

# Milton Keynes: Better By Design

## City Profile 2026

February 2026 – v1.0



# Why Milton Keynes?

Milton Keynes is amongst the top UK cities for **growth and innovation**, with the city seeing some of the UK's highest levels of business start-ups, growing populations and job creation.

Positioned between London & Birmingham, Oxford & Cambridge, Milton Keynes is the prime location for companies requiring **strong connectivity** for transport and logistics.

Milton Keynes benefits from a **highly educated workforce**, and with a strong presence of world leading firms already calling the city their home.

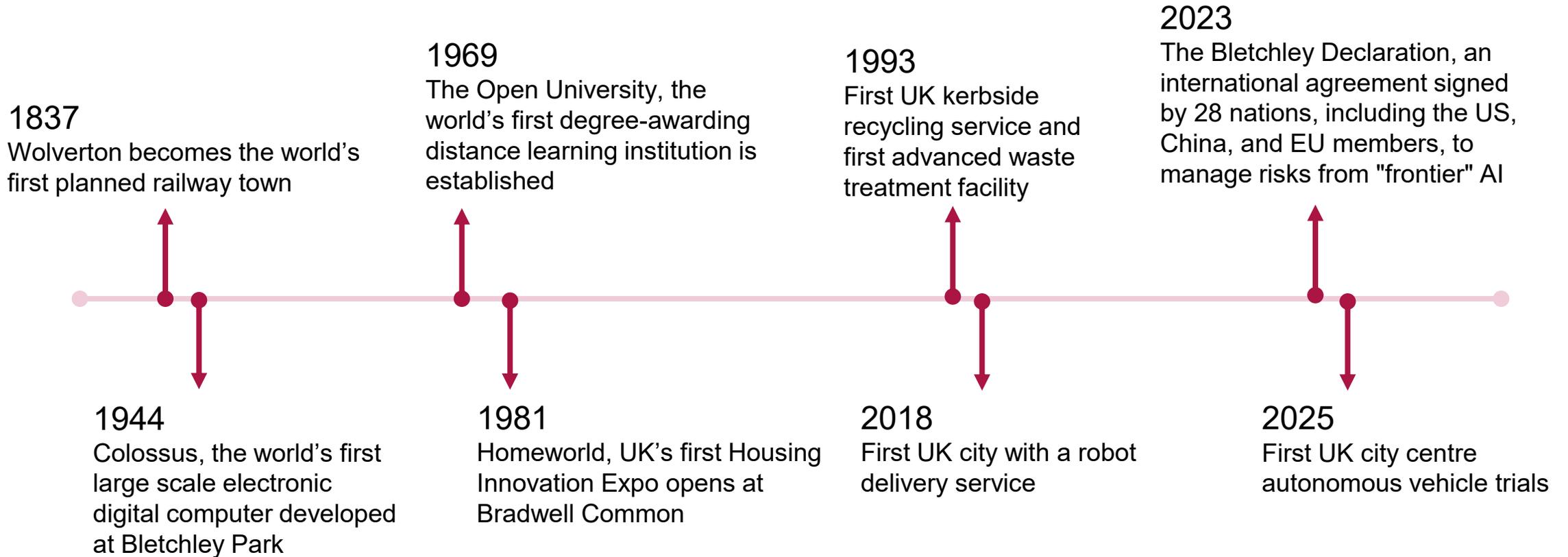
Milton Keynes offers a high quality of life, with good schools, green spaces, and affordable housing compared to London, which can help **attract and retain employees**.

This is Milton Keynes. **Better by Design.**



# A city of firsts

Milton Keynes has always been a pioneering place



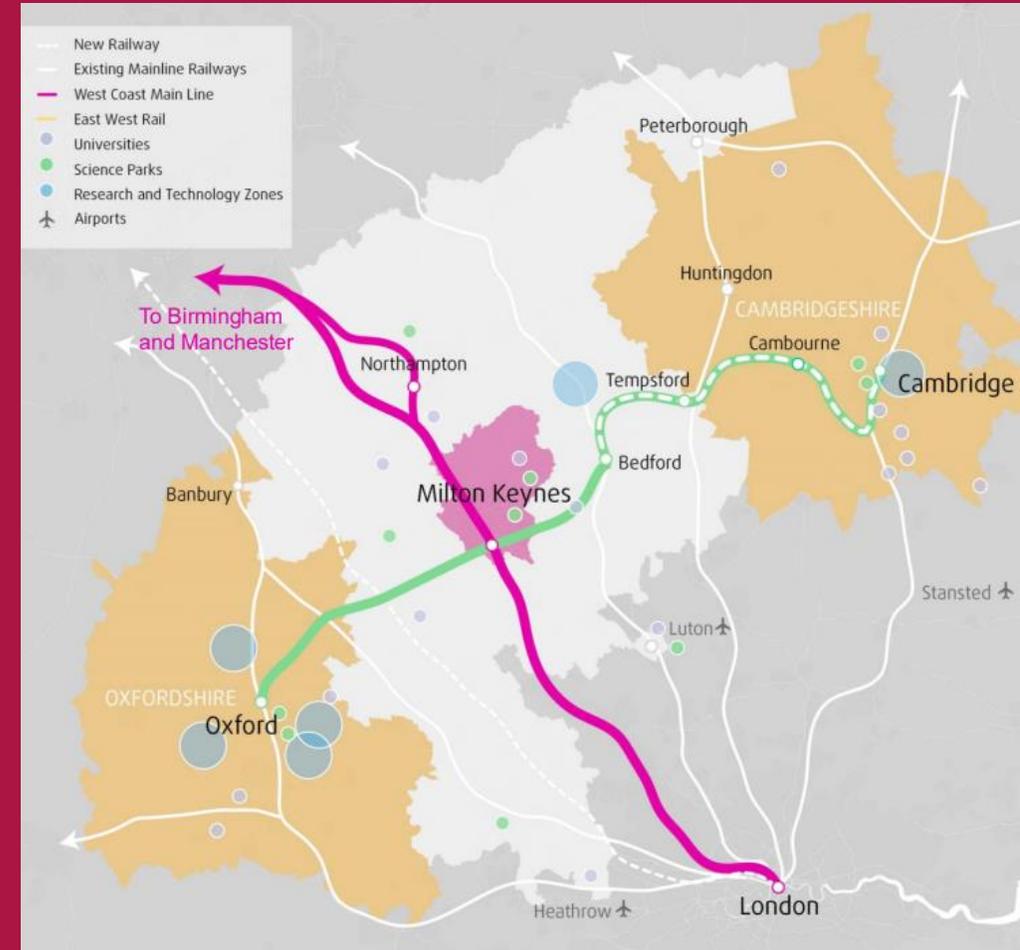
# Milton Keynes: Connectivity

Milton Keynes has a nationally **strategic location** – located halfway between London & Birmingham and between Oxford & Cambridge

Rail connections enable access to **central London** by train **within 35 minutes**, and direct connections to many other major cities in Great Britain through the West Coast Mainline.

The new **East West Rail** links Milton Keynes directly to Oxford in 40 minutes and will link the city directly by rail to Cambridge, and Bedford.

Milton Keynes has a favourable position in terms of international links, with Heathrow, London Luton and Birmingham International airports all **within an hour drive time**.



# Milton Keynes: Core City Comparison

| City                 | Population 2024 | Jobs 2024      | GVA per Job (£) |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Birmingham           | 1,183,618       | 648,000        | 55,796          |
| Leeds                | 845,189         | 545,000        | 66,027          |
| Glasgow              | 650,300         | 479,000        | 61,565          |
| Manchester           | 589,670         | 497,000        | 71,724          |
| Sheffield            | 582,493         | 311,000        | 55,907          |
| Edinburgh            | 530,680         | 404,000        | 85,247          |
| Liverpool            | 508,961         | 309,000        | 59,574          |
| Bristol              | 494,399         | 346,000        | 60,964          |
| Cardiff              | 383,919         | 253,000        | 61,266          |
| Belfast              | 352,390         | No Data        | 62,978          |
| Nottingham           | 331,077         | 230,000        | 54,035          |
| Newcastle            | 320,605         | 224,000        | 55,380          |
| <b>Milton Keynes</b> | <b>305,884</b>  | <b>202,000</b> | <b>85,050</b>   |

Milton Keynes is closing the gap on the other UK Core Cities - with Milton Keynes having much higher levels of productivity and job density.

The city is still slightly smaller in terms of overall population and total number of jobs, but the gap is reducing.

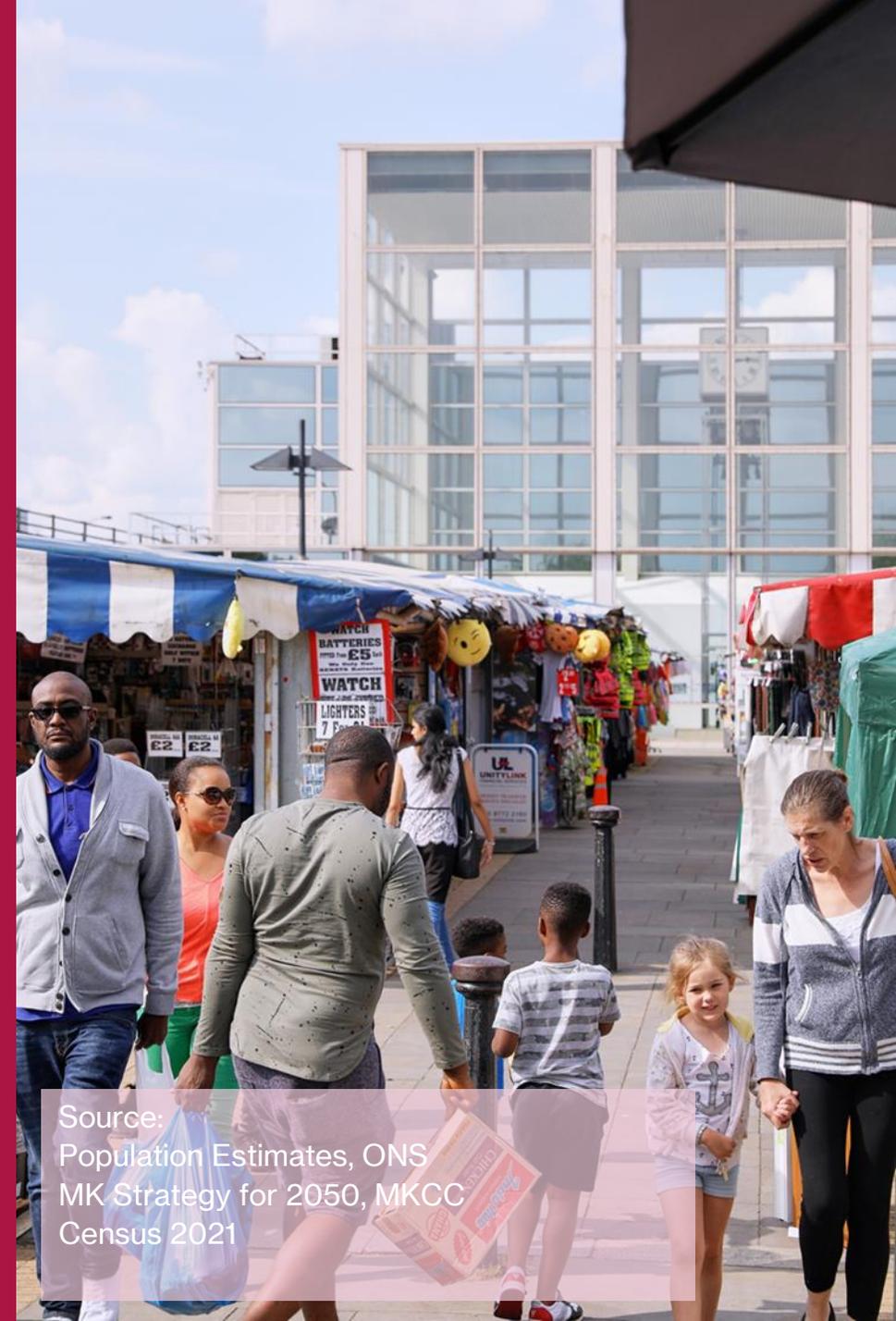
# Milton Keynes: Demographics

With an estimated population of 305,900 in 2024, Milton Keynes continues to be the area for **dynamic population growth**, with the city population increasing by 15.5% over the last ten years (+40,900 residents).

Milton Keynes is the **youngest** city in the South-East of England outside of London – with 26% of our residents under 19.

A diverse **international** city – 37.8% of residents are from an ethnic group other than White British (49.9% amongst young people). Nearly 30% of our residents were born outside the UK.

**People want to live here** – Milton Keynes is often ranked as top or great place to live – quality of life is good in the city. Homebuilders are investing and year on year we meet house building targets.



Source:  
Population Estimates, ONS  
MK Strategy for 2050, MKCC  
Census 2021

# Milton Keynes: Economy

The Milton Keynes economy consists of **200,000 jobs** and **over 12,500 businesses**.

Milton Keynes has one of the highest business stocks per 10k population in the country – **8.19%** higher than the national average.

It is a highly productive economy, worth over **£16.7 billion** or **£85,000** per filled job. Productivity in Milton Keynes is **25%** above national levels.

Central Milton Keynes is the heart of our city. It is the hub of our growing economy, with over **40,000** people working in offices, shops, restaurants and our cultural and leisure sector



Source:

*Milton Keynes Local Profile, NOMIS*

*Regional GVA( balanced), ONS*

*Subregional productivity, ONS*

*Inter-Departmental Business Register, ONS*

# Milton Keynes: Productivity

| Industry  | Milton Keynes |               | South East | United Kingdom |
|---|---------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
|   | 2023 (£m)     | 2023 (%)      | 2023 (%)   | 2023 (%)       |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles    | <b>3,694</b>  | <b>22.04%</b> | 11.26%     | 9.90%          |
| Financial and insurance activities                      | <b>2,078</b>  | <b>12.40%</b> | 5.50%      | 8.79%          |
| Real estate activities                                  | 1,431         | 8.54%         | 15.40%     | 13.07%         |
| Education   | <b>1,257</b>  | <b>7.50%</b>  | 6.85%      | 6.18%          |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities       | 1,215         | 7.25%         | 8.36%      | 8.30%          |
| Manufacturing   | 1,142         | 6.81%         | 7.50%      | 9.13%          |
| Transportation and storage                              | <b>891</b>    | <b>5.31%</b>  | 3.54%      | 3.40%          |
| Administrative and support service activities           | 837           | 4.99%         | 5.29%      | 5.27%          |
| Human health and social work activities                 | 830           | 4.95%         | 7.66%      | 8.27%          |
| Information and communication                           | 724           | 4.32%         | 7.63%      | 5.91%          |
| Construction  | 682           | 4.07%         | 6.76%      | 6.25%          |
| Public administration and defence                       | 564           | 3.36%         | 4.65%      | 5.05%          |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation                      | <b>472</b>    | <b>2.82%</b>  | 1.45%      | 1.38%          |
| Accommodation and food service activities               | 358           | 2.14%         | 2.83%      | 2.82%          |
| Other service activities                                | <b>353</b>    | <b>2.11%</b>  | 1.88%      | 1.62%          |
| Electricity, gas, water; sewerage and waste management  | 208           | 1.24%         | 2.86%      | 2.58%          |
| Activities of households                                | <b>18</b>     | <b>0.11%</b>  | 0.10%      | 0.09%          |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing; mining and quarrying | 10            | 0.06%         | 0.48%      | 1.98%          |

The most productive sectors within the Milton Keynes economy are  
*‘Wholesale & Retail’, ‘Financial Services’ and ‘Professional & Technical Services’*

Source:  
Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry, ONS



# Milton Keynes: Skills

Milton Keynes has access to a **skilled workforce**, with numbers of residents educated to degree level or higher (NVQ4+), higher than the national average.

The **employment rate** in Milton Keynes is **significantly higher** than the national average, whilst the unemployment rate is in line with the national average.

Skills providers in the City include the Open University, Cranfield University, MK:U, South Central Institute of Technology, and Milton Keynes College

Milton Keynes has ambitions for an in person, city-centre **university**



# Milton Keynes: Housing

Milton Keynes built 2,389 new homes in 2024-2025, with the Council featuring within the **Top 10 of English Local Authorities**

Milton Keynes has a varied housing stock with approximately **129,850 homes** across the borough.

Between 2022-2050, we have a local housing need of 50,400 new homes, the latest version of the MK City Plan 2050 provides a plan for around 60,000 new homes.

House prices in Milton Keynes are **competitive** and are significantly lower than that of the London and South-East average.



Source:  
Milton Keynes City Council Housing Statistics  
Housing Supply: Net Additional Dwellings, England: 2024-25  
House price statistics, ONS

# Visitor Assets

**Parks & Recreation** – 6,000 acres of green space, 200 miles of cycle paths, waterways, fishing and watersports – many of which are free to use

**Entertainment** – a range of attractions including Xscape, Gullivers Land, and the Red Bull Factory tour. Universal Studios (UDX) is expected to open in 2031.

**Shopping & Eating** – centre:mk, Midsummer Place, 12th Street and the Hub plus destination pubs and an independent offer in the outlying villages and towns

**Culture & Heritage** – Bletchley Park, the Gallery, Theatre and Museum, the Stables plus public art.



# Long-term Growth plans

- A forward thinking, pro-growth city with developed plans for continued growth to 2050.
- Growth of MK population to 410k by 2050
- Economic growth of 50,000 – 90,000 new jobs
- Delivery of Mass Rapid Transit and East West Rail
- Carbon neutral (2030) and carbon negative (2050) ambitions
- Maintaining the city's green character
- Major renaissance of Central Milton Keynes
- Creating healthy places to live
- Maintaining the city's unique character
- Local leadership in delivering the growth programme



Source:  
Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050, Milton Keynes City  
Council

# Thank You

Optional paragraph