

# **HARBOURS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002**

**S.I. 2002 No. 3155 (N.I. 9)**

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## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

### **BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES**

3. The primary purpose of the Order is to improve the public accountability of the Northern Ireland trust ports, that is Belfast, Coleraine, Carlingford, Londonderry and Warrenpoint. The then Department of the Environment (NI) completed a major review of public trust ports in Northern Ireland in 1998, which paralleled a similar exercise undertaken in Great Britain. In recognising the strategic importance of trust ports to the Northern Ireland economy, the review identified a need to extend their powers and ease the financial controls under which they operate to enable them to compete more effectively. However, it also recommended the need for improvements in the public accountability of the harbour authorities.
4. This objective has, in part, been achieved with the enactment of subordinate legislation in the form of three Harbour Orders for the ports of Belfast, Londonderry and Warrenpoint. These Orders have, inter alia, increased the number of council representatives on each of the Boards and ensured that the ports comply with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which each harbour authority has concluded with the Department, and which governs any disposal of land, and in addition covers any change of use within the respective harbour estates.
5. However, primary legislation is required to improve further public accountability within this sector. The need for this arises from the growing interest of the general public and elected representatives in the activities and future development plans of the individual harbour authorities.