

# Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy 2012-14

Strategy seeks to enable people, communities and business to be what they want to be by providing:

Help to start and stay in business

Help to start exporting or export more

Access to superfast broadband

Help for town centres with their viability and vitality

Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford

Help to persuade more people to visit Uttlesford

October 2012

## **Foreword**

Your District Council will play its part in maintaining a strong and inclusive local economy by helping people, communities and business to be what they want to be. Through working together and being innovative we can all help to ensure Uttlesford continues to be an outstanding place to live, work and play.

It's now more important than ever for us all to build upon our knowledge, experience and skills to formulate a local economic strategy for the whole of Uttlesford.

This economic development strategy sets out the key issues and opportunities facing our economy, and ways of addressing these through pragmatic and focused action.

We are grateful for all the feed back received on the Draft Economic Development Strategy and this feedback has helped us to create a strategy that will deliver the maximum return on our collective investment.

We will continue to focus all our resources in a way that makes our district a place in which businesses and their employees thrive.

Councillor Howard Rolfe  
Cabinet Member Uttlesford District Council

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## 1. Executive Summary

Uttlesford is a thriving and prosperous area. It is not, however, performing to its full potential. We have developed a strategy that seeks to help the performance of the Uttlesford economy by enabling people, communities and business to be what they want to be by providing:

- Help to start and stay in business;
- Help to start exporting or export more;
- Access to superfast broadband;
- Help for town centres with their viability and vitality;
- Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford; and
- Help to persuade more people to visit Uttlesford.

We also seek to ensure that the Council itself leads by example and is supportive of, and open for, business.

The strategy focuses on delivering a few things really well and where real impact can be made. Funding for the delivery of the strategy comes mainly from the £100,000 High Street Innovation Fund granted to the Council by Central Government to use to provide support for business across the district.

The strategy has been created with contributions from local people, businesses and partners on what the strengths, opportunities and issues are that the Uttlesford economy faces and how the District Council can help in its growth and development.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Context

The context for this strategy can be summarised nationally by:

- slow recovery from recession
- new institutional landscape for economic development:
  - Regional Development Agencies abolished
  - Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) – locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and business that play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and creation of jobs. Uttlesford works with two LEP the South East LEP (SELEP); and the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (GCGPEP)
- reduced public budgets for economic development
- introduction of the Localism Bill ensuring that the community's aspirations are recognised and supported

- planning policy making clear that councils should aim to meet the needs of business and help make the economy fit for the future and that councils should support both town centres and rural business.

The local context summarised by:

- the Local Strategic Partnership, Uttlesford Futures (a partnership of Uttlesford's public, private, voluntary and community sector agencies) developing and delivering against shared priorities via the Sustainable Futures Strategy 2009-2021
- the importance of business led partnerships and groups including London Anglia Growth Partnership, West Essex Alliance, Newport Business Association, Greater Dunmow Chamber of Trade, Saffron Walden Initiative and Stansted Chambers of Commerce
- the Local Plan providing the spatial planning framework for the District. Economic development and spatial planning are closely linked and there is a need to balance growth with the quality of life of our residents and maintain our heritage and green spaces.
- existing plans and strategies produced by partners such as the town and parish councils

## **2.2 This Strategy**

This strategy identifies the strengths, opportunities and issues of highest importance and what actions will have the greatest impact. The strategy comprises a 2 year action plan that will enable the district to move towards delivery of the economic vision of the future outlined in the strategy.

It is important not to see this strategy in isolation. The strategy sits within and supports the delivery of longer term holistic plans looking at the district as a whole such as developed by Uttlesford Futures and the Local Plan.

In focusing its actions in a small number of important areas there are inevitably some areas that it doesn't seek to directly influence but which are important to the development of the local economy. These decisions have been taken in the knowledge that any such areas are the focus of other plans and strategies.

One important area not addressed as part of this strategy is that of skills shortages. Action is being taken to address this issue as part of Essex County Council's Economic Development Strategy, Uttlesford Futures, Economy, Skills, Environment and Transport Group, SELEP, GCGPEP and others. It is also being addressed by the private sector through such initiatives as the Employment and Skills Academy at London Stansted Airport.

## **2.3 Consultation Undertaken**

To produce this strategy we have developed insights into the strengths, opportunities and issues facing the Uttlesford economy by using existing research and from discussions with local businesses, business groups and partners.

We used a draft of this strategy to inform a wider discussion and eventual consensus about what’s happening in the local economy and what the key actions are that should be undertaken.

The draft strategy was circulated to local businesses, business representative groups and partners for their views and comments. A discussion of the draft strategy was held with 60 businesses and partners at a business breakfast conference held on 17 September 2012. Appendix 1 contains a summary of the feedback received both from the business conference and from others.

The delivery of this strategy is very much a journey and there will be many other opportunities to influence and refine it along the way.

### 3. The Uttlesford Economy

#### 3.1 District profile

Below is a summary profile of the district:

- largest district in Essex by area
- two market towns Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow and six key villages including Stansted and Thaxted
- one of the most affluent areas in the country
- overall educational attainment is high
- average house prices significantly higher than the national average
- 80% of the jobs are in the service sector
- London Stansted Airport has over 10,000 people working in and around the airport

#### 3.2 What’s happening in the local economy?

The following table summarises the strengths, opportunities and issues facing the Uttlesford economy. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but is illustrative of the findings of the existing research – see Appendix 2.

<b>strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ high-level skills</li> <li>❑ well educated resident population (40% with NVQ4 or above, 29% nationally)</li> <li>❑ high employment rate</li> <li>❑ high average earnings of residents</li> <li>❑ excellent connectivity (road/rail/air/ports access)</li> <li>❑ London Stansted Airport UK’s third largest airport and key local</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>economic driver i.e. employs 1 in 12 Uttlesford residents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> quality of living</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> high quality natural environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> arts, cultural and heritage assets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> good quality employment land and range of sites and premises</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> varied existing business base including rural businesses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> existing clusters and drivers i.e. London Stansted Airport and Great Chesterford Research Park</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> proximity to London and Cambridge (internationally recognised brands, markets, world city functions and academic research)</li> </ul>
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opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> existing planned business expansions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> visitor economy including “staycation” trend</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> cluster development e.g. Stansted and Chesterford Research Park</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> joint promotion with adjoining Councils and partners to attract investment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> town centres</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sale of London Stansted Airport i.e. opportunity for local procurement</li> </ul>
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issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> comparatively low enterprise culture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> comparatively low local economy size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> comparatively low proportion of businesses who trade internationally</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> high levels of out commuting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> appropriate mix of skills and shortages of some skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> access to superfast broadband</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> rural issues e.g. accessing employment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> relative anonymity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> relative costs e.g. commercial space and house prices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ability to expand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> competition for jobs and investment i.e. Greater London/Thames Gateway</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> stagnant commercial stock (quality rather than quantity)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> low development activity</li> </ul>
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Sources: Local Futures – Place Profile 2011, Employment Land Study 2010, Employer and Business Survey 2009

#### 4. What local people, communities and business value

It’s the people of Uttlesford who live, work and play here that make it the place it is. Understanding what local people value about Uttlesford is a really important consideration in developing a strategy that seeks to help make it an even better place.

Based upon existing research (see Appendix 2) and insight gained from initial consultation with individuals, business owners and business groups the following are the main things (not in priority order) that people value:

- The natural environment
- The abundance of historic heritage
- The mainly rural landscape
- Small town and village life
- The sense of community in the towns, villages, between local businesses
- The connectivity via road, rail and air
- Access to London and Cambridge
- Continuous supply of local job opportunities

## **5. Back to the future**

Understanding what's currently happening in the local economy provides both insight into and a baseline from which to measure outcomes. However, it's also important to have a vision of what those who live, work and play in Uttlesford want the local economy to look like in the future. With this in mind actions can be put in place now that will help to create this future.

We have created below a "picture" of what the future might look like in Uttlesford around the year 2030.

"My ear-app tells me that I'm ten minutes away from Saffron Walden station and that my town centre shuttle will be waiting for me. Five minutes out from the station and I get the "What's happening in Walden today update" via my ear-app. I select to hear about the latest gallery openings and Sarah my virtual app-assistant books personal tours with two them. It's been ten years since I came to the opening of the Walden gallery and it's now recognised internationally as the leading gallery for contemporary art and a hot house for talent.

"I ask Sarah to select and book a lunch for me based upon what she knows I like to eat and what places are in the news. From the virtual town centre guide Sarah chooses The Four Seasons bistro overlooking the square. It's just achieved its third Food Factor award and has an offer on wine from the excellent local vineyards. Although now seen as old fashioned I decide to wait until arriving at the bistro before ordering. I know from the "what's happening in Saffron" update I received that the square will be bustling with people at the monthly contemporary art market and I'll join them after lunch.

I see from the Saffron news feed that the area has won the prestigious King William Golden Business award for the fifth year running for the mix of business and having more leading edge design companies than any other rural location in the UK. It appears world class design and products are being developed amongst the sheep and pigs. The shining star is the global business the Dunmow Farmers Corporation based just outside Great Dunmow that started in 2013 with help from a small business expert and now employs 50 people and exports locally-produced Dunmow Farmers wine all over the world.



It's getting late and my ear-app tells me that I can stay in the same room tonight I stayed in the last time I visited at the six stars Newport Hotel with a discount of 25% and will book me into the Audley End and Duxford tours tomorrow. It's too good an opportunity to miss!

I must say that I'm impressed at how local civic, business and community leaders had the foresight in the early part of this century to embark on making all this happen. Where similar places have declined due to the current triple dip recession Uttlesford has successfully remained a wonderful mix of heritage, culture and cutting edge business. I'll be back soon."

## **6. Action Plan**

The following sets out the actions that seek to build on the strengths, exploit opportunities and tackle issues identified in the analysis of the Uttlesford economy summarised in Section 3 of this strategy.

The actions have been selected on the basis that they are both deliverable, will have positive impacts on the Uttlesford economy and deliver the maximum returns for our investment. There are a large number of additional potential actions that could legitimately be undertaken that would also have positive impact. Given the resources available, one of the aims of the consultation was to identify and agree the key actions considered to be a priority for the next two years.

The actions will positively impact the rural economy including starting a business, access to broadband and the attraction of more visitors. The greatest employment and wealth creation potential comes from high growth new business and the strategy will concentrate its actions on high growth sectors through for example help to export, business mentoring and possibly discretionary rate relief.

All of the actions will be delivered in partnership with business, other local authorities such as the town and parish councils, relevant agencies and as part of wider partnerships such as the West Essex Alliance of local authorities and business.

Each of the actions set out an overall aim for each action, the key insights from the economic analysis and what the action is. The cost referred to in the proposed actions refers to the contribution made by the District Council via the £100,000 High Street Innovation fund granted to the Council by Central Government to use to provide support for business across the district.

It should be noted that additional funding and resources will be sought to deliver the maximum return and contribute to the longer term sustainability of the strategy.

## 6.1 Help Starting a Business

The majority of businesses in Uttlesford are micro businesses with 0-4 employees and they are particularly important for the rural economy. New businesses are a key source of future jobs, competitiveness and wealth creation.

Many previous business support programmes have suffered from vague objectives which have made it difficult to decide whether or not the programme has 'worked.'

Aim:

To achieve year on year growth in the number of business start-ups and in the number of new businesses surviving beyond 24 months of starting.

Key insights:

- Comparatively low enterprise culture (Uttlesford Business Survey 2009)
- Comparatively low local economy size (Uttlesford Business Survey 2009)
- Difficulties/barriers being faced by local start-ups (Federation of Small Business 2012)
  - access to, availability and cost of finance for business (21%)
  - lack of information, advice and support (20%)
  - access to superfast broadband (21%)
  - state of the economy (65%)
  - cost of materials, fuels or energy (41%)

Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions including utilising a total of £30,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund:

Action	<b>Provision of advice for starting a business</b>
Mechanism	1. Procurement of advice service 2. Support for volunteer mentors 3. Support for business network groups
Provider	1. Professional business advice service 2. Local volunteer mentor group 3. Networks e.g. Newport Business Association
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £20k (90% of total cost the remainder via contribution from people who are currently employed and not under threat of redundancy)
Delivered by	All operational by January 2013

Action	<b>Signposting to business information and advice</b>
Mechanism	1. Public access to business finance database 2. Signposting service via Council's website

Provider	1. Business finance database provider e.g. IDOX 2. The District Council
High Street Innovation Funding	1. Database total £10,000 (90% of total cost) 2. Nil from the High Street Innovation Fund
Delivered by	1. Operational by January 2013 2. Operational by December 2012

## 6.2 Exporting

Aim:

Increase the percentage of Uttlesford businesses exporting to 15% by 2014.

Key insights:

- Government and industry action plan “Expanding our Food and Drink Sectors Export Action Plan” January 2012
- 13% of Uttlesford businesses would consider exporting if suitable advice were available (Business Survey 2009)
- 13% of Uttlesford businesses currently export (Business Survey 2009) compared to 20% regionally and 25% nationally

Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions including utilising a total of £5,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund:

Action	<b>Analysis of the type of business and level of export experience and segmentation to work out what type of export information/support would be most useful to each segment</b>
Mechanism	Procurement of analysis
Provider	UKTI and Chambers of Commerce
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £3,000 (100% of total cost)
Delivered by	Completed by January 2013

Action	<b>Raise awareness of export opportunities</b>
Mechanism	1. Via networking with business groups and Council’s website 2. Hosting an export workshop
Provider	1. District Council 2. UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) and Chambers of Commerce
High Street Innovation Funding	1. Nil from the High Street Innovation Fund 2. Total £2,000 (100% of total cost)
Delivered	1. Operational by December 2012

by	2.Export workshop to be held March 2013
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### 6.3 Superfast Broadband

Aim:

To have the best superfast broadband network and connected economy in Essex.

Key insights:

- Rural broadband is a top priority for Central Government with a £530m investment in broadband to support superfast to 90% of premises by 2015
- Superfast broadband availability is patchy across the district and is critical for rural enterprise
- Lack of availability of superfast broadband appropriate to business requirements is a barrier to business success and to the attraction of new investment
- Rural areas are disadvantaged by the higher costs of broadband provision compared to urban areas and is an important enabler for community, education and business in rural areas
- A significant number of households and businesses are not receiving 2Mbits/s
- Demand for mobile data is estimated to increase by more than 500% over the next five years, fuelled by smart phones and mobile broadband data services. New '4G' spectrum capacity is becoming available to meet this mobile network. Wholesale mobile providers are expected to extend their coverage to over 98% of the UK population and to significant mobile 'not spots'. This is to be supported by a £150m infrastructure fund from government and substantial additional investment from providers themselves. The existing 3G coverage is patchy across the district and is critical for rural enterprise

Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions with nil contribution from the High Street Innovation Fund:

Action	<b>Support the market to deliver superfast broadband across the District</b>
Mechanism	1. Grant to Buzcom to enable wireless superfast broadband 2. Bid to Broadband Delivery UK for funding to support the delivery of superfast broadband
Provider	1. Uttlesford District Council 2. Essex County Council lead authority
High Street Innovation Funding	1. Nil from High Street Innovation Fund with total potential grant to Buzcom from the District Council of £30,000
Delivered	All ongoing

by	
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## 6.4 Town Centres

Uttlesford's two market towns Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow and six key villages including Stansted and Thaxted provide the heart of their community in terms of employment, services, transport and residential population. Each of the town and village centres faces challenges from out-of-town competition, on line retail and slow recovery from recession. The Government has provided a national policy context to promote town centres and high streets influenced by the 2011 "Portas Review."

Work on improving the vitality and viability of the District's market towns and key villages has been undertaken over a number of years. It is important both to recognise and build upon what has already been put in place. Saffron Walden Town Council, for example, is sponsoring the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Saffron Walden and a number of other plans over the last decade including a Town Centre Plan in 2003, Health Check in 2006 and Town Council Plan in 2007.

### Aim:

Uttlesford's four town centres to offer viable and exciting alternative to out-of-town shopping, internet shopping and competing town centres. The delivery of year on year increases in footfall for each of the four town centres.

### Key insights:

- each town centre has a large proportion of independent well established retailers and other businesses
- with ambitious plans all four town centres have the opportunity and potential to deliver development and significant performance improvement
- major responsibility for future town centre vitality lies with the local authorities and partners
- the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) provides the most comprehensive and immediate repository of advice and expertise on managing town centres

### Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions including utilising a total of £35,500 from the High Street Innovation Fund:

Action	<b>Join the ATCM</b>
Mechanism	Become a member of the ATCM
Provider	District Council
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £500 per annum

Delivered by	Completed
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Action	<b>Town centre management plans for each of the town centres in Uttlesford developed in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Town Councils and initial delivery</b>
Mechanism	<p>Each town centre plan would include an ambitious vision supported by evidence, delivery realism and enable the council to sustain a “town centre first” policy. Created and implemented by a fit for purpose partnership or “Town Team” with dedicated resources. The development of a plan for each of the town centres would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ indentifying who should be involved</li> <li>○ review of past and present information and plans</li> <li>○ holding a “visioning” exercise</li> <li>○ agreeing clear objectives</li> </ul> <p>A critical initial step will be to undertake a town centre health check completed by town centre customers to include first impressions of the town centre, shopping and services, entertainment leisure and tourism, public facilities, car access, public transport access, pedestrian experience, delivery access, car parks, streets/public realm, security and existing action, activities and marketing.</p>
Provider	District Council working with town centre partners
High Street Innovation Funding	Total cost for plans and initial delivery of £35,000 (100% of total cost)
Delivered by	Great Dunmow process commenced, plan in place March 2013 Saffron Walden plan in place June 2013 Stansted and Thaxted plans in place August 2013

## 6.5 Inward Investment

Aim;

Promote specific and targeted propositions to attract inward investment. We define inward investment as any new investment in Uttlesford including foreign direct investment and expansion of existing businesses such as the attraction of a new process or department.

Key insights:

- commercial investment deals over the last three years have focused on the North of Uttlesford i.e. Chesterford Research Park and M11 corridor/Stansted
- two key clusters to focus on to attract investment the Greater Cambridge biotech research and development and M11/Stansted air related

- close proximity to international recognised brands in London (named the Top European city in fDi Magazine poll 2012) and Cambridge (ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in Europe)
- the international connectivity of London Stansted Airport i.e. flights to over 150 European Destinations

#### Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions including utilising a total of £4,500 from the High Street Innovation Fund:

Action	<b>Attraction of investment into M11 corridor/Stansted</b>
Mechanism	Creation and delivery of inward investment plan with clearly defined respective roles of partners, sector focus with key messages and propositions, target audiences, coordinated approach to promotion, internal process to support inward investment e.g. enquiry handling and effective engagement with UK Trade and Industry and Invest in Essex
Provider	Partnership with West Essex Alliance (WEA) and London Anglia Growth Partnership (LAGP)*
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £2,000 (contribution to promotional campaign)
Delivered by	Operational by March 2013

\* WEA comprises Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forrester local authorities. LAGP comprises business groups, further education colleges, London Boroughs and District Councils covering Hackney out via the Upper Lee Valley to Stansted and on to Cambridge.

Action	<b>Attraction of investment into North Uttlesford</b>
Mechanism	Creation and delivery of inward investment plan focused on Greater Cambridge with “Cambridge” as the visual identity
Provider	Partnership with Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £2,000 (contribution to promotional campaign)
Delivered by	Operational by March 2013

Action	<b>Soft landing package for investors to ensure positive “welcome” for investors i.e. “free” commercial space for initial period</b>
Mechanism	Recruit business representative groups, commercial space providers, banks, lawyers, recruitment advisers

Provider	District Council in partnership with WEA and Invest Essex
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £500 for promotional material
Delivered by	Operational by April 2013

## 6.6 Visitors

The visitor economy is made up of:

- Visitors – leisure, business, visiting family and friends, day and overnight stays
- Supply chain – core = accommodation, attractions, bars and restaurants
- Related – retail, transport, other services i.e. food suppliers

Aim:

Year on year increase in the number of people visiting Uttlesford and the number of visits by the residents of Uttlesford with “wise growth” balancing the aspirations for growth in the number of visitors with the principles of sustainability

Key insights:

- visitor economy is important to Uttlesford and rural areas in particular
- contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment
- relatively unspoilt countryside, towns and villages of considerable charm
- a number of regionally and nationally important visitor attractions including Audley End House, Bridge End Gardens, Fry Art Gallery, St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Saffron Walden Museum, Priors’ Hall Barn, Gardens of Easton Lodge, Great Dunmow Maltings, Mountfitchet Castle and Toy Museum, St Mary’s Church Stansted, Aythorpe Roding Windmill, Finchingfield Windmill, Hatfield Forest, Thaxted Morris Festival, Dunmow Flitch, St Botolph’s Saxon Church, Hadstock and Chickney St Mary’s
- outstanding tourism information service in Saffron Walden
- proximity to Cambridge and London and their huge international draw
- represents the second most important income strand for the district after retail spend
- creates employment and opportunities for business
- provides the ability to supplement the income streams of business i.e. farm diversification
- supports the economic viability of communities e.g. shops, pubs, restaurants, transport
- the important role of London Stansted Airport

Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions including utilising a total of £25,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund:



Action	<b>Create or Develop an Existing Destination Management Plan (DMP) and Initial Delivery</b>
Mechanism	<p>DMP will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ tourism performance and impacts</li> <li>▪ visitor supply chain including historic buildings</li> <li>▪ working structures and communication</li> <li>▪ overall appeal and appearance, access, infrastructure and visitor services (this could marketing an area broader than Uttlesford where this makes sense)</li> <li>▪ destination image, branding and promotion (marketing)</li> <li>▪ product mix – development needs and opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>The DMP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set a strategic direction for the destination over period of up to 5 years.</li> <li>▪ Contain prioritised actions within an annual rolling programme, identifying stakeholders responsible for their delivery.</li> </ul> <p>The DMP process will commence with a workshop of all interested parties in October 2012</p>
Provider	District Council and partners including Saffron Walden Tourist Information and Visit Essex
High Street Innovation Funding	Total cost £23,500 (contribution to creation and delivery of DMP)
Delivered by	DMP finalised in May 2013

Action	<b>Join Visit Essex</b>
Mechanism	Become a member of Visit Essex
Provider	Visit Essex
High Street Innovation Funding	Total £1,500 per annum
Delivered by	Join December 2012

## 6.7 The Council

The Council has a leading role in creating the right environment for local businesses to flourish and right environment for growth. In doing so it needs to lead by example and display consistent civic leadership.

Aim:

Ensure that the Council is supportive of and open for business

Action

To deliver the aim we will undertake the following actions:

Action	<b>Procurement policy</b>
Mechanism	<p>Ensuring that local businesses have the opportunity to supply the Council with goods and services by communicating how to exploit the opportunity i.e. via networking with business groups.</p> <p>The Council procures around £13m per annum in goods and services and everything with a value of £50k plus goes out to tender via the Procurement Agency for Essex website <a href="http://www.paessex.gov.uk">www.paessex.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Council must also achieve best value in the supply of goods and services.</p> <p>Councils also use this website as a potential supplier list.</p> <p>Procurement of goods and services with a value of £30,000 up to £50,000 requires three quotes to be obtained and a minimum of one from local Uttlesford business.</p> <p>In addition, working with developers and contractors to procure locally either via legal agreement or at least best endeavor and support for local initiatives such as London Stansted Airport's "Meet the Buyer" events</p>
Provider	Council
High Street Innovation Funding	Nil from High Street Innovation Fund
Delivered by	Procurement policy in place

Action	<b>Discretionary National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief</b>
Mechanism	Inclusion of businesses in the Council's discretionary NNDR policy. An assessment will be made as to the viability of enabling NNDR relief to attract inward investment from specific business types and/or in specific locations such as town centres and rural communities
Provider	Council
High Street Innovation Funding	Nil from High Street Innovation Fund, however, there will be an ongoing cost of up to around £50,000 per annum (subject to budget process)
Delivered by	Policy in place by February 2013 for implementation from April 2013

Action	<b>Apprenticeships</b>
Mechanism	The Council will employ up to four apprentices in decorating, carpentry and business administration

Provider	Council – Housing and Environmental Services
High Street Innovation Funding	Nil from High Street Innovation Fund £40,000 funded from the New Homes Bonus and transferred from the General Fund into the Housing Revenue Account Potential funding from Essex County Council – Diversity into Apprenticeships Project
Delivered by	Apprentices recruited by November 2012

Action	<b>Touch points with local businesses</b>
Mechanism	Identify all the touch points the Council has with business i.e. website, reception, call centre, officers, members and assess in terms of service quality including ease of access, quality of information, accuracy of information
Provider	Council
High Street Innovation Funding	£0
Delivered by	Completed by September 2013

## 7. Summary

This strategy has been created with the aid of local people, businesses and partners on what the strengths, opportunities and issues are that the Uttlesford economy faces and how the District Council should help in its growth and development.

The strategy seeks to help the performance of the Uttlesford economy by enabling people, communities and business to be what they want to be.

The actions and associated spend of the £100,000 High Street Innovation Fund is as follows:

- Help to start and stay in business £30,000
- Help to start exporting or export more £5,000
- Access to superfast broadband £0
- Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford £4,500
- Help for town centres with their viability and vitality £35,500
- Help to persuade more people to visit Uttlesford £25,000

## Appendices

### 1. Consultation on Draft Economic Development Strategy

#### i. Business Conference 17 September 2012

**Attended by 60 local businesses, partners and agencies.**

### **i.i Evaluation Form Summary**

	Excellent	Good	Poor
Event			
Content	50%	50%	
Organisation	100%		
Presentations	80%	20%	
Facilitated Discussion	70%	30%	
Networking	70%	30%	

#### Additional Evaluation Form Comments

1. Aspects of conference most valuable
  - Council's positive action
  - Discussion around Council's policies and impact on business
  - Announcement concerning the opportunities for local procurement from London Stansted Airport
2. Aspects of conference disappointing or could be improved
  - Need for more of such forums
  - Greater clarity on expected outcomes from conference
  - More opportunity for networking
  - More quick fixes as part of strategy
3. Additional comments on the conference
  - Happy to help in the delivery of the strategy
  - Must not lose momentum
4. Conference administration, catering, etc
  - Extremely good
  - Catering, service and venue excellent
  - Look for central location

### **i.ii Facilitated Feedback Summary**

1. Are we focusing on the "right" areas?
  - About right
  - Key is access to superfast broadband
  - Must be sustainable beyond two years of the strategy
  - Agriculture is important
  - Lack of availability of people with manual skills
  - "Green" tech important
  - Need certainty over development strategy
  - Need for a "technology" centre with managed workspace
  - Use NNDR and planning process to incentivise business locations
  - Don't spread funding and other resources too thinly focus on two or three core needs

- Don't duplicate other central government roles but promote their services locally
2. Are the actions set out in the draft strategy the "right" actions?
    - Encourage more local sourcing of goods and services
    - Help enable a joined up approach to funding i.e. access to capital funding
    - Mobile coverage is not complete
    - Council must be consistent across departments in its approach to and relationship with business
    - Need a central source of information about starting a business
    - Consider "pop up shops" as part of the town centre plans
    - Work out how to attract visitors rather than them passing through
    - Review car parking charges in the town centres
    - Focus on tourism and the attraction of a new hotel
  3. How can we work together to deliver the strategy?
    - Regular communication very important including with residents
    - Just ask!
    - Support existing events and groups
    - Engage with residents and utilise their skills and networks
  4. Other feedback
    - Demonstrate what can be done rather than what can't be done
    - Must nominate a link person/role between Council and London Stansted Airport
    - Don't isolate Uttlesford from surrounding areas
    - Develop 5, 10 and 15 year plans

## **ii. Additional Feedback Received from Local Businesses, Agencies, Partners, etc**

1. Are we focusing on the "right" areas?
  - Development of a future workforce appropriately qualified and skilled to support business development
  - Ensure that schools address the employability competencies of young people
  - More analysis of local economic data should be undertaken
2. Are the actions set out in the draft strategy the "right" actions?
  - Must leverage the Greater Cambridge effect
  - Consider re-branding some of the industrial estates
  - Focus the spend on practical support for business rather than more research and surveys
  - Engage town centre landlords on rents
  - Town centre car parking charges need reviewing
  - Increase visits from the residents of Uttlesford

3. How can we work together to deliver the strategy?
  - Ensure that the contribution and role of partners such as the town councils is recognised in the strategy

4. Other feedback

- Strategy needs to be ambitious to avoid Uttlesford becoming a “commuter only” location
- Must cut any “red tape”
- Reflect the abundance of the historic heritage in Uttlesford
- Produce a review of the Buzcom initiative
- London Stansted Airport is a vital asset

## **2. Existing Research**

- i. Uttlesford Business Needs Survey 2009
- ii. Rural Business Research, A Study of the Support Requirements of Retailers in Rural Essex, 2008
- iii. Essex Economic Assessment
- iv. Re-imagining Urban Spaces to Help Revitalise Our High Streets, Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2012
- v. “Local leadership, local growth” Local Government Association, June 2012

## **3. Existing Strategies**

- i. Integrated County Strategy, 2010
- ii. Uttlesford Futures, “Sustainable Community Strategy A Vision for our future 2018,” 2008