



The Town Hall
Market Street
Saffron Walden
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SWTC Open Letter to Essex County Council



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T: (01799) 516501

Open Letter to Cllr Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport

Dear Cllr Cunningham

Saffron Walden Town Council (SWTC) wrote to you on 28.02.2025 and 19.05.2025 requesting an update on the following SWTC Local Highway Panel requests. Unfortunately, we have not received any response from you, and for the sake of good order, I summarise the essence of our previous correspondence:

1. Tuesday / Saturday Market Operating Times

Approximately 10-years ago, SWTC requested amendments to the traffic regulation order (TRO) covering closure of the Market Square for market purposes. Despite repeated promises from Essex County Council (ECC) that our request is being progressed, there is little evidence of any change or indeed of any progress. Some 10-years later, little has been enacted.

2. Market Square Partial Pedestrianisation

In 2022, SWTC submitted a request to ECC to pedestrianise the Market Square. This request followed an informed public consultation hosted by the Town Council, with 75% support for the proposals to pedestrianise this area.

Since 2022, numerous meetings have taken place and 100s of emails have been exchanged between SWTC and ECC although there is little, if any, tangible evidence of progress. I will not summarise here all the correspondence since 2015, but include details of more recent communications:

- (a) October 2024 – SWTC & ECC Officers met at ECC offices, and it was agreed to amalgamate the revisions to the Market TRO and the Market Square pedestrianisation into one project.
- (b) March 2025 – ECC wrote to SWTC, explaining the two requests are paused and will instead be considered as part of the draft Uttlesford Local Plan Transport

Study; this course of action and decision was made without any consultation, discussion or prior knowledge of the Town Council.

- (c) April / May 2025 – SWTC request ECC to confirm how the requests can be postponed until the draft Local Plan is adopted. Whilst the market TRO and pedestrianisation schemes may be included in the Uttlesford Local Plan Transport study, this is not an adopted policy or plan as it forms part of an unadopted plan which is currently subject to inspection by the Planning Inspectorate. No response has been received to this recent query.
- (d) June 2025 – ECC Local Highway Panel meeting papers note that the schemes are “cancelled” because *“it came to light that there is a scheme on the Saffron Walden Transport Strategy to pedestrianize the Market Square which is to be funded via developer contribution”*.

It is misleading to state that the scheme is to be funded via developer contributions. There are no known specific developer contributions currently held, pending or requested which could be used for either amending the TROs for the market or to pedestrianise Market Square. ECC cannot assume that any future S106 agreements will include contributions towards these activities.

Whilst some S106 monies are however currently held by ECC for ‘sustainable transport’ measures more generally, it cannot be assumed (or maybe it is), that these monies will fund the outstanding requests. It may be that ECC has indeed earmarked outstanding S106 monies to these schemes, but this is not known to SWTC; further demonstrative of the lack of updates provided to SWTC.

At the Town Council’s Full Council meeting on 9th June 2025, it was agreed by resolution to send an open letter to you as Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport setting out the Town Council’s frustration.

This letter was however, purposefully paused as SWTC officers were invited to meet with officers from both UDC and ECC on 11th July 2025. At this meeting, the ECC / UDC officers were able to expand on the plans and proposals as referenced under (d) above. This is of course encouraging and SWTC supports this concept, but it is fair to note that SWTC should not have waited since March 2025 for this information. It was and is, incumbent upon ECC to keep SWTC informed on these outstanding matters.

In summary and by means of this letter, SWTC wishes to formally place on record its discontent at the inordinate time it has taken ECC to deliver on the two outstanding schemes, i.e. the TRO for the market operation and Market Square pedestrianisation. In acknowledging the meeting between officers on 11th July 2025, there appears to be some progress in enacting works and SWTC remains supportive and committed to working with ECC in delivering the best outcomes for all our residents. SWTC trusts that some tangible action will now take place in delivering the two outstanding requests from the Town Council.

Yours sincerely

Mayor of Saffron Walden
Cllr Ahmed

Saffron Walden Town Council