

- Second, in nearly all of the cities there have been conscious efforts to remove organisational barriers to inter-departmental cooperation. This ranges from merging departments to delegating responsibilities, setting up fora, or using higher-level authorities to smooth out conflicts and secure coordinated actions. How this has been done depends on historical accidents, the adaptability of existing structures, political will and the advantages and disadvantages of different courses of action.

The key lesson is that there are a number of alternative paths to better integration and coordination of open space management, each with its own costs and benefits that need to be weighed up in light of local circumstances.

Beyond the public sector, the cities indicate no single approach to coordinating the involvement of private-sector players in the management of open spaces. The eleven cities have adopted different attitudes towards how much private-sector involvement they allow and this has been a function of political preferences, employment practices and cost minimisation/service rationalisation policies. The general trend, however, has been towards the contracting out of at least some management tasks. Where this has been most effective in enhancing the quality of open space management it is because there are clear structures to manage the relationship between public bodies and private contractors, as in Århus, Malmö and Groningen. It seems that an explicit concern to strike a balance between quality outputs and a competitive environment is important for success, together with adequate monitoring of standards and vetting of contractors.

It is also clear from the cases that there are advantages and disadvantages in involving the private sector. The cities were conscious of the cost benefits of contracting out management tasks and some have explored them extensively. However, others have acted more cautiously in order to retain the benefits of an experienced in-house service. Melbourne has tried to separate contexts in which private contractors should be used from those where in-house services are more appropriate. In a few cases the solution has been to transform in-house service providers themselves into competitive contractors, with good results.

Similarly, the participation of voluntary-sector stakeholders in open space management across the cases is highly variable, although again the general trend, even if patchy, has been towards the transfer to them of some management responsibilities. More often than not this has been in relation to small neighbourhood spaces, as in Tokyo, but also in more remote regional parks such as those in Melbourne. What is impressive is the variety of arrangements with third-sector parties found among the cities, although this is still clearly an underused management resource.

## Regulation of public open spaces

Rather than neatly packaged legal instruments, the eleven cities use a wide range of powers to build up the legal framework for the management of open spaces. At a strategic level, powers come from national, regional and local laws and are often linked to other areas of policy, most commonly land-use planning, environment protection and heritage conservation. At an operational level they are part of criminal law and local byelaws and regulations.

In this regard two more general points emerge. First, from the experience of places like Wellington, Zürich and Århus, it can be concluded that the availability of a coherent, open space-friendly regulatory framework at the strategic level can help (e.g. national legislation on the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, or statutory city- or region-wide open space management plans). However, when such a framework is absent, it can be substituted by political will, as in Malmö or Curitiba.

The second point concerns the capacity to skilfully combine the available powers to their most effective use. The use of the planning system to put open space issues onto a statutory footing in Malmö or Groningen, or the use of health and environmental legislation in Melbourne are good examples of this. The overarching lesson is therefore that although a clear statutory basis for open space management is desirable, what is more important is the political will to use available powers, or to find other means to deliver effective open space management.

The cases also demonstrate that, at the operational end of management, regulating open spaces is primarily a municipal affair. At this level, anti-social behaviour, littering, vandalism and dog-related issues are problems that affect to some degree all of the cities. Regulations are generally in place to deal with these problems, but a key issue is how they can be enforced, a matter highly dependent upon the characteristics of the cities' particular legal, institutional and cultural environments. Thus, whereas Minneapolis and Melbourne have enforcement built into their management system, others depend on collaboration, especially with the police. Given the generally low levels of misuse problems reported by the cities, it seems that all those approaches can be successful, although they are likely to have very different resource implications. Considerable success was reported when enforcement activities were backed up by information, education and consensus building about the relative importance of proper behaviour norms. Zürich, for example, has been particularly successful in solving conflicts between the demands of different user groups that would not have been eliminated by simple enforcement.

A further key lesson is that enforcement action should feed back into open space management systems and into park design so that it is less susceptible to vandalism or inappropriate use. The challenge here is to