

LPA ERA Pro-forma

1. Is an Ecosystem Resilience Assessment Required? Yes ☒ No ☐

Why is an ERA required or why is it not?

A detailed planning application for the demolition of an existing building and construction of a new ALDI store at Neath Abbey Road, Neath was submitted to Neath Port Talbot Council (planning ref: P2019/5304). Comments have subsequently been received by the Biodiversity Implementation Officer dated 27th January 2020 which have recommended that an assessment of ecosystem resilience (Section 2 Environment (Wales) Act 2016) should consider:

- (a) Diversity between and with ecosystems;
- (b) The connections between and within ecosystems
- (c) The scale of ecosystems;
- (d) The condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
- (e) The adaptability of ecosystems.

This ERA has been subsequently updated in December 2021 in respect of amendments to the site boundary to include additional land as part of revised access for the adjacent CSN Precision Engineering buildings.

2. Summary of Ecosystem Resilience Information relevant to the Planning Application:

Plan of identified Ecosystems, Constraints and Opportunities with the Zone of Influence:

Habitats

The site is dominated by hardstanding, close-mown grassland and a single small building. Along the western boundary of the site are a line of cypress trees and birch. Outside of the site, there are industrial buildings to the south and west, with residential housing to the east. The site is not functionally linked to any key ecosystems and does not currently provide an ecological corridor.

The revisions to the site boundary in December 2021 do not include any habitats which are in addition to those previously identified.

A non-statutory local wildlife site (Site of Interest for Nature Conservation, SINC) is located c. 50m south of the site and is designated for containing open grassland and trees/hedgerow. The proposed development however is well removed from the SINC and not considered to be within the Zone of Influence.

Protected Species

The site offers limited potential for protected and notable species. No evidence or potential for roosting bats was recorded within the building (Tyler Grange, 2019). The habitats on site and in the surrounding area offered limited foraging habitat for bats. This is because of the limited areas of vegetation and due to the current light levels which exist. Due to the current management of the grassland, and limited diversity of species within the sward, the habitat provides limited suitability for notable or protected species.

No additional features with potential to support protected species are present within the revised site boundary and no ecological constraints are considered to be present.

Opportunities

Due to the urban location, the habitats on site and the potential links to surrounding ecosystems there are limited opportunities for enhancing ecosystems within the local area. Within the design of the scheme the soft landscaping has however sort to provide a habitat which is more botanically diverse than that which currently exists. This includes small parcels of native shrub and trees, wildflower meadow, ornamental plants and amenity grassland. The proposed habitats would link into the current adjoining habitats and ecosystems in the local area and be suitable for species present within the Zone of Influence.

As part of the amendments to the proposals in December 2021, additional areas of landscape comprising wildflower grassland and new detention features are included which will provide additional benefit for wildlife including invertebrates.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph

Ecosystem Type/description:

The site is located within an urban ecosystem which is predominantly man made. The proposals seek to include native scrub and wildflower meadow within the landscaping. In addition, a number of native trees, amenity grassland with ornamental shrub beds and hedgerow are proposed.

Ecosystem Resilience Aspect	Impact	Mitigation and or Compensation Proposed (including monitoring)	Residual Impact	Enhancements Opportunities
Diversity between and within ecosystems	Neutral impact – the scheme will increase species diversity within the site from that which currently exists.	None required although enhancement measures included.	No residual impact	Proposals include native shrub, native trees and wildflower meadow (refer to soft landscaping proposals and Scheme of Biodiversity Enhancement Measures (Tyler Grange, R02c_2021). These will be monitored for a 12 month period to ensure habitats establish successfully and therefore increase the diversity within the ecosystems. Four bird nesting boxes will be installed on retained trees along the western boundary of the site within suitable habitat.
The connections between and within ecosystems	Neutral impact – the mature trees are to be retained and protected. All other habitats to be cleared on site do not provide connections between	None required	No residual impact	The proposed habitats are in keeping with urban ecosystems and provide connectivity to the wider area.

The scale of ecosystems	and within ecosystems. No increase in light levels. Currently the area is well lit and provides limited connectivity for bats.			
	Neutral impact – the scheme will increase the scale of ecosystems and species diversity within the site from that which currently exists.	None required	No residual impact	The proposed habitats seek to increase the scale of ecosystems in the local area and are in keeping with urban ecosystems.
The condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning)	Neutral Impact – The retained trees will be retained and managed to ensure their function and structure are maintained and allow the ecosystems to continue to function.	None required	No residual impact	The proposed habitats (which link to the ecosystems) will be managed under a Scheme of Biodiversity Enhancement Measures (Tyler Grange, R02c_2021). This will seek to create functioning ecosystems with the habitats which are of good structure and diversity for species to utilise within the ecosystem.
The adaptability of ecosystems	Neutral Impact – the scheme will provide adaptable habitats which can support adaptable ecosystems which will also provide a benefit for local wildlife and increase biodiversity.	None required	No residual impact	The proposed habitats will provide adaptable ecosystems of which the habitats will be managed under a Scheme of Biodiversity Enhancement Measures (Tyler Grange, R02c_2021).

Is the information submitted to inform the ERA suitable and addresses all aspects of ecosystem resilience? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, is further information necessary? Yes ☐ No ☐

N/A

3. Overall Assessment of Ecosystem Resilience:

Will the development result in impacts that will risk the resilience of the ecosystems identified and if so will this have implications for the ecosystem benefits gained from the ecosystems reported?

No – the site currently supports limited ecosystems and no impacts would occur. The proposals do however include resilient habitats which would enhance local ecosystems.

No objection	☒
No objection (subject to any specified conditions)	☐
Concerns have been identified (see below for how those concerns can be addressed by the applicant)	☐
Objection – on the grounds set out below	☐

Recommendations for conditions/s106/ or additional information requirements/ or grounds for objection:

N/A