**Issued on behalf of Stena Line**

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**Stena Line Invests £6M in Fleet Upgrade Work**

Stena Line is due to complete a £6m refit investment programme of its Irish Sea North ferry fleet when the Stena Precision finishes its upgrade at Belfast’s Harland & Wolff shipyard over the Easter period. A total of seven ships have been upgraded by Stena Line over the last 5 months with the bulk of the work being carried out at Harland & Wolff shipyard including Stena Line’s flagship vessels Stena Superfast VII and VIII which operate on the Belfast-Cairnryan service.

Stena Line is the leading ferry company on the Irish Sea and last year the company carried a total of 1.4m passengers, 318 000 cars and 485 000 freight units and as Stena Line’s Irish Sea North route manager Paul Grant points out, the latest refit spend is part of an ongoing investment programme by Stena Line. “Over the last 5 years alone Stena Line has invested more than £250m in its Irish Sea business. This latest investment commitment of £6m is to help keep our Belfast fleet operating at optimum performance levels and ensures that our leisure and freight customers continue to benefit from award winning facilities and service. The challenging 5 month work schedule has been achieved in partnership between Stena Line, sister company Northern Marine Ferries and the team at Harland & Wolff,” said Paul Grant.

Mr Grant added: “While the refit window provides us with an opportunity to overhaul all the necessary mechanical aspects of our vessels it also provides the perfect platform for us to upgrade and enhance our passenger facilities**.** For us, it’s a case of continual improvement, the best just keeps getting better! Our sister ships Stena Lagan and Mersey which operate on the Belfast-Liverpool service have also benefitted from an extensive refit programme which included an enhanced Stena Plus lounge, improved free Wi-Fi coverage and an extended children’s play area.”

Commenting on the ongoing programme of dry-docking six Stena Line ferries since the turn of the year, Stuart Wilson, General Manager of Harland & Wolff’s Ship Repair division, stated that: “Our company is very pleased to continue the working partnership with Stena Line, which has become increasingly important not only to the company, but also to the local economy through its associated supply chain. Stena Line’s commitment to our business, has enabled us to develop our facilities, as well as make a positive impact with respect to local employment, both of which are important to underpin future business growth.”

Stena Line operates 3 routes on its Irish Sea North corridor Belfast-Cairnryan, Belfast-Liverpool and Belfast-Heysham with seven ships providing a choice of over 140 scheduled sailings per week.

**NOTE TO EDITOR: For further information please contact Michael McCrory of Duffy Rafferty Communications on Belfast 9028) 9073 0880.**