09:12:49 From 8 Phil Fenn : Question 1

Which established, developing and potential new sectors will be most important for the county economy in the future?

09:14:26 From 8 Simon Gurney : I have family in the US and they have seen news coverage of the robots.

09:21:14 From 8 Lewis Stringer : If you are working with Milton Keynes businesses looking for financial support to survive AND grow please feel free to contact me lewis.stringer@british-business-bank.co.uk or refer to www.british-business-bank.co.uk and www.meif.co.uk. Lewis.

09:26:51 From 8 Phil Fenn : Question 2

Has the pandemic changed infrastructure priorities in the county?

09:29:18 From 8 Martene Coe (Rm 8) : I think that the lockdown has encouraged people to discover parts of MK that they were unaware of … walks, parks etc. On top of the good business base (tech/wholesale) we do have an excellent offering in MK … leisure, hospitality which will hopefully be encouraged further too.

09:34:38 From 8 Matt Summers : Looking to set up a business in MK though the availability of high quality space, (Light Industry) 20-30sq ft seems to be very low in terms of existing and new builds. Concentration seems to be on the larger warehousing

09:36:01 From 8 Phil Fenn : Question 3

What central or local government support measures are going to be required in the first few months of 2021?

09:37:08 From Christopher Hart 8 : Fewer commuters into London for sure, but it is likely to benefit small towns and villages rather than MK per se and demand for services in places like Olney and Ampthill increases. We do need to encourage the creation of proper jobs rather than MacJobs to engender confidence over the medium term.

09:38:15 From 8 Harpreet Panesar : hi Lewis what was the value of the support you gave to businesses in mk? I just missed it

09:40:24 From 8 Phil Fenn : Hello Harpreet, I will leave Lewis to contact you privately

09:41:00 From 8 Phil Fenn : Christopher, we will pick up your comment in one of our later questions

09:42:37 From 8 Lewis Stringer : Growth capital is available from the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) www.meif.co.uk, supported by SEMLEP.

09:43:52 From 8 Lewis Stringer : And start-up funding is available from the Start Up Loans Company (SULCo) www.startuploans.co.uk.

09:45:09 From 8 Harpreet Panesar : ICAEW has a number of hubs including one for redundancy which is worth looking at.

09:45:23 From 8 Phil Fenn : Question 4

What does the local professional and business community need to do to help support local SME and other employers to navigate what is likely to be a challenging first half of 2021?

09:46:01 From 8 Harpreet Panesar : we also have hubs for brexit and coronavirus which brings a lot of resources together many of which are accessible to all and not just icaew members

09:48:31 From Alex Collins : As the conversation has covered skills gaps and training, do contact me (Alex.collins@icaew.com) if training accountants in your practice or business is a relevant. ICAEW qualifications are approved apprenticeships attracting 95% funding and free recruitment support from ICAEW.

09:49:05 From 8 Simon Gurney : Many businesses recognise they need to change their business models and how they work but don't know where to start. A key challenge is new or improved systems. Technology providers talk gobbledegook which most business leaders don't understand and shy away from. We can help to bridge the gap.

09:50:41 From 8 Phil Fenn : Question 5

What are the principal skills gaps that need to be addressed, and is up skilling in existing industries or reskilling for emerging industries going to be more important for sustained economic recovery?