European Waterfront Cities Network

Thursday 14 March 2019, 11.00 to 13.00

Royann 2, Hotel Majestic Cannes

Attendees:

Liverpool	[redacted], Director Marketing Liverpool
Amsterdam	[redacted], Director, Residential Development [redacted] – Urban Space and Economy Director
Gothenburg	[redacted] – Head of Business Development [redacted] – Head of City Development
Rotterdam	[redacted], City of Rotterdam
Hafen City (Hamburg)	[redacted], Chief Executive, Hafen City [redacted] – Assistant to the Executives
Lisbon South Bay	[redacted], Executive board member for Baía do Tejo
Gdynia	[redacted], Deputy Mayor, Gdynia [redacted] – Economic Policy Department
Stockholm	[redacted] – Senior Advisor
Belfast	[redacted] – Strategic Director [redacted] – Interim Operational Director
Tallin	[redacted] – Real Estate Manager
Moderator	Prof [redacted]
Apologies	Glasgow & Cardiff

Prof [redacted] provided introductions and recap.

The network has been meeting for 2 years and the past meeting has seen a successful series of events at MIPIM March 2018 and EXPO Real October 18. Amsterdam and Rotterdam were thanked for hosting the MIPIM 18 showcase event in the Holland Metropole pavilion and Gdynia, Hamburg and Belfast for hosting events this year.

It is good news that Belfast have re-joined the group and a warm welcome extended to Tallinn – it is hoped that both Tallinn and Copenhagen will look to join the group.

As context, Prof [redacted] mentioned:

Following successful waterfront development arising from de-industrialisation in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, several European cities are now into their 3rd cycle of waterfront development.

This 3rd cycle has specific dimensions such and it is synchronised with wider changes such as:

i. Urban populations are growing rapidly and cities are both densifying and 'metropolitanzsing' in order to cope with growth. Waterfronts may now play special roles in making density more liveable and metropolitan areas better connected.
ii. Concern for social economic inclusion in cities is at a high following increased inequality as a result of urban growth.
iii. The priority for public services and public spaces and public systems in the city to unite people from different income and ethnic groups are now given a high priority.
iv. The decarbonisation of the process of urbanisation is now an urgent global priority and therefore many cities are thinking about how they can decarbonise particularly with respect to energy systems and energy efficiency, transportation and particularly car dependency, and real estate, how to get buildings to be more energy efficient and less carbon intensive.
v. New technologies are both disrupting city activities such as retail, entertainment, and office functions but are also fostering smarter, sharing economy, circular economy, and the experience economy, with very precise urban and place making requirements.
vi. Urban tourism has grown exponentially, and many cities are under strain from concentrations of tourists in some locations and at certain times of year. Low costs air travel is inducing low spend tourism in many cities with multiple unwelcome side-effects. Waterfronts are now sources of retail and tourism destinations where entertainment, leisure, culture, and more can be combined with tourism and retail.
vii. Citizens have high expectations of quality of life in cities and increasingly wanting high quality public space and amenities to off-set changes to densities and working conditions in cities. waterfront locations need to serve wider citizen agendas.
viii. Business is re-urbanising and there are more jobs, firms, and capital seeking city centre locations. Waterfronts offer a source of new city centre and adjacent locations.
ix. Renewed concern about segregation, inequality, and exclusion in cities. waterfront must avoid the challenges of gentrification and privatisation is they are win social support.
x. Ports are also expanding as result of increased trade in goods and many waterfronts need to

There were introductions and updates from the whole group covering their current work on waterfront development. The following forward planning of meetings and events was discussed:

i. Gothenburg still plans to hold the conference in 2021 concerning waterfront development in the city. We should discuss this further at EXPO Real in October
i. Amsterdam is planning a conference in 2020 about the city and urban development of the waterfront. Future dates to be provided by [redacted]
ii. Hafen City Hamburg will be 20 years old soon and plans to hold an international symposium to discuss the lessons learned and a forward agenda for waterfront development. [redacted] to forward any further information.

iii. Liverpool will shortly be 125 years old and wishes to celebrate the Albert Dock development and will be coming forward with plans for that.
iv. London is due to host the Great Cities of the World Symposium on November 25-27

These exciting events were all noted by the meeting and follow up was proposed on each of them to develop a clear calendar of events.

1. Agenda topics

- Inclusive Waterfronts
- Financing the Waterfront

2. Summary of discussions

- The focus of the discussion began with affordability.

Stockholm
No social housing provision in Stockholm therefore hard to develop affordable housing in the waterfront areas. Stockholm looking to develop a new mix and model because the publically owned companies that produce housing do not produce affordable housing in the way that it is understood in other European countries and as a consequence waterfront redevelopment in Stockholm does not contribute much to the affordable housing problem and the city has quite separated spaces where different tenures of housing exist.

Gothenburg
Gothenburg confirmed that they can't do social housing in an active measure there. There is no legal framework for promoting social housing but they can create a model on the ground level of waterfront developments which is designed to be accessible and affordable to ordinary citizens and therefore there is a strong focus on using ground level and public space on the waterfront developments to create amenities and attractions that bring people in even if they can't afford to live on the waterfront. Therefore, it is the mix of activity that provides some level of inclusion.

Liverpool
The ambition is to have the balanced use of the waterfront and to provide something that has something for everyone and therefore is able to be inclusive. The waterfront development model in Liverpool depends upon private sector investment and it makes it difficult to achieve affordability across the board because private sector investors have to seek the optimum return on their investment to make such investments work. The city government are not in control of the destiny of many developments even though they have planning powers they are not able to specify or control who benefits.

More generally in UK cities, not just Liverpool, it is the planning system that's used to define what happens on the waterfront but the planning system itself can't determine the full scale of the social impact of the outcomes and especially in cities where there is an absolute imperative to bring in private investors this reduces the power of the city government to achieve the outcome it seeks.

Amsterdam
The leasehold system in Amsterdam is coupled with a long-term planning approach which involves the master planning of new development sites and therefore the need for an inclusive waterfront is addressed through such master planning and the city government also has the leasehold system through which to influence the behaviour of its tenants. Areas that are close to the water itself and the waterfront must be public areas and city governments use planning to inforce this. When the city government enters into a contract with the private investors this includes strict requirements on the affordability of housing and other developments produced. For example, a typical model in Amsterdam would be 40% social housing, 40% middle income housing and 20% market housing and a private investor would not be able to develop unless they sign up to such targets.

It's also possible for the city government to vary the price of the lease to incentivise the developer either to do more or to compensate for their desire to do less and the leasehold income is used to finance the infrastructure required to make the waterfront work.

Rotterdam
Rotterdam indicated that the framework it works within and its approach, which is the same as Amsterdam, and it also uses contracts with the private sector to deliver the housing type and the cost requirements that it proposes and one of the additional approaches used in Rotterdam is to use the reclamation of land from water to create more land and this gives the city government more control over the new land created and therefore more able to deliver its objectives on such land.

Hamburg
In Hamburg one third of the housing built on the waterfront is affordable housing and it is supported by a state-owned agency that seeks to deliver that housing. Land prices are reduced for affordable housing to make it more feasible for private developers to achieve the outcomes and Hamburg works hard to achieve a broad mix of job types on the waterfront in order to enable people of all income levels to work in locations achieved through waterfronts. Hamburg has also placed strong emphasis, like Gothenburg, on the ground floor uses of buildings and facilities in the waterfront emphasising public related uses not just retail to include things like social services, child care, libraries and of course cultural space and public space.

Lisbon
The development of the Lisbon waterfront is proceeding through the large scale development of some major sites. There are some small plots that are allocated for affordable housing and the sites are allocated between freehold 20% versus affordable leaseholds at 80%. So, there is an attempt in Lisbon South to achieve some of the affordability agenda but large parts of the Lisbon waterfront will be privately owned and because there are difference municipalities developing the waterfront there is a need to have similar approaches across the different municipal boarders to avoid market distortion.

Tallinn
In Tallinn there is a desire to open up the waterfront to a wider range of people and this is being attended to through future planning, there is concern that so far little has been achieved in this space.

3. Future topics for Waterfront Events

[redacted] offered to provide a short list of ideas for future waterfront development, seminars, conferences and workshops and that list is as follows:

- Affordable Housing
- Smart Waterfronts
- Responding to Climate Change
- Reclaiming Land from the Water
- Jobs on the Waterfront
- Public Space and Waterfronts
- Arenas/Stadia on the Waterfronts
- Sea Level rises and Waterfront resilience
- Development of very large and/or very complex sites
- Branding the Waterfront
- Animating the Waterfront
- Skills for Water working
- Governing the Waterfront
- Long Term financing and maintenance of Waterfront Assets
- Relationship between Waterfronts and other Urban Centres, especially City Centres
- Multi- Jurisdictional Waterfronts (Waterfronts that span several municipalities)

4. Next steps

Liverpool proposed to make plans for activities at EXPO Real 2019 and will advise of the intended program for that soonest.

For MIPIM 2019 we have held events on both the Hamburg and Gdynia stands and notes /presentations from those sessions are attached.

It was generally agreed that these had a limited success factor re attendees and that we should therefore in 2020 look to:

- Hold a plenary event in the Palais – [redacted] will progress
- Look to hold at least two on stand events but to look to promote them better
- Hold our closed session event
- Any further ideas welcomed

We all collectively agreed that each city holds and plans a number of different waterfront related events each year and that it would be good to build up a better understanding of when these events are taking place so that individual cities have the opportunity to potentially participate in those or attend.

If Cities can forward any details to [redacted], he will develop a calendar to be distributed to all partners.

Liverpool City was thanks for convening the meeting.