

# Belfast Harbour

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Environmental  
Report 2010





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## The Chairman's Foreword

Belfast Harbour is a cornerstone of the local economy, providing not just access for 60% of all Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, but also acting as a major stimulant of economic activity throughout the region.

Apart from purely maritime operations, the Harbour is also Northern Ireland's largest logistics hub, a major commercial centre (over 17,000 people work in the Harbour Estate in sectors ranging from heavy engineering to ICT) and home to landmark regeneration projects such as Titanic Quarter, Sydenham Business Park and City Quays.

Managing the Harbour's 3,000 acre estate (2,000 acres of land, 1,000 of water) is a complex and proactive process, balancing commercial needs whilst protecting the environment. The estate includes 195 acres of land set aside for nature conservation.

Corporately, managing the environment is dealt with at the highest level within Belfast Harbour, being overseen by the Board's Safety, Environmental and Security sub-committee. Although there is a particular emphasis on protecting the environment of Belfast Lough, the Harbour is also committed to making its contribution to global environmental issues.

As a Port we are keenly interested in climate change and the associated issues of rising sea levels and changing weather patterns, and are constantly striving to reduce the Port's environmental impact. This year, for example, lighting projects in our workshops saved 30 tonnes of carbon and reduced associated costs by over 65%.

As a result of such efforts, in 2010 the Harbour achieved the Carbon Trust Standard for year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions and was awarded Platinum status for the third consecutive year in Business in the Community's ARENA environmental benchmarking survey.

Safeguarding and improving our environment is an ongoing task and we will continue to work with partners such as Business in the Community, RSPB, Ulster Wildlife Trust and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to ensure the sustainable development of Belfast Harbour.



**Belfast Harbour is a cornerstone of the local economy, providing not just access for 60% of all Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, but also acting as a major stimulant of economic activity throughout the region.**

**Belfast Harbour was the principal supporting partner for Business in the Community's annual ARENA Network Environmental benchmarking survey.**

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belfast-harbour.co.uk**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. J. P. O'Hagan'.

**Leonard J. P. O'Hagan DL**  
Chairman





## Environmental Management Systems

Belfast Harbour operates a formal Environmental Management System (EMS) which is certified to the internationally recognised ISO 14001:2004 standard.

The EMS consists of 3 components:

- Environmental Policy
- Governance
- Operational controls

## Environmental Policy:

- The overarching environmental policy is incorporated into an integrated Health, Safety and Environmental Policy statement that is publicly available.
- Supporting this are a number of policies, addressing issues such as:
  - Energy
  - Procurement
  - Sustainability
  - Biodiversity

### Building a Better Future

The development of the Port through the centuries is inextricably linked to the development, growth and significance of Belfast. Consequently Belfast Harbour understands the importance of reaching out and engaging with local communities, providing assistance in terms of both time and money, building bridges to education and training, managing and improving our environmental impact (particularly in respect of climate change) and encouraging suppliers to also behave responsibly.

### Value System

Our corporate responsibility commitment is a strategic objective and forms part of Belfast Harbour's value system. There are four dimensions to Belfast Harbour's Corporate Responsibility Strategy: Education, Environment, Community and the Arts. Belfast Harbour's annual CR programme attempts to support initiatives and projects that reflect one or more of these dimensions.



## Health, Safety and Environmental Policy Statement

Belfast Harbour recognise that good Health, Safety & Environmental management systems and performance are fundamental to our business.

We consider it a priority to reduce the health and safety risks to our stakeholders to a level as low as reasonably practical, to prevent pollution and to minimize the environmental impact of our activities.

In order to achieve this we will:

- Comply with all relevant Health, Safety and Environmental legislation and other requirements to which we subscribe including:
  - The Port Marine Safety Code
  - The European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) Environmental Code of Practice.
- Endeavour to prevent injury, ill health and pollution.
- Adopt the principles of sustainable development.
- Protect biodiversity consistent with our duties as a Harbour Authority.
- Systematically identify and assess Health, Safety and Environmental risks associated with our activities.
- Mitigate and control identified risks in order to conduct our activities safely and in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Develop, maintain and test emergency plans and procedures.
- Involve and consult employees and other stakeholders on Health, Safety and Environmental issues where appropriate.
- Set measurable Health, Safety and Environmental objectives and targets supported by a management programme that reviews effectiveness and evaluates compliance.
- Ensure that employees are competent to carry out their work and understand the impact their actions and behaviour may have on health, safety and the environment.
- Provide our employees (and where appropriate contractors and suppliers) with adequate information, training and supervision to enable them to understand and discharge their responsibilities for compliance with this policy.
- Communicate this policy to all persons working for or on behalf of Belfast Harbour Commissioners.
- Strive to continuously improve our Health, Safety and Environmental management systems and performance.



## Governance

Belfast Harbour's environmental performance is governed at the corporate level by the Safety, Environmental and Security Committee. The committee comprises members of the Board supported by the executive management team.

The Committee oversees the Harbour's performance in respect of statutory obligations and the Port's own environmental objectives and targets.

## Operational Controls

Day-to-day actions are managed in line with the policies, objectives and targets using a suite of standards, procedures and work instructions.

## Environmental Skills

The key skills and knowledge required of Harbour employees are delivered through on-going training programmes.

- During 2010 75% of Harbour employees completed an Environmental Awareness Programme.
- All required employees have completed Maritime and Coastguard Agency accredited Oil Spill Response training.

## Recognition

Belfast Harbour has been recognised for its environmental performance achieving the top status of Platinum in the Business in the Community ARENA Network Environmental Survey.

## Energy Saving

Conventional lighting in our workshops and stores was replaced by low energy fittings with occupancy and daylight sensors. This achieved a 67% reduction in electricity use and eliminated 30 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum.

A recently installed automated fuel dispensing system has improved fuel use management and reduced vapour losses.

The central heating system in the Harbour Office has been converted to natural gas and new high efficiency burners and boilers have been installed saving more than 45 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year.

**More than 98% of the grid electricity purchased by Belfast Harbour in 2010 came from renewable sources.**





## Environmental Context

Belfast Harbour is located at the head of Belfast Lough and is comprised of approximately 2000 acres of land and 1000 acres of water. The Harbour contains and is adjacent to Areas Of Special Scientific Interest and European designated Special Protection Areas.

The Harbour is home to approximately 650 businesses including manufacturing, chemical, oil and gas companies as well as office, retail and leisure organisations. A total of 17,000 people travel to work in the Harbour each day.

As such, the Harbour Estate contains:

1. Environmental aspects for which Belfast Harbour has direct control and responsibility.
2. Environmental aspects which are under the control of third parties but which may require monitoring or a response from Belfast Harbour.
3. Environmental aspects which are exclusively the responsibility of third parties.

This report addresses items 1 and 2 only.

### Local Issues

Important local environmental challenges relate to:

- Water quality
- Air quality
- Land use
- Noise and vibration

### Green Procurement

Belfast Harbour seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of our operations by integrating environmental considerations into our procurement process.

Belfast Harbour takes environmental aspects into consideration when purchasing goods and services.

Our commitment is to:

- Avoid unnecessary acquisitions and reuse resources where possible.
- Where appropriate purchase products with a high recycled content.
- Give preference to the use of renewable resources where appropriate.
- Insist on compliance with applicable environmental legislation, regulations and standards from our suppliers.
- Consider environmental credentials and impact when selecting suppliers and goods.
- Consider the environmental impact throughout the life cycle of the product or service.



## Water

Sea water quality is important as a social and economic resource. Preserving the natural environment and improving water quality and avoiding pollution are key environmental objectives for the Harbour.

- During 2010 the Harbour conducted a full review of its Oil Pollution Contingency Plan which was subsequently approved by the MCA.
- During 2010 Belfast Harbour worked closely with government, other ports and marine stakeholders to develop and implement River Basin Management Plans aimed at improving the water quality in our rivers and estuaries.
- During 2010 there were 5 minor pollution incidents, arising from third party activities. These were all oil related resulting from spillages from shipping activities and upstream discharges. All involved small quantities and were dealt with to the satisfaction of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA).

## Air Quality

Local air quality is important to the health of the people who work and live in and adjacent to the Harbour Estate. There are a number of operations under the control of Belfast Harbour which have the potential to impact air quality and maintaining compliance with the relevant pollution control regulations is a key objective.

- During 2010 Belfast Harbour commenced a programme to refurbish and upgrade equipment used to handle dusty cargoes and worked closely with Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Department to improve cargo handling processes.
- During 2010 there were no regulatory noncompliances by Belfast Harbour.
- 4 reports relating to dust caused by third parties and 2 reports relating to odour were received. Such incidents were investigated and the appropriate actions were taken.

## Green Travel Plans

Belfast Harbour is committed to minimising the impact of travel on the environment and optimising travel costs.

Belfast Harbour seeks to minimise the impact of travel by:

- Using teleconference technology to avoid travel where appropriate.
- Understanding the environmental impact associated with our business related travel.
- Encouraging Harbour staff to use sustainable methods of transport.
- Considering environmental performance when purchasing vehicles and designing traffic systems.
- Facilitating where practical the integration of sustainable and public transport modes within Belfast Harbour Estate.

**During 2010 Belfast Harbour introduced a subsidised "cycle to work" scheme for employees.**



## Land Use

Belfast Harbour is home to a number of commercial and industrial activities. Key objectives associated with land management include the deterrents of illegal dumping and effective response to accidental spillages to land.

- There were 7 recorded incidents of illegal dumping by third parties. These were investigated and remedied appropriately.
- There were 6 recorded incidents of spillages to land. These were all minor and involved leakage of oil from third party vehicles and plant. All involved small quantities and were dealt with using the Harbour's spill response measures.

## Noise and Vibration

Like many ports Belfast Harbour is home to a range of industrial and transport activities which have the potential to cause noise and vibration. Belfast Harbour seeks to prevent such issues by the design and location of facilities and by our operating procedures. Where issues arise these are dealt with by measurement and remedial actions where necessary.

- During 2010 one report of noise was received and investigated. The source of the noise was traced to a third party's cargo handling operation and was addressed with the relevant terminal operator.

### Global Issues

There are a number of environmental issues of global significance which affect the Port, such as:

- Biodiversity Loss
- Climate Change
- Conservation of resources

## Sustainable Development

Belfast Harbour Commissioners recognise the importance of sustainable development. We will therefore:

- Comply with the relevant sustainability legislation and regulations and, where possible, exceed any relevant minimum requirements.
- Raise the awareness of employees, suppliers, customers, visitors and other stakeholders by promoting the concept of sustainable development.
- Monitor the use of natural resources, and maximise the efficiency with which they are used.
- Manage our activities in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
- Encourage our employees to apply sound sustainability practices at work, at home and within the wider community.
- Participate in the definition of sustainability practice, and set our own appropriate and demanding standards where none exist.





## Biodiversity Loss

Belfast Harbour Estate encompasses areas of special scientific interest and European designated special protection areas including 195 acres of land and sea bed set aside for nature conservation. Belfast Harbour recognises that loss of Biodiversity is a significant environmental issue.

- During 2010 Belfast Harbour in partnership with the Ulster Wildlife Trust conducted an inventory of habitats and species throughout the Harbour Estate and is developing a biodiversity action plan.

## Climate Change

As a port Belfast Harbour is focused on the potential issues associated with climate change such as changing sea levels and increased storm surges. With this in mind Belfast Harbour established the following objectives:

- To responsibly manage our emissions and carbon footprint.
- To understand the potential impacts on Belfast Harbour of such changes.

During 2010:

- Belfast Harbour achieved accreditation to the Carbon Trust Standard. Such accreditation recognises an absolute reduction in carbon emissions of 6.5% during the calendar years 2009 – 2010.
- Belfast Harbour worked closely with the Rivers Agency to model flood risks associated with climate change.

## Biodiversity

“Belfast Harbour Commissioners recognise that our activities have the potential to impact on biodiversity, directly and indirectly”.

Belfast Harbour will therefore:

- Comply with the forthcoming statutory biodiversity duty, other relevant legislation and Codes of Practice to which we subscribe.
- Assess the impact of Belfast Harbour operations and development activities in order to minimise the impact on existing biodiversity.
- Promote awareness of the importance of biodiversity amongst employees and the Port community.
- Develop and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Encourage functional groups and individuals to consider the impacts on biodiversity of purchasing, investment, development and operational decision making.
- Support relevant projects and programmes consistent with our duties as a Harbour Authority that will conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity.
- Engage as appropriate with the local community and other stakeholders on issues to maintain, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity.
- Monitor the use of natural resources, and maximise the efficiency with which they are used.





## Conservation of Resources

Belfast Harbour recognises that natural resources are finite and seeks to minimise the impact that its operations and development has on nonrenewable resources. Specific objectives in this area include:

- Sustainable development.
- Waste minimisation through reduction, reuse and recycling.
- Energy management through reduction of consumption and use of energy from renewable sources.

During 2010:

- Belfast Harbour worked closely with the Carbon Trust to create a framework for sustainable development within the Harbour Estate.
- Belfast Harbour diverted 417 tonnes of waste from landfill and recycled 54% of total port waste.
- More than 98% of electricity procured was from renewable sources.

## Emissions Management

Belfast Harbour is committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to the lowest practical level whilst continuing to meet essential business needs.

It is therefore the policy of Belfast Harbour to:

- Comply with all applicable legislation.
- Conduct an annual Carbon Footprint of activities under our direct control.
- Establish and maintain a formal Emissions Management Plan.
- Develop awareness and encourage active involvement in energy efficiency initiatives by employees, energy customers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Implement operational control measures to optimise our energy performance.
- Maximise the use of energy from sustainable sources where economically viable.
- Incorporate energy efficiency considerations into all procurement and contracting activities.
- Demonstrate our commitment through external accreditation of our Environmental Management System.
- Strive to continuously improve our energy efficiency and energy management systems.





## Engagement

Belfast Harbour believes that the operation of its business and the development of its facilities can be undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner and has established close working relations with other stakeholders on a local and international level to identify and share environmental best practice within the Port Industry. These relationships include:

- Business in the Community
- The Carbon Trust
- Action Renewables
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT).
- European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO)
- Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum
- Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group

The Port has conducted a number of Belfast Harbour Environmental Forum meetings in which Harbour tenants and users participated to address topics of common environmental interest such as industrial symbiosis, environmental management systems, waste management, energy usage and new legislation.



### Environment and Education

A core element of Belfast Harbour's Corporate Responsibility strategy is engagement with schools throughout Northern Ireland to promote the benefits of environmental responsibility and provide information on Belfast's maritime heritage. The primary vehicle for engagement with pupils at educational Key Stages 1 and 2 is 'Webster the Port Monster' - Belfast Harbour's very own Environmental Guardian. Webster hosted two projects for schools in 2010, his Green Teacher of the Year Awards in association with Action Renewables and Webster's WaterWorks in association with the Ulster Orchestra.

