

# Overview of Community mapping: Map-walks and Panels of Somers Town residents

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## Introduction

Around 30 Somers Town residents participated in the pilot 'Map-walks and Panels' discussed below. The primary aim was *to allow participants to frame the issues, problems and suggested solutions in their own terms, and to present their views and preferences with clarity in a format that could help inform future improvements to the design and management of the public realm.*

The participants were:

1. Parents with young children (Panel 3<sup>rd</sup> June, Map-walk 6<sup>th</sup> June)
2. Women under 30 (Panel 9<sup>th</sup> June, Map-walk 11<sup>th</sup> June)
3. Older residents (Panel 25<sup>th</sup> June)
4. Men of Bangladeshi origin under 30 (Panel 30<sup>th</sup> June, Map-walk 14<sup>th</sup> July)

Those who took part in the Map-walks and Panels included residents in social groups that public agencies regard as 'hard to reach' by more traditional methods of consultation such as public meetings, exhibitions, and questionnaire surveys.

The process has helped the research team to develop a form of 'community mapping' known as 'GIS-P' (Geographic Information Systems for Participation). *Inter alia*, this application of GIS-P seeks to establish:

**Profiles:** Who we are, our reasons for walking, our regular routes.

**Values:** What we like or dislike about the street environment and why.

**Solutions:** What we should like to see changed and why.

Hard copies of 1: 1250 base maps (sometimes enhanced with photographs of landmarks) were used as a medium to stimulate discussion. The participants surveyed the pedestrian environment along routes that they regularly used, and annotated maps with 'speech bubbles'. Initially they did so individually. Then, through discussion, they agreed key points and priorities for action on a group map. The end product was simple and deliberately so: maps produced through the participants' observations and discussion that could be presented to practitioners and decision-makers.

## Research Aims:

With regard to *capturing participants' views, preferences and insights*:

- To identify walking routes that participants use regularly, and the reasons for making these trips
- To identify walking routes that they use to access public transport for journeys beyond the neighbourhood and the journey purpose(s)
- To enable the participants to express comments and suggestions in their own terms and identify the map locations with precision
- To compare the views of the different groups, highlighting common issues and any differences.

With regard to *analysis, comparison and feedback to decision-makers*:

- To compare the residents' views with those of the delegates who participated in the AUNT-SUE conference where routes overlap
- To present the participants' views as clearly and transparently as possible to LB Camden and other key stakeholders that can act on their comments and suggestions.

The GIS-P community mapping sought to capture participants' views on factors that inhibit journeys on foot with particular regard to:

- *Accessibility* = ease of movement, ability to overcome physical barriers, e.g. obstructions on pavement/entrances to station, lack of dropped kerbs/ramps;
- *Legibility* = ease with which people can 'read' spaces/routes and find their way around;
- *Personal security* = confidence to walk without fear of harassment or attack;
- *Road safety* = confidence to walk without danger from vehicles;
- *Other relevant issues* that might be identified by participants, e.g. availability of toilets.

## Methodology: five-step approach to GIS-P community mapping

Drawing from the scoping study, the research team encouraged participation through an iterative process, rather than a 'one-off' session. The process of facilitating Map-walks and Panels can be broken down into five stages:

[1] **Recruitment and selection of participants:** Participants were sought by posting notices in local community centres that the groups concerned are known to use, and the Panels were held at times that fitted with their activities, e.g. Sure Start for parents and young children.

[2] **Initial Panel:** As a preliminary, the Panels ('focus groups with maps') were convened to discuss the participants' regular walking routes, elicit their initial comments on public realm issues and problems in the area in question using large scale (usually 1: 1250, at least 4 X A3 maps or plans) that include the

centre where the meeting is being held. In the LB Camden pilots, most Panels had around 8 participants and lasted about 90 minutes.

Time was taken to establish whether the map 'make sense' to the participants, and to enable them to orient themselves to familiar landmarks.

The participants were encouraged to identify where they normally lived (including level in multi-storey buildings), and to draw the routes to places within or beyond the area that they visited regularly on foot (e.g. at least once during the previous seven days such as shops, community centres). Smaller scale maps of the area beyond were therefore made available. Participants were then encouraged to express their views on particular issues and any barriers to their mobility - to reach the places that wanted to visit - by drawing upon and writing comments upon the map.

Thus, the approach sought to capture local knowledge of factors that may create difficulties and thus inhibit residents from making journeys on foot or to access public transport. The discussion was structured with particular regard to the following aspects of access and personal mobility, and in this initial discussion, colour coded self adhesive dots were used to help pinpoint on the map, the places they were discussing with regard to the barriers highlighted above: *accessibility, legibility, personal security, road safety, and any other relevant issues that they identified.*

**[4] Map-walk:** Where practical to do so, the participants reconvened to do their 'Map-walk'. Equipped with the route maps, clipboards and pencils, they walked together to annotate the maps with their individual comments. However, they were asked not to confer with other participants for the time being. Typically it took 30 minutes to walk the route. The participants then return to the Panel venue and compare the comments set out on their individual maps.

**[5] Final Panel:** Finally, they reconvened as a Panel for around 40-60 minutes to compare notes and annotate a 'group map'. The Panel discussed the points of consensus and noted any points where their opinions differed. This iterative approach seemed to work well, as it allowed a rapport to be built up between members of each Panel. By the final panel session, all seemed confident and willing to discuss the survey findings critically discussed among their peers.

**Production of Digitised Maps for Decision-makers:** The participants' views captured through the Map-walks were incorporated into digitised maps, annotated with 'speech bubbles', so that they could be used to inform improvements by the local authority, and other agencies responsible for design and upkeep of the public realm.

## Context: Somers Town

Somers Town, LB Camden is a densely populated area, north of the Euston Road between Euston and King's Cross-St Pancras International stations. The neighbourhood is home to over 6000 residents, the majority of whom live in Local Authority or Housing Association accommodation. The economic and social disadvantage experienced by many of the area's residents is reflected in Multiple Deprivation and other indices. Over the last decade, there has been public investment through the Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes, especially to upgrade estates.

This has been accompanied by improvements to the public realm, including traffic calming, dropped kerbs, closure of some alleyways, and controlled access through some estates. Nevertheless, the mix of social landlords and other property owners responsible for different sites within Somers Town creates a challenge for the Metropolitan Police and other agencies controlling localized crime. Personal security remains an important issue, especially for more vulnerable groups. LB Camden's (2006: 14) 'Walking Plan' [second edition]<sup>1</sup> confirms the need for further upgrades to the public realm in Somers Town and other Neighbourhood Renewal areas, where 'more people are dependent on getting around on foot'. Such improvements would be carried out as and when funding became available. The Council reaffirms that it will work 'with the community, including people with disabilities, to identify problems in the streetscape'. As stated in the Walking Plan (ibid: 14), LB Camden is a Partner in the AUNT-SUE programme, and the findings of the consortium's research will be made available to them.

To the east of Somers Town, the 'King's Cross Opportunity Area', is designated in the UDP (updated 2009, p. 161)<sup>2</sup>. Amongst other aims, the area has potential:

- To achieve *economic, social, and physical integration with surrounding communities; and*
- For community regeneration through *innovative processes of community involvement* in the planning, design and management of the new development and services

Planning permission has been given for the Master Plan for 'King's Cross Central', and the developer has declared its commitment to 'inclusive, mixed-use, sustainable development' (cf. Imrie 2009: 94)<sup>3</sup>. When completed, this will provide 25 acres of open space: 'Over 40% of the development will be world-class public realm celebrating the highest standards of design, management and maintenance. 10 new spaces, 20 new streets, urban Home

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<sup>1</sup> LB Camden (2006) Camden Walking Plan, second edition, LB Camden

<sup>2</sup> LB Camden (2009) Replacement Unitary Development Plan, Adopted 2009 and revised 2009, [www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk), last accessed 05.08.09

<sup>3</sup> Imrie, R. (2009) 'An exemplar for a sustainable world city', in Imrie, I., Lees, L. and Raco, M. (eds.) Regenerating London: Governance, Sustainability and Community in a Global City, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 93-111.

Zones, three new bridges, and more than 400 mature trees represent a “real step change in the quality of the public realm of King’s Cross, with quality and genuinely new streets and open spaces” (Camden Council, March 2006)’.

Although the railway tracks create a physical barrier between the new development and Somers Town, increased pedestrian movement - passengers, ‘meeters and greeters’, employees - around and in some cases within Somers Town appears to have generated by the St Pancras International ‘destination station’ since November 2007, and by commercial premises, such as bars and restaurants that the new development has attracted. There is an emerging debate on whether or not more pedestrian movement along streets in Somers Town should be encouraged where the streets offer ‘through’ routes for people *passing through* between Euston, St Pancras and King’s Cross stations, as well as residents. Would the creation of more ‘penetrable space’ make the streets feel safer? Or, should movement be restricted because of intrusion and nuisance to Somers Town residents?

### **Some initial interpretations of the residents’ survey**

The residents provided some useful and detailed insights into the effects of street design and management on their daily movements, with regard to access, road safety, legibility, personal security, and other issues. Though the Map-walks, residents confirmed the significance of walking and of the quality of the street environment in people’s daily routines. In principle, the area is very well served by public transport. However, for the parents, young women and older residents, ‘everyday’ activity and movement was almost entirely within the Somers Town area.

All used local convenience shops, community centres<sup>4</sup>, and services such as Post Offices. Social visits to friends and relatives were also frequent, while older residents made more trips to health-related services. In a densely populated area lacking open space, many residents, especially parents of young children, enjoy the small parks and recreational areas.

Though ‘crowded and noisy’, the Friday street-market in Chalton Street was also popular, although some parents with children in pushchairs found it hard to navigate<sup>5</sup>. The young Bangladeshi men said that the street itself provided a place to socialise on sunny days. Indeed, on the Map-walk, they sat down on the benches in Chalton Street: ‘we sometimes sit there and read or wait for a friend or relative, then go to the shops’. The main branch of Sainsbury’s supermarket in Camden Town (about 2km to the north) was visited by almost everyone at least once a week, this being the main reason to travel outside the neighbourhood (on foot or by bus).

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<sup>4</sup> For example, St Pancras community centre in Ossulston Street has a lunchtime cafeteria. For the parents, it provides space for childcare, rotating with other local centres on different days of the week, for the young men, English language classes, for the older residents a lunch club.

With regard to accessibility, parents with young children identified places where more drop-kerbs were needed, and where unnecessary 'clutter' such as bollards should be removed. Although traffic calming measures had improved road safety, there were places where more pedestrian crossings were desirable, and these were marked on the group maps. There was one location (the junction of Chalton Street and Phoenix Road) where a ramp designed to slow down traffic had had the opposite effect to that intended by the Council. Understandably, for those who had lived a while in Somers Town, wayfinding was not a particular issue, but participants who had arrived more recently - especially those who whose reading knowledge of English was limited - found signposting confusing, and others agreed that signs to local facilities could be better.

Many of the Map-walk observations, and much of the Panel discussion related to personal security issues. All groups pinpointed particular places where improvements were needed, especially more street lighting and CCTV. For example, different groups confirmed that outside youth centres, teenagers often fight one another, meet in groups and intimidate passers-by.

Perhaps the most striking feature that emerged was the extent to which the everyday routines of walking or getting to public transport are shaped by *avoidance strategies*. Although the group of older residents, in particular, highlighted their refusal to be intimidated by crime or anti-social behaviour on local streets, people were choosing routes to keep well clear of places where youths were known to gather, 'hang around' or 'loiter', especially the local schools, the youth centres in Cranleigh and Chalton Street, also around the small park on Phoenix Road. Mobile hazards included 'youths on mopeds', and abuse or danger from car drivers.

Participants also avoided particular places where the behaviour of people visiting Somers Town - especially the customers of licensed premises – that they regarded as *intimidating or potentially dangerous*, in particular:

1. To the west, where *Eversholt Street* forms the boundary between Somers Town and Euston station. Here, the bus stops that they use are in an unattractive place, not only because of traffic noise and fumes, but also because there is a commercial strip: 'rough' pubs with outside seating, sex shops and 'adult entertainment'. Along this commercial strip (which includes a pharmacy), the public benches are avoided by local residents. Some felt that these, along with telephone boxes, should be removed.
2. *Within Somers Town*, there are long-established public houses at street-corners, some of which have benches and tables along side the pavement. The parents identified some as potential trouble spots, but as these were sited on crossroads they felt safer: there are 'more escape routes'.

3. At the *southern end of Chalton Street*, there has been some commercial gentrification, and as a result more people who are non-residents - and who are generally wealthier than the local population - are present, especially in the evenings. The Bangladeshi men were critical of the behaviour of customers of a gastro-pub, which attracts younger professionals. On summer evenings and lunchtimes, customers sit or stand drinking on the pavement outside. The Bangladeshi men interpreted loud voices and gestures of (mainly) white male customers as 'abusive' and insisted that the pub should be 'closed down'. Nor did the young women feel comfortable in this area after dark with, and in particular avoided the alleyway that its customers use on their way back to Euston.

Unfortunately, neither drug dealing nor street prostitution is new to Somers Town. Nevertheless, some participants thought that the problems were getting worse. Young women and parents wanted more foot patrols by the police. Though not confined to specific areas, they identified three particular trouble spots that they avoided, especially after dark:

1. The commercial strip on the east side of Eversholt Street, noted above.
2. The alleyway between Drummond Crescent and Phoenix Road.
3. Ossulston Street, along the flank wall of the British Library and behind it on Polygon Road: a very different environment from the plaza at the front and the Novotel beside it.

It was notable that the personal experience of residents is augmented by information passed on - presumably by word of mouth - by friends, relatives and neighbours - especially about violent crime incidents. Everyone *steers well clear of* particular places at specific times. As a consequence, their personal geographies of the locality included 'places to be wary of'. Thus, local perceptions of the streetscape might be very different to those of visitors.

With regard to the question of whether more pedestrian movement passing through Somers Town should be encouraged, a first reading of participants' comments suggests that the 'fine grain' of the street pattern, and particular generators of movement is important. To summarise:

- a) Phoenix Road/Brill Place (parallel with Euston Road) was generally perceived by all groups as a street to avoid after dark and certain other times as it attracts particular forms of crime and intimidating behaviour. Perhaps more people passing through would provide more casual surveillance?
- b) Concern was expressed over the recent impact of new bars, cafes and restaurants near Euston Road, especially on Chalton Street (south end nearest Euston Road), especially regarding the expansion of seats and tables into the street, and behaviour of some customers that some interpreted as intimidating.

## **Note on the development of the methodology for Map-walks and Panels**

The survey in Somers Town benefitted from a preliminary scoping study called 'InSITU' (please view [www.insitu.org.uk](http://www.insitu.org.uk)), in which the research team adapted a form of community mapping: 'GIS-P' (Geographic Information Systems for Participation), previously developed in other contexts by our colleagues at Stockholm Environment Institute, University of York. A range of approaches and techniques were piloted in the scoping study:

One approach is '**Rapid Appraisal**' (**RAP-Mapping**) - *intercept surveys* using large-scale maps and flags - are carried out to capture people's views in the places that were the subject of discussion at *times where the intended users were likely to be*.

For example, the City of York wants to establish how local people - as opposed to the many visitors to the city centre - value the historic squares. This was at an early stage in process of improving urban design to redress the balance in favour of local users. It highlighted, for example a fountain that was considered an attractive and safe place for people of all ages to meet, and a space where teenagers liked to talk with their friends and did not feel out of place. The Council now believe it is important to *keep it that way*, and not to allow the adjacent café to expand into it. Through this approach, many views can be collected and compared by urban designers on the GIS-P map, but on the downside the participants cannot develop their points and discuss their peers, and RAP mapping only allows short discussions of 10-15 minutes.

**Panel-Mapping:** In another case in York, the developer of the former Terry's chocolate factory is negotiating with City of York for permission to transform the site into multiple uses, including a hotel and upscale apartments. This was during discussion of an aspect of planning gain through section 106. That is to make gateways in the former factory wall and create new footpaths and cycle routes across the site. In this case, residents - contacted by leaflets through their letterboxes and cyclists through a local cycling group - were invited to GIS-P sessions on the site. Through Panels or 'focus groups with maps' they were asked to identify and agree new routes through the proposed new that would be useful for their everyday journeys on foot.

The process allowed participants to visit the site, and to visualize options, and to design their own preferred walking routes through the existing and new buildings that the developers were proposing. Through these discussions the participants agreed on design solutions that were subsequently presented to the developers. Initially the developers seemed reluctant to concede to any routes through the site, which included a new hotel, offices and housing. Nevertheless, they eventually presented to the Council their revised proposals, which accommodated some of the residents' and cyclists suggestions. Compared with RAP mapping, this approach allowed more scope for reflection, deliberation, and challenging of ideas. However, those who take part did not fully reflect the wider range of people who potentially might walk or cycle through the site.

A third variant is the **Map-walk**: In Hackney, the Council's programme of Public Realm Improvements and De-cluttering (PRIDE) includes on-going streetscape improvements to make pedestrian routes more *accessible, secure and safe*, especially after dark. In this case, those who took part in the community mapping included hospital workers, outpatients, residents and the manager of a local community centre, who were asked to evaluate a recent scheme to upgrade a walking route between Homerton station and hospital.

In this pilot, participants walked the route individually, *annotating a map as they went*. Following this transect or 'Map-walk', they *compared notes and deliberated as a Panel*. Thus, they identified some important 'missing links' and barriers that affect them, as well as suggesting constructive solutions that were communicated on the GIS-P maps to the Council officers. It was apparent that the activity of walking the route enabled the participants to make some very detailed and site-specific observations that included a record of their semi-conscious actions. For example a participant who used a wheelchair recorded his route that involved crossing roads to use a clutter-free and accessible pavement. Again, the Panel-mapping element allowed scope to deliberate, discuss alternatives and think through design solutions

## APPENDIX:

### **Panel of Parents with Young Children, Somers Town 1/1 Somers town Community Centre, Ossulston Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2008, 10.00 am-12.00 noon.**

Report: Fariya Sharmeen, Bas van de Geyn  
Facilitation: Bas van de Geyn, Antje Witting  
Participants: 7 comprising 6 mothers, 1 father (P5)

All participants were recruited through the day-care programme 'Sure Start', which meets in the local community centres in the neighbourhood. We are grateful for the help of Sure Start volunteer Manjola Peraj, who helped to recruit this Panel.

#### ***Participants:***

There were seven participants: P1-7.

The Panel met in a 'round-table' setting in the community centre. The children and babies were being looked after in the room adjacent.

This arrangement was necessary to hold the Panel discussion, but parents became distracted on hearing them next door, and half way through, they decided to bring their children in the Panel room, which also reduced concentration somewhat.

Antje explained to the participants the scope of AUNT-SUE project and the reasons for holding the Panel; she then introduced Bas as the co facilitator.

In the first 30 minutes of the Panel session, participants were asked to annotate Street Design Index (SDI) maps with 'safe vs. unsafe' areas and to complete the SDI questionnaires.

#### ***Regular Walking Routes and Purpose:***

Fariya and Antje provided an A3 map of the neighbourhood for each participant, and asked them to identify the exact location of where their main place of residence (silver star). Bas asked each participant to introduce her/himself to the group (name, how long they had lived in Somers Town, number of children, and age of children). The (mainly) women in the panel discussion preferred not to give their own age.

P1 (7 years), 3 boys (11 years, 7 years, 4 years)

P2 (4 years), 1 girl (7 months)

P3 (2 years), 1 girl (3yrs)

P4 (she has lived all her life in Somers Town), 1 boy, 1 girl (9 years, 3 years)

P5 (2 years), 1 girl (5 years)

P6 (6 years), 2 boys (7 years, 8 months)

P7 (2 years) 1 boy (18 months), 1 girl (4 months)

The participants were then asked to identify the regular journeys that they made on foot within the neighbourhood. They mapped out these journeys with yellow marker pencils; the main purpose of each journey was explained on post-it notes that they attached to the map.

All participants shop regularly in Sainsbury's main branch in Camden Town as well as Sainsbury's Local stores. All participants attended Sure Start, the venue of which rotates between different locations in the neighbourhood each day. These include the Somers Town Community Centre on Ossulston Street to the Asian Women centre on Polygon Road, other locations annotated on the map.

### ***Use of Public Transport to Travel Beyond Somers town***

The participants were then asked by Antje to identify any bus stops that they use regularly, and the main destination/reason for the journey:

P1 bus stop Mornington Crescent to Sainsbury's (route 29 stop on Hampstead Road and route 253 stop on Eversholt Street).

P2 seldom uses public transport, as she prefers to walk.

P3 bus stop on Eversholt/ Aldenham Street to Sainsbury's

P4 bus stop on Mornington Crescent to Sainsbury's (route 29 stop on Hampstead Road and route 253 stop on Eversholt Street)

P5 bus stop Eversholt/ Aldenham Street to Sainsbury's

P6 bus stop on Mornington Crescent to Sainsbury's (route 29 stop on Hampstead Road and route 253 stop on Eversholt Street)

P7 uses St. Pancras station.

All participants seem to make most of their regular trips within the neighbourhood of Somers Town, probably because of child caring. They considered it important to be close to home and local day-care facilities.

### ***Identifying Walking Routes***

The big A0 map was placed on the table for the group discussion. All participants were then asked to agree on a route that reflected their regular walking routes for the walkabout on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of June. Most said they tended to avoid the busy main roads (Euston Road and Eversholt Street), because they found it difficult to pass through with children and pushchairs and crossing roads was often dangerous because of road traffic.

### ***Issues and Problems, Initial Discussion Prior to Map-Walk***

Personal security was the main topic highlighted by the group discussion. P1 recalled a number of crime incidents; other participants confirmed (P3, 5 and 7). For example, a boy had been stabbed during a fight in Charlton Street about a year ago. They regarded particular parts of the area as unsafe because of these incidents, in particular Chalton Street (stabbing) and Aldenham Street (stabbing, in this case a police officer, they said).

Other issues relating to personal security included teenagers loitering outside South Camden School; they can sometimes be abusive and intimidating. For this reason, Phoenix Road was regarded as an unsafe place. The North of the area - Camden in particular - was seen as unsafe because of drunken people on the streets.

P3 and 7 considered the whole area to be unsafe. They thought that all public telephone booths should be removed, as only 'insane people' make use of them.

Again loitering youth gangs, hanging around the tower block estates in Somers Town were intimidating to passers-by.

None of the participants felt confident to go out after dark. This included father P5. P3 and 4 regarded Somers Town's local public space to be unsafe for their children, and the others agreed. The parents they never let their children play outside unsupervised. This had not always been the case, according to P3, both spent their childhood in the neighbourhood.

After a while P3 said that she would prefer to move out of Somers town, and the rest of the participants agreed that they would also prefer to move away if they could do so. Particularly unpleasant features were drugs dealers, abusive teenagers and drunks. Nevertheless, all agreed that their housing conditions were good.

Bus stops were generally on overcrowded pavements and it was hard to pass with a pram.

**Observation from pilot Panel:** Personal security was discussed to the exclusion of other issues. Although this was clearly a major issue for the parents, the facilitators felt that scheduling the SDI mapping and questionnaire at the beginning of the session had influenced the discussion that followed.

It was decided that the order would be changed for the next Panel to establish whether the results were any different.

## **Map-walk: Parents with Young Children, Somers Town 1/2 Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre, Phoenix Road, 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 1 pm –3 pm**

Report: Antje Witting, Fariya Sharmeen, Bas van de Geyn

Facilitation: Antje Witting, Fariya Sharmeen, Bas van de Geyn

Participants: 7 (all seven participants of the focus group at the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June)

All participants from the Panel on 3<sup>th</sup> June took part in the Map-walk. However, P6 Katarina arrived 15 minutes late. The participants were therefore split into 2 groups; at 1.00 pm. Fariya accompanied the first group (a, 4 people), and Bas accompanied the second group (b, 3 people), leaving 15 minutes after the first group.

Group a) followed the map walk anti-clockwise, up Charlton Street towards Aldenham Street. Group b) followed the map walk clockwise, down Chalton Street towards Euston Road.

Group a) completed the north part of the map walk and Group b) completed the south part.

All participants were provided with a clipboard, an A4 map showing the route the group had chosen, with a guidance sheet, colour-coded stickers and a pencil. The weather conditions were good.

Participants pointed out that young men were loitering outside the youth centre on Chalton Street. As it was Friday, there was a market in Chalton Street. The walkers avoided the more crowded pavements by the market stalls.

Annotating the map did not seem a problem for the participants, but the colour-coded dots (previously used by the 'expert' conference group) were rather awkward and confusing, and they found it hard to check the guidelines and look at the map at the same time. There was also some over-lap, e.g. in some cases a busy street might hamper accessibility, and at the same cause anxiety over personal security, as indicated in the written comments on the annotated maps. Group b) had to be reminded to write down their comments, rather than just verbalise them. Nevertheless, both groups participated with some enthusiasm.

### ***The final group discussion***

As the care-workers arrived half an hour later than expected, the facilitators decided to hold the group discussion in the crèche. The parents sat on the low chairs, and were somewhat distracted by the babies (especially P3 and 7). Each participant had their individual map, pencil and clipboard on the table. Bas asked the participants to consider their notes, compare them with the other participants and where possible to come to a general agreement on their observations. Antje interpreted their verbal comments and mapped their opinions on the A0 map.

### **Main issues:**

- Lack of public toilets was identified as an important issue (although this may have been prompted somewhat by the guidance sheet which gave this as an example of 'other issues').
- The crossing Chalton Street/ Polygon Road was considered dangerous because of road traffic. People driving from the St. Pancras side of the neighbourhood to the Euston side cross over the speed ramp, which overlaps with part of the pavement. There should be a clearer separation between cars and pedestrians here.
- There are many places where people loiter, for example outside pubs (on nearly all corners in the neighbourhood, e.g. Eversholt Street and outside the two youth centres (both on Chalton Street). This gives the parents a feeling of insecurity; they are not confident to walk past with their children.
- Eversholt Street was regarded as unsafe with regard to personal security; at night there are drug dealers and there is also street prostitution.
- For the parents, crowded pavements were a problem; difficult to access with prams, therefore they avoid these busy places, in particular the pavements on Euston Road, and the Underground station exits; some pavement cafes are also difficult to pass.
- There are several schools on Phoenix Road; when the pupils come out it is hard to access the pavements in front of the schools.
- Narrow pavements are also problematic, e.g. Chalton Street, particularly on market days.
- There are only two bus stops on Eversholt Street; the distance between the two bus stops is too great.
- The parents felt unsafe entering Polygon Street from Eversholt Street, because the archway is poorly lit.
- With regard to road safety, it is considered dangerous to cross Drummond Crescent, the ramps are rather high and it is not possible to see traffic in the curve of the crescent.
- They were not aware of any improvement works to pedestrian routes in the area.

The discussion after the Map-walk both confirmed and widened the range of issues discussed in the Panel. Accessibility and traffic safety concerns, in particular were pinpointed on the maps and discussed in more depth.

The colour-coded dots were too awkward to use for the individual on-street observation and was abandoned for subsequent Map-walks. They made written comments in pencil instead. However, it was decided to keep the stickers for group mapping afterwards as useful for categorising and reading back afterwards.

**Panel of Women under 30, Somers Town (2/1)  
St Pancras Community Centre, Ossulston Street, 9<sup>th</sup> June  
2008, 10.30am-12 noon.**

Report: Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Facilitation: Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Participants: 5 (including 3 mothers)

5 women participated (from a pool of 14 who responded from an advertisement in the Community Centre)

***Participants:***

W1 has a 2-year old child  
W2 no children, just moved to area from Bangladesh, has guardian  
W3 10 month old baby – moved when 16, regular visitor  
W4 3 year old child, 16 weeks old baby (related to W3)  
W5 no child, moved 9months ago to area from Bangladesh [30 min late]

A round table setting with one child looked after in next room, babies were with their mothers in Panel room.

Antje introduced Fariya as main facilitator, and AUNT-SUE project. She explained that participants were welcome to contact her with any questions about the project.

Fariya circulated A3 maps of Camden area and asked the participants to map where they live (silver star):

W1 (about 1 year)  
W2 (about 3 months)  
W3 (about 10 months - lived in Grafton Place until aged 16)  
W4 (3 years)  
W5 (9 months)

Once Fariya had established that the two Bengali participants (10, 13) would prefer her to speak Bengali, shared facilitation was agreed between Antje and Fariya.

***Regular Walking Routes and Purpose***

The participants were then asked to describe and mark key destinations of their regular local journeys on foot (stars)

W1 Sainsbury's Local and Big Sainsbury's, Camden Town to shop, British Library Court to spend some time, St Mary's Church, Somerstown & St Pancras Community Centre, Argos, Post Office etc. in Camden High Street

W2 Somers town Community Centre, Sainsbury's Local

W3 Somers town Community Centre, Argos, Post Office etc. in Camden High Street, Camden Locks (mum), Morrison's

W4 Somers town Community Centre, Argos, Post Office etc. in Camden High Street, Morrison's, Charlton Market (Fridays)

W5 Main branch of Sainsbury's, relative in Stanhope Street, Euston Station, Chalton street Market (Fridays)

### ***Use of Public Transport to Travel Beyond Somers town***

The participants were then asked to mark the stations/ stops they usually use (stars)

W1 bus stops on Eversholt Street near Euston St, Camden Road Overground  
W2 Mornington Crescent Station, bus stop at Vandell Street, St Pancras St (seldom use public transport, mostly travel by car).

W3 bus stops on Eversholt Street near Euston St, Chalk Farm

W4 bus stops on Eversholt Street near Euston Station, Camden Road Overground Station

W5 Euston station, St Pancras station

All participants seem to walk mainly within the neighbourhood. They do not go beyond Somers Town very often, on average about once a month. Reasons for travelling outside the area: visit family or friends, leisure, shopping.

### ***Identifying Walking Routes***

The participants were then asked to mark the journey from home to all of the highlighted destinations. The majority of participants explained that they generally stayed on main roads, such as Euston Road, Eversholt Street, Camden High Street. All avoided backstreets wherever possible. Main roads were generally seen as wider (i.e. two mothers can push their buggies and talk with each other), safer and more convenient (e.g. easier to walk and buy small items in shops on the way).

### ***Issues and Problems, Initial Discussion Prior to Map-walk***

Issues for the mothers: uneven pavement (everywhere), drunks hanging around at St Pancras Way (opposite hostel); Asian youths hanging around in Chalton Street (outside: hostel, off-licence); white youths on motorbikes make area unsafe; youths from Hampstead Road fight youths from Cumberland Street; area around St Pancras Street too crowded; St Pancras Way was considered not easy to use (not enough traffic lights); all alleyways were seen as unpleasant and potentially unsafe. Tube stations are generally avoided where stairs/escalators and lack of lifts presents difficulties for parents with small children and buggies. W1 also highlighted a lack of recreational facilities in the area. She commented that the attractive Natural Park on Camley Street should attract more parents and children but there is a busy road to cross from Somers Town.

Issues were highlighted by two women – both from Bangladesh - who had recently moved to the area: problems to read and understand signage, specially the crossings, not enough time to cross Euston Rd (crossing with traffic lights) and Robert Street, youths gathering on Chalton Street and Phoenix Road, dark and threatening environment around Euston Station. It is to be noted that both were generally accompanied by their guardian, they seldom travel alone.

All participants were then asked to agree on a route for the forthcoming Map-walk on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> June. Having finished the main exercise, the participants annotated SDI maps and filled in SDI questionnaires for the last 30 minutes of the session.

## **Map-walk of Young Women under 30, Somers Town (2/2) Somers town Community Centre, Ossulton Street, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 10 am-12 noon.**

Report: Steve Shaw, Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Facilitation: Steve Shaw, Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Participants: 7 (including 5 mothers, 1 pregnant participant)

Three more mothers joined this session. All three were recruited by W3 two of them live on estates North from Somers Town, one lives near St Pancras Station.

New Participants were:

W6 (19)  
W7 (26, 2 children: 1 year and 6 years),  
W8 (26, child: 1 year)

All participants joined the 45 minutes (60 minutes had been allocated) Map-walk (3 mothers pushing their buggies, one pregnant participant (W6) was carrying W3's baby in a sling).

The group started 10.15am and walked towards Charrington Street. Each participant had received a clipboard and pencil, which all, but W6 used to annotate their A4 map of the area (area/ route that was agreed in session on 9<sup>th</sup> May). W6's comments were taken down by W7. W8 also asked her friend to write down her comments, as W7 had no buggy. Wherever possible the group stopped to write notes onto the maps.

Researcher observation of area during Map-walk: cloudy sky, police patrolled area in van, no police patrol in street, no other buggies spotted, group of about 15 young men outside hostel in Chalton Street, Euston Rd was crowded, but not as bad as during rush hour. All mothers were able to stop and write notes, apart from short stretch of Euston Road.

The group returned to Somers Town Community Centre by 11am, and were offered tea and coffee. W2 (only young woman without child care responsibility at this session) left after the map-walk and did not take part in the discussion. Thus all the participants were mothers (or expecting to be) in the discussion.

Room set up: round table setting with one A0 map, stickers and pencils on table. Mothers were holding their clipboards on the lap; some also held their babies.

The discussion started at 11.15am. Steve Shaw facilitated the 30 minutes discussion that followed the walkabout with assistance of Antje Witting and Fariya Sharmeen (all sitting on same table as mothers).

Steve Shaw asked participants to compare and discuss their Map-walk notes. The discussion firstly followed the Map-walk route from start to finish. Then, towards the end, participants remembered observations at earlier stages of the Map-walk and re-opened the discussion about issues that had been discussed before during this session or in the previous session (9<sup>th</sup> June). Comments were not always about urban design or area related but expressed and confirmed by others, i.e. drug dealing at Camden Lock, general decline of neighbourhood (in terms of politeness and cleanliness), no activity offers for youth triggering crime; feeling that migrant

mothers were favoured in terms free activities offered by Community Centres, e.g. Asian Community Centre.

The following local issues were mentioned:

- Particularly the new members of the group highlighted the lack of crossings in Phoenix Rd and Polygon Rd., especially with regard to schools. They also noted that there was no crossing between St. Pancras way and Camley Street to the Natural Park, canal and to access the Overground station (one participant made visits to Kilburn);
- Drug dealing in alleyways; behind British Library along the flank wall;
- Local amenities (such as schools, leisure centre) are not sign-posted;
- Lack of rubbish bins and fly tipping, specially along three major streets in the neighbourhood Ossulston Street, Eversholt Street and Chalton Street;
- Noisy, crowded and polluted main roads;
- Safety issue at fire-station (cars on pavement);
- No lifts in any of the stations (Euston and St Pancras) [NB there is lift access to the Hammersmith and City and Circle line platforms at King's Cross- St. Pancras but participants were not aware];
- Parks are avoided during lunch time (around 1pm) as 'college boys' gather around and smoke in the area;
- Uneven pavements in the Doric Way and Euston Road;
- Litter and Dog poo in the alleyways, loose dogs at the alley joining Chalton Street and Charington Street, high railing is also an issue in this alley;
- Hotel entrance at the corner of Ossulston Street causing pedestrian difficulty, particularly when turning around from Euston Road.
- Muggings, dogfights were mentioned, as well as needles and broken glass on ground in playground / park. Disturbing blood stains were observed near the Polygon Road;
- Almost all the participants said that they use the bus stops on Eversholt Street when leaving the area. They generally avoid Euston and St. Pancras Stations due to absence of lifts and to avoid the crowd. In general, the commuters and other people who used these rail/tube stations seemed to 'look down' on parents with children and seldom helped them get children and buggies up and down stairs and escalators;
- They are not aware of any proposed improvement works in the area. They feel that the general living environment of Camden is getting worse day after day instead of all the public revenue (from parking, etc.).

It becomes apparent that most issues reflect the comments from the previous session (9<sup>th</sup> June), but also comments that were made on the individual maps, i.e. six schools but no zebra crossing at Chalton Street; no good signs and traffic signals at the intersection of Chalton Street, Brill Place and Phoenix Road.

The new participants, especially W7 who had lived in area for 3 years, were more likely to mention safety issues in backstreets, such as lack of zebra crossings on Chalton Street.

New themes emerged, such as lack of bins and noise and air pollution on main roads seem to have been prompted by the Map-walk. W7 confirmed that without the Map-walk she had not noticed some of the problems before.

One theme that became apparent at the individual maps, but not mentioned in the group discussion was the lack of public toilets.

## **Panel of Older Residents, Somers Town 3/1 Somers town Community Centre, Ossulston Street, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 1 pm-3 pm.**

Report: Bas van de Geyn, Stephanie Gledhill  
Facilitation: Bas van de Geyn, Fariya Sharmeen.  
Notes; Stephanie Gledhill  
Participants; 9 (three men, six women)

Participants were recruited from the Somers Town community centre lunch club. Unfortunately, two of the expected (six) participants were unable to attend as they had been taken into hospital. Therefore, more elderly people were recruited from the lunch on the day, which immediately preceded the Panel.

### ***Participants:***

There were 9 participants: E1-9

E6 and E8 (left early), E9 (joined Panel 15 min late)

A round-table setting in the main hall of the community centre, with an A0 map of the neighbourhood laid out on the table in front of the participants.

Fariya circulated A3 maps of the neighbourhood, one for each participant. Bas asked the participants to identify where they live (red star) and introduce themselves to the group. This appeared to be a hard exercise for more than half the participants. Bas and Fariya had to help out each participant to find their home on the map.

Fariya handed out A3 maps of the Camden area to annotate the SDI-maps. After a short introduction by Bas, the participants started mapping out areas they considered as safe or unsafe areas. E9 expressed her objections to mapping out safe and unsafe areas. She felt that mapping unsafe areas would make elderly people feel even unsafe.

### ***Regular Walking Routes and Purpose***

Walking is difficult for nearly all participants, they used walking aids and E9 uses a wheelchair. The participants were asked to mark key destinations of their regular journeys in the neighbourhood. Nearly all of them found it hard to do this exercise (as it was hard for them to read the map). Bas and Fariya had to help them to annotate their maps. After discussing these trips, it was established that all of them travel regularly to the community centre for their lunch. Except for one person, everybody travelled to Sainsbury's main branch at Camden Road, E3 used local shops on Camden High Road. And all but one use the convenience stores on Chalton Street.

### ***Use of Public Transport to Travel Beyond Somers Town***

The participants were then asked to fill in the one-page questionnaire – marking destinations outside the neighbourhood, the destination points and the transport modes. Although nearly half of the group needed help, the questionnaires were completed satisfactorily.

E1 Roseberry Avenue bus stop to go to University College Hospital.  
E2 Chalk Farm tube or bus station to visit friends.  
E3 Bus stop Eversholt Street (routes 253, 168) to go shopping.  
E4 never used public transport, takes the taxi to University College Hospital  
E5 uses the bus stops at Euston station and Eversholt Street  
E7 uses the bus stop Albany Street  
E9 uses the bus stop at Euston station and British Library bus stop.

All participants walk within the neighbourhood, the main reason is the lack of public transport within the area. For four of the participants it is really a struggle to walk all the way to the bus stops on the main roads (Euston Road and Eversholt Street). In this context, they talked about the Plus Bus. This was a bus that arrived on demand in the neighbourhood. However, according to the participants this didn't work well. It was badly scheduled you had to 'wait for hours' before the bus would arrive. Except E4 they all leave the neighbourhood at least once a week, to visit friends, to go shopping and to go to the hospital. Six of the seven said they use the bus to get out of the neighbourhood, E2 frequently uses the tube at Chalk Farm.

### ***Issues and problems, general discussion***

As more than half of the participants have walking difficulties, it was decided not to facilitate a map-walk with the elderly people. The facilitators decided to encourage a general discussion about the main issues they experience in their neighbourhood.

#### Issues concerning accessibility:

- Due to their physical condition, it was very hard for the participants to use public transport. Only E2 used the tube, three of them avoided the tube at all times and the others only used it when it was absolutely necessary.
- The railway lines and Euston Station are physical boundaries for the participants. The boundaries make it really hard to access the Somers Town neighbourhood from Regents Park. Bus stops are a long walk due to the one way traffic system (in particular around Regents Park).
- All participants observe difficulties getting on and off the bus; as buses do not get close enough to the kerb.
- If buses stop, there is hardly enough time to get on a bus and getting off a bus causes similar problems. E5 suggested that bus drivers should get better training. From the viewpoint of accessibility, four of the participants were concerned over the possible return of the Route master bus under the new mayor.
- Uneven pavements are a problem for three of the participants. Tree roots make the footpath uneven on the other side of the Polygon Road near the school.
- The exit from Euston station into Eversholt Street is not step free, which makes it inaccessible for wheelchairs or people with walking aids. For three of the participants this is a through road from Regents Park into Somers Town. E7 and E5 addressed the lack of signage for step-free access in railway stations.

- On market days (Friday) Chalton Street becomes inaccessible to the participants, the pavements and the ramps are blocked by the crowd and the stalls, in all neighbouring streets the ramps and road crossings are blocked by cars.

Issues concerning Legibility:

- For the participants it is hard to find their way around at public transport.
- Participants E2, E3 and E9 preferred to use a lift instead of an escalator, but in spite of their regular use of St. Pancras and King Cross Station, they admitted that none of them has ever found the way to the lifts.
- Participant E6 travels all the way up to Camden to travel from Regents Park to Somers town, he has never discovered a way to pass through Euston Station.

Issues concerning Road Safety:

- In recent years the Local Authority has made many streetscape changes to reduce through traffic in the neighbourhood. Four of the participants recognise these traffic-calming measures as real improvements.
- The signal of traffic lights on Euston Road and Eversholt Street is never long enough.
- It is never clear whether a cyclist will drive on or stop at a red traffic light.

Issues concerning Personal Safety:

- E9 feels really unsafe around her home after having been burgled eight times in one year.
- E3 and E4 really feel unsafe in the neighbourhood because of crime stories
- E5 said that as an elderly person you are really safe in London, if you are a young person carrying a knife, you should feel unsafe.

Other issues:

- There is hardly any fly tipping in the neighbourhood, this is a big improvement according to four of the participants.

**Panel of Young Men, Bangladeshi origin under 30, Somers Town (4/1)  
Somers Town Community Centre, Ossulston Street, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 1.30-3pm**

Report authors: Antje Witting, Steve Shaw  
Facilitation: Steve Shaw, Antje Witting  
Participants: 5 men

***Participants:***

Five participants: M1-5

Participants were recruited by advertising in the Community Centre with the helpful support of Guli Sarkar, Westminster Kingsway College, who has been teaching English classes for residents of Somers Town for many years. The Panel session was arranged as an extension of their class session. The men who were under 30 were selected, while the others remained in the room, completing assignments with Ms Sarkar. All participants were sitting around the table, as before.

All were native Bengali speakers and none was particularly fluent in English as yet. Two of them in particular M1 and 2 struggled with the language, but were assisted by the Bengali speaking English teacher and their colleagues who were more advanced.

Steve introduced himself and Antje. He then outlined the AUNT-SUE project, and the purpose and structure of the Panel exercise. When it appeared that all participants comprehended what was required, the first exercise started.

***Regular Walking Routes and Purpose***

Firstly, Antje circulated the A3 maps of the neighbourhood, one for each participant. They were given 20 minutes to familiarise themselves with their map and annotate it. Then, she circulated A3 maps of the Camden area. Steve asked the participants to map where they live (silver star) and introduce themselves to the group (name, age): M1-5.

The participants were asked to mark key destinations of their regular journeys in the neighbourhood on foot on their individual map. Initially, some found it hard to understand this exercise. After discussing these local trips, it was established that most travel regularly to work, classes and shops. The group agreed to highlight the places where they work with blue stars, places where they shop with red stars and places where they attend classes with green stars:

All five men shop regularly in Sainsbury's main branch in Camden Road as well as Sainsbury's Local stores. In addition, all but one use the neighbourhood convenience stores and the Friday street market on Chalton Street. All attend the English classes of the Somers town Community Centre or other centres in the area 2-3 times a week.

***Use of Public Transport to Travel Beyond Somers town***

The participants were then asked to mark the stations/ stops they usually use (black dots) on their map:

M1 – Kings Cross  
M2 – Mornington Crescent St, bus stops on Eversholt Street  
M3 – Kings Cross, Euston Station/ bus stop on Eversholt Street  
M4 – Kings Cross, Euston Station, bus stops on Eversholt Street and Camden Road tube station (the latter was only mentioned, but not mapped))  
M5 – Kings Cross, Euston Station and bus stops at Euston Square, Eversholt Street and Camden High Street

Then, they were asked to mark their journey from home to all of the highlighted destinations on their map or a route in the neighbourhood. Antje provided the group with an example route between British Library and the Somers town Community Centre:

Participants were then asked to fill in the one-page questionnaire – marking destinations outside the neighbourhood, the destination points and the transport modes. The participants had difficulty following the instructions here – especially with the term “destinations”- and needed the help of the facilitators and English teacher.

All participants seem to mainly walk within the neighbourhood – although they use buses to travel to the Sainsbury’s main branch in Camden. All leave the neighbourhood at least once a week by bus, mainly to visit relatives. Only one participant regularly uses the tube. However, all confirmed that they sometimes use either Kings Cross or Euston station travel by Underground (destinations were written down on the questionnaire). One man uses National Rail services fairly often, especially to visit relatives in Taunton, Somerset (via Paddington).

### ***Identifying Walking Routes***

The participants agreed to join the Map-walk (date later confirmed by mobile as 14.07.08). All participants were then asked to agree on a route for the forthcoming Map-walk. They agreed a relatively long route between St Pancras to Euston that was similar to the route of Map-walk by the delegates at AUNT-SUE Conference (see Appendix below).

### ***Issues and Problems, Initial Discussion Prior to Map-walk***

The majority of participants said that they stayed on main roads, especially Euston Road, Eversholt Street and Camden High Street. All said that they do not necessarily avoid backstreets, but feel drawn to the main roads for these are better lit and wider. However, the findings from the first exercise (plotting safe/unsafe/neutral areas (see A3 SDI maps) seem to contradict these verbal comments, as most participants indicated on the maps that they tend to feel unsafe on the main roads and safe on the backstreets.

This check suggests that there was some misunderstanding of the first exercise, perhaps the colour-coding, and that further probing would be needed in the Map-walk that followed.

Again, perhaps of lack of fluency in English or lack of confidence to speak English in public, participants did not raise any further issues prior to the walk.

Having finished the main exercise, each participant completed the SDI weighting questionnaire for the last 10min of the session. They needed very little assistance with this exercise.

**Map-walk of Young Men, Bangladeshi origin under 30, Somers Town (4/2)  
Somers town Community Centre, Ossulston Street, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008, 1.00 pm-2.30 pm.**

Report authors: Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Facilitation: Fariya Sharmeen, Antje Witting  
Participants: 5 men (all Bangladeshi origin)

The participants were same as the Panel session of 30<sup>th</sup> June.

It was agreed that Fariya would facilitate the whole session in Bengali. In the Panel on 30<sup>th</sup> June, the participants seemed to be struggling with English, and this appears to have been the main reason for their rather limited and sometimes ambiguous responses.

The participants started arriving from 12.50pm. As before, each participant was supplied with a map to annotate, clipboard and pencil. The Map-walk started at 1.10 pm and lasted for about 60 minutes. Fariya helped the participants orient themselves with the map. The proposed route was cut short slightly, as the men spent a little longer than anticipated participated, and made a number of stops en route.

At about 2.10, the group returned to Somers town Community Centre. Everybody gathered around a large A0 map. Fariya marked the route on this map and facilitated in Bengali to summarize the findings using adhesive stickers and dots to mark the points on the route they had identified, as before.

The key findings of the session were:

- On Ossulston Street more streetlights and waste bins are required, and more tree and shrub planting to provide shade in summer. The surrounding buildings seem dingy-looking and are badly in need of renovating or at least re-painting.
- Other the same street, the (both road and footpath) pavements were rather narrow and uneven. A pedestrian crossing was suggested at the intersection of Phoenix Road and Ossulston Street, as this intersection is in way of people heading to the King's Cross Underground station.
- They generally avoided the alleyway between Ossulston Street and Chalton Street; they assumed this to part of the premises of the Shaw hotel adjacent.
- On Chalton Street more surveillance and on-foot police patrols were suggested to improve personal security, especially near South Camden High School, where fights break out on a regular basis.
- By the building, opposite to the Asian Women's Centre on Phoenix Road there was often under-age drinking, drug use and fights between young men. The building is also rather dark and dingy, and this section of route was one of their main personal security social concerns in Chalton Street.
- On-street parking should also be limited as the cars are obstacles to pedestrian crossings. Parked cars are also subject to vandalism.

- One suggested that the pub-restaurant Somers Town Coffee House in Chalton Street (opposite of Church way) should be closed. Everyone agreed. They considered this pub is the main reason for people avoiding the alleyway. The other street-corner pubs on Chalton Street are generally not threatening. These have more exit points, giving a better feeling of security for passers by. Somers Town Coffee House is problematic as drunks bully and intimidate people passing by. More on-street police presence could make the situation better. None of the participants use any of the pubs.
- The participants considered the benches on Chalton Street to be OK, and felt that they enhanced the street environment. Pub users do not generally use them, they said. The benches are used by passers-by to rest (as the participants did themselves on the map-walk to discuss the issues). They sometimes sit there and read or wait for a friend or relative to accompany them on shopping trips. NB this view seems to contradict the opinion of Panel 2.
- Concerning the Friday market on Chalton Street, the participants agreed that it tended to get rather crowded and noisy. They felt that the Local Authority should take steps to define the boundary of the market more clearly and limit its expansion. There should be public toilets on this street, especially for the shoppers on Friday. There were not enough waste-bins on the south end of the street near the park.
- Mugging and youth fights along the Chalton Street were mentioned. The participants believed that mugging incidents were more common at the north end of Chalton Street near the youth centre. They were aware of this, although none of the participants, nor their near relatives had been victims or witnessed any incidents.
- They recommended that pedestrian crossing should be installed at the intersection of Chalton Street and Phoenix Road. They felt that the traffic calming, especially bollards should be taken out, so that cars could get through more quickly giving less scope to the drunks to harass them (see also comments of Group 2).
- They also suggested a crossing between Chalton Street and Churchway.
- At Doric Way, lack of streetlights and also the need for waste bins were mentioned. Like Panel 2, they felt that on-street parking was a problem in this area and should be prohibited. Parked cars are a hazard to pedestrians.
- The participants said that they use Euston and Kings Cross-St Pancras stations. However, they highlighted the lack of lifts, as well inadequate escalators and ticket counters and machines as shortcomings in both the stations. They use bus stops at Eversholt Street, where they pointed to lack of Countdown displays.
- The participants are aware of the street improvement programme (pavement reconstruction and painting of walls and building exteriors) for Eversholt Street by Local Authority, and argued that improvements should be made to other streets, particularly in Chalton Street.

The participants were asked how long they have been living in the Somers town area (a question not covered in the previous session):

M1 6-7 months

M2 7-8 months

M3 13-14 months

M4 3-4 years

M5 2-3 years

Antje distributed the vouchers with thanked the participants.