

MP's Meeting with Tesco

Written by Bill Wiggin
Wednesday, 13 July 2011 08:12 -

On Friday 8th July I met with representatives from Tesco to discuss their proposed plans for a superstore in Ledbury. During the meeting, I was able to pass on all the feedback I received from constituents who wished to express their views on the proposal.

I am extremely grateful to all those who contributed to my website and to those who wrote in. The comments, suggestions and questions enabled me to have an in-depth and informed debate with Tesco, who were keen to engage with local people.

The main point raised by those constituents in favour of the superstore is that a greater range of products at affordable prices would become available. As someone who does shop in Tesco, I can understand the need for more choice at a cheaper cost, especially in times of austerity.

Those constituents who asked if the new site would also have a petrol station delivering cheap fuel will be disappointed to learn that there are no plans for a petrol station. In a county like Herefordshire where people use their cars a great deal, this service would have been particularly welcome.

Those against the plans centred on the negative impact it would have on Ledbury, the shops that we have, and the ability of people to get to the superstore.

I have always tried to keep an open mind and I have waited until I have had a chance to look at all the plans proposed by Tesco. I am still awaiting an economic impact assessment from Tesco's as well as hopefully two independent economic impact assessments from the Town Council and Herefordshire Council.

However, I do not believe at this stage that I can support a plan to move the Tesco from the existing site as a new store will put the High Street at risk. I recognise that this is ultimately a decision for the County Council and I therefore hope that Tesco will look to develop their current store and not seek to move.

It is a great shame that Tesco have not yet looked at improving their existing store, as so many of you suggested, which would enable them to deliver greater product choice, whilst at the same time not putting the High Street in danger.

This is no easy decision for the Council. They must decide the outcome and the lobbying will continue. The results of the Local economic impact assessments will be essential to ensure the decision is informed.

Tescos in Ledbury has many supporters and everybody was at pains to ensure that it is known that our local Tesco's is much valued, we just would prefer to keep it where it is.