

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE

Issue Number: 3**Publication Date: August 2026**

Independent business intelligence on the Universal United Kingdom Resort and related developments affecting Bedford and the surrounding region.

THIS MONTH'S KEY QUESTION

Four Tier 1 contractors are now on site — is your business already in their supply chain?

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE DASHBOARD

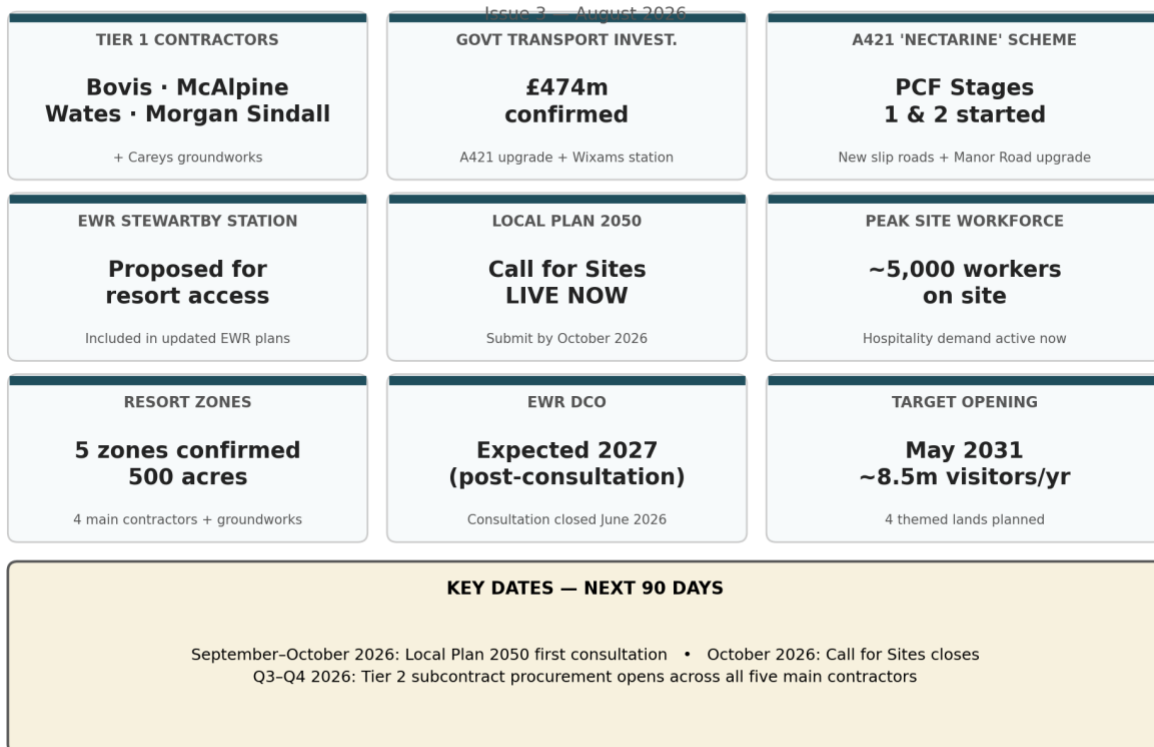


Figure 1: Bedford Intelligence Dashboard — Issue 3 snapshot.

Headline Summary

1. Four Tier 1 Main Contractors Named for the Theme Park Build

Bovis (Vistry Group), Sir Robert McAlpine, Wates Group and Morgan Sindall have been appointed to build the resort's five themed zones, with Careys Civil Engineering confirmed for advance groundworks. The supply chain is now open: subcontractors should contact each firm's procurement teams directly. Businesses affected: all civil, mechanical, electrical, specialist fit-out, landscaping, logistics and professional services firms with relevant capability.

2. UK Government Commits Over £1 Billion to Resort Transport and Infrastructure

The Department for Transport has confirmed a £474m investment in A421 and Wixams station upgrades, including new junction slip roads, Manor Road improvements and an expanded Active Travel Network. This is on top of existing EWR investment. Businesses affected: road construction contractors, transport and logistics operators, residential and commercial developers along the A421 corridor.

3. Bedford Local Plan 2050 Call for Sites Now Live

Bedford Borough Council's call for sites is open July–October 2026. Landowners, developers and businesses can now formally submit sites for consideration in the new Local Plan which is explicitly shaped around Universal and East West Rail. Businesses affected: landowners along A421/EWR corridor; residential and commercial developers; planning consultants and solicitors.

4. East West Rail: Post-Consultation — What Happens Next

The final pre-DCO consultation closed 9 June 2026. EWR is now processing 25,000+ responses and finalising designs for DCO* submission in 2027. A Stewartby station, specifically designed to serve the Universal resort, has been included in updated proposals. Businesses affected: commercial property owners near Bedford and Wixams stations; landowners along the EWR corridor; hospitality and retail operators planning for post-EWR demand.

5. A421 'Nectarine' Scheme: New Junction and Slip Roads Entering Design Stage

National Highways has confirmed a major junction upgrade scheme at the A421, codenamed 'Nectarine', is entering PCF stages 1 and 2 (Options). The scheme includes new direct slip roads to the resort and upgrades along the Manor Road access route. Businesses affected: road contractors and civils firms; logistics operators; industrial and distribution property owners along the A421 corridor.

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — The Construction Window Is Now Fully Open

Issues 1 and 2 urged businesses to register and make contact before the main contracts were awarded. That moment has now passed for those who didn't act, but the Tier 2 procurement window is opening right now.

Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall and Careys will collectively procure hundreds of subcontracts across all disciplines. Bedfordshire businesses that are already known to these firms are in the first wave. Those making contact now are still well-positioned. Those waiting for the next 'confirmation event' are falling further behind.

*Development Consent Order

OPPORTUNITY OF THE MONTH — Tier 2 Subcontracting — All Five Main Contractors

With four main contractors and Careys now confirmed, the single highest-priority action for any Bedfordshire construction, civils, M&E or specialist fit-out business is to make direct contact with every one of these five firms' supply chain or procurement teams. Each contractor operates an independent supply chain register. Registration with the Universal portal is necessary but not sufficient, a direct contractor contact is the differentiator.

Suggested First Action: This week: send a capability statement to the supply chain contact at each of Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall and Careys. Reference your local base, relevant disciplines and any existing major project experience. Do not wait for formal procurement notices.

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE VIEW

The contractor appointments confirm that the Universal United Kingdom Resort is now firmly in the delivery phase, not the planning phase. The £474m A421 investment and the confirmed Stewartby EWR station add a second major signal: the UK Government is committed to the infrastructure that makes the resort viable long-term. For Bedford businesses, the question has shifted from 'will this happen?' to 'are we part of it?' The businesses that answer yes to that question will look very different in five years from those that are still watching from the sidelines.

Section 1 — Universal UK Resort Tracker

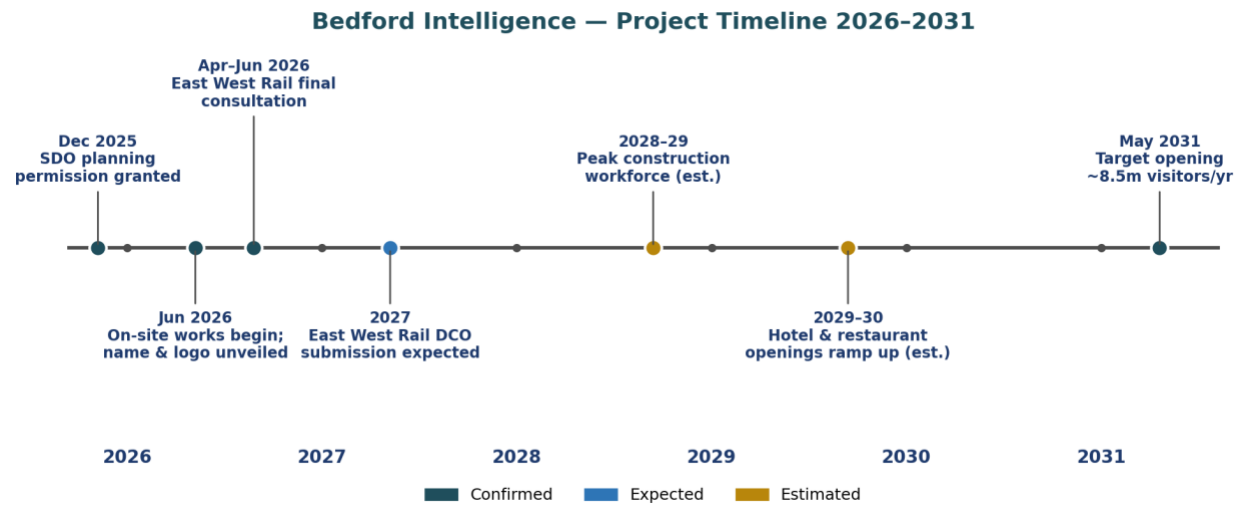


Figure 2: Project Timeline 2026–2031. Colour-coded by status — confirmed, expected, estimated.

1.1 The Tier 1 Contractor Appointments: What They Mean

What happened: Four main contractors have been appointed to build the resort's five themed zones. Bovis (Vistry Group) will construct two zones; Sir Robert McAlpine, Wates Group and Morgan Sindall will each build one. Careys Civil Engineering has been appointed for advance groundworks across the site. The resort is divided into five zones across nearly 500 acres at Kempston Hardwick. Peak workforce on site is estimated at 5,000 workers.

Why it matters: Each main contractor will now run its own supply chain procurement. These are four independent procurement exercises, each requiring subcontractors, specialists and suppliers across dozens of disciplines. For Bedfordshire businesses, this creates multiple simultaneous routes into the supply chain, through Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall or Careys. Waiting for a single central procurement route was always a mistake; it is now demonstrably the wrong strategy.

1.2 The Tier 1 Contractor Register

Contractor	Role / Scope	Zones	Action for Subcontractors
Bovis (Vistry Group)	Main theme park construction	2 zones	Contact Bovis supply chain team; register on Constructionline
Sir Robert McAlpine	Main theme park construction	1 zone	Contact McAlpine supply chain; strong civils/fit-out capability preferred
Wates Group	Main theme park construction	1 zone	Contact Wates supply chain; M&E and fit-out opportunities
Morgan Sindall	Main theme park construction	1 zone	Contact Morgan Sindall supply chain; civils and infrastructure focus
Careys Civil Engineering	Groundworks (advance enabling)	Site-wide	Immediate opportunity — groundworks and civils subcontractors needed now
ESP Utilities Group	Utilities infrastructure	Site-wide	M&E, water, EV, energy plant subcontractors

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — Five Doors Into the Supply Chain

Each of the five appointed contractors operates independently. Registration with one does not register you with the others. A Bedfordshire M&E firm that contacts only Bovis is missing four other procurement exercises simultaneously in progress.

The correct strategy is to contact all five directly, with a consistent capability statement tailored to each firm's known discipline focus. This is a week's work, not a month's project.

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

Who Benefits? Civil and groundwork contractors (Careys appointment creates immediate opportunity); M&E and utilities firms (ESP, Bovis, Wates procurement); specialist fit-out contractors; scaffolding; plant hire; logistics and materials supply; professional services (quantity surveying, project management, health and safety).

Who May Be Disadvantaged? Firms without appropriate quality certifications (ISO 9001, SSIP) or insufficient insurance cover, as these will fail pre-qualification at procurement stage.

Who Should Act? Any construction, civils, M&E or specialist firm within 50 miles of Bedford with relevant capability and appropriate certifications.

Suggested Next Step: Send capability statements to supply chain contacts at all five appointed contractors this week.

Expected Time Horizon: Tier 2 procurement active now; peak works 2027–2030.

1.3 Stewartby Station: A New EWR Station for the Resort

What happened: East West Rail's updated consultation proposals include a station at Stewartby, positioned specifically to serve the Universal United Kingdom Resort. Stewartby is the nearest proposed EWR station to the Kempston Hardwick site. If confirmed in the DCO*, this station would give the resort direct rail access from Oxford, Bedford and Cambridge without passengers needing to change at Bedford.

Why it matters: A dedicated rail station adjacent to the resort fundamentally changes the catchment geography for visitor-facing businesses. Restaurants, hotels and leisure operators within easy reach of Stewartby, not just Bedford town centre, would benefit from direct resort-adjacent rail access. This is a significant shift from the assumption that visitor spending would concentrate around Bedford station.

RUMOUR VS REALITY

Rumour: Universal will have a dedicated station right at the resort gates.

Reality: Stewartby station is proposed in EWR's updated consultation plans, positioned to serve the resort. It is not confirmed it requires DCO approval expected in 2027. The station design and exact location are still subject to finalisation.

Business Impact: Do not make property or business location decisions based solely on an unconfirmed Stewartby station. However, landowners and developers in the Stewartby/Kempston Hardwick area should note this as a materially significant planning consideration and engage with both the EWR DCO process and the Bedford Local Plan 2050.

*Development Consent Order

Section 2 — Business Opportunity Watch

Opportunity Scorecard — Issue 3

Sector	Opportunity	Score	Time Horizon	Ease of Entry	Rating
Construction — Tier 2 subcontracting	Direct subcontracting to Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall, Careys	9/10	Now–2029	Medium	★★★★★
Property — Bedford Station area	Civic plaza uplift; Queen's Park western entrance	8/10	2027–2031	Low–Medium	★★★★☆
Transport / Logistics	A421 upgrade + resort access road demand; HGV-accessible industrial	8/10	Now–2030	Medium	★★★★☆
Hospitality — Workforce	5,000 peak on-site workers; accommodation and catering demand	8/10	Now–2030	Medium	★★★★☆
Property — EWR Corridor	Station-adjacent sites along Bedford–Cambridge axis	7/10	2028–2034	Low	★★★★☆
Retail — Wixams Town Centre	New town centre units; early occupier position	6/10	2027–2030	Medium	★★★☆☆
Training & Skills	Construction and hospitality workforce training partnerships	6/10	2026–2031	Medium	★★★☆☆

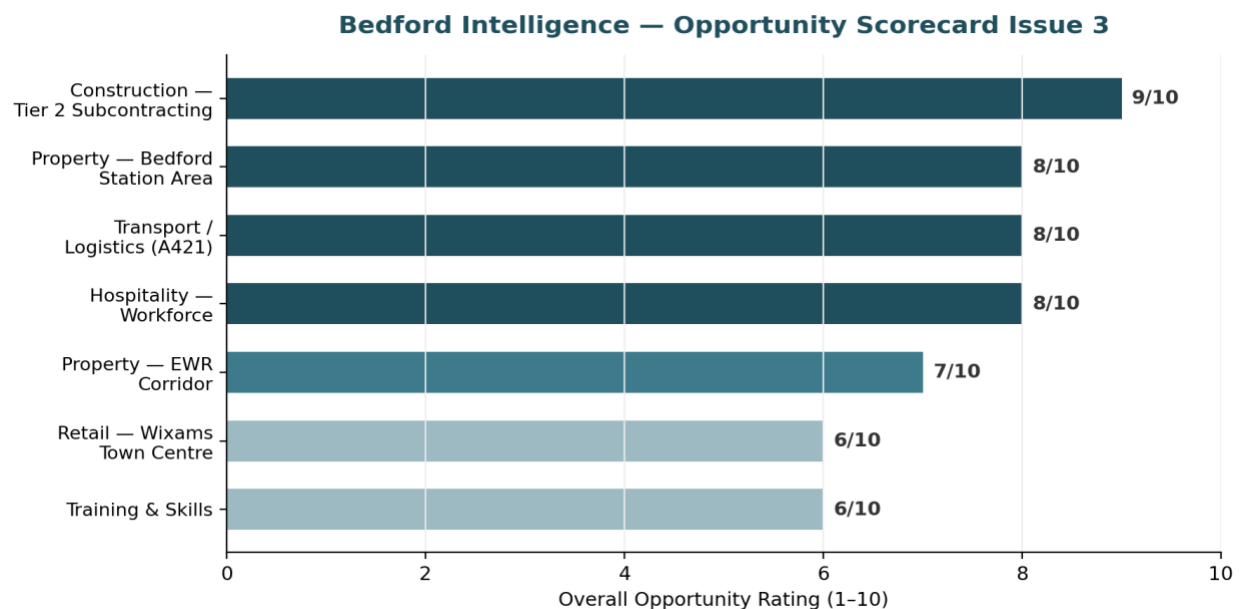


Figure 3: Opportunity Scorecard — Issue 3. Sectors ranked by overall opportunity rating.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Hospitality businesses: With 5,000 workers on site at peak, the workforce accommodation and catering opportunity is now a near-term operational reality, not a forecast. Block-booking negotiations with main contractors can happen now.

Retail businesses: Retail opportunity remains concentrated in Wixams town centre (2027–2030 window) and, longer term, along the Stewartby/resort access corridor if the EWR station is confirmed.

Property owners: The Bedford station civic plaza, the EWR corridor, and the A421 upgrade zone are the three property plays to track. All three will move on a 2027–2031 timeline as infrastructure is delivered.

Construction firms: This is the single most time-critical month in this publication's history for construction businesses. Five contractors are in active or imminent supply chain procurement. Make contact this week.

Professional service firms: The Local Plan 2050 call for sites and September consultation creates immediate demand for planning solicitors, planning consultants, surveyors and commercial agents. This wave starts now.

Investors: The A421 upgrade confirmation makes industrial/logistics property along the corridor a more clearly investable thesis. Competitive rents (circa £13/sq ft vs £15/sq ft Milton Keynes) plus infrastructure investment is a compelling combination.

Section 3 — East West Rail Deep Dive

As promised in Issue 2, this issue features a full deep dive into the East West Rail project and what it means for property values, business location decisions and commercial opportunity along the Bedford–Cambridge corridor.

What Is East West Rail?

East West Rail (EWR) is a nationally significant infrastructure project to reconnect Oxford and Cambridge through Bedford, a rail link that was closed in the 1960s. The project is being delivered by East West Railway Company, a Government-owned company established to deliver the project through the Development Consent Order (DCO) planning regime.

The full route runs Oxford–Milton Keynes–Bedford–Cambridge, with Bedford sitting at the junction of the new east-west line and the existing Midland Main Line to London St Pancras. When complete, EWR will offer up to five trains per hour through Bedford, with direct services to Oxford and Cambridge without changing trains.

The DCO submission is expected in 2027, with construction to follow on a timeline that would deliver services to Bedford by the late 2020s on an accelerated programme.

Why EWR Matters More Than Most Bedford Businesses Currently Appreciate

EWR is not simply a rail project. It is a fundamental reorientation of Bedford's economic geography. At present, Bedford is primarily a London commuter town, with the majority of long-distance passenger journeys oriented south toward St Pancras. EWR creates a new east-west economic axis connecting three of the UK's most significant economic clusters: the Oxford knowledge economy, the Milton Keynes logistics and tech hub, and the Cambridge life sciences and university economy.

Bedford, positioned at the centre of this axis and at the convergence with the Universal UK Resort development, will be the pivot point. Businesses and property investors, who understand this shift and position themselves ahead of it, will capture disproportionate value.

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — The Oxford–Cambridge Arc: Bedford's Strategic Position

Government and private investment in the Oxford–Cambridge Arc has consistently sought a transport spine to unlock the economic potential of the corridor. EWR is that spine. Cambridge's life sciences sector alone employs over 65,000 people and generates over £6 billion in annual economic output. Oxford's economy is similarly concentrated in high-value knowledge industries.

Bedford's position at the junction of EWR and the Midland Main Line makes it the most connected town in the corridor. For businesses looking to serve clients across Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge, a Bedford base will be materially more logical after EWR opens than it is today.

EWR and Bedford Property Values: The Rail Ripple Effect

Property professionals are already tracking what they term the 'Rail Ripple effect' along the EWR corridor. The pattern from previous major rail infrastructure projects, with Crossrail being the most studied, is consistent: property values in the vicinity of new and upgraded stations begin to move ahead of construction, accelerate as opening approaches, and stabilise at a new, higher level after opening.

The Crossrail evidence showed uplift of 10–25% for properties within walking distance of new or upgraded stations in the years surrounding opening. EWR is a structurally similar project offering new connectivity where none previously existed, linking high-demand economic centres.

Location Type	Expected Impact	Time Horizon	Action
Bedford station (0–5 min walk)	Civic plaza + western entrance = uplift in pedestrian footfall and commercial appeal	2028–2031	Monitor lease renewals; consider securing longer terms now
Queen's Park area	New western station entrance creates first pedestrian link — currently undervalued	2028–2031	Early acquisition or long lease ahead of entrance opening
Wixams (EWR station)	4-platform station transforms connectivity to Oxford and Cambridge	2028–2030	Commercial occupier and investor positions in new town centre
EWR corridor (Bedford–Cambridge)	New settlements planned; rural property near proposed stations may gain value	2030–2035	Identify land near proposed station sites before DCO locks in alignment
Safeguarded zone (Poets/Ashburnham Rd)	Statutory blight risk; need-to-sell scheme available	Now	Affected owners: contact EWR directly re. property purchase schemes

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — The Queen's Park Opportunity Is Underappreciated

EWR's proposed western entrance to Bedford station is a commercially significant event that has received very little business commentary. Queen's Park is currently separated from the station by an underpass that few pedestrians use. A new western entrance, with an upgraded connecting route, makes Queen's Park effectively station-adjacent for the first time.

Commercial and residential property in Queen's Park should be monitored now. The uplift will occur when the entrance opens, but the acquisition opportunity exists today.

EWR and the Stewartby Station: The Resort Access Point

The inclusion of Stewartby in EWR's updated proposals is one of the most commercially significant developments in this issue. Stewartby is positioned between Wixams and the Universal site. A station there would mean that resort visitors arriving by rail would not need to travel through Bedford town centre they would alight at a resort-adjacent station.

This has material implications for the geography of visitor-facing commercial development. The conventional assumption that resort visitors would stay in Bedford hotels and spend in Bedford restaurants may be too simple. A Stewartby station creates a viable alternative hospitality and retail zone much closer to the resort gates.

EWR Property Impact: What To Do Right Now

For landowners and developers, the Bedford Local Plan 2050 call for sites (open July–October 2026) is the mechanism for formally putting EWR-adjacent land into the development pipeline. Sites near proposed EWR stations such as Wixams, Bedford, and potentially Stewartby —

should be submitted. Once the DCO is submitted and routes are locked in, the opportunity to influence alignment and station locations effectively closes.

For commercial property investors, the most actionable positions are: station-adjacent commercial property in Bedford (eastern plaza and Queen's Park); Wixams town centre commercial units ahead of station delivery; and industrial/logistics along the A421 corridor where EWR construction logistics will drive near-term demand.

EWR: Protecting Affected Property Owners

Not all EWR impacts are positive. Approximately 65 residential properties may need to be acquired for the route (down from an initial estimate of 97). Homeowners in the safeguarded zone can apply under the statutory blight provisions for EWR to purchase their property at unblighted market value. The 'Need to Sell' scheme offers support to homeowners outside the safeguarded zone who can demonstrate a compelling reason to sell and significant impact on their property value.

ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE — EWR Property Schemes

Statutory Blight (safeguarded zone): eastwestrail.co.uk/your-area/bedfordshire — apply if your property is within the safeguarded boundary

Need to Sell Scheme: eastwestrail.co.uk — for properties outside safeguarded zone with significant impact

Local Plan 2050 Call for Sites: bedford.gov.uk/callforsites — submit land for consideration by October 2026

EWR consultation responses: eastwestrail.co.uk — consultation closed; DCO submission expected 2027

Suggested First Action: If your property is near the EWR route, check whether it falls within the safeguarded boundary at eastwestrail.co.uk/your-area/bedfordshire

Section 3A — Bedford Locality Spotlight: Bedford Town Centre

Bedford Town Centre: The Infrastructure Dividend

Bedford town centre is the beneficiary of three converging infrastructure programmes within the same 2026–2031 window: the East West Rail station redesign (civic plaza, western entrance, new London platform), the Universal UK Resort's economic ripple effect, and the Bedford Local Plan 2050's explicit commitment to revitalising the town centre as part of the Universal growth story.

The cumulative effect of these programmes on Bedford town centre's commercial profile over the next five years is likely to be more significant than any individual development project the town has seen in a generation.

The New Station Civic Plaza

EWR's proposals transform the eastern station approach into a new civic plaza giving a pedestrianised public space that will become the primary arrival point for resort-adjacent rail travellers from the EWR and existing London St Pancras services. A civic plaza of this type typically creates a concentration of footfall-dependent commercial activity: coffee shops, restaurants, small retail, hotel lobbies, and professional services offices.

The commercial property opportunity in the eastern station approach is real and currently underpriced relative to what the plaza will deliver. Occupiers who secure leases in this zone before the station works begin will be entering at pre-improvement pricing.

The High Street Challenge

Universal's arrival creates an opportunity for Bedford town centre's retail offer, but it is not guaranteed. Research from comparable theme park markets shows that host towns whose retail and hospitality offerings are not substantially upgraded before opening miss a significant proportion of the spending that might otherwise flow through them. Visitors who find a weak town centre retail offer tend to stay on-site or travel to better-served alternatives.

Bedford Borough Council's town centre strategy and the Local Plan 2050 process are the mechanisms for addressing this. Retail operators, hospitality businesses and commercial property owners in the town centre should engage actively with the Local Plan consultation to shape what happens, rather than react to decisions made without them.

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — The Town Centre Must Earn the Visitor Spend

Universal's arrival will bring additional visitors to the Bedford area, but it will not automatically route their spending through the town centre. A strong retail and hospitality offer, good wayfinding, and a pleasant pedestrian environment are prerequisites for capturing that spend.

The civic plaza and the western station entrance are infrastructure gifts. The town centre must create a commercial environment worth walking to from that plaza. That is a five-year challenge that starts now.

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

Who Benefits? Station-adjacent commercial property owners; hospitality and F&B operators in the station approach zone; retail businesses investing in their town centre offer ahead of 2031; professional services firms seeking a central Bedford presence.

Who May Be Disadvantaged? Town centre retailers and hospitality operators who do not improve their offer before 2031 risk losing visitor spending to on-site resort alternatives.

Who Should Act? Commercial property investors monitoring the eastern station approach; hospitality operators planning a town centre presence; retail businesses considering refurbishment or expansion.

Suggested Next Step: Engage with the Bedford Local Plan 2050 consultation (September–October 2026) to shape town centre development policies. Contact Bedford Borough Council's economic development team about investment in the town centre.

Expected Time Horizon: Station civic plaza 2029–2031; commercial uplift 2029 onward.

Section 4 — Planning & Development Watch

The A421 'Nectarine' Scheme: What It Is and Why It Matters

National Highways has confirmed a major junction upgrade at the A421, internally codenamed 'Nectarine', is now in PCF (Project Control Framework) Stages 1 and 2, (the options and preliminary design phase). The scheme includes new direct slip roads connecting the Universal site to the A421, improvements to Manor Road (the primary resort access route), and upgrades to the surrounding junction network.

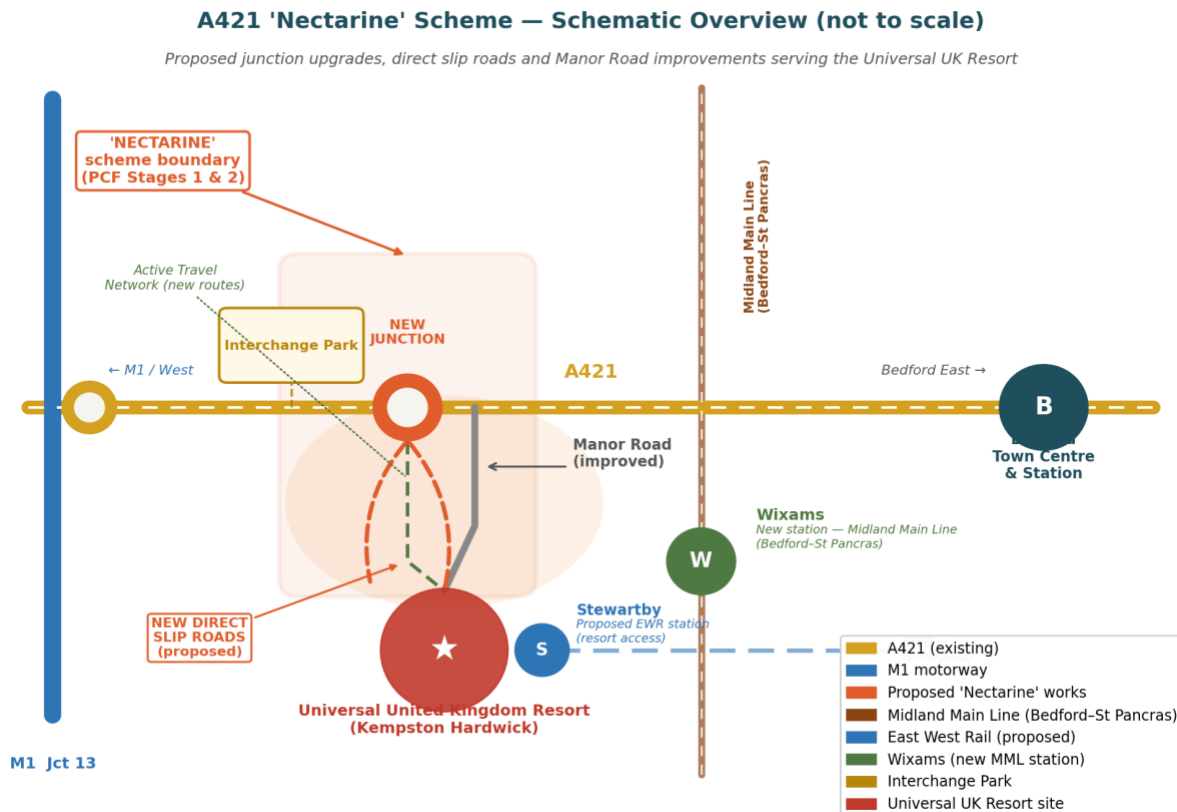


Figure 5: A421 'Nectarine' Scheme — Schematic Overview (not to scale).

The UK Government's broader £474m transport investment package for the resort area includes this A421 scheme alongside the expanded Wixams station. The A421 upgrade is not a minor road improvement, it is a major reconfiguration of the primary strategic road serving the M1-to-Bedford corridor, specifically to handle resort traffic volumes.

BEDFORD INTELLIGENCE INSIGHT — The A421 Upgrade Is a Logistics Game-Changer

The Kempston Hardwick site currently has limited strategic road access. New direct A421 slip roads will transform the site's logistics connectivity and not just for visitor traffic, but for construction materials, equipment and eventually operational supply chains.

Industrial and logistics properties between the M1 (Junction 13) and the resort site that are well-connected to the A421 will see their accessibility fundamentally improve when this scheme

completes. Bedford's already-competitive industrial rents (circa £13/sq ft vs £15/sq ft Milton Keynes) combined with improved M1 access is a compelling investment thesis.

Bedford Local Plan 2050: Call for Sites Open

The call for sites is live at bedford.gov.uk/callforsites and runs until October 2026. Bedford Borough Council is explicitly seeking sites along the EWR/A421 corridor, near proposed EWR stations, and in locations that can accommodate housing, commercial, retail and industrial growth consistent with the Universal-era economy.

The first public consultation on the new Local Plan's scope and direction will run September–October 2026. This is the point at which the broad spatial strategy for the Borough will be shaped, well before detailed site allocations are made. Developers, landowners and commercial operators who want to influence the strategic direction should respond to this consultation, not wait for the detailed stages.

ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE — Local Plan 2050 Engagement

Call for Sites portal: bedford.gov.uk/callforsites — open July–October 2026

Public consultation: September–October 2026 — bedford.gov.uk/localplan2050

Planning advice: For landowners promoting sites: engage a planning consultant before submitting — site promotion statements that are not professionally presented carry less weight

Suggested First Action: If you own land along the A421/EWR corridor, contact a planning consultant this month to assess submission options before the October 2026 deadline

Section 5 — Lessons from Other Theme Park Markets

Case Study: Universal Studios Japan (Osaka) — The Supply Chain Premium

Universal Studios Japan (USJ) opened in Osaka in 2001. In the years before opening, Osaka's construction sector benefited from one of the largest single-site construction programmes in Japan's private sector history. The contractors and subcontractors that participated in the USJ build used that experience to win subsequent major hospitality and entertainment construction contracts across Asia.

The pattern observed in Osaka was: local contractors who won USJ subcontracts developed specialist expertise in theme park construction which is a discipline that commands premium pricing and high margins because relatively few firms can credibly claim it. Those firms became preferred contractors for subsequent Universal expansions, for Disney Shanghai, and for major resort projects across the region.

Bedford Lesson: Build Your Theme Park CV Now

A Bedfordshire contractor that works on the Universal UK Resort, at any tier, will be able to claim theme park construction experience. That is a credential that does not currently exist in the UK market at scale. The firms that secure subcontracting roles on this project will have a competitive advantage in future hospitality, leisure and entertainment construction that will outlast the resort build itself.

This reframes the supply chain opportunity. It is not just about the revenue from this project. It is about the credentials, relationships and specialist knowledge that flow from participation and that will differentiate Bedfordshire contractors in future tenders for years to come.

Section 6 — Bedford Business Readiness Checklist — Issue 3

1. Contact all five appointed contractors (Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall, Careys) with a direct capability statement this week. Register with each firm's supply chain system independently.
2. Submit sites to the Bedford Local Plan 2050 call for sites before October 2026 if you own land along the A421/EWR corridor. Use a planning consultant to prepare a credible submission.
3. Respond to the Bedford Local Plan 2050 public consultation (September–October 2026) if you have an interest in town centre, commercial, industrial or hospitality development.
4. If your property is near the EWR route, check whether it falls within the safeguarded boundary and understand your rights under the statutory blight and Need to Sell schemes.
5. If you operate in hospitality or accommodation, approach main contractors now about block-booking arrangements for the construction workforce — 5,000 peak on-site workers represent significant near-term demand.

Section 7 — Looking Ahead: Next 30–90 Days

Development	Expected Timing	Confidence	What to Watch
Bovis, McAlpine, Wates, Morgan Sindall Tier 2 procurement opens	Q3–Q4 2026	High	Each contractor's supply chain portal; Construction Enquirer
Bedford Local Plan 2050 first public consultation	September–October 2026	High	bedford.gov.uk/localplan2050
Local Plan 2050 call for sites closes	October 2026	High	bedford.gov.uk/callforsites — submit before deadline
Wixams town centre planning decision	Q3–Q4 2026	Medium	Bedford Borough Council planning portal
A421 'Nectarine' junction scheme progression	Q4 2026–2027	Medium	National Highways and highways-news.com
EWB DCO preparation and submission	2027	High	eastwestrail.co.uk

Key Sources Monitored This Month

Official Sources: universalukproject.co.uk; bedford.gov.uk (Local Plan 2050, call for sites); eastwestrail.co.uk; gov.uk (government press releases on Universal and EWB); nationalhighways.co.uk.

Industry Sources: Building Magazine (contractor appointments); Construction Enquirer; New Civil Engineer; Highways News; WDW News Today; Attraction Source.

Local Sources: Bedford Independent; Bedford Today; CPRE Bedfordshire; Country Properties (Rail Ripple analysis).

COMING SOON

Bedford Hospitality Demand Forecast: Issue 4 will feature a full analysis of the hospitality demand outlook for Bedford — hotels, restaurants and accommodation — modelling the construction-phase workforce demand now and the visitor economy from 2031. Including a sector action guide for hospitality operators.

Bedford Intelligence is an independent publication. It is not affiliated with Universal Parks & Resorts, NBC Universal, Bedford Borough Council, Bovis, Sir Robert McAlpine, Wates Group, Morgan Sindall, Careys Civil Engineering, ESP Utilities Group, East West Railway Company or any development partner. All analysis is based on publicly available information. Readers should obtain independent professional advice before making any business or investment decisions. Bedford Intelligence — Issue 3, August 2026.