

RE: Application No: 21/01837/FUL

Thank you for inviting me to address the Panel in relation to the proposed development at the former Toys R Site, Western Esplanade Southampton.

In lieu of my actual attendance, please find below my restatement of support. My support is based on having scrutinised the plans, reviewing documents from consulted parties that are available on the planning application site, regularly visiting the part of the City under discussion.

My support is also influenced from over 30 years living in cities across Europe, Asia and North America, as well as witnessing first-hand the benefits that positive architecture and public realm enhancement has on citizens, communities, and cities.

My support for the proposed scheme is summarised thus:

- 1. Design and appearance** – With the City of Culture bid underway, it is vital to have not only new developments for the City but ones that positively shape the look, feel and aspirations of our city. Block A, within the proposed scheme, is one noticeable element which offers architectural texture and interest. Over time it would likely become a landmark building. Additionally, the heights of the proposed buildings act as a balancing element in an area that is dominated by the brutalist building at Blechendyn Terrace, Mayflower Halls and the Quilter Building to the North and East of the site. Furthermore, the type and colour of the proposed materials seem to take inspiration from those used in nearby buildings. The effect of this is a more unified, cohesive look and feel in this part of our city rather than the current disparate collection of buildings + ugly wasteland.
- 2. Green spaces and landscaping** – Being able to move from the station area to the main shopping area via landscaped areas such as the one proposed make for a significantly improved experience for those who live, work, and visit this area. I would like to think this green space could also add weight to our City's claim as National Park City.
- 3. Ongoing inward investment** – While I would love to see the streetscape of Southampton develop according to an overarching vision and around a bold extensive master plan, I have to accept that the days of grand schemes of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are gone. What I do NOT want our city to pass up on is the opportunity of a privately-funded development that not only enhances our public realm but also sends a positive message to future investors about our City's readiness to embrace practical, interesting, unifying developments.

In the name of this central area of Southampton that is crying out for regeneration and on behalf of other residents that support this planning proposal, please let's build it SO!

Kind regards,

Colin Barnett