



The North Sea
Region Programme
2007-2013



Place-keeping through Partnership: How can we sustain quality green & open spaces in a time of economic constraint?

Wednesday 11th July 2012

Yellow

Workshop Notes

Workshop 1: Priorities for Place-keeping: City, Area and Site and Collective, Organisational and Individual

What are the key issues that need to be addressed and the priorities for the city as a whole?

Theme: Education

- At all levels to inform organisations/communities about place-keeping
- Enable change in perceptions relating to site role and design, management and maintenance
- Local authorities and funding bodies to ensure funding, resources and policies support place-keeping

Theme: Uniqueness / Variety

- Wide variations city-wide relating to sites and their communities in terms of needs, strengths and expectations.
- Essential factor during decision making and prioritising input and support.
- Requires community involvement throughout process and effective communication at all levels
- Area-based Approach could provide a potential tool to meet unique community/site needs

Theme: Political Support

- Is there sufficient support in Sheffield?
- Essential when selecting a design which realises the site potential and ensures sustainability
- Can be delivered through Sheffield Green and Open Spaces Strategy
- Essential to manage community expectations – identifying opportunities and local assets despite funding cuts
- Ensure achievements are celebrated and involvement from all partners / stakeholders is valued

What are the key issues and priorities for the different organisations?

Theme: GOS Priorities

- Need to be identified by Local Authority following funding cuts
- Identifying these will enable organisations/partners to adapt, plan and deliver on a long-term basis

Theme: Maintenance

- Who is going to undertake this following funding cuts and reductions in staff?
- What are the associated costs of various approaches to deliver place-keeping?

Theme: Changing political approach

- Local authority need to adopt a 'Yes you can – let's see how we can work together' when approached by community organisations
- Transfer of assets (e.g. to a local Trust) could have the Council undertaking a health and safety and governance role, while the Trust leads on maintenance.

Theme: Communication

- Effective internal/external partner communication - key contacts identified and community involvement increased
- Communicate across traditional boundaries (e.g. develop links between Parks and National Health Service providers)

What opportunities does the current situation give?

Theme: Partnership Working

- Have similar approaches, awareness of needs/potential solutions and motivated despite challenges
- Have skills, knowledge, experience to develop and sustain sites if work together.
- Could increase links between pocket sites and lobby together for political support
- Work together to develop and apply Area-based approach.

Theme: Asset Transfer

- Potential to undertake in Sheffield and offers more scope than 'selling land off'
- Need to be aware of associated realities for community organisations (e.g. difficulties obtaining sufficient revenue funding)
- Service Level Agreements can provide legal definition of roles/responsibilities and funding for maintenance
- Opportunity for increased community ownership through sale of 'site shares'

Theme: Private Sector

- Potential for donations, sponsorship or additional 'maintenance payments' from private organisations
- Currently donations tend to be 'one off', relatively small and physical resource rather than revenue-based
- As partners, could lobby the private sector but would require political support (local and national) and supporting policies
- Evaluation of sites (e.g. use and costs per person) would demonstrate site value and potential to investors
- Encourage organisations to take responsibility for their 'own patch' (e.g. food retailers litter-picking discarded packaging)
- Sponsorship of round-a-bouts have worked well (e.g. Doncaster) but need to avoid loss of perceived community ownership/identify (e.g. not having a Morrisons/Tesco Park)
- In Germany and (?) Falmouth, UK, local retailers have paid maintenance fees in addition to council tax/German equivalent to improve maintenance standards on high streets. The retailers have benefitted through increased trade.

Workshop 2: Delivering the GOSS and building place-keeping capacity and collective responsibility

How to deliver the GOSS through place-keeping?

Theme: Formal Partnership Agreements (e.g. Stewardship Agreements)

- Can be used to support Friends of Groups
- P&C need to assess what their roles, responsibility and capacity would be to support this
- Suitability for a community group would depend on the group's capacity and needs of the site

Theme: Partnerships

- Need to identify what all can offer as strategic partners.
- Ensure that collaborating on funding applications rather than competing

Theme: Sharing Information

- Sharing maintenance schedules and why/what is happening on a given site with partners/communities to ensure understand and aware of place-keeping approach and its delivery of the GOSS

increase frequency of partner events and meetings at local and city levels

Can we identify critical roles, responsibilities, approaches and actions to do this?

Theme: Formalisation

- Roles and responsibilities need formalising to ensure commitment and maintain input of skills and experience of those involved.

Theme: Varied roles

- University of Sheffield could continue to offer a supporting role (academic, facilitation and evaluation skills) at city level.
- South Yorkshire Forest Partnership could act as a 'catalyst' to bring partners together, providing central hub to place-keeping
- Students could provide valuable volunteer workforce. P&C work with students from both Sheffield Universities. Also provide a means of developing closer links with the city and local communities

Theme: Varied approaches

- Applying a broader, holistic approach rather than focus on conservation
- Provide plans (e.g. Sheffield Standard site plans) which volunteers can follow with facilitator support
- Area-based approach to provide examples for practitioners. Need development of integrated communication systems
- Focus on increasing 'usage' of GOS through range of formal/informal events.
- Community Development is an important place-keeping element but requires initial investment and time to develop.

How might this work in practice at different scales - city/strategic, organisational, site based and personal etc.?

Theme: Events

- Important element of place-keeping, providing revenue and reducing vandalism.
- A range of formal/informal events could be encouraged but only one Community Events Officer in Sheffield

Theme: Third Sector

- Very strong sector in Sheffield – possess relevant expertise and local knowledge
- Potential for the Council to act as co-ordinators and Third Sector as 'doers'
- Need time to develop roles and associated partner networks

Theme: Skills-base

- Large grounds maintenance workforce city-wide. Potential to develop their skills and compensate for reduced Ranger numbers
- Induction process and ongoing training is required which explains reasoning behind the approach/tasks and how benefits the city.
- Need to create a workplace culture which enables involvement at all levels
- Site management plans could be used to identify roles/responsibilities and a means of demonstrating achievements of those involved – increasing pride and motivation.