

FREE LANDLORD GUIDE

Buy to Let Near *Universal Studios*

What the new Universal United Kingdom Resort at Bedford means for rental demand across Sandy and Central Bedfordshire.

ON OUR DOORSTEP

The biggest thing to happen to the local rental market in decades

Comcast/NBCUniversal is building its first UK theme park and resort — Universal United Kingdom Resort — at Kempston Hardwick, on the edge of Bedford, roughly ten miles from Sandy. Site works began in January 2026, and the resort is scheduled to open in 2031. It's already starting to influence local rental demand.

THE HEADLINE NUMBERS

20,000 construction jobs during the build, peaking around 5,000 on site	8,000 permanent roles once open — ~80% expected to go to local people	8.5m visitors expected in the resort's first year
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- ☐ A 500-room hotel plus retail, dining and entertainment complex alongside the theme park itself.
- ☐ Transport upgrades planned including an expanded Wixams railway station and new slip roads from the A421.

TWO WAVES OF DEMAND

Two very different demand phases

It's worth being clear-eyed that this plays out in two distinct waves, and they call for slightly different strategies.

Phase one: construction years (now-2031)

With thousands of contractors, engineers and site workers needed over the build, demand for good-quality rental accommodation across Bedford and the wider Central Bedfordshire commuter belt — including Sandy — is likely to firm up further. Well-presented one and two-bed properties, and houses that could suit contractor sharers, are typically first to benefit.

Phase two: resort opens (from 2031)

The 8,000 permanent roles represent a much more durable shift in local housing demand. Sandy's direct rail connections and relative affordability versus Bedford make it a realistic commuter option for resort staff.

STRATEGY

What this means for your strategy

- ☐ Treat this as a medium-to-long-term tailwind, not a reason to expect an overnight jump in rents — the biggest impact plays out over five-plus years.
- ☐ Properties near Sandy station and good road links toward Bedford and the A421 are best placed to benefit from both phases.
- ☐ Keep an eye on Wixams and the wider corridor between Bedford and Sandy, where transport investment is concentrated.
- ☐ Don't overpay for a property today purely on the promise of Universal — buy on fundamentals and treat any future uplift as a bonus.
- ☐ Large-scale developments of this kind can also affect local house prices, worth factoring into your longer-term exit planning.

A word of caution — 2031 is still some years away

Major infrastructure projects can and do slip in timing. Treat the Universal effect as one factor among several — not as a guarantee. We're keeping a close eye on planning updates, transport investment and early signs of demand shift, and we're happy to talk through what we're seeing on the ground.

We know Sandy, Potton, Gamlingay, Biggleswade and the villages between here and Bedford inside out.



Thinking about a buy to let purchase in this area?

Lane & Browns have been letting and managing homes in Sandy for over 35 years. Whether you're buying your first rental property or looking for a letting agent who'll actually pick up the phone, we're here to help.

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It starts with a chat and a cup of tea.

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