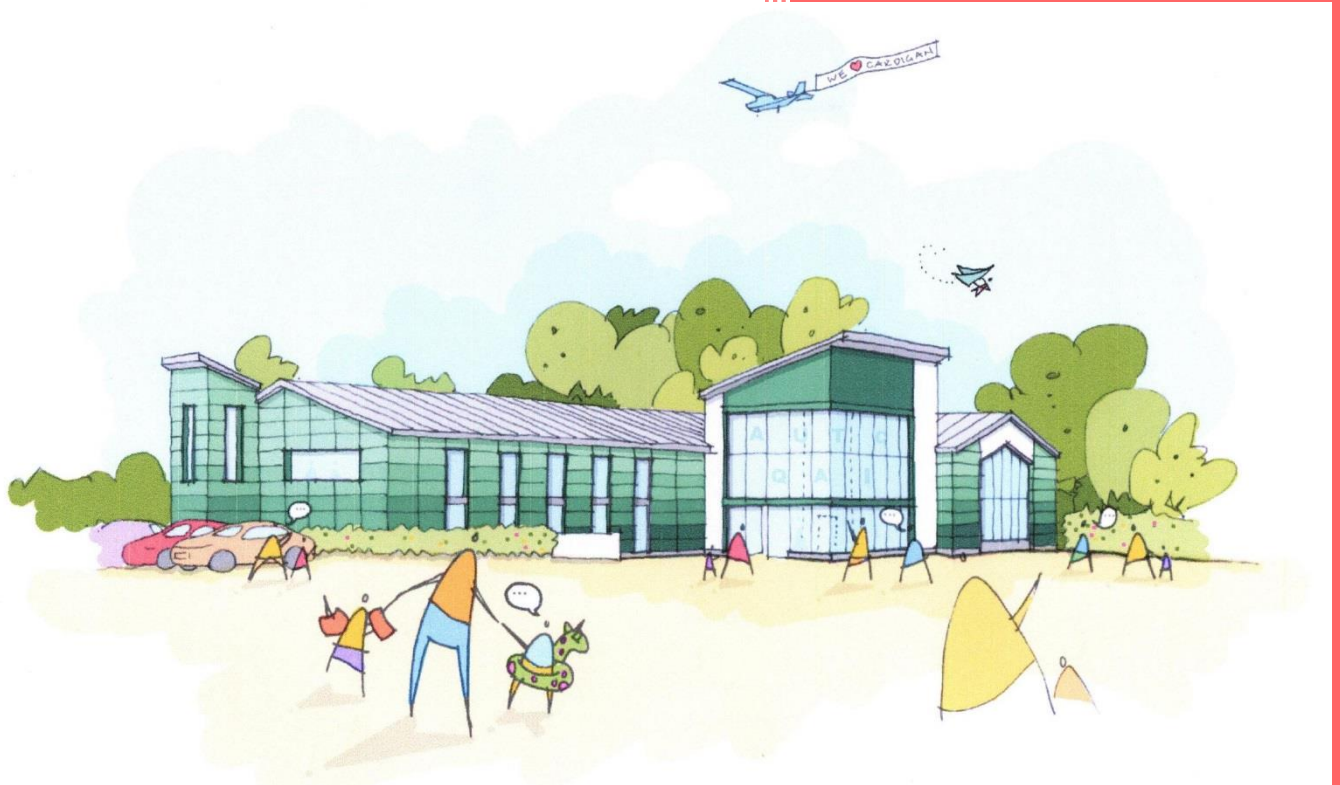




JUST SOLUTIONS

A CARDIGAN AQUATIC AND WELLBEING CENTRE REPORT TO CARDIGAN TOWN COUNCIL FOR DISCUSSION



Just Solutions for Cardigan Pool
Trustees and Working Group

2/1/2022



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Cardigan Memorial Pool and Hall Trustees engaged Just Solutions Consultants in 2021, to undertake a detailed feasibility study for the replacement or major upgrade of the existing pool and supporting infrastructure.
2. The emerging concept proposal is not simply a desire to replace a much loved, but ageing swimming pool. The proposals aim to deliver an exciting and complementary, activity offer (in the widest sense) to work alongside the town's many and varied sports facilities.
3. It is recognised that to secure the funding necessary to deliver this unique concept, then different creative approaches, a more sustainable model, less duplication and a genuine partnership with others, must be established.
4. A new facility is proposed that offers the opportunity to co-locate and jointly deliver services. Creating efficiencies and effectiveness, attracting the largest number and range of footfalls.
5. The Memorial Pool and Hall Trustees have given detailed consideration to the vision and rationale for a new facility and this report sets out the impact and long-term outcomes that a new facility will have on the town and surrounding area. Most importantly the Trustees consider that establishing secure and relevant partnerships with a range of stakeholders will be the key to the long-term success of the model for Cardigan.
6. This paper has been prepared to commence a dialogue with the Town Council, gauge support and ideally establish a genuine partnership to help take this important project for the town forward. Quite bluntly, the Trustees have come to recognise that a do-nothing option with continued repairs as has been the case for the last few years, almost certainly risks a resulting permanent closure and loss of the pool within next 5 years, if not before.
7. Instead, the current vision and rationale for the future is:
 - a. To create a landmark, destination healthy lifestyles offer, that complements, and enhances the economic development of Cardigan, leading to a positive feeling of wellbeing.
 - b. To create a commercial and unique multi services attraction.
 - c. To reduce duplication, accommodate co-locations and multi-disciplinary services and maximise footfalls, income and sustainability.
 - d. To be a catalyst for attracting additional funding from health, regeneration, commercial and other partners.
 - e. To be a catalyst for stimulating investment in the town centre and generally throughout the wider catchment area.
8. The outline design brief sets out the following requirements:
 - a. To replace the outdated facilities provided at the Cardigan Memorial Swimming Pool and Hall.

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- b. To develop aquatic facilities alongside a wide range of other wellbeing services, complementary to the offer provided at the school site.
 - c. To satisfy a wide range of social, health and recreational opportunities for vulnerable and priority groups, adults, young people, children and families.
 - d. To provide a wet weather attraction for visitors to the area, complementary to the natural regional offers.
 - e. To act as a unique statement, contributing to the continued regeneration of Cardigan – stimulating commercial life and providing both activity and wellbeing
 - f. To create a building with a ‘sense of place’ to contribute to an improved urban form and character.
9. The success of any future development proposals particularly in respect of third-party funding will be entirely dependent on the impact that the proposals have beyond simply the replacement of a swimming pool.

DRAFT VISION FOR CARDIGAN FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

10. To provide a context for a proposed future aquatic and wellbeing centre, the consultants have prepared a draft vision for sport and activity in the town in the hope that this might be something the Town Council might consider as part of its own wider vision for the town. This Active Lifestyles vision for Cardigan has been prepared to provide a sport, leisure, health and wellbeing context for the development of a new aquatics centre for the town and surrounding communities in south Ceredigion.

A Vision for Cardigan

11. To be a healthy and active population, living in safe and socially connected communities with a viable town and villages for people to live, work, visit, whilst attracting businesses to invest.
12. The successful delivery of this vision for Cardigan will demand a unified approach, supported by the County and Town Councils, working together alongside key providers and community organisations to deliver against the same priorities, with ‘Champions’ for Cardigan identified with delegated actions for sport and active lifestyles, alongside the arts and culture, tourism and economy, heritage and community.

A Bit About the Place

13. Cardigan is located in the south of the County of Ceredigion bordering both Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. It is an important historic market town with a history spanning over 900 years, including being the seat of kings and a busy 19th Century port. Its recently restored Norman Castle overlooks the River Teifi and the town is only a mile from the coast, and Cardigan Bay.

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14. A thriving market town in the midst of beautiful landscape, it is the 2nd largest town in Ceredigion with a, slightly growing, population of over 4,100, as well as a further 30,000 people living in the surrounding, catchment areas.
15. Farming and hospitality are the two biggest employment sectors, alongside a recent growth in the care sectors.
16. The town serves as a strategic education hub with the High School, and adjacent Further Education College, centrally located alongside the town's Leisure Centre.
17. Cardigan is well served by a busy retail heart with a range of individual shops, galleries, library, and indoor market. 'Out of the town centre' are supermarkets and business parks, with a new Integrated Care Centre, providing a wide range of health services.
18. Cardigan offers a rich variety of heritage, culture and sports opportunities, including: a Theatre; Leisure Centre; Pool; Skate and Play Parks; formal sports facilities for Rugby, Football, Bowls, Boxing, Golf, Riding; as well as water sports amenities, supporting activities such as surf life saving, rowing, boating and sub aqua.

A Bit About the People

19. Levels of physical activity in the area, amongst school age children, are higher than the Welsh average, with Ceredigion being 4th out of 22 local authorities in Wales for young people participating in sport and physical activity (52.5% participating three times a week or more - School Sport Survey 2018).
20. However, participation levels amongst adults drop, and are not as good as for young people i.e. Ceredigion is 13th out of 22 authorities in Wales (27% participating three times a week or more - Active Lifestyles Survey 2017). The same survey reports that 41% of adults didn't agree that they regularly took part in organised sport outside of school lessons, as well as 41% also saying they enjoyed sport at school only 'a little, or not at all'.
21. A high proportion of the population in Ceredigion is over 65 (23% and increasing), but as well as declining activity levels with age, Cardigan is one of the towns with the lowest median income levels. It is also noted by the Public Service Board that 23.2% of 4-5-year-old children are reported as being overweight, or obese. Poorer sections of the population have a disproportionately higher instance of bad health and lower wellbeing.
22. **This concept report recommends that a wellbeing and active lifestyles vision for Cardigan and Ceredigion should recognise different and more bespoke, albeit complementary, approaches and facility models for a range of different purposes i.e.:**
 - a. **the important needs of formal sport, teaching, training, coaching and competition facilities serving education and club sports activities;**

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- b. distinct from informal, accessible, healthy lifestyles, wellbeing and community hubs welcoming to a wider range of audiences and priority groups than a traditional and formal 'sports facility'.**

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL'S CURRENT THINKING

23. Ceredigion County Council (CCC) are currently developing a wellbeing centre concept, with the first exemplar project being introduced in Lampeter. Originally the Council's consideration was to develop the initial wellbeing centre in Aberystwyth, but this was put on hold because of the Pandemic.
24. As a result of CCC's commitments to the current project in Lampeter, the Council has very little capacity to give any time or consideration to a Cardigan model. Furthermore, they do expect to learn from the Lampeter Through Age Wellbeing project within the next 18 months and as a result have no readiness to be involved in plans for Cardigan.
25. However, CCC would not wish to stand in the way of the Trustees progressing their own proposals, which would be separate to the County Council's. But they would like any offer to be complementary to their own, (if possible, with no duplication), but a joint approach is not one that the Local Authority expect to pursue.
26. In the meantime, the rapidly deteriorating condition of the current swimming pool in Cardigan does mean that the Trustees have no time to wait and see how the County Council might approach their own future thinking for Cardigan. The Trustees with the support of partners in Cardigan, need to continue to develop their thinking whilst taking account of CCC's embryonic approach and with a view to establishing a unique and complementary facility on the footprint of the existing swimming pool.

A SPORTS, AS WELL AS AQUATIC AND WELLBEING HUB, VISION FOR CARDIGAN

27. The strategic vision for Ceredigion County Council's, 'Through Age Wellbeing Programme', includes a wellbeing centre in the south of the County - a facility inspiring positive lifestyle changes, reducing demands on statutory services, supporting lifelong learning activities, information and advisory services, through age integrated models etc.
28. It is assumed that the County vision for the second largest population will include the provision of a southern strategic hub in Cardigan, although it is recognised that the first such hub is currently under development in Lampeter (taking up its position with the proposals for Aberystwyth having been held over as a result of the Council's response to COVID-19).
29. This outline brief identifies that the strategic hub is a very different activity offer to the formal facilities required for organised sport and physical activity, physical literacy activity, teaching, coaching, training and competition at all levels. A detailed and considered review may

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determine that such a development is not best located alongside, or as part of, a traditional and formal Sports Centre.

30. The Sports Hub

- a. The vision for a 'sports hub' is to serve organised indoor and outdoor sports activities - a 'go-to' inclusive sports experience. Undoubtedly, such facilities could be managed in a partnership between the education provider and a community sports federation, as part of the town vision for a community leisure/school site/sports hub.
- b. This is distinctly different from the vision described as a community health and wellbeing centre, with a unique rationale, fit for purpose infrastructure and complementary offers, and delivered through an appropriate management arrangement.

31. The Wellbeing Centre

- c. A complementary, but separate infrastructure vision, is for a community wellbeing, one-stop-shop and healthy living centre – a visually attractive, accessible-to-all (ranging from the tentative and reluctant participant to the comfortably active). Visible and welcoming to the wider community and visitors - accessible to all ages, reaching out to, and targeting health and wellbeing agendas - compared to the more traditional formal offer, for committed sports customers.
- d. A community wellbeing centre in a visually accessible location offering health and wellbeing experiences, a physical activity and community fitness offer, co-locating multiple advisory, information and consultation services together with introductory exercise referral, lifelong learning, technology, healthy eating and play. Attractive, low intensity, introductory physical activity spaces i.e. dance studio, therapy spaces, fitness, warm water modality, child friendly play zones, healthy eating/café/vending.
- e. A facility that binds the community together, encouraging all ages to take on a healthy lifestyle. An inclusive community hub that will enable the sharing of service delivery under one roof, reducing annual running costs for all of the co-located services.
- f. A local attraction, with a sense of place, to contribute to an improved urban character.
- g. A catalyst for attracting additional funding from 'other partners' and stimulating investment in the town.

LOCATION OPTIONS APPRAISAL

32. A number of sites have been considered for the development of a new 'offer' alongside the current extant facility in the town centre, and they are as follows:

- a. The Integrated Care Centre (ICC) is a community hospital/care centre with social care and GP/pharmacy services – accessible by car/public transport on top of a hill - the surrounding land would be expensive to develop. A 'drive-to' experience, with little

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opportunity to develop an integrated wellbeing centre.

- b. Other sites have included the old Cattle Market; Maes Radley Playing Fields (the old open market); Bath Hill Road; Parc Teifi Industrial Estate. All are difficult to access for cars, or pedestrians, and would cost a lot of money for land acquisition, before considering the cost of construction.
- c. The 'Sports Club Hub'(Rugby, Football, Bowls and Tennis facilities, changing and social areas), on the other side of Gwbert Road to the School, is a significant and superb community sports concept, which would be difficult to relocate, or add to, but should be recommended for enhancement as part of an overall sport and wellbeing vision for the town.
- d. The School/College/Leisure Centre site has plenty of land, but is not a 'hospitable', easily accessible or visible community location. It is difficult to access through the College and School car parks, past old taxi garages, engineering and education buildings and with very limited car parking, serving a traditional sports centre and formal sports fields, recognising that the schools directly controlled infrastructure is being updated with the building footprint increased:
 - i. The recommended vision for this site would be the upgrading of the artificial, short pile carpet, pitch to a 3G surface, serving the football club and school use, perhaps leading to the relocation of the football club.
 - ii. Altogether the site should be considered for the conversion to a formal sports hub serving organised indoor and outdoor sports activities, best managed in partnership between the education providers and a community sports federation.
 - iii. In this scenario the public health and wellbeing physical activity offer i.e. lower level community fitness, exercise referral etc provided by the Local Authority, would be better relocated to a more visible and accessible-to-all community wellbeing centre in the town centre – **an upgraded and new look offer through the extant swimming pool site**, with the obvious advantages of being customer facing with a town centre presence, adjacent public transport, and with the local primary school benefitting from easy access to swimming classes.

PERFORMANCE BRIEF FOR AN UPGRADED CARDIGAN SWIMMING POOL BUILDING

Foreword to the brief

- 33. In October 2021 the Vale Consultancy – Civil and Structural Engineers, undertook a visual survey of the extant 1970s built Cardigan Memorial Pool and Hall.
- 34. The report concluded that the main portal frame buildings, which comprise approximately 90% of the building known as 'Cardigan Swimming Pool', are considered to be in reasonable condition considering the age of the structure, and with suitable localised repairs the building

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has a long-term future use.

35. Furthermore, it was stated that an additional factor in the decision-making process required to determine whether the building should be taken down and re-built, or extensively refurbished, is that any planning application with a 'new construction area' greater than 100m², will require a separate SAB application incorporating detailed design of the surface water drainage.
36. Any SAB application will require sustainable drainage (SUDS) to be implemented, much of which must be incorporated at ground level, and/or on roofs. This would add significant costs to a new build project and may impact on the commercial floor area available following a new build project, given that the freehold site ownership is entirely covered by the current building footprint.
37. In summary the report states that the extant structure - concrete portal frame, is suitable for upgrading (subject to detailed design and ongoing review), but elements are undoubtedly poor around the edges of the main structure: extensions to the side and rear. A significant upgrading could therefore be achieved to satisfy all of the new activities that would stimulate a commercial profile for the pool, with the much-reduced implications of the new sustainable drainage requirements accommodated in the detailed design (subject to further review).
38. A new build on the site would be frustrated by the new planning rules, and the drainage attenuation requirements would undoubtedly demand expensive solutions, more land or a reduced building footprint. All of which would be added to the cost of demolition and materials disposal.
- 39. Vision and Rationale:**
- a. To create a landmark, destination healthy lifestyles offer, that complements, and enhances the economic development of Cardigan, leading to a positive feeling of wellbeing.
 - b. To create a commercial and unique multi services attraction.
 - c. To be a catalyst for attracting additional funding from health, regeneration, commercial and other partners.
 - d. To be a catalyst for stimulating investment in the town centre and generally throughout the wider catchment area.
- 40. The outline design brief sets out the following requirements:**
- a. To upgrade the outdated facilities provided at the Cardigan Memorial Swimming Pool and Hall.
 - b. To improve the aquatic facilities alongside a wide range of other wellbeing services, complementary to the offer provided at the school site.
 - c. To satisfy a wide range of social, health and recreational opportunities for adults and families.

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- d. To provide a wet weather attraction for visitors to the area, complementary to the natural regional offers.
- e. To act as a unique statement, contributing to the continued regeneration of Cardigan – stimulating commercial life and providing both activity and wellbeing
- f. To create a building with a 'sense of place' to contribute to an improved urban form and character.

Mission

41. The updated facility will provide good quality aquatic and leisure facilities, with programmes designed to the benefit of the west Wales coastal region, providing an enjoyable, stimulating and quality experience for both local community and visitors to the area.
42. The facilities will offer services that encourage people of all ages, interests and abilities to enjoy their leisure time and visit to the town centre, as well as where appropriate, encourage return visits, develop skills and most importantly improve the general health and wellbeing of the local community.

Key Project Success Criteria

Functional

43. The facility to:
 - a. Establish a 'sense of place' through the creation of an iconic facility in a prominent 'just off town centre' location.
 - b. Improve the relationship between the coastal front and existing commercial and residential zones.
 - c. Enhance and complement the urban form and amenity of the town - visually connecting the town's architecture with the internal spaces of the facility.
 - d. Incorporate sustainable and 'future proofed' features which are 'proven', and will provide a value for money offer consistent with current and future facility development trends.
 - e. Incorporate 'future proofed' building management and customer information systems, with specific consideration given to the ongoing maintenance, operating and lifecycle costs.
 - f. Develop a facility which is safe to use and benefits from significant natural light, as well as good ventilation, delivering low levels of humidity – a building which is both comfortable and appealing to all users and staff.
 - g. Deliver a design that contributes to the overall 'upgrading' of Cardigan Town Centre – a facility designed to the highest standards, that satisfies all functional, social and aesthetic aspects.
 - h. Ensure that all areas of the building are fitted out with 'fit for future purpose' finishes – to include all equipment, ensuring that all areas can be maintained in a 'naturally' safe, secure, hygienic, clean and tidy condition.

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Economic

44. To deliver a facility that:
- Meets the long-term financial plans of the Trustees and other partners.
 - Is viable, with an operating surplus sufficient to keep up with all lifecycle costs.
 - Optimises the approved capital expenditure to achieve best value, and with a view to minimise lifecycle costs.
 - Contributes to the economic upgrading of the local area and region.
 - Contributes to Cardigan's ability to be a year-round visitor destination.

Social

45. To develop a facility that supports the Town Council's and Ceredigion County Council's (CCC) overarching strategic objective of regenerating the town and wider area.
46. To include within the facility inclusive and accessible activity areas, giving opportunity for all residents and visitors to access all of the features and participate in the widest range of activities.
47. To provide a facility that supports CCC's desire for people to be more active, more often.
48. To provide a facility with the flexibility to adjust and respond to future changing needs and demands of customers, as well future trends.

Environmental

49. To complement and enhance the visual urban form whilst creating minimal negative impact during both the construction and operational phases.
50. To develop a building that will meet the expected demands placed upon it by future climatic change.
51. To incorporate all best practice environmental and sustainable design principles, where economically feasible, minimising the use of resources and energy throughout the construction phase, and into the long-term operation of the Centre.
52. To deliver any new construction through the application of BREEAM, the world's leading sustainability assessment method for master planning projects, infrastructure and buildings.

KEY USER REQUIREMENTS

53. The upgraded building must satisfy the long-term user requirements, as set out in the Business Plan. Briefly they are as follows:
- To provide swimming opportunities for all ages and abilities – including water confidence and learn to swim programmes

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- b. A separate hydrotherapy pool will offer health care arrangements in partnership with local and regional health providers
- c. Fitness and general physical activity opportunities for all ages and abilities including medical referrals
- d. Health and wellbeing contact zones to deliver opportunities and benefits through both the statutory and third sector services
- e. An all age all ability welcome centre.

54. A detailed Performance, General Arrangements and Design Brief has been prepared by Just Solutions and a summary visual representation of the Client's possible key requirements and general arrangements for the upgraded facility has been drawn by Gavin Oliver, Architect BillyStudio. **ANNEX A**

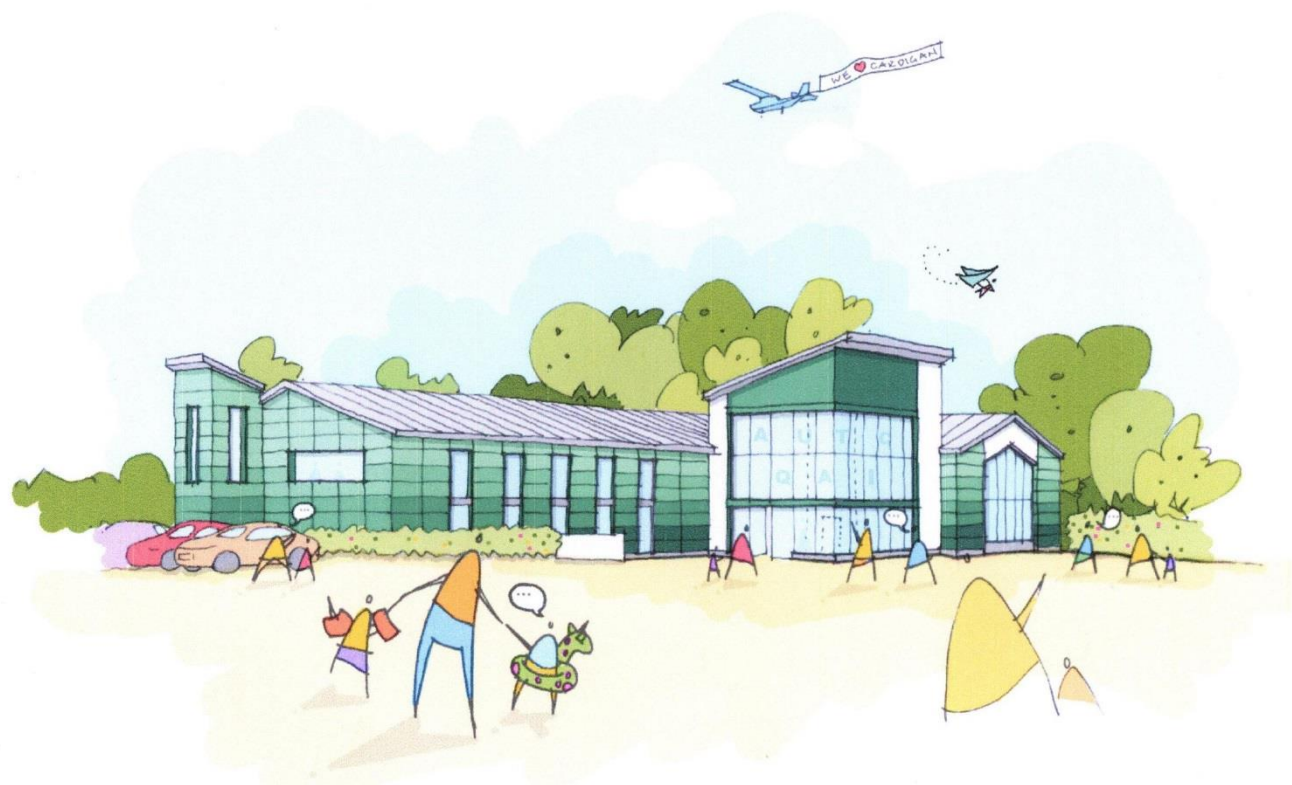
PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

55. The Trustees have established, and commissioned an independent task and finish group to develop the best community solution to replace the extant Cardigan Memorial Pool and Hall. Noting that the wider project group recently agreed that the current town centre footprint of the swimming pool provides the best location for any new aquatic and supporting activity offer.
56. The Trustees recognise that as volunteers, they have limited capacity to manage what is already a challenging and demanding scenario i.e., responding to building maintenance pressures; staff management demands; financial challenges; alongside the establishment of a fit for future purpose governance structure. With this in mind, they have agreed the focus of their attention should be on the current business and a separate group, with a clear brief, commissioned to help take forward the future vision and project and reporting back to the Trustees at regular intervals.
57. The immediate terms of reference for the project task and finish group, is to:
- a. Prepare a design approach for a new facility on the footprint of the existing building.
 - b. Prepare a report for the Town Council updating them on the current position and seeking support for the development of a future solution for Cardigan.
58. With the support of the Town Council, if secured, to manage a consultation together with Trustees and Pool Staff, engaging key stakeholders and funders, the Public Service Board, Voluntary Sector, Education, Interconnecting Health and Social Care Professionals and Providers, together with CCC, to test public opinion, seek feedback and gain support.

CONCLUSION AND REQUEST TO CARDIGAN TOWN COUNCIL

59. The Cardigan Pool Task and Finish Group would like to discuss a presentation for the Town Council to secure their support for the way forward approach leading to a genuine partnership and engagement in the development of design proposals for the widest possible public consultation as well as discussions with all the interested health, social care, wellbeing, lifelong learning, information services in both the public and third sectors.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS SUMMARY VISUAL REPRESENTATION (COURTESY OF GAVIN OLIVER, BILLY STUDIO ARCHITECTS, CARDIGAN)



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**GROUND FLOOR
ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE**

- R-Reception
- A-Administration
- C-Cleaners' Store
- PS-Pool Store
- 1-Entrance foyer & information point
- 2-Activity studio – spinning zone
- 3-Childrens' play zone
- 4-Rest area/meeting room
- 5-Main pool
- 6-Shallow water pool
- 7-Swimming pool changing
- 8-1st Aid
- 9-Public toilets, incl. accessible facility
- 10-Staff facilities
- 11- Lift and stairs
- 12-Health Spa Consultation & assessment room
- 13-Small changing room
- 14-Health Spa
- 15- Plant Room
- 16-Hydro & spa change
- 17- Warm water modality/Hydro pool
- 18-Vehicular access
- 19-Service yard
- 25- Fire exit



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FIRST FLOOR ACCOMMODATION

- ES-Equipment Store
- 9-Public toilets, incl. accessible facility
- 11- Lift and stairs
- 20-Studio: Dance, martial arts, yoga etc.
- 21-Fitness & Conditioning
- 22-Changing incl. accessible toilet
- 23-Swimming pool viewing
- 24-Footbridge to School
- 25- Fire exit

