

# Destination Milton Keynes

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## Business Plan APRIL 2011-MARCH 2012

Working with partners to develop the visitor economy and maximise resources



## Chair's introduction and Executive Summary

It is a privilege to have taken on the role of Chair of Destination Milton Keynes, DMK - the organisation representing business, leisure and cultural tourism in Milton Keynes and I am delighted to have been able to work with the DMK Board and team since last July to develop our ideas and plans. I am optimistic about the future of DMK and the potential for the city and the wider SE Midlands region to develop its tourism offer over the next few years.

DMK's three-year **business strategy for 2011-14 'Developing the visitor economy by marketing Milton Keynes in the UK and overseas'** builds on the successes achieved during the period 2006-10. As we mark our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, DMK will work particularly assiduously with partners to support implementation of the Milton Keynes Council's Core Strategy as well as its Arts, Public Art, Heritage, and Economic Development Strategies over the next 3-5 years.

In so doing, DMK's principal focus in our one year **business plan 2011-12** is on **'working with partners to develop and maximise resources'** by growing the **visitor economy of Milton Keynes**. The city acts as a regional hub for activities that extend beyond the borough's boundaries and our plans are designed with this in mind.

To achieve our plan we have identified **three over-arching strategic aims** designed to

- **market Milton Keynes and its environs as a destination of distinction for UK and overseas visitors**
- **enhance the experience and develop the offer available to visitors to Milton Keynes and the SE Midlands area**
- **secure the long term sustainability of DMK as a private sector-led tourism body, working with partners to leverage a diverse source of funding**

Our aims are underpinned by **five key priorities** to be undertaken during the three-year life of the Business Strategy; these are to

- **promote the Milton Keynes city brand** to local, regional, national, international, leisure, business, arts and cultural visitors, and investors and **encourage the delivery of collaborative and cross marketing initiatives**
- **increase website and e-commerce activities**
- **improve the provision of services** available to visitors, e.g. booking, information

- **support the development of the tourism offer**
- **ensure though increased membership** and demonstrable marketing impact that DMK makes a **measurable economic contribution to the economy of Milton Keynes and the SE Midlands and increases the sources of funding that can be accessed**

Within the framework provided by our **three strategic aims** and **five key priorities 2011-2014**, we will during **2011-2012**, through the activities and resources detailed in this Business Plan, aim to complete **twelve specific objectives** as detailed below.

### **Objective a**

To create a holistic approach to destination marketing that addresses the key inter-related markets of businesses, including new investors, tourists, new residents and employees and existing communities, by promoting a consistent Milton Keynes brand message through all marketing and promotional activity and by harnessing the power of all those marketing Milton Keynes, empowering them to spread the message, city values and logo.

### **Objective b**

To position Milton Keynes as a preferred destination for business tourism by focusing on the following activities:

- making Milton Keynes attractive and cost-effective to conference/meetings organisers in the automotive, rail, financial services and retail/warehousing industries using MK's existing strengths in these areas, e.g. a strong automotive and railway base with national head offices of Mercedes-Benz, VW, Saab, Scania and Red Bull Racing, Network Rail and Railcare, national or UK main offices/warehouses of Home Retail Group, Reed Accountancy, Santander, Dominos, Wimpey, River Island and John Lewis
- highlighting the short travel times to London and the easy access to the north of England via Birmingham and Manchester
- publicising the impressive spread of brand hotels with a total of 23 private and branded hotels in the Association of Milton Keynes' Hoteliers

### **Objective c**

To enhance the profile of Milton Keynes amongst targeted groups as a desirable and innovative destination, resulting in more leisure and cultural tourists thereby increasing the local arts and leisure sectors' contribution to the economy and employment.

### **Objective d**

To promote Milton Keynes specifically as an international city for sport, arts, heritage, and culture.

### **Objective e**

To ensure the DMK website and iPhone App are up to date and work with partners to ensure the website is the preferred one for visitors to Milton Keynes.

### **Objective f**

To put in place an 'opted-in' leisure database of 1,500 by December 2011 and an 'opted-in' business database of 1,000 by December 2011 and to increase both by 20% overall by March 2014.

### **Objective g**

To support major events by providing an on-line accommodation booking service.

### **Objective h**

To provide a visitor information service and assistance to visitors both prior to and during the visit which meets and exceeds the visitors' expectations.

### **Objective i**

To develop the Milton Keynes Visitor Offer.

### **Objective j**

To increase membership of DMK.

### **Objective k**

To raise funds to maintain DMK's operation and, working in partnership, explore ways of diversifying sources of funding.

## Objective I

To use the localism agenda, combined with the new regional configurations and nationally-led tourism strategies, to strengthen DMK's role and explore opportunities for developing productive strategic partnerships

To fulfill these 12 objectives for 2011-2012, the Board and team at DMK outline below our principal activities for the year and we look forward to working with you on them to turn this plan into reality.



Dr. Ann Limb DL  
Chair Destination



## Objectives a-d: activities -1 April 2011- 31 March 2012

Specific Activities	Milestones	Lead and partners	Target completion date
Promote usage of the MK brand by all DMK members	90% of DMK members use the brand by the AGM; 100% by March 2012	DMK Board	By AGM in Sept 2011 90%; by 31 March 2012 100%
Raise awareness and where possible, usage of the MK brand across the wider community	Undertake a marketing survey benchmarking current awareness and showing likely future usage	DMK/Marketing Group	31 March 2012
Maintain integrity of the MK brand and monitor its usage	Log known usage through annual survey	DMK	31 March 2012
Work with MK Council & Invest MK and MKELP (or their successor bodies) to help market Milton Keynes to potential investors	Align DMK marketing with MK Economic Development Strategy, specifically marketing MK action plan and undertake 6 funded 'test drives' for potential new business investors	MKC Economic Development IMK/MKELP	31 March 2012
Use conference desk proactively to explore possible new business	DMK Marketing Group to determine 10 new clients with confirmed business	DMK with AHA MKHA	31 March 2012
Work with MKCCM, MK Council, the Parks Trust, Arts & Heritage Alliance and MK Heritage Association to develop and publicise an Events Strategy for MK and an annual MK events calendar	Propose strategy to ISC steering group and produce annual MK events strategy and calendar	DMK/MKCCM with Parks Trust, AHA, MKHA, Community Action, Community Foundation and DMK's smaller member providers	31 May 2011
Work with ISC steering group to deliver major sports and cultural events for the summer of 2012	Agree format of event and identify key players and devise implementation plan	DMK with MK Council, IF Board, MK Dons	30 September 2011
Give practical support to IF 2012	Align DMK marketing with promotion of IF	IF and DMK Chair with AHA, Community Action and Community Foundation	31 March 2012
Work with SE Midlands Tourism Task & Finish	Agree and market three common themes	SEMLEP tourism group	31 July 2011

Specific Activities	Milestones	Lead and partners	Target completion date
group to identify regional strengths and develop some common themes which can be jointly marketed		supported by DMK and members	
Work with DMK attractions members to deliver themed events to attract PR	Agree and deliver two events	DMK	April 2011 and Sept/Oct 2011
Research possible sector-led PR opportunities, e.g. cycling, fishing, walking	Achieve publication of six related articles in national or lifestyle media by developing a PR media diary	DMK Marketing Group	31 March 2012
Revise the current MK Guide in partnership with MK Web	Content to be updated by DMK and publication produced	DMK	30 April 2011
Use existing PDF downloadable guide pages to link into sustainable transport modes to provide suggested ' <i>packages</i> ' to visitors	DMK Marketing Group with MK Council	DMK MKC Transport Major transport providers	30 June 2011

## Resource

DMK, together with and on behalf of, Milton Keynes Council will act as **guardians of the brand**. DMK will take overall responsibility for raising awareness, maintaining the integrity, and monitoring the usage of the brand. The DMK Marketing Group, made up of stakeholders from the public and private sectors that champion the brand, will be used to undertake the brand monitoring activities.

DMK's team have responsibility for all marketing activity assisted by the Marketing Group as endorsed by the Board of DMK. A freelance marketer whose main focus is on web marketing and member communications will support it. The DMK Marketing Group, made up of members representing the different sectors meets bi-monthly. The group's purpose is to provide membership feedback on marketing activity and to help identify joint initiatives.

## Objectives e-g: activities -1 April 2011-31 March 2012

Activities	Milestones	Lead and partners	Target completion date
Publish regular emailers promoting the MK offer	4 emailers to business and leisure targets	DMK	April, June, August 2011 & January 2012 for

			business; April, July, October 2011 and February 2012 for leisure
Liaise with major event organisers to ensure DMK maximises on potential accommodation bookings	Increase number of accommodation bookings achieved through DMK website	DMK	31 March 2012
Regular update of website content and explore possibilities of securing sponsored advertising to enhance revenue streams	Monthly review of content	DMK	31 March 2012
Regular update of iPhone App	Monthly review of content	DMK	31 March 2012
Develop links with member and stakeholder websites	Increase in number of referrals from other websites to maintain a monthly average of 10,000 visits	DMK Marketing Group	31 March 2012

## Resource

DMK itself has no specific marketing budget so any allocation for a marketing resource needs to be found from a range of sources including the membership subscriptions, working with members to pool resources to be devoted to collaborative marketing initiatives. There is potential revenue to be derived from website advertising, iPhone subscriptions for non-members and on-line merchandising.

## Objective h: activities 1 April 2011- 31 March 2012

Activities	Milestones	Lead and partners	Target completion date
Review and analyse the current 'visitor journey' to identify gaps and areas for improvement	Report produced of analysis	DMK	30 June 2011
Continue to operate the Visitor Information phone line and ensure the website provides up-to-date and relevant information	Information updated monthly	DMK	31 March 2012
Update information of accredited organisations and events for the VisitEngland, VisitBritain, VisitBucks and EnglandNet platform	All existing entries to be checked and updated; new accredited organisations and events to be added	DMK	31 March 2012

## Resource

The General Manager is responsible for managing the Visitor Information Services and works with DMK's conference desk, marketing and administration services.

## Objective i: activities -1 April 2011- 31 March 2012

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Lead and partners</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>
Conduct an audit of sporting, leisure and cultural events held in other destinations to see if any can be relocated to MK	Identify opportunities	DMK with MK Council	31 March 2012
Define key target markets and develop a programme of suggested itineraries for weekend packages	Identify target groups and develop "what to do" packages	DMK	31 May-30 June 2011
Support endeavours to identify the next generation of leisure, sporting and retail developments and to help MK to attract such investment when the market recovers	Help with the marketing of Milton Keynes to identify new business opportunities	MK Council with DMK and partners	31 March 2012
Support any other relevant Olympic related tourism activities undertaken	Produce an e-zine to email to world governing bodies of identified sports to attract their supporters to the MK area	DMK with partners	31 March 2012

## Resource

Chair and General Manager and MK Council Head of Communications and Corporate Head of Economic Communications, with IF Festival Board and staff.

**Objective j: activities 1 April 2011- 31 March 2012**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Lead and partners</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>
Demonstrate and communicate the value and benefit of membership to members and non-members	Increase income from membership by £500 - £1000 a month	DMK Board	31 March 2012
Continue the membership communications programme	Organise quarterly events and publish regular newsletters	DMK	31 March 2012
Market benefits of DMK membership to larger employers	Recruit three of MK's top employers as corporate members	DMK	31 March 2012
Market benefits of DMK membership to smaller providers and ensure their needs are understood and met	Include smaller DMK members in more activities and programmes	DMK	31 March 2012

**Resource**

The GM has overall responsibility for membership retention, recruitment and communication with support from Chair & Board

**Objective k: activities - April 2011- 31 March 2012**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>
Secure adequate funding to continue to operate to at least the same level in 2011/2012 as in 2010/2011 with a three month reserve	Retain existing membership at 95% and increase membership by minimum of 3 new members per month	DMK	31 March 2012
Identify additional sources of funding	Explore possibilities, with partners, eg Community Foundation, MK Council, SEMLEP, of project funding	DMK	31 March 2012

**Resource**

The GM has overall responsibility for membership retention, recruitment and communication with support from Chair and Board.

**Objective I: activities 1 April 2011- 31 March 2012**

Activities	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
Work with Visit England, TSE and other relevant bodies to exploit marketing opportunities for DMK	Integrate some of our marketing campaigns	DMK with TSE, Visit England & Visit Britain	31 March 2012
Continue to work with Bucks Tourism Officers Group	Integrate some of our marketing campaigns	DMK	31 March 2012
Raise awareness and understanding of the wider role played by the Milton Keynes visitor economy in the local and regional economy	Help implement MK Council's Economic Development Strategy; work with SEMLEP Tourism Task & Finish Group	DMK with MK Council and SEMLEP	31 March 2012

**Resource**

DMK operates 'virtually', with no offices or base. All staff are contracted on a part-time basis and are based from home – enabling total flexibility. Whilst in no way seeking to reduce this flexibility, DMK can use opportunities presented by infrastructure changes occurring to explore possibilities of flexible and creative partnership e.g. with Invest MK and MK Economy & Learning Partnership and work with MK Council to help deliver its Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016.