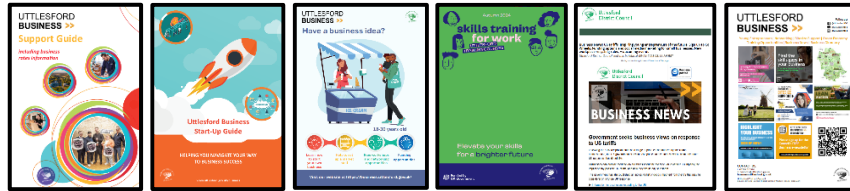


## **Appendix B: Economic Development 2024/25**

### **1. Communications**



### **2. Business networking and support**

#### **a. Uttlesford Business Awards**

The Business Awards were held at Saffron Hall in February with students from Stansted Airport College/Harlow College providing the catering and front of house.

Almost 180 nominations were received for 72 businesses across the 12 categories.

This year a 'People's choice' award was added and the public were encouraged to vote for their favourite nominated business. 12,496 votes were cast with Saffron Hall Trust winning the award with 6% of the total votes.

Winners received a trophy, bottle of Saffron Grange English sparkling wine and a behind the scenes tour of Stansted Airport.

*"It was a very good event, I could see how much hard work had gone into it."* – Dan Turpin (MAG)

*"Thank you, it was a great evening, I was delighted and surprised to win."*  
– Kate (Vintage Style Living)



b. Business breakfast

The annual business breakfast was held at Down Hall Hotel in September with 45 attendees.

Businesses enjoyed breakfast rolls and pastries whilst taking part in 3 mini workshops and networking with like-minded businesses.

No plans to host such a formal event in 2025/26. The focus will be on smaller, targeted networking events.

*“Thank you for organising such a successful Business Breakfast meeting at Down Hall.”*

*“It was wonderful to connect to new and old faces and learn from the business tropics being presented.”*

c. Ambitious Women in Essex

4 events were held in 2023/24 including the popular Start-up September panel discussion aimed at female entrepreneurs which was attended by 45 people.



d. London Stansted: Meet the Buyers

UDC were sponsors of this year's event, one of the largest procurement events in the East of England, held at the Radisson Hotel, Stansted Airport.

There were 150 attendees in total: 29 buyers, 12 exhibitors and 136 supplier businesses.

e. Chesterford Research Park

We are holding a monthly pop-up business support session at Chesterford Research Park inviting along other support agencies including ECC's Ambitious Essex team, West Essex Business Support, Backing Essex Business and Innovate UK.



f. Stansted Mountfitchet business support drop-in

A pilot scheme offering a drop-in business support morning was held at Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council with a business support officer in situ to engage with budding entrepreneurs and businesses.

Sadly the sessions had limited uptake and resources have now been directed elsewhere

g. Business Bitesize

A monthly online business support session has been launched. Sessions last for 30-40 minutes and feature a different guest speaker every month. Uptake was initially slow but has started to build with good feedback from attendees.

“Absolutely brilliant yesterday”

“Thank you very much for organising the Bitesize session last week, I found it to be very informative and hopefully will help us become a bit better with our social media!”

h. Rural Engagement outreach programme

Considerable efforts have been made this year to engage with rural businesses. The pandemic saw us focus on our High Street/town centre

businesses; we are keen to engage with our rural businesses and instigated a pro-active programme of visiting business parks, villages and farm yard based commercial centres.

### **3. Young entrepreneurs and school engagement**

As part of the Young Entrepreneurs programme, funded as part of our membership of the NEEB, we have been engaging with young people in local schools highlighting the possibilities of starting their own business either as an alternative to university or as a side hustle to help fund their studies. The initiative has been well received by the schools and we are being asked to attend more events. We have also encouraged some local business owners to step up to mentor young people thinking of starting their own business.

*“Thanks so much for this morning - hit the mark perfectly.”*

*“Thank you so much Rachael for your time and insights today – really landed well and we appreciate you walking through it with our Y12s.”*



### **4. Discover Uttlesford**

The Discover Uttlesford initiative has continued in 2024/25. Engagement levels are down on previous years, but this was to be expected as no paid for advertising has been done.

Over the summer an initiative with the Museum saw a number of photo opportunities placed at visitor attractions to engage more people. This was very well received by stakeholders, many of whom were very encouraged that the council was trying to help attract more visitors.

An emphasis this year was on Staycations and creating itineraries of things to do and places to eat.

a. **Website**

Number of visitors:

2022/23	13,000
2023/24	36,000
2024/25	32,000

60% of web users were women and the most popular age bracket was 25-34 year olds.

The most popular pages were *Free Family Fun* and *Eat & Drink*.

b. **Social media**

Facebook followers 2,498

Instagram followers 1,809

c. **Discover app**

The app is independent of UDC but we work closely with the team to promote the district.

In March 2024 there were over 5,000 visits to the Uttlesford pages with 70% of these coming from outside the district.

