



Thursday 26 June 2025

An update from Universal Destinations & Experiences

This April, Universal Destinations & Experiences, a unit of Comcast NBCUniversal, announced that it intends to build and operate the company's first-ever Universal branded theme park and resort in the United Kingdom, located here in Bedford, pending planning consent approvals.

The next steps in our planning process:

We have now submitted a request to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for planning permission to be granted by way of making a Special Development Order (SDO). Our submission includes the type of information that you would usually see in a planning application including an Environmental Statement, Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement. The proposal is sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Our request for planning permission is for an entertainment resort complex featuring 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 and create 28,000 jobs. At opening, the entertainment resort complex would be one of the largest employers in the region, with approximately 80% of employees expected to come from Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. The project will also help deliver several long sought after transportation upgrades including an expanded Wixams railway station, direct slip roads from the A421 and other local road improvements.

The past year has enabled us to closely engage with Bedford Borough Council, neighbouring authorities, national government, transport and environmental bodies and local communities. Thousands of residents participated in our engagement in April 2024 and 92% expressed their support for the project, which we appreciate and played a key role in us moving forward with the project.

What's next:

Once the request is received, MHCLG will be inviting representations on the Environmental Statement that accompanies the request, as well as the other documents, plans, and drawings submitted in relation to the proposed development. Details of where the material can be expected and how to make a representation will be available in due course. Any comments on the submitted proposals should be sent to MHCLG through the channels provided, not Universal.

As always, updates on the project can be found on our website universalukproject.co.uk. We look forward to the next steps in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Universal Destinations & Experiences