

# **SAVE WALDEN TOWN CENTRE**

Press Release  
23 October 2010

## **Sainsbury's and Tesco developments would result in a huge increase in Saffron Walden traffic and a significant decrease in air quality**

An analysis of the Air Quality and Transport Assessments submitted to Uttlesford District Council by Sainsbury's and Tesco show that either development would lead to a significant increase in traffic on neighbouring roads and a significant worsening of air quality at some of the worst local pollution blackspots. The Sainsbury's development in particular would result in an enormous increase in traffic from the proposed store, particularly down Thaxted Road and along Peaslands Road, Mount Pleasant Road and Borough Lane.

The key facts to emerge from the Air Quality and Transport Assessments are:

1. The Sainsbury's development would result in a 70% increase in traffic along Peaslands Road and Mount Pleasant Road.
2. The Sainsbury's development would result in roughly a 50% increase in total traffic through the Debden Road / Mount Pleasant Road / Borough Lane junction and a 65% increase in total traffic through the Peaslands Road / Thaxted Road junction. Sainsbury's are proposing that traffic lights be installed at each junction, but no other traffic measures are planned.
3. Pollution at the Debden Road / Mount Pleasant Road junction is currently only marginally below the legal maximum and these levels of traffic increases would almost certainly lead to pollution levels significantly in excess of the legal limits.
4. Tesco's extension would result in around a 10% increase in traffic along the Radwinter Road, including through the Radwinter Road / Thaxted Road junction which is already the most heavily polluted junction in Saffron Walden.
5. Sainsbury's predict a significant increase in air pollution along the length of the Peaslands Road to Borough Lane corridor, and the UDC appraisal of the Tesco submissions predicts a moderate or significant increase in air pollution at the Radwinter Road junctions, even before taking into account new housing developments.
6. Significantly, neither of the air quality assessment models used by Tesco or Sainsbury's predicts the levels of pollution which actually already exist in Saffron Walden. Because of this it is likely that even the levels of additional pollution their models predict significantly understate the likely actual effects on air quality of their developments.

It is interesting to note that the Air Quality Assessment prepared for the Friends' School development uses average emission rates per vehicle which are more than double those used by the very same consultants when acting for Sainsbury's. If these rates were used for the Sainsbury's development, they would show a massive increase in air pollution.

Paul Gadd, spokesman for Save Walden Town Centre, said: "These Assessments demonstrate that either supermarket development would lead to a significant increase in traffic and air pollution, particularly in areas of Saffron Walden which are already

badly polluted. We have great doubts about the bases on which the Traffic and Air Quality Assessments have been prepared and therefore believe that the problems would be even greater than predicted. Planning legislation is supposed to encourage only sustainable development, and it can be seen from these predictions that neither supermarket development can be said to be sustainable.”

**ENDS**

### **Notes for Editors**

1. Sainsbury's Air Quality Assessment predicts that on average there will be a 25% increase from the existing level of traffic along the Debden Road, a 73% increase along Peaslands Road and a 67% increase along Mount Pleasant Road.
2. Sainsbury's Transport Assessment predicts that at peak times, there will be an 80% increase in traffic along Peaslands Road, a 68% increase along Mount Pleasant Road and a 47% increase in traffic through the Debden Road / Mount Pleasant Road junction.
3. Tesco's Transport Assessment predicts that there would be a 20% increase in cars to and from Tesco and around a 10% increase in traffic along the Radwinter Road at peak times.
4. The maximum legal Air Quality limit for annual mean nitrous oxides concentrations (largely produced by exhaust fumes) is 40 microg/m<sup>3</sup>. The latest monitoring results at the Debden Road / Mount Pleasant Road junction, which Uttlesford District Council has started monitoring this year, show that the concentrations there are already at 38 microg/m<sup>3</sup>. Sainsbury's Air Quality Assessment predicts that this would increase by up to 10%; given that Sainsbury's uses average emissions rates per vehicle which are around half or less of those used by Friends' School in their own air quality assessment on the same roads, we believe that the real level of pollution is likely to be much higher even than this increase.
5. Nitrous oxide concentrations at the Radwinter Road / Thaxted Road junction are at 50 microg /m<sup>3</sup>, significantly above the legal maximum already. The Tesco Air Quality Assessment model predicts that the local NO<sub>x</sub> concentrations at this junction would be 11.9microg/m<sup>3</sup>, which is one of the reasons we have no confidence in Tesco's air quality assessments.

### **Further Information**

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