

## Every Letter Counts: Write Now!

Written by LOTS

Monday, 05 September 2011 10:27 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 November 2011 13:58

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The Tesco Superstore Planning Application has now gone live. And it's time for this campaign to move into top gear. There's nothing complicated here – all we have to do is mobilize everyone who cares about Ledbury to write and object to Herefordshire Council.



It's really important that letters are written in people's own words. Unless you really must, please don't cut and paste our words, but try to express the points in your own words. Personal letters carry more weight than standard proforma letters.

Although we've given just one contact at Herefordshire Council's Planning Department, it will be much better if we can also write to all the councillors on the Planning Committee (all 19 of them!), to Ledbury Ward councillors and to Ledbury Town councillors, (as their views will be canvassed). It's a big ask, but if you can find time to send letters to all of these people, this would be extremely powerful. We will send out a document next week with all the contact details and put them on the [www.saveledbury.com](http://www.saveledbury.com) web site.

□ **Ed:** This domain has now lapsed...

But for now, concentrate on the first important letter to the Head of Planning, Andrew Ashcroft.

There are two documents attached: one is the detailed objection with references and evidence, the other is a list of the key bullet points which is going out on a wide distribution. As core supporters we thought you'd like to be able to refer to both. Meantime remember that there are more resources and background information on [www.saveledbury.com](http://www.saveledbury.com).

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Please pass these documents on to family, friends, neighbours and colleagues and encourage them to write – even if they don't live in Ledbury, their voice will make a difference.

### Ledbury Opposes Out Of Town Superstores

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#### Act Now to Save Ledbury!

There are four weeks for people to make objections to the Tesco Planning Application. The deadline is September 29th.

The key points of the objections are outlined in this briefing. If you are pushed for time, Section Two is the most important. You may have other issues to raise from a personal point of view – for instance why you love Ledbury, what the High St means to you, the sense of community and so on. Go ahead - your personal views are as important as the planning objections set out below.

This is an outline of what you need to say, but please say it in your own words, and add in your own experiences, opinions and thoughts – DON'T cut and paste this letter if you can avoid it. Personal letters carry much more weight.

1. Quote this Planning Reference Number N/111554/F and write to:

Andrew Ashcroft, Head of Planning  
Planning Services  
PO BOX 230  
Blueschool House, Blueschool Street  
Hereford  
HR1 2ZB

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NB Ask Mr Ashcroft to pass on your letter to all the Planning Committee members.

Once you have written to the Planning Services Department, the next thing to do, if you have time, is to send a copy of your letter to :

- all Planning Committee members (there are 19!)
- Ledbury ward councillors
- Ledbury Town Council councillors

We will send through contact details in a few days, or go to [www.saveledbury.com/resources](http://www.saveledbury.com/resources) or email [saveledbury@gmail.com](mailto:saveledbury@gmail.com)

2. The proposed store is outside the town centre and is too large for the needs of the local area. This will have several bad effects:

- It will drain shoppers away from the High Street which will mean smaller independent shops will close down (Ref DETR 1998 )
- Because of the distance from the town centre (0.8 mile), shoppers at the proposed store will not combine a shopping trip with a visit to the High Street
- Business closures will lead to vacant premises or an increase in low rental-yield charity shops and fast food takeaways. This will mean less investment in the maintenance of historic Ledbury – there are nearly 200 listed buildings in the main commercial centre. This will cause a degradation in the heritage fabric of the town, in turn damaging tourism – one of Ledbury's key wealth generators
- The size of the proposed development far exceeds the stated retail requirements for Ledbury even taking account of projected population increases for the town over the next fourteen years. (Ref Herefordshire Council PPS4 2010). A big oversupply of retail provision will severely unbalance the successful High Street economy in Ledbury, acknowledged as one of Britain's best.

3. Ledbury High Street is the focus of a large local food supply network which supports

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hundreds of jobs and generates many millions of pounds for the local rural economy (Ref: CPRE 2011 ).

Closure of food shops in the High Street, one of the first casualties of an out of town superstore, will severely damage this important economic driver. Additional job losses and economic harm will also result from non-food shop closures which are similarly linked to the local supply and production chain. This finding is supported by research that shows on average at least 276 jobs are lost from a local economy when an out of town superstore opens. The effects in Ledbury may be much worse.

4. The promise of more jobs at the proposed superstore is not to be trusted. Tesco has a track record of inflating potential jobs at Planning Application Stage and in its application does not admit that many of these jobs will be part time. It has repeatedly refused to say how many jobs will be Full Time so that a fair comparison can be made of jobs lost in the local economy and jobs created at the superstore.

5. If Ledbury is dominated by Tesco in future, the local rural economy will be severely damaged. This will be highly detrimental to Ledbury and the surrounding area as supermarkets have been shown to suck wealth out of local economies to corporate headquarters: only 16% of supermarket turnover is spent on local wages, services and purchases whereas local shops 'recirculate' a very high proportion of their takings within the local economy . £10 spent on local food is worth £25 to the local economy compared with just £14 spent in a supermarket multiple. Local shops sell local produce, supermarkets import most of their goods from afar.

6. The establishment of a large store on Ledbury by-pass will lead to greater volumes of traffic coming in to Ledbury from the main population catchments of Malvern and Worcester via the already heavily congested Top Cross junction and put further pressure on narrow streets and fragile buildings at Top Cross, The Southend, High Street and Bye Street.

7. Tesco has not seriously examined the option of an improved or expanded store at Orchard Lane or a smaller additional store at another location within the town. (For instance Tesco owns One Stop in the Homend).

8. The proposal for a superstore three times larger than the present Tesco supermarket is not

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designed to satisfy local need – the town is already very well served by supermarkets and convenience stores. Rather the move is fuelled by the company's desire to monopolise trade and capture additional retail spend from the buoyant High Street and from other local centres not currently served by a Tesco. Ledbury therefore becomes a casualty in Tesco's 'store war' with the other Big Four supermarket multiples which together control 75% of the grocery retail market nationally (2009).

9. A huge superstore in a small town like Ledbury will erode consumer choice. When local shops close, people will come to rely on high-carbon footprint transportation of staple products at a time when people are being encouraged to buy locally and sustainably.

Remember, you must make your planning objection as soon as possible.

Pass this letter on to friends, neighbours and colleagues and encourage them to write to the Council too. Anybody who loves Ledbury can write. You don't have to live here to raise an objection. Councillors and Planning Officers really do listen to public opinion.

Don't leave it to others to make your views known, you must write too. If you love Ledbury, these next few weeks are the crucial time for us to act.

Every Letter Counts!

[Editor: [Why Tesco Plan is Doomed](#) ]