

# **SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE**

Press Release  
21 March 2010

## **Supermarket planning applications further delayed**

*Save Walden Town Centre* understand that both the Sainsbury's and Tesco's planning applications will be further delayed as Uttlesford District Council are still waiting for documentation from the supermarkets. This means that it is likely that the applications will now not be considered until May at the earliest

Campaign spokesman, Paul Gadd, said: "Revised planning legislation came into force on 29 December 2009. This new legislation, Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth and the associated Government guidance, significantly strengthen the planning policy protection for vulnerable town centres such as Saffron Walden, and should make it much harder for out of town centre supermarket developments to be approved. They also require supermarkets to be more realistic in the planning submissions they make."

"It is, however, almost three months since the new legislation came into force and the supermarkets have still not produced submissions complying with the legislation. Whilst we are concerned at the continued uncertainty hanging over Saffron Walden, we do welcome the news that both supermarkets have recognised that their planning submissions are inadequate. Both the current Sainsbury's and Tesco's submissions are hugely misleading in the statistics they quote and the claims they make. In particular, they deliberately understate their likely impacts on Saffron Walden and the neighbouring towns and villages and the huge increases in traffic and the worsening of air quality that the developments would entail. Further details of the inaccuracies in their original applications can be found on the *Save Walden Town Centre* website, [www.savewaldentowncentre.org](http://www.savewaldentowncentre.org)"

"We understand from UDC that they are also awaiting the results of their own retail study, and that once they have the revised supermarket applications and their own retail study they intend to allow a further period for public consultation, following which the planning department will make their formal report to the Development Control Committee."

"As we have said throughout our campaign, we firmly believe that both planning applications are in direct contravention of applicable planning legislation and policies, both national and local and should not be permitted. Either development would result in a huge negative impact on local towns and villages, a huge increase in traffic and a consequent damage to health caused by the worsening air quality, a net loss of jobs in the local area, and a large cash outflow from the local area."

**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 at or above national safety limits in four 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>