

## Mark's take on the latest unemployment figures

A CITY MP has welcomed figures which show a fall in the number of unemployed people in Milton Keynes.

House of Commons Library statistics reveal that in September 2010 the number of unemployed benefits claimants in Mark Lancaster's constituency was 3,067, 642 lower than in September 2009.

This represents a rate of 4.9 per cent of the economically active population aged 16 to 64, putting Milton Keynes North as the 270th highest of the 650 UK constituencies for unemployment.

Overall, 4.6 per cent of the working-age population of Milton Keynes were unemployed in April 2010 – higher than the UK average of 3.9 per cent.

Mr Lancaster said: "To me the Jobseeker claimants figures represent two groups of people: those who lost their jobs in the recession exacerbated by the previous Government and those born into this culture of worklessness, which was perpetuated by Labour.

"It is good to see that people are getting back into work after being hit so hard by the credit crunch, though we need to continue helping them. Meanwhile I am confident of the measures the Coalition is taking to help those for whom benefits is a way of life."

Britain today has five million people claiming out of work benefits and one in five households is entirely dependent on benefits, with no one working. Nearly one million people have never worked.

The Government has announced the creation of the Work Programme, one of the biggest employment and back to work programmes in the world which will offer targeted, personalised help for those who need it most.

Mr Lancaster was particularly worried to read in the recently released MK Social Atlas 2010 that 7 per cent of 18-24-year-olds are unemployed in Milton Keynes, higher than the national average of 5.5 per cent.

He added: "We need to do better by this age group. Encouraging them into higher education courses which will not benefit them is wrong. The lack of apprenticeships and work-based learning is also a problem. This is something I will be looking into over the coming months."