

**Final Report**

**Project UE2b(04)GR5**

**Scoping of Options to develop or extend  
a database of greenspace research**

**March 2005**

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## Executive summary

In late 2004, SNIFFER commissioned Greenspace Scotland to undertake a scoping study on the development of a greenspace research database on behalf of SNIFFER and the 'Greenspace and Quality of Life Group'<sup>1</sup>, Greenspace Scotland sub-contracted part of this work to OPENspace, which has been responsible for the development of a similar database for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This report is the result of the SNIFFER project, which included an audit of databases currently in existence and/or development; clarification of the 'needs' and uses of such a database, and recommendations on the development of a web-based searchable greenspace research database (and/or modification of existing database).

A questionnaire survey was used to investigate the opinions of a diverse range of stakeholders on issues in relation to a database and to explore the existence of other databases. A desk study was also undertaken to identify and appraise existing databases covering greenspace and related policy areas.

The key findings from the survey were:

- a clear demand for a greenspace research database covering a wide range of policy areas
- the requirement for a database which extends beyond academic peer reviewed research and includes evidence from a wide range categories including case studies and demonstration projects
- a database that will be used in a number of different ways, with a strong emphasis on evidence which supports project development and funding
- quality control (or critique) will be important if a diverse range of evidence is to be included to ensure that users are drawing on the 'best' evidence to support their delivery of project goals
- the ability to identify evidence from Scotland was considered very important, followed by the rest of the UK. (This is most likely to be a reflection that the majority of the respondents are working in Scotland, however, it does indicate the perceived importance of being able to identify projects within the areas covered by the devolved administrations of the UK.)
- a wide range of potential users were identified, including local authorities, agencies, NDPBs and NGOs. Community groups were also considered to be important users; this means that accessibility and ease of use (in relation to terminology, database interface and search facilities) will require careful attention
- Greenspace Scotland was clearly identified as the preferred 'host' for a database
- regular updating is required, with quarterly being the preferred option
- a high degree of interest from responding organisations in joining a partnership to develop and resource a database.

The conclusion from the audit of existing databases was that there are none that cover the mix of policy areas in relation to greenspace except the ODPM commissioned database. The ODPM database, whilst comprehensive in terms of recording academic and agency commissioned research, does not cover the range of evidence sources sought by stakeholders. It is recommended that a research database is developed which complements the ODPM project and rather than attempt to incorporate the two, they should be developed as mutually supporting and parallel structures with clear linkages between the websites and search engines.

The report concludes with proposals on mechanisms and costings for developing the database as a partnership project.

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<sup>1</sup> A collaborative partnership of Greenspace Scotland, Communities Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage

## 1. Introduction

This report is the result of a scoping study undertaken to explore what kind of research databases exist, if any; what database might be of most use, and to prepare options for developing one or more databases of research and other evidence on the general subject of greenspace<sup>2</sup>. The report was commissioned by SNIFFER, and undertaken by Greenspace Scotland and OPENspace. The work was overseen by the Scottish Quality of Life Group and SNIFFER.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Policy context

Greenspace is a cross-cutting issue with the potential to contribute to a wide range of policy agendas and priorities including: physical and mental health, community development and cohesion, economic development and inward investment, recreation and play, environmental quality and urban biodiversity.

In 2003, Greenspace Scotland, Communities Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage (the 'Quality of Life' group) commissioned a literature review to draw together existing research and literature linking greenspace and quality of life. As part of this study a small number of project case studies was also collected. This information was presented in a written report and summarised in an access database.

The 'technical report' was subsequently used to produce a series of topic-based briefing notes and a publication called 'Making the Links – Greenspace and the Partnership Agreement'. Taking the structure of the Partnership Agreement (the programme for the Scottish Parliament to 2007), this publication presented evidence and case studies to demonstrate the contribution to the four key areas of the programme, namely: growing Scotland's economy (*enterprise, lifelong learning and transport*), delivering excellent public services (*environmental services, health and education*), supporting stronger, safer communities (*children and young people, social justice, sport, culture and the arts*) and developing a confident and democratic Scotland (*governance*).

### 2.2 Identifying the need for a database of greenspace research

The above study had pulled together research and evidence from a wide range of sources and so the 'Quality of Life' group, in appraising the next steps arising from this study, identified a need for a shared and accessible database of greenspace research which would be widely available to practitioners, community groups, policy makers and researchers.

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<sup>2</sup> Greenspace is defined as any vegetated land or water within or adjoining an urban area. This includes: green corridors – paths, disused railway lines, canals and rivers; natural and semi-natural habitats; amenity grassland, parks, gardens and play areas; other functional greenspace like allotments and cemeteries; and, derelict and vacant land which has the potential to be transformed into 'natural' greenspaces.

Running in parallel, SNIFFER (Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum For Environmental Research) ran a research needs workshop (5 May 2004) in relation to greenspace as part of their urban programme. At this workshop, a wide range of stakeholders identified the need to draw together the findings of Scottish and UK research and case studies relating to greenspace, by developing a searchable, website-based database.

The 'quality of life' group subsequently became aware that ODPM had commissioned OPENspace to develop a greenspace research database. The ODPM database does not fully meet the requirements of the client group (and wider stakeholders – as discussed at the SNIFFER workshop and ODPM workshop) but initial discussions with the ODPM indicated a willingness to explore opportunities to extend and develop this database further.

Informal discussions have indicated that there may be other similar databases in development or already in existence but no longer maintained and updated.

The client group are keen to minimise duplication and where possible to develop a publicly accessible and searchable database in partnership with others and to add value to existing work.

### **2.3 The brief**

The brief for the scoping exercise was to investigate options and make recommendations (including mechanisms) to extend and develop existing/planned resources to incorporate a wider variety of information sources. These sources of information could include case studies, grey literature, research from other European Member States and, in particular, references which may be used by communities and greenspace practitioners to help them develop good practice and implement relevant policy.

The client group want a publicly available, accessible (fully compliant with DDA) and easily searchable database which can be used by practitioners, community and voluntary groups, policy makers, students and researchers across a wide range of sectors (e.g. environment, health, housing, regeneration, community, planning, enterprise, equality and diversity) in the following ways:

- A 'short-cut' to literature reviews at the start of research and other projects
- Evidence to support and improve project design, development and delivery
- Evidence to support partnership development
- Evidence to support funding and other project applications
- To stimulate ideas and provide inspiration

The database should cover research from a wide range of sources. In addition to academic peer reviewed work and agency commissioned research, it would include findings from action research, 'grey' literature and case studies, for example. The client group considered that the criteria for inclusion of research in the ODPM database (see below) is too restrictive and potentially excludes research that would assist practitioners in implementing relevant policy and guidance and in developing good practice. It is acknowledged that this poses quality control issues and so the consultants are

expected to provide recommendations on how database users can be alerted to the 'status' of different entries.

The data within the proposed database should also be searchable by location of research/project – eg Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales; UK, Europe, North America, rest of world.

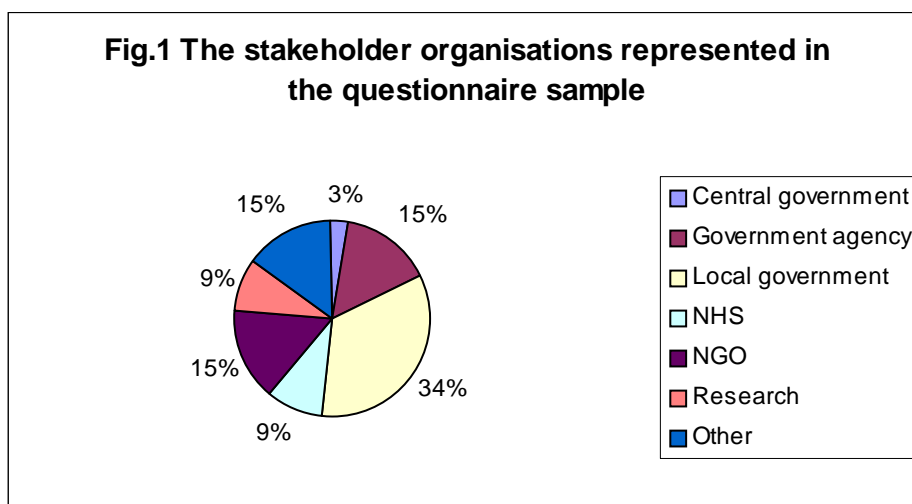
It should also be searchable by research originator/organisation – as in the ODPM specification but including government and government agency for all UK devolved administrations, non-UK government and non-UK government agencies, and communities.

Finally, it should be searchable by theme, again as in the ODPM specification but including themes such as community development, capacity building, lifelong learning and volunteering, and recognising that regeneration is a community activity and not just an economic/physical regeneration activity (a difference of Scottish and English terminology).

There should also be recommendations on how a database should be resourced and a mechanism for updating and maintaining it.

### 3. Methodology

The method used for the project was based on a questionnaire sent out to a large number of stakeholders. This questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed to ask the opinions of the stakeholders on a range of issues in relation to a database, ranking the importance or significance of these issues. Stakeholders were also asked if they knew of any existing databases. The questionnaire content was approved by the client group before being sent electronically to the list of stakeholders. The list of stakeholders was supplied by the client group and supplemented by a list of those who attended a stakeholder workshop for the ODPM database and research mapping project. Over 100 questionnaires were sent out and 33 were returned. This response rate is slightly lower than most postal/electronic questionnaires, but the results can be analysed and tend to show strong patterns. The respondents represent a range of organisations:



From this can be seen that a wide range of representation is included in the sample and so that it can be assumed that the views obtained are broadly representative of the stakeholder community as a whole.

The data from the questionnaires was put into a spreadsheet and analysed. The results are presented below.

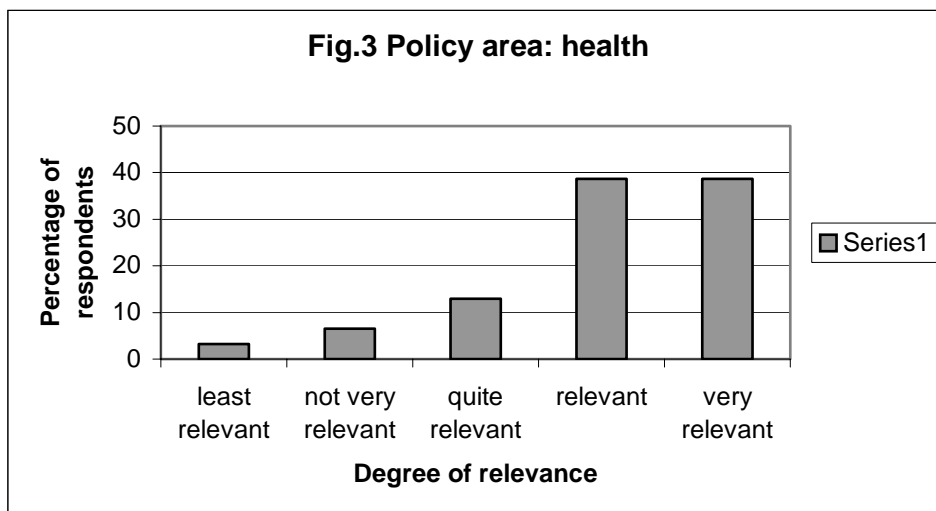
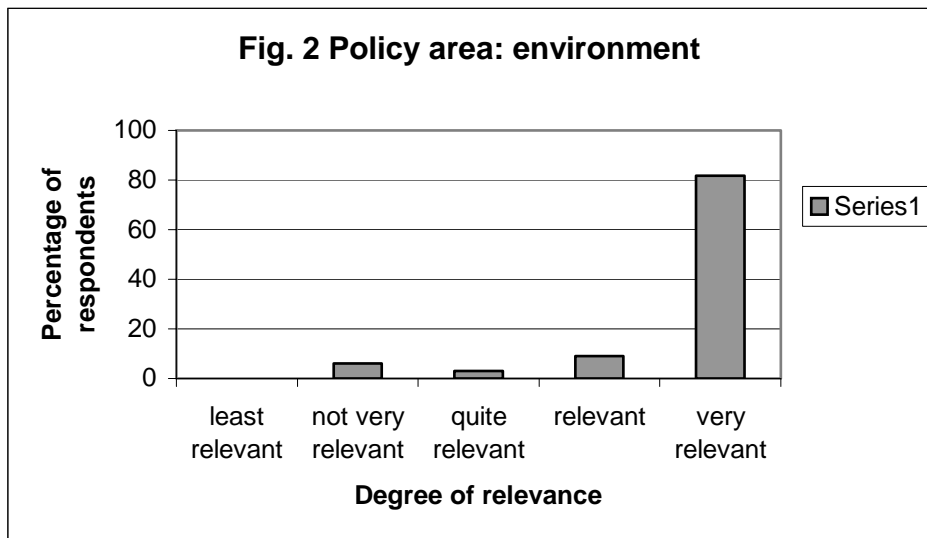
In parallel, a search was undertaken of databases that are already in existence, primarily via the Internet as well as those suggested by respondents to the questionnaire.

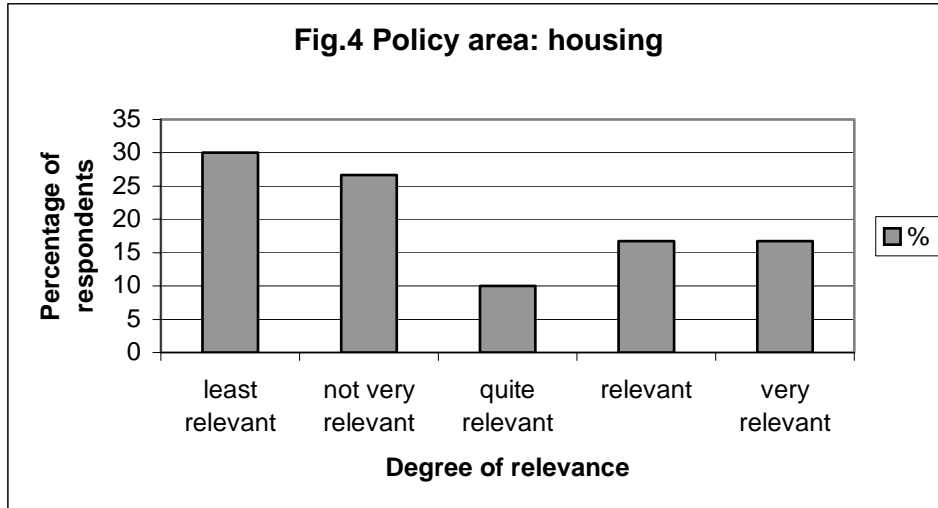
## 4. Results of the questionnaire survey about the aims, design and content of a potential database

### 4.1 Policy areas for inclusion in a database

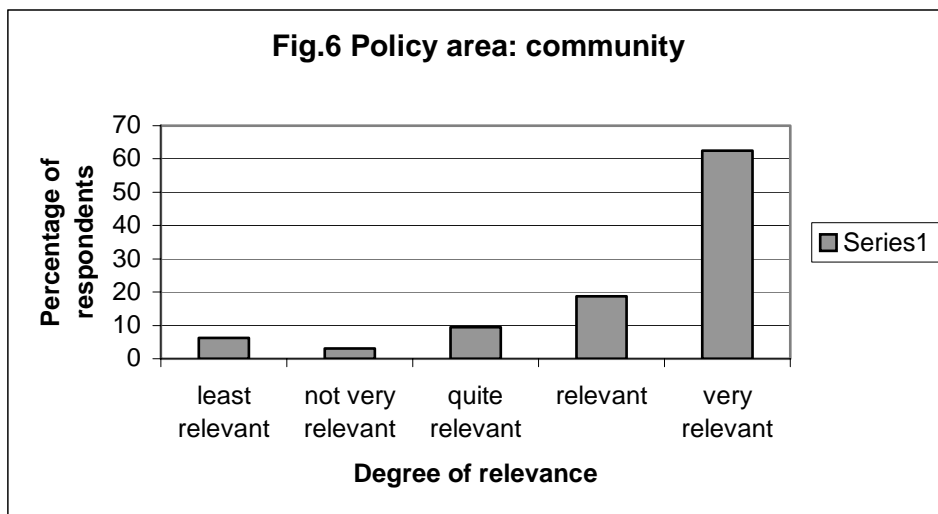
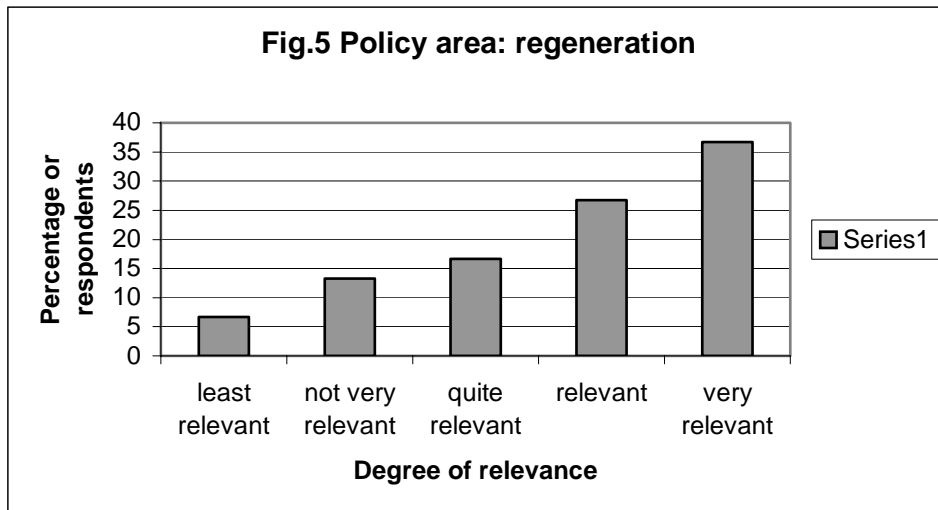
The first topic to be explored was which policy areas are of most interest and relevance to the organisations. Respondents were asked to rank the degree of relevance of a list of policy areas and also to suggest any that were missing from the list.

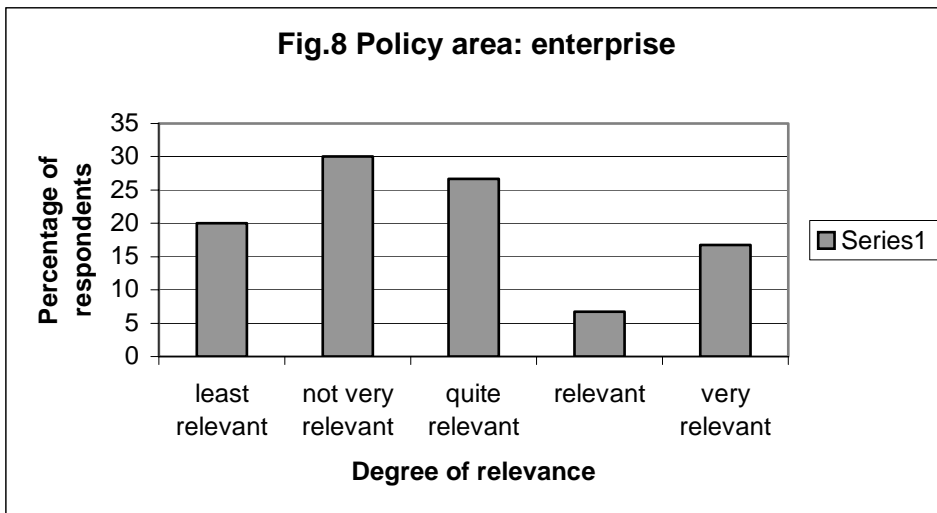
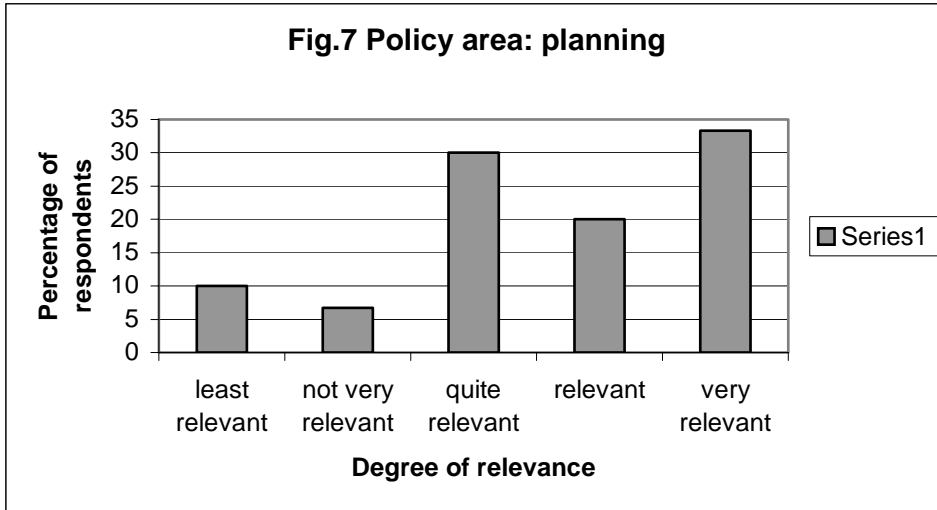
The following charts demonstrate quite clearly what are considered to be the most important areas.



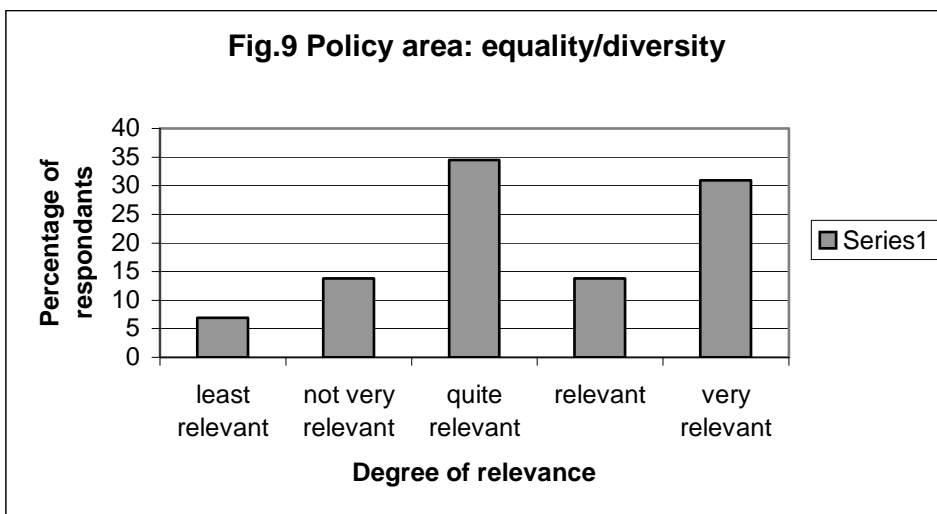


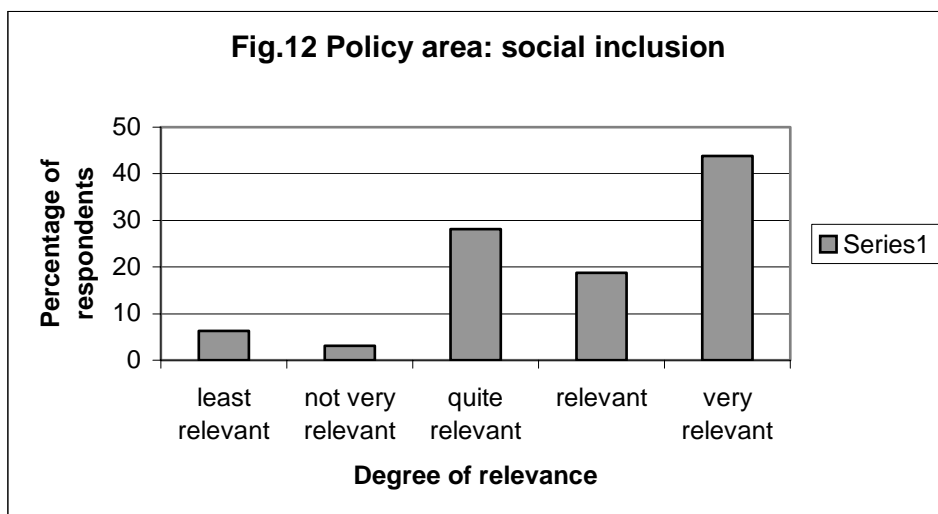
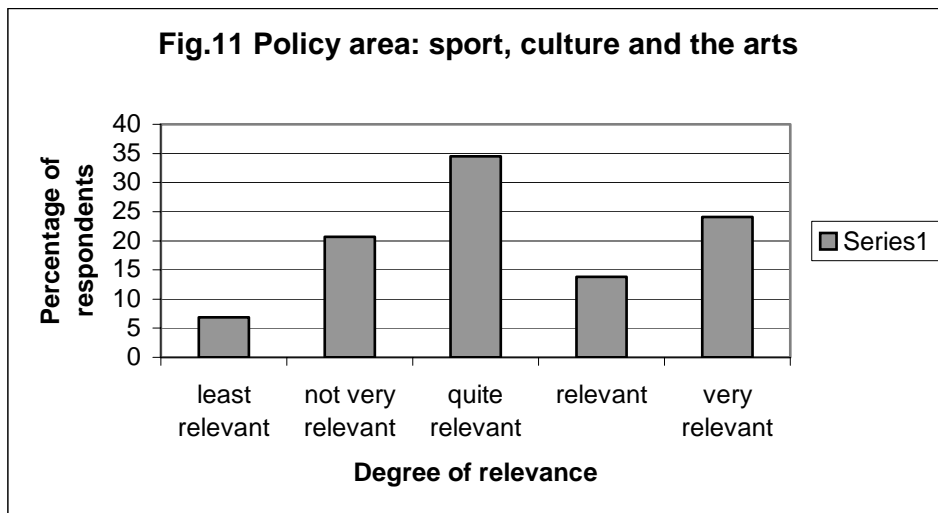
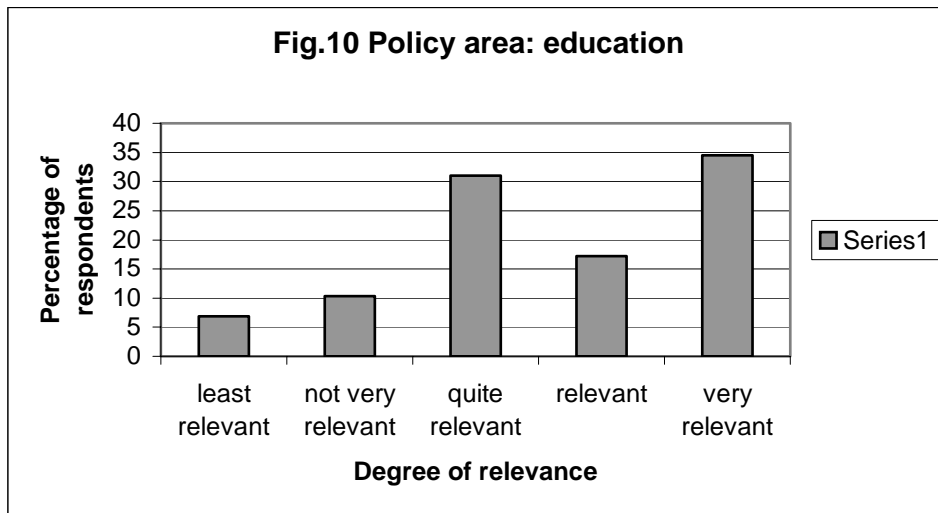
*Note: this may be a reflection of the sample which had a low response rate from housing associations and other organisations involved in the housing sector*





*Note: this again is probably a reflection of the sample with low responses from the enterprise sector but may also reflect the current priority and investment in 'place' by Scottish Enterprise*



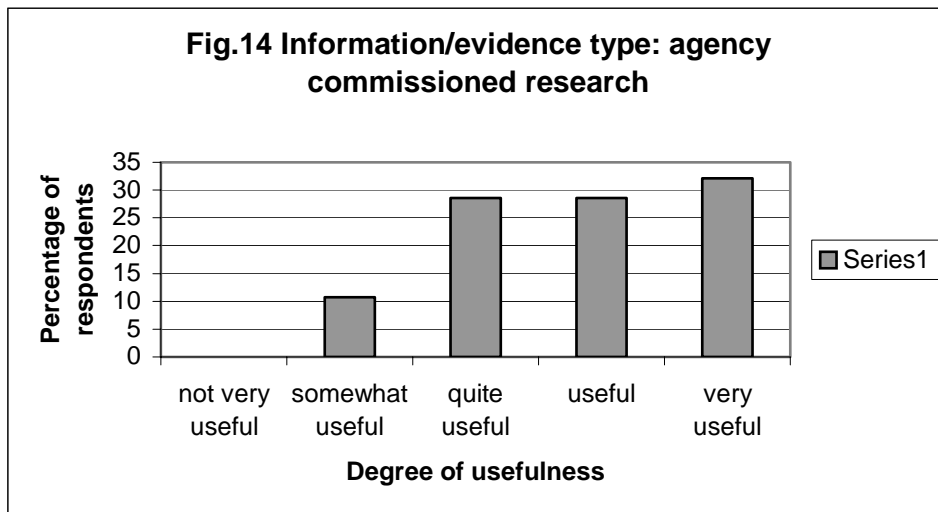
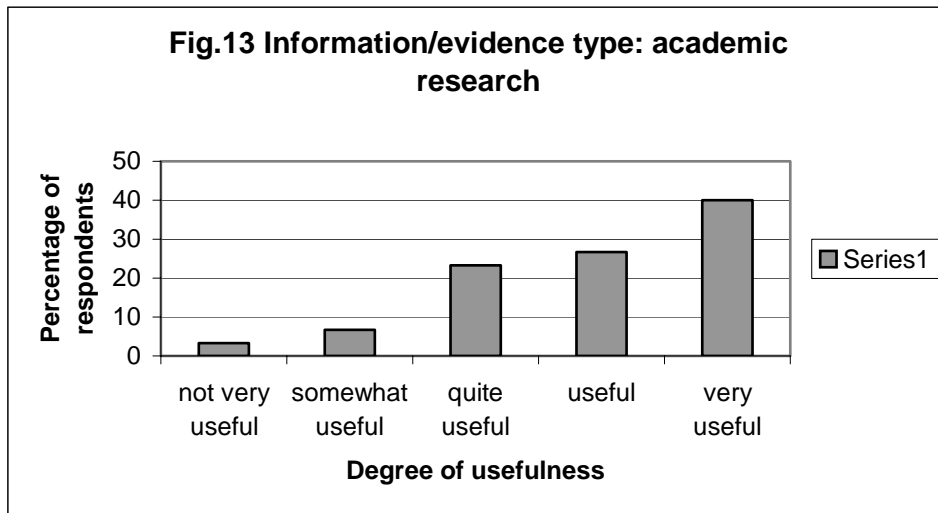


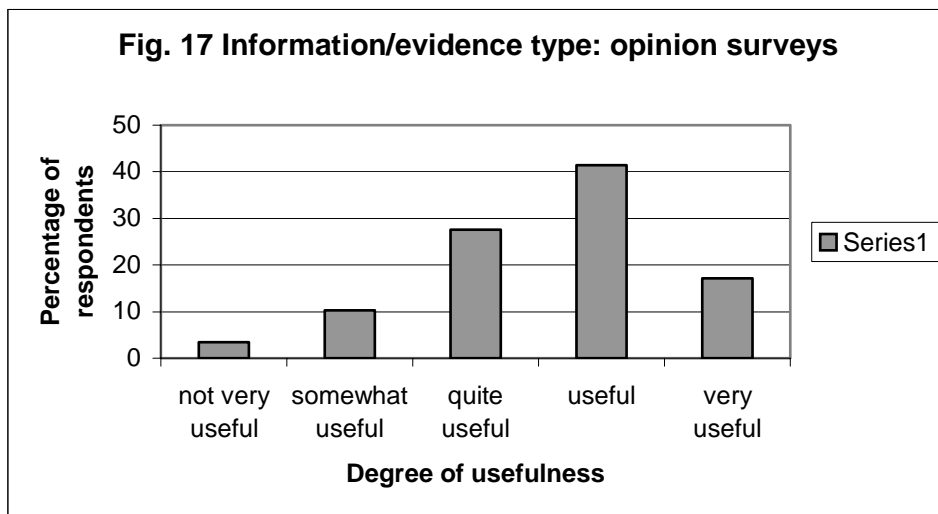
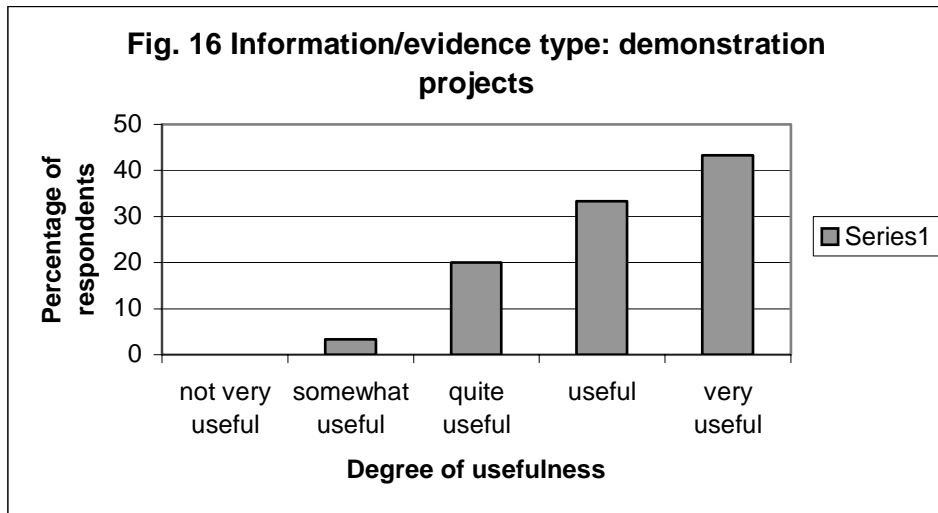
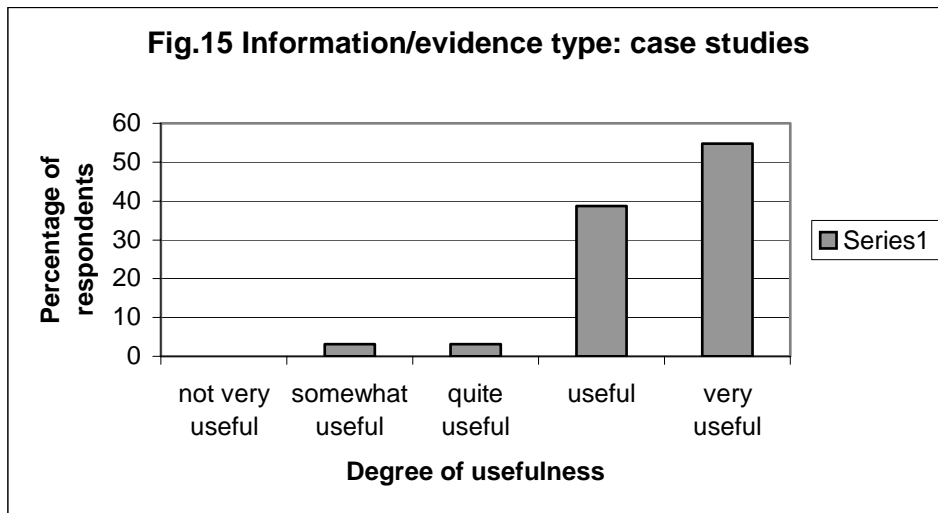
This analysis has produced some mixed results. Housing and enterprise are not considered by many people to be of high relevance while environment, health and regeneration are seen as having the highest relevance. The rest are somewhere in the middle. While there is this pattern, it may not be possible to ignore or exclude any policy field from a database because of the links there are between many of the areas. However, if reliance is placed on partner organisations supplying the evidence to go into the database, it may be difficult to obtain material from some areas if it is not seen as a priority.

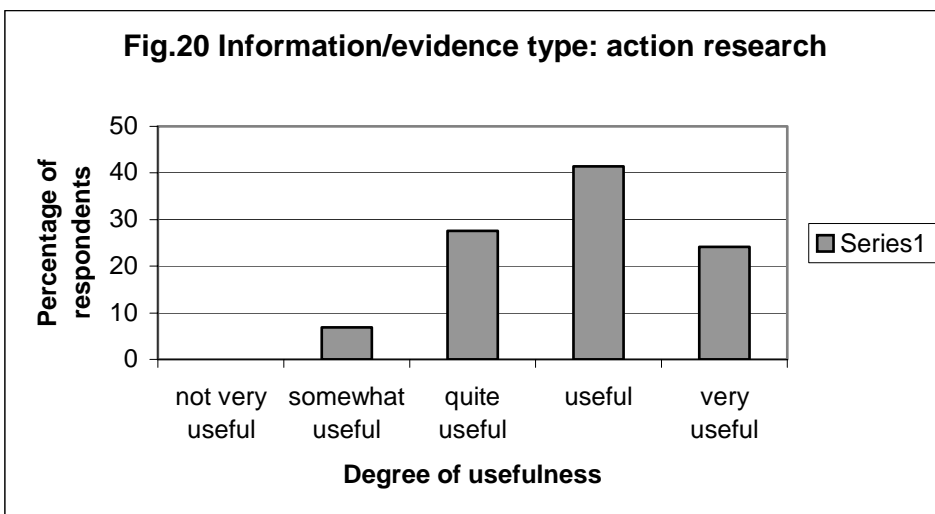
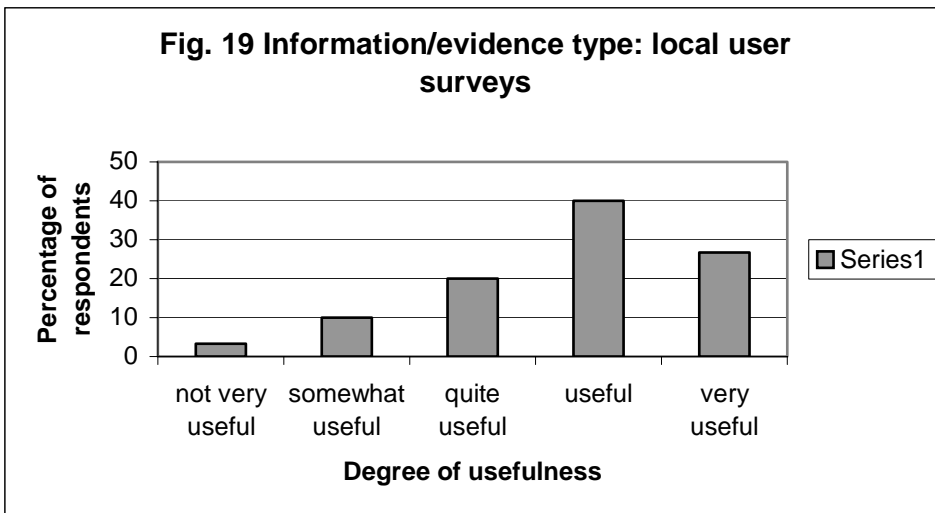
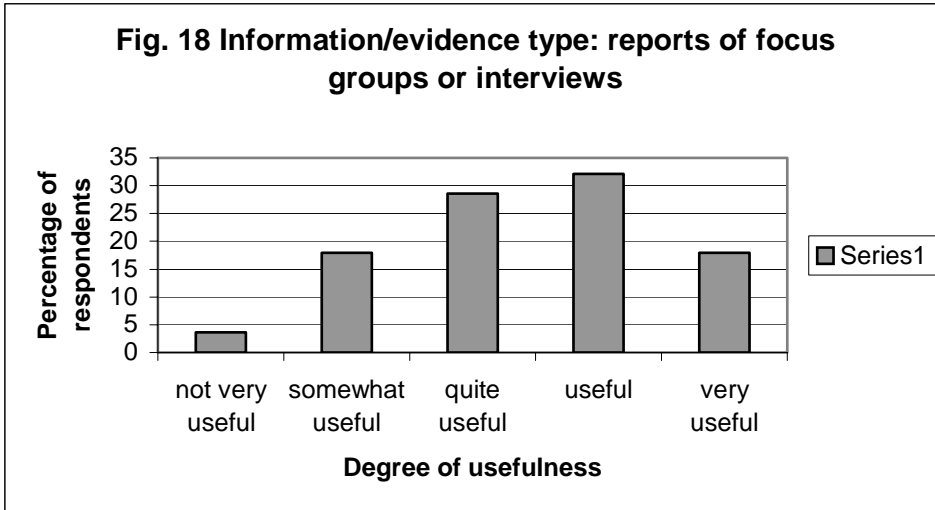
Respondents also suggested that biodiversity, sustainable tourism, landscape design, management and maintenance, employment, children’s play (as a separate item) and sustainable transport could be other policy areas to be included in the database.

**4.2 Evidence, research and information to be included in a database.**

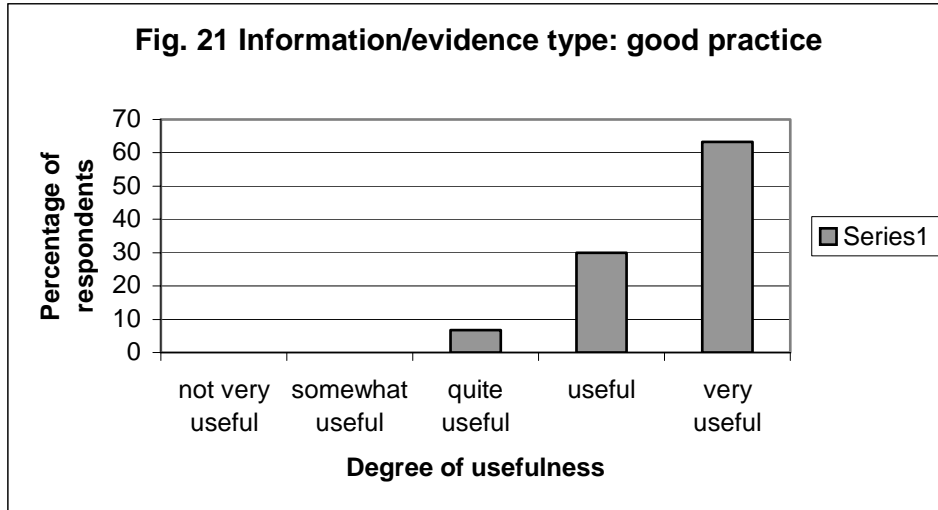
The respondents were asked their views on the degree of relevance of different categories of evidence, research and information that should be included in a database. The following charts present the picture emerging from the analysis.







*Note: this raises the question of whether respondents understood the term 'action research', particularly in the context of the high ratings attached to case studies and demonstration projects*

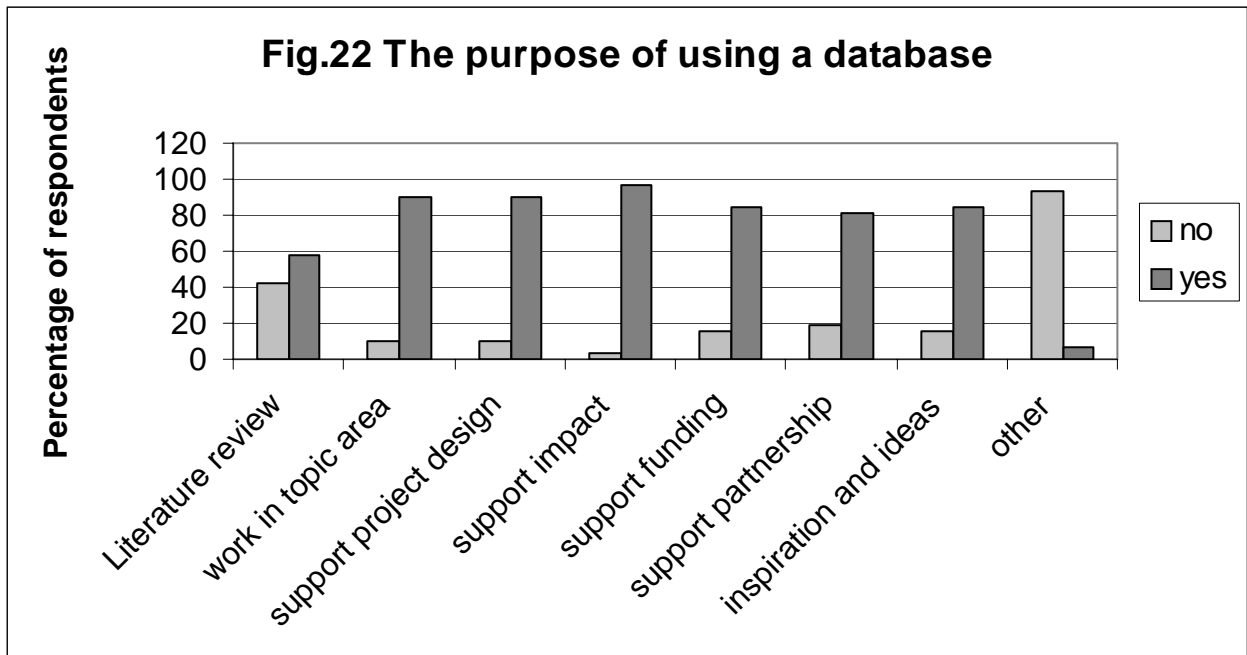


It is interesting that while all categories are seen as useful, case studies, demonstration projects and examples of good practice are seen as having the highest degree of usefulness. These are also probably the categories of evidence that are currently least available because they are least likely to be published compared with academic and commissioned research or reports of surveys, and they are also the categories of most usefulness, in many respects, to practitioners (see the analysis of the purpose of using a database below).

There were no other suggestions for inclusion in a database.

**4.3 The purpose of using a greenspace research database**

Respondents were asked to select from a list of purposes for which they would use a database. There was no ranking of importance, merely a yes/no answer. The following chart shows clearly the relative importance of different purposes:



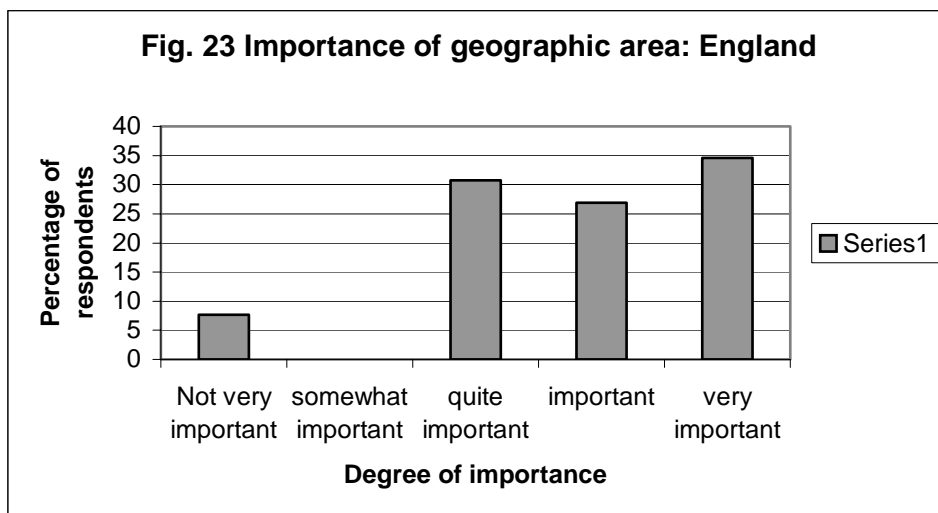
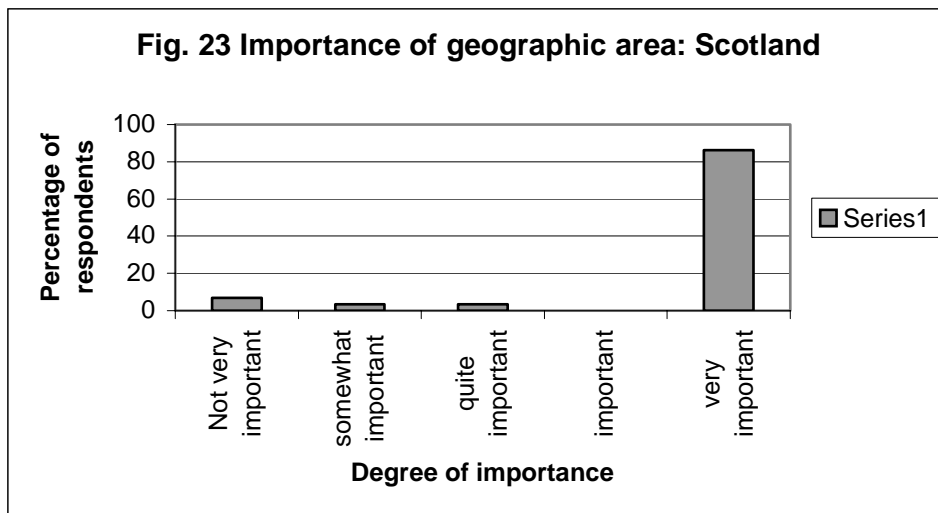
Clearly, apart from preparing a literature review, which is primarily an activity carried out by researchers, the other suggested uses:

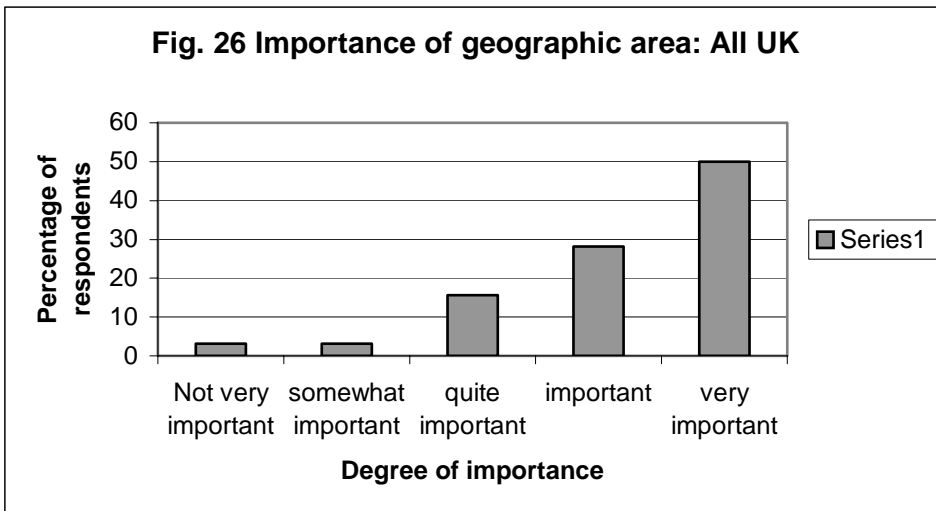
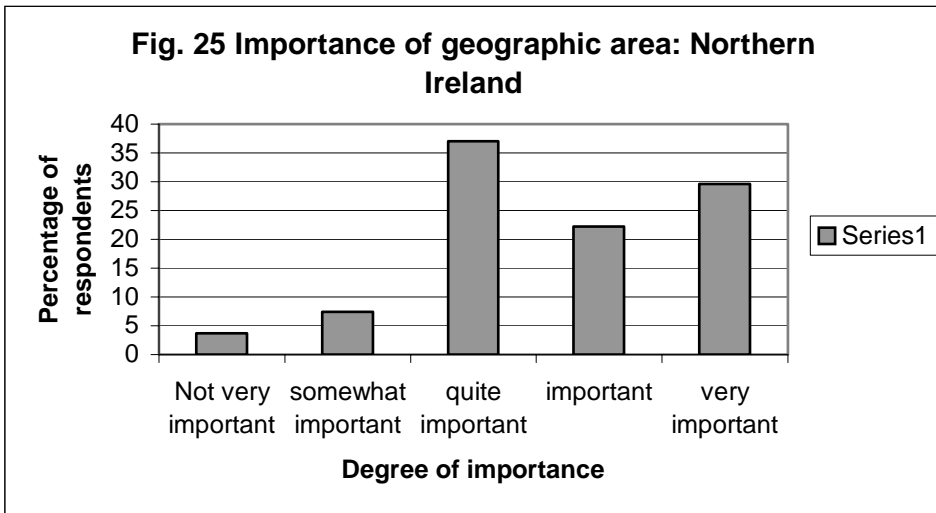
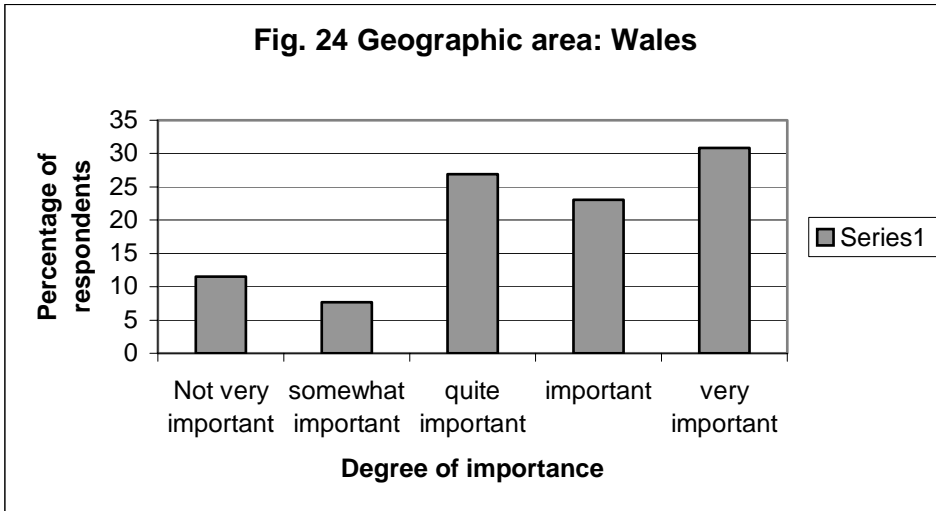
- for evidence and good practice to support project design and development
- for evidence to support impacts of greenspace projects
- for evidence to support funding and other applications
- for evidence to support partnership development
- for inspiration and ideas

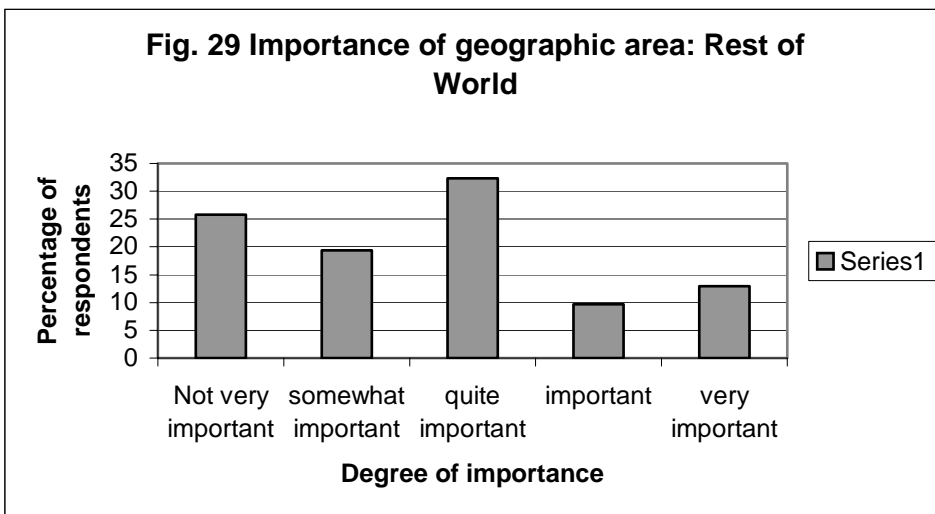
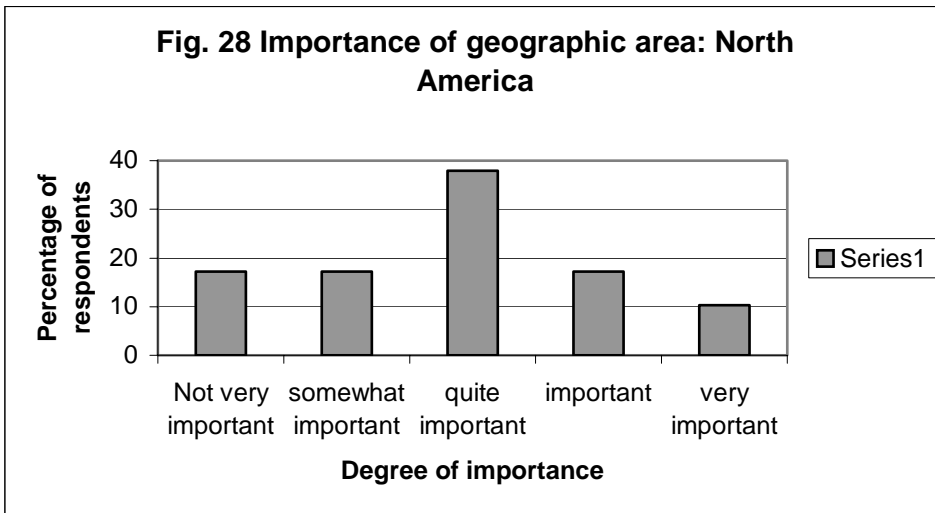
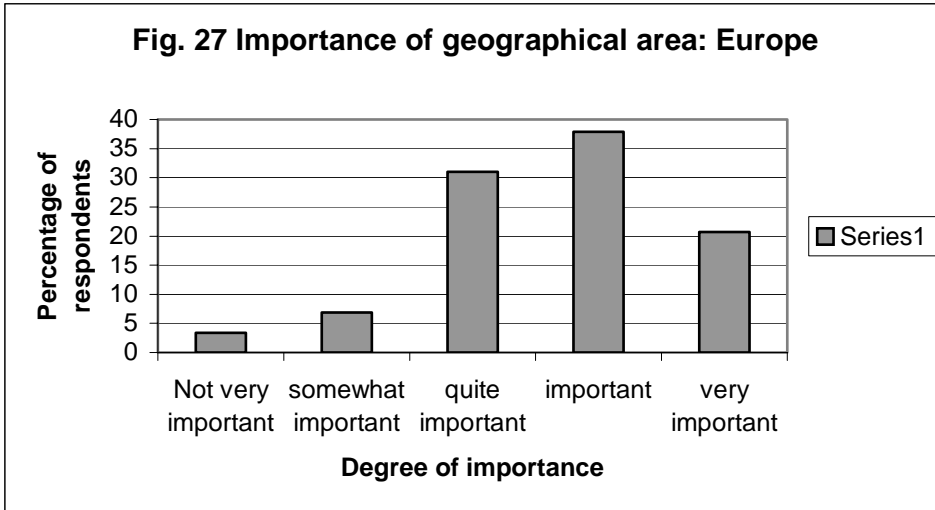
are all seen as definite uses to be made by the respondents. Other suggested uses included media interest/response, keeping up with developments, providing information for making robust decisions and information to undertake customer’s needs.

**4.4 The importance of being able to identify evidence from different geographic areas**

Respondents were asked to rank the degree of importance of being able to identify research and other evidence on the basis of the country or region of its origin. The following charts present the results:





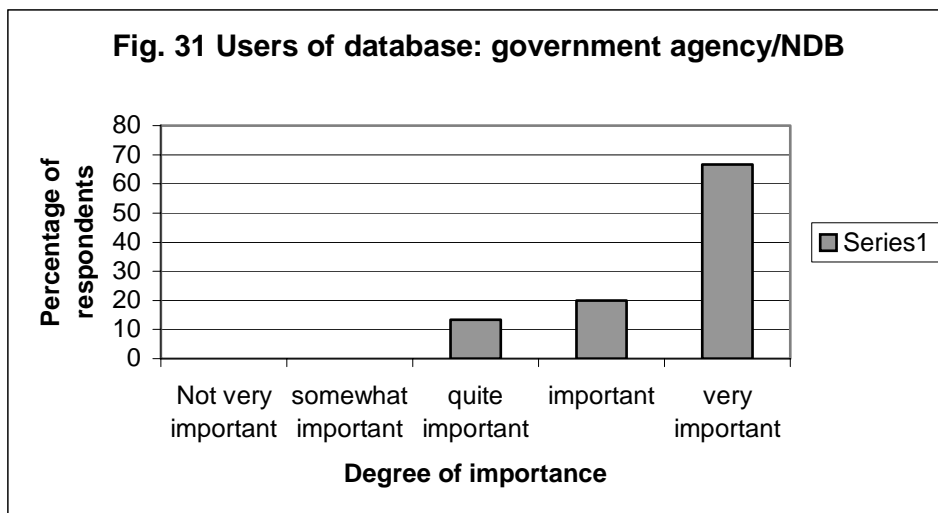
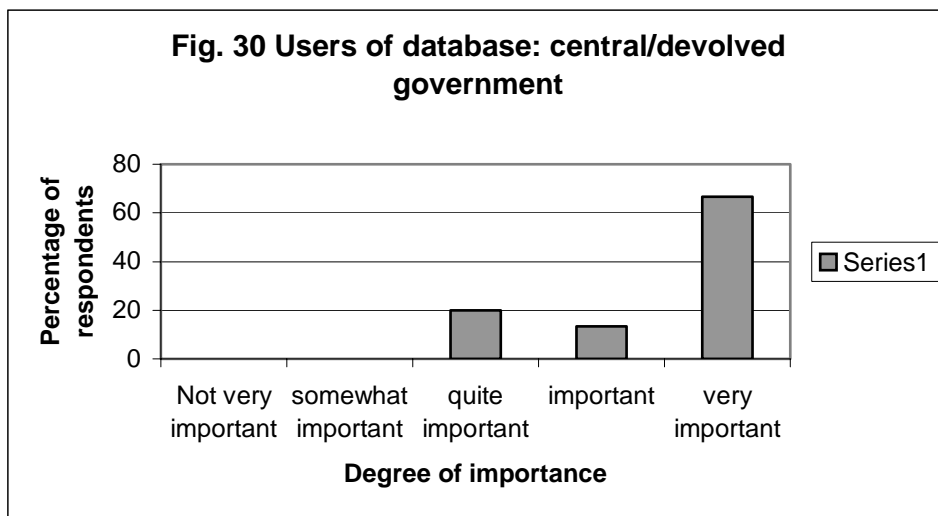


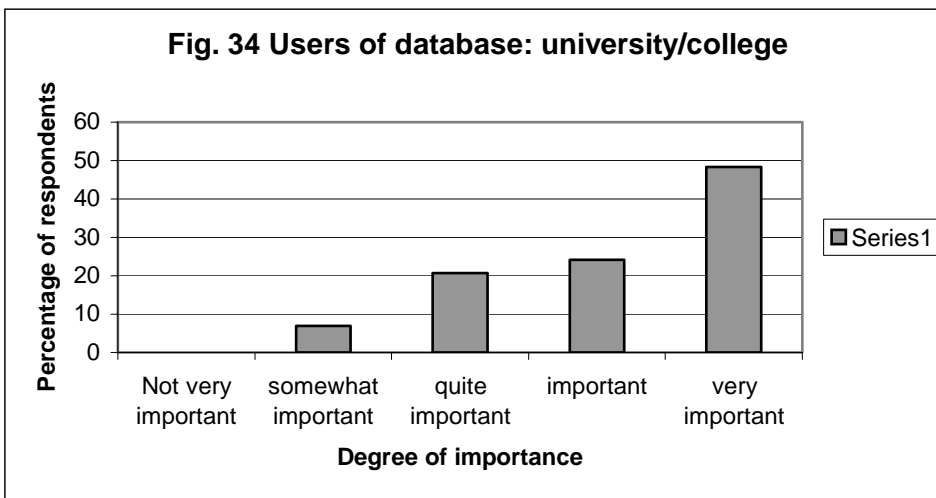
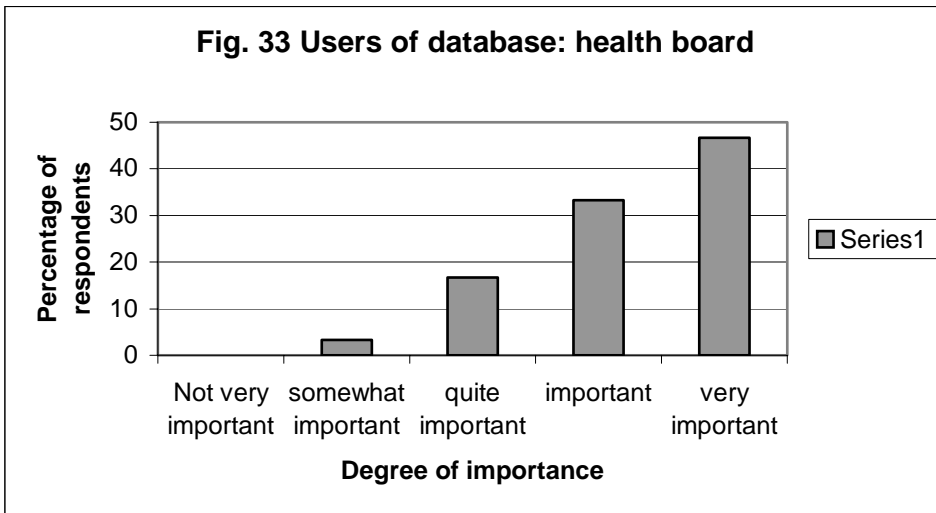
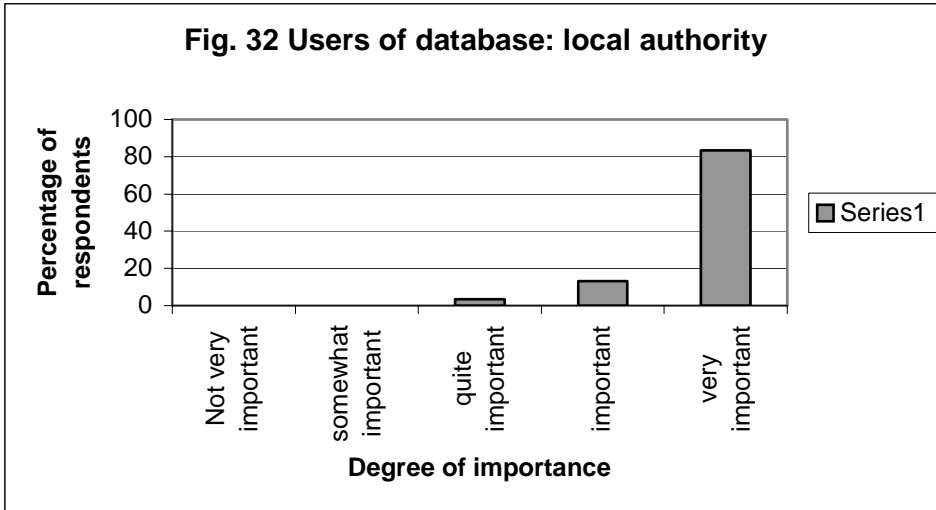
The results show that Scotland emerges as the most important country of origin – not surprising considering the location of the majority of respondents and also the different

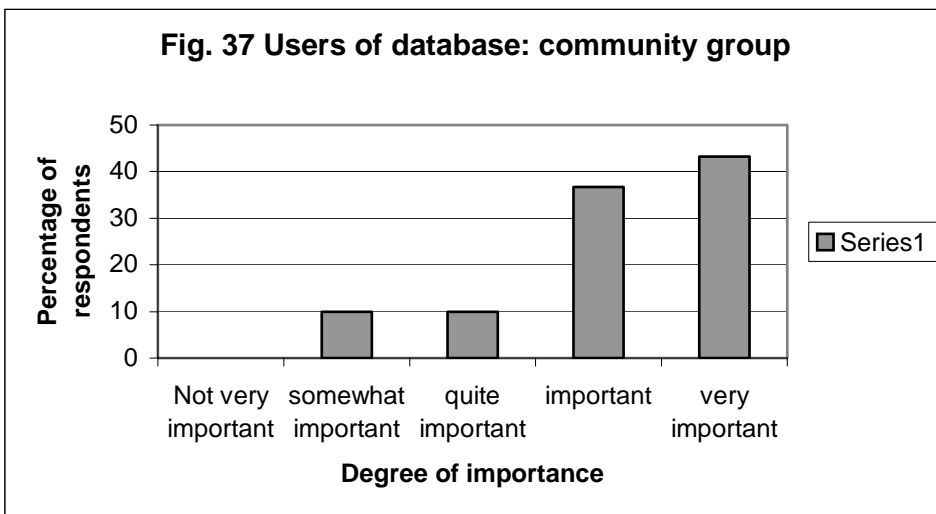
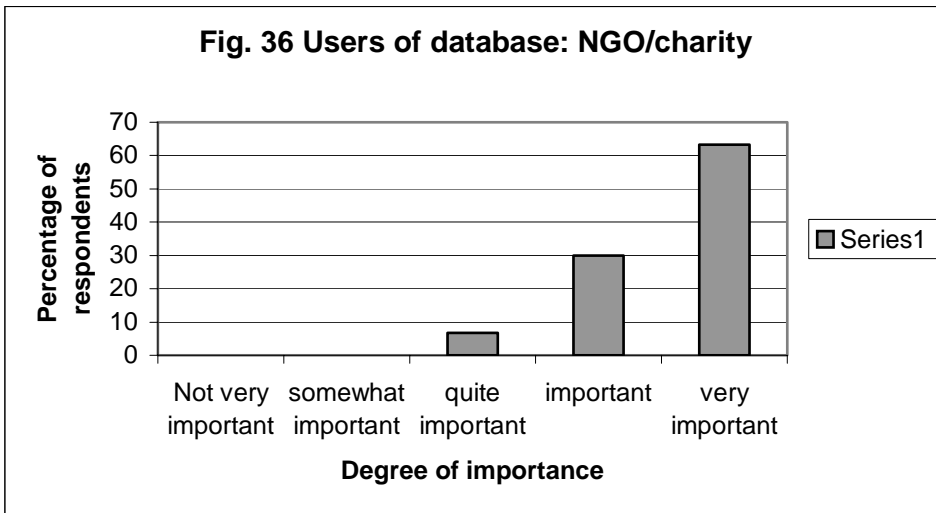
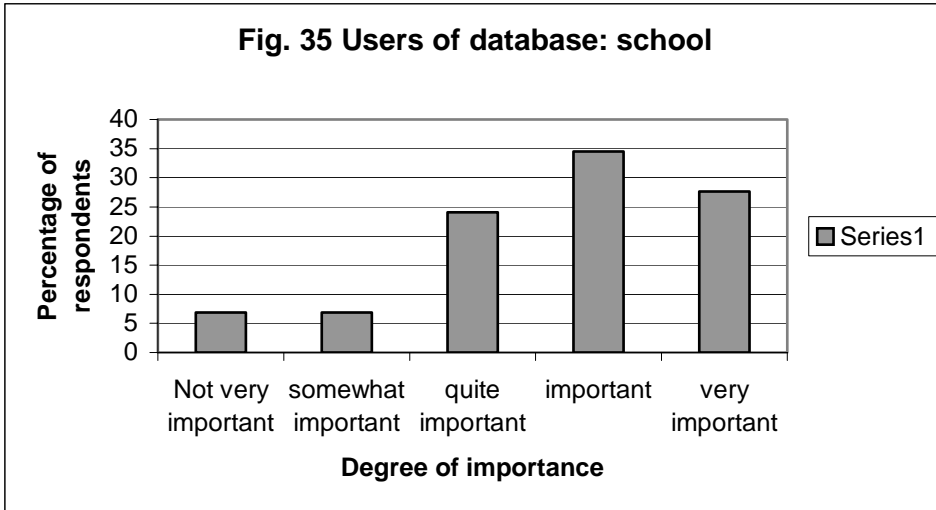
approaches of greenspace and other policies being taken in Scotland since devolution. The other countries of the UK are not as important as UK-wide research. Europe is fairly important but North America and the rest of the world slip in importance. This may reflect the relative importance/relevance of different types of evidence and the purposes for which a database would be used, such as case studies and best practice, for which examples from far away locations might well be considered less valuable compared with the findings of academic research.

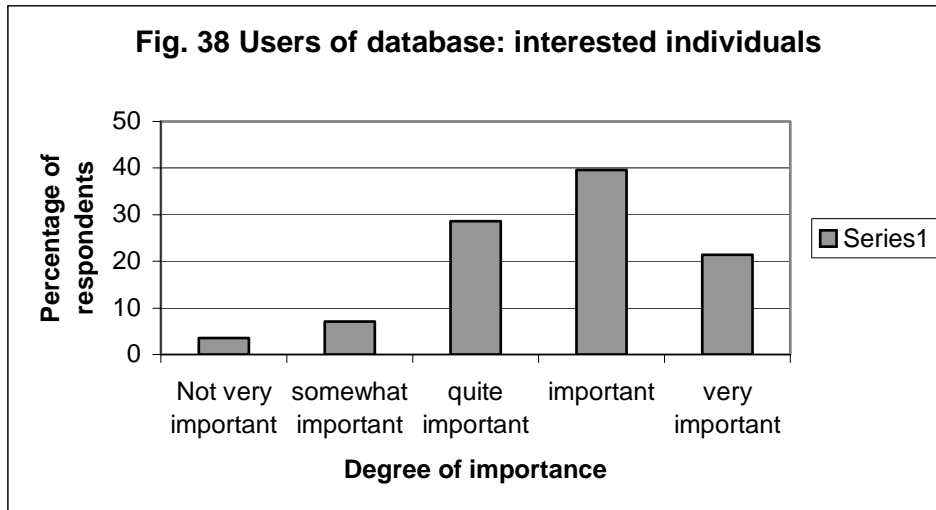
**4.5 The types of organisations who should be able to use a database**

Respondents were asked to rank the degree of importance of different categories of organisations in terms of their being able to use a database. The following charts show the results:







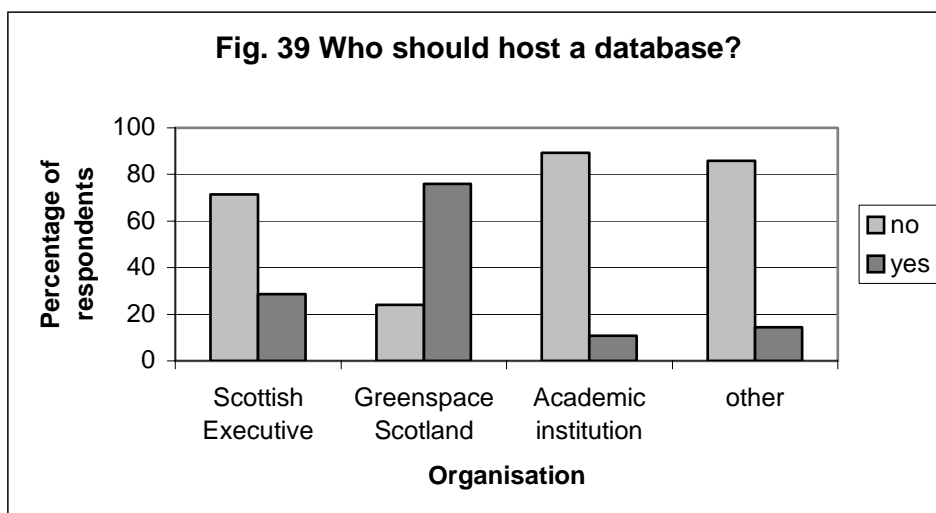


The results show that a wide constituency of potential users exists, which means that any database needs to be designed so that it is as user friendly as possible in terms of the interface and ease of use of the search facility as well as the way that the data entries are presented in summary form.

Other organisations suggested as potential users included COSLA, professional bodies, developers, regeneration agencies, community planning partners and relevant international organisations.

#### 4.6 Hosting a greenspace database

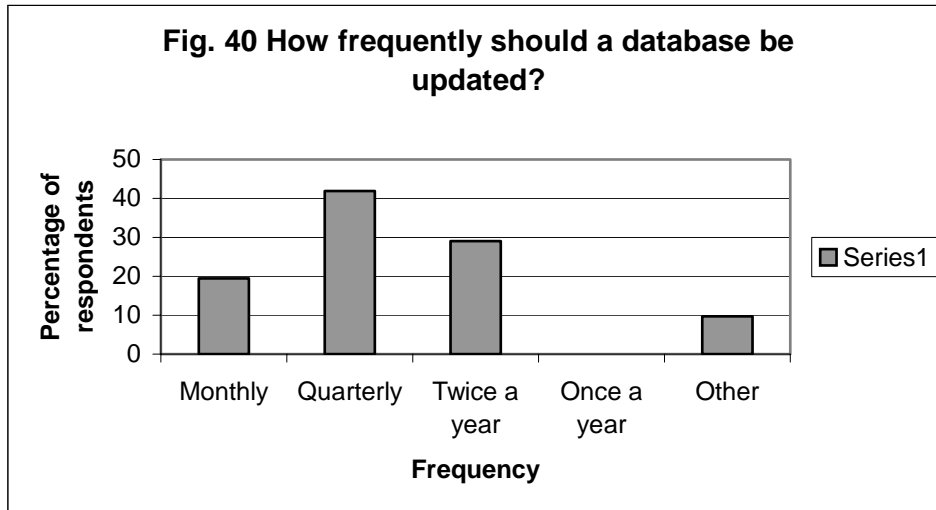
Respondents were asked to say which organisation should host a database. The following chart presents the results:



The clear favourite from this survey is Greenspace Scotland. This makes sense, because it is an organisation that aims to provide, among other things, a central source of information available to all and through its partners it coordinates many activities down to local levels. Hosting the database would provide a means for information from all partners and from all locations around Scotland being made available.

#### 4.7 How often should a database be maintained?

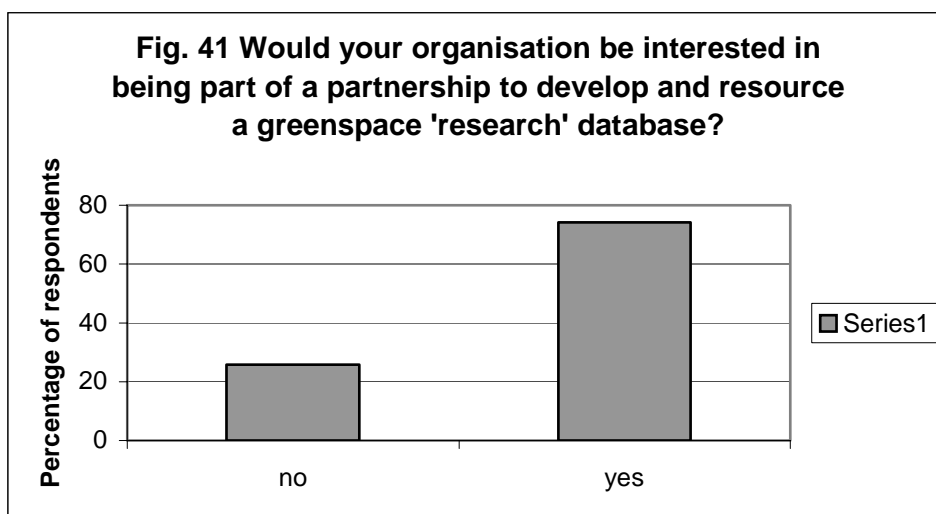
Databases need to be kept up to date if they are to continue to be useful, but cost/benefit aspects come into play. Respondents were asked for their views on how frequently a database should be updated and maintained. The following chart shows the preferences:



Quarterly updating seems to be the preferred option, with biannually as a second alternative.

#### 4.8 Willingness of stakeholder organisations to join a partnership to develop and resource a database

A database containing a wide range of evidence not formally published, especially of projects and case studies can be extremely arduous to construct owing to the difficulty of finding information. Developing a partnership so that such material is made available is likely to be a major contributor to the success of such a venture. Therefore it is important to know if the respondent organisations are willing to join a partnership. The following chart shows the result:



A list of organisations indicating an interest is appended as Appendix 4

The majority of respondents say their organisations are interested in being part of a partnership, which bodes well for the future development of any database.

#### **4.9 Conclusions from the stakeholder questionnaire survey**

The stakeholder questionnaire survey only managed to sample a relatively small number of organisations, but they are wide ranging and representative of the larger body of organisations who were asked to supply their views.

There is clearly a demand for a broad database covering a wide range of policy areas, although some are considered more important than others. Some policy areas were suggested that were not on the original list, but there is no idea of how important they could be considered to be for inclusion in a database.

There is also a wide range of categories of evidence sought by stakeholders, and though, while some are clearly considered more relevant than others, all are considered valuable.

The purposes for which a database would be used are also broad in nature, although there seems to be a strong preference for practical purposes of getting projects up and running and for evidence that supports project development and funding. This suggests that there will need to be a significant element of quality control or critique of the material that goes into a database so that people are able to achieve their project goals using the best evidence to help them.

Given that there is a lot of preference for including demonstration projects, good practice and case studies in the database, it is not surprising that evidence from Scotland should be considered the most important, followed by the rest of the UK countries. If the questionnaire was more widely completed by organisations from England, Wales or Northern Ireland it is likely that the balance would be somewhat different. However, there is perhaps less relevance for including these types of evidence from outside the UK, although many projects are part of wider European research and development activities – especially action research – so this should not be overlooked, although there are likely to be major difficulties in sourcing demonstration project, case study or best practice examples from outside the UK unless they are part of European networks.

The wide range of potential users has been demonstrated. With community groups considered to be important users, it means that the accessibility and usability of the database needs very careful consideration, compared with one that was principally aimed at the academic world, for example. Terminology, the database interface, the search facilities and the presentation of the content will all need to be very carefully specified and designed, possibly with a user group to help ensure that it meets its goals.

Greenspace Scotland is the clear favourite to host a database, assuming that it is to be led by Scottish organisations and to contain a distinctly Scottish flavour in terms of policy areas and terminology. If it is to be more widely used and contain evidence from other UK countries there may be some issues over some of the terms used.

A database is only as good as its contents, which need to be kept up to date. Clearly the respondents think this should be done quite regularly. This depends to some extent on how often fresh material is published or released, projects completed and so on. Academic research is continually published with journals coming out monthly or quarterly, while other work is also continuous. Quarterly updating may be too frequent to be cost effective, while biannually is probably most cost effective over the longer term, while any less frequent would pose serious problems for users.

The willingness of stakeholders to join a partnership is welcome. As well as making it easier for the database managers to compile the database, if partners contribute resources and so effectively own shares in it, they are more likely to be reliable about continuing to supply information to keep it up to date.

## 5. Existing databases on greenspace and other related policy areas

A search was made to find out what databases exist that contain research or other evidence of the type under discussion in this report. Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to provide details of any databases that they knew of. Very few examples were forthcoming, suggesting that either few are in existence or that no one knew of them. Appendix 2 contains a list of some websites that offer access to various forms of information, some of which is evidence or research, but most are not. The main database on greenspace research is, of course, the ODPM database.

The ODPM database is primarily of academic or agency commissioned research that meets a threshold of quality. It presently contains some 1 500 items from around the world. At the time of writing this report it is almost complete but the question of who should host it has not been resolved. It is likely to be CABE Space.

The ODPM database is arranged in categories of green and public space types drawn from PPG17, categories which are not exactly mirrored in Scotland. It can also be searched by policy or thematic areas, once again not necessarily mirroring those in Scotland. However, as a repository of data from one major set of sources there is no point in reconstructing it merely to reflect a Scottish perspective and so it is unnecessary to include academic research and agency commissioned research in any new database unless it fits categories specifically included that are not found in the ODPM database.

*<http://odpm.veritymedia.co.uk>* is the temporary site where it can currently be viewed.

Other sites containing evidence are heavily biased to single sectors such as transport, disabled people or public health. Many organisations, such as government agencies have publications sections on them where it is possible to find particular material, but this may be difficult and time consuming to search for.

European research can be found in the useful CORDIS database. This covers all research carried out under the various frameworks of research and can be searched for greenspace examples quite easily.

The only readily available searchable database similar to the ODPM one is the DPTAC site (Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee).

The conclusion from this limited exploration of databases is that there are none that cover the mix of policy areas in relation to greenspace except for the ODPM project. Thus a database is needed to meet stakeholders' desires as expressed in the results of the questionnaire survey. The ODPM database is already comprehensive in terms of recording academic and agency commissioned research, so these categories should be excluded from any project set up by the client group, even if some of the categories are not exact matches for Scottish conditions. Given that there are so few databases to be found, no information is available on the way they are set up, managed or updated.

## **6. Recommendations on a database to meet the requirements of the project brief**

### **6.1 Basic requirements**

The conclusions from the stakeholder analysis are clear about the scope of the database that is required. It should:

- Cover the policy areas identified and possibly expanded through further discussions and consultations
- Include the evidence/research types listed, apart from the academic and agency commissioned research which is already in the ODPM database
- Be able to be used for a wide range of uses, especially for practical project development, support, implementation and evaluation
- Be able to be used by a wide spectrum of people, with the expected use by non-experts/non-researchers to set the basic requirements for user friendliness
- Include research and evidence from far afield but concentrate on UK work because the type of evidence to be included should concentrate on demonstration projects, best practice and case studies

### **6.2 Structure of database engine and search terms**

It will be necessary to develop the search terms for a database engine. There are two options here. One is to adopt the ODPM terms of typology and theme as they are so that the two databases can sit side by side and perhaps be of greater use for the UK as a whole. The second option is to revise the ODPM search terms to broaden them and change the emphasis to suit a more Scottish context, as suggested in the brief. The choice will depend on the eventual partnership set up to develop the database. If it is mainly Scottish then option 2 is the obvious route but if a wider UK partnership develops option 1 may be more appropriate. Appendix 3 contains the search terms and structure for the ODPM database.

Whether the typology of green and public space is necessary is not specified in the brief. Since much of the potential use of the database would seem to be concentrated at the project level, evidence related to different greenspace types would seem to be valuable so that searchers could look for evidence of projects, best practice and so on that fitted their area of interest.

The construction of a database engine is actually technically very straightforward. What needs to be decided before that is done is the structure of the database search terms and categories. From the experience of the ODPM project and the requirements of the brief as well as the findings of this scoping study it should be relatively simple to achieve this. The major hurdle is obtaining the evidence to populate the database.

### **6.3 Obtaining the evidence**

The accumulation of academic research is easy because it is available through various on-line services such as the Web of Science and Sciencedirect. Experience of attempting to obtain other information about research demonstrates that it is difficult. However, organisations did submit material that was not suitable for inclusion in the ODPM database because it did not meet the criteria but which would probably find its way into the proposed database. A stakeholder partnership will be absolutely necessary so that people who are going to be the source of evidence feel ownership of the project

and will also want to use it. There should also be a means for people to submit material for inclusion on the database (after certain quality controls are met) and the use of a standard format that people can fill in describing the material, allotting key words for the search terms and so on and giving contact or website information. This would make the work of a database manager much easier.

While freedom of access might be the general aim, membership of the database project and the use of a freely given password would help to control and monitor its use. People who wanted to use it would simply register and get a password. This would allow them to submit information and engender a sense of ownership. The information on subscribers would allow the managers to see who was subscribing to and using it and to look for gaps in membership and hence missing evidence that would be desirable to have in the database.

#### **6.4 Quality control**

The question of quality control is at the heart of using any evidence to back up any case for funding, any best practice or any policy. While the database envisaged here should be inclusive, there nevertheless need to be some standards by which the quality of the evidence can be judged. In the ODPM project the research was either in or out, but here it will be necessary to rank the material according to some kind of grading – a very sensitive issue but one that cannot be avoided. Rather than imposing a scoring or star system, it may be better to include a statement as part of the entry in the database that describes the limitations on use to which the evidence can be put, based on criteria to be agreed by the stakeholders.

#### **6.5 Development of database process**

It is recommended that the following steps are taken in developing the database:

1. Establish an initial core partnership of organisations willing not only to supply their evidence but also to contribute some resources to help fund the creation and maintenance of the database.
2. Use the core partnership to define the search terms and database engine structure, with the help of consultants.
3. Hire consultants to oversee the development of the database structure and to pull together the first tranche of data from the partners in order to test the engine and to form the nucleus of the database, mainly from the core partners but also from a search of a wider group of organisations and from a search back a key number of years.
4. As soon as the database engine is complete and the first tranche of data has been assembled and formatted, place it on the Greenspace Scotland website and publicise it together with information on membership and an invitation to organisations to submit their evidence. As information is submitted it should be checked by the database manager for accuracy and to meet the quality ranking as described above.

5. At three-monthly intervals, or when sufficient additional evidence has been submitted the database manager updates the database and this fact is advertised via the Greenspace Scotland website.

### **6.6 Incorporating the database with others**

It is not recommended to attempt to incorporate the proposed database with the ODPM project but to look on them both as mutually supporting one another. Each should be linked from the other's website or search engine front page so that a searcher can access both very easily. There are no other databases that would be suitable as platforms upon which the new one could be built, so it will be easier and cleaner to start from scratch, though with the experience of the ODPM project as a guide.

### **6.7 Costings**

From experience of the ODPM project it is possible to estimate some of the major time/cost elements for developing a database.

The database engine itself, once the search terms and overall structure have been agreed by the stakeholders/client group should cost no more than £5000 excl VAT. If it has to be redesigned after it has been created, for example adding or changing search terms, this requires the engine to be taken apart and put back together which may cost from £100s to around £1000 a time, so it makes sense to try to get it right the first time.

Developing the final search terms and structure, building on the ODPM work, should take about 5 person days and cost around £2000 excl VAT.

Collecting and organising the initial tranche of data is a rather open ended and time intensive because it needs to be done accurately in order to create a database that will work properly in the database engine. If three months are devoted to seeking information from stakeholders, collating it in a reference management software such as Endnote and testing the engine etc there could be up some 30 days work costing around £12000 depending on the amount and quality of the data coming forward. If it is a large amount then this could be an underestimate.

It would be sensible to set up a consultancy contract to carry out this work, the database engine being a subcontract of this since the two elements of development need to be considered together. Thus an initial contract of around £20 000 would be realistic (and not far off the ODPM contract sum) for the initial phase. A 4 month contract period would also be realistic.

The management and updating of the database, carried out in an initial 3 monthly frequency for say two years followed by biannual maintenance (unless the volume of material remains high) should be carried out by a call-off contract on a time basis, allowing up to 4 days per quarter for the first year, 3 days per quarter the second and 4 days per six months the third and subsequent years, costing roughly as follows:

Year 1 £6400

Year 2 £4800

Year 3 onwards £3200

All these costs assume a staff cost plus overheads and expenses of around £400/day all in.

## **7. Next Steps**

The SNIFFER Greenspace Research Cluster provides an ideal vehicle for progressing the development of a greenspace research database.

It is recommended that invitations to join the cluster are extended to those organisations (listed in Appendix 4) who expressed interest in joining a partnership to develop and resource a database. A workshop style meeting, involving all cluster members, should be held to examine and validate the findings of this scoping study and to jointly agree the next steps. It is further recommended that from this cluster, a smaller steering group should be identified to develop a brief and resource package to employ consultants to progress the development of the database as outlined in section 6.

## Appendix 1 Questionnaire



### OPENspace: the research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments

#### **DATABASE OF GREENSPACE RESEARCH SCOPING STUDY**

In 2003, Greenspace Scotland, Communities Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned a literature review to draw together existing research, evidence and literature linking greenspace and quality of life. This group, together with a wider range of stakeholders through a SNIFFER workshop on urban research needs in May 2004, has identified the need to draw together the findings of greenspace/quality of life research and case studies by developing a searchable, web-based database.

Running concurrently, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned a research mapping exercise and developed a greenspace research database, although at this stage it only contains academic peer reviewed work.

The aim of this study is to explore the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the need for a greenspace/quality of life 'research' database; to look at how people would use any such database, to explore the potential content, subject matter and type of 'research' (for example, case studies, grey literature as well as academic work) to be included and to map out any pre-existing databases and information sources.

OPENspace have been commissioned by Greenspace Scotland, with funding from SNIFFER, to undertake this study. Your responses to this questionnaire will provide vital information to help us determine whether there is a need for a greenspace research database, and if there is, what structure and content it should have.

Many thanks for your help.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire electronically if possible and save as “database questionnaire(your name).doc” and email as an attachment to Alicia Montarzino at [a.montarzino@sbe.hw.ac.uk](mailto:a.montarzino@sbe.hw.ac.uk)

You can also complete the questionnaire manually and post a hard copy to Alicia Montarzino, School of the Built Environment, Edwin Chadwick Building 3.02, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh EH14 4AS

*The questionnaire should be returned by 22 November 2004*

### SECTION 1: EXISTING DATABASES

**1. Are you aware of any existing databases containing material relating to greenspace research? If so please provide details (web address etc) for each database (boxes for additional existing databases in appendix).**

How do you use this database?  
What is the content of this database?  
What types of ‘research’ does it cover?  
What geographical areas does it cover?  
How useful is this databases?  
How often do you use it?  
Is it kept up to date?  
Is it user friendly?  
Is it an open-access database i.e. accessible to anyone?  
Is it accessible to people with disabilities?

### SECTION 2: POTENTIAL DATABASE AIMS, DESIGN AND CONTENT

**2. Greenspace can impact on a wide range of policy areas – which policy areas are of most interest/relevance to your organisation? (score from 5=most to 1=least)**

Environment	Health
Housing	Regeneration
Community	Planning
Enterprise	Equality and diversity
Education	Sport, culture and the arts
Regeneration	Social Inclusion
Are there any sectors missing from the list (please specify)	

**3. What kinds of evidence, research and information would you wish to see in a database? Please score the following from 5 = very useful to 1 = not very useful.**

Academic research  
Case studies  
Opinion surveys  
Local user surveys  
Good practice

Agency commissioned research  
Demonstration projects  
Reports of focus groups or interviews  
Action research  
Other (please specify)

**4. For which purposes would you use a greenspace research database?**

As a short-cut for a literature review  
To find work done in particular topic areas  
Evidence and good practice to support project design and development  
Evidence to support impacts of greenspace projects  
Evidence to support funding and other applications  
Evidence to support partnership development  
For inspiration and ideas  
Other

**5. How important is it for your organisation to be able to identify (and search for) 'research' from the following specific geographical areas? Please score from 5 = very important to 1 = not very important**

Scotland	England	Wales	Northern Ireland	All UK
Europe	USA	Rest of the world		

**6. Which types of organisations and groups do you think should be able to make use of a research database? Score the following from 5 = very important to 1 = not very important:**

Central/devolved government	Government agencies/NDBs
Local authorities	Health boards
Universities/colleges	Schools
NGOs/charities/voluntary bodies	Community groups
Interested individuals	Other (please specify)

**7. Who do you think should host a research database?**

Scottish Executive	Greenspace Scotland
An academic institution	Other (please specify)

**8. How regularly should a research database be updated?**

Monthly      Quarterly      Twice a year      Annually      Other (please specify)

**9. Would your organisation be interested in being part of a partnership to develop and resource a greenspace 'research' database?** *(Please note this is an expression of interest only and does not commit your organisation. Answering 'yes' to this question means that you will be contacted to discuss 'next steps' following the completion of this study.)*

**10. Comments**

**If you have any other comments or observations you think would help us, please note them here.**

*Thank you very much for your cooperation*

Simon Bell and Alicia Montarzino  
OPENspace Research Centre  
Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University

## **Appendix 2 Databases/websites of evidence**

### ***CORDIS***

The European research carried out through the various Framework programmes can be accessed quite easily through the CORDIS website. This mainly covers academic type research and it is kept up to date regularly. The research covers every conceivable field, not only greenspace or related areas.

[www.cordis.lu](http://www.cordis.lu)

### ***SDRN***

The Sustainable Development Research Network has a good structure about sustainable development with a section on the urban environment and regeneration, but little actual data or evidence – it is more a way of finding people and partners.

[www.sd-research.org.uk](http://www.sd-research.org.uk)

### ***CEBE***

The Centre for Education in the Built Environment has within it a section on urban design resources database, which only has limited publications and then links elsewhere.

[www.cebe.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/links/uddata.html](http://www.cebe.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/links/uddata.html)

### ***UN Habitat***

UN habitat is a best practice database on improving the living environment. It lists best practice projects from around the world and has a search facility. Of limited value because of the wide range of examples, many from developing countries and few from UK.

[www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)

### ***SOSIG***

The Social Science Information gateway has a section on the man-made (built) environment and has a bibliography, mainly containing planning references, and some data on land use.

[www.sosig.ac.uk](http://www.sosig.ac.uk)

### ***TRANSPORTWEB***

This site has a bibliographic database but no material that is concerned with transport and greenspace

[www.transportweb.com](http://www.transportweb.com)

### ***DPTAC***

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee has a searchable database, although it is not directly accessible from the main site. The database is searchable in many ways and is the model for the structure and layout of the ODPM database. The

designers of the search engine also produced the ODPM engine. It is not certain how often it is updated, or when it was last updated. It deals with material on disability only.

[http://dptac.bgsportal.co.uk/search\\_e.asp](http://dptac.bgsportal.co.uk/search_e.asp)

### ***Support for Learning***

This site has comprehensive links on learning but no evidence or research

[www.support4learning.org.uk](http://www.support4learning.org.uk)

### ***National land use database***

This contains data on land use, especially previously developed land. It is not research or evidence as such.

[www.nlud.org.uk](http://www.nlud.org.uk)

### ***PHENET***

The Public Health electronic Network is a portal into many other networks, but contains no evidence itself.

[www.phenet.org.uk](http://www.phenet.org.uk)

### ***PHIS***

The Public Health Institute Scotland has lots of evidence on different aspects such as “active commuting” with links to other reports and statistics. Some of the evidence is related to the policy areas of interest to the client group.

<http://www.phis.org.uk>

### ***OMNI***

This is a public health site with a section on environmental health and links to other organisations, but no evidence as such.

[www.omni.ac.uk](http://www.omni.ac.uk)

### ***EMPHO***

East Midlands Public Health Observatory is an example of many similar sites where a lot of evidence on various aspects of public health is available, such as social deprivation statistics.

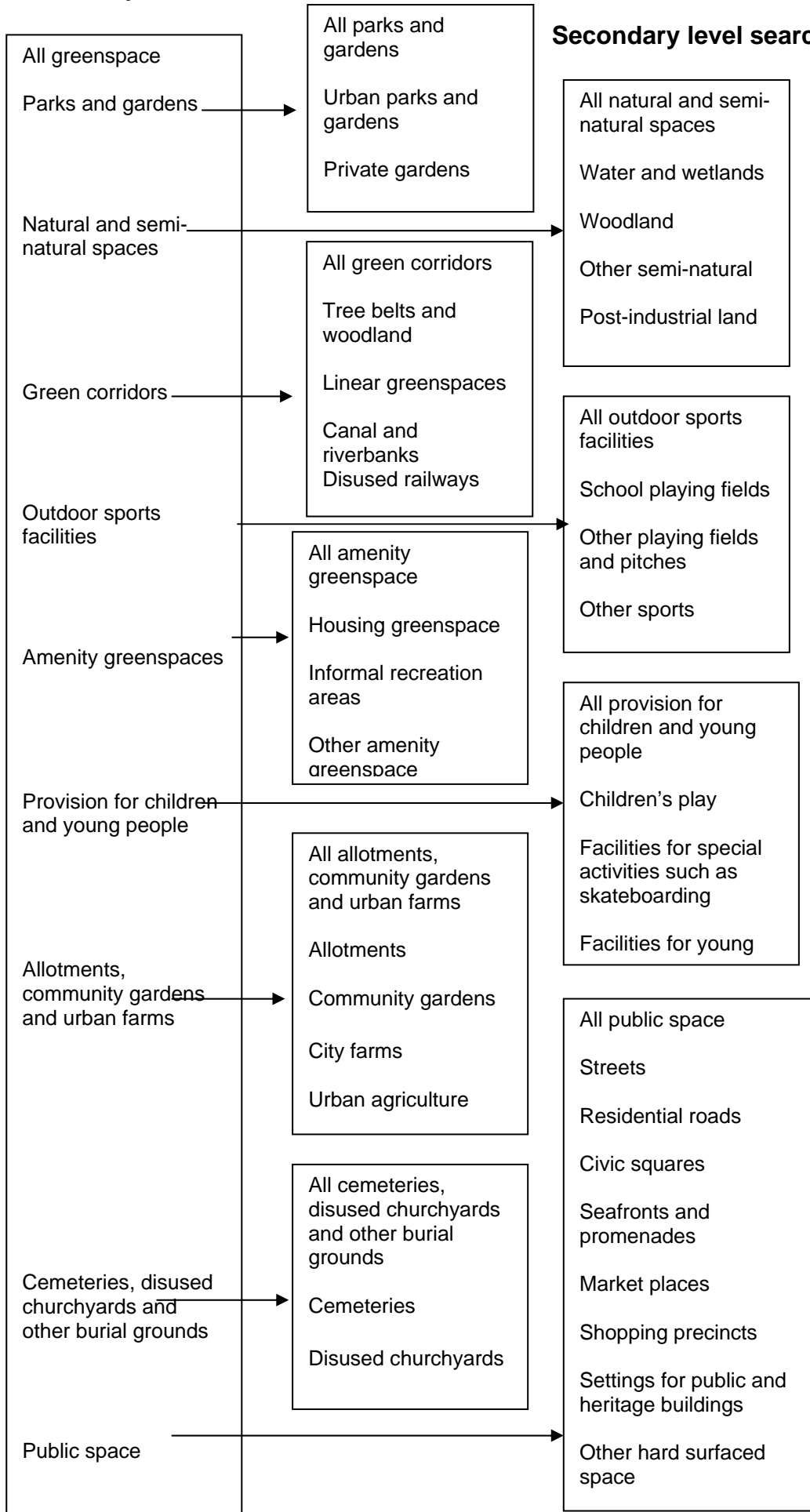
[www.empho.org.uk](http://www.empho.org.uk)

**Appendix 3 ODPM search terms**

**Public and greenspace typology**

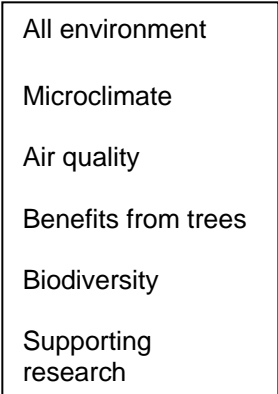
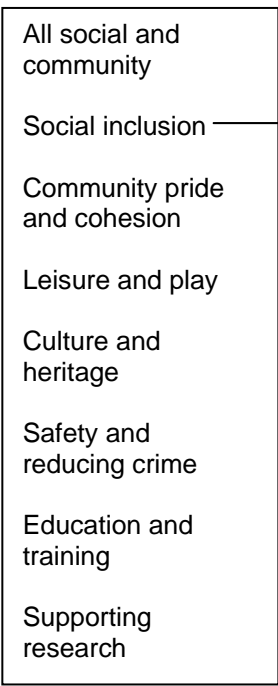
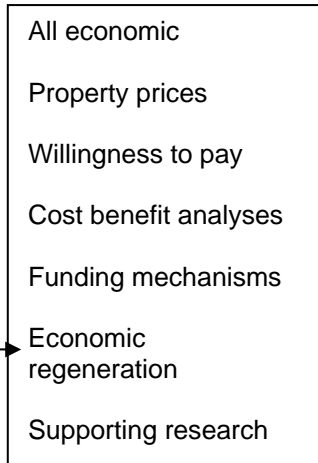
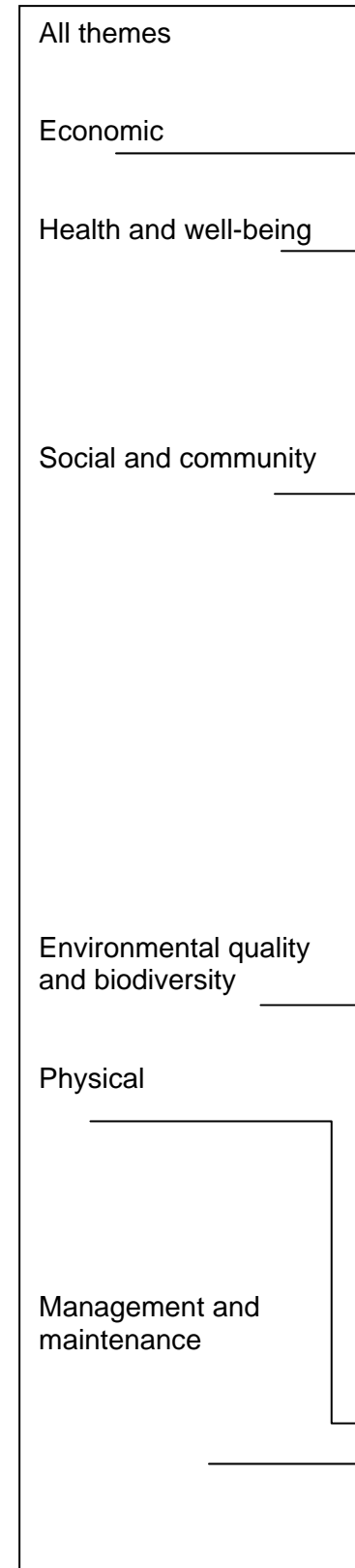
**Primary level search**

**Secondary level search**

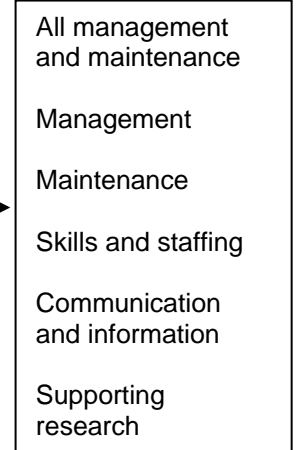
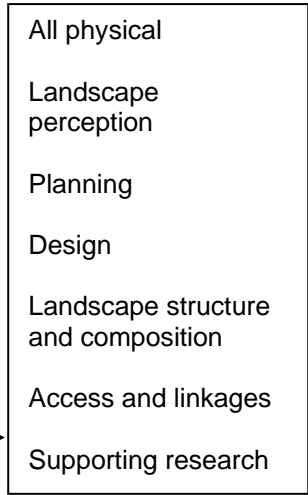
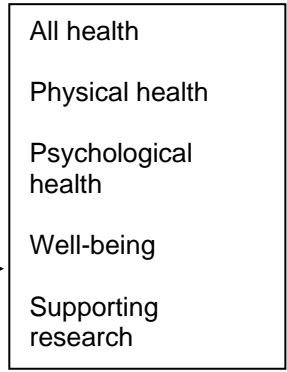


# Subject themes

## Primary search level



## Secondary search level



## Tertiary search level



**Appendix 4: Organisations expressing an interest in being part of a partnership to develop and resource a greenspace research database**

Scottish Executive (Environment and Rural Affairs)  
NHS Health Scotland  
Communities Scotland  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Countryside Agency

SNIFFER  
Greenspace Scotland  
Landscape Institute Scotland  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
BTCV Scotland  
Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health  
The Royal Parks

Aberdeen Countryside Project  
Dundee City Council  
East Dunbartonshire Council  
Edinburgh Green Belt Trust  
Fife Coast and Countryside Trust  
North Lanarkshire Council  
Perth and Kinross Council  
South Lanarkshire Council

Land Use Consultants