



## Background to Loan Request to West Berkshire Council

The University Centre Newbury (UCN) will be a partnership of two universities, a large national training provider, working with the College, and will deliver high level qualifications in five strategically important sectors of the local economy.

The project has received outstanding support from businesses, education providers, West Berkshire Council and a range of key community leaders.

The UCN building will meet the highest standards of sustainability, being the first public building in West Berkshire designed to meet the new 'zero carbon' standard.

The loan will be secured through the Council taking a charge on a separate 8 acre parcel of campus land. Unconditional values (without planning permission) and conditional values, based on current offers, are in excess of £3.5M. Therefore, the opportunity for the council to take a charge on this land is considered to provide effective security for the requested loan of £3.5M.

### Overview

Employers across the region identify critical shortages of employees with high-level skills, particularly in: Digital technologies; Business & Finance; Engineering; Health, Social Care & Education; and Construction

To meet these business-critical needs, a new type of provision is being delivered, focussing on the higher skills required by the economy and serving the needs of the area's residents. The project will be rooted in meeting employer needs to deliver economic growth.

The basis of this proposal is the development of the University Centre Newbury. A new purpose-built Centre on the Newbury College campus, as a partnership of employers, training providers and universities. The Centre will utilise advanced digital technologies to support learning and will be the first new building in West Berkshire to be designed to the 'zero carbon' standard. As well as providing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the Centre will host a series of professional seminars, business events and conferences.

### Key Features of the UCN

- Partnership of two universities (Bucks and Open), national training provider (QA Ltd), the College and significant local businesses
- Designed to meet higher level skills needs for local business, delivering qualifications in the five priority sectors identified by LEP research – digital technologies, business & finance, engineering, health & social care and construction
- Curriculum designed in partnership with businesses, with key qualifications all being structured around higher and degree apprenticeships
- Delivery will include 'virtual attendance', allowing students to take part in live lectures and seminars online, when they are unable to come into the UCN
- The UCN is directly supported by the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, who have invested £1.7M in the development

- Designed to the highest standards of sustainability, being the first public building in West Berkshire designed to meet the new 'zero carbon' standard
- Provides a high-quality alternative route to higher education for local people and businesses in West Berkshire

The University Centre is considered to be strategically important to West Berkshire in:

- Driving economic growth
- Meeting the skills needs of business
- Providing higher-level progression routes for young people and adults
- Supporting the retention of young adults in the local area
- Enabling the development of a 'University Town' ethos.

### Support for the University Centre

Since the launch of the proposal for the University Centre at the WBC 'Newbury 2026' Conference in October 2018, the project has received outstanding support from businesses, education providers, West Berkshire Council and a range of key community leaders, including the Rt Hon Richard Benyon MP.

The current Foundation Partners for the University Centre are:

			
			
			
			
			