

PHILIP DUNNE MP
(LUDLOW)



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Clive Wright
Chief Executive, Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

3rd February 2017
Ref: JB / TD / 03.02.2017

Dear Clive

Dun Cow Farm, Rocks Green, Ludlow (14/05573/OUT)

I write to provide my view ahead of the next South Planning Committee on 7th February on the new application for a food store supermarket development at Rocks Green, Ludlow (14/05573/OUT). I would be grateful if you would pass my comments on for consideration by the Committee.

I have serious concerns about the impact of this proposed supermarket on an edge of town site beyond the A49 at Ludlow.

Ludlow is a draw for many tourists, who come to see a thriving market town with a wide array of independent shops. All of these visits create jobs and growth in Ludlow's economy. Permitting this development brings with it the very real possibility of undermining that appeal, and threatening livelihoods. Any potential short term boost in local jobs from a new supermarket would all too quickly undermine the jobs of others in town.

We know there is pressure on trade in Ludlow. Recent news of the decision to close one of the three existing supermarkets, Budgens in the town centre, is indicative of the close competition for customers. The adjacent convenience store One Stop, which hosts the main Post Office in the town, has announced it is to close, further demonstrating that Ludlow cannot sustain its existing convenience food offer. HSBC's decision to remove their branch from the town centre will have a knock on effect on footfall elsewhere. Sucking trade out of the town centre would not only further undermine local trade, ensuring money is taken out of the local economy.



I have sympathy with those who want a supermarket retail offer with cheap clothing for children and adults. But this application at Rocks Green is not large enough to enable the provision of a clothing offer. Added to this, the application is speculative, and we have no idea who the tenant will be. So we cannot know whether this space would enhance Ludlow's retail offer. But we do know, from past experience, of the very detrimental effect an edge of town supermarket can have on a market town, as happened just along the A49 in Leominster.

I firmly believe that permitting this development would set a precedent that would undermine town centre trade, reduce local employment, and add nothing to the local retail offer. I would urge those on the planning committee to think very carefully when determining this application, and not to sacrifice Ludlow's long term future for a short term fix.

Yours sincerely

Philip Dunne
MP for Ludlow

cc Tish Docherty
cc South Planning Committee members