



<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Markets Update - Strategic review
<b>Date:</b>	20 August 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development, 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 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 approximately £15m p.a.
1.3	Members will be aware that Committee approved an independent and impartial review of St George's to establish how the market could be enhanced and strengthened to maximise the economic benefit to the City in terms of business trading, jobs and tourism. The issues to be considered were:
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Future role and use of the Market</li> <li>b. Governance, management and communications</li> <li>c. Role in providing an outlet for independent retailers and the expansion of tourism</li> <li>d. Retail experience</li> <li>e. Location and access improvements and</li> <li>f. Marketing</li> </ul>
1.5	The initial phase of the review has been completed and it is now possible to move into the more detailed phase 2.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The environment that St George's Market operates within has changed considerably in recent years. New office accommodation, office facilities and the Waterfront have all been developed and this has increased natural footfall in the area. This review is an opportunity to take advantage of these changes by

	improving the shopping experience in the markets so as to increase footfall and spend and make St George's an even more appealing attraction for Tourists.
2.2	<p>The initial work has identified key issues through consultation with traders, their representatives, and other key stakeholders. These issues, shown below, will be considered in detail for the next stage of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The long-term vision for the Market.</li> <li>- Marketing and branding of the market – which unique features/selling points will attract customers (particular with regard to changing demographics) and how to benefit from other initiatives such as taking the market on tour, tourism events, walking tours, history tours, etc.</li> <li>- Market facilities – we continually receive demands for adding seating and eating space, banking facilities, toilets, recycling bins, etc, as well as for consideration of the needs of children, the elderly and disabled. This needs to be balanced against the space required for actual trading stalls.</li> <li>- Achieving the right balance of categories of stalls/products. This will consider the size of the waiting list, and hence demand from traders, while balancing the need to have a variety of products particularly to appeal to tourists.</li> <li>- The effect of the layout of stalls within the market and how the layout could be improved. This is in terms of improving the flow of customers around the market as well as improving operational aspects such as set-up and cleaning for traders and staff.</li> </ul>
2.3	We would welcome the views of Members in this process and so would like to invite party representatives to consultation sessions.
2.4	At the conclusion of the second phase a report will be brought to Committee with recommendations from both phases and options for taking them forward.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Covered in existing budget.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.	There are no Equality or Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to participate in a consultation process to support the review and subsequent improvement recommendations for St George's Market. Sessions to be held with each Party Leader (or alternative nominee) or via the Party Briefing process.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Timeline:	November 2013
	Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay