

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/26/100902

Site Address: DISCOVERY HOUSE, CHANDLERS FORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
BRICKFIELD LANE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 4DP

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Change of Use from Use Class B2 (General Industrial) to Use Class E(d)
(gym)

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Within the Urban Edge Designated Employment Site Within Flood Zone 1		

Relevant Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Z/11008/001 – Change of use of part of premises from light industrial/showroom/offices to timber store and priming shop – PERMIT (12/06/1981) Z/11976/004 – Extensions, Class III Industrial Use, revision to accesses and car/lorry spaces – PERMIT (04/03/1983) Z/11008/002 – Change of use to general industry (B2) – PERMIT (08/06/1994) Z/12865/008 – Construction of link between buildings and alterations to front elevation – PERMIT (01/05/1997)		

Site Visit?	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was undertaken by the Case Officer to consider the proposals in context.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:			
None received.			
Consultation Responses (Summarised):			
Environmental Health	I reviewed the Design and Access Statement from RS Studio version 0 dated February 2026 and find it acceptable. The unit is located within an industrial area approximately 100m west to the closest residential receptor and therefore low risk. The operating hours are proposed to be 24-hour, 7-days a week, due to the site location I find this acceptable. My only concern is regarding the following “The proposal of a training gym is not expected to add to the external noise levels. Most gyms include some form of equipment sound, music and conversation, but the noise levels will not be above what would be desirable for those in attendance – so external outputs would be limited as well.” – I am not against the use of music inside the gym but due to the proposed 24h operation I would request the music to be operating at a lower level during night hours to mitigate potential noise nuisance and that no external music is		

	operating at any time. A condition is recommended in this respect.
Chandlers Ford Parish Council	No comment. The application was duly considered.
HCC Highways	<u>Recommendation:</u> Given the information provided by the applicant, in terms of comparable gym user numbers and potential on-road parking numbers, there would be no objection to the proposals from a highway perspective, subject to a condition to require car and bicycle parking to be provided in accordance with the approved plans prior to the facility being brought into use. <u>Comments:</u> The applicant has submitted comparable gym data, noting that the Hedge End gym is actually bigger in size, and so would realistically be anticipated to accommodate more users at any one time than the proposed gym in Chandler's Ford. As such, the data collected would be considered worst case and robust (in a snapshot), and is quoted as having a peak period between the hours of 5am to 6am, where a total of 17 users were recorded. At this time, it would be anticipated that there would be adequate parking available via a combination of on-site parking and roadside parking on Brickfield Lane, and this has been confirmed via parking surveys which indicate that at 7am on a typical day (Wednesday 15 April 2026), there were 20 available parking spaces located on Brickfield Lane. Whilst this survey time was after the gym peak, it would not be anticipated that there would have been more vehicles parked on Brickfield Lane earlier than 7am. However, it is noted that user numbers during the peak working periods of 0900 to 1700, no parking survey data has been provided, though the gym user surveys have shown an anticipated maximum of 12 users during the peak hours of 1500 to 1700. If this number were to be utilising the proposed Chandler's Ford gym, plus staff at a reasonable estimate of 4 at this time, that would require up to 16 parking spaces, and as outlined in the application, only 8 are provided on site, resulting in a potential shortfall of 8 parking spaces. What should however be acknowledged is that it would be anticipated that a certain level of users would come from a reasonable walking distance, be this the surrounding industrial estate, or even the surrounding residential areas. Additionally, some users would likely cycle or utilise public transport to get to the proposed gym. Given this, it would be reasonable to assume that a certain level of users would not require a vehicle parking space, and site surveys from the Hedge End gym suggest that this figure would be in the region of 73.2% (see figure 3 of the 'Hedge End Gym

	Trip Comparison' document – counting both single and shared car journeys as a worst case). If this were to be replicated at the Chandler's Ford gym, this would reduce the overall on-site parking shortfall, requiring a parking space on the highway to 3 vehicle parking spaces (rounded up). As outlined above, no parking survey data has been submitted for this period, against which an assessment of parking capacity can be undertaken, and onwards it is understood that there are existing regular reports of overspill parking in the vicinity, most notably by residents of Keble Road to the east of the site. Indeed, a site visit during this period has indicated that parking capacity appears to have been largely reached. Whilst such overspill parking obviously has an effect on local residents through loss of parking amenity, and should be fully discouraged, from a highway perspective there are restrictions in place through double and single yellow lines, which prevent obstructive and dangerous parking. It is noted that this is well adhered to. As such, the shortfall of 3 vehicle parking spaces in an area where a potential 81 roadside parking spaces have been identified, along with the potential to park in Chandler's Ford rail station (a short walk away) which also appears to have spare capacity, would not warrant a justified objection to proposed parking levels from a highway safety perspective. However, as outlined above, there is an unknown potential to impact on the amenity of local residents if gym parking were to overspill into residential areas, and it would be recommended that the case officer considers this in the overall assessment of the application proposals, along with the conformity to the EBC Parking Standards.
Planning Policy	No comments received.

Relevant Policy and Legislation:

Legislative Background:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan:

The Development Plan comprises of the Policies of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036. The following policies are of relevance to the application: S1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), S2 (Approach to New Development), S4 (Employment Provision), DM1 (General Criteria for New Development), DM2 (Environmentally Sustainable Development), DM3 (Adaption to Climate Change), DM8 (Pollution), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (General Development Criteria – Transport), DM14 (Parking), DM15 (Safeguarding Existing Employment Sites), DM34 (New and Enhanced Recreation and Open Space Facilities).

Other material considerations:Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

The following SPDs and Background Papers are of relevance to the proposals:

- Parking Standards

National Planning Policy and Guidance:

The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF or Framework) was published in December 2024 and, as set out within paragraph 231, the policies contained within it are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides additional guidance in support of the policies within the Framework and is also a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Assessment:Principle of development:

The application site lies within the urban edge and forms part of an established employment site within the Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy S2 sets a target of 103,500sqm of new employment development within the Borough across the Plan period (2016-2036), with Policy S4 setting out the strategy for how this will be sought to be achieved. This strategy includes retaining existing (and allocated) employment sites which have the potential to contribute towards future employment needs, and intensifying their use in accordance with the provisions of Policy DM15.

The application proposes the change of use of the unit from a B2 use (general industry) to a gym, which falls within use class E(d). A gym is not a traditional employment use as defined by Policy DM15 (which covers B2, B8 and E(g)(ii)/(iii) uses) and, as such, the proposals will lead to a loss of employment floorspace within the Borough. Policy DM15 does, however, state that the major existing employment sites as identified on the policies map (as in this instance) shall be retained 'predominantly' in such uses and it does, exceptionally, allow for alternative employment generating uses subject to specified criteria being met. These criteria are that the proposals would not have a significant impact on the continued primary use of the site and that the existing site is causing, or could cause, significant harm to highway safety or to the amenities of the area or to local residents.

The application unit is of a relatively modest size and, therefore, its change to an E(d) use in the form of a gym would not have a significant impact on the continued primary use of the Chandlers Ford Industrial Estate which would remain in a mixture of predominantly B2, B8 and E(g)(ii)/(iii) uses. The existing site / use of the unit, however, is not causing nor would it be anticipated to cause significant harm to amenity or highway safety based on its location and current authorised use. Accordingly, the second of the aforementioned criteria would not be satisfied. For the proposed change of use to be acceptable, therefore, there would have to be other material considerations that weigh in its favour which are sufficient to overcome this conflict with the development plan.

In this respect, the unit is presently vacant and is understood to have been empty since November 2024. The information provided in support of the application by the commercial agent explains that the unit has been marketed for let since February 2025 and whilst

some interest has been received from industrial uses, these have not proceeded due to the constrained nature of the accommodation, including the low haunch height which makes it less suitable for modern industrial / storage operations. The marketing that has been undertaken is considered sufficient to demonstrate limited interest in the space for traditional employment uses, with the exercise carried out having incorporated appropriate methods (signage boards, web listings on national property sites, marketing particulars being sent out to agents, etc.) and having been for a reasonable period (a minimum of 12 months).

The proposals would see this space brought back into a form of active use and still create some employment opportunities which would be economic benefits of the development. In addition, the scheme would provide for a new leisure / sports facility within a relatively sustainable location whereby users would be able to access it by means other than solely the private car. In these respects, the proposals would accord with the provisions of Policy DM34 of the Local Plan which relates specifically to the provision of new recreation facilities in the Borough.

Taking account of these factors and whilst acknowledging that there would be some conflict with the provisions of certain elements of Local Plan policy, on balance and on the basis of the specific circumstances of the case, it is not considered that such conflict would be sufficient to justify the refusal of planning permission. Accordingly, the principal of the development is accepted in this instance. Any subsequent planning approval is, however, subject to the proposals being considered to be appropriate in other respects, which includes in terms of their layout and design, as well as with regards to highway and amenity related considerations. These matters and those others of material relevance to the application are covered below.

Design, layout and impact on the character of the area:

The proposals include no changes to the exterior of the premises and, as such, it is not anticipated that the development will have any notable material impact upon the character of the area in respect of the visual appearance of the site or the Brickfield Lane street scene. There is therefore no conflict with the provisions of Policy DM1 of the Local Plan in these respects.

Residential amenity (including noise):

The proposals, due to their siting relative to the nearest dwellings which lie a reasonable distance from the site to the east (along Bournemouth Road and within Keble Close) and with other industrial / commercial development in-between, will not impact unduly upon residential amenity. As noted above, no exterior changes are proposed to the building and, as such, the levels of light, outlook and privacy available to these properties will remain unaffected.

The gym is proposing to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Given the aforementioned separation, however, as well as the modest scale of the operation, it is not envisaged that this will create undue levels of disturbance and no objection has been raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer in this respect. The condition recommended in relation to the playing of music (to prohibit music being played externally and any music played (i.e. internally) being audible outside of the premises) will be imposed accordingly.

In terms of the construction phase, as there are no external works proposed and the internal fit-out work will be relatively limited (the Design and Access Statement explains that this will largely encompass upgrades to provide showers and the laying out of gym equipment (which will not be fixed but moveable)), it is not deemed to be necessary to require a construction management plan or to restrict hours of working in the interests of amenity.

Taking account of these considerations, the application complies with Policies DM1 and DM8 of the Local Plan in respect of the matters of residential amenity and noise.

Highway matters:

Vehicular access to the premises is currently provided via a single entrance point from Brickfield Lane. This is to remain as existing and is considered to be suitable for the development, with it being of an adequate width and having an appropriate level of visibility. It is also not envisaged that the proposed use would, when considered relative to the existing, result in a notable increase in multi-modal trips and, as such, it would not materially impact on the highway network in this respect.

Turning to the matter of parking provision, the Highway Authority raised some initial reservations based on the number of parking spaces proposed on site (a total of 11) when considered in the context of the Council's adopted standards, as well as relative to the potential number of staff and users of the gym that could be on site during peak periods as outlined within the application. Accordingly, at the request of the Highway Authority, the applicant has provided data on the number of users across an average day for their other facility in Hedge End, as well as a Lambeth style parking test to assess the capacity of the surrounding roads to accommodate any overspill parking that may occur.

The information provided has been considered by the Highway Authority who, whilst highlighting existing parking pressures which have been raised in the past by residents of surrounding roads, have raised no objection to the application on the basis of the on-street parking capacity identified as being available and that the level of overspill from the site will likely be limited. It is also noted that the site is relatively sustainably located and a proportion of users and staff will likely therefore access the facility by modes of travel other than the private motor car, which will reduce the level of parking demand. Cycle parking is also proposed to be provided on site.

Taking account of the range of matters raised and whilst noting and acknowledging the existing parking pressures in the local area and that it would be preferable for the development to fully cater for its parking requirements on site, very much on balance and in the absence of a formal objection from the Highway Authority, it is not considered that it could be justifiably argued that any resulting impacts on highway safety, either in themselves or cumulatively, would be severe when having regard to the test in this regard which is set out within paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

Accordingly, the level of parking provision is accepted and there is deemed to be no undue conflict with Policies DM13 and DM14 of the Local Plan in respect of the highway related impacts of the proposals.

Ecology:

The proposals would be subject to the *de minimus* exemption in respect of the mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements. As the proposals constitute a change of use with no external works to be undertaken (save for the provision of cycle parking), the development will impact less than 25sqm of on-site habitat and not impact any priority habitat. Having regard to the nature of the development and the location of the application site, there are no other ecological concerns including in respect of the impacts of the proposals on European protected sites and, as such, the application complies with the provisions of Policy DM11 of the Local Plan.

Climate change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the

Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted Local Plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF supports economic growth and productivity with the aim of building a strong competitive economy, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 103,500sqm of new employment development to be provided within the borough over the plan period as noted earlier in this report. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and the Council's adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. Taking account of the nature of the proposals and the site context, the development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and to have limited material impact on climate emissions, when considered relative to the existing use of the premises.

Equalities implications:

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

- 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;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equalities implications.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, whilst acknowledging the reservations expressed by the Highway Authority in respect of parking provision and that there would also be a degree of conflict with the requirements of Policy DM15 of the Local Plan in terms of its criteria pertaining to non-B2, B8 and E(g)(ii)(iii) employment uses, there are considered to be material considerations in favour of the proposals which justify and outweigh the conflict with the development plan.

Notably, the application unit is presently vacant and a marketing exercise has demonstrated that there is limited demand for its occupation for its approved purpose or other traditional employment uses. The proposals would see this unit brought back into a form of active use, which would also create employment opportunities and provide for a leisure / recreational facility in a relatively sustainable

	location. On the particular facts of the case, therefore, the proposals are considered to be acceptable and it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.
Recommendation:	PERMIT subject to conditions