



## 1.0 Executive Summary

The Lagan Navigation was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 1958 and a central section approximately 13km long upstream of Lisburn was lost due 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, the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the Ulster Waterways Group and the Lagan Navigation Trust 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. Lagside Corporation (1989-2007) received international recognition as a regeneration agency for its achievement in successfully turning the vision of the Lagside 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 people realise their potential for leisure-based activities and for both rural and urban regeneration.

Belfast is now looking confidently towards the future development of the River Lagan and the Canal.

Belfast City Council is fully committed to the realisation of the Lagan Gateway Project as a project of national and regional significance.

The project includes the development of an iconic gateway lock, weir and bridge, together with a Visitor Centre with moorings, slipway and jetties. It will provide a lasting legacy and will link and transform communities along the Lagan Canal

Proposals include for a new approach channel and lock structure, since development at Cutters' Wharf has included the infilling of the original lock structure at Lockview Road. The new lock chamber will be located within the existing overflow channel at Stranmillis Weir and measures 5m wide and 22m long to accommodate boats with a beam width of 4m.

Currently, a relatively unattractive industrial pen weir structure exists at Stranmillis and controls water levels in the River Lagan between Stranmillis and Newforge. Proposals include construction of a crescent shaped cascade weir to replace the pen weir. This design is advantageous as it eliminates operational and maintenance requirements of the existing pen weir. It solves erosion problems within the river and creates a more stable recreational area of water downstream. The weir can be designed to incorporate fish passage and monitoring facilities in accordance with Section 54 of the Fisheries Act.