

Adm

RA

30 Elmwood,
Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire,
AL8 6LE.

16th March 2011.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Tesco Application, Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City.

I wished to make some comments on the current planning application by Tesco for the Broadwater Road site in Welwyn Garden City.

I believe that this retail led development is entirely inappropriate for this location. There are a number of reasons for this -

- 1.) A substantial amount of retail space on this site would seriously prejudice the trading of existing retailers in the established centre of Welwyn Garden City just to the opposite side of the railway line. One only has to look at the derelict state of the empty shops that existed in the vicinity of Sainsbury's before they recently commenced their redevelopment.

Recent data confirms that our town centres are struggling with vacant shop units, and it is estimated that approximately 12% of shops are currently empty in the South of England alone. Allowing additional retail space outside of the established centre is not likely to help this situation (source: Local Data Company).

- 2) I have serious doubts as to whether there is adequate highway infrastructure to support this development (retail, leisure and residential).
- 3.) I hope that the Council considers all of the current guidelines and research on the impact of developments such as this on established town centres. For example a recent report by the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE) (Supermarket led development: asset or liability), suggests that many schemes are simply repeating old out of town proposals, with large plain buildings and large car parks, which are unsuitable for town centres. In those cases, they state, short term economic gain will not compensate for the loss of local character. The report specifically cites a good example of a development (by Sainsbury's), and an unsatisfactory example (by Tesco).
- 4.) Another recent report, this actually commissioned by Tesco, 'Revisiting the Impact of Large Food Stores on Market Towns', identified a negative impact of such a supermarket on local businesses.

Having regard to the above points, I hope that Welwyn Hatfield Council refuse consent for this scheme.

Yours faithfully,

