

## Action for Sustainable Living Submission – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

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info@tescopoly wrote:

**Dear Friends,**

### **Competition Commission update**

**The Competition Commission has published its “emerging thinking” on the progress of its investigation. The report says that the Commission has not ruled out any areas for investigation and has identified problems including with supermarkets impact on farmers and small shops. However, the Commission’s concern’s are at this stage inconclusive and it wants more evidence about supermarkets’ practices and the impacts. The evidence and submissions many of you have written to the CC have already had a significant impact in prompting the CC to reach some of the conclusions it has. Any more information or evidence that you or people you know may be able to send in would be very useful, particularly evidence from farmers or other suppliers and small retailers on the impacts of supermarket dominance.**

**For further information, please see the front page of the Tescopoly website and the press releases linked to from the press release section. The Competition Commission inquiry’s email address is [groceries@cc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:groceries@cc.gsi.gov.uk)**

### **Campaign against planning reforms launched**

**A coalition of groups has launched a campaign, Planning Disaster, against reforms to the planning system recommended by the Treasury in the Barker Final Report in January 2007. The report recommended deregulation of the planning system to give big business more power, and specifically changes to national planning policy on town centre development that will effectively make it easier for retail chains to build large stores outside town centres. The Planning Disaster campaign aims to encourage people to write to the Treasury expressing their concerns. For further information and to take action please see the front page of the Tescopoly website and the Planning Disaster website at <http://www.planningdisaster.co.uk/>.**

### **Public Forum - Supersized Supermarkets: A global Dilemma**

Tescopoly is co-organising a major event on supermarkets which will include a public forum in Emmanuel Centre in Westminster on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February from 6.30 – 8.30 PM. There are further details on the forum, Supersized Supermarkets, in the flyer attached below [and to this email?]. To book a place at the forum, which is free, please email [amorser@waronwant.org](mailto:amorser@waronwant.org)

## Living Local in Old Trafford

Old Trafford has a bustling shopping area, where you can buy anything from fresh meat to the very latest Jerk sauce, insulator tape to mops. Some of the shops have been there for decades; many of the owners are familiar faces to the local community. The area acts as a focus for the community, people regularly popping in and out of shops and stopping to chat to friends and neighbours.



**However this resource is under threat. It has happened in areas all over the country, and it has now started to happen in Old Trafford.**



Claire Wheeler, our Sustainability Consultant for Old Trafford is conducting a survey to find out exactly what shops exist at present, what they sell and their worries as regards the changing structure of the way we shop:

*“The street is like a community centre, but it is losing that. If somebody is ill or dies, if something happens people know about it as they see each other in the shops.”*

[Local shop Keeper, Old Trafford]

The problem is that many of the independent shops in places like Old Trafford are finding it hard to compete with the number of supermarkets that have opened up nearby. Many people who used to do all their shopping locally are now travelling, more often than not by car, to the nearest supermarket.

Supermarkets have huge purchasing advantages and seem at the moment to be actively encouraged by the government. In the five years to 2002, 50 specialised stores like butchers, bakers, fishmongers and newsagents closed every week. In May 2005 the IGD (Institute of Grocery Distribution), in its authoritative Convenience Retailing Report revealed the loss of 2,157 unaffiliated independent convenience retailers, compared to only 1,079 the year before.

*“If people do not use us – we won’t be here anymore.”* [Local shopkeeper, Old Trafford]

It seems the message is clear, if people don’t want to see the communities they live in lose their shopping areas then people have to support their local shops.

The danger of the rise of large chain retailers is that it becomes a one way street. Once small independent stores go to the wall, there are often insurmountable barriers to get back into the high street.

Aside from the issues of community degradation, there are also the related issues of increased traffic and pollution associated with more people using supermarkets, as well as the concerns surrounding supermarket bad practice.

"Tesco now controls 30% of the grocery market in the UK. In 2005, the supermarket chain announced over £2 billion in profits. Growing evidence indicates that Tesco's success is partly based on trading practices that are having serious consequences for suppliers, farmers, overseas workers, local shops and the environment."

"In June 2005, the New Economics Foundation in its Clone Town Britain report, revealed the impact that the dominance of big chain retail is having on our high streets. This dominance of chain retailers, like Tesco, has a serious impact on communities. Chain retailers deprive the local economy of money, destroy the social glue provided by real local shops that holds communities together, and they steal the identity of our towns and cities. The argument that big retail is good because it provides consumers with choice is ironic, because in the end it leaves us with no choice at all."

### So What Can You Do?

- Support your local shops and services by using them in as many of your shopping trips as possible.
- Be open minded about prices, it is a common misconception that supermarket food is cheaper when you may be paying more for packaging and appearance than good food.
- [Sign our on-line pledge to shop local](#) whenever you can!

By shopping locally we can contribute to and affect nearly every aspect of the environment, social justice, health, community, congestion and more. The extra "bang per buck" of shopping locally, as shown by the New Economics Foundation, strengthens and accelerates urban and rural regeneration; we provide opportunities for employment near our homes and can improve our health and our environment too.

**So make your vote with where and how you shop!**

### More Information

For more information on the **Old Trafford Local Living: Local Food Action Group** or if you would like Claire to come and [talk to your group about Local Living: Local Food or 'Food Miles'](#) , contact Claire on 0845 108 6241 or [claire.wheeler@afsl.org.uk](mailto:claire.wheeler@afsl.org.uk)

### References

- [www.tescopoly.org](http://www.tescopoly.org)
- [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)
- 'Shopped: Shocking Power of British Supermarkets' Joanna Blythman 2004