



COMHAIRLE CONTAE SHLIGIGH
ÁRAS CONTAE COIS ABHAINN SLIGEACH

SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY HALL RIVERSIDE SLIGO

+353 71 911 1111
+353 71 914 1119

info@sligococo.ie
www.sligococo.ie

23rd May 2018

Mr. Brian Parle
Secretary
Co. Sligo Surf Club
Strandhill
Co. Sligo

Re: Proposed Surf Centre in Strandhill, Co. Sligo

Dear Brian,

Following a very constructive meeting with members of the County Sligo Surf Club on Monday 21st May '18, I wish to take this opportunity to address some of the concerns as raised by the Club. In doing so, I am conscious that there is broad agreement as to the merits of the Project and that all sides wish to be in a position to secure the investment for Strandhill and Sligo.

Sligo County Council is the project 'champion'. It will work closely with all groups including County Sligo Surf Club both directly and through the Strandhill Maritime Board to secure the best outcome from the Project. The Council has already made Architectural, Planning and Corporate services available to the Project and will commit to securing a Project Manager to provide on-site supervision during construction.

There is an acceptance that arrangements for the operation, management and maintenance of the existing premises will not suffice in the new facility when constructed. In this regard, responsibility for the operation of the new Surf Centre rests with the Maritime Board and I am to advise you that the Business Plan provides for the employment of staff by the Board for this purpose. As it currently stands the business plan provides for a one full time manager, assisted by 2 part time staff who will manage the premises 7 days per week during peak months with lesser opening hours corresponding to usage and needs during the winter and off peak months. Revenue to cover all operational costs including staff costs will arise from services offered including locker hire, showers, a small retail offering, training room hire, contributions from commercial users including local tourism provider and surf schools, as well as the possibility of revenue from advertising opportunities within the centre. The revenue projections are based on conservative user numbers which are well below the current level of visitors (including surfing visitors and CSSC members) who visit Strandhill and those who use the existing centre.

This will address the current level of voluntary commitment and I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the members for that commitment, which has served the surfing community and the Maritime Board well to date.

I can confirm that the operating procedures will make provision as necessary for appropriate changing facilities to cater for segregation and different age groups, storage of surf boards, opening and closing the Centre, security etc. Provision can be made to re-examine the internal layout of the building, prior to tender stage to ensure it meets the needs of all end users and provided it stays within the remit of

the existing grant of planning permission. I can also confirm that a sufficient funding package is available to see the project through to construction.

Significant public funds are to be invested in the facility and as with all such buildings, it will be a facility that must be available to the public. Equally, there is a long tradition of Local Authorities licensing clubs/organizations to operate in such public facilities in a manner that allows them pursue and fulfill their aims and objectives while also meeting the needs of the wider public. In the case of the proposed Surf Centre, I envisage the granting of a Licence to the County Sligo Surf Club in a manner that facilitates both the needs of the Club and other prospective users.

I trust the foregoing addresses the concerns of the Club and while I would like to be in a position to address any further points of clarification that may arise, I am very conscious of the delays that have been experienced to date and the extreme urgency now pertaining to the project. For it to proceed at this point, it is imperative that we are in a position to submit our application to Fáilte Ireland by the end of June. Fáilte Ireland for their part will undertake their due diligence of the project and in this regard, there are a number of criteria to be considered that will be critical to its success. They include an appropriate Business Plan, sufficient funding package and clear ownership of the property in the name of the Council. As part of the project assessment process by Fáilte Ireland, consideration is given to all aspects of risk management and to ensure that the project will have sufficient funds to complete within the given timeframe. It will be a requirement of any letter of grant offer that Sligo County Council is a co signatory and underwrite the operation of the project for a period of at least 10 years after its completion.

Accordingly, I request that you revert to me at the earliest date regarding your reconsideration of support for the Project in order that we can complete the necessary application to meet the requirements of Fáilte Ireland.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Ciarán Hayes
Chief Executive

cc **Cllr. Declan Bree, Chair, Strandhill Maritime Board**
Mr. Mick McEnroe, Secretary, Strandhill Maritime Board