Transnational assessment of practice in 'place-keeping': findings from the case studies

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Across Europe, there is too much emphasis on the 'place-making' and not '**place-keeping**' (or long-term management) of open space.

MP4 examines innovative approaches to planning, designing, maintaining and using public places for **the long term**.

Workshop format

- Presentation of 'place-keeping' and findings from case studies (15 mins)

- Split into 5 groups to discuss actual experiences and challenges of 'place-keeping' by theme (20 mins)

- Feedback and discussion from all groups together (10 mins)
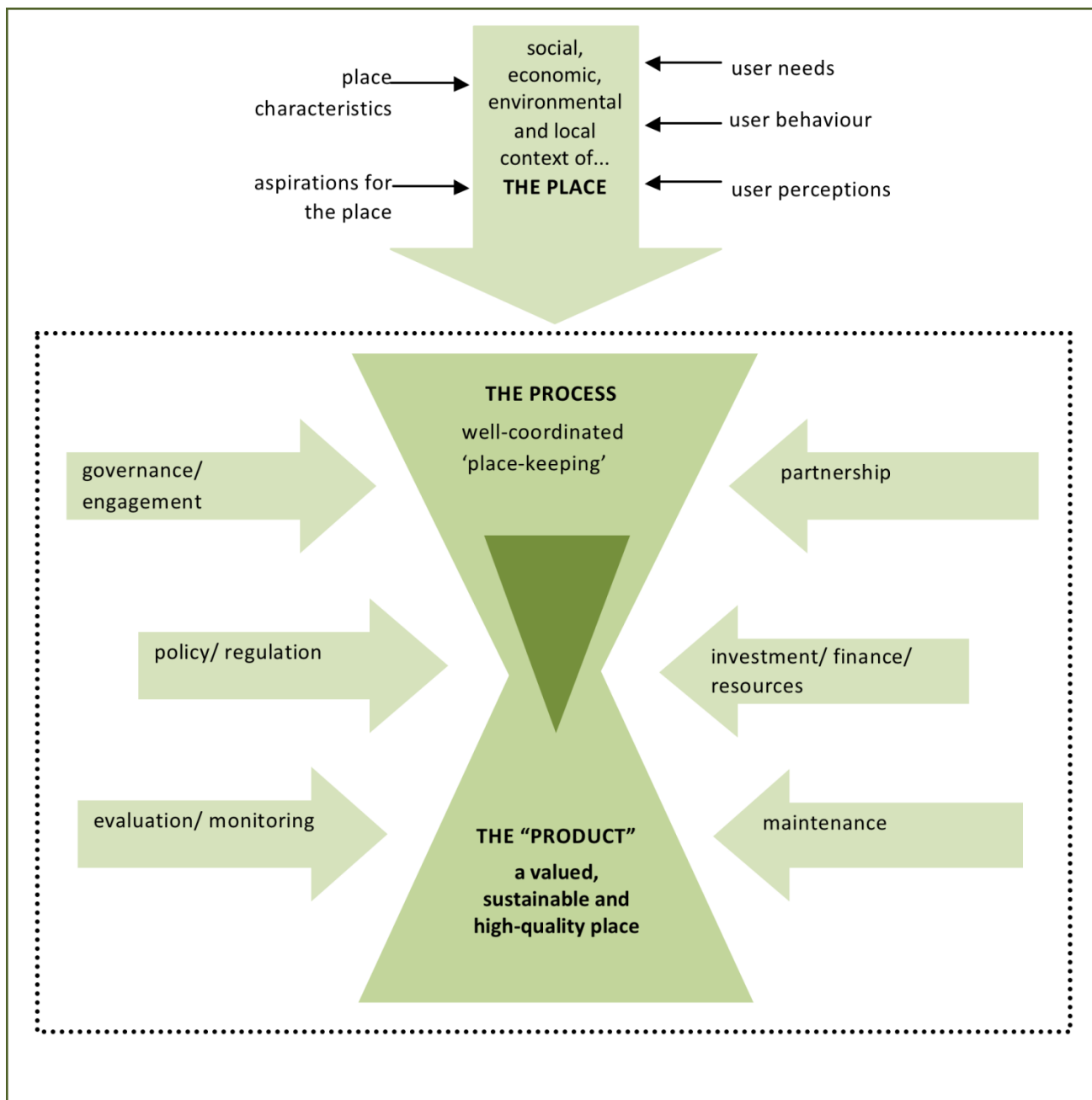
Place-making

- Creation of high-quality places that people want to visit, experience and enjoy

- Implies a people-centred approach
  - Health and wellbeing
  - Sense of belonging and attachment
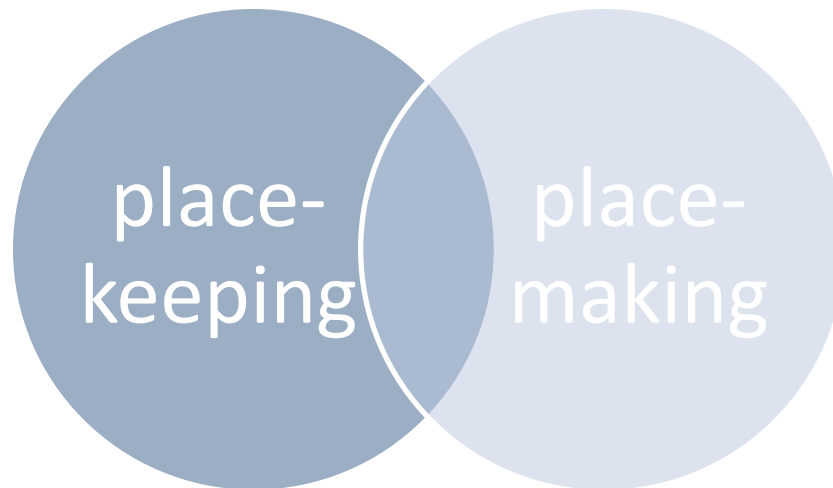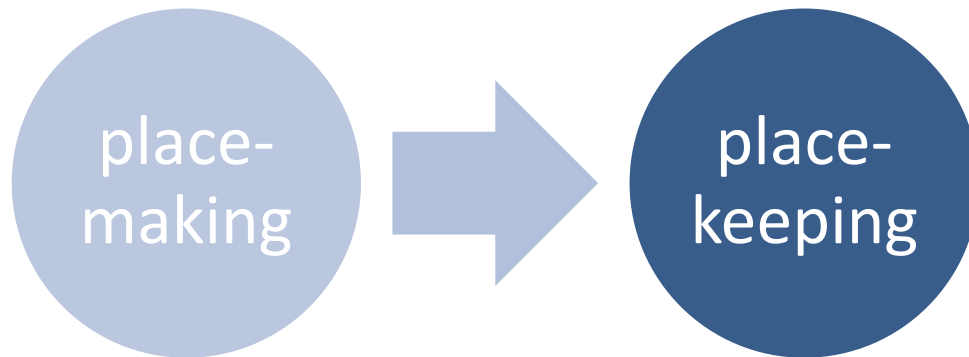 - Welcoming and inclusive places

HafenCity, Hamburg; River Don, Sheffield; Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh.
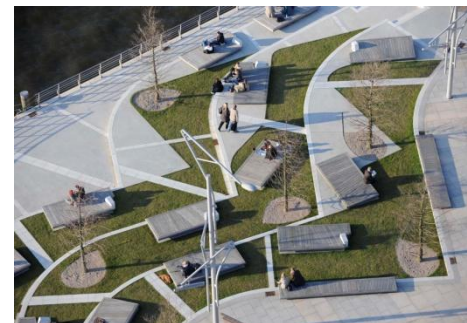
Place-keeping

- What happens 'after' high quality places have been created
  - Retaining, maintaining and enhancing the qualities and benefits over time
- Long-term management of places
  - to ensure that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits can be enjoyed by future generations
  - E.g. trees in park growing to maturity (increased biodiversity/ aesthetic value/ interest)

Woesten, West Flanders; Leuven, Flemish Brabant; Manor & Castle, Sheffield.

place characteristics → social, economic, environmental and local context of... **THE PLACE**

user needs →
user behaviour →
user perceptions →

aspirations for the place →

THE PROCESS
well-coordinated 'place-keeping'

governance/ engagement →

← partnership

policy/ regulation →

← investment/ finance/ resources

evaluation/ monitoring →

← maintenance

THE "PRODUCT"
a valued, sustainable and high-quality place

Place-keeping: part of a dynamic and cyclical process

Case studies include:

- Aarhus, Denmark.
- Business Improvement District, Hamburg, Germany.
- Bürgerpark, Bremen, Germany.
- Craigmillar, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Emmerhout and Zwartemeer, Emmen, the Netherlands.
- Gårdsten, Göteborg, Sweden.
- Green Estate, Sheffield, England.
- Grassmarket, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany.
- Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Intergovernmental Rural Dialogue, Flanders, Belgium.
- Langthwaite Grange, West Yorkshire, England.
- River Stewardship Company, Sheffield, England.
- Steilshoop, Hamburg, Germany.
- Telford and Wrekin Council, Telford, England.
- Temalekplats, Malmö, Sweden.
- Woesten, West Flanders, Belgium.

Successful aspects of partnerships

- A partnership with an *identity* of its own

- *Multiple partners* can make projects possible that would otherwise not have happened

- The *staff/ personnel*
  - A committed and skilled team

- The *improved relationship* between stakeholders
  - Move from complaints to visions

Challenges of partnerships

- **Informal, voluntary agreements** can be complex to manage, esp. with many partners
- *Funding* challenges
– Multiple partners: funding cycles' + policies can change
- What happens when people *move on* without successors to take over?
- Good *communication*
– Getting the right information to the right people

Success in governance/ decision-making

- Community engagement can be a vehicle for access to **new resources**
  - E.g. volunteer work
- A 'trusted mediator' or **link between the community and stakeholders**
  - Ideally apolitical
  - To get closer fit between user preferences and management
- Place-keeping activities are organized on basis of 'common ownership' where **consensus** is reached in decision-making

- The desire to create a **legacy**
  - not just the physical place, but a 'long-term community presence'
- **Social cohesion** and a **sense of community** can come from engaging communities
  - although it might be the social cohesion/ sense of community which brings about engagement

Challenges in governance/ decision-making

- Engaging communities is ***time-consuming and costly***
  - Funds may be better spent elsewhere
- Effective engagement can be ***complex and difficult***
  - Stakeholders with competing interests
  - Community engagement doesn't always achieve consensus
- ***Limits to residents' willingness*** to be engaged
  - Particularly marginalized residents living in areas of social housing areas
  - Where there is a lack of tradition of involvement with authorities

- A ***negative attitude towards the open space***
  - Can be difficult to engage residents/ requires work
- ***Land-ownership responsibilities***
  - Lack of clarity of who manages the land

Funding/ finance

- Easier to access funding for place-making than place-keeping
  - Place-keeping costs often not considered
- Funding for place-keeping is critical but limited
  - Lack of guaranteed funding - not statutory
  - Can existing funding be strategically distributed, i.e. not through the 'proper channels'?

Funding/ finance

- Organisations have to maintain financial viability
  - Go beyond original scope/ geographical location of the project
- A range of fundraising strategies and instruments can be called on
  - E.g. Tombola in Bürgerpark, Bremen

Evaluation

- Not carried out with any regularity

- Not a statutory obligation

- Whole range of evaluation methods
  - Formal
  - Informal

- But which ones provide the most useful data?

In/formal evaluation methods include

- Project delivered on time
- On-site staff get resident feedback
- In-house assessment
- People counts at events
- Unprompted user feedback

- Award schemes
- Satisfaction surveys
- Attitudinal surveys
- User counts
- Crime figures from police
- Steering group to monitor progress
- Annual reporting
- Financial monitoring

Useful or not? Too costly? Easy to do?

Policy challenges

- Place-keeping is often cited in guidance and good practice

- Funding for place-keeping is not statutory

- Evaluation of place-keeping (or place-making?) is not statutory

- How can the profile of place-keeping be raised with policymakers?

- Key question: Should place-keeping be made statutory? Why/ why not?

Time to discuss!

DISCUSSING THE WAR IN A PARIS CAFÉ.
SEE PAGE 394.

Thank you for your valuable contribution.

This workshop forms part of the process of making the MP4 project outputs as useful as possible for practitioners, policymakers and academics.

For more information, visit: http://mp4-interreg.eu

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