

Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy 2014-16

Builds on the success of the 2012-14 strategy in enabling people, communities and business to be what they want to be by providing:

Help to start and stay in business

Access to superfast broadband and mobile communication

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

June 2014

Foreword

In the Economic Development Strategy 2012-14 we set out how your District Council and our partners will play their part in maintaining a strong and inclusive local economy by helping people, communities and business to be what they want to be. Over the last two years much has been achieved by working closely with our businesses not least of which is the coming together of town centre businesses to form “Town Teams” in both Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

This updated Economic Development strategy sets out what has been achieved and how we will maintain and enhance this over the next two year period.

We are grateful for all the feedback received throughout these two years and specifically at the business breakfast held in January 2014. This feedback has helped us to shape the strategy that will continue to provide the maximum return on our collective investment.

We aim to focus all our resources in a way that makes our District a place in which businesses and their employees thrive and one that is seen to be truly “open for business”. We understand that as your Council it’s important not to stand still and so we will continue to innovate, change and invest in “our” Uttlesford.

Councillor Howard Rolfe
Cabinet Member Uttlesford District Council

Contents

1. Executive Summary	Page 1
2. Introduction	Page 2
3. The Uttlesford Economy	Page 4
4. Action Plan	Page 6
4.1 Starting a Business	
4.2 Superfast Broadband and Mobile Communication	
4.3 Town Centres	
4.4 Attracting Investment	
4.5 Attracting Visitors	
4.6 The Council	
5. Summary	Page 17
Appendices	Page 18

1. Executive Summary

In 2012 we developed an Economic Development Strategy that sought 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.

The strategy focused on delivering a few things really well and where with investment real impact could be made, for example;

- Enabling over 100 people to attend business workshops from social media to bookkeeping with 95% of participants rating the workshops as excellent and in addition to date 5 new businesses created;
- Attracting over £400,000 of grant funding to support 14 local rural businesses with their expansion, generated £350,000 of matched private sector funding and the creation of 12 additional jobs and apprenticeships; and
- Creating two Town Teams of skilled and experienced local businesspeople and other stakeholders and if regarded as part time paid posts would have an estimated actual total cost per annum of £100k.

The estimated cost of implementing the action plan is approximately £970,000. It is proposed that £101,650 will be funded from existing 2014/15 Economic Development budgets, £203,000 from the Economic Development Reserve and an estimated £664,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The proposed enhancement of Swan Meadow Car Park capacity is estimated to earn additional income of £14,300 per annum.

The 2014-16 strategy continues the delivery of initiatives in place from the first two years it also focuses on the future resourcing of the Town Teams, assesses the market for business workspace and develops further the relationship with and between local businesses.

2. Introduction

2.1 Context

The national context for this updated strategy remains consistent with the previous two years and can be summarised by:

- continued recovery from recession
- developing institutional landscape for economic development:
 - 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 including for economic development and particularly from 2016 onwards
- 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 can be 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 Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Teams, London Stansted Cambridge Consortium, West Essex Alliance, Newport Business Association, Stansted Business Forum, Great Dunmow Chamber of Trade, Saffron Walden Initiative and Stansted Airport Chamber of Commerce
- Economic development and spatial planning framework provided by the Local Plan 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 2014-16 strategy builds upon the 2012-14 Economic Development Strategy that identified the strengths, opportunities, issues of highest importance the actions which would have the greatest impact. The strategy sits within and supports the delivery of longer term holistic plans looking at the District as a whole such as developed the Local Plan.

In continuing to focus 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.

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 the Economic Plan for Essex, LSCC, SELEP, GCGP LEP 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

Throughout the last two years feedback has been continuously sort and changes made to the 2012-14 programme.

In particular a discussion of what has been delivered in the last two years and how this will continue over the next two years was held with 70 businesses and partners at a business breakfast event held in January 2014. Appendix 1 contains a summary of the feedback received from the business breakfast.

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.

strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ high-level skills ❑ well educated resident population (40% with NVQ4 or above, 29% nationally) ❑ high employment rate ❑ town centres with large proportions of independent traders and Town Teams ❑ high average earnings of residents ❑ excellent connectivity (road/rail/air/ports access) ❑ London Stansted Airport UK’s third largest airport and key local economic driver i.e. employs 1 in 12 Uttlesford residents ❑ quality of living ❑ high quality natural environment ❑ arts, cultural and heritage assets ❑ good quality employment land and range of sites and premises ❑ varied existing business base including rural businesses ❑ existing clusters and drivers i.e. London Stansted Airport and Chesterford Research Park ❑ proximity to London and Cambridge (internationally recognised brands, markets, world city functions and academic research) ❑ promotional brands of Think Cambridge and London Stansted
-----------	---

	Cambridge Consortium
--	----------------------

opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> pool of people with the skills and resources to start and stay in business <input type="checkbox"/> existing planned business expansions <input type="checkbox"/> visitor economy including “staycation” trend <input type="checkbox"/> cluster development e.g. Stansted and Chesterford Research Park <input type="checkbox"/> joint promotion with adjoining Councils and partners to attract investment through Think Cambridge and London Stansted Cambridge Consortium <input type="checkbox"/> town centres
----------------------	--

issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> high levels of out commuting <input type="checkbox"/> appropriate mix of skills and shortages of some skills <input type="checkbox"/> access to superfast broadband <input type="checkbox"/> rural issues e.g. accessing employment <input type="checkbox"/> relative anonymity <input type="checkbox"/> relative costs e.g. commercial space and house prices <input type="checkbox"/> ability to expand <input type="checkbox"/> competition for jobs and investment i.e. Greater London/Thames Gateway <input type="checkbox"/> stagnant commercial stock <input type="checkbox"/> low development activity
---------------	--

Sources: Local Futures – Place Profile 2011, Employment Land Study 2010, Employer and Business Survey 2009

4. Action Plan

The following sets out the actions that seek to build on and develop the initiatives over the last two years.

The actions have been selected on the basis that they are both deliverable, and continue to provide the maximum returns for our investment. 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 are designed to positively impact the rural economy including starting a business, the attraction of grant funding for expansion, access to superfast broadband and the attraction of more visitors.

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

The following sets out:

- the aim for each action;
- the key insights from the economic analysis;
- what has been delivered against the 2012-14 strategy and action plan;
- what the actions for 2014-16 are

4.1 Help Starting a Business

The majority of businesses in Uttlesford are micro businesses with 1-4 employees and they are particularly important for the rural economy. New businesses remain a key source of future jobs, competitiveness and wealth creation.

Aim:

Year on year growth in the number of businesses starting up and surviving beyond 24 months.

Key insights:

- Pool of local people with the skills and resources to start and stay in business (2011 Census)
- 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%)

Delivery 2012-14

- over 100 people have benefitted from “free” business workshops including be your own boss, book keeping, business 2 business, create a business idea, PR and free publicity, social media, speaking for business and your business on video:
 - 95% of participants rated the workshops as excellent
 - 80% have experienced real business benefit from attending the workshops including sales growth
 - of the 20 people who were not in business prior to attending the workshops so far 5 have gone on to start a new business.
- Plus:
 - 4 retail selling skills workshops have been held
 - 23 people on Employment Skills Courses (job seekers)
 - 16 people on Business planning 5 day workshop (job seekers)
 - 30 pre-start counselling sessions and 3 business health checks
- creation of the Stansted Business Forum:
 - self-sustaining with over 60 paid members and growing
 - created the Stansted Local Directory distributed to every household both in and around Stansted
 - created and delivered the Summer Fayre
 - created the “Think Local, Buy Local” campaign
- access to business finance database “open4business” launched June 2013 and to date:
 - 220 businesses registered
 - 160 searches completed

- via the Eastern Plateau programme:
 - attracted over £400,000 of grant funding for 14 rural businesses to support their expansion
 - generated £350,000 of matched private sector funding
 - enabled the creation of 12 additional jobs and apprenticeships

Action 2014-16

Action	Provision of business advice
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Assist Helpline ▪ A dedicated telephone and email response to assist local businesses with questions, giving advice and signposting where applicable
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ignite Enterprise Agency
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 months trial commencing May 2014 ▪ Business model developed to continue the service post trial if successful

Action	Provision of business support
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Workshops ▪ 20 half day workshops
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ignite Enterprise Agency
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme recommences June 2014

Action	Business database
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive database of local businesses ▪ Communicate more effectively with businesses ▪ Develop relationship with businesses ▪ Enable more local inter trading ▪ Encourage and discuss business growth and the support available
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ignite Enterprise Agency
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Database available August 2014 with a minimum of 1,100 businesses listed

Action	Supporting existing business forums
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ business, travel, tourism and careers event ▪ marketing support e.g. advertising in newsletters
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stansted Airport Chamber of Commerce ▪ Various forums including Newport and Stansted
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ business, travel, tourism and careers event June 2014 ▪ marketing support ongoing

Action	Finance for business
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eastern Plateau ▪ access to business finance database “open4business”
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eastern Plateau Programme ▪ IDOX (2nd year of two year lease)
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ new funding period for Eastern Plateau from 2015 ▪ new two year lease commences November 2014

4.2 Superfast Broadband and Mobile Communication

Aim:

To ensure businesses throughout the District have access to appropriate superfast broadband and mobile communication.

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 2016
- Superfast broadband availability is patchy across the district and is critical for rural enterprise
- “Blackspots” exist for mobile communication
- 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

Delivery 2012-14

- Buzcom – wirefree superfast broadband
 - approximately 70% of area of the District covered
 - 2014 over 700 subscribers
 - 140 are business subscribers many of whom are rural based businesses who are now able to access superfast broadband
 - several businesses would have either had to move and/or not expand if access to superfast broadband had not been

made available for example Novacom based at Radwinter , Spine-issimus Ltd at Wendens Ambo and Juice Creative Ltd at Hatfield Heath.

- Essex Superfast – fibre superfast broadband
 - 2016 everyone access to 2mbps broadband
 - 2016 65% access to superfast broadband

Action 2014-16

Action	Support the delivery of superfast broadband across the District
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant awarded to Buzcom to enable wireless superfast broadband ▪ Work with Superfast Essex ▪ Procure extension of wireless broadband to reach all parts of Uttlesford
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uttlesford District Council ▪ Essex County Council
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ongoing

Action	Mobile communication coverage
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ improved infrastructure enabling wider mobile coverage
Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mobile Infrastructure Project ARQIVA
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ nil
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2016

4.3 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.

Work on improving the vitality and viability of the District’s market towns and key villages has been undertaken over a number of years. Most recently the creation of the private sector led and run Town Teams in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

Aim:

Uttlesford's two town centres and two largest key villages, Stansted and Thaxted, to offer viable and exciting alternative to out-of-town and internet shopping and competing town centres. The delivery of year on year increases in footfall for each of the town and village centres.

Key insights:

- each town and village centre has a large proportion of independent well established retailers and other businesses
- ambitious plans for the four centres have the opportunity and potential to deliver development and significant performance improvement

Delivery 2012-14

- extensive market research and consultation undertaken in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow including consumer surveys, market data, mystery shops and town centre audits.
- creation of two Town Teams of skilled and experienced local businesspeople and other stakeholders and if regarded as part time paid posts would have an estimated actual total cost per annum of £100k
- creation of and support for Saffron Walden Town Team
 - supporting independents promotions
 - assessed the impact of the temporary closure of the Waitrose car park
 - provided summer and winter hanging baskets
- creation of and support for Great Dunmow Town Team
 - put in place a car parking refund scheme at no cost to the District Council
 - enabled a Christmas lights display through raising funding including £2k sponsorship and installed and operated the lights
 - created a discount voucher promotion
- Stansted initial assessment undertaken
- membership of both the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) and Action for Market Towns (AMT)
- creation and adoption of the Council A-board policy

Action 2014-16

Action	Membership of ATCM and AMT
Mechanism	▪ Membership of the ATCM and AMT
Provider	▪ ATCM and AMT
Delivery	▪ Ongoing

Action	Village centre management plans for Stansted and Thaxted developed in partnership with key stakeholders
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of a plan for each of the town centres would involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ indentifying who should be involved ○ review of past and present information and plans ○ holding a “visioning” exercise ○ agreeing clear objectives
Provider	▪ District Council working with town centre partners
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stansted plan in place September 2014 ▪ Thaxted plan in place March 2015

Action	Review of Council managed car parks
Mechanism	▪ Review of quality and quantity of car park provision within Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted and consider any improvements necessary
Provider	▪ AMT, NEPP and UDC
Delivery	▪ Within 1 st year, any outcomes phased as appropriate

Action	New car parking capacity in Saffron Walden
Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alterations to the layout of Swan Meadow car park ▪ Feasibility studies into additional options
Provider	▪ UDC
Funding	▪ Strategic Initiatives Fund
Delivery	▪ Within 1 st year, any outcomes phased as appropriate

4.4 Inward Investment

Aim;

Promote specific and targeted propositions to attract inward investment.

Key insights:

- commercial investment deals over the last three years have focused on the 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 7th in Europe)
- the international connectivity of London Stansted Airport i.e. flights to over 150 European Destinations

Delivery 2012-14

- creation of the “Think Cambridge” brand and partnership of local authorities
- Think Cambridge website and exhibiting at the MACH exhibition April 2014 where £800 contribution levered in £15k of additional contributions and time
 - over 20 leads are actively being followed up
- engagement with the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC) and the promotion of the area

Action 2014-16

Action	Attraction of investment into M11 corridor/Stansted
Mechanism	▪ LSCC inward investment plan
Provider	▪ LSCC
Delivery	▪ ongoing

Action	Attraction of investment into North Uttlesford
Mechanism	▪ Think Cambridge investment plan
Provider	▪ Think Cambridge
Delivery	▪ ongoing

Action	Shirehill Industrial Estate
Mechanism	▪ Marketing of Shirehill Industrial Estate via a “Shirehill Business Forum”
Provider	▪ District Council with key stakeholders i.e. businesses occupying premises on the industrial estate
Delivery	▪ business forum in place September 2014

4.5 Visitors

The visitor economy is made up of:

- Visitors – leisure, business, visiting family and friends, day and overnight stays
- Core supply chain – accommodation, attractions, bars and restaurants
- Related supply chain – 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 Flich, 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

Delivery 2012-14

- Uttlesford Tourism Action Plan
- tourism summit January 2014 attended by over 70 tourism businesses and stakeholders

Action 2014-16

Action	Create Uttlesford Tourism Team and Deliver Uttlesford Tourism Plan
Mechanism	▪ Creation of an Uttlesford tourism team to oversee the delivery of the tourism plan
Provider	▪ District Council and partners including Saffron Walden Tourist Information and Visit Essex
Delivery	▪ Tourism team in place July 2014 ▪ Delivery against plan July 2015

Action	Annual Membership of Visit Essex
Mechanism	▪ Renew membership of Visit Essex
Provider	▪ Visit Essex
Delivery	▪ April 2014

4.6 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

Delivery 2012-14

- Job Centre Plus workshops to be delivered in Saffron Walden
- Council procurement policy in place
- Attendance at the “Meet the Buyers” event
- Council created appointed three apprentice posts in 2012 in Housing and Environmental Services and the current apprentices are approaching the end of their two year programmes.

Action

Action	Discretionary National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief
Mechanism	▪ An assessment will be made as to the viability of enabling NNDR relief to attract inward investment and expansion of existing businesses
Provider	▪ Council
Delivery	▪ Policy at Appendix 4

5. Summary

The 2014-16 strategy continues to improve the performance of the Uttlesford economy by enabling people, communities and business to be what they want to be.

The 2014-16 actions are as follows:

- **Help to start and stay in business**
 - Provision of business advice
 - Provision of business support
 - Business database
 - Supporting existing business forums
 - Finance for business
- **Access to superfast broadband and mobile communications**
 - Grant to Buzcom
 - Procure extension of wireless broadband coverage to all parts of the district
- **Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford**
 - Attraction of investment into M11 corridor/Stansted
 - Attraction of investment into North Uttlesford
 - Shirehill Industrial Estate
- **Help for town centres with their viability and vitality**
 - Management plans for Stansted and Thaxted
 - Membership of ATCM and AMT
 - Swan Meadow car park capacity enhancement,
 - Feasibility of additional car parking options
- **Help to persuade more people to visit Uttlesford**
 - Annual Membership of Visit Essex
 - Uttlesford Tourism Plan

The estimated cost of implementing the action plan is approaching £1million during the two year period. It is proposed that £101,650 will be funded from existing 2014/15 Economic Development budgets, £203,000 from the Economic Development Reserve and an estimated £664,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The proposed enhancement of Swan Meadow Car Park capacity is estimated to earn additional income of £14,300 per annum.

The Economic Development Reserve includes the £43,000 balance of the High Street Innovation funding and £15,000 remaining from an original grant of £30,000 given to Buzcom from the 2009/10 Local Authority Business Growth Initiative monies to provide the District with a wireless superfast broadband service. Release of the remaining £15,000 of the original grant is subject to milestones being achieved.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Consultation on Draft Economic Development Strategy

Business Conference 8th January 2014

Attended by 70 local businesses, partners and agencies.

Evaluation Form Summary

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

Saffron Walden Business breakfast Jan 8th 2014			
Questionnaire analysis			
Content	Excellent	Good	Poor
	12	10	0
Organisation	Excellent	Good	Poor
	17	5	0
Speakers presentation/content	Excellent	Good	Poor
	6	13	0
Networking	Excellent	Good	Poor
	7	13	0

Comments of the event

The majority of comments were highly positive/constructive (46 responses). These included :

Table discussions being topic specific , exchange of ideas and networking were valuable (15); Catering and venue were very good

(15) ; Discussion of the future of town centres was interesting (2); wider business community lacks awareness of town centre (Saffron Walden) businesses (2); Enjoyable (1).

There were two neutral comments – one about the quality of catering and one which said that UDC needs to be more aware of the value of small business to the district.

Constructive comments:

Please make a list of attendee contact info available (2); would like greater frequency of events like this (2); would like the even to be longer with more opportunities for business to business contact /networking and more presentations (5); the seating system limits the opportunity for networking (1); would like better management of the feedback (1); feedback should be circulated (1); speakers should have been split 2 then break followed by the final presentation.

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

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

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

Appendix 2. Existing Research

- Uttlesford Business Needs Survey 2009
- Rural Business Research, A Study of the Support Requirements of Retailers in Rural Essex, 2008
- Essex Economic Assessment
- Re-imagining Urban Spaces to Help Revitalise Our High Streets, Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2012

- “Local leadership, local growth” Local Government Association, June 2012

Appendix 3. Existing Strategies

- Uttlesford Local Plan 2005
- Uttlesford draft Local Plan 2014
- Integrated County Strategy, 2010
- Uttlesford Futures, “Sustainable Community Strategy A Vision for our future 2018,” 2008