



Report to:	Shadow Planning Committee
Subject:	Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Lagan, Belfast.
Date:	11th March 2015
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development (Ext. 3509)
Contact Officers:	K. Sutherland Ext 3578

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Regional Development published a feasibility report in April 2014 which considered a range of potential options for a new bridge across the Lagan River for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed bridge will provide a link across the Lagan River between Ormeau Embankment and the Gasworks Estate.
1.2	The feasibility report identified three bridge designs for further consideration. Subsequently, the Department completed an assessment of these options and identified a preferred bridge design.
1.3	The preferred design is a twin pylon cable stayed bridge with the pylon foundations located in the River Lagan, close to the banks of the river. An image of the preferred option is attached in Appendix 1. Access ramps with a gradient for cycle and disability access will be constructed at either end of the bridge. The abutments of the bridge will be located adjacent to the existing towpath at each bank, and the bank levels will be raised slightly to accommodate the access ramps. The bridge deck will be 5.2m above the river level to allow suitable clearance for users of the River Lagan. The deck will be 5m wide and have 1.4m high parapets along the length of the deck. The pylons will extend approximately 41m above deck level. The length of the bridge deck will be approximately 141m.
1.4	The development falls within the scope of Schedule 2 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and therefore an Environmental Statement is being prepared to support the planning application.
1.5	The proposed draft response to the Environmental Impact Assessment consultation is attached in Appendix 2 for consideration.

2	Key Issues
2.1	It is suggested that the Council strongly supports the development of a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Lagan in this location. The Councils draft Belfast City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan identifies the need to connect the city centre to the surrounding neighbourhoods as one of its key policies. The framework highlights the "dividing role" of the River Lagan

