

**Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**ITEM 4(b)****MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL****19 JULY 2017****Report considered by Cabinet – 11 July 2017****MILTON KEYNES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-2027**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Marland, Leader of the Council

Report Sponsor: Anna Rose, Service Director – Growth, Economy &amp; Culture

Author and contact: Pam Gosal, Head of Corporate Economic Development and Inward Investment  
Tel: 01908 252192**Executive Summary:****Purpose**

To seek approval of the Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027.

**Background**

The Economic Development Strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with key partners, local business representatives, Members, officers and the general public.

The Economic Development Strategy seeks to build on the current economic success of MK, to capitalise on potential future opportunities and to address the challenges the city faces. The Strategy aims to secure strong and inclusive growth which benefits businesses and residents, and to sustain the reputation of MK as a prosperous, innovative and culturally vibrant place.

The Strategy has a fundamental role in supporting the aims of the Council Plan, the Core Strategy and the emerging Plan:MK. It is aligned with, and will support delivery of, the vision and projects of the MK Futures 2050 Commission.

1. **Recommendation(s)**
  - 1.1 That the Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027 be approved.
2. **Issues**
  - 2.1 The Council Plan 2016-2020 is based on three key aims, with 'A city of opportunity' relating specifically to the economy. The Plan consists of a number of priorities, with a commitment, under the Economy priority, to "developing a new Economic Development Strategy that focusses on high quality jobs, inward investment and sharing the benefits of growth fairly."

- 2.2 Milton Keynes has enjoyed significant economic success, consistently recognised as one of the top UK cities for business start-ups, knowledge intensive businesses, productivity and innovation. Both employment and population have grown significantly, with MK ranked highest for growth in both employment and Gross Value Added (UK Powerhouse Report, Irwin Mitchell, January and April 2017)
- 2.3 With the work of the MK Futures 2050 Commission and the focus upon infrastructure, skills, mobility, culture and the renaissance of CMK, there are some fantastic opportunities to enhance and build upon this success further.
- 2.4 Yet despite - and possibly because of - such growth, MK faces a number of challenges, such as achieving a balance between housing and employment, skills attainment, infrastructure links and persisting pockets of deprivation. The Strategy seeks to build on the success of MK, to capitalise on potential future opportunities and to address the challenges the city faces.
- 2.5 The current Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 has six priorities:
- (a) diverse and knowledge based economy;
  - (b) economic regeneration;
  - (c) skills and learning;
  - (d) business support;
  - (e) articulating a compelling 'MK Offer'; and
  - (f) enabling infrastructure.
- 2.6 The current strategy has contributed to numerous achievements, including award winning MK:Smart; over 2,000 individuals supported into work by the Neighbourhood Employment Programme; hugely successful Job Shows and National Apprenticeship Shows; delivery of externally funded infrastructure programmes; the highest number of foreign inward investment successes within SEMLEP and the opening of Entrepreneurial Spark and InnovateMK to support start-ups and entrepreneurs in MK.
- 2.7 The vision of the new Economic Development Strategy centres on strong and inclusive growth which benefits businesses and residents, and sustaining the reputation of MK as a prosperous, innovative and culturally vibrant place.
- 2.8 Four strategic priorities have been identified to help achieve this vision:
- (a) **Brand** - embedding a brand that makes MK a special place with the foundations to build upon MK's environment, leisure and cultural strengths.
  - (b) **Connections** - working in local, regional, national and international partnerships to advocate for the city and secure physical and digital infrastructure and other investment to support inclusive growth.
  - (c) **Enterprise** - closer engagement with business and ensuring MK continues to be a place where businesses prosper and grow.

- (d) **Skills** - ensuring residents and businesses can gain the skills they require to create a prosperous city.

Each priority is supported by a number of actions and activities.

2.9 Partners have played a key role in shaping the Strategy:

- (a) Two workshops with the Skills and Economic Growth Board. The Board, responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Strategy, includes representatives from business representative organisations, the community and voluntary sector, education, council officers and Members. The workshops, facilitated by Centre for Cities, enabled the Board to reflect on the current Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 priorities and to consider the priorities and actions required moving forward.
- (b) One to one meetings held with Board members, council and external colleagues and partners.
- (c) Four week public consultation, publicised on the council's website, through social media, business newsletters and wider sharing by partners. A number of comments were received, all of which were recorded and, as appropriate, incorporated into a final version.
- (d) The final version of the Economic Development Strategy has received the approval of the Skills and Economic Growth Board.

### 3. **Options**

3.1 Approval of the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027.

3.2 Alternatively, the timeframe for the current Economic Development Strategy could have been extended beyond 2016. Although quicker, the opportunity to review the continuing appropriateness of the current strategy's priorities and actions would have been lost. Some activities have successfully been completed; some are no longer required and new priorities and activities have emerged as the economy has evolved over this period. Extending the current strategy would fail to take this into account.

3.3 Furthermore, the Council Plan clearly articulates a commitment to a 'new' Economic Development Strategy.

### 4. **Implications**

4.1 Policy

The Economic Development Strategy will play a fundamental role in delivering the 'city of opportunity' aim of the Council Plan 2016-2020, with its focus on innovation, employment and skills. Furthermore, there is a role for the Strategy in supporting the 'affordable city' and 'healthy city' aims through creating the space for businesses to thrive; enhancing the cultural offer; raising aspirations and supporting a healthy workforce.

The Council Plan consists of several priorities. The Economic Development Strategy supports not only the economy priority, but also education and skills; partnerships; regional working; and regeneration. The Council Plan also clearly articulates a commitment to a new Economic Development Strategy.

The Strategy supports the current Core Strategy and the emerging Plan:MK. Ensuring the balance between housing and employment is a key consideration. The Economic Development Strategy plays a fundamental role in employment creation and retention.

The Economic Development Strategy is strongly aligned to the work of the MK Futures 2050 Commission. The Strategy will support delivery of the overall vision and the six individual 'big projects'.

The Economic Development Strategy further supports the Skills Strategy, RegenerationMK 2030 Strategy, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018 and Being the Best: The School Improvement Framework.

#### 4.2 Resources and Risk

The emphasis is upon working with partners to make the most effective use of existing budgets and resources, rather than dependence on new funding allocations. The Strategy acknowledges the importance of accessing external funding opportunities if and when they arise.

N	Capital	N	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	N	Medium Term Plan	N	Asset Management

#### 4.3 Carbon and Energy Management

The Economic Development Strategy may have positive impacts on the council's Carbon and Energy Management Policy by encouraging the development of more sustainable and efficient business practices and employment opportunities.

#### 4.4 Legal

There are no immediate legal implications from the adoption of the strategy.

#### 4.5 Other Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out so the Council could have "due regard" as part of its Section 149 Equality Act Duties. This recommends the cabinet should continue with the decision. The Economic Development Strategy aims to achieve inclusive economic growth. To do so, interventions may be required that target specific groups. This is particularly likely in delivery of the Strategy's Skills priority which is underpinned by delivery of the existing Skills Strategy, the work of YourMK and the MK:U and Learning 2050 MK Futures Commission projects.

Y	Equalities/Diversity	Y	Sustainability	N	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

**Annex:** Draft Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027  
Background Papers: Summary of Consultation responses