

Response to Truro Eastern District Centre

Planning application for Truro Eastern District Centre by Cornwall Council, Duchy of Cornwall and Waitrose

No:PA11/04599

City of Truro Chamber of Commerce Consultee Comments

The City of Truro Chamber of Commerce wishes to comment on the above proposals and has restricted its comments to those matters which it feels will directly affect the commercial activity of the City and its members.

Objection based on Established policy against Out of Town shopping.

The chamber is of the opinion that any out- of- town shopping developments will inevitably have an adverse affect on the commercial centre.

It has been proven throughout Cornwall and the country as a whole that out of town retail parks contribute to the decline of the high street and the demise of the small independent retailers.

Truro has an enviable reputation as being one of the 'survivors' and is often praised for its mix of national and small independent shops and markets.

This proposal is coming at a time when the government is reaffirming its commitment to Town centres and is offering guidance and formulating policy to strengthen rather than weaken these centres.

Previous Town and District Councils have supported this view and have worked with the Chamber and other bodies to formulate numerous strategic plans for the City centre and the surrounding areas.

The purpose of these strategies was in part both to identify suitable commercial development sites within the City and to prevent 'ad hoc' and unsuitable development- especially on Greenfield sites outside of the City's established development boundaries.

The Chamber is of the opinion that this proposed development would involve a significant departure from these adopted strategies

The location of a substantial development on this site outside of the City will set a precedent for further development towards Tresillian and Shortlanesend.

This application fails the established 'sequential test' when applied to alternative site availability because at least one and possibly two other brown field development sites are currently and immediately available within the City

Waitrose supermarket

The Chamber acknowledges that a Waitrose supermarket would be an asset to the City if it were sited within the City's current commercial centre

The presence of another out- of- town supermarket and food hall will inevitably draw trade away from the City centre and jeopardise an already fragile commercial sector.

We are concerned that although the current proposal includes a Waitrose supermarket, should Waitrose in future choose to relocate to a better location within the City centre, then it is questionable as to what controls could be imposed on any successor retailer.

Taste of Cornwall

We actively support the sale and promotion of local food and produce but maintain for the reasons stated above that this should take place within the City's commercial centre.

The concentration of this activity outside the City will jeopardise the independent businesses currently offering local produce within the City centre, including the Farmer's Markets.

Park & Ride

The Chamber welcomes any investment in public transport which may increase accessibility to the City centre but is concerned about the proposed routing of the busses especially the 'right turn' across the dual carriageway and the introduction of so many more bus movements through Boscawen Street which will inevitably lead to conflict with pedestrians.

We would urge reconsideration of any routes through or around the city.

We would affirm however that we feel that an out of town Supermarket and the precedent which this would set is too high a price to pay for a Park & Ride.

Procedural question

While acknowledging that the Council would be responsible for the provision of the proposed transportation and park and ride issues involved in this application, some Chamber members have asked for greater transparency regarding the financial implications of the Council being a joint applicant and the determining planning authority.

Summary

The Chamber of Commerce would welcome the arrival of a Waitrose store and Cornish Food Hall within the city but is opposed to its location outside the City's current development boundaries.

Simon Hendra

On behalf of the Executive committee of Truro Chamber of Commerce

