

POLICY

1.1 PLACE-KEEPING - AN ISSUE THAT MATTERS

Open spaces are highly relevant locally and citywide. They can range from the small pocket-park in a neighbourhood to a large park of citywide or even regional importance. They can be either grey (squares and streetspace) or green (parks), and can fulfil multiple functions for social life: cultural activities; biodiversity and ecosystems; and business environments.

They also have an economic value for both public and private sectors through individual and commercial spending power and the proven impact on surrounding property values. So the role of place-keeping (maintenance, care, joint responsibility and ownership in the broadest sense) within the long-term safeguarding of open spaces is not only important for cohesion within local communities but can create economic benefits as well.

Why must it be sustainable? Because in economically difficult times, place-keeping budgets are the first to suffer, despite their significant contributions to health, wellbeing and local economy. And while funding is available for construction and retrofitting, it is not available for maintenance or staffing; and while political credit exists for exciting new open spaces, it does not do so for their day-to-day management. Poor or non-existent place-keeping can lead to a waste of resources due to the cost of future regeneration when it is cheaper to systematically maintain.

1.2 WHY IS IT AN ISSUE FOR POLITICIANS?

For place-keeping to become an integral part of planning, design and economic improvement at the most fundamental level, the baton must be carried by the politician who has it in his/her power to ensure it is given the same level of importance within masterplanning and regeneration as place-making.

And place-making needs to be accorded the same gravity as other dimensions of well planned urban infrastructure. Economy and prestige, and health and happiness have their roots in, and benefit from, well designed open spaces sustainably cared for long term.

There is a political choice to be made: safeguard open space investments and their positive effects or condemn them, their surrounding communities and local businesses through underfinancing.

1.3 THE FIVE THEMES

MP4 analysed some of the many good place-making and sustainable place-keeping examples throughout Europe which bring together public and private stakeholders and create strong, longstanding partnerships.

This process identified five themes particularly pertinent to quality, sustainable place-making and place-keeping, namely: governance, partnerships, finance, policy, and evaluation. These are the catalysts for enduring open spaces and enriched neighbourhoods.

This document deals with Policy. Its four sister documents each discuss one of the following themes: governance, partnerships, finance and evaluation.

Lövgårdet



2 POLICY - KEY ISSUES



Firth Park, Sheffield

Sound policies for place-keeping comprise a **set of decisions** concerning place-keeping **goals and the means of achieving them** within a situation, where these decisions should, in principle, be **realistic to implement**.

The demands for sound place-keeping policies are born out of the necessity to maintain the long-term value of capital investments and create vital and healthy open places. Sound place-keeping policy outputs and outcomes contribute to attractive, competitive, and sustainable communities.

Place-keeping policies can range from international to local level, or even be specific to an organisation. **The content of place-keeping policies varies according to the needs and possibilities in a specific situation.** Examples include agreements with a citizen or associations regarding maintaining public owned space in a neighbourhood; setup of permanent or ad hoc local committees that support decision-making and formulation of goals; involvement of volunteers; adoption of sustainable development as a mode of working; new principles for engagement and partnerships; on

strategies and for agreements on future developments; or law-backed arrangements that formally transfer rights to initiate improvements in public space from city authorities to the private sector. Policies are often formalised and embedded in written documents, but may also be more loosely structured as in norms and routines. A place-keeping policy can also be assembled by drawing on other EU, national, city-level or local strategies and policies in support of particular place-keeping goals.

It is not difficult to draft innovative policy goals and content. The key issues concern decision-making and how the means for implementation are facilitated in a realistic way within a particular situation. Traditional authority-led policies and/or place-making without consideration for place-keeping has proved less effective than place-keeping based on working partnerships with local residents and stakeholders. New cross-cutting policy content must be formulated and implemented through new integrative policy processes, that balances top-down and bottom-up approaches in a context sensitive manner.

Sound decision-making for place-keeping policies involves new forms of governance, including engagement, involvement and partnerships with actors and stakeholders across traditional public and private boundaries. A key challenge is to induce the necessary political, economic and cultural support and change that can integrate concerns for place-keeping as a vital part of place-making and urban planning in general.

In practice place-keeping policies are agreed upon and implemented through processes that involve various arrangements of financial and economic incentives; involvement, negotiations and agreements; partnerships, networks and collaborations; and valuation and evaluation. Good and realistic policies are based on a broad stakeholder support, legitimised by involvement in decision-making processes, and specify the tools and methods that can secure the long term perspective of good place-keeping practices.

3 EXPERIENCE FROM THE MP4 PARTNERSHIP

The following projects from the MP4 context provide examples of various place-keeping policies and demonstrate how place-keeping policies can be implemented successfully within particular contexts.

3.1 LÖVGÄRDET AND ERIKSBO, CITY OF GOTHENBURG, SE

Positive outcomes through strong policies

The city of Gothenburg, Sweden, has strong, flexible and consistent city-wide policies for managing and developing its parks and open spaces. Major parts of the policy setup for place-keeping is the strategic park and open space programme, flexible maintenance operations, and a public partnership programme for addressing cross-cutting place-keeping issues. A sound place-keeping policy is emerging at the nexus between the various parts. The setup has ensured that parks and open spaces are coherently managed and developed throughout Gothenburg and in accordance with the needs of the citizens in 20 city districts. Lövgärdet is a social housing area at the urban fringe where municipally owned open spaces have been regenerated in line with the city-wide policies and with investment money from the MP4 project. As a result, the open spaces in Lövgärdet offer a broad variety of recreational experiences of high value that are managed by both housing companies and the City of Gothenburg.

Eriksbo



Further information:
Gothenburg
www.goteborg.se

3.2 GREEN ESTATE, SHEFFIELD, UK

Delivering national aims at a local level

The Green Estate is a social enterprise and a landscape consultancy company operating in the Sheffield area, UK which concentrates its efforts on transformation and management of open spaces. The company was initially set up as a part of a larger regeneration programme and as such forms an example of how an organisation has emerged from the delivery of a national policy. However, the company has a mission of its own and employs a set of policies to drive a place-keeping agenda forward. The policies are established by embedding proven best practices in its operations. This includes adoption of city-wide plans within Sheffield City Council, biodiversity action plans, procurement and buying policies, and formal and informal community engagement amongst others. The company is an example of how national, city-wide, local, and organisational policies are implemented and translated into practice.

Manor Lodge, Sheffield
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Further information:
Green Estate
www.greenestate.org.uk

3.3 EMMEN REVISITED, EMMEN, NL

Resident-friendly policy

The city of Emmen, in the Netherlands, has together with a range of housing corporations set up a joint venture – Emmen Revisited – that aims to improve the social and living environment in urban districts within the municipality of Emmen. Emmen Revisited seeks to establish collaboration among the municipality's many departments, housing corporations, and local resident groups and acts as a facilitator in regeneration programmes. The collaboration with residents is organised at various levels of engagement where platforms for dialogue and decision-making are established. The policy approach of Emmen Revisited is characterised as facilitating, democratic and non-hierarchical. In addition, the Municipality of Emmen has adopted a supportive policy whereby the public land is to become the joint responsibility of the local authority and the citizens.

Barger Compasuum



Further information:
Emmen Revisited
www.emmenrevisited.nl

4. KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

After analysing the practice of place-making and place-keeping around Northern Europe and implementing innovative pilots in five partner cities the transnational MP4 partnership comes to the following key finding and policy recommendations on place-keeping policies based on practical experience:

- The effects of poor place-keeping should be considered; place-making should not take place without the setup of a sound place-keeping policy
- No coherent formal agenda or policy framework backed by laws or regulations for place-keeping is in place today in the NSR. However, at the formal level, partial approaches exist, such as the Business Improvement District (BID) Laws in Germany that have been implemented at lower administrative levels (federal level)
- Today, place-keeping policies are often an assembly of other EU, national, city and local policies that are transformed into practice for specific parks and open spaces. Current policies are not supporting place-keeping enough. This needs to be changed to make place-keeping an integral part of place-making



Emmen

- Place-keeping involves cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed by inclusive decision-making and the setup of decentralised governance structures
- Traditional authority-led place-keeping policies are likely to be ineffective due to lack of appropriate arrangements for engagement, partnerships, finance, or evaluation. These are critical factors for setting up successful policies that go beyond traditional public and private boundaries
- New cross-cutting policy content must be formulated

and implemented through ongoing policy processes that require intra- and inter-agency collaboration. Place-keeping policies should enable bottom up processes in place-making and place-keeping. This would secure crucial local engagement and the inclusion of valuable information in the place-keeping process. It is highly recommended that policymakers in the EU at all levels develop and implement coherent place-keeping policies in support of sound long term management of public and private open spaces

MP4 is a European project (2008-2012) that focuses on innovative approaches for planning and designing, maintaining and using private and public open spaces. MP4 stands for 'Making Places Profitable, Public and Private Open Spaces.' It was funded through the European Union Interreg IVB programme for the North Sea Region. The nine project partners in six countries demonstrated how place-making, which is improving open spaces physically, can offer positive social and economic benefits on the long run. Its main aim, however, was to identify transferable successful methods of sustainable, long-term maintenance (place-keeping) and to influence planning policies from European level downwards to local neighbourhoods to ensure place-keeping is not only incorporated into citywide masterplans, but given as much consideration as place-making in every open-space investment.

For more information on MP4, please visit www.mp4-interreg.eu.



City of
Göteborg



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

HCU

HafenCity Universität
Hamburg



Lawaetz-Stiftung