



Local Action Plan

URBACT REPAIR Karlskrona, Sweden



The Local Action Plan (LAP) Karlskrona December 2010

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SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE OF LAP

1. Scope and Objective of LAP

The overall goal with the development of the Blå Port (Blue gate) area is to include and link it to the development zone that is defined in the master plan of Karlskrona. This zone should be handled as an integrated planning development of the area between the City centre and the University area at Gräsvik, which covers a distance of approx. 2 kilometers. Blå Port, situated in the middle of this development zone, is an important and strategic regeneration project to fulfil this goal.

Thus, the work of the Local Support Group has an obvious focus on the Four Pillars of the REPAIR project. However, at the time when the Repair project started, the legally regulated process of planning the Blå Port area was already going on. This meant that most of the participants in the ULSG had already formulated their requirements of the transformation in more general terms in advance.

The development area of Blå Port has a private owner, SKANSKA, an international construction company. The immediate neighbours are the municipal and private schools, with whom they already have a successful co-operation. All future development will take place if it can be based on a market economy.

TelecomCity located in Karlskrona is what would be referred to as a “hot spot” within the IT and telecom industry. It was here where Europolitan was founded, one of the first and subsequently largest mobile operators and an important contributor to the development of the Swedish mobile market. Today the TelecomCity network consists of a number of leading companies, e.g. Ericsson and Telenor, among others, as well as a variety of innovative product and service companies. The network also includes the Municipality of Karlskrona and Blekinge Institute of Technology, profiled in applied IT and sustainable development. Since the mid-90s, the companies within TelecomCity have been developing products, services and solutions that make businesses more effective and simplify every day life.

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And the knowledge-intensive segment of the market has created work for local people in every sector of the labour market.

These are the four main actions within the network:

"Boost the cooperation"

Within Telecom City we constantly work to find and seize opportunities for synergies and new business. Collaboration means lots of advantages. Everything from effectively sharing costs and resources to finding innovative collaborations and opportunities for development of business. An important part of our work is to take advantage of the innovative process as in the meeting between higher education and entrepreneurial skills. New companies are constantly born within our incubator activities.

"Create meetings with big companies and get them to the area"

Telecom City is growing all the time and an important part of our work is to open up and facilitate the establishment of new enterprises.

"Sharing the knowledge"

Another important part of our work is to create meetings between people. An example of this is that our members can participate in forums with focus on different issues; we participate in national and international events and fairs, and take good care of both national and international guests that visit us. Each year we arrange "Catwalk" - an international business event with a focus on mobile business - where the industry connects with its customers' current topics and future trends. At Catwalk, customers are also awarded for their initiatives and performance within mobile services at the "Cut the Wire Awards" ceremony.

"Take the role of a strong player"

Naturally, we want to tell everyone about all the interesting things that happen within our network. That is why information and marketing in many ways is an important task for us. When a specific topic involves the network as a whole we manage to reach out wider with joined resources.

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CITY PROFILE

2. City Profile

History

Karlskrona was founded in 1680 as a model city for the main naval base of Sweden. It meant that most of the navy fleet moved from Stockholm to the Denmark conquered province of Blekinge.

The dominance of the State was for centuries a fact until democracy and industrialisation made local political management legal and possible.

The employment continued mainly in the public sector, the naval base and shipyard being the greatest employers. In time mechanical industry and the modern welfare state created most of the jobs. The population grew fast, and from the 1960-ties the city was no longer a closed area for foreigners.

Historically, wartime and peacetime have been regulators for the local economy, but for the last 15 years the number of citizens has been growing slowly. Today we have passed 64 000 inhabitants, in the urban area 35 400. During these last decades, the city management has been focused on the transformation of the job sector, represented by the network of Telecom City and a growing tourist sector. Karlskrona was included in the World Heritage List by UNESCO in 1998.

The urban area of Karlskrona is spread over 33 former islands, today connected by bridges and land filling. It is both complicated and expensive to build and maintain such an urban infrastructure.

The regeneration of military buildings and sites has so far naturally been focused on central and relatively small land areas. Now time has come to include more distant and larger land areas into the urban life. Presently Karlskrona has four former military sites that are under a planning and transformation process to become new functions for the city. They are from centre to periphery: Blå Port

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Barracks, Gräsvik Barracks, Rosenholm Peninsula and Rosenholm Barracks and Training Camp. In this URBACT project, we have been focus on the situation for Blå Port Barracks. Blå Port (Blue Port=Opening) is located just outside the city centre, 2km from the Great Square.

The Barrack area is the site of the former Engineer Regiment, later it hosted the Coastal Artillery. Now it has been sold by the state and the new private owner is SKANSKA Ltd. The area is bordered by heavy infrastructure; the highway in east and the railway in west. Consequently, it has been somewhat isolated from the urban context; a school is the neighbour in the north, connected by a walking-bridge to housing areas in the west. In the south small shops and businesses are the neighbours.

The location itself is very attractive regarding its position between the university and the city centre. It will certainly help to focus on a sustainable goal for transformation and future land use.

The location fits into the strategy of developing the built area between the university and city centre complementing the university campus. This means that regeneration and transformation projects are promoted by the university, municipality and job sector (triple helix approach). SKANSKA has named the project Campus Blå Port to emphasize this fact in their marketing.

The challenge is to make the area an integrated part of the city, as well as this it will serve as a development area for the future job, education and housing sector and to serve as a natural link between the centre and the periphery.

Demography

Since Karlskrona was founded, being so totally dominated by the military and the shipyard the structural changes have been huge and difficult. The unemployment was very high and the city was suffering from declining in almost all sectors. In the nineties there were some very strategic decions made to focus on something new. The university was founded and a close cooperation between the municipality the companies and the academia started Triple Helix.

Karlskrona is growing and in 2010 we passed 64 000 inhabitants which is an "all time high". The unemployment is at 4% in Karlskrona and 6% in the neighbouring region. The national average is 4%. The average yearly income for citizens of Karlskrona is 268,000 SEK. The national average is 272,000 SEK.

Since the start of TelecomCity in 1993, there have been many affects on the City of Karlskrona. Today Karlskrona has about 150 IT & Telecom Companies, with the highest concentration of employees in IT in Sweden.

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The number of people with a university degree has doubled, and the growth of the relative tax income is the highest in Sweden. Karlskrona became the "Growth City of the year" in 2002.

Policy context

The national Planning and Building Act promotes transparency of the processes. It also defines a clear division of the local and state roles in the process. The national Environmental Act states an important parallel process of land use regulations. What is characteristic for the Swedish system is that most decisions are made locally.

The municipality has a strong position in the Swedish administrative system. It is based on the right to local taxation and a legal framework that regulates its independence. In planning matters it has a monopoly, and the state can only intervene when national interests or health is threatened.

The regional state authority is responsible for monitoring and taking position on state interests in the local planning activities. It is most obvious in the comprehensive level, where the regional authority coordinates all state bodies and its interests.

The managing body TILLVÄXTVERKET has its focus on economic development and infrastructure on a national level. It has a minor role for guiding the regional authorities in economic matters. Independent bodies that are loosely connected to their ministries represent the national level. It means that the political impact is mostly a yearly event expressed by budget instructions.

The State has decided to focus on 15 national goals for improvement of the environment. One of them concerns the building environment where sustainability is an obvious element. These national goals are broken down to regional goals as well as local on city level.

The comprehensive plan is the way strategies are implemented in the planning system. This implies a revision every four-years, being the political strategy for spatial planning in the municipality.

There is a significant regeneration programme for the inner city since the impact of heritage matters is significant. But in the suburban areas the planning is related to state initiatives and state subsidies for regeneration of specific areas.

Urban challenges

The main focus for city development is:

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- To build in harmony with the world heritage status
- To find possibilities to meet the demand for central location
- To overcome the sprawl of the urban area
- To use existing infrastructure in a efficient way

The comprehensive plan is the tool for implementing the pillars mentioned above and it is by law compulsory to present an environmental impact assessment for every planning task. This has stimulated the interest and awareness of public debate.

But the changes in economic preconditions are always affecting the possibilities to a certain extent.

The challenge is to make the area an integrated part of the city, as well as to serve as a development area for the future job, education and housing sector and to serve as a natural link between the centre and the periphery.

Other challenges are:

- The density of the project in connection to the diversity in land use
- Traffic noise
- The necessity to create improved infrastructural connections to the neighbouring areas

Positive aspects of the project are the efficient public transport system and its location in the area, with excellent bus, biking and walking connections. Blå Port is located 1 km from Karlskrona Central Railway Station, and 1 km from Bergåsa Railway Station in the north.

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LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP (ULSG)

3. The Local Support Group

The ULSG has hold representatives from the following stakeholders:

- Head of Planning department of the Municipality
- Environmental strategist of the Municipality
- SKANSKA, property owner
- Headmaster of the neighbouring school
- Student from Blekinge Institute of Technology
- Waste management and Energy Company, owned by the Municipality
- Regional Transport Company

As described above, the stakeholders have, together with an enlarged group, been invited to direct their opinions to the political authorities during the public consultations in the planning process. The ULSG has met three times and also participated in preparing the workshop in February 2010 on Pillar IV in Karlskrona.

Since the ULSG has delivered their essential opinions on the transformation in advance, the actual work within the REPAIR project has focused on how to fulfil the objectives of the development plan technically, and in a sustainable way. The main problems as described in the consultation report of the planning process, are the noise from road, railway traffic and heritage management in connection with the regeneration of existing buildings. Both questions are raised by the regional government authorities, but are mostly a joint mission to solve for the property owner and the municipal authorities.

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EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND BEST PRACTICES

4. Exchange of Knowledge and Best Practices

Regarding the contribution to our Local Action Plan, we have greatly focused on the how to adapt the result from partners from the 4 Pillars on our situation. As described above, our remaining problems from the planning stage are noise disturbances and heritage matters. The former is not much recognized by other partners, but the latter is indeed a crucial matter for many REPAIR partners.

In this field of transformation, we have specifically taken into consideration how Medway and Chatham Historical Dockyard have dealt with their heritage and valuable buildings during the regeneration, both regarding technical, asthetical and functional solutions. The resulting mixed-use area is what we are aiming at to attain for Blå Port in Karlskrona as well. In our case the heritage discussion is also related to the fact that the site is included in the buffer zone of World Heritage.

One major problem discussed by the ULSG in Karlskrona is the isolated situation that characterises the area of Blå Port, regardless of its central position in the urban context. Especially problematic is the fact that several elementary and nursery schools are located there. In order to change this deficiency, we have acknowledged much of the work done by New Dutch Waterfront in the field of transport and accessibility to sites.

During the REPAIR project work, the partners have spent some time to discuss the significance of intangible heritage related to some actual subjects. We have in this field met a good example of how to deal with difficult memories and recent history in Rostock. Even if it seems a controversial act to prevent physical heritage, we are moved by the subtle and pedagogical way it is performed in Rostock. Although we have not experienced a dramatic history the last centuries as many of our partners have done, Blå Port, situated close to schools, should have a good opportunity and reason to develop also the intangible heritage of the area reflecting our circumstances.

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KEY ACTIONS

5. Key Actions

The key actions for implementation and realisation of the Blå Port area are described in the consultation report dismissed by the Municipality. The LSG has not found any reason to discuss any change in the directed main goals for the new development plan. The work of the LSG has instead focused on some missing elements of the plan, for instance how to further improve the accessibility to the area. We have also found that the waste and energy management could be better handled in a more sustainable way in the realisation process.

SKANSKA and Karlskrona Municipality has decided to complete the integration and transformation of the site within 15 years. It seems a long time but holds a good margin. Since there are already on-going activities, some interests are directed to them as shown in the consultation report. Two important functions should be emphasised.

Firstly, the obvious concern for the schools. There are both public and private schools located to the site, and they have a need to expand. The good relations with the landowner will be valuable for these actions. There is also a private nursery school located to the site. The Municipality has proposed that it would like to place a second unit there. The improvement of transport and accessibility will be stressed in connection to the expansion of these functions.

Secondly, neighbouring the site is a large workout studio. It belongs to a successful and nationally widespread commercial chain. It is a very valuable partner in the regeneration and integration process of the area. The studio has announced two problems during the consultations. It has an immediate need to expand, and it is deeply concerned by insufficient transport and access to their site. To solve both this questions, the Municipality has the key role, but it will also be of great importance for the general development of the area.

At last, we would like to comment on the heritage situation. Several stakeholders, both public authorities and private associations, have presented severe remarks on the fact that the plan allows a high-raised building on the site that would damage the heritage. Other stakeholders are not happy about the fact, but emphasise that brilliant architecture could lessen the impact. The

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Municipality has taken the same position, and we are looking forward to a widely discussed step during the implementation process of Blå Port.

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FINANCIAL RESOURCES

6. Financial Resources

The costs for the Municipality for the detailed development plan amounts to SEK 223 000 (EUR 21 000). This does not include the costs that SKANSKA as property owner has had for special investigations and architectural designs sketches in connection with the planning process.

From now on traditionally all costs will be purchased by the individual stakeholder.

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Annex

SWOT Analysis

Annex: SWOT analysis

	Positive	Negative
Internal factors	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	Urban location	Isolated position
	Strong developer	Noise disturbance
	Strong municipal back-up	Limited area
	Interesting buildings	
	Partners on place	
External factors	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	Fit in to urban strategy for mixed use area	Heritage and design restrictions
	The growing university that means need for new jobs and housing	Bad economic times
	Improved transport facilities	Building costs
	Improved accessibility	Existing access