

VELUX Modular Skylights
shine a light on democracy
in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown
County Council

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As part of major refurbishment works for Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council, VELUX Modular Skylights were installed to bring natural light into Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's County Hall and new Civic Hub. The VELUX Modular Skylight system was specified as the only skylight system on the market which could provide a large-scale, cost-competitive solution for bringing in natural light effectively.

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The Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown project was delivered by Moston Construction as part of a wider specification to modernise the council building and create a new public space for the delivery of important council services. With this goal came the requirement for creating a sense of vibrancy and openness which could support public engagement and customer service for those in the locality. The creation of natural light and ventilation was deemed crucial to achieving this goal, with the VELUX Modular Skylight system offering the perfect combination of these factors.





Creating vibrant spaces and openness with natural light

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council's ambitions for the new Civic Hub were to design a new venue for public engagement and to bring democracy physically closer to its citizens. To deliver upon this promise, the council designed the new hub as a one-stop-shop for council services related to living, working, visiting, and doing business in the county. It consequently fell to Moston Construction, Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council's Architects' Department and VELUX Commercial to create a space where this ambition could actually work.




Not only has natural light been directly linked to greater workplace performance and reduced stress, but research has also shown the contributions it can make to a happy, healthy, and calmer self. To create a public space that would become a cornerstone of local democracy, it was therefore essential that the Civic Hub could create a positive and engaging atmosphere for people in the local area to enjoy. It was also vital that those working in the space would be able to feel at one with the community, thus "bringing the outside in" proved to be a key aspect of the project.





When assessing their options, Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council’s Architects’ Department identified the VELUX Modular Skylight system as “the only suitable product” for bringing natural light into such a large space. Through working closely between the architecture department and Moston Construction, VELUX Commercial operated in both a consultative and supplier role to support the greater ambitions of the project. This consultative relationship was necessitated by the requirement for a very specific length of skylight whilst ensuring the system would integrate with the council’s environmental strategies.





Using Modular Skylights to create natural light, ventilation, and energy savings

The roofing specification provided by Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council was a complex challenge for Moston Construction and VELUX Commercial to overcome. Not only did the space require a very large and specific volume of skylights to replace the existing roof, but they would also need to contribute to the council's building management strategy. The skylights would need to be able to support the ventilation of the building, help the council to create energy savings, and also meet best practise standards for thermal transmittance. The VELUX Modular Skylight system was able to provide all of the above as part and parcel of the product itself.

Designed to work as a single system from the moment they're made, the VELUX Modular Skylight system offers high energy performance, thermal stability, flexural strength, and can be customised with a variety of additional features to further the building management strategy.

Potential customisations include: custom flashings, integrated insulation, factory-fitted blinds and integrated rain and wind sensors. The skylights are aimed to be minimalist in aesthetic but able to offer all the functionalities of a turnkey solution for modern lighting specification. This flexibility effectively allows

for the system to be customised for the project at hand, prefabricated off-site and later easily assembled.

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VELUX Commercial ensured that the modular units provided for installation would both meet and exceed all of the council's specifications for its environmental strategies. Triple glazing would allow for the units to reduce the loss of heat through the windows, whilst motorized comfort ventilation could be used to open the skylights (up to 410mm opening) during hot summer months. Retention of heat during colder months would naturally allow for a reduced heating bill and associated carbon footprint, thus passing on all three of the important specifications in a single solution.

Pamela O'Connor, Senior Architect at Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council provided her thoughts on the use of the VELUX Modular Skylight system: "Modular building materials are going to be one of the most important things to give quality to the specification and to the completion of projects. This is especially true now that we have such stringent U-values required for all the different elements within the building and the new VELUX skylights are going to be a marvellous addition to this.

"First of all, the skylights are factory produced so you can be certain that what you're getting is a quality product. It's produced to the specification that we require, which is triple glazing, and that's going to give us enormous benefits from an energy point of view. I also think it's going to add a quality of light to the whole space. For ventilation we're going to have sections of the VELUX skylights which open from a fire point of view, but they can be opened in the event of us having an extremely warm day, which will allow a certain flexibility in the ventilation of the space too."



Avoiding construction delays and labour costs with prefabricated skylights



From the perspective of Moston Construction, one of the key considerations was delivering the project on-time and within budget. As with all construction projects, the timely delivery of preparatory works proves to be one of the most important aspects in minimising delays and spiralling costs across the build process. To tackle this problem, they took a pragmatic approach to the project so that delays could be pre-emptively mitigated or avoided entirely.

Due to the safety risks which can be posed by weather conditions, Moston Construction prioritised the installation of the modular skylights accordingly. The skylights needed to be installed quickly and efficiently so that other site works could then continue, with the installation of the system being undertaken by specialist installer, C&I Carpentry. Due to the prefabricated and modularised nature of the VELUX Modular Skylight system, C&I Carpentry were able to install the units in record time and make the site watertight for further works to continue without delay.



Mick Murphy, Contracts Manager at Moston Construction explained: "The advantage of using the VELUX Modular Skylight system is that it can be installed very quickly. Once the VELUX roof panels are installed, that opens up a huge amount of work for us inside, such as: completions, carpeting, furniture installation, decoration and plastering. Until the roof panels are in, it's not possible to complete this work, so having that done in a fast-track environment is paramount to our success in completing the project on time. The cost implications in relation to using the VELUX Modular Skylight system are getting it finished on time, in a hurry, and this means that you've less labour hours involved."

On the installation process, Paddy Lyng, Installer at C&I Carpentry also commented: "We've been working with VELUX Commercial since 2012 and we've fitted in the region of over 4,000 units at this stage, which has been across everything from schools to courthouses all over the country. VELUX Commercial is great and it's a very efficient system. Any issues we have, the VELUX Commercial team rectifies as quickly as possible and they take any of our advice on board when it comes to things they need to change. It's has been very positive working with them."



And the Result...

As you can see from the associated photos and video footage of this landmark project, the installation of the VELUX Modular Skylight system has been a resounding success. Combining rapid installation with unrivalled functionality, the skylights help to create a beautiful aesthetic within the building as has been the case with *other projects* using the VELUX Modular Skylights.

Pamela O'Connor provided the following feedback on the experience with VELUX Commercial: "VELUX Modular Skylights are the only product that's suitable for what we've been doing here and the only ones we could find on the market that could give us the length of skylight that we required. VELUX Commercial as a company have been really very good. We were very reassured by their interest in the whole project and by their interaction and rapid response to any of our queries. The quicker we get this job done the better, and I think that was another reason why we picked VELUX Commercial, because we knew that the good product would arrive, and be assembled very quickly. Daylight is critically important in a building, so we've been really looking forward to getting our new VELUX Modular Skylight system."



For more information and visuals from the project, click the video (right) to see just how simple and easy installing modular skylights with VELUX Commercial can be.

