



---

**Notification under Section 138 Local Government Act, 2001  
Intention to proceed with Quayside Buildings, Custom House Quay**

---

## **1. Background to the Quayside Buildings Project**

The proposed development is on the site the former Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) quayside building on Custom House Quay previously occupied, by the DCC Docklands Office. In accordance with the approved Part VIII, (application reference 3833/19), the project will involve the demolition of the former DDDA office building and the provision of two new quayside buildings with a combined total floor area of 763.98 m<sup>2</sup> and maximum height of 5.5m.

The east building, which will incorporate a changing room, reception area, staff amenity area and equipment storage, will be operated by the City Council's Sports and Recreation Services Section as a Water Activities Centre. The new Centre will enable the City Council to provide an expanded programme of water based activities based on the River Liffey, working in close cooperation with the Municipal Rowing Centre at Islandbridge.

The west building comprises replacement offices and a Conference Room for the use of the City Council's Docklands Office. The proposed development also includes ancillary landscaped public open space between the proposed quayside buildings, a surface water attenuation area and a quayside walkway.

## **2. Project Objective and Rationale**

The objective of the project is to redevelop the former DDDA Office building on Custom House Quay for the Council's operations in the Docklands and provide a new water sports facility which will be operated by Dublin City Council. The existing building, which was built in the 1980's has been largely vacant for a number of years and in fast decline. It is no longer fit for habitation and incapable of being remediated at an acceptable cost. The provision of a new water sports facility in the Docklands will provide residents and visitors with a new opportunity for direct access to water activities on the River Liffey.

The rationale for the proposed development is as follows:

- 1) *To develop a new Water Activities Centre, strategically located to provide animation on the River Liffey. This will assist the Sports and Recreation Services Section of Dublin City Council to provide a range of programmes targeted at different groups.*
- 2) *To provide safe access to water based activities and recreational/developmental opportunities for residents of the Docklands area.*
- 3) *To provide a new building for the Council's Docklands Office which will reinforce the City Council's role in the area.*

- 4) *To provide key flood defence mechanisms at this location, which are currently not in place.*
- 5) *To further develop the cluster of high quality tourist attractions in the Docklands area around the Epic Museum, the Jeannie Johnson and the Famine sculptures.*
- 6) *To provide a new quayside walkway.*

### **3. Planning Policy Objectives**

The *Dublin City Council Development Plan 2022-2028* identifies the Docklands area as a Strategic Development Regeneration Area with the aim of continuing its physical and social regeneration to create a vibrant economic, cultural and amenity quarter of the city. The Plan also seeks to develop strategies that animate the water bodies and promote Docklands for events, in particular water-based leisure, recreational and cultural activities.

The proposed facility will contribute to the physical regeneration of the quay area by providing an attractive new gateway to the public realm space and new civic buildings for North East Inner City on the River Liffey. It will have a positive impact on the prevailing perception of the area and will contribute towards changing it alongside the existing investments in the area.

The new facilities address the objective in the 2018 '*Water Animation Strategy for the Docklands Area*' required under the '*North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014*', to provide a significant water focused amenity and sustainable use of the waterways. The Water Animation Strategy seeks to build on the successes of previous plans further promoting the area as a world class destination for living, doing business, tourism, leisure, wellness and cultural activities.

### **4. Details of the Proposed Development**

The existing building is to be demolished and two new buildings constructed. The west building will meet the needs of the City Council's Docklands Office with an office and large boardroom facility for potential community use. The east building will be managed by the Council's Sports and Recreation Services Section to provide water-based activities on the River Liffey. The water activities centre will be a public amenity with charges consistent with other City Council sports facilities. The east building includes a reception/ticketing area, a visitor orientation area, changing rooms, training rooms, storage, staff facilities, drying facilities, etc.

It is envisaged that the facility will support dockside activities in the local area, including the water tours of the 'Spirit of Docklands', and other water based activities. The development will also provide for an extension to the existing pontoons with one new pontoon and a new canopy structure which will provide a secure sheltered area for water equipment used by the Water Activities Centre.

A new gangway will be provided which will be the main visitor access to the pontoon leading to the Jeannie Johnson famine ship. This will enhance the visibility of the ship and its links with the EPIC Museum and the Famine statues. This new gangway will cater for increased visitor numbers who will also benefit from the improved public realm space surrounding the redeveloped Quayside buildings.

The scheme will create a new and enhanced public realm space at Custom House Quay with an open pedestrian boardwalk along the Quay wall and public realm courtyard between the two new buildings.

The National Transport Agency (NTA) proposed Bus Connects Route 16 is to be delivered parallel to this new scheme. To facilitate the new route an extended boardwalk for pedestrian use is required to be provided at the Quayside to facilitate the national infrastructure project. All works pertaining to the NTA requirements will be funded by the NTA.



EXTERNAL VIEW LOOKING ALONG CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY



**View from Sir John Rogerson's Quay**

The estimated 'all in' cost of the project is €18m of which €7m will be provided by the NTA. The Council's portion of the cost will be funded from development levies.

## **5. Area Committee Briefing**

A report on the notification to proceed with the Quayside Buildings project was on the Agenda for the March City Council meeting. The item was not taken and the item was referred to the Central Area Committee. The report was presented to the Central Area Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023. Marie Kavanagh, Docklands Area Manager responded to issues raised by Elected Members. No recommendation was made by the Committee in relation to the project and a request was made that the matter be reconsidered at the Committee's April meeting.

## **6. Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the position of the Central Area Committee this report is being resubmitted to the City Council for a decision for the following reasons:

1. It is considered unlikely, given the comments made by members at the March Central Area Committee that they will be in a position to make a decision on the project at the April or subsequent Area Committee meeting. This would result in the Council having to abandon the current procurement process as we would not be able to award a contract. This could result in a loss of confidence in the market in relation to Council projects in the Docklands given that we previously abandoned a tender process for the White Water Rafting project.
2. If the project is to proceed, it is considered prudent to award the tender as soon as possible to minimise the Council's exposure to construction inflation.
3. While the proposed Water Activities Centre is located in the Central Area it will serve a wider city population. A decision on whether the development proceeds or not is a matter for the full City Council.
4. Any member who opposes the project can invoke the procedure set out under Section 139 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

It is therefore proposed to proceed to construction of the project.

This report is submitted to the City Council pursuant of Section 138 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

**Derek Kelly**  
**Executive Manager**

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**