

**Preface by Sir Reg Empey MLA
Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment, and**

**Nigel Dodds MLA, MP
Minister for Social Development**

Introduction

At the publication of the West Belfast Task Forces' Report on 4 March 2002 we recognised that much work had been undertaken to deliver a comprehensive document reflecting views of the local people about the issues and difficulties affecting them. At the event we undertook to consult with Ministerial colleagues to ensure a coordinated Government response to the Report's recommendations.

The Initial Response

There has been much to consider in a relatively short time but we believe this response reflects Departments' commitment to continue the strong, meaningful partnerships forged between business, the community and Government during the Task Force process.

In the time available it was not possible to deal with every recommendation in the Task Forces' Report. We have however, focused on the main issues, and structures to support their implementation. We see this response as the first stage in the implementation process - further work is required in the coming months between Government and the communities to prioritise tasks and set a timetable for initial actions.

The timing and detail of Departmental responses to the recommendations vary, reflecting the need for further policy consideration, ongoing discussions with local community and economic groups, and time to fully assess financial implications or secure additional resources. The implementation of the West Belfast Task Forces' recommendation will be further informed by the Belfast Regeneration Office's strategy for stimulating the social and economic regeneration of the most disadvantaged areas

of Belfast through a neighbourhood renewal programme and the publication in September of the Employability Task Force's Report.

Activity Underway

Ministers recognise the importance of maintaining the momentum achieved to date as we continue to address the recommendations. An Inter-Departmental Group has been established not only to help prepare this response but also to ensure continued close liaison with local community and economic development groups and other key stakeholders who participated in Task Forces process.

We are particularly pleased to acknowledge strong private sector engagement in the process. This includes work underway by a number of companies to form an Employers Forum and Bombardier's initiative to work with local training providers to encourage people to train for, and consider, a range of employment opportunities. It is important that those most disadvantaged, or who have been unemployed for a long time are offered help and guidance so they may share in future employment opportunities.

Work continues on the remodelling of the former Mackie site which, with the proposed Springvale Educational Village, offers a unique opportunity to support enterprise development, neighbourhood regeneration and the attraction of inward investment. It will also provide much needed inner city space for local companies wishing to expand operations. Work is underway between local communities and Government to market these and other Invest NI sites at Springbank, Whiterock and Glenbank to encourage further business growth and investment.

In moving forward we will need to identify, and determine the best use for, any additional sites that become available for redevelopment to ensure that people in the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas can benefit from the social or economic opportunities to be created from their development. It is important to continue to encourage people to consider opportunities available in the wider Belfast area.

While most of the Task Forces' recommendations focus on economic issues, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has drawn attention to the fact that many of the objectives complement,

or are supported by, those in the Investing for Health strategy published last March.

We will continue, together with Ministerial colleagues, to take a close personal interest as the initiative develops and will look forward to receiving reports from the stakeholder groups and Departments on progress towards achieving agreed actions.

Sir Reg Empey MLA
Minister of Enterprise Trade
& Investment

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to thank those who participated in the process to date, and for their continuing contribution as the implementation phase unfolds to bring about the results we all desire for the area.

Nigel Dodds MLA, MP
Minister for Social Development

28 June 2002

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Requiring Further Consideration

Report Section:	Getting People Into Employment	Lead Responsibility: DSD
Recommendations:	Removing the disincentive effects of the social security system to encourage the unemployed to take up employment opportunities. Add-on arrangements and benefit retention for the unemployed entering work are suggested to counter these effects. (page 33, Summary Report)	Support: DEL
Comment		Resource Implications:
<p>The Government has various initiatives underway which will address the benefits trap issue. The measures listed below, promise to be more effective than, and avoid some of the problems associated with, add-on arrangements and benefits retention. These initiatives will maintain the 'parity principle', which ensures that people in Northern Ireland have access to the same range of social security benefits paid at the same rates as individuals living in Great Britain.</p> <p>Work Underway</p> <p>The various Welfare to Work initiatives, including the New Deal schemes, the National Minimum Wage, the National Childcare Strategy and the Working Family Tax Credit, are all part of a framework which is seeking to address this issue, to ensure employment is more financially beneficial than being unemployed.</p> <p>The Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit will be introduced in April 2003 replacing existing tax credit schemes, increasing the welfare coverage over disadvantaged groups and encouraging people into work. The Government's Welfare Reform and Modernising Programme has introduced a new integrated job brokering and benefits service, which should improve customer services.</p>		<p>The costs of breaking the parity principle to introduce a scheme of this type would be substantial. Since funding for additional benefits would need to be met from existing Northern Ireland resources.</p>

Report Section: Getting People Into Employment	Lead Responsibility: DSD
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Comment	Resource Implications:
<p>The fear many people on benefits feel about leaving the ‘safety’ of the social security system and entering work is recognised by Government. Work underway to address these fears include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Readiness Help-Job Clubs, Work Track, Bridge-To-Employment and New Deal. • Financial help when seeking work – Working Families, ‘Disabled Person’s and 30 Hour Tax Credits, Child Maintenance Bonus, childcare subsidies, Housing Benefit Extended Payment, (Job Grant), Lone Parent’s Benefit Run On, Mortgage Run On, (Back to Work Bonus) and Travel to Interview Scheme. <p>The Government’s Welfare Reform and Modernising Programme has introduced a new joined up job brokering service, with staff from the Job Centres and Social Security Agency working together to deliver an enhanced and more integrated service in new Jobs and Benefits Offices.</p>	

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Requiring Further Consideration

<p>Report Section: Creating Jobs</p>	<p>Lead Responsibility: DCAL</p>
<p>Recommendations: The establishment of a Gaeltacht Quarter Development Board, to develop cultural based enterprises. (page 28, Summary Report)</p>	<p>Support: DETI, NITB, DEL, Invest NI</p>
<p>Comment</p> <p>DCAL has the lead policy role in advising and supporting Departments, Agencies and Stakeholder Groups to encourage activity which will promote tolerance, respect and understanding for linguistic diversity and action to promote regional languages, including Irish, in order to safeguard them. Responsibility for operational or project activity will rest with a range of Departments. DCAL does have a role to encourage minority language projects as an aspect of community cultural development, particularly with the most socially and economically disadvantaged people. Further discussion is required between Departments and Stakeholder Groups on how this sector can be further developed.</p> <p>Work Underway</p> <p>DCAL in conjunction with DEL is considering the opportunities for third level Irish medium based training.</p> <p>DEL is examining the issue of post 16 Irish Language based vocational training. A research project has recently been completed and further consultation with Irish language interest Groups is underway.</p> <p>In 2001 DEL also agreed to fund, on a pilot basis, a vocational programme through the medium of Irish delivered by Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education in co-operation with Forbairt Feirste. The programme consisted of Irish to A level standard, ICT and childcare. The Department is currently considering a request for an extension to the duration of this pilot programme.</p>	<p>Resource Implications:</p> <p>It is too early to ascertain future funding requirements for the development of the Irish language and cultural sector.</p> <p>Invest NI will, within current enterprise activity, consider support for programmes which generate viable businesses offering added value activity in this sector.</p>

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Implementation Bodies		Lead Responsibility: Employers
Recommendations: The establishment of an Employers Forum comprising employers from the Greater Shankill, West Belfast and wider city area to work with the Employment Services Board to overcome traditional barriers to recruitment. (page 22, Summary Report)		Support: DEL Invest NI Business in the Community
Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>A number of large employers and some former Task Force members met in early June to discuss the formation of an Employers Forum.</p> <p>Bombardier has, in conjunction with Springvale Training and Impact Training, launched a training initiative for 16 young adults to undertake a 3-year NVQ engineering course.</p>	<p>Employers plan to hold a further meeting inviting a range of businesses and public organisations to consider the formal establishment of the group, agree its remit, structure and prioritise actions against the Report's recommendations.</p> <p>Bombardier is proposing in conjunction with Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education and the Engineering Training Council to launch a 3-6 month pre-employment foundation engineering skills course to improve the local engineering skills base. Early discussions are also underway with local training providers for an 'Essential Skills' pre-employment course.</p>	<p>Following the establishment of the Employers Forum companies will consider how they might resource the body.</p> <p>The Bombardier Aerospace Foundation is providing substantial resources for the pre-employment foundation engineering skills course.</p>

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Implementation Bodies	Lead Responsibility: DEL
Recommendations: The establishment of an Employment Services Board to liaise with Employers and create a framework to encourage people to be better prepared for available jobs, with a particular focus on the skills requirements of business and distinctive issues facing specific unemployed groups. The Board will oversee the work of the proposed Job Assist Centres. (page 22, Summary Report)	Support: DE Employers Forum
Activities In Support Of Recommendations	
<p align="center">Underway</p>	<p align="center">Planned</p>
Resource Implications:	

<p>A pilot Labour Market Intermediary (similar to that proposed in respect of the recommended Job Assist Centres) is already in place in West Belfast.</p>	<p>DEL will work with local interests to develop in more detail, how best all organisations and employers involved in delivering employability measures can offer structured expert advice to the Minister based on their sound knowledge. This work will be taken forward within the context of the Employability Task Force’s Report.</p> <p>The Equality Commission will provide advice and guidance which companies, with an under representation of one community, can take to address chill factors.</p> <p>The Equality Commission will also be available to provide support through the proposed Employment Services Board or other appropriate mechanisms.</p>	<p>DEL will have to quantify and bid for additional resources.</p>
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GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES’ RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Implementation Bodies	Lead Responsibility: DSD, DETI,
Recommendations:	The establishment of an Oversight Commission comprising representatives of both Task Forces to monitor and report to Ministers on progress towards implementation of the recommendations. (page 35, Summary Report)	Support: DEL

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	

<p>Government recognises the interests of the communities covered by the report in monitoring progress on the implementation of the recommendations.</p> <p>To that end it wishes to establish a non executive body including representation from the West Belfast Partnerships, employers and Local Enterprise Agencies</p>	<p>Ministers will consider who they might invite to be chair of the group.</p> <p>The group will monitor the implementation process and report progress to Ministers every 6 months.</p> <p>The arrangements will include ongoing liaison with the Inter-Departmental Group and the Employers Forum.</p> <p>The arrangements will be reviewed after 3 years.</p>	
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GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Implementation Bodies	Lead Responsibility: DETI
Recommendations:	The creation of an Inter-Departmental Group to consider the Report's recommendations and to work with other stakeholder groups to deliver agreed actions within established time frames. (page 36, Summary Report)	Support: Relevant Departments

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>An Inter-Departmental Group has been formed to prepare Government's initial response to the Task Forces' recommendations.</p> <p>DETI co-ordinates this work and chairs the group.</p>	<p>The Group will continue to consider and develop the Government's response to the recommendations.</p> <p>It will work with the proposed oversight arrangements, Employment Services Board, Employers Forum and Enterprise Council to establish priorities and agree a timetable for actions to implement recommendations.</p>	<p>DETI will provide staff resources to undertake the inter-departmental co-ordination role.</p>

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Creating Jobs		Lead Responsibility: InvestNI, Local Enterprise Agencies (LEA's)
Recommendations: A reinvigorated enterprise awareness campaign to be launched and Local Enterprise Agencies encouraged to play an active role, to be supported by their role in the proposed Enterprise Council. (page 23, Summary Report)		Support: Enterprise Council Belfast City Council
Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	Further consideration is required to cost and decide how these activities will be funded. It is proposed that they will complement actions already planned within existing financial provision.
<p>Invest NI is working with local economic development organisations in conjunction with Belfast City Council to ensure appropriate support and advice is available to smaller companies at a local level.</p> <p>Invest NI is in discussion with LEA's to expand their current role to further enhance enterprise promotion and to seek their support to establish an Enterprise Council.</p>	<p>Invest NI will meet with LEA's in July to discuss a strategy to encourage enterprise in West Belfast and the Greater Shankill areas, paying particular attention to how enterprise programmes can be provided within communities, to meet the needs of specific disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Training programmes will also be developed for schools, colleges and communities to promote more awareness of enterprise. Some will be delivered by Invest Northern Ireland and others sub-contracted to local providers.</p> <p>These activities will be undertaken in conjunction with the proposed Enterprise Council which will include representatives from the LEA's</p>	

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Creating Jobs	Lead Responsibility: Invest NI
Recommendations:	Regeneration of ex-Mackie site to attract new investment prospects and provide flexible accommodation from incubator space to larger units for existing companies wishing to expand. (page 33, Summary Report)	Support: DSD SEV Enterprise Council

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>Invest NI is working in conjunction with DSD, DOE Planning Service, Belfast City Council and local representatives to develop the site in a way which will maximise employment opportunities for local communities.</p> <p>Work is underway to identify existing businesses with potential expansion requirements.</p> <p>Invest NI is working with LEA's through its local office network in the Greater Shankill and West Belfast to ensure an adequate supply of suitable buildings of an agreed type and size will be available on terms appropriate to the stage of a businesses type cycle.</p>	<p>Invest NI key tasks for the ex-Mackie site in the current financial year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An option appraisal/economic appraisal to be developed for the remodelling of the ex-Mackie site and identify private sector involvement. • Demolition of some older buildings. • Planning application for initial infrastructure works to be followed by an outline planning application for the conceptual masterplan. • Design and tendering for initial phases of infrastructure and building construction. • Working with key local stakeholders to promote the site to potential investors. • Keep local communities apprised of developments. 	<p>In the current financial year Invest NI has funding for early development in the form of demolition and partial site clearance together, with planning and design work on the proposed development of the whole site.</p> <p>InvestNI is considering how it can involve the private sector and other partners, to share in the total costs for the conceptual masterplan.</p>

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Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
Some of the land required for the proposed Forthriver Linear Park is owned by BRO. A feasibility study on the potential for the proposed Linear Park is currently underway.	BRO as one of the local landowners is working with Springvale Educational Village and Invest NI to ensure appropriate land is available to facilitate linkages between the business park and proposed educational village.	

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Intermediate Labour Markets & the Social Economy	Lead Responsibility: Social Economy – DETI Intermediate Labour Markets – DEL
Recommendations:	Social economy projects and intermediate labour market initiatives to be considered to help prepare people for work, create employment opportunities and provide services in the community. (page 24, Summary Report)	Support: BRO

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>An Inter-Departmental Steering Group led by DETI has been established. Its first priority is to establish a Social Economy Network to represent the Sector.</p> <p>Invest NI has launched a Community Business Start-Up Programme for local community and voluntary organisations providing services which benefit residents in areas designated for New Targeting Social Need.</p>	<p>Representatives from the Steering Group and the proposed Social Economy Network will form a Social Economy Forum to be chaired by the DETI Minister to develop policies and actions to harness the potential of the sector to the benefit of the NI economy.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Forum is planned to take place in the Autumn.</p> <p>DEL will consider the Task Forces' recommendations in light of the Employability Task Force Report due in the Autumn.</p>	<p>Additional resources will be required for Intermediate Labour Market initiatives (Job Assist Centres).</p> <p>Invest NI will consider support for community based projects that can demonstrate longer-term viability.</p> <p>Invest NI will discuss with the Belfast Local Strategic Partnership Board how it might support the development of social economy projects.</p>

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Education and Training	Lead Responsibility: DEL
Recommendations:	A clear role and timetable to be agreed for the development of the Springvale Campus taking account of the educational and vocational training needs of the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas. (page 25, Summary Report)	Support: Springvale Educational Village Invest NI BRO

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>The Millennium Community Outreach Centre costing £4m has recently opened on the Southern Campus.</p> <p>The Springvale Education Village is actively seeking funding for a range of programmes supporting a number of the Report's recommendations.</p>	<p>DEL agrees in principle that facilities for further and higher education in the area need to be accessible and linked to proposed developments for the Springvale Educational Village. DEL is considering how they may be progressed.</p>	<p>Increasing accessibility to further and higher education (including proposals for SEV) will have funding implications which are currently being considered.</p>

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Education and Training		Lead Responsibility: DE
Recommendations: Primary and Secondary Schools should develop the curriculum to improve motivation, achievement (to raise literacy and numeracy levels) and prepare young people with relevant practical skills required by employers. (pages 25& 26, Summary Report)		Support: DEL Employers Business In The Community
Activities in Support of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>DEL's Essential Skills strategy is intended to help individuals address these impediments to employment.</p> <p>DE's School Support Programme is aimed at helping low achieving schools through the provision of a period of intensive professional and additional financial support for self-improvement measures.</p> <p>Two local post-primary schools received enhanced support from DE's School Support Programme in recognition of the scale of socio-economic and educational disadvantage in the areas they serve.</p>	<p>Belfast Education & Library Board has successfully applied to BRO for three projects aimed at enhancing literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Subject to the availability of additional resources the Department of Education intends to further support the Reading Recovery programme and increase the number of summer literacy and numeracy schemes. It is also seeking to increase the number of schools involved in the Communities in Schools programme, which encourages partnerships between schools and various agencies working in their areas through a holistic approach to deliver services to promote and expand Out of School Hours Learning activities in schools.</p>	<p>DE has made a bid for additional resources which, if successful, will support and expand a range programmes.</p>

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Activities in Support of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
A wide-ranging strategy for the promotion of literacy and numeracy was launched in 1998 including a major programme of in-service support and training for all teachers and a Reading Recovery Programme for pupils struggling with reading. Summer literacy and numeracy schemes are also provided for pupils who have failed to reach acceptable standards.	DE and DEL intend to consult with stakeholders on the independent review of Careers Education and Guidance, which they jointly initiated.	

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Activities in Support of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>The DE Good Practice Initiative provides additional resources to schools demonstrating success to enhance their capacity to achieve further improvements</p> <p>In the 2001/02 school year 9 post-primary schools from the areas are participating in the Flexibility Pilot Scheme allowing schools to offer work-related learning programmes.</p>	<p>The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment proposals for the revised curriculum will be subject to a consultation process to October 2002 and are intended for implementation on a phased basis from September 2004.</p> <p>An independent review body was established to make recommendations for future arrangements for post-primary education. Discussions on how to proceed will follow consideration on the consultation responses on the Review Body's (Burns) Report due by 28 June 2002.</p>	

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Education and Training	Lead Responsibility: Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership
Recommendations: A co-operative partnership is required between schools, training providers and employers to make education more relevant to real life expectations of young people. (page 26, Summary Report)	Support: DE, DEL

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
DEL and DE jointly funded the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership to facilitate a range of activities to improve links between business and education.	Plans for local business/education partnerships for West Belfast are underway to provide valuable links between schools, businesses and the proposed Employers Forum.	DE has bid for additional resources which, if successful, will further support the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership to increase its activity.

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section:	Infrastructure & Planning	Lead Responsibility: DRD/DOE
Recommendations:	A local area Plan is required now to consider land use planning, arterial roads, urban retailing, planning restrictions on the scale of office developments outside the City Centre and the perceived image of West Belfast and Shankill areas. Internal and external transport access to the area should also be considered. (page 23, Summary Report)	Support: DSD DETI Belfast City Council

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) is due for publication in Spring 2003. If recommendations covering the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas are not opposed, they can in theory be adopted.</p> <p>BRO has published its strategy for consultation. Key aims include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage investment and physical regeneration in Belfast • Target resources at areas designated to be in greatest need through a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. 	<p>Recommendations in respect transport access to and from the area will be considered in the context of the evolving Regional Transportation Strategy and the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan as it relates to West Belfast.</p>	

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Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage private sector development through Urban Development Grant based on the principle of economic viability. <p>Belfast City Council is working with NIHE, BRO and the Belfast Area Partnerships on an Arterial Routes initiative. A mapping and analysis exercise has been completed to help prioritise this work.</p>		

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: Infrastructure & Planning Process		Lead Responsibility: DOE/DRD
Recommendations: An arc/zone of enterprise development should be incorporated in the planning framework with defined areas for commercial and industrial development to accommodate new businesses and existing companies wishing to expand. (page 33, Summary Report)		Support: Invest NI BRO
Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	<p>IDB invested £8.3m for site acquisition and development work at Mackie's and Whiterock.</p> <p>InvestNI has committed a further £1.8m for 20,000sq ft of flexible business space in a new building at Glenbank.</p> <p>Invest NI is providing financial assistance to Argyle Business Centre's phase II development proposals.</p>
<p>Invest NI supports the designation of a number of business planning zones in the Belfast region and is working with the BMAP team to identify additional suitable industrial development sites in the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas.</p>	<p>Current Invest NI sites – from Glenbank on the Upper Crumlin Road through the ex-Mackie site, and Whiterock, to Springbank, Poleglass, will be developed in a flexible manner to suit a range of client requirements.</p>	

Report Section:	Infrastructure & Planning Process	Lead Responsibility: DOE/DRD
Recommendations:	An arc/zone of enterprise development should be incorporated in the planning framework with defined areas for commercial and industrial development to accommodate new businesses and existing companies wishing to expand. (page 33, Summary Report)	Support: Invest NI BRO

Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
<p>Invest NI's work with existing workspace providers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposal for the expansion of Argyle Business Centre, supported by Invest NI, is currently being considered for funding by BRO. • Discussions underway with Townsend Enterprise Park and WorkWest about expansion of workspace. <p>Focus group discussions are continuing with small indigenous firms in the West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas to identify mechanisms how best to support the development of owner occupations and business expansions.</p>	<p>In addition to the work at the ex-Mackie site Invest NI will work with Local Enterprise Agencies in the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas to facilitate recommendations for the provision of business space of between 2,000-10,000 sq ft.</p> <p>The NIHE has published key findings from the Greater Shankill Housing Study and, the West Belfast Housing Sectoral Study which are currently the subject of public consultation due to end in August. This work will lead to the development of housing strategies for both areas and will impact on future land usage in the area.</p>	

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WEST BELFAST & GREATER SHANKILL TASK FORCES' RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Section: General		Lead Responsibility: West Belfast Partnerships
Recommendations: Imaginative branding of West Belfast as a place in which to work, visit and encourage more inward investment. (page 130 Full Report)		Support: Invest NI, Belfast City Council – industrial marketing Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), Belfast City Council – promoting culture
Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
NITB has carried out strategic work in West Belfast, and contributed to the West Belfast Tourism Strategy and is represented on the Board of Failte Feirste Thair. NITB has advised the Board on branding, sign posting (bi-lingual signage) and the development of the West Belfast Welcome Centre.	NITB will work to support Belfast City Council's cultural tourism strategy, which covers Belfast City including the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas. Invest NI will work with key economic development groups in Greater Shankill and West Belfast to consider how the area can be marketed for new investment.	

Report Section: General		Lead Responsibility: Key Economic Development Groups
Recommendations: Imaginative branding of West Belfast as a place in which to work, visit and encourage more inward investment. (page 130 Full Report)		Support: Invest NI, Belfast City Council – industrial marketing Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), Belfast City Council – promoting culture
Activities In Support Of Recommendations		Resource Implications:
Underway	Planned	
A key priority for DCAL within the Programme for Government is to support Belfast’s bid to be designated European ‘Capital of Culture’ in 2008. This will offer a significant opportunity to change the perception of Belfast throughout Northern Ireland and the wider world. Achieving the title would provide economic, cultural and social benefits to all residents of the City, including the West Belfast and the Greater Shankill areas.		