

PROPOSAL BY DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL FOR A WHITEWATER RAFTING CENTRE (WWRC) AT GEORGE'S DOCK IN DUBLIN DOCKLANDS

1. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a new city-centre urban activity facility located in Dublin's Docklands and set within the historic George's Dock, a protected structure dating from the 1820's.



The proposed development comprises:

- a) WHITEWATER COURSE around the perimeter of the George's Dock basin incorporating:
 - a central flat water training facility including water / canoe polo pool,
 - rafting and canoe-kayak slalom / freestyle / wildwater sprint / recreational paddling course
 - canoe-kayak / raft conveyor from finish to start pool,
 - pumping station and water treatment plant,
 - enhanced public lighting / low-illumination floodlighting and
 - swift water rescue centre with floodable urban street and mock buildings forming a 'rescue village' for training of Fire & Rescue Service personnel
- b) TWO NEW QUAYSIDE BUILDINGS:
 - Administration Building, Reception, Changing, Lockers, Showers, Storage and Pontoon servicing the Whitewater course
 - New Dublin City Council (DCC) Docklands office

2. COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

The course length is 250m and water flow will travel in an anticlockwise direction starting from the upper start pool, in the south-east corner of the Dock, down to the lower pool in an

11m wide channel. This has vertical sides and access to left side only via stepped terraces. The variable flow rate will be a maximum 14m³/sec served by four pumps located in the pumping station. The course has a 3m head and ends in the lower pool at the base of the raft / canoe-kayak conveyor. The course will use fresh water in a contained environment. Course features will be developed using fully flexible RapidBlocs whitewater obstacles. The course designer is Andy Laird of Engineering Paddler Designs who had key involvement in the development of the Lee Valley, Tokyo and Paris Olympic courses.



3. USERS AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

The Whitewater Rafting Centre will cater for four main categories of user:

- EXTERNAL PADDLER - with their own kayak arriving to use the centre for training. They will arrive via kerbside drop off at the designated point or will be paddling in (1,250m paddle upriver) or delivered by shuttle from the public landing stage at Ringsend on south end of the Eastlink bridge.
- RESIDENT CLUB PADDLER / RENTAL PADDLER - arriving without equipment and will approach the centre from either existing parking facilities or public transport. Kayak drop off is not required as these will use the WWRC rental fleet or club / private kayak (elite paddlers) stored in designated secure storage on the river pontoons.
- RAFTER / GENERAL VISITOR/SPECTATOR – arriving without equipment. largely made up of group bookings, but on the day purchases will be common during the peak season.
- FIRE & RESCUE PERSONNEL using the Swift Water Rescue Village.

4. ACCESS FROM THE QUAYSIDE BUILDINGS TO COURSE

Most users will approach the whitewater course by raft or canoe-kayak from the pontoon adjoining the quayside buildings to a new pontoon at the old Dock entrance upstream of the Scherzer Bridge. They will disembark and transit from the river channel to a wash area behind the electrical substation. From here they will enter George's basin and the course.

5. COURSE BENEFITS TO THE IRISH PADDLING COMMUNITY

- Thousands of Irish recreational and club paddlers do not have access to consistent river conditions necessary for **wildwater paddling** other than at times of heavy and prolonged rainfall or through trips to artificial courses in the UK or to European alpine rivers. The Georges Dock course will provide a **year-round, home-based alternative**.
- The facility will provide a **base for a local canoe club** in this Inner-city area which will provide valuable recreational, social and community benefits in association with Dublin City Council, Canoeing Ireland and local school, community and youth organisations. The social, community, health and well-being benefits of such a development will be considerable.
- **Paddlesport Training Providers** will be able to avail of the facility as a high-quality training environment to bring paddlers through levels of the Canoeing Ireland Training syllabus in a challenging and controlled whitewater environment.
- The lack of whitewater course in Ireland up to now, has been a major inhibiting factor in **bringing our development athletes up to international standard** and in preparing our Junior, Under 23 and Senior squads for international competition, which results in these athletes being severely disadvantaged in relation to those of other European nations who have multiple courses of this nature at their disposal.
- The logistics and expense of exposing our athletes, through their development progression, to **consistent water conditions of international standard** abroad has severely impacted on our sport's development. This proposal provides an exciting opportunity to address this disadvantage.
- The course will also provide the necessary rough-water facilities for **future hosting of national, 5-nations and international freestyle, wildwater sprint and canoe-slalom races** to International Canoe Federation standards.

6. WHAT CAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEES, CLUBS, INDIVIDUALS AND TRAINING PROVIDERS DO TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL?

- The proposed development is **currently on Public Display** under the Part 8 planning process since the end of August 2019. **All documentation is viewable on this [link](#).**
- **Submissions or observations** in relation to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and development of the area in which the development would be situated may be made in writing to Dublin City Council by **3rd October 2019**
- These **submissions will then be considered by the elected members of Dublin City Council** who will then decide to approve the proposal or not.
- Canoeing Ireland Technical Committees, Club Committees, Individual Members and Training Providers who are supportive of the Georges Dock Whitewater Course proposal are **encouraged to make a submission to DCC**. Talking points and advice to assist in formulating submissions is given below.

7. SUBMISSIONS TO DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

There are a range of Sporting, Environmental, Economic, Tourism, Social and Community benefits which can be cited in your submission to broaden its impact on the elected city councilors who will be considering the submissions in coming to their decision. Broadly these issues could include:

SPORTING / RECREATIONAL

- a. The sporting benefits to the Irish paddling community outlined in Section 5 above should be considered and expanded on from your viewpoint - whether as an individual whitewater paddler, club, technical committee or training provider.

- b. The addition of a whitewater rafting course will be a valuable addition to the range of water sports facilities available to the residents of Dublin city and nationally.
- c. The development will provide a significant sporting / recreational facility in an area where there are relatively few available to residents or workers.
- d. The National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 promotes the use of the wider natural and built environment to facilitate participation in sport and physical activities and healthy outdoor adventure pursuits.

ENVIRONMENTAL / AMENITY

- a. The current dilapidated condition of the historic Georges Dock visually detracts from the amenity of this high-profile urban space bounded by the IFSC, many high-profile, financial-based offices and the CHQ retail centre. The development of the WWRC in the dock, following conservation work on the dock walls, will significantly improve and rejuvenate the environment of the area.

TOURISM / ECONOMIC

- a. The centre will be a major year-round tourist attraction bringing significant spin-off economic benefits to the city.
- b. The potential employment opportunities that the centre will bring to the north inner-city area will be considerable.

SOCIAL / COMMUNITY

- a. The potential for a municipal whitewater centre, such as is proposed, to engage youth and community groups from the inner-city area in health-enhancing water sports activity in association with established youth and community organisations is considerable.
- b. The Mulvey Report on the north inner city area commissioned by the Government recommended that further DCC-managed recreational centres should be part of a renewed landscape for the area. The WWRC would be an important step in the direction of enhancing a sense of community.

It would not be appropriate to raise issues in submissions relating to operational issues such as hours of access for canoeing, charges for use etc. The consultation is a high-level one which is concerned with the planning merits of the proposal.

If making a submission use some of the above points but **expand and put into your own words.**

**Submissions may be made in writing* before 4.30pm on 3rd October 2019 to:
Executive Manager, Planning Department, Dublin City Council,
Civic Offices, Woodquay, Dublin 8.**

***Title your letter “*Submission on White Water Rafting Centre, Georges Dock & Custom House Quay - Part VIII*” and post by 1/10/19 to be sure....**

If you are making a submission on the proposed development and your address / club / organization is within the Dublin City Council area, it would also be helpful to forward a copy by e-mail / post to the elected councilors for your area and request them to support the proposal when it comes before them for decision. A list of councilors for each area and their contact details is available on this [link](#).