



Subject:	Request To Present - Markets Development Action Plan
Date:	4th December 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Clodagh Cassin, Markets Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to seek approval for a presentation to take place at the Committee's monthly meeting in January, focusing on the highlights and key recommendations from the Development Plan for St. George's Market. The presentation will be delivered by representatives of ASM, from the consultancy team that is undertaking this commission – ASM.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to agree to receive the presentation.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that St. George’s Market is one of Belfast’s oldest attractions. A listed building, it was built between 1890 and 1896 and is now one of the top markets in the United Kingdom and Ireland – currently holding the title of the Best Large Indoor Market as awarded by NABMA (National Association of British Markets). A vigorous campaign spearheaded by the Council and backed by traders and the general public resulted in a Heritage Lottery Fund backed £3.5 million refurbishment programme which was completed in 1999.</p>
3.2	<p>Twenty years on, the market now operates three days a week – Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It provides a place to trade and grow for over 180 small businesses, including six shop units and a restaurant. It supports some 385 jobs and welcomes over a million visitors each year. Although St George’s is primarily a market, it has also played host to a range of other events including food festivals, art initiatives, exhibitions, weddings, charity launches, fashion shoots and live music gigs. Over the last three years, the market has hosted the award-winning Twilight Market at least three times a year. The Twilight Market takes place on mid-week evenings (Tuesday and Wednesday) and focuses on unique local food and craft products.</p>
3.3	<p>While the market has undoubtedly been a success, it was recognised that, in order to set its future development on a sustainable footing and to consider a long-term investment plan for the market, it would be appropriate to undertake a development plan. The objective of this plan is to consider how we can enhance and strengthen the market and maximise its economic benefit to the city, principally focusing on supporting jobs and businesses, helping new companies to grow, generating tourism revenue and providing a unique events space for the curation and development of relevant activities.</p>
3.4	<p>In order to secure the relevant technical expertise required for the development plan, a procurement exercise was undertaken and ASM were appointed. They have been working on the project since September 2019. As part of their work, they have engaged with traders, staff and visitors to the market. Their work covers a number of areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future market management and development (opening hours; product categories; alignment with city events; opportunities to increase revenue from hire) • Commercial Management and revenue maximisation (stall fees; venue hire rates; opportunities for sponsorship)

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market layout and presentation (stall layout; accessibility issues; changes required to meet needs of specific audiences e.g. families) • Operational issues impacting on the day-to-day business (storage; waste management etc.) • Customer service and customer satisfaction • Marketing and Communications • Performance Management issues (benchmarks; relevant KPIs; enhancing data collection to support service improvement). <p>The consultancy team from ASM will present its high level findings and key recommendations at the Committee meeting in January 2020. These recommendations will form our investment decisions for the coming years, subject to Council endorsement, and will be reflected in our future budget plans and development activities for the market.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.6	<p>No specific financial or resource implications at this time.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications. St George’s Market attracts audiences and traders from all across Northern Ireland and beyond.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>