst the RVIs do not tend to have direct management responsibility for landscape areas.

Figure 6-6 Map of the Irk Valley Project Area



The IVP is seen as a mechanism for coordinating and clarifying management procedures for open space in the Irk Valley (Barlow 2002). An early task (ongoing at the time of writing) is to clarify the ownership and management arrangements. There is a fragmented ownership and management pattern across different departments of the City Council, with different sections of the council often managing different aspects of the same landscape.

The Newlands scheme for reclaiming derelict and under-used land (Forestry Commission) supported this envisioning process as a trial of participatory methods, which is a core principle of Newlands. Moston Vale is a key site for the project. This project feeds into the ongoing creative consultation in North Manchester, and was supported by North City Arts. The outcomes of the workshops have been made available to the strategic planning process for North Manchester and to groups working in partnership with the Irk Valley Project.

6.3.2 Moston Vale

Moston Brook is a tributary of the River Irk. Moston Vale (Figure 6-7) is a twenty-two hectare former landfill site located in a heavily populated area. Moston Brook was culverted in 1969, when controlled land filling of the valley began. Before this time, uncontrolled tipping had led to flood problems. The stream was heavily polluted. Outbreaks of salmonella poisoning and polio in the 1960's focused attention on the unsatisfactory state of the stream. Land filling of the twenty-two hectare site ceased in 1989, with 75% of the valley filled (Glen Kemp Hankinson 1997). Since that time, there has been subsidence and re-colonisation of the site with some trees, grasses, seasonal ponds and small areas of marshy grass.

Figure 6-7 Aerial Photo of the Moston Vale Site, showing its boundaries

Lightly wooded edges provide woodland nesting sites for birds. Plant species (on this site as well as the amenity grassland north of Church Road, which was including in the envisioning process) include Oak, Hazel, Ash, Poplar, Elder and Hawthorn, with rank grassland being the dominant cover (Lee-Gallon 2001). The Phase One Habitat Survey[50] found *"no key species or habitats outlined in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan".* Whilst the area was seen to have little interest for wildlife, the survey report concluded that the site had a range of habitats and opportunities (Lee-Gallon 2001). The LEAP for

[50]The survey was carried out in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's Phase One Habitat Survey methodology, commissioned by Red Rose Forest, and carried out by the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire.

the area notes diffuse ammonia contamination in Moston Brook. The water quality in Moston Brook scored 'poor' in the *General Quality Assessment Chemical Grading 1996*, and had a significant failure in terms of *Compliance with Proposed Short Term River Ecosystem RQOs* (Environment Agency 2001).

The site (Figure 6-8) is used for informal recreation, e.g. dog walking and kite flying, but has suffered with problems of dumping, burnt out cars, vandalism, fires and illegal motor-cross bike use. The Central Park (formerly known as North Manchester Business Park, and currently under construction) is to the south of the former landfill, on the site of a former school and hospital.

Figure 6-8 The Moston Vale site

6.3.3 Participating Stakeholders

A total of 39 people attended the Irk Valley planning workshops (including the business workshop) and 27 attended the Moston Vale workshops and site visit (excluding attendance at the MVRA meetings where the process was presented and participants were invited to write assets and future possibilities on leaves). Over 50 regional and local stakeholders, (organisations ranging from the Forestry Commission to the Environment Agency to employees of local companies to residents) attended the final workshop to discuss the results.

Table 6-1 summaries the organisations that participated in the process. Details of the process of engaging stakeholders and attendees can be found in Chapter 3, Methodology. A full list of participants can be found in Appendix Two.

Table 6-1 Summary of participating organisations

Participation: Creative Futures, Irk Valley & Moston Vale	
Sector	**Organisation**
NGO/Partnership	Irk Valley Project
	Mersey Basin Campaign
	Red Rose Forest
	Groundwork Manchester, Salford & Trafford
	Mersey Valley Countryside Warden Service
	Ramblers Association
Community Groups and Residents' Associations	Moston Vale Residents' Association
	Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust
Public Sector	**Manchester City Council:** Manchester Housing Neighbourhood Renewal Environmental Services Manchester Leisure
	North Manchester Partnerships: North City Arts Enterprise and Economic Initiatives
	Newlands: Forestry Commission North West Development Agency
Academic	Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology, University of Manchester
	Department of Psychology and Life Sciences, Bolton Institute
	Mersey Basin Campaign - Research Advisory Group
Private Sector	Countryscape
	Milliken Industrials Ltd.
	HMG Paints

6.4 Action Research - The Process

In the following section the planning process carried out for the Irk Valley and Moston Vale is described. This section is structured around the stages of the DesignWays process, and explores key ideas that emerged from the process at each level of scale. Charts are used to summarise the number of ideas developed in the workshops across different categories (as set out in the DesignWays process). Patterns emerging from these charts are discussed, both as they relate to the outcomes of the process for the area, and as they illuminate the design process.

DesignWays is a 12-stage process, including review and revision, summarised in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Stages of DesignWays

12 Stages of DesignWays		
1	Creativity	Brainstorming future possibilities (learning about creative thinking tools and developing new ideas continues throughout the process)
2	Context	Building a picture of existing assets
3	Sustainability	Analysis of project and resource flows against sustainability criteria
4	Limits and Solutions	Analysis of limits and problems, developing solutions
5	Values and Goals	Developing shared vision and goals
6	Filtering Ideas	Testing and filtering ideas against goals, sustainability criteria and current limits
7	Ecological Design	Applying ecological design principles
8	Landscape Analysis	Analysis of landscape ecology and historical information
9	Integrated Decision Making	Deciding priorities for action
10	Design Synthesis	Synthesising design ideas and landscape information
11	Action Planning	Prioritise actions and develop strategy to implement plans
12	Implementation and Review	Implement plan and allow for stages of learning and review from the implementation process

Key ideas that emerged from each stage of the process are explored below. The order of the steps is important, but they are given different emphases to suit the context and time available. The basic process takes 30 hrs, and can be held in a series of short workshops, all day workshops, or some combination of the above. Several of the workshops also work as ‘stand alone’ events. They provide opportunities to engage participation from additional stakeholders.

In addition to members of MVRA, several stakeholders who had been involved in the planning process for the Irk Valley also attended workshops to plan the open spaces in Moston Vale. The first five of the 12-stage DesignWays process were carried out in workshops tailored to the time limits of the Residents' Association. Data about community assets and aspirations were fed into the planning process for the Irk. Ecological design principles were used to refine the ideas applied to the ideas developed by MVRA participants in the longer series of workshops for the Irk Valley. The overall process was presented at 3 MVRA meetings.

6.4.1 Creativity

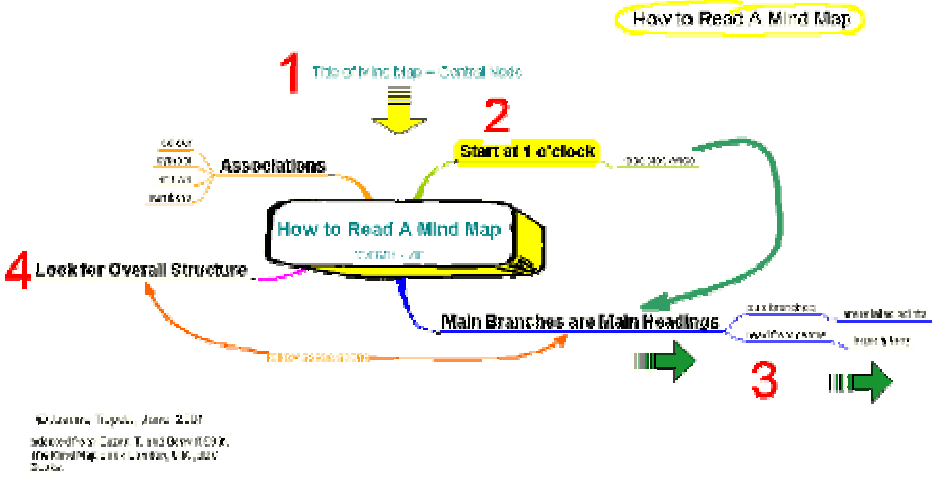
Human creativity represents a vast and often under-utilised resource. In endeavouring to improve quality of life, one of the most powerful tools lies in encouraging people to engage their own inventiveness. The DesignWays process encourages participants to ask - 'what is it we are really trying to do, and how can we design a better way to do it?' Several creative thinking techniques are taught and practised throughout the workshops.

6.4.1.1 Irk Valley

The skill of Mind Mapping was taught in the first session (Figure 6-9). A Mind Map (Figure 6-10) is a graphic technique for representing ideas, using words, images, symbols and colour (Buzan and Buzan 1993). Mind Mapping is based on patterns found in nature and research on how humans think and use their minds. Artistic talent is not necessary to learn Mind Mapping. Mind Maps increase the quality of thinking and assist in systems thinking, allowing a visual representation of an overview, showing connections and facilitating the synthesis of ideas. They are helpful for creative thinking, allowing people to use different ways of presenting and using information (see discussion on multiple intelligences on pg. 279) and assisting in the process of generating new ideas. Mind Maps help to organize ideas.

Figure 6-9 Participants learning to Mind Map

Figure 6-10 How to read a Mind Map (Created with Mind Manager Software)



In the first workshop, participants were introduced to the EASEL (Figure 6-11), a colourful, simple DesignWays tool based on Mind Maps. The EASEL is a framework for organizing design information, an acronym for: **E**conomics, **A**ctivities, **S**ocial Capital, **E**lements and Settlements, **L**andscapes. Each branch of the simple EASEL is expanded into a more comprehensive Mind Map under these headings.

Figure 6-11 Simple EASEL

Participants wrote their ideas on colour coded 'leaves' using erasable markers (Figure 6-12). The colour coding for the leaves is as follows:

- Green leaves = future possibilities
- Brown leaves = existing asset
- Grey boxes = problems and limits
- Yellow leaves = goals

Figure 6-12 Green and brown 'leaves' used in brainstorming

In this workshop, participants were asked to brainstorm ideas for the Irk Valley, the first stage in envisioning the future. These were then synthesised into one large Mind Map (using the EASEL template) (Figure 6-13). The process of

creative brainstorming is carried out early in the process for many reasons. If done before gathering data about the existing situation, ideas may be less constrained by perceptions of what already exists. Active participation in the planning process was seen as important in building a sense of ownership, which will be important in implementing and maintaining any long-term changes.

Figure 6-13 Participants synthesising ideas onto large Mind Map (simple EASEL)

In the book *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman (1988) described the strategy of successful companies as *'Ready, Fire, Aim'*, implying the need to encourage creative thinking before extensive data gathering. De Bono (1992) writes that it is important to be able to develop new ideas unfettered by the limits of traditional thinking about a subject, and offers several techniques for jogging people's thoughts out of the tracks of logical perception to encourage this process. Several of the creative thinking techniques developed by de Bono are incorporated into the DesignWays process. The skills of creative thinking are taught at different points in the process, and the toolkit includes 'Creative Thinking Prompts' (which are used after the stage of analysing problems to help develop solutions to the problems, and at appropriate times at the discretion of the facilitator).

120 ideas for 'future possibilities' were developed in the first two workshops. 402 new ideas were developed in total during the workshops looking at the Irk Valley. These included:

- building materials exchange depot;
- Queen Road's tip - eco- retail redevelopment and fair trade café;
- small wind turbines on tower blocks;
- create a green over or underpass to link woodland on both sides of Rochdale Road;
- and implement an Integrated Pest Management system on golf courses.

6.4.1.2 Moston Vale

Whilst less time was devoted to teaching creative thinking techniques, participants did learn the tool of Mind Mapping, and used the EASEL and leaf tools. 223 new ideas were developed in the three workshops held with participants. A short session of brainstorming (Figure 6-14) was introduced at the Residents' Association meeting that fell in the middle of these workshops. This used green and brown 'leaves' (for future possibilities and existing assets respectively) passed around in shoeboxes, and several new ideas were added to the evolving picture of possibilities for the area.

Figure 6-14 Passing the leaves for brainstorming, Moston Vale Residents' Association

Some of the creative ideas that were developed in the workshops included:

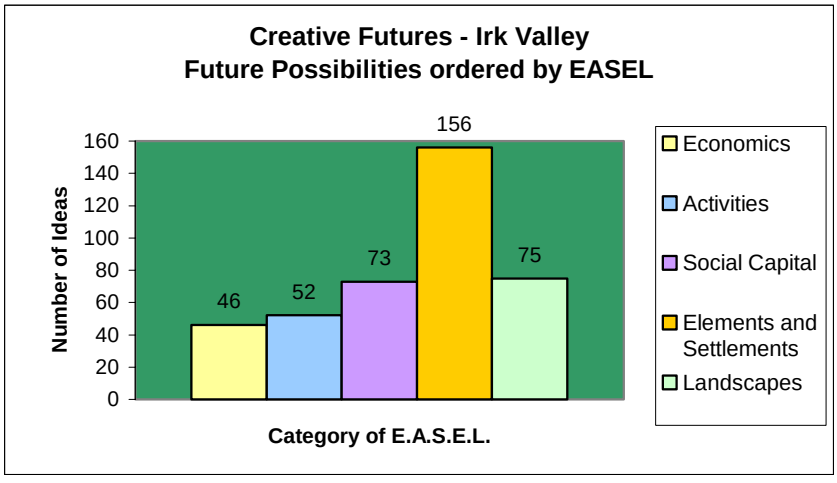
- develop a children's science education area – to include interactive exhibits such as water channels;
- highlight the former meander of Moston Brook (proposed as the main pathway on the site, Moston Brook Way) with innovative lighting at night (e.g. underlit blue lighting);
- collection and recycling of materials for arts and crafts;
- and growing materials for artistic use on site (e.g. willows, reeds) and artistic activities on site.

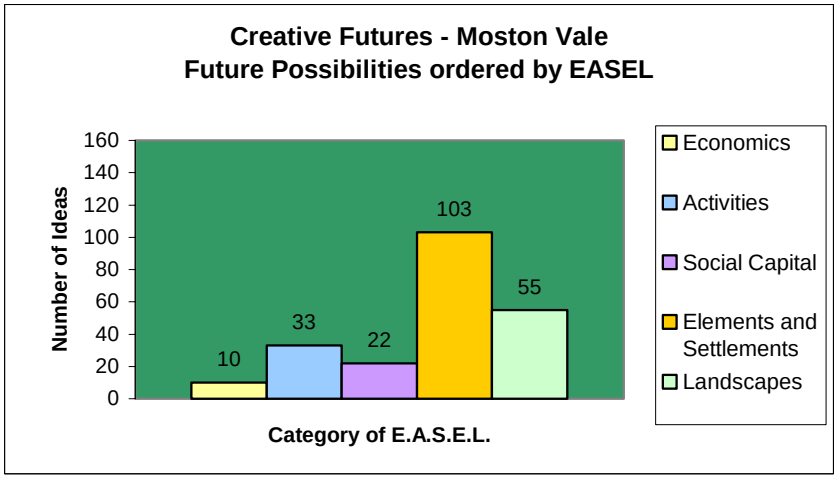
It was suggested that the artistic programmes be developed with the existing programmes running at the Simpson Memorial Hall. Such local knowledge of programmes and possibilities for connections is particularly useful for implementation. Participants were encouraged to build a holistic picture of future possibilities and relate these to the existing assets by using moveable pieces on the growing Mind Maps. Thus valuable ideas that emerge from a creative thinking process can be made more practicable.

6.4.1.3 Summary of 'future possibilities' - ideas developed in workshops

As can be seen from the charts below (Table 6-3), at both levels of scale, most ideas were developed in the category of Elements and Settlements (the built environment), followed by ideas for Landscapes. Given that the starting point of these workshops was planning for green spaces (the remit of the Irk Valley Project), the emphasis on the built environment might seem surprising. What this may reflect is that in a heavily urbanised area participants see the open spaces as intimately linked to the urban fabric. The DesignWays process encourages participants to consider interconnections between the built and natural environment, between aspects of social and economic life, and between physical form and activities.

Table 6-3 Number of 'future possibilities' developed during workshops





6.4.2 Context

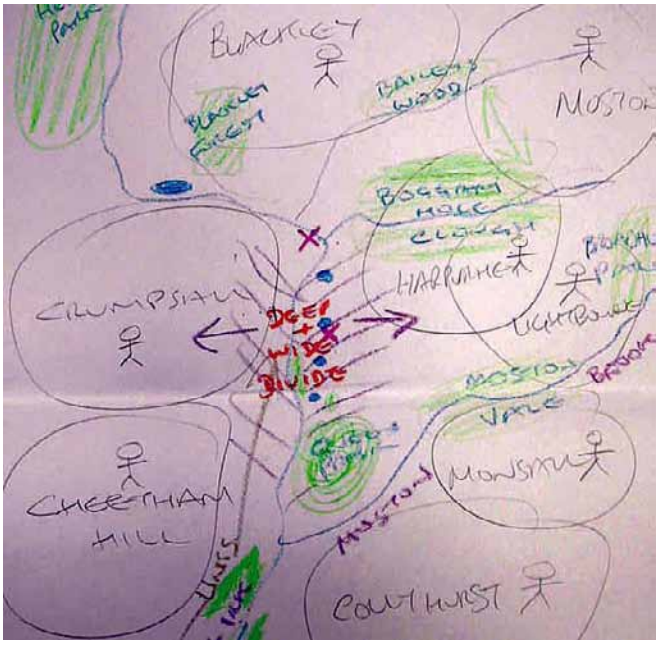
Participants were asked early in the process to develop a picture of the existing assets and resources, and to analyse how to maximize their value. This is important in terms of encouraging positive dialogue about the possibilities for an area, as opposed to a focus on the problems and limits. An emphasis on sustainability suggests the need to enhance and protect local assets, in order to protect and enhance areas of ecological value, and to maximise the social benefits of economic activity. This is particularly important in areas of ‘regeneration’. Regeneration can tend to focus on reducing problems, which might cause a loss of the assets and features that make a community unique.

The holistic nature of the EASEL templates helps to guide participants through thinking of the many different possible aspects of assets in their area. DesignWays can be used for planning a particular aspect of an area, for instance housing or industrial development, but the structure of the process encourages thinking about the full range of possible influences on the area under consideration, as no single aspect can be planned in isolation. There is a particular focus on landscapes and social capital in the process, as these are seen as essential underpinnings of sustainability. In addition to being a category of the EASEL and discussed throughout the process as the basis for design, landscapes are considered in more depth in later stages in the design process, as the non-substitutable basis of ecological capital.

6.4.2.1 Irk Valley

As some of the participants did not know the Irk Valley very well, residents and local project officers used the toolkit to describe the area, which helped them to clarify their knowledge of the assets at the same time as educating other participants. In the session dedicated to looking at existing assets, 84 were identified. Over the whole process, 168 were identified. Similar to the planning process for the Moston Vale site, participants commented that they were surprised at how many assets there were in the area, which had been uncovered by this process. In this workshop, the full (more detailed) EASELs were introduced. This allowed participants to broaden their understanding of the categories, and to deepen their overview of the Irk by focusing on some aspects in more detail. The use of Mind Maps in this tool helped participants to develop clusters of ideas, and to see patterns in the overall flow of information. As part of this process, participants were asked to draw simple maps of their perceptions of the Irk, using the major categories of the EASEL as their starting points. One of the maps drawn is shown below (Figure 6-15). This process (in particular the dialogue generated in the drawing) helped participants to identify more of the assets in the area. It stimulated useful discussion about the differences between the maps, as well as the similarities.

Figure 6-15 Community map showing perception of landscapes



Three of the main assets that were discussed in this workshop were the Irk itself, the large amount of largely under-used open space, and the wealth of historical heritage in the area. These were seen as largely under-appreciated assets, which led to a discussion about how to bring them into better use. One of the main ideas that emerged from this discussion was about the possible characteristics of a path running along the Irk, linking the open spaces all the way to Heaton Park. Good sign posting and interpretation of landscape and historical features were considered key. Discussion of potential regeneration in the area centred on the need to maximise its value for local residents, including skills training to help residents benefit from new economic opportunities. The fact that there are several adult education colleges in the area, including Abraham Moss and City College, was seen as important for achieving many of the ideas. The importance of tying historical and educational programmes to local schools was highlighted.

6.4.2.2 Moston Vale

The process was started with a site visit (Figure 6-16). Participants were invited to discuss the site's features and history.

Figure 6-16 Site visit to Moston Vale

This site visit was referred to in the workshop, and the aerial photo of the area was used to stimulate discussion of about the assets in the area (Figure 6-17). Participants were at first dubious about looking at the assets and suggested that there were not many assets in the Moston Vale area. The workshop started very slowly. Several techniques were used to stimulate discussion, and by the end of the evening, there were 80 assets written on leaves and clustered on the EASEL Project officers and community members discussed the area. At the end of the evening community members said they had remembered more and learned more about their area than they thought possible.

Figure 6-17 Using an aerial photograph of Moston Vale in workshop

147 assets had been recorded by the end of the process (Table 6-4). Similarly in the planning process for the Irk, participants commented that they were surprised at how many assets there were in the area. Many participants commented favourably on how much had been achieved in the short time of the workshop.

Some of the key assets that emerged from this process included: the old hedgerow trees on site, and the associated history of the witches' ravine, where the witches' stone and cottage used to stand. Looking at historical maps showed that there used to be a stepping-stone near the brook, and the ideas of creating seats and a mounting block from a stepping-stone (which could also be used by horse riders from the nearby stables) emerged from this historical information. The history of the site was seen as important in the final design, despite the fact that much of the landscape has been buried by landfill.

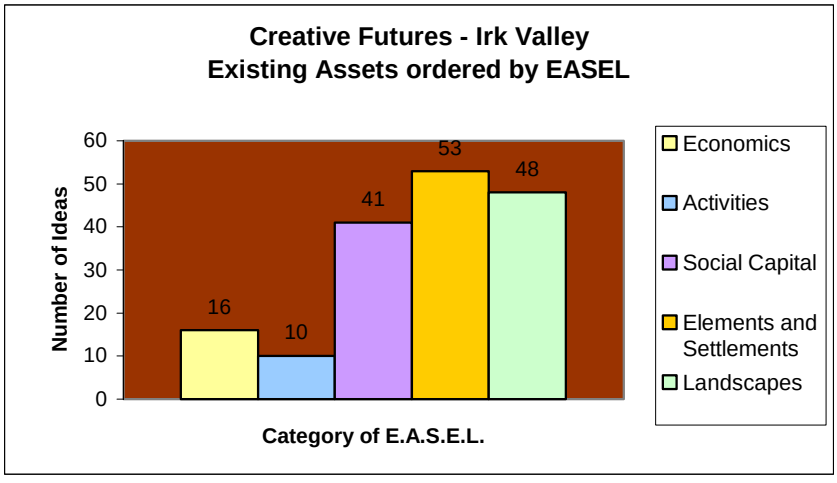
The wealth of organisations and networks in the area was emphasised in discussions as an important resource for helping to engage community involvement on the site. When looking at the 'Economics' branch of the EASEL, residents started with a fairly bleak impression of the economic resources in the area, but quickly started to develop a picture of local shops and resources that could provide the foundation for regeneration.

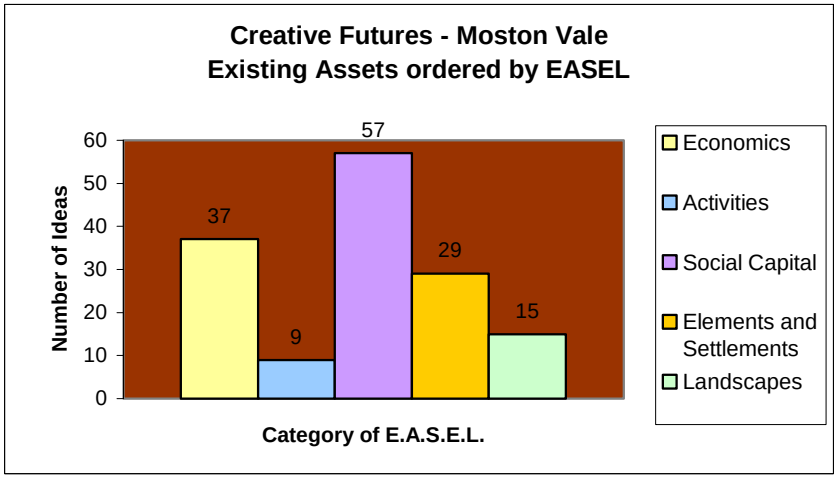
Ideas about turning the history of the site into an asset included:

- preserve existing trees and hedgerows in the construction of the United Utilities monitoring station;
- turn the history of landfill in the area to an educational resource;
- and to recreate a water feature, echoing the former meander of Moston Brook (the brook runs through the site in a culvert under the landfill. The former path of the brook can be seen on the 1849 Ordinance Survey map of the area), using scrapes and reedbeds in the existing marshy depressions, accentuated with sculpture and interpretative information.

6.4.2.3 Summary of 'existing assets' - ideas developed in workshops

Table 6-4 Number of 'existing assets' uncovered during workshops





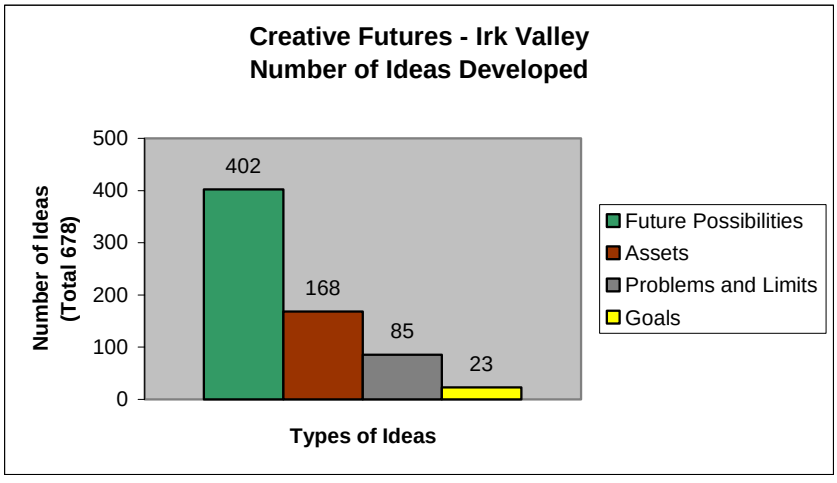
There is a marked difference in the proportions of assets that emerged from the workshops at the two different levels of scale. This could be partly a reflection of the different backgrounds of participants at the different levels of scale. At the Irk level of scale, there were more project officers who had knowledge of the local ecology, and less participants with an intimate knowledge of the area than for the Moston workshops. Some of the ideas derived in workshops came from looking at maps, which would tend to give a greater emphasis to the physical environment. In the Moston Vale area there were significantly more assets perceived under the 'Social capital' category, e.g. the organisations, networks, and institutions. This was somewhat surprising, given that the main focus of the workshops was the

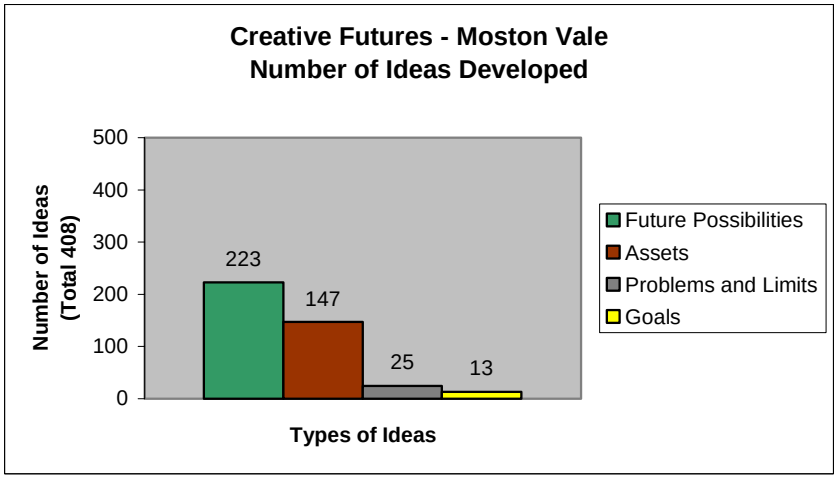
former landfill site, part of the physical environment. This could reflect participants' sense of the importance of links to existing social and economic programmes and activities in developing the site. Charts of absolute numbers such as these are a crude measure of differences, and do not show the significance placed on the different aspects mentioned by the participants (see below for more discussion of significance), but it does show an interesting pattern of local knowledge of social capital. This can form a very important resource for regeneration. The fact that the assets people saw in the area were heavily focused in the 'Social Capital' category, points to the value of engaging many different groups in planning for open space. Local participants saw the open space partly in terms of activities and programmes that could increase their use of it and help to build a sense of local ownership. It is hoped this would reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour on the site.

6.4.2.4 Summary of the types of ideas emerging from the process

As can be seen from the charts below (Table 6-5), many more assets were identified than problems. This is not necessarily a reflection of a lack of problems in the area. Indeed, there is high unemployment, with many social and environmental problems. One resident said *"To be honest go back 10 years and I thought there was no future around here".* Rather, the high proportion of assets reflects DesignWays's ability to encourage participants to draw out the positive aspects of the area. From these charts it can be seen that the proportion of assets to new ideas was much higher in the Moston Vale workshops. Two factors may have contributed to this difference, the greater local knowledge the participants have of the area, and the fact that somewhat more time was spent in the Moston Vale workshops looking at maps and talking about the assets of the area. The greater number of overall ideas for the Irk Valley reflects both the greater amount of time spent on the envisioning process and the fact that this work was carried out at a larger level of scale, which is inherently more complex than at the smaller level.

Table 6-5 Summary of types of ideas developed during workshops





6.4.3 Sustainability

In this stage of the design process a framework for understanding sustainability is introduced. Education about sustainability is an important starting point for dialogue. Tools are introduced to help participants make strategic decisions. Ideas are tested against a model of sustainability, using The Natural Step™ framework (see discussion of this model in Chapter 5). Participants are asked to develop ideas to increase sustainability in the project and the area, using creative thinking tools. Workshops can include education about sustainability technologies and ecological design ideas. This can come in the form of field trips to sites of best practice, slide shows, and general discussion. The categories of the full EASELs have been

designed to encourage discussion about different aspects of the built and natural environment, and the dialogue developed through the use of these tools often centres on best practice and case studies that the participants know of. The role of the facilitator in these dialogues is to encourage the discussion and, where appropriate, to add content-based knowledge about examples. This educational role is seen as important, recognising that a sustainable future will require very different technologies and processes to those in common use today. Several of the ideas developed during these workshops originated in such discussions. To counter the possibility that the participants simply reflect back what they think the facilitator wishes to hear, all ideas are subjected to the T/EASELing process (introduced below in the section Filtering Ideas on pg. 240). The Natural Step system conditions are used throughout the process, for example in the ecological design stages and in the stage of 'filtering ideas'. This helps to test 'future possibilities' against a rigorous framework of sustainability.

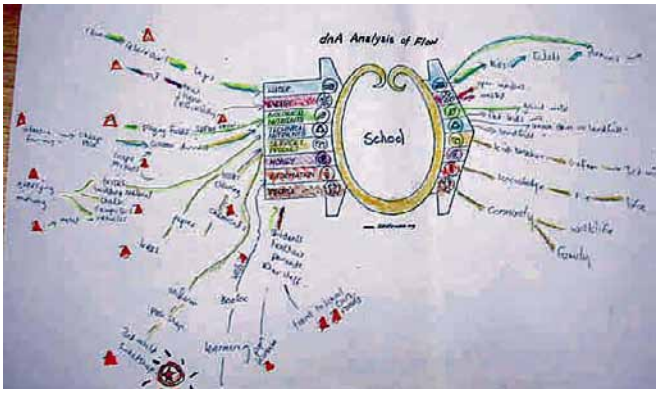
6.4.3.1 Irk Valley

This workshop was promoted as a good 'stand alone' workshop for people who were interested in attending some of the design process, but could not commit to the whole time. 19 people attended this workshop (including the core group of 9 participants). An extra workshop was run for businesses in the area (Figure 6-18). This proved to be a valuable way to both inform them about the envisioning process and to start a dialogue about sustainability in business in the area. Use of the EASEL as a framework for brainstorming in this business workshop elicited dialogue about the root causes of non-sustainability, which was considered to lie in economics. Participants went on to discuss ways of solving this problem, leading to the insight that many of the solutions lay in building social capital, and in working on the social aspects of sustainability.

Figure 6-18 Participants on business workshop on tour of landscape at HMG Paints

Participants were asked to think of flows of resources through the whole of the Irk Valley and elements within it, e.g. schools, community gardens. This tool, 'Analysis of Flows' (Figure 6-19), helped participants to understand more about the relationships between production and environmental problems, as well as looking for effective ways of attempting to design more sustainable systems.

Figure 6-19 Analysis of flow chart filled in



Ideas emerged from the discussion about how to enhance sustainability in the Irk Valley in each of the categories of the EASEL and included:

Economics

- Financial incentives to promote sustainable businesses
- Promote and market locally produced goods and materials
- Affordable local food for local people
- Farmer's Market

Activities

- Outreach and promotion about area's businesses
- Give design awards and promote good design through ceremonies
- Community conservation events
- Promoting community forestry, agriculture and composting

Social Capital

- Establishing trusts for maintenance of rehabilitated land
- Encourage the use of local currencies
- Improve community networks and facilities

Elements and Settlements

- Encourage state of the art design for new buildings and housing
- New developments should demonstrate a high level of ecological awareness in design
- Ecological design education and incentives for contractors, developers, designers
- Develop local waste/energy management systems and facilities
- Community structure that can be used for multiple purposes, such as Farmers' Markets

Landscapes

- Demonstration gardens linked to agricultural and horticultural training
- Community education about consumption patterns, ecology and local history
- Enhance and develop Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)
- Increase access to open space by creating pocket parks and greenway links between open space, use these to create networks of wildlife habitats

The process of regeneration of the surrounding area and its potential for enhancing sustainability was emphasised. The housing in the areas identified for regeneration area is typically very high-density terraced housing (Figure 6-20).

Figure 6-20 Terraced housing in regeneration area

Whilst some of the houses are neglected and some are boarded up, much of the basic building stock is sound. With sensitive renovation of the housing stock, it would be possible to retain the historic character of the area, develop a wider range of housing types and improve the environmental performance of the buildings. Much of the housing stock consists of two bedroom houses. Remodelling should be able to develop more diversity in the housing stock, creating three and four bedroom houses by combining terrace houses, and turning others into flats. Discussions during the planning process suggested that new developments should demonstrate a high level of ecological awareness in design, both in terms of materials used and energy efficiency. Participants felt it was important to make sure that new buildings were of a high quality and enhanced the existing character of the area.

The regeneration of the open spaces, including Moston Vale, is an important part of regenerating the area. Well sign-posted trails and interpretive materials can enhance links between the open space sites. Where houses were to be demolished to create open spaces, it was seen as important that these be used to create green links between the larger open space areas. These sites should also be used to enhance the sustainable management of urban rain run-off.

Education and information provision was seen as important to encourage such change. The importance of changes in legislation, e.g. building regulations, to reflect sustainability requirements was emphasised.

6.4.3.2 Moston Vale

The Natural Step framework was introduced briefly in this workshop, with an emphasis on the understanding of ecology and cycles. This was felt by some participants to be sufficient, and by some to be too rushed. In interviews, participants said they felt that it was important for them to understand framework of sustainability, especially as it played an important role in the planning process for the Irk Valley landscapes. This session was used to develop new ideas for the site, building on the information about assets from the previous week.

Ideas that were emphasised by participants from this workshop included:

- Fresh produce/Farmers' markets
- Demonstration eco-house in the area
- Demonstration wildflower garden
- Garden features from recycled materials e.g. sinks
- Education about the value of composting and how to compost.

It was felt that a demonstration area and display on the site would be useful. This could include facilities for community composting as well as for composting materials from the site itself. The display could include information about the history of site. As the site developed, demonstration urban gardens showing possibilities for typical garden spaces in the area could be incorporated.

Several of these ideas were developed through dialogue between participants on the Irk planning process and the Moston Vale residents. This included a process of the stakeholders at the Irk level of scale talking about what they had learned in those workshops and debating with residents how they might be appropriate in the context of Moston Vale.

6.4.4 Limits and Solutions

In participatory planning it can be difficult to prevent an exclusive focus on problems. In the DesignWays process thinking about problems is deliberately kept until later in the process. This is then introduced along with tools to help maximize the value of thinking of the problems in terms of finding solutions to them.

6.4.4.1 Irk Valley

This stage of the process involves an opportunity to develop the ideas on the EASELs in more depth, adding problems and limits to the evolving picture. The use of 'problem trees' as a tool for analysing problems was introduced. In this process, some problems that had been added to the EASEL by the groups were put in the centre of a sheet of paper on which a tree is outlined. An attempt is made to trace the root causes of the problem. The aim of this process is to gain a better understanding of the dynamics and interconnections of problems and their effects. Once the causes of the problem have been discussed, creative thinking techniques are applied to brainstorm possible solutions. One group for instance, was asked an idea 'What if all public transport were free' which was then discussed in relation to the issue of 'apathy'.

Teaching participants to look for the root causes of problems and apply problem-solving techniques to those causes, instead of symptoms of the problem, reinforces learning about sustainability. The Natural Step model is an attempt to understand the root causes of un-sustainability, enabling the development of more effective strategies for moving towards a sustainable system. By including teaching about skills of creative thinking in the session on problem analysis, DesignWays aims to encourage thinking about developing solutions. Green leaves for new ideas were available for brainstorming solutions to the problems. Through using the tool of problem tree analysis, solutions that are more likely to work towards minimising the actual cause of the problem are developed.

Significant problems and limits for the Irk included:

Social

- Lack of mobilisation of skills
- Lack of access to local government
- The need to fit with funding timelines and project deadlines can make meaningful participation difficult
- Sense of being a 'degraded area'
- Social exclusion
- Apathy

Environmental

- Heavily channelised and culverted nature of the river and its tributaries
- Contaminated land
- Rainwater drained off and perceived as useless instead of being used in the landscape.

6.4.4.2 Moston Vale

The tools of problem tree analysis and the creative thinking techniques were not introduced in the Moston Vale workshops due to lack of time, however the problems and limits that were mentioned in the workshops were used as a tool for brainstorming solutions.

In particular, participants felt concern about:

Moston Vale site

- Maintenance issues need to be resolved
- Inappropriate motorbike use of site
- Major road separating north and south of the site
- People’s fear of open space

- Dog fouling and litter

General in area

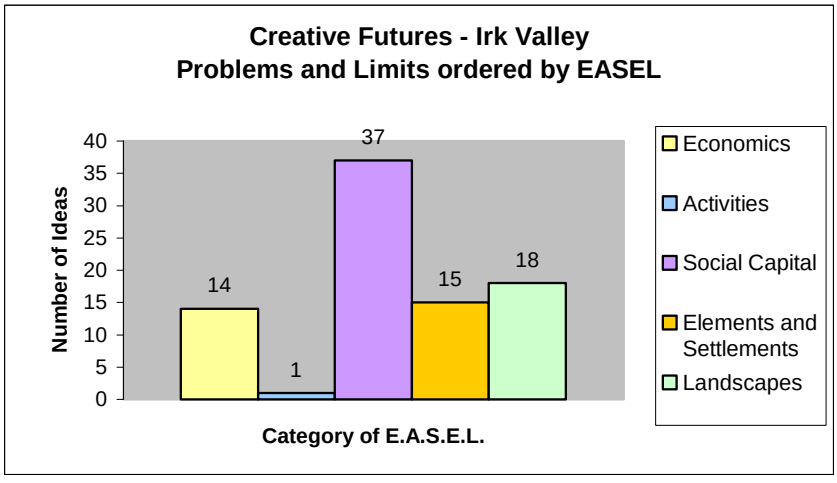
- Insufficient people who care about the area;
- Inconsiderate landlords/short-term tenants;
- Confusion over who is responsible for decision making;
- Decision makers not listening to youth.

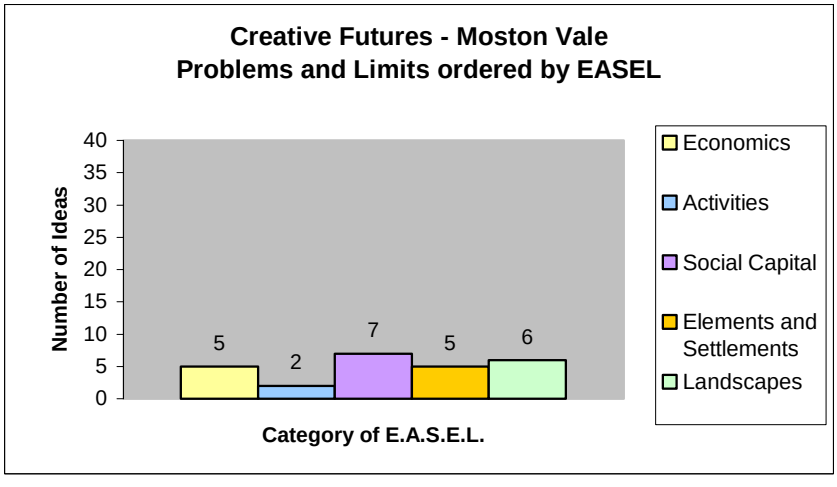
Several of the perceived problems were also seen as potential assets. Initially, the boggy areas were seen as a problem. Many ideas to enhance the wet areas were, however, developed through the brainstorming process of the workshops. The idea of creating a boggy garden gave rise to that of building boardwalks in the wet area. Planting coppice species could provide resources for artistic projects and allow for education about former craft practices, such as basket weaving. The seasonal ponds were seen as potential picnic sites. The fact that the brook is so deeply buried was also seen as a problem. Again, the marshy areas were seen as a resource in this respect, as it would be possible to highlight the former meander of the brook with both the main path and scrapes in the marshy areas, extending the boardwalk to small bridges over these scrapes to give a sense of crossing a waterway.

6.4.4.3 Summary of 'problems and limits' - ideas developed in workshops

The main difference that can be seen between the charts below (Table 6-6) is the perception of a greater number of problems in the 'Social Capital' category emerging from the planning process at the landscape level of scale. This may be due to the focus on *causes* of problems in the workshop, and the fact that many ideas emerged from the discussion of causes of problems that were added to the EASEL. Discussion of causes of problems tended to focus on the social aspects, as people's behaviour was seen as the ultimate cause of economic and environmental problems. Indeed, one of the ideas to emerge from this workshop was that 'the whole cultural values basis needs to be changed in order to fully address the problem'.

Table 6-6 Number of 'problems and limits' uncovered during workshops





6.4.5 Values and Goals

In this stage of the design process participants synthesized goals from the plethora of ideas developed in the previous workshops (Figure 6-21). Developing such goals is an important task in assessing the significance and relative importance of the ideas brainstormed in earlier sessions. Participants started by placing small icons with red exclamation marks by ideas on the EASEL that they considered to be important. Having thus reviewed the ideas developed, the participants were split into small groups to brainstorm goals. The goals were compared and discussed, and were analysed against the system of human needs developed by Max-Neef (e.g. 1991b) (see discussion pg. 262 in Chapter 7).

Figure 6-21 Participants discussing goals

The aim of this analysis was to stimulate discussion about whether or not the goals were moving towards sustainability in the deep sense of the term. This included asking questions about what regeneration is actually trying to achieve, and the nature of meeting human needs, e.g. through endogenous development, or through externally imposed programmes. Sustainable development aims both to protect the natural environment and meet human needs. Thus a discussion about sustainability implies a discussion about the nature of human needs and how they are met. This discussion included asking whether or not the goals developed were likely to improve quality of life in the area in the long run. This stage of synthesising goals is important in terms of developing an overview of the direction of the plans, as well as to provide principles against which future possibilities can be tested (see discussion below in Section 6.4.6 ‘Filtering Ideas’ on pg. 240).

6.4.5.1 Irk Valley

This stage of the planning process requires several iterations, and offered an important opportunity to stimulate discussion amongst stakeholders and decision makers. Further workshops with key stakeholders would be required in order to develop these ideas into measurable targets. An overarching goal for the process was to develop ‘Positive and sustainable land use patterns’. Further goals developed during the Irk planning process included (see database of ideas from workshops for full list, www.holocene.net/irk.htm):

- Restore the river and streams to become connected, dynamic ecosystems
- Create a good place for people and wildlife, with increased biodiversity
- Develop high quality, well-managed, locally owned and accessible countryside, with clean, open water and rivers
- Create a pleasant, healthy and safe place to live, work and play for all generations
- Create an opportunity for self determination and control over life
- Actively promote and celebrate diversity in the community
- Civic pride - a vibrant and healthy society
- Continuous, democratic and meaningful consultation
- A large variety of meaningful employment opportunities for all
- Good, sustainable transport system
- Legislation raises quality standards and supports holistic goals
- Pursuit of quality in executing regeneration and plans

These goals could provide a fruitful starting point for further workshops at the local level of scale, such as at Moston Vale, with a two-way flow of feedback. The goals could then inform discussion about priorities for the local area, whilst developing goals for the local areas could inform planning in the larger area of the Irk Valley Project.

6.4.5.2 Moston Vale

The discussion of goals in the Moston Vale workshops was focused on the site itself (due to lack of time). This enabled participants to clarify what was important to them on the site. This information was important for filtering ideas to be considered for further development in the site plan. New ideas for the site also emerged from this discussion of goals.

From discussions in the previous workshop in which the concept of sustainability was introduced, the goal of developing organic land management[51] was stressed by community members, two of which were members of the local Health Forum and were particularly concerned about health issues. This concern was raised in the workshops, and community members were able to discuss the nature of land management with project officers who were also attending. Other goals to emerge from the workshop included:

- Protect and enhance what we have
- Bring people and communities together
- Develop facilities and areas for people of all ages and for many different kinds of activities
- Develop an ongoing programme of activities and opportunities for involvement of people of all ages
- Recycling- composting -waste reprocessing facility including education centre / interpretive materials using history of site as an example
- Create informal country park with meadows and trees
- Create an area that is good for wildlife, including planting species native to the area.

The discussion about creating an area that was good for wildlife led to the long-term goal of restoring the brook, digging out the landfill and returning the brook to its old contours. This stimulated some debate as to feasibility and the need for an ecologically sound way of dealing with the landfill material. In the meantime, highlighting the history of the site, and developing innovative ways of showing where the brook used to be, was seen as important in maintaining the character and developing the educational value of the site.

[51] Management that does not use synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, artificial fertilisers, etc.

Three important goals emerged for the areas surrounding the site:

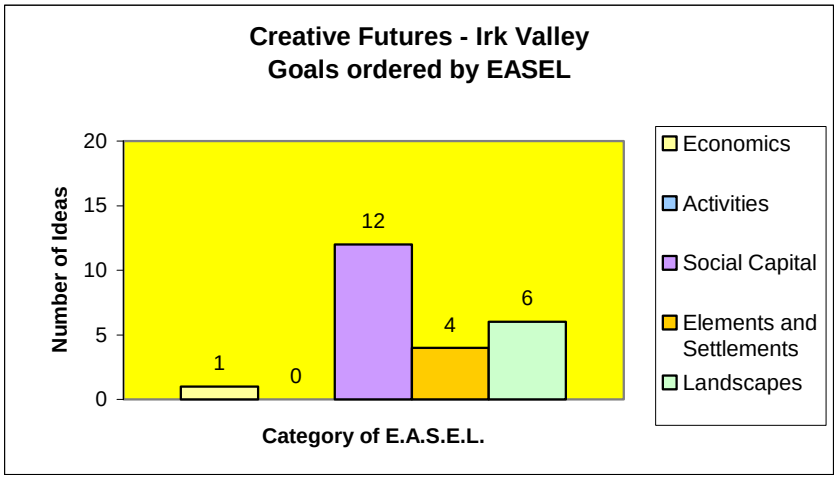
- Central Business Park to show-case sustainability, including Sustainable Urban Drainage, energy efficient building and composting facilities;
- Regenerate and revamp old houses in the neighbourhood to show case ecological building and sustainable technologies.
- Maintain the character of the neighbourhood in regeneration processes

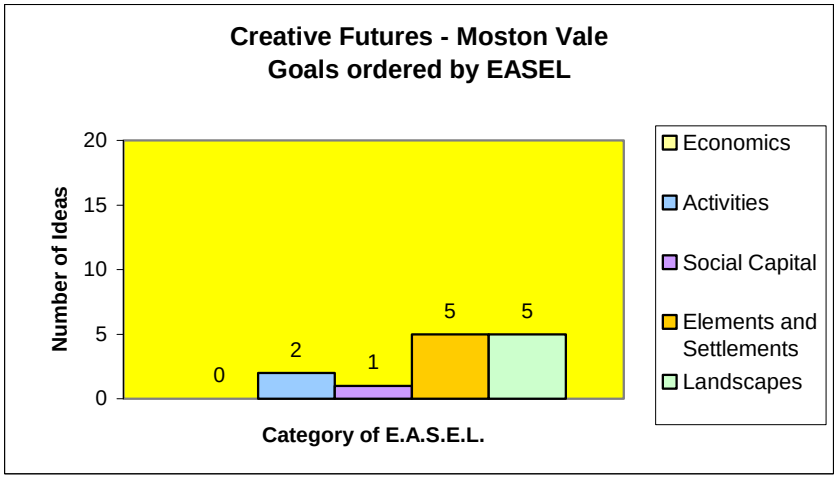
This aspect of the workshop, developing goals, would benefit from further time and attention. The starting list of goals could be used to stimulate discussion about the area. Participants felt that the work on the Moston Vale site could help to catalyse regeneration in the area, and both the goals and new ideas developed in these planning workshops could provide a valuable starting point for further planning and participation in developing plans.

6.4.5.3 Summary of 'values and goals' - ideas developed in workshops

The relatively high number of goals under the category 'Social Capital' at the Irk level of scale of planning, seen in the chart below (Table 6-7), could stem from two factors: the previous discussion about the root causes of many of the problems in the area and also the focus on discussion of human needs in the session. The relative lack of goals in the 'Social Capital' category for the Moston Vale site (especially given the high degree of emphasis placed on social capital in the stage of looking at assets) may stem from the fact that there was very little time for this stage of the process. The facilitator steered the discussion to goals for the physical environment, in particular for the site, as this was seen as important to allow community aspirations to be incorporated into the plan for the site.

Table 6-7 Number of 'goals' developed during workshops

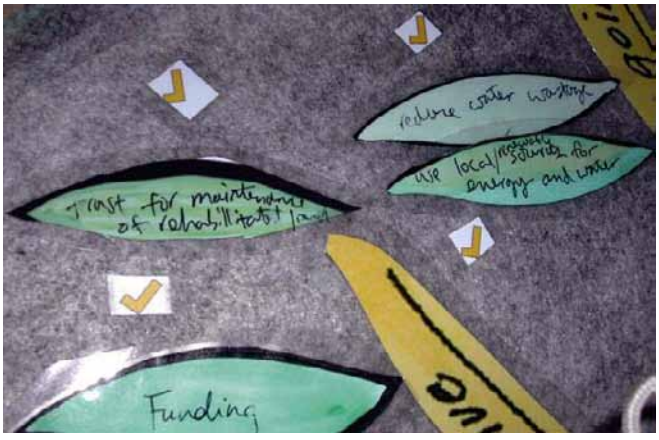




6.4.6 Filtering Ideas

In this stage of the process, the information gathered in the previous steps, looking at areas of un-sustainability, problems, limits and goals, was used to start the process of filtering out the important ideas from the large number of ideas that had been generated (Figure 6-22). These ideas are 'tested against' the long-term goals and criteria of sustainability. This process is important for stimulating discussion about the ideas, and for consolidating learning about the principles of sustainability. Education about sustainability and alternative options for development is an important part of this process. Participants' responses to this process are discussed in the following chapter.

Figure 6-22 Use of icons to highlight ideas



The information from these icons was recorded in the database developed from the ideas put forward in the workshops by participants (using Excel). Databases for both the Irk and Moston processes can be downloaded from http://www.holocene.net/irk.htm. Thus ideas can be 'sorted' by perceived importance and ability to meet goals. This was used to help decide which elements to work with in the final design stage.

6.4.7 Ecological Design

In the stage of ecological design, participants learned skills in applying ecological design principles to the new ideas that had been generated during the design process. This process helps to develop further ideas about how to increase the ecological sustainability of the project. This involves a consideration of flows, networks and the edges between nested systems. The future possibilities considered by the participants to be important for advancing the goals of the project were elaborated and developed (Figure 6-23). The aim is to design systems that are suited to their context, minimising negative social and environmental consequences, whilst maximising beneficial synergies. The concept of ecological design was described in more detail in Chapter 5, and the tools used to apply this process are described in more detail in Chapter 7.

6.4.7.1 Irk Valley

In this workshop, participants used the information developed in the earlier workshop on sustainability in the 'Analysis of Flow' charts to look at possibilities for reuse and cyclical, as opposed to linear, flows of resources.

Figure 6-23 Different layers of 'Nodes and Networks' charts

Colour Codes for Nodes and Networks Charts:

- Blue = water
- Yellow = energy
- Green = biological nutrients
- Grey = technical nutrients
- Purple = social flows
- Gold = money

Discussion about flows and sources of energy, water, biological nutrients (e.g. materials that come from natural sources and can be composted at the end of use), and technical nutrients (materials that cannot be composted at the end of use, such as minerals, metals and synthetic compounds) provided important information that was used in determining possible clusters of elements and structures in the later stage, Design Synthesis. These ideas are noted in the spreadsheet 'Nodes and Networks'. Some key ideas to emerge from this process included:

- Waste water collection to supply irrigation for urban agriculture
- Creation of a timber station to process products from community forestry, including a mobile charcoal kiln
- Use of forest products from community forests in small enterprises in the area
- A link between community composting and schools, information and educational link to composting/ children learn about the environment
- Moston Vale site providing crafts materials, e.g. reeds, for local artists
- Developing links between local nurseries and urban demonstration gardens, educating people about integrated pest management and providing plant 'starter kits' for wildlife gardening

6.4.7.2 Moston Vale

In the Moston Vale workshops some of the tools used in the Irk planning process were introduced. 'Nodes and Networks' charts were used to discuss possible flows of money, information and people. The use of the social nodes and networks tool (Figure 6-24) stimulated discussion about links to local artistic programmes, and ways of maximising school involvement on the site.

Figure 6-24 Consideration of social networks as they relate to Moston Vale

This aspect of the design process was somewhat neglected in the Moston Vale workshops, given the time constraints. The ideas developed in the Moston Vale process benefited, however, from being used as an example of how to 'flesh out'

the concepts developed in the Irk planning process. This meant that the ideas from the Moston workshops were further elaborated and integrated with the landscape analysis in workshops in the Irk planning process. The plans developed were thus more ecologically sound, whilst still retaining the flavour of the concepts suggested by Moston residents. This process would have been improved by a further workshop at the Moston Vale level of scale.

6.4.8 Landscape Analysis

This stage of the process involved a more in-depth analysis of landscape ecology and historical information than that carried out earlier, brainstorming assets and new ideas using the EASEL (see Section 6.42 ‘Context’ on pg. 219). Maps and geographical information are made available and referred to throughout the process. In this stage landscape ecology is used as a further stage of filtering ideas and gaining an understanding of the essential capital of an area that needs to be protected and enhanced.

Important landscape features for both the community and wildlife were mapped on overlays, synthesised from several sources: the Sites and Monuments Record, from the Archaeology Department of the University of Manchester, the 1849 Ordinance Survey map of the area and the Phase One Habitat Survey for Manchester. Participants’ additional knowledge of the area was noted on overlays.

Key points of interest were identified, and later used to develop ideas for historic features for interpretation and themed trails. The potential for linking adjoining areas of woodland using green links, such as street trees and tree-lined bicycle paths, was noted. The possibility of integrating water recycling into the landscape was also discussed, (e.g. through household water recycling, and the use of constructed wetlands and swales to help filter run-off from potentially polluted sites).

The potential for re-naturalisation of streams and rivers was discussed. Creating networks of cycle and pedestrian paths, especially along waterways, was seen as important. The river would be more valued if people could see and use it.

6.4.9 Integrated Decision making

Decision making in this process is designed to help deal with potentially conflicting aims, and to increase the likelihood of achieving sustainable solutions. This stage of the process involved returning to the T/EASEL icons used in 'filtering ideas'. Checks were made to see if the ideas being discussed in the landscape design were still considered to be the most important, and were still understood to be advancing the goals of the group. Areas noted as problematic from the perspective of sustainability could be seen from the red triangles showing violations of the TNS system condition. These were revisited in the light of information gained during the ecological design phase.

The information from these T/EASEL icons was also recorded in the database. Thus ideas can be 'sorted' by the different factors used in decision making. This was used to help decide which elements to work with in the final design stage.

A possible indication of the value of the TNS system conditions as a filter for ideas stems from an analysis of the proportion of ideas brainstormed in the early part of the process that were incorporated in the final design. Five 'future possibilities' out of the 120 brainstormed in the first stage of the planning process for the Irk were included in the final map. Only 15 of the total of 78[52] ideas included in the final plans came from the first three workshops (before the TNS workshops).

6.4.10 Design Synthesis

This stage of the design process involved synthesising the landscape information with the future possibilities and the ecological design ideas. Participants worked on maps and overlays at both levels of scale, developing a framework for planning for the Irk Valley and Moston Vale.

Overlays of ecological design ideas were used to help build a master plan for the project, over an OS base map. Design elements, such as community gardens; planting schemes; sustainable housing; and wind farms, were written onto 'leaves' which were then moved around on the overlays of maps. Different clusters of

[52] This total of 78 was derived from the total number of icons on the final maps minus the number of icons that were repeated in several places (e.g. SUDS which was repeated in several different areas).

elements and their relationship to the underlying landscapes were discussed, to form a draft plan. From this draft, a framework was developed for future planning in the Irk Valley project area.

6.4.10.1 Irk Valley

At the landscape level of scale, a framework was developed for future planning in the Irk Valley. Two maps were produced for the Irk Valley Project area. These maps[53] are part of the 'Green Map System' (see www.greenmap.org). The author was certified as Manchester's 'Green Mapper', and the maps created have been made available through the international Green Map System. One map focuses on the landscape and historical aspects of the plan (Figure 6-25), the other on the built environment and the potential to enhance sustainability in the human infrastructure in the area (Figure 6-26).

[53] The maps were produced and designed by:

- Joanne Tippett (CURE)
- Zinnia Clark (CURE)
- Matt Brown (Countryscape)
- Drew Anderson (Groundwork)
- Nuala Murphy (CURE)

Figure 6-25 Final Plan - Creative Futures, Irk Valley - Landscape Visions

The Figure 'Final Plan - Creative Futures, Irk Valley - Landscape Visions' shows ideas mainly focused on the open space areas, but there are some links throughout the built up areas. In addition to the ideas discussed above, several key ideas developed in this map include:

- The need to open up access to the river, capitalising on the industrial and historical heritage in any trails that are developed
- New developments should allow living room for the river, and where possible be used to open up waterways
- In flood plains, new developments should take into account need to adapt to extreme climatic conditions and climate change
- Community planting schemes from ancient woodlands nursery to extend the coverage of native species in the area
- Developing zones of islands of habitat for natural predators as part of a city - wide Integrated Pest Management schemes
- Trial innovative bioremediation techniques in the polluted waterways and on contaminated land, and to develop scientific research into practical tools for remediation. This could be tied into school science programmes in the area, building on work in bio-monitoring that already occurs

A further map, Figure 'Final Plan - Creative Futures, Irk Valley - Ecological Design', focuses on the built up areas and the infrastructure required to create more integrated, cyclic use of resources in the area. There is a concentration in areas of upcoming regeneration and renewal, as these areas were seen to offer more opportunities for change in the immediate future. Four of the wards in the IVP are in the North Manchester Housing Market Renewal strategy. Concern was expressed in the workshops that without a vision for sustainability, much of this money might be spent on projects that will not enhance the long-term viability of the area.

Figure 6-26 Final Plan - Creative Futures, Irk Valley - Ecological Design

The open spaces were seen as an important catalyst for ecologically informed design, especially for managing urban rain run-off, growing food, forestry and composting. The creation of pocket parks was seen as important for developing links between the large open areas, and as sites for small-scale water management in the hardscape of this urban area.

Clusters of ideas around Moston Vale and in Harpurhey reflected the fact that planning for the Moston Vale site informed the overall planning process. There is scope for further work to integrate the ecological design ideas developed in this process into the regeneration plans for these neighbourhoods.

6.4.10.2 Moston Vale

A Master Site Plan (Figure 6-27) was developed for the site stressing the importance of historical information and interpretation, 'Final Plan - Creative Futures, Moston Vale', shown below.

The overall tenor of the plan rests in enhancing existing features, such as the existing woodland in the Witches' Ravine, the boggy areas in the marshes. Biodiversity enhancement was seen as an important aspect of the plan, with large areas developed as wildflower meadows[54]. One idea to emerge from brainstorming was to accentuate the small hills that have developed due to subsidence, planting them with clumps of trees (appropriate to the soil and site) so that they become more distinctive features.

[54] Such development may require measures to adapt the soil, for example making nutrients less available or decreasing fertility, if the wildflowers are to be able to out compete the existing rank grass vegetation. A mosaic of diversity could be developed by selective treatment of the underlying soil structure (e.g. mixing with crushed building rubble in areas where wildflowers are desired) (Handley 2003, pers. comm.). It will also require an adaptation in land management. On one day the author was conducting interviews in Moston Vale, the City Council maintenance crew mowed the large strip of wildflowers that had been planted by the MVRA and IVP, just as it was coming into flower.

Figure 6-27 Master Site Plan - Creative Futures, Moston Vale

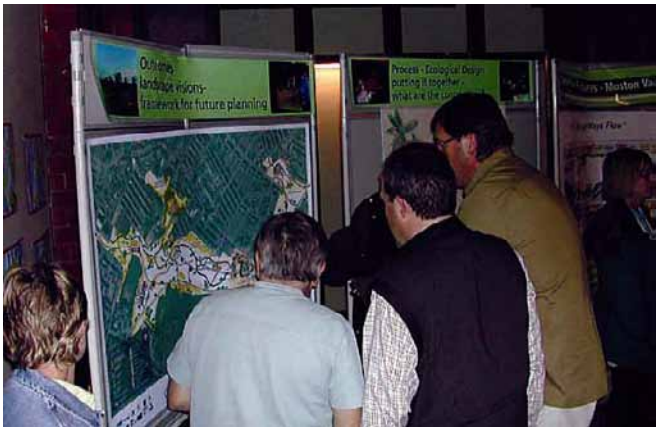
It was seen as very important to look for creative ways of bringing a memory of the brook back into the landscape. This included creating the main path, Moston Brook Way, along the former meander of the brook (enhanced by wetland scrapes in areas where the brook meandered too much for a path). Boardwalks could help to accentuate the experience of walking over the wetland scrapes, as well as making the terrain passable year round. This path could be enhanced with artwork.

Community composting facilities formed the core of the area focused on allotments. Facilities for composting were seen as an important addition, both for the community and for the site. Interpretation about the history of the site as a landfill was seen as a good starting point for educational materials about the need for composting.

Discussions about the nature of the regeneration in the area, and the fact that there will be a considerable amount of demolition of buildings led to a discussion of the potential use of much of this material. An idea that emerged from this was to include demonstrations of garden features made from recycled materials. Further ideas that were discussed were: gardening for wildlife; and integrated pest management, through the use of herbs and companion planting.

6.4.11 Action Planning

Figure 6-28 Residents viewing Moston Vale Plan



The plans for Moston Vale and the landscape framework for the Irk Valley were presented for discussion to the Moston Vale Residents' Association, the steering group of the Irk Valley Project, staff in the Mersey Basin Campaign and to a workshop attended by over 50 regional and local stakeholders (Figure 6-28 and Figure 6-29). Attendees were able to see the results of the planning process. They learned about DesignWays in hands-on workshops looking at priorities and means of achieving the plans, facilitated by participants of the DesignWays workshops for the Irk Valley. The action planning stage requires further workshops with key players and bodies who could implement the plans. Plans should also be reviewed and revised later, after some of the ideas have been implemented.

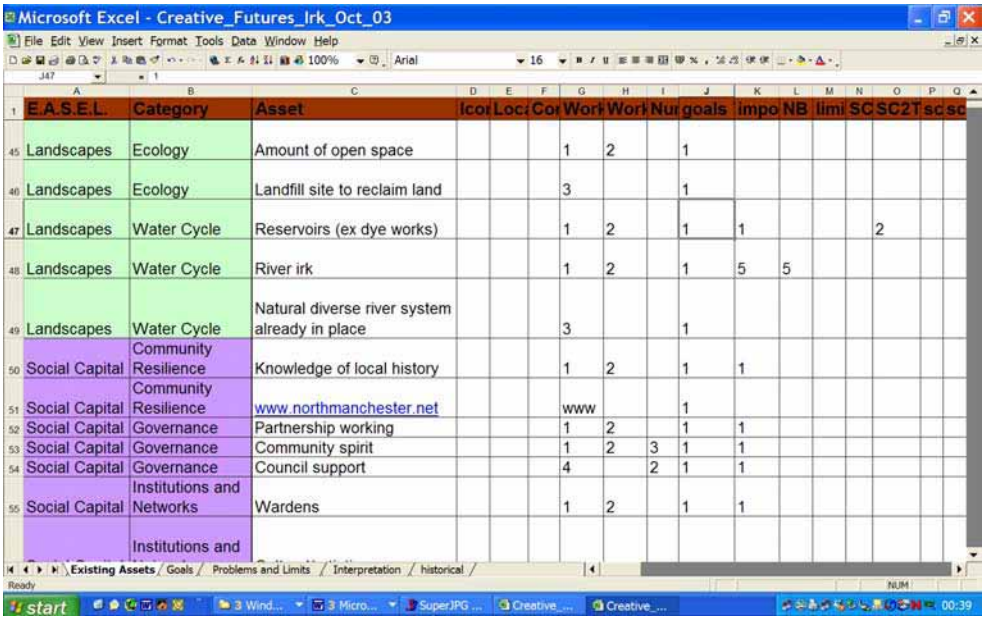
6.5 Project Outputs and Conclusion

The outputs of the process included the plans for the Irk Valley and Moston Vale.

Figure 6-29 EASELs filled in for the Irk Valley planning process

The Moston Vale plan is seen as the basis for regenerating the site, as part of Phase One of the Newlands Project. The framework developed for the Irk Valley, both as maps and as a database of existing assets and new ideas detailed with information about sustainability and local significance (Figure 6-30), will feed into ongoing consultation in North Manchester.

Figure 6-30 Screen shot of database of assets for Irk Valley



Microsoft Excel - Creative_Futures_Irk_Oct_03

	E.A.S.E.L.	Category	Asset	Icor	Loc	Cor	Work	Work	Nur	goals	impo	NB	limi	SC	SC2T	sc	sc
45	Landscapes	Ecology	Amount of open space				1	2		1							
46	Landscapes	Ecology	Landfill site to reclaim land				3			1							
47	Landscapes	Water Cycle	Reservoirs (ex dye works)				1	2		1	1				2		
48	Landscapes	Water Cycle	River irk				1	2		1	5	5					
49	Landscapes	Water Cycle	Natural diverse river system already in place				3			1							
50	Social Capital	Community Resilience	Knowledge of local history				1	2		1	1						
51	Social Capital	Community Resilience	www.northmanchester.net				www			1							
52	Social Capital	Governance	Partnership working				1	2		1	1						
53	Social Capital	Governance	Community spirit				1	2	3	1	1						
54	Social Capital	Governance	Council support				4		2	1	1						
55	Social Capital	Institutions and Networks	Wardens				1	2		1	1						
		Institutions and															

Existing Assets / Goals / Problems and Limits / Interpretation / historical /

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Organisations including North Manchester Partnerships, the Forestry Commission and the Irk Valley Project see this framework as a valuable source of information for strategic planning.

An article has been written about the process in the *Source* magazine of the Mersey Basin Campaign (Willis 2003). The process was run as an Open College Network accredited course, and eight participants achieved a 'One Credit', 'Level Three' qualification ‘Introduction to DesignWays – Core Planning Skills’.

The outcomes of the process are discussed in more depth in the following two chapters. First the participants’ experience of the process is analysed, and then the potential of the process to help meet the challenges posed by the WFD, as developed in Chapter 4 of this thesis, is explored.