

**Application Number: FUL/2019/0454**

**Suites 1- 4 and 7 & 8 Rowan House Westwood Way**

**Change of use of the part ground floor (units 1, 2, 3, 4) and part first floor (unit 7 & 8) from offices (Use Class B1) to Training Centre (Use Class D1)**

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| <b>WITHIN GREEN BELT?</b>        | <b>No</b> |
| <b>VISIBLE FROM GREEN BELT?</b>  | <b>No</b> |
| <b>WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA?</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>LISTED BUILDING?</b>          | <b>No</b> |

**POLICY GUIDANCE**

The Coventry Local Plan 2016 to 2031 has been adopted on 05/12/2017. Policies that are relevant include: **AC2/AC3/DE1/JE1/JE3**

**ADDRESS AND DATE OF NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION**

Adjoining neighbouring properties were notified on 13 March 2019 and a site notice was displayed on 13 March 2019; No responses have been received.

**RELEVANT HISTORY**

None

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Highways – No objection

Environmental Protection – No objection

Policy – No objection following receipt of additional information

**ISSUES**

The site is located within an employment area, where the loss of employment land must be justified against Policy JE3 of the Coventry Local Plan (CLP) 2016 for the proposed change of use of the part of the building (with lawful use B1) to a training centre (within use class D1). The planning application seeks permission to use part of the application building (identified in the description) into a training centre known as 'Trade Skills 4U' specifically to generate qualified electrician for trades and businesses.

The main issue is the principle of the development in terms of loss of employment in light with Policy JE3. Policy JE3 states 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.

2. In addition to at least one of the above criteria being satisfied it will also need to 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.

In this case, the applicant/agent has provided sufficient information to demonstrate that despite substantial efforts being made for marketing the site for employment use, the part of the building (units identified in the application description) still remains vacant. Nevertheless, the supporting statements indicate that the proposal would involve 12 full time employees in addition to the purpose of the training centre which is creation of skilled electrical and renewable energy technicians. I am of the opinion that the proposal would have significant impact in terms of job creation and subsequently support the operations of a primary employment use.

In addition to that it is considered that the use of the part of the building would not significantly compromise the viability or deliverability of other adjacent employment land or land allocated in this Plan for employment development; and would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing operation of any nearby existing businesses. Therefore, it is considered the proposal would not be contrary to the Policy JE3 and would be acceptable.

The proposed training centre falls within a D1 use class (under use classes order) which includes clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court; non-residential education and training centres, (list not exhaustive). In general, the uses under D1 use class are not related to job and employment uses and without adequate justification the loss of employment site would not be acceptable; however, in this instance, in addition to vacant units within the building for a long time, the proposal is directly connected to job creation as well as employ number of people in the operation of the proposed training centre. It is considered that the other use within use class D1 could compromise the viability or deliverability of other adjacent employment land and could have unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing operation of any nearby existing businesses. It is therefore considered reasonable to impose a condition which restricts the use of the units identified in the application documentation to training and learning facilities (Use Class D1) for use by the 'Trade Skills 4U' only for delivering their training purposes and for no other purpose.

The existing site has dedicated onsite parking spaces and there are no changes in the vehicular access and no-site parking arrangement. It is considered that the proposed change of use would unlikely to have any additional impact on free flow of traffic and current on-site parking provisions. The Highways Authority has raise no concern in this regard.

## **CONCLUSION**

In view of the evidence supplied within regards to the creation of skilled personnel for wider employment, it is considered that the change of use accords with development plan policies and therefore the application is recommended for approval subject to condition restricting the use to specific training centre only.