

Milton Keynes selected as one of eight nationwide robotics adoption hubs



Smart City MK CIC is at the front of a consortium that successfully secured government funding from the Robotics Adoption programme delivered by Innovate UK, and part of UKRI IS8 Advanced Manufacturing Programme. The Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption Hub is one of only eight hubs in a national initiative aimed at accelerating robotics in the UK. This prestigious award is further acknowledgement of Milton Keynes and its tech ecosystem as one of the UK's leading centres for technology innovation.

The Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption Hub will build on previous work in the city and focus on the deployment of robotics in open and closed public spaces. Milton Keynes is already recognised as a pioneer in deploying robotics and benefits from the Milton Keynes City Council driven ROBOPASS licencing framework that was developed to ensure robust governance in the deployment of robots.

The Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption hub will be delivered by a consortium led by Smart City MK CIC, with key delivery partners Milton Keynes City Council, Cranfield University, The Open University, Beverly Clarke Consulting, Ohmio UK and Smart City Consultancy. The Hub already has an impressive list of supporting partners including large organisations and local SMEs.

Operating from The Smart City Experience Centre in centre:mk, one of the UKs leading retail destinations with a footfall of over 22m visitors a year, The Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption Hub benefits from this unique location and the significant investment this represents from centre:mk as one of the founding partners of the project.

Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption Hub will act as a valuable resource for businesses and public sector organisations looking to understand and adopt robotics and automation

PRESS RELEASE – 9th October 2026

technologies such as autonomous vehicles, drones, industrial robots and other automated systems used across a range of sectors.

Support will be offered to end users in the form of impartial advice and structured support, robotics technologies in action, as well as connection with industry specialists, all aimed at helping them identify practical opportunities to improve productivity, address skills challenges and drive growth through automation. By making robotics more accessible and easier to understand, the Hub will support organisations of all sizes to explore, test and adopt new technologies with confidence.

Milton Keynes sits in the heart of The Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor, a world-leading innovation corridor in the UK. It is a vibrant and innovative region for globally renowned science and technology firms and internationally successful start-ups. The award builds on Milton Keynes' strong credentials in robotics and emerging technology.

Home to over 300,000 residents and a thriving £13 billion economy that includes more than 2,400 tech businesses generating over £3.4bn every year, the city has a long track record of embracing innovation and testing new technologies in real-world environments. Built as a new city and embracing new planning design and building technology, it is also home to Bletchley Park, where pioneering codebreakers helped shape the modern computing era during the Second World War. Milton Keynes has continued that spirit of innovation through projects such as autonomous vehicle trials, delivery robots, 5G deployment, city data exchanges, AI enabled traffic monitoring and other smart city initiatives.

"Being chosen as one of only eight successful projects from 76 applications is a fantastic achievement and a strong endorsement of Milton Keynes' reputation as a centre for innovation. We are proud to be working with Smart City MK CIC on this important programme, which will help businesses understand how robotics can improve productivity and create new opportunities for growth. This investment builds on the pioneering work already taking place in Milton Keynes and strengthens our position at the forefront of the UK's robotics sector."

- Deputy Leader of Milton Keynes City Council, Cllr Lauren Townsend

"This is such a great endorsement of many years of hard work with civic, business and education partners in and around Milton Keynes to ensure the city develops at the forefront of robotics innovation. As a Community Interest Company we are dedicated to delivering maximum value to the city, its business community, civic leadership and residents."

- CEO of Smart City MK CIC, Ian Pulford

"Robotics is increasingly part of everyday life. As an education partner within the Milton Keynes Robotics Adoption Hub, we are delighted to have the opportunity to bring robotics to life across the curriculum, helping young people explore its use in real-world open spaces, its connections with other emerging technologies, along with social and ethical implications. Without requiring schools to invest in expensive kit, we aim to make robotics accessible and inspire young people to engage confidently with the technologies shaping their futures."

- Principal Consultant at Beverly Clarke Consulting, Beverly Clarke MBE