

1.4 There is a significant lack of this type of fitness centre in this part of Port Talbot and uses such as this require large spaces and parking areas to accommodate the client base.

- 1.5 Fitness Zoo currently operates 9 venues throughout South Wales, with a further 3 opening in the next 12 months. The first venue originated at Northampton Lane, Swansea City Centre, however planning permission has recently been granted for a modern central venue in Cwmdau Industrial Estate.
- 1.6 Over the past 10 years, gyms have evolved from being predominately places where people use machines and lift weights to a predominately fitness class destination. The majority of our members visit before and after work and generally are in the gym for approximately a 1 hour period before heading to work or returning home. In reality the gym does not result in linked trips or spin off visits to other businesses.
- 1.7 From a highway safety and parking perspective, you will appreciate that the existing Taibach gym is not the most accessible location due to the fact it has no designated parking area. The lack of parking often leads to indiscriminate parking issues in and around the area and conflict with nearby residents.
- 1.8 In terms of residential amenity, the majority of classes involve early morning or late night activity which has created conflict with local residents by virtue of noise and disturbance at unsociable hours. There are major plans to regenerate this part of Neath Port Talbot and a gym would complement the surrounding employment uses.
- 1.9 The new premises will be our flag ship gym in Port Talbot and will give us the opportunity to expand and create new classes. We currently employ 20 members of staff and would seek to increase this to 30 staff. The new premises will enable us to provide the following facilities:
- Large free weight area.
 - Outdoor training area.
 - Larger space to accommodate schools, teams and other groups. With the adoption of the Health and Well Being Act in Wales we have been actively working with schools, community groups and sports clubs to promote healthy lifestyles and the importance of training.
 - Cafe area.
 - Funky pump area.
 - MMA and Judo area.
 - Improved shower and changing facilities.
 - Over 40's classes.
 - Specialist children classes, disabled classes, women only and ethnic minority training sessions.
- 1.10 The new facility will enable us to consolidate and expand our business. We will create additional employment opportunities and enable us to engage more with local community groups and local sports teams.

1.11 The Taibach site doesn't have the physical size or ceiling heights to accommodate a modern fitness gym which causes problems offering certain classes. We currently cannot expand the classes we offer as we have no external areas for classes which our Guerilla Fitness Classes rely upon. We currently operate Guerilla Fitness in the Taibach area which has resulted in conflict with residents by virtue of noise and disturbance at unsociable hours. The Taibach site is too small to accommodate our growing classes and this is seriously affecting our growth and our ability to expand and offer additional classes and facilities.

1.12 The proposal will result in the relocation of our Funky Pump and Guerilla Fitness classes to Llewellyn Quay, however we would still look to retain a presence in Taibach in the short term to accommodate our weight lifting element of the business and to offer some smaller classes.

2.0 Policy Context

2.1 The Council recently adopted the NPT Local Development Plan in February 2019. The site is identified as forming part of an existing employment site under the provisions of the adopted plan.



2.2 The policies relevant to the consideration of this application are:

Policy EC2—Existing Employment Sites

Existing Employment Areas In order to protect the employment function of the County Borough's employment areas, uses on the following sites will be restricted in accordance with Policy EC3:

EC2-10—Llewellyn's Quay, Port Talbot

Policy EC 3 Employment Area Uses

Within allocated and existing employment areas, unless otherwise specified and where appropriate, uses will be restricted as follows:

- **Uses within classes B1, B2 and B8;**
- **Ancillary facilities or services which support and complement the wider role and function of the primary employment use;**
- **Commercial services unrelated to class B.**

Developments will be required to demonstrate that proposals do not cause any adverse impacts on the overall function of the employment area and neighbouring commercial and residential properties, the proposal can be sustainably justified in this location and is appropriate in scale and form to the role and function of the employment area.

3.3 The amplification of this policy states that in order to stimulate growth in the economy a wider mix of uses will be permitted on the allocated sites and the existing employment areas, however the amplification goes onto state that these uses are likely to be commercial services and complementary uses (other than uses best located in a retail centre). These will be permitted where they will have no adverse impact on the overall function of the estate and neighbouring commercial and residential properties.

3.4 The Policy states that acceptable uses may include activities such as:

- commercial vehicle repair
- maintenance facilities
- creché
- cafés

3.5 The Policy doesn't specifically identify support for a gym, however it is a use which would complement the adjacent industrial uses and Port Talbot Town Centre. The approval of this application will breathe a new lease of life into this run down area. Therefore the principle of this form of use is considered acceptable.

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 The main issues for consideration during the determination of this application relates to the principle of this form of use at this location and the resultant impact of the proposal upon visual amenity, residential amenity and highway safety having regard for the provisions of the NPT Local Development Plan and any relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance documents

5.0 Principle of Use

- 5.1 There are a number of Industrial units in Llewellyn Quay which are currently vacant and available for rent and have been vacant for a number of months. The proposed gym will attract customers from the locality and will help sustain 20 permanent and 5 part time jobs and create 5 full time and 8 part time new jobs. Llewellyn Quay is made up of a mixture of commercial units comprising builders merchants, industrial, and storage uses. As such the introduction of a gym will not have a detrimental impact on the functionality of the estate.
- 5.2 The existing business is currently located in Taibach with limited room to expand our business and offer a wider range of classes and facilities. The majority of our customers visit for an hour period and due to a lack of parking this has created parking issues for our customers which is beginning to effect the business. The new premises will enable us to consolidate and grow our business.
- 5.3 It is clear from Policy EC3 that the policy does not seek to restrict ancillary uses such as this which complement the industrial estate. The business will offer visitors and employees at the Industrial Estate a place to train and as such will complement its primary function and as such is felt to be within the spirit of the policy.
- 5.4 Our business has a strong brand and currently runs a number of facilities in the South Wales area. The approval of this application will help the business expand, provide additional employment opportunities but also provide the space in which to engage with wider community groups which we can't currently cater for at Taibach site.
- 5.5 As previously stated, we currently provide support and help for community groups such as NEAT and INSPIRE which seek to get young disadvantaged youngsters into training. The recent drive by Welsh Government to promote Health and Wellbeing is at the heart of what our business offers and the approval of this application will help promote healthy lifestyles in the Port Talbot area.
- 5.6 Employment sites need to be flexible so they can take into account how the market evolves. The fitness industry have seen an enormous surge in the past 10 years. The UK currently spends £5 billion a year on gym membership and whilst it is a growing industry it is also a highly competitive industry. The approval of this application will help ensure the long term viability of the business in Port Talbot and will create employment opportunities. The units will still be in employment use and therefore it is felt the principle of this form of use at this location is acceptable.

6.0 Demand for B1, B2 and B8 uses in Llewellyn Quay.

- 6.1 There are a number of vacant industrial units in Llewellyn Quay which would suggest there is an over demand for such units. A quick search on [zoopla.co.uk](https://www.zoopla.co.uk) indicates the following units are available for rent:



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From £25,000 pa
(£6.86/sq. ft. pa)

From 3,643 - 6,291 sq. ft*

[Industrial to let](#)

Llewellyn's Quay, Port Talbot SA13

Available immediately

Detached Workshop + Store Within Secure Fenced Site •
Workshop of 338 sq. M. (3,643 sq. Ft.) • Plus additional store +
'Portacabin' Office • On Site 0.41 ha. (1.01 ac.) • Prominently
Situated Close To Entrance To Estate • Dual Carriageway Access
to ...

Port Talbot Parkway (0.3 miles) Baglan (2.3 miles)

01656 376915 ** [Contact](#) [Save](#) [Hide](#)

DLP Surveyors, CF31



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£75,000 pa (£2.87/sq. ft. pa)

23,294 sq. ft*

[Industrial to let](#)

Llewellyn's Quay, Port Talbot SA13

Available immediately

Large Detached Workshop + Yard Workshop of 2,179 sq. M.
(23,294 sq. Ft.) Includes Gantry Crane Of 10t. On Site 0.63
ha. (1.6 ac.) Dual Carriageway Access to J.39 M4

Port Talbot Parkway (0.3 miles) Baglan (2.4 miles)

01656 376915 ** [Contact](#) [Save](#) [Hide](#)

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- 6.2 There are currently 3 units available for rent in Llewellyn Quay would suggest that there is not significant demand for industrial type units such as this in the area. A number of units have been on the market in excess of 6 months which would suggest demand is low.
- 6.3 There are limited options for other units to relocate the business. Gyms require very high ceilings to accommodate equipment and industrial type units are ideal for this sort of use. There are no suitable local centre, Town Centre or City Centre locations to accommodate the business and we have viewed a number of premises in the area.

7.0 Visual Amenity

- 7.1 In visual terms the proposal will result in no external alterations and as such will have no impact on the visual amenities of the street-scene or the wider industrial park.

8.0 Residential Amenity

- 8.1 Turning to residential amenity, the application site is located in an industrial estate, with no residential properties within close proximity. As such the proposed change of use, would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity.

9.0 Highway Safety

- 9.1 The application site has areas for parking around the building which would be available for customers. Furthermore, the proposed gym will operate from 6am to 10pm with the majority of customers attending before and after work which would not therefore compete with parking at the Industrial Estate.
- 9.2 As such, it is felt the proposal would have an acceptable impact on parking in the area.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 It is felt the proposed change of use would have a positive impact upon the Industrial Estate and would fill a vacant unit which would help the vitality and viability of the Industrial Estate.
- 10.2 Furthermore, the approval would help relocate the existing business and help ensure the flagship fitness venue remains in Port Talbot. The approval will ensure the existing jobs are retained and the business can grow to create new employment opportunities.
- 10.3 In addition to this, the relocation from Taibach to a larger premises will help expand the current offer and help provide more community based functions which will help promote healthy living. The fitness venue will help develop a close working relationship with local schools and community groups and expand our offer to include classes for ethnic minorities, vulnerable youngsters and over 40's. If Neath Port Talbot Council is genuinely seeking to promote the Health and Well Being Act, then the approval of this application will go some way to help this.
- 10.4 All of the other sites we looked at were considered to be unsuitable for the proposed development. As previously stated the existing gym at Taibach is insufficient for the continued growth and expansion of the existing business and has the following issues:
- Taibach gym is currently too small to accommodate the existing classes and simultaneously operate as a gym. Issues will arise from a health and safety perspective if we cannot relocate part of the business to a larger premises.
 - The size, scale and design of the existing building is not suitable for a modern day gym. The ceiling heights prohibit the type of classes which can operate from the building which is preventing expansion and further job creation.

- Lack of external space in and around the building is prohibiting the classes we can offer at Taibach.
- The nature of a modern gym dictates the majority of classes are early morning or after work which has resulted in conflict with local residents. The proposed relocation of classes to Llewellyn Quay which is not surrounded by residential properties will reduce conflict and noise and disturbance.
- There is currently no parking with the existing gym at Taibach which again has resulted in the conflict with neighbouring uses. The new location at Llewellyn Quay has ample off street parking surrounding the site which will rectify this existing issue.
- The business offers training opportunities for staff, however we do not have sufficient space for continued professional development. The new gym will provide sufficient accommodation to expand and develop this element of the business further.

10.5 Therefore, it is clear that the business has outgrown its Taibach site and the relocation of the bulk of fitness classes to Llewellyn Quay will help alleviate parking and residential amenity issues. The relocation will also help grow the business and provide additional employment opportunities for local residents. It is clear that there are no other suitable sites within Port Talbot and you are respectfully requested so support our proposal.