

Following the presentation to the Special Meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration (CG&R) Committee in March 2026, Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the BHC draft Masterplan 2025-50. Strategically Belfast City Council recognises the important role that the wider Harbour Estate plays in supporting the delivery of the Belfast Agenda, as well as the critical role that the Estate has in supporting and growing the local and regional economy. With regard to the Masterplan the Council welcomes the Commissioners vision to increase the capacity of the Harbour to support growth across the region, to invest in regeneration and the provision of much needed homes for the city, and in providing a leading role towards sustainable energy provision, growing our skills base and supporting local communities.

Strategic Alignment

The Council welcomes the Draft Masterplan's 25-year framework, which aligns with the Belfast Agenda. We particularly draw reference to the Local Development Plan and draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) masterplan, including the 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

Port Capacity and Economic Growth

The Council recognises the strategic importance of the Harbour as the region's primary trade gateway. We support the long-term proposals for Horizon 3 (2040–2050), including the ambition to increase the port capacity, including the provision for the handling of additional trade, additional cruise capacity and the provision of off-shore wind infrastructure supporting economic and tourism growth for the region as well as supporting the transition to sustainable energy provision.

Transition to Clean Energy

We endorse the commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2030, as well as the establishment a Clean Energy Hub to facilitate a transition to new fuels. This initiative, alongside the roll-out of shore power for docked vessels, is a vital component of the city's broader decarbonisation goals and the Belfast Agendas objective to create a sustainable and resilient regional city.

Innovation and Sectoral Growth

The Council acknowledges the Harbour's pivotal role in growing the film, innovation, and tourism sectors. Continued investment in the Belfast Harbour Studios and the proposed Global Innovation Institute are essential for the knowledge economy. Furthermore,

we welcome the vision for an iconic waterfront that enhances tourism while delivering sustainable connectivity between the Harbour Estate and the city centre.

Trust Port Reclassification and Financial Prudence

As agreed by the CG&R Committee in March 2025, the Council supports the reclassification of trust ports and welcomes the progress made to date in bringing forward the appropriate legislation required to bring this forward.

Community Partnership and Engagement

Finally, the Council stresses the importance of ensuring the delivery of this Masterplan is carried out in genuine partnership with local communities. We encourage the Harbour to continue its proactive engagement with city stakeholders to ensure that regeneration projects, such as the 3,000 proposed new homes, meet the diverse needs of Belfast's residents.

The Council looks forward to the final publication of the Masterplan in May 2026 and to our continued collaboration in shaping the future of the city.