

Institution: University of Leeds		
Unit of Assessment: 32		
Title of case study: Heritage and Local Democracy: Shifting from 'public consultation' to active participation		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Helen Graham	Role(s) (e.g. job title): University Research Fellow in Tangible and Intangible Heritage (2013- present); Associate Professor (2017-present)	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: Sept 2013- present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-20		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Public consultation methods used within local government and heritage organisations often provoke polarized views and cynicism. This research introduced a fundamentally different approach to large-scale public engagement, allowing York Council to overcome 15 years of stalemate and make collaborative decisions, leading to enduring changes to policy and practice which shape York's built and natural environment. National recognition led to action research at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford (2017-2020) and training programmes for Historic England (2020) and National Trust (2019-2020). It has also influenced international policy development through the Geneva Declaration and Observatory of Diversity and Cultural Rights.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>The research was developed through a series of projects led by Graham: 'How should heritage decisions be made?' (2013-15) (AHRC £124K); 'Heritage + Utopias: Possibility Thinking for Living Together' (2016) (AHRC £14K); My Castle Gateway (2017-2020) (ESRC IAA £14k; CYC £20k); My York Central (2018) (York Central Partnership £30k) and 'Bradford's National Museum' (2017-2020) (AHRC £934K).</p> <p>'How should heritage decisions be made?' was a co-designed research project (including community groups, museum and heritage practitioners and policy makers). A key finding was to identify significant and specific issues with traditional forms of public consultation used by local authorities and museum and heritage organisations [1, 2, 3]. Consultation was perceived as a rubber stamp for decisions already made, increased cynicism in local democracy and damaged citizens' perception of their own agency. Through an ongoing research project called My Future York and an ongoing collaboration with Phil Bixby (Architect) and City of York Council (My Castle Gateway and My York Central) an alternative approach to public involvement in city planning has been developed.</p> <p>My Future York is a systemic action research project. Action research is a form of research that uses cycles of experimental action, observation and reflection to understand and create change; systemic action research is informed by whole system thinking, it is attentive to complex connections and relationships and uses this to begin inquiries from multiple perspectives. Using</p>		

this method enables My Future York to try out different approaches, to rapidly learn and to develop practical ways of working with the city as a whole system.

The research is actively in dialogue with ongoing academic and policy-led debates about how to stage participatory and deliberative approaches. In recent years – fuelled through advocacy by organisations as diverse as the RSA, Involve and Extinction Rebellion – Citizen Assembly approaches have become the most popular way of enabling public engagement in complex issues. Citizen Assemblies work through selecting a group of people, believed to be representative of the demographics and diversity of viewpoints in a place, to deliberate and then to lead to a decision or to recommendations. The novelty of the My Future York work – drawing on academic framings of a Deliberative Systems approach – is to facilitate participation of a wide range of people in creative and responsive ways, using practical action, heritage, emotion and storytelling [4, 6] as well as introducing deliberative elements into all activities [6] and to generate the networks and conditions for collaborative action and change [5]. The approach is designed to both feed into informal and formal decision making through Council Executive and Planning committees and also exceeds the Council through framing change as co-created between people and their governments.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- [1] Graham HC. 2017. 'Publics and Commons: The problem of inclusion for participation'. ARKEN Bulletin. 7, pp. 150-167
- [2] Bashforth M, Benson M, Boon T, Brigham L, Brigham R, Brookfield K, Brown P, Callaghan D, Calvin J-P, Courtney R, Cremin K, Furness P, Graham H, Hale A, Hodgkiss P, Lawson J, Madgin R, Manners P, Robinson D, Stanley J, Swan M, Timothy J, Turner R. (2017) 'Socialising heritage/socialising legacy'. In: Facer K; Pahl K (eds.) *Valuing the impact of collaborative research: Theory, methods and tools*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press
- [3] Graham HC. 2017. Horizontality: Tactical Politics for Participation and Museums. In: Onciul B; Stefano ML; Hawke S (eds.) *Engaging Heritage: Engaging Communities*. Heritage Matters. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer
- [4] Vergunst J, Graham H. 2019. Introduction: Heritage as Community Research. In: Vergunst J (eds.) *Heritage as Community Research: Legacies of Co-production*. Connected Communities. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 1-24
- [5] Graham H. 2019. 'Breaking out of the museum core: Conservation as participatory ontology and systemic action inquiry'. In: O'Neill M; Hooper G (eds.) *Connecting Museums*. Routledge Research in Museum Studies. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, pp. 80-94
- [6] Lianne Brigham, Richard Brigham, Helen Graham and Victoria Hoyle (2020) 'Archive utopias: linking collaborative histories to local democracy' in *Simon Pople, Andrew Prescott and Daniel Mutibwa (eds) Communities, Archives and New Collaborative Practices*. Bristol: Policy Press.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This body of work involved collaborative action research – meaning that creating change was integral to the method. These projects explicitly aimed to create change through strategic collaboration with policy makers, practitioners and community activists, which led the research to generate impacts in York, national heritage organisations and international cultural policy.

York

Castle Gateway is an area of York which includes Clifford's Tower, managed by English Heritage, and York Castle Museum, managed by York Museums Trust. Castle Gateway is a part of York that has a long history of planning disputes. In York public consultations were not perceived as genuine and too often led to contentious Council decisions which created backlash and deadlock.

An action research collaboration called My Future York was established in partnership with a local architect, which led to My Castle Gateway [A], a City of York Council collaboration. It

established a novel three-staged process of public engagement (Build a Brief; Explore Complex Issues; Make Change Together). This led to the development of a public Open Brief for the Castle Gateway area that led to the development of the Castle Gateway masterplan.

This created **impact on decision making**, as the masterplan was passed through the Council Executive on 26th April 2018, attracting cross-party and public support and ending 15 years of deadlock over the future of the area **[B]**. There will be significant **impact on the built and natural environment of the area** as the masterplan is implemented and new public spaces will be created.

My Castle Gateway led to **attitudinal change** within the Council, evidenced by the invitation to run a similar process for the York Central Partnership, which began in 2018. My York Central produced an Open Brief in the form of a Vision and eight Big Ideas **[C]** and led to **impact on policy** through the development of the York Central masterplan which passed through the council's Planning Committee in March 2019.

My York Central has led to **behavioural change** through the 'Making Change Together' phase of the engagement process and the establishment of a new group YoCo: York Central Co-Owned (2020-) **[D]** that will, with the support of York Central Partnership, drive the development of community-led neighbourhoods on York Central. This will lead to significant **economic and social benefit** through creating affordable housing and communities facilities in a city of significant housing inequalities over the next ten years.

Through the application and development of the research in York there has been specific **policy change**, with the 'My' approach being embedded in City of York Council strategy for public engagement and leading to a new 'My' project without the direct involvement of Graham and Bixby (My City Centre 2020). This policy change is evidence of significant **attitudinal change** in the Council, with a wide range of elected members and senior officers being actively supportive of the approach **[B]**. This is leading to **behavioural change** amongst council staff, who are now putting the new approach into practice across diverse projects **[A, C]**. This allows much more direct involvement of the York public in key decisions across a spectrum of city issues, creating a form of public leadership that enables the Council members to feel confident taking decisions **[B]**.

UK heritage organisations

The success of these action research projects in York was recognised nationally and resulted in subsequent commissions from Historic England to help design their approach to public engagement in Dewsbury Heritage Action Zone **[E]**. This collaboration involved designing a dynamic and systematic approach to public engagement on behalf of a key national heritage agency.

Graham and Bixby were also commissioned to design and deliver Historic England's national training programme on Heritage and Design (2019-2020). This is creating **attitudinal change** and will lead to **behavioural change** in a wide range of different organisations **[F]**.

Graham and Bixby have also ran training workshops for staff in The National Trust (2019, 2020) and Future Parks (2020) in different teams across England. This including working with the team on The National Trust's Clandon Park project and to collaborate with the Project Director of the Clandon Park project to facilitate a workshop with senior National Trust staff.

The 'How should heritage decisions be made?' project which led to the My Future York work also gave rise to a collaboration with the National Science and Media Museum (part of the Science Museum Group). The 'Bradford's National Museum' project (2017-2021) is working to connect the museum more closely with the city of Bradford in which it is situated. It included a major co-produced community exhibition 'Above the Noise: 15 Stories from Bradford' (March-June 2019) that was co-produced with people of Bradford. Bradford's National Museum has led to **attitudinal and behaviour change** within the organisation, now driven through a new staff action research group who are now shaping and developing the research impact. Conversations

with the BBC News as part of the development of *Above the Noise* led to the BBC's We Are Bradford initiative in March 2019 to enable the BBC to tell different stories, richer and a greater variety of stories about Bradford. The Media and Arts Correspondent, BBC News [G] noted: 'The idea behind the *Above the Noise* exhibition didn't just provoke an interesting conversation – it was the catalyst for the BBC trying a new way of reporting the news. *Above the Noise* was the inspiration for the BBC's *We Are Bradford* – a way of trying to reflect a wider and perhaps fairer picture of the city. This model of journalism is now being tried out in other cities following the success of what began in Bradford.'

National and international cultural policy

'My Castle Gateway' was cited in the Historic England Places Strategy as best practice for public engagement [H], establishing national **public policy impact**. The work has also been used as the basis of a submission to the Ministry and Housing, Communities and Local Government *Planning for the Future* white paper (2020). The research has also influenced international debate in the heritage sector leading to **impact on heritage practice and policy** through Graham's invitation to deliver a keynote at Europa Nostra, Turku (2017) [I]. This led to an invitation for Graham to be an expert contributor to the Geneva Declaration of Human Rights and Culture Heritage (2019), particularly ensuring that effective public engagement methods were being defined. This Geneva Declaration aims to commit cities across the world in working together to protect and restore culturally important sites, and it has been signed by the cities of Geneva, Lund, Mosul and Timbuktu, among others [J].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] My Castle Gateway website: <https://mycastlegateway.org/>

[B] Letter from City of York Council: City of York Executive Member for Housing, Deputy Leader of City of York Council and Head of Regeneration and Project Director for the Castle Gateway project

[C] My York Central Big Ideas, Principles and Vision: <https://myyorkcentral.org/about-my-york-central/>

[D] York Central Co-Owned: <https://www.yoco.uk/background>

[E] Community Engagement Brief for Dewsbury Living Market Town Heritage Action Zone commissioned by Historic England, 17th January 2019 (document)

[F] Letter from Historic England (Training Delivery Manager and Training Delivery Advisor)

[G] Quote from Media and Arts correspondent, BBC News, taken from the *Science Museum Group Annual Review 2018-2019*, p. 66

[H] Historic England (2019) 'Place Strategy' (p.7) (document)

[I] Europa Nostra keynote, 13th May 2017: <http://www.europanostra.org/forum-turku-participation-human-rights-approach-cultural-heritage/>

[J] Geneva Declaration: Human Rights and Cultural Heritage. Committed Cities Working Together, 26th March 2018. (document)