

Kerb Your Enthusiasm

Why shared space doesn't always
mean shared surface, and other stories

Eleanor Besley

Parliamentary Advisory Council
for Transport Safety



The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is an associate Parliamentary group and registered charity advising and informing Members of Parliament on road, rail and air safety issues. It brings together technical expertise from the public, private, academic and professional sectors to promote research-based solutions to transport safety problems. Its charitable objective is to protect human life through the promotion of transport safety for public benefit. Further information about PACTS, including details of how to become a member, can be found at www.pacts.org.uk

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FOREWORD

Beyond 2010, the British Government will simultaneously be dealing with an increasingly complex policy agenda and a tightening of public finances. Both locally and nationally, governance needs to get smarter and make the most of resources available. It is vital that we look for efficiencies which can be gained and question the soundness of current practice.

Smarter governance and improved performance should be extended to all aspects of policy facilitation including the physical area in which public life is carried out. Our public realm offers a wealth of untapped potential in terms of its ability to act as a catalyst to achieving a wide range of society's objectives. As things currently stand, poor public realm planning in some areas has resulted in divided communities, created unsafe environments or prevented users from travelling more actively, actually hindering the attainment of certain local and national objectives.

This report offers us all an opportunity to consider the public realm more widely, allowing practitioners to understand why their work matters so much more than perceptions currently allow for and inviting those currently outside the area to play a role and get involved. As elected members we too have a vital position in the development of better public realm, supporting those people who design and make our local areas, getting involved in the process and working more closely with our electorate to generate better and safer outcomes.

Here we have a report which calls for a holistic approach to the relationship between public policy and the public realm. We welcome its publication and ask that the government and Parliament take seriously its recommendations.

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¹ © <http://www.conservatives.com/>

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Dr Nicola Christie

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Finally I would like to thank Robert Gifford for the intensive short courses in transport and all related matters, for his unfailing support and advice and for the hours spent editing various drafts of this report.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- i Over the course of the last ten years, shared space has increasingly been discussed in and beyond transport and design circles. Research conducted for this report found large divergence of opinion about the implications of the term. Based on an initial interview process, shared space has therefore been defined as 'a multi-understood and somewhat controversial term which exists across a number of fields including urban design, engineering and traffic management and which implies new direction in thinking about the public realm.'
- ii The divergence of understanding has been linked to a lack of substantial research and/or definitive guidance as well as relatively low numbers of practical examples.
- iii Quite logically, observers have relied upon the most tangible elements of the concept, and tended to define shared space based on some of the design techniques used in public realm schemes to which it has been applied.
- iv The term has recently become synonymous with the conflict and controversy associated with some of these design techniques such as the removal of kerbs, signage and crossing points. However, research undertaken for this report has identified the more progressive and philosophical beginnings of shared space which could make a particularly useful contribution to the improvement of our public realm.
- v This report aims to move the debate on from the design elements it currently centres on, which will be shown as locally rather than nationally relevant issues, towards a focus on community-led maximisation of the role which the public realm can play.
- vi Rather than attempting to redefine the term 'shared space', this report has focused on the potential which a shift in thinking about public realm could have. PACTS has identified the role which the public realm could play in the achievement of a wide range of community needs, desires and objectives, but has also outlined a number of the evident hurdles which limit application.
- vii The following three questions have been central to the research process throughout:
 - What is the policy context within which shared space exists?
 - Why is the term so multi-understood and what are we really dealing with?
 - How can we move the debate forward and which areas should be focussed on?

PUBLIC POLICY AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- viii Though in appearance a simple term to define, the 'public realm' proves to be complex in its character. Without wanting to limit this complexity, our focus has fallen solely on those public space areas which exist on the street network. Combining the CABE definition of streetscape³ with the ODPM (now DCLG) definition of public space⁴, this report defines the 'public realm' as:

Those parts of the highway to which the public have shared access and on which the spectrum of public life is carried out. This can include, among others, high streets, rural village streets, market squares and shopping streets but would not include roads of obvious and limited purpose such as motorways and dual carriageways.

3 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/paving-the-way.pdf>

4 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/131006.pdf> schemesr

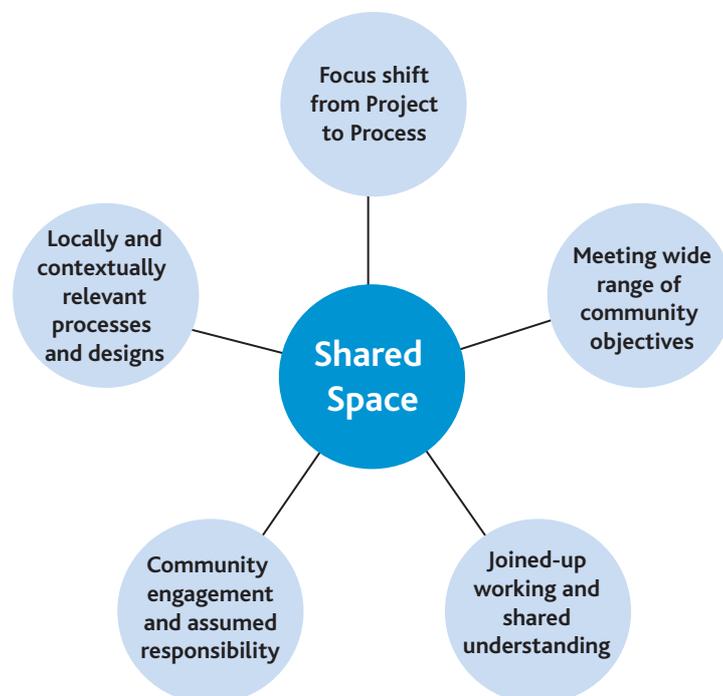
- ix This research has focused solely on those areas included within the above definition. Good public realm planning is shown to act as a catalyst in the achievement of a community's needs, desires and objectives, whilst poor public realm planning is shown to act as a hurdle. Certain policy objectives, such as modal shift, increased social integration and improved safety and security for users, are more likely to be affected by the quality of public realm planning.
- x Some of our public realm is fundamentally and unintentionally underperforming. This public space which should be providing a backbone of integration to society is frequently unsafe, unclean, inefficient and underwhelming.
- xi By outlining the government's development objectives, this report shows how 'smarter governance' can be applied to the public realm as much as it can to other policy tools.
- xii The public realm is seen as a key player in the balancing of the mobility objectives (economic growth, improved local economies, reduced congestion and so on) and civility objectives (healthier communities, cleaner air, safer roads and so on) of a community and of society at large.

BALANCING MOBILITY AND CIVILITY: PAST AND PRESENT

- xiii The balancing of mobility and civility objectives has been consistently attempted by planners over the years. In the second chapter, PACTS looks at a number of attempts from the last century, providing a rationale for some of the approaches which are less well perceived today and outlining the reality of 'unknown unknown' outcomes from well intentioned plans.
- xiv Moving closer to today, it is seen that the evolving and increasingly complex policy context has generated a shift change in public realm priorities. Initiatives such as Pedestrianisation, Home Zones and Mixed Priority Routes have tended to accentuate the 'civility' objectives for communities.
- xv New initiatives are assessed based on research available, experience is summarised and lessons are identified. There has been a fundamental lack of awareness in public realm planning over the last 20 years about the experiences and lessons learnt from that which has gone before. For example, extensive consultation was identified during at least three major projects as a crucial element for success in innovative public realm schemes and yet new approaches still fail to attempt extended consultation processes.
- xvi Shared space is viewed as a recent attempt to balance the mobility and civility objectives placed on the public realm. In practice, this balancing act attempts to redefine the public realm to ensure that, where appropriate, the car is the guest and does not own a space. As motorised transport has become increasingly important, areas designed for public life have become dominated by the prioritisation of cars, vans and other forms of motorised transport. Recent approaches try to redress the status quo.

SHARED SPACE: MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD

- xvii Shared space schemes in England have often been the subject of media, public and industry interest. Proponents and opponents are split over the potential benefits or disbenefits of a number of design approaches associated with shared space.
- xviii This report looks at the experiences, at the local level, of planners and stakeholders of so called 'shared space schemes' to highlight the kinds of issues being raised.
- xix In the absence of substantial evidence, research, guidance or practical examples, observers of shared space have tended to latch-on to the more tangible elements of schemes and national debate has centred on specific design techniques.
- xx However, a closer look at the origins of shared space and the theories developed during the European Shared Space Project show that this design-centred focus risks clouding a much wider contribution.
- xxi PACTS has identified the potential which shared space has to offer. The central theory, built on a series of key elements (disaggregation of the road network, speed and tolerance, behavioural understanding and so on) is developed into five 'lessons' shown in the model below.
- xxii This report calls for a shift in thinking which moves from shared space being an objective towards shared space being a process. PACTS has developed a model which builds a theoretical process which could help to maximise the contribution made by the public realm towards societal objectives.



MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD: THE CHALLENGES

- xxiii A shift in thinking and a shift in process of this kind are not expected to be automatic. In fact this is unlikely. PACTS has identified a number of hurdles which will need to be considered if public realm approaches are going to be pushed forward. The final chapter looks at issues such as engaging with communities, risk and liability, the weakness of private/public sector links and so on.

- xxiv It is hoped that the stakeholders, policy makers and planners will act on the recommendations made in this report. Smarter governance, joined-up working and shared understanding could make our public realm work harder and should make an important contribution to improving the quality of public life.

This report identifies a number of recommendations which can be found below and at the end of each chapter. Five key recommendations which encapsulate the larger list are central to the research conclusions:

- 1 Stakeholders, policy makers and planners should more effectively conceive and design the public realm as part of a joined-up working approach, to ensure its contribution towards the achievement of governmental, economic, societal and community objectives.
- 2 Evaluation and research should be better disseminated to stakeholders, policy makers and planners and applied to future design and planning guidance and approaches. Appropriate channels of communication should be explored and applied.
- 3 Stakeholders, policy makers and planners should see shared space as a process rather than a design technique and should use it to enable smarter planning and to encourage innovative and feasible public realm solutions. The user should provide a central focus to public realm design and planning.
- 4 Processes should engage with the community throughout and encourage cross-departmental participation at all levels.
- 5 National government should fund a demonstration project to generate greater understanding of the potential gains for society of using joined-up working processes and applying a wider set of objectives to public realm planning. Such a project should include an action learning element that would enable greater communication between participants. Good practice models for this include Neighbourhood Road Safety Initiative (NRSI) and the European Shared Space Project.

PUBLIC POLICY AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Policy makers and planners should be aware that public realm conception and design will impact on the wider needs, desires and objectives of a community and should prepare accordingly.
- Those involved in public realm conception and design should be aware of the full breadth of societal and community objectives.
- Transport goals concerning the economy, the environment, accessibility, health, safety and security provide a useful national base on which to add locally-specific knowledge to generate a nationally and locally relevant contextual setting.

BALANCING CIVILITY AND MOBILITY: PAST AND PRESENT

- Public realm planners and stakeholders should be aware of research and experience in the field before embarking on a scheme.
- The government should provide a central database of research and good practice which allows those working on or involved in public realm schemes to gather a wider sense of research and experience in the field.
- Local Authorities should be aware of the potential for unexpected outcomes of certain approaches.

- Stakeholders, policy makers and planners should ensure that planning, design and implementation all take account of location and context specifics when working on public realm schemes.
- Local Authorities should improve and widen consultation on public realm schemes.
- Local Authorities should collect before and after data based on the objectives of any public realm scheme and budget for substantial evaluation both of processes used and the schemes themselves.

SHARED SPACE: MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD

- The shared space debate needs to be moved away from micro-level discussion about design techniques and used to develop the role of the public realm as a facilitator which can contribute towards the wide needs, desires and objectives of communities. Shared space should be synonymous, in public realm terms, with joined-up thinking and shared understanding.
- The DfT should adapt LTN 1/08 to include the development processes which should precede and support the design stages of public realm schemes.
- Research should be conducted to further establish the nature of the direct or indirect link between public realm interventions and social outcomes. This should then feed into CLG guidance documents on Community Cohesion.⁵
- As the objectives of public realm schemes widen, so should the processes which are used to evaluate, audit, monitor and maintain those schemes. Future design guidance should address this.
- Consultation on public realm schemes must be extended to consider consultees as partners and generate a much wider sense of a community and its objectives.
- Central government should work to ensure that Local Government structures and processes allow for cross-departmental communication, understanding and cooperation.
- Guidance on community-based approaches to public realm should be directed at the wide range of planners and stakeholders and include information on how/where to identify wider community objectives and those partners who can communicate them.
- Vulnerable road users of all kinds should always be fully integrated into public realm processes.
- The self-explaining road concept should be developed and applied to all roads with particular focus placed on improving the implications of the concept at the public realm level.

5 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/151411.pdf>

MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD: THE CHALLENGES

- National government should encourage the development of a clear 'whole area approach' which identifies key goals and is accessible to all stakeholders. Part of this should encourage planners and stakeholders to identify the potential which the public realm holds in terms of influencing policy areas such as health, the environment, social inclusion and so on.
- National government should develop cross-departmental trials to evaluate the potential of using the public realm to achieve community goals using community-centred processes as outlined in this report.
- National government should lead by examples, encouraging Local Authorities to use the recession to an advantage. Looking at the bigger picture and the longer term will be key in identifying the cost efficiencies available.
- National government should set up a web-based tool allowing for dissemination of research and experience sharing between local stakeholders at all levels.
- Future design guidance should provide material on the auditing and evaluation of public realm schemes with increasingly complex objectives.
- The DfT should commission research looking into regulatory frameworks relating to public realm areas in the rest of Europe. This research should aim to establish any links between regulatory frameworks and user behaviour, user safety and wider social outcomes.
- National government should fund 'action-learning' trials which aim to move public realm developments from project to process in the manner outlined in this report. The trials should attempt to create more effective public realm using joined-up approaches and shared understanding and should feed back into guidance for practitioners. Knowledge sharing models such as NRSI and the European Shared Space Project should be considered as good practice examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- 1.1 During the last decade, the topic of shared space has become increasingly important across transport, urban design and traffic management circles.
- 1.2 Debate and discussion around the topic has been marked by large variation in interpretation and controversial implications for safety, specifically of more vulnerable road users.
- 1.3 At the outset, the aim of this report was to gather clarification and understanding about shared space. Relevant research questions were developed once an initial scoping task had been completed.

DEFINITIONS

- 1.4 In this rapidly developing area, the definition of terms has been regularly contentious and often taken the lead in debate over more substantial topics. For simplification, five of the central terms which may be subject to interpretation have been defined below. Definitions given will remain constant throughout this report.

- **Shared Space:** 'a multi-understood and somewhat controversial term which exists across a number of fields including urban design, engineering and traffic management and which implies new direction in thinking about the public realm.'

Shared space as a concept has tended to be associated with (but is not limited to) particular public realm design approaches such as level surfaces, removal of guard rail and declutter. This is not a term we seek to redefine or re-create under a new guise. The creation of terms has already been seen to overcomplicate the area and has slowed the potential offered by more innovative approaches to the public realm. This report aims to move the debate on and calls for a focus on process rather than project.

As a result, the use of the term 'shared space', unless otherwise indicated, refers to the particular and often subjective conception of the individual/organisation being considered.

- **Public Realm:** Though in appearance a simple term to define, the **public realm** proves to be complex in its character. Without wanting to limit this complexity, our focus has fallen solely on those public space areas which exist on the street network. Combining the CABE definition of 'streetscape'⁶ with the ODPM (now DCLG) definition of 'public space'⁷, this report defines the 'public realm' as:

'Those parts of the highway to which the public have shared access and on which the spectrum of public life is carried out. This can include, among others, high streets, rural village streets, market squares and shopping streets but would not include roads of obvious and limited purpose such as motorways and dual carriageways.'

6 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/paving-the-way.pdf>

7 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/131006.pdf>

This report focuses solely on those areas included with the above definition of **public realm**.

- **Public Health:** 'is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals.'⁸

Public health becomes increasingly related to the public realm as policy environments gain in complexity and smarter governance takes on greater importance.

- **Civility:** Rather than a reflection of politeness, 'civility', for the sake of this report, recognises the many differing interests which divide our increasingly diverse society. The term has been used in this report to imply a collective well-being/Quality of Life agenda which includes, though is not limited to the existence of good public health, high levels of social inclusion and integration, high levels of community cohesion, pleasant surroundings, health, happiness and personal security.
- **Mobility:** This refers to the complex elements of getting goods, services and people from A to B and is often closely linked to congestion and economic outcomes. Over the last 100 years, mobility and civility objectives have frequently appeared to be at odds.

METHODOLOGY

1.5 The main tasks carried out during research for this report were:

- Exploratory discussions with key professional stakeholders to review their understanding and experience of shared space. This process led to the development of research questions
- Further discussion with practitioners to review their experience of shared space and related developments in specific locations including site visits both in England and the Netherlands
- Analysis of interview transcripts and observational analysis of interviews and group discussions in order to disaggregate perceptions from reality and in order to unearth the 'facts' and 'norms' which decisions were based on
- A critical review of the literature regarding the balancing of the needs placed on the public realm, both historical and current, including a review of the limited body of literature on shared space
- Sounding meetings with advisory board members and with a group of representatives from various governmental Departments.

DEVELOPING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6 For the first round of exploratory discussions, the aim was to establish what shared space meant to different professionals. This process was designed to generate a picture of the range of conceptions of shared space before drilling-down into some of the more specific issues which were raised.

8 C.E. A. Winslow (1920), 'The Untilled Fields of Public Health' Science, n.s. 5

- 1.7 Questions remained broadly constant throughout the initial interview process, prompting answers to the following questions:
- In terms of content and in terms of context, what do you understand by the term shared space?
 - Looking ahead, how/where does the redesign of the public realm fit into wider policy aspirations?
 - What are the concerns of professionals and stakeholders involved in shared space?
 - How can the evaluation process of both innovative public realm design and its subsequent implementation be made effective?
- 1.8 Using the full interview transcripts for more in-depth, internal analysis, it was possible to pick-out key themes and repeated issues, identified in the table below (Table 1). On the whole, when discussing shared space, stakeholders did not spend time discussing all three areas, but tended to focus-in on one area.
- 1.9 During this consultation with professionals in the field, disaggregation of the responses tended to show that proponents of shared space focussed more on inputs, opponents on outcomes and those with less interest referenced a number of wider issues. In itself, this three-way split signals the rudimentary range of understanding around shared space which then diverges much more extremely as we look further into each section of the table. It should be noted that this trend indicates a skew, so interviewees often discussed all three areas, placing more or less emphasis on certain topics.
- 1.10 **Table 1** opposite gives a sense of the kinds of issues which stakeholders, in the area immediately surrounding the shared space debate, came up with during initial interviews. It would be fair to use this divergence of opinion at the professional level as a foundation model for the more marked levels of disparity of understanding and levels of confusion among the media, the general public and lobbying groups.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	WIDER ISSUES
<p>Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing out the adverse impact of traffic in towns Designing civility Integration of traditionally segregated road users 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared street Naked street Shared surface Level surface An area in direct contrast to traffic areas such as motorways The default mode pre-segregation Combining the various functions of public spaces Legibility 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No design manual available No design manual desired The self-explaining road Gaps between MFS & DMRB Is equality possible? Sustainable planning Not a design issue - too much focus on design
<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed reduction Improving streetscape Enhancing security and safety Consider specific area requirements Altering the perceived risk in urban centres Place-making Creating a different road-user Regenerating an area 	<p>Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less familiar Increased risk and perceptions of risk Confusion Fair and equal Unsafe Illegible Eye contact is key- impossible for blind and partially sighted users Dangers to the most vulnerable 	<p>Evaluation and audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current evaluation and audit processes are inappropriate for these schemes Liability (civil and civic) Who is responsible?
<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescriptive or non-prescriptive? Designing in an element of chaos Using creativity Removing segregation/guard railing Deliberately creating uncertainty Simplifying Removing signs/lines/signals/kerbs Declutter Softening or removing delineation 	<p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fluid hierarchy of users The combination of vehicle movements and other life activities Integrated communities Users taking more responsibility for actions Civilised streets Behavioural change 	<p>Monitoring & maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough before data Maintenance budgets removed or reduced No pressure to monitor performance or maintain schemes Objectives do not match the data being evaluated
<p>Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not just a design technique but a planning and process technique An urban design concept with implications on traffic and on safety Creating a toolkit of street interventions 	<p>Similar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zones de rencontre Home Zones 	<p>Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding availability and implications Revisiting the consultation process Local and situational contexts <p>Policy context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing to encourage wider policy objectives such as modal shift What is the role of government? Bottom-up decision Councillor-led initiative Conflicting targets and objectives to meet at the local level - need for more joined-up working Democratic deficit How to reach the community at large?

Table 1

1.11 The obvious levels of confusion and disagreement over the meaning of the term 'shared space' and its physical, social, economic, legal and political implications, shown in **Table 1** on the previous page, led to the identification of three central research questions:

- What is the policy context within which shared space exists?
- Why is the term so multi-understood and what are we really dealing with?
- How can we move the debate forward and which areas should be focussed on?

REPORT OBJECTIVES

1.12 Based on the identification of the three central research questions shown above, research for this report has developed based on a number of objectives.

1.13 Over the last two years at least, there has been extensive debate around shared space. Discussion has tended to focus on the potential safety risk to specific groups of vulnerable road users when faced with some of the design measures associated with shared space including level surfaces, removal of guard railing and a lack of signage. In the chapters which follow, PACTS aims to move the debate away from this micro-level focus and identify some of the wider issues coming from discussion surrounding shared space.

1.14 'Shared space' is later on in the report used to imply new directions in thinking about the public realm. Based on the definitions above, the public realm is largely made up of the areas which provide the greatest risk, in safety terms, to the most vulnerable road users. It is also the space which holds the greatest potential for achieving health and environmental objectives through the promotion of more active travel, and the most relevant space within which community's social and economic aims can be realised. The public realm is therefore a vital element in public health outcomes.

1.15 The public realm is viewed in this report as part of a wider toolkit available to society with which to meet the needs, desires and objectives of a community. We outline the policy context which exists today and present a case for rethinking the way in which the public realm is approached.

1.16 Our key objectives do not involve thinking about design approaches but rather attempt to redefine the public realm and the way it is approached in the aim that a wider range of policy objectives can be considered and worked towards. An important perspective during research has involved the balancing of two similar but widely different questions:

- To what extent is it safe to innovate?
- To what extent is it safe to maintain the status quo?

9 It should be noted that this stage of research picked up on the very confusing use and misuse of vocabulary surrounding shared space. For the sake of conveying the level of disagreement on this topic, we have not edited out other terms which are/could be synonymous with shared space.

STRUCTURE

- 1.17 The main findings of the report are presented in the next four chapters. Any further detail on transcripts, interviews, sounding boards and literature review can be provided by contacting PACTS.

Chapter 2

Public Policy and the Public Realm demonstrates the role of the public realm, highlighting the complex balancing act carried out by planners and stakeholders at all levels. The consideration of today's policy environment provides a frame within which key priorities for public realm planning can be identified.

Chapter 3

Balancing Civility and Mobility: Past and Present places shared space within a wider historical context. This chapter shows how public realm planners have, over the course of the last century, dealt with the same basic conflict between civility and mobility. A summary of more contemporary approaches to this conflict is provided including an analysis of shared space.

Chapter 4

Shared Space: Moving the Debate Forward builds on the previous two chapters, picking up on areas which have been identified as positive contributions to public realm planning within today's policy context.

Chapter 5

Moving the Debate Forward: The Challenges identifies the challenges ahead based on the potential offered by steps identified in the previous chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion - A final chapter provides some conclusions and brings together the recommendations made throughout the report.

- 1.18 A full list of contributors can be found at the back of this report. We are grateful to all those involved in the research process although it should be stressed that conclusions and recommendations were formed internally and are not necessarily supported by all those we spoke to.

2

PUBLIC POLICY AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Identifies the role of the public realm.
- Places the public realm within today's policy context.
- Highlights the high-level approaches which planners and stakeholders should be considering.
- Underlines the need for joined-up, local determination of objectives relevant to the planning of the public realm.

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC REALM

- 2.1 Though in appearance a simple term to define, the public realm is complex in character. Without wanting to limit this complexity, our focus in this report has fallen solely on those public space areas which exist on the street network. Combining the CABE definition of 'streetscape' with the ODPM (now DCLG) definition of 'public space'¹¹, this report defines the 'public realm' as:

Those parts of the highway to which the public have shared access and on which the spectrum of public life is carried out. This can include, among others, high streets, rural village streets, market squares and shopping streets but would not include roads of obvious and limited purpose such as motorways and dual carriageways.

- 2.2 Good public realm planning allows for a wide spectrum of opportunity whilst poor public realm planning restricts the quantity, quality and efficiency of public life activities which can be carried out in a space. Based on definitions employed for this report, it is possible to show that the public realm has important implications for public health and other policy objectives.
- 2.3 The four photos below¹² were taken in locations where public realm planning has limited the opportunities which the space offers.



- 2.4 The four photos shown are examples of ineffective public realm planning. In all cases, the design of the place fails to provide for the most obvious needs, desires or objectives which users may have.

10 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/paving-the-way.pdf>

11 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/131006.pdf>

12 Photo 3 kindly provided by John Dales, Urban Initiatives (research advisor) and photos 2 and 4 kindly provided by Andrew Cameron, WSP (research advisor)

- 2.5 In photo (1) pedestrians are crowded on the pavements but the one-way traffic is given two lanes and very clear encouragement through road markings to behave as if on any busy dual carriageway despite the obvious social function of the place. Photo (2) shows unnecessary segregation using a subway and guard-railing on what is essentially an important crossing area within a small town. Photo (3) shows a regeneration project which has completely failed to meet user needs on all levels – it is unlikely that a user with restricted mobility of any type would find this street easy to navigate and even the most able users would struggle to use such a cluttered street. (4) shows modern planning techniques which unnecessarily encourage traffic behaviours and probably high traffic speeds between two residential estates where the only requirement for cars is to enter, leave or park.
- 2.6 The clear message from all of the photos shown is that inadvertently, public realm planning in some areas has been inefficiently executed and fails to support the function of a place or encourage the actions and behaviours which users would like to observe.
- 2.7 When well planned, the public realm is essentially a tool which can contribute towards meeting the wider needs, desires and objectives of society. The more knowledge available to planners about the objectives of an area and the more effective the working structures and processes, the more likely it is that public realm planning will be effective.
- 2.8 **Figure 1** below builds on a Conceptual Map developed by researchers from the University of West England.¹³ It illustrates the nexus between Health and Well-being, Physical Environment and Social Environment objectives, linking them with examples of the 'tools' available to policy makers, planners and stakeholders. The model includes a range of elements which affect public health and other policy objectives.

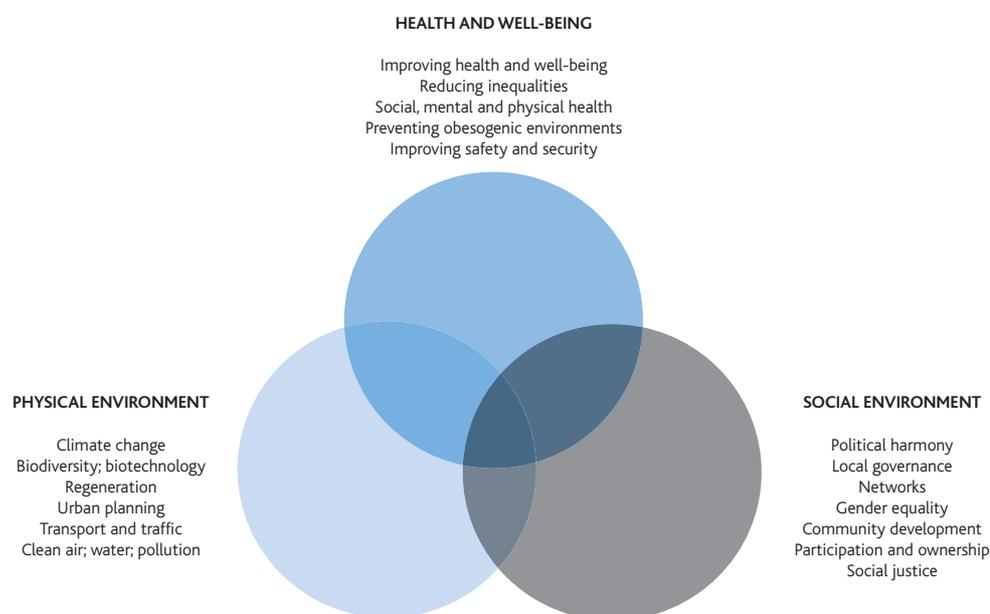


Figure 1: Conceptual Public Health Map

13 Kimberlee et al (2007) 'KATARSIS Growing Inequality and Social Innovation: Alternative Knowledge and Practice in Overcoming Social Exclusion in Europe' w.p 1.4 Survey Paper Health and Environment, University of the West of England.

- 2.9 **Figure 1** identifies a number of key social, physical and health and well-being topics which will hold more or less relevance depending on the area in question. The box at the bottom of **Figure 1** gives examples of some of the approaches or tools which can help to link the societal objectives provided in the physical, social and health examples shown. It is shown that the reconciliation of these often competing objectives can be aided by approaches such as: joined-up working, public realm planning, well-being initiatives, neighbourhood engagement strategies and so on.
- 2.10 Determining the objectives of any community or society will include a finely struck balance between local knowledge and national direction. It is therefore appropriate that the wider policy context is understood by those working on the public realm.

TODAY'S POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.11 At the national level, clear 'whole of government' policy objectives are difficult to extract. Policy has become increasingly complex and accordingly fragmented, with many of the cross-cutting issues failing to be prioritised. In response to this, the Institute for Government, an independent charity which works to improve government effectiveness, published **Shaping Up, a Whitehall for the Future**¹⁴ which built on the work of their 2009 report **The State of the Service**.¹⁵
- 2.12 The 2010 report confronts the 'weak administrative centre of UK Government' which has 'created a strategic gap at the heart of British government [and] which inhibits the ability to set overall government priorities and translate them into action.' The report gives examples of cross-cutting issues such as childhood obesity and social exclusion. These 'wicked' problems¹⁶ are both economically draining and preventable. The report calls for public sector reform to resolve them.
- 2.13 Aside from highlighting the difficulties involved in outlining a whole-of-government policy context, the two reports signal a move towards improving joined-up working across government. This is being echoed at the local level and will take on more significance as the public sector begins to take on the long-anticipated budget cuts.¹⁷
- 2.14 These changes should impact on public realm approaches. As whole area policy objectives are clarified, the public realm will have a more obvious role to play in terms of allowing for synthesis between various local and national objectives. Public realm planners and stakeholders should be aware of this and generate structures which allow for a wider range of objectives to be considered.

TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

- 2.15 In 2008, following recommendations made in the Eddington Study¹⁸ and the Stern Review¹⁹ and building on their preceding document **Towards a Sustainable Transport System** (TaSTS)²⁰, the Department for Transport published **Delivering a Sustainable**

14 <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/pdfs/shaping-up-a-whitehall-for-the-future.pdf>

15 http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/pdfs/state_of_the_service.pdf

16 <http://cognexus.org/wpf/wickedproblems.pdf>

17 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/May/17/george-osborne-6bn-spending-cuts-next-monday>

18 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/187604/206711/executivesummary.pdf>

19 <http://www.occ.gov.uk/activities/stern.htm>

20 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/transportstrategy/pdfsustaintranssystem.pdf>

Transport System (DaSTS)²¹. In DaSTS like in TaSTS, the DfT outline five key goals which 'take full account of transport's wider impact on climate change, health, quality of life and the natural environment.'

- 2.16 The public realm, as defined in this document, fits into the DaSTS transport system and should therefore be framed by these five goals:
1. To support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks.
 2. To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change.
 3. To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health.
 4. To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society.
 5. To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

SPECIFIC POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 2.17 Within the brackets of DaSTS goals, there are a number of public and societal concerns and issues which are pursued nationally and which currently form the basis of many policy-related decisions both at the national and local levels. It is important that those issues which will inevitably impact on the way in which the public realm is approached are considered.

Economic Growth and Public Debt

- 2.18 In 2009, public debt in the UK reached £800 billion. When measured as a percentage of national income, this figure is not out of line with other wealthy nations. However, it is growing relatively more quickly than in comparable countries.²² There is no doubt that encouraging economic growth will be at the forefront of all policy decisions being made. Logically, economic losses will be more actively avoided and economic gains more rigorously pursued. Improving the safety of British roads and reducing levels of congestion could contribute to making those savings; economic growth policy will therefore inevitably impact on transport policy and is important to bear in mind when making decisions in this area.

Congestion

- 2.19 In 2004, it was estimated that, without intervention, the economic cost of congestion on British roads was expected to rise to £30 billion per year by 2010.²³ The Commission for Integrated Transport published the chart below which outlines our levels of congestion when compared to some European counterparts.

21 Department for Transport (2008) 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/transportstrategy/dasts/dastsreport.pdf>

22 <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/economics/article6840749.ece>, viewed 19th September 2009

23 Goodwin P (2004) 'The Economic Costs of Road Traffic Congestion', ESRC Transport Studies Unit, University College London, p1

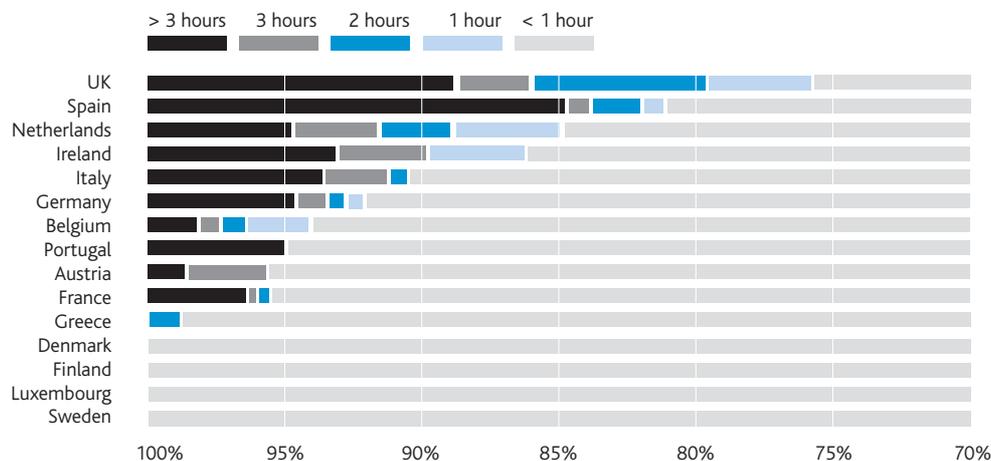


Figure 2: Daily duration of congestion in UK when compared with other EU nations.²⁴

Road Death and Injury

- 2.20 Based on DfT figures, the valuation of the benefits to society arising from the prevention of road death amounted, in 2008, to over £4273m, and the total from recorded road traffic collisions to £17,913m, over 70 per cent of which was loss from death or injury.²⁵ On average, seven people per day were killed in 2008 on British roads, a total of 2,538 in the year.²⁶ These numbers do not begin to illustrate the impact on people who suffer as a result of those deaths or those people with lifelong disabling injuries.
- 2.21 Furthermore, although 230,905 injuries as a result of collisions on the road were reported to the police last year, the Department for Transport (DfT) has crosschecked against other data sources such as Hospital Episode Statistics and Self-Reported Injury Accidents in the National Travel Survey and now estimates that the actual number may be closer to 800,000. Road safety is an issue which very clearly traverses both economic and quality of life objectives and should continue to play a fundamental role in public realm approaches.
- 2.22 The public realm, as defined in this report, nearly always fits into the DfT definition of a built-up road²⁷. In 2008, 63 per cent of those killed or seriously injured (KSI) were on built-up roads²⁸, of which 65 per cent occurred in daylight.²⁹
- 2.23 96 per cent of reported pedestrian casualties, 92 per cent of reported pedal cyclist casualties and 75 per cent of reported motorcycle casualties in 2008 occurred on built-up roads. More than half of the children who died on British roads in 2008 were on built-up roads, 69 per cent of whom were pedestrians.³⁰
- 2.24 In essence, the built-up road network, or public realm as defined in this report, is the setting which places the most vulnerable users at greatest risk from the least vulnerable. Public realm planners should take this on board, and ask both 'Is innovation safe enough?' and 'Is the status quo safe enough?'

24 CfIT (2002) Paying for Road Use; Roads, Vehicles and Congestion, DfT London 2003; Transport Statistics Great Britain 2003, Department for Transport, London, TSO. Table 9.7

25 The DfT estimate that the value to society of preventing each death is £1.6 million

26 Department for Transport (2009) 'Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2008'

27 Defined in accident terms as 'roads with speed limits (ignoring temporary limits) of 40mph or less.' RRCGB2008

28 RRCGB 2008, Table 5c

29 RRCGB 2008 Table 15b

30 RRCGB 2008 Table 24

The Environmental Agenda

- 2.25 The global climate change agenda has gradually risen in the priority list for the British government. The Climate Change Act of 2008 set legally-binding targets for the UK to reduce its gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, and CO₂ by at least 26 per cent by 2020.³¹ Improving the efficiency of vehicles and encouraging safe and less emitting means of transport are two ways in which these targets can be helped. Public realm schemes which contribute to this will inevitably gain more support than those which do not.

Fairer Society – Equality and Quality of Life

- 2.26 Income inequality has risen for a second successive year, and is now equal to its highest-ever level (at least since comparable records began in 1961) as measured by the Gini coefficient, which is a measure of income equality. The Gini coefficient can range from 0 to 1: a low Gini coefficient indicates a more equal distribution, with 0 corresponding to complete equality, while higher Gini coefficients indicate more unequal distribution, with 1 (or in this case 100) corresponding to complete inequality.³²

Gini coefficient for disposable incomes after deducting housing costs

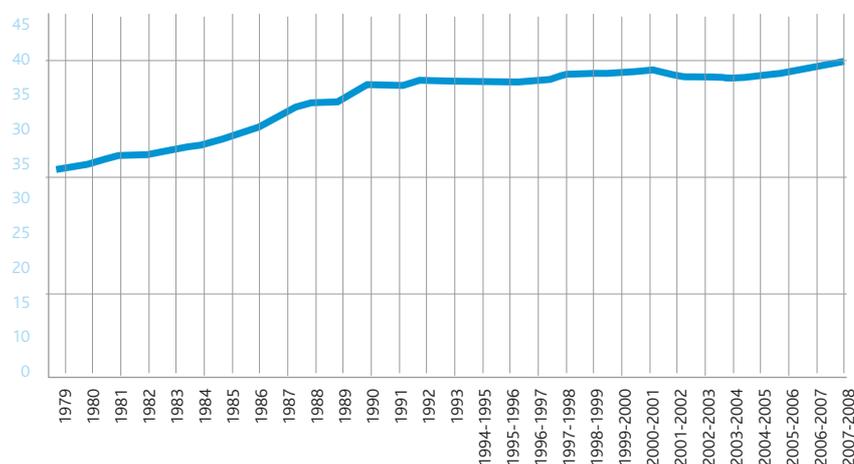


Figure 3: The Gini coefficient, 1979 to 2006–07 (GB) ³²

- 2.27 The 2007 Pre Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review set out the then government's commitment to improving the nation. Within the document, the government pledged to improve fairness and opportunities for all, underlining the need to 'narrow the gap' between low income and disadvantaged groups and their peers, 'address the disadvantage that individuals experience' by 'increasing participation in public life' among other measures.³³
- 2.28 In **'The Spirit Level – Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better'**, Wilkinson and Pickett show how high inequality is linked to a range of social outcomes. Using an evidence-led approach, the work argues that more equal societies, regardless of average wealth, are more likely to achieve positive public health and other social outcomes.³⁴

31 http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080027_en_1

32 <http://www.poverty.org.uk/09/g.pdf>

33 HM Treasury (2007) '2007 Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review', The StationeryOffice, p7

34 Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) 'The Spirit level - Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better', Allen Lane, London

- 2.29 New ways of thinking about the public realm could be used to help improve relations, communication and social equality between members of a community. Better consultation, definition of roles within a community and the acquisition of advanced citizenship may help communities to work towards creating more preferable social conditions. More qualitative research should be conducted in this area.

Health

- 2.30 In 2006, 60 per cent of men and 72 per cent of women did not meet the Chief Medical Officer's minimum recommendations for physical activity in adults³⁵. By 2011, 6 million women and 6.6 million men in England will be obese.³⁶ This number is important because it represents the growth and the scale of the largest contributory factor to Coronary Heart Disease (CHD).³⁷ CHD kills more than 110,000 people in England every year; more people in England and Wales than any other condition.³⁸ According to the Department of Health (DH) CHD is most prevalent amongst people who are obese.³⁹ It is expected that the consequences of overweight and obesity will cost around £50 billion per year in England and Wales by 2050.⁴⁰
- 2.31 There are a number of contributing factors which have helped to create the sedentary culture we exist in and the resulting condition, obesity, a cause of CHD and a myriad of other deadly conditions.⁴¹ Transport policy has directly or indirectly been one of those contributors over (at least) the last 50 years.
- 2.32 In 2007, the Government Office for Science presented 5 'top policy responses' which would have the greatest average impact on levels of obesity. One of those was 'Increased walkability/cyclability of the built environment' to build physical activities into our lives.⁴²

SUMMARY

- 2.33 Planners and stakeholders working in the public realm should be aware of and work towards a 'whole-of-community' range of objectives before embarking on any scheme. This type of approach will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 4: Shared Space – Moving the Debate Forward and Chapter 5: Moving Forward – The Challenges.
- 2.34 The public realm should be considered as part of a wider toolkit with which to meet the needs, desires and objectives of a community. Good public realm planning will allow for the widest range of these to be achieved and bad public realm design will restrict or prevent them.

35 Department of Health (2006) Health Survey for England 2006

36 Department of Health (2006) Forecasting obesity to 2010

37 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/health-social-care/health-of-the-population/causes-of-death/index.html>

38 http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Coronaryheartdisease/DH_120

39 <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Coronaryheartdisease/Riskfactorsandinitiatives/index.htm>

40 <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/obesity.pdf>

41 <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/obesity.pdf>

42 Ibid p28

- 2.35 The policy context which should frame public realm planning will involve a balance of local knowledge and national direction. The principles outlined in DaSTS offer a useful national perspective from which local specifics can be built upon.
- 2.36 New approaches to the public realm should include a comprehensive awareness of the wide range of community objectives which have traditionally tended to remain outside of transport thinking.
- 2.37 In its broadest sense, this whole-community approach involves a balancing of the mobility and civility requirements placed on a space.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS CHAPTER:

- Policy makers and planners should be aware that public realm conception and design will impact on the wider needs, desires and objectives of a community and should prepare accordingly.
- Those involved in public realm conception and design should be aware of the full breadth of societal and community objectives.
- Transport goals concerning the economy, the environment, accessibility, health, safety and security provide a useful national base on which to add locally-specific knowledge to generate a nationally and locally relevant contextual setting.

3

BALANCING CIVILITY AND MOBILITY: PAST AND PRESENT

- Builds on the idea of a struggle between civility and mobility within the context of the public realm.
- Looks at how this struggle has been approached in the past.
- Considers more recent approaches.
- Identifies shared space as the latest approach to this civility v. mobility conflict.

CONTEXT: THE BALANCING ACT

- 3.1 In the previous chapter, it was shown that the public realm should be seen as one of a wide range of tools with which the needs, desires and objectives of societies and communities can be met. The range of community objectives were identified as a balance between national guidance and local perspective of which public realm planners and stakeholders were asked to be more aware.
- 3.2 When specific objectives are taken out, it can be seen that this 'balance' takes place between two broad sub-categories: 'mobility' (getting people efficiently from A to B and thus supporting economic growth) and 'civility' (all that contributes to the well-being agenda).⁴³
- 3.3 In this chapter, the balance between mobility and civility and how it has been approached will be considered, initially taking an historical perspective before considering more modern approaches.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- 3.4 The tension between increasing mobility and maintaining or improving civility has probably been around since before Roman times, but has been particularly marked since motor vehicles began to appear more widely on streets in Britain and around the world. Road-based transport was quick to take precedence over rail, with investment in rail taking a back seat to road building from the late 1950s, highlighted in the 1960s by a sharp reduction in the length of the UK rail route.
- 3.5 Contrary to popular belief, researchers, visionaries, planners and governments throughout the twentieth century did not seek to segregate the various types of human and motor traffic solely with the aim of reducing congestion, but in response to the safety concerns associated with the more vulnerable road users and concern to reduce the intrusion of increasing motor traffic into living, working and social space.
- 3.6 **Figure 4** below identifies a number of key documents (pre 2000) which approach the conflict of interest between increasing capacity and maintaining or improving quality of life for vulnerable road users and individuals in society.

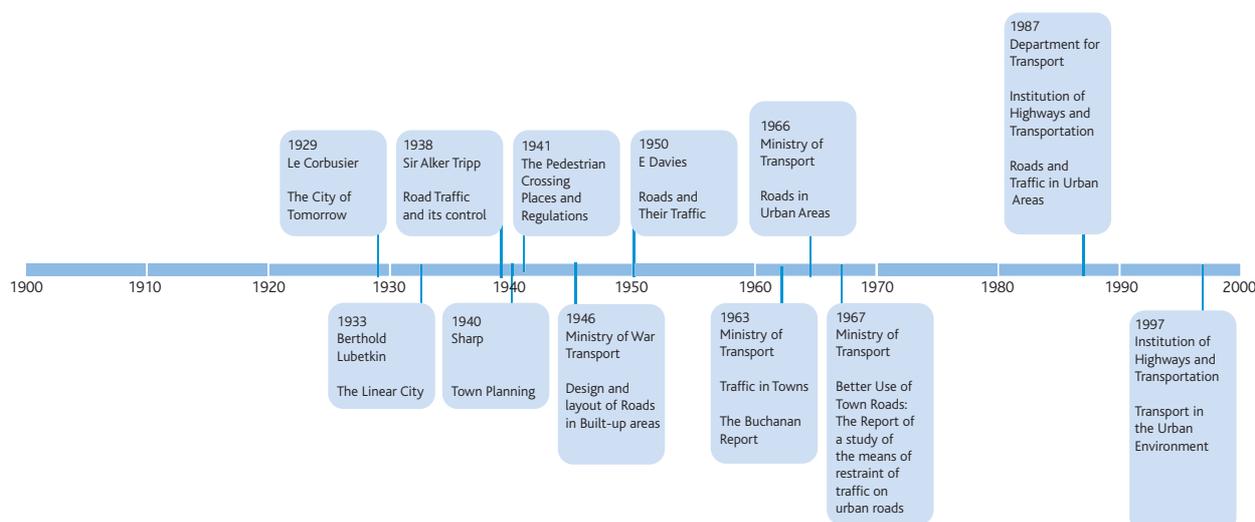


Figure 4: A Number of Key Documents Relating to the Mobility vs. Civility Debate

⁴³ See definitions section for more detail.

3.7 In 1929 Le Corbusier said of Paris

After the quiet of summer, autumn traffic meant that 'to leave your house meant that once you had crossed the threshold you were a possible sacrifice to death in the shape of innumerable motors. I think back twenty years, when I was a student; the road belonged to us then; we sang in it and argued in it while the horse-bus swept calmly along.'⁴⁴

3.8 In 1938, Sir Alker Tripp, who had formerly been the Assistant Commissioner of Police, commented that:

The community have certainly accrued; but this motor traffic inflicts daily a shocking toll of casualties upon the public at large, and at the same time increases to such an extent that, in the great cities, it is beginning to strangle its own circulation.^{45 46}

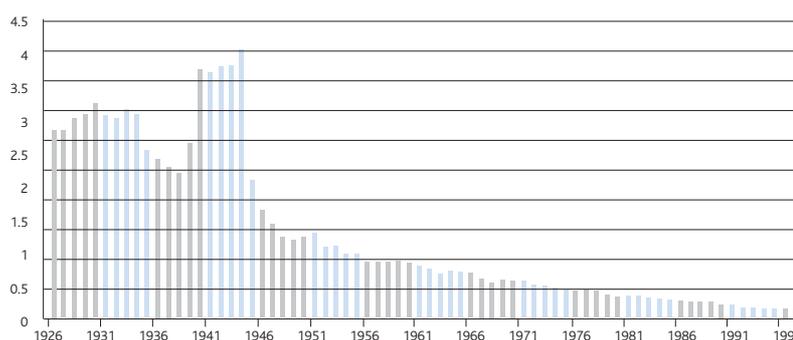


Figure 5: Annual Fatalities per Thousand Motor Vehicles Currently Registered ⁴⁷

- 3.9 The chart above shows the safety impact which the motorcar had on British society. Policy makers and others at the time attempted to find ways to protect the more vulnerable road users whilst at the same time encouraging the potential economic gains of the motorcar and reducing congestion without adding too greatly to the deterioration of public space. Of course these issues are obviously not compatible, and guidance tended to look for compromise.
- 3.10 It was noted by many that the motor vehicle had been welcomed onto road systems which had not been designed for motorised traffic. As a result, much literature of the time attempts to reconsider the highway within parameters more suited to the needs of motorised traffic. Le Corbusier, for example, was acutely aware of the insufficiency of contemporary roads for the traffic they carried whilst at the same time keen not only to improve safety but also to reverse the detrimental affect of the motorcar on living and social spaces.

HISTORICAL SOLUTIONS

- 3.11 Growing concern for the safety and well-being of individuals in society called for new approaches, which often sought to eliminate the possibility of encounter between motorised and vulnerable road users and, by association, eliminate the risk of injury. In the same vein, life functions tended to be separated in order to avoid reduced air quality

44 Le Corbusier (1929) 'The City of To-morrow and its planning' - translated from the French Edition of Urbanisme, John Rodker, London, xxiii

45 Tripp Sir Alker (1938) 'Road Traffic and its Control', Edward Arnold and Co, London, 1950

46 Ibid.

47 Cabinet Office (1999) A Research Paper 'A Century of Change : Trends in UK Statistics Since 1900', Jo Hicks and Grahame Allen, House of Commons Library, p17

in living spaces as a result of commuter and other traffic.

- 3.12 Le Corbusier developed four concise requirements for contemporary street design:
- 1) We must de-congest the centres of cities in order to provide for the demands of traffic.
 - 2) We must increase the density of the centres of cities in order to bring about the close contact demanded by business.
 - 3) We must increase the means whereby traffic can circulate i.e. we must completely modify the present-day conception of the street, which has shown itself useless in regard to the new phenomenon of modern means of transport; tubes, motors, trams and airplanes.
 - 4) We must increase the area of green and open spaces; this is the only way to ensure the necessary degree of health and peace to enable men to meet the anxieties of work occasioned by the new speed at which business is carried on.⁴⁸
- 3.13 Sir Alker Tripp was concerned with the additional vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists as a result of vehicular traffic and, based on statistical evidence, saw the redesign of the road network including strict coordination and the elimination of unexpected encounters as being key to reducing the numbers of casualties.
- 3.14 Further into the twentieth century, the motor car increasingly determined decisions that were made. Colin Buchanan speculated that soon all voters would be car owners, and that it would be in policy maker's interests to provide for the car owner. As a result, a great deal of road building took place including alterations in layout, increased segregation of road user type and specification of living and transport areas, much in the same way that Tripp had made proposals some twenty years previously.⁴⁹
- 3.15 Economic growth, voter popularity, safety and environmental quality have continued to guide approaches towards public realm design and have been positively affected by decisions made and processes observed. In that sense, visionaries throughout the twentieth century, often criticised for segregationist principles, did in fact act in good faith, recommending what they thought was the best solution. It is vital that this is observed if current thinkers are to approach the public realm in a sustainable manner.
- 3.16 Towards the end of the century, the remit to improve quality of life or civility had widened to include more environmental and health issues. As a result, guidance and documentation appeared to take a step change.
- 3.17 In 1987, **Roads and Traffic in Urban Areas** focussed on issues surrounding the difficulties encountered when mixing road user types, making the following suggestions:
- The Criteria for New Schemes:
- Ease congestion and reduce delays, especially where this would enable public transport to operate more effectively
 - Protect or improve the environment (e.g. by taking heavy through traffic out of residential and shopping areas.)

48 Le Corbusier (1929) 'The City of To-morrow and its planning' -

translated from the French Edition of Urbanisme, John Rodker, London, pp99-100

49 Department for Transport (1963) 'Traffic in Towns', Colin Buchanan, Para 101

- Improve access for industry and commerce
- Protect and enhance the safety of all road users
- Improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and disabled people.⁵⁰

3.18 The report continues:

What is clear is that no one policy or technique should be slavishly applied to every situation.⁵¹

3.19 The guidance also points out that:

All road users are pedestrians for one or more stages of every journey. In urban areas. About one third of all journeys are made entirely on foot and it is essential to consider their needs within the transport system to give them equal and sometimes greater consideration with other road users and to plan accordingly.

3.20 Recommendations included:

- Widening footways (reduces pedestrian crossing time – particularly useful when non-official crossing points used – bays can be provided for buses where necessary)
- Reducing corner radii, thus forcing traffic to slow
- Surface treating junctions forcing the driver not the pedestrian to change levels.
- Improving maintenance of schemes.⁵²

3.21 These kinds of recommendations are often used today and proposed as 'new' solutions. Given the limited resources and the continuing problem of urban pedestrian safety, it seems unfortunate that unintentional reinvention and repetition have to happen.

3.22 Throughout the course of the twentieth century, the public realm was influenced by a number of wider policy constraints. In this sense, transportation has, unintentionally or unconsciously, played a much larger role than might be initially considered. Acting as one of a number of 'tools' available to government, the various functions of the public realm were maximised to achieve the particular objectives of the day.

3.23 It is important that this relationship be understood by those working on public realm schemes. The changing nature of policy constraints will affect the way in which the public realm is approached. The more flexible a space can be whilst still achieving its objectives, the more sustainable it will be. Public realm approaches should fit within the wider concerns of today and the foreseeable future. This point highlights the need for intelligent and flexible design approaches which can absorb alterations in societal concerns beyond 2010.

50 Ibid, p4

51 Ibid, p5

52 Ibid, p193

MORE RECENT APPROACHES

- 3.24 In light of recent and current changes in policy focus, there has been an expected and marked shift in the direction of thinking about the role of the public realm.
- 3.25 The following briefly summarizes a number of more recent approaches; looking at reviews and evaluations of work carried out in order to establish the kinds of positives and negatives which are emerging.
- 3.26 Looking into more recent public realm approaches, it is evident that a lack of knowledge about existing research among practitioners has resulted in a number of schemes and approaches repeating the same mistakes and generating similar conclusions. The summaries below do not extrapolate all conclusions gathered, but hint at the experiences gained and lessons learnt. They have been included in the hope that references will provide useful tools in the dissemination of research.

Home Zones

- 3.27 Though Home Zones have been around in the Netherlands since the 1960s as Woonerven or 'yard for living', their appearance in Britain was some time later. In 1999, nine Home Zone pilot projects were initiated throughout England and Wales. The government then sponsored the "Home Zones Challenge" in 2002, granting funds to more than 50 additional schemes for street redesign.^{53 54 55}



A Home Zone in the Netherlands ⁵⁶



A Home Zone in the UK ⁵⁷

- 3.28 Home Zones have been very popular approaches to residential streets, focusing on the civility objectives of a space as identified in the definitions section of this report.
- 3.29 As seen with shared space, discussions about Home Zones have tended to focus primarily on either the inputs or the outcomes, depending on perspective. In its broadest sense, a Home Zone tends to be considered as a physical alteration to streets which slows speeds and encourages more freedom for all user-types to enjoy a residential space.

53 Department for Transport (2001) Traffic Advisory Leaflet 10/01, **Home Zones – Planning and Design**

54 Transport Research Laboratory (2006) 'Pilot Home Zone Schemes: Summary of the Schemes' ISBN 1-8460-653-1 (TRL)

55 www.livablestreets.com/streetswiki/home-zones

56 An example of Woonerven in the Netherlands

57 A Home Zone in the UK

- 3.30 Home Zones have been created in both new build schemes and retro-fit models with aims ranging from regeneration and crime prevention through to improving safety and tackling poor air quality.
- 3.31 Research shows that quantifiable objectives such as speed reduction, crime reduction, community empowerment and safety improvements have been being positively affected by the creation of a Home Zone.
- 3.32 However a number of other objectives, such as improved community cohesion, and social equality, are less quantifiable and are often left out in research. This means that in many instances, there is only anecdotal evidence to show the full range of benefits associated with Home Zones.
- 3.33 Though minor in comparison with the positives, some research raised the following less positive outcomes. These outcomes are not a result of the Home Zone concept but rather individual scheme experience – they are best considered as useful points for consideration in future schemes
- **Disabled access:** The most 'safe' option in terms of safety perception was to include safe zones, delineated by furniture or otherwise without being over-restrictive. There was no solution which appeared to suit all but wider consultation was considered a useful tool for gathering the needs of a multitude of users.
 - **Traffic calming:** Although not all Home Zones require traditional traffic calming measures, there was some negative feedback about the effects of traffic calming.
 - **Parking:** Reductions in parking availability was a problem in a number of schemes⁵⁸ and became more significant than had initially been imagined. However, Home Zones do not automatically imply reduced parking and can in fact include increases in parking capacity if required and well designed.
 - **Monitoring and maintenance:** There was some indication that monitoring had not been sufficiently carried out and that lack of maintenance had reduced the communities' desire to engage with the local space. This evidence was anecdotal but the DfT implied that further work would be carried out to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation in the future.⁵⁹
 - **Lighting:** was a much more important feature than had been anticipated and appeared to impact on the security and surveillance elements of schemes.^{60 61}
- 3.34 The 2002 IHIE Home Zone Design Guidelines provide a valuable resource to planners, focusing on the importance of user participation and community buy-in. The guidelines importantly state:

Home Zones must be tailor-made, and designed to fit the character of individual streets and spaces. Home Zones will work best when prospective residents recognise the benefits of living in a newly built Home Zone when choosing to live there, or when the existing local community has a sense of ownership of and commitment to the scheme.⁶²

58 Transport Research Laboratory (2006) 'Pilot Home Zone Schemes: Summary of the Schemes' ISBN 1-8460-653-1 (TRL)

59 Department for Transport (2005) Homezones: Challenging the future of our streets

60 Ibid.

61 Transport Research Laboratory (2006) 'Pilot Home Zone Schemes: Summary of the Schemes' ISBN 1-8460-653-1 (TRL)

62 IHIE (2002) 'Home Zone Design Guidelines' IHIE, London
<http://www.homezones.org.uk/public/guidance/index.cfm>

3.35 In 2005, the Department for Transport published 'Home Zones: Challenging the future of our streets'. The messages and recommendations from this document should be extended and considered within the contexts of shared space. Despite outlining the expense implications often associated with some of their suggestions, the Department gives important pointers on issues such as:

- Home Zones work best when areas are contained within a defined and homogenous area with a clear focus for the community
- Schemes always take longer than anticipated
- Involve the emergency services, utility companies and other less well represented groups from the start
- Community led approaches should encourage participation not consultation.⁶³

Pedestrianisation

3.36 Often in a bid to create more attractive urban centres, pedestrianisation has been widely used throughout recent decades to achieve objectives such as regeneration, improving shop patronage, increasing property value, improving the safety of pedestrians, improving air quality and other effects of congestion and encouraging use of a deteriorating area.

3.37 Pedestrianisation can manifest itself as a total ban for all traffic or as a partial ban by type of traffic, or, as seen in Newbury town centre, by time of day.



Pedestrianised High Street in Newbury⁶⁴

3.38 Although pedestrianisation has generally been considered a positive approach, some issues have been raised. These include:

ISSUE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Reduced security at night as a result of the lack of motorist surveillance	Allow traffic at some times of the day, enhance street lighting, CCTV, city centre reps, efficient pedestrian audit ⁶⁵
Congestion, emissions & unimproved safety on peripheral routes	Master planning, improved public transport, suitable parking areas ^{66 67}
User conflict?	Studies in Darlington did not find that a problem existed between cyclist and pedestrians ⁶⁸ although efficient auditing combined with wider consultation could help to eliminate any potential risk or misunderstanding here.
Redistribution of Traffic	Although little research is available on this, there is some concern that pedestrianisation may result in increased levels of traffic in other areas resulting in negative overall public realm and public health impacts.

63 Department for Transport (2005) Homezones: Challenging the future of our streets

64 Northbrook Street, Newbury, April 2009

65 Department for Transport (2000) 'Personal Security Issues in Pedestrian Journeys'
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/personalsecurity/personalsecurityissuesinpede3005>

- 3.39 Although research has been commissioned to look at the effects of pedestrianisation on cycling^{69 70}, environment⁷¹, personal security⁷² and older people⁷³, PACTS research has failed to identify any official UK-based research evaluating the success of pedestrianisation schemes based on their objectives.

Quiet Lanes

- 3.40 Based on a Jersey scheme known as 'Greenways',⁷⁴ Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads, designated by Local Highway Authorities to be appropriate for more shared use with greater attention given to protecting the needs of the more vulnerable road users from speeding traffic. By making positive changes to user behaviour, the aim is to improve safety, engage the local community, encourage active travel and offer better access to those without personal transport. The diagram in **Figure 6**, outlines the potential for Quiet Lanes as viewed by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

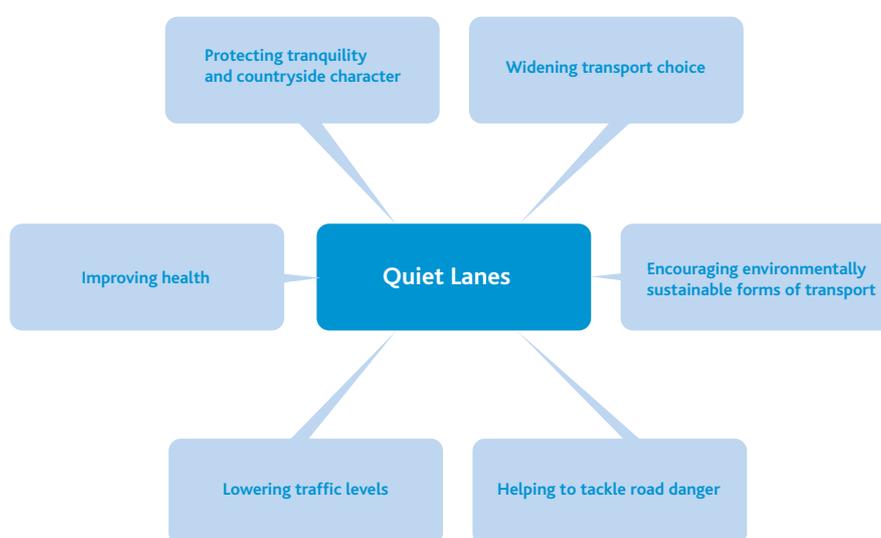


Figure 6: CPRE - Quiet Lanes⁷⁵

66 The Independent, 'Pedestrianised towns say: we want cars' Emma Cook, Sept. 26th 1999

67 Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet (Date unknown)
'Traffic Management and Emissions'

68 Grassick and Stahl (2005) Darlington Cycling Campaign,

'A Study of Pedestrian and Cyclist Interaction in the "Pedestrian Heart" in Darlington'

69 http://www.grassick.net/cycling_downloads/CCTV%20STUDY.pdf

70 http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/site/wpcontent/uploads/2008/10/a07_vehicle_restricted_areas.pdf

71 http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobe/pdf/165240/244291/244924/TAL_4-96

72 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/personalsecurity/personalsecurityissuesinpede3004?page=7>

73 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/inclusion/older/olderpeopletheirtransportnee3260?page=13>

74 <http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/resources/guidelines%206.pdf>

75 Campaign to Protect Rural England (2003) 'CPRE's Guide to Quiet Lanes'

- 3.41 By design, the process is intended to engage the community and encourage buy-in from local residents. Area-wide and network specific signage is used to highlight the schemes. In theory, the process works very well, with effective community involvement and encouraging self-reported figures for more active travel.
- 3.42 However, interviews conducted for this research found dissatisfaction with the actual behavioural outcomes of Quiet Lanes, with users indicating a gap between the intentions of residents and their actual behaviours.
- 3.43 Additionally, research conducted by the CPRE suggested that a lack of maintenance appeared to be a deterrent with flooding in some areas making the roads unusable for non-motorised traffic, whilst the CPRE point out that there is no legislation giving any user group priority.⁷⁶

Mixed Priority Routes

- 3.44 Although not discussing the projects themselves, Roberts and Morris provide a useful discussion on the areas which The Demonstration Project for Urban Mixed Priority Routes applied to.
- 3.45 The mixed-use or local urban high street outside a main city centre is rising in importance in the government's policy agenda and has the potential to address several policy concerns – the mixed use street enables shopping without a car, well connected catchments for local businesses, social sustainability and community, liveability, and yet they have often been neglected through fragmentation of responsibility, changes in retailing patterns and so on. These roads are both links and places and the conflicts which arise are frequent and addressed in this document. Both residents and visitors had expressed satisfaction with their high street in terms of the range and the quality of the goods and services available, but there was much less satisfaction when dealing with them as places. In essence, the traditional mixed use high street has been overlooked.⁷⁷
- 3.46 The Demonstration Project for Urban Mixed Priority Routes aimed to confront a number of the issues outlined above, and to show how main urban roads can be made safer and more pleasant for all users without causing major disruption to traffic.⁷⁸
- 3.47 The demonstration project worked to make streets safer and more pleasant, simultaneously tackling two major public realm concerns. The project summary from DfT showed that 'many of the schemes reduced carriageway width, reduced crossing lengths, increased informal and formal crossing points, used higher quality materials to improve the streetscape, improved public transport infrastructure (larger waiting areas, new stops, easy access kerbs etc.) Some more specific measures included; providing cycle ways in Oxford, widening footways, creating curves to reduce driver visibility, putting in bus priority measures.'⁷⁹

76 Campaign to Protect Rural England (2003) 'CPRE's Guide to Quiet Lanes'

77 P. Roberts M. and Morris L. (2007) 'Rediscovering mixed-use streets – The contribution of local high streets to sustainable communities', Joseph Rowntree Foundation

78 A background on Demonstration Partnership Programmes - DfT website

79 Department for Transport (2008) 'Mixed Priority Routes Safety Demonstration Project' WSP

3.48 The DfT report identified that

The outcomes of the projects have been in the main very positive. Crucially, they have delivered casualty reductions (24% to 60%) but have impacted on the more vulnerable road user more markedly.⁸⁰

- 3.49 All Highway Authorities involved collected 'before data' on performance indicators including safety (casualty data, traffic speeds and reported crime), environment (noise level, noise nuisance and air quality), economy (traffic counts, journey travel times, pedestrian footfall, parking and loading, number of vacant premises, population and unemployment), accessibility (pedestrian crossing movements). At the time of the DfT report, 36 month data was not yet ready but positive benefits had been seen.
- 3.50 Some of the less positive issues raised by the project in the period covered by the report were that schemes tended to be less successful or harder to achieve when consultation processes had been less extensive and that wider sources of funding would have been a useful way to engage the various departments whose objectives are also achieved by the schemes.

CONCLUSIONS FROM RECENT PUBLIC REALM APPROACHES

3.51 The above provides a brief summary of some experiences during schemes using modern approaches to reconcile the apparent conflict between mobility and civility. The summaries are intended to highlight a number of key themes which should be considered when discussing shared space:

- 1) Location and Context Specifics: In many instances the approach taken was impractical for the conditions. This is most obviously seen at night on quiet, pedestrianised high streets when the public realm serves neither the civility nor the mobility objectives of an area. It is vital that approaches to the public realm are designed to reflect local context and maximize the objectives placed on a space.
- 2) Consultation: Where consultation was ineffective, planners were not able to register the full range of uses which their particular public realm scheme served. It has been seen that wider consultation is key to more effective public realm schemes and public buy-in.
- 3) Evaluation: In many schemes, before data was not collected, in others, no data was collected. Evaluation was therefore near impossible. It is vital that evaluation is given importance before, during and after a scheme is in place.

SHARED SPACE

- 3.52 Shared space can be viewed as the most recent approach to the balancing of mobility and civility objectives and as an attempt to remedy a number of the intended and unintended consequences of approaches to-date. In some respects, shared space theory proposes familiar concepts translated to reflect modern contexts.
- 3.53 The extracts below come from two visions often placed at odds with one another. Yet in principle they both call for a public realm response to the same dilemma. The Buchanan Report outlines a rudimentary idea similar to the fast and slow network proposed in shared space theory. Buchanan's approach was particularly suited to the zonal planning of the time, but in reality the theory failed to consider the practical existence of areas

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

which cross the boundary between urban corridors and environmental spaces.

3.54 **The Buchanan Report – 1963:**

'There is no principle other than this on which to contemplate the accommodation of motor traffic in towns and cities, whether it is a design for a new town on an open site or the adaptation of an existing town. There must be areas of good environment - urban rooms - where people can live, work, shop, look about, and move around on foot in reasonable freedom from the hazards of motor traffic, and there must be a complementary network of roads - urban corridors - for effecting the primary distribution of traffic to the environmental areas. These areas are not free of traffic-they cannot be if they are to function-but the design would ensure that their traffic is related in character and volume to the environmental conditions being sought... It is not by any means a new idea, Sir Alker Tripp was advocating something on these lines over 20 years ago, and the precincts and neighbourhoods in the county of London Plan reflected the same approach. But in the face of the rapidly increasing number of vehicles it acquires a new urgency; it now requires to be explored and developed from a mere concept into a set of working rules for practical application.⁸¹

3.55 **The Shared Space Project – 2005:**

'Shared Space strives towards a design and layout of public spaces where traffic, human exchange and any other spatial functions are in balance. Shared Space requires a clear distinction between public space and highways. In public space, the freedom of movement and the social interaction between people are decisive criteria; residential space must be designed as people space and must invite social behaviour. A human being who is travelling through the public realm is a guest and behaves accordingly. But his behaviour is different in a traffic area. Traffic areas are designed for rapid movement to destinations. In this scenario the traffic function is the decisive factor for the design and demands a specific type of behaviour.'⁸²

3.56 The two extracts help to underline the continuity of conflict between the civility and mobility functions of the public realm.

3.57 In Scotland, wider thinking about public realm schemes has already entered policy. **Designing Streets** is the first Scottish policy statement for street design and is based on the values outlined below.

Streets exert an immense influence upon our lifestyles and behaviour. Street design also has a direct influence on significant issues such as climate change, public health, social justice, inclusivity and local and district economies. Designing Streets recognises these pressures and seeks to build a collective response through the design of new streets and the regeneration of existing streets that is informed by as wide a range of issues and stakeholders as possible. Through the introduction of this policy, the Scottish Government seeks to ensure that specific interests are no longer promoted without an appreciation of the wider context. Collaboration and awareness between what have often previously existed as singular processes is vital if the aims of Designing Streets are to be met.⁸³

81 Ministry of Transport (1963)' Traffic in Towns', Buchanan et al, HMSO, London. Para 101

82 Interreg IIIB Project (2005)

'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces', p10

83 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/307126/0096540.pdf>

SUMMARY

- 3.58 This chapter has built on the theory that the public realm can and has been used to balance the various mobility and civility objectives of an area, showing how this has been approached both historically and today.
- 3.59 This chapter has provided a summary of research available on modern public realm approaches in the UK including Mixed Priority Routes, Quiet Lanes and Pedestrianisation.
- 3.60 Shared space has been proposed as a recent approach to this 'balancing act' and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS CHAPTER

- Public realm planners and stakeholders should be aware of research and experience in the field before embarking on a scheme.
- The government should provide a central database of research and good practice which allows those working on or involved in public realm schemes to gather a wider sense of research and experience in the field.
- Local Authorities should be aware of the potential for unexpected outcomes of certain approaches.
- Stakeholders, policy makers and planners should ensure that planning, design and implementation all take account of location and context specifics when working on public realm schemes.
- Local Authorities should improve and widen consultation on public realm schemes.
- Local Authorities should collect before and after data based on the objectives of any public realm scheme and budget for substantial evaluation both of processes used and the schemes themselves.

4

SHARED SPACE: MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD

- Looks at how shared space has been interpreted in England and the Netherlands in terms of both processes and projects, and identifies the debates occurring around the topic.
- Considers the experience and relevance of the European Shared Space Project.
- Highlights key elements of what can be considered (although not limited to) shared space theory.
- Calls for debate around shared space to be moved on, away from microlevel design details which should be debated at the local level, towards higher-level thinking about positive directions in public realm – this movement has been considered under the 'project to process' banner.
- Calls for modern public realm thinking to exist within the context of the self-explaining road.
- Calls for modern public realm thinking to involve a 'total place' approach.

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 In the last two chapters it has been seen that:
- Public realm planning should be considered as a tool which can contribute to the attainment of the needs, desires and objectives of communities and society can be met;
 - The public realm plays a key role in balancing the various changing and often conflicting objectives under the wide headings of 'mobility' and 'civility'; and
 - This balancing has been approached in many ways over the course of at least the last 100 years, though the last twenty years have seen a shift in focus further towards prioritising those objectives which fall under the 'civility' heading.
- 4.2 In this report, shared space is considered to be one of the most recent approaches to this balance, and has been defined as 'A multi-understood and somewhat controversial term which exists across a number of fields including urban design, engineering and traffic management and which implies new direction in thinking about the public realm.'
- 4.3 Shared space as a topic has a limited research or evidence base, a factor which has probably contributed to the multi-understanding of the term. This chapter seeks to bring together what is known about the concept and gather a sense of how it has been translated, looking firstly at how the concept has been put into practice and identifying the controversial matters which have been raised around the subject.
- 4.4 Secondly, this chapter will look at the experiences of the European Shared Space Project and highlight the ways in which the practical translation of shared space has changed from the original concepts.
- 4.5 Finally, this chapter calls for a move away from the micro-level debates which have marked shared space towards an emphasis on progress in public realm thinking. The wider issues surrounding shared space concepts are seen to offer useful contributions, placing the public realm within the wider constructs of 'the self-explaining road' and 'total place' approaches.
- 4.6 Shared space is considered in this report as an important vehicle with which to confront the ineffectiveness of our public realm. It is hoped that smarter planning and innovation can result in better places for all.

SHARED SPACE IN PRACTICE: ENGLAND AND THE NETHERLANDS

- 4.7 This section will look at how shared space has been translated in practice. Looking at the practice before the theory will help to identify the reasons why debate has been so centred on design approaches and provide a natural progression back to the original concepts.
- 4.8 There are two caveats that precede this evaluation of shared space in practice. Firstly, a number of the English schemes deemed to be shared space have been somewhat falsely baptized by the media, practitioners, local politicians, engineers and others working in the field. As a result, shared space is frequently considered to be a design approach such as 'level surface' or 'shared surface' or 'naked street' rather than a concept. Secondly, by

their nature, schemes should vary in their objectives based on the local requirements, needs, influences and constraints. Objectives are often unquantifiable or traded-off against more quantifiable issues and schemes could thus appear to be less or more successful than they are.

- 4.9 With those caveats in mind, this section will look at experiences, in England and the Netherlands, of putting shared space into practice. Although research identified a number of shared space schemes in Wales and Scotland, the majority of UK schemes were in England. Research has therefore not extended beyond a number of English schemes.
- 4.10 Research for this section comprised a number of visits to Local Authorities, local Councillors, auditors, engineers, consultants and other practitioners. The visits were to places which fell into one or more of three categories: places 'doing' shared space, places choosing not to 'do' shared space, and places where schemes were not deemed to be shared space but which apply similar processes to those outlined by the Shared Space Project.
- 4.11 The approach did not seek to determine the success or failure of any schemes based on either quantitative or qualitative analysis. Rather it relied on linguistic analysis to gather an understanding of the kinds of processes which shared space had taken on and to draw a link between those approaches and any higher level issues which had arisen as a result.

Country	Town	Area
England	Brighton	New Road
		North Street
	Plymouth	Eastlake Street
		Market Avenue
		Aynho Road
	Northamptonshire	Southgate Street and Commercial Road
	Gloucester	The Kimbrose Triangle
	Westminster	Oxford Circus
		Trafalgar Square
	Ashford	Elwick Road
		Bank Street
		New Street
	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Kensington High Street
		Chelsea
	Manchester	Exhibition Road and South Kensington
		Old Mill Street
	Sheffield	City Centre and Suburbs
Poundbury	Poundbury	
Camden	Camden High Street	
South Hams	Sherford	
The Netherlands	Drachten	Kaden
		Lawai
	Sneek	Vischmarktplein

Table 2: Areas of Scheme Visits/Local Meetings/Research Gathered

- 4.12 Discussions centred on the kinds of processes used and the wider issues raised by the schemes in question. The DfT's **Appraisal of Shared Space** was also referred to, providing a useful source of information and analyses of 'shared space' schemes post-implementation.

- 4.13 Based on the evident lack of evidence available, conclusions drawn should be considered as conditional. Once more complex systems of evaluation are available to Local Authorities, more comprehensive results will no doubt highlight a number of outcomes and issues which cannot be identified at this stage.
- 4.14 The following will outline shared space experience using the three broad categories developed earlier: inputs; outputs; and wider issues.

Inputs

Lead, Objectives and Funding

- 4.15 Schemes ranged widely in their aims which were often closely linked to the type of funding or the influence of those making decisions about funds at the local level. In a number of more affluent areas, cabinet members with the desire to 'do shared space', create a legacy or upgrade the profile of their area, had led the process, calling on the various departments involved to work towards creating that vision.
- 4.16 In some places, Local Authorities had applied for Growth Point Funding – this funding was available in 2006 and again in 2008 (the first round sharing £40m between 29 locations) for areas with an average rate of house building 20 per cent higher than had been written into 2003 plans. The funding was designed to pay for infrastructure projects to support sustainable growth. Other approaches saw Business Improvement Districts (BID) take the lead on funding – BIDs are a precisely defined area within which businesses have opted to invest collectively to make enhancements to the local area and the trading environment. BIDs gained royal assent in 2003, and are designed to complement and add to the 'baseline' work of the local authority, not to replace it.
- 4.17 Crudely speaking, the funding type has tended to predetermine the kinds of aims and objectives which are taken on by schemes. As such, Growth Points have tended to focus on redevelopment of an area to encourage home buyers and business interest. On the other hand, BID areas have tended to focus on improving shopping areas to encourage footfall for commercial businesses, often in response to very local strong competition (in two locations, the recent development of a shopping centre had led the local area to redevelop in the run-down areas which were losing business). Where political influence took the lead, place making and legacy building tended to dominate.
- 4.18 Several of the schemes visited were not considered to be shared space schemes in the way that the term has tended to develop in England. But those schemes appeared to adhere more closely to the shared space approach outlined in this report.
- 4.19 For example, the Brighton North Street scheme is a road safety initiative, funded by the road safety partnership grant scheme. The scheme's 'vision' can be set as 'improving the walkability of the area with one of the 'strategies' being the 'improvement of safety for pedestrians', and one of the actions being the 'redesign to allow for more accurate use of desire lines'. The approach involved wide consultation and observation and targeted the specific issues and requirements of particular areas of the route.

- 4.20 Interestingly, although every scheme visited involved infrastructure work on the highway, transport departments were very rarely seen to take the lead or to provide the majority of the funding. This meant that plans were often worked into the Regional Spatial Strategies or the Local Development Framework, but not into the Local Transport Plan or necessarily related to the Local Area Agreement.
- 4.21 Schemes were seen to be more successful when a strong lead had been present and involved throughout. Having a higher-level master-planning role allowed for more efficient communication between stakeholders and achieved greater buy-in at all levels.

Consultation

- 4.22 Extended or innovative forms of consultation have, in a number of pieces of research concerning public realm schemes, been identified as essential to the process of gaining community 'buy-in' and thus improving the effectiveness of a scheme. However, in practice, the consultation of shared space schemes visited varied very little. In most places, a traditional approach had been taken.
- 4.23 In those instances, the media and local reaction post-implementation was frequently negative, resulting in costly and timely procedures and rectifications. In some areas, more extensive forms of consultation had been attempted but had failed to gather or maintain the community interest or support required. Where innovative forms of consultation had been successful and the needs of users taken a central role, it was seen that the public, the local media and local user groups tended to be more supportive of schemes and keen on being involved.
- 4.24 Achieving successful consultation is an issue which has been raised throughout research and will be considered later on in this report.

Audit and Evaluation

- 4.25 Interviews demonstrated a distinct feeling of limitation in this area. A number of Local Highway Authorities wanted to re-approach the public realm in new ways with a wider set of objectives, but felt that the traditional safety auditing process limited the options available.
- 4.26 Evaluation of shared space schemes was seen in most cases to be very difficult, with Local Authorities feeling under-resourced and lacking the correct toolkit. Discussions around evaluation pointed out that in all cases it was difficult to evaluate such a wide range of objectives and even more difficult to coordinate the various stakeholders. In some cases the funding was not available for evaluation and in others; structures and budgets prevented any evaluation from taking place.
- 4.27 In many ways, as public realm approaches take on new directions, an obvious 'guidance gap' is created. Quality audit was seen as a promising approach which Local Highway Authorities were keen to see extended for use throughout the auditing process and on more complex streets.

Outcomes

Design Outcomes

- 4.28 The schemes visited all varied in design approaches although there were some common themes.
- 4.29 Schemes tended to be low in street 'clutter' with very little signage unless strictly necessary. Focus was placed on making schemes aesthetically pleasing, using art and local features to add to the social quality of a space. In many instances, delineation was softened, with lowered kerb heights, or coloured or tactile paving used to mark a boundary between shared areas and 'safe space' provided for vulnerable road users. Local materials were often a feature, and many schemes saw old material being recycled for new purposes.



Photo (8) and (9) Elwick Road, Ashford Kent – Before (above) and After (below)



Photo below (10) A road in Plymouth following the re-introduction of motorised traffic





Photo (11) The Golden Mile in Sheffield following regeneration. This is the main route from Station to Town Centre.



Photo (12) a 'Pedestrian Friendly Street' in Manchester



Photo (13) New Road, Brighton – photos from different ends showing the road side backing on to the Pavilion Gardens.

- 4.30 Materials were often, although not always, expensive and/or bespoke. Spaces created tended to be more flexible in their use than a traditional road scheme with less-restricted boundaries and multipurpose features such as street space which became an outdoor cinema in the summer, bins which also served as lighting columns and benches which also served as signposts and so on.
- 4.31 It is hoped that future design and planning guidance such as the anticipated Manual for Streets II and the DfT's work on Shared Space will pick up on some of the design measures which can be used to achieve community objectives within a shared space context. It is important to bear in mind that shared space does not have to include any particular design technique but should be a product of specific consultation of people affected in a specific area.

Safety

- 4.32 Safety evaluation is very limited for these schemes for a number of reasons. Firstly, funding and working structures appear to have limited the time, money, feasibility, or motivation to gather sufficient 'before' data. Secondly, shared space schemes, particularly in the UK, have tended to involve massive regeneration to the point where comparison of before and after is not feasible without monitoring of effects of many kinds over a wide area, possibly requiring innovative techniques. Thirdly, in some designated 'growth points' the user population is not yet at capacity and schemes not fully developed. As a result, data is not yet representative of the eventual outcome. Finally, as shared space is a fairly new concept, the after data has not yet been gathered in many places. We have therefore relied on the little research already available to consider safety.
- 4.33 The Department for Transport's **Appraisal of Shared Space** uses data from a range of sources which look at the safety or risk profile of schemes similar in type or including shared space. The Appraisal correctly points out that UK shared space schemes have had very little to do with improving road safety. However, pointing to TRL's research on simplified streetscapes, the appraisal shows that there is no evidence to suggest that safety has deteriorated as a result of shared space schemes.
- 4.34 Reports from Dutch shared space schemes in Drachten and Sneek appear to show reductions in collisions and injury collisions although numbers are so small that they are likely to be subject to fluctuation and not statistically significant. As noted by the DfT Appraisal, in Drachten, the Laweiplein scheme has seen a casualty reduction despite increased motorised traffic. This is thought to be a result of reductions in speed.
- 4.35 Traffic flow on the Laweiplein junction has also increased with motorised traffic increasing by up to 30 per cent and cyclists by 5 per cent over the short period since implementation.
- 4.36 These results, though inconclusive, show that new approaches to public realm planning have not had significant negative impacts in any policy area. This supports but does not confirm an argument that innovation could be safer than the status quo in some instances.

Public Reaction

- 4.37 Anecdotal evidence from scheme visits identified a general sense of public satisfaction with public realm regeneration schemes. Interviewees tended to indicate public dissatisfaction with schemes when consultation processes had failed to incorporate a wide enough range of user-group input.
- 4.38 The Department for Transport's **Appraisal of Shared Space** noted that most user-satisfaction research had focussed entirely on pedestrians, with particular focus on the views of disabled people.

- 4.39 More research should be undertaken as part of a wider 'process-centred public realm planning trial' which evaluates the user buy-in and satisfaction levels and identifies any underlying themes.

Wider Issues

Maintenance and Monitoring

- 4.40 Maintenance was raised in many interviews as an area of concern. In some places, the letting-out of contracts to other parties and a lack of management and coordination of these led to scheme deterioration and, accordingly, reduced the level of community interest.
- 4.41 Utilities companies accessing areas within schemes were seen to cause specific difficulty. In many places it was felt that untimely reparations and renovations led to piecemeal repairs and unsightly public spaces. It was suggested that contractors and other actors who work in the public realm should be considered and included in consultation, although this proved difficult as a result of high staff turnover and a lack of specific 'contact' within utilities companies.
- 4.42 The monitoring and maintenance of road schemes in some areas was not given priority, and in some cases was underfunded. As a result, often expensive schemes soon lost appeal and became potentially less safe environments.
- 4.43 At some schemes, it was noted that regeneration projects had involved the introduction of expensive materials and hard-to-source equipment such as granite sets and bespoke lighting columns. Maintenance budgets did not stretch to meet the high costs of repair. Maintenance often involved the replacement of bespoke materials with traditional tarmac and columns. This resulted in messy, unsightly schemes which deteriorated and lost public appeal.

Risk and Liability

- 4.44 Practitioners, particularly at the Local Highway Authority level, were worried about changing traditional approaches and the risk of liability that ensued. Again, this tended to be associated with specific design techniques rather than shared space as an approach, although it did highlight the need for more information or better dissemination of research in the area.
- 4.45 Shared space is likely to imply new design approaches which legibly encourages behavioural change. Local Highway Authorities need to be provided with the tools with which they can re-establish their role and rights.

Vulnerable Road Users

- 4.46 In a number of places visited, the desire to 'do' shared space had ignited some heated debate about more vulnerable road users. The vulnerable road user is of utmost concern and should be given specific consideration in any highway or public realm scheme. The concerns which have been raised in campaigns such as The Guidedogs' 'Say No To Shared Streets'⁸⁴ are related to the design techniques traditionally associated with shared space and not the shared space approach outlined above. As such, thinking in

84 <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sharedstreets/index.php?id=198>

this area should move quickly to disaggregate design techniques such as 'level surface' and approaches such as 'shared space'.

- 4.47 Heated debate involving particularly strong lobby groups has transformed a question about vulnerable road users into a debate about specific users with disabilities. Vulnerability should remain a term which includes not only those users with disabilities but also those less protected and therefore more likely to be injured in the instance of collision.
- 4.48 If the 'shared space approach' is carried out in its true sense, the needs of many different kinds of vulnerable road user will be considered and integrated into the design and implementation process. All parties should be included throughout the design process to ensure the most equitable tradeoffs.

Meeting Other People's Targets

- 4.49 In many instances, as already noted, shared space schemes have been carried out by Highways' departments but led by a whole range of objectives which may or may not conflict with the 'normal' objectives of those working in highways. This was increasingly seen to be the case as a result of encouraging active travel to confront environmental and health issues.

In Summary

- 4.50 The above section has identified a number of issues raised during the development of some shared space schemes in England and the Netherlands. It is important at this stage to re-iterate the two caveats identified earlier. Firstly, schemes have often been named 'shared space' based on design techniques rather than on the key concepts of the approach, and secondly schemes vary widely in objectives, local contexts, working processes and so on. Comparison and evaluation are therefore limited in use.
- 4.51 This process has however been key in identifying how shared space in practice has been mistranslated from the original theories and objectives of the concept. In practice, shared space has largely been considered to mean a shared or level surface, and many of the controversies surrounding the term relate to those. Looking back at the original theories and the European Shared Space Project, it is possible to see and understand a gap between the concept and the reality.
- 4.52 The following section, which looks at the original theories of shared space as a concept and highlights the lessons learnt during the European Shared Space Project, aims to show how shared space can be used to push forward the role of the public realm within today's policy context.

SHARED SPACE : ORIGINS AND KEY ELEMENTS

- 4.53 Based on the limited body of substantial research available, the following will identify what is known and collectively accepted about this rapidly developing but multi-interpreted concept. It is widely agreed that shared space is a concept which was pioneered by Hans Monderman, a Dutch road traffic engineer. Though chiefly working to improve road safety, Monderman tended towards the innovative, playing an important

role, for example, in the development of the Dutch Woonerven. Monderman did not publish his theories but preferred rather to meet colleagues and journalists 'onsite' in order to demonstrate their effectiveness. As such, he did not produce written guidance but rather a number of useful videos which give a sense of the inspiration for shared space concepts.⁸⁵ The term 'shared space' was developed in discussions during the **European Shared Space Project** and coined by Ben Hamilton-Baillie, a British consultant in the field, in 2003.

- 4.54 Proponents of shared space often use historic town centres as examples of the shared space objective. The culture generated by the design of such towns is said to make car users feel like a guest whilst pedestrians, shoppers, observers and all other users go about their business in the area. It is generally agreed that the shared space approach uses new viewpoints and new terminology to return this age-old civility to public streets. Hamilton-Baillie argues that the ad hoc arrangements called for by shared space thinking were in reality the status quo ante the introduction of segregation, but that, as a result of their organic nature, they lacked definition or terminology.



Photo (14): The car as a guest in an historic town centre. ⁸⁶

- 4.55 It is frequently implied that shared space came about as an extension to principles developed in residential schemes known in the Netherlands as Woonerven and in the UK as Home Zones. The Woonerven approach aims to slow speeds of motor vehicles so that residents, children, pedestrians and cyclists are able to enjoy a greater sense of civility and take on ownership of the area. Though evaluation of schemes was not accurate enough to measure speed changes nor was the data large enough to provide statistically significant results, reports show that perceptions of safety were improved within Home Zone trials in the UK and that wider objectives were met more effectively when community involvement was developed effectively.^{87 88}

85 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=RLfasxqhBNU>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=wuxMuMrXUjk>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=hqGWz_lafa8

86 Photo from: Interreg IIIB Project (2005)

'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces'

87 Department for Transport (2005) 'Homezones: Challenging the future of our streets'

88 Transport Research Laboratory (2006)

'Pilot Home Zone Schemes: Summary of the Schemes' ISBN 1-8460-653-1 (TRL)

- 4.56 Shared space approaches are generally thought to reverse the effects of segregation, which came about during the late 18th and 19th Centuries often for sanitary reasons and has developed as a road safety measure over the course of the twentieth century. Shared space strives, in theory, to combine rather than separate the various functions of everyday life in the public realm.
- 4.57 In **Shared Space: Reconciling People, Places and Traffic**, Hamilton-Baillie points out that experiments to deliberately re-integrate traffic and social functions date back as far as the 1960s when 'Joost Vahl and his colleagues began to strip out standardized road signing, marking, kerbs and barriers whilst looking for ways to reduce the impact of traffic on social space.'⁸⁹
- 4.58 Though original shared space theory is more legible than current conceptions of the topic, there is no rigid or explicit set of 'shared space rules'. This is perhaps the first and most significant idea to retain.
- 4.59 In many respects, the original shared space approach falls within the concept boundaries of 'nudging'- the idea that thoughtful choice architecture can be established to nudge us in beneficial directions without restricting freedom of choice.⁹⁰
- 4.60 Shared space, at its base, implies a reconsideration of the public realm to generate conditions which better balance the seemingly conflicting mobility and civility aims of a place. The following is a series of elements on which the shared space concept has been built.

Disaggregating the Road Network

- 4.61 Shared space acknowledges the need for motorised traffic but looks to readdress the hierarchy of street users by making a much clearer distinction between those areas which make up the fast network and those which belong to the more finely meshed slow network.
- 4.62 The fast network, as implied by its title, comprises the strategic road network which is designed to move traffic quickly. It is almost entirely single purpose, very highly regulated and predictable. It relies on those qualities in order to be a successful, efficient and safe network. The slow network is a somewhat unpredictable multipurpose environment subject to constant change. The public realm, which falls within the slow network, is much more influenced and defined by local culture and insists on a great deal more interaction and communication.

89 Hamilton-Baillie B. (2008)

'Shared Space: Reconciling People, Places and Traffic', Built Environment, Vol.34, p7

90 Thaler R.H. and Sunstein C.R (2008)

'Nudge – Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness',

Yale University Press, London



Photo (15): Oxford Circus pavements prior to recent changes⁹¹

- 4.63 In reality, the two extreme ends of these categories function incredibly well. Difficulties are more prevalent in areas where the two function-types overlap as is often the case in urban centres or when major roads bisect villages and small towns. When the traffic function and the public realm function overlap, we tend to see a compromise of both. In urban centres for example, the flow of traffic is often congested and inefficient and yet travel speeds and road layout restrict the ability of other users to own the space (see **photo 15** above).

Speed

- 4.64 Within a public space, if the balance between user-types is to be readdressed to establish greater modal equity, speeds must be sufficiently low so that the more vulnerable road user:
- Feels comfortable enough to extend their social and human capacities beyond those normally anticipated in the road environment.
 - Would be at very little risk from collision and impact implications.
- 4.65 If speeds were not sufficiently low, users would not feel inclined or able to stretch the realms of the traffic function of streets that they have come to expect and rely on. On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to expect drivers to maintain low speeds for sustained periods of time without traditional traffic calming measures such as road humps or chicanes. As such, the disaggregation of the road network takes on a greater importance. Monderman understood this and generated his step matrix.

Monderman's Steps

- 4.66 A shared space should simultaneously cater for the needs of all users including those in motorised vehicles. As such, it is important to bear in mind that the motorised vehicle user is most likely to be driving as a means to an end rather than driving as an end in itself, and will therefore be aiming to keep journey time as low as possible. Monderman acknowledged this, and created a theoretical guide outlining the psychological impacts of time on a driver.

91 EB : Photo from Oxford Circus

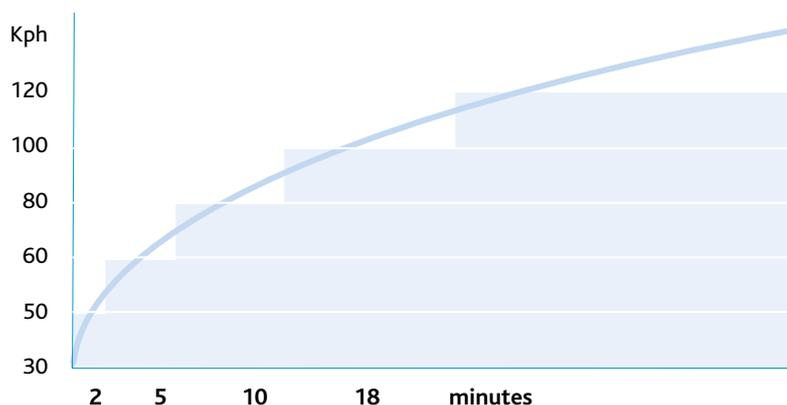


Figure 7: Monderman's Steps, indicating driver tolerance against speed and time ⁹²

- 4.67 The chart above depicts the way in which Monderman observed driver tolerance of some speeds. As journey time increases, Monderman argues that a driver's tolerance of speed is capped. Thus he suggests that a driver would only be willing to maintain 30kmph for up to two minutes and then 50 kmph for a further 5 minutes. It is important to note that the diagram is non-scientific and subjective, and interesting that Monderman did not anticipate any driver tolerance of speeds below 30km/h.
- 4.68 Scientific research into this area could provide a useful tool for Local Highway Authorities when thinking about the kind of space they are treating. Disaggregating those spaces which can be designed as slow, social destinations and the area they can realistically cover before frustration becomes too much of an influence on driver behaviour and a driver's ability to take part in the social construct. The chart also throws up interesting questions about the tolerance implications of those people who enter built-up areas at the end of journeys having been on the 'fast network'.
- 4.69 There are interesting links to be made between this type of model and the Goals for Driver Education (GDE) Matrix⁹³ outlined in PACTS' Beyond 2010 report.⁹⁴ The aim behind this model is to encourage young drivers to become aware of the influence of personal preconditions, social norms and motivational factors on driving behaviour and risk – an approach that should be adopted by drivers of any age.
- 4.70 Whilst current forms of driver training in most countries focus on traffic rules and managing the vehicle, the GDE matrix approach adds-in processes which address road safety and driver behaviour based on developing an understanding of journey purpose, personal motives and tendencies based on a broader perspective.

Behavioural Implications

- 4.71 The European Shared Space Project⁹⁵ produced the table below, giving examples of the behavioural factors which fall into within three broad categories; Social behaviour, Social traffic behaviour and Technical cum legal traffic behaviour.

⁹² Interreg IIIB Project (2005)

'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces' p15

⁹³ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_consultation_paper_annex.pdf

⁹⁴ <http://www.pacts.org.uk/research.php?id=8>

⁹⁵ To be discussed in the following chapter

	Social behaviour	Social traffic behaviour	Technical cum legal traffic behaviour
Characteristics of behaviour	Pluriform and pluralistic	Pluralistic	Uniform
Movement mode	Unfocused	Largely focused	Extremely focused
Appropriate speed	<30kph	<50kph	<50kph
Predictability of behaviour	Largely unpredictable	Limited predictability	Largely predictable
Eye contact	Frequent	Limited	Minimal
Determinants of behaviour	Social environment (people) and physical environment	Social environment (people) and physical environment + basic traffic rules	Control system - Traffic engineering and legal system (vehicles and traffic engineering environment, road markings and road signs)
Behaviour expected from other road users	Social behaviour	Social behaviour with legal and technical constraints	Technical and regulated traffic behaviour
Signals from spatial layout that are relevant to behaviour	Context of built and natural environment	Built environment, design of public space, road design, and contextual references	Signals, traffic signs and lights, traffic lights, speed-humps, instructions from authorities

Figure 8: An overview of differences between Social behaviour, Social traffic behaviour and Traffic behaviour. ⁹⁶

- 4.72 Shared space theory articulates that the technical cum legal traffic system seen on the fast network is central to determining and encouraging the kinds of controlled behaviours required for getting people from A to B efficiently. This system relies on clearly indicated priorities, signage, crossing points, road lining and other typical roadside furniture and encourages formal behaviour which is not distracted by the surroundings and is effective on the fast network.
- 4.73 It follows that replicating these tools and signals in social environments (or on parts of the slow network) will encourage drivers to continue to drive in the manner they are accustomed to, thus failing to take on the social behaviours desired in social environments (see figure 8). 'When [traffic measures] are used in an area with a public purpose, they put the road user on the wrong track. Traffic measures do not encourage the required social behaviour; instead they encourage legal traffic behaviour.'⁹⁷
- 4.74 Advice from the European Shared Space Project suggests that emphasis be placed on using 'spatial elements to achieve the required behaviour'. This approach asks for a thorough understanding of the context and a comprehensive awareness of historical, cultural, demographic and social opportunities and constraints on an area.

⁹⁶ Interreg IIIB Project (2005)

'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces,' p16

⁹⁷ Interreg IIIB Project (2005)

'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces', p38

- 4.75 Part of the shared space approach therefore encourages public realm design which promotes more social behaviours and discourages the technical cum legal traffic behaviour described above.⁹⁸ The road layout should support rather than dictate the culture of a space and the various functions it offers. It follows that in order to prevent domination of the public realm by the traffic, traditional road furniture which encourages traffic behaviours should be reconsidered.
- 4.76 In simple terms, this theory aims to change public perceptions of the role of the motorised vehicle in the public realm. The desired change of perception has been outlined in the behavioural table above, though in reality is perhaps the most difficult element to carry through into practice.
- 4.77 Shared space as a concept is non-prescriptive. It is not stated at any point that signs, lines and designated crossing points should be removed altogether, but it is implied that they should be reconsidered within the context of using social and spatial influences to achieve the desired outcomes. Focus on this design feature has often diverted debate away from some of the important higher-level questions provoked by shared space and towards very specific discussions about technical viability.
- 4.78 Debate on specific design approaches should be reserved for local meetings rather than debated at the national level, although practitioners may benefit from having a range of good practice examples with which to stimulate planning and discussion.

Declutter

- 4.79 The declutter element of shared space could be thought of as common sense planning, the emphasis being on cleaning, clearing and simplifying. Looking back at a photo from earlier in the report, it is fairly obvious why this would be a good idea.



Photo (16): A cluttered pavement ⁹⁹

98 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=RLfasxqhBNU>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=wuxMuMrXUjk>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=hqGWz_lafa8

99 Photo kindly provided by John Dales, Urban Initiatives (research advisor)

- 4.80 **Photo 16** shows a pavement which offers no clear line for the user to follow. Bins, lighting columns, a phone box, a cash machine, a bench, a parking meter and A boards are all cluttering the street resulting in unattractive and inefficient space usage.

In Summary

- 4.81 The above provides a summary of the origins and basis of shared space as a concept. As stated earlier, there are no hard-and-fast design rules for shared space. The elements discussed are high-level, often philosophical standards on which the **European Shared Space Project** began. The next section will summarise the experiences and lessons learnt during the shared space project. This will be used to further demonstrate the gap between theory and practice and to identify some of the wider issues of which planners and stakeholders of public realm schemes need to be aware as the debate moves forward.

THE EUROPEAN SHARED SPACE PROJECT

- 4.82 Though the previously discussed theory of shared space was largely developed during the **European Shared Space Project**, and the outcomes are seen in the particularly useful **Project documents**,^{100 101 102 103} this section highlights a number of the issues encountered by participants when putting theory into practice. As will be shown in the next section, a number of the issues raised during the Project have since recurred for some Local Authorities undertaking individual shared space schemes. This underlines the need for better dissemination of information and the implications of misunderstanding the fundamental elements of a concept.
- 4.83 Running from 2004 to 2008, The **European Shared Space Project** set out to develop 'a richer understanding of the physical measures as well as the working processes that contribute to successful public space based on a number of interrelated themes.' The themes or objectives were not exhaustive or necessarily applicable in all instances, but often included: road safety; community safety; economic regeneration; public engagement and liveability.¹⁰⁴
- 4.84 The project was funded by the European Interreg IIIB North Sea Programme, with additional funding coming from provinces involved in the work.¹⁰⁵ The seven participating areas were:

- The Netherlands : Emmen, Haren and Friesland
- Belgium : Oostende
- Germany : Bohmte
- Denmark : Ejby
- United Kingdom : Suffolk

100 Interreg IIIB Project (2005) 'Shared Space – Room for Everyone – A New Vision for Public Spaces'

101 Interreg IIIB Project (2008) 'Shared Space - From Project to Process – A Task for Everybody'

102 Interreg IIIB Project (2008) 'Shared Space – Spatial Quality – Places That Attract people'

103 Interreg IIIB Project (2008) 'Shared Space - Final Evaluation and Results -

It Takes Shared Space to Create Understanding'

All 4 reports available at

http://www.sharedspace.eu/en/publications/downloads/cat_view/15-boekenen-brochures/17-eigen-uitgaven/

104 Ibid, p7

105 Ibid

- 4.85 The **European Shared Space Project** literature provides a tool for any theoretical research into the basic principles of shared space. The four research booklets highlight key issues and elements of today's streets which the project aimed to tackle, provide apparatus which any developer or Local Authority could refer to when re-addressing certain issues within urban centres and identify a number of the issues raised and difficulties experienced whilst projects were being carried out.

Process

- 4.86 Reports from the **European Shared Space Project** show that initial aims, objectives and approaches were significantly altered during the early phases of work. The project team consisted of two groups; the expert group, set up to develop the shared space philosophy and the project partners who would deliver the shared space schemes on the ground. The leading principle was broad, simply placing emphasis on the 'physical translation of the [shared space] vision onto public space.'¹⁰⁶ Fairly early on this principle became even broader.
- 4.87 The project reports acknowledge that the partners were required to make plans for their project locations before the philosophy had been developed to a sufficient stage. As such, the development of the philosophy was not evident in the early processes of the majority of partner schemes which suffered as a result.¹⁰⁷ On the ground, this meant that projects were approached locally using traditional development tools, with the public expected to buy-in to new design approaches without necessarily being handed the tools or information required to explain them.
- 4.88 The **European Shared Space Project** was by its nature if not by its design, a fluid process which developed principles during the course of research. Five key lessons from the work of the **European Shared Space Project** are highlighted below, developed in the in the section below.

Lesson One: Consultation and Participation

- 4.89 In a development known to the **European Shared Space Project** team as 'project to process', there was early on a realisation that radically different streetscapes would require new attitudes and approaches from and towards the public and new frameworks and strategies for communication and community participation.¹⁰⁸ Underpinning this is the idea that if strategic change is to be successful, it will need to happen from within – if the community is expected to understand, respect and participate in the additional functions placed on an area through new and innovative solutions, they must be given the tools and the knowledge with which to negotiate. In order to increase ownership, a wider range of users should 'own' a space. This includes participation in conceptualisation, design, evaluation, use, monitoring and improvements.
- 4.90 Over at least the last twenty years, research and guidelines have often drawn similar conclusions^{109 110 111}, recommending extended and non-'traditional'

¹⁰⁶ Interreg IIIB Project (2008) 'Shared Space - From Project to Process – A Task for Everybody'

¹⁰⁷ It is noted that Bohmte was an exception to this.

¹⁰⁸ Interreg IIIB Project (2008) 'Shared Space - From Project to Process – A Task for Everybody' p12

¹⁰⁹ The Institute of Highways and Transportation (1990)

'Guidelines for Urban Safety Management', IHT, London

¹¹⁰ Department for Transport (2005) 'Homezones: Challenging the future of our streets'

¹¹¹ Department for Transport (2008) 'Urban Mixed Priority Routes – Summary Scheme Report', WSP, Birmingham

approaches to consultation of urban traffic management and public realm schemes. It could therefore be assumed that recent approaches to public realm regeneration would have applied these recommendations but this is not always the case. Time and again public realm schemes are undereffective and unpopular as a result of insufficient consultation.

Lesson Two: Compromise And Strategy Planning

- 4.91 Reports from the **European Shared Space Project** highlight the tension which inevitably emerges when developing a participatory planning process which still has to fit within the boundaries of the shared space parameters. This was made even harder because the philosophy itself was still a work in progress. The Project partners felt that the best way to counteract this problem arrived through clear distinction of shared space as a concept and of each participant's role within the process (including separation of experts and laypeople).
- 4.92 This process of co-determination requires every stakeholder to be aware of their exact role within the project as a whole, including regular communication with the project manager and other players in the team. This high and frequent level of communication should continue throughout and following the process of consultation, design and implementation. Finally, the rules for communication and for decision making need to be agreed by all involved and timescales should be adhered to. These elements make the consultation process lengthy and costly, but could reduce the long-term costs associated with schemes being rejected by users.

Lesson Three: Thinking For Yourself – Acquired Innovation and Assumed Responsibility

- 4.93 Until this point in the process, there has been no discussion about the area or scheme itself, but rather about stakeholders' attitudes and relationships, processes required, management structures, shared space as a concept and the timescales to be adhered to. The next step is the scheme itself. The Project reports discuss achieving realistic buy-in from users. Project results imply that once consultation processes have been extended successfully, the buy-in becomes much more successful.
- 4.94 'New citizenship' is the term which is used to describe the participation structure, and alongside it comes an ownership and a responsibility for one's actions. This is extremely hard to achieve for two key reasons. Firstly, it is impossible to please everyone, and those who are dissatisfied with an outcome are less likely to adhere to its principles. Secondly, if something were to go wrong, it is very easy to transfer blame, thus undermining the basic principles of the approach. These difficulties were not surmounted by any of the project partners and will be discussed later in this report.

Lesson Four: Shift of Responsibility

- 4.95 Those working on the **Shared Space Project** felt that decision making in the public realm had been separated from the greater political aims of an area as a result of the increasingly complicated role of local politics. It was seen that decision making had gradually been passed to those experts who are called on to provide specialist direction, and therefore, that specialised perceptions had tended to overtake the wider objectives and visions of an area.

- 4.96 The Project principles stress the need to widen responsibility for the public realm so that choices which are made will be more closely linked to the wider needs and desires of a community. Local government thus acts as an enabler and facilitator, bringing together the many diverging agendas. Philosophically speaking, this means that 'sharing' is not just intended once a scheme has been implemented. Throughout the design and conception process the overall aim is to achieve shared understanding, shared objectives and a shared vision – shared also with those concerned with other aspects of policy for the local area.

Lesson Five: Spatial Context and Local Design

- 4.97 One of the most important messages coming from the **European Shared Space Project** is the non-prescriptive approach to design and implementation. The Project notes make it very clear that local, historical and cultural context play vital roles in the shared space process. It is implied that when using the natural features and influences of a space, a design process is much more likely to generate a feeling of public space and thus achieve the shared space objective of re-introducing civility into a space.
- 4.98 As such, any shared space approach should hold off design proposals until after the vision has been developed, the consultation process has been structured and roles of stakeholders assigned.

In Summary

- 4.99 The **European Shared Space Project** has developed theory to a certain level based on the practice of eight examples, and the lessons should be built on without mistakes and shortcomings being repeated.
- 4.100 Perhaps the most interesting element of the **European Shared Space Project** is its non-prescriptive approach to design – what had started as a design-based concept very rapidly developed into a much wider subject area which reconsidered the processes with which the public realm is approached.
- 4.101 PACTS has developed a model which builds the theoretical processes established during work on the **European Shared Space Project**. This tool should be used when considering the processes required by shared space in an order deemed to be successful.

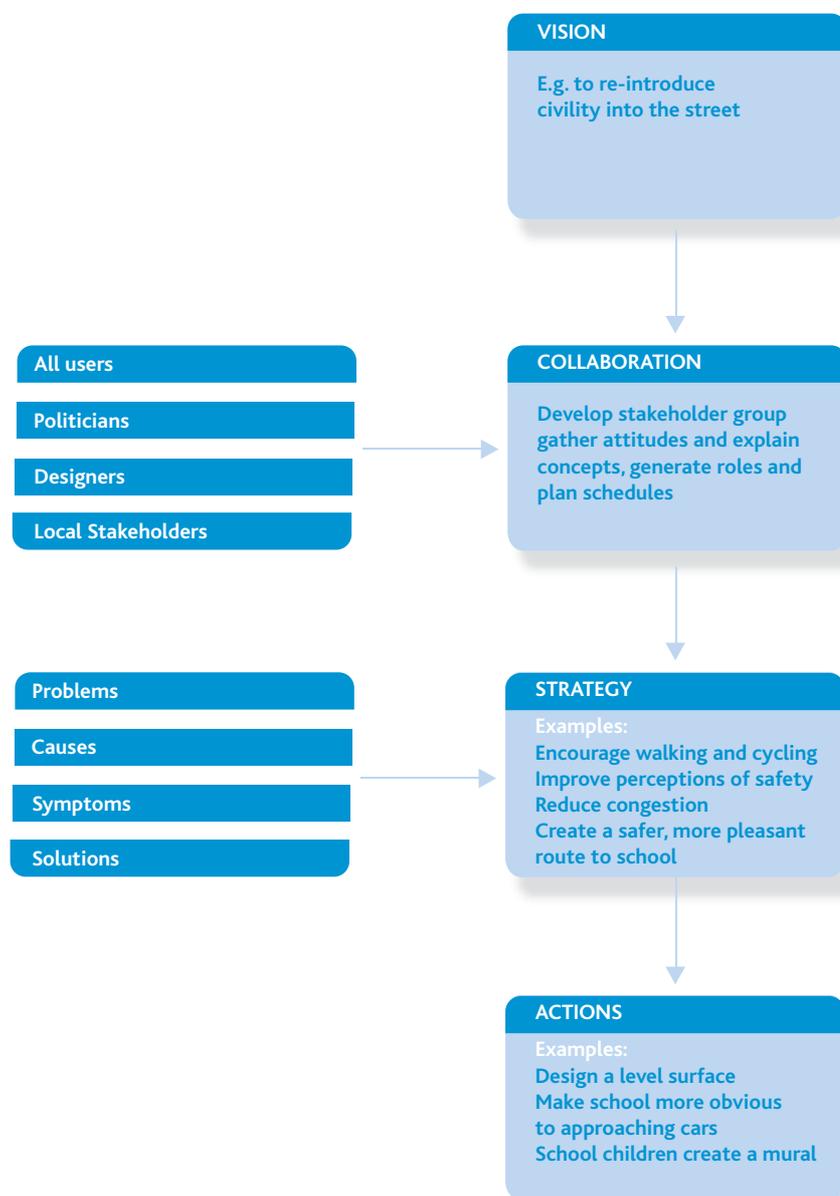


Figure 9: A PACTS model for shared space processes

- 4.102 The PACTS shared space model above gives an example of the order which could be used when considering the public realm in order to achieve the maximum number of objectives. It should be noted that design techniques and approaches do not feature until the final planning stage 'actions'. In order for the public realm to best serve the objectives of a community, the design approach should not be predetermined. Scheme design and design techniques will play an extremely important role at the local level once other stages have occurred. This underlines the futility of debating design approaches at the national level.
- 4.103 Once at the 'Actions' stage, Local Transport Note 1/08 '**Traffic Management and Streetscape**'¹¹² should be referred to alongside **Manual for Streets**¹¹³ (where appropriate) and **Manual for Streets II** (once published), CABE's '**Civilised Streets**'¹¹⁴, '**The Principles of Inclusive Design**'¹¹⁵ and '**Paved with Gold**'¹¹⁶.

112 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/ltnotes/ltm108.pdf>

113 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/>

114 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/civilised-streets>

115 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/the-principles-of-inclusive-design>

116 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/paved-with-gold>

- 4.104 Although the documents noted above provide balanced and current thinking and guidance on innovative public realm design and touch on elements of the 'Vision', 'Collaboration' and 'Strategy' stages outlined above, they do not provide sufficient guidance to practitioners on these earlier stages. This report has shown the importance of those earlier stages without which the design stage can be unintentionally undermined. The DfT should adapt LTN 1/08 to include these stages or build them into other guidance for planners and stakeholders.

MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD

- 4.105 This chapter has shown that despite broad, philosophical, community-based beginnings, shared space in England has, in practice, been interpreted as a design approach including level surfaces and reduced crossing facilities.
- 4.106 This interpretation is unsurprising given that examples of shared space are fairly rare and that the 'What does it look like?', 'How do I do it?' and 'How can I have what they've got?' questions are much easier to relate to than broad, undetermined concepts. Today debate around shared space, in England and the Netherlands, is marked by controversy around certain design techniques.
- 4.107 This chapter has shown not only that design techniques should be a local decision and contextually-relevant choice, but also that, at the local level, many other stages need to be completed before design is considered.
- 4.108 In previous chapters, this report has shown how the public realm has an important role to play in balancing the civility and mobility objectives of a community and that in many instances this role is underplayed or ignored.
- 4.109 Debate around shared space has ignited wider thinking in this area, but risks being dismissed if, among public realm planners and stakeholders, it continues to take a narrow focus on specific design approaches.
- 4.110 With this report, PACTS aims to move debate away from this micro-level design focus and encourage wider use of the higher-level concepts developed during the **European Shared Space Project**. In practice this means that 'shared space' should conjure-up images of communities and people rather than flush paving and granite sets. Shared space (or another similar term) could be a buzz word for community-based and community-serving public realm design.



Figure 10: The potential reach of shared space

Figure 10 above shows how shared space could occur and could contribute to the improvement of the public realm to better serve the needs, desires and objectives of communities.

A ROLE FOR SHARED SPACE

- 4.111 As outlined above, this report aims to move shared space debate forward. But this move is not expected to happen independently. There are two areas of development which could form close ties with the shared space agenda.
- 4.112 The concept of self-explaining roads encourages design and function-led driver behaviour. The objective is to make different classes of road distinctive and legible by using consistent and recognisable signals throughout the route. The European Commission suggest that on a self-explaining road network, 'drivers would perceive the type of road and "instinctively" know how to behave. The environment effectively provides a "label" for the particular type of road and there would thus be less need for separate traffic control devices such as additional traffic signs to regulate traffic behaviour.'¹¹⁷

The Self-Explaining Road

- 4.113 The self-explaining road approach is already used on the highest road classes such as motorways and trunk roads, but tends to be less evident in networks with a multitude of purposes – mixed use routes which are often marked by confusing or conflicting markings, proportions and roadside furniture.

¹¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/knowledge/road/designing_for_road_function/self_explaining_roads.htm



Photo (17): Camden High Street prior to recent changes ¹¹⁸

- 4.114 In the already seen photo of Camden High Street, this conflict is marked by road markings which encourage traffic behaviour despite the obvious social function of the place.
- 4.115 Based on what has already been established about shared space theory, it is clear that the shared space approach has a role to play within the category of the self-explaining road. The shared space approach should, when conducted appropriately, generate public realm spaces which are legible and which indicate a required behavioural change to all users. By taking a wide range of perspectives and understanding the multitude of functions which a place serves and designing accordingly, it is likely that the required behaviour will be more easily read by all users. TRL's work on psychological traffic calming backed this up, showing how consistent and continuous design messages to users were effective in speed reduction trials.¹¹⁹

Total Place

- 4.116 Total Place is 'a new initiative that looks at how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to better services at less cost. It seeks to identify and avoid overlap and duplication between organisations – delivering a step change in both service improvement and efficiency at the local level'.¹²⁰
- 4.117 It is not necessarily important that public realm planners and stakeholders look to avoid duplication between organisations as this is unlikely, but having a 'whole area' approach is vital. If the full range of communities' objectives are understood and managed, a place is more likely to be relevant and sustainable.

Nudge Theory

- 4.118 'Nudging' is the name given to the process with which thoughtful choice architecture can be established to nudge us in beneficial directions without restricting freedom of choice.¹²¹
- 4.119 Shared space, if considered in the sense outlined here, has an important link to theories about nudging behaviours. An example here would be a community with an

¹¹⁸ Photo of Camden High Street (before work takes place) highlighting the confusing signals to drivers.

¹¹⁹ Transport Research laboratory (2005) 'Psychological Traffic Calming' TRL Report TRL641, pp2-3

¹²⁰ <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/>

¹²¹ Thaler R.H. and Sunstein C.R (2008) 'Nudge – Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness' Yale University Press, London

overweight/obesity problem. Using the shared space model developed earlier, one strand of the public realm process could follow this order:

- **Vision:** Develop a healthier community
- **Collaboration:** Including schools, school children, employers and employees, PCTs, road safety teams, community members and so on
- **Strategy:** Encourage active travel
- **Actions:** Increase perceptions of safety and security, increase actual safety and security, design more walkable/cyclable environments, provide cycle training/cycle hire scheme, advertise walking/cycle routes to schools/work places/ doctors surgeries and so on.

- 4.120 Although the process above is a basic example, it highlights the collaborative approaches which could happen between and across various sectors of communities.

SUMMARY

- 4.121 This chapter has shown how debate around shared space could be moved forward to become part of a wider, community-led approach to greater efficiency of public services and public places.
- 4.122 Moving the debate on will not be simple, and there are a large number of other hurdles which need to be confronted. Some of these hurdles will be considered in the next chapter.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS CHAPTER

- The shared space debate needs to be moved away from micro-level discussion about design techniques and used to develop the role of the public realm as a facilitator which can contribute towards the wide needs, desires and objectives of communities.
- Shared space should be synonymous, in public realm terms, with joined-up thinking and shared understanding.
- The DfT should adapt LTN 1/08 to include the development processes which should precede and which support the design stages of public realm schemes.
- Research should be conducted to further establish the nature of the direct or indirect link between public realm interventions and social outcomes. This should then feed into CLG guidance documents on Community Cohesion.
- As the objectives of public realm schemes widen, so too should the processes which are used to evaluate, audit, monitor and maintain those schemes. It is hoped that this will be addressed in Manual for Streets II.
- Consultation on public realm schemes must be extended to consider consultees as partners and generate a much wider sense of a community and its objectives.
- Central government should work to ensure that Local Government structures and processes allow for crossdepartmental communication, understanding and cooperation.
- Guidance on community-based approaches to public realm should be directed at the wide range of planners and stakeholders and include information on how/where to identify wider community objectives and those partners who can communicate them.
- Vulnerable road users of all kinds should always be fully integrated into public realm processes.
- The self-explaining road concept should be developed and applied to all roads with particular focus placed on improving the implications of the concept at the public realm level.

5

MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD: THE CHALLENGES

- Realistically faces the challenge of moving the shared space debate forward.
- Identifies a number of significant challenges which will need to be tackled if the public realm is to take on the enhanced facilitator role outlines in this report.
- Makes suggestions about the kinds of ways that government can help the processes required to happen more smoothly.

CONTEXT

- 5.1 This report aims to move debate away from a micro-level focus on design techniques associated with shared space and develop some of the wider issues coming from discussion on the topic. It has been seen that the public realm is often underestimated in its role and could be used as a facilitator or part of a tool kit available to meet the needs, desires and objectives of communities.
- 5.2 As the policy environment becomes more crowded and local and national agendas more fragmented, it is important that efforts are made to bring together local planners and stakeholders to develop priorities, identify tensions and build on synthesis. This process should be translated into discussion on public realm schemes which can be used to meet a much wider range of community objectives than is currently the case.
- 5.3 It has been seen that a 'whole area' approach involves a balancing of national guidance and local knowledge and requires a significant change in tack from all sections of the community. This process and its outcomes could be beneficial if reflected in public realm planning.
- 5.4 However, this type of change in approach will not happen automatically nor without some level of debate, error and failure. This chapter outlines a number of the issues which will need to be considered. The list is non-exhaustive, and will in many instances depend on the conditions of a specific location. This chapter simply identifies the kinds of direction which debate should move towards.
- 5.5 The DfT and practitioners should additionally look back at the evaluations of Mixed Priority Routes Trials which provide valuable insight and experience.

WHOLE AREA APPROACH

- 5.6 A fundamental part of the processes outlined in and supported by this report involve closer, more joined up working between government Departments in order to tackle the cross-cutting 'wicked issues' and identify potential conflicts between various objectives.
- 5.7 It has been shown that the public realm offers untapped potential in terms of its ability to move towards achieving wider policy objectives – it is therefore important that the range of objectives can be discussed and considered simultaneously.
- 5.8 Research conducted by PACTS found that the 'joining-up' process was in reality made particularly difficult as a result of varying delivery structures and timeframes in different Departments. This was additionally compounded at the local level as a result of geographical variations of departmental boundary.
- 5.9 At local government level therefore, it has been difficult to generate whole of area approaches with tangible community goals. The new Local Area Agreements¹²² do have a commendable focus on area-based initiatives but they are a complex and multi-faceted resource particularly for those partners who do not work in local government.

122 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframework/partnerships/localareaagreements/newlocalarea/laa-overview/>

- 5.10 Local government should be offered guidance on identifying ways of communicating central area goals to the increasingly large group of people working alongside local government. In public realm terms, this involves developing a usable set of priorities which can be communicated with urban planners, engineers, residents, teachers, children and many other interest groups. This should include information about the main contacts, areas of tension, important stakeholders and so on.
- 5.11 Additionally, steps should be taken to ensure that areas are linked, in policy terms, to their neighbours who may offer efficiency gain opportunities through joined-up working and good practice experience.
- 5.12 There are a range of difficulties which this process will encounter. Interviews have shown that some of these will include:
- **Motivation:** Local Departments have been seen as unwilling/unable/unpressured to commit time to bigger picture/longer-term thinking. The push may need to come from national government in order to overcome these issues. Crossdepartmentally funded trials could help to evaluate the benefits of this approach and encourage more whole area approach working. The experience of the 13 pilot trials involved in Total Place should be learnt from and built on as this agenda moves forward.
 - **Time scales:** Variations exist between departments. Local and national plans, strategies and targets frequently vary across policy priorities making funding and communication of cross departmental approaches complicated and unrewarding.
 - **Budgets:** As the private sector begins to pull out of a recession, the public sector is just beginning to see major cuts. At the local level this means that spending reductions are becoming internalized. A sense of the 'bigger picture' could help to create spending efficiencies and reduce costs across local government whilst improving the service to residents.

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES

- 5.13 This report has identified that over more than 20 years, research, guidance and experience in public realm schemes have shown that much more extensive forms of consultation are key to successful community buy-in and sustainable project outcomes.
- 5.14 However, in urban planning and public realm projects this has frequently fallen under the radar resulting in public dissatisfaction and under-performing or ill-performing schemes. Government should produce guidance for Local Authorities and also for nongovernmental planners and stakeholders to ensure that far wider consultation exists and funding is allocated for the process. There are a number of significant difficulties which arise in this area but which may be solvable by looking at experience in other countries or other policy areas ^{123 124 125 126}.

123 http://www.acre.org.uk/communityengagement_parishplans.html

124 http://www.scdc.org.uk/shared-challenge/community-led-approach/?sess_scdc=afd8b227

125 <http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk/>

126 <http://talks.cam.ac.uk/talk/index/23305>

- **Hard to reach:** Some members of the community are extremely vocal and make efforts to be heard at consultations on all number of issues. Others, however, are not. In effect this means that consultation frequently results in schemes which keep a small but loud section of the community happy. Major groups are absent from this process, most frequently young adults and women. It is important that planners and stakeholders use ways-in to communities in order to gather a better sense of the needs, desires and objectives of communities.
 - **Interpretation:** As consultation becomes a larger process, it will become increasingly difficult to interpret individual 'wants' from societal 'needs'. This process may require specific training or external, independent leadership.
 - **Evaluation:** The consultation process itself must be evaluated to ensure that results are effective.
 - **Maintaining involvement:** Often when consultation has been extended to reach wider audiences, there has been some difficulty around keeping the same people involved and maintaining interest. This will be an important issue for national government to provide assistance with.
 - **Bottom-up:** As well as increasing stakeholder to the community members, it is important that local elected members take on a role in this process. By becoming involved in local schemes, the elected member becomes involved in the decision making process and becomes one of a collection of voices backing-up decisions. Strong civic leadership will be necessary if such changes are made.
 - **New Citizenship:** Part of wider consultation and involvement is the assumed responsibility it entails. It is hoped, though not proven, that having a stronger role in the community will generate more positive social behaviours through the process of 'buy-in' and the generation of local pride. More research will be needed in this area to show how increased community involvement can impact on social behaviours and social engagement. This may be a particularly useful area to look at with regards to young/obese/unemployed members of communities in order to confront cross-cutting issues.
- 5.15 There are some good practice examples and trials currently being carried out in this area. They should be learnt from and built on as public realm improvement schemes are developed.
- 5.16 The Sustrans DIY Streets project¹²⁷ sought to demonstrate how community involvement is integral to a project's long-term success. Residents were encouraged from the outset to participate in designing an appropriate solution to their traffic issues. Residents were asked to contribute their opinions and ideas to a new street design and work towards establishing an active community group to support the new interventions once they are in place. By focusing on the residents concerns at the

127 A Allen (2009) 'DIY Streets: Creating People-Friendly Spaces, Affordably Sustrans

outset, and working with them throughout, DIY Streets aimed to demonstrate the strength of partnership working between residents and the Council. As the schemes are built it is hoped that evaluation will take place, feeding into good practice guidance on community engagement issues raised here.

- 5.17 Outside transport circles, community development, community cohesion and community empowerment are now well established concepts. DfT should work more closely with CLG, and encourage greater interaction at the local level. Initiatives such as Planning for Real¹²⁸ will become increasingly important since community engagement has been shown as an important contributor to scheme success.
- 5.18 'New Citizenship' or community empowerment should be central to conception and design of the public realm, but also to its use. Webbased tools such as 'fix my street'¹²⁹ should be encouraged and translated into other formats so that communities are able to continue ownership of a space well after the design process.

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS AND CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

- 5.19 The essence of more recent approaches to the public realm is their attempts to alter the role of the motorised vehicle within a space. This report has shown the theoretical behavioural and conceptual change that is required but has identified difficulty when turning theory into reality.
- 5.20 It is not only car user behaviour which is difficult to redress. Interviews found that more vulnerable road users were equally unsure of their priority profile in 'new' environments.
- 5.21 Although a central element of shared space is declutter, it would be interesting to see how other countries have approached the public realm and the effects of regulation or legislation.
- 5.22 In France, the 'Code de la Rue' programme opened the way to changes in the Code de la Route (Highway Code) under decree 2008-754, which was passed on 30th July 2008. This decree introduced the "principle of prudence", governing the relationship between drivers and the most vulnerable, as well as new urban road planning rules. The changes also included a legal redefinition of specific traffic zones in urban environments, to include pedestrian areas and 30 kmph zones. The concept of the pedestrian priority zone was created and defined.¹³⁰
- 5.23 The DfT should commission research looking into the different regulatory frameworks across the EU and explore the benefits of such an approach in Great Britain alongside Home Zones and Quiet Lanes in section 218 of the Highway Code.¹³¹

128 <http://www.nif.co.uk/planningforreal/default.html>

129 <http://www.fixmystreet.com/>

130 http://www.certu.fr/fr/_S%C3%A9curit%C3%A9_et_circulation_routi%C3%A8re/Politiques_locales_de_sécurité_routière/114/Zones_de_circulation_apaisées

131 http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_070190

TIGHTENING PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR RELATIONS

- 5.24 Chapter 4 of this report identified the strong influence of funding type on the outcome of public realm schemes. In many cases, BID managers or regeneration managers have little contact with road safety, health, education and so on. It is the role of local government to ensure that that contact is established and to generate awareness of the pressures, targets and objectives of an area.
- 5.25 Private sector investment in public realm schemes is vital, but cannot be expected to automatically consider the wide range of community objectives. The public realm offers a great deal of potential, yet uninformed plans reduce the lifespan and flexibility of schemes. It will be difficult to generate public sector interest in private sector investment. National government can help to identify the benefits of this process.
- 5.26 The government should also provide guidance to those planners and stakeholders who have not traditionally worked on public realm schemes. Guidance should be directed at its specific audience and widely disseminated. Guidance should reach out to residents, engineers, businesses, schools, hospitals, utilities companies, designers, play workers and so on and help to identify the role they all play in this process.

INTEGRATING QUALITY AND SAFETY AUDIT

- 5.27 Interviews conducted for this report identified difficulty and misunderstanding, at the practitioner level, when discussing the audit implications of more recent public realm schemes.
- 5.28 The gap between DMRB and MfS was seen to be a logistical problem. It is hoped that MfS II can further knowledge and awareness in this area. Main elements of concern surrounded:
- The quality audit, what it means and how it sits alongside the road safety audit.
 - The quality audit being only appropriate for initial design phases and the desire for a tool post-implementation.
 - The appropriateness of quality audit and MfS design principles on non-residential streets.
- 5.29 In **Designing Streets – A Policy Statement for Scotland**, guidance is offered, tackling the quality/safety audit issue, putting forward a case for risk management:

The process set out in DMRB requires the audit team to be independent of the design team, and road safety issues are therefore often considered in isolation from visual quality and successful placemaking issues. It can therefore be difficult to achieve a balanced design through dialogue and compromise. The requirement for independence need not, however, prevent contact between the design team and the audit team throughout the process.

The involvement of road safety professionals as an integral part of the design team is recommended to help to overcome problems. This allows ideas to be tested and considered in more balanced and creative ways, and should overcome situations where perceived safety issues lead to late changes to schemes, often to the detriment of design quality.

Another area of concern with the current system is that RSAs may seek to identify all possible risks without distinguishing between major and minor risks, or quantifying the probability of them taking place. There can also be a tendency for auditors to encourage designs that achieve safety through segregating vulnerable road users from road traffic. Such designs can perform poorly in terms of streetscape quality, pedestrian amenity and security and, in some circumstances, can actually reduce safety levels. It would therefore be useful if RSAs included an assessment of the relative significance of any potential safety problems. A risk assessment to consider the severity of a safety problem and the likelihood of occurrence would make it considerably easier for decision-makers to strike an appropriate balance.

NEW DESIGN APPROACHES: RISK AND LIABILITY

- 5.30 An objective of this report was to move national debate about shared space away from specific design approaches, debate about which belongs at the local level. This report has therefore not considered or discussed design approaches.
- 5.31 However, a central element of reconsidering the public realm will inevitably involve alterations to the public realm. At the local level, this will require balanced consideration about the purpose, desired purpose, and function of a place. It is important to return to the questions 'Is innovation safe/good enough?' and 'Is the status quo safe/good enough?'
- 5.32 Design measures should be based on common sense and appropriate design guidance. Risk and Liability implications are discussed in LTN 1/08 '**Traffic management and Streetscape**'¹³² and the UK Roads Board's '**Highway Risk and Liability Claims**'¹³³ and CABE's '**Living with Risk**'.¹³⁴
- 5.33 Successful processes will include a wide range of stakeholder perspectives and effective auditing at all stages and should improve the ability of the designer to improve the public realm without reducing the safety to users.

DEALING WITH SET-BACKS

- 5.34 A fundamental change in approach will not be automatic and will inevitably involve mistakes and suffer set-backs as the learning process begins. It is important that the community is aware of this and are engaged in the learning process rather than excluded from it. This will ensure that relationships are supportive and that the local media are more likely to buy-in to processes.

132 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/ltnotes/ltn108.pdf>

133 <http://www.theihe.org/knowledgenetwork/uploads/Section%205%20of%20Highway%20Risk%20and%20Liability%20Claims%20202nd%20Edition%20July%202009.pdf>

134 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/living-with-risk>

EVALUATING AND DISSEMINATING EXPERIENCE

- 5.35 There is a fundamental lack of resources available to Local Authorities and to local planners and stakeholders which allows them to evaluate their work and to disseminate the experiences and outcomes of new approaches.
- 5.36 Current evaluation techniques of public realm schemes frequently fail to include 'before' data. Furthermore, evaluation of schemes frequently fails to look at the initial objectives of a scheme. (I.e. – a scheme which aims to invigorate local economies and encourage walking to work is measured against casualty numbers and CO2 emissions).
It is hoped that Manual for Streets II will consider the evaluation of schemes with widened objectives and ensure that consideration is given to ensuring before data is effectively collected.
- 5.37 Government should fund 'action-learning' trials which aim to move public realm developments from project to process in the manner outlined in this report. The trials should attempt to create more effective public realm using joined-up approaches and shared understanding and should feed back into guidance for practitioners.
- 5.38 Additionally, government should create a web-based tool for stakeholders which allows for dissemination of research and of experience.

IN SUMMARY

- 5.39 This report calls for debate around shared space to move forward, away from design techniques and towards the higher-level topics which offer great potential to communities and society. Considering the public realm as a tool which can contribute to the better balancing of the various mobility and civility objectives of a place, this report has looked at the gap between the potential and the reality of what the public realm offers.
- 5.40 Moving forward in this way however, will not be an automatic process. This chapter has highlighted a number of issues which are likely to come up as the agenda moves forward. The list provided is non-exhaustive and unsolved, but indicates the need for more research or more action.
- 5.41 It is important that the hurdles are considered at the outset – this chapter aims to begin that process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS CHAPTER

- National government should encourage the development of a clear 'whole area approach' which identifies key goals and is accessible to all stakeholders. Part of this should encourage planners and stakeholders to identify the potential which the public realm holds in terms of influencing policy areas such as health, the environment, social inclusion and so on.
- National government should develop cross-departmental trials to evaluate the potential of using the public realm to achieve community goals using community-centred processes as outlined in this report.
- National government should lead by example, encouraging Local Authorities to use the recession to an advantage. Looking at the bigger picture and the longer term will be key in identifying the cost efficiencies available.
- National government should set up a web-based tool allowing for dissemination of research and experience sharing between local stakeholders at all levels.
- Future design guidance should provide material on the auditing and evaluation of public realm schemes with increasingly complex objectives.
- The DfT should commission research looking into regulatory frameworks relating to public realm areas in the rest of Europe. This research should aim to establish any links between regulatory frameworks and user behaviour, user safety and wider social outcomes.
- National government should fund 'action-learning' trials which aim to move public realm developments from project to process in the manner outlined in this report. The trials should attempt to create more effective public realm using joined-up approaches and shared understanding and should feed back into guidance for practitioners. Knowledge sharing models such as NRSI and the European Shared Space Project should be considered as good practice examples.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report has taken a broad view of the public realm and its potential contribution to the achievement of wide societal objectives.
- 6.2 Based on the assertion that our public realm often unintentionally underperforms, PACTS was concerned that the micro-level focus of current debates surrounding new approaches such as shared space risked clouding important wider issues.
- 6.3 The public realm has been seen in this report as part of a wider toolkit with which to achieve the needs, desires and objectives of communities and has been shown as a potential beneficiary of a wider 'smarter governance' movement.
- 6.4 PACTS has identified a number of key processes and evident hurdles to progress in the hope that government and others will react to the recommendations made and maximise the potential of our public realm.
- 6.5 This is an important shift in thinking which could see our public realm become better, safer, cleaner, more equitable and more shared.
- 6.6 The public realm needs to be considered in terms of processes rather than projects. This change of focus will help communities to develop more holistic approaches to the achievement of their local objectives.

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