



Subject:	BHC Draft Masterplan 2025–2050 draft Council Response
Date:	15 th April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager. 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 individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<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 agree the Council’s response to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Draft Masterplan 2025-2050.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the Council response to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners draft Masterplan 2025-2050. 2. 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	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.

3.3	<p>BHC presented the draft Masterplan to the Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee on the 25th March 2026, outlining the important role that the harbour estate plays in supporting local and regional economic growth and in assisting on the delivery of the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.4	<p>BHC Chief Executive Joe O’Neill outlined the vision to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase port capacity for trade, cruise and offshore wind • deliver emerging plans for regeneration including additional provision for housing, commercial, logistics, sustainable and active travel • continue to support community and skills development • reclassify the port as a Trust Port to increase the BHC ability to invest in the masterplan in a prudent manner • transition net zero by 2030 and to support the wider region to transition through clean energy hubs, off-shore wind facilities and increasing green corridors and enhancing biodiversity and public access.
3.5	<p>In response to the presentation Members asked further questions in relation to the progress of the Trust Port legislation, the skills academies and the roll out of shore connections for cruise. Mr. O’Neill concluded by requesting that the Council would consider the masterplan and provide positive support and endorsement for its strategic vision and overarching framework. Subsequently, Members agreed at the Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee on the 25th March to submit a formal response to the Masterplan.</p>
3.6	<p>Members are asked to approve the draft response for approval is included within Appendix A of this report, as summarised below;</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. • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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
	Appendix A – Council Response to the BHC draft Masterplan 2025-2050