



Economic Development Newsletter

April/May 2017

Introduction

Welcome to the April/May edition of the newsletter. In this edition, we round up the latest news from Milton Keynes Council's (MKC) Economic Development Team. It's great to see continued recognition for Milton Keynes, our businesses and our students, with the city shortlisted in this year's Urbanism Awards, inspirational students recognised at the Milton Keynes College Student of the Year Awards and three of our businesses achieving a prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise.

Powerhouse Report

For the second consecutive quarter, Milton Keynes has been recognised as leading the way for employment and GVA growth.

The UK Powerhouse is an extensive business study produced by Irwin Mitchell and leading economic think-tank Cebr. The latest report, which looks at performance in quarter 4 of 2016, highlights GVA growth of 3.3% in Milton Keynes and employment growth of 2%. This places Milton Keynes above cities including Cambridge, Oxford and Manchester.

The report attributes this success to the city's diverse and well-balanced economy and strong business growth. The significant growth in the number of professional, scientific and technical businesses was particularly highlighted, with a 45% increase over the past five years.

To view the most recent UK Powerhouse report please visit the website <http://www.irwinmitchell.com/ukpowerhouse>

Queen's Awards for Enterprise

Congratulations go to three Milton Keynes businesses who received recognition in this year's Queens Awards for Enterprise. Artificial Intelligence software company Celaton Limited and lighting manufacturer Holophane Europe secured a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation. Automotive technology specialists, Secured By Design Ltd, received the award in the International Trade category.

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise recognise outstanding achievements by businesses across the categories of innovation, international trade, sustainable development and promoting opportunity through social mobility. Award winners are invited to attend a Royal reception at Buckingham Palace and can benefit from significant publicity and international recognition.

Applications are currently open for the 2018 Queen's Awards and it would be fantastic to see more Milton Keynes businesses recognised. Details on how to apply can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise>



More award winning businesses

And it doesn't stop with the Queen's Awards. A number of other Milton Keynes businesses have received recognition in recent awards. Congratulations go to:

Perception PR – PR Company of the Year, Acquisition International Business Excellence Awards 2017

- Calumet Photographic - Manfrotto Store of the Year, Amateur Photography Gold Service award Best Hire Centre prize (Photography Now Awards)
- Football Whispers - Outstanding Start-Up, Sports Technology Awards
- Little Star Media - Best Place to Work, 8th Women in Gaming Awards.

Urbanism Award

Not to be left out, the city as a whole is one of 15 places shortlisted by the Academy of Urbanism for the 2018 Urbanism Awards.

The Awards, which celebrate and learn from great placemaking, cover five categories including European City of the Year and Great Town, Neighbourhood, Street and Place. This year's Awards are focused on places built or rebuilt since 1945.

Milton Keynes has been shortlisted in the Great Town award alongside Corby and Coventry.

The Urbanism Academy will be establishing relationships with key stakeholders in each of the 15 places prior to a summer assessment visit. Winners of the Awards will be announced at the 2018 Urbanism Awards ceremony on 8 November 2017.

For more information, visit <https://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/finalists-2018/>

MK CityFest 2017

As part of the Creative and Cultured City project, one of the six 'big projects' put forward by the MK Futures 2050 Commission, Milton Keynes Council is organising a Festival of Creative Urban Living.

The Festival, known as MK CityFest, will be taking place between 27 June and 2 July. Based at Middleton Hall in the centre:mk, MK CityFest will showcase what a great place our city is to live, exploring MK's unique designed city framework which makes us a model for city living across the world, and exploring ideas around our future.

At its core will be the annual conferences of the International New Town Institute (INTI) and the Academy of Urbanism (AoU) but a wider programme is being developed including walks, talks, workshops, an artist programme, animations and creative activity focused on modern urban living of the future. All events will share the prominent city centre space – some aimed at a professional audience and others open to the wider public.

For further details visit: <http://www.destinationmiltonkeynes.co.uk/Conferencing/City-Fest/>



Milton Keynes Student of the Year Awards

Milton Keynes College hosted its annual student of the year awards in May and we were privileged to have been a part of this event. The event recognizes the achievements of students from different faculties across the college and celebrates the dedication and commitment they have shown.

In the wonderful settings of Woburn Abbey Sculpture Gallery, fantastic entertainment was provided by students from the College and excellent food was prepared and served by members of The Brasserie.

Our warmest congratulations go to all the winners. It really is inspirational to hear the individual stories and great to see the individual efforts of the students recognised by tutors and classmates alike.

Workplace wellbeing

On 25 April, the Public Health team organised the first Work Well MK event. The event, held at the MK Dons stadium, was attended by 40 delegates from local workplaces. The main focus of the event was to highlight workplace wellbeing initiatives that businesses can adopt to support and encourage improvements to employee health, which will ultimately result in a more engaged and productive workforce. The event consisted of guest speakers and a marketplace showcasing the local services available to workplaces across Milton Keynes.

A website is currently being created to support local workplaces to find out about health & well-being information and initiatives. To find out more, contact Trudy.hosker@milton-keynes.gov.uk

International Festival recognised as one of Europe's most 'remarkable festivals'

There was further recognition for Milton Keynes with the biennial International Festival recognised as one of Europe's most 'remarkable festivals' by the European Festivals Association.

The European Festivals Association aims to bring together festivals and festival associations from across Europe. 95 experts initially assessed and scored the International Festival, before an international panel considered the assessment. The panel praised the Festival for its growing *"artistic programme to embrace its local infrastructure, landscape and communities to extend its ambition and relevance to international issues and embrace innovative artistic engagement."*

Recipients of the EFFE Label 2017-2018 feature in the online European festivals calendar which offers audiences worldwide a window to Europe's vibrant cultural scene.

The fifth International Festival will be held in 2018. The last Festival, in 2016, saw over 500,000 local, national and international visitors enjoy 10 amazing days of music and entertainment.

To find out more about the International Festival visit <http://www.ifmiltonkeynes.org/home.html>



SEMLEP News

Apprenticeship Support for SMEs

SEMLEP recently commissioned a project to support SMEs who are considering apprenticeships. Through the Apprenticeship Support for SMEs project, funded through the European Social Fund, small and medium sized enterprises can access a range of support, including assistance with advertising apprenticeships and finding appropriate training. More information on this can be found at <https://www.velocitybusinesssupport.com/apprenticeship/>

Local Government Fund

Following the Government's announcement in March of an additional £59.04m of Local Government Funding (LGF) for the area, SEMLEP has published a LGF update for 2016/17.

With the additional funding, between 2015 and 2021, a total of £265 million will be invested in capital projects that support growth across the SEMLEP area. In 2016/17, £17m was distributed to projects, three of which are of particular relevance to Milton Keynes:

- The Fixing the Links project in Bletchley, aimed at improving the links between the railway station and town centre and thereby maximising the local benefits of east-west rail, is nearing completion
- Work is underway on the new teaching facilities for doctors at Milton Keynes Hospital
- Agreement on a funding package for dualling of the A421 between junction 13 of the M1 and the city. Development money has been released to facilitate the development in 17/18 and beyond.

Further information on the fund and updates on individual projects can be found at <http://www.semlep.com/local-growth-fund/>

Team News

It has been a time of change in the Economic Development team as we said goodbye and good luck to Kelly Bowman, our Inward Investment and Partnership Manager. Kelly has been promoting Milton Keynes to inward investors and supporting businesses to locate in Milton Keynes for around 14 years. Kelly has moved on to a new role at property consultants Bidwells where she will be continuing to promote MK and support local businesses.

Our Business Engagement and Support Officer, Amanda Creed, will now be our Inward Investment and Partnership Manager. Many of you will already know Amanda from some of the excellent work she has undertaken supporting existing businesses in Milton Keynes with growth, and encouraging and supporting business start-ups.

Apprenticeship Levy

Since the beginning of April, all employers with an annual pay bill in excess of £3m have been required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy. Apprenticeships have an important part to play in ensuring the skills needs of businesses are met. They also offer a fantastic opportunity for



individuals to gain skills and qualifications alongside experience of working. The team has been working with partners to find out more about our local apprenticeship offer and to look at how we can support both levy paying businesses as well as SMEs which are interested in apprenticeships.

Business Visits

The role of skills in supporting business growth was further acknowledged when we met with Serco which are delivering the Skills Support for the Workforce in the South East Midlands project. Through the project, SMEs can access fully funded and flexible training for their employees, from basic skills training to intermediate and higher level skills. Improving the skills of existing employees can enhance employee motivation and productivity, lead to greater staff retention and support the competitiveness and growth of businesses. For further information, email skillssupport@serco.com

Keeping with the skills theme, we met with representatives from the Open University, which has its headquarters in Milton Keynes and is one of the city's largest employers. With the Apprenticeship Levy coming into force, we met with the OU to discuss its degree level apprenticeship offers. This gave us the opportunity to discuss the needs of businesses with regards to training and development of their workforce. To find out more, visit the OU's Apprenticeships Knowledge and Insights Hub: <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/professional-learning-development/apprenticeships>

Support for Start-ups and entrepreneurs were on the agenda when we caught up with InnovateMK and Espark Milton Keynes. The meeting provided the opportunity to find out how businesses using both hubs are getting on and discuss opportunities and challenges. These meetings give a great insight into the emerging business community in Milton Keynes.

Access to finance is a hot topic and we met with Metro Bank to keep abreast of the banking services that they offer for pre start-ups to high turnover SMEs. These meetings provide a great understanding of the products and services that are on offer to the Milton Keynes business community.

Social Media

Our social media presence goes from strength to strength. Our Twitter followers at the end of May stood at 4315 (an increase of 1.1% from March) and our LinkedIn connections are at 2929 (an increase of 1.8% from March). The Economic Development team continues to utilise social media as one of its channels to promote Milton Keynes. It is vital that we remain competitive, constantly and consistently engaging with our national and international stakeholders.

Help Spread the Word

Follow us at @InvestMK at www.twitter.com/InvestMK and by joining our LinkedIn group at <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/investmk>

Pam Gosal

Head of Corporate Economic Development & Inward Investment

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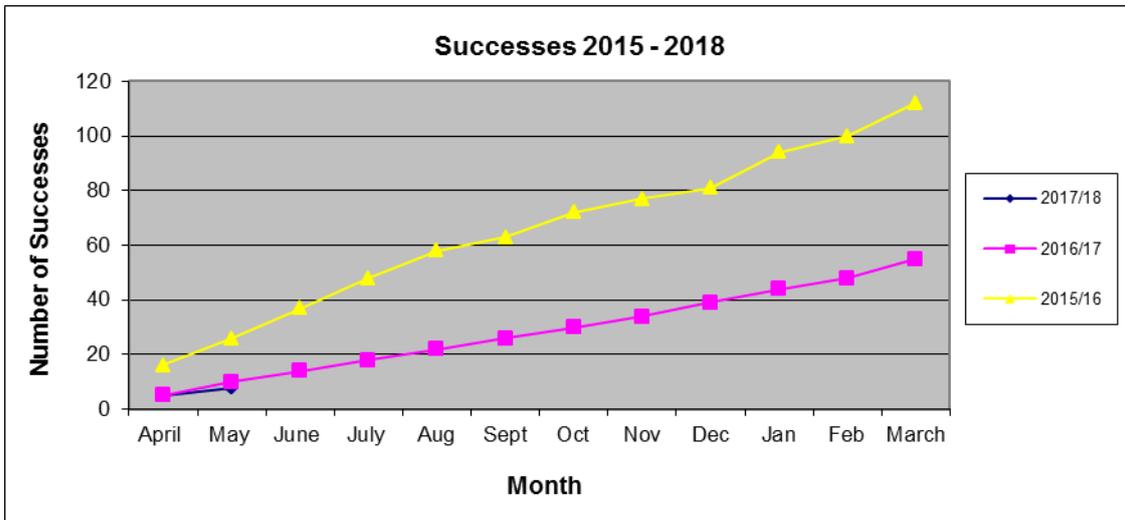
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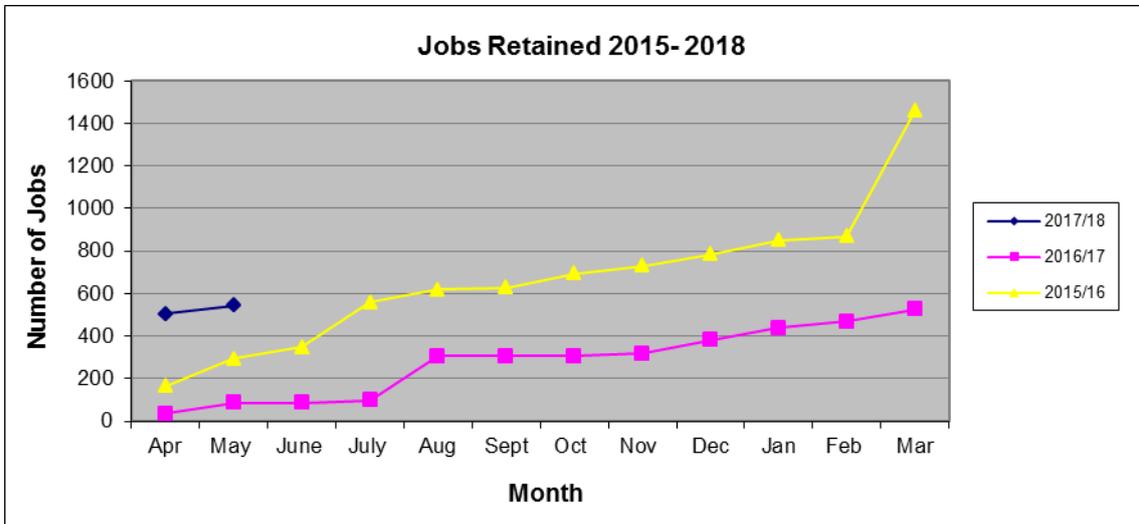
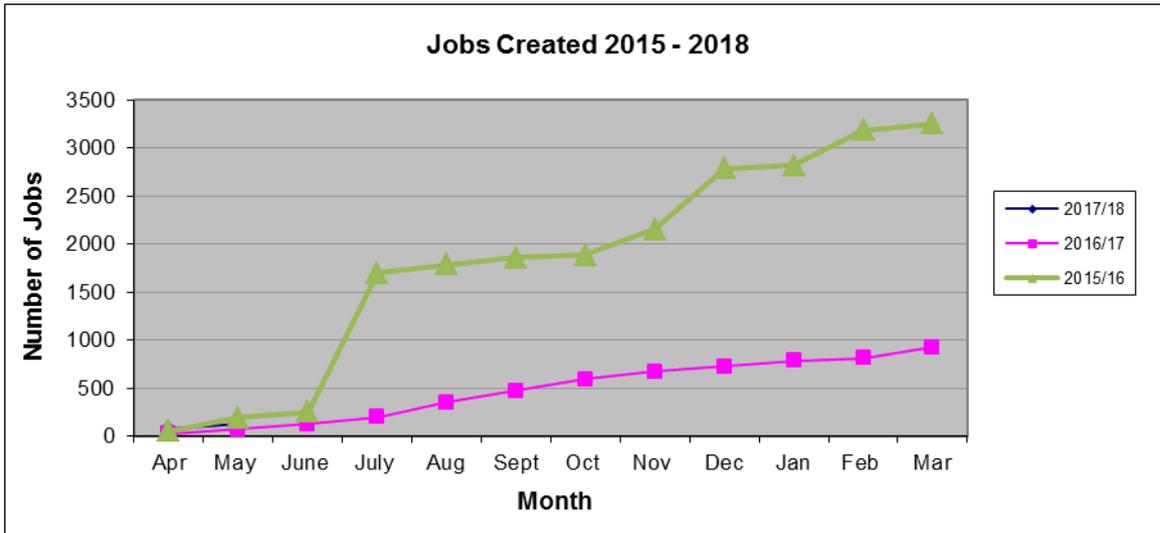


Investment Success Update

	April 2017	May 2017	Year to date
Companies arriving in or relocating within MK	5	3	8
From Target Group*	2	2	4
Total Jobs Created	68	65	133
Total Jobs Retained	505	38	543

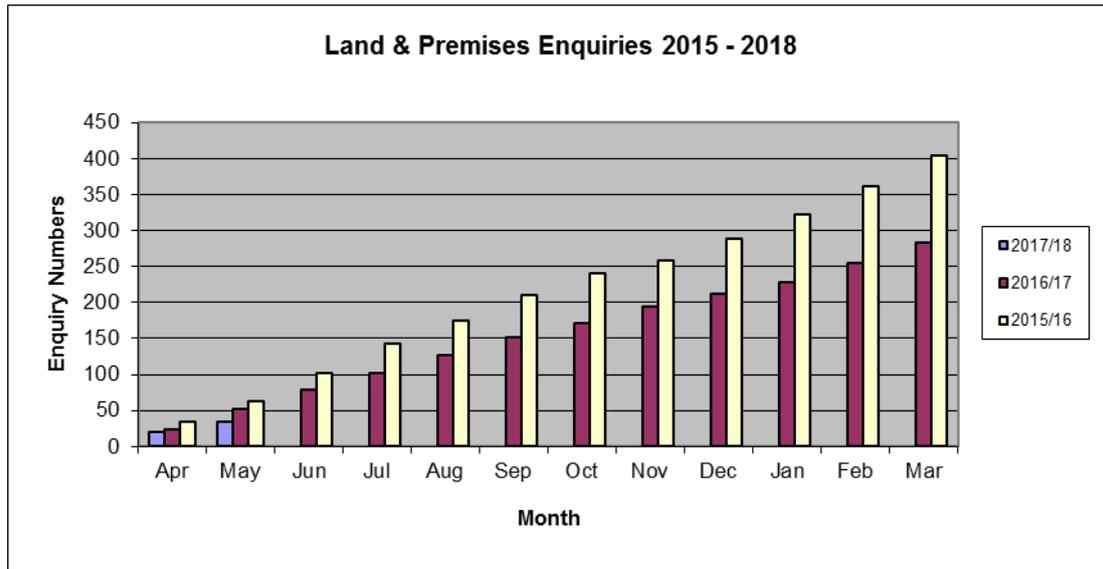
* **High growth, high value, knowledge-based businesses**





Enquiry Activity Update

The chart below shows the trends for commercial land & premises enquiries between 2014–2017:



Enquiries

During April and May, 35 enquiries were received as well as 8 investment successes consisting of 1 micro, 6 small, and 1 large. The team continues to promote MK through multiple channels and partners. Our current enquiry caseload is 27 category ‘A’ and 52 category ‘B’ enquiries.

(Category ‘A’ covers enquiries from UKTI and foreign owned businesses; land enquiries; industrial premises over 50k sqft; office premises over 10k sqft. and key business sectors. Category ‘B’ enquiries cover all other requests for support.)

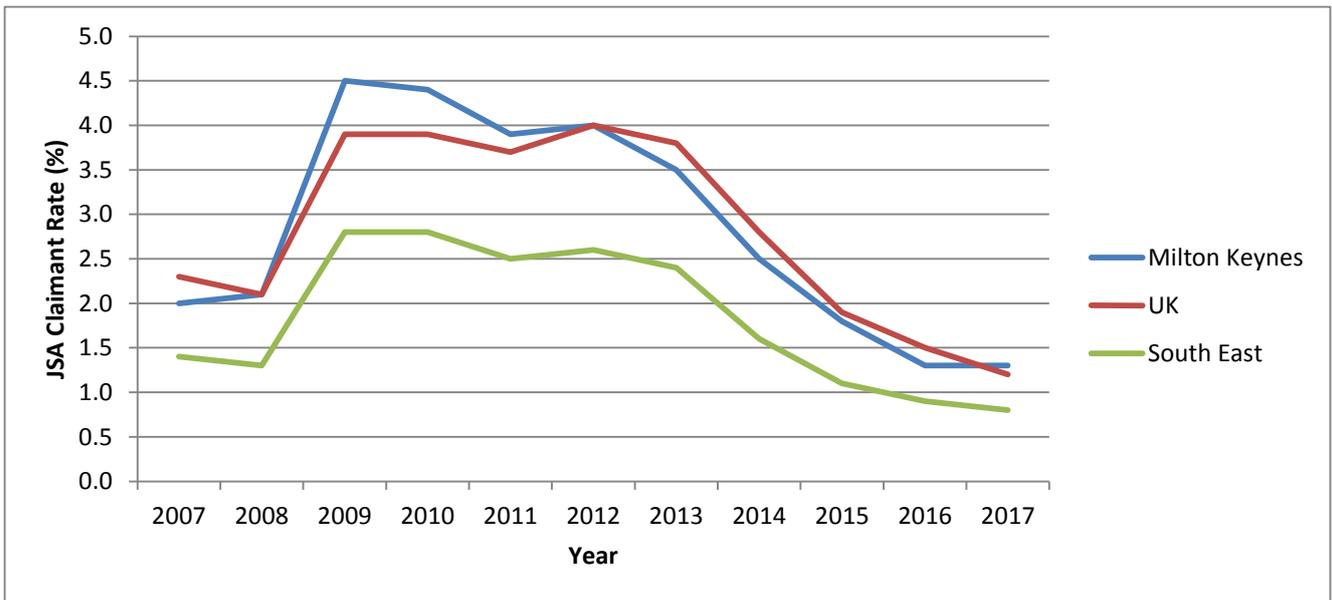
Enquiries by Sector	April 2016	April 2017	May 2016	May 2017
Office	7	5	9	2
Industrial	8	5	8	5
Retail	0	3	1	2
Land	0	2	4	1
Information and Support	7	5	9	5
Total	22	20	31	15



The Labour Market in Milton Keynes, April 2017

The JSA claimant count rate in Milton Keynes was 1.3% in April 2017. This remains unchanged from March 2017 and is the same rate as in April 2016.

Chart 1: JSA Claimant Rate Milton Keynes, South East & UK 2007-2017



	Milton Keynes	UK	South East
2007	2.0	2.3	1.4
2008	2.1	2.1	1.3
2009	4.5	3.9	2.8
2010	4.4	3.9	2.8
2011	3.9	3.7	2.5
2012	4.0	4.0	2.6
2013	3.5	3.8	2.4
2014	2.5	2.8	1.6
2015	1.8	1.9	1.1
2016	1.3	1.5	0.9
2017	1.3	1.2	0.8

Source: Jobseekers Allowance, Office for National Statistics via NOMIS. NB: Claimant count data is taken from April of each year.



Getting our residents back into work

Economic Regeneration continues to contribute towards successfully reducing unemployment levels in Milton Keynes. The Neighbourhood Employment Programme saw a record footfall in attendance at its job clubs, with just under 8,900 employability support sessions provided over the last financial year, leading to 562 job outcomes and 118 people attending accredited training provision. The Mental Health Employment Support Team organised and facilitated a World Mental Health Day, raising the issue of mental health awareness in the work place, which they replicated on two occasions in Tesco's distribution centre. They also continue to actively promote their 'retain' service which supports those that are in work to sustain their positions whilst experiencing mental health difficulties. Collectively, stakeholders continue to proactively deliver interventions that support those who are furthest from the job market into education, training and sustainable employment.

The Economic Development (ED) team work closely with Economic Regeneration. Enquiries from businesses interested in employing staff via the NEP, are passed through to the Regeneration team. The ED team work hard to promote the work of economic regeneration services, thus contributing to the reduction in unemployment levels in MK.