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1 **TITLE: Defining place-keeping: the long-term management of public spaces**

2 **Introduction**

3 *Place-making* has long taken centre stage in urban planning and design, where capital funding is spent on  
4 the *shaping* and *making* of high-profile places in towns and cities all over the world (Roberts, 2009). Such  
5 places encompass a wide range of areas including parks, civic squares, waterways and open/ green spaces  
6 in housing estates, both publicly and privately owned and managed. Through place-making, the resultant  
7 high-quality public spaces are argued to be economically and socially beneficial for local communities  
8 and contribute positively to residents' quality of life and wellbeing. In light of these benefits, it is perhaps  
9 unsurprising that large-scale capital is spent on creating such places. However, what is surprising is the  
10 lack of priority given to the *place-keeping*, or long-term management of such spaces, once *place-making*  
11 has occurred. This paper will show that in the planning and design process, inadequate thought is given to  
12 place-keeping, often manifested as an insufficient pool of resources made available for the long-term  
13 maintenance and management of such places. Without place-keeping, public spaces can fall into a  
14 downward spiral of damage, disrepair and inadequate maintenance. This can potentially lead to  
15 manifestations of the 'broken window syndrome' where even 'cosmetic damage can invite more serious  
16 anti-social or even criminal behaviour' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, cited in Nash and Christie, 2003, p.  
17 47). This can lead to residents feeling unsafe in places which become unused in favour of others. Trying  
18 to restore such places to their former 'glory' can be a costly exercise, not just in financial terms, but also  
19 socially to regain users' confidence to use the place safely and comfortably.

20 This paper argues that this lack of focus on place-keeping is not only due to a lack of resources but also a  
21 lack of understanding of the concept, its complexity and the wide implications it has for users,  
22 practitioners and policymakers. The paper aims to address this gap in knowledge by providing:

- 23 • an outline of the research and policy context within which place-keeping sits;
- 24 • an in-depth and critical review of the concept of place-keeping within the urban context;
- 25 • a detailed definition of place-keeping as a combination of physical and non-physical dimensions;
- 26 and,

27 • recommendations for further research.

## 28 **The wider context of place, place-making and place-keeping**

29 In Europe it can be argued that there is an ongoing policy shift back towards the aims of the mid-19th and  
30 20th century social reformers who fought for good-quality living environments for all residents which  
31 included the provision of publicly accessible green space. Place continues to be an important part of the  
32 discourse on urban social life, constituting a renewed interest in the concept (Roberts, 2009). While  
33 today's context may be very different politically, environmentally, economically and socially, there is  
34 growing consensus in theory and policy that open and green spaces are vital to urban life because of their  
35 significant contribution to urban dwellers' wellbeing (e.g. Newton, 2007). This perspective acknowledges  
36 that public open spaces 'provide a range of social, aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits'  
37 (Caspersen et al., 2006, p. 7). These benefits emerge from the perceived value that public space has for  
38 everyday quality of life, serving as 'a stage for urban publicness, sport, art, and cultural activities...for all  
39 members of society when they go about their daily business' (BMVBS und BBR, 2008).

40 The profile of place-making as a means of creating good-quality environments has been raised  
41 considerably since the late 1990s when area-based initiatives were adopted to address concerns with local  
42 and neighbourhood-scale social problems in deprived neighbourhoods throughout Europe (Carpenter,  
43 2006). Put simply, it was claimed that urban regeneration in a deprived area can combat urban poverty,  
44 the ensuing environmental degradation, and promote economic growth (Urban Task Force, 1999). Belief  
45 in such claims continues today within the broad context of sustainability: in 2005 all EU-member  
46 countries endorsed the Bristol Accord and agreed to create more attractive places – or ““sustainable  
47 communities” – where people want to live and work, both now and in the future' (ODPM, 2006, p. 9). As  
48 part of this focus on the quality of the environment is the liveability agenda adopted in cities around the  
49 world which endorses the provision of clean, safe and green public spaces and streets (Carmona, 2007,  
50 Jonas and McCarthy, 2009). In the UK for example, there is a plethora of prescriptive urban design  
51 guidance on 'the art of making places for people' (CABE Space, 2005a, Urban Task Force, 2006, Homes  
52 and Communities Agency, 2007).

53 While tastes and habits have clearly changed dramatically since the advent of the public park in the mid-  
54 eighteenth century, particularly in the last half-century in terms of leisure pursuits, publicly accessible  
55 public space continues to play an important part in people's everyday lives. Recent research and policy  
56 focus on encouraging people, particularly children and teenagers, to do more exercise and to do it  
57 outdoors. Urban green and open space is considered a means of combating obesity, getting fresh air and  
58 using green space more passively as a restorative environment in which to 'unwind' and cope with  
59 everyday stress and mental illness (Abraham et al., 2010, Pretty et al., 2005, Mitchell and Popham, 2008).

60 A growing body of research from around Europe shows that encouraging people to spend time in local  
61 green spaces can help improve mental health problems such as depression and work-related stress  
62 (Newton, 2007, Hansmann et al., 2007, Ulrich, 1979). Studies show that the closer people live to green  
63 space, the more likely they are to use it (Schipperijn et al., 2010) while other social benefits relate to sense  
64 of place, identity and spirituality with green space (Irvine and Warber, 2002, Konijnendijk, 2008). Further  
65 social benefits of open spaces include the opportunities for social interaction and engagement with people  
66 who might not be encountered elsewhere (Gehl, 2001, Whyte, 1980). Considerable literature focuses on  
67 the importance of spaces that all members of society can use with equal rights (Amin, 2008). There are  
68 also claims that urban open spaces can contribute positively to civic pride, sense of community and sense  
69 of place (McIndoe et al., 2005). The belief in such a relationship partly informed the creation of the public  
70 parks in the 19th-20th centuries around Europe as healthy places for all residents to spend time in and be  
71 proud of (Conway, 2000) alongside the long-standing premise, supported by recent empirical research,  
72 that urban open space can provide residents with respite from the daily pressures (Barbosa et al., 2007).

73 Such benefits are however achieved only if people use the spaces: and key determinants behind use  
74 include the safety and comfort of all potential users (Luymes and Tamminga, 1995).

75 Green spaces have also been identified as providing critical habitats for biodiversity and form an  
76 important part of the ecosystem in urban areas (Gaston et al., 2005, Barbosa et al., 2007). Trees and green  
77 spaces provide shade and cooling (CABE Space, 2005b, Davies et al., 2006) which, in light of growing  
78 concerns about environmental change, explains why urban green space is highlighted as an important

79 asset for climate change mitigation and adaptation. There is consensus that natural environments can  
80 contribute to aspects such as good air and water quality which bring environmental, social and economic  
81 benefits (ODPM, 2004). Empirical research findings by Irvine et al. (2009) on soundscapes in green  
82 spaces suggest that opportunities to access quiet, natural places in urban areas (highlighted above to be a  
83 benefit for mental health) can be enhanced by improving the ecological quality of urban green spaces. In  
84 this way, it is argued that ecological environments in a range of settings – urban, peri-urban, suburban and  
85 rural – must be provided, protected and maintained (Haughton and Hunter, 1994). However, conflicting  
86 demands on these settings – including pressure to create more housing and commercial development and  
87 with it the encroaching urban infrastructure – can endanger the existence and quality of such  
88 environments and have detrimental effects on biodiversity and habitats (Barber, 2005).

89 An obvious question emerges from the discussion above: if the importance of open and green space for  
90 urban social life is clearly shown in a growing body of evidence, why are some places left to deteriorate  
91 through lack of maintenance and investment in place-keeping? There is a disproportionately large body of  
92 urban design and planning guidance which focuses on the importance of place-making. Such guidance  
93 encourages well-designed, safe and inclusive places which are well-connected, environmentally sensitive  
94 and built to last (DCLG, 2006b, McIndoe et al., 2005, Burton and Mitchell, 2006). Such ‘assets’ should  
95 be managed ‘effectively and appropriately’ but guidance is often lacking in providing evidence of how  
96 this can be achieved in practice beyond having ‘the right skills and resources in place to manage...for the  
97 foreseeable future’ (Homes and Communities Agency, 2007, p. 180). This is due to a paucity of empirical  
98 research testing the effectiveness of place-keeping approaches. It can be argued that this prescriptive  
99 design guidance tends to do two things when considering place-keeping. Firstly, place-keeping is often  
100 discussed as a postscript of place-making, which is underpinned by, secondly, an unsubstantiated  
101 assumption that effective place-keeping will simply happen which in practice is not always feasible or  
102 realistic, particularly when funding is limited. This reflects the prevailing view that the creation of places  
103 in the place-making stage of the design and planning process is, while perhaps not simply considered to

104 be *more important* than long-term management, place-keeping as part of this process is certainly *less well*  
105 *understood*.

106 Examples of this lack of understanding and clarity are often found in practice relating to funding: the  
107 costs of maintenance of new or refurbished public spaces become apparent to local authorities only once a  
108 scheme had been implemented (Carmona et al., 2004b), a phenomenon encountered around Europe  
109 (Gallacher, 2005). There is also a disparity in practice, but invariably not highlighted in the literature,  
110 between the need to spend monies allocated for place-making (and any associated place-keeping) within a  
111 limited time-period, which hinders a long-term approach to place-keeping. In practice, this is manifested  
112 as an over-emphasis on the capital funds that often accompany place-making which, for accounting  
113 reasons, cannot be allocated against long-term care and maintenance. There are exceptions: for example,  
114 in Wellington, New Zealand, ongoing maintenance budgets are separated from one-off capital projects  
115 and managed over a 10-year financial planning system, allowing public space managers to plan ahead and  
116 invest consistently (Carmona et al., 2004a). However in the UK, the situation is unclear. When a public  
117 open space is created (or refurbished or regenerated with, for example, new features, planting, and/ or  
118 play equipment), the maintenance and management of that space is likely to fall under the remit of the  
119 local authority, which invariably does not receive supplementary funding to maintain and manage this  
120 extra public space, or support any extra skills or equipment required to maintain features (Burton and  
121 Dempsey, 2010). While national priorities may increasingly focus on the importance of maintaining the  
122 quality of parks and green spaces, it is local priorities which dictate how non ring-fenced resources are  
123 spent (CABE Space, 2006c). The local political context of trying to keep council tax low have been  
124 shown to influence directly (and negatively) the financial support for parks and green spaces (Woolley et  
125 al., 2004). At times of economic recession (such as the present moment), investment in public space tends  
126 to be precarious and disproportionately subject to tight fiscal pressures set by central government (CABE  
127 Space, 2005b).

128 The next section directly addresses the lack of consideration given to place-keeping by providing a  
129 detailed definition of the concept with reference to its constituent dimensions.

130 **Defining place-keeping**

131 As there is no one definition of *place*, it is little wonder that there are different interpretations of  
132 associated concepts which, this paper argues, constitute *place-keeping* (DCLG, 2007, Roberts, 2009).

133 This stems from the multi-faceted nature of the concept of place which encompasses:

- 134 • the spatial environment in which one lives or spends time;
  - 135 • the social environment, made up of residents and other users of a place; and,
  - 136 • the political and cultural context, where decisions made and trends can directly influence a place
- 137 – for example in terms of the provision of particular services and facilities.

138 Place can be described as a socio-spatial construct within local political and cultural contexts (after Jenks  
139 and Dempsey, 2007) which is underpinned by the ‘new institutionalist’ theoretical framework  
140 (Madanipour, 1996). New institutionalism provides a view of place-keeping which focuses on the  
141 institutions, or structures and mechanisms, which govern the ensuing relationships, process and  
142 interactions (Cohn, 2008, Smith et al., 2009, Healey, 1998). It permits a wider understanding of the urban  
143 environment by focusing on the physical and non-physical dimensions of space, (economic, social,  
144 cultural and organizational) and the interrelationships therein (Smith et al., 2009, Carley et al., 2001). In  
145 this way, place-making and place-keeping can be described as ongoing processes which comprise  
146 physical and non-physical dimensions within a local context. Figure 1 outlines how *place* is  
147 multidimensional, providing physical and non-physical functions for a diverse set of users, and has a  
148 combination of characteristics contributing to the essence of ‘place’ (as opposed to ‘space’) (after  
149 Carmona and de Magalhães, 2007, CABE and DETR, 2000).

150 Place-, or area-, based responses to social problems emerge from the policy stance that the physical  
151 environment can positively influence wellbeing and quality of life. Examples of social problems  
152 increasingly experienced in urban Europe include rising crime rates and anti-social behaviour with an  
153 associated reduction in perceived safety (Carpenter, 2006). These are partly attributed to social and spatial  
154 disparities between rich residents in affluent and high-quality areas and poor residents in generally poorer  
155 quality of housing and environments in less affluent areas (Hastings et al., 2005). For example, fear of

156 crime tends to be higher where there is a poorer quality environment with litter, graffiti and anti-social  
157 behaviour (Kullberg et al., 2009). It therefore follows that there is a clear need for place-making and  
158 place-keeping in socially and economically deprived areas.

159 **Figure 1 here.**

160 The concept of ‘place-keeping’, first coined by Wild et al. (2008), is defined here as long-term  
161 management which ensures that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits the place  
162 brings can be enjoyed by future generations. Place-keeping relates to what happens after high-quality  
163 places have been created. It means maintaining and enhancing the qualities and benefits of places through  
164 long-term management. Many aspects of place take time to develop and mature: for example, increased  
165 benefits (e.g. biodiversity) are experienced when trees grow to maturity, or when a place is used for  
166 particular events (e.g. community festivals), this can contribute to a growing sense of community and  
167 place attachment over time.

168 The aspirations of place-keeping are clear: the overriding goal is to create a high-quality, sustainable  
169 space which is valued by users who want to visit it again and again. The issue with determining the extent  
170 to which a space fulfils this aim is the subjectivity involved in defining *high-quality*, *sustainable* and  
171 *value* (Burton and Dempsey, 2010). Furthermore, the specific context within which place-keeping occurs  
172 is highly variable, indicating a wide variety of interpretations and definitions of the underlying aim. It can  
173 be shown however that place-keeping forms an increasingly important part of ‘green plans’ to preserve  
174 and sometimes create green space that are often developed at the city-scale and can be found in the UK,  
175 Denmark, Australia and Sweden among other countries (Carmona et al., 2004a).

176 Place-keeping encompasses dimensions of long-term open space management – maintenance,  
177 partnerships, governance, funding, policy and evaluation – which have not been considered before as part  
178 of a holistic concept (Figure 1). These dimensions are inter-related and can be applied at a number of  
179 different scales such as site, neighbourhood, city and region. *Maintenance* encompasses a range of land  
180 management techniques and the day-to-day operations required to ensure the ‘fitness for purpose’ of a  
181 place (Barber, 2005, Welch, 1991). It relates to a place’s condition and cleanliness – how well it stands up



182 to everyday use – and is incorporated within a longer-term process of management. It also relates closely  
183 to the design of the place: for example, specific features and landscaping may require particular  
184 maintenance equipment and expertise: e.g. high-pressure water cleaning for natural stone, a range of  
185 mowing equipment for grassed amphitheatres or specialist knowledge for particular planting.

186 The term *partnership* describes an association of two or more partners which has been developed here as  
187 agreed shared responsibility for place-keeping. While no particular partnership model is prescribed in this  
188 paper, third sector and local/ community organisations should be involved in place-keeping, as it has the  
189 benefit of ensuring the exchange and sharing of knowledge within the local context forms an integral part  
190 of the long-term management of the space (Wild et al., 2008). *Governance* is closely related to  
191 partnership and reflects a shift from government or the executive role where the state acts as the primary  
192 governing body (Smith et al., 2009) to describe the relationship between and within the range of  
193 stakeholders, usually governmental and non-governmental, involved in the decision-making process, a  
194 part of the state's enabling role (Lawless et al., 2010, Bovaird and Löffler, 2002). *Community engagement*  
195 is an aspect of governance particularly relevant in forms of participatory governance (Murdoch and  
196 Abram, 1998). It describes models of working with communities and encouraging appropriate long-term  
197 use, and engagement in the management, of the space through e.g. community programmes, events and  
198 activities.

199 *Investment, finance and resources* describe the range of financial models used for efficient long-term  
200 management. Ideally, funding is in place for place-keeping from the outset of the project and may come  
201 from a range of sources. This also relates to resourcing in more general terms and includes staffing,  
202 training and skills. However, it is clear that funding and resources for place-keeping is a contentious issue  
203 as the discussion below shows.

204 *Policy* can relate to place-keeping at different scales – national, regional, local, site-specific – and aims to  
205 embed best practice into local planning, urban design and other related disciplines. Place-keeping is often  
206 written as policy guidance and not statutory legislation, however related aspects may be covered by  
207 specific legislation (e.g. health and safety regulations). Rules and regulations can also be employed (e.g.

208 through signage) in an attempt to overcome potential conflicts of use with the aim of long-term positive  
209 use of and behaviour in the space.

210 Place-keeping *evaluation* monitors the process and product of place-keeping by assessing the economic,  
211 social and environmental benefits. The underlying aim is to improve place-keeping and deliver the  
212 associated benefits more effectively and efficiently with fewer resources. This may be evaluated through  
213 regular surveys of public use, satisfaction and attitudes towards the space and the use of award schemes to  
214 improve the quality of the space (e.g. Green Flag in the UK). Evaluation may also be used to monitor  
215 procurement options, staff development and retention to challenge existing practices and raise standards  
216 (Barber, 2005, Carmona et al., 2008).

217 It is critical to *coordinate* the overlapping dimensions of place-keeping. For example, the day-to-day  
218 maintenance of the space will involve various land management techniques, a range of stakeholders and  
219 varying levels of available resources; there will also be a need to follow specific regulations and  
220 undertake ongoing evaluation. All of these require coordination, which may manifest itself in a long-term  
221 public space strategy document or management plan. These dimensions of place-keeping are discussed in  
222 more detail later in the paper.

223 It is helpful to consider place-making and place-keeping as part of a dynamic and continuous process: the  
224 ongoing *process* of place-keeping maintains and enhances the *product* of place-making as a valued,  
225 sustainable and high-quality place within a particular local context. It is important to note the difficulty of  
226 divorcing the process from the product when considering the dimensions of place-keeping. For example,  
227 maintenance can be described as both a process (e.g. a cleaning service provided by a stakeholder) and a  
228 product (e.g. a wall cleaned of graffiti) (Carmona et al., 2008). Community engagement can likewise be  
229 considered an ongoing process of involvement in a range of programmes and events, or leading to a  
230 tangible outcome such as the decision not to erect a mobile phone mast (Bovaird and Löffler, 2002,  
231 Dempsey et al., 2009). Conceptually, this dynamic relationship might be considered as: a) place-making  
232 which leads to place-keeping as distinct activities; b) place-making which is influenced by place-keeping  
233 which can be manifested (and conceptually modelled) in different ways, e.g. the use of high-quality

234 materials to help reduce maintenance over time; and c), ideally, a two-way inter-dependent relationship  
235 between the two where place-keeping is considered from the outset as integral to place-making (Figures  
236 2a-c). The inter-relatedness of the concepts mean that it can be argued that place-making encompasses  
237 place-keeping as management forms an integral part of the creation or making of a place. However this  
238 paper takes the position that place-keeping focuses on the long term when considering place: place-  
239 making can therefore be considered as the creation, or re-creation, renewal or regeneration of place that  
240 occurs within the longer-term process of place-keeping. As outlined earlier, there tends to be a clear  
241 distinction between place-making and place-keeping in practice, which stems from specific activities on  
242 the ground as well as the funding streams. This emerges in the discussion later in the paper.

243 **Figures 2a-c HERE.**

#### 244 **Maintenance activities in place-keeping**

245 There is a clear link between maintenance and the perceived quality and use of public spaces (Dempsey,  
246 2008). Although the term ‘quality’ in relation to landscape is subjective (Burton and Dempsey, 2010)  
247 potential public space users are very clear about what they expect from a good-quality place. This  
248 includes variety, opportunities for play, sensory stimulation and provision for young people (Dunnett et  
249 al., 2002). People are hesitant to use spaces which are poorly maintained and are more likely to use spaces  
250 free from litter, dog mess and are equipped with good-quality facilities such as bins, toilets, play areas and  
251 sports areas (ibid., Shoreditch Trust and OISD, 2009). The level of maintenance can also strongly  
252 influence the image of an area as a place in which to invest. Creating a ‘neat and tidy’, ‘cared-for’  
253 immediate and wider landscape setting was found to be an indicator of the perceived ‘quality’ of potential  
254 office locations (Burton and Rymsa-Fitschen, 2008).

255 The level of maintenance required is related to the type and characteristics of the space as well as its users  
256 and its social, economic and environmental context. A higher level of maintenance may be expected of a  
257 civic square with clipped hedges and rows of annual bedding than of an urban nature park where grass  
258 may be allowed to grow long and shrubs grow into their natural shape. Standard management practices  
259 aim to maintain landscape elements of an open space such as grass and shrubs in the same condition

260 (CABE Space, 2006a), however the maintenance requirements of a space may change over time reflecting  
261 seasonal use and plant growth, changing user requirements or site context as the site matures. This  
262 indicates that a standardised regime, which lacks the flexibility to respond to change over the long term,  
263 may not be effective. It may therefore be more a question of ‘whether the right work is done at the right  
264 time’ rather than of how much work is carried out (Carmona et al., 2004a). While it is most often the local  
265 authority which oversees the maintenance and management, local residents and community groups are  
266 increasingly becoming involved in the process. This may be prompted by local concerns that standards  
267 are not high enough and organised to access more resources, such as the ‘Friends of Group’ which can  
268 access funds not available to the local authority.

### 269 **Partnerships and governance in place-keeping**

270 Achieving place-keeping depends on strong partnerships and effective governance/ decision-making. The  
271 *state-centred model* is identified as the typical starting point for many public spaces where a local  
272 authority plans, delivers and maintains the place in question with minimal external input (Burton and  
273 Dempsey, 2010, de Magalhães and Carmona, 2009). It is often argued that this model can suffer from  
274 inertia where processes have remained unchanged for decades and may be subject to excessive  
275 bureaucracy and lack of responsiveness (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2009). Different urban management  
276 partnerships have emerged due to what Broadbent and Laughlin call a ‘liberalisation in thought’ and a  
277 liberalisation of rules governing who provides and delivers public services (2003, p. 332). Public-private  
278 partnerships (PPPs) are increasingly widespread in open space management (Loader, 2010) as examples  
279 of what is described as a *market-centred model* (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2009), such as large-scale  
280 town centre management programmes (England and Sweden), and Business Improvement Districts (UK  
281 and Germany). Place-keeping PPPs involve a private, profit-driven organisation employed by the public  
282 sector, often in a contractual relationship which can (but not always) call on resources from outside the  
283 public sector (Carmona et al., 2008). The *user-centred model* is another example of devolved  
284 responsibility from the state where user-based organisations such as ‘Friends of...’ groups, local interest  
285 and community groups, charities and other non-governmental organizations are involved in place-keeping

286 (Jones, 2002). These organisations are not-for-profit and have a ‘direct interest in the quality of the public  
287 spaces and related services primarily for their use value’ (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2009, p. 125).  
288 Networks are very important in this model, with hierarchy abandoned for a more horizontal approach  
289 using formal and informal networks and contacts, making use of local knowledge and enthusiasm (Wild  
290 et al., 2008). There is widespread consensus in theory and policy that a partnership approach to public  
291 space management is an effective one (Bovaird, 2004, Carpenter, 2006) and it is suggested that a  
292 combination of the state-, market- and user-centred models could prove most advantageous for effective  
293 public space management (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2009).

294 *Governance* describes the relationships between and among the range of stakeholders, governmental and  
295 non-governmental, involved in the decision-making process. This reflects the conceptual and policy shift  
296 in Europe, North America and elsewhere (Geddes, 2006) from government where the state acts as the  
297 primary governing body to a new local governance with a strong focus on community engagement  
298 (Bovaird, 2004, Delgado and Strand, 2010).

299 There is no consensus on the definition of governance: it is a contested concept (Smith, 2004). For  
300 Jenkins (2004), it is based on government working with non-governmental sectors, including the private  
301 sector, and the processes of interaction between them. A less neutral definition of governance describes it  
302 as a form of negotiation used to formulate and implement policy that looks to actively involve  
303 community, voluntary and other non-governmental stakeholders with the public sector (Garcia, 2006).

304 Democracy underpins these ideas of governance, although it is argued to imply ‘a wider “participation” in  
305 decision-making than representative democracy or other forms of government...[accepting] a wide  
306 spectrum of actors other than the state, and thus, varying governance contexts and processes’ (Smith,  
307 2004, p. 64). The traditional public-sector led approach to governing is technocratic in nature, where the  
308 ‘experts’ are in control of the place-keeping decision-making: the polar opposite to a democratic approach  
309 (although this depends on the definition of democracy) (Irwin, 2006, Cohn, 2008). These technical  
310 experts solve place-keeping issues using their specialist knowledge and expertise, which is at odds with  
311 the identification of complex social ‘wicked problems’ which are claimed to be solvable only when taking

312 a democratic approach (Bovaird, 2004). It therefore follows that values of good governance in place-  
313 keeping include ‘openness, accountability, transparency and inclusiveness’ (Delgado and Strand, 2010, p.  
314 145).

315 Carmona et al (2004b) advocate an integrated approach to decision-making in public spaces which  
316 involves multiple agencies. It is claimed that new types of urban governance adopting a partnership  
317 approach are required for area-based initiatives dealing with urban deprivation around Europe due to its  
318 multi-faceted nature which demands a multi-agency approach (Carpenter, 2006). Therefore the need to  
319 carefully coordinate such a group (with different and potentially conflicting aims, resources and priorities)  
320 is critical. Despite the core ideas underpinning governance being based on inclusiveness and democracy,  
321 Irwin (Irwin, 2006) argues that, in practice, a fundamentally technocratic approach is often taken to place-  
322 keeping. He claims that a dated assumption is made about the public being insufficiently knowledgeable  
323 and who must therefore be educated by more knowledgeable experts in government. However, local  
324 residents can bring local, rich knowledge to the decision-making process via, for example, ‘Friends of  
325 Groups’ and local trusts, which can contribute to effective place-keeping (after Jones, 2002).

### 326 **Funding place-keeping**

327 Funding is fundamental to place-keeping. In the UK between 1979 and 2000, there were significant  
328 funding cuts for public space management, estimated at £1.3 billion, dramatically reducing numbers of  
329 skilled, experienced (and perceived to be expensive) workers which adversely affected the quality and use  
330 of local authority-managed parks and public spaces (CABE Space, 2006b). This move was attributed to  
331 the fact that such spaces do not constitute a service that local authorities are legally obliged to provide and  
332 so are not as important politically as other areas such as health, education or safety (Barber, 2005). Such  
333 budget cuts do not necessarily equate to efficiency gains, which may not be measured as place-keeping  
334 evaluation is not often prioritised or effectively funded so the resultant impact of such cuts may not be  
335 measured (CABE Space, 2006c). Such precariousness of funding allocation is encountered around Europe  
336 and elsewhere (Carmona et al., 2004a). While the importance of long-term funding is widely

337 acknowledged in the literature, how to secure it in practice is often not addressed which points to a critical  
338 gap in knowledge.

339 Generally speaking, funding for the creation/regeneration and maintenance of public spaces mainly comes  
340 from the traditional public sector model through funding allocations via the relevant local authority  
341 departments. Funding is also provided through public sector-led specific projects and initiatives. These  
342 include the Local Democracy and Self-Government programme in Sweden led by social housing provider  
343 Poseidon (Castell, 2010) and the Big Cities regeneration programme in the Netherlands (Dekker and van  
344 Kempen, 2004). At the more localised scale, other examples of public sector monies might include rental  
345 income as well as revenues from parking, road charging and events (Carmona et al., 2004b).

346 In the UK, to ensure that adequate public space is provided for residents, open space creation is in part  
347 funded by Section 106 obligations (recently amended in policy as the Community Infrastructure Levy)  
348 (DCLG, 2010). Planning permission for (housing, commercial, retail) development is contingent on such  
349 an agreement, which is increasingly used to support the provision of infrastructure such as public space  
350 (Living Places, 2010). Practice guidance states that contributions for the long-term management and  
351 maintenance of public space should take into account the time lag between the initial place-making costs  
352 and 'its inclusion in public sector funding streams' or when costs are recovered: 'pump priming  
353 maintenance payments should be time-limited and not be required in perpetuity by planning obligations',  
354 indicating that long-term management is not funded beyond the short-term establishment costs (DCLG,  
355 2006a, p. 11).

356 The private sector is also called on to contribute to public space place-keeping when they engage in  
357 contracts for the public sector (Lindholst, 2009), or PPPs such as town centre management and business  
358 improvement districts (Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2009, Schaller and Modan, 2008). The contracting-out of  
359 services to the private sector can have an impact on how funding for place-keeping is earmarked.  
360 Lindholst (2009a, p. 6) discusses the negative impact that contracting-out to the lowest bidder can have on  
361 the quality of place-keeping, because 'payments [are] relatively independent of performance'.  
362 Furthermore, he finds that in practice there are examples of underpriced contracts which are essentially

363 under-resourced and where maintenance and management are not implemented. Warnings are made  
364 elsewhere that contracting-out should not be considered as an exercise in cost-cutting, but can be effective  
365 if an outcome-based approach is taken (Carmona et al., 2004a). This is particularly suitable for increasing  
366 biodiversity in open spaces, as there would not be an annual cycle of work and funding which may  
367 potentially hinder progress over the longer term (CABE Space, 2006a). Sustaining funds for maintenance  
368 and management of the space over the short-, medium- and long-term is therefore critical and a major  
369 challenge for practitioners and policy-makers. With hindsight it is easy to see how landscapes age and  
370 change but it is sometimes not possible to anticipate future changes when the space is first created or  
371 developed. With this in mind, it seems clear that an effective long-term management plan should include  
372 the renewal of facilities etc. and not focus solely on the day-to-day maintenance, which is the case with  
373 current grounds maintenance contracts (Carmona et al., 2004a).

374 Place-keeping partnership models such as private finance initiatives (PFI) and PPPs can reduce the  
375 pressure on the public sector to finance large-scale projects, often with investment based on debt finance  
376 (Adair et al., 2000), while passing the responsibility to the private sector for an agreed set of  
377 specifications. Payments are typically made by the public sector based on performance or throughput after  
378 the competitive tendering process designed to ensure transparency and value-for-money (Zitron, 2006).  
379 However, there are negative aspects: in the case of housing, PPPs and PFIs have been criticised for  
380 putting economic interests ahead of the social wellbeing of all prospective residents, particularly those in  
381 social housing (Minton, 2009).

382 Other funding models for place-keeping include endowments which can provide monies through the  
383 interest gained on a large initial investment (CABE Space, 2006b). Endowments form the basis of the  
384 operations of the UK's Land Trust (previously the Land Restoration Trust) which provides long-term  
385 sustainable management of public spaces across England in perpetuity as part of community-led,  
386 environmentally-informed regeneration (Land Trust, 2010).

387 An increasing proportion of funding for place-keeping is provided by the charity sector, such as the UK's  
388 Heritage Lottery Fund, which allocates monies via independent distribution bodies (Grimsey and Lewis,



389 2005). Monies can come from funds open to the community sector to which public sector bodies do not  
390 have access. While conservation and restoration logically form part of long-term place-keeping activities,  
391 it should be underlined again that such funding tends to be primarily for place-making projects and not  
392 place-keeping. However, funders increasingly require assurance that resources are in place for place-  
393 keeping to secure the initial grant. In practice, however, this may only be achieved by compromising the  
394 level of maintenance of other open spaces as funding cannot be ring-fenced in this way over time.

### 395 **Evaluation of place-keeping**

396 It is widely acknowledged that there are many benefits to the provision and use of public space in urban  
397 areas (Baycan-Levent et al., 2009, Mielke, 2008), as outlined at the beginning of this paper. It therefore  
398 follows that this value afforded to public space has to some extent been measured, in different ways such  
399 as access to green space and indicators of health and recovery from illness (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989,  
400 Mitchell and Popham, 2008). There is indeed an extensive and broad literature on the evaluation of public  
401 space and the underlying need for such measurement. However, many of these indicators measure aspects  
402 and factors which are associated with place-making and place-keeping, or partly measure them but do not  
403 directly measure these concepts per se. This points to a critical gap in knowledge.

404 There are many existing awards, competitions and measures of quality in open, green and public spaces,  
405 including international ‘Nations in Bloom’ award, the Entente Florale, the international Blue Flag Award  
406 for good-quality beaches and marinas, the UK’s Green Flag Award and the Nordic Green Space Award  
407 for good-quality parks, public and natural spaces. Such award schemes represent good practice in  
408 maintaining and managing public space (Barber, 2005). Other indicators include the measurement of  
409 attitudes and satisfaction, the actual provision of services and facilities, community involvement  
410 (Carmona et al., 2004b), surveys of public space use, staff retention and skills development (CABE  
411 Space, 2010) and evaluation of procurement and contracting-out processes (Barber, 2005).

412 Value-for-money is an important consideration for all sectors, and is assured only if taken into account  
413 early on in the place-keeping process to ensure fair competition (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005). It is argued  
414 that insufficient attention is given to the long-term evaluation of value-for-money (Broadbent et al.,

415 2003). While exactly how long-term place-keeping is considered to be is unclear, some PPPs and  
416 contracts can extend to as long as sixty years, indicating the importance of evaluation both throughout the  
417 process and once a project is operational (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005).  
418 There are clearly many aspects of place-keeping that can be measured, but others that are less simple or  
419 tangible to evaluate. The quality of landscape, for example, is a complex concept which is difficult to  
420 measure, in part due to its dynamic nature and relationship with the seasons (Burton and Ryma-Fitschen,  
421 2008). These can include benefits such as aesthetic beauty and air quality that cannot be captured using  
422 traditional financial valuation methods (Choumert and Salanié, 2008). To some extent this is because such  
423 aspects are subjectively assessed on the part of the person experiencing the space (Dempsey, 2008). There  
424 is a small but growing body of research which looks to apply a monetary value to public space and its  
425 associated social, economic and environmental benefits (Mielke, 2008, Allin and Henneberry, 2010). A  
426 significant challenge to achieving this is how to quantify in financial terms non-physical and indirect  
427 aspects of public space and the place-making/ place-keeping processes underpinning them (Bell et al.,  
428 2007). For example, health benefits might be quantified as savings made to a hospital's budget (ibid.)  
429 while anti-social behaviour reduction might be measured as savings to fly-tipping budgets; but it is less  
430 clear how biodiversity might be measured financially (Chevassus-au-Louis et al., 2009). It is therefore  
431 often the case that one is not able to measure a number of place-keeping aspects. This may also due to  
432 lack of skills, but also because of time and cost constraints. It should also be noted that benefits  
433 experienced in a space as well as user needs may change over time alongside the changing nature of the  
434 space itself, which adds further complexity to evaluating place-keeping (Mielke, 2008).

#### 435 **Policy: contextual frameworks**

436 It is clear from the literature that the political context has a profound influence on place-keeping, how it is  
437 manifested, who is involved and how it is funded. Within the dominant paradigm of sustainability which  
438 increasingly underpins policy, research and practice, a conceptual link (albeit as yet not fully tested) has  
439 been made between increasing the quality of the physical environment and improving social disadvantage  
440 in neighbourhoods (Walsh, 2001). This link is manifested as the 'area-based initiative' which has been

441 applied to deprived neighbourhoods throughout Europe (after Carpenter, 2006). Put simply, the argument  
442 is that urban regeneration in a deprived area can combat urban poverty and the ensuing environmental  
443 degradation, and promote economic growth (Urban Task Force, 1999).

444 An example of an area-based initiative is the widespread adoption around Europe of ‘urban renaissance’  
445 policies which aim to promote economic growth and combat urban poverty and decay’ (Urban Task  
446 Force, 1999). Government policy, e.g. in the UK and the Netherlands, promote urban living and working  
447 in vibrant, compact and sustainable communities (Stead and Hoppenbrouwer, 2004, VROM, 1997). In the  
448 UK, this has been translated into policy focus on liveability which has been described as a necessary  
449 ingredient of a sustainable community (Brook Lyndhurst, 2004). Liveability policies impinge on place-  
450 keeping because they ‘focus on people’s perception and use of their local built environment within their  
451 everyday lives, and how well that local environment serves a range of human needs’ (Stevens, 2009, p.  
452 374). Thinking about place-making and place-keeping, relevant aspects include how a space is designed  
453 to attract people to come and use it, and also how durable and robust is the physical environment.

454 However, regeneration funding on the whole does not focus on the long-term management of places:  
455 current interpretations and applications of urban regeneration (certainly in the UK) appear to be  
456 synonymous with place-making, with no provision for place-keeping. Rare exceptions to this rule include  
457 the UK’s 5 year Single Regeneration Budget and 10-year New Deal for Communities programmes,  
458 providing initial public funds to create third sector organisations that might be involved in place-keeping  
459 over a longer period of time to become self-funding (Lawless et al., 2010).

460 Such area-based regeneration is argued to be a powerful political tool as it reinforces the perception that  
461 deprivation is bounded within particular areas and, as such, funding in these areas can seem to have a  
462 greater impact (after Carpenter, 2006). This comes with the caveat that such area-based regeneration can  
463 have unsustainable consequences such as a rise in property prices, the displacement of local communities  
464 (who may be priced out of the market) and potential gentrification (ibid., Walsh, 2001). Furthermore,  
465 following this paper’s contention that place-keeping does not necessarily follow regeneration efforts once  
466 the funding is spent, it is clear that there is a need to examine how effective such regeneration is in the

467 long term or if only *temporary liveability* is achieved. It may be possible to turn around disadvantaged  
468 areas but only if a long-term support mechanism is in place, which is incompatible with short-term  
469 political goals and funding streams (Hull, 2006).

470 Historically, for the most part, public space in many parts of Europe is state-provided and state-managed  
471 (Carmona et al., 2004a) although this is increasingly changing. There is growing acceptance of the need  
472 for alternative service delivery, or ‘any form of public provision other than direct delivery by the state to  
473 the public’ (Cohn, 2008, p. 32). This has been attributed to a new regime of benchmarks and best practice,  
474 propelled by what Cheung describes as the ‘ascendancy of New Public Management’ (NPM) (Cheung,  
475 2009, p. 1034). This is exemplified by the freeing up of the market to improve the quality of public  
476 services and the performance of public agencies (Taylor et al., 2001, Lindholst, 2008) emphasising the  
477 decentralisation of responsibilities (Carmona et al., 2004a).

478 A dominant manifestation of NPM is the public-private partnership, mentioned earlier. The PPP is based  
479 on financial investment from both parties; the project is carried out by the private stakeholder with  
480 ultimate responsibility held by the public stakeholder. PPPs are widespread in some European countries  
481 such as the UK, France, Netherlands, Italy and Germany (Bovaird, 2004) but less well-known in others  
482 such as Denmark. The PPP emerged in the UK and Germany as part of the respective governments’ drive  
483 to modernise, reorganise and improve public services by harnessing the skills of other sectors (Bovaird  
484 and Löffler, 2002). An important example of the PPP in the urban context is the Business Improvement  
485 Districts (BID), a model which finances capital and maintenance improvements to a designated area  
486 through by mandatory taxes/ fees paid by the private sector (Kreutz, 2009). BIDs are supported in policy  
487 in Germany (Section 171f of the Federal Building Code (BauGesetzbuch BauGB)) (ibid.) and the UK  
488 (Local Government Act, 2003) (HMSO, 2003, Hogg et al., 2007).

489 NPM critics point out that the top-down bureaucratic nature of NPM-led public service provision and  
490 delivery can lead to inflexible and inefficient processes that are difficult to speed up or change when there  
491 is a need to adapt to, for example, economic recession (Cohn, 2008). It has also been pointed out that this  
492 approach can generate conflict between service funders and providers when public and private interests

493 are not compatible (i.e. public good versus profit-driven interests) (Taylor et al., 2001). There is also a  
494 danger of interests becoming overly-compatible, where long-term partnerships ‘may be suspected of  
495 undermining competition between potential providers’ of management services (Bovaird, 2004, p. 200).

#### 496 **Coordinating place-keeping: bringing the dimensions together**

497 Alongside these inter-related dimensions, the contextual variables at play in place-keeping point to the  
498 need for taking an holistic approach to place-keeping through close coordination and good leadership,  
499 especially where ownership and management of spaces become divorced (Carmona et al., 2004a,  
500 Westling et al., 2009). Such coordination should aim to ensure that high-quality place-keeping is  
501 delivered by skilled service providers competitively to a high standard which is evaluated regularly. It has  
502 already been pointed out that all three sectors should be involved in place-keeping – public, private and  
503 voluntary –to make the most of a wide range of necessary skills, knowledge and resources which would  
504 be missing in a unilateral or bilateral partnership.

505 Effective place-keeping coordination can be achieved when collectively stakeholders have both a strategic  
506 and a local focus on long-term quality and efficiency, which is underpinned by reliable resources with a  
507 monitoring process in place. There is also a need for knowledge transfer among and between stakeholders  
508 which can help raise the profile of place-keeping. In this way, it is hoped that such an approach to place-  
509 keeping can bring about political commitment and real policy change.

510 Coordinating place-keeping in practice can however be difficult. For example, stakeholders often have  
511 different underlying interests: for example, different sectors may not be able to commit time and  
512 resources to place-keeping activities depending on the varying short- or long-term economic interests in  
513 the project (Adair et al., 2000). Another barrier to place-keeping coordination relate to fragmented  
514 funding streams which have conditions attached for funding to be allocated within a limited time period,  
515 which can undermine the long-term approach required for place-keeping (Burton and Dempsey, 2010). In  
516 practice, this is manifested as an over-emphasis on the capital funds that often accompany place-making  
517 which, for accounting reasons, cannot be allocated against long-term care and maintenance. A further

518 barrier relates to the management approach taken: ‘over-management’ can create commodified and  
519 homogenised spaces, while ‘under-management’ can result in unsafe and unused spaces (Carmona, 2010).  
520 To address these barriers and the overriding gap in knowledge about place-keeping, it is necessary to  
521 examine examples of place-keeping in practice in a rigorous way to analyse the effectiveness of different  
522 approaches taken in practice.

### 523 **Implications of place-keeping in practice: scope for empirical research**

524 While this paper provides an important first step, to understand the concept of place-keeping fully, it is  
525 necessary to examine it empirically and in practice. This calls for an identification of different place-  
526 keeping approaches, which, as this paper suggests, are diverse and numerous, particularly in light of the  
527 number of inter-linked dimensions and the potential stakeholders involved. It also calls for evidence to  
528 test the extent to which engaging in place-keeping brings about social, economic and environmental  
529 benefits for users over the long term. Furthermore, in light of the current economic downturn, there is a  
530 clear need for finding innovative and low-cost ways of implementing long-term maintenance and  
531 management, particularly when, as this paper has indicated, in practice place-keeping is low down on the  
532 political agenda.

533 The ‘MP4: Making Places Profitable, Public and Private Open Spaces’ project goes some way to  
534 addressing some of these gaps in knowledge. This is an EU INTERREG-funded project which brings  
535 together urban and rural landscape practitioners from the North Sea Region countries of England,  
536 Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium with academics to explore place-  
537 keeping in practice. The research aims of the MP4 project are to:

- 538 • explore the extent to which positive socio-economic impacts of open space improvements are/  
539 can be maintained in the long run;
- 540 • provide workable solutions to address maintenance and management requirements with a view to  
541 mainstream best practice in place-keeping across the North Sea Region; and,
- 542 • explore how place-keeping innovations can be embedded into policies at every level.

543 The MP4 project explores examples of place-keeping practice in seven European countries to engage in a  
544 process of transnational learning in a range of public and private open spaces within different political,  
545 social, economic and environmental contexts. It also examines and evaluates innovative place-keeping  
546 practice, both existing and occurring as part of the project itself in a number of ‘test-bed’ pilot projects.  
547 More information can be found at [www.mp4-interreg.eu](http://www.mp4-interreg.eu) .

548 While this project focuses much-needed attention on place-keeping, this discussion in this paper also  
549 points to a wider need for place-keeping practitioners to engage in processes of post-occupancy  
550 evaluation to ascertain the extent to which long-term open space management does and should achieve  
551 project aims and supports users. To date, this has not been conducted with any critical appraisal (see  
552 Gallacher, 2005 for a notable exception). This points to a significant gap between place-making and  
553 place-keeping, which runs parallel to the perennial problem of how to secure funding over the long term:  
554 there is no requirement for open space designers and managers to conduct an evaluation of a space once it  
555 has been created or regenerated, and there is certainly no mechanism in place to assess the extent to which  
556 a space is successful over the long term. Along with the non-statutory status of open space provision and  
557 management, this highlights the precariousness of place-keeping in practice. Having said this, the  
558 importance of local open space cannot be underestimated, nor can the attachment felt by residents and  
559 users, indicating that a community-oriented place-keeping approach may be a particularly effective one.  
560 Research is clearly needed which examines and evaluates the practice of place-keeping if the social,  
561 environmental and economic benefits of open space are to be fully understood and harnessed for all  
562 residents and users.

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Figure 2b. A process is influenced by the type of product required.

Figure 2c. A two-way relationship between process and product where place-keeping is considered at the beginning.