

Milton Keynes

Buckinghamshire

'Mark Three' New Town – Designated 23 January 1967

Designated to accommodate overspill from Greater London (the first New Town with this purpose since Bracknell in 1949), Milton Keynes (MK) is the UK's largest and fastest growing New Town. Its strategic location was key to its success in attracting industry and investment. Its iconic grid masterplan and supporting policy provided a framework intended to be flexible enough to accommodate future change and support high social and environmental ambitions. Despite financial setbacks in the 1970s, it has grown to be one of the UK's most successful cities, and is set to double its population through urban extensions. MK contains a number of celebrated stewardship organisations, including the Parks Trust, which manages MK's extensive green infrastructure. It is also home to Britain's only Business Neighbourhood Plan and the MK development tariff.



Destination Milton Keynes

Key facts:

- **Location:** 72 kilometres north west of London, 92 kilometres south west of Birmingham.
- **2011 Census population:** 211,062, in 82,175 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Milton Keynes Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 (adopted 2005). A new plan, Plan:MK, is being prepared.

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 23 January 1967.
- **Designated area:** 8,870 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 250,000 (population at designation: 40,000).
- **Development Corporation:** The plan for MK used innovative approaches to community and social development, with its grid containing a series of neighbourhood centres and one large central area to serve the whole town, all set within a comprehensive green infrastructure network. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1992.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in MK that are owner-occupied (55.0%) is 3.7% and 8.6% lower than the UK New Towns and the UK averages, respectively. 20.1% of households are in social rent – 1.4% lower than the UK New Towns average and 1.9% higher than the UK average. 18.0% of households are in private rent – 5.1% and 1.8% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively.
- Household deprivation statistics are broadly in line with, or more positive than, the UK New Towns and UK averages. 45.3% of households are not deprived in any dimension – around 3% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages. A lower proportion of households are deprived in three or four dimensions compared with the UK New Towns and UK averages.
- The 2011 Census reported that 47.6% of MK residents declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 1% higher than the UK New Towns average and in line with the UK

average. The numbers declaring 'bad' or 'very bad' health are below the UK New Towns and UK averages.

Employment/economic profile:

- The Borough is one of the fastest growing local authority areas in the UK in terms of both population and jobs.
- MK has more jobs than people of working age living within the Borough to fill them, resulting in net in-commuting.
- MK is the geographical centre of the South East Midlands LEP area.
- MK Development Partnership has been established by the Council as an urban regeneration agency. In 2013 the Council took control of the remaining New Town assets from the HCA.

Development Corporation legacy:

- The Local Plan Core Strategy takes forward key principles from the original masterplan.
- MK has a high-quality green space network, including linear parks, a strategic sustainable flood and drainage system and extensive grid road planting, managed by the Parks Trust.
- MK has a mixed, multi-sector employment base.
- MK has a good stock of affordable housing (although some estates are now in need of renewal).
- MK benefits from the MK Community Foundation and Parks Trust stewardship bodies, and its City Discovery Centre.
- MK's extensive, separated cycleway system is today considered by some to be unsafe as it is not overlooked.
- Despite being designed for all modes of transport, including a (never fully realised) rapid bus system along its grid roads, MK is criticised for encouraging reliance on the private car.

Key issues for the future:

- Planning, managing and delivering growth.
- Securing infrastructure to support growth.
- Regenerating older New Town areas and infrastructure.
- Maintaining the positive components of the New Town and balancing them with the requirements and environments necessary to continue the city's success.

¹ Totals for the following 'urban' wards: Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, Bradwell, Campbell Park, Denbigh, Eaton Manor, Emerson Valley, Furzton, Linford North, Linford South, Loughton Park, Middleton, Stantonbury, Stony Stratford, Walton Park, Whaddon, Wolverton, Woughton

Did you know?

It is said that Milton Keynes' masterplanners envisaged a 'city of trees', with no building taller than the height of a tree canopy.