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Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of **MSc *Spatial Planning*** at University College London:

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that ideas, data, and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and referenced.

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Contents

List of Figures & Abbreviations	4
Abstract	5
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 Defining Placemaking	6
1.2 Top-down & Bottom-up Placemaking	6
1.3 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking in London	7
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Research Objectives	8
2.0 Literature Review	9
2.1 The Role of Placemaking in Planning	9
2.1.1 Placemaking in Planning Practice	9
2.1.2 Placemaking in Planning Policy & Guidance	10
2.2 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking	11
2.2.1 Local Planning Authority	12
2.2.2 Site Suitability	12
2.2.3 Financing	13
2.2.4 Knowledge & Relationships	14
2.2.5 Team Structure & Inclusion	14
2.3 Conclusion	15
3.0 Methodology	16
3.1 Literature Review	16
3.2 Research Strategy & Design	16
3.3 Sampling	17
3.4 Case Studies	18
3.5 Data Collection	19
3.6 Data Analysis	19
3.7 Ethical Considerations	21
3.8 Limitations & Reflections	21

4.0 Findings	23
4.1 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking Framework	23
4.2 Key Findings	25
5.0 Discussion	26
5.1 Resources	26
5.1.1 Finance	26
5.1.2 Land & Site	28
5.2 Systems & Processes	30
5.2.1 Planning System	30
5.2.2 Support Systems	32
5.3 Project Team	33
5.3.1 Team & Organisational Structure	34
5.3.2 Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	35
5.3.3 Personal Resilience	35
5.4 People Networks	37
5.4.1 Working Relationships	37
5.4.2 Diversity & Inclusion	39
6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations	41
6.1 Conclusion	41
6.2 Recommendations	42
6.2.1 Planning Recommendations	42
6.2.2 Non-Planning Recommendations	43
Reference List	44
Appendices	49
Appendix A: PRISMA Flow Diagram	50
Appendix B: Five Research Designs	51
Appendix C: Placemaking Case Studies	51
Appendix D: Interview Guides	52
Appendix E: Information Sheet & Consent Form	53
Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Questionnaire	57
Appendix G: Framework Supported by Data	59
Appendix H: Risk Assessment Form	67

List of Figures & Abbreviations

Figures

Figure 1 – Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking Framework 24

Abbreviations

Local Planning Authority – LPA

Placemaker A – PMA

Placemaker B – PMB

Placemaker C – PMC

Council Officer A – COA

Abstract

Community initiated placemaking provides benefits for both communities and planning practice, however, barriers challenging the projects still exist. This research investigates the barriers, how they impact projects, and considers how they can be overcome. Assisting in filling a gap in the current field of study, this research is based in a London context, investigating a range of project types and exploring barriers from both the placemakers and local planning authority (LPA) perspectives.

Using a qualitative research strategy, semi-structured interviews collected data from three community placemakers and one council officer. The data was thematically analysed generating four themes and nine sub-themes and developed into a framework synthesising the barriers. The framework demonstrates that common barriers involve resources, systems and processes, project team or people networks. These barriers have a multitude of negative impacts on the community placemaking projects and participants, threatening the projects' longevity and sustainability. Therefore, there are areas for improvement in planning and placemaking practice upon which recommendations have been made. The framework developed from this research can guide placemakers to understand the barriers they may encounter and can be adapted for future research.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Defining Placemaking

Placemaking is an ambiguous and often contested term, defined in various ways, by a broad spectrum of professions (Future of London, 2017); this can dilute the concept and limit the term's effectiveness (Wyckoff, 2014). Therefore, authors must preposition their research with the lens through which they view placemaking by providing a definition. Taking inspiration from Project for Public Spaces (2007), this dissertation uses the following definition of placemaking to frame the research:

A people-centred process of re-shaping space to enhance the sense of place, become the heart of the community, and strengthen the connection between people and place. Beyond simply designing aesthetically pleasing places, placemaking encourages use, interaction and collaboration within a space thus enhancing an area's social capital.

1.2 Top-down & Bottom-up Placemaking

As a term, placemaking has much controversy surrounding it. It is often portrayed as inherently participatory, however it also has negative impacts of gentrification and socio-economic elitism and is dominated by neoliberal ideology, frequently resulting in homogenous places (Burns and Berbary, 2021; Omholt, 2017; Pritchard, 2019). While the controversy surrounding the term should not be overlooked or oversimplified, it is essential to distinguish between top-down and bottom-up placemaking. Top-down placemaking is implemented by government and non-governmental organisations while bottom-up placemaking is implemented by communities and individuals (Baker and Mehmood, 2015). It is argued that bottom-up placemaking resists and opposes the homogenous gentrifying effects of top-down placemaking by expressing the identity and desires of the community (Pritchard, 2019). When the bottom-up approach is not adhered to, the value of the concept is weakened, narrowing the agenda (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). However, it can be reasoned that both approaches are important and play a different role; bottom-up enables

sustainable places for all groups, while top-down operates at a necessary strategic level through funding and policies avoiding bias (Baker and Mehmood, 2015).

There are also well-documented benefits of bottom-up community initiated placemaking, such as improved wellbeing, health, sense of ownership, place attachment and social cohesion (Cocoran, Marshall and Walsh, 2017; Ellery and Ellery, 2019; Ellery et al., 2017). Furthermore, community initiated placemaking projects are beneficial for planning practice as they achieve a greater sense of place by implementing local projects founded upon their unique understanding of the area (Franklin and Marsden, 2014). These projects also assist local authorities as they share the workload and responsibility of improving and managing public space (Healey, 1998). Therefore, this dissertation will examine bottom-up placemaking. Approached from an epistemological position that placemaking initiated by the community and for the community is mutually beneficial for communities and planning practice. It should therefore be enabled by removing the barriers in its way.

1.3 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking in London

Despite the well documented benefits of community initiated placemaking projects, barriers still exist (Wesener et al., 2020). Taking inspiration from Wesener et al.'s (2020) definition, placemaking barriers are defined in this research as:

Factors that pose a challenge to the project, cause it to change direction, obstruct its development or threaten the success of the project's outcome.

Using case studies in the London boroughs of Ealing, Newham and Southwark, this dissertation aims to investigate what the barriers are, explore how they impact projects and consider how they can be overcome. Overcoming these barriers would empower and enable communities to take ownership of space, express collective identity, connect, and learn from others (Ellery and Ellery, 2019; Healey, 1998; Wyckoff, 2014).

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the barriers faced by communities and local planning authorities in community initiated placemaking projects?
2. How do the barriers affect the project?
3. How can the barriers be overcome to create a more effective and sustainable process that benefits both communities and planning practice?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. Identify the key debates surrounding community initiated placemaking, its importance to planning practice and analyse the key barriers to community initiated placemaking in literature.
2. Identify the barriers faced by communities and local planning authorities by using community placemaking groups and local planning authorities in London as case studies.
3. Analyse the barriers faced by London community placemaking groups and local planning authorities to gain understanding of what caused the barriers and how they effected the outcome of the projects.
4. Develop a framework of the barriers synthesising results and analysis to guide future practice and research.
5. Develop recommendations to overcome the barriers.

2.0 Literature Review

This narrative literature review assesses the role of placemaking in planning practice and policy before focusing on the barriers to community initiated placemaking projects. It demonstrates a gap in current literature that this research will assist in filling and identifies key debates upon which this research will draw in the discussion chapter.

2.1 The Role of Placemaking in Planning

2.1.1 Placemaking in Planning Practice

Since Jane Jacobs' (1961) influential writing regarding the importance of a people-centred approach to planning, placemaking and planning have been thought to be closely linked practices. Some authors argue that spatial planning is the leader of placemaking, using it to shape the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of society and place (Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, 2007; Shaw and Lord, 2007) Others suggest that placemaking is a principal purpose of spatial planning (Hague and Jenkins, 2005).

The importance of community initiated placemaking in planning is discussed in literature; many authors recognise that it is essential for planners to enable and facilitate these projects. Planning should create capacity and culture for placemaking to deliver and sustain long-term improvements to quality of life, identity and wellbeing (Healey, 1998). Placemaking is now viewed as an enabling tool for people to share ideas and learn new skills through the co-production process, as such spatial planners should focus on using it as an empowering and enabling process (Strydom, Purden & Drewes, 2018). Additionally, planners could use community placemaking as a catalyst for creating sustainable communities (Schlebusch, 2015). These literature findings suggest that planners should actively enable community initiated placemaking projects; part of this enabling process could be to reduce the barriers that prevent the projects from being sustainable and long-term.

2.1.2 Placemaking in Planning Policy & Guidance

A limited number of policies directly use the term placemaking, however some planning policies are rooted in placemaking principles. Placemaking principles use urban design elements to enhance a space's sociability, use, access, comfort and image, ultimately creating a greater sense of place (Project for Public Spaces, 2007).

Placemaking is becoming a valuable tool for planners to create successful places, and placemaking principles are increasingly encouraged through national policy and guidance. While the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) does not explicitly reference placemaking, it has policies dedicated to good design. It also emphasises the importance of public participation and collaborative working with communities to create well-designed places.

The NPPF (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) refers planners to the National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021b), which informs planners of good design characteristics, and the National Model Design Code (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021c), which provides LPAs with advice on producing national design codes. While these publications are non-statutory, they suggest that community involvement is an integral aspect of achieving successful places. This demonstrates the importance of the public's aspirations for an area's design and sense of place, which is also realised through community initiated placemaking.

Spatial Development Strategies and Local Plans also provide opportunities for policies on placemaking. At a regional level, the London Plan (Greater London Authority, 2021) explicitly references placemaking in six policies; the most relevant of which is that planners and developers should understand an area's unique value and utilise it in placemaking to strengthen place. While community participation is portrayed as a key aspect of planning, community initiated placemaking is not discussed, either directly or indirectly. At a local level, placemaking is incorporated directly and indirectly into Newham and Southwark Council's Local Plans (Newham Council, 2018; Southwark Council, 2022). However, Ealing's adopted

policies (Ealing Council, 2013) do not reference placemaking or contain placemaking principles.

Many of these policies and publications refer to placemaking principles in a top-down approach while only engaging with local communities. However, with the prevalence and emphasis placed on public participation and the well-documented benefits in literature, separate policies for community initiated placemaking appears warranted.

2.2 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking

From the literature search for barriers to community initiated placemaking, 11 scholarly articles and grey literature were found directly discussing barriers. Within these, only one article developed a framework for the barriers: Wesener et al. (2020). Wesener et al. investigated the barriers and enablers to community gardens, categorising them into biophysical and technical, socio-cultural and economic, and political and administrative. Thematically analysing semi-structured interviews, the researchers concluded that perceived factors are as prevalent as real factors in either obstructing or supporting community placemaking gardens. While Wesener et al.'s methodology is robust given the large sample size and extensive literature review, the findings are embedded in the geographical contexts of New Zealand and Germany. Additionally, Wesener et al.'s research is restricted to community gardens rather than a wider scope of community initiated placemaking. Building upon these findings, this research develops a new framework applicable to various types of placemaking projects, synthesising key barriers in a London context.

Of the literature used, only one was based on a case study in England (Stevenson, 2019). Additionally, only two were based on a range of project types (CoDesign Studio, 2019; Hartley et al., 2020). This demonstrates a gap in the literature discussing barriers in an English context and concerning a range of project types.

Upon reviewing the literature, key planning and non-planning barriers were identified and discussed below.

2.2.1 Local Planning Authority

LPAs hold a unique position in supporting community projects. However, lack of institutional support is a barrier identified in the literature (Menconi, Heland and Grohmann, 2020; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). This can remove placemakers sense of agency and discourages continued participation (Strunk and Richardson, 2017). Conflicting and complex relationships can occur when the council owns a community garden's land, as gardeners rely on council input or may have diverging visions and expectations (Wesener et al., 2020).

LPAs are often accused of being overly bureaucratic and actively blocking projects with rigid regulations, restrictive policies, and lengthy procedures (Hartley et al., 2020; Wesener et al., 2020). Councils lack the flexibility in their processes to actively facilitate projects on a case-by-case basis (Hartley et al., 2020). Planning applications can cause barriers through extensive processes and rejection of permission (Karge, 2018). The cognitive inaccessibility and convoluted terminology of the planning system are also barriers (Friedmann, 2010). They cause ineffective dialogue, slow the project's progress, and give the impression of unnecessary bureaucracy.

Given the severe lack of resources and underfunding of local government, barriers that appear to stem from LPAs are multifaceted and cannot be solely understood from the community's perspective. Only one report assesses the barriers from an LPAs perspective; the main findings are that councils lack internal communication and clear procedures for community groups and multiple sources of LPA approval are required (CoDesign Studio, 2019). More balanced findings and recommendations can be achieved if the LPA perspective is also considered.

2.2.2 Site Suitability

Access to a suitable site, land, or building is a barrier to community initiated placemaking (Chan et al., 2021; Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). Land

availability for community gardens can be scarce due to landowners prioritising development in urban areas over agriculture (Wesener et al., 2020). The land scarcity can incentivise temporary, often informal, leases to maintain the option of selling the land. This causes feelings of uncertainty and insecurity surrounding the longevity of the project and issues regarding legal tenure rights (Chan et al., 2021; Wesener et al., 2020). There is a concern among placemaking professionals that projects may be temporary and once they are gone, the place will be lifeless and underutilised again (Hartley et al., 2020). Not having a permanent location will ensure this cycle continues, and the benefits of placemaking for the surrounding community will, in turn, be short-lived.

Some sites may not be entirely suitable for the intended project; facilities, existing land use, location and accessibility are common challenges (Wesener et al., 2020). Site facilities and features such as water source and soil quality are vital for resource-intensive community gardens (Karge, 2018). Additionally, a lack of visual and physical accessibility is a barrier as it discourages use (Karge and Makarenko, 2015). As space is the essence of placemaking, not having access to a suitable site can prevent a project from being delivered and prevent a vision from ever being realised.

2.2.3 Financing

Financial barriers are prevalent in literature (Chan et al., 2021; Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). The scarcity of permanent and secure public funding causes uncertainties and concerns over long-term financial stability (Chan et al., 2021; Wesener et al., 2020). Commercial sources of income are often required to supplement public funding, however this can result in the social welfare focus of the project suffering (Chan et al., 2021). Moving towards a neoliberal approach undermines the community and social welfare ethos that commonly inspires community placemaking projects, however it is difficult to achieve without financial stability; these conflicting priorities are difficult to rectify.

The cost of resources are a barrier to community initiated placemaking projects; especially for community gardens, where resources such as water, tools and compost are instrumental to the project (Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). Quality

resources are vital in supporting the long-term stability of projects; the degradation of cheap materials ultimately increases maintenance costs (Karge, 2018). With frequent overreliance on donated materials and volunteers, these projects would benefit from additional consistent funding for all project areas, supplementing self-funding and enabling successful delivery. In a neoliberal society, only so much can be achieved without financial backing.

2.2.4 Knowledge & Relationships

A lack of relevant knowledge, such as IT, small-scale construction, gardening, volunteer management, regulations, networking activities and financing can be a barrier to success (Karge, 2018; Wesener et al., 2020). This barrier could also be linked to others; with additional funding, groups could provide courses, and if processes were easier to navigate, high levels of knowledge would not be required. Thus, if other barriers were overcome, lack of knowledge and skill may become less of a challenge.

Relationships can also cause barriers as issues can arise between group members caused by conflicting agendas, competition for resources, lack of leadership, communication issues and lack of governance (Wesener et al., 2020). Similarly, conflict with neighbours can hinder the project; aesthetic preferences can particularly cause conflicts with community gardens (Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). Hostile relationships with the surrounding community can cause a lack of social capital and difficulty for the project to gain traction (Hartley et al., 2020).

2.2.5 Team Structure & Inclusion

An informal organisational structure can cause difficulties in accessing funding and support from the council. Councils also face barriers in facilitating informal groups because there is no one consistent liaison contact, resulting in a lack of transparency on where responsibility and risk lie (Stevenson, 2019).

An informal structure can lead to exclusionary practices such as meeting in homes and privileging people with resources available to participate (Stevenson, 2019). Lack of diversity and inclusion is a prevalent barrier; stakeholders from low-income communities and ethnic minority groups are often excluded while project participants tend to be from homogenous white middle-class groups who are already active in similar initiatives (Menconi, Heland & Grohmann, 2020; Webster et al., 2021; Wesener et al., 2020). With a reliance on volunteering, some groups are less likely to have the resources to enable participation. However, these discussions appear to oversimplify the lack of diversity and inclusion. It is a complex and multidimensional issue prevalent in many aspects of placemaking and planning.

2.3 Conclusion

Although there are barriers discussed in literature, only 11 pieces of literature were found on the topic. There is a gap in literature of research exploring a range of project types, in a London context and featuring LPA perspectives; this research will assist in filling the literature gap. This research will add value to this field of study by expanding on existing knowledge and developing a comprehensive framework synthesising the findings and barriers.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Literature Review

This narrative literature review identifies the critical placemaking debates, ascertains its importance in planning and analyses the existing research on barriers to community initiated placemaking. As a policy governed practice, a policy review is also included.

To find existing empirical research on barriers to community initiated placemaking, the following search terms were entered into four key databases:

communit OR grassroot* OR neighbour* OR "community led" OR "community-led" OR "community initiated" OR "community-initiated" AND placemak* OR "place-making" OR "place-maker" OR "place making" OR "place maker" AND barrier* OR challeng* OR obstacle**

A total of 269 pieces of literature were identified (see Appendix A: PRISMA Flow Diagram, adapted from Page et al., 2020). After screening, seven were deemed relevant and analysed in the final review. An additional four pieces of grey literature were found using websites and citation searching.

3.2 Research Strategy & Design

A range of research strategies and designs were thoroughly considered to select the most appropriate study design to answer the research questions. Research is commonly conducted using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods strategies.

Quantitative research commonly employs the measurement of quantifiable data, typically utilises a deductive approach to theory and research, integrates practices of positivism and follows the natural scientific model. Whereas qualitative engages with experiences and feelings, utilises an inductive approach to theory generation and reasoning and often

incorporates interpretivism. They can occasionally be combined in a mixed methods approach (Bryman, 2016). As this research aimed to gain insights into the barriers to community initiated placemaking and how they affect the projects, understanding and interpreting people's experiences and feelings was necessary. An inductive approach was required to develop a framework of these barriers, ensuring meaning was generated from the data. Therefore, a qualitative research strategy was employed.

Clark et al. (2021) highlight five research designs: experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study and comparative (see Appendix B: Five Research Designs). The research did not require experimentation to test a variable, a cross-section of data, or an examination over an extended time frame. Additionally, the study would have been limited by only using one case study. Therefore, a comparative design was used. When combined with a qualitative research strategy, comparative design often becomes a multiple-case study. Consistent methods are used to gain an insight into the workings of social phenomena in different settings. This approach is more conducive to inductive theory building than an intense analysis of one case study (Bryman, 2016) and, therefore assisted the development of a comprehensive framework.

3.3 Sampling

London was chosen as the geographical context for this study because there are various community initiated placemaking projects within the city. While these groups are all framed by the same setting of London, the heterogeneity between local contexts and LPAs aimed to provide different perspectives and experiences on any barriers, thus increasing the barrier framework's robustness and variety. Therefore, the purposive sample set consisted of community initiated placemaking groups and their corresponding LPAs.

As the placemaking projects are the key focus of this research, the community placemakers were sampled first. Employing a two-level purposive sampling technique (Bryman, 2016), cases were identified initially, followed by participants within those cases. The cases sample criteria were placemaking projects initiated by the community in different London boroughs

over the last 15 years. The criterion for the participant sample was an individual who had been an active member of the community placemaking group since its inception, ensuring first had experiences and perceptions of the barriers. Many interesting and varied projects were identified using desk-based research and were sent a recruitment email.

Once the community placemaking sample was confirmed, a mix of purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to contact council officers in the corresponding LPAs. However, despite many attempts to contact the identified samples via email and telephone, only one council officer agreed to participate.

The final sample consisted of three community placemakers and one corresponding council officer. This sample size was small due to the limited number of respondents; however, it did enable a more in-depth investigation (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

3.4 Case Studies

The final placemaking sample consisted of a community garden, a green infrastructure project and an arts-based project (see Appendix C: Placemaking Case Studies).

Forest Gate Community Garden was chosen because it brings the local community together as users or volunteers to interact and connect with nature and the space, ultimately strengthening their connection to place.

OPEN Ealing arts centre was chosen because it introduces vibrancy and creative individuality to the area by re-shaping vacant buildings, many with active frontages, and encourages use and interaction between community members.

Peckham Coal Line was chosen because it is a unique and ambitious community project that will physically connect different places in the borough while providing a connection to nature, ultimately increasing an individual's emotional connection to and sense of place.

A Southwark LPA council officer participated in this research, providing a balanced perspective to Peckham Coal Line, and provided data applicable to all the placemaking case studies.

3.5 Data Collection

Qualitative interviewing was the primary source of data collection. To understand the barriers participants faced and how they affected the project, information on their experiences and opinions was vital. When combined with a qualitative strategy, a multiple-case study design typically takes the form of qualitative interviewing or ethnography, however ethnography is better suited to observational studies (Clark et al., 2021).

Interviews were semi-structured to ensure all discussion topics were effectively covered with each informant. Semi-structured interviews are more targeted and planned than unstructured ones, enabling flexibility for follow-up questions (Adams, 2015) and allowing for cross-case comparability between interviewees (Clark et al., 2021). Two interview guides were developed (see Appendix D: Interview Guides), following Bryman's (2016) guidance; one for the community placemakers and a second for the planning officer.

Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams to eliminate any risk of spreading COVID-19 and ensure interviewees' ease. The interviews were recorded with the participants' written and verbal permission and transcribed verbatim. All interview recordings and transcripts were stored in an anonymised password-protected computer file only accessible by the researcher, complying with the 2018 Data Protection Act. Data collection and recording were conducted in the same way for all participants reducing bias and preventing distortion of results.

3.6 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis method was implemented to assess the barriers explored in the participant interviews. Following a thematic analysis strategy also deployed by Wesener et al.

(2020) allowed for a cross-case comparison of results. Using an inductive approach, the researcher identifies, analyses, organises, describes, and reports themes within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a flexible yet structured method that highlights similarities and differences (King, 2004). However, flexibility can lead to inconsistency and lack of coherence (Holloway and Todres, 2003). This was mitigated by discussing the themes with peers to ensure coherent and unbiased interpretation and by following Nowell et al.'s (2017) thematic analysis guidance to establish trustworthiness.

Other frequently used approaches to qualitative data analysis are grounded theory and narrative analysis (Bryman, 2016). Due to the time and financial resources required to achieve saturation in grounded theory by frequently interchanging between data collection and analysis, thematic analysis was more suitable. Narrative analysis was unsuitable for this research as it is more concerned with personal narratives; while this study incorporated perceptions, it was more focused on the practicalities and outcomes of the project.

After familiarisation and by working systematically and iteratively through the transcripts, a code was assigned to each data item portraying its richness and relevance. Coding was conducted until saturation. A manual approach was used instead of a computer program as it allows for increased conceptualisation and reflection during the coding process (King, 2004). The final set of codes were brought together into themes to give them greater significance and meaning. An iterative process of reviewing and refining, and renaming the themes was then undertaken (Nowell et al., 2017); some themes were separated or combined, became sub-themes, or deemed irrelevant to the study as they were unrelated to barriers. Each round of coding and theming was documented on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet providing an audit trail and ensuring a rationale for decisions can be demonstrated (Koch, 1994).

On completion, the themes and sub-themes were compared against the original transcripts to ensure they accurately conveyed the data. The initial individual barriers described in the interviews were then re-inserted to create the final framework of barriers to community initiated placemaking. The themes, sub-themes and individual barriers were included as they demonstrate the layers of barrier categorisation. Detailing which participants experienced the barriers adds context and weight to the findings. The format enables the framework to be

adapted in future studies by amending the individual barriers and who experienced them columns. Once the framework was finalised, recommendations to overcome the barriers were developed by combining and iteratively analysing the interview and literature review findings.

Attempting to mitigate the risk of unconscious bias during data collection and analysis, the researcher practised being a reflexive practitioner throughout the research project via critical questioning, regular reflection, and supervision meetings to gain an additional perspective.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This research involved voluntary online interviews. In line with University College London's guidelines, an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix E: Information Sheet & Consent Form) were given to all participants. They were required to sign and return before being interviewed. A supervisor signed off the interview guides to ensure unbiased and transparent questions, assess the effectiveness and potential failings, and enable revisions.

Personal data was not collected during the interviews. Other participant identifiers, such as names and job roles, have been anonymised by giving each individual a code, in line with the 2018 Data Protection Act (see Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Questionnaire). Transcripts were provided to all participants, providing the opportunity to amend the responses and ensure they accurately reflected their views prior to analysis. Additionally, interviewees were able to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.8 Limitations & Reflections

Three key limitations to this research have offered an opportunity for reflection. Firstly, the small size of the sample was a limitation. Despite many attempts to recruit community placemakers, there were low response rates. A larger sample size would have increased theoretical saturation, adding more weight and variety to the findings, and may have provided a wider variety of project types. This could have been achieved with additional time and

financial resources. However, the impact on the research was mitigated by conducting a more in-depth investigation with the interviewees, resulting in detailed insights.

Secondly, interviewing one council officer was a limitation. Having all the corresponding council officers would have provided balance, different perspectives and comparisons of different local contexts. However, the data gained from the Southwark Council Officer was applicable to all three community placemaking projects as they explained the barriers broadly and holistically.

Thirdly, not all participants had varied in-depth interactions with the planning system, which may have decreased focus on planning barriers. However, participants provided valuable insights into non-planning related barriers, potentially making the framework more applicable to different practices.

4.0 Findings

This research aimed to investigate the barriers to community initiated placemaking in London from both the community's and LPA's perspectives. The locational context and bilateral perspective address a gap identified in literature. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the barriers faced by communities and local planning authorities in community initiated placemaking projects?
2. How do the barriers affect the project?
3. How can the barriers be overcome to create a more effective and sustainable process that benefits both communities and planning practice?


The key barriers to community placemaking projects were identified through thematically analysing a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews with three community placemakers and one council officer. Four barrier themes and nine barrier sub-themes were generated from the analysis. These were then developed into a framework, as illustrated in figure 1.

4.1 Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking Framework

The framework was generated inductively from the data (See Appendix G: Framework Supported by Data) and applies to different project types. Being applicable to different types of placemaking, this framework could be used in practice by community placemakers and LPAs as a guide and overview of the barriers they may experience. As the framework gives a quick effective view of the barriers, it could be used or adapted by other researchers to assist further investigations into barriers to community initiated placemaking.

Figure 1 – Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking Framework

Barrier Framework		Individual Barrier	Experienced by:			
Barrier Theme	Barrier Sub-Theme		Place-maker A (PMA)	Place-maker B (PMB)	Place-maker C (PMC)	Council Officer A (COA)
Resources	Finance	Lack of funding	x	x	x	x
		Funding requirements	x			
		Funding for all aspects	x	x		
		Self-funding approach			x	
		Economic situation		x		
		Competition for funding			x	
	Resource & maintenance costs		x		x	
	Land & Site	Temporary leases		x	x	
		Suitability of land or site	x	x	x	
		Opposing landowners	x			
Systems & Processes	Planning System	Inaccessible planning processes		x		
		Knowledge of planning		x		
		Cost of planning applications		x		
		Convolutd terminology		x		
	Support Systems	Lack of council support	x	x		x
		Lack of peer support	x		x	
	Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	Transitioning from informal to formal structure	x		x
Volunteers				x	x	
Knowledge, Understanding & Skills		Lack of knowledge		x	x	x
		Incorrect mix of skills		x	x	
Personal Resilience		Lack of understanding about skills				x
		Burnout	x	x	x	x
		Lack of recognition	x		x	x
People Networks	Working Relationships	Relationship with council	x			
		Relationship with landowners/developers	x			
		Council staff turnover	x		x	
	Diversity & Inclusion	Lack of diversity in participants	x	x		x
		Lack of diversity in users		x		
		Only accessible to certain groups	x	x		

 = undiscussed in literature as a barrier to community initiated placemaking

4.2 Key Findings

Barriers regarding finance, planning system, and personal resilience were the most prevalent and experienced by all participants; specifically, individual barriers were lack of funding, conforming to rigid processes, and burnout. The only barrier sub-themes not experienced by all three placemakers were knowledge, understanding and skills, and diversity and inclusion. However, the two placemakers that did discuss these gave rich accounts of the immense effects they had on the projects.

As demonstrated by the framework, many of the individual barriers were undiscussed in literature. However, the most prevalent new finding was the sub-theme of personal resilience; no research highlighted burnout or lack of recognition and the effects these have on personal resilience as a barrier to community initiated placemaking.

5.0 Discussion

The key findings and associated barrier sub-themes will be discussed below to examine the barriers further and determine how they affected the projects and how they might be overcome.

5.1 Resources

The resources barrier theme included sub-themes on finance and land and site. While these findings were the most anticipated based on the literature review, they also further explore some barriers' specific nuances.

5.1.1 Finance

Each of the placemakers conveyed the strategies they employ for financing projects, the most prevalent of which is applying for funding and grants. The findings suggest a lack of funding and difficulty accessing grants. However, each placemaker described different types of barriers in accessing this financial support. For PMB, funding has become increasingly difficult since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, economic impacts from COVID-19 will likely have lasting effects on grant availability. PMA has always faced barriers when accessing funding because they do not squarely conform to one type of placemaking project, they intentionally span the environment, planning, and parks. Many charities only provide funding for specific types of projects that are aligned with their ethos and mission. Finally, PMC highlighted how the finite number of grants causes competition between community groups. Not only does this rivalry make accessing funding more difficult, but it is also detrimental to collaborative working, affecting less experienced groups most severely.

These three findings illustrate the variety of barriers that community placemaking groups face when accessing grants. While none of these barriers were discussed in literature, it could be due to the relative recency of COVID-19, the literature case studies being of a more specific nature and the different geographical context.

Even when applications for grants are successful, they rarely cover all costs. PMA and PMB explained how trusts and charities prefer to fund projects with visible results and are reluctant to fund operational costs such as staffing, community engagement, materials, and administration fees. PMB explained this difficulty by emphasising the resource and financial intensity of running and maintaining a community garden, reflecting Karge's (2018), Strunk and Richardson's (2017) and Wesener et al.'s (2020) findings. Similarly, the predominant financial barrier that COA expressed was the maintenance costs; many project designs are not robust enough to last more than six months. Supporting Karge (2018), this can commonly be due to cheap materials being used initially. Therefore, these operational and maintenance costs support the durability and longevity of projects; if more organisations funded these costs, projects would be more sustainable.

To supplement grants and funding, all placemakers use additional methods of self-funding. For example, PMA and PMB have employed crowdfunding campaigns, while PMB and PMC also take a commercial approach by selling goods and renting out their venues. Giving an alternative view to Chan et al.'s (2020) findings of difficulty rectifying social welfare drive with financial viability, PMC has a firm belief about being self-funded to ensure the project's financial sustainability, thus enabling community work. However, this approach also causes barriers; not applying for charitable status makes them ineligible for tax breaks or discounted business rates. This indicates that financial values and perceptions can cause as prevalent barriers as accessing finance, even when similar project goals exist. These findings are similar to Wesener et al.'s (2020), which concluded that perceived barriers were just as prevalent as physical ones. While both beliefs about self-funding can cause barriers, the approach taken should reflect the values and ideals of the people implementing the project to ensure they stay connected with and motivated by the process and outcomes.

Lack of charity funding and grants can also be overcome by funding from the council; PMB, PMA and PMC all described receiving funds from a community neighbourhood operation or Section 106 money. However, contrasting this supportive narrative, PMC also expressed frustration that the council emphasise the importance of the arts yet associates little money with it. Without a steady stream of money, little is possible. Summarising this, PMC explained:

“At some point money is involved and will need to be involved. But if you can't do anything, everybody gets a bit stifled.”

Community groups can be financially resourceful and innovative; however, all the barriers highlighted in this sub-theme suggest that these measures can only go so far before a stable funding stream is required. Moreover, as will be demonstrated, many other barriers are connected to the lack of financial resources within the community and local government.

5.1.2 Land & Site

Each community placemaker discussed barriers regarding the land or site for their projects. Reflecting the literature (Chan et al., 2021; Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020), temporary leases are also a prevalent barrier to community placemaking projects in London; these transpired in different ways for PMB and PMC.

The lease for PMB's community garden council-owned land requires renewal every five years as it is designated housing land. Guaranteeing the temporariness, the group were required to declare they would leave without protest if evicted. Building upon Wesener et al.'s (2020) findings, this suggests the council's prioritisation of housing land causes a barrier to and concerns over the project's longevity. These practices likely aim to pre-emptively ease the transition and manage the community's expectations regarding the future of the project. While PMB felt some uncertainty over the longevity of the project, confirming Wesener et al.'s (2020) findings, they balanced this with confidence that the project has local support and believed it would be "at the council's peril" to evict the community garden. This raises questions about the right to land and the effectiveness of meanwhile leases; while it is beneficial for the community and vibrancy of the area for land to be used in the interim, benefits may be temporary and result in feelings of resentment and defeat if evicted. Expectations need to be managed more effectively, and alternative land acquired for the continuation of the project.

While community gardens require a static location due to the extensive time and resources spent establishing them, PMC's arts-based project utilised temporary leases and rotated between different sites. However, this movement was incidental while searching for a permanent location. Barriers to progression and development occurred as they had to start again with each re-location, had two six-month periods without a building, and the nature of the project was always subject to the context of the building. For example, the first building was much larger than anticipated, so the group needed to mobilise quickly to adapt their plans to suit the space. When discussing this, PMC explained that:

"The purpose, the aims, and the objectives as set out in the plans don't always come to fruition in exactly the same way; they come to fruition in a, you know, sort of a roundabout way, but not exactly meeting what we aspire to."

No matter how fluid and flexible the nature of the project is, temporary leases and relocating still act as a barrier to projects with long-term goals. Designing transience into the project would assist in realising the full benefits of a meanwhile lease.

PMA's project is different from PMB's and PMC's as it was designed for a specific site and cannot be transposed into a different locational context. However, a barrier occurred when the landowner unexpectedly sold the site, and the new landowners attempted to remove the placemaking project from the development. The group had to react quickly to the developers and take a defensive approach to ensure their project was not discarded. This effort consumed energy, reduced momentum, drained resources, and limited the time spent on other proactive work, such as community engagement. The complexities of stakeholders' contrasting perspectives are a prevalent barrier in planning and development (Gualini and Bianchi, 2015). These findings suggest that barriers of opposing interest also occur in community placemaking. This is a bilateral issue and difficult to overcome; while the placemaking project could benefit the wider area, restrictions may affect the development's viability.

PMB discussed site facilities as a barrier; a lack of running water in the community garden has been a challenge, however it is one they tolerate due to the cost of connecting it. The wooden

hoarding around the garden was an unexpected barrier, restricting visual accessibility. This was not realised until it was replaced by visually permeable wire fencing, increasing the number and diversity of visitors. Confirming Karge and Makarenko's (2015) findings, lack of visual accessibility is a barrier, however this can be overcome through design.

By the very essence of placemaking, the nature of the space will always have an immense impact. Whether it poses barriers or enablers, the project will always be influenced by the suitability and availability of the site.

5.2 Systems & Processes

Barriers involving systems and processes were the most prevalent; all participants experienced the barrier sub-themes of the planning system and support systems. While similar conclusions were revealed in the literature review, these findings are expanded upon by offering COA's perspective.

5.2.1 Planning System

Literature often portrays planning and placemaking as being closely linked (Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, 2007; Hague and Jenkins, 2005; Shaw and Lord, 2007). Due to this, it was expected that the case studies would have in-depth involvement with the planning system. However, each of the placemakers had differing levels of participation with the local planning authorities and, as a result, experienced different barrier types and severities. Barriers discussed by all participants were the inaccessibility of the planning system and bureaucratic processes.

Contrary to initial expectations, PMB needed planning permission for the community garden to account for the use change. The application needs to be submitted every five years as it is designated housing land; their request to extend to ten years was denied. Having repeated this process three times, the group has experienced four key barriers: the associated costs, complex planning processes, convoluted terminology and a lack of knowledge and skills.

Retired town planning contacts enabled the application in the first two instances; however they were unable to find a knowledgeable person within their budget on the third occasion. Eventually submitting the application themselves, the inaccessibility of the system and lack of knowledge caused an excessive expenditure of time, energy and stress when learning the terminology and skills required to apply. PMC deliberately limits interactions with the planning system to pre-emptively overcome the lack of knowledge barrier by ensuring developers are involved in projects to assist. These findings suggest that simplifying planning language could make the system more accessible, while providing planning education could give people the tools to navigate it to overcome these barriers.

Some authors have discussed the inaccessibility and complexity of the planning system (Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, 2007; Healey, 1998). However, other than Friedmann's (2010) discussions surrounding inaccessible language, this is not discussed as a direct barrier to community initiated placemaking within literature. This may be due to the case studies in literature having little interaction with the system or the different geographical planning contexts.

Similarly to lacking accessibility, planning processes are often denoted as overly bureaucratic; all participants discussed this as a barrier. For PMA, these barriers occurred increasingly in the implementation and delivery phase of the project rather than the initial ideation phase. As it was a unique project in the borough, the group felt there was an opportunity for it to inform council practices and encourage innovations, however it instead had to conform to existing policies, set mechanisms, and procedures. This limited opportunities for iterating and innovating and stifled collaborative work, creativity, and community engagement. Additionally, PMA and PMC described how the organisational burden of adhering to bureaucratic processes strangles groups. The findings expand on Hartley et al.'s (2020) conclusion that councils lack flexibility.

Giving a different perspective to PMA and PMC, COA understands how the system can be perceived as unnecessarily bureaucratic, however once the bureaucracy is implemented, it becomes clearer why it is necessary. Often accused of intentionally establishing barriers, COA argued that the barrier is, instead, a lack of community understanding of the purpose of

bureaucracy. Due to the broad spectrum of possible eventualities to consider when decision-making, rigid processes ensure fair and unbiased treatment and protect everyone involved. These findings demonstrate the multifaceted nature of planning processes; while they are convoluted and force conformity, they also ensure an equitable safeguarding system. As this barrier is bilateral, the solution to overcome it must also be. Further explanation of the necessity of the processes and additional process options could be a possible way to mitigate this barrier. However, the opportunities for implementing these solutions are restricted by limited resources within local government.

Based on the lack of community initiated placemaking policy highlighted in the literature review, it was anticipated that this would cause a significant planning barrier. While this may be attributed to a lack of understanding of processes, no participants discussed policy, or lack thereof, as a challenge. However, it could be argued that specific policy would set clearer parameters for placemakers and council officers, thus giving more purpose and clarity to the processes. Alternatively, specific policy could establish new processes more suited to enabling community initiated placemaking.

5.2.2 Support Systems

The inaccessibility and bureaucracy of the planning system resulted in PMA and PMB feeling there was a lack of support. PMB initially attempted to overcome the barrier of their lack of knowledge by asking the planning authority and a professional planning body for assistance, however little support was given. Although PMA felt supported when the project was written into the Local Plan, they felt limited support afterwards and limitations of what policy could enable; it did not prevent barriers such as the land being sold. Additionally, when they were required to conform to the rigid processes, PMA thought the council were unaccommodating, enforcing unnecessary barriers and not acting on their words of support. Corroborating Strunk and Richardson's (2017) findings, the lack of support left PMA feeling powerless and questioning whether to continue with the work. These effects make projects less sustainable and beneficial for the participants involved.

However, from an alternative perspective, COA explained that providing support, especially to less experienced groups, requires extensive resources. There is not enough time to "hand hold people" or take on "pet projects". It is also difficult to convey the resource intensity to community groups and help them understand why there is not as much support as expected. Similarly to overcoming bureaucracy and other barriers, the solution requires increased resources for local government enabling increased time and money to support community groups.

Not only is the lack of support from the council a barrier, but so is the lack of peer-led support systems. PMC explained that while some peer support exists in their area, more people talk about it than take action. PMA found that, at the community level, the charged and political environment often results in complex conflicts. This toxic and unhealthy environment causes feelings of isolation and loneliness. PMA argued that the current institutions are not equipped for this; even the local support and infrastructure groups have too much of a "parent-child dynamic" to overcome these barriers. With genuinely peer-led support systems and networks, conflict resolution and learning spaces could assist groups in overcoming these barriers together, creating a healthier and sustainable process for all. Working together, groups could also more easily influence and advocate for policy changes, in turn receiving more institutional support.

5.3 Project Team

The project team theme involved sub-themes of team and organisational structure barriers, knowledge, understanding and skill barriers and personal resilience barriers. This theme elicited many personal anecdotes and challenges faced by the participants. Many findings provide additional perspectives or highlight barriers previously undiscussed in the literature review.

5.3.1 Team & Organisational Structure

Many community initiated placemaking projects start informally and develop into a more formalised implementable form. All placemakers described the project's evolution as unanticipated because it either started as a provocation or evolved from another project. PMA and PMC experienced barriers in navigating and balancing the informal to formal transition. Similarly to Stevenson's (2019) findings that informal organisational structure can lead to difficulties in accessing support, PMC explained that working informally for too long can be a barrier to growth. Formal processes, such as a license to occupy and delivery strategies, protect the people involved to enable the longevity and sustainability of the project.

Furthering Stevenson's (2019) findings, which suggest difficulty stems from not knowing when to formalise, PMA described difficulty transitioning from the "kitchen table" into a formalised group as they did not want to become fully professionalised. They attempted to combine the energy and passion of a community group with the skills and delivery of professionals. However, ultimately ending up between the two caused uncertainty about what support was available, the viable ways forward, where the responsibility and risk lay, and where decisions get made. These ambiguous processes reflect the findings in the 'Support Systems' sub-theme of lack of support from both the council and peers. The difficulty transitioning from an informal to a formal structure raises questions about the community's motivation and goals of the project; if it began from a desire to volunteer spare time to improve the area and work with others, it stands to reason that formalising would be less desirable. A clear vision for the project may assist in navigating this transition.

The structure of volunteers in community placemaking groups also causes barriers for PMB and PMC. PMC explained how getting the correct amount of volunteers was a challenge; initially, they had too many people involved, which posed difficulties when they were still finding their feet. At other times, they had too few volunteers. Despite the majority of community initiated placemaking projects being volunteer based, no literature discussed this as a barrier. This finding suggests that a more formalised plan for volunteers may need to be developed in the initial stages to maximise the efficiency of the project.

5.3.2 Knowledge, Understanding & Skills

As discussed in the 'Planning System' sub-theme, lack of knowledge of the planning system causes significant barriers for community placemaking groups. Reflecting the findings in literature (Hartley et al., 2020; Karge, 2018; Wesener et al., 2020), PMC also explained how a lack of technical knowledge of council systems could have been a significant barrier for them. Additionally, having an inadequate understanding of governance prevented them from applying for charitable status, resulting in financial barriers.

Furthering the literature findings, knowledge barriers are not only applicable to technical knowledge; COA highlighted that many community groups lack understanding of their skills and the amount of work they can undertake and influence. However, as many individuals "don't know what they don't know", they are unaware of and unprepared for the challenges ahead. Many groups become frustrated when COA explains that an aspect of the project is impossible. To overcome this barrier, groups must know their skill sets and source additional advice on areas they lack. Listening to COA's feedback and actioning their advice enables groups to learn and become more autonomous over time.

Both PMB and PMC discussed issues arising from an imbalance in the mix of skill sets in the team. They emphasised the importance of having someone who can recognise an individual's skill sets to establish a robust team and ensure people use their strengths. However, curating a team with the right skill mix does not holistically address this issue and may lead to exclusionary practices whereby only educated people can participate. As concluded from reviewing the literature, further investment in upskilling and education is required to overcome the root cause of this barrier.

5.3.3 Personal Resilience

All research participants discussed the negative impacts of participating in community initiated placemaking and the influences these had on their personal resilience. However, this issue is undiscussed in the literature on barriers to community initiated placemaking. These

barriers negatively affect mental health; therefore, these findings are an essential addition to the existing body of research.

Burnout was found to be a common impact of the placemaking work; all participants had either experienced it themselves or witnessed it happen to another group member, and various factors caused it. Both PMB and PMC described people becoming exhausted and resigning from the project due to having too much work to do. PMC explained how feelings of disappointment, frustration, and lack of motivation, commonly associated with burnout, can occur when ideas do not come to fruition. COA emphasised the immense pressure, lengthy hours and drained energy that can lead to burnout due to the lack of resources. Having experienced the effects of burnout, PMA explained:

“The shadow is that it's absolutely exhausting. I got really burnt out by it last year and felt very, very unsupported in these later years... I was getting angry and frustrated and jaded and losing interest. That I'm still struggling with, and it makes me really question if I actually want to do this type of work.”

Therefore, burnout is a significant barrier to progression and threatens people's mental and emotional health. If this unhealthy environment continues, there is a risk not only to the projects but also the passionate people who are at the heart of initiating them.

Participants also described a lack of recognition as having a considerable impact on personal resilience. Despite community groups giving their free time and energy to the project, PMA explained that their volunteered skills and efforts are often not valued or recognised as much as a professional role; this negatively impacts motivation and energy. PMC discussed a lack of recognition between community groups, explaining that feelings of resentment and being undervalued can often occur when a group implements a similar project in the area. Without formalised structures of a professional organisation, there are limited gauges upon which to measure recognition, such as salary, peer reviews and customer feedback. However, lack of recognition is also apparent in the council; when explaining the amount of complicated work and extensive decision-making considerations, COA explained that the public does not understand and, as a result, views the council officers as incompetent. Additionally, the public

rarely acknowledges and respects council officers' skills and expertise. This perception leaves COA feeling frustrated and disappointed. However, COA balanced the negative impacts of burnout and lack of recognition with their motivation, passion, and investment in the work. Therefore, resilience can be enhanced by a drive and belief in the project.

Despite the prevalence of these findings, none of the literature discussing barriers mentions negative impacts influencing personal resilience. These findings demonstrate that burnout and lack of recognition can prevent individuals and groups from continuing the work, which is a vital barrier that needs overcoming. Providing increased support helps overcome these barriers, which, as discussed in the 'Support Systems' sub-theme, should stem from both the council and peers. If more support existed, both in a personal and organisational capacity, the workload could be shared, and there would be more recognition and collaboration, mitigating this barrier. Additionally, further research should be conducted into this barrier to assist in overcoming it.

5.4 People Networks

Barriers associated with people networks were categorised into sub-themes of working relationships and diversity and inclusion. Focusing on exchanges and interactions between people, or lack thereof, participants conveyed network barriers as more uncontrollable than other barrier themes. These findings build upon existing research by adding additional alternative perspectives and highlighting issues undiscussed in the literature review.

5.4.1 Working Relationships

The literature discussed relationships between community groups and surrounding neighbours as barriers (Karge, 2018; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; Wesener et al., 2020). However, the participants only described relationships between themselves and the council or landowners as barriers. As discussed in the 'Land & Site' sub-theme, PMA encountered barriers when the landowner unexpectedly sold the land. While they had been proactively building a relationship with the landowner and developers to enable partnership working, this

unexpected challenge arguably demonstrated the developer's lack of transparency, unwillingness to cooperate and limited communication. Counteracting the group's collaborative working approach, this barrier caused them to feel undermined and disappointed and eroded their trust in the landowners. Ultimately, this barrier stems from differences in goals and objectives; developers require a project to be financially viable, while a community group usually prioritises the social benefits of the project. Overcoming these conflicting interests is challenging as a middle ground, and a win-win situation needs to be found. For PMA's project, the council acted as a mediator between them and the developers to assist in attaining a solution; it was enabled by the existing involvement of the council and PMA proactively forging a good relationship with them. This demonstrates the vital role that council officers could play in conflict resolution in community initiated placemaking.

Despite building a good relationship, PMA faced challenges in their relationship with the council, such as differing opinions slowing momentum and prolonging decision-making. Additionally, staff turnover in the council was a barrier experienced by PMA and PMC. PMA explained difficulties in constantly rebuilding relationships with the new staff members and explained that progress or enablers get lost in the changeover. Similarly, PMC experienced challenges adapting to a new team's changing working styles and expectations. While COA did not describe relationships as barriers, they did emphasise the importance of effective partnership working; explaining that barriers are more manageable when community groups work with the council.

These findings offer a different perspective to the literature and delve further into the challenges that can arise from working relationships. As with all work involving various stakeholders, issues surrounding relationships and conflicting interests will always occur; it is an inevitable barrier that cannot be completely avoided. Instead, individual relationships and conflicts need to be managed case-by-case to find a resolution. This could be assisted by increased support in conflict resolution and advancing communication skills.

5.4.2 Diversity & Inclusion

The literature briefly discussed the lack of diversity and inclusion as a barrier to community initiated placemaking, however it did not expand on why it was an issue and how it may be overcome (Menconi, Heland & Grohmann, 2020; Webster et al., 2021; Wesener et al., 2020). This is likely because it is a multifaceted, complex issue affecting many different aspects of society.

PMA, PMB and COA discussed the lack of diversity and inclusionary practices. All concluded that community placemaking groups usually consist of people from educated white middle-class backgrounds. PMA thought this was partly due to much of the work being volunteer-based and therefore “privileges privileged people” who have enough time and money to participate; this does not address equality. Additionally, PMB felt their lack of diversity in the group and users was due to people having different expectations of what a community garden should be and feeling that it was a white organisation not intended for a diverse range of people. Therefore, efforts must be made to incorporate diversity and inclusionary practices into the group and project design from the outset.

Attempting to overcome this barrier, PMB is providing information in different languages, establishing liaison groups with schools, and using social media to reach a broader demographic. However, COA emphasised the extensive amount of communication, relationship building, and trust gaining required to include a diverse range of groups. Summing up this extensive amount of work, COA explained:

“If you’re really going to get into the DNA of the area and into the granular detail of the area, equalities and the way you approach your equalities is an absolutely huge piece of work, needing a huge amount of understanding. A lot of community groups don’t quite get that.”

However, very few groups have the knowledge, skills, time, or resources required to fully devote themselves to this work. Therefore, very few community placemaking groups can overcome this barrier. While this challenge may not directly obstruct the project’s

development or cause it to change direction, it is an issue in direct opposition to the people-centred collaborative nature of placemaking. Overcoming this barrier would enhance the integrity and success of projects and placemaking practices.

While these findings only scratch the surface of these extensive issues and their implications for community initiated placemaking, they demonstrate how prevalent the issues are and the extensive amount of work involved in overcoming them. Much more should be done, in practice and research, to include a more diverse group of people in community initiated placemaking and address this societal issue.

6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to identify the barriers to community initiated placemaking, explore how they impact the project and how they can be overcome. This was achieved by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with three placemakers and one council officer in London and thematically analysing the data. The data was developed into a framework synthesising the key barrier findings and analysis. Building and expanding upon Wesener et al.'s (2020) framework, this framework applies to different types of placemaking projects and can be adapted for future studies. Community placemakers and LPAs can also use it in practice as a guide and overview of the barriers they may encounter.

Barriers to community initiated placemaking were categorised into four themes and nine sub-themes. The resource theme included finance and land and site barriers. Very little is possible without finance, which causes concern and threatens the longevity of projects. Thus, increased sources of secure funding are required. Land and site barriers restrict placemaking because projects are defined by place and the nature of the site. To overcome these barriers, more suitable land needs to be made available and more projects need to be designed with a specific site and tenure in mind.

The systems and processes theme included sub-themes of the planning system and support systems. The inaccessibility and bureaucracy of the planning system causes frustration and drains resources and energy. LPAs providing explanations for the bureaucracy, simplifying language and developing specific community placemaking policies may help overcome the barriers. Support system barriers cause emotional strain, conflicts and unhealthy unsustainable project environments. Peer support networks and increased resources in the council are required to overcome these barriers.

The project team theme includes sub-themes of the team and organisational structure, knowledge, understanding and skills, and personal resilience. An informal team and

organisational structure causes difficulties accessing support and establishing formal protective strategies. Support and having a clear vision are key to overcoming these barriers. Lack of knowledge, understanding and skills lead to groups taking on too much work, becoming frustrated and not reaching their potential. Increased education and upskilling are crucial for overcoming these. Barriers affecting personal resilience were significant findings previously undiscussed in literature. As they threaten the safety of participants and the sustainability of the project, it is vital they are overcome. Increased support and further research can assist in overcoming these barriers.

The people networks theme included working relationships and diversity and inclusion sub-themes. Conflicting working relationships slow the project's momentum and drain energy; however, they need to be overcome on a case-by-case basis with effective communication and constant relationship building. Diversity and inclusion barriers are complex issues that can only be overcome with considerable work and understanding of equalities and the local area.

Many of the individual barriers within these sub-themes had not been discussed in literature. Therefore, this research provides additional insights and understandings of the nuances of barriers surrounding resources, systems and processes, project teams and people networks.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Planning Recommendations

As demonstrated in the literature review, there is a lack of national, regional, and local planning policy on community initiated placemaking. Protecting and promoting community placemaking projects could be achieved through policy. Policies could include direction on projects incorporating someone else's land or meanwhile leases and incentivise community placemaking projects. Local placemaking guides for communities could support and explain the policy, planning processes and reasons for bureaucracy. While the initial production of these documents would be resource intensive, they would save LPAs time longer term and

provide further support. An additional way of providing support would be to have a dedicated community placemaking officer. Increased funding for placemaking in local government would enable these three recommendations to be implemented.

On a smaller, less resource intensive scale, understanding of processes could be improved by publishing reasons for the bureaucracy on the council website. Additionally, establishing a process in which short-term planning applications can be kept on the council's system and, if unchanged, be reviewed and renewed at a reduced rate.

6.2.2 Non-Planning Recommendations

Many barriers to community initiated placemaking stem from accessing suitable land. To overcome this, a directory of land could be established for community use with transparent lease terms; community groups develop proposals for the specific site. This would manage expectations, design land features into projects and increase a location's vibrancy.

As lack of peer support was a prevalent finding, a London Placemaking Community of Practice could be established to bring placemakers together and enable sharing of materials and advice. This would establish an infrastructure of support, encouragement, and recognition. Being a London-wide network, connections could be made with groups in different boroughs to avoid direct competition for resources. Furthermore, they could be a voice for change, influence policy to meet community placemaking needs and provide a central directory of groups to assist future research.

Further research into the specific barriers would give greater insight into the nuances of the issues, especially those previously undiscussed in literature, such as influences on personal resilience. As the framework applies to different project types, future research could use or adapt the framework developed through this study by applying any additional individual barrier findings. With increased research and knowledge on barriers, the easier they are to overcome. Once a more seamless process has been achieved, more communities can safely contribute to placemaking, ultimately creating a greater sense of place and creating a more sustainable, cohesive community.

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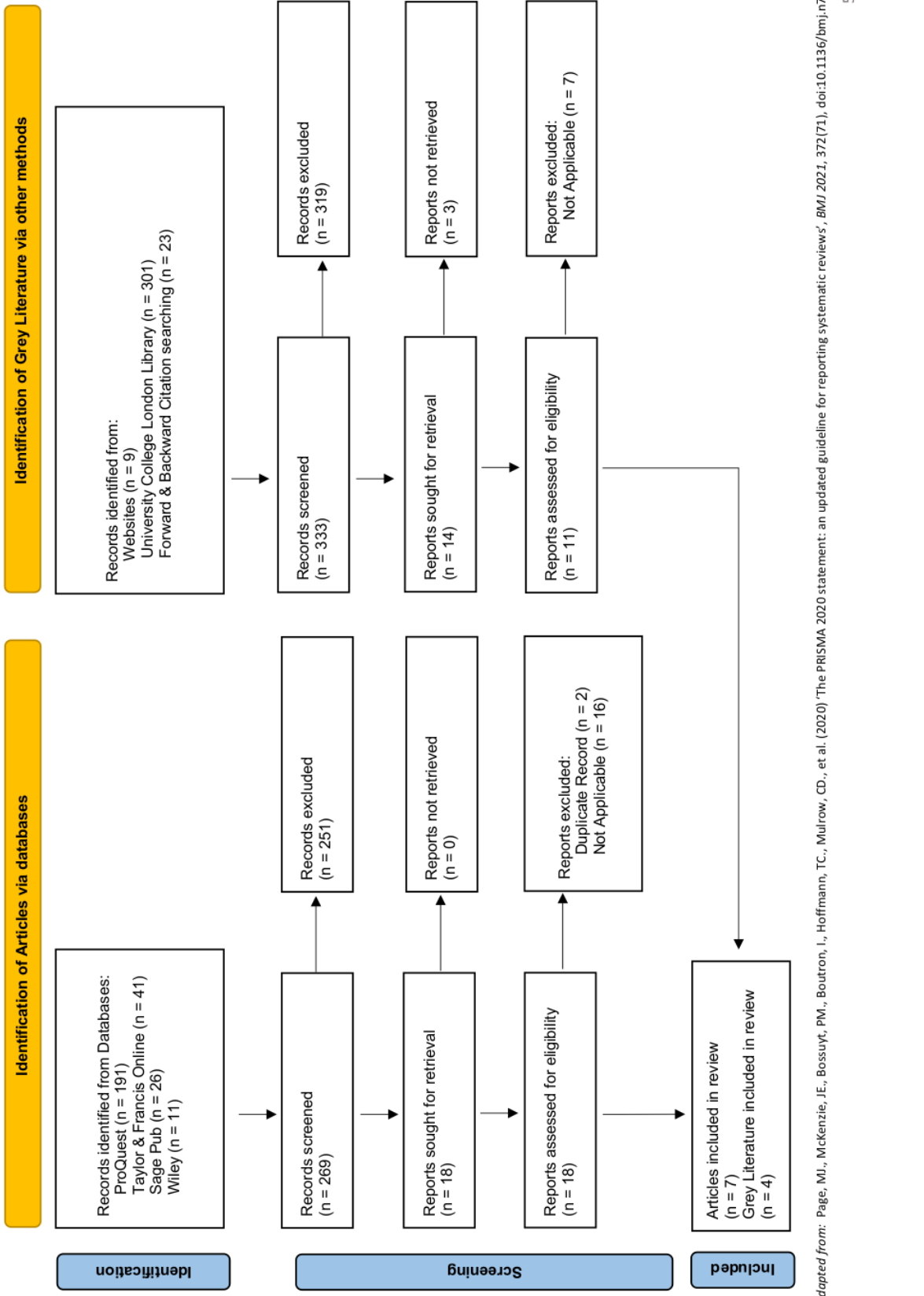
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Appendices

Appendix A: PRISMA Flow Diagram	50
Appendix B: Five Research Designs	51
Appendix C: Placemaking Case Studies	51
Appendix D: Interview Guides	52
Appendix E: Information Sheet & Consent Form	53
Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Pro Forma	57
Appendix G: Framework Supported by Data	59
Appendix H: Risk Assessment Form	67

Appendix A: PRISMA Flow Diagram



Adapted from: Page, MJ., McKenzie, JE., Bossuyt, PM., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, TC., Mulrow, CD., et al. (2020) 'The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews', *BMJ* 2021, 372(71), doi:10.1136/bmj.n71.

Appendix B: Five Research Designs

Research Design	Definition
Experimental	Experimental design is used to test causation by manipulating an independent variable to determine how it impacts the dependent variable, while holding potentially confounding variables constant (Clark et al., 2021).
Cross-sectional	Cross-sectional design involves collecting data with more than two variables gain a broad view of that population at one point in time (Clark et al., 2021).
Longitudinal	Longitudinal design collects data repeatedly from participants over an extended period (Clark et al., 2021).
Case Study	Case Study design involves intensely analysing one detailed exemplar case of a specific location to gain insights into that site or organisation (Clark et al., 2021).
Comparative	Comparative design studies two different cases using the same methods to gain an insight into the workings of social phenomena in different settings (Clark et al., 2021).

Appendix C: Placemaking Case Studies

Placemaking Case Study	London Borough	About
Forest Gate Community Garden	Newham	Forest Gate Community Garden in Newham was initiated by five residents in 2013, aiming to transform a neglected plot of land into a green space for the community.
OPEN	Ealing	OPEN was founded in 2010 by local artists and residents in Ealing, aiming to establish a community arts centre and utilise vacant buildings on temporary leases to deliver their arts programmes.
Peckham Coal Line	Southwark	Originating as an idea of residents in 2014, Peckham Coal Line in Southwark aims to transform a disused railway line into a green corridor.

Appendix D: Interview Guides

Interview Questions for Members of Community Initiated Placemaking Groups:

- *Initial Questions*
 1. Can you briefly tell me what your involvement has been in the project?
 2. How was the project initiated?
- *Topic 1 – Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking*
 3. Did the project experience any barriers during the process? If so, please can you tell me about them?
 4. What caused these barriers?
 5. Did you overcome these barriers? If 'yes': how? If 'no': why not?
 6. Were any of these barriers anticipated? If so, which?
 7. Did the barriers affect the outcome of the project? If so, how?
 8. Were there any barriers related to the planning system?
- *Topic 2 – Community Initiated Placemaking and Planning*
 9. What interactions did the group have with the planning system?
 10. How did you find navigating the planning processes?
- *Topic 3 – Outcomes of Community Initiated Placemaking for communities*
 11. Were there benefits of participating for you personally? If so, what?
 12. Were there negative impacts of participating for you personally? If so, what?
- *Ending Questions*
 13. *What advice* would you give to other community initiated placemaking groups?

Interview Questions for the Council Officer:

- *Initial Questions*
 1. Can you briefly tell me about your role and your involvement in community placemaking projects?
- *Topic 1 – Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking*
 2. Do barriers arise when working with community placemaking groups that limit you being able to support and enable the project? If 'yes': please can you tell me about them?
 3. What causes these barriers?
 4. Can the barriers overcome? If 'yes': how? If 'no': why not?
 5. Do the barriers affect the outcome of the project? If so, how?
 6. Are these types of barriers a common occurrence in community placemaking projects?
 7. In your experience, what are common barriers community groups face when initiating placemaking projects?
 8. What could the groups do to overcome these barriers?
- *Topic 2 – Community Initiated Placemaking and Planning*
 9. How effectively do you think planning and local authority systems enable and support community initiated placemaking?
- *Ending Questions:*
 10. *What advice* would you give to other community initiated placemaking groups?

Appendix E: Information Sheet & Consent Form

Information and Consent Form Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking

Project Title:

Exploring Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking: A Study of the Challenges Faced by Community Placemaking Groups and Local Planning Authorities in London

Researcher:

Megan Stevens, MSc Spatial Planning Student at University College London

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research project being undertaken by a Masters student from the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London (UCL).

Before you decide whether or not to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what participation will involve. Please read the following information carefully, feel free to discuss it with others if you wish, or ask the research team for clarification or further information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Why is this research being conducted?

Placemaking is an ambiguous term defined in many ways (Future of London, 2017). The definition used for this project is a process of reimagining and reinventing public spaces to become the heart of the community and strengthen the connection between people and place (Project for Public Spaces, 2020). Community placemaking shares the same goals, however, the community leads or initiates the process. Placemaking empowers and enables communities to take ownership of space, express collective identity, connect, and learn from others.

There is much evidence to support the benefits of community placemaking for both communities and planners, however, both parties still face barriers when implementing these projects (a barrier is anything that poses a challenge to the project or causes it to change direction such as access to land, funding, navigating the planning system, etc.). Limited literature directly discusses these barriers; thus, it is unclear how they affect placemaking outcomes and whether they are resolvable. The aim of this project is to explore the barriers to community initiated placemaking, identify how they affect the

outcomes, and investigate whether the barriers can be mitigated to create a more seamless and sustainable process that benefits communities and planners.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You are being invited to take part due to your contribution to [project name] community initiated placemaking project. Hearing your experience of the process [project name] has undergone would be a valuable asset to this research as it will provide insights on how barriers can be overcome, and success can be achieved.

Other community initiated placemaking groups and planning officers are also being contacted to request interviews. Together, the interviews will provide a broad overview of the different barriers faced by different types of community placemaking.

Do I have to participate?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do choose to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences and without having to give a reason.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If you do choose to participate, you will be invited to an online interview to explore the issues highlighted above. The interview will be conducted via Microsoft Teams video call which is free to use. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed at a later date. You will have the opportunity to see the interview transcript and agree any amendments with the researcher after the interview is concluded.

What are the advantages of taking part?

There are no financial incentives or rewards offered for participating in this research, however it is hoped that this project will inform other community placemaking groups of the barriers they may face throughout the process. It is also hoped to offer potential solutions to overcome these barriers and inspire other community groups to initiate their own placemaking projects.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

We anticipate no significant disadvantages associated with taking part in this project. If you experience any unexpected adverse consequences as a result of taking part in the project you are encouraged to contact the researcher as soon as possible using the contact details on page 2 of this information and consent sheet.

If I choose to take part, what will happen to the data?

The interview data will be anonymised at the point of transcription and identified by a general identifier (e.g. 'Community Placemaker A' or 'Council Officer A'). A record of participant identities and any notes will be kept separately and securely from the anonymised data. All data and information affiliated with this project will be securely stored on an encrypted computer drive. The data will be only used for the purposes of this research and relevant outputs and will not be shared with any third party. The anonymised data may be utilised in the written dissertation produced at the end of this project, and this dissertation may then be made publicly available via the University Library's Open Access Portal, however no identifiable or commercial sensitive information will be accessible in this way.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

It is anticipated that the data collected in this project will be included in the dissertation produced at the end of this project, submitted for the award of a Masters degree at University College London (UCL). You will not be personally identified in any of the outputs from this work, and attributions and quotations will be anonymised. If you would like to receive an electronic copy of any outputs stemming from this project, please ask the contact below who will be happy to provide this.

Contact Details

If you would like more information or have any questions or concerns about the project or your participation, please use the contact details below:

Primary contact Megan Stevens
Role MSc student
Email megan.stevens.21@ucl.ac.uk

Supervisor Ann Skippers
Role MSc dissertation supervisor
Email ann@charismaspatialplanning.com

Concerns and / or Complaints

If you have concerns about any aspect of this research project please contact the MSc student contact the student in the first instance, then escalate to the supervisor.

Informed Consent Sheet

Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form by ticking the boxes to acknowledge the following statements and signing your name at the bottom of the page.

Please give the signed form to the researcher conducting your interview at the interview. They will also be able to explain this consent form further with you, if required.

1.	I have read and understood the information sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I agree to participate in the above research by attending a face-to-face interview as described on the Information Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand that I may withdraw at any time without giving a reason and with no consequences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I agree for the interview to be audio recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I understand that I may see a copy of the interview transcript after it has been transcribed and agree any amendments with the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I understand that the intention is that interviews are anonymised and that if any of my words are used in a research output that they will not be directly attributed to me unless otherwise agreed by all parties.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand the data from this project will be considered for repository in the UCL Open Access repository as described on the Information Sheet but that this will be anonymised data only.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I understand that I can contact the student who interviewed me at any time using the email address they contacted me on to arrange the interview, or the dissertation supervisor using the contact details provided on page X of the information sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Questionnaire

The Bartlett School of Planning



Note: this is a copy of the proforma that each student MUST complete and submit directly on Moodle. Please reproduce your submission here for the purpose of your supervisor signing off on its review and approval.

Ethical Clearance Pro Forma

It is important for you to include all relevant information about your research in this form, so that your supervisor can give you the best advice on how to proceed with your research.

You are advised to read though the relevant sections of [UCL's Research Integrity guidance](#) to learn more about your ethical obligations.

Submission Details

1. Name of programme of study:

MSc Spatial Planning

2. Please indicate the type of research work you are doing (Delete that which do not apply):

Dissertation in Planning (MSc)

3. Please provide the current working title of your research:

Exploring Barriers to Community Initiated Placemaking: A Study of the Challenges Faced by Community Groups and Local Planning Authorities in London

4. Please indicate your supervisor's name:

Ann Skippers

Research Details

5. Please indicate here which data collection methods you expect to use. (Tick all that apply/or delete those which do not apply.)

- Interviews
- Audio-visual recordings (including photographs)
- Systematic review
- Secondary data analysis

6. Please indicate where your research will take place (delete that which does not apply):

UK only

7. Does your project involve the recruitment of participants?

'Participants' means human participants and their data (including sensor/location data and observational notes/images.)

Yes

Appropriate Safeguard, Data Storage and Security

8. Will your research involve the collection and/or use of personal data?

Personal data is data which relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data or from the data and other information that is either currently held, or will be held by the data controller (you, as the researcher).

This includes:

- Any expression of opinion about the individual and any intentions of the data controller or any other person toward the individual.
- Sensor, location or visual data which may reveal information that enables the identification of a face, address etc. (some post codes cover only one property).
- Combinations of data which may reveal identifiable data, such as names, email/postal addresses, date of birth, ethnicity, descriptions of health diagnosis or conditions, computer IP address (of relating to a device with a single user).

No

9. Is your research using or collecting:

- special category data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation*, and/or
- data which might be considered sensitive in some countries, cultures or contexts?

*Examples of special category data are data:

- which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership;
- concerning health (the physical or mental health of a person, including the provision of health care services);
- concerning sex life or sexual orientation;
- genetic or biometric data processed to uniquely identify a natural person.

No

10. Do you confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018)? (Choose one only, delete that which does not apply)

Yes

11. I confirm that:

- The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- I will continue to reflect on and update these ethical considerations in consultation with my supervisor.

Yes

Appendix G: Framework Supported by Data

Theme	Sub-theme	Verbatim Quote supporting Framework
Resources	Finance	"six months down the line, it just almost looks almost sometimes worse than before because you've you can't replace the paving slabs and you've had you've had to put little bits of tarmac in and and the designs haven't been robust, bits have been torn off, so so that's sort of part of the process really...that's why working with communities is so incredibly resource intensive...This is actually something that you want to look good for six years" (COA)
Resources	Finance	"a barrier around what what money is available for. So there's often money available for capital, works and projects, but there isn't often money available to invest in this sort of behind the scenes running and the community engagement part of these processes" (PMA)
Resources	Finance	"funding is ever issue for everybody...funding has become much more difficult since COVID, much more difficult...trusts and charities are very reluctant to fund core costs, soft costs. They like to fund projects, they like to see something at the end of it." (PMB)
Resources	Finance	"when we sell refreshments... We ask for donations and people used to sort of give us a fiver and say keep the change. They don't anymore. They're more careful." (PMB)
Resources	Finance	"you would be amazed at how much it costs to run, it costs nearly £20,000 a year... we held four events a year and raised it [money] that way, but really it doesn't raise much compared to the big money that we that we need. It's going to get more difficult I think, with you know the economic situation." (PMB)
Resources	Finance	"We we've only recently got an arts and culture manager, so that's that's always, if you like, been a bit of a struggle. Because although the council talks about placing arts and culture at the centre of everything, they don't actually associate any money with it. So it's quite difficult to know, well, how and what can you do" (PMC)
Resources	Finance	"access to funding when you have a belief about being self-funded so that you've got some, some sustainability and you're not reliant upon funding is tough" (PMC)

Resources	Land & Site	"we weren't to know that the land was going to be sold two times, to two sets of developers. We, off the back of that, we have proactively built a relationship with the other land owners for another one of the sites in a very proactive way, which is great. But then they went and tried to get the [project] taken out of the local plan. ... you couldn't have anticipated that. But even though we were proactive, they still kind of essentially went behind our backs to try and undermine what we were doing. So it was quite disappointing and actually just erodes trust, when we're going into this wanting to be very collaborative and relationship led" (PMA)
Resources	Land & Site	"when we set it up, we had to, one of our group had to go before a notary, and swear that we wouldn't protest when we left, but I think it would be at their peril now really" (PMB)
Resources	Land & Site	"the wire fencing you can see through makes an enormous difference to people coming in. They can now see what's inside and they come in, which was totally unexpected... it obviously looked secret and private beforehand." (PMB)
Resources	Land & Site	"we've gone from a, say, six weeks of chatting to suddenly having a building and then mobilizing and making certain that our part plans can fall into shape. But not exactly as we were thinking because we didn't know what we were going to end up with, It was far bigger than we thought we were ever going to have" (PMC)
Resources	Land & Site	"we are now in Ealing Broadway... Hopefully this will be our, one of, our forever homes because it's it's not as big as we need and you know stuff like that" (PMC)
Resources	Land & Site	"I have to say it [moving locations] is more accidental. We wanted it, I mean, as now we wanted, we wanted a forever home because you can't actually build an arts centre without having a permanent location. You can, you can run and operate and deliver art programs and workshops from a variety of spaces for a period of time. But to actually be able to get a centre embedded into the community, you do need a space, a permanent space" (PMC)

Resources	Land & Site	"It has been a barrier in our development because a couple of times we've been without a building. So, we've, you have to basically start again. So, six months has been our longest, and we've had two six-month stints where we've not had a building. And that, I'd say, we could have managed better. I won't say would have, we could have. We should have managed better. But anyway, that's that's the way that is." (PMC)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"it is difficult to get the wording right [in the planning application]. And there's lots of acronyms and things." (PMB)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"it probably, probably might come across that we're being unnecessarily bureaucratic and putting, I've I've often been accused of putting blockages in the way, putting barriers in the way... but they sometimes, as residents, they don't know what they don't know... I can be absolutely amazed at the horrendous bureaucracy involved. And when you start undertaking the bureaucracy, it becomes clearer and clearer why that's necessary." (COA)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"There's all sorts of health and safety considerations." (COA)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"There's only so much that policy can enable and not enable, and so yes, it was in the Plan, but it's not going to fundamentally stop the selling of of land or enshrining of stuff. So, there were points where we felt like planning could have pushed further or advocated for more things, which it didn't do. It wasn't all bad, but yeah, there's a limit to what policy as a lever can do." (PMA)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"but it feels like as we've gone into this delivery phase, there isn't as much openness to actually change and innovate some of their practices to genuinely accommodate it. It's expected to conform to the way things are done, rather than inform how things could be done... there's a lot of, sort of, public public support and words of support. But I suppose sometimes the actions aren't always fully aligned. Or, creating barriers and boxes for us to fit in rather than find ways for the project to fit into place." (PMA)

Systems & Processes	Planning System	"we've felt a bit like we've been put into a sausage machine, and new ideas for how you involve people in that delivery process haven't been welcomed in the same way they were when it was a bit more hypothetical, and ideas, and imagine if" (PMA)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"something else needs to exist that can take on some of that organisational burden because I think it just strangles, it strangles groups having to conform into those different setups" (PMA)
Systems & Processes	Planning System	"we have to start doing it [applying for planning permission] again in 2025. In my view, I mean nothing has changed whatsoever. We have to go through these hoops. Do a very complicated, to us, application. It costs us money as well. It's about £400 it costs us to do it." (PMB)
Systems & Processes	Support Systems	"you have you have local support and infrastructure groups, I'm also not sure whether they're the place [to provide support] because they often have a sort of parent child dynamic. Whereas I think this is a genuine what's the, what's the genuine peer led version of that? ... I'm not sure the current institutions are the right form" (PMA)
Systems & Processes	Support Systems	"But it's very difficult sometimes to actually get people to understand that you're not being difficult, you're not saying "computer says no"... you don't want to take any on anybody's pet projects." (COA)
Systems & Processes	Support Systems	"very, very resource intensive working with community groups on placemaking. Very, because you're having to explain why" (COA)
Systems & Processes	Support Systems	"Resources, I mean I I've so often, I work weekends, I go to evening meetings, I never claim that time back. I just can't because I've got so much to do. So we are not, We do not have the resources to hand hold people to the extent." (COA)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"there needs to be an understanding of what people can actually take on and what they actually then need to influence." (COA)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"people people need to understand what skills they have" (COA)

Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"this is the problem, and this is where, where you can get, people can get quite frustrated sometimes with the council because...people don't know what they don't know...That that can be really exasperating because people think they're moving forward, but actually they're they're moving forward in an area that they really don't understand. And so, people shouldn't bite off more than they can chew. I think is what I'm trying to say...Recognising that sometimes they they don't know what they don't know, and it's a huge amount. You can't learn stuff through one project." (COA)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"it's actually really complicated and it's quite difficult to actually, it's very difficult to actually try to explain that in a nutshell of the 1001 strands you've got for every single project and all the considerations... people don't always understand the huge amount of thought that goes into that. And then all the legal requirements that are needed for that as well" (COA)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"we had somebody who was, at the beginning, was very good at spotting people skills so she found a good person to be a treasurer ... a good person to be chair of trustees. You know there's a wide range of roles. It's not not just about gardening," (PMB)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"we're a social enterprise. We thought about going for charitable status. We're not very good at governance or we you know... we self-fund." (PMC)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"but they [smaller charities] themselves find the systems very difficult to access. They don't have, they don't have the technology, they're just there on the ground helping people. So it's the infrastructure and the admin that they don't want to have to be burdened with " (PMC)
Project Team	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills	"The first problem, which only comes to light really a way down the project, is the mix of skill sets and personalities that you have... you actually do need somebody that likes doing all the, you know, day-to-day admin and stuff like that. So it's always quite useful to have that on your team from the outset. And my advice to anybody is find somebody like that." (PMC)

Project Team	Personal Resilience	"sometimes my role is hugely pressurised. I work way more hours than I get paid for, but I really care about what I do and so that's fine. I'm really, really invested and I'm passionate about what I do. But you you can get quite drained" (COA)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"residents, they don't know what they don't know. And when I tried to point that out, it's like, "well, you're just a lowly council officer, I know more than you". And so, that actually, that actually becomes very difficult. And I'll do my best just to try to, try to explain on my vast knowledge and experience, but people don't always recognise that because I'm a council officer. And there's sometimes a real lack of recognition or respect for the skills and expertise that council officers have." (COA)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"there's a strong narrative and advocating for it, but I don't think the people that are living it are supported in a way that is healthy for them, so you risk losing people that actually want to do this, so that feels like a massive risk. " (PMA)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"we warn about burnout really, because people will get so involved. It's keeping a wide, a wide base of people involved... one of the things that you gotta watch for is people aren't doing too much and getting burnt out" (PMB)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"If you look at it with more short-term goals, you can be quite disappointed because it it, some things may not work out, so you need more than one thing to be able to balance it out and to keep the motivation going." (PMC)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"We left him to do the day-to-day running without realising just how much effort was involved. We quietly drove him to an early exit without even realising that's what we had done." (PMC)
Project Team	Personal Resilience	"I find it sad that they the initial responses were "we've been doing that, but we haven't had recognition" ... I find it equally sad that there isn't a way in which we can just all pool things and say, "well, this is what we're doing, and how can we collaborate? And are we willing to collaborate and share?" Because people are just scared that if if they share too much it you might do the amount of funding or you might do the amount of users" (PMC)

Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"So as a group, we've kind of struggled to go from kitchen table venture into something... we don't necessarily want to be fully professionalised, but it feels like there's a bit of a void or middle ground missing where you're bringing the best of the energy and passion of local people, the best of what a professional outfit looks like but but not being either ... so we feel a bit like we're stuck in a void and unsure, both what support is available for us there, but what the viable models are. It can actually enable different things" (PMA)
Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"where decisions get made... where the responsibility and risk lies" (PMA)
Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"Getting volunteers, keeping volunteers motivated, things like that. But just normal things you'd expect on you know, with a voluntary organisation" (PMB)
Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"quite a lot of people who are active in it [the project] are retired" (PMB)
Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"something that I would, I'm very cautious about looking at and making certain that that you have to have some formal things in place so to protect everybody. It's lovely to work and operate informally, but actually, if you want some longevity and sustainability, you do need to have formal things in place. Be it a proper license to occupy, expectations, service, delivery things and stuff like that." (PMC)
Project Team	Team & Organisational Structure	"We got other people involved, we had numerous, I cannot tell you how many volunteers, too many to handle and we didn't know what we were doing. So again, another steep learning curve, but a lesson well learned is that you can have too many volunteers... We didn't have the structure or anything that we could actually support them" (PMC)
People Networks	Diversity & Inclusion	"[groups are] usually sort of quite, uh, well educated, affluent white middle classes and over and over and over again. And there's nothing wrong in that. But how you actually then reach out, with a real equalities hat on rather than "we must get more minorities involved, we must reach out". (COA)
People Networks	Diversity & Inclusion	"Relying on people doing projects in free time just privileges privileged people who can take the time and the space. And that's not addressing any sort of equality." (PMA)

People Networks	Diversity & Inclusion	"Now, the downside of that is, it tends to be a bit white and middle class." (PMB)
People Networks	Diversity & Inclusion	"Different expectations [causing a lack of diversity], different things that people want from from leisure areas. Fear of dogs. I feel a perception that was a a white organization. It wasn't for them sort of thing" (PMB)
People Networks	Working Relationships	"we knew that there was going to have to be a time and to build really strong relationships, particularly with the council, was really important. So, we, you know, we really invested in doing that in the early years... Yeah, I guess we've we've known that we've had to pay attention to relationships as a means of, sort of, anticipating whatever comes." (PMA)
People Networks	Working Relationships	"there's just the physical amount of time that the lack of transparency and communication about land ownership. The time it took to then respond, which was often in reaction and not in a proactive way. It took all the energy out of the project and meant that we had to down tools on everything else that we were doing in a proactive way, because we had to react to what was happening. So, that that was really difficult... they still, kind of, essentially went behind our backs to try and undermine what we were doing. So, it was quite disappointing and actually just erodes trust when we're going into this wanting to be very collaborative, and relationship led" (PMA)
People Networks	Working Relationships	"but people come and go... there is an inevitable kind of staff churn and turnover that means you have to keep building those different relationships and some of what, what enabled people gets lost in that kind of changeover." (PMA)
People Networks	Working Relationships	"it not ending up being the same team... We thought, probably, our relationship was stronger than it actually turned out to be. So, managing expectations is always, you know" (PMC)

Appendix H: Risk Assessment Form

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FIELD / LOCATION WORK



DEPARTMENT/SECTION: BARTLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING

LOCATION(S): LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

PERSONS COVERED BY THE RISK ASSESSMENT: MEGAN STEVENS

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK (including geographic location): ONLINE INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN CHOSEN PLACEMAKING CASE STUDIES IN LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

COVID-19 RELATED GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets fall on people in the vicinity and can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face. This risk assessment documents key risks associated fieldwork during a pandemic, but it is not exhaustive and will not be able to cover all known risks, globally. This assessment outlines principles adopted by UCL at an institutional level and it is necessarily general. Please use the open text box 'Other' to indicate any contingent risk factors and control measures you might encounter during the course of your dissertation research and writing.

Please refer to the Dissertation in Planning Guidance Document (available on Moodle) to help you complete this form.

Hazard 1: Risk of Covid -19 infection during research related travel and research related interactions with others (when face-to-face is possible and/or unavoidable)

Risk Level - Medium /Moderate

Existing Advisable Control Measures: Do not travel if you are unwell, particularly if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Self-isolate in line with NHS (or country-specific) guidance.

Avoid travelling and face-to-face interactions; if you need to travel and meet with others:

- If possible, avoid using public transport and cycle or walk instead.
- If you need to use public transport travel in off-peak times and follow transport provider's and governmental guidelines.
- Maintain (2 metre) social distancing where possible and where 2 metre social distancing is not achievable, wear face covering.
- Wear face covering at all times in enclosed or indoor spaces.
- Use hand sanitiser prior to and after journey.
- Avoid consuming food or drinks, if possible, during journey.
- Avoid, if possible, interchanges when travelling - choose direct route.
- Face away from other persons. If you have to face a person ensure that the duration is as short as possible.
- Do not share any items i.e. stationary, tablets, laptops etc. If items need to be shared use disinfectant wipes to disinfect items prior to and after sharing.

- If meeting in a group for research purposes ensure you are following current country specific guidance on face-to-face meetings (i.e rule of 6 etc.)
- If and when possible meet outside and when not possible meet in venues with good ventilation (e.g. open a window)
- If you feel unwell during or after a meeting with others, inform others you have interacted with, self-isolate and get tested for Covid-19
- Avoid high noise areas as this mean the need to shout which increases risk of aerosol transmission of the virus.
- Follow one way circulation systems, if in place. Make sure to check before you visit a building.
- Always read and follow the visitors policy for the organisation you will be visiting.
- Flush toilets with toilet lid closed.
- 'Other' Control Measures you will take (specify): Take a lateral flow test prior to site visits

NOTE: The hazards and existing control measures above pertain to Covid-19 infection risks only. More generalised health and safety risk may exist due to remote field work activities and these are outlined in your Dissertation in Planning Guidance document. Please consider these as possible 'risk' factors in completing the remainder of this standard form. For more information also see: [Guidance Framework for Fieldwork in Taught and MRes Programmes, 2021-22](#)

Consider, in turn, each hazard (white on black). If **NO** hazard exists select **NO** and move to next hazard section.

If a hazard does exist select **YES** and assess the risks that could arise from that hazard in the risk assessment box.

Where risks are identified that are not adequately controlled they must be brought to the attention of your Departmental Management who should put temporary control measures in place or stop the work. Detail such risks in the final section.

ENVIRONMENT

e.g. location, climate, terrain, neighbourhood, in outside organizations, pollution, animals.

The environment always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this hazard

Examples of risk: adverse weather, illness, hypothermia, assault, getting lost.

Is the risk high / medium / low ?

Site visit (researcher only, no participants):

- May be strong wind, heavy rain, or high heat – low risk
- May get lost as have not been to the areas before – low risk

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | work abroad incorporates Foreign Office advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | only accredited centres are used for rural field work |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | participants will wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the specified environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | refuge is available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | work in outside organisations is subject to their having satisfactory H&S procedures in place |

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date can be re-scheduled if weather is bad • Take a mobile phone and plan route to avoid getting lost • Research site before going • Inform someone where I am going and when I will return • Will not visit when dark.
-------------------------------------	---

EMERGENCIES	Where emergencies may arise use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. fire, accidents</i>	<p>Examples of risk: loss of property, loss of life</p> <p>Site visit (researcher only, no participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of property – low risk

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants have registered with LOCATE at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	contact numbers for emergency services are known to all participants
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	participants have means of contacting emergency services
<input type="checkbox"/>	a plan for rescue has been formulated, all parties understand the procedure
<input type="checkbox"/>	the plan for rescue /emergency has a reciprocal element
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not take expensive belongings or more money than needed • Take mobile phone to contact emergency services

FIELDWORK 1 May 2010

EQUIPMENT	Is equipment used?	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. clothing, outboard motors.</i>	Examples of risk: inappropriate, failure, insufficient training to use or repair, injury. Is the risk high / medium / low ?		

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	the departmental written Arrangement for equipment is followed
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants have been provided with any necessary equipment appropriate for the work
<input type="checkbox"/>	all equipment has been inspected, before issue, by a competent person
<input type="checkbox"/>	all users have been advised of correct use
<input type="checkbox"/>	special equipment is only issued to persons trained in its use by a competent person

OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

LONE WORKING	Is lone working a possibility?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
	<i>e.g. alone or in isolation lone interviews.</i>	<p>Examples of risk: difficult to summon help. Is the risk high / medium / low?</p> <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be conducted online - no risk <p>Site visit (researcher only, no participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will visit site alone but will not interact with anyone there - low risk 	

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the departmental written Arrangement for lone/out of hours working for field work is followed
<input type="checkbox"/>	lone or isolated working is not allowed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	location, route and expected time of return of lone workers is logged daily before work commences
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	all workers have the means of raising an alarm in the event of an emergency, e.g. phone, flare, whistle
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	all workers are fully familiar with emergency procedures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research site before going • Inform someone where I am going and when I will return • Will not visit when dark

ILL HEALTH	The possibility of ill health always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this Hazard.
<i>e.g. accident, illness, personal attack, special personal considerations or vulnerabilities.</i>	<p>Examples of risk: injury, asthma, allergies. Is the risk high / medium / low?</p> <p>Site visit (researcher only, no participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May become ill or have an accident when there, however no allergies or pre-existing medical issues – low risk <p>Extensive computer use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postural problems – low risk • Fatigue and screen headaches – low risk
CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	all participants have had the necessary inoculations/ carry appropriate prophylactics

<input type="checkbox"/>	participants have been advised of the physical demands of the research and are deemed to be physically suited
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants have been adequate advice on harmful plants, animals and substances they may encounter
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants who require medication should carry sufficient medication for their needs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take mobile phone on site visit to contact emergency services • Take enough money on site visit to get taxi home • Take regular breaks from computer use • Wear screen glasses when using the computer • Ensure environment (lighting, space, desk, and chair) is conducive to computer use

TRANSPORT	Will transport be required	NO	YES	Move to next hazard
<i>e.g. hired vehicles</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Use space below to identify and assess any risks
	<p>Examples of risk: accidents arising from lack of maintenance, suitability or training</p> <p>Is the risk high / medium / low?</p> <p>Site visit (researcher only, no participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will use underground to travel there, may be delays or cancellations 			

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	only public transport will be used
<input type="checkbox"/>	the vehicle will be hired from a reputable supplier
<input type="checkbox"/>	transport must be properly maintained in compliance with relevant national regulations
<input type="checkbox"/>	drivers comply with UCL Policy on Drivers http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/college_drivers.php
<input type="checkbox"/>	drivers have been trained and hold the appropriate licence
<input type="checkbox"/>	there will be more than one driver to prevent driver/operator fatigue, and there will be adequate rest periods
<input type="checkbox"/>	sufficient spare parts carried to meet foreseeable emergencies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take mobile phone to research alternative travel routes • Take enough money to get taxi home

DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC	Will people be dealing with public	YES	If 'No' move to next hazard
<i>e.g. interviews, observing</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>	If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
	<p>Examples of risk: personal attack, causing offence, being misinterpreted.</p> <p>Is the risk high / medium / low?</p>		

Interviews:

- Will be online – low risk

Site visit (researcher only, no participants):

- Observing area, intention may be misinterpreted – low risk

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

<input type="checkbox"/>	all participants are trained in interviewing techniques
<input type="checkbox"/>	advice and support from local groups has been sought
X	participants do not wear clothes that might cause offence or attract unwanted attention
X	interviews are conducted at neutral locations or where neither party could be at risk
X	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews will be conducted online, and address information will not be revealed or requested • Will not interact with anyone on site visit • Will not visit site in the dark • Will walk with purpose and not loiter

FIELDWORK

3

May 2010

WORKING ON OR NEAR WATER

Will people work on or near water?

NO

If 'No' move to next hazard

If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks

e.g. rivers, marshland, sea.

Examples of risk: drowning, malaria, hepatitis A, parasites. Is the risk high / medium / low?


CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

<input type="checkbox"/>	lone working on or near water will not be allowed
<input type="checkbox"/>	coastguard information is understood; all work takes place outside those times when tides could prove a threat
<input type="checkbox"/>	all participants are competent swimmers
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants always wear adequate protective equipment, e.g. buoyancy aids, wellingtons
<input type="checkbox"/>	boat is operated by a competent person
<input type="checkbox"/>	all boats are equipped with an alternative means of propulsion e.g. oars
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants have received any appropriate inoculations
<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

MANUAL HANDLING (MH)	Do MH activities take place?	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. lifting, carrying, moving large or heavy equipment, physical unsuitability for the task.</i>	Examples of risk: strain, cuts, broken bones. Is the risk high / medium / low?		
CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk		
<input type="checkbox"/>	the departmental written Arrangement for MH is followed		
<input type="checkbox"/>	the supervisor has attended a MH risk assessment course		
<input type="checkbox"/>	all tasks are within reasonable limits, persons physically unsuited to the MH task are prohibited from such activities		
<input type="checkbox"/>	all persons performing MH tasks are adequately trained		
<input type="checkbox"/>	equipment components will be assembled on site		
<input type="checkbox"/>	any MH task outside the competence of staff will be done by contractors		
<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:		
FIELDWORK	4	May 2010	

SUBSTANCES	Will participants work with substances	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. plants, chemical, biohazard, waste</i>	Examples of risk: ill health - poisoning, infection, illness, burns, cuts. Is the risk high / medium / low?		
CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk		
<input type="checkbox"/>	the departmental written Arrangements for dealing with hazardous substances and waste are followed		
<input type="checkbox"/>	all participants are given information, training and protective equipment for hazardous substances they may encounter		
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants who have allergies have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs		
<input type="checkbox"/>	waste is disposed of in a responsible manner		
<input type="checkbox"/>	suitable containers are provided for hazardous waste		
<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:		
OTHER HAZARDS	Have you identified	NO	If 'No' move to next section

[REDACTED]	any other hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>i.e. any other hazards must be noted and assessed here.</i>	Hazard:		
	Risk: is the risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CONTROL MEASURES	Give details of control measures in place to control the identified risks		
Have you identified any risks that are not adequately controlled?	NO	X	Move to Declaration
	YES		Use space below to identify the risk and what action was taken
<i>Mag Stavers</i>			
DECLARATION	The work will be reassessed whenever there is a significant change and at least annually. Those participating in the work have read the assessment.		
Select the appropriate statement:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that there is no significant residual risk		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that the risk will be controlled by the method(s) listed above		
NAME OF SUPERVISOR			Ann Skippers
FIELDWORK	5	May 2010	

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

/100

Instructor

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9

PAGE 10

PAGE 11

PAGE 12

PAGE 13

PAGE 14

PAGE 15

PAGE 16

PAGE 17

PAGE 18

PAGE 19

PAGE 20

PAGE 21

PAGE 22

PAGE 23

PAGE 24

PAGE 25

PAGE 26

PAGE 27

PAGE 28

PAGE 29

PAGE 30

PAGE 31

PAGE 32

PAGE 33

PAGE 34

PAGE 35

PAGE 36

PAGE 37

PAGE 38

PAGE 39

PAGE 40

PAGE 41

PAGE 42

PAGE 43

PAGE 44

PAGE 45

PAGE 46

PAGE 47

PAGE 48

PAGE 49

PAGE 50

PAGE 51

PAGE 52

PAGE 53

PAGE 54

PAGE 55

PAGE 56

PAGE 57

PAGE 58

PAGE 59

PAGE 60

PAGE 61

PAGE 62

PAGE 63

PAGE 64

PAGE 65

PAGE 66

PAGE 67

PAGE 68

PAGE 69

PAGE 70

PAGE 71

PAGE 72

PAGE 73

PAGE 74

PAGE 75
