

9/3/2023

To the chairperson and members of
the North Central Area Committee

Meeting: 20/2/2023

COOLOCK SWIMMING POOL – NORTHSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE

Dublin City Council has operated Coolock Swimming Pool (CSP), on the roof of Northside Shopping Centre on the Oscar Traynor Road, for 50 years. It has provided an essential recreational service to the local community and to many local schools and clubs in this time. DCC hold a 150 year lease on the pool from the owners of the shopping centre and pays an annual service charge as part of the lease. DCC provide significant subvention on an annual basis to maintain the pool services at CSP. The average annual expenditure over the past five years is in the region of €300k, including wages, energy, upkeep, service charges etc. CSP provides a modest annual income to allay some of these costs, averaging around €60k per year.

For a number of years DCC has examined ways to increase the availability of swim hours at CSP. For a number of reasons including availability of staff, costs, covid etc. this has been of limited success. DCC is about to partner with Swim Ireland, through the recently appointed co-funded swim development officer in providing additional swim hours at CSP starting with Mondays when we are currently closed. This initiative will focus on the provision of additional swims for children from the local area (who might not have access to swimming classes because of associated costs); individuals with disabilities; older adults and youth at risk. There are seven DEIS primary schools within walking distance of the pool along with a secondary post primary. The scheme will also provide and facilitate water safety classes for young people in the area at an affordable cost. A report will be prepared and submitted to the Area Committee evaluating the scheme after 6 months of operation.

DCC will be recruiting new staff (for the first time in a number of years) in the coming months across a range of grades within the sports division with the intention of being able to increase programmes and public hours generally.



As mentioned above CSP was constructed as a stand-alone swimming pool over 50 years ago. While DCC has carried out some upgrades over the years, there is a need to undertake a significant upgrade to the facility to bring it to modern standards for customers. DCC commissioned a report in 2022 to examine the works required to modernise the facility, including replacement of the roof structure, significant upgrade of the pool and deck, new plant and electrical upgrades and the installation of new changing, staff and toilet facilities. The completed report identified a cost in the region of €5m to carry out these work.

CSP is a stand-alone swimming pool with few options in relation to expansion of services. The swim only nature of the facility does not allow other sports and wellbeing activities to be offered to the community, thereby reducing its attractiveness and limiting usage. There is no option here to expand facilities, beyond perhaps the installation of a small studio space. Modern municipal sports facilities provide a range of use activity options which attract greater community use and are more sustainable both in terms of finances and energy use. The option to improve energy consumption at CSP is limited within the current envelope and condition. Stand-alone pools were of their time, they are extremely expensive to run, and in particular energy costs are prohibitive and unsustainable. The investment of €5m in a service that will continue to be limited and confined by its location does not represent good value for public monies.

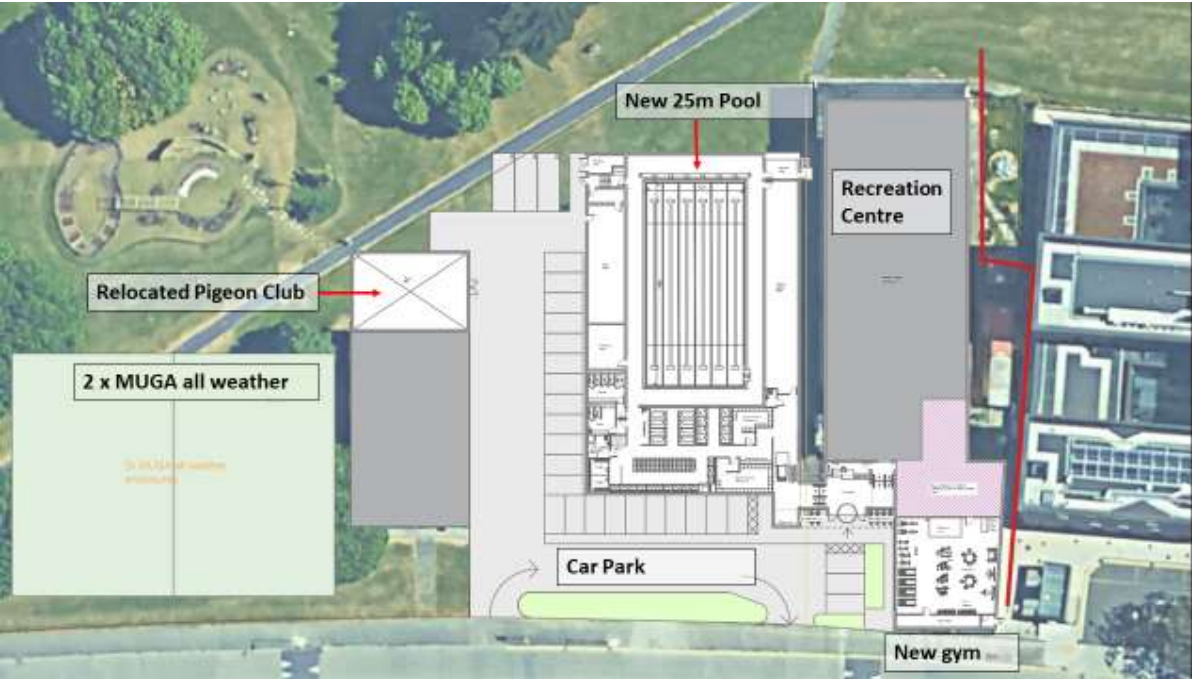
DCC has examined a range of options in relation to providing a sustainable leisure offering to the community in the local area and now propose to relocate swimming services to a new swimming pool attached to the existing Kilmore Recreation Centre, which is located within 300m of Northside Shopping Centre off Oscar Traynor Road. DCC commissioned a high level feasibility study to look at options here in relation to maximising services on land owned by DCC directly adjacent to Kilmore Recreation Centre.

The feasibility study has indicated an option for the installation of a new 25m, 6 lane pool with associated changing village etc., a new gym and studio and a new reception area to link both the new pool facility and the existing recreation facility. As part of this development there would also be an option to install 2 all-weather MUGAs which would be managed by DCC for use by the community. The creation of Kilmore Leisure Centre would provide for the first time a full range of modern sports and wellbeing facilities for the community in a sustainable and economically efficient way. The centre would mirror services provided by DCC at other leisure centres with full public swim hours as well as a range of sporting/wellbeing activities and attractions. A modern facility will also ensure a greatly reduced environmental impact through the installation of modern energy saving measures.



Existing Facilities at Kilmore Recreation Centre

The installation of a pool here would require the relocation of the pigeon club within the current site boundary (who have a long term lease to a building at this location with DCC), this will be discussed with the Pigeon Club if approval in principal for this proposal is forthcoming.



Feasibility Study Proposals



Artist's Impression of Kilmore Leisure Centre

The total project cost for this facility (including fees, contingency etc.) would be in the region of €10m. DCC propose to develop further these initial ideas though the appointment of design specialists to develop and agree preliminary design proposals to be presented to the Area Committee and stakeholders for consideration and if funding is secured a planning application will be submitted in 2024. DCC is examining possible funding options to develop a long- term sports & leisure facility at this location. A blend of funding including grants from various state supports for example Large Scale Sports Facilities Fund & DCC capital funding and community gain funds are possible options.

Donncha Ó Dúlaing, Senior Executive Officer