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# MP4 WP4.1

## Retroactive evaluation of on-the-ground benefits

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Evaluation report:  
Pilot Lövgärdet  
in Gothenburg,  
Sweden

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**The Interreg IVB  
North Sea Region  
Programme**

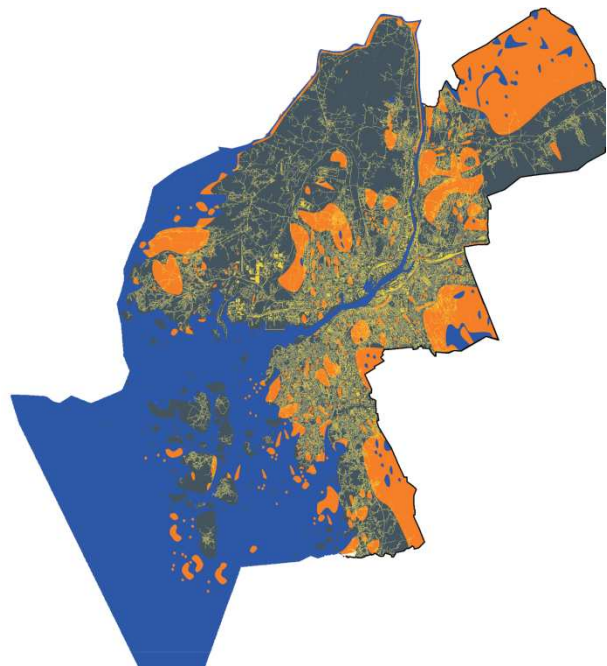
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## Introduction to the pilot project

City of Gothenburg has been involved in MP4 with two pilot projects allocated with MP4 investment money. The projects involved two almost similar city districts (the housing suburbs of Lövgärdet and Eriksbo, respectively) including under-used adjacent nature areas (such as a lake/river system and forest/wilderness areas). The two districts are located northeast of the Gothenburg centre in a part called 'Angered' and were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the so-called 'million program' based on principle of integrating work, living, and city function in smaller city districts. The program focused on creating new and modern housing options for an emerging middle-class in a phase of rapid urbanization in the Swedish society.

Although no formal definition exists in Sweden, both pilot areas are today described by staff in City of Gothenburg as 'deprived communities'. Both areas have physical environments that need to be renewed. The aims for both pilots as specified in initial MP4 project documents were to renew the areas in a sustainable manner, encouraging socio-economic growth and long-term improvements and to increase the attractiveness of open space



## Context and the aim of the project

Both pilot projects take place in what local staff describes as 'deprived' areas in Gothenburg. The areas have higher than average percentage of unemployment, receivers of social welfare, immigrants, and low income groups. The buildings and open spaces are similar in their structure. Apartment buildings are owned by a mix of public and private property owners, including both housing companies and private house-owners. Public green areas are located in the center of the areas and surrounded by dense multistory apartment buildings. The City of Gothenburg owns the green areas in the center of the areas whereas

public and private housing companies own areas in between and in close vicinity to the building blocks.

The general objective of the MP4 pilot project in Lövgärdet was to develop a master planning process that emphasizes the public value of open spaces, integrating long-term management concerns.

The specific objectives for the project included:

- Increase the use of local open spaces
- Engage local communities, businesses and associations in future maintenance of open spaces
- Engage all stakeholders in the process of decision-making and of finding alternative solutions (alternative funds, cost reduction, voluntary work, etc.) for the maintenance of open spaces
- To have open spaces which are enjoyable and well maintained as well as seen as positive assets by the local communities

In Lövgärdet the investment site is a city district park linking a playground to a school yard and a nearby lake. The design develops through a process including park managers, biologists, private housing companies and the inhabitants of Lövgärdet. In the proposal the park is given a stronger identity and its nature qualities are highlighted. Activities (especially for children and youths) as well as park qualities such as flowering trees and bulbs are added. The project aim to make the inhabitants involved in their nearby environment and to create a sense of ownership for the park. Possibilities for local jobs are therefore encouraged in the construction of the park. The aspect of future maintenance has been present through the process.



Residents in Lövgärdet

In comparison with Eriksbo, the other MP4 investment site in Gothenburg, Lövgärdet is generally perceived to be in a more deprived state. Households also consist of larger families than in Eriksbo. Like other city districts in Gothenburg, Lövgärdet is also endowed with nature areas and water features of high quality within close walking distance. Forests and a lake system offer great recreational opportunities in the outdoors for the residents in Lövgärdet.

In the past Lövgärdet suffered from too many empty flats. Before 1999, around 800 out of 5.000 apartments were empty. A big regeneration project initiated in 1999 demolished 5 big high multi-story buildings. The investment sites were at this time some wetland, left over space and a run down playground and perceived as unsafe by both residents and the housing company.

### **Timeline / overview**

By September 2011 most of the physical changes in the project have been finished. This means that the bathing place has been prepared with renovated roads, larger beach,

bridges, park benches, and places for barbecue. The artificial grass lawn and the areas around it have been finished. The playground area has also been finished. Another football area with artificial grass are also planned to be built.

A sign with information of the park and showing different windings in the area with different length are being made and put out in the area. This will help people to use and move around in their areas in a greater extent. Studies have shown that if people don't only stay in their own areas and instead moves to different places in the area this will make people feel more secure in their home setting. This is important to design for and an important aim in the phase of place-keeping.

The investments in the Lövgärdet pilot project are by spring 2012 complete and in full use by local people. The long winter period didn't affect the project plans in Lövgärdet. The park and nature department planned enough time for construction works to be finalized.

The site now has a new play area and a new football ground, both of which are proving to be very popular. The new investments were subjects for minor issues with anti-social behaviour. In the playground area some new planted trees were broken and some of the benches were damaged too.

There was supposed to be some meadow surfaces nearby the playground area. After a while in the growing season it was realized that there was only very few of those herbs that were wanted. Instead there were some thistles and other things not wanted. This was because of the wrong soil composition. The new planted trees were also too small.

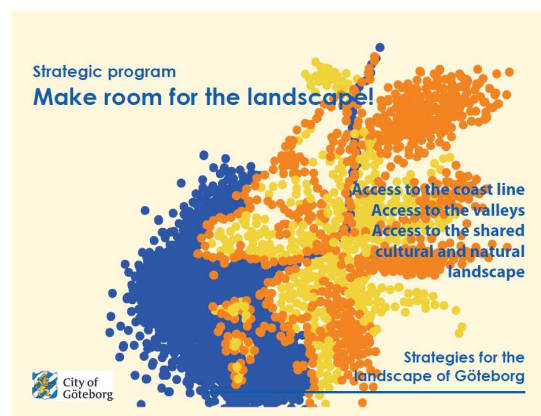
By March 2012 City of Gothenburg is starting up the place-keeping phase, by preparing new maintenance documents and additional meetings with property owners and other stakeholders. In general, the planners in Gothenburg see the place-keeping phase as a greater challenge than place-making as place-keeping – consisting of maintenance works such as cleaning and repairing – has a lower status than place-making. People are more focused on the visible results of place-making than place-keeping.

### The specific place-keeping approach

The specific place-keeping approach in Gothenburg takes outset in the strategic park program of City of Gothenburg which is coherently managed and developed throughout Gothenburg and in accordance with the needs of the inhabitants of the 10 city districts. The park program is labelled „Make room for the landscape“.

The strategic park program has five so-called 'strategies'. These are:

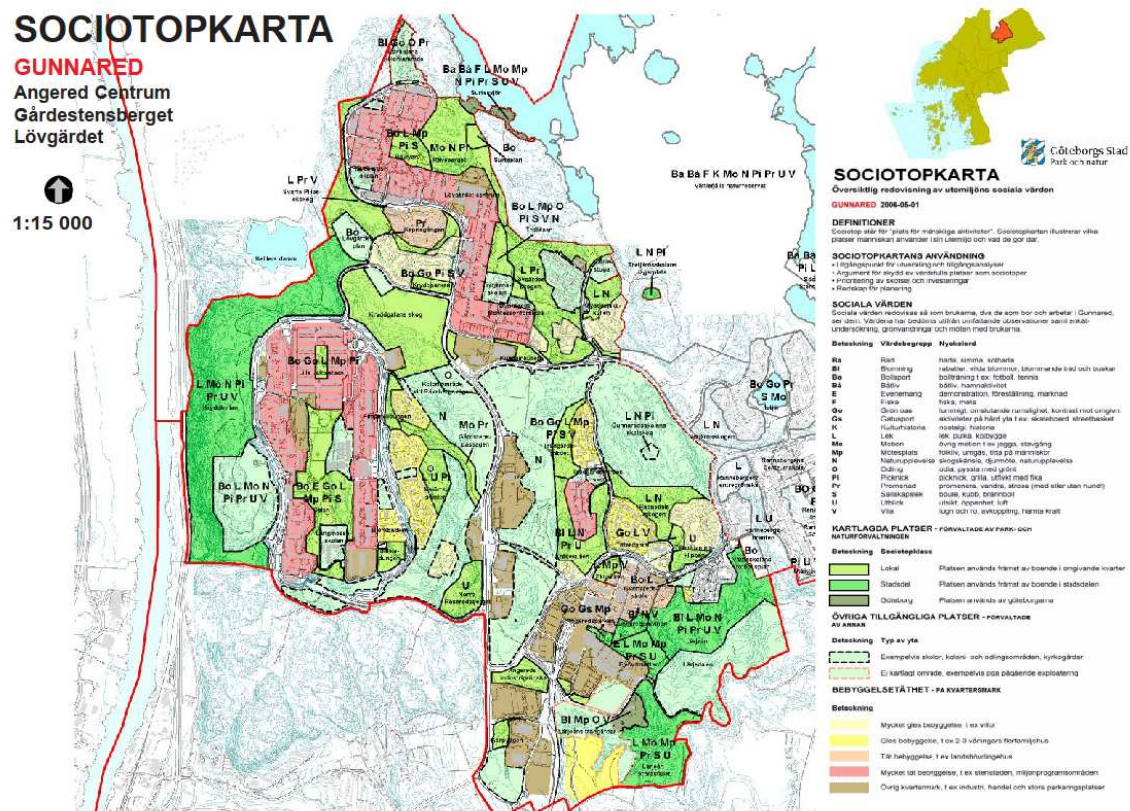
- Character („Karakter“)
- Within reach („Inom räckhåll“)
- Taking care of („Omhändertaget“)
- Make use of („Ställa til förfogande“)
- Variety („Variation“)





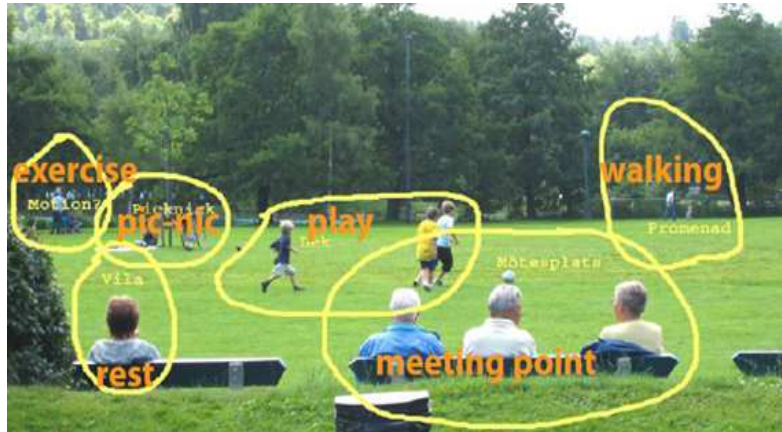
The strategy unit within Park and Nature Administration has the main responsibility for carry out the strategic park program.

The overall aims and five strategies of the park program are implemented locally in each city district through the so-called „district park plans“. District park plans are elaborated within the overall framework of the park program and the work utilizes the knowledge and opinions of professionals, institutions and organizations (e.g. schools), experts, and the local community. The content of a district park plan basically describe the current status of green spaces and highlight the development potentials within a district. Each park (or green-spaces) as well as the overall district and the green structure is described. The district park plan contains a range of photos and maps to make information easy accessible. The district park plan is intended for strategic decision-making supporting investment, development, and maintenance priorities. The district park plan does not contain information about how green spaces are managed and maintained or who is involved in these activities. It basically focuses on the physicality and social use and functions of parks within a city district. Although the strategic park program is on the potentials for place-making, the district park plans are a part of the framework for the long term management and maintenance of local parks and open space, i.e. place-keeping.



A special planning method has been developed in Sweden that focuses on the social use value of urban green spaces. The method, as an applied planning tool, has become known as „sociotope mapping“. The method was originally developed in the City of Stockholm, but is now used in other major cities as well. Gothenburg has been using sociotope mapping since 2005. Identification of „sociotopes“ and the graphical presentation of these in „sociotope maps“ and „sociotope spinning tops“ are vital elements supporting the overall park program and the elaboration of district park plans. These tools provide information about use of and transport distance to different important recreational and outdoor activities locally and across

the city. The „spinning tops“ defines the maximum transport distance that people ought to have to reach different sociotopes. Within reach of 15 minutes we find the sociotopes: play, meeting place, rest, promenade, picnic, green oasis, social interaction. Within reach of 30 minutes we find: water experience, events, ball games, motion, elderly area, vista, bath, boating, street sports, nature experience. At transport distances more than 30 minutes we find: cultural-history, fishing, and flowers. The district park plan should ensure that people in a district by and large have access to these sociotopes within given transport distances measured in travel time. Developments and investments are targeted projects that improve deficits in, for example, accessibility or provision of these green spaces services (i.e. sociotopes).



The engagement of local people and local actors in the elaboration of the district park plans is based on meetings where people with varied areas of expertise talk engage in dialogue about the city district and their park structure. With outset in the strategic park program, facts and impression are collected and assets and inadequacies are analysed. The results are discussed with the public and the agreed view that is reached is used to make a development plan. The final development plan takes form of a report, including a series of maps and graphical illustrations.

There is no fixed procedure for setting up a park district plan, but the five strategies are utilized in a process adapted for needs in each city district. The requirements for planning in an inner city district differs highly compared to the needs in a more remotely located social housing area. The strategy „character“ puts focus on both the overall role the individual district has in the green structure in Gothenburg („zoom out“) and what is typical in the district („zoom in“). The strategy „within reach“ identifies how accessible people in the district consider their parks and open spaces and which sociotopes are present and valued in the local district. The strategy „Taking care of“ takes on a holistic view of management and maintenance and asks which priorities that should be set to fit the character and preferences in the city district and who can be responsible. In the process of setting up the park district plan it is asked what is wanted by the people locally on order to ensure that parks and open spaces caters for different people’s needs and wishes, choices are made among ideas and suggestions, the voice of the public is integrated through open meetings in the planning process, and finally changes are made to provisional draft plans made by the City’s authorities. The final stage of the strategic park program is the



**Lövgärdet: Aerial photo. Red dots are sites for MP4 investments.**

implementation of district park plans, where investments, projects, and changes in maintenance levels are carried out.

The involved group of actors differs for each planning effort, but includes the City's park administration, unorganized and organized local user groups, housing companies, and consultants.

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| <b>Place-keeping: looked at from five dimensions – findings?</b> |
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### **1. Partnerships**

By March 2011 no new agreements with local stakeholders had been made, but efforts to gather stakeholders and association were planned later in 2011, with the focus on design and maintenance. The aims of involving stakeholders were achieved, but no new partners are involved. By the end of the evaluation no formal partnership agreements have been reached about place-keeping yet the efforts will continue.

Parks and nature department have planned to build another artificial football field but the contact person at the sport administration retired and set up of new contacts needs more time. The collaboration has suffered from this and needs to be initiated anew.

By September 2012 no formal partnership agreements has been made, but it has been agreed to continue the collaboration in the form of two meetings per year between stakeholders as described in the Governance section.

#### **Lessons learnt / implemented**

The project manager in Gothenburg thinks that it is easier to engage stakeholders in place-making than in place-keeping. It needs a lot of time and patience to convince the property owners to take larger role. Property owners typically have a lot to keep up with and don't have so much money.

One lesson learnt is that partnerships are built on personal relation, and that replacement of staff etc. could halt or postpone the building of a partnership.

Collaboration does however give better results. Partnerships are about building trust, patience is needed, and one has to be realistic what is achievable.

### **2. Governance and Engagement**

By March 2011, the community has been involved through different activities and meetings.

A first meeting with the property owners has been held with the agenda to discuss place-keeping.



In the beginning of September 2011, City of Gothenburg held an opening ceremony for the investments that has been done in the project. The opening ceremony was part of the annual Day of Lövgärdet which is annually arranged by the tenants association, the housing companies and property owners on a nearby square. The tenant association has contact with all local associations such as the football club, the scouts and the property owners. However, unfortunately the tenants' association manager didn't engage local associations enough to arrange some activities during this day in the park. City of Gothenburg was dependent on the tenant association and hadn't opportunity to arrange contacts themselves.



Planning meeting with local tenant organisation

By June 2011, the principal of the local school and representatives of the housing companies attended a place-keeping meeting and it is hoped for that the school will participate in the process. City of Gothenburg considers how the school can be involved to a greater extent.

The parks and nature department plans to target discussions foremost with whose stakeholders that appears as the most a steady collaborators.

By the end of the project it has been agreed to continue the collaboration in the form of two meetings per year between the housing companies, the school, the city district administration and the Parks and Landscape administration. The meetings are arranged by the City of Gothenburg.

#### Lessons learnt / implemented

One lessons learnt is that in inter-organisational relations you are dependent on other organisations, but you cannot control them. The experience with the missing activities in the park during the opening ceremony is one example.

For people to be engaged they have to see some changes before they take any responsibilities.

Generally the experience is that, despite the challenges, stakeholders have been involved, resulting in awareness and better results.

### 3. Finance

Project finance has proceeded as planned in the project. The initial plan set out by City of Gothenburg included funds from the City of Gothenburg together with co-finance from the NSR Interreg IVb program. Furthermore the housing companies Stena and Poseidon has been contributing to the investments in the area.



By September 2012 the park and nature administration found additional funding within the municipality. The project has been implemented according to the plan, although the finance for an additional football field needs some more lobbying within the City of Gothenburg. However, the funding situation is continuous a challenge and municipal funds are limited which require good arguments in order to secure public funding in competition with other services.

Furthermore, it has shown difficult to design high quality places with low or lower maintenance costs than before restoration. The new constructions will require more from maintenance now when there are more to look after, more commitment from our staff to follow up the area and hopefully more commitment from stakeholders if the new level of the area should be retained.

#### Through MP4-project: lessons learnt / implemented

The financial situation demand new ways of thinking and new ways of organizing finance for place-making. A big challenge in the pilots and in Gothenburg in general is to convey costs or share these across stakeholders and people living in the area. In Lövgärdet it is hoped for that a sense of ownership and co-management (users reporting on vandalism etc.) of the new facilities will enable an improved economic use of maintenance resources.

It is difficult at the same time to improve the quality of an area and keep the maintenance cost low. Place-making is easier than place-keeping.

### **4. Policy**

Place-making has been carried out according to the strategic park programme of Gothenburg (see the introduction to this report). The formal policies in the park programme have guided the place-making process, keeping it on track when circumstances or actors made a thread to the process.

The Programme is however focused on planning and development of areas and has less guidance for place-keeping.

As a result of the MP4 pilot, City of Gothenburg is planning to develop a new policy for place-keeping.

#### Through MP4-project: lessons learnt / implemented

The strategic park program has secured a good place-making process despite that the intended process in Lövgärdet has been delayed and halted by various events. One very important lesson learnt is the critical importance obligatory policies and guidelines have for achieving results.

### **5. Evaluation**

By March 2011, no systematic evaluation has been carried out by the parks and nature department. Some residents have spontaneously given the stakeholders positive feedback over the implementation. The kids like the football ground and started to play on it even if it's

not quite finished. In a stage where investments haven't been fully completed and the winter is still around it is hard to notice any improvements yet. However, there have been some clear signals from the stakeholders of people using the space more frequently. One clearly sign is more litter and more emptying of litterbins is demanded. Maybe the vandalism in the park is reduced? This will be interesting to study in the next period. Evaluation will take place later on in the project.

No evaluation took place during the September 2011 – March 2012 period, but an user evaluation was carried out later in 2012 among the residents by the housing company. The main result is that the outdoor environment and the playgrounds are better after the project.

#### Lessons learnt / implemented

City of Gothenburg does normally not undertake systematic evaluations, but as part of the lessons learnt in the MP4 project an understanding of the importance of proper evaluation has emerged. New guidelines need to be developed to support systematic evaluation in future projects.

### Critical appraisal of the pilot project

#### Photos of MP4 investments



New opportunities for play in nature



Refurbished playground



New outdoor exercise equipment



New football field with artificial grass



Information posters



Refurbished public bath

**Table 1. Meeting MP4 pilot objectives in Lövgärdet – Status, autumn 2012**

| <b>Objective</b>   | <b>Status</b>  |
|--|--|
| 1. Increase the use of local open spaces   | Yes, expected, by the new design and open space functionality provided by renewal works.   |
| 2. Engage local communities, businesses and associations in future maintenance of open spaces  | Yes, by engaging the housing companies, the tenants association and local schools.   |
| 3. Engage all stakeholders in the process of decision-making and of finding alternative solutions (alternative funds, cost reduction, voluntary work, etc.) for the maintenance of open spaces | To some extent. Stakeholders were engaged in the process of decision-making. There was some success in establishing co-finance for investments with the public housing companies; some of the investment was partly on grounds owned by the companies. No formal partnerships regarding place-keeping has however been set up. |
| 4. Have open spaces which are enjoyable and well maintained as well as seen as positive assets by the local communities.   | Yes, by delivering new open space design, facilities and functions.  |

### **Policy**

The MP4 pilot projects in Göteborg have managed to address all five strategies in the park programme.

### **Planning**

Sociotope map and park plan have helped to identify the important values and make priorities which implementations to focus on.

### **Place-keeping**

Dialogue and local involvement from residents, tenants and property owners have created stronger and longer lasting solutions.



## Recommendations and Outlook

Based on the place-making and place-keeping experience in Lövgärdet a range of points can be highlighted:

- Maintenance (place-keeping) issues need to be identified and discussed early in the place-making process together with stakeholders
- It can be challenging to motivate and activate other stakeholders, such as schools, the housing administrations and others to participate. However, good collaboration was established with the public housing company in Lövgärdet.
- A re-organisation within the City of Göteborg delayed decisions.
- Although there was an initial intend to try out new design solutions, it was challenging to make such new designs on the ground.
- A consultant company made the design and the technical drawings. Various mistakes (soil composition and tree sizes) were not corrected in the process, causing challenges in the place-keeping process.
- Limited staff resources demanded that decision-making had to determine when plans and designs were “good enough”.
- It has not been possible in the two pilots to design places that have a higher quality and at the same time have a lower maintenance costs than before regeneration.
- Small changes often makes surprisingly good result

Limited budgets make it paramount to prioritize staff efforts, use of resource and investments. However, place-making of higher quality result in higher place-keeping costs in the two investment sites in Gothenburg. Benefits therefore need to be visible for all stakeholders in order to justify the increased maintenance costs. Collaboration and partnerships are beneficial, but it takes time and patience to develop trust in the relations.

## Glossary

**‘Place-making’:** creating high quality places that people want to visit, experience and enjoy. It implies a people-centred approach which emphasises designing spaces that promote health, wellbeing and happiness. Such spaces engender a sense of belonging and connection for those who use them.

**‘Place-keeping’:** relates to maintaining the qualities and benefits – social, environmental and economic – of places through long-term management. The management required to maintain these qualities and benefits, the approach adopted and the timescale will depend on the ‘place-making’ aims, the available resources and the life span of the ‘place’.

**Partnership:** is defined as agreed shared responsibility between public, private and community sectors. It is a relationship which, in this context, is normally formed between governmental and non-governmental sectors – i.e. it is a manifestation of governance relationships.

**Engagement:** is a cross-cutting issue which describes successful models of working with communities and encouraging appropriate use. Engagement is an aspect of governance particularly relevant in forms of participatory governance and is intrinsic to the concept of ‘governance’ as defined below.

**Governance:** relates to the relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces. The term implies wider participation in decision-making than representative democracy or other forms of government, recognising a wider range of actors other than the state, and allowing for varying governance contexts and processes.

**Finance:** describes financial models for efficient long-term management.

**Policy:** is discussed within the context of embedding best practice into spatial planning and other policy.

**Valuation:** describes the economic impacts of improvements to open spaces, but also relates to wider socio-economic and environmental benefits.

## Notes on this report

This report forms part of the output from MP4 Making Place Profitable – Public and Private Open Spaces, a project funded by the EU through its Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme 2007-2013.

This report is based on qualitative methods including: interviews, evaluation visit, critical reports, model agreement assessment, etc.

## Websites of the Lövgärdet project in Gothenburg

City of Gothenburg: [www.goteborg.se](http://www.goteborg.se)