Research Report

Buckinghamshire Business Survey 2016

Prepared for: Buckinghamshire Business First

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Prepared for: Buckinghamshire Business First

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Table of Contents

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) wished to undertake a survey to gather the views of local businesses in relation to the structure of local government, the impact of 'Brexit', exports and broadband.

A total of 800 telephone interviews were undertaken with private businesses in Buckinghamshire in August and September 2016. Responses relate to the site at which the respondent is based.

Survey responses were establishment based; which is to say that they were based on activities and practices at that site only.

1.2 Council services

1.2.1 Use of council services

Half of Buckinghamshire's businesses have used, or had contact with, any of a range of council services in the last 12 months. They are most likely to have had contact with Buckinghamshire Business First (28%), followed by planning (17%) and environmental health (12%).

1.2.2 Satisfaction with council services

Satisfaction with the service received from these council services is highest with regard to library services (88% fairly/very satisfied); building control (81%) and trading standards (80%). It is lowest with regard to contact with the council about economic development (46%).

One in five businesses have been dissatisfied with the service received relating to economic development services (22%) and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (21%).

Two-thirds of respondents that have been in contact with Buckinghamshire Business First (68%) have been satisfied with their experience overall.

- Planning – 56% fairly/very satisfied; 21% fairly/very dissatisfied
- Trading standards – 80%; 3%
- Economic development – 46%; 22%
- Environmental health – 72%; 14%
- Library services – 88%; 2%
- Building control – 81%; 6%
- Adult learning – 69%; 7%
- Protecting the environment – 61%; 13%
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour – 55%; 21%
- Buckinghamshire Business First – 67%; 4%

1.2.3 Satisfaction with environmental council services

In terms of satisfaction with environmental council services, based on those that feel able to rate them, waste collection receives the most positive ratings (61% fairly/very satisfied) while highway maintenance is rated positively by just one in five respondents (20%).

- Waste collection – 61% fairly/very satisfied; 14% fairly/very dissatisfied
- Highway maintenance – 20%; 55%
- Street cleaning – 50%; 18%
- Pavement maintenance – 34%; 31%

1.3 Local government reorganisation

1.3.1 Support for reorganisation

More than half of businesses (55%) support the principle of reorganising local government in Buckinghamshire in order to help sustain the delivery of council services in the future. More than a fifth (22%) strongly supports the principle.

Five per cent oppose it and this proportion increases to 13% of businesses in primary industries and 10% in manufacturing.

From a list of elements that might be involved in developing a new model for local government, the majority of respondents considered any important:

- Providing high quality services – 94%
- Customer service that resolves problems quickly – 94%
- Retaining front line services through greater efficiency – 91%
- Making it easy to contact local government – 90%
- Ensuring that Buckinghamshire is effectively represented at a national level – 89%
- Businesses having a say in decisions that affect local services – 87%
- Having local councillors that are easily accessible – 86%
- Local Government being accountable to local businesses – 85%
- Reducing the cost of delivering services – 81%

1.3.2 Preferred pace of change

The majority of respondents (71%) would prefer an incremental or gradual change in local government, while just one in six (17%) opted for a ‘revolution’ or rapid change. Of the remainder, around half were unsure (7% of all respondents) and half preferred no change (5%).

1.3.3 Local control of spending

Two-thirds of respondents (69%) would like greater control over how central government spend is passed down to a more local level.

Planning is top of the list in terms of an area of spend which respondents would like to be controlled locally (87% of those that would like to see greater local control); followed by transport operation and business support (both 84%); housing (83%) and health and social care (81%). Further education spend is least likely to be selected in this respect (71%).

1.3.4 Views on changes to business rates

Businesses are more likely to opt for a business rates strategy that means the council provides value for money services whilst retaining and improving services for their business and local area, even if it would lead to small increases in business rates; 58% of all respondents.

A quarter (25%) prefer that business rates should be kept to a minimum even if it means that less services are provided for businesses and the local area i.e. cutting front line services.

1.4 Impact of Brexit

Plans to increase or decrease their activity in various areas amongst businesses within Buckinghamshire are as follows:

- Client base (the number of customers) – 65% increase; 5% decrease
- Online presence – 47%; 3%
- Investment in marketing/advertising – 38%; 6%
- Investment in equipment/machinery – 32%; 7%
- Staffing levels – 29%; 3%
- Research and development activity – 28%; 3%
- Number of premises/branches – 10%; 2%
- Investment in training – 37%; 3%
- Exporting (where export) – 26%; 6%
- Importing (where import) – 17%; 7%
- Euro currency bank accounts (where applicable) – 8%; 5%

There has been little change in plans following the EU referendum and the prospect of the UK exiting the EU. At most, around one in ten businesses plan to increase investment in marketing and advertising (9%), while fewer (7%) plan to decrease their client base.

1.5 Markets and exporting

In terms of the markets served by businesses in Buckinghamshire, one in seven (14%) are currently wholly dependent on sales within the county. A quarter of businesses reported some overseas sales (26%). The mean shares of sales across geographic areas are as follows:

- Buckinghamshire – 46%
- Neighbouring counties or towns – 24%
- Rest of the UK – 21%
- Within the EU (exc.UK) – 4%
- Outside the EU – 5%

1.5.1 Help with exporting

One in ten businesses (10%) indicated that they would like some help to export. This increases to 21% of those already reporting a level of exports.

1.6 Broadband

1.6.1 Broadband availability

Ninety-five per cent of businesses in Buckinghamshire have broadband at their site. This proportion is highest in Chiltern (98%) and lowest in Aylesbury Vale (93%).

Of those able to provide an estimate, 43% of businesses with broadband have a superfast connection; 42% have a standard connection and 15% have slow broadband.

Three-quarters of businesses (76%) consider their broadband speed to be sufficient for their business needs; a quarter (24%) does not. There has been no change in this respect since 2014.

While 92% of businesses with a superfast broadband connection are satisfied with their broadband speed, this proportion reduces to 77% of those with a standard connection and to only 22% of those with a slow connection.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) wished to undertake a survey to gather the views of local businesses in relation to the structure of local government, the impact of 'Brexit', exports and broadband.

2.2 Method

A total of 800 telephone interviews were undertaken with private businesses in Buckinghamshire. Fieldwork took place in August and September 2016.

There are c28,000 employing establishments in Buckinghamshire (source: Inter-Departmental Business Register/IDBR). The survey sample was restricted to private sector businesses but included sole traders as well as businesses with employees. Survey responses were establishment based; which is to say that they were based on activities and practices at that site only.

To inform the distribution of the sample by size and sector, and by geography, data from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) covering Great Britain was used. The distribution of businesses on this basis is included in Appendix 2: Technical Report.

In order to ensure robust analysis was possible in the larger businesses size bands, businesses with 25 or more employees were over-sampled relative to their prevalence in the business population.

The distribution of the achieved sample by size, sector and geography can also be found in Appendix 2.

Population estimates from IDBR as outlined in Appendix 2 have been used as the basis for the weighting scheme as they represent the most reliable estimates available. These have the effect of making the results representative of the number of businesses in specific size bands, sectors and districts, such that a small business' views are worth the same as a large business' views. This means that the results for larger businesses are weighted down in terms of the number of employees they represent.

2.3 Report contents

This report contains a written summary of the full data set.

Graphs and tables are used throughout the report to assist explanation and analysis. Although occasional anomalies appear due to 'rounding' differences, these are never more than +/-1%. These occur where, for example, rating scales have been added to calculate proportions of respondents who are satisfied at all (i.e. either very or fairly satisfied).

Sample bases in graphs and tables are the unweighted sample sizes (in order to be able to calculate confidence intervals). The data itself is weighted data, unless specified otherwise.

Data has been analysed by these sub groups where appropriate to the question and also where sub groups show a statistically significant difference (to a 95% confidence level) in response. A full list of sub groups used in the data report can be found in Appendix 2.

A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

2.4 About Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire is in the South East region of England and has a resident population of approximately 505,300 (Census, 2011) and covers an area of 156,495 hectares. As part of the South East it enjoys some of the strongest economic growth in Britain. In terms of the local economy, Buckinghamshire is particularly strong in terms of business start-ups and the growth of small businesses. Buckinghamshire has a high quality natural environment, with much of the county sitting within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Metropolitan Green Belt.

There are four districts in Buckinghamshire. Aylesbury Vale is a large area of mainly rural landscape in the northern half of Buckinghamshire. Chiltern lies to the East of the County and contains the Chiltern Hills, which it is named after. South Bucks lies in the southern tip of the County and Wycombe lies to the South West of the County.

Currently the county has some 28,000 businesses (IDBR, March 2015) and although this is increasing, the total number is still below the pre-recession level. The county has the highest proportion of very small companies in Great Britain with about 78% employing fewer than five people.

It is a central, strategic location with good export links provided by the M4 corridor, close proximity to London and its airports, particularly Heathrow. The county has a number of specialist sectors including high performance engineering centred on Silverstone, assistive technologies associated with the spinal injuries specialisation of Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the creative industries clustering around Pinewood Studios.

Unemployment is lower in Buckinghamshire than nationally and evidence shows that Buckinghamshire has fared better during the recession than both the South East and the country as a whole. The local workforce is more highly skilled than the average and earnings for Buckinghamshire residents are higher than nationally too.

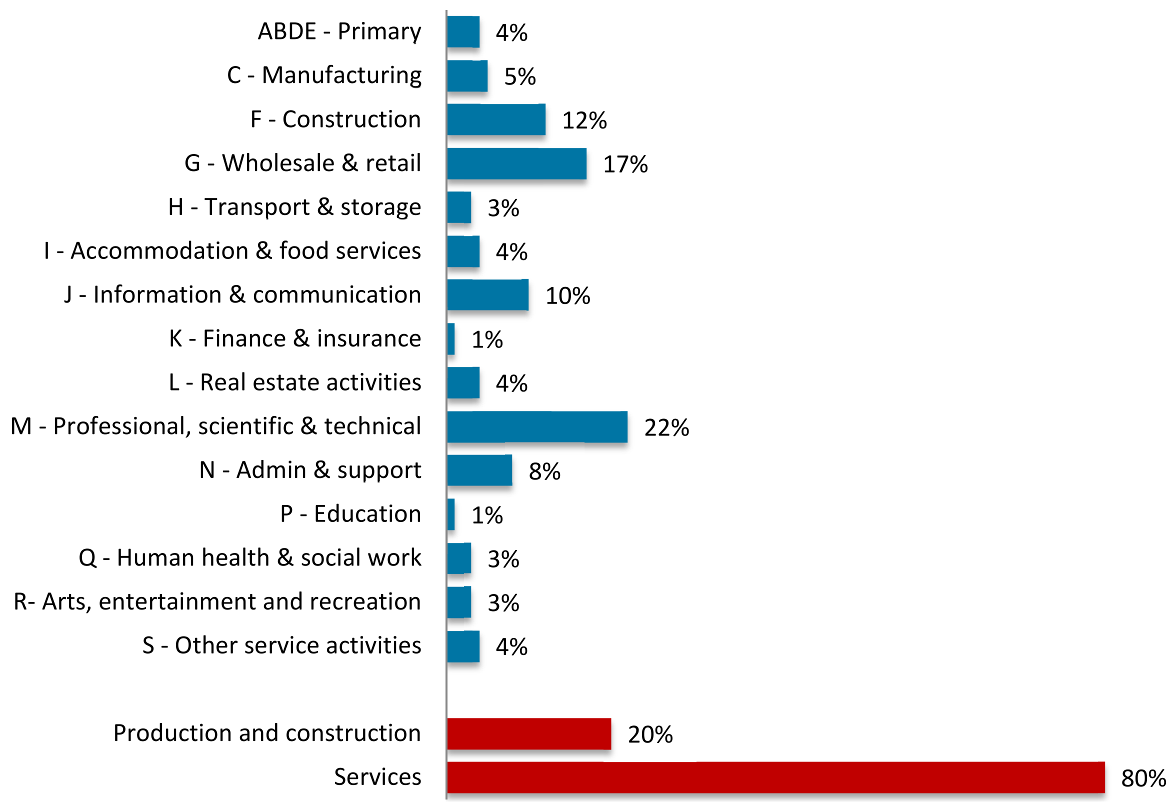
3 Business Profile

3.1 Industry sector

The following graph shows the weighted breakdown of businesses by industry sector (Standard Industrial Classification, 2007). It also shows the distribution across production and services and the specialist/boosted sectors.

The biggest sectors in Buckinghamshire are professional/scientific/technical industries and the wholesale/retail trade. The ratio of production to services is approximately 1:4.

Figure 1: Standard Industrial Classification, grouped sectors and boost sectors (all businesses)



A2/A3, unweighted base=800

The table below shows the (weighted) number of employees for each business overall and by industry sector.

3.2 Size of business

Overall, four in ten businesses have 1 employee (the respondent) and half have 2-9 employees at that site. This leaves about one in ten businesses with 10+ employees. Those sectors with the highest proportions of employees include human health/social work (33% with 10+ employees), accommodation/food services (26%) and manufacturing (21%).

Businesses with 1 employee are more likely to be found than average in professional/scientific/technical and transport/information/communications sectors.

Figure 2: Number of employees by sector (all businesses)

	Total	ABDE - Primary	C - Manufacturing	F - Construction	G/I - Wholesale/ Retail/ Catering	H/J - Transport/ Information & comms	K/L/N - Finance/ Real estate/ Admin	M - Professional, scientific & technical	P/Q - Education/ Health	R/S - Arts, recreation & other services
1 employee	41%	31%	*30%*	43%	*24%*	**54%**	40%	**56%**	*26%*	39%
2-9 employees	49%	64%	49%	51%	**58%**	*39%*	52%	*39%*	47%	53%
10-24 employees	7%	3%	**12%**	4%	**12%**	4%	6%	*3%*	**16%**	4%
25-49 employees	2%	1%	**6%**	*%	**4%**	2%	0%	1%	4%	4%
50-99 employees	1%	*%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%
100+ employees	1%	*%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	*%	**4%**	0%
Unweighted bases	800	31	84	48	171	89	75	190	64	48

A4 **% denotes less than 0.5%* *Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...*

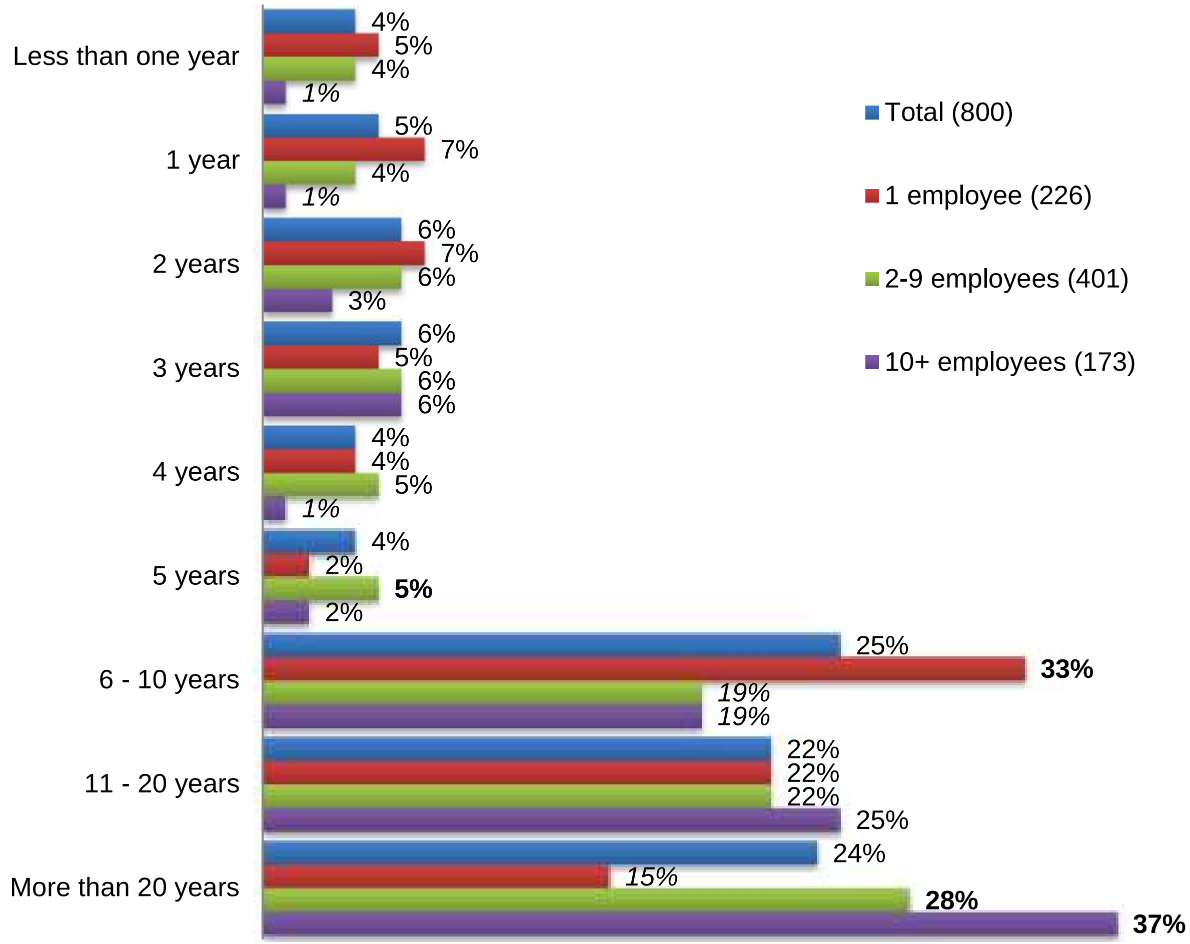
3.3 Age of business

The graph below shows the length businesses have been trading from that site, both overall and by size band.

Overall, a quarter of businesses (24%) have been trading from that site for more than 20 years. Just over a fifth (22%) has been trading there for 11-20 years and a quarter (25%) for 6-10 years. A fifth (21%) has been trading for less than 4 years, with around one in ten of all businesses trading for up to and including a year (9%), increasing to 12% of businesses with just one employee.

The proportion of all businesses that have been established for at least 20 years increases with the size of business, from 15% of businesses with one employee to 28% of businesses with between 2 and 9 employees and 37% of businesses with 10 or more employees.

Figure 3: Length trading at the business location by size (all businesses)



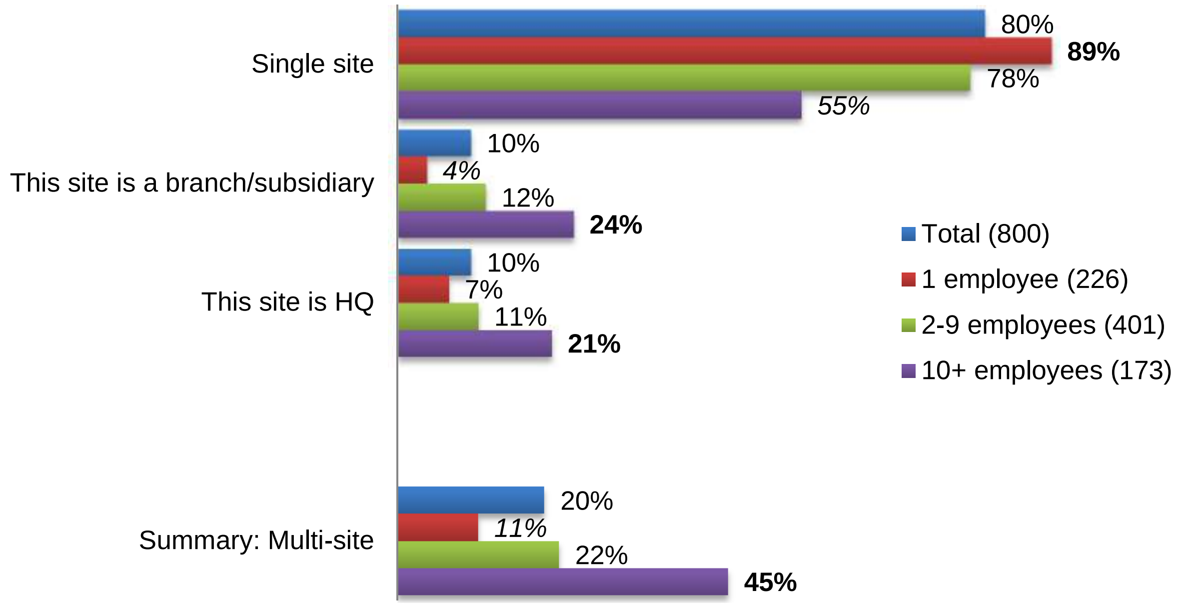
A5, unweighted bases shown in brackets
Excludes 'don't know' responses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

3.4 Number of sites

Eight in ten businesses are located at a single site. One in ten is a branch of the company and one in ten are headquarters. This varies by size, with smaller businesses much more likely than average to be single site.

Figure 4: Number of sites by size (all businesses)



A6, unweighted bases shown in brackets

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

Single site businesses are also more likely than average to be found in construction (92%), primary (87%) and professional/scientific/technical sectors (86%). Multi-site branches are more likely to be found in finance/real estate/administration (35%) and education/health (32%).

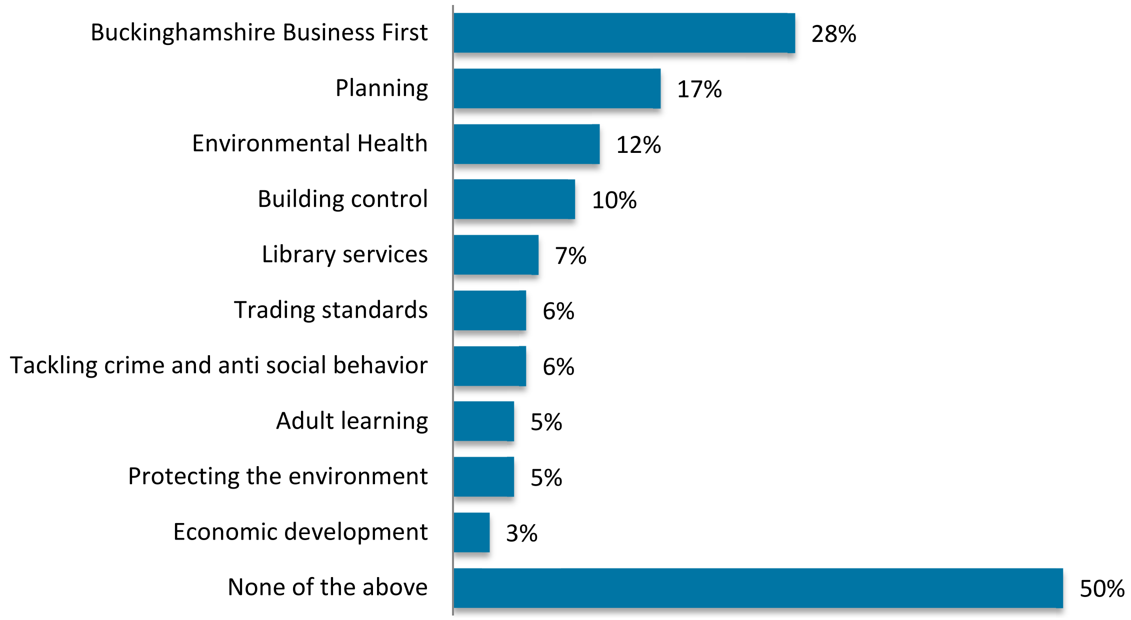
4 Council services

4.1 Use of Council services

Respondents were asked if their business has used or had contact with any of a range of council services in the last 12 months.

Half reported that their business had used or had contact with any in the last 12 months (50%). They were most likely to have reported usage of/contact with Buckinghamshire Business First (28%).

Figure 5: Council services used or contacted by businesses (all businesses)

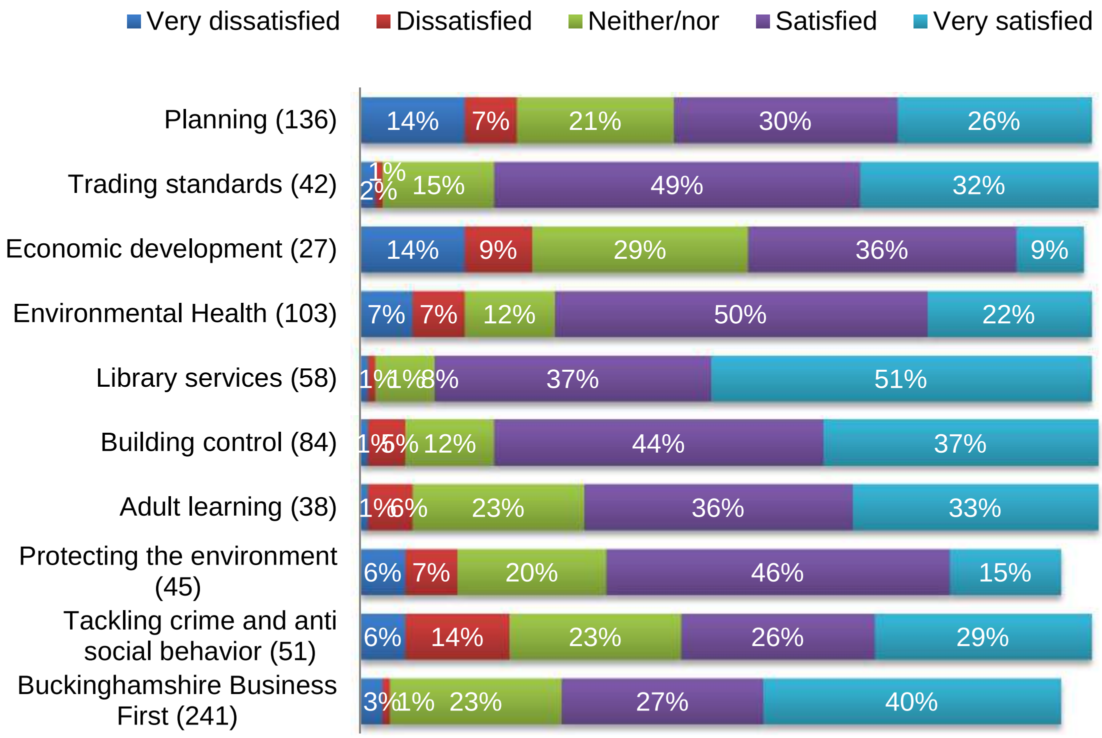


B1, unweighted base = 800

Businesses within primary industry sectors are most likely to have used or been in contact with any of the council services (74% have used any). They are particularly likely to have been in contact with planning services (43%), while a third have contacted the council with regard to environmental health (33%); tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (31%) and protecting the environment (30%).

Construction firms are significantly more likely than average to have contacted the council regarding planning (28%) and building control (28%), while more than a fifth of businesses in wholesale, retail and catering have contacted the council regarding environmental health (22%). Use of services provided by Buckinghamshire Business First is most common within the professional, scientific and technical (43%) and education/health sectors (50%).

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Council services used or contacted (all businesses)



B2, unweighted bases in brackets

Satisfaction levels are particularly high with regard to library services (88% very/fairly satisfied, including 51% that are very satisfied); building control (81%, 37% respectively); and trading standards (80%; 32% respectively).

Satisfaction is lowest with regard to contact with the council about economic development (46% very/fairly satisfied; 9% very satisfied). Just over a fifth of respondents that have used economic development services (22%) have been dissatisfied. A similar proportion of respondents that have been in contact with the council re: tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (21%) have been dissatisfied in this area.

Two-thirds of respondents who report that their business has been in contact with Buckinghamshire Business First, or BBF, (68%) have been satisfied with their experience overall, including 40% that have been very satisfied. Satisfaction with BBF is highest amongst businesses in South Bucks (78% satisfied; 50% very satisfied), while dissatisfaction is higher than average amongst businesses in Chiltern (12% dissatisfied; 10% very dissatisfied).

Table 4: Satisfaction with the experience of using Buckinghamshire Business First services, by district (where have used or been in contact with BBF)

	Total	Aylesbury Vale	Chiltern	South Bucks	Wycombe
Very satisfied	40%	39%	40%	50%	40%
Satisfied	27%	25%	28%	28%	29%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	23%	24%	20%	19%	26%
Dissatisfied	1%	2%	3%	0%	0%
Very dissatisfied	3%	1%	**10%**	0%	0%
Don't know	5%	8%	1%	3%	5%
Summary: Satisfied	68%	65%	67%	78%	69%
Summary: Dissatisfied	4%	3%	**12%**	0%	0%
Unweighted bases	*241*	*90*	*55*	*21*	*75*

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

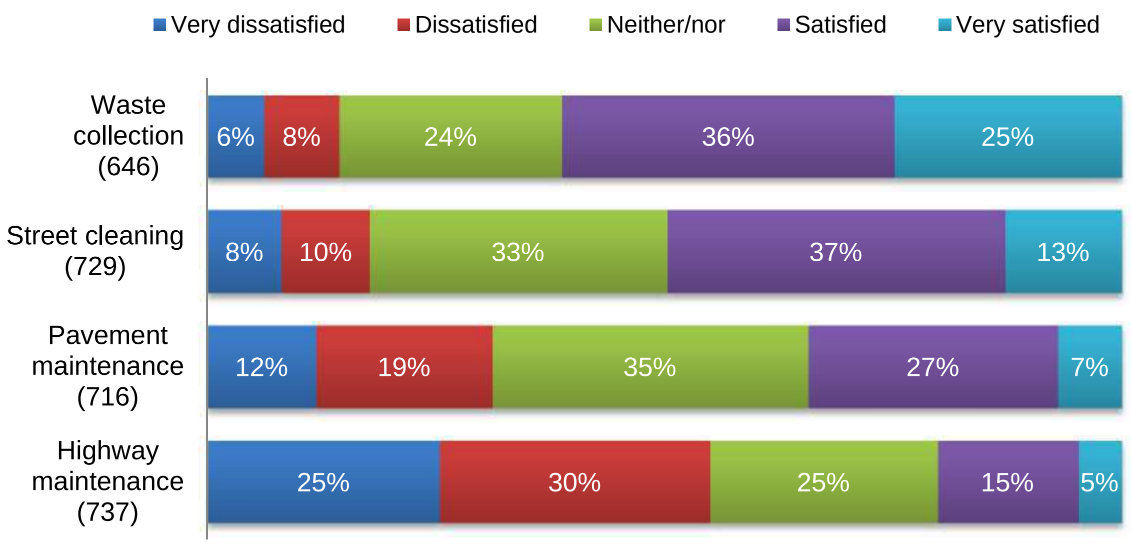
Satisfaction with BBF is slightly higher amongst businesses with employees than those without (71%; 64% respectively).

4.2 Satisfaction with environmental council services

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with council services relating to their waste collection, highway and pavement maintenance and street cleaning.

Some respondents did not feel able to provide a rating. This ranged from 8% of respondents with regard to highway maintenance up to 18% of respondents with regard to waste collection. This probably reflects the fact that not all respondents live locally – travelling to their businesses from outside the areas - and therefore have little direct experience of these council services. Thus, based on where respondents felt able to provide a response, they are most likely to be satisfied with waste collection (61%) and least likely to be satisfied with highway maintenance (20%).

Figure 8: Satisfaction with environmental council services (where provided a response)



B3, unweighted bases in brackets

More than half the respondents providing a rating (55%; 92% of all provided a rating) are dissatisfied with highway maintenance. This proportion increases to 67% within the district of Chiltern. A third are dissatisfied with pavement maintenance (31%) and the extent of dissatisfaction is similar across the districts. The table below which highlights significant differences, shows greatest dissatisfaction with waste collection in South Bucks (28%), compared with just 8% in Aylesbury Vale.

Table 9: Satisfaction with environmental council services, by district (where provided a response)

		Total	Aylesbury Vale	Chiltern	South Bucks	Wycombe
Waste collection	Satisfied	61%	**70%**	63%	52%	*55%*
	Dissatisfied	14%	*8%*	11%	**28%**	18%
Unweighted bases		*646*	*232*	*132*	*81*	*201*
Highway maintenance	Satisfied	20%	21%	16%	22%	21%
	Dissatisfied	55%	59%	**67%**	47%	*47%*
Unweighted bases		*737*	*243*	*155*	*93*	*246*
Street cleaning	Satisfied	50%	46%	**57%**	56%	46%
	Dissatisfied	18%	19%	15%	21%	17%
Unweighted bases		*729*	*236*	*155*	*93*	*245*
Pavement maintenance	Satisfied	34%	32%	32%	35%	37%
	Dissatisfied	31%	33%	31%	30%	30%
Unweighted bases		*716*	*228*	*153*	*93*	*242*

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

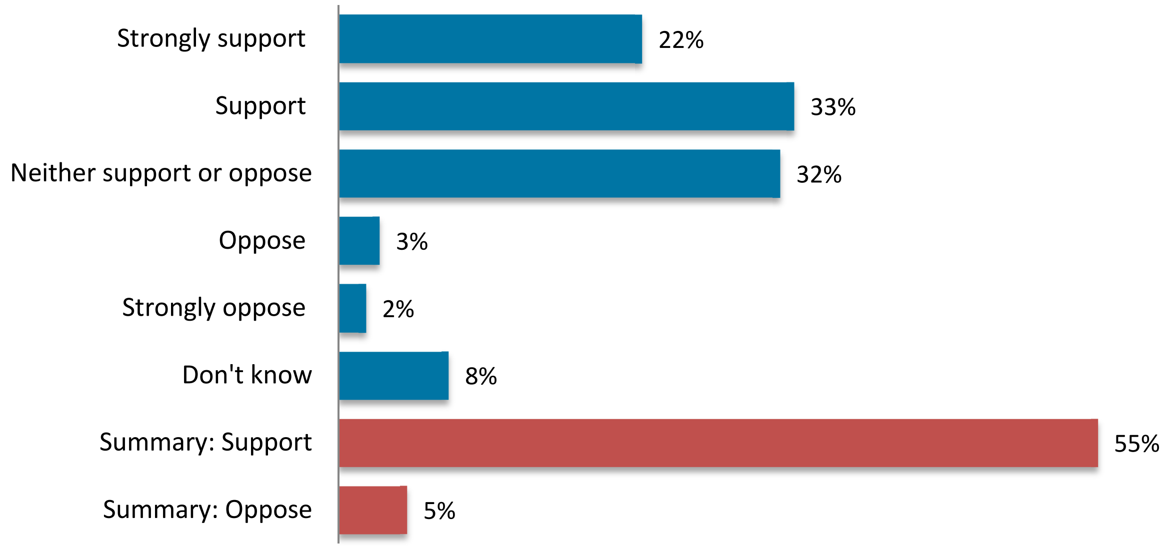
5 Local Government Reorganisation

An assessment of the financial case for unitary government in Buckinghamshire has been undertaken which was crowd funded by the local business community. This section presents views on the proposed reorganisation and preferred shape of local government in Buckinghamshire.

5.1 Support for local government reorganisation

When asked if they support or oppose the principle of reorganising local government in Buckinghamshire in order to help sustain the delivery of council services in the future, 55% of respondents were in favour and 5% were not.

Figure 10: Extent of support for the principle of local government reorganisation (all businesses)



C1, unweighted base=800

More than one in five strongly supports the principle (22%), while those that strongly oppose it are a very small minority (2%).

Support for reorganising local government varies little by district, although the proportion that are opposed is higher than average in Chiltern (8%). There is also little variation by business size, while, by industry, support is greatest within wholesale/retail and catering (61%) and lowest in primary industries (44%) and transport, information/communications (45%).

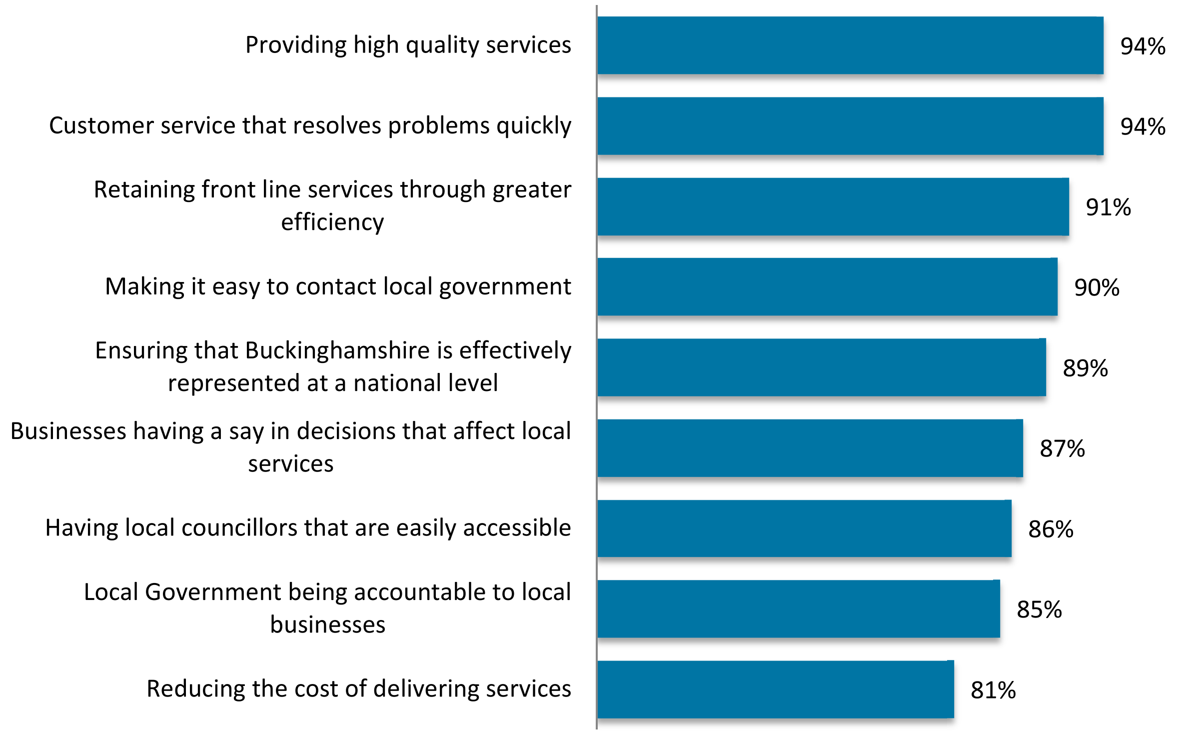
Opposition is higher than average within primary industries (13% oppose), manufacturing (10%) and education/health (8%).

5.2 Elements considered important in developing a new local government model

Respondents were read out a list of elements that might have a role in developing a new model for local government in Buckinghamshire and asked which they might think is important.

More than four-fifths of respondents considered any of the elements important. The elements equally most likely to be considered important were providing high quality services and customer service that resolves problems quickly (both 94%). Least likely to be considered important was reducing the cost of delivering services (81%).

Figure 11: Elements considered important in developing a new model for local government in Buckinghamshire – prompted, multiple response (all businesses)



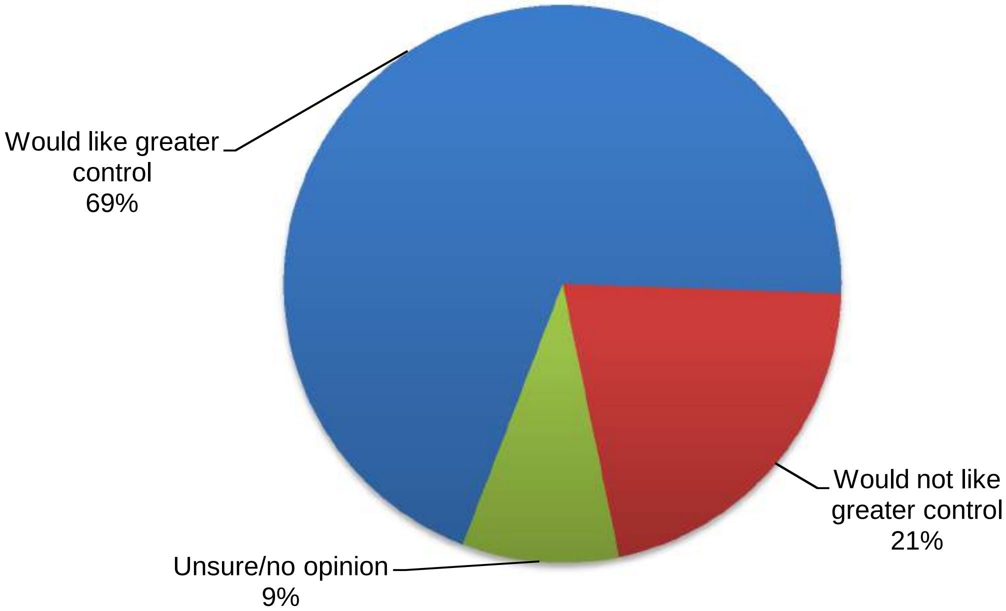
C2, unweighted base = 800

5.3 Control over central government spend

Two-thirds of respondents (69%) would like greater control over how central government spend is passed down to a more local level.

This proportion is slightly higher than average amongst businesses without employees (71%); businesses in Aylesbury Vale (73%) and South Bucks (71%); businesses within primary industries (83%) and construction (77%).

Figure 13: Views on whether there should be greater control over how central government spend is passed down to a local level (all businesses)



C4, unweighted base = 800

5.4 Views on changes to business rates

When asked how they would prefer the level at which local business rates to be set, respondents were most likely to opt for the option that might involve small increases. More than half (58%) agreed that the council should provide value for money services, whilst retaining and improving services for their business and local area, even if this means that there are small increases in business rates.

Most of the remainder (25% of all businesses) preferred that business rates should be kept to a minimum, even if this means that less services are provided for businesses and the local area, cutting front line services for businesses and local people.

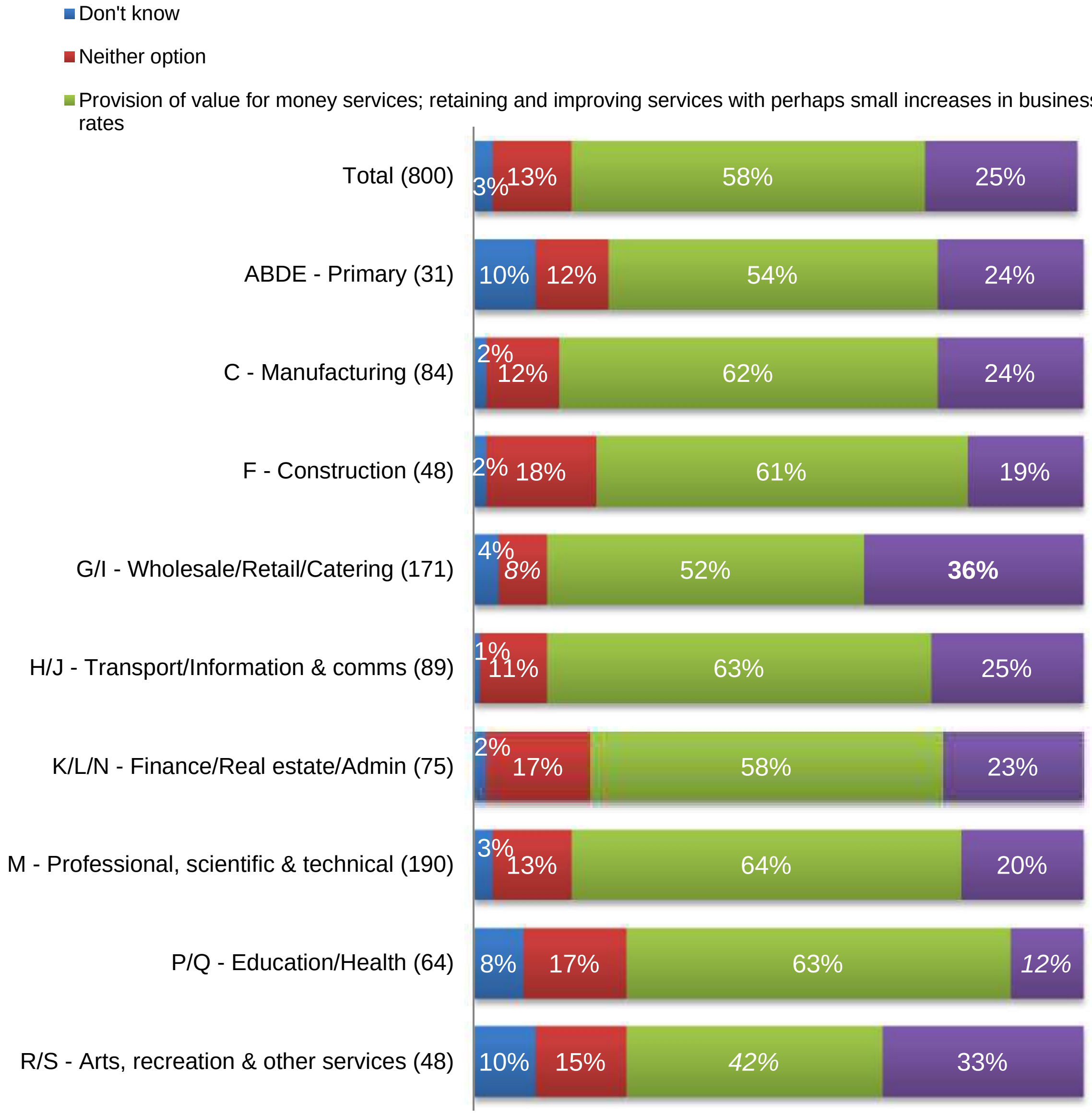
One in eight respondents (13%) did not choose either of the options – suggesting that they preferred an alternative third option; while 3% did not know which to choose.

Respondents within the wholesale/retail and catering sector are significantly more likely than average to prefer business rates to be kept to a minimum (36%), while those in the arts, recreation and other services sector are slightly more likely to prefer this option (33%).

Respondents in the service sectors of professional, scientific and technical (64%), education and health (63%) and transport, information and communications (63%) are more in favour of focusing on the retention and improvement of services even if this means a small increase in rates. Manufacturers are also more likely than average to opt for this (62%). Respondents in construction businesses are more likely than average to say neither (18%), as are those in education and health organisations (17%).

Variations in views by sector are summarised in the figure that follows. There is little difference by district or business size.

Figure 15: Preferred options regarding business rates and local authority spend, by sector (all respondents)



C6, unweighted bases in parentheses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

6 Impact of Brexit

On 23rd June 2016, the UK electorate voted in favour of exiting the European Union. At the time of this survey action had yet to be taken by the UK Government to trigger Article 50 to put into motion the exiting process and renegotiation of new trading relationships with EU members.

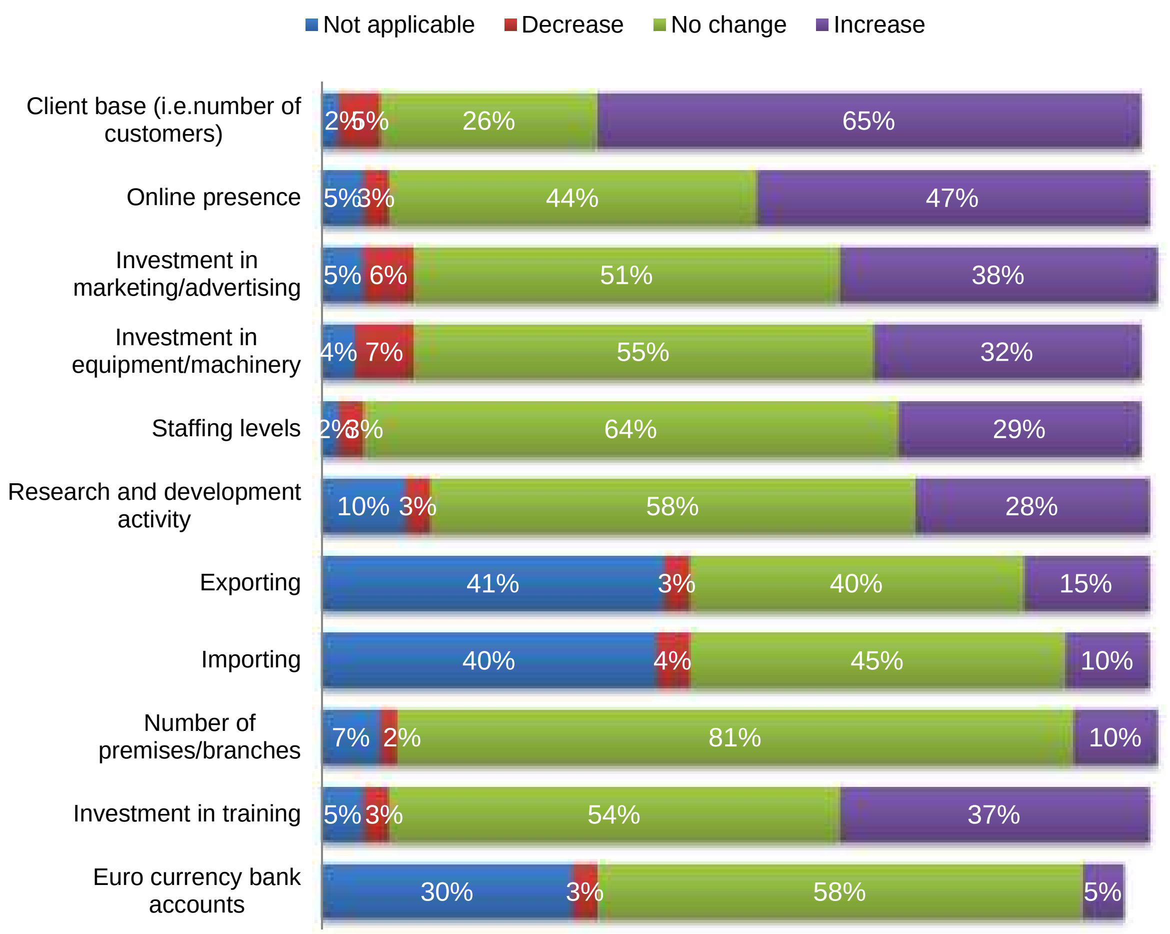
Respondents were asked about their business' plans in a range of trading and investment areas and then asked if these plans had been altered following the EU referendum result.

6.1 Business plans

Respondents were asked whether their businesses plan to increase or decrease their activity in a number of areas in the next 12 months.

Their responses are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 16: Whether businesses plan to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of activity in specified areas of trading and investment in the next 12 months (all respondents)



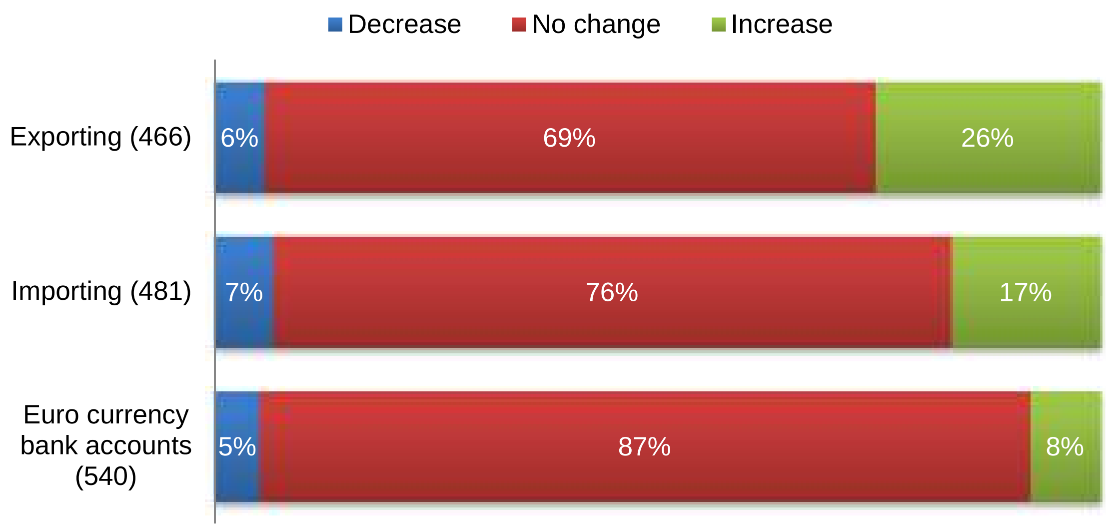
D1, unweighted base = 800

Around two-thirds of respondents (65%) report that their business plans to increase the number of its customers in the next 12 months. Next most likely in terms of business expansion is increasing an online presence, planned by 47% of businesses.

Very few businesses have plans to reduce their activity in any area. There are activities in which some businesses are not currently involved and do not have plans to move into. Exporting and importing are areas in which two-fifths of businesses are not involved (41% and 40% respectively). A significant minority of businesses (30%) do not currently have Euro currency bank accounts.

As Figure 17 shows, of those whose businesses are involved in or able to answer regarding exporting, importing and Euro currency bank accounts, the majority do not plan to change their level of activity, but a quarter (26%) plan to increase their level of exports, while one in six (17%) plan to increase their level of imports.

Figure 17: Whether businesses plan to increase, decrease or maintain current levels of activity with regard to exports, imports and Euro currency bank accounts in the next 12 months (where provided a response)



D1, unweighted bases in parentheses

Plans to increase the level of activity in any area increase with business size, while plans to curb activity in some areas are slightly more apparent than average in smaller businesses. This is highlighted in Table 18.

Table 18: Whether businesses plan to increase or decrease their current levels of activity in specified areas of trading and investment in the next 12 months, by business size (all respondents/where provided a response)

			Business size (at that site)		
		Total	**1 employee**	**2-9 employees**	**10+ employees**
Client base (i.e.number of customers)	Increase	65%	61%	65%	**82%**
	Decrease	5%	7%	5%	*0%*
Online presence	Increase	47%	42%	47%	**62%**
	Decrease	3%	5%	2%	*0%*
Investment in marketing/ advertising	Increase	38%	*32%*	39%	**53%**
	Decrease	6%	8%	4%	*1%*
Investment in equipment/ machinery	Increase	32%	*22%*	**36%**	**49%**
	Decrease	7%	10%	7%	*1%*
Staffing levels	Increase	29%	*17%*	**33%**	**54%**
	Decrease	3%	2%	3%	4%
Research and development activity	Increase	28%	29%	27%	29%
	Decrease	3%	4%	3%	1%
Number of premises/branches	Increase	10%	*4%*	12%	**21%**
	Decrease	2%	3%	1%	1%
Investment in training	Increase	37%	*26%*	**41%**	**58%**
	Decrease	3%	**6%**	*1%*	*0%*
Unweighted bases (all respondents)		*800*	*226*	*401*	*173*
Exporting	Increase	26%	23%	26%	31%
	Decrease	6%	10%	2%	2%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and provided a response)		*466*	*128*	*233*	*104*
Importing	Increase	17%	*11%*	19%	**30%**
	Decrease	7%	**11%**	*4%*	4%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and provided a response)		*481*	*124*	*246*	*110*
Euro currency bank accounts	Increase	8%	7%	8%	7%
	Decrease	5%	8%	4%	2%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and provided a response)		*540*	*143*	*275*	*121*

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

There are sector variations in terms of the propensity to have plans for businesses to increase their activity in these areas. Businesses in the transport/information and communications sector are more likely than those in other sectors to plan to increase their client base, online presence and investment in marketing and advertising, as well as, for some, exporting.

Manufacturers are also more likely than average to plan to increase sales and marketing and most likely to be planning to increase levels of exporting and importing.

Investment in training is most likely to increase within the education and health sector.

Table 19: Whether businesses plan <u>to increase</u> their current levels of activity in specified areas of trading and investment in the next 12 months, by sector (all respondents/where provided a response)

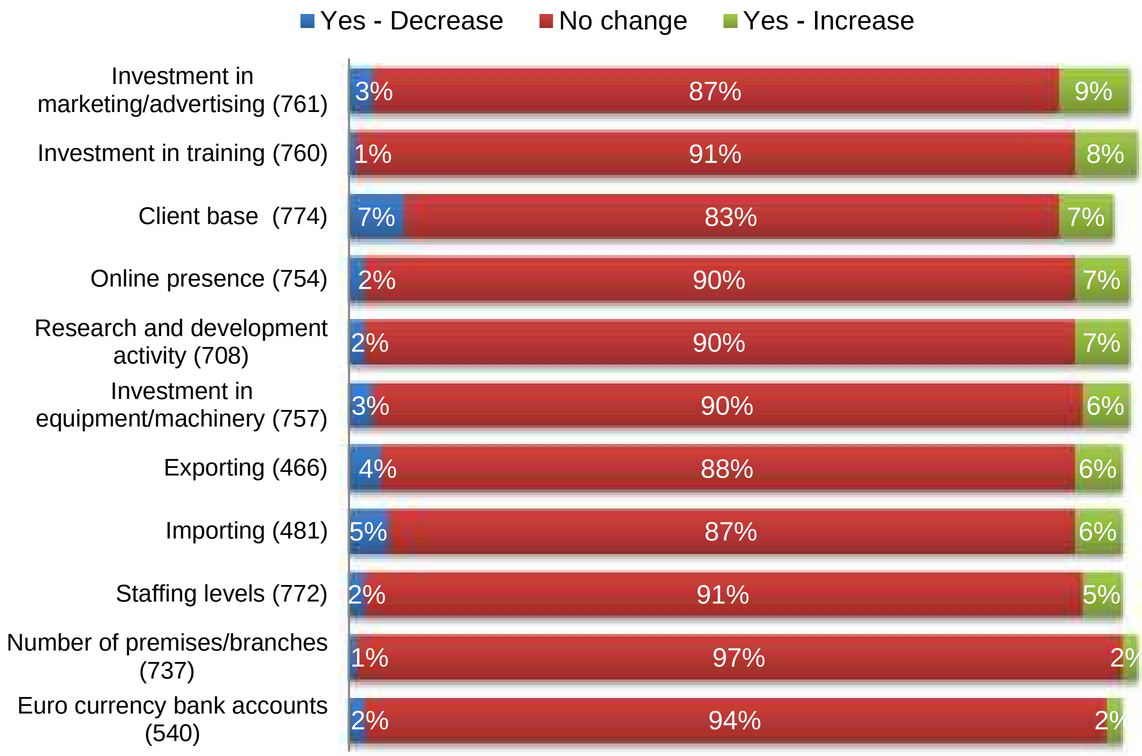
	ABDE - Primary	C - Manufacturing	F - Construction	G/I - Wholesale/ Retail/ Catering	H/J - Transport/ Information & comms	K/L/N - Finance/ Real estate/ Admin	M - Professional, scientific & technical	P/Q - Education/ Health	R/S - Arts, recreation & other services
Client base (i.e.number of customers)	50%	76%	59%	62%	**83%**	61%	66%	65%	57%
Online presence	32%	58%	41%	45%	**68%**	35%	45%	57%	40%
Investment in marketing/advertising	22%	38%	37%	41%	**51%**	33%	34%	45%	31%
Investment in equipment/machinery	53%	30%	36%	32%	29%	24%	30%	33%	40%
Staffing levels	22%	38%	33%	32%	30%	21%	26%	35%	29%
Research and development activity	17%	39%	32%	22%	**45%**	24%	25%	29%	23%
Number of premises/branches	7%	9%	10%	13%	7%	11%	4%	15%	17%
Investment in training	26%	41%	38%	38%	32%	33%	37%	**65%**	33%
Unweighted bases (all respondents)	*31*	*84*	*48*	*171*	*89*	*75*	*190*	*64*	*48*
Exporting	26%	**52%**	13%	33%	42%	4%	26%	13%	4%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and able to provide a response)	*18*	*56*	*29*	*101*	*59*	*27*	*107*	*28*	*20*
Importing	10%	**41%**	7%	30%	24%	6%	10%	7%	0%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and able to provide a response)	*19*	*61*	*30*	*110*	*55*	*28*	*108*	*27*	*21*
Euro currency bank accounts	15%	11%	8%	6%	14%	7%	7%	6%	5%
Unweighted bases (where applicable and able to provide a response)	*20*	*61*	*32*	*107*	*63*	*43*	*125*	*33*	*32*

6.2 Effect of EU referendum plans on business plans

Respondents that undertake these activities and have indicated a plan to increase, decrease or sustain that activity at current levels were asked if these plans had changed following the EU referendum.

The vast majority reported no change in plans since the EU referendum. The proportion of respondents reporting a planned increase since the referendum ranges from 2% (number of premises/branches; Euro currency bank accounts) up to 9% (investment in marketing/advertising). Fewer still reported a planned decrease in any of these activities since the referendum; between 1% (number of premises/branches; investment in training) and 5% (importing).

Figure 20: How business' plans have changed since the EU referendum (where undertaken specified activities)



D2, unweighted bases in parentheses

Construction businesses are most likely to report plans for an increase in their client base (15%), online presence (13%), marketing and advertising expenditure (21%), purchase of equipment/machinery (18%) and staffing levels (12%) since the Referendum.

Manufacturers are most likely to report plans to increase their research and development activity (15%) and exporting (15%) since the referendum.

7 Markets and Exporting

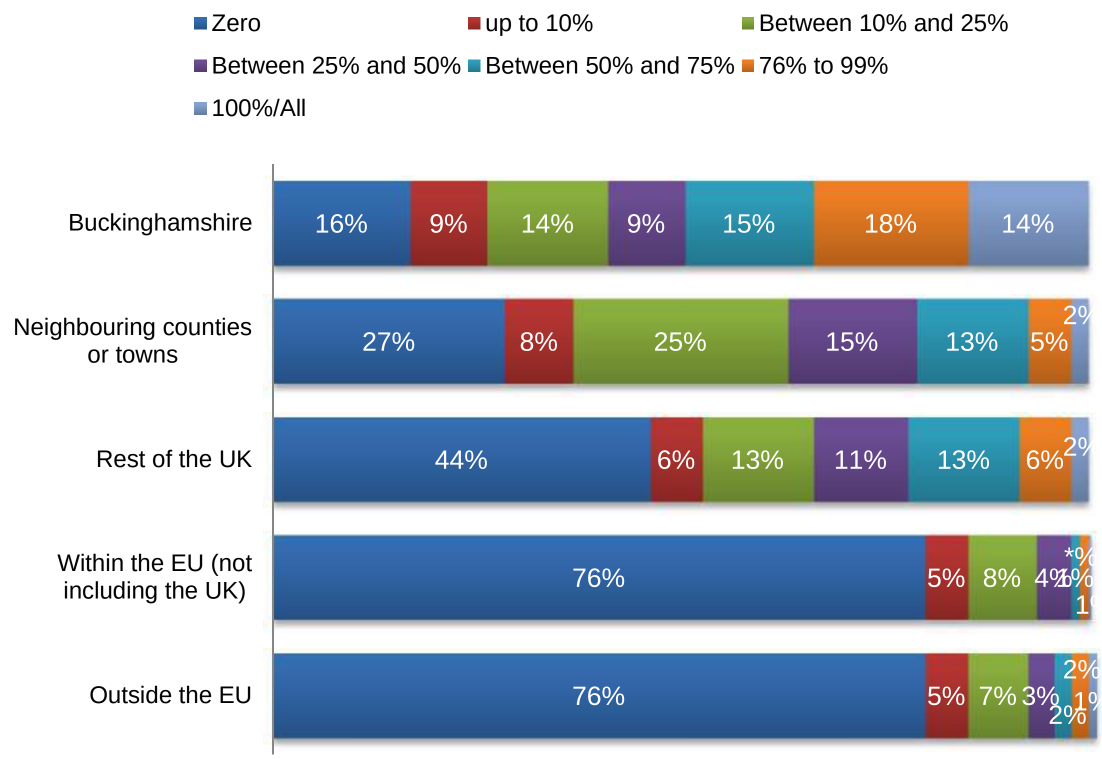
7.1 Markets

Respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of their sales that are generated locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

As geographical areas range further from the business location, the likelihood of businesses operating in those markets diminishes.

Across the areas, 2% of respondents were not sure of their response and 3% refused to respond. It cannot be assumed that if they did not know or refuse that they have no sales in these areas, so for the purposes of reporting it has been assumed that they do actually supply these markets.

Figure 21: Proportion of sales generated in each of the areas (all respondents)



E1/E2, unweighted base = 800

One in seven businesses in Buckinghamshire (14%) is currently wholly dependent on sales within the county. Approaching a third when we take into account those reporting at least three-quarters of sales in the county, are largely dependent on local spending.

Around a quarter of businesses report some sales overseas (26%[1]), either within the EU (20%) or outside the EU (20%). Around one in twenty businesses providing an estimate

[1] Based on where provided an estimate; don't knows/refused are not included

(6%) export only within the EU and the same proportion only to markets outside the EU. One in seven businesses providing an estimate (14%) sells to overseas markets both within and outside the EU.

Mean shares of sales across these areas are as follows:

- Buckinghamshire – 46%;
- Neighbouring counties or towns – 24%;
- Rest of the UK – 21%;
- Within the EU (excl. UK) – 4%;
- Outside the EU – 5%.

By sector, businesses in education/health and arts, recreation and services are particularly focused on local markets, while manufacturing businesses and those in transport, information and communications tend to rely on markets based at a distance to a greater extent than average.

The analysis suggests that that export markets outside of the EU are of slightly more significance than those within the EU.

Table 22: Mean proportion of sales generated within specified area, by sector (where provided an estimate)

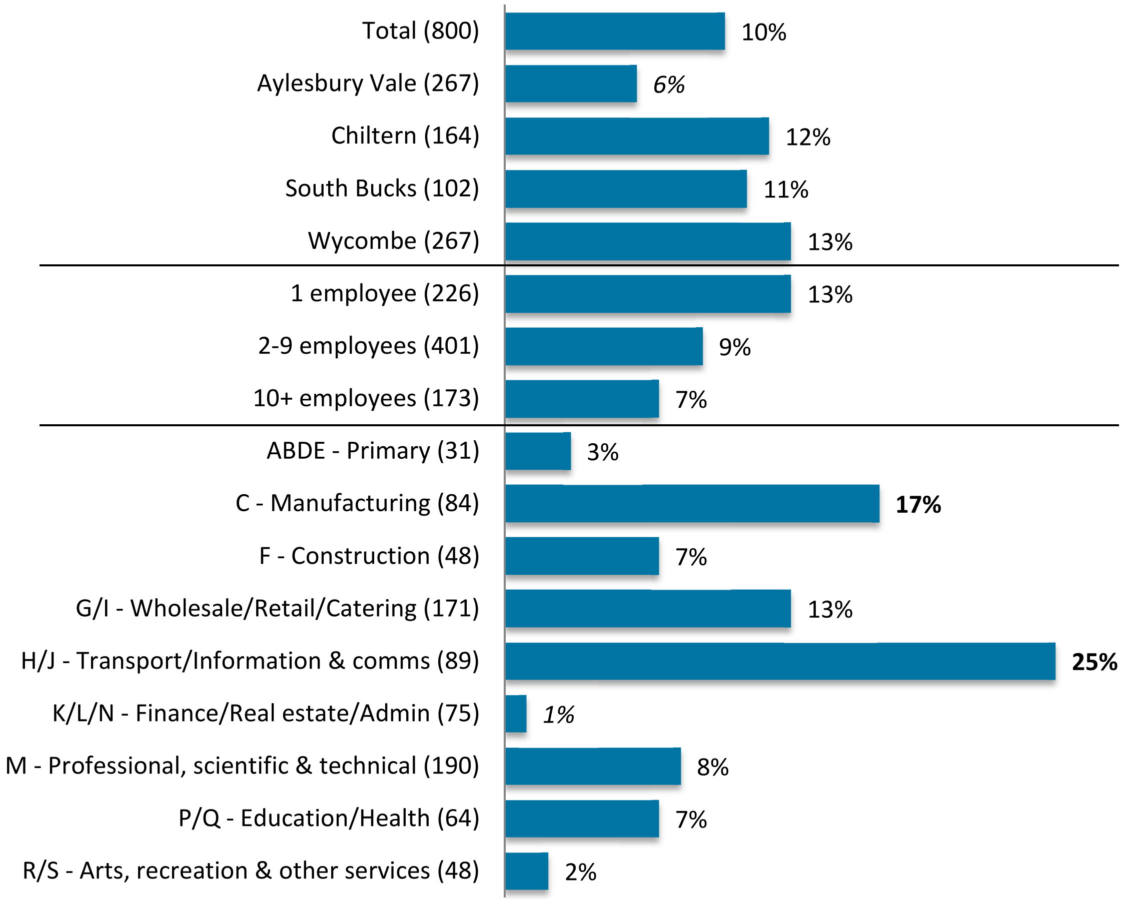
	Total	ABDE - Primary	C - Manufacturing	F - Construction	G/I - Wholesale/ Retail/ Catering	H/J - Transport/ Information & comms	K/L/N - Finance/ Real estate/ Admin	M - Professional, scientific & technical	P/Q - Education/ Health	R/S - Arts, recreation & other services
Buckinghamshire	46	55	*31*	**58**	**53**	*34*	50	*31*	**62**	**66**
Weighted bases	*735*	*28*	*38*	*87*	*148*	*99*	*93*	*162*	*28*	*51*
Neighbouring counties or towns	24	23	24	**33**	*15*	22	23	**30**	*15*	19
Weighted bases	*730*	*27*	*38*	*87*	*146*	*99*	*92*	*162*	*28*	*51*
Rest of the UK	21	18	**30**	*9*	23	23	23	**26**	14	*10*
Weighted bases	*735*	*28*	*38*	*86*	*150*	*99*	*93*	*162*	*28*	*51*
Within the EU (not including the UK)	4	4	6	*	4	6	2	**7**	2	1
Weighted bases	*731*	*28*	*37*	*87*	*147*	*99*	*92*	*162*	*28*	*51*
Outside the EU	5	4	**9**	0	5	**15**	*1*	5	7	2
Weighted bases	*735*	*30*	*38*	*87*	*149*	*99*	*92*	*162*	*28*	*51*

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower

7.2 Help with exporting

One in ten respondents (10%) indicated that they would like some help to export. This proportion is highest within businesses with no employees (13%) and within sectors where businesses are already more likely than average to already export, including manufacturing (17%) and transport/information and communications (25%).

Figure 23: Proportion of businesses that would like help exporting, by district, business size and sector (all respondents)



E3, Unweighted bases in parentheses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

Around one in five businesses that are already reporting a level of exports (21%) would like help in this area, compared with just 7% of those that do not currently export.

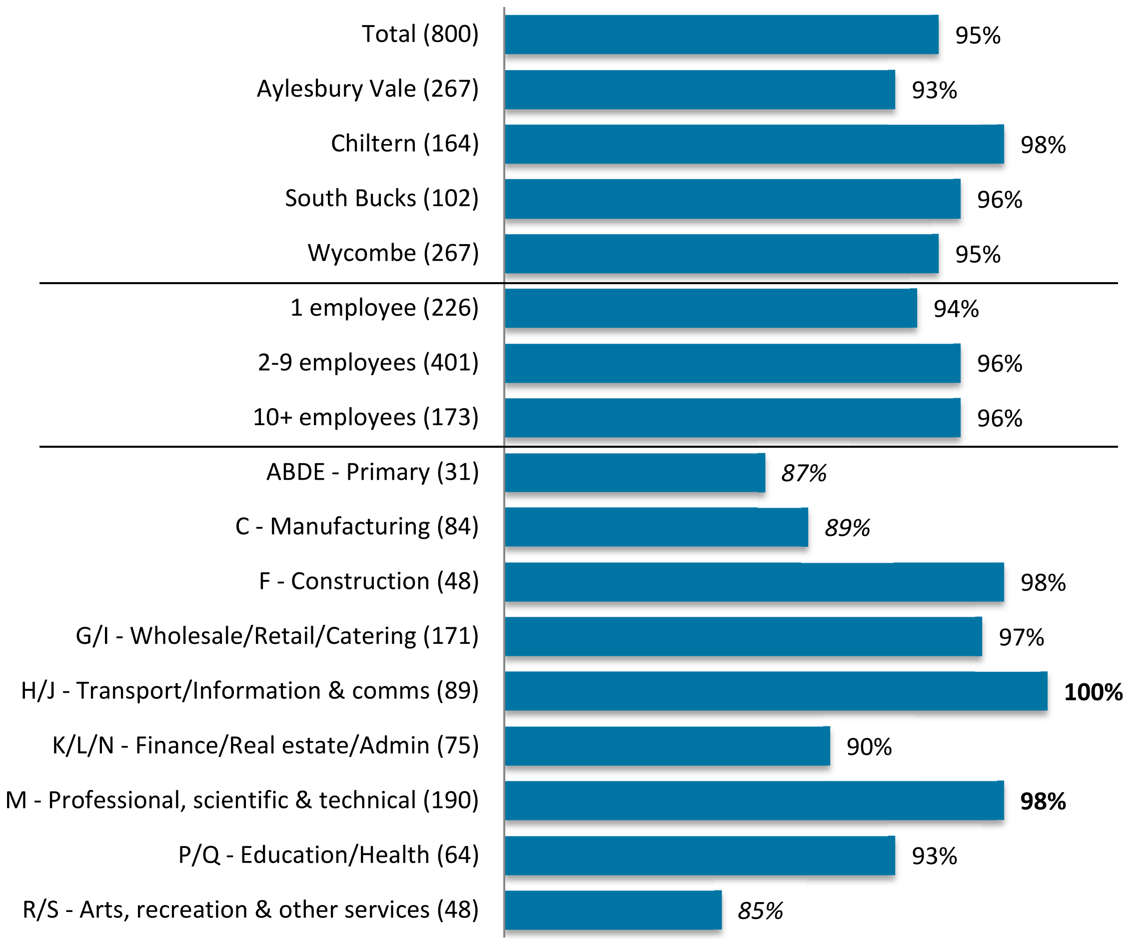
8 Broadband

8.1 Broadband availability

Ninety-five per cent of businesses in Buckinghamshire have broadband at their site. The proportion is lowest amongst businesses in the district of Aylesbury Vale (93%) and highest within the district of Chiltern (98%).

It varies only very slightly by business size; 94% of businesses with one employee; 96% of those with two or more. The proportion of businesses with broadband at their site is significantly lower than average within the sectors of arts, recreation and other services (85%); primary industries (87%) and manufacturing (89%) and higher than average within transport, information and communications (100%) and professional, scientific and technical (98%) sectors.

Figure 24: Proportion of businesses that with broadband at their site, by district, business size and sector (all respondents)



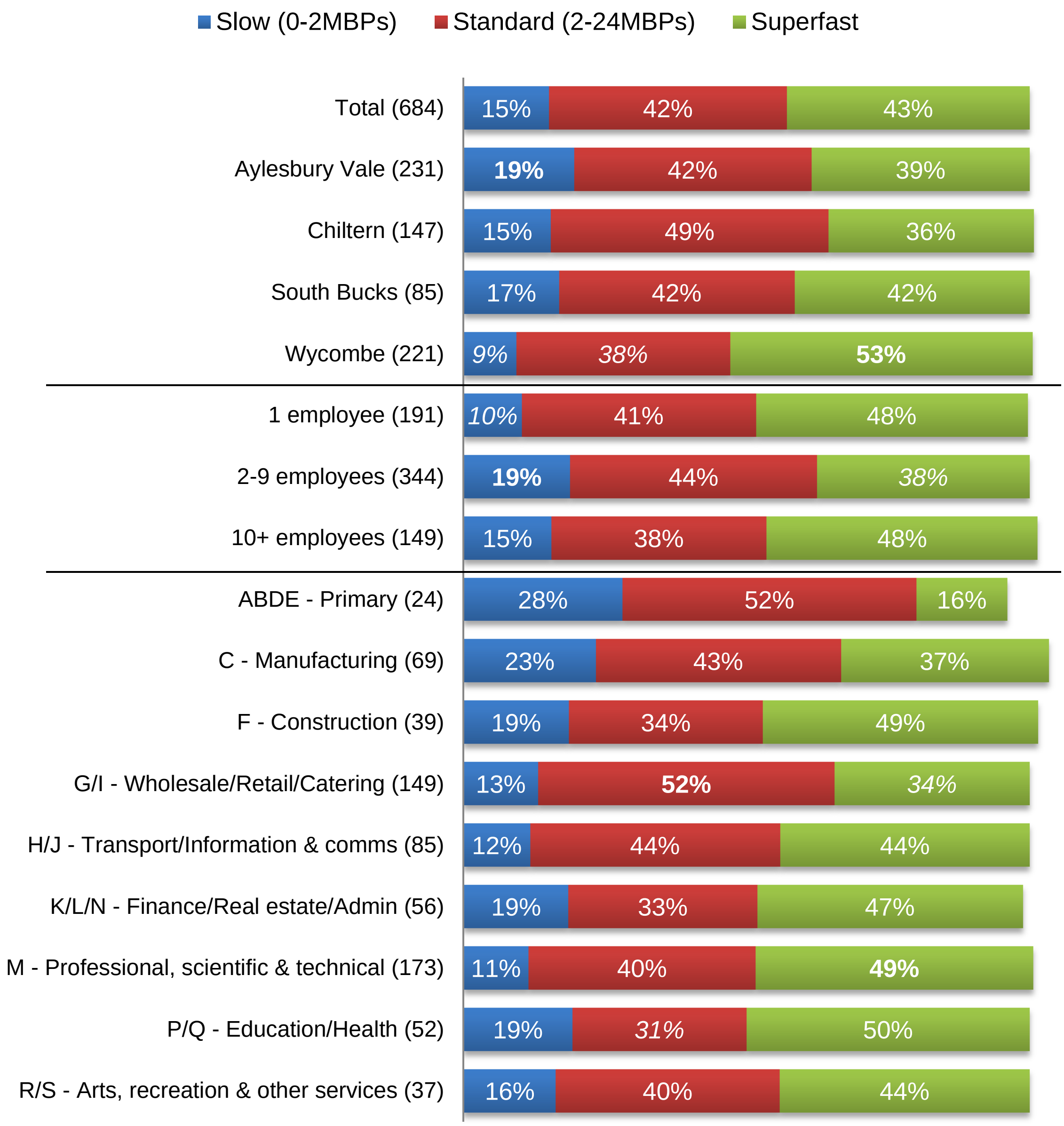
F1, Unweighted bases in parentheses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

When asked what speed of broadband they have, most respondents within businesses with broadband were able to provide an estimate (89%), 11% were not sure. Approaching two in five (38%) have superfast broadband (>24MBPs) and a similar proportion (38%) have standard broadband (2-24 MBPs). Just a minority (13%) have slow broadband (<2MBPs).

As a percentage of those able to provide a response, 43% reported having superfast broadband. This increases to 53% of businesses with broadband who were able to provide a response in Wycombe.

Figure 25: Speed of broadband at their site, by district, business size and sector (where provided a response)



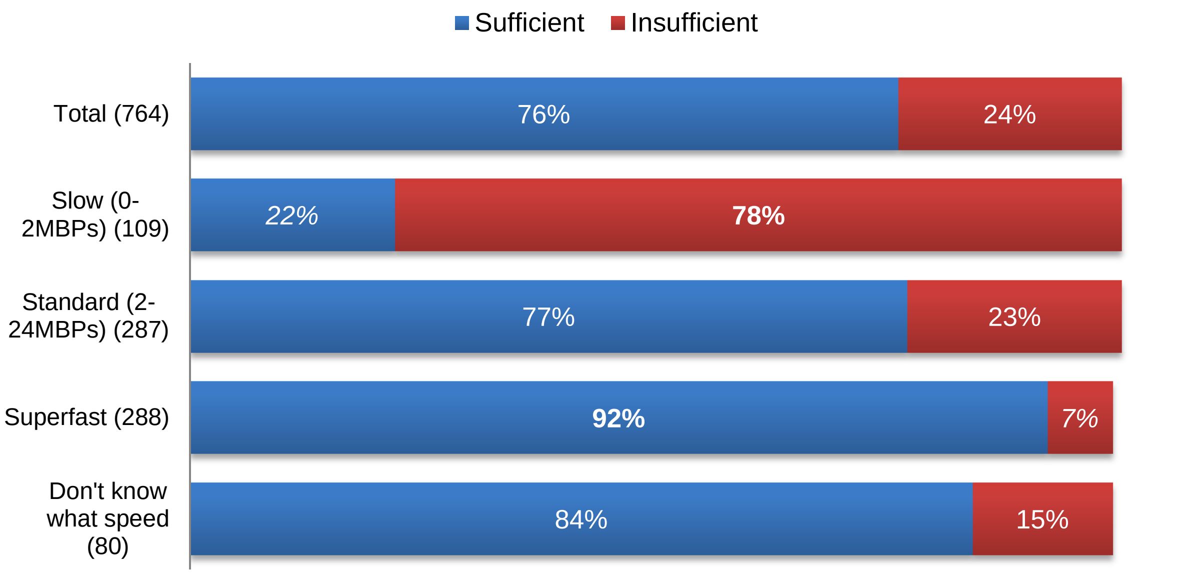
F2, Unweighted bases in parentheses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

8.2 Satisfaction with broadband

Three-quarters of businesses (76%) consider their broadband speed as sufficient for their business needs. Thus, one in four (24%) do not. However, more than three-quarters of businesses with a slow connection (78%) do not consider their broadband speed to be sufficient. This compares with just 7% of those with a superfast broadband connection.

Figure 26: Whether broadband speed is sufficient for their business needs, by speed of connection (where have broadband)



F3, Unweighted bases in parentheses

Figures in bold are statistically significantly higher than average minus the sub-group tested; figures in italics are significantly lower...

Appendix: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2008) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2013.

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not be publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.