



Living Places:
Caring for Quality



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Living Places: Caring for Quality

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The findings and recommendations in this report are those of the consultant authors and do not necessarily represent the views or proposed policies of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

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foreword



Yvette Cooper
Minister for Parks
and Open Spaces

The quality of public space affects the quality of our lives. All of us – rich or poor, young or old, wherever we live – use public space every time we step out of our front doors. Too many spaces are badly looked after, poorly maintained and neglected. They give the impression that no-body cares and that a lack of respect for others and the space itself is acceptable. However, we know that this is not true and that people do care. Surveys consistently show that issues around improving the quality of public space, such as better maintenance, tackling litter and graffiti are a priority for local people.

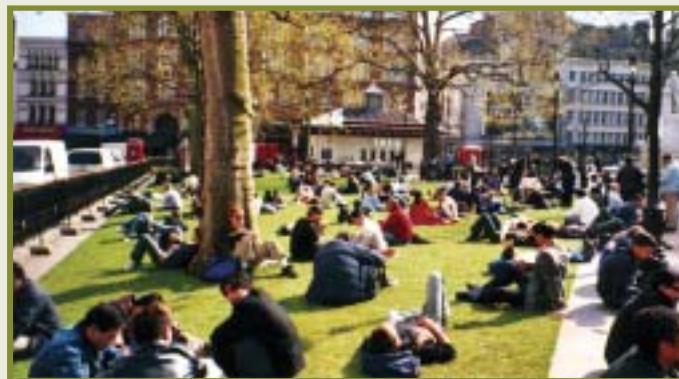
Recognising these concerns, we launched at the Urban Summit our vision for public space, *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener*, including action to improve co-ordination, regulation, investment and maintenance.

However, the Government can only set the framework. Responsibility for public space is shared, and many organisations and individuals – not just local authorities – directly influence the quality of the spaces around us. All share a common goal in making public space better to improve the quality of life, business opportunities and social capital.

Many areas are already making a difference to the quality of life in our towns and cities. This document highlights the lessons from their experiences and different solutions including the importance of leadership, integration, partnership, standards, long term actions, respecting local context and monitoring success. These simple principles can underpin the delivery of our vision for living places, which are clean, safe and green.

Chapter 1

Introduction



this chapter:

- Explains the purpose of *Living Places: Caring for Quality*
- Outlines the structure of the report

The purpose of Living Places: Caring for Quality

1.1 In his foreword to the policy statement *Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner*, the Deputy Prime Minister argued that:

“Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe, attractive – areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time. Tackling failure, such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned cars, dog fouling, the loss of play areas or footpaths, for many people is the top public service priority”.

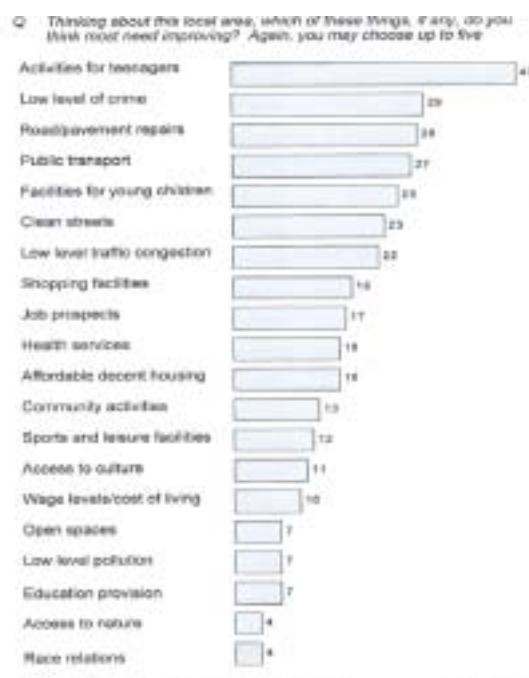
1.2 The statement reflects the consistent finding that people place the quality of their local environment high on the agenda of issues that concern them and most need improving, and often higher than the ‘headline’ public services such as education and health (figure 1). This is unsurprising when at any one time the majority of people do not use schools, public transport, health or social services, but do on a daily basis use the street outside their front door, their local neighbourhood and the environment around their workplace. As a result, the quality of the nation’s streets, parks and public spaces affects everyone’s daily life, and directly contributes to their sense of well-being.

1.3 Research undertaken for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE, 2002) revealed that when surveyed, 85% of people believed that the quality of public space impacts on quality of life and that the quality of the built environment directly impacts on the way they feel. Yet the Urban Task Force (1999) argued that there is a shared sense of *“dissatisfaction and pessimism about the state of our towns and cities”*, and *“a widely held view that our towns and cities are run-down and unkempt”*.

Figure1: Local Environmental Quality – A ‘Liveability’ Priority

According to MORI (2002), while people still think the ‘traditional’ measures of quality of life (i.e. jobs, education, and health) make a good place to live, it is the issues of liveability (the day to day issues that affect peoples quality of life at a local level) that they most want improved.

Low levels of crime and road and pavement repairs score highly, whilst activities for teenagers is the top concern, reflecting the negative impact of bored teenagers on the local environment.



- 1.4 *Living Places: Caring for Quality* (*hereafter Caring for Quality*) reports on research that examined how local authorities and other local stakeholders, through the better management of public space, are rising to the challenge described by the Deputy Prime Minister, and to reversing the dissatisfaction and pessimism identified by the Urban Task Force. This pursuit of more 'liveable' public space represents a key aspiration of Government as set out in *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* the action plan launched by the Deputy Prime Minister in February 2003. On the basis of extensive research evidence, a wide range of ideas are outlined in the following chapters to help move practice towards new more holistic approaches to public space management and therefore towards the delivery of more sustainable communities.
- 1.5 *Caring for Quality* is grounded in the national policy context at the time of its writing. Inevitably as the national policy context changes so will the local context, and therefore this document is not intended to be a definitive statement of best practice. It is, however, an attempt to set out options for, and to structure thinking about, better practice. In doing so it also provides an important new tool to fundamentally question existing practice and to help local authorities (and other stakeholders) move towards more integrated and effective public space management practices in the future.

The structure of Caring for Quality

- 1.6 *Caring for Quality* is structured in three parts:

- **part I: the challenge** – is primarily aimed at all those whose activities have a clear impact upon the quality and management of external public space. By recognising the complexity that often accompanies public space activity, this report encourages both senior managers and practitioners alike to better understand how their operations and activities come together and have a significant impact on liveability.

In order to stimulate new ways of thinking and of exploring possible ways through which management practice can be transformed, an understanding of the nature and quality of public space is required. Part 1 investigates what we mean by external public space, why it is so important, and what is wrong (and right) with current practice. Part 1 also presents a useful framework enabling all stakeholders to understand the key factors influencing the management of external public space and to help them consider their potential contribution in improving current practice.

- **part II: the delivery** – offers information, advice and recommendations for more innovative approaches to the management of external public space through use of case studies from a wide variety of case studies across England. Each of the four chapters deals in turn with one of four key delivery processes – co-ordination, investment, regulation and maintenance.

As well as discussing the different components of developing good practice, the objective of these chapters is to provide a framework that can itself be used as the means to systematically review, evaluate and challenge existing practice and as a route to a new, more holistic way of working.

- **part III: moving on** – brings these many ideas together and presents a questioning tool which will provide local authorities and other stakeholders with a useful framework for questioning current practice and help them move towards more integrated and effective public space management in the future.

1.7 Many readers will find it useful to read Part II in its entirety; others may simply wish to dip in to extract ideas concerning their own particular area of responsibility or to enhance a particular aspect of their service. It is nevertheless strongly recommended that all readers read Parts I and III in order to understand the interrelations between the different dimensions of public space management and the part their area of responsibility plays in delivering more 'liveable' public space.

part I: the challenge



part I:

- Discusses public space and its key characteristics
- Maps out the diversity of contributions to public space management
- Discusses the current shape of public space management
- Offers an aspirational view of public space and its management in the future

Who should read it?

- Part I is essential reading for all senior managers concerned with the co-ordination of local authority services that impact on public space
- Part I is important reading for all managers of local authority services relating to public space
- Part I is recommended reading for all professionals, whether operating in the private or public sectors, whose activities impact on the quality of public space

How should it be used?

- Part I provides the context for the detailed advice and 'questioning tool' offered in Part II
- The four short chapters should be read consecutively
- It is not necessary to read Part I before moving on to the detailed advice contained in Part II, but it is strongly recommended
- Part I provides useful reference material that can be referred back to as public space managers refine their aspirations and practice in the light of the Part II recommendations.

Chapter 2

the character of public space



this chapter:

- Argues that it is necessary to understand the nature of public space before attempting to manage it
- Suggests that stakeholders should have an awareness of the ongoing processes shaping public space character and the part they play
- Explores the three dimensions of public space character:
 - the kit of parts
 - public space qualities
 - the context for action

Understanding public space

2.1 An initial clarification of the definition of public space used in *Caring for Quality* helps delimit the scope of the interest of this work; however the aim is not to shut down the complexity of what is actually involved in managing the public space arena. Indeed, this chapter seeks to break down the elements and qualities that collectively come together to shape public space character. Illustrating these different elements, and how connections need to be made between these elements in order to understand what constitutes every public space, provides both a starting point in recognising what might be going wrong and a framework for thinking through how all stakeholders involved can move towards better practice.

What do we mean by external public space?

2.2 It is difficult to try and define a concept as broad as public space. Too wide a definition may result in a nebulous concept that is difficult for those charged with its management to address. Conversely, defining the concept too narrowly may exclude important elements that once omitted from policy may undermine the overall objective of delivering a better-managed local environment. This research adopted the following definition:

Public space relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public has free access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the 'public/private' spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and external and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.

2.3 By excluding spaces such as privately owned and internal 'public space', e.g. shopping centres and libraries, as well as the open countryside, this definition helps to focus attention on the contexts where the most immediate challenge for enhancing public space lies: on publicly managed external public space.

Making the connections

2.4 A lack of understanding of the elements and qualities of public space is a root cause behind the deterioration of much public space. This is because the delivery of space quality as an overarching objective features poorly (or not at all) in the decision-making logic of the many key stakeholders involved in the management of public space.

2.5 In order to manage public space more efficiently, there has been a tendency to carve up the field into smaller units of responsibility, many of which have been contracted out to private firms. This has replaced more holistic approaches to public space management that were epitomised in the guise of, for example, the park keeper or estate caretaker. A consequence seems to be the loss of key individuals who take an overview across all the elements of public space and its management, and a culture of delivering only what is specifically contracted or specified.

2.6 The failure to understand the connections between different public space management objectives can be illustrated by way of a simple example. Refuse collection is a vitally important dimension of managing the urban environment. In order to more efficiently (and cheaply) manage this process, many local authorities have given their residents wheelie bins. They not only securely hold significant quantities of rubbish (so avoiding the problem of rubbish spilling onto streets), but also allow operatives to clear rubbish with less chance of injuries to themselves. Despite these benefits, in some locations where houses open directly onto the street, the inadvertent side effect has been a negative impact on the urban environment as wheelie bins come to dominate the street scene (figure 2).

Figure 2: **Inadvertent Impacts – The Humble Wheelie Bin**

The simple example of the wheelie bin demonstrates the need to carefully consider the impact of one policy decision upon others, to consider their impact in different contexts, and to be able to predict where conflicts might occur. In other words, to make the connections. The illustration also demonstrates the need for a deep awareness of 'quality', the delivery of which should be the first and over-riding public space management objective, but which needs managers who understand the interlinkages.



2.7 Unfortunately, rather than skilling-up to meet the challenges, coping methods have often been found to simply avoid the worst effects of contemporary public space pressures, whilst still maintaining functionality. The inevitable result is the crude application of standards-based approaches to service delivery – planning and highways standards, road adoption specifications, police ‘designing out crime’ principles, accessibility regulations, road safety markings and signage, corporate street furniture, public transport infrastructure, and so forth – with little real understanding of the overall impact (figure 3).

Figure 3: **A failure to consider quality**



A design-led management process

2.8 The Urban Task Force (1999) contended that:

“More than 90% of our urban fabric will be with us in 30 years time. As a consequence this is where the real ‘urban quality’ challenge lies, rather than with the much smaller proportion of newly designed spaces created each year”.

They nevertheless argued that the way spaces look and feel today and the ease with which they can be managed relates fundamentally to how they were designed in the first place. Moreover, because every subsequent intervention to space following its original construction has an impact upon its overall quality, the importance of design skills remains fundamental.

2.9 This does not imply that all those involved in the management of public space need to be designers in an artistic sense (figure 4). It does imply, however, that interventions (no matter how small) should be considered creatively, involving weighing-up and balancing options and impacts in order to find the 'optimum' given solution within the constraints set by context and resources. As the wheelie bin example indicates, alongside countless other public space management decisions taken every day, this frequently does not happen.

Figure 4: **Back to School**



2.10 The management of external public space should therefore be a design-led process. Unfortunately, as the Urban Task Force recognised, the skills' deficit in design and other key urban skills goes right across the urban remit, from professional and managerial skills, to trade and operative skills. Focusing on the issue, the Urban Design Skills Working Group (2001) argued that rectification of the problem must begin with four things:

- On the demand side, reawakening the public's interest in the quality of public space through adequate community participation and the stimulation of grassroots involvement.
- On the supply side, increasing the skills base available to design and produce better places.
- Reaching a position where local authorities make use of those skills in administering their statutory functions.
- Bridging the divide between the different disciplines concerned with the built environment by focusing on the common ground – urban design.

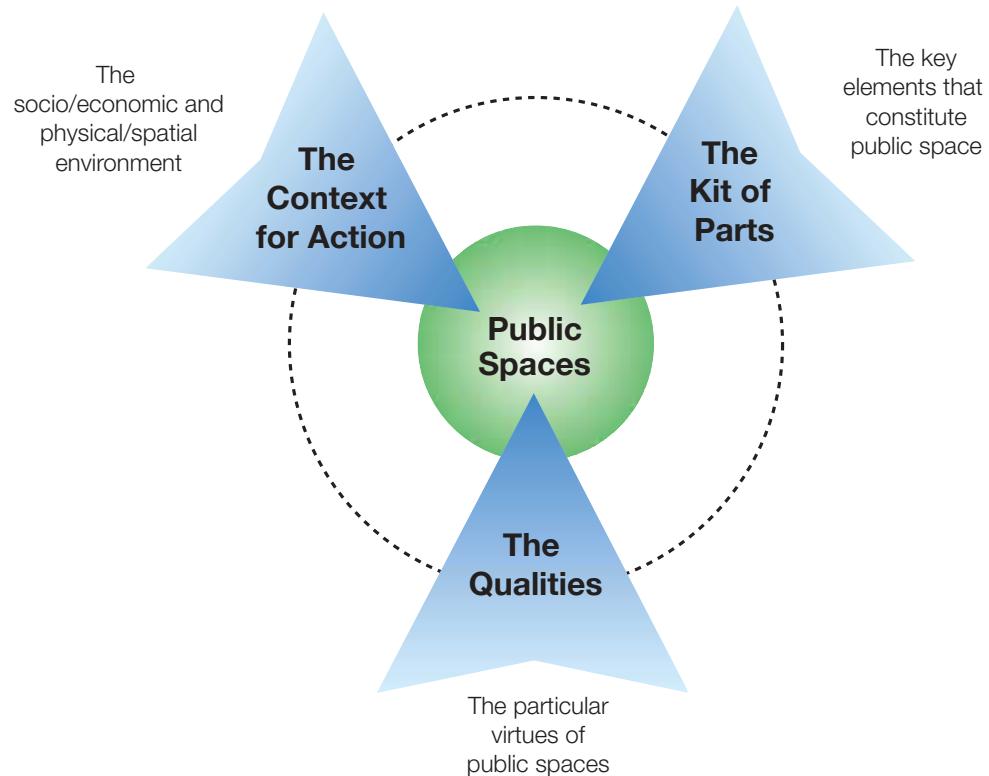
2.11 For the majority of those involved in caring for public space (see Chapter 4), an awareness of their role in, and responsibilities to, the overall and ongoing design process is all that is required. For others, a more complete understanding of the total urban environment and all the contributions to its upkeep is necessary in order to establish a vision, define the roles and responsibilities of constituent services, and reconcile possible conflicts.

The dimensions of Public Space Character

2.12 To understand necessary and appropriate contributions requires a good understanding of the key dimensions that together define the character of public space. An understanding of the character of public space will help to ensure that ambitions for public space are appropriately challenging, but also capable of being delivered through the allocated resources and chosen management strategies. In other words, managers need to understand the nature and complexity of public space before attempting to manage it.

2.13 There are many ways in which public space character can be conceptualised. In helping to structure this research, three key dimensions have been identified.

Figure 5: **The Dimensions of Public Space Character**



A Kit of Parts

Figure 6: **Public Space – A complex ‘Kit of Parts’** (Audit Commission, 2002)



2.14 The first of the elements of public space character is on the face of it the most basic, representing the constituent components of public space. This can be considered as a ‘kit of parts’ or parts of a jigsaw that divide along four key strands: buildings, infrastructure, landscape and uses of space (figure 7). The first three categories are entirely physical in nature, whilst the last encompasses a set of human uses and is therefore perhaps the most challenging to manage, and also the most significant in giving public space its character. The first three also delineate the physical urban form – the streets, spaces, urban blocks, and key routes and connections – that define the limits of external public space, and which between them create the venues for human activity.

2.15 When considered in terms of management responsibility, buildings and uses tend to be privately owned, with responsibility for their upkeep largely in the hands of companies, institutions and individuals. Motivations for managing these assets will therefore be influenced by an assessment of their economic value and the costs and benefits of maintaining them. Conversely, most of the landscape between buildings in urban areas, and much (although not all) of the infrastructure will be owned and managed by the public sector, whose motivations for its management will be determined by local and national priorities and available resources. The distinction illustrates the fact that in almost all environments, effective management will be a direct result of a formal or informal partnership between public and private interests.

2.16 Time also distinguishes the different elements of the 'kit of parts', as the buildings and much of the infrastructure will tend to change only very slowly over long periods of time, emphasising the need to get the design right in the first place with regard to its long-term management. By contrast, elements of the landscape, and in some environments the uses in and surrounding external public space, will tend to change more quickly. It is these elements that can have the most decisive short-term impact on the way public space is perceived by its users.

Figure 7: **The Kits of Parts**

Buildings	Infrastructure	Landscape	Uses
Walls	Roads and cycle lanes	Trees	Events
Structure	Bus stops/shelters	Planting beds and areas	Gatherings
Windows	Tram/bus lanes	Lawns and verges	Street Entertainment
Entrances/exists	Traffic lights/road signage	Planters/hanging baskets	Street Trading
Balconies/projections	Telegraph polls	Paving	Markets
Shopfronts	Telecommunications equipment	Road surfaces	External eating/drinking
Signage	Street lighting	Traffic calming	Kiosks
Building lighting	Telematics	Steps	Play grounds
Floodlighting	Parking bays/meters/car parks	Boundary walls/fences/railings	Parks
Artwork	Public toilets	Fountains/water features	Sports facilities
Decoration	Waste and recycling bins	Public art	Retail uses
Canopies	CCTV polls and cameras	Signage	Leisure uses (active/passive)
Colonnades	Telephone/post boxes	Advertising	Community uses
Skyline/roofscape	Gutters/drainage	Street Furniture	Homes
Corners	Utilities boxes	Bollards	Workplaces
Flags and banners	Underground services	Shelters/band stands	Industrial uses
Monuments/landmarks	Servicing bays/turning heads	Festive decorations	Tourism






2.17 Therefore, although at any one time most of the physical environment already exists and changes only very slowly, the way the different elements are cared for, and the impact of those elements that change most frequently – the paving, street furniture, shop-fronts, signage etc. – can be decisive in delivering quality.

Virtues of Public Space – Qualities

2.18 Awareness of the elements that together shape public space is by itself of little value without an awareness of how these elements may be combined to optimise the ‘qualities’ of public space that make it conducive to human activity. The influential Copenhagen-based architect Jan Gehl has argued that public space activities are particularly important in perceptions of public space. They are also particularly sensitive to the physical quality of environments.

2.19 Gehl (1996) has characterised outdoor activities into three categories:

- Necessary activities, that we have to engage in – walking to work or school, waiting for a bus, shopping for food, etc.
- Optional activities, that we choose to do if the time and place is conducive – walking for the sake of it, watching the world go by, sunbathing, window shopping, sitting at a pavement cafe, etc.
- Resultant (social) activities, which are dependent on the presence of others in public space – children playing, casual greetings, conversations, communal activities, etc. Social activities are resultant because they occur spontaneously as a direct result of the other two forms of activity.

Figure 8: **The Impact of Environmental Quality on Types of Activities**

	Quality of the physical environment	
	Poor	Good
Necessary activities	●	●
Optional activities	•	●
“Resultant” activities (Social activities)	•	●

Based on extensive research across the world and particularly in northern European climates such as the UK's, Gehl has concluded that necessary activities are influenced only slightly by the physical quality of the environment because they are necessary for life to continue. Optional activities, by contrast, only take place when conditions are optimal, and are therefore a direct barometer of the quality of public space.

Activities also effect our perception of space because if people are choosing to stay in spaces rather than hurrying through, the spaces themselves seem more ‘liveable’. Social activities will happen whatever the physical context, but their quality and intensity will be affected by both the numbers of people in a space, and by the extent to which the quality of space encourages users to linger.

2.20 It is a mistake, therefore, to think of better quality public space as a matter of simple aesthetic concern, of interest to only a minority. Instead, these are fundamental concerns that impact directly on the way all users perceive, function, and socialise in public space, and by implication on the viability of public space for different economic activities.

2.21 There is a range of publications focusing on the design of public space, setting out key aspirational principles for designing new and enhancing existing public spaces (see Annex C, figure 83). Most converge on a set of widely accepted urban design principles. However, managing rather than designing public space is a broader concern that encompasses, but extends beyond, design objectives. It is constrained by the fact that in most environments, the 'kit of parts' is already in place and unlikely to change.

2.22 In an evermore complex built environment, the 'kit of parts' that contemporary public spaces need to accommodate have increased dramatically. Furthermore, the intensity with which many spaces are used and the hours in the day over which activities happen have also increased. The result is inevitable conflicts that are difficult to resolve and which can undermine quality. Such conflicts include:

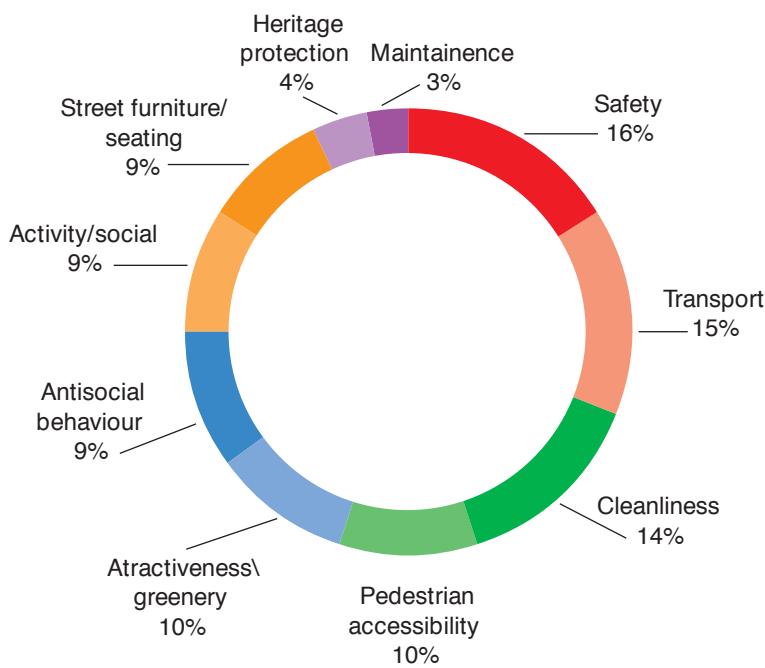
- the needs of drivers and public transport versus the needs of pedestrians;
- the needs of utility providers to supply and maintain underground infrastructure versus the space required for street trees to grow;
- the needs of commercial and entertainment premises versus the needs of local residents for peace and quiet.

2.23 When the functions that spaces accommodate conflict, the overall quality of the space is often the first casualty. The challenge is therefore to manage the conflicts whilst enhancing quality and maintaining functionality.

2.24 In his Croydon speech of April 2001, the Prime Minister called for cleaner and safer streets where communities are given the opportunity to thrive and not just survive. The National Centre for Social Research *Survey of English Housing* confirms the significance of these headline concerns, ranking crime, vandalism and hooliganism, litter and rubbish and dog fouling as the four top problems householders identified within their area. A MORI poll for CABE (2002) focusing more specifically on what might improve the appearance of people's areas identified general cleanliness, traffic management, roads/pavements/lighting maintenance, and the availability of local shopping and leisure facilities as the four top concerns.

2.25 The opportunity was taken to conduct 'public space quality audits' at each of the case study locations visited during undertaken research for *Caring for Quality*. Analysis of the opinion of 150 users of the case study public spaces revealed that users were most concerned about issues of safety, accessibility and cleanliness, and least concerned about the protection of heritage and the maintenance of the physical fabric (figure 9).

Figure 9: External Public Space Quality Audit by Users



2.26 Inevitably, relative judgements about the importance of the various qualities are matters of individual perception, and different users will value different qualities more or less highly. Consequently, the emphasis placed on different qualities by local public space services will be matters of political judgement. It is important to appreciate, however, that all the qualities pattern together to form an overall experience of public space, and that excluding key aspects in favour of others may simply undermine attempts to improve overall public space quality.

2.27 Bringing these altogether, and combined with the range of urban design objectives such as those in *By Design* (DETR & CABE, 2000), it is possible to identify a set of 'qualities' for public space. Public spaces can be distinguished by their:

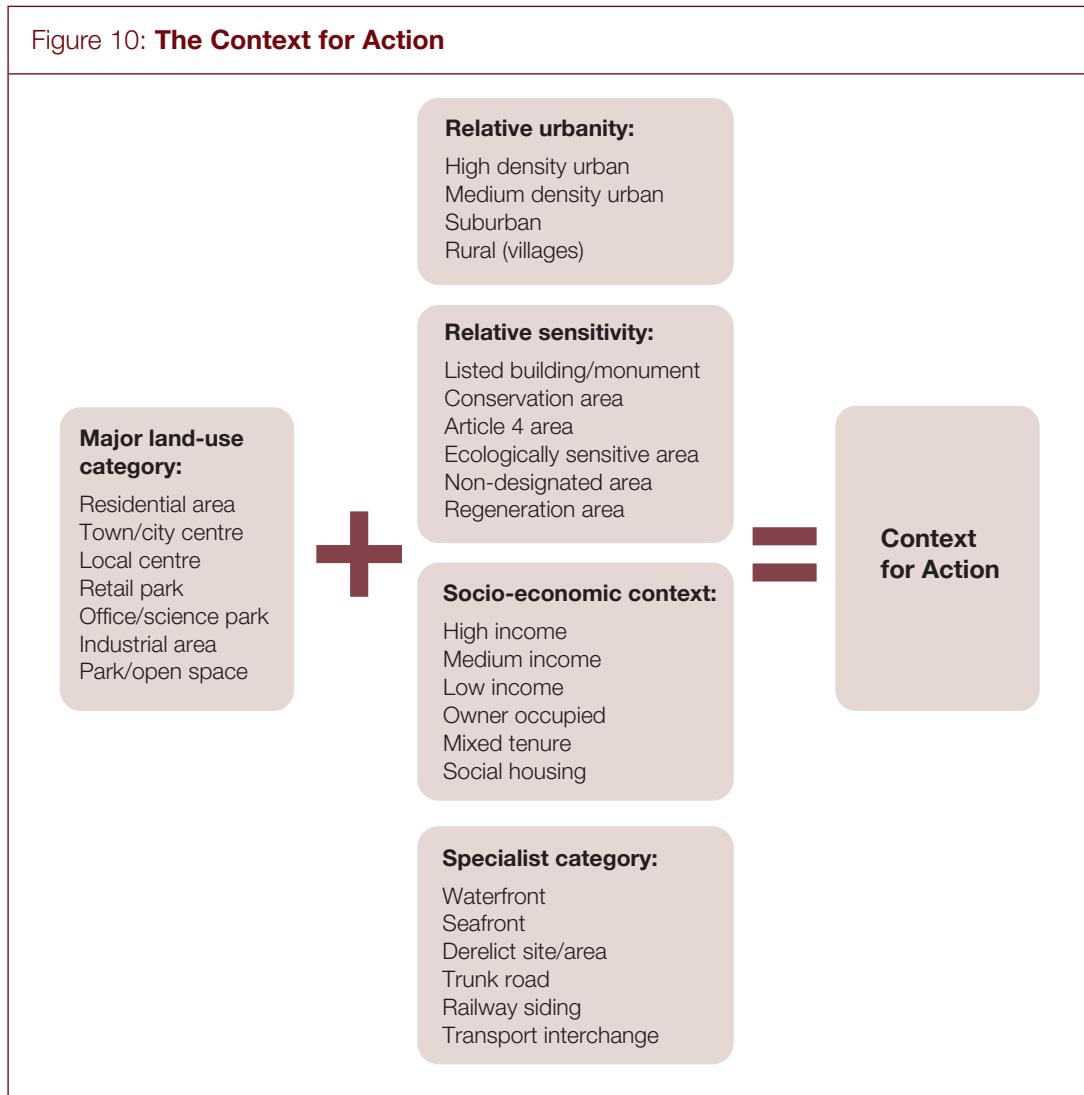
1. **Cleanliness** – whether they are clean and well cared for
2. **Accessibility** – how easy they are to get to and move through
3. **Attractiveness** – how visually pleasing they are
4. **Comfort** – whether they are comfortable to spend time in
5. **Inclusivity** – how welcoming they are to different sections of society
6. **Vitality and viability** – how well they are used and allow complementary uses to thrive
7. **Functionality** – how well the different uses they accommodate can function
8. **Distinctiveness** – whether they have a clear and individual character
9. **Safety and security** – whether they feel safe and secure places to be
10. **Robustness** – how resilient they are over time

The Context for Action

2.28 The final dimension of public space character adds yet further complexity to the management of public space by introducing the notion of a range of physical/spatial 'contexts for action' to which public space management processes need to respond.

2.29 The 'context for action' will be determined through the type of land use and then through the lens of the particular contexts within which public space is located. This would necessarily take into account factors such as relative urbanity and density, the socio-economic context and typology of housing. Areas with high percentages of owner occupiers, for example, may require different management regimes to areas with a predominance of social housing where stakeholder responsibilities will be different.

Figure 10: **The Context for Action**



2.30 The argument has already been made for policy and practice that is more sensitive to physical context, and that approaches that are both effective and efficient in one circumstance may have unintended consequences in others. Predominantly residential streets, for instance, have different physical characteristics to commercial streets and are also subject to different pressures and statutory/management processes.

Waste collection, street cleansing, and on street parking, for example, tend to be handled very differently in residential areas to commercial high streets. The degree of urbanity will also affect the relative emphasis on the natural environment and on soft (green) landscape as opposed to hard landscape.

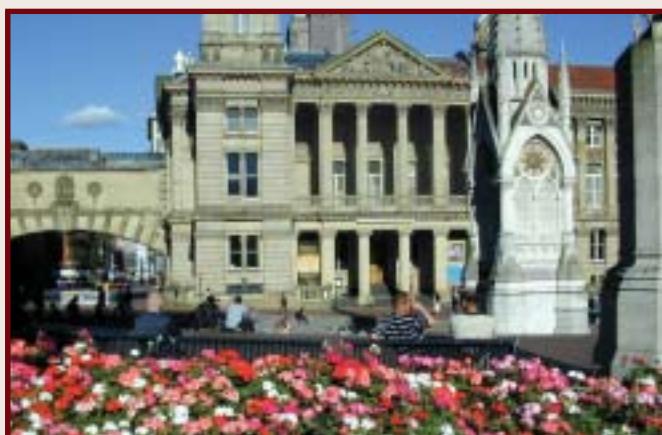
- 2.31 Moreover, some areas are classified as particularly sensitive contexts through conservation (and other) designations, while others are not. The result is that such contexts add a further layer of regulatory processes (and sometimes resources) that influence the quality of public space (see Chapter 7). To a lesser degree, the same often applies to areas receiving funding under the wide range of area-based regeneration programmes.
- 2.32 Finally, a set of 'special' contexts can be identified with particular management requirements because of:
 - The intensity (or lack) of their use.
 - Their particular patterns of ownership.
 - Their relationship to natural features or infrastructure.
- 2.33 Although the pursuit of high quality public space should remain the same as contexts change, it is likely that the relative emphasis on different aspects of management will change. In very high-density areas, for example, the emphasis will be on designing accessible, robust space that can cope with the demands. In suburban areas, the emphasis may be on making a more attractive environment through greening streets and spaces.
- 2.34 The argument is made throughout *Caring for Quality* that management approaches should be inherently sensitive to context and that aspirations should be shaped by an understanding of both the limitations and opportunities presented by different contexts.

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- There are many ways to define public space. *Caring for Quality* adopts a fairly narrow definition in order to concentrate in where we see the real challenge.
- A pursuit of high quality public space should be the overarching objective of public space management.
- Carefully consider what the unintended impacts of policy on public space quality might be.
- Well designed public spaces reflect long-term management concerns.
- Public spaces are complex with characters shaped by a wide range of attributes encompassed in their basic kit of parts (the uses and physical components), inherent qualities (their cleanliness, accessibility, etc.), and the particular context in which they are found.

Chapter 3

current practice



this chapter:

- Establishes the national picture for public space and its management
- Discusses the problems and pressures facing local authorities
- Identifies 4 key barriers to effective public space management: lack of co-ordination, lack of investment, lack of regulation and lack of maintenance

When it all goes wrong (and right)

3.1 Despite the best intentions of many of those charged with the creation and management of external public space, all too often the whole adds up to considerably less (rather than more) than the sum of the parts (figure 11). This is nothing new and the time-honoured British 'townscape' tradition has long bemoaned the roads-dominated nature of much new public space, and the tendency to fill streets with visual clutter.

Figure 11: **A Long Standing Concern**



The creeping mildew' of visual clutter
(Gordon Cullen 1955)

3.2 Some of the most graphic examples of recent failure to manage public space were captured by the joint CABE/BBC Radio 4 initiative, *Streets of Shame*, which called for nominations for the UK's best and worst streets. Following thousands of nominations, the five best and five worst streets of 2002 were chosen (figures 12 and 13). The results and the comments from nominees were instructive. They revealed that what was identified as good and bad by nominees usually represented two sides of the same coin:

Qualities of the 'worst' streets	Qualities of the 'best' streets
dirty and poorly maintained	↔ clean and well maintained
dominated by traffic/traffic management	↔ pedestrians and traffic in harmony
a sense of insecurity	↔ well lit and safe
dereliction, decay and lack of activity	↔ good attractions and associated activity
superficial and cheap 'improvements'	↔ sensitive alterations and quality landscaping
inaccessible (pedestrian and vehicular)	↔ accessible (pedestrian and vehicular)
uncomfortable to use	↔ comfortable to use
inhuman, ugly and unremarkable	↔ human, attractive and distinctive

3.3 The CABE/BBC research also confirmed that much of the perception that users form about space, and whether that perception is positive or negative, relates to how space is managed and maintained, rather than to its original design. Therefore, although all the qualities in the list (except the first) relate in some way or other to the original design and layout of the streets, all (except perhaps the last) correspond more strongly to the way streets are cared for following their original construction.

Figure 12: **Street of Shame – Britain's Worst Street** (CABE, 2002)

Streatham High Road, London – Concrete and metal barriers,
"wasting away in places, supposedly designed to protect pedestrians from the full force of the dual carriageway traffic, are used as an assault course by those determined to get from one side to the other"

Cornmarket Street, Oxford

"an example of small mindedness, inefficiency and ineptitude, filthy dirty, smelly and an embarrassment"

Drakes Circus, Plymouth

"The lack of diversity and the out dated office spaces mean it is unattractive to commercial and retail tenants and the threatening feel at night, with lack of activity and poor lighting, make this a no go area"

Maid Marion Way, Nottingham

"Dubbed the ugliest street in Europe since its construction in the 1960s, municipal engineers are doing their best to maintain its position at the top of the premier league"

Leatherhead High Street, Surrey

"An example of cheap and thoughtless pedestrianisation taking the heart out of a whole town"



Streatham High Road,
London

Cornmarket Street,
Oxford

Drakes Circus,
Plymouth

Maid Marion Way,
Nottingham

Leatherhead High
Street, Surrey

Figure 13: **Street of Shame – Britain's Best Street** (CABE, 2002)

Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

“the shop fronts may not be original but they are in keeping with the spirit of the original design and fit in very well with the scale of the buildings. A street on a human scale with a grand vision”

High Pavement, Nottingham

“well maintained and offers respite in what can become a busy street at weekends”

Buchanan Street, Glasgow

“well lit, clean, good public seating, attractive tree planting”

New Street, Birmingham

“The fact that people can now walk from Brindleyplace to the Rotunda without having to worry about fumes and traffic, with opportunities to sit in well designed seats and see an eclectic mixture of art and sculpture is a great achievement”

Water/Castle Street, Liverpool

“The scale is human, there is light and life and a feeling of safety 24-hours a day”



Grey Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne

High Pavement,
Nottingham

Buchanan Street
Glasgow

New Street,
Birmingham

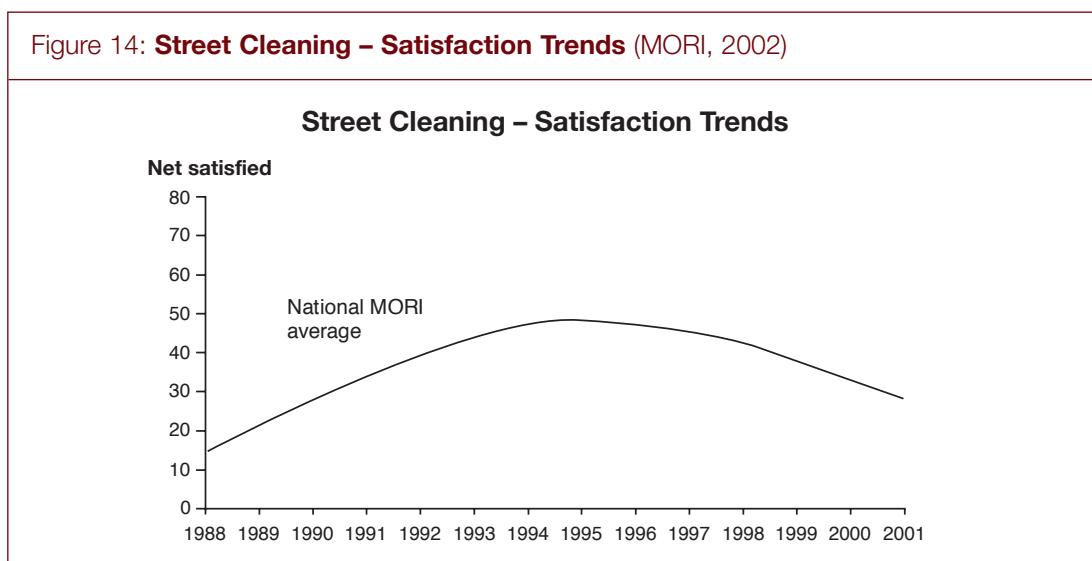
Water/Castle Street,
Liverpool

The national picture

3.4 A national picture of the state of public space and public space services is difficult to gauge. Nevertheless, a range of evidence can be gathered that begins to illustrate the challenge faced. Firstly, on the *quality* of public space:

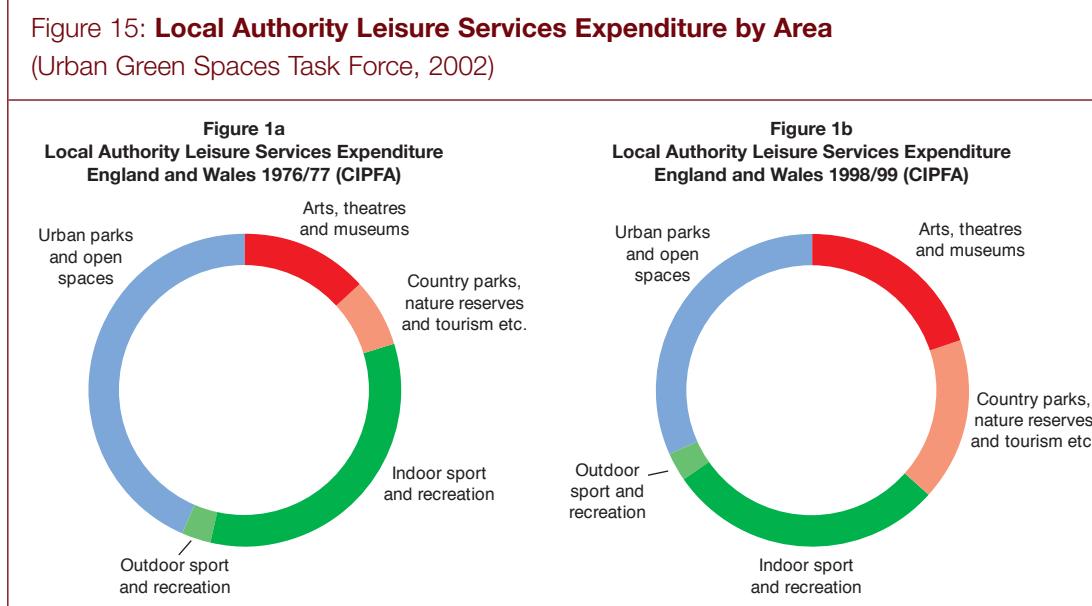
- MORI's ongoing work tracking the perceptions of around 100 local authorities reveals a falling satisfaction with the street scene as a whole and with street cleaning in particular over the past five years (figure 14). They argue, “In longitudinal survey after survey, the trends are negative”; a trend that contrasts strongly with rising satisfaction in the ‘big ticket’ services that have benefited from targeted funds and strong inspection regimes. The work reveals that highways and pavements are the worst rated local government service.

Figure 14: **Street Cleaning – Satisfaction Trends** (MORI, 2002)



- A self-assessment by 85% of UK local authorities of their green spaces undertaken for the Urban Parks Forum (2001) indicated that 69% of authorities described their stock as 'fair' and 13% as 'poor'. 37% of authorities separately described their parks as 'declining'. The Urban Green Spaces Task Force linked the decline in part directly to the reduction over the past 20 years in spending on urban parks and open spaces as a proportion of overall local authority leisure spending. Other factors identified included the decline in the skills' base required for effective green space management.
- Results from the first *Local Environmental Quality Survey of England* undertaken by the environmental charity ENCAms across 11,000 sites and 12 'land use' classes revealed that 50 per cent of the local environmental elements surveyed were registered as unsatisfactory (see Annex C, figure 88). These included litter, detritus, weed control, staining, highways, pavement obstructions, street furniture condition and landscaping.

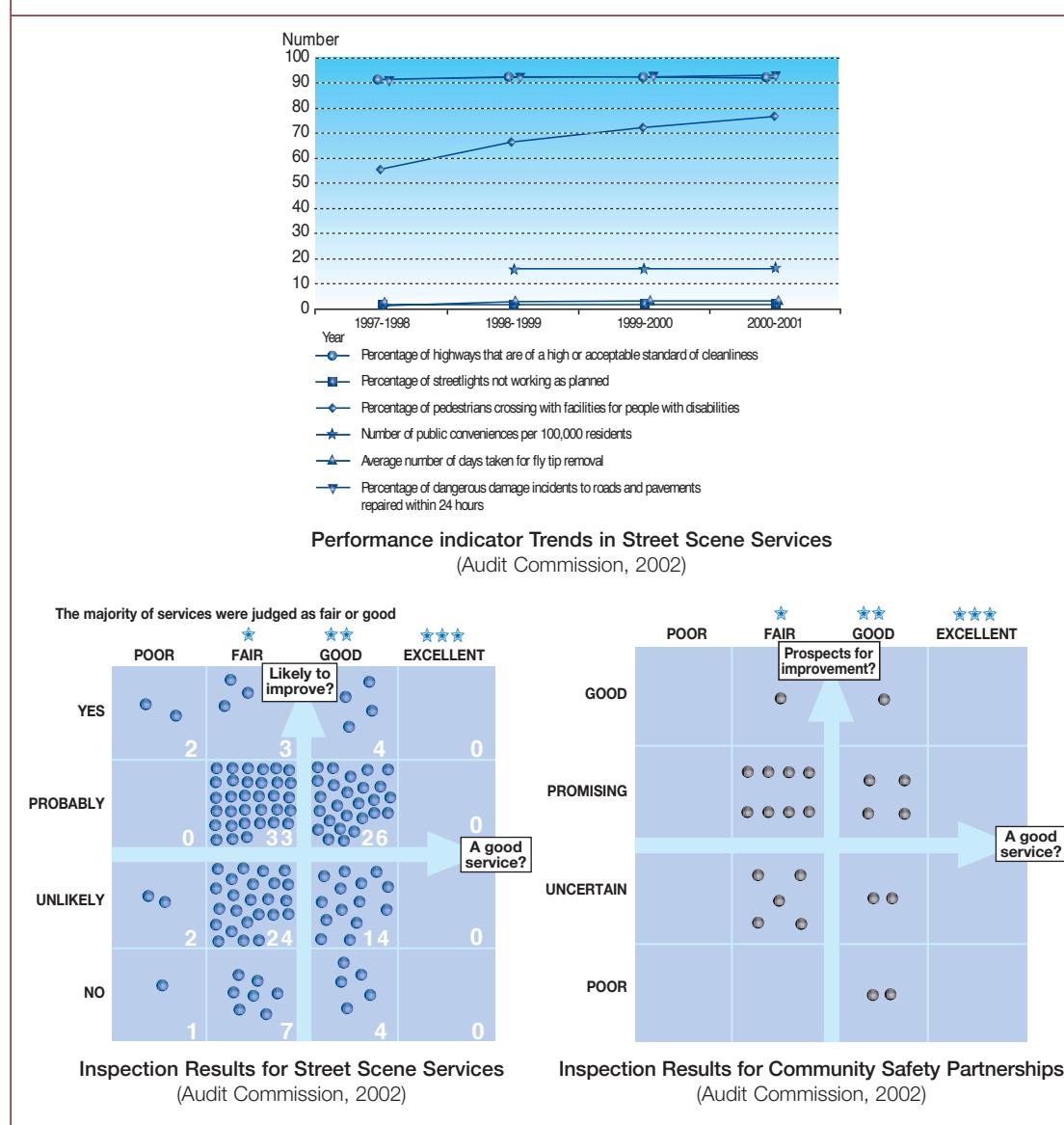
Figure 15: **Local Authority Leisure Services Expenditure by Area**
(Urban Green Spaces Task Force, 2002)



3.5 Secondly, on the issue of public space *management*:

- Evidence from the limited range of existing national performance indicators in the street scene ambit reveals a mixed picture, but generally little overall improvement except on the percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for people with disabilities.
- The Audit Commission's ongoing Best Value Inspection work of street scene services (figure 16), draws on the results from the first 120 or so inspections. It reveals a mixed picture with the majority of services judged as 'fair' (56%), a smaller proportion judged as 'good' (40%), none as 'excellent', and 4% as 'poor'. 43% of services were judged 'unlikely to improve' or 'will not improve'.
- On the crime prevention scene, Audit Commission Inspection reports of 23 Community Safety Partnerships illustrate that only 40% of authorities are delivering a 'good' service, and that 39% had 'uncertain' or 'poor' prospects for improvement.

Figure 16: **Audit Commission Evidence**



3.6 Collectively, the evidence indicates that a step change is required in both the quality of public space and the quality of the services that deliver, manage and maintain it. Whereas basic design flaws may be difficult and costly to correct, the experience from the CABE/BBC *Streets of Shame* exercise indicated that many public space problems might be solved with adequate management rather than through fundamental redesigns. Unfortunately, here the reality is often of too many hands all trying to do their best with limited resources, but with little co-ordination between efforts and with few attempts to question the rulebooks that guide key public services. The result continues to be deterioration in the quality of public space.

So what is going wrong?

3.7 In seeking to better understand practice in public space management, research undertaken for *Caring for Quality* involved:

- a survey of local authorities covering current policy adopted at a local level to co-ordinate contributions to public space management;
- a series of in-depth telephone interviews to examine current practice, focusing on identifying and understanding why things are managed as they are in the typical local authority; and
- Interviews, in parallel, with 18 key user groups and organisations to obtain their views.

(Please see Annex B for a more detailed overview of the research)

3.8 The key findings from our research highlighted the relatively low priority given to developing effective, integrated strategies and delivery frameworks for public space management:

- Of those local authorities surveyed, none had their own working definition of public space, although most favoured a broad, inclusive definition.
- Similarly, the large majority did not have a dedicated strategy for the management of their public space, and corporate objectives for public space remained extremely general. Beyond dedicated strategies for particular types of public space such as parks or town centres, or very broad '*motherhood and apple pie*' aspirations for public space in, for example, local plans or corporate strategies, local authorities generally do not have strategies in place to holistically manage public space. In fact just 17% of authorities taking part in the survey had any sort of integrating strategy in place.

- The provision of management services for public space varies between councils, but generally continues to be divided across traditional lines, with distinct and separate groups of services that operate without a co-ordinating strategy. Compartmentalised professional '*silo working*' between parks, leisure, planning, highways and street maintenance services are typical, whether or not they are under a single directorate. Complicating matters and reducing opportunities for integration is the fact that policy is increasingly being separated from delivery services, usually as a result of new structural arrangements in local authorities (i.e. the separation of planning policy and urban design from development control and enforcement).
- Much of the responsibility for the management of public space lies outside the direct control of local authorities, across a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders. The increasing complexity of public spaces as physical entities is therefore mirrored by the increasing complexity of the stakeholders engaged – either positively or negatively – in public space management. In part this is a result of the impact of the increasing numbers of private stakeholders with a role to play, including contractors engaged by, and working for, local authorities. It also reflects the diversity of public and semi-public agencies involved in managing public space.
- A lack of co-ordination and investment were highlighted as two overarching barriers to effective practice through the research, and the large absence of dedicated strategies to manage public space would appear to be symptomatic of this. Two further problems identified were themselves compounded by the lack of co-ordination and investment: a poor use of regulatory powers, and the low priority given to maintenance.

3.9 The four problem areas were in turn exacerbated by an increasingly complex set of pressures impacting on decision-making at the local level:

- Organisational pressures, because organisational structures were rapidly changing and therefore seen to be untried and tested, despite the benefits that might ensue.
- Societal pressures, because society seemed to be increasingly anti-social (i.e. the alcohol culture) and less concerned with place and community (i.e. the litigation culture).
- Legislative pressures, because new powers inevitably remain untried and untested until they are enacted; and sometimes have unintended side effects (i.e. EU fridge and electrical appliance legislation leading to dumping in public space).
- Economic pressures, that have reflected an expanding national and international environmental agenda but with negative externalities locally (i.e. the impact of the landfill tax and low vehicle recycling values).

- Local political pressures, encompassed in frequent descriptions of the lack of political will to take public space concerns seriously, and by a diversion of resources to other services.
- Spatial/physical pressures, brought about by the increasingly complex range of uses and infrastructure that public space is required to accommodate.

3.10 The situations identified paint a complex series of difficulties and pressures facing local authorities and other stakeholders. However, in seeking to understand and work through these potential issues, it is crucial to identify the key factors acting as barriers to dealing with these problems (figure 17). These of course will vary in degree of importance according to context, but our research identified a set of core, consistent factors:

3.11 Collectively, the research revealed a difficult, complex picture that in many respects has become ever more complex through the shifting context within which public space management occurs. However, the research also revealed that a number of authorities are proactively rising to the challenges presented. In this regard, the problems and pressures identified might equally be viewed as opportunities to question, rethink and restructure current practice. A framework to help move towards the delivery of more effective public space management – and who should be involved in this process – is developed in Chapter 4.

Figure 17: **Four key barriers to better practice**

Barriers to better <i>co-ordination</i>	Barriers to better <i>regulation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding • Poor linkage between policy formulation and implementation • Vaguely formulated policies • Fragmentation of initiatives • Persistence of 'silo mentality'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of co-ordination between regulatory regimes • Lack of resources for enforcement • Patchwork nature of laws and bye-laws • Insufficient powers to prosecute • Insufficient enforcement powers.
Barriers to better <i>investment</i>	Barriers to better <i>maintenance</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation of public funding streams with their different requirements • Cost and time involved in getting and managing these funds • Failure of funds to cover all aspects of public spaces • Many authorities do not have a cohesive strategy to frame investment • Capital investment funding tends not to cover maintenance costs • De-regulation and decreased subsidy to some services has made co-ordination and environmental quality objectives difficult to achieve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient level of investment in maintenance • Problematic relationship between the client and contractor functions • Lack of co-ordination of maintenance routines and standards between agencies and other stakeholders • Mismatch between community expectations and what can be achieved • Lack of concern with maintenance in early stages of a project • Intensive use of some spaces leading to conflict between maintenance routines and some users.

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- There is currently a falling satisfaction with the street scene in general and street cleanliness in particular.
- A step change is required in the quality of public spaces and the services that deliver and manage it.
- Adequate management can solve many public space problems without the need for costly redesign.
- The way public spaces are cared for determines whether they are perceived positively or negatively by the public.
- A lack of co-ordination and a lack of investment are compounded by the poor use of regulatory powers and the low priority given to everyday maintenance.
- Problems and pressures come and go, they should be viewed as positive opportunities to rethink priorities and processes in public space management.

Chapter 4

taking responsibility for action



this chapter:

- Makes the case that public space should be a higher local political priority
- Introduces four key stakeholder groups and their motivations, roles and responsibilities
- Suggests that the roles and responsibilities of the range of stakeholders can be viewed as a 'matrix of contributions.'

Taking responsibility for action

4.1 So far the discussion has defined the nature of public space and its importance, has recognised that a problem exists with regard to the quality and resulting liveability of public space (although with a few hopeful signs), and has recognised that it is possible to set our collective aspirations higher. If this is to happen, it is important to recognise who is responsible for delivering public space quality. Like much of the public space remit, the answer is complex.

Just blame the council!

4.2 Whilst there are many stakeholders with varied roles, responsibilities and interests in the management of public space – as this chapter will highlight – it is interesting to put such complexity into the perspective of the user.

4.3 As part of our research, the interviews with the everyday users of the public spaces examined as part of the case studies were illuminating. They revealed that almost nobody considers public space to be a low priority; indeed users place a high priority on how local authorities look after public space. Users were not knowledgeable about who makes decisions, although they thought they knew where to look to make a complaint – the council via the telephone directory. Most thought it had little to do with them, with 84% of those questioned saying they did not get involved in decision making. Most revealing, over half (55%) of users felt that the management of public space was the sole responsibility of their local council, and that whether they perceived that their council was doing a good job or not, it was the council that was responsible for the state of public space.

4.4 In this regard, a clear misapprehension was evident concerning LAs responsibility for and extent of influence over public space. A smaller percentage (29%) regarded public space management as a joint civic responsibility in which individuals, businesses and other organisations also had a role to play.

4.5 A clear incentive for local authorities was therefore revealed. If authorities are going to get the blame when things go wrong and the credit when things go right, there should be a political incentive for councillors to prioritise public space quality through the actions of their authority, whilst doing all they can to encourage other stakeholders to do the same. The MORI poll for CABE (2002) reinforces this finding. It revealed that almost half of those who say they voted in the last council elections said they would be more inclined to support a different party if there was a significant deterioration in the quality of the local environment. A similar proportion of non-voters said that the issue alone would make them more inclined to vote next time. Clearly this is – or should be – a live political issue.

- 4.6 Unfortunately, many current public space management regimes are still largely based on the ‘traditional’ local government model (see Chapter 3). This presents a range of challenges and restrictions, principal among which are the uncertainties inherent in local political and discretionary contexts, and the failure to demonstrate and publicise added value. The management of external public space, and local authorities’ contribution to that management, is never likely to improve unless and until these challenges can be overcome. In the meantime, authorities will continue to get the blame when things go wrong.
- 4.7 In reality, much of the management of public space lies outside of the direct control of local authorities. Instead, responsibilities lie across a wide range of stakeholders, both public and private. Therefore although *Caring for Quality* is primarily focused on the role of the former, in most contexts, the delivery of high quality public space will be dependant on a partnership of interests working together (see Chapter 5).
- 4.8 The increasing complexity of public spaces as physical entities, as discussed in Chapter 2, is mirrored by the increasing complexity of the stakeholders engaged – either positively or negatively – in public space management. In part this is a result of the impact of the increasing numbers of private stakeholders with a part to play, including contractors engaged by, and working for, local authorities. It also reflects the diversity of public and semi-public agencies involved in managing public space.

Four key stakeholder groups

- 4.9 Broadly, stakeholders can be split into four key groups – local government (figure 18), public-private (figure 19), private (figure 20) and community (figure 21). Significantly, each of these groups has a very different set of motivations informing their approaches to public spaces, and few have the overall quality of space as a primary motivation. This complexity is compounded by the fact that the 17 sub-groups (belonging to one of four key groups) identified below each encompass themselves a complex range of stakeholders with different roles, interests and influences.
- 4.10 Planning authorities, for example, frequently have responsibilities for forward planning, urban design, economic development, development control, conservation, and enforcement, each of which has a separate, but important role to play in the creation and on-going management of public space. Similarly, environmental (street scene) services encompass a wide range of services that are sometimes managed together and sometimes separated across different local authority directorates (see Chapter 3).

Figure 18: **Local Government Stakeholders and their motivations**

Stakeholders	Typical Motivations
Local planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forward planning • urban design • economic development • development control • conservation • enforcement • building control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local planning encompasses a range of services that have a decisive impact on public space across policy, implementation and regulatory roles. At the policy level planning is motivated by a wide range of complex economic, social and environmental objectives, only part of which concerns the quality of public space. At the control level, much that impacts on public space quality is outside of their control i.e. permitted development. Going forward, planning is increasingly motivated by space quality, and by the impact of development activity (large and small) in creating new and modifying existing public space. A lack of skills (particularly in design) and resources has held back both the potentially positive, creative and proactive role that planning can play and authorities willingness to enforce planning control. • Building control impacts on public space through implementation of accessibility and fire regulations, and through policing on-site building works. Its motivation is purely technical, the delivery of the building regulations.
Highways and transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highways engineering • traffic management • street lighting • roads/pavement maintenance • street furniture • car parks • parking control • public transport coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways and transport is the responsibility of county councils in two tier areas, and of unitary authorities elsewhere (in partnership with Central Government the Highways Agency is responsible for trunk roads). Motivations have invariably been driven by three key concerns: rights of way (as opposed to qualities of place); a heavy emphasis on planning for vehicles as opposed to pedestrians and cyclists; and on vehicle flow speed and efficiency. Practice has been driven by an emphasis on engineering solutions and standard approaches to highway design as opposed to the qualities of particular places, and by a 'play it safe', rather than evidence-driven approach to pedestrian safety. • The 'engineering' driven approach has often been extended to pavements, roads and street furniture maintenance, with cheap (in the short-term), standardised approaches favoured, usually reflecting the 'corporate' livery and colours of the local authority whatever the context. • Car parking policy has often been driven on the basis of the line of least resistance rather than any clearly defined vision of balancing need with impact on the local environment. • Public transport (particularly local bus services and facilities) has rarely been a high priority in local government, and municipal bus stations, like many municipal car parks have suffered a lack of investment and vision. Within limited resources authorities will wish to deliver high quality, reliable public transport, but in order to do so, will tend to invest in services, rather than facilities.
Parks and recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sports and leisure • parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like many other aspects of non-statutory external public space, parks and external sports facilities have suffered a historic decline in resources and quality. Authorities tended to see parks and external sports facilities as a lower priority than other formal recreational facilities, and have had to reduce levels of management and maintenance in order to make a thinner slice of the resources cake go further.

Figure 18: **Local Government Stakeholders and their motivations** (continued)

Stakeholders	Typical Motivations
Environmental (street scene) services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • waste collection/recycling • environmental health • trader licensing • public toilet provision • street cleaning (fly-sweeping, poster, graffiti, abandoned cars, dumping) • landscape maintenance (trees, verges, hanging baskets, planters, public art, fountains, decorations) • town centre management (TCM) • events management • alcohol licensing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental category covers a wide range of local authority services concerned with managing public space. Collectively they have tended to be seen as routine local authority services that lack glamour and therefore political attention. Some services have a significant impact on public space quality, yet the motivation driving them is generally the efficiency and cost of delivery, the meeting of targets, or technical health concerns, rather than their impact on space quality. The unintended impact is often negative. Others have environmental quality more directly as an aim, although the tendency is to pursue minimum standards, rather than to enhance space over time. Like the first group, the tendency has been to contract out many of these services, and in so doing, to narrowly define each for the purposes of contracts. The local authority role is then reduced to a monitoring role. • The remit of TCM (which is often a separate semi-independent local authority service) is wide-ranging, and motivated by urban space quality, as well as town centre vitality and viability. Town centre managers focus on the delivery of many of the local authority services better in urban areas, in partnership with their retail partners. Town centre managers are sometimes also responsible for arranging and managing special events. Local authorities are also responsible for licensing premises for the sale of alcohol and are increasingly under pressure to grant extended licensing hours.
Housing (and estates) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • estate management • grounds maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing services are primarily concerned with housing their clientele, often to a minimum standard. Lack of resources and the expense associated with maintaining the poor quality post-war housing stock has reduced standards of grounds maintenance. As many spaces within social housing developments are effectively 'public', this has sometimes resulted in a poor perception of the quality of social housing. Other local authority estates services have suffered from the pairing back of budgets.
Policing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crime detection • crime prevention • traffic control • CCTV • street wardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police authorities are the combined responsibility of local and national government. Their focus is largely on reducing crime and the impact of crime on communities, but extends to the management of traffic. Their motivations are therefore focused on only a part of the space management agenda but have an important influence over both the design of new public space (through architectural liaison officers) and to maintaining day to day civility. • New space management approaches coordinated variously through the police and other local authority departments include CCTV and street/neighbourhood wardens. Each are concerned with deterring criminal behaviour, maintaining civility, and with maintaining a visible presence on the street.
Community Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town councils • Parish councils • Neighbourhood Fora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although formally part of local government, the role of town and parish councils is more informal but their interests are wide-ranging. They often have a direct role in funding small scale public space improvements and in the upkeep of open space and sports facilities. They are also active in representing their communities across the range of public space management concerns i.e. commenting on planning, highways, housing and policing matters.

Figure 19: **Public Private Stakeholders and their motivations**

Stakeholders	Typical Motivations
Licensed Operators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • billboard/street furniture • fly posting • gas/electricity • cable/telephone • water/sewerage/drainage • pay phones • Post Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising in public space functions through legitimate and non-legitimate operators, the former mainly on permitted billboards/hoardings and on a wide range of street furniture (bus shelters, benches, telephone kiosks, etc.), and the latter through flyposting or non-permitted billboards. Both have as their primary objective to maximise coverage and visual impact for their advertising. • Utility providers are concerned with the establishing and maintaining a high quality infrastructure network at lowest possible cost. They will generally not be concerned with the visual impact of their infrastructure on the street scene (whether above or below ground) or with the impact of street works. • Public payphone providers (and to a lesser degree the Post Office) will, within limits, be concerned about the visual impact of their equipment in order to encourage customers. They will also wish their equipment to make a positive statement about their company.
Public transport operators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • network rail • rail operators • bus operators • tram operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport operators will also wish to make a positive statement about their companies to customers and to thereby increase custom, through the quality of their stations/stops, but will also wish to control expenditure on non-essential maintenance to enhance profitability. They will generally not be concerned with the visual impact of infrastructure that is not directly at the customer interface.
Conservation agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Heritage • Environment Agency • British Waterways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation agencies will regard the quality of public space as a top priority and will from time to time offer grant aid to improve its quality. They will be particularly concerned that schemes are distinctive (not standardised) and sensitive to the historic context. As owners of public space themselves they will also be faced with many of the same management challenges as local authorities i.e. the cleanliness of canal towpaths.
Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regeneration partnerships • community safety partnership • local strategic partnerships • Local Agenda 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration partnerships (initiatives) will often aim to improve the quality of the environment as a key objective and the subject of direct investment. Occasionally, investments in the social and economic infrastructure will be undermined if comparable investments in the physical infrastructure are not made. • Community safety partnerships are focussed on reducing crime and the fear of crime at the local community level. • Partnerships will be concerned with a wide range of crosscutting and sometimes conflicting economic, social and environmental objectives and with enhancing the basic well-being of the communities they serve. Within this complex field of responsibility, local priorities will inevitably differ, and will be shaped by the representation in the partnership. Improving the management of public space is therefore frequently not identified as a priority in the resulting Community Strategies, although invariably different elements of the agenda are i.e. reducing crime, conservation, greening.

Figure 20: Private Stakeholders and their motivations

Stakeholders	Typical Motivations
Developers/contractors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• housing developers• commercial developers• contractors (both in construction and public space management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivations vary, but generally developers are concerned with developments that are buildable, marketable and profitable. Because marketability is affected by the quality of the environment, developers are concerned with these issues, but only to the extent that they do not impact negatively on profitability. This will be a commercial judgement based on the requirements of likely purchasers.• Contractors will rarely be concerned with the quality of the end product beyond delivering that which is specified in their contract with either the public or private client. They will generally do the minimum to meet the terms of the contract.
Property owners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• residents• businesses/institutions• investors• RSLs/landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property owners will generally be deeply concerned with the quality of the environment, not least because it will negatively or positively impact on the value of their investment, and on the quality of life of themselves (in the case of residents) or their employees (in the case of businesses) and tenants (in the case of investors, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and other private landlords).
Property occupiers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• residents• businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non owner occupiers will be less concerned about the knock-on property value consequences of public space quality. They will nevertheless be concerned about quality of life issues, and in the case of businesses, about employee productivity and the image their business environment suggests to clients.

Figure 21: Community Stakeholders and their motivations

Stakeholders	Typical Motivations
Residents' societies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• residents societies• tenants groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research indicates that the primary motivations of residents groups and societies and tenants groups focuses on the quality of public space, including issues of cleanliness and safety and security.
Special interest groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• amenity societies• campaigning groups• local chambers of commerce• faith and other social groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The motivations of special interest groups varies according to their remits. Many are concerned with maintaining or enhancing the distinctive qualities of their environment and with resisting proposals seen as detrimental to that quality. Chambers of commerce are more concerned with the impact of the environment on their business viability.
Community policing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• neighbourhood watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood watch is focussed on reducing crime and the fear of crime in residential neighbourhoods. This includes environmental crimes such as graffiti and vandalism.

4.11 Finding means to ensure that quality is factored into the decision-making logic of key players is therefore likely to be an important prerequisite for better quality public spaces. To achieve this, the public sector will need to take the lead role in public space management. Sometimes this will require guidance, sometimes incentive and sometimes control, but if authorities are not there to lead, then public space quality is unlikely to be secured. First, however, it will require an in-depth understanding on the part of key public space managers of the motivations of the full range of other stakeholders (public, private and community), and how to influence them.

4.12 Unfortunately, no single agency has overall responsibility to co-ordinate the actions of all the others. Even local authorities with their diverse powers (DEFRA, 2002, see Annex C, figure 90) frequently fail to take a joined-up approach on such matters internally. In part this is because the activities of their different services are themselves driven by very different motivations; many of which do not relate to delivering a better quality environment.

4.13 Highways authorities, for example, are often primarily concerned with the efficient flow of traffic and with the safety of highways users (including pedestrians). Their approach is invariably to give vehicles precedence while pedestrians are kept behind a surfeit of signs, barriers and lights to keep them safe. The reviews of street quality undertaken for CABE & ODPM (2002) and the Institution of Civil Engineers (2002) focused on these concerns (see Annex C, figure 80 and figure 81). Both reports argued that there is need for a clearer line of responsibility for public space, centred on local authorities.



Stakeholder views – towards consensus

4.14 Similar criticisms can be levelled at most stakeholders involved in the management of public space. The research indicated that not only are examples of successful co-ordination few and far between, but where found, are frequently restricted to small-scale (usually) one-off 'show-piece' projects, rather than being adopted as mainstream practice. Nevertheless, the national survey of current policy and the subsequent case study work as part of this research (see Annex B) revealed that authorities are now being inspired to question practice, and many are considering how to take a more proactive leadership role in the management of public space.

4.15 This central role for local authorities was strongly supported by the range of organisations canvassed as part of a review of key user group opinion undertaken during our research. The review included a wide range of professional institutes, government agencies and amenity societies engaged in the management of public

space. The exercise showed that although stakeholders are often divided by their motivations, when interviewed, the groups' representatives were remarkably united in their views concerning the priorities, barriers and opportunities facing local authorities and other external public space managers.

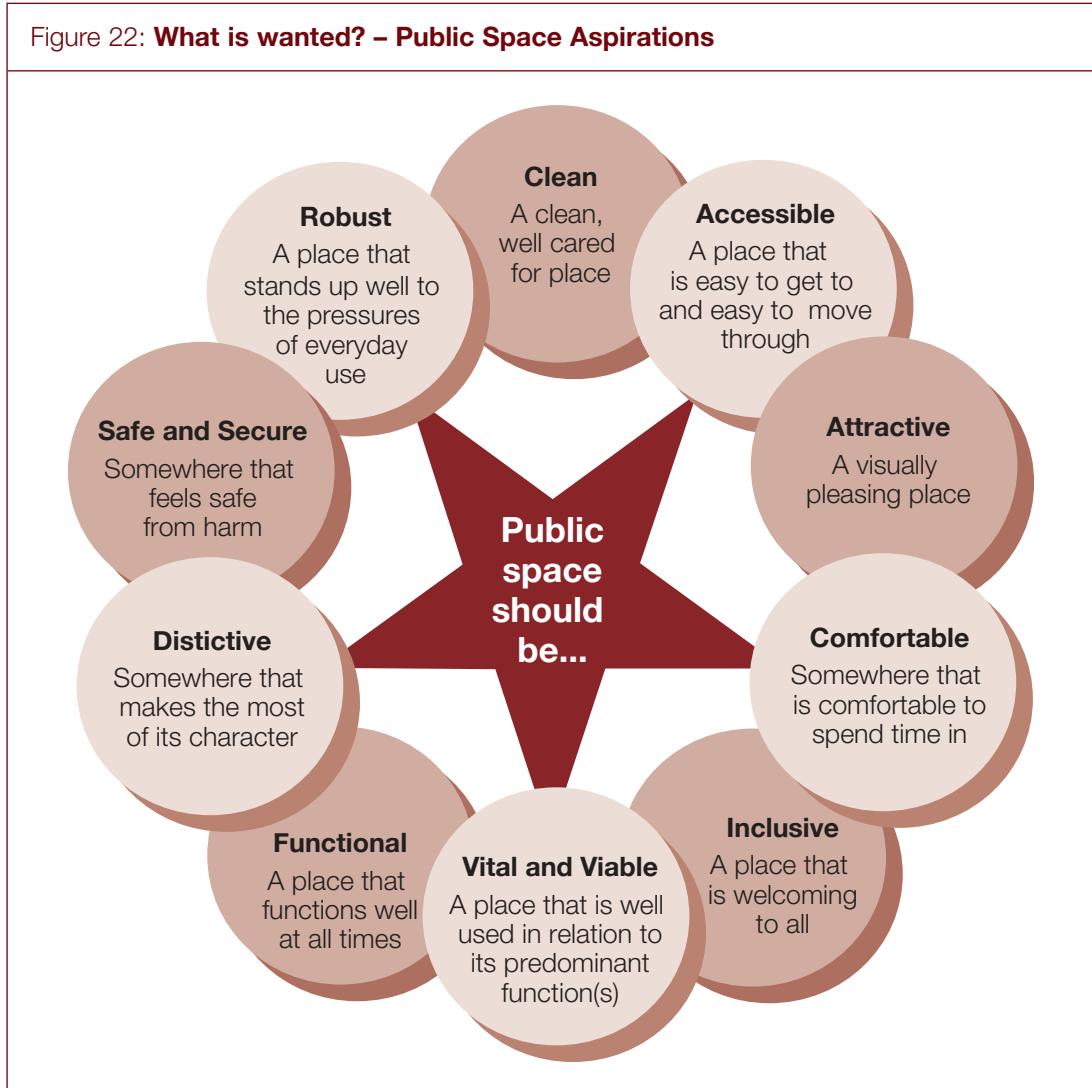
4.16 The organisations interviewed contended that public space remains a low political priority at the local level, and that a process of education is required to raise it up the agenda. They concluded that the barriers between the traditional 'silo'-based professional disciplines need to be overcome – both as part of the education process – and because key issues continue to fall between the gaps. They also argued that poor management skills continue to dog public space services. Stakeholders were remarkably consistent in identifying the important qualities of good public spaces – namely clean, safe, inclusive and robust space – and were aware that the complex interactions were poorly understood. Together, the stakeholder groups called for:

- Better co-ordination of activities – both in policy frameworks and delivery services.
- A move away from the philosophy that 'cheapest is best'.
- More resources for public space management, but also the better management of existing resources.
- An emphasis on the importance of routine maintenance through enhanced revenue budgets, rather than solely on projects and capital spending.
- Maintenance as an act of enhancement of public space, i.e. a positive attempt to improve standards rather than to simply uphold them.
- Good design to be factored in as a fundamental prerequisite for quality public space.
- Management regimes to be extended to private space if perceived to be part of the public realm.
- Better monitoring of public space quality, linked to more effective use of regulatory powers to better control public space.
- Relations between the public and private sectors to be mutually supportive, whether the private sector is operating as sponsors, contractors or partners in managing public space.
- The community to be recognised as an untapped resource to be more actively engaged in public space management.

4.17 Local authority views confirmed the last two of these objectives, emphasising what they saw as the core three-way partnership of interests between the public sector, private sector and local community.

A 'matrix of contributions'

4.18 The roles and responsibilities of the range of stakeholders can be viewed as a 'matrix of contributions' that input into the overall process of public space management. This matrix is shaped by the stakeholders' combined aspirations which in turn should, but it seems too often are not, be informed by wider public space aspirations. The aspirations identified below (figure 22) are based upon the ten key qualities of public space identified in Chapter 2. Fundamental amongst these are the need for the clean, safe and attractive streets, but these overarching objectives are related to and contained within a broader range of concerns inherent in the pursuit of more liveable public space that supports the complex and overlapping social, economic and environmental needs of localities.



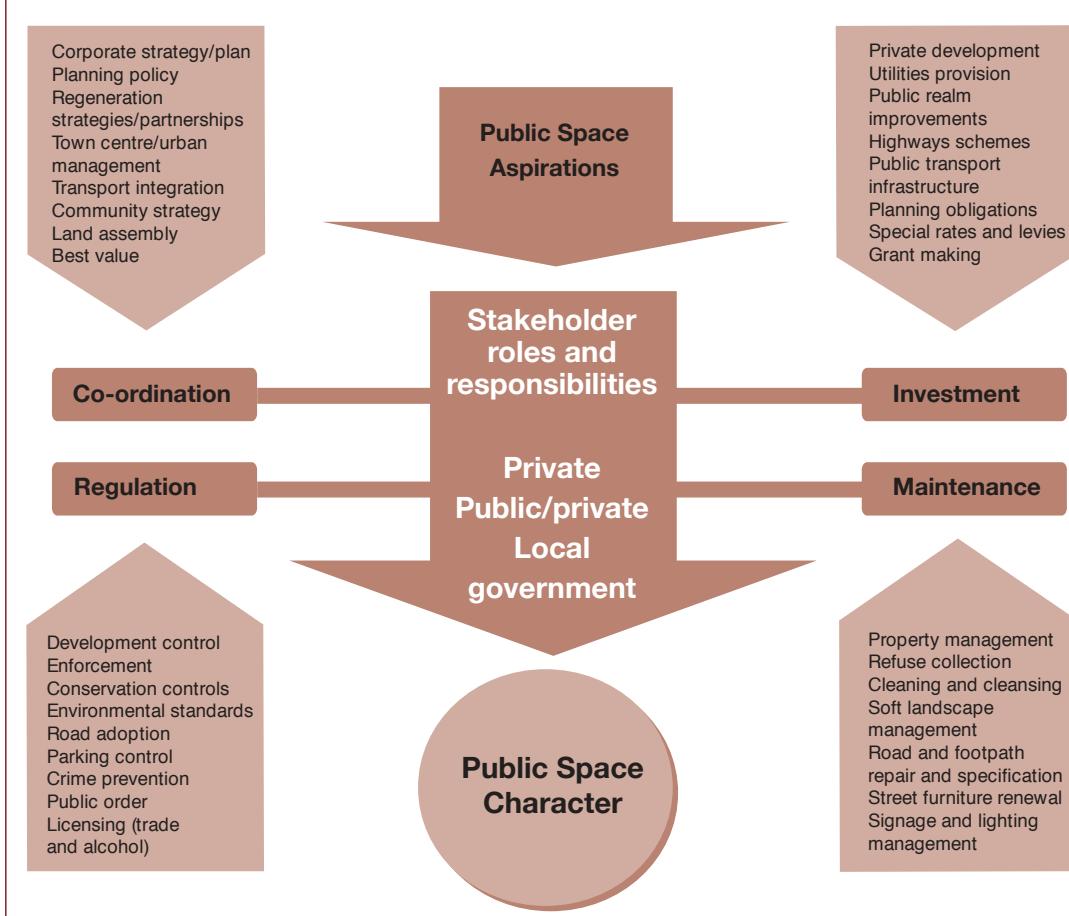
4.19 As identified in Chapter 3, there are four key barriers to stakeholders effectively meeting these aspirations. However the problems, pressures and challenges faced might equally be viewed as opportunities: opportunities for a radical rethink of priorities and processes; and opportunities to move towards more sustainable models of urban management. As such, stakeholders have four key delivery processes at their disposal to contribute to the management of public space and thereby meet these public space aspirations:

- Co-ordination. Co-ordinating the actions of themselves and others.
- Investment. Direct investment in the public realm.
- Regulation. Better use of statutory powers.
- Maintenance. The ongoing processes and public space management.

4.20 Collectively, the outcomes of stakeholders' actions will impact either positively or negatively on public space character. The objective should be to deliver outcomes that continue to change the character of public space for the better.

4.21 The matrix, presented below (figure 23) provides a robust basis upon which to examine current practice in urban space management as well as identify key issues and areas for more detailed investigation.

Figure 23: **A Matrix of Contributions**



Moving forward, improving practice

4.22 Part I of *Caring for Quality* has set out a process for thinking about public space and public space management, and the matrix of contributions illustrates how the often complex picture of the many stakeholders roles and responsibilities come together in shaping public space. Part I also illustrates that problems and difficulties can be recast as opportunities to challenge, rethink and move on. As discussed above, our four key barriers – co-ordination, investment, regulation and maintenance – reflect the four key delivery processes at the disposal of local authorities to move towards better management of public space.

4.23 Although Chapter 3 paints a generally weak picture of engagement with public space management issues, it is important to stress that our research revealed that a number of authorities are proactively rising to the challenges presented. The national 'Best Value' framework seems to be a driving force behind the use of strategies, where they exist, often tied to changes in organisational structure. Best value reviews are encouraging a number of initiatives that attempt to join-up street scene services through special working parties and projects through which to address recurring problems. Similarly, the rethinking of the structure and management of local authorities in light of the 2000 *Local Government Act* has similarly enabled authorities to start thinking through how they can better deliver services in their areas.

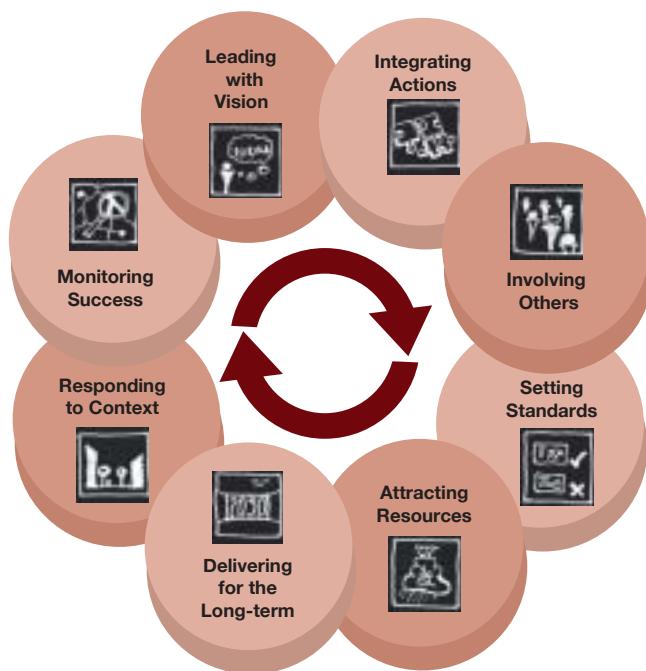
4.24 Whilst the initiatives respond very much to local need and context, examples of innovation and good practice identified can be classified into eight key types:

1. Explicit public space management strategies, aiming to establish and deliver a clear vision for public space and its management
2. Cross-departmental working structures and initiatives, aiming to better integrate public space management services – restructuring, co-ordination, devolution, champions
3. Initiatives aimed at better liaising with and involving a wider range of stakeholders – public, private and community – in the management of public space
4. Approaches aiming to redefine the standards required of public space management efforts – targets, guidelines, performance standards, specifications, training, award schemes
5. Attempts to attract more resources to the public space management agenda, both public (i.e. regeneration) and private (i.e. sponsorship, planning gain, business contributions)
6. Schemes aimed at establishing and setting long-term delivery standards, through exemplar projects that build-in long-term maintenance regimes, or through taking new powers (i.e. new byelaws), or better using existing powers (i.e. enforcement powers)
7. Initiatives that respond to the challenges of particular contexts, through dedicated area management regimes, personnel or designations
8. Investment in monitoring public space changes and initiatives, in order to better focus resources and better enforce decisions – audits, indicators, health-checks, peer reviews.

4.25 Although only a minority of authorities are actively engaged in more than a few of these initiatives, many new approaches to public space management cut across the different categories. Collectively, the different approaches suggest a set of corresponding objectives that might beneficially inform local practice: our eight categories can be considered as eight Crosscutting steps to better practice.

4.26 The eight crosscutting steps to better practice outline an iterative framework for public space management (figure 24). The framework starts and ends by monitoring the context in order to devise a plan for action. Part II of *Caring for Quality* uses these steps to explore each of the delivery processes – co-ordination, investment, regulation and maintenance – in turn and thereby relate the means of delivery to new ways of thinking.

Figure 24: **Eight crosscutting steps to better practice**



Integrating Actions – On the basis of the vision, carefully define and integrate all key responsibilities for planning and delivering the better management of external public space – cross-responsibilities, cross-departmental, intra-governmental and inter-agency

Involving Others – Be inclusive in developing strategies for the better management of public space, communicating with and actively involving private sector partners and the community wherever possible

Setting Standards – Aspire to deliver higher quality services and outcomes (public spaces) by actively challenging existing practices, design thresholds and specifications, and raising standards and expectations

Attracting Resources – Allocating sufficient core resources to the management of public space to deliver high quality public space, whilst actively seeking additional public and private sector resources to add value over and above established standards

Delivering for the Long-term – Invest and regulate wisely and for the long-term by thinking of management and development process and by building processes and places to last

Responding to Context – Carefully consider the particular requirements of the full range of local contexts, where necessary modifying standard space management approaches, or defining dedicated management strategies to avoid key areas falling through the gaps

Monitoring Success – Actively monitor the success and effectiveness of management processes and initiatives, including the well-resourced enforcement of public space infringements, and continually question, what could be done better?

Leading with Vision – Define clearly and early a vision for public space and its management that explicitly prioritises 'quality' as the first and overarching objective

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- The public expects local authorities to play the lead role in managing public space quality, regardless of the limitations on their statutory responsibilities.
- Public spaces are shaped by the actions of many stakeholders, who have sometimes very different motivations informing their approach to public space quality.
- Delivery of public space quality depends on the wide array of public, private and community stakeholders working together.
- Improving the quality of public spaces depends on factoring 'quality' into the decision making logic of all the relevant stakeholders.
- The four key delivery processes – co-ordination, regulation, investment and maintenance – provide the key means to deliver stakeholder public space aspirations.

part II:

The Delivery



part II:

- Offers ideas, information, advice, and recommendations across four detailed chapters, each dealing with one of the key delivery processes identified in Part I – co-ordination, investment, regulation and maintenance
- Uses the eight crosscutting steps to better practice from Chapter 4 as the means to structure the ‘delivery’ chapters and thereby relate the means of delivery to the idealised public space management process
- Provides examples of innovative practice from a wide range of case study authorities to illustrate the discussion

Who should read it?

- Part II is essential reading for all senior managers concerned with the co-ordination of local authority services that impact on public space
- Part II is essential reading for all managers of local authority services relating to public space
- Part II is important reading for all professionals, whether operating in the private or public sectors, whose activities impact on the quality of public space

How should it be used?

- Part II should be used to challenge existing practice
- The four delivery process chapters can be read in their entirety and consecutively, or dipped into for specific information and advice concerning particular approaches and/or public space management services

caring through better co-ordination



this chapter:

- Defines the nature of co-ordination in relation to public space management
- Relates co-ordination to the eight crosscutting steps to better practice
- Provides case study and other relevant material to illustrate innovative co-ordination practice

Definition

The better co-ordination by local authorities of their own actions and those of others.

- 5.1 Caring through better co-ordination is the first of the four possible means by which local authorities engage in the management of public space. It is an activity in its own right, and a concern that impacts on the other three management processes – investment, regulation and maintenance. It is the issue that local authorities most consistently fail to address, and yet because of the pressures on contemporary public space discussed in the previous chapter, it is also the most fundamental concern.
- 5.2 In essence co-ordination requires a re-direction of stakeholder motivations (see figures 18–21) to focus on the delivery of better quality public space. In considering how the best loved places were slowly created and cared for over time, the influential writer Christopher Alexander argued that every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city. This implies careful consideration about how each intervention, at whatever scale (road sign to urban extension), adds to or detracts from the whole. If this was taken as the starting point for all public space interventions, a more coherent public space could be delivered. It should start with stakeholders asking four questions:
 1. How does what is being proposed relate to what is already there?
 2. How does what is being proposed relate to what others are doing?
 3. How can both be enhanced through our actions?
 4. How can this be communicated to others?

Leading with vision

5.3 The process of better co-ordination should begin with a vision, not a physical vision, but a vision or strategy setting out about how activities will be better co-ordinated from now on.

5.4 Although examples can be found where individual local authority officers or small groups working from the bottom up have been able to drive change in council services, in a complex area like public space management, such attempts tend to be marginalised unless supported from above. Better co-ordination of public space processes and projects first requires an acceptance at senior officer and council executive level that joined-up efforts are likely to lead to more successful outcomes than the compartmentalised activities of the past. A number of means exist through which authorities are beginning to establish visions for a more co-ordinated future for public space services. These are both policy-based and practical. They should act as a constant reminder that caring for the quality of public space is a shared objective:

- Public realm strategies – adoption of clear and widely owned public realm strategies can be an effective way to create a framework for integrated service delivery and to harness organisational support across the local authority (figure 25). In two-tier areas it is vitally important that both tiers of local government (county and district) buy into the strategy, preferably preparing it together. Public realm strategies are of particular value because they cut across departmental structures, thereby establishing a common vision and set of principles for public space management. They usually include detailed guidelines and standards for streetscape design that can beneficially be distinguished by context (i.e. residential streets, high streets – see figure 96), or by street importance (i.e. principal streets and spaces, major streets and spaces, minor streets and spaces).
- Community strategies – which are increasingly viewed as the instruments through which the authority, in partnership with its wider community of users (the Local Strategic Partnership – LSP), establishes a future vision for their geographic area. It is particularly important that public space objectives feed into and inform the preparation of the community strategy as a means to share and extend the authority's aspirations to the range of local private and community stakeholders. The LSP should include representatives from the range of stakeholders whose activities impact on the management of public space.
- Urban design strategies – which establish broad urban design principles for areas (i.e. urban quarters), but which also include specific spatial design principles, including new development opportunities, connections, opportunities for new and enhanced public spaces, greening strategies and so forth. Urban design strategies are operationalised through a wide range of public and private initiatives, but usually remain strategic in their scale and are therefore more appropriate to guiding large scale investment decisions through the auspices of the statutory planning process. A key urban design issue and concern for public space management will be the quality of access to, and movement through the built

environment. Urban design strategies should be used to directly address these issues at their macro and micro scales – public transport, to space connectivity to barrier-free environments (see Annex C, figure 92).

Figure 25: Oxford, Public Realm Strategy

After traffic was removed from Oxford city centre in 1999, a public realm strategy was produced as a means to improve the centre. Whilst the city's historic college architecture provides a dramatic and distinctive street scene, increased traffic and a lack of investment in the city's public spaces has left the streetscape looking tired.

Commissioned and adopted by the city council, the Public Realm Strategy analyses Oxford on a historic, urban design, and policy basis, and suggests design ideas and guidance on a range of improvements to the city centre. The strategy also includes excellent guidance on how to manage public realm improvements following completion i.e. the need for maintenance manuals to ensure correct reinstatement and replacement, and principles to be followed by private utility companies.

Despite the positive investment in the strategy, implementation has proved problematic. Historic antagonism between the county (who as the highways authority have a large part of the public space powers and resources) and the city council has in the past resulted in limited co-ordination on public space services. The Public Realm Strategy suffered the same fate and was never adopted by the county council, ultimately limiting its impact.

Oxford have nevertheless succeeded in commissioning a high quality public space design framework that covers important management and maintenance issues, and establishes a clear vision for the city's streets and spaces. Work has now also begun on implementing the new streetscapes envisaged in the document utilising both county and city resources. The experience indicates that despite strong backing within the council at councillor and officer level, without co-ordinated preparation and joint ownership, improving public space can be made significantly harder.



Broad Street, Oxford

Carfax, Oxford

5.5 Beyond policy frameworks, establishing structures that can help to both develop the policy and practice agenda and act as constant advocates for high quality public space can also be valuable. The objective should be the creation of high-powered groups or individuals whose sole objective is to be a constant reminder, even a 'thorn in the side' of those charged with managing public space. These structures could identify good practice, point out when things go wrong, argue the case for quality, and providing leadership on all these fronts.

5.6 Three useful models were identified:

- Public space ‘champions’ – preferably appointed from the top, directly by the chief executive or council leader, to act as the advocate for public space, and to recruit interested staff within each relevant department of the local authority to champion public space issues within their own professional specialism.
- Cross-departmental street improvement groups – appointed from inside or (preferably) outside the authority to offer guidance and advice on public space management and to challenge what goes on across the range of departments (figure 26). In such cases, a multi-disciplinary membership is of value to lend expertise across the public space remit, with cross-departmental representation and powers to make recommendations to both council and its committees.
- Executive/cabinet responsibility – as a fundamental crosscutting objective impacting on a wide range of local government services, appointing a cabinet or executive member with a public space portfolio can help deliver and maintain strong strategic leadership. It can also help to ensure that public space receives due attention when key strategic and resourcing decisions are being made within the authority.

Figure 26: Leeds, Green Spaces Implementation Group

Leeds has undergone a widely publicised urban renaissance in recent years. One of its corporate targets was to create more green space for the city. However, in working towards this objective officers found that a mismatch between the resources being generated through section 106 contributions and what was being spent on the ground by the Leisure Department who are responsible for green spaces. Resources were not being channelled efficiently.

The Greenspace Implementation Group was set up in 1999 and operates at two levels with a strategic group and a site-specific group. The strategic group meets quarterly and is attended by staff from leisure, regeneration and community involvement teams. This group includes high-level decision makers and deals with broader strategic issues such as play space policy. It has demonstrated a high level of effective decision-making and is increasingly the focus of external lobbying.

The site-specific group deals with individual schemes coming onto or actually on site. Its membership includes 3-4 representatives from the Leisure Department; planning staff, landscape design staff, and financial project officers, and where relevant the Regeneration Unit and Community Involvement Teams. The groups are aimed at improving co-ordination but have found that overall working relationships have also improved as a result of the regular meetings between previously silo-based officers. They also provided fora for liaising with key stakeholder groups and bodies i.e. British Waterways and for inviting guest speakers.

Having two levels of group allows decision-making to remain relevant to those attending. The emphasis at site-specific level is on co-ordination, but it has also proved important for the lessons to be channelled to higher level staff on the strategic group whose members have appropriate decision-making authority.



Hyde Park, Leeds

Integrating actions

5.7 Complete integration of public space concerns also relies on co-ordination at the coal face – driving the delivery of services. This implies integration of structures and practices and is the very essence of better-co-ordinate practice.

Integrating structures

5.8 In order to improve co-ordination of public space management, a number of local authorities have taken advantage of the general restructuring processes underway in local government following the *2000 Local Government Act*. This has involved the integration of departments and service delivery structures. The process has included the creation of strategic departments encompassing services that were previously divided, as well as client and contractor functions.

5.9 Although anecdotally, authorities report benefits from the new integrated structures, for the most part it is too early to fully understand the long-term impact on public space management. Nevertheless, where undertaken, authorities have reported that bringing together all or most street services under one directorate and in physical proximity has often helped to improve communication and co-ordination between different services. Lessons include:

- Co-ordination should improve on existing performance rather than divide up institutional structures in different ways.
- The ‘cultural’ transformation implied by co-ordinated joined-up work within each department is therefore more important than the institutional restructuring itself.
- Any strategy/vision for public spaces should involve operational departments as well as those that manage statutory powers that have a bearing on public space quality (i.e. planning or highways).
- Increased delivery effectiveness seems to flow from merging client departments and in-house contractors into integrated Public Services departments (although having maintenance services entirely in-house may have disadvantages, especially in managing changes to work practices).
- Good results have also emerged from the creation of service departments bringing under one roof the management of urban spaces and green open spaces. This forms a basis for holistic public space management.
- The structure itself is not as important as clear lines of responsibility and well-developed relationships between those at the front end of service delivery.
- The advantages of ‘traditional’ structures in terms of skills and economies of scale should not be lost.

- 5.10 If more integrated departmental structures are part of the solution, then so it seems are more integrated political decision-making structures. Even when local authorities have different departments responsible for different aspects of public space, when public space services are integrated at member level it is likely that a more joined-up approach will be achieved. This is because chief officers have to report to a single member. In this regard, cabinet-style structures seem to have allowed for clearer responsibility for public space management at councillor level.
- 5.11 It is important that the quality of public space does not become a political football, but that its improvement represents a cross-party objective. The research delivered some salutary warnings that if the major parties in a council do not share ownership of public space management strategies, then changes in political administration can lead to changes in policy direction where the quality of public space and the quality of life of its users (the electorate) are the losers. In two-tier areas, this implies cross-authority agreement, even if that also means cross-party.

Integrating practices

- 5.12 Even without radical restructuring (either departmental or political) the benefits of integrating practices remains clear. A range of approaches can be suggested, ranging from the general to the particular:
 - Integrated area management – employed as an effective one-stop cross-responsibility service for dealing with a wide range of street management problems and opportunities. Street managers can provide the eyes and ears on location, able to activate the necessary response from service providers as and when required (figure 27).

Figure 27: Westminster, Leicester Square Action Team and Plan

As part of Westminster City Council's wider Civic Renewal Programme, the council initiated an action plan for Leicester Square and its surrounding streets. The action plan defines the vision for the area, covering the future desired 'atmosphere' for the square, as well as how planning and public space management powers will contribute to its delivery. The plan also includes a range of specific proposals with timeframes. The council went through three key stages to ensure agreement between the council, service delivery departments/agencies and local people and businesses:

1. A strategic overview of the area
2. Obtaining early 'buy-in' from the services that deliver in the area
3. An extensive consultation exercise on the proposed approach.

From inception, the proposals enjoyed the strong public support of the Council Leader, and are now being driven forward by a dedicated 'Leicester Square Action Team'. The team works on a problem-solving basis and has a multidisciplinary remit, but are not a 'do-it-all' self-contained department delivering all services in the area. Instead they act as catalyst for action, connecting problems with solutions. The team provides a first contact point for businesses, residents, service operators and other council staff and attend community and business meetings to identify problems at an early stage. The team then matches issues with the correct person within the relevant service for action.

The Leicester Square Action Team tracks all of the 'unplanned' actions that arise out of this process to ensure the desired result is achieved. In addition, the team monitors progress against the specific objectives listed in the action plan. The 'Leicester Square Action Plan' included provision for the expansion of a pilot uniformed city council presence in Leicester Square into a dedicated team of uniformed, radio-linked, wardens operating 24/7.

The wardens provide reassurance to visitors, and an on the spot council presence to co-ordinate services on the ground. Amongst other issues, the wardens address problems of litter, noise, faulty lighting, cracked paving, busking and illegal street trading. They monitor the outside of premises day and night, oversee the way in which vehicles use the Square, deal with safety problems, and are on hand to help in emergencies.



Leicester Square Vision (Icewit Design)

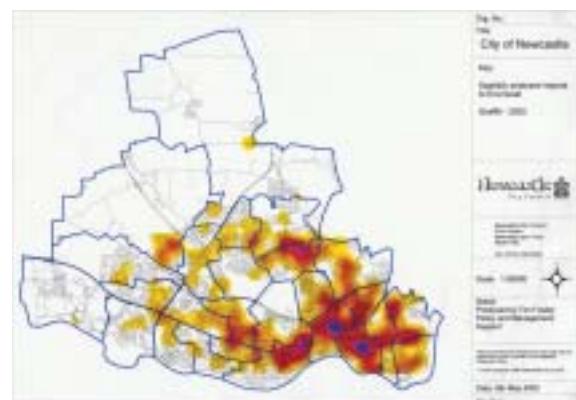
- Area management can relate to particular defined pieces of public space, housing estates or particular urban quarters i.e. town centres. Following pathfinder trials, integrated 'Neighbourhood Management' (NM) has been endorsed by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) as a key means of building partnerships between communities and service providers in deprived neighbourhoods.
- Regular senior officer meetings – between those responsible for public space management. Although such groups are without formal powers and responsibilities, they can be instrumental in sharing information, strengthening internal officer relationships (going beyond the senior level), and in discussing the programming of works, both routine and one-off (see figure 26).
- Cross-directorate working groups – complement strategic level groups by covering the practical issues of public space maintenance and its co-ordination. The objective should be the seamless delivery of public space services, whatever the local authority structure: from street lighting, highways and pavement repairs, to abandoned vehicles, graffiti, refuse collection, street cleaning, drug litter, fly-tipping, gully cleansing, grass verges, trees, dog fouling and litter bins.
- Single-issue forums – set up to focus energies and resources on particular problems. The 'Graffiti Forum' in Newcastle (figure 28), for example, provides a medium through which to co-ordinate a graffiti strategy and its delivery. The forum includes the council, the police, businesses, schools, and transport operators and meets regularly. Its remit includes monitoring and detection, cleaning, enforcement and education.
- Dedicated officers – to champion the needs of specific users of public spaces (i.e. the disabled) by working across departmental boundaries. Such approaches can help to instil new practices and programmes across existing departmental structures avoiding the need for a duplication of initiatives and expertise (figure 29).

5.13 Delivering more integrated strategies for public space requires that the tensions between local authority departments should be worked out. The research indicated that the resistance from highways departments in particular still represents a problem, including a reluctance to accept that the traffic function should be made less of a priority in the management of streets. The overriding objective of better integrating practice is to break down barriers of this type by agreeing shared objectives for public space and co-ordinating approaches for their delivery.

Figure 28: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a co-ordinated approach to graffiti

Newcastle City Council has taken a co-ordinated approach to tackling graffiti through a dedicated Graffiti Forum. The members of the Forum are wide-ranging and include representatives from the council, Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation Service, local utility companies, and transport operators. The Graffiti Forum developed a Graffiti Strategy and is responsible for its implementation in the following areas:

- **Monitoring** of graffiti has been improved through publicising that all council staff are expected to report graffiti immediately to the Envirocall public space call centre. Statistics from Envirocall are used to map and monitor graffiti incidents, detecting trends and patterns. Standard, obscene, and racist graffiti are all monitored at city-wide and ward level, as is the square footage of graffiti cleaned and the total graffiti jobs completed each month.
- **Cleaning** of graffiti has been improved through the use of a Graffiti Squad of four two-man teams. The squad have set response times to remove all graffiti reported to the council within 10 working days, and offensive graffiti within 2 working days. The squad also install two types of graffiti resistant surfaces on council buildings and street furniture, and provide the same service for businesses and utility companies for a small charge. Packs of graffiti removal materials are also given out free to businesses and community groups. Northumbria Probation Service provide a separate graffiti team of offenders who are trained by the graffiti squad to remove graffiti around the city using council equipment and materials.
- **Detection** has been improved through campaigns targeting offenders and specific areas by the police and local authority. Camera and surveillance equipment on vulnerable graffiti spots such as monuments and historic buildings have also proved an effective approach to detection. Further improvements in enforcement has followed from stakeholders on the Graffiti Forum sharing information on writers and ‘tags’ and by ensuring that all graffiti writers who are caught get prosecuted.
- **Education and research** has been improved by forum members financing research that involved consultation with the main graffiti writers in the city. It is hoped that some of the local graffiti writers will agree to police their own patch, and will participate in the Graffiti Forum. Other education schemes include meetings and talks in individual schools.
- **Good practice** is shared across the whole of the North-East Region with participation from local authorities in Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside.



Graffiti incidents across Newcastle – Envirocall call centre
(Newcastle City Council)

Figure 29: **Leeds, Access Officers**

Leeds has a strong record in making its public areas more accessible. Access issues have high-level support, and the council has a commitment to mainstream access concerns, partly in anticipation of legislative requirements. Access officers are encouraged to be proactive by: ensuring that access concerns are incorporated into new projects, bringing access issues in line with existing regimes such as maintenance, disseminating knowledge of legislation, training and awareness raising amongst staff, and liaising with stakeholder and representative groups.

Rather than having a single dedicated access team, Leeds has access officers placed within each department. The access officers co-ordinate very closely amongst themselves, with daily contact, but being based within the different departments has helped to mainstream access issues. For example the Access Officer in the Planning Department has developed a planning application screening and amendment process. In the Highways Department the officer has developed an access audit for use by maintenance staff to identify areas with access problems and integrate improvements into maintenance schedules.

The approach is resource efficient because it provides the opportunity for access issues to be addressed as part of routine programmes rather than as 'special' concerns. It also avoids the problem of access concerns being viewed as 'bolt-on' issues that are liable to be removed during cost-cutting. Having access issues fully integrated into policy and processes also makes it much harder for other stakeholders, i.e. property developers, to avoid access provision in final delivery.



Leeds City Centre

Involving others

5.14 A significant step forward to better co-ordination will be the involvement of the widest range of stakeholders in decision-making. For example, in setting up an area-based management scheme it will be important to agree on a strategic view of the area, to get involvement and commitment from all key services delivering in that area, and to undertake an open consultation on the strategic approach. This will lead

to an agreed approach and actions between the council, service providers, local people and businesses (figure 30).

Figure 30: **Westminster, Street Improvement Group and Joint Tasking Committee**

Westminster City Council initiated a Street Improvement Review Group in response to concerns that members' aspirations for a quality public realm were not being met. The group aims to deliver an integrated approach to activities and projects that affect the streetscape. The group is made up of approximately 25 officers, ranging in seniority and covering most council public space services.

The group meets on a monthly basis to provide critical analysis of potential street interventions and management initiatives. Participation in the review process by developers and external agencies is voluntary, although most see it as a welcome opportunity to gauge officer opinion or obtain guidance on particular initiatives. The group is quasi-independent and takes strength from the fact that they lack a place in the formal council hierarchy. For example, there is no requirement for its opinions to be reported to the planning committee and as a result proponents of new initiatives feel more comfortable submitting their schemes for comment.

Nevertheless the group is both influential, and proactive, for example acting as the driving force behind the development and review of the 'Street Furniture Manual for Westminster'. The manual aims to facilitate a high standard of design and management, both functionally and aesthetically, within the public realm. It also provides the basis for ensuring continuity of staff knowledge and experience.

Westminster has also set up a 'Joint Tasking Committee' as a way of resolving a wide range of multidisciplinary public space management problems, including the council's crosscutting Crime and Disorder Strategy. The committee has a multi-agency membership, which includes: planning, cleansing, police, social services, education, housing, customs and excise, immigration, the parking service, the wardens service, fire services and the primary care trust.



Westminster Street Furniture Manual

The committee meets monthly and its members are all at a decision-making level, crucially able to commit resources if required. This enables swift decisions to be made, and avoids the need for additional meetings. It has links to members and departmental reporting structures, as well as links to community fora.

5.15 Attempts are underway in proactive authorities to bring on board four significant audiences for public space policy and practice:

1. Other governmental tiers
2. The business community
3. The residential community
4. Other influential contributors

Local Government ► Local Government

5.16 The significance of councils working across tiers of local government has already been mentioned, but the failure to do so still represents one of the basic barriers to delivering better quality public space. Local authorities in two tier areas have a joint responsibility to ensure that both tiers are fully involved in generating a vision for public space and in agreeing how it will be delivered. Failure to do so risks compromising even the best conceived public space strategies. In Great Yarmouth, relationships have been improved through a combination of:

- Link officers, liaising with their respective colleagues at county level.
- Link meetings to deal with particular issues or areas of joint concern.
- The physical location of county offices in a one-stop shop in the Town Hall to aid communication and co-ordination between officers and the public.

Local Government ► Business

5.17 Regular discussions between council members and the business community have also proved to be a good way of expanding ownership of public space management strategies. The opportunities for more formal relationships between the authority and business communities in managing public space are discussed in Chapter 6. Even where contact is relatively informal – based on consultation rather than direct participation in public space management – there is value in engaging the business community as owners and occupiers of the private property that defines the limits and therefore much of the quality of public space.

5.18 The experience of the case study authorities pointed to the importance of getting all types of businesses involved, not just the big national retailers in area-based management initiatives. This not only helps to raise support for key initiatives, but also ensures the support of those with most to gain – the locally based businesses. It requires authorities to be clear about, and able to demonstrate how, businesses will benefit. In the case of the security shutters, for example, business gain by avoiding the graffiti and lack of perceived surveillance of both private and public realms that accompanies the installation of solid shutters.

5.19 One group of private interests that have sometimes been viewed as a negative influence on public space are building contractors. Although building works are vital to renew the building stock, the dirt, noise and hours of work associated with contracting activities can be problematic. Authorities can limit hours of operations when granting planning permissions, and encourage contractors to join the national 'Considerate Contractor' scheme (www.ccscheme.org.uk) which seeks to reduce the impact of building works on the surrounding environment. Authorities might also encourage suitable attractive hoardings or temporary advertising around sites to reduce the impact on the street scene.

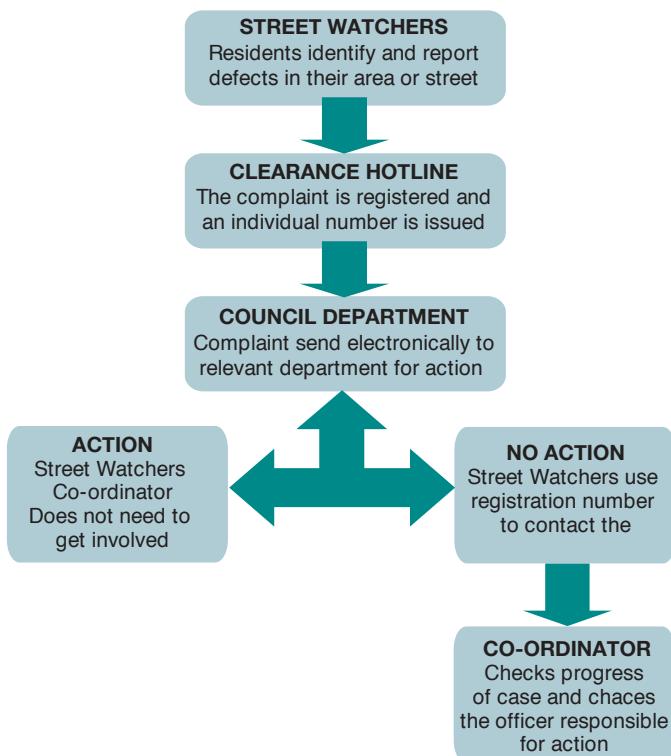
Local Government ► Residents

5.20 Local residents represent perhaps the most important constituency for space management initiatives, and therefore also for involvement. Like council/business relationships, resident involvement can be both formal and informal. Of the latter form, mutually beneficial involvement can be derived from building resident involvement into the aftercare associated with public space investment programmes. This works particularly well by initially involving those residents who are already active in reporting public space problems to their local authorities, and then expanding from there to develop a network of volunteers – ‘eyes on the street’ (figure 31).

Figure 31: **Waltham Forest, Street Watchers 1**

The Street Watchers initiative in Waltham Forest comprises local volunteers who report on problems effecting their immediate environment, but which relies for its success on the enhanced co-ordination of the follow-up delivery mechanisms. The initiative integrates with mainstream management but remains at arm's length from council operations; the only contact being the Street Watchers Co-ordinator who is responsible for the interface between the Street Watchers and service delivery through routine programmes. The initiative has led to improved services by keeping the pressure on officers to deliver.

Simplified Street Watchers Process



As most enforcement powers are within the same directorate, matters reported by the Street Watchers relating to private premises or land (i.e. overhanging vegetation, fly tipping, abandoned cars) can be dealt with quickly. However, delays in response times can arise when action involves other directorates who need to contact their own contractors before action is taken, or other agencies i.e. (electricity companies for street lighting) who do not necessarily share the council's priorities. Residents, however, do not distinguish between different agencies or departments.

5.21 Such initiatives can build on the voluntary safety-focused emphasis of initiatives such as the long-established Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The formal legitimacy that such schemes give the natural activity of watching out for others can help to raise resident confidence and encourage involvement and community capacity in areas where natural networks do not exist. Their social value extends well beyond their direct contribution to delivering the aims of the particular initiative i.e. safer streets.

- 5.22 Initiatives based on community involvement often work best as 'arms length' operations when they are perceived as coming from and representing the residents' interests first, rather than as the council acting on the residents behalf. They are also particularly useful for the authority in facilitating a feedback process. In this regard it should be the council's responsibility to create mechanisms for all public space stakeholders to come together and agree on the key issues and a strategy to tackle them, but thereafter it may be appropriate to quickly hand over responsibility for their management to local interests. The research indicated that initiatives are more likely to succeed if they are quickly 'owned by' their potential beneficiaries, and this is more likely to happen if they are championed by individuals with good community links and respect. This might mean local politicians, or other community leaders i.e. prominent business wo/men or religious leaders. Local area fora and more formal area committees provide possible models.
- 5.23 Likewise, utility providers, other licensed operators and public transport providers are major stakeholders and should be involved in initiatives aiming to better co-ordinate the delivery of public space services. Like RSLs, they will have their own management regimes for their properties (railway bridges, phone boxes, junction boxes, etc.), and specific arrangements have to be made in each case to meet their technical requirements at acceptable costs. Particular maintenance problems for this type of infrastructure are raised by the fact that it is often seen as a target for vandalism and fly-posting. Communicating the extent of these problems locally and getting agreement to act in partnership to address them as and when they arise rather than on set maintenance cycles can be effective in preventing problems getting out of hand.
- 5.24 Finally, the involvement of schools in public space management initiatives can be particularly effective on two grounds. Firstly, as a means to get head teachers to sign up to a charter of responsibility for keeping their grounds clean and tidy. Secondly, as a means to promote environmental stewardship amongst school children. Involvement on this level can help to reduce environmental crime by giving school children a sense of ownership for their local environment. This is regarded by many local authorities and police forces as a vital component of public space management, reflecting the truism that prevention is better than cure.

Local Government ► All

- 5.25 The challenge for local authorities will be to co-ordinate the involvement of the full range of stakeholders, in part to prevent the skewing of public space objectives towards particular sectors to the detriment of others. To achieve this it may be fruitful to establish joint initiatives and shared strategies from the start as a means to build a common understanding between the main public, private and community stakeholders. This means that attention should be paid to the process of building shared strategies and not only to the strategies themselves.
- 5.26 Council led fora attached to the new overarching directorates (i.e. environmental fora attached to environmental directorates) that include representatives from other public bodies, businesses and voluntary sector organisations have proved useful in providing inclusive arenas for agreeing shared public space strategies – including spending strategies and priorities. Having all stakeholders on board from the start has

helped to reduce problems of conflicting agendas and poor communication, and has helped to build consensus (figure 32). Sometimes these are better handled at a more local level than for the authority as a whole. This allows residents and businesses to identify more clearly with the context under consideration i.e. Eco panels attached to ward stewardship schemes.

Figure 32: **Great Yarmouth, Environmental Forum and Public Space Working Group**

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has improved co-ordination of public space services through two key initiatives. In 1999 the council was restructured into three cross-cutting directorates, economic, social, and environmental, with most public space services falling under the Environmental Directorate. Each directorate has its own 'forum', a partnership of numerous stakeholders (public and private sector organisations, individuals, and businesses) that is led by the council. The Environmental Forum meets quarterly, has over forty member organisations, and regularly discusses strategic public space issues. Each forum has a strategy covering its aims and remit prepared by its members. Thus the Environmental Forum aims to attract investment and aid communication about, and enhance ownership of, key public space initiatives. These aims feed into the council's corporate strategy – its '2020 Vision'.

Public space issues are also discussed and implemented through a Street Scene Working Group which is less strategic and more pragmatic in nature. This in-house cross-directorate working group of borough and county officers, public space operatives, and the borough councillor with the environmental portfolio offers a forum to discuss specific public space issues, to share information, and to consider new ways of working. The group has helped to create a co-ordinated cross-authority approach to public space management, cleansing, and maintenance.



Great Yarmouth beach (Great Yarmouth Borough Council)

Setting standards

- 5.27 Setting standards relates to both standards of service and outcomes. As regards better co-ordination, the former is particularly important and is addressed here.
- 5.28 A key objective for involvement should be the establishment of new standards of openness and trust through enhanced communication. This is a prerequisite for successful partnership between public authorities and their private partners, based on confidence that private investment decisions (no matter how small) will be supported by public decisions and vice-versa (see Chapter 6). In this regard, if the local authority is seen to be delivering high quality public space services, it is more likely that private stakeholders and the community will play their part in public

space management. The alternative can be a spiral of decline where the perception is quickly formed and reinforced that no one cares.

5.29 To encourage a 'caring culture' (as opposed to a non-caring one), it is vitally important that:

- Stakeholders (particularly the public) understand where the responsibilities lie in the provision of the various public space-related services, so that the correct parties can be contacted when services are required, and so that pressure can be brought to bear on the right organisations if services are not up to the desired standards.
- The public and other stakeholders are quickly and easily able to contact relevant public services when things go wrong.

5.30 To deliver on both fronts and to set new standards of service, authorities need to set themselves (and publicise) the challenging standards they aim to meet, and provide adequate opportunities for communication with their customers. The role and impact of 'Best Value' standards is discussed in Chapter 8, but in relation to co-ordination and communication two approaches should be flagged:

- Protocols – which can be agreed between public, private and community stakeholders to establish a framework for joint working: including standards of service, standards of outputs, codes of practice and joint working arrangements. Mutually agreed protocols between local authorities and private utility companies have proven particularly effective.
- Call centres – for all public space matters, have proven popular with residents. Examples in Newcastle, Greenwich and East Riding have enabled residents to make a single call raising a public space issue, whilst the call centre staff ensure that the appropriate council department responds. Even when the council is not the legally responsible party, call centre staff can pass on the information to the relevant organisation (i.e. the Environment Agency). In so doing, they help to provide an integrated point of entry to a wider network of public space services (see Chapter 8).

Attracting resources

5.31 Although the better internal and external co-ordination of public space management services can bring significant resource savings over the long-term (see Chapter 6), it is likely that attempts to co-ordinate will carry an up-front set-up cost that will need to be met in the short-term. This resource implication will make itself felt in the new infrastructure required for some initiatives i.e. call centres, or increased mechanisation. However, for most initiatives the most significant up-front resource implication will be the staff time required to analyse current practice, develop new strategy, bring on board other stakeholders and reorganise practice. Although new or external resources might be attracted for some of this expenditure, it is likely that much will have to be found from within existing budgets, perhaps putting services under pressure before benefits are felt further down the line.

5.32 This is inevitable, and will require particular attention to ensure that established services do not suffer whilst new systems are being devised and put in place. Experience from the most innovative authorities indicates that, just as in many of the most successful private businesses, much of their success is built upon a continual questioning and refinement of practices, rather than on 'big bang' changes. In this respect, the resources for innovation in practice, including better co-ordination of services, should be built into mainstream budgets as an ongoing top-sliced overhead. Alternatively, the *2003 Local Government Bill* aims to give successful authorities greater freedoms to borrow the necessary resources for particular investments that they perceive are in the interests of their communities.

5.33 A key challenge for authorities, whether digging into their own budgets, levering in resources from elsewhere, or borrowing resources, will be to ensure that new practices and procedures pay back the initial investment with dividends, so freeing up resources over the long-term for reinvestment in core public space services. The better co-ordination of services offers this potential.

Delivering for the long-term

5.34 Like the need to set standards, the need for a long-term view of delivery relates to both the processes and outcomes of public space management. As regards better co-ordination, a number of characteristics are important:

- Long-term commitment of both officers and members to establishing a new policy and delivery framework, and to driving through change. In Birmingham, for example, the commitment to an integrated public space strategy has a 15-year pedigree, over which time the benefits for the city have become steadily more apparent.
- Political continuity throughout such a period can help in achieving long-term goals, but active cross-party support can make up for the lack of it. Having a balance of the main political parties in the locality represented on key decision-making bodies can help to ensure that plans and strategies remain unaffected by political change (figure 33).

Figure 33: Great Yarmouth, Seafront Management and Regeneration

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is soon to implement wide-ranging changes to its seafront, demonstrating an integrated approach to public space management and regeneration. The initiative results from a partnership between the council, tourist authority and local tourist industry, with the common objective of increasing visitor numbers through re-branding and regenerating the beleaguered seafront, heritage quarter, and town centre. The objective is being achieved through a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, known as GYTA, with key stakeholders represented on the company's board.

The regeneration plans have been worked up by a working group with high-level political and officer representation, including the Council Leader and Chief Executive. To deliver a consistent political emphasis, the group contained members from all political parties as a means to buffer the proposals against changes to political administration.

In 2003 the council will devolve all income and expenditure functions for the seafront to the GYTA company. In partnership with the private sector, the autonomous company will manage the whole seafront, collecting car parking, lease, and licensing revenue, and having control of all the seafront, public spaces and the associated management and maintenance contracts. At officer level a multi-skilled workforce will be seconded into the company from a range of council services.

Public space operatives will belong to multi-skilled teams carrying out beach cleaning, street sweeping, toilet cleaning, and grounds maintenance in area zones. The company will also oversee the regeneration of the seafront.



Great Yarmouth seafront vision
(Great Yarmouth Tourist Authority)

- Having senior members and officers involved in driving initiatives forward (i.e. represented on the board of area management companies) to give decision-making clout, ensure that strategies are implemented, and to inspire confidence among private sector partners.
- The early co-ordination of planning, design, implementation and maintenance personnel in joint teams formed to see projects and initiatives through to completion. The co-ordination of working practices over the long-term is more important than whether officers are in the same or different departments.
- Instigation of means and mechanisms through which residents can influence and feedback to teams at key junctures.

5.35 Some authorities have adopted particular management models such as the European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM) as tools to evaluate existing practice, and develop new long-term performance management structures. These tools are recommended by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA, 2002) as useful complements to the 'Best Value' framework, particularly for critiquing existing practice. A variant on the EFQM developed specifically for streets is the Street Excellence Framework (SEF) discussed in the Institution of Civil Engineers (2002)

report 'Designing Streets for People' (figure 34). The value of such models is in helping to structure thinking about how to organise resources, policies and strategies to deliver enhanced results for employees, customers and society.

Figure 34: Street Excellence Model

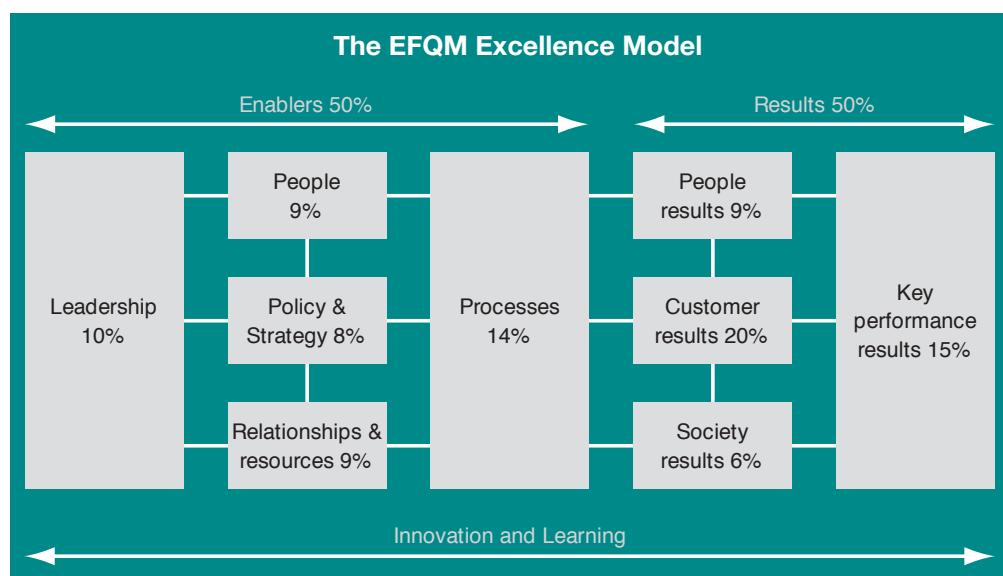
The Street Excellence Framework (SEF) – takes the concept of the European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM) and applies it to the public realm in a simplified form. It provides a self-assessment tool for local government and others to:

- Evaluate current practice and performance
- Monitor and provide a comparison over time and place
- Identify actions to remedy gaps and improve performance.

SEF focuses on providing a toolkit for delivering quality and excellence in the public realm – applying the principles of 'total quality management' to the street scene. It requires and enables a partnership approach to be developed for the management and maintenance of public spaces; whether commercial or residential in nature.

The quality of public space is to be a focus for attention as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessments of local authority services. Local authorities will be required to undertake self-assessment across the theme of 'public space' and to engage the community as part of this process. Identifying ways to improve this complex interaction of services is critical to improving the quality of life and the sustainability of places. The Street Excellence Framework provides a possible way of undertaking this task.

The heart of the process is the conduct of the 10-point self assessment using the Street Excellence Framework. This creates a baseline statement for the street and provides a basis against which progress can be monitored in the future. Following the process can also give measurable outputs and quality assessment data for a wide range of performance and service reviews, both internally and externally. Further information can be found at www.streetexcellence.com.



(ICE, 2002)

Responding to context

5.36 The expectations of different communities throw up different challenges. Attempts by local authorities to better co-ordinate private, public and community activities and responsibilities for public space management will need to be sensitive to these different contexts. This will involve engaging other key stakeholders when possible in 'value-adding' activities, but otherwise offering the same high quality service throughout their area of responsibility. Interviews with local residents undertaken during the research leading to *Caring for Quality* covered a wide range of socio-economic contexts. They suggested that although residents in some areas seemed to expect more from their local authority than others, this did not relate to either the predominant tenure patterns in the area, or to the socio-economic profile of interviewees. Nor did the willingness of residents to accept that the community as well as their local authority had a part to play. Although the research findings on this issue were not definitive, it seems that some communities simply expect more from public space service providers than others who are more willing to accept a shared responsibility.

5.37 The devolution of powers to the ward level may be an effective means of engaging communities or otherwise identifying and acting upon local priorities. Liaison teams at the parish/area level linked to an overarching department have proved effective. Such teams work with relevant contacts in each department to deliver a comprehensive service. These approaches have proved particularly successful in rural areas where the geographical dispersal of communities can reinforce the impression of isolation from centralised local authority services (figure 35), despite the fact that rural communities share many of the same public space problems as their urban counterparts.

Figure 35: East Riding, Parish and Area Liaison Managers

The Director of East Riding's Operational Services Department (the super-department containing most street scene services) aimed to develop a strong corporate culture of service delivery. The Director meets with heads of service daily, works closely with senior managers and puts emphasis on training and performance management. Managers also have strategic monthly meetings with the Director and have an annual away day for setting targets and discussing performance issues.

The structure of the Operational Services Department is based on specialist units. These service units provide the council with economies of scale. The council therefore felt that better co-ordination was required to improve performance, rather than restructuring. The Parish and Area Liaison Team was created to work across service unit disciplines and to take a proactive approach to identifying opportunities for service delivery improvements. The Liaison Team is funded by an overhead on the individual service units.

The team works with the parish and town councils and uses information from Customer Services to identify needs, priorities and areas of key concern. The team will then work with the relevant service units (i.e. street cleansing, grounds maintenance or highways) to evaluate the relevant local services in a geographical area and to deliver a co-ordinated solution. All the Parish and Area Liaison Managers have a technical background which gives the team valuable knowledge about the service units they aim to co-ordinate; including their constraints and potential for improvement.

Parish and Area Liaison Managers will work with parish councils and stakeholders in particular villages to put together a comprehensive plan for maintenance work and improvements, the aim being to co-ordinate delivery with the various service units undertaking the work in one go. The Manager will then develop a corresponding new maintenance schedule and monitor its progress. This system of village-based service teams has helped to co-ordinate district council and parish council resources.



Toll Gavel in Beverley,
East Riding

Monitoring success

5.38 A number of specific approaches to monitoring are discussed over the next three chapters. Here the case is simply made that there is a need to bring – as far as possible – evidence on progress across the different strands of public space management together in one place. This will allow:

- Some assessment of effectiveness.
- Informed resource allocation decisions to be made.
- Comparison of performance between the different public space (and other) service areas.
- Comparison with practice in other authorities.

5.39 The role of the community strategy has already been identified as the most appropriate place to set out and bring together service objectives as part of an overall vision for public space. It is also the most appropriate place to establish a set of authority-wide performance targets (figure 36). Targets should build on the national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) to identify crosscutting indicators that will measure whether and to what extent the authority as a corporate entity, as opposed to its individual services, is meeting the public space vision established in its strategy.

Figure 36: **Camden and Salford, Setting Targets for Action**

Both the London Borough of Camden and the Metropolitan Borough of Salford have gone through a process of partnership creation and consultation to develop their community strategies. In order to monitor the implementation of the strategies over time, a range of specific targets are established under each key strategic theme (96 in Camden and 55 in Salford). Each authority aims to produce annual action plans to set out new targets and identify how they will be met. Camden's first action plan, for example, systematically describes each target and identifies:

- When the target will be met
- Who will take the lead in that process
- Who else will be involved
- What actions will be required to meet the target
- What resources will be required to achieve the target
- How progress will be monitored
- How success will be demonstrated



For Target 74 on the better design and management of streets, for example, key responsibility falls with the Director of Environment, aided by the police, businesses, local community, public utilities and leisure and housing departments. By 2005 the authority aims to develop new processes for urban management, including reducing street clutter and investing in infrastructure. The capital programme will meet some of the resources required with the rest derived through more joined-up public/private working. Progress will be monitored by customer satisfaction surveys, analysis of the quality of finished work, and analysis of trips; and success will be demonstrated when satisfaction ratings of over 70% are achieved and the external auditor's reports are favourable.

5.40 The use of crosscutting authority-wide performance indicators supplemented by sets of challenging service indicators relating to the range of constituent public space management services can be particularly effective. Newcastle-upon-Tyne uses:

- 'Portfolio plans', tying relevant initiatives to a particular theme in the council's community strategy and including performance scorecards to allow each portfolio to be compared with one another in terms of their achievements.

- 'Urban Housekeeping Plans', which are non-statutory internal documents designed to demonstrate to city residents how public space services are being delivered and what future plans exist. These incorporate relevant national and local performance indicators.

5.41 A range of relevant public space performance indicators selected from the Library of Local Performance Indicators website (www.local-pi-library.gov.uk) are included as figure 37.

Figure 37: Possible Local Indicators

Subject	Specific local performance indicator
Community involvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of residents who feel that the council takes notice of residents' views 2. The percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live 3. Percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously 4. Satisfaction of tenants of council housing for opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord
Community safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Percentage of residents surveyed who said they feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' during the day whilst outside 6. Percentage of residents surveyed who said they feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' after dark whilst outside 7. Percentage of car parking covered by a Secured Car Park award 8. The percentage of streetlights not working as planned
Cultural Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Percentage area of the authority's parks and open spaces which are accredited with a Green Flag Award 10. The number of playgrounds and play areas provided by the council per 1,000 children under 12 11. The number of sports pitches available to the public per 1,000 population 12. Area of parks and green spaces per 1,000 head of population 13. Total net spending per head of population on parks and open spaces
Environmental services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Percentage of visits to collect syringes and needles discarded in public places undertaken within the target time 15. Percentage of local companies with Environment Management Systems 16. The percentage of highways that are either of a high or acceptable level of cleanliness 17. The average time taken to remove fly tips 18. Percentage of pavements inspected containing dog fouling 19. Number of prosecutions for dog fouling per 10,000 population 20. Percentage of prosecutions for dog fouling that were successful 21. Number of dog waste bins provided per km² of relevant land and highways for which the authority is responsible for keeping clear of litter and refuse

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- Define a clear vision of where you want to go and how you plan to get there.
- Ensure strong cross-party political backing for the common vision.
- Care of public space is a partnership – there are clear advantages to be gained from the breaking down of barriers between service providers – public and private.
- In two-tier areas, a joint commitment for public space is required, with clear and accountable lines of responsibility.
- Be aware of the complexities of multi-agency working, particularly as regards roles, responsibilities, and funding – there will always be a set-up cost.
- Successful partnerships require the three C's from all partners: consensus, clarity and certainty.
- Public space quality is central to successful regeneration.
- Ensure commitment and time is given from the top, but that decision-making powers are devolved to key staff and fora.
- Join-up contributions, but do not lose sight of the advantages of large single purpose departments.
- Publicise initiatives internally to ensure that new lines of responsibility are fully understood.
- Get the community on board and involve them in decision-making and directly in public space management.
- Get frontline staff and their unions on board early when change is proposed.
- Pilot radical changes to both process and specifications, and be prepared to learn from early mistakes.
- Invest in area-based approaches to managing public space.

Chapter 6

caring through better investment



this chapter:

- Defines the nature of investment in relation to public space management
- Relates investment to the eight crosscutting steps to better practice
- Provides case study and other relevant material to illustrate innovative investment practice

Definition

The adequate and sustained investment in new and existing public space quality.

- 6.1 Better investment implies the more effective use of the considerable investment that collectively goes into public spaces each year from across the range of public and private stakeholders. It implies that more of this expenditure should be reflected in an improvement in the perceived quality of public spaces. This is not to deny that a considerable and sustained under-investment has characterised public space management in England. Indeed, the Urban Task Force argued that despite real-terms increases in overall public expenditure, the share reaching public space services as part of the Standard Spending Assessment 'Other Services Block' has declined in real terms and in particular relative to other service areas. This they argued can be put down to the perceived low status of these services. More recently, the Urban Green Spaces Task Force confirmed that parks and open spaces have also suffered from what they called a "catastrophic decline" in resources (see Annex C, figure 84).
- 6.2 The 2002 Comprehensive Spending Review announced increased funding for mainstream local authority budgets that impact on public space. Nevertheless, as with many problems effecting the built environment, although the first reaction is sometimes to call for more resources, it may be that the wiser use of existing resources could go a long way to solving many public space problems. Thus the environmental charity ENCAMS (2002) have argued that the problem is not so much the extent of resourcing but the way it is spent. As a simple example, prior investment in traffic management schemes that through their intrinsic design slow traffic speeds, will thereafter save considerable resources on the high maintenance infrastructure that would otherwise be required to separate pedestrians and vehicles and slow traffic down (and which is so damaging to visual quality). Four questions might be asked of each investment decision, no matter how small:
 1. Is this investment required?
 2. How will it impact on the perceived quality of the public space?
 3. How can it be optimised to enhance the public space?
 4. Can it be better directed to complement and encourage other investment?

Leading with vision

- 6.3 Vision implies the foresight to invest early and wisely to reap enhanced benefits further down the line. Both public and private resources are required to ensure that high quality environments are delivered and maintained, but much of the earliest investment may need to come from the public sector if the private sector is to be given the confidence to raise its sights. For example, investing up-front in better design guidance to control alterations to buildings may save both public and private resources further down the line in enforcement and needless appeals. Alternatively,

investing directly in the quality of public space, for example through new streetscape design, may over time lever in considerable private sector resources.

6.4 Investments, including most famously the network of public spaces in Birmingham (figure 38), but also more recently the dockside schemes in Bristol, the regeneration of the Tyne in Newcastle and Gateshead, or Warrington's new public realm, are delivering private investments many times in excess of the original public investments. In each of these cases, the maintenance approaches have been embedded into the schemes from their conception in order to deliver sustainable management into the future.

Figure 38: **Birmingham, Streets and Squares Strategy 1**

In the late 1980s Birmingham had to address the loss of its manufacturing base and reinvent itself. The city had inherited a highways dominated environment, and the council through the streets and squares strategy sought to restore the fractured environment and link the centre to the distinctive quarters surrounding the city's core. Political continuity and ongoing commitment to the strategy has enabled Birmingham to implement the wider vision after the initial impetus resulted in Centenary and Victoria Squares in the early 1990s. These early successes ensured that the initiative received budgetary priority driven by the long-term need to lever-in new private investment into the city.

The initial commitment amounted to £5million per year over five years, including money from the European Fund to pump-prime the project and as a lever for private sector investment. Private sector involvement in delivering the streets and squares strategy began in the early 1990s at a time when the business community still lacked the confidence to locate in the city centre. Following the city's lead, the developer of Brindleyplace recognised the value of high quality external space as a showcase for the development.

In Brindleyplace the developer has built the external spaces to a very high specification and has set up long-term management structures to safeguard the initial investment as well as the environmental quality of the development. The high levels of maintenance have set a new benchmark for the rest of the city and show what extra resources can achieve, setting the scene for a future Business Improvement District (BID) in Birmingham as a mechanism for raising revenue.

Initial successes are being continued with the redevelopment of the Bullring, an extension to the retail quarter, where the council was instrumental in bringing together the two major landowners and negotiating the provision of a new square. Eastside, a neglected area adjacent to the Bullring, is to be the next project, and involves the delivery of the first new park within the city centre; thus helping to address the city's shortage of green space.



Victoria Square, Birmingham



Centenary Square, Birmingham

6.5 In Birmingham, the vision shown and demonstrated over a considerable period of time by both officers and politicians, and in particular the willingness of the authority to invest its own resources (including property) in the new public space network, quickly won over sceptical minds. In the Brindley Place development, the two new squares were scheduled to be provided as part of the final phase. However, as a testimony to the success of Birmingham's strategy, the developer was persuaded to build them at the start of the development programme, an investment that in turn attracted early tenants and other investors.

6.6 Authorities need to decide how they wish to establish and promote their public space vision, which should be cross-departmental and multi-stakeholder in its aspirations and endorsement. The use and value of public realm strategies, community strategies and urban design strategies have already been discussed in the previous chapter, but three further tools are particularly valuable in linking broad policy objectives to delivery through investment:

- The corporate plan – Cases where public space strategies are co-ordinated by the executive body of the local authority seem to achieve particular success by securing cross-departmental co-operation and tying public resources to their implementation. Linking those strategies to the council's corporate plan, as instruments for its delivery can be useful. From there, objectives can cascade to the wide range of policy frameworks, plans and guides that authorities produce across the range of different services. Foremost amongst these will be local development frameworks, local transport plans, and urban regeneration strategies (see Chapter 7).
- Urban regeneration strategies – which with their economic development focus can help to tie both public sector resources and levered private sector investment to the delivery of enhanced public space. The tendency with such strategies is to factor in capital spend without considering the long-term revenue expenditure required for management processes. The research indicated that with the involvement of all relevant local authority departments, the opportunity exists for the integration of both, from strategy to design to maintenance.
- Masterplans/urban design frameworks/development briefs – which provide a physical framework for the design and development of new areas and for the regeneration of existing areas. Because they establish design principles and tie these to particular contexts and sites, they provide the ideal basis for establishing a public space vision and linking it to resources for delivery. Again, the challenge is to build in long-term maintenance requirements as well as an initial project vision. Increasingly these documents are likely to be formally adopted as action plans in the local development framework (LDF) of local planning authorities. In this position, their statutory status will also give them increased weight to ensure management concerns are considered up-front and factored into investment decisions.

6.7 Through the various vision-making and delivery instruments it will be important to:

- Lead by example – establishing that through their own actions and investment in public space, the authority will play their part in delivering the vision
- Consult widely – both internally to different local authority services and externally to the wider community i.e. the local strategic partnership, to get buy-in to key management principles
- Establish expectations – of what is required from the full range of stakeholders (including other local authority departments)
- Consider both new and existing public spaces – including principles and standards of provision and ongoing management regimes
- Address delivery – particularly sources of funding – both public and private – for capital and revenue expenditure.

Integrating actions

6.8 The final point in the section above is important, and emphasises the need to integrate sources of funding in a pre-conceived and carefully managed way, for example, by using local authority powers and core funding to lever resources from other sources. Best Value Performance Plans can be used as means to establish how funding will be obtained and combined, and to set clear output targets. In addition to core funding, the following sources of funding are available:

Direct funding for public space (monetary and in-kind) from the private sector

- a) Contributions to area-based management regimes (see below)
- b) Sponsorship i.e. hanging baskets, flower beds, and bins and other street furniture
- c) Stewardship agreements i.e. with fast food take-away restaurants to regularly sweep their immediate area (sometimes tied to the granting of planning permission)
- d) Voluntary agreements i.e. to remove graffiti from vulnerable locations such as security shutters within an agreed period
- e) Section 106 Obligations (see Chapter 7 and figure 26).

Earnings from public space, in the form of

- a) Rental income from local authority owned commercial property
- b) Licensing revenue i.e. from licensed street traders
- c) Advertising revenue
- d) Revenue from fines (when kept locally)
- e) Events revenue
- f) Parking revenue
- g) Road charging.

Exceptional funding from the public sector

- a) Regeneration funding (i.e. through the Regional Development Agencies – RDAs)
- b) Conservation grants (i.e. through the Heritage Lottery Fund or English Heritage)
- c) EU funding
- d) Local public service agreements (LPSA) (extra funding from central government tied to agreed value-adding outputs).

Investment (monetary and in-kind) from the community sector

- a) Civic society grants (usually small)
- b) Volunteer assistance.

Involving others

6.9 The community (both residents and business) represent a major and enthusiastic resource that is easily overlooked, but which with very little assistance can be harnessed to complement mainstream local authority services and programmes of investment. Assistance in-kind from the public and community groups should always be seen as value-adding activity, over and above core provision. Using it as an excuse to cut core services in areas where the community is active will quickly remove the incentive for volunteer action. Community assistance can be utilised to:

- Raise funds (i.e. for special events, public art, etc.)
- Appraise existing environmental quality (i.e. through undertaking a 'Placecheck' – see Chapter 7)

- Undertake ongoing monitoring
- Inform policy and guidance frameworks
- Undertake cleaning and enhancement work (figure 39).

Figure 39: Greenwich, Harnessing Volunteer Assistance

Greenwich Council operates a 'graffiti strategy' through which it involves the community to tackle this aspect of antisocial behaviour. The council is working with young people to remove graffiti, especially in areas covered by the Clean Sweep initiative (see figure 59 in Chapter 7) that have a high proportion of social housing, and where graffiti is downgrading the environment and increasing the fear of crime. Working through schools and youth clubs, the initiative targets the age group that is responsible for the graffiti. At weekends and during school holidays, teenagers are supplied with materials and receive supervision to tackle the problem.

Officers have observed that not only do the young people enjoy the work, but often the graffiti does not reappear in the locations that have been cleaned. Thus the initiative not only improves the public realm but also educates those sectors of the population who are likely to exercise peer pressure on the offenders. As part of this pilot, the council is also working with traders to prevent young people gaining access to materials that can be used for graffiti painting.

The council involves community organisations in areas outside the Clean Sweep pilots in the 'Adopt a Building' project, through their 'graffiti monitoring officer', by giving members of these organisations relevant training and offering information packs and the necessary tools to remove graffiti and fly-posters. The Greenwich Society is one of these, and over 18 months, 50 volunteers have been recruited who go out once a week or every fortnight. So far 3,000 'marks' have been removed.

At the start their work was limited to private buildings but it has now been extended to street furniture. The key to their success has been a quick response and good monitoring; the sooner graffiti is tackled the easier it is to remove and repetition is discouraged. The society aims in the future to divide their area into zones and encourage volunteers to take responsibility for a zone.



Graffiti cleaning in Greenwich

E-Government

6.10 Community involvement may rely on the gradual build-up of community capacity, but should beneficially tap into existing community networks where they exist. Increasingly, authorities are also putting in new infrastructure as part of their e-government strategies to allow communities to better access their services (i.e. one-stop call centres linked to real-time GIS-based platforms to record and monitor urban management activities – figure 40). This considerable investment is leading in the most advanced authorities to a rethinking of service delivery to take advantage of the technology. It can also be used to enable more efficient feedback from community groups directly into the management process.

Figure 40: **East Riding, Investment in IT and GIS**

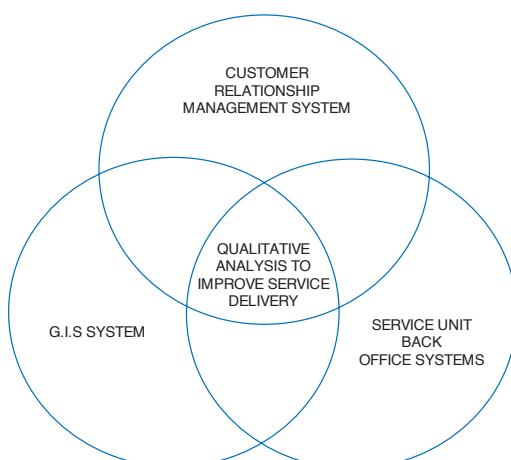
East Riding has invested in integrated IT systems that have allowed it to co-ordinate resources more efficiently. The system consists of three linked elements – GIS, 'back office' databases and IT systems, and the 'front office' Customer Relationship Management system.

The front office system is used to log enquiries coming through to the customer service team, by phone, email, fax, video kiosk or in person. As the system is linked to the service unit's back office IT systems, it can provide a link to the associated GIS map showing street lamps, maintenance schedules etc., and describe the information required to deal with a problem. The system therefore enables customer service staff to submit maintenance orders directly, and the council is currently working to ensure that the customer service team is able to check if the work has been carried out, thus closing the complaint loop.

A valuable feature is the electronic notice system. As customer service staff have found they are too busy to check emails notifying them of urgent news, a bulletin line is used, continually scrolling across the bottom of computer screens with any urgent information (i.e. winter maintenance delays, critical incidents, etc.). Operators are then quickly aware of relevant news to pass on to callers.

The IT system has been developed incrementally, spreading the investment burden. The IT department is a corporate unit, separate from the larger Operational Services Department (responsible for delivering public space services). Its corporate status eases the process of securing resources as they are funded, in part, through a tax on departmental budgets.

The integrated system also allows for quantitative analysis of thematic information i.e. roads, street lighting, open spaces, 'hot spot' sites for complaints. Qualitative analysis has resulted in improvements in service delivery outcomes, for example by improving refuse collection routes to minimise customer complaints. The use of the IT-based information system is also increasingly building up a corporate memory that can be shared, and is changing the culture of staff members defensively protecting their own knowledge.



6.11 Any mechanism that incorporates the community in decisions on public space investment needs to be realistic and manage expectations in a careful way. The research indicated that expectations can quickly become inflated beyond the ability of the authority and its partners to deliver. At the other end of the scale, low expectations, particularly of the business community, may only be heightened (and involvement encouraged), once particular initiatives begin to bear fruit. Therefore, until the added value is proven, the risk of additional investment may also need to be borne by the public sector.

Area-based management

6.12 Area-based teams can be particularly effective at co-ordinating specialised service delivery and encouraging business involvement. They tend to be funded from top-sliced contributions from existing service budgets and therefore have to quickly demonstrate the effectiveness of their service.

6.13 Experience has shown that council departments can initially resist transferring parts of their budget to area management organisations, and that it is difficult to disentangle budgets for that purpose. It is therefore particularly important for area management teams to rapidly show results (going initially for the 'quick wins') whilst concurrently levering-in funding from external sources and spending local authority resources more efficiently through integrating delivery.

6.14 Often a more neutral vehicle (i.e. not part of the local authority or semi-independent of it) will inspire greater confidence and involvement from a wider range of stakeholders, particularly from local businesses. Experience in Coventry (figure 41) and elsewhere has shown considerable success in raising funding through business membership of an arms-length area management company, with businesses paying an optional membership fee (separate from the business rates) in exchange for the right to have a direct say in managing their area. Essential in this case is the large degree of trust built up over time between the company and local businesses.

Figure 41: Coventry, CV One 1

Throughout the 1980s, Coventry gradually lost its city centre shopping trade to new out of town retail centres. If business was to be attracted to the centre, an initiative was required that would improve the physical character, build up the marketing profile of the central area, and regain the trust of the private sector. In 1996 the council took the bold step of creating an independent not-for-profit city centre management company, now called CV One. The move did not involve privatising the council's building assets, but the council did contract out the management of the entire city centre area to the new company. The company was charged with attracting new investment through a dedicated commercial focus on the city centre that the previous silo-based council department had not been able to take.

The company received start-up funding from the council, which showed council commitment and represented the crucial first step in earning the confidence of the private sector. It was given a 5 year contract (currently renewed on a year by year basis) to provide maintenance services and to use environmental improvements to lever further revenue. Under the strong leadership of CV One's CEO, from 1998 – 2001 the ten year decline in footfall was reversed and some £2.4million extra revenue was generated for environmental improvements.

Maintenance has improved, and proactive marketing through the press and events has attracted new interest, but much of the achievement of CV One stems from the relationships established by CV One with business, for example through its Business Membership Scheme. Retailers pay a membership fee to join the scheme which CV One invests in improvements to the city centre. The associated Business Forum provides CV One with a vehicle through which to co-ordinate the different interests and offer a lobbying route to the council to direct future investment.



Coventry city centre

6.15 The experience shows that when properly resourced and given sufficient control of service delivery, semi-independent management companies can be more flexible than council services who are bound by public sector procurement requirements. In particular, as priorities change, resources can be more easily switched between budgets to ensure fast and efficient service delivery.

Setting standards

6.16 When involving the private sector (in any form) in the delivery of, or direct investment in, public services, issues of probity and quality come to the fore. Three 'A's are important:

- Accounting standards – clarity in which is a prerequisite to convince businesses (and the community) that area-based schemes are not just instruments for the council to raise more money. Thus councils (and management companies) need to demonstrate how the revenue is spent and how private and community contributions can enhance the quality of public spaces over and above what would otherwise be achieved.
- Accountability standards – also need to be examined very carefully when setting up public/private partnership arrangements that relate to public space; in particular when former council responsibilities are ceded to new bodies, or when non-council resources are being utilised. Clear lines of responsibility and action need to be established from day one, including standards of delivery and involvement.
- Aspirational standards – which need to be clearly established, both as a basis to assess proposals and let contracts (see Chapter 8), and as a means to encourage a better standard of public space design and management.

6.17 Flagship public space projects have been used successfully to establish aspirational standards and quality thresholds, and to demonstrate what is possible (figure 42). Public realm strategies and design guidelines (see Chapter 5) can play a similar role, and where appropriate can promote flagship projects as exemplars. They should emphasise the importance of building to robust standards (building to last), and of building in maintenance concerns from inception.

Figure 42: Bristol, City Centre Strategy

Bristol City Council developed a City Centre Strategy in the mid 1990s as a multi-faceted urban design framework to co-ordinate the regeneration and creation of high quality new public spaces and their subsequent management. The range of public spaces now delivered has raised the quality thresholds expected across the city. Strong political backing ensured that the strategy was supported in the council's corporate strategic policy. The City Centre Strategy has proved to be visionary, with numerous new, innovative, and individual city centre spaces already realised and/or revitalised, and several others in the pipeline.

The strategy has been successfully used as a vision to establish aspirations and to attract resources, initially for land assembly, then for capital investment. By annually updating the document, the strategy is used to inform partners, investors, and residents of the coordinated approach. The strategy is also used as an umbrella framework in which other initiatives and strategies fit, such as the Bristol Legible City Initiative. Each annual update of the strategy therefore includes the setting of targets and the monitoring of new homes, job creation, crime figures, tourist figures, commercial rents, visits to public libraries and museums, levels of pollution, cycle usage, and pedestrian accidents.

To give stakeholders confidence about the overall direction of change, detailed background research has been used as the basis for an action plan for different elements of the strategy. Each action plan includes lists of key partners, lead council departments, and targets.



Queen Square, Bristol



Bristol Legible City signage



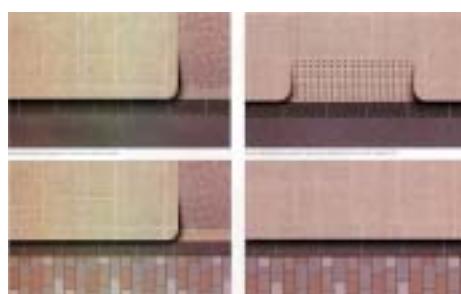
Centre Promenade, Bristol

6.18 Occasionally, despite the best intentions, standards are compromised, and high aspirations are not met. The cautionary tale of Oxford's Cornmarket Street (figure 43) illustrates what can go wrong, but also that despite the problems, the political will of the authority and determination of the officers can ensure that mistakes are learnt from and rectified. A simple lesson concerns the benefits of testing new technologies and techniques on a small scale in low profile areas, before moving to more prestigious locations.

Figure 43: Oxford, Investing Wisely in Public Space Materials

Oxford's Public Realm Strategy contains a framework for a range of incremental improvements to the streetscape of the city centre. Cornmarket Street, the first street chosen to be improved through new high quality paving, road surfaces, street furniture, and lighting is a high profile street at the centre of Oxford's busy retail centre. The first part of the scheme to be implemented was the high quality new paving scheme, laid using a new and untested technique. Unfortunately the paving began to crack after only a few months of being laid, resulting in a delay to the programme of city centre improvements as the problem was resolved.

Although the council took considerable flak from residents and the local press, a revised plan was quickly agreed to replace the paving. In hindsight, council members and officers agree that it was perhaps unwise to start a high profile public realm improvement scheme with untested paving techniques in a high profile location. The experience indicated that it is not possible to get it right all of the time, and that any vision will carry with it certain risks. Nevertheless, the Public Realm Strategy and renewed political and officer determination following the experience will provide a sound basis to move forward.



Oxford Public Realm Strategy – paving ideas
(Gillespies/Oxford City Council)



Operative at work on
Cornmarket Street, Oxford

Attracting resources

6.19 The range of direct and indirect sources of funding has been outlined above. For some time authorities have been faced with a situation where their management of external public space has been compared poorly with the private management of controlled public spaces such as in many covered and out-of-town shopping centres. More recently the development of external public spaces that are owned privately, and managed to a very high standard, have shown what extra resources can achieve when properly invested. Local authorities can explore 'non-traditional' approaches to public space management that tap into these resources and knowledge.

Town Centre Management (TCM)

6.20 In part, the rise of town centre management has helped to redress the imbalance in management quality, and many local authorities have established town centre management teams in their key commercial areas with great success. Extensive advice now exists from the Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) about the role of, and best practice in, town centre management (figure 44).

Figure 44: Town Centre Management

According to the Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM, 1996) Town centre management (TCM) is about “implementing a focused, balanced strategy to ensure the town centre meets the needs of its users, both now and in the future”. TCM is a methodology covering three key aspects of the town centre: accessibility, amenities and attractions; whilst the challenge is to create a plan of action to improve all three aspects:

Aspect	Considerations for improvement
	ACCESSIBILITY
Ease of access	Clear consistent signage for parking, streets, services, and amenities
Pedestrianisation	Some schemes can encourage crime and vandalism, attempt to design these out as much as possible with proper planning
Special needs	Access must be considered from all points of view, including those with different disabilities and parents with small children
	AMENITIES
Transport and Parking	Good public access for public transport and cars. Parking considerations include location, management systems, pricing systems, quality, lighting, safety, and cleanliness
Security	Street lighting, CCTV, a police presence and radio-link facilities all improve security
Urban Design	An attractive environment in terms of street furniture, greenery, maintenance and cleanliness
Facilities and Features	These include seating, public toilets, street events and entertainment
	ATTRACTIIONS
Mixed use	Retail and service businesses (chains and independents), office accommodation, and leisure and entertainment facilities. Try to promote educational, historical, or cultural features which make a place individual or special

Figure 44: **Town Centre Management** (continued)

TCM requires the employment of a dedicated Town Centre Manager or management team. Nationally Town Centre Managers fulfil different roles depending on local priorities and how the post is funded (i.e. by the local authority, joint funded by the public and private sector, or seconded for a fixed term from a private company). Generally managers:

1. Work with the key people involved in the town centre
2. Forge links between business and civic interests
3. Encourage cooperation and coordinate activity
4. Identify and define the management targets for the town
5. Develop and implement action plans
6. Communicate progress and results



Typical members of a town centre steering group, (ATCM, 1996)

6.21 Town centre managers have often been successful in getting a variety of one-off and long-term revenue from private sources in the form of in-kind assistance (human resource loans), voluntary contributions, and membership schemes. Although council funding is fundamental for the ongoing support of business and grant-providers, arms-length, relatively autonomous not-for-profit agencies are particularly effective in creating confidence among potential private sponsors and in allowing for greater flexibility. Such companies should be set up with representative boards to provide public space management services in specific areas as contractors to local authority departments. Experience from the case study authorities indicated that:

- Arms' length area management companies are able to raise funding by taking on-board other activities beyond those related to their contract with the local authority. This can help to cross-fund core activities.
- Such activities should nevertheless fit a business plan approved by the council to make sure that enough attention is paid to the core activities for which the company was created.

- A significant degree of autonomy is required if they are to have confidence from business sponsors.
- For private sector credibility, the company should be run as a business, with a business approach and business expertise.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)

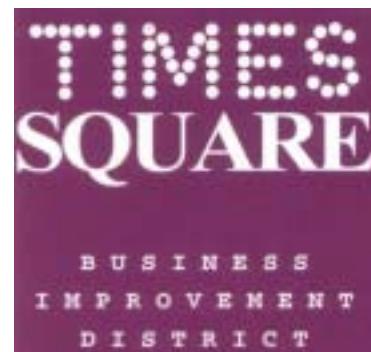
6.22 The experiences with TCM suggest that in the future BIDs will prove to be an important mechanism for raising revenue for public space management (figure 45). New powers for authorities form part of the 2003 Local Government Bill, and will enable the levying of additional funds from businesses in prescribed areas for improved urban management. As with existing voluntary membership arrangements, the key principle should be 'additionality', where funds are used to deliver additional or better services, over and above the high quality service that should already be offered.

Figure 45: **Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)**

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were pioneered in the US and allow districts to tax themselves independently of council rates in order to pay for local public space services such as street cleaning and security. The approach aims to overcome inevitable local authority funding constraints and deliver enhanced levels of service.

The 2003 Local Government Bill (Part 4) contains legislation that will allow non-domestic ratepayers (i.e. local businesses) to contribute to a levy used to create a BID, if the majority of non-domestic ratepayers in an area favour one. This will overcome the problems experienced by previous BID-style schemes set up in London (and many TCM schemes), where some businesses and landowners pay a voluntary levy towards public space services whilst others effectively 'freeload' on the benefits.

The legislation allows a local authority, or several local authorities across boundaries, to make arrangements for a BID in a prescribed area. The BID proposals such as the level of the levy, the chargeable period (not exceeding five years), the non-domestic ratepayers who are liable to contribute, and the date of commencement are to be specified in 'BID arrangements', prepared in partnership by the local authority and local businesses. BID proposals are only regarded as approved if the majority of non-domestic ratepayers in the proposed BID approve the BID arrangements in a ballot. Initial guidance – 'BIDs Guidance: A Working Draft' – on the purpose, establishment and operating of BIDs has been drafted by ODPM (2003).



6.23 The popularity of compulsory additional contributions has yet to be tested, although a number of the case study authorities were beginning to put in place plans to move in that direction. Current successful approaches for attracting additional resources include:

- The use of public information pillars with space for commercial advertising as a way of collecting revenue for area-based management. This has also proved to be a good way of reducing fly-posting.
- Revenue raised from hiring out public spaces for events, license fees from mobile outlets, advertising and sponsorship. This requires area managers to have systems in place to send applications for licences to the police and relevant local authority departments (including the highways authority) for comment.
- Signing-up leisure/food outlets to make a direct contribution to reducing their impact on the street environment through cleaning and better waste management.
- Involving communities in directly running some public space services in their area. Communities can apply directly for sources of funding to which the council does not have access (i.e. some lottery grants). Such funds can help in supporting maintenance regimes specific to a particular area.
- Transferring control over council properties (i.e. car parks) within the boundaries of area management schemes to area managers, both to ensure their higher maintenance standards, but also to raise funds for the wider management programme.

Establishing clear targets for area managers to raise additional revenue from the variety of possible sources. In 2002, for example, Birmingham raised £150,000 from private sector contributions and a further £50,000 from the use of the city's public spaces for events. The money is directly reinvested in public space management. In Bristol, the City Centre Spaces Manager has income targets for the city's spaces, to be generated from advertising, licenses from food outlets, and the hiring out of spaces for corporate, community, or charity events (the latter for a negligible fee). The revenue collected is used to promote and host free public events such as a summer experimental jazz festival, outside cinema screen in Queen Square, and an annual 'Streets Alive' festival to coincide with European Car Free Day.

- Gap funding arrangements, most often through central government schemes, RDAs, European funds, lottery grants and English Heritage. The full range of available 'gap funding' schemes is being compiled at www.bridgingthegap.uk.com.

Delivering for the long-term

6.24 The key challenge will be the delivery of more sustainable funding into public space management. BIDs (see above) may be particularly useful for enhancing long-term revenue streams in town centres, rather than as means to fund one-off capital projects which often have additional revenue costs. Pedestrianisation schemes, for example, although frequently desirable, will often have cost implications for

maintenance related to the intensification of pedestrian use. These implications need to be factored into strategies and budgets from an early stage if the quality of initial investments is to be maintained.

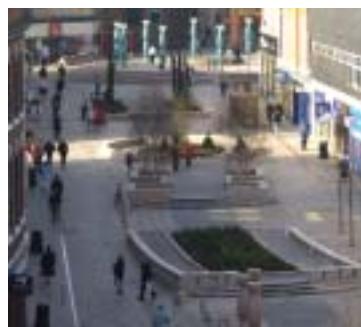
6.25 In Warrington, following a major town centre public space investment (figure 46), a post of Town Centre Operations Manager was created with the responsibility to deliver enhanced long-term day-to-day cleansing and maintenance. A major motivation was to protect the substantial one-off investment for the long-term. Having taken over from the contractor on completion, an early priority was to ensure that all defects were sorted out within the first year whilst the contractor's post-completion liability was still in place. Thus early investment in management helped to pay for itself by spotting defects that might otherwise have proved costly for the authority further down the line.

Figure 46: Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)

Warrington Borough Council saw the need to enhance their town centre public space, initially to reverse the retail competition from neighbouring centres and out of town retail schemes, and latterly following the 1993 IRA bomb that had a devastating effect on the vitality of the town centre. Strong political support backed an initiative to improve the public realm in the town centre which became possible when in 1996 the council received unitary status and inherited a windfall tax from the county council. Part of the windfall was put towards the regeneration of the town centre after match funding was received from the RDA.

An innovative high quality scheme was completed by the American Artist Howard Ben Tre and the Landscape Design Associates in January 2002 within an overall budget of £3.25m. The centre of the town centre is now the focus of a pedestrianised retail quarter with steps, a water feature, and an impressive lighting scheme. Marketgate links to a series of 'commons and garden spaces' set within two other streets, each with its own character, providing a wide variety of visual and sensory experiences.

Strong political support was crucial in seeing the scheme through, not least for ensuring that the quality of the initial vision was carried through into execution and post-completion management. Initial scepticism from the local press and some residents has been replaced by a recognition that the scheme is unique and greatly enhances the town centre, and that it is beginning to fulfil what it was commissioned for, to attract new investment to the town. Recent research shows increased numbers of users in the town centre and renewed interest from private developers.



Warrington new public realm
(LDA/Howard Ben-Tre)



Marketgate, Warrington (LDA/ Howard Ben-Tre)

6.26 Time limited urban regeneration programmes tend to favour capital investment over revenue expenditure, and often include street enhancement initiatives (i.e. the installation of CCTV) that later have to be managed through existing budgets. Regeneration agencies i.e. SRB partnerships should develop careful exit strategies to ensure that improvements are either self-funding or clearly linked to mainstream routines and budgets. In Waltham Forest, the 'Quality Streets' initiative has been linked to a refocusing of mainstream budgets and to the council's own highway maintenance and transportation programmes in order to deliver long-term management. A robust design was also selected with maintenance reduction in mind (figure 47).

Figure 47: Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)

The Quality Streets Initiative in Walthamstow Town Centre was formulated as part of the New Opportunities for Walthamstow (NOW) regeneration programme. The town centre was rebuilt in the late 1970s, including a new enclosed shopping centre, but has recently been declining due to competition. The mile-long market in the High Street is the focus of the improvements, together with adjacent access roads and the Town Square Gardens. Residents' highest priorities are crime and the street environment and the proposals aims to address both. The initiative also recognises that successful economic regeneration has to be premised on physical upgrading.

At present the town centre does not feel safe in the evening and visitors stay away. The aim is to create an evening economy after market operation hours by encouraging new uses and reintroducing cars. After hours, pitches vacated by the stalls will be used for either pavement eating and drinking or for car parking. A highly visible team of well-trained cleaners will deal with a range of environmental issues and act as the eyes and ears of the police to reduce the fear of crime (together with improved lighting and CCTV).

The funding for the town centre projects has been the greatest challenge. It comes from external sources (SRB, Europe), internal budgets (highway maintenance, transportation capital programmes), the council's own assets (land and buildings), and contributions from partners (the developer, the business community, the Arts Council, and Transport for London). Quality Streets alone is estimated at £5-6 million and relies on eight different funding regimes with varying timescales for spending. Unfortunately, there is still a shortfall between the council's design expectations and the actual budget available. Nevertheless, the council is committed to quality and has identified other sources for funding. Failing these, there are contingency plans to use routine maintenance budgets to bridge the gap.



Walthamstow High Street – physical regeneration



Walthamstow High Street – CCTV

- 6.27 Innovative practices (e.g. dedicated area teams for street services) invariably begin as pilot initiatives in authorities and can only be extended to wider areas when funding is available to cover the costs over and above traditional service delivery costs. Councils have sometimes used surpluses, windfalls, or regeneration funding to finance these one-off costs, but may in the future increasingly rely on the flexibility of the increased borrowing powers contained in the *2003 Local Government Bill* to bridge the gap. The quicker pilot initiatives can be mainstreamed, the more likely their long-term future can be guaranteed.
- 6.28 In the case of initiatives that deal with reshaping public spaces and their maintenance to accommodate the needs of specific groups (i.e. those with disabilities), good results have been obtained from integrating those needs directly into existing programmes and practices, rather than counting on dedicated funding to meet ongoing needs.

Responding to context

- 6.29 Inevitably different locations will have different management requirements that will in turn require different levels of funding. Generally, intensively used areas will require more intensive programmes of management and are often the focus of dedicated area management initiatives. The case study experiences indicated that although funding for teams in high profile areas can initially rely on pooling budgets from different departments, it is advisable in the medium-term to ring-fence and centralise area management budgets in order to:
 1. Protect them against other short-term priorities.
 2. Deliver greater flexibility in their use, i.e. making it easier to bring in specialist contractors when required, such as for chewing gum removal.
- 6.30 Beyond central locations, the use of ward stewardship initiatives in Newcastle-upon-Tyne to compile a database of investment needs for public space at ward level, with the participation of local residents, has proved successful (figure 48). The database is then used as a tool for council directorates with investment capital to make informed decisions about where priorities lie. Needs listed in the database have often already been costed and local communities consulted, and therefore actions can be implemented quickly and efficiently, or used to unlock outside investment and match funding.

**Figure 48: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Environmental Ward Stewardship:
Local Involvement in Public Space Investment**

Environmental Ward Stewardship has been running in Newcastle for over three years and aims to allow residents and communities to influence public space investment. Environmental Ward Stewards are council employees who liaise with residents and other local stakeholders, influencing public space service priorities and investment decisions at ward level. Each of the 26 council wards has a specific Steward who is responsible for several wards. The Stewards were initially a 'voluntary' workforce from a cross-section of council departments who fulfilled the duties in their spare time. Recently seven dedicated Stewards have been appointed.

Formally, Environmental Ward Stewardship occurs through a rolling programme of consultation and action planning, led by bi-annual public meetings. Public meetings are used to identify local priorities for capital investment in public space, as well as aspects of public realm maintenance. Follow-up meetings are used to agree an action plan for capital investment and improvements to public space services, with residents asked to rank their priorities in order.

Once an action plan has been agreed, the Steward will meet with the Cityworks Management Team to assess the ward action plan against the priorities and available resources. Following evaluation against set criteria, the Steward meets with the relevant elected member to agree a delivery programme. The proposals are then published in a newsletter – 'Streets Ahead' – which is posted to all households in the ward, and which includes local performance standards and response times for public space services.

Ward Stewardship is an umbrella framework for the council's public space investment programmes to feed into. All the public space improvements suggested by residents and backed by the council are logged onto a separate database for the 26 wards. Stewards along with the Cityworks Management Team will then look to funding streams for the capital improvements, usually looking to match fund each individual ward's set annual budget with other capital funding within the council.

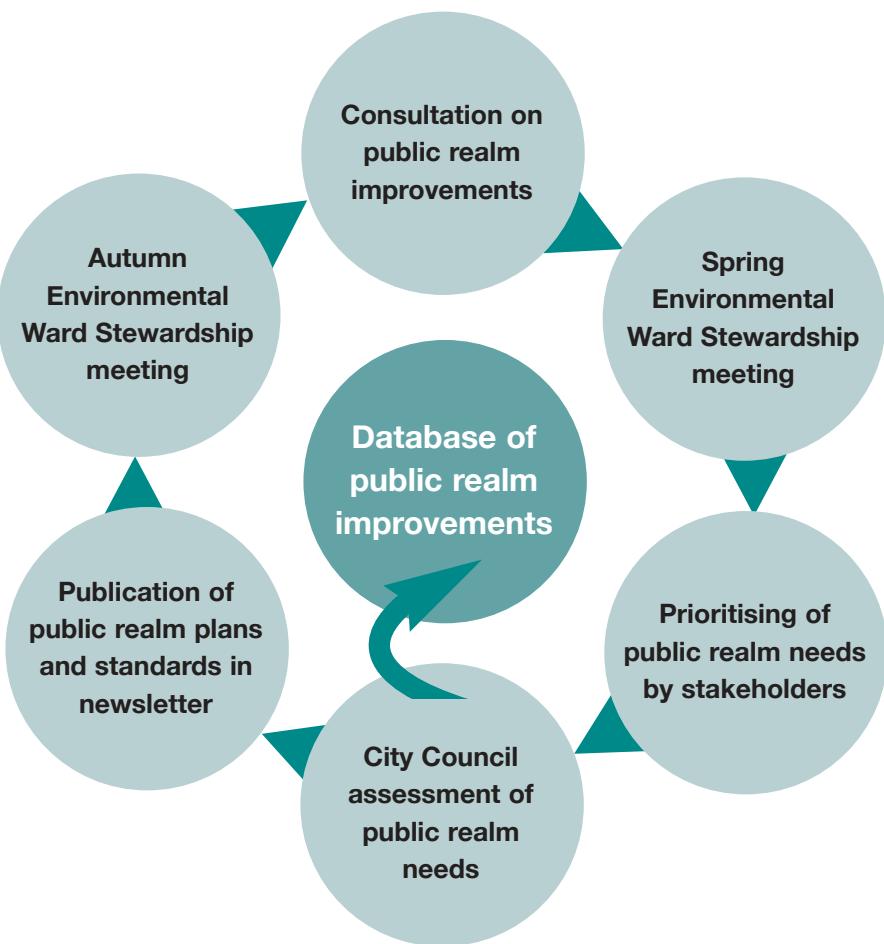


Leazes Park, Newcastle (Newcastle City Council)



Street Ahead Newsletter,
Kenton Ward (Newcastle
City Council)

Figure 48: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Environmental Ward Stewardship:
Local Involvement in Public Space Investment (continued)



6.31 Having systems (and resources) in place to respond to problems and opportunities as and when they arise can also be important as contexts change. This might be negative, i.e. responding to problems associated with discarded drugs paraphernalia which can suddenly become a problem in an area as dealing patterns and locations change. Equally, it may be positive, i.e. responding to the need for one-off focused investments to meet new (sometimes short-lived) hobbies or sporting demands. Providing leisure facilities, such as skateboard parks and other youth facilities (figure 49), may coincidentally cut down management problems associated with bored teenagers, and help to save resources elsewhere.

Figure 49: **Great Yarmouth, Investing in a Skate Park for Young People**

A skateboard park for young people was designed and built in the Gorleston area of Great Yarmouth in a scheme led by the local ward councillor. A scarcity of public spaces for young people to 'hang out' in the ward had led to complaints from adults about young people skating in the street and also inspired a petition in the local skateboard shop for a specific facility to be built by the council.

The process of designing and creating the skate park was facilitated when the councillor received political backing for the new skateboard park which fitted well with the local town planning framework. Funding soon followed through old section 106 money specifically ring fenced for open space relating to young people that had never been used. The future users designed the ramps and other elements of the park themselves under the supervision of the skateboard shop owner.

The skate park opened in January 2002 and the councillor who led the scheme now unofficially manages the park herself. She regularly visits the skate park to check all is well, chatting with the local young people, many of whom she knows. On several occasions elements of the park had been vandalised. Regular older children were warned directly by the councillor that if they did not tell those who were doing it to stop then it would be closed. After one year of operation the skate park has been a resounding success, with the temporary vandalism problems now resolved and young people from all over the district using the facility. Two smaller skate parks have now been completed in other parts of Great Yarmouth to keep up with the demand.



Gorleston skate park, Great Yarmouth (Great Yarmouth Borough Council)

Monitoring success

6.32 Because councillors are directly responsible for the expenditure of their authorities and can be held personally liable, the careful monitoring of urban management initiatives is essential. Success can be measured against four 'E's:

1. Enhancement – relates to the benefits that management approaches or particular initiatives deliver over and above what would otherwise have been delivered (i.e. what is the value-added). In Warrington, for example, research projects have been launched to measure user experiences and business impacts of public realm enhancements, both pre- and post-implementation.

2. Efficiency – relates to the responsiveness of local authority services, and therefore directly to the user satisfaction. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the introduction of a one-stop call centre for public space management is not only allowing quicker and better co-ordinated responses to problems, but is enabling the authority to monitor calls and gather information on the performance and responsiveness of services. The council's workforce and work methods have since been adapted to respond better to public demand.
3. Effectiveness – which is more difficult to measure, but is the sum of the three Es above, and relates to how successful the authority and its approach to public space management is for the money spent (the value for money). Westminster's enforcement initiative included clear monitoring targets in the project plan prior to inception. Monitoring over time has shown the initiative to be value for money (figure 50).

Figure 49: Great Yarmouth, Investing in a Skate Park for Young People

To support their flagship public space management initiative in Leicester Square, Westminster City Council needed to invest in a complementary and integrated multidisciplinary enforcement programme. This led to the development of the Leicester Square Enforcement Initiative, a multi-agency enforcement project. The Initiative aimed to have a positive, long-term, impact on petty crime and quality of life issues in the square and its surroundings. The programme was also used as a means to integrate the newly expanded Leicester Square Wardens service into the wider enforcement community (see i27).

The initiative focused on a wide range of public space enforcement issues, with set reduction targets for:

- Illegal street traders
- Highway obstruction
- Street entertainment
- Pickpockets
- Hot dog vendors
- Street drinkers
- Litter
- Fly posting
- Fly tipping
- Beggars and overly drunk people
- Illegal tables and chairs in the highway
- Illegal night cafes

The Leicester Square Enforcement Initiative has required a high level of council and police resources for the size of the area. However this investment was justified given the long-term benefits derived from effective in this nationally important public space.

The council's Intelligence Unit measured crime figures for the four weeks before the start of the project, during the project, and four weeks after the end of the initial 'hit'. The work recorded a significant drop in petty crime and enforcement action over the period. Longer-term monitoring of crime figures and enforcement action has indicated the benefits of ensuring that the initial investment is maintained.



Leicester Square licensed portrait artists

4. Expenditure – which is often the bottom line for authorities with tight budgets to manage. This will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that budgetary constraints are not breached by over-ambitious projects, that each pound of public expenditure is used as wisely as possible, and, where appropriate, levers in as much private capital as possible.

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- Improving public space will require a long-term and sustained investment, quick wins are possible, but long-term commitment is required.
- Councils are not in a financial position to 'go it alone' – a partnership of interests will be more effective and more affordable.
- Public funds invested early on in new initiatives can give other stakeholders the confidence to invest further down the line.
- Good design is good business, but long-term care is required to safeguard that investment.
- New processes, output standards and hardware (e.g. IT) do not necessarily require 'big bang' investments; taking an incremental approach can spread the cost while still delivering improvements.
- Regularly update and publicise the vision to show partners that progress is being made.
- Be aware of the wide range of public and private funds that can be bid for, levered in, or generated from public space – develop targets for their delivery.
- Go for quality in new public space schemes, avoid the temptation of spreading available resources too thinly.
- Do not promise too much or raise expectations beyond what can reasonably be delivered.
- Consider area-based management regimes and voluntary or obligatory systems of private sector contribution (e.g. BIDS).
- Integrate public space service budgets to increase flexibility and joint working.

Chapter 7

caring through better regulation



this chapter:

- Defines the nature of regulation in relation to public space management
- Relates regulation to the eight crosscutting steps to better practice
- Provides case study and other relevant material to illustrate innovative regulation practice

Definition

The more consistent and effective use of regulatory powers to manage public space

- 7.1 The powers available to authorities to regulate the use of external public space attempt to balance the collective rights and responsibilities of society and the state with the rights, responsibilities and freedoms of individuals. In any area of legislation this is a difficult balance to strike and disagreements will ensue about where the exact boundaries should be drawn.
- 7.2 At any one time, some stakeholders are likely to argue that the lack of powers available to authorities represents a significant impediment to better quality public space. Others may argue that it is the inconsistent or inappropriate use of the powers that are available that represents the problem. Examples of the limits of powers that in turn impact on the management of public space abound. Local authorities, for example, have powers to remove graffiti on public buildings, but not on private ones (unless racist or otherwise offensive). Similarly, planning authorities have extensive powers to control the design of new buildings, but outside of conservation areas have only limited powers to control the demolition or influence the numerous small-scale changes to buildings that collectively impact on character.

Figure 51: Street Legislation – A Complex Picture (ICE, 2002)

Street legislation – A complex picture		
Litter & refuse Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of practice on litter and refuse	Litter abatement notices issued by Magistrates under EPA 1990 1982	
Fly posting Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992	Eyesores & untidy land Untidy Land Orders under S215	
Vehicle obstruction S37 Highways Act 1980	Controlling access by vehicles Traffic Regulation Orders S1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984	Parking on a grass verge not an offence unless an obstruction, or prohibited by specific local act
Parking on the footway not an offence unless an obstruction, or prohibited by specific local act		Driving along the footway S72 Highways Act 1835 Only enforceable by police
Advertising within the highway S115 Highways Act 1980		Road openings statutory undertakers Rights exist under a variety of legislation especially New Roads & Streetworks Act 1991
Vending stalls S115E Highways Act 1980		Shop advertising boards not covered by legislation unless obstructing highway
Licensed obstructions skips, scaffolding, materials, hoardings Highways Act	Charity collections police, factories etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916/Charities Act 1992	Street events Highways Act, and Health & Safety at Work Act
Highways maintenance Highways Act 1980		Winter maintenance Highways Act 1980
Licensable street events Only applies to private land where access is restricted	Street trading Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982	“Consent streets” can be declared under the Act to allow more flexible control
Street cafés Highways amenities licence under S115E Highways Act 1980		Street trading Licence under S20 Licensing Act 1964 issued by Magistrates
Notices on the street Alarms: S80 EPA 1980 Other sources: Control of Pollution Act 1974	Air pollution from traffic	Air pollution from sites or premises Clean Air Act 1993
	Statutory Nuisances Abatement notices can be issued by the Local Authority which it is an offence to ignore	

7.3 Recommendations in *Caring for Quality* are framed within the legislative context that exists at the time of writing (2003), and the research did not attempt to critique that framework. A number of studies (figure 51) have nevertheless observed how complex the legislative framework is in the area of public space, and that key public space powers reside in the hands of a wide range of bodies. These factors may explain why powers are used inconsistently. Other factors may include:

- The costs associated with using powers more effectively i.e. monitoring of offences
- The risks associated with challenges and enforcement action
- The relatively untested nature of some powers i.e. 'well-being' powers
- The lack of skills (particularly in local authorities) to utilise the range of powers.

7.4 The problems associated with use of the public space legislative framework have been considered as part of the Government's crosscutting review of public space. Options for reform were published in *Living Places: Powers, Rights, Responsibilities* (DEFRA, 2002) which also included a valuable audit of the main duties and powers available to local authorities and other stakeholders. The document outlines three principal powers that must be in place for local authorities to play a strategic role in public space management. These are:



1. The power to enforce all other relevant bodies to meet their respective duties
2. The power to intervene and take remedial action when the other bodies fail to meet their duties
3. The power to recover any costs incurred during intervention.

7.5 This chapter does not attempt to systematically cover the range of regulatory powers and duties that fall to local authorities (see Annex C, figure 90), but instead focuses on the means by which the case study authorities were attempting to use their powers more systematically and creatively in the management of public space. Authorities should remember that:

- The three principle powers (listed above) need to be used in combination for greatest effect
- The increased freedoms and flexibilities granted through the overarching 'well-being' powers contained in the 2001 White Paper: *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*, provide potentially new and wide-ranging opportunities to proactively manage public space in the interests of local communities

- The process of public space management and many of its constituent services is greatly weakened unless regulatory powers (particularly enforcement powers) are adequately utilised. This will require appropriate skills and resources
- It is important to be positive wherever possible, but the use of 'carrots' without the backup of 'sticks' may only be partially effective. Start with incentive and guidance, and move on to control.

7.6 Authorities might ask themselves four questions:

1. How can this regulatory power be used to backup other public space management activities?
2. What other powers are available to deal with this local public space concern?
3. How can powers be combined and used more effectively to meet the objectives?
4. What extra powers can be taken in the future?

Leading with vision

7.7 The key principle for public space managers should be to base decision-making (as far as possible) on up to date, pre-conceived and publicly accessible policy frameworks and spatial designations that clearly lay out the intentions of the authority well in advance of decisions being made. Local authorities prepare a wide range of statutory documents containing policy frameworks that impact on public space. They include:

- Development Plans (Local Development Frameworks – LDFs)
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies
- Drugs Strategies
- Homelessness Strategies
- Housing Strategies
- Local Transport Plans
- Accessibility Strategies
- Municipal Waste Management Strategies
- The Community Strategy.

7.8 These documents provide the opportunities for authorities to establish their vision for public space, as well as the criteria against which key decisions will be made.

For example, this may involve determining the characteristics of new or modified public space for which planning permission will be granted, or the basis against which alcohol licences will be awarded. They also provide a framework for the development of a range of non-statutory policy tools, many of which are discussed in the other Part II chapters.

7.9 The implications for public space should be carefully considered as each policy framework is drafted, building on an overarching vision co-ordinated through the Community Strategy (see Chapter 5). In addition, authorities and their partners can make a series of spatial designations in urban areas that impact on public space management, and which in themselves provide the basis for more considered control of the designated areas and spaces:

- Land use designations
- Conservation areas
- Article 4 Directions (removing prescribed permitted development rights)
- Listed buildings
- Areas of advertisement control
- Tree preservation orders
- Air quality action areas
- Litter control areas
- Traffic speed limits (include 20mph zones)
- Home zones (figure 82)
- Parking control
- Traffic control orders
- No alcohol zones
- Bylaws (covering a wide range of designations to control public health, traffic, anti-social behaviour, open space, etc.)
- Metropolitan open land
- Housing renewal areas and clearance areas
- Consent streets (controlling street trading)
- Various area-based regeneration designations (figure 52).

Figure 52: **Area-based Regeneration Strategies Impacting on Public Space**

The government has reviewed area-based initiatives through the Regional Coordination Unit (2002) with a view to improving the integration and co-ordination of initiatives. A list of national area-based initiatives can be found at www.rcu.gov.uk/abi. Area based initiatives that impact on public space management and quality are listed below:

Focus	Area Based Initiative
HEALTH INEQUALITIES	Health Action Zones Positive Futures Sports Action Zones
SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS	Active Community Programme Community Champions Fund Community Chest Community Empowerment Fund
PUBLIC SPACE	Home Zones Neighbourhood Wardens Community Green Spaces/Playing Fields Street Wardens
REGENERATION FUNDING PROGRAMMES	Coalfields European Regional Development Fund Fair Share Market Towns Initiative Neighbourhood Management Neighbourhood Renewal Fund New Deal for Communities Single Regeneration Budget Urban Regeneration Companies
CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVES	Communities Against Drugs Crime Reduction Programme Partnership Development Fund Safer Communities Initiative



7.10 Although most remove rights from users of public space, each represents a positive response to preserve the character and liveability of public space. Each contributes to a local framework for public space management and is therefore part of the public space vision established by the authority.

Integrating actions

7.11 It will be important to bring the various spatial designations and their implications together in one place, perhaps in the future in the LDF proposals map or mapped as part of the authority's integrated GIS-based public space management system. By these means, public space managers will be able to understand the relationships between designations, and choose the appropriate consent regime to deal with issues as they arise.

7.12 Finding means to integrate consent and enforcement regimes is the next step and has been used with great success in a variety of authorities. The steady advance of e-government technologies provides a real opportunity to ensure that this happens in the future (see Chapter 6).

Consents

7.13 Some consent regimes are already relatively well integrated (i.e. conservation consent and development control regimes). Others, despite their obvious relationships, are not. Examples of the latter include building control (particularly disabled access provision), pavement crossover provisions, and development control. Building inspectors, for example, rarely check the construction drawings received for building regulations against the original planning permission to gauge compatibility.

7.14 Other problems concern what happens to information once received. Few authorities, for example, put adequate resources into co-ordinating the works of the utilities providers that regularly dig up roads and streets, despite powers under the *1991 Roads and Street Works Act* to be kept informed about such works and to co-ordinate them. Authorities should carefully consider which consent regimes should be co-ordinated by exchanging information, and which information might usefully be supplied to other stakeholders to help integrate activities externally. Systems should then be designed to ensure that relevant information is exchanged as a matter of course, and applicants should be clearly informed when requesting application forms for consent regimes of their responsibilities.

Enforcement

7.15 Integrated approaches to enforcement have proved to be successful:

- The use of multi-agency enforcement programmes, bringing together agencies with public space related enforcement powers to shadow area-based management schemes, has been particularly effective. Examples include bringing together licensing, policing, trading standards, and environmental health. In Birmingham (figure 53), for example, the town centre management team share enforcement responsibilities with their environmental health colleagues, and officers can issue fixed spot fines to transgressors.

Figure 53: Birmingham, City Centre Management 1

Birmingham recognise that constant monitoring and enforcement is the key to better space management, but are constantly faced with new problems that undermine public space quality. Recently these have included:

- Mass leafleting – the council can prosecute the individual who drops the leaflet but has no powers over those who hand them out or commission them
- Placarding – the practice of advertising on lamp-posts, railings, etc. is increasingly widespread and difficult to control
- Unauthorised street trading – from people who buttonhole the public (often selling deals for the energy companies) and cause a nuisance.

Increasingly the council is looking to innovative non-regulatory means to proactively deal with problems as and when they arise, particularly for difficult issues such as antisocial behaviour, litter and graffiti and street begging. Many are linked to other programmes, such as the Community Safety Partnership.

They include:

- On the spot fixed penalties that officers increasingly issue, assisted (if necessary) by the police. A crackdown on litter by issuing £50 fines has had much publicity in the local press and has been highly effective
- Doormen licenses, which can be obtained as part of an entertainment licence, and encourage premises to employ doormen who have been trained by the police to assist more generally with security in the city centre entertainment quarter
- Alternative giving through the 'Change for the Better' scheme, which has been set up in association with locally-based charities who deal with homelessness and drugs and assist people off the streets. The advertising leaflet invites residents not to give directly to beggars but to give through collection boxes at various locations around the city centre, in shops, banks, offices and public buildings
- Commercial refuse, run with Groundwork to train businesses to improve waste disposal practices
- A mini-skateboard park, provided to divert skateboarding to suitable areas. A by-law has also been obtained as a fallback, to take repeat offenders to court.



Leaflet from the 'Change for the Better' homelessness scheme, Birmingham



Public art in a difficult to manage space, Birmingham

- Where they exist, wardens/rangers/watchers (see Chapter 8) can function as co-ordinators of street services for users. They can explain to the public, for example, what the law is, the council system for solving the problem, how long it might take, and where they can phone to follow progress. They can also contact the relevant department to initiate action if they cannot solve the problem themselves.

- Multi-tasking can be used for enforcement as well as delivery (see Chapter 8). In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for example, traffic wardens are being trained to act as multi-skilled 'litter wardens', and are being given powers to enforce against littering and dog fouling. In Waltham Forest, the new TANGO Team (named after their bright orange vests) will deal with a wide range of environmental issues, including their primary role as cleaners. They are also being trained to act as the eyes and ears of the police.

7.15 *The People and Places* (1999) programme offered the following advice for making enforcement effective: "Enforcement ... does not necessarily mean court cases; a thorough understanding of the powers available and the appropriate publicity of these may avoid further, and unnecessary, action. Enforcement should always be used to raise awareness, and modify behaviour, as well as to punish offenders". Regarding waste and litter, the guidance suggests:

- Only one section within the authority should be responsible for all refuse, litter, cleansing and similar activities
- The public should be made fully aware of the arrangements in place for the disposal of domestic waste
- Enforcement officers should be fully trained in all aspects of legislation and procedures
- Enforcement should be part of a three pronged attack including education and effective contract monitoring.

Involving others

7.16 Enforcement is often the weakest link in the public space management process. This is because of the time and expense involved in effective monitoring, gathering intelligence, and pursuing cases, and, where required, in taking legal action. It is also a highly expert area that authorities do not always have the in-house expertise to confidently address. However, without an adequate investment in enforcement, the range of regulatory regimes at the disposal of local authorities will be brought into disrepute. In exercising their powers, it will be particularly important to adequately involve legal advisors, the police, utilities providers, and (in two tier areas) the highways authority in many regulatory decisions.

7.17 Legal advice – In Westminster, full-time wardens work closely with an in-house legal team who, when necessary, are able to provide quick advice, for example on whether to prosecute for more serious offences such as mass fly-tipping. The authority also retains an Intelligence Unit that gathers information to support public space managers, particularly over issues of enforcement. By providing staff with the necessary information to make informed decisions, the unit represents a proactive response to addressing a wide range of space management issues. For example, Westminster had long suffered a glut of rose sellers plying the city's restaurants and public spaces and the unit has recently investigated whether the sellers are using the sales of roses as a cover for more illicit activities.

7.18 Officers at Westminster argue for a robust approach to regulating public space (figure 54), and that being too cautious with the statutory implications of a particular approach may undermine the initiative. They argue for understanding why a law was originally put in place and taking calculated risks on using legislation to its full potential to reinforce innovative practice. Having a strong legal department and being willing to spend money on good legal advice seems to help the team strike the right balance between caution and risk.

Figure 54: **Westminster, Leicester Square Enforcement Initiative 2**

The Leicester Square Enforcement Initiative is a joint project involving multiple council departments including Community Safety, the Commercial Environmental Division, the Intelligence Unit, and the Leicester Square Wardens and Action Team (see figure 30 chapter 5). In addition, the programme involves allocated officers of the Metropolitan Police. Depending on the issue tackled the team will also involve agencies such as Customs and Excise and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

In developing the initiative the council took care to involve the local residents association (The Leicester Square Association) who became involved in monitoring the progress and outcomes of the initiative. The Initiative started with a project plan that identified objectives, the programme methodology, the risks, resource requirements and performance indicators. The performance indicators were results-based criteria derived from quality of life benchmarks. The plan also stated the frequency of review for the initiative; the first review allowing the staff involved to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and change the methodology if required.

The initiative provides both general enforcement support for the Leicester Square Wardens and the Action Team, as well as targeting particular issues each week (i.e. hot dog sellers, buskers, etc.). It does this by matching intelligence, gleaned from either the Wardens or the Intelligence Unit, with enforcement staff so that resources can be used effectively. The aim is to provide a seamless service between the Leicester Square Wardens/Action Team and enforcement staff. It has been particularly successful in bringing together a large number of different types of enforcement staff who would not normally work in such an integrated way.



Leicester Square, Westminster

7.19 The police – represent an important partner in managing the quality of public space on two counts. Firstly, in directly enforcing civilised standards of behaviour in public space i.e. controlling traffic, criminal damage, enforcing against begging and vagrancy, drugs offences and other anti-social behaviour. Secondly, as backup to many local government activities such as keeping the peace during the serving of a wide variety of enforcement orders:

- The exercise of compulsory purchase orders
- Getting access to and clearing unkempt private land
- Abatement of statutory nuisances, including noise
- Enforcing trading standards and food hygiene regulations
- Seizing vehicles used for fly-tipping
- Seizing intoxicating liquor in designated places
- Serving antisocial behaviour orders.

7.20 In view of the shared interests and responsibilities, there is obvious value in closely co-ordinating strategies and initiatives. In Great Yarmouth, for example, the Environmental Rangers have a direct radio link to a dedicated town centre policeman to backup their work. The Police are also able to provide valuable advice on designing out crime for public space works, and for new developments. Similarly, local authorities will be able to provide intelligence for a variety of police operations, and local authorities and the police will often to be partners in CCTV schemes.

7.21 Setting up formal liaison mechanisms to nurture these partnerships will be invaluable. Community Safety Partnerships may be the best mechanisms through which to enhance these working relationships, even though the Audit Commission has expressed concerns about the effectiveness of their operation. Community Safety Partnerships are potentially of great value because they bring together councils, the police and other local agencies to focus on community safety. The Audit Commission (2002) advises partnerships to:

- Recognise and co-ordinate the essential contribution that non-police agencies make to community safety
- Provide leadership and take tough decisions about priorities (for example, whether to tackle crime reduction or concerns about crime first)
- Maintain a clear focus on what matters, with objectives, action plans and targets that flow from agreed priorities
- Engage and communicate with local communities and other stakeholders
- Manage performance effectively, pooling information to identify and analyse problems

- Use resources efficiently and incorporate sound financial planning
- Learn from experience, seeking out examples of good practice.

7.22 Utilities providers – are blamed by many authorities for much disruption, noise and mess in busy urban areas and for failing to reinstate streets properly following works. Some authorities have set up Liaison Groups in association with locally active utilities companies to try and ensure problems of reinstatement are avoided. Others have attempted to control problems through preparing strict standards applicable to different contexts, and then rigorously enforcing them.

7.23 Existing powers have been utilised in Oxford to establish timeframes for utilities to carry out maintenance and new infrastructure work in public spaces in advance of major re-paving projects by the authority. After the work, companies are banned from undertaking new work for a period of years, and thereafter, new interventions are restricted to the purpose-made ducting installed by the authority. Unfortunately when authorities have considered ducting elsewhere, it has often proved too expensive to install; particularly as utilities companies are not obliged to contribute.

7.24 Pilot authorities are already trying out new powers contained in the 2001 'Street Works Regulations' that allow them to charge for lane rental and to fine utilities for overstaying. These charges and fines can be kept by authorities, and could be utilised to contribute towards a programme of ducting in the busiest areas in the future.

7.25 The highways authority – In two-tier areas, the need for highways authorities at the county tier to work closely with public space managers in district authorities (in London: Transport for London and the London Boroughs) represented a very clear and obvious lesson from the research. Many key powers lie with the highways authority (for trunk roads with the Highways Agency) including duties to:

- Keep highways clear of litter, refuse and obstructions
- Maintain highways
- Provide and maintain sufficient footways for pedestrian safety
- Co-ordinate execution of street works
- Construct and maintain pedestrian crossings, including subways and bridges
- Light highways
- Make traffic control schemes and orders
- Prepare and implement traffic calming schemes and speed limits, including 20mph zones
- Plan and maintain trees and vegetation.

7.26 Some of these duplicate, or cut across, powers at the local level, i.e. street cleaning and enhancement, or planning responsibilities. The value of co-ordinating plans and activities, for example through public realm strategies, has already been discussed (Chapter 5). More radical and often more effective solutions include the formation of formal partnerships between authorities to create combined public space teams. These include personnel from higher and lower tier authorities working together for specified areas, or formally combining departments, for example, by counties employing districts to act on their behalf as executive agencies for their highways powers.

Setting standards

7.27 Any system of public space regulation can only be considered truly successful if:

- The results on the ground are better than would be the case without such a system of control
- The system required to secure the improvements is perceived to be fair and robust (not open to abuse)
- The resources and costs required to achieve this have been worthwhile.

7.28 Unfortunately, few systems of regulation will be perfect, or deliver solutions that all stakeholders will value equally. Instead, most will involve balancing interests to arrive at the decision that satisfies the widest range of interests, including the wider public interest. This should be undertaken in an open and accessible manner that stakeholders can understand, engage in, and, if appropriate, challenge.

7.29 Perhaps the most complex of the regulatory processes is the development control process, because of the discretion inherent in its operation and the difficulty of defining a clear set of consistently desirable outcomes. If broken down into its constituent parts, it is clear that a wide range of possible ‘danger-points’ exist at which the pursuit of high quality public space can be compromised (figure 55).

7.30 Although not so complex in their objectives, most public space regulatory processes suffer from similar ‘danger-points’ at which the pursuit of high quality outcomes may be compromised by other conflicting objectives. For local authority officers and councillors it will be important to:

- Understand the ‘danger-points’ and be aware of the actions that need to be taken to overcome them
- Set regulatory processes within a clear pre- and post-application context that defines quality thresholds (the ‘public space aspirations’ – see Chapter 4), preferably negotiates agreed solutions before the formal regulatory process commences, and ensures that the outcomes on the ground fully reflect the outcomes agreed during the process itself
- Reject compromise when it comes to the quality of public space which should be, as far as possible, non-negotiable.

Figure 55: **Recognising the danger points – Development Control**

Possible DC 'danger-points'	Causes/issues of concern
Performance targets	over-emphasis on and misuse of
Form of application (outline or full)	appropriateness of use/difficulty to negotiate following outline consent
Conservation applications and consents	possible conflicts with planning
Information requirements (drawings/design statement)	poor quality of/deception through
Statutory consultee influence/views	distorting influence from single-issue consultees i.e. fire/crime/conservation
Public consultation (and occasionally participation) process	conservatism of public/influence on politicians
Negotiation processes	lack of time and/or design skills to negotiate local improvements
EIA processes	absence of physical quality as a consideration
Section 106 Obligations	tendency to sacrifice quality for other public goods
Decision-making process	political/discretionary nature of
Permitted development rights	negative environmental impact of/removal of following permission
Conditions	inconsistency and inappropriateness in the use of
Phasing requirements	agreeing phasing without a master plan
Reserved matters applications	issues surrounding changes/status/process/monitoring
Secretary of State call-ins	possible different interpretation
Appeals processes	perceived inconsistency of decision-making
Monitoring processes	failure to invest in, particularly of conditions and post-decision alterations
Revised applications	changes – de minimus or not
Co-ordination with Building Control/Highways/Environmental Management	failure to co-ordinate objectives and processes, and to prioritise quality i.e. through road adoption/maintenance
Enforcement	ad/hoc nature of/lack of investment in
Permission renewals	status of/ability to revisit solutions

7.31 At various points it may be appropriate to clearly specify expectations in a manner that is beyond question. A series of internal and external contracts can be useful:

- Service level agreements can be used between different public agencies and authorities, or between different local authority departments or services to agree the level of service to be delivered. Service level agreements can be used in a wide range of circumstances, but will be particularly valuable for co-ordinating the actions of the diverse range of public space services to deliver shared objectives and integrated actions. In Waltham Forest, for example, monies received by the council from their ownership of the freehold of the shopping centre are used to finance enhancement activity over and above that paid for through the normal maintenance budget. This arrangement is being formalised through a service level agreement in which the 'enhanced' budget is handed over to the street services department in exchange for a range of clearly specified deliverables.
- Procurement contracts. Embracing competition is an important component of the Best Value framework that the Audit Commission (2002) has identified as a weakness in street scene services. They argue that authorities should rigorously evaluate alternative provision of operational, professional and administrative services. The procurement process will require a rigorous market analysis to determine what aspects of public space management could be outsourced, and what (if any) the benefits would be. It might also include consideration of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) partnerships for particular aspects of public space i.e. street lighting.

7.32 Whatever approach is taken, authorities will need to carefully specify their expectations to ensure:

- Aims are clear, realistic and appropriately flexible (figure 56)
- Service and/or output quality is clearly enhanced per pound spent
- Management of the contract is fully integrated with other public space services
- Lines of communication and decision-making between authority and contractor are direct and efficient
- Performance is monitored and under-performance penalised.

Figure 56: Coventry, CV One 2

The creation in Coventry of CV One, a dedicated city centre management company, has offered more flexibility in dealing with public space. The company benefits from both a clear mandate and clear geographical operational boundaries. Provided the company's overall business plan is approved each year by council, and it continues to meet its contract, it is able to undertake other activities as it wishes under the direction of its board.

As an independent entity, CV One is free from council procurement regulations, allowing it to be flexible in sub-contracting maintenance and managing those contracts to high performance standards. It is able to generate, and similarly spend, its own revenue, and crucially, under the authority of the CEO, it has budgetary flexibility (i.e. to invest directly in environmental improvements). This means resources can more easily be redirected where there is a problem to be solved, for example to a troubleshooting team to tackle graffiti. The flexibility also allows the company to be more proactive in meeting its objectives, for example if a marketing opportunity presents itself it is able to redirect resources to maximise the exposure in support of attracting new investment.

The contract between the council and CV One has been improved with experience, and, whilst lengthy, it is not prescriptive. That a 1 year rolling contract enables the company to work towards a much longer-term vision for the city centre is an indication both of the relationship of trust between the company and the council, and that the contract has been developed to appropriately reflect that relationship.



Coventry City Centre

7.33 The Audit Commission (2002) argue for:

- Integrated contracts – that deliver integrated multi-task working (see Chapter 8) and avoid the narrow specifications of many CCT-type contracts that allowed little flexibility or intelligence in the way they were operated
- Outcome based contracts – that ensure that problems are dealt with as and when they arise, rather than against a contracted and pre-determined frequency that may not always be adequately responsive.

Attracting resources

7.34 In many parts of the local government ambit, enforcement has been regarded as the 'Cinderella' service and has suffered from a commensurate lack of resources. This has been combined with increasing pressures on some enforcement services to deliver, for example, as the incidents of fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles have multiplied.

7.35 In some areas, resources can be saved by combining enforcement activities (see above), however few enforcement activities bring extra resources to local authorities because of the costs associated with their delivery, because costs can be difficult to recover, and because authorities frequently do not retain the income from fines. This latter situation is changing and authorities will soon be able to keep the revenue from litter and dog-fouling fixed-penalties to help in improving the local environment. The incentive should therefore be to collect these penalties as efficiently as possible to ensure the maximum resource is generated.

7.36 Two major powers that bring resources into the public sector are the systems of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) and Section 106 Obligations. Through negotiation, both powers can be used positively to deliver high quality new public spaces, improvements to existing spaces, and long-term maintenance regimes.

7.37 CPOs – Currently only regional development agencies (RDAs) can use CPOs for wider objectives. Local authorities can only use them for specific schemes, and this limits their usefulness as a tool for securing the long-term maintenance of public spaces. Some councils are nevertheless working in partnership with the RDA to use CPO powers more creatively, for example, by buying and leasing-back land in exchange for a service charge. [Land is purchased and immediately leased back to developers on long leases – 999 years – and the service charge is levied to cover the council's management costs].

7.38 Even without such arrangements, councils can use their CPO powers to reduce the blight of under-used and derelict land, and to assemble packages of land large enough to deliver and support new public spaces (figure 57). They can also establish restrictive covenants over the land they are selling on in order to help guarantee the ongoing careful management of public space in perpetuity. The passage of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill* will free local authorities up to use their CPO powers if they think it is likely to be to the economic, social or environmental benefit of the area. This will allow authorities to use these powers much more proactively to enhance existing and deliver new public space.

Figure 57: Birmingham, Streets and Squares Strategy 2

When devising their Streets and Squares Strategy, Birmingham City Council was in the exceptional position that much of the city centre land had been allocated to the highways network of roundabouts, underpasses and elevated roads several lanes wide. This gave the council the opportunity to become a major player in the regeneration process, leading the transformation of the centre into a pedestrian friendly environment where safe streets link attractive squares. These have become civic spaces in their own right and the backdrop to events that contribute to the vitality of the city centre.

In the early stages of the strategy's implementation the council was in a position to pump prime the process and contribute its land assets from surplus highway requirements. It also had in place the planning framework necessary to enter into partnerships with investors and developers to carry out the vision. The powers available to the city council also played an important role in achieving the dramatic transformation of the centre over fifteen years. Traffic orders were used for road closures which required time consuming public inquiries that delayed the start of the public realm works. This process was largely the responsibility of the Highways Department who did not initially share the vision of reversing the predominance of the car in favour of creating spaces for pedestrians. This resistance had first to be overcome.

To assist in the regeneration process, CPO powers were crucial for land assembly, to compile viable private or public holdings for effective development. These powers were used in Brindleyplace where the city acquired vacant industrial land across the canal in order to extend the benefits of the earlier investment in the International Conference Centre and Centenary Square. In the Bullring development, the council was instrumental in helping to forge the alliance between the two major landowners by using its CPO powers to bring together the sites for a holistic development. The council's capital receipts from the disposal of surplus highway land have also been used to assemble land through CPO into viable development plots for the renewal of Birmingham's Eastside.



Chamberlain Square, Birmingham



New Bull Ring development proposals, Birmingham

7.39 Planning Obligations – operated through the statutory planning process provide local authorities with opportunities to tie the delivery of a wide range of 'public goods' to the granting of planning permission. The linking of planning permission to the donation by developers of pre-arranged sums to maintain the resulting public spaces has proved particularly effective. In Bristol, Section 106 agreements have been used to endow and maintain a public walkway around the city docks. In Newcastle, 106 Obligations are being used to partially redress the historic lack of green space in the city (figure 58).

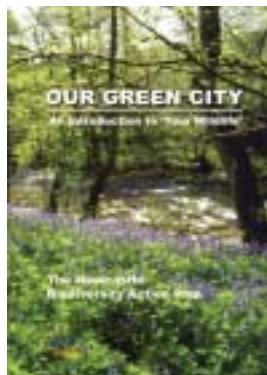
Figure 58: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Integrated Approach to Public Open Space Creation, Ecology and Management

Newcastle City Council is working with a consortium of developers to integrate public open space into a 400 hectare greenfield mixed-use development at Newcastle Great Park. The unique aspect of the scheme is the agreement to provide high quality public open space to cover 50% of the site, and to protect, enhance, and add to the valuable local ecology. The objective is to create a new 'green' public realm.

The 'environmental backbone' of the development was added before construction began on the built components of the Great Park site and included landscaping, public art, and service roads. The final development will have 50% of the open space dedicated to public uses and 50% for habitat creation. The rest of the site is being developed in eight cells over ten years.

The masterplan for the site has the status of supplementary planning guidance, and includes design codes for the buildings and landscaping, and requirements for ecological preservation and enhancement. Many of the ecological principles used on the Great Park site are from the council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

The developers are contributing to public open space and its management through a substantial section 106 agreement. The agreement includes a long-term management and maintenance plan for the site, as well as for the individual cells. The agreement also covers employing a part-time ranger for the site to maintain the open space and protect the ecology.



Newcastle Great Park (Newcastle City Council)

Delivering for the long-term

- 7.40 Authorities need to take a long-term view to regulation, just as they do of co-ordination, investment and maintenance. This can be done by keeping public space management issues under constant review and considering when and how existing powers can be utilised more effectively and when and how to take new powers to help fill gaps in the armoury.
- 7.41 Rather than seeking additional powers, many councils favour the former option, and believe it is more important to increase resources to detect, enforce and educate on the basis of existing powers (figure 59). This, they argue, would help in improving the quality of public spaces and in reducing service costs in the long run.

Figure 59: Greenwich, Clean Sweep 1

Although higher standards of maintenance have been achieved in the Clean Sweep areas of Greenwich, enforcement remains a challenge. The Clean Sweep initiative nevertheless successfully combined enforcement powers available under various pieces of legislation, using them to maximum effect, often by supporting one another. For example, powers to deal with illegal waste from shops are with the Environment Agency who can demand to see 'duty of care' agreements, but the council have also been able to use control of pollution powers to tackle the problem. Through training, staff have been able to make more efficient use of their powers to target particular problems.

The state of sites and structures owned by the utilities remains a serious problem.

Persistent offenders include:

- the local rail operators (removing graffiti from railway bridges is very costly)
- cable company (reluctant to allow the council to remove graffiti and fly posters in case damage is caused to the equipment inside its boxes)
- water authority (lack of maintenance of the grassed sewer bank which crosses much of the Clean Sweep area)
- bus and telecom companies (failure to remove graffiti and fly posters from bus shelters and phone boxes and to sweep broken glass).

When remedial action is not forthcoming the council resort to legal action or to naming and shaming offenders in the local press, often with good results. More proactively, as part of the Clean Sweep Initiative, a Stakeholder Conference was held in April 2002 attended by the utilities companies to discuss common working in relation to the public realm. This has proved successful in the Clean Sweep area, in part due to the evidence provided by the call centre and the ability of residents to easily report problems.



Abbeywood, part of the Clean Sweep jurisdiction

7.42 In a number of authorities, the presence of wardens/rangers on the street acting as the eyes and ears of the council are also seen as having an educational role. In Great Yarmouth, for example, the town's Environmental Rangers approach people littering or with dogs fouling the street to explain the consequences in a friendly way. Although the rangers have enforcement powers for both litter and dog fouling, education is viewed as a cost-effective alternative to enforcement, especially since (they argue) magistrate court fines are rarely at a level significant enough to act as a deterrent (figure 60).

Figure 60: Great Yarmouth, Environmental Rangers

On a mission to improve co-ordination, education, and enforcement in the public realm, Great Yarmouth Borough Council has trained and deployed two Environmental Rangers. Directly relating to the improved management of external public space, the rangers are recognisable council operatives who have the means – through each having a dedicated van and equipment – to quickly respond to and co-ordinate public space management issues. This includes cleaning, collecting and cleansing anything from broken glass to fly tipped items, and if the problem cannot be solved immediately, to liaise with other council services, including the Boroughworks depot team.

The Ranger will typically inform the public of what the council systems are for dealing with the problem, how long it will take, and any contact numbers if a member of the public wants to follow issues up. The Rangers also liaise with Neighbourhood Wardens who patrol the residential areas in the town, and with the Town Centre Wardens (see figure 64). All three sets of employees were trained together.

The second role of the Environmental Rangers is education, getting out onto the streets, being friendly, meeting the local community and parish councils, and visiting schools.

The Rangers recruit community voluntary wardens to help educate local people about using and caring for public space, and to help in ‘detective work’ (i.e. finding out where perpetrators of antisocial activities live). Rangers will also help in getting local environmental initiatives off the ground (i.e. community litter groups).

The final role of the Rangers is enforcement under by-law through the issuing of £50 fixed penalty notices for littering or failing to clear up after dogs. While the fixed penalty notices are not easy to enforce, they are effective in educating residents to change bad habits, as one ranger said: “word gets around”. The council is considering investing in portable CCTV equipment to help gather evidence in cases where those issued with fixed penalty notices appeal.



Great Yarmouth beach (in winter)

- 7.43 Like other authorities, Great Yarmouth has supplemented national legislation with local bylaws, in their case to control consumption of alcohol in public areas (the city centre, parks, highways and the beach). The bylaw does not ban drinking in public space, but allows the police to refer drinkers who do not stop when asked to do so to the courts. Signs around the town inform users of the law.
- 7.44 In Bristol, as part of their dockside management regime, new bylaws were enacted to better control water-based and dockside activities, including skateboarding, advertisements and dumping (figure 61). In Newcastle, new bylaws dealing with litter, dog fouling and the distribution of free literature were linked to enforcing the city’s litter awareness campaign (figure 62). A wide range of ‘model’ public space bylaws are set out in the Home Office (1996) Circular 25/1996.

Figure 61: Bristol, Regenerating and Managing Bristol Harbour

Bristol harbour occupies a central location in the city, and was once the home to a booming industrial port. By the 1970s very little industry remained and the central harbour area was largely derelict. The council being the principal landowner took the lead in attempting to regenerate a large part of the harbour site, which had numerous landowners with different ideas and concerns over the future of the area. By the 1990s the multiple landowners formed a partnership, agreeing a planning brief and contributions to the non-commercial elements of the scheme. The focus of the harbour is now mixed use/leisure.

Once momentum was gained in relation to the main harbour site, a specific post was created to area manage the new leisure uses on and around the harbour public spaces for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses. Formally the harbour area is regulated through bylaws, informally the Docks Manager liaises with all the stakeholders in and around the harbour area to ensure the smooth running of the public spaces, including control of anti-social behaviour.

Due to the continuous harbour side development activity, the Docks Manager works in conjunction with the city planners to secure public access to the riverside for all new harbour developments. Developers often endow the riverside walk area to the council, usually with a commuted sum to maintain the space. The council aims to provide public space that is easily manageable and has mechanisms in place to ensure that city council managed public space integrates with privately managed public space.



Harbour public realm, Bristol



Bristol waterside (Bristol City Council)

Figure 62: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Regulating Litter

Newcastle has raised the awareness of widespread public space problems by using various legislative powers. If caught, perpetrators can be issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice. The powers used by the council operate under Section 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Powers for enforcing against dog fouling are operated under Section 4 of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996. In the case of distributing free literature, the council introduced a bylaw that requires businesses who distribute free literature to be licensed for set areas of the city.

Enforcement of the bylaws is achieved through 50 traffic wardens who were trained and given the powers to enforce against litter and dog fouling whilst continuing their duties as traffic wardens. The traffic wardens now receive an extra flat rate salary for carrying out the additional duties. Four full time dedicated litter wardens (two for commercial waste, two for litter) are also employed, and two full time dog wardens. Park Wardens are also undergoing training to enforce the bylaws in parks across the city.

The campaign to reduce litter and the fixed penalty notices received wide-ranging press coverage. They are being operated in collaboration with various council departments,

including the Public Health and Environmental Protection Department (where the wardens are based); the Marketing and Press section (raising awareness); and the Cityworks cleansing teams. The campaign is also supported by ENCAMS who help the city council with promotion, keeping in touch with the national litter debate and policy, and completing a bi-annual litter survey.



Improved cleanliness in Newcastle's Grainger Town

Responding to context

7.45 By their nature, bylaws are area-based and respond to the problems encountered in particular contexts. Authorities have responded to the crime and disorder challenges of these particular contexts in a variety of ways.

Wardens

7.46 Neighbourhood and street wardens are a prominent national initiative that has proved to be successful locally in both commercial and residential areas. As part of the drive to improve quality of life and reduce social exclusion, grants are available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRU) for three types of warden (figure 63). Known colloquially by a variety of names, wardens can be instrumental in providing reassurance that the space is being maintained and controlled as well as providing a visible deterrent to anti-social behaviour.

Figure 63: **Neighbourhood and Street Wardens (NRU, 2002)**

Neighbourhood Wardens

- To provide a uniformed, semi-official presence in a residential area with the aim of improving quality of life
- To promote community safety, assist with environmental improvements and housing management, and contribute to community development
- Wardens should be supervised by a scheme manager and have the support of local residents and key agencies like the police
- Wardens may patrol, provide concierge duties or act as 'super caretakers'

Street Wardens

- Patrol in high profile areas such as city centres
- Provide highly visible uniformed patrols in town and village centres, public areas and neighbourhoods
- Street Wardens emphasis is on caring for the physical appearance of the area. They tackle environmental problems such as litter, graffiti and dog fouling
- They also help to deter anti-social behaviour; reduce the fear of crime; and foster social inclusion

Street Crime Wardens

- Street Crime Wardens will concentrate on the reduction of street crime in ten police service areas, targeting high-crime areas and contributing to the regeneration of these areas
- The wardens roles will depend on local needs. The overall purpose is to reduce street crime by reducing crime and fear of crime, deterring anti-social behaviour, and fostering social inclusion
- They will carry out street patrols and provide an information source for the police or the local authority (i.e. on issues such as abandoned cars and graffiti)
- They will also provide an information service to the public and an escort and visiting service for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and victims of crime



Wardens in action

7.47 Westminster prefer not to give the wardens themselves enforcement powers which would take them off the streets to fill out paperwork, but instead provide backup through immediate access via radio linkup to dedicated enforcement officers. Other case studies reported good results from giving the wardens themselves enforcement powers, or linking them directly to the police. Whichever model is favoured, it is important that wardens should be empowered in the eyes of the public and that backup should be prompt and meaningful.

Alcohol-free zones

7.48 Alcohol-free zones are proving popular to confront one of the main sources of public disorder in town centres (e.g. in central Coventry and Great Yarmouth – figure 64), or in areas where there is a significant leisure economy. Under new local authority powers contained in the *2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act*, authorities need to

carefully delimit both the area of control and the time of operation. In Warrington, 'Crystal Clear' policies are used by the local authority and are supported by the police. The initiative predates alcohol free zones but has similar results by confiscating and disposing of any bottles found on the street. In this case the key is the deterrent effect rather than fines and arrests.

Figure 64: **Great Yarmouth, Town Centre Management**

The dynamics of Great Yarmouth town centre vary over the course of the week (with different indoor and outdoor markets), and the year (with a great many more tourists and visitors in the summer months). In an effort to be responsive to changing needs, the town centre is managed as a partnership between the public and private sector using a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The board of the company has representatives from key stakeholders, such as the borough council, county council, police, and local businesses, with the chair rotated every two years between the council and business. The company offers different levels of membership to businesses, with an annual subscription calculated from rateable values.

A local bylaw forbids the drinking of alcohol in any public space in Great Yarmouth, a result of the mass of visitors in the summer months and an often unstable bed and breakfast community out of season. The police can report to the courts any individual who does not stop drinking alcohol when asked to, after which the individual can be fined by a magistrate. Great Yarmouth contains many signs in and around drinking establishments and public spaces warning people of the bylaw. The council is also looking at creating designation orders for regulating alcohol in the town centre and on the seafront.

Regulation of the town centre is primarily through two Town Centre Wardens who are tasked to:

1. 'Meet and greet' and give out information to visitors and shoppers
2. Record, report, and follow-up any environmental issues
3. Assist in crime reduction, such as shop lifting and anti-social behaviour
4. Complete other tasks which range from giving talks in local schools, to doing footfall counts



Great Yarmouth outdoor market

Town centre businesses pay a higher annual subscription to be part of the crime reduction scheme, and in return are provided with a radio link to the wardens, a Town Centre Policeman, and CCTV. The Town Centre Policeman is a dedicated officer whose shift patterns have been altered to reflect shop opening hours.

Dedicated Police Officers

7.49 A dedicated resource has led to clear benefits in particular residential areas, especially if officers are able to work flexibly rather than following standard police shift patterns in order to reflect the differential patterns of demand in their patch.

Expulsion orders

7.50 Orders have been used effectively in Great Yarmouth as part of the wider town centre management initiative (see figure 64). They help to prevent persistent

troublemakers from coming back to an area. The 2003 Anti-social Behaviour Bill aims to extend the powers of authorities to use Anti-social Behaviour Orders, Curfew Orders, Penalty Notices and Closure Orders, all of which can be used proactively to maintain more civilised public space.

Conservation areas

7.51 Conservation areas present their own particular problems and opportunities: problems, because their management will often require a higher resource level to deliver an enhancing maintenance regime; and opportunities, because powers for controlling insensitive development should deliver more context sensitive developments. Conservation areas are by far the most popular form of area-wide designation, but the skills and resources put into their enhancement, control and enforcement are often limited.

7.52 Authorities should be aware that the designation of conservation areas carries with it special responsibilities, and that these concern the management regime (see Chapter 8) as much as the regulatory one. As part of the regulatory process, authorities should consider:

- The availability of expert professional advice from specialist conservation staff to all services impacting on public space
- The availability of up to date context appraisal and a clear policy framework against which to make decisions about development and public space management
- Encouraging high quality contemporary streetscape or building design in appropriate locations
- Reducing permitted development rights through the use of Article 4 Directions where the character of conservation areas is being undermined.

Monitoring success

7.53 The key to effective regulation of public space seems to be enforcement. The key to good enforcement seems to be proactive investment in monitoring the state of the built environment and in actively pursuing infringements rather than passively waiting for complaints. A number of approaches can be recommended:

- Street inspectors – have been used in the guise of dedicated council officers with responsibility for carrying out holistic visual surveys of streets and reporting back to the relevant departments. Rating systems can be used to record problems and priorities for maintenance that can then be incorporated into normal service routines. The simple public space quality audit tool used and tested as part of the research might provide a model to be adapted for local use. Alternatively it can simply be photocopied from figure 65.
- Walking audits – are undertaken by the Pedestrian Association to assess general improvements required on identified routes. The pedestrian Association also train local authority staff to undertake the audits themselves.

- Placechecks – which have been devised by the Urban Design Alliance (UDAL) as a means to understand the qualities of places and assess what improvements might be required (see Annex C, figure 89).
- Town centre healthchecks – which include economic as well as physical aspects of town centres, and which can be undertaken using the methodology devised by the Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) (see figure 44 chapter 6).



7.54 Systematic monitoring of the built environment is also a necessary prerequisite for the generation of informed and therefore effective policy (see Chapter 5), and for the informed and therefore proper regulation of public space.

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- **Persuasion rather than regulation should be used in the first instance – much can be achieved through education and negotiation or even ‘naming and shaming’.**
- **Combine enforcement powers and be willing to invest in their use, failure to do so will undermine confidence in, and the credibility of, public services.**
- **Be prepared to take legal advice and trial new approaches to enforcement, or take new powers to deliver enhanced liveability.**
- **Proactive inter-agency responses to antisocial behaviour are essential to enhancing public space quality.**
- **Targeted training and education programmes should be explored for their long-term impact.**
- **Combining enforcement roles in individual staff can be effective.**
- **Train regulatory/enforcement staff together and ensure there is good integration of roles through clear remits.**
- **Use CPO and Section 106 powers to deliver high quality public space and help guarantee its subsequent care and maintenance over the long-term.**
- **Consider area-based designations and bylaws to enhance public space powers.**
- **Use CCTV and communications technology to link-up enforcement agencies and staff.**
- **Invest in area-based policing and wardens/rangers.**
- **Get businesses – large and small – involved in tackling crime and issues of community safety.**
- **Invest in proactive monitoring of the built environment to identify breaches of public space regulations and opportunities for enforcement.**

Figure 65: Public Space Quality Audit Tool

City/town: Assessor: Date/day: Time: Other exceptional circumstances:	Space: Reason for visit: Weather conditions (current and recent):			
Public Space Objectives	Performance Criteria	Strengths	Weaknesses	Evaluation 0 = very unsuccessful 5 = very successful
<p>Clean Litter, Fly tipping/posting/ carding, Car abandonment, Waste collection, Vandalism & graffiti, Dog fouling, Smell, Detritus/grime</p> <p>Accessible By foot, By public transport, By car/parking, in the evening/night, At the weekends/holidays, Barrier free pavements</p> <p>Attractive Aesthetic quality, Vegetation/ landscaping, Ambience/feel, Public art statuary, State of repair, Surfaces – grass cutting/paving, Street furniture coordination</p> <p>Comfortable Street furniture provision & comfort, Incidental sitting surfaces (low walls, grass, etc), Noise, Public toilets</p> <p>Inclusive Gender, Age, Race, Disabled access</p> <p>Vital and viable Vehicular movement, Type of activity, Range of activity, Appropriateness of activity</p> <p>Functional Ease of maintenance, Servicing to uses, Path (pedestrian)/road (vehicle) relationships</p> <p>Distinctive Individuality, Honesty, Conservation, Sense of place</p> <p>Safe and secure Lighting, CCTV, Management/ authority figures, Anti-social behaviour, Pedestrian safety</p> <p>Robust Street furniture materials, Paving materials, Soft landscaping street furniture</p>				
Summary/observations			Total Rating	

Chapter 8

caring through better maintenance



this chapter:

- Defines the nature of maintenance in relation to public space management
- Relates maintenance to the eight crosscutting steps to better practice
- Provides case study and other relevant material to illustrate innovative maintenance practice

Definition

Enhancement of public space quality through everyday maintenance regimes.

8.1 Much of the perception of public space quality has to do with the run-of-the-mill routines of maintenance. The Audit Commission (2002) quote the National Consumer Campaign's review of the pedestrian environment that identified the top ten consumer concerns about walking on public streets (figure 66). Of the ten, half relate to maintenance concerns, including the top two. The list reveals that poor maintenance not only contributes to a less attractive environment, but also to a less healthy, less accessible, more hazardous, and less equitable environment. Moreover, it is often the less mobile in society whose freedom is most curtailed by a poorly maintained built environment, including:

- Those with disabilities
- Adults with young children in pushchairs
- Children
- The less mobile elderly
- Those without cars.

Figure 66: The Top Ten Consumer Concerns about Walking on Streets (National Consumer Campaign, 1995)

Consumer Concern	% of Respondents	
Cracked or uneven pavements	44	
Dog mess	43	
Too much traffic, busy roads	30	
Vehicles parked on pavements	27	
Bicycles ridden on pavements	20	The number one consumer concern
No pedestrian crossings	19	
Pavements dug up	17	
Un-cleared snow/ice/leaves	15	
Litter and rubbish	11	
Narrow pavements	11	

8.2 However, better maintenance of the built environment impacts on all users of public space. Colin Buchanan once commented that the freedom with which we can move around represents a very useful guide to the civilised quality of an urban area. Through its impact on physical movement and user perception and therefore on the use of the environment (see Chapter 2), the everyday maintenance of public space has a large part to play in delivering these civilising qualities.

8.3 Managers should seek to move beyond simply maintaining the status quo, to using maintenance budgets and activities as a positive enhancement activity. Four fundamental questions should be asked of maintenance processes:

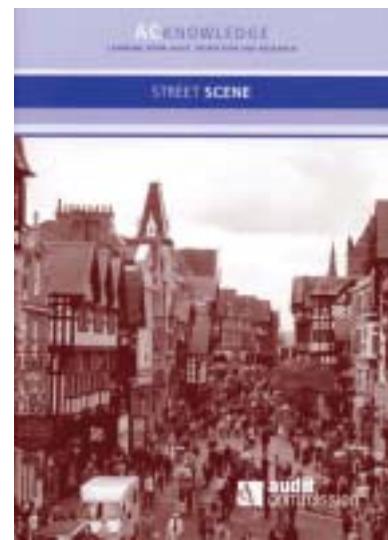
1. Will this contribute to building a general enhancement culture?
2. How can each task be made to impact positively on public space quality?
3. How can activities be better related to address public space quality more efficiently and holistically?
4. Are key problem areas/issues addressed?

Leading with vision

8.4 Visionary leadership in everyday maintenance services implies learning from the past, challenging existing practice, and using the information to establish a clear path forward. In its comprehensive comparative analysis of existing street maintenance services, the Audit Commission (2002) identified twelve areas of weakness (figure 67).

Figure 67: **Twelve Key Areas of Weakness (Audit Commission, 2002)****FOCUSING ON THE USER**

1. Lack of user, community and outcome focus
2. Lack of consultation with users
3. Difficulties for those using the street
4. Difficulties in accessing the council

**COORDINATING SERVICES**

5. Segregated services
6. Lack of partnership working with other departments or bodies
7. Narrow scope of service reviews

MANAGING QUALITY

8. No rigorous challenge of service targets, processes and costs
9. Poor or absent performance management systems
10. Improvement strategy does not allow for step-change, service specific and operational change, according to local circumstance

EMBRACING COMPETITION

11. Competition is not used to provide the best service to customers
12. Little reviewing of current contracts, or planning for new contracts

8.5 A wide range of solutions to tackle these areas was also identified:

In terms of engaging users:

- Consultation with users needs to be strengthened, especially on how people relate to their streets and what their needs are – particularly of hard-to-reach groups
- There is a need to ensure ease of movement for pedestrians on streets
- There is a need to improve access to the council for enquiries and reporting of problems
- Information on the street scene should be up to date and easily available
- The public should have a greater role in reporting problems and improving services.

In terms of the co-ordination of services:

- Co-ordination should reflect both what users want and the need for increased efficiency
- Co-ordination needs to be reflected during service design and at different levels within a council
- Effective joint working between agencies is required
- A single point of contact for service users can be valuable.

In terms of the variable quality of street scene services:

- Rigorous challenge of current standards of services is essential, with performance management, measurement and analysis
- There is a need to embrace change
- There is a need to adopt new technologies and sound working practices to motivate and staff and raise skill levels
- There is a need to manage conflicts within and between stakeholder groups.

In terms of the effective use of competition:

- There is a need for rigorous analysis of alternative methods of service delivery, including partnerships and outsourcing
- There is a need for careful exploration of the market for potential suppliers, especially when flexibility or integration of contracts is required.

8.6 The key overarching issue for the Audit Commission included the failure of authorities to adequately challenge what they have been doing, and where and how services can be improved. On a more positive note, the evidence from the research underpinning *Caring for Quality* suggested that the Best Value audit process has set a more critical process of self-reflection in train, with many of the initiatives reported in the insets directly inspired by the process.

8.7 Two tools are useful in starting this process:

- A service area map – that systematically maps out how the key stakeholders, processes, activities and outputs interrelate, and where areas of duplication, inefficiency and omission lie. The service area map can be as simple as post-it notes on a wall, or a complex multi-dimensional diagram. The key is to generate a tool to structure critical analysis of both the entire public space maintenance remit, and all its constituent parts. Applying the four fundamental questions above to each element of the service will be a good start to the analytical process.

- A service plan – which can be used to establish the future vision for each constituent service, and, in the form of a Best Value Performance Plan, for the service area as a whole. The service plan should establish challenging targets for improvement and, where appropriate, a strategy to embrace competition.

Integrating actions

8.8 The potential of more integrated authority structures, stakeholder arrangements, investment and regulatory process has already been discussed. More integrated delivery of maintenance processes can be delivered through area-based structures, multi-tasking, and integrated feedback arrangements.

Integrated management

8.9 The benefits of area-based management approaches and organisations were outlined in Chapter 6 and are not discussed at length here. A move towards area-based management approaches is nevertheless noticeable in public space maintenance, and the case studies confirmed that it can often deliver a more locally responsive, integrated and efficient service. Area-based management is not without its problems, however, and managers should be especially careful to:

- Avoid drawing rigid boundaries around areas or neglecting borders between areas
- Match the boundaries of different devolved area-based services
- Avoid a duplication of bureaucracy at the authority-wide and area-wide levels
- Encourage healthy competition between areas, perhaps with annual prizes for delivery
- Maintain clarity, through overall quality control, standards and delivery processes
- Avoid losing economies of scale in procurement of both services and materials.

8.10 Furthermore, area-based management should avoid simply replacing monolithic departments at the authority-wide scale with monolithic departments at the local scale – albeit multi-functional as opposed to mono-functional. It therefore remains vitally important to consider each function on its own merits before deciding whether to devolve activities, and keeping those activities which are better handled on an authority-wide basis together. What is important is that at whatever level it operates, the overall planning for, and management of, services should be handled in an integrated way (see Chapter 5).

Multi-tasking

8.11 An outcome of integrated management should be the integrated delivery of maintenance at the 'coalface'. Increasingly, authorities are employing multi-task work-teams to deliver better results. As with management approaches, however, care is required to ensure that the efficiencies of mono-functional teams are not lost where they are more appropriate i.e. in waste collection. Good results were reported in a number of areas:

- The use of highly visible teams of trained cleaners in more sensitive areas who can deal with a broad range of environmental issues and also help the police to trace offenders. In Waltham Forest this is part of a 'Business Watch' scheme that is backed by the police and the local business community
- From multi-skilled uniformed wardens in Warrington working closely with the police and dedicated cleansing and maintenance teams, and supporting a variety of street-related initiatives, especially in high profile areas
- The use of teams of dedicated employees in Bristol (either from the council or seconded from private contractors) trained to carry out a range of public space services in one area (including grounds maintenance in gardens belonging to elderly or disabled residents). These approaches have generated good and trustful relationships with local communities and the teams have tended to assume the role of informal neighbourhood wardens (figure 68).

Figure 68: Bristol, Project Pathfinder: Local Integrated Public Space Services

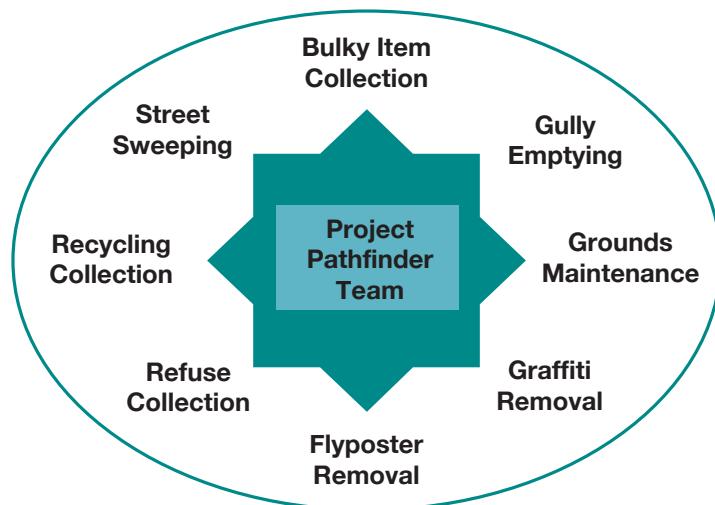
The New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme has been used in Bristol to improve the cleanliness of the public realm in a deprived residential area. The impetus to improve the external environment came from the community themselves following consultation. At operational level, Project Pathfinder has managed to integrate the maintenance, cleansing, and waste management of the public realm into one team of nine public realm operatives, consisting of employees from the city's private waste management and cleansing contractor. The key to Project Pathfinder's success is the use of a multi-skilled, flexible, and dedicated team of operatives.

In the case of Project Pathfinder, a single dedicated team carry out eight different duties. The cleaning and maintenance regimes of the operatives are flexible and responsive rather than sticking to a rigid contractual regime.

The team members were chosen for their commitment to their work and their willingness to learn new skills, with the NDC having a contractual agreement with the waste contractor that the same operatives do the job every day, in a specific uniform, with a dedicated vehicle and equipment. A single dedicated team has the benefits that operatives know where problem areas are likely to be, have a team morale, are accountable, and most importantly, get to know the community.

Local residents are encouraged to call in person to the local NDC HQ, or to telephone in public space enquiries. However, the real success of the scheme is that the team are viewed as trusted members of the community, and local people will now often approach them directly about public realm issues. Project Pathfinder is an example of a genuine partnership between the local community, the council, and the city's private waste/cleansing contractor. The council is currently rolling out similar schemes in ten other residential areas in Bristol.

Project Pathfinder Team Maintenance Duties



8.12 The various initiatives benefit from the same advantages. Firstly, employees quickly get to know the problems of the area they are responsible for and are able to respond flexibly to service needs by establishing priorities and routines that suit the context. For example, streets will not be swept if they are not dirty, with time and resources switched to other more pressing needs. Secondly, dedicated and stable teams can facilitate a more direct and less formal relationship between the service providers and the community.

8.13 Problems have been faced, however, when the success of particular area-based teams makes them susceptible to internal poaching to tackle problems as they arise elsewhere. In Bristol, these problems have only been solved by contractual arrangements with service providers that specify named workers and vehicles.

Figure 69: **Waltham Forest, Street Watchers 2**

Street Watchers started in 2000 following a suggestion from a 'Citizens' Jury' to involve residents more in council activities. Originally set up within the Highways Maintenance Section, it was subsequently transferred to Customer Services acting as an extension to their free-phone hotline. The post of Street Watchers Coordinator is therefore customer-focused and perceived to be independent from service delivery.

Street watchers' key role is to report unsightly or dangerous situations in public spaces, concerning street cleansing, refuse collection, abandoned vehicles, green spaces, graffiti and fly tipping. When street watchers report a problem to the telephone hotline they are issued with a reference number and the case is logged in the system. They can also contact the co-ordinator who has access to the system and who can provide feedback or follow matters up with those responsible for action.

Initially, the pilot involved twelve residents and 400 defects were reported in the first six months of operation. The scheme's long-term success was assured by the borough-wide expansion of street watchers to 224 volunteers (the objective being to reach 300 by March 2003 and eventually to have one for every street). Recruitment of volunteers is through the local press and attendance at events, and on joining they are equipped with information packs and relevant contacts. The initiative has so far failed to engage young persons and ethnic minority volunteers, and to redress the balance the council will be targeting these groups in future. It has nevertheless resulted in an improved environment by bringing problems to the council's attention before they become serious.

As street watchers become better educated in street scene matters they become more selective in their reporting which has reduced the number of complaints. Being able to talk to the coordinator and follow matters up has also increased residents' satisfaction with the council.



Waltham Forest, street market

Integrated reporting

8.14 One of the most frustrating problems for the public is knowing exactly who to contact when things go wrong (see Chapter 4), particularly concerning the small-scale maintenance issues such as bulky waste removal, graffiti cleaning, street cleaning etc. A number of authorities have been working to deliver more integrated reporting systems that either ensure quicker and more convenient access for the public, or identify individuals with responsibilities to report problems when they arise:

- ‘Street watchers’ and ‘litter watchers’ volunteer schemes – can supplement the work of council officers responsible for public spaces. ‘Watchers’ can work as the eyes and ears of the council, picking up problems (both actual and potential) and reporting to officers which are then able to respond more quickly than if they had to wait until scheduled inspection visits. This has proven to be effective for services like street cleansing, refuse collection, abandoned vehicles, graffiti removal, and fly tipping, but depends on very good relationships between the volunteers and the relevant officers (figure 69).
- ‘Street champion’ volunteers – have also been used (council staff or preferably residents) who adopt a road and become a named contact. These champions regularly visit the adopted roads (usually on the way to/from work) and are accessible by phone if anyone wants to report a problem. In Greenwich, the champion then contacts the hotline centralising street related services.
- Customer help-lines – operate in Newcastle (figure 70) where considerable investment has been put into creating a one-stop shop help-line, with appropriate systems and software that allow complaints and queries to be logged onto a GIS database. This system has a monitoring role (see below), but also acts as a tool to directly co-ordinate the delivery of services. The call centre receives calls and e-mails for a wide range of public space issues, and co-ordinates actions between the range of council services.

Figure 70: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Envirocall: Co-ordinating Public Space Services

Envirocall is a call centre and one stop shop that coordinates and monitors resident and business environmental and public space enquiries for 45 public space services. Aware that many residents and businesses were ringing the council and either not getting through or reaching any number of different departments and staff, Newcastle created Envirocall to make public space services quicker, more responsive, and more consistent.

The Envirocall HQ is staffed by up to 25 telephone operatives, six days a week, from 8am-8pm. Residents and businesses can either telephone, e-mail through a dedicated Envirocall website, or report personally in any City Council Customer Service Centre. Operators have the means to answer enquiries (i.e. about waste collection times) and can organise council services such as bulky item collection. Operatives can also arrange to rectify public space problems that are reported.

The co-ordination and distribution of such a wide range of public space services is made possible through structured case-based reasoning software. Envirocall operatives log public space problems or requests using GIS and Windows software to locate and track complaints, and then co-ordinate council public space services. GIS software is used so that an operator can locate exactly where a public space problem is, what land the council owns, can track routes of waste collection or cleaning regimes, or even find the number of a broken street light.

The software will automatically assign a team, vehicle and depot to handle the problem, with jobs electronically sent to the correct depot. The software will also tell the Envirocall operative if a charge is associated with the service, such as for commercial waste collection. Once a job is completed the depot staff will update the file to a 'done' status.

GQL software is used in combination with the GIS software to print off maps for any part of the city for different instances of the public space management issues covered over any time period. The results of the monitoring are used for a number of important purposes: the identification of outstanding jobs; compilation of maps and statistics to monitor staff working and efficiency; and performance management of set public space standards and council response times at city and ward levels.



Envirocall HQ



Envirocall GIS screen (Newcastle City Council)

- Full-time wardens/rangers – operate in Great Yarmouth (see figure 64) as the eyes and ears of the council. They receive complaints direct from the public, identify potential problems themselves, and decide on courses of action (sorting out the problem directly themselves or seeking help from relevant departments). The town centre wardens utilise the CCTV scheme as their eyes and a dedicated radio link as their ears, together with an informal network of in-house shop security personnel. This has proved particularly useful in warning businesses of impending problems and encouraging them to act together swiftly to address concerns.

Involving others

8.15 Integrated reporting on public space maintenance problems seems to work best when involving a wide range of stakeholder groups. Adequate consultation, good customer care and the involvement of a range of special interest groups are all important.

Consultation

8.16 Formal area-based management systems have the advantage of creating a structure and a person (the manager) that is accountable for the state of public spaces in that area, and to whom users can go to if they wish to raise concerns. Area management approaches, including the use of ward stewards and town centre management also provide a more locally-based means to reach out and liaise with local residents, community groups, businesses and councillors, and to influence other service delivery priorities and investment decisions at ward level. In Newcastle, this constitutes a rolling programme of consultation and action planning done through public meetings (two main meetings: in the autumn to agree on priorities and in the spring to agree the action plan). The events have proved to be popular, with large turnouts and participation (figure 71).

Figure 71: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, City Centre Environmental Management Working Group

The City Centre Environmental Management Working Group is used by Newcastle City Council to keep businesses and residents in the city centre informed about public space management and maintenance issues. When the group first started meeting, large regeneration projects in the city centre (i.e. the restoration and regeneration of the Grainger Town district) were being planned and implemented, and the group aimed to keep stakeholders on-board. The working group is also used to raise awareness of city-wide campaigns, such as the Nations in Bloom competition.

The group aims to gauge the public space priorities of businesses and residents, and has the power to redirect resources for physical public space improvements, such as new street furniture or replanting schemes. In many cases it has also managed to attract external resources that would otherwise not have been possible.

The group is used as a 'sounding board' to discuss improvements to public space cleaning and maintenance processes, and to monitor pilots, new working practices, and the centrally compiled public space service standards and response times. Stakeholders on the group are encouraged to comment on and influence council policy documents that affect the city centre at the draft/consultation stage, and are also given the opportunity to comment on city centre development proposals. The group, through the auspices of its chair and the dedicated City Centre Manager, regularly canvass the views of a wider constituency of city centre businesses face to face.



Newcastle city centre

8.17 The success of such events emphasise the importance of involving the wide range of users of public spaces in strategy design and implementation, since it is their perception of how well public spaces are managed that will ultimately set the benchmark of success. Increasingly it is also important to involve the managers of privately owned public space in devising long-term maintenance strategies to ensure the seamless integration between the maintenance of privately and publicly managed spaces (figure 72). The transport operating companies – Network Rail, the train operating companies and bus operating companies – should be included in such discussions.

Figure 72: Birmingham, City Centre Management 2

Birmingham's City Centre Manager reports to the City Centre Partnership Board. The Board, which includes councillors and senior officers, retailers, businesses, developers and property owners, provides strategic direction for the effective delivery of city centre management. The city centre has been a political priority for many years with expenditure to match, but the relocation of businesses to the centre and longer opening hours (requiring night time working) have increased pressures on funding, diverting further resources away from the rest of the city. Furthermore, because the maintenance needs of the city centre require a flexible approach (reflecting seasonal variations in the level of activity) staff are often brought in from suburban teams to work overtime.

Privately maintained publicly accessible places pose a challenge, as the public's perception of their environment does not distinguish between different ownership. Brindleyplace, for example, has set new standards in the management of external spaces that the business community has now come to expect as the norm. The City Centre Manager has therefore been working with the developers of the Bullring development to ensure a seamless integration between the privately managed areas and the rest of the city centre.

The post of manager has been elevated in status (effectively assistant director level) reflecting the ongoing commitment, but the nature of the work has become more business oriented with a view to increase income generated from promotional work and increasing the membership base. The various departments discharge their functions in the city centre as part of the mainstream maintenance programmes through 'service level agreements' based on priorities set by the City Centre Partnership Board. A major role of the City Centre Manager is to co-ordinate the various functions, an activity for which 'Beacon Status' was obtained in 2001.



Brindleyplace, Birmingham

Public realm around
St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Customer care

8.18 The importance of customer care skills should not be underestimated in the delivery of routine maintenance programmes. In particular, there can be positive advantages if those responsible for integrating the delivery of services at a local level are seen by the users of the services as a link between the community and the service department of the council.

8.19 Experience of some of the most sophisticated customer care systems have pointed to the importance of a prompt and adequate response to community feedback on the quality of services and maintenance regimes, even if the answer is that nothing can be done at present. In this regard, customer service databases can be an important tool in conjunction with a flexible area-based approach to service delivery. By such means, service providers will be informed of problems, and routines and practices can be adapted to suit area requirements. Customers can also be kept abreast of changes that have been made or actions taken in response to their feedback.

8.20 Customers also need to be made aware of the availability of specialist public space maintenance services such as fly-poster removal. These services should be made accessible and their existence and operating regime known by stakeholders. Managers and area wardens/ rangers can have an educational role in this regard, giving talks about the role of the authority and other stakeholders in delivering space management services.

8.21 Authorities should also provide information about how residents and other stakeholders can act by themselves or in partnership with others to address key problems. For some problems i.e. graffiti removal, a simple fact sheet can be produced and freely distributed to allow residents to deal with problems quickly and cheaply themselves without the need to call on frontline local authority services.

Special interests

8.22 A range of special interest groups can make a particular contribution to the delivery of more efficient and effective services. These include:

- Trade unions – who have sometimes resisted the switch to multi-tasking before the consequences for pay and conditions of employment implied by more generic work contracts are thought through. The more successful cases have included trade union involvement in the design of new public space maintenance strategies from the start
- Local civic amenities societies – who are often filled with motivated and skilled individuals who may be willing to actively participate in public space maintenance. Such groups sometimes also provide small grants for small-scale environmental works
- Young persons from local schools and youth clubs – experience shows that involving young people in graffiti and rubbish removal makes the problems less likely to reappear in the areas that have been cleared
- Graffiti writers – who have sometimes been involved in developing strategies to contain the problem. Such exercises can be valuable both for understanding the motivation of writers, and in educating them of the consequences of their actions (see Annex C, figure 86).

Setting standards

8.23 It has already been argued that privately owned and managed public spaces can help to set the benchmark for maintenance standards. This is because the commercial imperatives associated with such spaces demand attractive, safe and clean space. Some local authorities have tried to replicate the same standards in their own managed spaces, especially in the highly visible areas surrounding private developments, invariably with good results. Instruments such as BIDs (see Chapter 6) or arms-length area management companies will be useful in helping to match these standards.

8.24 A number of approaches have proved valuable in helping to establish and deliver higher maintenance standards in public space:

- Street furniture manuals – covering not just ‘products’ but also ‘processes’ (i.e. of reinstatement and maintenance) and ‘principles’ have proven to be powerful tools in supporting appropriate street level interventions. CABE’s (2002) ‘Paving the Way’ publication argues that visual simplicity is a key feature of many of the best streetscape schemes i.e. in the specification of paving, street furniture, lighting and signage (see Annex C, figure 80). Street furniture manuals can help to establish a limited pallet of well-designed elements that are applicable in all but special locations where one-off schemes may be required. This can also help to avoid the problem of a diversity of materials and street elements that quickly date, and are poorly maintained because either local authorities and utility providers lack the knowledge to reinstate special elements or are unable to source matching materials.
- Conservation area assessments – undertaken in a systematic manner can help authorities to understand their historic environment, and identify the pallet of historic architectural and townscape elements that constitute the character of designated areas. In this regard it is often the landscape and streetscape elements that make up much of the character of sensitive areas and for which authorities should prepare considered enhancement proposals. Again, a limited pallet of carefully chosen materials and street furniture supplemented with specials to reflect character in particular locations is recommended by English Heritage (2000) (see Annex C, figure 87).
- Cleaning charters – have been used with success to set out clear grades of cleanliness and response times for cleaning streets that become dirty beyond a minimum grade. This approach implies a move away from traditional cleaning routines based on rigid periodicity and requires the development of flexible street cleaning schemes. Charters also help to keep residents informed about the authority’s intentions (figure 73).

Figure 73: Great Yarmouth, Community Litter Reduction Plan

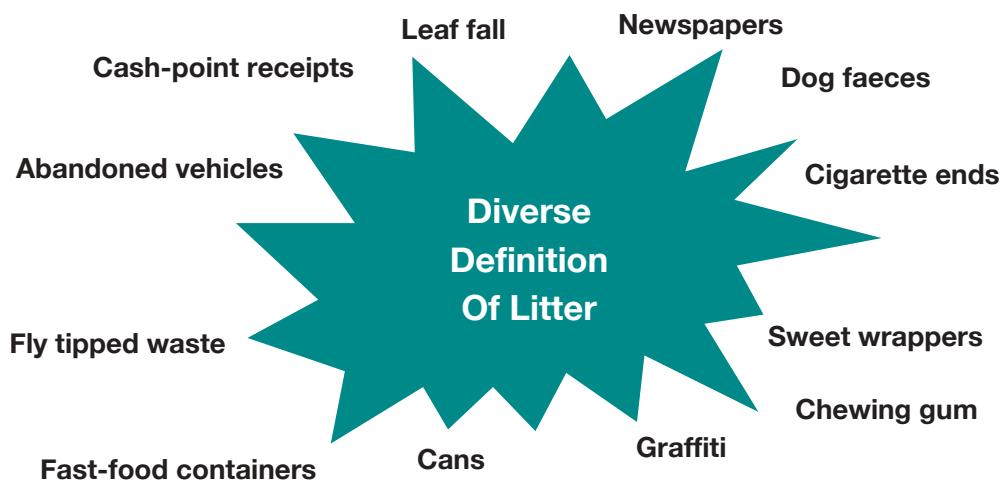
Great Yarmouth is one of the few towns in England to have produced a plan to reduce litter in the town. The wide-ranging definition of litter utilised in the plan covers many of the every-day problems found in public space management. Important features of the plan include:

- Grades of cleanliness and response times for removing different types of litter, which are used in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (DETR 1999). The grades of cleanliness will be used to calculate a 'street index of cleanliness' on a scale of 1:100 to enable areas to be compared with each other over time. The council is attempting to champion flexible and efficient modes of working for litter sweeping and collection, moving away from regular regimes to a more responsive service.
- Enforcement powers for the Environmental Rangers (see fig 60)
- Annual reviews of the plan to inform the public about how the council is performing on a range of issues, including response times for removing litter, the street index of cleanliness scores, penalty notices processed, and new bins installed.



The Leader of the council launched the plan at the borough's annual environmental conference in the town hall. A logo and slogan were used for the launch, and key stakeholders were asked to sign their names on a large board at the front of the conference so that the commitment of their organisation to the plan was recorded by those present and by the local press.

Litter Reduction Plan, Definition of Litter



- Chartermarks and awards – provide an incentive for frontline operatives and managers alike to question and improve practice. In particular, an open culture of criticism should be encouraged, with rewards for suggestions that allow more effective and efficient working. Newcastle has won the 'Nations in Bloom' competition in 2001 and 2002, the 'Tidy Britain Cup' in 2001, and the CABE/BBC Radio 4 'Best Street' in 2002 (see figure 12 and figure 13 in chapter 3). The Nation in Bloom competition alone brought the city an estimated £1million of positive exposure and considerable pride for local authority employees and politicians (figure 74). With the establishment of the Green Flag Award Partnership announced in *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (ODPM, 2003) the 'Green Flag Award Scheme' will increasingly become the accepted national standard to recognise the good management of parks and green spaces.

Figure 74: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cleaning and Greening the City

A concerted programme to improve the public realm of Newcastle by increasing greenery and improving grounds maintenance and cleaning was instigated by the council following public consultation in the mid 1990s. The key driver was the move from Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) to Best Value, enabling the council to deliver a more co-ordinated public realm service through an integrated budget for all environmental services. The new budget brought together the once separate cleansing, grounds maintenance, and highways departments, contracts, and operatives. This led to changes in working practices, and the altering of shift patterns to a more responsive 24-hour cycle.

As cleansing and maintenance improved, green areas were replanted and large flower displays were added to the city centre, with specific themes and colours chosen for different areas. Hanging baskets, multiple flower basket poles, shrubs and barrier planters were also distributed across the city centre. New horticultural training centres were established for improving the skills of council maintenance staff, and the new plants were grown in the council's own nursery. The increased cleanliness and greening of the city was complimented by the pedestrianisation of a number of key city centre streets and the addition of new modern street furniture.

The cleaning and greening initiative has been gradually rolled out into Newcastle's residential areas, with the council encouraging local schemes across the city by supplying materials, equipment, advice, and council staff/operatives. The council has also been encouraging community ownership of the schemes, with plants being delivered and the community planting and maintaining them, with much success and huge demand. Communities are even encouraged to enter competitions such as 'Northumbria in Bloom' and 'Britain in Bloom' and the council have published a booklet for communities that simplifies the guidance for competition entry and describes what direct financial assistance they can apply for.



Eldon Square, Newcastle: cleaned and greened



New street furniture in the Grainger Town, Newcastle

- Best Value reviews – can help in focusing attention on producing and implementing maintenance strategies, especially when decisions have to be made about where to allocate scarce resources. Best Value reviews seem particularly valuable in encouraging authorities to take a holistic look at the issue of public space management. They combine an examination of working practices, enforcement issues, working arrangements with relevant partners, education, and performance monitoring.
- Benchmarking and ‘mock’ reviews – Benchmarking between similar authorities can be a useful practice, as long as exercises are undertaken in the spirit of positive criticism and a willingness to challenge established practice. Authorities may even consider undertaking ‘mock’ Best Value reviews on neighbouring authorities between national reviews as a way of maintaining quality between visits and/or preparing for national assessment.

Attracting resources

8.25 Better management of maintenance services will only go so far to delivering external public space. Managers need to make the case for more resources on two fronts. First, that the maintenance of public space requires a larger slice of the overall public spending cake locally, because public space concerns should be a higher political priority. Second, that the savings brought about through more efficient modes of working should be reinvested in delivering higher quality public spaces and public space services. Both are only likely to occur if local managers can demonstrate the value-added by better quality public space, in social, economic and environmental terms. One off demonstration projects might be useful, backed by consumer research that seeks to test resident and business opinion about outcomes. Another approach might be member visits to UK authorities that are perceived to be performing well, and/or exchanges between officers.

8.26 The key is to balance quality with cost, but not to dwell so much on the latter that delivery of the former is undermined. During the research, authorities repeatedly bemoaned the impact of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). CCT had proved particularly difficult for them because contractors commissioned solely on a lowest cost basis inevitably cut corners and did the bare minimum in order to maintain a profit margin whilst meeting contractual obligations. The drafting of contracts needs careful consideration (see Chapter 7), but the aim should be to deliver clearly specified quality standards. Tenders (including from in-house services) should be judged on this basis.

8.27 The value of integrated working practices and multi-tasking has already been discussed. Authorities might also find that integrating service budgets helps to identify and cut out inefficiencies and duplication of tasks, and create more flexibility in how budgets are spent. For these reasons, where this was done on an experimental basis during the Best Value pilot process, it was quickly made permanent. The objective should be to reduce management and back-office costs in order to increase the resources available for frontline and customer care services.

Delivering for the long-term

8.28 Authorities face key issues in considering the long-term implications of new and/or innovative design and management practice. These operate on three fronts:

- Firstly, an issue that has already been discussed (Chapter 6) is the transition from capital investment to ongoing maintenance budgets. The telephone survey undertaken of existing practice and the case studies undertaken during the research (see Annex B) revealed that often councils only become aware of the maintenance costs of new or refurbished public spaces once schemes have been implemented. Therefore, new public spaces should be conceived with a long-term view and specified in a way that reduces costs of maintenance. The key seems to be close collaboration at the design stage between in-house project teams (and their external consultants) and in-house maintenance teams. Good management/maintenance routines should be established very early in the process and conceived for the long-term (figure 75).

Figure 75: Warrington, Maintaining A New Town Centre Public Realm

An innovative new public realm scheme in the town centre of Warrington was completed in 2002. Processes of maintenance began by establishing before the design stage that this major investment in the public realm must be built to last and should be easy to maintain. Council officers and operatives were therefore involved from the beginning of the design process in discussing the implications of different design solutions on management and maintenance regimes. Members and officers visited other towns and cities and ruled out man-made materials, opting instead for more durable materials such as granite, glass and bronze.

With such a large investment it was also vital that the revenue budgets and cleaning and maintenance regimes were agreed before the scheme was completed. In Warrington the revenue budgets for the cleaning and maintenance of the town centre's public spaces previously came from a variety of council departments, but once the new town centre was completed, the cleansing and maintenance revenue costs were centralised into a single budget for the whole town centre. The town centre revenue budget is therefore ring-fenced for an agreed 3.6km² jurisdiction, integrating the cleansing and maintenance of the new public realm into the rest of the town centre. The centralisation of the budget also allows the council to bring in specialist contractors (for chewing gum removal, new water features, etc.) when required.



New town centre public realm at night, Warrington



Maintenance planting scheme, Warrington

- Secondly, contracts for provision of services and service routines need to be flexible enough to allow for proactive initiative that enhances overall delivery, as well as means to deliver prompt responses to national and European legislative changes and their implications. Flexibility in the medium-term needs to be balanced with certainty over the long-term.
- Thirdly, authorities need to find means to experiment with innovative management models before mainstreaming practice. The case studies indicated that innovative public space management practices are more likely to succeed in areas of greater visibility such as city centres where it is easier to mobilise support from a variety of public, private and community stakeholders. They also indicated that although it is often desirable to design pilot schemes with a view to rolling out the lessons learnt to local centres and housing areas, this should only be done after careful evaluation of their successes and failures, and their appropriateness to other contexts.

8.29 Area-based management approaches have been used as an effective test-bed for new management systems and technologies. Indeed, one of the issues for area-based management is how it can contribute to building permanent structures that can take-over the specific day-to-day management practices and routines appropriate to local areas. In getting this done, area-based management teams can often short-circuit management or contractors' chains of command and union negotiations to get things done. Although these things will have to be addressed before practices can move to the larger authority-wide stage, re-negotiations of long-term practice elsewhere will be able to begin on the basis of knowledge and certainty about what works and what does not.

8.30 The telephone survey of current local authority practice undertaken as part of the research feeding into *Caring for Quality* revealed that as public space quality improves through the impact of better maintenance services, the tolerance levels of the public decreases and expectations rise. This is an entirely positive characteristic of improving practice, and will help local authorities and their partners to continually question 'How can we do better?' to meet heightened expectations. This 'challenging culture' is a key component of a long-term drive to deliver better services; it goes hand-in hand with re-educating some communities to treat their own public space with greater respect.

Responding to context

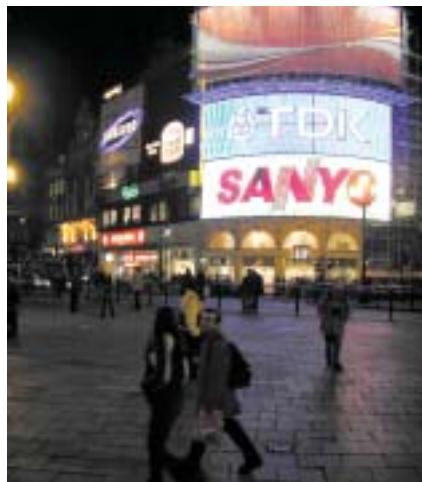
8.31 Different parts of urban areas will need different maintenance regimes and the development of standards, processes and routines that are appropriate to those locations. For example, suburban areas are likely to require a greater emphasis on the natural soft landscape and on maintenance during daylight hours, whilst urban areas will require frequent cleansing of the hard landscape and increasingly a 24-hour approach to maintenance (figure 76). To reflect these needs, some of the most innovative authorities are organising area-based maintenance by zones according to their maintenance requirements, with different maintenance regimes for each zone. Integration of contracts for cleansing, grounds maintenance and highways maintenance can then occur within each zone.

Figure 76: 24-hour Management

24-hour public spaces are an issue for many local authorities, and may increasingly be so following the changes to alcohol licensing hours and powers contained in the 2003 Licensing Bill.

In reality the 24-hour economy does not exist in most cities, which instead have an 18-20 hour economy. This still raises a series of distinct questions, opportunities, and management problems for local authorities. To benefit fully from the 'pros' and mitigate the 'cons', local authorities might think of preparing a 24-hour City Strategy. Local Government Association (LGA, 2002) work argues for:

- Consideration of the resources and regimes needed for increased services in 24-hour public space, such as maintenance, cleansing, and waste collection. Increased usage of public space over a 24-hour period gives local authorities a much narrower timeframe to complete these services. Local authorities should also be aware that those who live in mixed-use 24-hour cities do not generally appreciate high levels of automated noise in the early hours of the morning.
- Consideration of the need for increased management through the night, possibly with an increased police presence, the use of street wardens or rangers, and the use of CCTV and a 24-hour control room.
- Consideration of late night travel options, including buses and taxis.
- Consideration of how planning obligations (section 106) might be used to mitigate the negative effects of the 24-hour economy. Examples could include contributions to fund night bus services, public toilets, wardens, or CCTV.
- Staggering licensing hours of venues or banning street drinking through byelaws or Home Office designation orders.



Piccadilly Circus: 24-hour public space

8.32 Authorities have also reported encouraging results from early experiments to devolve the power to make decisions about maintenance priorities to the ward level. A fully tailored response will depend on the exact nature of the context for action (see figure 10 chapter 1). Beside the major land use categories, a wide range of special contexts exist which are subject to their own particular problems, ownership complexities and constraints, and which require their own maintenance regimes.

8.33 The interviews with everyday users of public space undertaken during this research revealed that the public does not understand the complexities of ownership patterns. For them, if space is perceived to be part of the public realm, then it should be cleaned and maintained as if it were publicly owned. The finding emphasises the importance of management regimes that extend from street wall to street wall, and do not stop at the line of studs in the pavement or at the kerb because ownership and therefore management responsibilities change.

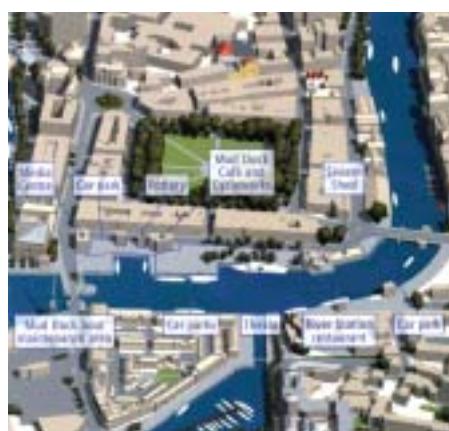
8.34 In Bristol, successful results have been obtained by management teams responsible for specific high-profile areas that are able to give special attention to concerns not covered by the mainstream cleansing and maintenance contracts (figure 77).

Figure 77: Bristol, Maintaining Bristol Harbour

Following the steep rise in the variety of leisure uses in and around the regenerated harbour area, maintaining the Bristol harbour presents particular challenges for the council. The City Council Docks Manager supervises a team of water/engineering staff who clean the water, carry out basic engineering work, and crop vegetation. Many parts of the water are hard to get to and require particular skills from a specialist team of operatives. A second team is responsible for the waterside areas, including cleaning and sweeping, emptying bins, cleaning graffiti, and completing small maintenance jobs. The waterside team have a formal checklist to be completed fortnightly, covering standards for cleanliness, lifebuoys and graffiti. Both teams will double-up at busy times, such as in the summer.

The cleaning and maintenance of the harbour area and water is done through council revenue. However the council will seek to negotiate with developers for commuted sums to pay for the cleaning and maintenance of the publicly accessible riverside land, or will encourage the owners of the land to manage it themselves.

While the public realm in the central Bristol harbour area is perceived by most users to be continuous council owned and administered public space, it is in fact a patchwork of public, semi-public, and privately owned land, brought together through the requirement to provide public access.



Section of the harbour management area,
(Bristol City Council)

Monitoring Check Sheets		00030		
To be completed by Harbour Operational Duty Staff				
Date	10/07/13	Location	09	
Time Commenced	14:30	Last Updated	14:30	
Time Completed	15:30	Empty Bin	None	
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Date		15/07/13		
Ref	Defect Found	Date Found	Immediate Action Taken	Further Action Required
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8.35 Alternatively, in the city's deprived residential areas the 'bending' of mainstream services enabled by New Deal for Communities (NDC) funding has been used to better integrate cleansing, waste management and public space maintenance. In Greenwich, a partnership between the council and local housing associations has proved highly effective in tackling some of the authority's largest social housing estates. The scheme designed for residential areas in the borough will now be rolled out over the remainder of the borough as a high political priority (figure 78).

Figure 78: Greenwich, Clean Sweep 2

In 2001 Greenwich set up a Policy Commission which recommended a crosscutting Best Value Review – 'Pride in the Public Realm' – in response to residents' concerns about the condition of their environment and safety (antisocial behaviour). In the borough's housing estates there was widespread criticism of the council's operations, which failed to address tasks in a co-ordinated way. In particular the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) inheritance had compartmentalised services, leading to their fragmentation.

Greenwich set out to address these issues and test alternative delivery mechanisms that resulted in the 'Clean Sweep' pilots, the first pilot being launched in 2001 in Woolwich Common. Following its success, Clean Sweep 2 started in 2002, covering a much larger geographical area. In addition to coordinating the client functions, the second experiment brought together the main delivery operations through a generic environmental worker capable of multitasking to cover all maintenance functions, including cleansing, grounds maintenance and caretaker roles.

The second pilot also tested whether partnerships with other providers could work by involving housing associations operating in the locality in the management of the housing stock. The two social landlords are now commissioning service provision jointly bringing economies of scale. The associations also operate a partnership on other management fronts, including for lettings and tackling antisocial behaviour.

The establishment of a 'call centre' for all public space related matters proved very popular with users, with a single call delivering a response from the appropriate department or section.

It also became a mechanism for better co-ordination as the information recorded is used for statistical purposes, providing longitudinal information about the process, for monitoring response times, and assisting in setting performance targets.

Standards of maintenance have up to now been centrally controlled in Greenwich, although the pilots have now departed from this practice. Through multitasking and responsiveness to local needs, the pilots are delivering a more flexible approach, and tasks are now more output oriented and defy boundaries. Standards in the areas covered by Clean Sweep are therefore higher, and other residents have requested that the model be extended to their wards. The next step, following evaluation, is to devise a model to rollout the innovations to the rest of the borough.



Operation Clean Sweep leaflet, Greenwich

Monitoring success

8.36 The importance of careful monitoring has been stressed throughout Part II as a means to gauge environmental quality, evaluate the success of particular initiatives, and feedback into the policy-making. This is particularly important for maintenance processes in order to:

1. Inform future project proposals i.e. what has stood the test of time and what has not
2. Inform procurement services, i.e. purchase of street furniture and materials
3. Better relate practices to particular contexts
4. Fine tune maintenance services and their co-ordination

8.37 A number of approaches to systematically monitor environmental quality have already been discussed in previous chapters, many of which are highly relevant to maintenance concerns. At the national level the approach to Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for district councils has an explicit public space element, and this will be extended to unitary and county authority assessments in the future. At the local level a range of other approaches were identified during the research:

- Increasingly authorities are using ENCAMS Local Environmental Quality Survey (LEQS) (see Annex C, figure 88). East Riding, for example, has incorporated the system into their Local Public Service Agreement to check that standards of performance are being delivered at a local level (see figure 35 chapter 5). For the first time in 2003/04, the methodology is being used as the basis for a new Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) on local cleanliness.
- Greenwich has set up a database of the complaints about public spaces received by its help line. These give the council information about key problem areas, as well as providing the basis for setting performance targets and monitoring response times.
- Newcastle have found that a regular survey of residents' opinions can be a good tool to understand and fine-tune maintenance priorities. They also use their Envirocall system (see figure 70) software to automatically print maps and statistics for any part of the city (over any timeframe) in order to examine the performance of the 45 public space services recorded by the system and to pin-point problems.
- In Bristol, standards for maintenance work that take into account the particular needs of the Dockside area have been specified in the form of a checklist to be used by the maintenance team at regular intervals.
- Finally, a number of authorities including Birmingham, Bristol and Coventry have devised a range of indicators for their central area that allow regular health-

checks to be undertaken. In Great Yarmouth, cleanliness indicators are published in their Litter Reduction Plan and then annually assessed to monitor progress (see figure 73)

Watch-Points: Don't Forget:

- **Persuasion rather than regulation should be used in the first instance – much can be achieved through education and negotiation or even ‘naming and shaming’.**
- **Strive to instigate a culture of continual improvement and learning.**
- **Invest in a one-stop shop public space call centre and co-ordinated response systems.**
- **Consider area-based maintenance, utilising stable teams of named operatives.**
- **You get what you pay for – better maintenance standards will require more resources as well as better co-ordination and regulation.**
- **Different areas and communities have different needs, a ‘one size fits all’ approach rarely works.**
- **Where appropriate, consider multi-tasking, with well trained frontline staff working flexibly on a range of public space concerns, and directing their time and energies to where they are required rather than on inflexible routines.**

part III: moving on



Part III:

- Provides a means to question existing local practice
- Contains annexes that reflect on the research methodology and provide sources of further advice

Who should read it?

- Part III is essential reading for all senior managers concerned with the coordination of local authority services that impact on public space
- Part III is recommended reading for all managers of local authority services relating to public space
- Part III is recommended reading for all professionals, whether operating in the private or public sectors, whose activities impact on the quality of public space

How should it be used?

- Part III contains a tool for use by all public space managers to:
 - Establish the local context for public space management
 - Comprehensively critique existing public space management services
 - Question everyday practice

Chapter 9

questioning practice



this chapter:

- Summarises the preceding Part II chapters
- Offers a tool to help public space managers critique local practice
- Provides an initial means to move local practice forward by applying the recommendations and advice contained in *Caring for Quality*

Towards better practice

9.1 The research on which the discussion in *Caring for Quality* is based revealed two clear messages:

1. The whole process of public space management has suffered from a historic lack of investment, lack of good practice, and most of all an apparent lack of interest from key stakeholders
2. This is changing. Increasingly, both at the national and local levels, the quality of external public space is becoming a focus for new interest, new innovative practice and, sometimes, renewed investment.

9.2 Unfortunately, despite the renewed concern, both public spaces, and public space management services are improving from a low ebb and it will be a long process before many can be taken off the critical list. It is hoped that the advice contained in the previous chapters will encourage a move towards better practice, and to that end a wide range of initiatives and possibilities have been discussed.

A framework for questioning

9.3 *Caring for Quality* aims to stimulate ideas, rather than to offer a definitive model for better practice. It is not anticipated that authorities will adopt any more than a proportion of the approaches advocated in these pages. In reality, every authority will have to find their own route towards better practice, built on their own unique understanding of local circumstances, stakeholders and priorities. *Caring for Quality* offers a framework that is intended to help local authorities and other stakeholders:

1. **Question existing practice**
2. **Rethink, restructure, resource and move on.**

9.4 This fundamental process will be particularly important in the light of the requirements of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of local authority services. *Caring for Quality* has been structured to take readers logically through a matrix of factors that come together to impact either positively or negatively on public space quality and its management. It can therefore also be used as a framework under which authorities can prepare a self-assessment of their public space services in the context of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 'public space' theme (Audit Commission, 2003).

9.5 The report highlights that the most successful approaches to public space management share a number of key characteristics in common:

- **Leading with vision.** Strong leadership and a clear sense of direction
- **Integrating actions.** A crosscutting approach that consciously integrates all key public space management processes

- **Involving others.** An inclusive approach that actively involves the wide range of interests and stakeholders.
- **Setting standards.** An aspiration and ability to deliver the highest standards of service and public space.
- **Attracting resources.** Adequate resource levels – both human and financial – to deliver on the aspirations.
- **Delivering for the long-term.** Effective and efficient delivery mechanisms that over time consistently deliver quality.
- **Responding to Context.** A caring culture that is sensitive to the full range of physical and socio/economic contexts.
- **Monitoring success.** A questioning process that continually learns from experience and aims to do better.

So where to start? – A Questioning tool

9.6 Moving towards better, innovative practice in public space management will be an iterative process: asking questions will be a constant element in seeking to improve. A review of current practice is a logical starting point, and by doing so in such a way which not only appreciates management process but also the full dimensions and complexity of public space opens helps open up and encourage more integrated and innovative practice.

9.7 A distillation of the issues, advice and ways of thinking encouraged by *Caring for Quality* is provided through the Questioning Tool introduced here. The tool can be used as a framework for questioning both existing practice and new initiatives. It is intended as a positive tool for authorities determined to do better in their management of public space, to critique their current practice, and plan the step change that may be required.

9.8 The 'Questioning Tool' is divided into three parts.

- **A – Fundamental starter questions**
- **B – Challenging crosscutting questions**
- **C – Ongoing operational questions**

Questioning Tool – A: Fundamental Starter Questions

9.9 Four starter questions help stimulate a better understanding of the local context within which public space is currently managed and what the priorities are for the future. These reflect the issues discussed in Part I, which come together and can be presented as a 'Matrix of Contributions' (see figure 23 in chapter 4). Authorities will need to come to a view about these fundamental factors before attempting to move practice on.

Fundamental Starter Questions

1. Who is responsible for the quality of public space in this area?
2. What are our collective aspirations and why?
3. Which are the key processes involved in delivery?
4. How do they impact on public space character?

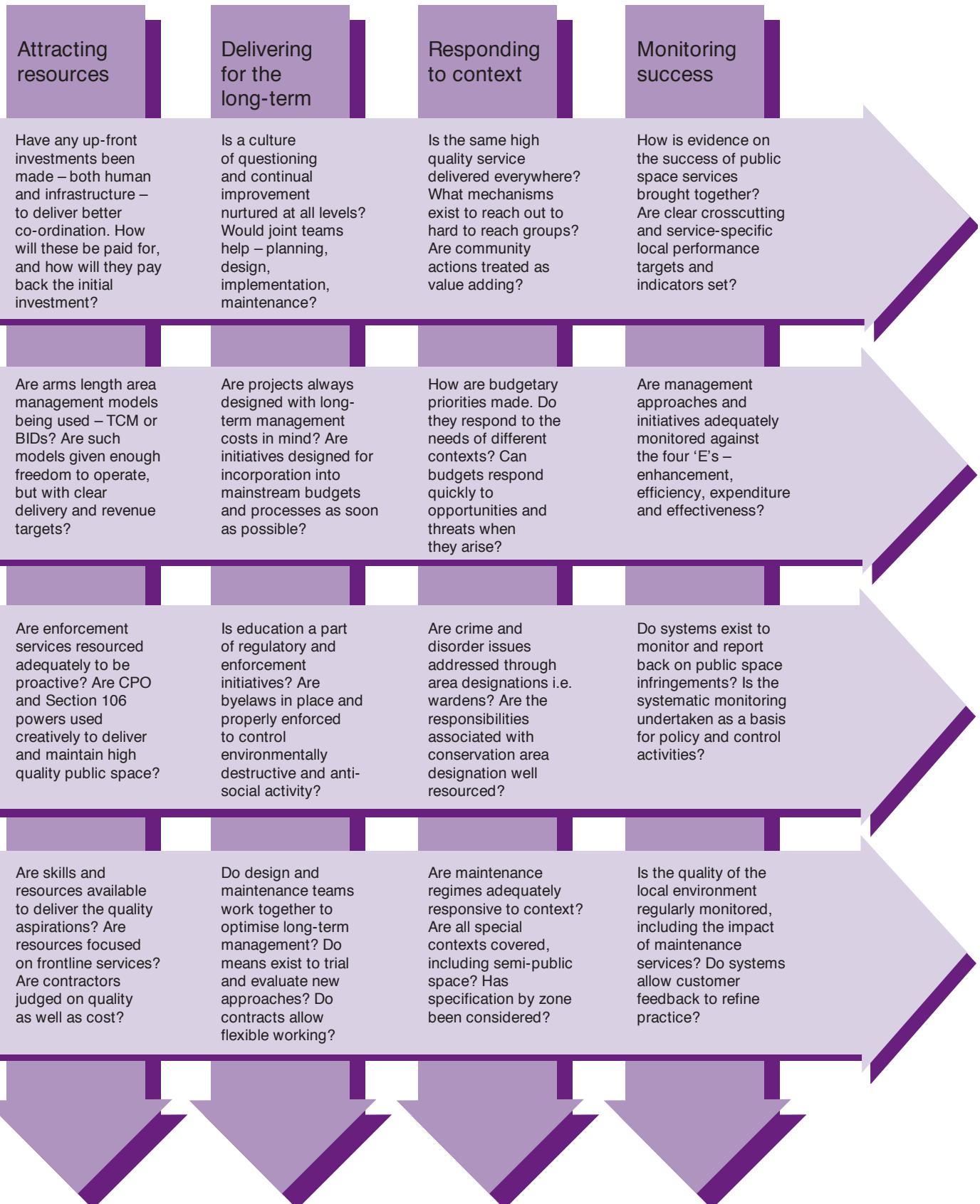
Questioning Tool – B: Challenging Crosscutting Questions

9.10 Analysis should then move to a more detailed set of crosscutting issues. Following the structure of the Part II chapters, a detailed questioning framework based upon crosscutting the eight steps identified above with the four key delivery processes available to authorities – co-ordination, investment, regulation and maintenance – can be mapped. Asking these questions helps critique existing space management processes in their entirety, cutting across the full range of local authority public space services. The tool can subsequently also be used for periodic monitoring of practice as it develops. The tool should be regarded as highly flexible, and questions can be added or deleted to reflect local circumstances.

- See [Crosscutting matrix overleaf](#)

A Questioning Tool – B: Challenging Cross-cutting Questions

	Leading with vision	Integrating actions	Involving others	Setting standards
Caring through better co-ordination	Are public space issues co-ordinated in an authority-wide policy framework? How are they reflected in decision-making structures, the LSP, and senior-level responsibilities?	Do departmental structures enhance co-ordination and communication on public space? How is a shared delivery culture being nurtured: politically, between services, between staff?	Have structures been put in place to involve the range of stakeholders – county authorities, local businesses, residents, licensed operators, RSLs, schools – and to agree a strategy?	How are standards of service and communication set and agreed by service customers? Are lines of responsibility clear to users and lines of communication integrated?
Caring through better investment	Are strategies in place to direct key public and private investment decisions to the delivery of better public space? How can early public investments set a quality threshold?	Has consideration been given to exploiting and integrating the range of investment sources (monetary and in-kind) – core, private, public space income, community, public exceptional?	Is the community as a resource being fully exploited in value-adding activity? Can area management and new technology better engage the community and local businesses?	Have standards of probity and quality been set? Is it clear how and why resources are being spent? How are the aspirations of the authority for quality and space longevity demonstrated?
Caring through better regulation	Are the full range of statutory policy frameworks in place and up to date? Do they reflect the vision for public space? Are the range of available spatial designations fully utilised?	Are all spatial designations integrated through a map-based system? Do consent regimes share relevant information? Are enforcement powers integrated in their delivery?	Are the Police and highways authority adequately involved in enforcement activities? Is legal advice available when required? Is the role of the community safety partnership clear?	Are the process 'danger-points' fully understood? Are internal service level agreements in place? Are procurement contracts outcome-based, integrated and flexible?
Caring through better maintenance	Are maintenance services challenged, both to deliver high quality services, and against models of alternative provision? Does the service plan reflect this?	Are key services located and management fully integrated at the appropriate level in the authority? Are opportunities for multi-tasking and integrated reporting fully exploited?	Is it clear to customers where responsibilities for maintenance lie? Are customer care systems in place? Have the unions and civic amenity societies been fully involved?	Are clear standards for maintenance (product and process) available? Are conservation area enhancement programmes delivered? Has benchmarking been considered?



Questioning Tool – C: Ongoing operational questions

9.11 The third element of the Questioning Tool brings together the four questions asked at the start of each of the Part II chapters. These vital questions concern the ongoing day-to-day operation of the four key delivery processes through individual public space services. Managers should ask the four relevant questions every time they are considering a new public space co-ordination process, episode of investment (large or small), regulatory activity, or act of maintenance. They work as simple reminders to ensure that the day-to-day delivery of space management services match the aspirations established at the start of the questioning process.

Questions for co-ordination initiatives

1. How does what is being proposed relate to what is already there?
2. How does what is being proposed relate to what others are doing?
3. How can both be enhanced through our actions?
4. How can this be communicated to others?

Questions for Investment initiatives

1. Is this investment required?
2. How will it impact on the perceived quality of the public space?
3. How can it be optimised to enhance the public space?
4. Can it be better directed to compliment and encourage other investment?

Questions for Regulation initiatives

1. How can this regulatory power be used to backup other public space management activities?
2. What other powers are available to deal with this local public space concern?
3. How can powers be combined and used more effectively to meet the objectives?
4. What extra powers can be taken in the future?

Questions for Maintenance initiatives

1. Will this contribute to building a general enhancement culture?
2. How can each task be made to impact positively on public space quality?
3. How can activities be better related to address public space quality more efficiently and holistically?
4. Are key problem areas/issues addressed?

An iterative process

9.12 Monitoring success in moving towards better practice will not only help understand where, how and why improvements have been made but also enables reflection on what could be done better. The matrix presented as part B of the Questioning tool above could be used as the basis for a simple 'performance' review. Using a blank version of the matrix, users could score how they feel they are performing across each of the crosscutting issues using a simple scoring system such as a three star rating system. So, for example, if all is well on 'Setting Standards' when considering regulation processes, then 3 stars may be rewarded.

- See public space performance matrix overleaf

Moving on

9.13 In 1999 the Urban Task Force laid down the challenge for central and local government to meet:

"Many people reject towns and cities, and choose to live elsewhere, because they are badly managed and maintained. More than 90% of our urban fabric will still be with us in 30 years time. The state in which we hand these assets over to the next generation depends entirely on how we look after them over that period. If we want to make the most of our existing urban assets, sustain the results of new investment and promote public confidence in our towns and cities, we must manage our urban environment carefully."

This means keeping our streets clean and safe, mending pavements, dealing with graffiti and vandalism, and maintaining attractive parks and open space. It is about the way we manage environmental services and the amount of money that is available for the task in hand. It is excellence in delivery combined with sufficient investment that will help to maintain urban neighbourhoods as attractive places".

9.14 *Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener* (ODPM, 2002) and *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (ODPM, 2003) set out the Government's response to the challenge. The latter identifies liveability as a key multi-dimensional challenge for local government, and establishes a range of national initiatives to spearhead a step change in delivery, notably the establishment of CABE Space to champion the high quality planning, design and management of parks and public spaces.

Monitoring progress: Public space performance – Blank tool

* – under-performing, urgent action required ** – adequate response, but room for improvement *** – perfect



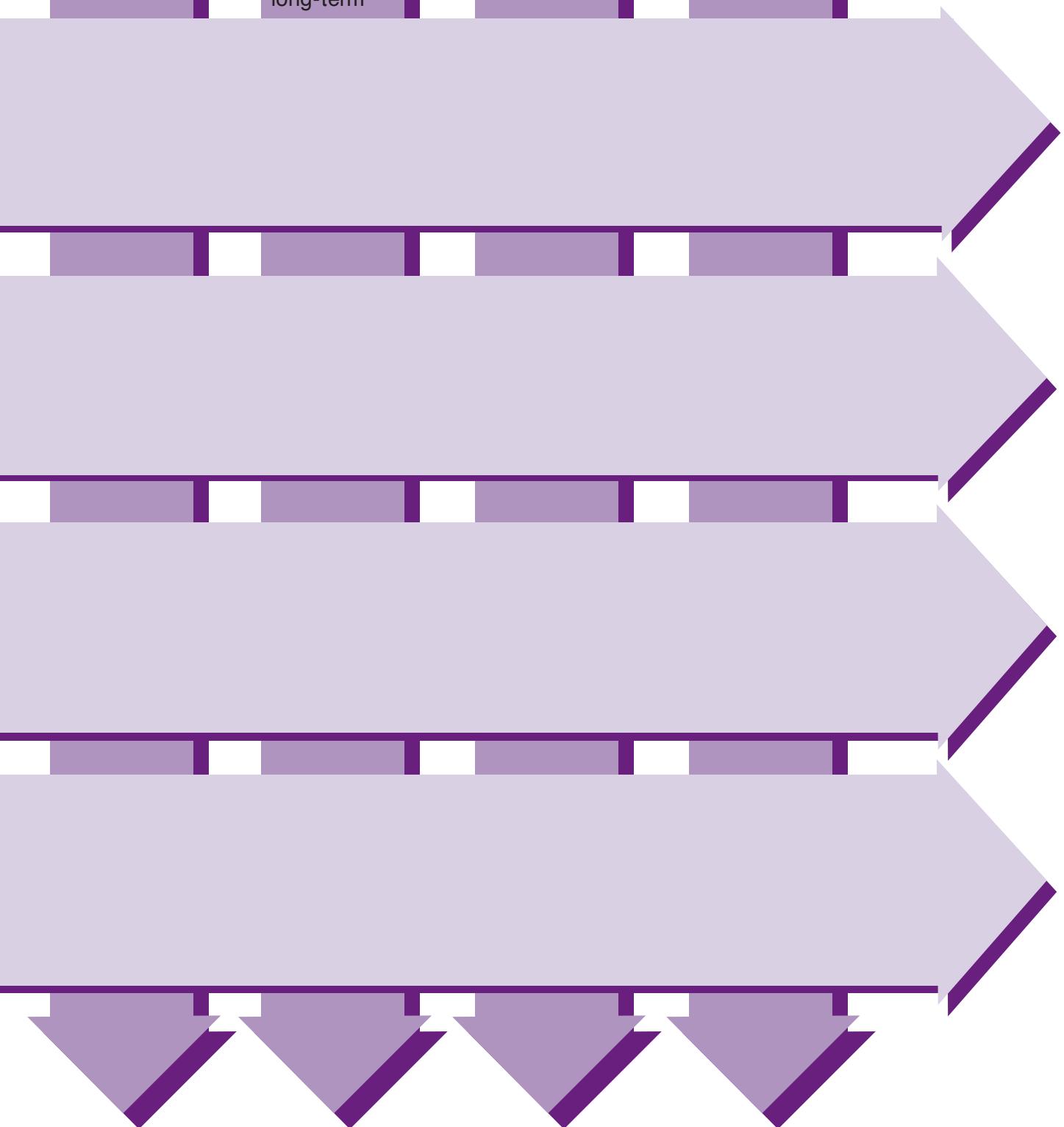
Perform well, maintain momentum

Attracting
resources

Delivering
for the
long-term

Responding
to context

Monitoring
success



9.15 The Liveability Fund, announced in August 2003, aims to test new approaches for tackling public space and local liveability issues that focus on and link service improvement, investment in innovative new parks and public spaces, and sharing of good practice throughout the process. The objectives of the Fund echo the findings of *Caring for Quality* in seeking to:

- encourage local authorities to adopt strategic planning and good practice in sustainable management and maintenance of the local environment
- develop performance management systems for improving service delivery on the local environment
- encourage better use of funding available to local authorities for local environment management through closer integration with complementary programmes and initiatives
- build effective networks for local authorities to learn and share lessons for raising the quality of services and for tackling local liveability issues.

9.16 At the local level, the ball is now in the court of the range of stakeholders, including local authorities, to deliver. During the course of the research upon which *Caring for Quality* is based, a wide variety of innovative practice was revealed that is delivering real improvements in the quality of public spaces on the ground. The innovation delivered by the few local authorities must now be extended to the many if England's towns and cities are to become the truly liveable places that their communities deserve.

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Annex A

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Annex B

the research

B1 The approach taken to the research was designed to unravel the complexity, and identify both the problems that result and possible solutions. A methodology based around twelve in-depth case studies was chosen in order to understand the relationships between different management processes, and as a means to examine best practice. The approach attempted to:

- Understand the range of contributors and contributions (positive and negative)
- Explore every-day policy and practice
- Identify and examine innovative practice
- Suggest how approaches to managing external public space can be refined in the future.

Figure 79: **Research Methodology**

A range of research approaches were adopted:

- **A policy, research and literature review.**
- **A national postal survey of current policy** – 290 local authorities across England were surveyed. 78 of the completed returns (a cut-off date for returns to be analysed was set) were received and analysed.
- **A telephone survey of current practice** across 20 local authorities regionally spread throughout England, chosen to represent different types of authorities and different urban situations.
- **Face to face interviews** with representatives of 18 key user groups – professional, amenity and local government
 - Association of Chief Police Officers
 - Association of Municipal Engineers
 - Audit Commission
 - Association of Town Centre Managers
 - British Retail Consortium
 - CABE
 - ENCAMS
 - English Heritage
 - Groundwork
 - Improvement and Development Agency
 - Institute of Civil Engineers
 - Institute of Highways and Transportation
 - Landscape Institute
 - Local Government Association
 - Living Streets
 - Royal Town Planning Institute
 - Secured by Design
 - SITA
- **In-depth case studies** with 12 authorities chosen to reflect – as far as possible – different routes to, contexts for, and types of, innovative public space management practice. Case studies included:
 1. **Interviews:** With the key stakeholders involved in each of the identified initiatives.
 2. **Quality audits:** Basic on-site investigations of public space quality. Locations were chosen to reflect the impact of the initiatives under examination.
 3. **Public opinion survey:** A vox-pop survey was undertaken of user views on their local public realm and its management (150 interviewees with residents, visitors and local business).

B2 Through a combination of research approaches (**figure 79, annex B**), the project attempted to address the wide range of contexts encompassed in the adopted definition of 'public space' (see chapter 1), as well as the range of management approaches. Despite adopting the 'narrow' definition of public space, the research was limited by three further factors; by the:

1. Breadth and complexity of the subject area, which until very recently has been largely examined in its constituent parts, and not as a whole
2. Lack of comprehensive examples of good practice, because managing public space has only recently featured as a high political priority and good practice has therefore only developed incrementally
3. Deliberate exclusion of parks and green open spaces from the research. This was on the basis that recommendations from the Urban Green Spaces Task Force (**figure 84, annex B**) and related published research, including comprehensive advice for local authorities on improving parks, play areas and open spaces (**figure 85, annex B**), have already examined management issues in these contexts.

B3 To overcome these limitations, the work draws directly from the rapidly expanding range of policy and guidance published in this area and in particular from:

- *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer Greener* – ODPM
- *Green Spaces, Better Places – Urban Green Spaces Task Force*
- *Paving the Way* – CABE
- *Street Scene – Audit Commission*
- *Designing Streets for People* – ICE
- *Towards an Urban Renaissance* – Urban Task Force

B4 Insets in **Annex B** provide a brief introduction to these publications and other key ideas, tools and publications which have been drawn upon in exploring public space management issues in *Caring for Quality*.

B5 It also concentrates on establishing a set of 'generic' and crosscutting principles, rather than on the specifics of individual processes or public space services (although a wide range of examples from the latter are given in **Part II**). It is hoped that by applying the principles advocated in *Caring for Quality* across the range of public space services, increasingly the sum of the individual contributions to public space management will reinforce each other to add up to more than the sum of the parts.



Annex C

summary of further advice

Category	Source of advice on public space management
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit Commission (2002) Street Scene, London, Audit Commission• CABE & ODPM (2002) Paving the Way, How We Achieve Clean, Safe and Attractive Streets, London, Thomas Telford• Stewart J (2001) Roads for People: Policies for Liveable Streets, Policy Report 56, London, The Fabian Society• Improvement and Development Agency (2003) A Year of Liveability Challenges 2003-2004, London, I&DA• Institution of Civil Engineers (2002) The 2002 Designing Streets for People Report, London, ICE• ODPM (2002) Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner, London, ODPM• ODPM (2003) Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, London, ODPM
Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit Commission (2002) Community Safety Partnerships, London, Audit Commission• DTLR (2002) Get On Board: An Agenda for Improving Personal Security in Bus Travel, London, DTLR• Home Office (1999) Neighbourhood Warden Schemes: An Overview - Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 2, London, Home Office• Home Office (2002) Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime: A Systemic Review: Research Study 251, London, Home Office• Home Office (2002) Crime Prevention Effects of Closed Circuit Television: A Systematic Review: Research Study 252, London, Home Office• Jacobson J and E Saville (1999) Neighbourhood Warden Schemes: An Overview. Crime Reduction Research Series, Paper 2, London, Home Office• Social Exclusion Unit (2000) Policy Action Team 6: Neighbourhood Wardens, London, Social Exclusion Unit• Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2002) Neighbourhood and Street Wardens Programme, London, DETR• www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/nswardens.asp (Neighbourhood Warden Programme website)• www.crimereduction.org.uk (guidance, good practice, toolkits funding information)
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biddulph M. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation) (2001) Home Zones: A Planning and Design Handbook, York, The Policy Press• CABE (2002) The Value of Good Design, How Buildings and Spaces Create Economic and Social Value, London, CABE• Carmona M, Heath T, Oc T & Tiesdell S (2003) Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design, Oxford, Architectural Press• Carmona M, Punter J & Chapman D (Royal Town Planning Institute) (2002) From Design Policy to Design Quality, The Treatment of Design in Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Action Plans, London, Thomas Telford• DETR & CABE (2000) By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice, London, Thomas Telford• DfT (2002) Inclusive Mobility, A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, London, DfT

Category	Source of advice on public space management (<i>continued</i>)
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTLR & CABE (2002) <i>Better Places to Live, By Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3</i>, London, Thomas Telford • English Partnerships & The Housing Corporation (2000) <i>Urban Design Compendium</i>, London, <i>Urban Design Compendium</i> • Urban Design Group (2002) <i>Urban Design Guidance: Urban Design Frameworks, Development Briefs and Master Plans</i>, London, Thomas Telford • www.rudi.net (resource for urban design information)
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Commission (2001) <i>We Hold these Truths to be Self-evident</i>, London, Audit Commission • Audit Commission (2001) <i>May You Live in Interesting Times</i>, London, Audit Commission • Audit Commission (2003) <i>Comprehensive Performance Assessment Guidance for District Councils</i>, London, Audit Commission • DETR (2000) <i>Local Public Services Agreements: A Prospectus for Local Authorities</i>, London, The Stationery Office • DETR (2000) <i>Local Strategic Partnerships: Consultation Document</i>, London, The Stationery Office • Improvement and Development Agency (2002) <i>Balancing Leadership and Management</i>, London, I&DeA • Improvement and Development Agency (2002) <i>Made to Measure? Best Value and the EFQM Excellence Model</i>, London, I&DeA • Knox M (2002) <i>Approaches to Community Governance: Models for Mixed Tenure Communities</i>, York, Policy Press • Urban Design Skills Working Group (2001) <i>Urban Design Skills Working Group Report to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Regeneration</i> DTLR, London, CABE www.streetexcellence.com (Street Excellence Framework website)
Green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comedia and Demos (1995) <i>Park Life: Urban Parks and Social Renewal</i>. Gloucester, Comedia • DoE (1996) <i>People, Parks and Cities – A Guide to Current Good Practice in Urban Parks</i>, London, HMSO • DTLR (2002) <i>Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Space</i>, London, DTLR • National Playing Fields Association (1992) <i>The Six Acre Standard: Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space</i>, London, NPFA • Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (2002) <i>Green Spaces, Better Places</i>, London, DTLR • Urban Parks Forum (2001) <i>Public Park Assessment: A Survey of Local Authority Owned Parks Focusing on Parks of Historic Interest</i>, Caversham, Urban Parks Forum
Local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DETR (1999) <i>Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse</i>, London: The Stationery Office • ENCAMS (2002) <i>Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE)</i>, Wigan, ENCAMS • English Heritage (2000) <i>Streets for All: A Guide to the Management of London's Streets</i>, London, English Heritage • Environment Agency (2002) <i>Our Urban Future, Putting the Environment as the Heart of Urban Renewal</i>, London, Environment Agency • London Assembly (London Assembly Graffiti Investigative Committee) (2002) <i>Graffiti in London</i>, London, London Assembly • The National Centre for Social Research Survey of English Housing, London, NatCen • People and Places (1999) <i>People and Places, Best Practice Guide</i>, Wigan, Tidy Britain Group • www.ccscheme.org.uk (Considerate Contractor Scheme website)

Category	Source of advice on public space management (<i>continued</i>)
Public perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CABE (2002) Streets of Shame, Summary of Findings from 'Public Attitudes to Architecture and the Built Environment', London, CABE • Gehl J (1996) Life Between Buildings, Using Public Space, Copenhagen, Arkitekten's Forlag • Hass-Klau C, Dowland D & Nold I (1994) Streets as Living Space, Brighton, Environmental and Transport Planning • MORI (2002) The Rising Prominence of Liveability, London, MORI • National Consumer Campaign (1995) Problems for Pedestrians: A Consumer View of the Pedestrian Environment, London, National Consumer Campaign • UDAL (2001) Arm Yourself with a Placecheck, 2nd ed., London: UDAL • www.placecheck.com (Placecheck website)
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carley M, K Kirk and S McIntosh (2001) Retailing, Sustainability and Neighbourhood Regeneration, York, YPS/Joseph Rowntree Foundation • English Heritage (1998) Conservation-Led Regeneration, London, English Heritage • Neighbourhood Renewal Unit & Regional Coordination Unit (2002) Collaboration and Coordination in Area-Based Initiatives, Research Report 1, London, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit • Urban Task Force (1999) Towards an Urban Renaissance, London, E& FN Spon • Regional Coordination Unit/ODPM (2002) Review of Area Based Initiatives, London: ODPM • Social Exclusion Unit (2000) National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation, London: The Stationery Office • Social Exclusion Unit (2002) National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Report of Policy Action Team 4: Neighbourhood Management, London, Social Exclusion Unit • www.bridgingthegap.uk.com (details of bridging funding schemes)
Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Trust (2002) Open All Hours? A Report on Licensing Deregulation By The Open All Hours? Campaign, London, The Civic Trust • DEFRA (2002) Living Places: Powers, Rights, Responsibilities, London, DEFRA • Home Office (1996), Circular 25/1996: Arrangements For Confirmation of Local Authority Byelaws, London, Home Office • ODPM (2002) Review of the Planning Enforcement System in England, London, ODPM
Town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTM (1996) About Town – Balancing the Issues of Town Centre Management, London, ATCM • ACTM (1997) Managing Urban Spaces In Town Centres, Good Practice Guide, London, ATCM • ACTM (2002) Sustainable Funding for Town Centre Management, London, ATCM • BCSC (2002) Managing the Retail-led Development of the Future, London, BCSC • Civic Trust (1999) Investing in the High Street, Good Practice Guide, London, The Civic Trust • DTLR (2002) Going to Town, Improving Town Centre Access, London, The National Retail Forum • Local Government Association (2002) All Day and All of the Night: an LGA discussion paper, London: LGA publications • ODPM (2003) Bids Guidance: A Working Draft, London, ODPM • Royal Fine Art Commission (1997) Improving Design in the High Street, London, RFAC • URBED (1994) Vital and Viable Town Centres, Meeting the Challenge, London, HMSO

Figure 80: **Paving the Way (CABE &ODPM) – Key Findings**

Problem	Possible solutions
Poor streetscape design, which often favours vehicles over pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway authorities could, under Best Value, establish an audit trail for design decisions affecting the streetscape. The aim of which is to show to all stakeholders how design guidance, people's needs and vehicle movements have been accommodated Try not to apply traffic engineering regulations too rigidly Try to ensure street furniture and fittings are simple and consistent, fitting into a clear design ethos Try to ensure signage is consistent, and not out of scale with its pedestrian surroundings Try not to neglect the local vernacular by thinking carefully about the local buildings, materials, and context on all streets, not just in historically significant areas Existing local guidance on highway design should be brought in line with Government policy on sustainability and the urban realm.
The public not feeling responsible for the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to involve the local community in the long-term care of the streetscape through the promotion of local community trusts for the improvement and management of streets. This could be through a local partnership of the community, local businesses, and the authority.
Divided responsibility for street management and execution of street works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce cross-sectoral (i.e. including planning, environmental and highway functions) management control for the administration of streets, with the aim of establishing an integrated approach to the public realm Appoint a 'streetscape champion' Attempt to get the involvement and support of senior councillors Adopt a clear corporate policy framework for the management, maintenance, and design of the street, with a clear division and understanding of responsibilities in the case of two-tier areas All roads and streets in urban areas, other than motorways, should be under single responsibility – either district or county council but not fragmented between the two Include specific strategies aimed at improving and maintaining the streetscape in development plans, local transport plans and community Strategies.
Disruptive utility works and obtrusive advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Roads and Streetworks Act can be used to fund 30% of reinstatement inspections Ensure reinstatement inspections are effective Think about introducing fines for slow or poor reinstatement Try to ensure advertising fits in the general streetscape. Fly posting can be reduced by encouraging utility companies to place above ground equipment, such as junction boxes, underground.

Figure 81: Designing Streets for People (ICE, 2002) – Key Findings

The 'Designing Streets for People Inquiry' put forward ten steps that can be taken immediately:

1. **Prepare** a Public Realm Strategy that sets out a vision for streets giving people choice in moving around the built environment, creating safer, cleaner streets, encouraging walking, etc. as part of meeting people's needs.
2. **Collaborate** by working across service and professional boundaries. Set up a specialist team dealing with the public realm, drawing on personnel from different professional disciplines. Joined up thinking cannot only be more creative, it can ensure resources are better deployed.
3. **Set up** a one-stop-shop as a single point of contact with the local authority dealing with all public realm enquiries. New technology should be used to ensure that the local authority's Internet site is user-friendly and delivers e-government.
4. **Carry out** a Placecheck or Street Audit involving local business and resident community to identify and clarify issues, both ongoing and emerging.
5. **Appoint** a person who has responsibility for championing the design, management and maintenance of the public realm. This may be an elected Mayor, other politician or senior manager in a local authority.
6. **Pursue** excellence in the quality of the built environment, with particular emphasis on urban design and the public realm. Include objectives in a Mission Statement or Charter. Trial the Street Excellence Model (see figure 34, chapter 5).
7. **Empower** the local business and resident community through involving them in the design process.
8. **Educate** staff to ensure people at all levels have the necessary expertise to deal with public realm matters.
9. **Challenge** why and how services are provided. Are there better ways of doing things?
10. **Establish** criteria to provide a rigorous system of continuous assessment as part of the performance management and the monitoring process.

Figure 82: Home Zones (Biddulph, 2001)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation research has identified Home zones as residential streets where the living environment predominates over provision for traffic. This is achieved by adopting approaches to street design, landscaping and highway engineering that control how vehicles move without restricting the number of vehicular movements.

People and cars effectively share what would formerly have been the carriageway and pavements, and, if well designed, vehicles' maximum speed is only a little faster than walking pace (less than 10 mph). This means that other things can be introduced into the street, for example, areas for children to play, larger gardens, or planting including street trees, cycle parking, and seats where residents can meet. The home zone concept can be applied to either streets in new-build schemes or to existing streets where there is resident support, particularly if there is little or no existing or planned local green space. Home zones can be designated under the terms of section 268 of the Transport Act 2000.

Although home zones can promote road safety, the main benefit for people is the altered perception of how the street can be used. In particular, they are helping to make urban living more attractive and encourage greater pride in local environments. Home zone projects are also being used to develop community capacity by bringing local people together to improve their environment. Housing developers are even starting to apply home zone treatments in new-build situations because they recognise them as 'family friendly' and think that they offer an attractive marketing opportunity.

Figure 83: National Design Conceptualisations (Carmona et al, 2002)

	Towards an Urban Renaissance (1999)	By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System (2000)	Urban Design Compendium (2000)	Better Places to Live: A Companion to PPG3 (2001)
Sustainable urban design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building to last • sustainable buildings • environmental responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage the investment • design for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptability • maintenance • sustainability
Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context, scale and character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with the landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structure • detail
Urban Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optimising land use and density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuity and enclosure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mix forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • space
Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public realm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of the public realm • legibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places for people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking • safety
Mixed Use and tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mixing activities • mixing tenures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mix uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mix • amenity • community
Connection and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access and permeability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ease of movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • movement • layout
Application to context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site and setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (application through eight aspects of urban form) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrich the existing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • place

Figure 84: The Urban Green Spaces Task Force (2002) – Key Recommendations

The Urban Green Space Task Force made a number of recommendations to local government on the planning, design and management of urban green spaces.

Recommendations include:

- **Communities** – Involve and support communities in green space service planning and delivery. Community Strategies, Best Value reviews, performance indicators and improved information about local parks and green spaces for users should underpin this.
- **Partnerships** – Promote and support partnership work for improving green spaces. Local authorities should provide appropriate training for members and officers.
- **Trusts** – Explore the potential for making greater use of local ‘open space trusts’ as an effective option for delivering improvements to green spaces and their management and maintenance.
- **Funding** – Local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships should provide information and advice on available funding streams and opportunities for supporting local partnerships involving local resident, voluntary and business groups for improving urban green spaces.
- **Leadership** – Provide effective leadership for local parks and green spaces at the highest level within the council by designating a senior cabinet member to champion and promote local parks and green spaces.
- **Scrutiny** – Local authorities scrutiny committees should give greater weight to the contribution of local green spaces in improving the quality of local environments and peoples’ lives.
- **Strategies** – Develop (or update) and implement a green space strategy, which integrates with neighbourhood renewal, regeneration, planning and housing development, community development, local health improvement and culture, children’s play and sports strategies.
- **Design** – Local authorities with failing or unsatisfactory spaces should carry out design reviews as part of their urban green space strategies.
- **Management** – Prepare, in consultation with local and ‘friends’ groups and users, a management plan for every major park, group of smaller green spaces, and types of spaces (such as cemeteries, allotments, nature resources and woodlands).
- **Reviews** – Conduct Best Value reviews of parks and green space services, taking note of the guidance and inspection reports by the Audit Commission as they are published.

Figure 85: Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces (DTLR, 2002)

Urban green spaces combine a variety of public open space types, including urban parks, play areas, and open spaces. Research commissioned by the DTLR (2002) suggests that a range of barriers are deterring people from using urban parks:

1. Lack of, or the poor condition of facilities
2. Other users, including undesirable characters
3. Concerns about dogs and dog mess
4. Safety and other 'psychological' issues
5. Environmental quality issues such as litter, graffiti and vandalism

The research indicated that local authorities can address some of these issues through a variety of actions:

Concern	Action
Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place urban green space delivery within an environmental directorate • Implement urban green space 'one stop shops' • Use departmental structures based on geographical areas
Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate demarcated site based roles such as ranger, gardener, and cleanser
Management and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce green space audits and categorisation systems • Produce holistic green space strategies and green structure plans that consider urban green spaces as one part of a wider environmental network • Develop local urban green space standards, rather than relying on national standards
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community involvement and partnerships, to enhance communication and active participation

Figure 86: **Graffiti – Dealing with the Problem (London Assembly, 2002)**

Detection and monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All stakeholders, particularly local authority employees, should be encouraged to report all graffiti immediately. 2. Local authorities must publish details of how residents and businesses, transport operators, and utility companies are expected to report graffiti, and develop and publicise standards for graffiti removal. 3. CCTV should be used to deter and monitor graffiti in particular vulnerable areas.
Removal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Authorities should think about using dedicated graffiti squads to remove graffiti from public and private property. 5. In order to facilitate the removal of graffiti from privately owned business premises, local authorities should develop low cost schemes with economies of scale that will remove all graffiti for an annual fee. 6. Local authorities should have standards for the time it will take to remove racist graffiti, graffiti from public buildings/spaces, and graffiti from private buildings. 7. Local authorities should work with the probation service and youth offending teams in extending the use of reparative activities, such as graffiti removal, for those who are convicted of illegal graffiti writing.
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Local authorities should consider ways in which they can facilitate and enable community involvement and self-help, this may include the provision of free technical advice and graffiti removal packs. 9. In developing strategies to deal with graffiti, authorities should consider whether the use of legal graffiti walls in a contained and sustainable environment may be used as part of a range of general youth activities or as part of diversionary work. It is vital that any graffiti wall initiatives receive long-term management and support otherwise they may just teach graffiti writing rather than channel creative talent away from illegal writing. 10. Local authorities should ensure that the cultural needs of young people are addressed. This will entail consultation with young people through existing youth forums and schools. Youth programmes provided should aim to encourage citizenship and ownership and provide opportunities for creative development.
Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. In meeting their duty to develop a community strategy, local authorities should develop seamless anti-graffiti strategies in partnership with both public and private sector organisations and the local community. 12. Local authority planning documents should require new developments to be designed in such a way that they are not susceptible to crimes such as graffiti and vandalism. 13. Where possible authorities should consider using planning conditions which specify the use of building materials that are easy to clean and can be treated with anti-graffiti coatings.
Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Local authorities should develop voluntary codes of practice to restrict the sales of graffiti materials in their areas, particularly to minors.
Stakeholder involvement & ownership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. All stakeholders should be brought together through a dedicated forum led by the local authority to discuss graffiti issues locally and regionally. Forum members should include the local police authority, utility companies, transport operators, local educational institutions, the probation service, and major businesses and landowners.
Transport operators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Local authorities should ensure that a consistent approach is taken to dealing with graffiti and etching amongst transport operators. This should include the sharing of best practice amongst the different transport operators and the undertaking of joint prosecutions of offenders where possible. 17. It is recommended that authorities and transport operators should install CCTV on all uses.
Utility companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Local authorities should work more closely with utility companies to ensure that the graffiti on their properties is removed swiftly.



(London Assembly, 2002)

Figure 87: **Integrated Townscape Management (English Heritage, 2000)**

Integrated townscape management is recommended by English Heritage as a holistic, coordinated, and multi-disciplinary approach to the management of the historic environment. In accordance with *PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, local authorities should take the lead based on a number of key principles:

- **Co-ordinate to integrate** – Nominate qualified urban design/conservation staff to act as public realm co-ordinators, or create area-based management teams to coordinate the activities of the council, other public agencies, private landowners, utility companies and independent agencies.
- **Partnership** – Street audits should be carried out by highways and urban design/conservation staff in partnership with local societies, this can help in identifying street scene problems and redundant street furniture.
- **Expertise** – Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to the presentation and the management of the public realm and all highways works.
- **Training** – Improve levels of urban design awareness amongst highways staff.
- **Policies** – Ensure clear policies for paving, street furniture and the public realm are included in development plans, conservation area statements, and non-statutory guidelines.
- **Guidance** – Follow the advice in PPG15 and offer clear guidance to other agencies involved with the public realm. This could be through a maintenance manual of standards and materials written by the original designers of new street scene elements, or a manual and code of conduct specifying acceptable reinstatement methods.
- **Context** – Respect local distinctiveness and ensure that all work in the public realm follows good streetscape practice and principles.
- **Quality** – Invest in quality solutions and materials that will endure and offer the best value for money. It is often a good idea to check that replacement materials and elements are easily available, and to order 10 per cent extra of all materials for new public spaces in order to stockpile replacements.
- **Less is more** – Street furniture and signage should be placed in the public realm only if it is useful or essential. Try not to add any useless clutter, and respect the locality within the overall townscape.



Paving good practice recommendations
(English Heritage, 2000)

Figure 88: Local Environmental Quality Survey of England Results by Environmental Element (ENCAMS, 2002)

The Local Environmental Quality Survey (LEQS) was developed by ENCAMS. LEQS aims to provide reliable annualised information about the condition of aspects of the local environment as a basis for improving local service standards.

The approach encompass most aspects of the public realm, with comparable indices collected for cleansing, litter, street furniture, condition of public space infrastructure, public transport infrastructure, public toilets and landscaped areas. These indices are collected for 12 standard land-use classes that collectively comprise the public realm.



Element	Standard	Observations and notes
Litter	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant components of litter are hazardous to health, such as dog fouling and broken glass Most widespread source of commercial litter is elastic bands from postal workers
Detritus	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38% of sites were significantly or heavily affected by detritus
Weed growth	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detritus is a product of poor street sweeping, that can lead to weed growth and highway and paving damage
Weed control	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed control often has pollution consequences and can lead to unsightly and dead vegetation
Staining	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major sources include chewing gum, oil, paint, and cement
Flytipping, flyposting and graffiti	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not widespread, but instead focused on a few hotspots Graffiti is focused on a few prominent locations and mainly consists of small juvenile marks Flytipping occurs in concealed areas, mostly as small stickers
Highways & pavements	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of public highways and pavements are significantly or heavily damaged
Pavement obstruction	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly a product of increasing café culture
Street furniture	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of basic maintenance such as washing, decoration, and minor repair
Landscaping	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the cleanliness and the maintenance of landscaping was unsatisfactory Once installed many landscaping schemes are neglected due to poor maintenance routines or inadequate funding

Figure 89: **Placechecks (UDAL, 2001)**

Placecheck has been developed by UDAL (2001) as a method of assessing the qualities of a place, identifying what improvements are needed, and focusing people on working together to achieve them. Placecheck is structured through a series of questions that all stakeholders within a defined area (which could be a street, neighbourhood, district, town or city) can participate in answering. The three basic Placecheck questions are:

1. What do you like about this place?
2. What do you dislike about it?
3. What needs to be improved?

Each of the basic questions lead to 15 more detailed questions about different elements of a place, which in turn lead to even more specific questions.

The key management of public space-related Placecheck question is “How else can public spaces be improved?” which breaks down as follows:

- Open space: Is there any public or open space that is not used? How can it be made usable?
- Shelter: What places are unnecessarily windy (due to down-draughts from tall buildings or a lack of shelter)? What can be done about it?
- Art and craft: Are public art, craftwork and well-designed street furniture needed to give identity and interest to public spaces?
- Street life: Do public spaces need to be adapted (or made adaptable) to accommodate local economic, social and cultural life (such as markets, festivals, tourism, night life, eating, entertainment, sport, sitting out, promenading, religious practices and retailing)?
- Contamination: Are there places where rubbish or ground contamination needs to be cleared up?
- Pollution: Are there places where air or water pollution needs to be tackled?
- Noise: Are there places where the impact of noise needs to be reduced?
- Graffiti: Are there places where graffiti needs to be removed or protected against?
- Clean streets: Are the streets and other spaces well cleaned and maintained?
- Fly-tipping: Are there places where fly-tipping needs to be prevented or where dumped rubbish needs to be cleared?
- Maintenance: Is it clear who is responsible for caring for and maintaining each piece of public and open space? If not, how can it be cared for?
- Vermin: Are there problems with mice, rats, pigeons or other vermin?

Ideally, Placecheck questions should be completed by professionals in partnership with the local community. Details of the full Placecheck question structure can be found at www.placecheck.com, which also includes details of how a Placecheck appraisal can be organised. Placecheck appraisals could be lead by a local authority to aid community participation in informing local strategic planning documents, preparing an urban design framework or design brief, or preparing and implementing improvements to the public realm.

Figure 90: Summary of Key Local Authority Public Space Powers and Duties (DEFRA, 2002)

Powers	Duties
Providing and maintaining high quality public spaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To require developers to make provision for open spaces using planning obligations • To charge for the collection and disposal of commercial/industrial waste • To specify receptacles to be used for household and commercial waste • To designate litter control areas on land which the public is entitled to have access which must be kept free of litter and refuse to the required standard • To provide and maintain litter bins or receptacles for the collection of street refuse and waste in or under the street • To provide litter bins in a street or public place • To issue Street Litter Control Notices to occupiers of premises • To establish crossings for pedestrians, and construct, light, and maintain subways and bridges for the protection of pedestrians crossing the highway • To provide lighting for all highways • To remove obstructions and charge a penalty, remove or immobilise parked vehicles • To plant trees and shrubs in the highway • To provide recreation grounds in connection with accommodation • To provide, extend, and manage country parks • To make tree preservation orders in the interests of amenity • To erect bus shelters, place chairs and seats in public parks, and provide toilet facilities • To maintain and acquire land for open spaces and plant, light provide with seats and otherwise improve it • To enact by-laws, good rule, and government and suppression of nuisances • To provide such recreational facilities inside or outside its area as it thinks fit or contribute to voluntary organisation in providing such facilities • To provide lighting for all highways or for purposes of prevention of crime • To have accredited community safety organisations where a chief police officer considers it appropriate • To license street vendors and other activities occurring in public space • To install CCTV where it will promote the prevention of crime or the welfare victims of crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider taking action against unauthorised development and to ensure that public open space is provided in accordance with Local Planning Authority requirements and that the development does not adversely affect the extent or quality of public space • To keep all relevant land (public space) clean and clear of litter and refuse • To keep respective highways and roads clear of litter and refuse • To make arrangements for the regular emptying and cleansing of litter bins it provides in public places • To collect household waste and to collect commercial waste if requested to do so by the occupier of a premises • To maintain highways, footpaths, and pavements and to remove obstructions • To provide sufficient footway for the safety of pedestrians • To co-ordinate execution of street works of all kinds • To maintain and keep local authority public space in a good and decent state • To exercise functions with due regard to the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area

Figure 90: **Summary of Key Local Authority Public Space Powers and Duties (DEFRA, 2002) (continued)**

Powers	Duties
Taking action against persons that defile public space	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To serve statutory notices requiring works (e.g. statutory nuisance, litter, condition of land) on persons responsible or other notices requiring action to deal with the clean up • To seize/remove loudspeakers used in connection with a statutory nuisance in the street • To seize/remove intoxicating liquor in designated public places • To require removal of unlawful advertisements (fly-posting) • To recover the expenditure attributable to clearing litter or when there has been no-compliance with a litter abatement notice • To recover reasonable expenses of removing fly-tipped waste where there has been non-compliance with a notice to remove waste • To recover reasonable costs from a licensed street trader for collection of refuse, cleansing of streets and other services provided to him in capacity as a license holder • To seek and obtain and enforce Anti-Social Behaviour Orders • To designate streets for street trading licensing purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent people 'accidentally' hurting themselves or one another • To inspect the area for statutory nuisances and to serve abatement notices in relation to any identified nuisances • To serve litter abatement notices if certain public land is defaced by litter

Figure 91: Improving Design in the High Street (RFAC, 1997)

The poor management of high streets in towns and cities across England can contribute to a loss of their vitality and ultimately viability. An investment in public space can help to make high streets more attractive places to shop and spend time and therefore also help to enhance their competitive edge. Useful guidance from the Royal Fine Art Commission suggested 25 actions to improve the high street:

Issue	Action	
WELCOME	1. Tidy up car park entrances 2. Make car park interiors welcome 3. Integrate paths to the high street 4. Clarify pedestrian direction signs	
A CARED FOR PLACE	5. Eliminate flyposters and graffiti 6. Clean litter and rubbish 7. Position waste recycling bins	
COMFORT & SAFETY	8. Calm traffic	
PAVEMENTS	9. Specify quality pavements 10. Reduce street furniture clutter 11. Rationalise traffic street furniture	
SHOPS	12. Improve shopfronts 13. Reduce impact of vacant shopfronts 14. Relate shop signs	
URBAN SPACE	15. Design infill development 16. Create incidental urban space 17. Plant street trees	
STREET LIFE	18. Introduce seasonal colour 19. Encourage market stalls and kiosks 20. Vary activities in urban spaces 21. Establish special events	
LOCAL LANDMARKS	22. Accentuate landmarks 23. Design paving for special places 24. Install public lighting 25. Place art in public places	
		A changing programme of public space activities and events

Figure 92: **Going to Town, Improving Town Centre Access (DTLR, 2002)**

Guidance from DTLR concludes that many urban areas in England suffer from poor town centre accessibility, manifesting itself in a variety of guises:

- Unattractive or unpleasant arrival facilities i.e. ugly stations and car parks
- Remote arrival facilities, sometimes accompanied by poor signage
- Poor connections and link quality between arrival facilities and town centres
- Poor safety and security i.e. dark car parks and deserted underpasses.

The guidance recommends that local authorities should think in terms of the FIVE C's:

1. **Connection** – good pedestrian routes which link the places people want to go, and form a network
2. **Convenience** – direct routes following desire lines, with easy-to-use crossings
3. **Comfort** – good quality footways, with adequate widths and without obstructions
4. **Conviviality** – attractive well lit and safe, and with variety along the route
5. **Consciousness** – legible routes easy to find and follow, with surface treatments and signs to guide pedestrians

In his foreword to the policy statement *Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner* the Deputy Prime Minister argues that

"Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe, attractive – areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time. Tackling failure, such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned cars, dog fouling, the loss of play areas or footpaths, for many people is the top public service priority"

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