

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## Tesco workers to strike at two stores

TESCO workers are to hold pre-Christmas strikes at two stores – which may lead to a wider strike across the firm.

Staff at the Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon stores have voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action on three days this month following a continued dispute with the company over collective representation.

The Mandate trade union has served the company with notice that workers in Sligo, where 97% of staff were in favour of industrial action, will strike this Thursday and again the following week, on December 14. Meanwhile, in Carrick-on-Shannon, where 85% of workers voted in favour of industrial action, a strike will take place on December 22.

While the dispute is currently isolated to the two stores, the union has warned that a

By **Craig Hughes**

further escalation of industrial action is likely, including more strike dates and the potential for more of Tesco's 150 stores to join the action, if the company doesn't move to resolve the dispute.

Mandate general secretary John Douglas said while workers don't want to strike, they feel they have 'no alternative'.

'For the last three years Mandate has tried to engage with the company on a whole range of issues, but it seems Tesco management are determined to continue with their de-unionisation plan,' he said.

In February last year, staff at 16 Tesco stores went on strike across the country in relation to a plan by the company to cut a large chunk of their workforce. Independent Dublin TD

Joan Collins previously outlined the details in the Dáil. 'It aims to get rid of 1,200 of the most secure and well-paid jobs in the company, critically undermining the union in the process,' she said at the time.

Mr Douglas said Tesco has 'refused to engage' with staff in relation to representation rights and as a result the strike action was being called.

He said: 'Tesco workers throughout Ireland are at a crossroads. They are being told by their employer that they will no longer be entitled to trade union representation, and unfortunately now the only way they can avail of that right is to strike.'

The union is calling on the company to once again engage with their workers.

Tesco Ireland did not respond to a request for comment yesterday.