

## **ISM: THE IDEAL SOLUTION METHOD**

In this method the alternatives are listed - and then ignored. Instead an 'ideal solution' is fashioned for the situation. The general 'shape' of this ideal solution is considered. It should not be detailed but the characteristics should be noted. The list of alternatives is now uncovered and examined to see which of them approaches the nearest to the 'ideal solution'. In other words, the alternatives are no longer examined in their own right but for their nearness to the 'ideal'.

These alternatives are put on one side and there is a discussion about the general shape of the ideal solution. It is agreed that this should benefit most people and that it should directly make life more pleasant. When the actual alternatives are compared to this 'ideal solution' the park alternative wins.

In this method it is important to be honest and not just to fashion the 'ideal solution' to fit one or other of the known alternatives. For the same reason it does not make sense to design the ideal solution first and then list the alternatives because these will be fashioned to meet that solution. Such fashioning can take place later. The first list of alternatives should be an objective one - before the ideal solution is shaped.

A small town has a vacant lot and the following suggestions are made for the use of that lot:

1. Car park.
2. More houses.
3. Park.
4. Playground.
5. Open (stall-type) market.