

Cabinet report



13 July 2021

Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023

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| Name of Cabinet Member | Councillor Robin Bradburn Deputy Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Economy, Recovery and Renewal |
| Report sponsor | Tracey Aldworth Deputy Chief Executive |
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| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | Fair and Prosperous Economic Recovery 1,2,3,4 |
| Wards affected | All wards |

Executive summary

In September 2020, the Council launched its ambitious £2.25million Economic Recovery programme to invest directly in the recovery of the borough following the COVID-19 pandemic. An action plan was approved at Cabinet on 1 September 2020 which allocated the funding for projects to support MK's people, businesses and the city through the delivery of practical support.

The Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Plan 2021-23 (Annex A) provides an update on the achievements and successes of the Council's Economic Recovery Programme so far, and the further work to be undertaken from July 2021 onwards.

It also proposes the allocation of an additional £1.5 million from the Council's 21/22 budget for further Economic Recovery schemes (Annex B) which have been developed in partnership with the business community and a dedicated Infrastructure Pipeline project to encourage further investment in the city, to be delivered over the 21/22 and 22/23 financial years.

1. Decisions to be made

- 1.1. That Cabinet recognise the progress made in delivering the targets of the Economic Recovery Plan agreed in September 2020 and the positive impact this has had in delivering practical support across Milton Keynes during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2. That Cabinet agree the Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Plan 2021-23 (Annex A).
- 1.3. That Cabinet allocate funding of £1.5m to the Economic Recovery Programme projects outlined in Annex B, subject to further development and sign off by the Council's Section 151 officer.

2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 A dedicated Economic Recovery Plan was presented to Cabinet for decision on 1 September 2020 ([CMIS link](#)) and £2.25 million of funding was committed to the delivery of the plan. Since September, over 400 businesses and 12,000 residents in Milton Keynes have directly benefited from this Economic Recovery funding, which has supported 15 individual projects to date. These have ranged from direct support for individuals out of work through MK College's New Futures MK Programme, to funding free memberships of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) for over 150 MK small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), to practical support for over 160 MK based entrepreneurs through the Council's partnership with the Rebel Business School. The Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023 (Annex A) provides an update on all the schemes that formed part of this initial plan and the successes to date, as well as the wider work of Council departments including Transport, Workplace Health, Environmental Health, Planning, Economy, and Housing to support the economy of MK following the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.
- 2.2 The Economic Recovery Plan success and support is in addition to the substantial direct support that the Council has provided to the business community throughout the pandemic, which includes:
 - Over £190m of direct financial support to businesses, through grant funding and business rates relief
 - Supporting our High Streets through simplified licencing processes for tables and chairs, the Reopening High Streets safely campaign and running significant Shop Local MK/ Rediscover Local MK communications campaigns
 - Providing direct support to over 200 of MK's businesses with managing workplace COVID-19 cases and outbreaks
 - The MK Testing team contacting over 200 workplaces to provide advice on employee testing
 - Providing match funded grants for businesses to increase sustainable transport and free cycle parking for businesses.

2.3 In the 2021/22 Council Budget, a further £1.5 million was allocated to supporting MK’s Economic Recovery in Annex R, and the Economic Recovery Plan 2021-23 outlines the Council’s plans for this budget over the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years (Annex B). The indicative allocation in Annex R for this £1.5 million was for £750k on Infrastructure Pipeline funding and £750k on Economic Recovery Projects. This allocation has been reviewed and in this decision £650k will be allocated to the Infrastructure Pipeline project and £850k to Economic Recovery Projects, to reflect the need for additional support to the business community.

Action Plan Headlines

2.4 Of this £1.5m of funding, an allocation of £850k will be made to Economic Recovery Plan schemes, including;

- An MK SME ‘Restart’ scheme to provide support to up to 100 small and medium sized businesses across MK to move from survival to recovery, working in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, MK Business Leaders partnership and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Further schemes to support MK’s people including a partnership with the Rebel Business School building on the success in 2020/21 and to support young people

2.5 Further schemes to promote Inward Investment and the marketing of the city, including a ‘city positioning’ piece and an MK Accelerator scheme with the Connected Places Catapult to showcase our ‘city as a testbed’ approach. The remaining £650k will be invested in an MK ‘Infrastructure Pipeline’ project to ensure the city builds business cases for its priority projects and secures more public and private sector investment into our priority schemes.

3. Implications of the decision

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| Financial | Yes | Human rights, equalities, diversity | No |
| Legal | No | Policies or Council Plan | Yes |
| Communication | No | Procurement | No |
| Energy Efficiency | No | Workforce | No |

a) Financial implications

The allocations made in this decision (as set out in Annex B) will be subject to a due diligence process. The award of funding at this stage is indicative to allow a further stage of refinement against a set of criteria that will include:

- a) value for money;
- b) deliverability;
- c) governance;

- d) overlaps with other schemes; and
- e) monitoring and evaluation.

Should any changes be required to the programme as a result of due diligence changes, they will be accommodated within the three workstream headings (Supporting MK's people, Supporting MK's Businesses and Supporting our city) and subject to agreement and sign off by the Cabinet Member.

b) Other implications

Policies or Council Plan – The new Council Plan (adopted June 2021) includes commitments (1,2,3,4) to providing Economic Recovery support which this new plan will achieve.

4. Alternatives

This decision outlines the plans for the funding already allocated to Economic Recovery Plan initiatives in the 2021/22 Council budget decision. The Economic Recovery Plan appended (Annex B) shows the Council's ambitions for this funding. The Council Plan also outlines the priority to spend £3m+ on Economic Recovery work, therefore no other alternatives have been considered for this funding.

The plan has been scoped in conjunction with the MK Business Community, and other alternative schemes were ruled out where there were judged to be deliverability or value for money issues.

5. Timetable for implementation

The Economic Recovery Plan (Annex A) will be delivered over the course of the 21/22 and 22/23 financial years in line with the financial allocations (Annex B).

List of annexes

Annex A – Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023

Annex B – Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023 financial allocations

List of background papers

[Milton Keynes Economic Recovery Action Plan](#) – September 2020