



Draft Development Plan for County Louth 2021- 2027

Forward Planning Unit,
Development Plan Review,
Louth County Council,
Town Hall,
Crowe Street,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth
A91 W20C

22 December 2020.

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the aquatics community in Drogheda and the surrounding area Drogheda Water Polo are requesting that as part of an all-encompassing plan for the development of sport in the area the council include the provision of an appropriate aquatic facility in the area in Drogheda earmarked in the plan for Leisure and Recreation.

The Drogheda area, which is probably the fastest growing urban area in the country is at present badly served in terms of the provision of access to a properly designed, equipped and managed swimming pool to allow clubs and groups to develop and increase participation in aquatic activities.

Aquatic activity has a strong tradition in Drogheda and over the years its reach has been very broad, covering such areas as Water Polo, Competitive Swimming, Synchronised Swimming, Water Safety, Paralympian Swimming, Special Olympics and Triathlon.

Currently Drogheda Water Polo have both Ladies and Men's teams competing in the highest division in Irish Water Polo, a huge testament to the commitment of its members, coaches, administrators and parents, given that the club has to travel to the National Aquatic Centre in Blanchardstown to train and play matches, a return journey of 90 minutes.

Aquatic activities by their very nature are hugely inclusive and cater for all ages, genders and ability levels, and a properly designed and run swimming pool complex could provide open access for up to 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Indeed, such is the shortage of available pool hours throughout the country the immediate demand for access suggests that such a facility would be fully utilised.

We are proposing that the council give very strong consideration to the provision of a 35m x 25m swimming pool, with a modern hydraulic floor to allow the depths to be adjusted to suit all types of uses. As part of the fixtures and fittings in such a complex we propose that the build specification would include meeting & conference rooms, timing & score keeping equipment, starting blocks, floating & fixable water polo goals in addition to adequate storage capacity for all of the above.

This size of facility would provide capacity for up to 100 users at any given time in a competitive setting, and up to 150 users for leisure purposes.



From our perspective the provision of an appropriate facility would allow our club and the sport of water polo to develop in a meaningful way in the region. At present our club's development is greatly hampered due to the fact that we lose many young members because of the inconvenience of having to train in Dublin, and the fact that Drogheda can never host a 'home match' is a huge disadvantage.

It would be our wish that a pool would be provided as part of a greater sports campus on the Northside of Drogheda, encompassing in addition a sports arena for indoor sports, track and field facilities, all weather pitches and a municipal stadium. The complex would be similar, but more advanced than those already in place in towns such as Athlone, Sligo urban areas with a much smaller catchment than Drogheda, and Waterford, a city with a similar population.

A well thought out, properly designed and constructed facility as part of an overall sports complex, open and available for community use would prove to be a very wise investment for the council as the societal benefits of participation in sport and exercise in terms of community participation, improved health and wellbeing as well as a positive effect in terms of reduction in criminal activity have been very well documented and proven.

Yours in Sport,

**Dom Gradwell,
Chairman.**