



Saffron Walden Healthcheck

September 2004

A community proud of the past and excited about the future

Contents

1. Opening Comments	3
2. Executive Summary	5
3. Snapshot Worksheet	8
- Environment	8
- Economy	9
- Community	12
- Transport and Access	18
Government/Community Organisations	112
4. Vision and Action Plan	21
5A. Worksheets: Environment	
EN1 Character & Vitality of the Town	
EN2 The Countryside	
A Note on Water & Waste Disposal	
Landscape Survey Around the Town Edge	
EN3 Links Between Town & Country	
5B. Worksheets: Transport & Access	
T1 Ease of Travel to & from the Local Area	
T2 Ease of Access to Services	
T3 Ease of Movement Around Town	
5C. Worksheets Economy	
EC1 Employment	
EC2 Retail & Town Centre Services	
EC3 Training & Education	
EC4 Commercial & Industrial Property Needs	
EC5 Tourism & Visitor Services	
EC6 Business Support	
5D. Worksheets: Community	
S1 Population	
S2 Housing	
S3 Health & Public Safety	
S4 Local Government/Community Organisations	
S5 Sport, Leisure & Open Spaces	
S6 Culture & Heritage	
6. Consultation: Public Meeting Report	
7. Consultation: Questionnaire Results	
8. Consultation: Interview Findings	
- Economy	
- Community	
- Transport & Access	
- Environment	
9. Consultation: Youth Report Extracts	
10. Consultation: Report from 1st Saffron Walden Scouts	
11. Acronyms	
12. Examples of Key Resources	
13. References	
14. Acknowledgements	

1. Opening Comments

The Saffron Walden Healthcheck was undertaken by the Saffron Walden Initiative, a local partnership, with funding and advice from the Countryside Agency and practical assistance from Uttlesford District Council (UDC), Saffron Walden Town Council (SWTC) and others. It is a community-based piece of research that aimed to assess the wellbeing of the town as well as the surrounding area that relies on it for goods and services. The purpose of this exercise was two-fold: a) to assist the development of a robust community partnership for the town, and b) to put together a plan of action, rooted in local circumstances and opinion, to help support a sustainable and successful future for the town and village communities of this area. Some of the findings support what has already been identified elsewhere, but there are both differences and new emphases that are specific to Saffron Walden as compared to the wider district. What the Healthcheck has produced is a body of evidence to justify specific projects and in some cases new working arrangements.

The geographic area under discussion constitutes Saffron Walden town itself and its hinterland. The hinterland covers an area that relies on the town for services, covering approximately an eight-mile radius from the centre of Saffron Walden. This area was identified by the Saffron Walden Initiative on the basis of local knowledge, taking into account a (roughly) fifteen-minute drive time, competing centres, and natural and human geography. It includes:

Core: Saffron Walden

Hinterland: Arkesden, Ashdon, Carver Barracks, Clavering, Chrishall, Debden, Debden Green, Elmdon, Gt Chesterford, Hadstock, Hempstead, Hinxton, Ickleton, Langley, Littlebury, Little Chesterford, Little Walden, Newport, Quendon, Rickling, Radwinter, Swards, End, Wenden Lofts, Wendens Ambo, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington, Wimbish.

Except where stated, percentage figures relate to these areas.

The project had several strands:

- a) desk research
- b) a 'Snapshot' worksheet, completed mainly in November-December 2003
- c) four working groups addressing detailed worksheets on the following areas – Economy, Environment, Transport & Access and Community
- d) individual interviews
- e) telephone and written/email submissions from the public (included here within the interview section)
- f) public meetings and feedback from other events

- g) input from experts, campaigners and public officials
- h) work with schools
- i) a survey of estate agents
- j) regular project meetings with a partnership sub-group

The findings comprise a mixture of quantitative or factual data and local views or experiences. Efforts have been made to strive for accuracy and consistency, but apologies are offered should any errors appear. A copy of this report will be held on the Saffire website, www.saffireweb.net, to which serious corrections can be sent. Sources of information have varied greatly in the degree of detail readily available, which is reflected in this report.

Maps detailing areas under discussion, problems, and opportunities for improvements have been prepared by the Transport and Environment working groups, and are held with original Healthcheck documents at Uttlesford District Council offices.

In all, the research contains the input of over 350 local individuals, which was our guide target for 'statistically significant' findings. No single strand of the research would be described as perfect or scientific, but together they form a substantial piece of work that provides both a lot of useful, interesting information and a 'resonant chime' with local opinion. The Report and Action Plan may act as the evidential basis for project plans and funding applications to support them. At the time of writing, it had been agreed in principle by the Saffron Walden Initiative, Saffron Walden Town Council and Uttlesford District Council, with formal confirmation of the details still to be established, that a Project Officer would be appointed for a period until March 2006 in the first instance, in order to see through delivery of community aspirations and ideas as expressed through the Healthcheck.

Emma Drew
Healthcheck Co-ordinator

2. Summary

Saffron Walden has a relatively affluent population on average, and on the whole the quality of life is good for those with resources, but there are pockets of deprivation, for whom service provision can be weak compared to urban areas, and particular problems with access to services and facilities – most acute for the young and the old and those in the rural hinterland (whom added together form a majority), and often relating to geographic distance or public transport, but also to a perceived or genuine lack of real services. The town has considerable strengths, not least its beauty and rich history, yet it is also going through a period of economic and social change that is leading to community tensions and environmental pressure.

Housing development, or the lack or quality of it, is a very prominent matter of local discussion, with further concern raised by national government housing proposals. There is a chronic shortage of affordable housing in the area, but also considerable local anxiety about the nature of development, the loss of countryside and the threat of urbanisation. Local people are expressing high aspirations in terms of the quality, design, and environmental sensitivity of affordable housing. The town falls within the London-Peterborough (M11) corridor identified by national government as a likely site for major housing development, and just north of the Stansted Airport/A120 area, already designated for some development.

The town has a significant number of people living here who came to the area for work (in one village the number of residents who had been there 20 years or more was only 10%), and of those who commute out to Cambridge or London. Over 40% of those in work are in managerial or professional occupations, including local government. Young adults and commuters were amongst the most difficult people for this project to reach. There is a decline, relative to national figures, in the number of young adults in the town (from 17% to 14% of the population in ten years), explained by high housing costs, weaknesses in leisure opportunities and employment/study options available elsewhere. A reduction in the sense of community or ‘social cohesiveness’ is widely felt, caused in part by housing cost and by poor communication between generations. Around half of both questionnaire respondents and interviewees identified some form of leisure, entertainment or cultural gap, another prominent topic of local debate.

The Saffron Walden area remains one of the safest to live in England and Wales with regard to most types of crime, though a significant minority report anxieties about anti-social or drunken behaviour on Friday and Saturday nights, and Essex Police and Uttlesford Primary Care Trust report some complex needs in relation to child protection and domestic violence, incidences of which run contrary to the generally low statistical trend.

Reliance on the car is very high locally, car ownership rates are amongst the highest in the country, and public transport is almost universally perceived as weak and irrelevant to the needs of the economy. Parking, while not as expensive or pressurised as in nearby Cambridge, remains an important matter, particularly for those who work in the town centre, for those with mobility problems and for those whose businesses rely on browsing customers. Traffic congestion is also an issue of growing local concern, especially with regard to pollution, the presence of heavy goods vehicles in the town centre and the risk vehicles pose to pedestrians including children.

The economy in the centre of the Healthcheck area is stable (if in some views characterised by complacency), well-integrated and well-supported by long-established companies in professional services, with a good market base for new businesses. At the northern and southern margins there is something more of a boom-and-bust character with fast-moving high-tech companies prevalent. Small- and medium-sized enterprises dominate. Agricultural employment continues to decline and there are reported weaknesses in the retail sector, business networking and development support for young and female entrepreneurs. There is great pressure building from two adjacent economic 'powerhouses', Cambridge and Stansted Airport. The expansion of the airport itself, while falling outside of the area under discussion by a few miles, is perceived by many as a threat to the town.

Local education provision is of exceptionally high quality, particularly in the secondary schools, but there is minimal local access to post-16 vocational training.

A need has been expressed for better promotion of the town to itself and to visitors, and of the town centre in particular, along with a desire for a better built environment for pedestrians and visitors (particularly regarding accessibility), and for better care to be taken of the natural and horticultural environment.

The town has a remarkable store of historic buildings, which are highly valued by local people – they are identified here as *the* key feature that makes the town special for local people, by a large margin – but some improvements to the town centre are desired including access and visual enhancements, and better street furniture. The town maintains a medieval-style compact character and is surrounded by agricultural land and historic parkland, much of it belonging to one landowner. Where planning permission exists for residential development, land values become extremely high.

Official processes are seen by many as opaque, frustrating and confusing, and there is concern locally about the lack of clarity between the roles of the various public bodies and agencies. A sense of detachment and low expectation can be observed between local organisations or people and the democratic bodies – which is sometimes reciprocated.

There is also a noticeably even spread between diverse views on several subjects such as housing and leisure. This may contribute to understanding

the feeling, reported often in the interviews, that the town has a history of disagreement or difficulty when it comes to civic actions such as the town centre management plan or the inability of the Chamber of Trade to continue to function. The pressure on volunteer time during working hours due, amongst other things, to a low unemployment rate and to the number of 'wealthy retired' who travel extensively, has also been reported to cause problems, especially with community transport. The town has however a strong, impressive history of civic involvement, attributed by some participants to its Quaker past, but this is reported to be fragmented and in decline in places, due in part to the absence of many of its present citizens during the working day, to the loss of young adults to feed into volunteering and the growing age of volunteers in some groups. There is, however, a very substantial pool of goodwill and expertise available locally, evidenced not least by the extraordinary depth, range and warmth of support given by local people and organisations to the Healthcheck project itself.

3. Snapshot Worksheet

This worksheet contains a series of questions devised by the Countryside Agency to create a 'snapshot' overview of the town and its hinterland. It was mainly completed in November and December 2003, so some more recent developments may not be recorded (although they may appear elsewhere in the report).

Environment

National Parks: None

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: None

Heritage Coast: None

Number of Conservation Areas: 34 in the UDC area, one of which encompasses much of Saffron Walden town centre

Number of RAMSAR sites (wetland conservation areas): None

Number of National Nature Reserves: None, although the ancient woodland of Hatfield Forest is close by, near Stansted Airport and the A120

Number of Local Nature Reserves: Nine, according to maps in *Wild Essex* by Tony Gunton (Lopinga Books)

Number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Five – one in Quendon, two in Newport, two between Ashdon and Swards End

Number of sites of importance for nature conservation: There is a high number of protected verges, greater than in the rest of Essex combined

Number of listed buildings/scheduled ancient monuments: Uttlesford District contains the highest number of these of any district in the country with some 2% of buildings being 'listed'; precise numbers for the Healthcheck area were not received, but at least 400 are in the town itself

Number of footpaths: At least 155, counted from Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 195 and 209. According to the 'definitive map', 56 of these are within Saffron Walden town itself

Number of bridleways: At least 34, from OS Explorer maps; eight on the definitive map for the town

Number of National Trails: None, but one possibility has been discussed locally – the Icknield Way

Number of cyclepaths: No dedicated ones, but one is planned from Saffron Walden to Audley End railway station. The precise date of implementation is to be confirmed

Number of byways open to all traffic: At least 24, four of which appear on the definitive map for the town itself

Economy

Jobs by industrial sector: Workforce statistics for Uttlesford district – Services 65.4%; Manufacturing 18.2%; Construction 9.1%; Agriculture 5.3%; Energy, water & mining 1.3%

Percentage of people employed in hotels and catering: 1200 individuals in the UDC area, but a high proportion of these are at Stansted Airport, outside of the Healthcheck area

Unemployment rate: Very low – 0.9% at April 2002. This, combined with high house prices, can create recruitment problems, especially in those sectors that are traditionally poorly paid such as cleaning services, childcare and retail

Percentage unemployed over 6 months: 0.6%

Professional employees (e.g. public sector, medical, financial and legal services) as a percentage of all economically-active residents: Very high at 42.4%. (compared to skilled non-manual 20.7%; skilled manual 19.3%; partly skilled 11.4%; unskilled 4.3%; armed forces 1.2%)

Number of Job Centres: None

Number of new businesses registered: 118 registered with BusinessLink at the Saffron Walden office (which includes Great Dunmow) between 1 April 2003 and 23rd February 2004.

Members of Chambers of Trade/Commerce: None. The existing chamber has ceased to function

Presence of a Business Link office: Yes, one day per week (Wednesdays) at UDC offices in London Road

Presence of a one-stop-shop for business advice: None other than the above

Rent for prime retail unit: £45 per square foot

Change in commercial rents: a local estate agent reports they are up by 25-33% for premium sites in 2004 compared with the mid 1990s, but not quite as high (taking into account inflation) as in the late 80s boom

Describe the recent trend in commercial rents: In the last two years there has been an increase in the take-up of vacant properties in the town centre for retail activity, though there remain a significant number of charity shops as in other market towns. This suggests an end to the downturn that took place after the early 1990s slump. Premium rents in King Street in 1990 were about £45 per square foot; these fell to £32, but are now approaching £45 again. Allowing for inflation, rents have not yet returned to the late 80s boom rates. It is notable, however, that shops are now being let to very different types of business than were once seen here. There is no hardware shop, greengrocer or fishmonger, while several clothes shops, at the more expensive end of the market, have opened

Is there a regular general market? Yes, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The market provides the only significant greengrocery other than the supermarkets, and also has clothes, plants, specialist foods and other goods. An antique/collectors' market takes place once a month in the town hall

Is there a regular farmers' market? Yes, in neighbouring parishes there are three, in Chrishall, Chesterford and Ugley, and one more began in Saffron Walden itself in May 2004. These are very popular, though there have been mixed reports as to range and availability of local produce

Number of supermarkets over 1000sqm: Two - Tesco, Waitrose

Number of other convenience goods shops in the town: Five – one on the High Street, one at the junction of Radwinter and Thaxted Roads, one on Old Mill Road, one on Rowntree Way and one on Cromwell Road

Number of vacant shops in the town in proportion to total number of shops: two shops were vacant at the time of writing, but there are at least five charity shops (which do well; the Cancer Research one recently came top in its region out of 104 shops)

Number of shops that have closed in the last year: Two noted – an upmarket children's clothes shop has closed to relocate; an independent outdoor clothing shop has closed

Number of public toilets in town centre: Three, two of which are coin-operated and self-cleaning. Complaints have been received by the Tourist Information Centre about the quality of the third (next to Jubilee Gardens), and improvements are taking place

Residents qualified to degree level or higher: 27.2% (England and Wales average 19.8%)

Residents with no formal qualifications: 19.2% (England and Wales average 22%). Figures for those with no qualifications were notably lower in Littlebury (15.5%) and Wimbish/Debden (14.9%) wards

Number of primary schools: Fourteen, six of which are in Saffron Walden itself. On the basis of existing housing stock, Essex County Council predicts that primary pupil numbers in Uttlesford as a whole will drop slightly from 5,663 in 2003 to 5,248 to 2008, but on the basis of a possible extra 5,600 houses (the bulk of which are likely to be in the south of the district rather than in Saffron Walden) this number is predicted to increase to 6,041. These predictions cannot take into account very recent announcements concerning the potential development of the M11 corridor or Cambridge sub-region, or possible longer term plans relating to expansion at Stansted Airport

Number of secondary schools: Three – Saffron Walden County High and Newport Free Grammar, which are state schools, and the Friends' School (an independent Quaker school). Demand for places at these schools is high. The number of secondary school age children in Uttlesford is predicted to increase by ECC from 4,751 to between 5,065 and 5,573 depending on housing development as described above. Significant numbers of pupils travel from outside of the immediate area to the two state secondary schools in Saffron Walden and Newport because of their high quality and because of the rural nature of the district, coming from as far afield as Cambridge and Bishops Stortford. Schools are cited by local estate agents as a (if not *the*) principal driving factor in the local housing market, and one reports that 7 out of 10 house buyers encounter problems registering with local schools or doctors because of lack of capacity though this view was not supported by the Primary Care Trust

Number and type of post-16 education (VI Form College, Technical College): The County High School, Newport Grammar and the Friends' School all have well-subscribed sixth form education. North West Essex Adult Community College does provide courses from time to time in various

premises in the town. Students tend to travel to Braintree, Harlow or Cambridge for further education, which presents transport and access problems for some people, and increases car use. Anecdote suggests a significant take-up of distance learning opportunities such as the Open University

Community

Rank in indices of deprivation (1 = most deprived, 350 = least deprived): employment 343; income 340; average ward scores 330; local concentration 347. These indices are technical measures used by local and national government to assess poverty and other aspects of deprivation, and form part of the basis on which some decisions are made about the allocation of public resources. By these measures, Saffron Walden is relatively well-off (one part of Birmingham scores 1, for comparison). As yet, it is recognised that these indices do not adequately measure 'geographic' deprivation – that is, the inability of people to access work or services because of remoteness, mobility or transport problems, which are issues in Uttlesford. Approximately 10% of people in this area experience income deprivation, based on numbers claiming means-tested benefits. In Uttlesford district, 22% of households in total were in receipt of some form of public financial support; of this latter figure, 33% received Housing Benefit. This means that in common with other market towns, a significant number of people in Saffron Walden experience financial deprivation even though they are surrounded by affluence. The number of 'concealed' households is also an issue, that is, those where people would be living in a separate household were one available or affordable – the Rural Housing Trust are taking steps to address this issue in some villages such as Ashdon and Clavering where there is local support and demand

Number of residents: At the 2001 census, around 28,000 people lived in the wards of Saffron Walden Audley, Shire, Castle, Ashdon, Clavering, Littlebury, Newport, the Chesterfords, Wenden Lofts and Wimbish and Debden. In addition the villages of Hinxton and Ickleton (South Cambridgeshire) might be considered part of the hinterland. Approximately half of this number live in Saffron Walden town, and half in surrounding parishes (for detailed figures see the Community Worksheets). The population and area covered by the Healthcheck equate to almost half of the area and population covered by the District Council. Uttlesford District's total population is predicted to increase significantly, by between 7,500 and 10,000 over the next ten years, largely in the south. However, population figures are subject to questions relating to the outcome of decisions on housing and airport expansion. The population has grown between the 1991 and 2001 censuses by around 6%, more in town and less in the villages

Percentage of the population over 60: 20.2%. The regional average is 18%. In the period 2000-2005, an increase of 10.3% has been predicted in the 65+ age group

Percentage of the population under 16: 20.7%. The regional average is 18.5%. 34% of people in Uttlesford district are under 30. The government's neighbourhood statistics suggest a net loss of young adults in the area (down from 17% to 14%)

Number of households: 11,138 in total; 74.1% owner-occupied (The England and Wales average is 68.9%); 9.1% rented from the Council

Percentage of single person households: 22.9%. In Audley ward the figure is 37.6% (England and Wales average 30%), many of whom are pensioners

Percentage of households with elderly people living alone: 12.2% (The England and Wales average is 14.4%)

Percentage of housing stock without whole-house heating: 3.2% (England and Wales average 8.5%). The highest figure is for Wenden Lofts (4.4%)

Number of households on the local authority authority waiting lists: over 300

Average house price: According to Uttlesford District Council figures the average house price in the year to June 2002 was £168,147. This is compared to the Cambridge sub-region average of £157,950 for April 2003, or a median rural Eastern of England figure of £123,654 for June 2002. In February 2004, the Saffron Walden town average, as reported to the Healthcheck by five local estate agents, fell within a range of £200,000 – £237,000, and in the surrounding villages the range of averages was £250,000 – £444,000. This means that house prices are higher than in some other areas of the eastern region. Land Registry figures reported in the local press suggest a certain amount of 'blight' in areas close to Stansted Airport (where prices rose in the year to March 2004 by 6% rather than the district average of 11%)

Change in average house price: This change fell within a range of 5% to 18% in the twelve months to January 2004 according to local estate agents, with the bigger increases at the lower end of the market

Trend in average house price: Upward, particularly on smaller or cheaper houses, but slowing down significantly in summer 2004. Between 1999 and 2002, prices rose by 60% for flats and 45% for terraced houses (for both, 24% in 2001-2002 alone). At 2002 rates, one needed an income of £38,000 to buy a two-bedroomed terraced house in Saffron Walden, which is a cheaper location than the surrounding villages. The annual rate of house price inflation at 30th June 2002 was 19%, compared to a UK average of 16.7%. In March

2004, in areas affected by Stansted Airport, house prices have been comparatively depressed, rising by some 6% over the year

Recorded crime rates for all crime: (twelve months to October 2003; figures from Essex Police)

Beat	Recorded	Detected	Detection rate
Saffron Walden	824	247	30.0%
Newport	141	25	17.7%
Thaxted	87	11	12.6%
Littlebury	99	7	7.1%
Elmdon	93	3	3.2%
Saffron Walden section total	1,244	293	23.6%

The highest detection rate (crimes solved) was for offences against the person, such as assault, in Saffron Walden itself; the lowest detection rates were for burglary and car crime in the more rural areas. Uttlesford remains one of the safest places to live in England and Wales according to police figures, with exceptions in respect of 'domestic' violence and child protection

Number of police stations and when open: One police office in Saffron Walden, which opens during office hours, and a traffic police office in Newport, which may be moved out of the area. There is a police office open for part-time hours in Elmdon

Number of Magistrates Courts: None, but a Saffron Walden bench sits at Harlow, approximately 40 minutes away

Number of Crown/other courts: None

Presence of Registry Office: One, at the District Council offices

Presence of Town Hall: one, used by a variety of local societies and businesses

Presence of Citizens' Advice Bureau or Community Legal Services Partnership and when open: a CAB is open during office hours

Number of fire stations and whether staffed by full time staff or volunteers: Two – Saffron Walden and Newport, staffed by full time officers and volunteers

Number of ambulance stations: Two – Saffron Walden and Newport

Number of swimming pools and when open: One public one at Lord Butler Leisure Centre, open seven days a week. There is some restriction on the availability of public seating for events and competitions. Some people on the edges of the rural hinterland may use other pools such as those at Melbourn or Royston. Private swimming lessons take place at The Potteries in Newport

Number of sports halls: Two, the Lord Butler Leisure Centre and the County High School

Number of outdoor sports pitches: Three at Herbert's Farm, plus those at the secondary schools and Saffron Walden Town Football Club

Number of Post Offices: In Saffron Walden, one, on the High Street. The East Street one recently closed. Clavering and Ickleton shops amongst others have a sub-post office

Number of health and fitness centres: One public one and several private small clubs and gyms, two of which are in Newport

Number of banks and building societies: Four banks – Barclays, Natwest, HSBC, Lloyds; three building societies – Saffron Walden Herts & Essex, Nationwide, Halifax

Number of cash points: Four – Barclays, Natwest, HSBC, Tesco (out of the town centre). Some village shops also have cashpoints of the type that charge for withdrawals

Number of council offices: Two – Uttlesford District Council's main office at Saffron Walden and the Town Council's office on Emson Close

Number of solicitors: Seven firms are listed in Yellow Pages

Number of accountants: Thirteen firms are listed in Yellow Pages

Number of hospitals and which facilities provided e.g. A&E, maternity: one, Saffron Walden Community Hospital, which has basic services and no Accident and Emergency department, clinics for arthritis or genito-urinary care, or maternity unit. A recently published leaflet indicates that the Uttlesford Primary Care Trust, which runs the hospital, has received a one-star rating (out of a possible three). A team of health visitors work out of the hospital, covering an extensive rural area. A review is currently taking place as to how best make use of a ward that is closed at present

Number of doctors: Sixteen, five of whom are based in Newport

Number of dentists: Seven, including satellite operations in Chesterford and Radwinter

Number of opticians: Three listed in Yellow Pages

Number of public houses: 31 listed in Yellow Pages, 14 of which are in the town and 11 of those serve meals. Seven of the settlements in the area under discussion have no pub – Duddenhoe End, Elmdon, Little Chesterford, Quendon, Swards End, Strethall and Wenden Lofts

Number of hotels: Six are listed in Yellow Pages; four have been inspected and included in the Tourist Information Centre Guide

Number of hotel bedspaces: 52 inspected bedspaces are recorded at the TIC

Number of bed and breakfast bedspaces: 66 inspected bedspaces are recorded at the TIC

Number and type of restaurants and cafes, including take-aways: 11 are listed in Yellow Pages, but there are some obvious omissions. The Tourist Information Centre record 59 eating places all together, including pubs, in the town and immediate hinterland

Presence of a cinema: No. This has been the subject of local debate and a current proposal is to pilot the Uttlesford council chamber as a venue in which to show films

Presence of a theatre: No. A professional theatre company, Shake-A-Leg, have staged Shakespeare performances in the town in the past couple of years. The amateur scene is quite active

Public halls/community centres: Fifteen halls are for hire in Saffron Walden (mainly very small capacity), not including UDC and SWTC chambers; there are sixteen halls in surrounding villages. One of the largest is probably the Town Hall Assembly room (capacity approx. 200), which is much in demand from local amateur musical and theatrical societies, but has considerable limitations as a venue due to the historic nature of the building. The village halls tend to act as general community centres - some bear that name such as the one in Langley. The rooms for hire in are a mixture of churches, schools and other buildings as well as community centres

Presence of museum(s): Yes, the Saffron Walden Museum, which is supported by Uttlesford District Council and has a distinguished history

Presence of a library: Yes, a central one that is open on Sundays and is widely supported and provides a variety of services. It also houses the historic 'town library' or Gibson Collection. Some rural parishes are served by a mobile library service

Presence of art gallery(ies): Three – one public one, the Fry, one commercial one on Cross Street, and one charitable one run by the Saffron Walden Arts Trust to promote the work of local artists. The library has some modest exhibition space

Number of churches according to different denominations: In Saffron Walden itself, one Pentecostal, one Roman Catholic, two Methodist, one Friends' Meeting House, one United Reformed, one Anglican (the parish Church of St Mary), one Baptist, plus the Salvation Army and Wellspring at the County High. Most of the villages have an Anglican church, though they often share ministers, and often have Baptist, Methodist and/or United Reformed establishments too, though recently at least one of these has closed. Some share premises, such as in Clavering

Number of voluntary organisations and societies in the town and its surrounding countryside: A figure of 1200 used to be used for the whole of Uttlesford, including sports clubs. A precise figure seems impossible to quantify, although a figure of 200 has been suggested for Saffron Walden itself. 40 Saffron Walden organisations have registered volunteering opportunities with the Uttlesford Volunteer Bureau, compared to 120 for the whole district.

Transport and Accessibility

Number of bus stations: None

Number of train stations: None in Saffron Walden itself. There are stations in Great Chesterford, Newport and Wendens Ambo (Audley End); the latter, which is the main commuter station for trains to London Liverpool Street, is, for historical reasons, about two miles from the town centre and a mile and a half from the edge of town, which presents access difficulties. The car park is normally full well before 9 a.m. on weekdays. At present there is no designated foot or cycle path between the town centre and Audley End station, but Uttlesford District Council have highlighted the need for one in their corporate plan. Resistance two centuries ago to the passage of a navigable canal across the Audley End estate is offered by some as an explanation for the awkward siting of the subsequent station in relation to the town. The branch line station in Saffron Walden itself was closed during the Beeching reforms

Number of coach parks: One, at Swan Meadow car park, a five-minute walk from the town centre

Percentage of households without a car: About 16%, according to economic research done by the University of Plymouth on the town and immediate area, but older census figures suggest 11.1%. This may be connected with different geographic areas used, and/or influenced by the very high figure for Audley ward (23%)

Number of cycle paths: No dedicated ones, in marked contrast to the city of Cambridge to the north. A new one has been created recently to connect Hinxton, north-west of Saffron Walden, to Cambridge via Whittlesford, a distance of about eight miles

Journey times by car and public transport to nearest large town or city:

Cambridge is 20 minutes by train, but the station is located some two miles out of Saffron Walden centre, and Cambridge station is also not in the city centre but requires a bus journey to get to the main shopping areas. Cambridge is 20 minutes by car except during the rush hour, when it can take up much longer to get to the city centre, depending on the direction travelled, and an hour or more by bus. **London** is between 55 minutes and one hour ten minutes by train, but delays are frequent. Bus journeys to London require a change and take much longer. North London by car is 50 minutes and upwards, again depending on traffic, and central London is an average of an hour and a half

Bus route services from villages to train stations: 12, but only two run at regular intervals (hourly or two-hourly) during the day. There is little evening service, which can cause problems, especially for those with limited resources such as young people or pensioners for whom a taxi is expensive. The cancellation of the X40 from Haverhill through to Saffron Walden and Stansted has also been an issue (Haverhill has no railway station)

Bus routes/services serving the town and surrounding countryside: 35.

Again, frequency (and appropriate size) may be an issue. The services to Stansted Airport are subsidised by the airport and regular; the airport acts as an effective transport hub to the south, but the benefits to Saffron Walden are limited. The district council supports a local transport forum to examine these and other issues, and a Community Transport scheme for the district operates out of Great Dunmow to help those with mobility problems

4. Saffron Walden Healthcheck Vision and Action Plan

Our vision for Saffron Walden

A town where our special heritage is valued and enhanced and community spirit is strong. An attractive and lively place, offering a good range of shopping and services for residents and visitors of all ages. Easy to get to, and to get around in, with housing and leisure for all sectors of the community.

The Action Plan

The Action Plan set out below focuses on key objectives for achieving the vision, drawing on all the information and views researched during the Healthcheck process. In addition detailed project proposals to address priority areas have been produced by the Healthcheck Transport and Environment working groups and are appended to the action plan. Effort has been made during this process to cross-reference these against existing plans such as the Uttlesford 'Quality of Life Corporate Plan'. Some ideas could be implemented quite quickly, and others might take more formal assessment before decisions could be made.

Key objective 1 - Create a robust, effective, cross-sector partnership to support community involvement in planning Saffron Walden's future

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners ¹
a) Create a framework for delivery of the Healthcheck Action Plan	i) Create Project Board involving key partners ii) Appoint Market Town Project Officer to March 2006 iii) SW Initiative to become formally involved in Uttlesford Futures, Tourism Forum, Public and Patient Involvement Forum	CA, EEDA, EEP, UDC, SWTC, SWI Possible project leader: SWI

1 – Resources and Partners includes people, information, finance, and advice

Key objective 2 - Provide for the accommodation needs of young people, key workers and those on modest incomes

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Create a mechanism to address the concerns of local people regarding design, quality, infrastructure and	i) Identify all potential sites, providers and sources of support ii) Develop strategy to consult and influence key bodies iii) Obtain clarification of central	UDC, SWEHBS Saffron Walden CPRE

environmental sensitivity of housing development	government plans; development of coherent housing strategy iv) Formulate proposals	
b) Provide additional affordable housing	i) Implement housing proposals	UDC, housing associations

Key objective 3 - Better engage and provide for the needs of children, teenagers and young adults

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Further develop current programmes of support, consultation and advocacy for young people	i) SW Initiative to agree areas for joint working with Essex Youth Service, UDC Youth Forum and UDC/UPCT Youth Strategy Group, Skate Park Group ii) Implement project programme iii) Develop advocacy project to counter local hostility to young people iv) Transport scheme for the young as above	ECC, UDC, Police
b) Further advance leisure/culture provision and informal learning opportunities	i) Arts/civic centre feasibility study as above ii) Events programme as below iii) Work placements and entrepreneurship training as above/below iv) Play areas as below	See above/below

Key objective 4 - Address growing congestion problems and local concerns about weak public transport

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Develop and implement traffic management plan	i) Establish traffic management group and undertake detailed traffic study ii) Research new public transport plan; identify local opportunities and sources of additional support for public transport improvements, inc. those for young people & access to town from villages iii) Develop and implement 'visionary' transport solutions in conjunction with key partners iv) Agree improvements with major agencies v) New transport scheme for young people vi) Unified ticketing scheme	ECC, UDC,
b) Resolve current parking debates	i) Traffic study as below ii) Identify resources to support findings/solutions iii) Agree projects e.g. parking solutions such as minibus shuttle from Swan Meadow iv) Implement parking projects	UDC, SWTC

c) Plan incremental changes to traffic movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Improved signage both within the town and on approaches to it, including from M11 ii) New signage at Audley End station and promote train access to town iii) Develop and launch car-share schemes iv) Develop or improve unified, reliable information resource for public transport v) Develop and implement new school/youth transport pilot vi) Foot and cycle path to Audley End station vii) Research shuttle bus option to Audley End Station viii) Implement shuttle bus 	DoT ECC, UDC, Audley End Estate, Network Rail, SaffireWeb
--------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Key objective 5 - Support and improve the long-term economic vitality of the town

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Create incentives for people to use the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Create a new, high quality, unified, attractive, comprehensive and accessible information resource ii) Free lunchtime buses from research parks iii) Enhance markets, inc. possible relocation of farmers' market to site adjacent to existing Tues/Sat market iv) Include review of town hall use in arts centre feasibility study 	SW Directory, What's On, Saffire , SWTC, ECC (Library) Gt Chesterford Rsearch Park, Genome Campus. SWTC, UDC Jan Lupton
b) Create a pilot 'green tourism' plan to promote the town in sustainable ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree resourcing, partners & support for new 'attractors' /projects ii) Implement pilot scheme iii) Evaluate pilot scheme and agree next steps iv) Cross-promotion scheme with Audley End House and Duxford Imperial War Museum v) Cross-promotion scheme with public transport providers vi) Introduce vintage bus scheme between Audley End Station, AE House and the town centre vii) Agree pilot compulsory inspection/promotion scheme for tourist accommodation providers viii) Evaluate inspection scheme 	ETB UDC English Heritage, Imperial War Museum

c) Make parking schemes easier and more attractive to access and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Identify resources to support parking improvements based on traffic study as above ii) Assess/implement other actions from Transport working group iii) Implement enhancements to access between Swan Meadow and town centre iv) Implement pay on exit parking v) Assess/implement other actions from Transport WG 	ECC, UDC, SWTC
d) Extend the economically active hours of the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Address 'anti-social' behaviour in the town centre (see also providing entertainment below), e.g. review licensing arrangements; implement staggered opening hours; make CCTV more conspicuous; support initiatives to reduce fear of crime; learn from other towns ii) Develop and implement Sunday and evening opening strategy in conjunction with traders and town centre management group iii) Improve access and quality of public spaces as above, inc. town hall and market square 	Police, SWTC, local publicans, retailers, UDC SWI
e) Provide better ongoing support for local business, esp. women and young entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Establish a sustainable and inclusive business networking forum (inc. identify key partners, organisational support) ii) Launch forum iii) Hold a business fair iv) Identify and provide new work placement opportunities for young people v) Develop and implement in-school training in entrepreneurship 	<p>Prowess, DTI, BusinessLink for Essex, SWTC, Young Enterprise</p> <p>Learning and Skills Council, local employers, BusinessLink for Essex</p>

Key objective 6 - Enhance the appearance and accessibility of the town centre and public spaces

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Expand the town centre management partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree new partners and shared objectives – SW Town Council, UDC, market traders ii) Develop town centre management philosophy iii) Agree integrated town centre improvement plan based on identified need and local priorities iv) Develop and implement town centre management plan v) Implement town centre improvements 	SWTC, UDC, market traders.
b) Maintain and improve the built environment of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Undertake Feasibility Study for town centre improvements, including accessibility audit ii) Public tender for town centre design improvements 	Uttlesford Futures, CIBA ,

the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Project example – new, better and more appropriate street furniture, including on the Common iv) Assess/implement actions from Environment working group v) Complete refurbishment of Jubilee Gardens public toilets, and redesign of exterior to allow view through to gardens 	SWTC, UDC, EEDA
c) Create pedestrian friendly town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Full feasibility study for pedestrianisation inc. economic and aesthetic impacts and cost/benefit analysis ii) Introduce pedestrian friendly zones, possibly inc. market square iii) Launch a new programme of public events (see below) iv) Survey of pavements and implement programme of repairs v) Identify resourcing for a street inspector. vi) Appoint street inspector vii) Improve River Slade watercourse viii) New signage, information resources and publicity for footpath network ix) Create outdoor eating and drinking areas 	Essex CC, UDC, SWTC, voluntary sector (surveys)
d) Improve quality of children's play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Identify improvements needed to play areas and necessary resources ii) Implement improvements to play areas 	SWTC
e) Implement new management plan for town centre horticulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree new approach to manage trees in town centre and other plants/planting schemes ii) Continue with annual flowering baskets scheme 	SWTC/UDC SWI/Business Forum

Key objective 7 - Promote a sense of community and belonging

Project	Actions	Resources and Partners
a) Create new culture/leisure /entertainment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Full feasibility study for new arts/leisure/civic space to include cost/benefit, traffic, economic, cultural impacts and to consider in relation to alternatives ii) Identify new resources and promoter(s) to develop a programme of community events; create promoter network iii) Implement programme of events iv) Provide enhanced support for existing provision and initiatives e.g. publicity and information as above, greater frequency v) affordable housing as above vi) transport as above vii) Implement recommendations of feasibility study viii) Maintain and support new networks/programmes of events 	ECC, UDC, SWTC Saffron Walden Arts Trust, Round Table

	ix) Information resource as above to promote and celebrate the town x) Develop enhanced support for UDC's 'good citizen awards'	
b) Take services & activities to people in rural locations, esp. the old and the young	To be considered as part of transport and culture proposals Investigate rural touring scheme cf. Norfolk, Cambs	ECC, ACEE, UDC, SWTC, SWAT, Parish councils
c) Better promotion of local history	i) Develop an enhanced programme of walks, events and publications ii) Create history trails for residents and visitors	SWI, Museum, TIC, English Heritage, Saffron Walden Historical Society, Saffron Walden Archive Society
d) Enhance the working relationship between the Saffron Walden Initiative and UDC/SWTC, and between SWI and parishes	i) Identify, formalise and support new areas for co-operation ii) Undertake training needs assessment iii) Develop programme of joint activities iv) Develop and promote benefits of hinterland parish involvement in SWI	Saffron Walden Project board, Parish Councils

DETAILED ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE ENVIRONMENT GROUP

1. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT WITHIN SAFFRON WALDEN

- 1.1 To carry out a feasibility study for the co-ordinated improvement of the town centre around the Market Square, including options for increased pedestrian priority, integrated street furniture and signage. As part of the above, to press for a planning framework within the central area that seeks to develop the full potential of pedestrian links within the block bounded by High Street, Market Hill, King Street and Church Street (eg Lime Tree Court to Church Street.)
- 1.2 To promote the reorganisation of the George Street public toilets as part of a design that will provide an attractive view through to Jubilee Gardens, whilst also upgrading the quality of the existing facilities.

- 1.3 To pressurise Essex C.C. to resolve the engineering and legal difficulties delaying action to repair/reline the defective Slade culvert and, meanwhile, to replace the unsightly red and white traffic barriers with bollards appropriate to the Conservation Area and less obstructive to pedestrian movement and those with mobility aids.
- 1.4 To improve/screen unattractive sites in key locations – the Eight Bells car-park at the northern entry to the town, The White Horse car-park in George Street, the boundary between the rear car-park of the police-station and the public car-park at the bottom of Common Hill, and various refuse bin sites at the rear of commercial premises for instance in Mercers Row.
- 1.5 To prepare a study for the reorganisation of Emson Close, a significant pedestrian route into the centre from the north-east, that would screen re-organised parking behind a punctuated screen wall or hedge and improve the footpath towards The Cockpit and the Market Square.
- 1.6 To improve/develop the vacant advertising hoarding site at the North end of Fairycroft Road.
- 1.7 To investigate a scheme for upgrading the unsightly pavement and set-back frontage of shops at the west end of George Street.
- 1.8 To monitor/safeguard buildings in the Conservation area that are in neglect or “at risk” (eg The former “Young Things” building adjacent to the temporary barriers in George Street / 12 Market Hill and rear yards / 5 Bridge Street / FC Moore offices in Bridge Street / The Myddleton Place frontage of the Youth Hostel / the Grange 33 Church Street.)
- 1.9 To investigate proposals for the maintenance and improvement of neglected historic structures within the town (eg The Castle and its setting within the Museum Grounds, the Battle Ditches, and the Town Pound at the beginning of Little Walden Road).

Ideally all the above items should be considered together as part of a comprehensive scheme of improvements to the historic and commercial centre of Saffron Walden. Outside this area:

- 1.10 To upgrade the unsightly traffic island at the junction of East Street and Audley Road with an attractively landscaped surface that complements the existing planted flowerbeds on the inner edge of the junction.
- 1.11 To investigate the possibility of a new pedestrian link from Swan Meadow Car-park into Audley End Park, incorporating a footbridge over the Slade.
- 1.12 To set up a community-based scheme for environmental improvements to the housing areas around the Golden Acre Centre.

2. TREES AND LANDSCAPE

- 2.1 To pressurise the LA's responsible (ECC, UDC, SWTC) to adopt positive policies and practice for the maintenance, pruning and replacement of significant tree groups within the town – see Map within Worksheet appendix - including High Street, St Mary's churchyard and The Close garden, the perimeter of The Common.
- 2.2 To carry out new tree planting in green areas fronting existing residential developments (eg Little Walden Road and at the junction with Caton's Lane), as screening to unsightly industrial areas on approaches to the town (eg Thaxted Road, Ashdon Road near Ridgeons , Radwinter Road at the SIA site) and to reinforce weak sections of the boundary between town and countryside. See detailed comments and photographs in the EN2 and EN3 worksheets.
- 2.3 To support the planning authority in pursuing more extensive planting requirements within new developments (including trees), followed up by active enforcement of approved proposals.
- 2.4 To develop nature conservation areas on appropriate sites within the town, with management plans to encourage wildlife.

3. FOOTPATHS

- 3.1 To press for completion of those footpath links between Saffron Walden and adjacent villages that are discontinuous at present (eg along Wenden Road to Audley End and the Little Walden Road to Little Walden) and to seek improvement of defective and slippery surfaces on existing routes (eg the high level footpath over Windmill Hill towards Littlebury.)
- 3.2 To support and assist the auditing of surface condition, kerbs, crossings, lighting and mobility hazards within the footpath network of the town that is progressively being carried out by the Uttlesford Access Group.
- 3.3 To develop proposals coordinated street furniture and signage within the town's pedestrian and vehicular network, including the provision of additional seats for the elderly and infirm.
- 3.4 To enhance pedestrian routes from principal public car-parks into the Central Area, (particularly Swan Meadow to High Street via Park Lane and Caton's Lane to Castle Street via the American Playing Fields) Also, to create a shared footpath / cycleway from the Common car-park to the footbridge over the Slade.

- 3.5 To seek improvement of other pedestrian links within the town eg Central Arcade between High Street and King Street, Tanner's Way between East Street and Audley Road.)
- 3.6 To improve access to and interpretative signage at historic sites such as The Castle and Battle Ditches.

4. THE URBAN EDGE

- 4.1 To press for planning control policies that will maintain the clear distinction between the town edges and the surrounding countryside and strengthen this edge by tree planting where weakened by commercial development on the Ashdon, Radwinter and Thaxted Roads.
- 4.2 To ensure that views of the church spire are preserved when assessing the merits of planning applications, and that materials and planting are also considered for their impact on rooflines and longer views.
- 4.3 To promote awareness and upkeep of recreational footpaths linking the town and the surrounding countryside (see response to EN3 Q1)
- 4.4 To secure the long-term protection and enhancement of the landscape setting of Saffron Walden.

5. THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE

- 5.1 To promote awareness of the need to safeguard the SSI at Debden Water, Newport, (one of four in the local area) which is reported to be in unfavourable and declining condition.
- 5.2 To seek better management of protected roadside verges for their bio-diversity value.

DETAILED ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE TRANSPORT GROUP

1. Some Potential Improvements – Footpaths

- 1.1 Thaxted Road: widening of east side pavement and prevention of pavement car parking.
- 1.2 George Street: Crossing by traffic lights has poor camber and little width for pedestrians waiting to cross one of busiest roads in town.
- 1.3 George Street and Hill Street: Consider speed reduction measures and more pedestrian priority.

- 1.4 Hill Street South side: pavement very narrow and busy with pedestrians where speed and volume of traffic is oppressive. Improve traffic management; pedestrian-friendly enhancements.
- 1.5 Waitrose Car Park from Hill Street to Elm Grove: improve and make pedestrian route more obvious and reduce conflict with cars.
- 1.6 Debden Road: widen and improve surface of pavement on east side of this major north-south pedestrian route linking the major southern residential area to the town centre.
- 1.7 Church Street: widen pavement at High Street end.
- 1.8 Tesco, Radwinter Road: Improve pedestrian access so that slope is acceptable for wheelchair use.

2. Some Potential Improvements – Crossings

- 2.1 Newport Road: Fast and busy main vehicular entrance to town needs a crossing to serve residents on west side because of the lack of pavement to the north of most of the houses.
- 2.2 Little Walden Road: lack of footpath for some of east side. Crossing to serve Goddard's Way area residents coming into town and sports grounds visitors
- 2.3 South end of Common Hill: existing crossing is too far from East Street to serve pedestrians using East Street as a route into town, and there is no footpath on the north-eastern corner of the roundabout at this junction. A new crossing has been agreed.
- 2.4 Thaxted Road: a dedicated crossing to aid access to Saffron Walden County High School
- 2.5 Debden Road: a dedicated crossing to aid access to Katherine Semar school

3. Some Potential Improvements – Raised Tables

- 3.1 George Street and/or Hill Street: speed reduction measures and greater emphasis on pedestrian priority in this busy area
- 3.2 Church Street: raised table in place of roundabout at the eastern end. Pedestrian space is limited, particularly on the eastern side, and vehicle speeds can be high
- 3.3 Church Street/Museum Street/Market Hill: it is not easy to see alternative solution which would work for this junction, but a raised table might solve the problem

4. Walking and Cycling

- 4.1 Seating is important for those walking around the town and thought should be given to additional provision
- 4.2 Covers for cycle parking at the station and schools would be appropriate
- 4.3 New cycle parking could be found in the Market Square, close to the entrance of Waitrose and visible from seating, as well as the sports grounds and leisure centre, employment sites, outlying shops and the front of the Council Offices in London Road
- 4.4 Cycle lanes in Cromwell Road and Ross Close. Other possible locations include part of Peaslands Road and Station Road.
- 4.5 Footpath and cycle route maps could be produced and distributed to surgeries, tourist office, library, schools and the leisure centre and other places.
- 4.6 A full study of pedestrian links should be undertaken.

5. Signage

- 5.1 The historic sign on corner of Audley End Road and Wenden Road should be repaired and include a sign to Saffron Walden itself.
- 5.2 A sign to Saffron Walden could be erected at entrance of Audley End House to encourage joint trips.
- 5.3 'Finger posts' could be installed, such as those seen in Cambridge, stating distances to attractions and facilities. The location of toilets is a frequently asked question by visitors.
- 5.4 The current signs to Swan Meadow car park to may give the false impression that it is a long way from the town centre, and do not identify it as town centre parking.
- 5.5 New signs for both pedestrians and car drivers could be installed at exits towards Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford and Newport.
- 5.6 A bus route map should be erected on both sides of the High Street by the main bus stops.
- 5.7 Signs to Saffron Walden could be installed at the railway station and at the motorway junction to the south. Tourist visitor surveys, carried out three times per year, reveal that only about 10% of people in the town centre are visitors at present.

5. The Worksheets

These worksheets were completed by four separate working groups of local people, including some with specific expertise or interest in the areas concerned.

5A. Environment

WORKSHEET EN1: THE CHARACTER AND VITALITY OF THE TOWN

These questions are aimed at defining the character and vitality of the town, and identifying what aspects make the town distinctive.

Q1 What are the main landmarks or distinctive buildings in the town?

Individual buildings include:

- St. Mary's Church, the spire of which is visible from many approaches to the town. Built between 1450 and 1525, it is in the English late Gothic or perpendicular style. The church has a thriving congregation and is used for civic occasions and concerts.
- The Old Sun Inn. The exterior of this medieval building shows one of the finest surviving examples of pargetting or decorative plaster work. The building has historical associations with the Civil War.
- The Castle. The flint and rubble remains of the basement/cellar are all that is left of this thirteenth century construction.
- The Youth Hostel. This fourteenth century building has had many uses, including medieval shops and eighteenth century maltings. It suffers badly from the passage of traffic along Bridge Street.
- Audley End House. On the western edge of town, this Grade 1 listed building is surrounded by Capability Brown-designed parkland.

Groups of buildings include:

- Bridge Street. Largely medieval buildings of varying size, mainly in good order.
- Castle Street. Medieval and nineteenth century houses, once a densely populated slum but now thoroughly gentrified.

- Church Street. Medieval, nineteenth century and modern houses and shops.
- Market Hill. A similar mixture of buildings, some not in a good state of repair.
- Market Place. These buildings are of rather different design, including an eighteenth century town hall somewhat obscured by nineteenth century additions and an Italianate Corn Exchange (now the library). The Boots shop, built to replace the Rose and Crown Inn that was lost along with many lives in a disastrous fire, has never quite fitted in visually. To the south there are Market, Butchers' and Mercers' Rows, where medieval traders worked.
- High Street. A tree-lined and imposing street with examples of houses favoured by prosperous Victorians as well as medieval buildings concealed behind nineteenth century facades. The last house on the east side, The Close, has a well-known spider window.

Q2 What are the focal points of the town? Where do people naturally congregate?

- The Market Place, especially on market days
- The Library, which holds periodic events and exhibitions
- The Town Hall, which has rooms for hire
- Cafés and restaurants: Duffy Moons and the Mocha are favoured by the young
- The Day Centre in Jubilee Gardens, popular with the over 60s
- The Common, especially on spring and summer evenings and for visiting fairs and circuses – though a town superstition says that the fair always brings rain
- The Bowls Club in Abbey Lane, which is thriving
- Audley Park, especially for dog walkers
- The County High School, used as a venue
- The Allotments (Windmill Hill, Little Walden Road, Limefields)
- Outside Waitrose supermarket, where long conversations seem to take place and which is also a walkway into town

- The Lord Butler Leisure Centre
- Saffron Walden Football Club, which is used for social occasions

Q3 Is there a historic core to the town?

The medieval area is around the church and castle, extending west to the High Street, south to George Street and Hill Street, east to the Common and north to the wall behind Castle Street. The nineteenth century areas beyond this extend to Audley and London Roads and east to the far side of the Common. Most of the buildings are Grade 2 listed, with several Grade 2* and a few Grade 1.

WORKSHEET EN2: THE COUNTRYSIDE

Q 1 What is the local countryside's distinctive character?

The character of the local countryside is generally open and rolling farmland broken by occasional woodland, with farmsteads and villages interspersed throughout a tranquil rural area.

The M11 and mainline electrified railway run north-south through the area and provide an approximate boundary between the larger open fields to the west and the smaller and more enclosed character in the river valleys to the east. Close to Saffron Walden, Capability Brown's landscape at Audley End provides a striking approach to the town from the north and west.

Essex County Council has identified three broad Landscape Character Areas around Saffron Walden. These are:

- The Cam Valley: broad valley, open arable farmland on valley slopes, enclosed character of valley floor with riverside vegetation, nucleated settlement and extensive historic parkland
- Central Essex Farmlands: irregular field pattern with sinuous hedges, many small woods, scattered settlement, typically with greens and ponds, isolated moated farmsteads, narrow winding lanes, tranquil character
- North Essex Farmlands: strong undulating landform dissected by small valleys, distinctive elevated broad flat topped ridges, medium to large arable fields, openness and space with wide views, contrasting semi enclosed character of some valleys, relatively low density of small villages, hamlets and some farmsteads, mostly remote/ tranquil (Chris Blandford Associates for Essex County Council 2003).

Q 2 Is the landscape of high quality?

No national or local official designations (such as National Park) apply. Local authorities have moved away from local designations in line with current guidance, towards a 'countryside character' approach.

Q 3 Is the countryside important for agriculture?

Saffron Walden is mainly surrounded by Grade 2 land (Grade 1 being the highest and most versatile quality) although there are some pockets of Grade 3, which designates the land as important arable land. The Cam Valley floor is Grade 3. Much of Audley End Park is shown as land primarily not in agricultural use, even though some is.

Locally there is a variation in soil types ranging from light chalk and flint to heavy clay capable of growing a variety of different crops. Presently, combinable crops predominate with some roots such as sugar beet and potatoes. Commercial livestock farming has almost disappeared.

Woodland is mainly deciduous with some ancient woodland/semi-ancient woodland sites surviving. There are some intensive forestry plantations but much of the woodland has the appearance of being maintained for their sporting and landscape value rather than forestry production.

Q 4 Is the countryside important for nature conservation?

There are four main Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the area. These are nationally designated areas of importance for their nature conservation value.

- Hales Wood is eight hectares of ancient, semi-natural woodland. The conservation interest in the site centres on the large population of oxlip and the plant and animal communities typical of ash-field maple woodland found on chalky boulder clay. The site is designated as a National Nature Reserve and is managed by English Nature.
- Nearby Shadwell Wood is owned and managed as a Nature Reserve by the Essex Wildlife Trust. Like Hales Wood it is ancient, coppice-with-standards woods of the wet ash-maple woodland type. Both are under active coppice management and support a rich collection of plants and animals, including two nationally uncommon plant species. Both woods are classed by English Nature as being in favourable condition.
- Nunn Wood is an ancient oak-hornbeam 'coppice-with-standards' woodland situated on the chalky boulder clay of north-west Essex. It supports one of the largest known colonies of the early-purple orchid

Orchis mascula, together with the rare Oxlip *Primula elatior*, which is restricted to East Anglia. It is in favourable condition.

- Debden Water is a small freshwater stream that runs through a narrow sheltered valley on the chalky boulder clay and forms a tributary to the River Cam at Newport. The surrounding land has a varied topography and supports a range of habitat types including tall fen vegetation within the flood plain, unimproved neutral grassland, broad-leaved woodland, species-rich calcareous grassland on the valley slopes, and sandy areas surrounding a number of small disused gravel pits. It is classed as being in an unfavourable and declining condition.
- In addition, Langley High Wood is a woodland of ancient origin holding stands of the ash-maple woodland type together with areas of hornbeam. Such woodland types are restricted to lowland England and have suffered a rapid decline since the first half of this century. The wood is notable for its size and relatively unmodified state and for the presence of hornbeam at the edge of its geographical range. It is in favourable condition.

There are four further areas of nature conservation value to which have the public access:

- Bendysh Woods, Radwinter (90 ha, part of the Forestry Commission's Walden Forest). These are ancient oxlip woods, once designated as SSSI but damaged by conifer planting. They are now under restoration to natural broad-leaved woodlands with wide rides and rich flora, and are breeding grounds for four species of deer including the Red Deer, Britain's largest wild land mammal.
- Rowney Wood, Debden (82 ha, part of the Forestry Commission's Walden Forest). This is conifer-planted wood, now being 'deconiferised'. It has good flora, butterflies and deer.
- Little Hales Wood, Ashdon. (18 ha, managed by Essex Wildlife Trust). Now being deconiferised. Good wildlife ponds.
- Harrison Sayer, Hadstock (1 ha, managed by Essex Wildlife Trust). Boulder clay grassland with rare wildflowers.

UDC has designated a series of Special Verges that are subject to protection under the District Plan. They are often associated with lanes following historic alignments. Around Saffron Walden itself there are special verges along Ashdon Road, Debden Road and Audley End Road.

Within Saffron Walden town, little land is managed for wildlife. There is some land to the rear of the hospital that is semi-natural unimproved grassland, rare in Uttlesford. Bee orchids, uncommon in Uttlesford generally, are found on site. Areas of the Radwinter Road Cemetery and the Windmill Hill allotments

are not intensively managed and provide habitat for wildlife, as does Claypits Plantation on Debden Road.

Audley End Estate, which surrounds the town on three sides, has little official conservation designation but supports much varied wildlife. Of the larger mammals, badgers, fallow and muntjac deer are very common and to a lesser extent roe and red deer are found. Otters have been recorded on the River Cam or Granta in Cambridgeshire and spore has been identified once near Audley End. There is some evidence of mink. Many areas are managed for the conservation of game, which has encouraged a variety of wildlife habitats such as field margins, hedgerows, woodland and river banks, as well as the control of animals regarded as vermin. As a consequence, a range of other flora and fauna flourishes.

Q 5 Are there areas of historic importance?

The Essex County Council historical database returns 578 records for Saffron Walden, including details of archaeological 'watching briefs'. The area is extremely rich in historic features. The National Monuments Record has 149 entries for Saffron Walden and its immediate environs. These include:

- 59 entries for buildings or groups of buildings
- 23 archeological sites including earthworks, Roman burials, an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery and Neolithic sites
- eight settlement sites
- 20 records relating to Audley End house and gardens
- 25 findspots
- two churches
- a windmill
- a castle
- the historic turf maze on the Common, which some sources regard as medieval and has certainly existed since the seventeenth century
- Parts of the Audley End Estate, to the west of the town, are designated as 'Park and Garden of Historic Importance'.

Audley End is overlooked by Ring Hill, which has the remains of an iron age hill fort extending to approximately 16 acres (6.5 hectares), and may form part of the western frontier defences of the ancient British Trinovantes. The chalk ridge it is on provides a good strategic position overlooking the River Cam. The site is enclosed by a rampart with causeways and traces of inner ramparts, and is recorded as being unexcavated but some Roman materials have nonetheless been found in the fort. Ring Hill is regarded as being of regional and national importance and a scheduled monument of exceptional significance.

The Temple of Victory, designed by Robert Adam and built in 1774 to celebrate the end of the Seven Years War, is on the site of a former belvedere (a summer house built to command a fine view). At the same time a gothic menagerie was built that housed eagles, parrots, finches and other exotic specimens. Visitors enjoyed a horse drawn carriage ride from Audley End House via Gamages Wood to The Ring and back via the Oaks.

Q 6 Is the countryside being actively managed?

Part of the Audley End Estate to the west of the M11 is currently being managed under an Arable Stewardship Scheme, a scheme offering subsidy to landowners to allowed the creation of conservation headlands, wild bird cover, beetle banks and other environmental initiatives. A long-term forestry plan is in the process of being prepared that will include nature conservation measures and the restoration of some habitats.

Q 7 Do community groups participate in the management of the local countryside?

The Essex Wildlife Trust manages the Local Nature Reserve at Shadwell Wood with some volunteer help. Langley has its own conservation group, affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Volunteers also help to monitor and protect the roadside verges.

Q 8 Are there plans for major change on the urban edge?

There is a site at Little Walden Road, currently outside the development boundary, which the Planning Inspector has recommended for inclusion in the District Plan for a mixture of community uses with some affordable housing. The physical setting of Saffron Walden is extremely important to its character. The town lies in natural bowl in the landscape, with the church and the castle on a ridge in the middle of the town. The *Landscape Survey* below gives key features of the setting, as identified through a series of walks undertaken by the Environment working group around the town.

A Note on Water and Waste Disposal

Water supply

A major aquifer lies under most of the northern half of the district. Contamination of ground water is critical in cases of proximity to abstraction sites where water is drawn off for drinking supply. There are four such sites around the upper reaches of the Cam, at Arkesden, Debden Road in Saffron Walden, Springwell and Uttlesford Bridge, Wendens Ambo.

Surface water quality

River water quality has improved over recent years. The Cam, between Debden Water and the Slade at Audley End in 2002, was of good or very good water quality; similarly Wendon Brook between M11 and River Cam, and the Slade between Audley End and Little Chesterford. The River Cam between Little and Great Chesterford is all of very good quality.

Waste licences (source: Environment Agency website)

Four operators have waste licenses in the area – two for landfill sites, one for facilities for treating physical waste and one for household, commercial and industrial waste transfer station. These are in Widdington, Great Chesterford, Ashdon Road and Thaxted Road respectively.

Landscape Survey Around the Town Edge: Some Observations

Between Windmill Hill and Little Walden Road

Windmill Hill: tree-lined tunnel approach to town with views of the church spire (floodlit at night) and medieval housing in Bridge End. The footpath along Windmill Hill is poorly maintained but an important route into town from Littlebury. There are limited views north because ground rises to crest of Windmill Hill. There is potential to augment planting around the cricket ground. The view eastwards is across the valley to modern housing (Goddard's Way) on the skyline. Between the Catons Lane footpath and Little Walden Road, lower-lying land behind ribbon development on Little Walden Road could accommodate development without harm to landscape setting of the town.

Between Little Walden Road and Ashdon Road

The Little Walden Road view is into town with the church spire visible from some points. The road is partly lined with hedges and some twentieth century housing unsympathetic to surroundings. There are poorly maintained road markings and surface. The long-distance footpath Harcamlow Way leads out of town to the north-east. There are open views to the skyline with distant pylons. Concrete and chain link fencing to rear of the Goddard's Way development forms a very unattractive edge to the town. Large commercial buildings on Ashdon Road are prominent, especially from north and east of the town.

Between Ashdon Road and Radwinter Road

Ashdon Road generally has a good entrance to town with strong hedges screening commercial development from the road. There are protected hedgerows. However, there is a poorly-screened yard to the rear of Homebase and next to the road. The fuel dump to the west of Pounce Wood forms a prominent, artificially contoured feature with mown grass. Scattered apparatus and poorly maintained structures are associated with the dump on Radwinter Road, opposite Tesco. A prominent line of dark conifers along the line of the old railway screen are an alien feature. The water tower of the hospital is fairly prominent and appears to need repainting.

Between Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road

There are medium views in and out of town along Radwinter Road. Good hedgerows on both sides of road lead out of town. The ridge on which Shire Hill Farm sits closes views southwards from Radwinter Road. The Shire Hill industrial development is generally not prominent from footpath in this sector but there is some dumping at land off Thaxted Road. Poorly screened housing appears off Rylestone Way. Structures and possible caravans at Shire Hill Farm are prominent on the skyline when seen from the south-west. There are pleasant views out to south and east in this area.

Between Thaxted Road and Debden Road

Thaxted Road is reasonably well hedged and the Civic Amenity site is not prominent. There is some unsympathetic modern housing, and intermittent industrial development along Thaxted Road. The Lord Butler Leisure Centre is a prominent flat-roofed modern building at the start of housing area. The edge of housing development between Thaxted and Debden Roads is mostly well screened.

Between Debden Road and Audley End Road

Debden Road has a good entrance to town, with hedges and protected roadside verges. There is a good green edge to the built-up area between Debden and Newport Roads with well planted areas along footpath that runs between built-up and open areas. Some flat roofs at or near the County High School are prominent from a distance. There are good views south to trees and fields. Wenden Road is an attractive route but very busy and threatening to pedestrians.

Between Audley End Road and Windmill Hill

Audley End Road forms a good entrance to town with the walls of the Audley End Estate and protected roadside verges. Audley End Park and golf course abut the built-up area of town. There is excellent screening along all boundaries.

WORKSHEET EN3: LINKS BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY

These questions are aimed at identifying the visual and physical links that exist between the town and country.

Q 1 Are there natural or man-made features such as rivers, canals, roads or railway corridors that link the town and country?

The London Liverpool St.-Cambridge main line railway runs north-south through the countryside to the west of Saffron Walden. There has never been a main line station in the town (a branch line was closed in the 1960s), which is therefore served by Audley End, some one and a half miles away across country. The M11 and the old A11/B1383 run parallel to the railway line. Again there is no motorway junction directly serving the town. The River Cam passes just west of the town through Audley End Park. Most of the banks are in private ownership. It is not navigable or canalized. These routes therefore do not provide a meaningful link between town and country.

The key roads linking the town to the surrounding villages, Audley End Station and M11 are relatively minor: B184 (north-west and south-east); B1052 (north and south west); Ashdon Road (east); B1053 (east); Debden Road (south); Audley End Road (west).

Audley End Road provides a particularly strong visual link between the countryside and town due to the long section of eighteenth century brick wall from Audley End House to the edge of the town. Windmill Hill (B184) to the north of the town provides a similar visual link and gateway to the countryside with its 'tunnel' of trees and historic buildings on the immediate edge of the town.

There is a network of footpaths skimming the edge of the town to the west and south, including through Audley End Park, which provide a physical link and views both in and out of the town and across the countryside, such as the footpaths around the circumference of Loompits Way. Footpaths lead from the town into countryside to the north (Catons Lane),

north-east (Byrds Farm Lane and Harcamlow Way), south-east (from Thaxted Road) and south from (Debden Road). There is also an old estate road from Audley End to Debden
See also Q7.

Q 2 Are there distinctive design elements found in both the town and the surrounding countryside?

The local vernacular style of building found in the town itself is repeated in the countryside, where village centres have a high proportion of listed buildings, generally of medieval origin, timber-framed and rendered. There are also isolated farmhouses of the same period, often with ranges of traditional farm buildings, including weatherboarded barns. Flint boundary walls and buildings are a typical local feature.

Q 3 Are there any memorable views either from the town to the countryside or from the countryside of the town?

Saffron Walden sits in a 'bowl' with clearly defined edges to urban development on all sides, adjacent to open countryside generally in agricultural use, with the exception of the Capability Brown parkland of Audley End House to the west. The boundary is defined by the rear of properties and their gardens and not by circumference roads. Some of the parkland has for some years been a golf course. While undeveloped and planted with trees, this does to an increasing extent undermine the quality and views of this Park. There are however spectacular views over the town from the fourth hole.

There is further parkland around the Shortgrove Estate between the town and Newport. Planning consent for a hotel, golf course and park with public access has never been implemented. There is no public access to this park and no significant public views of its landscape. As a consequence, from most directions one comes across the built edge of the town as a 'surprise' upon descending towards it over the 'rim' of the 'bowl'. Within the town itself, the spire of St. Mary's church is the key landmark feature. To a lesser extent, the red brick Debden Road Water Tower is also a landmark.

The vista along Audley End Road and past Audley End House to the Adam Bridge is especially attractive and to the west of the town, and the roof tops of Audley End House can be glimpsed through the trees.

Q4 Are historic commercial links between the town and country still apparent?

The town centre is based around the market square where there is a twice-weekly general market.

Examples of surviving buildings from Saffron Walden's past as an agricultural market town (all redundant from original use and converted) are: the Corn Exchange (library); the gateway to the pig market in Hill Street (retained in retail redevelopment); the former branch railway station (private dwelling); former brewery at Raynhams, High Street (private dwellings); old maltings at Central Arcade and to the rear of Gold Street (carriage arch on street); Barnards corn merchants, South Road (private dwellings); and barns converted to private dwellings, Bridge Street.

There are similarly surviving buildings in the surrounding villages. Examples include windmills, often converted to dwellings (e.g. Clavering, Debden and Ashdon, which is undergoing restoration as a working mill); watermills at Littlebury (private dwelling) and Great Chesterford (apartments). Newport has a small area of maltings and other industrial uses by the railway station still in commercial use.

Current planning policy allows the conversion of redundant rural barns from agricultural to light industrial or office use. Those of historic and/or architectural value may be converted to residential use.

Q 5 Does the character of the surrounding countryside become less distinct the closer it gets to the town edge?

As much of it is either arable or parkland, the surrounding countryside retains its character rather consistently up to the town edge. For more detail see that Landscape Survey above.

Q 6 How does the town sit in the landscape?

See Q3 and the Landscape Survey. A series of photographs compiled by the Environment group would benefit public exhibition and discussion of the condition of the town edge.

Q 7 Are there any long distance or locally important footpaths, cycle paths or bridleways linking town and country?

Recreational links between town and country are primarily centred on use of footpaths. Those around the west are extensively used by dog walkers, for example. Slightly further afield and less of a link are, to the west, the Icknield Way and, to the east, the Harcamlow Way long-distance routes. Beechy Ride is an attractive bridleway to the south of the town. Audley End House and its immediate grounds, owned by English Heritage (whereas the farmland and some of the park is in the private ownership of Audley End Estates), are open to the public during the summer and there

are some events held there, such as open air concerts. There is no direct footpath to the English Heritage-owned site from the town, so the pavement by the road must be used. Bridge End Gardens on the northern edge of the town is open to the public.

5B. Transport and Accessibility

WORKSHEET T1: EASE OF TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE LOCAL AREA

These questions help evaluate the level of accessibility to and from the area.

Q1 What is the distance to a national network of dual carriageway roads from the town and the least and most accessible villages?

It is approximately 7km (4.3 miles) from Saffron Walden to Stump Cross and 1km (0.6 miles) from Great Chesterford (most accessible village) to Stump Cross. It is difficult to judge which is the least accessible village as several are quite inaccessible, but it is probably Hempstead in terms of remoteness from the dual carriageway network. Hempstead is about 17km (10.5 miles) from Stump Cross. Access to the main road network from Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden is reasonable, but is relatively poor from Hempstead due to the narrow twisting B1053, especially in winter.

Q2 What is the distance and average travel time by car to nearest large town, from the town itself and from the most and least accessible village within the surrounding countryside?

It is approximately 21km (13 miles) from Saffron Walden to Cambridge; 15km (9.3 miles) from Great Chesterford and about 31km (19.2 miles) from Hempstead. If you assume an average travel speed of about 35mph, this gives average travel times of 22, 16 and 33 minutes respectively.

Q3 What improvements are planned for the local/regional highway network in your area?

There is the proposed future widening of the M11 north of Bishop's Stortford, but there is no timescale on this at the moment.

The major road scheme in the 2000/2005 Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the new A120 from Bishop's Stortford to Braintree, although this is to the south of the Healthcheck area. The section from Bishop's Stortford to

Dunmow West is already open; the next section east to Braintree is due to open in mid-2004. After opening, traffic management measures will be implemented along the old A120 (now B1256). Work is due to start in 2004/5 on a new roundabout at the dangerous Sparrows End Hill junction (B1383). Preliminary work on the new LTP is now underway, but no schemes have yet been identified.

During the present financial year, speed reduction schemes were implemented at B1053 Plough Hill, Radwinter and in Audley End Road, Saffron Walden. Schemes for the coming financial year are still being drawn up.

In the current financial year, structural maintenance schemes were completed at:

- High Street, Saffron Walden
- Debden Fox Crossroads, Debden
- Elder Street, Wimbish
- Frambury Lane, Newport
- Cherry Garden Lane, Newport
- High Street, Debden
- B1054 Hempstead Road, Radwinter
- King Street, Saffron Walden
- B1052 Beechy Ride, Saffron Walden

For the coming year, money has been allocated for Saffron Walden traffic management investigations, consultations and implementation of schemes, although, of course, these have yet to be formulated. The following structural maintenance schemes are also proposed:

- B1053 Pounce Hall Hill
- B184 George Street, Hill Street
- B184 Bridge Street
- Chaters Hill
- B1054 Hill Cottage, Hempstead to Witchtree Lane

Bridge strengthening is also proposed at the Cross Street Culvert.

Developer funding has secured a new road layout into Chesterford Park via a roundabout, benefitting residents of Little Chesterford. Similar funding has secured road improvements along Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden – namely a new pedestrian crossing, updated traffic signal software and layby parking. Footway improvements along Thaxted Road are due when redevelopment of the Southgate site eventually takes place.

Q4 How far is the train station from the town centre by foot, bicycle, taxi and bus?

Foot	2 miles	30-40 minutes
Bicycle	2 miles	10-15 minutes
Taxi	2 miles	5 minutes
Bus	2 miles	varies from 6 to 15 minutes

(depending on the route taken through the town)

The nearest station (Audley End) is situated in Wendens Ambo, which is 2 miles from the town. Wendens Ambo can be reached by a narrow – but busy – country road which has no pavement or cycle path. There are no street lights along this road outside the town boundary. The journey also necessitates travelling along and crossing a dual carriageway road at the end of the country road.

Q5 Is the main bus station or main concentration of bus termini in the town centre?

The main bus stops are in the High Street, which is probably as central as the layout of the town centre allows. There is no main bus station and no central information about bus times except at the Tourist Information Centre in the Market Square. Time to get from the bus stops in the High Street to the town centre is approximately two minutes.

Q6 Is it convenient to change between train and coach and/or bus services, i.e. is it easy to walk into town or is there a bus service that connects with the trains?

It is possible to walk into the town from the housing estates on the edge of the town, which takes 10 to 30 minutes and there are pavements along most of the roads. The town bus service (No 34) operates between town centre and housing estates surrounding the town, and runs from 0840 until 1740 (approximately hourly) Monday to Friday, with three buses on Saturdays (1020 to 1153) and no service on Sundays.

Bus Services from Town to Station

Monday to Friday

No. 59/590 operates from 0627 to 0915 (six buses) then 1256, 1648 and 1715 to connect with trains to London and Cambridge. Return journeys from the station at 0905, 0950, 1320, 1702, 1730, 1759, 1831, 1901 and 1931 to connect with trains arriving from London and Cambridge.

No. 301 operates from 0905 to 1305 (two-hourly) then 1705 and 1805 to connect with trains from London and Cambridge. Return journey from the station at 0818, 0940, 1040, 1240, 1440, 1740, 1841

Saturday

No. 59/590 Three buses to the station at 0852, 1258 and 1650. Return journeys at 0955, 1350 and 1725

No. 301 operates from 0905 at two-hourly intervals until 1305 then 1705 and 1805. Return journeys at 0940, 1040, 1240, 1440, 1631 and 1840.

Sunday

No Sunday services on these routes

The town service does not link conveniently with the times of the buses to the train station.

During peak hours, there is a satisfactory bus service from the town to the station. However, off-peak there is a very limited service. For example:

- No service from the station to the town from 1440 to 1702 (Monday to Friday)
- No service from the station after 1931 (Monday to Friday)
- Limited service on Saturday
- No service on Sunday

There appears to be weak co-ordination between the times of trains and the times of buses. As, on average, there are around 12 trains an hour departing the station, there may be a case for a bus to shuttle continually between the town and the station.

A taxi service usually operates from Audley End Station, but tends to decline after peak periods.

It is proposed to create a pedestrian/cycle path between Saffron Walden and Audley End Station.

Q7 What is the frequency of rail services?

Audley End to Bishop's Stortford/London: Monday to Saturday, two an hour; Sunday, one an hour.

Audley End to Cambridge: Monday to Saturday, three an hour; Sunday: two an hour.

There are also regular trains to Stansted Airport and Liverpool Lime Street (the same service in the opposite direction).

How easy is it to travel by rail to other towns and cities?

Once you reach Audley End station, travelling to towns on the London Liverpool Street–Cambridge line is easy – there is a regular service to towns and cities such as Harlow and London. There are no railway stations in the nearby towns of Dunmow and Haverhill. There is no direct rail connection between the nearby towns of Royston, Braintree and Newmarket.

Are there closed rail lines?

The branch line between Audley End and Saffron Walden was closed in the 1960s. The branch line extended to Bartlow in the east, where it connected with the Cambridge–Haverhill line (also closed in the 60s). Lines existed between Elsenham and Thaxted and Bishop's Stortford and Braintree.

Are there plans to re-open these?

There are possible plans to re-open the Bishop's Stortford–Braintree line as part of the proposed Stansted Airport expansion.

Q8 What is the travel time to the nearest large town by bus/coach/train, from the town and from villages in the surrounding countryside?

From Saffron Walden to Bishop's Stortford (the nearest large town):

Bus The Village Link 5 (via Debden, Thaxted, Broxton, Stansted Airport, Takeley, Hatfield Broad Oak, Hatfield Heath, Lt Hallingbury) takes 1 hour 34 minutes (hourly service from 0621 to 1930, return from 0706 to 2015).
The 301 (via Audley End station, Newport, Widdington, Quendon, Stansted, Birchanger) takes 45 minutes (two-hourly service from 0739 to 1805, return from 0800 to 1800).

Coach No service.

Train The train from Audley End to Bishop's Stortford takes around 20 minutes.

From the least accessible village?

There are no buses from Hempstead to Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford or Haverhill. Four buses a day (Mondays to Saturdays) travel between Hempstead and Saffron Walden, but some other villages have no service.

From the most accessible village?

Sewards End, one and three-quarter miles from Saffron Walden has no bus service.

The time taken to get to nearest city (Cambridge) by bus/coach/train?

Bus From Saffron Walden – hourly bus service to Cambridge (via Addenbrookes Hospital) which also serves Gt Chesterford, Ickleton, Hinxton. The journey takes 1 hour. The buses are not all equipped with facilities for those with wheelchairs/baby buggies. First bus leaves Saffron Walden at 0705 and last bus back from Cambridge leaves at 1845.

Train The train from Audley End to Cambridge takes around 20 minutes.

Coach No coach service

Q9 What is the number of national coach services per day?

None

Q10 What improvements are planned for the public transport infrastructure and public transport services in your area?

Via Essex County Council's Passenger Transport Strategy Group, Uttlesford has bid to the Department of Transport for funding for the development of Quality Taxi transport. In addition, the Police Community Tasking Group for Saffron Walden has introduced publicity initiatives on behalf of those prepared to provide transport, especially in the evenings. Hopefully, these measures will improve accessibility for those without a car.

There could be future general access benefits to the area from works required by Section 106 Agreement as part of the expansion of Stansted Airport to 25 million passengers per year. These may include a new airport bus/coach station by 2007 with provision for real time information, and rail infrastructure works to facilitate 12-car train operation out of the airport, including a platform extension at Stansted Mountfitchet station, just south of the Healthcheck area.

Q11 Is it as quick and easy to travel to the nearest large town by public transport as it is by car?

The journey by car to Bishop's Stortford takes approximately 20 minutes. Bus journeys take from 53 minutes minimum to an hour and 34 minutes, depending on the bus route used. In rush hours it takes roughly the same amount of time to travel by train as by car. Outside of rush hours it is significantly quicker to travel by car.

If there were suitable public transport between the town and station (and surrounding villages) it would be quicker to travel to towns/cities on the London Liverpool Street–Cambridge line by public transport. Due to the remoteness of the station it is far easier (and quicker) to travel everywhere by car.

Q12 Are there cycle or walking routes between towns and villages?

Sustrans is working on the National Cycle Network, including Route 11 from Harlow to Cambridge via Bishop's Stortford, then largely on-road to Thaxted and Saffron Walden. Due to local opposition to a previously proposed route to Audley End station from Saffron Walden, Sustrans is keen to pursue the option of taking the route along the London Road verge between Spring Hill and Littlebury Green Road, with an improved road crossing at Littlebury Green Road.

Uttlesford District Council's new Quality of Life Corporate Plan includes a cycleway from Audley End Station to Saffron Walden.

There are a large number of footpaths between rural settlements, although some are of variable quality and can be hard to use in winter or inappropriate for cycles.

WORKSHEET T2: EASE OF ACCESS TO SERVICES

These questions help evaluate the level of accessibility to services, predominately by public transport.

Q1 Are bus and train times from outlying villages to the town convenient for travelling to work and children going to school?

Generally speaking, rural settlements have school transport to Saffron Walden County High School or Newport Free Grammar School – either by public bus services or school contract coaches funded by Essex County Council.

Due to the nature of the area and timing of buses, very little work travel takes place by bus. It is considered by some that it is 25 years too late to reverse this trend unless a very substantial public funding becomes

available, and that the only work flow realistically worth funding is from Saffron Walden to Audley End Station.

Q 2 Are there any planned changes to rural public transport services?

The First Group withdrew the X40 (Bury St Edmunds-Stansted Airport) bus service from April 2004 due to low patronage south of Haverhill. Confirmation has been received from Essex County Council that two extra journeys each way, six days a week, to the No.18 bus service (Haverhill-Saffron Walden) will provide some benefit to local residents. There is no onward convenient link to Audley End railway station, so a suggestion has been made that the No.18 should continue through to Audley End, not confirmed at the time of writing.

Q3 Is public transport accessible to the mobility impaired?

No bus services in the Saffron Walden area are currently operated 100% with low floor buses. Under forthcoming provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2000 (DDA), no new non-low floor buses can now enter service and the local bus 'parc' will be all low-floor within the next 12 years.

With regard to the train service operating between London Liverpool Street and Cambridge, for wheelchair users (and children in buggies) there are enormous problems accessing the platforms at a number of stations because of the bridge links between the two lines. This is the case at Audley End, which has no lifts or indeed footpath access to the northbound platform.

Many passengers with mobility or visual impairments require assistance at Audley End as the design of the station does not lend itself to easy access. The remote location of the station would necessitate further assistance for some, as bus services are patchy.

Q4 Are there special public and private transport services e.g. bus, taxi, or alternative community or voluntary transport catering for people who are mobility-impaired?

Uttlesford Community Transport (UCT) offers a minibus service to the elderly and those with disabilities. These vehicles have tailgates, and can accommodate wheelchair users. UCT serves many local organisations and assists with outings because they have this provision. The drivers aim to assist passengers and convey confidence to their users. A Hospital Link and Hospital Car Service are also provided by the same organisation. There is a Social Car Service provided by local church organisations that enables those with impairments to access facilities within a four-mile radius at a modest charge. Most doctors' surgeries provide a patient car

service, as do some of the clinics at Addenbrookes Hospital where there are transport and parking issues.

UCT are the preferred operator for many people, so any withdrawal of this service due to lack of funding would create a huge vacuum. The service relies on volunteer drivers and the number of minibuses that are available.

Q5 Is information on public transport easy to obtain?

Bus information is provided at main bus stops (Essex County Council produced displays, though these are not 100% comprehensive), the Saffron Walden Tourist Information Center or by telephone from the National Traveline (also on the Internet).

Train information is available at Audley End Station, the Saffron Walden Tourist Information Center or by telephone from National Rail Enquiries. Questions have been raised in the press about the reliability of information from train enquiry services.

Q6 How many public services have information available on-line and where can this be accessed?

Train services from Audley End are available at www.onewestanglia.com. Saffron Walden Town Bus service details and local taxi information are available on www.saffireweb.net, which also has a link to details of other bus services at www.southeast.traveline.org.uk.

Q7 Do buses travel right into the town centre?

Yes. High Street bus stops, whilst cramped, are reasonably central.

Q8 How easy is it to get to health, education, cultural and retail services by public transport from three rural settlements that have poor, adequate and good public transport links?

Details below are for Widdington, Hempstead and Langley:

Widdington

Saffron Walden Hospital

Monday-Saturday only, a 20 minute bus ride.

08.27 09.29 10.29 12.29 14.29 17.29 and 18.29; seven opportunities per day.

Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge

Monday-Saturday, bus from Widdington to Saffron Walden High Street, service detailed above. Journey 20 minutes, followed by a one-hour bus journey from Saffron Walden to Addenbrookes.

This service seems to tie in well with the Widdington-Saffron Walden service but there is no allowance for delays (only one minute between arrival and departure); this could cause a one hour wait for the next bus, and in three out of seven cases two hours.

Secondary Schools

Buses to both Newport and Saffron Walden schools are available.

Supermarket

Service as per Saffron Walden Hospital.

Library

Service as per Saffron Walden, alight at High Street.

Leisure Centre, Saffron Walden

Service as per Saffron Walden hospital. However, there is quite a long walk to be encountered to the leisure centre from either the High Street or the hospital.

Cinema and Sport Centre, Bishops Stortford

Monday-Saturday only, a 30 minute bus ride.

09.22 10.22 11.22 13.22 15.35 17.22 18.22; seven opportunities.

Job Centre, Braintree

Wednesday only (buses run on a Saturday but the Job Centre is closed then). Service to Saffron Walden High Street, 20 minutes plus a 20 minute wait then a one and a half hour bus journey. One bus only in each direction at 08.50 from Saffron Walden and 12.45 return.

Hempstead

Shown by the number of buses involved in any one journey:

<i>Hospital</i>	Two buses, one to SW, another to Cambridge (Addenbrookes)
<i>Secondary school</i>	School buses provided (general public may use these)
<i>Jobcentre</i>	Two buses, one to SW, one to Cambridge, <u>or</u> Three buses, one to SW, one to B/Stortford or Stansted Airport, one to Harlow
<i>Supermarket</i>	One bus to SW, or one bus to Haverhill
<i>Library</i>	1 bus to SW, or 1 bus to Haverhill. The mobile library also visits the village.

<i>Leisure/sports centre</i>	One bus to SW, or one bus to Haverhill, or two buses to Cambridge
<i>Cinema</i>	Two buses, one to SW, another to Cambridge, or Two buses, one to SW, another to Bishops Stortford, or one bus to Haverhill

The main Hempstead bus is the 59, which is essentially a commuter bus, and so there is a gap in the service in the middle of the day. The no. 18 bus has had some services added since the withdrawal of the X40 coach, but it is still relatively infrequent. The school buses run during term-time only, and although they may be accessible, to an extent, to people working in town, they would return to Hempstead too early to be of use for many journeys home.

Trains run from Audley End to Cambridge, Bishops Stortford and Harlow, but of course Audley End railway station is a bus ride from Saffron Walden, or a half-hour walk along a busy road with no footpath most of the way.

Langley

List of services at 23rd May 2004 (all subsidised):

62 (Thursdays only, Upper and Lower Greens) 09.50 to Bishops Stortford interchange, returns 13.40.

306 (Monday-Friday, term times only, Upper and Lower Greens. Thursdays only during school holidays) 07.30 to Bishops Stortford, returns 16.50.

PB1 (Post Bus, Monday-Friday, Upper and Lower Greens) 11.05, returns 15.10 but sometimes as late as 16.15 (last collection).

10 (Saturdays only, Upper Green only) 13.51 to Bishops Stortford, returns 17.06, allowing 2 hours in Stortford.

11 (Tuesdays only, Upper Green only) 10.07 to Saffron Walden Common, arrives 10.48 Leaves Saffron Walden at 13.00 and arrives back at Langley at 13.40.

Saffron Walden Hospital

No direct bus. Once-daily Post Bus (11.05) takes upwards of an hour to central Saffron Walden. The bus leaves again at 13.00 and takes over two hours on the return journey. This service is not a practical option for daytime appointments. The Uttlesford Community Transport scheme can be used by those with advance notice of need and no other transport access.

Addenbrookes Hospital

Direct bus service not available, and connecting services do not allow time for the journey to Cambridge and back. Community transport dial-a-ride scheme to central Saffron Walden for those in need, thereafter an hour or

more on the hourly service to Addenbrookes by bus. Some elderly residents use the hospital car scheme. The total bus journey if taken can last as much as three hours at peak times.

Queen Alexandra Hospital, Harlow

The 07.30 service to Bishops Stortford, change and on to Harlow. Total journey time around two hours. This option is only practical if appointments are in the middle of the day and the traveller can get back to Bishops Stortford by 15.50.

Bishops Stortford, Herts and Essex Hospital

Bishops Stortford service as above – and therefore not available on weekdays other than Thursdays during the school holidays.

Secondary Schools

There is a school bus service to Newport Free Grammar School, but not to Saffron Walden County High. Pupils travelling to Stansted Mountfitchet School can take the 07.30 to Bishops Stortford, which takes 45 minutes. They arrive home shortly before 5 pm.

Supermarket

Services as for Bishops Stortford and Saffron Walden above – therefore not a realistic option on days other than Thursdays and Saturdays. The Saturday number 10 service originates in Royston, where there is a large 24 hour Tesco, but it would only be possible to travel to Royston at 17.05, and it would be necessary to get a taxi back (approximately £25).

Library and Leisure Centre

Services as for Saffron Walden and Bishops Stortford.

Cinema and Sports Centre

Services as for Bishops Stortford or Cambridge – so no evening service, and very limited daytime access.

Jobcentre

As for Bishops Stortford.

Railway Station

As for Bishops Stortford. There is no service at all to either Audley End or Royston stations, which are both much closer.

Q9 How easy is it to get to health, education, cultural and retail services by car?

Results below for Widdington, Hempstead and Langley. Distances and times are approximate.

Widdington

Saffron Walden Hospital

Ten miles or 15 minutes

Addenbrookes

20 miles or 45 minutes (Park and ride advisable due to poor parking facilities at Addenbrookes)

Secondary Schools

Newport four miles or ten minutes; Saffron Walden eight miles or 15 minutes

Supermarket

Ten miles or 15 minutes

Library

Ten miles or 15 minutes

Leisure Centre, Saffron Walden

Ten miles or 15 minutes

Cinema and Sports Centre, Bishops Stortford

15 miles or 30 minutes

Jobcentre, Braintree

25 miles or 45-60 minutes

Hempstead

Health, education, cultural and retail services are 15 to 40 minutes away by car (Saffron Walden, Cambridge, Haverhill, or Bishops Stortford). Most households in Hempstead have more than one car, the vast majority working away from the village. Hempstead is concentrated largely along one main street, which acts as a “rat run” for people who work in Haverhill, or go there for recreational activities, but who live in other villages close to Hempstead.

Langley

Langley is rather isolated, and not en route to anywhere. Roads are very narrow, winding and often in need of repair. Journey times can be (and often are) affected by the presence of agricultural vehicles, infrastructure repairs or weather-related hazards such as floods, fallen trees, snow and mud. Most recent winters have seen occasions when the local roads are impassable (sometimes for several days), a factor which does cause inconvenience and poses potential risks to the frail, but is also regarded by many residents as part of the village’s character.

Health

The nearest doctor's surgery is in Newport, seven miles or 15 minutes by car. The surgery in Barley, Hertfordshire, is slightly closer, but very small and not accepting new patients from Langley. Saffron Walden Community Hospital – nine miles or 25 minutes; Addenbrookes Cambridge – 20 to 25 miles (varies according to the route taken – the shortest is not always the quickest) or 35 minutes to one hour at peak times; Queen Alexandra, Harlow – 30 miles or 45 minutes upwards; Bishops Stortford, Herts and Essex Hospital – twelve miles or 30 minutes.

Secondary Schools

Newport – 15 minutes; Saffron Walden – 20 minutes; Stansted Mountfitchet – 25 minutes.

Supermarket

Saffron Walden – 25 minutes; Royston – 20 minutes; Bishops Stortford – 25 minutes.

Library

As for Library above

Leisure Centre

As for Saffron Walden

Cinema and Sports Centre

As for Bishops Stortford, or Cambridge 45 minutes to one hour including parking and walking. As long as peak times are avoided.

Jobcentre

As for Bishops Stortford.

Q10 What time is the last Friday or Saturday night bus service from the town to villages in the surrounding countryside?

Few services exist, so there is little public transport access to what modest degree of night-life there is.

WORKSHEET T3: EASE OF MOVEMENT AROUND THE TOWN

These questions are aimed at evaluating the level of access within and around the town.

Q1 Are there any seriously congested junctions or parts of the local road network?

At both peak hours and also some non-peak hour times there is serious congestion at the junction of Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road. This was identified as a reason for insisting on traffic light software improvements at the junction when the Printpack development was being considered. A short relief road from Shirehill Industrial Estate to Radwinter Road would reduce the problems at the junction.

At peak hours there is serious congestion in London Road, High Street, Church Street, Bridge Street and Castle Street. These can probably only be resolved by building relief roads to the north and the south of the town.

At peak hours there is also congestion in Ashdon Road. This could be relieved by making it one-way or by narrowing the pavement.

Q2 Have there been many road traffic accidents involving pedestrian and cyclists at key locations in the town?

Pedestrian accident black spots in Saffron Walden are the High Street, Thaxted Road, Ashdon Road and Little Walden Road. Cyclist accident black spots are the High Street, Audley Road and London Road.

Q3 Are there any particular locations, e.g. shopping streets, where there is conflict between pedestrians and cars, buses or heavy vehicles?

The worst conflicts between pedestrians and cars, buses and heavy vehicles are in George Street/Hill Street and the High Street.

In the Market Square there is conflict between pedestrians and car drivers 'hunting' for a free space. There is also some confusion and concern in the same area about concessions for loading/unloading and for parking for people with disabilities.

Q4 Where are the short and long-term car parks, coach parks and disabled parking spaces, and how well used are they?

Short-stay car parking

- Rose & Crown: 27 spaces, of which 4 are for people with disabilities. Charges: 1hr , 40p; 2hrs, 80p. Very well used, often full.
- The Common: 109 spaces, of which 6 are for people with disabilities. Charges: 1hr, 40p 2hrs, 80p; 3hrs, £1.60. Very well used, often full.
- Fairycroft Road: 294 spaces, of which 9 are for people with disabilities and 4 are for parent/child parking. Charges: 1 hr, 40p; 2hrs, 80p; 3hrs, £1.60. 1hr refund from Waitrose if spending over £5. Busy but less often full than the Common car park.
- There is some Pay and Display parking in Abbey Lane, Castle Street and Gold Street (1hr for 40p). Usually full during working hours.
- There is some free short-stay (30 mins) parking available on Market Square (23 spaces). Usually full.
- There is free on-street parking available in the High Street (2hrs). Often full.
- There is parking for people with disabilities in King Street (3hrs), plus facilities for loading/unloading. Well used, especially the loading bays, although not generally completely full.

Long stay car parking

- Swan Meadow: 394 spaces, of which eight are for people with disabilities. Charges: 1hr , 40p; 2hrs, 80p; 4hrs, £1.60; 6hrs, £2.00; 10hrs, £2.60.
- There is also coach parking available at Swan Meadow (six spaces). Charges: 5hrs, £2.50; 10hrs, £5.00
- Catons Lane: 49 spaces (free) of which two are for people with disabilities
- Council Offices, London Road: 100 spaces (free) available at weekends, of which five are for people with disabilities.

There is usually plenty of space at Swan Meadow, except at Christmas, but the others are often full. Most of the short stay parking is within 400m of the town centre. Parts of Swan Meadow are within 400m.

Q5 How well used are the on and off-street car and coach parks?

See Q4 above.

Q6 How many public buildings and shops have disabled access?

The introduction of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act, which requires the removal of physical barriers, and the Revised Part M of the Building Regulations (national regulations made under the Building Act 1984) will have some impact on Saffron Walden and the shops and services provided. This is a traditional market town with access problems due to the types of buildings and the undulating area around the shopping centre.

The fact that the town centre has a large concentration of historic and listed buildings and is a conservation area will inevitably have an impact on the degree to which disabled access is developed under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2000 (DDA). Barclays Bank has improved its access by providing a ramped entrance at the side of the building, but it may not be possible for the HSBC Bank to provide the same facility. Where reasonable, those customers who use wheelchairs may be able to access premises using portable ramps provided by the service provider. A survey was carried out several years ago, but nothing has been undertaken recently to provide further information. Sometimes a wheelchair user or someone with mobility impairment may be able to access a shop, but the layout within may then prevent them from fully using the facilities. Staff may assist customers by bringing goods or services to them. Several pavement areas, such as in the High Street, are uneven or narrow, making wheelchair mobility a challenge.

There are several public buildings that are accessible in Saffron Walden. The Museum, Saffron Walden Council Offices, the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, the Saffron Walden Day Centre and parts of the Town Hall, which has a lift. There is also Turpins the indoor bowling centre adjacent to the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, where wheelchair bowling is offered. The Library in the Market Square is accessible, as is the Post Office. In addition, the hospital in Radwinter Road, although outside the immediate town centre, has good access.

The nature of the buildings in the town centre and the geography does not lend itself to every building being accessible. As indicated, the

introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Revised Part M of the Building Regulations should go some way to improving services for disabled customers. The Uttlesford Area Access Group is working closely with the Primary Care Trust to ensure that doctors' surgeries are accessible to those with mobility impairments and sensory impairments. This programme is well under way and doctors are receptive to the comments made.

Q7 Are the majority of disabled parking places within 250 metres of the main focal points of the town centre e.g. the main shopping area?

There is provision within the market place for some disabled parking and in King Street. It is intended that more such bays will become available as part of a revised programme with some additional spaces in one of the adjoining streets. This would give disabled drivers more opportunity to park and use other areas of the town and reduce the shopping/parking distance. Comments have been made to the Healthcheck that there may be a problem with the relative location of disabled parking spaces and public toilets.

Car parks in Saffron Walden provide the following number of spaces for disabled people:

Fairycroft	9 spaces
Rose and Crown	4 spaces
Catons Lane	2 spaces
Swan Meadow	8 spaces
The Common	6 spaces

Q8 Can buses move freely throughout the town centre?

From the point of view of buses, it is difficult to suggest any major positive changes to the current traffic management scenario, bearing in mind the narrow nature of much of the central Saffron Walden highway infrastructure. The current one-way street pattern does result in extra wasteful bus mileage, and on-street parking on roads not wide enough for three vehicles causes delay to bus services and congestion for all traffic.

Q9 Are there any traffic management measures in place?

There is one-way working along many roads within the town centre, but Bridge Street, High Street, London Road, Newport Road, Borough Lane and Mount Pleasant Road remain two-way. King Street and the Market Square are closed to traffic on market days (Tuesday and Saturday).

Q10 Are the main shopping streets in the town centre pedestrianised or with pedestrian priority measures?

Some minor streets within the historic core of the town are pedestrianised, but generally they are not. Two more streets are closed to vehicles on market days. The potential extension of the pedestrian priority area to George Street/Hill Street, one of the busiest streets in the town centre, would probably not exclude vehicles but calming of this stretch of road, for instance by employing shared zones to reduce vehicle speeds, could considerably improve the physical environment for shoppers and workers. A small grant has recently been made by Uttlesford Futures to allow investigation of this question.

Q11 Where are the main foot and cycle paths within the town?

There are no designated cycle routes. Further discussion of the condition of the footpath network is to be found in the Environment worksheets above.

Paths and Destinations

There is little designation of paths in the town. None are set out for joint use. Some prohibit cycle use. The most obviously suitable for all sectors of the community is the diagonal path across the Common. Some paths, including perhaps this one, are too steep for wheelchair users. There are very few paths outside the town for leisure walking.

Links

- The footpath network is quite restricted as well as being of poor quality in many places. New residential developments have rarely been integrated to link with existing paths. Some important routes from residential areas into the town centre and around other facilities lack proper footpaths.
- The Leisure Centre is reasonably accessible, despite its edge of town location, but it has no dedicated cycle route and cycle parking is limited. The sports grounds are on the northern edge of the town and lack footpath access and cycle parking. None of the schools benefit from 20mph zones and in several cases the safety of walking routes is compromised by narrow pavements or lack of proper crossings.
- The northern end of the Thaxted Road is a particular problem as traffic levels are heavy, vehicle speeds can be high, the eastern side footway is often blocked by parked cars, and there is no accessible footpath for much of west side of the road. This may be a problem for future residents of housing currently being built to the west of Thaxted Road.

- Debden Road pavements have narrow pinch points; this is a major north-south route for pedestrians.
- The north end of South Road has a very narrow pavement on its west side leading from the crossing on Audley Road; it is an important link to two primary schools and the language college as well as forming another important north-south route for pedestrians.
- The junction of Church Street, Museum Street and Market Hill has poor pavement surfaces and little space for pedestrians waiting to cross.
- The pavement at the junction of Church Street and High Street is narrow, has a poor camber, and a sign further reduces the space on the south side where a leaking gutter adds to the potential for pedestrians to slip. This is a busy corner for both pedestrians and cars.
- One clear omission in the schools' path network is the High School on Audley End Road; its main entrance has only a muddy path at the top of a bank for pedestrian use and the road is narrow so compromises safety for cyclists.
- Much of the shortest two-mile route to the railway station is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists; improving pedestrian and cycle safety on this 'short' route could be achieved by reducing traffic speeds along a specific 400m stretch of the road where there is no path, visibility is poor and vehicle speeds are high. This route has been allocated as the station cycle route since the Cycle Network Plan was published in 1999, but no action has yet been implemented.

Many pavements in the town are in a poor state of repair and are often too narrow and steeply cambered for wheelchair or pram access. They can prove hazardous, particularly in winter, for elderly residents. Opportunities to improve or create direct footways into the town from residential areas should be pursued.

Some Potential Improvements – Footpaths

Maps have been prepared by the Transport group that identify problem areas and opportunities for improvements.

Location	Improvement Possibilities
Thaxted Road	Widening of east side pavement and prevention of pavement car parking
George Street	Crossing by traffic lights has poor camber and little width for pedestrians waiting to cross one of busiest roads in town
George Street and Hill Street	Consider speed reduction measures and more pedestrian priority
Hill Street	South side pavement very narrow and busy with pedestrians where speed and volume of traffic is oppressive. Improve traffic

	management; pedestrian-friendly enhancements
Waitrose Car Park from Hill Street to Elm Grove	Improve and make pedestrian route more obvious and reduce conflict with cars
Debden Road	Widen and improve surface of pavement on east side of this major north-south pedestrian route linking the major southern residential area to the town centre
Church Street	Widen pavement at High Street end
Tesco, Radwinter Road	Improve pedestrian access so that slope is acceptable for wheelchair use

Some Potential Improvements – Crossings

Location	Improvement Possibilities
Newport Road	Fast and busy main vehicular entrance to town needs a crossing to serve residents on west side because of the lack of pavement to the north of most of the houses
Little Walden Road	Lack of footpath for some of east side. Crossing to serve Goddard's Way area residents coming into town and sports grounds visitors
South end of Common Hill	Existing crossing is too far from East Street to serve pedestrians using East Street as a route into town, and there is no footpath on the north-eastern corner of the roundabout at this junction. A new crossing has been agreed.

Some Potential Improvements – Raised Tables

Location	Improvement Possibilities
George Street and/or Hill Street	Speed reduction measures and greater emphasis on pedestrian priority in this busy area
Church Street	Raised table in place of roundabout at the eastern end. Pedestrian space is limited, particularly on the eastern side, and vehicle speeds can be high
Church Street/Museum Street/Market Hill	It is not easy to see alternative solution which would work for this junction, but a raised table might solve the problem

Seating

Seating is important for those walking around the town and thought should be given to additional provision.

Cycle Routes and Parking

The District Council's Cycle Network Plan for the period 1999-2004 has yet to be fully implemented. There are no designated cycle paths in Saffron Walden and cycle parking provision is very poor. Recent

widening of the Radwinter Road did not include a cycle lane, although this route was identified in Cycle Network Plan 1999 as a possible route.

There are several opportunities to extend the cyclepath network. Existing road space is car-dominated. There are several one-way roads that may be wide enough to accommodate a contra-flow cycle lane; there are very few useful short-cuts for cyclists and because of some relatively steep hills in the town, creating shortcuts could increase the ability of more people to cycle. Cycle lanes in Cromwell Road and Ross Close appear possible if central white hatching on carriageways was reconsidered (the existing white hatching may be encouraging vehicles to speed). Other possible locations include part of Peaslands Road and Station Road.

Cycle parking should be clearly visible in order to help raise awareness, and also so that bikes are safe and less likely to be tampered with. Existing provision is too far from shops to be useful and/or may lack natural surveillance. Covers for cycle parking at the station and schools would be appropriate. Locations for new cycle parking could be found in the Market Square, close to the entrance of Waitrose and visible from seating, as well as the sports grounds and leisure centre, employment sites, outlying shops and the front of the Council Offices in London Road.

Promotion

Footpath and cycle route maps could be produced and distributed to surgeries, tourist office, library, schools and the leisure centre and other places.

Due to the poor pedestrian network around the town and the lack of cycle routes, a full study of pedestrian links should be undertaken. The notes here identify a few critical improvements that could be achieved, but it is likely that there are other possibilities. All strategic cycle and pedestrian routes should be protected, and no development that would lessen the viability of the routes for pedestrian or cycle use should be encouraged.

Policy

The UDC's Transport Forum is asking for the Highway Authority to sign up to a policy that ensures that all highway works (repairs as well as new schemes) will be audited for pedestrian and cycle safety and convenience. Consideration should be given to improving footpath cambers, and the height of kerbs should discourage pavement parking. These could be dealt with under maintenance contracts. For cyclists the lack of passing places on some of the road humps in the town is a problem that could also be resolved during routine maintenance. Other opportunities could be addressed through the same process.

Q12 Is it easy to find your way around town?

The route from the railway station to town is reasonably well signposted for cars but not the route from the town to the station. There are three routes available. Much of the shortest two-mile route is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Bus links to the station are poor, and non-existent on Sundays and bank holidays. There are timetables at the station and in the High Street, but the pattern of services is patchy, complex and involves five companies. The town does not have a bus station, and is served by ten different bus companies all together. Bus information can be difficult to follow and sometimes unreliable, making longer journeys in and around town difficult for those without cars.

Walking and driving routes around town can be confusing and not well signposted. Some improvements could be:

- The historic sign on corner of Audley End Road and Wenden Road should be repaired and include a sign to Saffron Walden itself.
- A sign to Saffron Walden could be erected at entrance of Audley End House to encourage joint trips.
- 'Finger posts' could be installed, such as those seen in Cambridge, stating distances to attractions and facilities. The location of toilets is a frequently asked question by visitors.
- The current signs to Swan Meadow car park may give the false impression that it is a long way from the town centre, and do not identify it as town centre parking.
- New signs for both pedestrians and car drivers could be installed at exits towards Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford and Newport.
- A clear bus route map should be erected on both sides of the High Street by the main bus stops.
- Signs to Saffron Walden could be installed at the railway station and at the motorway junction to the south. Tourist visitor surveys, carried out three times per year, reveal that only about 10% of people in the town centre are visitors at present.

Q13 Are the pavements in good condition and are there dropped kerbs at crossing points?

The Uttlesford Area Access Group have worked closely with the Highways and Transportation Department, and with users, to develop

and improve level access and the greater provision of dropped kerbs. Where existing crossing points were established it has been possible to replace the pavements originally used with a level, smooth crossing surface, which is also acceptable to the local planning department. Work on pedestrian access is constantly under review.

Q14 Is there a shop mobility scheme?

No

Q15 Do the majority of pedestrian crossings have tactile markings and audible warnings, i.e. pelican crossings?

All crossings have tactile paving edging with audible warnings. Where additional crossing points have been identified, the Uttlesford Area Access Group has worked with the Highways and Transportation Department to provide them. There is one pedestrian crossing at the junction of the High Street with George Street and Abbey Lane. There is also a crossing point at George Street. Existing crossings along Audley Road at its junction with Fairycroft and in Audley End Road allow the students from the County High School to cross. A new pedestrian crossing has been put in place at the junction between Audley Road and the High Street in Saffron Walden.

Q16 Is there secure cycle parking at convenient locations throughout the town e.g. at the railway station, in the main shopping areas, at the bus station, at schools?

There are cycle racks at The Common, at the High School and at Audley End station, which are not enclosed or covered. Extended and more visible provision might be desirable.

Q17 Do buses experience delays or unreliability as a result of traffic conditions and/or traffic management measures in the town?

See Q8. Buses do experience delays during peak hours, due to vans and lorries unloading, as well as periodically through the day at:

- London Road
- High Street (north of traffic lights)
- George Street/Hill Street

The attractiveness of public transport is reduced because of:

- The length of journey times and indirect routes
- Some older buses are not fully accessible

- Comprehensive timetable displays are not centrally visible
- A lack of confidence in or access to service information
- Infrequency or unhelpful scheduling

Q18 Are there dedicated/segregated cycle routes linking residential areas to the town centre and to local schools?

No. The Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan suggests the following, subject to resolution of all on-site problems:

- Saffron Walden to Audley End
- Saffron Walden County High School to the Town Centre via Saxon Way/Gibson Gardens
- Windmill Hill to Town Centre, via New Pond Lane, Hanover Place, Abbey Lane
- Sheds Lane/Usterdale Road/Goddard's Way area to the Town Centre
- Radwinter Road/Thaxted Road to Tesco
- Thaxted Road to South Road via Victoria Avenue
- Thaxted Road to Peaslands Avenue, linking Victoria Avenue, Shire Hill Estate, Lord Butler Leisure Centre and Bell College
- East Street to Peaslands Road via South Street

The cumulative effect of these proposals would be to make it much easier to cycle safely to the High School from the north of the town.

Q19 How easy is to walk to/from school?

Generally, it appears quite easy to walk to school in Saffron Walden – the town is not a large one and the residential areas are quite compact. Here are some examples from the southern part of the town:

Rylstone Way to St. Thomas More RC Primary School

Route length: About half a mile

Walking time: 10 minutes

No. of main roads to cross: one (Thaxted Road), but this has no dedicated crossing point or assistance available. There is a school crossing patrol outside the school in South Road, which would benefit those walking from the other direction. The route does not go through any unlit, isolated or unpopulated areas.

Rylstone Way to Saffron Walden County High School

Route length: About one mile

Walking time: 20 minutes

No of main roads to cross: Four – Thaxted Road (as above), Debden Road, Borough Lane and Newport Road. Debden Road and Borough Lane have no dedicated crossing points or assistance available.

Newport Road has a crossing point with a tactile surface.

There is an elevated section of unmade footway on the south side of Audley End Road that is unlit, relying only on borrowed light from the road. This section of footway backs onto houses, but has a relatively isolated feel. The route does not go through any other unlit, isolated or unpopulated areas.

Auton Croft to Katherine Semar County Infant School

Route length: Just under half a mile

Walking time: 15 minutes

No. of main roads to cross: Two – Debden Road and Cromwell Road, neither of which have dedicated crossing points or assistance available. There is a school crossing patrol outside the School in Ross Close. The quickest way is via a short section of footway linking Cromwell Road and Long Horse Croft. This is unlit, although there is a domestic floodlight on the wall of an adjacent house.

Auton Croft to Saffron Walden County High School

Route length: Just under one mile

Walking time: 20 minutes

No of main roads to cross: Two – Rowntree Way and Newport Road. Rowntree Way has no dedicated crossing point or assistance available. Newport Road has a crossing point with a tactile surface. There is an elevated section of unmade footway on the south side of Audley End Road which is unlit, relying only on borrowed light from the road. This section of footway backs onto houses, but has a relatively isolated feel.

Some obvious improvements might be:

- A dedicated crossing on Thaxted Road
- A dedicated crossing on Debden Road

5C. Economy

WORKSHEET EC1: EMPLOYMENT

These questions help find out the basic data required to understand the local employment situation.

Q 1 Are local unemployment rates high?

Unemployment has been consistently low, at less than 1%, for several years. Of these people a relatively high proportion are long-term unemployed, suggesting a more complex situation than straightforward availability of work (see below). This apparently benign picture does, however, conceal the fact that there is a net loss of young adults in the town who leave for work elsewhere that is better paid or is in other ways more attractive, so leading to recruitment issues in the less well paid sectors.

Q 2 Has unemployment fallen or risen in recent years?

Unemployment is more or less stable at between 0.6% and 0.9%. The decline in employment in the agricultural sector has been largely offset by growth in other areas, noticeably services.

Q 3 What are the labour market participation rates?

At the last census, in Saffron Walden wards, there were 10,655 people aged between 16 and 74, of whom 7,318 were working, 182 were unemployed (107 men) and 2,885 were economically inactive (1,007 men). Labour market participation rates are high; the following gives some detail of the situation for women.

At 64.8% of women aged 16-74 (Audley, Shire, Castle and Chesterford wards), the proportion of economically active women in the core area is higher than the regional average of 61.4%. This includes full-time workers, part-time, self-employed, unemployed and full-time students (the latter two forming between 0.8% and 2.7% each depending on the ward).

In Ashdon, Clavering, Littlebury, Newport, Saffron Walden, the Chesterfords, Wenden Lofts and Wimbish and Debden, the average percentage of women in full-time employment is 28.9% (regional average 30.5%, national 29.6%), part-time 21.7% (regional 21.7%, national 20.3%), and self-employed 8.3%. The highest figures for full-

time women employees are in Saffron Walden and the Chesterfords (above 30%).

The highest figures for women in self-employment (well over double the national average) were in the rural wards of Ashdon, Clavering, Littlebury (the highest at 11.9%) and Wenden Lofts (10.8%), compared to Shire ward in Saffron Walden (4.7%), and Wimbish and Debden (5.9%). These compare to the national average for self-employed women of 4.3% and regional figure of 4.6%.

The proportion of economically inactive women in these same wards who are retired varies between 10.12% (Wimbish) and 18.3% (Audley, Clavering), averaging at 14.6%. Of the remainder, those women who are not students, looking after home/family, unemployed or permanently sick/disabled form 2.1%. It is not possible to tell from the figures examined whether these are 'hidden unemployed' people or those who exist on independent incomes without working, or both. Figures for unemployed women between 16 and 24 as a proportion of the unemployed vary wildly between 0% (Littlebury) and 60% (Ashdon). 60% is also the figure for women in Ashdon who are long-term unemployed, suggesting that actual numbers are small enough for single instances to affect the statistics.

Q 4 What are average household earnings?

21.5% of households in the core area have an income below £10,000, compared to 28.3% nationally. 19.4% have an income of between £10,000 and £20,000, compared to 28.8%, and 16.3% have between £20,000 and £30,000, compared to 18.4% nationally. 46% have an income below the national average of £23,000, compared to the UK average of 63%. The overall picture is of relative prosperity.

Q 5 What proportion of the unemployed have been unemployed for over 6 months or one year and what sectors of the population are most represented by age/gender?

Figures generally are low for long-term unemployment, but tend to form a significant proportion of the total, particularly of those over 50, e.g. Ashdon 3 long-term unemployed registered at the last census and 3 over 50; Newport 12 long-term, 17 over 50; Shire nine long-term, 12 over 50.

The number of economically active women in the core wards registered as unemployed is lower than the regional average (1.3% compared to 2%). At 14.7%, the proportion of unemployed who are aged 16-24 is well below the regional average of 25% – a figure which can be attributed both to the availability of work locally or within commuting

distance, and to the net loss of young adults to the population for work and study elsewhere.

Q 6 What proportion of residents in employment commute elsewhere to work?

Saffron Walden has an increasing dormitory town function, comparable with other towns within an hour's radius of London, but Cambridge is also a commuting destination. In Saffron Walden wards, 578 people use public transport to travel to work and 4,842 use a car, van or motorcycle, out of 7,318 working. It is fair to assume that this already high proportion using a car will be higher still in rural wards where public transport infrastructure is weaker. This may however be offset by the fact that a greater proportion than the national average of the economically active in rural areas work mainly from home (e.g. Ashdon and the Chesterfords both at over 15%, compared to a regional average of 9.4%). Of those using public transport, a significant number will nonetheless be parking a car at Audley End, Great Chesterford or Newport railway stations.

13.1% of economically active people work from home, compared to the regional average of 9.4%, and the national average of 9.2%. A significant proportion of these are women (see above).

This effectively means that Saffron Walden has a reduced function as a destination for work. It is not clear how much this figure is influenced by the widely reported poor availability of small-scale office and commercial space, by the nature of the businesses themselves, or the requirements of life-work balance, but the high number of self-employed women is clearly a factor.

Q 7 Is the local economy particularly dependent on specific industry sectors?

In rural wards the rate of agricultural employment is higher than the regional average but in core wards it is lower (e.g. Chesterfords 3.7%, Wenden Lofts 7.8%, North West Essex 5.3%, Audley 1%, East of England 1.9%). At 16.6%, manufacturing employment in Audley, Shire, Castle and the Chesterfords is higher than the regional average of 14.5%. Wholesale/retail/motor repair employs slightly fewer proportionately than the regional average. Health, social work and transport all employ smaller than average proportions, and education greater, all by 1-2 percentage points. The regional figure for those involved in real estate, renting and related business is 13.3% - in Audley, Castle, Shire and the Chesterfords the range is 14.3% (Shire) to 22.39% (Chesterfords). This last suggests that the local effects of any crash in the super-heated housing economy could be significant,

and, equally, that the local business infrastructure exists to support housing development.

The local economy is quite well integrated in terms of market and supply, with strengths in professional services such as law, finance and accountancy, and in the range and number of small and medium-sized enterprises. There is a lack of small-scale commercial premises, which, combined with the cost of such premises, creates an incentive for developing companies to move elsewhere, such as Haverhill. Lower paid sectors are in some cases reliant on inward commuting in order to fulfill recruitment needs. A relatively large number of people run home-based businesses, which creates a demand for the appropriate infrastructure and services. It has recently been announced that the telecoms network, at present rather weak and unreliable, particularly in the rural hinterland, is to be upgraded to support broadband – at present available only to a minority. There is demand reported for greater networking and support services for small and new businesses, roughly 40% of which are set up by women (again about twice the national average).

Q 8 Is the local economy dependent on a small number of large employers?

Larger employers include: Uttlesford District Council, Uttlesford Primary Care Trust, Saffron Walden County High School, Newport Grammar School, Ridgeons, Waitrose, the Sanger Centre genome campus. In recent years a few large employers have moved out of the town, some citing lower overheads elsewhere or the need to realize land values.

The local economy is much more reliant on small and medium-sized enterprises than on large employers. In March 2000, there were no local VAT-registered businesses of more than 50 employees, although a small number of bigger companies had branches in the town employing more than this number, such as Ridgeons. 550 enterprises in Saffron Walden in the same year employed between 1 and 49 people, with a further 90 in Littlebury ward, 100 in the Chesterfords and 90 in Wimbish and Debden.

Q 9 Is the number of jobs available locally increasing or decreasing?

The district council identified one major recent closure (SIA), but this company was replaced by another of comparable size (Willis).

A study by the University of Plymouth has confirmed the relative economic health of the town at present, and the job market seems relatively stable. Longer term structural problems may exist with regard to the loss of young adults to the employment market, the cost and

availability of housing, and weak road, transport, utilities and telecoms infrastructure – such as the problems associated with large delivery vehicles needing to pass through the medieval town centre roads. The number of jobs within commuting distance is growing, especially in the Cambridge sub-region.

Q 10 What are the rates of business start-ups and failures?

In the ten months to February 2004, 118 start-ups were registered with the local BusinessLink office. The failure rate is reported by them to be low compared to their national average figures, though it should be born in mind that they do not deal with all new business start-ups in the area. There is a good market base for a variety of new businesses.

The local economy is stable rather than dynamic (fast-moving with the possibility of dramatic profits) in the way that Cambridge is, but has hotspots located to the north of the area of the Healthcheck, such as the new research park at Great Chesterford, and just beyond to the south, in the area surrounding Stansted Airport. Respondents in interviews reported a sense that the town was not well positioned currently to influence or manage these external pressures for the benefit of the local community.

Q 11 What opportunities are there for new employment from the expansion of existing local firms?

Local expansion can be limited by cost and availability of premises and staff, so some expanding firms have moved out. The Healthcheck questionnaire suggests that a majority of organizations view the immediate future as stable, but growth is predicted in both private and public sector organizations catering for young people, from education and nursery care to leisure and consumables. Hard information about local business confidence is not readily available.

Q 12 What economic development/inward investment grants are available?

BusinessLink for Essex provide an advisory service for new businesses on Wednesdays, in conjunction with Uttlesford Enterprise, that can advise on sector-specific assistance. There is at the time of writing no economic development unit at the district council, and the comparable function at the county council appears recently to have been scaled

down. By straightforward economic deprivation indicators, Saffron Walden would often not qualify for public inward investment.

There may be arguments for using strategic intervention to prevent the increasing social division caused by high house prices: well-paid workers are moving to the area for employment and thus, in competing with key workers and those not yet on the 'housing ladder', drive up house prices. There may also be a case for developing the range of post-16 and vocational training available locally. The paucity of cultural and leisure opportunities may, through further development in the first instance of local strategy, allow access to separate funding streams such as those for arts and heritage. East of England Development Agency funding, via the Investing in Communities scheme, ought on recent guidance to be available to assist in pre-empting economic and other difficulties being posed by the town's pressured location between economic hotspots, notably in relation to housing, social cohesion, the environment and transport. To access this funding, on latest guidance, plans for Saffron Walden need to be submitted to 'subregional economic partnerships' through 'local strategic partnerships' such as Uttlesford Futures. To date it has not been possible to obtain unequivocal advice on available assistance from the Essex Economic Partnership or the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and how the town should address its relationship to both the Essex and the Cambridge sub-region economies. Not fitting neatly into either administrative category, and therefore not having its specific characteristics recognized by formal economic development bodies, may pose longer-term questions for the economic and community vitality of the area.

It may, for larger scale projects, be possible to obtain European social fund assistance to support diversification of the rural economy and training/employment development to keep young adults in the town. European funding is also available to support the development of 'green tourism' pilot projects, which may be in keeping with local strategy on developing cycle networks, providing leisure opportunities for people passing through Stansted Airport, and other activities.

WORKSHEET EC2: RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data required to evaluate the retail and town centre services available.

Q 1 How much of the local shopping provision is in the town centre, out-of-town centre or in the villages?

The high proportion of independent shops in the town centre is regarded by local people as a strength, but increasingly shoppers comment on the lack of good 'basic' shops such as a fishmonger, greengrocer or hardware shop, and the growth of 'nick nack' shops. There is one town centre supermarket and one on the edge of town, which some years ago was at the center of public debate as the result of a planning application to expand (declined). Both supermarkets are very successful, one appealing more to the mass market and one more focussed on the 'quality' end.

For major shopping expenditure other than (and sometimes including) food, people often travel to Cambridge, Braintree Freeport, Thurrock Lakeside, Haverhill, Bishops Stortford or London. There is a very small handful of basic convenience shops in the villages; Newport has a greater range including a hairdresser, bicycle repair shop and delicatessen. Online/telephone order and delivery services appear widely used, including for supermarket shopping.

Q 2 What type of shops and services are there in the town centre?

More detail is given in the 'Snapshot' worksheet, but here is a summary of what the town centre includes: 4 banks, 3 building societies, 2 electrical/hi fi shops, 2 butchers, 1 small department store, 5 charity shops, 2 bookshops (new) with stationery departments, 2 bookshops (second hand), 2 children's clothes shops, 6 women's clothes shops, 1 men's outfitters, 1 health food store, 1 outdoor clothes store, 2 chemist/pharmacies, 1 general 'drugstore', 6 estate agents, 1 computer store, 1 fireplace store, 3 hairdressers, 2 manicure parlours, 1 sports shop, 3 newsagents, 1 stationer's/art supplies, 1 stationer's, 1 office supplies, 4 shoe shops, 2 agents, 1 florist, 1 furniture shop (new), 1 furniture shop (antique/second hand), 3 antique shops, 1 general auction house, 4 soft furnishings shops, 1 photographer, 2 delicatessens, 2 launderers/dry cleaners, 1 office services supplier, 2 recruitment agencies, 13 accountancy firms, 7 law firms, 6 cafes, 1 kebab shop, 2 fish and chip shops, 7 restaurants, 2 betting shops, 3 jewellers.

The pleasant town environment (attractive buildings and so forth) seems to be what attracts shoppers from outside of town, but recent improvements in Royston and those planned for Bishop's Stortford may be a pull for people in the western half of the hinterland. The town is not very actively promoted to shoppers from elsewhere.

Q 3 Has retail floorspace in the town centre been lost in the last five years?

At August 2004, at least 15 companies from elsewhere were actively seeking retail premises in the town. The town centre is attractive for some kinds of retail offering, especially given the average affluence of the local market, but overheads are considered relatively high. There are inevitable limitations to development and market expansion due to the historic nature of the buildings and streets, though the growing population may be an influence in terms of the future location of retail premises.

Q 4 Are there a variety of markets operating in the town and surrounding countryside?

There is a general market in the market square on Tuesdays and Saturdays (the only greengrocery and fishmongery other than the supermarkets). Four farmers' markets take place, one of which was recently established in Saffron Walden itself but which faces challenges in its present location. The others are in Chesterford, Ugley and Chrishall. A monthly 'collectables' market takes place in the town hall. The W.I. holds a small weekly event, also in the town hall.

Some local producers do have access to a variety of outlets (such as at least two fancy bread and cake producers), but the local agricultural scene is largely arable, so does not often supply retail outlets directly. It has not been realistic to identify all local small-scale producers, but there are a number of local firms who source foods and ingredients from elsewhere. Some quite isolated villages are still visited by the somewhat unsung heroes of local delivery such milkmen and the 'wet fish man'.

Q 5 What is the frequency of the general market and what are the numbers of traders/stalls?

The general market is twice weekly, and the town centre is noticeably more busy on these days. Traders, of whom there are less than twenty, have expressed the view that the longer-term future of the market requires closer and more consistent support and co-operation from the relevant public authorities, for instance with regard to the question of working together with the farmers' markets and other complementary businesses; expanding the footprint of the market space and promotion to go with it; and parking. Market customers are observably loyal.

Q 6 How many shops are vacant in the town centre and how many have been vacant for more than two years?

Only one significantly sized shop has been vacant for a long period (charity shops occupy others). The reason for this is not clear, but the shop is prominently located on George Street and some people have surmised that negotiating cost and refurbishments may be relevant issues; in addition work has been necessary on the Slade culvert which is adjacent. At the time of writing it appeared to have found a potential new occupant. Another shop in a similarly prominent location, previously selling fireplaces, has also just become vacant.

Q 7 How many new shops in the centre have opened in the last three years, or have had major refits?

At least three new clothes shops have opened in recent times. No major refurbishments are known to this study in existing stores, though at least one may be forthcoming and two clothes shops have moved and refitted premises; one outdoor clothing chain has moved in and refurbished/rebranded premises accordingly. An independent outdoor clothes shop closed. The forthcoming requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act may precipitate a flurry of activity to improve accessibility, which is widely regarded as problematic.

Retailer confidence seems generally buoyant after a dip reported by some in 2003, but there are anxieties about parking/access (staff and customers); the cost of premises including access improvements; recruitment; and current discussions about improving the 'pedestrian-friendliness' of the town centre.

Q 8 Are rents for retail premises stable or increasing?

Rents have increased significantly in recent years and have almost returned to the level of the late 80s boom.

Some local business people claim that the growth of 'hobby shops' may have contributed to a decline in shoppers visiting the town, as the margins of 'basic' goods shops may not allow them to pay such competitive rents as those with a more relaxed view of profitability and so the range and availability of core goods outside of supermarkets has reduced.

Q 9 Are local retailers confident about future trading?

Physical expansion is rarely an option, although some capital-consuming potential exists in under-used cellar space. There is a desire reported by a number of local businesses to see shopping and other attractions in the town better promoted and more accessible, and to see the range of basic goods shops supported in order to sustain the town's ability to provide for the day-to-day needs of shoppers rather

than lose them to other destinations such as Thurrock or Cambridge. Some discussion has also taken place about 'modernising' opening hours (i.e. to review early closing day and examine the potential of evening and Sunday opening, as many local people are not likely to be weekday shoppers).

Q 10 Is the town centre promoted as a shopping destination in any brochures or other publicity material?

No

Q 11 Is there commercial demand for additional retail floorspace?

15 retailers had registered interest in finding premises in the summer of 2004.

Q 12 How many shops are charity shops? (Charity shops pay lower rates and rentals.)

Five.

Q 13 Is the local provision and/or livestock market vulnerable to closure?

See Q5 above. The cattle and poultry markets closed some years ago.

WORKSHEET EC3: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data needed to evaluate the quality of training and education available in the local area and what the specific needs are.

Q 1 Do the vocational training courses on offer reflect the needs of local residents and employers?

The local availability of post-16 training is generally not strong, although opportunities such as languages and computing are provided through the North and West Essex Adult Community College (which itself covers a very large geographic area and highly disparate community). Cambridge, Harlow and Braintree, all within an hour away

by car, have significant provision. The prevalence in the local economy of small and medium-sized businesses means that many employers do not have access to the kind of training provision and career development expertise provided by larger employers elsewhere, and this might usefully be addressed in a centralized way. Distance learning seems to be quite widely used, though no figures have been obtained due to the impossibility of surveying all theoretical providers and data protection considerations. Demand has been reported in interviews for return-to-work and entrepreneurial skills for women and young people. Transport to existing training provision is also an issue, as is the cost of childcare. The district council is working with its partners to provide a pilot free moped hire service to enable young people in rural areas to get up and running with jobs and training. Manufacturers and 'tradesmen' have reported difficulties in attracting appropriately qualified trainees.

Q 2 Are school leavers well qualified?

Figures for local educational achievement are generally outstanding. Of the 10,655 people in Saffron Walden core wards at the 2001 census, 3,451 or 32.4% were qualified to levels 3, 4 or 5 (graduate/professional).

In 2002 Saffron Walden County High saw 77% of pupils achieve five or more Grades A*-C, and Newport Free Grammar 79%. At A-Level they were ranked 9th and 11th respectively amongst all secondary schools in the county including selective and independent schools. Achievement levels amongst intake at Year 7 are also higher than average. A possible issue emerging from one primary school OFSTED report is a possible weakness in children's understanding of the diversity of the wider society in which they live.

Q 3 Is there access to good quality schools in the area?

The academic quality of local schools is in many cases very high (see Q2), both in terms of raw results and of 'added value'. Physical access relies on significant levels of both bus journeys and private car use, as walking to school for children in the hinterland is often not an option. A recent controversy surrounded a county council decision (under review) to cancel the school bus from Littlebury to Saffron Walden, so necessitating a long walk alongside a busy A road with no pavement for primary school children.

Q 4 Are there sufficient pre-school places in nurseries and playgroups?

The county council is not predicting growth in primary school numbers, but this may change in the context of central government housing proposals and development in neighbouring areas such as Cambridge and Stansted. Secondary school numbers are likely to rise, and there is significant unmet demand for affordable, good quality pre-school and out of hours provision. The district council report anecdotal evidence of holiday activities effectively acting as a 'babysitting service'.

Pre-school and nursery providers report very strong demand, and there seems to have been a surge in the pre-school population very recently.

Q 5 How many Internet learning and access points are there within the town and/or villages?

Essex County Council is the only local provider of open access points to the Internet, in the town centre library, so these are not available out of library hours. Levels of home access seem to be quite high and growing, but at present telecoms infrastructure is often weak and unreliable, especially in bad weather as much cabling is carried on overhead lines. Some improvements are expected. Demand for broadband from home-based businesses is relatively high, evidenced by online campaigns such as the one for Clavering.

Q 6 Is there adequate provision of non-vocational courses locally?

N.W. Essex Community College is the main provider, but few of its courses are in Saffron Walden. In the present prospectus these are Flower Arranging; Woodworking; Computing (various courses); Digital Photography; Exercise classes; Beadwork Jewellery; Drawing and Painting; Face Painting; Watercolours; French; Italian; Spanish; Basic English; Basic Maths. Access often relies on car use.

Q 7 Is there a high number of school exclusions?

No. No significant problems with exclusion appear in Ofsted reports examined for this research (indeed attendance figures as reported in 'league tables' for the secondary schools are very good).

WORKSHEET EC4: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY NEEDS

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data required to evaluate the commercial property needs in the local area.

Q 1 How much new commercial or industrial floorspace has been built or let in the last three years?

New development has been fairly modest due to the weak availability of sites and the higher value of sites with residential planning permission. The exception is in the north of the area, where there is a new research park developing rapidly at Great Chesterford. Business confidence in the higher technology sectors in good.

Q 2 How much good quality office or industrial floorspace is vacant or on the market?

Vacancy does not seem significant issue locally – the shortage of small-scale premises is, however.

Q 3 Are there sufficient premises at affordable rents for new small businesses?

No

Q 4 Has there been an increase or decrease in the rents of industrial and commercial property in recent years?

Rents are increasing. See above and the Snapshot worksheet.

Q 5 Have vacancy levels for commercial properties increased or decreased in recent years?

Demand is for small-scale commercial and industrial units, including those with laboratory facilities.

Q 6 Are there any planned expansions of existing commercial and industrial firms?

It would be hard to answer this question comprehensively due to commercial confidentiality. However, expansion is reported likely in biotech and other advanced technology-based businesses, as well as in business services, personal health/wellbeing and grooming, and in providers of products and services for children.

Q 7 Are there economic development and funding initiatives in place to assist incoming firms and the expansion of local firms?

See EC1, Q12. The principal provider of advice for small firms is BusinessLink/Uttlesford Enterprise.

WORKSHEET EC5: TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data required to evaluate the level of tourism activity in the area and an assessment of visitor

Q 1 What are the main tourist or visitor attractions including festivals and events in the town or nearby?

Within the Healthcheck area there are a large number of small, historically or architecturally interesting buildings, but little co-ordinated promotion to tourists and problems with transport access across this rural area. The tourism staff of the district council are very well informed but not many in number. The Tourism Officer is part-time. She is co-ordinating a tourism forum for the district to examine common issues and promote closer working between tourism-related organizations. Larger attractions are few, but include:

- Audley End House and Park (English Heritage) – a magnificent Grade 1 listed stately home which hosts a handful of picnic concerts during the summer featuring popular classical music or pop acts at the conservative end of the spectrum. It also has a popular organic kitchen garden. Through the Healthcheck, local people have requested both better cross-promotion between Audley End House and the town, and a greater array of public events at the house and grounds.
- Miniature Railway – adjacent to Audley End House and attracting 42,000 visitors a year. It is the only significantly-sized attraction in the Healthcheck area for small children other than the well-used Leisure Centre.
- The carnival, which is not an annual event, and is organized by volunteers primarily for local people.

To the north, between Walden and Cambridge, is the Imperial War Museum's site in Duxford, which can be extremely busy but there is little cross-promotion with Saffron Walden.

Cambridge, again to the north, is a phenomenally busy tourist destination with numerous annual events and festivals, but again there is little cross-promotion (and in any case public transport to and from is weak, especially in the evenings and at weekends).

Dunmow, to the south, has a successful annual music festival, and Thaxted has a popular arts festival attracting visitors from outside of the area, as well as a Morris Dancing Weekend.

Q 2 How important is tourism-related employment to the local economy?

The figures for the district as a whole are distorted by the presence of a major international airport and the hotels and services that go with it. Little information is available for the smaller area covered by the Healthcheck. The district council, amongst others, has identified that most 'visitors' are in fact *en route* to elsewhere and spend relatively little here, therefore, and has identified this market as potentially important for future development. UDC surveys point to 10% of shoppers in town being visitors.

Q 3 What is the range of tourist accommodation available in the area e.g. number of hotel beds by grade, bed and breakfast, youth hostels, caravan and, camping site pitches?

See the 'Snapshot' worksheet. The variability in quality and the absence of compulsory inspection for hotels and bed & breakfast facilities have been identified as issues affecting tourism development. Large-capacity facilities such as those that might be provided by hotels are largely absent. The youth hostel is well-located in a historic building in the town centre. Camping and caravan provision is very small-scale and tends to be scattered in village areas rather than in town.

Q 4 How many visitors come to the town or area and how long do they stay?

10% of people in the town centre tend to be visitors, according to shopper surveys. Figures were not received for Audley End House, but the suggestion seems to be that these are day-trippers who do not spend much time in the town itself. Millions pass through the airport to the south each year, but in general little has been done to date to capture their business. Given the growth of low-cost airlines and the associated frequency of short breaks, this has been identified by the district council as a possible opportunity.

Q 5 How seasonal is the visitor activity?

Visitors tend to be concentrated in the summer months. Winter is very quiet for tourism, with the possible exception of language students.

Q 6 Is there a Tourist Information Centre in the town and how well used is it?

The TIC is well-sited and well-used, although cramped. It is recognized that more could be done to aid tourist 'navigation' such as improved signage, published resources, blue plaques and guides.

Q 7 How much do visitors spend in the town or surrounding area?

Tourist spending is a target for development under the local strategic plan. Figures for their spending had not been obtained for this report at the time of writing.

Q 8 Is visitor activity concentrated in the town itself or does it take place in the surrounding countryside?

The overwhelming number of visitors come to the town, principally to Audley End House, although the surrounding countryside attracts cyclists and walkers – again, this is an area that has been identified for development. The need for navigation aids/guide information is relevant.

Q 9 Does the number, range and quality of visitor facilities e.g. accommodation, quality of restaurants match expectations and needs?

The principal demands seem to be:

- More outdoor eating and drinking facilities
- More evening and weekend activities
- Improved information resources
- Improved accessibility and signage, especially for children and mobility-impaired people
- Better resourced and co-ordinated promotional activity.

Q 10 Is there a visitors' guide or town trail?

There is a modest town trail leaflet, though in general the historical features of the town are widely regarded as under-promoted. Several local authors have produced interesting guides and books, including to some of the villages and a notable recent one by the Head Librarian on the historic buildings of the town. A local publisher (Lopinga) produces a comprehensive guide to nature reserves and natural history in the area. A small minority of local people wish to resist tourism development.

Q11 Does the town enter the 'Britain in Bloom' competition or the surrounding villages 'Best Kept Village'?

Saffron Walden does not enter Britain in Bloom, indeed there are local complaints about the management of town trees and horticulture, but several local villages including Clavering and Langley have achieved honours in the Best Kept Village competition. In recent years this latter has taken into account conservation practice, highly relevant in this area because of the rich fund of local biodiversity.

Q 12 Are there any specialist tourism enterprises, such as language schools, conference centres?

The Bell Language School is well established in the town and a conference centre has been opened in Newport.

The Quaker and non-conformist history of this area, embodied in the presence of the Friends' School, may attract additional visitors. The presence of the high-tech cluster to the north, including the Sanger Centre (genome research campus) in Hinxton, brings national and international human traffic to that area. Rural districts are used by cycling clubs from Cambridgeshire wishing to practice in a landscape with hills in it.

Q 13 Is there adequate signing to visitor attractions and the town centre?

Signage has long been identified as a chronic weakness contributing to the seeming invisibility of Saffron Walden, although its character of being 'off the beaten track' is seen by some as part of its appeal. Signage is examined in the Environment and Transport worksheets above, but it may be worth noting here that:

- town centre signs are sometimes inconsistent, too few, unhelpful and unattractive
- the nearest railway station is called Audley End, and there is no mention on platform signs of Saffron Walden
- there are no signs prior to the northbound motorway exit for the town.

There is very little to indicate the proximity of the town centre to Audley End House and vice versa (which is about five minutes' walk). Cross-promotion and transport links between attractions are weak.

WORKSHEET EC6: BUSINESS SUPPORT

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data required to evaluate the level of support available to local businesses in the town and surrounding rural areas.

Q 1 Do the banks, financial institutions and other business support services offer a full range of business advice and support?

At least one bank provides a full business banking service, and private consultants are available. Weaknesses in support for new businesses and entrepreneurs are described above. BusinessLink provide a weekly surgery service. There is a perceived need for improved and more inclusive networking arrangements. Public sector support for economic development is patchy. Private sector companies such as accountants and lawyers provide comprehensive services, although one firm of accountants has recently merged its Saffron Walden operation into its Cambridge office.

Q 2 Does the town have a town centre manager, town centre forum or similar partnership organisation?

The town council leads a town centre management group, the only body of its kind in Saffron Walden. There is no Chamber of Commerce or town centre manager (indeed both of these initiatives have been tried but found themselves unable to continue).

Q 3 Is there a presence of the following organisations in the town: Small Business Service, Business Links, Chambers of Trade or Commerce, Learning and Skills Council, Enterprise Agency?

BusinessLink one day per week, in conjunction with Uttlesford Enterprise (small business service).

Q 4 What business support or initiatives have proved successful?

BusinessLink report good survival rates amongst their client organizations relative to the national picture. The 'cluster' approach of research parks to the north seems very successful.

Q 5 Are there regular events that have the potential to draw the business community together, e.g. trade fairs?

There are no business or trade fairs at present, though the idea was well received when floated amongst business and council figures as

part of the Healthcheck. A monthly business breakfast meeting is well attended.

There is a strong demand for networking events, but also, critically, for a body or person to organize them, and a good location. The reliance of the local economy on small companies means that it is difficult for businesspeople to find the time to undertake such activity independently.

Q 6 What is the current and likely future demand for broadband (>2 MBs) communication services?

The Countryside Agency worksheet posed a series of very detailed questions on this topic. It is not realistic to try to answer these questions comprehensively, as much of the data has not been researched and would require expert professional resources: the picture is a fast-moving one. We do know however that demand for broadband, for instance, is significant due to the following:

- There is a high proportion of small, home-based, knowledge-based businesses for which the technology is integral
- There is a local cluster of larger, technology and knowledge-based companies, including academic spin-offs
- There is a high average household income and high levels of educational achievement, which are associated with access to Internet technology, particularly the market of 'early adopters'
- The proximity of Saffron Walden to Cambridge University, a pioneer of the early JANET network and subsequent technologies, has enabled continuing high levels of Internet awareness amongst local people, even those who do not use it
- In the ten months after the Healthcheck commenced, BT completely revised its policy on not rolling out broadband in the rural areas, and now the whole of Uttlesford is scheduled to receive broadband. Availability during the course of this project has evolved rapidly and will continue to do so, though it is still very patchy at the time of writing

Several respondents to the Healthcheck have reported frustration at the slowness of the telecoms companies to provide broadband. This may express straightforward commercial or other need, and

it may also be a result of the rather sophisticated activities of some local companies, for whom the speed and quality of connections may be commercially critical.

Q 7 What is the current and likely future status of the supply of broadband technology (>2 MBs) communication services?

For broadband see comments Q8 above. ISDN is present in Saffron Walden and patchily available elsewhere. Outside of the town there is often little alternative to BT fixed links. Mobile phone coverage is extremely patchy, and non-existent in some areas. But then ordinary radio signals are barely available in Saffron Walden High Street.

The district council support the rolling out of broadband across the whole area, a policy that predates the BT decision noted above.

Q 8 Is there a Business Directory or website for the town, or any arrangement for networking local suppliers?

There is no dedicated business website for the town, but a forthcoming upgrade to the Saffire site could provide the necessary infrastructure. The annual Saffron Walden Directory (print) is published annually on a modest budget and is well received. It covers businesses and other aspects of life in the town. There is also a North-West Essex business directory.

Q 9 Are there adequate business meeting and conference facilities locally

This is a shortage identified by the town council and others. Principal meeting spaces in the town centre are the Town Hall, the Saffron Hotel, the Friends' Meeting House, the Friends' School and the Baptist Church. The Town Hall is one of the largest, in which the assembly room can accommodate up to 200 people but catering facilities are very modest. Most meeting spaces are for 50 people or fewer. Out of town there is a conference centre in Newport, a modestly-sized hotel in Great Chesterford and a handful of other smallish facilities, mainly not dedicated to business.

Q 10 What results have there been from any existing town centre management work?

The town centre management group is currently examining a number of ideas including making the town centre more pedestrian-friendly.

There is scope to expand and strengthen this partnership and develop its resources in order to assist the delivery of its ambitions and objectives for the town. Uttlesford Futures have recently offered a modest grant to assist with a feasibility study. A request has been submitted via the Healthcheck for improved dialogue with interested parties not currently represented on this group, such as market traders, and an appropriate mechanism for resolving debate.

In general a past town centre manager project is not seen to have reaped large benefits, for which the explanations offered include that the supporting partnership and funding structure were not sufficiently robust.

A degree of local scepticism needs to be addressed in order to underpin the success of future town centre initiatives.

The Saffron Walden Initiative have undertaken the management of the popular annual hanging baskets scheme, held a salsa event in the market square to help contribute to the 'life' of the town centre, and run the annual charity Christmas shopping evening.

Q 11 How well used are the agencies such as Small Business Service, Business Links, Chambers of Trade or Commerce, Learning and Skills Council, Enterprise Agency?

What modest support exists is well-used, but many local businesses are long-established with strong core groups of customers. One firm of accountants commented that a certain amount of complacency may exist with regard to making use of such services in order to develop business activity.

Q 12 Is there a published strategy relating to the use of information technology?

See Q6 and Q7 above.

5D. Community

WORKSHEET S1: POPULATION

These questions seek to define the population profile of the town and surrounding countryside.

Q 1 What proportion of the total population live in the town as compared to the hinterland?

Saffron Walden population at the 2001 census was 15,095, and the population of the hinterland villages 14,348. (This is the parishes of Arkesden, Ashdon, Clavering, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon, Gt Chesterford, Hadstock, Hempstead, Ickleton, Langley, Littlebury, Little Chesterford, Newport, Quendon/Rickling, Radwinter, Strethall, Wenden Lofts, Wendens Ambo, Widdington, Wimbish.)

Q 2 What proportion of the population is of retirement age i.e. over 65/60?

2,503 people in the town were 64+, 17% of the population. In the hinterland there are 2,101 people aged 64+, a similar percentage. The total of 4,604 is in line with the regional and national averages of 16% of the population, but some individual wards have much higher averages, whereas in Wimbish, where there is an army barracks it is lower. (The age of 64+ was used for both men and women.)

Q 3 What proportion of the population is under 16?

2,925 people in the town are under 16, or 20% of the population. In the hinterland there are 2,901 people under 16, a slightly higher percentage. The total of 5,826 is in line with the regional and national averages of 20% of the population being of this age group. Half of the areas' youth live outside the town and have the transport issues to deal with when making use of the town's facilities.

The census shows a net loss of young adults (under 30) to the area compared with national averages. Healthcheck findings suggest three primary causes for this: the poor availability of affordable housing, the lack of 'things to do', and the attraction of work or study elsewhere.

Q 4 What proportion of the population is between 18 and 29?

In the town in 2001 there were 1,939 people aged between 18 and 29. This is 13% of the town's population. In 1991 this age group numbered 2,355 or 17%. In the hinterland this group numbered 1,668 in 2001, 12% of the population. In 1991 this was 2,181 or 16%. The regional and national averages for this age group are 14% and 15% respectively.

Q 5 What proportion of the population is between 30 and 64?

In the town in 2001 there were 6,815 people aged between 30 and 64. This is 47% of the town's population. In 1991 this age group numbered 6,138 or 44%. In the hinterland the same age group numbered 7,591 in 2001, or 53%. In 1991 this was 6,687 and formed 48%. The regional and national averages for this age group are 46% and 47% respectively.

It can be concluded that there is net loss of young adults and an influx of 30-64 year olds. The higher earnings of this latter age group has impacted on house prices and made it more difficult for younger people to buy houses in the area. In the town the numbers for the 30-64 age group are now in line with the regional/national averages – the inflow to new housing developments will influence how this changes in the future. A possible effect of the growing average age of the population is an increased need for services for the elderly.

Q 4 What proportion of the population have professional and managerial jobs?

At around 42%, the proportion of the working population in professional or managerial jobs is very high. This includes local authority employees.

Q 5 What proportion of the population have semi-skilled manual and unskilled jobs?

Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers form 14% of the town's workforce and 9% of the workforce in the hinterland. Across both the average is 11%. This is significantly lower than the regional and national averages of 16% and 17% respectively. Similarly, skilled manual workers for 14% of the workforce from the town, and 14% for the hinterland (this is influenced by the presence of Carver Barracks in Wimbish).

Q 6 What proportion of total households are elderly people living alone?

In Saffron Walden and hinterland there are 11,797 households (6,297 in town and 5,500 in the hinterland); 1,657 of these are pensioners living alone. They form 16% of the town's population and 11% of the population in the hinterland – 14% overall. There is little change from 1991. The regional and national average is 14%. At around 20%, the figure for Castle Ward is particularly high.

Q 7 Has the population of the town and hinterland grown or declined in the last ten years?

The population increase from 1991 to 2001 is 8% for Saffron Walden and 3% for the hinterland – overall 6%. Population is forecast to increase again by 15% across Uttlesford by 2011. The most significant change is predicted to be in the number of people over 65.

WORKSHEET S2: HOUSING

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data required to evaluate the housing situation in the town and surrounding countryside.

Q 1 Does the housing needs survey give an accurate picture of housing needs for both the town and hinterland?

Yes, a housing needs survey was completed in 2002 – relevant findings are in the answers below.

Q 2 What types of houses/flats are currently available?

There is currently a stock shortage of 'affordable' housing. Demand is high for one- and two-bedroom and flats in particular, but also for family homes. There are few opportunities for the development of affordable housing in the area, and this is reflected in the relatively low

percentage of people aged between 19 and 30 in the town and villages. Further information on housing is given in the Snapshot.

Q 3 How much of new housing is being planned in your area, and of what type?

New housing is planned for: Raynham's, High Street; Braybrooke Gardens and Station Road/Harris Yard; land east of Thaxted Road; West Road; the Printpack site; and land at Bell College. The minimum total site capacity is given as 247 dwellings.

It is seen as unlikely that there will be significant housing growth at Saffron Walden because of historic, transport and landscape constraints. New housing in large amounts has been proposed for nearby areas – the Essex Structure Plan requires Uttlesford to plan for 5,600 additional dwellings between 1996-2011. The Uttlesford District Plan identifies Great Dunmow as an area for major housing expansion: 1,448 dwellings by 2011. Regional Planning Guidance also identifies Great Dunmow area for growth (2,650 dwellings by 2021), assuming full capacity use of one runway at Stansted. Much of the development is proposed regardless of whether Stansted expands. There is also growth around Cambridge, including 5,500 additional dwellings in the period 20016-2021. This will increase general busy-ness of roads, buses and trains used by Saffron Walden and hinterland residents.

Regional Planning Guidance states that there should be restraint on development, except for local needs or strategic transport improvements in areas including 'Uttlesford district north of Stansted Airport' (which is where Saffron Walden is).

The Government in February 2004 asked the East of England Regional Assembly to carry out further work to identify capacity for an additional 18,000 dwellings in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area. This study was due to be completed by September 2004, and will look particularly at potential in the areas of the Lee Valley, Harlow, Stansted, Stevenage, south of Cambridge and Peterborough, as identified in the earlier LSC and Stansted M11 studies.

There may be an impact on house prices in Saffron Walden when proposed housing in other nearby areas becomes reality. This could be a stabilisation or reduction in prices because of substantially increased supply of housing supply in the sub-region, or, alternatively, an increase in prices as Saffron Walden develops into an 'exclusive' and attractive enclave.

Q 4 Is existing local housing, including affordable (social), in good condition?

UDC's housing stock was assessed at the end of 2002. Overall it is well maintained. There is no planned-replacement scheme for

bathrooms and kitchens, and some elements such as roofing will soon be reaching the end of their serviceable life. There are no major problems to report with the condition of private sector housing.

Q 5 Is local housing affordable?

That unemployment is low and average earnings are higher than the national average (43% of households have an income above £30,000, compared to the national average of 18%.) both masks and enforces the acute difficulties that younger people and those with low and modest incomes (including key workers) face in accessing the housing market. House prices are significantly higher than the regional averages for all categories. This has led to increasing pressure for more affordable housing.

UDC carried out a housing needs survey in 2002. The average price for all dwellings in Uttlesford in 2002 was approx. £168,000. Detached houses accounted for 41% of sales with an average price of £294,000. The semi-detached average was £181,000, accounting for 27% of sales. Terraced houses accounted for 19.7% of sales at an average price of £137,000. Flats account for 11.5% of sales and average £97,000. Prices were seen to increase by 30% by the end of 2003. Terraced houses, and to a lesser degree flats, are the main property types bought by first time buyers, and within Uttlesford are cheapest in Saffron Walden. In 2002, a salary of £17,500 was needed to buy a one-bedroom flat, £38,000 to buy a two-bedroom terraced house in the town, and £50K in rural areas – in a period of low interest rates. The supply of terraced houses in rural areas is very low. House prices have increased only by 6% in the year to March 2004 in areas subject to overflying from Stansted airport. 72% of new households formed in Uttlesford in 2003 had incomes below £27,500. A large proportion of first-time buyers are excluded from the owner-occupied market. The Housing Needs Survey demonstrated that more subsidized, low-cost/low-rent housing should be included in new developments than was needed four years ago. Figures from the Land Registry, reported in a housing needs survey undertaken in Langley in January 2004, indicate that the average price for a terraced house in that parish was over £147,000, and for a detached house was over £411,000. The list of people indicating Langley as one of their three preferences for public sector housing in Langley parish stands at well over 100; in 2003, one council property became vacant for new occupiers from the waiting list. The Rural Housing Trust has recommended building eight new homes in the village. The Trust also noted that where those in housing need aspired to shared ownership, few if any could afford more than 50% of the equity in such a scheme.

Amongst new households, the need identified in UDC's housing survey is 15.5% for terraced houses and 41.1% for flats. The supply of new properties in 2002 was 13.9% terraced and 8.6% flats. Flats form just 7% of the total housing market. Most new affordable housing units are

required for renting. Full market costs for renting can be high. Compared to Dunmow, Stansted and the western rural fringes, Saffron Walden is relatively cheap (a one-bedroom flat is around £375 p.c.m. compared to £400, £500 and £580). Based on housing costing 30% of gross income, an income of £15,000 is needed for the town – for the western rural fringe of Uttlesford this figure is £23,000.

The cost of buying between 1999 and 2002 increased by 60% for flats and 45% for terraced houses. Access to home ownership is beyond the reach of 75% of the concealed households, that is, those people who currently share but would be living in a separate household were one available/affordable. The total shortfall in affordable housing is around 488 per year. 730 households intend to leave the district between 2002-2007 due to the lack of affordable housing. In 2003 there were 882 people/households on the Uttlesford Housing Register (around 300 for Saffron Walden). This is estimated to grow to more than 2,100 by 2007. Factors such as debt and insecure housing are recognized to have public health implications.

79% of properties in Uttlesford are owner-occupied (44% with a mortgage). 13% are rented from UDC, and 6% are rented privately. 86% of households say their accommodation is adequate for their needs.

Single adult households, at around 27%, are comparable with the national average. Single parent households are fewer, 4% compared to 9%. Couples constitute 69% compared to 60%. 14% of houses are underoccupied. 22% of households receive some form of public financial support, 7-10% receive housing benefit.

It is worth noting that housing proposals relating to the M11 corridor area could lead to a significant increase in the number of young adults and families in the area, which in turn could put further strain on already stretched services for this section of the population.

Q 6 Is homelessness a problem in the area?

Over a ten-month period there were 107 people registered as homeless in Uttlesford district; homelessness is not seen as a critical problem. The main difficulty is finding *suitable* accommodation, especially for single people. There are however no agencies working specifically with the homeless in Saffron Walden, and there is heavy reliance on inadequate (and relatively expensive) bed & breakfast accommodation, so those who are homeless may be poorly served compared with other areas.

Q 7 Does the local council give priority to a local connection for affordable housing, i.e. do local people have priority in accessing affordable housing?

For the whole of Uttlesford any applicant who has a housing need (that is, scores in the points scheme) may also be eligible for extra points due to a local connection. In order of most awarded, points are added if the applicant is a current UDC tenant who needs to move or needs more suitable accommodation; a permanent Uttlesford resident; or resident in Uttlesford for the last two years. Points are also awarded if the applicant is non-resident, but an employee of UDC; strongly connected to family within Uttlesford; someone who lived in Uttlesford as a juvenile for 15 years; or a returning member of the Forces.

The Rural Housing Trust also operate a priority scheme for those with local connections (residence, former residence, permanent work or caring responsibilities).

Q 8 Is supported housing available to those who need it through special units e.g. for the elderly?

The council and Registered Social Landlords have sheltered housing schemes, and the area is well served with sheltered accommodation. The area could benefit from a 'frail elderly scheme (the stage between sheltered and residential care) – UDC is investigation opportunities for such a scheme on a new development. The Uttlesford Primary Care Trust is also aware of this need.

Q 9 Is there a significant level of second home ownership or holiday lets locally or in particular areas?

There does not appear a particularly significant level of second home ownership or holiday lets in the town or its hinterland.

Q 10 Is there a high level of vacancy or empty houses?

The level of vacant housing appears low; a survey has just been undertaken in the parishes.

Q 11 Are there opportunities to bring housing in the town centre, e.g. flats over shops, back into use?

UDC and Registered Social Landlords have a limited program, but there are few empty properties. Concrete information is not easy to obtain on vacant property 'above the shop'.

Q 12 Will the planned provision of affordable housing meet local need?

No, see Q5. In the town and surrounding villages only two sites are designated for affordable housing by 2007, Harris's Yard and Bell College – a total of 55 units.

Q 13 Where there is poor quality housing, is this being addressed by improvement/investment programmes?

All UDC properties will meet the Decent Homes Survey by 2007, ahead of the government target of 2010. There appear no major issues with private housing.

WORKSHEET S3: HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

These questions are aimed at assessing the health and public safety aspects of the town and surrounding countryside.

Q 1 Do the ambulance, police and fire services meet their own response time targets?

The fire brigade aim and appear to meet their targets of between 5 -15 minutes for Saffron Walden and surrounding villages. Fire engines at Newport and Linton help provide cover.

Ambulance response times for A-category calls (emergencies) have improved considerably in the last few months, from one of the worst in the country to now matching the government target of 75% of calls reached in eight minutes. Saffron Walden has an ambulance station close to the Community Hospital and both Saffron Walden and Great Chesterford have 'first responder' schemes whereby volunteers are equipped and trained to use defibrillators pending the arrival of the emergency services. The Essex Air Ambulance and groups such as Medics play an important role in emergency situations, given the dispersed and rural nature of the district.

Police target response times are as follows. Emergency: Urban 10 minutes/Rural 20 minutes; Priority: Urban 20 minutes/Rural 30 minutes; Routine: four hours.

Q 2 Does the number of doctors and dentists meet the appropriate standards?

Uttlesford Primary Care Trust does not report any significant shortfall in the provision of doctors and dentists for the Saffron Walden area (the target is 1,750-2,000 patients per GP), although estate agents (with regard to house buyers moving to the area) and respondents to the

Healthcheck have reported difficulties in accessing services. The PCT has set a target of all patients being able to see a GP within two days of their request by 2006.

Q 3 Are local mortality rates for heart disease, stroke, cancer, suicide and accidents high?

Uttlesford coronary heart disease mortality was lower than the national average but one of the highest in North Essex in 1997-1999. Stroke mortality was higher than the national average and one of the highest in North Essex in 1997-1999. Accident mortality is relatively high, with challenging reduced targets set for 2010. For men the major cause is road traffic accidents. In Uttlesford rates for suicide, and cancer mortality are lower than the regional or national averages. Cancer screening programmes are being reviewed in 2004, as Uttlesford PCT coverage levels are not as good as others in the region for breast screening and cervical screening.

The Primary Care Trust is planning to extend and enhance community-based nursing services to enable health visitors, district nurses, school nurses and others to deliver a more sophisticated programme of patient-centred care than at present. The new strategy will be published in 2004. Increasingly, it is likely that nurses will be managing chronic care management rather than doctors, which could both reduce waiting times and enable more people to access health care at home. These developments were to be monitored by the new Public and Patient Involvement Forum (PPIF), which identified the following priorities for 2004:

- Cardiac rehabilitation
- Breast and cervical screening
- Mental health in the elderly
- Equipment loans from Social Services

However, news reports in summer 2004 indicate that the PPIF structure is to be dismantled.

Q 4 How easy is it for residents to get access to non-emergency hospital services as a user or visitor?

The Primary Care Trust has identified both pockets of deprivation and significant problems with transport and access to services. The majority (over 70%) of non-emergency hospital referrals are to Addenbrookes in Cambridge (use is also made of Princess Alexandra Hospital, Mid-Essex Hospitals, Colchester General Hospital and West Suffolk Hospitals). Saffron Walden Community Hospital currently has a closed ward due to staff shortages; this is likely to re-open pending a review of need. The government's proposed 'Patient Choice' programme is likely to lead to use of a growing range of hospitals and clinics.

Access by public transport can be difficult (see the Transport worksheets). Uttlesford Community Travel runs 'Hospital Link', and a volunteer Hospital Car Scheme also runs to Addenbrookes. The growth of Saffron Walden Community Hospital – the rehabilitation unit has just opened and a radiology department is planned – will add to the list of outpatients services. There is a strong demand for endoscopy and sigmoidoscopy services.

Q 5 Are there adequate specialist clinics and out-patient clinics available locally e.g. family planning, drugs and drink advice?

A high level of people in North Essex feel they have good health compared to the national rate. Teenage pregnancy rates are amongst the lowest in the country. The number of babies delivered to teenagers is also very low. Alongside this, the abortion rate is the highest in Essex. This is reportedly associated with high educational levels amongst teenagers. Influenza immunisation rates for the over 65s in Uttlesford were very good compared to other areas at 74%.

Youth Services have outreach programmes that aim to get information on these topics to young people. However, there is a strong perception locally that the key issues of alcohol and sexual health awareness programmes are under-funded in comparison to the more newsworthy but rather less locally significant drugs problem.

Q 6 Are there adequate social and health care services available in the home?

The PCT has plans for a new community nursing strategy in order to improve access to health care in the home. They plan to develop work in the area of depressive illness in the elderly. The Trust also reports complex needs in the areas of child protection and domestic violence.

Q 7 Is there a high incidence of crime?

Crime rates are amongst the lowest in England and Wales, with the exception of domestic violence and some child protection issues. Crime statistics are reported in the Snapshot section.

Q 8 Are there any crime prevention measures in place?

The installation of CCTV in the town center appears to have led to a reduction both in the incidence of anti-social behaviour and the fear of it. There are numerous town and village neighbourhood watch schemes, of varying degrees of activeness, and the recent appointment of four Police Community Support Officers has led to

more visible policing in the town. This development is currently being reviewed. There remain a number of public spaces that are seen to attract anti-social behaviour; Healthcheck research suggests that a lot of local people associate this with the lack of 'things to do' for teenagers and excessive drinking in young adults.

Q 9 Do background levels of noise, air quality and water quality meet or exceed national standards?

UDC concludes from analysis of its routine monitoring that the air quality in the town is within acceptable limits.

In 1998, Castle Street Residents Association in conjunction with Residents for Walden carried out their own NO_x diffusion tube studies using an independent analytical laboratory. The results differ, showing higher levels of contaminants than indicated by the Council's analysis. Their work suggested the following blackspots:

- East Street/Thaxted Road junction
- 6 London Road
- 19 East Street
- 109 Castle Street
- Oxfam, George Street
- Radwinter Road (opposite Printpack)

Anecdotal evidence is that local GPs are treating an increasing number of respiratory problems, although other environmental and lifestyle factors cannot be ruled out as causes.

Noise pollution in the town comes from three sources:

1. Air traffic. Some villages suffer particularly in this regard. Air traffic noise is evident at current levels and levels are likely to increase. Oily film appearing on ponds has been attributed by some residents to aircraft fuel in the atmosphere.
2. Road traffic. Engine noise and vibration from HGVs is pervasive at many locations in the town. Heavy goods traffic has to pass through residential areas to get to industrial estates, such as Shire Hill and Ashdon Road.
3. Industrial activity at some sites can generate nuisance noise, for example Shire Hill (Pedleys) has reportedly had disputes with residents over the years, as has Printpack in Radwinter Road.

Q 10 Is the fear of crime significantly worse than actual crime rates?

This has been an issue locally, and both Essex Police and Uttlesford District Council have strategies in place to address it.

Q 12 Is there visible evidence of vandalism, unlit streets, litter or graffiti?

Graffiti and vandalism exist, but not on a major scale. Litter, however, is a source of ongoing complaint, including overflowing bins in the town centre.

WORKSHEET S4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

These questions are aimed at finding out about the level of community involvement in local decision-making and activity in both the town and surrounding countryside.

Q 1 Do local residents have direct access to the Town or Parish, the District and the County Council in the town?

Parish councils rely strongly on community networks as few have formal facilities or resources for consultation other than normal parish meetings.

District councillors have good networks in the community, but well-publicised public meetings are often poorly attended. The District Council offices are on the edge of town within walking distance of the town centre, and there is a prominent noticeboard. Parking is severely limited on the District Council's site. The Planning Department has recently moved to Saffron Walden from Dunmow, and this represents improved accessibility for residents of Saffron Walden. Surgeries are not common. District councillors each have a public email address, though this is not a relevant means of communication for all residents. UDC has a website through which residents can interact, although the site is has been reportedly unreliable on occasion. Councillors have reported that it can be 'the same old faces' who feel confident in engaging the council on specific issues.

The Town Council's office is in a central location and is open five days a week, and there is a noticeboard on the outside of the town hall. Staff are few, however, and the office may often close at lunchtime, which is when many people would have an opportunity to visit it. Councillors do not have public individual email addresses (although a good proportion are also UDC councillors). There is a simple website where minutes of meetings can be found, but no surgeries. The Ward naming system is such that it may not obvious where the boundaries are, and therefore who the appropriate councillor is. There is not a map on public display.

The County Council presence in town is principally represented in the town library and archive office. ECC has its own website which contains details of County services. There are no local surgeries and there is a perception that Chelmsford HQ is too far away for Saffron Walden to command its close attention.

From the point of view of the average citizen, it may not be obvious which arm of local government is responsible for which service; indeed to many residents 'the council' is one body, not three. No doubt this situation exists in other communities. Some Healthcheck interviewees reported frustration with official processes and the difficulties public bodies had in resolving longstanding local dilemmas.

Q 2 Are a large number of local people involved in community activities?

There are perhaps 600 known clubs and societies in the Uttlesford (estimates vary), about 200 in Saffron Walden and its hinterland. Around 60 of those are youth-related, including religious groups, HM Forces, scouts/guides and sports. Around 30 are clubs for senior citizens. The remainder are very wide-ranging and include arts, theatre, sports, active leisure, politics, charities, pressure groups and gardening groups.

There used to be a regular clubs fair in town, but this has not happened for some years. Information about clubs is now available through the Saffire website, the Tourist Information Centre (from where a printed list can be taken away), and Essex County Council's website Life (Local Information for Essex). The Life database is available in the town library where staff are on hand to give assistance.

Local opinion seems to be that there is 'little for young people to do' in the town and villages. The majority of after-school and holiday activities are well attended and often over subscribed. Evening and weekend clubs and activities for younger people, and in particular the age groups 10 – 13 (who are too young to be covered by youth services) has been noted. Many activities are sports based, and non-sporting activities and activities geared for girls have been noted as a need.

Q 3 Do local people have an interest in national and local politics?

The major political parties are represented in local elections, particularly Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, plus a good number of minor parties (Greens etc.) and independents. In the Town Council elections of May 1999, the turnout was: Shire 35%; Plantation 34.8%; Audley 46.1%; Castle 40.6%. The turnout for the Castle Ward by-election in Feb 2004 was 25.7%. The average turnout (while of Uttlesford) for the District Council election in May 1999 was 40%. The turnout for the General Election of June 2001 was 65.2%. The turnout for the Uttlesford referendum on Stansted expansion was 69%. In May

1997, the Town Council held a referendum on 'Should the Town Council should continue with its plans to provide a multi-purpose arts and community venue?' The turnout was 10.7%.

From these figures it seems that there is healthy interest in national politics and major local issues such as Stansted expansion, but significantly less in day-to-day local government.

Q 4 Is there somebody who can help develop community involvement?

There is no dedicated community development officer, but district council officers in the Community and Leisure department have community development within in their area of responsibility. A recent restructuring has put a new focus on delivering action in the community, and the council has a staff member available to provide guidance to people wishing to develop funding applications for community projects. UDC grant schemes have changed in the current financial year and so it is too soon to report on evaluation of present arrangements. A community safety grant scheme last year was sufficiently under-subscribed for that to require press coverage to encourage applications.

Q 5 Have community groups been influential in developing policies or strategies?

The Uttlesford Area Access Group, the Uttlesford Transport Forum and the Local Agenda 21 group all provide established dialogue with UDC. More recently (in March 2004), UDC created a Youth Forum, which includes members of the Essex Youth Parliament. Uttlesford Futures is the formal local strategic partnership, which is for organizations and has finite membership. The development of policy or strategy may be less problematic than its ultimate implementation.

The Public and Patient Involvement Forum, which had its inaugural open meeting in spring 2004, had not yet established how to formally involve the public by the time the abolition of this scheme was announced in the national press. The relationship between the community at large and the Planning Department seems to raise particular tensions (perhaps not surprising given the nature of the current environment, the kind of pressures it is under, and the consequent workload of the Planning Department), and appears characterized by reactivity and low expectations on either side.

Q 6 Is the local community well represented on committees?

See above.

Q 7 Are there any active, neighbourhood forums, residents or tenants associations?

There are three active, neighbourhood-based residents' associations in Saffron Walden itself, in addition to council or housing association tenant mechanisms. Parish councils operate effectively as neighbourhood voices, with varying degrees of public input.

Q 8 Have local people had the experience of being actively involved in community development?

Council officers suggest that involvement is concentrated mainly in a core group of people who feel confident with official procedures.

WORKSHEET S5: SPORT, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACE

These questions are aimed at finding out the basic data on the use and quality of sport and leisure facilities and, in both the town and the surrounding countryside.

Q 1 Are local sports and leisure facilities in good condition and in demand?

The play area at the back of leisure centre is not in good condition, but the privately-run leisure centre itself is popular and has just been refurbished. Play areas on the Common, at Golden Acre and near Caton's Lane have good, modern equipment, but the picture is more patchy in the villages. The Herbert's Farm sport pitches are very popular, mainly with boys. Saffron Walden Town Football club is not especially well-resourced. A proposed skate park at the Lord Butler leisure centre received planning permission in July 2004; completion is anticipated in the summer of 2005.

Q 2 Is there any unmet demand for specific sports or leisure facilities?

There is significant demand for a range of better leisure facilities: more detail is given in the Questionnaire and Interview sections. A recent 'Best Value' review of Uttlesford District Council Leisure and Cultural Services (2003, on the UDC web site) said users' needs were not the driving force for policy and were not adequately into account, and that therefore more should be done to assess and take into account user needs.

An absence of places for informal ball games is reported, as well as football goalposts, leading to older boys using younger children's swings as posts. Girls' sporting needs may be under-addressed (and under-researched). Several child representatives commenting to the Healthcheck mentioned the lack of 'jumps' for bikes.

Q 3 Are local open spaces and parks for leisure and recreation as well as sport of a high quality?

The quality of open spaces ranges from very good (historic Audley End Park, though this is not free and is closed for half of the year), to good (the Common, well maintained but poor seating) to poor (Peal Road, vandalism and anti-social behaviour reported). There is perhaps a lack of freely accessible open space around the edge of town, as much if the land is in either private or English Heritage hands, although a good-natured rapport exists between Audley End Estates and walkers. The lack or poor quality of seating, refreshment facilities and sometimes play equipment are issues.

Q 4 Are there any parks in the town and its hinterland?

Audley End Park, as mentioned above, is a historic park of outstanding quality, but completely lacks facilities for children and the refreshment facilities and toilets are tucked away, not fully accessible to all. Further information on small-scale facilities is available under 'Locations and Parish Data' on Saffire.

Q 5 Are there any known threats of loss of open space and parks or closure of facilities due to either development proposals or reduction in budgets?

Although there are few specific threats to identified open spaces, the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, which identifies the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor as a growth area, poses the possibility of dramatic changes to the landscape. As the population of the town is set to increase the lack of play facilities per head of population is set to worsen. New development proposals do not often contain provision of playgrounds or casual play areas, and new gardens are small.

Q 6 Are there adequate opportunities to pursue outdoor sporting activities?

Bike hire, rock climbing and outdoor activity centres are not locally available, nor are water sports. Horse riding facilities exist in numerous locations, and the growing popularity of 'off-roading' has caused damage to some green lanes (there are no bespoke facilities). There are several local providers of 'country' sports.

Q 7 Do many people have to travel outside the town to take part in certain sports?

Ice skating (Peterborough); water sports (rowing, Cambridge; others at Grafham Water); rugby (Henham); rock climbing (climbing wall in Cambridge, or else much further afield); team games in various locations.

Q 8 What proportion of the eligible local population belongs to a sports or leisure club?

The leisure manager at UDC says such information is hard to come by due to privacy laws.

Q 9 Are there any residential areas that are over 400 metres from an area of open space?

The town is very compact, so most spaces are reasonably accessible, and the majority of villages have commons, greens or similar open space.

Q 10 Does the provision of open space meet the National Playing Fields Association Standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population?

No – a figure of only 15% of this provision is quoted by Saffron Walden Town Council.

Q 11 Which villages have village greens and/or recreation grounds?

The village green is a usual topographical feature in this area, although the small settlement Duddenhoe End is not well provided for in this respect. Several have playgrounds of varying degrees of sophistication and repair. Playgrounds are not routinely funded by the district authority.

Q 12 Is sufficient space allocated for allotments in the town and settlements in the surrounding countryside?

Allotment gardening is growing in popularity according to the Cambridge Allotments Network, and there are fifteen sites in the town as well as a handful of small ones in more rural areas.

WORKSHEET S6: CULTURE AND HERITAGE

These questions are aimed at finding out about the breadth of cultural facilities and activities taking place in the town and surrounding. It may prove useful to map some of the answers.

Q 1 Does the town have an adequate range of cultural facilities e.g. theatre, cinema, art gallery, museum or library?

Saffron Walden has a well-used library; a fine museum; a small public art gallery, a commercial one and a gallery run by the Saffron Walden Arts Trust above a shop in the centre of town. Performance venues are limited primarily to amateur use of the Town Hall and school halls. The Town Hall is the regular rehearsal and performance venue for the local amateur drama and operatic societies – as a result it is often fully booked well in advance and is not readily available for other uses, a matter of local complaint. The library (Corn Exchange), though small, doubled as a modest arts facility for small scale performances until in 2001 – amongst some controversy – the arts facility was withdrawn by the county council. There has been much debate about the provision of an arts centre in town (see <http://www.saffireweb.net/> and enter the search term ARTS CENTRE). Such a centre seems desired by residents (786 for, 286 against in town council referendum, May 1997). A survey set up jointly by Saffron Walden Directory and Saffire also indicates a strong interest in a cinema for Saffron Walden. Further detail on this is given in the Questionnaire and Interview sections.

Q 2 Are there regular events that have the potential to draw the whole community together?

Regular events that have the potential to draw the whole community together include the late night Christmas shopping market and the annual fireworks display organised by the Saffron Walden Round Table. There is a widespread feeling that both events, and in particular the Christmas shopping, have become increasingly commercial over recent years and their special community identity might be reduced by this. A carnival is held in the town every three years – the last was in 2002. This is a major community event that lasts for about week, starting with a procession through the town and continuing with a series of events under canvas on the Common. It is voluntarily organised by Saffron Walden Round Table. The Footpath Association arranges walks in summer.

Other events have been lost, such as the Steam Rally and the Folk Festival, and in general large scale events are absent.

Q 3 Does the local community have a mechanism to report and comment on local events and issues?

The main channels of communication for local events and issues are:

- four local newspapers (one is independent and dedicated entirely to Saffron Walden; the others are part of group newspapers, two of which have offices in the town);
- regional TV stations;
- the town's Saffire website;
- and local radio – with the town being served by three BBC radio stations, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Three Counties but on the periphery of the coverage area of all of them. Three local commercial stations Q103, Vibe FM (music) and Star can also be received, but these are intended for a Cambridge or regional audience. In terms of local reporting and commenting Saffron Walden is not well served by radio.

In 2003, a few enthusiasts set up a local Internet-based radio station (<http://www.saffronwaldenradio.co.uk>). At the time of writing (late March 2004), this seems to have been last updated in January 2004 and contains a lot of syndicated material. There is little audio content with a local connection. There may be scope for a terrestrial local radio station, possibly on a restricted service licence basis.

Q 4 Do town and rural communities have adequate community venues?

There are plenty of small halls with basic facilities, but little on a medium or large scale.

Q 5 Does the area have any strong cultural associations such as famous people, events or literary links or any famous products?

The area has a strong Quaker and nonconformist history. Dick Turpin was born and lived locally (Hempstead); Oliver Cromwell is said to have had a base here during the Civil War – he is commonly associated with the Old Sun Inn, and his home was in Ely, north of Cambridge. Audley End House has a long history of aristocratic associations, and Capability Brown parkland.

The most famous association with Saffron Walden is of course the Saffron crocuses that were grown here for dye in the Middle Ages and after which the town is named.

Q 6 Are there strong historic associations with the area?

See above, and also the Environment section reference to Roman and ancient British settlements. Recent excavations for a gas pipeline have revealed archeological evidence from a range of historical periods. Digs also took place at Hinxtton Hall during the development of the genome campus, revealing Bronze Age and Iron Age evidence.

Q 7 What proportion of the local population is involved in an arts-based community group?

Amateur opera, music and drama engage healthy numbers of residents, and the Saffron Walden Arts Trust has about 200 members.

Q 8 Do facilities for arts and cultural activities meet the demand of the local arts groups?

No. Professional arts provision is minimal. The Arts Trust and others have been actively campaigning for arts facilities for some years; both Questionnaire and Interview sections give more detail on these aspirations. A proportion of residents would also like to see a dedicated music venue in order to reduce the need to travel to Cambridge or London for professional events.

Q 9 Are churches of all denominations active in the community?

There is a broad range of church activity in the community, and from a variety of denominations (see the Snapshot p.17). St.Mary's in Saffron Walden has a good-sized congregation. The Friends' School, in line with its Quaker ethos, makes a significant contribution to the community, not least by making its facilities available for the use of a range of local groups and organizations.

6. Consultation: Report from the Healthcheck Public Meeting on 23rd February 2004, Golden Acre Community Centre

Four discussion groups undertook a 'SWOT' analysis of the town under the four project headings of Environment, Economy, Transport & Access and Community. They then sought to identify priorities for action.

Environment

The over-arching priority for this group was identified as **an integrated approach to town improvements.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Historic buildings	Poor housing design – high density, segregation of affordable housing
Attractive physical environment	Lack of outer distribution roads
Open spaces in town	Unco-ordinated street furniture and lack of care
Narrow streets	Narrow streets
Audley End – countryside in town	Audley End – forces development south & east
Views of church	Few seats e.g. market place
Topography – views across town	Some neglected public places
	Visual impact of parking

Opportunities	Threats
'Living above the shop' initiatives	Development pressure
Market at centre – vitality	Traffic increases
Pedestrianisation – opportunities for extension	Competing centres in growth area (or edge of town)
Co-ordinated planting	
Watercourses – improvements to the Slade	
Integrated townscape improvements	
Potential for town council to become involved in townscape	
Improvements to Swan Meadow e.g. better walk to town centre, and footpaths in town e.g. Battle Ditches	
Better 'gateways' at entrances to town	
Interpretation	

Economy

The priorities for this group were:

- 1. Town centre promotional schemes**
- 2. Parking solutions**
- 3. A new business forum**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Beauty	Dormitory town
Atmosphere	Poor recent architecture
Heritage	Premises
Cosmopolitan	Self-promotion
Antiques	Lack of co-ordination with villages
45% professionals	Parking
Small individual shops	

Opportunities	Threats
Business incubation centre	Stansted
Free lunchtime buses from research parks	Several reported housing development proposals from national government (see www.odpm.gov.uk , Uttlesford Local Plan, Buchanan Report and other reports and local press)
Promotional leaflets	Free parking in other towns
Welcome pack from estate agents	
Town centre loyalty scheme	
Business forum	
Free parking	

Community

The priorities for this group were:

1. Finding ways for the Saffron Walden Initiative to work with the new Youth Forum and other youth organisations
2. More community and leisure activities in the evenings and at weekends
3. Finding a solution to the long-running debate about arts/civic space

Strengths	Weaknesses
Enterprise culture	Some gaps in leisure facilities, esp. for younger adults and teenagers
Lots of societies and clubs for older groups and sport	Too few members in some of the many societies, older members not being replaced when they leave or die
Pub culture – some lovely pubs, some very busy	Pub culture – ‘yobs’ can be off-putting to some groups, esp. in the evenings
Some thriving villages, e.g. Ashdon, Clavering (esp. word of mouth communication, parish magazines, amenities, close communities)	Rural isolation and poor access to services in villages
High average disposable incomes	Young people do not necessarily use the facilities that they ask for
	Inertia, complacency
	The press tend to pick up on the bad news stories
	Lack of agreement on key ideas, e.g. arts centre, cinema
	Lack of sheltered and affordable accommodation

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
The new Youth Forum	Not engaging young adults in civil societies or structures
Finding the right 'product' for young people	People commute out
Increase community activities in the evenings and at weekends	Lack of evening/weekend activity
Find better promotional channels for activities and for the town itself	Lack of recommendations and reviews
Develop the relationship between SWI and the local press	Some activities don't have enough takers – competition for members, financial viability
Create new arts/civic space(s)	Insular culture
Integrate the village and town communities better	Venue problems
	People being obliged to leave (house prices etc.) – damages community

Transport and Access

The Transport group presented their findings rather differently, as priorities from a list of available opportunities. These were:

- 1. Parking solutions (e.g. bus station; town centre transport link to Swan Meadow; Pay As You Leave car parking; improve access to Swan Meadow car park)**
- 2. Consider north and south link roads to take congestion and heavy vehicles away from the centre of town**
- 3. Pedestrian share zones**

As Transport emerges as a priority issue from the Healthcheck, it is likely that significant and more detailed work will be undertaken in this area in the next phase of the project.

7. Consultation: Questionnaire Results

Context

The majority of questions asked for textual answers, that is to say, people were able to answer in their own words as they saw fit. This was in order to avoid prescriptiveness. Some people did not answer all questions (including questions like gender or age) and some people gave more than one answer to some individual questions. *One person raising a specific issue was counted as a single response, with all such responses counted*, and where possible these have been categorised by type, e.g. into points raised about shopping facilities or leisure/social/cultural activities. What this achieves, in addition to identifying local concerns, is some measure of the *range* of such concerns, and the concentration of strong feelings, in order to assist with the requirement of the Healthcheck to help identify local priorities.

142 questionnaires were returned, five electronically and the remainder on paper out of 936 hard copies circulated, a response rate in the region of 15% (11% was given in guidance for reliability on another Healthcheck). Percentages in the results are of those who responded – where a question was left blank it has not been included, because the reason for the omission was not known and so an answer could not be assumed. Some attempt was made here to improve the overall demographic representativeness of the project, particularly with regard to women, who were under-represented in the interviews but form just above half of respondents to the questionnaire (53.6%). Success was achieved in reaching those over 60 (sometimes regarded as ‘hard to reach’ in this district). The views of young adults were less easy to access, which makes certain findings perhaps all the more noteworthy. A plan to survey commuters was cancelled due to lack of time, but might nonetheless prove a useful exercise in future. Of respondents who gave a home or work contact address (and nearly a quarter did not), 69% were based in the town itself, 31% in the hinterland. Of those based in town, a significant proportion gave a work address or worked from home. A very small number indicated that they worked in the town but lived outside of the area under discussion. 122 people recorded their racial or cultural background, of whom 90.1% described themselves as white British or as being in a related subcategory (e.g. English, Welsh, Essex). 2% of people were from a minority ethnic background and the remainder were white European, North American or South African. 6.8% described themselves as having a permanent disability. These figures are reasonably close to the local demographic picture. Age representation was:

under 18	9.80%
18-24	5.30%
25-30	5.30%
31-40	14.30%
41-50	24.80%
51-60	18.80%
over 60	21.80%

Results

Q1 A list of six local issues based on a survey done by the Saffron Walden Initiative in 2002 was supplied to the Countryside Agency as part of the funding application for this project. People were asked to rank these in order of priority.

They were:

- a) The economic success of the town centre
- b) Getting around, including transport, access and parking
- c) The look of the town centre
- d) Leisure facilities, including those for young people
- e) Promoting the town as a place to shop, visit and do business
- f) Affordable housing for local people and/or key workers

Priorities emerged in the following order (highest first):

1. Affordable housing (29.5% ranked as first priority)
2. Economic success of the town centre (19.4%)
3. Leisure facilities (17.6%)
4. Getting around etc. (17.4%)

The look of the town centre and promoting the town were ranked first by just over 11% and 10% respectively.

The same two issues were emphatically ranked as of lowest priority by significant numbers of people:

1. Look of the town centre (34.6% lowest)
2. Promoting the town (26.6%)

With regard to the look of the town centre, this result, when compared with what people felt to be special about the town (see Q7 below), suggests that while people value highly the historic look of the town centre, they feel confident enough about its preservation for this not to be a priority when compared to other issues.

Rank:	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Total
a) economic success of the town centre	26 19.4%	19 14.2%	24	30	25	10 7.5%	134
b) getting around, including public transport, traffic and parking	24 17.4%	30 21.7%	28	24	22	10 7.2%	138
c) the look of the town centre	15 11.3%	12 9%	18	20	22	46 34.6%	133

d) leisure facilities, including those for young people	24	33	20	28	21	10	136
	17.6%	24.3%				7.4%	
e) promoting the town as a place to shop, visit and do business	14	20	25	22	18	36	135
	10.4%	14.8%				26.6%	
e) affordable housing for local people and/or essential key workers	41	22	21	11	22	22	139
	29.5%	15.8%				15.8%	

Q2 People were asked to identify what they felt to be the biggest current or future threat to the town.

Three issues were dominant.

1. Airport expansion at Stansted (15.7% of responses)
2. Building development (15.7%)
3. Lack of affordable housing (10.7%)

The full list is:

Stansted Airport expansion	28
Building development inc. M11 corridor	28
Lack of affordable housing	19
Traffic congestion	14
Lack of free, cheap or accessible parking	10
Lack of facilities for the young	10
Poor public transport	6
Supermarkets	6
Loss of young people	5
Under-age drinking	5
Cambridge & out of town shopping centres	4
Resistance to change	3
Expensive location for business	3
New people moving to area	3
Rising crime and vandalism	3
Lack of expansion at Stansted Airport	3
Antisocial behaviour, drunkenness, noise	3
Declining range of shops	3
Chain retailers	2
Nothing	2
Too much success, may lose character	2
Proliferation of charity shops	2
Under-promotion of the town	1
Destruction of the countryside	1
Isolation of older people	1
Lack of leisure facilities	1
Population growth	1

Too many 'executive homes' built	1
High property prices	1
Litter	1
Immigration	1
Noise pollution	1
Apathy	1
Fancy shops	1
Cost of living	1
Poor roads	1
Total given	178

Q3 People were asked to identify other issues of local importance not mentioned in the questionnaire so far.

In order of frequency the most important were:

1. Facilities for young people (8.4%)
2. None (7.5%)
3. Anti-social behaviour (6.6%)
4. Traffic and traffic calming (5.8%)
5. Better policing (5.8%)

That some of these matters had already been mentioned may suggest strength of feeling, or issues of questionnaire design, or both. Further questions below help to clarify more specifically what people think. The full list of responses to this question is:

Facilities for young people	19
None	17
Anti-social behaviour	15
Traffic and traffic calming	13
Better policing	13
Public transport	9
Vandalism	9
Affordable housing	9
Crime	8
Under-age drinking	7
Drinking	7
Better shops or better range of shops	7
Leisure facilities (all ages)	7
Cheaper or improved parking	5
Good design for new developments	5
Litter, rubbish clearance	5
Poor standard of public spaces	4
Safety at night for pedestrians	3
Stansted airport expansion	3
More safe foot- and cycle paths	3
Housing development	3
Better care of the environment	3
Better services, pressure on services	2

More to do	2
Parking for disabled people	2
Public toilets	2
Overcrowded schools	2
Inconsiderate parking	2
Lack of shops in villages	2
Arts centre	2
Heavy vehicles in town centre	2
Lack of community involvement	2
Cinema	2
Lack of safe space for young people	2
More cheap pubs	1
Teenage crime	1
Loss of green space	1
Better, cleaner public toilets	1
Better road maintenance	1
Behaviour of army personnel at weekends	1
A bypass	1
Drug taking	1
Public sector pay and recruitment	1
Hospital services	1
Lack of local autonomy	1
Need to make young people feel they belong	1
Preservation of historic buildings	1
More non-residential land use	1
Lack of co-ordination between public bodies	1
Lack of good walking routes in and out of town	1
Improvements to pavements	1
Improvements to market	1
Too many signs	1
Small cheap workshop spaces	1
More employment opportunities	1
A meeting place	1
Dog mess	1
Horse-riding/cycling on inappropriate roads	1
Better promotion of services, clubs and associations	1
Light pollution	1
Loss of young people	1
Reintroduce weekly auctions	1
Insufficient infrastructure for population growth	1
Evening/Sunday opening	1
Encouragement for SMEs	1
Total given	226

The concern about local crime, despite very low reported crime rates (see the Snapshot section), has been confirmed in research done by Essex Police and Uttlesford District Council, and some measures such as CCTV and new Police Community Support Officers have already been implemented although their effectiveness is being debated at the time of writing.

Q4 People were asked to say, if they could create one thing to bring more visitors to the town, what they would do. Some 50.3% of responses related to the field of leisure, culture or entertainment.

Total given	193
Cinema or film club	20
Arts/music venue	14
More free, cheap or improved parking	12
Festivals, inc. open air & arts	11
Bowling alley	10
Entertainment facilities	10
Pedestrian-friendly town centre	7
Town does not need more visitors	6
Improved market facilities	6
Leisure complex	5
Town centre railway station	5
Sunday/evening opening	5
Low cost transport	5
Restaurants, pubs, cafes with outdoor seating	5
No parking in Market Square	4
Bus link from Audley End station	4
Theatre	4
Better range of shops	4
Better promotion of town	4
Music events	3
Better/more hotels	3
Ice skating rink	2
Nightclub	2
Facilities for teenagers	2
Better restaurants	2
More events at Audley End House	2
Teashop	2
Better public toilets	2
Sign to Saffron Walden from the M11	2
Better/more bed & breakfast accommodation	2
Free parking for tour buses	1
Gardens	1
Landmark	1
Macdonald's	1
More chain clothing stores	1
New museum	1
New junction on the M11	1
Better pubs	1
Burger van	1
Military museum	1
Bypass to rid town of through traffic	1
More child-friendly cafes & restaurants	1
Evening entertainment	1
Staggered opening hours	1
Exhibitions	1

Improved signage	1
Improved links with Audley End House	1
F.E. or H.E. campus	1
Visitor centre	1
Something to express the town's uniqueness	1
Encourage street performers	1
Better services for people on low incomes	1
New station sign 'Saffron Walden - Audley End'	1
Cycle track to station	1
Improved access to shops for wheelchair users etc	1
Road 'train' from Swan Meadow to town centre	1
Reduce speed limits in town & villages	1
Reduce town centre business rates	1
Children's play areas	1
Maintain existing atmosphere	1

Q5 People were asked what they would do if they could give one additional hour per week for volunteering. A significant number of respondents already acted as volunteers; nonetheless a notional 81 weekly hours of additional time was identified, or the rough equivalent of 10 full-time volunteers. Interest was as follows:

Litter clearing	13
Youth work	12
Provide entertainment, make town more exciting	6
Bridge End Gardens	5
Improve parks & gardens	4
Sports coaching with young people	4
Work with disabled children	3
Conservation work	2
Drive for the elderly	2
General help in the community	2
Help with RESCU	2
Flower baskets	1
Local trips out for young children	1
Walking buses for primary school children	1
Provide opportunities for young to work with old	1
Discipline teenagers	1
Evening activities for children	1
Help the elderly at home/with shopping	1
Provide a united voice for business community	1
Tidying grass verges	1
Charity shop	1
Promote recycling	1
Clean up graffiti	1
Promote responsible dog ownership	1
Help move the town archive to a place of safety	1
St Mary's Church	1
Chase cars off the churchyard greens!	1

Help pedestrianise town centre	1
Political activity	1
Talking newspapers	1
Harangue the highways dept to improve roads/pavements	1
Patrol town for 'drug dealers' and under-age drinkers	1
Support SWI	1
Promote differentiated recycling bins	1
Oppose more planning applications	1
Office work	1
Plant trees	1
Total given	81

Q6 People were asked what was *missing* in Saffron Walden.

1. Entertainment, leisure, cultural facilities (30.7%)
2. Leisure activities and spaces for the young (17.4%)
3. Cinema or film club (17%)*

*this figure is *in addition* to (1).

The full list of comments is:

Activities for the young	34
Cinema or film club	39
Cultural/leisure facilities	29
Good shops or range of shops	16
Bowling alley	9
Affordable housing	8
Cheap or free parking	8
Railway station	8
Safe place for young people to meet	6
Theatre	6
Nightclub	6
Improved swimming pool facilities/more pools	5
Nothing	5
Police presence	3
Evening/weekend activities	3
Adequate public transport	3
Work, training, education opps for post16s	3
Music venue	3
Good quality restaurants	3
Decent public toilets	3
Community spirit	2
Good pubs	2
Multiple retailers	2
Town centre parking for disabled/elderly people	1
Respect and consideration	1

Fun	1
Buzz, atmosphere	1
Signposts to Swan Meadow car park	1
Connection with surrounding countryside	1
Playing fields	1
On-street short stay parking	1
Continental style street cafes	1
Zebra crossing at Lt Walden Rd/Castle St	1
Good hotel	1
Relaxed atmosphere	1
Arts workshops	1
Co-ordination between different voluntary groups	1
Promotion to attract visitors	1
Wildlife areas	1
Direct coach link to London	1
Ramp access for wheelchair users	1
Seats and benches	1
Extended licensing hours	1
Local amenities	1
Charitability	1
Finesse'	1
Meeting point	1
Total given	230

Of those mentioning cultural or leisure facilities, the most frequent response was 'arts centre', followed by leisure/entertainment complex and music venue.

Q7 People were asked what was *special* about Saffron Walden.

At 24.8% of responses, the history/historic buildings of the town were by far the most frequent answer to this question.

History & historic buildings	68
Rural surroundings, physical geography	19
Beauty/quality of environment	18
Small town feel	15
Friendly	15
Range of independent shops & businesses	11
Town centre	10
Sense of community	10
Location	9
Nothing	9
People	9
Old market town	7
Atmosphere	7
Everything is within walking distance	7
The Common, Maze, public open spaces	7
Audley End House	6
Quiet, serene	5
Safe, feeling of security	5

Restaurants/pubs	4
The Museum	4
Quaintness	4
Excellent schools	4
Market	4
Range of services	3
Access to London & Cambridge	3
Mixture of old and new buildings	3
Tidy, clean, well-kept	2
Off the beaten track	2
Quality of life	2
It's unique	2
Sports facilities	2
Low crime rates	1
Local walks	1
Coffee shops & gift shops	1
Bridge End Gardens	1
Quaker influence	1
It's my home town	1
The Temeraire (a pub)	1
Unique approaches maintain medieval appearance	1
The Town Library ('Gibson Collection')	1
Thriving churches	1
Music	1
Total given	274

It may be of note that nine people felt the town had nothing special to offer, and also that only six registered Audley End House, a spectacular Grade I listed building and park, as special to the town, which may support comments made in both questionnaire and interviews that there is insufficient collaboration or cross-promotion between the two.

Q8 People were asked why they lived or worked here.

1. Came here for work (25.9%)
2. Family from this area/always lived here (20.6%)
3. Quality of life (14.1%)
4. Access to London/Cambridge etc. (9.4%)

The full list of reasons given is:

Came for work	44
Family from this area/always lived here	35
Quality of life	24
Access to Cambridge, London etc	16
Moved here a long time ago	11
Quality of schools	5
Moved here in retirement	5

Pleasant area	5
Moved to be near family	4
Safe	4
Quiet rural environment	2
We like it	2
Easy to walk everywhere	2
Old buildings and local history	1
Found the town by accident and decided to stay	1
Friendly	1
Work-life balance	1
Unpolluted air	1
Transport links	1
Nice houses	1
Came from London for more affordable housing	1
Can't afford to move	1
Satisfactory place to live	1
Community spirit	1
Total given	170

Of those who moved to the area for work, the period over which they came is several decades – not all are recent arrivals.

Q9 People were asked if they planned to stay. Of 124 responses, there was an overwhelming preponderance of those wishing to stay.

1. Yes (74.1%)
2. No (13.7%)
3. Undecided (11.3%)
4. Already moved away (0.8%)

The most common reasons given for planning to move or considering doing so were housing costs, lack of leisure/entertainment facilities and airport expansion.

Q10 People were asked what one thing would make life better for their organisation (which in most cases given was their employer). 34.4% answered free, cheaper or better parking facilities. The full list is:

Free, cheaper or improved parking	21
Better public transport and transport links	6
Better public funding for org's that work with young	4
More local custom	3
Lower business rates	2
Nothing	2
Better public funding	2
More work placements for students	2
Better train links to London	2
Bypass	2
Better pay for staff	2

Less traffic congestion	2
Recreation areas for children	1
Better paving	1
Places for young people to gather	1
Less boring	1
Railway station	1
Bus station	1
Less crime	1
Better access to railway station	1
Make Bury water Lane one-way	1
Better buildings	1
More investment in social infrastructure	1
More volunteers	1
Massage, yoga for employees	1
Work more constructively with the airport	1
Detailed local development plan	1
Better community outlook	1
A bigger building	1
Respite centre	1
Free rubbish collection for businesses	1
End to vandalism & fighting on Gold St at weekends	1
End to commuting	1
More staff	1
Update Newport Village Hall	1
Recognition of FoE on BAA's consultative committee	1
More green space	1
Total given	61

This highlights where the focus of the parking issue might lie, i.e. with town workers and businesses. The cost of daytime parking for town centre workers was raised by several respondents. Parking for attendance at evening events was also raised.

Q11 People were asked what their organisation did well that others could learn from. Less than half of the respondents answered this question.

Good relations with clients, customer service	13
Involvement in local community	6
Addresses the needs of young people	7
Positive working environment	5
Partnership working	4
International programme	3
Communication, open/responsive	3
Caring for the elderly	2
Specialised knowledge	2
Training	2
Colleagues are highly valued	2

Provides transport	1
Attracts shoppers to the town centre	1
Good employment package	1
Provide work for local youngsters	1
Democracy in the workplace	1
Employs lots of local people	1
Refunds parking charges	1
High achieving	1
Very little	1
Running voluntary sector projects	1
Recycling	1
Treats staff well	1
Market research	1
Unique retail offering	1
Environmental campaigning	1
Total given	66

Q12 People were asked what the future was for their organisation (these were a spread of small, medium and large bodies in the private, voluntary and public sectors).

Expansion	13
Stability	11
Contraction	4
Total no. of organisations identified	28

The principal reasons given for expansion were the growth in demand for children's services/private and public sectors. The principal reason for contraction was pressure on funding.

Q13 People were asked to give the number of people who worked in their organisation (voluntary and some people answered this question but not Q12 or vice versa). Organisations were counted once.

Number of employees	Number of organisations
Less than 5	13
5 to 20	7
21 to 50	3
50 to 200	1
More than 200	9

The large organisations identified here were Waitrose supermarket, Ridgeons building supplies, Uttlesford Primary Care Trust, Uttlesford District Council, Epping Forest Primary Care Trust, the Sanger Centre genome campus, Newport Free Grammar School, Essex Police and Essex Library Service. Saffron Walden County High School is also a major employer. The purpose of

this question was to establish how the questionnaire chimed with what is known about the broader employment picture (which is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises). An attempt was made in circulating the questionnaire, with some success, to target those on more modest incomes via their place of work, as these people had been under-represented in the interviews.

8. Consultation: Interview Findings

The comments below are extracted from some 80 pages of summarised, typed notes compiled principally from around 90 interviews, but supplemented by views from school student councils and by written and email correspondence received from the public. They represent a summary of the views of approximately 135 people. Some of the children had done preparatory work in class, and some of the discussions took place with people who had relevant professional or voluntary sector expertise, or who were elected officials. For reasons of time, and in order not to pre-empt discussions between the Saffron Walden Initiative and its partners in the town such as the Town Council and UDC, the following is a summary of headline issues most frequently raised in the period November 2003–July 2004. Numbers in brackets refer to the number of people who mentioned the issue. Inevitably, this is a condensation of some quite sophisticated views, but it provides a substantial picture and, it is hoped, it serves to provide evidence for local priorities.

Summary of Healthcheck Interviews

A number of key issues are highlighted in more than one section. The third column indicates where a topic is noted under more than one of the four areas (Economy - Ec, Environment- En, Transport- T, Community- C), so as to give a sense of its impact and the possible benefits of strategic intervention. The most frequent concerns in each section are highlighted in **bold**.

Economy

Perhaps surprisingly the single most frequently mentioned area of concern falling in this field was transport, including the 'hub' issue, public transport's lack of relevance to businesses, access to Audley End station and reliance on cars. It may be that this issue needs further 'unpacking' as suggested in the Action Plan via a full traffic and transport study.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>No. of mentions</i>	<i>Also relevant to</i>
Weak public transport, inc. 'hub' issue, lack of relevance to businesses, access to Audley End station, reliance on cars	37	C, T, En
Concern about housing development proposals, urbanisation, overdevelopment, lack of coherent strategy	32	C, T, En
Lack of civic amenities, inc. cultural, leisure, entertainment provision (3 people specifically mentioned transport access)	31	C, T
Lack of affordable housing	21	C, T, En
Decline of town centre inc. evenings, Sundays, no late night chemist	21	C
Town centre parking issues, inc. workers, shoppers & buses	15	C, T, En
Infrastructure weaknesses, inc. water, electricity, broadband	15	C, En
Insufficient support for small or home-based businesses, inc. R&D, bureaucracy	14	
Poor access to services and specialist help, esp. in villages	14	C, T
Confusion, antagonism or lack of support from or between roles of public bodies (SW Town Council, UDC, Countryside Agency, former Chamber of Trade)	13	C, T, En
Growing dormitory-town function	13	C, T, En
Town under-promoted, needs more 'attractors', cross-promotion with Audley End House or station	11	C, T, En
Need to address the local effects of the booming Cambridge economy	10	C, T, En
Local deprivation is concealed, not addressed, inc. homelessness & debt	8	C
High business rates	8	
Planning controls seen as too confusing, inflexible or out of tune	6	C, T, En
Local debate does not lead to action or leads to unrealistic demands	7	C, T, En
Land shortage, land values	7	C, En
Cost of labour/labour shortages, inc. retail, work with children, manufacturing	7	C
No Chamber of Trade or business forum	4	

Poor road links/off the beaten track (note: in one case this was seen as a benefit)	4	C, T
Long-established businesses need to look more at new ideas	4	
Under-promotion of local talent, inc. business, arts/crafts, trades	4	C
Lack of small commercial premises	4	
Declining agricultural economy, changing rural employment patterns	4	C, T
Mismatch between learning provision and the local economy	3	C
Tourism needs further development	3	T
Effect on house prices and traffic of quality of local schools	3	C, T, En
Servicing to businesses if town centre pedestrianised	3	T
Independent local businesses threatened by multiples/corporates	3	
Market trading subject to excessive restriction	2	
Perceived risk of failure in current public plans	2	C, T, En
Need to preserve and enhance historic town centre – motor for prosperity	2	En
Lack of official support/co-ordination/promotion for market	2	
Lack of access to work placements for the young	2	C, T
Niche shopping image restrictive	2	
Businesses relocating elsewhere	2	
Weak retail sector, need to encourage 'browsing'	2	
Insufficient affordable childcare	2	C
Threat from expanding competing centres	2	
Clash between historic buildings and shopfront design	2	En
Town is expensive to shop in	2	C, T
Poor town centre signage	2	En
Location of commercial premises/access	2	T
Need to address why some villages 'succeed' (e.g. Chesterford, Clavering) and others do less well	2	C
Empty business premises	1	
		C, T, En

Local needs identified but no resources channelled into them	1	
Not enough use made of external help available	1	C, T, En
Villages no longer self-supporting	1	C
Need to assess how regeneration elsewhere (Harlow, Peterborough) will affect the town	1	
Poor availability of local food supplies	1	
Essex County Council cutting economic development role	1	
Potential influx of low income workers	1	C
No 'good' hotel in the town centre	1	
Bed & breakfast quality highly variable	1	
Changes in funding threaten momentum of parish plans	1	C
Need to build more strongly on Saffron Walden Initiative successes	1	C, T, En
No farmers' market*	1	
Need to keep local people in local work	1	C, T

*A farmers' market was launched in late Spring 2004 in Saffron Walden.

Community

Around half of interviewees were concerned about the lack of facilities for the young and children, including access to what provision exists elsewhere.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Also relevant to</i>
Lack of facilities for the young, inc. access and younger children	46	
Weak public transport, inc. 'hub' issue, lack of relevance to businesses, access to Audley End station, reliance on cars	37	T, Ec, En
Concern about housing development proposals, urbanisation, overdevelopment, lack of coherent strategy	32	T, Ec, En
Lack of civic amenities, inc. cultural, leisure, entertainment provision (3 people specifically mentioned transport access)	31	Ec, T

Congestion/pollution, inc. safe crossing points	28	T
Decline of town centre inc. evenings, Sundays, no late night chemist	21	Ec, En
Lack of affordable housing	21	T, Ec, En
Town centre parking issues, inc. workers, shoppers & buses	15	T, Ec, En
Infrastructure weaknesses, inc. water, electricity, broadband	15	T, Ec, En
Declining social cohesiveness, inc. between old and young, rich and poor, established and newcomers	14	
Poor access to services and specialist help, esp. in villages	14	T, Ec, En
Confusion, antagonism or lack of support from or between roles of public bodies (SW Town Council, UDC, Countryside Agency, former Chamber of Trade)	13	T, Ec, En
Growing dormitory-town function	13	T, Ec, En
Town under-promoted, needs more 'attractors', cross-promotion with Audley End House or station	11	T, Ec, En
Alcohol/drugs culture, anti-social behaviour on Fri/Sat evenings	11	
Dangerous roads, through traffic, speeding (SW and villages)	10	T
Weak civic involvement, inc. formal volunteering and young	9	
Insular culture, 'cliqueyness', complacency, inability to cope with change	9	
Local deprivation is concealed, not addressed, inc. homelessness & debt	8	Ec
Land shortage, land values	7	Ec
Local debate does not lead to action or leads to unrealistic demands	7	T, Ec, En
Cost of labour/labour shortages, inc. retail, work with children, manufacturing	7	Ec
Lack of visible policing, esp. in rural areas	6	
Lack of information about local activities,		

communities and events	6	
Planning controls seen as too confusing, inflexible or out of tune	6	T, Ec, En
Mismatch of crime and perceptions of it	5	
Bureaucratic processes and grant mechanisms are confusing and off-putting	5	T, En
Poor use or quality of public spaces	5	En
Rural isolation	5	T
Poor road links/off the beaten track (note: in one case this was seen as a benefit)	4	T, Ec, En
Under-promotion of local talent, inc. business, arts/crafts, trades	4	Ec
Declining agricultural economy, changing rural employment patterns	4	Ec
Lack of green spaces, inc. recreation areas and walking access	4	En
Leisure facilities too expensive, inc. Lord Butler leisure centre	4	
Young people's concerns identified but not enough done	3	
Insufficient sports pitches	3	
No country park, poor access to countryside	3	
Loss of young people	3	Ec
'Posh' development is threatening communities	3	
Weak relationships between UDC and parishes	3	
Effect on house prices and traffic of quality of local schools	3	
Domestic violence	2	
Need to address why some villages 'succeed' (e.g. Chesterford, Clavering) and others do less well	2	Ec
Town is expensive to shop in	2	Ec
Elderly moving into town from villages	2	
Insufficient affordable childcare	2	Ec
Town Hall impractical for public events,	2	

uninviting		
Condition of public toilets in town centre	2	En
BAA not seen as fair in its distribution of help to communities affected by over-flying	2	T
Amateur societies only serve limited segments of the community	2	
Hare coursing	2	En
Poor links between town and village communities	2	
Town needs to feel more accessible, welcoming, 'buzz'	2	
Unresponsiveness of local health providers	2	
Perceived risk of failure in current public plans	2	Ec, En, T
Poor ambulance response times	2	
Lack of access to work placements for the young	2	Ec
Vandalism	2	
Need to devolve more power to parishes	2	
Privatisation of old people's accommodation	1	
Changes in funding threaten momentum of parish plans	1	Ec
Potential influx of low income workers	1	Ec
Need to keep local people in local work	1	Ec
Historic rivalry between towns in the district	1	
Local needs identified but no resources channelled into them	1	T, Ec, En
Not enough use made of external help available	1	Ec
Dumping of burnt out cars	1	T, En
Village networks still strong enough for local problem-solving	1	
Access to historic town centre - likely exemptions under DDA will reduce benefit	1	T
Museum a disproportionate consumer of resources	1	

Town losing its character	1	En
Rural culture is diminishing	1	
Weak relationship between town and Carver Barracks	1	
Golden Acre area dirty and dangerous	1	
Lack of formal support for 19-25s	1	
Local people do not appreciate the town	1	
Clash of uses on green lanes – safety issue	1	T
Hard for children to meet up out of school hours	1	T
Poor availability of adult education locally	1	
Poor access to health support for disabled children	1	

Transport and Access

After the concerns already noted above in connection with public transport, housing, development and amenities, the next most frequent area of concern in this field was traffic congestion and related pollution and safety matters.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Relevance to:</i>
Weak public transport, inc. 'hub' issue, lack of relevance to businesses, access to Audley End station, reliance on cars	37	C, Ec, En
Concern about housing development proposals, urbanisation, overdevelopment, lack of coherent strategy	32	C, Ec, En
Lack of civic amenities, inc. cultural, leisure, entertainment provision (3 people specifically mentioned transport access)	31	Ec
Congestion/pollution, inc. safe crossing points	28	C, Ec, En
Lack of affordable housing	21	C, Ec, En
Town centre parking issues, inc. workers, shoppers & buses	15	C, Ec, En

Infrastructure weaknesses, inc. water, electricity, broadband	15	C, Ec, En
Access to services and specialist help, esp. in villages	14	C, Ec
Confusion, antagonism or lack of support from or between roles of public bodies (SW Town Council, UDC, Countryside Agency, former Chamber of Trade)	13	C, Ec, En
Growing dormitory-town function	13	C, Ec, En
Airport expansion at Stansted, inc. aircraft noise	11	En
Town under-promoted, needs more 'attractors', cross-promotion with Audley End House or station	11	C, Ec
Dangerous roads, through traffic, speeding (SW and villages)	10	C, En
Local debate does not lead to action or leads to unrealistic demands	7	C, Ec, En
Planning controls seen as too confusing, inflexible or out of tune	6	C, Ec, En
Bureaucratic processes and grant mechanisms are confusing and off-putting	5	C, Ec, En
Rural isolation	5	C
Poor road links/off the beaten track (note: in one case this was seen as a benefit)	4	C, Ec, En
People do not use the buses, under-publicised	4	En
Parking is not a problem	3	En
Better use of green lanes, inc. reduce damage by vehicles	3	En
Perceived risk of failure in current public plans	2	C, Ec, En
BAA not seen as fair in its distribution of help to communities affected by over-flying	2	C

Under-use of Swan Meadow car park	2	En
Strong local environmental awareness	2	En
Inadequate parking points for access to green lanes	2	En
Lack of cycleways	2	En
Local needs identified but no resources channelled into them	1	C, Ec, En
Dumping of burnt out cars	1	En
Poor ambulance response times	1	C
Access to historic town centre - likely exemptions under DDA will reduce benefit	1	C, En
Clash of uses on green lanes – safety issue	1	C
Hard for children to meet up out of school hours	1	C
Poor road maintenance, gritting	1	
Poor condition of Rose and Crown walkway	1	En

Environment

<i>Issue</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Relevant to:</i>
Weak public transport, inc. 'hub' issue, lack of relevance to businesses, access to Audley End station, reliance on cars	37	Ec, C, T
Concern about housing development proposals, urbanisation, overdevelopment, lack of coherent strategy	32	Ec, C, T
Congestion/pollution, inc. safe crossing points	28	C, Ec, En
Decline of town centre inc. evenings, Sundays, no late night chemist	21	Ec, C, T
Lack of affordable housing	21	Ec, C, T
Town centre parking issues, inc. workers,		

shoppers & buses	15	Ec, C, T
Infrastructure weaknesses, inc. water, electricity, broadband	15	Ec, C, T
Confusion, antagonism or lack of support from or between roles of public bodies (SW Town Council, UDC, Countryside Agency, former Chamber of Trade)	13	Ec, C, T
Growing dormitory-town function	13	Ec, C, T
Town under-promoted, needs more 'attractors', cross-promotion with Audley End House or station	11	Ec, C, T
Airport expansion at Stansted, inc. aircraft noise	11	T
Local debate does not lead to action or leads to unrealistic demands	7	Ec, C, T
Planning controls seen as too confusing, inflexible or out of tune	6	Ec, C, T
Poor use or quality of public spaces	5	C
Bureaucratic processes and grant mechanisms are confusing and off-putting	5	Ec, C, T
Poor road links/off the beaten track (note: in one case this was seen as a benefit)	4	T
Lack of green spaces, inc. recreation areas and walking access	4	C, T
People do not use the buses	4	C, T
Better use of green lanes, inc. reduce damage by vehicles	3	T
Town untidy, scruffy	3	
Parking is not a problem	3	T
Clash between historic buildings and shopfront design	2	
Under-promotion of recycling and 'intelligent shopping'	2	

Need to preserve and enhance historic town centre – motor for prosperity	2	Ec
Hare coursing	2	C
Strong local environmental awareness	2	T
Inadequate parking points for access to green lanes	2	T
Lack of cycleways	2	T
Perceived risk of failure in current public plans	2	Ec, C, T
Under use of Swan Meadow car park	2	T
Condition of public toilets in town centre	2	C
Local needs identified but no resources channelled into them	1	Ec, C, T
Dumping of burnt out cars	1	T
Town losing its character	1	C
Poor condition of Rose and Crown walkway	1	T
Implementation of biodiversity initiatives inconsistent, under-supported	1	
Lack of focal points for wildlife promotion/awareness	1	
Little wildlife friendly-farming	1	
Poor tree maintenance on the High Street	1	
Fuel dump on Ashdon Road – any pollution/health hazard?	1	
Oilseed rape production - allergen	1	

9. Consultation: Youth Report Extracts

As part of the Healthcheck and in response to a strong perceived set of needs amongst young people, both a public meeting and a small-scale youth consultation exercise were undertaken, the latter by an external consultant in Youth Participation, Jo Skelt, with the support of John Starr of the Essex Youth Service. The public meeting on youth issues organised by the convener of the Community working group, which facilitated communication between relevant organisations and concluded, amongst other things, that safe and sociable places to gather were lacking for 11-18s, as well as the means to travel to them from rural areas.

Amongst Jo's findings, the following extracts seem of particular relevance:

- 'Overall, 15 males and 6 females made some form of contact during the evening... (Of some concern was one girl who was too young to come onto the bus and appeared to be wandering around without company late at night)'
- 'Discussions during the evening ranged from music, not going to school and training/apprenticeships, crime, revenge and justice, international youth work, life skills, residentials, relationships, sports'
- 'The key issues raised by young people in this consultation are "having nothing to do", transport and, in some cases, police harassment'
- 'There are further issues of improving life skills, providing emotional support and guidance for making choices, resolving issues and developing opportunities for engagement through the arts and/or music'
- 'I would also want to explore what opportunities exist for intergenerational youth work to establish better communication and understanding between age groups'
- 'The group in question did not express frustration over "too much consultation and no action" and were happy to be interviewed'
- 'Older people make huge assumptions about youth values [and] desires and assume them to be miscreant (hence the "over-policing" of youth)'

The consultant noted the following potential limitations to the findings:

- Young people may not conceive of 'Saffron Walden', or what it needs, in a context beyond their own needs/choices
- Young people tend to respond to consultations by asking for provision of amenities (e.g. cinemas or skate parks) and focus on external answers, secondary entertainment and passive forms of participation rather than grapple actively with issues of youth inclusion and recognize their own role in initiating change

- The exercise was small-scale and took place on one evening so there is the risk of generalizing from limited case study material
- Potential issues of lies and exaggeration.

10. Consultation: Report from 1st Saffron Walden Scouts

The Scout group made a carefully prepared presentation to a Healthcheck public meeting in July 2004. Here is a summary.

What we do for fun:

In town

- Cycle around, play on the Common
- Go down town and wander around
- Scouts
- Leisure centre – swimming

Out of town

- Cinema – Bishop's Stortford, Cambridge
- Camping with Scouts

What we don't like about Saffron Walden:

- No cycle paths
- No cinema or ten-pin bowling
- No skate park (yet)
- Poor public transport
- Litter, graffiti, vandalism
- Not enough for our age group – Saffron Walden is quiet and sleepy

How we would change Saffron Walden

- Cinema
- Ten-pin bowling
- Cycle paths
- Cafes in the Market Place
- Buses to interesting places
- Make it a better place for young people

11. Acronyms

ACE(E)	Arts Council England (East)
CA	Countryside Agency
DEFRA	Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 2000
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
EEC	Essex County Council
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EEP	Essex Economic Partnership
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
GCP	Greater Cambridge Partnership
GO-East	Government Office for the East of England
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
RCCE	Rural Community Council for Essex
SWI	Saffron Walden Initiative
SWTC	Saffron Walden Town Council
UDC	Uttlesford District Council
UF	Uttlesford Futures
UPCT	Uttlesford Primary Care Trust
UPPIF	Uttlesford Public and Patient Involvement Forum
UVB	Uttlesford Volunteer Bureau

12. Examples of Key Resources

Projects:

- EEDA – Investing in Communities, via Essex Economic Partnership (regeneration; sustainable prosperity; market towns projects)
- Rural Renaissance Fund (community & environment projects)
- European Social Fund ('ecological' tourism pilots; diversification of rural economy)
- Big Lottery (community & voluntary sector development)
- Arts Council; CIBA 'Project' (arts, artists & the built environment)
- Numerous other small and medium scale (partners, public, charitable) sources appropriate to different projects

People:

- Project Officer to March 2006 – Countryside Agency; Uttlesford District Council; Saffron Walden Initiative; Saffron Walden Town Council
- Town and District Council member and officer time/expertise
- Parishes
- Government and specialist agency expertise
- Local volunteers and other organisations/businesses

13. References: Documents and Websites Consulted

The following is a list, not comprehensive, of documents and websites consulted during the Healthcheck process, listed largely alphabetically by organisation. Original papers and background documents for the healthcheck research are held at the Uttlesford District Council office in Saffron Walden.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Title</i>
	Ashdon Parish Council	Ashdon Topography Statement
Cruickshank, David et al	Business Development Services (N/W Essex) Ltd	Business Handbook: North West Essex - the region for business
Rambissoon, Meera	Campaign to Protect Rural England	Transport Campaign Group News
	Castle Street Residents' Association	A Transport Strategy for Saffron Walden
	Chesterford Research Park	Experience the New Home of Research
	City of Ely Perspective	Public consultation document
	City of Ely Perspective	Market Town Healthcheck Report
	Community Renewal Network East	Networking East: Connecting People, Places and Issues in Community Regeneration
	Council for Voluntary Service, Uttlesford	Volunteer (newsletter)
	Countryside Agency	Research Notes 29, 33, 44, 46
	Countryside Agency	Market Towns Healthcheck Handbook
	Countryside Agency	Market Towns Toolkit
	Countryside Agency	Data Sources & Survey Methods Directory
	Countryside Agency	Local Transport Plans: A better deal for rural areas - good practice guidance
	Countryside Agency	State of the Countryside National Report 2003
	Countryside Agency	State of the Countryside Regional Report 2003
	CPRE	Market Towns Survey Form
	CPRE	Market Towns: Losing Their Character?
	CPREssex	No to Airport Expansion leaflet
	DEFRA	http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery/report/default.htm
Mercer, Tracey	Dereham Area Partnership	Public consultation document
	East of England Regional Assembly	Regional Social Strategy
	Easten Region ACRE	Annual Report and Review
	ECC	Draft Essex School Organisation Plan
	ECC	Bus route maps
NOP Research Group Ltd	ECC	Resident Survey Form
	ECC	Bus Passenger News
	ECC	<i>Ways and Means</i>
	ECC	Celebrating Essex... A Shared Vision
	ECC	County and Parish: A report on working together for the future of Essex
Transport Co-ordination Centre	ECC	Bus & Train Timetables: West & North Essex

Medleycott, M.	ECC Heritage Conservation Group	Origins of Saffron Walden
	EEDA	Investing in Communities Framework document
	EEDA	Data and Information Sources relating to Deprivation at Ward Level
	EEDA	Deprived Wards in the East of England
	EEDA	The Bulletin
	EEDA	Economy and Labour Market Background Paper
	EEDA	Economic Update
	EEDA	Quarterly Export Statistics quarter 4 2002
	EEDA	Update
	EEDA	Corporate Plan 2003-2006
	EEDA	www.eastofenglandobservatory.co.uk
	EEDA/Action for Market Towns	Best Practice Guidance
Bradshaw, Jonathan	Eikonika Ltd	Sample survey forms
Rowe, Janet et al	Faculty of the Built Environment, University of the West of England	Report to the Market Towns Advisory Forum
Haskins, Lord	Government Rural Delivery Review	<i>Reality in the Countryside</i> , in <i>Countryside Voice</i> (CPRE)
	Harts of Saffron Walden	Late Night Opening Customer Survey
	Huntingdonshire District Council	http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/Housing_Serv/documents/Cambbridge%20Sub-Region%20Final%20Report.pdf
Mark, Kenneth	Kenneth Mark Practice	architectural drawings and plans, various
Gunton, Tony	Lopinga Books	Wild Essex: A guide to the nature reserves and country parks of Essex and East London
	NEHA	GP contractor list
	New Economics Foundation	Participation Works
	North & West Essex Community College	Adult Learning Prospectus
	Rural Action East	Briefing Paper 1
	Saffron Walden Initiative	Striving for Success
	Saffron Walden Initiative	Public survey results
	Saffron Walden Town Council	Town Talk
	Saffron Walden Town Management Scheme	Residents and Business survey results
Fink, Arlene	Sage Publishing	The Survey Kit (9 vols)
Sharp, Donna	Sharp Impressions	Saffron Walden Directory
	Shell Better Britain Campaign	Making It Work: lessons for managing projects for sustainable communities
	SW Chamber of Trade	Shoppers' Guide
	SW TIC	SW Halls for Hire
	SW TIC	Village Halls for Hire
BAA Stansted	<i>The Reporter</i>	What a New Runway Means for our Community
	UDC	Leisure & Cultural Strategy
Stewart, Alex	UDC	Expression of interest form, Liveability Fund
	UDC	Best Value Performance Plan
	UDC	Partner Consultation document, Quality of Life Corporate Plan
Dean, Alan	UDC	Presentation document, Uttlesford Futures
	UDC	Community Plan
Strategic Leisure Ltd	UDC	Uttlesford Leisure & Cultural Strategy: appendices
	UDC	Public Bus Services in Uttlesford
	UDC	Response to Government's Air Transport Proposals
	UDC	Uttlesford News
	UDC	Public consultation leaflet
	UDC	A-Z of Council Services
	UDC	Official Guide to Uttlesford District
Booth, A. G. et al	UDC	Saffron Walden: A Conservation Study, Parts One and Two
	UDC	Local Plan Deposit Draft
	UDC	Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft
	UDC	The 'No' Book
	UDC	Uttlesford District Official Guide

	UDC	Youth Directory 2004
CB Hillier Parker	UDC	Retail Impact Study: Proposed Extension to Tesco Superstore
	UDC	Housing Needs Survey
	UDC Committee & Communications Services	How to Get Involved in Meetings
	UDC Planning Services Section	Good Practice Guidance
	UDC Tourism Section	Accommodation Guide
	UDC Tourism Section	What's On
Susannah Ford	University of Plymouth	The Role of Small and Medium-Sized Towns in Rural Development
	UPCT	Guide to Local Health Services
	UPCT	Annual Report
	UPCT	Children's Community Services
	Uttlesford Community Safety Action Team	Community Safety Strategy
	Uttlesford Primary Care Trust	Local Delivery Plan
	Uttlesford Primary Care Trust	Guide to Local Health Services
	Uttlesford Volunteer Bureau	Guide to Volunteering
	Wiveliscombe Community Office	Community Strategy & Action Plan
Sawyer, Alison	Wymondham Development Partnership	Market Town Healthcheck Report
		www.saffronwalden.gov.uk
		www.defra.gov.uk
		www.rics.org
		www.saffireweb.net
		www.countryside.gov.uk
		www.towns.org.uk
		www.markettowns.org.uk
		<i>Saffron Walden Observer</i>
		<i>The Reporter</i>
		<i>Walden Local</i>
		<i>Saffron Walden Weekly News</i>
		www.elan.essexcc.gov.uk
		www.go-east.gov.uk
		www.uttlesford.gov.uk
		www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
		www.kentrcc.org.uk
		www.saffireweb.net
		www.comm-dev.co.uk
		www.renewal.net
		www.go-wm.gov.uk/regionalIntelligence/deprivation
		www.cpre.org.uk
		www.statistics.gov.uk
Buchanan & Partners et al		Stansted/M11 Development Corridor Options Study
		www.eelqc.gov.uk
		www.rural.co.uk
		www.newportvillage.org.uk/
		www.freespace.virgin.net/kevin.egan/
		www.geocities.com/wendensambo/
		www.wimbish.org.uk/
		www.ickletonvillage.co.uk/
		lcene
		www.any-village.co.uk
		www.langleyessex.net
		www.ruralactioneast.org.uk
		www.essexrcc.org.uk/
		www.nationaltrail.co.uk/trailnews.asp
		www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/sub/lsp/cambridge/citylsp/sld007.htm
		www.cambridgenetwork.co.uk
		www.rochford.gov.uk/CouncilDivisions/Planning/LocalPlans/Publications/

		www.dti.gov.uk
		www.bbc.co.uk
		www.wireuk.org
		www.essextrade.org.uk

14. Acknowledgements

It is not possible to list all who gave generously of their time and energy to this project, but the following are amongst those who deserve a special mention

1st Saffron Walden Scouts	Kenneth Mark
Andrew Broughton	Malcolm Domb
Andrew Mynott	Martin Turnbull
Andy Dyer	Mary Sheil
Angela Reed	Muru Visana
Ann Jones	Nick Osborne
Anne Kline	Peter Blanchard
Barbara Wilcox	Peter Riding
Catherine Flack	Phil Dean
Children of Katherine Semar Primary School	Phil Dolan
Children of Newport Free Grammar School	Rachel Thomas
Children of St Mary's Primary School	Richard Freeman
Chris Bayley	Robin Leclercq
Chris Hingston	Ros Bryan
Claire Skinner	Ruth Lucy
Daniel Kemish	Ryan McNamara
David Beswick	Saffron Walden W.I.
David East	Sandra Mynott
Dennis Madden	Sarah Mclagan
Dominique Wallace	School Council, Saffron Walden County High School
Donna Sharp	Simon Curran
Geoff Wakelin	Simon Lander
Geraldine Hines	Staff and councillors, Saffron Walden Town Council
Gill Pike	Staff and councillors, Uttlesford District Council
Gillian Williamson	Staff, Saffron Walden Tourist Information Office
Howard Rolfe	Steve Jones
Issie Grayson	Steve Willoughby
Jeremy Pine	Sue Flynn
John Bullough	Sue Locke
John Ready	Malcolm White
John Starr	Tom White
John Wells	
Katherine Childs	

And to those many others not listed here, sincere thanks.