Deloitte LLP
100 Embankment, Cathedral
Approach, Manchester, M3 7FB

Phone: +44 (0)161 832 3555
www.deloitte.co.uk

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Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

FAO Jack Naven

Dear Jack

Union, T2, St Johns Manchester - Full Planning Application for Change of Use (Ground Floor and Level 2)

Please find enclosed a Full Planning Application for Union T2. The Applicant is Vita Living T2 Limited ("the Applicant"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Vita Group.

This proposal comprises of the change of use of the ground floor commercial unit to an ancillary residents' gym and laundry, alongside the reconfiguration of Level 2 to provide enhanced residential amenity alongside commercial co-working space.

Background

Planning permission reference 126648/FO/2020 was approved in November 2021 for:

"Full Planning Permission for the erection of 36 storey plus basement level mixed use building comprising co-living units, amenity space and flexible commercial space (Sui Generis), co-work (Use Class B1), landscaping, access and other associated works."

This planning permission was subsequently varied under Section 73 (Ref: 132952/JO/2022) to extend the ground floor commercial unit. Additionally, a Non-Material Amendment application (Ref: 138954/NMC/2024) was approved on 15 February 2024 to facilitate design changes at ground floor level.

Following completion of the building, Full Planning Permission (Ref: 144699/FO/2025) was granted on 23 January 2026 for the use of level 2 as a residents-only gym in place of Use Class B1 co-working space. This permission has not been implemented and is replaced by this application. It should be noted that the approved co-working accommodation on Level 2 was not approved as residential amenity space. Rather, it formed part of the commercial co-working offer associated with the original Union concept and was approved as co-working floorspace (Use Class B1, now falling within Use Class E). The space was intended to provide flexible workspace serving the wider Enterprise City concept and employment offer, rather than a communal resident facility. Additionally, the loss of the approved co-working floorspace was previously considered acceptable by Manchester City Council (MCC) under planning permission ref. 144699/FO/2025, which

approved the use of the Level 2 accommodation as a residents-only gym in place of the approved co-working use. The principle of removing the co-working accommodation has therefore already been established.

Following occupation of Union T2, the Applicant has gained a clear understanding of how the building operates in practice and the requirements of both residents and the building management team. Demand for the commercial workspace has not materialised and parts of the floor are currently underutilised. At the same time, the ground floor commercial unit has remained vacant while demand for enhanced resident amenity has become more clearly established, which are the key drivers for this application.

The revised internal layout proposed by this application therefore seeks to optimise the use of available floorspace within the building through the introduction of a residents' gym and laundry at ground floor level alongside a revised mix of uses on Level 2, including retained workspace, show apartment and enhanced resident amenity.

This application has been discussed in advance with the Local Planning Authority who have confirmed acceptance subject to all relevant material considerations and compliance with policy being demonstrated. The details are set out in this covering letter and supporting documentation submitted with the application.

The Site

The Site subject to this Application (the "Site") is 0.72 ha and relates to the ground floor and Level 2 and is located within the St. John's Masterplan, forming part of Enterprise City. It is bounded by Water Street to the east, Festival Square and Factory to the south, the Victoria and Albert Hotel located to the north, and the River Irwell to the west. Union T2 was occupied by residents in June 2025.

Proposed Development

The Description of Development is as follows:

"Full Planning Application for change of use of the ground floor from flexible commercial space (Use Class E / Sui Generis) to ancillary gymnasium and laundry room for the exclusive use of residents, and reconfiguration of Level 2 to provide residential amenity, marketing suite (Sui Generis) alongside retained workspace (Use Class E), and associated works."

The Proposed Development comprises two related changes to the internal layout and use of Union T2:

- **Ground floor:** the existing commercial unit would become an ancillary residents' gym and laundry facility.
- **Level 2:** the layout would be reconfigured to retain a portion of workspace, alongside residential amenity and a marketing suite.

The proposed reconfiguration seeks to optimise the use of this space whilst retaining an element of co-working accommodation. The proposed office space will be occupied by Vita Group staff relocating from their

existing office accommodation at Affinity Living, Salford, and will facilitate the day-to-day management and operation of Union T2. This will enable building management functions to be undertaken on-site and in closer proximity to residents.

The proposed marketing suite/show apartment will support the ongoing operation and letting of the building. Owing to the nature of the accommodation offer, including the minimum six-month tenancy model, Union T2 experiences a relatively high turnover of occupiers. The marketing suite will provide prospective residents with the opportunity to view and understand the accommodation offer, supporting efficient lettings, maintaining occupancy levels and ensuring the continued successful operation of the building.

The proposals therefore do not result in the loss of designated residential amenity space. Instead, they comprise the reconfiguration of previously approved commercial co-working floorspace (Use Class E), part of which is retained, to provide a mix of retained workspace, operational office accommodation, marketing facilities and enhanced residential amenity. The revised arrangement better reflects the operational requirements of the occupied building and makes more effective use of currently underutilised floorspace.

Together, these changes would make more efficient use of the available floorspace and better align the amenity offer with residents' day-to-day requirements.

Access

The gym's location at ground floor level will be for the use of Union residents only. Access will be controlled via key card entry and controlled access points. To maintain the required two-hour fire separation between the commercial unit and the residential tower, direct internal access between the commercial space and the residential tower is not permitted. Residents will therefore be required to access the gym externally using the former commercial unit entrance.

Acoustics and Privacy

The proposed gym will comprise a mix of equipment, including controlled free weights, studio space and cardio equipment, with the layout and specification designed to minimise noise and vibration. Free weights will be located within the northern section of the unit, positioned outside the main building footprint, thereby reducing potential impact on residential areas.

A Gym Noise Impact Assessment (*Doc Ref: T2-FAC-A180-RP-00-001 P01 - Gym Noise Impact Assessment*) has been prepared to assess both airborne and impact noise associated with the relocated facility. The assessment confirms that the proposed gym on the ground floor can operate without causing disturbance to residential receptors and will comply with relevant MCC guidance in respect of both internal noise transfer and external noise breakout.

The gym will be equipped with a sound system for background music, with internal noise levels controlled in accordance with the thresholds and mitigation measures set out within the noise assessment report. The

assessment defines maximum allowable internal noise levels within the gym to ensure compliance with both external noise criteria and internal noise transfer limits to residential receptors.

Noise levels will be controlled via the building's sound system, which is linked to a central control amplifier located within a secure, management-only access cabinet, with volume levels regulated through a controlled interface. This ensures that sound output can be limited to the approved levels at all times. The proposed location to the ground floor allows for 24-hour access to the gym due to the sensitivity of the location. The acoustic assessment considers both daytime and night-time operating scenarios and confirms that the gym can operate within acceptable noise limits during both periods, subject to validation of the proposed mitigation and management measures.

Privacy will be addressed through retained low-level screening facing the River Irwell. To the south of T2, the retained clear glazing and active internal use will continue to provide visual interest and contribute to an active frontage along the riverside.

The level 2 areas will also be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Waste Management

Waste generated by the relocated ground floor gym will be managed in accordance with the approved building-wide strategy, with waste transferred to the designated bin store and disposed of via the established collection arrangements.

Given the nature of the facility as a residents-only gym, waste generation is expected to remain minimal. This approach is consistent with the operational management arrangements set out within the Resident's Management Strategy. Waste requirements for the level 2 proposals have been accounted for in the approved waste management plan due to being consistent with the approved office use.

Flood Risk

The Site lies within Flood Zone 2 and was previously the subject of a detailed Flood Risk Assessment submitted in support of planning permission ref. 126648/FO/2020. The proposed development does not involve any alterations to the building footprint, floor levels, access arrangements or approved flood mitigation measures.

Email from the Flood Consultant (Doc ref: '*Email from Curtins dated 27.08.2026'*) confirms that the proposed ground floor gym remains classified as a 'less vulnerable' use in flood risk terms, consistent with the existing commercial/amenity use previously approved for the space. It also confirms that the key mitigation measures identified within the approved Flood Risk Assessment have been implemented, including the provision of a ground floor finished floor level of 26.900m AOD, flood protection measures to below-ground areas, approved drainage infrastructure and the implementation of a Flood Emergency Plan (Doc ref:

089521-CUR-XX-XX-T-C-92000, prepared by Curtins) for the building. The Flood Emergency Plan confirms that the current modelled 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood level is 24.780m AOD, whilst the 1 in 1000

year flood level is 26.140m AOD, both below the constructed ground floor level of 26.900m AOD. The report therefore concludes that the ground floor accommodation is at low risk of fluvial flooding and that the proposed use is compatible with the site's flood risk context.

Planning Policy and Material Considerations

The key Development Plan documents relevant to the Proposed Development are:

- The 2012 Manchester Core Strategy and the Addendum to the Manchester Core Strategy (2024);
- Saved Policies of the 2006 Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP); and,
- The Places for Everyone Plan (PfE) (2024).

Other material considerations associated with the Proposed Development are as follows:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (the "NPPF") (2026);
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs); and
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- St John's Strategic Regeneration Framework (2014 and 2016 update)
- Draft Manchester Local Plan (2025)

The relevant policies pertinent to this application are set out in detail below.

Planning Policy Assessment

Development Plan

Places for Everyone Policy JP-P7 requires new development to provide new and/or improved existing sport and recreation facilities commensurate with the demand they would generate. This supports Paragraph 111 of the NPPF which supports planning policies which support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for leisure.

Core Strategy Policy SP1 outlines that development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents.

Policy CC7 notes that the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development to promote using land as efficiently as possible.

Policy CC10 requires that proposed leisure uses which are part of residential amenity, should not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, traffic and disturbance.

Policy DM1 requires all development to have regard to residential amenity, including noise and vibration effects. They should also be designed for health of residents and have adequate amenity space.

Policy EN14 seeks to ensure that development is appropriately directed having regard to flood risk and that proposals are safe for their lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Elements of EN14 relating to flood risk and climate change have been partially superseded by Places for Everyone Policy JP-S4, however the remainder of the policy remains part of the adopted Development Plan.

Policy JP-S4 seeks to minimise flood risk and ensure that development is safe for its lifetime, taking account of climate change, whilst ensuring flood risk is not increased elsewhere. The policy requires development proposals to be supported by appropriate flood risk information, incorporate mitigation where necessary and demonstrate that any residual risk can be effectively managed.

The Proposed Development will enhance the residential offer at Union T2 by providing improved amenity. It also ensures the effective use of internal floorspace by bringing a currently vacant ground floor unit into use, whilst also improving the provision of amenity space at Level 2 and providing essential workspace for Vita staff. In doing so, it will support the ongoing vitality of St John's by supporting both high rates of residential occupation and new activity within the building.

The proposals are limited in scale and will operate for the benefit of residents and have no adverse impact on the wider area or residents within the building.

The Applicant has consulted with a qualified acoustics consultant to test and seek to ensure that the Proposed Development is wholly compliant to the noise requirement as specified on the planning permission ref: 132952/JO/2022.

A Gym Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Fisher Acoustics supports this application and confirms that the proposed ground floor gym can operate without unacceptable noise or vibration impacts. Internal noise levels will be controlled to defined thresholds, with mitigation measures including resilient flooring and controlled sound systems to ensure compliance with relevant guidance. The Proposed Development is therefore consistent with the Core Strategy, when read as a whole, and the saved policies of the Manchester UDP.

The Site is located within Flood Zone 2. Flood risk has previously been assessed and accepted as part of the wider approved development and the proposed change of use does not introduce a more vulnerable form of development. The submitted flood risk information confirms that the proposal remains acceptable in flood risk terms and that the approved flood mitigation strategy continues to apply to the development.

On this basis, the Proposed Development accords with Core Strategy Policy CC7, CC10, DM1, EN14, PfE Plan Policy JP-P7 and JP-S4.

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in August 2026 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Policy HC4 states that substantial weight should be given to development proposals that make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction within the local community. The proposed gym would increase access to health and fitness facilities for residents and visitors to the City Centre, supporting active lifestyles and contributing positively to health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Site is located within Manchester City Centre where the proposal would support the vitality and viability of the area through the provision of an active leisure use. Policy TC2 confirms that substantial weight should be given to development which supports the vitality and viability of centres, including through the diversification of uses.

With regard to flood risk, Policies CC3 and F4-F7 require development to take account of climate change impacts, be located in appropriate locations having regard to flood risk and remain safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The submitted flood risk information demonstrates that the proposal satisfies these requirements and remains acceptable in flood risk terms.

St John's SRF (2014 and 2016) seeks to ensure that new housing meets the needs of the city in terms of quality, design, and sustainability. The SRF also adds that the proposed mix of complementary uses ought to combine to create a distinctive sense of place that should support activity and vitality on weekdays, in the evenings, and at the weekend. Adding to the residential amenity offer by improving the ancillary spaces will continue to drive residential demand and support vitality of this area through the continuous influx of residents.

The Draft Manchester Local Plan was published in September 2025. It is currently undergoing Regulation 18 consultation and although afforded very limited weight and not formally part of the Development Plan, it is considered to be a material consideration.

Policy SI 2 notes that *"Proposed new and/or enhanced open space, sport and recreation land and facilities, both indoor and outdoor, will be supported in principle where they are evidenced by an appropriate, up-to-date needs assessment, and subject to consideration of any impact on neighbouring uses"*.

The Acoustic Report prepared by Fisher Acoustics submitted with this application specifically resolves the issue around the impact on neighbouring uses by assessing and mitigating the impact of noise and vibration.

The proposals result in the loss of previously approved ground floor commercial floorspace. However, this space has remained vacant since completion of the building. Its re-use as a residents' gym represents an active and beneficial use that will provide additional amenity space for residents within the building, making best use of a currently vacant space.

Whilst not publicly accessible, the use will generate footfall from residents and provide visual activity through the glazed frontage. The proposal is therefore considered to maintain an appropriate level of activity consistent with the objectives of the St John's Strategic Regeneration Framework.

Additionally, the changes on Level 2 do not result in the loss of approved residential amenity space. The approved use of the floor was commercial co-working accommodation (Use Class B1, now Use Class E), part of which is retained as part of the proposals. The proposed office and marketing suite will support the ongoing management, operation and occupation of Union T2, whilst the enhanced amenity provision responds to operational experience since the building became occupied. The proposals therefore represent the optimisation of approved commercial floorspace in response to evidenced operational need.

Summary

This application comprises this Covering Letter and the following documentation:

- Application Form prepared by Deloitte.
- Location Plan (*6555-P-B500-P-00-003 Rev A*), prepared by DCM
- Approved Layout of the Ground Floor of Union T2 *(Doc ref: 6555-P-B500-P-00 Rev J),* prepared by DCM
- Proposed Layout of the Ground Floor of Union T2 *(Doc ref: VG-UT2-00-DR-K-20-SK01),* prepared by DCM
- Approved Layout of Level 2 of Union T2 *(Doc ref: 6555-P-B500-P-TYP-001 Rev C Levels 02-04 GA Plan),* prepared by DCM
- Proposed Layout of Level 2 of Union T2 *(Doc ref: VG-UT2-02-DR-K-20-GA01),* prepared by DCM
- Residents Management Strategy (*Doc ref: Residents Management Strategy)*
- Gym Noise Impact Assessment (*Doc ref*: *T2-FAC-A180-RP-00-001 P01 - Gym Noise Impact Assessment)*
- Waste Management Strategy (*Discharge Condition No. 24 and 25_Waste Management Strategy*)- This was discharged under application reference CDN/23/0444
- Surface Water Drainage Management Plan *(071297-Drainage Planning Conditions Report 24.07.24 Full)*- This was discharged under Condition 22 under application reference CDN/24/0960
- Framework Travel Plan titled (*Discharge of Condition No. 27 - Framework Travel Plan*)- This was discharged under Condition 27 under application reference CDN/24/0960
- Flood Emergency Response Plan (Doc ref: *089521-CUR-XX-XX-T-C-92000*)
- Email from Curtins dated 27.08.2026

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal under Reference: PP-15025864. The application fee of £701, in addition to the prerequisite Planning Portal service charge of £91, has been paid online. We would be grateful for written confirmation of the receipt and registration of this application.

The development is compliant with the Development Plan as demonstrated above and there are no material considerations that would justify refusal of the Application. We therefore respectfully request that this Application be supported by the Planning Authority. If there are any points of clarification required, please do not hesitate to contact my colleagues Michael Percival (mipercival@deloitte.co.uk / +44 161 455 6672) or Ragini Dutta (raginidutta@deloitte.co.uk / +44 330 138 6276)

Yours sincerely

Deloitte.
Together makes progress



Deloitte LLP