

NEWS RELEASE**Local traders strangled as Tesco makes a killing****For immediate
release:
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Tesco posted record profits of £2.25 billion this week, but Manchester Friends of the Earth [1] warns that the supermarket's dominance comes at a serious cost to local traders.

The profit announcement comes as the supermarket giant squares up to force through yet another planning application in Manchester - this time for an 8000 plus sq m store on a playing field adjacent to Stretford Leisure Centre on Chester Road in Stretford, Manchester. Manchester Friends of the Earth is deeply concerned that if the application is granted, shops in the vicinity could fall victim to the same fate as independent traders in Burnage, who have been squeezed out of business by the opening of a Tesco superstore.

California Wines on Burnage Lane, for instance, has had to halve the size of its premises as turnover has fallen by as much as half since Tesco opened. *"How can we compete when Tesco can sell something to the public at the price we pay for it at the wholesalers?"* asked owner Dat Vo.

Manchester Friends of the Earth campaigner Paul D'Ambra says: *"Tesco is growing unchecked by the competition authorities and aided by a planning system that is not robust enough to stop it building new stores and extensions even where there is strong local opposition. We are determined not to let history repeat itself and will continue working with residents in Trafford to make sure the council is not allowed to forget that the people in the local community, who are supposed to be benefitting from this huge store, do not want it."*

Tesco has held planning permission for a 3000 sq m store to be built on the site in Trafford since 1998. Last year the council refused an increase to 7500 sq m and this year Tesco has applied for permission to build an 8000+ sq m store. Local businesses and residents are worried that the proposal will jeopardise existing town centres, worsen the traffic situation and wipe out green space that is home to wildlife.

Manchester Friends of the Earth has been working with other local groups to oppose the application and has delivered over 40 letters of objection and a petition with over 130 signatures to the council planning officers. This may not seem like many but last year's

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refused application received just five letters of objection. The consultation period is now closed but a public inquiry is scheduled to take place later in the year.

Small shops all over the country are currently struggling for survival in the face of the growing power of the big supermarkets. Earlier this year an all party group of MPs gave a stark warning that many independent shops will go out of business by 2015 unless action is taken now to curb the power of the biggest supermarkets [2].

As well as eradicating high street trade, Manchester Friends of the Earth is also concerned that the proliferation of the supermarkets is having a detrimental impact on the environment. *“Tesco might have announced plans this week to improve its environmental credentials, but it is a long way off becoming a ‘green’ organisation,”* says D’Ambra. *“Tesco is continuing to build huge new stores geared up to people shopping by car, import food over vast distances and push prices to farmers down so low that some are on the brink of bankruptcy. In addition, the amount of climate changing emissions from superstores compares very badly to those of other food businesses - on average, superstores emit three times more carbon dioxide than a typical greengrocers, per square foot [3].”*

Manchester Friends of the Earth has compiled a Real Food Guide to locally sourced, organic, GM-free and fair trade food, which can be accessed online at www.realfoodguide.org.uk.

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Notes to Editors

[1] Manchester Friends of the Earth is a prominent campaigns group, raising awareness and lobbying for policy changes at a local, regional, national and international level. The group consists entirely of volunteers, and its campaigns are funded by membership fees and individual donations. Up-to-date information is available on their website: <http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk>. Manchester Friends of the Earth is part of a national network of local groups, affiliated to the national organisation (further information can be found at <http://www.foe.co.uk>).

[2] All Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group (2006) ‘High Street Britain: 2015’, House of Commons.

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[3] Sheffield Hallam University (2002) Energy use in the United Kingdom, non-domestic building stock.

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