

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Belfast City Region Deal?

The signing of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in December 2021 was a key milestone for the Belfast region, securing substantial financial commitment from central government and BRCD partners. The UK Government and NI Executive have each committed £350 million and partners a further £150 million. The Deal represents a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners and secures a bespoke package of investment from central government and the BRCD partners to support the delivery of a shared vision of:

“Inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region”.

The substantial financial commitment, which will be further supplemented by the private sector, will generate up to 20,000 jobs as it is delivered over the next 10-15 years - an exciting, once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate economic growth for the region in an inclusive and sustainable way.

This Deal will strengthen the region’s offer in growth sectors such as life and health sciences, the digital and creative industries, and advanced manufacturing. It will support next-generation digital capabilities, boost tourism and support the regeneration of our region, underpinned by infrastructure developments and investment in skills to connect people to jobs and services.

The BRCD involves an integrated programme of investment that cuts across the responsibilities of local councils, the Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government. The BRCD partners comprises Belfast City Council, five partner councils (Ards and North Down being one), two universities and four of the region’s further education colleges.

What is a CFF?

The Contract for Funding (CfF) is an agreement between the UK Government, NI Executive (Department for Communities), Belfast City Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council to fund £40M of the expenditure incurred in the delivery of the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment. The Contract includes the project particulars, governance arrangements, sets out the funding terms and conditions of the Agreement and provides project delivery guidance over a 10-year programme.

How will this redevelopment benefit Bangor?

The programme will achieve significant outcomes for the city and the wider Borough, including an additional 489 jobs, increasing visitor numbers by 100,000 each year and increasing GVA by £110 million, as well as providing environmental and health and wellbeing benefits.

What is the plan for Bangor Waterfront?

This BRCD funding provides the support needed to realise and deliver on a vision for Bangor worked through by local stakeholders in 2018 – to make Bangor a ‘destination of choice’ to live, work, visit, study and invest in. With an additional £20 million contribution from Council and circa £12.8 million from private investment over the next decade, this total investment of circa £73 million in a 2-mile stretch of coastline will connect the new city to the sea through a proposed range of sustainable, world-class visitor and leisure attractions and experiences.

There are five key projects that make up the development and procurement will now begin for designers to draw up plans for each of the key areas.

Urban Waterfront Development

Bangor's coastline and stunning sea views are some of the town's most significant selling points. They should be enhanced sympathetically, sustainably, beautifully and in ways that people of all ages can have the opportunity to enjoy them. We recognise that and so propose to make a significant investment in new urban waterfront/public realm features along the waterfront, making the everyday spaces that people move through, and linger within, as attractive as they can be; 'instagram-able' to use today's social media language.

Travelling from Skippingstone in the west to Ballyholme in the east (or vice versa) should be a real voyage of discovery and we intend to use creative signage, pathways and artistic features to encourage more people to enjoy the journey.

Particular attention will be given to: Skippingstone Beach (multi-use pods for beach activities, accessibility features, feature lighting/benches and Ballyholme (watersports opportunities, feature lighting/ surfacing).

Pickie Fun Park

Pickie holds a host of great memories for families from the Bangor area and beyond. The giant Pickie pedal swans have become an iconic feature on the Waterfront landscape. With some enhancements and new features, we think it can continue to attract and delight families for many more years to come.

We are proposing the development of new all-weather attractions for both children and young adults, and feature landscaping so it better integrates with the new public realm along the coastline.

Bangor Marina

Bangor Marina, built in 1989, is one of the largest 5 gold-anchor accredited marina developments on the island of Ireland and is the largest in Northern Ireland, attracting a considerable number of vessels.

Some of its infrastructure is critical to safe and effective operations and cannot be moved, however a level of redesign will enable us to increase the number of seafaring visitors to Bangor and to open up the space, making it easier for people to enjoy the sea views.

Our proposals recommend redeveloping Bregenz House as a mixed-use development in a new cluster with iconic and high-quality architecture.

The redesign will include additional public access with dropped boardwalks, seating and viewing areas and the opportunity for cafés/ restaurants integrated into the Marina.

There is also an opportunity to integrate with the plans for the private sector-led Queen's Parade development, to create a new marine gardens with formal and informal spaces for events and activities, further supporting the leisure and creative sectors within Bangor.

Bangor Court House Phase II

The creativity of its people, from earliest times to present day musicians and producers, is a key part of Bangor's DNA. The Borough inspires and supports many key influencers within the music industry including Van Morrison, Snow Patrol, Two Door Cinema Club, Foy Vance, Hannah Peel and Lowden Guitars. Ards and North Down is also home to several successful companies involved in TV/film music production.

Independent charity, Open House, has ambitious plans to regenerate Bangor Court House as a permanent home for the Open House Festival and a much-needed multipurpose venue serving the town. Through grants and crowdfunding activity, Open House secured the funds for their Phase 1 plan which is now complete.

Having considered a range of options for a music hub as part of the Waterfront Development, and working with Open House, we are proposing further developing and building on the Open House plans to create a Phase 2. This will see the capacity of the building double in size to include additional event and performance spaces and creative workspaces that will further ensure the sustainability of the venue as a significant music and creative hub for the Borough.

Ballyholme Yacht Club Watersports Centre

We believe this peninsula affords the opportunity to create a state-of-the-art destination for sports and relaxation; a waterfront park to rival the best in Europe. It is home to Ballyholme Yacht Club (BYC), which has been identified as the preferred location within Northern Ireland for major sailing and watersports events by the Royal Yachting Association. The redevelopment of BYC would provide Bangor with a world class facility for water sports and the ability to host international events.

Supporting this and working closely with Ballyholme Yacht Club, we propose to enhance the area as a hub for residents and visitors alike with enhanced facilities and promenades.

Where is the Council's £20 million investment coming from?

The Council's £20 million capital contribution has been built into its 10-year Capital Investment Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan. It is expected, like with all large capital investment schemes undertaken by Council, that the costs will be met by taking out long-term government borrowings. The impact of this on domestic and non-domestic rates bills is spread over many future years (similar to mortgage repayments) and does not fully commence until after the new facilities become operational or available for public use.

What is the timeline for the project?

The Development is a 10-year rolling programme of work and having now received confirmation of funding, the Council will start to work through the following required individual steps before **any** construction can begin. Due to the standard stages of project delivery as detailed below, it is envisaged that construction will then be undertaken in a phased approach over the next 5-6 years.

- Procure consultants to develop design proposals
- Engage and consult with the public and stakeholders
- Secure planning and other statutory approvals
- Develop detailed technical designs and specifications for construction
- Procure a building contractor

What is happening to Queen's Parade?

In addition to the 10-year Bangor waterfront redevelopment project, the Queens Parade area will also be regenerated and redeveloped by private owners Bangor Marine Ltd.

Their vision is to transform Queen's Parade and create a premier public waterfront space that also embraces Bangor's rich heritage and paves the way to securing the city's future. Further details on the Queens Parade scheme and Bangor Marine Ltd can be found at www.queensparadebangor.com or via email at info@queensparadebangor.com

PROGRESS UPDATE - MARINE GARDENS IN BANGOR

Monday 17th July 2023

Aran Blackbourne of Bangor Marine said:

"Over the last few months, we have been working on the detailed design for the Queen's Parade project in consultation with the Council and Hemingway Design. This has resulted in some unique opportunities to improve the offering at Marine Gardens, including the introduction of a new play area. We believe these changes will greatly enhance the plans, providing additional benefits for residents and visitors to the city. It was fantastic to receive an award of £9.8m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for Marine Gardens. We have been working closely with the Levelling Up Fund team to finalise the funding arrangements, including the commitments required from Bangor Marine, and we hope these will all be in place in the very near future. We are also undertaking the requirements to satisfy the Planning Pre-Conditions. Unfortunately, this is taking a little longer than we originally anticipated. This involves preparing reports and carrying out surveys, which are then sent to the various consultees for consideration.

With all of this needing to be finalised before we can get going on site, there will be a short delay in seeing work starting. However, we hope to undertake prestart works late this year, with construction starting in early 2024. We remain fully committed to delivering this landmark project for the City of Bangor."

What is happening to the Long Hole?

Any proposals in the location of the Long Hole will form part of the Urban Waterfront & Public Realm project, which is one of five key projects within the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment programme. At Outline Business Case stage, initial concept ideas included the resurfacing of the path around the long hole, new bench seating, an art installation and information board, to sensitively and responsibly rejuvenate this location. The design proposals for this area will be further considered and developed when designers have been appointed and the initial stage of stakeholder engagement and consultation is complete.

Will each of the 5 projects start at the same time?

No. This is a 10-year redevelopment programme, and the projects will be phased. We are currently in the early stages of procuring consultants to design and deliver each of the projects within the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment programme. The delivery programme for each project will be tailored to suit its specific requirements and characteristics, based on the optimal delivery strategy.

What environmental considerations have been given to the redevelopment?

During the initial stages of design development, extensive surveys and investigations will be undertaken to mitigate the risk of adverse impact on the environment and maximise the opportunity to positively contribute to the natural and built environment through the planned redevelopment. Rigorous consultation with several statutory consultees, including NIEA will take place to develop environmentally sustainable proposals and secure planning approval.

What is happening to the Tennis Courts in Kingsland?

At Outline Business Case stage, opportunities for the redevelopment of the tennis courts were considered, however this area was **not** included in the Belfast Region City Deal bid for funding. The courts are currently managed by Council's Leisure Services and their future upgrade will be considered as part of the overall tennis strategy for the Borough.

What is happening to the Table Tennis Club in Kingsland?

The Table Tennis club will not be affected by the redevelopment. Council will continue to liaise with the Club representatives throughout.

Is there any consideration being given to providing suitable facilities for those in Motorhomes?

Yes, Council is engaging with the relevant Government Departments in relation to the regulations contained within the current Caravan Act, to determine if there is an opportunity to cater for those visiting Bangor in motorhomes in the future.

What are you planning to do at Skippingstone? Lots of bathers use this area and wouldn't want access to the sea to be affected.

As we are currently in the early stages of project delivery and in the process of procuring our design teams the proposals for this location are yet to be determined. Initial design considerations focused on retaining the beauty of this natural beach and surroundings, while improving accessibility and considering features such as improved lighting, seating and natural landscaping.

Further engagement and consultation will take place with stakeholders e.g. Dash & Splash, when the design team is appointed, to fully understand how the planned works could benefit enjoyment of this location.

Is the BRCD £40 million funding a set amount, or will it increase with inflation over the 10-year programme?

The funding from both BRCD and Council is a fixed amount, and we will work carefully together with the appointed consultants and project partners to appropriately manage the budget over the duration of the programme.

How will the public be kept up to date on the project and how can we find out what is going on?

We will aim to reach every single resident in Bangor, through in-person meetings, an online engagement platform - Citizens Lab and through E-zines (electronic magazines), social media updates and newspaper articles. Our focus is to keep residents and businesses informed and up-to-date on progress throughout the design and delivery of the redevelopment.

We are aware that not everyone has access to, or chooses to use the internet, so as the project progresses, we will schedule further public meetings, publish newspaper articles, and organise community events to enhance community engagement.

A dedicated email address has been set up and questions can be sent at any time to bangorwaterfront@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

I am a teenager and live in Bangor, how can I be reassured you will listen to the views of my generation and how can I get involved?

Initially we will be engaging with youth representatives across Bangor and will build on this over the coming months. We have met with students at SERC and had some really productive and passionate conversations which we hope to continue throughout the programme. Anyone can register their interest in engaging with us at bangorwaterfront@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

What are Council doing to ensure people who require additional access support will be considered in designs and layouts of new paths, parks, facilities etc.

Council will be working with disability groups and are very mindful of those who require access support, and this will be a factor throughout the programme. The designs will comply with statutory legislation and guidance for accessibility. Council will also be working with community groups, residents' groups, schools, sports clubs and businesses to ensure everyone's needs are considered.

Is the car park in Kingsland moving from the shore side to the dog exercise area?

The Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment is still at a very early stage, with the design proposals yet to commence. At the appropriate stage, we will engage and seek feedback from the public on the concept design proposals as part of the consultation process. While initial stakeholder engagement took place to inform the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment Outline Business Case, further consultation will take place when design teams have been appointed.

Are Council building glamping pods and a skatepark and will there be consultation on these?

Council is currently in the early stages of project delivery and in the process of procuring our design teams, therefore redevelopment proposals are conceptual and not yet fixed.

The Outline Business Case for Bangor Waterfront includes, at a conceptual level, an Urban Sports Park and Waterfront Beach Hut Accommodation and we look forward to working closely with consultants, stakeholders and the public to develop appropriate, site specific and sustainable design solutions for all sections of the Urban Waterfront route.

How will this sizeable investment be maintained?

The additional revenue costs associated with maintenance and repair will be the responsibility of the Council which has been fully considered in the Business Cases and will be incorporated into annual revenue budgets in due course.