



RetailNI

Standing up for
Independent Retailers

Retail NI response to CFI Call for Evidence

Dear Sir/Madam

Retail NI has been the steadfast advocate for the independent retail sector in Northern Ireland. We are the sole organisation representing this vital sector at every level of government, ensuring that the voices of our 2000 members are heard and valued.

Our diverse membership encompasses wholesalers, independent retailers spanning various industries, suppliers, and affiliated chambers of commerce and local traders' groups. Together, we form a united front, advocating for the interests of independent retailers across Northern Ireland.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to respond to this Call for Evidence regarding the Harbours Bill.

As an organisation we recognise the role which our ports throughout Northern Ireland play in our economy, ensuring goods can flow efficiently through the supply chain from wholesalers to local retailers to local consumers.

We acknowledge the aims of this Bill to modernise the legislative and governance framework for Northern Ireland's Trust Ports. We understand that this will open the door to a future ONS reclassification of our Trust Ports, which will strengthen their ability to continue to drive our regional economy by investing in facilities to enhance tourism opportunities and expand trade, without impacting on DFI's balance sheet. We are supportive of these objectives.

We recognise Belfast Harbour's ambition in their 2025-29 Advance Regional Prosperity strategy to invest £105m in the ongoing regeneration and development of the Harbour Estate and waterfront. This will create exciting new opportunities for existing and new local retail businesses. This will be further built on by their longer-term plans contained in the 2050 Masterplan, which will require greater flexibility to borrow to invest.

We would encourage this Bill to be advanced efficiently through the Assembly, to enable all of our Trust Ports to strengthen their role as key economic hubs for the region.

Yours Sincerely,

Glyn Roberts,

Chief Executive, Retail NI

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