

Planning Ref:	FUL/2020/2781
Site:	300 Kingfield Road, Coventry, CV1 4EP
Ward:	Foleshill
Existing Floor Space:	297.5 sq m (3,202 sq ft)
Proposed Floor Space:	297.5 sq m
Net Floor Space:	297.5 sq m
Proposed Number of Units:	N/A
Proposed Number of Affordable Housing Units:	N/A
Proposal:	Change of use of premises from Use Class B2 'general industry' to use as a fitness centre falling within Use Class E 'Commercial, Business and Service'
Case Officer:	Fiona Runacre

SUMMARY

This proposal is for the change of use of an existing industrial unit currently in use as a car repair and paint shop (Use Class B2) to an indoor fitness centre (Use Class E(d)). The existing occupants are due to vacate shortly and relocate to an alternative site. Fitness365 propose to operate their existing business from the unit. No external changes are proposed; this application relates solely to the change of use of the unit.

KEY FACTS

Reason for report to committee:	More than 5 representations in support of the application
Current use of site:	Use Class B2 (General Industrial) Car repair & paint shop
Proposed use of site:	Fitness centre Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service)

RECOMMENDATION

Planning committee are recommended to refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in this report.

REASON FOR DECISION

- The proposal is not acceptable in principle due to the loss of B2 floorspace, conflicting with policies JE1 and JE3 of the Coventry Local Plan, and would not provide for safe access for pedestrians and cyclists due to its location within the industrial estate, contrary to policies CO1 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan.

BACKGROUND

APPLICATION PROPOSAL

It is proposed to change the use of the unit to provide a fitness centre for Fit365, an established business, which has been running fitness classes from Jubilee Crescent Community Centre in Radford. Although presently due to Covid19 restrictions classes have been continuing online, Fit365 provide four classes per week at the following times:

1. Monday 0615 to 0715 hours
2. Tuesday and Thursday 1730 to 1830 hours
3. Saturday 0845

It is intended that the same early morning and early evening classes will be run at the new premises, with typical attendance of around 15 per class. In addition, 'one to one' sessions with personal trainers would be held during the daytime, as well as nutrition, mental health and wellness workshops. Two full time posts would be provided, and in addition the use of the premises will support the employment of specialist consultants on a freelance basis.

Hours of use sought are:

4. 0600 to 2200 hours Monday to Friday
5. 0800 to 2000 hours Saturday and Sunday

The site plan shows that parking provision for up to six cars would be available immediately outside the unit, with additional provision for up to thirteen cars available outside the adjoining units, which would typically be available outside of the hours of 0900 and 1700 hours, for use by Fit365.

No external changes are proposed to the building.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The industrial unit is located in the far north corner of this part of the Kingfield Industrial Estate, at the end of a block of three units. The external space immediately outside the unit is currently used for the storage of cars awaiting either repair or collection. The adjacent unit, No. 302 is occupied by Independent Peugeot Specialists and No. 304, the larger of the units is occupied by Frames Express. All three units are under the same ownership. To the rear of the site is the railway line and adjacent to the north is the Amtico site. Opposite are other industrial units. The largest unit on this part of the estate, the former Bablake Wines unit, to the south has recently been granted planning permission for use as a gymnasium (Use Class E(d)), by Phoenix Gymnastics. (Application reference FUL/2020/2502). The unit has been vacant since early 2020.

Sole access to the site is via the vehicular access from Kingfield Road, shared with all other units. There is no dedicated pedestrian access to this part of the estate.

The existing single storey unit offers 297.5 sq m of floorspace and has a roller shutter door and separate pedestrian/customer access at the front.

PLANNING HISTORY

There has been one previous application on this site, (which also included the adjacent unit No. 302), as detailed below:

Application Number	Description of Development	Decision and Date
FUL/2014/0901	Continued Use of Units for Industrial (Class B2)	Approved 12/05/2014

POLICY

National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so, and identifies that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental objective which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Of specific relevance are part 6: Building a strong, competitive economy; part 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres and part 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF and it is intended that the two documents are read together.

Local Policy Guidance

The current local policy is provided within the Coventry Local Plan 2016, which was adopted by Coventry City Council on 6th December 2017. Relevant policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy
Policy CO1: New or improved Social Community and Leisure Premises
Policy R3: The Network of Centres
Policy R4: Out of Centre Proposals
Policy JE1: Overall Economy and Employment Strategy
Policy JE3: Non-Employment Uses on Employment Land
Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design
Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network
Policy AC2: Road Network
Policy AC3: Demand Management
Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling
Policy EM7: Air Quality
Policy HW1: Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents (SPG/ SPD):

SPD Delivering a More Sustainable City
SPD Coventry Connected
Appendix 5 – Car parking and cycle parking standards
SPD Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document

CONSULTATION

No objections subject to conditions received from:

- Environmental Protection (18/12/2020)
- Highways (04/03/2021).

Objections received from:

- Planning Policy.

Immediate neighbours and local councillors have been notified; a site notice was displayed on 16/12/2020. A press notice was published in the Coventry Telegraph on 24/12/2020.

33 letters of support have been received, raising the following material planning considerations:

- a) Promotes physical and mental wellbeing
- a) An asset to the local community
- b) Hours of use would not conflict with existing businesses
- c) Proposal will support Coventry City Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023
- d) Existing facility is constrained by available hours and restricted space
- e) Larger space and improved facilities would be an asset not just to the club but the city
- f) A suitable and larger premise is required to allow the business to be viable
- g) Not all members will travel by car

A letter of support has been received from Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) raising the following material planning considerations:

- h) The proposal accords with key national and local policy initiatives
- i) It is a growing new venture that provides an important local community service
- j) Proposal will lead to a net gain in local employment opportunities, noting that existing jobs based at the site are to be relocated

Cllr Kaur has advised that she is fully in support of the proposal.

Any further comments received will be reported within late representations.

APPRAISAL

The main issues in determining this application are:

- Whether an out of centre location is acceptable for the proposed use;
- Whether the principle of the change of use to a non-employment use on an established industrial estate is acceptable; and
- Whether the site provides adequate parking and access.

Principle of development

Out of centre location

The NPPF identifies that main town centre uses include retail, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses, including health and fitness centres, and states that a sequential test is to be applied for such uses. Whilst 'more intensive' is not defined, the use is, irrespective of its scale, one that would fall within the scope of Policy CO1 of the Local Plan.

Policy CO1 supports new or improved social community and leisure facilities, setting out a sequential approach, with the focus first on designated centres. The preamble to the policy identifies sporting uses and venues, under the wider scope of cultural and

community buildings. Therefore, policy CO1 is applicable which states firstly, that proposals for social, community and leisure facilities will be considered through the following sequential approach:

- a) Designated centres to support the centres hierarchy;
- b) Where no suitable sites are available in a designated centre, an edge of-centre location;
- c) Where no edge of centre sites are available, a site adjacent to other associated facilities including existing schools and educational facilities;
- d) Only where no suitable site can be identified having regard to points 1- 3, will stand alone sites be supported, subject to:
 - i. The proposal addressing an unmet need within a local community;
 - ii. There being no significant adverse impact upon the role of a defined Centre; and
 - iii. There being no material impact on neighbouring amenity;

Designated centres are identified on the proposals map of the local plan, and policy R3 sets out the hierarchy of the centres: Major District Centres, District Centres and Local Centres.

The site is not within a designated centre; edge of centre location (that is within 300m of a centre boundary); or adjacent to other associated facilities including existing schools and educational facilities. (Parts a to c). The supporting text to policy CO1 recognises that there may be occasions where a proposal is not suitable for an in-centre use. This may be due to a number of factors including space requirements, neighbouring uses or local amenity.

The application is supported by a sequential assessment which identifies that the applicants have reviewed the potential availability of sites within the two District Centres closest to the catchment area of their members and to the Kingfield Road site, specifically Jubilee Crescent District Centre (approx. 2.5km from the site) and Foleshill District Centre (approx. 1.1km from the site).

The assessment concluded that there were no suitable, alternative premises available within these centres. In both centres, the assessment identifies that there were no 'to let' boards identifying available premises, and that the nature of the smaller retail units would not provide a suitable open plan arrangement for the club. A premises in the Radford District Centre (approx. 1.5 km from the site) was also considered, but this also was identified as unsuitable due to the lack of parking and L-shaped layout.

In this case, it is accepted that the applicant has demonstrated that no suitable sites are available within appropriate local centres within a reasonable catchment of the site to suit the specific space requirements of the club. Part d of policy CO1 requires that stand-alone proposals meet all three of the identified criteria. It is accepted in this case that (1) there is a need for the provision in the local community, and that the existing provision at the Jubilee Crescent Community Centre is constrained by hours of opening and size, limiting scope for future growth of an established business; (2) there would be no significant impact on the role of a defined centre, such that locating the use outside of a defined centre would not undermine the role that defined centres play

at the heart of local communities; and (3) there would be no material impact on residential amenity. Policy CO1 part 1 is therefore satisfied.

The second part of policy CO1 requires that proposals are considered on the basis of:

- a) The appropriateness of their proposed location in relation to their scale and intended catchment;
- b) Compatibility with nearby uses;
- c) Accessibility by a choice of means of transport; and
- d) Compatibility with other Plan Policies.

The location and size of the unit is appropriate to the scale of the club and the Radford/Foleshill/north Coventry catchment. The site is also well served by public transport. www.nxbus.co.uk plan your journey identifies that the nearest bus stop is on Foleshill Road between Edmund Road and Honeyfield Road, approx. 0.5 km distance to the site. The Coventry Connected SPD identifies that the maximum desirable walking distance to bus services in continuously built up residential areas is 400m distance/700 m distance (for residential developments). Whilst no specific distance is specified for leisure uses, the Kingfield Industrial Estate is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and thus in a sustainable location.

However, due to the siting of the unit not having a direct frontage with Kingfield Road, members arriving on foot or by bicycle will need to navigate their way to the end of the estate, where there is no separate or delineated pedestrian route. Whilst adequate parking can be provided, there remain concerns regarding pedestrian safety, given vehicle movements including large good vehicles associated with the wider employment use of the area and the location of the site at the end of a cul-de-sac. Therefore, the use would be incompatible with adjacent employment uses, particularly given the number of persons attending the club, throughout the day, where individual 'comings and goings' associated with the proposed fitness club would likely be greater than those associated with the existing B2 use.

In summary, whilst there would be no conflict with part 1 of policy CO1, and the objectives of part 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) of the NPPF, the proposed use would fail to satisfy part 2 of Policies CO1 and NPPF paragraph 127 (e) due to concerns relating to safe pedestrian and cycle access, such that the use would be incompatible with existing employment uses on this part of the Industrial Estate. Compatibility with other local plan policies is discussed below.

Loss of employment space

The site provides employment space under use class B2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Paragraph 20 of the NPPF requires Local Authorities to make sufficient provision for housing, employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development.

The NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Policy JE1 sets out the overall economy and employment strategy, encouraging positive and proactive work with the business community in the city to promote sustainable economic growth and job creation. As part of this, policy JE1 part d, identifies that the Council will safeguard existing employment sites and premises from

being lost to non-employment uses unless certain exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. These circumstances are set out in Policy JE3.

Policy JE3 of the Local Plan relates to non-employment uses. The policy preamble identifies that references to 'employment land', 'employment uses' and 'employment purposes' relate only to development falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). These comprise business offices (Use Class B1a), research and development activities (Use Class B1b), light and general industrial uses (Use Classes B1c and B2) and uses within the storage/distribution sector (Use Class B8). There has been recent change to the use classes order such that use class B1 no longer falls within this use class. This is discussed further in the report.

It is essential that a sufficient amount and range of employment land is maintained throughout the City to ensure that the city's economy continues to grow, and residents have access to job opportunities. This objective is achieved in part through the allocation of land for employment. The application site is an existing non-allocated employment site on part of the wider Kingfield Estate. It is also important to ensure that such sites are also retained for employment use wherever possible.

Policy JE3 (part 1) sets out that at least one of the following specific criteria must be satisfied where there would be a loss of an employment sites, whether as a result of redevelopment or change of use.

Proposals for the redevelopment in whole or in part of employment land for non-employment purposes will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the part(s) of the site where non-employment development is proposed are:

- a) No longer suitable for employment use bearing in mind their physical characteristics, access arrangements and/or relationship to neighbouring land-uses and there is evidence of unsuccessful active and substantial marketing of the site for employment use using a variety of media which supports this; or
- b) It would not be financially viable to re-use or re-develop the land or buildings on the land in whole or in part for employment purposes; or
- c) The non-employment development proposed would be used for purposes which are clearly ancillary to and will support the operations of a primary employment use on the land; or
- d) The non-employment development would generate significant employment gains which are of sufficient weight to justify the loss of employment land.

This application is sought on the basis of part (d), that the non-employment development would generate significant employment gains, which are of sufficient weight to justify the loss of employment land.

Regarding employment generation, the proposed use would support two FTE posts, in addition to the part-time employment of several free lance trainers/consultants, which the applicants have confirmed would equate to four FTE posts. Currently, it is understood that the existing business employs 1 FTE person, which is at the lowest end of the capacity of the site. Employment gains are not solely restricted to the

number of employees, but can also take account of ongoing employment generation, such as a training school for a vocational course, which would generate skilled employees as well provide employment for trainers.

The CWLEP in their representation express their support for the proposal stating that it will lead to a net gain in local employment opportunities noting that existing jobs currently based at the site are to be relocated and this will produce a range of new jobs at the fitness centre. The Policy does not define 'significant employment gains', but applying the ordinary meaning of 'significant' and taking account of other examples where the loss of employment uses have been accepted in the city, an increase from 1 to 4 FTE posts would fail to satisfy this, particularly as the site offers capacity for increased employment provision than that currently provided.

Whilst the health and well-being benefits of the use are not disputed, these benefits would not generate significant employment gains to satisfy this specific policy requirement. The application therefore fails to satisfy part 1 of the policy JE3. Turning to the second part of the policy, there is the following requirement:

In addition to at least one of the above criteria being satisfied, part 2 of policy JE3 requires that it must be demonstrated that:

- a) The potential of the site to contribute to the employment land requirements of the city over the plan period is not significant; and
- b) The proposal would not significantly compromise the viability or deliverability of other adjacent employment land or land allocated in this Plan for employment development; and
- c) The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing operation of any nearby existing businesses.

Whilst it may be concluded that the change of use would not conflict with parts b and c, the existing unit does contribute to the employment land provision. The loss of this unit, on the Kingfield Industrial Estate would harm the ability of the area to meet the wider employment needs of the city, contrary to part a. Whilst such individual losses may not be significant, incrementally such losses could have a significant impact on the employment needs of the city being met. Therefore, it is important to ensure that existing non-allocated employment sites are also retained for employment use wherever possible.

Over the past twelve months (March 2020 – March 2021) Coventry City Council's Economic Development Service has received 27 enquiries from clients seeking industrial premises measuring 2800-3200 sq ft; and during the same period has received 39 enquiries from clients seeking 2000-3200 sq ft. This is an indication that there is an interest in this size of industrial unit. Due to the nature of a B2 use, which can cause environmental conflict if located outside of allocated or established employment sites such as Kingfield Road industrial estate, the retention of existing B2 premises on established estates is vital to meet demand.

Recent changes to the Use Classes order are of relevance. As from 1st September 2020, changes to the use classes order were introduced, which included the creation of a new use class E (Commercial, Business and Service), which brings together a wide range of uses that previously fell within other classes, under one larger class. Of relevance to this case is that Use Class B1 (Light industrial) and Use Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) now fall within this new use Class E. The changes maintain

Use Class B2, which this proposal seeks to remove. Therefore, Policy JE3 remains fully applicable and carries full weight.

Whilst it is accepted that a change of use from B2 (general industrial) to B1(c) (light industrial) could take place without the need for planning permission, and that until 31 July 2021 a further change of use to a fitness club would be permitted development, this is not the proposal under consideration. The current use as a car repair business and paint spraying is not such that it would fall within Use Class B1, as it would unlikely be a use that can be carried on in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

This proposal has been sought on the basis of generating a 'significant employment gain', an increase from 1 to 4 FTE jobs if the business grows in accordance with expectations. A unit of this size has greater employment capacity than is currently provided, dependent of course on the occupant, and is of a size for which there is evidence of a demand within the city. It is therefore not accepted that the proposal would satisfy part (d) of policy JE3. No other evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposals accord with parts 1a, 1b or 1c of Policy JE3, and it has not been evidenced that the proposal would satisfy all the exceptions criteria of policy JE3, part 2. Both parts of the policy are required to be met. Therefore, the loss of the B2 floorspace on an established industrial estate is not supported.

Highway and access considerations

Policy AC1 'Accessible Transport Network' states that development proposals which are expected to generate additional trips on the transport network should: a) Integrate with existing transport networks including roads, public transport and walking and cycling routes to promote access by a choice of transport modes. b) Consider the transport and accessibility needs of everyone living, working or visiting the city. c) Support the delivery of new and improved high-quality local transport networks which are closely integrated into the built form. d) Actively support the provision and integration of emerging and future intelligent mobility infrastructure.

Policy AC3 of the Local Plan acknowledges that the provision of car parking can influence occurrences of inappropriate on-street parking which can block access routes for emergency, refuse and delivery vehicles, block footways preventing access for pedestrians, reduce visibility at junctions and impact negatively on the street scene.

Proposals for the provision of car parking associated with new development is assessed on the basis of parking standards set out in Appendix 5. The car parking standards also include requirements for the provision of electric car charging and cycle parking infrastructure. The standards require 1 space per 15 sq m floorspace public area for gyms and fitness centres, which based on 216 sq m public area would equate to 14 car parking spaces. The original plans submitted showed 6 spaces, with reference in the Planning Statement to additional spaces outside of the adjacent units available for use outside of normal working hours.

Initial concerns were raised by Highways as it was considered that the transport impacts of the proposed change of use had not been demonstrated. Further to a meeting with the applicant and agent, an amended site location plan and site plan showing an adequate level of parking for the use was received. Six spaces would be provided directly outside the site and an additional 13 spaces would also be available fronting the adjoining units, outside of their hours of business. On this basis no objection is raised by Highways subject to a condition requiring parking and turning areas to be clearly marked out on site.

Policy AC4 requires that development proposals should incorporate safe and convenient access to the walking and cycling routes that should be proportionate to the scale, use and location of the site.

As discussed above, the site is considered to be in a sustainable location being served by public transport within a 500m walking distance as well as being accessible by foot and bicycle. Provision can be made for bicycle storage within the site. However, due to the location of the site in the far corner of this part of the estate, unlike the nearby former Bablake Wines premises recently granted planning permission, there does not appear to be an opportunity for safe pedestrian and cycle access to be provided. The marking out of spaces on this part of the site would improve accessibility within the site. However, improvements would not extend to the units opposite and there would remain the potential for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists during the operational hours of other units.

The proposal would satisfy the requirements of policy AC3 and appendix 5, and Coventry Connected SPD and sustainable transport objectives of the NPPF, to provide adequate and improved parking. However, the lack of safe pedestrian access would be contrary to Policy AC4 and CO1 part 2.

Health and Wellbeing

There is no doubt that the proposal will allow the club to continue to deliver health and wellbeing benefits and provide new opportunities in enhancing the health and fitness of the city's communities. As the representations attest, Fit365 is an established business that has maintained its classes via online platforms through lockdown restrictions helping many members with physical and mental wellbeing.

The use would be compatible with the objectives of the Coventry Health and Wellbeing Strategy plan 2019 – 2023, policy HW1 of the Local Plan and part 8 of the NPPF that promotes healthy and safe communities, and such benefits have some weight in the consideration of this specific use which requires a premises offering open plan space, for a well-established club, and for which it has been evidenced is not available with an existing centre or edge of centre location.

However, the health and wellbeing benefits do not outweigh the need to ensure that suitable employment space (Use Class B2) on established industrial estates is retained for such use, particularly where there is evidence of a demand for such units. With the introduction of the new Use Class E, the retention of such units for industrial use has become more acute, increasing the need to retain B2 employment use on the site which in this case outweighs the health and wellbeing benefits.

Other matters

Air quality

With the city being declared an Air Quality Management Area since 2009 for nitrogen dioxide, primarily as a result of traffic related emissions, and the more recent Ministerial Direction that requires the city council to implement a package of measures to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions to legal levels within the 'shortest possible time', policy (AC1) and Coventry Connected SPD requires the infrastructure for electric vehicles to be installed through planning condition; in this case one space per 10 parking spaces. The policies reflect paragraph 181 of the NPPF.

Had the proposal been acceptable, it would be necessary to impose a pre-commencement condition requiring electric vehicle charging points to be provided, (at ratio of 10% of spaces) such that the proposal accords with Policies AC1 and EM7 of

the Local Plan, Coventry Connected SPD, Air Quality SPD and the objectives of the NPPF.

Residential amenity

The site is surrounded by other employment uses, with the railway line to the west, and the nearest residential properties the opposite side of the Kingfield Road. The hours of use proposed are typically later than those on the industrial estate. The Environmental Protection team have requested a condition restricting the fitting of amplification equipment and the playing of any amplified music or voice, and operating hours to reflect those stated in the application. No external plant is proposed. These conditions would satisfy the conditions tests and would be put forward, had the proposal been acceptable, such that the proposal would not give rise to any harm to residential amenity in accordance with policy DE1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

Streetscene and visual amenity

Policy DE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure high quality design and development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. Part 12 of the NPPF highlights the need to secure high-quality development.

There are no external changes to the building, such that there would be no change to the street scene, which in this case is limited to the confines of the industrial estate screened from Kingfield Road by other industrial buildings. The proposal would accord with policy DE1.

Flood Risk

No matters arise in respect of flood risk.

Contaminated land

No matters arise in relation to contaminated land due there being no groundworks.

Ecology

No matters arise in respect of ecology and biodiversity.

Equality Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- a) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- b) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

Conclusion

On balance, whilst the proposal would deliver health and wellbeing benefits that weigh in favour of the proposal, they would not outweigh the harm that would arise as a result of the loss of B2 floorspace on an established industrial estate, the retention of which has become more acute since the introduction of Use Class E. The increase in employment provision from 1 FTE to 4FTE is not considered to amount to a 'significant employment gain' such that it would satisfy the exceptions in policy JE3, particularly when there is evidence of a demand for this size of unit which is of a size that could potentially accommodate a larger workforce, of a B2 (general industrial) nature. Further, whilst the use would satisfy part 1 of the sequential approach in policy CO1, and no alternative suitable sites have been identified within or at the edge of an existing centre, the proposal would fail to satisfy policies JE1, CO1 (part 2) and AC4, being incompatible with other uses on the industrial estate due to the lack of safe pedestrian access.

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

The proposal is therefore unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The proposed use would be contrary to policies JE1 and JE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016, by reason of its failing to satisfy one of the specified exceptions criteria that safeguards existing employment sites and premises from being lost to non-employment uses. The basis on which this change of use is sought, namely the proposed increase in the provision of equivalent full-time jobs from one to four, is not considered to represent 'significant employment gains' required by policy JE3, part 1, (d), on an established industrial estate, where there is a demand for this size of unit. No other evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would satisfy any other of the exceptions. The loss of B2 floorspace would also harm the ability of the Kingfield industrial estate to meet the wider employment needs of the city, contrary to part 2 of policy JE3. The harm arising is not outweighed by the health and wellbeing benefits in this case such that the principle of the change of use is unacceptable in this location.
2. The use would fail to satisfy policies CO1 (part 2) and AC4, and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework to deliver safe and accessible developments. The proposed fitness centre would be incompatible with other uses on the industrial estate due to the lack of safe access for members arriving by modes of transport other than the private car. Notwithstanding the provision of marked parking bays and the shared parking provision which will result in improvements to the parking on this part of the estate, the introduction of the fitness centre would give rise to the potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists accessing the site, particularly during the hours when adjacent businesses are operational, thereby detrimental to the safety of those arriving on foot or by bicycle.

