

# Forward South Partnership – Common Hub

Feasibility Study (Aug23)

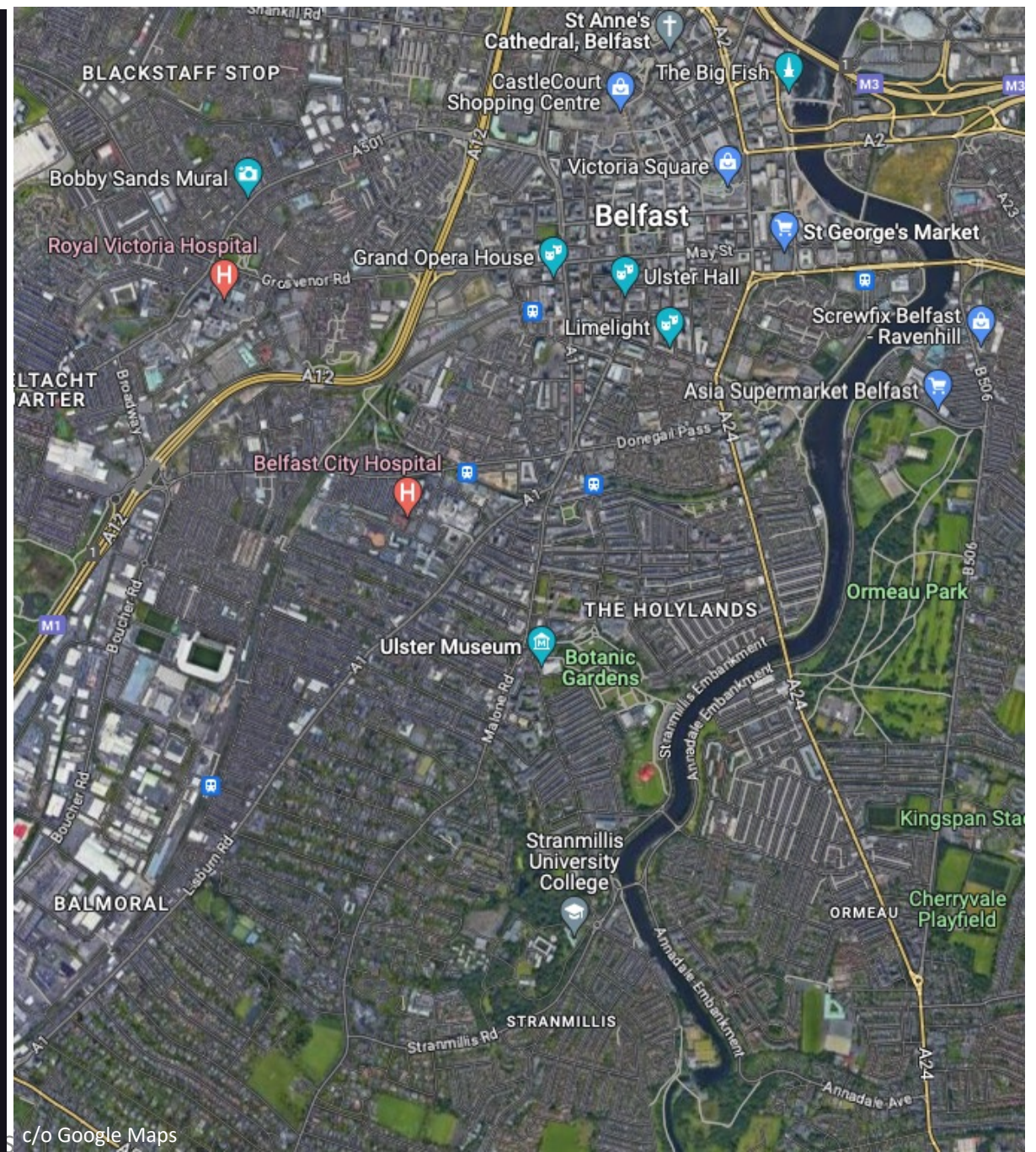
**SHORT PRESENTATION 10-Jun-2024**



# The Wider University Area

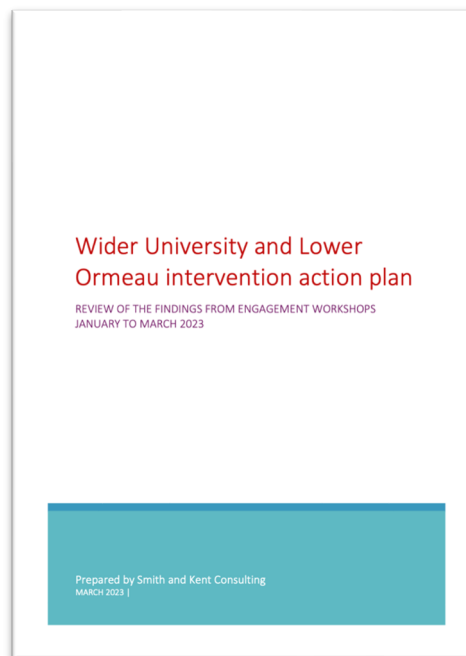


c/o Holylands Transition Study 2020



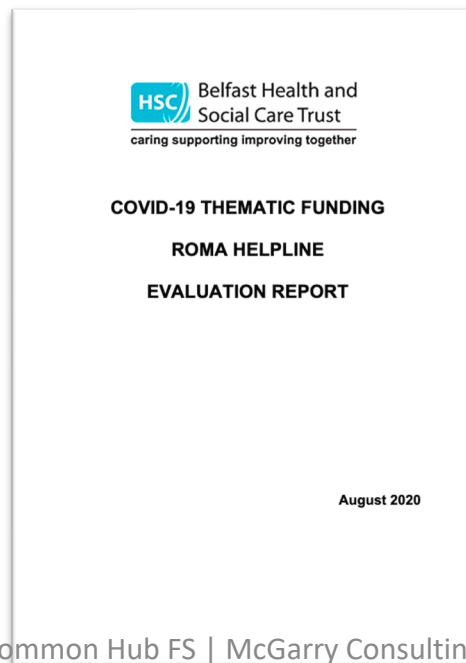
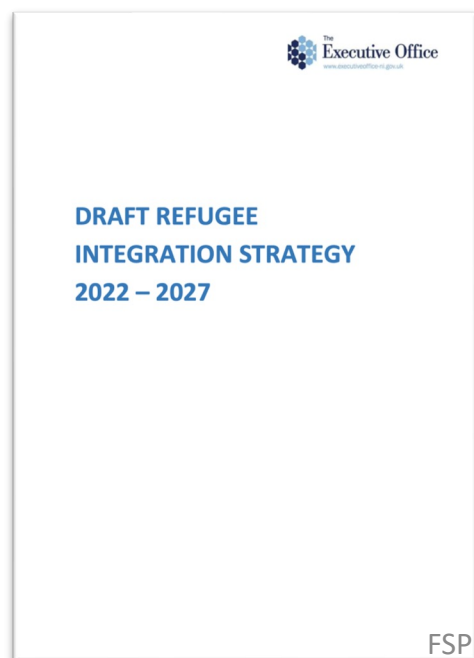
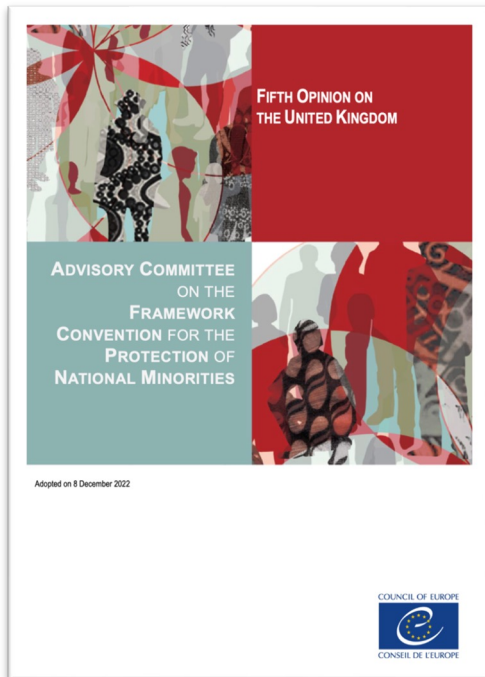
c/o Google Maps





“Rights and entitlements for different groups had become much more complicated since Brexit. Many migrants, and public sector organisations, didn’t understand the new immigration (points based) system. Whilst **third sector organisations were swamped. This is confounded by a lack of hard data, and interpreters.** Additional barriers included complex forms, digital skills and access to documents.” [Impact of Brexit Report](#)

‘There are a wide range of **challenges identified for both minority ethnic and migrant individuals in gaining employment, accessing suitable housing, healthcare, education, leisure, political participation, access to justice, safety, economic inclusion, receiving language support, and cultural integration.**’ [Research Summary Report](#)



‘**Communities were identified as a strength. With many enthusiastic about creating positive change.**’ The report recommended moving quickly to foster positivity and build on the momentum. Recommendations included **raising awareness of services newcomers can avail of; longer term more intercultural activity,** more community facilities and spaces [WUA & LO Intervention Action Plan](#)

‘The Roma Helpline is a bridging service to statutory and community services, that is seen as credible to the Roma.’ [Roma Hub Evaluation](#)

**7.1 million people are in the UK as part of the EU Settlement Scheme, millions more than expected.**

**1.2 million people migrated to the UK in 2022.**

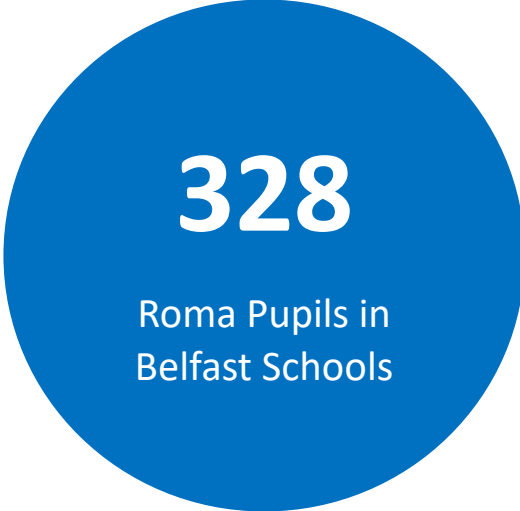


For context 45,000 people crossed the channel by boat in 2022 (3.75% of total)

this needs to be addressed, with long-term sustainable skills & solutions put in place

school pupils from ethnic minorities (Up 1,273%)

Roma population:



# botanic: outline area profile

2021 NI Census Data Points	Botanic (pop: 49,727)	Holyland Peak	Botanic A (Belfast City Hall)	NI
Born in NI	66%		40%	87%
Main Language – Non-English	15%		33%	5%
No Religion (or Not Stated)	35%		44% <small>(18% Other Religions)</small>	11%
Other Ethnic Group (i.e. Non-White)	18%		47%	3%
Live in Flats or Terraced Housing	80%	96% <small>(75% in Flats v NI 10%)</small>	97% <small>(77% Flats, 21% owned)</small>	32%
Unemployment	5%	8%	6%	3%
Lived at Same Address (> 1 Year)	64%	38%	50%	92%
Arrived in NI (2011-2021)	25%		55%	6%

Highlights the different area profiles and the challenges in getting hard data (e.g. Roma population) to base decisions on.

Also, Botanic figures are an average, which means there will be even greater variance at more local levels.

## feasibility study findings

A review of reports to date, along with consultations and research as part of the feasibility study, led to the summary findings below:

- **public bodies have invested** in the area over the the last few years but that level of investment appears unsustainable
- there was a **wide variety of formal and informal ‘cultural’ groups** out there with **varying levels of capacity**; there is no single exhaustive list (with any list needing to be a ‘living breathing list’)
- some of the groups are entirely volunteer led but are being **relied upon by as gateways** and/or interpreters for public bodies, in the absence of more recognised channels
- **access to services is a key challenge, not only in terms of language barriers but also in respect of knowing and navigating the system** (which is increasingly moving online and/or to automated telephone system; plus there is often a lack of consistency in personnel). There is also **confusion as to status and terminology** (e.g. refugee, asylum seeker, migrant, newcomer etc)
- being able to **communicate in English** reduces barriers and enables greater interaction, integration and commonality [**NB Tech Advances**]
- groups who want space often **want it at the same times** (e.g. Saturday mornings) and would **prioritise it for the own community** (e.g. language schools, after-schools) above integration
- emerging **trends** (students moving out of the Holylands; high density housing (and housing allocation); immigration challenges – more people coming to the UK and people being moved to

Belfast who arrived elsewhere in the UK; **cost of living increases and funding cuts; racism**) will place the WUA under more pressure

- the pilot **Roma hub** illustrated the challenge (e.g. securing & retaining skilled staff) and successes (e.g. which can deliver support, can be trusted, and **once trusted - be used more**), in running a hub. The **Ukrainian Assistance Centres** in NI also demonstrated how much support newcomers to NI require (and the associated public resources required to meet that need) – [NB Non-Roma Use of Hub, Now Food Bank]
- people felt a **‘common hub’** would be a more inclusive description than a multi-cultural hub
- whilst many people wanted space (from office space, space for language schools and after-schools to large social spaces) it was **not clear how this would be sustainable** or support collaboration
- in the first instance a common hub, should be more **about key services than providing large amounts of space**, which would be more difficult to sustain (at viable venue/office hire rates)
- before pursuing any physical ‘common hub’ there would need to be more work around the **role of key public partners** (e.g. BCC, BHSC, PHA, PSNI) and how they would support services within it
- there is a **lack of hard data** (e.g. with respect to the Roma population), and a **perception amongst public bodies that there is more support out there than is being perceived on the ground**. This shows there is a need for improved evidence gathering (and sharing) and outcome measurement. As well as need for greater communication with more people/organisations on the ground [**Issue with Perceptions; ‘Industry’**]



# Victim of racist graffiti urges public to speak up against discrimination

By Jessica Rice

A MAN who was forced to move out of his Belfast home due to racist graffiti daubed on the property has called for the public's support in standing up to racism.

Takura Makoni has lived in Northern Ireland for more than 20 years and in Finaghy for almost five years.

Back in March, Mr Makoni who works with the African & Caribbean Support Organisation in Northern Ireland, openly condemned racist posters around his home that were calling for the Housing Executive to "stop

housing illegal immigrants". Then in April the words "Taura not welcome" were spray painted on the walls of the father-of-four's home.

Mr Makoni said he felt he was targeted for speaking out against the anti-immigration signs.

"It was because I took a stance against the signs that were put up around my home so they targeted my home," he said.

After some discussion with the House Executive, Mr Makoni has since been given alternative accommodation.

He said he will continue to speak out about racism but is urging more people to join him.



Takura Makoni

"How I feel is neither here nor there. It doesn't matter how I feel, it matters how the rest of Northern Ireland feel, are they happy to let something like this continue? Or are they going to decide to do something about it?" he said.

Following the recent vandalism to his home, Mr Makoni stressed that he did not believe it expressed the views of the majority of people in the local area. However, he claimed there is a danger some have become "by-standers" to racism.

"I can't speak for the vast majority of people because I don't know how they feel. The vast

majority of people need to speak for themselves and tell us how they feel," he said.

"You don't hear from anyone until an incident and then we don't hear from them again after it."

Mr Makoni is instead asking the public to educate themselves on some of the racial stereotypes present in society.

He also urged everyone to "take ownership" of the problem in society.

"Just stop an immigrant in the street and say 'hello', that's all you need to do, from there you can learn anything you need," he said.

"There is no point running

from blame station to blame station. We can't say 'this is the police's fault' or 'this is the Housing Executive's fault'.

"I can't cure racism as a victim of racism, it is up to the people to educate themselves. This is the time for action, not the time to be sitting there with folded arms.

"If we want to, we can do something about it. In 1998 everyone – politicians, the police, community groups – all came together because they all had a shared vision of peace in Northern Ireland.

"They were able to achieve their shared vision, so we can do the same."

## 'No one should feel intimidated'

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) chief inspector Mark Conway said: "Hate crime hurts communities on many levels and racially motivated hate crime is a priority issue for local police in south Belfast."

He said police have "engaged with the victim after each incident and continue to work with local community representatives and partner agencies to try and find a solution".

He said that officer patrols have been stepped up across south Belfast in recent weeks in response to increased reports of anti-social behaviour.

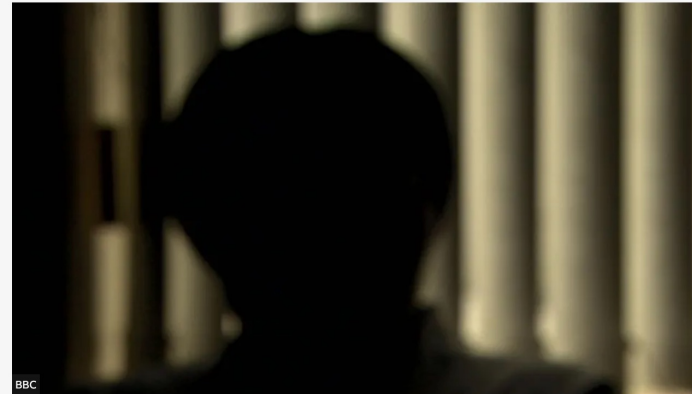
within the last 12 days...

## NEWS

Home Election 2024 InDepth Israel-Gaza war Cost of Living War in Ukraine Climate UK World Business

N. Ireland N. Ireland Politics

# Mum terrified as home targeted in racist attacks



BBC

Odegua said she was worried about her daughter in light of the racist incidents

Brendan Hughes Ita Dungan  
BBC News NI BBC News NI

7 June 2024

A Nigerian woman living in south Belfast has said she and her daughter are living in fear as their home has been targeted in multiple hate-motivated attacks.

# Viewpoint



## Ghastly hate crimes are stain on society

BELFAST is known around the world for its tours, with some of the most iconic featuring the many colourful murals adorning gable walls across the city.

Depending on which area of town you're in, different cultures are on display.

But recently a culture no one wished to see has been appearing around Northern Ireland. It is happening in front of schools where children pass, resulting in curious questions for parents and teachers, in town centre car parks and on shop shutters overnight.

Racist, anti-immigration and anti-asylum seeker messages have been daubed across the landscape in various locations. And it's all extremely distasteful. It is not the society the majority of people in Northern Ireland wish to be associated with.

The mentality of those who paint such slogans, images and swastikas in our communities can be summed up by the fact they often can't even spell their hateful words correctly.

Northern Ireland has worked hard to create a diverse society and it is all the richer for it. It's sad that some would seek to rob us of that wealth of culture.

Once again communities are being blighted by those with minds so narrow they do not wish to tolerate anyone who comes from a different culture

or has a different colour of skin. This intolerance may be an echo of the past, of the religious divide we have all grown up with in this country. Time, for some, has simply not moved on, but the world is leaving them behind.

There should be a collective shame that such people are allowed to walk freely among us.

And that shame should be enough for communities to, once and for all, call out those so far out of touch with society in 2024 that they are the ones who will not be tolerated.

The number of hate crime incidents is on the rise. Perhaps that's a good thing as more people are coming forward to report them. Previously there was a fear of reprisal for speaking out against those who wish to bully and coerce their way through life.

But it's still a worrying trend. Only by rooting out those guilty of the threats – and we have seen several over the last few days in Belfast, Newtownabbey and Cookstown – and making an example of them are we going to begin to rid society of them.

There is little deterrent for those responsible for the slogans that stain our towns and cities – usually painted under the cover of darkness – with their words appearing as if they speak for the whole community.

They do not. And that message has to be loud and clear.



£2m

(buy & upgrade)

£58k

(running costs pa)



The corner site has few windows on the ground floor, but has significant presence and floorspace. It also incorporates 23 Eblana Street (shaded, right)



# FORWARD SOUTH FEASIBILITY STUDY



All Saints Church of Ireland



Fitzroy Presbyterian Church



Social Housing



Feasibility Study for Forward South @ 57 Cromwell Road, Belfast

Proposed Site Context

June 2023



ARCHITECTURE  
INTERIORS  
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANCY

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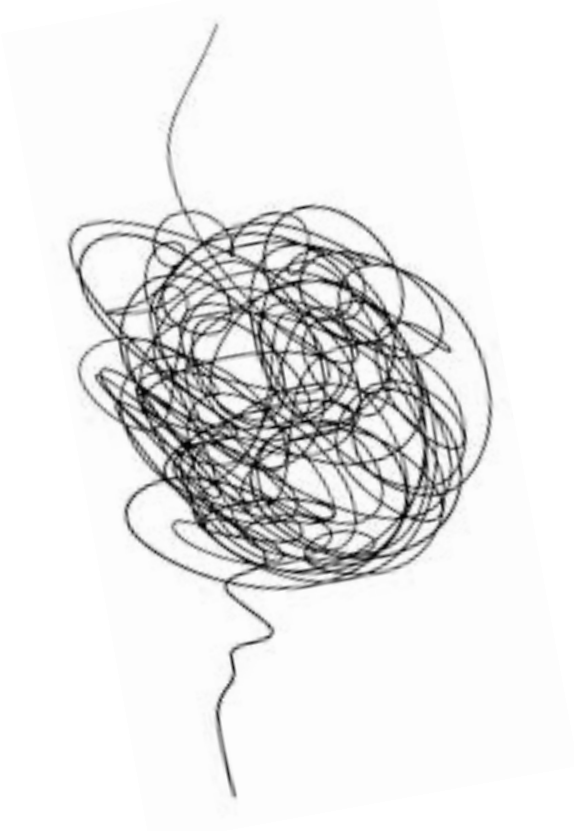
Tate Stevenson looked at various design options to make the most of the space.

A concept design is laid out on the following pages. Key points below:

- A lift has been added to ensure accessibility to all floors
- Extra windows provide more natural light, with a new entrance
- Toilets are provided on the first (including changing places toilet) and second floors
- The Roma Hub has open space and a dedicated meeting room
- The FSP office space is on the ground floor near the entrance to leave the first floor more for meeting/office/social space with a variety of sized rooms available. Further flexibility is available via foldable partitions and through dedicate storage spaces on each floor



## Public & Public Funded Support



## People in Need

### in summary

Any proposed common hub should focus initially on three key areas:

1. **Access to Services**
2. **Learning English / ESOL**
3. **Shared Services & Support**

### how it might be achieved

- **public bodies can work together to** improve peoples' quality of life (PfG)
- **STEP, in mid-Ulster** provides an example of how such advisory services could be delivered
- A July 2023 [tender for Ageing Well services](#) in Mid-Ulster (£267k contract over 15 months), sets out a Council led (multi-agency) example to commissioning various support services through one contract

### proposed benefits

- **Simplified** and trusted approach
- 'unowned space', safe & neutral
- Acts as a '**One-Stop-Shop**' starting point
- Creates **two-way conduit**/communication
- Builds long-term **capacity** & connections
- Creates economies of **scale** (e.g. tech, admin) and inherent **resident lingual mix**

### role of FSP & conclusion

- **FSP** is well established in the area
- They set-up, piloted and secured multi-year funding for the **Roma Hub, and have been involved in circa 50 projects in 2022-23,**
- Their current space is not fit for purpose or accessible
- **FSP could offer a common hub: an anchor tenancy, a strong partner network, skilled & experienced staff and good relations knowledge.**
- Requires a partnership approach, agreement on governance and long-term planning for FSP
- Key issues are securing partner buy-in, sourcing capital funding (confirming site), and what happens in the interim



**“People come to the hub  
because there’s a relationship  
and there’s trust.”**

Belfast Roma Hub

# Q&A

end