BESTCO PLC

Bestco is one of the UK’s largest discount supermarkets and is looking to open up a new store in Denham, a small market town about 8 miles from Norwich. Bestco has carried out extensive market research and thinks that Denham will be the ideal site in which to locate their latest store, already having 300 stores across the UK. Their proposed store will consist of a one-storey build occupying 20,000 sq ft close to the cemetery, on the outskirts of the town.

There is already one supermarket; Waitrose, which attracts a relatively wealthy clientele. However Bestco’s feel that there is a gap in the market for a lower priced food store, as there is a high proportion of pensioners and a poorer, mainly council housed area to the West of the town centre. Both of these groups make up about 85% of Bestco’s customer base. Bestco’s also thinks that it will be able to attract custom from neighbouring villages, as currently Waitrose is the only supermarket for about 5 miles.

The site that Bestco’s have chosen is close to both the cemetery and the local school. They are hoping that they will attract passing trade from parents who are dropping off their children at school as well as attracting the price conscious consumer. Bestco’s is also in talks with a local bus company to see whether this proposed site can be on a bus route so that those without cars will still be able to shop at Bestco.

Bestco’s are planning on recruiting 40 staff for the store, 20 of which will be on a part time basis. They don’t think they will have any problem with finding new staff for the store as the local school has a sixth form with students always looking for part time jobs as well as many Mum’s who would like jobs whilst their children are at school. They are also paying better rates than Waitrose (for example a checkout assistant at Waitrose is earning £4.50 an hour, whilst Bestco’s pay £5.75).

However, there are some problems. Firstly the site will have to be totally cleared, as currently it is the site of an old printing factory that has been derelict for several years. There were rumours that the former printing factory may have been renovated to provide a leisure centre with swimming pool for local residents, however nothing has ever been done about this, and currently the old factory is attracting vandalism, only last year it suffered from an arson attack.

Another major problem is that the current roads surrounding the site would have to be improved in order to support the additional transport that a supermarket would bring. Bestco have agreed to pay £500,000 of the estimated £750,000 it is proposed to cost, and is currently in talks with the council as to whether they will offer a subsidy for the remaining £250,000.

You are going to attend an emergency meeting of all the affected parties and will need to voice your opinion. Present at the meeting is a Denham council official who will decide whether to grant planning permission to Bestco’s and any necessary action that will need to be taken.

# Paul Best, Managing Director of Bestco

Obviously you want this store open a.s.a.p. You don’t care about the local community (obviously you don’t show this), as all you are really interested in is increasing your company’s share of the grocery market and bringing in the profits! You want to get your way and there is no way that you will back down – the proposed store is good for everyone in your eyes!

# Mr Smith, Headteacher of Denham High School

You are concerned about the impact of traffic surrounding your school. It will mean delivery lorries passing your gates several times a day as well as the increase in cars. You are also concerned that your pupils will start to hang around the store and generally give your school a bad name.

# Helen Bestlewaite, Community Warden who has a keen interest in local history

You would like to see the old printing factory preserved instead of knocked down. If only the council would agree to renovate the building and transform it into a leisure centre for the local community. You know only too well the problems that Denham has, not having many facilities for the young.

# Sarah Fisher, Single Mum with 2 children

You have heard that there is possibly going to be a new store and would love to get back out to work. The only trouble is that you need to earn enough to pay for childcare, unless you can find a job that you could do during school hours. The job at Bestcos’ would suit you down to the ground. Plus you have heard about their low prices and as a single Mum, ‘every little helps’!

# David Bean, owner of Fresh & Fruity’s, a small greengrocers in the town centre

You are very concerned. You have heard of small towns that have become ghost towns because of the fact that customers are now going out of town to do their shopping. When Waitrose opened 5 years ago that had a big impact on your sales. You are now worried that because Bestcos offer such low prices, that some of your customers will no longer shop with you. Traditionally some of your major customers have been pensioners and the lower income groups who haven’t managed to travel to Waitrose.

# Colin Cracknell, Planning Department, Denham District Council

The decision is in your hands! After listening to the stakeholder views, you must decide whether or not to grant planning permission to Bestco, and if any other decisions are necessary. Listen to their opinions. Whatever you decide will have an impact on someone….so make your decision carefully!