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Welwyn Garden City
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PLANNING
DEPARTMENT
- 3 NOV 2010
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Director of Planning
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

2 November 2010

Dear Sir

I write to object to the proposed Tesco's development in Broadwater Road. I have lived and brought up my family in the Garden City for nearly 40 years and for some time worked in the borough. I have for a many years actively volunteered with charities that support the most disadvantaged in our community and in my professional life held board level appointments in private and public sector organisations of national importance.

It is self evident that the approval of a Tesco's multi-store so closely adjoining the town centre will severely dilute the facilities currently available, when conversely we should be seeking to promote more independent retailers and services in our town centre. Furthermore, this proposal will adversely impact the local shopping centres at Woodhall, Haldens, Shoplands and Peartree and is completely unnecessary given the existing Tesco Extra less than 2 miles away at the Olding's.

Tesco have been disingenuous in their approach to this planning application and have a record of this elsewhere. A year ago they paraded plans for a much smaller shopping proposal and pedestrian crossing to the town centre with leisure and housing amenities. Following that public "consultation" the current planning application has changed significantly and detrimentally. Typically, they have now presented an incomplete financial proposal with regard to this development portraying a substantial subsidy to support the housing scheme without providing the overall financial return they expect to make on the whole development at the expense of the current shopping facilities we have available to us.

Moreover there is no outline of the overall socio-economic benefit this proposal should be expected to provide to Welwyn Garden City.

Their plans to link this multi store to the town centre are woefully inadequate and one suspects that they intend to rely on Network Rail to provide this, which is quite unreal.

If Tesco want to have a leading-edge supermarket to impress visitors to their WGC Bessemer HQ's then they would be wise to upgrade the Olding's Tesco Extra and avoid creating retail mayhem in our town centre. The notion that visitors would stroll across to a Broadwater Rd store should not be assumed given the permanent bus facility currently provided for Tesco visitors and staff at the railway station.

Though I have respect for the retail and marketing achievements of Tesco sadly their development reputation carries less regard, and indeed with others throughout the UK. They would be much wiser using the site for a development of premium homes which would benefit from access to London's West End in 30mins and the City in 40mins. With the new Sainsbury underway we are now in sight of serious improvement to the south side of our town centre and this should not be put at risk.

I urge our Council Members to show leadership and reject this planning application and ensure that the town centre is developed and promoted in line with the proposals already considered for Welwyn Garden City and that we do not expose our community to socio-economic decline.

Yours faithfully

