

1st February 2025

Planning Department

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Planning Division

The Quays

Brunel Way

Neath SA11 2GG

Dream Street Limited - Planning Application

Application for the Establishment of a Children's Role-Play and Physical Play Facility with Café at Unit 3, Neath Town Centre Retail Development, SA11 3ES

Dear Sir/Madam

Dream Street Limited ('Dream Street') is pleased to submit this planning application for the transformation of Unit 3, within the Neath Town Centre regeneration development at Fairfield Way, into an engaging children's role-play and activity centre. The proposal involves the installation of themed play zones, a small café, and associated infrastructure to support the venue's operations. The total area of the facility is 217 square metres.

Overview of Proposed Development

The facility will be designed primarily for children up to 8 years old, providing an immersive role-play environment that encourages imagination, social interaction, and motor skill development. The space will include:

- Themed role-play zones simulating real-world settings (e.g., beauty salon, florist, builder's merchant, and bakery)
- A designated small-scale physical play section to support active movement and coordination
- A café area offering light refreshments for parents and carers
- Necessary kitchen and refrigeration equipment, including a jacket potato oven and toastie maker
- Background music played at low volume during scheduled sessions to enhance the play environment
- Seating areas for parents to relax while children engage in activities

Proposed Works

The current space of Unit 3 will require significant fit-out works to make it suitable for the intended use. These works will include:

- Partitioning and construction of internal walls to define the various role-play zones and welfare facilities ensuring a safe and engaging environment for children
- Installation of toilets for both children and adults, compliant with the relevant standards
- Custom-built role-play structures, designed to mimic real-world businesses and environments for interactive learning and fun
- Mezzanine floor installation (covering only part of the facility area) to maximise space and provide an upstairs party/craft area and storage
- Connection of necessary plumbing systems, including those required for kitchen and toilet facilities

This application has been submitted via Planning Applications Wales and includes:

- Completed application form
- Site location (red line boundary plan)
- Plans, elevations and 3d imagery
- Noise management plan
- Green infrastructure statement

Location & Surroundings

Unit 3 is part of the recently developed Neath Town Centre Regeneration Development, an area designed to accommodate various retail and leisure facilities. The site benefits from proximity to established businesses ensuring a vibrant and active commercial environment. The surrounding units currently host a variety of businesses, creating a diverse and engaging area for visitors.

Operational Details

- Opening Hours: 8:30 AM – 6:30 PM, Monday to Sunday
- Session Structure: Four structured play sessions per day, each lasting two hours, starting at 9:00 AM
- Parental Supervision: Parents/carers will be required to remain on-site and always supervise their children

- **Maximum Capacity:** A set number of children per session to ensure safety and quality of experience
- **Staffing:** Trained staff members will oversee operations, ensuring a secure and enjoyable environment for all visitors

Change of Use Request

Currently, Unit 3 is classified under A1 retail use. However, the proposed transformation of this space into a children's role-play and activity centre necessitates a change of use to D2. The nature of the proposed development—offering supervised play sessions with educational and recreational elements for children, alongside the café facility—aligns more closely with the D2 classification, rather than A1 retail use. As such, we respectfully request that the planning authority approves the change of use from A1 to D2 to facilitate the proposed role play café facility.

Design & Fit-Out Considerations

The internal layout will be thoughtfully designed to maximise safety and engagement. The themed play areas will include:

- Custom-built structures that mimic real businesses
- Soft flooring in physical play areas to ensure child safety
- Secure partitions to create defined play zones while maintaining open visibility
- Clearly marked exits and signage for safety compliance
- Adequate lighting and ventilation for a comfortable atmosphere

The café area will be designed with comfortable seating, tables, and a compact kitchen space for food preparation. Special attention will be given to energy-efficient appliances and effective waste disposal solutions in line with environmental standards.

Compliance with Local Planning Policies

The proposal aligns with the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026), particularly its objectives to promote mixed-use developments that enhance town centre activity. The introduction of a children's role-play facility will contribute to increasing footfall, extending visitor dwell time, and diversifying the town's leisure offering. The design also considers noise management and health and safety regulations to ensure minimal disruption to neighbouring units. Furthermore, the development will aim to enhance biodiversity through the inclusion of native wildflower planting in raised planters at the entrance to the unit, improving the biodiversity of the streetscene.

Impact & Benefits

The addition of Dream Street to the town centre is expected to:

- Boost local economic activity by attracting families and increasing customer circulation to nearby businesses
- Support community engagement by offering a safe, educational, and entertaining space for children
- Maintain an active and inviting streetscape, reinforcing Neath's role as a thriving town centre
- Encourage healthier social interactions and learning experiences for young children through imaginative play
- Provide a valuable indoor recreational space for families, particularly during colder months

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed transformation of Unit 3 into a children's role-play and activity centre by Dream Street Limited is a well-thought-out initiative that aligns with the objectives of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan. The facility will not only enhance the town centre's activity but also provide a valuable recreational space for families, promoting social interaction and learning for young children. The careful design and fit-out considerations ensure a safe and engaging environment, while the inclusion of a café area adds convenience for parents and carers. The project is expected to boost local economic activity, support community engagement, and maintain an active streetscape, reinforcing Neath's role as a thriving town centre.

Should any further information be required to process this application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Lianne Davies

Director