

## **Response to our Recent Public Consultation on the Proposed Floating Pool and 'Urban Beach' Facility for Dún Laoghaire**

A public consultation on a proposed floating pool and 'urban beach' facility for Dún Laoghaire ran during August and September 2013. In total, 33 submissions were received during this consultation. Below is a summary of the points most frequently referenced in submissions.

### ***Remit of Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company***

Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company is a semi-State body, which operates entirely independently of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The Harbour Company is responsible for the upkeep and future sustainability of the Harbour – from both an economic and a usability viewpoint – but does not have a wider remit in relation to Dún Laoghaire town. A number of issues that were raised by those who made submissions relate to areas that fall outside of the remit of Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company, for example: rates, vacant commercial units in Dún Laoghaire town and the maintenance of the Victorian baths. Further information about the exact role and remit of the Harbour Company is available at: <http://dlharbour.ie/about/>.

### ***Role of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in this Project***

This project has received support from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in the form of a grant. However, Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company is the owner of the land on which the project will be built, and the project sponsor. The East Pier – the proposed location for the urban beach and floating pool – falls under the jurisdiction of Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company, and the planning application will be submitted by the Harbour Company to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

### ***Planning Application***

- As Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company is not a local authority, this development will not go through part 8 planning application procedures. Rather, it will follow standard planning application procedures. (Part 8 planning application procedures only apply for applications made by a local authority to elected members of that authority.) The planning application will be submitted to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.
- Full plans and an Environmental Report will be included with the planning application, and interested parties will be able to submit feedback to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in line with the processes for planning applications to the local authority.

### ***Business Plan and Finance***

- A detailed business plan was developed on behalf of Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company in relation to this project. The aim of the business plan was to confirm the commercial viability of the proposed facility. The business plan based projected visitor numbers on the numbers of visitors to similar attractions during recent years, a six month operating window and average weather conditions during the operating season. The business plan allowed for revenues from admission fees, as well as from a café concession. Based on projected revenues, the business plan shows that the new facility will be self-financing, and the costs involved in developing the facility in its initial stages will be depreciated over a 20-year lifespan.
- The business plan projects that the proposed new facility will attract approximately 140,000 visitors per annum. It estimates that the new facility will be worth over €1 million directly and indirectly to the local economy.
- To ensure the proposed new facility can be self-financing, an entrance fee will be required for the use of the urban beach and pool. The admission price will be as competitive as possible: it is expected to be in the region of €7, i.e. the equivalent of a cinema ticket. The revenue generated through admission fees will go towards the management, operations and upkeep of the facility.

### ***Weather Factors***

- The proposed new facility will be operated on a seasonal basis, whereby it will be open for six months of the year (notionally spring and summer).
- The new facility will incorporate weather-shielding measures to protect users against wind and rain.

- The floating pool will contain heated and treated sea-water.
- In order to understand the wave conditions in detail, Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company commissioned a specific wave study for the proposed site of the floating pool. Using the results of the wave study, the floating structure will be designed to remain stable and moored at its location during worst-case storm conditions.

### ***Aesthetics / Architectural Heritage of the Harbour***

- It is hugely important to Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company that the design of the proposed new facility reflects, and is in keeping with, the history of the Harbour. In developing detailed designs for the proposed new facility, the aim will be to complement the existing attractions of the East Pier, and to draw inspiration from the Harbour's rich history. For example, the pod structures in the proposed new facility have been inspired by the old-fashioned timber cargo crates that would have been a common sight on the Piers when Dún Laoghaire was a more traditional shipping port. Each structure is single-storey and situated to allow some visual penetration to the Harbour, while ensuring privacy for bathers.
- Importantly, the proposed floating pool will sit below pier level so as to minimise any potential impact on views of the Harbour from the East Pier.

### ***Navigation Restrictions and Berthing Arrangements***

- DLHC have commissioned a navigation impact assessment and the proposed new facility is likely to have minimal impact on existing access routes in the Harbour. Due to the nature of the development and its modular construction, it is also expected that there will be very little disruption during the construction phase.
- In response to comments received from Harbour users on the Masterplan and using the results of the impact assessment the design of the proposed facility has been revised since the publication of the Masterplan for Dún Laoghaire Harbour to align the development with Berth 1. This significantly reduces the impact on existing access routes for Harbour-users. The orientation and location of the proposed facility will not reduce access for the National Yacht Club, the RNLI or other harbour users.
- The proposed new facility will require the relocation of the traditional 'public berth', as utilised by the Navy, sail training vessels and others. In the short term, these ships can berth at the Carlisle Pier, which can be opened to the public as required. In the longer term, the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Masterplan includes a display berth alongside St. Michael's Pier, which would be visible from Marine Road, thereby assisting in creating vital linkages from the Harbour up into the town.
- The shore-side elements of the urban beach and floating pool will be mostly constructed off-site, and delivered to the East Pier when complete, thereby minimising the likelihood of disruption during the construction phase. Depending on the preferred construction methods of the successful contractor, a floating or jack-up barge may be required for installation of the piles for a number of days (the piles are for supporting the gangway and will form the mooring system for the barge). Depending on the location of the piles, the jack-up barge may cause a temporary restriction to access for a very limited period of time.
- The floating pool will not be a permanent structure, and the facility will be operated on a seasonal basis, opening for just six months each year. It is not envisaged that the structures on Berth 1 will be removed during the off season; however, some degree of demobilisation will occur to ensure the security of the facility during the off season.

### ***Size of the Proposed New Facility***

- The proposed development will be localised on Berth 1 and will not encroach onto the East Pier. The floating pool will be moored on a converted river barge along the length of Berth 1.
- The size of the barge will be approximately 60m x 10.5m.
- The size of the swimming pool will be approximately 250m<sup>2</sup>; 125 people max. capacity.
- The heated saltwater pool will be designed with a special parents and children area, separate to longer swimming lanes (approximately 35m to 40m in length), and a recreational bathing area.
- The beach area on the barge will be approximately 35m x 5m.
- The beach area on Berth 1 will be approximately 35m x 5m.

### ***Ongoing Maintenance and Security***

Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company will ensure that the new facility will be suitably managed on an operational level, including the upkeep and maintenance of the facility, once it has been developed. During the operating season, the facility will be supervised and maintained on a daily basis.

CCTV cameras with remote monitoring will be in place to ensure the facility is as secure as possible at all times; these will be in operation both during the operating season for the facility and during the off-season.

### **Next Steps**

- A list of all those who made submissions to this consultation will be published on the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company website on the morning of Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 (unless you have requested – or request over the coming days – that your submission be treated as confidential). On the same date, a summary of the key issues raised in submissions will be published on the website.
- End-November 2013: planning proposal submitted by DLHC to DLR County Council.
- Mid to late 2014: Proposed commencement of construction (dependent on planning permission).
- Early 2015: construction likely to end.
- April 2015: envisaged opening date for urban beach and floating pool.