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[Redacted]

Sent: 04 January 2012 18:15
To: Stephen Boulton; John Dean; Planning; grant@shapps.com
Subject: Tesco Planning Application

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
05 JAN 2012

Dear Sirs,

I'm am writing to you to show my support for the Tesco application at Broadwater road. I know I may have written to you in the past, however with the decision meeting and planning date of the 11th January 2012 being announced (which I may not be able to attend) I felt the need to re-iterate my views.

First of all, I should make it clear that the views of the scare mongering PR campaign by the WGC-Soc do not represent the whole of WGC, I do not know how many people have signed their petition but any time I have been to their stool in the howard centre there have always been an equal number of pro broadwater people at the stool being dismissed. They are also unable to come up with answers when questioned about any of their complaints on numerous occasions. I should also make it clear that I am in no way associated with Tesco (okay, I used to work there 14 years ago as a Saturday job, but I would support this if it was Asda, Co-op, [insert brand], etc.) nor Spenhill - I am writing as a young family peartree/broadwater WGC resident. I have also read the council officers report (http://www.whtimes.co.uk/news/welwyn_hatfield_council_s_officers_say_no_to_tesco_1_1167715) which seems to be made up mostly of opinion rather than fact.

I think the benefits of this scheme are widely known - new jobs, new homes, a public swimming pool, upgraded footbridge (not to mention the security that goes with it, you can't put a price on someones well being) and a new retail area but mostly importantly, the development of a waste ground and derelict factory which is a blot on our town will become a crime scene if not looked after and without this investment who else is going to do anything with this area (and pay for it).

The WGC complaints boil down to the following, and I want to counter those arguments:

Take people away from the high street (split it in two)

- They say that it will create a new highstreet - well, the distance of the proposed Tesco is within 20m distance to the centre of the howard centre that the entrance to John Lewis/Sainsbury/Waitrose is to it. If by building a tesco, we would create a split high street - then one would already exist, which it doesn't. They also dismiss the 3 hours free parking idea from Tesco, saying that people wouldn't use it because their food would get warm - clearly the WGC Soc don't have a great amount of common sense, as most of us would go into town first, then shop. It's a scheme that is already working very well with the new Sainsbury.

- The high street (not just ours) as we know it is dying. People shop online, our bookshop closed because of this, record stores are closing, etc. The few things that people still shop for are food (although granted some of that is still internet based), and people like going out for coffees whilst browsing the internet for shopping (new coffee shops brought in by Tesco). Not to mention people coming into town to use the swimming pool (who will then hop the short distance over the bridge into the howard centre). What I'm trying to get at, food shopping, leisure facilities and recreational places (coffee shops, etc.) are the way that high streets need to adapt to and survive.

- If there was a slight split, there are plenty of town centres around the world that thrive on a split centre. I'd also think that 2 centres operating at 60% capacity, would be better than one at 75% (our town is never "heaving").

Extra Traffic

- Traffic is going to get bad in WGC, whatever, regardless of a new Tesco. The Tesco only brings forward these traffic problems, and Tesco are willing to pay to resolve them. There was far more damaging traffic with big lorries going past at all hours when the factory was open. However, this argument is also counter productive to their other arguments, they say that the town isn't big enough to support another supermarket, but yet they say it'll bring in extra traffic- either it will bring in people or it won't?

Cause local/other shops to shut

- Lets nip this in the bud, the expansion of sainsburys hasn't caused local shops to close. If you visit summerfield/co-op/morrisons/sainsbury/waitrose you do so because it's either convenient (walking distance) or you want a specific product or you like that shop (and you drive there). Or you drive to Tesco because you want to shop there. None of this changes with the opening of the new Tesco - EXCEPT that you'll be driving into the town centre instead of oldings, so the only trade is taken away from Tesco, not the other shops. It is not an out of town Tesco (as Morrisons say), and it is not as big as the hatfield Tesco. The reports also says there is an excess of retail space until 2026 (ish) - is planning for the future such a bad thing?

Not any real jobs

- The WGC Soc have mucked around with some figures about full time jobs, etc. Granted, we are in a time where there are a shortage of full time jobs, but there is also a massive shortage in part time jobs that enable young people to get an income whilst studying/finding their career choice jobs. There is also a lack of work for families where one partner would like to work part time, not to mention plenty of people wanting seasonal work. But basically, any number of new jobs is a welcome thing.

Swimming pool not long enough

- I don't think we need an olympic swimming pool, and there are enough people in Welwyn to not detract from the Hatfield swim centre (which most people won't use because it is in hatfield). It should also be the case that the facilities to not directly compete with Gosling (i.e. tennis, squash, badminton, etc., although a fitness/gym is probably fair enough). WGC ethos is about healthy living, and having a swimming pool, in walking distance of the town fits 100% into that ethos.

Bridge not wide enough

- Fair point (although it will be wider than the current), but at the same time a slightly wider bridge can easily be agreed upon - but more interestingly, the WGC soc say that people won't cross over into the town centre - if this is the case then how can they argue the bridge isn't wide enough?

Lastly, my big question to you if you refuse planning, what plans do you have for the area and who will pay for it? My big fear is that is a regular user of the bridge and someone who walks along broadwater road everyday is that late at night, it is already unsettling to walk past the area. Without redevelopment, it will become a crime spot and it won't be long until a member of the public comes to some harm or is attacked. I have similar fears over the footbridge that has recently been patched together after a fire, let alone the poor lighting and railings along the edge; again, it's only a matter of time before someone is harmed (either attacked from the bad lighting, or the infrastructure fails). You can't put a price on someones wel-being and if that price is a Tesco store, then so be it.

I really can't see what else you can do with this site, or put another way, who would buy the land off Tesco and then pay for the redevelopment. The ethos of WGC is not an ugly barron waste ground, but of healthy living, jobs and leisure facilities. The quotes that are used to say that this plan is against that ethos are using ideas set out many decades ago, and are not adapting to the times. Whilst I do think that it's important that the new development fits into the town from a design/look, there isn't anything else in the plan that doesn't fit in. Slightly answering my own question - the other option for the site is more manufacturing, which means no leisure facilities, no homes, and a probable lack of investment in a footbridge, and a set of unattractive buildings and a massive increase in heavy traffic using the broadwater road; all of which I see as a negative compared to the current plans.

I trust that you find my comments a helpful counter argument, and I really do hope that you consider the implications of denying the redevelopment of the area which I feel outweigh the issues that some people think that redeveloping the area will make.

Regardless, best of luck with what must be a very difficult decision.

Thank you for your time & happy new year to you.

Kind Regards,


28 Woodhall Court.

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