

Noise Impact Assessment for Change of Use from Retail to Integrated Role Play Café

For Submission to the Local Planning Authority

1. Introduction

This Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been prepared in support of a planning application for the change of use of a building (Unit 3, Fairfield Way, Neath) from retail to an integrated role play café. The primary objective of this assessment is to evaluate the potential noise impacts associated with the proposed change of use and to outline mitigation measures to ensure compliance with relevant noise standards and guidelines.

2. Site Description and Proposed Development

2.1 Site Location

The unit subject to the planning proposal is known as Unit 3, Fairfield Way, Neath. SA113ES. It is one of five newly built units that formed part of the wider regeneration of this part of Neath town centre and is integrated with the new leisure centre, library and multi-story car park. In addition to the five units, a larger unit currently occupied by the retail store – The Range, is also present as part of the larger development.

Directly adjacent to the unit, the construction and fit out of a new Deli Unit is currently ongoing in Unit 2. On the other side, works are being implemented to fit out Unit 4 for a new homeware and jewellery retail store. Unit 5 is currently vacant and unit 1 is occupied and run as Cadno Lounge, a large restaurant and bar.

Opposite the unit, across the newly developed paved open space site three further occupied units, although these are separate to the development within which unit 3 is located. The businesses occupying the units opposite are Boots, The Greyhound Public House and Monty's Café.

2.2 Existing Use

The existing use of the building was designated as retail as part of the wider town centre regeneration project delivered by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

2.3 Proposed Use

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

It is anticipated that the hours of operation will be as follows:

- 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 with a half hour interval between sessions to allow staff to prepare for the next session.
- The only exception to the above times will be during seasonal events e.g. Christmas, Easter, Halloween, where the opportunity to open to 8:00 PM is sort to facilitate special events. The special events will not differ from the proposed usual day to day operations of the business other than it is anticipated that special guests such as the 'Easter Bunny' or 'Santa Clause' would be present to visit the children within the role play café. Other than changes to the time, there are no further proposed changes during special events.

3. Baseline Noise Assessment

3.1 Methodology

At present, the unit is vacant and has been since its construction therefore there is nothing to currently measure as a baseline. An assessment was undertaken by Hydrock in 2020 as part of the initial wider development. This document can be found

3.2 Baseline Noise Levels

As above, the unit is vacant and therefore a baseline noise assessment is unable to be undertaken due to there being nothing to measure.

4. Noise Impact Assessment

4.1 Noise Sources

The following is a list of activities and operations that may generate noise once the business is in operation:

- Customer activity :

- Children will generate a low level of noise when utilising the themed role-play zones and small-scale physical play section. It is anticipated that the level of noise generated would be comparable to that of a day nursery or restaurant.
- Parents will generate a low level of noise through holding conversations with their children and other customers within the role play café.
- Kitchen activity – It is anticipated that a very low level of noise will be generated from the kitchen and serving area. Examples of noise generated from this section of the unit will include staff conversations and interaction with customers and any noise generated from the proposed basic kitchen appliances such as coffee making facilities, panini press and jacket potato oven.
- Music – Background music will be played at a low level during the scheduled play sessions.

4.2 Predicted Noise Levels

It is predicted that the highest level of noise created within the unit will be in the region of 70 - 80 dB. This is the equivalent to the noise level generated by a restaurant similar to that of the neighbouring Cadno Lounge. The background music played will be at a level lower than 50-60 dB to not interfere with customer conversations or the children's immersive play experience.

4.3 Impact Assessment

The noise level generated from role play café is not expected to be any higher in volume than that currently generated by the neighbouring businesses. The existing café, deli and restaurant are comparable with the noise levels of this proposal and the public house generates noise at a much higher level than this proposal.

5. Mitigation Measures

Outline below are the proposed mitigation measures to ensure that the impacts of any noise that is generated by this proposal is limited.

- Incorporation of decorative acoustic sound absorbing panels suspended from the ceiling to absorb noise generated from the role play, physical play section and café.
- Limitations on operating hours as set out above.
- A clear complaints procedure should anyone raise the level of noise as an issue during the business operation.
- Regular maintenance of all kitchen equipment to ensure that it is operating efficiently.

6. Conclusion

The overall noise impacts for the proposed development are considered acceptable. The predicted noise levels are comparable to existing businesses in the area, and the proposed mitigation measures are expected to effectively manage any potential noise issues.