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Evaluating the effectiveness of approaches to public consultation in the regeneration of urban public spaces

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Evaluating the effectiveness of approaches to public consultation in the regeneration of urban public spaces

- VOLUME I -

By

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I dedicate this thesis to my father, Ing. Luboš Frank.

1948 - 2008

He has always been the driving force behind my education and continues to be so even when, sadly, he is no longer with us.

I hope he would have been proud of me.

ABSTRACT

Until the mid-1990s, urban public spaces were in decline. Their rejuvenation has now become a key policy concern in the UK, with high demand for well-designed and well-maintained spaces, which meet the diverse needs of their users. Despite public space improvements being an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy, they are not always achieved. However, urban public spaces can be successfully regenerated if they are co-produced by professionals and public space users by drawing on their knowledge and aspirations for these spaces. Despite the fluctuations in public involvement in the process of decision making, involving the general public is now considered as central to urban regeneration policy and practice. However, discussions concerning how the public could be involved in a meaningful manner continue. While the need to involve the public is clearly advocated, the most effective ways of achieving this remain ambiguous. Although the number of mechanisms to involve the public has multiplied, their quality and effectiveness is less certain. Detailed literature on involvement methods is scarce. Where literature does exist, it reveals an absence of agreed evaluation criteria against which the effectiveness of different methods could be measured, a lack of evaluation instruments and general uncertainties about how evaluations should be conducted.

This research focused on public consultation as opposed to more extensive public involvement and critically explored and evaluated the effectiveness of eight public consultation methods - online form, e-mail, electronic kiosk, text message, on-street event, photographic diary, walking discussion and focus group - in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces. These methods were identified as under-researched or offering potential for further development.

They were applied as part of ‘test’ consultations in two case study areas in Coventry and their effectiveness was established using an evaluation framework designed to address wider issues in effectiveness. The framework was used to explore the methods from three perspectives; that of the participant, the researcher and data quality. The participant perspective was explored using questionnaires. Data quality was assessed against criteria such as ‘relevance’, ‘clarity’, ‘location specification’ and ‘actionability’. The researcher perspective triangulated the two perspectives with general observations, an examination of methodological practicalities and the influence of non-human actants, informed by actor-network theory (Callon, 1986; Law, 1992; Latour, 1996). Professionals involved in urban regeneration were interviewed to provide contextual and practice-based perspectives.

Empirical findings revealed that each method generates different types of data which may be useful for the regeneration of urban public spaces. Some generated ‘surface’ data from a larger number of participants, while others yielded in-depth data from smaller participant samples. This highlighted the value of evaluating ‘data quality’, which has so far been neglected in effectiveness evaluations. The two in-situ methods (the photographic diary and walking discussion) proved most effective, generating high quality data and achieving participant satisfaction, and it is argued that public consultations concerned with regeneration of urban public spaces would benefit from a greater use of in-situ experiential approaches. Furthermore, factors such as providing opportunities for dialogue, understanding, level of immersion, the influence of non-human actants and provision of information were identified as influencing the effectiveness of these mechanisms, contributing to the empirical and conceptual debates about method effectiveness.

The proposed contributions to knowledge include the development of an evaluation framework that can be used to assess method effectiveness. It particularly highlights the value of examining data quality, which can be assessed against the proposed data quality criteria. The identification of factors influencing effectiveness, derived from empirical findings, contributes to the wider theoretical and practical understanding of public involvement methods’ effectiveness and its evaluation.

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I am grateful to my mum, for listening.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide the context and rationale for this research, followed by its aims and objectives, a summary of the methodology and proposed contributions to knowledge. As the research was linked to an RCUK funded project, 'VoiceYourVIew', the aims of the wider project will be briefly described. The chapter concludes with an outline structure of the thesis.

1.1 Study context and rationale

The concept of 'public involvement' (also referred to using terms such as 'participation' and 'engagement') continues to receive attention in the UK and abroad. It remains ambiguous, both in theory and practice, and is often open to various interpretations (White, 1996; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2005). However, it is generally referred to as the extent to which the general public may be actively involved in the process of decision making.

Often justified on the grounds of being a fundamental civic and democratic right, as well as potentially resulting in more satisfactory and legitimate decision making (Fiorino, 1990; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2004), public involvement has been of growing interest to academics, practitioners, regulators as well as governments (Catt and Murphy, 2003, Rowe *et al.*, 2004; Cameron and Grant-Smith, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2005).

> *'In the United Kingdom […], a number of significant recent reports from the government have called for increased public participation at national and local levels, in realms as diverse as health care, the environment, transportation and local government'.*
>
> (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 513)

Apart from becoming a legal requirement in many public policy arenas (Innes and Booher, 2004), the growing importance of public involvement also suggests a departure from, firstly, an elitist model, where experts are viewed as the authoritative sources of regulation, and secondly, the traditional model of governance when the public elects their representatives who then make decisions with no further public input.

Instead, public views are increasingly sought in a more direct manner, in order to obtain information that the sponsor (e.g. local authority) lacks (Catt and Murphy, 2003) and to provide further legitimacy for decisions. However, despite the recognition that public involvement *should* be conducted in an effective manner (Burton *et al.*, 2004; HM Government, 2008), the guidance on how this is achieved is sparse. Additionally, there is no guiding framework in place to stipulate what involvement methods should be adopted in particular circumstances or contexts to engage the public effectively (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Webler and Tuler, 2002; Rowe and Frewer, 2004, 2005). This research aims to contribute to addressing this gap in knowledge.

In view of the key concepts within public involvement generally being left undefined (White, 1996; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2005), disagreements may appear regarding the scope of activities that could be understood as public involvement, as well as how their effectiveness should be assessed. Public involvement mechanisms lack systematic evaluation (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2004, 2005; Abelson and Gauvin, 2006) and thus it is difficult to determine their relative success or effectiveness. Challenges in conducting comprehensive comparisons stem from the absence of clear definitions of key concepts (including ‘public involvement’, ‘effectiveness’ and the terminology used to define different involvement mechanisms) and the lack of agreed benchmarks against which success or failure could be judged (Rosener, 1978; Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; Rowe and Frewer, 2000, 2004; Bochel, 2006). Additionally, there are no agreed evaluation instruments and few reliable measurement tools (Rosener, 1981; Rowe and Frewer, 2000, 2004).

According to Arnstein’s (1969) ‘ladder of citizen participation’, participation can range from the provision of information to the public, to full citizen control. Conceptualising participation as ‘a categorical term for citizen power’ (p. 216), Arnstein presented ‘citizen control’ as the ultimate goal to aim for, although it is rarely achieved in practice. However, the model has received increased criticism especially in terms of its focus on redistribution of power as the prerequisite for meaningful public involvement. It is considered devoid of context and of not acknowledging the public's reasons for participation (Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Collins and Ison, 2009).

Rowe and Frewer (2005) used the 'information flow' perspective – i.e. flow of information between the public and the sponsors – to differentiate between 'public communication', 'consultation' and 'participation'. Firstly, in public 'communication', the public acts as a passive recipient of information that is supplied by the sponsor. Secondly, through public 'consultation', following a sponsor's initiation, public input is sought. Information flows from the public to the sponsor without any formal dialogue between the two. In both cases, the flow of information is one-way. Finally, public 'participation' assumes information exchange and a certain degree of dialogue between the public and the sponsor. This research adopts Rowe and Frewer's (2005) terminology, however in view of the findings, the model itself is reconsidered.

In reality, however, 'consultation remains the dominant and the most familiar face of participation in policy making across the OECD world' (Bishop and Davis, 2002: 22). In times of 'austerity', when resources are at risk (DCLG, 2011c; The Campaign Company, 2011), and acknowledging that consultation may be the preferred option for the general public (Foley and Martin, 2000) – rather than 'full citizen control' - it could be argued that public consultation is often the highest level at which the public can be realistically involved in practice. However, in comparison to 'communication' and 'participation' methods (Rowe and Frewer, 2005), 'consultation' methods appear to have received the least attention in academic literature, representing a gap in knowledge regarding their effectiveness[1] (Fiorino, 1990; Chess and Purcell, 1999; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Abelson and Gauvin, 2006).

Regeneration of urban public spaces was selected as the context within which to explore the effectiveness of several public consultation methods. Whereas the attitude towards public spaces was primarily negative in the first half of the 20th Century (Gehl and Gamzoe, 2001), they are now viewed as assets to their localities (Jacobs, 1961; Madanipour, 1999; Williams and Green, 2001). Since the mid-1990s, the rejuvenation of public spaces has become a key policy concern in the UK (UTF, 1999; 2005; ODPM, 2002b; 2003; Holland *et al.,* 2007), together with the concern of meeting the diverse needs of users of these places (CABE Space, 2007b; Cattell *et*

[1] Key terms such as 'consultation', 'participation', 'involvement' and 'engagement' are used interchangeably in the literature. Throughout the thesis, the original terminology has been retained in all direct quotes, however the focus of this research remained on public consultation.

al., 2008). Public spaces not only foster positive social bonds, community cohesion and social inclusion, but also provide a 'sense of place' and bring additional health, environmental and economic benefits (DoE and ATCM, 1997; Williams and Green, 2001; Woolley, 2003; CABE Space, 2004; Gehl, 2007). With increased urbanisation, there is a demand for good-quality, well-designed and well-maintained public spaces which meet the needs and aspirations of different users. Within public policy in the UK and beyond, there is political consensus around the notion that the public can play a key role in improving urban public spaces (Mean and Tims, 2005; Worpole and Knox, 2007). Through consultation, the public's views on how public spaces could be regenerated can be obtained.

Improvements to the public realm usually form an integral part of any regeneration strategy (Worpole and Knox, 2007), where urban regeneration ultimately aims to 'ameliorate against the negative consequences of urban decline' (Hall, 2006: 57). Urban regeneration is a broad concept and being part of urban policy, it is susceptible to prevailing political ideologies (Beswick and Tsenkova, 2002; Pacione, 2005). In turn, these influence the extent of public involvement in urban regeneration. The role of public involvement in urban policy has fluctuated since the late 1960s (Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Tallon, 2010), until it was established as a key element of New Labour policies (UTF, 1999; 2005; Blakeley and Evans, 2008), as it still is today (DCLG, 2012c). In fact, involvement of the general public in planning and design aspects of regeneration have become a mandatory, necessary and democratic element of public projects (HM Government, 2008; LGID, 2011b). However, Robinson *et al.* (2005) claim that genuine public involvement in urban regeneration is far from easy and evidence suggests that local communities are still not adequately involved (Taylor, 2003a; Smith, 2008). Members of the public need to be involved in issues of civic life through appropriate, effective and engaging methods. This is a challenging process and ambiguities remain regarding how the public should be involved in an effective, meaningful manner.

1.2 Aims and objectives

In view of the lack of empirical consideration paid to the effectiveness of public consultation methods, using the context of urban public space regeneration, this research aims:

To critically explore and evaluate public consultation methods in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces, in order to inform empirical and conceptual debates about effectiveness.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Provide a justification for the importance of urban public spaces and the involvement of the public in their regeneration.

2. Critically explore the concepts of public involvement and consultation, in order to:

- Explore current debates surrounding the effectiveness of consultation methods, with a view to establishing an evaluation framework.
- Identify specific methods, applicable to the context of urban public space regeneration, which are under-researched and which offer potential for further exploration, with a view to contributing to debates about their development.

3. Identify and evaluate critical factors influencing the effectiveness of public consultation methods by:

- Testing a selection of methods, via their practical application in two different case study areas in Coventry, in order to establish their effectiveness, applying the identified evaluation framework.
- Exploring how the effectiveness of the chosen consultation methods could be improved.

4. Assess the findings to inform empirical and conceptual debates about public consultation effectiveness in urban public space regeneration.

The research was conducted to inform debates about method effectiveness, rather than to influence actual urban public space regeneration. As such, the selected methods were tested as part of a two-phase action learning/developmental process using 'fictional' or 'test' consultations. These were conducted in two locations - a university campus and a small urban park. Informed by the conceptual thinking covering the 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry, 2006), actor-network theory (Callon, 1986; Law, 1992; Latour, 1996; Murdoch, 1997) and Rowe and Frewer's

(2004) agenda for evaluation, a three-perspective evaluation framework was established to explore the effectiveness of the selected consultation methods. Methods were evaluated from the participant and researcher's perspectives, and in terms of 'data quality'. Although public consultation is primarily about the collection of data, previous evaluations have paid little attention to how data quality could be defined and assessed (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). This research addresses this gap in knowledge and proposes a set of data quality criteria that may be used in future evaluations.

Using an evaluation framework informed by a review of the literature, the research proposes to contribute to knowledge by, firstly, providing a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of several under-researched consultation methods, and secondly by identifying critical factors influencing the effectiveness of consultation methods. These findings will inform empirical and conceptual debates about method effectiveness. The evaluation framework will contribute to knowledge particularly in terms of evaluating data quality. It will test and validate several data quality criteria (e.g. relevance, clarity and actionability) as tools for establishing the extent to which different public consultation methods succeed at capturing data which constructively informs urban public space regeneration. It is intended that this will provide a starting point for possible future data quality evaluations.

1.3 VoiceYourView project

The initial direction of this research was instigated by the 'VoiceYourView – Making Public Spaces Safer' project[2] (later referred to as 'vYv'). The project ran between July 2009 and July 2012 under the Digital Economy Programme, a research theme led by the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) on behalf of RCUK (Research Councils UK). The author of this thesis operated as a member of the research team for the duration of the project.

The multi-disciplinary VoiceYourView project stipulated that certain features within the physical environment, such as its design aspects, poor maintenance or social issues, can result in its users feeling concerned for their safety. Although members of the public possess tacit knowledge of the spaces they use and can provide useful information on how these areas could be improved, professionals are unlikely to gain

[2] Reference EP/H007237/1; www.voiceyourview.com

access to this knowledge. The project aimed to mobilise this tacit knowledge to increase the safety and inclusivity of public spaces by employing digital technology to capture citizen's knowledge of spaces they used, in real-time. This information was to be structured and stored in an online repository and shared with relevant stakeholders, thereby contributing to 'public space designs that are more attuned to the needs of their users' whilst alleviating safety concerns (EPSRC, 2009). This project laid the foundations for the use of the technology-based methods in Phase 1 of this research. The literature review confirmed that due to their novelty, technology-based involvement methods have received limited attention and as such require investigation of their effectiveness of involving the public in 'making public spaces safer'. Other methods used in Phase 1, and all of those in Phase 2, were selected, used and evaluated independently of the VoiceYourView project.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, including the aims and objectives.

Chapter 2 is primarily contextual, providing the justification for the importance of urban public spaces and the involvement of the public in their regeneration. It defines 'urban public spaces' and 'urban regeneration', identifies the characteristics of successful urban public spaces and argues that the general public can contribute to improving urban public spaces. The changing role of public involvement within wider urban regeneration policy is explored. The latter part of the chapter critically assesses concepts of public involvement. Several models and their critiques are presented and discussed (Arnstein, 1969; White, 1996; Rowe and Frewer, 2005), and the challenges of public involvement and the varied expectations of different stakeholders are outlined. A justification is developed which argues for a focus on public consultation. The chapter concludes that despite public involvement being increasingly advocated, it is rarely achieved effectively in practice.

In Chapter 3, the focus shifts to the debates and challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of involvement mechanisms. Examples of past evaluation criteria are presented, together with the more comprehensive acceptance and process criteria proposed by Rowe and Frewer (2000). The agenda for conducting effectiveness evaluations is outlined, including the need for a clear definition agreed by different stakeholders *a priori*. In order to contribute to debates about method effectiveness, the second part of the chapter critically reviews a variety of consultation methods and identifies eight methods which are considered as under-researched and offering potential for further development. The potential for a greater use of mobile, visual and electronic methods to conduct consultations about regeneration of urban public space is identified.

The conceptual thinking presented at the beginning of Chapter 4 is subsequently used to inform the development of an evaluation framework to be adopted in order to explore the effectiveness of the selected methods used to consult the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces. The Phase 1 case study location of a university campus under redevelopment is introduced, together with the operationalisation of the selected methods in the field. The chapter then demonstrates how the evaluation framework was applied in this phase of the research.

Chapter 5 establishes the effectiveness of the eight consultation methods tested in Phase 1 (four electronic-based methods as part of the vYv project and four methods independent of the vYv project). Findings are triangulated in terms of data quality, participant and researcher's perspectives which make up the evaluation framework. Two methods, considered particularly effective at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces, are identified as offering opportunities for further development and testing as part of Phase 2.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from interviews with professionals involved in urban regeneration. These were interviewed independently of the two research phases to provide an additional perspective on the debates surrounding the effectiveness of public consultation methods, and public involvement in general.

Chapter 7 covers the contextual background of a small urban park under redevelopment, as well as the methodology adopted for Phase 2 of the research. The evaluation framework remains consistent with that utilised in Phase 1.

The effectiveness of the two selected consultation methods is considered in Chapter 8. Their effectiveness is discussed in terms of the alterations that were implemented based on the findings from Phase 1 (Chapter 6). Several factors which influenced their effectiveness are identified.

Chapter 9 consolidates all the materials consulted and generated in the research, including the literature, primary research findings from Phase 1 and 2 and insight from the interviews with professionals. In view of these materials, critical factors influencing the effectiveness of public consultation methods are identified and evaluated. The findings are then used to inform the empirical and conceptual debates about public consultation methods effectiveness. Several of the models identified and discussed in Chapter 3 are reconsidered.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 10, which revisits the aims and objectives of the research and discusses how they have been addressed. The empirical, methodological and conceptual contributions to knowledge made by the research are presented, together with their implications and potential for wider application in academia, policy and practice. Finally, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are identified.

Chapter 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACES AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR REGENERATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a contextual basis for this research, outlining the importance of urban public spaces, and the justification for the involvement of the public in their regeneration (Objective 1). The key concepts will then be explored (Objective 2, part 1).

Public spaces bring numerous benefits to urban dwellers and make areas more attractive and pleasant to live in (CABE Space, 2009a). They can be seen as destinations in themselves or facilitating movement in and between places. They should be well designed and well maintained, however it has not always been so. While in the past people used urban public spaces regardless of their condition, the quality of these spaces is now a crucial parameter and a commonly perceived measure of the quality of urban life (Gehl, 2007; Cattell *et al.*, 2008). Throughout the 1990s it was realised that the state of public spaces in the UK was generally declining. Since then, the growing interest in town centre management, urban design, city marketing strategies and the 'urban renaissance' (UTF, 1999; 2005; DETR, 2000) has led to the acknowledgement of the importance of public spaces in people's lives. The importance of open spaces is now clearly recognised by statutory and community planning processes (CABE Space, 2009a) and their regeneration is often a key component of plans to revive urban areas (Holland *et al.*, 2007). When referring to the regeneration of public spaces, one may consider their design, (re)development, renewal and maintenance. The general public – the regular users of these spaces, as well as those only passing through as visitors – can contribute to regenerating these areas.

This chapter is separated into three sections. The first section defines public spaces, outlines the reasons for their growing importance and concludes with the argument that involving public space users has been recognised as a necessary element to successfully regenerate urban public spaces.

The second section explores the concept of urban regeneration and the changing role of public involvement within it, dependant on wider political agendas. It concludes that despite public involvement being considered central to urban regeneration policy and practice (Smith, 2008), there is evidence that public involvement may not be effectively realised in practice. As such, there is a gap in knowledge regarding how the public should be involved in a meaningful manner and how this should be assessed.

In order to make inroads into this gap, public involvement needs to be explored as a concept. As such, the third and final section explores public involvement more theoretically. Terms such as public 'participation', 'involvement' or 'engagement' - often used interchangeably - refer to the extent to which the general public may be actively involved in the process of decision making, applicable to any context. Challenges of involvement are outlined, together with a critique of conceptual frameworks. In order to contribute to empirical and conceptual debates about effective public involvement, 'consultation' is identified as the suitable level of public involvement to focus on in this research.

This research builds on the understanding of public spaces as adopted in the 'Western' world. This is because public spaces in other parts of the world may have undergone different processes of change than those relevant to this study (Gehl, 2007). This research draws primarily on literature from the UK, North America, Europe and Australia and as such may not be applicable to all world regions.

2.2 Urban public spaces

2.2.1 Defining 'urban public space'

'Urban public spaces' refer to public spaces located in urban areas[1] and can be defined relatively broadly:

[1] 'Urban areas' are defined as 'spatial concentrations of human, economic, social, cultural and political activities distinguished from non-urban or rural places by both physical aspects such as population density or administrative definition and lifestyle characteristics' (Pacione, 2005: 676).

'public space is all around us, a vital part of everyday urban life […], public space is our open-air living room, our outdoor leisure centre.'

(CABE Space, 2004: 2)

Several typologies have defined public spaces more comprehensively, in terms of their type (Carr *et al.*, 1992; Kit Campbell Associates, 2001; ODPM, 2002a, 2003b; Bell *et al.*, 2007), land use (Lynch, 1981; Llewelyn-Davies Planning, 1992; ILAM, 1996) and the physical distance from the users' homes (Woolley, 2003) (Tables 2a.1 – 2a.6, Appendix 2a[2]). Although none of these typologies is considered as 'universal', the ODPM's (2002a) typology (Table 2a.4, Appendix 2a) has been adopted by the UK government and its use is promoted as the basis for planning and management. Its further expansions (ODPM, 2003b, Bell *et al.*, 2007 - Tables 2a.5, 2a.6, Appendix 2a) imply that the concept of public space evolves over time.

These typologies consider public spaces from the perspective of the planner, designer or manager, i.e. the professional, who often takes into account the ownership of particular spaces. However, the users of these spaces (residents, workers, visitors, shoppers and others) may not necessarily make such distinctions between different types of public spaces, their functions or ownership[3]. Worpole and Knox (2007: 4) propose that:

'to members of the public, it is not the ownership of places or their appearance that makes them 'public', but their shared use for a diverse range of activities by a range of different people. If considered in this way, almost any place regardless of its ownership or appearance offers potential as public space'.

Shopping malls, for example, may be viewed as 'public', although they may be managed privately. As such, existing typologies do not consider the distinctions the public may make. This research, however, will embrace the general public's understanding and views of public space, as the principal users of these areas. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, 'public space' (or the broader term 'public realm') will be understood as comprising of 'the green spaces, parks, streets, civic

[2] The numbering of individual appendices follows that of the chapters the appendices refer to. As such, the first appendix is Appendix 2a and not Appendix 1 (Chapter 1 had no appendix).
[3] Apart from being 'public', spaces can also be 'semi-public' (e.g. school playgrounds, open only at certain times or used by particular groups), 'semi-private' (e.g. communal gardens or courtyards to houses or apartments, not generally accessible to the non-residents) and 'private' (e.g. individual gardens to homes) (Newman, 1972; Woolley, 2003) (for discussion on the extent to which 'public spaces' are really 'public', see Listerborn, 2005).

squares and other outdoor spaces that are freely accessible to the public and usually free of charge' (CABE Space, 2007b: 12).

There is also a difference in the meaning between the terms of 'space' and 'place'. 'Space' refers to an open, abstract expanse, which can be understood as being free and undifferentiated from other areas. As such, 'space' could be viewed as the least biased term and thus will be utilised in this research. 'Place', however, is loaded with particular meanings, memories and values created by the individual and collective moments that have occurred in it (Porter and Barber, 2006). It is also value laden in its association with security and stability (Madanipour, 1996).

2.2.2 The importance and evolution of urban public spaces

Everyday lives have been played out in public spaces since the earliest urban settlements. However, economic growth in the 20th Century has led to changes in society, people's lifestyles and the use of public spaces. The Modern Movement (from mid 1920s onwards) declared streets and squares as unhealthy and unwanted, dramatically degrading their importance (Gehl and Gamzoe, 2001). Activities in such places were looked down upon. Instead, public life was to be experienced in 'cleaner and healthier' parkland locations in housing areas. Furthermore, with the increase in car ownership in the mid-1950s, traffic and parking took over the streets (ibid.). The interest in public spaces was reignited by the publication of Jane Jacobs' book 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (1961). Streets began to be closed to traffic and pedestrianised, providing a safer environment[4].

In the UK in the 1980s, the role of public authorities declined and private investors took over the development and management of new additions to public spaces, such as civic spaces adjoining new commercial and office developments, housing developments and shopping and leisure facilities (Madanipour, 1999). These exclusive spaces are managed to protect and maximise investment, and thus move away from spaces that are accessible to all towards privatised public spaces (ibid.; Cybriwsky, 1999; Williams and Green, 2001). Varied ownership also creates confusion over who is ultimately responsible for these spaces (Portas, 2011).

[4] Gehl (2007) presented the example of Copenhagen, Denmark, which has experienced the shift from streets being dominated by cars, to pedestrian streets providing opportunities for shopping and recreation, outdoor cafés, cultural events, parades and exhibitions.

Hillier Parker's (1994) review saw public spaces in town centres declining and becoming uncompetitive when compared to the newer, more highly maintained out-of-town shopping centres (Cybriwsky, 1999; Evans and Stonham, 2010; Portas, 2011) and recommended local authorities improve the management, attractiveness and functioning of town centres. This was reinforced by numerous planning (DoE, 1996; ODPM, 2005; DCLG, 2009) and other policy documents (listed in Table 2a.7, Appendix 2a), which recognised the importance of public open spaces and ensured that open spaces were part of statutory and community planning processes (CABE Space, 2009a). In the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the Coalition Government in March 2012 (DCLG, 2012e), the planning documents[5] were revoked and streamlined. At the time of writing, it is unclear what implications this will have on urban public spaces and their development. However the NPPF acknowledges the need for high quality public and open spaces and encourages 'the active and continual use of public areas' (ibid, Para. 69). As such, public spaces have remained part of national planning processes.

Public spaces are recognised for bringing numerous social, economic, environmental, health and cultural benefits (these benefits have been extensively researched – see Table 2a.8 in Appendix 2a). They are important in facilitating daily interactions between people (Arefi and Meyers, 2003; Gehl, 2007), which can be further encouraged by high quality design and maintenance (DETR, 2000; Simoes Aelbrecht, 2009; van Eijk and Engbersen, 2011). Certain characteristics are recognised to contribute to successful, quality spaces (Williams and Green, 2001; CABE Space, 2004; Bell *et al.*, 2007) - according to Greenspace Scotland (2008: 1), a quality space is 'fit for purpose', meaning 'it is in the right place, readily accessible[6], safe, inclusive, welcoming, well maintained, well managed and performing an identified function' (DETR, 2000; Cattell *et al.*, 2008).

> *'Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe, attractive – areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time.'*
>
> (ODPM, 2002b: 5)

[5] For a full list of documents revoked and replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework, see Annex 3 in DCLG (2012e).

[6] Cattell *et al.* (2008) argued that public spaces should be inclusive, open and accessible to all regardless of their age, gender, disability or ethnic origin.

However, in the absence of national quality criteria for open spaces (CABE Space, 2010b), the desired characteristics are informed by a variety of best practice guidelines and indicators, which are, nonetheless, not prescriptive (Appendix 2b) (Greenspace Scotland, 2008; CABE Space, 2009a). Instead, they indicate an aspiration that should be aimed for, but may not necessarily be achieved in practice, as argued in PAN 65 (2008: 1):

> *'New areas of open space of enduring quality and value have […] been the exception rather than the rule and existing spaces are under pressure not just from physical development but also from poor management and maintenance'.*

Despite growing awareness of what constitutes successful spaces and the extensive research into the physical aspects of public spaces (Madanipour, 1999; Bell *et al.*, 2007), these areas are not always successfully regenerated. In view of these facts and the resulting gap between aspiration and reality, regeneration of urban public spaces deserves ongoing attention. For these reasons, urban public spaces were considered to provide a suitable focus for this research.

Overall, the level of importance of public spaces has varied over time. Since the mid-1990s and the introduction of 'urban renaissance[7]' (UTF, 1999[8]; 2005[9]; DETR, 2000[10]) and 'sustainable communities' (ODPM, 2005), the rejuvenation of public space became a key policy concern in the UK, together with the concern of meeting the diverse needs of their users (ODPM, 2002b). Improvements to the public realm are now an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy[11] (Worpole and Knox, 2007) and involving the public is viewed as one of the ways in which the public realm can be improved. As such urban public space regeneration deserves ongoing research attention, as exemplified by this thesis.

[7] For a more comprehensive review and critique of the 'urban renaissance', see for example Imrie and Raco (2003) and Barber and Hall (2008)
[8] 'Towards an urban renaissance' (UTF, 1999)
[9] 'Towards a strong urban renaissance' (UTF, 2005). This report was a response to the earlier DETR (2000) report
[10] The Urban White Paper 'Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering the Urban Renaissance' (DETR, 2000)
[11] Urban design, architecture and planning are all linked within urban regeneration and stress the importance of public spaces (Pasaogullari and Doratli, 2004).

2.2.3 The importance of public involvement in urban public space regeneration

In addition to the various aesthetic and maintenance characteristics, Greenspace Scotland (2008) argued that quality spaces should be 'community supported'. This entails greater involvement of the public[12] and the utilisation of their local knowledge in the management and decision making concerning public spaces (CABE Space, 2009c). 'Local people have the greatest wealth of subjective knowledge of their own experiences' (Watt *et al.*, 2000: 122) and sometimes judgements made by laypersons, i.e. the general public, can be 'as sound or more so than those of experts' (Fiorino, 1990: 227). Coming from a different frame of reference than the experts, they may identify and consider a wider range of problems, issues and solutions and include those of relevance to their everyday lives (Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). Gstach (2011: 260) argued that 'there is evidence that professionals are all too often wrong in their assumptions' about laypeople's preferences of public open space aesthetics. Prone to possible bias and professional manipulation (Foster, 1997), 'expert' views should not replace direct involvement with people. This places considerable value on the knowledge and opinion of the general public (Day, 1997; Rydin and Pennington, 2000).

The contribution public space users can make to the management and/or development of spaces is acknowledged by the 'community involvement' criterion used by the Green Flag Award scheme (2012)[13], too. Public involvement may also partly address some of the factors that have been identified as potentially undermining the quality of public spaces, including (Williams and Green, 2001):

- Poor design[14]
- Privatisation of the public realm[15]
- Traffic[16]

[12] Since this research is contextualised within the regeneration of urban public spaces, which are utilised by a variety of people – the general public - the focus will be on 'public involvement', as opposed to 'community involvement' (Cochrane, 2003). Catt and Murphy (2003: 410) argued that for 'major public works', concentrating exclusively on the general public is acceptable.

[13] The voluntary Green Flag annual awards scheme provides a national benchmark for all types of green spaces (CABE Space, 2010b).

[14] For more information, see DoE and ATCM (1997)

[15] For more information, see Madanipour (1999), Cybriwsky (1999), Williams and Green (2001), CABE Space (2009c), Evans and Stonham (2010), Portas (2011)

- Business[17]
- Anti-social behaviour and crime
- Institutionalised neglect

Effective public involvement can challenge poor design and management, as advocated by academia (Mean and Tims, 2005; Holland *et al.*, 2007), the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE Space, 2009a; CABE, 2011a), independent organisations and charities specialising in improving the design of the public realm (Beam, 2010; Glass-House, 2010a), the design community (Eason, 1995; Sanders, 2006; Lee, 2007, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2008; Sanders and Stappers, 2008) and the government (DETR, 1999; UTF, 2005[18]). Furthermore, community groups are increasingly calling for involvement in restoring and maintaining neighbourhood spaces (CABE Space, 2009c).

> *'Community involvement is now recognised as an essential part of any regeneration scheme. With the right support, local people can contribute an enormous amount to the regeneration process. The people who live, work, study and play in an area can give designers and project managers valuable information about how the area really works, or doesn't, and which changes will really benefit local people. They can also contribute their skills, knowledge and networks to build local interest, support and commitment. Local people are vital to the long term success of the regenerated area.'*
>
> (Glass-House, 2010b)

Mean and Tims (2005) concur that public spaces are most successful when they are 'co-produced' by designers, architects, managers and the users. The design community also advocates 'design participation', where users provide their knowledge and become co-creators in the design process, providing their own 'expert knowledge' (Sanders, 2006; Lee, 2007, 2008).

Holland *et al.* (2007) highlight that drawing on public consultation and involvement with all age and social groups that may use public spaces can lead to 'local spaces that embrace local involvement in their design, purpose and management' (p. 59).

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[16] For more information, see Hillman (1996), Williams and Green (2001), CABE Space (2004), Ramboll Nyvig (2006) and MVA Consultancy (2009)

[17] For more information on business, anti-social behaviour and crime and institutionalised neglect, see Williams and Green (2001), DTLR, 2001; 2002), UTF (2005) and Greenspace Scotland (2008)

[18] UTF (2005) claimed that new developments and public realm projects are still inadequately designed, often due to poor design briefs, varied attention paid to design across different government departments, as well as design being imposed on communities rather than involving them.

However, Edwards (2007: 9) argued that 'public space users had been under-represented in policy development'.

Parker (2010: 5) claims that 'the understanding of the uses of place is too focused upon those related to economic gain' and that policy guidance tends to concentrate on what makes a good public space in the physical sense and not the social.

> *'The success of particular public space is not solely in the hands of the architect, urban designer or town planner; it relies also on people adopting, using and managing the space – people make places, more than places make people'.*
>
> (Worpole and Knox, 2007: 2)

This aligns with Porter and Barber's (2006) argument that contemporary regeneration practice privileges economic issues and 'marginalises the socio-cultural meaning of place', with little appreciation for existing social, economic, cultural and other assets. Dismissing the socio-cultural meaning of place 'constrains planning possibilities and imaginations for the area's future' (ibid., p. 215). A clear sense of identity contributes to distinctiveness and by involving the public in public space regeneration, local knowledge of myths and traditions can be gathered and subsequently utilised to influence public realm improvements. Even small and cost-effective improvements and everyday good maintenance of seating, lighting and accessibility can enhance a public space (Parker, 2010). Furthermore, it is believed that public involvement results in a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the care of a neighbourhood (McArthur, 1993; Dobbs and Moore, 2002) and increase in community capacity, social capital[19] and empowerment[20] (Colenutt and Cutten, 1994; Lyons *et al.*, 2001; Taylor, 2003b; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Burton *et al.*, 2006). Individuals may benefit in the form of personal development or 'empowerment'[21], through increases in self-esteem and confidence and by gaining new skills and knowledge (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998, 2001b; Rydin and Pennington, 2000; Lyons *et al.*, 2001).

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[19] Putnam (1995) refers to social capital as the networks, norms and trust which enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.

[20] Rocha (1997) argued that 'empowerment' is a form of power, which is developmental and experienced in different ways. Drawing on McClelland's (1975) classification of power experiences and Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, she developed a 'ladder of empowerment' consisting of five types of empowerment ranging between individual to community empowerment.

[21] 'Personal empowerment' refers to the enhancement of human capital through education, training and experience of individuals and their acquisition of social, managerial, administrative, political and technical skills (Lyons *et al.*, 2001).

Although historically the value of public involvement in public space regeneration has been largely ignored, the need to involve the public - and doing this effectively - is now clearly advocated (Burton *et al.*, 2004; HM Government, 2008). However, the 'best' way in which this should be achieved remains ambiguous and effective public involvement remains a challenge.

Public spaces are often (re)developed as part of wider physical regeneration schemes, with varied investors. They may be part of waterfront developments (Bassett *et al.*, 2002; Sanoff, 2005; Oakley, 2007), city strategies (Mahjabeen *et al.*, 2009), area-based initiatives (Ram, 1995; Mayo *et al.*, 2000; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Kasim, 2011) and smaller neighbourhood improvements (Juarez and Brown, 2008). Therefore, public involvement tends to be assessed in terms of the entire scheme rather than its individual aspects. In this 'aggregated' format, details of how the public may have contributed to and influenced the regeneration of a particular space, as well as the manner (i.e. method) in which the public may have been involved, are scarce[22].

Regeneration of public spaces tends to play a key role in plans to revive town centres (Holland *et al.*, 2007). Multiple documents (e.g. DETR, 1999, 2000; ODPM, 2002b; UTF 1999; 2005) point to the central role that quality urban open spaces play in British urban areas, as well as the need to involve their users in their development, which can encourage a sense of ownership and pride. CABE Space (2009c: 4) concludes that 'public space projects are rarely successful unless they involve people who have an interest in the space involved'. However, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding the ways, i.e. the mechanisms, in which effective public involvement in the regeneration of urban public spaces can be achieved. The research aims to contribute to this area.

However, regeneration of urban public spaces represents only one component of wider urban regeneration, of which public involvement has become an inherent part. Before exploring public involvement more theoretically, the next section will briefly outline urban regeneration and the changing role of the public within it.

[22] Exceptions include Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005), Kapadia and Robertson (2006) and Juarez and Brown (2008)

2.3 Urban Regeneration

The previous section has identified that public spaces are important in achieving successful urban regeneration (Worpole and Knox, 2007) and that despite growing awareness of what constitutes quality urban public spaces, these are still rarely accomplished (PAN 65, 2008). However, it was recognised that by involving their users in their regeneration, more successful public spaces could be achieved.

The Government (DETR, 1999; UTF, 2005) now recognises the value of public involvement in regeneration, but it has not always done so. This section begins with defining urban regeneration and explores the impact of political agendas (Beswick and Tsenkova, 2002; Pacione, 2005) and urban policy (Tallon, 2010) on the changing significance of public involvement in urban regeneration[23].

New Labour (1997 – 2010) policies and their approach to urban regeneration and public involvement were most influential for this research, which started in mid-2009. The practical development of the research was subsequently influenced by the economic recession, which severely affected the regeneration sector (Parkinson *et al.*, 2009; Broughton *et al.*, 2011; Carpenter, 2011). New Labour was replaced by a Coalition Government in May 2010, with further changes to urban policy.

2.3.1 Defining 'urban regeneration'

Urban regeneration plays a significant role in changing both the physical and social urban landscape. Hall (2006: 57) defined it as a 'proactive set of interventions designed primarily to ameliorate against the negative consequences of urban decline', but the most frequently used definition in academic literature is:

> *'A comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.'*
>
> (Roberts and Sykes, 2000: 17)

The economic, social and cultural, physical and environmental, and governance-related dimensions of urban regeneration are interconnected and together they aim

[23] For a comprehensive review of urban regeneration, refer to Roberts and Sykes (2000), Beswick and Tsenkova (2002), Jones and Evans (2008), Tallon (2010) and others.

to tackle multifaceted urban problems (Hall, 2006; Jones and Evans, 2008; Tallon, 2010). However, regeneration is rarely, if ever, comprehensive (Turok, 2005). Since the early 1990s, sustainability[24] in regeneration has become more prominent (Lees, 2003; Tallon, 2010; Lombardi *et al.*, 2011).

This research is placed within the physical aspect of urban regeneration – the regeneration of urban public spaces. There are numerous actors involved – architects, designers, builders, property developers, consultants, local authorities as well as members of the public – implying the existence of a complex web of networks, relationships and interests among the different stakeholder groups (Lowndes *et al.*, 1997). The way these groups of actors are organised has changed significantly since the mid-1980s (Beswick and Tsenkova, 2002; Turok, 2005; Hall, 2006; Jones and Evans, 2008; Tallon, 2010).

The role of the general public in regeneration has been influenced by the changes in the regeneration policy and its focus shifting between physical, economic and social regeneration in response to different political agendas. Particularly economic agendas tended to favour the views of the private sector over that of local government and local communities. This is explored in more detail below.

2.3.2 Public involvement in British urban regeneration and policy

Urban regeneration is a significant component of urban policy (Tallon, 2010), which entails 'the targeting of resources by government to problems that it regards as peculiar to, or concentrated in, towns and cities' (Davies, 2002: 168). Political changes determine changes in urban policy and thus also the approaches, programmes and funding support (Beswick and Tsenkova, 2002; Pacione, 2005).

This section briefly covers the influence that changes in the British urban policy since the 1960s have had on the changing role of public involvement in urban regeneration. Different political and economic agendas tend to either involve or exclude certain stakeholders, which affects the extent to which the general public can participate.

[24] For a critique of 'sustainability' conceptualisation, see Lombardi *et al.* (2011)

There now exists a range of requirements to involve the general public in the process of decision making in relation to different functions, such as spatial planning (HM Government, 2008: Para 2.13). Apart from being a fundamental civic and democratic right, public involvement is also advocated on the grounds of numerous perceived benefits, including reaching more satisfactory, legitimate and easier decisions, incorporating a broader range of values, avoiding possible public protest and increasing trust in decision makers (ibid.; Fiorino, 1990; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2008). Overall, public involvement is no longer an option, but a requirement (LGID, 2011b), which applies to many public policy arenas (Innes and Booher, 2004). Within the context of this research, this links backs with the arguments presented in Section 2.2.3 regarding the need to involve the public in creating successful urban public spaces.

2.3.2.1 The changing significance of public involvement between 1968 and now

In the 1960s, the importance of public involvement in regeneration and planning was first recognised by Government via the Urban Programme (1968) and the Skeffington Report (HMSO, 1969) (McArthur, 1993; Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Tallon, 2010). During the 1970s, the Urban White Paper[25] (HMSO, 1977) recognised the importance of communities as a key part of a range of stakeholders from business, government and the third sector (Mohan, 1999; Pacione, 2005; Hall, 2006). In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government's neo-liberal stance resulted in the primacy of the private sector[26], side-lining local authorities and local community involvement (Kosecik, 2000; Beswick and Tsenkova, 2002). By the 1990s, this approach was proven to be divisive and partnership approaches involving the community amongst a range of other stakeholders were established. Local government and communities were given a central role in new initiatives such as City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and the Single Programme[27] (Jones and Evans, 2008), a key principle of which was to consult with local communities on the needs of their areas (Ram, 1995; Smith, 2008; Kasim, 2011). New Labour (1997 – 2010) continued the partnership approach. Public involvement became central to its policies (Blakeley and Evans, 2008) and a much greater emphasis was placed on

[25] Urban White Paper: Policy for the Inner Cities (HMSO, 1977)

[26] The most pronounced policies included the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and Enterprise Zones (Hastings, 1996; Imrie and Thomas, 1999; Tallon, 2010).

[27] An extensive body of literature addresses the advantages and pitfalls of these initiatives (De Groot, 1992; Harvey and Shaw, 1998; Fordham *et al.*, 1999).

community engagement in regeneration programmes[28] (Tiesdel and Allmendinger, 2001; Imrie and Raco, 2003; Robinson *et al.*, 2005) and Local Strategic Partnerships (Tallon, 2010; LGID, 2011a). The report 'Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' (SEU, 1998) stressed the need to involve communities in a more bottom-up approach to urban regeneration[29] (Smith, 2008).

> *'Unless the community is fully engaged in shaping and delivering regeneration, even the best plans on paper will fail to deliver in practice.'*
>
> (Blair in SEU, 2000: 5)

The 'duty to involve'[30] (Appendix 2c) (HM Government, 2008; LGID, 2011b) was introduced in 2008. However, despite the statement that the effectiveness of the methods chosen to involve the public should be monitored, it did not specify how this should be evaluated. DCLG (2005) did not provide any specific guidance on how to carry out and assess public involvement in the planning process, despite highlighting its importance.

Since the forming of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition government in 2010, British urban policy has experienced considerable change[31]. Although the government rhetorically advocates public involvement, 'community-led regeneration'[32] (claimed to be part of the 'Big Society'[33] agenda and the Localism Act 2011[34]) and theoretically giving the general public more power to influence what is happening in their areas, it remains unclear how this will be realised in practice and what impact these policies will have.

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[28] New policies and initiatives included the New Deal for Communities (NDC) in 1998 (Robinson *et al.*, 2005) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) in 2001.

[29] The New Labour's intention to engage the public was also stated in the White Paper 'Modern Local Government: In touch with the people' (1998), the Local Government Act 2000 and the statutory duty for local authorities to consult the public as part of the Best Value process (Blakeley and Evans, 2008).

[30] The duty to involve - 'a statutory obligation applying to specified public bodies, requiring them to consult and involve individuals, groups, businesses or organisations likely to be affected by their actions' - was established in the 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities' report (HM Government, 2008), but was repealed in 2011 and replaced with the Best Value Statutory Guidance (DCLG, 2011d), which retained the duty to consult (Involve, 2012).

[31] For example, the economic recession has affected the public sector's ability to finance regeneration projects (Broughton *et al.*, 2011; Carpenter, 2011) - some have been put on hold or abandoned altogether (Parkinson *et al.*, 2009; Carpenter, 2011).

[32] For the legislation linked to the approach of 'community-led regeneration', refer to HM Government (2010), DCLG (2011a, 2012a) and UK Parliament (2011).

[33] The Big Society is the Government's current vision 'of a society where individuals and communities have more power and responsibility, and use it to create better neighbourhoods and local services' (DCLG, 2012d).

[34] For details about the Localism Act, refer to DCLG (2011b, 2012b, 2012c).

Despite the policy rhetoric and associated documentation acknowledging the importance of public involvement, some argue that with scarce empirical evidence, the proposed benefits may not be realised in practice (Muers, 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2008; Burton *et al.*, 2006; Burton, 2009). Together with an often poorly articulated nature and purpose of public involvement (Dobbs and Moore, 2002; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Bryson *et al.*, 2012) and possible misunderstanding and overestimation of what can be actually achieved, it is difficult to ascertain what could be considered as effective public involvement and how it should be carried out (Catanese, 1984; Gregory, 2000; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Mahjabeen *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, given the different stakeholders in regeneration and their varied interests, it remains unclear who is responsible for delivering public involvement[35]. As such, uncertainties remain around how public involvement should be achieved effectively, and how this effectiveness should be assessed. Even with the change in political leadership, the debates surrounding effective public involvement and how this should be assessed remain current. The debate is no longer whether the public should be involved, but 'who should participate, which methods should be employed, what type of knowledge will be produced and how that knowledge will be integrated into the process' (Juarez and Brown, 2008: 190). As such, this thesis will engage with these issues surrounding public involvement mechanisms and their effectiveness. However, before that it is necessary to explore the concept and challenges of public involvement itself.

2.4 Public involvement

Having established the importance of public involvement in the regeneration of urban public spaces, as well as the wider public policy (Innes and Booher, 2004), this section explores 'public involvement' more theoretically in terms of the ways it has been defined and its multiple challenges, including the varied expectations of different stakeholders. All these elements have an influence on the effectiveness of public involvement.

[35] Even independent consultants may not have full control, as they may be influenced by for example steering boards made up of representatives of other interested bodies (for more detail see Bassett *et al.*, 2002; Rowe *et al.*, 2005). Literature is scarce on this topic, as consultation is generally practice-based and is performed with the purpose of gathering public input, rather than for the results to be shared with the academic community.

2.4.1 Defining 'public involvement'

Despite the extensive use of the term 'public involvement', it remains ambiguous in both theory and practice (White, 1996; Innes and Booher, 2004; Burton *et al.*, 2006) and is generally left undefined and open to interpretation (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, the terms such as 'consultation', 'involvement' and 'participation' are often used interchangeably (Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Kasim, 2011). At the same time, they can be used to distinguish more precisely between different forms of involvement, which range from information provision to citizen control (Arnstein, 1969; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; Smith, 2008).

Smith (1983; in Rowe and Frewer, 2000) defined public participation as a set of procedures designed to consult, involve and inform, which allows an input into decision making by those affected by it. This may cover decisions in various areas, including urban public spaces. An alternative definition includes 'the practice of involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making and policy-forming activities' (Rowe and Frewer, 2005: 253).

Involvement can take various forms, such as joining pressure and action groups, engaging in debates, acting as members of citizen's juries or panels, responding to consultations, being co-opted onto working groups for statutory organisations, campaigning and volunteering (Bochel, 2006) as well as through 'simple one-to-one acts of neighbourly kindness' (Chanan, 2003: 6). In urban regeneration policy, public involvement is often understood in terms of participating in decision-making in local partnerships.

Public involvement is challenging in practice. Thus, before moving onto its more conceptual debates, its practical aspects will be explored.

2.4.2 Challenges to public involvement

Public involvement faces multiple challenges, which Oakley (1991) placed into three categories:

- Structural obstacles refer to the political environment, which may limit public involvement by restricting policymaking to a few individuals.

- Administrative obstacles can be created by centralised administrative and planning procedures
- Social obstacles refer to the limitations in individuals' experiences and skills

Availability of resources is often an issue, even when their importance to 'stimulate and sustain effective community engagement' (Burton *et al.*, 2004: 32) is undisputed. Authorities struggle to justify greater expenditure on public involvement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a), which may be exacerbated in times of austerity[36]. Lack of time and possible inconsistency in officer commitment inhibits greater experimentation in working practices (ibid.; Burton *et al.*, 2004) - the most popular methods of public involvement in planning were identified as consultation documents, exhibitions and public meetings, which do not demonstrate particular innovation (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004). To manage effective public engagement, staff need training and specific skills sets including facilitation, mediation and negotiation skills as well as knowledge about the particular location (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004; Grant, 2009; Kasim, 2011; Bryson *et al.*, 2012). However, 'some agency scientists admit they are functionally illiterate in public participation' (Chess and Purcell, 1999: 2691). Campbell and Marshall (2000) observed planners not being skilled in participation methods, either[37]. However, without the necessary resources and skills, public involvement may not be carried out effectively. Shipley and Utz (2012: 37) confirmed that planners 'still cannot determine, definitely, that what [they] are doing is right'.

The lack of public interest is a major challenge, too. Public involvement often takes the form of meetings, where some groups[38] may not be able to attend due to time,

[36] Based on the context at the time, Berkeley *et al.* (1995) commented that 'in the current economic climate, it would not be surprising to find local authorities undertaking the minimum of consultation necessary to satisfy the relevant Government Minister'. This suggests that lack of resources, often dependant on the economic climate at the time, is a recurring issue.

[37] Potential lack of skills to deliver public engagement could explain the abundance and the relative straight-forward nature of guides such as The Community Planning Handbook (Wates, 2000), Participation Works! (New Economics Foundation, 1999) and a variety 'how to' guides produced by local authorities and other organisations (Sterne and Zagon, 1997; Scottish Executive, 2004; Nottinghamshire County Council, 2007a, 2007b; COI, 2009; Orkney Community Planning Partnership, 2010). These appear to be produced separately by each organisation, without necessarily referring to any academic evidence. The need for a consultation to be 'effective' is often accentuated, together with the importance of evaluation, but guidance on this is limited.

[38] Hard-to-reach groups include parents with children, disabled people, those living in remote areas, people in full-time employment, working class people, young people, women, members of black and ethnic minority groups, asylum seekers and refugees, homeless people and faith communities (Brownill and Darke, 1998; Speak, 2000; Mitchell, 2001; Farnell *et al.*, 2003; Jones, 2003; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Curtis *et al.*, 2004; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004; Cameron and Grant-Smith, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006).

location, access and transport restrictions or lack of confidence (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Newburn and Jones, 2002; Shipley and Utz, 2012). People often become involved only when they believe that an issue directly affects them and is in their immediate interest (Catanese, 1984; Day, 1997) but for some individuals[39], non-participation may be an active rational choice (Mathers *et al.*, 2008; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2005). Some may experience 'consultation overload' (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a). Due to the substantial commitment required from the public to take part in more 'empowering' forms of engagement, only a small minority of residents take part at present. Large parts of communities do not engage at all. The established structures and bureaucratic systems of decision making, policy and urban regeneration can discourage the general public, too (Jones, 2003). These obstacles have contributed to a culture of dependency on experts and community leaders[40] (Gregory, 2000), who act on behalf of the community, but their representativeness may be questioned (Purdue *et al.*, 2000; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; Bochel, 2006). They may participate in partnerships[41] (Raco, 2000; Lowndes *et al.*, 1997; Ball and Maginn, 2005), however in partnerships the public is believed to often remain on the margins of power as the weakest partner[42]. The predetermined system, formalised structures, language used and the pace of decision-making may inhibit public engagement in the process (Mayo *et al.*, 2000; Dobbs and Moore, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2005). Overall, relying on the presence of community representatives rather than large numbers of individuals may 'limit public participation and retain power in the hands of the elite' (Arblaster, 1987:62). As such, in this research, consultation - as opposed to participation - may provide a voice to a broader range of individuals, representing their own views of urban public spaces, rather than a collective view articulated by a community representative.

Furthermore, evidence points to 'apathy' among the public[43] (Lowndes *et al.* 1998; 2001a, 2001b). In fact, Foley and Martin's (2000) study revealed that only 20% of

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[39] The specific reasons for why these hard-to-reach groups may feel marginalised will not be considered further as it is deemed outside the scope of this research

[40] For further discussion, see Gregory (2000), Taylor (2003b), Catt and Murphy (2003), Robinson *et al.* (2005)

[41] For further discussions of partnerships, see Mackintosh (1992), Peck and Tickell (1994), Hastings (1996), Day (1997), Mayo (1997), Audit Commission (1998), Taylor (2000), Allen (2001), Tiesdell and Allmendinger (2001), Hudson and Hardy (2002), Gilchrist (2006) and Jones and Evans (2008)

[42] However, power dynamics form part of almost any encounter between 'professionals' and the 'public' (Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Bennett, 2002)

[43] Incentives – both material and non-material – may encourage participation, where intangible benefits, such as new skills and knowledge, greater self-respect, stronger

residents were interested in having more say in the running of their local services, and those preferred passive forms of consultations, such as postal surveys, rather than more active involvement in the form of meetings or citizen juries. Other surveys revealed that people wish to be informed and have the opportunity to take part - even though this is not often taken up – instead of participating in public affairs more extensively (Burton *et al.*, 2004).

As such, policy officers may have unrealistic aspirations for public involvement and perhaps need to be more realistic about the true levels of involvement possible. As Jones (2003: 597) claims:

> *'Complex social relations, time constraints and accumulated experiences and perhaps dashed expectations of previous initiatives suggest the need to be realistic about barriers to increasing participation and the myth of even 10% - never mind 100% - participation.'*

The different stakeholders' expectations pose another challenge to public involvement. In view of their different interests and levels of power and authority (Hillier, 2003), their reasons for involvement and their expectations of it will vary (Webler and Tuler, 2002; Simmons and Birchall, 2005; Hall, 2006). However, with the exception of Lowndes *et al.* (1998, 2001a, 2001b[44]) different stakeholders' expectations of public involvement processes are seldom examined

Local government's primary concern is to address its information needs by gaining citizen's views, leading to better informed decisions and service improvements (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a, 2001b). Learning that potentially results from participation is valued. However, empowering the public or raising their awareness is of secondary interest. There are often concerns over raising unrealistic public expectations, when the local authority may be financially or legally restricted in responding to particular issues (ibid.).

Local authorities' expectations contrast with those of the public. Citizens would like to have more influence over final decisions or at least know what happened as a result of their involvement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b). 'Influence on decision-making'

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community identity or 'the prospect of meeting friends who share similar values and beliefs and the enjoyment of collective effort' can be sufficient (Rydin and Pennington, 2000: 157).

[44] In these two papers (2001a, 2001b), Lowndes *et al.* discussed the results of a study examining the practice and attitudes towards public involvement within local government, commissioned by DETR (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998).

frequently features as an effectiveness criterion (Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Hartley and Wood, 2005). However, the Audit Commission (1999: 41) discovered that nearly three-quarters of authorities 'failed to link the results of consultation with decision-making processes', preventing 'the results from being used effectively', and as such limiting public influence over decisions. Lowndes *et al.* (2001b: 452-3) advise:

> *'Even (or especially) when final decisions go against popular opinion, local authorities need to inform the public of the outcome and the reasons for the decision. Clearer statements of the scope and limitations of participation, and better feedback on outcomes […] are necessary to challenge citizens' cynicism and their resultant reluctance to participate.'*

The different (and sometimes opposing) stakeholders' expectations also complicate the definition of effectiveness, of either public involvement as a whole or of individual approaches. The expectations may not be met for all parties involved and what may appear effective to one set of stakeholders may be seen as ineffective by another (effectiveness will be explored in Chapter 3). Wilcox (1994: 9) proposed that successful involvement may be achieved 'when each of the key interests – the stakeholders – is satisfied with the level of participation at which they are involved'. Ideally, the purpose of involvement should be made explicit (Kane and Bishop, 2002; Juarez and Brown, 2008) and the various perspectives taken into account – an approach embraced by user-based evaluations, which acknowledge the goals of different parties (Chess, 2000).

In order to better understand and address the practice and challenges of public involvement, academics have tried to explore the concept of public involvement more theoretically.

2.4.3 Conceptual considerations of 'public involvement'

Webler (1999: 55) argued that the field of public involvement is 'characterised by an interesting juxtaposition of a rich experiential knowledge and a growing, but scattered theoretical literature', covering multiple disciplines. The combination of the theoretical and practical knowledge would extend the conceptual and theoretical understanding of public involvement (Webler and Tuler, 2002) and assist those applying involvement techniques in the field with the selection of techniques that would match particular contexts. As part of the ongoing debates surrounding public involvement, several frameworks have been offered to assist the conceptual understanding of the key terms (Arnstein, 1969; Connor, 1988; Burns *et al.*, 1994; Wilcox, 1994; Chambers, 1994; 1997; White, 1996; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Creative Commons, 2012).

Sherry Arnstein's (1969) (Table 2.1) 'ladder of citizen participation' is one of the most frequently mentioned models (Speak, 2000; Dobbs and Moore, 2002; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Juarez and Brown, 2008; Collins and Ison, 2009; Tallon, 2010). Arnstein conceptualised participation as 'a categorical term for citizen power' (p. 216) and her hierarchical model (considered from the perspective of an 'activist') differentiates between eight types of participation. These are metaphorically placed on eight levels or rungs of a ladder. They range from non-participation, represented by therapy and manipulation, to degrees of tokenism such as informing, consultation and placation, to degrees of citizen power, where communities engage in partnership structures, are delegated power and have control. It demonstrates the significant gradations of citizen participation, where each of the rungs corresponds to 'the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product' (p. 217). Arnstein argued that without a redistribution of power, participation is an empty ritual. As such, citizen control[45] is presented as the ultimate goal, but is rarely achieved in practice, due to political and procedural constraints.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Table 2.1: Arnstein's 'Ladder of citizen participation</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="9"></td><td>Rungs on the ladder</td><td>Extent of participation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Citizen control</td><td rowspan="3">Degrees of citizen power</td></tr>
<tr><td>Delegated power</td></tr>
<tr><td>Partnership</td></tr>
<tr><td>Placation</td><td rowspan="3">Degrees of tokenism</td></tr>
<tr><td>Consultation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Informing</td></tr>
<tr><td>Therapy</td><td rowspan="2">Non-participation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Manipulation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Note: Table adapted from Arnstein (1969)</td></tr>
</table>

Arnstein admitted some limitations of her model, firstly, the simplified juxtaposition of 'powerless' citizens with the 'powerholders', secondly, the omission of various barriers, thirdly, that in practice there may be 'as many as 150 rungs with less sharp distinctions' (p. 217), and lastly, that some of the characteristics, which could be both

[45] Arnstein herself acknowledges that 'absolute control' is a misleading term and is realistically unattainable.

legitimate or illegitimate, may apply to other rungs, too. Overall, the typology was supposed to be provocative, but despite its extensive use, it has received increased criticism. Some have identified the typology as over-simplistic, one-dimensional and hierarchical. Its primary focus on redistribution of power as the main indicator of meaningful citizen participation - as if 'seizing control' was the true aim for citizens - is considered its greatest limitation (Connor, 1988; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Collins and Ison, 2009), as in reality participants may engage for many different reasons. They may be content with achieving a particular level, even if it is on a 'lower' rung[46].

> *'Arnstein is vague about the method adopted to involve users and sees no relationship between the aims of the involvement exercise, users who participate and the methods adopted to involve them.'*
>
> (Tritter and McCallum, 2006: 162)

Overall, the practice of public involvement is claimed to be much more complex than the ladder metaphor suggests (Tritter and McCallum, 2006). Its hierarchical structure (although not restricted just to Arnstein, but used in other models, too) implies that the highest rungs on the ladder are the ones to aim for, whereas the lower rungs somewhat fail at public involvement. However, although Arnstein's model has been repeatedly redesigned and adapted[47] for other contexts, its highly criticised hierarchical structure has often been retained. On the contrary, Wilcox (1994: 8) argues that 'different levels are appropriate in different circumstances', where no one level is inherently better than the other.

---

[46] Further criticisms of Arnstein (1969) include: being based on a value judgement; focusing on outcome only, without acknowledging the process; failing to recognise the importance of method and feedback systems, limiting the adoption of innovative methods; overlooking the complexity of stakeholders, their relationships and roles; being devoid of context; its linear continuum implying that policy problems are constant, rather than unique; the hierarchical approach being generally restrictive and limiting opportunities for evaluation; not acknowledging that citizen control can be achieved only if authority and responsibility is transferred with it; and not considering options for collaboration or shared decision-making (Connor, 1988; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Collins and Ison, 2009).

[47] Wilcox (1994) simplified Arnstein's ladder to five rungs, ranging from 'information', 'consultation', 'deciding together', 'acting together' to 'supporting independent community interests'. Burns *et al.*'s (1994) model increased the number of rungs and added adjacent ladders linked to 'spheres of influence'. Choguill (1996) adapted Arnstein's model for underdeveloped countries and Horwich and Lyon (2007) for integrated conservation and development projects, where community ownership of projects is advocated. Hart (1992; 1997) adapted the model to suit the context of children and young people. Shier (2001) subsequently further adapted Hart's model. Rocha (1997) utilised Arnstein's model to create a 'ladder of empowerment'.

As such the model is rather theoretical and less practical for pragmatic policy implementation and is prone to ongoing conceptual criticism. Whereas Tritter and McCallum (2006) have suggested incorporating additional ladders with horizontal accountability, or even using a mosaic model, Collins and Ison (2009) argued that participation should be re-conceptualised from a process concerned with power to 'a process of social learning about the nature of the issue itself and how it might be progressed' (p. 369). Bishop and Davis (2002) proposed to view participation as a discontinuous interaction, where 'there is no shared theoretical base', but where participation is viewed as a suite of different options instead[48].

Alternative models have been presented by White (1996) and Chambers (1994, 1997). White's (1996) (Table 2d.1, Appendix 2d) framework describes four types of participation – nominal, instrumental, representative and transformative – which differ in the extent to which the public is consulted or empowered. It recognises the varied expectations of different actors in the process. Chambers' (1994, 1997) (Table 2d.2, Appendix 2d) model has been adapted from international development and is based on the distinction between Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). He placed these along a continuum ranging from the extractive mode of obtaining information in the case of RRA to empowerment achieved by PRA. He also considered the role of the professional in the process.

Arnstein's, White's and Chambers' models suggest a continuum of approaches which range from consultative forms of participation to citizen empowerment[49]. They point to the power relations present between the participants and the professionals, as well as the overall complexity of participation due to the different perspectives it can be considered from (Juarez and Brown, 2008). However, they also highlight the need for clarity on the side of the professionals on what they aim for – to inform, consult and gain some input from the public, or strive for a transformative process. This should subsequently inform the method to use, as different methods will generate different types of results.

[48] These include 'participation as consultation', 'participation as partnership', 'participation as standing', 'participation as consumer choice' and 'participation as control' (Bishop and Davis, 2002: 21 – 26)

[49] Some commentators view Arnstein's model as associated with empowerment (Burns *et al.*, 1994; Juarez and Brown, 2008), however Arnstein herself does not mention 'empowerment' in her original paper and only refers to 'power'.

Public involvement is not of interest only to regeneration, planning, policy, health, science and technology, environmental impact assessments and other domains (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Innes and Booher, 2004; Hartley and Wood, 2005; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Smith, 2008). The design community, involved in physical regeneration projects, is also increasingly advocating ‘user involvement’ in design processes, altering the relationships between designers and users (Eason, 1995; Lee *et al.*, 2008). Sanders’ (2006) cognitive collage of the design research space (Figure 2d.1 in Appendix 2d) ‘clearly shows that user involvement has become an essential part in design research development’ (Lee *et al.*, 2008: 3). Using vertical and horizontal dimensions, the collage presents different levels and intentions of user involvement. Lindsay (2003) developed the ‘pyramid of user-led design’ (Figure 2d.2 in Appendix 2d) and Lee (2007, 2008) the design participation typology (Table 2d.3 in Appendix 2d), which specifies the ‘space of operation’ (designers’ space, users’ space and the realm of collaboration) and the relationship between these spaces, the purpose of participation and the roles of the designers and the users. This demonstrates that the debates of how to engage with the public the most effectively are current in a variety of disciplines. However, focusing on general regeneration of urban public spaces (i.e. pre-design stage), these models will not be explored any further.

Rowe and Frewer (2005) conceptualised public involvement based on the flow of information between participants and sponsors (such as the local authority) and as such provided an alternative to the hierarchical models based on power[50]. Three distinctions are made - ‘communication, ‘consultation’ and ‘participation’, which are together referred to as ‘public engagement’ (Table 2.2).

- In public communication, the public acts as a passive recipient of information supplied by the sponsor.
- In public consultations, following a sponsor initiating a consultation, public input is sought. Information flows from the public to the sponsor without any formal dialogue between the two taking place.

In both of these cases, flow of information is one-way.

[50] Rowe and Frewer’s (2005) conceptualisation is similar to OECD Active Participation Framework (OECD, 2001), which differentiated between ‘information’, ‘consultation’ and ‘active participation’ based on the nature and the direction of the relationship between government and citizens.

- Public participation assumes information exchange between the public and the sponsor. Some degree of dialogue takes place and 'negotiation serves to transform opinions in the members of both parties' (Rowe and Frewer, 2005: 256).

Table 2.2: The three types of public engagement				
	Type	**Flow of information**		
Public engagement	Communication	Sponsor	→	Public
	Consultation	Sponsor	←	Public
	Participation	Sponsor	↔	Public
Note: Table adapted from Rowe and Frewer (2005)				

Whereas consultation and participation involves gathering public input, in the case of communication, the flow of information is top-down and one-way from the sponsor to the public. As such, public feedback or input is generally not required and 'when the public attempts to provide information, there are no mechanisms specified a priori to deal with this at any level beyond, perhaps, simply recording the information' (Rowe and Frewer, 2005: 255). For these reasons, communication could also be viewed as a form of non-participation. Still, Arnstein (1969) admitted that 'informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities and options can be the most important first step toward legitimate citizen participation' (p. 219).

Although public participation and consultation both entail eliciting public input, they cover two distinct sets of circumstances.

Firstly, in 'participation' the two-way interaction between sponsors and the public is considered more suitable when seeking input into making more complex decisions (Abelson *et al.*, 2003) and as such the public has certain influence over decision making (corresponding with Arnstein's degrees of citizen control and White's representative and transformative forms). The level of specialist or cognitive knowledge required to contribute to decision making will influence the extent to which the public can be involved (Glicken, 1999). Decisions requiring greater expert input will result in more limited public involvement than would be the case when seeking more value-based decisions (Rowe and Frewer, 2000). In the context of planning, without sufficient knowledge, the public may not understand how the process operates and what it is capable of[51], restricting their involvement to the consultation level (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004).

Secondly, through 'consultations' the public either advises or provides information for the decision makers, but the input does not have to be incorporated into the policy making process and thus the public has no control over decisions (Catt and Murphy, 2003; McLauglin *et al.*, 2004). Bishop and Davis (2002) stated that consultation is the main form of public involvement utilised in practice and that it 'collects voices and ensures they are heard when choices are made, but does not assume any fundamental shift in ultimate responsibility for the decision' (ibid., p. 22).

This thesis will follow Rowe and Frewer's (2005) terminology of public communication, consultation and participation and the overall terms of public 'engagement' and 'involvement' to refer to involving the public in the process of decision making in a general sense. Making a relatively clear distinction between the three types of involvement, Rowe and Frewer's (2005) conceptualisation could be viewed as less susceptible to confusion and overlap, as tends to be the case with Arnstein (1969). Other models (Chambers, 1994; 1997; White, 1996) are more domain-specific and as such less applicable for the context of this research. Additionally, while the transfer of power may be a contested concept in public involvement, flow of information is its inherent component because at the most basic level, public involvement tends to be initiated because a sponsor 'wants to gain information that it does not have' (Catt and Murphy, 2003: 416). However, in view of the findings obtained in this research, a conceptual discussion of the theoretical models will be offered in Chapter 9.

Acknowledging that regenerating urban public spaces does not necessarily involve 'complex decisions'[52] and in its pre-design stage seeks mainly public views, opinions and aspirations for particular areas, 'consultation' lends itself to be the appropriate level of public involvement to focus on in the context of this research. Further arguments for consultation are presented next.

[51] However, the public should be given support and access to independent sources of advice, especially if they are expected to participate in contributing to decision making (McArthur, 1993; Robinson *et al.*, 2005).
[52] Regeneration of urban public spaces does not necessarily require highly technical or scientific expertise and would seek personal views and aspirations of the members of the public instead.

2.4.4 The arguments for focusing on public consultation in this research

Combining the original arguments of the need for effective public involvement in the regeneration of urban public spaces, with the challenges of public involvement presented in Section 2.4.2, this research will focus on consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces, as opposed to other, more intensive forms of public involvement. This is for several reasons.

Firstly, public involvement in regenerating urban public spaces is dependant on obtaining the views and opinions of the public. Although ‘communication’ is fundamental in developing an informed audience (Murray, 2011), the flow of information is one-way, from the sponsor to the public (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). Accepting the arguments that communication is not a suitable form of public involvement in this domain and that communication methods have already received considerable attention (Rowe and Frewer, 2000), communication will not be explored further.

Secondly, some consultation methods are likely to gather the views of a broader range of individuals than more participatory methods would do. More extensive participation, for example within partnerships, is often dependant on community representatives (Section 2.4.2). However, ‘direct rather than representative forms of participation are assumed to maximise democracy’ (Day, 1997: 423).

Thirdly, the public appears to give preference to consultation, too (Foley and Martin, 2000). This confirms that the public may not necessarily strive for ‘control’ (Arnstein, 1969) and that consultation may be the level which fulfils their own motivations and expectations for getting involved. Given the frequent lack of interest and apathy (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998, 2001a, 2001b), consultation may be the most realistic, too.

Fourthly, ‘consultation remains the dominant and the most familiar face of participation in policy making across the OECD world’ (Bishop and Davis, 2002: 22), although more extensive and collaborative participation may be advocated (Arnstein, 1969; Innes and Booher, 2004). Juarez and Brown (2008) confirmed that in the case of landscape architecture most involvement tends to fall on the lower rungs of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder and towards the nominal/instrumental/representative end of White’s (1996) framework, and the public consultation level of Rowe and Frewer’s

(2005). There are exceptions, but they do not constitute mainstream practice. As such, focus on consultation in this research follows the trend in practice. In fact, drawing on Stivers (1990), Day (1997: 425) argued that:

> *'there exists a long standing consensus in Western political thought that substantial involvement by citizens in their governance is unworkable, regardless of how desirable it may be. […] The modern administrative state is too big and complex to facilitate the kind of face-to-face relationships upon which participatory democracy depends'.*

Finally, in practice, engagement is mostly achieved through one-off events rather than continuous processes (Rowe and Gammack, 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2005) which limit the opportunities for greater public engagement. Combined with the possibly decreasing resources at the times of 'austerity' (DCLG, 2011c; The Campaign Company, 2011), consultation may be viewed as offering better 'value for money'.

Still, the term 'consultation' is open to a variety of interpretations. Kane and Bishop (2002: 87) have warned that confusion over the nature and purpose of consultation can decrease its effectiveness, especially when the public misunderstand it as 'an exercise in policy determination', where their input would be utilised to determine a decision. Instead, consultation is a means through which the public *may influence* policy, but not determine it. Therefore, the sponsors should 'state clearly in advance exactly how the results of a consultation will be used' and 'never allow citizens to believe their input will be determinative of final decisions' (ibid., p. 91). Still, consultation 'marks a legitimate step towards full participation' (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004: 154). In some cases, it may even facilitate personal empowerment through skill or knowledge acquisition. On the contrary, a negative experience of any level of involvement will not be empowering, as 'although participation may allow for empowerment, it is not intrinsically empowering' (Murray and Hallett, 2000: 15). As such, consultation could be also viewed as a mechanism of social control, where existing power relations are reproduced (Gutek, 1978; White, 1996; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004). However, these challenges (and others identified in Section 2.4.2) are not restricted to consultation only and would apply to the range of public involvement methods as a whole.

Overall, despite the ongoing debates about public involvement and consultation, questions remain as to how these should be achieved as effectively as possible. The trend in increasing public involvement is mirrored by an expanding range of public involvement techniques, however their effectiveness often remains undetermined (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). As Collins and Ison (2009: 359) have argued:

> *'Whilst the imperative for participation has increased, critical engagement with understandings and the epistemologies of participation and the practices that result has lagged.'*

Focusing on consultation - identified as the most appropriate and realistic when seeking public space users' views of their needs and aspirations (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004) - this research will explore the effectiveness of consultation methods in the context of public space regeneration and thus contribute to debates about effectiveness.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the importance of urban public spaces and the involvement of the public in their regeneration, setting the context for this research (Objective 1). It identified that despite growing awareness of what constitutes quality urban public spaces, there are indications that in reality many spaces fail at fulfilling these aspirations (UTF, 2005; PAN 65, 2008). Open spaces have become part of statutory and community planning processes (CABE Space, 2009a) and government, organisations such as CABE and Glass-House, the design community and others have recognised that involving the public in co-producing such spaces can contribute to their improvement and regeneration (Mean and Tims, 2005). Furthermore, despite the fluctuations in the role public involvement has played in urban regeneration over the last sixty years, involving the general public is now considered central to urban regeneration policy and practice (Smith, 2008) as well as wider public policy arenas (Innes and Booher, 2004). This was the case in New Labour's policies and appears to be so in the Coalition government's Localism Act and Big Society, too. However, the challenge remains how to conduct public involvement in an effective manner. Numerous documents highlighting the need to involve the public fail to elaborate on how the public should be engaged meaningfully. As such, there is a gap in knowledge surrounding the issue of effective public involvement, which this research seeks to address.

The last part of this chapter partly fulfilled the second objective, in terms of critically exploring the concepts of public involvement and consultation. It presented the challenges of public involvement and several conceptual frameworks (Arnstein, 1969; Rowe and Frewer, 2005, and others). Consultation was subsequently identified as the most appropriate level of public involvement for this research. Most public involvement takes the form of consultation (Bishop and Davis, 2002) and it is possibly the most realistic level not only in the current climate of austerity, but also when considering the extent to which the public themselves want to take part (Foley and Martin, 2000).

Mirroring the growing trend in increasing public involvement in decision making, the range of techniques enabling involvement is also expanding. However, despite the recognised need for public involvement to be effective (Webler and Tuler, 2002; Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Rowe and Frewer, 2005; HM Government, 2008) and the multiplication of such mechanisms, their quality and effectiveness is less certain (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). As Shipley and Utz (2012: 29) argue:

> *'A good deal of the theoretical writing does not make a distinction among the methods, inferring in some ways that consultation is a single entity rather than a broad range of techniques. […] Much of what is written about consultation methods is descriptive, even promotional and not analytical or evaluative.'*

Although it is recognized that public involvement in urban public space regeneration and other domains should be effective, it remains unclear how this should be achieved and assessed. In view of the various challenges to public involvement possibly preventing the public from being involved in a meaningful manner, the next chapter moves on to exploring the current debates and difficulties surrounding the effectiveness and evaluation of public involvement methods. It reviews a variety of current consultation methods and identifies those to be assessed in this research in terms of their effectiveness at consulting the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces.

Chapter 3

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has established that public involvement in urban regeneration - as well as other disciplines – has been acknowledged as a necessary element in public projects (Smith, 2008). However, despite this recognition, public involvement is not always carried out effectively. The translation of public involvement into practice is complex as well as challenging and its success is not always evident due to no consensus on 'what constitutes successful participation' (Day, 1997: 432) and the 'general failure to make the nature of participation, and what it is to achieve, explicit' (Gregory, 2000: 180). In order to contribute to debates about effectiveness, consultation and consultation methods – as opposed to participation – were selected as the focus of this research, for reasons summarised in Section 2.4.4.

In order to examine 'effectiveness' more thoroughly, the key concepts need to be explored first. As such, this chapter engages with the current debates surrounding the effectiveness and evaluation of public involvement methods and subsequently identifies specific consultation methods to be evaluated for their effectiveness in this research. As such, the chapter progresses on the second objective of the research.

This chapter consists of two parts.

The first part focuses on the challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement mechanisms. By exploring the lack of evaluation criteria, the lack of a typology of mechanisms and other issues, it is argued that current understanding of effectiveness evaluation is incomplete and thus requires ongoing research attention. Although consultation methods will be the focus of the study, the frameworks presented in Section 2.4.3 pointed to potential overlaps and inconsistencies in the terminology used. In the absence of a mechanism typology, the literature on method effectiveness does not necessarily differentiate between different types of involvement methods and considers them more broadly. Still, these more general discussions of the effectiveness of public involvement mechanisms inform the effectiveness of consultation methods. As such, the discussion of effectiveness will not be restricted to consultation methods only.

The second part critically reviews a selection of consultation methods that may be considered applicable to urban public space regeneration. Literature in this area is limited and lacks thorough and systematic methodological descriptions and precise definitions of methods (Rowe and Frewer, 2000, 2004, 2005). Methods tend to be described generally and without much detail regarding the contexts or topics for which they may be suitable. Therefore, after exploring consultation methods which can be used in a variety of disciplines, focus will shift to methods which are specifically applicable to physical regeneration contexts. The aim is to identify those methods which may be currently under-researched and offer potential for development in the context of consulting about urban public space regeneration. The potential for more extensive use of mobile and visual in-situ methods is identified and explored. The chapter concludes with the selection of consultation methods to be evaluated in this research.

3.2 Evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement methods

> *'Effectiveness is not an obvious, uni-dimensional and objective quality that could be easily identified, described and then measured.'*
>
> (Rowe and Frewer, 2000: 517)

Effectiveness is often defined implicitly by referring to aspects believed to achieve effectiveness, or benchmarks to aim for (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). An ambiguous definition subsequently complicates the process of evaluation.

In this section, the importance and challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement mechanisms are presented, together with an agenda for evaluation proposed by Rowe and Frewer (2004), which, if followed, could result in the generation of more comprehensive evaluations of involvement mechanisms. These should be based on predefined evaluation criteria and use structured evaluation mechanisms. More comprehensive effectiveness evaluations could assist academics and practitioners in identifying which methods to use to achieve effective public involvement in various contexts. The section concludes with a summary of the involvement mechanisms which have received attention so far, and which may need further research.

3.2.1 The importance of effectiveness evaluation

The variety of involvement mechanisms - used as a collective term for the different methods, exercises, approaches, procedures, process, techniques and instruments used to involve the public - is large and growing. However, their effectiveness in achieving public involvement often remains unclear, as evaluations are often informal, based on subjective assessment, and examples of structured rigorous evaluations are few (Rowe *et al.*, 2004, 2005, 2008; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004; Burton *et al.*, 2006). They are often limited to ad hoc suggestions and criticisms about the advantages and disadvantages of the various techniques, without following a clear evaluation framework that would make more systematic comparisons possible (Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Rowe and Frewer, 2000, 2004).

For clarification, evaluation can be defined as:

> *'a term embracing many different kinds of judgements, from informal assessment that relies on intuition or opinion, to well-defined and systematic research that makes use of social science research methods'.*
>
> (Joss, 1995: 89)

Evaluations, in this case of involvement methods, are of value to all potential stakeholders (sponsors, organisers, participants and the wider public). Evaluation is important for multiple reasons (Robson, 2000; Rowe and Frewer, 2004):

- financial reasons - to justify public or institutional investment
- developmental / practical - to learn from the past mistakes and improve in the future
- ethical / moral
- research / theoretical reasons.

3.2.2 The challenges of effectiveness evaluation

Despite the argued importance of evaluating involvement methods, such work is limited. This is believed to stem from 'the uncertainty in the research community as to how to conduct evaluations' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 512). Other reasons include (Rosener, 1981; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Frewer *et al.*, 2001; Judd and Randolph, 2006; Rowe *et al.*, 2008):

- The concept of public engagement is complex and value laden (as demonstrated in Section 2.4.3) and combined with the complexity of involvement mechanisms and their various goals, there are no clear benchmarks or criteria against which to judge their success or failure.
- There is no accepted and widely used typology of involvement mechanisms (explored below).
- There is no standardised evaluation framework and few reliable measurement tools to assess effectiveness.
- Public engagement is often seen as an end in itself, rather than a means to an end[1].
- Controlled experimental studies are difficult to implement in this domain due to the abundance of contextual variables which can impact on the effectiveness of the method and which need to be controlled. These include political, cultural, social, economic and environmental factors, as well as the design aspects of the method and the nature of the issue being considered (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Judd and Randolph, 2006). Furthermore, if evaluation is not embedded from the beginning of the exercise, the evaluator may have limited control over the evaluation and may depend on already available data.

Day (1997: 422) adds:

> *'It is difficult to evaluate and contrast empirical findings because the independent variables in each case study are often vastly different; comparing different participation methodologies and techniques may thus be like comparing apples and aardvarks.'*

[1] In such cases, the actual act of 'engagement' is considered as a success, deeming evaluation a 'superfluous' concept. Rowe *et al.* (2008) consider this perspective highly unsatisfactory.

Without the contextual details, it is difficult to identify whether the evaluated exercises are sufficiently similar or not, which raises questions regarding the extent to which results can be generalised. However, due to the variable contextual factors it is argued that ‘there will be no one universally effective method’ (Rowe and Frewer, 2000: 1).

Evaluations can assess the ‘process’ or the ‘outcome’, where ‘outcome’ evaluations are often preferred as they are seen to correspond more directly to the aims of the exercise (Bradford and Robson, 1995). However, because of the practical difficulty of identifying an end point to an involvement exercise and the fact that outcomes may be a result of other interventions, process evaluations must often serve as surrogates. It is believed that if an exercise process is considered to be well run, it would seem more likely to lead to good outcomes (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). However, a particular method does not determine process or outcome success (Chess and Purcell, 1999). Chess (2000) additionally identified three approaches to public involvement evaluation:

- User-based evaluation, which acknowledges and takes into account the various goals of different stakeholders. These evaluations tend to be the most frequent (Abelson and Gauvin, 2006).
- Theory-based evaluation is driven by theories and models of public involvement and draws on normative criteria.
- Goal-free evaluation is conducted without a clear theory or predefined goals.

The paucity of empirical examples of involvement methods in academic literature (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Burton, 2009) is one of the reasons for the absence of a typology of mechanisms, which in turn complicates their evaluation. Some methods are more formalised than others, some may have been used only to a limited extent by a particular group of researchers (Swallow at al, 1992; Wiedermann and Femers, 1993; Soby *et al.*, 1994). Even creating a comprehensive list of the available methods is challenging due to the inconsistencies in nomenclature and ‘fuzzy’ definitions (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). Some authors may use certain terms synonymously, or to make a deliberate distinction. Some methods may in fact incorporate others, creating composite processes. Certain terms may carry different meanings in different countries[2]. Overall, 'in many cases, it is completely unclear what authors mean when using a particular term, because precise mechanism definition rarely ever takes place in published research' (ibid., p. 258). For example, it remains unclear to what extent a 'consultation seminar' differs to a 'citizen advisory committee'.

> *'Not only does the lack of clear definitions hinder research activities into the effectiveness of the different mechanisms, but also the sheer abundance of mechanisms – often highly similar to one another, differing only in the order in which a number of processes are implemented – creates research problems in the sense of multiplying potential objects of research.'*
>
> (ibid., p. 253)

Instead of using precise definitions, mechanisms may be described in terms of the number of participants, the duration and activities undertaken in an exercise. Rowe and Frewer (2005) argue that the variables used in such 'fuzzy definitions' should be those that may in theory, or based on evidence, have an influence on effectiveness. These may include the participant selection method (i.e. controlled or uncontrolled), participant response mode (i.e. open or closed), whether the exercise is face-to-face or facilitated. These actual structural differences between methods are described as 'between-mechanism variables' (for more detail see Table 3a.1 in Appendix 3a). Effectiveness also depends on the way an exercise is conducted. Application of an exercise is referred to as 'within-mechanism variables' and varies on a case-by-case basis. Poor conduct of an exercise may result in a poor outcome even if the exercise was appropriate for the particular context (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

The development of a typology of involvement mechanisms was identified as a priority by the research community (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Webler and Tuler, 2002; Rowe and Frewer, 2004)[3]. Rowe and Frewer (2005) have proposed an extensive engagement mechanism typology. It represents an initial attempt and thus is not widely accepted and is open to conceptual considerations. Using the between-

[2] For a more detailed discussion of the comprehensiveness of the terms used, their independence, functional equivalence and the uncertain and contradictory nomenclature, see Rowe and Frewer (2005).

[3] Several academics have attempted this (Rosener, 1975; Nelkin and Pollak, 1979; English *et al.*, 1993; Wiedemann and Femers, 1993; Bochel, 2006; see Webler (1999) and Rowe and Frewer (2005) for details), based on various attributes that may affect effectiveness: the level of the public's empowerment, the purpose of involvement and its function (to inform the public, listen to them, involve them in decision making), whether people represent their own views or those of a particular group, and other attributes.

mechanism variables, they identified four classes of communication mechanisms, six classes of consultation mechanisms and four classes of participation mechanisms[4]. Ideally, a typology should reduce the volume of methods and place them into classes based on common attributes. However, it could be argued that having identified fourteen classes of engagement mechanisms, evaluating effectiveness still remains complex and poses considerable challenges (Rosener, 1978).

The lack of appropriate benchmarks against which the quality of different methods could be compared and measured is considered the main problem for conducting evaluations (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Bryson *et al.*, 2012). It is linked to the confusion over what is meant by 'effectiveness'. In the absence of a universal effectiveness definition, Rowe and Frewer (2000: 10) argue that 'it is important to understand what results of a participation exercise constitute 'good' outcomes and what processes contribute towards these, and are thus desirable'. Literature has proposed certain criteria that should be met in order to achieve effective public involvement.

3.2.3 Evaluation criteria

Fiorino (1990) developed four criteria, based on democratic and participation theory:

- Direct participation of amateurs in decisions should be allowed, where people are involved as laypersons rather than professionals.
- The extent to which citizens are allowed by the mechanism to share in collective decision making.
- Degree to which there is a structure for face-to-face discussion over some period of time.
- The opportunity for citizens to participate on some basis of equality with administrative officials and technical experts.

Each of these criteria needs to be viewed as a continuum and the assessment as a 'judgement about its capacity to fulfil the criteria' (p. 229). Webler (1995) discussed the criteria of 'fairness' and 'competence' (Table 3a.2 in Appendix 3a).

[4] The typology is limited to only the most formalised methods. Methods with high variability in structure (e.g. workshops) were not included, as they are highly influenced by within-mechanism variables (Rowe and Frewer, 2005).

Reviewing past empirical evaluations[5] of public meetings, workshops and community advisory committees, Chess and Purcell (1999) differentiated between 'outcome' and 'process' criteria. Outcome criteria focused on the results and included 'better accepted decisions', 'consensus', 'education' and 'improved quality of decisions' (p. 2685). Process criteria were concerned with the characteristics of the means and included 'fairness', 'information exchange', 'group process' and 'procedures' (p. 2686).

Rowe and Frewer (2004) reviewed thirty empirical evaluations which mostly used normative and objective criteria, taking into account different perspectives. Around half of the studies used outcome criteria and the rest both outcome and process criteria. Multiple studies used the outcome criterion of 'representativeness', the rest 'generally related to the exercise having some impact on the sponsors, such as on their decision making or attitudes, or else on the knowledge of the public' (p. 540). However, as discussed in Section 2.4.2, 'impact on decision-making' is not always achieved (Audit Commission, 1999; Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a; Hartley and Wood, 2005; Oakley, 2007; Mahjabeen *et al.*, 2009). Process criteria usually considered the opportunity for a two-way communication and thus group interaction processes. Please see Table 3a.3 in Appendix 3a for the list of criteria from this review.

Criteria devised on the Aarhus Convention principles[6] (Hartley and Wood, 2005), presented in order of importance from highest to lowest, included 'communication', 'fairness', 'timing', 'accessibility', 'information provision', 'influence on decision-making', 'competence', 'interaction', 'compromise' and 'trust' (Table 3a.4 in Appendix 3a)[7].

Rowe and Frewer (2000; 2004) and Bochel (2006) argued that there is a need for a comprehensive set of criteria, which would enable conducting of evaluations in a more structured manner. Such criteria would provide benchmarks against which

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[5] The reviewed studies were conducted in North America between the 1970s and 1990s.
[6] These criteria are not restricted to environmental impact assessments and are applicable for other contexts (Hartley and Wood, 2005).
[7] Hartley and Wood (2005) applied these criteria to evaluate involvement methods including site notices, newsletters, advertisements, public exhibitions, meetings, public inquiries and informal discussions. However, the methods were rated as a single 'participation process' within each case study area. Not differentiating between the methods, the effectiveness of individual methods could not be judged. A four-point scale ('unfulfilled', 'partially fulfilled', 'nearly fulfilled', 'completely fulfilled') was used to assess the degree to which the different criteria were met.

engagement mechanisms could be judged and their effectiveness established (Rosener, 1978).

In response, Rowe and Frewer (2000) have amalgamated research on ‘evaluation’ to produce a relatively tight set of criteria that they viewed as essential for any participation exercise to be effective and that could be used to assess effectiveness of engagement methods. They were based on suggestions from academics and professionals, rather than results derived from empirical studies (ibid.). The criteria are conceptually similar to the democratic criteria proposed by Fiorino (1990) and to ‘fairness’ and ‘competence’ criteria of Webler (1995). Rowe and Frewer (2000) differentiate between ‘acceptance’ and ‘process’ criteria. Acceptance criteria refer to features of a method which make it acceptable to the wider public. These include criteria of ‘representativeness’, ‘independence’, ‘early involvement’, ‘influence’ and ‘transparency’. These criteria allude to the stakeholders’ perceptions of whether the exercise was conducted fairly and honestly with the intention to take the information yielded on board. On the other hand, process criteria concern features of the process, which ensure that it takes place in a competent, efficient and effective manner. These incorporate criteria of ‘resource accessibility’, ‘task definition’, ‘structured decision making’ and ‘cost-effectiveness’ (see Table 3.1 and Rowe and Frewer, 2000: 12 – 17)[8]. It is argued that both types are necessary, as they ensure the satisfaction of different parties involved. While acceptance criteria refer more to the participants taking part in an exercise, process criteria are of particular concern to the sponsors. However, while the authors claim that each method should ideally score well on all the criteria, there are no claims made about the relative importance of these.

The authors (ibid.) admitted to using personal opinions and relative terms[9] to assess methods against these criteria, as due to the variety of ways each method can be applied, together with the mediating factors, such as the different contextual factors, it is not possible to clearly state either the success or failure of a method.

Quite often judgemental assessments are the only available evaluation options. Even though they can be considered better than nothing (Rossi *et al.*, 1999), it is argued

[8] These criteria were applied in the following studies: Rowe and Frewer (2000), Rowe el al (2004; 2005; 2008)

[9] Rowe and Frewer (2000) used terms such as ‘low’, ‘moderate’, ‘high’, ‘variable’ and others. Rowe *et al.* (2004) used qualitative subjective ratings of ‘very bad’, ‘bad’, ‘moderate’, ‘good’, ‘very good’ and ‘unsure’.

that more reliable and valid measurement tools, such as social science methodologies, need to be applied to achieve rigorous evaluations of engagement methods (Rosener, 1981; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004; Burton, 2009). Rowe *et al.* (2004: 91) conclude:

> *'Cases where more rigorous evaluations are attempted, using tools (such as questionnaires) developed to measure some stated criteria or other methods to gather information to enable the researcher to conduct a more structured evaluation, are rare'.*

Table 3.1: The (revised) evaluation criteria of Rowe and Frewer (2000); in Rowe et al., 2004: 93

	Criterion	**Criterion definition**
Acceptance criteria	Representativeness	The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.
	Independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way.
	Early involvement (timeliness)	The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient.
	Influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
	Transparency	The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.
Process criteria	Resource accessibility	Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief.
	Task definition	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
	Structured decision making (or Structured dialogue/discussion – Rowe *et al.*, 2004	The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
	Cost-effectiveness (cost/benefit)	The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors.

Apart from Rowe and Frewer's (2000) criteria, which were utilised by their teams in subsequent studies, the other criteria sets do not appear to have been applied further. Most of the proposed criteria are procedural, relating to what makes for an effective process, rather than substantive, in terms of how to measure effective outcomes (Middendorf and Busch, 1997). Overall, multiple authors have identified similar criteria, implying that these could be used to inform 'best practice' in developing public involvement mechanisms (Frewer *et al.*, 2001).

In order to achieve more rigorous evaluations of participation exercises, Rowe and Frewer (2004) proposed a framework for conducting effectiveness evaluations. The absence of any such framework was blamed for the disorganised nature of previous research and no significant theory of what methods may be the most suitable in particular scenarios. Such a theory would not be of just academic interest, but practical importance, too, as it may assist in the appropriate selection and use of methods suitable for particular contexts and thus enable effective involvement.

3.2.4 Evaluation framework for method effectiveness

Rowe and Frewer's (2004) framework comprises of three steps – defining 'effectiveness', operationalising the definition and conducting the evaluation - explored in turn below.

3.2.4.1 Defining 'effectiveness'

Firstly, the meaning of the term 'effectiveness' (or 'success' or 'quality') needs to be clearly defined, otherwise it remains debatable. An unambiguous definition provides a benchmark against which performance can be assessed. However, effectiveness 'is not an obvious, uni-dimensional and objective quality (such as speed or distance), that could be easily identified, described and then measured' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 517), which makes its definition challenging.

Definitions of effectiveness can be either 'universal' or 'local'.

> *'A universal definition, encompassing all types of participation exercises and mechanisms, may theoretically be used to develop measures that will enable the effectiveness of any participation exercise to be ascertained and compared with any other. More limited (local) definitions will result in measures that will allow comparison of*

exercises only to others belonging to the particular subgroup covered by that definition.'

(ibid., p. 518 - 19)

While universal definitions can be used to reach generalisations about methods, local definitions allow comparisons between methods of a particular subgroup only. There is not a clear answer as to which type of definition is better, however a more general phrasing may enable the acquisition of more comparable findings. On the contrary, the more fuzzy the definition, the more difficult it will be to judge whether effectiveness has been achieved.

Definitions can draw on theory, other author's opinions and research findings or on participants' views; however the validity and utility of such definitions can be uncertain as they generally go unchallenged (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). Definitions can be also 'implicit':

> *'Frequently, researchers and authors may simply discuss or forward some key aspects of effective participation, rather than a complete definition, or else may present some rule of thumb or checklist for effective participation in which the definition is implicit.'*

(ibid., p. 521)

Attempting to provide a universal effectiveness definition drawing on the information flow perspective, Rowe and Frewer (2005) argued that:

> *'an exercise's effectiveness may be ascertained by the efficiency with which full, relevant information is elicited from all appropriate sources, transferred to (and processed by) all appropriate recipients, and combined (when required) to give an aggregate/ consensual response'.*

(ibid., p. 251)

This definition appears relevant to this research, as public involvement is mostly concerned with eliciting information from those concerned. It could be assumed that involvement methods should strive to make the information transfer between the different parties as efficient as possible.

Furthermore, the multiple stakeholders involved in any participatory or consultation process come with different perspectives and different expectations (Section 2.4.2) and what might appear effective to one group may be disputed by another. Hence, it is better to take an 'objective' perspective, which tries to take multiple views into account (Rowe and Gammack, 2004). Agreeing on a clear definition, and how it may be ascertained, should also avoid possible disputes at a later stage (Rosener, 1978; Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

Effectiveness should be subsequently established in relation to different criteria, or goals. When evaluating the effectiveness of the GM Debate[10] (Rowe *et al.*, 2005, 2008), several different sets of evaluation criteria were used in order to reflect the different perspectives. The criteria from the sponsor's perspective were based on their aims and objectives for the exercise. Participants were surveyed about what they thought were the good and bad points of the exercise and from these, evaluation criteria were devised. The final set of criteria was normative, i.e. based on literature and drawing on the normative criteria of Rowe and Frewer (2000). Combining these different perspectives allowed for triangulation and increased confidence in the actual evaluation. Chess and Purcell (1999) advocate methodological pluralism and view combining theory-based criteria with those based on stakeholders' goals and satisfactions as a way of overcoming the limitations of any one approach. Rowe *et al.* (2005, 2008) also advocate this pragmatic approach to evaluation, based on methodological plurality, rather than either stating evaluation criteria a priori, or inducing definitions after data is collected.

3.2.4.2 Operationalising the definition – measurement instruments

Operationalising the effectiveness definition involves the development of 'one or more processes or instruments to measure whether, and to what extent, a particular public participation exercise has successfully attained the required, defined state' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 541). This addresses the gap in terms of reliable measurement tools, initially identified by Rosener (1981).

These processes may include participant interviews or evaluator observations, while particular instruments may include participant questionnaires, both qualitative and quantitative. A suitable procedure needs to be detailed and structured, so that it can be reused. It also needs to be tested for its appropriateness and accuracy, and satisfy the quality measures such as validity, reliability and usability. Using a variety of instruments or processes enables triangulation of data (Judd and Randolph, 2006; Pitcher, 2006). However, most evaluation studies tend to leave out the details of the

[10] 'GM Nation? The Public Debate' was concerned with the possible commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops in the UK.

processes and instruments (e.g. questionnaire items, interview questions) employed, which makes study replication difficult (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

Judd and Randolph (2006) and Pitcher (2006) point[11] to the importance of employing qualitative methodologies as processes for evaluations but emphasise the need for high quality application of these methods (Burton *et al.*, 2004). They argued that qualitative methods offer more insightful assessments, provide much richer understanding of underlying dynamics and are more easily manageable for researchers than quantitative methods. The most common qualitative methods employed are in-depth structured or unstructured face-to-face interviews, focus groups and descriptive case studies (Burton *et al.*, 2004). Observation techniques, action research or ethnography are not yet well developed for this purpose.

Quantitative data, preferred by policy makers, is seen as more ‘objective’ and reliable, however it is difficult to obtain comparable quantitative data (Judd and Randolph, 2006). Overall, qualitative and quantitative methods need to be seen as complementary to each other rather than competing, as they enable triangulation of findings and thus greater reliability. This is exemplified by the 3Rs Guidance[12] (ODPM, 2004), which acknowledges the value of qualitative, quantitative as well as monetary data in evaluation processes. A mixed methodology is also promoted by the IMPACT Evaluation Tool (Judd and Randolph, 2006).

Rowe *et al.* (2001)[13] developed a toolkit, claimed to be ‘the first psychologically validated method for evaluating the effectiveness of public participation exercises which permits systematic and rigorous comparison’ (Frewer *et al.*, 2001: 17). It consists of a ‘short’ and ‘long’ participant questionnaire and an evaluator checklist. All these tools are linked to the normative criteria of Rowe and Frewer (2000). This framework was utilised in a number of studies, however it still proved not to be universally applicable – whereas many of the ‘real-life’ participation exercises listed in Frewer *et al.* (2001) were evaluated using either the questionnaire or the checklist,

[11] Their claims are based on policy evaluations rather than particular participation exercises, however the findings can be applied nonetheless.
12 The 3Rs refer to regeneration, renewal and regional development policies.
[13] Rowe *et al.* (2001) is the original final report for the Department of Health and Safety Executive. However, the researcher could not obtain this document and as such used the summary report (Frewer *et al.*, 2001) instead.

and not both, Rowe *et al.* (2004, 2008) adjusted the framework to suit their contexts[14] and concluded that it is still not exhaustive (Rowe *et al.*, 2008). Overall, it may not be suitable in contexts where the normative criteria of Rowe and Frewer (2000) do not apply.

3.2.4.3 Conducting the evaluation and interpreting results

The final stage consists of conducting the evaluation and interpreting the results. Drawing conclusions about the absolute or relative effectiveness may be generally sufficient. However, academia in particular is interested in drawing out what the specific results may tell us about effectiveness more generally. Webler and Tuler (2002) warn that 'researchers often analyze a single application as if it existed in a vacuum, [whereas] each process is both shaped by previous processes and a shaper of later processes'. Context and other factors need to be acknowledged, such as the history of the issue at hand, expertise of sponsors or organisers, the agency's commitment as well as the manner in which the method was applied (Chess and Purcell, 1999).

> *'Studies of* different *forms [of engagement mechanisms] sometimes yielded* similar *outcomes, while studies exploring the* same *form of participation sometimes yielded* different *outcomes. Because empirical studies of the same form of participatory process may yield such varied results, factors other than the mechanism for the participatory process undoubtedly account for the variation in public participation success'.*
>
> (ibid., p. 2690)

In view of Rowe and Frewer's (2004) guidance on how to conduct more rigorous effectiveness evaluations, the development of an evaluation framework to be used in this research to assess the effectiveness of consultation methods will be explored in Chapter 4.

[14] Some of the normative criteria (Rowe and Frewer, 2000) were not applicable, therefore certain questions from the questionnaires were removed, others added, and different rating scales used.

3.2.5 Past evaluations of public involvement methods in the literature

Empirical examples of evaluations focusing on the effectiveness of individual engagement methods are rare (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Rowe *et al.*, 2004, 2005). Rowe and Frewer (2000: 6) have argued that while communication methods have received considerable attention already, 'less research […] has been conducted on mechanisms for involving the public at higher levels of input into decision making', implying the need for further research into consultation and participation methods. However, after a more comprehensive review of available literature concerned with these methods, it was identified that if academics have considered effectiveness of engagement mechanisms, they have in fact focused on participation methods more than consultation methods (Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Abelson and Gauvin, 2006). Consultation methods, perhaps excluding relatively well established approaches like surveys and focus groups, have received lesser attention in terms of their effectiveness, which points to a gap in knowledge which needs to be addressed.

Below are a number of examples of these studies, demonstrating which methods have received attention so far. These evaluations were often informal, 'based on the researchers' subjective and theoretical assessment of a particular type of participation mechanism or comparison of several different mechanisms' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 521). Others may have drawn on discussions provided by other studies.

Fiorino (1990) reviewed the public hearing, the initiative, public surveys, negotiated rule making and citizen review panels. Each method was discussed in terms of four democratic process criteria, based on participation theory. Additionally, he drew on previous studies that have explored the individual methods.

Chess and Purcell (1999) based their evaluations of public meetings, workshops and community advisory committees on empirical evidence and drew on evaluation studies published in North America between the 1970s and 1990s.

Rowe and Frewer (2000) evaluated referenda, public hearings/inquiries, public opinion surveys, negotiated rule making, consensus conference, citizens' jury/panel, citizen/public advisory committee and focus groups. They used their acceptance and process criteria, however the assessment of individual methods was based on their personal opinions. Rowe *et al.* (2004) adopted the same criteria and different stakeholders' perspectives to evaluate the deliberative conference[15]. Rowe *et al.* (2005, 2008)'s evaluation of the GM Debate included open public meetings and 'narrow-but-deep' discussion groups[16]. Rowe *et al.*'s (2001) framework was also used to evaluate citizens' panels and juries, public meetings, focus groups and various conferences and seminars (Frewer *et al.*, 2001).

Other studies, reviewed by Rowe and Frewer (2004), considered the methods already mentioned above, plus deliberative conferences, task forces, community groups, planning cells and some others. However, very few of these used an objective approach to measure effectiveness. The instruments used to assess effectiveness lacked detail which would make study replication possible.

Newburn and Jones (2002) reviewed several consultation methods[17] – public meetings, surveys, focus groups, citizens' juries, citizens' panels, TV, radio and other mainstream media, police community consultative groups and crime prevention panels. However, these assessments were based primarily on a survey of community safety co-ordinators and limited to identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each method, the extent to which they were utilised by different partnerships and how successful the partnerships believed they were.

The above examples confirm that attention has been given primarily to more participatory processes which aim to involve the public mainly in policy formulation. Methods that may be particularly applicable in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces have received considerable less attention. With the development of the internet, new methods based on the use of ICTs are emerging, but their effectiveness is not clearly determined. Rowe and Gammack (2004) have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of electronic mail, electronic surveys, video conferences and electronic groups, but they call for more research into the effectiveness of electronic engagement mechanisms.

[15] The deliberative conference was evaluated using two types of participant questionnaires, an evaluator checklist and post-exercise telephone interviews, drawing on Rowe *et al.*'s (2001) evaluation framework.
[16] Rowe and Frewer's (2000) normative criteria were utilised alongside criteria induced from the sponsor's aims and objectives and participants' feedback.
[17] The context was Crime and Disorder Partnerships.

Even though examples of empirical evaluations of particular methods are rare (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Rowe *et al.*, 2004; 2005), those identified demonstrate that participation methods, i.e. methods aiming for higher degrees of public involvement, have received more attention in comparison to consultation methods. This further supports the choice to focus on consultation methods in this research, which will address the gaps in knowledge regarding the effectiveness of consultation methods within the context of urban public space regeneration.

3.2.6 Summary

Overall, the uncertain and contradictory nomenclature used to refer to different involvement mechanisms, the paucity of their empirical examples in the academic literature (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Burton *et al.*, 2004) and the general discrepancy between experiential knowledge and the theory of public involvement (Webler, 1999; Webler and Tuler, 2002), have all resulted in no agreed-upon definition of effectiveness and criteria linked to it, and the overall lack of structured effectiveness evaluations. Furthermore, examples of empirical evaluations of specific engagement mechanisms are rare (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Rowe *et al.*, 2004). This demonstrates the intertwined nature of the discipline and points to the ongoing need of evaluating the effectiveness of involvement mechanisms.

Drawing on available literature and the arguments presented in Section 2.4.4, this research will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of a number of consultation methods in the context of urban public space regeneration, in order to extend our understanding of the effectiveness of public involvement methods. As such, the next part of this chapter will explore a variety of consultation methods that are applicable for this context, with the purpose of selecting those to be evaluated for their effectiveness as part of this research.

3.3 Public consultation methods

Detailed systematic literature on engagement methods, and consultation methods in particular, is scarce (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Rowe and Frewer, 2005). Webler (1999) pointed out that the theoretical debates of public involvement are scattered across disciplines and can suffer from ineffective discourse, while Burton *et al.* (2004) commented that many documents and studies include only limited reference to research design and can be rather generic. With no single journal to communicate results, literature on public involvement tends to take the form of non-peer-reviewed handbooks, manuals, guidebooks and 'how-to' guides[18]. These include for example the New Economics Foundation's book 'Participation Works!' (1999), Nick Wates's 'The Community Planning Handbook' (2000) and the associated website www.communityplanning.net, Involve's www.peopleandparticipation.net, IDEO's (2003, 2010) 'method cards'[19] or knowledge repositories such as the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL, 2013). These list many methods not featured in academic materials. Webler (1999: 57) argued that drawing on experiential knowledge, these sources provide 'insight into the state of development of the field and as such they are on the front line of generating knowledge and theory about public participation', recognising the need for more effective and meaningful public involvement.

Many methods can be used for consultation, ranging from formal ones such as public meetings, to more informal ones such as open house events. Some approaches may require more of an active input, such as attending a consensus conference, compared to a postal survey, which requires less effort. Some mechanisms seek input from individuals alone, others require interactions in groups. Most of the methods identified are 'top-down' – initiated by a professional body.

The methods presented below provide an indication of the variety of ways through which the public can be consulted. They are limited to those where public input is

[18] 'How-to' guides produced by local authorities and other organisations include Sterne and Zagon (1997), Scottish Executive (2004), Nottinghamshire County Council (2007a, b), COI (2009), Orkney Community Planning Partnership (2010) and CABE Space (2011a) and CABE (2011c)

[19] IDEO (2003), a design and innovation consulting firm, has developed a set of 'IDEO Method Cards' to stimulate the mind of practicing and aspiring designers. Each of the fifty one printed cards explains one possible method with an example of its practical application, providing a tool for people who wish to be more creative and explore new approaches to their work. These methods are aimed at designers in general but have wider application, too.

sought, but where the sponsor is under no obligation to incorporate it into final decisions (Catt and Murphy, 2003; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004). As already mentioned, with the exception of Rowe and Frewer's (2005) attempt, there is currently no agreed typology of involvement mechanisms. The following list was compiled using research documents (Lowndes *et al.*, 1997; 2001a; 2001b; Newburn and Jones, 2002), evaluation literature (Fiorino, 1990; Chess and Purcell, 1999; Rowe and Frewer, 2005), practice-based sources (New Economic Foundation, 1998; Wates, 2000), case studies (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Juarez and Brown; 2008; Cinderby, 2010), research methods literature with particular focus on mobile and visual methods (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Kusenbach, 2003; Rose, 2007; Carpiano, 2009) and other sources. It is not exhaustive and while it attempted to group methods according to some of their shared characteristics, overlaps can still be identified. The methods are generally applicable to a multitude of different topics that may require public input, for example policy, budgeting, health and crime. However, despite potentially extensive use of some, their effectiveness may not always be established. Therefore, the aim is to identify those methods that are either currently under-researched or offer the potential for further exploration regarding their effectiveness.

3.3.1 Public opinion surveys

Surveys are popular, well established and researched methods (see Fiorino, 1990; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Newburn and Jones, 2002; Hay, 2005; Flowerdew and Martin, 2005; People and Participation, 2012). However they tend to be employed with variable success and phrasing of questions can introduce bias. They are often enacted in a questionnaire (via telephone, post, e-mail or face-to-face) and occur as a one-off event. Large-scale surveys can provide quantitative estimates of the issues explored, but tend to 'isolate problems and issues from their social and community context' (Fiorino, 1990: 234).

With the internet becoming more ubiquitous, opportunities for survey distributions over web pages and e-mail expand. Web page-based survey respondents tend to be self-selected, whereas e-mail surveys rely on the existence of mailing lists (e.g. of citizen panel members – Section 3.3.2). However, it is unclear whether these 'electronic' surveys achieve higher response rates than postal and other surveys (Sheehan and Grubbs Hoy, 1999; Rowe and Gammack, 2004). Low response rates are frequently seen as an issue, together with the challenges of targeting particular groups.

Having received considerable academic attention, surveys do not appear under-researched. Their advantages and disadvantages are well known. However, surveys conducted online may offer potential for further exploration.

3.3.2 Citizens' panels

Citizens' panels comprise of a large sample of citizens, mirroring the local community, who are approached regularly to respond to different issues of local importance. Useful for monitoring and feedback purposes, citizens' panels can have more permanency with the same or partially replaced group to form ongoing consultation. Members are usually approached via questionnaires, but can be involved in meetings, too. High costs are associated with running citizens' panels (Newburn and Jones, 2002; Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Catt and Murphy, 2003). Citizens' panels have already been evaluated by Fiorino (1990), Rowe and Frewer (2000) and Frewer *et al.* (2001). Together with being the domain of the local authorities and also potentially resembling a variation to a traditional survey, citizens' panels are not viewed as under-researched for the purpose of this study.

3.3.3 Public meetings

Public meetings are specially organised to consult with the public on general matters or particular issues. They can also be referred to as:

- Special meeting
- Consultation meeting
- Public hearing/inquiry

With an open door policy, attendees can include members of local voluntary groups, parish councils, local neighbourhood watch groups and others. A relatively wide cross-section of the public can be reached, but marginalised groups tend not to attend (Juarez and Brown, 2008). Poor attendance and representativeness is often an issue. Other challenges include the formalised nature of meetings, the attitude of the consulting agency, imposed power structures, the language used, inadequate information provision, and public apathy (McArthur, 1993; Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a; 2001b; Chess and Purcell, 1999; Smith, 2008; Tallon, 2010) (Section 2.4.2). Furthermore, public input does not have to be taken on board[20] (Fiorino, 1990; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Newburn and Jones, 2002). They are a popular method of involving the public in the planning process (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004).

Fiorino (1990), Chess and Purcell (1999), Rowe and Frewer (2000) and Newburn and Jones (2002) argued that public meetings often tend to be undertaken without a clear idea of what is aimed for and how it should be achieved. They can take different forms – usually determined by the agency – such as a presentation, followed by a discussion and feedback. Sometimes attendees are split into separate smaller groups to discuss more targeted issues. The considerable diversity in methodologies make comparisons difficult as a variety of factors may contribute to either success or failure, which varies from case to case.

Despite public meetings' effectiveness remaining inconclusive, this method has received considerable research and evaluation attention already and will not be considered further.

3.3.4 Workshops

Workshops involve 'citizens in a task-oriented process that enables more discussion than public meetings over less time than a citizen advisory committee' (Chess and Purcell, 1999: 2688). Although similar to focus groups, workshops tend to be more interactive. Exercises and tasks are prepared for the participants and the results presented and discussed in a group. Workshops are referred to in different ways, usually reflecting the main aim of the session. They are commonly used to gain public input into design.

Wates (2000) lists the following as the most common:

- Briefing workshop
- Community planning forum

[20] However, Chess and Purcell (1999) pointed to a number of studies where shifts in outcome were achieved as a result of a public meeting.

- Design game
- Design workshop
- Models

A briefing workshop is used to establish a project agenda or a brief. A community planning forum lasts longer and may be attended by thirty to 150 members, who inspect and comment on interactive displays, take part in an open forum and participate in workshop groups. A design game is ‘a highly visual way of allowing people to explore physical design options for a site or internal space’ (Wates, 2000: 48). A base map and cut-out pieces are used to explore different options, while models can aid thinking in three dimensions. 3D models are also used in Planning for Real exercises (Section 3.4.1.1). A design workshop brings together small groups of professionals and non-professionals, ideally eight to ten per group. Drawing and adjusting plans and models using post-it notes and tracing paper overlays, they develop planning and design ideas. IDEO (2003) also uses scale modelling as a spatial prototyping tool. There are also ‘charrettes’ (Karwoski-Magee and Ruben, 2010), and other types of creative workshops (Lee, 2008).

Brainstorming, use of post-it notes, modelling and discussion in small groups form a significant part of these workshops. Their format depends primarily on their purpose, the type of information that is required, as well as the preferred types of participants.

Due to the high variability in structure, workshop effectiveness in this domain is difficult to judge and previous studies showed mixed results (Chess and Purcell, 1999). For this reason, Rowe and Frewer (2005) did not consider workshops when developing their typology of engagement mechanisms. This research is not seeking to develop particular public space designs, and as such creative workshops will not be explored further.

3.3.5 Events

Events, such as ‘street stalls’ and ‘open house events’ are open to much larger numbers. Less structured than workshops and more informal than traditional exhibitions, they can last several hours to a number of weeks. Events are generally used to collect people’s opinions on certain issues but can also serve to inform the public about what is happening. They are frequently used in the context of urban regeneration and can be used at any stage of the development process.

An open house event is a type of public exhibition, where development initiatives are presented in order to secure public reactions in an informal manner. Visible venues such as vacant shops are ideal, as people are generally attracted when they see others taking part (Wates, 2000). Interactive displays on proposals and options are arranged around the venue and facilitators are present to engage in an informal debate with the public. Exhibitions are popular when consulting the public about planning issues (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004).

‘Street stalls are particularly useful when the views of people using a particular street or public space are required’ (Wates, 2000:118). Interactive displays, comment books and a postbox allowing anonymous contributions can be used and leaflets handed out to passers-by. Outdoor events tend to secure the views of a larger number of people than events held indoors. Stalls can be used during larger community events, such as village fairs and festivals, where a wide range of the local population can be accessed in an informal setting (Taylor and Cheverst, 2008).

Interactive displays are frequently used to stimulate an informal debate. They include flip charts for comments on proposals or general thoughts, and maps and plans which people can annotate with post-it notes, pins or stickers to indicate their likes, dislikes and ideas. Surveys can be distributed, too. Facilitators should provide assistance if needed, however as momentum builds up, a dynamic process develops.

Cinderby (2010: 239) provided a comprehensive methodological review of on-street mapping events used to ‘rapidly assess and integrate local concerns, knowledge and design ideas in the urban development process’. He observed the potential of such events to attract groups including the elderly, young people and those with mobility issues that may not typically attend conventional consultation exercises. No special arrangements need to be made to attend and the time requirement is a matter of minutes. Although the organiser has limited control over who participates, this can be counterbalanced by holding events at different times and days of the week.

Organisations such as local authorities[21] appear to use consultation events relatively frequently. However, despite their popularity, methodological reflections are not available in the public domain, although internal audits may be conducted. Findings from such events are generally concerned with the number of people that participated, level of agreement and disagreement with particular proposals and the issues raised, and not whether aims and objectives of the exercise were met, whether desired information was gathered and how it may influence decisions[22].

As such, despite its extensive use, a consultation event represents an under-researched method with opportunities for further exploration.

3.3.6 Focus groups

Focus groups are now well established, evaluated and widely used social science research methods, with their advantages and limitations well recorded (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999; Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch and Lewis, 2003; Rowe *et al.*, 2005, 2008; Conradson, 2005). They evolved through market research (Bennett, 2002) and since the 1990s have been used extensively for consultation purposes (Finch and Lewis, 2003). Focus groups can 'take many different forms depending upon the aims, background, skills and theoretical perspectives of the researcher' (Bennett, 2002: 151), even resembling workshops[23].

Focus groups are based on a discussion, assessing opinions, attitudes and perceptions about a given topic with a small group of between four and twelve pre-selected participants (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch and Lewis, 2003). They usually occur as a single meeting[24] lasting up to two hours. The group

[21] Wyre Forest District Council and MADE used 'pop-up' events to consult about the Churchfields Masterplan close to Kidderminster (Changing Churchfields, 2011). 'Drop-in' events and exhibitions in the City Hall foyer and a shopping centre were used to consult about City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's local development framework (City of Bradford MDC, 2008). 'Drop-in' events were also used by Mansfield District Council (2009), Newcastle City Council (2011) and West Hallam Parish Council (2011).

[22] Mahjabeen *et al.* (2009) argued that despite the requirement of exhibiting plans for public comment in Australia, it was unclear how and for what purpose the comments would be used.

[23] Juarez and Brown (2008) used a SWOT analysis, popular theatre and Venn diagramming in a focus group setting.

[24] Burgess *et al.* (1988a; 1988b) advocate focus groups that meet more than once - 'reconvened groups'. Nevertheless, recruiting enough people who would turn up on multiple occasions is challenging (Kong, 1998). Holbrook and Jackson (1996) attempted focus groups running over three consecutive meetings but three out of eight people cancelled on the day of the first meeting. The rest admitted that 'they were often prepared to come to one meeting but found it difficult to commit themselves to two or three meetings' (p. 137). Therefore, despite

dynamics are explicitly used to generate data and insights and during the sessions participants listen, reflect on what has been said and reconsider their standpoint. Sometimes they can reach a consensus on an issue, however reaching this and generating recommendations is not required (Bennett, 2002; Finch and Lewis, 2003). Focus groups provide an opportunity to elicit a 'depth' of information, often understood in terms of the collective data which emerges from the interactions between participants and which might not be obtained through other methods (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Holbrook and Jackson, 1996). This data can also be checked and validated by the other participants, which is a major benefit as opposed to one-to-one interactions (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Webb and Kevern, 2001). However, poor facilitation can result in a poor discussion and the data generated may be off-topic or without sufficient detail.

With the advances in technology, virtual groups can be formed, meeting through teleconferencing or chat rooms[25]. Ideas can be exchanged in real-time (synchronous discussions) or in the form of posted comments (asynchronous discussions) (Finch and Lewis, 2003).

Despite focus groups being extensively researched and evaluated (Section 3.3.6), being generally conducted in 'neutral' environments (for example meeting rooms), their effectiveness could be compared to that of in-situ methods that are examined in Section 3.4.2.

3.3.7 Internet-based mechanisms

The Internet has experienced rapid growth[26] (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Realising this potential, the UK government committed itself to deliver its services online by 2008 (HMSO, 1999). Apart from making information available online (e-government), the

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reconvened focus groups being advocated as best practice (Burgess *et al.*, 1988a; 1988b), 'one-off focus groups may be more practical for many research situations' (Holbrook and Jackson, 1996: 137; Kong, 1998). Organising reconvened focus groups within a consultation setting, where it is generally difficult to involve the public, may be even more challenging than for research purposes (Kong, 1998).

[25] An example of such online collaborative discussions are Jam Events (IBM, 2011). These are much focused conversations for a practical outcome, carried out in an online environment. They are sometimes referred to as crowd sourcing (Cleaver, 2010).

[26] Between 2000 and 2011, the number of internet users grew by 528% from 391 million to 2.2 billion worldwide (Internet World Stats, 2011a). In 2010, with almost 53 million internet users and an 84% penetration rate (the percentage of population with internet access), United Kingdom was the third largest internet user in Europe (Internet World Stats, 2011b).

internet offers opportunities for public involvement (e-governance). E-governance or e-democracy refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support the democratic decision making process (Macintosh, 2004; Macnamara, 2010).

New electronic mechanisms include electronic consultations, virtual focus groups, online forums, electronic juries and others, where e-mail is playing a particularly increasing role (Finch and Lewis, 2003; Rowe and Gammack, 2004; Komito, 2005). Planning services are now offered through interactive websites, where the general public can view current and past planning applications and submit their comments. Local planning authorities view participation through the internet gaining a more prominent role in the future (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004; Rainey and Lawlor-Wright, 2012)[27].

The hypothesised advantages of e-government are questioned (Rowe and Gammack, 2004; Komito, 2005). With access, speed, time, cost and storage benefits (Rainey and Lawlor-Wright, 2012) these appear attractive, however electronic communication removes non-verbal cues such as gestures, nods, smiles as well as tone of voice, which may result in misunderstanding (Rowe and Gammack, 2004). Also, significant resources need to be allocated to moderating and analysing information gathered through online consultations (Macnamara, 2010). The representativeness and identity of mostly self-selected participants may be questioned and privacy and confidentiality are of concern to users (Layne and Lee, 2001). Overall, there appear to be few illustrations of best practice (Rowe and Gammack, 2004). The rationale for using the selected approaches is not always clear and 'there is a danger of future engagement being driven by a 'technological push' that does not reflect a 'customer pull'' (ibid., p. 51). The 'digital divide' forms a potential barrier, which is 'not only marked by physical access to computers and connectivity, but also by access to the additional resources that allow people to use technology well' (Warschauer, 2003: 6; in Rainey and Lawlor-Wright, 2012), pointing to deeper social issues such as language and literacy. However, as access is increasing this may not pose such a barrier in the future (Komito, 2005).

'Love Lewisham' successfully demonstrates the growing role of information technology in public service transformation (Prendiville, 2009). The scheme builds on

[27] Online planning services are offered for example by Manchester City Council, Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Leicester City Council and Sheffield City Council.

the co-operation between residents and local authority staff to resolve environmental issues such as graffiti and fly-tipping. Using mobile devices and smart phones, users send images of issues and accompanying comments 'straight to a live web front-end, for rapid action by environmental staff' (ibid., p. 4). Exact location is specified via an online map or GPS tracking. The system offers two-way communication as comments and 'before' and 'after' photos are displayed on the public website and residents receive feedback on the progress of their report. All data is recorded and stored within the system, allowing monitoring of trends[28]. Love Lewisham can perhaps be presented as one of the best examples of a coordinated approach to dealing with environmental issues, even though it is ultimately a reporting mechanism and not a consultation tool. However, even small and cost-effective improvements and everyday good management and maintenance can enhance a public space (Worpole and Knox, 2007). The system promotes active citizenship and leads to a behaviour change 'through public engagement and energy to improve the local area' (Prendiville, 2009: 2). It could be potentially extended to encourage the public to submit general observations on their areas and how they could be improved in a more long-term manner.

Other local authorities (e.g. Coventry City Council and Sheffield City Council) provide online forms on their websites which can be used to report issues such as those addressed by Love Lewisham. The same form may be used to report different issues and submit general views. Residents should provide an address or other information to assist in locating and identifying the problem, but images cannot be attached[29].

To summarise, although the internet is believed to enhance communication within the urban design field (Carmona *et al.*, 2007), it is still early to assess whether it facilitates effective public involvement (Rainey and Lawlor-Wright, 2012). More deprived communities may be at a disadvantage, therefore a mixture of technologies

[28] The system has resulted in faster and more efficient response from the authority, as the mapping, categorisation and visual references lead to a more accurate judgement of the size of the offence (Prendiville, 2009). Since then, the system has been extended into 'Love Clean Streets', which is not restricted by location, and has been also adopted by Leicester City Council, which has altered the system to their requirements and re-branded it as 'One Clean Leicester' (One Clean Leicester Team, 2011).

[29] Other local authority websites (e.g. Manchester City Council and Birmingham City Council) provide direct contact details to those who are responsible for the individual issues. For example, if graffiti is located on a post box in Manchester, its removal is the responsibility of the Royal Mail and not the local authority (Manchester City Council, 2012). It could be argued that such a system may discourage residents from reporting an issue altogether.

with more traditional approaches still needs to be available, otherwise the value of public involvement may be undermined (Macnamara, 2010).

Overall, establishing the effectiveness of the technological engagement mechanisms is not straightforward and further investigations into the potential of the application of information technologies in consultation processes are worth-while (Rowe and Gammack, 2004), together with examining the views of the participants in online consultations (Macnamara, 2010). Being aligned with the aims of the VoiceYourView project, electronic consultation methods will be explored in more detail in this research, responding to this gap in knowledge.

3.4 Public consultation methods and regeneration of urban public spaces

Consultations regarding public spaces and related environmental issues often take the form of workshops making use of some practical design activities, as already outlined. Examples of more formalised methods employing this approach include 'Planning for Real', 'Spaceshaper' or design games aimed at young children (Parkes, 2000). Traditional qualitative research methods can be adapted and combined with planning and design participatory techniques (New Economics Foundation, 1998; Wates, 2000) to provide more creative and innovative processes for the public (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). Visual and arts techniques, including taking photographs as well as public performances can be used to share stories and uncover potential conflicts present in urban and open spaces (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006).

Still, within the current work, Finney and Rishbeth (2006) have identified a notable absence of experiential methods. Furthermore, they highlight that:

> *'research and public consultation about the use and perception of open spaces […] has predominantly been conducted in places and situations removed from these open spaces'.*
> (ibid., p. 29)

Conducting research and consultations ex-situ (i.e. in neutral locations, such as a meeting room in a community centre, removed from the actual spaces under discussions) as opposed to in-situ (i.e. within the space under discussion) also ‘encourages generalised accounts of user experience’ (ibid., p. 29). With the exception of ‘situated consultation events’ (e.g. ‘Planning for Real’), in-situ research tends to be limited to observational surveys or short questionnaires with users conducted on-site (ibid.).

In response to this gap in knowledge, it could be argued that mobile and visual methods may be applied in the process of public consultation in the regeneration of urban public spaces. ‘Our knowledge of the world is shaped by our senses’, where the visual tends to take precedence (Knowles and Sweetman, 2004: 1). With the exception of the visually impaired, people’s navigation of their surroundings is an intensely visual process (Dodman, 2003). As such, visual and mobile methods - used individually, or in combination with each other or other more conventional methods - could assist in the exploration of people’s everyday experiences of their surrounding environments and provide opportunities for emplaced visual engagement with urban public space in particular.

Different methods deemed as particularly applicable for the context of urban public space regeneration are outlined below, followed by a review of mobile and visual methods.

3.4.1 Consultation methods for urban regeneration

3.4.1.1 Planning for Real®

Planning for Real, similar to a workshop, is a nationally recognised method of public consultation. It utilises three dimensional models, made by local schools, which fosters greater local ownership of the consultation process. Placing cards and flags on the model, participants identify key locations in their area, indicate their regular routes and point out possible problems. Visual hands-on techniques are also employed. The method is copyright protected and sessions can be carried out only by officially trained facilitators (NIF, 2010; Planning for Real, n.d.)[30].

Due to the cost associated with conducting these exercises, it is unlikely they would be carried out without a prior commitment to applying the results they generate. As

[30] Planning for Real was used to develop alternative plans for the Railway Lands (Parkes, 2000) and to elicit residents’ views and opinions on the current and future development of the village of Slaithwaite (Carter *et al.*, 1999). A virtual map was used in addition to a physical model.

such, it is not a suitable method to be adopted for research purposes when the findings are collected with a view to inform academic and practical debates, rather than to influence a particular space development.

3.4.1.2 Mapping

Maps can serve as useful tools when encouraging public discussions about the physical environment. With careful facilitation, they can be interpreted by almost anybody, including children from the age of about six years (Cinderby, 2010). Used as stand-alone or as part of other events or workshops (Fahy and O Cinnéide, 2009), they have the potential to show 'how different stakeholder groups […] can vary in their use and perception of the same physical space with consequent important implications for urban development and regeneration' (Cinderby, 2010: 243).

Participatory Geographic Information Systems (P-GIS) techniques were adopted by Cinderby (2010) when exploring perceptions of streets and squares and when developing transport options and an inner-city health walk. A variety of suitable base maps - cartographic, aerial photographs and satellite images - presented at suitable scales were annotated by the public during on-street mapping events. The results were converted into digital GIS files and interactive maps. Cinderby (2010) claimed that 'the use of in-situ on-street mapping allowed people to physically engage with the area in a way that would be impossible using conventional approaches' (p. 242) and that 'the use of GIS could add considerable value to the information collected from communities' (p. 243) since comments could be clearly linked to a map. P-GIS represents a 'flexible suit of tools with different approaches relevant to particular contexts and issues' (p. 240).

Similar techniques can be used using computer terminals or touch screens, located in libraries, cafes or cultural centres. Specially created software allows participants to virtually explore electronic maps, aerial photography, video clips, sounds and photos and add their comments (Wates, 2000). With technological improvements, this form of consultation is becoming less and less dependant on static computers and can be accessed online using programmes such as Google Earth, Google Maps and Google Streets[31].

[31] One of the first online GIS systems available to the public was the 'Virtual Slaithwaite' online interactive map (Carter *et al.*, 1999). Used parallel to a Planning for Real exercise, the virtual and dynamic digital map allowed a two-way flow of information and provided

Other mapping techniques, more applicable for research than consultation, include 'mind mapping' (Lynch, 1960), mental maps (Matthews, 1984; Young and Barrett, 2001) and cognitive maps (IDEO, 2003; Goličnik and Nikšič, 2009).

Different forms of mapping offer potential tools that can be used within other methods to explore the design and use of the physical environment.

3.4.2 Mobile and in-situ methods

As Finney and Rishbeth (2006: 29) pointed out, research about open spaces is often 'conducted in places and situations removed from these open spaces', i.e. ex-situ, which may result in generalised accounts not taking note of the 'reactions that capture details of micro-climate, noise, impressions of other users and physical effort taken to move around the site'.

More interest has been given to mobile research methods in recent years, which take a spatial approach and remove research from a stationary environment into motion in the environments under study (Jones *et al.*, 2008).

> *'Mobile methods 'seek to use movement as part of the research approach itself, so that generally the researcher is mobile and thus either follows the subject through space, or makes the subject mobile for the purposes of the research'.*
>
> (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008: 1269)

Walking methodologies, such as the walking interview, are increasingly being adopted by a small but a growing number of social scientists and other researchers to engage with ideas of place, identity and people's relationships and connections with space (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Moles, 2010). Despite the growing interest, these methods can still be considered as 'novel' – so far, there has been little systematic application of mobile methods such as go-alongs in ethnographic studies of everyday life or in other disciplines (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2009). Critical examinations of the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of such techniques are also limited

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considerably more information than a traditional paper map would. The system generated a positive user feedback and it was concluded that interactive online maps could contribute to more effective public involvement. However, such a system would was seen 'as a way to enhance, not replace, current methods' (para 4.5).

(Jones *et al.*, 2008), thus presenting a gap in knowledge offering opportunities for further exploration of their effectiveness.

The theoretical background for the growing interest in mobile methods can be traced to the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Bűscher and Urry, 2009), which challenges the ways in which social science research has generally been sedentary and ‘a-mobile’. However, movement is fundamental to the everyday practice of social life and walking constitutes a large proportion of people’s daily mobility (Lee and Ingold, 2006; Hall, 2009). The issues of mobility - movement of people, materials, images and information – have implications for the research topics to be studied as well as the methods to study them. Sheller and Urry (2006) also argue that places are dynamic and ‘themselves seen as travelling within networks of human and nonhuman agents’ (p. 214) and that ‘all places are tied into at least thin networks of connections that stretch beyond each such place’ (p. 209). These connections contribute to new forms of social life and are organised through ‘nodes’ (Lynch, 1960) such as stations, hotels, airports, as well as through street corners, public plazas, back alleys and buses. This mobility turn, which assumes a ‘fluid’ mobile world where everything works across space, distance and across boundaries, has been identified in multiple disciplines including sociology, geography, migration studies, science and technology studies and tourism (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Hall, 2009). However, Sheller and Urry (2006: 210) conclude that the paradigm ‘suggests a set of questions, theories and methodologies rather than a totalising or reductive description of the contemporary world’.

Current debates are interested in what value mobile methods can bring to the research inquiry, whether they can capture opinions different to those obtained by traditional non-mobile methods and whether new findings surrounding the ways people relate to spaces around them can be generated (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008). Kusenbach (2003: 455) highlights their potential ‘to access some of the transcendent and reflexive aspects of lived experience in-situ’. Some may argue that movement can put an interview at risk, as the researcher loses some control over the process. Whereas for static interviews locations where noise and interruptions can be minimised are selected, interviewing in the field is prone to noise, interruptions, distractions and weather conditions (Hall *et al.*, 2006). However, this potential risk can be turned into an advantage, as every interview (or other research) site produces ‘micro-geographies of spatial relations and meanings’ (Elwood and Martin, 2000: 649). These micro-geographies not only influence the knowledge produced, but also affect the social identities and the power relations between the participants and the researcher[32]. These aspects are often ignored in the literature (Chih Hoong, 2003). Paying more attention to the micro-geography of an interview site can offer opportunities for participant observation, to learn more about the participant or the place and to generate more detailed information. This can enrich the researchers' understanding of explanations provided by the participants (Elwood and Martin, 2000). As such, conducting research in-situ while walking can add multiple layers of information and contribute to creation of meaning and knowledge.

To date, mobile methods appear to not have been widely used, and when they have, this has been mostly in a research context. Examples include perceptions of local problems by Los Angeles residents (Kusenbach, 2003), urban design and the sense of place in recently regenerated areas and areas due for redevelopment (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Jones and Evans, 2012) and the experiences of growing up in areas undergoing change (Hall, 2009). Mobile methods are of interest beyond the academic community. As Ricketts Hein *et al.* (2008: 1266) argue:

> *'Methodologies that capture the ways in which people, and the communities of which they are part, value places are becoming increasingly desirable to policymakers, planners and designers. It is thus possible to point to theoretical, political and practical forces that are driving the development of mobile methods at the current time.'*

They provide opportunities for application in more practical contexts of public consultation in regeneration of urban public space. Formalised in-situ methods used in regeneration of urban public spaces are scarce. One such technique is Spaceshaper. Others are less structured.

Mobile or in-situ methods used in practice will be outlined first, followed by their more extensive application in research contexts.

3.4.2.1 Practice-based mobile and in-situ methods

3.4.2.1.1 Spaceshaper

Spaceshaper is a workshop-based technique developed by CABE which measures the quality of an existing public space, or can be used to plan a new one. A site visit

[32] Participants may assert different identities in different locations, for example while in a company's officer or in their own home.

is combined with a number of methods. Using a questionnaire, participants – users and professionals – rate the site against 41 criteria in eight sections: ‘access’, ‘use’, ‘other people’, ‘maintenance’, ‘environment’, ‘design and appearance’, ‘community’, and ‘you’. Data is processed by the Spaceshaper software and results discussed in a workshop, together with sharing ideas and suggestions for improvement. Spaceshaper workshops are carried out by approved facilitators, involve between eight and eighteen participants and last around five hours. Cost is at least £1,000 per workshop (CABE, 2010a). CABE Space (2007a) lists examples of successful applications of Spaceshaper. Success appears to be judged on the basis of the findings influencing final decisions.

Young people can get involved in improving the public spaces around them through an adapted version Spaceshaper 9-14, aimed at nine to fourteen year olds (CABE, 2010a).

3.4.2.1.2 Reconnaissance trip and Guided tour

A day-long reconnaissance trip covers key local features, on foot or using various types of transport (Wates, 2000). The participants include local residents and experts. Notes, sketches and photographs are taken as part of the session and a de-brief is held at the end. The suggested group size is less than fifteen, or participants are divided into smaller groups. IDEO (2003) refer to a guided tour, where participants are accompanied on ‘a guided tour of project-relevant spaces and activities they experience’.

3.4.2.1.3 Walkabout

Local authorities and other organisations frequently use the concept of walkabouts in their practice. Coventry City Council organise quarterly walkabouts around some of the residential areas in the city, attended by council officers, elected members, local housing association representatives and residents. The walkabouts focus on the maintenance of the environment and outdoor space and targeted issues such as overgrown shrubs and graffiti. Identified issues are then allocated to appropriate agencies for resolution (Neighbourhood Management South, 2010). Similar activities are carried out by the housing association Midland Heart and environmental charity Groundwork where photos of issues were taken along the walk (Midland Heart, 2010). However, these methods appear very informal where the principal aim is to identify and rectify maintenance issues. In principle these are similar to the concept of the Love Lewisham reporting system (Prendiville, 2009).

A walkabout is also utilised in an audit tool 'Placecheck', which can be conducted by members of the public to assess how an area could be improved. Although claimed to be 'widely used' (Placecheck, 2012), www.communityplanning.net, www.peopleandparticipation.net or other sources do not mention this method, indicating that it is highly informal.

3.4.2.2 Research-based mobile and in-situ methods

Mobile methods can take different forms as demonstrated by their growing application in research contexts (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008). Nomenclature used is broad and variations include:

- Talking whilst walking or Walking whilst talking
- Go-along
- Bimbling
- Guided tour
- Walking interview or Mobile interview
- Roving focus group
- Soundwalks

Bearing many similarities, they still differ on three grounds. Firstly, some are based on a one-to-one interaction between the researcher and participant, as opposed to group-based interactions. Secondly, they can either follow a fixed-route (set by the researcher or in cooperation with the participant(s)), or be participant-led. Finally, they can be conducted in 'natural' or 'contrived' situations. In case of 'natural' go-alongs researchers follow participants on outings which would have taken place whether the researcher was present or not (Kusenbach, 2003). 'Contrived' or 'experimental' go-alongs are based on activities that are not part of the participants' own routines and are conducted specifically for the purpose of research.

One-to-one interactions appear to prevail (Stevenson and Adey, 2010) and occur in case of walking or mobile interviews, bimbles, go-alongs as well as guided tours. These are all examples of 'talking whilst walking', which is often used as a synonym to the other names. 'Go-along' is a hybrid between participant observation and interviewing where:

> *'fieldworkers accompany individual informants on their 'natural' outings and – through asking questions, listening and observing – actively explore their subjects' stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment'.*
>
> (Kusenbach, 2003: 463)

It is viewed as more modest, but also more systematic than just 'hanging out' with participants while conducting ethnographic research. During 'guided walks', participants lead the researcher through locations of significance to them and discuss those localities and their importance (Ross *et al.*, 2009). 'Bimbling' could be considered as less formal than go-alongs and guided tours, as it entails 'aimlessly walking through an environment' (Anderson, 2004: 257). All of these are one-to-one and participant-led. While Kusenbach's (2003) go-alongs were mostly 'natural', Carpiano's (2009) were more similar to the guided tour, as the researcher was interviewing a participant while receiving a tour of the locality.

Walking or mobile interviews are one-to-one, but the route followed can be selected either by the participant or the researcher. Jones *et al.* (2008) have used both fixed-route and participant-led approaches. Fixed-route approach was considered useful at obtaining a cross-section of responses to the same spaces, which started to recur even with a small sample.

Inwood and Martin (2008) used two roving focus groups, with five to six participants and one researcher in each, to explore the experiences of African American students of how race was depicted at a large US university. The route was selected collaboratively and both groups followed the same route, which lasted under two hours. Inwood and Martin's (2008; 2010) roving focus group was one of few which appear to have benefited from the group dynamics. The method 'fostered conversation and sharing among the participants that could not have happened in other formats' in fixed locations (p. 379) as participants interacted with each other and actively used specific evidence in the landscape to debate their experiences and individual views.

Taking a different approach, Adams (2009) conducted 'soundwalks' around a number of urban areas with the purpose of listening to the environment and assessing environmental quality and design of urban public spaces. Soundwalks, lasting around ten minutes, were conducted in silence and complemented by a photo-survey which then assisted with reflections during a follow-up interview, or what was being heard while in-situ was discussed at key locations during the walk.

3.4.2.2.1 Advantages and limitations of mobile methods

The advantages and disadvantages of mobile methods have received limited critical attention in the literature (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008). Kusenbach (2003) and Carpiano (2009) offer the most extensive methodological discussions of the go-along, Hall (2009) the benefits of the mobile interview. Others tend to reflect on the methods only briefly. Not much detail tends to be provided about how the method was conducted. Still, as demonstrated above, the different types of mobile methods do not differ fundamentally, therefore the presented advantages and limitations can be considered broadly applicable to mobile methods as a whole.

Advantages of mobile methods

Mobile methods are generally based on 'conversations in place' through which geographical context can be made more explicit. Through their immersion in the location under investigation, individuals can connect with the place and look at the it differently. As one walks through space, meanings are created and uncovered. It is often the spaces themselves that prompt recollection of knowledge, incidents and feelings about landscapes and trigger a stream of associations, which may have been considered as not worth mentioning or may not be recalled during a formal interview or focus group (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Inwood and Martin, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Moles, 2008). As such, mobile methods may prove beneficial for consultation settings, too.

> *'A mobile method becomes a 'three-way conversation' with the interviewer, interviewee and locality engaged in an exchange of ideas; place has been under discussion but, more than this, and crucially, underfoot and all around and as such much more of an active, present participant in the conversation, able to prompt and interject.'*
>
> (Hall *et al.*, 2006: 3)

Walking in-situ also tends to comprise of other people and places passed along the way, together with the sounds, smells and sights (Bűscher and Urry, 2009). As such, rich qualitative data can be generated, contributing to the creation of meaningful understanding about everyday experiences 'through embodied, multi-sensory research experiences' (Ross *et al.*, 2009: 606). Despite being rooted in the everyday present, these research encounters can also open up avenues to reminisce about the past through individual and personal memories, as well as their imagined futures (Anderson and Moles, 2008; Ross *et al.*, 2009; Moles, 2010), pointing to their possible application for consultation purposes.

'Unique' social bonds can occur while walking (Ronander, 2010). Giving a participant the opportunity to act as a 'tour guide', conducting research in the out-of-doors shifts the balance of control away from the researcher. Some participants can even derive validation and pride from the process, possibly resulting in personal empowerment (Carpiano, 2009). Reflecting on Agar (1996; ibid., p. 268), 'most people enjoy telling their story to someone who is interested in listening'. The established rapport can assist with gaining legitimacy and lead to intimate bonds and more free flowing and spontaneous conversations (Anderson, 2004; Hall, 2006; Carpiano, 2009). Some authors propose that marginalised groups may be more likely to partake in research using mobile methods (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Juarez and Brown, 2008; Ross *et al.*, 2009).

Mobile methods can follow an informal and flexible format, lasting from a couple of minutes to several hours (Inwood and Martin, 2008; Adams, 2009). Kusenbach (2003) proposed one hour to 90 minutes as a productive duration. A relatively unstructured or semi-structured approach was usually taken with limited direct or probing questions from the researchers, letting the participants speak about what mattered to them. It was observed that showing and discussing their neighbourhoods is almost intuitive to participants, who tend not to require much guidance (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2009). Talking while in motion can feel less invasive and encourage conversations at a deeper emotional level (Ronander, 2010), but at the same time participants have the opportunity to abandon topics they may feel uncomfortable with (Ross *et al.*, 2009).

Limitations of mobile methods

Mobile methods' limitations receive considerably less attention. Ross *et al.* (2009) claim that certain narratives can get lost due to disruptions caused by conducting research out-of-doors. However, at the same time this leads onto sharing of other narratives. Mobile methods are unsuitable in situations not based on conversations, such as rituals requiring silence, exhausting activities and where access may be restricted or dangerous (Kusenbach, 2003). Practical issues (such as weather conditions, time of day, safety, recruitment issues, the physical health of the participants, recording equipment and analytical considerations) entail more detailed planning (Carpiano, 2009). For analysis, comments need to be linked with the locations they were made in. Jones *et al.* (2008) and Jones and Evans (2012) stated that many projects have not concentrated on connecting what people say with where they say it, and thus experimented with using GPS in their own work. Despite taking a spatial approach, analysis tends to draw on transcripts of recordings or field notes (Adams, 2009).

The potential advantages and disadvantages tend to be presented from the view of the researcher and participants' opinions of the method are not presented. Carpiano (2009) claimed his participants 'seemed to genuinely enjoy the process', but this appears to be based on his personal observation. A limited questioning of participants was done by Adams (2009) in relation to her soundwalks. As such, there is a clear potential to explore the participants' views of mobile methods in more detail in order to establish the methods' effectiveness from their perspective.

3.4.2.3 Discussion – mobile methods

Mobile methods can offer a unique way of gathering more place-sensitive information (Anderson and Moles, 2008), which tends to be more verifiable, as it is experienced first hand. The issues identified tend to be on a more neighbourhood or street scale than those obtained through more traditional approaches (Juarez and Brown, 2008), which makes them potentially even more appropriate for consultations about regenerating urban public spaces. They are especially suited to exploring issues surrounding environmental perception, spatial practices, biographies, social architecture and social realms (Kusenbach, 2003). They can be even more powerful when combined with other methods (ibid., Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Carpiano, 2009) (Section 3.5).

So far mobile methods appear to have been used primarily in research settings. Ricketts Hein *et al.* (2008) have pointed to the political and practical forces that stand behind the development of mobile methods at the moment, as they may capture information useful to policymakers, planners and designers. Inwood and Martin (2010) claim that walking methods could contribute to the transformation of space, however, the reviewed literature has rarely considered the potential of these methods for consultation purposes within regeneration. None of the sources discussed whether the obtained information was, or could have been used to influence an improvement or development plan in a certain area. Only Adams (2009) used her soundwalks with urban design professionals to explore their understanding of urban soundscapes and their interconnection with the built environment.

This points to a gap in knowledge, where the application and subsequently the effectiveness of using a mobile method to consult the public about the regeneration of urban public space could be explored in more detail.

3.4.3 Visual methods and the use of photographs

Interest in visual methods has grown in recent years (Knowles and Sweetman, 2004; Lombard, 2013). Although most accounts relate to research contexts, visual methods may be suitable to consult the public about regenerating urban public spaces.

Researchers have collected and recorded visual data, mostly still photography, since the 1870s (de Brigard, 1975; in Blinn and Harrist, 1991)[33]. Since the mid-1990s, visual methods have received more focus and recent years have experienced their particular expansion (ibid.; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004). This visual agenda has been driven by renewed interest in people and places, a shift towards more discursive forms of inquiry, the growth of cultural studies and advances in digital technologies (Dodman, 2003; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004). Visual images can take the form of video, photographs, maps, diagrams as well as drawings (Rose, 2007). However, for the purpose of this research, focus will remain on photographs, which are currently the most popular images with social scientists. They are relatively easily made and are believed to act as unique sources of evidence, providing an alternative mode of expression to written text and speech. Photographs can evoke information, affect and reflection, as they encourage consideration of aspects that people may pay little attention to or overlook altogether (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Dodman, 2003; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004; Rose, 2007).

Photographs can be made either by the researcher or the participant. Additionally, photo-elicitation interviews (Section 3.4.3.2.2) may use photographs from other sources. However, as this research is concerned with gathering public opinions on

[33] Visual methods have been used relatively extensively in anthropology, ethnography, sociology and psychology but photographs' position as a source of data in its own right has been taken more seriously only since the 1970s.

regeneration of urban public spaces, photographs taken by participants are the most applicable. After exploring some practice-based visual methods, focus will shift onto those used in research settings.

3.4.3.1 Practice-based visual methods

A ‘photo survey’ can be conducted independently or as part of a wider community profiling or action planning event (Wates, 2000). Teams or individuals take photographs of their existing environment or focus on particular themes. Processed photos are sorted, selected and either placed on large sheets of paper or maps, or they can be cut up, grouped and annotated. Comments added by the group members stimulate discussion and can help develop new design ideas.

Photos can be also used to create an ‘elevation montage’. It ‘shows a façade of a street by assembling photos of individual buildings’ and ‘they can be useful for helping people gain an understanding of the building fabric and devise improvements’ (Wates, 2000: 58). People can make comments about what they like or do not like on post-it notes, which they place underneath the relevant section. Elevation montages can be used during workshops, events or exhibitions, but can be costly to prepare.

Photographs are also often used within larger public meetings or workshops involving group discussions.

3.4.3.2 Research-based visual methods

Despite the growing interest in visual methods, academic literature is scarce on examples where photographs were created by participants and ‘participatory photo-methodologies remain uncommon in geography’ (Myers, 2010: 330). There is no clearly established methodological framework surrounding the use of photography in social sciences (Becker, 2004). Photo-methodologies are frequently used alongside more traditional methods and tend to be adapted according to the requirements of particular projects, but similarities between photo-methods exist.

Research projects working with photographs made by participants tend to follow a similar structure, where participants take photographs addressing the theme under investigation. Certain parameters are set, such as the number of photos to be taken, the number of days over which the exercise should be completed and whether the photos should be accompanied by additional written information. In many cases the photographs are elaborated on in more detail in subsequent photo-elicitation interviews, where images can be reflected on and additional details uncovered.

Using varied terminology, such methods have been referred to as ‘autophotography’ (Dodman, 2003; Lombard, 2013), ‘diary-photograph-interview’ (Latham, 2003, 2004), ‘photo elicitation and caption writing’ (Myers, 2010) and ‘photo diary’ (Young and Barrett, 2001; Edwards, 2007; Gabridge *et al.*, 2008; Jones, 2009). ‘Camera journals’ (IDEO, 2003) are popular in the design field, where camera journal kits can be issued as part of cultural probes, which form part of a design-led approach to understanding users through ‘collections of evocative tasks meant to elicit inspirational responses from people’ (Gaver *et al.*, 2004: 1).

Photos can be taken by disposable, Polaroid or digital cameras. Disposable cameras do not perform well in poor light conditions and there is a considerable delay between taking a photo and it being processed. Polaroid cameras provide instant images and an immediate feedback to the photographer, however the film can be expensive (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Latham and McCormack, 2007). Digital cameras are now easily accessible and many mobile phones have in-built cameras, too. Images are instant and thus can be reviewed and corrected. The choice depends on the requirements of the research project.

The number of photos taken and the duration of the exercise vary. In the above examples, the number of photos to be taken was either not specified or ranged from ten (Blinn and Harrist, 1991) to twenty (Dodman, 2003). One week period appeared the most frequent (Latham, 2004; Gabridge *et al.*, 2008; Lombard, 2013)[34].

In the majority of the above examples, participants were asked to accompany the photographs with written entries into a provided notebook. Photographs ‘do not speak for themselves’ and some explanation is needed to make sense of their content (Rose, 2007: 243). Blinn and Harrist (1991) provided participants with a short questionnaire to accompany each photo taken. Latham (2003, 2004) was interested in information such as where participants went, when, why, who with and who they

[34] Time periods ranged from 24 hours (Young and Barrett, 2001), three days (Myers, 2010), one week (Latham, 2003, 2004; Gabridge *et al.*, 2008; Lombard, 2013), ten days (Dodman, 2003) to one month (Edwards, 2007; Waitt *et al.*, 2009).

met. Myers (2010) requested the reasons for taking photos and how they made the participant feel. Such accompanying texts can be referred to as ‘annotations’, ‘captions’, ‘comments’, ‘notes’ or ‘entries’. When working with children, asking for written comments may prove difficult. Dodman (2003) asked children to create posters from their photographs and then add textual explanation to them, while Newman *et al.* (2006) and Oh (2012) interviewed children about their photographs. In order to assist in regenerating urban public spaces, lack of comments to particular images would be a considerable limitation.

3.4.3.2.1 Advantages and limitations of visual methods

A number of sources explore the advantages and limitations of using photographs in academic research (Pink, 2001; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004; Rose, 2007). Methodological reflections are scarce in the literature and focused on the benefits. Some methodological reflections were offered by Young and Barrett (2001), Myers (2010) and Lombard (2013).

Advantages of visual methods

Latham and McCormack (2007) explored the benefits of using digital cameras in an educational context and concluded that the cameras focused the students’ attention and altered the way in which they visually engaged with the surrounding environment. As a result, they documented and concentrated on details of the urban environment that may have appeared as too mundane, and used photos to support or illustrate their arguments. Photo diaries can capture a moment, mood, ambiance as well as details of trivial things that may be seen as not worth mentioning (Latham, 2004). Participants/photographers can express themselves freely, which may increase their sense of empowerment and ownership of the process, and through text and images may even reveal insights into what they want to say about themselves (Newman *et al.*, 2006; Edwards, 2007; Waitt *et al.*, 2009; Myers, 2010). Photographs can become a useful tool for exploring the participants’ everyday lives (Oh, 2012; Lombard, 2013). Furthermore, this insight is presented from their perspective (ibid., Young and Barrett, 2001). Chaplin (2004) kept a personal visual diary for fifteen years, adding one photo and a short description each day. She claimed that it encourages critical consideration of what we are seeing, considering its wider significance, together with greater appreciation of what may otherwise be taken for granted.

> *'Keeping a daily photo diary makes you look at life around you differently. It is often remarked that we tend to take in the visual scene before us quickly – indeed, in a flash. We only look again, more carefully, if we sense that we need to. […] Knowing that you will be photographing something during the day forces you to step more often out of that 'in a flash' mode, and to take a longer look, because you are thinking: Shall I photograph that?'*
>
> (ibid., p. 43)

Many authors concur that photography can be an enjoyable methodology for the participants (Young and Barrett, 2001; Dodman, 2003; Latham and McCormack, 2007; Oh, 2012). For street children in Uganda, the photo diary was a source of excitement and a significant self-esteem and confidence builder (Young and Barrett, 2001).

Myers (2010) represented the only identified example where a systematic evaluation of a photo diary with participants (using a questionnaire) was conducted. Myers enquired about the mechanics of the method as well as whether participants personally gained from the process. Participants found the photo diary thought provoking and felt a sense of empowerment and control as they could decide what to include and what to omit. It could also take them 'away from the vagaries of everyday life as they took on the role of data producer' (p. 336). The overall response was positive and pointed to the wider potential of participatory photo-methodologies. As such, photo-methodologies may prove useful when consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces.

Limitations of visual methods

In terms of disadvantages, a high degree of commitment is required by the researcher but mostly the participant to complete a photo diary (Wates, 2000; Latham, 2004; Edwards, 2007; Lombard, 2013). Some interpretative work, by the researcher or the participant, is needed to clarify the meaning of images (Rose, 2007). Participants' comments help to go beyond the surface content (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Rose, 2007) but in terms of analysis, researchers point to the difficulties with coding (Dodman, 2003). Apart from some general photographic skills, participants need a good standard of literacy to express themselves through text. Additionally, their style and detail of writing can differ and while some may generate quite detailed captions, others may be quite brief (Edwards, 2007; Myers, 2010). However, the general view is that by combining different methods, difficulties with photographs can be minimised. Still, it needs to be acknowledged that being a qualitative approach relying on smaller samples, the validity and reliability of visual methods may be questioned. But 'if we accept that any research method in human geography can only ever provide a partial and incomplete picture of reality, then photo-elicitation and caption-writing are legitimate methods for acquiring and working with data' (Myers, 2010: 336).

3.4.3.2.2 Photo-elicitation

Many research projects include discussing the photographs taken in a follow-up 'photo-elicitation' interview, which is based 'on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview' (Harper, 2002: 13). Collier (1957) used photo-elicitation interviews alongside conventional interviews to compare how each method worked. Apart from photos sharpening the participants' memory, they also reduced misunderstanding. Furthermore 'the pictures elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helped subjects overcome the fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews' (ibid., p. 858). Still, inserting photos into an interview does not automatically elicit useful information. This may occur when unsuitable photographs that 'do not break the frame of [the participants'] normal views' (Harper, 2002: 20) are selected and as such do not evoke deep reflections. On the contrary, images that 'break the frame' can result in an individual viewing their social existence in a new or different way. Those who have used photo-elicitation highlight that as visual representations are universal, they can act as catalysts for drawing out oral descriptions and parallel accounts. Photo diaries can be used to form a narrative structure or an interview schedule for the follow-up interview, where photos can be used as questions, stimuli or probes (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Young and Barrett, 2001; Latham, 2003; Myers, 2010; Oh, 2012). Using a photo diary and interview does not result in a unified narrative, but rather a mosaic where 'each of the different elements of the method is designed to lead us into the world of the diaries in different and broadly complementary ways' (Latham, 2004: 127). This 'bricolage' of texts can also aid triangulation of data, where the overall veracity of the different accounts can be compared and weighted up (ibid.; Young and Barrett, 2001).

3.4.3.3 Discussion – visual methods

Bolton *et al.* (2001: 503) argued that photographs offer 'an opportunity to gain not just more but different insights into social phenomena, which research methods relying on oral, aural or written data cannot provide'. Follow-up photo-elicitation interviews can provide parallel accounts, revealing additional information regarding the meanings of particular images. Photographs can add a new dimension to people's perception of their surrounding environment, but despite this they have not been used extensively in the field of geography. Most examples of photo diaries come from the research environment and with the exception of photo surveys, elevation montages and camera journals, photographs appear to be used as additional tools rather than methods in their own right in the context of urban regeneration. No examples were located of where photo diaries were used to capture people's opinions of the environment for the purpose of improving it. As such, visual methods and photo diaries in particular show potential for more extensive use in the context of public consultation in regeneration of urban public space.

3.5 Combining methods – combining benefits

Multiple authors have pointed to the benefits of mixing different methodological approaches in order to limit each method's limitations and combining their strengths. Mobile and visual methods are often combined.

Finney and Rishbeth (2006) combined site visits to parks with a photography training course. Feedback interviews and interactive workshops facilitated further reflection and participants benefited by developing photography, language, self-confidence and social skills. Juarez and Brown (2008) mixed a 'transect walk' with photography, mapping and image analysis. Participants took photographs of what they considered as affecting the quality of life in their neighbourhood, then plotted them on a map and discussed.

Photographs were also taken by regular walkers of a suburban bush land in Australia, capturing their lived experience of walking (Waitt *et al.*, 2009)[35]. A project exploring future mobile spatial applications used situated one-to-one interviews and photo-diaries with additional follow-up interviews (Fröhlich *et al.*, 2007). While the situated interviews aimed to capture initial thoughts, photo diaries provided a more long-term observation. Follow-up interviews elicited additional information. Pink (2007) used a 'video tour' in applied visual anthropology projects where she walked with participants while video recording them as they showed her around and discussed their environments.

[35] Movement in this case was more of a topic of research rather than a methodology, but it was important for the photographs to be taken in-situ.

The complementarity with other methods is also advocated by Carpiano (2009), who suggests that go-alongs can be more useful when used in conjunction with photography, GIS and focus groups. A go-along combined with a focus group (i.e. a roving focus group) 'may be a particularly useful way for residents to communicate opinions and ideas regarding community development initiatives to policy makers and stakeholders' (ibid., p. 271). This points to the potential of evaluating a group-based mobile method to either confirm or refute this assumption.

Comparing go-alongs with participant observations and interviews, Kusenbach (2003) concluded that their benefits were combined and each other's limitations compensated for. While observations provide the opportunity to see how people really behave in and experience the environment, nothing is generally learnt about the underlying factors (Parfitt, 1997; Kusenbach, 2003) for their actions. However, during a transect or group walk, these underlying issues can be discussed there and then with the participants and therefore a deeper understanding can be gained of the meanings that spaces and places carry with them for different individuals.

Myers (2010: 336) concluded that 'in employing mixed methodological approaches, geographers can add rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, depth and creativity to their work'. At the same time, they allow for methodological triangulation (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003).

3.6 Under-researched consultation methods suitable for effectiveness evaluation

The selection of specific consultation methods to be evaluated in this research was informed by the gaps in knowledge identified in current literature and to a limited extent by the requirements of the VoiceYourView project.

In response to the growing use of the internet and ICTs, Rowe and Gammack (2004) called for more research on technological engagement mechanisms in order to establish their effectiveness. Multiple local authorities now offer their services online (e-government and e-governance), however how well this works remains debatable. Use of technologies for public involvement represents a relatively new and unexplored area of interest, where empirical evidence is scarce.

From the available ICT options at the start of the research, e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text messaging were selected to be evaluated for their effectiveness at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces. Online form and the electronic kiosk may also provide some indication of the effectiveness of electronic surveys. The methods were also selected in accordance with the aims of the VoiceYourView project[36], which aimed to employ digital technology to mobilise and capture the tacit knowledge of users of public spaces in real-time (Section 1.3).

Finney and Rishbeth (2006) have pointed to the limited use of experiential methods when consulting the public about open spaces, where research and consultation tends to be predominantly ‘conducted in places and situations removed from these open spaces’ (p. 29). In-situ methods are already used to involve the public, but only to a limited extent. This tends to be the case of copyright methods such as Spaceshaper and informal approaches like walkabouts. However, the primary purpose of walkabouts is to identify environmental issues in a specific area, rather than explore possibilities for improvement. Reviewing the literature on mobile methods identified possibilities for more extensive application of mobile in-situ methods within consultations about urban public spaces.

Kusenback (2003), Jones *et al.*, (2008), Carpiano (2009) and others have identified multiple benefits of mobile methods, pointing to the embodied experience of the surrounding environment and its influence on data generation. However these claims need to be confirmed if mobile methods are to be employed more extensively for consultation purposes rather than research only. Mobile methods applied in research contexts so far have usually been based on a one-to-one interaction between the researcher and one participant, which also points to a gap in knowledge regarding group-based approaches (Carpiano, 2009). As public spaces generally facilitate social interactions, there is potential to explore a group-based mobile in-situ method more extensively.

The method to be tested as part of this research is termed the ‘walking discussion’. For comparison purposes, focus groups will be employed in parallel, in order to

[36] It was expected that vYv would produce a widely available ICT data gathering tool for use in public consultation, which could be used in the first and second phases of the research. This did not prove to be the case.

explore whether conducting a consultation in-situ is more effective than ex-situ, and if so, in what ways. Focus groups can be used to explore the same issues, but in a neutral location removed from the space under discussion.

Literature has shown several examples where mobile methods were combined with visual methods (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Juarez and Brown, 2008; Waitt *et al.*, 2009). Focus tends to be on photographs, as those are currently the most popular visual images used by social scientist, but more importantly, they can be created by the participants themselves. As such, taking photographs may be considered as a more creative way of engaging people. Photo diaries have been used in numerous geographical and design research case studies but not for the purpose of consultation. As such, photo diary is another method which may be potentially added to a consultation toolbox, with need for assessment of its effectiveness. Furthermore, both the walking discussion and photo diary are examples of experiential methods which are currently not used as extensively as they perhaps could be (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006).

The effectiveness of certain consultation methods does not appear to feature widely in the literature, despite their application in practice (Wates, 2000). Anecdotal evidence points to consultation events in particular, which appear popular with local authorities. With the exception of Cinderby's (2010) on-street mapping events, however, such events do not seem to be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness. What seem to be of interest are the actual comments gathered during the event and the number of participants. As such, a consultation event was viewed as a suitable candidate for effectiveness evaluation. Furthermore, in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces, this method offers opportunities for in-situ application, as in Wates's (2000) street stalls. However, Wates (2000) does not provide clear reasoning for his claims about the success of this method. A consultation event conducted as part of this research will be referred to as the 'on-street event'.

Overall, the consultation methods which are deemed as under-researched and offering potential for further exploration and development are:

- E-mail
- Online form
- Electronic kiosk

- Text message
- Walking discussion
- Focus group
- Photographic diary
- On-street event.

Additionally, drawing on Rowe and Frewer's (2005) between-mechanism variables introduced in Section 3.2.2, these methods differ in the variables identified as potentially affecting effectiveness. They vary in their use of pre-selected and self-selected participants, facilitator presence during data collection stage, open and closed response modes and face-to-face and non-face-to-face interaction (see Table 3b.1 in Appendix 3b). Furthermore, the methods also vary in their level of immersion (i.e. whether consultation method is applied in-situ or ex-situ).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has established that the effectiveness of the majority of public involvement methods often remains undetermined, caused by the uncertainty over how to conduct evaluations, imprecise mechanism definitions, lack of evaluation criteria and an overall paucity of empirical examples of involvement methods in the academic literature (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Burton *et al.*, 2004; Rowe and Frewer, 2005). Without systematic comparisons between methods, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding what methods may work best in which scenarios. There is a particular gap regarding consultation methods, which this research focuses on.

The different consultation methods used to elicit public input in the context of the regeneration of urban public spaces were reviewed. Some methods have received considerable research attention and as such their relative effectiveness is better understood. However, for other methods (such as consultation events) little is known about their true effectiveness. Evaluation of consultation exercises may be limited to simply counting the number of participants and voting majorities, but not the extent to which the aims and objectives of the event were met. Similar criticisms can be applied to methods that make use of ICTs. These are relatively novel (Rowe and Gammack, 2004) and have received limited research attention to date. In response to these gaps in knowledge, an on-street event, online form, electronic kiosk, e-mail and the text message were identified as under-researched methods to be tested for their effectiveness in this research.

Finney and Rishbeth (2006) identified a lack of in-situ and experiential methods in research and public consultation about the use and perception of open spaces, which pointed to the potential of a more extensive use of such approaches in this study. Mobile and visual methods were examined, as they can potentially reach into the multiple emplaced knowledges of public space users, generated through their first-hand experience of the environment. This knowledge includes awareness of the 'little things', known only to the actual users of space (Thrift, 2000). The data collected through the use of mobile and visual methods could contribute positively to regeneration plans and lead to improvements in urban public spaces, meeting local needs. However, their use so far has been limited mostly to research settings and thus it is not clear how effective they may be at consulting the public about public space regeneration. Furthermore, the participants' perceptions of these methods have remained mostly unexplored. As such, the photographic diary and the walking discussion were identified as methods suitable for effectiveness evaluation. In order to link the possible benefits of the walking discussion to its level of immersion in the space under consideration, focus groups were selected to serve as a 'control' ex-situ method.

Overall, this chapter has engaged with the debates about method effectiveness and presented a variety of methods suitable for public consultations in the regeneration of urban public spaces. Eight methods with potential for further exploration in terms of their effectiveness were selected and their evaluation in the following chapters will be used to inform wider empirical and conceptual debates. A preliminary assessment of potential evaluation criteria was also made, addressing the second objective of this research.

The next chapter outlines the conceptual thinking and the development of an evaluation framework and evaluation criteria, used to explore the effectiveness of the selected consultation methods. The methodology adopted in the first phase of this research is presented, together with an outline of how the evaluation framework was applied in practice.

Chapter 4

DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY FOR PHASE 1

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of public consultation methods in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces via their practical application, and then to use the empirical findings to contribute to broader conceptual and empirical debates about effectiveness. Having established the importance of involving the public in the regeneration of urban public spaces and the gaps in knowledge regarding effective involvement, the previous chapter identified the need for an evaluation framework and concluded with the selection of consultation methods that merit further exploration either because they have been under-researched in terms of their effectiveness and/or offer potential for further development.

This chapter firstly examines the conceptual framework underpinning the research methodology, involving a preliminary definition of effectiveness in the context of public involvement and consultation methods, followed by the development of the evaluation framework to be employed in this research. Secondly, the operationalisation of the methods within the case study of a university campus under redevelopment will be covered. The final part will present the application of the evaluation framework, which will assess the effectiveness of the selected methods in terms of data quality and from the perspectives of the participants and the researcher. This way, the gap in understanding the effectiveness of the selected consultation methods will be addressed.

An action learning approach (Revans, 1978, 1982; Kolb, 1984) was adopted, with the results of the first stage of the research informing the second. For clarity, the different methodologies adopted in the separate phases of the work are explained in two chapters, this and Chapter 7.

4.2 *Conceptual thinking informing the evaluation framework*

4.2.1 Conceptual framework

Working on the premise of involving the public in the regeneration of urban public space, apart from the concepts surrounding public involvement already explored in Chapter 2, this research is also concerned with ‘people’, ‘space’, ‘place’ as well as ‘time’, which are all viewed as of interest to human geography (Holloway *et al.*, 2003). As such, this research is grounded in the tradition of human geography and wider social sciences, exploring the relationship that people have with places, the knowledge that develops through the use of spaces, and how this knowledge can be utilised to facilitate improvement of such spaces.

Many elements of human geography and social sciences adopt a qualitative methodology which utilises techniques such as interpretation and observation (Snape and Spencer, 2003) to ‘understand people’s lived experience from the perspective of the people themselves’ (Hennink *et al.*, 2011: 14). This research follows the interpretative paradigm, acknowledging that reality can be experienced from multiple perspectives and as such it is subjective, socially constructed and influenced by context – in this case the reality experienced by users of public spaces. It dismisses the claims of the single truth and value-free research proposed by positivism (Snape and Spencer, 2003; Hennink *et al.*, 2011). The research is also influenced by the geographies of everyday life[1], recognising that place plays an important role in shaping people’s routine, ‘everyday’ lives and that an individual’s knowledge and understanding of a particular space may lead to different experiences of the same place (Thrift, 2000; Waitt *et al.*, 2009). The research embraces the idea that this knowledge can be captured using consultation methods and is useful for urban regeneration. Aspects of the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Bűscher and Urry, 2009) (Section 3.4.2) are also influential, as many of these everyday space-time routines are executed through movements between locations of regular activities (Taylor, 2003c).

[1] Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau have engaged extensively with aspects of the everyday, linking them with the themes of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1991) and resistance (de Certeau, 1984)

William Kirk (1963) suggested that understanding people's behaviour in the world may be best achieved by focusing on their perception. He made a distinction between the 'real' or 'objective' environment, consisting of the physical world, and the 'behavioural' environment, referring to the 'psycho-physical field in which phenomenal facts are arranged into patterns or structures that acquire values in cultural contexts' (p. 365). This implies that human beings make decisions on what their senses tell them, thus acquiring partial, distorted, selective and simplified knowledge and understanding, instead of accurate and objective information of what really exists. The general public in consultations are often viewed as 'laypersons'. As such, it could be concluded that the data gathered is subjective, based on the participants' personal experiences and opinions. Lay perspectives are implicitly assumed to form a legitimate and workable source of information within public engagement (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). In fact, it is believed by some that laypeople – due to their capabilities and knowledge - are in the best position to analyze their own situation and do something about it (Chambers, 1994, 1997; Juarez and Brown, 2008).

Furthermore, it has been recognised that:

> *'lay publics typically include a wider range of considerations than technical experts do in their reasoning processes; including matters that are of relevance to their everyday lives. In this way the rationality associated with technical expertise may be seen as narrowly defined, and indeed alienating in terms of its apparent disregard for issues about which people may have strong value-commitments'*
>
> (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007: 260).

The recognition of multiple perspectives is particularly pertinent in the context of urban public space regeneration, where the varied perspectives of numerous stakeholders and their subjective knowledge need to be combined in processes that aim to achieve successful urban regeneration. Multiple perspectives need to be explored in evaluation, too, as different stakeholders are likely to have different expectations of what constitutes an effective method. The goals of various parties are examined in user-based evaluations (Chess, 2000). A number of evaluation frameworks (Rowe *et al.*, 2001, 2004, 2008) have obtained and combined participants', sponsors' and consultants' views with normative criteria in order to reach a more valid and reliable conclusion regarding whether a consultation method was effective, rather than one biased towards a single perspective (Rowe *et al.*, 2005). Thus, in view of the importance of exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders, multiple viewpoints will be incorporated into the evaluation framework used in this research.

However, in addition to the perspectives of the 'humans', there are others to consider. Elmwood and Martin (2000) and Chih Hoong (2003) highlighted that the micro-geographies of research sites, at the moment often neglected, can influence the knowledge produced, as well as the power relations embedded, in a research process. Linking back to the 'new mobilities paradigm', Sheller and Urry (2006) claimed that not only are people 'on the move', but also places themselves can be seen as 'travelling within networks of human and non-human agents' (p. 214).

Networks of human agents tend to be voluntary and informal and 'arise from and are sustained by relationships between individuals over some shared concern, belief or value' (Lowndes *et al.*, 1997: 336). Partnerships, on the other hand, are based on formal organisational relationships. Both relationships are challenging to research, as the informal relationships and contacts necessary in these collaborations result in diverse and fluid relationships that are difficult to place boundaries around.

However, non-human actors/actants can also be part of networks. The concept of networks and the actors within them is the focus of actor-network theory[2] (ANT), identified as another approach influential for this research. Actor-network theory is sometimes known as 'the sociology of translation' and is concerned with the mechanics of power (Law, 1992; Munro, 2009). Certain aspects of ANT are valuable for this research, despite the theory being viewed as analytically radical and for many unclear, resulting in extended critical discussions in the literature (Law, 1992; Murdoch, 1997; Bosco, 2006; Elder-Vass, 2008). In ANT, networks are understood as 'sets of relations which give rise to the objects and dualisms that make up our world' (Murdoch, 1997: 743). These networks are materially heterogeneous as the theory argues that all phenomena – agents, texts, organisations, machines, architectures and others – are effects or products of heterogeneous networks of diverse materials (Law, 1992). All these phenomena are 'actors', which can be both human and non-human. The theory argues that a social network is not formed by human beings only, but humans interacting with other humans as well as non-human materials (Law, 1992). In fact, the theory 'does not make privileged distinctions

[2] ANT is associated with the work of Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon (Bosco, 2006; Munro, 2009).

between humans and non-humans' (Bosco, 2006: 139) and argues that they should be treated symmetrically – Callon (1986) has termed this 'generalised symmetry'. An actor in an actor-network 'is also, always, a network' as 'social agents are never located in bodies and bodies alone, but rather that an actor is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations, or an effect produced by such a network' (Law, 1992: 384). An actor can also be referred to as an 'actant', which 'implies no special motivation of human individual actors, or of humans in general. An actant can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of action' (Latour, 1996: 373). Having decided to explore the effectiveness of in-situ and visual methods in this research, it could be assumed that phenomena not generally encountered in 'neutral' research environments will form part of the networks within the individual methods.

ANT assigns agency to both human *and* non-human actors, whereas conventionally, agency has been tied to humans only, linking action with intention, which cannot be attributed to non-humans (Munro, 2009). ANT generally challenges established dualisms like structure-agency, nature-society, local-global, macro-micro, action-intention and others (Murdoch, 1997; Hubbard, 2006). It distances itself from the anthropocentric perspective 'which continually positions humans as the only significant actors [and] cannot adequately take into account the various non-humans which make up our world and upon which we depend' (Murdoch, 1997: 731). Furthermore, ANT tries to uncover and trace the connections and relations between actors (Bosco, 2006) in the process of 'translation', i.e. the process of forming a network (for more details, see Callon, 1986). Treating humans and non-humans symmetrically has led to numerous discussions in academia (Murdoch, 1997; Elder-Vass, 2008), however Law (1992: 383) argued that 'to say that there is no fundamental difference between people and objects is an analytical stance, not an ethical position'. Methodologically, case material in ANT is presented in a narrative form, with full descriptions of networks. However, some believe that such a description may not capture all the network elements (Murdoch, 1997).

For the purpose of this research, the main contribution made by ANT is the acknowledgement of the importance of non-human actants, 'on the grounds that they can be just as important as human actants in making things happen' (Hubbard, 2006: 145). When consulting the public about regeneration of urban public space, the actual space under discussion may be viewed as an actant, playing its own role in the consultation and influencing its effectiveness. Non-human actants may consist of not only the surrounding physical environment, but weather conditions, as well as tools used to consult. By acknowledging the influence of these phenomena, more attention is being paid to the wider consultation context[3].

However, this research will not work on the premise that all actors and actants should be treated symmetrically. Unequal power relations are often present in networks and partnerships in urban regeneration and public engagement, and as such claiming that they could be 'equal' would mean ignoring this fact. This research will not necessarily trace the connections between the different actors either. Instead, it will discuss their individual roles in the consultation process, taking into consideration possible influences of non-human actants on effectiveness.

A mixed-method approach (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) will be adopted in order to address the research questions regarding the effectiveness of consultation methods. Judd and Randolph (2006) and Pitcher (2006) highlighted that a mixed methodology is promoted for evaluations, as it allows for triangulation of data. Qualitative and quantitative approaches do not have to be viewed as incompatible, as explored below.

Several researchers encourage 'greater acceptance of pragmatism in choosing the appropriate method for addressing specific research questions, rather than focusing too much on the underlying philosophical debates' (Seale, 1999; in Snape and Spencer, 2003: 15) (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As such, qualitative and quantitative research are not contradictory but can be viewed as part of a research 'toolkit' and provide complementary strategies to deal with different types of issues. There have been arguments that 'purism about the epistemological origins of a particular approach may undermine our ability to choose and implement the most appropriate research design for answering the research questions posed' (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 17). Pragmatism is 'a method of knowing through practice' and 'one key set of ideas that takes qualitative research beyond the world of representation, into the messy complexity of practice' (Smith, 2001: 32). It is also concerned with 'the construction of meaning through practical activity attempting to ground philosophical activity in the practicalities of everyday life' (Kitchin and Tate, 2000: 13). It claims that knowledge can be only achieved through experience and thus 'understanding must be inferred from behaviour and rooted in experience, not knowledge' (ibid.). Debates about pragmatism continue and criticisms revolve around

[3] Law (1992) used the example of an overhead projector, a non-human actant, being part of social relations and mediating the communication between a lecturer and students.

the difficulties of combining the two approaches, with differing epistemological bases, in a single study (Snape and Spencer, 2003). However, this research does not embrace all the aspects of pragmatism. As the study involves a practical application of a number of consultation methods with the purpose of assessing their effectiveness based on that particular application (and subsequently developing empirical and conceptual contributions to knowledge from the research findings), a mixed-method approach appears apt.

Drawing on the recognition that the perspectives of multiple stakeholders should be explored as part of evaluations (Chess, 2000; Rowe *et al.*, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008), as they may perceive the experience of a consultation method differently (Hennink *et al.*, 2011), the selected consultation methods will be evaluated from several perspectives. These include the perspectives of the participants and the researcher, complemented by assessment of 'data quality', which has so far been neglected in evaluations (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). The analysis of the data quality perspective is more quantitative, whereas the perspectives of the human stakeholders in the process will be studied qualitatively. The role of non-human actants will be explored through the researcher's perspective.

Furthermore, the consultation methods to be explored as part of this research were identified as currently under-researched and offering potential for further development. This implies a scarcity of data regarding their effectiveness, which complicates the formulation of any hypothesis that could be potentially tested as part of the research. As such, the study takes on a developmental approach, following an action learning cycle (Revans, 1978; 1982; Kolb, 1984), and is conducted in two phases, where the first phase informs the development of the second. The research builds mostly on inductive reasoning[4], common within the interpretative paradigm, with aspects of deductive reasoning.

[4] Whereas inductive reasoning involves 'using evidence as the genesis of a conclusion', deductive reasoning uses 'evidence in support of a conclusion' when a theory is either confirmed or not in view of the data collected (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 14).

4.2.2 Development of the evaluation framework

The consultations carried out as part of this research were primarily to inform debates about the effectiveness of consultation methods, rather than to inform actual public space regeneration projects. The gathered public input will be of interest on the basis of 'method', rather than 'substance'.

As such, these were 'fictional' or 'test' consultations, concentrating on the pre-concept design stage of public space regeneration, where public space users' opinions, aspirations and recommendations are explored. If actual designs were to be developed, the presence of professional designers or architects as facilitators would have been necessary. Furthermore, discussing actual designs may raise participants' expectations inadvertently and result in disillusionment if design ideas are not taken forward.

In order to explore the effectiveness of the selected methods, understand their operationalisation and contribute to knowledge regarding the evaluation of effectiveness in this context, an action learning (Revans, 1978, 1982; Kolb, 1984) or developmental approach was adopted. As such, the research process was conducted in two phases. In the exploratory Phase 1 (explored in this chapter and Chapter 5), all selected methods were tested and evaluated. The aim of the subsequent Phase 2 (Chapters 7 and 8) was to expand on the effectiveness of methods from Phase 1 which showed potential for further development and learning regarding effectiveness.

Reflecting the variety of stakeholders involved in consultations, the evaluation framework will explore effectiveness from the perspectives of the participants and the researcher, and data quality. A limited professional perspective, independent of the evaluation framework, was sought using interviews (Chapter 6), conducted between Phase 1 and Phase 2.

4.2.2.1 Defining effectiveness

Evaluation framework development should begin with defining 'effectiveness' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). To enable generalisations and to cover multiple stakeholder perspectives, a universal and objective definition (Section 3.2.4.1) will be utilised in this research. However, defining effectiveness *a priori* for this research is challenging due to:

- The absence of agreed-upon evaluation criteria in the literature (Section 3.2.3)
- The methods were selected mostly on the basis of being under-researched - the limited knowledge surrounding their application does not provide a firm basis on which to build a definition and requires their application to be tested as part of an action learning/developmental process
- The action learning/developmental approach adopted requires methods to be used and evaluated, rather than evaluating methods used by other organisations
- In using a 'fictional' scenario, there are no specific sponsor's objectives and requirements to meet, which could otherwise contribute to the effectiveness definition (Rowe *et al.*, 2005)

Still, the variety of criteria proposed in the literature (Section 3.2.3) demonstrates some recurring themes, such as the need for a method to 'competently/efficiently' achieve its intended purpose (Webler, 1995, 1999; Rowe and Frewer, 2000, 2005) and to be conducted in a 'fair' manner (ibid., Chess and Purcell, 1999; Hartley and Wood, 2005).

Utilising the information flow model (Rowe and Frewer, 2005), competence/efficiency within public consultations entails:

> *'maximizing the relevant information from the maximum number of the relevant population and efficiently transferring it (with minimal information loss) to the sponsor, with the efficient processing of that information by the receivers (the sponsors)'.*
>
> (ibid., p. 263)

Fairness is described as concerning:

> *'the perceptions of those involved in the engagement exercise and/or the wider public, and whether they believe that the exercise has been honestly conducted with serious intent to collect the views of an appropriate sample of the affected population and to act on those views'.*
>
> (ibid, p. 262)

Table 3.1 presented the acceptance (i.e. fairness) and process (i.e. competence/efficiency) criteria proposed by Rowe and Frewer (2000), which were informed by previous studies. Due to the 'experimental' nature of this research, the majority of these criteria, such as 'early involvement', 'influence' and 'cost-effectiveness', are not applicable. However, the criteria can be used as pointers to 'best practice' and how the methods should be employed to maximise their general effectiveness in terms of their application. Rowe *et al.* (2004, 2008) acknowledged that the criteria may not be appropriate in every situation, as well as not being exhaustive.

Even though public involvement is about data elicitation and information flows (Rowe and Frewer, 2005), the quality of the data itself has not received much attention in previous evaluations. Methods' effectiveness tends to be considered in terms of organisational processes and not in terms of methods as information systems. This has been confirmed by Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007: 261) who stated that:

> *'despite this awareness of the importance of information, knowledge and communication to the effective functioning of engagement exercises, we are not aware of any work that has considered closely the overall management of information and knowledge during such exercises'.*

At the same time:

> *'Capturing, and making effective use of, a range of different forms of knowledge emerges as a matter of central importance to the effectiveness of citizen engagement initiatives.'*
>
> (ibid., p. 261)

They proposed using 'translation quality'[5] as an effectiveness criterion, where translation 'seeks to capture how effectively various sources of knowledge are utilised in an interactive and integrative process' (ibid., p. 260). This may also include the ways in which conclusions are drawn from one stage of the process and inform and shape subsequent stages. However, they do not propose any particular criteria to assess translation quality, nor data quality more specifically. As such, there is a

[5] However, while Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007) were interested in the entire process of translation, i.e. from gathering information from a number of sources, to how it got interpreted, re-interpreted and finally presented in a final report, this research will focus on the actual information gathered using a particular method. As such, it covers only a part of the process that Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007) consider as 'translation'.

gap in knowledge regarding the type and quality of information[6] generated through particular consultation methods, and their possible influence on method effectiveness. This research will address this gap by establishing several data quality criteria[7] to assess data quality (Section 4.4.1).

Additionally, it has already been proposed that public involvement may lead to some personal empowerment (Colenutt and Cutten, 1994; Lyons *et al.*, 2001; Taylor, 2003b; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Burton *et al.*, 2006). Chess and Purcell (1999) identified 'education' as an outcome criterion, whereas Rowe *et al.* (2004) suggested that a criterion related to learning may be included, too. As such, an effective method may ideally result in some personal benefits or gains to the participants.

Therefore the definition of effectiveness to be used in this research is, that to be effective, a method should have the following attributes:

- Achieve its intended purpose or its more specific aims and objectives
- Achieve a balance between the expectations of the different stakeholders
- Be fair – the exercise should be conducted with serious intent
- Be representative
- Maximise relevant information / gather quality public input
- Give the general public an opportunity to express their views
- Bring personal benefit to the participants

This definition will be later refined in view of the findings generated throughout the empirical research (Section 9.4).

Although this research will not aim for 'representativeness', it appears to be the most frequently mentioned criterion and thus will be discussed as part of the evaluation. However, having an 'impact' or 'having ones views being acted upon' is intentionally excluded. It is not the aim of this research to ensure it influences any particular

[6] Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007) also make a distinction between 'information' and 'knowledge', claiming that only information can be shared, whereas 'the acquisition of knowledge entails processes of learning, re-framing and understanding' (p. 261).

[7] As a baseline, the rigour of all research methods should be considered in terms of their validity, reliability, replicability and other aspects (Boaz and Ashby, 2003). The 'data quality' criteria used in this research represent an addition to these and examine the methods' effectiveness specifically in terms of the data generated by them and the quality of that data.

project. The primary aim is to inform debates about method effectiveness. However, it could be assumed that if the data yielded by the different methods is of high quality, it could be used to inform decisions.

The ways in which the individual effectiveness characteristics will be assessed are presented in the next section, which introduces the three perspectives of the evaluation framework.

4.2.2.2 The three perspectives of the evaluation framework

In Section 3.2.4.2 attention was drawn to the way in which Rowe *et al.* (2004, 2005, 2008) combined the perspectives of the sponsors, the public and the evaluators with normative criteria to carry out a more valid and reliable evaluation. However, not all evaluations examine these different perspectives (Frewer *et al.*, 2001) and sometimes the views of one party may be given more weight than those of another. As mentioned in the effectiveness definition, an effective method should ideally balance the expectations of all stakeholders involved. As such, the effectiveness of consultation methods will be evaluated from three different perspectives – the data generated, the participants' satisfaction and the researcher's reflections. These are expanded on below.

The perspective of the sponsor is not included within the evaluation framework, as the 'test' consultations did not have sponsors. However, in a 'real' scenario, the sponsor's perspective would need to be examined. Although informal partnerships with external organisations were established in this research in order to secure case study locations, their involvement was minimal. They were also more interested in the aggregate content generated through the consultations as a whole, rather than the effectiveness of individual methods. As such, their aims were divergent from those of the research study. Therefore, instead of exploring whether any specific aims and objectives of the methods were met - which would have depended on the sponsors – the researcher will reflect on whether the more generic 'intended purpose', which in this case entailed consulting the public about the regeneration of the case study locations, was achieved. However, in order to incorporate a practice-based professional perspective into the research, interviews with professionals were conducted independently to the 'test' consultations. These are presented in Chapter 6.

In order to achieve a systematic and consistent evaluation of the selected consultation methods' effectiveness, the evaluation framework remained the same between the two research phases. However, its success at evaluating effectiveness is reflected on in Chapter 9.

4.2.2.2.1 Data quality

Previous evaluation studies have rarely paid explicit attention to the 'quality' of data (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007), despite the fact that consultations are generally concerned with data gathering (McLauglin *et al.*, 2004). The one identified exception applies to Horlick-Jones *et al.*'s (2007) exploration of the translation quality within mechanisms such as discussion workshops and public meetings. Drawing on observations and the actual materials generated during the sessions (facilitator reports, audio recordings, flipcharts, final report), their evaluation was presented in a narrative format[8], without using specific criteria. They concluded that:

> *'it is clear that considerable work is needed to develop specific instruments and procedures in order to assess translation quality in ways more systematic than the simple narrative approach.'*
>
> (ibid., p. 272)

Responding to this gap in knowledge, the quality of data generated by the individual methods used in this research will be evaluated against a set of criteria. These were selected on the basis of what data properties would be seen as desirable when collecting information for the purpose of regeneration of urban public spaces, and informed by the literature and the vYv project. Rowe and Frewer (2005) pointed out that all members of the public possess relevant and irrelevant information about a variety of issues, where ideally relevant information should be maximised and irrelevant information minimised. They added that data quality may be compromised if data is suboptimal, i.e. incomplete, irrelevant or incorrect. Whether data obtained from participants is complete or correct would be a matter of subjective opinion and as such not entirely valid. However, the criteria presented below offer one way of assessing data quality and are believed to be valid for the purpose of assessing the quality of data in this context. As such, they may contribute to the development of

[8] Horlick-Jones *et al.*'s (2007) conclusions were presented in a format such as: 'we conclude that the organizers were restricted in their capacity to capture the rich detail of the discussions' (p. 268) or 'de-contextualized and over-simplified information in stimulus materials' (p. 273).

more systematic instruments to assess data quality (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). The individual criteria and their application are explored in more detail in Section 4.4.1, once the case study location has been introduced.

The data quality criteria to be utilised in this research include:

- Validity
- Relevance
- Location specification
- Clarity
- Actionability

Additionally, data was going to be examined in terms of:

- Sentiment
- Theme
- Suggestion for improvement
- Link between comment and photo (applicable to photo diary)

These are not viewed as criteria per se, but rather as data characteristics. Effectiveness of a method cannot be judged on whether it generates positive or negative comments, but this may provide an indication of whether the method succeeds at generating a relatively balanced public input, or one that is skewed towards a certain sentiment or theme.

It was anticipated that the individual methods would generate different types of data – either 'shorter' comments, which could be analysed in a 'quantitative' manner (i.e. rating the comments against the individual data quality criteria), and qualitative data based on discussions, requiring a narrative approach to analysis.

4.2.2.2.2 Participant perspective

The public is a key stakeholder in any consultation exercise and thus their views should form part of effectiveness evaluations (Chess, 2000; Rowe *et al.*, 2001; Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

In order to achieve a thorough evaluation, it was considered essential to include participants' views on the effectiveness of the different methods. Furthermore, for many of the selected methods, the participant perspective remains under-represented[9]. This research will address this gap in knowledge.

Participant satisfaction with the individual consultation methods was explored using questionnaires (this selection is justified in Section 4.4.2), featuring closed and open questions on topics such as:

- General attitude / satisfaction
- Perceived effectiveness – advantages, disadvantages, barriers
- Recruitment and convenience
- Contact time / Duration
- Quality of facilitation (where applicable)
- Group dynamics and opportunities to speak up

By asking participants what they like or dislike about the methods and listing what they see as advantages, disadvantages and challenges of the methods, they are implicitly asked about possible evaluation criteria (Rowe *et al.*, 2005). In relation to the attributes listed in the effectiveness definition, the questionnaires also implicitly enquired about the participants' belief that the method was conducted with serious intent, and explored whether they personally benefited from the experience and whether the methods allowed them to express their views. Additionally, the number of participants and their demographic information can provide an indication of whether a range of participants was involved, or whether certain groups may have been represented more. In a real scenario, such information could evidence whether 'representativeness' was achieved.

Using consistent questionnaires permitted comparisons between methods at a later stage. The participant perspective is explored in more detail in Section 4.4.2.

[9] Myers's (2010) was the only identified study which explored participants' views on the photo diary. However, participants' views on focus groups have received considerable attention (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

4.2.2.2.3 Researcher perspective

The researcher adopted the role of a fictional consultant, who organises and facilitates the consultations and processes the data that is generated, as well as the role of the evaluator[10].

The researcher's perspective, following Schön's (1983, 1987) reflective practice, will mostly entail evaluations of the first-hand experiences of using the different methods in the field. It will also triangulate the data quality and participant perspective with the researcher's observations and reflections of the individual methods, following action learning cycles (Revans, 1978; 1982; Kolb, 1984). Although not following a predetermined checklist but making extensive reflective notes throughout the research period, the researcher's arguments for the effectiveness of individual methods will be discussed and substantiated by appropriate empirical evidence. This reflection will also encapsulate a discussion of the methodological practicalities and examine the findings in relation to human and non-human actants, as proposed by the actor-network theory. Overall, the researcher's reflection will involve both 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' and building up ladders of reflection (Schön, 1983, 1987), informing the overall effectiveness evaluation.

Researcher perspective will be revisited in Section 4.4.3.

4.2.2.3 Validity, reliability, triangulation and positionality within the evaluation framework

All research should be rigorous with issues of validity and reliability appropriately addressed. Rowe *et al.* (2005: 343) admit that 'the nature of the public engagement domain frequently makes it difficult to establish instrument reliability and validity', but that 'in the very least, researchers should discuss reasons for believing that their measures of effectiveness are reliable and valid'.

External validation can be achieved through triangulation, which 'assumes that the use of different sources of information will help to confirm and to improve the clarity,

[10] Although with prior experience of using multiple research methods, including qualitative and quantitative surveys and their analysis, the researcher's potential skills gaps were addressed by further professional and educational training via extra-curricular activities and volunteering with external organisation on a variety of projects.

or precision, of a research finding' (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003: 275). This research offers opportunities for both methods triangulation, which involves 'comparing data generated by different methods (e.g. qualitative and quantitative)'; and triangulation of sources based on 'comparing data from different qualitative methods' (ibid., p. 276).

The validity and reliability of data content can be supported by triangulating findings from the eight tested consultation methods. More importantly, the views on method effectiveness can be triangulated using the three different perspectives of the evaluation framework. There are debates regarding the extent to which triangulation can verify findings, as in view of no single reality, multiple sources of information may not offer any confirmations, together with different methods generating different types of data. In view of these claims, the main value of triangulation entails adding breadth or depth to an analysis and as such extending understanding. Ritchie (2003: 44) adds that 'the 'security' that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one', while Seale and Silverman (1997: 379) conclude that 'authenticity rather than reliability is often the issue in qualitative research'.

Furthermore, the researcher has to be aware of her own positionality and subjectivity and how her presence may have affected the particular research situations (phenomenological validation) (Marshall, 1997; Hennink *et al.*, 2011). Being reflexive about one's own positionality involves a 'self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher' (England, 1994: 82). A researcher's positionality will always shape the interactions that take place and these need to be acknowledged. All research encounters are inherently power-laden. Positionality will be discussed throughout the chapters on research findings.

4.2.3 Summary

This section has preliminarily defined an effective consultation method as one that achieves its intended purpose, balances the expectations of different stakeholders, is fair and representative, gives participants the opportunity to express their views, maximises relevant information and brings participants personal benefit. It has also established an evaluation framework incorporating three perspectives – data quality and participant and researcher perspectives - from which the consultation methods will be evaluated. The operationalisation of this evaluation framework will be revisited in the latter part of the chapter, once the case study location of Coventry University campus has been presented in the next section.

4.3 Methodology for Phase 1 (Coventry University)

In order to assess the effectiveness of the selected consultation methods, it was necessary to apply the methods in a scenario, which would as closely as possible replicate the impression of a real consultation. This would enable the selected methods to be reproduced on a smaller scale whilst still yielding data that would enable the identification of certain patterns or observations regarding how effective these methods would be if used by regeneration professionals in their consultation practice. In a theoretical case study, the entire exercise would not be grounded in reality and as such it would be unlikely to yield valid and reliable results. Informal partnerships were established with external organisations who would act as 'sponsors' of the consultation.

Primary data was collected in two phases. Phase 1 (conducted at Coventry University campus), which was later used to inform Phase 2 (conducted at Greyfriars Green park), is explored below. After covering the contextual background of the case study area, the recruitment and promotional strategies will be presented, followed by an outline of how the individual methods were operationalised.

4.3.1 Contextual background to Phase 1

Coventry University – in Coventry[11], West Midlands – covers a 14.5 ha city-centre campus, adjacent to Coventry Cathedral and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (Figure 4.1; for more detailed campus maps, see Appendix 4a). It originated as The

[11] Coventry is the 11th largest city in the UK, with a population of more than 315,000 (for more details, see Section 7.2.5 and Appendix 7c). In the 14th Century, its wool trade, together with leather goods, metal working and the manufacture of soap made it one of the largest towns in England. From the mid 18th Century and well into the 19th Century, the manufacture of silk ribbons was the major local industry. Watch making and manufacture of sewing machines was also important. Coventry is claimed to be the birthplace of the modern bicycle – in the mid 1980s, there were 80 bicycle firms – and later became the heart of Britain's motorcycle, motorcar and aircraft-manufacturing industries. Between 1940 and 1942, Coventry suffered from destruction and was subsequently extensively re-built, resulting in its current legacy of 1950s and 1960s architecture (Skinner, 2006; CCC, 2013a). The city's industries suffered from de-industrialisation in the 1970s, leading to high unemployment. Now the city is known for its two universities (Coventry University and the University of Warwick) and focus on research and development (CCC, 2013a).

Coventry College of Design in 1843, later becoming Lanchester Polytechnic in the 1970s and Coventry Polytechnic in 1987. In 1992, Coventry University was granted university status (Coventry University, 2013a) and currently it comprises of four faculties or schools[12].

The university is housed across approximately twenty buildings (Appendix 4a), which are purpose-built, converted or inherited from previous institutions (Coventry University, 2013c). Details of the student and staff profile are outlined in Section 4.3.4.1 in the discussion about the target population.

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Figure 4.1: *Location of Coventry University campus in relation to the city of Coventry (Source: Google Maps, 2013)*

The university is investing £160m in its campus redevelopment between 2010 and 2020 (Coventry University, 2010). At the time of the research the most recent additions included a multi-storey staff car park, the Computing and Engineering

[12] Coventry School of Art and Design, the Faculty of Business, Environment and Society, the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (Coventry University, 2013b).

building and the Student Enterprise building (later re-named The Hub)[13]. Due to these regeneration activities, Coventry University campus was selected as a case study site for Phase 1. Additionally, the university administration admitted that little consultation had taken place with campus users about their aspirations for the campus (Estates Team, 2010), which presented an ideal opportunity for testing the eight consultation methods.

4.3.2 Consultation at Coventry University campus

The eight consultation methods tested at Coventry University campus were:

- E-mail
- Online form
- Electronic kiosk
- Text message

Referred to as ‘electronic’ methods for short, and conducted as part of the vYv project

- Walking discussion
- Focus group
- Photographic diary
- On-street event.

These methods were conducted independently of the vYv project

The walking discussion, focus group, photo diary and the on-street event were facilitated by the researcher and conducted independently of the VoiceYourView (vYv) project. E-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text messaging were tested as part of the VoiceYourView project, which partly influenced their selection, provided the necessary funds for an extensive promotional campaign (Section 4.3.4.4) and the technological infrastructure to support electronic forms of data collection and compilation. The consultation was held in the Autumn term of 2010/2011 academic year and ran for approximately 12 weeks.

The consultation exercise provided university staff, students and visitors with an opportunity to provide their views, concerns, ideas, and suggestions for improvement as well as general comments about the physical aspects of the university campus. The scope of the consultation was left relatively broad but an emphasis was placed on the physical realm, such as green spaces, pavements, squares and car parks.

[13] The Computing and Engineering building (opened in summer 2012) and The Hub (opened in summer 2011) were under construction at the time of this research. The staff car park had already opened in May 2010 and was fully completed at the time of research.

Compliments, complaints as well as general comments could be made using any of the methods.

Co-operation with the Estates Department was vital in order for the consultation to be considered legitimate. Participants were informed that findings would be passed on to those responsible for campus management, however there was no guarantee of influencing future plans. It was not the aim of this research to influence decisions, however managing expectations is an important aspect of all consultations, as exemplified by Rowe and Frewer's (2000) criterion of 'task definition' stipulating that the nature and the scope of an exercise should be clearly stated.

Appropriate ethical clearance was obtained from Coventry University prior to the research (Appendix 4b).

4.3.3 Aims and objectives for Phase 1 (Coventry University)

Phase 1 represented an exploratory phase in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of selected consultation methods in the context of regeneration of urban public space. Its aim was to:

Test a selection of methods, via their practical application at a university campus, in order to establish their effectiveness.

Objectives:

1. Using the evaluation framework, explore individual methods' effectiveness in terms of data quality, participants' and researcher's perspectives and any other aspects that may emerge during their application in the field.

2. Examine the extent to which participants may be pro-active in a consultation process, especially in terms of using electronic mechanisms (e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk, text message).

3. Explore whether in-situ methods may benefit consultations about regeneration of urban public spaces, and if so, how.

4. Based on the findings (via the evaluation framework), identify methods to be further tested for their effectiveness in Phase 2.

4.3.4 Target population, recruitment and promotion

4.3.4.1 Target population

A 'population' is 'the total of all possible people who display the characteristics we are interested in' (Kitchin and Tate, 2000: 53). Additional to students and staff, users of the campus included visitors, prospective students attending open days and workers in nearby premises. The consultation was open to whoever wished to take part, but was promoted mostly around the campus itself. Students and staff represented the main target audience, however other campus users were not excluded by intent.

In the 2010/2011 academic year, the university had approximately 20,500 students (OIA, 2012) - half of them aged between 19 and 24 years (Coventry University, 2011) – and around 2,500 staff members (Coventry University, 2012). Over 60% of students and almost three-quarters of staff were White. The rest comprised an ethnically diverse community, with the Asian (students: 17.7%; staff: 10.6%) and Black (students: 10.1%; staff: 4.8%) ethnicities being the most prominent. Only 5.5% of students and 3.3% of staff members had a disability. Half of 'disabled' students had a learning disability, followed by a long standing illness or health condition. Students with physical, visual or hearing impairments represented a very small minority, although information regarding the exact disabilities of staff members was not available (for more details, see Appendix 4c). Bearing in mind the student to staff ratio and the demographic profile, participation primarily by students below the age of 30 years and individuals of mostly White origin was anticipated. The actual participant samples will be discussed further in Sections 5.2.1.7, 5.3.1.9, 5.4.1.9 and 5.5.1.6.

The spontaneous uptake of the electronic methods was one of the issues the research was intending to uncover and as such no specific target of how many individuals should utilise these was set. Literature remains highly inconclusive on what a representative sample should be. A sample of 10% of the campus users would consist of about 2,300 individuals. On the contrary, the photo diary, focus group and walking discussion rely on targeted recruitment rather than pro-active participant uptake. As such, a target number of participants was set for these methods and is discussed in Section 4.3.4.5.

4.3.4.2 Promotion and participant recruitment

A controlled as well as uncontrolled participant selection strategy (Rowe and Frewer, 2005) was used to recruit participants (Table 4.1).

E-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message were promoted via a campus-wide promotional campaign using posters, leaflets and other methods (Section 4.3.4.4) under the VoiceYourView brand.

Focus group, walking discussion and photographic diary were based on targeted recruitment, where participants were selected by the researcher. During the on-street event, participants were sourced from passers-by, following convenience sampling.

Table 4.1: Recruitment of participants for Phase 1

Method	Linked to vYv project? (Yes/No)	Type of recruitment
E-mail	Yes	Generic promotion
Electronic kiosk	Yes	Generic promotion
Online form	Yes	Generic promotion
Text message	Yes	Generic promotion
Focus group	No	Targeted recruitment
Walking discussion	No	Targeted recruitment
Photographic diary	No	Targeted recruitment
On-street event	No	Passers-by

4.3.4.3 Sampling design

The unit of study for this research were individuals as opposed to organisations or households (Parfitt, 2005) as the focus was on individuals' opinions and personal attitudes towards the regeneration of the university campus. The target population was set mainly by, but not restricted to, the geographical boundary of the campus and the temporal boundary in terms of who was circulating the area at the time of the study.

Sampling designs are often separated into probability (or random) samples and non-probability[14] (or non-random) samples. A sampling frame was not available for this study, thus probability or random sampling methods could not be utilised. Being primarily a qualitative research, non-probability sampling strategy, where 'units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or groups within the sampled population', was adopted (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 78). The sample was not intended to be statistically representative (ibid.).

Non-probability samples include purposive sampling[15], theoretical sampling, opportunistic and convenience sampling (Kitchin and Tate, 2000; Ritchie *et al.*, 2003). In purposive sampling, 'the members of the sample are chosen with a 'purpose' to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion' (Ritchie at al, 2003: 79) and the particular features then enable a detailed exploration of themes central to the study. In this case, these were the opinions of campus users on its physical aspects. Opportunistic sampling[16] was also utilised, supplemented by convenience sampling[17]. Literature suggests that convenience sampling is the most common form of sampling used in qualitative research, however others argue that more systematic approaches are needed (ibid.). For this research, multiple strategies within the non-probability sampling design were adopted in order to reach a wide number of campus users. While selecting and recruiting participants, effort was made to include 'student', 'staff' and 'visitor' participants as well as individuals from different demographic backgrounds (age, gender, ethnicity, disability). However, replicating well-known challenges to recruitment (Lowndes *et al.,* 1998; 2001a, 2001b), the individuals' availability and willingness to participate took precedence over their demographic characteristics, partly limiting the researcher's control over the final composition of participant groups, and thus limiting the sample in terms of breadth of diversity.

The non-random, non-probability methods of participant recruitment used for this research will be explored in more detail below.

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[14] Probability samples are considered the most rigorous and most appropriate for statistical research. A sampling frame is required (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003).

[15] Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental or criterion based

[16] Opportunistic sampling 'involves the researcher taking advantage of unforeseen opportunities as they arise during the course of the fieldwork, adopting a flexible approach to meld the sample around the fieldwork context as it unfolds' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 81).

[17] Convenience sampling 'lacks any clear sampling strategy: the researcher chooses the sample according to ease of access' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 81).

4.3.4.4 Generic promotion – E-mail, online form, electronic kiosk, text message

The electronic methods were widely promoted around the campus under the banner of the VoiceYourView project. The use of the methods was not restricted to a particular time and relied on a self-selected sample of users. The assumption behind the promotional campaign was that the users would be proactive and use the electronic methods on their own initiative. Hennink *et al.* (2011: 102) claimed that 'often a substantial incentive is needed to attract potential participants and the response to advertisements may be low'. To try to overcome this, participants were entered into a prize draw. Advertising is often considered to generate only limited responses (Hennink *et al.*, 2011) and as such is often used in conjunction with other methods, such as informal networks. These were used to circulate e-mails, but with limited success.

Campus users could use whichever method they found most convenient. There was no limit to how many comments could be submitted per person. The idea was to provide a variety of options, from which users could choose the one most comfortable to them.

The consultation was promoted in numerous ways in order to reach the widest audience possible[18]. These included:

- Posters and leaflets placed around university buildings and distributed at various university fairs
- Announcements on computer log-on screens, featuring a link to the online form
- Article in staff online magazine
- Active online form links on staff and student information portals
- Information on flat screens in building foyers (Figure 4.2)

The university's ethical policy in relation to the use of group e-mails prevented extensive promotion using e-mail. Some students were approached directly during lectures.

[18] The University's Media and Communications Team was called to assist with promotion to ensure that all material complied with university policy.

Figure 4.2: *Slide displayed on flat screen TVs around the campus buildings*

As demonstrated above, multiple promotional channels were utilised. A number of institutional barriers had to be overcome ranging from regulations concerning format and placement of posters, to the reluctance of administrative staff to help in the promotion. Therefore, it could be said that despite best efforts, the promotion coverage around the campus may have been inconsistent in its frequency as well as visibility.

4.3.4.5 Targeted recruitment – Focus group, walking discussion, photographic diary

A more direct approach was taken to participant recruitment for the focus groups, walking discussions and photographic diaries. A limited number of posters were placed around the campus to ensure consistency with the promotion of the methods under the vYv banner, however this attracted just one participant.

In the absence of a sampling frame, a list of contacts had to be specially generated to ensure enough participants (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003). The majority of participants were obtained using 'flow populations', where 'samples are generated by approaching people in a particular location or setting' (ibid., p. 94). Although this method does not allow the collection of detailed information for selection, in this case anyone using the campus was considered a suitable participant, which simplified the sampling[19]. Staff and students were directly approached in recreational and informal learning facilities such as the library and cafés and briefly told about the research. If they were interested, they were asked for their contact details and availability. The researcher tried to approach representatives of both genders equally, together with representatives of different ethnicities and ages in order to achieve as varied sample as possible. Around fifty contacts were obtained using this strategy. From the availability information a timetable was developed for the focus groups and walking discussions. The potential participants were then re-contacted and invited to the session. This proved to be a very time consuming process, as many changed their mind or were no longer available at the times they had stated. Once the exact dates were established, further recruitment took place until a sufficient number of participants were recruited. This tended to be more successful as the potential participants could directly confirm their attendance. Some snowballing was also utilised.

4.3.4.6 Number of sessions, participants and 'data saturation'

Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007: 270) recognise that 'there exist no hard and fast rules about how many focus groups need to be conducted in order to make strong claims regarding the validity of resulting findings'. The number of focus groups, walking discussions and photographic diaries, together with the number of participants in each, was guided by the theoretical principle of 'data saturation' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), 'when no new insights would be obtained from expanding the sample further' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 80). When data saturation is reached 'further data collection becomes redundant because the purpose of recruitment is to seek variation and context of participant experiences rather than a large number of participants with those experiences' (Hennink *et al.*, 2011: 88).

> *'From the first interview on an unfamiliar topic, the analyst learns a great deal. The second interview produces much more, but not all of it is new. Usually by the third session, and certainly by the fourth, most of what is said has usually been said several times, and it is obvious there is little to be gained from continuing'.*
>
> (Wells, 1979: 6)

[19] Ritchie *et al.* (2003: 95) claimed that flow populations are 'best used to identify people who are willing to consider taking part in the study, seeking their permission to contact them and describe and discuss the study in detail'.

The primary concern in this research was to learn about the methods themselves, rather than about participants' actual views on the public realm. As such, saturation in terms of what could be learnt about the method was aimed for. Three focus groups, three walking discussions and eight photo diaries were initially estimated as sufficient for this purpose. Hennink *et al.* (2011) admit that a saturation level can only be really identified after data collection has started. However, during data collection, the number of occurrences of each method proved adequate. Adding more sessions would have reached the point of diminishing return, 'where increasing the sample size no longer contributes new evidence' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 83).

The number of participants in qualitative studies is 'effectively guided by the diversity in the information gained' (Hennink *et al.*, 2011: 88). The depth of detail and variation in experience are of interest, not statistical representativeness, and thus the number of participants is often small. Experienced researchers suggest that focus groups should have between four and twelve pre-selected participants (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch and Lewis, 2003; Conradson, 2005). It was considered that a focus group consisting of eight participants would offer sufficient opportunities for all participants to contribute to the discussion, whilst still being manageable. Smaller groups of around five participants were considered to be too small to represent a variety of views. Twelve participants were invited for each focus group, allowing for high attrition rates (Kong, 1998; Conradson, 2005).

For the walking discussions the number of participants was reduced to five, as a larger group would be unmanageable outdoors and may possibly cause an obstruction. Furthermore, a suitable walking pace may be challenging to agree on in a larger group.

As part of photographic diaries, participants could have taken twenty four images, but the exact number each would take could not be estimated a priori. It was assumed that the participants would need to take several photos to form an opinion on the method itself (and its effectiveness), but also produce sufficient material for analysis. Focus groups and walking discussion were unlikely to generate small amount of data, and even if that was the case, the researcher would have been present to deal with the situation. As such, three sessions were considered, and proved sufficient. However, once cameras were given to the participants, the method was 'out of the researcher's hands' until the cameras were returned three weeks later. If participants took as little as three photos each, eight participants would still produce 24 photos.

Even this small amount would be likely to point to certain issues, for example usability of the method. On the contrary, if used to the maximum, 192 photos would have been produced, not only yielding a generous amount of data, but more importantly, extensive utilisation of the method by participants and thus views on its effectiveness. As such, eight photo diaries were viewed as likely to achieve saturation. Edwards (2007) also settled on eight participants when using photo diaries to explore views of public space users.

The on-street event was not advertised and instead captured the flow populations in the university library corridor on the day.

4.3.5 Operationalisation of the individual methods

4.3.5.1 E-mail

E-mail, to be sent to vyv.cucampus@coventry.ac.uk, gave the users the option to freely write about the public realm of the campus. Demographic information was requested via a confirmation e-mail.

4.3.5.2 Online form

Some promotional materials featured an active link to the online form, which was otherwise accessed via www.voiceyourview.com/cucampus. The online form was structured in a similar way to a questionnaire (Appendix 4d). Users were asked to select a category for their comment, specify the location it related to, write the comment in a text box and provide a suggestion for improvement, if applicable. Demographic information questions were included in the form.

4.3.5.3 Electronic kiosks

Brightly coloured purpose-built electronic kiosks contained a computer, keyboard and a touch screen. They were placed in three buildings:

- Alan Berry building foyer, used by staff, students and visitors
- Students Union
- Entrance to the university library (Figure 4.3)

The kiosk form was similar to the online form, with the exception that the location to which the comment referred could be specified on an online map (Appendix 4e).

Figure 4.3: *Electronic kiosk in Lanchester Library*

4.3.5.4 Text message

The text message was an ‘anytime, anywhere’ option – users could submit their view when it occurred to them. Text messages, starting with ‘vyv’ were to be sent to 60777. They were limited to 160 characters. Demographic information was requested via a confirmation text message.

As an incentive, all electronic methods users who provided their demographic information were entered into a prize draw.

4.3.5.5 Focus group

Each of the three focus groups lasted two hours and was attended by eight participants. Two focus groups took place in the afternoon and one in the evening (Figure 4.4). Participants were provided with complimentary refreshments. No other incentives were used. Prior to the event, participants were sent multiple e-mail and text message reminders to ensure their attendance.

Figure 4.4: *Focus group (FG1)*

The researcher acted as a mediator and facilitator and was assisted by a note taker who also distributed stimulus material during the session. The session was recorded using two audio recorders. A reasonable quality of recording was achieved and during transcription, the notes aided the identification of the speakers.

The session began with completion of Participant Information Sheets and Informed Consent Forms.

By way of introductions, participants said how long they have been at the university and their connection to it. By placing green (positive) or red (negative) stickers on a map (Appendix 4a), they identified their most and least favourite place in the campus. The map was referred to throughout the session, as it provided a visual representation of popular and unpopular areas.

Multiple themes, aggregated from those agreed upon with the Estates Department (listed in Section 4.4.1.1), were discussed. To keep the session dynamic, the discussions were intersected with some simple activities. For example, participants used post-it notes to write down three adjectives or phrases to describe the campus and placed these on a large board depending on whether they were positive, negative or neutral. This provided a useful prompt to stimulate discussion[20]. Photographic images proved to be useful, too, as some participants were not familiar

[20] The focus group was pilot-tested prior to start of data collection. Only the activities that proved successful during the pilot were utilised in the focus groups.

with locations being discussed, or they just needed to be ‘reminded’ through the image. Refer to Appendix 4f for the focus group schedule.

At the end, the discussion was summarised by the researcher and general conclusions drawn. Participants were reminded that their comments would be passed on to the relevant University department for consideration. Finally, participants completed an evaluation questionnaire about the session, providing their perspective on the method’s effectiveness.

4.3.5.6 Walking discussion

Each of the three walking discussions lasted approximately two hours and followed a predetermined route chosen by the researcher to cover the main areas of the campus - public spaces and green spaces, main crossing points, areas seen as popular and unpopular as well as the locations of new developments. These locations served as examples for the themes discussed (listed in Section 4.4.1.1), which were the same as for other methods. Using the fixed-route approach enabled generation of ‘a cross section of responses to the same spaces’ (Jones *et al.*, 2008: 4) and also the recording of first impressions of areas participants may have not visited before. The order in which themes were discussed depended on the points raised by the participants, or their relevance to a particular location.

Participants were sent a number of reminders prior to the walking discussion. They were also advised to dress accordingly as the sessions were not going to be cancelled due to adverse weather. The target of five participants was achieved only once due to last minute cancellations. While the five member group was relatively mixed, the remaining two, with three participants each, had participants of very similar backgrounds. In these groups, participants tended to agree with each other. A group of five offered much more opportunities for discussion (Figure 4.5).

The walking discussions took place in the afternoons and finished before dusk. Participants were reluctant to participate in the evening hours. However, it would have been interesting to explore the campus at times of decreased visibility.

The walking discussions were recorded using two voice recorders. While audio recording outdoors, a back-up recorder is essential. High quality recorders[21] with microphones were needed, as various sounds, especially traffic and weather, affected the recording. One recorder was carried by the researcher, the other by one of the participants. A note taker assisted only during the first walking discussion as the difficulty of taking comprehensive notes in the outdoors soon emerged. Subsequent sessions relied on the recordings only.

Figure 4.5: *Walking discussion (WD1)*

As in the case with focus groups, the walking discussions started with the documentation required by the University's ethical policy, followed by introductions of the participants. Maps and green and red stickers were used again to identify favourite and least favourite locations. Some laminated images were used during the walk to show the participants what new buildings under construction would look like once finished. No other materials were used. In the first walking discussion participants were provided with a map to note down any additional ideas but none used them. The maps were therefore omitted in the subsequent walks. For the walking discussion schedule, see Appendix 4g.

The walk concluded in one of the university's cafés, where each participant was provided with a hot drink. No other incentive was provided. After summarising the main points and assurances that the findings would be passed on to the relevant University department, participants filled out an evaluation questionnaire regarding their experience of the walking discussion.

[21] Edirol R-09 HR Recorders were used, each with an attached microphone.

4.3.5.7 Photographic diary

Both focus groups and walking discussions are examples of qualitative methods based on group interaction. As such, they rely on the presence of several individuals at a particular location and time. Thus, those not available at the proposed time are automatically excluded from a consultation process using this type of method. Being an individual activity, the photographic diary offered participants more flexibility.

Eight participants were provided with a disposable camera to take photographs around the campus over a three week period. They were instructed to photograph parts of the public realm of the campus they felt strongly about and record some information about the photos in a notebook, so as to aid correct interpretation (Rose, 2007). Caption writing often forms part of photographic diaries (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Latham, 2003; 2004; Myers, 2010). This included when, where and why the photo was taken and whether the participant would change anything and how (for full instructions see Appendix 4h). Cameras and notebooks were handed over during a short informal meeting, when ethical documentation was also completed. Apart from verbal instructions, written instructions were included in the notebook itself, together with some additional tips on what participants could look out for, such as places that inspired them, places they tended to avoid or places they used frequently.

The intention was not to rush the participants in completing the activity, therefore three weeks were selected as an appropriate time for them to get used to the task and possibly notice things they otherwise would not have. They were given a free hand on whether they wanted to annotate the photographs straight after they were taken, or make short notes and add more information at a later stage. However, it needs to be highlighted that the use of disposable cameras meant that the participants did not see the photographs they had taken. Films were developed only after the notebooks had been returned to the researcher. Several participants decided to use their own cameras or phones, making use of digital photography. Those had the benefit of actual seeing the photographs, which possibly allowed them to reflect more on them than the rest of the participants did.

The disposable cameras allowed 24 images to be taken. Thus, those using their own cameras were restricted to 24 images, too. Participants were not prescribed to take a certain number of images, as the purpose of the method was to provide them with an opportunity to visually show what they saw as important instead of creating a visual inventory of the university campus. Participants were not required to carry the camera with them at particular times or to take an image every day. The method was flexible within the boundaries already outlined, as the study was interested in finding out how a method like this could be utilised to consult the public about regenerating urban public spaces and whether it may be a viable option for those who would otherwise not participate via other methods, i.e. meetings. Convenience, flexibility and potential enjoyment were at the core of this method.

The participants were reminded several times to keep on taking photographs. At the end of the study, the participant returned the camera and the notebook and filled out an evaluation questionnaire. This meeting was not used to elicit any further information regarding the photographs. The written annotations were the only means to provide any descriptions to the images, as it was part of the effectiveness evaluation to explore whether the photos and accompanying comments would be sufficient for consultation contexts.

4.3.5.8 On-street event

The on-street event took place in the middle of the academic term and ran for approximately four hours, between 11am and 3pm. The time was arranged bearing in mind the dynamics of the campus.

The name of the method would imply the event being held ‘on-street’. It was originally intended to consult the campus users in-situ and a particular green space was selected to hold the event. However, owing to poor weather on the day, the event had to be relocated to a corridor leading to the university library. Being well used, it was considered as a suitable alternative to an on-street location. Furthermore, it offered a better opportunity to engage with people in a small, sheltered area.

The event consisted of a display stand with images of the campus, some brief information and ideas for things for the passers-by to comment on (Figure 4.6). The stand was manned by the researcher and three facilitators, who personally approached passers-by.

Figure 4.6: *Enquiry space of the on-street event (taken near the end of the event)*

The ‘enquiry space’ contained concept images of the future Engineering and Computing building (E&C) and Student Enterprise building (SEB), the layout plan of one of the SEB floors and brief information about the timescales of these developments. Other generic images introduced the themes of ‘general look’, ‘public spaces’, ‘moving though campus’, ‘sense of identity’ and ‘way finding’. They were supplemented with brief prompting questions that the participants could think about, such as:

Public spaces:

- *Would you spend your break at the campus? Where would you go?*
- *What do you think of the quality/quantity/design?*

Way finding:

- *Can you find your way around the campus easily?*
- *What do you think of the navigation signs?*

The assumption was that after viewing the display and having an informal discussion with one of the facilitators, the participants would write down their own comments onto provided cards, which would be added onto the display for others to view.

An additional display board was used to record respondents' age, gender, status (student, staff or visitor) and whether they had a disability or not. Information on ethnicity was not collected. Participants were asked to place stickers into the boxes that applied to them[22]. This offered a simple way of capturing a general overview of the participant demographic characteristics. It was not possible to link the participants' characteristics to individual comments. However, this was not seen as imperative to the study as the effectiveness of the method was unlikely to be affected by the ability or inability to link comments to specific types of people. In cases where such information would be required, demographic information could be noted on the back of comment cards. In this case, stickers were used as a 'fun element' to encourage the participants to physically engage with the display.

It was soon discovered that those passers-by who were willing to pause, view the display and speak to a facilitator were too busy to write down their comments. Instead, the facilitator had to complete the cards on the participants' behalf after they left. This resulted in data in the form of bullet points or very short notes which were the facilitators' interpretation of the participants' comments.

Unlike with the other consultation methods tested, participants were not asked to evaluate their experience of the method. After taking a participant through the display boards, asking them to complete a comment card and place stickers on the demographic boards, it seemed that there were already too many tasks. This method was to engage those people who would be unlikely to take part in other consultation methods that would require them to make an effort or special arrangement, such as attending a focus group, or writing an e-mail. Cinderby (2010) pointed out that encounters at events can be relatively short. As such there are limited opportunities for further questioning regarding the effectiveness of the method. While incomplete demographic information was not seen as a major limitation, an incomplete participant satisfaction data set, completed by only those who had time to do so, may bias the effectiveness evaluation. Furthermore, it could be argued that the short encounter might not have allowed participants to form a clear opinion on the method's effectiveness.

[22] Prior to the on-street event, this technique was successfully piloted at an informal community event held as part of the VoiceYourView project.

Drawing on the number of stickers placed on the demographic boards, around 130 participants were involved in the on-street event - a greater number than at any other consultation method.

4.3.6 Processing of data

All comments from e-mails, online forms, electronic kiosks and text messages were stored automatically in an electronic database[23]. The data was then transferred into Excel[24] for analysis.

The focus group and walking discussion audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Each session generated around thirty pages of text. For walking discussions, exact locations of where particular discussions took place were specified. Following a fixed-route simplified this identification, however voice prompts, such as the name of the building the group was walking past, were also inserted into the recording en route (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Carpiano, 2009).

Photographic diaries were returned either in paper or electronic formats, depending on the preference of the participant. Paper diaries and images were transferred into a general Microsoft Word template, allowing for easier analysis.

Comments collected during the on-street event were transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet. During the event, 139 cards were completed. For some participants only one card was used, for others more, if they were commenting on different topics. Only forty-one comments were verbatim, the rest were formed from a précis of the conversation, completed by the facilitators. Clarifications of different facilitators' notes were sought after the event.

Only the main findings are presented in Chapter 5, however these were derived from an extensive analysis of all the data[25].

[23] This database, as well as the online form and electronic kiosk form were developed as part of the VoiceYourView project.
[24] The data was also compatible with SPSS (PASW).
[25] The comprehensive analysis is only summarised in the thesis, given the space constraints and to ensure brevity, but is available.

4.3.7 Summary

This section presented the contextual and methodological background of the first phase of this research, conducted at a university campus. Promotional and recruitment strategies and the sampling design were disclosed, together with the details of how the individual methods were operationalised. The next section explores how the effectiveness of the individual methods was assessed using the evaluation framework introduced in Section 4.2.2.2.

4.4 Application of the evaluation framework

As outlined in Section 4.2.2.2, the eight consultation methods were to be evaluated in terms of data quality, participant and researcher perspectives. The application of the evaluation framework is explored below, together with greater detail concerning the individual data quality criteria, participant questionnaires and researcher's reflections. Validity, reliability and usability of the individual instruments are also discussed.

4.4.1 Data quality

As anticipated, certain methods yielded data which could be easily coded into numeric form – the electronic methods, photo diary and the on-street event generated mostly short comments, or entries comprising of several brief sentences. These comments were quantitatively rated against the individual criteria, as explored in detail below. Focus groups and walking discussions were discussion-based and as such could not be evaluated in the same 'quantitative' manner. Instead, a narrative approach, which examined the relative data quality and triangulated it with the participant and researcher's perspectives, was adopted for their analysis. However, the same criteria or data attributes were considered.

The data from the electronic methods was collected with the assistance of the vYv project. The data quality (and further) analysis was in accordance with the evaluation framework developed in this research, and was thus independent of the vYv project.

Quantitative data analysis will be explored first, followed by the narrative-based approach.

4.4.1.1 Electronic methods, photo diary and on-street event comments – data quality analysis

Validity

Only the electronic methods were specifically rated against this criterion – invalid data was generated through technical errors and misuse, resulting in some 'invalid' entries into the vYv database.

i. Valid – All entries submitted to the system with the best intention to contribute to the campus consultation.

ii. Invalid - Entries into the database caused by technical errors and wilful misuse, including attempts to hacking into the system, bouncing e-mails and multiple entries. From the total of 1,108 entries into the vYv system, 88.5% (n = 980) were invalid. These were removed and not analysed further.

For the remaining methods, all collected data was considered 'valid', as it was consciously provided by the participants to contribute to the consultation. Therefore, the analysis of these methods does not further mention 'validity' but concentrates on the remaining data quality criteria.

Relevance

Every individual has relevant and irrelevant information about multiple topics, but ideally, relevant information should be maximised, while irrelevant minimised (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). Only 'valid' comments were separated into 'relevant' and 'irrelevant' comments.

i. Relevant - Comments in accordance with the aims and objectives of the consultation, i.e. relating to the physical environment of the case study location.

ii. Irrelevant - Comments relating to topics other than the physical environment of the case study location, considered 'irrelevant' to the purpose of regeneration of urban public space[26].

[26] For example, comments deemed as 'irrelevant' related to interiors of individual buildings, student services, catering services and others. Some participants abused the system by

Location specification

In order to adequately respond to public input relating to urban public space, location needs to be clearly specified. Online reporting forms used by local authorities[27] require an address or other information that may assist in locating and identifying a problem.

i. Location specified – Participants made a fair attempt at providing enough information to enable identification of a specific location.

ii. Location not specified – Participants did not provide any information from which a location could be identified. This may include quite generic entries, which refer to an area as a whole.

This binary coding can also indicate the proportion of comments referring to a particular location, as opposed to more generic comments.

An additional level of location specification ('location vs. image') was added to data generated by photo diaries, which included visual data in addition to text. This rating examined whether a location could, or could not be identified from the image itself.

Clarity

Clarity refers to the extent to which the data analyst feels that he/she correctly understood the comment. Three options were used:

i. Clear comments

ii. Partly clear – Comments which leave space for ambiguities[28]; or comments containing parts which cannot be clearly interpreted even when taking context into consideration. May involve the use of sarcasm.

iii. Unclear – comments which could be interpreted in a variety of different ways.

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submitting offensive comments (only several cases), or comments which lacked vital information, especially in terms of location, and therefore could not be interpreted clearly.

[27] For example Coventry City Council, Sheffield City Council, Love Lewisham (Prendiville, 2009), One Clean Leicester

[28] An example of a partly clear comment could be 'We need more outdoor space', as 'outdoor space' could refer to green space, or purposely designed public space, or other.

Actionability

Actionability, a 'measure of actionable knowledge in a statement' (Simm *et al.*, 2010: 554), is concerned with the level of detail within the data, which could be directly acted upon. Ferrario *et al.* (2011: 1) claim that 'it is important to understand not only how people feel about a topic but also what actions they would like to take and to be taken'. Therefore, in addition to consulting the general public about their needs and aspirations for specific public spaces, actionability refers to whether additional information on how a potential issue could be addressed is included[29]. A three-point scale was used:

i. Not actionable – Comments that lack any suggestion for improvement that could be directly acted upon to solve an issue (Whittle *et al.*, 2010; Ferrario *et al.*, 2011). However, this research does not claim that such comments are of no value. They still reflect an individual's point of view, which may not necessarily require anything to be changed.

ii. Partly actionable – Comments that may point out a problem or identify a lack of something, even vaguely, but do not offer a specific solution, or this suggestion is ambiguous (Whittle *et al.*, 2010).

iii. Actionable – Statements which are very clear, potentially point to a problem or identify a lack of something, but additionally provide a specific suggestion as to how an identified issue could be addressed. The solutions should ideally be realistic (ibid.). They are 'expressions that contain a request or a suggestion that can be acted upon' (Ferrario *et al.*, 2011: 1).

Sentiment

Sentiment analysis can be defined as 'the task of identifying positive and negative opinions, emotions and evaluations' (Wilson *et al.*, 2005). It provides an indication of the participants' prevailing sentiment, whether balanced or skewed. A three-point scale, generally adopted by local authorities and other organisations, was used:

i. Compliment – Positive comment

[29] So far, extracting actionable knowledge has been of interest in the data mining and automated text analysis domains (Cao and Zhang, 2006; Simm *et al.*, 2010).

ii. Complaint – Generally understood to imply a negative comment, but in this case a comment which identifies a lack of something, something missing or something that could be improved is also included. As such, 'constructive criticisms' are viewed as complaints, as they are not entirely positive, but not neutral either.

iii. General comment - Neutral, general comments and statements, where sentiment is not apparent (Simm *et al.*, 2010).

Some comments may have been half positive, referring to one theme, and half negative, possibly referring to a different theme. In such cases, comments were separated.

Theme

The 'theme' refers to the main topic of the comment. Allocating themes is relevant for content or thematic analysis in order to assess which topics may be of particular interest or concern to the public. Content analysis (i.e. frequencies at which different themes were mentioned) can demonstrate whether a consultation has gathered data on a variety of themes (thus providing a more 'holistic' public input covering a broad range of themes) or has been dominated by a few (providing a more focused feedback). Furthermore, it can display whether public input on the themes of particular interest to a consultation sponsor has been achieved, and how prominently these themes feature. Overall, 'theme' complements the criterion of 'relevance', as it can show whether data relevant to the consultation has been yielded, and whether it is balanced or skewed towards particular themes. Issues not considered before may be uncovered in the process.

The majority of the themes to be explored as part of the Phase 1 consultation were derived from discussions with the Estates Department and set a priori. Several were added later to reflect the generated data. The same themes were used across all methods:

Code	*Theme*
1	'Lighting'
2	'Roads / pavements'
3	'Pedestrian crossings'

4 ‘Street furniture / public art (benches, bollards)’ – also referred to smoking shelters, covered walkways and similar

5 ‘Public realm / open spaces / green spaces + public space theme’

6 ‘Trees/ hedges / flower displays’

7 ‘Graffiti’ – including ‘artistic’ graffiti, as well as a form of anti-social behaviour

8 ‘Way finding and navigation signs’ – finding your way around the area, use of navigation signs, maps, signs on buildings

9 ‘Subway / Underpass’

10 ‘Safety’

11 ‘Maintenance – campus in general’

12 ‘University buildings’ – comments referring to the individual university buildings (exterior, not interior)

13 ‘Cleanliness / litter bines + recycling bins’

14 ‘Car parks / cycle parking’ – anything to do with car parking (lack of/too expensive) as well as bicycle parking

15 ‘Public and people’ – when a connection between the place and the people that use it is mentioned, also for comments referring to social issues occurring in public spaces

16 ‘Miscellaneous’ – any comment that does not fit into any of the other categories

17 ‘Sense of identity’ – the feeling of community, sense of belonging, sense of place

18 ‘Changes at the campus’ – refers to the new developments taking place, such as Engineering and Computing building, Student Enterprise building (The Hub) and the new car park.

19 ‘Moving around the campus + access’ – comments such as ‘It is easy to get around the campus’, the campus being compact or well integrated into the city, locations being to too far/close to each other etc.

20 ‘Campus in general’ – comments referring to the campus as a whole

As comments may refer to multiple themes, during analysis a single comment could be assigned up to two themes. If a comment referred to more than two themes, only the two most prominent were recognised.

Suggestion for improvement in comments

Whether a suggestion for improvement is included in a comment is a simple measure of indicating the proportion of comments which contain a constructive criticism. It is complementary to 'actionability', as actionable comments should include a clear suggestion for improvement within the comment. Comments were coded as:

i. Suggestion provided – comments with suggestions either clearly indicated (for example what in particular works well, what is missing, what could be done better), or fairly explicit in their own right where their 'hidden' suggestion could be identified with relative certainty

ii. No suggestion provided

Link between comment and photo (photo diary only)

This measure, applicable only to photo diaries, assesses whether the photo taken by the participant depicts what is mentioned in the comment, or vice versa. Ideally, the photo should serve as evidence to the comment. If the two are not related, it could be argued that the image is not needed.

i. Comment and photo related - The comment and image are directly related – the image depicts what is mentioned in the comment

ii. Comment and photo partly related - A part of the comment may relate to something that is not visible in the image – the image does not really provide much additional evidence to the text, or vice versa

iii. Comment and photo not related - The comment and the image appear unrelated

4.4.1.1.1 Rating of comments – validity and reliability

For the data evaluation to be deemed reliable, the ratings against the different criteria were performed by three raters, aiming for a high inter-rater reliability[30]. The researcher was always one of the raters, whereas the other two were independent but had some contextual knowledge of the consultation and the location it referred to. Guided by the evaluation framework, they were provided with the criteria and instructions on how to rate the data. Possible unreliability may be caused by lack of clarity over the different criteria and their associated rating scales among the raters,

[30] Inter-rater reliability refers to 'the consistency in rating some aspect of an exercise either by two or more raters' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 544).

as well as overlap between categories or simple coding errors (Seale and Silverman, 1997). As such, particular attention was paid to clarifying understanding among the different raters before the rating process commenced in order to achieve overall consistency (ibid.). Due to the relatively small dataset, no statistical tests could be performed to confirm reliability. Instead, in the case of electronic methods comments, raters met to discuss their ratings, adjust them if applicable and reach a group agreement (Woodcock *et al.*, 2012). Thus, all the ratings were based on aggregate ratings allocated by individual raters. These counts of 'events', or quasi-statistics, can be used to support generalisations and as such increase validity and reliability (Seale and Silverman, 1997).

Content analysis, the most preferred method of quantitative researchers to analyse written materials, was utilised in this research to code the themes within the comments. Content analysis involves 'researchers establishing a set of categories and then counting the number of instances that fall into each category' (Berelson, 1954; in Seale and Silverman, 1997). The categories used need to be sufficiently precise so that different coders or raters arrive at the same results. As before, this was addressed by discussions and clarifications of understanding with other raters before coding. However, this content analysis was used to provide a general overview of what themes featured the most in the datasets, indicating whether 'relevant' data was collected. A thorough analysis of the actual *content* of the comments was not performed, as this was not imperative for assessing the method effectiveness. However, this would be the data that a sponsor of a consultation would be interested in.

For photo diaries data, the researcher aggregated the ratings from all three raters and adjusted them in view of the ratings that prevailed. Inter-rater agreement was then calculated at the mean of 89.9%, mode of 92.6% and standard deviation of 7%.

The on-street event data was rated by the researcher only. The participants did not write down their comments themselves and thus it was likely that some interpretation bias was introduced in the data collection stage already. Therefore reliability of ratings was unlikely to be increased by it being rated by more than one rater. The researcher attempted to be as consistent in her ratings as possible in order to increase intra-rater reliability.

4.4.1.2 Focus group and walking discussion – data quality analysis of transcripts

Focus groups and walking discussions resulted in extensive transcripts. The collective discussions tended to meander and certain points may have been returned to repeatedly. Thus, the data could not be analysed in the same manner as that yielded by other methods. Content analysis was inappropriate, as the frequency of occurrences could not be clearly identified. Instead, general textual analysis was performed by the researcher, with some indication of which themes[31] might have featured more often than others. 'Presenting simple counts of events can help readers gain a sense of how representative and widespread certain instances are' (Seale and Silverman, 1997: 380). Furthermore, the facilitator influenced data quality – discussion could be moderated in order to keep to relevant topics, actionability could be increased by asking for further details, clarifications could be sought.

Textual analysis was performed by the researcher only. She was not only present during all the sessions, but completed the transcriptions as well. As such, she was able to capture the different nuances within the data and reveal some subtle features in the talk, which might have passed unnoticed if the transcription was performed by somebody else. As Silverman (2000: 187) argues, 'when people's activities are tape-recorded and transcribed, the reliability of the interpretation of transcripts may be gravely weakened by a failure to transcribe apparently trivial, but often crucial, pauses and overlaps'. Despite not exactly following the transcription symbols of conversation analysis (CA), notes on verbal and non-verbal conduct were added to the transcripts, capturing memos on participants nodding in agreement or disagreement, whether sarcasm may have been used, whether using the word 'no' really implied disagreement in the particular context and other aspects. 'Once we pay attention to such detail, judgements can be made that are more convincingly valid' (ibid., p. 187). Furthermore, 'recordings and transcripts can offer a highly reliable record to which researchers can return as they develop new hypotheses' (Seale and Silverman, 1997: 380).

Still, the narrative-based textual analysis considered the same criteria as for the other methods. Additionally, attention was paid to the extent to which all participants contributed to the discussions, how much prompting was needed and how

[31] This term does not necessarily imply the 'themes' listed in the theme list, but general aspects of the discussions.

discussions on certain topics may have been triggered. In some cases, they may have been triggered by a direct question from the facilitator, in others, the surrounding environment (a non-human actant) in the case of walking discussions may have prompted certain themes. Furthermore, walking discussion transcripts were trailed for examples of participants making direct references to the surrounding environment (often accompanied by place adverbs of ‘here’, ‘there’), indicating that they engaged with the area under discussion. It is believed that this kind of assessment may be more extensive than that carried out by Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007).

4.4.2 Participant perspective

All methods with the exception of the on-street event were evaluated by the participants using a questionnaire. A questionnaire was considered the most appropriate to reach the electronic methods users, as well as those participating via other methods[32]. A questionnaire could be used across all the methods, allowing for consistency and comparisons.

Participant questionnaires have been utilised in previous evaluations, too (Rowe *et al.*, 2005, 2008). However, these were quantitative, based on considerably larger samples than possible in this research study, and linked to Rowe and Frewer’s (2000) normative criteria, which were identified as unsuitable for a ‘test’ consultation.

Instead, specific participant questionnaires exploring the effectiveness of the consultation methods were designed for this study. All the questionnaires were pilot-tested for appropriateness, content and usability and altered accordingly. They were also designed in a manner to allow for re-use in subsequent phases of research, ensuring consistency and allowing comparisons.

[32] A face-to-face feedback session was deemed inappropriate for several reasons. Firstly, it was unlikely that all participants would commit to another session; secondly, focus groups and walking discussions would have had to last longer than two hours, unless the content of the session was cut to allow time for a discussion about the effectiveness of the actual method. Thirdly, it was believed that participants would not be openly critical in front of the researcher, but may be more honest in a questionnaire.

4.4.2.1 E-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message participant evaluation

The participant evaluation of the electronic methods was conducted via a ‘Surveymonkey.com’ electronic survey. Using multiple choice and open-ended questions, the questionnaires aimed to find out why participants decided to take part in the vYv consultation, what methods they used and why, how satisfied they were with the individual methods in terms of convenience, feedback and their format for reporting, and requested suggestions for method improvement. A single questionnaire was used for all the methods (Appendix 4i).

A link to the survey was e-mailed to all VoiceYourView users who submitted a ‘valid’ comment and provided their e-mail address. The survey was circulated among 83 individuals[33], with three weeks given for users to reply. From these, 26 responded. This represents an overall response rate of 31.3%.

4.4.2.2 Focus groups, walking discussions and photographic diary participant evaluation

All focus group, walking discussion and photographic diary participants were provided with an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the session or photo period. They were asked to complete it straight away to ensure feedback from the full sample.

A unified questionnaire was used for all the methods, however, certain questions were altered in order to suit the specific method. Please see Appendix 4j for the individual questionnaires. Open-ended questions regarding the perceived benefits, disadvantages and challenges of the methods were supplemented by a mixture of multiple choice questions which allowed for a clear comparison between methods. Views on power relations inherent in the methods were explored, together with the quality of facilitation, opportunities to speak up, group dynamics, general feedback on the conduct of the method, perceived effectiveness and other topics.

[33] Including two text message users, who provided their e-mail address for the survey link to be sent to them.

4.4.3 Researcher perspective

The extent to which the researcher was involved varied between the consultation methods. Although the researcher had no direct involvement in the electronic methods, she was still able to discuss contextual factors which might have affected the use of these methods. In the remaining methods, the researcher had direct contact with the participants. This face-to-face interaction was either informal (on-street event, photo diary) or more structured. While in the role of a facilitator (focus group, walking discussion), the researcher could also observe the sessions. However, this was not an observation per se, as the researcher could only take on one role fully. Additionally, the researcher had to be aware of her influence on the research situations (Marshall, 1997; Hennink *et al.*, 2011). More reflections on positionality will be offered throughout the results chapters (Chapters 5 and 8).

Instead of using a predetermined checklist, the researcher made extensive notes after each session or meeting – ‘reflecting-on-action’ (Schön, 1983, 1987) - capturing general observations, thoughts and issues encountered. Through reflections on what appeared to work well, what did not work and ideas for improvement, a ladder of reflection was being created. Notes on potential factors influencing the effectiveness of the methods were recorded. Personal reflections were made at all stages of the process, from the preparations and trialling of the methods, the changes implemented, ideas for subsequent development of the research and other information (Revans, 1978; 1982; Kolb, 1984).

During analysis, these notes were always triangulated in terms of data quality, feedback from participants, or other sources, such as academic literature, external reports or interviews with professionals (triangulation of sources). Methodological practicalities and discussions of non-human actants were also included. Overall, findings and generalisations presented in subsequent chapters are always based on triangulation of data from a variety of sources to increase validity and reliability, and never on the researcher’s personal opinion only.

4.5 Conclusion

Having outlined the conceptual framework and its considerations of the new mobilities paradigm, actor-network theory and the value of capturing people’s everyday knowledge in order to regenerate urban public spaces, this research is placed within human geography, wider social sciences and the interpretative paradigm.

This chapter has presented how this research responds to the current gaps in knowledge regarding the effectiveness of several methods at consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces. It also introduced a preliminary definition of effectiveness, to be used as part of the effectiveness evaluation framework. A mixed methodology was adopted to develop an evaluation framework to assess effectiveness in this research, triangulating three perspectives - data quality, participants' views and the researcher's reflections.

This framework was used in the context of a university campus under redevelopment to evaluate the effectiveness of eight public consultation methods. Quality of data was examined against a set of criteria including validity, reliability, clarity, location specification, actionability and others. Participants' views were collected using questionnaires. In order to provide an account as objective as possible, researcher's perspective triangulated data quality, participant perspective and the researcher's reflections and observations.

The results of the effectiveness evaluation of e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk, text message, the on-street event, photographic diary, focus group and walking discussion, are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS 1 – PHASE 1

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings and effectiveness of eight methods used to consult the public in the context of a campus redevelopment. The individual methods will be considered in turn, starting with the electronic methods employed as part of the 'VoiceYourView consultation'. The on-street event and photographic diaries are analysed separately. The focus groups and walking discussions, both based on a face-to-face interaction between the researcher and a group of participants, differ principally on the level of immersion in the space under discussion. As such, they are evaluated together in the latter part of the chapter.

The methods' effectiveness is assessed using the evaluation framework presented in the previous chapter. Data quality in terms of validity, reliability, location specification, clarity and actionability is explored for all methods, followed by indications of sentiment, theme and suggestions for improvement. An extensive evaluation from the participant perspective was obtained for photo diaries, focus groups and walking discussions, with some limited aggregated participant feedback for the electronic methods. The researcher perspective addresses more theoretical issues and methodological reflections and the implications of the empirical findings for theory and practice. Throughout the evaluation, references are made to how the individual methods meet the attributes presented in the effectiveness definition (Section 4.2.2.1).

Throughout the chapter, indicative examples of comments are provided. Please refer to Appendix 5a for the explanation of codes.

5.2 *Effectiveness of electronic methods: E-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message*

The use of e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message was promoted using multiple mechanisms (Section 4.3.4.4) to encourage participation across the university. The resultant sample was self-selected and the researcher had no influence over the volume and type of data yielded. Lack of direct interaction with the participants meant that only general conclusions could be drawn about the methods' effectiveness. However, this section provides evidence regarding what may be considered as a realistic uptake of consultation methods which depend on members of the public being pro-active. It therefore sheds some light on the effectiveness of such methods for public consultation.

In terms of the organisation of the section, information is presented first about the quality of the data derived from each method, followed by the views of the users and the researcher's perspective. The section is concluded by a discussion of the overall success of these methods.

5.2.1 Data quality

Table 5.1 shows that 1,108 electronic entries were recorded. However, the majority (88.5%; n = 980) were invalid, mostly caused by technical errors[1]. Campus users submitted 128 valid entries.

Table 5.1: Validity of electronic comments (freq)

	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Text message**	**Total**
Invalid	865	15	99	1	980
Valid	**23**	**41**	**60**	**4**	**128**
Total entries	888	56	159	5	1,108

After removing those comments deemed as irrelevant to the purpose of the consultation (i.e. not related to the public realm of the university campus), 87 relevant comments remained (Table 5.2). As such, 68% of the valid comments were relevant

[1] Invalid comments had to be manually removed from the database. Their high volume confirmed Macnamara's (2010) claim that significant resources are needed for moderation of information gathered through electronic methods.

to the study. The irrelevant comments focused on issues such as the interior of university buildings (the library in particular, as this was one of the location of the electronic kiosks), provision of computers and other student services and facilities.

While the online form and electronic kiosk were structured and encouraged users to submit separate comments for different topics, e-mail users were free to be as brief or as exhaustive as they wished. As such, some e-mail entries covered multiple themes. For more accurate analysis, these comments were split into individual comments, each covering a separate theme. After separation, there were 101 relevant comments (instead of the original 87). All subsequent ratings were based on these 'separated' comments.

Only four text messages were submitted during the 12 week consultation period. From these, three messages were relevant. Such limited uptake does not provide enough data to enable analysis. For these reasons, text message will not be discussed.

5.2.1.1 Frequency of use and relevance of electronic methods comments

Of the electronic methods explored, the electronic kiosk was used the most frequently. However, from the total of 60 comments, only 29 (48%) were relevant (Table 5.2) (Figure 5.1). This could suggest that the kiosk was used more out of curiosity rather than being approached to submit a particular view. Wishing to simply use the device resulted in 'irrelevant' comments or the kiosk being misused.

Table 5.2: Relevance of electronic comments (freq)

	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Text message**	**Total**
Irrelevant	3	6	31	1	41
Relevant	20	35	29	3	87
Relevance rate (from unseparated valid comments)	87%	85%	48%	75%	68%
Relevant when comments separated	**30**	**37**	**31**	**3**	**101**

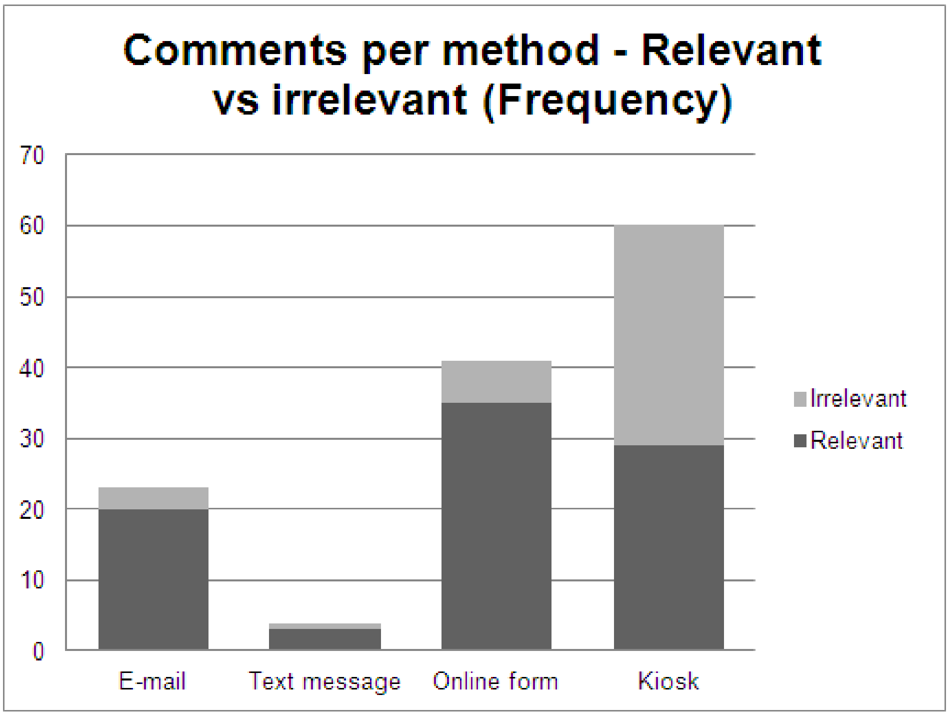

Figure 5.1: *Relevant and irrelevant e-mail, text message, online form and kiosk comments*

A high number of 'irrelevant' comments, relating to poor computing or library facilities, were entered via the kiosk located in the library. This would imply that the users misunderstood its purpose. Although each kiosk was surrounded by information about the university-wide focus of the consultation, the number of comments relating specifically to the library would suggest that users disregarded the information and instead assumed that the actual placement of the kiosk implied its purpose – i.e. a kiosk located in the library was concerned with collecting feedback about the library. This would suggest that the library may have become a powerful non-human actant, affecting the practical use of the kiosk. Therefore, the placement of kiosks or similar devices needs to be considered not just in terms of footfall within the area, but also whether the actual location or certain features – i.e. non-human actants - in its close proximity may skew public feedback towards certain themes and thus influence the relevance of these comments.

The online form was the second most used electronic method (n = 41), followed by e-mail (n = 23) (Figure 5.1). E-mail had the highest relevance rate of 87% (n = 20), followed by 85% of relevant comments for the online form (n = 35).

While some electronic promotional materials featured an active URL link to the online form, participants choosing to comment via e-mail had to be more pro-active. It could be argued that in order to make the effort to write an e-mail, participants had to feel strongly about an issue and as such made not only a relevant comment, but also one with reasonable detail without the need for prompts. Furthermore, making a conscious choice to fill out an online form or write an e-mail appeared to limit the misuse of the service. While the kiosk was misused repeatedly, the online form and e-mail were not.

5.2.1.2 Location specification

For both the e-mail and online form, location was specified in 67% of comments (Table 5.3). The online form specifically requested information regarding the location, which may have increased the rate. However, in most cases the location was also implied in the actual comment. The comments without a particular location related to the campus as a whole or to generic aspects which were not location specific, as exemplified below:

- *There should be more open spaces/green areas around the university. Make the outdoor areas more pleasant by planting schemes with e.g. flowers, dwarf conifers etc. (OF249-1)*

The same applied to e-mail – comments without a specified location (n = 10) related to the campus as a whole. Despite the free-text format, e-mails contained relatively precise descriptions of locations[2]. This may be attributed to the large number of potential ‘landmarks’ around the campus. In more homogeneous areas, such as parks, or larger areas, such as an entire town centre, providing accurate location information in free-form may be more difficult.

Table 5.3: Location specification

	E-mail		**Online form**		**Kiosk**		**Text message**	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Location specified	20	66.7	25	67.6	7	22.6	2	66.7
Location not specified	10	33.3	12	32.4	24	77.4	1	33.3

[2] For example, ‘Paving in places uneven - bottom of the ramp behind James Starley [building]’ (EM1360-3)

The location of kiosk comments was to be specified using an OS electronic map overlaid with a campus map. Only seven comments had their location specified using it. The rest either referred to the city or the campus as a whole, or included the location within the comment. However, by not following the format of the form and ignoring the map, the users may complicate future analysis. The comments with 'map locations' were unhelpful – they were generic, often ambiguous and their specified locations appeared inaccurate. The lack of detail within the map may have been at cause. Alternatively some individuals may find interpreting maps challenging. As such, the kiosk map appeared to have failed to fulfil its purpose. It was either not used at all, or was not accurate enough. Therefore, using a combination of verbal specification with a very accurate map may be more appropriate.

5.2.1.3 Clarity

No comments were rated as 'unclear'. Just over a quarter of kiosk comments (n = 8) were rated as partly clear, which could be attributed to its sometimes frivolous use.

All three methods appeared to yield primarily clear comments. Clarity may be reduced in the case of individuals with reduced levels of English literacy, but this would be the case with any method relying on the written format and not restricted to the methods tested as part of this research.

5.2.1.4 Actionability

The highest percentage of actionable comments was generated by the online form (73%), followed by e-mail (56.7%) (Table 5.4). If considering actionable comments together with those partly actionable, the rate increased to 91.9% for the online form and 86.7% for e-mail. The online form, which within certain boundaries still allowed users to express themselves freely, generated the highest rate of actionable comments. Its structured format may have prompted users to input more detail than they may have provided in a free-text format like e-mail, where it is purely the user's decision what to include. Even though the kiosk utilised a form almost identical to the online one, its actionability rate was considerably lower - 61.3% of actionable and partly actionable comments. As in the case of clarity, this may be attributed to its more experimental use.

Table 5.4: Actionability								
	E-mail		**Online form**		**Kiosk**		**Text message**	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Not actionable	4	13.3	3	8.1	12	38.7		
Partly actionable	9	30	7	18.9	12	38.7	2	66.7
Actionable	17	56.7	27	73	7	22.6	1	33.3

However, ‘not actionable’ comments should not be viewed as redundant. They may present the user’s stance towards more generic issues or larger areas (such as the entire campus). In this study, many non actionable comments included compliments, especially for the work done by the grounds maintenance team. Although they may lack detail or suggestions on how identified problems may be addressed, they provide an indication of the general public opinion.

For some examples of not actionable, partly actionable and actionable comments, refer to Appendix 5b.

5.2.1.5 Sentiment and suggestions for improvement

Sentiment and suggestions provide an overview of more general patterns within the data and whether public opinion is skewed in a particular way, rather than directly relating to the methods’ effectiveness. It indicated whether the obtained public input is balanced, constructive, or more general.

When assessing sentiment, e-mail and online form generated mostly complaints. As explained in Section 4.4.1.1, complaints do not need to be purely negative, but may also point to issues that could be improved. As Table 5.5 shows, over two-thirds of online form comments and 83.3% of e-mail comments were complaints. The kiosk generated a more balanced response. The kiosk compliments tended to be quite generic and brief, such as ‘I like Coventry University’ (K278), where again the potential ‘curiosity’ value of the device may have prompted users to input generic compliments.

This belief was further confirmed by almost half of the kiosk comments not including any suggestion for improvement (Table 5.6).

Table 5.5: Sentiment								
	E-mail		**Online form**		**Kiosk**		**Text message**	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Compliment	4	13.3	4	10.8	11	35.5	1	33.3
Complaint	25	83.3	28	75.7	14	45.2	2	66.7
General comment	1	3.3	5	13.5	6	19.4		

On the contrary, more than 80% of both e-mail and online form comments contained a suggestion. If compared with the total percentages of partly actionable and actionable comments for these methods (e-mail 86.7%; online form 91.9%), the results are quite similar, pointing to certain reliability within the rating of the data.

Overall, almost three-quarters (74%) of all comments included a suggestion for improvement, which implies that a high rate of comments included constructive public input into how the public realm of the campus environment could be enhanced.

Table 5.6: Suggestion for improvement								
	E-mail		**Online form**		**Kiosk**		**Text message**	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Suggestion provided	24	80	31	83.8	16	51.6	3	100
No suggestion provided	6	20	6	16.2	15	48.4		

5.2.1.6 Theme

A full thematic analysis was not performed as the frequency with which different themes were mentioned is context specific and does not necessarily have clear implications for the method's effectiveness. However, a thematic overview (Figure 5.2) can identify whether themes relevant to the consultation featured in the gathered public input.

Figure 5.2 provides the frequencies with which different themes were mentioned for each electronic method. A single comment could be allocated up to two themes, therefore the total frequencies do not equate to the total number of valid separated comments.

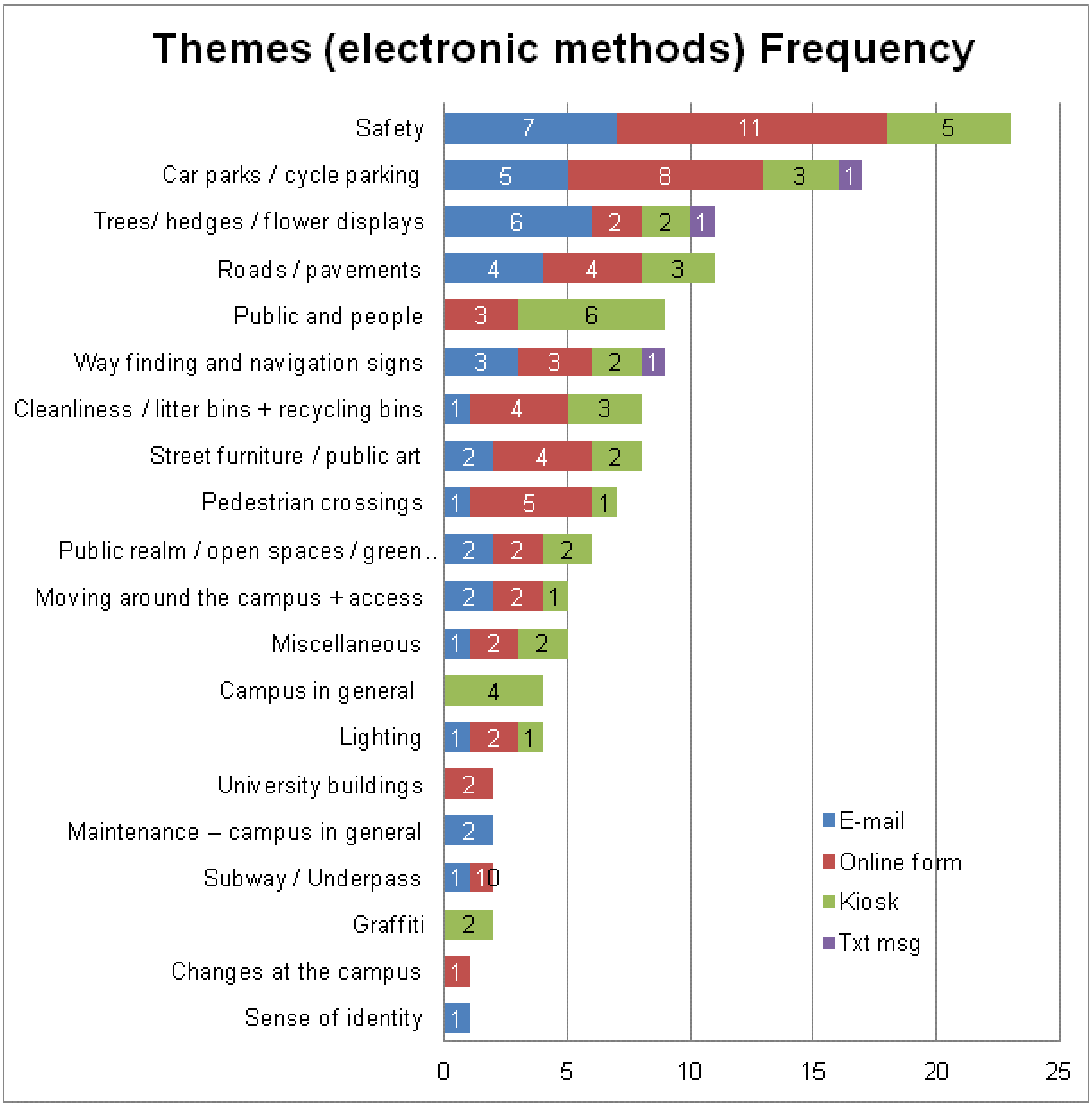

Figure 5.2: *Electronic methods comments, separated by theme*

The themes of 'safety' around the campus (n = 23) and 'car and cycle parking' (n = 17) featured the most across the methods. 'Roads and pavements' and 'trees, hedges and flower displays' both received eleven comments. The chart shows that overall the data was thematically relatively balanced and relevant to the consultation. Still, certain themes featured more strongly - 'safety', 'roads and pavements' and 'public and people' were often interconnected, indicating that some campus users were concerned over their safety while crossing the road, or in relation to anti-social behaviour. On the contrary, 'street furniture' and 'public realm' were mentioned less than was perhaps expected for a consultation focusing on the urban realm.

5.2.1.7 Participant demographics

'Equal opportunities' questions were included in order to gain a better understanding of the types of people who participated in the consultation and whether the users of different methods have been skewed in terms of certain characteristics. Demographic information can be also used to address the often mentioned criterion of 'representativeness' (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004).

The tables below present demographic data for each method, as well as totals across the four methods. Demographic data is based on all valid unseparated comments, as the demographics of all the participants who submitted a comment was of interest.

Only three e-mail users supplied their demographic information, whereas online form and kiosks users provided it in approximately 80% of the cases[3]. Therefore the demographic overview is mostly based on the users of these two methods. Based on this data, almost 60% of the participants were students and 34.5% staff members (Table 5.7). While staff members were more inclined to use the online form (possibly because some promotional materials featured an active link), the kiosk was used considerably more by students. All age groups were represented, with more than half (52.7%) aged 18 – 29 (Table 5.8), which is the most frequent age group for undergraduate students. Slightly more women (55.6%) took part than men (Table 5.9). A half of the participants were White British, followed by White Other (15.7%) and Asian or Asian British Indian and Black or Black British African (both 7.2%) (Table 5.10). This corresponded closely to the student and staff ethnicity profile (Figures 4c.4 and 4c.7 in Appendix 4c). Over 13% of participants claimed to have a disability (Table 5.11). When compared to the student and staff profile in Appendix 4c, the demographics of the electronic methods participants almost reflected those of the students and staff at the university. Only the percentage of disabled participants was higher (Figures 4c.2 and 4c.6 in Appendix 4c).

Overall, a variety of individuals with different backgrounds took part in the consultation, reflecting the diversity of those using the university campus. Still, the sample was limited to those who pro-actively decided to participate, either as a result

[3] Demographic questions were included in the online form and the kiosk form. E-mail users were asked to provide this information in response to an acknowledgement e-mail. The prospect of being entered into a prize draw did not appear to motivate e-mail users to provide their demographic information.

of the promotional campaign, or because they had a strong view they wished to express.

Table 5.7: Status - Are you a…?						
	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Txt msg**	**Total**	**Total %**
Student	1	13	34	2	50	59.5
Staff	2	20	7		29	34.5
Visitor		2	2	1	5	6.0
Total	3	35	43	3	84	100
Missing	*20*	*6*	*17*	*1*	*44*	-

Table 5.8: Age						
	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Txt msg**	**Total**	**Total %**
Under 18			3		3	3.2
18 - 29	1	13	34	1	49	52.7
30 - 39	2	7	4		13	14.0
40 - 49		7	6	2	15	16.1
50 - 59		7	1		8	8.6
60+			5		5	5.4
Total	3	34	53	3	93	100
Missing	*20*	*7*	*7*	*1*	*35*	-

Table 5.9: Gender						
	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Txt msg**	**Total**	**Total %**
Male	2	10	23	1	36	44.4
Female	1	25	17	2	45	55.6
Total	3	35	40	3	81	100
Missing	*20*	*6*	*20*	*1*	*47*	-

Table 5.10: Ethnicity						
	E-mail	**Online form**	**Kiosk**	**Txt msg**	**Total**	**Total %**
White British	n/a	22	20	n/a	42	50.6
White Irish	n/a		1	n/a	1	1.2
White Other	n/a	6	7	n/a	13	15.7
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	n/a		3	n/a	3	3.6
Mixed White & Asian	n/a		2	n/a	2	2.4
Mixed White & Black African	n/a			n/a		
Mixed Other	n/a			n/a		

(Ethnicity continued)	E-mail	Online form	Kiosk	Txt msg	Total	Total %
Asian or Asian British Indian	n/a		6	n/a	6	7.2
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	n/a	1		n/a	1	1.2
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	n/a		2	n/a	2	2.4
Asian or Asian British Other	n/a		1	n/a	1	1.2
Black or Black British Caribbean	n/a	3	1	n/a	4	4.8
Black or Black British African	n/a	1	5	n/a	6	7.2
Black or Black British Other	n/a			n/a		
Chinese	n/a		1	n/a	1	1.2
Any other ethnic group	n/a		1	n/a	1	1.2
Total		33	50		83	100
Missing	*23*	*8*	*10*	*4*	*45*	-

Table 5.11: Disability

	E-mail	Online form	Kiosk	Txt msg	Total	Total %
Yes	n/a	5	6	n/a	11	13.6
No	n/a	28	42	n/a	70	86.4
Total	-	33	48	-	81	100.0
Missing	*23*	*8*	*12*	*4*	*47*	

5.2.2 Participant perspective on electronic methods

The participant views on the actual consultation and the individual methods considered were gathered using an online survey (Appendix 4i), to which 26 individuals responded (31.3% response rate).

The electronic methods depended on participants being pro-active and as such they were questioned about their motivations to participate (Q1). Most felt strongly about a particular issue at the campus that they wished to highlight and the consultation provided them with the means to do so. Some claimed the methods were a convenient way to share their views on the campus and contribute to its improvement. Some sample responses include:

- *I used it to test the technology and because I have some concerns about the campus overall which I cannot raise in any other way.*
- *I prefer to have a say on my environment and this was a quick and easy way to be involved.*

Almost three quarters (73%) of the survey respondents submitted only one comment throughout the consultation period (Q2), four respondents used the same method on multiple occasions and a further three respondents used different methods on multiple occasions. This suggests that once the respondents shared their particular view, they were not inclined to provide further input. As such it could be argued that this consultation was perceived as a one-off opportunity to provide an opinion, instead of a channel that could be used on a continuous basis. Rowe and Gammack (2004) and Rowe *et al.* (2005) indicated that most public input is sought on a one-off basis, which appears to be the stance taken by the participants.

Participants chose to use particular methods based on their convenience, ease of use, accessibility and simplicity (Q3). These qualities were mentioned in relation to all the methods (with the exception of the text message).

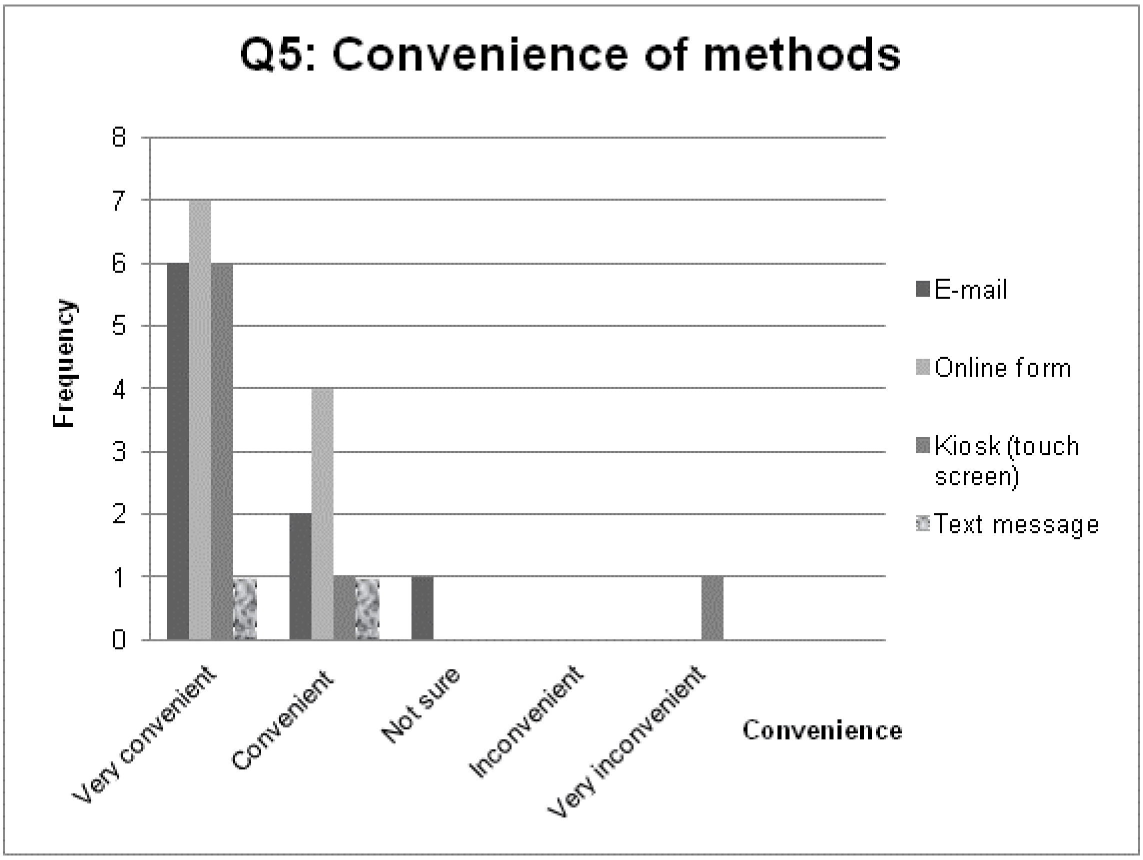

Figure 5.3: *Convenience of individual methods (frequencies)*

As Figure 5.3 clearly shows, inconvenience was not of major concern with any of the methods (Q5). Sometimes, participants were not aware of alternative methods, while the kiosk was encountered by chance (confirming its 'curiosity' value discussed earlier).

Respondents also tended to strongly agree or agree with the statement that 'the method I used had the suitable format to report what I wanted' (Q4) (Figure 5.4).

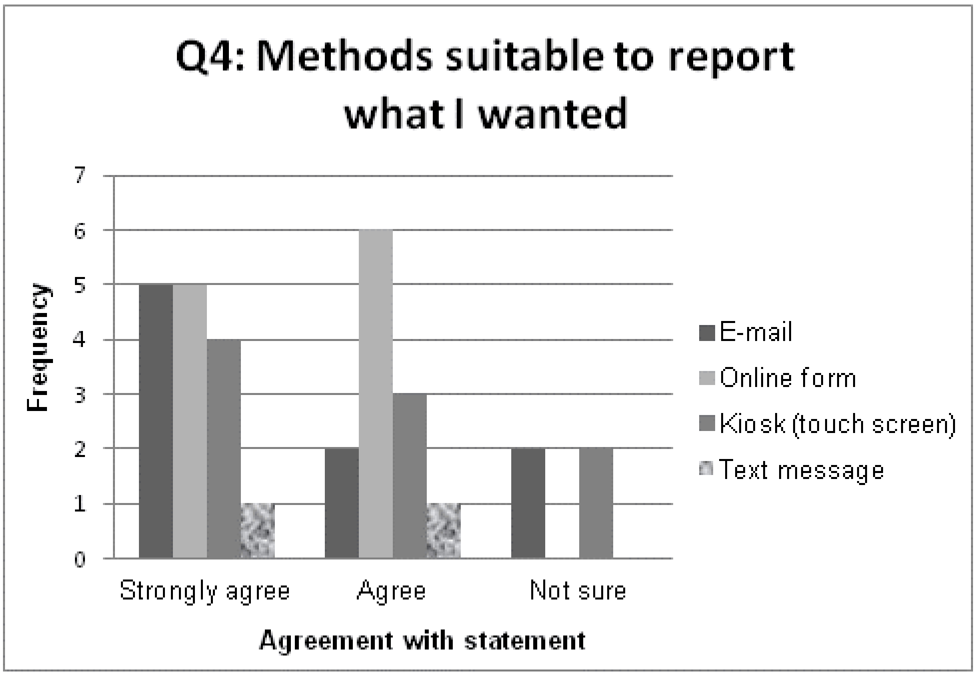

Figure 5.4: *Methods' suitability to report opinions (frequencies)*

Linking back to the characteristics of effectiveness, this may suggest that the respondents felt the methods did not restrict them in expressing their views.

No particular suggestions for methods' improvement were shared (Q10), apart from requesting feedback indicating what others users may have said (see Q6 below). However, the unreliability of the vYv system was highlighted several times. Indeed, the kiosk especially encountered recurring technical problems.

Exploring whether respondents would consider using these methods in consultations carried out by other agencies (Q11) (Table 5.12), e-mail (n = 14) and the online form (n = 13) were favoured. Respondents would be inclined towards using the kiosk, with nine who would use it and six who might 'possibly use' it. In comparison to e-mail and the online form, the kiosk may be considered as less familiar to the public, which may partly explain the preference for e-mail and the online form.

Table 5.12: Would you use vYv methods if adopted by e.g. LAs? (Q11)					
	Yes	**No**	**Possibly**	**Total**	**Missing**
E-mail	14		8	**22**	4
Online form	13		7	**20**	6
Kiosk (touch screen)	9	5	6	**20**	6
Text message	4	6	9	**19**	7

The ‘feedback’ sent to participants consisted of a ‘thank you’ message and a reference number, rather than preliminary results of other participants’ comments. The satisfaction with such feedback (Q6) varied between methods - e-mail and online form users tended to be more satisfied than kiosk and text message users. The individual users’ expectations of what ‘feedback’ should include are likely to have had an influence. Q15 (exploring the level of interest in other participants’ comments) responses suggested that those dissatisfied with the current form of feedback expected to receive information on what issues have been brought up and how they may be addressed, rather than a simple acknowledgement. However, to many respondents the simple acknowledgement was sufficient, suggesting that they were satisfied with simply ‘voicing their view’.

In terms of respondents’ likelihood to pay more attention to the surrounding environment after taking part in the consultation (Q13), ten (out of sixteen who responded) implied they would, but mostly in terms of whether their suggestions were acted upon. Overall, it could be argued that this consultation had a minimal impact on changing the users’ attitude towards their surroundings, but revealed their desire to see whether their comments were responded to in any way. However, no conclusions can be reached on whether they had personally benefited from the use of the different methods.

Thirteen out of 24 respondents were satisfied and four very satisfied with the overall experience of the consultation (Q14) (Figure 5.5). Those unsatisfied were kiosk users who referred to the kiosk’s technical failures.

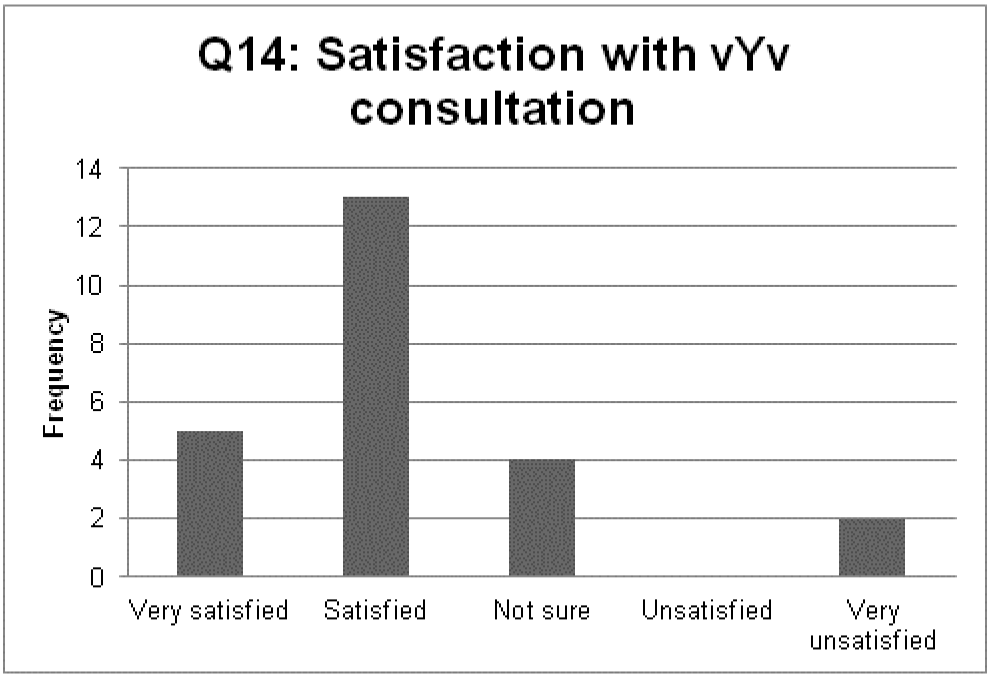

Figure 5.5: *Satisfaction with the vYv consultation*

Overall, despite the limited pro-active participation in the consultation, respondents to the evaluation questionnaire claimed to have been generally satisfied with the consultation. Having a strong view about a particular issue or wishing to make their views known were the main motivations to take part. Respondents tended to submit one comment only. The use of a particular method usually related to the method's convenience and ease of access. In general, methods were viewed as convenient and suitable for the sharing of views. With the exception of technical faults, respondents did not offer suggestions on how the methods could be improved. However, as more than two thirds of the overall sample ignored requests to complete the questionnaire, the results present only a limited participant perspective on the potential effectiveness of electronic consultation methods.

5.2.3 Researcher perspective

The role of the researcher in the VoiceYourView consultation was fairly limited. Being based on electronic rather than personal interaction, it relied on the pro-action of self-selected participants. The researcher could not influence the amount, quality or range of comments submitted by the campus users. Still, some of the observations made during the consultation period can aid the discussion of results.

The researcher's role consisted of the preparation and promotion of the consultation. The technical aspects were overseen by another member of the VoiceYourView team, who inspected the three electronic kiosks on a daily basis and dealt with unexpected but frequent system failures and repeatedly being blocked by the university's security system[4]. As such, the kiosks were not functional on several occasions, preventing their use, which was also highlighted by several participants. These errors almost certainly negatively influenced the effectiveness of the electronic methods and may have discouraged some participants. As such, the actual system capturing the data submitted by electronic methods became a non-human actant, with a negative influence.

The style of the consultation allowed participants a relatively free choice on what to express their views on[5]. Therefore they were not forced to explore particular themes, as might be the case in a face-to-face interaction, where the facilitator may prioritise in relation to the sponsors' requirements. Even though several themes were prominent, the remaining data was fairly broad, indicating that these mechanisms may encourage a varied public input. The majority of e-mail and online form comments were either actionable or partly actionable, implying constructive public input into enhancing urban public space. However, underlying issues were rarely captured by these methods. Additionally, with electronic (and non-face-to-face) mechanisms lacking non-verbal cues, which can be used to indicate feelings or check understanding, some comments may have been unintentionally misinterpreted (Rowe and Gammack, 2004). Although most of the content was rated as 'clear', some problems with translation quality may have been introduced into the data processing stage (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007), negatively influencing the effectiveness of the methods.

Despite the extensive promotion of the consultation, the uptake was limited. The 128 valid entries represented only 0.5% of the assumed population of 23,000 (Coventry

[4] This was the case despite extensive pre-arrangements with appropriate university departments prior to the consultation and had extensive resource implications for the project, pointing to possible difficulties that sponsoring organisations may have in offering electronic-based consultations. Not only do extensive steps have to be taken to encourage uptake of such systems, but a dedicated member of staff needs to be employed to ensure hardware and system errors are reduced and the system is secure.

[5] The online form and kiosk included a list of themes to choose from (Section 4.4.1.1), however participants could select the 'miscellaneous' theme if the list did not contain the theme they were commenting on. E-mail and text message did not feature a list of themes.

University, 2012; OIA, 2012), hardly a representative sample[6]. Thus, responding to the Objective 2 for Phase 1[7], it could be argued that only a very small proportion of the target population is likely to be pro-active and take part as a result of general promotional materials. These individuals are likely to have a strong view about a particular issue that they wish to share. The limited uptake may be attributed to possible 'apathy' and the tendency of public involvement to be reactive rather than pro-active (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; 2001a; 2001b). Lowndes *et al.* (2001b) claimed that it is better to actively recruit participants, rather than wait for them to come forward. This also confirms Jones' (2003) claim that policy officers may often have unrealistic aspirations for public involvement and limited awareness of its barriers, where achieving even 10% participation may be challenging.

Institutional barriers may have contributed to the limited uptake - had the university allowed for promotion via e-mail to all staff and students, the buy-in may have been larger. Receiving an active link to an online form may have increased the convenience and ease of access to certain methods, as indicated by some participant evaluations.

While the online form and e-mail were seldom misused, the electronic kiosk appeared to be used more for its curiosity value. The actual placement of one of the kiosks is also believed to have influenced the nature of the comments submitted – the kiosk location may have become an important non-human actant within the consultation. However, this may not always be the case as indicated by the fact that the kiosks in the two other locations did not demonstrate this phenomenon. This leads to two observations in terms of factors influencing methods' effectiveness. Firstly, the aims and objectives of a consultation need to be communicated clearly and simply to the participants, who need to understand them. Secondly, attention needs to be paid to the placement of devices such as kiosks, as their location may influence the nature of the public input.

It needs to be acknowledged that the majority of the campus population could be considered as capable of using computers, touch screens, mobile phones and other technologies. In a different context, perhaps in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, the skill base may not be present and lead to even lower uptake of these methods.

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[6] Furthermore, if considering only the 87 relevant comments, the rate is further reduced to 0.4%.

[7] Objective 2: Examine the extent to which participants may be pro-active in a consultation process.

5.2.4 Summary and Implications for Phase 2

The triangulation of data quality and the participant and research perspectives points to some general conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the four electronic methods, together with their implications for Phase 2. With the exception of the kiosk users, the participants generally demonstrated understanding of the purpose of the consultation[8].

The quality of data varied between methods. Despite the kiosk being the most 'popular' (i.e. most 'interacted with') method, it did not perform very well in this study. Its misuse could be attributed to its curiosity value and the possible misunderstanding of its purpose, resulting in suboptimal and generic data without much constructive input.

The online form and e-mail could be considered as more effective than the kiosk. Proactive users who have something to say can provide relevant, clear and actionable information. Although the structured online form achieved a higher actionability rating, e-mail users were capable of supplying views of equivalent quality in free-text form. However, the comments rarely revealed underlying reasons for particular opinions. As such, these methods appear more appropriate for 'reporting' purposes, rather than consultation[9].

Text messages, with only four submitted comments, were viewed as generally unsuccessful in this case, and as such were not explored further. No particular conclusions can be drawn from the limited data, perhaps only that the cost and effort to make such a method functional was not reflected in the returns. However, the ineffectiveness of the method in this case does not imply that the method would be generally ineffective. Further research is needed.

All the methods relied on a self-selected sample of users, which may result in a very limited uptake, as was the case in this study. Although this research is not necessarily aiming for representativeness of participants, a real consultation would require a certain amount of public response to be viewed as acceptable (as explored

[8] The general purpose was to consult the campus users about regeneration of the campus.
[9] It should be noted that the Love Lewisham (Prendiville, 2009) and One Clean Leicester systems (One Clean Leicester Team, 2011) successfully use multiple electronic channels – including mobile phone applications, online forms and e-mail – for reporting of environmental issues.

later in Chapter 6). The results indicated that apart from a possible lack of interest, the buy-in to these methods may be more a matter of promotion, rather than issues with the methods themselves – those who responded to the participant questionnaire were generally satisfied. However, in this case the actual returns in comparison to the resources needed to promote and run the consultation resulted in a cost-ineffective consultation[10]. Together with limited response to the evaluation survey and the indication that participants are reluctant to respond to repeated contact, the participant perspective in future studies may again remain only partial. Also, the researcher has very limited control over these methods once ‘live’, suggesting that possible implementation in Phase 2 would unlikely extend the debate of the effectiveness of these methods any further.

Most importantly, the electronic methods depended on a fully working IT system – a non-human actant - but the VoiceYourView project failed to deliver a reliable system which could be used beyond a ‘pilot situation’. This had further implications for the rest of the research – as a stable, reliable system was not developed, the research in Phase 2 focused on non-electronic methods. The problems encountered in this case provide an indication of the potential technical challenges of using electronic methods, however they should not prevent research and development of these methods in the future.

[10] Unlike with other tested consultation methods, the cost of promoting the electronic methods and keeping an active text message service could be accurately calculated.

5.3 *Effectiveness of the on-street event*

The evaluation of the on-street event is based on the data analysis and the researcher's reflections only - due to the fast-paced nature of the on-street event, the participant perspective was not examined. However, the researcher perspective discusses the context and application of the method in practice, which is believed to have significantly influenced the data generated during the event.

5.3.1 Data quality

5.3.1.1 Number of comments generated during the on-street event

During the four hour on-street event, 393 comments were collected (see Table 5.13) from approximately 130 participants (Section 5.3.1.9). As indicated in Section 4.3.5.8, the majority of participants (68%) preferred not to write down their opinions themselves. Only 10% of the comments were in the participants' own words, with 352 comments being made by the facilitators during or shortly after discussions with the participants. The representation of a discussion as a series of one-sentence comments may give rise to both interpretation bias and loss of detail. As the face-to-face interactions between participants and facilitators were a matter of several minutes, facilitators had limited opportunities to record all that was being said.

Table 5.13: On-street event comments	**Freq**	**%**
Comments from bullet points	352	89.6
Comments written by participants themselves (verbatim)	41	10.4
All comments total	**393**	**100**
No. of cards	139	
Average no. of comments per card	2.8	

5.3.1.2 Relevance

From the 393 comments, almost 90% (n = 353) were relevant to the purpose of the study. This may have been achieved by the facilitators' guidance of the conversations.

The irrelevant comments – not explored in further detail - related most frequently to the interior and other aspects of the library. These comments may have been inspired by the stall being situated next to the library and its location may have become a strong non-human actant in the practical application of the method, as was the case with the electronic kiosk.

5.3.1.3 Location specification

The majority of comments (almost 70%) were at a rather general level and did not relate to a specific area (Table 5.14), for example:

- *Need more benches. (OSE059)*
- *I enjoy Coventry campus. (OSE198)*

The remaining comments usually referred to individual university buildings, often mentioning the E&C and SEB, as the on-street event became focused on the new developments taking place (reasons for this are discussed in Section 5.3.2.1).

Table 5.14: Location specification		
	Freq	**%**
Location specified	108	30.6
Location not specified	245	69.4
Total	353	100

5.3.1.4 Clarity

The majority of comments were rated as 'clear' (83.3%) (Table 5.15). This could be attributed to the fact that the majority of comments were of a single sentence and précised by the facilitators.

Table 5.15: Clarity		
	Freq	**%**
Clear	294	83.3
Partly clear	57	16.1
Unclear	2	0.6

About 16% were considered as 'partly clear', exemplified by:

- *The campus is too spread out - it needs to be more together. (OSE144)*
- *Need more outdoor space. (OSE282)*

5.3.1.5 Actionability

As Figure 5.6 clearly shows, almost three-quarters of comments were not actionable, even though the conversations were guided by facilitators. These comments related to the campus as a whole, such as:

- *I like the campus generally. (OSE246)*

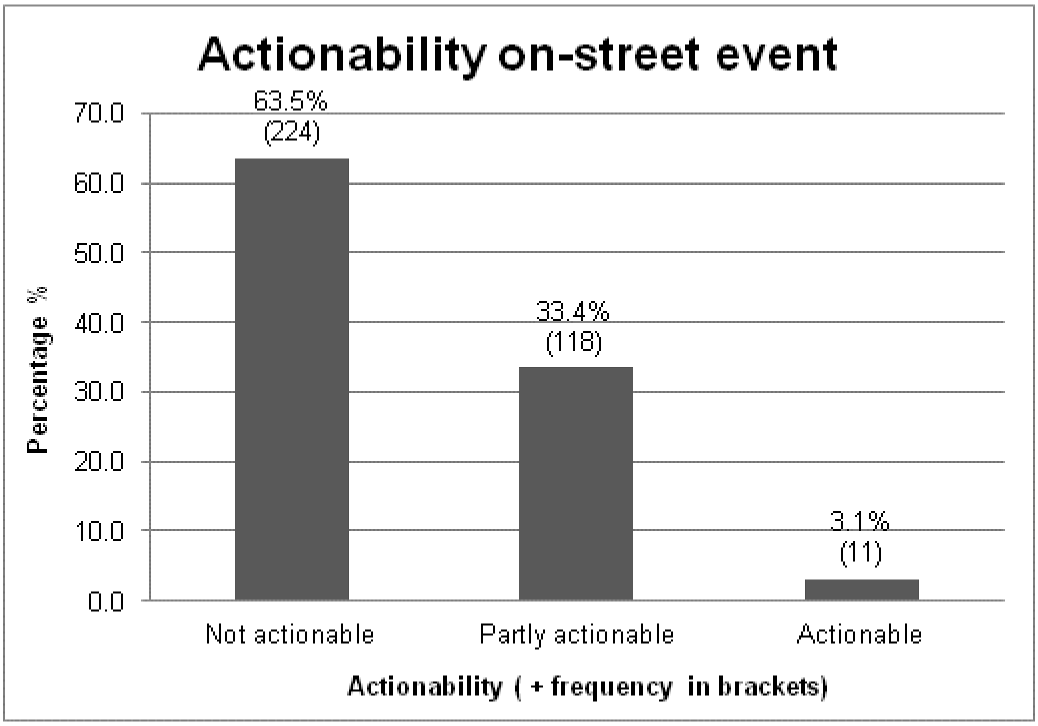

Figure 5.6: *On-street event comments, separated by actionability*

About a third of the comments (n = 118) were considered to be partly actionable. These identified a problem and provided some suggestion for improvement, however the location may not be specified:

- *Need more consistent design throughout. (OSE154)*
- *The roads can be dodgy, need more zebra crossings. (OSE271)*

Only 3% (n = 11) of all relevant comments could be classed as ‘actionable’. Some actionable comments include:

- *Subway on Whitefriars St needs some attention, maybe cleaning it a bit. (OSE012)*
- *Maps need improving - coloured mapping system, numbered mapping system, add the address as well so that I can use my sat nav. (OSE073)*

It is unlikely that a possible inconsistency in note taking would have caused this low rate, as all facilitators were briefed before the event about the entire study and its particular interest in the actionability of comments.

Overall, the actionability ratings contribute to the view already proposed in terms of location specification – that the public input generated during the on-street event was on a fairly general level without much detail.

5.3.1.6 Sentiment

The comments were almost equally made up of compliments (41%) and complaints (47%) (Figure 5.7). 12% of comments were general, in contrast to the electronic methods which generated a higher proportion of negative comments. Although compliments may not necessarily be very productive or actionable, they do provide feedback on what is being done well and is 'well-received'. However, the division between compliments, complaints and general comments varied significantly in relation to individual themes. Whereas 73% of comments referring to the 'changes at the campus' were positive, complimenting the buildings under construction, 75% of comments referring to the 'public realm' were negative, pointing out the lack of green spaces (Frankova *et al.*, 2013).

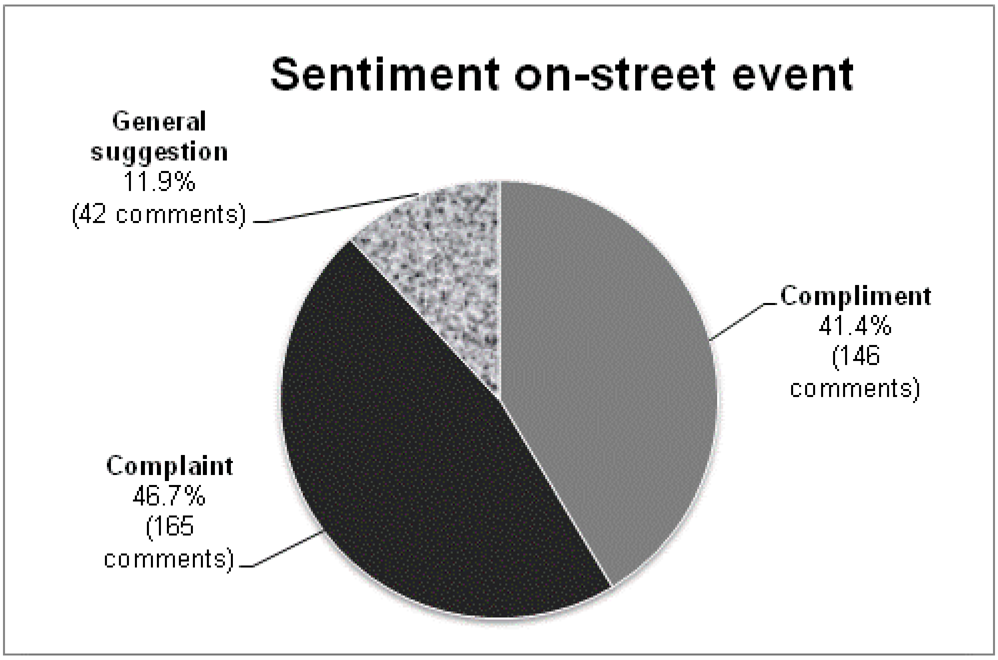

Figure 5.7: *Sentiment of on-street event comments*

5.3.1.7 Suggestion for improvement

Just over a third of comments (n = 133) included a suggestion for improvement (Table 5.16). Suggestions were usually linked to complaints and only rarely with compliments. In case of compliments, the suggestion usually implied that there could be more of the same.

- *I like the area around Alan Berry, there could be more green spaces. (OSE344)*

Table 5.16: Suggestion for improvement		
	Freq	**%**
Suggestion provided	133	37.7
No suggestion provided	220	62.3

5.3.1.8 Theme

Figure 5.8 presents the themes mentioned during the event, in order of frequency. Again, some comments addressed multiple themes, therefore the total adds up to 413. In case of electronic methods the overview of themes pointed to a relatively broad public feedback. In this case, the frequency of themes indicates a possible inclination to one theme in particular - changes taking place at the campus. On the contrary, participants using electronic methods hardly mentioned this theme.

Images of the new developments were used on the displays to capture attention and to stimulate discussion not only about the current state of the campus, but its future, too. However, they may have created a mindset which possibly shifted the focus of the on-street event and influenced the comments. It became apparent that many participants were not aware of the developments and enquired about the images - which became active non-human actants – initiating a discussion about them. As a result, the on-street event served not only to collect public input, but to disseminate information, too.

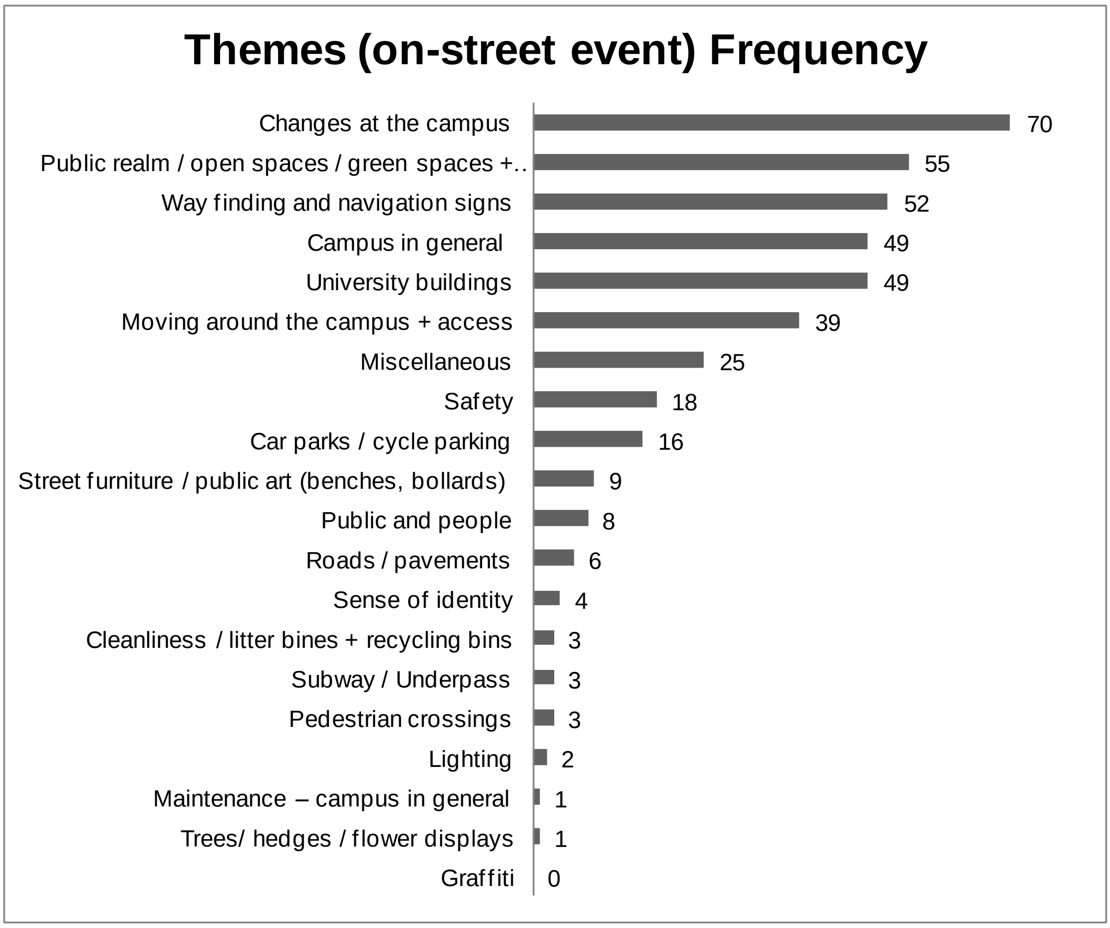

Figure 5.8: *On-street event comments, separated by theme*

Other frequently mentioned themes included the 'public realm, open and green spaces', 'way finding' throughout the campus, comments about the university buildings and the campus in general. However, the themes of 'public spaces', 'way finding' and 'general look' all featured on the display stand, which may have been an influential non-human actant. Although there was some overlap with the 'changes at the campus' theme in terms of the E&C and SEB buildings (in ten cases), a variety of different buildings were mentioned suggesting that the aesthetic attributes of the buildings themselves as well as the wider campus environment influence the users' perception of the campus.

5.3.1.9 Participant demographics

A general overview of participants' demographic background was obtained via sticker boards placed on the event display, as already outlined in Section 4.3.5.8. Participants did not always respond to all the categories and some did not respond at all, resulting in a varied number of responses per each category. Based on the number of comments, together with the information provided on the sticker boards, it is assumed that approximately 130 individuals took part in the event. This number should be taken as indicative.

Within the estimated university population of 23,000 (Coventry University, 2012; OIA, 2012), the 130 participants represented just over 0.5%. The exercise was voluntary and it was estimated that every third person approached by a facilitator participated. For comparison, Cinderby (2010) engaged with 30 to 40 participants within three to four hour P-GIS events, where their participation lasted between three to fifteen minutes. The interactions with individual participants during the on-street event lasted several minutes. However, although more participants than in Cinderby's case were involved, the desired detail within data was not necessarily achieved.

From those who provided their information, 90.1% (n = 100) were students, 7.2% (n = 8) staff and only 2.7% (n = 3) visitors (Table 5.17). This was not surprising considering that the library is used primarily by students. 57.1% were female (Table 5.18) and 80.7% were aged between 18 – 29 years (Table 5.19), the prevailing age category for students. 4.9% (n = 5) claimed to have a disability (Table 5.20). The participants' demographics corresponded with the general student and staff profile (Appendix 4c). However, the participants were limited only to those present in the vicinity of the stand on the day. These may have been regular library users or members of particular faculties located close to the library building. Those not using this part of the campus were unintentionally excluded. A more varied participant sample could be achieved by holding a number of events, in different locations and at different times of the day, week and year.

Table 5.17: Status – Are you a…?

On-street event	Frequency	%
Student	100	90.1%
Staff	8	7.2%
Visitor to the uni	3	2.7%
Total	111	100

Table 5.18: Gender

On-street event	Frequency	%
Male	48	42.9
Female	64	57.1
Total	112	100

Table 5.19: Age		
On-street event	**Frequency**	**%**
Under 18	2	1.7
18 – 29	96	80.7
30 – 39	8	6.7
40 – 49	9	7.6
50 – 59	3	2.5
60+	1	0.8
Total	119	100

Table 5.20: Disability		
On-street event	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	5	4.9
No	97	95.1
Total	102	100

5.3.2 Researcher perspective

The reluctance of the majority of participants to complete their own comment cards was the greatest influencing factor in the practical application of this method. It was not anticipated that talking to a facilitator would be the preferred option for most participants, hence the facilitators had no voice recording equipment or a structured topic guide at hand. Academic literature on events is scarce, but Wates (2000) and Cinderby (2010) demonstrated the use of interactive displays or maps, where the public made written annotations or used post-it notes, pins or stickers to provide their input[11]. These materials, created by the participants, appeared to be the main source of data for analysis and Cinderby (2010) did not refer to any reluctance from the participants to create these materials. However, in case of the on-street event, participants appeared to strive for minimal inconvenience or interruption. As such, reflecting-in-action, the researcher decided to adopt an alternative way of recording this information and instructed the facilitators to take notes instead. However, there was no prior agreement on the format in which these notes should be taken. If the participants had written their own comments, possible bias or erroneous interpretations by the researcher at a later stage could have been avoided. Overall, the way in which the data was recorded was not ideal. The method may prove more

[11] Particular guidance on this matter was difficult to find. Cinderby (2010) referred to ‘annotations of maps’ during his P-GIS events, however it is unclear what exactly these annotations consisted of, as alongside drawing and writing on maps, the use of a topic guide by facilitators was also mentioned.

effective if held as part of an organised event, such as a community day or a summer fete, where people are not in a rush and thus might be more willing to write comments themselves.

It was observed that the instructions for participants should be very simple and clear, as too many activities were confusing in a very short space of time. This was identified when some of the participants did not want to use stickers to indicate their demographic information anymore, as they felt they had already done enough.

The on-street event demonstrated the advantages identified by Cinderby (2010), such as the short period of time necessary for engagement. To participate, people did not have to make any special arrangements to attend and as such it may have succeeded at involving those who may otherwise not participate in conventional consultations. They took part because of being at a 'right place at a right time', again pointing to the importance of minimal inconvenience to the participants. At the same time, the facilitators had limited control over who participated. As already argued, this could be addressed by holding multiple events, at different times and locations.

5.3.2.1 The influence of display stand imagery

The visual material on the display captured a lot of attention although the text usually remained unread. Informal conversations with participants revealed that they were keen to find out what was happening at the campus, especially in terms of the new developments. As a result, the on-street event served a dual purpose – as a data dissemination (Arnstein's (1960) 'information' and Rowe and Frewer's (2005) 'communication') in addition to a data collection tool. The participants may have benefited from obtaining new information. After understanding about the campus developments, participants often commented on the images provided. As such, the display itself served as a powerful non-human actant in influencing the focus of the on-street event. Although the changes at the campus were anticipated to encourage a discussion about the campus, they were not expected to almost dominate it. As such, the design and imagery on a display need to be given careful consideration, as it is likely to affect the participants' frame of mind. Imagery appeared to be more powerful than actual textual information.

Once a comment card was completed, it was placed on the display board for others to see. This was seen as a valuable exercise which served as visual evidence that other people have taken part, demonstrating a ‘buy-in’ from other campus users. It also offered other passers-by the opportunity to read these comments and add their own (Figure 5.9) (Cinderby, 2010).

Figure 5.9: *Participants engaging with the on-street event display stand*

5.3.2.2 Influence of facilitators and prompting

During a reflective discussion held after the event, all four facilitators agreed that considerable initial prompting was necessary in order to encourage participants to say more than just ‘the campus is alright’. Facilitators had to be flexible in their conversations with the participants, however as no topic guide was prepared prior to the event, different facilitators may have focussed on different topics[12]. They used the themes on the display boards to formulate more specific questions such as ‘What do you think about the public spaces at the campus?’, however it was acknowledged that their individual positionalities may have influenced the data collected as well as the manner in which participants’ views were recorded. This demonstrated that despite thorough planning, the facilitators may not necessarily stay in control of all the elements of an event based on interaction with the public.

[12] Cinderby (2010) stated that in his P-GIS scoping activity, ‘a lack of well-formulated topic guide led to different types of information being mapped by participants, depending on which facilitator engaged with them’ (p. 243).

5.3.2.3 Lack of detail within comments

As already demonstrated, the majority of comments were general in nature, often being bare compliments or complaints, without emphasising what was liked in particular or what could be improved. 62% of comments did not provide a suggestion for improvement and 69% did not refer to a specific location (Frankova *et al.*, 2013). This was possibly due to the 'fast' context in which the event was held, where the participants may have felt too much in a rush to think in more detail about what to say.

Giving participants more time to think or speaking to them informally for longer may have resulted in more detailed comments. The short and individual nature of the interaction did not allow for an exploration of underlying issues (Cinderby, 2010) and may not have given the participants enough opportunities to express their views either. It may be concluded that without engaging participants in in-depth conversation the method obtained mostly 'surface' data and thus failed to yield sufficiently detailed and actionable data to constructively inform regeneration of the campus.

5.3.3 Summary and Implications for Phase 2

The method generated an almost equal number of compliments and complaints, where the majority of comments were relevant and clear. The facilitator led interactions may have influenced this. However, in terms of the method's effectiveness at consulting about the regeneration of urban public spaces in a more actionable manner, 69% of comments were not referring to any specific location and 64% were not actionable, implying suboptimal data.

If the outcomes of this event are comparable to those generated from consultation events carried out by local authorities and other organisation, then their effectiveness at capturing useful and actionable public input should be questioned. An on-street event may be useful as a starting point in a wider consultation process, but due to its limitations, it should not be the only method used to consult the public. However, it may offer opportunities for the exploration of generic public attitudes, raising awareness and providing information. An on-street event may be more suitable as a starting point to identify key issues in an area and to inform the development of subsequent stages in a consultation. Alternatively, it may be used to seek opinions to very specific questions.

Section 3.3.5 demonstrated that events are highly susceptible to their actual operationalisation in the field. The multiple challenges encountered in practice – as demonstrated in this study - can make it difficult to identify the factors that have had a genuine influence on the method's effectiveness. The researcher can only speculate about the real influence of the adopted approach to data capture, the facilitators' prompting and the role of non-human actants. However, using a topic guide might improve levels of consistency of questioning between different facilitators. Alternatively, a simple questionnaire could be used to enable more consistency in conversations with the participants. Practitioners should have an alternative plan in place in case the participants do not engage in the anticipated manner.

Overall, the on-street event was considered as being not very effective at constructively consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces. The method proved to be highly dependant on its application in practice, which appears potentially subject to great variation. Therefore, the further testing and development of this method will not be explored any further in this research.

5.4 Effectiveness of the photographic diary

The photographic diaries are evaluated firstly from a data perspective, with some examples from the diarists' entries, followed by the participants' responses to the evaluation questionnaire. The researcher then combines the three perspectives with findings from academic literature.

Some examples of the photo diaries are included below, structured in the following manner:

a. The image itself
b. Image code
c. Location/brief description
d. Reason for taking the photo
e. Suggestion/idea

5.4.1 Data quality

The data generated comprised of text as well as images, however the data quality analysis is based primarily on the textual annotations. Photos 'do not speak for themselves' (Rose, 2007: 243) and without the annotations, the photos would have been almost impossible to interpret. Although the comments were looked at in conjunction with the photos, sometimes the main message of the comment was not actually depicted within the photo, as demonstrated by PD504 (Table 5.21). It refers to the anti-social behaviour taking place at an otherwise aesthetically pleasing location. Without the accompanying text, the image itself would have been of little value.

As Rose (2007) argues, there is a paradoxical interdependency between the image and the text, which means that while 'the unique abilities of visual materials to convey information or affect in ways that words find hard or impossible, those visual materials still need some written context to make their effects evident' (p. 255). In the absence of a methodological framework guiding the use, analysis and interpretation of photography in social sciences (Becker, 2004; Lombard, 2013), photos serve as evidence to be interpreted and their interpretation 'takes precedence in the researcher's argument' (Rose, 2007: 244). The interdependency between the images and text is further discussed in Section 5.4.4.

Table 5.21: PD504 comment and image	
a.	
b.	PD504
c.	Facing the Herbert Art Gallery
d.	I walk past this building everyday, and it looks pretty good – however the only thing I usually notice is the teenagers skateboarding on the steps, seems a bit of a waste

Additional assessment of images was based on their content rather than quality, which would have been influenced by the photographic skills of the participant as well as the capabilities of a disposable camera. It cannot be expected that all members of the public will have a natural ability to compose aesthetically pleasing images.

5.4.1.1 Number of comments generated by the photo diary and their relevance

The eight photo diary participants produced the total of 101 photos, accompanied by textual annotations. Participants took between 3 and 23 photos, with an average of 12.6 photos each. Eleven entries referred to more than one theme and as such each was split into two comments for easier analysis. This resulted in the total of 112 comments. From these, seven were rated as irrelevant and as such the analysis worked with the total of 105 comments. The high relevance rate implied that the purpose of the method was understood by the participants.

5.4.1.2 Location specification

In 97.1% (n = 102) of the comments, location was specified by the participants. Although this specification may have used terms such as 'pond outside the library' (PD404) or 'outside Chapters Café' (PD707), combining this description, the image and the local knowledge of the three raters, who were all familiar with the campus, exact locations could be identified. It is argued that some contextual knowledge is necessary for accurate analysis, as users of a particular area may develop their own points of reference, easy to understand for those familiar with the area, but unclear to others.

5.4.1.3 Clarity

The majority of comments (94.3%; n = 99) were clear, implying that the participants' annotations, however brief or comprehensive, were easily understandable. Only six comments were 'partly clear'.

5.4.1.4 Actionability

There was almost an equal number of actionable (n = 39; 37.1%), partly actionable (n = 33; 31.4%) and not actionable comments (n = 33; 31.4%) (Figure 5.10). If considering partly actionable and actionable comments together, 68.5% of all comments included some form of constructive input into the regeneration of urban public spaces.

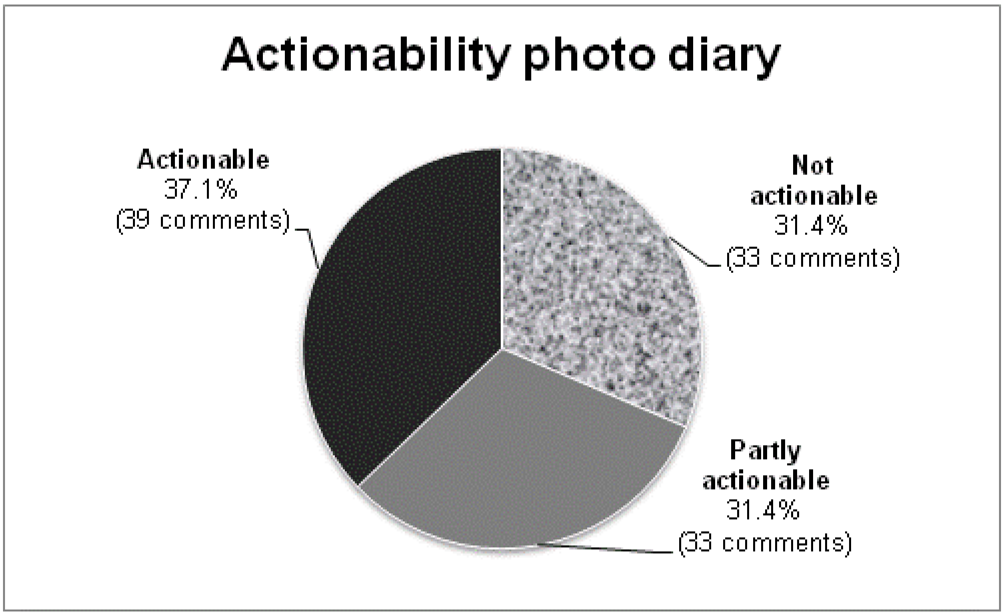

Figure 5.10: *Actionability of photo-diaries*

5.4.1.5 Sentiment

Almost an equal amount of compliments (n = 44; 41.9%) and complaints (n = 43; 41%) was generated, with the remaining 17.1% (n = 18) being general comments (Figure 5.11). In comparison to the electronic methods, which generated mostly complaints, the photo diary (together with the on-street event) may be more likely to generate a balanced public input.

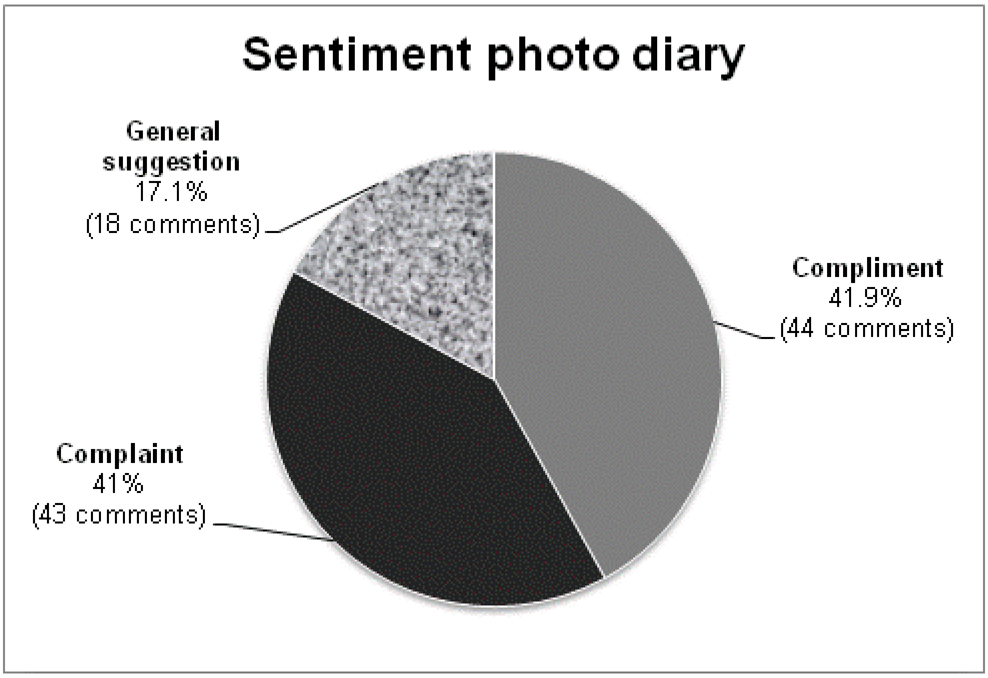

Figure 5.11: *Sentiment of photo diary comments*

5.4.1.6 Suggestion for improvement

Almost three quarters of comments (74.3%; n = 78) contained a suggestion for improvement (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22: Suggestion for improvement		
	Freq	**%**
Suggestion provided	78	74.3
No suggestion provided	27	25.7
Total	105	100

As distinct from the other methods, where suggestions were linked primarily to complaints, in the case of the photo diary, suggestions were spread across all three types of comments. A suggestion was included in 24 compliments, 42 complaints and 12 general comments. It may thus be argued that while taking photographs, participants engaged with their surrounding environment (a non-human actant) on a deeper level. In addition to being complimentary, some participants considered how certain aspects could be applied elsewhere or more extensively in order to create more pleasing urban public spaces, as in the case of lighting in PD118 (Table 5.23). For more examples, please see Appendix 5c.

Table 5.23: Example of a compliment with a suggestion	
a.	
b.	PD118
c.	In front of Union/ Cathedral Square
d.	Love the fairy lights!
e.	Wish they were all over campus, would really brighten the place now it is winter and give a happier welcoming feel. A lot of the nicer elements are focused on the square and spreading them out around the campus would improve the overall feel and make other areas feel as important.

5.4.1.7 Theme

The instructions given to participants were fairly generic in order to give them a free hand at capturing what they wanted. As such, the content was generated by the participants themselves, with the researcher having no influence over the data. The method proved effective at capturing what mattered to the participants, achieving a broad public input covering a variety of themes (Figure 5.12). Most of the data fitted within the predetermined categories. As before, comments could be allocated up to two themes.

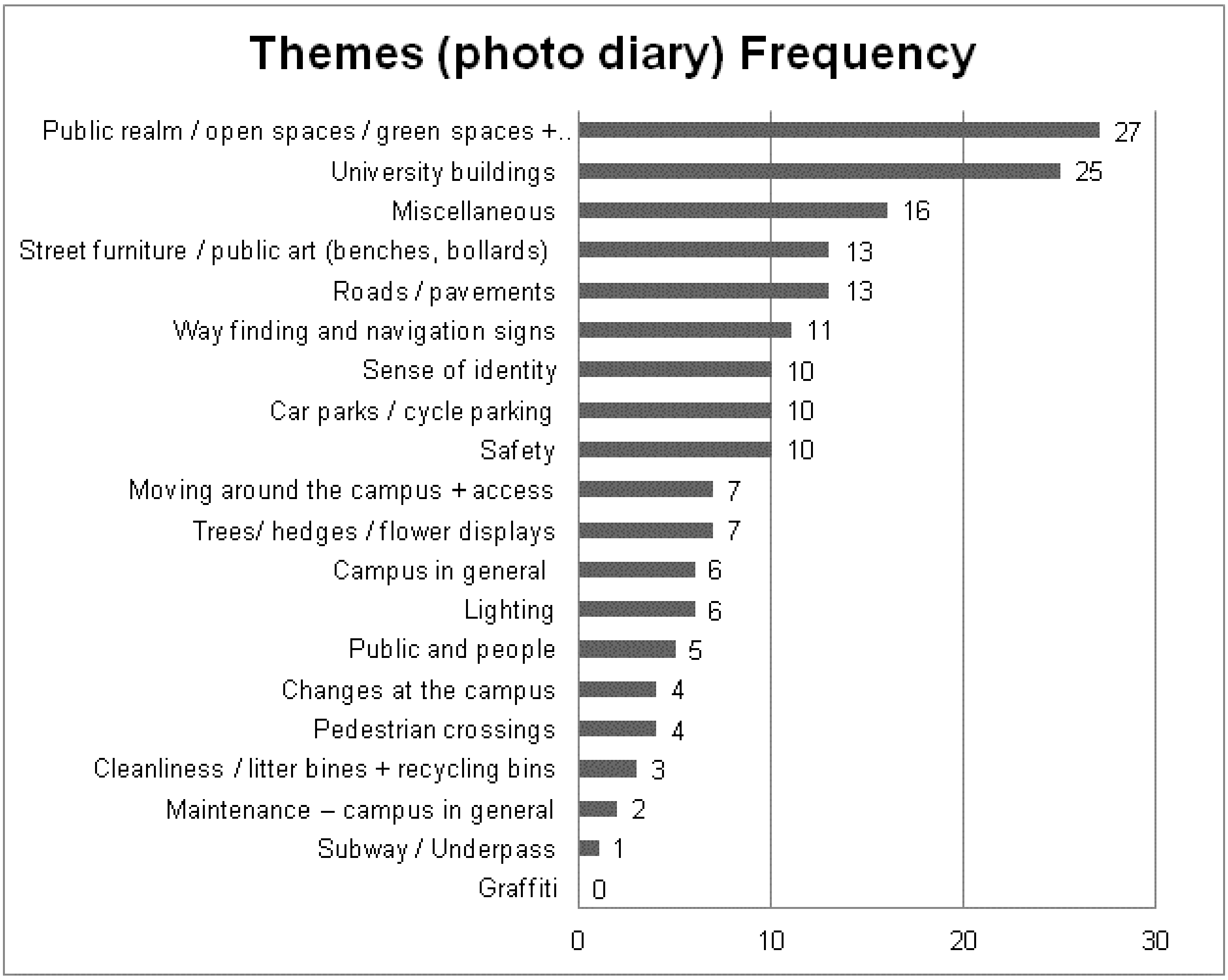

Figure 5.12: *The most frequently mentioned themes in the photo diaries*

The 'public space' theme was mentioned the most often (n = 27), followed by 'university buildings' (n = 25). Alongside the University Square, which was mentioned the most frequently, participants photographed numerous green spaces around the campus, assessing them overall and then pointing out specific features, such as a pond, seating, gazebos, gravestones and lighting (Table 5c.3, Appendix 5c). These tended to be mostly compliments, but many pointed to the ways in which areas could be further improved, by having more seating and litter bins or trimming of hedges (Table 5.24).

Table 5.24: Example of ‘public realm’/’miscellaneous’ comment (compliment, actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD709
c.	Outside Armstrong Siddeley
d.	This is a nice big green area – I think there should be more like this!
e.	Students could get involved in creating/planting them? Things like a herb garden/veg patch could work well – could get a society going and students can plant own vegetables, then take home what they produce?

Entries referring to different university buildings included both compliments and complaints on their design and general comments (for examples see Appendix 5c). Only four comments referred to the buildings under construction, indicating that this may not be a topic which participants think about. A similar lack of interest was displayed with electronic methods, providing additional evidence for the influence of the on-street event display (and possible role of facilitators) on data generation.

‘Miscellaneous’[13] was the third most frequently mentioned theme (n = 16), capturing unusual features and ‘hidden gems’ within the public realm of the study area (Table 5.25). Such information can contribute towards creating spaces which are unique. The overall impression was that participants valued the history captured within certain spaces, buildings or features and wished to preserve, and use more, this connection of the present with the past (Table 5c.6 in Appendix 5c).

[13] ‘Miscellaneous’ was often allocated in addition another theme.

Table 5.25: Example of 'miscellaneous' comment (compliment, actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD717
c.	Outside James Starley
d.	I think having a bird box is a good idea to encourage more wildlife.
e.	There should be more.

If looking at the images themselves, the most photographed location was the University Square. Table 5.17 includes images taken by different participants from almost the same location. Further photographs of University Square were taken from other locations. This shows that some locations and specific urban public spaces attract a lot of attention and are of particular value to the public. The value of University Square was confirmed across the different methods tested in Phase 1.

Table 5.26: Photographs of University Square from various photo diarists	
	
PD122	PD503
	
PD311	PD713

5.4.1.8 Link between comment and photo

In 89.5% of cases, the comment and the image related to each other, i.e. the image depicted what was described in the comment (Table 5.27). As such, the images served as evidence to the comments and together they provided a more creative and informative way of capturing public input.

Table 5.27: Text and image related?		
	Freq	**%**
Yes	94	89.5
Partly[14]	10	9.5
No	1	1.0

[14] Six of the ten ‘partly related’ comments came from the same participant, whose possible difficultly with taking or annotating photographs may have been more the cause rather than a limitation of the method itself.

5.4.1.9 Participant demographics

Of the eight photo diary participants, five were students (62.5%) and three staff members (37.5%). Men and women were equally represented and none had a disability. Five were aged between 18 and 29 years (62.5%), one between 30 and 39 years (12.5%) and two aged between 50 and 59 years (25%). Four were White British (50%), three White Other (37.5%) and one Indian (12.5%). As such, the sample was relatively varied, but still small. In practice, the small sample may not satisfy the representativeness criterion. Although it may be argued that participants volunteering for this method may have more inclinations towards photography, the 'quality' of some of the images (i.e. their composition) would suggest otherwise. Some participants showed interest in the research as such and agreed to do a photo diary when they could not attend a focus group or a walking discussion. Thus, possible interest in the built environment or the flexibility of the method in terms of being completed individually and at times convenient to the participant may have been more influential than particular enthusiasm for photography. Participants' views of the method are explored below.

5.4.2 Participant perspective

All eight participants completed the evaluation questionnaire. Please refer to Appendix 4j for the full list of questions. They all found the photo diary useful or beneficial (Q1) - apart from having the opportunity to express their opinions, they enjoyed the process of taking photos, reflecting on them and experiencing the campus in a slightly different way. They noticed features they did not pay attention to before, or explored previously unknown surroundings. An indicative response includes:

- *It has enabled me to view the university campus differently which has been good for me. Previously I have ignored campus features/issues.*

Each participant enjoyed the photo diary for a different reason (Q2) – contemplating what photos to take, writing about them and using them to express their ideas, comparing locations, and thinking about the campus in a more positive way. As such, the photo diary brought some personal benefit to the participants.

All the participants agreed that the instructions provided were clear (Q4a) (seven 'strongly agreed'). The actual data confirmed participants' understanding of the task, since the majority of comments were relevant to the study, clear and often actionable.

Participants disliked some of the practicalities of keeping the photo diary (Q3). This concerned the annotations especially, which were difficult to complete on site in adverse weather. Two participants suggested taking notes electronically.

- *Think I would have preferred an online or Word document diary so I could import pictures from my phone and type information directly. I found with the diary I took the photos but kept forgetting to update the book.*
- *Being outside in the cold it has been quite difficult to properly write down reasonings and to match up the pictures properly.*

Six photo diarists found taking and annotating the photographs convenient or very convenient (Q5a) (Table 5.28). Those 'not sure' attributed this to the inconvenience of annotating photos in the field and in poor weather conditions.

Table 5.28: How convenient was taking photographs and annotating them? (Q5a)

	Freq	**%**
Very convenient	2	25
Convenient	4	50
Not sure	2	25
Not convenient		
Not convenient at all		
Total	8	100

Seven participants found it easy to annotate their photographs (Q6a). While some photographed what really caught their attention and thus had no difficulty in annotating such images (Q6b), other may have struggled when something caught their attention without a particular reason, or if they wished to avoid making repetitive comments. Five participants strongly agreed and two agreed that the photo diary allowed them to fully express their opinions (Q10a).

Using a disposable camera may have been the cause of some of the inconvenience. Participants had to either annotated their photos 'in the field', or remember to complete their diary at a later time (Q7). They had no way of checking the photographs and thus depended either on the notes they took or their memory.

Those, who decided to use their own digital cameras or iPhones (three individuals) could inspect the images later and annotate them retrospectively. Their approach to annotations was:

- *Sporadic, in a few sittings, rather than after each picture. (iPhone)*
- *When I got home - brought all pictures and annotations together in one document at the end. (digital camera)*

Most of the participants enjoyed taking photographs (Q8a) (Table 5.29).

Table 5.29: I enjoyed taking photographs around the campus. (Q8a)		
	Freq	**%**
Strongly agree	3	37.5
Agree	4	50.0
Not sure	1	12.5
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Total	8	100

The three weeks allocated for the photo diary were considered 'about right' by seven out of eight participants (Q9). However, several participants admitted having taken all the photos in two or three days, rather than across the whole period. This would suggest that from a practical point of view, a shorter period to take photos may be appropriate, to make the process more dynamic for the participants.

Since the photo diary was completed individually, participants were asked whether they believed a discussion with other people about the photos would have benefited the method (Q13). The answers were mixed (two agreed, four disagreed, two stated 'possibly'), but the responses were more inclined towards a discussion not being necessary. Some acknowledged that it might be of benefit to the researcher, but unless the other participants had real interest in the same issue or had the power to do something, it was not seen as a useful addition.

- *Possibly - it would be interesting to see what other people have done, but wouldn't want to do anything too time consuming.*

In the initial meeting, participants were informed that the photo diary was going to be used for research purposes but that their views would be shared with relevant members of the university. No guarantees were given as to the extent to which the views would contribute to campus regeneration. Six participants 'agreed' and one 'strongly agreed' that the outcome of the exercise was made clear to them (Q11a), confirming they understood the intent with which the method was being used. However, they were sceptical as to whether their comments would be acted upon (Q11b), using expressions such as 'I think they will be', or 'maybe, who knows'.

Exploring potential changes in personal attitudes, seven participants claimed they were likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment as a result of keeping the photo diary (Q13), exemplified by statements such as:

- *Yes, as I was forced to look in greater detail at buildings/environment that I pass every day and don't pay much attention to.*

This suggests that apart from using the photo diary to share views and ideas on how the urban realm of the campus could be regenerated, participants' attitude to their surrounding environment may have altered in a positive direction. Chaplin (2004: 43) argued that knowing that you will be taking a photograph influences the way 'you look at life around you' and makes you look at things longer when contemplating whether a photograph should be taken. In the process, people may become more focused and pick up on things previously unnoticed or even trivial (Latham, 2004). Only a re-evaluation with the same participants at a later stage could indicate whether this potential change in attitude has had any longer-term effects on how they view and respond to their surroundings, but there is the possibility that a more positive attitude to the urban realm may result in greater participation in regeneration matters, or more positive treatment or appreciation of urban public spaces.

The overall experience with the photo diary (Q14) was positive - rated as 'good' by six participants and 'excellent' by two.

Using a scenario of a public consultation about the redevelopment of a particular public space in Coventry, participants were asked to think about the method, its effectiveness, advantages, disadvantages and challenges more theoretically (Q15 – 19). Participants were left to interpret 'effectiveness' as they wished and the responses were quite ambiguous - five participants (62.5%) were not sure about the method's consultation effectiveness (Q15). However, two thought the method was very effective. Still, participants identified multiple benefits (Q16) such as making people more aware of their surroundings and increasing their focus, encouraging creative thinking and enabling them to express their views in their own time, with little restriction. Participants listed time, effort, possible mobility problems and the inconvenience of carrying a camera and a notebook as the main disadvantages (Q17) and barriers (Q18) to the method. It was also seen as largely dependent on capturing what already exists. Changing the method to a digital format – which several participants suggested - may increase the convenience of the method, since for example a mobile phone could be used to capture images and notes without the need of carrying an additional device.

Participants claimed they would be inclined to use the method again as part of a consultation if it were mainstreamed (Q19), but preferably in an adapted format. This could be digital and possibly shorter than three weeks.

- *I think it is a good method that produces good results, however I would need convincing to spare three weeks from my schedule to do it - even though this time span has some positives.*

Overall, despite some general caution regarding the method's effectiveness, participants viewed the method mostly positively, and suggested ways it could be improved. They listed how the method had personally benefited them and agreed that they could express their views using the method. Additionally, the positive feedback may point to potential personal empowerment as a result of the method. Apart from having enjoyed the experience, the diary helped participants to view, explore and appreciate the area in a different way and share ideas on how it could be improved. As Chaplin (2004: 41) argued, 'a visual diary is a tool which can be used to help you think about whatever concerns you at the moment'.

5.4.3 Researcher perspective

The researcher had very little influence over how participants approached and completed their photo diaries, only seeing participants for a briefing and de-briefing meeting. A rapport was created between the participant and the researcher during these meetings, which appeared to contribute to making the participants feel valued.

The informal discussions revealed that participants rarely went out of their way to photograph something, instead choosing locations they frequented on their regular routes. The photos became a medium through which they showed their everyday use of the campus and shared their knowledge of these spaces (Murray, 2009), which may be potentially used to regenerate them. Although the minutiae of thought and the extent to which personal meanings of spaces were shared varied between participants, valuable, insightful and constructive input was achieved. The diary became a reflective tool which may have encouraged participants to contemplate issues on a deeper and more creative level - not just pointing to what they liked and disliked, but considering how things could be improved.

Participants were provided with an optional structure, which they all followed (instructions in Appendix 4h). This may have led to a higher quality of data by encouraging reflections, simplifying the annotation process in terms of what information to include and encouraging actionable comments. This in turn led to easier analysis and potential bias being minimised.

Being based on an experiential in-situ engagement of participants with particular spaces, Objective 3 of Phase 1[15] was addressed. The participants became involved with the spaces around them in a different way - via the viewfinder of the camera. The camera itself became an important non-human actant within the method, adding a new dimension to the participants' perception and engagement with the surrounding environment. It allowed them to capture their everyday experiences of places in a different way, often pointing out their relationships with these spaces in addition to sharing their views.

However, not all participants used disposable cameras. Three used their own digital cameras, which allowed them instant access to images. Thus, participants worked with different types of photographs - non-human actants - which may have influenced the effectiveness of the method. Those using disposable cameras often annotated their images right after taking them, or retrospectively at home. However, although they never saw their images, their annotations do not appear any less 'reflective' than those completed by digital camera users. The comprehensiveness of the comments appears to depend more on the individuals, rather than whether they used a digital or disposable camera. On the contrary, this may imply that taking photographs supported the conveying of a message or a view, rather than being an end in itself.

Participants confirmed that the photo diary was an enjoyable method (Young and Barrett, 2001; Dodman, 2003; Oh, 2012). They acknowledged that the method

[15] Objective 3: Explore whether in-situ methods may benefit consultations about regeneration of urban public spaces, and if so, how.

‘forced them to keep an open eye’ and ‘allowed thought to be clearly focused on a specific area’. Benefits tended to out weigh disadvantages. As such, the method appears effective at engaging with the participants, who benefit from the experience, possibly resulting in some personal empowerment.

Drawing together the three different perspectives, the photo diary presents itself as a method which may assist in consulting the general public about the regeneration of urban public spaces in a more effective manner. Participants’ in-situ experience of a particular area and the use of a camera to capture their views, opinions and suggestions are central to the method. The participants interact with several non-human actants – the surrounding environment, the camera and the photographs themselves (in the case of digital images) – to present what is of importance to them and in a different, possibly more creative and actionable manner, than may be done through other, non-visual and ex-situ methods (Objective 3 of Phase 1). Deeper and more insightful information can be captured (Edwards, 2007). Although the actual analysis relies more on the comments than the images themselves, the data included in these comments would not have been generated without the process of taking the photographs in the field and the thinking and reflections behind them. For analysis purposes, images could also be plotted on a map to indicate spatial use of the area, as well as what areas may be valued or not.

5.4.4 Discussion

As already highlighted in Section 3.4.3, literature is scarce on the use of photographs created by participants and the evaluation of such an approach from a participant perspective (Myers, 2010). This research makes a contribution to addressing this gap and has assessed the method in terms of its potential use in a consultation setting.

The collected data confirmed the interdependency between the photos and text (Rose, 2007). The images themselves were analysed only to a very limited extent. Critical visual methodologies tend to be applied to the interpretation of found visual images. However, in the case of photographs being made as part of a research project, critical approaches such as compositional interpretation, content analysis, semiology and discourse analysis are not appropriate (ibid.). Although basic content analysis was conducted in relation to the themes mentioned, this was based primarily on the written comments. The images in this case played a ‘supporting’ role in terms of ‘what they offer in the way of evidence’ (ibid., p. 239). The photos were made in relation to public consultation and the regeneration of urban public space and not to examine the social effects of imagery. As such, the images served as evidence and an extension of the points raised, rather than an independent data source to be examined in terms of their composition, possible juxtapositions within them and the way the images have been framed. Participants were not asked to create artistic images, but images to demonstrate their particular views, so they were considered for their general content and appreciated for the 'texture' of places that they captured:

> *'Photos can convey a 'feel' of specific locations very effectively; they can show us details in a moment that it would take pages of writing to describe.'*
>
> (ibid., p. 247)

Since the analysis relied primarily on the written comments, some may question the merit of photo diaries. Are photo diaries capable of capturing unique data that would otherwise be unattainable by other forms of consultation? Although the relevance of the images and comments was sometimes quite tenuous, taken together, there was a richness which would not be achieved via text or image only. In most cases, the images served as evidence for the issues raised. The photo diary content was wholly generated by the participants, which allowed them a degree of autonomous self-expression (ibid.; Newman *et al.*, 2006; Myers, 2010) and brought forward information which may have not been considered by the researcher (Edwards, 2007). As such, although five participants were 'not sure' about the method's potential effectiveness, the data quality points towards the argument that the photo diary can capture information that could constructively contribute to regenerating urban public spaces.

5.4.5 Summary and Implications for Phase 2

Combining photographs and comments, the photographic diaries offer a unique way of capturing how the general public use urban public space on an everyday basis. Murray (2009: 469) has argued that 'methods that are both mobile and visual produce insights into the everyday life experiences, which are not available using more traditional methods'. The findings showed that photo diary data can also be highly relevant, clear and location specific. This suggests that the participants understood what was expected of them when fulfilling the task. Almost an equal number of actionable, partly actionable and non actionable comments were achieved, which were balanced between compliments, complaints and general comments. Overall, these point to a varied set of data created by the participants. The in-situ use of the camera and subsequent reflection appeared to encourage creative thinking, where even compliments often included suggestions for improvement, resulting in actionable and constructive content, which was not achieved by the electronic methods and the on-street event. Participants seemed to engage with their surrounding environment and the exercise itself on a deeper level than was the case in previous tested methods. The photo diarists often commented on points not brought up in other methods.

Apart from the method generating high quality data and being enjoyable for the participants, the evaluation uncovered potential for further development and subsequent re-testing in Phase 2 (Objective 4 of Phase 1[16]). Firstly, in view of the ongoing technological developments, the use of disposable cameras may be out of date, and more so in the future. Informal discussions with participants confirmed that many of them had access to digital photography, which was also identified as potentially offering multiple benefits. Secondly, participants usually completed the task in a two or three day period – a shorter 'photo period' may thus be sufficient. Thirdly, the data showed that on average each person took around twelve images. With a shorter photo period, it appears apt to limit the maximum number of images, too. Finally, photo-elicitation interviews (Harper, 2002) could be added to the photo diary to explore whether more, or somehow different, information regarding the images may be obtained. With these alterations, the method could be deployed again, in a different context with different participants. It may then be evaluated whether these alterations contribute to increasing the method's effectiveness any further.

[16] Objective 4: Based on the findings, identify methods to be further tested for their effectiveness in Phase 2.

5.5 *Effectiveness of the focus group and walking discussion*

The ex-situ focus group and in-situ walking discussion are both 'structured by the spatial context in which they are conducted' (Chih Hoong, 2003: 306). Their comparison offered the opportunity to critically evaluate the micro-geographies of the two research sites (ibid., Elmwood and Martin, 2000) in terms of whether conducting a consultation in the actual environment may be more effective – and in what ways - than when conducted in a 'neutral', indoor location. Both methods explored the same themes within the context of campus redevelopment, but differed in their immersion in the space under discussion.

As already mentioned in Section 4.4.1.2, focus groups and walking discussions generated data more extensive than that yielded by other methods. It emerged from a 'collaborative performance' (Goss and Leinbach, 1996) and deliberation[17] among the different group members, resulting in an aggregated or synergistic information, rather than separate input from individual participants (ibid.; Zeigler *et al.*, 1996; Conradson, 2005; Rowe and Frewer, 2005). The data quality is presented in a narrative format, combined with the researcher's perspective. There was a close relationship between the researcher's role as a facilitator, the data generated and the level of immersion, offering greater opportunities for reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Participant perspective is presented separately. The section concludes with an overall examination of the methods' effectiveness.

5.5.1 Data quality and researcher perspective

5.5.1.1 Micro-geographies of research locations and power dynamics

Both methods were influenced by the group composition and the personal characteristics of the participants. Although heterogeneous groups of staff, students and visitors were aimed for, the sessions were ultimately attended by those who were available at the particular time. Together with frequent last minute cancellations,

[17] Deliberation 'refers either to a particular sort of discussion – one that involves the careful and serious weighting of reasons for and against some proposition – or to an interior process by which an individual weights reasons for and against courses of action' (Fearon, 1998: 63).

the researcher had limited influence over who attended. While all focus groups achieved their target of eight participants, two out of the three walking discussions had only three participants instead of five. All sessions offered opportunities for observation of group and power dynamics. Group composition and its influence on group dynamics of focus groups, as well as the power dynamics occurring between the researcher and the researched, are extensively discussed in the literature (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999; Finch and Lewis, 2003; Conradson, 2005). Although the focus groups tested in this research confirmed many of the points already raised in the literature, the power and group dynamics played out differently in the walking discussions. These will be dealt with in turn.

Focus groups

The observed group and power dynamics corresponded with those already presented in the literature, and thus will be covered only briefly. The relationship between the different participants developed through the process of 'forming', 'storming', 'norming', 'performing' and 'adjourning' (Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Finch and Lewis, 2003), where participants firstly seemed guarded, but as the focus group progressed, they became more relaxed and actively participated. Often a closer rapport was established between certain participants. Some became more dominant, others remained more reticent. With the facilitator managing the more vocal participants, six out of eight participants tended to engage extensively. 96% of the participants confirmed that they could 'always' or 'often' speak up (Q9a) and enjoyed the lively discussion. Many enjoyed the social aspect of the focus groups, confirming that such methods can become 'social events' with elements of fun and novelty (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Longhurst, 1996).

Still, on rare occasions, there were individuals who adopted a role of an 'expert' (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Holbrook and Jackson, 1996), shifting the focus of the discussion and challenging the role of the facilitator. Overall, it was confirmed that a particular individual within a group can influence the attitude adopted by other participants, either encouraging a constructive debate acknowledging multiple viewpoints, or a rather dismissive one, focusing on the negative where greater interference of the facilitator is necessary.

Walking discussions

Removing the participants from the traditional a-mobile location of a meeting room and placing them in-situ in the environment under discussion appeared to have reduced the typical power dynamics. Apart from the fact that the walking discussion groups were smaller and as such offered the participants more opportunities to actively engage in the debates, the discussions took on a more conversational style, which appeared to level possible inequalities. An informal, yet professional rapport was created between the facilitator and the participants. Although the groups may have been (unintentionally) slightly homogenous in terms of their participants – one with four students and a visitor, the second with all students and third with all staff – the discussions were freer flowing and more natural than those in the focus groups[18]. Talking whilst walking proved difficult - the groups tended to break up into smaller groups while mobile[19]. Thus most of the discussions took place while stopping at key locations along the route. The group stood in a loose circle, some participants slightly wandering off to look around and returning again, creating a relaxed atmosphere where participants appeared comfortable. If any of the individuals were shy in their nature, this was not apparent as all actively engaged in the sessions.

Overall, the power dynamics were realised differently in the two methods. A more 'equal' atmosphere was achieved during the walking discussions, while the more traditional power inequalities remained in the focus groups.

5.5.1.2 Content of the discussions and probing

Both methods generated extensive and detailed narratives. To ensure that certain topics were covered, the facilitator followed a pre-prepared structure for both methods (Appendix 4f, 4g). It allowed for a flexible discussion and for other themes to emerge spontaneously during the sessions.

> *'Focus groups are naturalistic rather than natural events and cannot and should not be left to chance and circumstance; their naturalism has to be carefully contrived by the researcher.'*
>
> (Bloor *et al.*, 2001: 57)

[18] All focus groups were diverse in terms of staff and students, gender, ages and ethnicities. Therefore, the 'authenticity' of the walking discussions was attributed primarily to their in-situ nature rather than the group composition.

[19] Talking while walking is more likely to take place during one-to-one interactions (Kusenbach, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Carpiano, 2009) rather than in a group setting.

Focus groups

Instead of just ‘orchestrating’ the flow of contributions from different participants and ensuring they remained relevant (Burgess, 1996; Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999; Finch and Lewis, 2003), the facilitator had to provide considerable direction during the focus groups. She brought up topics, probed (Bernard, 2002; De Leon and Cohen, 2005), encouraged participants to speak and asked for clarifications and ideas on how identified issues could be dealt with. Two of the focus groups considered primarily negative aspects, focusing on a particular topic[20]. Without the facilitator’s interference, there was sometimes little constructive progression to the discussion, as participants diverted to more generic themes. Although providing substance and context to their opinions, these themes were less useful in terms of how the campus could be improved in an actionable manner. Still, taking the discussions in an aggregated format, participants came up with suggestions for improvements, however these often needed to be elicited by the facilitator.

Walking discussions

Current debates of mobile methods centre on what value these methods can bring to the research enquiry and whether they are capable of obtaining data different to that generated through non-mobile methods (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008). The walking discussions provided evidence supporting the argument that in-situ mobile methods influence what data is produced during the session (Objective 3 of Phase 1[21]). Although the operationalisation of the methods was not ideal, strong patterns in terms of the quality of data could still be identified.

Following a fixed route[22], the facilitator introduced the various themes in the order which seemed appropriate to the environment the group was passing through. The structure remained flexible to what participants brought up themselves, however upon reflection it was realised it may have been imposed too strongly. Public spaces tended to be discussed on several occasions, as different spaces were passed through, while for example way-finding was explored when standing near a navigation sign. Most of the conversations took place while standing in particular locations.

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[20] For example university facilities and services (FG1) or the inconsistencies in the university’s design and the way it promotes itself (FG2).
[21] Objective 3: Explore whether in-situ methods may benefit consultations about regeneration of urban public spaces, and if so, how.
[22] The route could be altered based on the participants’ wishes, however this option was not taken up. For details of the exact route, see Appendix 4g.

As identified in the literature (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Inwood and Martin, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Moles, 2008), the surrounding environment played an active role in the interaction, which could be viewed as a three way conversation – between the researcher, participants and the environment (Hall *et al.*, 2006). Sometimes the surrounding natural and built environment became a 'walking probe' (De Leon and Cohen, 2005) and a non-human actant within the discussions, prompting certain topics. Objects or certain places are viewed as non-verbal 'material probes'[23], which can stimulate responses from participants with a minimal influence from the researcher. Even 'the most mundane locations and the events that occur at them can elicit rich responses' (ibid., p. 203), as the embodied and multi-sensory experience can not only explore the present, but create paths into the participants' memories, as well as their imagined futures (Anderson and Moles, 2008; Ross *et al.*, 2009; Moles, 2010).

During all the walks, participants interacted with the surrounding environment and referred to it repeatedly in the debates. In WD1, participants made almost seventy direct references to the surrounding environment – these consisted of comments and observations often accompanied by place adverbs such as 'here' and 'there', where participants pointed out aspects supporting their argument. These did not necessarily serve as prompts encouraging particular discussion topics, but provided evidence and more context to what was being said. From these, nineteen references to the surrounding environment served as 'walking probes', causing an instantaneous reaction to the surrounding environment, where participants perhaps noticed something previously unfamiliar. These reactions sometimes altered the course of the discussion, adding additional topics to the general structure. While in WD1 participants engaged with the surrounding environment extensively, in the remaining two walks with three participants each, this happened less. In both WD2 and WD3, thirty-two references to the surrounding environment were made (about half compared to WD1), from which only seven were considered as 'walking probes'. In order to demonstrate the value of the method in terms of its ability to capture public input influenced by the participants' interaction with the micro-geographies of the research site, Table 5d.1 in Appendix 5d presents some examples of direct references to the surrounding environment and some 'triggers' prompting the discussion of certain topics.

[23] 'Material probes' prompt and motivate participants to share information, where 'the goal is not to learn about the object or place but instead to learn about the information through the object or place' (De Leon and Cohen, 2005: 200).

There are several possible explanations to the varied interaction with the surrounding environment. Firstly, the participants of the first group could have been generally more attentive. Secondly, the size of the first group may have allowed participants to engage more openly with their surroundings, as they could look around while other participants were speaking. In the smaller groups, participants tended to look at each other while talking. Thirdly, the weather was rainy during the second and third walk, where more attention could have been paid to avoiding puddles and vision may have been obscured. As such, the weather itself could be viewed as another non-human actant. Although weather was identified as the worst aspect of the walking discussion by the participants (Q3), in their view it did not decrease the method's effectiveness.

Lastly, reflecting-on-action, the facilitator herself may have sometimes intervened in the discussions more than necessary[24]. However, it was observed that the external environment often prompted comments which closely corresponded to the structure prepared by the researcher. This suggests that a considerably more flexible approach, with minimal interference from the facilitator, could be adopted in the future. The space itself may then play a greater role in generating the themes to be discussed and as a result the discussion may reflect more closely what is of importance to the participants and thus respond more to their own perspectives, rather than the researcher's.

Being in-situ had a more general influence on the data generated, too. Although the facilitator sometimes had to probe for more detail, conversations often flowed quite freely when topics of particular interest were brought up. The first-hand experience appeared to keep the participants focused on the purpose of the discussion – to explore their views on the campus and ideas on how it could be improved. As such, participants did not tend to wander off on less relevant topics as was the case in the focus groups, and always linked back to the original point. They were more attentive to the wider spatial context. For example, rather than thinking about the appearance of individual buildings, participants viewed them in relation to each other, thinking about them more holistically (for an indicative discussion, see Table 5d.2 in Appendix 5d).

Often pointing to specific examples within the actual space, the geographical context was made more explicit in the participants' opinions. Their opinions also appeared

[24] This was a question of quality of facilitation, rather than a structural feature of the method itself.

more informed and realistic (Frankova *et al.*, 2013). While focus group participants often discussed whether being 'compact' was an advantage or a disadvantage of the campus, in the walking discussions, participants tended to admit that certain things within the campus were unlikely to change and as such acknowledged the situation as it was. Instead of being perhaps dismissive about a particular issue, walking discussion participants were more reflexive (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Adams, 2009) and demonstrated an awareness of the constraints of individual locations (Table 5d.3 in Appendix 5d).

Many participants shared their local knowledge in terms of the heritage within the campus and their appreciation for aspects which made the campus as well as the city unique. The discussions went beyond simple statements and comments[25] and provided a more detailed, personal and emotional dimension to the everyday use of the campus.

On topics of particular interest, the participants bounced ideas off each other, resulting in a discussion considerably more creative than those in the focus groups. This applied especially when discussing a particular pedestrian subway underneath the ring road (Figure 5.13). Focus group participants were generally very negative and dismissive about it, perceiving it as unsafe and a 'necessary evil', with some general suggestions to improve the lighting and add CCTV. On the contrary walking discussion participants were considerably more imaginative. They came up with several ideas, which could be quite confidently attributed to their presence in the subway. In addition to better lighting, they suggested using bright colours to repaint the subway, add a university logo and a map, which would show where the subway leads to, use the subway as an art space for professional graffiti artists or art students from the university, add reflective mirrors to particular locations to increase visibility and others. They also acknowledged that the visibility in the particular subway was relatively good, the subway was relatively tidy and wider than other ones. As such, being in-situ made the participants view the space as it was at that moment in time, rather than relying on memory or general perception, as was the case in the focus groups. Hobsbawm (1997) discussed memory recollections in oral histories and claimed that they can be subject to exaggeration and be inherently flawed. On the contrary, memory can be reliable in cases where the individual has

[25] Which could be viewed as the type of public input generated by the online form, kiosk, text message, on-street event and sometimes the e-mail and photo diary.

personal interest in the topic explored (Thompson, 2000). Still, being in-situ avoids relying on memory and the possible exaggeration or inaccuracies.

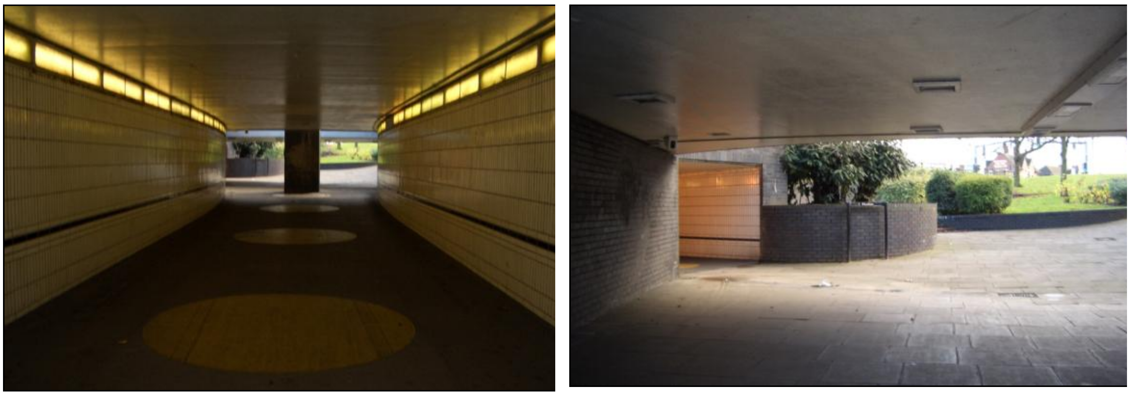

Figure 5.13: *Subway on Whitefriars Street*

Overall, walking discussion participants tended to come up with diverse as well as constructive suggestions for improvement, often with a variety of options, with considerable detail and background reasoning. As one participant stated, ‘it makes it easier to visualise options when walking physically in the space’. Although representing lay knowledge which may be sometimes considered of lesser importance (Day, 1997; Rydin and Pennington, 2000; Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007), the participants demonstrated the ability to consider a wide range of perspectives that are important for the everyday use of public spaces, generating legitimate as well actionable information.

5.5.1.3 Data patterns between focus groups and walking discussions

Some more generic patterns between the data generated in the focus groups and walking discussions could be identified.

Firstly, when talking about well known, familiar or generally popular places – for example University Square (Table 5.26) - the views shared did not generally differ between the two methods. Such places appeared to be well placed within the focus group participants’ memories and being ex-situ did not appear to negatively influence their knowledge of the square (Thompson, 2000). The opinions were generally positive and some participants easily recalled more specific design features within the space, too (Table 5e.1, Appendix 5e).

Secondly, when discussing spaces that were either new or unfamiliar – for example a new public space by a staff car park (Table 5e.2, Appendix 5e) – walking discussion participants appeared to present a more balanced view and shared more constructive comments than those in the focus groups. Relying on memory or a photographic prompt rather than a first-hand experience, focus group participants tended to be dismissive. Although it cannot be said that walking discussion participants were enthusiastic about the space, they identified its good aspects and proposed how it could be improved, or how the particular design could be altered to create future campus spaces. The same pattern was observed in case of the subway, presented above.

5.5.1.4 Informing during consultations

As in the case of the on-street event, the provision of information during the focus groups and walking discussions played a more extensive role than originally anticipated. The general prompting question 'Have you noticed any changes happening around the campus? If so, do you know what is happening?' often revealed that although participants were aware of building work, their knowledge was very limited or inaccurate[26]. As such, the sessions often provided 'new' information about the developments at the campus. Participants appeared to value this information, since the majority put down 'learning something new about the campus' as the major benefit of the methods (Q2). In fact, participants as well as academics have recognised 'learning' as one of the major advantages of a number of different engagement processes (Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Longhurst, 1996; Lowndes *et al.*, 1998, 2001b; Rowe *et al.*, 2004; Collins and Ison, 2009)

Without some campus redevelopment information, both methods would be less effective at eliciting public views. Object probes in the form of artists' impressions of the new buildings became valuable non-human actants (Figure 5.14 and Figure 5.15), as without them the participants, especially in the focus groups, would have had little to refer to. Walking discussion participants had the opportunity to compare the images with the progress of the building work in-situ and as such could comment more extensively within context.

[26] While those from a particular faculty appeared well informed about the construction of 'their new building', others had incomplete word-of-mouth information.

Images removed

Figure 5.14: *Object probes – images - Engineering and Computing building (Source: Skyscraper City, 2009)*

Figure 5.15: *Object probes – images - Student Enterprise Building (SEB) (Source: Skyscraper City, 2008)*

Furthermore, both methods proved informative for the facilitator[27], too. Although having been briefed by the Estates Department, participants provided additional information[28]. As such, in some parts the sessions took form of a more two-way conversation between the facilitator and certain participants, rather than a one-way information process that Rowe and Frewer (2005) advocate is typical for consultations. It could be argued that some form of information exchange would be difficult to avoid in a face-to-face interaction, be it in a one-to-one or a group setting. Although the elicitation of local or personal knowledge is central to consultations, more factual information can be also gathered. Therefore, not only did ‘information provision’ and the ‘opportunity for learning’ (for participants and researcher) appear to influence effectiveness, but they could be also viewed as a form of personal

[27] Through mutual learning, public as well as organisational knowledge may be enhanced (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Rowe *et al.*, 2005; 2008).
[28] This information usually came from different staff members who were actively involved in the redevelopment of the campus.

empowerment (Section 2.2.3), which may not be restricted only to participation methods (Colenutt and Cutten, 1994; Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Lyons *et al.*, 2001; Taylor, 2003b; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). The evidence from this research, as well as from previous studies (Rowe *et al.*, 2004, 2008) suggests that learning as part of a consultation may facilitate personal empowerment, too. As such, some consultation methods may have a similar impact on the general public as a more extensive participation process would. This would correspond with some of the criticisms[29] of hierarchical models such as Arnstein's (1969), where power over final decisions is presented as the ultimate aim, rather than viewing the different levels of public involvement as a 'suite of options' to choose from depending on the situation (Wilcox, 1994; Bishop and Davis, 2002). The interactions that took place during the focus groups and walking discussions were in no way tokenistic. Furthermore, informing and consultation may be viewed as more closely tied together than Rowe and Frewer's (2005) and Arnstein's (1969) models suggest.

5.5.1.5 Methodological practicalities

The different sessions showed that while activities using maps and post-it notes enlivened the focus groups, they appeared excessive during the walking discussions. For consistency, maps were used to indicate favourite and least liked areas in both methods. However, in the walking discussions the map was not used any further and the information could have been easily obtained verbally. The actual movement from place to place provided the necessary stimulus to keep the discussion dynamic. Overall, the walking discussions pointed towards simplicity in its conduct, alleviating the need for any other materials.

For the researcher, both methods required an equal amount of preparation. Direct recruitment of participants was challenging, but generally of the sort applicable to all methods requiring the presence of a group of participants (Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Kong; 1998). Focus groups required setting up of the venue and provision of refreshments. This was avoided for the walking discussion, however the facilitator needed to remember the content of the sessions, as referring to notes while moving was challenging. Overall, the operationalisation of the walking discussions was considered smoother than conducting a focus group. Additionally, the data generated during the walking discussions appeared more useful for the context of regenerating

[29] Connor (1988), Bishop and Davis (2002), Tritter and McCallum (2006), Collins and Ison (2009)

urban public spaces. However, without the use of voice recorders, a large quantity of that information would have been lost (Finch and Lewis, 2003; Conradson, 2005).

The structure for both focus groups and walking discussions perhaps covered more topics than was feasible to discuss properly in the time available. Some focus group participants pointed this out in the evaluation form. As such, some themes may have not been discussed to the depth that participants would have hoped for. Furthermore, with this structure, it was challenging to identify which themes would have been of particular interest to the participants themselves, and limited the role of walking probes in the walking discussions.

In view of the more context specific, relevant and actionable data generated using the walking discussions, together with the more ‘equal’ power and group dynamics and other identified benefits, the walking discussion is viewed as more effective than the focus group at consulting the public about urban public space regeneration. It needs to be acknowledged that the benefits of the in-situ approach may not be realised in certain contexts. This would be the case of developing clear sites. However, in cases where regeneration is concerned with improving existing sites, the method would constitute an appropriate approach to take. One photo diary participant pointed out that the method was restricted to responding to what was already in the space, which would generally apply to the walking discussion, too. However, the method appears ‘appropriate for idea generation for site improvements as well as for post-occupancy evaluations’ (Frankova *et al.*, 2013).

5.5.1.6 Participant demographics

There were 24 focus group and 11 walking discussion participants. Students formed more than half of the participants (Table 5.30) – 54.2% (n = 13) in focus groups and 63.6% (n = 7) in walking discussions. The rest were staff. Slightly more men took part than women – 66.7% (n = 16) in focus groups and 63.6% (n = 7) in walking discussions (Table 5.31). More than half of participants in each method were aged between 18 and 29 years – 58.3% (n = 14) for focus groups and 54.5% for walking discussions (n = 6) (Table 5.32). Other age groups were also represented. White British participants prevailed – 54.2% (n = 13) in focus groups and 72.7% (n = 8) in walking discussions, followed by White Other. There were also Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean and African participants (Table 5.33). Only one participant, in a focus group, claimed to have a disability (Table 5.34). Once again, the participant profile was generally in line with the student and staff profile of the university (Appendix 4c), although the number of male participants was higher.

The sample was limited to those who were available at the time of the particular sessions. As already mentioned, the personal characteristics of the individual participants as well as group composition and group dynamics had an influence on the effectiveness of the methods. However, this would apply to any group-based method. The findings suggest that in this case, by challenging the typical power dynamics, the level of immersion in the space under discussion was more influential when establishing the effectiveness of the focus group and walking discussion.

Table 5.30: Status – Are you a…?

	FG Freq	WD Freq	Total Freq	FG %	WD %	Total %
Student	13	7	20	54.2	63.6	57.1
Staff	10	3	13	41.7	27.3	37.1
Visitor	1	1	2	4.2	9.1	5.7
Total	24	11	35	100	100	100

Table 5.31: Gender

	FG Freq	WD Freq	Total Freq	FG %	WD %	Total %
Male	16	7	23	66.7	63.6	65.7
Female	8	4	12	33.3	36.4	34.3
Total	24	11	35	100	100	100

Table 5.32: Age

	FG Freq	WD Freq	Total Freq	FG %	WD %	Total %
Under 18						
18 - 29	14	6	20	58.3	54.5	57.1
30 - 39	2	1	3	8.3	9.1	8.6
40 - 49	4	1	5	16.7	9.1	14.3
50 - 59	3	1	4	12.5	9.1	11.4
60+	1	2	3	4.2	18.2	8.6
Total	24	11	35	100	100	100

Table 5.33: Ethnicity							
		FG Freq	**WD Freq**	**Total Freq**	**FG %**	**WD %**	**Total %**
1	White - British	13	8	21	54.2	72.7	60
2	White - Irish	1		1	4.2		2.9
3	White - Other	6	3	9	25.0	27.3	25.7
4	Mixed - White & Black Caribbean						
5	Mixed - White & Asian						
6	Mixed - White & Black African						
7	Mixed - Other						
8	Asian or Asian British - Indian						
9	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1		1	4.2		2.9
10	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi						
11	Asian or Asian British - Other	1		1	4.2		2.9
12	Black or Black British - Caribbean	1		1	4.2		2.9
13	Black or Black British - African	1		1	4.2		2.9
14	Black or Black British - Other						
15	Chinese						
16	Any other						
	Total	24	11	35	100	100	100

Table 5.34: Disability						
	FG Freq	**WD Freq**	**Total Freq**	**FG %**	**WD %**	**Total %**
Yes	1		1	4.2		2.9
No	23	11	34	95.8	100	97.1
Total	24	11	35	100	100	100

Although it may appear that the focus group and walking discussion used in the context of urban regeneration could appeal more to individuals already interested in the built environment or its development, according to Table 5.36 (next section), less than a quarter of the participants paid much attention to their surrounding environment prior to taking part in this research. As such, these methods may attract a wide range of people, including those who may not have given much consideration to their surrounding environment before.

5.5.2 Participant perspective

All participants filled out the evaluation forms.

With one exception, all focus group participants found the focus group useful or beneficial (Q1). Eleven specifically referred to gaining new information and better awareness of the future developments at the campus, i.e. personal learning. Seven found the interaction with other participants interesting, sharing their own and hearing others' opinions. Walking discussion participants also valued personal learning and sharing opinions with others. Furthermore, seven out of eleven identified the benefit of being taken out of a 'neutral' environment into the environment under discussion, getting a different view of the campus, discovering areas they were unaware of and having the opportunity to 'externalise' their opinions. Overall, both methods brought some personal benefit to the participants.

- *I've learned much more about the developments at the university and had a good tour of the layout. (WD)*

For both methods, participants liked the actual discussion, interaction with other people, sharing of ideas and opinions and learning from each other (Q2). The atmosphere was viewed as friendly (FGs) or casual (WDs) but still offering sufficient structure to the discussion.

Half the focus group participants did not specify anything they did not like about it (Q3). However, some claimed there were limited opportunities for discussions, with either too much focus on negative aspects or lack of time to explore other topics. Some pointed to group power dynamics. The weather conditions were seen as the major negative of the walking discussion, raised by seven out of ten participants. One participant mentioned the traffic noise sometimes obscuring the discussions.

Around two thirds of all participants were very satisfied with the recruitment process, the rest were satisfied (Q4a) and the times of the sessions were convenient or very convenient to the majority of participants (Q5a). The reminders as well as the reminder on the day were found useful.

The majority of participants found the contact time of 2 hours appropriate[30] ('about right') (Q6a).

The quality of facilitation was rated positively and divided almost equally between 'good' and 'excellent' for both methods (Q7a)[31]. Furthermore, the majority of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the topics covered during the sessions were relevant (Q8a). All participants could relate to what was being discussed during the sessions (Q10a). Further comments implied that since all the participants were linked to the university, they could find common ground. Another viewed the photos used during the focus group session helpful, pointing to the images and their role as a non-human actant in the execution of the method.

- *Clarification was offered. The site photos were a big help. (FG)*

54% (n = 13) of focus group participants claimed they could 'always' speak up when they wanted to, followed by 42% (n = 10), who 'often' had the chance to speak up (Q9a). Over 90% (n = 10) of walking discussion participants claimed they 'always' had the chance to speak. Apart from three individuals who claimed to have felt nervous or shy, everybody felt comfortable speaking up in front of the others (Q9b). This was especially applicable in terms of the walking discussion, where groups were considerably smaller and thus more casual. Focus group and walking discussion participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were given the opportunity to fully express their opinions (Q12a). The division was almost equal for both methods.

Considering group dynamics, the participants were split almost evenly into two groups who either strongly agreed or agreed that the discussion with other participants was interesting and stimulating (Q11a). This applied to both methods and together with responses to some of the other questions, there is a strong indication that the discussions with other participants are an important as well as an enjoyable part of the consultation session. Although the discussion had not necessarily changed people's opinions (Q11b), in some cases it had confirmed or even reinforced them based on consensus with other participants.

[30] This included introductions and filling out of the evaluations.
[31] The participants were reminded that their responses were going to inform an effectiveness evaluation and as such were requested to be as honest as possible in their responses. The questionnaires were anonymous; however there is a possibility that some participants did not want to be openly critical about the researcher's facilitation abilities.

- *Broadened my perspective of the campus as an entity, rather than its component parts. (FG)*

However, participants claimed to feel more informed through the sessions, which possibly made them think about issues they had not given much consideration before.

Some responses indicated that the 'outcome' of the sessions, i.e. that findings would inform this research and would be passed on to the relevant university department, could have been articulated more clearly (Q13a). Generally, more than 70% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the outcome of the session was made clear to them. Still, in case of focus groups, around 20% of respondents were not sure or disagreed that the outcome of the session was clear, which was mirrored for the walking discussion, too (Table 5.35).

Table 5.35: The outcome of the focus group/walking discussion was made clear at the end of the session. (Q13a)

	Focus group	**Walking discussion**	**Focus group**	**Walking discussion**
	Freq	**Freq**	**%**	**%**
Strongly agree	9	2	37.5	18.2
Agree	10	6	41.7	54.5
Not sure	4	1	16.7	9.1
Disagree	1	1	4.2	9.1
Strongly disagree		1		9.1
Total	24	11	100	100

Generally, participants claimed they were sure their concerns would be passed on to the Estates Department, but were not convinced that they would be acted upon (Q13b), demonstrating awareness of financial and resource barriers. Still, participants remained hopeful their comments would be taken into consideration.

In terms of changes in personal attitudes (Q14) (Table 5.36), 62.5% (n = 15) of focus group and 72.7% (n = 8) of walking discussion participants claimed they were likely to pay more attention to the surrounding environment after attending a consultation session. Two focus group participants added that they were keen to explore the areas that were discussed and that were unfamiliar to them. The findings suggest that although the focus groups were held ex-situ, the participants' interest and inclination to look around may have been raised.

- *I will actually, yes, I've not thought too much into the uni environment - not as much as today. (WD)*

Table 5.36: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after attending this session? (Q14)				
	Focus group	**Walking discussion**	**Focus group**	**Walking discussion**
	Freq	Freq	%	%
Yes	15	8	62.5	72.7
No	2	1	8.3	9.1
Already did	6	2	25.0	18.2
Missing	1		4.2	
Total	24	11	100.0	100.0

Overall experience was positive for all the participants. More than half had a 'good' experience, while the remaining participants had an 'excellent' experience (Q15):

- *Overall, I'm very satisfied with the way group discussion passed. I found it very useful because I was told a lot of information that I didn't even know about. (FG)*

Half of the focus group participants thought it an 'effective' method (Table 5.37), with further 29% (n = 7) who considered it 'very effective'. Over half of walking discussion participants (n = 6) considered it to be a 'very effective' method, followed by 27% (n = 3) who saw it as 'effective'. Although the number of walking discussion participants was considerably lower, percentage-wise the effectiveness of the walking discussion as a consultation method appears to be viewed higher than that of the focus group.

Table 5.37: How effective do you think a focus group/walking discussion would be at consulting the public about improving public spaces? (Q16)				
	Focus group	**Walking discussion**	**Focus group**	**Walking discussion**
	Freq	**Freq**	**%**	**%**
Very effective	7	6	29.2	54.5
Effective	12	3	50.0	27.3
Not sure	3	2	12.5	18.2
Not effective	2		8.3	
Not effective at all				
Total	24	11	100	100

The methods' benefits (Q17) that participants listed corresponded with the responses to Q2. Five out of eleven walking discussion participants specifically highlighted the benefit of being in the space under discussion and their ability to directly relate to what was being talked about.

- *Generally being in the physical space that is being discussed makes it easy to make a direct connection. (WD)*

The disadvantages (Q18) and barriers to participation (Q19) identified by participants of both methods corresponded with the well-established limitations of group-based mechanisms and public involvement in general[32]. Additionally, focus group participants acknowledged that the points raised may not actually address the practicalities of development and may not be translated into action, due to space, financial and other limitations. Still, about a fifth of participants could not think of any disadvantages. Operational challenges to the walking discussions concerned poor weather and possible mobility problems of participants (mentioned by more than half of participants), however areas with restricted access could be tested out with participants with mobility problems[33].

Over 70% of focus group participants (n = 17) and nine out of eleven walking discussion participants stated that they would be inclined to take part in a focus group or walking discussion again (Q20).

- *I feel this method is successful and allows people to air views on things they can actually see. (WD)*

Overall, participant evaluations of both methods yielded similar results. Both focus groups and walking discussions were rated positively by the participants and interaction with other participants, learning and exchange of views were identified as their main advantages. Around 80% rated the methods as 'effective' or 'very effective' at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces. Over 60% of participants also claimed they are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment after attending a consultation session. The majority of

[32] These included influence of group composition on representativeness and group dynamics, power relations, apathy, lack of confidence and communication skills, time, mobility and access constraints, difficulties in reaching a consensus and others (Goss, 1996; Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Lowndes *et al.*, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Chess and Purcell, 1999; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Bennett, 2002; Newburn and Jones, 2002; Finch and Lewis, 2003).
[33] It should be noted that the majority of the 5.5% disabled students experienced disabilities that were 'non-physical' (Figures 4c.2 and 4c.6 in Appendix 4c). Nevertheless, people with mobility issues were not represented in the sample.

participants had personally benefited from the experience and both methods offered opportunities to express opinions. However, great value was placed on the opportunities to ‘externalise’ opinions offered by the walking discussion.

5.5.3 Summary and Implications for Phase 2

The interactive nature of the focus group and walking discussion made it possible for the facilitator to ‘reflect-in-action’ and influence the quality of the data generated, by seeking clarifications, encouraging further information and increasing relevance, location specification, clarity and actionability. An opportunity for dialogue was seen as beneficial, also because the participants and the researcher could learn from each other. However, placing walking discussions in-situ appears to aid the generation of more contextualised, informed and realistic public input. The surrounding environment acts as a prompt and plays an active role in inspiring certain topics, relevant for regeneration of urban public space. As Carpiano (2009: 271) argued, combining a ‘go-along’ with a focus group ‘may be a particularly useful way for residents to communicate opinions and ideas regarding community development initiatives to policy makers and stakeholders’, which Phase 1 confirmed. Furthermore, walking discussions confirmed that mobile methods ‘offer critical information about place and space that simply does not emerge in interviews or focus groups in fixed locations’ (Inwood and Martin, 2010: 5). Focus groups tended to focus more on the negatives within the campus environment, where suggestions for improvement often had to be elicited by the facilitator using targeted questions. On the contrary, during the walking discussions the facilitator could have taken a step back to allow the surrounding environment guide the discussion more, as it was observed that the facilitator’s structure might have sometimes limited, rather than encouraged, the discussion. Overall, the information yielded through the walking discussions could be considered as more useful to professionals who aim to address the deficiencies in urban public spaces (Frankova *et al.*, 2013).

Disadvantages of both methods appeared to be linked to specific power and group dynamics that are generated by those involved, rather than the actual method per se. However, by placing the walking discussion in a mobile and outdoor setting, such power dynamics appeared to be challenged and improved.

Focus groups have received extensive attention in the past (Section 3.3.6) and have also been evaluated more formally (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004). In most instances, findings from Phase 1 confirmed already published material and as such it is unlikely that anything new may be added through further testing in Phase 2. However, the focus groups provided ex-situ 'control' groups against which the potential benefit of consulting the public *in-situ* (via a walking discussion) could be identified. It was revealed that public input generated in-situ tends to be more relevant, actionable and context specific than that obtained ex-situ. As such, the walking discussion appears more effective at yielding quality public input for urban public space regeneration.

As identified previously, there is a clear gap in knowledge regarding the application of mobile and in-situ approaches. Although political and practical forces encourage the development of mobile methods (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008), which are considered as capable of capturing information useful to policymakers, planners and designers, they do not yet appear to be used extensively for consultation purposes. The findings from Phase 1 point to data which could indeed be useful to practitioners in physical regeneration. Additionally, the method was viewed as effective and enjoyable by the participants themselves and did not require greater preparation than the focus group. As such, the walking discussion is considered as suitable for further evaluation of its effectiveness and how this could be improved (Objective 4 of Phase 1)[34]. Results from Phase 1 have also pointed to the aspects of the method which could be altered and explored in a new context with different participants in Phase 2, as outlined here.

Firstly, the results pointed to the importance of simplicity of method. Walking discussions did not need any additional activities to encourage interaction. Therefore, the use of maps could be removed. Secondly, lack of time was identified as one of the possible barriers to participation by the participants. Although they generally agreed that two hours were 'about right', there were some indications that the sessions could have been shorter. In response, it could be explored whether a 'shorter' walking discussion would affect the method's effectiveness. Thirdly, the discussions indicated that due to the embodied experience of being in-situ, participants often brought up topics themselves. The facilitator may have sometimes negatively interfered with the natural progression of these discussions by working to

[34] Objective 4: Based on the findings, identify methods to be further tested for their effectiveness in Phase 2.

a 'script'. Therefore, in the next phase, the facilitator should refrain from directing the conversation and let the topics emerge spontaneously. Such information is likely to be more connected to the participants' needs, expectations and aspirations, rather than those of the sponsors.

Walking discussions will be tested again, with the above alterations, in Phase 2, to evaluate whether they influence effectiveness, or whether the findings from Phase 1 will be re-confirmed.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the evaluation framework was used to triangulate findings from three perspectives and discuss the effectiveness of eight consultation methods (Objective 3, part 1). The findings indicated that an 'acceptable balance' between the available perspectives was not necessarily achieved for all methods (Objective 1 of Phase 1[35]). Presenting the findings in relation to the effectiveness definition[36], the extent to which the general characteristics of effectiveness were met varied between the individual methods. This is explored below and demonstrates that methods are unlikely to meet all the characteristics equally, confirming the challenges of establishing method effectiveness (Rowe and Frewer, 2000).

All the methods tested in Phase 1 achieved the intended purpose of consulting the public about campus regeneration. However, the data captured by the electronic kiosk suggested that its purpose may have been misunderstood because of its location, which resulted in decreased data quality. None of the methods were statistically representative, however due to its qualitative nature, achieving representativeness was not the aim of this research (Section 4.2.2.1). However, a varied sample of participants was often involved. The 'fairness' of the individual methods was addressed by being transparent about the way the generated data was going to be used. Participants generally pointed to being clear about the outcomes of the individual methods[37], partly confirming their belief that the study was conducted with serious intent. With the exception of the on-street event, which did not explore

[35] Objective 1: Using the evaluation framework, explore individual methods' effectiveness in terms of data quality, participants' and researcher's perspectives and any other aspects that may emerge during their application in the field.

[36] In Section 4.2.2.1 an effective consultation method was defined as one that achieves its intended purpose, is fair and representative, gives participants the opportunity to express their views, maximises relevant information and brings participants personal benefit.

[37] However, walking discussion and focus group participants indicated that the outcomes could have been expressed more clearly at the end of the sessions.

the participant perspective, participants confirmed that all the methods gave them the opportunity to express their views. The photo diary, focus group and walking discussion also brought some personal benefits – personal learning in particular was raised in the case of the focus group and walking discussion.

Data quality varied between the individual methods and was evaluated using the different data quality criteria. The kiosk was the most popular (most 'interacted with') from the electronic methods, however it generated the highest rate of irrelevant comments. As such, its input was not necessarily useful. Online form and e-mail both collected relevant comments, but the uptake of these methods was small. Text message was hardly used at all and thus considered ineffective[38]. The on-street event gathered relatively generic input with little suggestions for improvement. However, it was balanced in terms of sentiment. The photo diary yielded relevant, actionable and balanced public input, combining textual comments with images serving as evidence. Finally, in comparison to the focus groups, walking discussions were viewed as generating more focused, actionable and realistic comments, attentive to context. Data quality could be influenced by non-human actants such as the surrounding environment or photographic cameras.

Although the thematic content generated by the individual methods was not of focus in this research, its aggregation and triangulation would have resulted in a very rich and valid dataset, as each method succeeded at gathering different types of data and thus contributed to the wider consultation. The electronic methods and the on-street event gathered data from a larger number of participants in comparison to the other methods but comprised mostly of generic 'surface' data. The photo diaries, focus groups and walking discussions generated data from a lesser number of participants, however it was more in-depth and generally of higher quality. Although the electronic methods and the on-street event may be viewed as more 'representative'[39], they did not necessarily generate a more constructive input into public space regeneration (Frankova *et al.*, 2013). Reflecting on the data quality, it could be argued that more in-depth data from a smaller number of participants may better inform the regeneration of urban public spaces.

[38] The limited uptake of these methods may be attributed at the promotional campaign not reaching the intended audience effectively, or public apathy.
[39] Still, the participant samples in all the methods tested in this research were too small to satisfy the 'representativeness' criterion.

In terms of Objective 2 of Phase 1[40], the very limited uptake of electronic mechanisms appeared to resonate with Lowndes *et al.*'s (1998; 2001a; 2001b) assertions of public apathy towards pro-active participation. Over the 12 week consultation period, only 128 valid comments were submitted, averaging at 10 comments per week. It could be argued that only a limited number of people, who have a particularly strong view they wish to share, are likely to participate pro-actively. As such, targeted recruitment – used for the remaining methods - may be more suitable.

The in-situ approaches of photo diaries and walking discussions were recognised as promising for consultations about urban public spaces (Objective 3 of Phase 1[41]). Being in-situ confirmed that participants engage with the surrounding environment in a different way than when ex-situ. Participants appreciate both the positive and negative aspects of spaces and tend to be more reflexive and creative while considering a broader range of options. The resultant public input is more detailed, balanced and realistic than from ex-situ approaches, potentially comprising more useful data for public space regeneration. However, further testing in a different scenario (and thus different contextual factors) is needed to either confirm or refute these claims, as the benefits may not be ratified when the methods are replicated.

Throughout the evaluation, various advantages and disadvantages of the eight individual methods, and potential explanations for them, were identified. Considering the limitations of the electronic methods, the on-street event and focus groups, compared to the benefits of the photo diary and the walking discussion, the latter two methods have been identified as the most effective at consulting the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces. At the same time, they offer the greatest potential for further development (Objective 4 of Phase 1[42]). Several ways in which the methods could be altered have been recognised. The intended alterations will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 7, which presents the methodology adopted in Phase 2 of this research. This will form the basis for further testing and evaluation in

[40] Objective 2: Examine the extent to which participants may be pro-active in a consultation process, especially in terms of using electronic mechanisms (e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk, text message.

[41] Objective 3: Explore whether in-situ methods may benefit consultations about regeneration of urban public spaces, and if so, how.

[42] Objective 4: Based on the findings, identify methods to be further tested for their effectiveness in Phase 2.

Phase 2 (Chapter 8), aiming to identify the factors particularly affecting their effectiveness.

Due to the ‘experimental’ nature of the tested consultation methods, the evaluation framework does not directly engage the perspective of the professionals. However, in order to provide a more practice-based perspective, supplementary interviews with several professionals were conducted. These are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

THE PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION, EFFECTIVENESS AND EVALUATION

6.1 Introduction

The evaluation framework utilised in this research covers primarily the perspectives of the participants and the researcher (or consultant) and data quality. In order to substantiate some of the claims and to ground the research in practice, eight professionals from the fields of community engagement, architecture, urban and landscape design, planning, regeneration and research, and one community champion, were interviewed about their experiences with public consultations and the ways in which effectiveness was examined in this context.

These interviews took place after Phase 1 and were used to inform the later stages of the research by providing a practical context for the research and contributing to the debates about methods' effectiveness.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the methodology adopted to conduct the interviews, followed by the interviewees' responses to the individual themes and their implications for the research.

6.2 Methodology

Phase 1 was informed primarily by academic literature. However, public consultation is conducted by a variety of professionals outside of academia. In principle and practice, public involvement is conceptually complex (Burton *et al.*, 2006). In order to get a spread of perspectives, several professionals involved in urban regeneration were interviewed on:

- the role of different methods adopted during consultation
- the evaluation of these methods

- the value they placed on public input and the attributes of this input
- their experience of using in-situ methods.

The interview schedules[1] (Appendix 6a) remained flexible as not all questions were applicable to all interviewees. The interviews were conducted following Coventry University's ethical policy (Appendix 6b).

Nine interviews were conducted between August and November 2011 – eight with professionals and one with a community champion. Each lasted approximately one hour and was voice recorded. Professionals were sourced from both private and public sectors from organizations located in the Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber. As a number of interviewees had worked in both the private and public sectors they were able to draw on experiences throughout their careers, not just their current roles. For some, their experience was international (see Appendix 6c for more detailed professional background of interviewees). All professionals were male. The community champion had been officially recognized for her contributions to regenerating her town and as such was viewed as representative of the 'community'.

Professionals interviewed included:

- 'Engagement officer 1' - public sector
- 'Engagement officer 2' - public sector
- 'Urban designer' (also a landscape architect/planner) – private consultancy
- 'Architect'– public sector
- 'Landscape architect' - public sector
- 'Regeneration officer' (chartered surveyor/regeneration/project delivery officer – public sector
- 'Urbanist' (also an architect/planner) – academia, research
- 'Research officer' – public sector
- 'Community champion'

[1] Two interview schedules were used – one for the professionals, another for the community champion.

Nine interviews were considered sufficient to represent the professional perspective - responses started to repeat as the interviews progressed and as such data saturation was achieved (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Wells, 1979; Hennink *et al.*, 2001).

6.3 Interview results

6.3.1 Experience with public consultations

All the interviewees had varying levels of experience with public consultations.

- The landscape architect claimed that he carried out most of the consultations concerning green spaces, cycle paths, play areas and similar.
- The architect was rarely involved and tended to rely on the clients' briefs, drawing on already processed data from consultations conducted by the client.
- The urban designer's involvement (similar to that of engagement officer 1) varied from project to project - sometimes an external public relations company was hired, in other cases consultation was done by the urban designer's own team.
- The regeneration officer and engagement officer 2 had experience with public meetings and consultation events.
- The community champion pro-actively consulted within her own community, but also participated in consultations delivered by external organisations.
- The research officer and urbanist had more indirect roles in public consultations, focusing on research or more strategic master planning, where contact with the public was limited.

Overall, the interviews demonstrated that in practice there is no systematic approach to public consultations and that direct engagement of individual professionals varies from case to case. Likewise, there is no standardised procedure to process results (research officer). In most projects, data manipulation can be fragmented, resulting in 'translation problems between the designer and the PR consultants' (urban designer) – corresponding to 'translation quality' (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). Although the architect and the urban designer would prefer 'raw data' or hearing public input first hand - to 'make sense of it' themselves and thus avoid the loss of clarity when it is processed by different people - this often depends on fee structures. As the urban designer admitted, 'as a consultant you can only do as much as the client is prepared to pay for'.

However, the importance of public consultation was not disputed, with four interviewees[2] particularly highlighting that consultation, and not just with the public but other stakeholders too, is not only imperative, but required in current practice:

> *'With projects of any sort of value or meaning, the city council stipulates that we do consult. We have a whole process.'*
>
> (Landscape architect)

Four professionals confirmed that apart from statutory and strategy documents that need to be updated, the majority of consultations are one-off (Rowe and Gammack, 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2005). This confirms that in individual projects - which tend to include improvements to the public realm - the general public is asked for a one-off input, rather than continuous feedback. This one-off consultation process was generally replicated in this research.

6.3.2 Consultation methods – importance, advantages, disadvantages, expectations

Focusing more specifically on the importance of the particular method in a consultation, the interviewees highlighted the layers of complexity (i.e. context) involved in every consultation and referred to the structural, administrative and social obstacles already identified by Oakley (1991). They mentioned the varied agendas of different stakeholders, the influence of the political situation, lack of skills and resources and others.

> *'The engagement of the consultation technique or process, I think in the public sector, many times in my experience, is not good at all.'*
>
> (Engagement officer 1)

The potential to choose specific methods in order to 'manipulate' the consultation and reach desired results was acknowledged by all interviewees. Although some stressed this was not their approach, others admitted it has happened in their experience on multiple occasions.

[2] Urban designer, landscape architect, regeneration officer and urbanist

Four professionals[3] stressed that a consultation method should use open-ended questions to allow the public to express their views openly. The landscape architect acknowledged that individuals interested in a particular project can provide a lot of information via a questionnaire. However, in case of limited public interest, they generate 'fragments of stuff which you can just about use'. Thus, discussions going beyond 'yes' or 'no' answers are preferred – although they may be more time consuming, they can uncover the 'real' issues. Professionals involved in actual design, i.e. the architect, landscape architect and urban designer, place particular value on dialogue and expressed preference for face-to-face interaction with the public over other less interactive mechanisms.

> *'I actually think most people prefer to talk face-to-face with people rather than in a public meeting or on the internet.'*
>
> (Architect)

However, discussions taking place in exhibitions, meetings and similar events are considered 'less transparent' (urban designer), possibly due to not being voice-recorded. Notes may be taken (architect), but a lot of information may be lost in the process. In this research, the challenge of effectively capturing public input was exemplified by the on-street event. However, the urban designer warned that:

> *'If we are not careful, all we end up doing is recording information rather than designing'.*

6.3.3 Criteria of effectiveness

The interviews aimed to explore the professionals' understanding of method effectiveness, as the literature review revealed a lack of appropriate evaluation criteria (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; Rowe and Frewer, 2000). 'Effectiveness' does not always need to be defined explicitly, but can be established in relation to different criteria or aspects that should be achieved (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004). As such, interviewees were not asked for 'their' definition of 'effectiveness', but 'On what criteria would you, personally, assess how effective a consultation method was?'. For most, this proved a thought provoking question.

[3] The urban designer, engagement officer 1, landscape architect and the research officer.

Interestingly, most participants responded in the same manner and with the same order of perceived importance. The majority listed the criteria explicitly, the rest implicitly. Overall, the criteria of effectiveness according to the professionals were:

1. Response rate, referring to the number of participants that take part in a particular consultation (or method). The research officer emphasised that these should be actively involved participants (seven interviewees).
2. The quality of the information, data, response or comments provided by the public (four interviewees explicitly, additional three implicitly).
3. The extent to which the public input is taken into consideration (four interviewees explicitly, additional one implicitly). The community activist expressed great scepticism over the influence public input can have, as ‘most of the time there is no result for a community like us’.

These criteria generally correspond with the ‘representativeness’ and ‘influence’ criteria (Rowe and Frewer, 2000). On the contrary, the quality of data, formally recognised by Horlick-Jones *et al.* (2007) but otherwise overlooked, was very highly rated by the interviewees. This further confirms the need to examine the quality of data generated by consultations to address current gaps in knowledge – an approach adopted in this research. Response rate and quality of data will be explored in more detail below.

Some additional criteria were also mentioned. The architect claimed that success could be assessed by a development being used after it is finished, ‘because people vote with their feet’. The urbanist brought up Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation, implying that professionals should be clear about the extent to which they are actually involving the general public - ‘never ever imply you are giving more power than you really are’. This corresponds to the criterion of ‘task definition’ (Rowe and Frewer, 2000).

The importance of clear and accurate communication was brought up by the majority of the interviewees, this being a prerequisite to achieving understanding. While most of the professionals referred to communication in the direction from the sponsor to the public (Rowe and Frewer, 2005), the community champion pointed to communication in the opposite direction and the willingness of the sponsor to listen to the views of the public:

> *'When it comes to communities, consultation is only effective if it agrees with the big people who are making the real decisions. They have to listen. And want to listen.'*

6.3.3.1 Response rate

Two professionals[4] raised the issue of response rates generally being low 'whatever you do' (regeneration officer), pointing to public apathy (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; 2001a; 2001b).

> *'If you are holding an event and you only get back twenty to fifty respondents, you can hardly say this is statistically a good cross-section of people to use the findings.'*
>
> (Urban designer)

An acceptable response rate was indicated at around 150 – 200 responses from an exhibition or a meeting (urban designer, engagement officer 2). The research officer claimed that 'at least a 100 people in an area with a reasonable randomness in their selection should be sufficient', adding that 'when you know the context, you know what the right number is'. The community champion recognised that 'a bad turnout is very easy to manipulate'. The landscape architect admitted that if a particular method does not result in a reasonable response, they would generally go for another.

6.3.3.2 Quality of data

Several questions explored the value professionals placed on public input, their expectations of the data collected through consultations and how it was processed. In terms of the value of public input, the engagement officer 1 put it simply as 'any information from the public is good'. All the professionals agreed[5] that the public is capable of generating useful and feasible ideas.

> *'I think they are in the best position to actually give suggestions and ideas for what they see fit for their area… they are the experts in the area, they are the eyes and the ears of the community.'*
>
> (Engagement officer 2)

[4] The landscape architect and regeneration officer.
[5] This question was not applicable to the community champion.

The landscape architect admitted that 'very few things are not useful', however many acknowledged that sometimes participants need some guidance to be able to contribute 'within the realms of reality'[6] (architect).

At the same time, professionals (apart from the engagement officer 2 and the community champion) expressed concern over unintentionally leading participants in certain directions. By providing examples to help the public think about an issue (urban designer), presenting a proposal (urbanist), providing a stimulus or asking questions that the participants may have not thought about (research officer) were all recognised as non-human actants already biasing the process. In fact, this was also observed in Phase 1 of this research, when the images used on the on-street event display influenced the focus of what the participants talked about.

The urbanist highlighted that the closer the decision or project is to the scale that people live their lives, the more effective their contribution is. This corresponded with the architect's slight scepticism towards the laypeople's knowledge of what they really want (Day, 1997; Rydin and Pennington, 2000). Together with the research officer, they both argued that a lot of people tend to focus on narrow and local issues that are relevant to their lives, but struggle to 'think big' or in a more abstract manner. The architect claimed it was the role of the professionals, who are 'trained to think ahead', to help the public understand what may be suitable. Nonetheless, most of the professionals[7] admitted to a certain level of arrogance being present in their trade.

Understanding of the public was considered key to generating useful feedback. Concurrently, it was recognised that in order to achieve understanding, information may be sometimes abbreviated or simplified or sometimes even withheld because of 'trade secrets', resulting in the public responding to incomplete information[8]. Overall, 'you can judge for the wrong reasons, which then affects the accuracy of the data that comes out the other end' (architect).

Keeping the above arguments in mind, professionals listed the following as attributes of valuable feedback or data quality:

[6] The urban designer, architect and landscape architect all used examples of consulting school children, who would welcome a Disneyland on their playground.
[7] Engagement officer 1, architect, regeneration officer, research officer and community champion.
[8] Architect, landscape architect, regeneration officer, research officer and urbanist.

- A lot of detail or depth – which aids in understanding the complexity of where the views are coming from and the reasons behind them (engagement officer 1, landscape architect)
- Clarity – 'being absolutely clear in what it is you want' (architect)
- Specific and constructive input – participants are specific and constructive in what they want; very vague positive or negative comments are considered unhelpful (urban designer, regeneration officer)
- Relevant comments – irrelevant comments may be those that are derogatory, political, or not relevant to the particular project (architect, regeneration officer, research officer)
- Balanced and fair input – presenting not just the negative or just the positive, but a balanced view (landscape architect, research officer)
- Historical aspects – historical knowledge of the local residents, how the place has changed and 'sense of place' (engagement officer 2, landscape architect)

Additionally, engagement officer 1 and the urban designer claimed they would welcome specific suggestions from the public.

> *'It would always help to ask people not just if they want something, but how they want it. And have a level of interaction with the would-be users in order to add a level of local intelligence.'*
>
> (Engagement officer 1)

When exploring the implications of the responses to this research, professionals rate data quality very highly despite this being rarely addressed in the literature. The listed 'preferred attributes' also closely correspond with those used to assess data quality in this research. Relevance and clarity were listed as important and the 'level of detail', being 'specific' and 'constructive' closely link with 'actionability'. Whether a balanced input is achieved is addressed by measures of 'sentiment' and 'theme'. Location specification was not mentioned, but since most interviewees referred to face-to-face consultations with participants, it may be assumed that this may be already included in 'clarity', 'detail' and 'being specific'.

The interviewees also confirmed that the approach of 'questioning' participants adopted in this research reflects the approach taken in practice. The landscape architect in particular explained that he firstly enquires about the liked and disliked aspects in a space, which assists him in understanding the current use of that space. Subsequently, he explores the ideas for altering or developing the space.

6.3.4 Evaluation

Academic literature put forward that systematic and rigorous evaluations are few and usually based on subjective assessments (Rosener, 1978; 1981; Lowndes *et al.*, 1998; Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004; Rowe *et al.*, 2004; 2005; 2008). In line with Lowndes *et al.*'s (1998) findings, five interviewees confirmed that consultations were hardly ever evaluated in terms of their methodology.

> *'We evaluate in the sense of what was said, how many comments were made and what they focused on. We don't actually go about and think 'can we do this better?''*
>
> (Regeneration officer)

Despite acknowledging the value of reviewing a consultation in order to improve subsequent practice, the reasons for failing to do so were identified as[9]:

- having limited control over the consultation
- the competitive nature of consultancy, different priorities
- lack of resources
- arrogance, lack of empathy and communication skills
- lack of appropriate knowledge, training and understanding of the risks involved

The research officer highlighted the limited innovation in method selection – using an ad hoc approach (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998) the same method is often reapplied and the same mistakes repeated. A change is likely to happen 'only if a new person gets involved in the process'. The urban designer confirmed this, claiming that despite consultation being brought up in design degrees, 'it is never really taught… so you kind of piggy back, you just go along'. Learning thus occurs via working with other practitioners sharing their own expertise developed through experience, rather than through systematic training regarding consultation (or involvement) concepts and methodologies (ibid.). The public sector in particular appears to have a rather uncoordinated approach to consultations, where each department may carry out their

[9] Engagement officer 1, architect, urban designer and research officer.

own (engagement officer 1, research officer) - they have the expertise on the consultation topic, but may lack expertise in terms of the consultation techniques.

6.3.5 In-situ approaches

In exploring the extent to which the interviewees used in-situ methods, it was found that only the urban designer, landscape architect and community champion had direct experience of these. Overall, 'most of the consultations take place ex-situ' (engagement officer 1, landscape architect).

The responses gave the impression that interviewees have not necessarily considered using these methods before. Initially some scepticism was expressed – in-situ approaches were viewed as inappropriate (and possibly unnecessarily complicated) for certain contexts and types of consultations, such as those to be delivered on 'clear' or 'greenfield' sites or those exploring more general issues[10]. The possible reliance of the walking discussion on what is already present in the environment was identified in Phase 1 (Section 5.5.1.5) However, it was acknowledged that:

> *'For a specific consultation that is really looking at a specific space, yes, I think it would add a lot of detail and the views may change because of being in that space. It can add a level of complexity to the consultation and it can change opinion than when done ex-situ.'*
>
> (Engagement officer 1)

Professionals admitted that they could see a benefit of using in-situ approaches and would consider using them in their practice (engagement officer 2, architect), confirming that these methods may capture information useful to professionals involved in physical regeneration (Ricketts Hein *et al.*, 2008).

Turning to the specific examples of in-situ methods, these tended to be combined with photography and used more with children or teenagers rather than with adults. The landscape architect accompanied children around their school sites, where the children photographed what they liked and disliked. Although having only used this method with children, the landscape architect was aware of 'walk-arounds' with adults, which he believed were difficult to organise. A school, on the other hand,

[10] Urban designer, regeneration officer and community champion.

offered a captured environment and sample. He also highlighted the value of spending time on the site and observing how it gets used (Goličnik and Nikšič, 2009; Simoes Aelbrecht, 2009; van Eijk and Engbersen, 2011). He concluded that:

> *'Our choice of method would always be to have an in-situ method and a face-to-face talk. Because I think you can learn so much more from that. But sometimes it is not practical.'*

The urban designer set up an experimental 'treasure hunt' for young people as part of a project to improve a town centre. Equipped with a question sheet, a route map and a disposable camera, teenagers explored their town, pinpointing what they liked and disliked about it. It was seen as 'another way of getting people out there' and an opportunity 'to get what their perspective on place was, rather than necessarily the adults''. Participants actively engaged with the task. An evening walk following the same route was also held with adults, however no cameras or voice recording equipment was used. The discussions were viewed as useful for the overall design process and building understanding of the design team. The urban designer admitted that:

> *'We did this as an experiment – a new method to try. We were just exploring ideas. We hadn't done it before and we didn't know whether it was going to work'.*

The visual aspect of being in-situ was mentioned as the main benefit, as 'it's all very well being in a room with a plan, but it's not better than actually standing with somebody, talking to them, planning in the space where you can visually see it'. While public sector clients were seen as more open towards such approaches, for private clients the method may not be transparent enough. Furthermore, the method was seen as requiring more thought, effort and organisation[11].

The community champion, together with a number of other representatives, was taken on a particular site by an architect, when a specific project needed to be re-thought. She claimed that perhaps 5% to 10% of the consultations she was involved in were in-situ. However, for specific cases, she considered them useful.

[11] However, the researcher would disagree with this claim. Focus groups and walking discussions in Phase 1 required about the same amount of preparation and organisation, however the actual application of the walking discussion was much easier than conducting a focus group.

6.3.6 Photography

The urban designer and landscape architect both mentioned having combined in-situ methods with photography. In both cases, cameras were handed out to children only, where the images of likes and dislikes in a particular space were discussed. Both interviewees were very enthusiastic about the use of photographs. The benefits identified included the participants 'exploring their own town or city in a way they haven't or wouldn't normally do, as people tend to look down, instead of up buildings' (urban designer), and offering an opportunity to 'get to see it through their eyes more' (landscape architect).

> *'Getting people to take their own photos works really well. I haven't done that on an open space or with adults, but I think it's an excellent method.'*
>
> (Landscape architect)
>
> *'We have not used photography any further, but it's something that we want to explore more, actually. Because I think particularly with the built environment, it's quite useful.'*
>
> (Urban designer)

Otherwise, professionals generally make use of photography for recording purposes in their own work. Images can serve as object probes in interactions with the general public (engagement officer 2, regeneration officer). The professionals agreed that communicating ideas visually is generally more successful[12]. This corresponds with some Phase 1 findings.

The community champion participated in a day long photographic exercise. Separated into groups, each group visited a different part of town and took photos of what they considered to be heritage, areas of neglect and others. Images were then processed into collages and discussed. She rated the experience as 'extremely interesting and fulfilling'.

6.4 Conclusion

The professionals' direct experience of public consultations varied. Recognising consultation as an integral part of regeneration projects, the interviewees confirmed that consultations can be very complex, affected by different agendas, local context,

[12] Urban designer, architect, landscape architect, regeneration officer and research officer.

political situation, lack of skills and the understanding of the public and the professionals.

'Response rate', 'data quality' and 'influence' were identified as the key criteria of effectiveness. The value of lay perspectives was acknowledged, but in order to be useful to the professionals, the data should be detailed, clear, specific, relevant, constructive, balanced and fair. These criteria closely correspond with the data quality criteria utilised in this research, validating their suitability. As such, data meeting the criteria used in this research is more likely to meet the professionals' expectations.

Professionals confirmed that rigorous evaluations are seldom conducted and as such the effectiveness of methods often remains undetermined. Utilising a more systematic evaluation framework, this research fills a gap in knowledge regarding the effectiveness of a number of consultation methods.

The experience of in-situ approaches amongst the professionals was limited. Practical experience was usually restricted to working with children rather than adults, and methods appeared to be deployed in an experimental manner. Possible discussions were not voice recorded but used to expand the designer's knowledge in an informal manner. The majority of the professionals admitted that more extensive use of in-situ methods may be beneficial to their work. The interviews confirmed that currently, in-situ methods are not systematically applied or evaluated and that further exploration of the effectiveness of the walking discussion as an example of an in-situ method may actively contribute to the expansion of knowledge regarding public consultations in the context of urban public space regeneration.

The potential for a more extensive use of images, taken by participants, in public consultations, was also identified. Interviewees were enthusiastic about the approach and despite some having no direct experience, they could imagine its application in physical regeneration. As such, it was confirmed that further exploration of the photographic diary could positively contribute to public consultations.

Overall, the interviews provided additional evidence that the themes explored in this research are relevant to the theoretical and practical debates concerning effective public consultations. Professionals expressed interest in finding out more about in-situ and visual methods and how they could be applied in practice, highlighting the value of evaluating the effectiveness of these methods, which is the focus of the following two chapters.

The next chapter presents the methodology for Phase 2, which examines the effectiveness of the photo diary and walking discussion altered in view of the findings from Phase 1 (Chapter 5). Chapter 8 then discusses the findings regarding their effectiveness at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces.

Chapter 7

METHODOLOGY FOR PHASE 2

7.1 Introduction

Using the evaluation framework, the effectiveness of eight consultation methods was established in Chapter 5. Evaluating the methods from three perspectives, the photographic diary and the walking discussion were considered the most effective at consulting the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces, and offered the greatest potential for further development. Interviewed professionals (Sections 6.3.5, 6.3.6) confirmed that learning more about the effectiveness and application of these methods would be of interest to regeneration practice.

In order to explore what factors may increase or decrease the photographic diaries' and the walking discussions' effectiveness and thus inform effectiveness debates, several ways in which these two methods could be potentially developed were identified (Sections 5.4.5 and 5.5.3). Before exploring whether the changes made have led to an increase in effectiveness (Chapter 8), this chapter presents the methodology adopted in this phase of the research. The contextual background to the case study site - 'Greyfriars Green' - and the reasons for its selection are outlined first. The changes implemented to the two methods are presented in more detail, followed by their operationalisation. Finally, the evaluation framework is briefly revisited in order to clarify the approach to evaluation adopted in Phase 2.

7.2 Methodology for Phase 2 (Greyfriars Green)

7.2.1 Contextual background to Phase 2

As in Phase 1, a site which was undergoing redevelopment was needed for Phase 2, but the recession and the various austerity measures (DCLG, 2011c; Broughton *et al.*, 2011) made securing a suitable site challenging. In 2010 Coventry was selected as an Olympic co-host City for the London Olympic Games 2012 (CCC, 2013b). In preparation for hosting the Olympic football matches, Coventry City Council, with the help of the European Regional Development Fund, invested over £7m to improve key locations in the city centre (CCC, 2012). Coventry City Council agreed to assist with this research, particularly the Planning, Transport and Highways team. After ongoing discussions, it was decided to focus on one of the 'Legacy for the City 2012' projects - Greyfriars Green. It offered the widest variety of topics relevant to this research and the timescales of the project were also closely aligned.

Greyfriars Green is a small urban park located in the southern part of Coventry city centre (Figure 7.1). En route to the railway station, it serves as the main access point to the city for those arriving by train. Serving a wide range of people, the park is used by Coventry residents, commuters, tourists and other visitors to the city.

This image has been removed

Figure 7.1: *Location of Greyfriars Green in relation to the city of Coventry (Source: Google Maps, 2013)*

Greyfriars Green is a highly valued park and its history goes back to the 12th Century (Stephens, 1969). As many participants referred to the park's historical value, brief historical context is provided in Appendix 7a to appreciate some of the findings presented in Chapter 8.

Greyfriars Green has not experienced significant changes since the construction of the ring road in the 1970s (Appendix 7a). Coventry City Council[1] (2012) explained their intentions for improving Greyfriars Green as part of the 'Legacy for the City 2012' scheme:

> *'The Station to Bull Yard is a key connection and for many it is the first impression of the city centre. The current route is unwelcoming and difficult to negotiate and it involves using two subways. By improving the pathways, upgrading the lighting, removing unnecessary clutter and filling in the two subways to create surface crossings, local people and visitors will be able to enjoy an attractive and improved route into the city centre'.*

More specifically, the plans included repaving the main path through Greyfriars Green from the Freemans Way footbridge to Greyfriars Road, removal of pedestrian subway leading underneath Greyfriars Road (created in 1971) and subsequent extension of the park over the formal subway ramps, as well as installation of a zebra crossing across Greyfriars Road. Furthermore, the underpass underneath the ring road was to be redecorated and newly lit and Freemans Way footbridge repaved. Junction 6 subway was to be in-filled and replaced with a toucan crossing. Alterations at Bull Yard included narrowing of roads and introduction or extension of grass lawns (Planning, Transport and Highways Team, 2011). The work was undertaken between November 2011 and May 2012.

7.2.2 Consultation in Greyfriars Green

As in the case of Phase 1, this was a 'theoretical' consultation'[2] which primarily aimed to explore the effectiveness of two specific consultation methods, rather than collect views on how the particular public space could be improved[3]. Representing a different setting to that of Phase 1, Greyfriars Green consisted primarily of open green space surrounded by roads and buildings and covered an area considerably smaller than that of the university campus.

[1] Since 2010, Coventry City Council is controlled by the Labour Party (CCC, 2011).
[2] The council claimed to have consulted about the 'Legacy for the City 2012' projects via an exhibition in January 2011. However this was a generic consultation addressing all projects, rather than each one separately. Apparently, the original design for the park was altered in response to the public wanting more green areas and the proposals to remove the two subways were received positively by those attending the exhibition.
[3] Participants were informed of this.

The primary research was to take place at a time when some improvement work had already been completed in the park. With some changes already visible it allowed the gathering of some preliminary public feedback, but also the collection of new ideas which could be potentially used for possible future improvements planned for the city. Therefore, although decisions had already been made on what changes were to be implemented, there was a possibility of participants' comments having some influence on future plans.

The actual work on Greyfriars Green was delayed by two months, until November 2011. Participants were recruited throughout January 2012 and primary research carried out between February and April 2012. All walking discussions were conducted in February 2012, whereas the individual nature of photographic diaries allowed more flexibility. Work in the park continued until late May 2012 with timescales continually being changed. Access to certain parts of the park was restricted by closures of certain footpaths, a pedestrian bridge and an underpass in March 2012. This may have influenced the photo diary results.

Appropriate ethical clearance was gained from Coventry University prior to the research (Appendix 7b).

7.2.3 Aims and objectives for Phase 2

The aim of Phase 2 at Greyfriars Green was to:

Evaluate the extent to which the changes made to the photographic diary and the walking discussion improved their effectiveness.

Objectives:

1. Assess the extent to which the benefits of methods, identified in Phase 1, will be confirmed when deployed in a different context and with different participants.

2. In view of the alterations to the methods, identify the factors which increased or decreased their effectiveness.

7.2.4 Themes explored in the Greyfriars Green consultation

Members of the public were consulted using walking discussions and photographic diaries about their opinions on the changes taking place in Greyfriars Green as well as their general views of the park and ideas for further improvements.

Information relevant to the consultation was discussed during several meetings with council representatives. Themes of particular interest to the council included cycle paths, lighting, navigation signs, street furniture and public art, feedback on the removal of subways and the introduction of shared spaces, and general ideas for enhancing the area. Some of these were already covered by themes utilised in Phase 1 (Section 4.4.1.1), which were retained for analysis consistency[4]. However, eleven 'new' themes were added in response to the council's requests and the actual data later generated by the participants. The list was not disclosed to the participants and as such it did not influence their input.

Themes added in Phase 2 included:

Code	*Theme*
21	Shared space
22	Cyclists and cycle paths/routes
23	Improvement works / Olympic Games 2012 preparations
24	Shops / retail
25	Traffic / ring road
26	Personal history / memories
27	Surrounding buildings / architecture
28	Information signage
29	De-cluttering
30	Blue line
31	Bridge (pedestrian - over the ring road)

7.2.5 Target population and recruitment

The target population consisted of individuals aged over 18 years who lived, worked or visited Coventry and were interested in its regeneration. Awareness of Greyfriars

[4] Please note that themes using codes 12 (university buildings), 18 (changes at the campus), 19 (moving around the campus) and 20 (campus in general) became redundant in Phase 2, as they were context specific to the campus case study in Phase 1.

Green was preferable, but not compulsory. As such, the consultation was open to all 316,900 Coventry residents (ONS, 2013) as well as visitors, representing a larger and broader target population than Phase 1. According to the 2011 Census, the average age of a Coventrian was 34 years and there was a high proportion of 18 to 24 year olds, reflecting the presence of two universities in the city. With a third of the population coming from ethnic minorities, the city was ethnically diverse (Coventry Partnership, 2011). Almost 20% of working age Census 2011 respondents claimed to be disabled[5]. For more detailed statistics, see Appendix 7c.

Non-probability sampling was utilised - including purposive, opportunistic and convenience sampling - to generate a list of contacts (Kitchin and Tate, 2000; Ritchie *et al.*, 2003) (in line with Phase 1 recruitment strategy). The study was advertised using posters placed in key locations around the park including the local library, cafes, churches and the railway station. However, these generated no response. Businesses in the vicinity of the park were personally approached, but expressed no interest. Unlike Phase 1 where 'flow populations' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003) were successfully utilised, most participants for Phase 2 were sourced from local community interest groups and through snowballing. The researcher attended community meetings where she addressed the individual groups with a short summary of her work and a request for participation. The membership of these groups meant that mostly elderly participants were recruited. They expressed great interest in the research and the case study location. Through the initial face-to-face introduction, a rapport was created. However, where community groups were approached by telephone and e-mail and where the research was introduced by a third party, no participants were recruited. The lack of personal contact could be viewed as the main cause – Holbrook and Jackson (1996) also found recruitment (for focus groups) easier when they met with potential participants beforehand.

Overall, recruitment for the Greyfriars Green study proved to be more challenging than for the university based study which relied on a more captive audience. Phase 2 was potentially open to all Coventry residents. The local authority did not assist in recruitment beyond sharing contact details of potentially useful individuals.

[5] However, specific types of disabilities were not specified.

7.2.6 Photographic diary

7.2.6.1 Alterations to photographic diary

Eight photographic diaries were conducted. As participant evaluations in Phase 1 confirmed that the instructions were clear, these were only changed to suit the new context, i.e. participants were asked to take photographs of what they liked and disliked around Greyfriars Green and annotate these images with some additional information (full instructions in Appendix 7d).

Some changes were introduced to the photo diary, as indicated in Section 5.4.5. Participants used their own digital cameras instead of disposable cameras. Instead of a paper notepad, they were provided with an electronic Word template into which they could insert their photographs and write annotations. The use of digital cameras allowed participants to review the actual images away from the location, rather than rely on memory. It was expected to simplify the annotation process.

Using personal equipment and digital documents meant that the researcher did not have to meet participants face-to-face. Instead, participants received instructions verbally on the telephone and through e-mail. They were encouraged to contact the researcher in case they needed any clarifications, but none did.

Participants were given seven days instead of three weeks to complete the photo diary, to keep the task fresh in their minds. Previous participants admitted that they usually took all their photos in two or three days. Thus, one week was considered sufficient (Young and Barrett, 2001; Latham, 2003; 2004; Gabridge *et al.*, 2008; Myers, 2010).

In view of the shortened period of time and the twelve images taken on average by each participant in Phase 1, the maximum number of photographs was limited to twelve. Participants were advised that in case they took more, they were to select the twelve most important ones.

Blinn and Harrist (1991), Young and Barrett (2001), Latham (2003), Myers (2010) and Oh (2012) have all combined their methodologies with follow-up photo-elicitation interviews (Harper, 2002), where photographs acted as questions, stimuli or probes to elicit further information or parallel accounts. Therefore, photo-elicitation interviews were added to this methodology. They were to provide comparisons between the textual annotations in the actual diaries with verbal commentaries captured through interviews, in order to assess how much additional information may be obtained through the interview and whether they would benefit the consultation method.

7.2.6.2 Operationalisation of the photographic diary and the photo-elicitation interviews

Once participants had agreed to take part and completed the necessary ethical documentation, they were sent the diary instructions and template via e-mail. This was followed with a telephone call, when the researcher explained the purpose of the diary once more. After seven days, participants e-mailed their images and comments to the researcher and received an evaluation form in return. The majority of communication with the participants was not face-to-face, but through telephone or e-mail. The only exceptions were the photo-elicitation interviews.

From the eight photo diarists, four agreed to a photo-elicitation interview. The plan was to discuss four images (two of their choice, two selected by the researcher). The interviews were unstructured. The participants did not select the images to discuss until the actual meetings, therefore the researcher could not prepare questions beforehand and had to improvise. The general conversation started with 'What made you take this photo? Can you tell me more about it?'. The interviews lasted about 30 minutes, were voice recorded and then transcribed.

7.2.7 Walking discussion

7.2.7.1 Alterations to the walking discussions

Instead of the intended three walking discussions (as in Phase 1), four were conducted when an opportunity arose to hold a walking discussion in the early evening hours, which was deemed beneficial. The target of five participants per group remained the same. Again, discussions were voice recorded. No written notes were taken.

Several changes were introduced to the walking discussions, informed by Phase 1 (Section 5.5.3).

Simplicity was achieved through reducing the amount of documentation which accompanied the walking discussion. No route maps were produced, no notes taken. Only several images of the proposed developments were brought to the session and discussed in-situ.

The walking discussion was shortened to one hour. With time being a possible barrier to participation – identified by participants as well as professionals - the aim was to explore whether a one-hour discussion could be sufficient to yield quality data useful for regeneration practitioners, or whether longer interaction is needed.

The role of the facilitator was minimized to allow participants more control over what they discussed and to provide opportunities to raise issues that mattered to them. The facilitator ensured that the discussions stayed relevant to the regeneration of Greyfriars Green, clarified points made, asked for more detail when needed and managed the flow of the discussion. With less intervention from the facilitator, the non-human actants were granted a more active role in the spontaneous creation of data, emerging from the embodied experience during the walking discussion.

7.2.7.2 Operationalisation of the walking discussion

The walking discussion was trialled with five volunteers and a member of the Planning, Transport and Highways team prior to the official data collection stage. The trial served to identify possible locations to stop, confirm the appropriateness of the discussion topics, clarify the council's vision and plans for the area in-situ, and inform the final plan for the walking discussions.

All walking discussions began from a church located close to Greyfriars Green, where the documentation required by the University's ethical policy was completed. It also provided a secluded location where participants could introduce themselves and outline how they used the park. Participants were advised that the actual walking discussion would last one hour, followed by optional light refreshments in a local café. There, participants could also fill out their evaluation forms. Those who needed to leave earlier were given the evaluation form to take away.

The building works in the park at the time determined the route to be taken and as such the route could not be altered based on the participants' wishes (Figure 7.2). At the time of the walking discussions, the subway under Greyfriars Road was already filled in and the main path through the park was being re-paved. All walks finished with crossing a pedestrian bridge over the ring road, looking at the other subway yet to be in-filled. From there, groups returned the same way they came.

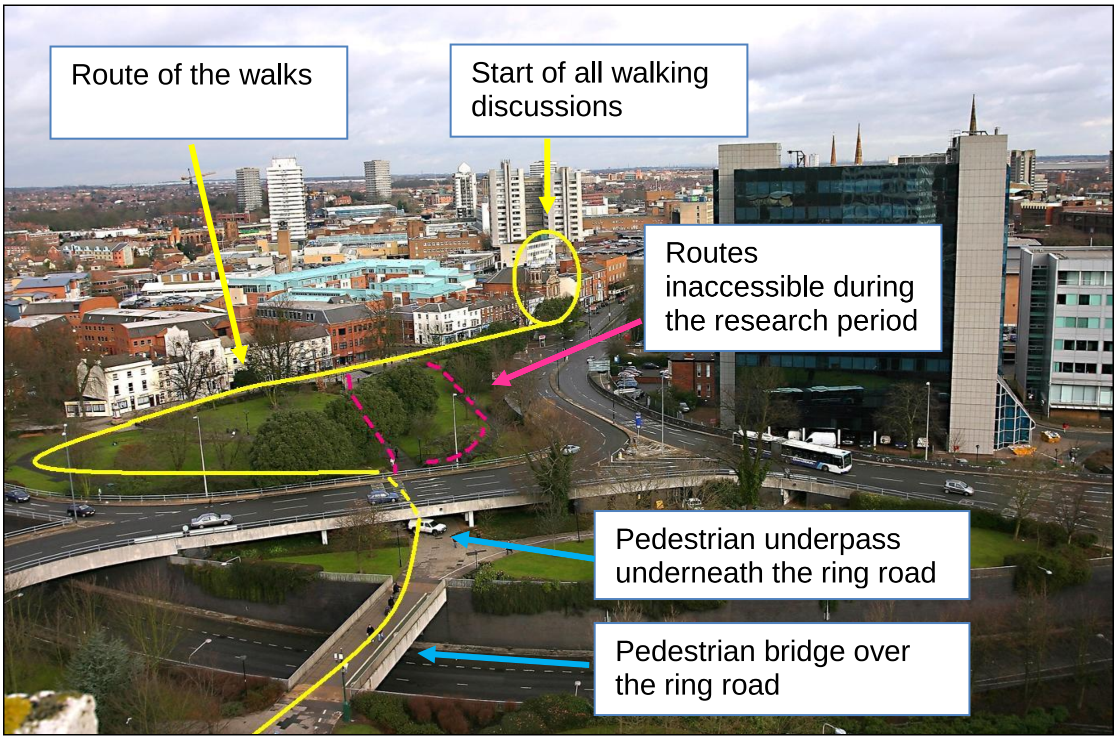

Figure 7.2: *Route through the Greyfriars Green (Source: personal image from PD21)*

After several initial prompts, the facilitator let the participants take over the discussion. She encouraged participants to stop the group if they wished to point anything out, and to speak up whenever something occurred to them. The council identified several specific questions they were interested in, but rather than initiating the discussions with these questions, the facilitator inserted these into the discussions led by the participants. Although the researcher prepared a structure for the walking discussions, this consisted of themes and points of interest, rather than a list of themes to be 'ticked off' (Appendix 7e). It was used rarely. The structure was flexible to omit themes that did not appear of interest to the particular group. As such, the content was primarily created by the participants. Interestingly, the majority of topics of significance to the researcher as well as the council were brought up spontaneously.

7.2.8 Evaluation framework

For both walking discussions and photographic diaries, the same evaluation framework as in Phase 1 was utilized (Section 4.2.2.2). This was to enable an evaluation consistent with Phase 1 and the examination of whether the effectiveness of methods could be improved via its application and use. Alterations to the evaluation framework between the two phases would have limited the extent to which results could have been compared.

The comments generated by photo diaries were evaluated against the same criteria as in Phase 1 by three independent raters, who were all familiar with the study location[6]. Mean inter-rater agreement of 93.1% was achieved, with a mode of 96.3% and standard deviation of 4.5%. The results were triangulated with the researcher's reflections and participants' evaluation.

Photo-elicitation interviews transcripts were compared with the comments participants originally supplied with their images. The aim was to explore whether the verbal commentary revealed any additional information to that provided in a written format and thus draw some conclusions regarding the value of discussing images with participants beyond the actual photo diary.

The more extensive and qualitative walking discussion data was evaluated in a narrative format combined with the researcher's reflection and participants' evaluation. A detailed thematic analysis was also carried out and a report was presented to Coventry City Council in June 2012 to satisfy the informal co-operation agreement. Apart from a brief summary, the thematic findings are not presented in this thesis, as they do not have implications for the method's effectiveness beyond complementing the 'relevance' criterion[7].

The participants' perspective on the effectiveness of the methods was obtained via evaluation questionnaires, which remained consistent with questionnaires used in Phase 1 (see Appendix 7f). Where applicable, the results were compared to Phase 1 to demonstrate whether the methodological alterations changed the participants' views of the method.

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[6] The same raters were used to code photographic diaries in both Phase 1 and Phase 2.
[7] However, the report is available upon request.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology adopted for Phase 2 at Greyfriars Green. Reflecting on the evaluation in Phase 1, certain aspects of the photographic diary and the walking discussion were adapted in Phase 2 in order to explore, via the use of the evaluation framework, whether these changes will contribute to making the methods any more effective at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces, and thus inform debates about method effectiveness. Photo-elicitation interviews were also added to the photographic diaries, in order to explore how much additional data may be provided verbally.

The majority of participants were sourced from local interest groups, rather than from 'flow populations' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003), which resulted in a sample demographically different to that of Coventry University. The evaluation framework remained the same to ensure consistency within the research.

In the next chapter, the effectiveness of the photographic diary and the walking discussion is established and discussed in view of the implemented alterations. These findings are subsequently used to identify factors which may generally impact on method effectiveness, contributing to wider empirical and conceptual debates about effectiveness.

Chapter 8

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS – PHASE 2

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the contextual background for Phase 2, where the photographic diary and the walking discussion were re-applied with several alterations. This chapter focuses on whether the alterations resulted in increasing or decreasing the methods' effectiveness in consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces, in order to inform wider debates about method effectiveness.

Using the context of a small urban park in Coventry – Greyfriars Green - firstly, the influence of 'digitizing' the photographic diary is explored, together with the addition of the photo-elicitation interviews. Secondly, the walking discussion is evaluated in terms of its shortened duration and less-rigorous structure. The same evaluation framework as in Phase 1 was utilised for both methods, exploring the characteristics listed in the effectiveness definition. The findings will also be used to identify further factors believed to influence the effectiveness of consultation methods (Objective 3).

Please see Appendix 8a for explanation of codes of comments presented throughout the chapter.

8.2 Photographic diary and photo-elicitation interviews

The evaluation of the photo diaries was consistent with Phase 1. Photo-elicitation interviews were added to the method. Where appropriate, comparisons with Phase 1 are made to demonstrate the extent to which the implemented alterations may have influenced the effectiveness of the method. These are presented as percentage changes between the two phases. Data quality will be explored first, followed by the participant and researcher perspectives.

Some examples of the photo diaries are included below, structured in the following manner:

a. The image itself
b. Image code
c. Location/brief description
d. Reason for taking the photo
e. Suggestion/idea
f. Excerpt from a photo-elicitation interview

8.2.1 Data quality

8.2.1.1 Number of comments generated by the photo diary and their relevance

Seventy-four images with accompanying annotations were captured in the eight photo diaries. On average, each participant took nine photographs. From these 74 entries, 14 were split into multiple comments. Overall, there were 90 comments generated by the diaries and all were rated as relevant to the study – a similar amount to that generated in Phase 1.

8.2.1.2 Location specification

Identifying exact locations of images within the park proved more difficult than in Phase 1 (Table 8.1). Apart from several statues, an underpass and a pedestrian bridge, the park offered limited reference points that could be clearly described in text.

Table 8.1: Location specification							
	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**	**Phase 2**		
					Can location be deciphered from the image itself?		
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**		**Freq**	**%**
Location specified	45	50	97.1	↓ - 47.1	Yes	39	86.7
					No	6	13.3
Location not specified	45	50	2.9	↑ + 47.1	Yes	41	91.1
					No	4	8.9
Total	90	100	100			90	

If a participant made a reasonable attempt at describing the location of the comment, as exemplified below, raters were instructed to rate it as 'location specified'[1]:

- *James Starley memorial statue, outside Loveitts estate agents. (PD2501)*
- *Inside Warwick Road roundabout, footbridge over the ring road. (PD2803)*

Half of the comments had their location specified, whereas the other half were considerably more vague, without a clear location:

- *This is where the park meets the city centre. (PD2203)*
- *Footpath south end/eastern edge of Greyfriars Green. (PD2806)*

In these cases, the photographs proved particularly valuable, as they helped in pinpointing exact locations. Using the raters' contextual knowledge of Greyfriars Green, it was possible to identify the location in 89% of the cases. In 91% of cases where location could not be identified from the textual description, the image provided necessary clarifications (Table 8.2).

In view of this, supplying the participants with a map or a sketch of the park to pinpoint the locations may have been beneficial.

[1] If the raters were strict with their ratings, the number of entries with their location specified would have been even lower.

Table 8.2: Example of a comment, rated as 'location not specified', but where the location could be identified from the image	
a.	
b.	PD2410
c.	Flower beds on banks

8.2.1.3 Clarity

Clarity of comments remained high at 91.1% (n = 82) (although a slight decrease from Phase 1). Eight 'partly clear' comments came from the same individual (PD28), who often used sarcasm, which could be challenging to interpret correctly (Table 8b.1 – Appendix 8b).

8.2.1.4 Actionability

Compared to Phase 1, there was a decrease in the percentage of actionable and partly actionable comments. Still, together these comprised more than half of all comments (56.7%) (Table 8.3), indicating a relatively balanced public input in terms of actionability. Partly actionable and actionable comments were mostly the result of complaints. From the not actionable comments, 21 were compliments, 17 general comments, and only one a complaint - implying participants being content with certain features within the park.

Table 8.3: Actionability				
	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Not actionable	39	43.3	31.4	↑ + 11.9
Partly actionable	26	28.9	31.4	↓ - 2.5
Actionable	25	27.8	37.1	↓ - 9.3

8.2.1.5 Sentiment

Sentiment-wise, the comments were more balanced than in Phase 1. In Phase 2, there was a 9.6% increase in general comments[2] (Figure 8.1).

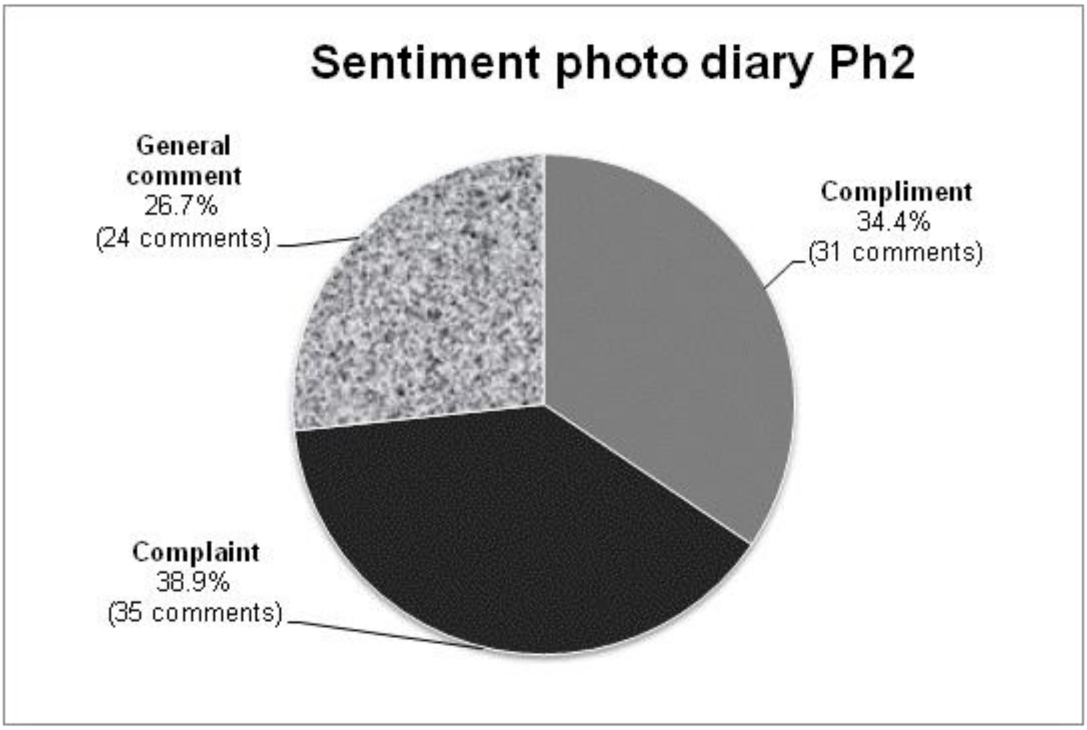


Figure 8.1: *Sentiment of Phase 2 photo diary comments*

Highlighting the influence of context, during an informal meeting, Coventry City Council representatives claimed that a relatively high number of compliments was not surprising since Greyfriars Green was known to be a popular location within the city

[2] However, the data indicated that this may have been caused by the individual nature of some participants. Two participants in particular (PD23 and PD28) were more prone to providing general comments. A photo-elicitation interview conducted with PD23 indicated that the participant may have not fully understood what was required of him. Instead of sharing his opinions and ideas for the park, the participant conducted more 'a reportage' of the park, revealing little in terms of his own views.

(Appendix 7a). On the contrary, if the photo diary was utilised to consult the public about a location possibly viewed as controversial, the feedback may have not been as balanced. However, in this case the photo diary satisfied the interviewed professionals' requirement for balanced data (Section 6.3.3.2).

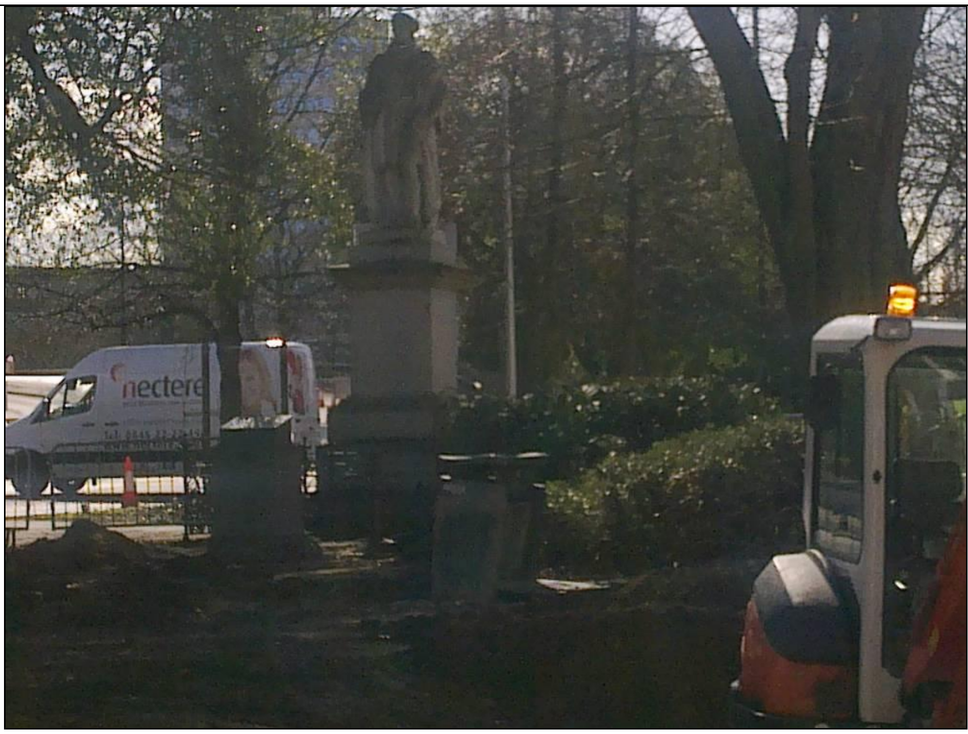
8.2.1.6 Suggestion for improvement

60% (n = 54) of comments provided a suggestion for improvement, a 14.3% decrease compared to Phase 1 (Table 8.4). Again, suggestions were spread across all types of comments (see Table 8.5 and Tables 8b.2, 8b.3 in Appendix 8b), although there was more inclination towards complaints (n = 35; 64.8%).

Table 8.4: Suggestion for improvement

	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Suggestion provided	54	60	74.3	↓ - 14.3
No suggestion provided	36	40	25.7	↑ + 14.3

Independent of each other, participants generally agreed on several action points for the park. The park was viewed as attractive and valued for the well-kept flower displays and the architecture of the surrounding buildings (old and new). However, many believed that the park was not utilised to its full potential. Potential 'dead space' could be enlivened by more seating, picnic tables and artwork, i.e. points of interest. James Starley statue, Sir Thomas White statue, a horse and footballers artworks were photographed repeatedly. Some were viewed in need of repair, better maintenance as well as a description of what they were symbolising (Table 8.5 and Table 8.6). The view (as well as noise) of the ring road was considered aesthetically unpleasing, but could be partly obscured by trees and foliage.

Table 8.5: Example of a general comment with a suggestion (actionable; 'street furniture/public art' / 'sense of identity/heritage')	
a.	
b.	PD2412
c.	Statue
d.	I had no idea that we had a statue there. I still don't know who it is of?
e.	We should make these more prominent maybe even as a meeting place with benches so people can sit and talk or eat their lunch. There could even be an area for chess boards. In New York City, Washington Square Park has chess every day!

8.2.1.7 Theme

The content of the photo diaries was the result of what the participants themselves noticed when in Greyfriars Green. It demonstrated a relatively broad public input, covering a variety of themes, with several themes featuring strongly. From the 90 comments, three quarters (74.4%; n = 67) were allocated two themes, the rest only one. As Figure 8.2 below demonstrates, 'street furniture and public art' was the most frequently mentioned theme (n = 31), followed by 'trees, hedges, flower displays' (n = 23) and the general 'public realm' (n = 15). The 'street furniture and public art' theme was most often combined with 'maintenance' (often referring to the maintenance of various statues and artworks) and 'sense of identity and heritage' (in terms of the historical value of the statues). The 'public realm' and 'trees, hedges, flower displays' were also often mentioned together (see Table 8.6 and others in Appendix 8b).

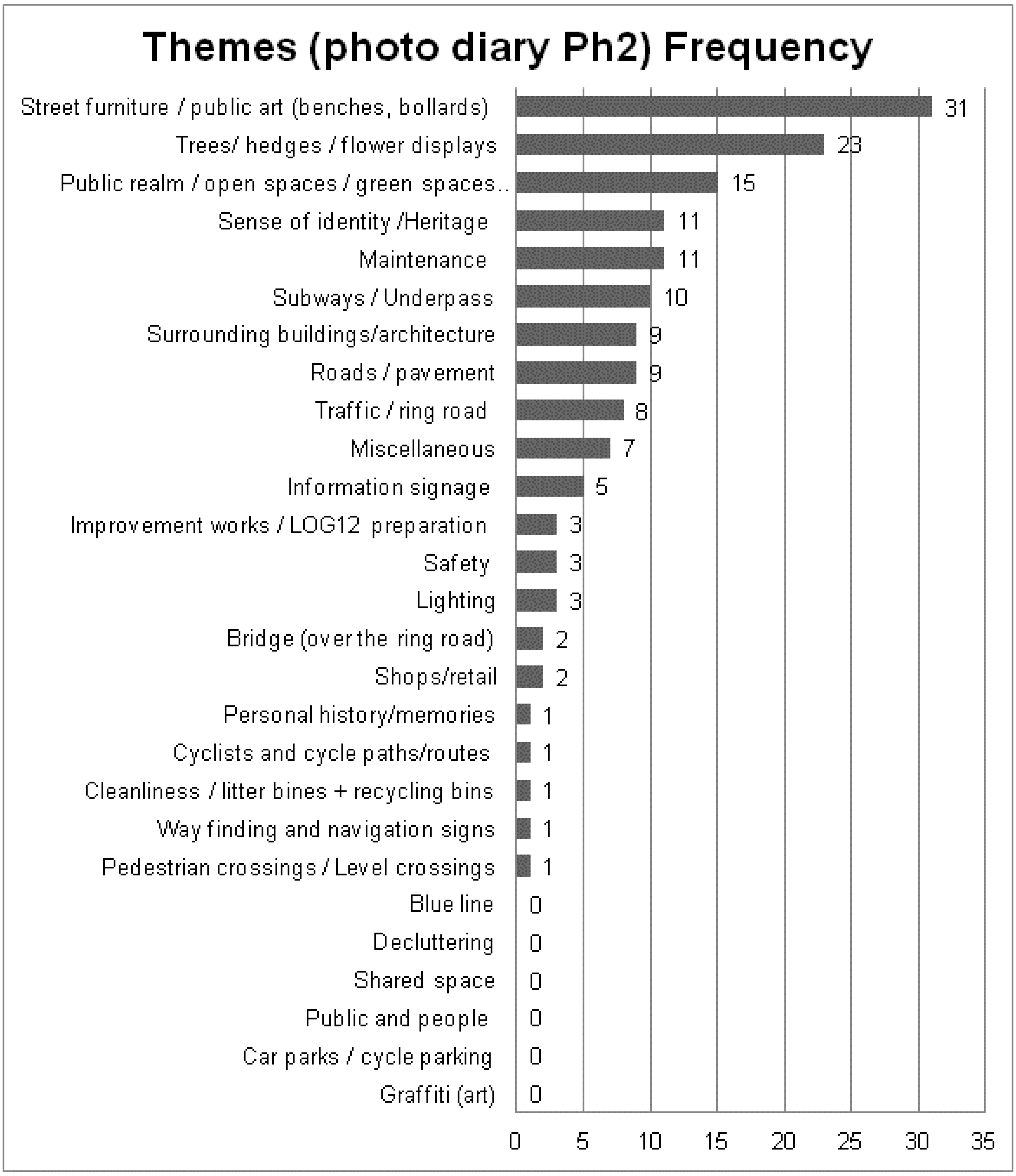


Figure 8.2: *The most frequently mentioned themes in the photo diaries Phase 2*

Table 8.6: Example of 'street furniture and public art' / 'maintenance' comment (complaint, actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD2108
c.	On the other side of the green nearest the ring road there are a number of metal sculptures.
d.	These are cleverly designed and colourful. They make a nice feature, without being too dominant.
e.	They are in need of cleaning and repainting.

8.2.1.8 Link between comment and photo

There was a clear link between the majority (n = 88; 97.8%) of photographs and annotations. This was an increase from Phase 1, possibly due to the fact that participants could review their images.

8.2.1.9 Participant demographics

From the eight photo diary participants, six were male and two female. All were White British and claimed not to have a disability. Participants varied the most in terms of their age. There were two participants in each of the 18 – 29, 40 – 49 and 60+ age categories, and one participant in each of the 30 – 39 and 50 – 59 age categories.

Full demographic information and more extensive discussion in terms of the sample are presented in Section 8.4.

8.2.2 Photo-elicitation interviews

Photo-elicitation interviews were carried out with four participants[3]. It was assumed that participants would talk spontaneously about their images, as Collier (1957) claimed that using pictures can lead to longer and more comprehensive interviews. However, this was not confirmed in this research as all participants tended to mostly repeat what they had already written in the diary, often linking back to it and providing minimal additional information (see Tables 8c.1 and 8c.2 in Appendix 8c). This may have been caused by the actual topic of the consultation. While Blinn and Harrist (1991: 175) used photo-elicitation interviews alongside annotated photo diaries to research the ‘emic view of what it is like to be a female re-entry college student’, Myers (2010) used the same ‘for uncovering emotional and embodied experiences’ of HIV-positive gay men. Both these topics are highly sensitive, personal and emotional, whereas in this research, participants took images to demonstrate what they liked, disliked and what they would change about a particular space. As such, the personal information they shared referred to their everyday experiences and not necessarily their emotions.

One image could generate about a three-minute discussion, with the researcher often having to prompt for more information or clarifications. However these clarifications were often in line with what was already said, verbally or in the diary. Instead, participants often referred to other photographs, giving the impression that rather than treating each photograph individually, they saw them as part of an overall ‘story’ they wanted to tell. It appeared as if each of the interviewees focused on a particular aspect that he/she wanted to demonstrate by the images.

It is difficult to reach a conclusion as to whether there was a particular benefit of conducting photo-elicitation interviews in addition to photo diaries. The results would indicate that the interviews generated minimal additional information to that already shared in the photo diaries. As such, the photo diary appeared sufficient for the participants to express what they wanted. Two of the interviewees (PD24 and PD25) clearly understood the instructions given to them and as such their annotations were fairly comprehensive, with all the requested information. Although PD22 expressed uncertainty about how much she was supposed to write, her annotations were also relatively detailed. PD23’s annotations were rather descriptive and quite vague in terms of the participant’s own stance towards the aspects raised. Eliciting information

[3] Participant codes PD22, PD23, PD24 and PD25.

proved challenging in the interview, too. A lot of prompting and direct questioning was needed, where the participant often replied very briefly. In consequence the boundary between the participant's own views and those of the researcher became blurred.

Overall, it could be argued that the level of detail in the annotations accompanying the images in the photo diary is dependant on, firstly, the personal characteristics of the participants[4], and secondly, the participants' comprehension of what is expected of them. In this case, a photo-elicitation interview failed to capture much additional material.

8.2.3 Participant perspective

Participants found the photo diary useful or beneficial (Q1, Q2) for several reasons. Overall, they appreciated the direct experience of the park, which could aid their understanding of the changes taking place. Some referred to an increased interest and appreciation for their surrounding environment and what it takes to improve it (also addressing Q13). The photo diary had led them to view the familiar park environment in a different way and more closely, discovering features not noticed before (n = 3). Additionally, two participants claimed that the method made them 'stop and think', not just about the park, but the general purpose and utilisation of urban areas. This suggests that for some, reflection on a deeper level took place, possibly contributing to greater personal empowerment. Participants clearly benefited from the experience. The photos were also viewed as generating visual evidence to the comments made, minimising possible misinterpretation.

- *Taking pictures makes you think and also gives you reference points to substantiate your findings/thoughts. I actually found the method eye opening, it makes you think about what you are actually seeing!*

However, participants identified the method as demanding in terms of time and effort (Q3) (Lombard, 2013).

Some discrepancies in terms of participants' understanding of instructions were identified. Six out of eight participants 'strongly agreed' that the instructions were clear, the rest 'agreed' (Q4a). However, triangulation of the generated data, the

[4] I.e. PD23 did not write much into the diary and was not particularly talkative either.

researcher's observations and informal discussions with participants revealed that some participants may have struggled with completing the diary. Two did not follow the given format - the researcher then 'created' the diaries instead of them[5].

The convenience of taking and annotating photographs (Q5a) was rated in the same way as in Phase 1 – two participants found it very convenient and four convenient. One participant appreciated that the photo diary was an individual task:

- *Doing the study independently and in my own time meant I felt no pressure time-wise or to come to any set conclusions. Therefore the comments are brief but my own.*

Phase 2 participants appeared to have found annotating images more challenging than those in Phase 1 (Q6a) (Table 8.7), implying that the digital format did not necessarily make it simpler or more convenient. Two participants did not find it easy to annotate the images, while one participant ('not sure') admitted to forgetting the reason for taking some of the images.

Table 8.7: I found it easy to annotate my photographs. (Q6a)

	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Strongly agree	2	25	50.0	↓ - 25
Agree	3	37.5	37.5	
Not sure	1	12.5	12.5	
Disagree	2	25		↑ + 25
Strongly disagree				
Total	8	100	100	

All but one participant annotated their photographs at home rather than in the field (Q7) and some even had a couple of days break between taking the photos and annotating them. Four participants later admitted that without any notes made at the time the photographs were taken, they sometimes forgot why they had snapped them in the first place. Instead of the break being a time for reflection, it appeared to serve as time in which details were forgotten. Phase 2 participants may have relied more on the actual images (non-human actants), assuming they would trigger their memory at a later stage. However, it may be argued that being able to see the actual

[5] One submitted the diary in the form of a letter with photographs inserted into the text, another took the photos using his mobile phone and then attached each image to separate e-mails, with brief commentaries. The researcher then had to transfer all this information into the Word template, collating the images and text.

image may not necessarily lead to more reflection. Although the photo diary in Phase 1 did not allow participants to reflect on the images themselves, in some cases it may have succeeded at capturing their views and thoughts more effectively than the digital version. The need to complete the annotations on site may have encouraged Phase 1 participants to look around more, engaging with the non-human environment, rather than taking a photograph and moving on.

For some, the actual Word template may have been a non-human actant too – one participant repeatedly pointed to difficulties with the template, claiming it kept 'jumping around', causing much frustration. As such, instead of making the recording process easier, it may have made it more complicated. This could be perhaps attributed to the age of some of the participants[6].

Despite the possible difficulties, all participants claimed to have enjoyed completing the photo diary – five 'strongly agreed' and three 'agreed' (Q8a). These results are in line with those of Phase 1. Some additional comments included:

- *I saw far more in the area than I normally see. Monuments etc. that had been hidden in the previous design.*
- *A good way to provide residents with a connection to their local environment.*

Six participants considered the seven day diary period 'about right' (Q9). For the remaining two, it was apparently too short - one stated that photographs taken over a longer time scale would provide a more accurate assessment of the changes in the area[7]. Still, some participants appeared to have adjusted the timescales to suit them, not prescriptively following the instructions[8]. This confirmed that often the researcher cannot be in full control of the method.

Six participants agreed or strongly agreed that they could fully express their opinions using the photo diary (Q10a) (Table 8.8), however they expressed more scepticism

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[6] Although participants were acquainted with e-mail and digital photography, they may not have felt comfortable with word processing.

[7] However, their idea of comparing 'before' and 'after' images implied extending the photo period in terms of months, rather than weeks, which might not be feasible considering the time scales of many regeneration projects.

[8] Some participants failed to stick to the allocated period and took photos for example during two visits, with a two week gap between them. One participant even used photos from his 'archive', as they were supposedly 'better', because they were taken in the spring instead of winter. The researcher had limited control over this.

than in Phase 1. Perhaps this could be attributed to the proposed misunderstanding of some participants of what was expected of them.

Table 8.8: The photographic diary provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions. (Q10)				
	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Strongly agree	3	37.5	62.5	↓ - 25.0
Agree	3	37.5	25	↑ + 12.5
Not sure	1	12.5	12.5	
Disagree	1	12.5		↑ + 12.5
Strongly disagree				
Total	8	100	100	

The researcher succeeded at conveying the outcome of the photo diary[9] more explicitly than in Phase 1 - four 'strongly agreed' and four 'agreed' that the outcome was clear (Q11a). Participants appeared relatively hopeful that their suggestions may be acted upon (Q11b), but acknowledged the difficulties. This suggests that participants believed the method was used fairly, i.e. with serious intent.

When considering the possible benefit of discussing the images with other participants (Q12), the responses were the same as in Phase 1 – four participants disagreed with the statement, two agreed and two stated 'possibly'. The method appears to be valued for its individuality, when participants feel they do not need to conform to the opinions of a group. It also offers a flexible alternative to those consultation methods which rely on participants' presence at a certain place and time.

- *Not for this particular method as I feel it may have swayed me into taking other photos or concentrating on other areas of the green.*

As in Phase 1, seven participants claimed they are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment after keeping a photo diary (Q13), while one already did. Some responses to Q1 and Q2 had already implied that the photo diary made the participants pay more attention and notice new aspects in an environment that was otherwise relatively familiar to them. As such, findings from Phase 2 have confirmed those already obtained in Phase 1 – that in response to being consulted

[9] I.e. Photo diaries may inform future plans but the suggestions were unlikely to influence the current improvements.

using the photo diary, the participants are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment (Objective 1 of Phase 2[10]).

The overall experience of the photographic diary was rated mostly positively (Q14) – three rated it as ‘excellent’, four as ‘good’ and one as ‘average’. Despite some difficulties in completing the diaries, six participants also rated the method as ‘very effective’ at consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces. This is in contrast with Phase 1, where five were ‘not sure’ and only two participants rated it as ‘very effective’.

Two participants identified the visual evidence that photo diaries can provide as a benefit of the method (Q16). It can also demonstrate how people ‘consume’ space. Four participants referred to the opportunities to express their own opinions, in an intimate environment and without pressure from others, and show others what they see.

- *It gives evidence, not just words and graphs to support an argument or a consensus.*

Time and commitment, need for access to a digital camera and a computer, technical, photographic and literacy skills, disabilities (e.g. visual impairment), illness and age, together with the need to embrace a ‘new way of looking and thinking’, were mentioned as the disadvantages or barriers of the method (Q17, Q18)[11]. Two participants suggested taking notes in the field, ‘while thoughts are fresh’.

- *Taking photographs is subject to emotions of the time, and other aspects after taking the photograph can influence your write-up. Later I thought I could have used a notepad to take some notes there and then about why I took a particular photo.*

This further supports the earlier argument that despite some inconveniences of taking notes in the field in Phase 1, the paper notebook may have been a more important non-human actant in the process of data gathering than previously believed.

[10] Objective 1: Assess the extent to which the benefits of the walking discussion and photographic diary, identified in Phase 1, will be confirmed when deployed in a different context and with different participants.
[11] Again, many of these correspond to the general disadvantages and barriers of public involvement.

All participants confirmed they would take part in a photographic diary again (Q19), as it provided a 'new' and 'meaningful' way of getting involved in regeneration, where opinions can be provided together with visual evidence.

In various parts of the evaluation, participants added their thoughts on how the method could be improved. In fact, some suggestions pointed to the aspects that were implemented in Phase 1 and altered for Phase 2. In order to 'open the method to a wider audience', disposable cameras may be more suitable (PD22). Four participants[12] independently mentioned that they should have been encouraged to take notes right after snapping the photos. PD23 complained about the amount of paperwork[13] involved in the method and that the method should be 'as simple as possible'.

Although the participants' evaluation of the method between Phases 1 and 2 does not differ significantly[14], some general patterns can be identified. Overall, the evaluation in Phase 2 was generally positive and participants appreciated it for 'opening their eyes' to an otherwise familiar area. Phase 2 participants confirmed personally benefiting from the experience, which offered them opportunities to express their views and experience the environment in a new way. As such, the method appears to fulfil these effectiveness characteristics. Time, effort and technical aspects were viewed as the main disadvantages and barriers. Although the method was generally judged as convenient, other sources of data implied that some participants may have not fully understood and followed the instructions. Phase 2 participants could be viewed as more typical of the general public - as they were not sourced primarily from a university campus - which may provide a more accurate indication of the real technical abilities of the general public. Therefore, a paper version of the photo diary may be more practical and thus more effective, not just in terms of usability, but also in terms of capturing the participants' thoughts at the time the image was taken. As such, digitizing the method did not necessarily make it more effective (Objective 2 of Phase 2[15]).

[12] PD22, PD25, PD26 and PD27
[13] Referring to the ethical papers, the template itself, as well as the evaluation form at the end
[14] It needs to be taken into consideration that there were only eight photo diary participants in each phase.
[15] Objective 2: In view of the alterations to the methods, identify the factors which increased or decreased their effectiveness.

8.2.4 Researcher perspective

The majority of the researcher's observations have already been presented as part of the data quality and participant perspective analysis. However, the main finding coming out of the photo diaries in Phase 2 was that substituting the 'disposable camera and paper version' for a 'digital version' appeared to have complicated rather than simplified the method (Objective 2 of Phase 2).

By removing the need to meet with participants face-to-face to hand over the disposable camera and the notepad, the channel of communication changed from face-to-face to mediated (i.e. telephone and e-mail). Although the instructions were the same as in Phase 1, it appears that without the researcher and the participants personally meeting, their understanding of the task at hand may have been compromised. Some information may have been misunderstood, alternatively participants may not have read through the instructions carefully. However, none of the participants sought any clarifications. The importance of clear communication channels was already raised by most professionals (Chapter 6), who claimed it to be a prerequisite for understanding, and was confirmed in this case, too. As such, communication and understanding appeared more influential over effectiveness than the actual digitizing of the photo diary.

> *'The essence of consultation should be to keep the lines of communication as clear as possible, so that you basically avoid confusion.'*
>
> (Architect)

Alternatively, participants may have become confused with the number of actions they were expected to do. In order to complete a photo diary from start to finish, participants were expected to:

- Read, sign and return ethical forms
- Read the instructions to the diary
- Visit Greyfriars Green and take photographs
- Insert photographs into the template and write comments
- E-mail the photo diary to the researcher
- Fill out and return an evaluation form[16]
- Optional – attend a photo-elicitation interview

[16] This step was a requirement of the evaluation and not necessarily the method.

In comparison, all interaction between the researcher and participants in Phase 1 took place in two brief face-to-face sessions. There is a possibility that the amount of tasks required in Phase 2, conducted mostly through e-mail may have become too overwhelming for some. This suggests that methods should be as simple as possible (Objective 2 of Phase 2).

With the loss of face-to-face communication, the researcher also lost some control over the application of the method. The dates of images revealed that some participants took images over a period longer than the allocated seven days. However, they all took photos during two occasions, corresponding with the practice in Phase 1. Two participants did not follow the prescribed format at all, resulting in their entries lacking a lot of the requested information.

8.2.5 Discussion and Summary

Changes implemented in Phase 2 (Objective 2 of Phase 2) (the shortened time scale, and the maximum number of images limited to twelve) appear not to have had a negative influence on the effectiveness of the photo diary. As in Phase 1, participants tended to take their photos in one or two site visits, which suggests that specifying a maximum number of images may be more appropriate than setting a time limit. Phase 2 generated a similar amount of data (and of similar quality – explored more below) as Phase 1, suggesting that apart from a shorter period succeeding at keeping the task ‘fresh’ in the minds of the participants, the actual time allocation is not critical.

The findings from the photo-elicitation interviews advance the belief that discussing photographs in addition to the information already provided in the diaries may not necessarily lead to more or better data. This appears to go against the general experience with photo-elicitation interviews (Collier, 1957; Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Myers, 2010), possibly due to the actual topic of research, which did not focus on personal emotions but more pragmatic issues and thus failed to ‘break the frame’ of participants’ normal views (Harper, 2002). The detail within written comments appeared to depend more on the participants and how much they wished to share themselves, rather than the diary being restrictive. The four photo-elicitation interviews provided little additional data. The time to organise, conduct and process these interviews appeared to outweigh their actual benefit. As such, the addition of photo-elicitation interviews had limited impact on effectiveness.

The most influential factor for the effectiveness of the method was the change from a 'disposable camera and paper' version to using digital cameras and electronic diary templates. With the consequential change in communication channel and the increase in the number of tasks participants had to perform, confusion and misunderstandings were introduced. Although without necessarily much impact on the actual data quality, there were considerable usability and administrative implications for both the participants and the researcher[17], which may be viewed as decreasing the effectiveness of the method[18]. The findings demonstrated that the photographic diary is capable of yielding high quality data, however a more flexible hybrid version may be more suitable in future application, where participants choose between disposable or digital cameras and paper or electronic note taking, reflecting their own preferences and abilities.

Overall, this re-distribution of influence between the different non-human actants within the method (the camera, the paper notebook or electronic template, the image itself, the computer) and the comparison of evidence between Phase 1 and Phase 2 suggest that the main value of this method is in the participants engaging with the environment and thinking about it in a unique way via the non-human actant – the camera – rather than reflecting on actual images. When participants were able to see and comment on digital images, they did not appear to demonstrate more reflection than those who took images with disposable cameras and made notes in the field.

Despite the challenges of keeping and completing a photo diary in Phase 2, the generated data could be considered of equal quality as that in Phase 1, capturing the participants' routine use of the site (Objective 1 of Phase 2[19]). With the exception of location specification, which proved challenging in an area with scarce points of reference (but could be addressed by providing a map), the entries were relevant, clear and relatively balanced in terms of actionability, sentiment and theme. 60% of comments included a suggestion for improvement. Thematically, clear patterns of

[17] The researcher's administrative workload increased considerably in terms of communication with the participants and processing the diaries and interviews.
[18] i.e. the balance between the expectations of the different stakeholders was not necessarily achieved.
[19] Objective 1: Assess the extent to which the benefits of the methods, identified in Phase 1, will be confirmed when deployed in a different context and with different participants.

what participants valued about the area could be identified, often with agreement on the solutions. As such, Phase 2 generated further evidence to argue that the photo diary is likely to encourage public input which is valid, actionable and substantiated by visual evidence and thus may prove useful in regeneration practice. Unlike data gathered using methods facilitated by a researcher, photo diary data is generated by the participants themselves without any outside influence or external agenda, in some cases identifying issues omitted by other methods. Participants also acknowledged that they are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment after keeping a photo diary. It possibly increased their spatial awareness in terms of noticing how particular spaces change and how they may be utilised by other people. They appeared to have personally gained from the experience and some personal empowerment may have been achieved. Therefore, it is proposed that public consultations about the regeneration of urban public spaces would benefit from a greater use of visual methods such as the photographic diary and this research has explored two possible approaches that may be taken when conducting a photo diary. However, although digitizing the photo diary was anticipated to improve the method, this did not necessarily prove to be the case. Overall, the method is capable of generating quality data, drawing on the public's personal knowledge of the space, which may be challenging to obtain using other methods. However, the method needs to be simple and convenient for the participants.

8.3 *Walking discussion*

In response to the findings from Phase 1, the walking discussions in Phase 2 were shortened from two to one hour and simplified in terms of the materials used. Furthermore, instead of initiating discussion topics, the role of the facilitator was reduced to consist of only keeping the discussion focused on the themes relevant to the consultation, seeking clarifications and probing for more information, thus granting a more active role to the surrounding environment.

These three alterations will be discussed in turn in terms of their influence on the effectiveness of the walking discussion. As was the case in Chapter 5, the data quality will be presented together with the researcher's perspective. Subsequently, the participants' perspective will be presented, followed by a summary.

8.3.1 Data quality and researcher perspective

Apart from the general influence of group composition, the participants in Phase 2 represented older age groups than those in Phase 1 (see Section 8.3.1.5 for demographics). Often having lived in the city for many years - sometimes their entire lives – and some coming from local interest groups, these individuals displayed a high level of curiosity over the activities taking place locally. For many, Greyfriars Green was well placed in their personal memories. As such, in comparison to the possibly 'transient' nature of the Phase 1 participants, these participants could be considered more representative of the 'general public', i.e. they had a more long-term stake in the area under discussion and its regeneration.

It was confirmed once again that placing a method in-situ can minimise typical power dynamics (Anderson, 2004; Hall, 2006; Carpiano, 2009) (Objective 1 of Phase 2[20]). The groups were small enough for no participant to dominate the discussion. This was confirmed in the participant evaluation, where the majority of participants could 'always' or 'often' speak up (Q9).

[20] Objective 1: Assess the extent to which the benefits of the methods, identified in Phase 1, will be confirmed when deployed in a different context and with different participants.

8.3.1.1 The influence of implemented changes on the method's effectiveness[21]

8.3.1.1.1 Simplicity of method

Most participants arrived having read the ethical documentation provided prior to the walking discussion. They appeared clear about the purpose of the session as well as what was expected of them, granting a dynamic start. With the exception of a number of images of the proposed changes, no other materials were used. The sessions relied on verbal communication and the in-situ interaction with the surrounding environment. This simplification of the method appeared to work well - the participants were not burdened with additional tasks and as such their 'role' remained clear, i.e. to discuss their views of the Greyfriars Green, feedback on the changes in the park, and point out anything in the environment of importance to them.

8.3.1.1.2 Contact time

The shortened duration of the walking discussions resulted in an almost equivalent amount of data as in Phase 1[22]. Avoiding pro-longed introductions and exploring a smaller area (compared to the campus), one hour proved sufficient. Time constraints were repeatedly identified as inhibiting potential participation in consultations relying on group interactions[23]. Although the discussions had not reached a natural closure in the allocated time, one hour appeared to represent an optimum compromise between contact time with participants and the data generated. Indeed, most participants later confirmed that the duration of the walking discussion was appropriate. However, in different contexts a suitable duration would have to be considered in terms of the size of the area concerned. It may not be feasible to cover a larger area and have a meaningful discussion about it within 60 minutes.

[21] Addressing the overall aim for this phase (Evaluate the extent to which the changes made to the methods improved their effectiveness) and Objective 2 (In view of the alterations, identify the factors which increased or decreased their effectiveness).

[22] It needs to be acknowledged that in Phase 1 the actual walks lasted around 90 minutes, with the remaining time allocated for completing the evaluation forms.

[23] This barrier was identified in the literature, Phase 1 and Phase 2 participant evaluations as well as interviews with professionals.

8.3.1.1.3 Human and non-human actants

Participants were given considerable control over the themes to be discussed. Unlike in Phase 1, where a ‘set of themes’ was to be covered, Phase 2 explored the extent to which participants could generate meaningful and relevant data for the regeneration of urban public space without extensive probing by the facilitator. This also granted a much more active role to the non-human actant – the surrounding environment.

Restricting the facilitator’s role increased the effectiveness of the method in two ways. Firstly, the surrounding environment became a much more influential non-human actant, initiating the majority of the themes discussed. Secondly, the participants interacted with each other much more, resulting in more spontaneous (but still relevant) discussions. These will be dealt with in turn below.

8.3.1.1.4 Influence on data quality

Firstly, the three-way conversation between the researcher, participants and the environment became more profound (Hall *et al.*, 2006). In fact, the ‘conversation’ was particularly strong between the participants and the non-human surrounding environment. Whereas in Phase 1 participants interacted with the environment and referred to it in their narratives, its role as a walking probe (De Leon and Cohen, 2005) was limited. In Phase 2 the surrounding environment became a very active non-human actant, prompting the majority of topics. On average, aspects within the surrounding environment were specifically referred to on 62 occasions in each walk (minimum = 41; maximum = 79). These direct references to the surrounding environment, often using place adverbs ‘here’ and ‘there’, consisted of commenting on how things may have changed in the park over time, perhaps building on prior personal knowledge of the site, or consciously referring to certain aspects to exemplify or substantiate an opinion or suggestion raised. Please refer to Table 8d.1 in Appendix 8d for some examples of participants pointing out issues in the park (Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.3: *WD21 participants pointing out an issue in the park*

Figure 8.4: *WD23 participants pointing out an issue in the park*

From these direct in-situ references, around a third represented ‘walking probes’ (minimum = 15; maximum = 27). Rather than being used to evidence a particular point, these probes acted as triggers, generating instantaneous reactions from the participants. They may have involved features - such as statues, landscaping features, views, mistletoes in trees and others - which the participants had not noticed before, accompanied by exclamations such as ‘oh, look!’ (Table 8d.2, Appendix 8d). Unlike the references to the surrounding environment serving to evidence opinions, these probes often affected the course of the discussion and inspired topics to be discussed further.

Being motivated by the park environment, the discussion themes remained relevant to the consultation. Participants did not bring up themes irrelevant to the area under investigation and rarely went off-topic. This goes against Rowe and Frewer's (2005) claim that 'open' response modes not only elicit more relevant information, but also more irrelevant information (Table 3a.1 in Appendix 3a). Being in-situ in the environment under discussion appeared to keep participants focused on the purpose of the session. With minimal interference from the facilitator, but influenced by the surrounding environment, all four walking discussions tended to cover similar themes, sometimes even in the same locations. This aligns with Elmwood and Martin's (2000) and Chih Hoong's (2003) argument that there is a relationship between the micro-geographies of a research site and the data that gets produced. In the spontaneous discussions, themes tended to overlap, merge one into another and could be revisited. For example, subways and the underpass were mentioned in all discussions, often connected with lighting and safety themes. The most frequently mentioned themes concerned street furniture, public art and other features or points of interest within the space of the park, followed by specific reference to trees and flower displays and the public realm in general. Although some themes may have been more prominent in some groups than in others, the participants still brought up a variety of themes, providing a broad public input. This was also relatively balanced in terms of positive and negative views. Participants generally complimented the flower beds, but did not like the underpass underneath the ring road. Additionally, complaints were usually accompanied by constructive suggestions for improvement. In terms of implications for the method's effectiveness, the obtained data suggests that generating meaningful, balanced and actionable public input to regenerate urban public spaces does not need to rely on a strong structure. The embodied first-hand experience of the site is very likely to motivate spontaneous discussions that are of use to the regeneration professional. The themes are not only relevant, but also indicate what may be of particular value to the members of the public. Issues unknown to the professional may be brought up by the participants, too. As such, Phase 2 confirmed the benefits of the method identified in Phase 1 (Objective 1 of Phase 2).

Considerable data covering the participants' personal histories and meanings attached to the location were elicited. Some participants recalled the park from fifty years ago. This way, the facilitator extended her knowledge and gained further insight of the research site. A new layer of meaning was added to the data, highlighting the importance of regenerating areas in keeping with the views of the local population and its sense of place. Furthermore, this 'historical' information has been identified by the engagement officer 2 and the landscape architect (Section 6.3.3.2) as of particular interest to some regeneration professionals. Walking discussion is capable of yielding such data.

8.3.1.1.5 Influence on group dynamics

The second positive implication of the facilitator taking on a less active role resulted in a much more dynamic interaction between the participants. Participants did not need much encouragement to speak up. Most walking discussions occurred in a relaxed atmosphere where rapport was created among the individuals. Participants interacted with each other much more than they did in Phase 1 - they talked among themselves, asking and answering each other's questions, debating about their opinions and collectively identifying solutions (Figure 8.5 and Figure 8.6).

Figure 8.5: *Interaction among WD22 participants*

Figure 8.6: *Interaction among WD24 participants*

On some themes opinions were divided[24], but the deliberation among the group sometimes led to a change in the initial opinion, or its alteration in terms of acknowledging and respecting different perspectives. Consensus tended to be reached, although this was not required (Finch and Lewis, 2003).

8.3.1.2 Ideal group size

The ideal group size was identified at between four and five participants, plus facilitator. In Phase 1, three participants were considered as too few. In Phase 2, the number of participants ranged between four and six, with two walking discussions having five participants. While in the walks with four or five participants discussions flowed well and all participants had relatively equal opportunities to speak up, the walk with six participants was more difficult to manage. The size of the group appeared to increase the likelihood for it to 'split' into smaller groups, not only while walking, but while static, too, disrupting natural flow. Furthermore, the larger group appeared to cause an obstruction in the park.

8.3.1.3 Informing during the walking discussion

Phase 1 findings already pointed to provision of information forming part of face-to-face methods. During the walking discussion, the researcher provided some

[24] For example the proposals to in-fill a subway by the railway station and its replacement with a level crossing over the ring road, and introduction of shared spaces.

information regarding the plans for Greyfriars Green[25] and answered questions. Whereas some participants appeared relatively well informed about the plans, the knowledge of others was limited. In their evaluation participants once again identified 'learning about the new developments' as one of the benefits of the method (n = 5) (Q1). The importance of and the expectation for information provision was implied by the participants on several occasions. Some would have preferred more prior information covering the general parameters for the changes (e.g. financial constraints) as well as the plans already accepted. One suggested that an officer directly involved in the regeneration project could have accompanied the group in order to provide immediate informed feedback. These comments imply the participants' own expectations for information provision. The presence of a directly involved professional would not only benefit the participants, but would allow the professionals gain public views first-hand, possibly learning more about the site. The urban designer and architect (Section 6.3.1) stated their preference for obtaining information first hand in order to avoid problems in data translation and the resulting loss of clarity and dilution of data.

Extending the argument started in Section 5.5.1.4, although Arnstein (1969) has acknowledged that the characteristics of some of the rungs on her ladder of citizen participation may simultaneously apply to other rungs, the placement of 'informing' and 'consultation' on individual rungs would imply that these are often separate. However, as indicated in Phase 1 and confirmed in Phase 2, achieving useful public input may be unlikely without sharing of some information which the public could respond to. On the contrary, participants appear to demand information. It may be argued that in the context of regeneration of urban public space, some information will need to be shared for participants to be able to take their stance. As such, public involvement models may need to more openly recognise that the sponsor providing some information may be part and parcel of consultation. Rowe and Frewer's (2005) information flow model may also need to acknowledge that face-to-face consultation involves not only the flow of information from the public to the sponsor, but vice versa too. These concepts will be revisited in more detail in Chapter 9.

[25] General overview of the Council's plans for the improvement of Greyfriars Green was presented on the local authority website as well as in some of its publications. However, the researcher was provided with additional information not available in the public domain, some of which was shared with the participants during the walking discussions.

8.3.1.4 Methodological practicalities

A fixed-route approach was adopted in both phases[26] and appeared suitable for walking discussions – participants were generally reluctant to initiate group stops. Furthermore, a cross-section of responses to the same locations could be obtained (Jones *et al.*, 2008). Participant-led routes may be more suitable for one-to-one scenarios, such as walking interviews (Jones *et al.*, 2008) or 'go-alongs' (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2009).

The facilitator may find the presence of an assistant useful, in terms of carrying voice recorders or assisting with tasks such as photographing raised issues. Alternatively, this 'assistant' could be a member of the project team, able to provide more direct feedback. However, the presence of an 'official' may inhibit some participants from talking honestly.

8.3.1.5 Participant demographics

The four walking discussions had twenty participants altogether. Over two thirds were male (n = 12) and more than half (n = 11) were aged over 60 years. The second most represented age group was 18 – 29 years with four participants (20%). Apart from one ('White Other'), all participants were White British. Two participants claimed to have a disability.

Full demographic information and more extensive discussion in terms of the sample are presented in Section 8.4.

8.3.2 Participant perspective

With all twenty participants completing the evaluation forms, Phase 2 obtained feedback from a larger sample than in Phase 1 (n = 11). The results were consistent with those obtained in Phase 1, indicating a relative consistency in the participants' views on the method's convenience, effectiveness, advantages, disadvantages and other aspects (Objective 1 of Phase 2).

[26] Although the researcher wished to give participants the opportunity to alter the route in Phase 2, the developmental work restricted access through the research site and ultimately prescribed the course of the walking discussion. Unlike in Phase 1, a circular route could not be taken either.

All participants found the walking discussion useful or beneficial to them (Q1). Again, opportunities for sharing of ideas (n = 5), learning about the new developments in the park (n = 5) and exploring the area in-situ (n = 3) were valued. The sharing of ideas (n = 11) and the discussion taking place in the actual space (n = 7) were also identified as the best aspect of the walking discussion (Q2). Being in-situ was appreciated for allowing 'a true feeling for what the area was like', observing things not noticed before, spotting details and seeing the alterations made first-hand. In terms of the negative aspects (Q3), the weather was mentioned the most frequently (n = 10), followed by background noise (n = 2). Six participants stated there was nothing they did not like about the walking discussion.

The majority of participants were either satisfied (n = 8; 40%) or very satisfied (n = 11; 55%) with the recruitment process (Q4a) and found the time of the walking discussion convenient (n = 13; 65%) or very convenient (n = 7; 35%) (Q5a). These results closely corresponded with the responses in Phase 1, confirming the participants' satisfaction with the recruitment strategy adopted in this research. The one hour duration of the walking discussion was considered appropriate by eighteen participants (90%) (Q6), suggesting that the method has not been negatively affected by its shortened duration.

In terms of the facilitation and the discussion itself, the majority of participants rated the facilitation as 'good' (n = 9; 47.4%) or 'excellent' (n = 9; 47.4%) (Q7a). The majority also agreed (n = 9; 47.4%) or strongly agreed (n = 8; 42.1%) that the topics covered were relevant to the purpose of the discussion (Q8a). However, most of the discussion themes were in fact introduced by the participants themselves. More than half of participants (n = 11) 'always' had the chance to speak up (Q9a), followed by further seven (35%) who could speak 'often', suggesting that they did not feel intimidated. They could also easily relate to what was being discussed (Q10a) – they all either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Participants also agreed or strongly agreed that the walking discussion allowed them to fully express their opinions (Q12a). One participant added that 'the physical experience generated opinions which might not have been evident from just looking at photos of proposals', pointing to the value of the method being carried out in-situ.

The group dynamics were rated positively, too. All participants found the discussions interesting or stimulating – eight strongly agreed with the statement, twelve agreed (Q11a). Only four participants openly stated that the discussions had no effect on their opinions (Q11b). The rest acknowledged becoming more open towards the views of other people, considering issues previously overlooked, gaining more insight and information about certain topics. Two participants pointed out that the group discussion altered their view on the proposed in-filling of a subway and made them consider it from the perspectives of the pedestrian as well as the motorist. Although only a speculation, it may be argued that some form of personal empowerment and benefit in terms of gaining new knowledge, appreciating different perspectives and becoming more informed about the plans for improving the park was achieved through the walking discussion.

It appears that participants in Phase 2 felt clearer about the outcomes of the walking discussion than those in Phase 1 (Q13a) (Table 8.9). There was a considerable increase in those who strongly agreed with the statement[27]. Around half of participants expressed hope that their comments would be acted upon (Q13b) by the local authority.

Table 8.9: The outcome of the walking discussion was made clear at the end of the session. (Q13a)

	Phase 2		**Phase 1**	**Change**
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Strongly agree	8	40	18.2	↑ + 21.8
Agree	8	40	54.5	↓ - 14.5
Not sure	3	15	9.1	↑ + 5.9
Disagree	1	5	9.1	↓ - 4.1
Strongly disagree			9.1	↓ - 9.1
Total	20	100	100	

Thirteen participants (65%) confirmed that they are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment after taking part in the walking discussion (Q14). The rest claimed they were already observant to it, corresponding with answers given in Phase 1. One participant added:

- *I think the people who are likely to attend these sessions will be, like me, aware and care for the environment.*

[27] The local authority was very resolved about not raising the participants' expectations through this research. Apart from the research purposes, they agreed to treat data as preliminary public feedback on the implemented changes and possible inspiration for future work, but unlikely to influence current work. The participant responses indicate that the facilitator articulated this point clearly to them and thus that the method was carried out in fair manner.

This statement would align with the researcher's observation that many of the participants expressed great interest in the area under consideration[28]. Although the walking discussion may not attract individuals who generally do not participate in consultations any more than other methods, its main value comes from generating relevant public input in-situ and possibly offering a more empowering channel for voicing opinions. Even if already attentive to their surroundings, more than half of participants still indicated a positive change in their attitude towards the surrounding environment. This may possibly influence how they experience and treat their surroundings in the future. The research officer in Chapter 6 pointed to the building of social capital:

> *'Where people are clearly involved in the decision making process, they will look after the end result better. They have a sense of ownership, they will keep it tidy. That's a very positive outcome that you are really looking for. And they will participate next time more willingly. That is building social capital in the process, which is what you want.'*
>
> (Research officer)

Participants' evaluation would further confirm this. All participants rated their overall experience as 'excellent' (n = 11; 55%) or 'good' (n = 9; 45%) (Q15) and all claimed to be inclined to participate again if the method were mainstreamed in consultation practice (Q20).

Considering the method more theoretically, 65% of participants (n = 13) viewed it as 'very effective' at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces (Q16) (Table 8.10), with further 25% as 'effective'. Phase 2 participants appear to have rated the method's effectiveness more positively than those in Phase 1.

Table 8.10: How effective do you think a walking discussion would be at consulting the public about improving public spaces? (Q16)

	Phase 2		Phase 1	Change
	Freq	**%**	**%**	**%**
Very effective	13	65	54.5	↑ +10.5
Effective	5	25	27.3	↓ - 2.3
Not sure	1	5	18.2	↓ - 13.2
Not effective	1	5	0.0	↑ + 5
Not effective at all				
Total	20	100	100	-

[28] This was also demonstrated by the amount of personal memories shared during the walking discussions.

Apart from the already mentioned benefits (Q17), seven participants specifically valued the in-situ nature of the method. Apart from it being easier to visualise things in-situ and in context, two participants highlighted the benefit of seeing the location 'in action' with its sounds, sights and tactile experiences. As such, the level of immersion appears as the most influencing factor within this method.

- *It is a real time, pragmatic, direct and pleasurable way of discussing issues about a communal space and offers a great platform to express opinions. I think it is much more time efficient than methods which do not involve immersing within the real environment. The senses are involved in perceiving and engaging with the surrounding environment. Reflecting upon the experience of being in the space, the responses are ultimately only realistic, not hypothetical.*

Relying on small groups was identified as the main disadvantage (Q18) by six participants. Participants themselves acknowledged that larger groups may cause an obstruction and be more difficult to manage, as the researcher also observed. In practice, the number of walking discussions would have to be increased to obtain feedback from larger numbers of individuals, rather than increasing group sizes. However, the thematic analysis carried out for the purpose of the local authority confirmed that even with just four walking discussion, data saturation appeared to have been reached. As such, a certain level of representativeness may have been satisfied.

Other identified disadvantages corresponded with the already identified barriers to participation in walking discussions (Q19) – weather, time, apathy, confidence and language issues. Disability was mentioned again, too (n = 9). However, in practice three participants had walking sticks and demonstrated no particular difficulty. As such, time and lack of interest may pose a greater barrier than an actual physical disability.

Overall, the participant feedback on corresponded to the results from Phase 1, however its effectiveness was rated considerably higher (Objective 1 of Phase 2). Participants recognised the value of being in-situ. However, they most enjoyed sharing their ideas with other people, highlighting the importance of face-to-face interaction. They appeared to have viewed the method as fair, bringing them personal benefit and allowing them to express their views.

8.3.3 Summary

The benefits of utilising an in-situ approach to consult about the regeneration of urban public spaces identified in Phase 1 were confirmed in Phase 2. However, the surrounding environment proved to be a more active non-human actant than in Phase 1 and served as active visual evidence of the purpose of the consultation[29]. Since the facilitator took on a more passive role, the discussion points were initiated primarily by the participants and influenced by the surrounding environment. As such, the themes raised were of relevance and importance to both the consultation and the participants themselves.

Relative consistencies in the participants' views were also confirmed, suggesting that even with the limited number of participants (i.e. twenty), a legitimate public input was obtained through the walking discussions. Furthermore, the data was viewed as highly actionable, relevant, location specific and with considerable detail. Overall, the findings provided additional evidence to ratify the value and effectiveness of in-situ approaches in consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces.

8.4 Phase 2 participant demographics and reflection

The demographics of participants between Phase 1 and 2 varied considerably. In Phase 1 staff members came from various age groups and students tended to be aged between 18 and 29 years. They were of relatively varied ethnicities. However, Phase 2 participants (tables below) were mostly White British (Table 8.11) and aged over 60 years (Table 8.12), not necessarily reflecting the demographic profile of Coventry population (Appendix 7c).

As mentioned in Section 7.2.5, this was influenced by participants being recruited primarily from local interest groups, supplemented by snowballing. White British and retired residents were the main members of these groups. Their availability and general interest may have increased their willingness to participate, especially in the case of the walking discussions, where seven out of twenty participants claimed being observant to the surrounding environment already. Photo diaries had a more varied sample in terms of age and most participants claimed to become more attentive to their surroundings only after taking part. As such, it could be argued that

[29] I.e. to gather the participants' preliminary views on the alterations in the park and to generate further ideas for improvement.

although prior interest in a location may increase the likelihood of particular individuals to get involved, it may not be the only reason. These methods may potentially appeal to different types of people, however participant recruitment is challenging. Targeted recruitment within specific age, ethnic, religious, neighbourhood and other groups may broaden the range of participants whose views could be gathered using these methods.

Table 8.11: Ethnicity							
		WD	**PD**	**Total**	**WD**	**PD**	**Total**
		Freq	**Freq**	**Freq**	**%**	**%**	**%**
1	White - British	19	8	27	95	100	96.4
2	White - Irish						
3	White - Other	1		1	5		3.6
4	Mixed - White & Black Caribbean						
5	Mixed - White & Asian						
6	Mixed - White & Black African						
7	Mixed - Other						
8	Asian or Asian British - Indian						
9	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani						
10	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi						
11	Asian or Asian British - Other						
12	Black or Black British - Caribbean						
13	Black or Black British - African						
14	Black or Black British - Other						
15	Chinese						
16	Any other						
	Total	20	8	28	100	100	100

Table 8.12: Age						
	WD	**PD**	**Total**	**WD**	**PD**	
	Freq	**Freq**	**Freq**	**%**	**%**	**Total %**
Under 18						
18 - 29	4	2	6	20	25	21.4
30 - 39	2	1	3	10	12.5	10.7
40 - 49	1	2	3	5	25	10.7
50 - 59	2	1	3	10	12.5	10.7
60+	11	2	13	55	25	46.4
Total	20	8	28	100	100	100

Two walking discussion participants claimed to have a disability (Table 8.13).

Table 8.13: Disability						
	WD	**PD**	**Total**	**WD**	**PD**	
	Freq	**Freq**	**Freq**	**%**	**%**	**Total %**
Yes	2		2	10.5		7.4
No	17	8	25	89.5	100	92.6
Total	19	8	27	100	100	100
Missing	*1*		*1*			

Table 8.14: Gender						
	WD	**PD**	**Total**	**WD**	**PD**	
	Freq	**Freq**	**Freq**	**%**	**%**	**Total %**
Male	12	6	18	60	75	64.3
Female	8	2	10	40	25	35.7
Total	20	8	28	100	100	100

As already argued, Phase 1 participants could be considered as better acquainted with information technologies. Concurrently, Phase 2 participants' technical abilities may be viewed as being more indicative of those of the general public. As Phase 2 photo diary findings suggested, several participants may have indeed struggled with some of the technical aspects of the method, demonstrating their possible limited knowledge of using digital photography or word processing. Thus it is necessary to avoid making assumptions regarding people's technical abilities and keep consultation methods flexible and simple to correspond to individuals' abilities.

Overall, it needs to be acknowledged that the individual participants' personal characteristics and their potential motivations to take part may have had an effect on the tested methods. However, this would be the case for any consultation, within any context, and may be challenged by more targeted recruitment (e.g. specific age/ethnic/other groups), conducting a consultation in-situ and communicating the method's purpose and the participants' tasks within the method more clearly (and checking understanding). The findings presented in Chapters 5 and 8, derived using the three-perspective evaluation framework, assessed the effectiveness of the methods beyond the influence of individual participants.

8.5 Conclusion

Addressing the third research objective, this chapter evaluated the extent to which several alterations to the photographic diary and walking discussion, re-tested in a different case study location and with different participants, would influence their effectiveness.

Decreasing the photographic diary period and the maximum number of images did not appear to decrease the effectiveness of the method at consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces. A comparable amount of data to Phase 1 was generated. However, triangulation of data quality and participant and researcher perspectives revealed that ‘digitizing’ the photo diary did not necessarily lead to more reflection on the side of the participants, better data or increased convenience for the participants. Although the data quality remained equivalent to that of Phase 1, some participants demonstrated difficulties in following the instructions for completing the task. The digital format of the photo diaries did not require a physical meeting of the researcher and participants, alleviating opportunities for face-to-face communication, which is believed to have resulted in decreased understanding of the task by some participants. Furthermore, the administrative workload of the researcher increased. As such, although still generating balanced and actionable data, digitizing the photo diary does not necessarily increase effectiveness. The ‘disposable camera and paper’ version, or a combined one, may be more convenient, simple and accessible to some individuals. The photo-elicitation interviews did not appear to generate substantive additional data to that already provided in the photo diaries, suggesting that in contexts such as consultation, they may not yield the same benefits as when exploring more personal topics (Blinn and Harrist, 1991; Myers, 2010). Together with half of participants not seeing a benefit in discussing their images with other people, the conclusion was reached that the effort to organise and conduct photo-elicitation interviews is not reflected in the obtained data. Participants appear to value the individual nature and flexibility of the method.

The findings confirmed that structurally, a photo diary can be effective at consulting the public about regeneration of urban public spaces. However, its effectiveness may be compromised by inadequate application, such as digitization. Communication, understanding and simplicity have a considerable impact on method effectiveness.

The walking discussions in Phase 2 proved more effective than in Phase 1. The shortened duration did not result in a significant data loss, suggesting that a successful walking discussion can be conducted within one hour. Relying only on verbal communication simplified the process and made the method more dynamic. Most importantly, the facilitator adopting a more passive role resulted in increased interaction of the participants with the surrounding environment. With minimal 'official' structure, the participants brought up a variety of relevant discussion themes in response to the walking probes present in the surrounding environment. Overall, the walking discussion was viewed as a method effective at consulting the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces. The data was actionable, detailed, context specific, aligned with the interests of the participants themselves and fulfilling the requirements of professionals (Section 6.3.3.2).

Linking back to the effectiveness definition (Section 4.2.2.1), the findings already discussed in Section 5.6 were confirmed. Both methods achieved their intended purpose[30], were conducted in a manner as fair as possible and quality data was obtained. Participants confirmed they could express their views using both methods and personally benefited from the experience, although their views may not influence decisions. Both methods could be made more representative by increasing the number of participants. In the case of the walking discussion, this would entail increasing the number of sessions, rather than the number of participants in each session. However, the data itself pointed to data saturation being reached. Balance between the expectations of different stakeholders was perhaps compromised by the digital version of the photo diary, which some participants struggled with and which increased the researcher's administrative workload. However, these issues could be addressed by personally meeting participants, to ensure understanding, and by retaining some 'non-digital' features of the method to increase convenience.

Overall, the findings indicate that the photographic diary and the walking discussion - examples of experiential in-situ methods, with visual elements - represent potentially more effective methods for consulting the public about regenerating urban public spaces than ex-situ methods. The empirical evidence suggests that they can not only generate quality data that would be challenging to obtain using other methods, but they can also make the participants more attentive to their surrounding environment. Unlike ex-situ methods, they can uncover more detail regarding the participants'

[30] Despite some of the photo diarist having difficulties in following the instructions.

needs and aspirations for certain spaces, the socio-cultural meanings of these spaces (Porter and Barber, 2006) and solutions which the professionals may not have considered, resulting in public input which is potentially more constructive for regenerating urban public spaces in a distinct and unique way. Furthermore, these methods require more or less equivalent planning resources[31] as other tested consultation methods, although analysis should be performed by those with some contextual knowledge of the area.

Several factors influencing the effectiveness of the photo diary and walking discussion were identified throughout the chapter, such as simplicity of method, communication, clear understanding or the role of the non-human actants. These will be re-visited in the next chapter, which aggregates the findings from Phase 1, Phase 2, the interviews with professionals and the literature to identify factors that are believed to have significantly influenced the effectiveness of all the consultation methods explored throughout this research. These factors will be subsequently used to discuss their wider implications for the conceptual debates of consultation methods' effectiveness and the wider public involvement.

[31] This is based on the experience from Phase 1, in terms of resources used for testing the eight original methods.

Chapter 9

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DEBATES

9.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings from the preceding chapters to extrapolate salient points, which have implications for both empirical and theoretical considerations of consultation methods and their effectiveness. Firstly, the evaluation framework, its three perspectives, and the overall success at evaluating the methods' effectiveness is critically examined in terms of its value and implications for effectiveness evaluation. Key factors identified as influencing methods' effectiveness are presented, together with supporting empirical evidence. The original effectiveness definition presented in Chapter 4 will be re-examined based on the findings. Finally, implications of the research for wider conceptual debates of public involvement are also examined. Throughout the chapter, the ways in which gaps in knowledge have been addressed and the contributions to knowledge achieved will be presented and discussed.

9.2 The value and implications of the evaluation framework

An evaluation framework was specifically developed for this research. Responding to debates highlighting that current understanding of effectiveness evaluation is incomplete and that rigorous effectiveness evaluations are scarce, the evaluation framework was informed by literature and Rowe and Frewer's (2004) agenda for evaluation (Section 3.2.4). The key element of the developed evaluation framework was the interaction of its three perspectives – data quality, participant and researcher perspectives - enabling a holistic and informed evaluation. As such, after appraising the evaluation framework as a whole, this section elaborates on the value of each of the three perspectives, together with some suggestions on how they could be altered. The section concludes with outlining the contributions to knowledge achieved using the evaluation framework.

One of the research objectives was to identify key factors influencing a consultation method's effectiveness (in the context of regenerating urban public spaces) and use these to contribute to wider empirical and conceptual debates about methods effectiveness and what methods may be appropriate for what contexts (ibid.; Chess and Purcell, 1999; Webler and Tuler, 2002). Thus, the empirical findings extend our understanding of which methods may be more effective in which contexts.

The three perspectives of the evaluation framework were used to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of consultation methods[1] against the attributes identified in the initial effectiveness definition. Being universal[2], this definition could apply to a variety of consultation and participation methods, i.e. methods gathering public input, and not just those studied in this research[3]. As such, the evaluation framework as well as the definition has the potential to be applied beyond the contextual boundaries of this research.

In order to achieve a rigorous effectiveness evaluation, the evaluation framework used pre-defined evaluation criteria as well as structured evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of selected methods. In order to ensure a systematic evaluation, the framework remained consistent throughout the research. Adopting a mixed-method approach, the measurement instruments included both quantitative coding and narrative-based analysis of data quality, participant questionnaires (standardised across the different methods) and a flexible researcher analysis, drawing on action learning cycles and reflective practice (Revans, 1978; 1982; Schön, 1983, 1987; Kolb, 1984). Unlike many previous studies, this research provided explicit and in-depth examination of all the measurement instruments used, providing their details[4], and thus allowing possible study replication. Necessary

[1] Online form, e-mail, electronic kiosk, text message, on-street event, photographic diary, walking discussion and focus group.

[2] 'A universal definition, encompassing all types of participation exercises and mechanisms, may theoretically be used to develop measures that will enable the effectiveness of any participation exercise to be ascertained and compared with any other' (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 518).

[3] However, the attributes referring to collection of data would not apply to communication methods, which are based on a one-way from of information from the sponsor to the public (Rowe and Frewer, 2005).

[4] I.e. the data quality criteria and their coding, and individual questionnaire items.

details regarding the individual methods were also provided in Section 4.3.5, clarifying what each of the methods entailed.

Since the methods were applied for research purposes, there were no ‘sponsors’ for the consultations. However, in a ‘real’ consultation, the sponsor perspective should be explored. In this case, a supplementary professional perspective was obtained using the interviews with professionals. Depending on the context, future evaluations may also need to include the perspectives of other stakeholders additional to the participants’, sponsors’ and researchers/evaluators’.

The value of the individual perspectives will now be discussed in turn.

9.2.1 The value of data quality

The data quality perspective addressed the current gap in knowledge regarding considerations of data quality within effectiveness evaluations (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). Previous evaluations reviewed by Rowe and Frewer (2004) made no reference to data quality. However, professionals interviewed in this research identified ‘data quality’ as the second most important attribute against which they would judge consultation effectiveness, confirming the validity of examining data quality.

Professionals independently confirmed the appropriateness of most of the data quality criteria (Section 6.3.3.2). Although ‘data quality’ is a relative term, they claimed to particularly value public feedback that is clear, relevant, specific and constructive (i.e. ‘actionability’ and ‘suggestion for improvement’), balanced and fair (i.e. ‘sentiment’ and ‘theme’), rich in detail (i.e. ‘actionability’) and also covering some historical information, i.e. sense of place (covered by ‘theme’). As such, they supported the significance of the data quality criteria used in this research. Thus, it could be argued that the more a particular method succeeds at gathering data fulfilling the above requirements, the more effective it is at obtaining public input that is useful for the regeneration of urban public spaces. Subsequently, such data is more likely to influence decisions. As such, it is necessary to examine data from these viewpoints.

Professionals revealed that they utilised data from consultations in different ways, depending on their expertise and role in a consultation. While some may demand a thematic overview of complaints and compliments, others may require more detail in terms of the public's specific ideas and requirements. As such, a single 'aggregate' analysis of results may not be universally suitable. The data quality criteria allow for flexible analysis according to the requirements of data recipients[5].

Although the criteria may be used for content analysis of a consultation, their main value lies in their ability to:

- provide a data characteristics overview
- identify the extent to which constructive public input has been gathered
- point to wider empirical and conceptual issues surrounding consultation

Exemplifying the last point, a limited uptake of a method may not have been the result of inconvenience or public apathy, but a poor promotional strategy; a large number of irrelevant comments may have been caused by misunderstanding of the purpose of the consultation; and lack of actionable comments may suggest that participants are satisfied with the current state of an area - as Burton (2004: 197) claimed, low levels of participation may actually be evidence of public contentment. Therefore, an evaluation can facilitate a more informed understanding of consultation as a concept.

Overall, the data quality criteria can provide an overview of the nature of the data and assist analysts and professionals in identifying broader patterns[6] in the information obtained from the public.

Future evaluations of involvement mechanisms would benefit from a more comprehensive consideration of data quality, in order to identify whether data useful to the sponsor was actually gathered. This research has shown that data quality needs to be far better recognised and explored both at a research and practice level in order to assess effectiveness. Furthermore a number of criteria, which may be used to achieve this in future studies, have been offered. However, rather than

[5] All data, together with its ratings, was stored in an Excel spreadsheet, which allows for its sorting against the different criteria and in accordance with the sponsors' interests.
[6] This can for example include a general public agreement or disagreement with a particular proposal, what appear to be the major concerns and what aspects people especially value.

seeing this list as ‘complete’, the criteria should be viewed as a starting point for future effectiveness evaluations considering data quality. The list could be extended in the future to reflect the requirements of specific disciplines, or the actual coding used (Section 4.4.1.1) could be altered to meet the requirements of particular consultations or contexts. For communication methods, the criteria could be used to examine the quality of the information that the sponsor is providing to the public and whether that is relevant, clear, actionable and balanced.

9.2.2 The value of the participant perspective

The participants are the key stakeholders in any consultation exercise and it has been acknowledged that for a comprehensive evaluation, different viewpoints, including that of the participants, should be considered. However, with the possible exception of focus groups, the participants’ opinions of the methods used in this research have been under-researched in previous studies. Apart from the research of Myers (2010) on photo diaries, participants’ views on mobile and visual methods have also not been sought. This research has contributed to the current knowledge of participants’ views on these methods.

Evaluation questionnaires were used to explore participants’ general attitudes towards the individual methods, including whether they believed the methods were conducted in a fair manner, offered opportunities for raising opinions and brought participants some personal benefit. For example, the responses confirmed that having a ‘different’ experience or meeting people with similar values and beliefs may be sufficient (Rydin and Pennington, 2000) for participants to be satisfied despite not attaining power over decisions (Arnstein, 1969). Participants’ demographic information can be also used to assess whether ‘representativeness’ was achieved.

The consistency of the questionnaire between methods and across Phases 1 and 2 permitted comparative analysis. The combination of open and closed questions allowed participants to add more information regarding their experience. However, future evaluations, for which Rowe and Frewer’s (2000) normative criteria would apply, could combine Rowe *et al.*’s (2001) quantitative questionnaires[7] with more qualitative elements, as used by this evaluation framework. Alternatively, other methods could be adopted to elicit participants’ views.

[7] Rowe *et al.* (2001) included a ‘short’ and ‘long’ participant questionnaire in their evaluation toolkit.

This part of the evaluation framework addressed the gap in knowledge regarding participants' views of the effectiveness of the photo diary, walking discussion and to a limited extent the online form and e-mail. It also allowed for an exploration of participants perceptions of what makes a method effective.

9.2.3 The value of the researcher perspective

The 'test' consultations of Phases 1 and 2 represented controlled experimental studies, in which the researcher perspective was necessary to interpret the data quality and participant perspectives in combination with her observations, reflections and exploration of the methodological practicalities of different methods. This triangulation ensured a more rigorous evaluation of different sources, which aided the identification of factors that influence effectiveness (Section 9.3), extending current understanding of how method effectiveness could be improved. Although each of the perspectives independently pointed to certain factors influencing effectiveness, only when triangulated with the other perspectives was it possible to identify their possible causes and implications with more confidence.

In her reflection, the researcher was able to not only assess the individual methods and provide a richer understanding of underlying dynamics, but also compare the experiences between the different methods and phases of the research. This way, action learning cycles were followed (Revans, 1978; 1982; Kolb, 1984), whereby having a concrete experience and reflecting on it led to the exploration of alternatives, applying these in Phase 2 and reflecting on these again. Although some of the alterations for Phase 2 did not prove to increase effectiveness[8], they aided the identification of factors that may *influence* it. The researcher both 'reflected-in-action' and 'on-action' (Schön, 1983, 1987), although this varied depending on her level of direct involvement in different methods. She particularly 'reflected-on-action' after each focus group and walking discussion, which resulted in an alteration of her facilitation style for the subsequent research phase[9]. Aspects of actor-network theory and the effects of a variety of non-human actants on effectiveness were brought into the analysis, too, confirming that the effectiveness of methods may be influenced by

[8] For example, digital photographic diaries did not lead to better quality data than when done using disposable cameras. Convenience to the participants appeared not to increase either.
[9] However, it could be argued that by all face-to-face sessions being facilitated by the same individual, the 'quality' of this facilitation would have remained more or less constant.

different human and non-human actors (Section 9.3.6), which the researcher may not always be able to fully control.

The main value of the researcher perspective consists of the link it created between the different perspectives, including that of the professionals, which was obtained independently of the tested methods. Without the researcher's analysis, reflection and interpretation, the potential connections between the different elements of the methods would not have been identified. As Rowe and Frewer (2004) argued, the quality of application (i.e. within-mechanism variables) are context dependant and vary on a case-by-case basis. The researcher could incorporate these wider contextual factors into the analysis and assess what influence they may have had on the effectiveness of the method.

Although Rowe *et al.* (2001, 2004, 2008) developed evaluator checklists, this research has demonstrated the value of comprehensive field notes and personal reflections within an effectiveness evaluation. In 1998, Lowndes *et al.* argued that public involvement methodologies are rarely evaluated in practice. Professionals interviewed confirmed this to still be the case almost fifteen years later. More comprehensive personal reflections may be the start for them to consider whether their consultation practice is as effective as it could be. Through reflection, one's awareness and understanding of factors influencing effectiveness can be increased, and their effect managed.

9.2.4 The evaluation framework – contributions to knowledge

Empirical findings obtained using the evaluation framework confirmed that effectiveness cannot be universally measured (Rowe and Frewer, 2000) and though a method may score well on certain elements of the effectiveness definition, it may perform less well on others. This would depend on its structural elements (between-mechanism variables) but also on the way the method was implemented (within-mechanism variables). As such, it was confirmed that 'there will be no one universally effective method' (ibid., p. 1).

However, the findings confirmed the claim (ibid., p. 7) that:

> *'It is possible that some of the innovative approaches, particularly those that combine a variety of methods or that provide variants on the more standardized procedures, will ultimately prove to be the most efficient mechanisms for engaging the public'.*

This research provided the evidence that public consultations in the context of urban public space regeneration would benefit from a greater use of experiential methods such as the photographic diary and the walking discussion, which are used minimally in current consultation practice (Chapter 6). Combining several approaches (i.e. visual, face-to-face, mobile and in-situ methods) with a first-hand experience of the space under discussion, the findings suggest that these methods can generate quality data and achieve participant satisfaction (further discussed in Section 9.3.5). They also entail a similar workload to the researcher as other methods.

Although none of the methods could be considered as 'the most effective' at consulting the public about urban public space regeneration, each succeeded at different elements, identified in the effectiveness definition. As such, it is argued that to be effective, a wider consultation should use a combination of different methods. Whereas the more 'surface' data generated by methods involving larger samples may provide a more general overview of public opinion, face-to-face mechanisms drawing on smaller samples succeed at gathering more in-depth and actionable data. Used in combination, the benefits are combined and disadvantages compensated for.

Overall, the evaluation framework succeeded in assessing the effectiveness of the different consultation methods and highlighted the value of more holistic effectiveness evaluations. It contributed to knowledge in terms of facilitating a systematic evaluation of several under-researched methods. By triangulating the three perspectives, the findings were derived from a rigorous examination of various elements and not personal views of the researcher only.

However, not all perspectives informed the analysis of each method equally. The extent to which the three perspectives contributed to the evaluation of the individual methods' effectiveness is visually presented in Figures 9.1 to 9.3. Please note that these diagrams are only indicative. The analysis of the four electronic methods in Phase 1 primarily drew on all perspectives, but the participant perspective was limited. The online evaluation survey, covering all four electronic methods, received limited response (Figure 9.1). The on-street event evaluation was based on data quality and researcher perspective only (Figure 9.2). However, the evaluation of the focus group in Phase 1 and photo diary and walking discussion in both phases was informed by all three perspectives more substantively (Figure 9.3), although more narrative-based interpretation of data quality had to be carried out for the focus group and walking discussion. An evaluation where the three perspectives are more balanced represents a more rigorous approach to evaluation, which could be also viewed as achieving more reliable results regarding the method's effectiveness at consulting the public.

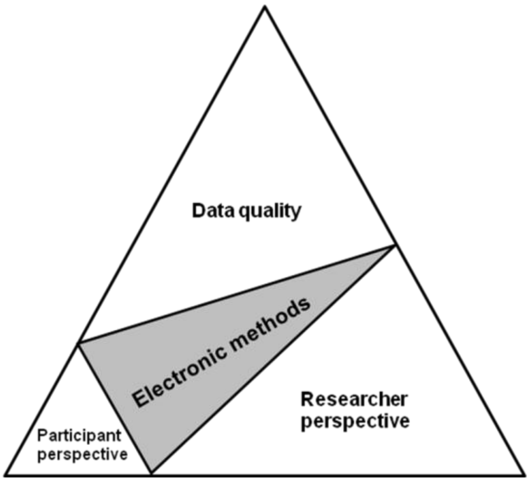


Figure 9.1: *Evaluation framework for the electronic methods, i.e. online form, electronic kiosk, e-mail and text message*

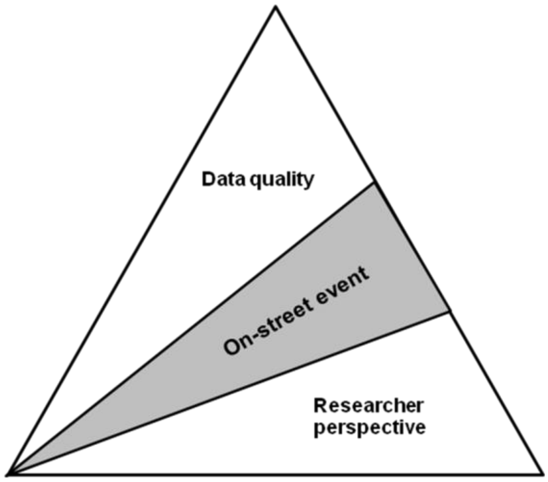
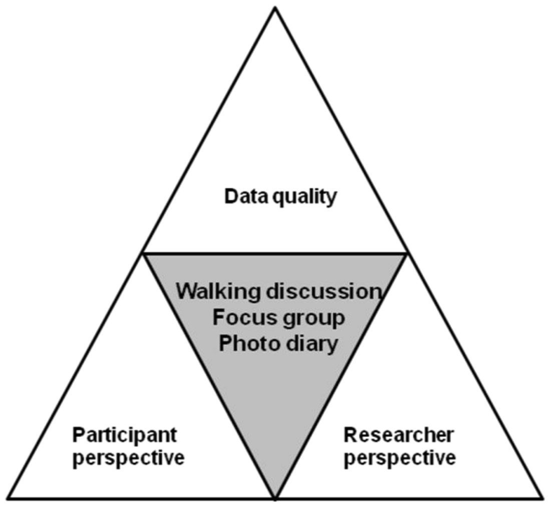


Figure 9.2: *Evaluation framework for the on-street event*



Please note that these diagrams are only indicative

Figure 9.3: *Evaluation framework for the walking discussion, focus group and photo diary*

As interviews with professionals confirmed, consultations are rarely evaluated in terms of their methodology, and as such there is an ongoing need for guidance on how to conduct more systematic evaluations. In view of this, the framework itself - a more qualitative alternative to that of Rowe *et al.* (2001, 2004, 2008) - may be viewed as another contribution to knowledge. It offers some guidance on how effectiveness evaluations could be approached, especially those based on 'test' scenarios. However, its main contribution entails its consideration of data quality and individual data quality criteria, which have so far been neglected (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). These offer a starting point for future data quality evaluations, although it is recommended that additional criteria, reflecting the requirements of different disciplines and stakeholders[10], are included.

Finally, the evaluation framework assisted in identifying factors influencing effectiveness. These are explored in the next section.

9.3 Key factors influencing methods' effectiveness

Conceptual debates about effectiveness have argued that apart from establishing the effectiveness of individual methods – explored in the previous section – a key benefit of evaluation concerns what can be induced about effectiveness more generally from them (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Webler and Tuler, 2002; Rowe and Frewer, 2004) and thus better inform our understanding of method effectiveness.

The empirical findings, obtained via the evaluation framework, point to a number of factors which can influence data quality, participant satisfaction and consultation practice, and thus overall effectiveness. In addition to contextual factors (political, cultural, social, economic and environmental), which are unique for every particular scenario, these include:

- Opportunity for dialogue / clear communication / understanding
- Simplicity
- Learning
- Provision of information
- Level of immersion

[10] For example, if adding a sponsor's perspective into an evaluation framework, the visual representation would change from a triangle to a square.

- Influence of non-human actants
- Contact time
- Recording of data

Together with the wider empirical implications of these factors on the effectiveness of consultation methods, such factors can also contribute to more conceptual debates about method effectiveness in terms of how more effective consultations could be achieved. The individual factors are explored empirically in turn below with their implications for the definition of effectiveness explained in Section 9.4. The impact of these findings for broader conceptual contributions to knowledge is discussed in Section 9.5.

9.3.1 Opportunity for dialogue / clear communication / understanding

The value of dialogue came out strongly in this research. This applied to both group dialogue, and dialogue between participant(s) and the researcher. Dialogue can positively influence data quality, together with the participants' overall experience of the consultation.

Opportunities for group dialogue or deliberation were offered by focus groups and walking discussions[11]. The majority of the participants valued the social aspect of these methods, where they could meet different people and exchange and discuss ideas.

Within their between-mechanism variables (Appendix 3a), Rowe and Frewer (2005) claimed that active facilitation (typical for group-based mechanisms) and an 'open' response mode for participants could increase the elicitation of relevant information. On the contrary, non-face-to-face information transfer could decrease relevant information, due to possible misunderstanding. All these claims were substantiated in this research, where dialogue during focus groups and walking discussion allowed for clarification, requests for more information and feedback, and resulted in increased relevance, clarity, location specification and actionability of participants' comments. Although some irrelevant information was also provided, this was minimised by the

[11] In the Phase 1 photo diaries, dialogue between the researcher and individual participants occurred during two informal meetings. On-street event interaction was too short for much dialogue to take place.

facilitator. Preference for dialogue and face-to-face interaction with participants, as well as open response modes, was also supported by professionals.

Participants' and the researcher's understanding could be increased by face-to-face communication (ibid.), which permitted for a more accurate detection of whether understanding was achieved or not. The need for clear understanding on the part of participants was identified as critical for method effectiveness, confirmed by professionals. The numerous comments referring to the library, generated by the electronic kiosk placed in the library, was attributed to the participants' possible misunderstanding of its purpose. The instructions for photo diaries in Phase 1 were conveyed to the participants face-to-face and in writing, achieving participants' understanding of the task. This understanding was compromised in Phase 2, when face-to-face contact was replaced by telephone and e-mail, although written instructions remained the same.

Overall, opportunities for dialogue, clear communication and maximising understanding are all intertwined and are likely to increase the effectiveness of a consultation method. Dialogue and face-to-face communication may not apply to some methods, however clear communication, as well as clear articulation of the purpose[12] of the consultation is critical (Catanese, 1984; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Juarez and Brown, 2008; Mahjabeen *et al.*, 2009). This applies to all involvement mechanisms. Participants should never be misinformed of the role they can actually play in a consultation, also highlighted by the urbanist in the interviews with professionals.

9.3.2 Simplicity

The need for simplicity, both of the methods and the instructions, was identified in relation to a number of methods tested in this research. Simplicity can facilitate clearer understanding of the purpose of a consultation as well as what is expected from the participant. A 'simple' method assists greater understanding, which in turn leads to data of higher quality. Quality data can then be better utilised by the sponsors.

[12] The need for a clear definition of the nature and scope of the method is acknowledged by Rowe and Frewer's (2000) process criterion of 'task definition'.

In the walking discussions, using a map to indicate liked and disliked areas in Phase 1 was omitted in Phase 2, as it did not appear to bring additional value to the discussion. Simplifying the walking discussions to verbal communication only proved that methods conducted in-situ do not necessarily need any tasks or materials to stimulate interaction, as the dynamism of the process is already facilitated by abandoning an ex-situ environment.

The on-street event was perhaps confusing or overwhelming for some participants, who were approached by a facilitator, encouraged to view the display with visual and textual information, requested to write a comment and finally place stickers on multiple demographic boards, all in a short space of time. In view of the findings, there may have been too many tasks to carry out, with multiple options. The displays could have perhaps featured only visual information, while the facilitators asked more targeted questions. Lack of simplicity may have negative influenced the method's effectiveness.

'Digitizing' photo diaries in Phase 2 resulted in the loss of face-to-face contact between the researcher and participant and the subsequent multiplication of tasks for participants to carry out. Although written instructions remained the same, the method became 'more complicated' and the understanding of participants appeared to be compromised.

On the contrary, a simple structure can increase data quality. Several targeted questions in the online form, and the suggested photo diary structure, resulted in relevant, clear and actionable comments with their locations specified. The quality of data generated by the electronic kiosk appeared to be compromised by the curiosity value of the kiosk, rather than the form itself.

Simplicity of method also corresponds to the ease of use or convenience, as demonstrated by the electronic methods (except text message).

9.3.3 Learning

Learning was identified by focus group and walking discussion participants as one of the key benefits or favoured aspects of those methods. It emerged independently – participants claimed to have obtained new knowledge and learnt about issues they may had not considered previously[13]. This confirmed findings from the evaluation of a deliberative conference (Rowe *et al.*, 2004) and the GM Debate (Rowe *et al.*, 2008), where learning was valued repeatedly by participants. By obtaining knowledge, the participants' potential expectation of some personal gain may be satisfied, possibly increasing their perception of the method's effectiveness, or of the value of consultation processes as a whole. At the same time, more informed participants may be able to provide a valid, clear and actionable feedback, particularly constructive for the sponsor.

Learning in focus groups and walking discussions resulted from the personal interaction with other individuals and the deliberation with them (ibid.) and the information provided by the researcher (Section 9.3.4). Photo diaries were individual exercises and as such 'learning' did not necessarily take place in the same form, however the participants' physical presence in the case study area appeared to have stimulated a form of personal reflection, which was somehow 'new' to some of the participants. It is unclear whether the on-street event facilitated learning, but since participants asked a lot of questions, it could be assumed that some limited learning occurred, at least in the form of general awareness raising. Additionally, it is believed that the focus group and walking discussion may have led to learning not just on the side of the participants, but on the side of the researcher, too, resulting in a two-way process. In fact, Innes and Booher (2004: 426) claim that 'while education of the public is essential, it is not participation if it does not include the education of the agency'.

Learning could be viewed as a limited form of personal empowerment. Although participants were not asked whether they felt 'empowered', their questionnaire responses indicated that most had personally benefited from the experience. Empowerment does not necessarily equate to a power to influence decisions. Indeed, Rocha (1997) claimed that empowerment is a form of power which gets experienced in different ways (McClelland, 1975), while Wilcox (1994: 4) proposed that 'people are empowered when they have the power to achieve what they want – their purpose'. In fact, Rowe *et al.* (2004) argued that learning, as opposed to wanting influence, may be a priority to some participants.

[13] Collins and Ison (2009: 364) used the term 'social learning' to indicate learning which 'occurs through some kind of situated and collective engagement with others', as opposed to individual learning through education.

Overall, Lowndes *et al.* (2001b) stated that citizen learning should be recognised as a valid outcome of involvement and Rowe *et al.* (2004) proposed that a criterion of 'learning' could be added to Rowe and Frewer's (2000) normative criteria. This research has confirmed that personal learning, including acquisition of new information, is of particular value to participants, expanding the list of potential expectations the public may have of consultations and public involvement more generally. Learning may be understood as a form of personal empowerment, ensuring some direct personal gain to the participants in a situation where influence on final decisions cannot be promised.

9.3.4 Provision of information

The literature has generally attributed provision of information primarily to 'information' or 'communication' mechanisms (Arnstein, 1969; Rowe and Frewer, 2005), which aim to educate or inform the public. However, provision of information became an inherent part of the face-to-face consultation methods tested in this research.

A brief overview of the plans for the redevelopment of the university campus or Greyfriars Green was given to the participants, where this information was often new to many participants. Evaluation forms later confirmed that information provision played a more important role than previously anticipated. Some walking discussion participants in Phase 2 explicitly stated they would have appreciated more information about the proposed or agreed plans and the potential limitations prior to the session, demonstrating an expectation for information. Murray (2011: 396) highlighted the importance of communication strategies in order to develop informed audiences and this research suggested that there is a link between information provision and quality of public input, with positive implications for method effectiveness. An informed audience is likely to provide more relevant and actionable input. In walking discussions, the embodied experience of the surrounding environment also provided additional information about the area under consideration, which was seen beneficial to data generation. Information provision proved important during the on-street event, too.

Overall, it is argued that providing information to the participants is important no matter whether 'communication', 'consultation' or 'participation' is aimed for. As such, Rowe and Frewer's (2005) model may be unrealistic, as it appears to underestimate the importance of implicit information sharing. A more theoretical discussion of information provision and the flow of information model (ibid.) will be provided in Section 9.5.

9.3.5 Level of immersion

Immersion in the space under discussion is a factor specifically applicable for the context of physical regeneration. It may not be suitable for other domains, for example policy, however including first-hand experiences in consultations could be viewed as generally beneficial.

Increasing the level of immersion in this research proved to have a positive influence on data quality, as well as the experience of the participants. Although focus groups (ex-situ) generated rich narratives, participants relied primarily on memory, discussions were inclined towards the negative and there were tendencies to wander off-topic, together with stronger power dynamics within the groups. In-situ walking discussions, however, appeared more dynamic and topics were often triggered by the surrounding environment, increasing their relevance. Participants were more attentive to context and as a group discussed more options for improvement than focus group participants. Overall, the first-hand experience encouraged greater engagement with the case study area, led to higher-quality data and power dynamics appeared to be minimised. The in-situ experience of photo diaries resulted in the creation of visual evidence, which often yielded information different to that captured by other methods. Participants also recognised the value of being in-situ, which provided them with an alternative experience to that of their 'everyday', shifting their attention to things not noticed before, exploring new areas and options for their improvement. Most participants also admitted that they are likely to pay more attention to their surrounding environment after taking part in the consultation (including focus group participants), implying a possible change in their attitude, which may improve their attitude towards public consultations in the future.

Furthermore, the immersion in space under discussion also appeared to reduce possible power inequalities and a more 'equal' atmosphere was achieved than in ex-situ focus groups (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999; Finch and Lewis, 2003; Conradson, 2005). The act of walking together facilitated a rapport different to that created in an ‘a-mobile’ situation (Ronander, 2010). Rather than insisting on persuading others of one’s own view, participants appeared more open to alternatives, resulting in more dynamic, balanced and constructive debates.

Overall, it is proposed that the effectiveness of public consultations concerned with physical aspects of locations could be increased by greater use of experiential methods (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2004), such as walking discussions and photo diaries. This research has provided evidence that in comparison to electronic or ex-situ methods, they can maximise relevant public input, as well as facilitate a positive consultation experience for the participants, resulting in greater data quality, participant satisfaction and possibly sense of ownership. The information collected using the walking discussion is also likely to uncover the reasons for particular opinions, socio-cultural meanings of the spaces, their historical value and other in-depth data, which can be particularly useful to design professionals, such as architects, landscape architects and urban designers (Chapter 6). Furthermore, these methods are not necessarily more resource intensive than other ex-situ consultation methods.

9.3.6 Influence of non-human actants

Within the context of this research, elements of actor-network theory were utilised for their acknowledgement of the existence and importance of not only human actors, but also non-human actants, and their influence on data quality and overall method effectiveness. Several non-human actants, affecting the consultations, were identified during this research, acknowledging the micro-geographies of the research sites (Elmwood and Martin, 2000; Chih Hoong, 2003). These were not treated symmetrically to the human actors as proposed by ANT (Callon, 1986). They included the surrounding environment during the walking discussions and photo diaries; the cameras, paper notebooks, electronic templates and photographs used in the photo diaries; the images on the display boards during the on-street event; and the vYv database system.

The role of the non-human actants in consultations varies and should not be ignored. They can influence both data generation and the method as a whole. They can have both a positive and negative influence, and their influence can be increased or decreased, depending on which option is more desirable. The facilitator adopting a more passive role in the walking discussions in Phase 2 resulted in an increase in the positive influence of the non-human environment on data generation.

Whereas the first-hand experience of the non-human surrounding environment during walking discussions and photo diaries was beneficial for data generation as well as the participants, the images used on the on-street event display boards appeared to alter the focus of the consultation, skewing it towards a particular topic. The unreliable vYv system may have discouraged potential participants. The cameras in photo diaries allowed participants to experience and view otherwise familiar areas in new ways. The notebooks and electronic templates became tools for reflection. Surprisingly, paper notebooks appeared more effective at capturing participants' views than the electronic templates. Furthermore, instant digital photography did not appear to encourage more reflection than that achieved through the use of disposable cameras. As such, it could be argued that the most influential non-human actant in the photo diaries was the viewfinder of the camera itself, which altered the way participants experienced and thought about their surrounding environment. The images became a bi-product of the participants' altered perception, capturing their views in a unique, but constructive, way.

This research has utilised certain elements of ANT in the context of public consultation by highlighting that a consultation forms a network of both human and non-human actors. Whereas the human actors are already recognised, the non-human actants need to be paid more attention to, as they may often be more influential than is acknowledged. In some cases, especially in experiential methods outlined above, the research has shown that they can be actively exploited to increase methods' effectiveness.

9.3.7 Contact time

The tested methods varied considerably in their duration or contact time, from several minutes (electronic methods and the on-street event), hours (focus group and walking discussion) to days (photo diary). Very short contact time is likely to result in relatively generic public input.

Although a short contact time may be convenient, it appears to limit the opportunities for reflection and thus the information that participants provide. Electronic methods generally yielded short, often ‘surface’, comments, as did the on-street event. These fail to elaborate on underlying reasons for particular opinions. As such, they may be more suitable for reporting, rather than consultation purposes (Prendiville, 2009; One Clean Leicester, 2011). The on-street event could have perhaps performed better if carried out in a more relaxed atmosphere of a ’community event’ or similar. On the contrary, the focus group and walking discussion allowed for wider consideration of discussion points, resulting in more detailed feedback. Photo diarists also demonstrated reflection in their comments. Overall, a fast-paced consultation is likely to result in suboptimal data, as participants have limited opportunities for reflection. Although participants rated two hours as suitable for focus groups and walking discussions, Phase 2 confirmed that even one hour can be sufficient for sufficient consideration of issues and alternative options.

Although lack of time was repeatedly identified by participants as a barrier to participation, and professionals often mention lack of resources (including time)[14] to conduct public involvement, a ‘fast-paced’ consultation is unlikely to result in high data quality, thus decreasing the effectiveness of the method involved.

9.3.8 Recording of data

Increasing data quality is not only dependant on the factors already identified above, but also the way this data is recorded[15].

Participants using electronic methods and the photo diaries recorded their input themselves, therefore all the information they were willing to provide was captured in its full and original form. Focus groups and walking discussions were audio recorded and transcribed, capturing entire discussions. As the researcher both facilitated the sessions and transcribed the recordings, she was able to add contextual information, for example participants nodding in agreement or using sarcasm, aiding a more accurate analysis. However, accurate and comprehensive recording of information became an issue during the on-street event. It is likely that valuable information was lost when facilitators failed to note down everything that participants shared during a

[14] Rowe and Frewer’s (2000) process criterion of ‘resource accessibility’ does acknowledge time as a resource.

[15] Although Rowe and Frewer (2005: 263) referred to the need of ‘efficiently transferring’ information ‘with minimal information loss to the sponsor’, they were not any more specific.

very short and fast interaction[16]. As such, unless data is properly captured, conducting the event in a more relaxed atmosphere may not increase its effectiveness in terms of data quality. It is recognised that an increase in data quantity may not result in data quality, however it is likely that more systematic data capture will minimise possible misinterpretation and may add transparency and more legitimacy to the process.

Professionals admitted that they often do not record all the information provided by the public. Although notes may be taken, information appears to be processed informally, contributing to 'insight', which is subsequently utilised in plan or design creation. Discussion-based methods were the preferred option, but also considered 'less transparent'. However, it could be argued that this may be due to an inappropriate data capture strategy.

Lack of resources appears to be the main cause of inadequate data capture. It is acknowledged that transcription is extremely time consuming[17], however note taking is likely to capture only the main points and may introduce bias into the interpretation, depending on the views of the note-taker. As such, with inadequate recording, the potential of different methods to provide quality data may not be fully exploited.

9.3.9 Key factors influencing effectiveness – contributions to knowledge

In view of the evaluations of the eight consultation methods tested as part of this research, several factors were identified as critical at influencing the effectiveness of public consultation methods. As the empirical evidence suggested, rather than being separate, these factors are interconnected and influence each other, within the wider context of the consultation. This is visually represented in Figure 9.4. As such, an opportunity for dialogue ensures clear communication and thus better understanding. These three elements then have a positive effect on data quality, as well as participant satisfaction. Simplicity of method as well as of instructions also helps better understanding. Learning and provision of information are closely

[16] As explained in Section 4.3.4.8, participants were expected to write down their comments themselves. Since they were very reluctant to do so, facilitators had to resort to capturing the information in note form.
[17] It is estimated that every 10 minutes of a discussion-based recording (i.e. focus group and walking discussion) took 60 minutes to transcribe.

interconnected, as well as the level of immersion with the influence of non-human actants. Longer contact time not only encourages more reflection and consideration of issues at hand, but can increase the opportunities for learning, provision of information, increased influence of non-human actants and overall understanding. All these factors have implications for data quality, the experience of the participants, as well as the researcher, and thus overall effectiveness. Additionally, in order to avoid misinterpretation and loss of data, data needs to be recorded as systematically as possible.

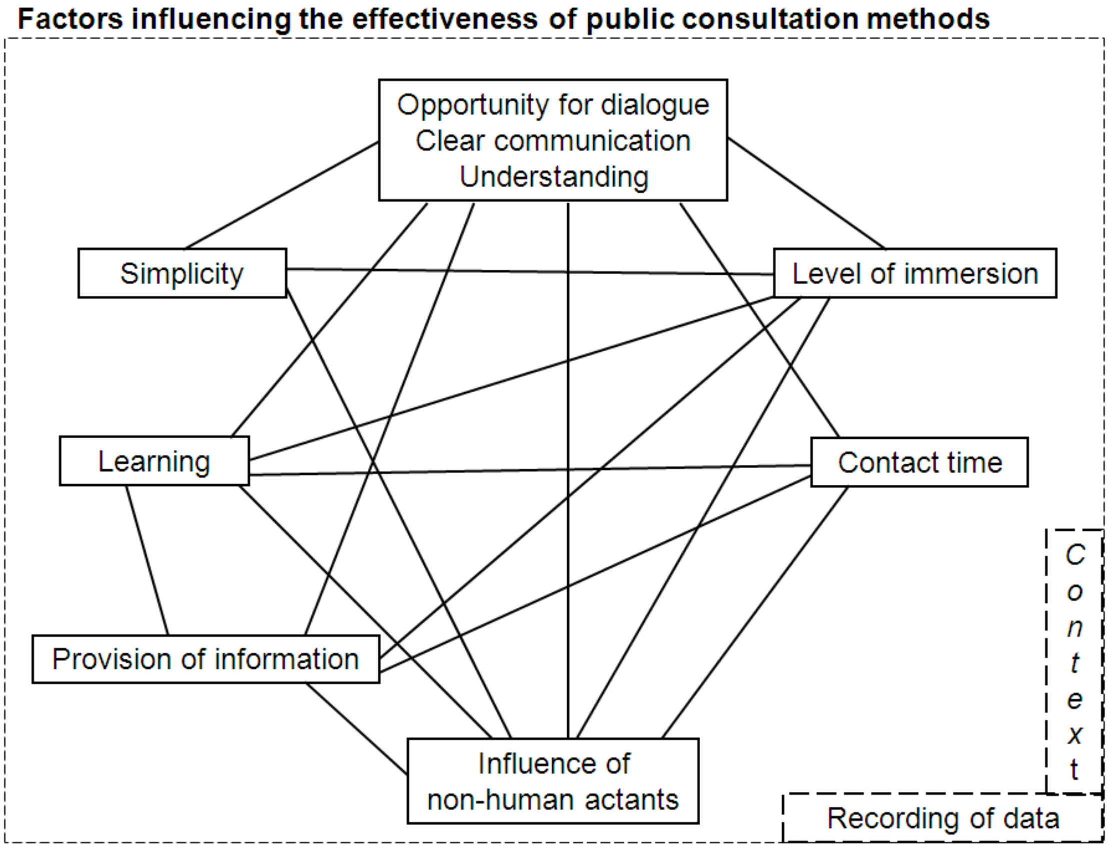


Figure 9.4: *The interconnected nature of the factors influencing the effectiveness of consultation methods*

Some factors, such as face-to-face communication (Rowe and Frewer, 2005), need for clear communication and understanding and the value of learning (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Rowe *et al.*, 2004; 2008) may have been alluded to in earlier studies. However, this research contributes to empirical and conceptual debates of method effectiveness especially by drawing attention to the role of non-human actants and the level of immersion in the space under consideration. Whereas an increased level of immersion appears to generally encourage more actionable and context specific data, different non-human actants can influence effectiveness both positively and negatively.

Identification of these factors has contributed to expanding our understanding of the variety of factors which may influence effectiveness. Overall, all the above factors need to be considered when consulting the general public, as they have implications for the effectiveness of the methods utilised. By balancing the different factors accordingly, the effectiveness of consultation methods can be increased. Policy documents advocating public involvement should pay greater attention to factors that influence effectiveness, as despite the rhetoric advocating effective public involvement, its understanding is still incomplete.

Additionally, some of the influencing factors could also be viewed as influential in wider conceptual debates of public involvement, discussed in Section 9.5.

9.4 Revising the effectiveness definition

In Section 4.2.2.1, an effective consultation method was defined as one that achieves its intended purpose, balances the expectations of different stakeholders, is fair and representative, gives participants the opportunity to express their views, maximises relevant information and brings participants personal benefit.

On grounds of the findings, this universal definition still holds. However, in view of the influencing factors discussed above, the definition could be extended. As such, an effective method should also:

- Ensure full understanding of what the involvement exercise entails
- Provide adequate background information on the topic
- Allow adequate time for consideration of the topic
- Allow for first-hand experience of the environment under consideration (where appropriate)
- Generate quality data (that is valid, relevant, clear and balanced in terms of actionability, sentiment and theme)
- Adequately and reliably record the input provided by the public
- Acknowledge the existence of non-human actants and their potential influence on the method

- Provide opportunities for learning where possible
- Not be too complicated

Although these criteria cannot be easily ‘measured’, they provide guidance on how the effectiveness of public involvement methods could be better achieved. Most importantly, as opposed to other previously identified criteria, this research has contributed by adding the data quality criterion. It is argued that future effectiveness studies would benefit from the inclusion of data quality and learning (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b; Rowe *et al.*, 2004) criteria in their evaluation frameworks. This research has provided a developmental list of data quality criteria.

9.5 Research implications for wider conceptual considerations of public involvement

The findings obtained from the study confirmed that translation of public consultation from concept to practice can be challenging. Arnstein’s (1969) and Rowe and Frewer’s (2005) frameworks do not necessarily take into account the intricacies that are inherent in the *implementation* of consultation (and other public involvement) processes and the influence that implementation can have on effectiveness. Some of these, especially information provision, will be discussed below, contributing to wider conceptual debates about public involvement, with implications for effectiveness.

It has already been mentioned that participants’ feedback was mainly positive, indicating that the tested methods were effective at consulting them (although some more than others). Despite the participants’ knowledge that their views were collected for research purposes, and may not lead to any tangible regeneration outcomes, many claimed to have ‘benefited’ from the consultation experience. This is in opposition to Arnstein’s (1969) argument that without transfer of power from the ‘powerful’ to the ‘powerless’, meaningful participation cannot be achieved and is thus tokenistic. Although the consultations in this research did not influence decisions, they were not tokenistic. Therefore, this research concurs with several of Arnstein’s critics (Connor, 1988; Bishop and Davis, 2002; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Collins and Ison, 2009), who argued that viewing the concept of public involvement only in terms of ‘power’ (within a hierarchical model) may be limiting (Section 2.4.3). In response, some have tried to re-conceptualise public involvement along the lines of social learning (Collins and Ison, 2009), empowerment (White, 1996; Chambers, 1994, 1997) and the flow of information (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). The importance of consultation facilitating learning - potentially leading to some personal empowerment - as well as providing information were also confirmed by the empirical findings from this research (Section 9.3). However, information provision *within* consultation processes deserves greater consideration.

In view of the findings, it is proposed that Rowe and Frewer's (2005) conceptualisation of consultation in terms of one-way flow of information, from the public to the sponsor, may be inaccurate. It could apply in the case of methods which do not involve any personal interaction, such as the electronic methods and the photo diary, and which rely on participants' subjective experiences. However, in the case of face-to-face methods, such as the on-street event, focus group and walking discussion, this process turned into a two-way flow of information, where provision of some contextual information was necessary in order to stimulate debate and obtain more informed feedback from the participants.

The need for two-way interaction is not new. Abelson *et al.* (2003) emphasised the need for two-way interaction between the sponsors and the public when using participation and deliberative processes exploring 'complex issues'. However, the focus group and walking discussion utilised in this research did not have 'a guaranteed public influence' (Rowe *et al.*, 2004: 515) and thus did not necessarily represent 'participation'. Still, two-way flow of information became an important aspect of the sessions, where information provision led to more informed participants (Murray, 2011), influenced the data that was generated as well as the participants' experience. Hence it is argued that consultation methods also feature two-way flows of information.

Using another example, asking on-street event participants whether they knew what was happening around the campus was meant to be a conversation starter, not a genuine question. The purpose of the event was to gather public views, i.e. one-way information flow. However, it turned into an information dissemination tool, where participants subsequently responded to some of the 'new' information. Without providing this information, they may have shared even less than they actually did (Section 5.3.1). It was also observed that the public may actually demonstrate less awareness over a certain topic than would be expected.

In view of this, it is proposed that Rowe and Frewer's (2005) 'information flow model' does not sufficiently recognise the importance of implicit flows of information that take place during informal discussions and interactive processes, which form part of consultation exercises and influence their effectiveness. The importance and influence of these implicit flows of information appears underestimated, together with a limited recognition of how information gets passed around within consultation. It is argued that once interaction between participants and the consultants, sponsors or other professionals takes place, the flow of information changes from one-way to two-way. As such, Rowe and Frewer's (2005) conceptualisation of public involvement could be altered, as demonstrated in Table 9.1. Consultation methods should not be seen as opportunities to just collect data from the public. Although they may not have a direct impact on final decisions, participants should still be provided with sufficient background information they can inspect if they wish to do so.

Table 9.1: The three types of public engagement, with altered flow of information

	Type	Flow of information	
Public engagement	Communication	Sponsor ⟶	Public
	Consultation	Sponsor ⟵ ⟶	Public
	Participation	Sponsor ⟷	Public

Note: Table adapted from Rowe and Frewer (2005)

Arnstein (1969: 217) pointed to possible overlaps between the rungs of her ladder, admitting that 'some of the characteristics used to illustrate each of the eight types might be applicable to other rungs'. As the previous argument has identified, flow of information from the sponsor to the public may also not be restricted to 'communication' and 'participation' only, but is likely to be part of 'consultation', too.

As such, this research has confirmed that the proposed differences between various types of public involvement are not clear cut. Conceptualising consultation as a process with 'one-way flow of information' from the sponsor to the public may be limiting, not granting sufficient attention to the participants' own expectation of information provision, and thus influencing effectiveness.

On the contrary, despite many criticisms, Arnstein's conceptualisation of public involvement in terms power still appears applicable, as the main difference between 'consultation' and 'participation' could be viewed in terms of the public's influence on decision making. Through 'consultation', public views are sought, but these are not necessarily to determine the final decision (Kane and Bishop, 2002). However, instead of viewing the different levels in a hierarchical manner, where one is considered 'better' than another (i.e. that participation is 'better' than consultation), some argue that they should be viewed as a 'variety of options' to involve the public (Wilcox, 1994), where the choice is made according to whether the type of involvement is appropriate or not for a particular situation (Kane and Bishop, 2002). Bishop and Davis' (2002: 21) 'discontinuous interaction' framework, derived from an aggregation of contemporary practice, advocated a conceptualisation where:

> *'Participation is shaped by the policy problem at hand, the techniques and resources available and, ultimately, a political judgement about the importance of the issue and the need for public involvement.'*

In fact, challenges such as public apathy, limited professionals' skills to deliver public involvement, recruitment, representativeness and others are likely to apply to all the levels of public involvement.

However, none of the models appear to consider data quality. Bearing in mind that public involvement is often about the 'discovery' and 'measurement' of public opinion (Walters *et al.*, 2000), effective consultations (and participation) should involve generating quality data. However, with the exception of Horlick-Jones *et al.*'s (2007) 'translation quality', the actual data gathered and its quality has so far been neglected. This research has demonstrated one approach to evaluating data quality, proposing that paying greater attention to data quality can provide another dimension of evaluating the effectiveness of various involvement methods. Assessing data against the proposed criteria can indicate whether a particular method has succeeded at capturing public input useful for the sponsors or decision makers.

Overall, it could be argued that unless public involvement methods succeed at 'maximising relevant information from the maximum number of relevant sources' (Rowe and Frewer, 2005: 263), debating whether 'participation is better than consultation' or vice versa may be of secondary importance. Furthermore, public policy advocating better public involvement should turn its attention more towards clearly articulating how the expectations for *effective* public involvement should be met and measured.

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter amalgamated the empirical findings gathered through evaluating the effectiveness of several consultation methods via their practical application in two case study locations in Coventry, in order to inform empirical and conceptual debates about consultation method effectiveness, as well as the wider concept of public involvement. The findings confirmed that the theory and practice of consultation is indeed complex and challenging (Day, 1997; Tritter and McCallum, 2006; interviews with professionals), with implications for effectiveness evaluation.

The evaluation framework adopted in this research was discussed and its value of evaluating method effectiveness established. The framework succeeded at evaluating the individual methods' effectiveness by triangulating findings from three different perspectives – data quality, participant and researcher perspectives – which has the potential to be applied more widely. As such, it contributes to knowledge by offering one approach of assessing method effectiveness. Most importantly, it acknowledges the need and value of exploring the currently under-researched data quality (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). The suitability of the proposed criteria was confirmed by professionals, indicating that these offer a useful starting point for assessing data quality.

Effectiveness evaluations of individual methods resulted in the identification of several factors influencing method effectiveness, contributing to current understanding of how effectiveness may be better achieved. These factors also have particular implications for data quality, participant satisfaction and wider consultation practice. They included opportunity for dialogue, linked with clear communication channels and understanding, simplicity, learning, provision of information, level of immersion, influence of non-human actants, contact time and recording of data. Although presented separately, these are interlinked and influence each other. The benefit of immersing consultations in space under discussion was confirmed by the research findings, which point to better data quality and personal benefits to the participants. In view of the key influencing factors, the original 'effectiveness' definition (Section 4.2.2.1) was developed beyond that of existing definitions in the research literature.

Provision of information was utilised to debate the current understanding of the concept of 'communication', 'consultation' and 'participation' methods (Rowe and

Frewer, 2005). It was concluded that viewing consultation as a process with one-way flow of information, from the public to the sponsor, may be inaccurate and limiting, underestimating the importance of informal and implicit information flows, as well as provision of context specific information to the participants. While accepting the 'influence on decision making' as the fundamental difference between 'consultation' and 'participation', the data also confirmed the currency of the arguments that different forms of public involvement should be understood as a 'suite of options', rather than in a hierarchical manner (Wilcox, 1994; Kane and Bishop, 2002; Bishop and Davis, 2002).

Having discussed the implications of the empirical findings, the next and final chapter revisits the aims and objectives of this research, presents how they were addressed and summarises the contributions to knowledge made by this research.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter revisits the main findings from this research and examines them against the aims and objectives set out at the beginning of the thesis. The relevance of these findings will be discussed in terms of their contribution to empirical and conceptual debates about method effectiveness, their implications for academia, practice and policy and their potential wider application.

10.1 Revisiting the aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this research, set out in Chapter 1, will be dealt with in turn, together with supporting evidence of their fulfilment and references to the chapters in which the particular themes were discussed.

The importance of urban public spaces and public involvement in their regeneration was established in Chapter 2, fulfilling the first objective[1]. The rejuvenation of urban public spaces and meeting the needs of their different users has been a priority since the introduction of the New Labour government in 1997 (UTF, 1999, 2005; Worpole and Knox, 2007; Cattell *et al.*, 2008; CABE, 2009a), when involving the public was recognised as a necessary element of public projects (Smith, 2008). However a gap in knowledge in terms of uncertainties of how the public should be involved effectively was identified. The critical exploration of the concept of public involvement and its challenges - responding to the second objective[2] - established that despite the growing interest, perceived benefits and general requirements for increased public involvement (Innes and Booher, 2004), and the multiplication of mechanisms to do

[1] Objective 1: Provide a justification for the importance of urban public spaces and the involvement of the public in their regeneration.

[2] Objective 2: Critically explore the concepts of public involvement and consultation, in order to: i) Explore current debates surrounding the effectiveness of consultation methods, with a view to establishing an evaluation framework; ii) Identify specific methods, applicable to the context of urban public space regeneration, which are under-researched and which offer potential for further exploration, with a view to contributing to debates about their development.

so, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains undetermined (Rowe *et al.*, 2004, 2005, 2008; Rowe and Frewer, 2000; 2004). As such, Chapter 3 engaged with the challenges of systematic effectiveness evaluation. These are rarely conducted, for numerous reasons including ambiguous definitions of 'effectiveness', uncertainties over how evaluations should be carried out as well as a lack of agreed evaluation criteria and inconsistent nomenclature of public involvement mechanisms. Adopting Rowe and Frewer's (2005) conceptualisation of public 'communication', 'consultation' and 'participation' methods – based on the 'flow of information' between the public and the sponsor – public consultation was selected as the level to focus on within this research. Not only is it the level at which the majority of public involvement occurs (Bishop and Davis, 2002), but the public appears to prefer to be involved at this level, too (Foley and Martin, 2000). Furthermore, in comparison to 'communication' and 'participation' methods, consultation methods have received the least attention in terms of effectiveness evaluation (Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Abelson and Gauvin, 2006), presenting another gap in knowledge. In consultations, public opinions on particular topics (in this case regeneration of urban public spaces) are gathered, however these may only *influence* and not determine final decisions (Kane and Bishop, 2002).

Drawing on Rowe and Frewer's (2004) agenda for evaluation and other conceptual debates surrounding the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006) and elements of actor-network theory (Callon, 1986; Law, 1992; Latour, 1996; Murdoch, 1997), an evaluation framework for this research was developed (Chapter 4), which combined three perspectives – participant and researcher perspectives and data quality – to assess the effectiveness of different consultation methods. Previous evaluations have advocated exploring the views of different stakeholders. However, despite the acknowledgement that public consultation is about obtaining public input, the quality of this data has not been given much consideration (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). As such, not only has this research considered data quality of consultation methods, it has also proposed several criteria to assess it, including relevance, clarity, location specification and actionability, thereby making a methodological contribution to knowledge. The suitability of these criteria was confirmed by professionals (Chapter 6) who claimed in their interviews that data meeting these criteria would be more useful for regeneration practice.

A review of current literature identified several consultation methods as currently under-researched or offering potential for further exploration or development in terms of their effectiveness. In response to several explicit and implicit gaps in knowledge, methods selected for effectiveness evaluation included four electronic methods (i.e. e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk, text message), an on-street event, photographic diary, walking discussion and a focus group. As such, the second objective of this research was met (Chapters 3 and 4). This objective was further addressed via interviews with nine urban regeneration professionals, who provided their perspectives on topics including public consultation, effectiveness, evaluation criteria, the value of public input and the use of in-situ and visual methods in practice (Chapter 6).

In order to accomplish the third objective[3], the effectiveness of the eight consultation methods was assessed using the evaluation framework, based on their application as part of a 'fictional' consultation at a university campus under redevelopment (Chapters 4 and 5). Focusing on the main conclusions only, e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message were considered not effective at public consultation regarding the regeneration of urban public spaces. They generated data of mixed quality, but most importantly, the pro-active uptake of the methods was very limited. The encountered technical difficulties highlighted the need for a reliable system to support such methods. The on-street event generated data of limited quality, but succeeded as an information dissemination tool. The photo diary generated relevant, clear and actionable public input, complemented with visual evidence in the form of photographs. Through the data quality and participant evaluation, potential for further development of the method was identified, as was also the case for the in-situ walking discussion, which generated more context specific, actionable and balanced data in comparison to the ex-situ focus group. Along with other non-human actants, the immersion in the space under consideration was identified as the factor positively influencing the generation of quality data using these methods, as well as achieving participant satisfaction. The value of using mobile and visual methods for consultation purposes about urban public spaces was further confirmed by the empirical findings from Phase 2 of the research, which explored how the effectiveness of these methods could be increased and what factors may have determined their effectiveness (Chapters 7 and 8).

[3] Objective 3: Identify and evaluate critical factors influencing the effectiveness of public consultation methods by: i) Testing a selection of methods, via their practical application in two different case study areas in Coventry, in order to establish their effectiveness, applying the identified evaluation framework.; ii) Exploring how the effectiveness of the chosen consultation methods could be improved.

Drawing on the evaluations of individual methods, factors influencing effectiveness were identified, such as opportunity for dialogue, simplicity, level of immersion, provision of information and the influence of non-human actants. These were brought together in Chapter 9, where their broader implications for empirical and conceptual debates about method effectiveness were discussed, progressing onto the fourth and final objective of this research[4].

The findings obtained from all parts of the study were critically examined in Chapter 9. Apart from discussing the above overarching factors in terms of their implications for method effectiveness and wider consultation practice, the adopted evaluation framework was reflected on and its value in assessing effectiveness established. Its main contribution concerned the data quality perspective, which has been until now neglected (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). The data quality criteria offer one way in which data quality evaluations could be approached in the future, assessing whether particular methods succeed at yielding data useful for regeneration practice.

Furthermore, the factors influencing effectiveness were used to refine and extend the initial effectiveness definition, extending our understanding of how public involvement methods could be made more effective. The factors also served to re-examine some of the conceptual models introduced in Chapter 2 (Arnstein, 1969; Rowe and Frewer, 2005). It was concluded that Rowe and Frewer's (2005) understanding of 'consultation' consisting of one-way flow of information from the public to the sponsor may be limiting and overlooking the importance of information exchange during face-to-face consultation processes, as demonstrated by the findings from this research.

To conclude, using a systematic evaluation framework developed specifically for this research, the effectiveness of several methods used to consult the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces was critically explored and evaluated. Through the three perspectives of the evaluation framework, more generic factors influencing effectiveness were identified and used to inform empirical and conceptual debates about public consultation effectiveness in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces, fulfilling the last objective[4].

[4] Objective 4: Assess the findings to inform empirical and conceptual debates about public consultation effectiveness in urban public space regeneration.

10.2 Contributions to knowledge

The research in this thesis has resulted in a number of empirical, methodological as well as conceptual contributions to knowledge. These are outlined below.

The evaluation framework developed specifically for this research enabled a systematic evaluation of several under-researched methods in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces. As identified in the literature and interviews with professionals, rigorous evaluations of consultation activities are rare. By establishing the effectiveness of the chosen consultation methods, an empirical contribution to knowledge was made. The results confirmed that none of the tested methods was universally effective (Rowe and Frewer, 2000) but each has its advantages and disadvantages and fulfils different elements of the effectiveness definition.

The key contribution of the evaluation framework is its consideration of data quality within consultation, which has so far been neglected (Horlick-Jones *et al.*, 2007). Interviews with professionals further confirmed the importance of data quality in public consultations, as well as the suitability of the adopted data quality criteria. Therefore, criteria including relevance, clarity, actionability and location specification are advanced as a possible approach to evaluating the quality of the public input obtained through particular consultation methods, additional to the perspectives of the different stakeholders (Rowe *et al.*, 2001; Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

By establishing the effectiveness of the chosen consultation methods, evidence was generated to argue that public consultations about the regeneration of urban public spaces would benefit from a greater use of in-situ methods. The first-hand experience facilitated by methods such as the walking discussion and the photographic diary can contribute to generating public input which is relevant, clear, highly actionable and attentive to context, and which would be difficult to obtain using other methods. In-situ methods can also benefit the participants by offering a new experience and personal learning. Participants can become more attentive to their surrounding environment, possibly increasing their awareness and appreciation for it.

The role and influence of non-human actants on consultation methods' effectiveness was explored extensively in the research. It was concluded that non-human actants have not been sufficiently recognised in research and practice and that with greater awareness and understanding of their roles and influence, they can be positively exploited to increase method effectiveness. Empirical findings evidenced that non-human actants (such as individual features in the surrounding environment, the viewfinder of the camera, the location of an electronic kiosk) can have both a positive and negative influence on effectiveness, especially in terms of data quality, but also in relation to the participants' experience.

The empirical findings led to the identification of a range of factors influencing effectiveness, providing further insights and extending our understanding of how more effective public consultations (and public involvement in general) may be achieved. Opportunities for dialogue, clear communication, understanding, simplicity, learning, provision of information, level of immersion, influence of non-human actants, contact time and adequate recording of the public input were identified as crucial in achieving more effective consultations. These factors are interconnected and influence each other and should be considered together with the contextual factors of particular scenarios.

Conceptually, the 'provision of information' factor was further used to discuss Rowe and Frewer's (2005) framework. It was concluded that the current framework, based on the flow of information between the public and the sponsors, under-recognises the importance of implicit flows of information in public involvement exercises. It is thus proposed that consultation should be viewed in terms of a two-way flow of information, rather than one-way (from the public to the sponsor).

By critically exploring and evaluating public consultation methods in the context of regeneration of urban public spaces, the research findings have progressed current understanding of how to view, assess and improve consultation method effectiveness. Although explored within the context of regeneration of urban public spaces, some of the findings are also transferable into contexts and disciplines beyond the arena of urban public space regeneration. As such, a contribution to academia and practice (and potentially to policy) has been made. The next section considers some implications of these findings.

10.3 Implications for academia, policy and practice

The main findings presented in the previous section and throughout Chapter 9 have implications for academic knowledge as well as policy and practice. These will be explored below, firstly considering the effectiveness of the individual methods, followed by the value of data quality evaluation and in-situ methods and the influence of non-human actants and other factors on method effectiveness.

The empirical findings demonstrated that none of the tested methods could be viewed as universally effective (Rowe and Frewer, 2000). In order to achieve an effective consultation – following the principle of mixed-method approaches - researchers and practitioners should use different methods in conjunction with each other, combining their advantages and compensating for their disadvantages. The findings implied that when data content generated from different methods is aggregated and triangulated, it results in a rich and valid set of public views, opinions, aspirations and suggestions for urban public spaces and their regeneration. While electronic methods succeeded at gathering a larger number of comments from a self-selected sample of participants, this public input tended to be relatively generic. As such, practitioners may find these electronic methods more suitable for reporting purposes than for consultation. The focus group, walking discussion and photographic diary engaged with a smaller but specifically recruited sample and generated more detailed and extensive data of far higher quality than the electronic methods and the on-street event.

Contributing to academic debates about effectiveness, the evaluation framework developed for this research proposed assessing method effectiveness in terms of data quality, in addition to drawing on the perspectives of different stakeholders. Responding to the uncertainties of how to conduct evaluations and the resulting lack of rigorous evaluations, it is proposed that academic research needs to place greater recognition on exploring the importance of measuring and assessing data quality when researching the effectiveness of consultation methods. Practitioners would also benefit from assessing data quality and thus learning about maximising opportunities for increasing data quality. Analysis of data relevance, clarity, actionability and location specification, and the additional data characteristics including sentiment, theme and others, can assist not only in evaluating the effectiveness of individual methods, but also making practitioners and policy makers more aware about what proportion of the gathered public input may be useful and constructive in a given scenario. It could be argued that if public input meets the above criteria, it may be more useful, and thus more influential, for policy and practice. Practitioners are encouraged to alter or add other criteria suitable for their particular cases. However, recognising that such data analysis may be too time-consuming and resource intensive to be done in practice, practitioners may benefit from at least completing more comprehensive personal reflections of their work – as exemplified by the researcher perspective - in order to assess whether they are consulting as effectively as they could be. Within this, they could reflect on data quality more generally.

By facilitating situated experiences, in-situ methods such as the walking discussion and photographic diary achieved higher quality data than ex-situ methods. It is thus argued that a more extensive use of in-situ method would not only benefit academic research, but also consultation practice. These methods succeed at generating more constructive feedback, which is not only attentive to context but can also reflect what is of particular importance to the participants. Although experiencing a particular space first-hand may not necessarily be applicable for contexts other than those considering the physical environment, bearing in mind the benefits presented in this research, practitioners may consider incorporating first-hand experiences into consultations in other contexts and disciplines, too.

The influence of non-human actants has so far been overlooked in both academia and practice. The researchers and practitioners need to be aware of these and manage them in order to conduct consultations and public involvement more effectively. This research has provided several examples of the roles non-human actants can play (for example the location of a kiosk or the images used on a consultation stand) and the way they may affect a consultation, contributing to increasing researchers' and practitioners' awareness and understanding of them. However, more recognition and research is required to evidence the importance of non-human actants in the effectiveness of consultation methods. Practitioners, too, need to acknowledge and pay greater attention to non-human actants. Through pre- and post-event reflection, they can learn about non-human actants' likely influence and their possible mitigation for future application, potentially resulting in more effective consultations.

The identification of factors influencing method effectiveness[5] not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of effectiveness, but may be also inform policy on how the public could be involved in urban regeneration (and policy formulation more widely) in a more meaningful manner.

[5] Opportunities for dialogue, clear communication, understanding, simplicity, learning, provision of information, level of immersion, influence of non-human actants, contact time and adequate recording of the public input.

Reflecting on the implications of these ‘factors’ for academia, practice and policy, researchers and practitioners need to ensure all stakeholders fully understand what a consultation exercise entails. This understanding can be increased by clear communication channels, providing opportunities for dialogue and not over-complicating the methods (i.e. simplicity). Stakeholders should be provided with adequate background information (before, during and after a consultation exercise) that they can respond to. Especially in the case of discussion-based methods, such as the focus group, walking discussion and the on-street event, provision of information entails not only the ‘official’, but also implicit sharing of information during discussions with and among participants, often leading to personal learning. Professionals also need to make a decision on whether a first-hand (i.e. in-situ) experience is suitable, what an adequate contact time may be and consider the variety of non-human actants which may impact on the consultation. Furthermore, to capture the maximum information shared during such sessions, data needs to be adequately recorded, which is not always the case in practice. Interviews with professionals confirmed that rich qualitative data is often captured only in the form of brief notes or used to informally build up practitioners’ insights. Subsequent fragmented data manipulation can result in problems and misunderstandings between different professionals in a regeneration project. More thorough data capture (i.e. voice recording, or extensive notes) may address unnecessary data loss and make qualitative methods more ‘transparent’[6], also broadening the range of ‘legitimate’ methods to use.

In view of the limited details in government guidance on how effective consultations should be achieved – and at the time of writing the ambiguity of how exactly the Big Society and Localism Act were going to affect the approach to public involvement and physical regeneration – the key influencing factors could be used as the basis for the development of future government guidance on how effectiveness in public consultations and public engagement may be understood and how it should be assessed.

Overall, the research findings have numerous potential implications not only for academic research about consultation method effectiveness, but also for consultation practice and development of public policy.

[6] The architect and urban designer, together with Judd and Randolph (2006) claimed that quantitative methods such as surveys are often considered as more ‘transparent’ than qualitative, discussion-based methods.

10.4 Wider application of the research findings

Considering the wider application of the research findings, all the methods tested for effectiveness have the potential to be used at multiple stages of regeneration projects, not merely at the pre-design stage when identifying users' needs and aspirations. Although consultation should ideally take place before any major decisions are made, most of the methods may also be used to gather preliminary feedback and the in-situ methods may work well for post-occupancy evaluations.

Although the tested methods could be applied to consult the public about the regeneration of a wide range of urban public spaces (Section 2.2.1) – and in this research covered public spaces such as civic squares, streets, amenity green space, parks and others – they may not be suitable in all situations. For example, the benefits of in-situ methods may not be realised when consulting about developing blank/vacant sites. Some areas may pose safety issues for the participants and researchers. Consulting about controversial or popular sites (or particular neighbourhoods) – with their particular contexts - may also influence the operationalisation of the methods in practice and thus their effectiveness.

Different methods may appeal to different types of people, reflecting their interests, skills, technical abilities as well as availability in terms of time. As such, there is the potential to use these methods with a variety of individuals. However, this research also confirmed the challenges of participant recruitment and that consultations should not heavily rely on self-selected samples (which can be also biased towards individuals with certain shared characteristics, for example technical competence) as they may be smaller than expected. Their size may partly reflect the success of the campaign used to promote the consultation. Dependence on self-selected samples could be addressed by more direct recruitment (bearing in mind its challenges), which could also achieve samples more representative of the wider population.

The consultation methods tested in this research may not necessarily attract individuals from hard-to-reach groups, people from ethnic minorities or those with severe physical disabilities. As public consultations should draw on views of people of all age and social groups (Holland *et al.*, 2007), more targeted recruitment may be able to reach such individuals in a more proactive and effective manner.

In principle, the eight tested methods were not excluding specific vulnerable groups. However, participants with significant physical impairments may find (for example) walking discussions more difficult. To deal with this, several sessions could be held specifically for groups of such individuals[7]. Participants with less confidence in their literacy skills may be discouraged by methods relying on writing (i.e. electronic methods, photographic diary and to a certain extent the on-street event). In such cases, the walking discussion, focus group and oral forms of on-street event may be more suitable and offer an alternative, since they are based primarily on verbal expression. Individuals' technical abilities need to be taken into account, too - some photo diary participants preferred its digital version, however this was not the case for all.

Method effectiveness will also be influenced by the personal characteristics of individual participants and how much they themselves wish to share. Certain methods may encourage people to share more information and in a more constructive manner, such as the in-situ methods, which facilitate greater reflection and engagement with the surrounding environment.

Overall, for a successful wider application, methods need to be as simple as possible, in order to ensure participants' understanding of the task at hand. This contributes not only to better data, but also to participants' satisfaction with the method. Methods also need to offer some flexibility to accommodate individual participants' abilities and preferences.

It needs to be acknowledged that the wider applicability of these findings will depend on the specific contextual factors of the individual projects or programmes in which these methods are utilised. The researchers, practitioners or consultants need to take into account the political, cultural, social, economic (including available time and financial resources) and environmental factors while deciding on their approach to a consultation and the methods to be used.

[7] It is likely that the presence of carers or more specifically trained individuals would be required for such sessions.

10.5 Study limitations

Several limitations to this research are recognised.

Firstly, all empirical research was based on a UK context. It was thus affected by British policy and its approach towards urban regeneration, regeneration of urban public spaces and public involvement more broadly. As such, the results may not necessarily apply to other countries, particularly where planning systems and regeneration processes radically differ.

Secondly, drawing on 'test consultations', the perspective of the sponsors could not be fully explored. Sponsors' feedback regarding the practical application of the proposed data quality criteria would have been beneficial to reach an evaluation more grounded in practice.

Thirdly, the contexts of the case study locations, the personal characteristics of individual participants and the relatively small participant samples most likely had an influence on the findings. However, these factors are present in all research. Despite the smaller samples of focus groups, walking discussion and photographic diaries reaching data saturation, in practice they may not satisfy the criterion of representativeness. As such, these methods would need to be supplemented with methods reaching a wider and broader range of the target population.

Finally, the researcher represented a common denominator in the majority of the tasks associated with conducting the test consultation, the individual methods and their evaluations. These tasks included planning, preparation, promotion and recruitment and facilitation of the different methods, followed by reflection and the evaluation of their effectiveness. This may have introduced some bias into the process. However, as interviews with professionals confirmed, the practice of public consultation tends to be fragmented and these tasks are unlikely to be performed by the same individual. Therefore, the researcher may have provided a degree of consistency within the effectiveness evaluations, possibly triangulating the range of data more extensively than would have been done in practice.

10.6 Suggestions for further research

Several opportunities for further research were identified.

Although this research set out to fill some gaps in knowledge regarding the use and effectiveness of four electronic methods, their limited uptake as well as the unreliable system prevented a thorough evaluation. This should be explored further as electronic methods are likely to expand with the progress in technologies.

Exhibition and event-based consultation methods, in this research exemplified by the on-street event, also deserve greater attention in terms of their effectiveness. Rather than evaluating a ‘test’ event, future research may wish to examine real-life applications of such methods. As mentioned, literature is scarce on empirical examples. They appear to be one of the most frequently adopted approaches in practice and in view of their continuous use, more needs to be learnt about how they could be conducted more effectively, especially in terms of data capture.

The walking discussion and the photographic diary were identified as the most effective of the tested methods. Interviewed professionals also expressed interest in learning more about how these methods may be used in practice. As such, they offer opportunities for further examination, especially in terms of how the obtained data could be used to regenerate urban public spaces in practice. Photographic diaries would benefit from a custom-built programme to aid their analysis.

Finally, some may wish to focus on how the consideration of data quality and its various criteria could be embedded into future evaluation frameworks, as well as the design of consultations.

10.7 Concluding remarks

The research confirmed the challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of public consultation methods and that effectiveness can be influenced by a variety of factors. The need for greater understanding of the effects of level of immersion in the space, understanding of the participants, the provision of information during consultation process, influence of non-human actants and other factors was highlighted. Paying special attention to them and managing them accordingly can assist in achieving greater method effectiveness when consulting the public about the regeneration of urban public spaces.

This research has illustrated the significance of evaluating the effectiveness of consultation methods from a variety of perspectives, which ensure a more balanced assessment and which can also point to wider issues within consultation practice. The empirical findings indicated that quantity of data does not necessarily imply its quality, demonstrating the value of evaluating effectiveness in terms of data quality in addition to exploring the perspectives of the different stakeholders. Although a method may succeed at fulfilling criteria such as the acceptance and process criteria of Rowe and Frewer (2000), its effectiveness also depends on whether the collected data was relevant, clear, specific, actionable and balanced, and overall useful for the regeneration of urban public spaces.

Finally, it was established that some public consultation methods are more effective at gathering quality public input - that can contribute to the regeneration of urban public spaces - than others. Although the experiential methods of photographic diary and the walking discussion were established as the most effective within this research, different methods succeed at gathering different types of data. If combined together, they can provide a richer data set comprising of actionable as well as more general comments, which professionals may use to regenerate urban public spaces. As such, consultations are likely to be most effective when utilising a variety of methods, combining their strengths and limiting their weaknesses.

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APPENDIX

Refer to separate book – Volume II

Evaluating the effectiveness of approaches to public consultation in the regeneration of urban public spaces

- VOLUME II: APPENDIX -

By

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April 2013

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 2a

Urban public space typologies, key documents and benefits of public spaces

Table 2a.1: A Typology of Open Space - Kit Campbell Associates (2001) in Williams and Green (2001: 2)	
OPEN SPACE Any unbuilt land with the boundary of a village, town or city which provides, or has the potential to provide, environmental, social and/or economic benefits to communities, whether direct or indirect.	
GREEN SPACE A subset of open space, consisting of any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature within urban areas.	CIVIC SPACE A subset of open space, consisting of urban squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with civic functions.
• Parks and gardens • Amenity green space • Children's play areas • Sports facilities • Green corridors • Natural/semi-natural green space • Other functional green space	• Civic squares • Market places • Pedestrian streets • Promenades and sea fronts

Table 2a.2: A Typology of Contemporary Urban Public Spaces; based on the US context - Carr et al. (1992: 79 – 84)		
Main category	**Type**	**Characteristic**
Public Parks	Public/Central parks	Publicly developed and managed open space as part of zoned open space system of city; open space of citywide importance; often located near centre of city; often larger than neighbourhood park
	Downtown parks	Green parks with grass and trees located in downtown areas; can be traditional, historic parks or newly developed open spaces
	Commons	A large green area developed in older New England cities and towns; once pasture area for common use now used for leisure activities
	Neighbourhood park	Open space developed in residential environments; publicly developed and managed as part of zoned open spaces of cities, or as part of new private residential development; may include playgrounds, sports facilities etc.
	Mini/vest-pocket park	Small urban park bounded by buildings; may include fountain or water feature

Squares and Plazas	Central square	Square or plaza; often part of historic development of city centre; may be formally planned or exist as a meeting place of streets; frequently publicly developed and managed
	Corporate plaza	Plaza development as part of new office or commercial building(s), often in downtown area but increasingly part of suburban office park development; built and managed by building owners or managers; some publicly developed examples but primarily privately developed and funded
Memorial		Public place that memorialises people or events of local and national importance
Markets	Farmers' markets	Open space or streets used for farmers' markets or flea markets; often temporary or occur only during certain times in existing space such as parks, downtown streets or parking lots
Streets	Pedestrian sidewalks	Part of cities where people move on foot; most commonly along sidewalks or paths, planner or found, that connect one destination with another
	Pedestrian mall	Street closed to auto traffic; pedestrian amenities provided such as benches, planting; often located along main street in downtown area
	Transit mall	Development of improved transit access to downtown areas replacement of traditional pedestrian malls with bus and 'light rail' malls
	Traffic restricted streets	Streets used as public open space; traffic and vehicle restriction can include pedestrian improvements and sidewalk widening, street tree planting
	Town trails	Connect parts of cities through integrated urban trails; use of streets and open spaces planned as setting for environmental learning; some are designed and marked trails
Playgrounds	Playground	Play area located in neighbourhood; frequently includes traditional play equipment such as slides and swings; sometimes include amenities for adults such as benches; can also include innovative designs such as adventure playgrounds
	School yard	School yard as play area; some developed as place for environmental learning or as community use spaces

Community open spaces	Community garden/park	Neighbourhood places designed, developed, or managed by local residents on vacant land; may include viewing gardens, play areas and community gardens; often developed on private land; not officially viewed as part of open space system of cities; often vulnerable to displacement by other uses such as housing and commercial development
Greenways and Parkways	Interconnected recreational and natural areas	Natural areas and recreational spaces connected by pedestrian and bicycle paths
Atrium/Indoor marketplace	Atrium	Interior private space developed as indoor atrium space; an indoor, lockable plaza or pedestrian street; counted by many cities as part of open space system; privately developed and managed as part of new office or commercial development
	Marketplace/downtown shopping centre	Interior, private shopping areas, usually freestanding or rehabilitation of older building(s); may include both interior and exterior spaces; sometimes called 'festival marketplaces', privately developed and managed as part of new office or commercial development
Found/ Neighbourhood spaces	Found spaces/everyday open spaces	Publicly accessible open space such as street corners; steps to buildings etc. which people claim and use; also can be vacant or undeveloped space located in neighbourhood including vacant lots and future building sites; often used by children and teenagers and local residents
Waterfronts	Waterfronts, harbours, beaches, river fronts, piers, lake fronts	Open space along waterways in cities; increased public access to waterfront areas; development of waterfront parks

Table 2a.3: A Typology of Urban Open Spaces - Woolley (2003)

Type of Urban Open Space		**Specific examples**
Domestic		Private gardens Community gardens Allotments
Neighbourhood		Parks Playgrounds Playing fields and sports grounds School playgrounds Streets City farms Incidental spaces and natural green space

Civic	Commercial	Squares Plazas Water features Office grounds
	Health and Education	Hospital grounds University campuses Courtyards Roof gardens
	Transport	Ports and docks Transport and waterway corridors
	Recreational	Woodland Golf courses Cemeteries

Table 2a.4: Urban Open and Green Space Typology – ODPM (2002a: 43)

	Sub-sets of 'open space'	**Typology suitable for planning purposes and open space strategies**	**More detailed classification for open space audits and academic research**
Urban open spaces	Green spaces	Parks and gardens	Urban parks Country parks Formal gardens (including designed landscapes)
		Provision for children and teenagers	Play areas (including LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs) Skateboard parks Outdoor basketball goals 'Hanging out' areas (including teenage shelters)
		Amenity green space (most commonly, but not necessarily, in housing areas)	Informal recreation spaces Housing green spaces Domestic gardens Village greens Other incidental space
		Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces)	Tennis courts Bowling greens Sports pitches (including artificial surfaces) Golf courses Athletics tracks School playing fields Other institutional playing fields Other outdoor sports areas
		Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Allotments Community gardens City (urban) farms
		Cemeteries and churchyards	Churchyards Cemeteries
		Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, including woodland or urban forestry	Woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub Grassland (e.g. downland, meadow) Heath or moor Wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen)

			Open and running water Wastelands (including disturbed ground) Bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits)
		Green corridors	River and canal banks Road and rail corridors Cycling routes within towns and cities Pedestrian paths within towns and cities Rights of way and permissive paths
	Civic spaces	Civic spaces	Sea fronts (including promenade) Civic squares (including plazas) Market squares Pedestrian streets Other hard surfaced pedestrian areas

Table 2a.5: A Typology of Open Spaces - (2003b: 13 - 14) (Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)	
Typology	**More detailed classification**
Parks and gardens	Urban parks Country parks Formal gardens
Provision for children and teenagers	Play areas Skateboard parks Outdoor basketball hoops Other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters)
Amenity green space (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas)	Informal recreation spaces Green spaces in and around housing Domestic gardens Village greens
Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned)	Tennis courts Bowling greens Sports pitches Golf courses Athletics tracks School and other institutional playing fields Other outdoor sports areas
Allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms	
Cemeteries and churchyards	
Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	Woodlands Urban forestry Scrub Grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) Wetlands Open and running water Wastelands Derelict open land

	Rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)
Green corridors	River and canal banks Cycle ways Rights of way
Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas	
Civic spaces	Civic and market squares Other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians

Table 2a.6: Urban Open and Green Space Typology - Inspired by ODPM (2002a; 2003b) and Bell et al. (2007)

Sub-sets	**Typology**	**More detailed classification**
Green spaces	Parks and gardens	Urban parks and gardens Country parks Formal gardens (including designed landscapes) Private gardens
	Provision for children and young people	Play areas (including LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs) Skateboard parks Outdoor basketball goals ‘Hanging out’ areas (including teenage shelters)
	Amenity green space (most commonly, but not necessarily, in housing areas)	Informal recreation spaces Housing green spaces Domestic gardens Village greens Other incidental space
	Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces)	Tennis courts Bowling greens Sports pitches (including artificial surfaces) Golf courses Athletics tracks School playing fields Other institutional playing fields Other outdoor sports areas
	Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Allotments Community gardens City (urban) farms Urban agriculture
	Cemeteries and churchyards	Churchyards Cemeteries Other burial grounds
	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, including woodland or urban forestry	Woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub Grassland (e.g. downland, meadow) Heath or moor Wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen) Open and running water Wastelands (including disturbed ground) Remnant, vacant land

		Green belts Wedges Bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits) Post-industrial land
	Green corridors	River and canal banks Road and rail corridors Disused railways Cycling routes within towns and cities Pedestrian paths within towns and cities Rights of way and permissive paths Tree belts and woodland Linear green spaces
	Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas	
Civic spaces	Civic space	Streets Pedestrian streets Residential roads Shopping precincts Sea fronts (including promenade) Civic squares (including plazas) Market squares and market places Settings for public and heritage buildings Other hard surfaced pedestrian areas

Table 2a.7: Key policy documents relating to public spaces (until 2010)

Name of document	**Year Published**	**Organisation**
PPG 6 - Town Centres and Retail Development	1996	DoE
Towards an urban renaissance	1999	UTF
'Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering the Urban Renaissance' – The Urban White Paper	2000	DETR
By Design	2000	DETR and CABE
The Value of Urban Design	2001	CABE and DETR
'Green Spaces, Better Places'	2002 (a)	ODPM (Green Spaces Task Force)
Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener	2002 (b)	ODPM
PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	2003 (b)	ODPM
The Value of Public Space	2004	CABE Space
Towards a strong urban renaissance	2005	UTF
PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres	2005	ODPM
PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth	2009	DCLG
Urban Green Nation: Building the Evidence Base	2010 (b)	CABE Space

Table 2a.8: The benefits of public spaces	
Type of benefit	**Details**
Social	Opportunities for passive and active recreation (which can result in reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour)
	Increase community cohesion and social inclusion
	Provide a 'sense of place'
	Increase a 'sense of community', e.g. through holding events (e.g. in urban parks) (with economic and cultural spin-off benefits)
	Shape cultural identity
	Child development (and health benefits) through provision of child play facilities
	Foster continuity of social relations in the long term
	Educational resource
Environmental	Balance urban climate and the 'urban island effect'* – vegetation can reduce airflow, air pollution, air temperature, radiation, sunshine and noise**
	Biodiversity
	Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)
Economic	Attract inward investment
	Increased footfall, potentially improving business trading performance
	Tourism
	Increased tax revenue and job creation
	Impact on property values***
For more information, see: Opie and Opie (1969), DoE and ATCM (1997), Williams and Green (2001), Woolley (2003), CABE Space (2004), Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004), Gehl (2007), Cattell *et al.* (2008) * Park, 2001 ** The evidence for reduced noise pollution remains highly inconclusive (Swanwick *et al.*, 2001). *** Evidence suggests there is an increase in property and land values surrounding good quality parks (CABE Space, 2004, 2009b).	

Appendix 2b

Characteristics of a good public space

CABE in collaboration with the DETR identified seven objectives that form a framework for good urban design (DETR and CABE, 2000; CABE and DETR, 2001). Based on extensive research, and included in government guidance, these objectives carry considerable legitimacy. They include:

- Character – 'a distinct sense of place responding to local context'
- Continuity and enclosure - 'continuity of frontages and clearly defined public space'
- Quality of the public realm - 'safe, attractive and functional public space'
- Ease of movement - 'an accessible, well connected, pedestrian friendly environment'
- Legibility – 'a readily understandable, easily navigable environment'
- Adaptability – 'flexible and adaptable public and private environments'
- Diversity – 'a varied environment offering a range of uses and experiences'

(CABE and DETR, 2001: 24)

Greenspace Scotland (2008: 26 – 27) proposed that spaces should be:

- Accessible and well connected
- Attractive and appealing
- Bio-diverse
- Active, supporting heath and well-being
- Community supported

Green Flag Award Scheme (Green Flag Award, 2012) judges green spaces holistically against a combination of aesthetic, maintenance and social criteria, broadly grouped into the following themes:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Marketing
- Management
- Community involvement

Further requirements for good public spaces concern cleanliness, a lack of graffiti, low transport emissions and quietness. Necessary amenities include good pedestrian routes, car parks, cycle routes, adequate seating provision (i.e. street furniture), better safety and security for the public, clear sign posting[1], toilets and access for all (DoE and ATCM, 1997; RUDI, 2010). High quality design balancing access and

[1] Sign posting can be used to improve an area's identity - a set of design elements can be used to ease navigation but also contribute to the development of a distinct image.

amenity and providing a clean, safe and comfortable environment is desirable, together with 'ambience' and town centres that are compact and well integrated (DoE and URBED, 1994; Hass-Klau *et al.*, 1999). Public art can improve the perception of an area, too (Cattell *et al.*, 2008). A successful space should meet the diverse needs of its users and be flexible as these needs change (CABE Space, 2007b; Cattell *et al.*, 2008).

Appendix 2c

Duty to involve

The 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities: Statutory Guidance' (HM Government, 2008) presented in detail the duty to involve, which aspired to 'embed a culture of engagement and empowerment' and aimed to give people greater opportunities to have their say (ibid., Para 2.11).

The duty was originally introduced in the 'Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act' (DCLG, 2007) and came into force in April 2009. It did not replace already existing requirements regarding informing, consulting and promoting participation of users or citizens and it was to be considered in addition to them, also exploring options for a more coordinated approach to consultation and involvement between different bodies. Other documents – 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (DCLG, 2006) and 'Planning for the Sustainable Future' (HM Government, 2007) - had already highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to engagement.

Para 2.15 of the duty to involve stated:

> *'The duty requires authorities to take those steps they consider appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so. It specifies the three ways of involving that need to be covered in this consideration: providing information about the exercise of the particular function; consulting about the exercise of the particular function; and involving in another way'.*

'Representatives of local persons' were defined as a 'balanced selection of the individuals, groups, businesses or organisations the authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the authority function'. In addition to local residents this definition also considered those who work or study in the area, together with visitors and service users. Children, young people and adults were to be informed, consulted and involved as well as marginalised or vulnerable people (HM Government, 2008).

It was left to the authority to decide whether they should use one, two, all three or none of the approaches (inform, consult or involve) in the exercise of any particular function and it was acknowledged that different functions would require different approaches and depending on the locality and the question being considered, different types of involvement, too.

While 'informing' referred to the provision of 'appropriate information about services, policies and decisions which affect the public or might be of interest to them' (ibid., Para 2.16), 'involvement' was understood as the most interactive form of engagement where the public have a greater influence over decision making and service delivery. The consultation part of the duty read (ibid., Para 2.18):

> *'Authorities should offer representatives of local persons appropriate opportunities to have their say about the decisions and services that affect them through consultation. […] Consultation needs to provide genuine opportunities for people to be involved so authorities will want*

to draw on widespread evidence of what constitutes good practice in consultation.'

This included for example clarifying the purpose, scope and parameters of an activity that the public may be consulted about or involved in, provision of relevant background information and feeding back the outcomes of any consultation or involvement and showing how a final decision was reached (ibid.).

Since the new Coalition Government, the DCLG's new Best Value statutory guidance consultation (2011d) proposed to repeal the duty. In response, discussions regarding how effective it has actually been were raised. Opinions varied – on the one hand, some proposed that despite the duty, local authorities still failed to involve communities in a meaningful way. Others added that the duty was too vague to be an effective tool for legal challenge and should be replaced with a more specific one. On the other hand, repeal of the duty was seen as possibly making it more difficult for engagement to be taken seriously and could result in cuts to local authorities' engagement budgets (Involve, 2011).

The duty to involve was repealed by the Best Value statutory guidance (DCLG, 2011d) in 2011, but the duty to consult was retained (Involve, 2012).

Appendix 2d

Public involvement frameworks

Table 2d.1: White's interests in participation			
Form	**Top-down**	**Bottom-up**	**Function**
Nominal	Legitimation: lends credibility and authority to governmental body or organisation sponsoring the participatory activity	Inclusion: allows participants to be members of the participatory group, should some benefit (to the participant) arise	Display: function is primarily for demonstrating that participation has been part of the process
Instrumental	Efficiency: participatory activity provides labour for essential services in an efficient manner for the government or sponsoring agency	Cost: participation is viewed as a cost by participants, detracting time and resources from other activities, but participants are willing if they view the activity as a necessity	Means: functions primarily as a way of providing services desired by both the top-downs and the bottom-ups
Representative	Sustainability: governmental body or sponsoring agency seeks participation in order to ensure viability of a program over the long term	Leverage: process gives local people a voice in the project and they use that voice to influence decisions	Voice: representative in allowing people to express their own interests and influence decisions, but program comes from the top-down
Transformative	Empowerment frequently perceived as a bottom-up strategy, but impetus often comes from top-down when organisation establishes empowerment as a priority	Empowerment: intent is to empower locals to plan and act for themselves	Means/End: functions as a means for providing services, but also as the end in itself as locals exert control over their future
Note: Table adapted from White (1996)			

Table 2d.2: Chambers' RRA-PRA continuum

Nature of process	**Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)**	**Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**
Mode	Elicitive / extractive	Empowering
Professional's role	Investigator	Facilitator
Information owned, analyzed and used by	Professional	Local people
Typical methods*	Secondary sources, observation, interviews with local experts	Shared visual analysis, Venn diagramming, group checking and validation
Objective	Data collection	Empowerment
Long-term outcomes	Plans, projects, publications	Sustainable local action and institution

Note: Table adapted from Chambers (1994, 1997)
* Methods listed are only representative examples and not exhaustive. Methods have considerable overall along the continuum, depending on the mode of the process

Image removed

Figure 2d.1: *Topography of design research (Sanders, 2006: 4)*

Image removed

Figure 2d.2: *Pyramid of user-led design (Lindsay, 2003)*

Table 2d.3: Design participation typology – Lee (2007, 2008)					
Space of operation	**Four types of design participation (What's design participation for?)**	**The relationship between the designers' and the users' space**	**The role of 'designers'**	**The role of 'users'**	**Working with/ for people**
Designers' space (abstract space)	1. Innovation (designer only)	Two spaces are separated	Masters/ authorities	Imagined user/ representatives	Working *for* people
Realm of collaboration (between designers and people)	2. Collaboration (designer-driven)	Overlapping at the corner and formed the realm of collaboration	Co-designers/ facilitators	Co-workers/ partners	
	3. Emancipation (user-driven)	People's space taking over experts' space	Stimulators	Creative people/ advisers	Working *with* people
Users/ people space (concrete space)	4. Motivation (user only)	Overlapping as one entity	Craftsmen/ builders	Active clients	DIY (do-it-yourself)
Note: Table adapted from Lee (2007, 2008)					

Appendix 3a

Between-mechanism variables, proposed evaluation criteria

Table 3a.1: Between-mechanism variables *(i.e. structural differences between methods; basis for mechanism typology)*		
Variable associated with maximizing:	**Mechanism variable and Levels of variable**	**Details**
Relevant Participants	Population of interested/affected individuals	Depends on the context of the exercise; important as it is used as a benchmark for the intended sample size and those actively engaged
	Intended sample size	Number approached during the exercise not a relevant between-mechanism variable (but highly important within-mechanism variable)
	Proportion of the sample that is actively engaged	People who process information or respond
	Participant selection method: a) controlled b) uncontrolled (i.e self-selected) – relinquishing choice of involvement to the public themselves	In controlled selection, both the number and relevance of those engaged may be determined (in theory)
Relevant information from public participants i.e. information elicitation	**Facilitation of information:** a) yes – present b) no – absent	Particular feature of group-based mechanisms; active facilitation often appears to increase relevant information elicited when compared to some identical processes without facilitation
	Response mode: a) open / unlimited – allows 'free' responses b) closed / limited – respondents choose among two or more options	'Open' are more likely to elicit more of relevant information (but also more irrelevant information)
Relevant information from sponsors i.e. information elicitation	**Information input** (communication): a) set information input – e.g. newsletter, leaflet b) flexible information input – allows for flexible, variable and responsive information provision from sponsors; can clarify uncertainties (MISUNDERSTANDING); e.g. hotline, public meeting (X most mechanisms are 'flexible')	Info should be: • Relevant • Comprehensive • Appropriate This variable of less use, as most types are flexible.

Effective transfer of information to, and its processing by recipients (sponsors/participants)	**Medium of information transfer:** a) face-to-face – e.g. information centres, focus group b) non-face-to-face – e.g. over the phone, computers *comprehensibility (within-mechanism variable) – whether recipients fully understand all of the information they receive; understanding of questions and tasks in a consultation mechanism	N-FTF: lack of physical contact removes visual, nonverbal cues – can lead to MISUNDERSTANDING – diminishing the relevant information transfer Aspects of transfer medium: info presented… • Graphically • Textually These are more within-mechanism variables
Aggregation of relevant information	**Facilitation of aggregation process:** a) structured combination – info elicited from individuals, process structured following some rules (e.g. from a survey); combined and taking into account all inputs b) unstructured combination – e.g. when values are elicited from groups, the output itself represents an aggregation performed within and by the group; no clear rules followed	A facilitator may help combine information effectively
Note: Table adapted from Rowe and Frewer (2005) - based on the 'information flow perspective' – potential impact on information flow		

Table 3a.2: Principles from the theory of fair and competent citizen participation (Webler and Tuler, 2002: 183)

Criterion	**Details**
Fairness	Attend the discourse
	Initiate discourse
	Participate in discourse
	Participate in decision making
Competence	Access to information and its interpretations
	Use the best available procedures for knowledge selection

Table 3a.3: Different effectiveness evaluation criteria (used in the literature reviewed by Rowe and Frewer 2004)

Criterion	**Source**
Inclusivity	Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001
Interaction	
Transparency	
Continuity	
Representativeness	Carr and Halvorsen, 2001
Identification of common good	
Incorporation of values/beliefs into discussion	
Social impact	Einsiedel *et al.*, 2001
Procedural impact	
Comfort	Halvorsen, 2001
Convenience	
Satisfaction	
Deliberation	

Incorporating public views into decision making	Beierle and Konisky, 2000
Resolving conflict among competing interests	
Restoring trust in public agencies	
Fairness	Barnes, 1999
Competence	
Actual impact	Guston, 1999
Impact on general thinking	
Impact on training (learning) of knowledgeable personnel	
Interaction with lay knowledge (impact on lay learning)	
Decrease time to develop regulations	Coglianese, 1997
Reduce or eliminate subsequent judicial challenges.	
Representativeness	Petts, 1995
Effectiveness of method process	
Compatibility with participants' objectives	
Knowledge achieved	
Impact on decision process	
Efficiency (whether exercise 'run well')	Joss, 1995
Effectiveness (outcomes, such as impact on public debate, influence on policy making)	
Perceived success	
Whether participants' values/opinions changed	Nayer *et al.*, 1995 (consensus conference)
Whether participants learned anything	
Fairness	Renn *et al.*, 1995
Competence	
Representativeness	Kathlene and Martin, 1991
Participation rate	
Cost-effectiveness	
Impact on policy formation	
Obtain input early in planning	Blahna and Yonts-Shepard, 1989 (resource planning initiatives in forestry)
Involve public throughout planning process	
Obtain representative input	
Use personal and interactive methods	
Use input in development and evaluation of alternatives	
Participant perceptions	Houghton, 1988
Sponsor perceptions	
Actual outcomes	
Representativeness	Crosby *et al.*, 1986
Effective decision making	
Process fairness	
Cost-effectiveness	
Process flexibility	
Highly likelihood that recommendations followed	
Subjective assessment of previous evaluator (??)	Berry *et al.*, 1984
Representativeness of participants	
Responsiveness of agency to policy demands of participants	
Representativeness of participants	Gundry and Heberlen, 1984
Representativeness of participants' opinions	
Representativeness of variance of participants' opinions	
Impact	Cole and Caputo, 1983
Frequency of meetings	MacNair *et al.*, 1983
Allocated resources	
Access to higher authority	

Involvement in decision making process	
Intended role of citizens	
Selection of independent membership	
Consensus	Twight and Carroll, 1983
Openness (participation process perceived as being open to public influence)	
Power over internal decision making	Hannah and Lewis, 1982
Influence	Rosener, 1982
Accessibility	Godschalk and Stiftel, 1981
Involvement	
Public awareness	
Effect on staff and plan	
Effect on Publics and plan support	
Cost	
Objective agreed on by public and planner	Syme and Sedler, 1994:533
Others used as examples by Rowe and Frewer (2004:517)	
Speed of reaching a decision	
Number of ideas generated	
Quality of ideas generated	
Extent to which final solution part of consensus	
Note: for full references, refer to Rowe and Frewer (2004)	

Table 3a.4: Evaluation criteria - Hartley and Wood (2005)

Criterion	**Details**
Communication	The material is presented in a non-technical format and is understandable to lay people
Fairness	The full range of potentially affected individuals is identified
Timing	The participation process begins early enough to ensure that all participants can have an input
Accessibility	The public have access to all documentation relevant to the decision-making process
Information provision	The public are informed where material relevant to the decision-making process can be obtained
Influence on decision-making	The outcome of participation influences the decision-making process
Competence	The public have the ability to challenge experts and have access to the necessary information to do this effectively.
Interaction	The participation techniques used allow stakeholders to contribute effectively.
Compromise	The process used allows a consensus to be achieved.
Trust	The process facilitates the development of trust among all involved.
Note: Table adapted from Hartley and Wood (2005)	

Appendix 3b

Consultation methods to be tested in this research and their between-mechanism variables

Table 3b.1: Consultation methods to be tested and their between-mechanism variables, based on Rowe and Frewer (2005)		
Mechanism variable	**Level of variable**	**Example of method**
Participant selection method	Controlled	• Walking discussion • Focus group • Photo diary
	Uncontrolled (participants are self-selected)	• E-mail • Online form • Electronic kiosk • Text message • On-street event
Facilitation of information	Yes – facilitator present	• Walking discussion • Focus group • On-street event
	No – no facilitator	• Photo diary • E-mail • Online form • Electronic kiosk • Text message
Response mode	Open – unlimited	• Walking discussion • Focus group • Photo diary • E-mail • Text message (limited by 160 characters) • On-street event
	Closed – limited	• Online form (tick boxes, but still allows free text) • Electronic kiosk (tick boxes, but still allows free text)
Medium of information transfer	Face-to-face	• Walking discussion • Focus group • On-street event • Photo diary – in terms of explanation
	Non-face-to-face	• E-mail • Online form • Electronic kiosk • Text message • Photo diary – written annotations

Appendix 4a

Coventry University campus maps

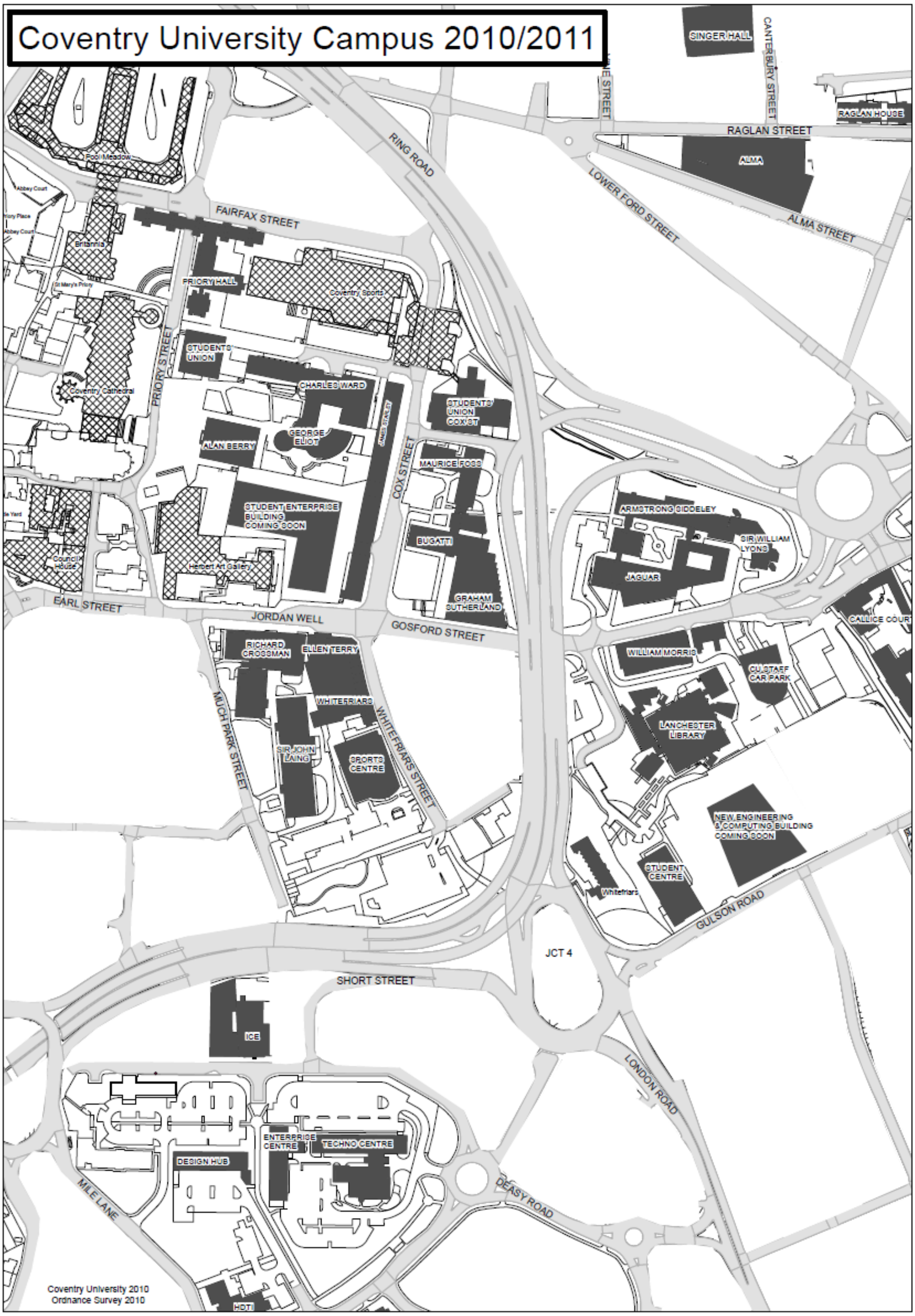
- **Coventry University campus 2010/2011**

Map used during focus groups and walking discussions, created specifically for this purpose by Mr Miles Glover. It is based on an Ordnance Survey 2010 map, with university buildings highlighted in black. Key buildings within the city of Coventry (e.g. Coventry Cathedral, Pool Meadow Bus Station) are dashed. Other buildings have been erased from the map.

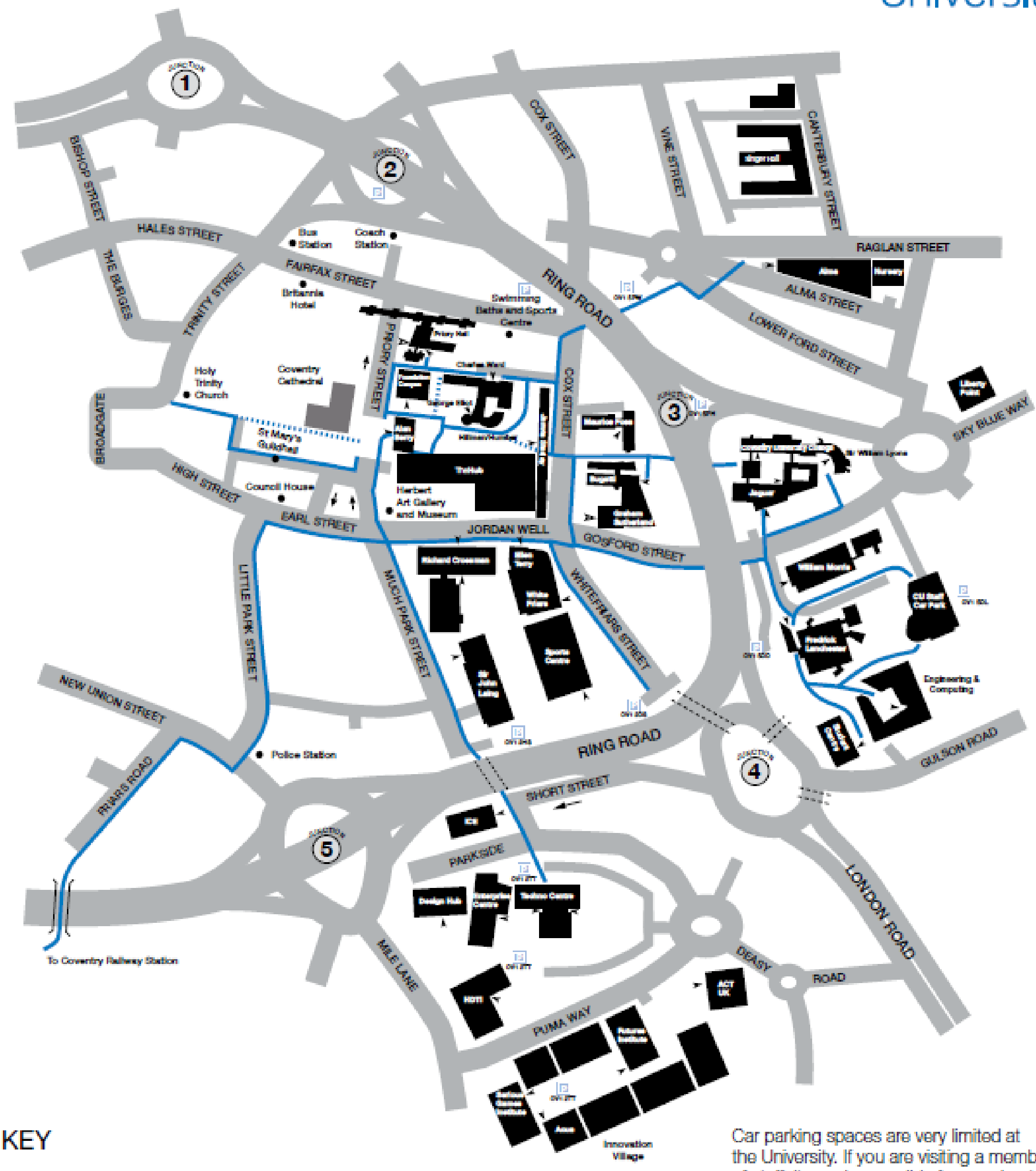
- **Campus Map – Coventry University**

Official campus map, produced by Coventry University.

Coventry University (2012) *Campus Map* [online] available from: http://www.coventry.ac.uk/study-at-coventry/open-days/visiting-coventry-university/travel-directions-info/ [Accessed 13/04/13]


Coventry University Campus 2010/2011
SINGER HALL
CANTERBURY STREET
RAGLAN HOUSE
RAGLAN STREET
ALMA
RING ROAD
LOWER FORD STREET
ALMA STREET
Pool Meadow
FAIRFAX STREET
Britannia
PRIORY HALL
Coventry Sports
STUDENTS' UNION
PRIORY STREET
CHARLES WARD
Coventry Cathedral
STUDENTS' UNION COX ST
GEORGE ELIOT
ALAN BERRY
MAURICE FOSS
COX STREET
STUDENT ENTERPRISE BUILDING COMING SOON
ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY
SIR WILLIAM LYONS
BUGATTI
JAGUAR
Council House
Herbert Art Gallery
GRAHAM SUTHERLAND
EARL STREET
JORDAN WELL
GOSFORD STREET
CALLICE COURT
RICHARD CROSSMAN
ELLEN TERRY
WILLIAM MORRIS
CU STAFF CAR PARK
MUCH PARK STREET
WHITEFRIARS
WHITEFRIARS STREET
LANCHESTER LIBRARY
SIR JOHN LAING
SPORTS CENTRE
NEW ENGINEERING & COMPUTING BUILDING COMING SOON
STUDENT CENTRE
Whitefriars
GULSON ROAD
JCT 4
SHORT STREET
ICE
LONDON ROAD
ENTERPRISE CENTRE
TECHNO CENTRE
DESIGN HUB
MILE LANE
DEASY ROAD
Coventry University 2010
Ordnance Survey 2010
HDTI

Campus Map



KEY

- Ringroad junction
- Power assisted door access
- Non-powered access
- Ringroad subway access
- Principal pathway with wheelchair access
- Principal pathway with steps
- Footbridge
- Pay/display parking

All Coventry University buildings have wheelchair access and accessible toilets for disabled persons

Information correct at November 2012

Car parking spaces are very limited at the University. If you are visiting a member of staff, it may be possible for your host to reserve you a car parking space. Please check in advance. This facility will not normally apply to visitors attending Open Days, Conferences or other large-scale events.

Please note that the visitors who park in the University car parks without displaying a valid permit may be clamped.

The main University switchboard number is 024 7688 7688.

Coventry University is easily reached by road, rail or air. The information below shows you how to get to Coventry and, once you're here, how to find the University itself.

By rail

Coventry is on the main intercity route. Trains from London (Euston) leave every 30 minutes throughout most of the day with journey times of approximately 1 hour.

There are also daily services from Scotland and the Northwest, from Bristol, the Southwest and South Wales. In addition there are frequent services to Oxford, Southampton, and Bournemouth, as well as Nuneaton, Rugby, Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International.

Once you arrive at Coventry, you have three ways to reach the University. If you take a taxi, the fare will be approximately £4 and you should ask for Coventry University in the City-centre.

Alternatively, buses leave the station for the City-centre every ten minutes (after 18.00, every 20-30 minutes).

If you choose to walk, it will take you 10-15 minutes and the route is marked on the map.

By air

Birmingham International Airport is just 20 minutes away by road or rail. It provides direct daily flights to and from many other European cities.

By road

Coventry lies at the heart of a motorway network, with fast trouble-free roads right into the City. Once you get to the City-centre there are signposts to the University from all the relevant Ring Road junctions.

From London: follow the M1, leaving it at Junction 17 onto the M45. At the end of the M45, continue along the A45 and follow the signs for the City-centre.

From southern England: take the A34 to the M40. Leave the M40 at Junction 15, then take the A46 and follow signs for the City-centre.

From the Southwest: take the M5, then the M42, leaving the M42 at Junction 6. Follow the A45 to Coventry. (From South Wales: follow the M4 to the M5, then as above).

From western Scotland and the Northwest: leave the M6 at Junction 2 and follow City-centre signs.

From the North: take the M1 to Junction 21, then to the end of the M69, following signs for Coventry City-centre.

For those travelling by bus or coach, the bus and coach stations are just a few minutes' walk away from Priory Street.

Facts and figures

Coventry University covers 14.5 Hectares right in the heart of Coventry City-centre. The 8 Hectare Coventry University Technology Park, whose development continues, is just minutes away from the main campus.

We have a student population of approximately 20,000 enrolled on courses in our four Schools/Faculties:

Coventry School of Art and Design
Faculty of Business, Environment and Society
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
Faculty of Engineering and Computing

But people come to us for more than just qualifications. With more than 2,000 staff, we can offer a whole range of expertise in research and consultancy, as well as training and short course provision. Our central location means that we are the ideal choice for conference and room-hire bookings.

If you would like to find out more, contact Marketing and Communications on 024 7688 8682.

The campus map is available in other formats. Please visit
www.coventry.ac.uk/map

Appendix 4b

Ethical approval for Phase 1 – Coventry University campus study

Ethics Medium-High K. Frankova methods CU trial 25.08.10.doc Revision 1.00

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

1 Project Information (Everyone)

Title of Project: **Evaluating Different Approaches to Community Engagement in the Regeneration of Urban Public Spaces – Coventry University campus case study**
Name of Principal Investigator (PI) or Research or Professional Degree Student: **Katerina Frankova**
Faculty, Department or Institute: CSAD, Coventry University
Names of Co-investigators (CIs) and their organisational affiliation: student is funded through the Digital Economy Programme 'VoiceYourView' project (2009-2012)
How many additional research staff will be employed on the project? There might be an assistant hired to help out with serving drinks, taking notes and giving general support during the research process, but will not be involved in any analysis of data. This person is likely to be a Student Ambassador. Names and their organisational affiliation (if known)
Proposed project start date (At least three months in the future): 04/10/10
Estimated project end date: 17/12/10 (for this case study)
Who is funding the project? Research is linked to the VoiceYourView project (Digital Economy programme), however it is for the purpose of the PhD research and not the overall project. Additional funding will be taken from the £1500 student allocation. Has funding been confirmed? Yes
Code of ethical practice and conduct most relevant to your project: • Other (Specify): Digital Economy Programme, EPSRC

Students Only

Degree being studied (MSc/MA by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD, etc): PhD
Name of your Director of Studies: Prof Andree Woodcock
Date of Enrolment: 1 July 2009

Registry Research Unit Page 4 of 43 25/08/2010

16 Principal Investigator Certification

Please ensure that you:

- Tick all the boxes below that are relevant to your project and sign this checklist.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign this declaration.

I believe that this project **does not require research ethics peer review**. I have completed Sections 1-2 and kept a copy for my own records. I realise I may be asked to provide a copy of this checklist at any time.	
I request that this project is **exempt from internal research ethics peer review** because it will be, or has been, reviewed by an external research ethics committee. I have completed Sections 1-4 and have attached/will attach a copy of the favourable ethical review issued by the external research ethics committee. Please give the name of the external research ethics committee here: Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	
I **request an ethics peer review** and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly. Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	✓
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	✓
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.	✓
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.	✓

Signatures

If you submit this checklist and any attachments by e-mail, you should type your name in the signature space. An email attachment sent from your University inbox will be assumed to have been signed electronically.

Principal Investigator

Signed: *Katerina Frankova* [redacted] Principal Investigator or Student)

Date: 25th August 2010....................................

Students submitting this checklist by email must append to it an email from their Director of Studies confirming that they are prepared to make the declaration above and to countersign this checklist. This email will be taken as an electronic countersignature.

Student's Director of Studies

Countersigned: *A. Woodcock*.......... [redacted] .... (Director of Studies)

Date: 25th August 2010....................................

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Note: This checklist is based on an ethics approval form produce by Research Office of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University. Copyright is acknowledged.

For office use only

Initial assessment

Date checklist initially received:	DD/MM/YYYY	
1. Ethical review required	Yes	No
2. CRB check required	Yes	No
Submitted to an external research ethics committee		
3. External research ethics committee (Name)	Yes	No
4. Copy of external ethical clearance received	DD/MM/YYYY	
Ethics Panel Review		
5. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
6. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Original Decision (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
7. Approve	Yes	No
8. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
9. Resubmission	Yes	No
10. Reject	Yes	No
11. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	
Resubmission		
12. Date of receipt of resubmission:	DD/MM/YYYY	
13. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
14. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Final decision recorded (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
15. Approve	Yes	No
16. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
17. Reject	Yes	No
18. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	

Signature ....[redacted]....................................(Chair of UARC/Chair RDSC)
Date .....22.09.2010.......................... AS CHAIR OF SARC (CSAD)

Appendix 4c

Coventry University student and staff profile 2010/2011

In order to achieve consistent formatting, the charts have been recreated using the data from the source documents. Age and disabled staff status profiles were not available for staff members.

- **Students**

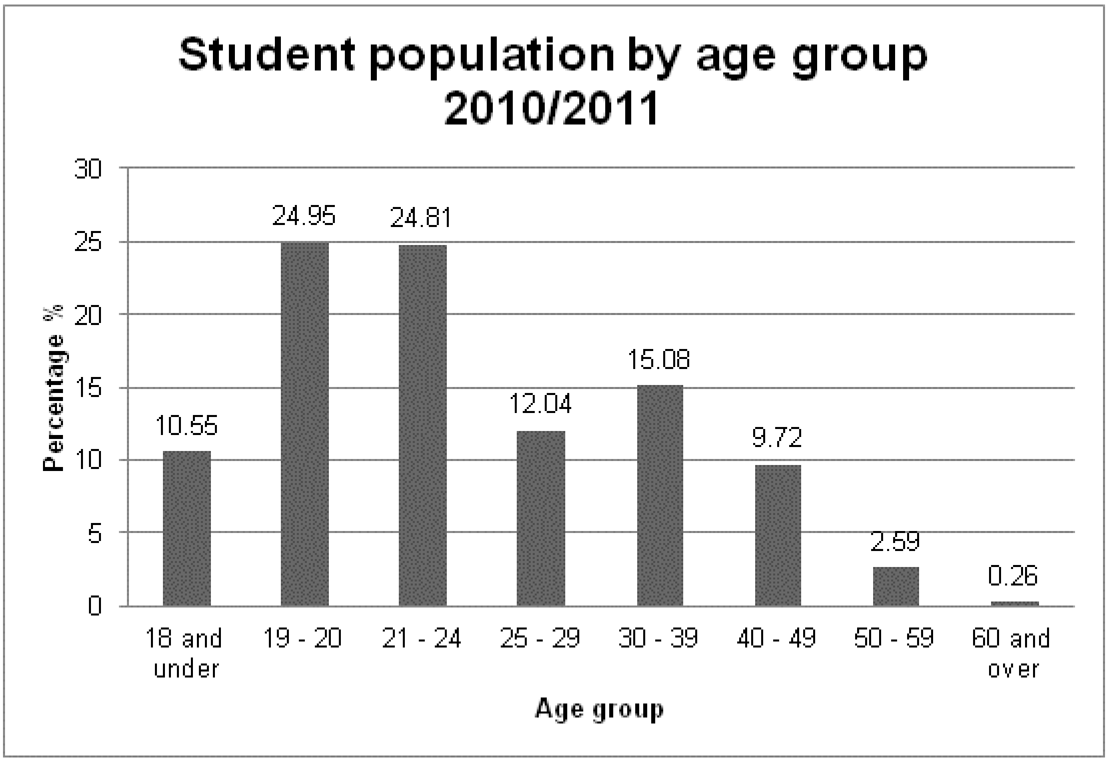


Figure 4c.1: *Student population by age group 2010/2011 (Coventry University, 2011:1)*

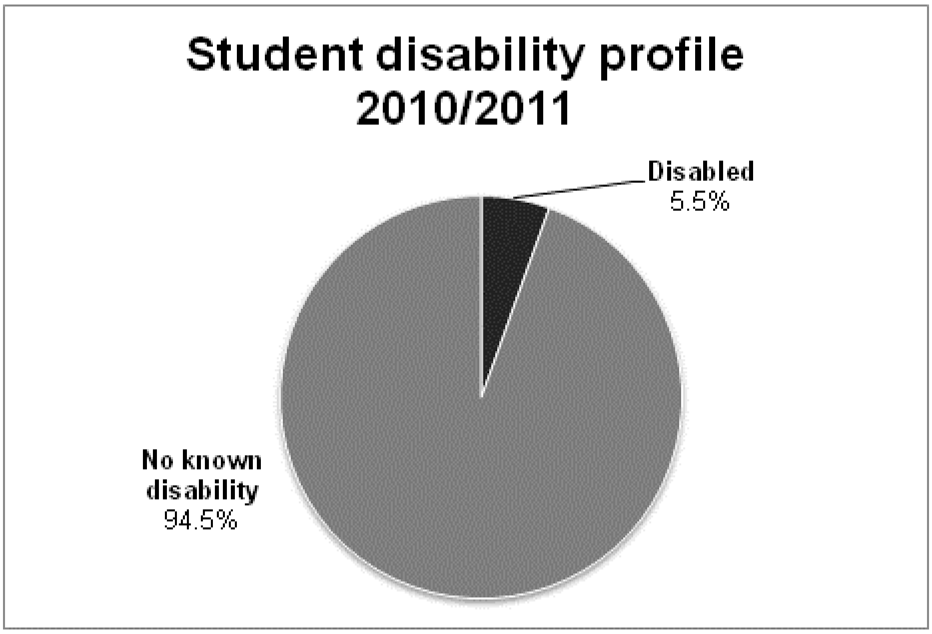


Figure 4c.2: *Student disability profile 2010/2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 2)*

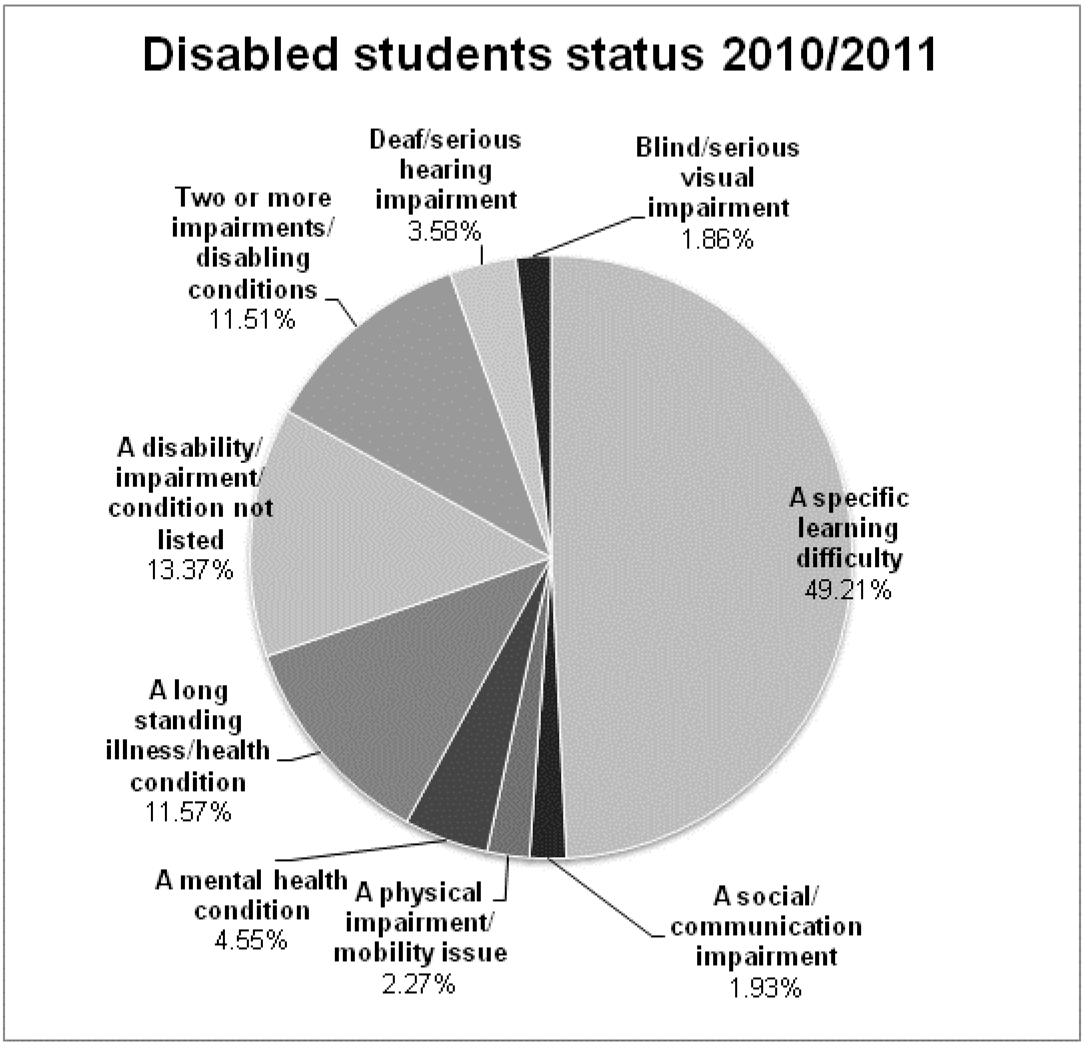


Figure 4c.3: *Disabled students status 2010/2011 (Coventry University, 2011: 2)*

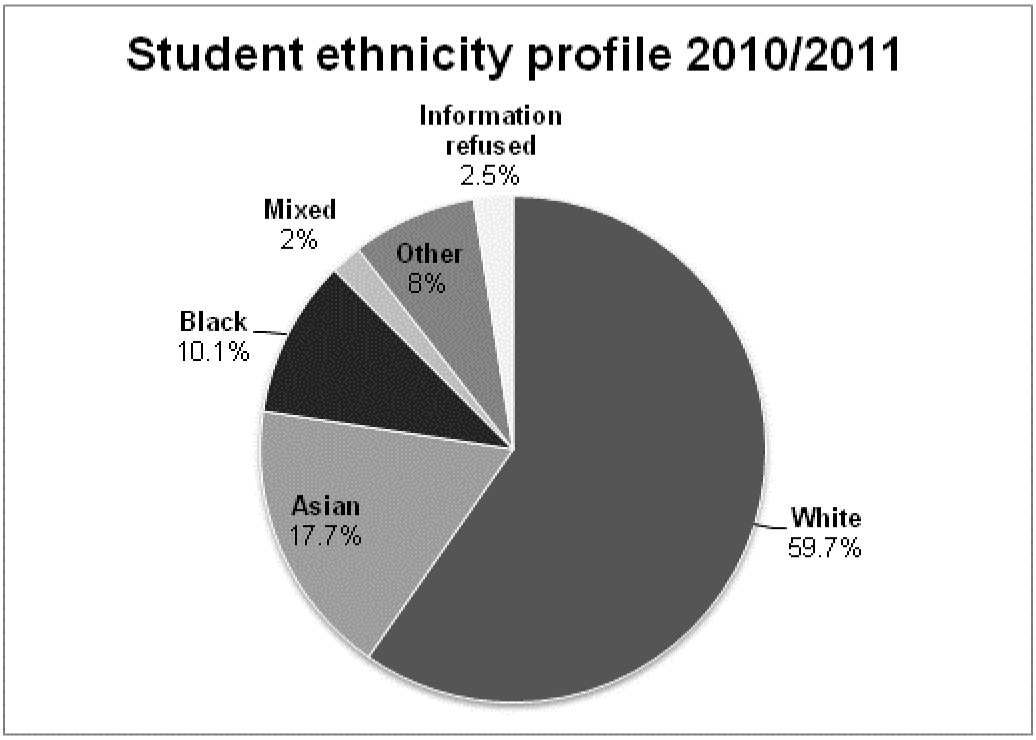


Figure 4c.4: *Student ethnicity profile 2010/2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 2)*

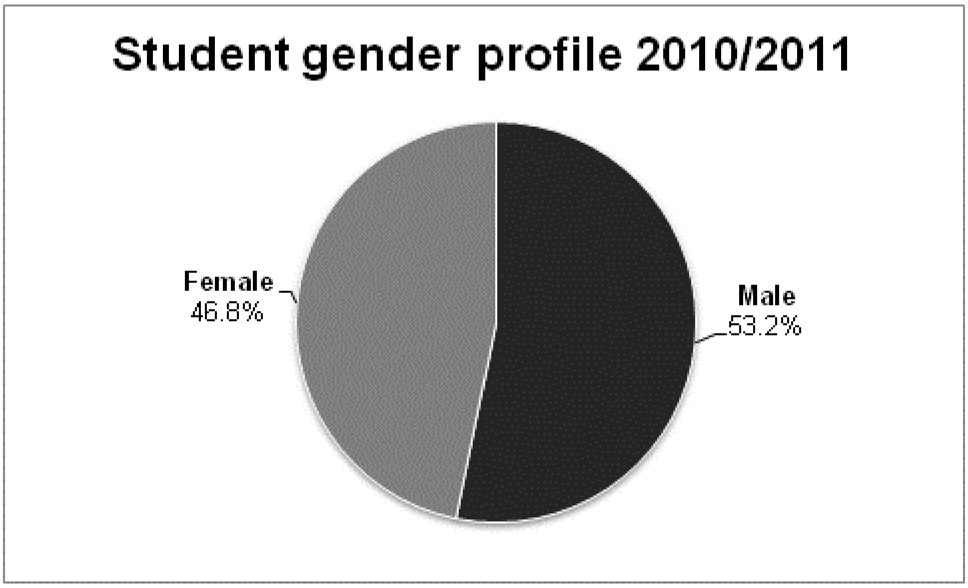


Figure 4c.5: *Student gender profile 2010/2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 3)*

- **Staff**

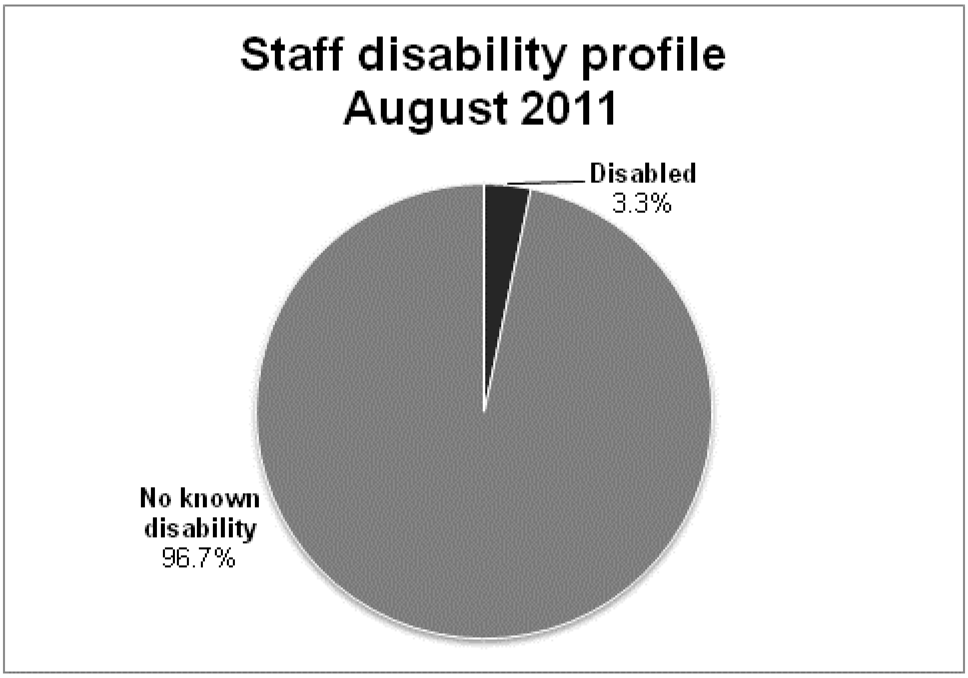


Figure 4c.6: *Staff disability profile August 2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 4)*

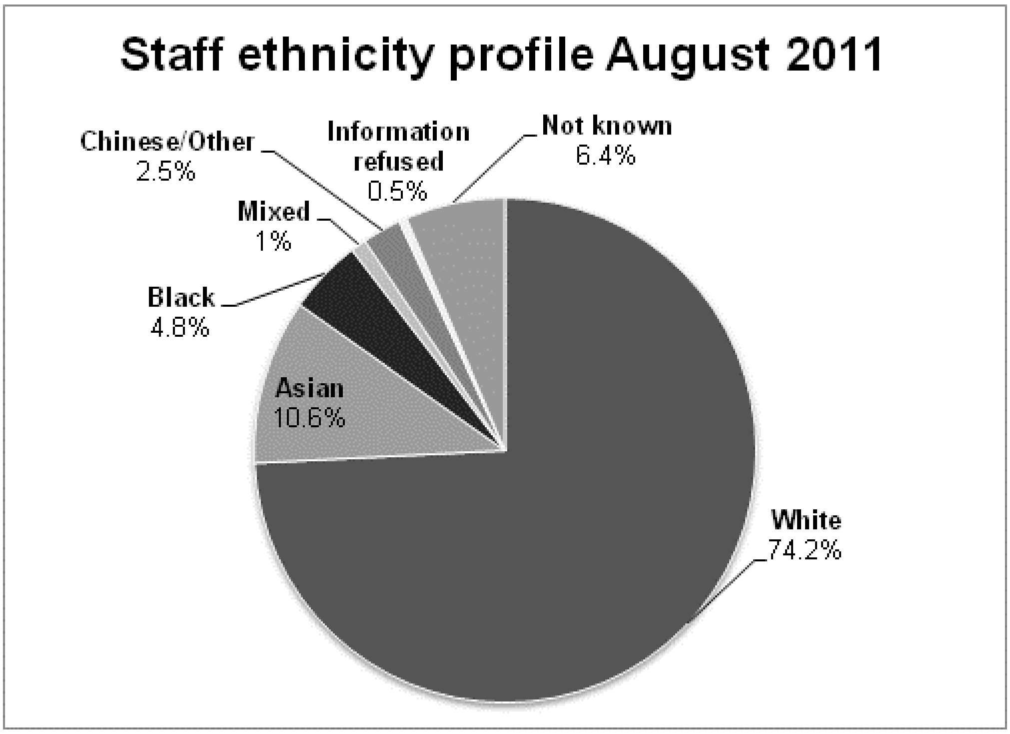


Figure 4c.7: *Staff ethnicity profile August 2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 4)*

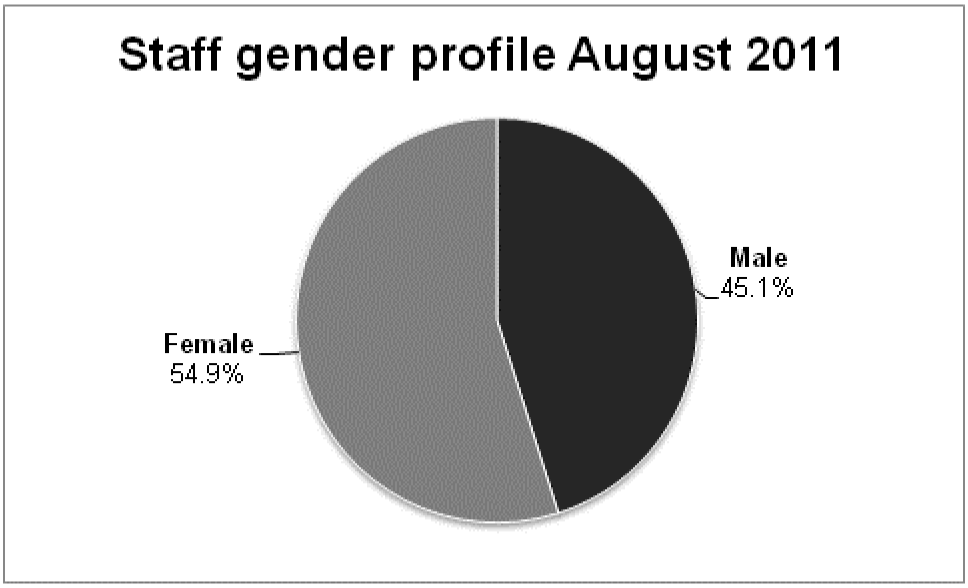


Figure 4c.8: *Staff gender profile August 2011 (Equality and Diversity office, 2011: 5)*

Appendix 4d

Online form

voiceyourview @ Coventry University

Online Form

If you want to report something that requires urgent attention and may be a safety hazard, please report this to the Estates Department on **024 7765 7272**, in addition to this form.

Please make ONE comment PER form

1. Please choose what your comment is about

- Lighting
- Roads/Pavements
- Pedestrian crossings
- Street furniture/ Public art (benches, bollards)
- Public realm/Open spaces/ Green spaces
- Trees/Hedges/Flower displays
- Graffiti
- Wayfinding and navigation signs
- Subway/Underpass
- Safety
- Maintenance – campus general
- University buildings
- Cleanliness/Litter bins
- Car parks
- Public and People
- Miscellaneous

2. Do you wish to make a:

- Compliment
- Complaint
- General comment

3. How urgent is your comment?

- Not urgent right now
- Action required
- Urgent action required

4. To help us identify the location you are referring to, please give as much information as possible.

Street name	Shop close by
Intersection – street names	University building close by
Landmark close by	Other information

5. Please input your comment

6. If there is any further action you want us to take, what would it be?

Demographic information

Please fill this information in if you wish to be entered into the VYV prize draw.

Status

- Student
- Staff
- Visitor to campus

Gender

- Male
- Female

What is your ethnicity?

White
- British
- Irish
- Other

Black or Black British
- Caribbean
- African
- Other

Chinese / Other Ethnic Group
- Chinese
- Any other

Asian or Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Other

Mixed
- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Asian
- White & Black African
- Other

What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60+

Do you think you have a disability in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

- Yes
- No

Email Address

Submit

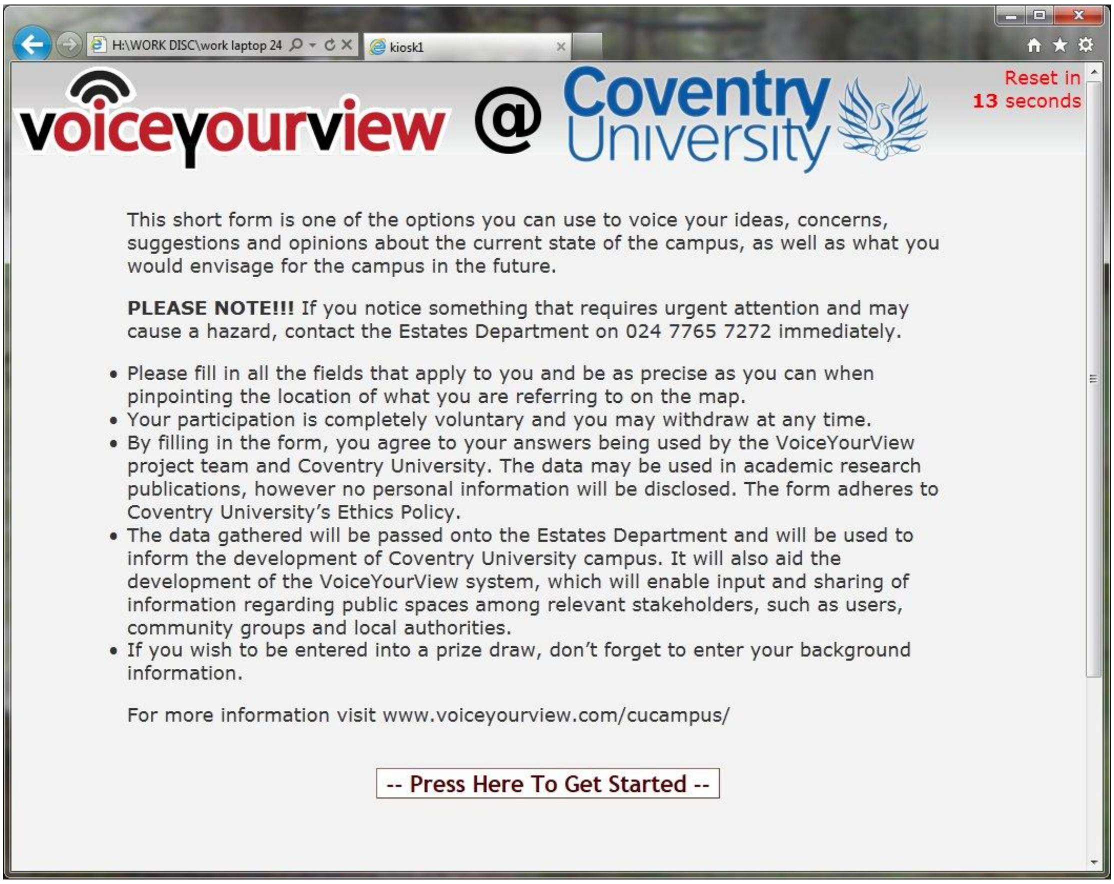
VoiceYourView 2010

Appendix 4e

Electronic kiosk form

Electronic kiosk form located in the Alan Berry building

The form:



voiceyourview @ Coventry University

Reset in 13 seconds

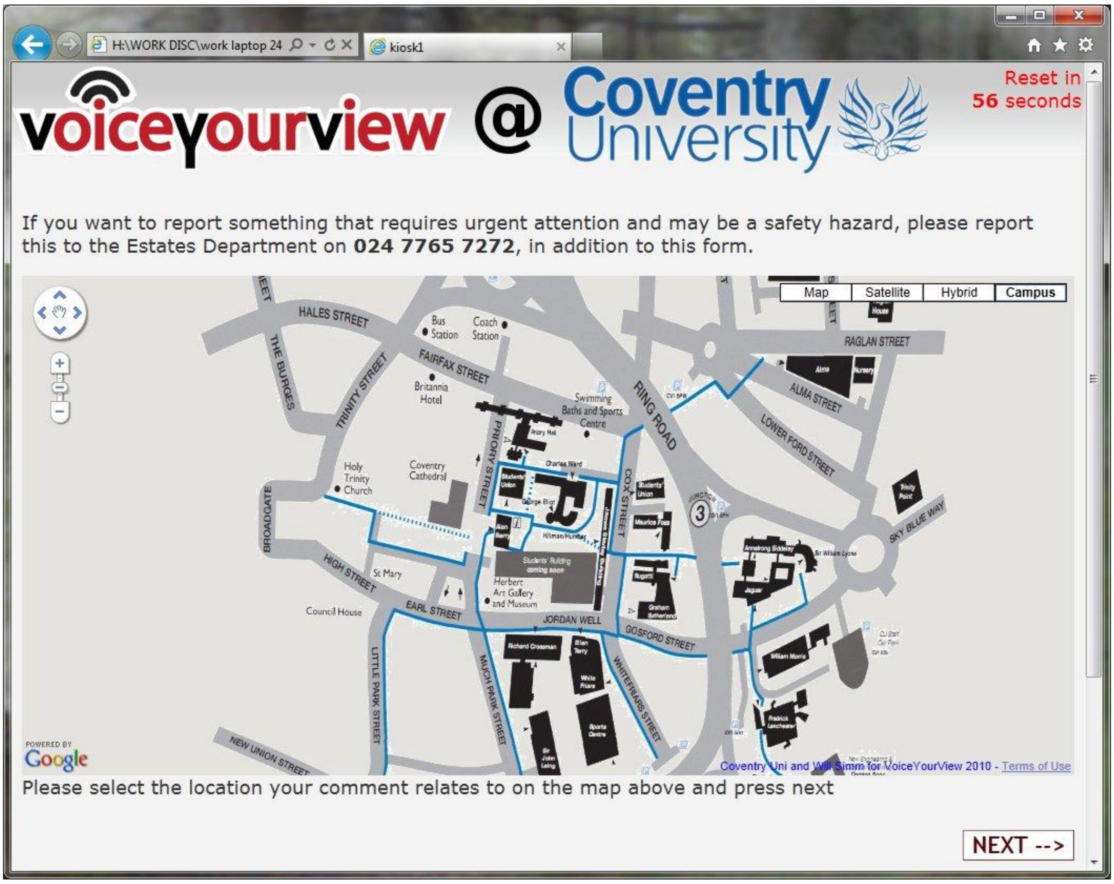
This short form is one of the options you can use to voice your ideas, concerns, suggestions and opinions about the current state of the campus, as well as what you would envisage for the campus in the future.

PLEASE NOTE!!! If you notice something that requires urgent attention and may cause a hazard, contact the Estates Department on 024 7765 7272 immediately.

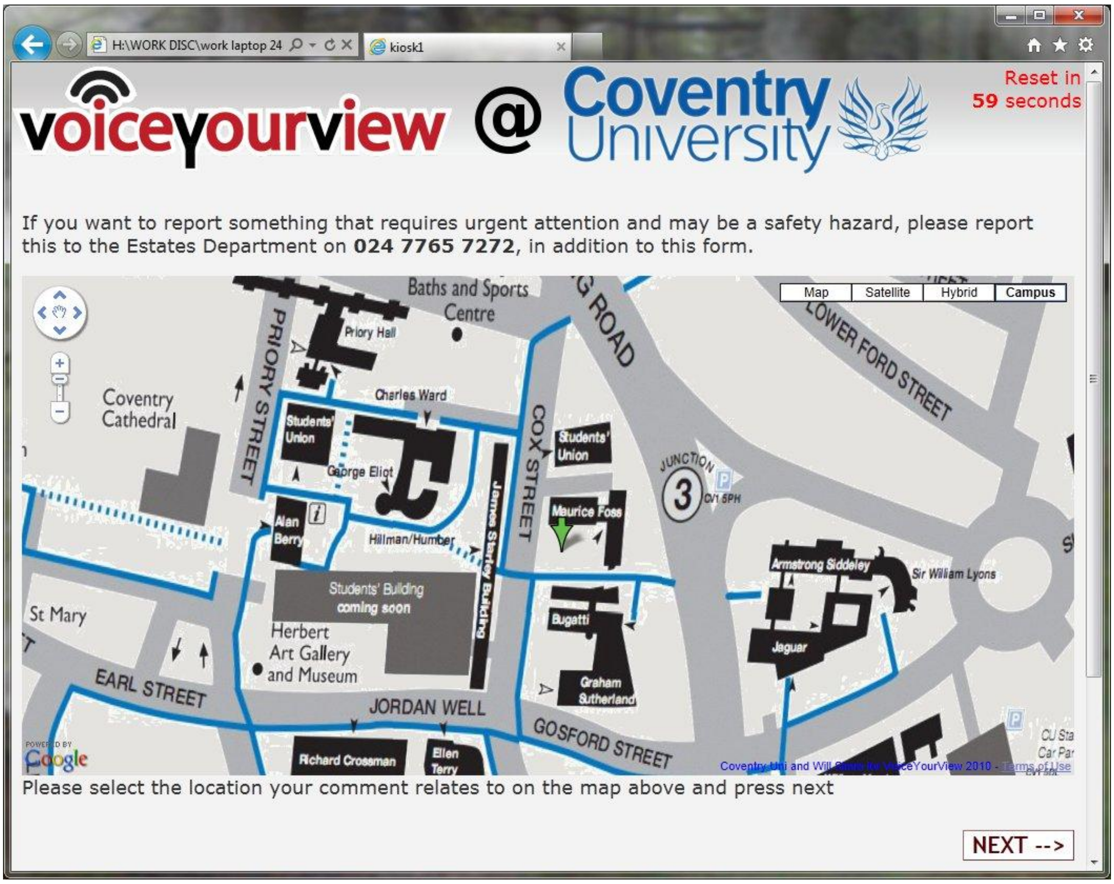
- Please fill in all the fields that apply to you and be as precise as you can when pinpointing the location of what you are referring to on the map.
- Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.
- By filling in the form, you agree to your answers being used by the VoiceYourView project team and Coventry University. The data may be used in academic research publications, however no personal information will be disclosed. The form adheres to Coventry University's Ethics Policy.
- The data gathered will be passed onto the Estates Department and will be used to inform the development of Coventry University campus. It will also aid the development of the VoiceYourView system, which will enable input and sharing of information regarding public spaces among relevant stakeholders, such as users, community groups and local authorities.
- If you wish to be entered into a prize draw, don't forget to enter your background information.

For more information visit www.voiceyourview.com/cucampus/

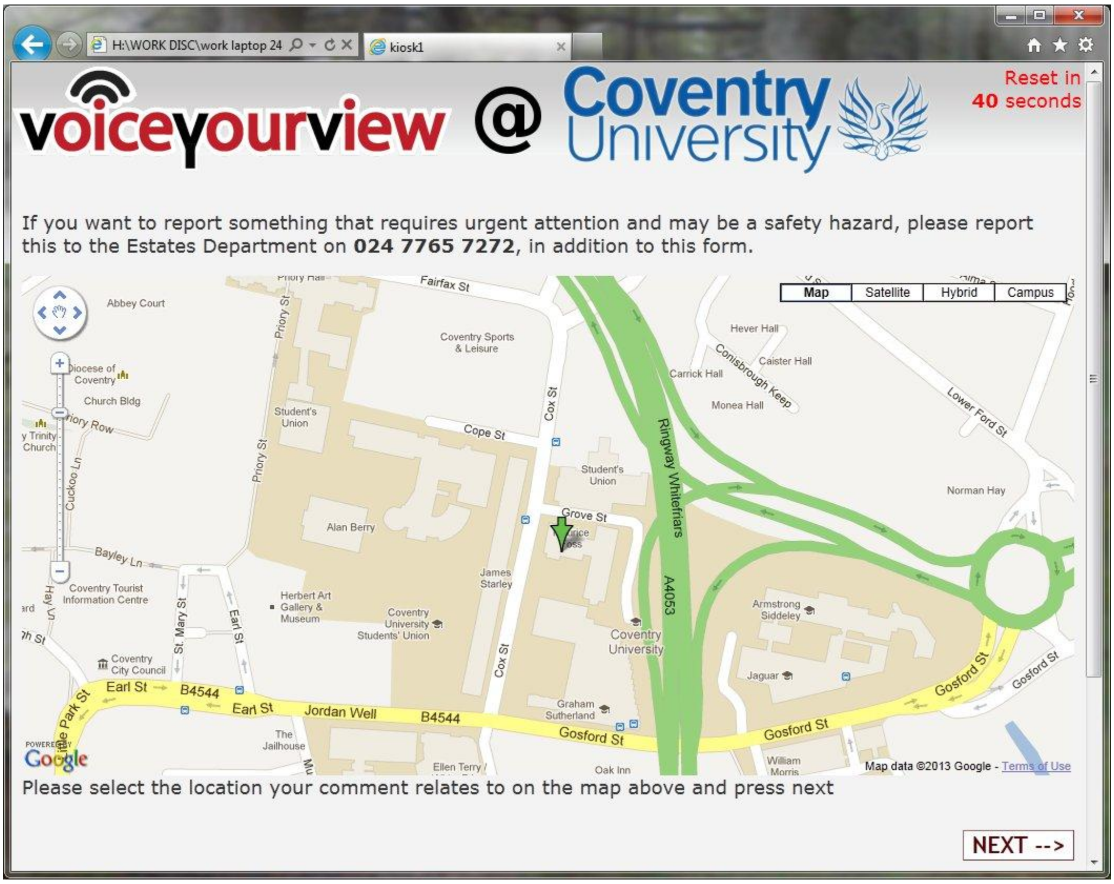
-- Press Here To Get Started --

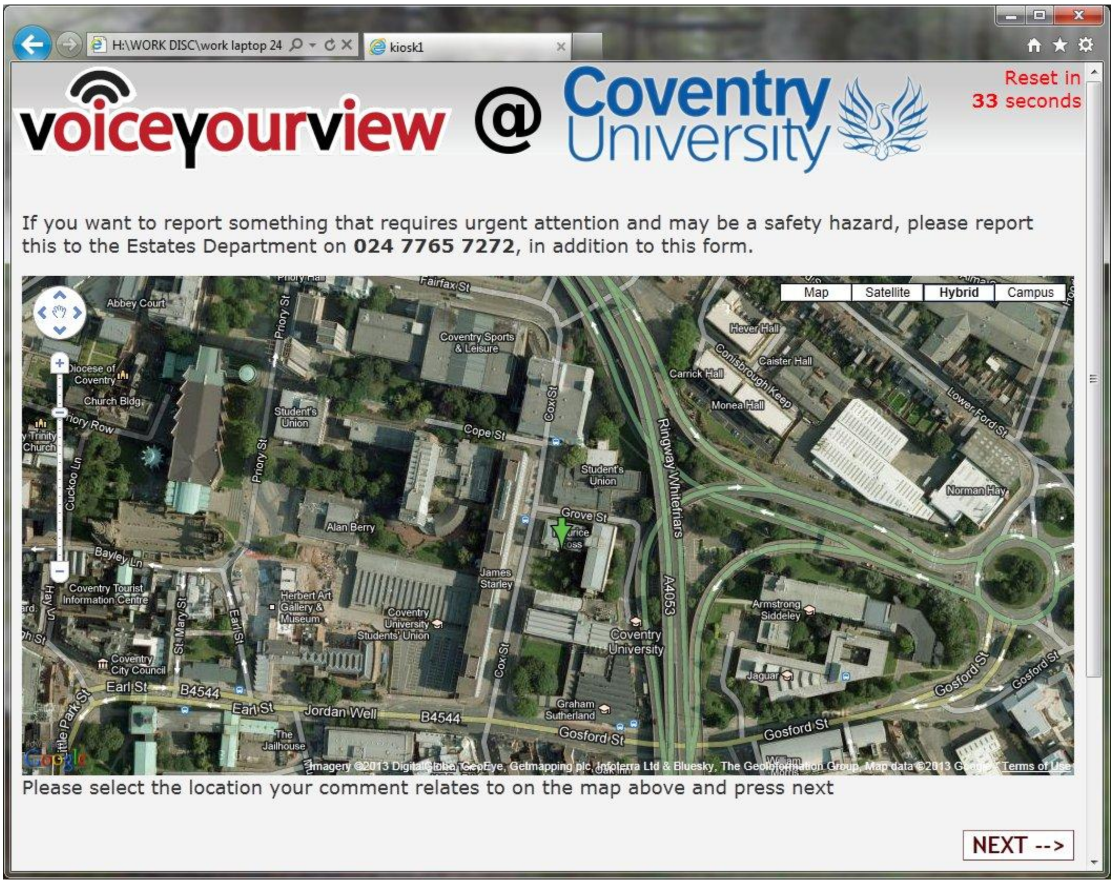


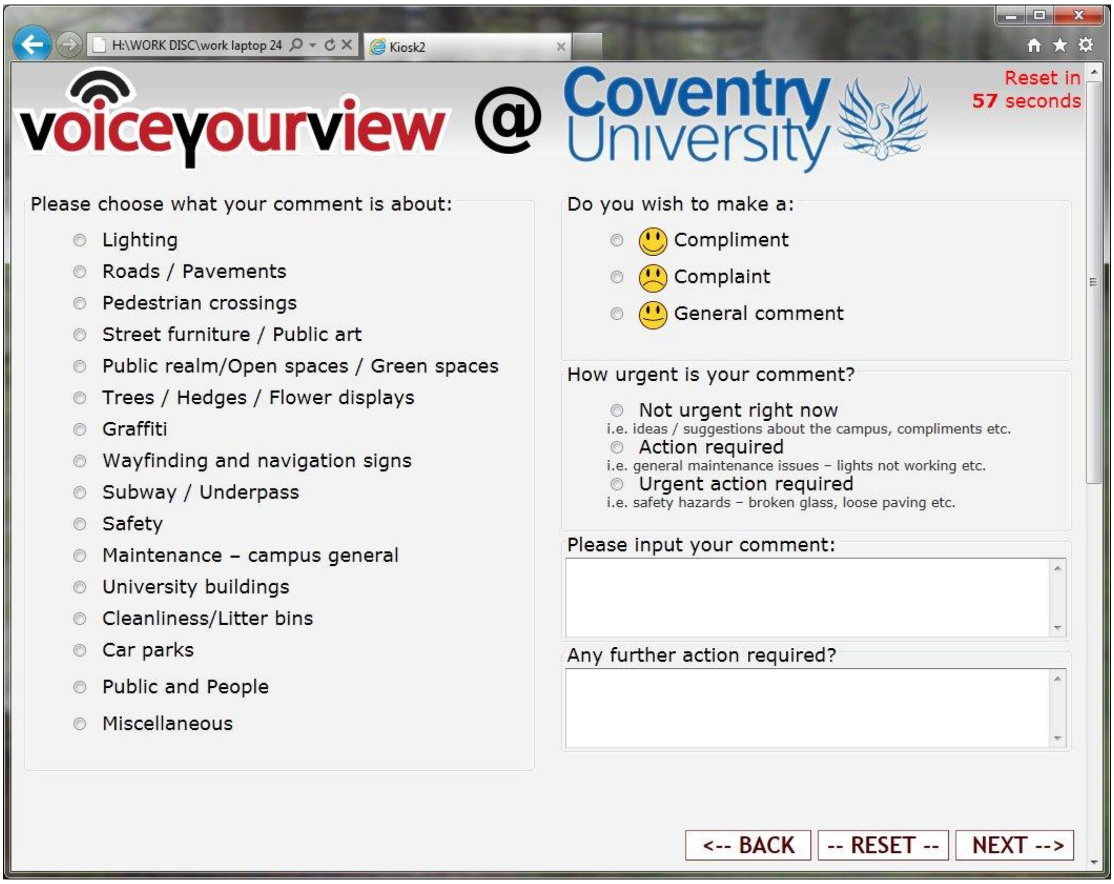
Zoomed-in version of the map:

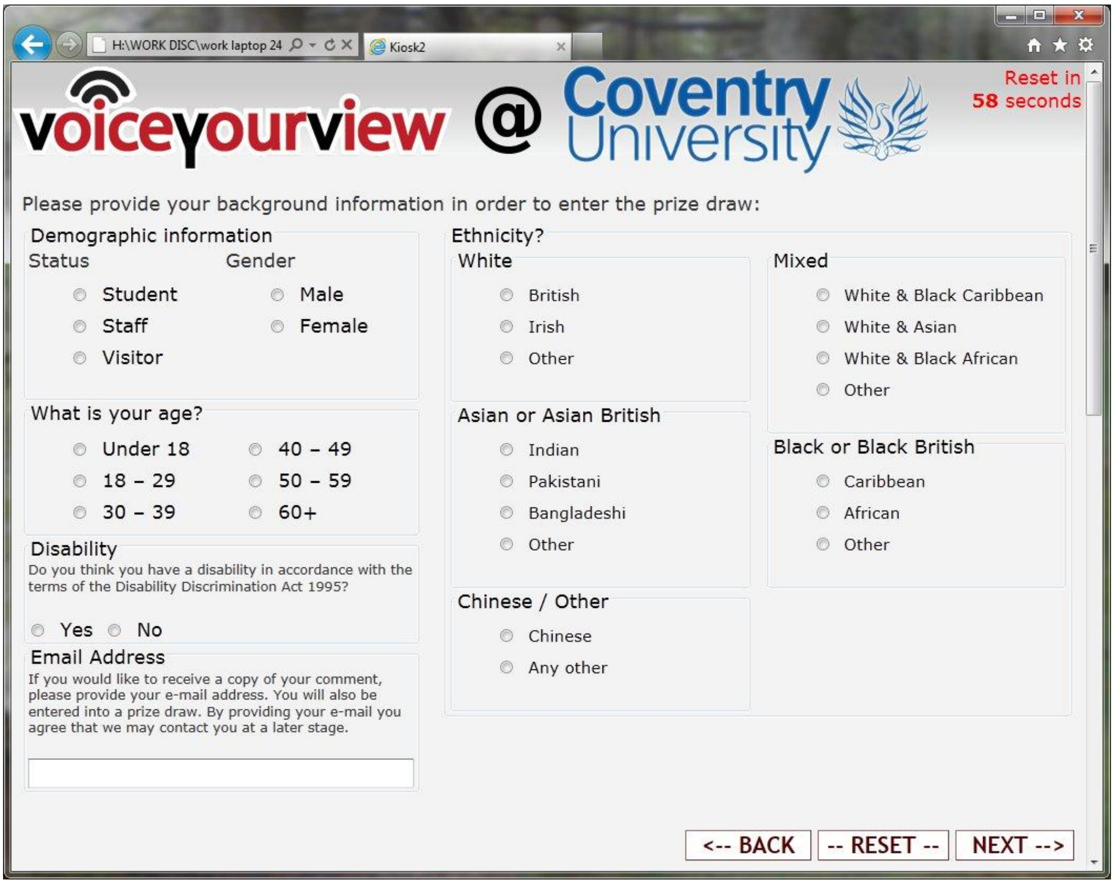


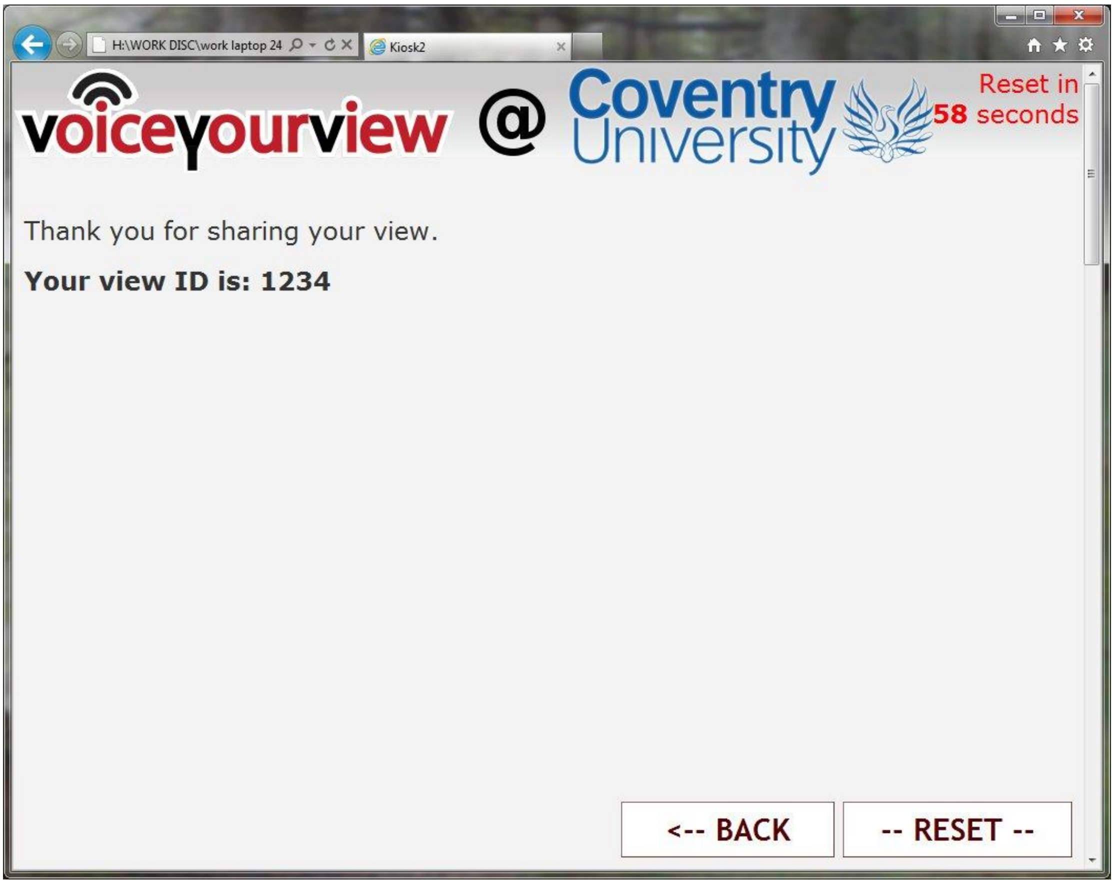
Alternative views of the map:






H:\WORK DISC\work laptop 24
Kiosk2
voiceyourview @ Coventry University
Reset in 57 seconds
Please choose what your comment is about:
Lighting
Roads / Pavements
Pedestrian crossings
Street furniture / Public art
Public realm/Open spaces / Green spaces
Trees / Hedges / Flower displays
Graffiti
Wayfinding and navigation signs
Subway / Underpass
Safety
Maintenance – campus general
University buildings
Cleanliness/Litter bins
Car parks
Public and People
Miscellaneous
Do you wish to make a:
Compliment
Complaint
General comment
How urgent is your comment?
Not urgent right now
i.e. ideas / suggestions about the campus, compliments etc.
Action required
i.e. general maintenance issues – lights not working etc.
Urgent action required
i.e. safety hazards – broken glass, loose paving etc.
Please input your comment:
Any further action required?
<-- BACK
-- RESET --
NEXT -->


H:\WORK DISC\work laptop 24
Kiosk2
voiceyourview @ Coventry University
Reset in 58 seconds
Please provide your background information in order to enter the prize draw:
Demographic information
Status
Student
Staff
Visitor
Gender
Male
Female
What is your age?
Under 18
18 – 29
30 – 39
40 – 49
50 – 59
60+
Disability
Do you think you have a disability in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?
Yes
No
Email Address
If you would like to receive a copy of your comment, please provide your e-mail address. You will also be entered into a prize draw. By providing your e-mail you agree that we may contact you at a later stage.
Ethnicity?
White
British
Irish
Other
Asian or Asian British
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Other
Chinese / Other
Chinese
Any other
Mixed
White & Black Caribbean
White & Asian
White & Black African
Other
Black or Black British
Caribbean
African
Other
<-- BACK
-- RESET --
NEXT -->


H:\WORK DISC\work laptop 24
Kiosk2
voiceyourview @ Coventry University
Reset in
58 seconds
Thank you for sharing your view.
Your view ID is: 1234
<-- BACK
-- RESET --

Appendix 4f

Focus group schedule

Coventry University Campus Present & Future Focus Group

Facilitator:
Katerina Frankova BA (Hons)
PhD research student, Art & Design
2009 - 2012

Structure of the session

- Introductions
- Plans for the campus
- We will explore the following themes:
  - Public spaces
  - Way finding
  - Getting around
  - Sense of identity
  - General look
- Today you have the chance to have a say on the current and future state of the campus:
- *What do you think about it?*
- *What could make it better?*

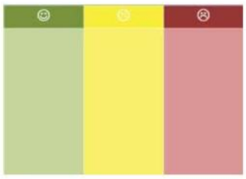
Introductions

- What is your name?
- Are you:
  - Student - undergraduate/postgraduate – what do you study?
  - Member of staff
  - Visitor to the campus
- How long have you been at the university?
- What is your FAVOURITE part of the campus?
- What area do you like the LEAST at the campus?

GROUP ACTIVITY:
Use the map provided to show these areas

How would you describe the campus in THREE WORDS?

Write these down on post-it notes.



GROUP ACTIVITY:
Place the post-it notes on the table provided – separate into POSITIVE / NEGATIVE / NEUTRAL aspects of the campus

Redevelopment of the campus

- *Have you noticed any changes taking place around the campus?*
- *Have you been given enough information about it?*

http://wwwm.coventry.ac.uk/University/masterplan/Pages/Themasterplan.aspx

Current developments

- Multi-storey car park
  - Opened in May 2010
- Student Enterprise building
  - Opening Autumn 2011
- Engineering & Computing building
  - Opening Summer 2012

Hawkins\Brown

View from University Square

Public Spaces

- Between lectures/meetings – *Where would you go at the campus?*
- *What do you think about the public spaces?*
- *Do any of the spaces need improvement?*

- *What do you think about the new public space by the new car park?*

- *How could the new space between the Student Enterprise building and Phoenix Café be developed?*

GROUP ACTIVITY:
Annotate the map provided

Way finding

- *Can you find your way around the campus easily?*
- *What do you think of the navigation signs?*
- *Are there particular routes that you frequently take?*
- *Do you avoid any routes?*

Getting Around the Campus

GROUP ACTIVITY:
How do you get to the university?
Place post-it notes in relevant boxes

Shared space:

- It is an urban design concept aimed at integrated use of public spaces
- The traditional segregation of motor vehicles, pedestrians and other road users is removed
- CU goal: Welcoming, low-speed environment where pedestrians and cyclists are considered first

SAFETY around the campus

Car users

- Car parks
- New car park

Pedestrians

- Areas of particular concern?
- Pavements
- How would you improve:
  - Whitefriars St subway?
  - Passage underneath the ring road?

Cyclists

- Cycle parking

Sense of Identity

- Does the campus have a clear sense of identity?
- Integrated vs. self-contained campus
- Buildings at the campus
- Campus complementing the rest of the city?
- Integration of the 'existing' and 'new'

General look

- MOST URGENT things that need to be addressed at the campus
- What would you improve?
- Is the campus clean and well maintained?

Please fill out the EVALUATION FORM

Katerina: frankov2@uni.coventry.ac.uk

Thank you
for your
input
today!

Appendix 4g

Walking discussion schedule

Coventry University Campus Present & Future Walking Discussion Guide

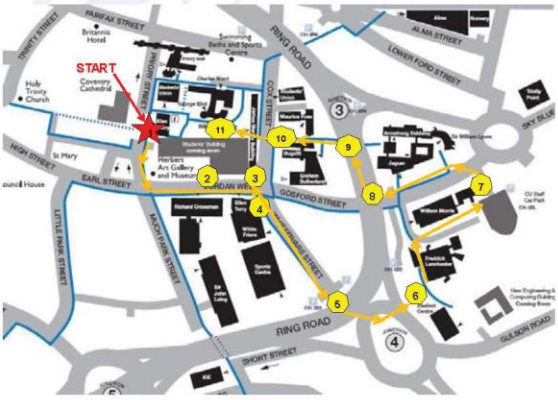
Facilitator:

Katerina Frankova BA (Hons)

PhD research student, Art & Design

2009 - 2012

I have a route in mind which we will follow, however if there is anywhere in particular you would like to go, please feel free to do so – we can adjust the route to suit YOU, so that we cover areas that YOU care about.



Structure of the session

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- *What could make it better?*

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  - Member of staff
- How long have you been at the university?
- What is your FAVOURITE part of the campus?
- What area do you like the least at the campus?

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:
Annotate the map provided to show your favourite places, areas you don't like and record anything that was not covered or discussed in the walk

Redevelopment of the campus

- Have you noticed any changes taking place around the campus?
- Do you feel you have been given enough information about it?

http://wwwm.coventry.ac.uk/University/masterplan/Pages/Themasterplan.aspx

Current developments

- Multi-storey car park
  - Opened in May 2010
- Student Enterprise building
  - Opening Autumn 2011
- Engineering & Computing building
  - Opening Summer 2012

Hawkins\ Brown

View from University Square

Public Spaces

- Between lectures/meetings – *Where would you go at the campus?*
- *What do you think about the public spaces?*
- *Do any of the spaces need improvement?*

2

Sense of Identity

- Does the campus have a clear sense of identity?
- Integrated vs. self-contained campus
- Buildings at the campus
- Campus complementing the rest of the city?
- Integration of the 'existing' and 'new'

STUDENTS' UNION COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

CU SU coventry university students' union

Hawkins\ Brown

View from Jordan Well - Second Phase

- This will be the entrance to the new Student Enterprise building, which is likely to change the dynamics at the campus.

3

Way finding

- *Can you find your way around the campus easily?*
- *What do you think of the navigation signs?*
- *Are there particular routes that you frequently take?*
- *Do you avoid any routes?*

4

- Do you feel SAFE around the campus?

Pedestrians

- Are there any areas of particular concern to you?
- Pavements

5

Pedestrians

- How would you improve:
  - Whitefriars St subway?

Public spaces II

6

- What do you think of the QUALITY, QUANTITY and DESIGN of the public spaces at the campus?
- Which are the key spaces across the campus which have a potential for IMPROVEMENT, MODIFICATION or ADAPTION?

E & C building

- Engineering & Computing building
  - Opening Summer 2012

- Design of buildings
- Library
- Integration of buildings – sense of identity

- Have you used the new car park?
- What do you think of the new public space?

7

8 Getting around the campus

Shared space:

- It is an urban design concept aimed at <u>integrated</u> use of public spaces
- The traditional segregation of motor vehicles, pedestrians and other road users is removed
- CU goal: Welcoming, low-speed environment where pedestrians and cyclists are considered first
- How do you get to the university?

<u>Cyclists</u>

- Are there enough places where you can leave your cycle?

<u>Pedestrians</u>

- Areas of particular concern to you?
- Pavements
- How would you improve:
  - Passage underneath the ring road?

9

<u>Car users</u>

- What do you think of the car parks at the campus?

<u>Pedestrians</u>

Do you use shortcuts at the campus?

10 General look & New spaces

- MOST URGENT things that need to be addressed at the campus
- What would you improve?
- Is the campus clean and well maintained?

- Do you have any ideas how the new space between Student Enterprise building and Phoenix Café could be developed?

GROUP ACTIVITY:
Annotate the map provided

11 Conclusions

- Have we visited any places today that you have not been to before?
- Have you learned something new about the campus?

At Alan Berry foyer or Café:

- Please fill out the short EVALUATION form

Thank you for your input today!

Appendix 4h

Photographic diary instructions - Coventry University

As you walk around the campus in the next three weeks (*input dates*), take photographs of anything that catches your attention – this can be:

- something that you like at the campus
- something you don't like or even hate
- your favourite place
- place you have a good (or bad) memory of
- places you use frequently
- places you tend to avoid
- places you have a strong opinion about
- something that concerns you
- you have a suggestion how a particular problem identified could be resolved
- you have an idea what could be improved as part of the redevelopment of the campus

Please consider things in public spaces OUTSIDE the university buildings. These can be general physical aspects, the design, buildings, way finding around the campus, its maintenance and whatever else crosses your mind.

After taking the photograph, make an entry to this notebook. Include:

- ✓ Date
- ✓ Photo ID/no.
- ✓ Location and brief description of the image
- ✓ Reason why you took this photograph
- ✓ If you are pointing to something that needs to be addressed, what do you suggest should be done?
- ✓ Other notes – feel free to add anything else, including sketches if you wish

Your entry can be as long or as short as you like.
Take as many photos as you wish, but most importantly - have FUN!

You have also been given a map in the notebook. Feel free to plot on the map where you took the individual photos. Add the ID number to it.

__Photographic diary - example entry__

Date: 3 May 2010, 3pm, Monday

Photo ID/no.: 1

Location/Brief Description:
Square between Start Up Café and Phoenix Café, close to James Starley Building

Why I took this photo:
I really like the mosaic of the Phoenix logo on the pavement. Sometimes I just like to stand in the middle of it for a moment. It is the only one around the whole campus. It gives the place a nice touch and shows a clear connection with the campus. Also, I think that the design of the logo itself is very attractive.

Suggestion/Idea:
As part of the redevelopment of the campus, similar idea could be introduced in other parts of the campus. The campus is closely connected to the city centre so for visitors it may not be that clear whether they have entered the campus or not. If the logo starts appearing on street furniture, signage as well as within pavements, it may create more of a campus ‘feel’ and ‘look’.

Other notes: n/a

Appendix 4i

Participant evaluation questionnaire – Electronic methods

Please note that Questions 7 to 9 were not applicable to this research. They were of interest to the VoiceYourView project.

Evaluation of VoiceYourView at Coventry University

Thank you for having submitted a comment about Coventry University campus to the VoiceYourView system last term. Your opinions are valuable to us.

All the comments have been passed to the Estates Team, who head the development and maintenance of the campus.

We now need to evaluate the success of the system itself and how you felt about using it, so we can improve it in the future. Therefore, please spare 5 minutes to fill out the following questionnaire. This is voluntary, however we would appreciate if you could fill it to the end.

The questionnaire adheres to Coventry University's Ethics Policy. The data may be used in academic research publications, however no personal information will be disclosed.

If you would like more information, please feel free to contact Katerina Frankova on frankov2@uni.coventry.ac.uk.

* 1. Why did you decide to use VoiceYourView?

* 2. Which options have you used and how many times did you use them?

	1	2	3	4	5	0 - DID NOT USE
E-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online form	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kiosk (touch screen)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Text message	○	○	○	○	○	○
iPhone application	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 3. Why did you choose this/these particular method(s)? Was there a particular reason why this method appealed to you?

4. How much would you agree with this statement? (Please note: For the methods you did not use, please select 'did not use')

'The method(s) I used was/were suitable (had the suitable format) to report what I wanted'.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	DID NOT USE
E-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online form	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kiosk (touch screen)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Text message	○	○	○	○	○	○
iPhone application	○	○	○	○	○	○

Evaluation of VoiceYourView at Coventry University

5. How convenient did you find the method(s) you used?

	Very convenient	Convenient	Not sure	Inconvenient	Very inconvenient	DID NOT USE
E-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online form	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kiosk (touch screen)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Text message	○	○	○	○	○	○
iPhone application	○	○	○	○	○	○

Feel free to add any additional comments, whether positive or negative:

6. Were you satisfied with the form of feedback?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	DID NOT USE
E-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online form	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kiosk	○	○	○	○	○	○
Text message	○	○	○	○	○	○
iPhone application	○	○	○	○	○	○

Evaluation of VoiceYourView at Coventry University

*** 7. How much would you agree with the following statements based on the technology you used most frequently to provide your comments on the state of the university?**

E.g. If in Q2 you stated that you used e-mail most often, then answer the following questions based on e-mail – substitute 'vYv' for 'e-mail', etc.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Neutral	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
i. Using vYv improved the quality of my experience when submitting a comment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
ii. Using vYv gave me greater control when submitting my comment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
iii. vYv enabled me to submit my comment more quickly than through already existing channels	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
iv. vYv supported all the critical aspects of submitting a comment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
v. Using vYv increased the speed and efficiency of submitting a comment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
vi. Using vYv improved my ability to make my voice heard	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
vii. Using vYv allowed me to submit comments more easily than would otherwise be possible	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
viii. Using vYv enhanced my effectiveness when submitting my comment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
ix. Using vYv made it easier to submit comments about the university to the correct people	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
x. Overall, I found vYv useful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Evaluation of VoiceYourView at Coventry University

*8. How much would you agree with the following statements based on the input method you used the most frequently?

E.g. If in Q2 you stated that you used e-mail most often, then answer the following questions based on e-mail – substitute 'vYv' for 'e-mail', etc.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Neutral	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
i. I found vYv cumbersome to use	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ii. Learning to operate vYv was easy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
iii. Interacting with vYv was often frustrating	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
iv. I found it easy to get vYv to do what I wanted it to do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
v. vYv was rigid and inflexible to interact with	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
vi. It was easy for me to remember how to use vYv	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
vii. Interacting with vYv required a lot of mental effort	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
viii. My interaction with vYv was clear and understandable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ix. I found it takes a lot of effort at using vYv	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
x. Overall, I found vYv easy to use	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

*9. Please rate your level of expertise with the input method you used most frequently.

E.g. If in Q2 you stated that you used e-mail most often, then how would you rate your level of experience using e-mail?

◯ Low level of expertise

◯ Medium level of expertise

◯ High level of expertise

10. Could you suggest any improvements to the methods provided by VoiceYourView?

Input answers for the methods that you used, otherwise leave the boxes blank.

E-mail

Online form

Kiosk (touch screen)

Text message

iPhone application

Evaluation of VoiceYourView at Coventry University

11. If local authorities and other agencies adopted the vYv options for citizens to report issues, pay compliments or respond to consultations, would you use them?

	Yes	No	Maybe
E-mail	◯	◯	◯
Online form	◯	◯	◯
Kiosk (touch screen)	◯	◯	◯
Text message	◯	◯	◯
iPhone application	◯	◯	◯

12. Would you have preferred to be asked about your opinions of the university campus in a different way? If yes, how?

13. Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after taking part in VoiceYourView? Please expand.

14. Overall, how satisfied were you with VoiceYourView?

◯ Very satisfied

◯ Satisfied

◯ Not sure

◯ Unsatisfied

◯ Very unsatisfied

15. Would you have been interested in learning about what other people had commented on?

◯ Not interested

◯ Interested - At my request

◯ Interested - As an automatic follow up message

16. Would knowing what others have said encourage you to add more comments?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Maybe

17. Please use this space for any other comments you may have.

18. Are you a...?

- Student
- Staff
- Visitor to the university

19. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60 +

20. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

21. What is your ethnicity?

- ◯ White British
- ◯ White Irish
- ◯ White Other
- ◯ Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
- ◯ Mixed - White & Asian
- ◯ Mixed - White & Black African
- ◯ Mixed - Other
- ◯ Asian or Asian British - Indian
- ◯ Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- ◯ Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- ◯ Asian or Asian British - Other
- ◯ Black or Black British - Caribbean
- ◯ Black or Black British - African
- ◯ Black or Black British - Other
- ◯ Chinese
- ◯ Any other

If Other, please specify

22. Do you think you have a disability in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

23. If yes, did your disability inhibit you in your interaction with the input method you used the most frequently according to your answer of question 2?

- ◯ Yes - My disability did inhibit me in my interaction with VoiceYourView
- ◯ No - My disability did NOT inhibit me in my interaction with VoiceYourView

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey!

If you have any queries, feel free to contact Katerina Frankova on frankov2@uni.coventry.ac.uk.

<u>Appendix 4j</u>

Participant evaluation questionnaires

- Focus group
- Walking discussion
- Photographic diary

Please not that the ‘equal opportunities’ questions (E1 – E5) were identical for all three questionnaires

EVALUATION – Focus Group

1: Have you found the session useful or beneficial to you? How?

____

2: What did you like the most about the focus group?

____

3: What did you like the least about the focus group?

____

4a: How satisfied were you with the recruitment process (i.e. information prior to the focus group, frequency of contact, reminders etc.)?

Very satisfied	
Satisfied	
Not sure	
Dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	

4b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____

5a: How convenient for you was the time at which the focus group took place?

Very convenient	
Convenient	
Not sure	
Not convenient	
Not convenient at all	

5b: In order to attend, did you have to cancel on any of your other commitments? (e.g. had to skip a lecture, cancel a meeting). If so, was this a big problem for you?

____

6: The duration of the focus group was…

		What would you suggest as an appropriate duration for a focus group?
Far too long		⇨
Too long		⇨
About right		
Too short		⇨
Far too short		⇨

7a: How would you rate the quality of facilitation?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

7b: Feel free to add any additional comments or ideas of what could have been done better.

____

8a: The topics covered in the focus group were relevant to the purpose of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

9a: When you wanted to speak, how often did you get the chance to?

Always	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

9b: How did you feel about speaking up in front of other people?

10a: I could easily relate to what was being discussed.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

11a: The discussion with other participants was interesting and stimulating.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

11b: Has the discussion influenced or changed some of your opinions? How?

12a: The focus group provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

12b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

13a: The outcome of the focus group was made clear at the end of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

13b: Do you think that the comments you have made will be acted upon?

14: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after attending this session?

15: How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

Imagine that Broadgate in Coventry (where the statue of Lady Godiva is located) is getting redeveloped and the public is being consulted about it…

16: How effective do you think a focus group would be at consulting the public about their opinions, ideas, suggestions and concern for Broadgate, or any other public space?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	
Not effective at all	

17: What benefits do you think the method offers?

18: What disadvantages do think the method has?

19: Can you think of any barriers or circumstances that would prevent people from taking part in a focus group?

20: If this method was mainstreamed as a consultation method, would you generally be inclined to take part? OR Would you prefer a different method altogether?

21: Feel free to make any additional comments.

Equal Opportunities

E1: Status

Student	
Staff	
Visitor to the uni	

E2: Gender

Male	
Female	

E3: What is your ethnicity?

White	British		
	Irish		
	Other		⇨
Mixed	White & Black Caribbean		
	White & Asian		
	White & Black African		
	Other		⇨
Asian or Asian British	Indian		
	Pakistani		
	Bangladeshi		
	Other		⇨
Black or Black British	Caribbean		
	African		
	Other		⇨
Chinese / Other Ethnic Group	Chinese		
	Any other		⇨

E4: What is your age?

Under 18	
18 – 29	
30 – 39	
40 – 49	
50 – 59	
60+	

E5: Do you think you have a disability in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

Yes	
No	

EVALUATION – Walking Discussion

1: Have you found the session useful or beneficial to you? How?

____
____
____
____
____

2: What did you like the most about the walking discussion?

____
____
____
____
____

3: What did you like the least about the walking discussion?

____
____
____
____
____

4a: How satisfied were you with the recruitment process (i.e. information prior to the walking discussion, frequency of contact, reminders etc.)?

Very satisfied	
Satisfied	
Not sure	
Dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	

4b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____

5a: How convenient for you was the time at which the walking discussion took place?

Very convenient	
Convenient	
Not sure	
Not convenient	
Not convenient at all	

5b: In order to attend, did you have to cancel on any of your other commitments? (e.g. had to skip a lecture, cancel a meeting). If so, was this a big problem for you?

____
____
____
____
____

6: The duration of the walking discussion was…

		What would you sugges as an appropriate duration for a walking discussion?
Far too long		⇨
Too long		⇨
About right		
Too short		⇨
Far too short		⇨

7a: How would you rate the quality of facilitation?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

7b: Feel free to add any additional comments or ideas of what could have been done better.

____
____
____
____
____

8a: The topics covered in the walking discussion were relevant to the purpose of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____

____

____

____

____

9a: When you wanted to speak, how often did you get the chance to?

Always	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

9b: How did you feel about speaking up in front of other people?

____

____

____

____

10a: I could easily relate to what was being discussed.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____

____

____

11a: The discussion with other participants was interesting and stimulating.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

11b: Has the discussion influenced or changed some of your opinions? How?

____

____

____

____

____

12a: The walking discussion provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

12b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____

____

____

____

13a: The outcome of the walking discussion was made clear at the end of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

13b: Do you think that the comments you have made will be acted upon?

____

____

____

14: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after attending this session?

15: How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

Imagine that Broadgate in Coventry (where the statue of Lady Godiva is located) is getting redeveloped and the public is being consulted about it…

16: How effective do you think a walking discussion would be at consulting the public about their opinions, ideas, suggestions and concern for Broadgate, or any other public space?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	
Not effective at all	

17: What benefits do you think the method offers?

18: What disadvantages do think the method has?

19: Can you think of any barriers or circumstances that would prevent people from taking part in a walking discussion?

20: If this method was mainstreamed as a consultation method, would you generally be inclined to take part? OR Would you prefer a different method altogether?

21: Feel free to make any additional comments.

EVALUATION – Photographic Diary

1: Have you found the experience useful or beneficial to you? How?

2: What did you like the most about the photo diary?

3: What did you like the least about the photo diary?

4a: The instructions of what I was to do were clear to me.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

4b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

5a: How convenient was taking photographs and annotating them?

Very convenient	
Convenient	
Not sure	
Not convenient	
Not convenient at all	

5b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

6a: I found it easy to annotate my photographs.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

6b: Did you know what to write down, or were you sometimes unsure? Please comment.

7: When did you annotate the photographs? (E.g. when they were taken, at home at the end of the day…)

____
____
____
____
____
____

8a: I enjoyed taking photographs around the campus.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____

9: The time allocated to me to take photographs (3 weeks) was…

		What would you suggest as an appropriate duration for a photo diary?
Far too long		⇨
Too long		⇨
About right		
Too short		⇨
Far too short		⇨

10a: The photographic diary provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____

11a: The outcome of the photographic diary was made clear at the end of the 3 week period.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

11b: Do you think that the comments you have made will be acted upon?

____
____
____
____
____

12: Do you think a discussion with other people about the photographs taken would benefit the method?

____
____
____
____
____

13: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after using a photo diary?

____
____
____
____
____
____

14: How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

Imagine that Broadgate in Coventry (where the statue of Lady Godiva is located) is getting redeveloped and the public is being consulted about it…

15: How effective do you think a photo diary would be at consulting the public about their opinions, ideas, suggestions and concern for Broadgate, or any other public space?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	
Not effective at all	

16: What benefits do you think the method offers?

17: What disadvantages do think the method has?

18: Can you think of any barriers or circumstances that would prevent people from taking part via a photo diary?

19: If this method was mainstreamed as a consultation method, would you generally be inclined to take part? OR Would you prefer a different method altogether?

20: Feel free to make any additional comments.

Appendix 5a

Explanation of codes

Examples of indicative comments collected through Phase 1 are supplemented with identification codes. The first letter of the ID code indicates the method using which the comment was submitted. Subsequent numbers were either allocated automatically by the VoiceYourView system (for the e-mail, online form, electronic kiosk and text message), or by the researcher.

OF	=	Online form
EM	=	E-mail
K	=	Kiosk
T	=	Text message
OSE	=	On-street event
PD	=	Photo diary
FG	=	Focus group
WD	=	Walking discussion

Examples:

OF1296	online form comment no. 1296 (allocated automatically by system)
K305	electronic kiosk comment no. 305 (allocated automatically by system)
OSE344	on-street event comment no. 344, allocated by the researcher
PD118	photo diarist no. 1, image/comment 18
PD212b	Photo diarist no. 2, image/comment 12b (comment was separated into two – 12a and 12b)
FG25f	focus group no. 2, participant no. 5, female
FG33m	focus group no. 3, participant no. 3, male
WD15f	walking discussion no. 1, participant no. 5, female
WD22m	walking discussion no. 2, participant no. 2, male

Appendix 5b

Examples of not actionable, partly actionable and actionable comments generated by the kiosk, online form and e-mail

Not actionable:

- *'I like this university.' (K1305)*
- *'The garden between the library & the student centre is really nice, and the planting is well organised to be colourful all year round. It's well used by wildlife, including a heron which I have seen there several times.' (OF1203)*
- *'I think the grounds people do a great job, the flowers all year round look fabulous and really brighten up the place, and the fact that when they change the displays they leave the old plants for people to take, should they wish, is a great idea too.' (EM1224)*

Partly actionable:

- *'Need more graffiti.' (K479)*
- *'The lights at this junction [Cox Street by James Starley building] are very difficult for pedestrians to see, which makes it difficult to cross at this junction.' (OF1218)*
- *'Pedestrian underpasses are scary, ugly and put the citizen last - they should all be banned.' (EM284)*

Actionable:

- *'The signs around the campus need a properly oriented, realistic and accurate map and a 'you are here' sign along with it.' (K484)*
- *'Some more bicycle locking space at the library would be good as the existing spaces are often full in term time. Undercover places to lock bicycles out of the rain would be even better. Install more bike parking space, and some sheltered bike space.' (OF1204)*
- *'There are lots of leaves on the steps that lead under and through James Starley from Cox street zebra crossing. These are especially slippery when wet. Would it be possible to have these more regularly swept up?' (EM301)*

Appendix 5c

Examples of photographic diary comments

a.	The image itself
b.	Image code
c.	Location/brief description
d.	Why I took this photo
e.	Suggestion/idea

Suggestion for improvement

Table 5c.1: Example of a complaint with a suggestion	
a.	
b.	PD701
c.	Building works outside of the library – taken from Gulson Road entrance
d.	Building works seem to be going on for a long time – why? It is not so clear what they are doing or if it's money well spent.
e.	Make it clearer what's happening and why.

Table 5c.2: Example of a general comment with a suggestion	
a.	
b.	PD214
c.	Alan Berry and University Square situated on Priory Street and opposite to Coventry cathedral.
d.	It is main part of university, it is used for open days and also for all these official meetings. It got lovely view and it is opposite to Coventry cathedral.
e.	There should be some benches to allow visitors to sit. There should be some more rubbish bins.

Themes

Table 5c.3: Example of 'public realm' comment (compliment, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD404
c.	Pond outside the library
d.	Another of my favourite spots. A brilliant example of how to create a peaceful little microcosm/nature reserve just minutes away from busy traffic!

Table 5c.4: Example of 'university building' comment (general comment, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD715
c.	Priory Halls of Residence
d.	I think this is the ugliest building at the whole uni. It is just concrete and often gets called a prison because it looks like one! However friends who did stay there loved it as it is a very social atmosphere – maybe the building should reflect that.

Table 5c.5: Example of 'university building' comment (complaint, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD501
c.	Outside Priory SU, facing Priory hall student accommodation
d.	Every time I leave the George Elliot building / the SU and have to walk to Pool Meadow bus station or into town, I pass Priory Hall, and I think it is one of the worst looking buildings in the city (along with the adjoining hotel)
e.	Get rid of it and replace with a nice looking building.

Table 5c.6: Example of 'miscellaneous'/'public realm' comment (complaint, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD119
c.	Graves and grass By Alan Berry/Union
d.	Really like how the graves and trees have been incorporated into the campus.
e.	Hope that the graves etc. aren't overlooked by students for their historical, religious, gothic identities. It is a really interesting feature which many universities won't have so they should be highlighted and given positive focus.

Appendix 5d

Examples from walking discussion transcripts

Table 5d.1: Direct references to the surrounding environment and walking probes	
Direct references to the surrounding environment	**Walking probes, inspiring discussion topics**
WD14f: There are so many structures around already, like here, you can see this [SEB] is going to be huge and there's this over there [George Eliot building]. Even if the building is ecologically green, it is nice to have a bit of grass as well.	[walking past a campus map] WD12m: How come the map is identical from both sides? So I am now looking at a building no. 12 and 11 and from the other side I am also looking at buildings no. 12 and 11… they are identical. So I don't know where I am… which is right? I don't know… Facilitator: All the maps are facing north. Would you prefer them facing the way you are going? WD12m: Of course. If I was walking here and didn't have a clue… if it was the first time at the university, I would assume that I was looking through 11 and 12 over there somewhere, I would naturally think that I am looking at that one way, but having an arrow there…
[middle of a subway] Facilitator: […] Obviously, something needs to be done about the subway, so what would you suggest? WD32m: More adequate lighting could be one of themes. These are not the best. Going over a couple of them, some of them are broken. It needs to be kept maintained. […] And things like there's a massive post (see image) in the way, that's a huge issue. […] There are so many places where people can stand behind you without you seeing them. 	WD11f: This is actually quite a nice grass area, isn't it? WD13f: I think having grass is important. There are no green spaces in the centre of Coventry.

Table 5d.2: Appearance of individual buildings discussed in context, WD2
Facilitator: Do you think the university has a clear sense of identity? [standing on Jordan Well, by Herbert Art Gallery] WD21m: I wouldn’t say there is anywhere in particular that I would associate with Coventry campus. Because it seems a bit scattered. Like… you’ve got really nice buildings down there that way [towards Ford St], like the business building [William Morris] and the Lancaster library, but up here you’ve got like the nice… Browns café and… the three buildings in between do not seem to suit the same form, if you know what I mean? Facilitator: Architecturally? WD21m: Yes, and I think… it’s just that some of them are quite old fashioned, some of the buildings. WD22m: Yeah, you can look at some of them, like the one next to the library, WM, you notice it is Coventry University building, but with some of the older ones, you can walk past and if you don’t look for signs, you just don’t know it is university because it is all old. They don’t all match so you don’t really know what’s Coventry University. WD21m: Yeah, there isn’t like a common suit, is there? WD23m: Yeah, I would say some buildings are really old, they should do something with them…I don’t know, destruction.

Table 5d.3: Awareness of context and limitations of individual locations, WD1
Facilitator: What do you think of the design of the buildings? WD13f: Some of them are really good. The library looks really good. WD14f: [nodding in agreement] WD13f: And the Ellen Terry as well, I really like it that it used to be a cinema and everything. It works inside somehow. But some of them look a bit dirty, but obviously you can’t help sometimes that things don’t look as good as they can be. Facilitator: Do you have any suggestions how it could be made better? WD13f: Uhm, a building is built, you can’t really change it once it’s there… The insides of all the buildings that I’ve come across have been quite nice inside so I suppose that’s the important thing when you are going in there to learn…

Appendix 5e

Examples of data patterns between focus groups and walking discussions

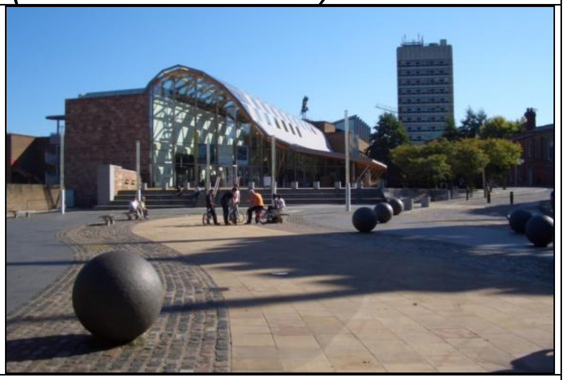
Table 5e.1: University Square comments (Source: author's own)	
	
FG	**WD**
FG17m: Like most people I think that the cathedral area is really nice, a good place to hang out in the summer. FG14m: When I was a student here, there was so much more grass all over the place. It was really sad they started putting those… those spheres in the middle… It's beautiful visually, but functionally it doesn't mean anything. And there are maybe three benches! For how many thousands of students?! FG28m: During the day, the space is wonderful, dramatic, it's got architectural oozing all over the place, it's a great historic site. But it's also very bad at night. It's very dark, dingy, depressing and it needs something doing to it. FG31f: I love it when you are out in the University square and everybody is graduating, or it's lunchtime and people are milling around. There is a good sense… there are lots of places to congregate, because it is very pedestrian friendly, it is very compact.	WD15f: I guess this area just by the cathedral is the area that I really like especially in the summer because it fits with the Herbert Gallery. WD12m: I've come through at night and I've enjoyed looking at the lights, the lighting effects. Places don't look great on a rainy day, but on a bright day or a nice evening… not too bad. WD31m: In terms of the design, there are some features of it that I don't like. First of all, it's a big open space, there's actually, not even when the seating is out […] there are not many places that where people can come and congregate. […] I don't actually like the different surfaces, I think it is a bit fussy.

Table 5e.2: New public space by car park comments (Source: author's own)

	
FG	**WD**
FG14m: Very very elegant, very nice trees [sarcastic]. It's… useless. People will never go there, I can tell. FG16m: Just looking at this picture, you've got this nice path, concrete path here, which says 'this is the way to go', then you have this nice grassed area and you've got this lovely border, which effectively says 'keep off the grass'. FG26f: It's a nice piece of grass, but we are in England and it's raining. So a bench would be nice. FG31f: Why would you go there, unless you were going to your car? It's not very interesting, is it? It's very flat, bare, no seats. FG32m: It looks attractive. FG35m: I am not very inspired by it, I am afraid. Sorry to the designer who came up with that.	WD12m: If you would like a visitor to walk through for the sake of walking through, then you would need to make it non-utilitarian. You would have to have things like works of art, statues, and make it an interesting sort of… these things are not particularly expensive. This is a question of do you think you are walking through because it is a pleasure to walk through, or I have to walk through here and it doesn't look too bad. WD13f: It's a nice space but there is nowhere for people to be in it. There are no benches or bins. WD11f: It's a bit strange there are three lamp posts there in the corner, kind of doing nothing I guess. WD23m: Yeah, I've been here before but I think the bad part is that there are no benches… you can't sit anywhere here. Probably in the summer you can sit down on the grass, but that would be it. And you don't really have anything to do around here. WD33m: It is clean and fresh. WD32m: As it is, I would not use it. But if it was replicated elsewhere and if it were wider… this one, the location between the roads and the car park and people constantly driving there and the generators and stuff… no, it would not be somewhere I would eat my lunch.

Appendix 6a

Interview schedules

- **Professionals**

Introduction

General info to the person – doing consultation for themselves/others?
How many years of experience?

What has been your experience of public consultation in physical regeneration projects? Good and bad.
[Concentrate on an example of the most successful and least successful – tease out the main points about what makes a 'good' consultation]

Methods

How important do you think the actual methods are in a consultation process – i.e. how it is done?

Defining effectiveness: On what criteria would you, personally, assess how *effective* a consultation method was?

Data

What sort of qualities/attributes (e.g. actionable) should information/data have for it to be useful to you/your client?
    What sort of information/insight are you looking for in the data?

How do you use the data? / What happens with the data?
    (e.g. stored in a report that nobody reads?
    Circulated among decision makers and discussed?
    Or would an online database be better to display the data?
    Fed back to community?)

To what extent is the data acted upon?
    Specifically, do you think the method of consultation can affect the way the information gathered is acted upon?

(To what extent does the data influence your plans?)
    How do you decide what gets acted upon and what doesn't?
    What percentage/amount do you actually respond/act upon or dismiss?

(What sort of data do you see as useless, if any?)

Do you see a difference (e.g. in quality) in the data that was collected, based on the way (i.e. method) that the consultation was conducted?

In-situ / ex-situ

When consulting with community, what proportion of methods used would you say are done in a neutral/abstract environment (ex-situ) and what in-situ?

Advantages/disadvantages
Would you welcome such ‘innovative’ approaches?

What proportion are one-off compared to more longer-term/ongoing/continuous? / Do you tend to do one-off or continuous consultations?

Looking at the effectiveness of the methods themselves - do you think that some methods are “better” than others?
If so, why do you think they are better?
What does a “better” method ‘look like’?
Based on what criteria do you select the consultation methods to be used?

Other

Was the success of the consultation evaluated? How? (+ how do you define success… or effectiveness?)

Do you believe the public generate useful and feasible ideas?

For guidelines to be useful to you, what would you expect?

- **Community representative**

1. What has been your experience of community involvement in regeneration? Good and bad.

2. How important do you think the actual *methods* are in a consultation process – i.e. *how* it is done?

3. On what criteria would you, personally, assess how *effective* a consultation method was?

4. When the community is being consulted, what proportion of methods used would you say are done in a neutral/abstract environment (*ex-situ*) and what *in-situ*?
    a. What proportion are *one-off* compared to more longer-term/ongoing/continuous?

5. Looking at the effectiveness of the methods themselves - do you think that some methods are "better" than others?
    a. If so, why do you think they are better?
    b. What does a "better" method 'look like'?

    PROMPT: For example, better accountability, better feedback given to professionals, better response from those in charge, more likely to result in what the community wanted?

6. Going into more detail about better methods, what do you think are the 'good' and 'bad' things about 'in-situ' methods compared to those that are done 'away' from the site or area being consulted on?
    a. Advantages/disadvantages
    b. Would community welcome such 'innovative' approaches?

    PROMPTS: Again, better accountability, better feedback given to professionals, better response from those in charge, more likely to result in what the community wanted?

7. From your experience, after a consultation, did you know how the data gathered from the community was used and whether it was acted upon?
    a. Specifically, do you think the *method* of consultation can affect the way the information gathered is acted upon?
    b. What are your thoughts on in-situ methods with this?

8. What do you think are the biggest mistakes with the way that communities are consulted? What would be your advice to the practitioners?

Appendix 6b

Ethical approval for interviews with professionals

- **Preliminary approval**

katerina copy

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

1 Project Information (Everyone)

Title of Project: **Evaluating different approaches to community engagement in the regeneration of urban public spaces** **Phase 2 research – Interviews with professionals and community representatives**
Name of Principal Investigator (PI) or Research or Professional Degree Student: **Katerina Frankova -** PhD student, Coventry University
Faculty, Department or Institute: CSAD, Coventry University
Names of Co-investigators (CIs) and their organisational affiliation:
How many additional research staff will be employed on the project? n/a Names and their organisational affiliation (if known): n/a
Proposed project start date (At least three months in the future): 01/08/11
Estimated project end date: 25/04/12
Who is funding the project? Research is linked to the VoiceYourView project (Digital Economy programme), however it is for the purpose of the PhD research and not the overall project. Additional funding will be taken from the £1500 student allocation. Has funding been confirmed? Yes
Code of ethical practice and conduct most relevant to your project: • Other (Specify): Digital Economy Programme, EPSRC

Students Only

Degree being studied (MSc/MA by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD, etc): PhD
Name of your Director of Studies: Prof Andree Woodcock
Date of Enrolment: 1 July 2009

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Initial assessment

Date checklist initially received:	DD/MM/YYYY	
1. Ethical review required	Yes	No
2. CRB check required	Yes	No
Submitted to an external research ethics committee		
3. External research ethics committee (Name)	Yes	No
4. Copy of external ethical clearance received	DD/MM/YYYY	
Ethics Panel Review		
5. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
6. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Original Decision (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
7. Approve	Yes	No
8. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
9. Resubmission	Yes	No
10. Reject	Yes	No
11. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	
Resubmission		
12. Date of receipt of resubmission:	DD/MM/YYYY	
13. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
14. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Final decision recorded (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
15. Approve	Yes	No
16. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
17. Reject	Yes	No
18. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	

Signature [redacted] ....Chair of CSAD SARC
Date 01.08.2011

- **Final approval**

Ethics Medium-High Interview professionals and community K Frankova.doc Revision 1.00

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

1 Project Information (Everyone)

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Name of your Director of Studies: Prof Andree Woodcock
Date of Enrolment: 1 July 2009

Registry Research Unit Page 4 of 23 28/10/2011

16 Principal Investigator Certification

Please ensure that you:

- Tick all the boxes below that are relevant to your project and sign this checklist.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign this declaration.

I believe that this project **does not require research ethics peer review**. I have completed Sections 1-2 and kept a copy for my own records. I realise I may be asked to provide a copy of this checklist at any time.	
I request that this project is **exempt from internal research ethics peer review** because it will be, or has been, reviewed by an external research ethics committee. I have completed Sections 1-4 and have attached/will attach a copy of the favourable ethical review issued by the external research ethics committee. Please give the name of the external research ethics committee here: Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	
I **request an ethics peer review** and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly. Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	✓
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	✓
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.	✓
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.	✓

Signatures

If you submit this checklist and any attachments by e-mail, you should type your name in the signature space. An email attachment sent from your University inbox will be assumed to have been signed electronically.

Principal Investigator

Signed: *Katerina Frankova*..(Principal Investigator or Student)

Date: 29/07/2011 ....

Students submitting this checklist by email must append to it an email from their Director of Studies confirming that they are prepared to make the declaration above and to countersign this checklist. This email will be taken as an electronic countersignature.

Student's Director of Studies

Countersigned ....(Director of Studies)

Date........29/7/2011..........................

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Note: This checklist is based on an ethics approval form produce by Research Office of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University. Copyright is acknowledged.

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Initial assessment

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10. Reject	Yes	No
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Resubmission		
12. Date of receipt of resubmission:	DD/MM/YYYY	
13. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
14. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Final decision recorded (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
15. Approve	Yes	No
16. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
17. Reject	Yes	No
18. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	

Signature .... (Chair of UARC/Chair RDSC)
Date ...31.10.2011... AS CHAIR OF SARC

Appendix 6c

Professional background of interviewees

- 2 community engagement officers – public sector
    - One with 3-year experience in the current position, but with previous experience in working in priority neighbourhoods and business advice for social enterprises ('Engagement officer 1')
    - One only recently appointed to the current role, but within public sector for almost 10 years and previously worked with the third sector ('Engagement officer 2')
- 1 urban designer/landscape architect/planner – private urban design consultancy
    - Over 20 year experience in the public and private sectors, worked in the UK and abroad ('Urban designer')
- 1 architect – public sector (previously in private sector)
    - Over 25 years of experience working as an architect for the public and private sectors, including private developers ('Architect')
- 1 landscape architect – public sector
    - Almost 20 years experience within the current organisation but worked for a variety of clients, including the private sector ('Landscape Architect')
- 1 chartered surveyor/regeneration/project delivery officer – public sector
    - Almost 20 years experience in urban regeneration, within both public and private sectors ('Regeneration officer')
- 1 architect/planner/urbanist – academia, research
    - Over 25 years experience mostly as a consultant planner in master planning exercises and regeneration; later a researcher and academic ('Urbanist')
- 1 research officer – public sector
    - Over 30 years experience in the public sector in research connected to urban development and other areas, previously an academic ('Research officer')
- 1 community champion/activist
    - Representing community for over 20 years ('Community champion')

Appendix 7a

Historical background of Greyfriars Green

The park is named after the community of Grey Friars whose monastery was dissolved in 1538 (McGrory, 2003). The first houses on Warwick Row facing Greyfriars Green, now mostly Grade II listed buildings, were built in 1764 (Law's Cuttings, No.2/30) and at the time were the most sought after in the city. By 1863, a terrace of large Victorian houses called The Quadrant was built on the eastern side of the Green. Grade II listed, they have undergone little or no alteration to their front elevations (Stephens, 1969; CCC, 1985). Stoneleigh Terrace, detached houses and the middle-class terraces built to the south of the Green, was demolished in the 1960s to make way to the Ring Road. Greyfriars Green was designated as a Conservation Area in 1969 (CCC, 1985) (Figure 7b.1).

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***Figure 7b.1**: Location of Greyfriars Green within Coventry city centre, plan of the park, and listed buildings (CCC, 1985)*

Greyfriars Green was formally laid out and opened as a park in 1876 (CCC, 1985). It was agreed there would be no permanent buildings apart from statues or monuments. In 1883, Sir Thomas White statue was unveiled, followed by James Starley Memorial in 1884 (Heap, n.d.; p.32; Law's cuttings, No.20/30). Greyfriars Road, cutting through the Green, was created in 1968 (CET, 20/03/1969) and a pedestrian subway leading underneath Warwick Row was established in 1971 (CET, 15/04/1971). Greyfriars Road ultimately cut the Green ‘in half’ and some of the buildings in Warwick Row were demolished. This went hand in hand with the construction of Stage VI of the Inner Ring Road, between 1971 and 1974, on the southern boundary of the Green. Until then it was seen as a small park surrounded by heavily congested streets but with well maintained lawns and fine mature trees, together with popular seasonal floral displays. The construction of the Ring Road was viewed as an opportunity to improve the area and remove any defects while retaining and safeguarding what was already present (CCC, 1985) (Figure 7b.2). Until the introduction of ground shaping at this time, the park used to be relatively flat. In 1974 Warwick Row became a pedestrian promenade (CET, 12/06/1974), linking the green physically and visually with the 18th and 19th Century buildings. Greyfriars Green was formally reopened in May 1975. Until the improvements plans in preparation for the Olympic Games 2012, Greyfriars Green had not experienced any further significant changes.

This image has been removed

Figure 7b.2: *Greyfriars Green after the changes in 1971 – 1974 (CCC, 1985)*

Appendix 7b

Ethical approval for Phase 2 – Greyfriars Green study

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

1 Project Information (Everyone)

Title of Project: **Evaluating different approaches to community engagement in the regeneration of urban public spaces** **Phase 2 research – Walking discussions and photographic diaries – Greyfriars Green city centre project**
Name of Principal Investigator (PI) or Research or Professional Degree Student: **Katerina Frankova -** PhD student, Coventry University
Faculty, Department or Institute: CSAD, Coventry University
Names of Co-investigators (CIs) and their organisational affiliation:
How many additional research staff will be employed on the project? n/a Names and their organisational affiliation (if known): n/a
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Code of ethical practice and conduct most relevant to your project: • Other (Specify): Digital Economy Programme, EPSRC

Students Only:

Degree being studied (MSc/MA by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD, etc): PhD
Name of your Director of Studies: Prof Andree Woodcock
Date of Enrolment: 1 July 2009

Ethics Request Updated
omis [omis@coventry.ac.uk]
Sent: 11 October 2011 13:51
To: Katerina Frankova [frankov2@coventry.ac.uk]

The following ethics request has been approved by Martin Woolley. Please proceed with good ethics.

Ref:	1404
Project Title:	Phase 2 research – Walking discussions and photographic diaries – Greyfriars Green city centre project
Applicant:	Katerina Frankova

Go to ethics.coventry.ac.uk to view this request in more detail.

THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN GENERATED AUTOMATICALLY - PLEASE DON'T REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE

Appendix 7c

Key statistics for the population of Coventry

Coventry Partnership (2012) *State of the City 2012 - Quick Statistics* [online] available from: http://www.facts-about-coventry.com/ or http://www.facts-about-coventry.com/uploaded/documents/Quick%20Stats%202011%20-%20update%20Dec%2012.pdf [Accessed 12/09/13]

State of the City 2012

Quick Statistics
CONTENTS

Reading the tables

▼ indicates Coventry rate lower than comparator
▲ indicates Coventry rate higher than comparator
● indicates Coventry rate no different to comparator
Green indicates Coventry's performance better than comparator
Red indicates Coventry's performance worse than comparator
Black indicates that difference is neither

All the information in this document is the most up to date available as of December 2012. There is often a time lag between the collection of data and its publication.

Demographics	Coventry	West Midlands Region		England		Period
Population and Age						
Total population	316,960	5,601,847		53,012,456		2011
Average age (all residents)	34	39	▼	39	▼	2011
% aged 0 -14	18.5	18.3	▲	17.7	▲	2011
% aged 15-29	25.1	19.9	▲	20.0	▲	2011
% aged 30-44	20.1	19.8	▲	20.6	▼	2011
% aged 45-59	16.8	19.2	▼	19.4	▼	2011
% aged 60-74	12.4	15.0	▼	14.6	▼	2011
% aged 75-84	4.9	5.7	▼	5.5	▼	2011
% aged 85+	2.1	2.2	▼	2.2	▼	2011
% aged 16 -64 (working age)	65.5	63.5	▲	64.7	▲	2011
Birth rates						
Number of births	4,801	73,023		688,120		2011
Birth rate increase over five years	16%	6%	▲	8%	▲	2005-10
Fertility rate* (15-44)	68.6	68.4	•	65.7	▲	2011
Ethnicity						
Ethnicity (% BME)	33.4%	34.0%	▼	20.2%	▲	2011
— % White British	66.6%	66.0%	▲	79.8%	▼	2011
— % White Irish	2.3%	1.4%	▲	1.0%	▲	2011
— % White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.0%	0.1%	▼	0.1%	▼	2011
— % White Other	4.9%	2.6%	▲	4.6%	▲	2011
— % Mixed	2.7%	3.4%	▼	2.2%	▲	2011
— % Asian British: Indian	8.8%	6.8%	▲	2.6%	▲	2011
— % Asian British: Pakistani	3.0%	7.3%	▼	2.1%	▲	2011
— % Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.9%	1.8%	▼	0.8%	▲	2011
— % Asian British: Chinese	1.2%	0.8%	▲	0.7%	▲	2011
— % Asian British: Other	2.4%	2.2%	▲	1.5%	▲	2011
— % Black British: African	4.0%	2.0%	▲	1.8%	▲	2011
— % Black British: Caribbean	1.0%	2.9%	▼	1.1%	▼	2011
— % Black British: Other	0.5%	1.1%	▼	0.5%	•	2011
— % Other	1.6%	1.6%	•	1.0%	▲	2011
Non national Nat. Insurance Registrations	5,050	40,740		541,380		2011/12
Non national Nat. Insurance Registrations % Working Age Population	2.4	1.1	▲	1.6	▲	2011/12

The Local Economy	Coventry	West Midlands Region		England		Period
Economically Active						
Working age population	207,500	3,561,100		34,347,400		2011
Economically Active	70.7	74.3	▼	76.7	▼	11-Jun12
Employment rate - All	64.8	67.6	▼	70.4	▼	11-Jun12
Employment rate - BME	52.0	55.5	▼	59.0	▼	11-Jun12
Employees	58.3	58.6	▼	60.3	▼	11-Jun12
Self Employed	6.2	8.5	▼	9.7	▼	11-Jun12
Economically Inactive						
Unemployed * (ILO def. % of Econ Active)	8.3	9.1	▼	8.2	▲	11-Jun12
Economically Inactive	29.3	25.7	▲	23.3	▲	11-Jun12
Percent on out of work benefits latest quarter	14.4	13.9	▲	12.1	▲	Feb-12
— Job seekers' allowance	5.0	5.0	•	4.0	▲	Feb-12
— Incapacity benefit or ESA	6.9	6.7	▲	6.2	▲	Feb-12
— Lone Parents claiming Income Support	2.0	1.7	▲	1.5	▲	Feb-12
— Other benefits	0.5	0.5	•	0.4	▲	Feb-12
% of working age respondents who say they are disabled	19.2	21.4	▼	20.5	▼	11-Jun12
* % people actively seeking employment in the last 4 weeks						
Qualifications						
Percent of working age people with NVQ 4	26.8	26.3	▲	32.7	▼	2011
Percent of working age people with NVQ 3	17.1	16.3	▲	16.3	▲	2011
Percent of working age people with NVQ 2	15.8	18.4	▼	17.1	▼	2011

Percent of working age people with NVQ 1	13.7	14.2	▼	13.4	▲	2011
Other Qualifications	7.0	7.5	▼	6.8	▲	2011
No qualifications	16.6	14.0	▲	10.4	▲	2011
Business						
Number of active enterprises	8,495	186,150		2,001,885		2010
Business births (no. per 10,000 16+ population)	37.8	40.5	▼	48.9	▼	2010
Business deaths (no. per 10,000 16+ population)	50.7	55.1	▼	61.7	▼	2010
NI 172 % VAT registered businesses showing growth	13.9	14.4	▼	14.2	▼	2008
Health and Wellbeing	**Coventry**	**West Midlands Region**		**England**		**Period**
General						
Life Expectancy (Males)	77.2	77.9	▼	78.6	▼	2008-10
Life Expectancy (Females)	81.6	82.2	▼	82.6	▼	2008-10
% population who describe their health as 'good' or 'very good'	73.9%	72.6%	▲	75.8%	▼	2008
People with limiting long term illness	18.6%	18.3%	▲	17.9%	▲	2001
Lifestyle						
Obesity (16+ yrs BMI > 30)	25.6	26.3	▼	24.2	▲	2006-08
Smoking prevalence	20.5	20.9	▼	21.2	▼	2009-10
Adults (16+) physical activity 5 times a week	9.7%	10.8%	▼	11.5%	▼	2009-10
Eating 5 portions of Fruit & Vegetables	25.5%	25.1%	▲	26.9%	▼	2008
Prevalence of diabetes (all people in city)	5.5%	6.0%	▼	5.4%	▲	2009-10
Accidents all ages rate per 1,000 people	19.4	18	▲	16.2	▲	2008
Disease						
Mortality rates per 100,000 people:						
All causes	607.2	573.8	▲	553.3	▲	2008-10
All circulatory diseases people under 65yrs	42.3	36.0	▲	35.1	▲	2008-10
— Coronary heart disease	23.9	21.2	▲	19.5	▲	2008-10
— Strokes	5.7	6.3	▼	5.9	▼	2008-10
All Cancers people under 65yrs	73.8	63.0	▲	61.4	▲	2008-10
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (M)	38.2	33.8	▲	32.5	▲	2008-10
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (F)	26.8	21.0	▲	21.3	▲	2008-10
Alcohol related Mortality rate (Males)	50.3	44.2	▲	37.1	▲	2008
Alcohol related Mortality rate (Females)	18.8	18.1	▲	15.3	▲	2008
Smoking related mortality (Persons 35+yrs)	232.73	216.75	▲	216.05	▲	2007-09
Community Safety	**Coventry**	**West Midlands Region**		**England**		**Period**
Perceptions of community safety						
Do you feel safe during the day?	85.3%	85.8%	▼	87.9%	▼	2008
Do you feel safe after dark?	43.9%	47.7%	▼	50.9%	▼	2008
% satisfied with the local police force	60.4%	56.4%	▲	56.0%	▲	2008
% satisfied with fire service	80.6%	81.7%	▼	80.6%	●	2008
% People who perceive ASB as a 'big' or 'fairly big' problem	20%	21%	▼	20%	●	2008
% People who feel that police etc. are dealing successfully with ASB ?	25.8%	24.9%	▲	26.3%	▼	2008
% people who feel there is a 'Big' or 'fairly big' problem in local area:						
— drug taking	31.2%	33.6%	▼	32.7%	▼	2008
— graffiti, vandalism etc	39.3%	39.0%	▲	36.7%	▲	2008
— abandoned / burnt out cars	7.0%	6.8%	▲	7.2%	▼	2008
— Noisy neighbours	15.6%	13.2%	▲	13.7%	▲	2008
— Drunk, rowdy people in public places	27.9%	27.7%	▲	29.0%	▼	2008
Crime Rates per 1,000 residents:						
All Crime	76	69	▲	73	▲	Dec10-11
Violence against the person	16.5	14.7	▲	14.8	▲	2010-11
Sexual offences	1.2	1	▲	1	▲	2010-11
Robbery	2.6	1.9	▲	1.4	▲	2010-11
Burglary dwellings	8.7	5.1	▲	4.8	▲	2010-11
Theft of a motor vehicle	2.5	2.2	▲	1.9	▲	2010-11

Theft from a motor vehicle	9.3	6.1	▲	4.7	▲	2010-11
Criminal damage	12	12	●	12	●	Dec10-11
Anti-social behaviour	66.8	59.9	▲			2009-10
Alcohol related crime	11.8	9.3	▲	9.2	▲	2007-8
Youth Justice System						
First time entrants into youth justice system (per 100,000)	1620	1340	▲	1472	▲	2008-9
Children & young people	**Coventry**	**West Midlands Region**		**England**		**Period**
General						
Children in Poverty (under 16)	27.0%	24.0%	▲	23.8%	▲	2010
Percentage of people who feel that parents are responsible for children's behaviour	29.0%	28.3%	▲	29.6%	▼	2008
Health And Wellbeing						
Infant mortality rate	6.5	6.0	▲	4.6	▲	2008-10
Percent of children obese in reception year	10.7%	10.1%	▲	9.4%	▲	2010-11
Percent of children obese in year 6	20.3%	20.6%	▼	19.0%	▲	2010-11
Chlamydia - % of tests positive	7.7%	6.2%	▲	6.5%	▲	2009
Teenage Conceptions (rate per 1,000 15-17 years olds)	59.7	43.9	▲	38.2	▲	2009
Experiences/Opinions						
Most need improving: activities for teenagers	44.0%	48.5%	▼	46.5%	▼	2008
Experience of bullying at school	31.7%	29.5%	▲	28.8%	▲	2009
Substance misuse	9.9%	9.8%	▲	9.8%	▲	2009
Qualifications & Employment						
Early years-% of 5 yr olds achieving good level of development	59%	60%	▼	59%	●	2011
5 GCSEs A*-C inc. Eng + Maths	54.3%	57.0%	▼	58.3%	▼	2010/11
5 GCSEs A* - C in any subject	85.5%	82.5%	▲	78.8%	▲	2010/11
19 yr olds qualified to NVQ 2+ level	71.6%	74.9%	▼	75.9%	▼	2008-9
Number of university undergraduates	38,145					2009/10
Not in education, employment & training (aged 16-18) (NEET)	6.9%	6.6%	▲	6.6%	▲	2008
Looked after children (LAC)						
Number of LAC per 10,000 under 18's	86.0	68.0	▲	59.0	▲	2011
% of looked after children with 3 placements	9.9%	12.5%	▼	10.9%	▼	2010
% of looked after children in same place 2 yrs	69.5%	68.0%	▲	68.0%	▲	2010
% of 19 yrs former LAC in suitable accomod.	84.0%	88.0%	▼	90.0%	▼	2011
% of 19 yrs former LAC in EET.	49.0%	54.0%	▼	61.0%	▼	2011
Housing	**Coventry**	**West Midlands Region**		**England**		**Period**
Number of dwellings in the city	132,590	2,358,300		22,814,000		2011
of which privately owned	81.6%	80.6%	▲	82.0%	▼	2011
New affordable dwellings in year	150	3,750		39,120		2010-11
Homeless (rate per 1,000 households)	0.2	1.5	▼	2.2	▼	2010
Satisfaction with homes	86%	89%	▼	89%	▼	2008
Average house price	£123,500	£147,000	▼	£185,000	▼	2010
— change on 2 years earlier	-0.3%	3.4%	▼	5.9%	▼	2008-10
No of sales in last year	9,133	54,789		625,845		2010
— change on previous 12 month period	60%	6%	▼	6%	▼	2009-10
Transport						
Car ownership	66.9	73.2	▼	73.2	▼	2001
% of all repsondents very / fairly satisfied with:						
Local Transport information	51.0%	46.9%	▲	48.0%	▲	2008
Local bus services	62.5%	54.6%	▲	55.2%	▲	2008
% of 5 to 10 yrs going to school by car	31.8%	no data		no data		2008
% of 11 to 16 yrs going to school by car	15.1%	no data		no data		2008

Attractive streets and neighbourhoods	Coventry	West Midlands Region		England		Period
% land as green space	44%	88%	▼	88%	▼	2005
% domestic gardens	22%	5%	▲	4%	▲	2005
Satisfaction with facilities						
% of all repsondents very / fairly satisfied with:						
Parks and open space	60.7%	65.1%	▼	68.5%	▼	2008
Keeping land clear of litter	53.5%	77.6%	▼	56.9%	▼	2008
Refuse Collection	76.6%	78.7%	▼	77.0%	▼	2008
Doorstep recycling	54.2%	71.4%	▼	69.8%	▼	2008
Local tips / Recycling centres	62.4%	65.1%	▼	71.2%	▼	2008
Culture and Sport						
% of residents in last 12 months have used:						
Libraries	46.9%	44.6%	▲	48.5%	▼	2008
Museums & Art Galleries	54.8%	46.7%	▲	53.8%	▲	2008
Theatres / Concert halls	43.1%	41.0%	▲	45.2%	▼	2008
% of all repsondents very / fairly satisfied with:						
Libraries	63.9%	68.4%	▼	69.0%	▼	2008
Museums & Art Galleries	52.7%	43.3%	▲	41.5%	▲	2008
Theatres / Concert halls	44.8%	45.3%	▼	43.2%	▲	2008
Sports / leisure facilities	43.0%	43.2%	▼	46.2%	▼	2008
Climate Change	**Coventry**	**West Midlands Region**		**England**		**Period**
Greenhouse emissions per capita	5.6 tonnes	7.4 tonnes	▼	7.6 tonnes	▼	2010
Equalities and Community Cohesion						
Very/fairly satisfied with area as place to live	75.8%	78.1%	▼	79.7%	▼	2008
Very/fairly strongly feel belong to local area	55.3%	59.4%	▼	58.7%	▼	2008
People with different background get on well	78.4%	75.1%	▲	76.4%	▲	2008
% people not treating each other with respect	24.7%	31.6%	▼	31.2%	▼	2008
% of people who can influence deicision making	28.9%	28.0%	▲	28.9%	●	2008
% people who feel that Public Services treat them fairly	70.4%	69.5%	▲	70.8%	▼	2008
% people who feel the Council provide value for money	35.6%	32.4%	▲	33.2%	▲	2008

Deprivation

35 LSOAs (neighbourhoods; out of 197 in total) in national top 10% most deprived
61 LSOAs (neighbourhoods; out of 197 in total) in national top 20% most deprived

18.3% (57,860) Coventry population live in top 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally
32.1% (101,349) Coventry population live in top 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally
50% (157,900) of Coventry's population live in top 34% most deprived LSOAs nationally

Glossary of Abbreviations and Symbols Used in Tables

ASB	Anti-social behaviour
BME	Black Minority Ethnic
F	Females
LAC	Looked after children
M	Males
NEET	Not in employment, education or Training
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification

Reading the Tables

▼ indicates Coventry rate lower than comparator
▲ indicates Coventry rate higher than comparator
● indicates Coventry rate no different to comparator
Green indicates Coventry's performance better than comparator
Red indicates Coventry's performance worse than comparator
Black indicates that difference is neither positive or negative e.g. no. self-employed

Sources of Information
ONS Population, Birth rate, Ethnicity
Dept. Work & Pensions National Insurance Registrations, Benefits information
NOMIS Annual Population Survey All Employment and qualification information
National Compendium of Clinical & Health Indicators Life Expectancy, Accident rate, Circulatory disease, Cancers, COPD, Infant mortality rate
Place Survey 2008 Self reported Health, Perceptions of community safety, Opinion of problems in local area, Opinion of police dealing with ASB, Parents responsible for children's behaviour, Satisfaction with homes, Satisfaction with local transport, % Respondents satisfied with facilities, Equalities and Community Cohesion
South West Public Health Observatory Smoking prevalence
Association of Public Health Observatories Physical activity, Portions Consumed, Diabetes prevalence,Smoking related mortality
North West Public health Observatory Alcohol related mortality rate
ONS: Crime & Justice Crime rates except:
West Midlands Police Anti-Social Behaviour
North West Public Health Observatory Alcohol Related Crime
HMRC Children in Poverty
NHS Information Centre Obese children, Chlamydia test rate
Tellus Survey Most need improving: activities for teenagers, Experience of bullying, Substance misuse
Dept. Children, Schools & Families Foundation stage education, GCSE results, Looked after children
Higher Education Statistics Authority University undergraduates
HM Land Registry Average house price, No. Sales in last year
Census 2001 Car ownership, People living with limiting long term illness
ONS: Neighbourhood statistics % Land as green space, % domestic gardens
National Obesity Observatory - Obesity Rates

Appendix 7d

Photographic diary instructions - Greyfriars Green

As you walk around Greyfriars Green in the next 7 days, take photographs of anything that catches your attention – this can be:

- something that you like in the area
- something you don't like or even hate
- your favourite place
- place you have a good (or bad) memory of
- places you use frequently
- places you tend to avoid
- places you have a strong opinion about
- something that concerns you
- you have a suggestion how a particular problem identified could be resolved
- you have an idea what could be improved as part of the redevelopment of the area

You may also take a photo of something which is completely outside the area, even in a different city (or country), as long as it somehow links to the area which is the focus of the research. For example, you like a specific type of bench that you found somewhere else – you can add this to your diary, but explain why you are adding this particular photo.

Please consider things in public spaces OUTSIDE, not interiors of buildings, cafes, restaurants or shops. These can be general physical aspects, the design, buildings (exterior), finding your way through the area, its maintenance and whatever else crosses your mind.

After taking the photograph, make an entry to this notebook. Include:

- ✓ Date
- ✓ Photo ID/no. (if applicable)
- ✓ Location (please be as precise as possible) and Brief description of the image
- ✓ Reason why you took this photograph
- ✓ If you are pointing to something that needs to be addressed, what do you suggest should be done?
- ✓ Other notes – feel free to add anything else, including sketches if you wish

Your entry can be as long or as short as you like.

Please take maximum of 12 photos (but can be less if you wish). You may take more during your 7 day period, but then choose maximum of 12 to share with the researcher.

Feel free to be as creative as you wish. But remember, there is no right or wrong way to do this. Your photographic skills will not be judged.

Hope you enjoy the experience!

Have FUN!

Photographic diary - example entry

Date: 3 May 2010, 3pm, Monday

Photo ID/no.: 1

Location/ Brief Description:
Art work / funny faces in the park - Letenske sady park, close to beer garden, Prague 7, Czech Republic

Why I took this photo:
These strange grinning creatures always make me smile. I think they add something to the space. They are smiling no matter what the weather is, even when covered in snow. They are not only an art work, but they can be used as sort of a playground as well. I often see children climbing on them. And adults do as well. People just let their hair down when they see them.

Suggestion/Idea:
I think it is a great idea to combine an art work with something that people can actually interact with without necessarily breaking anything easily. The creatures are a bit crazy looking, which makes them look quite fun. They certainly catch attention and make people stop. It would be nice to see something similar around Greyfriars Green. It would depend on the artist what they would decide to do, but something that the people and children can interact with and make them smile at the same time would be great.

Other notes: n/a

<u>Appendix 7e</u>

Greyfriars Green walking discussion plan

Welcome and Introductions
Ethics – fill out paperwork

<u>*Aims of the session:*</u>

- Testing out a consultation method
- Get some initial feedback on the changes so far
- Ideas on how the site could be made even more attractive
- This is not a re-consultation! I don't work for the council.

<u>*Start:*</u>
How often do you use GG?

How do you use GG? – to sit down and relax, or just as a thoroughfare?

GG – <u>main access route from the train station to the city centre</u>
How do you view the route?

1) **Clear**? – what could make it clearer?
    a. Lighting?
    b. Signage? – How can it be made clearer for pedestrians?

2) **Welcoming**? – If not, what could make it more welcoming, attractive?
    a. Trees – more?
    b. Grass – features, or just plain grass
    c. Public art – mosaic tiles
    d. Street furniture
    e. Bins – enough, where?
    f. What else would you like to see?

3) **Safe**? – are there particular design aspects that make you feel unsafe, or is it the people?
    a. Lighting
    b. Signage
    c. Infilling of subways
    d. Crossing the roads

<u>Blue line</u> – will be removed
Do you have an example of a friend/colleague/relative struggling to find their way to the city centre?

Aim: making the route more consistent, level and safe:

a. Better paving
b. Levelled paving
c. Better lighting
d. Infilling of subways – what do you think of that?

Shared space – do you know what it means?

a. Discussion about de-cluttering of the space
b. Removal of dedicated cycle route – is this a good idea?
c. Crossings over the road – safety

Underpass under ring road

- a. New lighting will be installed – Are the new lights bright enough?
- b. What colours would you like in the underpass to make you feel safer?
    - i. Consistent colour with bright light
    - ii. Colour wash
    - iii. Changing colours

Subways – if these are not in-filled, what could they be used for?

Green spaces

OUTCOMES

Appendix 7f

Participant evaluation questionnaires

- Walking discussion
- Photographic diary

Please not that the ‘equal opportunities’ questions (E1 – E5) were identical for both questionnaires

EVALUATION – Walking Discussion (Ph2)

1: Have you found the session useful or beneficial to you? How?

2: What did you like the most about the walking discussion?

3: What did you like the least about the walking discussion?

4a: How satisfied were you with the recruitment process (i.e. information prior to the walking discussion, frequency of contact, reminders etc.)?

Very satisfied	
Satisfied	
Not sure	
Dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	

4b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

5a: How convenient for you was the time at which the walking discussion took place?

Very convenient	
Convenient	
Not sure	
Not convenient	
Not convenient at all	

5b: In order to attend, did you have to cancel on any of your other commitments? (e.g. had to skip a lecture, cancel a meeting). If so, was this a big problem for you?

6: The duration of the walking discussion was…

		What would you suggest as an appropriate duration for a walking discussion?
Far too long		⇨
Too long		⇨
About right		
Too short		⇨
Far too short		⇨

7a: How would you rate the quality of facilitation?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

7b: Feel free to add any additional comments or ideas of what could have been done better.

8a: The topics covered in the walking discussion were relevant to the purpose of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

9a: When you wanted to speak, how often did you get the chance to?

Always	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

9b: How did you feel about speaking up in front of other people?

10a: I could easily relate to what was being discussed.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

11a: The discussion with other participants was interesting and stimulating.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

11b: Has the discussion influenced or changed some of your opinions? How?

12a: The walking discussion provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

12b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

13a: The outcome of the walking discussion was made clear at the end of the session.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

13b: Do you think that the comments you have made will be acted upon?

14: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after attending this session?

15: How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

16: How effective do you think a walking discussion is at consulting the public about their opinions, ideas, suggestions and concern about a public space under redevelopment?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	
Not effective at all	

17: What benefits do you think the method offers?

18: What disadvantages do think the method has?

19: Can you think of any barriers or circumstances that would prevent people from taking part in a walking discussion?

20: If this method was mainstreamed as a consultation method, would you generally be inclined to take part? OR Would you prefer a different method altogether?

21: Feel free to make any additional comments.

Equal Opportunities

~~E1: Status~~

~~Student~~	n/a
~~Staff~~	n/a
~~Visitor to the uni~~	n/a

E2: Gender

Male	
Female	

E3: What is your ethnicity?

White	British		
	Irish		
	Other		⇨
Mixed	White & Black Caribbean		
	White & Asian		
	White & Black African		
	Other		⇨
Asian or Asian British	Indian		
	Pakistani		
	Bangladeshi		
	Other		⇨
Black or Black British	Caribbean		
	African		
	Other		⇨
Chinese / Other Ethnic Group	Chinese		
	Any other		⇨

E4: What is your age?

Under 18	
18 – 29	
30 – 39	
40 – 49	
50 – 59	
60+	

E5: Do you think you have a disability in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

Yes	
No	

EVALUATION – Photographic Diary (Ph2)

1: Have you found the experience useful or beneficial to you? How?

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

2: What did you like the most about the photo diary?

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

3: What did you like the least about the photo diary?

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

4a: The instructions of what I was to do were clear to me.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

4b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____
____

5a: How convenient was taking photographs and annotating them?

Very convenient	
Convenient	
Not sure	
Not convenient	
Not convenient at all	

5b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

6a: I found it easy to annotate my photographs.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

6b: Did you know what to write down, or were you sometimes unsure? Please comment.

____
____
____
____
____

7: When did you annotate the photographs? (E.g. when they were taken, at home at the end of the day…)

____
____
____
____
____
____

8a: I enjoyed taking photographs around Greyfriars Green.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____

9: The time allocated to me to take photographs (7 days) was…

		What would you suggest as an appropriate duration for a photo diary?
Far too long		⇨
Too long		⇨
About right		
Too short		⇨
Far too short		⇨

10a: The photographic diary provided me with the opportunity to fully express my opinions.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10b: Feel free to add any additional comments:

____
____
____
____
____

11a: The outcome of the photographic diary was made clear at the end of the exercise.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Not sure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

11b: Do you think that the comments you have made will be acted upon?

____
____
____
____
____

12: Do you think a discussion with other people about the photographs taken would benefit the method?

____
____
____
____
____

13: Are you likely to pay more attention to the environment around you after using a photo diary?

____
____
____
____
____
____

14: How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very poor	

15: How effective do you think a photo diary is at consulting the public about their opinions, ideas, suggestions and concern about a public space under redevelopment?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	
Not effective at all	

16: What benefits do you think the method offers?

17: What disadvantages do think the method has?

18: Can you think of any barriers or circumstances that would prevent people from taking part via a photo diary?

19: If this method was mainstreamed as a consultation method, would you generally be inclined to take part? OR Would you prefer a different method altogether?

20: Feel free to make any additional comments.

Appendix 8a

Explanation of codes

Examples of indicative comments from photographic diaries and walking discussions collected through Phase 2 are supplemented with identification codes. The first letter of the ID code indicates the method using which the comment was submitted.

PD = Photo diary
WD = Walking discussion

Number 2 after each of these signifies that these are from Phase 2. The rest of the codes follows the same pattern as presented in Appendix 6.a.

Examples:

PD22	Photo diarist no. 2 in Phase 2
PD2105	Photo diary Phase 2, photo diarist no. 1, image/comment 5
PD2204b	Photo diary Phase 2, photo diarist no. 2, image/comment 4b (comment was separated into two – 4a and 4b)
WD215f	Walking discussion Phase 2, walking discussion no. 1, participant no. 5, female
WD222m	Walking discussion Phase 2, walking discussion no. 2, participant no. 2, male

Appendix 8b

Examples of the photographic diary comments

Sarcasm used in photo diary entries

Table 8b.1: Example of ‘partly clear’ comment which utilises sarcasm (complaints, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD2811
c.	Behind bars – western side of Greyfriars Green
d.	Initially, it was the ‘behind bars’ - inaccessibility aspect, but look closely and you’ll see the juxtaposed ‘welcome’ sign and CCTV cameras. Very welcoming. Again.
e.	Once again, keep the ‘welcome’ sign and CCTV apart.

Suggestions for improvement

Table 8b.2: Example of a compliment with a suggestion (partly actionable; 'trees/hedges/flower displays' / 'street furniture/public art'	
a.	
b.	PD2504
c.	A flowerbed located on the pathway when walking from the James Starley statue towards the train station
d.	I thought it was a very simple but effective way of bringing colour to the site. The flower beds, like the others on the green are all very pretty and provide an aesthetic bonus.
e.	Make even more use of the flowerbeds by adding a bench or another feature nearby so that the flowerbed can be utilised to its full potential.

Table 8b.3: Example of a complaint with a suggestion (partly actionable; 'maintenance')	
a.	
b.	PD2603
c.	This is looking just before you walk over the bridge across the ring road.
d.	I don't like the dumping of the bricks, the barrier and obviously at some stage the barrels were used for plants. Not good maintenance and not visually appealing.

Themes

Table 8b.4: Example of 'public realm' / 'trees, hedges, flower displays' comment (general comment, partly actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD2411
c.	Pathway
d.	I think this path could be modelled to be a 'grove'. It would be very beautiful with plants growing over it.
e.	Model the path to be scenic. Archways etc.

Table 8b.5: Example of 'trees, hedges, flower displays' / 'street furniture' comment (compliment, actionable, with a suggestion)	
a.	
b.	PD2702
c.	The flowerbeds in the middle of the park
d.	Apart from the temporary railings this view of the park has almost a rural feel to it – plenty of grass and vegetation and little concrete. The bench invites people to sit down and enjoy the green space. The place is obviously well maintained from the neat flowerbeds.
e.	I really like this spot and there is not much that I would suggest to change. However the temporary railings need to be removed and it might be nice to put in a couple more benches.

Appendix 8c

Photo-elicitation interviews – comparisons between photographic diary entries and photo-elicitation interview transcripts

Table 8c.1: Comparison between the text in the diary and transcript from interview	
a.	
b.	PD2201
c.	Under the road bridge that dominates the park.
d.	This road bridge dominates the park and instantly tells you this is a city centre park squeezed into the small space available. As such there is no place for ‘dead spots’, every inch must be filled and of interest.
e.	This is a great place for a quirky café. Sitting, sipping inside or out. The aim of a green space in such a busy location is to give relief from the busy areas and for a moment at least let everything stop.
Interview	For me this bridge is again a dead space that could be so well used. And I can just imagine a lovely café there, all in glass and the tables spilling out either side, where people can sit and have a coffee and they can look around and enjoy the park. On their way through rushing to the train station or into town. But it just gives people that oasis, that place to stop and a reason to stop. Because if you haven’t got a reason, you don’t. But if it’s ‘Oh, that would be nice’ and sit down and have a coffee, or… Yes, that would be a good place to stop, I think. That was the reason why I took that photo, because every time I walk under it, I think ‘They could do something with that space’, you know.

Table 8c.2: Comparison between the text in the diary and transcript from interview	
a.	
b.	PD2506
c.	The 'welcome to' sign just after the first subway when heading to the city centre from the train station.
d.	It is a nice welcoming sign drawn by a young student from Coventry. It is really the first thing I notice as regards to the green when I walk into the city from the train station.
e.	I think it is a good way to greet people, with a children's interpretation of the green and really could do with either being a bit bigger or more importantly cleaned up a bit as there has been stickers stuck to it in the past.
Interview	My only issue with it is as you are entering into the park, it's like the first thing you see. I know there are things before it, but it's the first real thing that indicates where you are. And it just looks dirty. It's a great thing to have. It shows local involvement – getting kids involved in painting, people are always going to smile. You can't but smile when you look at it… for what it is. It is just a little child, I dare say aged 7 – I am sure it probably says actually. I mean the context of it is great. But it just looks dirty. There is a sticker on it! Clean it up. Maybe even make it a little bigger. Because at the end of the day, the only thing it is hiding is the ring road. And I just though, well, they don't make enough of what is actually good about the site. And that's one of them.

Appendix 8d

Examples from walking discussion transcripts

Table 8d.1: Examples of some direct references to the surrounding environment from walking discussion transcripts	
WD211m:	This building here, 22 Warwick Row, which is where I used to work in the 1960s… […] We used to come out of here and sit on the grass over there, eat our sandwiches, talk to the girls…
WD222m	See, if you don't have all the same paving, I think things can look a little bit… disjointed perhaps?!
WD235f	As a child I used to use this area a lot more… carnivals used to come down this route and I remember sitting there and looking at the carnivals. And the retail shops here were a lot bigger. I had a wedding ring from one on here.
WD234m	It's amazing how much land is actually recovered from filling in the subway. It's a huge, huge difference!
WD232m	You almost want to light some of the pavement, like a blue light all the way from over there… all the way to there.
WD241m	In the spring, when you drive up that road, and you see all these flowers out and the blossom on the trees, it looks beautiful from there.

Table 8d.2: Examples of some walking probes, inspiring discussion topics in walking discussions	
WD211m:	Oh, this subway here has gone, hasn't it?!
WD212m:	Do you think there are too many paths? I mean that one over there (see image), for instance, the unmade one… the unmade path… who's that for?! 
WD212m:	When you walk down here, you see the… you know, they have all these brick walls. They have so spoilt it, haven't they? They've taken away the green area… it isn't a green, is it, now?!
WD226f	One of the problems I think here [Warwick Row] is that you've got all these estate agents. It may be nice to have something like newsagents or a florist so that people coming through might want to buy a paper or sweets…
WD231m	I just noticed a statue over there! I have never noticed that before! [Sir Thomas White statue]
WD244f	It's nice that there is the seating all along the walkway, isn't it? It would be nice to have just one or two little picnic benches.