

Tesco scraps 24-hour opening at two large stores



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Tesco has scrapped 24-hour opening at two large stores, and other shops with low numbers of nighttime shoppers may soon follow in order to cut costs. As part of efforts by the chief executive, Dave Lewis, to restore the group's fortunes, Tesco has decided to shut one Extra outlet and one superstore at night because not enough customers were using them. The supermarkets will now close at midnight and reopen at 6am.

The company declined to disclose the stores' locations while staff were being consulted. It insisted, however, that there would be a "limited" impact on jobs, as other night operations – restacking shelves and picking goods for online deliveries – will go on as usual.

Analysts reported that other large stores will also cut their nighttime opening hours, but Tesco said no decision had been taken yet. A spokeswoman said: "We're always thinking about how to best serve customers in each of our stores. Any decisions will be made locally and our colleagues will be the first to know."

About 400 of the supermarket group's UK stores open around the clock. Britain's biggest retailer added that 24-hour opening was important for many of its customers. Nick Bubb, an independent retail analyst, said: "There is some demand for 24-hour shopping, for example from shift workers, but Tesco hypermarkets may not be best sited to meet that demand ... and there is always online as an alternative."

Tesco's oversized out-of-town supermarkets were once regarded as the grocer's prime asset. However, the economics of selling food have changed along with shopping habits, with customers buying more online and from small local shops. The company has shut 43 large stores and cancelled plans for 49 others.