

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

25 March 2026

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Wednesday, 25th March, 2026 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Declarations of Interest

2. **Presentations**

- (a) Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Draft Masterplan 2025-50 (Pages 1 - 26)
- (b) Northern Ireland Food To Go Association

3. **Restricted Item**

- (a) Cultural Multi-Annual Grants (Pages 27 - 104)



Subject:	Belfast Harbour Draft Masterplan 2025–2050 – Presentation and Request for Council Response
Date:	25 th March 2026
Reporting Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Martin O'Neill, City Regeneration & Development

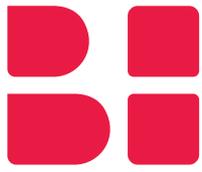
Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise Members that the Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) will present their Draft Belfast Harbour Masterplan 2025–2050 to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee. The BHC has requested that Belfast City Council provide a formal response to the consultation.
1.2	Members should be aware that, due to the Council’s statutory role as Planning Authority, any response should remain high-level and strategic, with no commentary on specific development proposals. It is appropriate, however, to reference alignment with relevant planning policy, including the Draft Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City Quays Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) masterplan, which was recently out for a 12 week public consultation that closed on 29 th January.
1.3	Members who sit on both CG&R and the Planning Committee should be aware of potential conflicts of interest, particularly as parts of the wider area move through the statutory planning process.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the forthcoming presentation from Belfast Harbour Commissioners on the Draft Masterplan 2025–2050. 2. Agree that officers will prepare a draft response, reflecting the matters set out within this paper, and any additional comments from Members at this meeting. 3. Note the potential conflict of interest for Members who sit on both CG&R and the Planning Committee.
3.0	Main report
	Background
3.1	Belfast Harbour Commissioners have published their Draft Masterplan 2025–2050, setting out the long-term strategic ambitions for the Harbour Estate and wider waterfront area. The document is available at: https://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/masterplan/

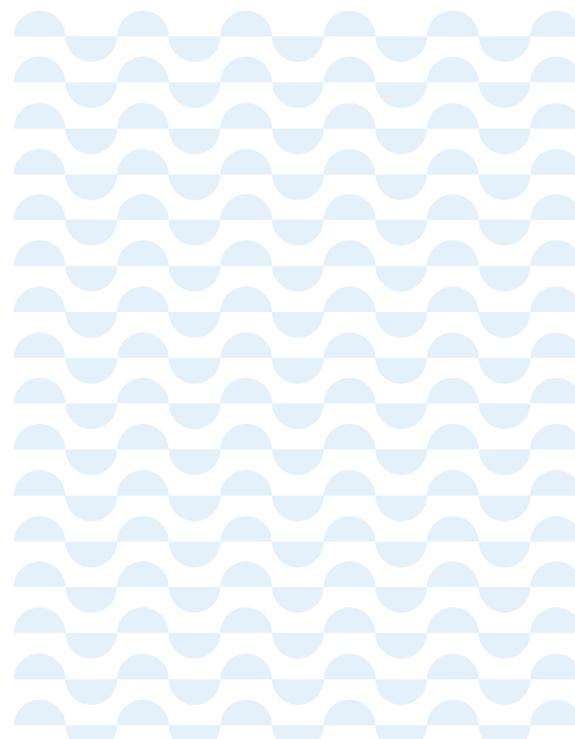
3.2	<p>The masterplan sets out a 25-year framework for investment, regeneration and sustainability aligned to; increase the port capacity, embracing the Belfast Waterfront, supporting transition to clean energy and protecting the environment, redeveloping the Inner Harbour and supporting connectivity and tourism. Over 50 engagement sessions have been held to date, with BHC currently analysing the feedback received prior to publishing the final Masterplan in May 2026.</p>
3.3	<p>BHC has requested the opportunity to present the Masterplan to the Committee and have specifically asked that Belfast City Council provide a formal response to the consultation.</p>
3.4	<p>The Council recently undertook a 12 week public consultation on two draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) masterplans, including the Draft Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City Quays SPG masterplan, which provides planning guidance for areas directly adjacent to and overlapping with parts of the Harbour Estate.</p>
3.5	<p>Members should be aware that, due to the Council’s statutory role as Planning Authority, any response must not be prejudicial to the proper exercise of the Council’s planning functions. Accordingly, the Council should not comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The merits or acceptability of any specific development proposal. • Site-specific issues that may come before the Planning Committee.
3.6	<p>Members are asked to consider the Masterplan as presented, and agree to submitting a formal response for consideration prior to the finalisation of the Masterplan. Officers will collate the feedback from the Members of the CG&R Committee prior to presenting the draft response to the April CG&R Committee for approval. Officers have considered the Masterplan and have outlined the following items for consideration for the response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council recognises the strategic importance of the Harbour to the city’s economic growth and regeneration and welcomes the long-term approach to building the Port capacity, the transition to cleaner energy solutions and the progression for regeneration of the Inner Harbour area in line with the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance. • That the Council recognises the important role of the wider Harbour Estate in growing the city’s key growth sectors in film, innovation and tourism, as well as the Harbours role in delivering regeneration and sustainable connectivity connections.

3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council recognises and supports the reclassification of trust ports to provide the Harbour with the ability to increase spending in a prudent way, as agreed by the CG&R Committee in March 2025. • That the Council recognises the importance of proper community engagement and encourages the Harbour to continue to ensure that the delivery of the Masterplan is carried out in partnership with city stakeholders and communities. <p>Conflict of Interest – Planning Committee Members</p> <p>Members who are sit on the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Board, and/or sit on both CG&R and the Planning Committee should be aware that discussion of matters linked to live or emerging development proposals may give rise to a perceived or actual conflict of interest, and Members should consider these conflicts prior to taking part in the presentation and subsequent discussion.</p>
4.0	Finance & Resource Implications
	None associated with this report.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	None associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices
	None



Belfast Harbour

Draft Masterplan 2025-50



Help us Plan the
Next 25 Years



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Chair's Introduction

Belfast Harbour has always been a place of ambition and progress. For nearly two centuries we have adapted, invested and grown to serve the region, and those who trade with it. Today, we handle 70% of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade and 25% of seaborne trade for the entire island of Ireland. We also provide a base for thousands of jobs and businesses. But our responsibility is not only to the present. It is also to the future.

This Draft Masterplan sets out a bold 25-year framework for our future, covering 2,000 acres of land and 1,000 acres of water. It focuses on developing this space to create an even more successful port and estate. We can sustain our role as a port to enable trade, tourism, clean growth and innovation. We can also shape new places to work, visit, live and invest in.

Growth with Purpose

Belfast Harbour benefits from having a large land area with prime deepwater access. This gives us room to grow. Our Draft Masterplan shows how we could use that advantage to become the leading port on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) – while deepening trade and transport links globally and with GB. With the help of our Draft Masterplan, we are on track to become one of the fastest-growing ports in the UK by 2050.

Our status as a Trust Port fuels this ambition. We are stewards of Belfast Harbour for the benefit of the economy and society. We operate the port and develop our land, while also acting as a landlord for businesses who operate here. We receive no public funding; all our post-tax profit is reinvested into Belfast Harbour and into the communities that depend on it. This means we can act not only to meet today's needs, but also to plan with confidence for the needs of generations to come. This is reflected in our Net Zero achievements – our own operations are on track to reach this goal before our 2030 target.



Similarly, our values are the foundation for our work. They guide us in everything we do: People-Focused, Open, Responsible, and Trustworthy. They shape the way we act as a port operator, a landlord, a developer and a civic partner. They remind us that our responsibility is wider than trade alone. It includes creating opportunity, protecting our environment, while strengthening and growing vibrant communities.

What This Is, and Who It Is For

In that spirit, this Draft Masterplan is written for everyone who has a stake in Belfast Harbour, now or in the years ahead. That includes the people who live and work here, port users and tenants across Belfast Harbour Estate, and the wider public across NI. It includes elected representatives, our city-region partners and government. All these groups will feel the benefits of Belfast Harbour's continued achievements, and each has a role in shaping this vision. For this reason, our Draft Masterplan aligns with the NI Executive's Programme for Government, the draft 2050 Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, the goals of Belfast City Council and the ambition of the DBEC.

It is important to be clear about what this Draft Masterplan is – and what it is not. This is not a planning application; we aren't required to consult – we do so because it is best practice. We believe progress improves with partnership, and that your views can make our draft plans stronger. This process will create a flexible Masterplan that will change through time. It will provide our stakeholders with insights to support their own decision-making. Finally, this draft has been developed in line with guidance from the Department for Infrastructure and Department for Transport (UK). Each development project within will still go through a formal planning process, with its own public engagement and statutory assessment.

Listening and Engagement

Our Draft Masterplan is built on listening. In 2024 we carried out independent consultation with a representative set of our port users. Their feedback has been combined with the views of our tenants. We also engaged with many institutions whose work enables ours and whom we, in turn, support. Finally, we engaged independent experts to provide an objective and empirical view on planning for our future. Collectively, these learnings have helped shape the priorities of this Draft and will continue to guide our work ahead.

To make our final Masterplan a success, we are committing to a process of proactive engagement, transparency and accountability. We now start a consultation process designed to make sure every voice can be heard. Public consultation opens in November 2025 and runs for eight weeks. The responses we receive will inform the final Masterplan, due to be published in May 2026.

A Living Document

Our final Masterplan will not be a fixed blueprint. It will be a living document that responds to changing needs over the next 25 years, from how the port is used to wider economic and social factors. It will be reviewed alongside future strategies, each informing and supporting the other. This ensures we can adapt with confidence while keeping our long-term vision in sight.

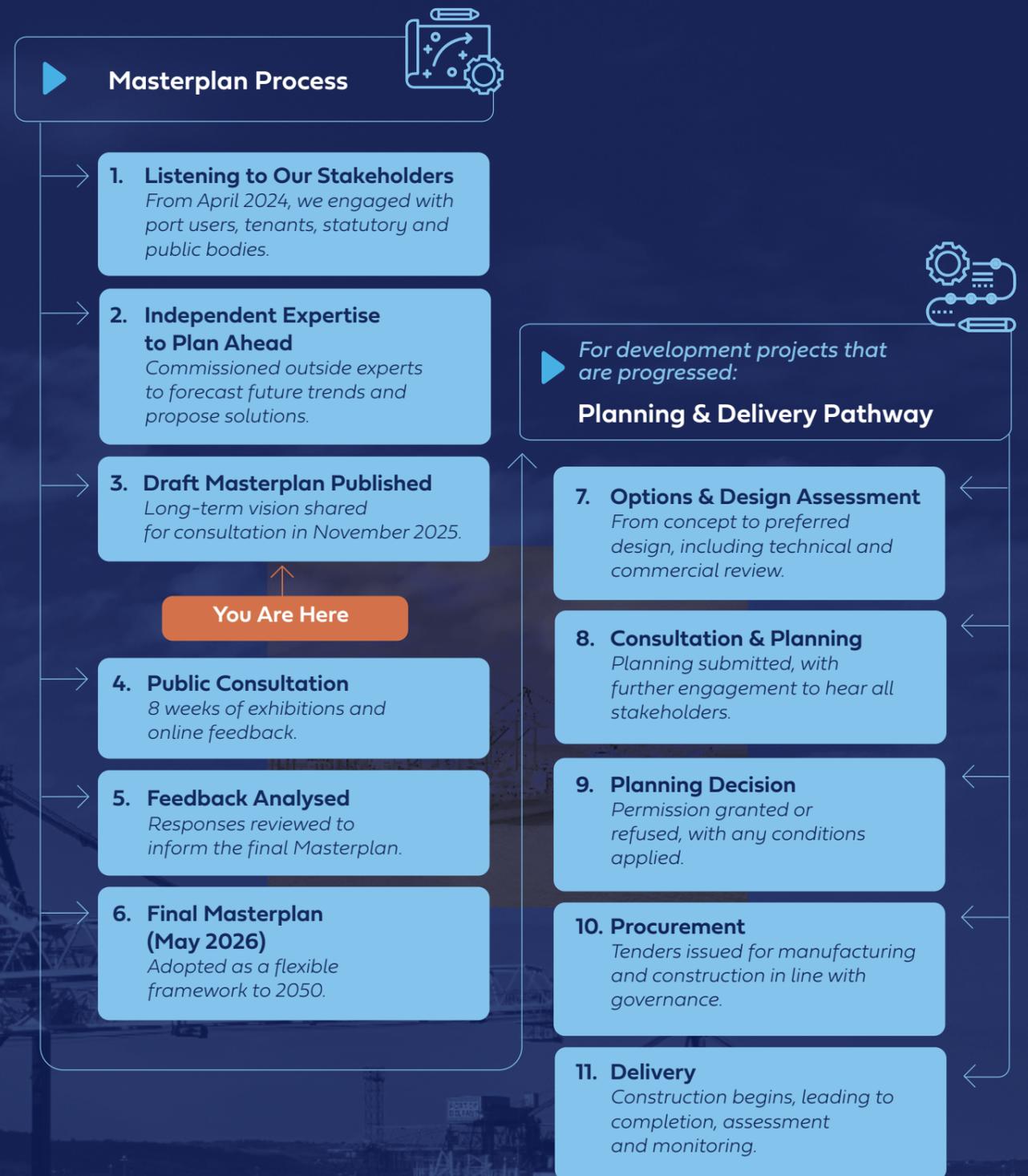
This Draft Masterplan is both ambitious and practical. It reflects our track record of delivery, but it also raises our sights. It shows how Belfast Harbour can continue to grow as a competitive gateway to global markets, while still being somewhere people are proud to live, work, study, or visit.

An Invitation to Participate

That is why we are asking you to take part in this consultation. Your views will help shape the final Masterplan and ensure it reflects the broadest possible range of perspectives. Our performance has always been built on partnership – with government, with business, with communities, and with citizens. That partnership will remain at the heart of our final Masterplan as we look forward to 2050.

This is a moment to plan boldly and responsibly. To strengthen Belfast Harbour's role as an economic engine. To invest in a cleaner, more inclusive, more connected place between the city and the sea. To create a legacy of opportunity for future generations.

Dr Theresa Donaldson
Chair of Belfast Harbour Commissioners





Chief Executive's Introduction

Belfast Harbour is NI's main port and a critical link to GB, Ireland, and global markets. Our operations span Roll-on Roll-off (RoRo), Lift-on Lift-off (LoLo), bulk and project cargo, cruise ships and passenger ferries. We use our deepwater port to help the wind energy sector to assemble and commission new turbines. Alongside this, we also manage commercial space and develop our land to create vibrant, inclusive new communities. Few ports in the UK or Ireland match this breadth of activity. Much of what people rely on – from the car in your driveway to the food in your fridge to the sofa in your living room – passes through Belfast Harbour. At the same time, we ensure NI exporters can reach their customers. This Draft Masterplan shows how we can grow and compete – both on this island, and in relation to GB.

Supporting the Success of Our Port Customers

Belfast Harbour Commissioners operate the port and are stewards of the Belfast Harbour Estate. We promote innovation and support the achievements of our port users. This includes the long-term leaseholders who have developed thriving businesses, such as W&R Barnett Ltd and Stena Line. Their growth strengthens ours, and together we deliver a stronger port for future generations

Partnership is central to our success. We work with the businesses that use our port, and with the institutions that shape the future of Belfast and the wider region. This includes the NI Executive, the Department for Infrastructure, the Department for the Economy, Belfast City Council, and others. That collaborative spirit has driven our growth since 1847. Since then, Belfast Harbour has expanded in scale and scope, including through land reclamation.

How Belfast Harbour helps Northern Ireland thrive



Planning for Growth

Independent forecasts of future trade volumes show that in some scenarios, the port may reach its operating limits. They show that trade through Belfast Harbour could grow from 24 million tonnes today to around 32 million tonnes by 2050, with higher-growth scenarios reaching over 40 million tonnes. We must therefore plan now for additional long-term capacity. Similarly, forecasts relating to our property and land holdings point to lasting and growing demand for housing and commercial space. This reinforces our role as a key driver of city regeneration to 2050.

That is why this Draft Masterplan matters. It sets out how we will replace or improve ageing infrastructure and optimise land use, so we can remain the backbone of NI trade. This will ensure people continue to get the goods they depend on, and the wider economy can keep growing.

A Track Record of Delivery

Our ambition is based on a proven track record. An average of £27 billion worth of goods moves through Belfast Harbour every year. Over the past 25 years, we have completed projects that reshaped the port and the city. The £130 million invested so far on City Quays regeneration created Grade A office space on a scale not seen before in the city. The £53 million Offshore Wind Terminal at D1 enabled the assembly and installation of new offshore wind farms. These produce 1.3GW of clean energy every year – enough to power more than a million homes. The extension of Stormont Wharf created the island’s longest deep-water berth. At Victoria Terminal 4, we delivered new facilities for Stena Line ferries. We also led the way in sustainable logistics, completing the island’s first BREEAM Excellent warehouse in 2024. We developed Belfast Harbour Studios, site of major productions and home to Studio Ulster, a world-leading virtual production facility. We worked with Titanic Quarter Limited to bring Titanic Belfast, Arc Apartments, Loft Lines, and Belfast Metropolitan College to Belfast Harbour Estate.

We host some of the region’s major employers, such as Spirit AeroSystems and Harland & Wolff, now part of Navantia. We are also home to landmark attractions like the SSE Arena, W5 and Titanic Belfast, as well as Catalyst – NI’s science and innovation hub. Each project created jobs, strengthened supply chains and attracted new investment. This history of achievement is proof that we deliver on our plans.

In January of 2025, we launched our five-year strategy, which is Horizon 1 in our Draft Masterplan. After less than a year, we have already made strong progress on these projects. Ground has broken on D3, our £90 million dual-purpose deepwater quay. This will accommodate some of the biggest cruise ships and increase capacity for assembling and installing offshore wind turbines. We are proactively responding to housing needs, procurement has begun for CQ4 and we are advancing housing, retail and leisure plans for Clarendon Wharf. Alongside this, our commitment to innovation is delivering results. We ordered the first of many new sustainably powered cranes, completed a successful pilot of the Harlander autonomous shuttle bus service, and started to test an autonomous hopper for bulk cargo. Research is also under way into how automation could transform our container terminal. To support these and future technologies, we have expanded our 5G network across Belfast Harbour Estate. This progress, in less than a year, shows how quickly our strategy becomes delivery.

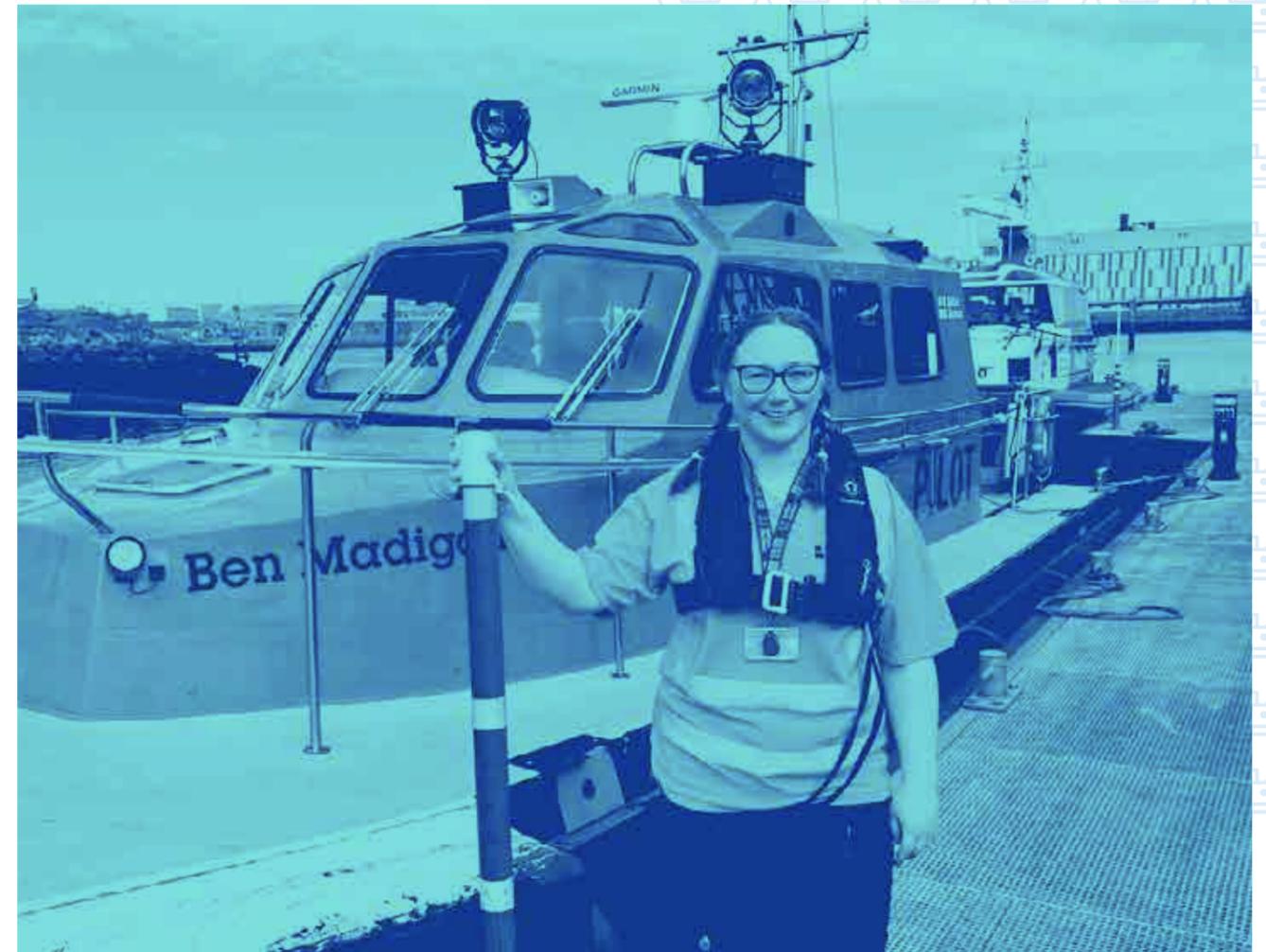
Funding the Future

Your feedback will shape the final Masterplan, and with it, the ultimate cost. Most Horizon 1 projects are already financed through retained profits. However, some property development projects in Horizon 1 – and most of our draft plans in Horizons 2 and 3 – will need change to be delivered. Belfast Harbour, like all NI Trust Ports, is classified as a public corporation for accounting purposes. This limits our ability to borrow, as even privately funded debt would impact the balance sheet of the Department for Infrastructure.

Our Draft Masterplan Spans Three Phases to 2050

The first of these aligns with our five year strategy, published earlier this year.

Horizon 1 2025-2029	Horizon 2 2030-2040	Horizon 3 2040-2050
Strategy 2025-2029 Advance Regional Prosperity		



Why Reclassification Matters

At a time of particularly constrained public budgets, we do not want to add to this pressure. Changing our accounting classification is essential if we are to achieve the potential of our Draft Masterplan. The NI Executive recognises that this treatment holds back all NI Trust Ports and is supportive of change. We are hopeful for legislation from the Assembly to enable a solution. This would allow the Office for National Statistics to reclassify all NI Trust Ports, bringing us in line with Scottish Trust Ports. Progress so far has been encouraging, and we are optimistic for a successful outcome. When we are reclassified, we can then responsibly develop housing for the city. This includes City Quays 4, which already has planning approval for 325 homes – including affordable housing.

Shaping a Prosperous Future Together

Belfast Harbour has a unique combination of operational scale, development potential and a proven ability to deliver major infrastructure projects. This Draft Masterplan builds on these strengths. It shows how we can sustain and grow our role as a competitive gateway to global markets, while delivering regeneration, innovation and opportunity. With your input, it will ensure Belfast Harbour continues to support a future of prosperity for generations to come.

Joe O'Neill
Chief Executive, Belfast Harbour

Why a 2050 Masterplan?

Belfast Harbour's role is to serve the NI economy today and for the long term. We can also be the leading port on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor. To achieve these goals, we need to plan ahead. Trade volumes continue to grow and evolve. The transition to clean energy is gathering pace. We must adapt to climate change and build resilience into our infrastructure. We can also help clean energy growth by enabling next generation offshore wind turbines to be assembled in our deepwater port. At the same time, Belfast is expanding as a city, and we can play a part in providing homes and commercial space to meet this need. For Belfast Harbour to remain as a strong port and to enable the city's growth, we must also evolve and grow. We must do so in a way that secures our ability to operate as a port, and as a steward of the land we own and manage – for generations to come.

This Draft Masterplan provides a coherent 25-year framework. It reflects our existing near-term plans, starting with Horizon 1 goals that align with our current five-year strategy. Longer-term, our Draft Masterplan addresses essential needs. This includes creating new capacity, replacing older infrastructure and equipment, and using new technologies to improve efficiency. This will help us to achieve our own aims and support the goals of our customers.

It also ensures alignment with NI, UK and local economic and spatial strategies. That includes supporting housing plans for Belfast and contributing to the city's wider regeneration.

Flexibility is built in. Our Draft Masterplan can adapt to changes in regulation, markets, and technology, especially in global shipping and logistics. It reflects Belfast Harbour's dual role as both a working port and a developer of places that contribute to the city, such as the Maritime Mile. Like other ports, over centuries our operations have gradually moved seaward, freeing land for new uses. Adding deepwater capacity nearer the sea boosts efficiency and lowers fuel use for shipping companies, which also cuts carbon emissions.

Above all, the Draft Masterplan provides clarity. It gives partners, investors, and communities a clear picture of our direction of travel. And it sets out how Belfast Harbour will continue to be a keystone of the economy on these islands for future generations.

What we have heard so far

The Draft Masterplan builds on early engagement with port users, tenants and operational partners across Belfast Harbour Estate. These stakeholders are among those most directly affected by how the port operates today, and how it will evolve. Before creating this Draft Masterplan, we independently sought their views on what should inform our thinking. Their feedback has shaped our priorities for the next five years and will continue to guide our long-term plans.

What Stakeholders Said

Infrastructure

- Stakeholders highlighted the need for sustained ongoing investment, especially as some core infrastructure and equipment age. The message was clear: Belfast Harbour must continue to modernise if it is to remain efficient and competitive.
- Access and utilities were also issues raised. Improved energy supply, better digital connectivity, and reliable transport links are all needed to support long-term growth.
- Belfast Harbour serves global shipping and is also used as a short-sea shipping route. Our facilities for both must evolve to handle the vessels expected in future decades. Adapting berth length, depth and handling equipment will be essential.
- Logistics capacity emerged as a strong theme. Stakeholders called for more high-quality warehousing and distribution space. They particularly mentioned facilities that meet best-in-class environmental, social and governance standards. As their own customers become more carbon-conscious, operators need to prove that supply chains are sustainable. The Manfreight warehouse, completed in 2024 and constructed to BREEAM Excellent standards, was seen as a benchmark for future development.

- Finally, stakeholders noted the symbolic and economic value of shipbuilding's resurgence. Navantia's commitment to revitalise the historic Harland & Wolff site was welcomed as a positive addition to Belfast Harbour's industrial ecosystem.

Operations

- Reliability and resilience were repeatedly emphasised. Stakeholders see these as critical, especially as the effects of climate change become more apparent. They want us to ensure the port can continue operating 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. To safeguard this, we will continue to monitor and review our flood defence systems, our weather resilience, and our asset management practices.
- There were also questions about land use. We are developing former port lands near the city. As we do this, stakeholders want to know how we will protect and grow capacity for port use in the harbour.
- Stakeholders also discussed the potential to use new technology and digital tools to improve efficiency, speed up processes, and improve health and safety. Examples included automation, remote inspection, and energy monitoring.

Growth

- Anticipated growth in volume will need Belfast Harbour to plan for expanded capacity that meets the needs of the economy. Stakeholders were clear that delivering this capacity is vital for the region's trade.
- Additional capacity and flexibility will be required to support expanding trades and to create space for emerging industries. Without this, NI risks losing out to other ports.
- Regeneration was also raised as a theme. Stakeholders value the continued transformation of the waterfront, not only for the economic benefits it brings but also for the way it improves quality of life for residents, workers and visitors.

Sustainability

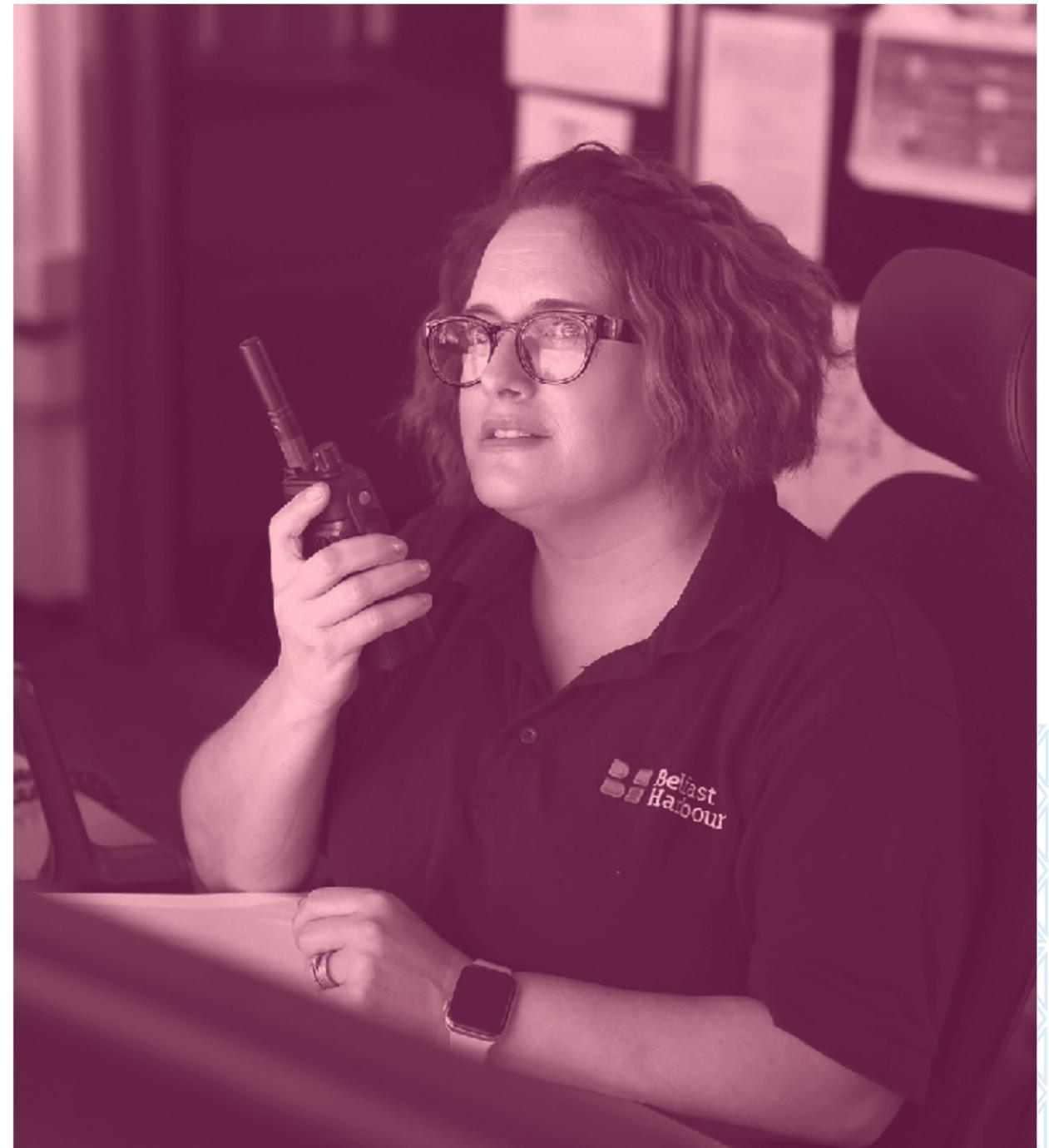
- Sustainability is viewed as a pressing priority. Stakeholders encouraged Belfast Harbour to work with them and the utilities networks to increase grid capacity. This could help reduce carbon emissions, unlock shore power, and promote the electrification of equipment.
- They also encouraged collaboration with transport agencies to improve how goods and people move to and from Belfast Harbour estate. Smarter transport solutions can ease congestion and reduce carbon emissions.
- Stakeholders see Belfast Harbour as a key partner in their transition to Net Zero. They encouraged continued partnership and innovation towards this shared goal. They asked for collaboration to trial new technologies, explore alternative fuels, share learning, and create the space and facilities needed to support this shift.
- Finally, property development was highlighted. Stakeholders expect every project to meet high sustainability standards, with BREEAM Excellent or equivalent seen as the benchmark. Stakeholders recognised that Belfast Harbour already delivers to this level and encouraged we commit to sustain this standard.

Dependencies

- Stakeholders acknowledged that Belfast Harbour cannot deliver this Draft Masterplan alone. The expected rise in port volumes will require investment beyond Belfast Harbour to enable our capacity growth.
- Partnership with government, utilities and city-region agencies will therefore be vital. Only through joint planning and investment can our vision become reality.
- Transport links, electricity grid capacity and wastewater treatment were repeatedly mentioned as critical enablers. Without action in these areas, Belfast Harbour's ability to expand and modernise would be constrained.
- More broadly, this Draft Masterplan is based on the forecasted growth happening as expected. We will adapt, advance, delay, or prioritise different aspects of this plan depending on actual port traffic in the years ahead.

Listening and Responding

The feedback gathered through surveys, interviews and direct engagement has already influenced the priorities set out for Horizon 1. The consultation on this Draft Masterplan now provides the opportunity to broaden and deepen that process. By listening carefully and responding openly, we can ensure our final Masterplan reflects not only our long-term vision, but also the expectations of those who depend on us most.



What Informs our Draft Masterplan?

The Draft Masterplan has one clear purpose: to help us meet the future needs of our port users, tenants, and the communities who live, work in and visit Belfast Harbour. We aim to make decisions today that anticipate the demands of tomorrow.

Our Methodology

To achieve this, we commissioned independent analysis of both our port activities and our development outlook, using a range of scenarios.

Economic & Shipping Forecast

Independent forecasts were prepared by Haskoning, a global specialist in ports and logistics. Their work drew on historical trade patterns at Belfast Harbour. They also considered macro-economic and regional growth trends – including the impact of the energy transition – and direct engagement with industry.

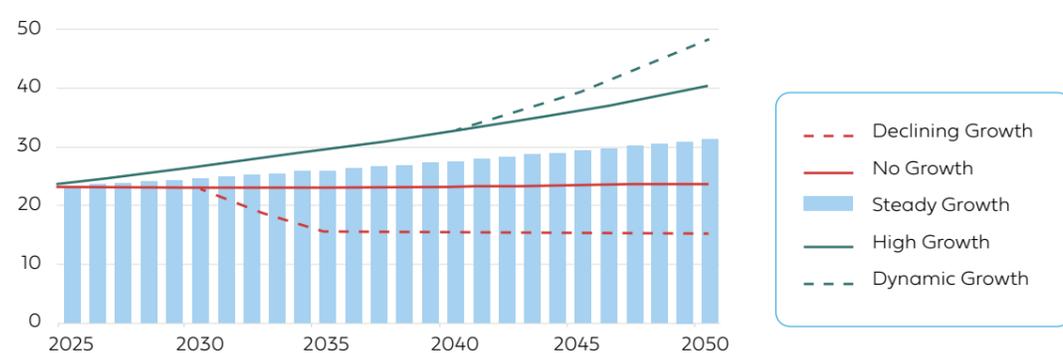
Real Estate Development Outlook

Alongside this, Deloitte undertook market analysis of property in Belfast. Their work assessed demand across a wide range of sectors.

These included residential, hotels, commercial space, innovation, and logistics. Their study reviewed current supply pipelines, economic trends, and demographic trends. They also compared these to similar city markets. Their work provides an evidence base for our estate development plans up to 2050.

Our draft plans are also informed by research we commissioned this year on successful neighbourhoods. We worked with the NI Housing Executive, Belfast City Council, private sector developers and local groups. Together, we identified the characteristics and attributes of effective and engaging placemaking.

2050 Port Trade Scenarios - Million Tonnes (mT)



Port Forecasts: Scenarios and Capacity Needs

The port forecasts are based on three main growth trends: high, steady (or "base") and no growth. These are shown with two event-driven scenarios where our historical market share norms are disrupted to create declining or dynamic growth. All scenarios examined future demand in all shipping sectors. They indicate that trade through Belfast Harbour could grow from 24 million tonnes today to around 32 million tonnes by 2050, with higher-growth scenarios reaching over 40 million tonnes. This growth is mainly driven by RoRo and LoLo. The forecasts show some variation across other cargo types: Bulk cargo has a mixed outlook, with declines in carbon-related trades offset by resilience in agribusiness and other trades. The "steady" rate of growth is projected at 1-1.5% annually, compared to 2-2.5% of growth over the past 25 years. Under every scenario except declining or no growth, we are projected to approach capacity limits by 2050. Under the higher growth scenarios, we reach these limits up to a decade earlier.

Port Infrastructure and Land Use

These findings led us to review capacity of our core infrastructure. We examined quay length, berth depth, terminal layouts and renewal of existing assets. This work confirmed the importance of timely investment. As always, we will invest to extend the life of some assets, replace others, and plan for new facilities. Alongside infrastructure, we looked carefully at land use. We mapped operational, regeneration and greenfield sites across Belfast Harbour Estate. We considered key projects like a Victoria Terminal 3 extension and wharf rebuilds. Possible reclamation projects, such as a new terminal to support trade, are also planned closer to 2050. The aim is to make the best of land available for improvement and development before creating new land for increased capacity. This will allow us to protect port operations, meet environmental goals, and create new opportunities for the city.

Property Forecasts: Estate Development and Future Projects

The outlook for real estate has clear implications. Strong market demand for housing and commercial space underpins our draft plans and have shaped our regeneration priorities.

This can be seen in our plans for City Quays 4, Clarendon Wharf and other residential projects, and in similar plans for Titanic Quarter. These developments will ensure we continue to deliver both economic and community benefits.

Our Draft Masterplan also ensures alignment with wider regional and city ambitions. It fits with the goals of the NI Executive's Programme for Government, with the Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, and with Belfast City Council's Local Development Plan and Belfast Agenda. We support shared goals for housing, regeneration and connectivity.

The Draft Masterplan also builds on projects already in motion. These include the new dual-purpose deepwater quay (D3), City Quays 4 and 5, and the Loft Lines residential project in partnership with Titanic Quarter Ltd.

Sustainability and Biodiversity

Our plans are framed by a commitment to sustainability. We have set a target of net zero for our own emissions by 2030. But our role extends further. We aim to invest in shore power and to support partners to decarbonise. We will also enable green shipping corridors and will continue to play a key role in the next generation of offshore wind energy.

We also want to strengthen biodiversity and provide greater public access. Our draft plans include linking existing nature conservation areas to create a new public amenity. Walkways, boardwalks and viewing platforms would connect industrial, retail and community areas, providing access to nature in the heart of Belfast Harbour Estate.

Aligned with Policy, Shaped by Stakeholders

Our Draft Masterplan was developed to align with NI, UK and local strategies. It supports both our own environmental obligations and our wider ambitions. This approach ensures consistency with wider government priorities. It also strengthens our ability to secure necessary partnerships and allows us to lead as well as follow.

Finally, the Draft Masterplan reflects the voices of our stakeholders. Phase 1 engagement themes have been incorporated directly into this plan. As consultation continues, your feedback will guide the choices we make and the priorities we set.



Belfast Harbour

Draft Masterplan 2025-50



Areas of Focus

This map shows the areas we've used to develop our long-term draft plans for Belfast Harbour.

Each colour shows our current intentions for the areas covered – from enhancing our port facilities to creating new neighbourhoods.

These draft aims will be rolled out up to 2050, grouped into three time-periods: Horizon 1, 2 and 3.

The following areas of focus show where and how we propose to concentrate our efforts for the next 25 years:

- Sustain & Increase Port Capacity
- Embrace the Belfast Waterfront
- Enable Industry & Commerce
- Facilitate the Shift to Clean Energy
- Protect Nature for Community Benefit
- Redevelop the Inner Harbour
- Support Connectivity & Tourism

This is a simplified view designed to make our draft plans more accessible. A detailed source map can be downloaded at belfast-harbour.co.uk/detail-map
Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence



Introducing Three Horizons to 2050

This Draft Masterplan is structured around three horizons: a near-term duration of five years, and two follow-on periods of a decade each. Each one builds on the last to create a long-term vision for Belfast Harbour.

▶ **Horizon 1 (2025–2029)** This period reflects our five-year strategy, **Advance Regional Prosperity**, launched in early 2025. Our focus for this timeframe is immediate priorities. With some projects already fully scoped and funded, this Horizon will strengthen the port and add new capacity.

▶ **Horizon 2 (2030–2040)** represents step-change investment in several areas. It will enhance our infrastructure and maximise our existing capacity. It will see the roll out of innovative technology and will enable clean energy. And it will open more of the waterfront for regeneration and community benefit. This is the decade when ambitions start to scale.

▶ **Horizon 3 (2040–2050)** is about long-term transformation to expand capacity. It will reshape Belfast Harbour with reclaimed land, new technology, new fuels and new places. This will create a port and estate that can better meet the needs of future generations, while deepening our role in the economy and community.

The three horizons allow Belfast Harbour to grow sustainably. They respond to demand, technology, government policy, and the needs of the community.

▶ Our Plans for Horizon 1: 2025–2029

The plans for this first horizon have already been set out in our five-year strategy, *Advance Regional Prosperity*. As a result, many of these projects are already fully scoped, funded and ready for delivery. Together, they strengthen today's port, add new capacity and prepare for future growth.

You can learn more about **Advance Regional Prosperity**, our current five-year strategy, at belfast-harbour.co.uk/strategy

A New Deepwater Quay

The new dual-purpose deepwater quay is at the heart of this programme. It is a £90 million investment designed for both large cruise ships and assembly of offshore wind turbines. Stage 1 targets the 2028 cruise season, with Stage 2 adding further infrastructure by 2030. Once complete, this new dual-purpose deepwater quay (D3) will allow cruise operations to move here. This change will free up the existing deepwater quay (D1) for offshore renewables. This shift reflects the larger energy transition. It also highlights how our port development can enable national climate goals.

Improved & New Capacity for Land and Sea

Horizon 1 also invests in the equipment needed to keep pace with growth. Investments in crane upgrades will continue to modernise our fleet. This will improve efficiency and prepare for next generation vessels and the handling of heavier cargo. On the west bank of the harbour, we will improve the resilience of our RoRo facilities, following our recent improvements to LoLo infrastructure. This helps prepare for new, larger ships that use cleaner fuels.

Logistics capacity will also expand. We will develop new warehousing and distribution facilities to meet the needs of port users and tenants. This will help meet the rising demand for sustainable logistics centres linked to transport networks.

Responding to the City's Needs

Beyond core port infrastructure, Horizon 1 includes a significant programme of city-facing development. Even in this near-term period, our property development plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are compatible with economic conditions. City Quays 4 and 5 are due to add 325 new homes – including affordable housing – and new commercial office space, with planning consent already secured. Clarendon Wharf is also progressing through the planning process, with proposals for up to 600 new homes and mixed-use spaces that will extend regeneration along the waterfront. These projects build on our existing work to regenerate Belfast's waterfront, delivering new homes and workspaces. This includes working with Titanic Quarter Limited on the Loft Lines residential project, due to open in this period. We have a long history of working together in shaping this part of Belfast Harbour Estate.



Artist's impression of a dual-purpose deepwater quay in use as a cruise terminal



Artist's impression of Maritime Skills Academy



Artist's impression of new logistics park

Sustainability runs through every proposed project, as Horizon 1 sees Belfast Harbour achieve our net zero goals by 2030. Across the Masterplan term we will deliver low carbon buildings and clean energy infrastructure, and we will prepare to roll-out onshore power connections.

Investing in Maritime Skills

Finally, Horizon 1 will see Belfast Harbour back the establishment of a training facility for maritime skills. By hosting and supporting this expansion, we will provide facilities for specialist training. Subjects will include port logistics, offshore renewables, seafaring skills, and marine digital technologies. A Maritime Skills Academy will equip a workforce with the know-how needed for the next generation of maritime, logistics and clean energy roles. This will ensure that our planned investment in infrastructure is matched by investment in people.

What you can influence

Together, these projects make Horizon 1 a period of imminent delivery. Several are already under way, while others are moving through the planning process. That means the scope for you to suggest changes to this stage is limited.

You have a greater opportunity to shape our Draft Masterplan in Horizons 2 and 3, where we are considering future priorities and exploring long-term plans.

Horizon 1: selected project locations



1. A new deepwater quay (D3)
2. Adapt for offshore renewables (D1)
3. Improve resilience of RoRo facilities
4. New warehousing and distribution facilities
5. Sustainable property development
6. Investing in people: Maritime Skills Academy



Artist's impression of City Quays 4

▶ Draft Plans for Horizon 2: 2030–2040

The second horizon is about step-change investment, building on the immediate delivery of Horizon 1. We want to develop our infrastructure, support clean energy, and make more of the waterfront available for renewal and community use. These projects are larger in scale and ambition, setting the stage for Belfast Harbour's transformation through the 2030s.

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Expanding Capacity for Trade

A central project will be the redevelopment of Stormont Wharf, a vital quay that already supports a range of mixed cargo uses. Our plans include options to deepen the berth and potentially the approach channel, depending on demand and ship size. This investment will provide flexibility and resilience, to ensure it can handle new trades and larger vessels.

At Victoria Terminal 3, the container terminal will be extended and deepened to handle the new "Irish Max" generation of vessels. This will future proof the main container hub for NI. It will also support exporters and importers and reinforce Belfast Harbour's role as a logistics gateway.

To further support this, Horizon 2 plans also include expanding logistics warehousing capacity at the Port. This is necessary to meet forecasted demand and to strengthen regional supply chains. Customers want high-quality, sustainable logistics space that links to transport networks. These facilities will attract investment, boost trade, and solidify our role as a focal point for employment in the region.

Cleaner Power, Greener Places

The decade will also see the first major roll-out of shore power across key berths. Onshore connections let vessels turn off their engines and access clean energy while docked. This will cut emissions to support the decarbonisation of Irish Sea operations. It will also ensure Belfast Harbour remains competitive if environmental standards tighten.



Artist's impression of assembly of offshore wind turbines



Artist's impression of Clarendon Wharf



Artist's impression of logistics facilities

Horizon 2: selected project locations



1. Expanding capacity - Stormont Wharf
2. Expanding capacity - West Bank
3. Expanding capacity - airport logistics
4. Strengthening D3 deepwater quay
5. Linking two public amenity green spaces
6. Developing homes, workplaces & leisure
7. Expanding Belfast Harbour Marina

Stage 2 of D3, our new dual-purpose deepwater quay, will expand its use to handle next generation offshore wind. This will help us sustain our role as a hub for offshore wind assembly, installation, and maintenance. These plans will foster growth in the renewable energy sector. They will also bring new opportunities for local enterprises.

Horizon 2 also includes plans for new public space amenities. We will work to create a green corridor connecting existing nature conservation areas and supporting biodiversity. The current RSPB Belfast's Window on Wildlife is already sited between our two planned deepwater berths. We are aiming to link this to the existing nature reserve close to Belfast City Airport. Walkways, boardwalks and viewing platforms will open up this part of Belfast Harbour as an appealing space. This will create new access to nature for residents, which will deliver long-term social and environmental value.

Homes, Workspaces and Leisure

Our regeneration will continue at sites closest to the city, including Albert Quay and Clarendon Wharf. These developments will bring new homes, workplaces and public realm spaces. They will also strengthen the growing connection between Belfast Harbour and the wider city. Subject to funding, this could include a proposed new active-travel bridge linking Sailortown with Titanic Quarter.

Finally, our draft Horizon 2 plans will see the expansion of Belfast Harbour Marina. We will further expand the capacity added in 2019. We also plan to increase further berthing capacity in phases during Horizon 2, to boost leisure and tourism growth.

These draft plans will boost port capacity, support clean energy, revitalise the waterfront, and add new amenities. Horizon 2 highlights a decade of growth. Our draft plans for this period blend economic investment with benefits for both the environment and the community.



Artist's impression of Belfast Harbour Meadows

▶ Draft Plans for Horizon 3: 2040–2050

The third horizon is about long-term transformation. It will go beyond previous stages to reshape how Belfast Harbour works as a port – and to further enhance our connection with the city. Our draft plans to 2050 deliver three thematic benefits: making space for future trade, enabling clean energy, and reshaping the waterfront into vibrant spaces for people to live and work.

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Reclamation for Growth

To meet forecasted long-term growth in demand for freight moved by container or trailer, we are planning a new terminal at the end of the West Bank Road. This would involve reclaiming land north of Victoria Terminal 4 to create a large terminal to support trade. Reclamation is part of Belfast's story: much of the port, and even the Titanic Quarter, was built this way. The last major reclamation project was 25 years ago, and this approach is well proven. West Bank is the logical place for expansion, and Belfast Harbour previously had planning consent for such a development. This location already hosts three ferry terminals and the container terminal, with strong road access. Co-locating these functions would strengthen efficiency, reduce cost and improve sustainability.

Expanded Regeneration where City meets Port

Horizon 3 also continues the move of port activity further outwards in Belfast Harbour. This frees land closer to the city for redevelopment. We want to dynamically redevelop port lands nearest to the city. The goal is to extend our existing waterside neighbourhoods with more homes, workplaces, and vibrant ground floors. This would be supported by new streets and high-quality public spaces. We plan to consider waterfront land – nearest to Belfast city and no longer suitable for port use – as a placemaking asset. We can create promenades, parks and an expanded marina to knit districts together and encourage people to live, work and spend time by the water. This will integrate with our earlier developments, so this part of Belfast Harbour becomes a coherent urban quarter.



Artist's impression of regeneration at city's edge



Artist's impression of regeneration at city's edge



Artist's impression of clean energy hub

Clean Energy and Climate Resilience

To support the move to lower carbon fuels for shipping, we plan to establish a Clean Energy Hub. The zone would provide for new fuels such as methanol, ammonia, hydrogen or advanced biofuels. It would have appropriate storage, safety systems and connections to wider distribution networks. It would also serve the offshore wind supply chain with space for components and maintenance.

Our goal is a flexible cluster that adapts as technologies mature. We plan to encourage a reduction in hydrocarbon land use and promote the uptake of cleaner alternatives. This would help shipowners, hauliers, and the industry to begin decarbonising while also ensuring a secure supply. The long-term outlook is for lower carbon per unit of cargo as use of new fuels grows.

The need for climate resilience shapes every scheme in this horizon. This includes extending shore power coverage to more berths. To make this happen, port users and public utilities will have to work together to deliver the electrical capacity needed for shore power.

We will ensure all our plans over the next 25 years are built with climate-adaptation in mind from the start, reducing the need for future measures. This will include stronger quay structures, drainage upgrades, and design allowances for sea-level rise. The buildings and public spaces we develop will meet the highest environmental standards. We will design the urban environment to support biodiversity. We will consider sustainability measures in waterfront streets and open spaces. This will help keep new neighbourhoods cleaner, more temperate and welcoming year-round.

Bettering Belfast Harbour

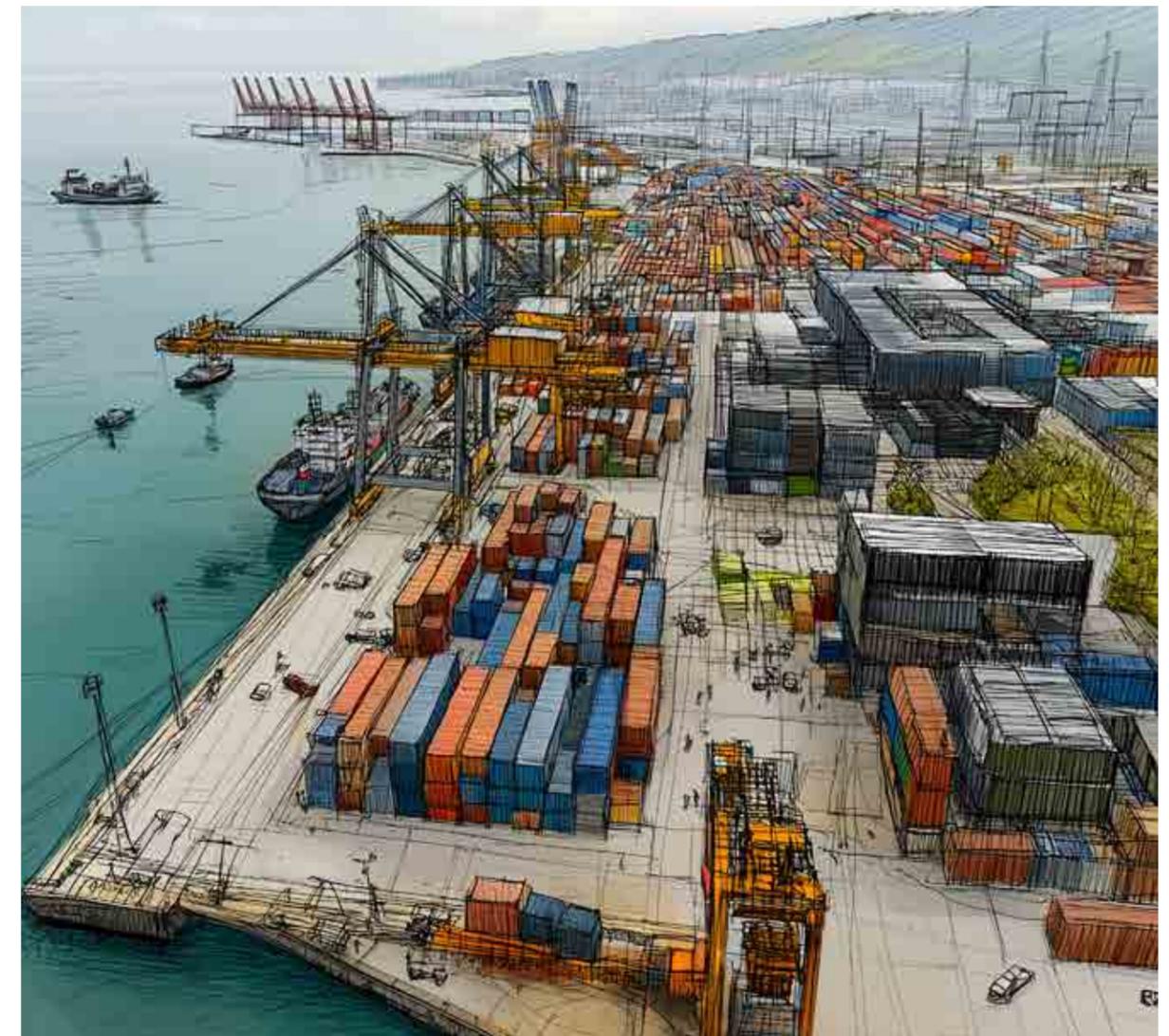
Horizon 3 positions Belfast Harbour for trade in the second half of the 21st century – while unlocking more of the waterfront for the city. As with earlier Horizons, our aims for this Horizon are flexible. We will adapt them when required – to respond to changing customer needs, new policies, or to avail of opportunities created by new technology. Together, these plans complete the arc that begins in Horizon 1 and scales in Horizon 2.

We aim to reach 2050 with Belfast Harbour becoming even more competitive, capable, clean and closely connected to the people we serve.

Horizon 3: selected project locations



- 1. Reclamation for growth
- 2. Expanded regeneration
- 3. Clean energy hub



Artist's impression of new cargo terminal on reclaimed land

Dependencies & Enablers

Belfast Harbour alone cannot deliver our ambitions for the next 25 years. A competitive, cleaner and more connected port depends on investment and action by others. Stronger links between the port and the city are essential if growth is to be sustainable. Many of these dependencies fall outside our scope to plan, fund or deliver.

Planning and Policy Alignment

Each development project in this Draft Masterplan must pass through the statutory planning process. Delivery will depend on environmental consents, policy alignment and community support. A strong partnership with local communities, with Belfast City Council and the NI Executive will be crucial.

Our aim is that this Draft Masterplan underpins the vision and ambitions of government. Our plans will also support the goal of DBEC to develop a strong cross-border investment opportunity. We have the ambition to be the primary port meeting the growth opportunities of this corridor.

Transport Connectivity

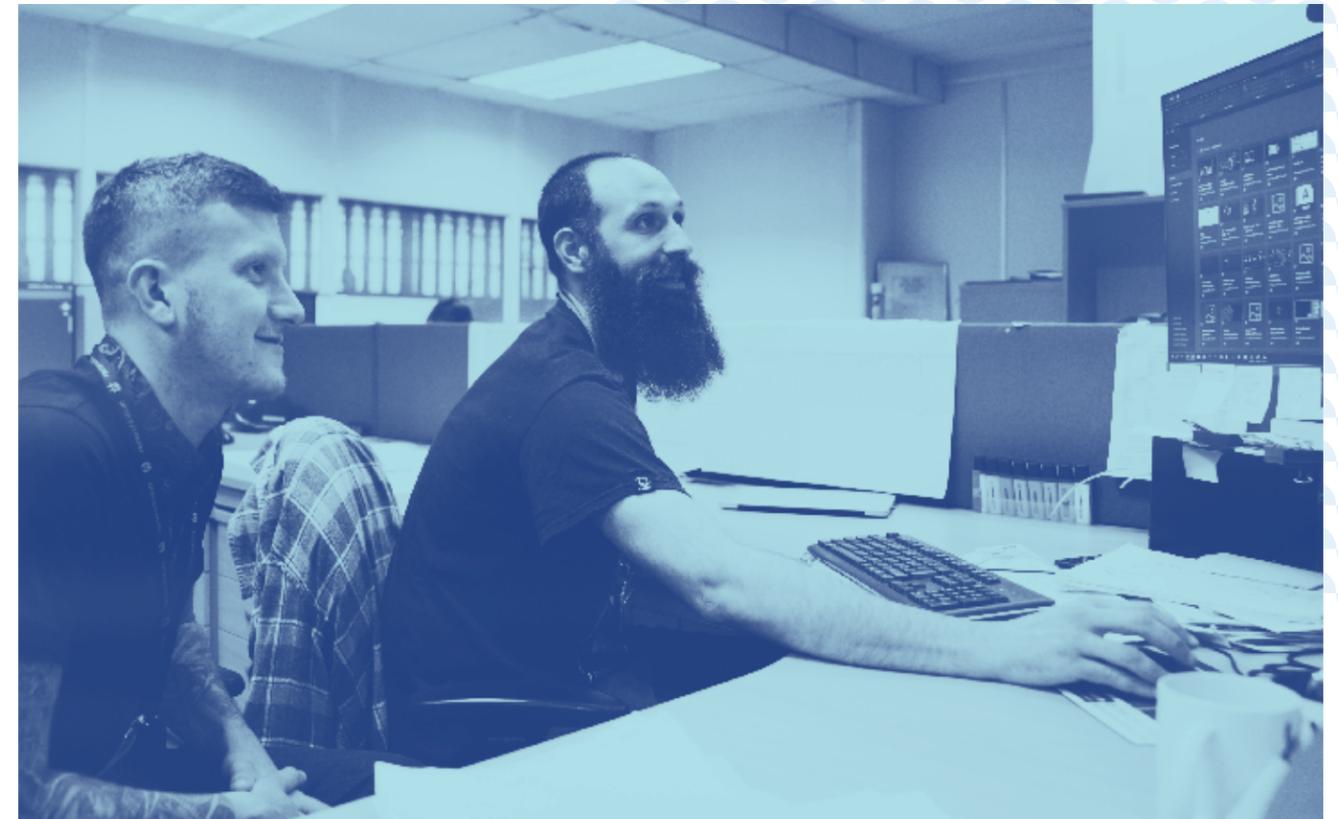
A growing port needs road and active travel links that can move people and cargo safely and efficiently in and out of Belfast Harbour. Some current connections are already stretched and under pressure.

Planning and development of strategic transport projects rest with the Department for Infrastructure, in partnership with operators such as Translink. Their rail and bus services will be central to creating sustainable, low-carbon access to the port. We look forward to further collaboration with them, and with port users, to achieve greater connectivity to enable the goals in our Draft Masterplan.

Utilities Capacity

Growth in both port operations and new city neighbourhoods will place added demands on utilities. In the next 25 years, Belfast Harbour anticipates that the local electricity transmission and distribution networks will need greater capacity.

These improvements, if delivered, could help us provide shore power and future clean energy hubs. It will also be important to have the support of NI Water to increase sewage and water treatment capacity. Without these upgrades, our pace of regeneration and decarbonisation will have to slow.



Funding and Borrowing Powers

As a Trust Port, we reinvest all our post-tax profits into the port and the Belfast Harbour Estate. However, our current borrowing capacity is restricted by how we are classified for accounting purposes. Even if we borrow from commercial lenders, this impacts the budget of the Department for Infrastructure. Our Horizon 2 and 3 plans rely on the reclassification of this accounting status. This change would let us prudently borrow more money for bigger projects. Accessing joint ventures and government funding may also be needed to successfully deliver some plans.

Flexibility in Delivery

Belfast Harbour has always proactively adapted to changes in trade, technology, and policy – this has kept us strong and competitive. That same adaptability can help us respond to the potential constraints noted above. Our Draft Masterplan is a framework, not cast-in-concrete foundations. If the forecasted trade growth does not occur, or happens at a different pace, we can respond. We can defer, re-sequence or accelerate projects to reflect changes in policy, demand, funding, planning or utility capacity. This will ensure we stay on course towards our 2050 vision.

Your Voice, Our Plan

Our Draft Masterplan to 2050 is not just Belfast Harbour's vision. It is a framework we want to refine with your help. Early consultation with port users, estate tenants and statutory bodies has already helped us prepare this draft. The next step is to hear directly from the wider public.

Have Your Say

This consultation gives everyone the opportunity to influence how Belfast Harbour grows over the next 25 years. An eight-week public consultation will run from mid-November to mid-January. Your views will help us balance the needs of trade, regeneration, sustainability and city life. We will host four temporary drop-in exhibitions at venues across Belfast. This will be supported by a display at Belfast Harbour Offices for the duration of this consultation. We aim to ensure this process is visible and inclusive.

Your Feedback, Our Commitment

We are committed to reporting openly on what we hear. The final Masterplan will include a "You Said, We Listened" section, showing how your feedback has influenced our decisions. Feedback from our customers, local communities and the wider public will guide us. This consultation will improve our final Masterplan and, where possible, it will reflect your feedback.

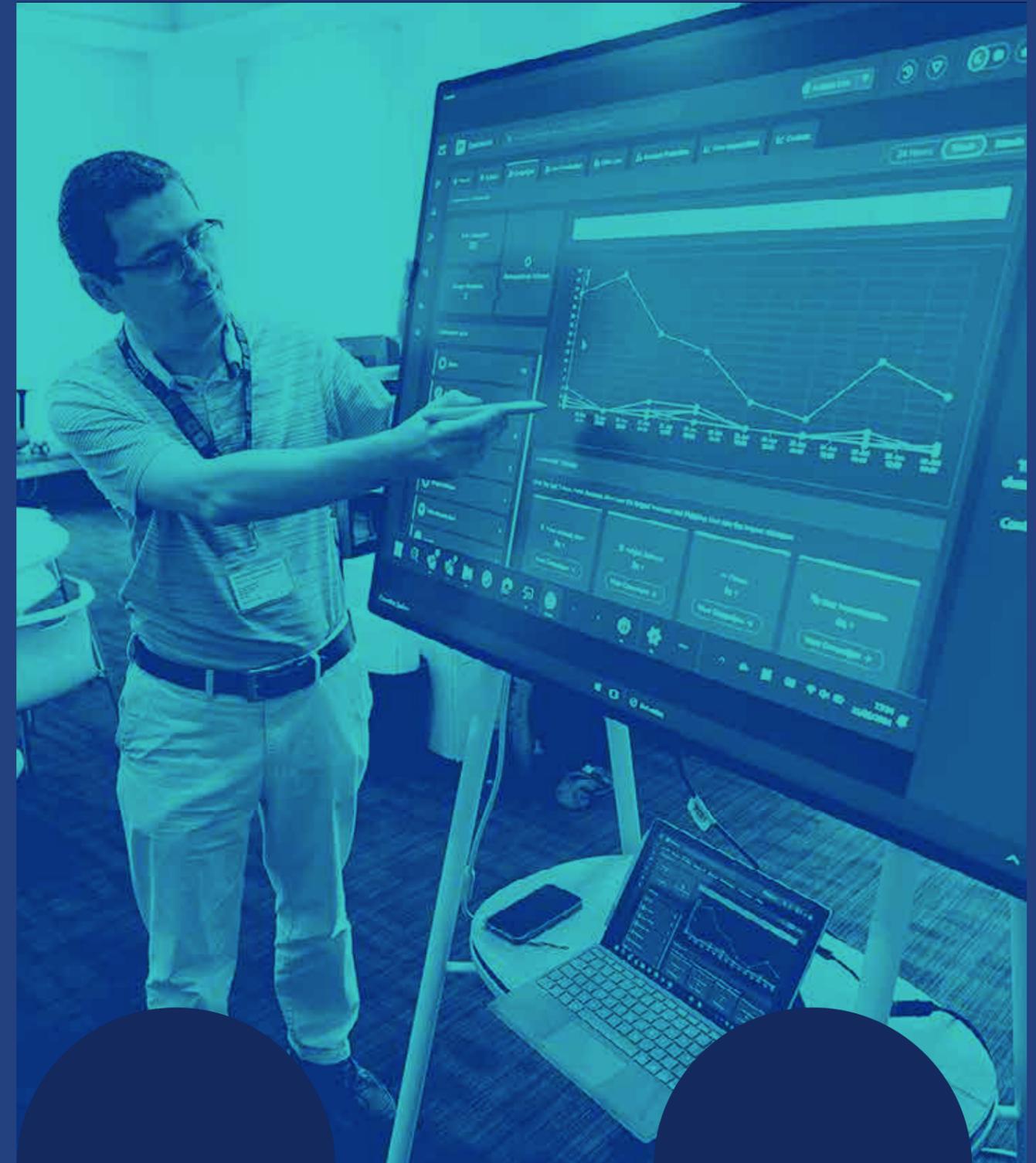
How to Take Part

Visit belfast-harbour.co.uk/masterplan or scan the QR code below to take part in our online survey on this Draft Masterplan. To learn more or to ask questions, you can also attend one of our public events. The details of where and when these events are taking place can also be found on the web page above. Finally, you can email us your views to 2050masterplan@gravisplanning.com or post your comments to the Harbour Office, Corporation Square, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 3AL



Next Steps

Every journey begins with a single step, and this is ours. In the months ahead, voices from across the city and beyond will help refine and complete this Draft Masterplan. By May 2026, we will have a shared vision for the next quarter-century – an evolving guide that adapts with each five-year strategic cycle. Projects will rise in sequence, beginning with Horizon 1, each one a signal of progress. We will measure openly, report honestly, and listen continually. With your voice and our commitment, Belfast Harbour can grow as a gateway of opportunity and a legacy for generations yet to come.



Information on our Draft Masterplan is also available online at www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/masterplan. This allows for use of screen readers and other assistive technologies.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the consultation documentation and a Freepost return survey, you can request this by telephoning Gravis Planning on 028 90 425 222, by email to 2050masterplan@gravisplanning.com or in writing to: Gravis Planning, 1 Pavilions Office Park, Kinnegar Drive, Holywood, BT18 9JQ.



**Belfast
Harbour**
Draft Masterplan
2025-50

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