



**MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

**Stakeholder  
Engagement  
Report**

(Full Report)

**OUR RIVERS  
OUR CITY**



# GROUNDWORK

GREATER MANCHESTER



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2021



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

:vivid**economics**



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## Contents

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| <b>1. Introduction to “Our Rivers Our City”, Background and Context</b> | page 3  |
| <b>2. Stakeholder Engagement Activities Programme and Overview</b>      | page 4  |
| 2.1 Covid 19 Impact   | page 4  |
| 2.2 Previous consultation activity                                      | page 4  |
| 2.3 Identifying the challenges and opportunities                        |         |
| On-line survey  | page 5  |
| Workshops   | page 5  |
| Community activities  | page 6  |
| Social media  | page 6  |
| Partner engagement  | page 8  |
| Community project bank  | page 8  |
| <b>3. What the Engagement Tells Us</b>                                  |         |
| On-line survey  | page 10 |
| Workshops and partner engagement  | page 12 |
| Social media  | page 16 |
| <b>Appendix 1</b>   |         |
| Challenges and Opportunities report for the Irk River Valley            | page 18 |
| <b>Appendix 2</b>   |         |
| Challenges and Opportunities report for the Medlock River Valley        | page 22 |
| <b>Appendix 3</b>   |         |
| Challenges and Opportunities report for the Mersey River Valley         | page 27 |

## **1. Introduction to “Our Rivers Our City”, Background and Context**

For hundreds of years, the rivers flowing through our City have been central to its success – providing water for industry, for wildlife and for communities. The rivers have survived multiple challenges and continue to flow beneath houses, streets, parks and railways. Today, the river valleys of the Irk, Medlock and Mersey include many of the city’s green spaces, connect Manchester to the wider City Region and contribute to the distinct nature of our neighbourhoods. However, the rivers and their surrounding landscape are also the product of their past usage, and need to evolve in order to claim their rightful place in the story of Manchester’s future. In recent years we have come to understand and recognise how essential the environment is to people’s lives, and the positive impact that access to quality green spaces, water courses and wildlife can have on our quality of life, our health and wellbeing and productivity, and how - if we work with nature - we can tackle many of our future challenges. Our first step on this journey is to develop a long term vision and set of actions which will re-energise the City’s river valleys.

Manchester City Council is developing the Manchester River Valleys Strategy and, in May 2020, commissioned The Environment Partnership, Groundwork Greater Manchester, Mersey Rivers Trust and Vivid Economics to support them by delivering the Our Rivers Our City project. The project aims to develop a long term vision and set of actions which will re-energise the City’s river valleys. It is funded by Grow Green, an EU Horizon2020 project, which aims to create climate and water resilient, healthy and liveable cities by investing in nature-based solutions.

## **2. Stakeholder Engagement Activities Programme and Overview**

On behalf of the partnership, Groundwork Greater Manchester led the stakeholder engagement strategy, developing a plan to reach those who are very knowledgeable about the challenges and opportunities facing the river valleys in Manchester, as well as those who use the river valleys for commuting and recreation.

### **2.1 Covid 19 impact**

We all had our world turned upside down at the end of March 2020 when the country went into lockdown and the Government told us to '*stay home, protect the NHS, save lives*'. At Groundwork we decisively reviewed how we could continue to support our communities and understand the impact of the pandemic would have on the delivery of our existing work and partnerships. For Our Rivers Our City, this meant a review of the stakeholder engagement strategy and frank partnership conversations about changes to our capacity due to staff being furloughed. For that initial period (March to summer), all engagement was delivered virtually. Whilst this worked relatively well for engaged stakeholders, our aspiration to reach parts of our communities that are not usually involved in this kind of work was compromised. To engage those who are seldom heard from takes time to build relationships and trust and is extremely difficult to do via virtual means. When restrictions were relaxed, we were able to commence meaningful conversations with groups of previously unengaged young people but have yet to fully address the inequality in participation when it comes to people from a Black, Asian or UK minority ethnic background. This will continue to be a challenge now that restrictions are tightened again but we continue to talk to community leaders about how they might be involved in later stages.

### **2.2 Previous consultation activity**

We recognise that it is important not to duplicate recent engagement activity, encourage consultation fatigue and instead, build on what has gone before. Therefore we undertook a review of previous consultation activities to consider and incorporate their findings into our plan.

This included:

- IGNITION - Citizen Engagement Survey
- Grow Green - Baseline Consultation Survey
- Every Child Wild
- BRIL

- My Wild City
- Restoring the Medlock
- Nature Near Me consultation
- Park Strategy - Plant a Seed Consultation
- Environmental Volunteering

### 2.3 Identifying challenges and opportunities

We believe the vision for Manchester's river valleys should be co-created with those who use and value our rivers now, and will do so in the future. Local residents and workers are the experts about their place and their local knowledge, skills and expertise must be harnessed to get under the skin of both challenge and opportunity. We therefore created a range of opportunities allowing us to dig down further into what we know from previous work.

#### On-line survey

Developed by TEP, we ran an on-line survey that aimed to establish how much people value and use the rivers, what they don't like and how they would like to use them. The survey ran from July 2020 – January 2021 and was promoted via the social media campaign. We also created the opportunity for respondents to log specific challenges and opportunities on maps and to comment on them.

In the online survey we asked questions about:

- **The respondents** - to help identify gaps in engagement and gauge whether we were reaching those who are interested in environmental matters and to identify a potential volunteer base and collaborators;
- **The rivers** - to gauge the degree of understanding of the benefits from river valleys and gauge how valued they are;
- **Specific challenges and opportunities** - to capture successful project activity and best practice, identify things that are perceived as 'problems' and to develop community project bank.

#### Workshops

Delivered virtually with TEP and MRT, we conducted a series of workshops with interested partners, organisations and individuals to introduce the project and its aims and to capture their thoughts about the challenges and opportunities facing each river valley. We held separate

workshops for each river valley to allow us to focus more clearly and understand the different cultures and experiences in each valley.

Sessions included:

- Irwell Catchment Partnership members - 20th August 2020, 15 participants.
- Irk River Valley - 1st October 2020, 18 participants.
- Medlock River Valley - 15th October 2020, 15 participants.
- Mersey River Valley - 22nd October 2020, 10 participants.

### **Community activities**

To make sure our reach went beyond people who have easy access to engagement channels, we had originally planned to deliver a number of open access opportunities in the river valleys themselves, to have targeted conversations with the wide range of people who live there.

The number of events and attendees were reduced due to Covid restrictions however the following community activities still took place:

- Crumpsall Park holiday play scheme - 27th August 2020, 5 young people aged 10 – 14.
- Chorlton Youth Group bike ride along the River Mersey - 28th October 2020, 7 young people aged 13 – 15.
- Challenges and opportunities 1-1 discussion with Ian Sheldrake, Venture Out (Canoeing and Kayaking on the Mersey) - 20th November 2020.
- 1-1 discussion with Mike Kane MP - 30th November 2020.
- Poll on Anglers' Facebook pages - November 2020.
- Irk River Valley community workshop - 2nd December 2020, 8 participants.
- Medlock River Valley community workshop - 8th December 2020, 4 participants.
- Northenden & Didsbury challenges and opportunities community workshop - 9th December 2020, 15 participants.
- Mersey River Valley challenges and opportunities community workshop - 10th December 2020, 13 participants.

### **Social media campaign**

As part of our endeavours to reach those who live and work in our river valleys, we included a social media campaign as part of our engagement strategy, which became increasingly important during the spring lockdown. We created a [project summary](#) document to download and a short film and animation to watch, we were able to drive interest to consistent messages and

opportunities to get involved. Participating partners agreed on the project hashtag of **#OurRiversOurCity** which partners and supporters could use when sharing any content.



We used the following social media platforms, tagging partners in posts throughout the campaign, making it easy for them to share and promote content.

- **Facebook** was used to reach community members and activists. The Groundwork Greater Manchester page, Greening Greater Manchester group & localised Facebook community

groups which we are active and respected within, for example 'Middleton & Blackley', 'Everything Stockport' and 'Irlam and Cadishead community Views' were all used.

- **Twitter** was used to reach partners, campaigners and environmentalists. We mainly used the Groundwork Greater Manchester & Irwell Catchment Partnership accounts.
- **LinkedIn** was used to reach businesses and industry professionals via the Groundwork Greater Manchester page.

In addition, we encouraged partners to submit a river related blog that would generate interest from new parties, driving traffic to the webpage with the project summary, films and link to the on-line survey.

Blogs included:

- Flagships and Standards – Why Plans, Policies and Strategies Count: Dave Barlow, MCC - [Read blog](#).
- Manchester's Rivers: Enhancing the City's Long Term Environment Plan: Jennifer Lane, IGNITION and GMCA - [Read blog](#).
- Manchester's River Valleys can Enhance the Northern Gateway: Matt Doran, MCC Northern Gateway Strategy & Coordination Lead - [Read blog](#).
- Lockdown and Beyond: Green Spaces Are More Important Than Ever: Hilary Wood, My Wild City, Lancashire Wildlife Trust - [Read blog](#).
- River Access Can Help to Tackle Climate Change: Mike Kane, MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East - [Read blog](#).

### **Partner engagement**

In recognition of the limited opportunities key partners with detailed knowledge had to share what they know due to the online format of the workshops, we organised a series of 1-1 meetings following the group workshops. This provided an opportunity for them to reflect on the discussions at the workshops and to add in anything not already captured. Meetings were held with representatives from United Utilities, Environment Agency, Irwell Catchment Partnership, MCC and Trafford Countryside Management Partnership.

### **Community project bank**

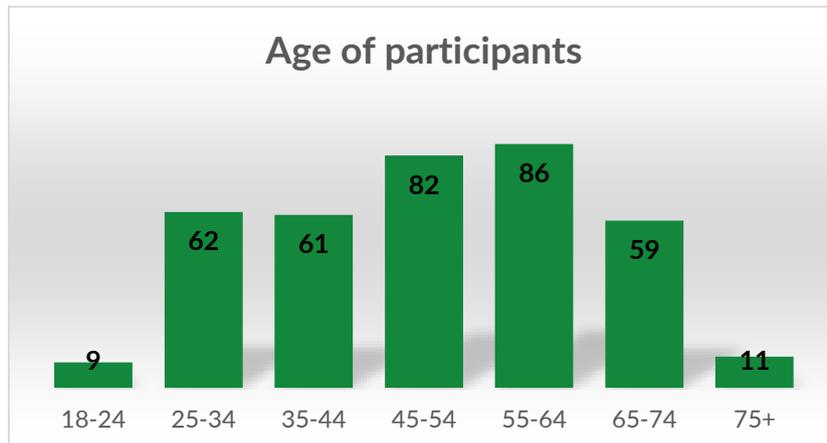
The community have highlighted a number of low/no cost ideas project ideas during the Our Rivers Our City engagement activities, many that could be taken forward by the community

themselves or with a little support from agencies. These have been captured in a community project bank and wherever possible Groundwork will seek to work with community groups to identify funding for these ideas and / or to connect groups and individuals with similar ambitions.

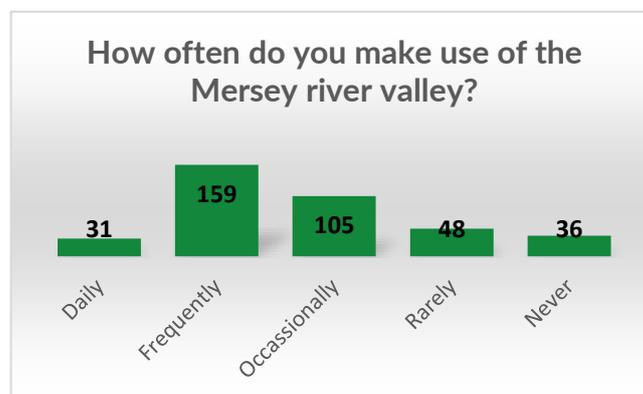
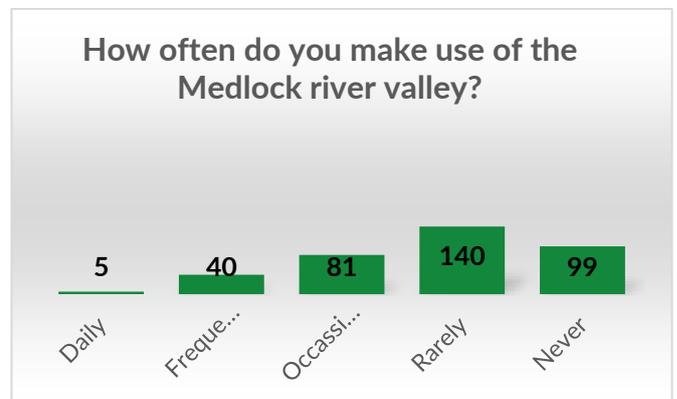
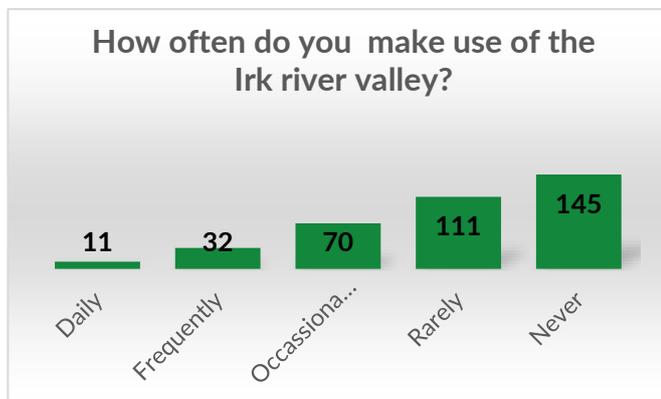
### 3. What the Engagement Tells Us

#### On-line survey

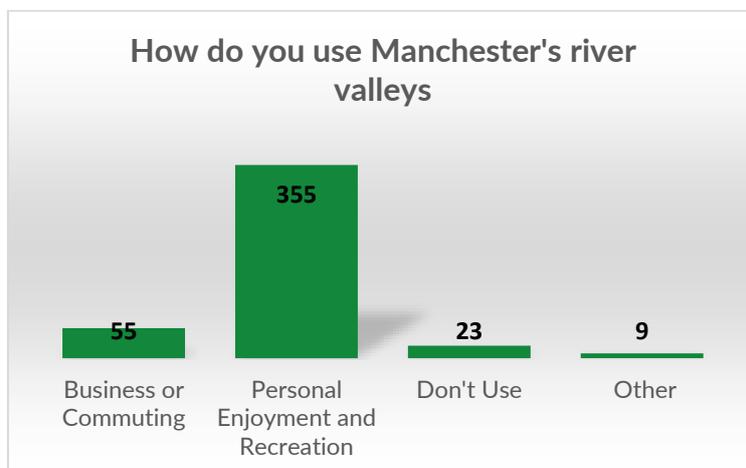
427 people took part in the survey which was open between July 2020 and January 2021 and promoted via social media. 43% of respondents were women and 9% described themselves as something other than white British.



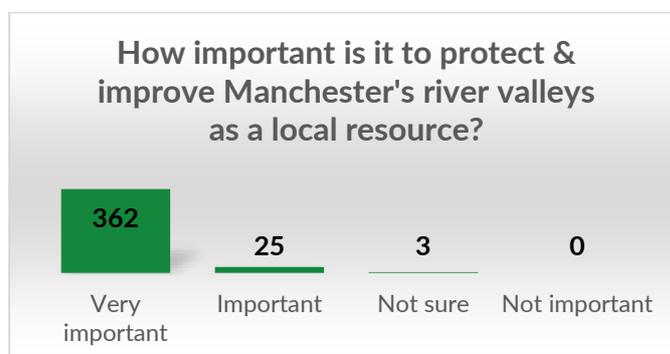
It is clear that the majority of survey respondents are more familiar with the Mersey than the Medlock or the Irk which have similar usage patterns.



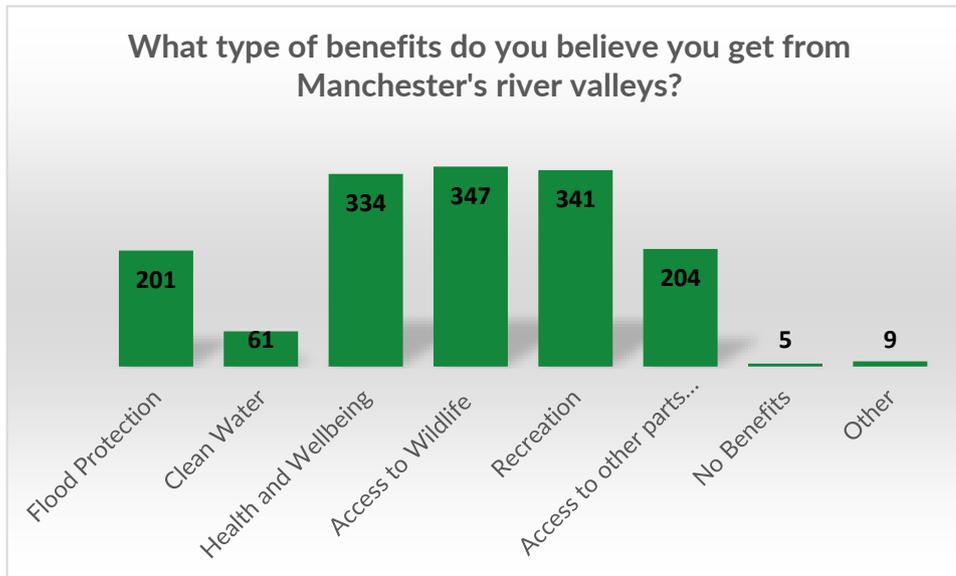
Respondents are overwhelmingly accessing the river valleys for enjoyment and recreation purposes. Other reasons stated included walking, cycling, fishing, studying plant life, research and volunteering for the Trans Pennine Trail.



We asked respondents how important it is to protect and improve Manchester's river valleys as a local resource. No one who took part in the survey felt that it is not important, although three were not sure.



We then asked respondents what benefits they felt that they were getting from accessing the river valleys; we offered a range of options as shown in the graph. Other reasons stated included walking, cycling, fishing, improved air quality, cooling, environmental education, exercise, socialising, studying plant life and one respondent *stated 'getting both joy and despair from accessing the river valleys'*.



### Workshops & partner engagement

Twelve young people (aged 10-15years) and 100 adults took part in conversations about the challenges and opportunities facing Manchester's river valleys between August and December 2020. Their comments have been grouped around the themes of:

- Flood protection
- Clean water
- Looking after wildlife / biodiversity
- Improving access or safety
- Attractiveness
- Recreation
- Heritage

We found that people were being proactive and requesting additional opportunities to input into Our Rivers Our City including Didsbury Councillors and the Trans Pennine Trail but we would have liked to have heard more from the "seldom-heard" voices; this targeted engagement was made more difficult due to Covid restrictions. When we organised a ward-based workshop at a local Councillor's request, we found a wealth of current and historical knowledge and the participants raised very specific challenges and opportunities as opposed to some of the more general points raised in a discussion of people from a wider geography. This approach may prove useful in the future when consulting on individual projects, although perhaps does mostly reach those who are used to accessing this type of engagement opportunity and reinforces the lack of diverse representation.

## Summary of points raised repeatedly across the three river valleys

1. There was a real sense that participants recognised the focus on building back better because of the coronavirus pandemic. Together with their increased awareness of the value of green and blue spaces the engagement activities marked a key moment in time for harnessing focus and energy. This in turn gives a sense of **urgency and desire to see change**.
2. In addition to making sure that we get the best value from our 'honey-pot' sites, there was a strong message that **small-scale projects and big, bold projects should go hand in hand** and that projects should include activity on multiple levels. For example, large-scale investment pieces should include community-focussed awareness raising activities and clean up campaigns, a cycleway should include a wild buffer strip.
3. Balancing the need to invest in the Irk and Medlock without letting the Mersey slip backwards was a noted challenge. **The greatest need and the greatest opportunities** are felt to be in the Irk and Medlock, for example in health gains for the population. This is reinforced by the fact that North and East Manchester's rivers are felt to be culturally lost, demonstrated by a lack of tradition of going for a walk with the dog for example.
4. There is a call for **greater strategic join up between both Local Authorities and catchment based initiatives**. There was wide recognition that a catchment approach is required to best tackle a range of issues that do not restrict themselves to administrative boundaries such as non-native species. There was a call for Local Authorities to work together more when accessing funding to address the shared challenges facing the river valleys.

In addition, we heard a real desire for the best value to be achieved from initiatives that integrate a range of policies and planned projects which reflect the understanding that river valleys are central to the governance of the city, and have influence beyond the city.

*"Clayton Vale is a success story with increased activity, which encourages more people. It feels safer now and has international visitors (on the coat tails of sport city). It sometimes takes new people to appreciate the area before local people appreciate it and a local bad reputation takes a long time to shift."*

There was a clear understanding of the relationship between the river valleys and other policy areas that directly affect the valleys such as health and community safety.

5. When asked what would constitute success for improvements to the river valleys, there was a strong feeling that it involved **local communities being engaged in the rivers** and recognising the benefits of healthy local watercourses. Active community groups were seen as key to this, with the recognition that support is needed to establish new groups, re-energise some existing groups and look at the opportunities for them to link and be supported by a more integrated approach. Covid-19 also has an impact here as some groups or members may not want to be actively involved, to meet outdoors even when restrictions allow and may have different priorities.

Other aspects supporting community engagement included:

- An exploration of the potential role of social enterprises;
- The opportunity we have with the Park Rangers to be proactive in encouraging activity in parks and creating a welcoming space for residents;
- A frank discussion about the role of volunteers in river/park maintenance, keeping expectations of their contribution realistic and the need to resource support and co-ordination.

6. A tension appeared in many of the conversations between **increasing and improving access and recreational activities** and:

- **Protecting the biodiversity of the environment** - improving access to the river valleys will need to be sensitively managed and accompanied by clear communications to raise awareness of the inherent tension.
- **Control measures installed to manage anti-social behaviour** (eg from motor bikes) - there was a call for a clear approach to addressing access for all with many examples cited of poor or no access for people with disabilities.

These issues will need to be kept in mind when planning how to scale up public access.

7. **Investment** was a common theme in the conversations with some participants calling for current investments to be used more imaginatively and collaboratively, eg those for flood basin maintenance and for big schemes such as Northern Gateway and Mayfield to be used to

inspire development elsewhere. There was also a strong message about making the case that upfront investment has long term benefits, including health and economic outcomes.

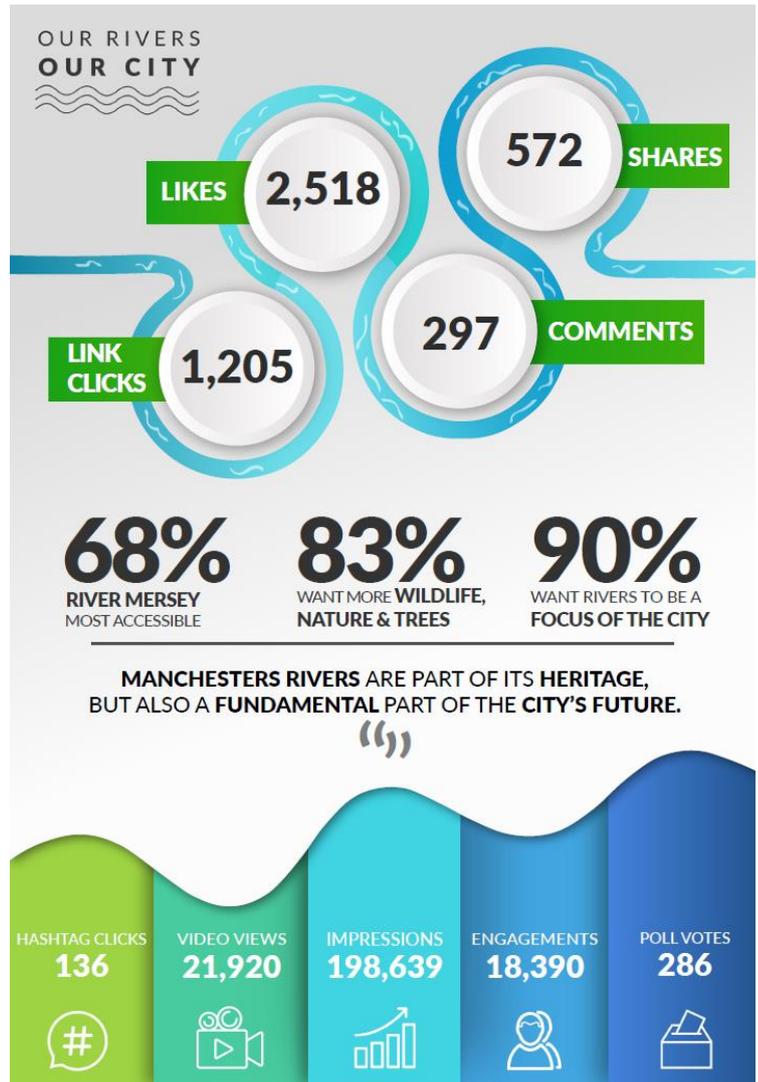
8. The **industrial heritage** of the rivers was a regular feature in discussions, both in terms of the challenges that the relationship brings and the physical and perceptions legacy, with a number of heritage projects suggested.

9. Through most of the conversations, there was a focus more on the amenity value of the river valleys **rather than water quality and quantity**. There is a fundamental relationship between water quality and the draw for people to use the river valleys, but it was mostly the people whose work involves them in the rivers that were more concerned to discuss the quality of the water and this should be kept in mind for an engagement strategy. However, there was broad recognition of the importance of SuDS from all perspectives.

Whilst we have a rich picture at a hyper local level with ward level discussions, we recognise that this may mean there is an in-built bias in our reporting of the various issues raised from the discussions we had. We recognise that we heard from more community activists in the Mersey Valley than the other two river valleys as they came forward to invite conversations and our plans to engagement the people we seldom hear from were badly hit by the covid restrictions as outlined above. We would recommend a ward based approach however, when action plans are being implemented, as the knowledge of current and historic issues is especially useful in ensuring best use of limited resources. Local people really are the experts in their place.

## Social Media

The social media campaign began once the on-line survey was open for respondents and used Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The infographic shows the levels of engagement achieved with 297 comments on the various posts. It is difficult to include the comments in the survey analysis as social media helps us to start/continue a conversation however it does show that there is an audience with a real interest in the river valleys and their future.



# OUR RIVERS OUR CITY



Will Stone via Twitter

**Boulevards** on each side with **trees** and the river running through it. More independents lining the main drag but plenty of **outdoor space** with **eateries**.



**Rivers** are often an overlooked **asset**. Very few things can give that sense of ease or **well-being** like a healthy **waterbody**.

Phil via Facebook



**Improve accessibility** for **active travel** on our river banks or existing **path networks** to form a key part in combating the **climate emergency**.

Mike Kane MP Via blog



# 185

PEOPLE LIKED

HOW **OTHER CITIES** USED THEIR **RIVERS**,  
INCLUDING **SHEFFIELD, LONDON** AND **READING**.



# APPENDIX 1

| <b>IRK RIVER VALLEY</b><br>Iwrck or Irke comes from Roebuck, named for its fleetness. |   |
|---|---|
| <b>CHALLENGES</b>   |   |
| <b>Flood protection</b>   | <p>Flood risk impacts on many people in the area; Higher Blakely, Lower Crumpsall and Lower Irk Valley are relatively prone to flooding. A sense that it's getting worse.</p> <p>Paths get very flooded and drainage problems create access issues eg Blackley Forest. Blackley and Alkington area paths are badly eroded by flooding.</p>  |
| <b>Clean water</b>  | <p>Water quality is poor throughout and has an impact on attractiveness, biodiversity, access.</p> <p>Modifications have been made throughout which means it looks like a canal and impacts the water quality eg walls falling into the river.</p> <p>Urban diffuse pollution from urban, industrial sites is an issue along with eateries towards city centre.</p> <p>Impact of single use plastic.</p> <p>Sewage issues and motorway runoff (M60 and M62) impacts water quality – impacts further downstream.</p> <p>Combined sewer outlets eg Middleton – multiple discharges in course of the year.</p> <p>Huge landfill site close to Middleton and Harpurhey– leakage from those has potential to impact water quality.</p>   |
| <b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b>  | <p>Ecological connectivity and lacks diversity.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam across catchment. Need a catchment approach to controlling/eradicating INNS.</p> <p>Riverbed is not diverse (EA study).</p> <p>Poor fish population with a poor species mix.</p> <p>Victoria Station to Queens Rd: much is heavily engineered with concrete banks so not good for habitats.</p> <p>Very little space left for structural greenspace provision or washland creation. (Heaton Park, Boggart Hole Clough Blackley Forest are good examples).</p>   |
| <b>Improving access or safety</b>   | <p>Need to address the wider issues beyond the river that lead to antisocial and criminal activities. Criminal activity detracts from the biodiversity of the site and hinders access for people who want to engage in nature. We need local ownership to help address local issues around anti-social behaviour, litter, fly tipping, etc. but can only get this if engage more widely with local people, many of whom see the river as an unsafe environment and hidden away from the community. Personal safety concerns also limit access health and wellbeing opportunities. Feelings of insecurity at night especially areas away from housing, paths at Blackley end.</p> <p>Access needed along the length to connect green spaces and provide greater enjoyment but access is restricted eg access controls that exclude mobility scooters , bicycles and prams, vandalism restricts access, schools fence off for safety (as in Blackley). Young people would like to see more benches too.</p> |

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
|                                  | <p>There isn't enough promotion of the rivers; much less use than other greenspaces/ivers. Anglers request more information on safe parking and disabled access. People are drawn to Heaton Park due to better access, sturdier pathways.</p>   |
| <b>Attractiveness</b>            | <p>History of industrialisation and dense development means it is hidden physically (industrial legacy and development pressures) and emotionally (people stop using it when they can't see it and forget about it).</p> <p>It looks neglected by landowners, damage is not repaired (eg to fences), litter in and around the river especially around Blackley Forest area eg shopping trolleys in the river stop the clear flow and fly tipping. Fly tipping and litter is very bad especially in the lower Irk, towards Manchester</p> <p>Resources for maintenance: clean-ups and vegetation management done by Parks Team, but very few resources on the ground.</p>  |
| <b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b> | <p>Lots more people have been using the rivers in lockdown and this has negatively impacted some of the pathways – eg. river banks from Middleton to Alkrington Woods completely worn away.</p> <p>Not much opportunity for sport recreation.</p> <p>Perch population near Blackley depleted in recent years.</p>   |
| <b>Engagement</b>                | <p>Surface Water passes through multiple drainage management pathways, often in multiple public ownership. Different public owners have different attitudes to water, with many seeing it as a risk or a problem to pass on, rather than as a resource. Need to engage and educate public bodies about water being a resource, not a problem.</p> <p>How sustain the engagement beyond the strategy development.</p> <p>More networks and volunteers needed generally in North Manchester including development of the VCSE sector. Need more Friends groups (eg in Harpurhey). Transient population in parts of North Manchester makes building connections more difficult,</p> <p>Engagement and improvements needed at Harpurhey industrial estate and the lorry park just up from Harpurhey towards Blackley.</p> <p>Health sector needs to be engaged more for wellbeing benefits.</p> |
| <b>General</b>                   | <p>Crosses multiple councils – needs to be a strategy for the whole area, not fragmented approach from councils.</p>  |

| <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>    |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Flood protection</b> | <p>"21st century mill ponds" to restore former industrial reservoirs to reduce flood risk at Harpurhey ponds (repairing, reinstating and restoring connectivity), perhaps a flood basin at Lower Crumpsall Recreation Ground and Bottom Billy, Blackley Forest.</p> <p>Identify where we can incorporate SuDS schemes into current developments.</p>    |
| <b>Clean water</b>      | <p>Harpurhey Reservoirs and Ponds has scope for water quality improvements. The former gasworks waste tip was cleaned up but scope for much more, eg creation of a nature reserve approach along the river - Factory Lane to Harpurhey area.</p> <p>There are improvements being made to Oldham sewage treatment works which should have an impact.</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b></p> | <p>Northern Gateway have got some funding to look at connecting green/blue spaces along the route that falls in their area, eg Northern Gateway area to Queens Rd earmarked for lots of development; opportunity to use river as the focal point, renaturalise the river and create flood mitigation. Taking out Scotland Road weir is an opportunity for restoration and greening alongside.</p> <p>Create a nature reserve along the river - Factory Lane to Harpurhey area.</p> <p>Wetland and bird sanctuary possibilities.</p> <p>Two LNR's at Boggart Hole Clough and Blackley Forest have scope for improved management.</p> <p>Young people want to be able to 'see' the wildlife – education as well as physical improvements.</p> <p>Tree planting schemes.</p>  |
| <p><b>Improving access or safety</b></p>            | <p>Daylighting culverts. Culverted section towards the City Centre could be opened up.</p> <p>Link blue and green infrastructure more explicitly.</p> <p>Innovative relatable educational campaigns in partnership.</p> <p>Access could go through to Heaton Park.</p> <p>Information boards in Blackley show the length of the walk.</p> <p>Create access events such as walking tours to engage local people and open the river to them, involve ecologists and hydrologists. Important to connect people &amp; river.</p> <p>Need to make the most of Harpurhey ponds and reservoirs and Queens Park.</p>   |
| <p><b>Attractiveness</b></p>                        | <p>Quite a lot of litter picking activity in Upper Irk but could also encourage user groups (e.g. canoeists, paddle boarders, anglers) to get involved in cleaning up / reporting and develop volunteer river rangers to report issues and get things resolved more quickly. More needed in the lower Irk eg Collyhurst and Manchester. Friends of Alkrington Woods have set up litter picking events, shared litter pickers through lockdown.</p>   |
| <p><b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b></p>             | <p>Improve the Irk Trail with a clear walking route from Blackley to the centre. Extend the footpath between Blackley Forest and Blackley Vale (past BT cables) where it is culverted. Link nature reserves - Clough, Hopwood, Rinsbrook and create access through to Heaton Park. Currently there are leaflets showing a walk but in places, you have to divert onto the road.</p> <p>Harpurhey onwards is a really lovely route – paths intact, traffic free and connects easily with local transport Metrolink, rail and bus stations, as well as connecting different communities</p> <p>A cycling superhighway from M60 into city centre down the Irk Valley as an alternative to Rochdale Road commuting. Irk Valley cycleway could be extended but some bits are steep therefore tricky. Northern Gateway are looking at cycling. There was a plan for a cycle route some years ago that avoided what might now be NG area so could be looked at differently. The middle section around Harpurhey is lonely and has a lot of fly tipping so would need to be robustly managed to get people using it. Cycle routes could be different for commuters and for leisure – see route 86.</p> <p>Walking routes around Collyhurst been improved by the Collyhurst Big Local. Friends of Alkrington Woods have put together trail leaflets using GM Walking funding.</p> |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
|                          | <p>Northern Gateway will have 15,000 homes, with the River as the local green patch for tens of thousands of people. Huge scope for walking, fishing, cycling.</p> <p>Industrial heritage and archaeology of the area is a big plus point and should be promoted more to raise awareness. A heritage trail up the river will be interesting, not just built history, also cultural, musical links. Bring out the importance of the history of the Irk with schools and adults alike. Northern Gateway are looking to 'retell the story' of the industrial heritage.</p> <p>Opportunity for fishing near the local reservoirs eg King William.</p> <p>Kingfisher Trail is a good example project Bolton, Bury and Salford along the River Croal, 14 mile route through parks, nature reserves etc. Signposted some of the way.</p> <p>Walking Projects have a designed route through the Irk Valley which could be promoted.</p>   |
| <p><b>Engagement</b></p> | <p>Covid-19 has stimulated local interest in rivers and green spaces, including from young people.</p> <p>Various Friends Groups in the Irk (Friends of St Catherine's Wood, Friends of Blackley Forest with active Facebook page and annual Himalayan Balsam clearance days.)</p> <p>Peoples' River Project delivered by Manchester Histories along River Irk, engaged with community groups with public photographic exhibition.</p> <p>Crumpsall community has made a recent bid for lottery funding centred around mental wellbeing (MYZ)</p> <p>Engage with children and young people in small projects eg scientists and experts to facilitate the development and delivery of projects with children and young people.</p> <p>Show people what is possible and what we already have eg simple illustrations of what can be done with a small amount of work and funding in Manchester and UK.</p> <p>Explain benefits of blue-green infrastructure and of development for the Irk.</p>   |
| <p><b>General</b></p>    | <p>10,000 new people moving into Manchester each year. Requirement for city's GI to do more to meet their needs. Greater Manchester Spatial Framework 5-10,000 houses being built including requirement that greenspace/active travel element should be included - SUDS also incorporated within this development.</p> <p>Waterfront development increases house prices.</p> <p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leverage an estate charge to maintain greenspaces plus dowries can help tide over maintenance in early years of development.</li> <li>• ENTRUST Funding for environmental improvements close to landfill sites</li> <li>• S106 payments can be used for capital items.</li> <li>• Given the location of North Manchester General we should certainly benefit from health funding and opportunities when it is rebuilt.</li> <li>• Bee Network funding would be very beneficial for Dantzic street close to city centre.</li> </ul> <p>Biodiversity net gain is an opportunity.</p> <p>We need to ensure that the Irk Valley is included in Manchester's Nature Recovery Network.</p> <p>Change attitudes about "ownership" - everyone has a part to play in improving the river: the river valley is the community's river not the council's.</p> |

## APPENDIX 2

| <b>MEDLOCK RIVER VALLEY</b><br><b>Medlock means river running through meadows.</b> |  |
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| <b>CHALLENGES</b>  |  |
| <b>Flood protection</b>  | <p>M60 runoff into the Irk and Medlock has negative impacts on water quality and flooding.</p> <p>Contamination legacy may limit multifunctional SUDs opportunities.</p>   |
| <b>Clean water</b>   | <p>Currently failing WFD waterbody, suffering from urban diffuse pollution issues and in recent past has suffered from point source pollution eg major sewage failure polluted Medlock 2-3 years ago.</p> <p>Old Victorian infrastructure of combined sewer overflows impact on water quality and sewer litter.</p> <p>Contaminated land/old tips/landfill inhibit work to naturalise river channels and also leachate causes water quality problems.</p> <p>Lots of the storm drains need sorting.</p> <p>Parts need desilting and dredging to remove old industrial muck and gravel.</p>   |
| <b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b>                                       | <p>River restoration needed in the Philips Park area but funding has not been forthcoming to date despite a costed design developed.</p> <p>Man-made canalised reaches of river so there is no natural river bed or river bank and a lack of ecological connectivity.</p> <p>INNS are a problem throughout the river valley with large area of Japanese Knotweed in upper reaches (in Oldham).</p> <p>Brick lined channel from Clayton to Philips Park has severely impacted ecology and isn't safe to get access to or near.</p> <p>Siphon at point where Medlock meets Irwell at the lower end is a big challenge from ecological perspective.</p> <p>Plenty of chub but needs a variety of fish.</p>  |
| <b>Improving access or safety</b>  | <p>Deculverting needed as lots of the river is hidden away/underground and hard to access/see – including Philips Park and lots of areas in the city centre. It is perhaps the most hidden river despite flowing right through the city.</p> <p>Feelings of insecurity; it doesn't feel safe to walk along and there is a big ASB problem in the Lower Medlock Valley with injecting drug use, rough sleeping, prostitution.</p> <p>5 sisters park has not been maintained and now feels unsafe.</p> <p>Many paths feel worn and a bit rundown in city centre – more could be done to make them feel more walkable and safe. A few users and joggers along but not many.</p> <p>A lack of connectivity between the canal and river between the Etihad and City Centre.</p> |

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| <b>Attractiveness</b>            | <p>Litter and fly tipping on the riverbanks and in the river. Significant problems particularly towards the City Centre. Upper areas have little fly tipping until you reach the Etihad, then it is a major problem into the City Centre, including walking towards Gay Village and at Holt Town. Partly due to inability to access as a pedestrian which makes people engage less with resolving the issue or feeling responsible for it. Lack of bins in the city centre leads to more people using the river. The steepness of the banks means that local people who would volunteer to tidy it up can't.</p> <p>Philips Park riverside paths are underused and overgrown.</p> <p>Lots of graffiti along the passage until Castlefield Basin.</p> <p>Tree management and opening views is important. Canal has an open, visible, waterside path, plus boat traffic.</p> |
| <b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b> | <p>Medlock seen as a river that has suffered most neglect - whole Medlock valley designated as recreational route in the past but this was lost (Pin Mill Brow).</p> <p>Lack of opportunities for recreation and walking routes are not joined up. Not clear signage – there are occasional regional finger posts with directions but there isn't anything to indicate this would be a pleasant route to walk down.</p>  |
| <b>General</b>                   | <p>Heavily industrialised river and infrastructure prone to failure. Industrial impact on river turned people away from the river; perception of the river taking rubbish away historically hasn't changed and there is still an association with industrial contamination.</p> <p>Development turned its back on river physically and metaphorically.</p> <p>Investment has been uneven with lots of investment around Ancoats and Etihad Campus but other areas have not seen any investment.</p>  |

| <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>                         |  |
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| <b>Flood protection</b>                      | <p>Developers could integrate SuDS more and incorporated into master planning. Look at mapping potential for co-financing of neighbourhood-scale SuDS projects as part of the IGNITION project, such as 5 sisters park.</p> <p>Explore options to reduce or eliminate spills from CSOs, including nature-based solutions/SuDS to attenuate storm water input to combined sewers and look at sewer/surface water separation.</p> <p>Look at opportunity to naturalise river channel (but note there is not much space in a very constrained flood plain) to help slow the flow of floods, currently man-made channels speed the flow of water through the river. This will also create biodiversity benefits and could make slopes less steep where there is space.</p> |
| <b>Clean water</b>                           | <p>Multiple millions are being invested by UU in water quality.</p> <p>Celebrate the improvements in water quality since 1990: dippers, kingfishers, herons.</p>   |
| <b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b> | <p>Pilot restoration project was completed at Clayton – working with GW and MCC to restore 350m section of river to its natural state by removing brick lined channel. Monitoring has been carried out and the river which used to support virtually no ecological life can now support fish, vertebrates, kingfishers minnows etc. 1.1km of the channel remains in Philips Park where this project could be easily replicated with some investment. A feasibility study has been done for removal of the bricks in the Philips Park section so it is a reasonably “oven-ready” project near the Etihad and Philip's Park is an EA priority.</p>   |

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|  | <p>Create link between Sport City and New Islington and develop it as a pocket park.</p> <p>Floating islands/ecosystems as on the canal.</p> <p>Clayton Vale has good potential for restoration and regeneration.</p>   |
| <p><b>Improving access or safety</b></p> | <p>Look at what CRT are doing for the canal ie we need to link canal and river activities together better; people see the canal as safer for access and walking than the river. Interesting to compare with the canals which are very accessible and while they suffer from some ASB and vandalism, they are increasingly "loved". If we can get the Medlock to be similarly visible, people may value it more.</p> <p>Opportunities to deculvert section of the river to remove walled channel and create greenspace and emphasis on doing other things in urban centre area – people walking alongside these areas would encourage people to take better care – and reach the human inside of people. Possible to deculvert at the Etihad but it's very deep. Consider a Perspex lid to daylight it.</p> <p>So much brownfield land along the Medlock, so plenty of opportunity to regenerate and create waterside access.</p> <p>Have been some improvements to lighting under bridges near city centre/Deansgate which makes it feel a bit safer.</p> <p>Use the weir (Philips Park?) to generate energy to power lighting and address security.</p>  |
| <p><b>Attractiveness</b></p>             | <p>Open up views of the river and get clean-ups done (although conscious of the very difficult access to the water in the city centre). MCC provide skips and CCTV but the problem could be commercial waste tipping not necessarily domestic waste. Castlefield litter pickers community group are helping to tackle the litter issue. Need to set up more litter picking groups and clean –up opportunities for getting hands dirty with practical action cleaning up the rivers. More bins in city centre might stop rubbish being thrown into the river. Floating bins for waterways would help to collect rubbish along the rivers.</p> <p>Mayfield Park development offers huge potential - could open up river as real asset 'a little oasis'.</p> <p>Some work has been done on beautifying with replanting in the city centre – planting a good initiative.</p> <p>As Medlock comes down into City Centre, there is a small section near a tram stop that could be improved</p> <p>'Adopted' stretches of land.</p> <p>Government policy around charging to reduce plastic bags may be similarly replicated with a deposit scheme for plastic bottles – which could emphasise importance of recycling and change attitudes/behaviours.</p> |
| <p><b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b></p>  | <p>Medlock valley trail for walking, running etc, from City Centre to Philips Park and out to Clayton Vale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the connectivity of walking routes so that more attractive for people to want to access riverside paths.</li> <li>▪ Potential to build stronger relationship with Etihad to promote walking to/from football matches utilising river networks.</li> <li>▪ Manchester Ramblers could commit to offering weekend walks running alongside other community activities for families etc along the route.</li> <li>▪ Better signposting required to mark out nice places to walk and go to encourage usage</li> <li>▪ Promotion of a Green Trail and Cycle routes.</li> </ul>  |

- Wayfinding: when you are in City Centre, there is no obvious sign that you could get along the Medlock out to Etihad. People would only think of going along roads. Need to establish footfall and establish a story. For example, celebrate the achievements at Philips Park.
- Mayfield has established a good vibe, using “meanwhile” uses such as festivals and farmers markets.
- Noticeboards could help to alert people; raise awareness of history as long as money is invested in them so they are long lasting.
- Use of QR codes / an app walking tour to walk along the Medlock could highlight points of interest. Could gather information from Greater Manchester Archaeological Service - <http://www.gmau.manchester.ac.uk/about/index.htm>
- Advertise/promote the existing walking and recreation opportunities to local people more proactively, maximise what is already available and get them interested in shaping the further improvements.
- Holt Town to Pin Mill Brow has Manchester Green Trail and cycle route and offers potential, it already has infrastructure with paths in decent condition but is neglected with flytipping /anti-social behaviour.

A new venue will be planned at the Etihad campus. Philips Park is in the boundary and the Medlock is very deep beneath so potentially difficult to daylight. Are we maximising the green space benefits or S106 commitments? Could make connections between Etihad and park and create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Park. It could be a large-scale park development including a wilder area from Clayton Vale, coming into managed space at Philips Park and provide a trail into the City Centre. EA has done engineering research in Philips Park but the project needs to be a whole park solution and needs to engage with people. Could potentially restore it to a water park with a series of ponds and lodges. It's listed and English Heritage are resistant.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Survey have information stored about the history, which could be tapped into. Link interest in heritage to the river and bring in new people with interest in heritage to find out about their river eg. heritage walks along river.

Potential for disabled pegs at Clayton Vale but needs raising by a few feet to be fishable.

## Engagement

Now is the time to act. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of green space and how it is part of the city's support system.

Need to work with the local community, especially the younger generation, engagement brings sense of ownership and involving local people galvanises local action and groups often support low-level maintenance work.

Experience from Friends of Rochdale Nine (community group preserving and cleaning canal area) shows it is good to get people involved in projects where they can 'get their hands dirty' eg lock clean-ups where they feel as though they are making a difference and have more connection directly to the watercourse. Perhaps River Guardians where local people get involved in cleaning riversides or even communities adopting stretches, plugging Friends of group gaps. Deansgate Labour Group and other local groups could support.

Need to make better use of what we already have in the valley, particularly bringing a wide range of small groups together as they often operate in total isolation from each other. Maximise community power and bring these people together to help engender change and improvements.

Celebrate and shout about existing successes to build up local people's pride.

Martin Zero films on you tube have been popular.

New housing adopting stretches of the river – more community ownership.

## General

Mayfield Park will open up 450m of the Medlock to create a 6.5-acre park. Riverside footpaths will be set above the 1 in 25 year flood level, generally 2m above normal water

levels. The river will be “softened”. There will be a flood compensation area which will be laid out so that in future it could be walkable (“latent provision”) for future access if water quality improves. The Pin Brow trash screen serves a great purpose in keeping back litter from Mayfield.

Replicate the Mayfield Park approach elsewhere ie. linking regeneration with multi-benefits of environmental and social improvement. Castlefield development could be replicated, it was derelict and unattractive area but with some physical investment, including adding bars/restaurants this has improved a lot. Needs to be done in conjunction with a determined programme of activity which encourages use.

MCC rewriting the Local Plan at the moment.

HS2 is mostly in a tunnel through Manchester but will impact close to Piccadilly Station. There will be mitigation funding and there is talk of rebuilding Piccadilly Station and creating a new green space next to the Medlock. Even where HS2 is underground, there is funding for a green route on the land above.

Strengthen planning policy to encourage good developers to do the right thing.

Make sure regeneration investment includes a legacy/dowry for ongoing maintenance so that the gains made can be sustained in future.

Worth contacting Bolton council who are restoring their city centre and river corridor.

Worth having a look at River Restoration Centre’s River website for other urban restoration examples.

## APPENDIX 3

### MERSEY RIVER VALLEY Mersey means boundary river.

| CHALLENGES                                   |  |
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| <b>Flood protection</b>                      | <p>Riverside infrastructure may be washed away with a single flood event. Some stretches become submerged eg around Fletcher Moss, they need to withstand key peak flows. When the river is flooding, there is erosion of the road / paths from flood runoff from Northenden Golf Course. Northenden to Simon's Bridge is a section of NCR 62; the surface needs improvement as does access to the car park as the river often floods so the surface is damaged by erosion very quickly or covered in debris after any substantial rainfall.</p> <p>Large walls along rivers which provide no flood protection.</p> <p>Issues with a disconnect between surface water flows, smaller brooks and the Mersey, with surface water flows suffering from large peaks and variability.</p> <p>Rain water has nowhere to go in the car park on the Didsbury side of Ford Lane.</p> <p>Drains on Ford Lane need cleaning.</p> <p>Development (Camperlands) is in a flood plain and water runs off into the Mersey.</p> <p>Fallowfield / Micker Brook: surface water outfall &amp; agricultural land management issues.</p> <p>Lack of use of flood plains for potential ecosystems – given over to golf courses/housing.</p> <p>Micker Brook into Mersey, upstream of ship canal: livestock impacts, CSOs, phosphate.</p> <p>Sinderland Brook (including Fairywell and Baguley Brook) urban development and transport impacts, phosphate from urban sources. Multiple cross connections a little further down with diffuse run off. Altrincham treatment discharged here and UU looking at developments.</p> |
| <b>Clean water</b>                           | <p>In the Chorlton Brook tributary catchment, note that water quality is high upstream at Gore Brook and the Debdale Reservoirs but declines rapidly by the time water reaches Sunnybank Park and Brickfield Park.</p> <p>Embankments very high so water rushes into River Mersey – water moves very fast which washes away sediment, browning the water colour and meaning there aren't ecosystems within it.</p> <p>Pollution including micro plastics.</p> <p>Sewage discharge including tampons and baby wipes.</p>  |
| <b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b> | <p>Mersey is almost over managed; great access to people, but not so much to ecosystems. Balancing recreation/visitor numbers and wildlife always a problem in Mersey Valley but last few months have exacerbated the issue even further with lots of people and lots of dogs.</p> <p>Banks are heavily strimmed with negative impact on biodiversity.</p> <p>Lack of proper habitat management, lots of wildlife and plant life has been lost over last 48 years (Chorlton Meadows). Less wildlife along the Mersey compared to other rivers, which are more wild.</p> <p>Need to focus on creating resilient ecosystems that can resist pressures from invasive species/climate change.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Improving access or safety</b></p> | <p>Pressures of path maintenance - people walk further and wider to get away from mud and extend pathways even more which encourages meandering off and disturbing undisturbed land. During lockdown the paths along Mersey were heavily used and lots of wear and tear.</p> <p>Access routes no longer maintained. Surface of pathways not good for cycling or those with prams and mobility issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor quality paths at Northenden</li> <li>- Northenden to Didsbury is sandy on cycle path side.</li> <li>- Path on the golf club side is awful because the cars to golf club go too fast.</li> <li>- Good access routes to Sale but pathway problems to Jacksons Bridge.</li> </ul> <p>Controls/barriers restrict access but manage ASB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to stop quad bikes</li> <li>- Need to enable access for those on mobility scooters etc</li> <li>- Bike problems should be managed.</li> <li>- Barriers at Kenworthy Woods and into Northenden</li> </ul> <p>Better access needed across the busy road between Longford Park and Turn Moss – pedestrian crossing would be helpful.</p> <p>Privately owned land is still part of the NCR – must be a public right of way. Access around Didsbury GC is difficult - access blocked at Simons Bridge by GC with notices not to access the GC land.</p> <p>Many tributaries are culverted.</p> <p>Older teenagers need place to meet/socialise but need to make sure not putting people off and taking rubbish away. Framing that message positively is a challenge.</p> <p>Gaps in the railings on the golf club side of the river make it unsafe for children. Railings alongside the river are missing where it goes underneath the motorway bridge.</p> <p>Simon’s Bridge car park has a pothole problem and Mill Lane car park needs environmental improvements to make it a public space which doubles as a car park.</p> <p>Anglers report safe parking and access, including ramped access, as issues in deterring anglers.</p> <p>Lack of disabled access across Jacksons Boat Bridge and Tatton Bridge.</p> <p>Disability access: it is not clear what sites have accessible footpaths or disabled toilets – people keep to the same sites as they don’t know where else is accessible.</p> <p>Bailey Bridge leading to Chorlton Water Park is in a state of disrepair and Green bridge can be dangerous – people jump off into the river.</p> <p>Access point to the Fallowfield Loop is missing at Hough End – could connect Airport to the loop and city centre.</p> |
| <p><b>Attractiveness</b></p>             | <p>Litter, fly tipping, dog waste, commercial waste (eg Ford Lane Car Park), motorbikes dumped in river. Fly tipping along the Northenden Didsbury route. Need Litter bins on Northenden side. Litter increased during covid period.</p> <p>No dog waste bins anywhere between Tatton Arms and past Didsbury. Could dog waste bins be provided at Simons Bridge, although there are issues with dog bins being used for general litter.</p>  |
| <p><b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b></p>  | <p>Balancing wildlife and play - (eg. deadwood being taken to build dens and fences harmful for wildlife as their habitats are taken). How do we share messages in a positive way without putting people off engaging with nature?</p> <p>Walking and cycling along Palatine Road is dangerous.</p>  |

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|                   | <p>Way markers on the Mersey are not consistent and you could get lost.</p> <p>Caravan park blocks the TPT. Walkers and cyclists need to deviate from river around the caravan park and Tatton Arms</p> <p>TPT maintenance is awful and some difficulties reported in engaging the TPT officer.</p> <p>In Summer, people are swimming &amp; there are only small signs saying no swimming</p> <p>No official fishing pitches so it is not strictly legal to fish. Chorlton Water Park has defined pitches and Loonts Lake is owned by MCC and managed by Woodhouse Park Anglers.</p>   |
| <b>Engagement</b> | <p>Balance between high levels of engagement having a negative impact on the biodiversity and encouraging access. High levels of engagement without sufficient maintenance means that footpaths are not accessible in wet weather and can exclude disabled and those with prams.</p> <p>Much lower levels of engagement with the brooks running through south Manchester Parks than the Mersey itself.</p> <p>No designated person to speak to at the council makes it difficult to communicate issues.</p> <p>Need liaison with Didsbury GC – they have submitted an application to take part of it out of greenbelt, possibly for future development.</p> <p>Need to engage schools along the river.</p> <p>Engage with Sustrans.</p> <p>Connect with RSPB - who manage lots of the Manchester areas of the Mersey valley.</p> <p>Engage with business eg Siemens, Wythenshawe Hospital and other large employers.</p> <p>Increase awareness of the responsibilities of riparian owners. Obtain data on landownerships</p> |
| <b>General</b>    | <p>Strong identity but significantly reduced investment in past decade or more.</p> <p>Mersey in Manchester is heavily modified and people refer to it as a canal.</p> <p>Robust environmental management and conservation needed.</p> <p>Maintenance is a key issue especially for the tributary streams and it isn't clear who is responsible for maintenance for different parts of the river / streams.</p> <p>Get rid of diesel generating mobile phone mast at Northenden golf club.</p>   |

| <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>    |   |
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| <b>Flood protection</b> | <p>Could flood Chorlton Ees, reduce embankments and create new water storage/giant wetland/reed bed. (See Mersey Life document.) There are services along river banks so not easy.</p> <p>United Utilities designed a site at Fletcher Moss, they built a damp woodland rather than concrete retention tanks under the ground to combat flooding. Supported with signage to let people know paths may be closed when flooded.</p> <p>Swales could drain grassland more effectively. Look at swales in urban sites such as Longford Park, and bank maintenance of the brooks so that less flow is diverted into the canalised section of the Mersey.</p> |

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|  | <p>Would be nice to convert some of the grassy floodplains to "spongier" wetland that will retain water in all conditions.</p> <p>SUDS schemes would help, replicating successful scheme at Fletcher Moss. It may make things worse for walkers/cyclists but if planned well could benefit everybody.</p> <p>Timperley Brook in Trafford demonstrates a flood basin opportunity.</p> <p>EA are apparently interested in engaging with local communities about flood defences and environment as a whole.</p> <p>Credit to UU for good flood defence works.</p> <p>Need to look at tree planting along the flood banks of Mersey.</p> <p>Gatley Brook has a hole in it and is flooding the golf course at Didsbury. They want to sell that bit of the course but is in the green belt. We could look to reconnect hydrologically into the river.</p> <p>Golf courses are part of flood plain and used for flood storage. Golf courses do also protect us from overdevelopment, traffic and pollution. Could they do more to support flood management? Levees at the GCs are there to protect residents from flooding.</p> <p>Creating a hard surface on the upper section of the flood defences on the right bank bordering the Whittington golf club could be more flood resilient. It would be an extension of the section from Simon's Bridge to Millgate Fields.</p> <p>Awareness programme to reduce the number of people tarmacking drives.</p> <p>Repair railings and flood mitigation on Ford Lane.</p> <p>Misconnections programmes esp. the brooks/tributaries. Households supported with high quality support/information but it needs to be backed up with MCC EHO and EA enforcement.</p> <p>Potential for leaky dams project to slow the flow into the Mersey.</p> |
| <b>Clean water</b>                           | <p>CSO exemplar treatment using nature based solutions ie a highly visible showcase of what could be done.</p>  |
| <b>Looking after wildlife / biodiversity</b> | <p>As you move along river there is a change in the ecology; some bits desolate others quite vibrant. Would be useful to have a biodiversity survey to inform further improvements.</p> <p>Lots of potential for habitat improvement eg wet woodlands, wet grasslands. Links between Longford Park and Turn Moss, creating wetland habitats</p> <p>Golf Courses near to the river offer an opportunity to improve habitat and possible NFM opportunities.</p> <p>Damp woodland at Sale Ees fairly contained could be used for similar scheme as Fletcher Moss.</p> <p>Ensure EA involved in conversations around habitat management.</p> <p>Information boards to share information about wildlife sensitively and colourfully – not telling people what to do but letting them know the value of what is there, why it is there (eg. deadwood left for wildlife to use)</p> <p>Greening and community growing along river and shared space for wildlife and river.</p> <p>More anglers if there were some nice trees and bushes to sit amongst, willow etc and places for fish to hide when the water is up instead of barren banks we have now.</p>   |

GM Environment Fund is looking at developing financial models to increase biodiversity.

GMEU are opportunity mapping.

The River Valleys need to be seen as Habitat Banks for Biodiversity Net Gain funding of Bollin “wild-belt”

The recolonisation of the river by otters would naturally eliminate mink which are harmful to native species.

### Improving access or safety

Mersey is accessible and very well used with lots of public goodwill which needs to be harnessed. Greater use of greenspaces through pandemic can be translated into greater public awareness and enthusiasm for preserving what we’ve got. Increased use might mean barriers can be taken away as place is safer which would make area more accessible for everyone. Children/young people are using the greenspace and we should encourage this for mental health (eg building wigwams) – but there is a need to balance this with wildlife and raising awareness.

However young people are often more comfortable away from the river in their den or playing games in the surrounding woodland. The river needs to be cleaner and with more activities like at the waterpark. The river seems less of a destination point to them and more of a means of accessing other places.

It is far more diverse in terms of different communities accessing the river than it has ever been but still need to address inequality in access: those in deprived areas (eg Wythenshawe, Longsight, Gorton) don’t enjoy same levels of access as the more affluent areas of the valley.

Remove barriers to improve access for those with mobility issues. Disabled people can use their Radar key to open kissing gates although people often don't know this. A comprehensive disability access plan is needed with age friendly benches, sensitively designed access including sensory considerations.

Step access at Stenner’s Lane could be improved Northenden weir – step access no longer safe as has been worn down/collapsed.

Lack of online presence for the sites. A portal is needed where people can click on each site and see the site, details about it and how it relates to others.

Work at the Heaton 5-6 yrs ago on the Mersey to lay a new hardwearing path that is accessible to people but still retain a very natural area is very well used by families and those with disabilities. Could we have similar?

Improvements could be made to a path on the south section of the Mersey which gives access to the Princess Parkway.

There’s a viable route between Northenden and Didsbury without building a new path.

Didsbury side of river has improved greatly but quite stony lots of old bricks so quite slippery. A better path would be an improvement.

EA thinking of raising the banks and putting tarmac paths along the top from Stockport to the Ship Canal.

Daylighting tributaries where they are currently underground, making people more aware of their local tributaries and that they are part of the Mersey. De-culvert in Wythenshawe as residents who live next to semi culverted areas have to live with a smell.

Create some safe access spots onto the tributaries for families / schools to do pond dipping / wellie walking.

Re-prioritise investment plans and resurface Ford Lane and Didsbury car park.

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|   | <p>s106 money is designated for Camperlands car park: eco friendly with permeable surface and greening.</p> <p>Develop blue-space access policy and standards. Lewes District Council have a riverside access policy. West Country Rivers Trust working on blue-space access standards.</p> <p>Green Social Prescribing.</p> <p>Reinstate a warden service.</p> <p>Access at Palatine Road: Highways England 3 year programme of motorway junction improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can their route through Withington GC to the river be used in future and established?</li> <li>- Can they make improvements to Didsbury West side of river as part of the programme?</li> </ul> <p>Tatton Arms development - S106 funding to resolve steps on the bridge to improve accessibility.</p> <p>Improve the surface around the Simon's Bridge as it often gets really muddy.(MCC bidding to the active travel fund to improve surfacing).</p> <p>Boat Lane Bridge could be ramped not stepped for accessibility on both sides,</p> <p>Northenden golf club have a bridge that isn't a right of way and should be so we could cross the river.</p> <p>Boat Lane filtered neighbourhood would be great.</p>  |
| <p><b>Attractiveness</b></p>            | <p>Uniform identity for the Mersey valley: consistency for how people access information and standards of access across Local Authority boundaries.</p> <p>Several focal points (honey pot sites) spread out along the river eg Sale Water Park, Dunham Massey.</p> <p>Riverside Park, Northenden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- children's play area</li> <li>- eco-friendly car park with a permeable surface,</li> <li>- attractive horticulture</li> <li>- make good use of the empty toilet block</li> <li>- Improve paths and seating for those with limited mobility.</li> <li>- Improve experience of the whole trail to Fletcher Moss.</li> <li>- Remove fences blocking people from accessing the waterside.</li> <li>- Great community interest and highly-engaged Councillor so could really draw in local resources</li> <li>- create a community hub</li> </ul> <p>Create a stronger identity and awareness of links of tributaries to main river eg Chorlton Brook is fenced off from the park as it runs through Chorlton Park. Tributaries need some attention as neglected and some underground.</p> <p>Litter picks happen every weekend. The Wythenshawe Waste Warriors might be interested in starting a new clean up day for the river bank. Cllr Russell &amp; MRT interested in supporting clean ups.</p> <p>Bins needed near bridges and main access points. Bins on Ford Lane (vehicular part) and resurface pavement on Ford Lane.</p> |
| <p><b>Recreation &amp; heritage</b></p> | <p>Mersey Valley as a regional park see <a href="https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/">https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/</a></p>  |

Trans Pennine Trail looking into feasibility to follow whole river valley stretch through to Northenden. It's not in a good enough state currently to make into walking/cycling/horse riding route.

More information needed on short walks along the rivers to encourage more people to access eg 20 mins walks with benches for those who need to sit regularly while walking or to relax. Sponsored benches? Memorial benches?

Interactive nature trail with information on the local nature.

Paths with hard surface which joggers could use (flexipave)- this would help other parts of the path from getting muddy and people going off pathways disturbing wildlife.

Trafford have Highways England money for footpath improvements including the Manchester side and a new bridge across the Mersey.

Community activists are reclaiming the walking and cycling path from the Heybrook/Greenwood Road underpass. They have dug back and reclaimed the path to Simonsway, creating an off-road walking and cycling route from Baguley to Wythenshawe Town Centre and Manchester Airport.

Beyond Simon's Bridge, little use of south side; could be circular walk.

Eco centres. Perhaps at Chorlton Water Park and people can then access the river and use a smooth cycle way to get to a new wetland at Chorlton Ees. For example Brockholes Centre at the Ribble nr Preston.

Relatively well managed with banks flat and consistent - potentially faster to cycle along this rather than use the road network especially under the ring road.

Ladybrook Valley Cycle Way in Stockport (funded by Cycle City Ambition grant) is a mile stretch of flexipave - porous hard surfacing and signposted could be replicated.

Young people enjoy cycling/riding down the 'Camel Humps' - hills along the River Mersey close to the green bridge.

Sustrans are consulting on realigning cycle route 85. Consultation closes in March. This would give all 5 Wythenshawe wards (60k people) access to the river.

Previous consultation around Urmston to Chorlton cycle pathways to be improved with new bridge at Longford Park. We need update from Arup about this.

Extend the bike lane that ends at Lapwing Lane to Palatine Road. Highways Agency discussing a cycle lane across Palatine Road Bridge but where does it go then? Should build a cycle lane to Withington.

At the end of Chorlton Water Park is the former Barlow Moor tip. It should now be managed open space isn't managed well. If restored as a public green space resource, it might take the pressure of Chorlton Water Park if people can walk round that too.

It is possible to hire kayaks from Stockport and kayak to Ashton. It's perfect for beginner/novice canoers/kayakers, as quite safe and open, moves like a canal with no technical issues in terms of current. Approx. 50-100 people kayaking each week - lockdown caused increase in numbers. Need wider promotion of open access agreement.

In Urmston during lockdown a little pop up coffee shop set up next to the river bank and has become a destination for a walk for families, friends walking. Cafes might move from village centre where there are 7 cafes but might create litter and existing cafes may complain losing business.

A map/leaflet of Our Green Chorlton is being produced by Let's Reimagine Chorlton.

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|                   | <p>Opportunity for heritage of river project. Northenden was a holiday destination.</p> <p>Northenden waterfront area - more amenities around riverside park and make it more of a hub.</p> <p>Skate parks in a more developed/urban setting along the river.</p> <p>Strategic approach needed so in water activities are properly mapped with conversations around educational messaging/guidance for participants.</p> <p>Where it is wide enough, dispersed park with play equipment spread out to keep walking - attractive and woody.</p> <p>Former cricket ground on Northenden side, currently a teen gathering area, could be useful resource including car parking and a park, near to Simons Bridge car park - check UU ownership.</p> <p>A series of foot high weirs would increase depth above each weir at all fishable river levels, slowing the flow, providing oxygenation and holding areas below the weirs.</p> <p>Sale Water Park has great natural capital opportunities. EA operate it as a flood basin and it should be part of bigger network of connectedness.</p> <p>Apply for bathing water status at Northenden Weir.</p> |
| <b>Engagement</b> | <p>Active Friends groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friends of Chorlton Meadows group run sessions and maintain footpaths – MCC supply materials</li> <li>- Northenden Riverside Park Friends</li> </ul> <p>Neighbourhood Officer has contacts with groups and Didsbury Mosque.</p> <p>Eco Church group (and other faith groups with environmental interests).</p> <p>Opportunity to educate people about using greenspaces and awareness raising of rivers to act as springboard for awareness of water as a habitat generally as more ponds, wetlands etc needed all over. Gore Brook and Chorlton Brook definitely needs more awareness-raising.</p> <p>Education projects with children and young people – harnessing high engagement and educating about local wildlife, engaging in nature positively</p> <p>Engage local schools to develop artwork along the river.</p> <p>Engage with different landowners. Everyone likes the idea of access but not on their bit of land.</p>  |
| <b>General</b>    | <p>Relationship between Sale and Chorlton water parks; there needs to be a close working between LAs.</p> <p>Mersey runs through some affluent suburbs which could provide investment opportunities (eco-centres, cafés) as the area is very busy with people. Chorlton and Didsbury property prices are higher due to their proximity to the Mersey so should provide economic opportunities.</p> <p>S106 monies have been used to fund improvements at Riverside Park.</p> <p>Bee Network.</p> <p>The area round Northenden is eligible for funding from Tarmac and Biffa because of the location of the tip.</p> <p>The airport when operational could offset its carbon in the Mersey Valley.</p>  |

HEP feasibility study Archimedes screw option is available <http://www.torrshydro.org/>. Problem for HEP at Northenden Weir, but flood works since may have changed this. Worth checking with EA who were consulted in 2009.

HS2 proposed ventilation shaft at Palatine Rd at Withington GC. HS2 will need to replace the flood storage at Withington GC with storage at Didsbury GC. Lots of earth movement will be involved to construct this. Need to take account of this construction works and changes to the flood storage. (The HS2 vent has been relocated slightly in the new design to lessen the impact on the flood storage, and they are looking at whether the soil can be removed through the tunnel itself). If there are going to be environmental changes to the golf course because of HS2, then is that not an opportunity for future environmental changes (tree planting, nature-based solutions etc?)

# OUR RIVERS OUR CITY



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THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
PARTNERSHIP



Mersey Rivers Trust  
Healthy rivers for people and wildlife



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