

Why Tesco's Plan is Doomed

Written by John Eager

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Herefordshire Council's [Retail Study \(PPS4\)](#) is a revealing document that sheds light onto why Tesco's planning application to triple the size of its grocers store in a relocation to Leadon Way is doomed to failure.

Tesco plan to increase their retail area by 2,044 sq m does not fit in with the council's recent Retail Study which indicates that by 2026 only an extra 1,581 sq m (gross) of discount food/convenience retail space will be needed in Ledbury.

To put it simply Tesco's planned hypermarket is just too big for Ledbury, and even after 1,000 (adjusted to 800) extra dwellings are built in Ledbury by 2026, it would still be too big.

The Drivers Jones Deloitte PPS4 assessments make interesting reading and make some nice informed comments about Ledbury's almost unique retail experience:

Ledbury has a 'vibrant and strong centre' and is 'an attractive shopping environment' as 'much of Ledbury's character comes from its thriving independent retail provision'.

It is predicted that Ledbury will need extra retail space in the coming years, but nothing close to what the grocer's Tesco is planning. Tesco's best option for growth would be to extend its current store. It could build an underground car park and use its existing car park as retail space.

Over the years extra quality retail, non-food and comparison shopping could be further accommodated in Bye Street.

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Such changes would then not affect Ledbury's historic centre. If Tesco, followed by Sainsbury's and other large national/international superstores move to Leadon Way then Ledbury would become decentred with its historic centre relocated.

This decentering should be resisted. Ledbury's centre has been there for over a thousand years; it is the heart and soul of the town, and should be protected just as Ledbury's historic buildings and burgage plots are.

The reasons above are more than sufficient for Herefordshire Council to reject Tesco's planning application. However, Tesco's secret meeting(s) with councilors should alert us to the very real possibility that deals are being done behind closed doors.

Council funded retail assessments, independent impact assessments, historical considerations, poster campaigns and common sense may not be enough to influence Herefordshire County Councilors.

When all things are revealed it is often money that speaks loudest - and Tesco has loads of that. How will Tesco sweeten a deal that threatens to rip the heart and soul out of Ledbury?

Lobby your [councilors](#) !