a port for everyone
As a Trust Port we do not receive public funding.

We operate, maintain and develop the Harbour for the benefit of everyone by re-investing our profits.

Vision to 2035

To be the region’s gateway for trade, growth, tradeable services and an Iconic Waterfront for the City.
As a Trust Port, Belfast Harbour has no shareholders but it is set up by statute to operate, maintain and develop Belfast Port for the benefit of its customers and local stakeholders.

We receive no public funding, however as we have no shareholder dividends to pay, we are able to reinvest every penny of our net earnings back into the development of the Port.

This document details our ambitious investment and development plans which take into account the changes taking place in our economy and the way we live. Our vision is to make Belfast Harbour this region’s gateway for trade, growth, tradeable services and tourism, generating economic growth and jobs and creating an iconic Waterfront for Belfast.

The history of Belfast Harbour goes back over 400 years to 1613 when King James 1st granted a Royal Charter Incorporating Belfast to establish a Port. Since then Belfast Harbour has grown and been transformed from a muddy estuary to modern deep water Port helping to shape the development of Belfast and its hinterland. Belfast Harbour is man-made, largely dug by hand during the Victorian era with the spoil used to create Queen’s Island.

Just as our predecessors had the ambition in the 19th and 20th centuries to transform Belfast Port and the City into a world leading industrial centre, we now are unveiling our plans to work with our various partners that will help shape Belfast’s and the Region’s development in the 21st Century. We plan to further transform Belfast Harbour into the best regional port in the world serving our existing economic sectors and being a world class centre for the rapidly growing creative, knowledge and leisure sectors.

Over the next 5 years through to 2023 we plan to invest more than £250 million in major port infrastructure and real estate projects. Improving quayside capacity, delivering new marine and handling equipment and expanding our workspace and residential offer through developments such as City Quays, Titanic Quarter, Belfast Harbour Studios and Catalyst Inc. By 2035 we want to deepen our channels, create new deep-water berths and prepare for an era of accelerated automation and artificial intelligence.

Belfast Harbour is already at the heart of Northern Ireland’s digital, media and knowledge sectors, but we can do more. This will involve the creation of a new Global Innovation Institute helping the partners of the Belfast Region City Deal realise their ambition. We also want to create a connected port, not just digitally but also physically, with a new bridges across the Victoria Channel and new public spaces which seamlessly integrate with the rest of Belfast.

This is an ambitious plan but we believe together with our key partners we can transform not only Belfast Harbour and the City but help drive the region’s economic development and well being.

Dr. David Dobbin CBE
Chairman
Belfast is a City with ambition and Belfast Harbour has a unique business model and opportunity to help the City realise this ambition.

First and foremost we will always be a port; Northern Ireland’s primary gateway to the rest of the world. We want to be the most efficient and greenest port on this island, but also to be the best regional port in the world.

To compete globally we need to create a port that has the physical capacity to manage trends for ever larger ships. We need to become a ‘Smart Port’ that leads the way in adopting new technology to help customers grow and target new trade opportunities.

Belfast Harbour also wants to be a green port and we are working to decarbonize activities in the estate, including the acquisition of electric vehicles and adoption of shore-side clean energy sources.

The legacy of strategic decisions taken by my predecessors means, however, that we are more than a port.

Belfast Harbour is home to an amazingly diverse community concentrated around Belfast’s waterfront. Commercial offices, residential accommodation, leisure, tourism, media, research & development, heavy engineering, aerospace, retail and more – all are located within a relatively small area.

Over the next 15 years we will continue working with our customers and tenants, to fulfil the entrepreneurial potential. But we also want to deepen our partnerships with Belfast City Council, Titanic Quarter Limited, NI Screen and others.

To guide the business we have developed new values which commit Belfast Harbour to be Customer Focussed, Receptive, Innovative, Collaborative and Agile. We have also identified five themes which will shape our strategy not just to develop major new infrastructure, but to support employability, growth oriented businesses and the wider community.

‘A Port for Everyone’ is our template for future growth. Our hope is that this strategy will evolve into a shared vision that complements the ambitions of our partners and the aspirations of future generations.

Joe O’Neill
Chief Executive
We plan a Growing Port that is customer-focussed and stimulates the regional economy, a Smart Port that is innovative and uses the latest available digital technologies, a Green Port which upholds the highest environmental standards covering land and water, a Connected Port with better links to the community, the city, the wider region and the rest of the world. We will develop an Iconic Waterfront, a vibrant home to more people and an exciting and flourishing tourism and leisure destination. These ambitions are interdependent and so need to be progressed together.

All of this will support and help Belfast City’s Council’s 2035 Agenda ambition to accommodate 66,000 new residents, create 46,000 additional jobs, and develop 550,000 square metres of employment floor space.

How we go about the task ahead is just as important. We have developed new values for our organisation that will guide every aspect of our work. In all that we do we will strive to be:

- Collaborative, working through partnerships to achieve common goals.
- Customer-focussed, developing a port and an estate that meets their needs;
- Receptive, always open to new ideas and the views of others;
- Agile, able to adapt to new circumstances in a rapidly changing world;
- Innovative, committed to being early adopters of new technology and new ways of working to benefit our customers and our region;
- Our Strategic Plan respects our statutory purpose as a Trust Port to “operate, maintain and develop” the Port for the benefit of its stakeholders. But we’ve also adopted a more enlivened and enlightened purpose “to be the Region’s gateway for trade, growth and tradeable services.”

As a Trust Port we don’t have shareholders but are instead accountable to our stakeholders, so we believe it’s imperative that we understand their needs and hear their views as we shape our future strategy. As a Trust Port we reinvest all our profits in the Port and Harbour Estate to ensure its long-term sustainability, because we know this in turn creates jobs and economic growth that benefits the whole of Northern Ireland.

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Our employees come from a diverse set of backgrounds and their skills, enthusiasm and commitment to the highest standards of service and health and safety plays a major part in maintaining Belfast Harbour’s strong reputation. Their drive and energy will be essential to achieving our vision in the years to 2035.
Belfast Harbour at a glance

Belfast Harbour is made up of Belfast Port and the 2,000-acre Harbour Estate.

There are 1,500 people who live within the Estate and it is home to more than 760 businesses with 27,000 people who come to either work or study every day. It is also a major tourism and leisure destination attracting more than 5 million visitors annually.

The Port is a gateway to trade and an important driver of the regional economy. Every year more than 1.75 million people arrive and depart through the Port through our key ferry partner Stena Line’s services and cruise liner visits. Around 24 million tonnes of goods also pass through the Port each year, carried by ferries, container ships and general cargo vessels. In recent years there has also been strong growth in the number of cruise ships docking at Belfast Harbour with almost 150 expected in 2019.

The Harbour Estate is also home to some of Northern Ireland’s best-known organisations including George Best Belfast City Airport, Belfast Metropolitan College, Baker McKenzie, ITV, TPICap, Belfast Harbour Studios, Harland and Wolff, Bombardier, Catalyst, SSE Arena and world class tourist attractions such as Titanic Belfast.

In the past ten years more than £250 million has been invested in equipping and developing Belfast Harbour to deliver wider economic and job creation benefits.

No public money is received or spent by Belfast Harbour. Our Trust Port Status means we can more effectively and efficiently deliver for wider society. As a Trust Port, all our profits are re-invested back into the Port and Harbour Estate to maintain and improve services and infrastructure and support local communities through a variety of initiatives and programmes.
Our Vision: Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 with an Outlook to 2035

Working in partnership

To be successful in the future we understand that Belfast Harbour cannot stand alone.

We’re working with a range of leading organisations in order that we can accomplish more and do things better. This includes partnerships with organisations such as Belfast City Council, the Department for Infrastructure, Titanic Quarter Limited, Titanic Foundation Limited, NI Screen, the Odyssey, our Universities and Catalyst Inc. in order to grow business and support the regional economy.

Strong economic performance is good for everyone, and for Northern Ireland to be competitive on the global stage we need to work together, collaborate more and pool our resources. That’s why in particular we’re partnering with Belfast City Council to help deliver some of the Belfast Region City Deal initiatives and realise some of the Belfast 2035 Agenda ambitions.

We are also partnering with truly global players such as the Port of Rotterdam, one of the world’s biggest ports, to help make Belfast Harbour and the region, world-class.

Many of our key initiatives will be delivered in partnership with our customers, government, local authorities, communities and businesses to help them achieve their goals and to boost trade, tourism and innovation. All of our initiatives will be undertaken to help grow the economy and increase the prosperity of the region and all who are a part of it.

Community Initiatives

We are committed to working within our local communities to help local people prosper.

A number of initiatives are already underway and will continue during the Plan period, with a particular focus on employability and skills. The world is changing rapidly as the digital revolution continues to accelerate. We want to help ensure that local people have the skills and can therefore access future work. We are, for example, working with Business in the Community on Time to Code, a programme which will teach digital skills to 4,500 primary school children.

There will also be a focus on young people from local areas who are currently not in employment, education or training, to help them into employment. We are working with the Prince’s Trust and Active Communities to create new routes to work for these young people. Other work is planned to enhance skills development to prepare people to work in the fast-growing creative sector through new initiatives developed with NI Screen, the body responsible for NI’s film industry.
Our plans are laid out under 5 themes:

1. A Growing Port
   - Investing to meet the needs of the regional economy

2. A Green Port
   - Growing sustainably and having a positive impact on our environment

3. A Smart Port
   - That is innovative, using the latest available digital technology

4. A Connected Port
   - To the community, the City, the wider region and the rest of the world

5. An Iconic Waterfront for the City
   - To create an iconic Waterfront connected with the City and aligned with our partners’ ambitions

A Vision to 2035: A Port for Everyone
Attracting more blue chip foreign direct investment and local customers

We will build high-quality offices and other workspaces in the Harbour Estate to attract blue chip employers to Belfast, and support local businesses as they grow. We want to target growing industries in line with the Belfast Region City Deal and other regional and national ambitions, helping make our City a great place to work and invest.

Our workspaces will be underpinned by high-speed data and telecommunications and green, cost-effective and resilient energy infrastructure. They will be set within an environment that is defined by high-quality public realm and maritime heritage.

To help stimulate and grow the knowledge sector in partnership with others

Innovation is the key to developing and growing the economy and those businesses at the heart of innovation are clustered in what is often called the knowledge sector. Many are start-ups with brilliant ideas that need help to get to the next level. We will be working with Catalyst Inc, who are already based in the Harbour Estate, and development agencies on specific programmes that will help stimulate growth in this vital sector that is creating the high quality, sustainable jobs of the future.

Our aspiration aligns with The Belfast Region City Deal’s central objective to make the region a global investment destination, creating 20,000 new and better jobs in the sectors experiencing rapid growth in which we have potential to become a world leader.

We will work in partnership with Queen’s University and Belfast City Council to develop a Global Innovation Institute which will drive forward research and innovation in these high-growth sectors at a new and accelerated pace.

To be a leading European creative and media hub

The growth of the creative and film industries has been one of the region’s biggest success stories in the past decade. We already have two film studios on the Estate, which we intend to expand into a media hub, by building a third studio and providing opportunities for businesses involved in the creative industries to base themselves in the Harbour Estate.

In parallel with this, we are partnering with Belfast City Council, Queen’s University and Ulster University and NI Screen to develop creative industries and digital innovation hubs. Work is planned to help skills development to bolster the number of people gaining employment in the creative sector and making sure it is in robust shape to compete in the future. Our investment and partnership will help to realise the aspiration for Northern Ireland to be the largest creative and media hub outside of London and a leading European centre for this sector.

Success through our People

We will only grow through investing in our people. Underpinned by our values, we will create a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation and continuous improvement. Nurturing and attracting talent is a key priority for us to realise the success of our ambitions. We will develop our existing employees to ensure they are fulfilled, challenged and share in the success of the organisation. And we will support young people who want to come and work for us in their career development and strive to grow a workforce that can meet the future needs of the organisation.
We will be the world’s greenest multi-modal Port
Belfast Harbour handles a diverse range of trades, from ferries and containers to petroleum and dry bulk products. In that sense we are a truly “multi-modal” port, and our ambition is to be the greenest multi-modal port in the world. We will deploy new technologies to improve air quality, reduce fuel consumption and reduce emissions.

We will also be rolling out extensive environmental education, community regeneration projects and activities which improve the City, the Harbour Estate and Belfast Lough through biodiversity activity and environmental clean-ups.

We also plan to continually improve water and air quality and biodiversity in Belfast Harbour to make it a more attractive location to live, work and visit.

We will be the region’s most sustainable developer
Our buildings and workspaces will lead the way in environmental sustainability. Our City Quays developments are already the most sustainable in the region, designated with ‘BREEAM’ Excellent credentials, an industry recognised award for sustainability. We will continue to develop our products with this sustainable ethos in mind.

Digitisation, Decarbonisation and Decentralisation
Belfast Harbour continues to go green and our goal is to ‘digitise, decarbonise and decentralise’ our energy usage in the Harbour Estate.

We will deliver energy solutions, which will improve our environmental sustainability and reduce ships’ emissions within the Port.

Innovative technology will also be used to reduce energy consumption and we’ll provide advice to our customers to help them reduce their usage.

We will electrify our vehicle fleet and adopt zero-emission vehicles to promote environmental stewardship, as well as install electric vehicle charging points in key areas to promote the uptake of electric vehicles.

We will develop and pursue Clean Air, Clean Water and Biodiversity agendas, reducing the use of single use plastic and continuing initiatives to improve the water quality in Belfast Lough.

We will also promote the adoption of a ‘Good Growth’ agenda with our tenants and customers, seeking out new opportunities for them with environmental partners.

Realising these green ambitions will be only possible through partnerships. We will work with existing and prospective customers to drive forward green initiatives, and establish a consortium of SMEs to assist in the delivery of clean, cost-effective and resilient energy.
Investment in these new technologies is central to our plan to make Belfast a Smart Port and deliver improvements to our efficiency and productivity. We are determined there should be no waste of time, money or natural resources at the Port.

We will be introducing a Port Community System for our customers. That means that all cargo and shipping communications will be coordinated through a single system that makes information more readily available and eliminates unnecessary bureaucracy. This will mean greater efficiency, better planning and faster handling. And we will bring in other smart technologies too, including automation and further improvements to our digital infrastructure, modern cranes and a new Port Access System to make the Port as efficient as it possibly can be.

Leveraging the Harbour Estate as a digital testbed with our partners

With 2,000 acres of land, 1,000 acres of water and a diverse occupier base, the Harbour Estate is a unique place to trial new technologies. We want to pioneer things like last mile delivery to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. We will create a digital twin of the Harbour Estate, and develop our own micro-energy grid that is green, efficient and resilient.

To do this, we are already talking to major technology companies, SMEs and other leading smart ports such as Rotterdam from whom we can learn in order to develop the latest smart innovations to help Port customers. We will introduce self-driving and electric vehicles and will develop the infrastructure and sustainable transportation solutions to support the growth in trade.

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To develop world class public spaces

We want to be more connected in every sense of the word – working with local authorities and other partners to help each other achieve our goals and to be physically connected to Belfast city centre. We believe that creating wonderful public spaces at the heart of our developments is vital – they help bring an area to life and give people a sense of well-being.

We will work with Titanic Foundation Limited and our City partners to deliver the exciting Maritime Mile project which brings together our maritime heritage assets under one banner and contributes to an Iconic Waterfront for the city.

Our world class public spaces will be supported by high speed personal and business connectivity with leading edge 5G and Wi-Fi technology.

We are also working on plans to promote leisure use of the water. This will be another boost for tourism, opening up an attractive new way of seeing our City.

We also plan to continually improve water and air quality and biodiversity in Belfast Harbour to make it a more attractive location to live, work and visit.

To be the Region’s gateway to trade and tourism

The Port is already Northern Ireland’s gateway for tourism but we want to keep improving. Currently we welcome more than 5 million visitors to the Harbour Estate annually and we want to attract more to the waterfront area by working with Belfast City Council, Visit Belfast, Titanic Foundation Limited and venue operators to develop fresh new tourism offerings. We will also be bringing the area to life by more regularly providing a venue and backdrop for festivals and other large-scale events.

As a port, we are committed to growing cruise tourism through our partnership with Visit Belfast. In recent years we have seen significant increases in visitor numbers and will continue to invest to realise further the economic benefit that these visitors bring to the City and region.

To develop safe and attractive places where people want to live, work, invest and visit

As more and more people choose to live in the centre of our thriving city, we will develop high quality residential accommodation set within safe and vibrant public spaces to house a new generation of talent. We will support the Belfast Agenda 2035 for 66,000 additional city dwellers and students, and work in partnership with Titanic Quarter Limited to help deliver this for the City.

We will also invest in the roads, pavements and cycling infrastructure to assist in the movement of people to and from Queen’s Island. This will include new and iconic cross harbour bridges and a unique water taxi service for the City.

We will work in partnership with Translink and the Department for Infrastructure to promote sustainable and public transport throughout the Harbour Estate.
To create an Iconic Waterfront connected with the City and aligned with our partners’ ambitions

We will develop an Iconic Waterfront for the City, connecting the river to the City and bringing world class public spaces to Belfast. It will be a place where people will want to live, work, invest, study, visit and play.

Great ports and great cities do best when they work closely together and a key part of our strategy is to develop and strengthen our partnership with Belfast City Council. Getting this partnership right will set the tone for the next century of Belfast’s development.

Through this waterfront development we will help deliver the Council’s ambition for 46,000 new jobs and 66,000 new residents, and support the Council’s Green & Blue infrastructure plans.

Safe and Welcoming

The safety of everyone who works in and visits the Harbour Estate is a top priority for us. We will continuously work to minimise risks for everyone in the Port Community and ensure the Port is a safe place to come to work.

Our public spaces will be world class and we will ensure they are safe and attractive, creating a destination and a part of the City everyone can be proud of. Through our community engagement activity, including the work of our Community Policing Team, we will make the Iconic Waterfront a place which is welcoming and accessible for all. We are also committed to safety on the water and will continue to develop our excellent relationship with Lagan Search and Rescue to deliver a 24/7 emergency response service in the Harbour.

Driving Diversity

Belfast is a rapidly changing City and we will embrace opportunities to encourage everyone to be part of the success of the City and Belfast Harbour.

Our engagement activity will support all communities and through working with a wide variety of organisations championing Diversity and Inclusion, we will be an open and welcoming place for all. We already champion diversity through our longstanding relationship with The Belfast Mela, holding the Diversity Charter Mark and participating in the Women in Maritime Taskforce. But we aspire to do more.

To help stimulate and grow the tourism and leisure sectors in partnership with others

Our vision is for an Iconic Waterfront that will be a great place to work, live and to play. To help make that a reality we are growing our existing marina and we'll also be exploring opportunities to develop tourism and leisure businesses within the area. This tourism led regeneration, will involve working with Titanic Quarter Limited, Titanic Foundation Limited, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council and will encourage the sustainable growth of a vibrant tourism, leisure and cultural sector.
Between 2019 and 2023 we plan to invest £254 million. This will lay the foundation for further, and much larger, investment in the years to come.

**The Port**
Investing in the Port is our first priority. In our five-year plan we will embark on our journey to become the world’s best regional port. We’ll be rolling out Smart Port initiatives, installing automated cranes, upgrading cranes and material handling equipment in the Port, installing a new ramp to accommodate larger ferries, building a new quay to cater for the increase in cruise ships, installing new feeds storage and carrying out important maintenance.

**Port Investments will include:**
- Replacing cranes at the container terminal with larger, highly automated cranes
- Upgrading other cranes and material handling equipment in the Port
- Installing a new ramp to accommodate two new larger Stena roll-on roll-off vessels which will go into service in 2020 and 2021
- Investing in a new quay to cater for the increasing number of cruise ships coming into the Port
- Setting up the digital Smart Port initiatives

**The Harbour Estate**
We will be working with partners to make the Estate a great place to live, work and play and a world-class centre for the creative industries and the knowledge economy. These include a new film studio and media hub, high quality offices, public realm and marina facilities, investment in the roads infrastructure and bespoke offices for the businesses in the knowledge economy.

**Estate investments will include:**
- City Quays 3 - 250,000 ft² Grade “A” office
- City Quays 4, a c.250 apartment build-to-rent development
- A new film studio and media hub
- Investment in road infrastructure
- Office space for the knowledge economy at Catalyst Inc
- Developing the marina and public realm projects
- Olympic House, a joint venture with Titanic Quarter Ltd to provide a 148,000 ft² of high quality office
The period between 2024 and 2035 will see once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects for the Port to fulfil our ambition of achieving the world’s best regional port together with what we believe is required to deliver on our vision of an Iconic Waterfront connected to the city.

The Future: Achieving the Vision

The Port
The period between 2024 and 2035 will see once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects for the Port to fulfil our ambition of achieving the world’s best regional port together with what we believe is required to deliver on our vision of an Iconic Waterfront connected to the city. Our plans involve deepening the channel so that larger vessels requiring up 12.5 metres water depth can access the Port. This will provide economies of scale for existing customers and will open up opportunities to attract more trade and new customers. We will redevelop older quays, which do not have sufficient load bearing capacity or water depth for future needs.

Port Investments will include:
- Deepening the Victoria Channel
- Developing new deep water bulk terminals
- Rebuilding Wharves
- Expanding storage facilities for our customers
- New road and transportation infrastructure
- New and innovative energy infrastructure

This will amount to a complete transformation of the Port, and one which will increase trade and help boost the entire region’s economy.

The Harbour Estate
Our vision is to create a high quality and sustainable Iconic Waterfront where people want to live, work and play which will both complement the city and be an integral part of it. Its physical and digital infrastructure will mark it out as a special place to locate.

All of this will support and help Belfast City’s ambition to accommodate 66,000 new residents, 46,000 additional jobs, and 550,000 square metres of employment floor space.

Estate investments will include:
- Completion of City Quays to provide almost 1.6m square feet of office, 320,000 ft² of mixed tenure residential and 30,000 ft² of retail
- A cycle and pedestrian bridge across the river
- Further investment in film studios and media
- Development of 250,000 ft² for office/light industrial use at Sydenham Business Park
- Investment into Catalyst Inc. to create a globally renowned science and technology hub
- Connecting the Iconic Waterfront to the city
Making a Positive impact

2019 — 2023
This strategy is titled “A Port for Everyone” because we truly believe that Belfast Harbour can have a positive impact on the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland.

You might not be aware of the impact that Belfast Harbour already has on your day to day life, but the chances are we do – whether through the goods you buy, provision of energy, the visits to the tourism and leisure venues in the Estate or simply as a gateway to the world.

This will amount to a complete transformation of the Port, and one which will increase trade and help boost the entire region’s economy.

To quantify the impact of the activities contained in our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, Belfast Harbour commissioned the University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) to evaluate the direct benefits to society.

UUEPC found that our planned investment projects will generate £500 million for the economy, support 3,500 construction jobs, accommodate another 7000 jobs in the new investments, add £300m in wages and contribute another £4m in additional rates to the city each year.

2023 Onwards
We will build new film and new offices to support the ongoing growth of our local creative industries.

We will add new facilities to enable cruise ships to bring ever more tourists to visit and spend money in our economy and we will create new infrastructure that takes the city forward and makes it a better place to live and work.

The investments we implement now – some of which are once-in-a-generation changes to core port infrastructure – will strengthen Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole.

Our reputation as a city and a country is on the rise and Belfast Harbour plans to play its part by developing an exceptional port offering, creating an ecosystem with our partners that encourages innovation and making Belfast an even better place to live, work and play.

“£500 million for the economy”

It is important to note that our future investment strategy is not cast in stone. It is a recommended direction of travel. We will be consulting widely with our stakeholders, responding to their needs, and factoring in any future market and economic conditions.

We are living and working through a time of rapid change and we will be as agile and responsive as circumstances require.

Concluding note