



## SOUTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Markets Development Association  
c/o: Market Community Centre  
1 Market Street  
Belfast  
BT1 3JD

7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Kathleen,

Please find attached our response to the Draft Markets Regeneration Plan consultation. This response has been prepared by the South Belfast Partnership Board, and acknowledges the potential for the Market Regeneration Plan to fit into the wider regeneration plans for inner South Belfast and the city centre. As the regeneration vehicle for South Belfast, we will encourage the Market Development Association to link into existing and emerging plans for neighbouring areas and wider South Belfast to ensure the development of a cohesive and connected city.

The Market sits in a place within the city that has great, yet unharnessed, potential for reconnecting many of its areas. As pointed out in the analysis, the Market is cut off from the city, despite being in the centre of it, by infrastructure and poor planning.

Projects and actions that address this issue will benefit not just the Market area but all of South Belfast and the city as a whole, creating a more cohesive city that connects its neighbourhoods and becomes attractive and easy to navigate, connecting people to work opportunities and services.

South Belfast Partnership Board would like to see the Market become a vibrant and fully integrated neighbourhood in the city that connects with its neighbouring areas and all of South Belfast; One that promotes healthy and creative lives, and attracts people from across the city to interact with and support its initiatives, bringing footfall, business and investment to the area.

We welcome the focus of the projects to challenge and address the infrastructure that currently cuts off the Market from the city, particularly opening up and creating links across the river and the Gasworks. Reinstating Cromac Street as a busy high street will be key in animating the area and turning it into a more people-focussed place which will provide essential retail and services for the community.

The proposed projects have the potential to create the desired positive change for the neighbourhood and the city, as outlined in the plan. All of the projects have the potential to

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create great impact, but a focus on opening the Market up and reconnecting it to work opportunities and services, and to bring in footfall is set to create a long-term sustainable change. The Tunnels project which has already commenced will without doubt be a great catalyst for change bringing in people from across the city and inspire and attract investment for future projects.

Building on the Tunnels project with its physical links to the North and its proximity to the busy tourist/visitor destination of St George's Market has potential to transform the business environment in the Market, which should be supported and built on. However, it will benefit from easy access, not just from North, but also East, South and West to maximise the use of its services and visitor offer. The animation and revitalisation of Cromas St will be key as a next step, and likewise, the foot and cycle link that is part of the Tunnels project offers a great opportunity and momentum to challenge the barriers South and East across the Gasworks and the Lagan. It is very timely to use a foot and cycle link to do so.

Such a project can also link to the new Transport Hub, and it offers an opportunity for the wider South Belfast community to support the regeneration plan as it brings it together physically and enhances all of South Belfast with active and sustainable access/routes. Public realm and community garden/allotment projects will further enhance and encourage the use of sustainable routes to/from/through the Markets, while at the same time significantly enhancing and improving the lives of the local community.

The Draft Market Regeneration Plan is an ambitious plan that is set to bring pride to its community and the wider South Belfast. It will be exciting to see how it will unfold. South Belfast Partnership Board welcomes the initiative and wishes to support the resourcing of it where and when possible.

We trust that you find these comments useful and look forward to seeing how they help shape the final plan in due course. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the matters raised within this response with the MDA, so please don't hesitate to contact my colleague Sophie Rasmussen on 02890 244 070 or [sophie.rasmussen@southbelfast.org](mailto:sophie.rasmussen@southbelfast.org) if you would like any further information or clarity in relation to any of our comments.

Yours sincerely



Briege Arthurs  
Chief Executive  
South Belfast Partnership Board