

# **SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE**

Press Release  
8 February 2010

On Monday the *Save Walden Town Centre* campaign handed in to Uttlesford District Council planning department over 730 signed, addressed and dated letters from members of the public objecting to the current Tesco and Sainsbury's planning applications. This first batch of letters had been collected in the Market Square and through local shops over eight days and demonstrates the huge public concern over the proposals. There will be more opportunities to write letters next Saturday morning in the Market Square and forms can also be found in a number of shops.

Spokesman, Paul Gadd, said: "We are aware that 60 local businesses have written a joint letter to the press stating their opposition to the Tesco and Sainsbury's planning applications because of the negative impact these developments would have on the number of people coming in to the town centre. The *Save Walden Town Centre* campaign group is particularly concerned at the findings of the key Government report on the impact of out-of-town centre supermarkets on towns such as Saffron Walden, particularly the conclusion that an out-of-town centre supermarket can be expected to reduce the footfall in a market town by between 13% and 52%. It's obvious that a reduction of that magnitude would have a devastating impact on our town centre. That's why we're asking as many people as possible to contact their District Councillors, MP and Uttlesford District Council planning department and make their concerns known. For further information on the campaign see the [www.savewaldentowncentre.org](http://www.savewaldentowncentre.org) website."

**ENDS**

## **Further Information**

Paul Gadd – [info@savewaldentowncentre.org](mailto:info@savewaldentowncentre.org) or 01799 521252

## **Reasons for opposition to Sainsbury's and Tesco expansion plans include:**

1. Both applications are contrary to national, regional and local planning policy.
2. Both applicants misrepresent the 'need' for more supermarket provision in the town. At the last Tesco extension planning Inquiry the inspector was not convinced that real demand existed or that choice would be enhanced. We already have two supermarkets.
3. Research data contradicts Sainsbury's claim that a new out-of-town supermarket would attract new shoppers to the town centre.\*
4. Sainsbury's claim there will be at least a 10% reduction in convenience shopping footfall in the town. Government research says the real turnover loss is likely to be between 13% and 50%.\*
5. Government research shows that the main impact will be on local retail businesses - with potentially many ceasing to trade.\*
6. There will be a negative impact on employment in the town with more jobs lost than created.
7. The transport impact will be significant. Unrealistic assumptions have been made about the number of shoppers arriving on foot, by bike or on public transport.
8. The air quality in the town, already near or above national safety limits in three key areas, will get worse because of the extra traffic generated.
9. 30% of Sainsbury's offer will be non-food items. 70% of Tesco's extension will be for non-food items. These will impact heavily on the viability of many local businesses.
10. Most of the Thaxted Road site is reserved for industrial and commercial use, not retail.

\*See *“The Impact of Large Food Stores on Market Towns and District Centres”*  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/529570.pdf>