

12<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Braintree District Council  
Planning Department

Dear Sirs

**Planning Applications 07/02151/FUL 07/02152/FUL**

The Chamber of Trade and Commerce for Braintree and Bocking would like to voice concerns about the above planning applications.

The two out-of-town stores were granted planning permission in order that local shopping facilities for those two communities were provided. These new applications are seeking to change the official standing of those stores. Whilst the stores may have been grown, by Tesco, outside the spirit of the planning permission and therefore attracted users from some distance away, this does not mean that the permission should be allowed de facto and thus the out-of-town-centre sites be allowed to expand without close examination. We urge this close examination.

We understand that the planning rules do not take into account the question of competition, but they do require that vitality and viability are maintained. If Tesco are to have such a physically dominant position in the area, it will make it extremely difficult for an alternative to enter the market. This will affect vitality and viability. Their dominance in the area already has an effect on other retailers and an expansion will make that dominance even stronger and reduce the ability of other retailers to come along.

Tescos' expansion into multiple non-food ranges consistently "nibbles" away at the trading offer of other retailers. Their own submission includes an indication that they feel that their store expansions may cost Sainsbury some 17% of it's trade. They may feel that this is a withstandable loss but Sainsbury may have a different idea. Tesco do not seem to have addressed the problems that their presence may cause smaller retailers, but anecdotally, I can report that George Yard Shopping Centre retailers notice to their detriment when Tesco adds a new range of product.

There is already limited choice in the Braintree area for food shopping and we are concerned that this will be further limited by unbridled expansion of one business.

A disproportional balance in favour of one business reduces the ability of creative input into retailing because it a sector becomes so cut throat that no other business can afford to take a chance. The consumer will end up with only very limited offer, which is similar

in all outlets – banks now all offer the same thing, with only minor difference between them –an homogenizing effect.

In total, Braintree Chamber believes that the Tesco stores should not be allowed any further expansion.

Yours faithfully

Brenda Baker  
Chair  
Braintree Chamber of Trade & Commerce