

Cruise  
Belfast

visit  
Belfast

■ ■ Belfast  
■ ■ Harbour

# Cruise Belfast Sustainability Strategy 2023







**Cruise  
Belfast**

# Introduction

An award-winning cruise destination, Belfast is regarded as one of the UK and Ireland's most welcoming and vibrant destinations. Since the first cruise ship arrival in 1996, Belfast has welcomed more than 1,000 calls to the City and over 1.9 million cruise visitors.

Cruise visitors are a valued and crucial part of the growing tourism economy in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland. Cruise tourism continues to be a catalyst for regeneration and economic growth in Belfast, supporting jobs and creating opportunities for our businesses and communities across the region.

As part of our first Sustainability Strategy, Cruise Belfast is committed to developing a more sustainable cruise offering within the destination that takes account of economic, social and environmental impact.

**77% of cruise guests say environmentally friendly cruise line policies and protocols are important to them.**

*Cruise Critic (2022)*



# The journey towards a sustainable future

In 2020, the City of Belfast launched its first Resilience Strategy and climate plan, with the view 'to transition to an inclusive, zero emissions economy in a generation'.

Since then, key stakeholders across the City have been developing thirty transformational programmes to future-proof Belfast for generations to come.

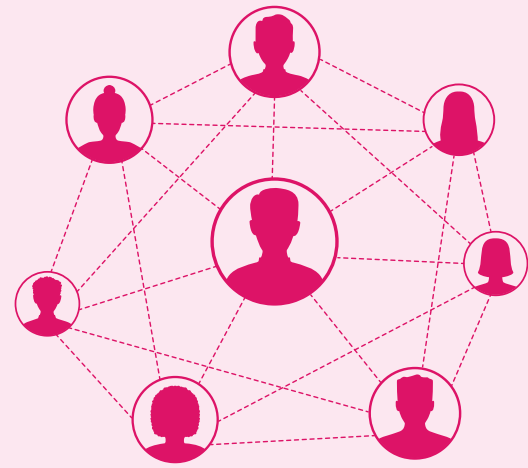
Cruise Belfast recognises the role the tourism industry - especially cruise tourism - has to play in supporting Belfast's ambitions. It is within this context that we are launching this Sustainability Strategy.

## Sustainable Belfast Ambition

- 1** To transition Belfast to an inclusive, net zero emissions, climate resilient economy by 2050
- 2** To retain Belfast's position as a Top 10 Sustainable Destination in the world - Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS)
- 3** To continue to develop as a socially responsible Green Port - Belfast Harbour
- 4** To plant one million trees by 2035
- 5** To transition to zero emissions public transport by 2040
- 6** To invest in a network of city centre public realm play spaces



# Cruise Belfast: Our Commitments



## Partnerships

Drive collaboration across the cruise industry to accelerate sustainable performance in Belfast and Northern Ireland.



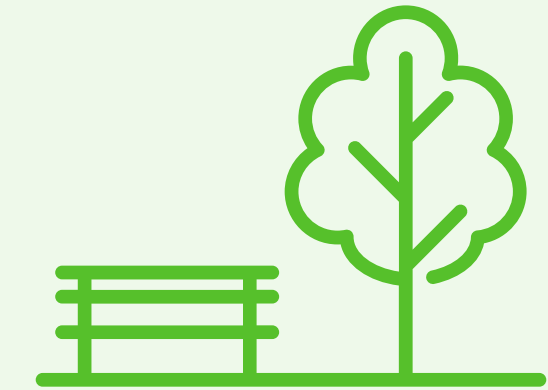
## Planet

Reduce the environmental impact of cruise calls in Belfast and Northern Ireland by working in collaboration with all key stakeholders to deliver greener choices and more sustainable experiences for visiting cruise lines and their guests.



## People

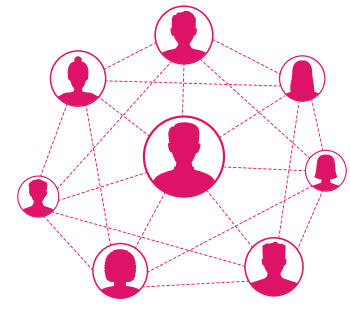
Promote an inclusive cruise offering that increases the positive impact cruise business has on communities.



## Place

Maximise the economic impacts of Cruise Belfast's activities to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth for Belfast and Northern Ireland.





# Partnerships

## Where we are

### **Dedicated sustainability support**

Cruise Belfast provides local expertise and support to assist cruise partners and cruise guests in making more sustainable choices when they visit Northern Ireland. Visit Belfast has a dedicated Sustainability and Impact Manager and Belfast Harbour's Sustainability Team ensures that cruise partners are able to access support at a Port and destination level.

### **Destination Collaboration**

Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council have launched a city-wide partnership with Green Tourism to help visitor attractions and tourism services and products in Belfast secure an internationally recognised

sustainability accreditation. This initiative is helping to drive sustainable practices and increase certification levels across the tourism sector, as well as reducing the environmental impact of the cruise sector.

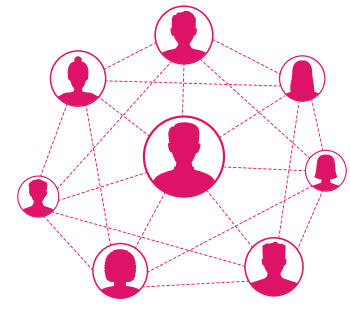
Cruise Belfast proactively engages with key stakeholders on cruise development and growth plans - including local and central Government, industry partners, media, local businesses and local communities.

## **Aim**

**Drive collaboration across the cruise industry to accelerate sustainable performance in Belfast and Northern Ireland.**







# Partnerships

## Key Actions – 2023

### Cruise Industry Collaboration

- Work with cruise lines, agents and ground handlers to source locally sourced products and services
- Conduct a FAM trip that focuses on sustainable shore excursion ideas, highlighting the wide range of attractions across Northern Ireland that can minimise the footprint of visiting cruise guests

### Destination Collaboration

- Work with key partners and stakeholders to gather baseline cruise sustainability data for the season
- Conduct a cruise stakeholder engagement event that focuses on cruise sustainability and social, environmental and economic benefits of cruise







# Planet

## Where we are

### Infrastructure

Belfast Harbour procure **100% renewable electricity** and has committed to **reducing carbon emission to net zero by 2030**.

It has also committed to **achieving zero waste to landfill**, improving air and water quality and enhancing both land and marine biodiversity within the next 3 years.

### Cruise Product

Cruise Belfast has also been working with key visitor attractions across Belfast and Northern Ireland to help them inform cruise partners and shore excursions companies of how they can minimise their impact on environmentally sensitive sites.

## Aim

**Reduce the environmental impact of the cruise industry by working in collaboration with all key stakeholders to deliver greener choices and more sustainable experiences for visiting cruise lines and their guests.**





# Planet

## Key Actions – 2023

### Infrastructure

- Pilot scheme for bikes / ebikes shoreside on cruise ship days
- Investigate grey water to mains solution
- Investigate life cycle of waste discharged from cruise vessels
- Work with NI Green Seas Consortium and Belfast Maritime Consortium to investigate ways to decarbonise maritime transport in Northern Ireland
- Investigate sustainable water taxi options







# Planet

## Key Actions – 2023

### Cruise Product

- Digitise the 'What's On' information guide for cruise visitors
- Expand range of sustainable shore excursions and conduct product training sessions with cruise partners
- Maximise usage of zero or low emissions vehicles for shuttle services
- Produce a report on the emissions ratings of coach fleets used for shore excursions, to be used as Year 1 baseline data
- Using ESI (Environmental Ship Index) introduce a discount incentive for visiting cruise ships that have lower emissions for future bookings





## Where we are

### Extending the Benefits

Cruise Belfast has been working with cruise partners to promote a range of products across Northern Ireland, create opportunities for the tourism industry, support small businesses, create prosperity for communities and limit congestion at high footfall sites. We have also worked to extend the cruise season outside of key summer months.

### Inclusive Welcome

All Cruise Hub facilities are accessible, ensuring an inclusive welcome for all visitors that arrive in Belfast.

### Volunteering

To support our warm cruise welcome, we run a cruise volunteering programme that offers students an opportunity to get on the ground experience and offers others an opportunity to give back whilst serving and promoting their community.

## Aim

**Promote an inclusive cruise offering that increases the positive impact the cruise industry has on our communities.**





## Key Actions – 2023

### Supporting local communities

- Engage with cruise lines on food surplus and other re-usable amenities which could be donated to local community organisations
- Introduce a charity collection in the cruise hub for guests to donate leftover currency on returning to ship to the Belfast Harbour Community Fund (BHCF)

### An inclusive welcome

- Create a digital Cruise Belfast accessibility guide
- 100% of all Belfast Harbour and Visit Belfast staff to take part in inclusivity training in 2023

### Supporting crew health & wellbeing

- Develop a range of health and wellbeing activities for visiting crew to take part in whilst visiting Belfast







## Place

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### Where we are

Cruise tourism has generated more than £100m in visitor spend to Belfast and Northern Ireland since the first cruise ship arrival in 1996. In 2022, Cruise attracted 250,000 visitors and an estimated £14m spend to the local economy. 67% of visitors explore beyond Belfast, supporting regionality and 71% of cruise guests are first time visitors to the region.

### Aim

**Maximise the economic impacts of Cruise Belfast's activities to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth.**

### Supporting Local

Cruise partners already use local guides, drivers and coach companies where possible, with the exception of the occasional language guides or specialist vehicles that may not be available locally. In order to promote local shopping, we have developed a shopping guide that has discounts in place for cruise visitors and we are committed to increasing the number of locally sourced and produced gifts available at the cruise hub and welcome centre.

We also actively promote neighbourhood experiences & products to cruise guests to help create prosperity in our communities and extend the benefits of the cruise industry.





# Place

## Key Actions – 2023

### Supporting local

- Increase the economic value of cruise tourism in 2023 to £21m
- Create a dedicated area of the cruise welcome terminal gift shop to showcase locally sourced products, crafts and gifts
- Develop crew incentives and discounts for shopping and visiting





# Cruise Belfast Legacy & Impact Initiatives

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## 1 Supporting local charities

Cruise Belfast will engage with cruise lines on food surplus and other re-usable amenities which could be donated to local community organisations. In 2023 we will also introduce a charity collection in the cruise hub for guests to donate leftover currency on returning to ship to the Belfast Harbour Community Fund. (BHCF)

## 2 Cruise career initiative

Working with local universities and colleges as well as a visiting cruise line we will conduct a career training day focusing on how graduating students can join the cruise industry.







# Reporting & Measuring

- 1** Cruise Belfast will publish its first sustainability report to report on progress made during 2023 season.
- 2** Cruise Belfast will request feedback from visiting lines on all sustainability practises in order to inform objectives and plans for 2024.
- 3** Cruise Belfast will conduct sentiment analysis during the 2023 cruise season amongst stakeholders, residents and local businesses.



# Cruise Belfast

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Harbour**

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**Belfast**  
**TOP 10**  
**SUSTAINABLE**  
**DESTINATION**  
**in the world**



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