

# Universal: Landlords Forum

## 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025





**Credit:** Universal Destinations & Experiences



**UNIVERSAL**  
DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES

A COMCAST COMPANY

CONCEPTUAL ARTIST RENDERING



**£50bn**  
of direct and indirect  
economic benefit  
for the UK



Major boost to local and  
UK tourism, attracting  
millions of new visitors



Bolstering the UK's creative  
industries, delivering the  
first Universal theme  
park in Europe



Investing billions of pounds  
and unlocking wider  
investment in the UK



Universal would  
become one of the  
largest employers  
in the region



Approx. **80%**  
of employees to come  
from Bedfordshire and  
the surrounding areas



**20,000**  
jobs projected during  
construction with 5,000+  
on site at the peak



**8,000**  
new jobs generated  
once operational



Transformative  
regional impact,  
facilitating several  
infrastructure upgrades



Expanded Wixams  
station



New direct slip roads  
from the A421 and local  
road improvements



Play an active role in  
our communities with  
a proven track record  
of local partnerships

# Economic impact

## Gross direct employment

Once operational, the theme park will deliver the following impacts at the-site:

**8,065**

Est. jobs in  
opening year

**12,475**

Est. jobs in  
twentieth year

**5,950**

Est. FTEs in  
opening year

**9,185**

Est. FTEs in  
twentieth year

- More than **68.7% of jobs projected to go to residents of Bedford and Central Bedfordshire in the opening year.**
- Opening year employment represents 3% of national average employment growth from 2015 – 2022, rising to 4% in the twentieth year.
- Opening year employment represents 4% of Bedford and Central Bedfordshire existing employment as of 2022.
- A large number of **jobs will be offered in the knowledge economy**, including a diverse range of professionals such as accountants, IT professionals, legal professionals, engineers, medical professionals, and marketing specialists.

## SDO – Planning Submission

### *Temporary Workforce Accommodation Strategy*

- Workforce Peaks – Winter 2029 – 5,380 workers for Universal  
3,985 - 4,495 workers for other local developments
- Estimate – 855 workers – non-UK based  
– 225 - 680 workers – could require accommodation. **1,535 Total.**
- BBC Response – Further analysis of possible impacts on affordability within the local market and assessment of availability in counties north of Bedford Borough.
- BBC to undertake own analysis and monitoring.

**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

Confirm the support for the development but acknowledging that there will be adverse impacts which will need to be weighed against the significant benefits to the local areas and to the local, regional and national economy.



**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

*Recommend the Chief Executive write to DCMS to request consideration of:*

(a) A financial support package to the Council to help manage the local impacts of the development including construction management, local transport plans and measures to manage the housing market during construction

(b) Funding from relevant bodies to enable specific projects to maximise economic benefits and increase capacity in the local health care system, housing offer and local infrastructure improvements, including active travel, and controlled parking, to build on the significant opportunities derived from the proposed development

**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

Recommend the Executive Director for Environment to bring forward proposals to deal with parking controls in areas around the proposed Universal site, including commencing a consultation process should planning approval be granted.

Recommend the Executive Director for Environment to bring forward proposals as soon as practicable in relation to policy measures to control temporary lets uses in areas around the proposed Universal site, should planning approval be granted.

**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

That Full Council requests – separate from the Planning Process – that Executive:

- i) Work with Universal Destinations and Experiences to develop an accommodation and housing strategy from day one,
  
- ii) Work with Universal Destinations and Experiences and developers of unadopted roads to develop a parking strategy to enable restrictions to be implemented consistently across public and unadopted developments,

**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

That Full Council requests – separate from the Planning Process – that Executive:

iii) produce, separate to the planning process but in the context of the impact of Universal

Studios:

- (a) A housing strategy
- (b) An infrastructure strategy
- (c) A frontline service strategy
- (d) A transport strategy
- (e) A finance strategy

**27 August 2025**

***Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee Recommendations***

That Full Council requests – separate from the Planning Process – that Executive:

iv) negotiate further Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to support council capacity, including but not limited to planning capacity, and negotiate accommodation strategies informally separate to the planning process with Universal to ensure that sufficient accommodation can be found for workers minimising pressure on local housing stock.