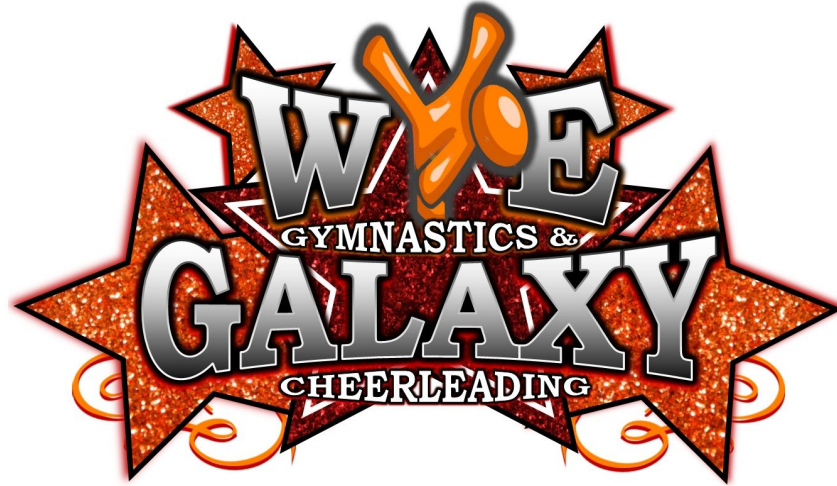
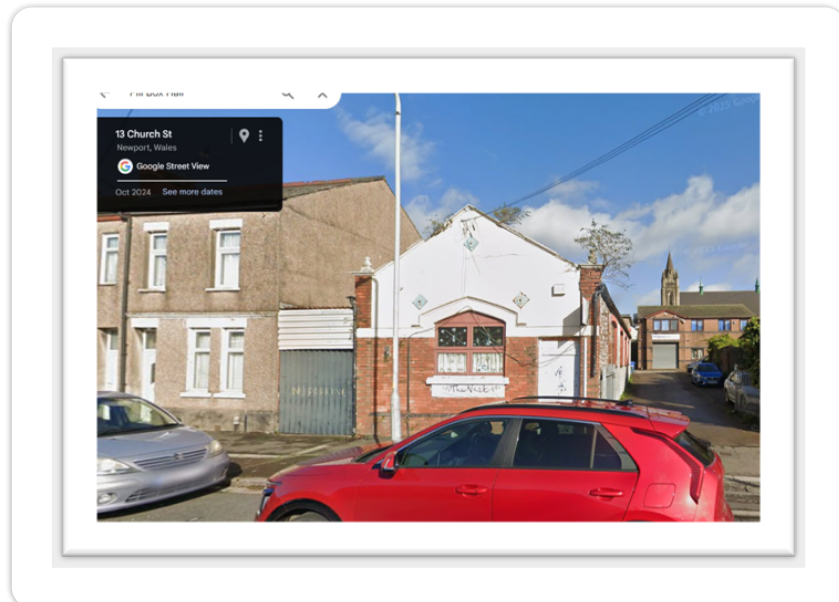




PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR:
A GYMNASTICS AND ROLE PLAY CENTRE
AT
PILL BOX, 13A CHURCH STREET, NEWPORT, NP20 2BY



AUGUST 2025

Wye Gymnastics & Galaxy Cheerleading

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Design & Access Statement

Planning Application for Change of Use to a Gymnastics & Soft Play Centre

Newport City Council

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) is submitted on behalf of Wye Gymnastics and Galaxy Cheerleading (the applicant) in relation to the proposal for the change of use of Pill Box, 13A Church Street to a Gymnastics & Soft Play Centre (D2 Use Class – Assembly & Leisure).
- 1.2 This statement provides a business profile, site description and demonstrates how the proposal aligns with Newport's Redevelopment Plan, Planning Policy Wales (PPW), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and Newport City Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

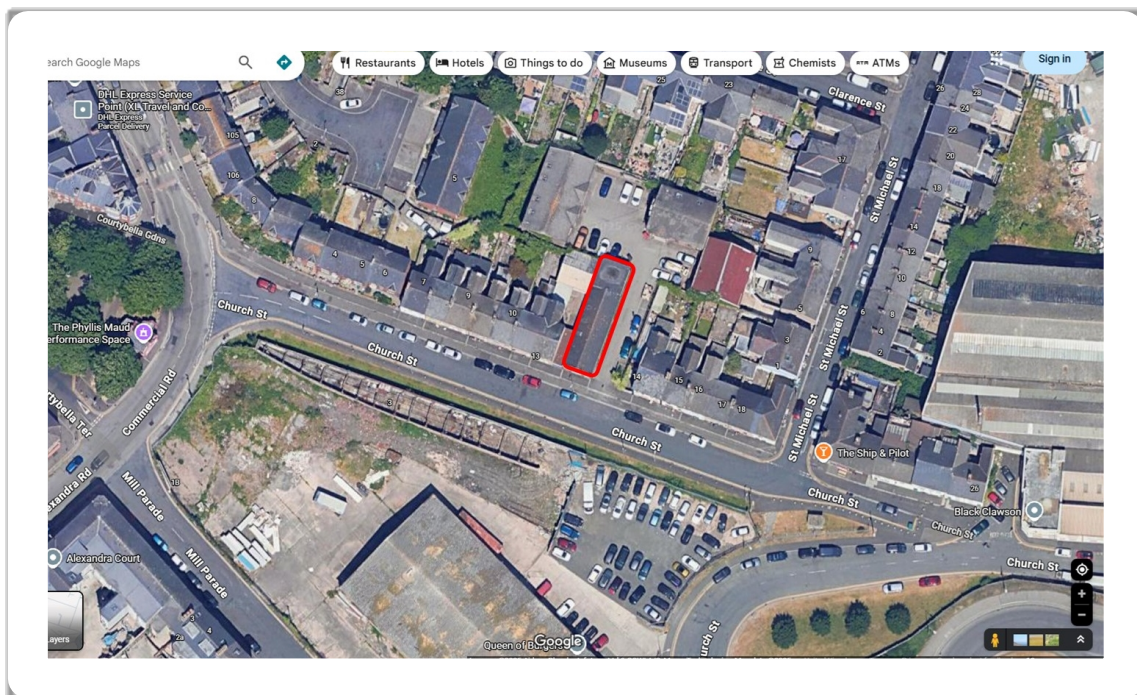
Business Profile

- 1.3 Wye Gymnastics and Galaxy Cheerleading (WGGC) is a registered charity (Charity No 1177378) providing classes for all ages and abilities throughout the week in Acrobatic Gymnastics, Cheerleading, General Gymnastics, Pre-School Gymnastics, TeamGym and Tumbling.
- Their Headquartes is in Caldiot Monmouthshire however, they currently deliver 62 sessions per week, across 17 different venues through South Wales and impacting over 1500 people.
- 1.4 Gymnastics & Cheerleading, like many other sporting activities, can provide valuable life experiences for young people and can help develop social skills, self-esteem, confidence team work, and leadership qualities. In addition, WGGC is not only focused on participation but also on long-term engagement and personal development and their initiatives support the entire community, from small children to older adults and those living with dementia. Due to this, WGGC is an important part of the communities in which they are based and are committed to using sport as a vehicle for social change.
- 1.5 As set out on the organisations website, there are many positive attributes associated with the applicants successful club, including welfare benefits as follows:-
- WGGC works closely with British & Welsh Gymnastics and has adopted the Safeguarding Policies & Procedures of their governing body accordingly.
 - All staff and volunteers receive regular and up to date Safeguarding and Protecting Children Training and hold a clear enhanced DBS check that is updated every three years.
 - WGGC have a team of trained Welfare Officers available as well as a comprehensive and robust reporting procedures for any concerns.
- 1.6 It is established that the applicant provides valuable opportunities for members to develop confidence and social skills through a variety of sessions and physical activity.

- 1.7 WGGC has achieved many accolades which has identified them as one of the most successful gymnastics clubs in Wales. They were awarded the 2025 British Gymnastics Club of the Year award in January 2025, the British Gymnastics Inclusion Club of the Year in 2023, the Health & Wellbeing Award at the Welsh Charity Awards in 2023 and was shortlisted for a National Diversity Award in 2023.
- 1.8 This facility will provide a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for children and young people, encouraging physical activity, social interaction, and community cohesion in an area of deprivation and within a diverse community.
- 1.9 Further information on WGGC can be found on their website at weandgalaxy.co.uk and on social media at @WyeAndGalaxy. This includes details of awards won and competition success' at a local, national and international level, which is testimony to the hard work of the staff and athletes, evidencing the important role the club plays within the local and wider community.

2. Site Context

- 2.1 The development proposal seeks full planning permission for change of use to D2 Use Class (Assembly & Leisure) to allow the renovation of an existing building for a Gymnastics and Role Play Centre.
- 2.2 Following a conversation with Newport Planning Department, we are unsure of the current classification that the site is designated as.
- 2.3 As shown on the aerial photograph below, the proposed premises, which is demarcated within the red line boundary, lies within a row of terraced houses and is the entry way to a small court which consists of 2 other commercial premises.



- 2.4 The site was formerly used as a Charity Shop but has been unoccupied since the Covid pandemic in 2020.
- 2.5 OpenView Group – Security Systems. Apex Computer Services.
- 2.6 The site back onto St Michaels Court which hosts two diverse range of businesses – A Computer Services Company and a Security Systems Company reflecting its mixed-use character.
- 2.7 Overall, Church Street exemplifies a dynamic area with a blend of residential and commercial enterprises, benefiting from its strategic location in the heart of Pillgwenlly and ongoing development initiatives.

- 2.8 In review of Natural Resources Wales Flood Maps for Planning, the Development Advice Map (DAM) shows that the site resides in Rivers & Sea - Flood Zone 3. The attached report from the NRW shows that the risk of flooding is very low:-
- Flooding from rivers - Very Low Risk.
 - Flooding from Sea – Low Risk.
 - Flooding from Surface Water and small watercourses – Low Risk
- The report also states that this area does not benefit from flood defences and has no recorded flooding.

SPEAK TO PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO ENQUIRE WHETHER FULL FRA IS NECESSARY

3.Development Proposal

Building Operations

- 3.1 It is proposed that the building is converted into a gymnastics and role play centre, specifically designed and occupied by Wye Gymnastics & Galaxy Cheerleading.
- 3.2 The proposal does not alter the building's external appearance. A new roof will be installed, replicating the existing structure, and all necessary external works will be carried out to preserve the building's original character.
- 3.3 The front entrance will no longer be in use. Instead, the side entrance will serve as the primary access point, providing convenient entry from both the rear car park and the street
- 3.4 Externally, there will be no change to the existing access and parking arrangements around the building.

Proposed Use

- 3.5 The new Gymnastics and Role Play Centre will be operated by Wye Gymnastics and Galaxy Cheerleading. The charity is well established in delivery of this type of activity and have a Headquarters with over 600 members and several satellite venues.
- 3.6 WGGC already run 3 sessions within Pillgwenlly, 2 at Pill Millennium Centre and 1 at Community House on Eton Road with a participation of 62 children.
- 3.7 There is a growing waiting list for these sessions in Pill and with no further time available at Pill Millennium Centre, this project will allow for further sessions to be delivered to many more children.
- 3.8 It is anticipated that each session will last between 45-60 minutes with a 15 minute break between sessions to allow for changeover. The centre will be open Monday to Saturday within the following hours:-
- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| Monday: | 10.00am – 7.00pm |
| Tuesday: | 4.00pm – 7.00pm |
| Wednesday: | 10.00am – 7.00pm |
| Thursday: | 4.00 – 7.00pm |
| Friday: | 10.00am – 7.00pm |
| Saturday: | 9.00am – 1.00pm |
- 3.9 It is proposed that WGGC Newport would consist of small sessions of no more than 6 children per time for sessions taking place between 10.00 – 2.00pm and no more than 12 children per time for sessions between 4.00 – 7.00pm.

- 3.10 The centre will be located in the heart of the community, with a clear emphasis on social inclusion and community cohesion. Its primary purpose is to provide a welcoming environment that brings together individuals and families from a wide range of backgrounds.
- 3.11 A specialist sensory room will be incorporated within the scheme to deliver tailored play opportunities for children with additional needs. This provision aligns with principles of inclusive design and ensures that the facility is accessible to all members of the community.
- 3.12 In order to promote equality of access, the centre will operate a designated free day each week. This initiative is specifically intended to remove financial barriers that may prevent some families from engaging in extra-curricular activities, thereby supporting social equity.
- 3.13 In terms of employment, it is estimated that WGGC Newport would create one full time manager position, 2 part time assistant manager positions and several part time coaching vacancies which would equate to 4 full time positions overall. In addition to this, the already established Leadership Academy would continue to grow offering volunteer and CPD opportunities to children aged 12-16 years.

Access and Parking

- 3.14 There is currently 16 parking spaces to the rear and side of the building. 2 of these spaces will be utilised as staff parking. Due to the small nature of the venue, there will only ever be 2 adult staff members with vehicles on site at any one time.
- 3.15 Visitors to the centre will be directed to utilise additional nearby parking provision, including:
- Courtybella Terrace (approximately 3 minute walk)
 - Pill Millennium Centre (approximately 5 minute walk)
 - Mill Parade (approximately 7 minute walk)
- 3.16 During programmed sessions (4:00pm – 7:00pm) accommodating groups of 12 children, parents typically drop off their children and do not remain on site, thereby significantly reducing on-site parking demand.
- 3.17 Of the 62 children currently registered:
- 25 walk to their current sessions.
 - 5 use public transport.
 - 8 already participate in car-sharing arrangements, a sustainable practice which will continue to be actively encouraged and incentivised.
- 3.18 The site benefits from good transport links, pedestrian accessibility, and proximity to schools and residential areas, supporting active travel and accessibility. The nearest bus stop is located on Commercial Street (approximately 2 minute walk), offering direct services to Newport City Centre, Maesglas and Duffryn. This provides a convenient and accessible alternative to private car use.
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4. Wider Policy Context

From the wider policy perspective, the change of use of the subject premises supports a number of Newport Council and Welsh Government initiatives.

4.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

- Supports the re-use of existing buildings to provide community services.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and active living.
- Encourages the provision of accessible, inclusive recreational facilities.

This project aims to establish a vibrant community space specifically designed to address the needs of children from areas of deprivation. By offering accessible physical activity programmes, the project will help combat health inequalities, promoting physical and mental well-being among children who may otherwise have limited opportunities for such engagement. WGGC will also focus on breaking down barriers to participation by ensuring that activities are affordable, welcoming, and tailored to diverse community needs.

Furthermore, the project will prioritise inclusivity by creating opportunities for children from culturally diverse backgrounds. Programmes will be designed to respect and celebrate cultural differences, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. Culturally appropriate activities and collaboration with community leaders will ensure that the space feels welcoming to families from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, WGGC Newport will serve as a safe, inclusive space where families can come together to build connections and share experiences. By fostering a culturally safe environment, families will feel comfortable participating in activities and events, encouraging stronger community ties. The focus on inclusive programming will promote cross-cultural understanding, helping to build a sense of unity while celebrating diversity.

In summary, the project aligns with the principles of PPW by not only reusing an existing building but also promoting healthy lifestyles, inclusivity, and social cohesion within the community. It will serve as a crucial asset in empowering children and families, fostering an environment of support and opportunity.

4.2 Newport Local Development Plan (LDP)

- Policy SP1 (Sustainability) promoting well-being and supporting local communities.
- Policy SP12 encourages the development of new community facilities in sustainable locations. This includes dance and sports halls and gymnasiums as well as indoor sporting and leisure uses.
- Policy CF1 (Community Facilities), providing an essential service for families and young people.
- Supports economic growth and employment opportunities in alignment with local regeneration priorities.

This project aligns with the above policies by fostering well-being and strengthening local communities. By transforming an existing building into a welcoming community environment, the project contributes to sustainable development, reducing the need for new construction and making efficient use of existing infrastructure. This approach not only preserves the building's durability but also revitalises the surrounding area, attracting more people and boosting local businesses.

The proposed centre will cater specifically to children from deprived areas by offering affordable, accessible physical activity programs. Through structured pre school, gymnastics and cheerleading sessions, children who may otherwise face barriers to participation will have a safe and supportive space to stay active, improving both physical health and mental well-being.

In addition to promoting physical activity, the hub will prioritise cultural inclusivity by designing programmes that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the community. Activities will be adapted to be culturally appropriate and respectful, creating an environment where children from various ethnic backgrounds feel welcome and valued. This inclusive approach will encourage participation from families who may not typically engage with mainstream sports and recreation programmes, fostering social inclusion and cultural understanding.

WGGC Newport will also address Policy CF1 (Community Facilities) by providing essential services that directly benefit families and young people. As a place where families can come together in a culturally safe environment, the centre will host events that celebrate diversity while promoting community spirit. By offering a welcoming space for intergenerational activities, the project will strengthen family bonds and enhance community cohesion.

Furthermore, the project supports economic growth and aligns with local regeneration priorities by attracting more visitors and creating employment opportunities. Staff roles, volunteer positions, and partnerships with local businesses will not only boost the local economy but also provide residents with valuable skills and experience.

In summary, the proposed community hub supports the objectives of the Newport Local Development Plan by promoting sustainability, fostering physical activity, celebrating cultural diversity, and supporting economic growth. It will serve as a vital community asset, particularly for children and families from deprived and diverse backgrounds, while contributing to the social and economic revitalisation of the area.

4.3 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This development will contribute to the Act's seven well-being goals, specifically:

- A Healthier Wales: Encouraging physical activity for children and families.
- A More Equal Wales: Ensuring affordability and accessibility for all.
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities: Bringing people together through shared activities.

The project will promote physical activity among children and families, with a particular emphasis on those from areas of deprivation, specifically Pillgwenlly which lies within the top 10% of most deprived areas in Wales. WGGC Newport will offer a range of accessible and affordable physical activities, including gymnastics sessions, cheerleading classes, a pre school programme, role play and sensory play sessions tailored to the needs of children and young people. By providing safe, structured opportunities for physical exercise, the centre will help address health inequalities prevalent in deprived areas, where access to such facilities is often limited.

Additionally, the centre will create a welcoming and inclusive environment where children from diverse cultural backgrounds can participate without fear of discrimination. Activities will be designed with cultural sensitivity in mind, ensuring that all children feel comfortable and accepted. Encouraging active participation in a culturally safe space will support both physical and mental well-being, fostering positive lifestyle habits from a young age.

This development will actively work to ensure that children and families from all backgrounds have equal access to recreational opportunities. The programmes at WGGC

Newport will be designed to remove financial barriers by offering access to free and low-cost activities, making them accessible to families facing economic challenges.

Furthermore, the project will celebrate cultural diversity by incorporating activities that resonate with various ethnic communities, such as traditional dance sessions and diverse role play activity. This inclusive approach will ensure that children from minority backgrounds feel valued and included. By fostering an environment of equality and mutual respect, the centre will empower families from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds to engage in the wider community.

WGGC Newport will serve as a vital space for bringing people together through shared physical activities and family events. By hosting culturally inclusive programmes, the centre will encourage social interaction and foster connections among families from diverse backgrounds. This sense of community belonging is particularly important in areas where social isolation and cultural divides may be prevalent.

In summary, this development not only aligns with the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 but also actively addresses health disparities, promotes social equality, and strengthens community cohesion. By prioritising physical activity, cultural inclusivity, and family engagement, WGGC Newport will make a meaningful and lasting impact on the local community.

4.4 Newport City Council Strategic Equality Plan

This development also aligns with Newport City Council's Strategic Equality plan in the following areas:-

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- The centre will provide inclusive access for children with disabilities through the installation of a sensory room and specialist play equipment, ensuring they are not excluded from developmental and recreational opportunities.
- The facility will create a safe, welcoming environment for families from minority backgrounds, actively promoting equality and tackling prejudice through inclusive design and programming.

Advancing equality of opportunity

- Affordable pricing, supported by initiatives such as a weekly free day, will ensure that no child is excluded on the basis of family income. This approach directly addresses socio-economic inequalities and widens participation.
- Diverse recruitment practices and partnerships with local organisations will promote equal opportunities in employment and volunteering, ensuring the centre reflects and represents the community it serves.
- A significant proportion of attendees already walk or car share, and these sustainable practices will continue to be encouraged, further reducing barriers for families with limited access to private transport.

Fostering good relations between different groups

- Active engagement with the local community will guide how the role play centre is managed and developed, ensuring it remains culturally mindful, responsive, and reflective of Newport's diverse population.
 - The centre's location in the heart of the community will provide a shared space where families from different backgrounds can come together, strengthening community cohesion and mutual understanding.
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5. Design Considerations

5.1 Layout and Accessibility

- The centre will be fully accessible, incorporating level access at all primary entrances. Corridors and doorways will be designed to exceed minimum width requirements to accommodate wheelchair users, pushchairs, and mobility aids. In addition, fully compliant disabled toilet and changing facilities will be provided in line with *Approved Document M* of the Building Regulations and *BS 8300:2018 – Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment*. These provisions ensure the building can be used safely, independently, and with dignity by all visitors.
- Designated sensory friendly areas, including a purpose-built sensory room, will form an integral part of the layout. These spaces are intended to provide children with additional needs opportunities to engage in tailored developmental and play activities in a calm and supportive environment. This approach reflects best practice in inclusive design and supports the objectives of the Equality Act 2010 by removing barriers to participation for disabled children.
- The internal layout will incorporate adaptable, multi-use spaces designed to accommodate a variety of activities. This includes dedicated areas for structured gymnastics training alongside open-plan role play and free-play zones. The design ensures that children of different ages, abilities, and interests can benefit from the facilities, supporting both physical development and imaginative play.
- The layout has been developed to maximise accessibility, inclusivity, and community benefit. The design principles align with *Planning Policy Wales (PPW)* and national best practice in inclusive design, ensuring that the facility not only complies with statutory accessibility requirements but also goes beyond minimum standards to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for all users.

5.2 Sustainability

- The centre will incorporate energy-efficient lighting, heating, and ventilation systems, designed to minimise energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. These measures are in line with the principles of *Planning Policy Wales (PPW)* and the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, supporting the national goal of creating a “resilient Wales” by reducing environmental impact and improving energy performance.
- Wherever possible, sustainable and responsibly sourced materials will be used in the development, including those with low embodied carbon and high durability. This approach supports the principles of a “globally responsible Wales,” ensuring that the project reduces waste, minimises environmental harm, and contributes positively to the circular economy.
- The design of the scheme will encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private car use. The centre will provide safe, pedestrian-friendly access and will be well connected to the local bus network, with a stop located on Commercial Street approximately two minutes’ walk away. Car sharing will be further incentivised for families, and walking will continue to be promoted as a sustainable mode of travel for the many children who already access sessions on foot. These measures support PPW guidance on sustainable transport, as well as the Well-being of Future Generations goal of creating a “healthier Wales” by encouraging more active lifestyles.

- By embedding sustainability into its design and operation, the centre will deliver lasting community benefit, aligning with national planning policy and the Future Generations framework. The project will demonstrate good environmental stewardship while providing a high-quality, inclusive facility that supports both current and future community needs.

5.3 Safety and Security

- The centre will implement robust safeguarding measures to ensure the protection and wellbeing of all children and families. These will include secure entry and exit points with controlled access, CCTV coverage in key areas, and supervision by staff trained in safeguarding procedures. Policies and training will be aligned with *Working Together to Safeguard People* (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) and *Keeping Learners Safe* statutory guidance, ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are fully embedded in day-to-day operations.
- The building will be designed and managed in full compliance with current *Fire Safety Regulations*, including the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*, and all relevant *Health & Safety Regulations*. Fire detection, alarm, and suppression systems will be installed, with clearly marked evacuation routes and accessible emergency exits. Staff will be trained regularly in fire safety, first aid, and emergency procedures to ensure resilience and preparedness.
- Beyond statutory compliance, the design will integrate principles of *Secured by Design* to promote a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment. Measures will include adequate external lighting, secure boundaries, and internal layouts that support passive surveillance and staff oversight. These features will contribute to a reassuring environment for children, families, and staff, while supporting the broader objectives of the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, particularly the goal of creating a healthier, more resilient Wales.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 Active engagement with local schools, parents, and community organisations will ensure that the centre is shaped around local needs and priorities. This participatory approach supports the well-being goal of *A More Cohesive Wales* by strengthening relationships within the community and fostering inclusive decision making.
- 6.2 The centre will develop partnerships with public health programmes to encourage active lifestyles, healthy behaviours, and mental wellbeing. By offering structured physical activity and safe play opportunities, the centre will contribute to *A Healthier Wales* while supporting the Council's wider public health objectives.
- 6.3 The project will create employment and volunteering opportunities for local residents, with a commitment to promoting diversity and equal opportunities in recruitment. This approach contributes to *A Prosperous Wales* by supporting the local economy and investing in people and skills, while also aligning with the *Strategic Equality Plan* by ensuring inclusive access to employment.
- 6.4 Through continued dialogue with community stakeholders, the centre will ensure that its facilities and activities are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and reflective of Newport's diverse population. This commitment contributes to *A More Equal Wales* by removing barriers to participation and ensuring equal access for all children and families, regardless of background or circumstance.

- 6.5 Embedding community engagement within the centre's operations will ensure its long-term relevance and sustainability. This will help build resilience within the community and strengthen cohesion, aligning with both *A More Cohesive Wales* and the principle of long-term thinking embedded within the Act.
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7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This application seeks planning permission for the re-use and modernisation of Pill A Church Street, Newport (NP20 2BY) for use as a gymnastics and role play centre, falling within Use Class D2 – Assembly & Leisure.
- 7.2 The proposal represents a sustainable re-use of an existing building and will deliver a modern, inclusive facility designed to support children, families, and the wider community.
- 7.3 The project aligns with the policy framework set out in *Planning Policy Wales* and the *Newport Local Development Plan*, contributing positively to national and local objectives around health, wellbeing, regeneration, and inclusivity. Specifically, the development demonstrates sustainability across the three recognised roles:
- **Economic Role** – The scheme will directly create the equivalent of four full-time jobs and will provide indirect economic benefits by supporting local suppliers and attracting visitors into the city centre, contributing positively to Newport's local economy at a time of economic uncertainty.
 - **Social Role** – The centre will provide a much-needed recreational facility in the heart of the community, supporting physical activity, imaginative play, and social interaction for children of all backgrounds. It will also foster inclusivity through features such as a sensory room for children with additional needs, affordable pricing structures, and initiatives to remove financial barriers to participation.
 - **Environmental Role** – The re-use of the existing building represents a sustainable form of development, minimising the need for new construction. The scheme presents no adverse impacts upon the local environment and will incorporate energy-efficient measures, sustainable materials, and promotion of active travel in line with national sustainability goals.
- 7.4 On this basis, it is concluded that the proposal accords with the overarching aims and objectives of both national and local planning policy. It represents a sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial development that will deliver significant community gain while supporting economic regeneration and social wellbeing in Newport.
- 7.5 The applicant respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission for this proposal without delay.
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Prepared by: Carly Hawke, Wye Gymnastics & Galaxy Cheerleading
Date: 01/09/25