

Milton Keynes Economic Context

Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 (Milton Keynes Council, 2011) sets out *“to tackle current economic issues and provide a clear sense of purpose, direction and vision for the future. It combines aspiration with action, inspiration with implementation and presents detailed plans that will enable us to work together towards achieving our shared vision of moving from new town to international city.”* It comments *“Surprisingly for a city of its size, growth trajectory and ambition, Milton Keynes does not have its own local university.”...“It is inconceivable that Milton Keynes can achieve its aspirations as an international city and effective knowledge economy without its own university to provide a focus for its intellectual capital and to provide a rich resource of teaching, training, knowledge transfer and R&D inter alia.”* It further comments that the current University Centre project (and, by implication, its future successors) *“is widely considered to be a pivotal component of the city’s economic development strategy”*.

“Our vision is to ensure that Milton Keynes, the can-do city of the 21st Century, becomes the power house in a thriving South East Midlands economy, with leading edge innovation, a highly skilled workforce, and a growing knowledge-based sector set within an attractive environment in which to live and do business.” (Forward to Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016, Milton Keynes Council, 2011). The establishment of a local university in Milton Keynes is central to this vision.

Promoting a diverse and competitive knowledge based economy, and the associated skills and learning are two of the six key Priorities identified in the Strategy with the object to *“create an environment that will foster business and employment growth”* and to *“improve the overall skills and qualifications profile of the resident population.....to meet the needs of employers, especially in relation to higher level skills and the development of UCMK.”* The current UCMK is identified as key lead for developing the Knowledge Based Economy and MK College as key lead for Skills and Learning. Action Plans support these Priorities. University College Milton Keynes will now take up the leadership role for developing the Knowledge Based Economy.

The establishment of a local university is also a key component of the **Milton Keynes Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Milton Keynes Council, December 2009 and Revised Submission Version, October 2010)** which provides the vision, objectives and strategy for the spatial development of Milton Keynes to 2026. It supports the delivery of new and improved job opportunities, and identifies the development of the current University Centre into a full university with an appropriate range of centrally located facilities as one of the key requirements.

Milton Keynes Council Corporate Plan 2012-16 (Milton Keynes Council 2011) summarises how the Council and its partners will work together to achieve the collective ambitions for Milton Keynes. It is built around Themes of which the first is “World class MK”. Within this Theme one of the top priorities is to “Expand university education and research in MK”.

Milton Keynes Partnership (MKP) Business Plan 2008/09 – 2012/13 identifies that central to the growth and continuing economic success of the city is the *“requirement for a well-educated, skilled and entrepreneurial workforce drawn from all sectors of the community. Of equal importance is the requirement for business to have easy access to education, research and development expertise provided by this sector (FE and HE).”* *“Further and higher education institutions will be supported through the tariff mechanism to make sure that the*

necessary further and higher education infrastructure is in place when required.” (Paragraph 6.3). The Plan notes that *“The absence of an attractive, campus-based higher education offer has been identified as a barrier to the long term growth of the city and its economy.”* (Paragraph 6.3.2). The Plan summarises the action of English Partnerships to acquire 200 Silbury Boulevard for UCMK and of MKP to invest £2.1 million of infrastructure tariff funding in refurbishment with the aim of providing *“a high quality education offer and provide the stepping stone towards establishment of a larger, permanent university in Milton Keynes.”* (Paragraph 6.3.2)

The MKP Investment Plan 2009 - 2011 updates the Business Plan 2008/09 – 2012/13 to reflect the slowdown in housing growth and identifies support for the delivery of a range of economic, development and skills projects including UCMK. The merger of the former English Partnerships and Housing Corporation (including its Academy for Sustainable Communities) to form the HCA, has combined their expertise and resources to enhance skills development in Milton Keynes. This includes development of strong links between the HCA Academy and UCMK to develop local provision relevant to sustainable development and living (see §6.10).

UCMK capital contribution for higher education infrastructure is included in the Milton Keynes Tariff Programme at a level of £14.25 million of which £2.1 million has been committed and of which £12.15 million is uncommitted.¹

What kind of graduates?

Milton Keynes seeks graduates and other students who:

- are active and informed global citizens
 - are work aware and employable
 - are socially open and engaged
 - have well developed analytical and communication skills
 - are internationally minded
 - possess the capacity to respond to fast-moving societal changes
 - are ambitious and inspirational
 - have an entrepreneurial drive
 - are personally resilient
 - are technologically equipped and articulate as 21st century citizens
- (Source. 2020 Vision)

What kind of university level education provider(s)?

To achieve these goals, university level education providers in Milton Keynes will be:

- driven by the needs of students
- employer-led with a focus on employment-related skills and innovation
- academically rigorous and vocationally relevant

¹ Tariff funding under a framework Section 106 Agreement provides the infrastructure for a quality environment ahead of the major expansion of the city.

- ambitious and capable of achieving high standards in all its activities
- innovative and inspirational in increasing and widening participation by encouraging students (and their parents) from non-traditional as well as traditional backgrounds, by offering clear progression opportunities to higher education, and by achieving fair access for all students regardless of background or age
- engaged in ground-breaking partnerships with local secondary and junior schools and acting as a catalyst for raising school standards
- committed to working in partnership with local universities, Milton Keynes College, civic bodies, employers, the third sector and other agencies, across traditional regional boundaries, where appropriate
- attractive to students from the local community as well as the surrounding region, the UK and overseas through the development of highly competitive fee structures and an integrated physical offering embedded within the distinctive features of the Milton Keynes community
- actively engaged in knowledge exchange and R&D with business and HE partners to stimulate enterprise and to stimulate and shape the knowledge economy
- a catalyst to develop and retain talented, skilled graduates in the area
- a generator of high skill knowledge-based jobs
- readily accessible to students by offering a variety of study modes optimised through the imaginative use of communication technologies including cloud HE and leading-edge pedagogy
- integrated with the community and contributing to its leadership, its social and cultural life, and its sense of identity
- global in outlook
- a key delivery component of the Milton Keynes Economic Vision and Economic Development Strategy
- responsive to and will contribute to driving dynamic national, regional, and local contexts, policies and targets
- sustainable with a robust business model and effective governance
- an agent to help the community to articulate its self-understanding and aspirations and to act as an engaged and friendly critic.

(Source. 2020 Vision)