

Press release: Secretary of State visits Victoria Square

Speaking after a tour of the shopping centre, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

I am absolutely delighted to be here in Victoria Square enjoying the very best that Belfast has to offer. You just have to look at this view, look at what this city is today, and think about what has been achieved in 20 years. Think about how much more we can do, and how much we have to build on, to continue Belfast and Northern Ireland's success.

I've just been hearing about how in terms of retail outlets, this centre is number one not just in Northern Ireland but in the island of Ireland, and it is number three in the whole of the United Kingdom in some categories. That is a fantastic achievement. It really goes to show what is bringing people to Belfast, why they are coming to Northern Ireland and why we want it to continue.

This has been a difficult week, I'm not going to make any pretence of that. We worked extraordinarily hard to do our very best to enable an Executive to be formed and I still believe that can be done, with the will of the politicians to deliver what the people of Northern Ireland want and need: their elected politicians doing the right thing and delivering devolved government for the people of Northern Ireland. The message I have had from the retailers and shoppers I have met downstairs is that that is what they want too. They want to exploit the opportunities that would come from a stable government being able to deliver the reforms and the transformation this country needs.

I am here to help them deliver that. I will do all I can to try and get devolved government back into Stormont because I genuinely believe that is the best thing for the people of Northern Ireland.