



MP4 Stakeholder workshop
24th of November 2011



Workshop 1

Dealing with governance and engagement



Several approaches in governance (1): pilot projects & model agreements



- Sheffield Sheaf Valley: project managed through a professional steering group with regular reference to the Friends and wider public. The steering /project group has a manager who reports to a sponsor and board
- Sheffield Friends of Firth Park: Voluntary residents' organisation with an interest in local open space, working in collaboration with local authority
- Gothenburg: Strong strategic framework to maintain coherent action – with some flexibility – with coordination located at several administrative levels and units (e.g. Gothenburg strategic park programme, maintenance agreements and 'safe beautiful city' partnership)
- Emmen Revisited: Municipal facilitator organisation working with local community in a structured approach to establishing community representative bodies involved in place-making and place-keeping decision-making – with responsibilities for implementation resting with relevant participating agency under supervision of community representative body



Several approaches in governance (2): pilot projects & model agreements



- VLM: Have built capacity to deal with governance and participation, including community participation as technique for designing the right solutions for spaces (placemaking) and local neighbourhood surveys to improve the green infrastructure in an area
- Lawaetz Foundation: GetMove – Youth association with support from the Foundation, and looking at further means of support
- Steilshoop Hamburg (NID): Informal agreements between diverse stakeholders with an interest in the open space
- Hamburg BIDs: Private sector initiatives backed by legislation – formal agreements between property owners who want to jointly improve the area around their properties, which require public authority approval and are binding for all property owners in the area. Run by BID management body



Several approaches in governance (3): Conceptual overview



- Purpose + Context + People + Process = Outcome
- Governance is likely to be influenced by existing social policy framework
- Technocratic vs participatory governance
 - exclusive vs inclusive, experts vs users
 - technocratic governance of projects traditional in the public sector
 - but benefits of community engagement widely pointed at in conceptual literature



Several approaches in governance (4): Benefits of community engagement



1. Valuable insights and experiences from those being consulted
2. Community's understanding raised by involvement in technical details
3. Improved legitimacy of the project and 'buy-in' from the stakeholders
4. Supports the relationship between policymakers and the community
5. Local people can be brought together through a common interest, empowering communities and helping generate social cohesion
6. An expression of active citizenship associated with greater social justice
7. Can lead to services better suited to local people's needs



Several approaches in governance (5): Issues with community engagement



1. 'Usual suspects' get most out of the system
2. Communities not necessarily 'good' per se
3. Non-engagement from some types of users
4. Disengagement due to long timescales
5. Involvement of community in physical works needs dedicated support
6. Danger to put too much pressure on community groups and to delegate too much responsibility
7. Role of residents in place-keeping has to be clarified
8. Considerable changes in public administration have severe effects on process, e.g. budget cuts, staff reductions, etc.
9. What criteria are used for selecting stakeholders who engage in place-keeping?



Pitfalls

(from pilots & model agreements)



- Engaging communities in place keeping is not common, and there are barriers based on existing culture and expectations (Gothenburg, VLM)
- Who is engaged – Certain communities but not others? Certain individuals? Property owners but not residents? (ER, Hamburg, Sheffield)
- Challenge to engage private companies and their sponsorship (LF, VLM)
- Participation puts pressure on public organisations, raises public expectations and can cause disappointment with some groups (VLM)
- Uncertainty (budgets, responsibilities, decision-making, etc) can be barrier to engagement in PK or increase discussion time (ER, Gothenburg)
- Public sector input is needed to support community groups (Sheffield SV) & avoid unfair and imbalanced PK within cities (Hamburg BIDs)
- Informal agreements may be easier to implement but depend on individuals & their relations, can lead to unclear roles and difficult to ensure delivery (Gothenburg SBC, Hamburg NID, Sheffield FoFP)
- Formal agreements require more effort and may be less inviting, but easier to monitor and ensure delivery (Gothenburg)



Successes (from pilots & model agreements)



- Voluntary residents' associations can provide a forum for discussion of PK, lobbying and involvement in PK, giving a voice to local people and strengthening local ownership and responsibility (FoFP in Sheffield)
- Engagement of residents based on respect & dialogue, administrative support & independent facilitator can be critical success factors (ER)
- Engagement in projects (by potential stakeholders) depends on prospect of mutual benefits & trust in lead or organisation (Gothenburg, ER)
- Long-term engagement of private stakeholders may be attained through combined majority willingness & legal compulsion (Hamburg BIDs)
- Informal agreements can facilitate PK activities across 'borders' in spaces under multiple ownership & can lead to further PK (and other) activities in the neighbourhood (Hamburg NID)
- Freedom within facilitating organisation to innovate is important (ER)



Conclusions



- Achieving place-keeping depends on strong partnerships and effective governance/ decision-making
- Values of good governance in place-keeping include openness, accountability, transparency and inclusiveness
- In practice, a fundamentally technocratic approach is often taken to place-keeping, which does not acknowledge the fact that local residents can bring local, rich knowledge to the decision-making process which can contribute to effective place-keeping
- Community groups may not want to take over full responsibility for open space maintenance – they do not have the capacity to do so including time, skills, interest – and may want to continue to work in partnership with local authority. They may be able to look after smaller areas.



Key questions



- What strategies are there to “approach” stakeholders in ways that will encourage their engagement?
- What tools are available to engage local communities in the maintenance of sites yet to be developed?
- How do you keep residents involved in place-keeping in the long term?
- How do you engage (and keep engaged) in place-keeping private sector bodies, e.g. as sponsors?
- Where are the limits to other stakeholder involvement and how are responsibilities defined?
- How can the public sector be prepared for good governance of place-keeping?