

Irwell City Park

Stakeholder engagement summary

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1.1 Introduction

During Stage 2 of the Big Lottery Fund Living Landmarks programme, which took place between September 2006 and May 2007, a truly innovative and creative engagement programme was developed and delivered, to make sure that the designs for Irwell City Park (ICP) were built on the needs and aspirations of local people and other stakeholders.

Over 1500 people contributed their thoughts and ideas through one of the 50 events and activities that took place. In addition, 40,000 leaflets, brochures, postcards and questionnaires were distributed.

Local community and voluntary groups, supported by a wider facilitation team, led many of the consultation activities. The University of Manchester and Urbis Museum also led workshops with students and children.

1.2 The team

The Stage 2 engagement programme was developed by the Stakeholder Engagement Working Group. Working group members were selected to broadly represent the communities of Manchester, Salford and Trafford, and included local residents, representatives from the community and voluntary sector and special interest organisations. One of the local residents was elected to sit on the Irwell City Park Project Board, to feed the views of the group to the Board and vice versa.

The following organisations, groups and individuals helped to deliver the Stage 2 engagement programme:

- Ordsall Community Arts
- Salford Disability Forum
- Urbis museum
- Wythenshawe FM Community Radio
- University of Manchester
- Community Views Count (CVC)
- Community Network 4 Manchester
- Manchester Residents Association
- Local residents
- Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal team
- Environment Network for Manchester
- Action Irwell (part of the Mersey Basin Campaign)
- The three Local Strategic Partnerships - Partners IN Salford, the Manchester Partnership and the Trafford Partnership
- The four Irwell City Park partners - Salford, Manchester and Trafford Councils and Central Salford Urban Regeneration Company
- Vision 21

1.3 Consultation activities

Consultation activities were designed to reach as many people as possible, across a number of locations and through methods that encouraged harder to reach communities to take part. Examples of some of the activities are detailed below:

- 70 strategic community stakeholders contributed to a workshop event in December 2006;
- Local community and voluntary groups led a range of innovative activities including street theatre, community radio broadcasts, focus groups, doorstep interviews and workshop sessions. Almost 900 people were engaged through these methods, including residents living nearby the river and further afield, as well as communities of identity such as people with disabilities, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, older people and Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups;
- Presentations were made to school headteachers to seek feedback, and further activities were arranged with children and young people. Working with Urbis museum and the University of Manchester, four workshops took place involving over 120 school children and students;
- Other activities included roadshows, staffed stands at existing events, and online questionnaires. Around 300 people gave their feedback through these methods;
- Developers were consulted on an ongoing basis through group sessions and one to one meetings;
- Businesses were engaged through a business event as well as individual meetings;
- Special interest organisations gave feedback through a group question and answer session, individual meetings, emails and letters and at the Mersey Basin annual conference;
- Supporting tools and materials were produced such as maps, display stands and PowerPoint presentations;
- A visual identity and website for the project were developed and a DVD produced; and
- A PR strategy was put in place and delivered.

1.4 Consultation feedback

More than 1,500 people directly contributed their thoughts and ideas for Irwell City Park. Across all stakeholder groups there was strong support for the Irwell City Park project.

84% of respondents overall felt that it was extremely important (67%) or important (17%) to improve the river and surrounding area.

The most enthusiastic groups were business owners (95% feeling it was extremely important or important), residents and leisure users (both 87%) and those working in the area (86%).

There was a good mix of stakeholders consulted through questionnaires, with a fairly even male (49%) to female (51%) ratio, and with all age groups represented.

Almost 30% of respondents were children and young people (24 years and under) and over 17% of people were 55 years or older.

People felt that Irwell City Park should:

- Connect communities and create greater community cohesion and pride
- Be a safe, well maintained green environment
- Provide new leisure and recreational activities to encourage people to visit and use the area
- Improve community health and wellbeing
- Enhance the educational opportunities in the area
- Be accessible to everyone
- Provide appropriate facilities such as seating and toilets
- Improve the environment and conserve wildlife

The most popular events/facilities required were:

- Places to eat and drink
- Wildlife and nature areas/green spaces
- Festivals, fun days and grand events
- Music, dance and drama

All respondent groups identified they would use the park for leisure, both at weekends and during the week. Other popular uses were for evening entertainment and to attend specific events of interest.

Just under 700 people requested to be kept informed about the project, with over 100 people expressing the desire to play a more active role and be involved in the project as it develops. An extensive database now exists to ensure that people continue to be involved as the ICP proposals move forward.

1.5 Consultation influence on design

The design of Irwell City Park reflects the needs and aspirations of local people, businesses, user groups and other stakeholders, and builds on the key themes from the consultation.

The table below outlines the main priorities that emerged from the consultation, and explains how the designs for Irwell City Park have been influenced by these priorities:

What people wanted	How Irwell City Park provides what people want
Connect communities and create greater community cohesion and pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong linear connection along the river between communities and amenity centres. • Additional connections across the river at Clippers Quay, Greengate and The Meadows. • Improved maintenance and security along river. • Better access to and information on historical features and buildings. • Ongoing programme of creative engagement will ensure communities are involved in elements of design and ensure final proposals reflect local character.
Improve community health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, attractive routes will encourage people to walk or cycle to get to work, the shops or just for leisure. • Routes have been designed to maximise accessibility, legibility and safety to ensure that people have the confidence to use them regularly. • Most of the park will be accessible by bike and on foot. Where physical constraints do not allow this, alternative routes will be provided. • New accessible public spaces will provide locations for outdoor recreation and play. • Play facilities have been incorporated into appropriate spaces. The design of these will be developed through engagement with the relevant communities. • The Park Manager and Ranger team will work with local PCTs and other organisations to develop a programme of healthy walks and activities.
Be accessible to everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible, well signed access routes to the park will be provided from all key points. • The route has been designed to comply with Design for Access 2 and most stretches of route will be fully accessible for wheelchairs, pushchairs and cyclists. Where physical constraints do not allow this, well marked alternative routes will be provided. • Regular seating/resting points will be incorporated along the route. • Accessible toilets will be provided at four strategic locations.
Be a safe, well maintained welcoming green environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety of the park has been a central concern and has been addressed in a number of ways. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved and increased lighting throughout. ○ Regular, well signposted access and exit points. ○ Focuses of activity at regular intervals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning Guidance will ensure that development overlooks the park and provides natural surveillance. ○ A dedicated ranger team will regularly patrol the routes and have close links with local police. ○ A dedicated ranger team will ensure a high standard of maintenance for the park. ● The three partner authorities have signed up to a long term commitment to provide revenue funding for the maintenance of the park to a high standard. ● The use of attractive, high quality materials throughout the park and a range of planting will ensure that the park is welcoming and provides a green environment wherever practical.
<p>Provide new leisure and recreational activities to encourage people to visit and use the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The designs have tried to ensure that existing activities such as rowing and angling are encouraged in a number of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of fishing pegs. ○ Provision of 'beacons' at 250m intervals along riverbank to act as markers for rowing course. ○ Route improves access for land-based support/training (cyclists) for rowers. ● Activities and events will take place once construction of the park is complete. This will provide opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdoor markets. ○ Outdoor performances and shows. ○ Large local festivals and gatherings. ○ Informal sports. ○ Play for toddlers to teenagers. ○ Cycling and running. ○ Themed walks focused on local heritage, wildlife or ecology. ○ High quality play areas.
<p>Enhance the educational opportunities in the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The park will enable educational activities to take place, either formal or informal. Potential subject areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industrial revolution . ○ Roman and mediaeval Manchester and Salford. ○ Ecological studies at The Meadows ecopark. ○ Geography and geology. ● The park will provide a direct and easy connection between a wide range of museums and visitor attractions, improving their accessibility and improving links between them. Some of the main places of interest along the route include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Imperial War Museum North. ○ The Lowry. ○ Ordsall Hall. ○ The Museum of Science and Industry. ○ The People's History Museum. ○ John Rylands Library. ○ Manchester and Salford Cathedrals. ○ URBIS. ○ Salford Museum and Art Gallery. ● The ranger service will actively liaise with schools and other educational establishments to develop educational programmes.

<p>Provide appropriate facilities such as seating and toilets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilities provided within the park include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdoor amphitheatre ○ Educational base ○ Bike parking and hire ○ Accessible toilets ○ High quality play areas ○ Seating areas ○ Interpretation and information
<p>Improve the environment and conserve wildlife</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Meadows will include a large ecopark area comprising wetland and marginal habitats. ● Smaller areas along the route will include planting to diversify and reinforce riverbank habitats. ● Bat boxes and nesting boxes will be provided along the route at suitable locations. ● Recycled materials will be used wherever practical. ● Inert construction waste will be used to provide fill for the mounds at the Meadows. ● Lighting columns will have PV panels to generate power for the lights. ● Other opportunities for the use of sustainable technologies will be explored at detailed design stage such as smaller wind turbines and water power.

Stakeholders should note that designs are still at the concept stage and further more detailed design work will be undertaken to firm up these proposals.

1.6 Future stakeholder engagement

There are three main stages to future stakeholder engagement for Irwell City Park;

Stage 1: June - November 2007

During this time the Irwell City Park bid will be considered by the BIG Lottery, and successful projects will be announced in November 2007. During this stage, leaflets containing consultation feedback and design details will be distributed, and a series of public exhibitions will take place over the summer. Activities to raise awareness about the project will continue, and the Irwell City Park website (www.irwellcitypark.info) will provide up to date information about the project, and a way for people to give their messages of support and contact details.

Stage 2: December 2007 - May 2008

If Lottery funding is secured, Irwell City Park will progress into the detailed design phase, and further consultation and involvement will take place to ensure that people's views and comments continue to shape the proposals. Encouraging community and voluntary groups to lead consultation activities and develop their skills will continue to be a strong theme during this stage.

Ideas for engagement activities include:

- A People's Panel involving residents and community & voluntary groups
- Targeted activities with harder to reach communities, delivered by local community groups
- Projects with local schools, colleges and universities
- Events for businesses and public agencies
- Capacity building projects and sense of place workshops

A comprehensive communication programme will be delivered alongside consultation activities, helping to promote the project and keep people informed. It is envisaged that many of the activities delivered during this first year will also continue into the longer term. During this time, longer term activities to involve and link people to the park will be explored, for example volunteering schemes and friends groups.

Stage 3: June 2008 - 2012

A longer term plan of communication and engagement will be developed to continue to raise awareness and build enthusiasm about Irwell City Park, and involve local people as the park is constructed. During this time Irwell City Park will become embedded within local structures and strategies, adding value to existing activities and providing new activities that involve and benefit local communities, for example volunteering and employment schemes, friends groups and other activities with local organisations such as schools, employers and the probation service.

Delivering this wide range of involving and innovative methodologies will ensure that the needs of all those living in, working in and visiting the area continue to shape the development of Irwell City Park, both during the detailed design phase and into the future.