

Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020 - DRAFT

March 2020



milton keynes council



Foreword

The Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020 has at its heart a very simple concept: facilitating a skills system which meets the needs of our employers and residents.

Whilst the concept is simple, the delivery is highly complex and will require the collaboration of Milton Keynes Council and our partners together, to maximise the resources that are available. We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone and we will work with a range of partners to ensure a coordinated approach; including schools, further education colleges, higher education institutions, Department for Work & Pensions, business organisations and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). Most importantly, we will need to work with our residents to ensure they can achieve their potential.

The Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020 will provide a framework for the skills agenda in Milton Keynes. Priorities focus on supporting young people, residents and employers in Milton Keynes. The role for the strategy is to provide a platform in which skills related performance can be shared and to showcase best practice.

It is expected that the strategy will run until 2025. However, the strategy will be flexible and the timescale will be dictated by the actions identified in the Action Plan.



Councillor Moriah Priestley

Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Community Partnerships, Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Skills Strategy 2020



In collaboration with partners, we will empower residents and businesses to develop and nurture the skills the enable them to succeed in a vibrant and inclusive economy

We're serious about business...

The **Council Plan** sets out how important a strong economy is to us and our **Economic Development Strategy (2017-2027)** sets out our workplan with **Plan:MK** allocating land which will support up to 32,000 new jobs.

And serious about skills...

The **SEMLEP Growing People Skill Plan** provides the regional strategy for skills – and the **MK Futures 2050 Programme** aims to help support good, long term growth, with projects specifically focused on education and skills.

This Skills Strategy aims to support employers with access to the skills they need to compete nationally and internationally – and help as many residents as possible benefit from that success.

Cross cutting themes

Partnership and
Collaboration

Inspiration and
aspiration



Priorities

- 1 Fostering an environment that grows the aspirations and resilience which empowers them to engage and access opportunities**
Helping young people develop core competencies, attitudes and behaviours to be ready for work, backed up with great careers guidance that starts as early as possible and strong networks between education providers and employers.
- 2 Empowering residents to seize the learning opportunities available to them, with a particular focus on supporting those wanting to upskill, retain or reengage in the workforce**
Championing lifelong learning, reskilling and reengaging local people as opportunities change with our economy to reduce local employers need to rely on workers from further afield.
- 3 Building strategic partnerships between employers and education providers to facilitate the delivery of technical and vocational training**
Great partnership working leading to more apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and placements and the development of MKU, a new model university.

The multi agency **Skills and Economic Growth Board** is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategy and the action plan.



Fast business growth



Local economy worth over £14 Billion



Home to over 14,800 businesses



Providing over 182,000 jobs

Strategic Framework

Priorities

1. *Fostering an environment that grows the aspirations and resilience of young people, which empowers them to engage and access the opportunities available to them.*

This priority focuses on ensuring that our young people develop the core competencies, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to thrive within education, work and society. Schools and colleges will be supported in raising the aspirations of young people, and the provision of great quality careers guidance and experiences will empower young people, teachers and their parents to make educated decisions about their futures. Inspiration and aspiration will be embedded in pupils at an earlier age.



Credit: MK College

It is essential that young people are given the opportunity to develop the right attitudes, behaviours and core competencies; these can all be acquired through the education curriculum, work experience, enterprise activities, and extra-curricular activities. Providing young people with meaningful experience of work will help improve their work-readiness. The most recent SEMLEP Business Survey¹ identified that a fifth (19%) of businesses interviewed have difficulty recruiting due a lack of work-ready school leavers, up from 11%

¹ SEMLEP Business Survey 2019 (November 2019)

in 2017. A similar result is seen with the work-readiness of college or further education leavers. Yet fewer businesses are offering work experience placements to school and college leavers, with only 24% of businesses interviewed reported offering at least one kind of work-experience placement most commonly to school students aged 14-16, down from 42% in 2017.

It is essential that there is an effective network between education providers and local businesses to ensure that young people have access to meaningful experience of work to ensure that they are better prepared for the world of work. The Learning 2050 Board will be instrumental in helping deliver this priority.

2. 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.

This priority focuses around ensuring that Milton Keynes fosters an environment of life-long learning. With the threat of automation, high demand for skilled labour and increases to the retirement age it is essential that the skills of residents of Milton Keynes labour remain flexible through reskilling and reengaging the workforce. Partner organisations will engage Milton Keynes communities to reinforce residents the benefits of adult learning.

Enhancing the skills of residents of Milton Keynes will provide social benefits which will beyond the financial payments. The Kings Fund² has evidenced that the health benefits of having a good job are profound. If businesses are better able to recruit locally, it will inevitably reduce their environmental footprint as their requirement to import labour from further afield drops.



Credit:
Stephanie
O'Callaghan

² The Kings Fund, Helping people find good jobs and stay in work

Working in partnership with key stakeholders, we must find innovative and sustainable ways to encourage businesses to develop local talent rather than attract it in from further afield. This will be particularly important for SMEs which are looking to grow as their training and development procedures may be less developed than that of larger employers.

3. Building strategic partnerships between employers and education providers to facilitate the delivery of technical and vocational training

This priority focuses on the delivery of technical and vocational training, such as apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience. Building effective networks between businesses, schools and colleges will help encourage the development of vocational opportunities. It will also help raise awareness of alternative post-16 and post-18 pathways for pupils and their parents.

Both employers and Education Providers gain when they build effective networks. The MK Futures Board highlighted the following benefits.

Benefits to employers	Benefits to Education Providers
Greater brand awareness	Broaden experience of world of work for students
Corporate social responsibility	Enable the curriculum to reflect current business situations
Enthusiasing students to seek employment in their business or sector	Help students to commit to a particular career path to give focus for study
Attracting potential apprentices	Help raise apprenticeship awareness
Greater opportunity to develop specific training courses for existing employees	Potential placements for students post-16 who do not wish to consider Higher Education study at a university.

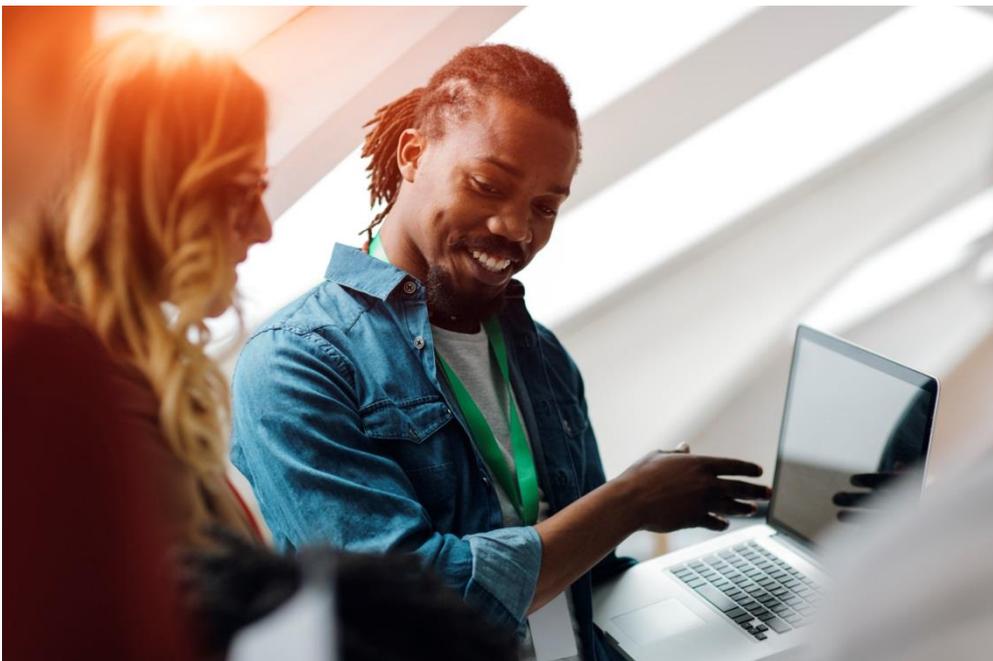
We are already taking action on this. The principal ambition behind building a new technical university is to answer to the city’s need for an undergraduate university; retaining local students and to attract talented young people to boost local economic growth. MK:U will ultimately host around 15,000 students and will focus on a vocational and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) undergraduate curriculum. MK:U is expected to open in Summer 2023. MK:U is working very closely with business to tailor their curriculum to ensure that it delivers the skills that businesses require.

Delivery and Implementation

Implementation

The transformational change that is required will only occur if all partners build upon their long history of working collectively and collaboratively to ensure that the vision of this Strategy is delivered. The Skills Strategy provides a framework which will guide partnership action and inform skills planning.

It is expected that the outcomes and actions for this Strategy will be further refined over the next four months, with a clear Action Plan created by July 2020.



Cover image provided by MK College

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