RECESSION EFFECTS ON COPELAND - QUARTERLY UPDATE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Phil Greatorex
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy
REPORT AUTHOR: Ron Black, Julie Betteridge

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS

This report provides an update on a basket of indicators which highlight the ongoing impact of the recession on Copeland as an area and the Council as an organisation. It allows the Council to ensure that as far as possible its actions continue to best help to fight the impact of the recession locally to benefit the economic and general well being of its residents and communities.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?
(eg Key Decision, Policy recommendation for Full Council, at request of Council,etc.)

The information keeps the Executive informed of recession impact trends in order to inform its decision making. The report specifically picks up impact over the past three months when the Government has published its Localism Bill and has undertaken a range of consultations on its content. The report completes a 2010/11 quarterly update programme, sets out end of year data and compares demand and recession indicators with 2009/10 to highlight impact on Council services and funded activity.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive is asked
a) to note the detail in the report, including the 2010/11 debt write off at 7.1; and
b) take this context into account when taking decisions that could help to offset the recession impact on Copeland and the additional impact of public sector cuts in line with the borough's economic reliance on public sector resources and contracts.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This updates the Executive Report of December 2010. This report focuses on a number of detailed indicators where data is more frequently made available, namely:

- National economy and retail indicators;
- Local unemployment data and trends;
- Local business activity;
- National and local housing trends and indicators;
- Local crime data and trends; and
- Council service demand and trends.

1.2 Where established published sources used for the last report have not changed since September they have not been reproduced in this report.

2. NATIONAL VIEW

2.1 Reducing the budget deficit is the central economic challenge of the Coalition Government with public sector spending cuts of £81bn planned over the next 4 years, leading to up to 500,000 public sector job losses. Economic recovery in the first half of 2010 was encouraging but after 4 quarters of growth, the economy suffered an unexpected contraction of 0.6% in the last quarter of 2010, raising fears that the recovery has stalled, although the CBI and the Bank Of England Monetary Committee agree that the bad weather did play a part in the poor GDP performance for this Quarter. This disappointing performance was further highlighted by the UK Consumer Prices Index for January 2011 which was 4%, up from 3.7% in December, leading many commentators to speculate that the Bank of England would have to raise interest rates earlier than previously thought, although the rate still remains at 0.5% at May 2011. Unemployment in January also rose more sharply than anticipated, further adding to the economic pressures and many analysts now forecast that the deficit will be £155bn by the end of the financial year, £7bn higher than forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

2.2 Year-on-year, sales volumes were up 5.3% in January - the biggest annual increase for more than six years. The figures were better than expected, as analysts had forecast a monthly rise of 0.5% and an annual increase of 4.1%. The Office for National Statistics said there was some anecdotal evidence that shoppers made major purchases before the VAT rise took effect on 4 January with sales falling off thereafter. Independent analysis suggests that because of these effects, February would be a much better pointer to the underlying trend in sales. With rising commodity prices and the CPI measure of inflation currently at 4% - double the Bank of England's target - consumers will soon face even higher prices.

3. UNEMPLOYMENT

3.1 One of the most significant data updates relates to unemployment which receives the most direct effect in a recession. The latest March figures show the Copeland total and percentage rate has increased over the last 12 months, with 1,685 (3.8%) now claiming benefit, a significant increase from the October figures of 1433 (3.2%) reported in the last Recession Report in December. It is normal for the unemployment rate to peak in January and the numbers were expected to fall in February/ March – however the numbers have continued to increase, which suggests that the redundancies at Sellafield and public sector bodies are starting to take effect.

3.2 The latest January figures also reveal that Copeland now has the second highest rate in Cumbria, and the same as the UK and North West figure of 3.8%. The increase of 138 since last March was the highest in Cumbria, both in numerical and percentage terms and is distributed in the following Locality Areas:-

Whitehaven	+52
Cleator Moor	+25
Egremont	+56
Mid Copeland	+15
Millom	-10
TOTAL	+138.

3.3 Long Term Unemployment: There has been an improvement since the last reported figure of 11.7% for October. The Copeland rate for March is now 10.1% unemployed claiming for more than 12 months, which is the second highest in Cumbria, but lower than the National and Regional rates.

3.4 The Job Centre ratio of claimants to live unfilled vacancies in March 2011 for Cumbria was 5.3 compared to the National average of 6.05. The ratio varies significantly In Cumbria, from South Lakeland (1.70) to Barrow (15.01) and Copeland (14.53). When we last reported in December 2010 (October figures) Cumbria was 3.6, Nationally it was 4.2 and 12.04 in Copeland. Copeland and Barrow have significantly higher vacancy rates in Cumbria, more than double the County and the National average and Copeland has the lowest number of live vacancies in the County. However, these figures tend to be volatile and should be treated with caution. As a general rule, the Jobcentre only receive details of about a third of all vacancies.

3.5 We do not have an update on the May 2010 NEET statistics for Copeland that highlight that 97 of our young people are not in education, employment or training. The current rate is 6.18%. Our hot spots for high numbers of young people in this position are Distington, Harbour, Sandwith, Mirehouse, Frizington, Egremont North and Cleator Moor South.

3.6 The National 'League' Table for unemployment rates shows a worsening situation over the last few months. In March 2010, Copeland was ranked 194 out of 406 UK Districts (with 1 being the worst) but by March 2011, Copeland was ranked at 153. Further analysis of the rate of improvement in unemployment levels over the last 12 months show Copeland 14th out of 406, putting us in the worst 5%. Recent and anticipated announcements on public sector resources may worsen this position within the next six months. Whilst our unemployment may appear relatively stable over the last year recent public sector related contracts and jobs have reduced in Copeland and hence our job seekers are facing up to an 80% increase in the numbers of people applying for local jobs, which is reflected in the current Vacancy Rate.

4 Business

4.1 Tourism: We reported in December the record levels in 2010 for tourism bookings with the main website for Cumbria taking nearly £3million in business. West Cumbria Tourism's consumer facing website (www.western-lakedistrict.co.uk) has held steady in the first part of 2011, with on average 8,500 unique visits per month. Over 100 events being promoted free of charge, along with paid for advertising from accommodation providers and attractions in the region. Online promotion also via Twitter (www.twitter.com/WesternLakes) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/WesternLakeDistrict) with Twitter now having 745 followers, and Facebook 638 fans. We had a bumper year for visitor levels at the Beacon during 2009/10 and this year has seen significant increase on 2008/9 numbers but less than 2009/10. Enquiries at the TICs have been followed the pattern suggested by Cumbria Tourism of holidays at home in Cumbria although this last quarter looks to be slightly less busy than previous years. We will not know if this is a temporary position or an indication of less visitor interest due to the impact of public sector cuts on travel plans.

4.2 Retail: Shop vacancy levels remain consistent in our towns although there has been some take up of empty retail units in Whitehaven in recent months. The general market is far from good and the level of enquiries received is low and mainly local interest. The empty shops initiative has assisted by putting in local images to reduce the visual impact during the past 18 months.

4.3 Business Support Enquiries: Enquires to the Council on property and business issues are slightly higher in 2010/11 than 2009/10. The bulk of enquiries are related to industrial workspace for companies who have secured contracts with the nuclear industry, followed by small office space for small start up businesses locally and those expanding into the area for nuclear related activities. The total number of enquiries received by the West Cumbria Development Agency in Copeland during 2010/11 is higher than in the previous two years by approximately 20%. The increase in enquiries could be the result of many things including large scale redundancies and the reduction in other funding/programmes available. WCDA also reinstated the Linkstart programme in the second half of the year which may have affected the number of start-up enquiries being received. Invest in Cumbria has seen a slight increase in enquiries from Copeland in areas such as renewable energy, and new supply chain opportunities. They have been using their local office at Westlakes Science Park on a regular basis to meet potential new inward investors and hold investor development meetings with foreign owned and UK owned companies.

5. HOUSING

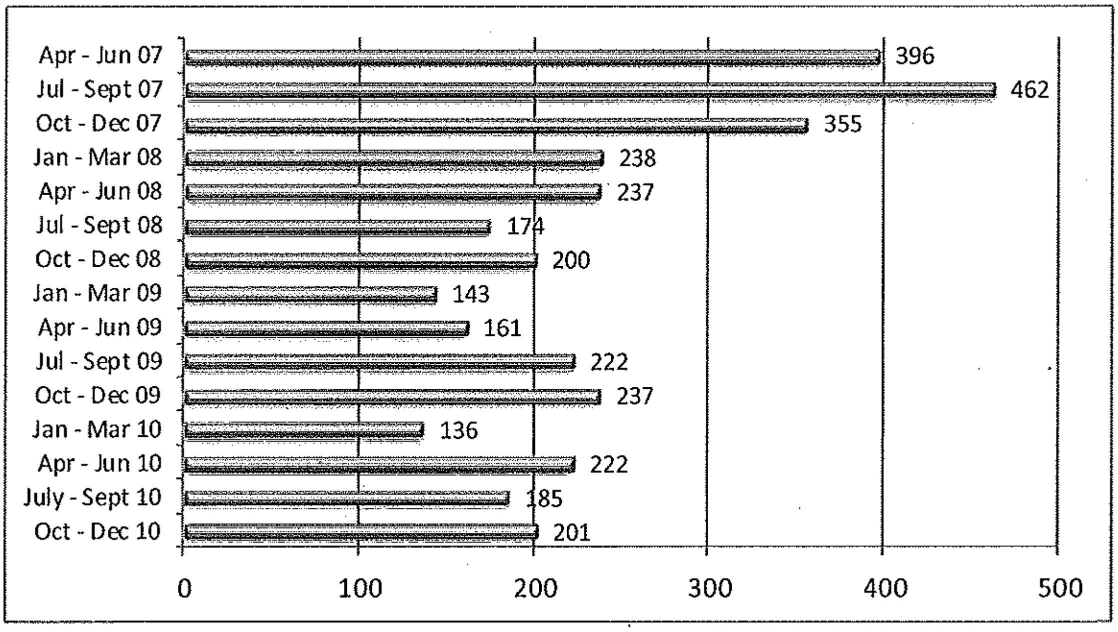
5.1 House Sales

House sales provide an indication of the level of activity in the housing market. Nationally housing prices continue to be dragged lower by a shortage of buyers. Mortgage lending continues to be subdued where total mortgage lending in the UK in October 2010, £12.4bn, was the lowest October figure since 2000.

House Sales for Copeland Borough by Quarter 2007 - 2010

5.2.1 In September 2010 we reported a record low quarter of housing sales from January to March 2010. The sales for the July to September and October to December Quarters in 2010 were 185 and 201 respectively and are both at a lower level than the corresponding periods in 2009 and 60% less than the peak achieved in 2007.

Graph: House Sales – Copeland 2007 – 2010 by Quarter



Source: Land Registry Data

5.3 House Prices

The latest official house prices show a Quarterly increase of 8% in the October – December 2010 Quarter, with the average price increasing to £138,000. However, prices are 3.5% lower than a year ago and 5.0% below the market peak in Cumbria at May 2008.

5.4 Housing Approvals and Completions

Building Control records reveal there have been 103 gross new dwellings completed up to March 2011, of which 22 were Affordable, although it is expected a total of 41 new affordable and social homes will be recorded for 2010/11. However 66 dwellings were demolished during this period, which gives a net figure of only 37. The Ehen Court scheme being delivered by Home Housing at Egremont is nearing completion offering 22 older persons housing. Home Housing's Grammerscroft development has also received grant support from the HCA and this will provide 41 new affordable lifetime homes to be available in 2011/12.

5.5 Home Developments

Planning records also show that in 2009/10 we determined 480 planning applications, the final year figure for 2010/11 is 472. In looking at the detail we have had a 26% increase in major applications and a 20% increase in minor planning applications. Other planning applications, specifically home owner developments and improvements has declined by 18%.

5.6 Complaints

We have seen a marked drop of 50% in complaints in the last quarter of 2010/11 (11 complaints) compared to the last quarter of 2009/10 (22 complaints). We are taking this as a positive indicator that the council is being pro-active and responsive to assisting residents and other local stakeholders and improving its service performance.

6. NATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

6.1 The Localism Bill implications and consultations are ongoing. Consultation responses on the New Homes Bonus and the Social Housing proposals have been discussed and sent from the Strategic Housing Panel. Our New Homes Bonus settlement from 2010/11activity is £14,968. Its low level reflecting the housing renewal programme within the borough which has delivered both demolitions and new social housing to provide housing that local people want to live in. We work to keep up to date with consultation outcomes and potential opportunities and implications and are supported by national policy support from the LGA and other relevant bodies. The impact of social rented sector changes will be implemented in 2011/12 and will be reported on in future reports.

6.2 The council through its Cumbria and Britain's Energy Coast participation has been active in the development of the Cumbria LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership). There were no bids affecting Copeland into the first round of the Regional Growth Fund and work with partners on bids for round 2 is underway.

7. EFFECT ON COUNCIL SERVICE

7.1 The recession, depending on its severity and duration, will impact upon the Council's own resources, both in terms of income generation from fees and charges, rates of Council Tax collection and in expenditure, in areas such as benefit claims. These areas are subject to routine monitoring and will be reported through the quarterly monitoring processes if the actual position differs to the budget. The Council has 292 accounts of debt in 2010/11 that it has written off. The following table highlights the amount being written off against the type of charge.

Type of Charge	**Number of Accounts**	**Amount Written off 2010/11**
Council Tax	107	£55,916.86
National Non Domestic Rates	52	£90,632.97
Housing Benefit Overpayments	68	£9,508.74
Sundry Debts	65	£10,901.61
TOTAL	**292**	**£167,683.71**

7.2 In the three months January to March 2011, the council's workload re housing benefit for residents of working age is relatively stable with a 1% increase over this period. Age UK West Cumbria report a 200% increase in referrals to their Money Wise service. Particular concerns are increases in rent, council tax, water and fuel bills. The charity is seeing a significant change in the age range of people seeking support which traditionally has been people over 70 years of age but in last year this has shifted to include many more clients in their late 50s and 60s. The biggest increase in referrals is of people in early retirement.

7.3 Building Control and Development Control have annual income targets from fees for work undertaken and have not been affected by the recession or public sector cuts this year. Building control will meet their 2010/11 income target of £217,150, the highest income levels since the end of the construction boom in 2006/07.

7.4 Crime figures continue to be low for Copeland. Improvement in 2010/11 has seen a downward trend in anti social behaviour. However, all crime has increased by 18% since we last reported in December 2010 with notable increases shown in the table below:

Type of crime	September-November 2010	November - February 2011	% change
All crime	937	1106	18.0%
All vehicle crime	49	57	16.3%
Vehicle Taking	15	23	53.4%
Theft from a Vehicle	34	34	=
Burglary Dwelling	30	31	3.3%
Burglary Other	48	49	2.1%
Shoplifting	41	60	46.3%
Theft in a Dwelling	13	17	30.8%
Theft from the Person	3	6	100.0%
Theft of Pedal Cycles	10	6	-40.0%
Other Classified Thefts & Handling	11	5	-54.5%
Other Stealings	101	97	-4.0%
Vehicle Interference	3	4	33.3%

7.5 Domestic violence repeat percentage continues to cause concern. Current data for 2010/11 is showing an expected year end figure of 48%. In 2009/10 the repeat figure was 38%. Reporting and activity by the Cumbria domestic violence project has increased over the year contributing to the rise in figures. However, this area is a priority for the West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership.

7.6 The Council has an annual SLA arrangement with our Citizen Advice Bureau. In their 2010/11 report on activities in Copeland the following recession impact is evidenced:

- An annual increase of 49% clients with debt issues;
- Number of client priority debts increased by 66.5% resulting in a 128% increase in priority debt known to the CAB to £1,741,664. (priority debt includes rent, mortgage and council tax);
- A 75% increase from 2009/10 in number of employment related advice cases;
- Most clients threatened with homelessness who were advised by CAB had homelessness delayed or avoided;
- A 32% increase during 2010/11 of housing related advice clients with a 54% increase in clients with rent arrears.

7.7 The Council leases a number of business premises to Phoenix Enterprise Centre (PEC), a community interest company with 25 years experience of business and worklessness services in Copeland and Cleator Moor specifically. In the past year we have upgraded one of the leased premises offering office units on licence arrangements. During 2010/11 PEC report that they have lost six tenancies within Phoenix House and gained one relocation from Westlakes Science Park. The current occupancy rates are 90 and 100% for two of the office/workshop buildings. Phoenix House, previously full, is now at 75% vacancy level and the 4th office building is at 10% occupancy and requires upgrading to attract new tenants. PEC continues to deliver against high demand for information advice and guidance to individuals out of work or at threat of losing their jobs. As a direct result of existing contract cuts the organisation has lost 30% of its staff with the remaining 11 staff all accepting reduced working hours.

8. COUNCIL ASSISTANCE

Our Suppliers

8.1 The Council is meeting its commitment of arranging payment of local suppliers within 10 days – 63.72% of our payments during the past quarter have been paid within 10 days. We have paid 94.89% of invoices within 30 days in the past quarter, a major improvement of our 2009/10 quarter 4 performance of 91.88%. Our 2010/11 performance to date is 96.19% which is a 5% improvement on our annual performance for 2009/10 of 95.7%.

8.2 The Procurement team continues to use the Chest, the website where Copeland and all the Cumbrian councils advertise their tenders, to encourage local supply chain tenders.

Housing

8.3 The Housing Options Team have noticed a sharp increase in 2010/11 in the number of people requesting help. The total number of approaches for advice & assistance was 927 (including repeats), the highest in recent years. The table below shows the acceptances of full homelessness duties since 2007/08, with 86 in 2010/11 being the highest. Without the strong emphasis on prevention in our Homelessness Strategy the number of full duties accepted would have been greater. We will undertake a review of homelessness in 2012 prior to publishing a new statutory homelessness strategy in 2013. The emphasis on prevention will remain.

Homelessness acceptances of full housing duty	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Nos	83	54	68	86

8.4 The Council's housing capital programme made a very substantial contribution towards improving private sector housing conditions and supporting the local economy in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Activity	*Spent*	*Committed spending*
Disabled Facilities Grants	£531,550	£497,127
Housing Renewal	£209,697	£200,303
Totals	£612,570	£697,430

8.5 Expenditure on disabled facilities refers to the building works and services relating to installation of typically (but not exclusively) chairlifts, through-floor lifts and level access showers. These enable otherwise disabled people to remain living safely and with dignity in their own homes. Housing renewal refers to financial assistance for building works and services that remove the most serious statutory Housing Health & Safety hazards from homes in poor condition (Housing Act, 2004). However, from 1 April 2011 the Council will cease providing financial assistance for home renewal when existing commitments have been completed. Disabled facilities grants will continue.

Business

8.7 The Council commissioned projects in 2010/11 to support new and existing businesses. These are performing well and assisting businesses with reducing income levels and needing to widen their market base. The projects use a range of funding levered against our Local Authority Business Growth Incentives (LABGI) scheme funding and Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF).

a) Backing Business in Copeland

Backing Business aims to provide support to Copeland businesses with fewer than 250 employees who want to increase sales and profitability, identify areas for growth or simply survive the current economic downturn and is available to businesses that have been trading for more than 12 months. The project is delivered by West Cumbria Development Agency and consists of a fresh look review, in-depth advice and grant funding of up to £1,000 to assist with marketing, training and equipment.

Project outputs:

	Year 1 to end Mch 10	*Year 2 to end Mch 11*
Businesses advised	56	67
Business reviews	52	65
Consultancy	15	43
Increased turnover	43,000	87,423
Safeguarded turnover	0	78,000
Increased jobs	1.5	12.5
Safeguarded jobs	6.5	11
Grants to companies	35	43

b) Ways into Successful Enterprise

This joint project with Allerdale Borough Council commenced in April 2009 and provides Enterprise Coaches to raise overall enterprise in deprived and under-represented communities by finding and targeting people with the potential to start a business.

Totals for Copeland to the end March 2011 are as follows:

	To Date	GENDER		ETHNICITY				AGE			
	OVERALL	*M*	*F*	White British	White Other (Irish/European etc)	African/ Asian	Gypsy & Travellers	*16-25*	*26-50*	*51-65*	*65+*
Total assisted:											
New total to date	393	243	150	382	4	7		43	283	66	1
JSA claimants assisted											
New total to date	209	159	50	204	1	4		27	150	32	
IB people assisted											
New total to date	17	8	9	17					14	3	
Other people assisted											
New total to date	167	76	91	161	3	3		16	119	31	1

c) Business Start up Support in Copeland

Intensive business start up support in Copeland is provided by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and figures for 2010/11 are as follows:

New businesses created in Copeland	35	(4 of which are social enterprises)
Intensive supports	34	(5 of which are social enterprises)
Total businesses engaged	136	

d) Redundancy Support

The Council and its partners have been working with local businesses to assist their sustainability and where needed has put in place support to assist redundant staff and companies needing to downsize. This activity is ongoing in the current climate.

e) Retail

Level of enquiries received is low and mainly local interest. Projects are now being put in place to utilise the remainder of the DCLG Empty Shops funding on a range of retail support activities including an extension of the shop fronts scheme in Cleator Moor and Egremont and a range of activities in the South including a shop local campaign in Millom. In Whitehaven consideration is being given to extending uses in the King Street area of the town to include A2 and A3 uses in addition to A1 (shops) which could bring units back into commercial use, generate footfall and bring some additional vibrancy to the street.
Properties in Whitehaven are generally in a bad state of repair as owners are reluctant to make improvements. A scheme is currently being worked up to utilise £50,000 from existing LABGI funding to support private sector investment in shop front enhancements for both occupied and vacant shops in the town.

Worklessness

8.8 The Copeland Future Jobs Fund (FJF) initiative has had a positive effect in contributing towards addressing the high NEET (not in employment, education or training) figures as recorded in previous Recession reports. FJF has created opportunities for 48 young people to experience secure employment for a 12 month period. The majority of young people involved in the initiative have undertaken some form of training whilst in employment and these have been NVQ Level 2/3 including Business Administration; iTQ; Customer Service and Hospitality. Although FJF has been a tremendous success, it is noticeable that only a small proportion (under 10) have either secured employment or gone on to full time education. This is in line with other FJF schemes nationwide and could be a factor for record breaking numbers of 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training in England being recorded in March 2011.

8.9 The Council, through its Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) Commissioning Panel has approved projects that provide support and training to help unemployed people into work.
They include:-

a) Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative
The Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative will provide training opportunities and also engage local employers. Apprentice frameworks will be available in areas such as – Construction; Retail; iTQ; Health & Social Care; Business Administration; Customer Service and Hairdressing. The Programme is open to unemployed individuals aged 16 and over. It will be a 3 year programme with the first apprenticeships commencing in May 2011.

b) Wheels 2 Work
Wheels 2 Work is aimed at helping people who cannot access employment or training because of a lack of public or private transport. Clients accepted onto the Wheels to Work Programme are able to take up work and training opportunities which would otherwise not be available. This type of project underpins other WNF related activity that Copeland Borough Council is currently supporting.

8.10 The work and skills partnership have undertaken a local assessment to inform the priorities for a Copeland Skills and Work Plan.. Work is underway to source funding for other potential initiatives that meet priorities in Copeland's Work & Skills Plans. The challenge continues to be increasing skill levels, work opportunities and addressing our high NEET (not in education, employrment or training) rates in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor and Frizington.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 In summary, the highlights of the report are:

- **Rural unemployment is relatively higher impact than previously** where concentration of worklessness has been in a number of our urban wards.
- **Long term unemployment rates have not been significantly affected** however with increased job losses and new claimants in the marketplace for available jobs we anticipate that long term unemployment will stay static in line with the known position that people the least time out of work are more likely to get access to any available jobs.
- Our statistics continue to highlight **the difficulties for Copeland residents to access local jobs due to the low number of vacancies and the significantly higher jobs to claimants ratio rates for Copeland job seekers**. This has not significantly increased our benefit caseload as yet although we have seen a 1% increase over the past quarter.

- In December 2010 we reported that Copeland was in the worst 15% of districts nationally for **unemployed claimants. Within the past three months we have now moved into the worst 10% nationally.** We are continuing to work with partners on local initiatives but have yet to understand the impact of the cuts on the DWP and its local services.
- The housing sector continues to be affected through lower house prices.
- **We are encouraged by a significant increase, over 20%, in major and minor applications in line with the regeneration development activity** across the borough and specifically in the wider Whitehaven area.
- **A significant increase in requests for advice, assistance and homeless prevention work from the Council, supported through our SLA with CAB.** This has helped families and individuals to either stay in their homes or find other solutions to prevent becoming homeless.
- The private sector has been helped by some of the measures the Council, the NWDA and the nuclear sector has funded to assist both new starts and existing businesses. The future is still uncertain although we know funding is available to continue these for 2011.
- Tourism remains a challenge in the West with Cumbria still a popular destination with families holidaying at home increasing visitor figures this year.
- **The Council has maintained its ability to pay local suppliers promptly** (ie within 10 days).
- The small but potentially worrying increases in shoplifting and theft in a dwelling reported in December 2010 show marked increases in the latest figures at 7.5. Theft from the person has doubled in the past three months and shoplifting, a classic indicator expected when community income levels are affected by recession, has risen by just under 50%. The statistics for the past three months also highlight the increase in vehicle related crime, particularly opportunistic approaches: vehicle taking up by 53%, interfering with vehicles up by a third and all vehicle crime up by 16%.

9.2 As anticipated, the statistics and local delivery figures over the second half of 2010/11 highlight the public sector cuts are beginning to impact on our residents within the borough, significantly with regard to debt, housing and employment issues. We have a number of services and SLAs in place to assist with managing a continued service to residents during the past year but this will be more challenging in 2011/12.

9.3 Positively, the council has been able to be flexible in supporting and delivering services and targeted initiatives to assist local people affected by the recession directly. Our SLA and worklessness initiative links with the CAB has enabled increased volunteering to deliver services. Our LABGI resources have been used to deliver and commission services to assist local businesses. The worklessness partnership we lead has been more effective in working together to assist young people and people at threat of redundancy. The council's services have been able to meet the increase in demand from local residents, eg homelessness and benefit support to ensure residents are able to feel confident that they will be supported at a time of increased personal stress. Opportunities for new interventions are being considered and the council is leading a partnership project to provide apprenticeship opportunities to use the best practice from the future jobs fund and respond to the needs of both job seekers and local employers.

9.5 The situation has not changed, the Council will need to continue to use all its influence to oppose any major reductions in local public sector spending programmes locally to protect our economy. Our regeneration aspirations remain key to enabling increased economic activity in our major settlements and to assist our smaller settlements to be sustainable. This is particularly relevant as the local evidence supports the earlier Experian study which highlighted Copeland as a borough with a lower than average resilience to the public sector cuts. The service review outcome will roll out from April 2011 and will build on existing improvements and recession actions including payment turnaround times, partnership activity and prevention work eg around homelessness.

10. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

10.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are:
No comment from the Monitoring Officer on the report.

10.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are:
No further comment.

10.3 EIA Comments are: Service delivery and council initiatives in response to the recession are assessed within the service plan framework to ensure targeting and customer engagement enables effective access from all residents or relevant stakeholders. Analysis of recession impacts relates to our understanding of our communities through mosaic and customer relations.

10.4 Other consultee comments, if any:
Partner agencies have contributed detail which has been incorporated into the report.

11. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

11.1 The report provides an overview only. Projects and changes in service will be project managed and risks to service delivery and continuity within the existing council framework.

12. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

12.1 This is an update report which will influence policy and decisions made by the Council. The outcome will be Council decisions more sensitive to the current economic circumstances.

List of Appendices None

List of Background Documents: Existing service statistics, Cumbria Observatory and national websites