



2nd September 2026

Submission by email: committee.infrastructure@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Harbours Bill Call for Evidence

I write on behalf of Maritime Belfast Trust and welcome the opportunity to respond to the Committee for Infrastructure's Call for Evidence on the Harbours Bill.

Maritime Belfast was set up in 2007, with a primary objective to oversee the delivery of the Titanic Belfast visitor attraction, which opened on March 31st, 2012.

The success of Titanic Belfast has enabled Maritime Belfast to work on numerous projects, championing Belfast Historic Waterfront as a vibrant, accessible heritage destination for Belfast and its visitors.

As an organisation dedicated to preserving and promoting Belfast Historic Waterfront and a key stakeholder in Belfast's waterfront, we recognise the important role that Belfast Harbour plays in supporting the city's economic growth, regeneration and maritime future.

We are supportive of the changes proposed within the Harbours Bill. Maritime Belfast believes that enabling Belfast Harbour to borrow responsibly has the potential to support significant long-term investment. This could help unlock delivery of ambitions such as those set out within the Belfast Harbour 2050 Masterplan, while doing so without placing additional pressure on public expenditure through the Department for Infrastructure.

We are aware that this is achieved through the Clauses of the Bill, which remove the Department's power to initiate transfer of, and issue directions to, Belfast Harbour Commissioners. We support this approach, it addresses the current ONS classification of Trust Ports as public corporations, which requires Trust Port borrowing to count against the Department's capital budget. Removing these powers will allow ONS to review this, with the aim of reclassifying Trust Ports away from public non-financial corporation status to private. Maritime Belfast also recognises Belfast Harbour's commitment to safeguarding critical port infrastructure, enabling offshore wind, building an iconic waterfront with vibrant neighbourhoods, and attracting new industries. Modernising the governance frameworks of NI Trust Ports can put Trust Ports on a more competitive footing, allowing Belfast Harbour to achieve its strategic aims, of which we are supportive.



As Lead Partner for Belfast Historic Waterfront, a multi-million-pound UK-wide investment by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, designated through the Heritage Places Strategic Initiative, and coordinator of the Belfast Waterfront Task Group, Maritime Belfast is committed to working collaboratively with partners across the waterfront. We aim to strengthen its role as a place to visit, work, live and invest. Through this partnership approach, we support greater collaboration and coordination across the waterfront, helping to identify opportunities for investment, regeneration and development. We recognise that responsible investment in the waterfront can create opportunities to improve the visitor experience, enhance connections, provide employment opportunities and bring Belfast's maritime story to life for local communities and visitors alike. We maintain that the legislative changes proposed by the Harbours Bill will bring enable more visitors to the waterfront where they can learn more about Belfast Historic Waterfront.

We fully support the advancement of the Harbours Bill through the legislative process and that it is progressed as efficiently as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerrie Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Kerrie Sweeney MBE

Chief Executive