

Planning Application 37/24/00099

As residents of the hamlet of Huntworth we would like to submit our objection to the creation of a new Motorway Service Area and ancillary uses including all supporting infrastructure. Our reasons for objecting are detailed below:

- Two motorway services at Junction 24 is completely unnecessary, especially when there are also services at Dunball and Taunton. We note that planning has previously been refused for this application on the following grounds:
 - a) The site is located in the open countryside and outside the limits of any settlement, where development will be strictly controlled. It has been resolved to grant planning permission for a Motorway Service Area on the nearby Huntworth Business Park and there is no overriding need for another Motorway Service Area. In the absence of such a need, the proposal is contrary to policy C4 of Somerset Structure Plan (Alteration No 2).
 - b) The site lies in the open, undeveloped area between Bridgwater and North Petherton, and the proposed development would lead to the coalescence of the two settlements, and would detract from the visual amenities of the area.

So why has it now been deemed that an additional service station is required? What research has been carried out and what evidence can be provided that there is a requirement for this? Also why is it now ok to detract from the visual amenities of the area?

- The impact of both noise and light pollution that will be created from the development will have a hugely detrimental impact on wildlife in the area. Our property and garden borders the land of the proposed development and sightings/evidence of birds of prey (including owls), badgers and bats are a daily occurrence. It is proven that light and noise pollution can disrupt nocturnal species feeding, foraging, breeding and general movements and can result in them abandoning their habitats.
- The impact of both noise and light pollution on the residents of Huntworth. The area is currently completely unlit and to go from that to being constantly lit 24 hours a day, 365 days a year is completely unreasonable and will majorly impact local residents. Not to mention the noise will have a massive bearing on residents' ability to enjoy their gardens and outdoor space.
- Air pollution – due to the nature of the development and the amount of traffic it will attract to the area air pollution is inevitable. What (if any) studies have been carried out to assess the impact of this and what measures are being put in place to minimise it? Are any hazardous materials to be used in the construction (silica dust entering the air etc.)?
- Has an appropriate plan been put in place to negate the loss of natural drainage resulting from building on farmland? There are already flooding issues along Huntworth Lane after heavy rainfall.
- Has the environmental impact on nearby water courses been considered? Fuel and oil spills are inevitable with the volumes of cars and HGVs that would be using the facilities. This is particularly important taking into account the proximity of the development to the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal.
- Due to the nature of the development it is highly likely that littering will become an issue, what measures are being put in place to limit this and to follow the 'Keep Britain Tidy' initiatives? It is commonly known that service stations are a major source of litter and waste.

- Whilst we are in the midst of a cost of living crisis it is irresponsible of the Council to allow arable land to be built on. Destroying arable land will directly impact on crop yields which in turn can disrupt local food supply chains and have the potential to raise food prices. There are already enough challenges for those in the farming industry without taking away already established farmland and taking away from their ability to maintain their livelihood.
- A major concern looking at the proposals is highway safety. There are no footpaths in Huntworth and we regularly walk along the road with our two small children and we also own two dogs who require regular walks and exercise. Increasing the volume of traffic and the amount of HGVs in a small village raises huge safety concerns for us, not only for our own family but for all our neighbours (many of whom also regularly enjoy walking around the area and dog walking).
- Huntworth Lane is completely unsuitable for the number of vehicles that would be using the lane to enter and in particular exit the service station, it is too narrow and is particularly unsuitable for lorries or other HGVs to be using. The road is already in a bad state of repair with lots of pot holes along the edges which has been caused by the increase in traffic since the new road connection to Squibbers Way was put in. Not to mention the congestion it will cause when vehicles will be unable to pass each other. We have two young children that both attend Buttercups Nursery on Notaro Way and the new road layout will no doubt cause congestion issues around the entrance to Notaro Way. There are already congestion issues (particularly in the summer) on the main roundabout at Junction 24 which is going to get significantly worse with the addition of the services and yet again will negatively impact the residents of Huntworth. What consideration has been given to creating an entrance directly off the motorway and what is the justification for choosing Huntworth Lane as a more suitable option?
- One of the neighbouring properties has in the past been refused planning consent for a small extension on the grounds that it would 'detract from the character of the surrounding area'. How can Somerset Council rule that a modest extension (which would not have even been in view from the public highway) would detract from the character of the surrounding area but an extensive contemporary style motorway services is perfectly acceptable and in keeping?

In summary it is our view that the only thing being achieved with the construction of this development is for a large corporation to make a profit with absolutely no regard to the residents of Huntworth. We have worked hard and made sacrifices to be able to live in a charming and characterful village like Huntworth and to raise our young family in a healthy environment where they can enjoy being outdoors in the fresh air and around nature and wildlife. We strongly feel for the numerous reasons mentioned above that this development should not be permitted and that the need for a second motorway service station at one motorway junction cannot possibly justify or outweigh all the adverse and unfavourable impacts on the local area and residents.