

Memo

To: Planning Services
From: Transport Development Management
Date: 26th November 2025

Application Number: PL/2023/09142

Proposal: Outline application (with Access to be determined) for development of a new Motorway Rest Area (MRA) to provide up to 241 car parking spaces; up to 63 Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking spaces; coach and caravan parking; amenity building; fuel filling station; new roundabout access from B4005; and associated landscaping, infrastructure and ancillary works.

Location: Land at Junction 16 (M4), Swindon

Thank you for inviting further comment on this application for permission to develop land close to Junction 16 of the M4 for a motorway rest area (MRA).

I have previously provided comment on behalf of Swindon Borough Council by memos (a) undated and (b) 21st March 2024. Those memos set out our concerns for the design of the proposed facility and the associated parking demand and vehicle trip generation. I expressed concern also for the effect that the development might have on the pattern of HGV movement in and around Swindon.

Those concerns are informed by a more overarching uncertainty surrounding the role of the proposed facility. Whilst referred to as an MRA, it appears to me to exhibit characteristics of an MSA, which would suggest higher levels of vehicle attraction and a greater need for parking. The Response Document continues to argue that the proposed facility is an MRA and should be designed accordingly. On that issue and the related matters of trip generation, car parking and site access, I offer no further comment, relying instead on the opinions of colleagues at Wiltshire and at National Highways.

On the issue of the potential for the proposed facility to attract Swindon-bound HGV movements and thereby alter the patterns of goods vehicle movement around the Borough, the Response Document argues that this will not occur, as the facility will not be signed or advertised as a facility for goods vehicles. I am not persuaded by that argument, as professional drivers can be expected to plan their delivery routes and make use of facilities that are not otherwise advertised. Whilst I remain concerned, I have no basis however to object to the application on the grounds of those uncertainties.

Please note that the comments made here represent Officer opinion and cannot be seen to prejudice Swindon Borough Council's formal determination in relation to any application or planning matter.

Kind Regards

Gerry

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