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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Time Limitations

I appreciate your advices as to time limitations – but whilst five minutes may suit you and your colleagues,

the people of Hadleigh deserve and demand better of yourself and myself.

I will take not a moment longer than necessary to address the Committee but this is a proposal which has been **years** in preparation and if you think that I will be cajoled or encouraged to restrict myself to five minutes, you are (respectfully) greatly mistaken.

I intend to take full advantage of the protocol which permits and encourages local Councillors not to short change their residents when it comes to getting the message across.

Predetermination

First Mr. Chairman, I must record that I have exchanged e-mails with one councillor as to whether he has pre-determined his position and therefore should stand down – otherwise your decision today will be flawed.

He has assured me that he is more than capable and experienced at dealing with each application in a judicial and logical manner.

Whether he and your colleagues will have the courage and confidence to go against the officer's recommendation – only time will tell.

Heart & Soul

The officers have presented a professional document.

It ticks all the right boxes since it has been based on Tesco's own extensive and professional resources –

but it doesn't tick the box that deals with the heart and soul of Hadleigh.

It doesn't deal with the dislocation of shops and businesses closing down,

it doesn't deal with High Streets becoming full of charity shops just to keep premises open.

Look to Woodbridge where Oxfam now has two substantial stores – which compete unfairly with the regular shops so much so that all the commercial second hand book shops have closed.

And when the High Street footfall stops so other businesses go the way of the dodo –

the number of antique and furniture restoration shops in Woodbridge have also drastically diminished and

restaurants open and close with disappointing regularity.

Unenviable Task

Mr. Chairman, You have an unenviable task before you today. Because you are caught between a rock and a hard place – on the one hand you have the people of Hadleigh who

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require you to lead your team so that your decision beneficially affects the well being of the town over the next fifty years and then...

There is the applicant whose business model focuses on return to their shareholders even though that that means destroying the existing fabric and social infrastructure of the town by a destructive harvesting of the good work and investment by others over the years.

It's a business model which effectively says tough luck on you because there'll come a time when you'll have no choice.

It's a model which charges what the market will bear

(which is why the cost of petrol at Tesco's Martlesham is more expensive than that in Copdock).

If Tesco comes it will kill off our High Street and I'll tell you now we'll never see Copdock prices!

Economic Impacts

I understand that Tesco currently have twelve stores in the east of the county and the sound you hear when you visit these towns is the sound of money gurgling its way to Tesco's HQ in Cheshunt –

it won't come to Hadleigh except in the form of a projected 200 part time jobs which will see more than that disappearing from our High Street – because that's the reality of what happens when Tesco comes to town.

I must congratulate the officers for the work they have done pulling all the Tesco documentation together. What this paper doesn't do is pick the holes in the documentation and this I will now try and do and I'll be grateful if you'll bear with me because I'm just a Councillor whose strong points (I hope) are plain common sense and local connectivity (I **live** here!).

I'll leave the professionals and people who are trained, qualified and better educated than myself to put all this into Planning Speak.

Localism

First let's look at localism, democracy and the will of the people. It's no great secret that in the Electoral Reform Society Referendum involving every household in Hadleigh 73% of the town voted against a supermarket on the Brett Works Site.

This postcard says "We need another supermarket but not near the river" and I have received many like it.

Babergh's own consultations with residents indicate that of the 1,350 responses, only 11% offered their support for the development.

To take the maths further 89% of respondents were against the proposals.

How dare Tesco persist in the face of such opposition?

Don't they care for local opinion?

Doesn't it matter to them that our town matters to us?

The problem with the unsuitability of this application is first that the proposed supermarket is in the wrong place. Your predecessors on the Development Committee knew that when they turned down the application all those years ago.

And Tesco (because they are so solicitous of our well being) then took the decision to an appeal and the good inspector in his Bristol Office paid no attention to local knowledge or local wishes but by merely looking at the maps and said OK go with it.

All this despite the town growing towards the north,

despite the access roads being problematical to say the least,

despite the knowledge and the wishes of the town,

he decreed as if he was some distant Wizard of Oz that the Brett Works site be the new Emerald City for Hadleigh Tesco.

The whole premise of this application is flawed– it is based on mis information and bad practice whereby distant arbitrators feel that they can do their jobs properly without even bothering to visit the town they are deciding for!

Safety Issues

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Next Mr. Chairman let's look at safety issues. The proposed entrance and exit points on Bridge Street do not have satisfactory sight lines for the size of the delivery lorries proposed by Tesco. It's obvious that Tesco's proposal will not let facts get in the way of their progress.

But any engineer will tell you that the sight lines are insufficient to allow drivers to avoid oncoming traffic when exiting the site.

We already have the situation in Benton Street where the last twenty-two years have been marked by a reluctance by the authorities to enforce the weight limits.

Are we to expect the next twenty one years to be marked by a safety situation on Bridge Street which can only be described as a car crash waiting to happen.

Where is the safety concern with the proposed roundabout at the High Street/Calais Street junction?

The High Street/Calais Street junction only works at present because of a comparative lack of traffic and a chicane.

In other words the present proposals won't work and for that alone this application should be declined.

Every route into Hadleigh (at some point) is effectively single lane.

Count them,

Angel Street
Benton Street,
Station Road,
the High Street,
Castle Street and Gallows Hill.

We weren't built for heavy lorry traffic.

Already there are 1.4 million traffic movements (mostly cars and small commercial vehicles) a year in Benton Street.

How much more do you expect – or is the congestion going to be so bad that everyone will have to walk – thereby meeting the objective of Babergh being a fitter and healthier district. Thirty years ago your far sighted forebears built the bypass.

One of the objectives was to reduce traffic through the town and to reduce the noise levels and pollution from the traffic which was drawn into and through the town.

Are you going to turn back the clock?

Are you going to increase diesel particulates in our atmosphere?

Are you going to do the last thing we need?

which is to increase traffic on our access roads and in the centre of our town.

The Retail Plan

The retail plan on which this entire proposal is based is flawed to the point of being seriously defective. Even the consultants were not happy with it. How else do you explain their caveat **"May be subject to a significant margin of error"**.

This is consultant speak for the figures are not reliable – yet we have nevertheless built a whole edifice on the sands of unreliable figures and you should not be making decisions based on unreliable data.

The caveat are not my words but the words of Colliers the consultants who drew up Babergh's Retail Study.

The Tesco proposals will not lead to the vibrant and sustainable retail environment that should be Hadleigh but will lead to one predatory supermarket and empty shops because the retail High Street throughout the country is fragile and will remain that way for some time to come.

Mr. Chairman we do not need your deliberations to be the kiss of death – but that is what an approval will be – because the basic figures are flawed to the point of being seriously defective and we have gone forward on the basis that all will be well – when we know and they know that it won't.

Planning Challenge

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The major planning challenge of the Council, the Development Committee and all of us is to protect and enhance our environmental quality (in every sense of the word), so that the planning policy framework allows retail and other commercial activity to flourish.

The only retail to flourish from this proposal will be Tesco.

The experience of other market towns shows that local businesses die and for all Tesco's trumpeting of job creation the majority of these jobs will be low level, minimal wage part time jobs.

Regrettably there will be a net loss of these jobs and the effect will be on those who are on the lower rungs of Fortune's ladder.

The resultant net increase in unemployment will be a cost on us all – certainly it won't be a cost on the people in Cheshunt.

Wants & Needs

Mr. Chairman, we do not want this development,

We do not need this development and we will curse the day that your committee ever makes a decision in favour of Tesco's getting their own way with this site.

What to do with Brett Works. Well, if I had my druthers I'd let a state of the art high tech office be built there so that we get knowledge jobs – because that is where our future should lie.

It's bad enough that we are becoming the East Anglian Capital for Care of the Elderly – we do not need to become a town for shelf stackers and outward commuters.

Disappointment

I was very disappointed when the District Council decided to sell the ransom strip access road to the Brett Works site for £750,000.

Partly because I thought the amount too small but mainly because of the way the Council reached its decision.

It became scared of what would happen if we refused to sell,

if Tesco appealed and

if we lost the appeal.

Despite the assurances that our systems were robust.

Ignoring the fact that we were already in the frame to receive £750,000 some councillors ran scared that we might lose an appeal which would reduce our proceeds for the ransom strip to £660,000

So we did not hold out for more and consequently are seen as a soft target – how else can you explain this application which is wrong for all sorts of reasons.

Confidence and Courage

Mr Chairman, it's time for confidence and courage.

Confidence that you can say no!

Confidence in that the processes taken to reach this decision are robust and can resist an appeal.

Courage to look at this application and say that it is not right.

It is not the right time, the right place or the right proposition.

Listen to the people – turn it down and have a statue erected in your memory.

Let it go forward and be vilified for the rest of your lives and beyond.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.