

# Dun Laoghaire Harbour – National Watersports Centre

The termination of the HSS ferry service has created a fantastic opportunity for Dun Laoghaire town and harbour to provide a new facility of national significance for water based sports at the very centre of the harbour, whilst at the same time opening up access to the water front for all.

This can be addressed by the development of a National Watersports Centre. This centre would be the focal point for training and participation in a range of water sports and would host major international and national sailing and other water sports events. The sports that will be facilitated can include sailing, kayaking, rowing, paddle boarding windsurfing triathlons and scuba diving.

This would be a national watersports equivalent of the National Sports Campus Project at Abbottstown.

## **1. Dun Laoghaire Harbour**

Dun Laoghaire Harbour is exceptionally well placed to host major international and world sailing and other watersports events and championships on an ongoing basis. It is a very attractive destination with excellent accommodation, transport and support services and the benefits of a large city close by.

Importantly the skilled event leadership and management are already in place in Dun Laoghaire. Such events currently contribute significantly to the local economy. These lead to all local hotel and guest accommodation being booked out and bring substantial business to restaurants bars and shops in the town. The opportunity now exists to develop this business for the benefit of the town.

Ireland is considered to be an ideal place for a wide variety of watersports with a temperate climate and excellent wind conditions throughout the year combined with sea temperatures moderated by the gulfstream.

The location of Dun Laoghaire in capital city of Dublin benefits from the combination of extensive direct air links to Europe, North America and the Middle East and sea links to the UK offering easy access to the majority of the world's water sports enthusiasts, together with ferry links to Dublin Port.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour is a unique facility on the east coast of Ireland. It offers a large, relatively protected sailing area within easy reach of Dublin and is extensively used for water based recreation and competitive watersports including sailing, rowing, kayaking windsurfing and paddle boarding.

Dublin Bay has moderate sea and tidal conditions combined with interesting and varied wind patterns. It is ideal waters for these activities, in easy reach of a capital city.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour is already established as a unique sporting facility of national and international significance.

Dun Laoghaire has particular experience of hosting international sailing events, as listed in Appendix 1, and now has a considerable reputation for delivering world class events.

Following the ISAF Youth World Championships hosted in Dun Laoghaire in 2012 the president of ISAF Göran Petersson described Dun Laoghaire as a “spectacular world class sailing venue both on and off the water”.

### **2. National Watersports Centre**

The opportunity to build on this reputation and to develop a National Watersports Centre to provide a state of the art training centre for watersports broadening participation in watersports and developing expertise. It will provide a very valuable facility for hosting national and international sailing and other watersport events. It can be delivered quickly and at a relatively low cost as a highly suitable site already exists within the harbour, the former HSS terminal and marshalling area.



Figure 1: Aerial photo showing the subject site in context with the surrounding area (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 2: Aerial photo depicting the subject site (Source: Google Maps)

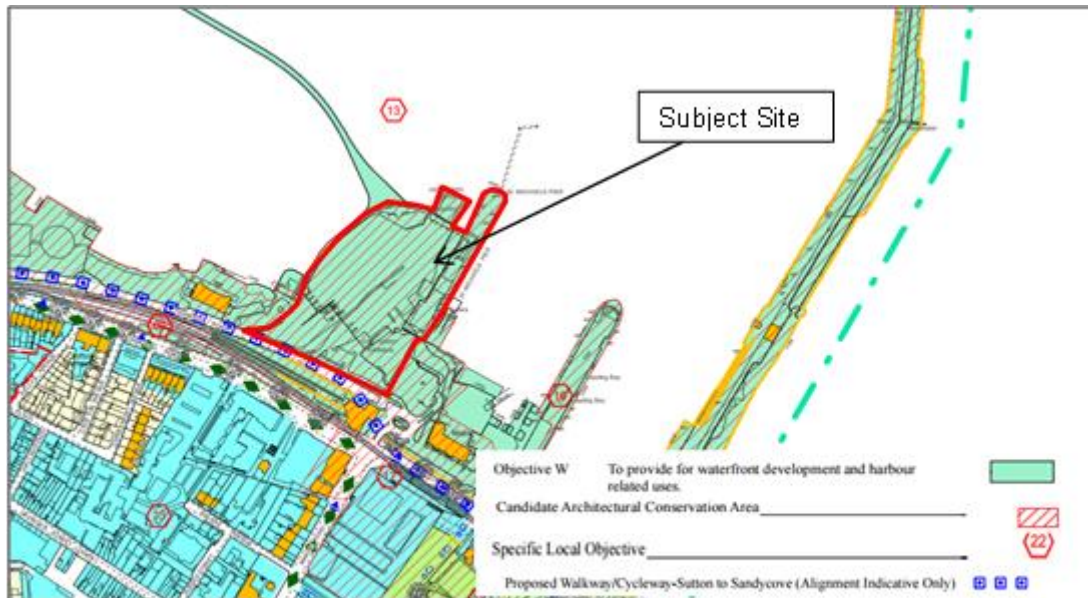


Figure 3: Extract from landuse zoning map Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2010-2016

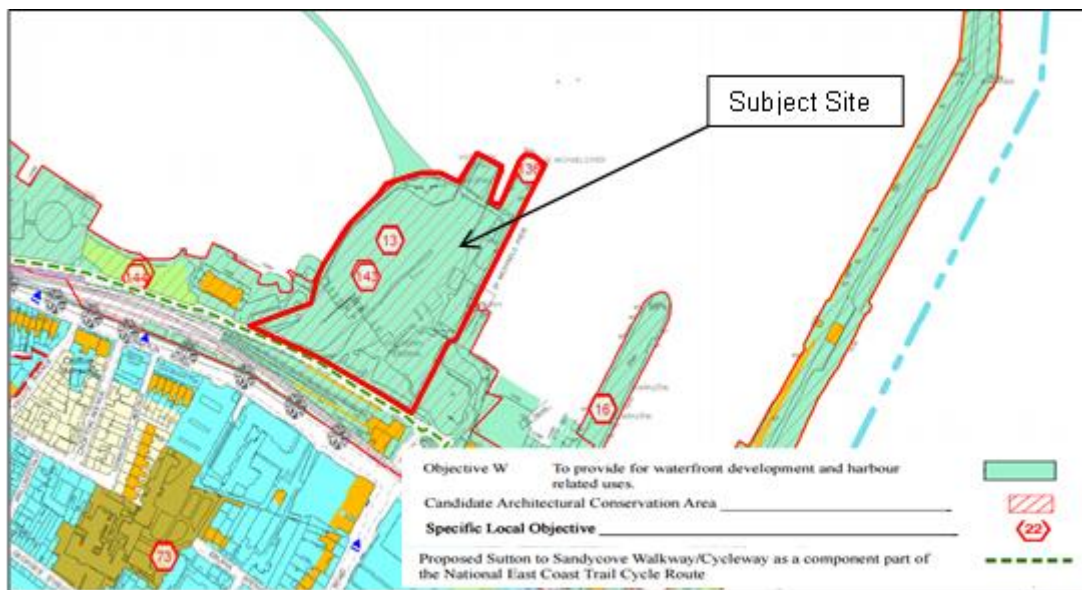


Figure 4: Extract from landuse zoning map Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022

The site vacated by the HSS ferry service will be very suitable. The ferry terminal building at St Michael's wharf could at least in part be converted to use as a National Watersports Centre. It's location at the end of Marine Road will further develop the historic physical and visual connection of the town to the harbour. It can include a restaurant and café open to the public and provide public access directly onto the water front.

A centre such as this could host multiple sailing championships each year bringing hundreds of visitors to stay in Dun Laoghaire for extended periods.

A large atrium space already exists within the ferry terminal building and can be adapted for use during national and international championships as well as for conferences, exhibitions such as food fairs, boat and other sports shows. It would also be suitable for local community events and activities and for educational purposes. In addition the views of the harbour and the town will provide an attractive venue for weddings and other private events.

Offices suitable for race and event management and training lecture rooms along with high class changing rooms and a drying room and a gym facility in addition to kitchen/catering facilities can be included by adaption of the existing structure of the building.

Alongside and directly connected with the existing terminal building is a secure compound for parking of boats and equipment during events could be accommodated whilst facilitating public access to the waterfront. A soft rigging area for Windsurfers could also be included.

It is immediately adjacent to the Dun Laoghaire marina, which will be a further attraction for event organisers and competitors.

Such events can attract up to 500 hundred boats and up to 1,000 people including sailors support crews and families of competitors who will stay in the town for up to a week.

The provision of a new large launching slip in place of the existing ro-ro facility at St Michael's pier will be required. This will allow for the fast launching and return of large numbers of boats simultaneously during events and will have the added benefit of providing a large public access to the water for the residents of Dun Laoghaire.

Such a facility could be successfully run commercially by a qualified and experienced permanent team including a conference manager, an events manager, a marketing manager, sports organisers and instructors and other relevant support staff.

The facility will be designed to provide much greater public access to the water front by opening up a large area at the centre of the harbour to public access and delivering in a very significant way on the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council objective to reconnect the harbour to the town. It will complement and enhance the existing water sports use of the harbour.

### **3. Economic Benefits**

The cost of developing such a centre will be considerably less than the €21M proposed for the cruise ship berth and the benefits to Dun Laoghaire town of the additional visitor stays will be much greater, especially as it will involve reuse of the now redundant HSS marshaling area and ferry terminal buildings for the facility.

Based on the example of other centres such as Weymouth and Pwllheli in the UK and Medemblik in Holland, detailed below, in the region of 20-30 events per annum throughout the year each typically of 4-5 days duration are feasible, generating substantial additional revenue for shops hotels restaurants bars and other local businesses throughout the year.

The economic benefits to the town will be very substantially greater than might be derived from a cruise ship berth, whose customers would rarely spend much time or money in Dun Laoghaire town.

A Watersports Centre plays to the existing strengths of Dun Laoghaire Harbour and town whereas the presence a cruise berth would undermine the sailing and watersport strengths to the detriment of the town. This would be a national asset for the country and provide significant benefits to Dun Laoghaire

The Dun Laoghaire International Sailing Events (DLISE), an organisation in which the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company and the four waterfront clubs are jointly involved, in charting the future for sailing events advocates a planned approach which will open up opportunity to bid for other much sought after pinnacle events. It has noted that the reputation and relationships that Dun Laoghaire has built up in recent years means that greater consideration is now given to hosting events here. An ambition has now been set to host a major international sailing event in Dun Laoghaire at least every two years. It noted this ambition is well under way with events secured through 2014 and other opportunities in the pipeline through to 2020. Its planned approach over this period will open up other pinnacle events like the ISAF World Championship held every four years valued at €25m to the host country or to bid for the Youth Olympic Games 2022 for Dublin.

The Volvo Regatta, a 4 day sailing event contributes in the region of €2.3m to the economy. The regatta, which takes place every two years over 4 days, attracted 21,000 visitors to Dun Laoghaire with a total spend of €511,350 into the local retail economy over the period of the regatta.

Further development of event hosting is however hampered by the absence of a state of the art facility capable of accommodating large numbers of competitors and their equipment in a single location for long periods of time. The National Watersports Centre would address this deficit.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The termination of the HSS ferry service has created a fantastic opportunity for Dun Laoghaire town and harbour to provide a new facility of national significance for water based sports at the very centre of the harbour, whilst at the same time opening up access to the water front for all.

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Dun Laoghaire Harbour is already established as a unique sporting facility of national and international significance.

A state of the art National Watersports Centre can be developed in the heart of Dun Laoghaire converting existing and now redundant facilities at relatively low cost.

The business case for such a centre is good. Attracting hundreds of sailors to stay in Dun Laoghaire throughout the year will be of considerable benefit to the town.



The location of a National Watersports Centre at St Michael's wharf in the centre of Dun Laoghaire town is superior to the leading examples in Europe which are generally located at a remove from the town centre. It is close to the capital city and has first class local, national and international transport links which will be very attractive to competitors.

The waters and weather of Dun Laoghaire Harbour and Dublin Bay offer some of the best all year round sailing in Europe.

This will enable Dun Laoghaire to build on its established reputation for providing world class international sailing events and is a popular destination for competing sailors.



### 5. Examples of other similar events centre

**Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre at Pwllheli, North Wales** was opened in April 2015 at a cost of £8.3m (€11.40m).



The purpose of this newly built centre is to attract national and international sailing events and to provide a boost to the local economy by attracting thousands of extra visitors to stay in the area every year.

Events held in the newly opened centre in 2015 include:

- Welsh Junior and Youth Championships
- Triathlon 2015
- All Wales Boat Show
- Land and Seafood Festival
- Optimist Europeans (250 sailors)
- Optimist Nationals (440 sailors)
- 29er Nationals,
- 29er World Championships
- Fireball World Championships
- Fireball National Championships
- IRC Welsh National Championships

**Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy** was opened in 1995 and most famously, hosted the Sailing Olympics in 2012. This venue is promoted on the basis of the world class sailing waters of Portland Harbour and Weymouth Bay, the excellent onshore facilities and the staff's expertise.



The following events were held in 2015:

- Topper Winter Regatta
- Laser 4.7 Ladder
- RYA Olympic Classes Spring Series 2015
- Laser Standard and Radial Qualifier
- 420 Spring Championships and Open Worlds and Junior European Selector
- RYA Youth National Championships 2015
- RYA Olympic Classes Spring Series 2015 No. 2
- BUCS Match Racing Championships 2015
- International Moth Grand Prix
- BUCS Windsurfing Championships 2015
- GBR Optimist Team Selection Trials 2015
- RYA Olympic Classes Spring Series 2015 No. 3
- Independent Association of Prep Schools Regatta
- UK Cadet Class Clemenson Nautilus Trophy
- ISAF Sailing World Cup

- Solo Class Championship
- Reb Bull Foiling Generation
- Streaker National Championship 2015
- International 505 National Championships
- Topper National Championships 2015
- Hansa UK National Championship 2015
- RS Tera National Championship
- RS Aero National Championship
- Laser4.7 Ladder
- Inter-Services Windsurf Championships
- RYA Olympic Classes National Ranker
- RYA South West Zone Championships
- Weymouth Speed Week
- Optimist End of Season Championship 2015
- RYA National Ranking Series 2015
- UK 29er Grand Prix Series 2015/2016
- RS Feva End of Season Championship

**The International Sailing Centre in Medemblik Holland** was opened in 1999 and, similar to Weymouth, now hosts in the region of 30 sailing events each year.



Historically the International Sailing Center Medemblik (ISC Medemblik) is home of international sailing events such as the Delta Lloyd Regatta, European and World Championships in various classes, Dutch Championships, Class Championships and many practices including practices from the Dutch Olympic sailing squad. The combination of marina, restaurant and sailing centre ensures a lively marina.

Calendar of Events 2015:

- Matchrace Winterserie
- 2K Teamsailing Winterserie
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- 2K Teamsailing Winterserie
- Matchrace Winterserie
- 2K Teamsailing Winterserie
- Matchrace Winterserie
- Teamracing qualifier
- United-4 (Cadet: 470, 420, Laser, LaserR, Laser 4.7, Splash, 29er, Optimist,)
- Teamracing qualifier
- Spring Cup
- NK 2K Team Racing



- Delta Lloyd Regatta
- Spring Event
- NK Matchracing
- Lely Cup
- Medemblik Trophy
- 2K Team Racing
- European Championship 29er
- ONK Contender
- World Championship Contender
- World Championship Laser 4.7
- World Championship Laser St/Rad U21
- NK Aken
- Dragon Tune Up
- Dragon ONK
- NK Matchracing Youth <25
- Delta Lloyd Open Dutch Championships
- Pinta Opti Trophy
- Dyas Cup

## Appendix 1

<b>Dun Laoghaire International Sailing Events 2007 - 2022</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
2007	Laser 4.7 European Championship
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2008	SB3 World Championship
2009	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2010	ISA Youth National Championship
2011	Topper World Championship
	Solitaire du Figaro
	ISA Youth National Championship
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2012	ISAF Youth World Championship
	MOD 70 Route des Princes
	ISA Youth National Championship
2013	Laser European and World Championship
	MOD 70 Route des Princes
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
	Optimist National Championship
2014	Optimist European Championship
2015	Laser National Championship
	International Moth Class National Championship
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2016	Laser Radial World Championship
2017	Moth European Championship
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2019	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2021	ISAF world Championship
	Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta
2022	Youth Olympics