

North City Business Centre

North City Business Centre is a purpose-built business park located directly on an interface in Duncarin Gardens, North Belfast. The centre aims to incubate small and medium businesses from across the whole of Belfast through its provision of affordable commercial units (varying from office to light industrial), virtual hot desking facilities, conference space and meeting rooms.

The centre also provides bespoke business support as well as a range of house training programmes. These help to professionalise and build the commercial capacity of businesses or organisations that have chosen to lease a unit there. Some of these include social enterprises and large third sector organisations such as NICVA and Groundworks NI.



What support has NBEI provided?

North City approached NBEI with the aim of securing investment to help them expand and make physical changes to their existing location. North City also wanted the proposed changes to 'soften' the interface the site occupies by re-orientating the general layout so that it faced towards instead of away from the adjacent North Queen Street

NBEI provided North City with an investment package which was used to procure a range of technical assistance services that included a **land survey, architectural drawings an economic appraisal and a planning application** (including fee). This support also included the writing of a new **business plan**

A representative from North City also participated in NBEI's digital sales and marketing programme. This allowed the group to explore how it could **improve the quality of its online website and social media platforms** to help market the site to new audiences and potential users that may have been unaware of the centre in the past

How has NBEI support helped and who has benefited so far?

- The technical assistance procured by NBEI was critical in helping the North City Business Centre apply for planning and to make physical changes to their existing site. In April 2018, their application was approved by Belfast City Council and re-development of the site is scheduled to start later in 2018.
- Moving forward this re-development not only has the potential to help incubate and support the growth of more SME's but it will also help to provide more much needed jobs and training opportunities for people living in the North Belfast area and beyond.
- Finally through its engagement with NBEI's digital sales and marketing programme North City have developed the capacity to manage its own online and social media platforms. Not only has this created large savings for the organisation (as previously they hired an external consultant) but it has enabled them to diversify and provide their tenants with a new web building/maintenance support service