

Good afternoon, I am the vice chair of Pawlett Parish Council. I am also a retired planning consultant.

We held public sessions to discuss this application and overall there was no support for it by villagers. There was support for a local hairdresser to have one of the units, but she has since moved elsewhere.

Our objections to this major application are threefold.

First, currently there is a wonderful view when leaving the village, and from the village green, of the Mendips, this is important local landscape character and this development would adversely affect that and thus is contrary to your policy D19.

Second, the site is outside the village on the wrong side of the A38, and a retail store of 312 square metres is hardly a village shop, it is designed for passing traffic.

Access by pedestrians is of real concern, with traffic lights 95 m from the exit from the village, the temptation to, “just quickly nip across” is an accident waiting to happen.

Thirdly, and most importantly the scheme of 1200 square metres is contrary to your policy D15.

This states that large scale commercial developments over 1,000 square metres should be on brownfield sites in Bridgwater, Burnham and Highbridge.

In his original assessment the policy officer mistakenly referred to gross internal floorspace and said 1072 square metres is technically slightly above the threshold, and then went on to say individually the units were small and therefore the scheme is consistent with the policy.

The case officers report corrects the gross external area to one thousand, two hundred and two sq m (1,202), but repeats the same wording and arguments used by the policy officer, which were based on the wrong size.

The upper policy limit is 1,000 sq m. This scheme isn't slightly above that limit, it is 20% over, and there is no justification to say individual units are small, the policy refers to overall schemes and proposals.

Your policy does allow exceptions, but only where they are identified in the ELR, or where they are of national or regional importance. None of which apply.

Thus, our objections are, in the main it is not supported by villagers, it is in open countryside, on the wrong side of a busy A road, and it is contrary to your own policies D19 and D15.

Thank you.