

January 2008



City Green Extra

Newsletter for Bournville, Cotteridge, Stirchley and area

TORY TESCO TREACHERY?

Decision made

Back in October, Tesco became the Council's preferred bid for the development site in Stirchley. However, our local Tory Councillors have been oddly silent on the issue – it didn't even get a mention at the Ward Committee meeting in November. Both the Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee, and the Cabinet member for Regeneration, are members of the Conservative Party and Bournville Councillor Tim Huxtable is Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Regeneration. With three Tory Councillors in Bournville, you'd expect that they'd use their party connections to represent the people who elected them. They didn't.

Local voice ignored

Back in August, the Green Party collected 65 letters of opposition to Tesco's bid in just two hours – discovering in the process that many Cotteridge shopkeepers were unaware of the situation. In our recent survey, over 70% of Bournville Ward residents who responded were against Tesco's application to develop a food retail site in Stirchley. If local opposition to Tesco's bid is so clear, why did the Council approve it?

No explanation

According to one source, "Council officers have refused to say how much was paid by Tesco to become the preferred developer and whether money was the only material consideration in making the decision." Friends of the Earth published a report in 2006 detailing how major supermarket chains, and Tesco in particular, abuse the planning system with their immense resources – just like in Stirchley.

Why oppose Tesco?

We opposed the Tesco bid because it would greatly increase traffic in the area, including around Stirchley Community School, and also because Tesco have been accused of driving local shops out of business by selling goods below their real value. Imagine Stirchley or Cotteridge with no more local shops – not a pretty sight, is it? Tesco are also accused of squeezing out farmers and other suppliers, by using their immense buying power to drive down prices. Aside from putting the livelihood of the suppliers at risk, this also increases costs for other buyers wanting to buy from the supplier.

What now?

Our Councillors have failed us. They had the opportunity to represent the people who elected them and stop Tesco from taking over in Stirchley, but instead they allowed them to go ahead – at the risk of closing local shops, and endangering local people. The Green Party has consistently opposed Tesco's expansion, and we will continue to do so. We welcome your support.

We will be on Cotteridge high street (Watford Road) from 10am-2pm on Saturday 19th January, so please let us know how you'd like us to proceed, or just come and talk to us about our policies or local work.

Many thanks to all those Bournville Ward residents who returned the survey enclosed with our first edition of City Green. This information will be of great value to us as we continue our local campaigning work.

What does poor council housing cost you?

Bournville ward's "Masfield Estate" is one of the most deprived areas in the country.

4 years ago residents were promised that 170 homes would be demolished but the Council changed their minds. Last summer residents staged a number of protests to highlight the problems of their damp, mouldy and crumbling homes. They were then promised that a plan for the estate would be drawn up. After waiting five months the council presented their master plan which was just one sheet of paper the same size as this leaflet! All it said was that a few homes would be demolished but most would be refurbished. However, the council still doesn't know what work they intend to do or when they will do it.



Decaying flats on Overbury Rd, Bournville Ward

BUT WHAT DOES POOR COUNCIL HOUSING COST YOU — THE TAX PAYER?

Cold housing has been linked to breathing disorders like asthma, heart disease, strokes and hypothermia.

Damp allows the spread of infectious diseases and the growth of mould.

Mould can cause respiratory problems, allergic reactions and infections.

The Facts



£1000's wasted each year in costs to health and welfare services because of underinvestment in council homes

It has been found that people with asthma are two to three times more likely than the general population to live in damp properties.

(National Asthma Campaign)

Children in bad housing had up to a 25% higher risk of severe ill health and disability during childhood and early adulthood. (Shelter)

Green Party Pledge

1. Work **WITH** residents to improve the Estate.
2. Draw up a full programme of regeneration for the Estate.
3. With 30,000 on the waiting list in Birmingham, the Green Party would work with the housing associations to build more homes for rent.

An estimated 6,975 youngsters also live in unfit housing in Birmingham city. (Shelter)

Children who grow up in bad housing are robbed of their future chances by ill-health, educational under-achievement and devastating insecurity." (Shelter)

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Soaring Health Costs

More people relying on benefits due to health issues

Tories stop new homes for rent

The Tory led council are refusing to work with housing associations to provide desperately needed homes for rent. All the talk of affordable housing is a sham and a smokescreen as it always comprises of starter homes for sale and shared ownership both of which are unaffordable to those on low wages or benefits.