

9.0 PLANNING ANALYSIS

9.1 We have undertaken our assessment of need, retail impact, the sequential test as required by Policy S4 of the Local Plan. In each instance the fact that the mezzanine floor if fully constructed could provide more floorspace than that proposed by the store extension must be taken into account.

9.2 In such circumstances Tesco could lawfully introduce a mezzanine floor into the store without any further recourse to planning. This is an accepted fall back position, of sufficient weight to convince the Inspector at the Hatfield Inquiry that the store extension scheme was acceptable. There is no substantive difference between that proposal and the store extension scheme before the Council here.

9.3 Despite this we have undertaken an assessment of need, retail impact and the sequential test. In terms of need, growth in expenditure both in convenience goods and comparison goods terms far exceeds that required to support the proposals, (£72.35 million in total versus £7.46 million required by the extension).

9.4 The store is also overtrading by some 85% increasing to 96% at the design year if no action is taken to resolve the situation. This clearly illustrates the latent demand for new shopping floorspace within Salisbury, and is a valid demonstration of need arising at a specific location.

9.5 The overtrading results in the store experiencing problems of congestion within the store, stock deficiencies and queues at the checkouts, all of which are recognised components of qualitative need.

9.6 We are of the view that a clear need has been proven for the store extension and that the proposal therefore accords with the relevant criterion of Policy S4.

9.7 Our economic assessment also has regard to the effects of the scheme on the vitality and viability of the City Centre. Compared to the turnover of the town centre floorspace the level of impact from the store extension is considered to be low, and would not in our view undermine the future trading performance of the centre. Salisbury is a successful centre, with low instances of vacant properties and a steady yield rate. It exhibits all of the signs of being a healthy and vibrant centre, and is therefore considered able to withstand small levels of impact without any undue harm.

- 9.8 Moreover the progression of the Maltings redevelopment scheme indicates investor confidence and will serve to strengthen the food offer in the City Centre again making it more resilient to impact from external forces. On this basis we consider that we have demonstrated that the Tesco proposal would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the centre nor will it undermine the local plan strategy for the centre, again in compliance with Policy S4.
- 9.9 The redevelopment of the Maltings centre also illustrates the lack of suitable alternative sites that could meet the need identified at the Southampton Road, Tesco. Even though PPS 6 indicates that the sequential test should no longer be applied to extensions, it is clear if such an exercise is undertaken that there are no other suitable, available or viable locations able to meet the identified need in sequentially preferable locations.
- 9.10 Of course, the sequential test must be viewed in the light of the fall back position for the mezzanine floor, as it is entirely possible that the additional floorspace could be accommodated at the store whether other more suitable sites exist or not.
- 9.11 With regards to access considerations, a traffic assessment has been submitted with the planning application that considers the additional traffic generated by these proposals. Tesco have offered a contribution to the Council as part of this application to fund additional road improvements to Southampton Road to improve the access situation and try to relieve some of the existing congestion problems.
- 9.12 Access to the site would also be improved by the introduction of the Petersfinger park and ride site, designated in the Local Plan under Policy TR8. This is on land adjacent to the Tesco store and owned in part by the Company. With the park and ride site so close to the store, there would be a clear improvement in the accessibility of the store by means of transport other than the car. Furthermore, customers would also be able to undertake linked trips between Tesco and the City Centre via the park and ride buses adding to the sustainable credentials of the scheme. On this basis we believe that the scheme complies with criteria of Policy S4.

**10.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 On the basis of the above analysis, the proposed Tesco store extension at Southampton Road, Salisbury satisfies the tests of the Development Plan and Government Guidance. On this basis, we request that the Council grant consent for the proposed foodstore extension in lieu of the mezzanine floor scheme.