

We read with horror and disgust the report in your paper [Ledbury Reporter and the Ledbury Community Portal website] about an “award winning business expert’s” view of the proposed Sainsbury out-of-town supermarket for Ledbury. The views of Mr Michael Lever show a breath-taking misunderstanding of the way town centres work and a horrific callousness to the fate of enterprises affected by this proposal.



As a 'self-employed commercial property surveyor' we don't suppose he has ever had to trade on a normal town street and is presumably unaware of the physical, financial and emotional investment we small traders put in to our enterprises and he seems perfectly content for us and our hard work to be swept away by the juggernaut of a massive, avaricious concern such as the modern supermarket, and we make this point with such passion because our award winning shops which do trade successfully and which we have worked every hour the good Lord sends to stock and staff - would be two of the shops not only put at risk, but we can say with good authority, probably doomed. We say with good authority because we know from friends and colleagues who have been traders in small towns, of the devastating effects of out-of-town developments.

For all Mr Lever's expertise he seems to be blissfully unaware of the true effects of out-of-town developments which is to slowly strangle the trading part of any town until most shops who trade die a slow lingering death. The reason for this is simple, when a large one-stop shop such as this opens, the customer drives there, parks, shops and leaves, they very seldom park, shop and then drive to another place in the town to shop in the high street, if he is unaware of this undoubtedly true statement his expertise is questionable as is his attitude which blandly sentences 'a dozen or so town-centre shops' to such a sad end and to be replaced with what exactly??

And what of these 'dozen or so town-centre shops' heartlessly dismissed by Mr lever, what of their staff and suppliers and the whole chain of business's who rely on these shops and others like them - dead or dying, but never mind we can always get a job at the supermarket.

If the residents of Ledbury who want this development are to make an equitable judgement on its merits then they need to accept that Ledbury High Street will change for ever, shops will close and they will perhaps be replaced with charity shops etc., or more likely be left empty to slowly deteriorate, this is what happens. It is not biased scaremongering, and if the residents who want it are prepared to accept this for their town then so be it, but please don't be tempted in 4 or 5 years' time to complain that Ledbury is a dump because 'there's nothing in it any more'

Critical Response to Expert's View on Tesco

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Saturday, 24 September 2011 09:58 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 November 2011 13:59

because you will have made your choice and will have to live with it!!