1 better cross-departmental corporate working arrangements
2 restructuring (e.g. merging departments into larger directorates)
3 IT initiatives to improve communication
4 working parties/stakeholder liaison (internal and external)
5 partnership arrangements (contacting, crime, etc.)
6 improving customer focus/care
7 setting new work standards/targets/guidelines/performance
8 devolution to neighbourhood level
9 coordination strategies – design, open space, transport, crime, etc.
10 capital investment projects/programmes/exemplar schemes
11 dedicated area management regimes
12 sponsorship schemes
13 warden schemes
14 award schemes
15 public space audits/indicators/health checks/monitoring
16 peer review schemes
17 training schemes (design, management, etc.)
18 byelaws (safety, litter, etc.)
19 community involvement
20 public space champions.

Many of these local initiatives suggest a degree of redefinition and redistribution of roles and responsibilities for public spaces within local government, and between them, the private sector, and community/voluntary sector organisations. Whether or not this redefinition of rights and responsibilities in the management of public spaces is socially desirable remains contested, in England, however, it seems to be inherently linked to the simultaneous redefinition of the very nature of local government (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, these moves towards greater community or market involvement in the management of public space are (so far) typically tentative and do not amount to a wholesale move from a state-centred to either a market or community-centred model of management.

The research confirmed that this is an area of public sector responsibility in need of significant investment and reform, but also that top-down initiatives from national government are beginning to inspire a burgeoning range of bottom-up initiatives from below. In time, the initiatives could have a major impact on improving public space management responsibilities and structures and on delivering integrated strategies within local authorities. To do this, however, the problems identified by the stakeholder groups and associated with poor coordination and lack of resources, and the poor use of regulatory powers and low priority given to maintenance will need to be overcome.

For these groups, the limitations with the current state-centred delivery model were obvious, and many argued for a greater use of market and community-centred models as a supplement to state activities. They argued that the private sector and the community both have a long-term stake in, and responsibility for, the public realm, and therefore have an important contribution to make as part of the three-way partnership identified in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.10). However, this should be a long-term mutually supportive relationship and not an exploitative one (in either direction), or one that furthers the 'us and them' mentality.

The approaches reported in the next chapter suggest how some local authorities are actively planning a way forward. Elsewhere, the reality is still often of too many hands all trying to do their best with limited resources, but with little coordination between efforts and with few attempts to overcome the pressures that limit the effectiveness of key public services. The result, it seems, continues to be a widespread deterioration in the quality of public space.

Notes

1 See Carmona and Sieh 2004 for a more comprehensive discussion of 'new public management' and performance management in English local government.
2 In this chapter and the next, local authority departments, directorates, or units will all be referred to as departments.