

Councillor John Dean
Leader Welwyn Hatfield Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7


43 Essendon Gardens
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL7 3QT

11 January 2011

Dear Councillor Dean

Spenhill/Tesco's development

I would like to express my concerns to the proposed plans to build a new Tesco supermarket and Tesco.com, on the land of the former Shredded Wheat Factory site, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

As a resident of Welwyn Garden City, we are very fortunate to live in a well-designed city. The Howard Centre and shops such as John Lewis and others throughout the town centre provide everything that resident's need.

Welwyn has a community; it has little pockets of local shopping areas such as Howlands, Woodall Parade. These areas have already suffered because of the increase in supermarkets, which is common throughout the country – we have lost local butchers and I fear we could lose other small businesses vital to maintaining a community. This has already been demonstrated in Hatfield town centre now it has Asda and Tesco's.

I am sure you are aware Welwyn Garden City is well provided for in terms of supermarkets, with Sainsbury's, Morrison, Waitrose as well as Co-op and Somerfield's, Lidl's all within the city's boundaries. Within 3 miles, at most there are two very large supermarkets, Tesco's and Asda.

The proposed development plans submitted by Spenhill include cafés restaurants, new offices, swimming and leisure facilities. Does the Unitary Development Plan identify these as being needed? There are plenty of units around Welwyn that are not in use or in demand. Creating new ones is only likely to create more empty buildings.

An example is the Town Centre, it has many little cafés already, some have had to close – a large busy cafe in the Howard Centre closed leaving a large empty space for over a year.

Swimming Pools are notoriously expensive to maintain and run profitably. We have two local pool's Hatfield, Stevenage and other excellent leisure facilities at

Gosling and Hatfield University. Creating another will jeopardise these businesses.

The promise of 1800 new jobs on the site I suspect is a red herring and very unlikely to come to fruition; unfortunately they have a history of making many promises such as this that are never kept.

Spenhill/Tesco's claim they have consulted – I have received two separate pieces of information almost a year apart. Neither has asked for my views, both have just been propaganda documents. Consultation needs to be just that and to include all the residents of Welwyn, as any development on this site will impact all of us not just those in the local vicinity.

Other concerns are the significant increase in traffic. Broadwater Road is already very busy. Any increase in the traffic from shoppers on roads that have not been designed to take so many vehicles. The dot.com site also included in the plans will mean that there will be a constant flow of vans in and out of the site at key times of the day impacting on residents and community. An example can easily be seen with the Ocado business in nearby Hatfield and this is on a large industrial site.

The proposal by Tesco's or indeed any other supermarket on the site is nothing more than greed and not in the interests of Welwyn Garden City or its residents. They are renowned for being aggressive developers.

As Leader, you will be fully aware that building land is very rare. The plans submitted to build on adjacent land are not in keeping with Welwyn Garden City nor are they a reasonable size for those that would be living in them. Using both sites for building housing would ensure the land is not wasted and enable the properties to be designed more in keeping with the remainder of Welwyn. Alternatively, I understand Welwyn has been identified, as a place for additional housing, if this is so then there is an obvious impact on the demand on local schools provision.

I am strongly opposed to this development. I appreciate the Council is concerned with having unused land. However, it is essential that such a large site so close to town be developed properly. This development is not in the interests of the residents or Businesses of Welwyn Garden City, it is in the interests of corporate giant and its shareholders. I would like to point out that this is not a vendetta against Tesco I would have the same view and concerns if it were any other supermarket chain.

Welwyn is a lovely small town that is rare and should be nurtured. Allowing developments such as this, the creation of a Hotel so close to the town centre would change this town in a negative way.

I hope that as Leader of Welwyn Hatfield, you will consider the points raised and add your support to stop this unnecessary and unwanted development.

Yours Sincerely

