

# BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING (OPEN TO PUBLIC) HELD ON MONDAY 19 MARCH 2012 AT 7.30PM AT THE TOWN HALL, BRIDGWATER

PRESENT: Cllr PGH Parker (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), Cllrs SB Austen, D Baker, AM Glassford, GJ Granter. MJ Lerry, DP Loveridge, Mrs PM Morley, LP Redman, KF Richards, Mrs GJ Slocombe, BD Smedley, and J Turner (JP)

Apologies: Cllrs Monteith, Moore and Tucker

Also present by invitation:

Sedgemoor District Council: Leader Cllr Duncan McGinty, Chief Executive Kerry Rickards and Corporate Director Doug Bamsey

Tesco representatives: Emma Heesom and James Harrison and Gareth Hooper (DPP Planning Consultant) and Julian Clarke (TPA – Highways Consultant)

*(Declarations of interest – Cllrs Granter, Loveridge and Richards declared personal interests as members of the Sedgemoor Development Committee and Cllr Baker declared an interest through a family relationship, took no part in the discussion – all taking a purely observer role).*

### **88/11 PROPOSED NORTHGATE TESCO DEVELOPMENT (MIN 69/11 iv):**

The Town Clerk read a statement outlining the reasons for convening the meeting, which had been widely advertised with the opportunity for the public to attend. The request to the company had been made at the end of 2011 and followed the pre-application consultation and presentations, which the company representatives had made to various organisations, groups and public. It was hoped that the meeting would be held in time to inform the consultation and in advance of plans being drawn up by Tesco for the submission of a planning application. The “Bridgwater Forward” group had also written to the Town Council and the company with a similar request.

It was evident there was a body of opinion opposed to Tesco coming to the site for a variety of reasons, not least the impact on the Brewery Field and others who wished to ensure if the development proceeded this should complement the town centre and integrate as far as possible with improved accessibility between the development and the existing retail area. This was the opportunity to seek answers to a number of questions and representation which had been made. These had been invited in writing in advance of the meeting.

The Tesco representative then gave an update on progress with the proposed development, for which it was anticipated a planning application would be submitted at the end of April. This dealt with the consultation processes undertaken to-date and changes proposed to the scheme, including the provision of a short stay car park, a reduction in the loss of the brewery field to 10%, and variations in the height and layouts. Tesco also undertook to reply in writing, in addition, to verbal responses to those questions and representation which had been submitted.

Questions and representations raised by Gaynor Brown, John Hesketh, Bob Cudlipp, Peter Smith, Patricia Walsh, John Bastable and Sally Jones, were responded to as submitted. Follow up questions were also dealt with (further written questions and representations from Nick Gibson, Stephanie Lord and Arthur Willis have since been referred onto the company for response as agreed).

The meeting was then open to questions from the floor, dealt with in accordance with the public guidance and Standing Orders of the Council. Where appropriate, responses were given by the company and/or the District Council.

The matters raised from the floor related to traffic impact, numbers of full and part-time jobs, issues of height and substance of the new build, construction impacts and management, and the need for detailed retail impact assessment, and full ecological documentation and loss of green space. Other issues relating to any proposed Section 106 Agreement and the additional retail units, and linkage to the town centre were also raised.

Tesco representatives had taken note of all the representations received and undertook to include the issues in their consultation statement, which would accompany the planning application in due course.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr Dave Chappell proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Council and representatives from Bridgwater Forward and the public for arranging the meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.35pm

.....  
Signed  
Chairman