Planning a Vibrant Leighton Buzzard

I ♥ LB

Leighton Buzzard & Linslade

Go local first

Planning a Vibrant Leighton Buzzard

Introduction

“Town Centres are at the heart of our communities and neighbourhoods. They are the places that we come together, to shop, to work, to relax and to be entertained”

“We continue to support the “town centres first” policy.

Eric Pickles Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

What this document is
This is a condensed version of our findings based against the Planning Policies from the Government to dispute and repudiate the Tesco claims that their proposal could be beneficial to the town. This is backed up by a summary and comment of the Planning Inspectors report from 2003.

Tesco’s new planning application
This is the second time in 11 years that Tesco have applied for an extension to their store in Vimy Road, Linslade. It was turned down by the then South Bedfordshire Council in 2000. Tesco then appealed and the Planning Inspector upheld the South Bedfordshire decision in early 2003.

What is happening this time?
This time around Tesco have stated that they are not renewing Homebase’s lease and wish to demolish this building and use part of the land for extending their store and the bulk of the Homebase site to be turned into a car park. As part of the S106 Tesco are offering a 159 sq metre (1700 sq foot) café/kiosk by the canal and to re-landscape the edge of Tesco owned land on Leighton Road. The kiosk/café is not going to be run by Tesco but leased out. The likelihood is that it will be a national chain as the size is suggestive of a fast food franchise and the space allocated will fit into a number of fast food companies store formats. It would be too expensive for most independents.

Why there is opposition
The I Love LB Group, a group of local business people and local citizens, are opposing the Tesco plans as they are seen to be detrimental to the town and its population. This proposed extension could have serious repercussions for the proposed development in the town centre and edge of town centre which have the potential to transform Leighton Buzzard and the area and enable the town to “claw back” up to £70 million of Leighton-Linslade disposable income that now finds its way to Milton Keynes. Something that could improve the financial situation of Central Bedfordshire through car park fees, business rates and other financial and social factors.
And also to give a better understanding of the actual proposal and to give a balanced view to the public so they can decide.

Researching the proposal
We have looked at and researched thoroughly the Tesco proposals and we have also extensively used Government and local government planning regulations and frameworks, as well as Retail studies from Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale. Leighton-Linslade is on the border with Buckinghamshire and the town gets both consumers from Buckinghamshire, but more importantly more of our consumers go to Milton Keynes. We found the Tesco proposals seriously lacking in a number of areas and are not conducive to the future health of the town centre or the population of the town as a whole. The spin was very much, as you would expect, towards Tesco. However, Tesco do miss the point that a majority of people in the town do not use

Tesco and a majority of people do not think that Tesco should expand as it is big enough as it is, both the store as it is and the company itself.

Backing up a more detailed document
We think you will find that the facts, figures and illustrations that are in this document will help you formulate your decision. And there is further proof with a document sent to Central Bedfordshire in late January rebutting the findings and impressions Tesco have made in their Planning and Retail Assessment from the I Love LB Group.

We live here
As opposed to the Tesco application, which has been formulated by people who are not from the area and based on desk research and minimal research from other consultants, this has been compiled by local people who have a much greater vested interest than Tesco. Simply, we live here and care passionately about the town. .

Leighton Buzzard Town Centre

Leighton Buzzard Town Centre at present
Leighton Buzzard has around 220 retail businesses and services in the town centre proper. 75% of these businesses are independently owned. They also support a network of smaller businesses – window cleaners, cleaners, local trade services, accountants and bookkeepers. Vacancy rate is 12 shops or around 4%, one of the lowest for this size of town in the country. Of these shops 4 are being investigated by new tenants or in the process of being refurbished.

Medieval Planned town
Leighton Buzzard is a planned medieval town planned around the market which has existed for over 1000 years and is held on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

A walkable town
The furthest away part of the town from the town centre by car is about 2.5 miles (Bideford Green) the bulk of the town is within a mile of the town centre by foot.

Supermarkets in Leighton Buzzard and their use
The town is well served with 5 supermarkets. Over 95% of main shopping and 91% of top up shopping is made in Leighton Buzzard. (Shape Your Future. CBC) This is in direct contradiction from Tesco "It is considered that owing to larger foodstores in nearby towns (Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, Dunstable, etc) shopper who should look to Leighton Buzzard for food and lower order comparison goods shopping are choosing to do their food shopping in these other centres and then taking advantage of the respective town centre offer for other services and facilities. A larger foodstore in Leighton Buzzard will help to bring back some of the customers for the benefit of the town."
Page 14 Design and Access Statement Tesco November 2010.

Supermarkets in LB are very well used
That statement is not true as it is demonstrated by the retail study figures that over 90% of all food shopping is carried out in Leighton Buzzard. Why would people drive miles to shop when you have a good choice of supermarkets here? Yes, if people go to other places then logically they will shop for food if they need it. That is why it is called convenience.

Comparison Goods
With comparison goods the town is well served by DIY and Homeware stores. There is a reasonable mix of stores selling jewellery, stationery, furniture and other items. The weakest area is clothing and footwear with just under 10% of all disposable income for clothes being spent in Leighton Buzzard. (Shape Your Future. CBC)

Disposable income spend on Comparison goods
Only 40% of disposable income in Leighton Buzzard is spent in Leighton Buzzard. 50% is spent in Milton Keynes. This is about £60-70 million or around £2,000 per head. £36 million is spent on clothes in MK. (Milton Keynes Borough Retail Study 2009)

Sequential Sites
There are two sequential sites in Leighton Buzzard. The land to the South Side of the High Street (2.5 hectares or 250,000 square feet) and Bridge or Smiths Meadow on the edge of town (5.5 hectares or 550,000 square feet)

Planning Briefs
CBC has obtained a grant from Government to get consultants to create planning briefs for these areas which the public consultation has recently been completed.

The South Side of the High Street is seen as the main site for retail and Bridge Meadow for community facilities, which Leighton Buzzard is sadly lacking.

What the population would like in LB
The population when surveyed in 2007 (I Love LB Group 850 questionnaires) stated that they wanted a better range of shops, especially clothes shops, to complement what is here already. Main reasons people go to Milton Keynes clothing, footwear and other goods not sold or perceived to be sold in Leighton Buzzard.

Tesco site in Linslade and Tesco in the immediate area

Tesco is actually situated in Linslade.

Tesco is officially an out-of-town-centre site
The Tesco site is 400 metres from the Leighton Buzzard town centre boundary as set out by GOAD (Shape your Future) this means that it qualifies as an out-of-centre site. Tesco are not interested in the town areas available. Nor are Tesco interested in using the Homebase site to sell other goods.

What Tesco actually is
Tesco in Linslade is primarily a convenience store. It also sells clothes, small range of books, CD's and other items. The car park is free for three hours and is shared at the moment between Tesco and Homebase. `
How far from the actual town centre?
However, to get to the town centre proper (620 metres) a person on foot has to negotiate first the Tesco Car park. They then have to cross the road at a very busy junction with the main arterial road of Leighton-Linslade at a zebra crossing. Walk along beside the busy road to get to another zebra crossing and then either cross another zebra crossing or walk up and cross the road further up Bridge Street. No matter what claims Tesco make not many people do this.

Tesco numbers in the local area
There are in a 20 mile radius of Leighton Buzzard town centre 50 Tesco sites of different formats. Twenty of these are in Milton Keynes with plans for two more Tesco supermarkets in Newport Pagnall and Olney. There are three in Leighton-Linslade. This is more than the other Big 4 supermarkets put together and matched only by the "symbol" stores of CO-OP, Spar and others, the small convenience stores in suburbs and villages.

Other campaigns against Tesco and other supermarkets
There are or there have been in the same 20 mile radius at least 15 campaigns against a Tesco format store in the last few years. Nationally against supermarkets there are over 350 on-going or resolved campaigns (Tescopoly).

This is not against Tesco as it stands it is against the extension.
Tesco owns the site and it is there and serves a function. We are against an extension of Tesco into areas it is not specialist in and gives a veneer of choice as opposed to a multi-choice town centre which it will, if the proposed South Side and Smiths Meadow developments goes ahead, have a major impact. Just look at Dunstable for an example of a supermarket (ASDA) selling a large range of comparison goods. We suspect that South Bedfordshire was promised more people into Dunstable, more jobs and a bright future when Asda pitched for this site.

Market Cross

Part One

Planning Policy Schedule 4: its impact on Leighton Buzzard from a Tesco and I Love LB standpoint.

PPS4 Policy introduction

To promote the vitality and viability of a town and other centres as important for communities. To do this the Government wants:

- new economic growth and development of main town centre uses to be focused in existing centres with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities.

- competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community (particularly socially excluded groups)

- the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and where appropriate enhanced to promote a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity.

EC4.1
Local planning Authority should proactively plan to promote competitive town centre environments and provide consumer choice by:

1. Supporting a diverse range of uses that appeal to a wide range of age and social groups.

2. Planning for a strong retail mix so that the range and quality of the comparison and convenience retail offer meets the requirements of the local catchment area, recognizing that smaller shops can significantly enhance the character and vibrancy of a centre.

3. Supporting shops, services and other important small scale economic uses in local centres.

4. Identifying sites in the centre or failing that on the edge of centre, capable of accommodating larger format developments where a need for such a development is identified.

5. Retaining and enhancing existing markets, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive by investing in their improvement

6. Taking measures to conserve, and where appropriate, to enhance the established character and diversity of the town centre.
EC4.2

Local planning authorities should manage the night-time and evening economy in centres

EC5.1

Local planning authorities should identify an appropriate range of sites to accommodate the identified need, ensuring that sites are capable of accommodating a range of business models in terms of scale. Format, car parking provision and scope for disaggregation. LPA's should:

A. Base their approach on the identified need for development

B. Identify the appropriate scale of development, ensuring the scale of sites identified and the level of travel they generate , are in keeping with the role and function of the centre within the hierarchy of centres and catchment served.

C. Apply the sequential approach to site selection (Policy EC5.2)

D. Assess the impact of sites on existing centres (Policy EC5.4)

E. Consider the degree to which other considerations such as physical regeneration benefits of developing on previously developed sites, employment opportunities, increased investment in an area or social inclusion, may be material to the choice of appropriate locations for development.

EC5.2

Sites for main town centre uses should be identified through a sequential approach to site selection. Under the sequential approach, LPA's should identify sites that are suitable, available and viable in the following order

A. locations in appropriate existing centres where sites or buildings for conversion are, or likely to become, available and viable within the plan period

B. edge of centre locations, with preference to sites that are or will be well connected to the centre.

C. out-of-centre sites, with preference given to sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and which are closest to the centre and have a higher likelihood of forming links with the centre.

EC5.4

Local Planning Authorities should

1. Take into consideration the impact considerations set out in policy EC16, particularly for developments over 2,500 sq metres or any locally set threshold under EC3.1.d, ensuring that any edge of centre or out of centre sites would not have an unacceptable impact on centres within the catchment of the potential development.

2. Ensure that proposed sites in a centre, which would substantially increase the attraction of that centre and could have an impact on other centres, are assessed for their impact on other centres.

3. Ensure that the level of detail of any assessment of impacts is proportionate to the scale, nature and detail of the proposed development

EC10.1
LPA's should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably.

EC10.2
All planning applications for economic development should be assessed against the following impact considerations.

1. Whether the proposal has been planned over the lifetime of the development to limit carbon dioxide emissions, and minimize vulnerability and provide resistance to, climate change

2. The accessibility of the proposal by a choice of means of transport and the effect on local traffic levels and congestion after public transport and traffic management measures have been secured.

3. Whether the proposal secures a high quality and inclusive design which takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way it functions

4. The impact on economic and physical regeneration in the area including the impact on deprived areas and social inclusion objectives

5 The impact on local employment.

EC14.3

Sequential Test (Under Policy EC15) for main town centre uses not in an existing town centre and not in accordance with an up to date development plan, including extensions for retail/leisure developments over 200 sqm.

EC14.4

Requires an impact assessment for retail/leisure developments over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace

EC15.1

In considering sequential analysis required under Policy EC14.3 LPA's should:

A. Ensure that the sites are assessed for availability, suitability and viability.

B. Ensure that all in-centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered.

C. Ensure that where it has been demonstrated that there are no town centre sites, preference is given to edge of town centre locations which are well connected to the centre.

D. Ensure that in considering sites in or around the edge of centres development and operation have demonstrated flexibility and intentions of

1. Scale, reducing the floorspace of the development

2. Format: more innovative site layouts and store configurations such as multistory with smaller footprint

3. Car parking: provision reduced or reconfigured car parking area.

4. The scope for disaggregating specific parts of retail or leisure.

EC15.2

In considering whether flexibility has been demonstrated under policy EC15.1.d above, LPA's should take into account any genuine difficulties which the applicant can demonstrate are likely to occur in operating the proposed business model from a sequentially preferable site, for example where a retailer would be limited to selling a significantly reduced range of products. However, evidence which claims that the classification of goods proposed to be sold cannot be sold in the town centre should not be accepted.

EC16. 1

Planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in a centre and not in accordance with an up to date development plan should be assessed against the following impacts on centres

1. The impact of the proposal on existing committed and planned public and private proposals in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal.

2. The impact on town centre vitality and vibrancy, including local consumer choice and the range and quality of the comparison and convenience retail offer.

3. The impact of the proposal on allocated sites outside the town centre being developed in accordance to the development plan.

4. In the context of retail or leisure proposal, the impact of the proposal on in centre trade/turnover and on trade in the wider area, taking account of current and future consumer expenditure capacity up to five years from the time the application is made

5. If located in or edge of town centre, whether the proposal is of an appropriate scale in relation to the size of the centre

EC17.1

Planning applications for a main town centre that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up to date development plan should be refused planning permission where:

1. The applicant has not demonstrated compliance with requirements of the sequential approach

2. Or there is clear evidence that the proposal is likely to lead to significant adverse effects in terms of any one of the terms of any one of the impacts in EC10.2 and EC16.1

Interpreting PPS4

Common Ground

Both ILLB and Tesco agree that the main document to use is PPS4 as the new local framework is still being considered. But how it is interpreted is different.

Is Tesco an edge of town or out-of-town-centre site?

Tesco have presumed that they are edge of town centre. They are not. The planning inspector quite firmly put Tesco as an out-of-town centre site. In accordance with the Government plans and regulations in-town centre and edge of town centre sites have to be looked at first or the sequential approach. Tesco may argue that black is white, but they are an out-of –town-centre site. They have to prove their case for extending.

Sequential approach

The Government has made it quite plain that a Local Planning Authority has to secure any land that can be used to redevelop a town centre by all legal means possible. Leighton Buzzard has a package of land behind the town centre that is 250,000 square feet. There is also the Smith Meadow site which is 500,000 square feet in size. Both are more than adequate for Tesco's needs. Tesco have dismissed both of these. Partly because of the reason they own the land where they are now but because for them an out of town site is preferable to the format of their stores – based around car travel and car parks.

Policies

Policy EC14.3 confirms that a sequential analysis is required for planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre.
Policy EC15.1 which sets out the matters to be considered for the "proposed development" that is to be tested.

Town Centre First

The Governments main thrust in planning is the town centre. As stated in EC4.1 it is for a "diverse range of services that appeal to a wide range of age and social groups" The town centre historically has had the majority of shops and services in or around the centre. A town centre is not just a retail area. Tesco's main thrust is retail and quite clearly the Government line is not retail based; it is community based.

Planning Briefs

Central Bedfordshire has managed to get a Government grant to hire consultants to look at the two parcels of land. The planning briefs that will come out of this will go towards the future local area framework. The briefs are very much a mixture of retail, services and community facilities. These have been governed very much by the population. From the Big Plan instigated and created by Leighton-Linslade Town Council in conjunction with the population of the town, from population surveys and other council studies. The population realizes that it needs a wider range of shops in the town to improve the shopping offer. These plans, though needing more revision, are the right way to help Leighton Buzzard and its population. It is what the people want.

Future convenience and comparison goods requirements

The retail study conducted for South Bedfordshire by White Young and Green considered that there was some room for convenience growth but a lot of need for more comparison goods, especially in clothing. Other studies reveal that over £70 million of disposable income from LB and area goes out of town, mainly to Milton Keynes. Up to 2,500 sqm in convenience and 6,900 sqm + for comparison goods were the figure suggested.

Tesco's claim

Tesco argue that they are overtrading (see Part 5) and that they have an obligation to put that right and that an increase of 1,000-1300 sqm would remedy this. This is for convenience goods only. It could be equally claimed that Waitrose are overtrading. However, Tesco are looking at only increasing the convenience goods retail area by 511 square metres. And they are looking at increasing the comparison goods by 1014 sqm.

Sequential Analysis of proposal

It has been proven, and is a much better proposal, that land to the South of the High Street and Smith's Meadow has to be considered first. Tesco have only justified their proposal through overtrading, which is based on convenience goods, a much lower priority for the town, but using that space to place comparison goods, most of which the town centre sells anyway. And as it is up to the LPA once preferable sites have been identified to try and get those sites developed first. It is mixed "usage for all ages and social groups" that is the main priority. The planning briefs fulfill that.

Impact assessment

The main thrust of Tesco's argument is that the town needs to claw back revenue from Milton Keynes and they believe their proposal will help this. They reckon on sales of £3.68 million on the 614 sqm of "new comparison" space having taken out 400 sqm for taking on goods that Homebase sold that Tesco would sell in their store. This is based on sales per square metre of £6,000, which is taken as an arbitrary figure, and probably very low.

Where will this money come from?

Tesco argue that this money will come from people not going to Milton Keynes. Reality is that this money will come mainly from one place- Leighton Buzzard town centre. In various studies it is proven that a large new supermarket or extensions to supermarkets have an effect on the town centre in reducing footfall which in turn reduces spending which sets off reductions in staff or closure of businesses as enough people taken out of town centres will cause this. (See section 7)

What effect will the loss of £3.6 million have on LB Town Centre?

It is actually more than this. There will be an amount taken from the other supermarkets; there will be a knock-on effect where shops lose the footfall and the chance to sell additional goods. The figure is probably around £4.5 - £5 million perhaps more. That is 10% of comparison spend in the town centre as it stands at the moment. Although it will vary from type of business it is very difficult for any business to survive a loss of earnings as high as 10%. Staff will be cut and other measures taken to survive. This will drive more people to go to Milton Keynes. The complete reverse to what Tesco are after. This will have an impact on any plans to redevelop the town centre as potential investors will not come into a town that is losing shops.

Reduction in choice

The population of Leighton-Linslade has in a number of surveys expressed their view that they would like a wider range of shops in the town centre. Choice is a word that is used extensively by Tesco. Choice is crucial for the future of the town. The town needs a wider choice of shops, primarily clothing, to draw people back from Milton Keynes. The town centre needs a balance of national chains and independent businesses. From evidence a new or extended supermarket will cause a loss of business in the town centre and therefore reduce choice. Tesco will never replace shops that are lost in a town as they do not specialize. They pick and choose the best bits and give a minimal, if not non-existent, service.

More choice preferable

In Leighton Buzzard over the last 18 months there have been two major companies moved in – Subway and Costa Coffee. Most, if not all, people thought that these two large businesses would wipe out the small independent units in the town. They did have an effect but all the businesses are still there. The reason; people have a choice and a lot of choice in a small area. The proposed retail units for the South Side would complement, not put out of business other stores. The reason is simple; there is more choice in a small area. The main point of the town centre proposals is that the range of shops will bring in people who would usually go to Milton Keynes on a regular basis back in to the town on a regular basis and give more opportunities to all retailers to sell more goods and services.

Impact on in-centre trade and turnover

The proposed Tesco extension would have a devastating effect on the town centre. It would reduce the footfall and the sales in the town centre. It will have an effect on the town in the future. It will directly affect the street markets on Tuesday and Saturdays. It will reduce choice.

Appropriate Scale

The largest site in the town centre is Waitrose at 1256 sqm metres. The proposed Tesco building is 8599 square metres or 6.8 times larger. Though obviously it is not all selling space the basic fact is that it will be the biggest retail building in the town. The current store is 4.7 times larger.

Taking the car park area that Tesco has and superimpose the whole over the town centre it is half the size of the whole town centre. It would be like having two town centres. This is too large for a town such as Leighton Buzzard with over 100 buildings in the town Grade 2 listed and still based on a historic plan.

Planning Briefs

The planning briefs do not have large units. The proposed units will be larger than the current units in the town but will be proportionate. No one shop will dominate. This will produce the range and quality of shops that the town needs.

Satisfying Policy EC17

Tesco will not reuse the Homebase store even though they have a format that is home goods based. The main thrust of Tesco's proposal is to put everything under one roof. They have rejected the sequential approach of closer sites to the town centre. This does not satisfy the sequential approach set down. The space is there at both the South Side of the High Street and Smiths Meadow.

EC10.2

There are five considerations i

The **first** is reduction of carbo hich will be done if Tesco are successful as whatev nitored by I Love LB and other groups.

Second is accessibility by all types of transport. The primary way people get to the store is by car. Over 90% of traffic is in cars. Tesco state that there will be no additional traffic flow but they have neglected to incorporate the café/kiosk traffic. If this was to be a fast food/national chain franchise, then there will be a lot of traffic. This will not reduce the use of cars. Tesco is not easily accessible to a great proportion of the Leighton Buzzard population which lives more than a 20 minute walk away. The bus service is not extensive.

The **third** is high quality and inclusive design that improves the character and quality of the area and the way it functions. One huge building and a sea of car parking will not improve the area and is out of keeping with the town.

Fourth is the impact on the regeneration of the area. The two sites that have been identified could be seriously hampered if this extension goes ahead. The town needs a much stronger retail offer to get claw back money from Milton Keynes and this has to be mixed specialist retailing.

The **fifth** consideration is employment. One that Tesco trumpets. However, the number of people stated, 140, is 44% of the number they have currently employed, which is also the amount of extra space they are asking for. Evidence shows that for every 20 jobs a supermarket creates around 30 will go from the local area.

EC16.1

As described above the impact of an extension would be detrimental to the town centre. On their own figures Tesco reckon on £3.68 million which with other financial considerations is more like £4.5 to 5 million, or around 10% of comparison spends in the town centre.

In no way has Tesco demonstrated that the money would come from Milton Keynes. Their shopping offer does not make people to decided not go to Milton Keynes as they claim. The money they would take will come from the town centre. In their own documents they acknowledge that their goods are "mainly lower end" and this will not stop people going to Milton Keynes.

Conclusion

Based on PPS4 the Tesco proposal does not stack up. The impact will be too great on the town centre. It will lose the town jobs not gain them. It will reduce investment in the town. It will cause more social problems. It will reduce choice. The site is an out-of –town centre which is not the preferred government choice. The Government is pushing for "Town Centre First" which has been the main thrust for the last 15 years.

Part 2

Summary and comment from the Planning Inspectors report March 2003

Planning Inspectors Appeal Decision 11 Mar 2003
Appeal Ref. APP/N0220/A/1095401
Application SB/TP/200/0401

Reasons to include this document
This document goes to the heart of the matter in hand. The actual main issue as far as the Planning Inspector was concerned was the increase in "durable goods" (comparison goods) in the Tesco store at this time and its effect on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.
"The reason for refusal of the application refers specifically to the comparison goods impact it is believed would arise from the proposed extension." (Paragraph 11)
We are seeking the refusal of this new application on the same grounds.

"As I see it, therefore, the main issue comes down to whether it would be appropriate to have 690 square metres (2000) (1480 metres 2011) at the Tesco store (163 sqm existing plus 526 sqm proposed) (2000) devoted to selling durable goods. The location of the store in relation to the town centre, the need for the proposal and sequential test, are, in my opinion, matters reasonably to be addressed in assessing the likely impact" (paragraph 12).

Location of the Store and linked trips

"At present, the store entrance is 400 metres from the town centre 620 metres from the primary retail frontage." (Paragraph 13) "The store's location is out of centre rather than edge of centre" (paragraph 13)

In terms of PPS4 the far boundary of edge of town is 300 metres. This has a detrimental effect on the Tesco proposal as it is very evident that proposals for the town centre or failing that, edge of town centre, sites will be favourably looked upon. Out of centre and out of town are not looked on favourably.

The previous submission from Tesco in 2000 had a shopper's survey to see if there was a linked shopping angle with the car parking at Tesco being free. The evidence for this **"was not conclusive" (paragraph 15)**

A survey outside Tesco at the time had 6% of the customer interviewed visited the town centre that day, 6% for financial services, 3% food shopping and 6%for other reasons. 21% of total asked. **The survey was open to question as "the interview point was outside the car park" (Paragraph 16)**

Tesco argued that 35% of Tesco shoppers undertook linked trips. The Council agreed with the previous lower 21% given. Planning Inspector took as his base for calculations at 22%.

Hillier Parker who made a survey around this time **"found that 92% of those making linked trips (to the Town Centre from Tesco) did so by car"**

In 1996 Somerfield stores made a survey with their different formats of stores, in town, edge of town and out of town, using 12,000 people as their base. Their research found that people who used the town centre store spent 46 pence for every £ spent in Somerfield in the town centre. 23p in every £ at an edge of town centre store was spent in the town centre. Out of town centre stores only 10p in every £.

WYG stated that Tesco had 55% of convenience spend in Leighton Buzzard. Also that 95% of main shopping and 91% of top-up shopping was centre around Leighton Buzzard. Therefore according to the updated WYG Table 7C (Table 5 Tesco Planning and Retail Assessment) the convenience spend in 2016 is calculated at £99,233,268. Therefore Tesco's share is done on a straightforward 55% of that figure is £54,578,297.

If 22% of customers made linked trips into Leighton Buzzard from Tesco, then the calculation is £1.200 million spend (22% of £54.578 million divided by 10p.) If you take the higher 46p for town centre, then Waitrose at 15% of total LB convenience spend in its current space at £14,884,990 will have customers making £6,847,000 in linked purchases. And Morrisons as an edge of town £26,792,982 will have customers spending £6.162 million in linked purchases.

In simple terms the two other major supermarkets between them create £13 million in linked spending compared to Tesco's paltry £1.2 million. And this is comparison goods spending which is according to Table 4a in the Tesco Planning and Retail Assessment is £104,168,169. Waitrose and Morrisons linked spending percentages on these figures are 12.5% approximately and Tesco 1.15%. If Waitrose moved and expanded then these figures will get larger for the town centre and edge of town sites and Tesco would grow smaller.

The Planning Inspector did it a slightly different way (as a percentage of all comparison and convenience goods for the town centre at the estimated 2005 figures) but came to the same conclusion that the Tesco linked trips were worth far less to the town than Waitrose. And if Iceland was factored in then another £900,000 of linked trip money to be included from the town centre.

Need
"**Qualititative and quantitative need are not disputed in convenience terms" (Paragraph 23) However "site-specific convenience need cannot, however, be widened to justify an extension to be used for the sale of comparison goods" (Paragraph 23)**

Therefore Tesco's main argument that it needs more space is valid in terms of convenience need but not comparison. And in demolishing Homebase it further reduces the comparison retail area of the town. Equally Waitrose can also argue that if they can extend it makes much more sense economically. Every extra £1 million increase in sales at Waitrose will bring in approximately £460,000 in comparison linked shopping to the town centre.

The Planning Inspectors main point "is that comparison sales would be introduced where they do not presently exist (at least lawfully) and could thus have an effect on a town centre that might not otherwise be thought to be affected" (Paragraph 24)

This comment about "at least lawfully" is aimed at Tesco who had a condition put in at the original plan not to exceed a percentage of goods. The percentage we believe now to be no more than 30% comparison space of the retail sales area. The bone of contention is what constitutes comparison and convenience. And how it is measured by each party.

It was agreed by Tesco and Council in 2000 that 25% of all comparison spend was retained in the town. Taking the 2016 figure of Table 3 Tesco Planning and Retail Assessment, the overall figure is given as £164,393,523. The Milton Keynes retail Study figure after taking out special purchases (Internet) is £144.2 and WYG £133.5 million. This is potential turnover. Milton Keynes gives the retained spend at about 40 % or 57.7 million. Tesco would have it down to £41 million, which seems too low seeing as it was calculated for estimate in 2005 at £35.88 million and £40.75 million by 2008.

Going with the Milton Keynes figure which seems more realistic for 2016 than Tesco's, based on the comparison square metre sales of £3,679 the extra 1014 sqm that Tesco proposes will bring in potentially, £3.7 million. However, the differences between the WYG figure of current comparison space of 1104 sqm and the 466 sqm that Tesco quote makes a big difference. 2118 sqm equals £7.792 million total turnover. 1480 sqm £5.44 million. £5.44 million is 9.46% of the total. £7.792 million is 13.50% of the £57.7 million. Tesco in 2000 were looking at a durable (comparison sales) of £2 million on 656 sqm (£3048 per sqm) (See Part 7 for a plan of Tesco's comparison area in the current store to substantiate the WYG figure)

For one store to have as large a percentage of comparison good sales is unrealistic for the viability of the town centre shops. There is not the evidence that the offer that Tesco wants to have (depending on the size) will come from Milton Keynes. It is more than likely to come at the expense of the town centre shops as seems to be the case in most other towns.

Being out of town centre does not give the customer the choice of checking in other stores as you would in a town centre with a wider range of goods. It is well known that a perception of being cheap is powerful in making people believe that everything is cheap. As quoted from Bernie Marcus head of Home Depot that "special offers are islands in an ocean of profits". Classic marketing, draw them in and they will spend. Tesco are not necessarily the cheapest, nor have the range. Buyer beware. (See compared prices and services section 7)

Tesco rely on the one off impulse purchase. Unfortunately that is usually enough to whet a persons desire and to do enough to stop them going elsewhere.

The Planning Inspector concludes Need section with the following "Accordingly, I see no qualititative need (for Tesco) to retail durable goods…… (This) represents commercial policy not qualitative needs"

Sequential Analysis

The Planning Inspector recognized that the only area in the town centre was the land south of the High Street. Tesco said it was too small for even a small supermarket, though the area from the Post Office to Duncombe Drive car park if brought as a parcel of land is about 7,800 square metres, about the size of Homebase and a little more. The point was made that the land was not for convenience goods - but comparison. This area will certainly now take the comparison goods increase. That is the problem for Leighton Buzzard, the comparison goods not convenience offer needs to improve. Tesco's argument that there is nowhere for them to go closer to the town centre is wrong. The area that the Planning Briefs identify is 250,000 square feet for the South Side. The sequential approach is crucial to regenerate the town centre. The main choice of shops in Leighton Buzzard is in the town centre and this is where new comparison stores should be.

Impact

Tesco in 2000 stated that the impact of the previous application for an extension was going to be £530,000. The council at the time was looking at £1.13 million out of total comparison sales of £35.29 million or just over 3.2%. The comparison goods impact would be at least £2 million possibly higher. It would also take away convenience goods as well from Waitrose which will lower the linked shopping amount as well.

Further to this. If Homebase is not replaced then the turnover of Homebase which is possibly about £10 million (calculated at £5 million in 2000) then the full impact will be, if some of this turnover is absorbed by the other town retailers, anything between £7 – 10 million. This is not what the town needs.

Conclusion on the Main Issue

Tesco is an out of town centre location

That potentially up to 22% of shoppers make linked trips

Government Policy looks to locate new retail space in town centres and first preference should be for town centre sites.

There is no reason in principle why comparison goods proposed to be sold at the Tesco store could not be sold in the town centre. It does not need Tesco to sell them.

"Accordingly, the proposal fails the test of national retail policy before the trading impact on the town comes to be assessed"

"That the proposal runs directly contrary to firmly established policy"

"To sell (comparison goods) at an out-of-town centre location would fail to sustain or enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Leighton Buzzard town centre – irrespective of whether or not it is a healthy town centre."

I Love Leighton Buzzard Group standpoint.

It is too big and in the wrong place
An extension of Tesco with the majority of the retail area given over to comparison goods is not good news for the town. And as will be shown Tesco, and other supermarkets, are turned down due to the impact that they will have on a town centre, the main building block of Government plans. The loss of shops, jobs and community cohesion will be detrimental to Leighton-Linslade.

What the people of the town would like to see
The people of Leighton-Linslade have told us that what they require in the town is a range of shops that they can use on a day to day basis. We used to be quite self sufficient as a town and now we are not. And a trip to Milton Keynes or elsewhere is a drain on people's resources. To have one dominant store in town and a lack of choice is not what a lot of people want or desire.

Change in the age of population
And bear in mind over the next twenty years the median age of the population changes there will be a bigger percentage of people over 60 in the town. The whole point of a town centre is to be a focal point of retail, social, health and other community activities. Our street market is very important. A town centre has to be able to function for all and the elderly and the less well off need a healthy town centre. Not everyone drives and this is true of a lot of older people, and Tesco is very much geared to the car and two thirds of the population lives on the other side of the River Ouzel and public transport is not geared to Tesco. But the town centre is set up for all of these needs.

Centre Parcs
Equally, the town will have on its doorstep by 2015/6 a Centre Parcs Holiday Village which will bring an influx of people into the area. Leighton Buzzard is a nice town to visit and it would be a shame if a lot of the town centre died and made the town unattractive to visit because of a decision to let Tesco expand. It would be detrimental to the town of Leighton Buzzard and the whole Central Bedfordshire area.

Last word

"The sequential test is king"

Christopher Katkowski QC
Landmark Chambers.

Part 3
Places in the UK that have rejected a Tesco store expansion and why.

Planning Inspectors Rejections

Stoke on Trent 2010. The Council and the Planning Inspectors rejection of the Tesco Expansion upheld by the Secretary of State based on PPS4.

The Tesco store of 5,342 square metres was built in 1982 and in Tesco's opinion needed to be overhauled. They applied for a rebuild and extension to 9,383 sqm or a 53% increase. Most of the increase in retail space for comparison goods.
Turned down eventually by Secretary of State who agreed with the Planning Inspector that there would be a major impact on the local town centre, that it was too far out and closer land was not considered.

Douglas Isle of Man 2010

Tesco was turned down from expanding their store. The bulk of the stores new space, 2,200 sqm was destined for comparison goods, added to the original 256 sqm, or half the new stores full proposed retail area. .
The extension was turned down mainly because "The Tesco application site is not within Douglas Town Centre. It is an out of town centre site. Furthermore, to allow a major addition of retail development on a site some 800 metres from the main shopping area of Douglas would set a

dangerous precedent for future shopping policy and retail investment on the island" **Planning Appeals Administrator Isle Of Man. 2010.**
The site was also turned down because of its large size in contrast to the shops in Douglas (Population 26,000) the stores footprint would have been over 100,000 square feet.
And finally the traffic situation around the store was called into question as it was felt that the traffic would be too much for the roads to take and make the town more congested.

Trafford Greater Manchester

Tesco applied twice after their initial food store was approved to increase the floorspace by 83% and 99% respectively to over 8,000 sqm **before** the initial store was even built. Most of the increase in space was for comparison goods.
The extensions were further rejected due to the Planning Inspectors not accepting Tesco's impact assessment considering it as too low and that there would be a major impact on the local shops. Also there were sequential problems and the design and the size of the proposed larger store was deemed to be overwhelming.

Other store extension rejections

Hull (2009): Application to knock down and rebuild and expand store rejected**.**

Honiton Devon (2009): Wanted to replace store with new and extended store. Planning Inspector turned down Tesco's appeal due to the impact the store would have on Honiton town centre shops.

Helston Cornwall (2006) Tesco wanted to double the size of their store. Rejected due to the adverse impact there would be on the town centre shops.

Major decisions against Tesco stores and other supermarkets 2010 and the reasons why.

Redhill 2011: Refused store as it is"dislocated from the town centre"

Urmston Lancashire 2011: Turned down as there was a perceived negative impact on Eccles town centre, traffic problems, noise and pollution.

Wadebridge Cornwall 2011: Refused a Sainsbury's site due to adverse affect on Wadebridge town Centre.

Keyworth 2010: Out of keeping with area, parking problems, major impact on local business.

Bingley 2010: Tesco refused a store due to impact on Bingley town centre

Crosby Village Liverpool 2010: Sainsbury's application to tear down old store and replace it with a store three times bigger rejected. Would have resulted in 21 shops and buildings demolished. Major adverse impact.

Alton Hampshire 2010: Tesco refused a store out of town centre. Basic reasons were it was too far out of the town centre, it would have a major impact on Alton town centre and other local centres.

Morpeth Northumberland 2010: Both Tesco and Sainsbury turned down due to the negative impact on Morpeth town centre.

Leek Staffordshire 2010: Tesco refused store due to the impact on the town centre and not considering sites closer to the town centre.

Padiham: Tesco turned down due to traffic and impact on town centre.

Part 4

Overtrading and what it really means.

Overtrading

Overtrading is an overused and misunderstood phrase. Overtrading in its purest sense is that the physical store cannot cope with the volume of customer traffic and stock turnover and needs to expand to improve conditions for all and to satisfy demand.

Overtrading and supermarket uses

Overtrading – as used by the supermarkets is not quite used correctly in a lot of cases. Each store and each town is different. But overtrading in the sense that Tesco are using it is only for convenience goods. Unless you know what they are talking about it can be quite confusing.

Convenience and Comparison Goods

Convenience goods are basically human food, drink, newspapers, magazines, cigarettes and some basic non durable goods such as tissues. (See Part 7 for list)

All the rest, including pharmaceutical and health goods and goods for pets, are comparison.

Using "overtrading" as a reason to expand

Tesco are arguing that they need to expand because they are "overtrading" on convenience goods. However, the extension is not for all convenience but for two thirds comparison which is not the reason for the extension.

Overtrading for Tesco is

Difficulty ensuring that there is sufficient stock on the shelves to keep up demand from the high number of customers.

Needing to consider reducing range and choice in order to carry higher amounts of more popular items

Conflict between shoppers and employees stocking shelves during busy times

Difficulty in respect to circulation both within the aisles themselves and at the front of and behind the checkouts

Insufficient checkouts to meet the needs of customer leading to long queues

Tesco Planning and Retail Assessment 2010

Problems with these reasons

Tesco have longer store hours than any store in the town. It also has more checkout points, both manned and self service than any other store in town. The aisles are approximately the same size as comparable supermarkets in town. Their car park is bigger. From observation and from anecdotal evidence there is no real "overtrading" at this store, Indeed Tesco have a very questionable tendency to have shops "overtrading" indeed of the top 10 supermarkets overtrading in a 11 mile radius of LB 7 are Tesco. They also have the lowest percentage of shop floor space for convenience goods than any of the other Big 4 supermarkets.

Overtrading and the Isle of Man

Overtrading is an excuse to get a bigger store and sell more comparison goods as there is more profit in those. The Isle of Man store was increasing by 2,200 square metres in comparison goods if they had got their extension and very little to convenience goods which they were using the "overtrading" argument in convenience to get what they wanted which was more space for comparison.

Convenience and Comparison Need in Leighton Buzzard

In the retail studies there is need for extra space for both convenience and comparison goods in Leighton Buzzard. Bear in mind that there is a shrinkage in the spending of every household; rising fuel costs and other financial problems; the need is to be taken with a sense of caution.

Claw back

However, there is a need for Leighton Buzzard to "claw back" up to £70 million that is spent in Milton Keynes from Leighton Buzzard. This has to be a much larger proposal than Tesco and should be in the town centre to complement what is already here. And this need is for comparison goods as the town is well catered for by the supermarkets and other food shops and market stalls in the town for convenience. That is the supermarkets main job as convenience goods providers.

Why the Tesco extension is not useful to the town

The Tesco offer is not helpful to the town. If Tesco were in the town centre then it would not be such a problem. But they are not. The basic fact is that having more stores in the town centre will help the town whilst a development outside the town will harm it. The simple reason is choice; choice in a defined area not a one stop shop. As studies have shown an in town centre store more is spent per £ than outside of town centre. In town 46p is spent and out of town 10p (Somerfield 1996).

To fully qualify a statement made by Tesco
The Tesco store "exhibit significant overtrading, and that some additional floor space (around 1300 sqm) would restore benchmark trading conditions" Quoted from the Retail Study update, which goes on to say"it would be reasonable for the LPA to insist on measure to improve linkages on foot between the town centre and Tesco and to **retain the limitation on comparison goods." The retail study concludes that it is convenience not comparison that should be considered for an extension.** However, Waitrose is overtrading as well and equally could lay claim to the additional space required.

Leighton Buzzard needs a wider range of shops not less

Leighton Buzzard needs a much better and bigger shopping offer than Tesco could ever hope to offer. The impact of a Tesco expansion would cause a lot of problems for the town. Tesco will not make people stay in Leighton Buzzard and not go to Milton Keynes with their offer. We need a broader appeal to the people of the town that can only come from a multi-unit redevelopment of shops and services the town actually needs to claw back this £70 million going across the border into Milton Keynes.

Part 5
Statements about towns and town centres

Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 -2031

Vision:

People can easily access high quality leisure and cultural facilities and the natural environment, which are enjoyed by all

Our towns and village centres are at the heart of our communities, and support to help them grow and thrive is critical to delivering economic success and great places to live.

Investment is needed to improve our transport system and community facilities, as well as our green and public spaces.

In 3-5 years we will have:

Completed town centre plans that set out how we guide and encourage investment in our High Street, enable access to our public services and develop better public places for people to meet in, shop and enjoy.

Build a sense of identity and belonging by enabling more people to influence decisions in their locality if the wish, and empowering and supporting people to manage their local community facilities.

Encourage people and businesses to buy and supply locally.

Leighton-Linslade will retain its high quality market town character with development mainly focused on new housing and employment opportunities to support its self sufficiency. It will retain and enhance its services in the town centre and seek to improve its "green wheel" of attractive open spaces.

For Leighton Linslade the priorities are to consolidate the town centre to provide for the retail, service and cultural needs of the growing town and to enhance the public transport accessibility, while conserving and enhancing its townscape.

New developments to extend the centre of the market town of Leighton Buzzard, providing a range of modern retail units, accommodation for business and a large venue for community meetings, transforming the area between the river and canal.
To ensure that social infrastructure is in place to enable people and organizations to create, run, and sustain the voluntary and community groups, volunteering programmes, social networks and cultural activities required for existing and new communities.

Meeting development needs, whilst protecting and maintaining the compact market town atmosphere is important. **Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee**.

Stirling University Diversity Report

Towns are not merely centres of trade. It is important not to equate a town centre with a shopping centre. In terms of land use or commercially activity, shopping may well be the major function of a town centre, but the town centre should be the focal point for a whole range of commercial and community activities….

Main observations from many studies:

Development of urban sites of directly competitive chain merchants will reduce the overall vigor of the local economy.

Local merchants generate a substantially greater local economic impact than chain retailers

Modest changes in consumer spending habits can generate a substantial local economic impact.

The more diverse a town the better it survives.

In nature a diverse habitat produces equilibrium

American study in 1948 examined two towns of the same population and distance from big city and similar transport links. The town that had most of its businesses and shops in independent hands were better off that the town with fewer businesses in fewer and more distant hands. The first town's facilities were far better and social problems fewer.

Local economic theories maintain that money spent in local shops circulates a lot longer. A number of local businesses are dependent on each other, cleaners, accountants, and service people. And many of the smaller branches of chain stores are of benefit. Halfords, Boots, Argos and WH Smith put back over 15% of their income back in the economy. Tesco puts back 8%.

High Street Britain 2015: All party Parliamentary Report

Concerned that most small shops will disappear from the streets of Britain by 2015:

"The small retailer sector is a key driver of entrepreneurship, employment, skills, local economies, innovation and sophisticated business relationships.

All Party Parliamentary Group on Town Centres Report Jan 2011

"Since 1996 Government Planning Policy has been to promote development in Town Centres – shopping, leisure, offices- which requires developers to select town centre sites, or if proposing an out-of-town-centre development to demonstrate that they could not find a more central site."

"Town Centres First Policy has across-the-board support in Parliament, among the public and with **most developers and retailers**."

Likely outcomes if this policy not supported:

"Medium size/smaller towns –will continue to lose out if out-of-centre superstores selling non-food as well as food take their trade."

"Further decline in the retail share of town centres due to supermarkets, the internet and retail parks – in that order"

Action needed:

"**To recognize that strong and healthy, vital and viable town centres are essential to the local economy – there is a strong rational to the Town centres First policy"**

"There are strong social reasons that town centres are accessible to all, especially those without access to a car, they enable people to make trips that allow several tasks to be done in the same trip (linked trips) and town centres are the heart of our communities"

"Restate the need for town centres and recognize that town centres need good management to stay healthy – a partnership between local authorities, business and local communities.

The property developers point of view

Jon De Mello of CRBE (Property consultants)

"Out of town retail is more convenient for people to get to. Local town centres can't provide for modern retailers needs."

"(Retail) Park outside Orpington Kent where several large retailers have decamped from the town centre and what is left in the town centre are discount and charity shops.

"(In this retail park which is out of town) a massive Tesco Extra has opened which contains more non food than the entirety of the town"

A Tesco representative was asked by ILLB what town has benefited from a new or extended Tesco recently. Orpington was the answer.

Orpington town centre has had the heart ripped out of it. The last check on retail vacancies in Orpington (population 20,000) has **70 shops for sale or for rent.** This includes most of an in-town centre shopping centre called the Walnuts. The Tesco site and the retail parks are well outside the town centre with the only real access by car.

Nationally about 25% of households do not have a vehicle. In Leighton-Linslade it is around 2,000 households (Census 2001). That is not fair to these people, young and old.

This is why the Government is against out of town centre sites- they are too car-centric and do exclude a good proportion of people.

The above statements from a developer show what motivates them, large scale developments where they can make money with no thought of the people who can't easily visit these places. Vacant shops do not interest them. It also goes against the grain of Government thinking and views from all parties. Clone town Britain on the march.

Of course Tesco has more non food than the rest of Orpington; there are no shops left.

Part 6
Conclusions

The extension is not right

It is quite clear that the Tesco proposal for an extension is not right for the town. Tesco as it stands at the moment is fine. Not a problem. And as for extending to compensate the "overtrading" in convenience has some merit but really cannot be justified, especially when other stores actually do have a space problem and the use for the extra space is comparison goods.

Tesco and other supermarkets do get rejected

As illustrated in other towns, Tesco and others are rejected because of the impact that they could have on the town centre. This is now gathering momentum as the impacts of earlier supermarket developments, especially coming out of town centres, can be seen around the country affecting towns and cities. It is being realized more and more that this is not the way forward. Central Government sees it, other national bodies see it and now the public is seeing it more and more. And 12,000 shops closed in one year is not good for the country.

Community issue not just retail

It is not just a retail issue at the end of the day. It is a community issue, therefore much more serious. The town centre is the heart of the community. The town centre is for all. It is the retail, social, health and spirit of the community. They are walkable, accessible and cater for all.

Tesco needs to stick to its knitting

Tesco serves a function as a food store. It fills a need we all have. But we have a choice and for a lot of people Tesco on its own is not a choice. Having 10 clothes shops, or 10 cafes or two sweet shops is a choice, especially when they are in the same proximity. Coming to Leighton Buzzard should be a shopping experience. Tesco? The Grocer magazine conducted a survey in 2006. Of all the Tesco customers they interviewed **57% said they were bored by Tesco, 54% said they were overwhelmed.** Not a great advert.

And is bigger better? No. Is more choice healthier? Yes. More diversity better? Yes.

On planning guidelines Tesco does not tick the boxes.

It is out of town centre

The proposed store is far too big for the area
The impact it would have on the town centre would be at least £4 million. Its impact on Milton Keynes would be very small if there was any at all.
Take £5 million worth of trade out of the town centre and all shops will suffer independent and chain alike.
The sequential analysis Tesco fails as it does not want to move closer to town.
There would be traffic problems.
Jobs – there would be more lost than gained
Jobs- there is a very big question mark over the number promised
This extension proposal should be rejected on planning grounds

Part 7
Facts Figures and illustrations

Results of Tesco's own Community Consultation held in their store in September

The presentation that Tesco held in their own store was accompanied by a simple tick box questionnaire/comment form.

These results are from Tesco's own submission to the Council for their extension which can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Planning site under the reference CB/10/04238/Full under Statement of Community Consultation.

142 comment forms were filled out. 19 were not properly filled in (no or part address)
Therefore 123 forms were valid

Results were
60% (74) were against
36% (44) were for
4%   (5) undecided.

Biggest concerns for people

Loss of Homebase
Needs an Instore café
Impact of traffic
Impact of the extension on the town centre shops

Interestingly enough this was held inside the store and was mainly viewed by regular Tesco customers, not exactly the "Community" and still the reaction was against the extension.

Convenience and comparison lists.

The supermarkets do like to confuse people with their definitions of what is and what is not convenience and comparison. The lists below are the official listing from the UN.

COICOP Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose (United Nations)

Convenience Goods
Food and Drink (except pet food)
Tobacco
Alcoholic Drinks
Newspapers and Magazines
Non Durable Goods

Comparison Goods
Clothing
Footwear
Materials for repair and maintenance of buildings
Furniture and Furnishings
Carpets and other floor coverings
Household textiles
Major Household Appliances
Small electrical appliances
Tools and miscellaneous accessories
Glassware
Tableware and household Utensils
Medical Goods and Pharmaceutical products
Bicycles
Recording Media
Games, Toys and Hobbies
Sporting and Camping Equipment
Musical Equipment
Garden Equipment
Plants and Flowers
Pet food and related products
Books and Stationary
Audio-visual, photographic and information recording equipment
Appliances for personal care
Jewellery
Watches and Clocks
Other personal Effects

Non Durable Goods not included in Convenience Goods
Brushes and scrapers for paint
Varnish and Wallpaper
Fire Equipment for transport
Transport cleaning materials
Horticultural products for ornamental gardens
Paper handkerchiefs
Toilet paper
Toilet Soap

Supermarket sales in LB area convenience sales and overtrading

Store	Convenience Area m2	Estimated floor Space	Company sales per m2 average (figures at different times)	Sales by bench	Calculated	Average m2	Overtrading	Convenience Space %
Tesco Vimy Road	2300	3404	13184	29.6	50.8	22070	21.2	
Tesco Bletchley	2649	3604	13481	35.7	45.1	17025	9.4	
Tesco Metro Luton	1200	1420	13481	15.8	29	24196	13.2	
Tesco Skimpot Rd Dunstable	4250	6637	13481	56	60.6	14429	4.6	
Tesco Tring Road Aylesbury	3060	4020	13417	41	69.3	22647	28.3	
Tesco Broadfields	3840	6160	13417	46.6	52.5	13671	5.9	
Tesco Kingston	4715	12058	13481	63.6	71.8	15228	8.3	
	22014	37303		288.3	379.1	17220	90.9	59
Asda Bletchley	5442	7000	13596	74	38.6	7092	-35.4	
Asda Wigmore Luton	3500	4666	13646	47.8	88.8	25379	41	
Asda Queensway	5000	6750	13646	68.2	40	7998	-28.2	
	13942	18416		190	167.4	40469	-22.6	75.7
Sainsbury Luton Bury Park	2500	2676	9870	24.7	37	14793	12.3	
Sainsbury Bramingham	3300	3723	9870	32.6	51.5	15606	18.9	
Sainsbury Dunstable	4000	6385	9870	39.5	30.7	7673	-8.8	
Sainsbury Aylesbury	1286	1429	10112	13	13	10116	0	
Sainsbury Bletchley	1388	1559	9899	13.7	16.6	11959	2.8	
	12474	15772		123.5	148.8	60147	25.20	79.1
Morrisons LB	2350	3669	11794	27.7	22.9	9756	-4.8	
Morrisons Aylesbury	2805	3330	11613	32.57	35.7	12752	3.2	
Morrisons MK	3689	7432	11415	42.1	46.2	12523	4.1	
	8844	14431		102.37	104.8	35031	2.5	61
Waitrose LB	1000	1286	12207	12.2	15.2	15219	3	
Waitrose MK	1626	2084	11602	18.9	22.2	13653	3.3	
	2626	3370		31.1	37.4	28872	6.3	78
Aldi LB	850	948	5211	5.2	4.1	4088	-1.1	
Aldi Luton	700	781	5211	3.6	6.9	9789	3.3	
Aldi Aylesbury	819	910	4638	3.8	2.6	3174	-0.92	
	2369	2639		12.6	13.6	17051	1.28	89.8

Iceland LB	450	557	4768	2.1	1.8	4078	-0.3	
Iceland Marsh Rd Luton	800	836	4768	3.8	5.5	6863	1.7	
Iceland Dunstable	500	564	4768	2.4	0.9	1737	-1.5	
Iceland Aylesbury	427	487	6078		2.7	6323		
	2177	2444			10.9	19001		89.0

Figures from Retail Studies from Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale
Differences between Tesco and White Young and Green Retail Study Figures

	Total retail	Convenience	Comparison
Tesco			
White Young and Green 2005	3404	2300	1104
Tesco 2010	3105	2639	466
Difference	-299	339	-638
Morrisons			
White Young and Green 2005	3669	2350	1319
Tesco 2010	2270	2050	220
Difference	-1399	-300	-1099
Waitrose			
White Young and Green 2005	1256	1000	256
Tesco 2010	1256	1000	256
Difference	0	0	0

Figures from Shape Your Future and Tesco Planning and Retail Assessment

Figures from Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale Retail Studies 2009

Overtrading	Company Benchmark	Calculated	Over/Undertrading
Convenience Goods	sales	Store sales	Millions
Asda Wigmore Luton	47.8	88.8	41
Tesco Tring Road Aylesbury	41	69.3	28.2
Tesco Vimy Road	29.6	50.8	21.2
Sainsbury Bramingham	32.6	51.5	18.9
Tesco Metro Luton	15.8	29	13.2
Sainsbury Luton Bury Park	24.7	37	12.3
Tesco Bletchley	35.7	45.1	9.4
Tesco Kingston	63.6	71.8	8.3
Tesco Broadfields	46.6	52.5	5.9
Tesco Skimpot Rd Dunstable	56	60.6	4.6
Morrisons MK	42.1	46.2	4.1
Waitrose MK	18.9	22.2	3.3
Aldi Luton	3.6	6.9	3.3
Morrisons Aylesbury	32.57	35.7	3.2
Waitrose LB	12.2	15.2	3
Sainsbury Bletchley	13.7	16.6	2.8
Iceland Marsh Rd Luton	3.8	5.5	1.7
Iceland LB	2.1	1.8	-0.3
Aldi Aylesbury	3.8	2.6	-0.9
Aldi LB	5.2	4.1	-1.1
Iceland Dunstable	2.4	0.9	-1.5
Morrisons LB	27.7	+22.9	-4.8
Sainsbury Dunstable	39.5	30.7	-8.8
Asda Queensway	68.2	40	-28.2
Asda Bletchley	74	38.6	-35.4
			113.4

Net floor space for convenience based on stores 11 miles from LB from official retail studies
Tesco 59%
Morrison's 61%
Asda 75.7%
Waitrose 78%
Sainsbury 79.1%
Iceland 89.07%

Aldi 89.76%

Price Comparisons

Category

Fruit	**Market**	**Tesco**	**Morrisons**
Apples Kg	1.54	1.66	1.67
Blood Oranges	8 for £1	6 for 1.99	6 for 1.99
Lemons	5 for £1.20	5 for £1	6 for £1.29
White seedless grapes kg	3.00	3.47	4.49
Melon	1.50	1.97	1.95
Conference Pears	1.54 (Eng)	1.97 (Dutch)	1.97 (Dutch)
Bananas kg bunch	70p Kg	77p kg	77p kg

Vegetables	**Market**	**Tesco**	**Morrisons**
English onions	88p Kg	82p Kg	82 Kg
Leeks	1.70 Kg	2.49 Kg	2.29 Kg
Brussel Sprouts	1.32 Kg	1.36 Kg	1.36 Kg
Swedes	66 Kg	1.24 Kg	60 Kg
Cucumber	70p	80p	80p
Cauliflower	£1.20p	97p	97p
Mushrooms	2.26 Kg	2.47 Kg	2.39 kg
Potatoes 5lb loose	1.50 (local)	1.67 (2.50Kg)	1.57(2.50 kg)
Salad Tomatoes	£1.76	£2.00	1.80

Eggs	**Market**	**Tesco**	**Farmers market**
1 Dozen large	1.50	3.00	2.60

Cheese	**Strattons**	**Tesco**	**Morrisons**
Mild Cheddar Kg	7.25	7.50	6.90
Medium Cheddar Kg	8.40	7.38	7.10

Meat (Organic)	**Strattons**	**Tesco**	**Market**
Pork chops Kg	7.50	12.83	7.50
Beef sausages kg	5.99	5.68	6.00
Lamb mince Kg	6.50	8.30	7.50
Large chicken Kg	3.30	4.38	5.00
Beef Mince Kg	4.50	**5.60**	6.00

Fish	**Market**	**Tesco**	**Morrisons**
Mackerel Kg	6.60 (Fresh)	8.37	8.40
Cod fillets Kg	8.70 (Fresh)	8.70	8.70
Rainbow trout kg	8.80 (Fresh)	6.69	6.85
Prawns Kg	6.00 (Fresh)	8.57	7.75

Bread	**Oliver Adams**	**Tesco**	**Farmers M**
Granary	1.60	1.10	1.60
Baguettes	.90	.79	.90
Farmhouse	1.50	1.30	1.50

Health Goods	**Boots**	**Tesco**	**Lloyds**
Pampers New Baby 24	3.33	5.97	5.99
Johnson's Baby shampoo	2.05	2.00	1.95
Kleenex for Men	3.01	1.80	2.45
Gillette Foam s/Skin 200 ml	1.32	1.35	1.59
Silvikrin Hairspray FH3 250	2.24	1.99	2.25
Nurofen Plus I&C 12 tablets	2.50	2.42	3.65

Pet food and accessories	**Selections**	**Tesco**	**Wilkinsons**
Cat litter Kg	4.38	1.56	2.29
Winalot Classics	.56	.56	.56
Whiskas Kg	2.28	1.43	2.29
Wild Bird Seed Kg	85	2.43	2.00

Basic Stationery	**Smiths**	**Tesco**	**Wilkinsons**
Sellotape	1.99 (50m) (OB)	1.47 (50m)	59p (60m) (OB)
A4 pad Refill	1.99(100sheets)	1.60 (150s)	80p (80 sheets)
Ream of printer paper	4.99	4.50	2.80

Sweets/Crisps	**Market**	**Tesco**	**Wilkinsons**
Selection Cadbury	40p	57p	44p
Fox's Creams	70p	50p	78p

Pies	**Farmers Market**	**Tesco**	**Strattons**
Steak and Kidney	5.00	4.49	4.50
Cottage Pie	6.00	4.80	4.50
Apple Pie (1 person)	2.00	1.00	1.50

Batteries	**Boots**	**Tesco**	**Wilkinsons**	**Argos**
Duracell Plus AA	4.07	2.95	3.48	3.59
Energizer Ultra Plus AAA	3.77	2.95	2.98	3.19

The main factor with this is the quality of the goods and the service that you get. With the butchers you get advice on cooking the meat. With the majority of independents and small chains you will get superior service, usually for free. It is the skill and the knowledge of the independents that will be lost if shops are forced to close. This is what you pay for and the fact that they maybe a little bit dearer does not mean you don't get value for money. Usually it is the other way around; the cheapest can work out more expensive in the long run.

Getting things into perspective

Proposed Gross Floor Area of Tesco: 92,000 square feet
Retail area 48,760 square feet

Town centre biggest units selling floor areas

Waitrose: 13,842 square feet
Wilkinsons: 8,438 square feet
99p Store: 7,700 square feet approx
Peacocks: 4,700 square feet (estimated)
Total: 34,680 square feet.

Total shop floor area of all Waterborne Walk shops including Waitrose: 66,000 square feet

Therefore the whole Tesco building would swallow up all of the Waterborne Walk from Waitrose to New Look shops, paths and alleyways and the buildings and areas behind these buildings that front the High Street from Oxfam to Clarks Shoes. One building.

Add the Tesco car park and you have an area that covers most of the town centre.

The Tesco building would be 6.6 times bigger than the shop floor area of Waitrose.

The café/kiosk that Tesco propose to build by the canal would be 1700 square feet in size which is bigger than most units in the town centre.

The amount of comparison goods space that Tesco would like to have is the equivalent size of Waitrose shop floor area and half of Superdrug's shop floor area.

The town, according to the consultants that produced the Retail study for Central Bedfordshire in 2009, needs about 6,900 square metres of extra comparison space by 2016. That is an area just bigger than the Homebase store and the Garden centre area.

What Tesco are thinking of going into or have gone into

Beauty Salons/ Hairdressing: Hairdressing, styling, waxing, possible tanning.

Cash for Gold

Jewellery

Used Cars: Threatening to go into this business this year

Gas & Electricity: Comparison site at the moment but you never know

Weddings: Starting to branch out into all areas

Funerals: Already have links with life insurance and funeral plans

Tesco Tyres

Film making – Tesco commissioned a film of a Jackie Collins book for exclusive sale in Tesco.

Other Services Tesco can or could supply

Opticians
Mobile Phones
Furniture
Mortgages
Estate Agency

Is there anything left? Charity Shops "Every little helps"

Belper against Tesco commissioned a report on the effect that Sainsbury's had had in Matlock after it opened. Based on 43 retailers answers.

65% had a decrease in customers
62% had a decline in sales
57.5% said it would make an impact on their business
87% said footfall was down.

The range of Goods and Services of selected Leighton Buzzard shops.

Leighton Buzzard became the first Fairtrade town in Bedfordshire in 2005.

Dillamores Furnishings: Established 1923. 4th generation ownership.

British manufactured furniture; three piece suites, armchairs, lift and rise, beds, bedroom furniture, mirrors.
Delivery: Free. Old furniture taken away: free. All packaging removed: free. Assembly: free. Any problems; sorted out by staff and through the manufacturer.
Most removed furniture if in good condition is given to Willen Hospice for their shops for sale. Or to people in need.
Has loaned out furniture to people.
Home visits to measure up and look at problem areas. Furniture moved for you.
Contact for local upholstery and cleaning companies.

Dillamore's Handbags: Established 2009: Quality leather handbags, Bulaggi, Nica, Fiorelli, Yoshi Ciccia, Golunski purses, wallets, handbag hooks. Quality leather products.

TJ Furniture: Established 1972. All types of furniture: beds, three piece suites, chairs, dining furniture, mirrors, bedroom furniture. Local delivery. Small charge for delivery. Furniture taken away. .

Strattons Butchers: Established 1936: Master Family butcher. All British meats; free range pork, local lamb April to September and from the Orkneys. Beef is all certificated from the Orkneys. Chickens supplied from Norfolk. Pates from Wales. British cheeses. Handmade sausages. Barbeques. Hog Roasts. Bread, Rolls, Pies, coffee, tea and chocolate. Suppliers to local restaurants, pubs and other premises. Delicatessen. Ready meals and pies. Advice on cooking different meats. Advice on cooking cheap cuts of meat.

William Yirrell Master Butcher Linslade: Established 1820. High class retail and catering butchers. Licence dealer in Game. Local farm produce. Competitive prices.

A Touch of Class: Established 1995: Hair and beauty salon for man and women. Organic products used for colouring and other treatments. Eyebrows, facials other beauty treatments.

Selections Pets and Gardens: Established 1985. Animal products, animal feed, cat and dog food, wildlife food, animal accessories, fish and aquarium accessories, garden supplies, seeds, seed potatoes, delivery service. National Garden Tokens. Free gardening advice. Free pet care advice.

Barringtons: Established 1991. Fully licensed café/restaurant. Function facilities on site. Outside catering for any occasion. Funeral teas. Wedding, celebration and novelty cakes made to order. Business lunches.

Angelicas: Established 2005. Crystal & Rock Shop and Holistic Therapies
Massages, reflexology, Reiki and other therapies. Classes held and arranged.

Loobi-Crafts Established 2005: Specialists in card making and scrapbooking, equipment, papers, inks and other card making accessories, wooden stamps, specialist magazines. Classes for card making and scrapbooking. Wedding stationery made to order. Special occasion cards made to order.

Buzzard Books Established 2006. New and secondhand books, 4,000 titles in stock and access to 2 million tiles. Book tokens. Music books. Book ordering both new and old. Maps. Local books. Book searches. Book clubs.

Cocoaberry Established 2009: Traditional sweets, exotic confectionary and delicious luxury chocolates. Treats for kids. Luxury gifts and handpicked chocolate selections. Gluten-free, dairy-free and sugar-free sweets. Special gift bags and hampers for parties, weddings, social events and special gifts.

Petticoat Lane Established 2009. Specialist in lingerie, swimwear and nightwear. Full fitting service from qualified specialist. Personal service.

BG Cards: Established 1992. Cards, wrapping paper, novelties, calendars, diaries, Leighton Buzzard souvenirs – cards, tea-towels, coasters, etc, wedding items, money boxes, soft toys, gift bags and boxes.

Ollie Vee's Established 2007: Retro boutique. Ladies and gentlemen's clothing from the 1980's back in time. 1950's and 1960's clothing a specialty. Old records, jewellery. Accessories. Will sell items for customers.

Barista Bay Established 2006: Specialist coffee shop and food. Freshly ground coffee. Teas and other drinks. Snacks and full meals. Great place to meet and chat.

Cee Jays. Established 1956. Electrical goods, furniture, fireplaces and other household items. Free delivery and installation. Expert knowledge. If brought from stock same day free delivery and installation.

House of Coffee. Specialty coffee roasters and blenders. Coffee from 20 sub-tropical countries. Coffee roasted and packed in 24 hours for home, work or business. Sales of coffee equipment and complimentary products. Fairtrade and Rainbow Alliance coffees stocked.

Making the Best Established 2010: Beer and winemaking kits and advice. Soap making kits, candle making kits, candles and soap, cards, specialist paint and interior design. Classes held.

The Dress Circle: New and nearly new quality clothes. Will buy and sell new nearly new clothes less than two years old many at prices lower than the High Street.

Nutmeg Needlecrafts: Knitting equipment, yarns, wool, tapestries, cross-stitch, embroidery silks, ribbon, buttons and other haberdashery. A large selection of pattern books and books. Classes for crochet and knitting and other demonstrations of other crafts when required.

See the enclosed shopping map of the town to see the rich variety of shops in the town.

Services and charges

Furniture

Tesco: Home delivery for large items £5.00

Argos: Home delivery £8.95

Both will deliver into the house. You have to contact them for any difficult delivery.
Will set up the furniture but will do more than fix on casters. Both will take off the wrappings.
Argos will take the wrapping away
Neither will take old furniture.

Dillamores Free delivery. TJ £10 delivery charge.

Kitchen Appliances
Tesco: Delivery charge for large kitchen appliances
Will bring into house.

Electric cooker Installations and disconnection charge	£59.95	£7.50 Removal charge
Gas Cooker	£70.00.	£7.50
Range and Dual Fuel Cookers	£70.00.	£7.50
Disconnection – washing machine		£7.50

Installation charges

Tumble Dryers	£13.00	£7.50
Standard fridge/freezer	£13.00	£7.50
Washing Machines and dishwashers	£22.50	£7.50

Cee Jay Free delivery and free installation. If in stock same day delivery.

Argos: Delivery Charge for large kitchen appliances
Bring into the house and unwrap and recycle the packaging.
Standard delivery £8.95
Express Delivery £19.99
Recycle 7.50
Installation up to the customer.

Books: Tesco about 200-250 titles no Instore ordering service. Buzzard Books 4,000+, ordering service for new and old titles, maps, music books, audio books, CD's, video's. local books. Second hand books.

Newsagents (Cornish) Papers and magazines, customer orders, photocopying, The basic thing to note is that the there is a big discrepancy between the main stores and the independents on service. The add-ons in a lot of cases can add up quite a bit with the major stores. And if there are problems the independent will be much quicker and better than the stores.

Is Leighton Buzzard
Worth preserving and improving?

As you can see from above the range of goods and services that the independent shops provide for the community, as well as the social connections that they make, this town is well worth preserving; and many towns are like this or were once.

From a hard headed businessman's point of view there are many things that are not charged for, services done for free or a small charge. But the service and the goodwill are priceless. Word of mouth, personal recommendations and other subtle forms of marketing are worth their weight in gold. How else does a furniture business still continue 88 years after it was founded? Or butchers survive for 75 years or nearly 200 years.

We think that you will see from this document that Leighton Buzzard is a living, breathing entity and one that can really improve its offer to the population and beyond.

We need the national chains here to balance the shopping offer. But this needs to be planned out carefully so we have a rich mix of offerings to the public, especially when Centre Parcs gets built.

As we said we are not against Tesco as its stands at the moment. We are against the extension which is for the bad for both the town and town centre. There could be a massive building bigger than anything we have in the town centre out of the town centre. The offer that Tesco promise is not that good an offer. They are not the cheapest. They do not give good service and the range of goods seems to be wide but not very deep. It is the same "Pile them high. Sell them cheap" offer just wrapped up in marketing. The only thing that they can actually say that they have is convenience. You see what rich variety of shops and services could be lost if an extension is built and comparison goods sold instead of food.

The town centre offers a lot more than that.

A town centre is more than just shops.

The evidence is there to suggest very strongly that the Tesco/Supermarket type of development is detrimental to towns. The Governments point of view since 1996 is that town centres need to be supported and improved for all. All the planning guidance is geared towards the town centre or edge of town. The All Party Parliamentary Committee on Town Centres is right behind this.

Therefore the Government and Opposition line is to preserve town centres. Tesco maybe a big company with big resources but they are still subject to rules and regulations. The rules and regulations in this case they are not adhering to. A lot of people do not want this to happen. **And in the spirit and the letter of planning law this proposal should be stopped.**

I Love LB Vision

Community is the key word. The Town Centre is the heart of the Community. A vibrant and successful town centre is the essential foundation stone for a strong local community. Everything we do is aimed at making Leighton Buzzard and Linslade strong, sufficient, successful and offering goods, services and events that meet the needs of our local community. We urge all to "Go local first"

What we want to achieve

To make Leighton Buzzard and Linslade a self sufficient town in respect of its businesses, facilities and opportunities for all:

To have a vibrant town centre with full occupation of shops and offices

A wide range of shops catering for all covering all day to day and general needs for all people

A vibrant, diverse street market catering for all ages, rich or poor

To create a safer more pleasanter Town Centre with trees, planting, benches, better lighting, parking and traffic control for use day and night as indicated by the people of the town in surveys.

To capitalise on the Historic aspects of the Town Centre to attract more visitors to the town and to get the Town Centre smartened up and eliminate eyesores

To actively promote the area as a tourist destination (Centre Parcs)

To hold and attend events to promote the town to the local population and beyond

To inform the town population of what is on offer in the town through a Community Directory a complete listing of all businesses, services, groups and societies for all.

To back all efforts to bring in a Hospital, College and other facilities to make Leighton-Linslade a self sufficient town for all

To call for a Community Hall for the Town in the Town Centre for entertainment, social events and meetings

To actively promote and champion causes to improve the Town's environment – actively plant trees, shrubs and flowers, improve areas of neglect, to encourage better more efficient lighting, to promote walking and cycling, to back any initiatives for alternative energy and other green issues. In short make Leighton-Linslade a Green Town.

GO LOCAL FIRST

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