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**Committee and Members' Services Section
3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange
24-26 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GD**



28th May, 2008

SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange on Wednesday, 4th June, 2008 at 1.45 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
 - (a) Apologies
2. Lagan Navigation (Pages 1 - 5)

In pursuance of the Committee's decision of 14th May to undertake a site visit along the Lagan Towpath from the Lagan Weir to Shaw's Bridge.

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Special Development Committee
Subject:	Lagan Navigation
Date:	4 June 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 Pièr Morrow, Acting Tourism Development Manager, ext 3582

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that at the Development Committee meeting of the 14 May it was agreed that a site visit will be held on Wednesday 4 June 2008. The committee will meet at Adelaide Exchange at 1.45 pm then travel to the Lagan Lookout from where the group will depart at 2.00pm to Locks 1, 2 and 3 via the Lagan Tow Path. The group will return by bus to Adelaide Exchange from Malone House for approximately 4.00 pm. The site visit will be by bicycle and will be led by the Lagan Corridor Officer.

Additional background information is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Resource Implications

Cost for bicycle and helmet hire and refreshments will be no more than £250 which has been provided for within the 2008/2009 tourism budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the information provided during the meeting.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Relevant Background Information

Appendix 1

Relevant Background Information

The Lagan Canal was constructed in the 19th Century to transport bulk commodities between Belfast and Lough Neagh and its hinterland. In the wider context, the Lagan Navigation was linked to the overall network of Irish Canals through the Ulster Canal which connected with the River Shannon Corridor. The navigation was abandoned in the 1950s with a central section approximately 8 miles being lost to motorway construction in the 1960s.

The Canal runs through the local authority areas of Belfast City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council, Lisburn City Council and Craigavon Borough Council. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (who have a water recreation remit), the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland and the Ulster Waterways Group also have an interest in the Canal and its reopening and reuse.

Following years of neglect and decline, Belfast's waterfront has been transformed, becoming a focus for business, leisure and cultural activities and a place of opportunity for all. Laganside Corporation (1989-2007) received international recognition as a regeneration agency for its achievement in successfully turning the vision of the Laganside area as an exciting place to live, work and play into a reality. This success is reflected in the development of key sites including the Belfast Waterfront Hall. Now all over Europe, rivers and canals are being restored and reopened as we realise their potential for leisure-based activities and both rural and urban regeneration. Belfast is now looking confidently towards the future development of the Lagan and the Canal.

Currently a pen weir exists at Stranmillis (Lock 1) in Belfast and controls water levels in the Lagan between Stranmillis and Newforge. This existing weir is operated and maintained by the Rivers Agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The operation of this pen weir has resulted in a number of difficulties including flooding upstream, operational and maintenance commitments, erosion of the river bed downstream. It also forms a relatively unattractive industrial structure at the entrance to the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Belfast City Council is fully committed to the redevelopment of this weir as a project of national and regional significance. This project includes the development of an iconic gateway lock, weir and bridge which will provide a lasting regional and national legacy and will link and transform communities along the Lagan Canal. The project must be considered initially within the redevelopment potential of the Canal up to Shaw's Bridge and within the overall strategic vision for the Lagan Corridor from Belfast to Lough Neagh.

The new Lock 1 would be located at the current Stranmillis pen weir and would form a key feature in the Lagan Gateway project. Lock 2 is sited at Morelands Meadow within the Lagan Valley Regional Park and Lock 3 is within the Castlereagh Borough Council area and is sited at the 'Lock Keepers Cottage' at Newforge. The success and benefit of Lock 1 is linked with the restoration of Locks 2 and 3. Belfast City Council is committed to commencing redevelopment of Locks 1 and 2 by undertaking the Lagan Gateway Project.

Prior to embarking on the cycle, please note the following instructions from the National Cycle Network (NCN)

Cycling on the Towpath:

Cyclists must give way to pedestrians

Cyclists should use a bell to warn others of their approach

Cycling at speed on the towpath does cause accidents
Cyclists should give due care and consideration to other towpath users

Always cycle with respect for others, whether other cyclists, pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, horse riders or drivers, and acknowledge those who give way to you.

On shared use paths

One third of National Cycle Network is on traffic-free paths. These are designed for shared use by cyclists and walkers. They are often suitable for wheelchairs and sometimes for horse riders. Experience shows that such paths can benefit everyone and that they can be comfortably and safely shared if we show respect for others.

When cycling on shared use paths please:

- give way to pedestrians, leaving them plenty of room keep to your side of any dividing line
- be prepared to slow down or stop if necessary don't expect to cycle at high speeds
- be careful at junctions, bends and entrances. Remember that many people are hard of hearing or visually impaired - don't assume they can see or hear you carry a bell and use it - don't surprise people
- give way where there are wheelchair users and horse riders.

When cycling on roads:

always follow the Highway Code be seen - most accidents to cyclists happen at junctions fit lights and use them in poor visibility consider wearing a helmet and conspicuous clothing keep your bike roadworthy don't cycle on pavements except where designated - pavements are for pedestrians use your bell - not all pedestrians can see you.

And in the countryside...

follow the Country Code respect other land management activities such as farming or forestry and take litter home keep erosion to a minimum if off road be self-sufficient - in remote areas carry food, repair kit, map and waterproofs try to cycle or use public transport to travel to and from the start and finish of your ride cycle within your capabilities match your speed to the surface and your skills.

Details of Timetable

Approx Timings	Stops	Information
1.45 pm (Prompt)	Departure from Adelaide Exchange to Lagan Lookout	Attendees with their own cycles should proceed directly to Lagan Lookout for 2.00 pm
2.00 pm	Meet at Lagan Lookout	Hired bikes being delivered to Lagan Lookout. Collect Bikes at Lagan Lookout
2.05 pm - 2.10 pm	Lagan Lookout	Short briefing and introduction description of Lagan Weir, followed by Departure to Cutters Wharf. J Edgar, P Gallagher (River Manager DSD)
2.25 pm	Brief stop at Car Park - Cutters Wharf	Highlighting original lock and Lock Keepers House. Brief discussion J Edgar
2.30 pm	Lagan Weir Stranmillis Gateway	Overview of Lagan Gateway Brief discussion J Edgar
2.40pm	Depart Lagan Weir	
2.45 pm	Lock 2 Moorelands	Brief overview of Lock 2 Alec Foye (DCAL)
2.55 pm	Lock 3 Lock keepers Cottage	Look at Interpretation Centre Charlie Charlton (Castlereagh Borough Council)
3.15-3.30 pm	Malone House	Light refreshments at Malone House 3.45 pm. Bus return to Adelaide Exchange for those with hired

		<p>bikes.</p> <p>Hired bikes to be returned by Parks Dept. to Lifecycles – Botanic Avenue.</p> <p>N.B. Attendees with their own bikes to make their own arrangements to return to the city centre.</p>
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List of Attendees	
Members of the Development Committee	
Ms Shirley McCay	Head of Economic Initiatives
Ms Pier Morrow	Tourism Development Manager (Acting)
Mrs Pamela Davison	Estates Surveyor
Mr Neil Malcolm	Members Services
Mr Jim Edgar	Lagan Corridor Officer
Mr Alec Foye	Dept. Culture Arts and Leisure
Ms Alison McQueen	Dept. Culture Arts and Leisure
Mr Peter Gallagher	River Manager (Dept. for Social Development Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate)
Ms Cathy Burns	Lagan Canal Trust Manager
Mr Charlie Charlton	Castlereagh Borough Council

For further information contact:
 Jim Edgar Lagan Corridor Officer. Ext 3639