

Cabinet report



10 March 2020

Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Moriah Priestley Cabinet member for Economic Growth & Community Partnerships
Report sponsor	Tracy Darke Director – Growth, Economy and Culture
Report author	Lewis Campbell Economic Development Manager Lewis.campbell@milton-keynes.gov.uk / 01908 252 840

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	2 – Growth and Economic Prosperity
Wards affected	All wards

Executive summary

The Skills Strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with key partners. The strategy aims to provide a comprehensive picture of skills provision within Milton Keynes.

The strategy will be later supported by a clear action plan. The plan will identify the actions required to support skills provision for our residents, employers and other stakeholders.

The Skills Strategy has a fundamental role to play in supporting the aims of the Council Plan 2016-2022. The Strategy will play a vital role, directly and indirectly, in meeting the priorities of the current Economic Development Strategy.

1. Decision to be made

That the Skills Strategy 2020 be adopted.

2. Why is the decision needed?

The Local Economic Assessment 2019 (Annex B) provides a comprehensive and robust analysis of the local economic and social conditions affecting Milton Keynes. The statistics in this report highlighted a mixed economic picture. The Milton Keynes' economy is relatively strong with lower levels of unemployment, a greater business start-up rates and higher labour productivity (Gross Value Added per head) than comparator areas. However, overall qualification levels in Milton Keynes are slightly weaker than average and the wages earned by people living in Milton Keynes are lower than those working in Milton Keynes. In order to support the ambitions highlighted in the draft Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050, it is essential that the residents and employers have access to the appropriate skills provision.

The Skills Strategy has the following overarching vision:

“In collaboration with strategic partners, we will empower the residents and businesses of Milton Keynes to develop and nurture the skills that enable them to succeed in a vibrant and inclusive economy”

Three strategic priorities have been identified to support the achievement of this vision:

- Fostering an environment that grows the aspirations and resilience of young people, which empowers them to engage and access the opportunities available to them.
- Empowering residents to seize the learning opportunities available to them; with a particular focus on supporting those wanting to upskill, retrain or reengage in the workforce.
- Building strategic partnerships between employers and education providers to facilitate the delivery of technical and vocational training

Wider engagement has been fundamental in shaping the Skills Strategy:

- A Skills Conference was held in June 2019. Representatives from education, local businesses and the voluntary sector came together to provide feedback and guidance on the direction of the future of the skills agenda
- Workshop sessions were held with small groups of stakeholders from mixed backgrounds to identify the strategy's vision and priorities
- The Skills & Economic Growth Board has been engaged during the development of the strategy

- 1:1 meetings were held with partners from business representative organisations, education and training, and the voluntary and community sector
- Stakeholders were consulted and invited to comment on an earlier draft of the Strategy. All comments were recorded and, as appropriate, incorporated into the final version of the Skills Strategy.

The Strategy itself is an enabling framework; an Action Plan will be developed that articulates the varied and extensive work required to deliver the priorities within the strategy, and specific actions will be detailed to show how these objectives will be achieved.

3. Implications of the decision

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

a) Financial implications

No financial implications identified. The strategy emphasises the importance of collaboration with partners to make the most effective use of existing budgets and resources.

The financial implications will be reviewed on the completion of the Action Plan.

b) Legal implications

No legal implications identified.

c) Equality Impact

An equality impact and child poverty assessment has been completed which found that the strategy has due regard to all relevant aspects with the following comment. The narrative that a skills strategy is only a sub-set of strategy for a thriving economy limits the strategy's importance to social issues. The strategy does recognise its ability to develop a relevance to these social challenges. Skills, for example, are fundamental to changing the narrative on child poverty, are essential to equality with the recognition of the skills of residents who acquired them outside the UK and can address the challenge of enabling disabled residents and residents with poor English competency. As plans are developed to deliver its three-fold vision the

strategy will be required to develop, and to have regard to, these social aspects of skills development.

4. Alternatives

We could choose not to prepare a new Strategy. If we did this, we would be operating with a strategy that may not represent the current political, economic or social climate.

5. Timetable for implementation

Cabinet Approval – 10 March 2020
Strategy adoption – 11 March 2020
Action Plan Approval – July 2020

List of annexes

Annex A – Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020 DRAFT

Annex B – Local Economic Assessment 2019 ([Local Economic Assessment 2019](#))