



**Welsh National Sailing Academy  
and Events Centre**

Gwynedd Council

Commercial in Confidence

**Stage 1  
Preparation of Concept Proposals**

August 2008

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pwllheli provides access to some of the best UK sailing waters including Cardigan Bay, Anglesey and the East Irish coast. Pwllheli is already well known as a dinghy sailing event location providing not only good sailing but also an attractive environment for accompanying supporters and families.

The development of the Hafan in 1991 reinforced the popularity of the location but the view remains that the potential of Pwllheli has not been achieved. Gwynedd Council and Pwllheli Sailing Club recognise the remaining potential and in establishing The Pwllheli Sailing and Events Academy Technical Group, have identified a vision for a Welsh National Sailing Academy. The anticipation being that the creation of a Sailing and Events Academy will bring economic benefit to the area, help support the maritime identity of the town, enable educational activity and promote the Welsh identity.

Marina Projects Ltd has been commissioned by Gwynedd Council, as lead body within the Pwllheli Sailing & Events Academy Technical Group, to prepare concept proposals for provision of the Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre. Whilst taking a lead on this commission in order to meet the project brief Marina Projects has engaged the professional services of Morgan Carey Architects Ltd.

The study work has focused on the development of concept proposals for a Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre in Pwllheli. The study has made the following conclusions with respect to the opportunities presented by such a proposal.

- There is strong support for the concept from a range of stakeholder group and furthermore the proposal is consistent with a number of key themes and agendas being promoted by various organisations including WAG.
- A range of parties with differing interests have come together to establish an agreed Vision and Objectives for the Project.
- The location is an established dinghy sailing venue, a reputation that has in many ways developed in spite of the existing facilities. It is the geographic advantages of the location in particularly the world class sailing waters around Pwllheli that make it such an attractive location.

- There is an opportunity to enhance the Welsh Language & Culture and create a focus on the activity of sailing, with related education and training that will create economic benefits for the area.
- Evidence suggests that there is a market for an extended events calendar and a limited number of facilities that can accommodate larger events
- There is an opportunity to introduce Visitor & Event berths to support the Academy development
- If the facility is to prove viable it is clear that a range of uses will need to be catered for including education and other community uses. In turn there is both a need and opportunity to improve links with the Town of Pwllheli.
- It is imperative that the facility seeks to compliment Plas Menai and does not create direct competition.

The report provides an independent analysis of a range of issues including a detailed market assessment and review of the existing site and constraints that exist. Most notably there are depth restrictions within the harbour and this combined with the geographic location of Pwllheli in relation to typical cruising grounds will limit the level of keel boat and visitor activity. This is not to say that the activity cannot be generated but it will take some time to come forward and ultimately the activity will always be secondary when compared to the dinghy event activity.

Other key constraints exist in that a scheme of this nature will require a range of consents to be secured and various statutory requirements and environmental designations will need to be fully addressed.

Following review of the options a preferred concept has been identified which provides the best opportunity to deliver against the agreed Vision Statement and Objectives – the Vision Statement is outlined at the end of this Executive Summary. Broad agreement has been reached with the Technical Group on the merits of this option. A public exhibition was held which further confirmed the general levels of support for the over-arching concept.

A 10-year business plan has been prepared which indicates that the Academy could sustain itself as an operating entity subject to initial funding and subject to various assumptions and operating criteria. The business plan does identify the sensitivity of key income generating headings and the financial reality of events confirms the need for a partnership approach which avoids competition.

The study brief requires that a Design Code is prepared for the preferred Concept and as a function of the development of the Design Code the building concept has been taken forward by the design team. The current form of the preferred Option and the Design Code is detailed at Appendix 13. The Design Code has been prepared in the form of design guidance to demonstrate how a building could be designed on the site of the preferred Option. The Code sets a minimum standard for the development of a future Planning Application. It addresses strategies for modelling, massing, scale, materials, lighting and sustainability.

Finally an implementation programme has been prepared which identifies the key next steps and a structure to take the scheme forward. Importantly it will be necessary at an early stage to identify the economic benefits arising from the proposals and set these against the anticipated capital costs to ensure a case can be made for the significant investment required to bring the project forward.

The project is of a scale and complexity which means the delivery programme will take some considerable time to achieve. The reality is that the facility would take until at least spring 2011 before it is operational and there are several areas where the project might suffer from significant delays. Prompt delivery will require a firm commitment and strong management.

The Vision Statement agreed with the Technical Group is as follows:

**VISION STATEMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
WELSH NATIONAL SAILING ACADEMY and EVENTS CENTRE**

The project vision is to create a Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre that maximises the potential afforded by the natural location and world class sailing waters around Pwllheli. The facility will develop and build upon the existing reputation of the location and it will confirm Pwllheli as an internationally renowned dinghy sailing venue.

As a Centre of Excellence for sail training it will provide state of the art facilities for sailors at all levels of competence and abilities. In addition to providing for the hosting of dinghy events of national and international standard the facilities provided will also cater for keelboat events, yachting regattas and other water sport activities.

The facility will exhibit a distinct identity by promoting the Welsh language and culture. Furthermore through joint participation the facility will be sustainable and bring long-term economic benefit to the local area and its multi-purpose function will provide for use by local communities, businesses, schools and other training providers.

The Centre will make a significant contribution to the development of Pwllheli Harbour and complement Hafan Pwllheli by providing new visitor berths and on-shore facilities for visiting yachtsmen.