

# **SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE**

Press Release  
13 December 2010

Paul Gadd, spokesman for Save Walden Town Centre, said: "We welcome the rejection by Uttlesford District Council of the Sainsbury's planning application because quite clearly the population of this area could not support three supermarkets and an out-of-town Sainsbury's would seriously affect the viability of the town centre. However, we are concerned that the extremely limited grounds given by the Council in rejecting the Sainsbury's application will make it very hard for them to resist an appeal by Sainsbury's against the decision. Indeed, last week Sainsbury's said in their advertisements that the grounds for rejection given by the Council were invalid. Despite this, the planning officers refused to make any changes to their advice to the planning committee or alter the grounds for rejection.

We were obviously disappointed by the Council's decision to approve an extension to the existing Tesco supermarket because a large part of the extension will be devoted to products which will compete directly with town centre retailers. Irrespective of the actual decision, we were dismayed at the standards displayed by the UDC planning department and the development control committee. For example, more than half of the discussion on Tesco was taken up with a consideration of whether or not there would be a problem if Tesco had a pharmacy - they aren't even applying for one - and landscaping issues, and there was almost no discussion on the likely impact on the town. Also, the planning department couldn't tell the meeting whether or not the proposed £150,000 that Tesco would have to pay to improve the Radwinter Road / Thaxted Road junction would be enough to make sure that the necessary works could actually be afforded.

Most of all though, we were shocked that the Council planners recommended approval of the Tesco application without allowing the public and the members of the development control committee to see some key documents used by Tesco in their application. Given the issues raised, we hope that the Tesco application will be 'called in' and dealt with fully by a Government inspector. It cannot be right that important planning applications are decided without all the evidence being made available to the public."

**ENDS**

## **Further Information**

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