FARRINGTON GURNEY PARISH COUNCIL

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27th September 2021

**Local Plan Partial Update**

Farrington Gurney Parish Council - **OBJECTION**

**Site Designation Updates - Objection to changes to the land use at Somer Valley Enterprise Area**

Dear George,

The proposed changes under the local plan partial update include changes to the policy of land use at the Somer Valley Enterprise Area. This is a major development for the area, designated for employment uses namely industrial uses. The partial update now looks to vastly change the emphasis of this development to allow for a wide range of retail and roadside uses.

As one of the local parish areas most affected by this development, we would likely to **strongly object** for the following reasons:

1) The proposed changes are not in line with current Planning Policy for protecting the High Street, and any retail development in this location would be detrimental to the High St of our local town of Midsomer Norton as well as the number of smaller retail enterprises within the Parish of Farrington Gurney. Promoting this kind of use away from the High Street can never be considered to be sustainable, especially as the council have called a climate emergency. Furthermore, additional consideration should be given to the impact of foods on human health and discarded fast-food packaging on the environment from possible drive thru / fast-food retailers especially given the current health crisis and environmental challenges we face.

2) It is essential for the vibrancy of the High St that retail is concentrated in one area, and the proposal to allocate part of the former Welton Bibby Baron site at the top of the High St in Midsomer Norton for retail is welcomed as a logical extension of the High St retail.

3) It is also quite obvious that a sequential test of the SVEZ for retail uses is needed, and this would easily identify the Welton Bibby Baron site as a better and more sustainable location for retail in the local area.

4) If retail and roadside uses were allowed at SVEZ this takes away from the whole idea of an enterprise area. The types of businesses likely to be attracted to this location by the proposed policy change are highly likely to include a variety of uses and whilst a complimentary hotel would be welcome, other uses including public houses, restaurants, drive thru fast-food establishments would have a major negative effect on the already struggling retail sector locally.

5) Retail uses within SVEZ would increase traffic, and the main route being the A362 through the village of Farrington Gurney.

6) Retail uses within the SVEZ would also increase pollution, and the main route being the A362 through the village of Farrington Gurney. A climate emergency has already been called and the A37/A362 junction is already an area with well documented high levels of air pollution.

7) The SVEZ site sits on the edge of a largely rural area, and the littering that seems to inevitably go with roadside uses and drive thru fast food would not be welcomed due to the risk to the surrounding countryside, livestock and wildlife.

8) We would also like to object to the increase in the site area of the SVEZ, and the proposed allocation of further land to the South of Old Mills. Industrial demand (take up) for the area shows this will not be required anytime soon, and especially if employment land is not taken away from the original SVEZ area to be used for retail use.

The Parish Council would also like to ensure that the council planning policy considers that prior to any development commencing at the SVEZ, policy is adopted that highway upgrades on the A362 including cycle path are completed prior to construction commencing.

Yours Sincerely,

On behalf of Farrington Gurney Parish Council,

Jenny

**Jenny Howell CiLCA**

**Farrington Gurney**

**Parish Clerk**

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