

A Victory for Ledbury – Now the Real Work Begins

Written by Save Ledbury

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LOTS issues the following statement on Tesco's withdrawal of its planning application for an out of town superstore:

“The LOTS campaign wishes to thank our supporters for their brilliant efforts, and who have worked so tirelessly throughout the last five months to raise awareness of the ruinous impact that an out of town superstore would have on our beloved town.

Residents, shop and market traders, visitors and well wishers from near and far have delivered a resounding message that they care passionately about Ledbury's vibrant town centre and its unique sense of place.

A real bonus of this campaign is to see so many talented, informed and skilled people from all walks of life step forward and do their bit – their dedication and determination is inspirational. They have confounded those who said we could never hope to succeed against the might of a company like Tesco. This was never a 'done-deal'.

Tesco were bound to lose, not on sentimental grounds, but on the fact that their plans contravened the planning laws of the land. As we announced at the outset, it was to that end that our campaign would be directed. A mountain of evidence has now been amassed that charts in detail why an out of town, outsize superstore is utterly wrong for a market town like Ledbury. That same evidence will apply equally to Sainsbury if it decides to proceed, since its plan is identical in scale and location, and its impact potentially even more damaging than a relocation of Tesco. An additional 33 thousand square feet Sainsbury superstore in Ledbury on top of what we have already is ridiculous and totally unsustainable – and we shall demonstrate

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this.

Thanks are also extended to Tesco itself for withdrawing its application, even at this late stage: common sense has prevailed. We hope now that a constructive dialogue may be possible concerning improvements to or even expansion of its current Orchard Lane store, which we would all welcome.

Ledbury now stands at an important point in its history. The Town Council is about to launch a process to agree a new Local Development Plan which will guide the town's progress over the next ten years or more. It is to be hoped that this can give a voice to all interested parties in Ledbury, and find a way to draw widely on the talents of people living and working in our community.

The issue of future Town Centre retail development will form one vital element, along we hope with innovative plans for new jobs, better broadband, new housing, education, and leisure.

The town can't stand still: it has to be pro-active in selling the attractions of Ledbury far afield, to attract new manufacturing and technology companies to set up their businesses here, and we need to involve as many people as possible who have the skills, experience and contacts to make that happen in a new era."

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