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56 Parkway,
Welwyn Garden City,
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To all Planning councillors

Dear Sir/Madame,

The Proposed Tesco Development

I am completely puzzled by the report in a recent edition of the Welwyn Hatfield Times in respect of the proposed Tesco development on the Broadwater road site. The Council have requested, and Tesco have complied, in submitting an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) report in respect of their proposed redevelopment. The report states that the development will have minimal effect on the town centre etc., etc., etc. Well, what a surprise! How stupid can we get? It is like asking a prosecuted person to provide evidence in their defence. Clearly any report commissioned and paid for by Tesco would come out in their favour. How can the Council be so blatantly stupid to place any validity on such a report? In a previous letter to the Council I pointed this out to them and suggested that they commission, and pay for, a truly independent report, but clearly this suggestion has fallen on deaf ears. Why is it that if someone suggests that the Council should go left they will automatically go right? Amazing.

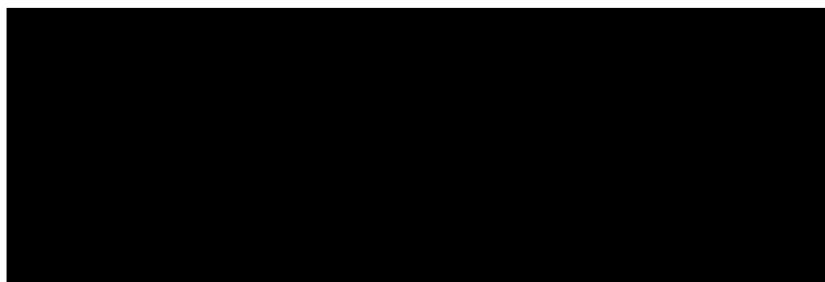
You don't have to be an expert to realise that such a development (50,000 sq ft store) will decimate the whole of Welwyn Garden City. I recently heard of a Tesco Office Manager, totally unknown to me and who lives many miles from Welwyn Garden City, make the comment that Tesco's will have no trouble at all in obtaining the full planning permission they require. The reason - apparently - for this view is that Tesco's have a large office complex in the Borough and the Council will be 'obliged' to give them the planning order because if Tesco's do not get the permission they will redeploy their office complex elsewhere. And they employ over three thousand people. I stress that this is a reported point of view without any direct evidence. However, 'power' is 'might' and Tesco's certainly do have the power. So why are Tesco's trying to undertake such a large development in the centre Welwyn Garden City when they have numerous other stores in this part of Hertfordshire and an enormous supermarket just a couple of miles away at Oldings Corner? The answer can only be Corporate pride. Just about every other business in England place their shareholders and company profit at the top of their daily list, but Tesco clearly wish to have a prime store within spitting distance of their office complex, and money is of secondary importance. The fact that their development will have a totally detrimental effect on the town is of little importance to them. They are clearly blinkered

by their corporate pride. Tesco's Chairman, Mr. David Reid, has clearly bitten on the idea and is totally blinded to all other considerations.

So, opinion is one thing, let's concentrate on a few facts:

- ❖ Dr Dennis Lewis has given the most pertinent example of what can happen to a small town when a company like Tesco are given planning permission to place an unwanted store in the centre of town. His example of Llandrindod Wells should be a serious warning to all fifteen Councillors on the Planning Committee. This is fact, not fiction. Shops in the centre of the town have lost up to 25% of their trade and one store has recorded a 60% reduction in profits. Exactly the same will happen to most of the shops in the centre of Welwyn Garden City and the outlying areas of WGC. Mr. Louis Calvete, of Knightsfield has also written to the Welwyn Hatfield Times pointing out that the website is full complaints against Tesco's development policies and in many cases points out some of their alleged dubious practices.
- ❖ How can the Planning Committee come to a sensible decision before the effects of the new Sainsbury store can be assessed? Sainsbury's plan to open their new store for the coming Christmas and I think that Councillors will require, at the very minimum, a whole year of trading before they can make a sensible assessment of the effect on the other shops and businesses in the centre of town. To give Tesco's planning permission before this evaluation can be made would be a folly of the highest order.
- ❖ If the information I have is correct then the development of the Broadwater road site is in complete opposition to the original tenets of the Garden City plan as devised by Ebenezer Howard. Yes, things do change and we must modernise with changing times, but the development, as proposed by Tesco's, will destroy every concept of the original plan.
- ❖ Tesco's place emphasis, and quite rightly, upon the possible employment prospects for a developed site. If the site were to be developed in the correct manner – housing, leisure facilities, small shops (even a Tesco Express !), retirement apartments etc. then this would create additional employment, BUT A HUGE TESCO STORE IS NOT REQUIRED.
- ❖ Broadwater road will, apparently, have to redesigned into a two-laned highway. Is this possible? And who will pay for it?
- ❖ Welwyn Garden City certainly does need a decent swimming pool, but the emphasis should be on 'decent', and Tesco's have been clever enough to include this suggestion in their proposals, but the size of pool they suggest is no more than a paddling pool. A proper sized pool, and all adjacent facilities would be an enormous attraction for the town. Not only creating employment but an additional reason why people should visit the town and use the shops. With Gosling the town has a major and important sporting complex which has international appeal. Why not create a swimming pool complex with similar attributes?
- ❖ There is not one fact in favour of Tesco's proposed super store, and they have, through their publicity arm, Spenhill, made a number of propositions which they hope will compensate for their lack of real substance in their application.

I must admit that over the years Tesco had provided an excellent service to the community and in particular when Mr. Jack Cohen was alive the company was run with an excellent 'community' spirit, but quite clearly the modern management do not have Mr. Cohen's gift for balancing company ethos and public spirit. Tesco employ approximately half a million people and have a turnover of over £60 billion pounds and the present management clearly think that this allows them to do what they want, where they want and how they want. This must not be allowed to happen, particularly when their proposals will certainly decimate one of the treasures of twentieth century town planning. Councillors, if you vote in favour of the Tesco proposal you will go to your graves knowing that you have destroyed one of the best modern towns in the British Isles,



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