

# APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please try to restrict your application to no more than six sides plus supporting documents. Remember to let us know of your intention to apply by **12 noon on Wednesday 28 October 2009**, by email to Harriet Festing at [challenge@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:challenge@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

## Section 1: General information

Project title	Y Morfa Leisure Centre Extension
Name of proposed community	Towyn and Kinmel Bay

Name of lead contact	Dr Stuart Anderson
Job title	Board Member of Kinmel Bay and Towyn Sports and Recreation Association, and elected member for Conwy County Borough Council.
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Are you applying for Phase 1 or Phase 2? (If Phase 1, please also attach LCIF application form)	Phase 2

## Section 2a: The community

Please describe the community working with you on this application.

<p>Towyn (population 3,500) &amp; Kinmel Bay (6,000) are neighbouring towns on the Morfa Rhuddlan coastal floodplain, together bearing the brunt of the 1990 North Wales Coastal Flood Disaster, caused by the combination of a storm surge and poor maintenance of a sea wall built in 1867 for railway protection.</p> <p>Origins of the towns' main residential status are reviewed in attached references <b>B1-B7</b>, as part of the plausible but in practice poorly planned interwar Garden City or 'Plotland' experiment whereby sub-standard agricultural land shed to pay off war debts was marketed and sold as 'land fit for heroes' by clever but unscrupulous entrepreneurs such as, in this case, Charles Neville – who here created a Land Company to sell off midget seaside chalet plots, ¼ acre suburban plots, or smallholding aliquots of between one and three acres for chicken farms, horticulture etc. Road and mains sewage infrastructure has in general had to be retrofitted – a process still incomplete despite work for the three decades up to 2005 by the Land Authority for Wales to rationalise development through voluntary or if necessary compulsory purchase of parcels of land left over from the demise of Neville's Kinmel Bay Land Company. In the aftermath of the 1990 disaster the social structure was revealed as showing a marked emphasis on young householders (typically first-time buyers) and retiring incomers from the midlands and NW, who have often spent years holidaying in the numerous caravan parks (which have bed-space for upwards of 40,000 people and hence the potential to quadruple the resident population). In common with many UK coastal towns there is thus an hour-glass population distribution, with a relative deficit of the 30-50 age-group - Refs <b>A50-A56</b> framing these demographics within the wider present-day sustainability debate.</p>
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Nevertheless there is a strong emphasis on self-reliance and community spirit, the latter typically latent until roused. Y Morfa Leisure Centre is itself a manifestation of this, being the only one ex 9 in Conwy to have been founded entirely through self-help, the Kinmel Bay & Towyn Sports & Recreation Association (of which I am the only remaining founder member) being an autonomous charitable company that has been responsible for the planning and oversight (day-to-day management being in local authority hands) of all developments at the Leisure Centre since construction in 1994, where the £100,000 residue of the Mayor of Colwyn Bay's Disaster Relief Fund was used to match other inputs e.g. from National Lottery.

The Board has strong links into the PTA of the adjoining infant and junior schools, which make extensive use of the centre in school-time. This positions it ideally for parties, fairs, bring & buy, 'Feel Good Friday' health & wellbeing awareness days, etc. Through its own efforts but also in close partnership with the County, the Board has also taken on the mantle of being N Wales' Centre of Cricketing Excellence, with much used, top-quality net facilities. Over the past 2 years its users have won awards as Wales' premier focus for girls' football, a novel 'Adult Youth Club', and as a base for enthusiastic keep-fit and outdoor pursuit clubs. A recent novelty is the Saturday 'Smiles Club' for up to 50 autistic children supervised by their own parents. The compact nature and layout in relation to its playing fields and MUGA also make it popular as a venue for all-Wales and even international childrens' tournaments, and an annual dog-show.

The Chester Avenue estate that borders the other side (S) of the Centre's playing grounds scored high enough in 1997 on Wales' Index of Multiple Deprivation to qualify the area for WAG Communities First status. This scheme has brought significant environmental, social & educational improvements via a Community House focus, and has also helped extend the Safer-Route-to School initiative so that the towns are linked by their own £200,000, 1 km long shared-use lit cycle path.

## **Section 2b: Describe the action/change already facing the community**

Please describe the action or change that is already taking place in the community as a result of climate change.

**Any account of the climate challenges and changes facing Kinmel Bay and Towyn must start, and to some extent end, with the gravely serious issue of flood risk management; q.v. attached:-**

**Ref B8:** Rationale for two-storey emergency refuges for the vulnerable on Morfa Rhuddlan

**Ref B9:** 1991 response paper by N Wales Flood Defence Group (authored by present lead applicant)

**Refs B10-B60:** review and illustrative portfolio of activities 1991-2009 broadly undertaken under 'Community Routes' – &/or relevant to the broader Travel Awareness and Engagement Plan agenda.

**In an attempt to redefine and integrate the above responses, this project is to extend the Y Morfa Leisure Centre so that, in serving as a two-storey refuge for the entire population of adjoining infant and junior schools in the event of an imminent flood warning or unexpected event during school hours, it will also capture maximum 'green gain' to the schools & wider community, embracing the wider context of Conwy's community development strategy under its current 4-year Corporate Plan (A52) and the EU Convergence programme. Thus the project aims primarily, through active community engagement at its most needy point, to help transform the outlook for a major coastal flood-risk area from that of the Wales Audit Office's recently expressed perception (A36) as arguably an insoluble 'basket case' climate change problem into a healthily adapted, exemplary leading-edge part of the world's climate change solution.**

**Ref B61:** Outline Design Brief July 2009 by Board of Kinmel Bay & Towyn Sports & Recreation Assoc.

**Ref B62:** Engineering & Design Services

**Ref A7:** consultation package produced by EDS; **Refs B63 & 64:** survey form and piloted results.

### Section 3: Success criteria.

Using the headings provided, please outline how you meet each of the criteria.

#### 3a: Overall ability to deliver community-wide targets and plans for the area and meet the objectives of the Challenge

1. **The full 'plan of action for an area-based low carbon zone'** will depend partly on an integrated Sustainable Homes Adaptation Programme by Extension (**SHAPE**), & partly on a Travel Awareness and Engagement Plan (**TAEP**). Details to be worked out with partners - basis for SHAPE being systematic long term programme for combining bungalow loft modifications with insulation, and for TAEP the £5m cross-County, Assembly-funded Integrated Transport Package (1998-2009) that has mostly been used on a community route and shared-use path programme for the whole area bordering Morfa Rhuddlan. (See also **Refs B10-B60** above for review of work to date, largely under the aegis of now-superseded Charity 'Community Routes').
2. **'Public involvement in an equitable way'**: as detailed in Eligibility Assessment and Section 2(a) above, the project is ideally placed to achieve this through its geographical proximity to a Communities First project, to junior and infant schools, and through the area's tourist status for the midlands and NW 'heart' of UK.
3. **'Skills, resources, and governance structures'**: **Refs B65, B66** = present governance structure for the Board of KBTSA. **Ref B67**= last financial year's accounts. The tradition of success is maintained in the enthusiastic attitude of the present Chair and all members of the Board, as well as in that of the Active & Creative Lifestyles Unit within the Conwy's Community Development Department, partnership between both being seen as the key to delivery of present aims. For example Mr John Hardy, Director of Active & Creative Lifestyles, spent a whole morning this January in a 'blue-sky-thinking' session with the Board, during which the idea for a full-scale, high-specification extension was first collectively dreamt up. Since September the LCCC has been an enormous further spur to collective thinking, to the extent that Board thinks some modifications to its charitable governance structure may be wise in order to accommodate the wider aims & mission statements we must now expect to develop and implement – recognising the enormous potential to widen the scope for proactive 'user-group involvement'. Meanwhile the lead applicant is scheduled to serve on Conwy's Task & Finish Group looking at the working of all its Leisure Centres. This Group has its first meeting in January. The results should feed in positively to the creation of a business plan for the proposed extension that is expected, in principle, to suggest staffing inputs from Conwy that are more in line with its other Leisure Centres.
4. **'Accessing needed specialist skills: legal, planning, liabilities'**: full access is available to Conwy's legal, planning and educational facilities as well as those of Llandrillo College. Warm Wales' help and expertise also needed and expected for SHAPE, and Sustrans' over TAEP.

#### 3b: Deliver integrated approaches

1. **'Plan of action'**: the Board is happy to admit that, as 'second movers' our plans for full project integration are as yet incomplete. This may be as well since we note two parallel applications ref. the Morfa Rhuddlan area. In this context it is acknowledged that as in all partnership working, 'joint ownership' will be vital, and for success this cannot and should not be hurried. As Chair of Conwy's Partnership Overview & Scrutiny Committee, I have recently authored a paper (**Ref B68**) presently visiting Joint Local Voluntary Service Board, Local Service Board etc, & being studied and worked on by Conwy's Community Development Dept, on the opportunities for partnership working to optimise use of offshore wind farm benefit moneys. The Board's Chair and all members are fully committed to playing their full part to ensure that its own plan of action will help to catalyse such a partnership programme. **To me it seems axiomatic that a successful LCCC application could and should be fully used to help gear up a partnership process whereby best to exploit cross-County and wider opportunities afforded by the Gwynt y Môr wind farm when it starts to come on-stream in 3-5 years' time.**

2. **‘Integration of sectors often operating separately’** This application stands to help catalyse the process of bringing a large neighbouring area of vulnerable housing up-to-date with the 2004 UK Civil Contingencies Act via a Flood Warden scheme being developed via the local resilience forum (see **Eligibility Assessment**). It seeks to turn threats into opportunities via a public educational exemplar emphasising positive and healthy climate change adaptation – a theme that I have personally been helping the LGiU’s policy development unit develop in two learning group series. The Project can clearly help positively shape and dynamise otherwise complex or too easily blocked outcomes consistent with the Corporate Plan (**Ref A52**) and Coastal Regeneration plans (**Ref B69**) . Three full-time employees, not including the Flood Warden/Climate Change Adaptation co-ordinator, would normally be the target for the fuller range of services that a Sports Centre of this size could offer. In his/her work the co-ordinator would have the help of Conwy’s excellent new Partnerships Co-Ordinator, with back-up from WAO - whose key question is whether the people of Conwy would be improved by partnership working focusing more on results (**Ref B70**) - and of a very environmentally aware young County Statistician (**Ref A8**). **Ref B68** is again relevant in showing awareness of the need to pioneer exemplary partnership working arrangements. Meanwhile **Ref B71** instances a recent highly successful event at Y Morfa that involved planning by several sectors and attracted over 250 attenders.
  
3. **‘Mix of buildings’:** the project aims initially to convert a large-carbon-footprint ‘barn-style’ building into an entity that overall is initially carbon-neutral, but also has potential for conversion into something that is carbon-positive, with wide roll-out implications not just locally but also regionally nationally and even internationally (see 3c below).

### 3c: Build on and bring together existing learning, skills and resources

Again the geographic positioning of this project is extraordinarily well suited for success at several levels:- **(i) immediately local** (positioned as it is between the two local primary schools and a Communities First Estate within a climatically threatened coastal township; **(ii) area-based and regional** (on the boundary between two local authorities central to the North Wales region yet in terms of Spatial Planning sharing the middle, ‘fuzzy’ transition zone between its NE and NW parts, & both trying to turn dire coastal threats into learning opportunities by actively seeking to share best practice and Heads of Depts between more and more services including Infrastructure & Highways, Health & Wellbeing and Social Services, Crime & Disorder and Regulatory Services – and Higher Education in terms of being able to draw on the learning and skills resources of Llandrillo College which covers both Counties and has a go-ahead attitude to mainstreaming green technology explicitly as the ‘no-alternative technology’); **(iii) Wales & UK national** (close to the geographic centre of the British Isles, therefore ideal for demonstration of how academic co-operation over green technology could be used to flagship ICZM principles, as per **Ref B68**; **(iv) international:** (there are ambitions to bring to bear the expertise of the Eden Project to use this Project as a stepping-stone in the development of ideas for a world-class coastal green visitor eco-centre under the name ‘Resurgam Project’, see **Ref B60** – it being noted in general terms that while relatively few of your other applications seem to be explicitly coastally based, yet 60% of Wales’ population is coastal (**Refs A8, B68**) as are all of the British Isles’ capital cities and a high proportion of others worldwide).

### 3d: Recognise communities as places

**Here the Board would urge special attention by your judges to the totality of the above sections being greater than its parts.** We agree wholeheartedly with the emotional connection & that communities can and should aim even to transcend the place that they physically exist in. Here this means accepting the fundamentally maritime nature of the Morfa Rhuddlan area – i.e. as always having been and remaining only on lease rather than permanent ownership from the sea – this nevertheless being seen as a spur to responsible community stewardship of these terms on behalf of future generations instead of a narrower sense of permanent and less flexible ‘place ownership’ based merely on the present generation’s wants. Proximity to infant and junior schools is seen as the key to credibility of this aspect of the project.

### 3e: Foster community leadership, involvement and partnerships

See supporting email attachments plus flyer and outline programmes for TOWYN+20 event (**Refs B72-74**), being prepared in partnership with ICE Wales, NWDA, RTPI Cymru, EA Wales & relevant departments of Cardiff, Liverpool, Bangor and Newcastle Universities. Llandrillo College is seen as a key local partner since Conwy CBC is involved with an emerging partnership in joint skills development led by their Head.

### 3f: Willingness to learn and capacity to quantify impacts

1. **Coastal flood resilience.** I have personally led efforts not just to re-examine the technical and terminological basis for Professors Richard Burrows' and Roger Falconer's study work on the potential of tidal energy and storage (TESAR) schemes, but to bring them together in a learning partnership around the idea of a generic pilot scheme expressly to bring the technology up-to-speed with 20<sup>th</sup> C social and environmental requirements. Through this collaboration I was made aware of Newcastle University's proof-of-concept work on agent-based modelling, and by means of separate visits to Newcastle and to EA Millbank House have helped to broker the introduction of the serious postgraduate study programme now under way to pioneer this concept's practical application here – and, it is hoped, point to wider applicability. Baseline figures on types of housing by area on Morfa Rhuddlan were collected in 1991.
2. **Carbon footprinting.** Apart from the need to catalyse individual and community action in a generally exemplary way, clearly this should now be recognised as an issue intimately related to the planning future of this area (**Ref A51**). At the RTPI's spring follow-up event to TOWYN+20 it is hoped to try to bring together Crown Estates, Wales Audit Office, WAG and the Carbon Trust to give backing to the idea of an 'Integrated Coastal Zone Development' (ICZD) concept study for the N Wales coast, setting the parameters for various 'forward planning paths' (e.g. immediate as opposed to delayed retreat) that look at overall carbon impacts over at least the full one century timescale, with or without intervention – one aim being to set this area up as a beacon project pointing the way forward for all other coastal areas as potential leaders in positive climate change adaptation. **Success with this DECC application could, it is hoped, give extra urgency and purpose to the setting-up of this urgently needed UK-wide learning process.**

### 3g: Be replicable

Credibility is again the key. Here the safe-refuge theme affords unusual opportunities which - while not necessarily being exactly replicable in all coastal locations elsewhere - should help to draw attention to the need for broadly similar positive climate change adaptation. Sports Centres usually have space around, on, and inside them for creative adaptational use and we hope to set a good precedent in Conwy and elsewhere to attract in local community inputs to partner local authorities in putting other equally inspiring projects into effect. **At a time of adversity elsewhere, the history of our community's misfortunes and how it has sought and intend to continue to overcome them by turning adversity to advantage may be of particular help in terms of helping and inspiring others to 'turn the corner'.**

### 3h: Be equitable and sustainable

In the coastal situation particularly, the social side of sustainability is too often missed out. But the coastal disaster history gives clear 'permission' to place this absolutely centrally. Many of the likely partners to be involved in integrated approaches to be aimed at are outlined in the accompanying paper on Offshore Wind Farm Community Benefit Monies (Ref B68). As mentioned above, some adjustment to our charitable aims is likely to be needed in order to be best placed to respond to the chosen wider sustainability-related aims and targets. In this respect we look forward to putting together a pioneering route-map that directs us in coastal N Wales how to 'walk the talk', via contacts made with such inspiring exemplars as Green Cornwall, Gwent Energy, Stirling Going Carbon Neutral.

#### Section 4: How does your application contribute to the balance of communities?

A quick scroll-down survey of the 187 project summaries available on the internet (8.12.09) gave opportunity for the following analysis:-

Coastal community (England & Wales).....	25 ex 187 = 13.3%
Coastal community (Wales).....	6 ex 20 = 30%
Greater London community.....	8 ex 187 = 4.3%
Notional link to offshore wind farm community benefits.....	2 ex 187 = 1.1%
Link specified to coastal climate change adaptation.....	4 ex 187 = 2.2%
Schools or higher education link specified.....	36 ex 187 = 19.2%
Sports or leisure centre connection specified.....	5 ex 187 = 2.7%

Since 3 ex 6 of Welsh coastal community applications are from Morfa Rhuddlan or the area immediately bordering it, without these applications (including the present one) coastal representation within Wales would have been only 15%, as against the commonly accepted figure 60% of Wales' population. Meanwhile within England and Wales as a whole, including Greater London, the proportion of population in coastal communities is generally reckoned at around 35%, as against the 13.3% representation above.

The present application is the only one, coastal or inland, to be based on any form of community adaptation measure for flooding itself, while of the five schemes with a reference to tidal power this is the only one to specify that a successful DECC Low Carbon Communities application had ambitions to move debate on towards the development of community, local & central government and Crown Estates acceptance of the need for a generic pilot tidal energy storage and release scheme aiming to bring existing technology up-to-speed with 21<sup>st</sup> C coastal adaptational needs.

In pointing issues out that may help rate our scheme, the Board welcomes the DECC approach in that it gives the opportunity (**p.8 of Ref B68**) for the 'Joe Bloggs' directional model as against the 'Sir Humphrey Wobblyman' one. But in saying so we would urge your judges to try to balance up coastal representation as fairly as possible – many if not most coastal communities being recognised to have disproportionately severe economic and social problems alongside the often 'wicked' environmental ones.

**If Britain is a maritime nation, defined by its coast and (in one of our national songs) the capacity to 'rule the waves', it seems clear we have yet to recognise the potential of the biggest, most predictable wave of all i.e. the tidal one. This seems to be because in the climate change battle the biggest danger facing us is of fatalism - of not rising to the environmental challenge because (as Lord Stern has pointed out) of socially and economically narrow definitions of 'affordability'. In this respect a fundamental shift seems needed in order to gear up to 'fighting on the beaches' in a joined-up way, as in wartime.....**

While believing that our bid is well placed to do much that others seem not to have not been able to do to redress this imbalance, and the coastal fatalism that is implied, the Board would welcome some other coastal applications coming through to help support it.

#### Section 5: Additional information

Ref B75 – photo of Board members and prospective members.

Ref B76 – profile of same

Ref B77: since some emphasis seems to be on the capacity of the principal applicant to champion the project they represent - and indeed what that project itself might have the opportunity to represent on behalf of wider UK-wide or even international efforts - a personal statement is attached along with a few references that directly relate to that statement.