

Table 5.4 A selection of individual local authority initiatives for public space management

Authority	Name of initiative	Focus of initiative
Birmingham City Council London Borough of Camden	Street Design Guidelines	These apply to highways, new roads in residential areas and rural lanes
Carlisle City Council Lancaster City Council London Borough of Bexley	Town Centre Management	Area based management of town centres, included strategies and partnerships also
Corporation of London Sandwell Borough Council	Individual management plans for open space, parks and green spaces	Clear plans that refer to the four management processes but are limited by typology
Corporation of London Newcastle City Council	Award schemes	Internal authority or national or international environmental competitions, (such as 'Britain in Bloom')
Dartford Borough Council London Borough of Richmond Newcastle City Council Spelthorne Borough Council	Sponsorship schemes	Sponsorship for the maintenance of public spaces, including schemes such as 'friends of...' or 'adopt an area'
Eastbourne Borough Council London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea London Borough of Waltham Forest West Sussex County Council	Individual public space capital investment projects	New public spaces or major enhancement of the environment; it applies both to streets, town centres and parks and open spaces.
Lancaster City Council London Borough of Haringey London Borough of Wandsworth Wycombe District Council	Warden schemes	Human management of environmental and/or antisocial behaviour. These apply to park patrols, neighbourhood wardens, street watchers.
London Borough of Camden	Boulevard Project	Introducing new standards for street scene management

efforts have often been made to create a relationship with the users of the public spaces, with schemes such as 'friends' who volunteer to improve or maintain these spaces – usually parks – or businesses who contribute to the public realm through sponsorship schemes – usually town centres.

TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITIES

However, there was still wide variation in how extensive the use of private contractors is, with some local authorities reporting several instances of such a practice, and others reporting very little. Contracts themselves have varied from short, well-defined instruments that aim to keep contractors responsive to local authorities' needs, to broader long-term arrangements, which shift management responsibilities away more decisively from the public sector. This transfer of public space management responsibilities has often been done through more or less formalised partnerships between the local authority and local businesses, focusing on the management of specific areas.

A similar process has shaped the involvement of community organisations and the voluntary sector in public space management, often spurred on by national neighbourhood regeneration policies. The research shows a general agreement with the principle that the public should have an active role in tackling public space problems, as the 'ownership' of public spaces by their users might be the most effective way to maintain their quality. This is so despite a tendency of some authorities to keep a clear distinction between their role as provider and that of the community as recipient of services.

In general there is a tendency to experiment with service integration and redistribution at the local level, often through pilot schemes, in order to make

the delivery more responsive to users. For example, the interdisciplinary working of officers from different departments, or the establishment of working parties that include external partners. Increasingly structural changes that bring together the various sections within local authorities with a role in the management of public spaces are also being adopted.

Local authority public space documents

Of the 64 authorities that responded to the survey, 41 enclosed a total of 134 documents with their response. The different types of documents supplied are shown in Table 5.5, loosely grouped by subject area. This information was often of a high quality and useful in understanding particular approaches and practice. A huge variety of document types were supplied by local authorities and analysed during the research. The diversity of documents serves to illustrate the highly complex nature of external public space practice and local policy.

Because national best value processes were resulting in local authorities reviewing the way in which public space services are delivered, documents associated with the Audit Commission inspection process and with performance reviews featured strongly in the response. However, broader aims and key priorities of councils were expressed in their corporate/community plans or strategies or in statements from the leader or cabinet. These also provided the framework for the service plans and best value reviews.

The corporate plans set out the authority's vision and identify key issues. They revealed that the aspirational objectives associated with the management of external public spaces tend to reflect common themes for both processes and outcomes. Examples of process objectives included: