



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 11<sup>th</sup> 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.