

# The Economic Impact of Warrenpoint Port

## Executive Summary

December 2025

# Executive Summary & Key Takeaways

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### Introduction

In 2024, Warrenpoint Port facilitated £3.4 billion of trade, generating £6.0 million in direct economic value and employment of 94 jobs.

As Northern Ireland's third-largest port, handling 3.4 million tonnes of cargo in 2024, Warrenpoint combines scale with a strong local focus. Operating under the Trust Port model, it reinvests profits in port infrastructure, supporting the local economy.

In 2024, the Port accounted for c.12.0% of the total goods handled by Northern Ireland's ports. Only Belfast and Larne handled more goods during 2024 than Warrenpoint Port. This underlines the importance of the Port to both the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council economy, and the wider Northern Ireland economy.

To understand this contribution in full, Grant Thornton was commissioned to evaluate the Port's economic footprint. This report evaluates the Port's operations, quantifies its economic, social and environmental impact, and sets out the scale of value Warrenpoint Port delivers to the region.

### Our Approach

To assess the economic contribution of Warrenpoint Port, Grant Thornton has applied a tried-and-tested economic impact model. This sits within our wider suite of economic models, which includes forecasting tools and other analysis that help us build a clear and consistent picture of the Northern Ireland economy.

While our approach uses NISRA's input-output tables, we do not rely on them alone. We combine these tables with our own economic forecasts and wider analysis to ensure the assessment reflects both current economic conditions and the direction of travel for the Northern Ireland economy. This broader evidence base strengthens the model and provides a more rounded view of the Port's impact.

The total economic impact is made up of three linked components:

- **Direct impact** – the economic value generated by the Port's own activities.

- **Indirect impact** – the value created through the Port's supply chain.
- **Induced impact** – the additional spending in the wider economy supported by the wages of people employed directly and indirectly because of the Port.
- Together, these components give a full picture of Warrenpoint Port's overall contribution to the economy.

The Grant Thornton economic impact model is built using a range of publicly available data sources including data from the Annual Business Inquiry published by NISRA, Workforce Jobs data published by NOMIS/ONS, GVA by sector data published by ONS and wage data from the Annual Survey for Hours & Earnings (ASHE).

All results presented refer to the calendar year 2024.

Grant Thornton populated the impact model with financial and employment information provided by the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to estimate direct, indirect and induced impacts.

### Grant Thornton's Economic Impact Model



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### The Economic Value of Trade: Warrenpoint Port

Alongside the assessment of the Port's operations, Grant Thornton has also examined the wider economic contribution it facilitates. This analysis considers the total economic value of trade supported by the Port, with the aim of understanding the scale of economic activity it enables. To calculate this, trade flow values provided by the Port were combined with data from the Department for Business & Trade, which records tonnage and value by good. A value per tonne was calculated and applied to the Port's tonnage data. These figures were then aggregated to produce a total value of trade.

### Our Findings

This section of the executive summary will set out the findings from our economic impact assessment. This analysis will consider the three components of the economic impact including the direct, indirect and induced impact.

### Direct Impacts

In 2024, Warrenpoint Port delivered record levels of performance, with turnover reaching approximately £8.6m. This represents almost a fourfold increase compared with 1997 and reflects the Port's growing role as a key economic generator for the region. The trend in turnover closely mirrors the growth in throughput over the past two decades, underlining the Port's ability to adapt to changes in trade patterns and continue to capture greater levels of activity. This financial performance highlights not only the Port's resilience but also its ability to reinvest in operations, infrastructure, and the wider community under its Trust Port model.

To sustain this level of output, the Port employed 61 full-time staff in 2024. Workforce levels have remained relatively consistent over the past 17 years, despite pressures such as the global financial crisis which reduced staffing to 46 in 2011. Employment has since recovered, reaching a peak of 70 in 2022 before stabilising at its current level. The Port's ability to maintain a stable employment base through fluctuating economic cycles reflects its importance as a reliable local

employer.

Alongside turnover growth, Warrenpoint Port also recorded its highest ever wage bill in 2024, paying around £3.2m in salaries, benefits, and taxes. This reflects both the value of the jobs supported and the Port's direct contribution to household incomes in the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area. When measured through Gross Value Added (GVA), the standard measure of economic contribution, we are evaluating the 'direct' GVA of Warrenpoint Port or the GVA generated through its operations i.e. turnover and its employees through their wages. The Port generated c.£3.8m in 2024 – the highest level since records began in 1997. This confirms Warrenpoint Port's significance as a direct contributor to the regional economy, creating sustained value through its operations while providing well-paid, high-quality employment opportunities.

### Indirect Impacts

Beyond its direct operations, Warrenpoint Port delivers further economic benefits through its supply chain activity. In simple terms, when the Port spends money with local firms, that spending becomes income for those businesses. They, in turn, generate GVA and support jobs. The indirect impact measures this wider contribution.

In 2024, total supply chain expenditure amounted to approximately £5.4m across Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and the Netherlands through dredging contracts. For the purposes of assessing local and regional impact, only spending within Northern Ireland has been considered, as this represents additional economic activity within the local economy. Of the total, around £3.1m was spent with Northern Ireland-based suppliers, ensuring that a significant share of the Port's procurement directly benefits regional businesses.

Analysis of this local expenditure shows that Warrenpoint Port's supply chain spending generated an estimated £1.3m in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2024. This indirect activity also supported 21 jobs within Northern Ireland, providing wages of approximately £625,100. These findings highlight the wider contribution of the Port, demonstrating that its role as an economic driver extends well beyond the harbour itself, sustaining jobs and business activity across multiple sectors of the regional economy.

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### Induced Impacts

In addition to its direct and indirect impacts, Warrenpoint Port contributes further economic value through induced impacts, which arise from the spending of wages by its employees and those supported within its supply chain. These arise when employees spend their wages in shops, restaurants and other businesses. That spending supports further jobs and generates additional economic value.

In 2024, the Port employed 61 full-time staff with an average salary package of around £39,700, equivalent to a net income of £30,500. A further 21 employees were supported through the Port's supply chain, earning an average salary of £29,400, or £23,500 net.

The combined spending power of these employees generated an estimated £2.1m of additional economic activity within the wider economy. When measured in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA), this equates to approximately £903,500 and the support of 12 jobs, with associated wages of around £280,700. These results underline the Port's wider reach, showing how its role as an employer not only benefits its staff directly but also stimulates further economic activity across the local and regional economy.

### Total Economic Impact

Combining all components, our assessment finds that Warrenpoint Port generated c.£13.8m worth of spend for the Northern Ireland economy. Converting this to GVA we calculate that Warrenpoint Port supported c.£6.0m in GVA as well as 94 jobs in 2024.

### Warrenpoint Port Tax Receipts

Warrenpoint Port is not only a key driver of economic activity but also an important contributor to public finances. In 2024, the Port generated approximately £1.2m in tax revenues, its highest level to date, reflecting record turnover. The majority of this was paid to the UK Government through Crown Estate Tax, Corporation Tax, National Insurance Contributions, and PAYE, with a further £42,800 paid in rates to the Northern Ireland Executive. Since 2017, the Port has contributed

around £7.4m in total taxes, underlining its consistent role as a fiscal partner.

In addition to these direct contributions, the Port also generates indirect tax revenues through the employment it supports within its supply chain and the wider economy. Analysis indicates that jobs supported through indirect and induced impacts generated a further £165,000 in PAYE, £83,600 in employer National Insurance Contributions, and £39,300 in employee NICs during 2024. Taken together, these findings confirm that Warrenpoint Port is not only a significant generator of economic value but also a substantial and reliable contributor to government revenues at both national and regional levels.

### The Economic Value of Trade

Warrenpoint Port plays a vital role as an economic enabler, facilitating trade flows that are essential to business activity and regional development. In 2024, the Port handled approximately 3.4m tonnes of goods across a wide range of categories. Based on value-per-tonne data from the Department for Business & Trade, the total value of goods moving through the Port is estimated at £3.4bn, highlighting the scale of trade supported by its operations.

When converted into economic terms, this activity equates to around £1.1bn in Gross Value Added (GVA). This represents 1.9% of the entire Northern Ireland economy and more than 27% of the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council economy in 2024. In employment terms, the trade facilitated by the Port is estimated to support approximately 18,300 jobs, confirming Warrenpoint's strategic importance as both a regional and national economic gateway.

### Societal Impact

Warrenpoint Port plays an important role in the social and cultural life of its community, as well as in the regional economy. Operating under the Trust Port model, with surpluses being reinvested in port infrastructure, ensuring its impact extends beyond commercial activity. Employment quality and career development are central to the Port's ethos, with staff ranging from operational roles to management and specialist functions. Long service among employees, some exceeding 40 years, reflects a supportive workplace culture, while recent moves to convert casual positions into permanent roles demonstrate a commitment to workforce stability. Looking ahead, the Port is

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preparing to launch a dedicated Stevedoring Apprenticeship scheme in 2026, building on its track record of developing skilled professionals and supporting the next generation of maritime workers.

The Port also makes a strong contribution to its community through charitable and civic engagement. Since 2020, its Community Fund has distributed more than £126,000 to over 120 organisations, supporting causes from schools and sports clubs to hospices and foodbanks. Additional charitable donations of over £35,000, together with contributions from suppliers and staff, reinforce this impact. Partnerships with local groups have delivered environmental improvements, while cultural initiatives such as open days and cruise ship visits have enhanced Warrenpoint's reputation as a vibrant coastal town. The Port also prioritises health, safety and wellbeing, achieving reductions in workplace incidents through regular training and emergency exercises, and extending care to visiting crews via its partnership with the Mission to Seafarers. Alongside these social contributions, Warrenpoint continues to deliver regional value as a logistics hub, with efficient vessel turnaround and reliable operations supporting supply chains across Ireland and beyond.

### Environmental Impact

Warrenpoint Port has taken significant steps to reduce its environmental impact, guided by a comprehensive Health, Safety & Environmental framework and a Strategic Sustainability Plan aimed at achieving full sustainability by 2050. Early progress has been tangible: the Port has transitioned to 100% renewable electricity, introduced LED lighting, enhanced waste management, installed electric vehicle charging, and invested in more efficient equipment. These initiatives have already delivered measurable results, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced by over 46% since 2017. Looking ahead, the Port plans to expand renewable generation, pilot solar power projects, electrify its fleet and equipment, and adopt water conservation and advanced emissions tracking, supported by defined KPIs, regular audits, and independent oversight.

Alongside carbon reduction, Warrenpoint Port has prioritised wider environmental stewardship, including air quality monitoring, habitat protection, and biodiversity initiatives

Community-focused projects, such as a £55,000 tree-planting initiative with local schools that has seen over 1,300 trees, shrubs, and flowers planted since 2019, further reinforce this commitment. Together, these actions highlight Warrenpoint Port's proactive approach to balancing operational growth with ecological responsibility and long-term sustainability

### The Strategic Importance of Warrenpoint Port

In 2024, Warrenpoint Port generated an estimated £6.0m of economic impact for the Northern Ireland and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council economies. While this represented a relatively modest share of overall economic output (0.01% of Northern Ireland and 0.14% of the Council area), the figures understate the Port's wider strategic significance. When productivity is considered, Warrenpoint Port performs strongly: with a direct GVA impact of £3.8m and 61 full-time employees, productivity per worker stands at £63,000. This is slightly above the Northern Ireland average (£62,000) and notably higher than the Newry, Mourne & Down average (£55,700). In terms of local sector rankings, the Port ranks 6th for productivity, reinforcing its position as a highly efficient employer.

The Port also provides well-paid employment opportunities. In 2024, full-time staff earned an average salary of £39,700, equivalent to a net income of £30,500. This is £5,300 higher than the Northern Ireland average (£34,400) and positions Warrenpoint Port 4th among all sectors for pay levels, behind only ICT, Education, and Public Administration. Locally, Port employees earn around £8,900 more per year than the average full-time worker in the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area, further underlining its role as a provider of high-quality jobs.

The local economic impact of these wages is reinforced by the fact that the majority of staff live within close proximity to the harbour. In 2024, around 90% of wages were paid to employees residing in the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area, with more than 83% of total pay going to staff living within 10 miles of the Port. This high level of local residency ensures that much of the Port's wage spend circulates directly in the surrounding community, strengthening its role as a cornerstone of local prosperity and a key driver of household income in the region.

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### Warrenpoint Port: Comparator Assessment

Warrenpoint Port sits at the upper end of Northern Ireland's "second-tier" ports alongside Larne, handling over 3 million tonnes of cargo annually and contributing around £6m in GVA. Its cargo mix is diverse, ranging from Ro-Ro freight and bulk commodities to recyclables, supported by a twice-daily service to Heysham. The Port directly employs around 70 staff and sustains 94 jobs locally, with profits reinvested under its Trust Port model. Compared to peers, Foyle Port is smaller in tonnage but enables over £1bn in trade annually, while Larne, though similar in scale, is privately owned and reinvestment is less direct. Drogheda and Greenore are smaller again but play critical roles in agri-supply chains and the energy transition, with Greenore positioned for growth through a major offshore wind facility.

From an infrastructure perspective, Warrenpoint offers seven berths, Ro-Ro facilities, and strong road links, though it lacks rail access. Its environmental and social credentials strengthen its profile, with initiatives including CO<sub>2</sub> reduction projects, habitat protection, and a £126,000 community fund supporting over 120 organisations. By comparison, Foyle is positioning itself as an offshore wind hub, Drogheda demonstrates strong community engagement, and Greenore's sustainability focus is tied directly to renewable energy development. Overall, Warrenpoint compares favourably among peers, combining scale, efficiency, community engagement, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that its economic success is tied to local and regional benefit.

### Summary: The Key Findings

In summary our assessment of the economic, social and environmental contribution of Warrenpoint Port included:



Warrenpoint Port handled c.3.4m tonnes of throughput in 2024, with this valued at c.£1.1bn of GVA



Warrenpoint Port generated a total of c.£6.0m in economic output in 2024



The Port had a total tax contribution of c.£1.2m in 2024



c.83.2% of Warrenpoint Port workers live within 10 miles of the Port



Since 2017 Warrenpoint Port has reduced its emissions by over 46.0%

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