

Ack

No/2010/2055/MA

From: Tracy Harvey
Sent: 31 January 2011 08:43
To: Planning
Subject: FW:
Attachments: Broadwater Development. Jan11.doc

PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

31 JAN 2011

RECEIVED

Tracy Harvey
Head of Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Council
The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AE
01707 357239
Fax 01707 357255

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 January 2011 20:23
To: Tracy Harvey
Subject:

Dear Ms Harvey,
Attached is a letter expressing my concerns regarding the proposed Broadwater Development.
I have forwarded a copy of this to several members of the council and also to Grant Shapps.
I would be grateful for any comments you can make and also any suggestions as to how I can best voice my concerns such that they hopefully achieve some purpose!

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PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

31 JAN 2011

RECEIVED


12 The Old Drive
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6TB

30 January 2011

Proposed Spenhill/Tesco Broadwater Development

I have a number of very serious concerns regarding this proposed development. Having been born in Welwyn Garden City and lived here for over 50 years I would hope that my comments would be considered and responded to.

The following points are against the background that the current Welwyn Garden City Town Centre retail facilities are the envy of similar sized towns throughout the South East. It is important that the Town Centre continues to evolve paying due regards to Sir Ebenezer Howard's ethos and I would like to see the town become even more attractive in terms of its retail offering and open competition within this context.

My main concerns are as follows:

1. I believe a development of the nature proposed would not add to competition and would be to the detriment of the existing Town Centre retailers and the neighbourhood shopping centres. I also do not believe that the Tesco development would draw substantial additional footfall to the existing Town Centre.
2. The Broadwater area is designated primarily for employment and residential, whilst the Tesco development would provide a certain number of jobs this is very small in comparison to potential alternative schemes.
3. Given that whatever development takes place on the Broadwater site will influence the town's future for decades to come, and the proposed scheme contravenes most, if not all, of the planning policies, has there been a rigorous study of the alternatives potentially available. Although the current market would not necessarily support a major office development along the lines of Shire Park this is only a temporary market condition. I would have thought that a full assessment of the alternatives for the site would be irresistible.
4. Tesco as a retailer (and for that matter Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose, Morrisons etc) are typically seen as a "weekly shop" destination. In terms of consumer choice there is already a major Tesco at Hatfield,

less than two miles drive from the Broadwater site. Whilst I am sure that their proposed development is economically viable for Tesco it does not, in my view, add any real value or other substantial attraction to Welwyn Garden City as a Town Centre, either for the residents or visitors. Indeed the opposite is true and if Tesco (or any of the above named) develop the Broadwater site, this would be to the detriment of other retail facilities which are widely used by local residents on the East Side of the town.

5. At present the road network in Welwyn Garden City is, in comparison to many other towns, generally coping with volumes but there does need to be substantial improvements to the Broadwater area linking to Stanborough in particular. I am concerned that the current proposals do not fully address these issues which are of less concern to the developers than the inhabitants of Welwyn Garden City.
6. Whilst any Section 106 type benefits to the area would be welcome, I really cannot see the sense of a swimming pool or similar leisure facilities on the Broadwater site, surely this would be better sited at the Gosling Stadium which has better traffic access and would achieve higher usage than Broadwater. Similarly whilst a Heritage Centre is a good idea, the location at Broadwater is a poor solution and appears to be a rather cynical ploy by Tesco.
7. Further retail developments in Welwyn Garden City should be centred on the existing retail area for the benefit of both the current and prospective retailers. The obvious site for such a development would be the area adjacent to and behind the council offices on the campus, ideally behind a retained façade. I would have thought the value of this site for retail would be a very attractive proposition to the Welwyn Hatfield Council who could relocate their offices to the Broadwater site, which would then encourage further office development at Broadwater.
8. Having witnessed the prosecution and fine of Welwyn Hatfield over the Galleria development, it is difficult not to be greatly concerned at our track record in approving major developments. Justifiably the council members, officers and the residents would be reassured by a more open and rigorous decision making process than appears to be underway at present.

I look forward to your comments regarding the above points and would be pleased to attend a meeting to discuss these if that would be of benefit.

Yours sincerely

