

PLANNING STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE OF COMMERCIAL UNIT (CURRENTLY VACANT) FOR D2 COMPRISING OF A GYMNASIUM

EASTLEIGH FITNESS CENTRE, 37 PARK PARADE, HAVANT, PO9 5AA

1. Background

- 1.01 37 Park Parade comprises of 5 small commercial properties and a large storage area at the back that has access from the back via Tidworth Road. The storage area will be split as shown in the attached plans to keep some storage and rest will be used by the gymnasium.
- 1.02 There are many other vacant properties in the area itself, and effective employment generation uses should be encouraged.
- 1.03 The proposed planning application seeks to introduce a D2 use into part of the building comprising of a gymnasium.
- 1.04 The gymnasium will be accessed from Tidworth Road.
- 1.05 The applicant Mr Craig Linton currently operates a sports nutrition company from offices in Portsmouth & Crawley, and has a very detailed knowledge of the fitness market.
- 1.06 The gymnasium/fitness centre will also be equipped with the highest quality equipment providing facilities for both male and female customers.

2. Market

- 2.01 The local residents will be the main target group for the new facility; the applicant has close links with various personal trainers (fitness instructors) and bodybuilders in the area who have all stated that they would be a high demand for a gym in the area.
- 2.02 The targeted age group would mainly be 18 to 55 years old, with younger members being allowed admittance with supervision.

3. Employment

- 3.01 In the first year it is proposed to employ 4 full time members of staff with an additional 1 or 2 part time. In the second year there could be a rise in employment to possibly include a personal trainer and receptionist.

4. Times of Opening

- 4.01 Hours of opening will be between 6am – 10 pm Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm Saturday and 9am – 4pm Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 4.02 Monday to Friday the predicted use would be, 8am to 4pm would attract between 20 – 35 members and 4pm to 10pm attracting 35 – 50 members per day.
- 4.03 Saturday & Sunday would attract 10 – 25 members per day.

5. Membership & Fees

- 5.01 The membership fee will be a maximum of £20 a month, thus allowing people who are currently unemployed or working part time to be able to afford to join.
- 5.02 There will be no contracts but there will be a discounted rate for those who choose to pay by direct debit.
- 5.03 The applicant is proposing to give 5 free monthly memberships for members that have been referred by a local doctor.
- 5.04 Personal trainers will also be using the gym by bringing their individual clients to use the facilities throughout the day, which will also increase employment.

6. Potential Number of Member

- 6.01 The applicant has estimated that in the first year of operation to have 150 to 200 members, increasing in the second year to 250, with a continual increase.

7. Disabled Access

- 7.01 There will be disabled access from the front door; there are plenty of disabled parking in the surrounding streets and at Tidworth Road car park which has 5 disabled places opposite the entrance of the gym.

8. Parking, Cycling & Travel

- 8.01 There is parking available at Tidworth Road car park which is operated by the council and has around 100 spaces.
- 8.02 Havant Rail Way station and local bus routes are also a short walk or cycle away from the gym

9. Planning Policy Considerations

- 9.01 Policy CS2 (Employment) of the Havant Borough Core Strategy March 2011, states that:

“Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- 1. Prioritise the use of previously developed land for the provision of new employment floor space.*
- 2. Favour town centre locations for the provision of B1a offices and other town centre uses*
- 6. Provide jobs, generate wealth or produce an economic output on existing employment sites that are not fit for current purpose.”*

Policy CS4 (Town, District and Local Centres) states:

- 1. Promote and enhance the following hierarchy of identified centres ... Leigh Park*
- 2. Enhance the evening economy of the town and district centres.*
- 3. Retain and enhance local markets.*
- 4. Support small and independent businesses.*
- 5. Encourage high quality, mixed-use development in designated centres that retain active ground floor frontages.*

- 9.02 The conversion of storage space into a gymnasium will provide employment for land that previously did not have any employees. The land is also located in the town centre and will provide jobs and encourage others to visit the town centre who would not normally do so and thus increase foot fall in the town and increase spending
- 9.03 As stated above the proposed business will employ in its first year 4 full time workers and 1 or 2 part time, with an anticipated 2 further jobs being provided in the second year. With the addition of self employed personal trainers using the gym with their clients. This level of employment is very significant and accords with the policy where it will create appropriate employment.
- 9.04 The gymnasium will enhance the evening economy by being open later in the evening, it will encourage people to visit the local shops before visiting the gym.
- 9.05 The applicant is also keen to source materials needed for the building work and continued running of the business from local shops and suppliers thus supporting the small and independent businesses.
- 9.06 The gymnasium will be fitted to a high standard with the latest and top of the range fitness equipment.
- 9.07 The proposal therefore accords with the policy criteria's set out by Havant Borough Core Strategy March 2011.