

SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE

Press Release
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Sainsbury's development predicted to take 40% of Waitrose customers away from the town centre

Uttlesford District Council has instructed retail experts Savills to appraise the claims made by Sainsbury's in their planning explanations. The Savills appraisal report has now been made public and predicts that the new Sainsbury's development would have a worse impact on Saffron Walden even than that previously estimated by the *Save Walden Town Centre* group.

The key findings of the Savills appraisal are:

- The Sainsbury's supermarket would take away over 40% of Waitrose's customers.
- Sainsbury's would directly take away 10% of trade in food and other convenience goods from local shops in Saffron Walden town centre.
- Sainsbury's would take away almost 50% of the Saffron Walden Tesco's customers.
- In total, almost 90% of Sainsbury's turnover would be taken from Waitrose, Tesco and the stores in the centre of Saffron Walden.
- Overall, the development would result in a substantial reduction in footfall and turnover in Saffron Walden, and the vitality of Saffron Walden would be much reduced.

Experts calculate that a 10% reduction in turnover for a small shop equates to a 30% drop in their income due to their high fixed costs; this is likely to make the difference between survival and their being forced to close.

These findings completely endorse the assessments made by *Save Walden Town Centre* that by far and away the largest source of turnover for the new store would be trade diverted from the existing Saffron Walden stores. This trade diversion would inevitably result in huge job losses at Waitrose, Tesco and throughout the town centre stores. They also directly contradict Sainsbury's claims that the majority of their turnover would come from out of town.

The Savills appraisal looks only at the direct impact of the Sainsbury's development. Government studies show that customers of out of town supermarkets in general just go to the supermarket to do their shopping - they do not make "linked" trips into the neighbouring town centre. The Savills appraisal doesn't even address the indirect impact on Saffron Walden if 40% of Waitrose's customers stop coming into town and stop visiting all the other stores in town.

Save Walden Town Centre spokesman Paul Gadd said: "The Savills' findings completely endorse the concerns we have been raising for the last 4 months on the effect that the Sainsbury's development would have. They show that almost all of Sainsbury's trade would be cannibalised from the existing Saffron Walden shops, which is why we have said all along that new supermarkets overall destroy rather than create jobs. The Savills' findings also show that the claims made by Sainsbury's in their planning application just cannot be believed. We hope that this will be the final

evidence needed to show that this planning application should without question be rejected by our District Council.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. The Savills report estimates that 89% of Sainsbury's food and related goods turnover would be turnover taken from Waitrose, Tesco and the town centre stores. Only 11% of turnover would be drawn into Saffron Walden
2. In contrast, Sainsbury's claimed that 55% of their turnover would be new trade drawn into Saffron Walden and a further 35% of trade would be diverted from the Saffron Walden Tesco.
3. The Savills report estimates that the trade diversion would represent 41% of Waitrose's turnover, 10% of town centre shop turnover in food and other convenience goods and 48% of Tesco's turnover. It also concluded that Waitrose would be hit almost as badly as Tesco, and there was no truth in Sainsbury's claims that Sainsbury's would primarily provide competition for Tesco

Further Information

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