



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Strategic Review of St George's Market / Real Deal Charter
<b>Date:</b>	22 May 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	St George's Market is one of Belfast's oldest attractions and is a listed building. It was built between 1890 and 1896 and is one of the top markets in the UK and Ireland.
1.2	The renovated market originally opened on Fridays only. A Saturday market was added and more recently a Sunday market was launched. The current programme in St George's is a weekly Friday Variety Market; a food, craft and garden produce market on Saturdays; and a Sunday Market with the main emphasis on local handmade arts and crafts, antiques and collectables, recyclable goods and a variety of foods.
1.3	The market provides a place to trade and grow for over 170 small businesses, including 6 shop units and a restaurant. It supports around 385 jobs and welcomes approximately 600,000 visitors each year. The total value to the Belfast economy is estimated to be £15,761,500 p.a.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Belfast City Council's corporate vision is to take a leading role in improving the quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city a better place to live in, work in, invest in and visit. To contribute to this the current corporate plan sets out six main themes:
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- City leadership – strong, fair, together.</li><li>- Better opportunities for success across the city, which includes wealth creation, employment, skills, innovation, enterprise, and regeneration.</li><li>- Better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future.</li><li>- Better support for people and communities.</li><li>- Better services – listening and delivering.</li><li>- Better value for money – a can-do, accountable and efficient council.</li></ul>

2.3	St George's Market contributes to all of these themes. In terms of city leadership it is one of the most iconic buildings within the city and a major tourist draw. It contributes to our environmental aims by encouraging local produce and being a physical reminder of our heritage. It supports people and communities by providing shared space for people to interact and has its own 'community' of traders and their regular shoppers. Our management of the markets contributes to the themes of better services and value for money.
2.4	Management responsibility for St George's Market is with the Markets Unit, comprising of one manager, 1 senior supervisor, 1 supervisor and 4 staff. This team reports to the Head of Economic Initiatives. Traders are represented by a Traders Committee which meets with traders and council staff regularly.
2.5	<p><u>Strategic Review</u></p> <p>Since the renovated St George's Market opened in May 1999, the city and the economy have undergone significant changes. Belfast had enjoyed a period of confidence and growth and the last ten years have seen a major increase in tourism in the city, which now welcomes approximately 8 million visitors per year. St. George's Market is also increasingly seen as a tourist attraction and has added tremendously to the city's product offering especially as a facility open on Sunday mornings. Unfortunately, the last few years have also experienced the recession, increased unemployment and difficult trading conditions.</p>
2.6	This review is a chance to check the impact of these changes and determine if the current approach to St George's is the most appropriate way of achieving the Council's overall aims.
2.7	<p>There are a range of issues that the review will need to consider. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Positioning ST Georges in BCC's longer term vision</u> – establishing how the market contributes to and is affected by Belfast's integrated economic strategy.</li> <li>- <u>Assessing the demand for additional trading days</u> or changes to opening days and hours.</li> <li>- <u>Other possible uses of ST Georges</u> – for example increased use as an entertainment venue</li> <li>- <u>Governance arrangements</u> – different operating models to improve the effectiveness of market development</li> <li>- <u>Finance and investment</u> – consideration of any necessary physical improvements to future proof the building. Potential additional income sources such as the use of internal space for selling advertising.</li> <li>- <u>The customer shopping experience</u> - being more customer centric and creating the right retail environment. The effect of the layout of stalls and achieving the right balance of categories of stalls. Identifying the current customer profile and future target customers including domestic and abroad.</li> <li>- <u>Market facilities</u> – seating &amp; eating space, banking facilities, toilets, recycling bins, etc. Consideration of the needs of children, the elderly and disabled.</li> <li>- <u>Access</u> - the impact of limited access especially parking for customers and loading/unloading for traders. Consideration of other forms of transport.</li> <li>- <u>Marketing and branding of the market</u> – especially its unique selling experience; local traders and products, environmentally friendly, child friendly, accessible &amp; close to the city centre, a historic setting. Other</li> </ul>

	<p>initiatives such as taking the market on tour, merchandising, gift or loyalty cards, etc. Links to other tourism initiatives such as events, walking tours, history tours, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>The impact of legislative changes</u> - both nationally and the Council's new Markets Policy. Links to BCC's strategies for Tourism, Economic Development, Culture &amp; Arts, Physical Development and Transport Policy.</li> <li>- <u>Performance indicators and targets</u> – to enable us to monitor and manage the contribution of the market to BCC's aims.</li> </ul>
2.8	<p>Over the last year, increased collaboration has taken place between Council officers and the Market Traders Committee to deal with a range of short and medium term issues. Currently monthly meetings take place with the St George's Market Traders Committee and there are a number of issues being discussed. An action plan has been produced, including the issues of casual trading system, monitoring of permanent trader attendance and current floor layout on each market day. Open session meetings are to be held with casual and permanent traders, along with their committee to discuss these issues.</p>
2.9	<p>Given the significance of market traders as an important part of the Belfast economy, it is prudent that a longer term view is taken so that they can be effectively supported. Market trading is often the first rung of the ladder for retailing of new products and at present we have 350 traders in St George's Market along with a further 450 on a waiting list for permanent stalls. The longer term strategic review will complement the improvement of the short term action plan that officers are currently managing.</p>
2.10	<p><u>"Real Deal" Campaign</u> Local Markets such as St George's are valuable part of Belfast's retail environment, allowing people to purchase a wide range of goods, some not available in shops and often cheaper. The market provides opportunities for small, mostly local, businesses to trade successfully. Some, though, may attempt to sell fake, illegal or unsafe goods, which may undermine St George's good reputation and the many genuine traders.</p>
2.11	
2.12	<p>A programme called 'Real Deal' is established in the UK with over 46 local authorities already participating in this programme and the organisers wish to bring it to Northern Ireland. It is hoped St George's Market will be the first market in Northern Ireland to sign up and launch the campaign here.</p>
	<p>Raw Deal is National Charter (Appendix 1) which contains broad principles for market organisers and trading standards. This national charter is underpinned by detailed codes of practice which reflect local circumstances (Appendix 2).</p>
	<p>Current practice within the St George's Market to try and counter against the selling of counterfeit or fake goods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All permanent traders' details are kept on file. Initially they have to complete an application form and be entered onto the waiting list. When made permanent they receive a trading permit which outlines what goods they will be allowed to sell. It is signed by both the trader and Market Development Officer.</li> </ul>
2.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those who are on the waiting lists and casual traders who turn up on the day to trade also have to complete an application form, outlining which</li> </ul>

	<p>goods they wish to sell on any given day and what category on the waiting list they are set into.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Casuals sign in each trading day, and on the form they stipulate which goods they are selling that day.</li> </ul>
2.14	<p>The market aims to ensure a commitment of fair trading. Market officers work in partnership with the BCC Environmental Health Department, local Trading Standards service and PSNI to try to prevent the sale of counterfeit and other illegal goods. The National Market Traders Federation is fully supportive of this initiative and sees it as a benefit to markets in general. The programme was also discussed with the Belfast branch of the NMTF who represent St George's traders, who gave it their full support.</p>
2.15	<p>The Real Deal programme is to let shoppers and traders know which markets work to be free from fake and other illicit goods. Brand owners and copyright holders have joined together with local authorities, trading standards, police and market operators to help create a 'fake free' environment. This is called the Real Deal Charter. Once the charter is signed the markets can display the Real Deal logo and promote the market for people to know it is a safe and fair place to shop. St. George's Market is fully compliant with the Real Deal Charter and therefore it is recommended that Council agree to sign up to the Charter.</p> <p>The Department of Justice and Organised Crime Task Force who will be co-ordinating the launch are anticipating Ministerial attendance and are asking for Council support to host the launch in a city centre venue.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Costs attached to the proposed strategic review will be in the region of £30K to £35K.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
	None.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	That Members approve a Strategic Review for St George's Market and that authority is granted for a tender exercise to procure this service including delegated authority under the Scheme of Delegation to the Chief Officer.
5.2	That Members approve St George's Market signs up to the Real Deal Charter and support the launch at a cost not exceeding £3,000.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officer Responsible: Shirley McCay – Head of Economic Initiatives</li> <li>- Actions to be completed for 1 June 2012</li> </ul>

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	<p>NMTF National Market Traders Federation  UK – United Kingdom</p>

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Copy of Real Deal Charter  Appendix 2 - Copy of Code of Practice</p>

