

SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE

Press Release
15 February 2010

The *Save Walden Town Centre* campaign has now handed in to Uttlesford District Council planning department 1,100 signed, addressed and dated letters from members of the public objecting to the current Tesco and Sainsbury's planning applications.

Spokesman, Paul Gadd, said: "We continue to be delighted at the high level of support for our campaign from both the public and local businesses. A number of people we talked to in the Market Square told us that high shop rents and parking charges are also important factors in determining the economic life of the town centre. We quite agree with them and will work with the Business Forum and the Town and District Councils to try to address these issues once the current Tesco and Sainsbury's planning applications have been considered by UDC.

In the meantime, it is important that as many people as possible to contact their District Councillors and MP to make their concerns known. For further information on the campaign see the www.savewaldentowncentre.org website."

ENDS

Further Information

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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>