

Invest Milton Keynes Business News - November 2025

South Midlands Growth Hub launches £1.8 million growth grant programme



The new grant funding programme has been created to accelerate the growth of South Midlands SMEs by driving innovation, advancing local economic priorities and supporting the region's decarbonisation ambitions.

The South Midlands Growth Hub has launched the South Midlands Growth Grant, a £1.8 million, to be awarded over three-years designed to empower SMEs, micro-enterprises and sole traders.

Eligible businesses across Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire can apply for grant funding between £300 - £50,000 to support investments in innovation, adoption of new technologies and enhancement to green credentials.

Ruth Roan, South Midlands Growth Hub Manager: "The launch of the South Midlands Growth Grant is a significant moment for our business community. Our micro-businesses and SMEs are at the forefront of business growth, and we must provide a platform to ensure their growth can accelerate.

"Our ambition is to help businesses maximise their strengths, create business resilience and generate sustainable growth. We're excited to launch the South Midlands Growth

Grant and to see the impact it has on our region.”

Jason Longhurst, Chair of the South Midlands Business Board: “The South Midlands Growth Grant is a catalyst for ambition, unlocking the potential of our region’s business community. This is a strategic investment in innovation, resilience, and growth, aligned with the ambitions set out in our new South Midlands Economic Growth Strategy.

“By backing the small and medium-sized businesses that power our economy, we’re not just supporting growth — we’re building a stronger, more dynamic South Midlands that leads with enterprise, confidence, and global competitiveness.”

Businesses interested in applying for the South Midlands Growth Grant are invited to submit an Expression of Interest to the Growth Hub, outlining the project and the amount of funding required. The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 17:00, 17 December 2025.

Full details of the programme and the link to the Expression of Interest [click here](#).

Thousands of comments help shape MK City Plan 2050



Milton Keynes City Council has published the next stage of its long-term vision for growth, the Milton Keynes City Plan 2050, following thousands of comments from residents, businesses and community groups that have helped shape the plan so far.

The MK City Plan sets out how Milton Keynes can deliver new homes, attract investment, and create well-connected communities with access to schools, health services, shops,

and green spaces, while protecting the environment and ensuring infrastructure is in place from the start.

Since 2023, the city council has run a wide-ranging engagement programme, including in-person events and an online campaign, which attracted around 7,000 comments. This stage allowed people to share views on how the city should grow, and their feedback has been instrumental in shaping the policies now included in the plan.

The process is now moving into a formal and technical stage. Before the plan is submitted to government for independent examination, the city council is inviting comments specifically on whether it is legally sound, based on robust evidence, and consistent with national planning policy. Anyone who wishes to comment on these aspects or suggest changes to ensure compliance with national requirements can do so by 22 December (5:30pm).



Milton Keynes City Plan 2050

"Thousands of voices have helped shape this plan and we're grateful to everyone who took the time to share their views. Milton Keynes is growing, and this plan is about making sure that growth works for everyone, delivering homes, jobs, and infrastructure in a way that protects our environment and strengthens our communities."

- Cllr Shanika Mahendran, Cabinet Member for Planning and Placemaking

For further information about the consultation and details on how to respond [click here](#).

City Council invites local businesses to join free sustainability programmes



Milton Keynes City Council is calling on local businesses to seize the opportunity to cut costs, boost efficiency, and lead the way on sustainability through two fully funded programmes.

The initiative is supported by the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**, administered by **Milton Keynes City Council**, which invests in projects that strengthen communities, create jobs, and grow local economies. As part of this commitment, **£35,000 has been allocated to Green Lark**, a local sustainability consultancy dedicated to helping businesses reduce energy use and prepare for a low-carbon future.

Greenlark is delivering two schemes:

- **Sustainable Business** provides practical tools and expert guidance to help businesses measure their carbon footprint, identify emissions sources, and take action to reduce them. Cutting energy and resource use doesn’t just benefit the environment – it saves money, improves efficiency, and builds resilience for the future.
- **Carbon Literacy for Business** is an accredited training course running on **2 and 3 December**. It equips businesses and their teams with the knowledge and confidence to act on climate change, while earning an internationally recognised Carbon Literacy certification. This training helps organisations understand climate impacts and implement solutions that reduce costs and demonstrate leadership.

Both programmes are **completely free** for Milton Keynes businesses and form part of a city-wide ambition to make the city a leader in sustainability.

“These free programmes give local businesses the chance to future-proof their operations and lead the way on sustainability. By helping firms cut energy and resource costs, we’re not only supporting greener practices, but we’re also creating opportunities for savings to be shared with customers, building a stronger and fairer local economy for everyone.”

- **Cllr Shanika Mahendran, Cabinet Member for Planning and Placemaking**

Further information about how to get involved can be found [here](#).

Next Level Efficiency: Free workshop for local SMEs



Is your business looking to work smarter, reduce costs, and accelerate growth? The South Midlands Growth Hub, in partnership with the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, invites you to an exclusive online session designed for SMEs to explore how new growth grant funding can help transform your operations.

Why attend?

This event will provide you with:

- **Practical Insights:** Learn how local SMEs are applying grant funding to improve efficiency, boost productivity, and innovate operations.
- **Expert Guidance:** Discover how to identify eligible projects, prepare a strong grant application, and access funding that supports growth.
- **Real Business Examples:** Hear from businesses who have successfully navigated grant programmes and understand what works in practice.
- **Interactive Q&A:** Connect with funding advisors and peers, and get your questions answered in real-time.

This session is ideal for business owners, managers, and decision-makers who want to maximize efficiency and seize new opportunities in their sector.

To secure your free place today and gain the knowledge to make your business more productive and future-ready [click here](#).

Network & Learn: Bringing business innovation to life

Network & Learn

AI in Action: Live from the Studio

4 DECEMBER | 10:00 – 13:00 | UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE, LUTON CAMPUS

If you've been wondering how your business can make the most of innovation and funding opportunities in the South Midlands, this is an event you won't want to miss.

Join the South Midlands Growth Hub, in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, Luton Borough Council and Fliweel Tech, for an inspiring Network & Learn: "AI in Action – Live from the Studio" event — designed to help local SMEs explore practical ways to boost efficiency, productivity, and growth.

This dynamic, studio-style session brings together business leaders, innovation experts, and funding specialists for an engaging live broadcast experience.

What to Expect:

- **Expert Insights:** Hear from Dr. Ed Braund on how businesses of all sizes are adopting intelligent tools and technologies to work smarter and grow stronger.
- **Real-World Demos:** Andy Paul (Fliweel) will showcase practical examples of tools and approaches that SMEs can start using right away.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Learn about the South Midlands Growth Hub grant and how it can support your digital transformation journey.
- **Networking & Q&A:** Connect with peers, partners, and experts ready to help you take your next step.

Why Attend?

This event is designed for SMEs ready to innovate and grow, whether you're just exploring new technologies or looking for funding to scale your ideas. You'll leave with practical insights, funding knowledge, and local connections that can help you take action immediately.

To reserve your free place today and be part of this exciting live experience [click here](#).



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