



# Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report

JANUARY 2022

# Foreword

**As Chair of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), I am delighted to introduce the second Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report.**

Much has changed in the job market since we published our first report just under a year ago. Whilst concerns for those who have lost jobs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic remain, recruitment difficulties are now a critical issue across a wide range of sectors. In sectors such as: education; social care; construction; film and TV; and hospitality, employers are struggling to recruit and retain staff, with services and economic growth being disrupted as a result.

In implementing the Buckinghamshire Skills Action Plan, members of Buckinghamshire's SAP and its associated sector sub-groups have driven forward many skills initiatives over the past year that aim to better align the skills and knowledge that individuals have, with the skills and knowledge the local economy needs. From developing ambitious plans to secure future talent pipelines for the County's strategic growth sectors, to championing re-training schemes to help individuals move into high demand roles, including influencing curriculum changes, the strong collaborative approach between employers and education and training providers is reaping rewards.

There remains much to do. We need to ensure we're gearing up our current and future workforces to be able to thrive in the future economy. We need to continue our work to ensure we have appropriate talent pipelines for our growth sectors, and a strong supply of skills in areas we know will be in higher demand in the future, such as digital skills, green skills and skills in health and social care. We also need to ensure we remain agile so that we can quickly respond to help people transition into areas in which the County has critical skills shortages.

Over the coming year, we will continue to seek ways to maximise the impact of the Government's Plan for Jobs programme and Skills for Jobs White Paper, ensuring we find ways for national initiatives to work effectively in our micro-business economy and for those in greatest need of support. To this end, we look forward to the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel continuing to build on its momentum and playing a key role in the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan for the County.



**Professor Gavin Brooks**  
*Chair, Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel*

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# Chapter 01.

# About this report

This is the second Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report. It is the 'go-to' document for everything skills-related within Buckinghamshire, bringing together evidence, strategy, information on current and planned initiatives and examples of best practice.

The first report, published in March 2021, raised local and national awareness of the skills needs of the Buckinghamshire economy and informed investment and curriculum planning decisions. This second report provides an updated position with regard to:

- The local labour market
- Skills policy
- Local skills projects

It also includes some new case studies which showcase examples of local employers working together with education and training providers to address skills gaps and shortages.

## Linked resources

Key resources linked to this report are listed below.

- [Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report 2022: Evidence Annex](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Labour Market and Skills Analysis 2022: Slide deck](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Skills Strategy 2017-2022, Buckinghamshire LEP – 2017](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy, Buckinghamshire LEP – 2019](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Economic Recovery Plan, Buckinghamshire LEP – 2020](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory website](#)



# Chapter 02.

# Introduction

## Skills Advisory Panels: the national context

Since 2018, Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level.

SAPs are part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and there are 36 in total across England. The Department for Education (DfE) has supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high-quality analysis of local labour markets and publish Local Skills Reports, which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities..

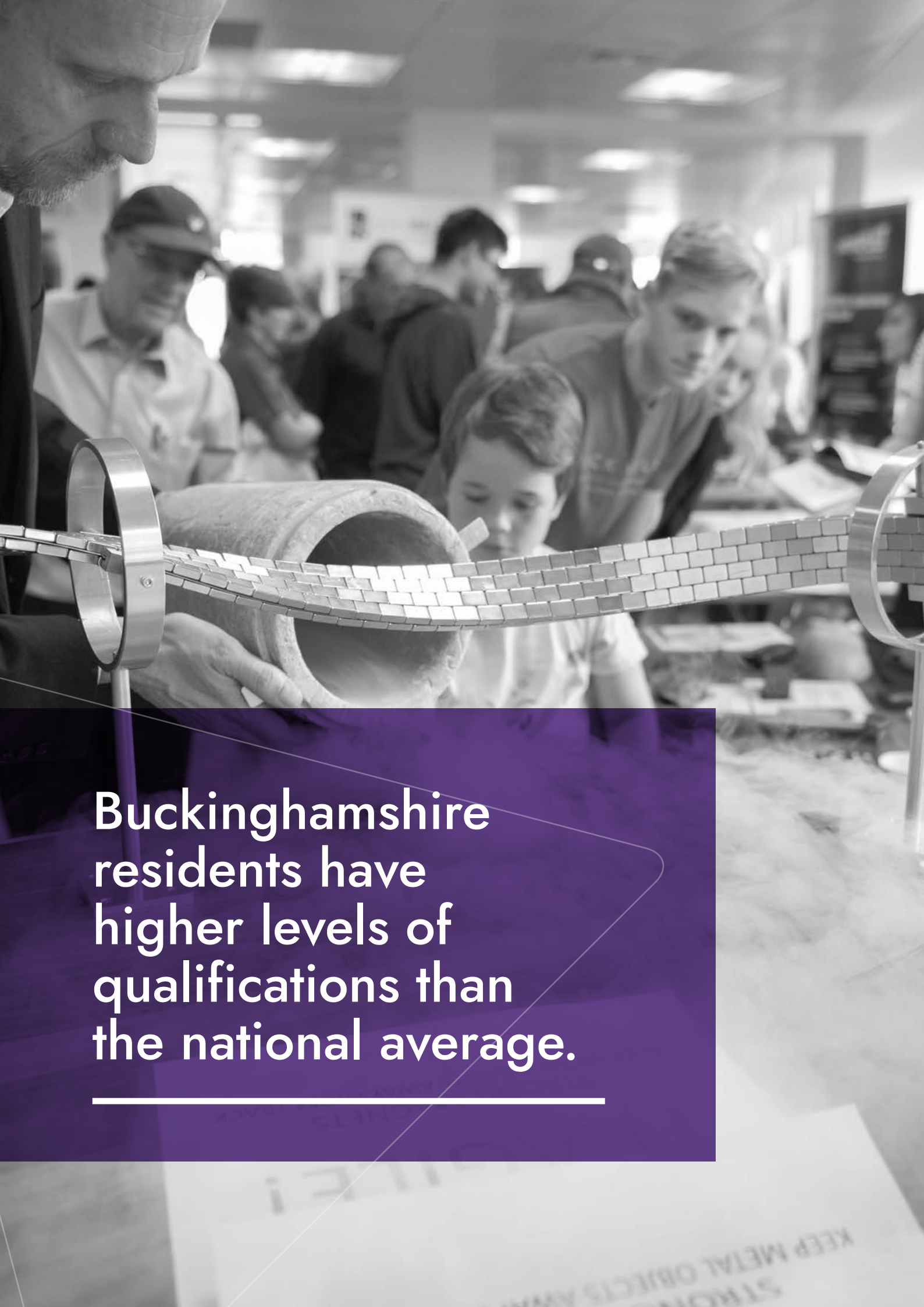
The second iteration of SAPs' Local Skills Reports comes at a time when DfE is Trailblazing new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), in eight areas of the country. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's "Skills for Jobs" White Paper that aim to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national roll out of the programme. In the meantime, and before LSIPs are rolled out across the country, it is DfE's intention that Skills Advisory Panels and Local Skills Reports should continue to influence the behaviour of local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including to sectoral focussed skills teams and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

## The Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)

Buckinghamshire's SAP was established in 2019. It took up the mantle from the Buckinghamshire Skills and Employability Board, which had been undertaking a skills activity co-ordination role in the County since 2015.

Buckinghamshire's SAP reports directly to the **Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board**. Employers are at the heart of Buckinghamshire's SAP. Four sector sub-groups, made up of employers and learning providers, meet regularly to share information and collaborate on sector-specific skills initiatives (see figure 1). The Chairs of the four sub-groups are members of the SAP.

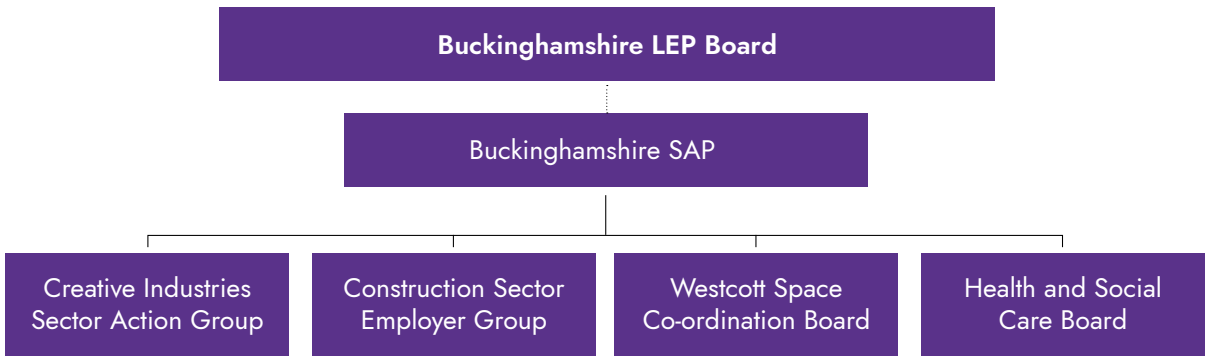
Buckinghamshire's SAP, and the sector sub-groups, meet six times a year. SAP members (as of 30 November 2021) are listed in Annex B. Some SAP and sub-group members represent national skills bodies (e.g. CITB and ScreenSkills) and some members sit on national skills advisory groups (e.g. trailblazer groups developing apprenticeship standards).



**Buckinghamshire  
residents have  
higher levels of  
qualifications than  
the national average.**

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**Figure 1: Structure of the Buckinghamshire SAP**



Buckinghamshire’s SAP is co-ordinated by the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub. The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub was established by Buckinghamshire LEP, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF), to promote and optimise links between the local business community and education and training providers. The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub sits alongside the Buckinghamshire Growth Hub which is the route to market for business engagement, support, and advice.

In addition to its work with the SAP, the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub:

- Co-ordinates the Buckinghamshire Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub (which seeks to improve careers advice in schools, and links local businesses with schools to inspire young people about careers).
- Runs the annual Bucks Skills Show (see Chapter 6).
- Provides workforce development support to local businesses (in conjunction with BBF Business Advisers).

**Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF)** is a business-led, business-focused community for new, established and growing businesses across Buckinghamshire. It is the authoritative voice of the local business community, providing support and advice to the County’s 31,000 businesses. It has a membership of around 14,000 businesses, which collectively employ approximately 70% of the local workforce.

BBF has been appointed by Buckinghamshire LEP to deliver the Buckinghamshire Business Growth Hub. It delivers a wide range of business support activity including business growth programmes; grant funding schemes; leadership and management initiatives; programmes to reduce carbon emissions; and advice and support on a vast range of topics by way of regular workshops and events.

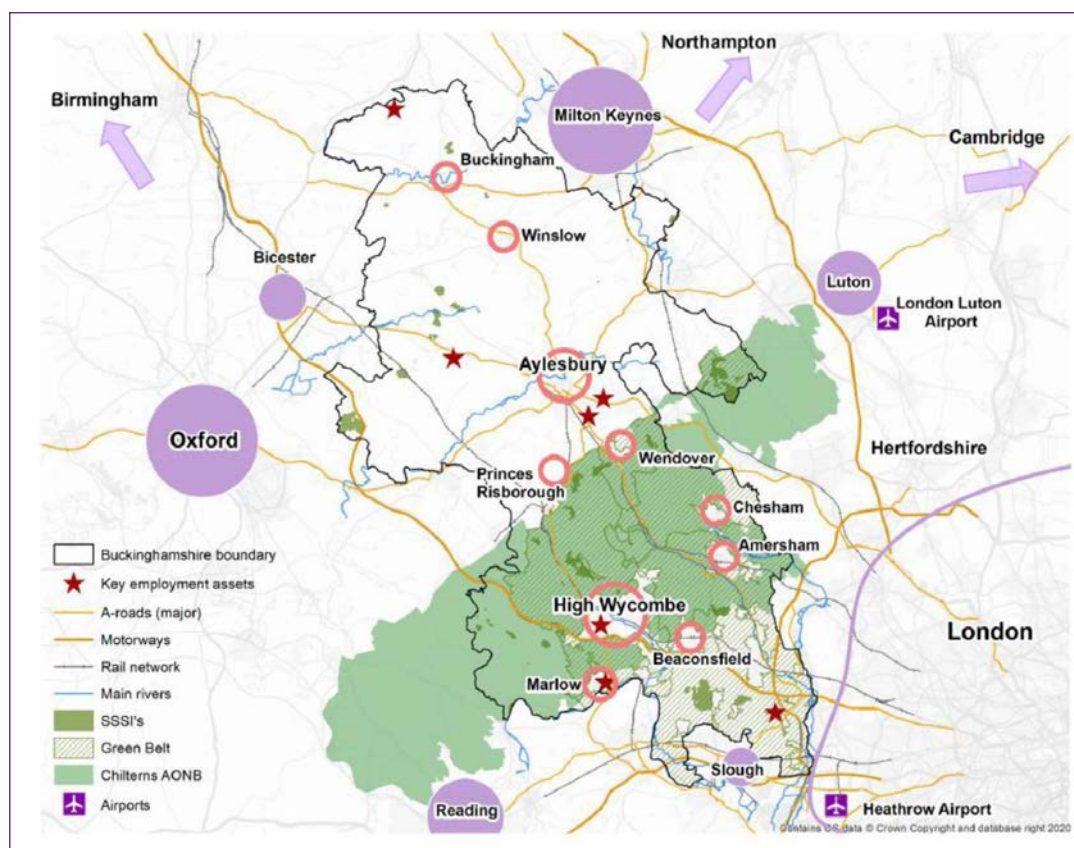
BBF also provides the management of the DMO (Destination Management Organisation) for the County - Visit Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns.

## About Buckinghamshire

Situated in the South East of England, Buckinghamshire neighbours London and is located close to the UK's main international gateway at Heathrow. Sub-regionally, Buckinghamshire sits within both the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and the Thames Valley economic areas.

There are no major urban conurbations within Buckinghamshire, with the County's two largest towns, High Wycombe and Aylesbury, having populations of 124,000 and 89,000 respectively.<sup>1</sup> Much of the County is rural.

**Figure 2: Map of Buckinghamshire**



Source: Buckinghamshire Council, 2021

The geographic areas covered by Buckinghamshire and the unitary Buckinghamshire LEP Council are coterminous. The County has five parliamentary constituencies: Aylesbury, Buckingham, Beaconsfield, Chesham and Amersham, and Wycombe.

<sup>1</sup> [Mid-year population estimates 2020 - ONS](#)

# Chapter 03.

## Skills strengths and needs

### At a glance

- A strong collaborative culture (between education institutions, and between employers and educators).
- Further and Higher Education Institutions with a strong history of business engagement, and a focus on applied learning and employability.
- Significant job growth underway in the construction and film and TV sectors.
- Higher than average Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 and high levels of qualifications amongst residents.
- World-class talent in industries such as high-performance engineering, film and TV, space and medtech.

### Buckinghamshire's skills challenges

Skills Challenges	Scale	Timeframe	Identified by
Recruitment difficulties causing problems for employers in many sectors and hampering economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Linked to a reduction in the size of the economically active population, and a rise in the number of economically inactive working-age residents.	Significant	Immediate / medium term	Employers and data analysis
Unemployment at highest levels since 2016 (although lower than anticipated at the start of the pandemic and improving)	Medium and falling	Immediate and likely transitory	Data analysis
Growing mismatch between the demand for skills and labour within the local economy, and the skills and jobs sought by local residents	Significant	Immediate and long-term	Employers and economic vision
The need to ensure strong local talent pipelines for growing sectors (including life sciences, health and social care; creative industries; construction; high performance engineering; space)	Significant	Immediate for construction, health and social care and film / TV, medium to long term for high performance engineering and space	Employers and economic vision
The need to ensure a strong talent pipeline of green skills (including digital and engineering skills) to enable the shift towards a net zero economy	Medium but growing	Long-term	Economic vision and employers



# The local economy

Buckinghamshire's economy generated £18.4bn of GDP in 2019<sup>2</sup>, which in 'GDP per head' terms was slightly higher than the national average. Whilst the County experienced relatively slow GDP growth over much of the last decade, growth rates picked up in the two years before the Covid-19 pandemic. Local level GDP data for the period affected by the Covid-19 pandemic has not yet been published. However, it is estimated that, as with the national economy, the local economy suffered a sharp drop in output in April 2020, followed by a fairly swift immediate rebound and a more sluggish subsequent recovery phase. At the time of writing (November 2021), the national economy is yet to return to pre-Covid levels of economic output.

On the all-important measure of productivity, Buckinghamshire was estimated to have the 9th most productive economy of the 38 Local Enterprise Partnership areas in England immediately prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is worth noting however, that Buckinghamshire's productivity statistics present a slightly rosier picture of the performance of the local economy than is actually the case, due to estimates of the economic value of home ownership being included within productivity calculations.

As with the national economy, Buckinghamshire's economy is dominated by the service sector, which provides 85% of all local employee jobs<sup>3</sup>. Three in every five jobs in Buckinghamshire exist in the 'foundational economy'<sup>4</sup> with the remainder being within the 'tradable economy'<sup>5</sup>.

Defining features of Buckinghamshire's economy are:

- The predominance of small businesses<sup>6</sup>
- High levels of self-employment (second highest of all 38 LEP areas), particularly within the County's creative and construction sectors<sup>7</sup>
- A small public sector (the second smallest of all 38 LEP areas)<sup>8</sup>
- World-class economic assets and strong growth potential in the areas of film and TV, high-performance engineering, space and medtech<sup>9</sup>.
- A large wholesale sector (particularly the wholesale of pharmaceutical goods, machinery and equipment, computers and software)<sup>10</sup>
- A larger than average digital sector<sup>11</sup>
- One of the least 'self-contained' labour markets in England (high levels of commuting into London and to other nearby large towns and cities)

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<sup>2</sup> Source: *Regional GDP, ONS, May 2021*

<sup>3</sup> Source: *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

<sup>4</sup> The element of the economy that provides goods and services to the local population

<sup>5</sup> The element of the economy that produces goods and services that are, or could be, traded outside of the local area, including internationally

<sup>6</sup> With 42% of employees working for micro (fewer than 10 employees) or small (10-49 employees) companies in Buckinghamshire compared to 32% nationally Source: *Inter Departmental Business Register, ONS, 2020*

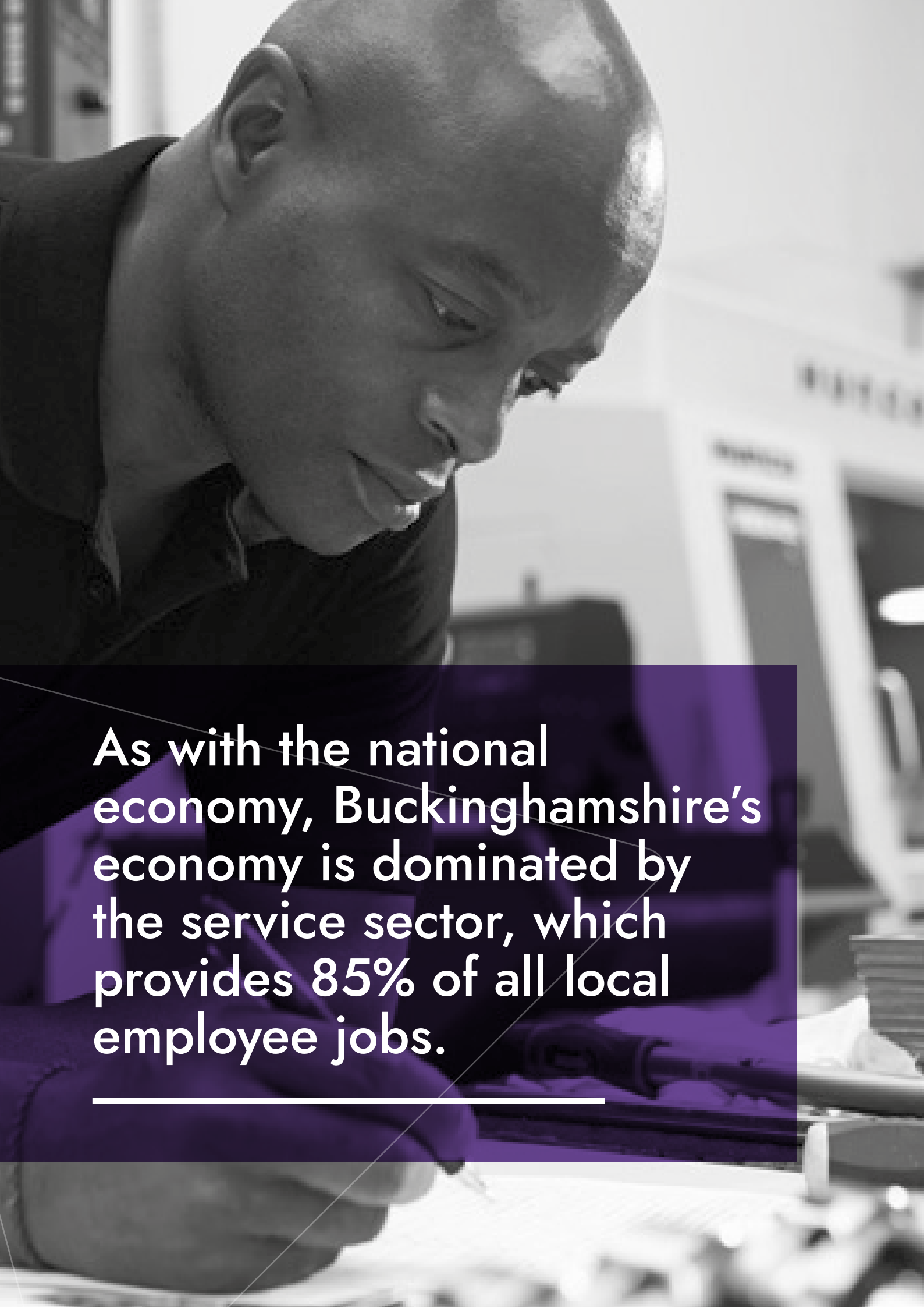
<sup>7</sup> Source: *Annual Population Survey, ONS, Jul 2020-Jun 2021*

<sup>8</sup> Source: *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

<sup>9</sup> Source: *Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy, Buckinghamshire LEP, July 2019*

<sup>10</sup> Source: *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*



As with the national economy, Buckinghamshire's economy is dominated by the service sector, which provides 85% of all local employee jobs.

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# Skills supply and demand

## The great skills mismatch

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Buckinghamshire employers reported that 53% of vacancies were proving difficult to fill, the highest figure of all 38 LEP areas. Buckinghamshire employers were more likely than average to report difficulties filling vacancies due to applicants lacking the required skills (28% versus 25% nationally) and due to 'not enough people interested in the role' (25% versus 12% nationally) (see Chart A46 in the accompanying Evidence Annex). Local intelligence suggests the latter to be a particular problem for the County's health and social care, construction and manufacturing sectors.

Proximity to the London job market, the high cost of housing, the perceived lack of vibrancy of Buckinghamshire's urban centres, a smaller than average cohort of young people taking-up apprenticeships and perceptions of certain sectors are all likely to have contributed to the recruitment challenges of local employers in recent years.

Whilst recruitment difficulties eased at the height of the pandemic, they ramped up in 2021 with local employers stating that they are now worse than they have been for many years, despite a high number of residents claiming out-of-work related benefits, and 11,200 residents being on the furlough scheme when it closed at the end of September 2021.

Commentators believe that this is in part due to the loss of a large number of people from the labour market during the pandemic (EU workers returning to their home countries, students staying on in education, people taking early retirement or not wishing to work due to underlying health conditions which could increase their risk of falling seriously ill with Covid etc).

Recruitment difficulties are also likely due, in some cases, to unfavourable terms and conditions including low pay, long hours, physically challenging work and requirements to work shifts. Whilst in other cases they relate to a lack of awareness of certain occupations, or jobs not appealing in terms of the perceived level of fulfilment they offer. In some sectors they are also likely due to increased demand for staff. For example, the need to deliver increased construction activity in the County, the production boom within the film and TV industry and the increased need to support people experiencing mental health difficulties.

## The next generation

Young people were particularly badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Exams were cancelled, learning took place online, work experience opportunities dried up and apprenticeship, internship and graduate programmes paused, not to mention the detrimental impact on mental health. As a result, some stayed on in education for longer than anticipated, whilst others became unemployed or economically inactive.

The reduction in work experience opportunities will likely impact the work readiness of young people entering the labour market in 2022. However, with the labour market running hot, there will likely be many entry level opportunities. Employers who halted apprenticeship, internship and graduate programmes have, in the main, restarted them and are keen to attract the next generation to meet their skills needs. It will be important for employers to recognise that new entrants may lack the experiences of previous cohorts and may need additional support to enable them to flourish within the workplace.

One challenge is that more jobs than normal (pre-pandemic) will require young people to work from home (to a greater or lesser extent). There are concerns that this is less than ideal for new entrants who often require regular support and gain a great deal by observing and listening to colleagues in real life.

## Cross-cutting skills needs

### Digital skills

A key skills issue within Buckinghamshire (and indeed globally) is the need to raise digital skills at all levels. According to the Employer Skills Survey (DfE, 2019) pre-Covid-19:

- A third of Buckinghamshire employers with employees deemed 'not fully proficient' stated that these employees lack the required IT skills.
- A third of Buckinghamshire employers struggling to recruit people with the required skills said that applicants lacked the required digital skills.
- Nearly three quarters of Buckinghamshire employers anticipated the need for new skills within their business over the next 12 months. Of these, 45% anticipated the need for new digital skills.

Covid-19 has accelerated the need for individuals to raise their digital skills (be that within current roles or to access new employment opportunities) and for employers (particularly SMEs) to adopt new technology. However, gaining of digital skills appears not to have accelerated significantly over recent years. Research undertaken by WorldSkillsUK in 2021<sup>12</sup> found that take-up of digital subjects at schools, colleges and for apprenticeships has remained static or in some cases has declined in recent years. Whilst there has been a slow but steady increase in participation in digital training in higher education. They conclude:

“

**While demand for digital skills is set to increase rapidly, the pipeline of digital skills through the education and skills system is not providing the skills at the scale we will need.**

### WORLDSKILLS 2021

### Green skills

According to the LSE Grantham Institute, about one in five jobs are likely to be affected by the transition to a green economy, with workers experiencing either an increase or decrease in the demand for their skills.

The Green Jobs Taskforce<sup>13</sup> Report identifies specific sectoral groups where change will be crucial to meet net zero ambitions. Of the sectors identified, those with potentially the greatest growth potential in Buckinghamshire are:

- Buildings retrofit sector
- Building fabric energy efficiency
- Modern methods of construction for retrofit and especially new builds
- Hydrogen
- Automotive

Whilst many of the skills required for the net zero transition are specific to certain industries or trades, the transition will require and support an array of skills not unique to green roles. In particular, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills will underpin jobs that are key to progressing the green recovery and delivering net zero.

<sup>12</sup> *Disconnected: Exploring the digital skills gaps, WorldSkillsUK, 2021*

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-jobs-taskforce-report>

Other skills that are expected to be critical for the workforce to deliver net zero include:

- Digital and data skills
- Project management skills
- Education, communication and change management skills
- Leadership, management, and communication skills

#### *Engineering skills*

There were around 6,800 engineers working in the Buckinghamshire economy in 2019, a rise of 15% from 2009. The vast majority (90%) of engineers are men. 31% of those working as engineers within the Buckinghamshire economy work within the construction sector, 25% within the manufacturing sector, 16% within the professional, scientific and technical sector and 11% within the repair of motor vehicle sector.

Employers state that there is a lack of local engineering training provision, with some provision having ceased a few years ago due to a lack of student demand. Training providers also note this absence, with the Engineering Trust stating that:

“

**The Aylesbury, High Wycombe area is crying out for an engineering college. We...have learners both in Aylesbury and High Wycombe, and they have to travel an hour plus to a college to do the engineering qualification aspect of their apprenticeship. It's a massive gap at the moment ...[it] is restrictive for... businesses...and relies on these young people travelling [long] distances, to fulfil their apprenticeship and gain the qualifications they need.”**

**MARK VINGOE, CEO, THE ENGINEERING TRUST, NOVEMBER 2021**

The number of Buckinghamshire residents that have undertaken engineering related Apprenticeships has almost halved in recent years (see table A6 in the accompanying Evidence Annex).

Other issues cited by local employers include:

- A poor perception amongst young people of what engineers do, and poor awareness of the range of different types of engineering opportunities available nowadays.
- A lack of diversity within the existing workforce
- An SME economy in which individual SMEs are unlikely to have enough employees who require training for a college to establish provision

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<sup>14</sup> [\*LSE Grantham Institute \(2021\), 'Green economy how the transition to net-zero could affect UK jobs across the country'\*](#)















## Priority sectors

Our research has identified five priority sectors for skills investment in Buckinghamshire, with the need to raise digital skills underpinning all five. National priority sectors have also been identified, and there is some overlap between the two (see table 1).

**Table 1: Local and national priority sectors for skills investment**

Below are descriptions of each of the local and national priority sectors, and the skills challenges they face in Buckinghamshire.

Local/national priority sectors	Sector/sub-sector
 	Construction
	Life sciences, health and social care
	<i>Adult social care</i>
	Manufacturing
	<i>High performance engineering</i>
	Film and TV
	Space
	Digital technology
	Haulage and logistics

 Local priority sectors  
 National priority sectors

### Construction (local and national priority sector)

Approximately 24,600 people work in Buckinghamshire's construction sector, around a third of whom are self-employed. Buckinghamshire has a higher concentration of construction workers than nationally, particularly within the 'construction of buildings' sub-sector.

The construction sector is expected to be a key growth sector (from an employment perspective) within Buckinghamshire over the next 10 years, predominately due to the construction of HS2, a large house building programme, and Aylesbury Garden Town and East West Rail construction related activity. In addition, if plans for the expansion of Pinewood Studios in the south of the County get the go-ahead, around 1,500 construction jobs are likely to be created.

Skills shortages are rife across the sector locally, at all levels (see table A13 in the accompanying Evidence Annex). These are discussed regularly at Buckinghamshire Construction Sector Employer Group meetings, along with initiatives designed to address the shortages. Many sector employers operating within the local area have developed close links with schools in a bid to strengthen pipelines of new recruits. Buckinghamshire College Group provides a range of construction courses including carpentry and bricklaying and will be offering T levels at level 3 in on site construction, brickwork and carpentry, and building services in plumbing and electrical from September 2022. However, there is scope to widen provision into areas such as plant operators, which are in high demand due to HS2 and other infrastructure projects being undertaken in the County. Discussions are underway between the College Group and local employers with a view to widening the local construction curriculum offer.

Other issues affecting the sector include: the ageing working (meaning that there is greater need to attract new recruits than in the past); certain groups, particularly women, being under-represented within the workforce; the perception of construction as ‘mud and boots’ making it difficult to attract talented young people; and difficulties recruiting and retaining construction lecturers, trainers and assessors due to much higher salaries being on offer in industry.

## **Life sciences, health and social care (local and national priority sector)**

In total, approximately 31,400 people work in Buckinghamshire’s life sciences, health and social care sector (see figure A1 in the accompanying Evidence Annex). The sector is expected to see employment growth over the next 10 years linked to both the health needs of an ageing population and the need to respond to the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As is the case nationally, the health and social care elements of the sector are experiencing significant staff shortages at all levels (see table A13 in the accompanying Evidence Annex). Evidence suggests that recruitment difficulties are more acute in Buckinghamshire than in some other parts of the country. Pay is higher and there has traditionally been greater reliance on non-UK workers in the County. It was difficult to recruit from overseas during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, more staff than normal are currently leaving the sector and it is reported that there is an over-dependency on agency staff. Longer term, there are concerns regarding the sector’s ageing workforce (an estimated 50% of the workforce are over the age of 50<sup>15</sup>), with more staff expected to retire in coming years than in the past, and the need for employers to adapt to the needs of an older workforce in order to retain staff.

A significant number of initiatives are underway within the County to try and address staff shortages within the health and social care sector, many of which involve multi-agency approaches.

### **Adult social care**

Buckinghamshire’s care sector is currently under enormous pressure. Some care homes went out of business as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, staff are leaving the sector and vacancies are becoming more and more difficult to fill. Skills shortages exist at all levels, from volunteers to care home managers and social workers.

The need for staff to be fully vaccinated has had an impact on staffing, with higher-than-average levels of vaccine hesitancy within BAME communities who make up a high proportion of the social care workforce in the County. In 2020/21, an estimated 68% of the Buckinghamshire social care workforce identified as British, compared to 83% nationally.<sup>16</sup>

Care homes in particular are finding it more difficult than normal to fill the vacancies being created due to high levels of competition from sectors that offer similar pay but are perceived to provide ‘easier’ work. Due to the high cost of living in Buckinghamshire and comparatively low salaries for many social care roles, local experts believe the sector needs to target the existing population to fill vacancies, as it would be difficult for new recruits coming from overseas to make ends meet.

### **Mental health services**

Increased mental health difficulties amongst adults and children over the last 18 months has increased the demand for services and therefore skilled staff. A lack of trained staff is leading to long waits for referrals and increased pressure on health professionals (such as GPs).

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<sup>15</sup> Berks, Bucks & Oxon Integrated Care System People Strategy meeting, November 2021

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/Local-authority-area-summary-reports/South-East/2021/Buckinghamshire-Summary-2021.pdf>

## Healthcare

As has been the case nationally, there has been immense pressure on healthcare professionals over the last 18 months as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst it was all hands to the pump at the height of the pandemic, the sector is now experiencing higher than normal rates of retirement. Overseas recruitment was difficult during the pandemic but is now picking up with increased recruitment from countries such as the Philippines, India and some African countries, and less from the EU. A particular issue for the sector in Buckinghamshire is the high cost of housing. This makes the County a less attractive option for overseas healthcare workers than other parts of the country.

## Manufacturing (local and national priority sector)

In total, nearly 17,000 people work in Buckinghamshire's manufacturing sector<sup>17</sup>, for around 1,200 companies<sup>18</sup>. The County is home to nearly 90 high growth/high growth potential manufacturing firms.

Buckinghamshire's manufacturing specialisms include: furniture; computer, electronic and optical products; pharmaceutical products; electrical equipment; wood and wood products and other transport equipment. There are particularly high concentrations of manufacturing activity in and around the Wycombe area, and at Silverstone.

The **high-performance engineering sector** includes: high tech manufacturing, engineering and digital technology. This is a specialist sector for Buckinghamshire, driven in part by the cluster of activity around Silverstone Park. In total, over 4,000 high-performance engineering companies are located within an hour radius of Silverstone.

Sports Engineering, linked to Silverstone, is a highly regarded local specialism. Whilst Formula 1 companies tend to find it relatively easy to attract talent, other local engineering firms report struggles to recruit technicians, graduates and experienced professionals. Much is put down to young people favouring other sectors and having an out-dated view of what an engineering career involves.

A strong supply of the skills in high performance engineering/manufacturing is critical for the continued expansion of Buckinghamshire's burgeoning space sector and for net zero innovation.

## Film and TV (local priority sector)

There are twice as many creative industry jobs within the Buckinghamshire economy than the national average, many of which are in the film and TV sector<sup>19</sup>.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the creative industries were one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy<sup>20</sup>. In Buckinghamshire, despite the pandemic, the number of jobs in the creative sector in the County rose by 33% between September 2019 and 2020<sup>21</sup>.

At the heart of Buckinghamshire's film and TV (or 'screen') sector is the world-renowned Pinewood Studios, home of the British film industry and the James Bond and Star Wars franchises. Buckinghamshire's screen sector sits within a wider West of London Screen Cluster, which includes studios at Leavesden, Elstree, Shepperton, Long Cross, Bovingdon, Didcot and, within the next few years, Reading and potentially Marlow. The West of London Screen Cluster is experiencing a period of significant growth, with at least 40 new sound stages expected to become operational over the next two years. The production boom is inward-investment driven, with major players such as Disney, Netflix and Amazon taking up a significant proportion of studio space on long (10-year or so) leases.

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<sup>17</sup> *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

<sup>18</sup> *UK Business Count, ONS, 2020*

<sup>19</sup> *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020 and self-employment estimates based on the Labour Force Survey.*

<sup>20</sup> *Creative Industries Federation, 2020*

<sup>21</sup> *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

A grayscale photograph of a person's head and shoulders in profile, looking at a computer monitor. The monitor displays a complex 3D CAD model of a vehicle chassis, showing various components like the engine, suspension, and frame. The person is sitting at a desk with a keyboard visible in the foreground. A purple semi-transparent box is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image, containing white text.

Buckinghamshire has  
a larger than average  
digital sector, with 1.3  
times as many people  
working in the sector  
locally than the  
national average

The film and TV sector has a wide supply chain and generates employment across many disciplines. For example: equipment manufacturing, catering provision, accommodation, transportation, carpentry, rigging, accountancy, prosthetics and more.

Expansion plans for Pinewood (which include new sound stages, a visitor attraction and a skills hub) are expected to create more than 3,500 over the next few years.

Whilst plans for a new studio at Marlow could create a similar number of jobs if plans are approved.

The production boom is leading to significant skills shortages (see table A13 in the accompanying Evidence Annex), many of which are at the 'experienced' rather than entry level. There are concerns that a lack of staff will mean that the economic potential of the boom will not be fully realised, and investment lost to international competition. Locally, there is strong interest in careers in the sector amongst young people, and apprenticeship numbers are increasing sharply as new standards have been launched.

At the experienced level, staff shortages are largely a result of increased demand. One consequence has been large companies offering staff roles as employees rather than freelancers, to ensure they have the talent required.

A raft of training initiatives are in place, or are in development, established by sector groups, local bodies, education and training providers and employers themselves. Some of which focus on re-training people from other sectors to enable them to work in the industry (e.g. accountants to production accountants and office managers to production co-ordinators/managers). There is an on-going push to improve diversity and inclusion within the industry, in particular behind camera and at senior levels.

The level of qualifications required for many occupations within the industry tends to be overstated. The vast majority require a Level 3 qualification combined with the right experience/attitude. Time spent within the industry is of high value.

### **Space (local priority sector)**

The Westcott Space Cluster, located in the Enterprise Zone of the Westcott Venture Business Park near Aylesbury, is home to a growing nucleus of space-related companies developing new innovative technologies in rocket propulsion, 5G communications and autonomous systems. It is anticipated that the 10-year plan for the Cluster will create over 2,000 jobs in the coming years.

Access to a skilled workforce, particularly at technical and engineering level, is fundamental for realising the growth ambitions of the sector. A specific skills gap, which is critical to the UK's space launch ambitions is within the propulsion engineering specialism. No single university has the capacity to deliver such a programme, but Westcott offers the opportunity to develop a new National Academy for Space Propulsion Engineers working alongside a range of UK and international partner universities. There is a need to develop local training provision, including the National Academy, to ensure a sustainable supply of talent, and also to address issues related to the rural location of the Westcott site which can deter young people in particular from taking up job opportunities.

Plans are in development to create a Skills Academy at Westcott, further details of which are set out in Chapter 4 of this report.

### **Digital and technology (national priority sector)**

Buckinghamshire has a larger than average digital sector, with 1.3 times as many people working in the sector locally than the national average (see chart A3 in the Evidence Annex). The County is home to some leading digital technology firms (e.g. SAS software, Softcat and ESRI), but by no means to the same extent of neighbouring Berkshire. Buckinghamshire's digital specialisms include: film and TV production and post-production activity; computer consultancy activities and telecoms activities.



As is the case nationally, and globally, digital and technology skills are in high and growing demand within Buckinghamshire. At the 'specialist' end of the spectrum, pre-Covid, approximately 12,200<sup>22</sup> people work in specialist digital technology roles within Buckinghamshire firms, and approximately 1,600<sup>23</sup> Buckinghamshire residents worked in such roles on a self-employed basis. At a sector level, around 12,000 people work in the 'information and communication' sector as employees, with others doing so on a self-employed basis<sup>24</sup>.

Digital skills shortages exist across a range of sectors, not just within digital technology firms. Securing and utilising digital skills and digital technology can be particularly difficult for SMEs, which are highly concentrated in Buckinghamshire. 37% of respondents to a local business survey<sup>25</sup> conducted in 2019 stated that a lack of awareness of digital technologies or a lack of digital skills were the largest factors limiting the adoption of technology within their businesses.

The ability to attract digital talent can be difficult for SMEs that are unable to match the financial incentives offered by larger companies in the County and neighbouring areas such as London and the M4 corridor.

### **Haulage and logistics (national priority sector)**

There are around 700<sup>26</sup> haulage and logistics firms in Buckinghamshire employing nearly 7,000<sup>27</sup> people. Whilst it is not a specialist sector within the Buckinghamshire economy, there are logistics clusters to the north of the County (around Milton Keynes) and the south (around Heathrow airport) which employ Buckinghamshire residents. The sector has grown in Buckinghamshire over the last year or so, with a relatively high number of new businesses registering for VAT/PAYE and employment and driver vacancies increasing. Demand for warehouse space in the County is rising, as are warehouse property prices. This growth, coupled with the highly publicised national HGV driver shortage, means that it is a 'sector to watch' for Buckinghamshire.

**Tables A13, A14 and A15 in the accompanying evidence annex summarises how Buckinghamshire's priority sectors have been identified and lists specific examples of occupations in high demand or experiencing skills shortages.**

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<sup>22</sup> *EMSI Analyst, 2020*

<sup>23</sup> *Estimates based on the Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2019*

<sup>24</sup> *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

<sup>25</sup> *Buckinghamshire Business First, 2019*

<sup>26</sup> *UK Business Count, ONS, 2020*

<sup>27</sup> *Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2020*

# Chapter 04.

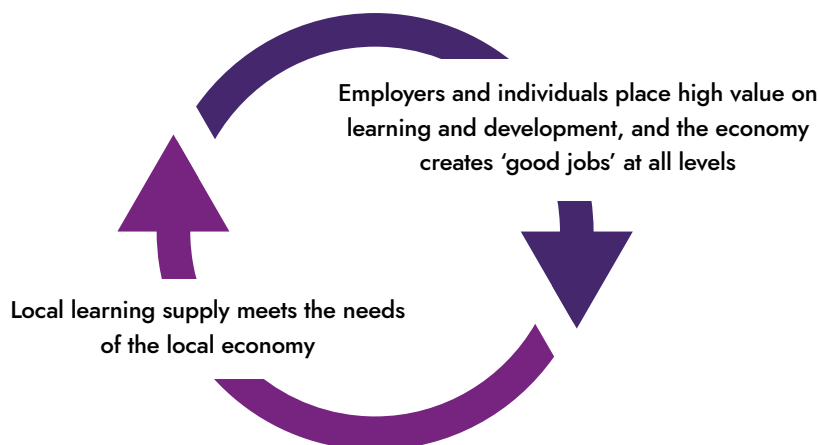
## Skills strategy

### Ambition

The ultimate ambition of Buckinghamshire's SAP is for: *"Buckinghamshire employers, learning providers and other stakeholders to collaborate effectively to ensure the current and future workforce are equipped with the skills required of the local economy, which in turn raises productivity and creates 'good jobs' for all".*

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**Figure 3: Skills ambition**



### Local skills strategy

**Buckinghamshire's Skills Strategy** was published in 2017 and covers the period 2017 to 2022. A refreshed strategy, which takes into account recent local developments, the latest national policy developments (including skills strategy and strategies on innovation, net zero and levelling-up), the latest evidence, and the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, will be produced in 2022.

In the meantime the core themes of the current Strategy remain relevant. These being:

- Developing the future workforce by improving the work preparedness of young people and helping them make informed career choices.
- Addressing skills gaps through continuous professional development.
- Developing a pipeline of talent for priority growth sectors.
- Supporting recruitment into, and skills development within sectors experiencing recruitment difficulties / skills shortages.

A 'skills and inspiration revolution' sits at the heart of Buckinghamshire's long-term **Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)**. The Buckinghamshire LIS recognises that people, and the skills they have, are a key driver of productivity. To facilitate long-term local economic growth, Buckinghamshire LEP has targeted its skills-related investments towards sectors it is seeking to grow in Buckinghamshire over the next 10 years, to help create the required talent pipelines. These 'strategic growth sectors' are: space, creative, high-performance technology and health (medtech). In addition, investment has been targeted at the construction sector (which is a growing sector locally that traditionally suffers from skills shortages) and towards raising digital skills across the economy as a whole.

LEP investment in skills (or skills related) projects over the last five years is summarised below. Evidence provided through the Buckinghamshire SAP has helped inform these investment decisions and will continue to do so.

### **Buckinghamshire LEP investment in skills initiatives to strengthen talent pipelines for local growth sectors (2016 – 2021)**

#### *Creative*

- Digital Hub and 4K Studio (National Film and TV School)
- National Centre for Immersive Story Telling (National Film and TV School)
- Bucks Creates at Pinewood (Bucks New University and Creative Media Skills)
- Media Suite (Bucks College Group – Amersham)

#### *High Performance Engineering*

- Silverstone Pedalling Efficiency Project (Silverstone Sports Innovation Hub and UTC collaboration)
- Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub

#### *Construction*

- Construction and Trade Skills Centre (Bucks College Group – Flackwell Heath)
- Plant Operator Skills Hub (Flannery Plant Hire)

#### *Digital*

- Digital Innovation Lab (including Cyber Security Suite) (Bucks New University – Aylesbury)
- School of Computing and Centre for AI (University of Buckingham)

#### *Health and Social Care*

- The Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy
- Healthcare Innovation Centre (Stoke Mandeville hospital)
- Healthtec Centre (Bucks College Group - Aylesbury)

In September 2020, Buckinghamshire LEP produced an **Economic Recovery Plan** in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This recognised the significant impact the Covid-19 pandemic had had on both the local labour market, and on the provision of education and training across the County, and identified a number of related actions. These actions have been embedded within the Buckinghamshire Skills Action Plan (see Chapter 5).

## **Devolved skills funding**

Whilst much can be achieved through current structures and programmes, in 2021, the **Buckinghamshire Growth Board** published a **Recovery and Growth Deal proposal** which made the case to central government that more could be done, at pace, with a devolved skills budget for the County.

The proposition included:

- A devolved Adult Education Budget for Buckinghamshire, to accelerate re-skilling to meet local demand.
- Streamlining local delivery of national employment programmes such as Kickstart.
- Greater freedom in the apprenticeship levy system to meet the needs of local SMEs.
- Developing a County-wide Apprenticeship Training Agency with a dedicated Buckinghamshire Skills Fund that could be responsive to local needs.
- Acting as a test-bed area to pilot new national skills initiatives.
- A pilot agreement with DWP on shared data to assist employer support and job matching.

Subsequently, the government announced plans for new '**County Deals**' to "take devolution beyond the largest cities, offering the rest of England the same powers metro mayors have gained over things like transport, skills and economic support".

Buckinghamshire's Recovery and Growth Deal proposal forms the basis of the County's County Deal ask. The developing County Deal identifies three significant propositions for skills development projects to support Buckinghamshire's strategic growth (or super) sectors.

These are:

### **A Skills Academy at Westcott**

The intention is that the Academy will help develop the future pipeline of talent needed for Buckinghamshire's growing space sector and will facilitate the continuing learning and upskilling of the existing workforce. To this end it is anticipated that the Academy will offer the following provision:

- Level 3 T Level in Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control<sup>28</sup>
- Level 4 Apprenticeship in Space Engineering Technician<sup>29</sup>
- Level 4 Apprenticeship in Engineering Manufacturing Technician<sup>30</sup>
- An annual professional training programme
- A career change programme aimed at older people wishing to change career.
- Business courses in leadership and management
- Learning aligned to existing Westcott Services, e.g. drone technology, and the Health and Agri Living Labs
- Specialist facilities for those undertaking space and propulsion engineering degrees at local universities.

### **A Multiversity Campus at Silverstone Circuit Enterprise Park**

The Multiversity is a facility under promotion by the University of Northampton and Bedford College that links higher and further education in a single campus facility. The Silverstone Campus will be a flagship across the region, providing demand-led skills. The educational offer will include from GCSEs and BTECs for 14-19 year olds, delivered through the Silverstone UTC, with progression routes into apprenticeships, degrees and research degrees.

This transitional offer will be the first of its kind in the UK for high performance engineering, where the skills and taught curriculum are guided fundamentally by the needs of industry. It has potential to become a world class centre of excellence, complementing the UK Silverstone brand with new educational innovation, enterprise and research across the global Formula 1 motorsport network.

Lifelong Learning will also be a feature with the campus acting as a training hub for those working in high performance technologies needing new skills, and others wanting to retrain in engineering and advanced technologies.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/Levels/Level-information-hub/Level-in-engineering-manufacturing-processing-and-control/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/space-engineering-technician-v1-0>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/engineering-manufacturing-technician-v1-0>


## Education hub at Pinewood Studios

The intention is to create an education hub as part of a new Screen Industries Global Growth Hub at Pinewood Studios. The education hub is planned to provide a wide range of training/re-training, vocational, career change and other education provision. Run in partnership between Pinewood Studios and the National Film and Television School it will aim to provide:

- Core craft skills training
- Work experience placements
- Professional short courses for those already working in the screen industry to further develop and upskill their expertise
- Training within virtual production
- Workshops for 16-19 year olds to develop their specialist filmmaking and craft skills
- Local community access to workspaces for adult learning

Whether or not these three projects attract central government funding via a County Deal, they are key strategic skills projects for the County for which funding routes will continue to be pursued.





About one in five jobs are likely to be affected by the transition to a green economy, with workers experiencing either an increase or decrease in the demand for their skills

# Skills priorities

Underpinning the strategies and plans listed above is a wealth of local skills analysis and insight. Some of which was gathered pre-Covid-19, but largely remains valid, and some since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. Much of this evidence can be found in, or is signposted from, the Evidence Annex accompanying this report.

The evidence led to the SAP identifying five broad skills priority areas for Buckinghamshire. These are set out in table 2.

**Table 2: Skills priorities for Buckinghamshire**

Theme	Priorities
<b>1. The Future Workforce.</b> Programmes to support young people, career seekers and career changers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to help individuals navigate the current and future job market.</li> <li>• Ensure those seeking work have access to comprehensive, up-to-date, high-quality information about the opportunities available in Buckinghamshire.</li> <li>• Improve the work-readiness of students leaving education.</li> <li>• Increase local take up of pathways leading to in demand occupations.</li> </ul>
<b>2. A Skilled and Productive Workforce.</b> Programmes to support employers and the existing workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure businesses have access to the information they need to manage their workforces effectively.</li> <li>• Strengthen the talent pipeline for strategic growth sectors and key skills shortage occupations.</li> <li>• Provide workforce development support for SMEs, start-ups and the self-employed.</li> </ul>
<b>3. An Inclusive Workforce.</b> Cross-cutting themes to support the entire population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure residents have access to the information they need to gain access to opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills for both work and life.</li> <li>• Mobilise potential of current population.</li> <li>• Attract and retain talent.</li> <li>• Promote skills for green growth.</li> </ul>
<b>4. An Informed Approach.</b> Maintaining up to date information on skills needs through research and employer networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise the impact of national skills policy on the local economy.</li> <li>• Produce and disseminate high quality LMI and research.</li> <li>• Maintain sector sub groups to inform policy, strategy and actions plans and share good practice.</li> <li>• Update Skills Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>5. A Digitally Able Population.</b> Ensuring access to digital programmes for the whole population for work and life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure residents are able to develop their digital literacy so they can access the services they need to meet their basic health and well-being needs.</li> <li>• Ensure residents have access to education and training programmes enabling them to develop their digital skills and take up emerging digital careers.</li> <li>• Champion the adoption of new technology and development of employee skills amongst SMEs as a lever of growth.</li> </ul>

# Investment in skills to support Buckinghamshire's strategic growth sectors

A key priority for the Buckinghamshire SAP is to further strengthen and sustain talent pipelines for the County's growth sectors (as set out in the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy). This includes ensuring high quality learning provision is embedded within key employment locations. Some ambitions for significant investment are listed below. Three of which are included in the developing County Deal as set out previously.

## Creative Industries

- Creation of an education hub at Pinewood Studios, as part of its Screen Industries Global Growth Hub proposition (details on page 22).

## Space

- Creation of a Skills Academy at the Westcott Space Innovation Park (details on page 22)
- Potential for facilities to enable greater cutting-edge industry/academia collaboration.

## Life Science, Health and Social Care

- Creation of a Digital Health Innovation Centre at Buckinghamshire New University.

## High Performance Engineering

- Greater industry/academia collaborative innovation activity at Silverstone Enterprise Zone (linked to green technologies such as electric vehicles and clean fuel) to grow the pool of individuals with cutting edge prototyping and advanced technology skills. This includes the creation of a Multiversity (details on page 22).
- Embedding engineering skills development facilities within plans for growth in the south of the County.

## Construction

- Potential new facilities to increase the supply of construction talent into the Buckinghamshire economy. With a particular focus on the current need for plant operatives, ground workers and scaffolders, along with rising demand for energy efficiency retrofitting, off-site/modern methods of construction and digital skills.

*Actions required to support these ambitions are set out in the Buckinghamshire Skills Action Plan (Chapter 5)*

# Chapter 05.

## Buckinghamshire Skills Action Plan

This chapter sets out the Buckinghamshire Skills Action Plan, as agreed by the SAP in February 2020. Each action seeks to address one of the five skills priorities set out in Chapter 4. Organisations and organisation types cited within the Action Plan are listed below, along with the current stage of activity and timescales involved.

During 2021 the SAP has monitored progress towards the achievement of the Action Plan and progress by November 2021 has been noted in the table below.

### Organisations and organisation types cited within Skills Action Plan

Organisation	Abbreviation
Buckinghamshire Business First	BBF
Buckinghamshire Council	BC
Buckinghamshire College Group	BCG
Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership	BLEP
Buckinghamshire New University	BNU
Buckinghamshire Skills Hub	BSH
Construction Industry Training Board	CITB
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP
Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership	EM3 LEP
Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall	EKFB
Health Education England	HEE
Bucks Health and Social Care Academy	BHSCA
Independent Training Providers	ITPs
National Careers Service	NCS
South Central Institute of Technology	SCIOT
University of Buckingham	UoB
Community and Voluntary Sector	VSO
Westcott Space Co-ordination Board	WSCB

### Current stage of activity

Stage of activity	
Stage 1	Preparation
Stage 2	Start
Stage 3	Early
Stage 4	Advanced
Stage 5	Completed

### Timescales

Timescales	
Short term	Up to 6 months
Medium term	6 months to 1 year
Long term	1 year or more



## 1. The future workforce

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>1.1. Recovery support to help individuals navigate the impact of Covid-19 on the job market</b>	<b>1.1.1 Establish a Redundancy Taskforce</b> - bringing resources and support available for individuals in the County into a single portal.	BBF, BC and all SAP partners	5	Completed	Portal completed and incorporated into BBF and BSH websites. BC continuing practical support under Employability and Skills Taskforce and through DWP partnership.	Plan for Jobs
	<b>1.1.2 Aviation to Screen Redeployment scheme</b> - support and promote the Skills to Screen: Aviation scheme to help workers displaced from the aviation sector take-up roles in TV and film production.	ScreenSkills, BLEP, EM3 LEP, Pinewood Studios	5	Completed	Skills to Screen initiative completed supporting people displaced from aviation sector into new jobs in film and TV production.	Plan for Jobs
	<b>1.1.3 Hospitality to Care Redeployment scheme</b> – working in partnership with People 1 <sup>st</sup> International, explore the feasibility of establishing a scheme to enable people displaced from the hospitality, leisure, retail and aviation sectors find new careers in the health and social care sectors.	BSH, People 1st, HEE, HSCA, Seetec, DWP	2	Med term	Pilot underway with Seetec under the DWP funded JETS scheme.	Plan for Jobs
	<b>1.1.4 Manufacturing to Construction Redeployment scheme</b> – working in partnership with CITB, explore the feasibility of establishing a scheme to enable people displaced from the manufacturing sector to find new careers in the construction sector.	BSH, CITB, Construction Sector Group	N/A	N/A	Discussion undertaken with CITB and Make UK - scheme determined to be not feasible.	Plan for Jobs
<b>1.2. Ensure those seeking jobs and careers have access to comprehensive, high-quality information about the opportunities available in Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>1.2.1 Develop a new Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website</b> – aimed at young people and career seekers providing up-to-the-minute information about the jobs and careers in Buckinghamshire.	BBF, BSH	5	Ongoing	Bucks Skills Hub website launched March 2021. Work ongoing to keep up-to-date.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.2.2 Expand and consolidate the Enterprise Adviser network</b> – to achieve complete coverage across Bucks secondary schools, maintain levels of support for these schools and continue to strengthen relationships. Currently, Bucks has 80 Enterprise Adviser volunteers from businesses supporting 46 schools. The target is to have two Enterprise Advisers per school.	BSH	4	Ongoing	All schools now have at least one Enterprise Adviser. Buckinghamshire is the first area in the country to have advisors in all state schools including SEND schools and the County's two Pupil Referral Units.	Skills for Jobs White Paper

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>1.2. Ensure those seeking jobs and careers have access to comprehensive, high-quality information about the opportunities available in Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>1.2.3 Organise and Host the Bucks Skills Show 2021</b> – BSH has established the County's largest interactive and experiential skills festival which helps young people explore careers and work out how to get there. The 2020 event took place virtually in November, with a focus on careers in the curriculum, and saw over 5,000 people attend online. In 2021 the aim is to go back to a face-to-face skills festival, but also retain the virtual careers in the curriculum model, which provided a workplace reality into the classroom.	BSH, employers	4	Ongoing	The virtual Bucks Skills Showcase was delivered 11th and 12th November 2021. New web pages created <a href="http://www.bucksskillshub.org/the-skills-show">www.bucksskillshub.org/the-skills-show</a> . The face-to-face Bucks Skills Show planning has begun for March 9th and 10th 2022. This will be held at Westcott.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.2.4 Expand the Careers Hub</b> – in line with the Government's Careers Strategy, to ensure the Gatsby Benchmarks are delivered in each school and college within the Careers Hub and that careers outcomes are improved for all young people. The Buckinghamshire Careers Hub covers all mainstream secondary schools in the County, plus the Bucks College Group and UTC.	BSH	5	Ongoing	All state-maintained secondary schools including SEND schools and the County's two Pupil Referral Units are now in the Careers Hub.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.2.5 Create a Special Educational Needs and Disability community of practice</b> to bring together educators to share good practice and resources.	BSH, BC Preparing for Adulthood Team	5	Ongoing	This is running to include Alternative Resourced Provision facilities. Working closely with the voluntary sector BC's Preparing for Adulthood Team have developed programmes for young people with SEND to enable them to take up education and training programmes as well as work experience opportunities with employers.	Skills for Jobs White Paper National Disability Strategy
	<b>1.2.6 Continuous Professional Development of Careers Leaders in school</b> – to ensure all are trained in their role and local CPD sessions run are relevant to the local need.	BSH	4	Ongoing	Compass Plus session run in July. CPD session run on Ofsted and Future Skills Questionnaire. Webinar planned on Apprenticeships.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.2.7 Explore ways to upskill school staff to become Careers Advisers</b> - including through the use of apprenticeship funding	BSH	2	Long term	Work underway to develop package for schools to upskill staff using Apprenticeship Levy	Skills for Jobs White Paper
<b>1.3. Improve the work-readiness of students leaving education</b>	<b>1.3.1 Devise a Work-Readiness "Bridging Programme"</b> – to address the concerns of business that school-leavers in Bucks, especially those from non-selective schools, and some graduates, are not work-ready. Work with education and private training providers, review current programmes and explore the need for a standardised offering for Buckinghamshire. Build on work already underway by Bucks College Group and Buckinghamshire's universities. Ensure there is good provision for SEND job seekers.	BSH, BBF	3	Med term	Discussion at SAP to progress. Work underway to identify all provision in County.  Action within Careers Hub Strategic Plan for employers and Enterprise Advisers to show students what work readiness means.	Skills for Jobs White Paper National Disability Strategy

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>1.4. Increase local take up of pathways leading to in demand occupations.</b>	<b>1.4.1 Workforce skills advice and support for employers</b> – The Buckinghamshire Growth Hub to actively support and advise businesses on all workforce needs including training plans, apprenticeship opportunities etc.	BBF	4	Ongoing	Core activity. Potential opportunity to bid for extra support from DfE (“The Prospectus”) to promote apprenticeships to SMEs	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.4.2 Facilitate flexibility in apprenticeship funding</b> – through identifying opportunities for apprenticeship levy transfer and seeking out opportunities for collaboration between businesses.	All SAP partners	3	Ongoing	Core activity. National Levy matching system introduced in Sept 2021. Buckinghamshire Council policy published Oct. 2021	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.4.3 Support introduction of T Levels</b> – through a promotional campaign amongst businesses in Bucks, persuade employers to offer work placements to T Levels students.	BBF, All SAP partners	2	Short term	BBF supporting BCG marketing campaign for first T Levels in Health & Social Care.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.4.4 Encourage and support work placements, Traineeships and internships</b> – alongside the campaign to support the introduction of T Levels. Focus on explaining the various initiatives and promoting the benefits.	All SAP Partners	2	Short term	BBF supporting BCG marketing campaign for T Levels. Work Experience guide for employers for BBF website agreed and underway.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.4.5 Support programmes for career changers, returners and encore careers</b> – to help facilitate career longevity and encourage the economically inactive to take advantage of opportunities in Bucks.	All SAP partners	2	Med term	Bucks Skills Hub website launched March 2021. BCG “New Year, New Skills” free courses for career changers launch Summer 2021. Flannery Plant Operator Skills Hub proposal supported by BBF and BLEP. Pinewood Skills to Screen programme supported by BLEP to encourage people displaced from aviation sector to new jobs in film and TV.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>1.4.6 Promote subjects which lead to careers in priority sectors</b> – Science, Engineering, Digital, Creative. Explore the feasibility of delivering an online STEAM festival in summer 2021 to promote STEAM pathways and careers.	All SAP partners	3	Med term	Full STEAM ahead event ran in July 2021 and plan for running again in July 2022. NFTS (National Film and Television School) commercials challenge run in autumn term. Cloudy IT Apprentice challenge spring term.	Skills for Jobs White Paper



## 2. A skilled and productive workforce

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>2.1. Ensure businesses have access to the information they need to manage their workforces effectively during the Covid-19 pandemic</b>	<b>2.1.1 Develop a Redundancy Support website</b> – to identify resources and services available in the County to support businesses making redundancies as a result of Covid-19 and provide access to these resources via a single portal that businesses can use as a first port of call. Signposting of services to include: employment initiatives such as Kickstart, HR Support, legal advice and workplace health and well-being.	BBF	5	Ongoing	All resources identified and added to website September 2020. Re-organised with launch of Bucks Skills Hub website in March 2021. Maintained and updated since then. Currently being updated and combined with recruitment pages due to current recruitment difficulties.	Plan for Jobs
	<b>2.1.2 Provide direct business support for businesses affected by impact of Covid-19</b> – including 1-2-1 support from BBF business advisers to support them through the Covid-19 pandemic and for recovery thereafter.	BBF	4	Ongoing	BBF Business Support team engaged in over 62,000 business assists in 2020-21 – an increase of 65% on 2019-20 and paid out over £6.7m in Covid-related grants to over 800 businesses.	Plan for Jobs
	<b>2.1.3 Identify gaps in delivery and seek funding to bridge gaps</b> – where there are significant areas in which existing provision is not meeting an important need, seek funding from government and relevant agencies to provide solutions.	All SAP partners	3	Short term	Funding sought for various projects including Hospitality to Care Redeployment scheme via DWP Flexibility Support Fund. SCIOT Microsoft Accredited Pathways programmes launched in Buckinghamshire, Help to Grow Digital and Digital Boost – national offers, Skill Up Bucks, Building Back Better - Community Renewal Fund Visitor Economy. Apprenticeship Levy Transfer - BC. Funding sought for Westcott, Silverstone and Flannery Plant Operator Training facility.	Plan for Jobs
<b>2.2. Strengthen the talent pipeline for Buckinghamshire's Strategic Growth Sectors and key skills shortage occupations</b>	<b>2.2.1 Support plans to create high-tech teaching and learning facilities at the Westcott Space Innovation Park</b> to educate the next generation of space innovators	BLEP, BSH, WSCB, providers partners	2	Long term	A proposal has been developed for a Westcott Skills Academy by the Satellite Applications Catapult in consultation with BBF as part of the Disruptive Innovation in Space Centre (DISC) proposal to be based at Westcott.	Skills for Jobs White Paper

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>2.2. Strengthen the talent pipeline for Buckinghamshire's Strategic Growth Sectors and key skills shortage occupations</b>	<b>2.2.2 Support innovation at the Silverstone Enterprise Zone through improved links with universities</b> on green technologies such as electric vehicles and clean fuels.	BLEP, BSH	3	Ongoing	Core activity. Contacts now established with a number of key businesses. Activity will be ongoing to build recognition of BBF to provide business and skills support. Audit of Net Zero innovation in Buckinghamshire commissioned by BLEP.  Plans are in development to create a multiversity campus at Silverstone Circuit Enterprise Park to supply the skills needed by the high-performance engineering sector.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.2.3 Support initiatives designed to widen and strengthen the talent pipeline for the creative sector</b> such as the expansion of the National Film and Television School at Beaconsfield and skills activities at Pinewood Studios	BLEP	3	Ongoing	NFTS expansion being re-considered. Head of NFTS to join SAP.  Plans are in development to create an education hub as part of a new Screen Industries Global Growth Hub at Pinewood Studios. The education hub is planned to provide a wide range of training/re-training, vocational, career change and other education provision	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.2.4 Support initiatives to recruit and train people to take up new jobs in the Construction sector</b> , resulting from HS2 activity and the expansion of house building across the County e.g. through the proposed EKFB plant operation training facility, and raise skills for the future.	BBF, BSH, BLEP, Construction Sector Group / Empl	3	Ongoing	Successful bid for LEP Get Building Fund for £3m plant operator training facility from Flannery Plant Hire. Flannery to partner with EKFB, BCG and others to provide new plant operators for major infrastructure project in the County.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.2.5 Promote careers in Health, Social Care and medtech</b> – through close working with the Health and Social Care Academy, support skills development and careers initiatives to encourage more people to take up jobs in the sector.	BLEP, HEE/ BHSCA, BCG	3	Ongoing	Nurse and Social Care Cadet programmes introduced by BHSCA and BCG. LEP funded Research and Innovation Centre opened at Stoke Mandeville.	Skills for Jobs White Paper

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>2.3. Workforce development support for SMEs, start-ups and the self-employed</b>	<b>2.3.1 Create a series of free webinars on key training and development topics</b> – including how to employ Apprentices and how to train and develop your team.	BBF	3	Med term	Demystifying Apprenticeships webinar developed by BBF and delivered 4 times. A Recruitment webinar is currently under development with plans for two new webinars focusing on workforce planning and developing training plans.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.3.2 Identify programmes to support Leadership and Management</b> – including Peer Networking programmes and new national initiatives	BBF, provider partners	4	Med Term	Peer Networking programme delivered in 2020-21 with second phase in 2021-22 currently underway. MD Ngage group networking programme for senior leaders and new mentoring programme through BBF launched.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.3.3 Work closely with BBF Business Advisers</b> to embed business support advice particularly business planning, with that of skills and workforce development plans so that business growth is not hindered by the lack of skilled labour	BBF	4	Ongoing	Core activity. Skills for Business Advice Service launched October 2021.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>2.3.4 Identify specific solutions for start-ups and the self-employed</b> – seek opportunities and funding to provide training and support for self-employed people.	BBF, provider partners	3	Long term	Be Your Own Boss programme currently being delivered which includes a session on setting up a business to be Net Zero. SCIOT Microsoft Accredited Pathways programmes to be made available to all Bucks businesses. BBF also provides a wide range of non-accredited workshops.	Skills for Jobs White Paper

### 3. An inclusive workforce

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>3.1. Ensure residents have access to the information they need to gain access to opportunities and to improve their knowledge and skills for both work and life.</b>	<b>3.1.1 Ensure the Skills Hub website maintains up to date information on all learning opportunities</b> available in the County from all key providers. BSH and BBF should fully resource the continued use, development and promotion of the site as the “go to” resource for careers and training support in Buckinghamshire.	BSH, BBF, provider partners	4	Short term	Core activity, new website launched March 2021, LMI for All API added to website providing up-to-the minute searchable information on all learning opportunities available in the County.	Skills for Jobs White Paper  Education Technology Strategy
<b>3.2. Mobilize potential of current population</b>	<b>3.2.1 Promote opportunities for economically inactive people</b> to update their skills and re-enter the workforce. Reach out directly to hard-to-access groups through networks such as the Buckinghamshire BAME Group, Community Impact Bucks and via disability networks, as well as through the Buckinghamshire Community Boards.	All SAP Partners	3	Medium term	Buckinghamshire Council Employability and Skills Taskforce established. Debt Prevent and Advice Workstream High Wycombe Pilot underway.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>3.2.2 Work with training providers and other partners to develop accessible career change and taster programmes</b> to enable people to change careers or develop encore careers.	BSH, all provider partners	3	Long term	BCG - New Year, New Skills Programme. Consideration currently being given to Bootcamps for Construction and Creative sectors.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
<b>3.3. Attracting and retaining talent</b>	<b>3.3.1 Work with Buckinghamshire Council to promote opportunities</b> created by town centre redevelopments and new affordable housing to attract people to live and work in Bucks.	BBF, BC	3	Ongoing	Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan and High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy providing new employment opportunities, and town centre living opportunities for young people.	Levelling-up agenda
	<b>3.3.2 Ensure the Skills Hub website has up-to-the-minute information on jobs and careers in Bucks.</b>	BSH, BBF	3	Ongoing	Core activity, new website launched March 2021 and maintained up-to-date.	Careers and Enterprise Company strategy
<b>3.4. Promote Skills for Green Growth</b>	<b>3.4.1 Support the development of training in green construction techniques</b> e.g. installation of photovoltaic solar panels, ground source heat pumps, insulation techniques and carbon neutral homes.	Training providers	2	Long term	SAP Roundtable event on this subject to be arranged. Construction Sector Employer Group roundtable also planned.	Net Zero Strategy
	<b>3.4.2 Seek to provide training opportunities for SMEs</b> to demonstrate the practical steps they can take to move towards zero carbon or offset their carbon footprint.	BLEP, BBF,	3	Long term	SAP deep dive research agreed and underway - report to be published in 2022.	Net Zero Strategy

## 4. An informed approach

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>4.1. Maximising the impact of national skills policy on the local economy</b>	<b>4.1.1 Establish a Bucks training provider network</b> – to disseminate good practice, encourage the development of a market for training in Bucks responsive to the needs of Bucks businesses, extend provision, increase resources for skills initiatives, remove duplication in the system and identify gaps in training provision.	BSH, all provider partners	2	Med term	Providers contribute to Construction and Creative Sector Employer Groups. BNU, UoB, BCG, BAL and Brunel are working together to create an employer guide for work experience. Work ongoing to include private training providers.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
<b>4.2. High quality LMI and research</b>	<b>4.2.1 Maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive evidence base on local skills needs</b> to ensure that local skills policy and funding decisions are based on the needs of the local economy.	BLEP/BBF	4	Ongoing	Core activity. Two presentations on the key findings of the 2020 skills analysis have been undertaken. Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory Launched Sept 2021.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>4.2.2 Produce local Labour Market Intelligence</b> for young people, job seekers and career changers, to nudge individuals to consider careers in jobs where local demand is highest. This includes embedding up-to-date LMI within the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website and producing content for the annual Buckinghamshire Skills Show.	BSH/BBF/BLEP	4	Short term	Core activity. Research team are making greater use of tableau (data visualisation package) and PowerBI (interactive data dashboards) to improve accessibility and impact of LMI. Annual LMI for schools presentation published alongside LSR.	Skills for Jobs White Paper

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>4.3. Maintain Sector Employer groups to inform policy, strategy and actions plans and share good practice</b>	<b>4.3.1 Extend the Construction Sector Group</b> – to cover Tier 2 and 3 employers, SME and micro businesses and ensure skills needs of all are met. Work with CITB to explore the establishment of the group as CITB training group. Showcase great examples of employer-led skills development.	BSH, CITB	4	Med term	Core activity. Successful handover to new Chair. New local CITB group established. Employer group new working procedures established.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>4.3.2 Maintain the Creative and Cultural Sector Group</b> – continue the work of the existing group promoting careers and skills in the sector and showcasing great examples of employer-led skills development.	BLEP, BBF	3	Ongoing	Core activity. Successful handover to new Chair. Three meetings held so far in 2021/2. Work still to do to widen membership beyond Film and TV.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>4.3.3 Explore the need for a Digital Skills Partnership</b> and/or work to ensure that the range of local digital training provision (including apprenticeships and T Levels) in Buckinghamshire is meeting the needs of local employers.	BSH/BBF	1	Med term	New digital provision signposted on website including offers from Google Digital Garage and Digital Boost. New offer of free training courses from SCIOT to be promoted to Bucks employers. Waiting for Buckinghamshire Digital Strategy before forming a stakeholder group.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	<b>4.3.4 Maintain a Space Sector Group</b> – for the Wescott Space Cluster to oversee, facilitate and deliver an action plan for training and skills development.	BLEP, WSCB	3	Long term	Satellite Applications Catapult strategy group attended by Heather Dean. New Operational Group formed. Significant progress on Westcott Skills Academy.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
	<b>4.3.5 Maintain a Health and Social Care Sector Group</b> –continue to support the work of the Health and Social Care Academy board in promoting careers and skills in the sector and identifying skills needs and seeking solutions.	BLEP, BBF, HEE/HSCA	3	Ongoing	This role is performed by the Bucks Health and Social Care Academy Board. Significant progress has been made e.g. on Nurse Cadet Programme and others.	Skills for Jobs White Paper
<b>4.4. Update Skills Strategy</b>	<b>4.4.1 Update the Buckinghamshire Skills Strategy</b> – to incorporate latest strategic developments.	BLEP	2	Long term	LEP to progress in 3-4Q 2021/2	Skills for Jobs White Paper

## 5. A digitally able population

Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
<b>5.1. Ensure Buckinghamshire residents are able to develop their digital literacy so they can access the services they need to meet their basic health and well-being needs.</b>	<b>5.1.1 Support the roll-out of the Buckinghamshire Digital Strategy</b> to enable people to gain access to IT facilities and high-speed access to the internet e.g. through the development of community facilities such as libraries and digital cafes.	BLEP, BBF	1	Long term	Awaiting publication of Buckinghamshire Digital Strategy, Due Feb 2022. BBF Hubs now open for members.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	<b>5.1.2 Continue and accelerate the signposting to digital skills providers</b> such as Digital Boost, SCIOT, Google Digital Garage and Microsoft to provide online training courses in key digital skills.	BBF	5	Ongoing	New BSH website launched - all current provision identified; new provision added as it becomes available. SCIOT offer for SMEs launched October 2021.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	<b>5.1.3 Ensure where possible access to digital provision for SEND learners</b> that meets the latest requirements for people with special educational needs, disability and age-related issues	BSH, all provider partners	2	Long term	New BSH website highlights opportunities for SEND learners. SEND Enterprise Co-ordinator appointed.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
<b>5.2. Ensure Buckinghamshire residents have access to education and training programmes enabling them to develop their digital skills in order to take up emerging digital careers</b>	<b>5.2.1. Inspire Bucks residents to develop advanced and specialist digital skills</b> through highlighting local assets such as the University of Buckingham School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence, the Institute of Technology at Bletchley Park and the proposed MK:U in Milton Keynes.	BSH	3	Ongoing	New Skills Hub website launch March 2021 highlights opportunities available in County for higher level learning, careers and jobs. "Careers in Bucks" booklet for young people published March 2021.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	<b>5.2.2 Work closely with all FE, HE and private training providers to ensure programmes in the County meet the requirements for existing and future digital careers.</b> This includes exploring opportunities emerging from the Skills for Jobs White Paper for local digital bootcamps and Institutes of Technology.	BSH	2	Medium term	"Deep dive" research to be undertaken by Research Team in 2021-22.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	<b>5.2.3 Champion the setting up of career change and taster programmes</b> which enable people to develop new careers in the wide range of businesses requiring high level digital skills	BBF, BSH	2	Long term	SCIOT Microsoft Accredited Pathways programmes to be launched in Bucks and promoted by BBF. Bootcamps under consideration by SAP – awaiting details for Wave 3 bidding.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy



Priority	Action	Partners	Stage	Timescale	Progress (Nov 2021)	National Priority Alignment
5.3. Champion the adoption of new technology and development of employee skills amongst small and medium-sized businesses as a lever of growth	5.3.1 Explore the creation of the Digital Skills Partnership or Digital Skills Employer Group in order to involve employers in shaping local digital skills provision and raise awareness amongst residents and local businesses of the importance of keeping up with new technologies.	BBF	1	Long term	Long term project. Discussions with key employers to be initiated.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	5.3.2 Establish networking, peer groups, events and webinars to raise awareness amongst SME businesses in Bucks of the opportunities provided by new technology	BBF	4	Medium term	<p>BBF has hosted a number of networking events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Peer Network groups with 22 events so far 2021-2022</li> <li>• 7 MD Ngage events</li> <li>• 11 Business Leaders Network events</li> <li>• 1 Business Leaders' Dinner</li> <li>• 1 Young Directors' meet</li> </ul> <p>In addition, BBF hosted the Buckinghamshire Business Festival in April 2021 and the Future Tech Summit in November 2021.</p> <p>BBF hosts regular masterclasses and webinars on digital topics including digital marketing, cyber security and sales &amp; marketing automation amongst many.</p> <p>For 2021-22 BBF has introduced "Collaboration Circles" to create a space for the Buckinghamshire business community to share knowledge, drive innovation and change in their organisations.</p>	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy
	5.3.3 Encourage the region's business leaders to become Digital Leaders who can confidently champion the value and investment in workplace digital skills development.	BBF	1	Long term	Discussions with key employers to be initiated to expand the current generic mentoring offer to include Digital Peer mentoring. Future Tech Summit 23rd November 2021, Business Festival in March 2022.	Skills for Jobs White Paper UK Digital Strategy



**2,470 Buckinghamshire  
residents started  
apprenticeships in  
2020/21, an increase  
of 200 from 2019/20**

# Chapter 06.

# Assessment of progress

## Skills Leadership in Buckinghamshire

**The Buckinghamshire SAP and wider economic development activity across Buckinghamshire, benefits from strong cross-organisation working between Buckinghamshire LEP, Buckinghamshire Business First (the Growth Hub) and Buckinghamshire Council.**

The immense impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on the local economy, workforce and learners focused the minds of all involved with the skills agenda in the County. It led to closer collaboration and a greater impetus to work together for a common good.

The Buckinghamshire SAP has strong representation from employers and key stakeholders, meetings are well attended, and the level of debate and discussion demonstrates a high commitment from members.

The first Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report and supporting analysis was published in March 2021 and is available to download from the **[Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website](#)**. The report is based on high quality skills and labour market analysis that meets the standards set out in the DfE Analytical Toolkit.

Events took place in April and May 2021 to launch the report with key local stakeholders. The events were also used to showcase local employer/education collaboration activity that is developing provision which meets the needs of the local economy.

Feedback from the events was positive, and there is evidence that the publication of the report has improved evidence-based decision making and the co-ordination of skills activities across the County. In addition to influencing provision and informing Covid-19 recovery plans (see next section), the report and analysis has been used by school Career Leaders (and in some cases shared with parents), and the local press to report on the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market.

# Impact on local skills provision

Examples of the Buckinghamshire SAP influencing local provision include:

- Evidence has been used to inform Buckinghamshire College Group's T-level offer
- The Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report was used by Buckinghamshire College Group to update their Adult Learning Strategy
- The Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report has been used to shape proposals for a Skills Academy serving Westcott's Space Cluster
- The **Skill Up Bucks programme** is being developed by Adviza to respond to the skills challenges set out in the Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report
- Evidence has been used to inform Buckinghamshire Adult Learning's bid for funding for digital skills workforce training
- Evidence has been used to inform the development of the University of Buckingham's MSc in Applied Business Skills
- Evidence has been used to inform the development of Buckinghamshire's County Deal skills-related propositions

The SAP has also been instrumental in establishing the relationships between Flannery Plant Hire and Bucks College Group which led to a successful bid for funding from the Buckinghamshire LEP Get Building Fund to establish the Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub – see case study in Chapter 7.

## Covid-19 recovery and renewal plans

### The Buckinghamshire Redundancy Taskforce

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub focused efforts on redundancy support. In May 2020, a Redundancy Taskforce was established to co-ordinate the efforts of all the agencies, voluntary organisations and providers seeking to support:

- Individuals who may be facing redundancy.
- Businesses who may have to make redundancies.

Sub-groups were formed to identify resources available and bring them together in a single portal. The sub-groups also considered gaps in provision and immediate actions that needed to be taken. The sub-groups covered:

- Personal Support for Individuals – CV writing, interview preparation and personal support
- Young People – support for Apprentices and school leavers
- Support for Employers – HR Support, Legal advice
- Training and Re-skilling – career change and work taster programmes
- Construction – a key employment growth sector with many new jobs being created
- Health and Social Care – a key employment growth sector with significant vacancies.

The Redundancy Taskforce established close collaborative working between agencies and organisations and set up a redundancy support portal for employers which is hosted by Buckinghamshire Business First and can be accessed through the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website, where further support for individuals can be found.

Buckinghamshire Council has now established an Employability and Skills Taskforce with a view to initiating some key actions to alleviate hardship suffered by Buckinghamshire residents as a direct result of Covid-19. In addition, it is working closely with Jobs-22 and Fedcap to get the DWP Restart scheme up and running.



# Skills Action Plan

## Summary of achievements in key priority areas:

### *The Future Workforce*

Including young people, career seekers and career changers:

- Established the Buckinghamshire Redundancy Taskforce and supported the work of the Buckinghamshire Council Employability and Skills Taskforce (see above)
- Supported the Skills to Screen: Aviation programme. The DWP funded programme run by ScreenSkills, in partnership with Pinewood Studios and Buckinghamshire and Enterprise M3 LEPs, was developed to help workers displaced from the aviation sector and its supply chain apply for potential new roles in the film, television and games sector. 350 people participated in the pilot scheme with over 100 completing the programme (see case study in Chapter 7)
- Supported the development of a new [Buckinghamshire Skills Hub](#) website, providing support for job seekers and career changers of all ages (see below).
- Expanded the Buckinghamshire Careers Hub to cover all mainstream secondary schools in the County, plus the Buckinghamshire College Group, Buckinghamshire UTC and all special schools (see below).
- Expanded and consolidated the [Buckinghamshire Enterprise Adviser](#) network. Buckinghamshire now has 80 Enterprise Adviser volunteers from businesses supporting 46 schools.
- Gained funding, promoted and supported both the virtual and face to face Buckinghamshire Skills Shows to raise awareness amongst young people of the career opportunities within the local economy (see below).
- Produced labour market information (LMI) resources for schools (including presentations, booklets and videos)

### *A Skilled and Productive Workforce*

Programmes to support employers and the existing workforce:

- Invested funding to support skills initiatives within the creative, high-performance engineering, construction, digital and health and social care sectors) including:
  - the Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub (see case study in Chapter 7)
  - the Westcott Skills Academy
- Supported the establishment of the Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy.
- Provided increased support to businesses on training and skills issues through the employment of a dedicated Workforce Skills Manager, working alongside Buckinghamshire Business First Business Advisors.
- Introduced a peer networking and mentoring programmes for business leaders

### *An Inclusive Workforce*

Cross-cutting themes to support the entire population:

- Supported the establishment of Buckinghamshire Council's Employability and Skills Taskforce
- Maintained up-to-the-minute information on job vacancies and apprenticeships on the Bucks Skills Hub website

### *An Informed Approach*

Maintaining up-to-date information on skills needs through research and employer networks:

- Undertook extensive research to develop a solid understanding of the Buckinghamshire labour market, how it has been impacted by Covid-19, and the current and future skill needs of the local economy.
- Steered the development of the 2021 Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report and began the implementation of the Skills Action Plan it contains
- Held two launch sessions for the 2021 Local Skills Report to ensure all stakeholders had a chance to understand and discuss the contents so it could be used by all.
- Undertook research to inform the 2022 Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report
- Initiated research deep dives into engineering skills, digital skills and green skills
- Launched the **Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory** which aims to provide easy access to the latest economic data and insight to support strategy and policy development, project and programme design, and monitoring and evaluation activity across the County.

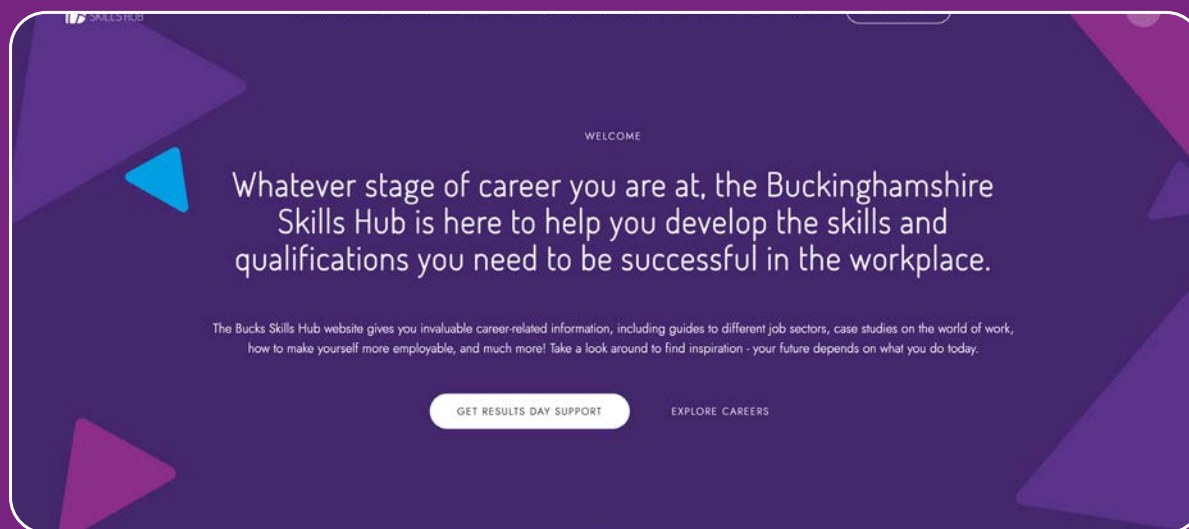
# Bucks Skills Hub Website

In March 2021 Bucks Skills Hub introduced a **new website**, intended to be a “one-stop shop” for all skills and career-related advice in Buckinghamshire. It is designed to inspire, support, and inform students, career seekers, career changers and educators.

Historically Buckinghamshire had various websites intended to do this work representing different organizations and different activities. These included:

- Wannabe Bucks - aimed at students looking for jobs and work placements.
- Opps in Bucks - a communication platform providing information about jobs and careers in Bucks, toolkits for schools and a service matching young people with employers.

These websites worked well for a number of years, but with the introduction of the Bucks Skills Hub, Buckinghamshire now had a number of different brands all working in the same area causing confusion for everyone. Over the last few years, due to the success of the Enterprise Adviser network and the Bucks Skills Show, it is the Bucks Skills Hub brand that has become synonymous with jobs and careers in Buckinghamshire, so it made sense to combine all the websites into a single portal for everything to do with jobs and careers in the County. The requirement for the new website was heightened by Covid-19 related job losses meaning that more people were seeking careers information.



The website highlights job opportunities in key sectors across Buckinghamshire and shows 1,000s of live job vacancies. Career seekers can also find the latest resources and advice on career choices and skills development, as well as redundancy support. The new website is linked closely to the BBF website so that job vacancies listed on the BBF website also appear on the BSH website. It also signposts to all the resources identified by the Buckinghamshire Redundancy Taskforce.



# The Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy

The Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy is a non-profit partnership between Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire NHS Healthcare Trust, Bucks New University, University of Bedfordshire, Health Education England, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Buckinghamshire College Group and the University of Buckingham. Its purpose is to optimise the health and social care workforce's education, training and skills development through partnership-working across systems, ensuring the best possible delivery of care to the population of Buckinghamshire. Further information is available on the Academy's website – [www.bhsca.co.uk](http://www.bhsca.co.uk)



## Buckinghamshire Under 19 Skills Hub

The Under 19s Skills Hub supports schools and colleges to inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work. The Enterprise Coordinator team facilitate the strategic coordination of careers provision across Buckinghamshire to improve opportunities for young people, by working closely with careers leaders in schools and colleges to develop effective employer engagement. The hub works in partnership with The Careers and Enterprise Company to help young people reach their potential and attain the relevant skills and competencies to make them ready for the world of work, and is supported by the Enterprise Adviser volunteer network who help unlock relationships with other local businesses. During 2021 the Hub has had some notable successes:

- **Gatsby Benchmarks** — the average number of benchmarks achieved for Bucks Skills Hub was 5.2 versus a national average of 3.8. (Source: March 2021 LEP Report, The Careers and Enterprise Company). This makes the Bucks Skills Hub one of the top performing skills hubs in the country.
- **Hub Expansion** - In September 2018, Bucks Skills Hub launched one of the first Careers hubs in the country, bringing together a group of 21 secondary schools with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks. Now all 46 schools are now in the Hub.
- **All SEND and PRU schools joined Buckinghamshire Careers Hub** — on 29th September 2021 the Under 19s Hub celebrated the admission of all Bucks SEND schools to the Careers Hub. A SEND community of practice has also been established.



- **The Bucks Skills Hub annual conference** was held on 14th July. It was attended by headteachers, career leaders, enterprise advisers, Cornerstone employers and other stakeholders. Thematic elements explored by participants included: planning and resourcing; quality and impact; a whole school approach to careers; ensuring the best destinations for all students.
- **Project extension 'What's right for me?'** – Careers advice programme funded by Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and delivered by Adviza is a 1-2-1 service for all young people in years 11, 12 and 13.
- **'Full STEAM ahead'** - a live, virtual STEAM event for KS3 held on 7th and 8th July together with STEM NOW and Oxfordshire and Berkshire careers hubs.
- **Teacher CPD** - the Bucks Skills Hub continues to support teachers by offering bespoke training to Careers Leads (CLs) which complements the training offered nationally by CEC. Training has focused on Compass Plus and the new OFSTED guidance around careers and the new Future Skills Questionnaire launched by CEC in September.
- **'Access NFTS' Challenge** - Access NFTS, in conjunction with Bucks Skills Hub and the Careers and Enterprise Company, launched a 2021 competition with 10 schools. The Commercial Challenge allows Year 12 students to learn from professionals in the film and TV industry to develop and display a range of employability, technical, creative and academic skills.
- **Experiences of the workplace** - An experiential approach has been taken to experiences of the workplace through the delivery of virtual workplace experiences. The team worked with schools to trial Speakers4schools, Springpod and Changing Education.
- **The Bucks Skills Showcase** – a virtual event which took place in November involving live Q&A morning assemblies; live Q&A each evening events targeting students and their parents discussing pathways into particular careers or next steps; access to Bucks Skills Show web pages containing a variety of information, video links and interactive activities, e.g. scavenger hunt, quizzes and challenges.
- **The Bucks Skills Show** was held virtually in November 2021, and will be held in person on March 9th and 10th 2022 across two days. Venue to be confirmed but likely to be Westcott Venture Park.
- **Employer visits** - On 19th November 2021, students from Bucks College Group visited Flannery Plant Hire's Operator Skills Hub in the West Midlands to experience first-hand the range of roles within the construction industry whilst on 8th December 2021, students from Bourne End Academy will be visiting Pinewood Studios for a studio tour to discover the range of roles available there.

A black and white photograph of a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, looking down intently at a piece of machinery. The machinery is out of focus, showing various metal parts and a hand. A purple semi-transparent box is overlaid on the lower left of the image, containing white text.

**The Westcott Space  
Cluster 10-year plan is  
expected to create over  
2,000 jobs in the  
coming years**

# Chapter 07.

## Case studies

This section provides three case studies of local skills activities that have been undertaken by employers operating within Buckinghamshire since the establishment of the SAP.

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### **Case Study 1. Flannery Plant Hire: creating partnerships to solve skills supply in the construction industry – The Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub**

Flannery Plant Hire has established a number of partnerships in Buckinghamshire to help set up a plant operator technical training centre which will provide jobs and champion careers in the construction sector for Buckinghamshire residents.

#### **Background**

Flannery Plant Hire was established in 1972 by current Chairman Patrick Flannery. From its original base adjacent to the Oval cricket ground in London, the business has grown rapidly to become one of the largest providers of operated plant in the UK with depots all over the UK and Ireland.

Flannery operates a modern fleet of 3,500 units of which are progressively being replaced with replaced with hybrid and electric vehicles and the majority are low emissions plant. To service this fleet the company has over 50-delivery vehicles and 80 fitters covering sites across the UK 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year.

Thoughtful operation has been at the heart of the Flannery business model with the company having led the sector in areas such as driver training and its focus on eco-friendly low emission operation. Flannery has also been at the forefront of skills development and apprenticeships within the sector. Managing Director Patrick Flannery chaired the Trailblazer Group that developed the new Construction Plant Operative Apprenticeship standard. `

Their approach to developing high skilled employees is reflected in a host of awards, including Danielle Taylor winning apprentice plant operator of the year 2020.

#### **Skills Challenges**

Flannery Plant Hire, along with the construction industry as a whole, is facing a pressing need to recruit new plant operators and upskill existing ones. This has been brought about by a number of converging factors: a shortage of people wanting to enter the sector over the past few years; an aging skilled population with many now nearing retirement; and skilled migrant workers leaving the UK following Brexit. Locally, this has been heightened by the need to substantially increase the size of the workforce for major infrastructure projects now underway in Buckinghamshire.

In February 2021, in partnership with Balfour Beatty, Flannery launched an Operator Skills Hub in Birmingham – a purpose-built facility offering innovative training programmes to inspire young people and upskill current plant operators in the UK. It is now establishing partnerships to do the same in Buckinghamshire.

Anticipating the need to base significant numbers of plant units in the County, Flannery Hire were successful in a bid to Buckinghamshire LEP for a grant under the Getting Building Fund to create a technical training centre to be known as the Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub.

In addition to recruiting new plant operators, the hub will provide Flannery with a facility to retrain existing operators to operate the latest low emissions and GPS-equipped vehicles.

## Partnerships

In order to deliver the training centre Flannery has initiated a number of partnerships:

- **Partnership 1 – Community/education engagement:** Working with social enterprises, local colleges (including Bucks College Group and the Buckinghamshire University Technical College) and schools to ensure a strong focus of local people progressing into employment in the construction industry. Flannery has been a member of the Buckinghamshire Construction Sector Employer Group since 2018, playing an active role in supporting skills, training and apprenticeships in Buckinghamshire and has twice sponsored the Bucks Skills Show.
- **Partnership 2 – Productivity & environmental improvement:** Collaboration with supply chain partners such as JCB and Caterpillar for the adoption of the latest Electric and Hybrid Plant.
- **Partnership 3 – Innovation:** Adoption of Euro Tier 5 low emission and utilization of virtual simulator training equipment along with engagement with Buckinghamshire New University on Data Analytics and Remote Management AI.
- **Partnership 4 – EKFB:** EKFB is delivering the multi-billion-pound middle section of the HS2 project – the part which passes through Buckinghamshire. This section of the HS2 project includes up to £3 billion of plant activity. EKFB will be a major project partner and will be a member of the project board.

The Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub is expected to operate for seven years and train at least 30 apprentices per year as well as upskill 100-200 existing plant operators. In addition, the Hub will directly employ 10 training and management staff. The Hub will also offer work placements, school visits and get involved locally with careers events such as the Bucks Skills Show.

For several years not enough young people have been choosing the construction sector as a career and it will no doubt continue to be a challenge to attract people to the sector for some time to come. The Buckinghamshire Plant Operator Skills Hub, however, will provide a great way to help overcome this. It will provide a great opportunity to showcase careers and highlight the good salaries available in the sector. Skilled plant operators can command salaries of up to £50-60k (£35-40k starting) with good sustainable employment prospects.

This will be the second plant operator skills hub that Flannery has initiated. In developing each, Flannery recognises the importance of strong partnerships with local stakeholders, developing a local talent pipeline of college students, a robust quality assurance process and engagement with local schools and colleges.

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## Case Study 2. Pinewood Studios: Promoting jobs and careers in film and TV production

### Background

Pinewood Studios is recognised as a leading provider of studio and related services to the global film and television industry. The Pinewood Group has enabled storytellers to bring their creations to life on the big and small screen for over 85 years. The organisation employs over 200 people but at any one time there could be thousands of people working at the studios. A large production may have a film crew as big as 1,000, mainly freelancers who move from one production to another.

Located in the south of Buckinghamshire, Pinewood is at the heart of Buckinghamshire's creative sector which employs 19,000 people. It also sits within a wider West of London Screen Cluster. The latest Screen Business report published 13 December 2021 by the BFI, revealed the highest ever return on investment to the UK economy of £13.48 billion (GVA) from the UK government's screen tax reliefs from 2017-2019. The in-depth triennial report demonstrated the tax reliefs generated record-breaking levels of production and jobs; grew local businesses and infrastructure expansion across the UK's nations and England's regions; attracted record levels of inward investment; boosted exports of UK productions and services internationally; and created wider economic benefits for other industries, including tourism and retail.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the creative industries were one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK economy. Buckinghamshire has twice as many creative industry jobs than the national average, many of which are in the film and TV sector.

### Sector growth creating new skills challenges

Pinewood is growing fast. In December 2021, Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Sites Planning Committee granted permission for Pinewood's 'Screen Hub UK' application. The Hub will include the development of an international visitor attraction, as well as additional production space, a business hub and an education facility. The plans will provide a significant social investment to inspire the next generation of filmmakers. The proposals will make a total investment value of c.£450m creating an estimated 3,500 new jobs, adding c.£230m pa into the economy and c.£125m pa into the tourism industry. The scheme comes at a time when the need for investment in the economic recovery has never been higher.

However, there are fears in the sector, and at Pinewood in particular, about where all the people to take up these jobs will be coming from and fears that without substantial numbers of new creative and technical workers, the sector could lose valuable productions to competitors abroad.

The Pinewood Group has a track record of community engagement and supporting young people to break into the industry and reach their potential. The structure of this engagement is already well established with a history of school visits and links to training and education providers, local councils and wider stakeholders. Below are a few examples of how Pinewood Group uses the organisation's influence and impact to benefit Buckinghamshire residents.

### Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers

This programme was intended to enable students to recognise how the things they learn in school will help make them employable. Working closely with a subject teacher expert from the Academies Enterprise Trust, Pinewood created resources for teachers of classes in years 7-10 to use the 'real' context of work in Film & TV jobs to underpin learning. Students were able to develop their capability in key principles of mathematics, through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that they developed a conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. The lesson resources produced were:

- Year 7 – Interpreting Data for a Specific Purpose
- Year 8 – Ratio and Proportion
- Year 9 – Percentages
- Year 10 – Shape, Symmetry, Reflection and Rotation.



## **Understanding SEND: A commitment from Pinewood Studios to diversity and inclusion in Buckinghamshire SEND schools**

Pinewood has committed to expanding its education outreach to all students in Buckinghamshire, including those from SEND schools. Pupils with SEND face significantly greater challenges in learning than most of their peers or have a disability which hinders their access to the teaching and facilities typically found in mainstream education settings.

Working together with a Careers Leader from the Bucks Skills Hub, this initiative seeks to attract and cultivate talent from all backgrounds, to inform and inspire by focusing on what SEND pupils can do, not what they can't, and to educate and simplify by providing learning opportunities to SEND pupils interested in the creative sector.

## **Supporting the Youth Employment Scheme – Kickstart**

Pinewood is one of a number of organisations that took part in the Kickstart gateway administered by the British Film Industry (BFI), employing eight young people. The successful candidates were referred by the local Jobcentre Plus and took up positions with Pinewood Group in a number of departments including Operations, TV Studios and Post Production.

In its role as a Kickstart gateway, the BFI supported is providing wrap-around support and training delivered by The Skills Builder Partnership to help young people settle into the world of work and prepare them for the next step beyond the Kickstart programme, including applying for jobs, CV writing, interview skills, leadership and teamwork.

## **Skills to Screen: Aviation**

Prompted by the plight of workers displaced from the aviation industry at nearby Heathrow Airport jobseekers previously working in the aviation industry were supported by Pinewood Group in an initiative set up to support the transfer of their skills into the screen industries. The programme run by ScreenSkills in partnership with Pinewood and Buckinghamshire and Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnerships, identified individuals to participate in an online introduction to the screen industries and receive support to identify their transferable skills.

Those interested in pursuing a new career in screen then applied for a series of online training events.

The Skills to Screen: Aviation programme was funded by the Department for Work and Pensions following a £150 million boost to the Flexible Support Fund as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs. The training and placements were tailored to the skills of those who came forward, including those from retail, digital and administrative roles as well as aviation staff. Beneficiaries included people with expertise in areas such as accounts, digital and logistics as well as craft and technical skills such as carpentry and construction.

## **Partnership with the National Film & Television School**

The National Film and Television School (NFTS) has partnered with the Pinewood Group to train the next generation of filmmakers to establish a dedicated education and training centre within Screen Hub UK, Pinewood's expansion development.

The ground-breaking NFTS training facility will be the first partnership of its kind globally which will see one of the top film schools in the world and one of the world's leading film studios come together. It is expected new provision will develop and strengthen skills within the UK screen industry's workforce, bringing much needed jobs and spending to the local economy.

NFTS training facilities within Screen Hub UK will be multi-functional and include shooting space to enable practical filmmaking to be taught in addition to office and teaching space, seminar rooms and workshops for hands on training sessions. The NFTS training centre at Pinewood will aim to provide:

- Core craft skills training
- Work experience placements



- Professional short courses for those already working in the screen industry to further develop and upskill their expertise
- Training with Virtual Production led by StoryFutures Academy
- In partnership with the BFI Film Academy, courses for 16-19 year olds from across the UK to develop their specialist filmmaking and craft skills
- Local community access to workspaces for adult learning

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### **Case Study 3. Silverson Machines Ltd. – mechanical engineering apprenticeship scheme**

#### **Background**

For more than 70 years Silverson has specialised in the manufacture of high-quality high shear mixers for processing and manufacturing industries worldwide. Based in Chesham, this seventy-five-year-old family-owned and run company has customers in over 150 countries whose activities are as diverse as food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, lubricating oils and petrochemicals. The company employs 120 people at their factory, including a team of highly skilled manufacturing technicians, and a further 30 located in sales offices around the world.

#### **Skills challenges**

By the mid-2010s with an aging workforce, including a significant number of key skilled employees approaching retirement age, Silverson realised it needed to do something to ensure it had the skills it needed in the future. Skilled workers were becoming increasingly difficult to find however and the company found that young people studying mechanical engineering locally were not being trained in the practical manufacturing skills the company needed to sustain future growth.

#### **Silverson Apprenticeship Scheme**

The company decided to establish its own training programme at its premises in Chesham. The award-winning training scheme was set up in 2014, moving into a dedicated new facility adjoining its main factory in September 2015. The purpose-built training centre cost £2million to set up and is the centrepiece of the Silverson site. The scheme comprises a traditional 5-year apprenticeship in mechanical engineering which combines practical training and study for a Level 3 Diploma in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering. Trainees spend their first year based in this dedicated training facility, learning basic practical engineering skills and being trained in good working practice and Health & Safety. The centre is adjacent to the company's customer experience centre which is used for product demonstrations often involving the apprentices, giving the apprentices experience with customers and giving customers the confidence that Silverson is a company investing in its future. The company pays apprentices the full National Minimum Wage rather than the much lower apprentice wage rate as they believe this is fairer and helps with recruitment and retention of the best candidates for the scheme.

On successful completion of the first year of the programme, apprentices will take up jobs on the factory floor. Here they will spend time on rotation in different departments, including milling and turning, the fitting shop (assembly), welding, inspection and spark erosion. While remaining under the overall guidance of the Apprentice Trainer, they will be working with an assigned mentor on a day-to-day basis.

The programme is structured to provide a broad engineering experience but allows apprentices to specialise in a certain field if they show a particular skill or interest - ultimately providing the company with a highly qualified, skilled and flexible workforce.

Having now been established for over five years, Silverson is seeing real benefits from their investment. They are able to mould apprentices in the specific skills need for their manufacturing processes and they are able to provide training using machinery and equipment not available to many colleges or independent training providers which results in better quality training. Apprentices appreciate the investment made in them by the

company which improves their commitment and enthusiasm and helps make them 'Silverson people'. This provides assurance in the quality, reliability and continuity of production for the future, which matters to both Silverson and its customers.

Silverson still struggles to recruit apprentices with a very low number of applications for their annual intake of 5-6 apprentices. To address this the company is very active in promoting careers in engineering and is pro-active with schools, getting involved with careers evenings, school visits and offering work experience placements. Silverson believes that any company wishing to ensure its own future must offer apprenticeships.

### **Recruiting using Degree Apprenticeships – Zenopa Ltd**

Unsatisfied with some recent graduate recruits, Zenopa Ltd, a recruitment consultancy based in Penn, Buckinghamshire decided to experiment with recruiting school-leavers to see if they could develop internally the talent needed to run a high-performing recruitment agency. The company's training provider recommended a relevant level 3 apprenticeship for these new recruits but it became clear very quickly that the level 3 was too basic and their fledgling recruitment consultants were capable of undertaking a more challenging programme. It was also clear that they needed the broader grounding in business that only a suitable degree-level programme would offer. The answer was a degree apprenticeship. Working with the University of West London the two new apprentices began degree programmes. The company has been so impressed with the results that it now has seventeen degree apprentices amongst its thirty employees.

Managing Director, Mark Denton says their degree apprentices have performed far above expectations and have demonstrated a commitment and enthusiasm which has transformed the company. In addition, he has found that having bright young people in his business who challenge the business and drive change has enabled the company to adapt faster and embrace innovation helping it to maintain a competitive market position. The fact that the scheme is great for the young people too, enabling them to gain experience while getting a degree and not building up a large debt, is a win-win situation.

### **Recruiting an apprentice for the first time – SYLO Beyond HR**


As an HR consultancy, SYLO Beyond HR found the pandemic meant businesses in Buckinghamshire increasingly turned to them for urgent employment advice, which then led to further requests for support for all their on-going people-related matters.

As a small business themselves, SYLO had to think carefully about growing their team in a way that was sustainable, being mindful of costs. They had also always wanted to employ an apprentice and after seeking advice from Buckinghamshire Business First, SYLO decided to take the plunge. The company has now employed Maggie, a CIPD Level 5 HR apprentice and Sharon Smits, their Internal HR Lead at SYLO, sets out the following benefits of doing so:

- We are showing our clients that we practice what we preach regarding the benefits of employing an apprentice
- Passing on our varied experience is fulfilling for the team
- At the end of the two years, we should have a qualified HR Advisor who may join the team permanently
- The majority of the training is paid for by the government
- It has highlighted the need to encourage CPD in our team and we have taken action to implement this.

SYLO Beyond HR have created a "crib sheet" based on their experience and can be contacted on [enquiries@sylobeyondhr.com](mailto:enquiries@sylobeyondhr.com) if you would like further information.

Contact for further information: John Browning, Buckinghamshire Skills Hub ([John.Browning@bucksskillshub.org](mailto:John.Browning@bucksskillshub.org))



Thousands of jobs are expected to be created in the film and TV industry in and around Buckinghamshire over the next few years as the UK production boom continues.



# Chapter 08.

## Looking forward

**Over the last 12 months, the Buckinghamshire SAP, sub-groups and partners have made significant progress, both against the ambition and activities set out in the 2021 Local Skills Report, and in responding to the impact of Covid-19 and long-term skills challenges. However, there is much more to do.**

Significant investment is needed to secure the long-term growth ambitions of the local space, film and TV, high performance engineering and life-science, health and social care sectors, and immediate action is required to address critical skills shortages within the healthcare, social care, construction and film and TV sectors. Without action, services will suffer, and economic growth will stall. This will not only affect the success of the local economy, but also the UK's global ambitions, as opportunities to achieve or maintain world-leading positions will be lost.

As Buckinghamshire is not earmarked as a priority for levelling-up funds, it is vital that we work smartly as a County to ensure the local skills system is working as effectively as possible.

A major focus over the coming years will be the ramping up of green skills provision across the County, ensuring it is made available at an appropriate pace to facilitate the shift to a net zero economy. This will involve a wide range of organisations working together to plan and deliver what is needed at the right time.

By maintaining a real-time labour market and skills evidence base over the last 18 months we have been able to react quickly to rapidly changing labour market conditions and challenges and pivot our activities accordingly. It is vital that we continue to do so over the coming months and years as we remain likely to remain in a period of flux in the short term at least.

Whilst we await (at the time of writing, November 2021) further skills and devolution policy announcements by central government, the Buckinghamshire SAP will continue to co-ordinate local skills activity to ensure maximum benefit of national initiatives for Buckinghamshire residents and employers.

Key messages for providers, employers and government on how to support the skills agenda in Buckinghamshire going forward for the benefit of all, are set out below.

# Key messages

## Key messages for education and training providers

- Continue to foster strong relationships with local employers (including SMEs) and employer groups, and build new relationships where gaps currently exist.
- Continue to take into account local labour market and skills analysis (including the Evidence Annex accompanying this report) when evolving curriculum.
- Work collaboratively with employers and other providers to develop provision that meets the skills needs of Buckinghamshire's growth sectors (in particular construction, high-performance engineering, health and social care, space and film and TV).
- Continue to improve the supply of STEAM (including digital) skills into the local economy.
- Seek to address employer concerns regarding the shortage of engineering training provision within the County.
- Develop curriculum that addresses the growing demand for green skills.
- Provide first-class customer service to employers who wish to engage with local education and training providers in any way.
- Work with employers and employer groups to establish local priorities for Strategic Development Fund investment (note - applies to further education providers only)
- Building on recent successes, work with employers to continue the growth of apprenticeship and T-level provision that meets the needs of the local economy
- Work with employers to explore the potential for Skills Bootcamps within the County
- Utilise the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website

## Key messages for employers and employer groups

- Share and promote good practice in terms of workforce training and development (including the use of apprenticeships).
- Share and promote good practice in terms of recruitment and retention (for example diversifying recruitment practices to widen recruitment nets, fill vacant posts and diversify workforces and reviewing employee benefit offers, including good practice in relation to attracting and retaining older workers).
- Provide opportunities and inspiration for young people (including offering work experience placements, attending the Bucks Skills Show, delivering career talks, offering apprenticeships and internships)
- Share skills needs and challenges with the Buckinghamshire SAP to help maintain a real-time evidence base.
- Seek opportunities to engage with local education and training providers, including schools, further education and higher education institutions.
- Work with education and training providers to shape the County's green skills provision.
- Work with education and training providers to develop conversion courses for those wishing to retrain and enter new sectors.
- Work with further education establishments to establish local priorities for Strategic Development Fund investment as set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper.
- Work with education and training providers to explore the potential for Skills Bootcamps to raise digital and technical skills within the County.
- Utilise the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website
- Hospitality, leisure and tourism sector employers - engage with the local Community Renewal Fund programme to help raise digital skills, green skills and attract economically inactive people into vacancies.

## Key messages for career leads

- Promote the wealth of opportunities available in the Buckinghamshire economy to young people, particularly within sectors experiencing high growth and skills shortages (e.g., construction, health and social care, engineering and film and TV).
- Promote the importance of digital skills to young people.

- Help young people make informed decisions, particularly in relation to apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships).
- Promote opportunities in 'low profile' sectors / occupations such as hospitality, logistics and social care to young people and career changers.
- Utilise the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website.

### Key messages for government

- Significant investment in skills is needed to secure the long-term growth ambitions of Buckinghamshire's space, film and TV, high performance engineering and life-science, health and social care sectors.
- Buckinghamshire has a very different economy to surrounding areas, in terms of industry specialisms and the size of businesses, which needs to be taken into account when considering the geographic scale of Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- Buckinghamshire's leading Employer Representative Body (ERB) is an independent membership organisation, Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF). It has 14,000 members, out of a local business base of 31,500 and hosts the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub (who manage the Buckinghamshire SAP programme) ensuring that employers are already at the heart of the skills agenda within the County.
- BBF regularly meets and works with other local ERBs including local Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Innovate UK, the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN), Innovate Edge, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Catapults, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), ScreenSkills and many others.
- Existing structures within the County will therefore provide an excellent base on which to build to ensure that employers remain at the forefront of the County's skills agenda as Local Skills Improvement Plans are rolled out in the near future.
- Continue to work closely at a local level on employment initiatives, such as Restart, to ensure they help address the mismatch between skills and jobs in the County.

## Growing our evidence base

During 2021, Buckinghamshire LEP has maintained an up-to-date evidence base of labour market and skills trends. This evidence is now shared publicly as soon as it is updated via the newly launched Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory.

In 2021/22, Buckinghamshire LEP are conducting deep dive research into three key areas:

- Green skills
- Digital skills
- Engineering skills

The research involves reviewing existing evidence of skills demand and supply in these three areas and undertaking primary research with local employers and training providers. The findings of these three research projects will be reported in 2022 and will inform the future work of the SAP.

## With thanks

Thank you to all members of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel and employer sub-groups for their input into this report and for their commitment, enthusiasm and openness over the last 12 months. We look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming year.

For more information about the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel, please contact Heather Dean, Head of Skills and Business Support – [heather@bbf.uk.com](mailto:heather@bbf.uk.com)



# Annexes

## Annex A: Evidence Annex

This Annex provides data and intelligence on key aspects of Buckinghamshire's labour market and skills landscape. It has been published as a separate document that can be accessed [here](#).

The majority of indicators presented within the Evidence Annex have been defined by the Department for Education (DfE), to ensure consistency between the Local Skills Reports being produced by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across England.

Buckinghamshire LEP has drawn on local intelligence to provide commentary around these indicators. This local intelligence has been gathered from: Buckinghamshire LEP board members, Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel members, Buckinghamshire Creative Industries Sector Action Group members, Buckinghamshire Construction Sector Employer Group members, Buckinghamshire Space Sector Group members, the Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy, local employers working with the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub on careers initiatives and Buckinghamshire Business First members.

## Annex B: Members of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel (November 2021)

Member	Role and organisation	Type of member
Prof Gavin Brooks (Chair)	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Buckinghamshire New University	Education
Dave Oxley	Software Security Architect, McAfee	Employer (Digital Group Chair)
Mark Wood	COO and Engineering Director, Reaction Engines (representing the Westcott Space Co-ordination Board)	Employer (Space lead)
Paul Skitt	Flannery Plant Hire	Employer (Construction Group Chair)
Martina Porter	Director, All Spring Media	Training Provider (Creative Group Chair, LEP Board Member)
Juliet Anderson	Implementation Director, Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy	Sector representative (Health and Social Care)
Ian Barham	Partnership Director, Buckinghamshire LEP	Buckinghamshire LEP
Heather Dean	Head of Skills and Business Support, Buckinghamshire Business First	Buckinghamshire Business First
Beth Baker	Head of Careers, Employability and Alumni Relations, University of Buckingham	Education
Ian Harper	Director of Apprenticeships, Buckinghamshire New University	Education
Karen Mitchell	Principal and Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire College Group	Education
Jo Meloni	Headteacher, The Misbourne School	Education
Lucy Bowman	Senior Partnership Manager, DWP - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire District	Government Department
Kevin Hctor	Area Lead, Cities and Local Growth, BEIS	Government Department
Cllr Anita Crammer	Cabinet Member for Education, Buckinghamshire Council	Local Authority
Shabnam Ali	Head of Local Economic Growth, Buckinghamshire Council	Local Authority
Katie Higginson	Chief Executive, Community Impact Bucks	Community
Kerry Senatore	Regional Lead, Careers and Enterprise Company	Government Agency
Sally White	Director and Co-Founder, SYLO   Beyond HR	HR Agency
Sue Cross	Regional Manager, Adviza	National Careers Service Provider
Simon James	Director of Education, Buckinghamshire Council	Local Authority
John Wardle	Director, National Film & Television School	Education



**Buckinghamshire has a higher concentration of construction workers than nationally, particularly within the 'construction of buildings' sub-sector**



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