

**Development Management Officer Report  
Committee Application**

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Application Ref:</b> LA04/2025/1661/F	<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>Proposal:</b> Installation of a new floating pontoon to replace the existing wooden jetty.	<b>Location:</b> River bank approximately 150m north east of Shaws Bridge Car Park, Belfast, BT9 5YN
<b>Referral Route:</b> The application is made on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (d))	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval subject to condition and subject to consultation response from HED	
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Mark Scott DfI Rivers Eastern Regional Office Ravarnet House Altona Road Lisburn BT275QB	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Rory McGeown Construction and Procurement Delivery Clare House 303 Airport Rd West Belfast BT3 9ED
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Date Valid:</b> 27/10/2025	
<b>Target Date:</b> 09/02/2026	
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Ciara Reville (Principal Planning Officer)	
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	
<p>The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a new floating pontoon, which would replace an existing fixed bankside wooden jetty in the same location along the riverbank of the river Lagan. The existing wooden jetty has been closed for use due to its condition. The works take the form of a modular floating pontoon system secured by 2 no. steel locating piles, connected to the shore via a hinged access gangway and walkway with handrails. Localised works are also proposed to install concrete plinths at existing ground level on the bank.</p> <p>The site is located within Clement Wilson Park a designated Site of Local Conservation Importance (BT084/13). This is an area of parkland and walking trails within the wider designated Lagan Valley Regional Park (COU9) and Lagan Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB 1) owned by Belfast City Council. The river Lagan runs through this parkland with a number of Community Greenways accessible nearby. The site is accessed from the Malone Road.</p> <p>The Key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principle of Development</li> <li>- Impact on amenity</li> <li>- Impact on the character and appearance of the area</li> <li>- Other considerations</li> </ul> <p>There are no objections from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) or Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Rivers. Consultation response from Department for Communities (DfC)</p>	

Historic Environment Division (HED) is currently outstanding, and no third representations have been received.

**Recommendation**

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is acceptable.

It is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, including any issues from the outstanding HED consultation response, provided that they are not substantive.

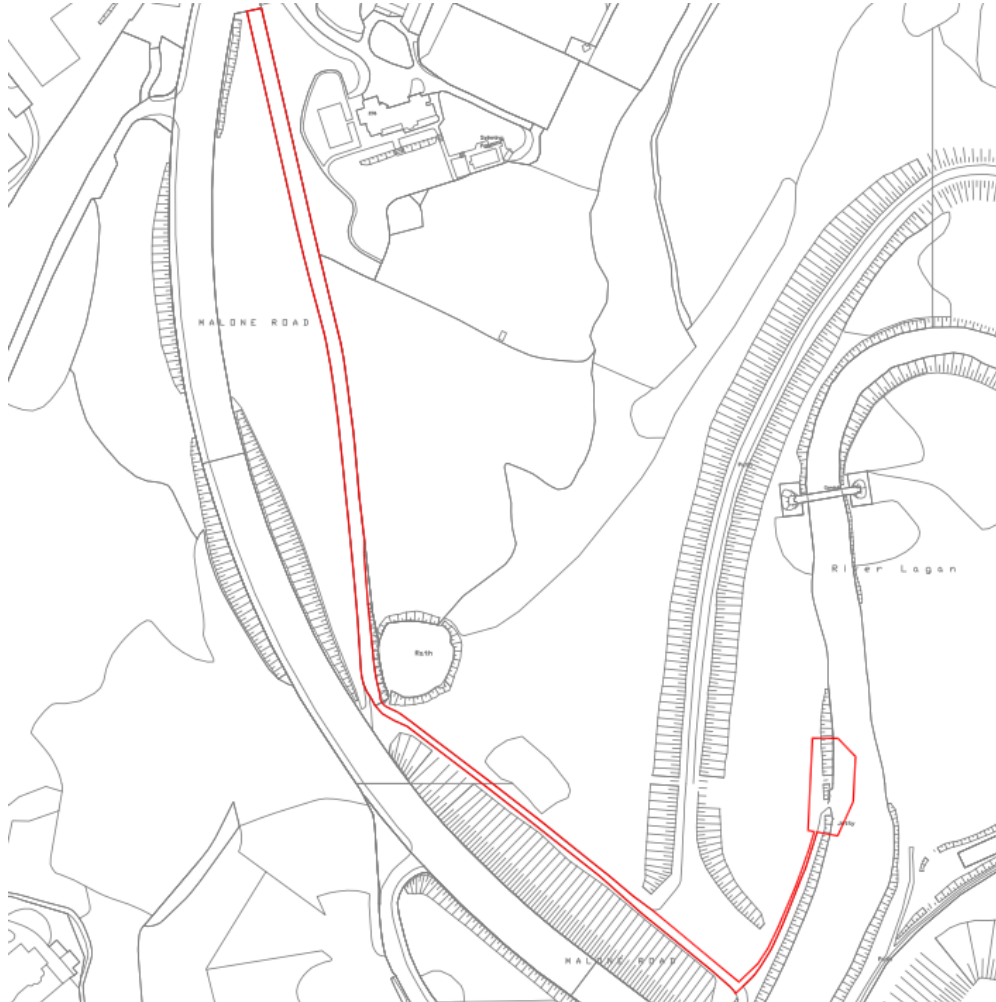
**Officer Report**

**1.0**

**Drawings**

**1.1**

**Site Location Plan**





<b>2.0</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b>
2.1	The site is located within Clement Wilson Park, a designated Site of Local Conservation Importance (BT084/13). This is an area of parkland and walking trails within the wider designated Lagan Valley Regional Park (COU9) and Lagan Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB 1) owned by Belfast City Council. The river Lagan runs through this parkland with a number of Community Greenways accessible nearby. The site is accessed from the Malone Road.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Description of Proposal</b>
3.1	The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a new floating pontoon, which would replace an existing fixed bankside wooden jetty in the same location along the riverbank of the river Lagan. The existing wooden jetty has been closed for use due to its condition. The works take the form of a modular floating pontoon system secured by 2 no. steel locating piles, connected to the shore via a hinged access gangway and walkway with handrails. Localised works are also proposed to install concrete plinths at existing ground level on the bank.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</b> Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk</li> <li>- Policy GB1 – Green and Blue Infrastructure network</li> <li>- Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities</li> <li>- Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure</li> <li>- Policy DC1 – All Countryside Development – general policy principles</li> <li>- Policy DCI3 – Other Proposed Development in the Countryside</li> <li>- Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space</li> </ul>
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy OS4 – New Open Space Outside Settlements</li> <li>- Policy OS6 – Facilities Ancillary to Water Sports</li> <li>- Policy LC1A – AONB's</li> <li>- Policy LC2 – Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP)</li> </ul>
4.5	<b>Supplementary Planning Guidance: Planning &amp; Flood Risk</b>
4.6	<b>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</b> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)
4.7	<b>Regional Planning Policy</b> Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2
4.8	<b>Relevant Planning History</b>  There is no planning history relevant to the proposal site.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Consultations and Representations</b>
5.1	<b>Statutory Consultations</b> NIEA Water Management Unit & Natural Environment Division – No objections. DfI Rivers – No objections.

5.2	DfC HED – Consultation response awaited. No representations were received.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</b>
6.1	<b>Development Plan Context</b>
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.1.4	<b>Operational policies</b> – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out above under paragraph 4.2.
6.1.5	<b>Proposals Maps</b> – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	<b>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001</b> - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	<b>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004)</b> - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.8	<b>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</b> - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.2	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>The key issues to be considered as part of this assessment are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of Development</li> <li>• Impact on amenity</li> <li>• Impact on the character and appearance of the area</li> <li>• Flood Risk</li> <li>• Impact on Natural Heritage</li> </ul>

6.3	<p><b>Principle of Development</b></p> <p>The principle of recreational development/facilities ancillary to water sports has already been established as there is an existing wooden jetty for access to the water and as such is deemed acceptable at this location. The proposal retains the use as facilities ancillary to water sports as an access point to the waterway and supports policy position to promote healthy and active lifestyles and the provision of community infrastructure in the form of leisure facilities. The floating pontoon will allow for year-round access to the river due to its nature as not fixed but floating, promoting increased accessibility for users. The principle of the development is acceptable subject to further considerations below.</p>
6.4	<p><b>Impact on Amenity</b></p> <p>The proposed gangway measures approximately 12m in length from the edge of the riverbank to where it connects to 2 steel locating piles, with the floating pontoon measuring approximately 12m in length located in the water. The gangway measures approximately 1.2m in height. The pontoon floats in the water and is largely in line with the riverbank and floats at a height of approximately 2.5m. There are no properties located in the near vicinity of the application site. There is a Grade 2 Listed Boundary Marker, Historic Buildings Reference (HB26/17/127) located approximately 20m southwest of the application site. Subject to HED consultation response, it is not envisaged the proposal would have an adverse effect on the Listed Boundary Post. Any issue that may arise from consultation response will be addressed prior to grant of planning permission, with delegated authority sought for this. There are no amenity concerns regarding the proposal.</p>
6.5	<p><b>Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area</b></p> <p>The proposal is incidental to an existing use within an area of open space. The pontoon is considered appropriate for access to water sports use in the waterway. The design of the pontoon will result in limited visual impacts. Much of the proposal will be located within the waterway. Public views would largely be limited to near distance views from the walkway within the park and due to the scale of the proposal in terms of height, it is not considered the proposal would result in detrimental visual impacts and the character of the open space would be preserved.</p>
6.6	<p><b>Flood Risk</b></p> <p>The proposal site lies within a flood risk area and under Policy ENV4, an exception to development within a flood plain may be granted. Exception to Policy, U3 – Water compatible development such as for boat mooring, navigation and water based recreational use, which for operational reasons has to be located within the flood plain is applicable for this proposal. A flood risk assessment has been submitted and the assessment confirms the proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere and no other significant sources of flooding affect the proposed development. DfI Rivers offer no objection to these findings and subsequently offer no objection to the proposal.</p>
6.7	<p><b>Impact on Natural Heritage</b></p> <p>Northern Ireland Environment Agency was consulted due to the location within a waterway. Water Management Unit (WMU) offer no objection to the proposal and refer the applicant to standing advice on Pollution Prevention Guidance. Natural Environment Division (NED) have considered a Construction Environmental Management Plan, Construction Method Statement &amp; Ecological reports relating to protected species and offer no objection to the proposal.</p>

<b>8.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
8.1	Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to condition.
8.2	It is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, including any issues from the outstanding HED consultation response, provided that they are not substantive.
<p><b>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</li> </ol> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>	