

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR RAILWAY EXCELLENCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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WHAT IS AN EIA

The Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017) is the legislation that determines whether an EIA is necessary.

the process of an EIA involves:

1. Screening
2. Scoping
3. Baseline Study
4. Impact Prediction
5. EIS
6. Follow up



GCRE (2018)

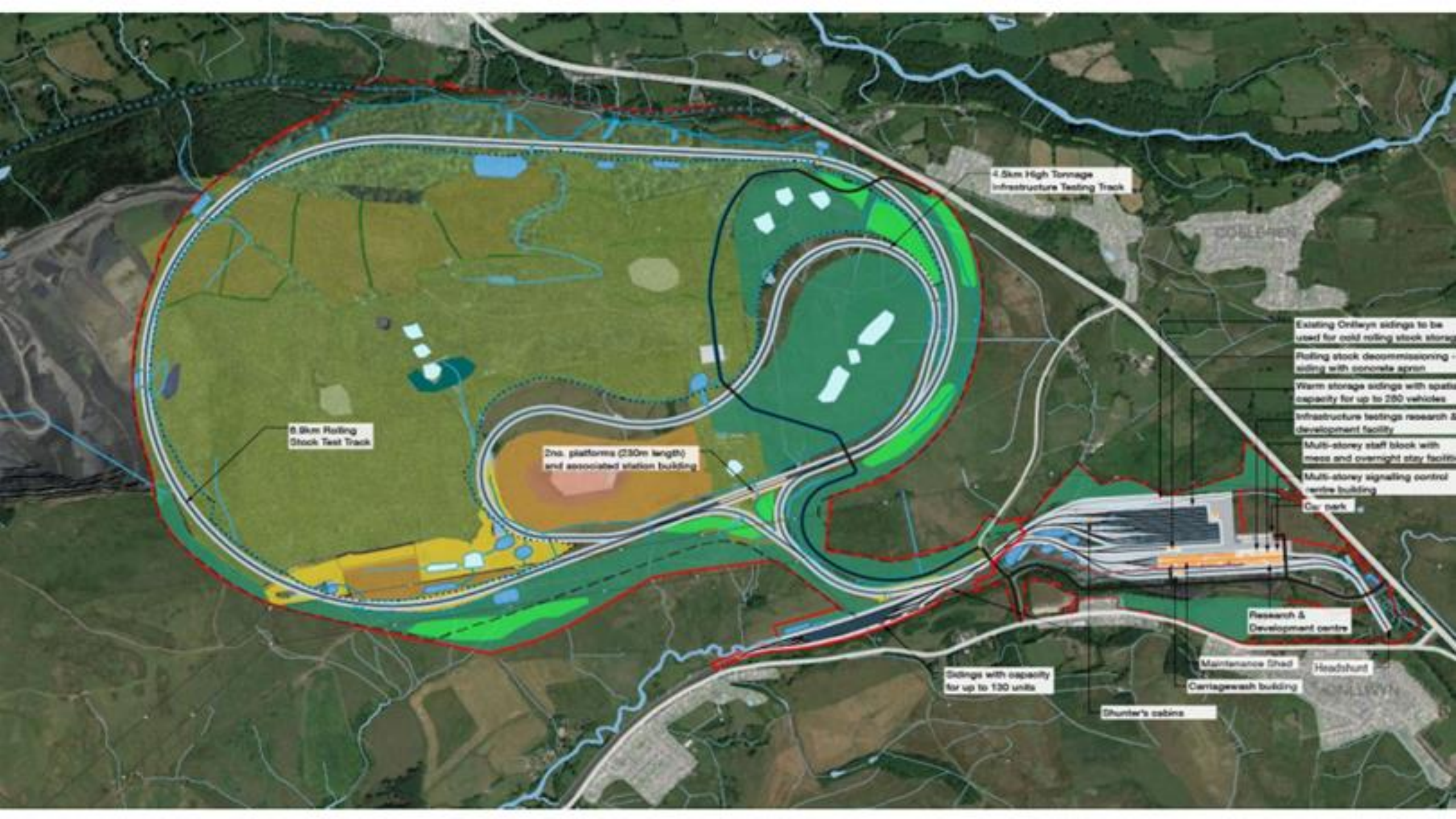
Is a train testing facility consisting of:

- 6.9 km testing tack
- 4.5 km testing track
- R&D and staff buildings
- Storage and wash facilities

Built upon Nant Helen open cast site once its restoration is complete by Celtic Energy.

During the screening and scoping stages this development followed land development plans of both Powys county council and Neath Port Talbot county council (2016).

Construction split into three phases, set to be complete by 2025.



4.5km High Tonnage Infrastructure Testing Track

8.5km Rolling Stock Test Track

2no. platforms (230m length) and associated station building

Existing Onlayn sidings to be used for cold rolling stock storage
Rolling stock decommissioning siding with concrete apron
Warm storage sidings with spatial capacity for up to 200 vehicles
Infrastructure testings research & development facility
Multi-storey staff block with mess and overnight stay facilities
Multi-storey signalling control centre building
Car park

Research & Development centre

Maintenance shed
Carriagewash building

Headshunt

Shunter's cabins

Sidings with capacity for up to 100 units

BIODIVERSITY AND GROUND CONDITIONS

Legislation followed: Wales Environment Act (2016)

Scoping was conducted by Powys County Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Natural Resource Wales. Confirmed that all surveys prior to Nant Helen restoration would have to be conducted again with the addition of an arboreal mammal survey.

The EIA is unclear with regards to the establishment for both the ground conditions and the Biodiversity, whether or not it is based on the Nant Helen site pre-restoration or post-restoration.

Old mine shafts and entrances are present in the site, many of which are underground. Unidentified tunnels may affect the draining of the site during construction.



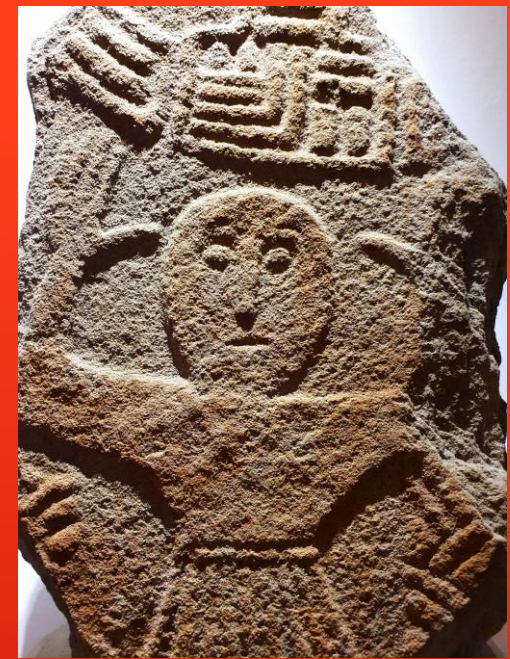
LIGHT, NOISE AND HERITAGE

Due to the nature of the site still being in operation (Nant Helen restoration) suitable field surveys have been unable to be carried out with focus of both the light impact and the noise impact.

The light impact is concerning due to very limited mitigation with regards to reducing the overall light pollution especially when bordering on the Brecon Beacons that has Dark Sky status.

Consultation documents concerning Noise and vibration are incredibly vague, only stating that the trains will be electric. This could be misleading to the public. Noise section relied mainly on predictions, it is again vague with regards to its baseline, but does say worst case scenario.

The area is very rich in history, the EIA follows the historic environment act (2016) as guidance but assumes that any previous archaeological sites were destroyed by coal operations. Several scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the development. The visual impact of the historic setting.



CONCLUSION

Although the EIA is very detailed and had appropriate consultation at most stages, it does lack information especially revolving around light pollution and noise. Other areas where it was weak was the clarity of baseline and the consultation document is vague at parts. But overall a very well written document.



REFERENCES

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ANY QUESTIONS

