



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Waterfront Task Group Update
<b>Date:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes ☐ No ☒

**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**

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**


**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes ☒ No ☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of the Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework, and in particular to provide an update 'Under the Bridges' and the 'Sailortown/Titanic Quarter Bridge' projects, including progress to date, consultation/ planning timeline and next steps.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the update on the progress of the Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework;</li> <li>• Note that Members of the Waterfront Task Group will be providing an update presentation to this Committee meeting that will be in conjunction to this report;</li> <li>• Note the update on the Under the Bridges and Sailortown/Titanic Quarter Bridge projects.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
3.1	As reported to the CG&R Committee in October 2023 a Waterfront Task Group was established to develop a focused approach to the Belfast waterfront, in response to 'A Bolder Vision' Key Move 'Embracing the River'. This Key Move seeks to capitalise on one of the city's most defining, but underused assets, the River Lagan, by strengthening connections, promoting new leisure activities and attracting tourism. Improved connections from the city centre to the waterfront and its surrounding communities would remove barriers by providing links across with new bridges and enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure along the river. The Key Move also promotes revitalisation along the Lagan waterfront and on Queen's Island including activating the river front with new uses and spaces to dwell and utilise waterfront developments like Titanic Quarter, City Quays, community led projects and other initiatives such as the Maritime Mile.
3.2	The Waterfront Task Group, chaired by BCC Chief Executive and consisting of Maritime Belfast Trust, BCC officers, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, local community groups, Titanic Quarter Ltd, DfC, DfE, Tourism NI, Odyssey Trust and DEARA commissioned a detailed analysis of the waterfront area from the Ormeau Road Bridge to Thompsons Dock.
3.3	Consultants, Schulze + Grassov undertook a detailed analysis of over 10km of the waterfront, compiling analysis on the completed and pending developments, as well as identifying the catalyst opportunities and gaps in infrastructure to maximise the social, economic and environmental opportunities that exist along the waterfront. This work also undertook to

	<p>identify the existing and proposed projects emerging from within the adjacent communities, and to identify catalyst opportunities to connect these projects and the local communities to the wider education, employment and leisure facilities along the waterfront corridor. This work was carried out in consultation with a range of stakeholders including local communities through online surveys and a dedicated charrette style design workshop.</p>
3.4	<p>Following a detailed analysis of over 10km of the waterfront, Members of the CG&amp;R Committee received a presentation on the Framework in October 2023 and approved the Belfast Waterfront Framework (<a href="#">Link to October Committee Meeting &amp; Framework</a>).</p>
3.5	<p>The Waterfront Task Group continues to meet regularly and are making significant progress in the ongoing regeneration of Belfast's waterfront, with a range of initiatives currently underway that aim to enhance connectivity, promote active travel, celebrate the city's maritime heritage, and foster inclusive, community-led placemaking. Local community groups, including Eastside Partnership, Lower Ormeau Residents Association and Sailortown Regeneration Group are Members of the taskforce and are proactively engaged in the Taskforce to develop the emerging work strands to ensure effective design and delivery to meet the shared vision of the Waterfront Framework.</p>
3.6	<p>As part of this work, representatives of the Waterfront Task Group undertook a study visit to Copenhagen in 2024 to research best practise, and recently participated in a cycle tour along the Maritime Mile which provided valuable insight into the active travel experience in the area, highlighting both existing connections to the wider cycling network and identifying barriers that require further attention. The tour also served as a platform to learn more about future initiatives under development along the waterfront, including projects under development, which seeks to improve accessibility and recreational opportunities across the waterfront.</p>
3.7	<p>This Committee has received a number of updates on Council Led projects emerging from A Bolder Vision and the Waterfront Framework, including Under the Bridges, the Sailortown/Titanic Quarter Bridge and the Queens Quay Kiosk. Members were also invited to attend a presentation update and boat tour of the Framework area in October 2024.</p>
3.8	<p>The waterfront has seen substantial development in recent years, with a steady pipeline of emerging developments coming through the planning system to further enable the areas' ability to deliver on the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and the LDP. In addition to the relocation of Ulster University to York Street and the subsequent influx of student accommodation in the surrounding areas, the emerging development landscape of this area is ambitious with the impact expected to be transformational. Projects such as City Quays</p>

Gardens has been delivered and is operational since April 2025. The gardens transformed a former car park into a vibrant green space with walkways, seating areas, an events lawn with amphitheatre-style seating, and an iconic 'Gateway Nest' sculpture. Planning approval has been secured for further developments in the area including;

- Public realm works at [Little York Street, Little Patrick Street](#), Planning secured in 2025, and currently undergoing the Traffic Road Order Process prior to commencing construction procurement
- Residential development comprising 256no. units, public realm, and associated access at [City Quays 4](#) and the 69 affordable homes in Pilot Street,
- [Office, retail, community and cultural development at City Quays 5](#),
- Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) [at 39 Corporation Street](#).
- [Build to rent scheme at 21-29 Corporation Street / 18-24 Tomb Street](#).
- Public realm environmental improvement scheme at [Cathedral Gardens](#).

3.9

Furthermore, there are several additional schemes at various stages of development, namely,

- Public realm improvements including development of urban recreational space [Under the Bridges](#).
- Sailortown / Titanic Quarter Active Travel Bridge,
- BCC Housing Led Regeneration Site at Corporation Street.
- DfI's Corporation Street Active Travel Cycle Lane development (including lighting at Dock Street) which is due to open to public consultation in October 2025, and
- The Clarendon Wharf residential development plans within the Harbour Estate including activation of Clarendon Dock, Barrow Square, Clarendon Road and Corporation
- . The Gasworks to Ormeau Park Bridge, funded through BRCD, is currently at the procurement stage to secure a contractor to deliver this cross-Lagan active travel connection.
- John Murray Lockhouse secured planning in 2023, to transform the site into a community café, exhibition and training space, and a good relations hub, with a new water activity hub at McConnell's Lock with work ongoing through the BCC Neighbourhood Renewal fund to bring the project forward.
- Construction is ongoing to deliver 94 affordable homes on the Gasworks Northern Fringe Raphael St site

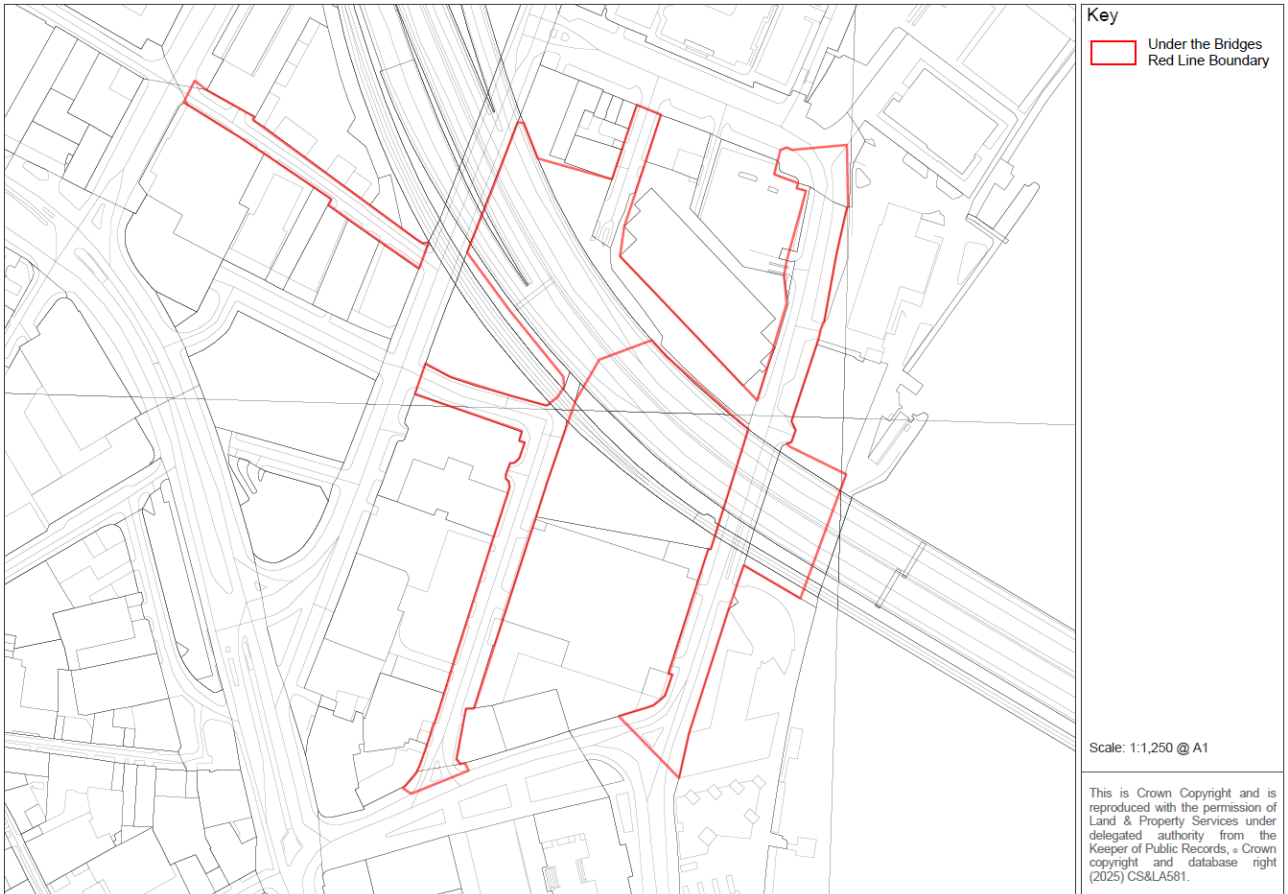
3.10	The work of the Waterfront Framework will be ensuring the successful integration of these projects into the waterfront area as well as delivering key connectivity and public spaces to enable the successful embedment of sustainable communities within the existing landscape and areas.
3.11	Collectively, the work of the Waterfront Task Group reflects the strength of cross-sector collaboration in shaping Belfast's waterfront. They represent a shared commitment to delivering an inclusive, connected, and world-class destination that supports cultural life, environmental sustainability, active travel, tourism, and community development. The work currently underway is laying a strong foundation for the long-term transformation of the waterfront as a space that will serve both residents and visitors and ensure the protection of the area for future generations.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
4.1	<p><b>Waterfront Promenade Framework Progress Update</b></p> <p>In conjunction with this Committee paper, Maritime Belfast Trust will be providing a presentation to this Committee meeting to provide an update on an emerging strand of work that will focus on building on the heritage of the area, as well providing capacity building within the local community networks. A presentation will also be provided along with this paper to highlight some of the projects delivered to date, and to provide an overview of emerging projects currently under development, as outlined below.</p>
4.2	Maritime Belfast Trust is undertaking a feasibility study to establish the River Lagan as a Blueway in line with Blueways Ireland Accreditation standards. Blueway Accreditation identifies a network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites on a waterway. With the potential to be the first urban Blueway under the scheme, the accreditation brings a number of opportunities including strong branding, user reassurance, enhanced visitor experience, community engagement and funding opportunities. The study will involve site assessments, stakeholder and community engagement, and a co-design process to evaluate the potential of the Blueway route. Key recommendations will be developed to ensure any proposals balance environmental sustainability with the area's industrial heritage and meet accreditation criteria over the short, medium, and long term. While water quality remains an issue this work strand will set out a pathway to achieving Blueway accreditation for the River Lagan.
4.3	Several projects are already contributing to the transformation of the waterfront into a welcoming and vibrant destination. The recent addition of the Queen's Quay Kiosk to the

	<p>Maritime Mile has delivered an increased social value to the area. Operated by Native Coffee, the kiosk combines hospitality with cultural expression, offering a “coffee and bake” menu alongside a platform for local artisans to showcase and sell their work. Delivered by BCC and funded through the Department for Communities’ Covid Revitalisation Programme, the kiosk features public artwork by local artist Terry Bradley, depicting stories of industrial Belfast. The space around the kiosk has also been enhanced with new planting and seating, reinforcing Queen’s Quay as a key gateway along the waterfront. Native Coffee have been active in animating the area as a key connectivity node between the city centre and Queens Island, regularly hosting jazz evenings, DJ evenings and running clubs centred around the iconic structure.</p>
4.4	<p>Upstream, work has commenced on the redevelopment of the former Lockhouse along the Lagan Towpath. This £2.9 million capital project, led by Council, will transform the site into a community café, exhibition and training space, and a good relations hub. The project complements the existing community garden and men’s shed already active in the area and will be supported by a new water activity hub at McConnell’s Lock, being delivered in partnership with the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) through the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.</p>
4.5	<p>The waterfront is also being activated through a growing programme of cultural events, most notably the Belfast Maritime Festival, which took place in September. Organised by Belfast City Council in partnership with the Maritime Belfast Trust and supported by multiple stakeholders including Belfast Harbour, Titanic Quarter, Odyssey Trust, and Tourism NI, the festival brought the Maritime Mile to life through a diverse offering of maritime-themed entertainment, music, food, arts, and family activities. The festival served both to celebrate Belfast’s rich maritime heritage and to animate the waterfront as a space for public engagement and tourism.</p>
4.6	<p><b>Connectivity, Sustainable and Active Travel</b></p> <p>At CG&amp;R Committee in October 2023, Members approved the Waterfront Framework and initial priority areas including, Under the Bridges and the Sailortown to Titanic Quarter Active Travel Bridge, and as such work commenced on developing these schemes. In January 2025 the Committee approved the submission of a funding application to DfI’s Active Travel funding to progress designs on the Under the Bridges and Sailortown Bridge projects. These projects aim to improve the connectivity and place-making between the Sailortown community, the City Quays and Queens Island areas and the city centre. The need to improve the connection between the city and the harbour area has been highlighted in previous plans including the</p>

	<p>Great Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan, A Bolder Vision and the Belfast Waterfront Framework, and is of increasing importance to overcome the long-standing severance to communities and given the growth in population as a result of new residential developments, educational and leisure opportunities within the area. There is fragmentation in the urban form and blight caused by large road infrastructure that generates air and noise pollution and creates a hostile environment for pedestrianisations and cyclists. The sporadic lighting and unoccupied spaces also raise issues in relation to personal safety, which prevents people from taking this route, despite it being a direct link to the city centre and the Sailortown and City Quays areas. This funding is now secured, and in conjunction with funding from BCC and BHC the design development work is underway with updates below.</p> <p><b>Under the Bridges</b></p>
4.7	<p>The Under the Bridges project will be a significant connectivity project for the city that aims to improve the connectivity links between the City Centre and City Quays / Sailortown and to provide an enhanced amenity / urban sports space in the area under the M3 bridges. The design work focuses on the connections between Corporation Square and the city centre along the proposed active travel routes of Tomb Street, Gamble St, Gt. Patrick St (connecting into the BCC Housing Led Regeneration site at Corporation Street), and Little Patrick Street (connecting into the Little York Street Little Patrick Street Scheme). Proposals for an urban sports / recreation space will also be brought to public consultation for the car park areas under the M3 flyover, aimed to improving lighting and usage of this area as well as providing a recreation facility for existing and emerging communities and users alike. Design development is happening in tandem with the DfI Active Travel Team to ensure that the proposed scheme integrates with the proposed Corporation Street Cycle Scheme that is due to go to public consultation in October 2025.</p>
4.8	<p>Designs have progressed on the Under the Bridges Project with a PAD public consultation event to be held in the 'AC Hotel Belfast by Marriott' on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 3pm – 7pm, followed by an online event to follow on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 6pm – 7pm to inform the emerging designs. In addition to this an update presentation on the projects shall be taken to the North, East and City Centre Area Working Group's in November/December 2025. The ICT will then analyse the results of the consultation process and use this information to update the designs to ensure the outcomes of the consultation are integrated into the design. The emerging designs that will be brought to public consultation will be presented to this Committee meeting.</p>
4.9	

4.10	<p>Following the completion of the consultation, the ICT aims to submit a full application to Planning in Autumn 2025, targeting an approval by end of March 2026, however it should be noted that the scheme remains subject to capital funding to enable delivery.</p>
4.11	<p><b>Sailortown/Titanic Quarter Bridge</b></p> <p>The proposed Sailortown bridge will provide a new cross harbour pedestrian and cycle opening bridge that could complete the Harbour Loop, provide connections between Sailortown and North Belfast to the economic and educational opportunities on Queen's Island and providing a critical active travel connection to the newly completed York Street Train Station and the Queens Island estate.</p>
4.12	<p>Funding has now been secured from DfI, BCC and BHC, and a design team of Arup with Knight Architects have been appointed to develop the bridge designs up to RIBA Stage 2. This work will provide concept design, technical requirements, cost plan and outline specification, and feasibility information including capex and opex requirements that will clarify the optimum route to securing capital delivery funding and long-term operation and maintenance.</p> <p>Community and Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken throughout the process to ensure the optimum design and route for the area with further updates to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The design development of the Under the Bridges and Sailortown Bridge projects are funded by DfI, BHC, and BCC through previously agreed budgets. Work is ongoing to identify and secure Capital funding to deliver these projects. Financial implications in terms of the loss of carparking income associated with the UTB's site will be assessed and incorporated within the whole life costs of the project, and will be reported to a future meeting of the CG&amp;R and SP&amp;R Committees.</p>
5.0	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>

## **Appendix**



***Under the Bridges - Red line boundary map***