

ESP Utilities Group embarks on ambitious regional infrastructure upgrades following appointment by Universal Destinations & Experiences

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ESP Utilities Group has been appointed to design, build and operate significant new community infrastructure in Bedford.

Following appointment by Universal Destinations & Experiences, ESP will work closely with the company, Bedford Borough Council and key local providers to deliver additional infrastructure and distribution capacity that can serve communities in the area of Universal's planned development and support future growth.

Key infrastructure upgrades include:

- **A substantial new water treatment facility:** Located on Universal's Bedford site and designed to re-use and recycle water, this significant investment follows its requirements for water sustainability and will provide greater resilience to Bedford's regional infrastructure, safeguarding it from the demands generated by the resort. The new facility, to be adopted by ESP and designed and built by Veolia, will significantly reduce the volume of water used on-site and the volume of sewerage needing to be discharged locally.
- **Enhanced water management:** In addition, surface water drainage will be designed to maximise the capture of rainwater within new dedicated habitat areas on Universal's site, reducing the risk of surface flooding locally.
- **A new primary substation:** A new electricity substation will be adopted and operated by ESP, with capacity to power both the Universal development and surrounding local developments.
- **An all-electric central energy plant:** Contributing to Universal's commitment to align the outcomes of the project with the UK's trajectory towards net zero by 2050, ESP will design and deliver alongside Veolia an all-electric plant to provide low carbon heating and cooling to the resort, with the potential to expand to serve surrounding communities as well.
- **Low-carbon transport:** ESP will deliver one of the UK's largest EV charging facilities for visitors to the Universal resort. A fleet of electric or other low-carbon transportation will also transfer guests from local railway stations to the resort.

Kevin O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, ESP Utilities Group, said:

"The ESP collaboration with Universal Destinations & Experiences strengthens our position at the forefront of sustainable infrastructure. With the support of our partners in Veolia, we are immensely proud to be able to deliver a pioneering water, power and energy strategy for the Entertainment Resort Complex and surrounding areas. Our model of long-term ownership, combined with Veolia's outstanding operational capability, creates a complete solution that provides resilience for years to come, reduces energy demands, and supports Universal to meet its goal of world class sustainable infrastructure that can serve both the project and surrounding communities."

Gidon Freeman, Universal Destinations & Experiences Vice-President of External Affairs, said:

"ESP's appointment as our utilities partner reflects our commitment to unlocking the long-term transformational benefits of this project. Across water, wastewater and energy we will be ensuring the resort can be built and operated sustainably, with additional distribution capacity added to the local network to benefit neighbouring communities and developments."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Universal Destinations & Experiences and the project:

Universal Destinations & Experiences offers guests around the world the most innovative, immersive and popular entertainment experiences. There are five Universal-branded theme parks and resorts around the world, with new developments including Universal Horror Unleashed Las Vegas recently opened in August 2025, and Universal Kids Resort (Frisco, Texas) set to open in 2026.

The new entertainment resort complex in Bedford will feature a world-class theme park with several themed lands, visitor accommodation, as well as a range of retail, dining and entertainment uses. The development will have a transformative impact on Bedford and the UK economy; it will generate nearly £50 billion of economic benefit, create 20,000 jobs during construction, a further 8,000 jobs once operational, and help deliver several long sought after transportation upgrades.

In December 2025, planning permission for the project was approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by way of making a Special Development Order (SDO). Further information about the project can be found at [Universal UK Project |](#)

About ESP Utilities Group:

With 25 years' experience and over 1.1 million Residential and Industrial & Commercial connections, ESP Utilities Group adopts and maintains heat, electricity, gas, water, and wastewater, across the UK. As a leader in independent adoption, we deliver cost-effective solutions with flexible design standards, transparent assets values, rapid approvals, and unparalleled expertise across regulated utilities. [ESP Utilities Group | UK Multi-Utility Network Utilities Provider](#)

About Veolia:

Veolia group aims to become the benchmark company for ecological transformation. Present on five continents with 215,000 employees, the Group designs and deploys useful, practical solutions for the management of water, waste and energy that are contributing to a radical turnaround of the current situation. Through its three complementary activities, Veolia helps to develop access to resources, to preserve available resources and to renew them. In 2024, the Veolia group provided 111 million inhabitants with drinking water and 98 million with sanitation, produced 42 million megawatt hours of energy and treated 65 million tonnes of waste. Veolia Environnement (Paris Euronext: VIE) achieved consolidated revenue of 44.7 billion euros in 2024. <https://www.veolia.com/en>

For Media Enquiries**Amy Kent**pressenquiries@espug.com

For more information, please visit www.espug.com.

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