



BBF Policy Paper 2

The Buckinghamshire Labour Market

July 2011



Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county, with highly skilled, entrepreneurial residents. Furthermore the number of jobs in Buckinghamshire for every working age residents is above the national level. However, despite this strength in absolute terms, Buckinghamshire's performance over time gives cause for concern.

- At 75.3% Buckinghamshire's employment rate is well above the national level, ranking 6<sup>th</sup> among the 27 county council areas;
- Although Buckinghamshire's unemployment rate of 6.0% is below the national level of 7.7%, in Wycombe the rate has reached 8.4% and 9.3% in the Wycombe Parliamentary Constituency;
- Buckinghamshire's claimant count rate of 1.9% is the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest of all county council areas, Wycombe has the 118<sup>th</sup> lowest claimant count rate of the 380 local authority districts, with rest of Buckinghamshire's districts ranking among the 50 lowest;
- There are 1,450 Buckinghamshire residents aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance, 4.0% of all residents in that age cohort, 5.0% among men and 3.0% among women;
- In May 2011, 1,090 Buckinghamshire claimants (or 1 in 6) were looking for work as retail or sales assistants. There were 62 such vacancies notified to Job Centres;
- 56.4% of Buckinghamshire's employed residents work in managerial, professional or technical occupations, the highest proportion of any county council area and higher than the level recorded in any Local Enterprise Partnership area;
- Only 5.7 per cent of Buckinghamshire's working age residents hold no qualifications, the lowest proportion of any county council area and lower than any Local Enterprise Partnership area;
- Buckinghamshire's jobs density fell to its lowest level on record in 2009 with 0.79 jobs for every working age resident, only 13<sup>th</sup> among county councils but still above the national level of 0.78;
- Wycombe lost 18,000 jobs or 17.1% of employment in the district from 2004-09. This is the weakest performance of any local authority district in Great Britain. Over the same period Chiltern and Aylesbury lost 4.8% and 1.2% of jobs respectively, South Bucks added 2,000 jobs or 5.7% and total employment in Great Britain rose by 0.8%;
- Total employment in Buckinghamshire is not forecast to return to pre-recession levels until 2015 and not until 2018 in Wycombe;
- Although Buckinghamshire has the highest proportion of residents aged 0-15 of any county council areas at 20.5%, it has 10.2% of residents in their 20s to rank 21<sup>st</sup> of the 27 county councils and well below the 13.7% recorded across the UK as a whole;
- Although Buckinghamshire has the highest new firm formation rate of any county council area only 13.1% of residents are self-employed, level with the national rate and only 19<sup>th</sup> among county council areas;
- Buckinghamshire is a predominantly small firm economy, with 75.2% of firms employing four or fewer people, well above national rate of 67.7%.

## Introduction

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county, with highly skilled, entrepreneurial residents. Furthermore the number of jobs in Buckinghamshire for every working age residents is well above the national level. However, despite this strength in absolute terms, Buckinghamshire's performance over time gives cause for concern.

This short paper presents the latest labour market intelligence for Buckinghamshire that is informing on-going work by Buckinghamshire Business First and partners across the county. Suggestions for further analyses should be sent to [rupert@bbf.uk.com](mailto:rupert@bbf.uk.com)

## Buckinghamshire's Residents

At 75.3 per cent, Buckinghamshire's employment rate is well above the national level, ranking 6<sup>th</sup> among the 27 county council areas. However, it is very close to the rates recorded in the Local Enterprise Partnership areas neighbouring Buckinghamshire, being ahead of Hertfordshire, SEMLEP and Pan London but behind Oxford City Region and Thames Valley Berkshire. Full details are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Residence based labour market indicators (Year ending December 2010)

	Economic Activity (16-64)			Employment Rate (16-64)			Unemployment Rate (16+)			Economic Inactivity (16-64)		
	No.	%	Rank	No.	%	Rank	No.	%	Rank	No.	%	Rank
Aylesbury Vale	89,100	81.3	70	86,000	78.4	39	3,100	3.4	344	20,500	18.7	308
Chiltern	42,700	76.6	219	40,500	72.7	165	2,200	5.0	284	13,000	23.4	157
South Bucks	30,800	76.5	223	28,000	69.6	253	2,800	8.4	120	9,500	23.5	154
Wycombe	85,700	82.8	32	78,300	75.6	93	7,400	8.4	120	17,800	17.2	345
Buckinghamshire	248,300	80.3	4	232,800	75.3	6	15,500	6.0	14	60,800	19.7	24
Hertfordshire	563,100	79.8	6	529,500	75.1	8	34,000	5.8	27	142,200	20.2	29
Oxford City Region	325,100	78.7	12	314,000	76.0	3	12,100	3.5	35	88,000	21.3	24
Pan London	4,059,700	74.7	27	3,702,100	68.1	28	360,400	8.7	10	1,376,500	25.3	9
SEMLEP	948,500	80.2	3	889,400	75.2	6	60,300	6.2	24	234,600	19.8	33
TV Berkshire	459,500	80.4	1	435,000	76.1	2	25,200	5.3	33	112,200	19.6	35
South East	4,257,200	79.3	1	3,998,800	74.5	1	263,300	6.0	11	1,110,200	20.7	12
Great Britain	29,616,900	76.2	-	27,307,200	70.3	-	2,328,900	7.7	-	9,236,500	23.8	-

Source: APS, ONS, 2011

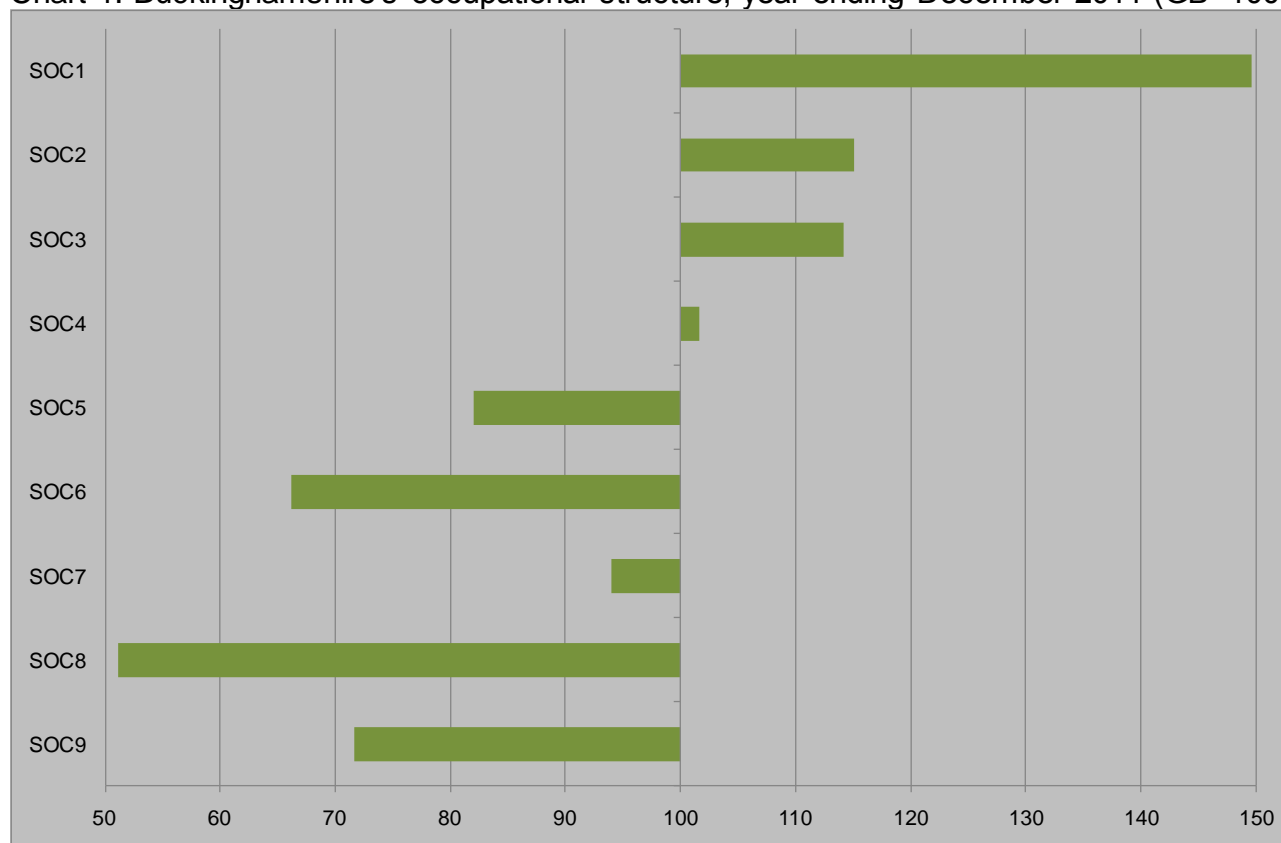
Buckinghamshire has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest inactivity rate of any county council area at 19.7 per cent of working age residents, this is driven by men, with Buckinghamshire having the lowest male economic inactivity of any county council and only the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest rate for women. There are further differences between the sexes, while 37.5 per cent of the male economically inactive would like a job, this falls to 17.6 per cent for women. The level of economic inactivity has remained comparatively steady since before the recession, with an increase of one percentage point (2,000 people) since the year ending 2007.

Although Buckinghamshire has the highest new firm formation rate of any county council area, the county ranks only 19<sup>th</sup> for the proportion of working age residents in self-employment at 13.1 per cent.

The jobs undertaken by Buckinghamshire residents are more likely to involve higher levels of human capital, being over represented in managerial, professional and technical occupations and under represented in administrative, skilled trades, personal service, sales, plant operatives and elementary occupations, as shown in chart 1 below. At 56.4

per cent, Buckinghamshire has the highest proportion of working age residents employed in managerial, professional and technical occupations, well above the 44.4 per cent recorded across the country as a whole.

Chart 1: Buckinghamshire's occupational structure, year ending December 2011 (GB=100)



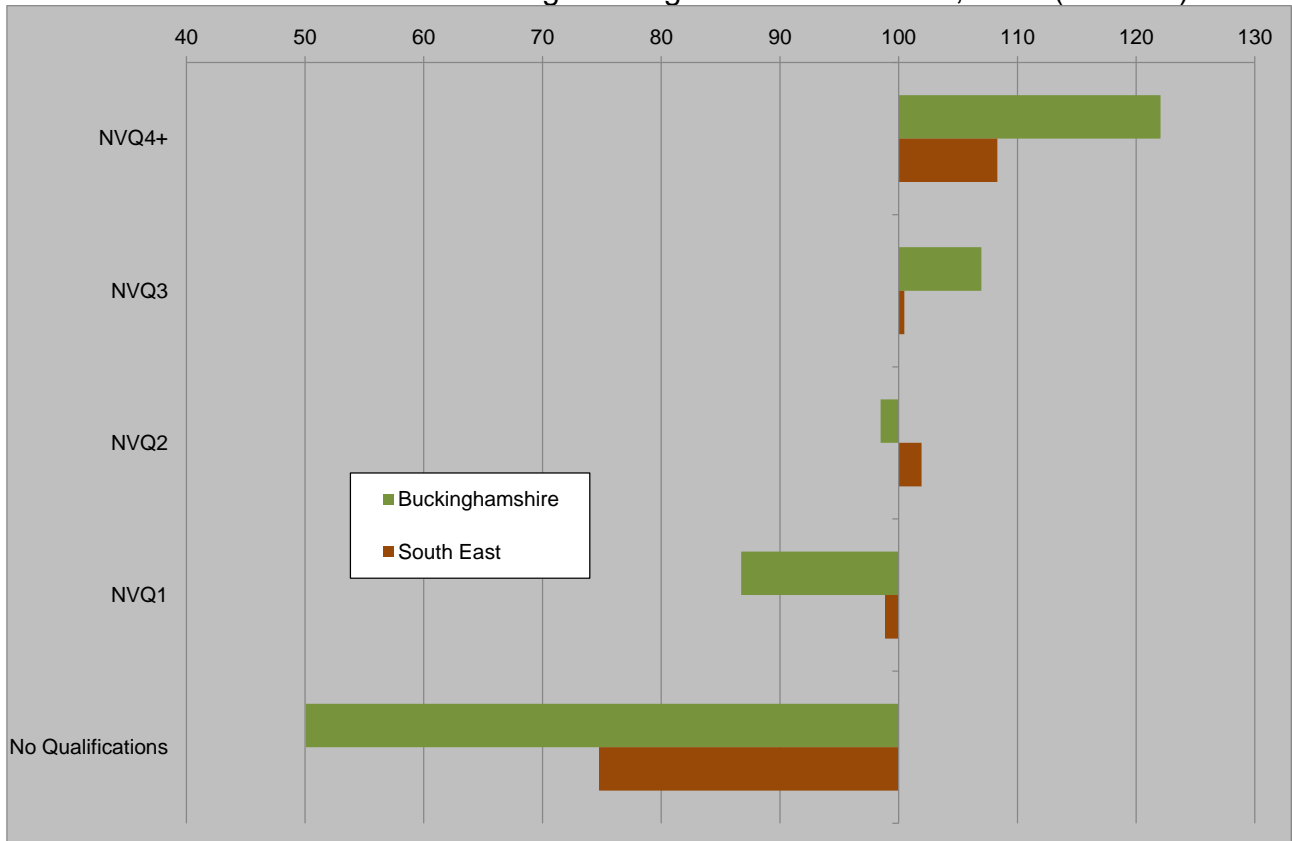
Source: APS, ONS, 2011

Educational attainment remains high in Buckinghamshire, with 94.7 per cent of working age residents holding a qualification at NVQ level 1 or above and 38.2 per cent having degree level educational attainment to rank 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively among county council areas, performing well above the national rates of 88.7 and 31.3 per cent as shown in chart 2 below.

While the proportion of residents in employment in Buckinghamshire remains high compared to national levels, underemployment has increased, with the number of residents employed part time having more than doubled since the year ending December 2008 to stand at 16,000. It is the rise in part-time employment for men that has driven the overall increase in employment in Buckinghamshire, with full-time employment for men falling and employment among women falling for both full and part time workers over the last two years as shown in chart 3 below.

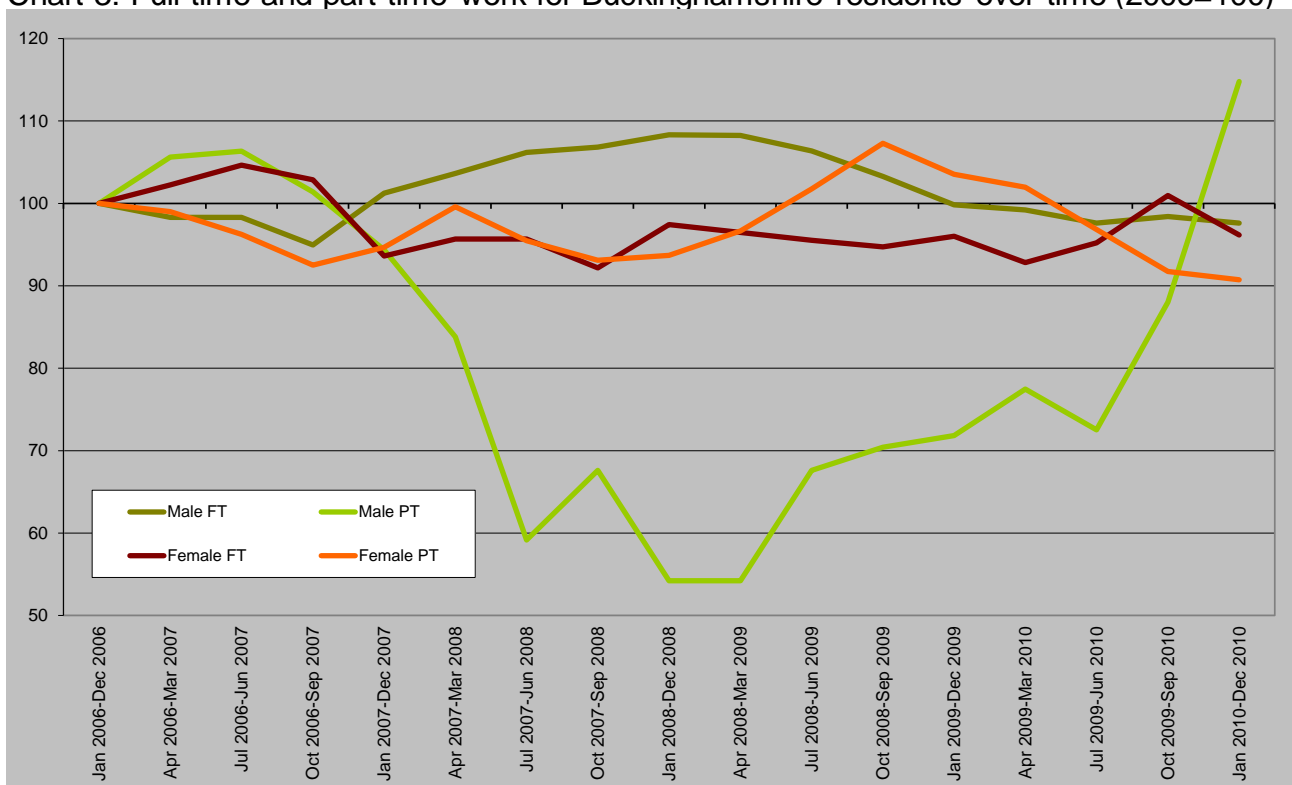
Buckinghamshire's claimant count fell for the third successive month in May to stand at 5,976. The county's claimant count is below 6,000 for the first time since December and is 4.5 per cent lower than in May 2010. Claimants in Buckinghamshire are becoming more concentrated. In May, 29.6 per cent of the county's claimants lived in 10 of the 108 wards, up from 27.6 per cent a year ago (see map 1). The number of claimants usually employed in managerial, professional and technical occupations has fallen to 20.3 per cent the lowest level since the start of the recession but still the highest of all county council areas. The distribution is shown in chart 4 below, together with the corresponding vacancies notified to Job Centres.

Chart 2: Educational attainment among Buckinghamshire residents, 2010 (GB=100)



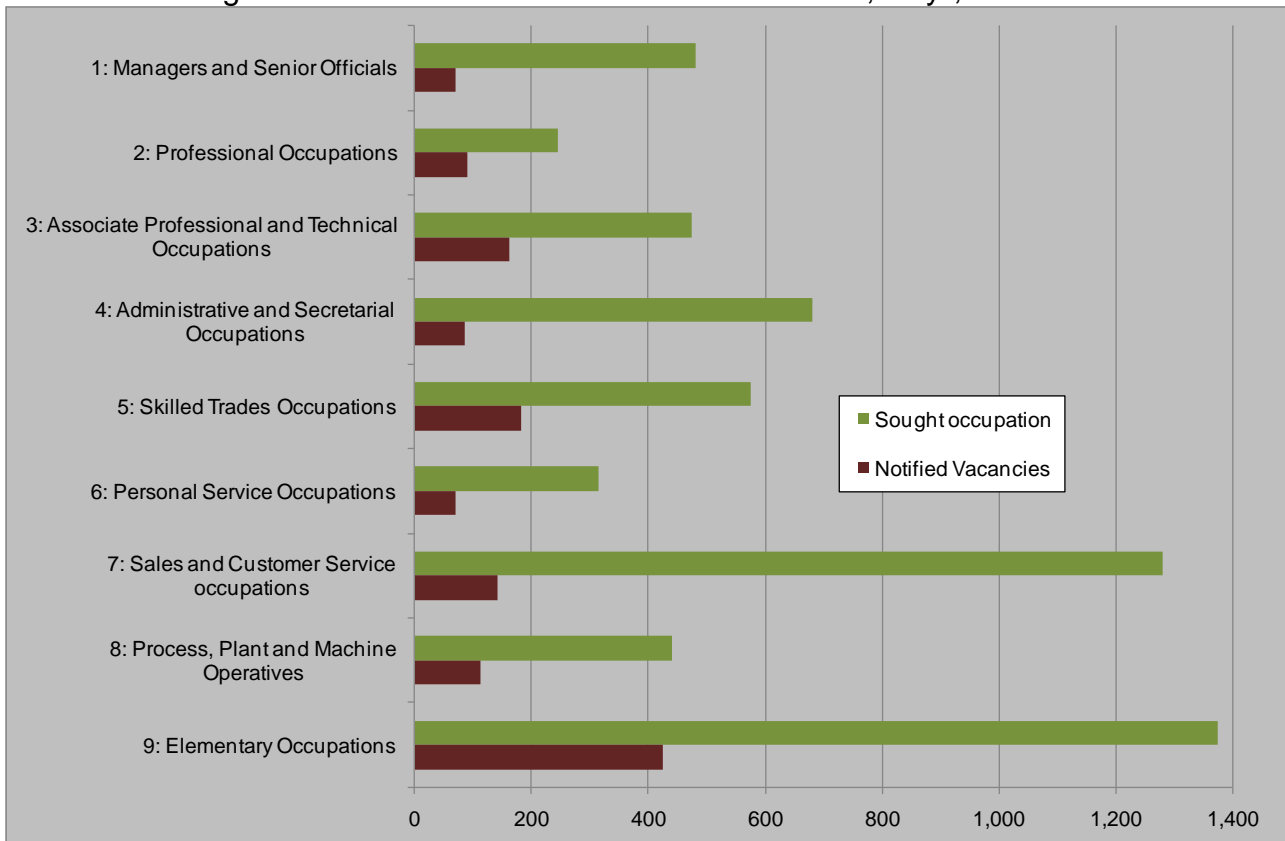
Source: APS, ONS, 2011

Chart 3: Full-time and part-time work for Buckinghamshire residents over time (2006=100)



Source: APS, ONS, 2011

Chart 4: Buckinghamshire's claimants and notified vacancies, May ,2011



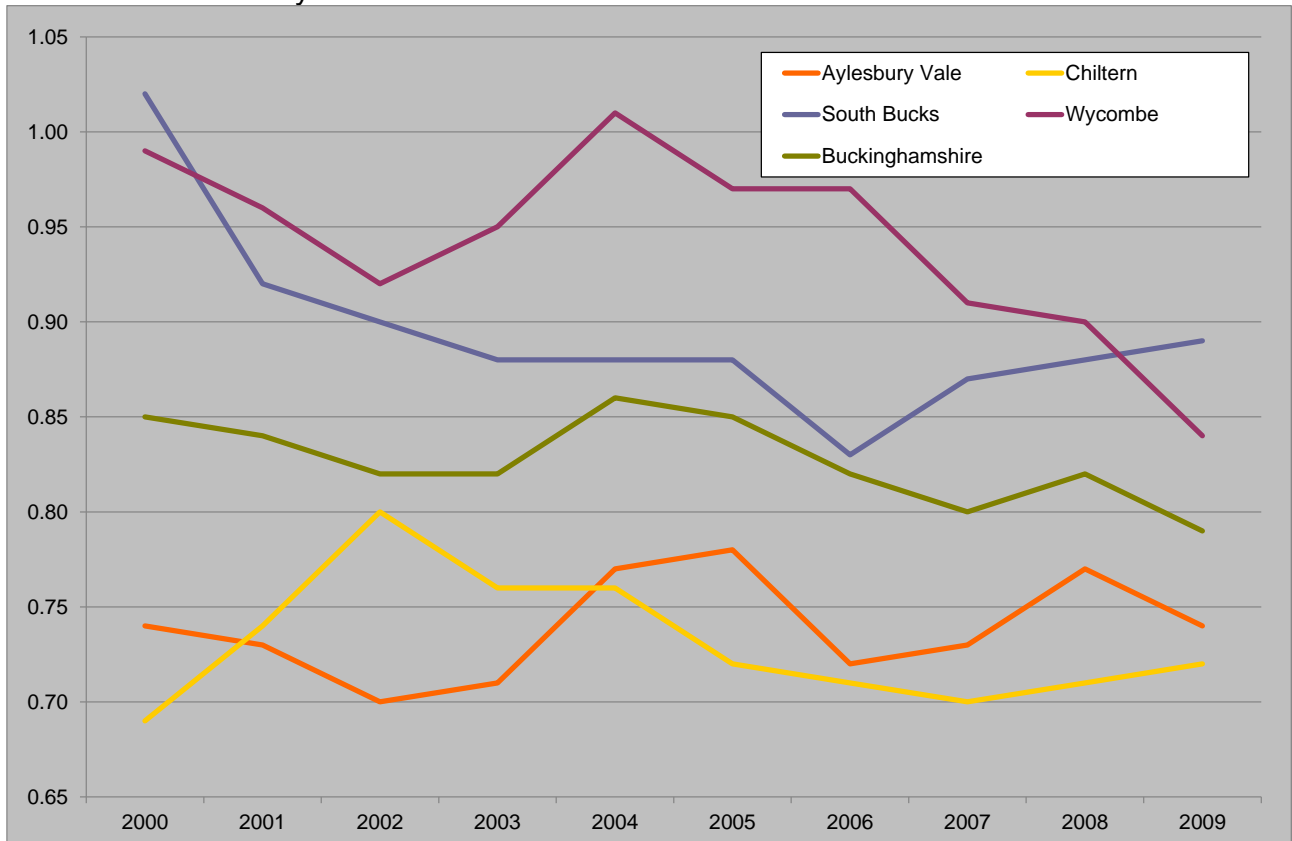
Source: Job Centre Plus, 2011

### Buckinghamshire as a Place to Work

Having increased in 2008, Buckinghamshire's jobs density fell to its lowest level on record in 2009, with increases in jobs density in Chiltern and South Bucks being offset by falls in Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. By losing 3.1 per cent of its jobs in 2009 Buckinghamshire recorded the 3<sup>rd</sup> weakest performance of any county council area and would rank only 31<sup>st</sup> among LEPs, level with Thames Valley Berkshire and ahead of only Greater Birmingham and Solihull (-4.6 per cent) and the Black Country (-4.2 per cent). Among the districts, employment in Wycombe fell by 6.5 per cent, the 45<sup>th</sup> weakest performance of all 380 local authority districts in Great Britain and by 3.5 per cent in Aylesbury Vale (116<sup>th</sup>). Employment rose by 2.8 per cent in South Bucks, the 66<sup>th</sup> strongest performance and remained the same in Chiltern (117<sup>th</sup>).

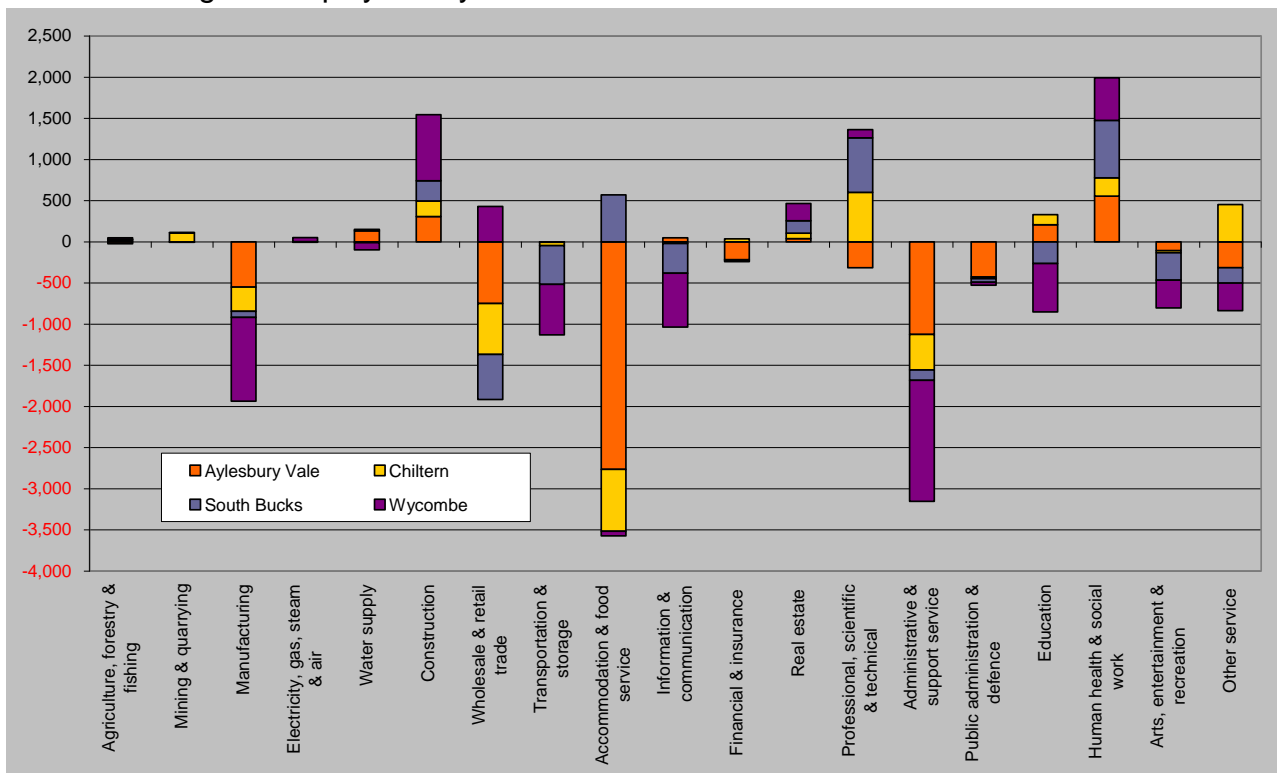
Over a longer period, Wycombe has lost 18,000 jobs or 17.1 per cent of employment since 2004. This is the weakest performance of any local authority district in Great Britain. Over the same period Chiltern and Aylesbury lost 4.8 per cent of jobs and 1.2 per cent of jobs respectively, while South Bucks added 2,000 jobs or 5.7 per cent. Over the same period, total employment in Great Britain has risen by 0.8 per cent as shown in chart 5 below. Chart 6 and table 2 show changes in employment in Buckinghamshire by sector, while chart 8 shows forecast changes by sector by year to 2026, demonstrating that the skills and the industrial and commercial property demanded by employers in Buckinghamshire can be expected to undergo marked change in the coming years. However, as shown in chart 7, the Buckinghamshire economy is currently well represented in the sectors highlighted in the Government's Plan for Growth.

Chart 5: Jobs Density over time



Source: Jobs Density, ONS, 2011

Chart 6: Change in employees by section 2008-09



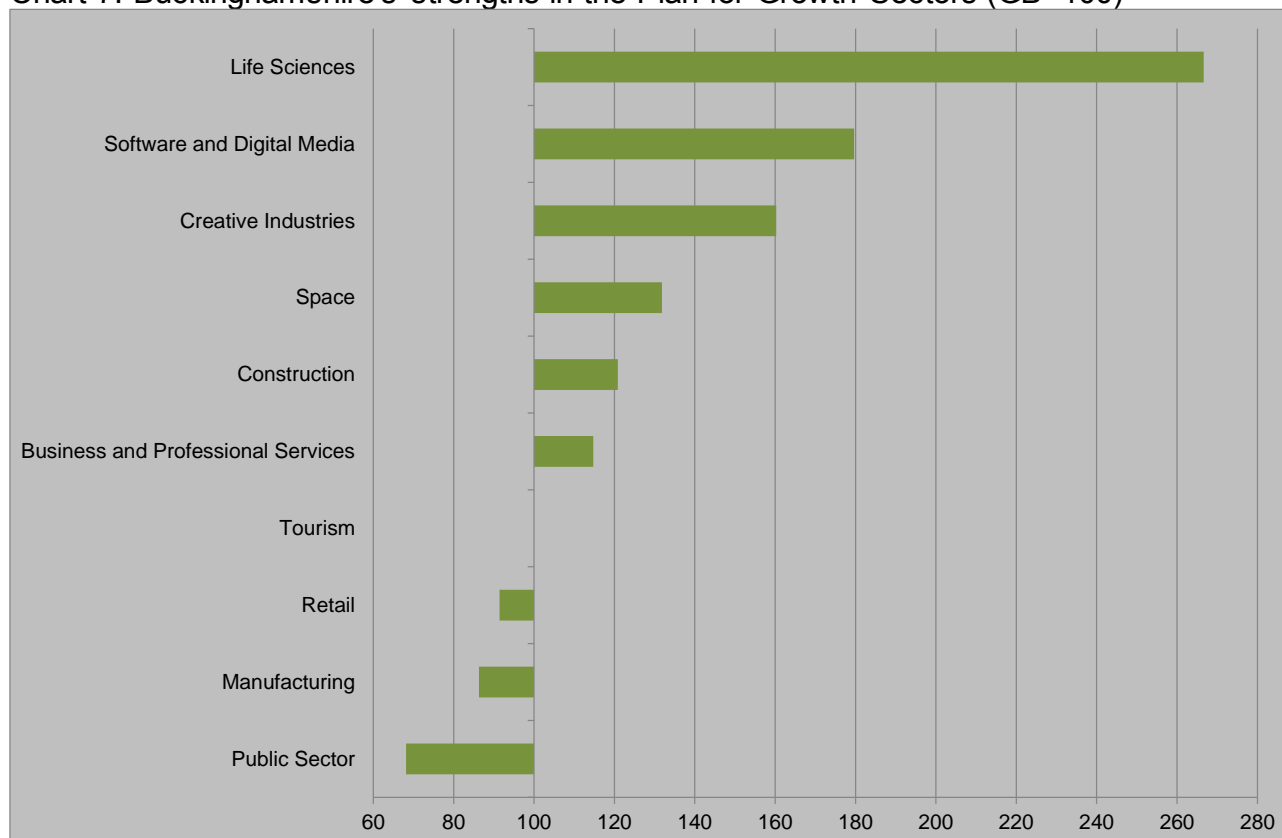
Source: BRES, ONS, 2010

Table 2: Changes in employment in Buckinghamshire by sector 2008-09

Biggest Increases	1	88 : Social work activities without accommodation	1,100
	2	86 : Human health activities	1,000
	3	70 : Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	800
	4	94 : Activities of membership organisations	800
	5	47 : Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	800
	6	71 : Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis	700
	7	32 : Other manufacturing	700
	8	43 : Specialised construction activities	600
	9	42 : Civil engineering	500
	10	63 : Information service activities	500
Biggest Decreases	10	53 : Postal and courier activities	-700
	9	45 : Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	-800
	8	78 : Employment activities	-900
	7	80 : Security and investigation activities	-900
	6	96 : Other personal service activities	-1,000
	5	21 : Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical prepar	-1,000
	4	81 : Services to buildings and landscape activities	-1,100
	3	46 : Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	-1,400
	2	62 : Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	-1,900
	1	56 : Food and beverage service activities	-2,900

Source: BRES, ONS, 2010

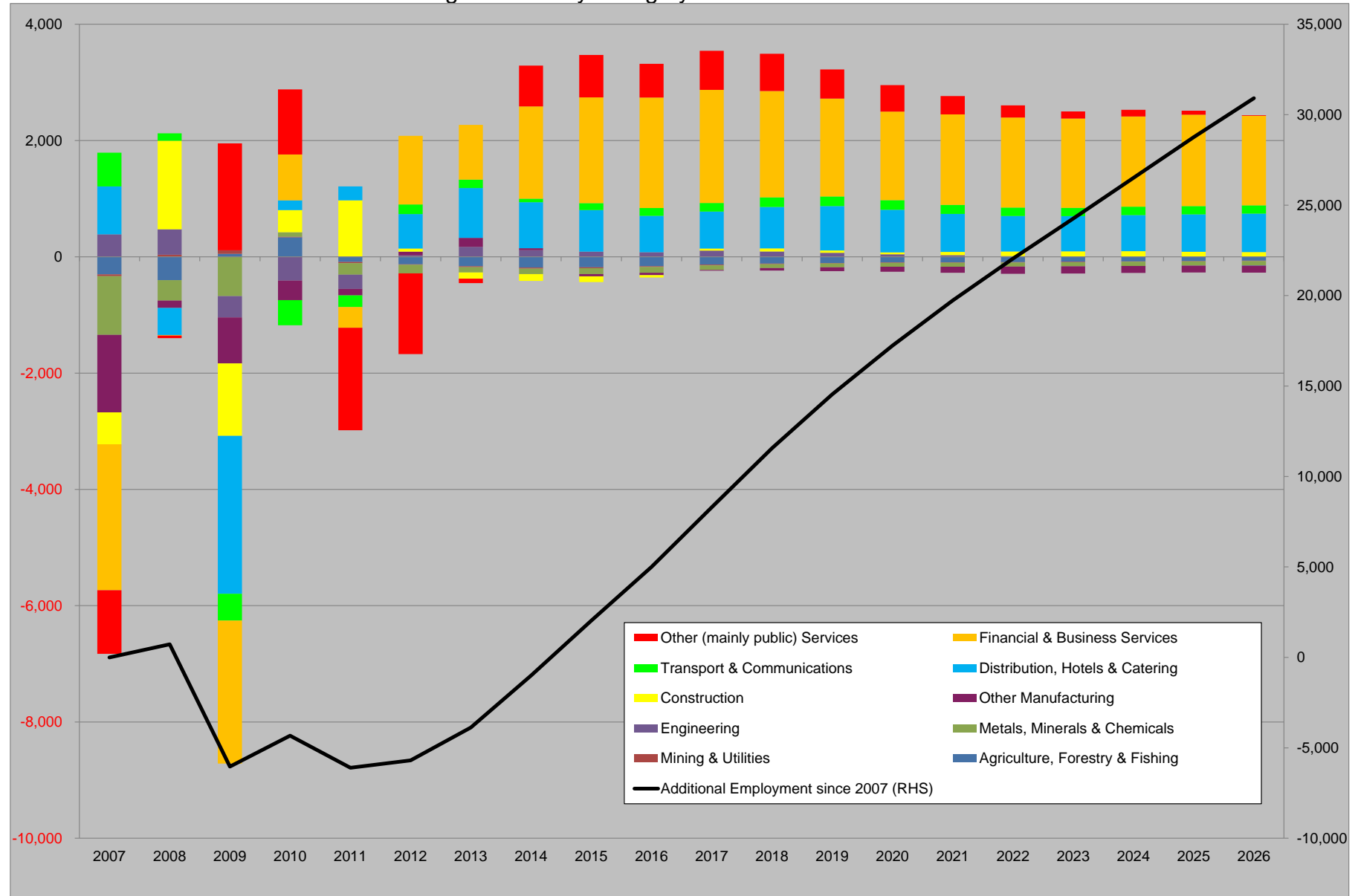
Chart 7: Buckinghamshire's strengths in the Plan for Growth Sectors (GB=100)



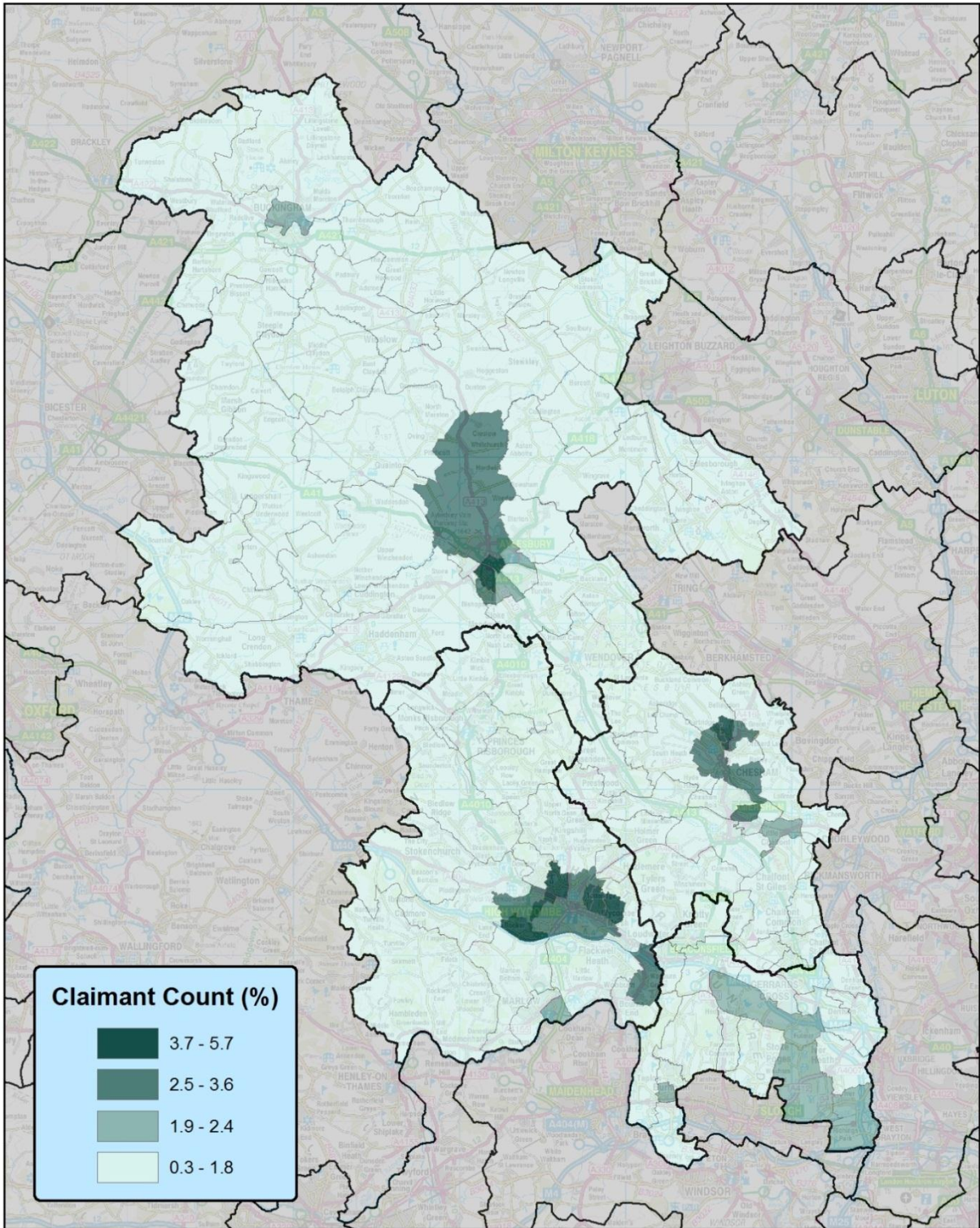
Source: ABI, ONS, 2009; BRES, ONS, 2010







Chart 7: Additional Annual Jobs in Buckinghamshire by Category to 2026



Source: Local Markets Forecast, Experian, May 2011



Claimant Count (%)	
	3.7 - 5.7
	2.5 - 3.6
	1.9 - 2.4
	0.3 - 1.8

**Buckinghamshire Claimant Count Rate by Ward  
May 2011**

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Scale: 1:300,000 at A4

