

2011 Census Ward Populations Compared with MKC Estimates for 2011

Each year Milton Keynes Council produces the Population Bulletin which estimates and forecasts the populations of wards. In November 2011 the Office for National Statistics released population figures for wards from the 2011 Census. This report outlines the differences between the 2011 Census figures and Population Bulletin 2011/12 estimates for wards calculated prior to the 2011 Census results being released.

How different are the 2011 Census and 2011 MKC estimates for wards?

For many wards there is a large difference between the 2011 Census and 2011 MKC estimates. This is especially true for those wards where a large number of dwellings have built since 2001.

Table 1 shows the difference between the 2011 Census and 2011 MKC estimates. It outlines that wards with significant housing development in them since 2001 have been undercounted in the MKC estimates. Wards with little or no housing development have been over counted.

Middleton Ward has the largest difference. The 2011 Census estimated that the ward had a population of 15,775 whilst MKC estimated 12,000. This is a difference of 31.5%. Other wards with large differences are Bletchley and Fenny Stratford (+1,381 difference, 11.3%), Hanslope Park (+732 difference, 16.6%) and Loughton Park (+1,058 difference, 6.2%)

Table 1: Difference between 2011 Census and 2011 MKC Estimates

Ward	2011 Census	2011 MKC Estimates	Difference Between Census & MKC	
			People	%
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford	13,581	12,200	1,381	11.3
Bradwell	12,938	13,750	-812	-5.9
Campbell Park	16,859	16,800	59	0.4
Danesborough	4,672	4,350	322	7.4
Denbigh	8,062	8,700	-638	-7.3
Eaton Manor	8,563	8,900	-337	-3.8
Emerson Valley	17,896	16,800	1,096	6.5
Furzton	9,148	9,750	-602	-6.2
Hanslope Park	5,132	4,400	732	16.6
Linford North	8,397	8,950	-553	-6.2
Linford South	9,672	9,300	372	4.0
Loughton Park	18,108	17,050	1,058	6.2
Middleton	15,775	12,000	3,775	31.5
Newport Pagnell North	7,392	7,850	-458	-5.8
Newport Pagnell South	7,726	7,900	-174	-2.2
Olney	8,735	9,150	-415	-4.5
Sherington	4,102	4,250	-148	-3.5
Stantonbury	9,469	9,800	-331	-3.4
Stony Stratford	12,148	12,200	-52	-0.4
Walton Park	14,559	15,200	-641	-4.2
Whaddon	8,462	9,000	-538	-6.0
Wolverton	15,601	15,250	351	2.3
Woughton	11,824	12,200	-376	-3.1
Milton Keynes	248,821	245,750	3,071	1.2

How are the population figures calculated?

The 2011 Census figures are based on a survey of all residents. The 2011 Census took place on the 27th March 2011 and the results are being published throughout 2012 and 2013. The Office for National Statistics takes the raw results from the responses and adjusts them to take account for non response and other sampling errors. It is therefore the most robust estimate of the population.

Milton Keynes Council population estimates and forecasts are calculated using a population forecasting model called PopGroup. This software takes data on mid year population estimates, births, deaths, migration, dwellings completions and household headship rates to forecast the population. Much of the data used in the software are official statistics from the Office for National Statistics.

Why is there such a difference?

There are three main reasons why the ward estimates differ:

1. The 2011 MKC estimates were based on 2010 Office for National Statistics Mid Year Estimates. These official estimates undercounted the population of Milton Keynes Borough. This in turn led to the population of wards within MK being undercounted.
2. The basis of the age structure and other assumptions for the wards come from the 2001 Census. The further away we get from 2001 the less reliable that data becomes. This is especially the case for wards with high growth.
3. The headship rates (used to work out how many people are within each household) may not correctly reflect growth areas. This is causing the estimates of household sizes in growth areas to be too low and hence lowering the population estimate. Headship rates at district level are gained from the Department for Communities and Local Government and are applied to all wards.

What can be done to improve MKC estimates in the future?

Firstly, all assumptions about the base population, migration, fertility and mortality and headship rates will be updated to reflect data from the 2011 Census.

Where possible we will adjust headship rates to better reflect the new population in the high growth areas.

We will compare our estimates with administrative data to check for any anomalies. Datasets we can compare against include:

1. Electoral Roll
2. GP Patient Register
3. ONS Ward Estimates
4. Child Benefit Data
5. State Pension Claimants

If any anomalies arise from the checking we can adjust assumptions made in the PopGroup software.

In addition a Population Bulletin Technical Paper will be produced alongside the Population Bulletin Publication. This will set out in detail the assumptions made within the population forecasts.

When will the MKC population forecasts be updated to reflect the 2011 Census?

Updated population forecasts will not be available until the summer of 2013. This is because the majority of the assumptions around migration, fertility, mortality and headship rates needed for the forecasts won't be updated by the Office for National Statistics until the summer of 2013.

Further Information

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