

The design incorporates a ramped non-vehicular bridge which will not only provide a link between Annadale Embankment and Stranmillis but can be used as an observation platform.

It is envisaged that the Visitor Centre will act as a base for a Warden to oversee the strategic gateway location and will include toilets, a café and an interpretation display of the Lagan Navigation and the role of the Lagan Valley Regional Park. The project includes provision of an adjoining slipway, which will facilitate the launching of boats at this key location in the river.

Other associated works include dredging of the river and the provision of an access road for construction and maintenance requirements. Two access proposals are included within the design via Annadale Embankment and Hampton Park, both of which require further consultation and design development.

Alongside the main elements of works, the project seeks to develop high quality public realm and consequently associated paths and landscaping are essential to establish a framework which creates the connection between the development of the city, Laganside, the entrance to the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Lagan corridor.

This report reviews previous studies, which have confirmed that the introduction of recreational boat traffic on the River Lagan and reopening of the Lagan Navigation Canal are entirely feasible, and would encourage recreation, tourism and regeneration of the Lagan corridor. The provision of the Lagan Gateway would be a significant step in raising the profile of the waterway's restoration potential and promoting the benefits to be obtained from a complete restoration.

Whilst the Gateway can be regarded as a separate project, it forms part of a wider concept which would enable navigation to be restored to various destinations upstream. As a first step towards the opening of the navigation to Lisburn and eventually to Lough Neagh, the village of Edenderry could be regarded as a viable first stage. This would require significant work at the Lagan Weir, Lock 2 and Lock 3.

The Titanic Quarter initiative includes the development of the Abercorn Basin into a busy marina, a development that will attract boat and river users up the River Lagan to the Gateway Project. The Lagan Weir currently acts as a barrier preventing navigation up the river except during certain tidal conditions. The report identifies the need for provision of a new lock at Queen's Quay to bypass the Lagan Weir.

Works at Lock 2 at Moreland's Meadow would include construction of a new control weir, restoration of the lock with provision of upstream and downstream moorings and clearing of the canal channel.

At Shaw's Bridge, replacement of the existing weir, construction of a new canoe slalom, restoration of Lock 3 at Newforge, provision of moorings in upstream and downstream locations, clearing the canal channel and dredging of the river are all required to reinstate navigation through this stretch of the navigation.

The total cost of works in these three locations is estimated to be in the region of £5,000,000.