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PlaceSpeak launches first consultation in Northern Ireland

Belfast, Northern Ireland. Wednesday, November 19, 2014. PlaceSpeak Limited announced today the launch of its first UK consultation topic in Belfast, NI - The South West Gateway Masterplan - conducted by the South Belfast Partnership. The pilot project can be viewed at www.placespeak.com/southwestgateway.

The South West Gateway Masterplan, commissioned by The Department for Social Development working alongside Belfast City Council, South and West Belfast Partnership Boards and other partners, will identify a range of strategic actions for the regeneration of one of Belfast's most important economic areas.

"The South West area of Belfast is a vital node of economic and social activity within the City. It is now time, over the next 14 weeks, for people from the local communities, businesses and wider public to have their say on this vision," said Minister for Social Development for Northern Ireland, Mervyn Storey.

Briege Arthurs, CEO of South Belfast Partnership, welcomed the innovative use of digital technology to this project adding, "South Belfast is renowned for leading innovation within the creative and digital industries sector. I am delighted to welcome Placespeak to carry out their pilot in my area. The results of this pilot will provide us with a series of views which can be authenticated back to its place. This is a great opportunity for local people and businesses to speak and I would urge everyone to become involved. "

"From its inception, PlaceSpeak understood the importance of engaging citizens in decisions that affect them to generate verifiable, location-based evidence. The principles of accessibility and inclusivity, transparency, respect, diversity and integrity are the foundation of strong democracies. We have embraced them at PlaceSpeak and are delighted that the Government of Northern Ireland has joined us," says CEO and Founder Colleen Hardwick.

Background

Placespeak.com founder and CEO, Colleen Hardwick, delivered a talk at TedXBelfast in June 2012 at the Titanic, where she was introduced to leaders in the Northern Ireland innovation and technology community and members of the local community planning and political establishment. These conversations informed the creation of a NI presence intended as a technology hub for the UK and EU. <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxBelfast-Colleen-Hardwick-Au>



Southwest Gateway Project

The South West Gateway Masterplan has been commissioned by The Department for Social Development working in partnership with a range of stakeholders including Belfast City Council and South and West Belfast Partnership Boards. Once finalised the plan will serve to inform future investment and policy making for this part of the city.

The masterplan study area extends from the Falls and Andersonstown Roads in the West to the main railway line in the east and from Stockman's Lane in the south to the Bog Meadows and Windsor Park in the north. Bordering the study area are the neighbourhoods of The Village, Donegall Road, Falls Road, Andersonstown and Lisburn Road.

Consultants from The Paul Hogarth Company have prepared draft concept proposals which sets out a vision of the area's physical development potential that can be used by statutory bodies and private developers over the next decade, to inform their regeneration and development priorities.

The South West Gateway Masterplan has been commissioned by the Department for Social Development. The concepts for the draft Masterplan can be viewed on the Place Speak website www.placespeak.com/southwestgateway.

The Paul Hogarth Company has been appointed from a consultancy framework to produce the concept Masterplan for the South West area of Belfast. The consultation period will close on 22 February 2015.

About PlaceSpeak

PlaceSpeak is a location-based public consultation platform. Its mission is to authenticate the online consultation process in an open, transparent, verifiable, and defensible manner. It

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solves the problem of how to consult with people online within specific geographical boundaries. PlaceSpeak connects participants' online identities with their physical address to generate feedback that proponents can be confident in the knowledge that they are engaged with residents located in the affected area.

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