

Local environmental quality of streets
and green spaces

**Greening your service in challenging
times**

APSE 15th October 2009


Commission for Architecture
and the Built Environment

The government's advisor
on architecture, urban design
and public space

Sustaining and promoting environmental quality of public spaces in challenging times



- **Key to adaptation to climate change and promotion of quality of life.**
- **Quality dependent on resourcing**
- **Well evidenced arguments for competitive edge – battle for adequate funding and confident negotiation in a climate of tightening budgets**
- **Proving and arguing the value of these services – economic, social and environmental**

A group of people are picnicking on a grassy hill under a blue sky with scattered clouds. In the foreground, a woman wearing a yellow and black striped headscarf and a yellow patterned top is sitting on a white blanket, looking down. To her right, several other people are sitting on the grass, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. A water bottle and a can are visible on the ground. The background is filled with lush green trees.

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What does CABE do?



- **We influence and inspire the people making decisions about our built environment, so that they choose good design**
- **We run public campaigns and provide practical advice**
- **We work directly with architects, local authorities, planners, designers and clients, sharing our learning and giving specific guidance on individual projects**
- **Our remit was set out in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2005. England and urban**



QABE SPACE

aiming to bring excellence to the design and management of public spaces in our towns and cities



CABE Space

a national champion for public space



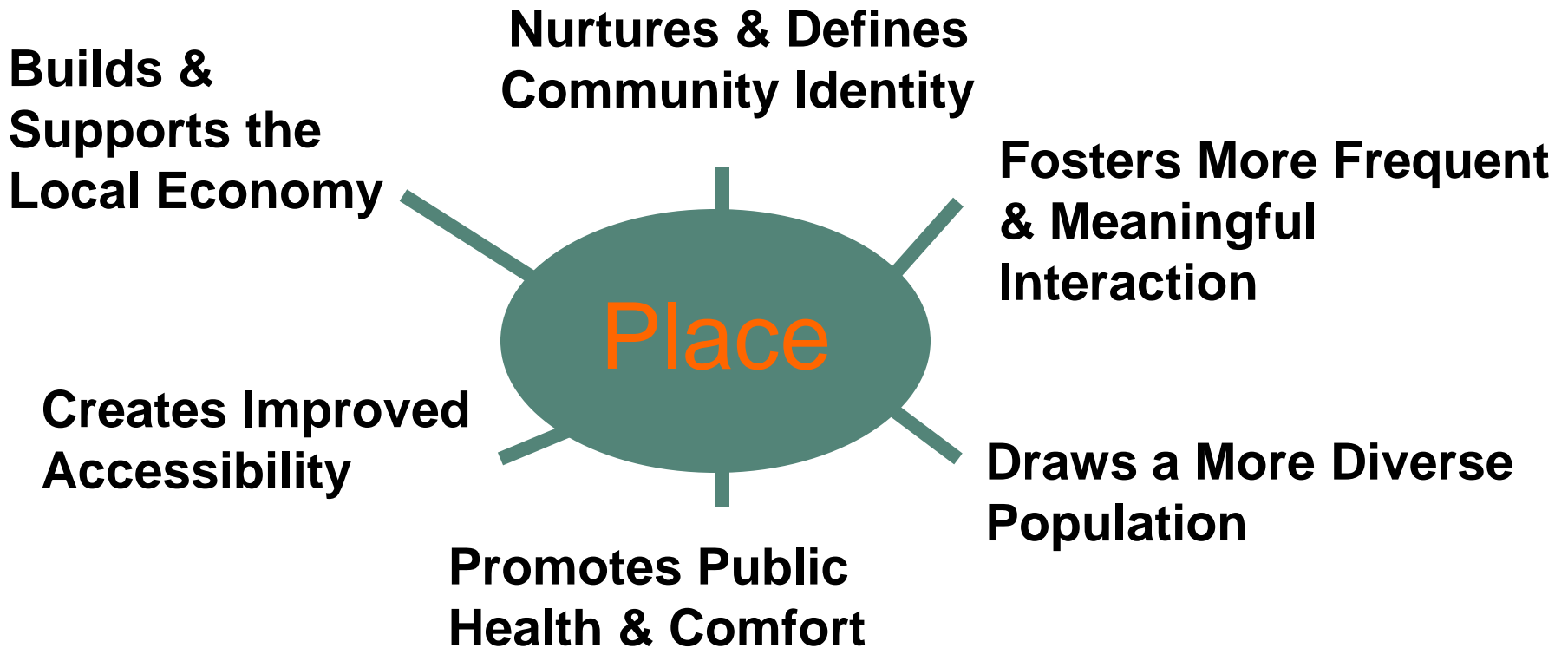
- **Set up May 2003 following report of UGSTF**
- **A specialist unit within the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)**
- **A small central team with a wide range of partners across the country**
- **A champion and advocate for public space, especially urban green space**
- **Promoting a national programme of research, best practice and technical support**

Aspirations for public space



- 1. **Clean:** a clean and well cared-for place
- 2. **Accessible:** a place that is easy to get to and move through
- 3. **Attractive:** a visually pleasing place
- 4. **Comfortable:** somewhere that is pleasant to spend time in
- 5. **Inclusive:** a place that is welcoming to all
- 6. **Vital and viable:** a place that is well used in relation to its predominant function(s)
- 7. **Functional:** a place that functions well at all times
- 8. **Distinctive:** somewhere that makes the most of its character
- 9. **Safe and secure:** somewhere that feels safe from harm
- 10 **Robust:** a place that stands up well to the pressures of everyday use

The Benefits of Good Places?



Slide from Project for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

People recognise this value and this reflects in measures of LA performance



- **‘Not so Green and Pleasant’ programme of work scoping all data relating to the state of the nation’s urban green space**
- **90% of people think it’s important to have green spaces near to where they live**
- **Parks and open spaces key to positive LA performance**
- **Modelled neighbourhood satisfaction – perceived quality of public open space service strongly positively related**
- **Satisfaction with open space services is positively related to quantity of green space, proximity and service spend**

Despite this.....



- **‘Cinderella service’ historical legacy of underfunding and underinvestment**
- **Acute lack of skills e.g. 68% said a lack of horticulture skills is affecting service delivery and shortage of professionals**
- **Environmental quality is lowest in the poorest urban areas and areas with highest levels of ethnic minorities**
- **Resident satisfaction lowest in poorest areas**

Paved with gold: the real value of good street design

Briefing

Paved with gold: the real value of good street design

This research demonstrates a direct link between street quality and property prices. It shows that the quality of a high street can add at least 5 per cent to the price of homes and to the level of retail rents.

This is the first study to connect economic benefits directly with the quality of street design, management and maintenance. It may seem obvious that smarter streets cost more and that good quality design brings benefits but this research gives us new information: it shows that the design quality of a street affects prices on its own, regardless of any other factors. All the other things likely to affect prices, such as income levels, the quality of public transport, or the range of local shops, have been discounted. Simply improving street design can make a major difference to market values.

These findings support the case for improving street quality, and provide evidence of the likely returns from investing in a high-quality streetscape.



- **Demonstrates a direct link between street quality and property prices**
- **Quality of high streets can add at least 5% to retail rents and price of homes**
- **The benefits of quality street design are clear and local authorities are already taking the initiative in realising the latent value in their high streets.**

This Way to Better Streets: 10 case studies on improving street design

Briefing

This way to better streets: 10 case studies on improving street design

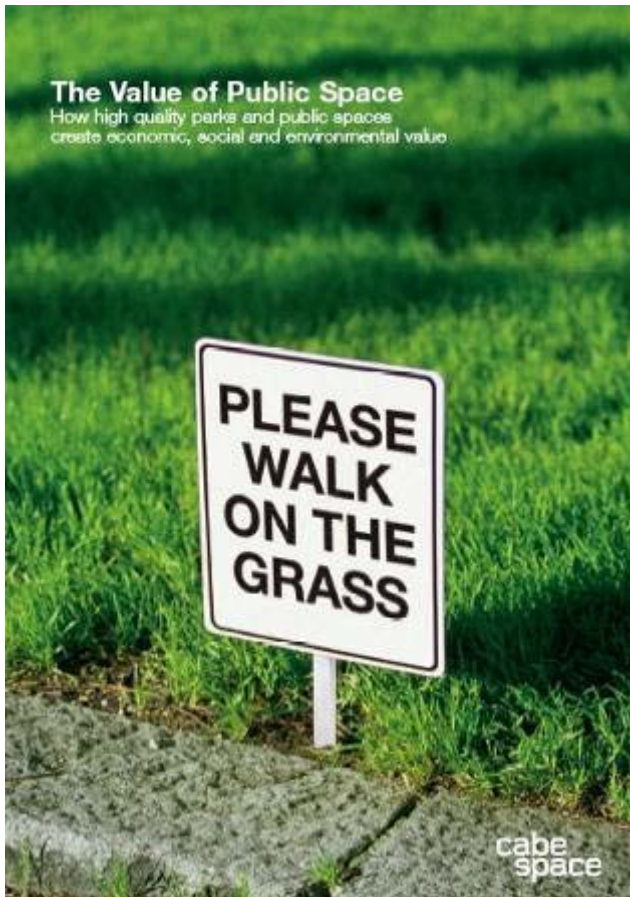
Streets are hard-working spaces. They balance a wide range of uses, communicate values and signify the transformation of neighbourhoods, towns and cities. To be sustainable and fit for purpose in the 21st century, streets need to respond to the demands of climate change and shifts in culture. CABE has reviewed 10 streets, looking at design development and implementation to unlock the lessons learnt. They provide an insight into recent developments in street design. This briefing summarises the findings. Details of the 10 case studies can be found at www.cabe.org.uk/streets.



Five key principals behind successful streets;

- Vision
- Commitment
- Integration
- Adaptation
- Coherence

The value of public space



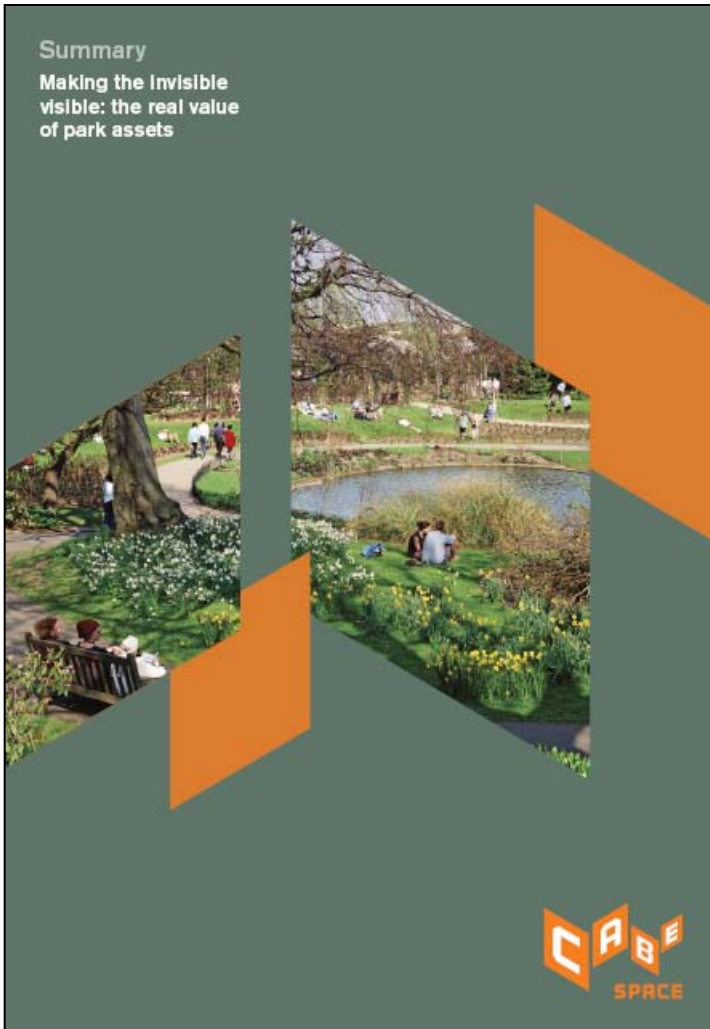
- **Economic benefits**
- **Social value**
- **Physical and mental health benefits**
- **Reduction in crime and ASB**
- **Increased biodiversity**
- **Environmental and climatic benefits**

Does money grow on trees?



- **Connection between proximity to public space and value**
- **8 UK case studies**
- **Average value uplift of 5-7% for properties that overlook a park**

Parks in the credit crunch: making the real value of park assets explicit

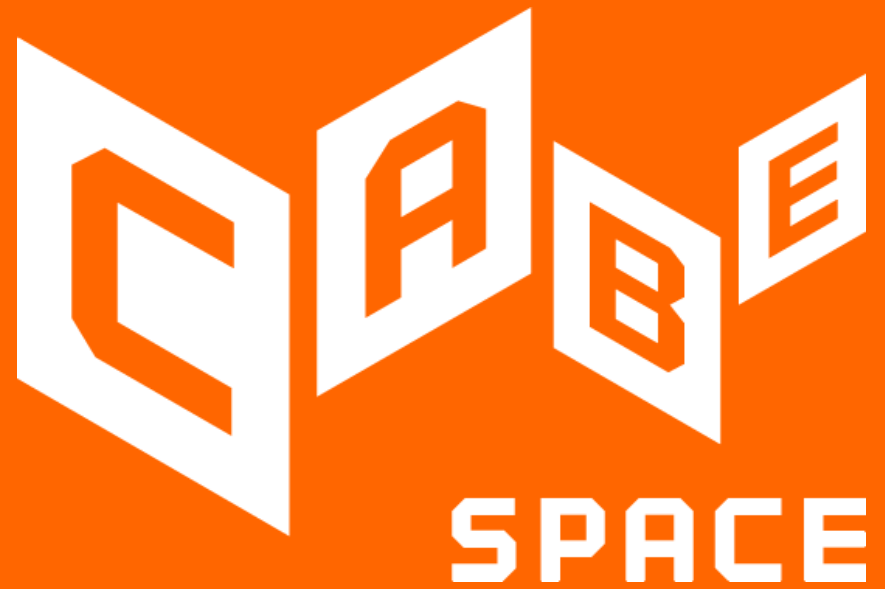


- **New CABE Space research**
Making the invisible visible: the real value of park assets
- **Aims to produce more accurate calculations of the value of parks and green spaces**
- **Facilitate well evidenced arguments for adequate funding and negotiate confidently in a climate of tightening budgets**

Next steps



-
- **Further work on quantification of value**
 - **Public spaces are the one public service everybody uses on a daily basis**
 - **Evolution of services in current context**
 - **Making best use of evidence and partnership working**
 - **Opportunities to link to other agendas**



Thank you.

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www.cabe.org.uk

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