



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	B-Team – Feedback Belfast Brownfield Days - recommendations
<b>Date:</b>	16 October 2012
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Belfast City Council is the Lead Partner in the ERDF funded INTERREG IVC project B-Team. The B-Team project brings together specialists in Brownfield regeneration from different countries to exchange knowledge contributing to improved developments and enhanced regional policies focussing on the resolution of practical challenges on case study sites in the partners' countries.
1.2	The partners include Dublin (Ireland), Sevilla (Spain), Oulu (Finland), Dresden (Germany), Ruda Slaska (Poland), Hajdu-Bihar (Hungary), Torino (Italy) and Vilnius (Lithuania).
1.3	The support and exchange of technical knowledge takes place during "Brownfield Days" events with the experience and practical approaches discussed and disseminated to a broader public at European Dissemination Events. The last of these events will be the final conference that will take place 7 – 8 November 2012 in Sevilla/Spain.
1.4	The Brownfield Days in Belfast took place 10 – 13 September 2012 and were attended by representatives of the partner cities, BCC officers and elected members as well as representatives of other organisations such as InvestNI, BCCM and DSD.

<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>As previously outlined the Brownfield Days (BDs) are focussed on the progression of work on case study examples/Brownfield sites with specific issues or challenges. The sites form the basis of examination and discussion with the European partners.</p> <p>In advance of the BDs for Belfast the Council has worked with the partners to identify the main issue in the redevelopment of Brownfields and assemble an information pack</p>

	describing the local issues/regional context. This profile was studied by each participant in advance of their BDs participation.
2.2	<p>Based on consideration of the priorities in the Investment Programme, wider Brownfield challenges and discussion with the European partners three topics/sites were identified for exploration during the Brownfield Days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Topic 1</u>: Tackling city centre Brownfields and bring back life in vacant spaces (vacant city centre sites)</li> <li>- <u>Topic 2</u>: Stimulating socio-economic activities in former industrial areas while involving surrounding communities (Springvale / Forth River)</li> <li>- <u>Topic 3</u>: Dealing with constraints issues and balancing site aspiration (environmental, market value, planning, community) (Northern Fringe / Gasworks)</li> </ul>
2.3	The BDs in Belfast presented the opportunity for the Council to benefit from the expertise of the other European partners in the field of Brownfield regeneration and to work towards innovative solutions for problematic Brownfield sites. At the last day of the BD there was a feedback session about the findings of the workshop days to which Members were invited
2.4	The policy recommendations, where possible, should be adopted and implemented to change or influence the planning processes of the host partner through the signing of a "Brownfield Pledge" (BP). This pledge would seek to commit the partner to improvements regarding their policies or approach to future activity. Following approval of a pledge for Belfast the Council will receive a further €15,000 European funding to support the initiation of a specific action or the changes suggested thereby progressing the regeneration of a case study site. The resources can be used for a study, the organisation of an event, consultations, direct works or similar activity related to the case studies.
2.5	<p>In broad terms the B-Team partners, through their initial feedback, recommended the following strategies:</p> <p>Group 1 City Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City Council leadership- active participant in driving change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban living –mixed use, new communities</li> <li>• Bringing the vacant space to the potential user</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Incentives to attract desirable uses (rate-rebates)</li> <li>- Use flexible lease agreements and more flexible planning policy at the micro scale to reduce vacancy e.g. Market traders and start up businesses</li> <li>- Macro retail policy in order to protect City Centre.</li> <li>- Review of parking policy city wide to make land available for other uses where possible.</li> <li>- Identification and management of the brownfields throughout the city centre through strategy or policy</li> <li>- Branding and communication to promote sites.</li> </ul>
2.6	<p>Group 2 Springvale /Forth River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership and the need to consider the site as a whole</li> <li>- Engagement &amp; participation</li> <li>- Active, inclusive and open principles for development</li> <li>- Synergies and mixed use</li> <li>- Focus on the provision of investment &amp; employment opportunities</li> <li>- Consideration of branding &amp; communications to give the site a local identity</li> <li>- Increased opportunity for connectivity into and through the site</li> </ul>

2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The potential for social clauses so secure local benefit</li> </ul> <p>Group 3 Northern Fringe Gasworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to focus on defined community needs (not only wants)</li> <li>- Integrate environmental issues with land use planning early in the process</li> <li>- Clear and ongoing communication with all interested parties in relation to the risks and the potential</li> <li>- Education of developer(s) around the potential for development on more challenging sites</li> <li>- Potential for international architectural design competition to drive innovation</li> </ul>
2.8	<p>These recommendations together with the site specific proposals will be drafted together in the Brownfield Pledge – the commitment of the Council to improve its procedures. Following more detailed feedback from the Partners this Brownfield Pledge will be brought back to Committee for approval.</p>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p>There are no additional resource implications arising from the EU funded INTERREG IVC initiative. Following approval of the pledge the Council will receive a further €15,000 to support the initiation of a specific action or change suggested to progress the regeneration of a case study site.</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	<p>There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.</p>

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- note the recommendations from the B-Team partners following the Brownfield Days in Belfast and opportunity to use European expertise to address the challenges in Belfast;</li> </ul>

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>There is no decision tracking attached to this report.</p>	

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
<p>ERDF – European Regional Development Fund          BDs – Brownfield Days          BP – Brownfield Pledge</p>	