

and Parks Department is responsible for managing all public open spaces, but it contracts out much construction and maintenance work to a mix of public and private contractors. In Paris, all works are undertaken by private contractors under the system of public bidding, and private architects and landscape architects are used to design major new parks, through the same system.

In Wellington, the private sector has been involved in the management of open spaces in a more comprehensive manner. It provides contracted services such as design and management consultancy, weed spraying, and so forth. It is also involved in sponsorship. Council-controlled trusts and companies have been set up to manage certain facilities or areas suitable to be run as business enterprises such as the Regional Stadium. The private sector was also involved in negotiating incentive development rights in the city centre in the 1980s and 1990s when extra building height was allowed in exchange for open space provision at ground floor level. The outcomes of this practice were not good and, as a result, it has been discontinued. Collectively, however, few problems were reported by the eleven cities concerning their use of private contractors, as long as work is carefully specified, properly integrated with other operations, and carefully monitored.

In contrast to this widespread use of private contractors, involvement of the voluntary sector in public open space management was not common in the cities, although a number of initiatives existed to improve the situation:

- In Melbourne 50 voluntary Friends Groups contribute to regular programmes and projects.
- In Århus voluntary neighbourhood boards are given direct support by the municipality, and are involved in decisions about open space management in their areas.; in these areas, some smaller open space projects have only been implemented and maintained by mobilising local voluntary labour, delivering viable open space management on a shoestring and creating a long-term sense of responsibility within communities.
- In Zürich the management of playground areas and open spaces close to residential buildings have sometimes been contracted out to voluntary parents groups.
- Community gardens have been created in Minneapolis which are managed by a coalition of not-for-profit organisations.
- In Curitiba a schools' initiative in deprived neighbourhoods has helped to train young people in gardening and related activities through an extra-curricular programme that also offers the opportunity of long-term employment in open space maintenance.

Tokyo had perhaps the most developed system for involving community organisations in managing their public open spaces (see Box 7.1). There, local government sometimes manages open spaces directly and in other instances management is contracted out to external organisations, either in the form of voluntary groups made up of local residents to manage community parks, or as private contractors for larger parks. This reflects a concerted effort being made in Japan, where national legislation was changed in 2003 in order to promote greater involvement of the community and voluntary organisations in the management of open spaces. This idea is being translated into the production of model contracts and the setting up of information exchange networks between voluntary and community organisations.

Elsewhere, feedback from open space users and other municipal staff has been used to define maintenance priorities, although the community remains a still largely untapped source of enthusiasm, labour and expertise.

Management structures

A number of the cities had recently been engaged in management reforms as a means to improve the delivery of public services in general. These were often inspired by 'new public management' approaches (see Chapter 5), including the streamlining of responsibilities, the introduction of cross-service community planning mechanisms, and a focus on outcomes as well as processes. In Hannover, for example, during the 1990s a national initiative to reformulate local government emphasised the decentralisation of responsibilities, considering citizens as customers and understanding local authority services as products. Open space management was chosen as a pilot sector for several of the new management initiatives, including the better coordination of responsibilities through a dedicated division of the city administration (Box 8.2). The state of Victoria was also a few years into a management reform programme for public services focusing on outputs from service delivery activities rather than on service processes. Departments are now accountable to the state government for their outputs, and key output groups are identified for each service against which performance is measured.

Debates concerning methods of managing open spaces have been widespread since the mid-1990s in Japan through the auspices of the Parks and Green Spaces Committee, set up by central government. The outcomes from this work were reflected in revisions to the Urban Park Act 1956 which included legal mechanisms to create new open spaces in built-up areas, promotion of community involvement in open space management, and the better enforcement of open space regulations. In Tokyo, the recent metropolitan Inquiry Committee for Urban Green Spaces