

New Cruise Berth Facility

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Who is making the planning application?

- A. The application is being made by Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company, representing the Dun Laoghaire Cruise Stakeholder Group.

Q. What is the Dun Laoghaire Cruise Stakeholder Group?

- A. It is an informal group made up of the Harbour Company, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and the Dun Laoghaire Business Improvement District [BID] Company. The Group was set up to ensure that Dun Laoghaire and the surrounding areas are best placed to take advantage of the expanding cruise tourism market.

Q. Why is the planning application not being made in the normal way to the local authority, where local councillors and the local people could have a view?

- A. The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 introduced a “fast-track” planning process for a range of infrastructure deemed to be strategically important for the country or for particular regions.

If An Bord Pleanála considers that any particular environmental, energy, transport or healthcare development proposal qualifies as “Strategic” Infrastructure then the planning application must be made directly to An Bord Pleanála. Members of the public still have a right to make submissions and observations on the application to An Bord Pleanála.

Q Why is this regarded as a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)?

- A. The plan for the new berth to cater for the new generation of cruise vessels meets the criteria to qualify under the Act, which include the ‘construction of one or more quays...which would exceed 100 metres in length’.

Q. Why is this new berth required?

- A. The berth is required to ensure that the Dublin Bay area is capable of accommodating the new generation of larger cruise ships (i.e. those of more than 300m in length). Over 50% of cruise ships on order world-wide are over 300m in length. At present, Cobh is the only port that can accommodate these vessels. If facilities are not put in place, Ireland risks losing out on the rapidly expanding cruise tourism business.

Q. Does it make sense that Dublin Port and Dun Laoghaire should both be offering facilities for the limited cruise business that is out there?

- A. The cruise business is rapidly expanding and there is potentially plenty of business for both. Dun Laoghaire is in the best position to quickly deliver the facilities required to cater for the new vessels. Furthermore, Dun Laoghaire is a port designated for marine leisure and marine tourism under the National Ports Policy, and the cruise business fits into the Harbour Company’s remit, as set out by Government.

Q. What evidence is there that Dun Laoghaire can attract cruise vessels of this size?

- A. Dun Laoghaire is already attracting large numbers of cruise vessels. In this year alone, 2015, Dun Laoghaire will have its most successful year in cruise business, with some 100,000 passengers and crew expected.

In 2013 Dun Laoghaire had a visit from the Queen Mary 2 (the flagship vessel of the famous Cunard Line, with 3,000 passengers and several hundred crew aboard). However, vessels of its size cannot currently dock in the harbour and passengers had to be taken ashore using tenders. Dun Laoghaire has achieved a reputation as an attractive port of call for cruise vessels, but the cruise operators want ports that are capable of catering for the new, larger vessels.

Q. How much will this project cost?

- A. It is not possible to give a definitive figure for a final cost until the planning application has been finalised and the procurement process initiated. However, the final cost is likely to be in the region of €15m-€18m.

Q. How is it going to be financed?

The precise funding model will be agreed by all stakeholders upon granting of planning permission. The funding model will include a long-term infrastructure loan similar to other marine-based infrastructure loans.

Q. Does the proposal have the backing of the government and particularly the Minister for Transport?

- A. There is no direct government involvement in this proposal, but the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is very conscious of the need to cater for the new generation of vessels. In addition, the Government's National Ports Policy, published in March 2013, stressed the potential of Dun Laoghaire for marine tourism.

Q. What are the dimensions of the proposed new quay?

- A. Subject to planning approval the berth will be 390m long, while the quay itself will be 120m long and 20m wide.

Q. Is it intended that there will be buildings on the new quay and how intrusive will these be?

- A. There would be no permanent buildings on the berth. Any structures would be dismantlable, and potentially include a reception tent and security kiosks. These would be removed outside of the cruise season.

Q. What impact will the construction of the new access roadway / walkways and new berthing dolphins have on other harbour users, particularly recreational sailors and yachters?

- A. Any disruption would be minimal in nature and of short duration. Significant development has taken place in the harbour area previously without undue inconvenience for other users.

Q. What impact will the dredging work, both within the harbour and in the approach channel, have on other harbour users?

- A. Dredging would take place over a period of 3 to 4 months and would operate on a 24 hour basis. There would be little impact on other harbour users.

Q. What impact will the movement of large cruise ships in and out of the harbour have on other harbour users?

A. The harbour has long experience of managing the movement of large vessels such as ferries with minimal disruption to other users. It is not envisaged that this would be a problem. Cruise ships tend to arrive between 6.00am and 8.00am morning and depart between 5.00 and 7.00pm in the evening.

Q. When will the cruise season operate?

A. The season will run from April – September.

Q. What will the berth be used for outside of the cruise season?

A. No decisions have been made on this yet, but it could be used for the berthing of other vessels, such as large sail-training ships, Naval Service vessels or other visiting ships.

Q. If An Bord Pleanála gave the go-ahead, how long would the project take to complete?

A. The target for completion would be the cruise season of 2017.

Q. How many cruise ships would be expected to use the new facility each year?

A. When the berth is fully operational up to 100 cruise vessels would be expected each year.

Q. What economic benefits are likely to accrue to the town from this project?

A. It is estimated that the net economic impact of the project for Dun Laoghaire town will lie between €16m and €41m after twenty years, depending on the number of vessels coming into Dublin Bay. The lower number assumes a continuation of historical growth trends in the Dublin Bay market, while the upper limit represents a replication of the success of Copenhagen.

Q. How many jobs would be created during construction?

A. Approximately 180.

Q. How many permanent jobs would be created?

A. After 20 years it is estimated that the number of permanent jobs created in Dun Laoghaire as a result of the project will be between 70 and 250, based on the expenditure of the cruise passengers and crew. The lower number is the jobs created in a low growth scenario, while the higher number is for a high growth scenario.

Q. Has an Environment Impact Study been undertaken?

A. Yes.

Q. What will be the visual impact on the harbour?

A. Modern cruise ships are huge vessels and there will clearly be some visual impact on the harbour. However, many people are also likely to come to Dun Laoghaire to see the vessels. Any visual impact has to be considered in the context of the very substantial economic benefit that these ships and their passengers will bring to Dun Laoghaire and the surrounding area.

- Q. Will the construction of the cruise berth not greatly limit the space available for sailing?**
- A. There has been a 50% increase in water space available over the past two years as a result of the removal of swing moorings.
- Q. Won't the Cruise Berth cut the harbour in two and not allow racing?**
- A. It will still be possible for racing to be held in the harbour, especially to the east of the Cruise Berth, albeit with smaller race courses. Traditionally, the only racing that consistently takes place within the harbour is the 'Water Wags'. More recently, in the winter, there is dinghy racing on Sundays. Dublin Bay Sailing Club occasionally requests permission to race inside the harbour. Junior Regattas also occasionally request permission to race inside the harbour.
- Q. Will the Cruise Berth affect the Water Wags?**
- A. Water Wags normally race on Wednesday evening with a start time of 7.00pm and they will be able to continue to operate on the east side of the Cruise Berth.
- Q. How will the Cruise Berth affect windage (with and without ship alongside)?**
- A. It is highly unlikely that a cruise ship will be on the berth after 18.00 so windage will not be an issue.
- Q. Will the Cruise Berth affect summer racing?**
- A. Summer racing normally involves Juniors, and small courses are used. It should be possible to use both the east and west side of the Cruise Berth for these events. The Cruise Berth may actually improve racing for the Juniors as it will contain them in a more manageable area.
- Q. Will the Cruise Berth affect winter racing / dinghy sailing?**
- A. It will still be possible for these activities to go ahead, especially to the east of the Cruise Berth, albeit with a smaller race course. It is highly unlikely that a cruise ship will be on the berth during winter so 'windage' will not be an issue.
- Q. How will it affect youth training?**
- A. The Cruise Berth may well improve the situation for Junior Training. Over the last number of years the Junior training run out of the clubs (National Yacht Club, Royal St. George Yacht Club, Royal Irish Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club, Irish National Sailing School, Irish Youth Sailing Club) have split their students into two sections. The Senior Juniors, weather permitting, go out into the Bay to train. The Junior Juniors train inside because it is sheltered. It will be even more sheltered for these Junior Juniors with the advent of a Cruise Berth. If the weather is inclement the Junior Juniors will not sail and the Senior Juniors can use the area inside the harbour
- Q. How will it affect cruiser racing?**
- A. The Dublin Bay Sailing Club organises racing outside the harbour on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons. They use the harbour as a transit area from the Clubs and Marina. A Cruise Berth dividing the harbour will have no impact on these sailors.
- Q. How will the Cruise Berth affect match/team racing?**
- A. These will not be affected as they already take place in the east side of the harbour.
- Q. What consultation has there been with other harbour users regarding these proposals?**
- A. There was extensive consultation with the public and all stakeholders prior to the publication in 2011 of the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Master Plan. Among other objectives the plan sought to:
- Position Dún Laoghaire Harbour as a major marine / leisure / tourism destination.
 - Enhance Dún Laoghaire's attractiveness as a gateway for tourists to Ireland by

offering state-of-the-art berthing and terminal facilities to ferry and cruise operators at Dún Laoghaire Harbour.

While some users had concerns, there was widespread public support for the promotion of Dun Laoghaire as a cruise destination.

Prior to the opening of this public consultation, a number of key stakeholders including elected representatives, yacht clubs and other harbour users have been briefed on the plans.

Q. Is this the only opportunity to make my views known?

A. No. When the final application goes to An Bord Pleanála (expected to be late April/early May), the full planning application and the Environmental Impact Statement will be available for viewing on a dedicated website to be set up by Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company, with hard copies available for inspection at Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Office. Any person can submit observations on these to An Bord Pleanála.

Q. If An Bord Pleanála rejects the planning application can the company appeal against it?

A. No, a new and different application would have to be made.