

URBAN

FOUNDRY

Pennard Community Hub Feasibility Study

July 2020



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1. Introduction

Urban Foundry was commissioned by Pennard Community Council ('PCC'/the Community Council) to explore the potential for developing a proposed Community Hub at Pennard Playing Fields – augmenting or replacing the existing Pavilion located there. This report summarises the findings of our study, including the consultative work with local community groups and small organisations in the Pennard area.

A brief business plan accompanies this report as a separate document. This report should be read prior to reviewing the accompanying business plan.

Background and context

The Council provided a brief, which outlined the need for the village to (re)develop changing facilities for the playing fields (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Current building



During consultation with the community via the VocalEyes platform (see next section), proposals arose from the community for the development of a Community Hub.

A questionnaire was also circulated by the Council approximately 5 years ago to explore the viability of constructing a replacement pavilion but received very low response rates.

The Council secured funding from the Swansea Rural Development Partnership ('RDP') LEADER scheme to commission this study to explore the feasibility of the ideas.

PCC have declared a Climate Emergency and so any project is required to reflect this, providing a low-energy building (ideally to Passiv-Haus standards).

The Council intended that funds raised from the incorporation of a café, and desk-spaces for rent, along with hall hire fees, would help run the building.

Additionally, the vision of a carbon neutral (or possibly carbon negative) building, should reduce long-term revenue costs by reducing (possibly removing) utility costs.

Furthermore, the Council intended that the space should allow the community to come together at this location in a way that is not currently possible other than on Carnival weekend when a marquee is hired.

The Playing Fields are part of the Fields in Trust Scheme and held in perpetuity for the community; any development on the site will need to fit with these requirements.

Nearby facilities at the park have received recent investment with an improved playground to cater to a wide range of user access needs, and it is hoped there will be a new skatepark in the near vicinity in the next year also.

This study has been commissioned by PCC who were in turn funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and supported by Swansea Rural Development Partnership ('RDP') at Swansea Council.

Aims for the study

The study aimed to:

- establish who the lead organisation will be for developing/managing the new Hub (whether the Community Council, another existing organisation/group, or a newly formed partnership/cooperative);
- assess the potential impact on other facilities within the community;
- produce a three-year forward cashflow projection for the proposal, showing how it will be implemented and funded (if applicable);
- produce a three-year forward business plan for the proposal (if applicable); and
- produce clear recommendation on the likely viability of a potential project (if applicable).

The requirement of the brief was for a first phase study to explore the viability of these proposals.

Limitations

The focus of the study is on potential demand and viability of the proposals; the brief and budget did not allow for consideration of survey work of the existing building, any drawings for proposals, or estimates of capital costs. Furthermore, the budget did not allow for a large-scale survey of the wider community. Therefore, there are several

areas where assumptions have had to be made – these are detailed in the text in the relevant places.

Our approach

The study began with a meeting with the Community Council, to gather background information and to better understand its aspirations and limitations. This was followed with a walkabout of the local area, including the site but also its immediate urban surroundings, coupled with desk-based research and some basic walkability mapping.

The second phase of the work involved a series of 12 one to one semi-structured qualitative telephone interviews with key stakeholders to determine potential interest in the proposals and develop a deeper understanding about demand and likely patterns of use.

Respondents (see Appendix 1) were limited to representatives from a range of local business and community groups operating within or linked to the Pennard area who may be potential users of the space and/or people with significant views about the proposals. These included: sports clubs; youth group; Pilates; Yoga; Art; Badminton; and Gardening.

A 'purposeful sampling' qualitative method was used to identify specific groups as it was viewed that the general public would not use it frequently enough for us to be able to build a business case.

In the one to one telephone interviews, participants were asked how familiar they were with the proposals put forward by the Council, if they were unaware of these, the interviewer recalled these to them, followed by questions relating to different themes such as: use of current facilities; requirements and demands for alternative facilities; and general attitudes towards the proposals.

Contact details of current Community Hall users were provided by the Council and additional contact details for sports teams were obtained via other local groups' key contacts, via Google and various social media platform searches (e.g. Twitter and Facebook).

In addition to the qualitative data a short-form questionnaire was used to obtain more general attitudinal views of community dwelling individuals at the local Pennard Market, though attendance at the event and subsequent responses were relatively modest.

Nevertheless, the qualitative responses gained, coupled with our site visits, were adequate to draw conclusions from.

Impact of COVID19 lockdown on the study

Whilst the substantive consultative work was completed prior to the lockdown phase of the COVID19 there was some overlap with the final phases of data gathering, which truncated some of the consultative work – we were unable to reach some individuals despite repeated attempts, and we put this down to competing (and more compelling) Coronavirus-related issues.

The COVID19 lockdown also placed severe strain on our resources as a company and resulted in a delay in submission of the final report. This was communicated to

the client as soon as lockdown took effect; our internal approach was to 'triage' our commissions, prioritising on those that had to be immediately repurposed because they were unviable during lockdown and/or where our work could make an immediate impact on COVID19 lockdown emergency response, with those projects (such as this) that were focused on much longer-term outcomes delayed.

An extended deadline was agreed with the client, and the delay in contract work was further agreed with the Swansea RDP as funders of this commission.

2. Site location analysis

This section provides analyses of the site location characteristics and determinants of place that affect the social and commercial viability of any facility.

Walkability

All sites have location factors that enhance or detract from their commercial viability and a first task in determining commercial viability of proposed uses is to determine their siting and context in line with key urban design principles, notably their 'walkability'.

'Walkability' is normally defined as being approximately 400m (five-minutes) walking distance for residents living in nearby homes.

Daily needs, including public transport, should be accessible within that distance and certainly within a 10-minute walk.

Low residential density (number of houses/households per hectare) within easy walking distance results in insufficient footfall to sustain commercial and social resources, such as community and cultural facilities, as well as café/retail or other similar activities that rely on footfall.

Low density places a requirement on customers to be car-borne, which brings a range of challenges from congestion to car parking, air quality, and safety issues.

The spatial structure (road and pathway systems) of town leading to and around sites need to be conceived to minimise distances from home to facilities that might be used on a day to day basis to reduce the requirements for car borne traffic, especially where sites are accessed via residential roads where higher traffic volumes (even temporarily) are not desirable.

Figure 2 (overleaf) shows the 400m walking circle centred on the changing rooms building. A large proportion of the walking circle (over 50%) is undeveloped and the areas of built settlement within the circle are low density.

This significantly restricts the trade area for any functions that rely on regular 'pass by' trade (footfall) and dictates that in commercial terms a facility will only be viable based on a combination of users on foot and car-borne customers.

The latter poses issues with parking, which is adequate for current levels of activity but (as can be seen from the use of the nearby existing Community Centre) can quickly fill available space and beginning to cause congestion at the access/egress point of the car park.

Figure 2 – 400m walking circle



Re-organisation of space

More public use can be made of the grassed area, currently dominated by the relatively under-used soccer pitch, the protected cricket wicket and, hence, a highly under-used area (approximately 80m x 50m = 0.4ha) to the south.

Our study interest here is two-fold:

- principally, to encourage greater social use of the residential ('north') end of the park; and
- secondly, to review and improve the much-used 'desire line'* from the village community towards the school, Park Road and, perhaps (see below), the walking route behind to the school.

**'Desire lines' are the preferred route a pedestrian will take to travel from A to B – often they do not align with formal paths, taking the form of 'dirt tracks' through grass areas.*

Creation of a direct through line

Priority consideration should be given to walking routes in and around the park. It is evident, even from our brief visits, that many people use the routes, especially to school but also to and from Park Road.

The ways people move in and through the site are a key consideration for commercial viability of any scheme – there is a clear 'through route' stretching from Anderson Lane, presently following a 'dog leg' form (see Figure 3 overleaf).

Figure 3 – Current pathway from Anderson Lane



We suggest creating a direct straight line path from Anderson Lane to the Park Road Entrance and the school 'kissing gate' (Figure 4). A school back gate should also be provided and formalised. This then informs the general approach to other measures.

Figure 4 – Direct route pathway to further encourage connection



For such an important short-cut, the pathway connections at the school end leave much to be desired, cutting behind homes and with poor overlooking by residential buildings creating a secluded space and making the backs of homes vulnerable. Whilst it is beginning to veer away from our brief, that too warrants attention as the means of better connecting the clusters of community facilities – the existing Community Hall, the school/library/health facilities and the park.

Additionally, consideration of the through cycle route, not to mention encouraging cycling to school, is a key element for wider community benefit, promoting active travel and a safe route to school for the community.

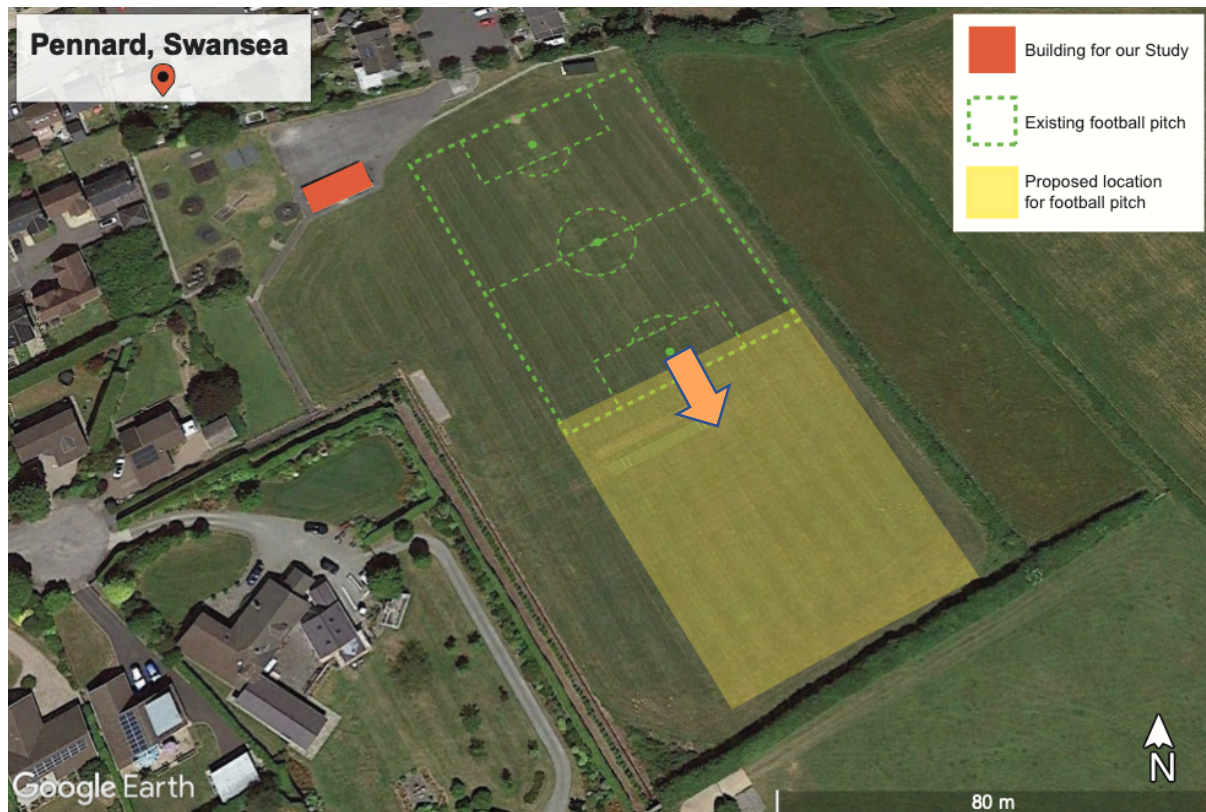
Additionally, an alternative gate into the ‘dog-walking field’ (next to the east boundary) and beyond, should be explored in conjunction with local landowners, and a new walkers’ pathway should be created from that gate, to link with the existing, which currently runs round from behind the school grounds. We have not further explored this possible connection as it is beginning to stray from a very focused brief, but it clearly has some social and environmental advantages.

This reorganisation of the ways in which people move around the park will certainly enhance and inform future use and functions.

Reorganisation of space for pitches

To achieve the proposed straight line connection from Anderson Lane, and also to create a more varied use of the site at the more accessible end, consider moving the soccer pitch further back to create a much larger ‘free play’ space (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Movement of pitches to reorganise space



The cricket wicket would be moved to a new location, somewhere behind the 'north' goalposts as against the current 'south' location. Players and spectators will make the additional (short) walk to the football pitch – informal users for kickabouts and other non-organised uses are much less likely to do so.

A new high fencing system for some of that southern area would be desirable. A gate to access the adjoining field when necessary, would also be wise as noted above.

The exact location of the cricket wicket is a matter for the club, but with the summer removal of the (north) goalposts, there is plenty room for a good size cricket pitch. The wicket itself can have its own protection provision.

A skate facility is under consideration – any further provisions should consider bringing use out in 'front' of the building to encourage overlooking for safety and also to boost the viability of the terrace area for serving of tea/coffee/snacks at certain times.

Further, the current car parking adjacent to the building, though necessary for access, could be repurposed to formalise the tennis/basketball function.

The Boules court should also be relocated as close to the building as possible, potentially including similar such as a giant chess/draughts board (pieces can be stored in a newly refurbished facility).

The Pavilion building

This approach then informs the discussion of the existing changing rooms – the 'pavilion building'. If it can be demonstrated that a more substantial and better-used facility can be justified (see section 3) – and we believe that our proposals here will immediately make that more feasible – we recommend consideration of an extension to the pavilion frontage, turning it toward the (re-located) cricket pitch, so creating a sitting area for cricket watchers and waiting players alike. That may be achieved with a small raised terrace with an 'L-shaped' building enclosing a triangular terrace. Coffee, drinks and the like can be provided there on match days.

The intention is to create more reason to sit on a terrace outside a refurbished building to watch the cricket and for parents to oversee younger children in informal play, moving the football pitch (which will generally be 'touchline' spectating wherever sited) further away. Spectators to the football will still likely purchase a tea or coffee in a take-away cup to consume on the touchline further away.

Further, that turned space will provide for other social activities being discussed – the building begins to more actively 'engage' with the space it is there to serve.

As a general principle, all buildings have 'fronts' and all buildings have 'backs' – pavilions in parks such as this present problems attempting to face in all directions. There are merits in retaining the current siting (reoriented) as discussed but that does create a space to the rear of the building that is less well supervised, which includes the relatively recently added play facilities.

It is in these places that are less well-supervised that mischief often happens (often in modest terms – noise and litter) but sometimes more serious (drinking, drug-taking, vandalism and assault). There are no easy answers to resolving this given the recent investment in play equipment and layout, so the key will be to ensure that any further provisions are well-supervised both by any 'new' building and by surrounding residential properties.

Much can be achieved with better lighting as a starting point and this should be pursued alongside any building (re)development.

Building condition

The changing rooms should certainly be upgraded – the building is a 1970s construction and showing clear signs of urgent need for upgrade/replacement. We are restricted to a visual inspection, but there are clear signs that flooring is beginning to come up, heating and ventilation are poor and insulation is likely inadequate and (whilst we could not see them on our visits) there are reports of holes in the roofing/leaks.

Absent of a more invasive survey it is not possible to comment further on construction materials and issues; the age of the building may mean that there is some asbestos in its construction and further investigative work should explore that.

Furthermore, the internal provision of space is very modest and inadequate for aspirations to enhance sporting use of the park – there is no separation for girls and boys changing, no ‘home’ and ‘away’ separation for changing, no referees room, no medical room, and no storage space. Toilet facilities are also inadequate and would benefit from upgrade with the addition of shower facilities. The current provision is not DDA compliant and would benefit from significant overhaul.

Whilst architects will need to determine the approach, we would also suggest that – changing space is required beyond the current footprint and that will require rebuilding or extension. If the latter, any extension should be built to the rear of the existing building with a new ‘players exit’ to the ‘east’ side.

These are initial suggestions, which, if considered worthy of pursuit, should then be subject to further development through design work that engages the various potential users.

A (lesser) alternative is to seek discussion on the private land between the Anderson Lane link and the play equipment area as a possible location for an entirely newbuild facility there.

A more invasive and detailed survey with input from architects is required to determine whether the building should be extended or replaced entirely, but either way there is a clear need for an upgrade of these facilities based purely on the condition of the building and current usage levels.

Further site considerations

It is also suggested that, in addition to the current provision for younger children, a single net facility (basketball and/ or netball – see Figure 6 overleaf), a wall for kicking a ball against, and perhaps an outdoor table-tennis table or the like, be provided on the pavilion side, behind the path line and out in the open for as much ‘natural supervision’ as is achievable.

There is scope to further develop this idea to create a multi-use games area (MUGA) – again it is important this is sited where it is overlooked by any redeveloped facility and not tucked away behind it, otherwise there will be inevitable problems with anti-social behavior (some of this is already evident).

Figure 6 – Stand-alone basketball net



We would anticipate that the new pavilion could operate positively for young people especially (see section 3) as well as for various other age-groups and these provisions would enhance its scope for these users.

Consideration should be given to informal 'hang-out' spaces near the building – close enough to be supervised by the building and surrounding residential properties but far enough to reduce noise and also to give young people some space of their own and also suited for younger children to play on/climb on.

An example of one such space from one of our projects in north Wales is shown in Figure 7 overleaf.

Figure 7 – A ‘hang-out’ space for children and young people



It was noted in the inception meeting with PCC for this work that there is some interest in weddings with the addition of a marquee if toilet facilities could be upgraded. This would require a more detailed discussion with immediate neighbours as such a use may entail late evening drinking and noise from guests/music and there is strong potential for clashing.

Presently, our focus is on the sporting and general community uses, but there is merit in allowing for extension of the building through gazebo/awnings for temporary events and activities of all sorts e.g. with anchor points in the car parking area and doorways/power supplies to easily link to. This though should be explored in further detail at the design stage, with specific additional consultative work with immediate neighbours on this aspect if weddings are to be pursued as a use for this space.

Beyond our remit, there is also consideration of a garden facility on the east side of the school, perhaps embracing the bandstand and an allotment or planting area that side of the school. Whilst all this is to be encouraged, we recommend resolution of pathways, routes to school, and dog-walking routes on the south and west sides

before finalising those decisions. The nature and growing garden to the rear of the school is a valuable asset to be considered in this context.

For now, we believe that an attempt to socially and operationally integrate the facilities of the park would provide the best conditions for additional footfall, a wider range of activities and provision for a wider cross-section of the community, from young to old. That said, the intention is to complement, not compete with, the current provisions in the existing Pennard Community Hall (see section 3).

3. Need/demand

The following section summarises the need/demand, summarising the feedback from the initial VocalEyes study previously conducted by the Council, initial notes gathered from the inception meeting, and followed by a summary of the key findings of our research in the local area through this commission both through presence at the Pennard Market and also a series of one to one interviews with key stakeholders identified with support from PCC.

VocalEyes consultation feedback

Four ideas were proposed through the VocalEyes platform, with most engagement in relation to the Pennard park community hub (54 people engaged) and work to upgrade the pavilion on the playing field (52 people engaged).

The other two ideas (a multiuse games area and low cost shared office space) had less engagement with 13 and 19 respectively; both with fewer additional comments received those ideas.

Comments provided for the community hub were from 2018 to 2019; five were positive, one was neutral and there were none against the idea.

People's support of the idea was expressed particularly in terms of support for children and youth groups, whilst also suggesting a place for parents was necessary:

“Brilliant idea. Our youth really would benefit from structured workshops and activities and us parents need somewhere to get coffee while the kids use the recreation ground! Tying it in with a new library and meeting space would make it a very vibrant, attractive hub to visit!”

Expression of demand was a little clearer for the (re)development of the pavilion; 8 comments were provided in favour of the idea, and 1 against. Those in favour provided examples of how many young people they attract regularly to the Pennard Youth Group (40-50 individuals a week) and lack of reliable showers for sports teams:

“The Pavilion requires attention ASAP and glad this has been highlighted, as a club playing here even a warm shower is hit and miss, what is even more worrying is the lack of support/sponsorship from local businesses etc. to keep a football team going in Pennard. Would be a great shame to see the youngsters of Pennard having to go elsewhere to play football, Grassroots football is essential, let's not lose it in Pennard!”

These comments should be taken into consideration in terms of future demand – on the one hand improved facilities will potentially enhance the visibility and therefore

viability of local clubs. However, if local clubs are unable to fund themselves there are risks to creating a facility largely based on their use.

It is evident people were becoming irritated by a perceived lack of action for these facilities with such comments dating back to 2017, and that there might be some conflict with previous conversations about the potential arrangements for the site:

“Long ago we gave an assurance to the residents of the nearby houses that it would only be changing rooms.”

“What is happening with the pavilion? A lot of us have bought one or more bricks and would like to see some action.”

“This has been on the cards for too long, let’s see some action.”

Some comments provided a view of what they would want without elaborating on the demands for such facilities, further to this there were concerns in relation to the maintenance of the buildings once erected.

“Great idea but what about external exercise equipment like on Swansea promenade otherwise you have to consider who will manage the centre.”

In summary, the VocalEyes data provide some insight into the needs and demand with relatively positive expressions of support for the idea of a community hub and development of the original pavilion, but with some concerns expressed over the more practical elements such as the maintenance and funding of the project.

The VocalEyes data informed the brief for this work and our subsequent commission.

Other local facilities

The existing Community Hall is well-used and full most weeks in normal circumstances.

The Parish Hall is also quite heavily used but is some distance and not walkable, with very weak (non-existent in places) pedestrian connections to it from the area and poor bus services. It is not a viable alternative provision for the immediate community near to this site.

There are other local facilities such as the golf club and pub, and the cluster of facilities at the primary school site (swimming pool and library).

There are well-used cafes overlooking the sea to the south in Southgate that are well-frequented.

Stakeholder interviews

The following section briefly summarises the consultation with a range of local special interest groups – the range of respondents is summarised in Appendix 1 (note that due to the research overlapping with the early stages of the COVID19 lockdown there were some individuals that we were unable to reach but we consider that we have sufficient data from which to draw conclusions).

Use of current facilities

The majority of respondents accessed either the Parish Hall or Community Hall currently based within Pennard. The most common and most well-used facility was the Community Hall which acts as the main community hub currently.

The Community Hall has: two multi-functional rooms (one large, one small); a kitchen; toilets; and a day centre attached. Most groups reported that they run on a weekly basis, either using a block session (four hours) or splitting the cost of a session between two groups in order to pay for a 1-hour time slot.

Most groups reported that they attracted at least ten people per session with some groups such as gardening attracting forty to fifty people each month with popularity continually increasing.

In the Community Hall there are frequently two groups running at the same time, in both the large and small rooms. This can lead to problems when accessing the toilets and kitchen, with groups in the smaller room having to interrupt sessions in order to access the facilities. Irrespective of the proposals for the Pavilion, it will be a worthwhile exercise to explore whether modest works to the hall can make better use of these existing spaces.

Respondents reported that the use of the Community Hall was principally due to its convenient location, affordability, the size of the halls, and accessibility of the car park. In addition, the Parish Hall, the local pub (Southgate) and local school were used by local groups operating in the area.

It was a recurrent theme that there was a shortage of indoor facilities for younger people in the area. Currently, the youth group attracts between 20-60 young people every week, from age 11 onwards and has been running for ten years in the Community Hall. They often use the playing fields in the summer and were very keen to move facilities closer to the playing fields; thereby giving them more space both indoors and outdoors especially with growing numbers, which can overspill into the car park of their current facilities.

Pennard Cricket Club and Bishopston Juniors are the two sports teams that regularly use the playing fields with occasional use by others. Pennard Cricket club use the current pavilion on home match days (approximately 10 weekday nights of the season between May and August inclusive) and access the kit and equipment for away fixtures during the same period. The cricket club are invested in the fields and have raised funds.

Bishopston under U15's and 16's teams use Pennard Park on a fortnightly basis for home games. They train there weekly during the early months of the season (August, September, October) when the nights are light – lack of flood-lighting limits this as nights draw in.

The U12's, U13's and U14's use Murton on Saturday mornings. There are no summer football camps and no senior football team in Pennard due to lack of players. The youth football teams did not tend to use the current changing facilities at Pennard.

Attitudes towards proposals

The responses to the planned proposals were positive although there was some scepticism. The most positive responses came from the local youth group and Bishopston Youth Football Club.

The youth group described the plans as 'Excellent' suggesting that in the summer they spend the most of their time at the park and so having the facilities and playing fields co-located would be highly beneficial.

Current Community Hall users also recognised and supported having additional space for local youth groups:

“Great idea in relation to the youth club; there is nowhere for the kids to go. The Community Hall isn't enough at the moment; they only meet once a week ... there are always loads of kids in Pennard but nothing for them to do ... frequently there are kids hanging around in the car park and it's really dangerous; skateboarding and bikes etc.”

The majority of respondents were happy with the current set-up of the facilities they use, such as the Community Hall and even the current Pavilion, with some questioning whether it is possible to afford a facility that can replicate their current needs of a large hall with high ceilings. Pennard cricket club also welcomed the upgrade of the Pavilion.

None of the respondents expressed any resistance to the proposed works going ahead, but the general view tended to be that a generic revamp of the Community Hall would be sufficient for most users as it could lead to the over-provision of hall space in the area, leaving buildings empty:

“Is there a need for the proposed new facility when we currently have three coffee shops, a library (with study and PC access), a Community Hall and a Parish Hall? The current facility meets the Club's needs, but an upgrade of the toilets, changing rooms and storage would be welcome.”

The building of a new housing estate was raised as something to consider in relation to these proposals, with potential demand for facilities in the area set to rise, and most classes already at full capacity. Some respondents were of the opinion that some work had been planned to go ahead in order to extend the small hall in the current Community Hall, with new cloak room and kitchen, but that those have since fallen through. We are not aware of any such proposals but it would be worthwhile exploring these irrespective of the findings of this report. In addition, a plan to include a café in the library was also highlighted by some respondents.

Requirements and demand for additional space

The majority of respondents said that they would not need two facilities and that they would use just one. When gauging interest in relocation to a new facility it tended to be dependent on the final plans, in terms of size of the space being offered.

Some groups (e.g. Badminton) need substantial ceiling height, length and width rooms in order to play, which a new facility would struggle to cost effectively provide. However, other groups that were seeing substantial attendance to their sessions such as Gardening and the Youth group were very much in favour of the plans for a new space in which they could locate:

“One of the problems is that we meet in the small hall and we are out-growing it; if there were another building or hall that we could use – brilliant.”

In addition, there were calls for a studio-type facility, with current rooms in the Community Hall deemed either too large, resulting in issues with heating and voice projection, or too small. The current smaller room available in the Community Hall often doubles as a storage space, which can be problematic with groups having to remove/rearrange the contents before they begin their session; as a result calls for storage facilities in the new proposals were echoed by respondents.

When questioned about whether they would wish to relocate to a new site, some respondents suggested they would be willing to pay a little more, especially if a bigger space was offered. From April, the Community Hall is expected to be raising prices, with some indicating that they felt this could lead to overcharging for the current space and could act as potential driving force to relocate.

The Cricket Club, who currently use Pennard Pavilion in its current state, raised the need for two separate changing rooms, and secure storage (a minimum of 2m tall x 1.5m deep x 2m wide).

The sports clubs generally had low numbers of spectators, therefore demand for additional space needed to accommodate them would be minimal. The local junior football team proposed AstroTurf pitches would be the best option:

“It would be ideal to replace existing grass one, for example recent bad weather meant teams haven’t played for 5 or 6 weeks. Last week the youth team travelled to Llanelli when they were supposed to be playing at home in order to use an Astro pitch there. There is very little Astro at Bishopston - not full size ... was originally tennis courts that they converted. Previous funding wouldn’t allow it. There’s a massive call for local five a side powerleague teams, if you don’t get your foot in the door early booking a AstroTurf in Swansea early in the season there’s no hope. I think it would definitely be a draw for those in Swansea and could earn its keep.”

The youth group highlighted previous plans to include a 'Kick Wall' to stop children kicking balls against buildings. Other respondents highlighted the potential for the space to be used by young people, providing a safe space for local youth to play:

"It would be ideal; having the football pitches, and cricket fields located nearby would be much safer. Currently, they congregate in the car park, which can be a bit dangerous."

The following requirements for the new facilities were raised by respondents:

- a studio room (as the current large room in the Community Hall is slightly too big and can be cold, yet the smaller room is slightly too small);
- kitchenette;
- separate changing rooms (boys/girls and/or home/away);
- heating;
- bigger spaces indoors and outdoors;
- accessible toilets
- secure storage;
- accessible parking; and
- AstroTurf pitches.

None of the respondents felt that there was a need for a co-working space.

Translation of needs into use

None of the groups were tied into any contracts and all were able to move easily should they want. The majority of respondents said that they would not use the proposed facilities in addition to other facilities in the area – it would be a case of 'either/or'.

One of the main potential drawbacks highlighted by respondents was potential for over-provision, in terms of the amount of space currently available and the catchment area of likely facility users:

"The current building isn't the most modern and yes it's not environmentally well-built, but it has more than enough potential in terms of expansion for other things. You think 'do we need it and why are we having it?'."

I think there are other facilities that already accommodate groups. So, it does question how much it would be used, I guess for outside sports it would be more beneficial to have the changing rooms but for [other] groups not really."

Unsurprisingly, cost for hire and facilities was one of the biggest factors for local groups. The need for Pennard to provide cheap space was highlighted due to the small catchment area, and modest size of the various organisations.

Most of the respondent groups were self-funded with attendees paying a monthly fee to cover the cost of facility hire and with modest turnovers. The youth group was previously funded by Swansea Council but is now funded by the Community Council; it was presumed that the Community Council would continue to fund them should they move into the proposed facilities.

The need to provide a more flexible payment system (per hour) was also highlighted. Currently, payment for the Community Hall is per session (four hours for £15).

In relation to the proposed café within the facilities feedback was mixed. It was highlighted that a number of the groups attendees often meet for coffee following attendance of the activities. This was a running theme across a number of groups. However, there was competition from other coffee shops in the area already and the need for someone to volunteer to run it was also raised. In the summer periods when it gets busier another place to have a coffee was welcome.

Club meetings tended to be held in local pubs, and this was unlikely to change. The Community Hall already has a kitchen in which teas and coffees can be made. The sports teams highlighted the inconvenience of not having such facilities located on the playing fields and the majority of respondents suggested that a kitchenette style set up would be beneficial and sufficient for sports teams in the proposed facilities

Similar facilities to the current Pavilion are located in Murton and Underhill Park, which Pennard cricket club uses for away games. For home games they would welcome an upgrade of the toilets, changing rooms and storage.

Further to this, concerns were raised relating to the security of their kit and match equipment (currently stored in the Pavilion) if the new hub was open to the public and during potential building works.

4. Options

There are several options for the Council, outlined below.

Option 1 – Do nothing

The building is ageing and clearly degrading, so a do nothing option is not feasible – there will be liability issues (potentially significant as it could be deemed negligent for allowing use of a facility that degrades further) for the Community Council of doing nothing.

This is not considered a credible option and is not recommended.

Option 2 – Demolition and removal without replacement

The building could be demolished and removed once it reaches the end of its useful life – there is likely some life left in it, but this will likely not be too far in the future. Park users require changing facilities and the building is used presently, so this will create a problem and will very likely result in current users no longer using the park or doing so much less frequently.

This is not considered a credible option and is not recommended.

Option 3 – Basic refurbishment of existing building

A basic refurbishment could be carried out simply to repair the building. Absent of a detailed invasive survey of the building structure it is not possible to give an indication of the cost/benefit of doing this compared to the refurbishment/new build option below, though option 4 will certainly be more costly. The age and nature of the building dictate that any investment in refurbishment will only be able to go so far. Furthermore, the building is not fit for purpose even if refurbished – it is not DDA compliant and will be difficult to make so, it is limited in its use, and it does not have segregated changing facilities required by existing users. Retrofit for greater energy efficiency will be challenging under this option.

Whilst possible, this would not represent good value for money in our view and would not achieve any added value – it would be a ‘standstill’ option at best. This option would also likely struggle to secure external grant for capital works given that there would be little or no added value.

This option is not recommended.

Option 4 – Refurbishment and/or new build

It is not possible to separate these as options as drawings and a quantity survey’s input will be required to assess the relative cost/benefit of each, but the overarching option here is one of a new facility.

This is the recommended approach based on the findings of sections 2 and 3 and as summarised in the conclusions in section 5.

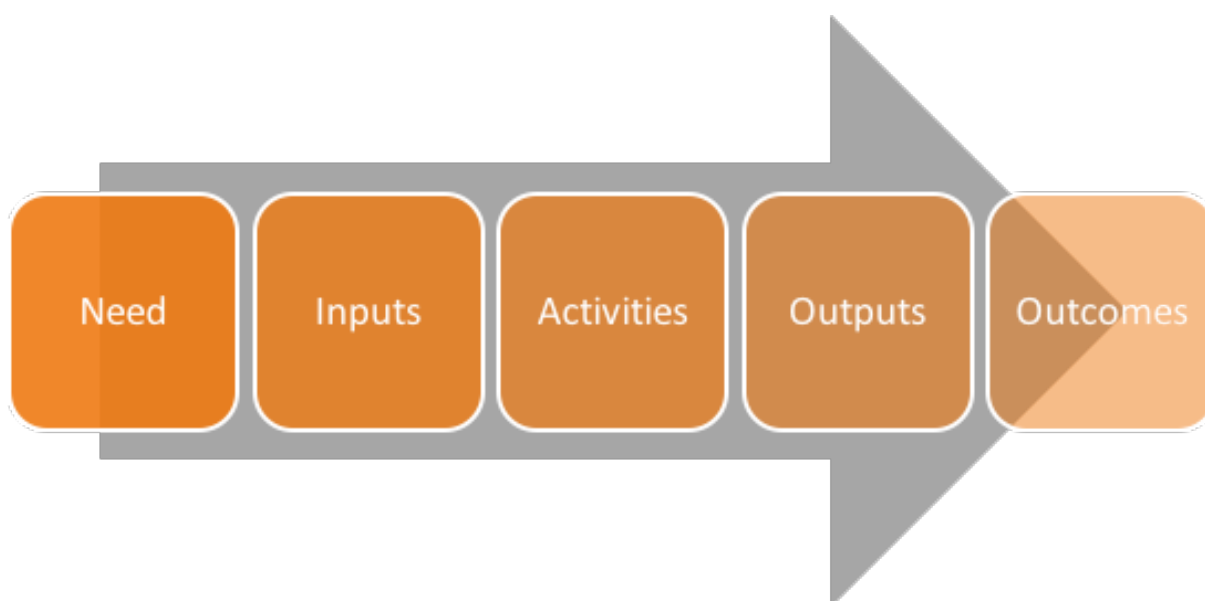
5. Theory of change

This section pulls together the preceding study to articulate the project as a Theory of Change, linking needs (as tested and assessed herein) to a series of outcomes drawn from the brief and our study, with the recommended option for the project as the 'activity'.

About theory of change

Theory of Change is a process that links a series of needs to a range of desired outcomes, and draws on best practice in demonstrating value for public funding as laid out in HM Treasury's Magenta Book. The (simplified) theory of change process is shown in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 – Theory of Change



In the diagram above:

- 'needs' are the key issues that need to be addressed;
- 'inputs' are the resources required to address those needs (expertise, knowledge, time, finance, buildings and the like);
- 'activities' are the project(s) that will be delivered to achieve the desired changes (i.e. what you are seeking funding to do);
- 'outputs' are the immediate tangible things that result from the activities (for example number of refurbished facilities, number of square metres of community facilities created, number of users and similar); and
- outcomes describe the changes that undertaking the approach described results in.

The outcomes are generally split into short, medium and long-term, with the latter the overall impact of the approach and the reason for delivering the project (and therefore the rationale for public funding). Frequently, the long-term outcomes are 'big' strategic issues, which the project may only partially contribute to.

Theory of Change for the Pennard Pavilion Needs

The needs for the Pavilion refurbishment can be summarised as follows:

- facilities are inadequate for current park users, including:
 - lack of segregated changing spaces (boys/girls and home/away);
 - lack of first aid room;
 - lack of referees room;
 - inadequate storage;
 - poor showers;
 - lack of disabled accessibility;
- dilapidated facilities – ageing and with several problems in need of immediate repair;
- facilities are dated and will fall significantly short of standards given the declaration of a climate emergency by the Community Council;
- park is well used but poor facilities hinder wider users;
- existing community facilities are at or near to capacity with likely increased demand from new housing developments;
- a lack of children and young people’s activities; and
- the Community Council does not have a permanent base for the Clerk.

Inputs

A refurbishment and extension of the facility or a rebuild of the facility is the recommended option. Inputs will need to be determined through the commissioning of drawings by an architect, coupled with a quantity surveyor’s report to cost the scheme.

The project should be eligible for external capital funding, though there are risks with much external funding refocused on immediate COVID19 recovery and likely high competition for remaining funds.

The project will generate some earned income but the site constraints are such that it is unlikely to cover its costs, therefore revenue funding will be required to subsidise running costs.

Activities

The recommendation is to improve the facilities by refurbishing and extending or rebuilding the Pavilion (to be determined by architects based on the findings of this report). The refurbished/rebuilt facility should incorporate the following:

- separate male and female changing spaces, with a small referees room (which could double as a treatment room for first aid on match days or with a separate space for this);
- a multi-functional room for use principally by the youth club (which will add additional capacity for general community use when not required by the youth group or Community Council) but with scope for other users and accommodating occasional ‘overspill’ from the Community Hall;

- a kitchenette for self-service use by building users that should double with a serving hatch for serving an outside terrace on match days – operated on an ‘ad hoc’ on-demand basis;
- storage space for the sports clubs and the hall (e.g. folding tables and chairs; small PA system);
- an office for the Community Council Clerk with sufficient room for other Councillors to meet and hot desk and hold small meetings as required (with accompanying Wi-Fi accessibility); and
- upgraded toilet facilities (including disabled facilities).

The above are the provisions specific to the building, but they should be accompanied by the recommendations for the wider park, including:

- realignment of the connecting pathway;
- creation of an additional connection to adjacent ‘dog walking field’;
- creation of a rear gate to the school;
- reorganisation of sports pitches;
- high fence to reduce chance of balls going into neighbouring fields;
- creation of additional facilities near to the Pavilion such as giant chess, relocated boules pitch, basketball hoop and ‘hangout’ space; and
- measures (insofar as can be designed by architects) to overlook and ‘protect’ the less well supervised play spaces to the rear of the Pavilion building.

Although beyond the scope of this brief, there is also merit (regardless of what happens to the Pavilion building) in reviewing the space at the existing Community Hall and making modest changes in order to make it easier for simultaneous use of the large and small hall and to increase storage space. Doing so will not negate the proposals made herein for the Pavilion.

The path between the primary school and the rear of the homes on Park Road is also not satisfactory in urban design terms and warrants further consideration – it is clearly an important link but creates vulnerabilities for the homes and the school.

Outputs

The outputs will be:

- number of square metres of community space improved and created (specific number to be determined by architect’s drawings);
- number of existing and new community sporting groups using the facilities;
- number of other community groups/users;
- number and frequency of young people’s activities accommodated;
- number and frequency of park users; and
- energy efficiency of the building.

Outcomes

Short-term outcomes

The short-term (evident by the time the initial capital project is completed) outcomes that the project will achieve are:

- more and better community amenities (particularly community sporting facilities and youth facilities);
- retention of existing park users;
- more local opportunities for children and young people;
- improved access to park facilities;
- improved connectivity into and through the park;
- increased footfall through the park;
- improved sustainability of the building; and
- an improved community asset.

Medium-term outcomes

The medium-term (with meaningful progress evident within a few years of project completion) outcomes that will be achieved by this project include:

- increase in number of sports activities in the park;
- more physical activity by the community;
- wider demographic range of park users;
- increase in number and range of community activities;
- a safer and more secure park environment; and
- fewer anti-social behaviour issues.

Longer-term outcomes

The long-term (many years) outcomes that this project will contribute to are:

- improved community wellbeing;
- improved community health;
- improved community sporting and cultural assets;
- a more resilient community; and
- a more sustainable local community.

A next stage as the scheme is further refined is to develop an evaluation plan based on the above outcomes, which begins to quantify (where possible) some of the outcomes and making them 'SMART' (which is to say 'Specific', 'Measurable', 'Achievable', 'Relevant', and 'Timed') and developing simple evaluative measures to assess progress towards these outcomes.

Assumptions (risks)

To achieve the outcomes through the theory of change described a series of assumptions are made as follows, which can also be considered to be organisational risks that will affect the outcomes identified (letters in brackets identify whether these are considered low, medium or high risks).

Key assumptions (risks) include:

- capital funds can be secured at an appropriate level to develop the facilities described and within a reasonable timescale (M);
- planning permission is granted for an expanded footprint and refurbished facility, including approval in line with Fields in Trust status of the park (L);
- the Community Council is able to and wishes to subsidise the revenue costs of the facility (M);
- there is no significant increase in the unit costs of the expenditure items identified in the accompanying forecasts between now and the time the facility is built (L);
- existing community groups continue to operate in some form and maintain (at least) current levels of use and demand for both the Community Hall and Parish Hall and also the playing fields, in other words the current demand levels stay the same or increase (L);
- new homes developed do not add other community facilities that will cater to the needs identified herein, thereby creating duplication (L); and
- COVID19 impacts in the medium to longer-term do not prevent the types of facilities described from being used effectively or even at all (it is impossible to gauge the likelihood and severity of this presently).

Organisational risks

As the Community Council already operates the Community Hall and existing Pavilion there is no merit in replicating the existing organisational risk assessment as it will otherwise be the same.

There are only two principal additional organisational risks to the Community Council from the development and operation of the proposed facility:

- firstly, it will place a strain on relatively modest resources with the need to subsidise the revenue costs; and
- secondly, small community groups are volatile at the best of times – they operate on very modest cost parameters and are heavily reliant on key individuals, so even in normal times, demand can drop in the short to medium term if small community groups do not survive. This risk is always present with capital projects like these as capital projects generally take several years to mature to completion and much can change at the community level in the interim. This risk is significantly enhanced by the COVID19 crisis, which may make it more likely that groups do not survive and/or our lives are so severely impacted by it that far more fundamental rethinking of how communities operate will be required (though taking current patterns to extreme conclusion suggests there may be more rather than less hyper-local demand for facilities as the primacy of major central places gets eroded but this is far from clear).

Mitigation of organisational risks

The expenditure categories for the building are modest, and the main mitigation of the first risk is to make the building as energy efficient and resilient as possible, to reduce long-term utility and maintenance costs.

The only mitigation that can be applied for the second risk is to delay developing this project further until there is some greater clarity over what a post-COVID19 world and/or a 'forever-COVID19' world look like. It seems likely that irrespective of cures or not, there will be far greater clarity about the impacts and likely future will look like by mid-2021. In capital project terms that is not a long timescale.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Following the inception meeting with the Council, site visits and mapping, review of pre-existing information, and interviews with local community and sports groups in Pennard plus presence at the Pennard Market, our conclusions are summarised below. Recommendations follow the summary conclusion.

Conclusions

The Pavilion building is in need of refurbishment – the building is visibly decaying, has dated heating, lighting and insulation, and has insufficient space/facilities to meet the needs of the sports groups that currently use the Park. It is not fit for purpose and based on current uses alone merits investment.

The Park is clearly well-used and valued by the community and that further warrants investment in these but also the wider facilities in the park (some of this has already taken place with investment in play provision).

The key issues are that, aside from the clear need to upgrade changing facilities rooms, there is relatively weak evidence of demand for more community space (notwithstanding potential increased demand in future from the new housing estate, which is not possible to gauge presently). Furthermore, there is concern (which is valid) that there could be an over-provision of space for general community uses – some groups might move to a new facility but the relatively modest demand locally would then likely mean reduced capacity in terms of use of other facilities.

Whilst improved changing rooms are clearly needed, the potential to generate sufficient income from these is modest and capital funding solely for changing rooms is more difficult to secure. Absent of numerous other alternative users of the facility, this is problematic for developing a business plan as the potential income streams are extremely modest, further complicated by the potential volatility of the limited number of users with some clubs that have already ceased operating.

However, aside from the clear need for improved changing spaces, there are two groups that are in definite need of additional provision: young people's activities, and the Community Council itself.

A refurbished Pavilion expanded beyond simply upgrading of the changing facilities can be justified in terms of demand on the basis of the needs expressed by these two groups alone, but the facility would then be largely reliant on the Community Council to cover the bulk of its revenue costs as the two principal regular users (the Youth Club and the Council itself) are funded by the Community Council.

Whilst there is need for some provision for serving of tea/coffee and snacks on match days in a 'kiosk' format that can operate 'ad hoc' with low overhead costs, the density within the walking circle and the general footfall levels are nowhere near sufficient to support a café. Similar provisions in other parks at Cwmdonkin and Brynmill are heavily reliant on seasonal trade and with much higher footfall levels and the café in the former has failed to be commercially viable.

There were no responses that supported the co-working provision at this site, which is not to say that this could not be accommodated (the costs of making a small number of 'hot desks' available adjacent to a Clerk's office and using shared wifi would be

negligible in both capital and revenue terms). However, it is not something to focus on as a principal use of the building.

Whilst there will be some income from sports teams using changing facilities, this will likely remain at current levels, perhaps slightly augmented if a seniors football team can be resurrected, but likely still very modest.

Purchasing power of the local groups seemed to be adequate for changing room style provision, with none of the groups we spoke to tied into any contracts and some calling for a more flexible approach to facility hire (i.e. hourly rates). Within reason, flexibility should be considered to ensure that the small number of current users can be retained. The business case for the facility that incorporates income from these groups must consider that the financial standing of all such small community groups is always relatively precarious and volatile, and so caution should be exercised when considering earned income streams that rely on such groups.

Whilst this study did not have the resources to undertake full market research, there is sufficient demand and need identified to suggest that this is a worthwhile endeavour if costs can be kept modest and in line with the current Community Hall costs. In relation to local groups relocating, interest in the additional space was noteworthy, yet current plans seem to be over-complicating the requirements of local groups with the money better invested in other refurbishment and provisions, in order to sustain relevant maintenance and consistency of use.

Therefore, in our view there is sufficient evidence of need/demand to conceive of a facility that accommodates young people for more frequent youth club activities with this building as their principal base, and to act as a base for the Community Council with ancillary spaces for changing rooms, plus a small kitchenette area that can double for external serving of teas/coffees on match / event days with external serving hatch to a terrace for spectators (looking over a rearranged sporting layout and with some additional facilities such as basketball and potentially a MUGA adjacent).

This is a project worthy of pursuit, and could attract capital funding, but is subject to a decision on revenue funding from the Community Council. The viability of a scheme at this site rests on the Community Council's willingness and ability to meet the bulk of the revenue costs – there is no credible business plan that can be developed without this in our view. The revenue costs are detailed in the accompanying indicative business plan.

Irrespective of the above, the Community Council should also review the current facilities at the existing Community Hall to explore how space might be better used, including allowing for easier simultaneous use of the large and small halls and creation of additional storage space(s). This will be a worthwhile investment regardless of whether an additional facility is created at the park.

Recommendations

Subject to the Community Council's willingness and ability to fund the bulk of the revenue costs for a refurbished building, a project should be pursued to refurbish the building.

The project should focus on a refurbished and extended (or rebuilt depending on the views of the architect and a capital cost comparison of the two options) building to high environmental standards, as detailed in Section 5, briefly which are: improved

changing facilities/storage for sports teams using the field; a youth-focused facility in a multi-functional room; storage spaces; and accommodation for the Community Council (the latter providing the financial backbone in revenue terms for sustaining the building).

A separate not for profit entity could be created as a special purpose vehicle, but will still require subsidy (possibly at an increased level as the Community Council already has insurances, financial costs and other overheads budgeted for and covered and can take advantage of ‘economics of scale’ with additional costs from the new facility likely marginal in some of these areas). Therefore, unless the Community Council has its own compelling reasons why it does not wish to do so, our view is that PCC should be the owner/operator of the facility.

A touchstone for the type of facilities can be found near Trallwm near Llanelli (see Figure 9) where a community facility with a modestly sized hall (a little larger than we are proposing here) was redeveloped to incorporate much-improved changing facilities and also a better interface with the surrounding urban environment (in the Trallwm case with a café but the principles of creating facilities that better ‘connect’ to their surroundings are similar to the more modest proposals suggested herein).

Figure 9 – Trallwm Hall before and after pictures



Any building works should be to the highest environmental sustainability standards possible. As well as the environmental imperative with the Council having declared a climate emergency, there is also a commercial imperative for increased investment at the capital stage to achieve energy efficiency. Higher capital spend on such provision at the outset will reduce longer-term revenue costs; given that the facility will only function with revenue subsidy from the Community Council, there is a cost-saving to the public purse in the long-term through additional sustainability measures being incorporated at the capital build stage.

Any building should be (re)constructed to ensure that it has active frontage facing the park, and doing as much as possible to protect more vulnerable, less well-supervised play space to the rear of the building.

Furthermore, improvements to the Park should also be considered in conjunction with the building improvements, and treated as one larger project. Improvements to the park should include:

- realignment of the path from Anderson Lane to connect with the current northern entrance to the field and also better-connecting with a (improved and formalised) rear entrance to the school;

- movement of pitches as described herein to accommodate a realigned building along a key movement line, and also creating space for more informal activity in front of the building and a reason for a terrace to function for cricket match spectators;
- improvements to the short-cut through to the school and the adjacent pedestrian link (which warrants further study but is beyond the scope of our current brief);
- creation of a gate and pathway to it into the adjacent 'dog walkers field' (in discussion with the landowner);
- high fencing to allow for movement of the cricket and football pitches; and
- sensitive lighting to allow for early evening practices during winter months (but considering light pollution to adjacent residential properties) as well as to better light the route through the park for walkers on dark winter evenings particularly.

More ambitiously, the football club would appreciate AstroTurf facilities, though this is expensive and there are environmental considerations to consider in line with the Council's stated climate emergency. An investment into AstroTurf was expressed in terms of its potential to rejuvenate the senior football team, but this would represent a sizable investment for something that may or may not happen.

A more detailed scheme design by architects, considering the wider site as well as the Pavilion, might incorporate this as a 'nice to have' feature and an accompanying quantity surveyor's report can then determine whether economies of scale from the broader redevelopments described in this report would bring the cost of adding such a pitch down to a level that funders would accept for something that does not have a strong evidence of demand.

An ecological impact assessment of the removal of natural greenery and replacement with artificial surfaces should also be considered if this is to be pursued. We do not consider the inclusion of an AstroTurf pitch to be a recommendation, but it may increase use of the site and we do not at this stage have a strong view against the inclusion of this from a social and commercial vitality perspective.

Finally, alongside developing this scheme, the Community Council should review the space in the existing Community Hall and consider adaptations to improve its functioning for existing users.

Next steps

The immediate priority is to determine whether the revenue costs outlined in the accompanying business plan are at a level the Community Council can meet, and whether there is willingness to do so. That decision should be resolved before committing to any further work on this initiative.

If it is resolved that the Council is content to subsidise the revenue costs then the next step after that should be to seek funding to commission design work for the building refurbishment (to include some more invasive work for the current building, underground servicing and the like) as well as reorganisation of space and other facilities in the park, accompanied by a quantity surveyor to develop cost estimates for capital works. Any such design work should ensure that the key principles of urban design outlined in this brief are adhered to as these are key to the social viability of any scheme – the brief for any design work should specify the need for this to be incorporated as architects (building and landscape) are frequently not strong on urban design matters and these are important in ensuring the scheme as proposed works.

Some further consultative work will likely be required at the next stage once more detailed designs emerge to support planning applications (a planning consultant should be included in the next stage design work). Some resources should also be allocated at the next stage to review the attached indicative business plan to ensure it remains aligned with the emerging proposals as they are further refined.

Appendix 1 – Consultees

In addition to the Community Council and those that spoke to us anonymously at the Pennard Market, we are also grateful to the following consultees for giving their time to respond to this study through more detailed one to one interviews, particularly with the consultative period for this work overlapping the initial stages of COVID19 lockdown:

- Christine Broomhall – Art class;
- Ian Colloff – Gardening club;
- Mel Cook – Archery club;
- Karen Davies – Pilates class;
- Kerina Hanson – Pennard Primary School;
- Debra Llewellyn – Bishopston Youth Coach;
- Johna Llewellyn – Bishopston Youth Coach;
- Margaret McDonald – Badminton group;
- Rhys Morgan – Golf Club;
- Sharon Morgan – Foot Clinic;
- Tim Smith – Youth Group;
- Margaret Waymark – Parish Hall;
- Jeremy Wolfe – Pennard Cricket Club.