

Vitalising Cities through Integrated Spatial Planning: an Example

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that town centres may also be considered as viable and vital neighbourhoods. We examine an EU Interreg project whose aim was explicitly to achieve vital neighbourhoods through integrated spatial planning, showing how the partner small-cities adopted particular strategies for revitalisation, both in their city centres and in residential neighbourhoods. The five partners to the project, all small cities in the North Sea Region, combined social and spatial programmes of physical urban regeneration alongside citizen- participation programmes and combined learning centres, to integrate their approaches to revitalisation. In doing so, they have experimented with different approaches to development, planning and welfare, and developed a set of principles related to integration in spatial planning. The paper will consider the role of the vitalisation project in shaping visions of vital urban life, and the effectiveness of Interreg as a space for policy experimentation.

Key Words: revitalisation, spatial integration