

Green Infrastructure Report

Planning Application for Change of Use from Vacant Retail Unit to Role Play Café

1. Introduction

This report outlines the proposed green infrastructure strategies associated with the planning application for changing the use of an existing retail unit to a role play café. The aim is to enhance the environmental sustainability of the site while maintaining its functionality and appeal.

2. Site Description

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.

3. 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.

At present, there is no streetscene associated with the building owing to its vacant nature. The proposal will see the introduction of some planters to create a sense of welcome to the unit.

4. Green Infrastructure Strategies

4.1 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The building already benefits from sustainable drainage system that was installed as part of the wider town centre regeneration project. There is no extension to the building included or addition of an hard surface area therefore no additional surface water run off has been considered.

4.2 Energy Efficiency

All lighting, appliances and heating will be energy efficient to reduce energy consumption and limit the carbon footprint of the business.

4.3 Sustainable Transport

The building already benefits from a number of bicycle storage units located outside as part of the open space area. Whilst some customers may utilise this facility, it is anticipated that the majority of customers will arrive by foot, public transport or their own personal vehicle. As the development is situated in the town centre, it's a much more attractive option for customers to use public transport than it would be if the role play café was situated in an out of town industrial estate like other similar facilities.

4.4 Biodiversity Enhancement

Planters will be installed at the entrance to the unit to create a welcoming feel for customers. The planters will be planted with a native wildflower seed mix and maintained regularly to enhance the biodiversity of the streetscene.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed change of use from a vacant retail unit to a role play café at Unit 3, Fairfield Way, Neath, aims to create a vibrant and engaging environment for children up to 8 years old. The development will not only provide an immersive role-play experience but also enhance the environmental sustainability of the site through various green infrastructure strategies. These include the implementation of energy-efficient lighting and appliances, the use of sustainable transport options, and the enhancement of biodiversity with the installation of planters featuring native wildflower seed mixes¹.

The project aligns with the broader regeneration efforts in Neath town centre and is expected to contribute positively to the community by offering a unique and valuable service. The collaboration between different departments and the focus on sustainability will ensure that the role play café is both functional and environmentally responsible.