

Recession and Recovery: UK City Case Studies – Impacts and Responses

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Overview

The impact of the global economic crisis on UK cities will be widespread and long-term. Understanding the impact of the crisis, how this varies between different places, and how places can and should respond, is vital.

This report is one of a series of reports on the recession which have been published simultaneously. These are:

- A Work Foundation report reviewing the impact of and responses to the recession by UK cities;
- An OECD report reviewing the responses of international leaders to the recession;
- A companion paper presenting some of the empirical data on the impact of the recession.

This Annex examines in detail the impact of the recession on 12 UK cities: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Chelmsford, Derby, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Swindon under the key themes outlined in the framework below.



Using the same set of key themes, the case studies also set out how a range of local actors – including local authorities, local strategic partnerships, Regional Development Agencies, universities and higher education institutions, Business Link and Job Centre Plus centres – have undertaken initiatives designed to support local residents and businesses and ensure that their city is positioned to take advantage of recovery when it comes.

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Belfast

Overview

Record levels of investment and growth have led to rapid change in the Belfast skyline and external perceptions of the city over the past decade. With rapid growth in employment, Belfast has emerged from a long period of decline and deindustrialisation as one of the fastest growing UK cities and a major driver within the Northern Irish economy. However, despite a large public sector, the positive impact of a weaker euro in terms of cross-border trade and an ongoing long-term commitment to employability programs, the recession has had a significant impact on Belfast's manufacturing, construction and retail sectors.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

Nearly 2% of all Northern Irish manufacturing jobs were lost the week before Easter 2009, with losses concentrated in manufacturing businesses located in Belfast.

- Visteon UK Ltd, a parts supplier to Ford with a factory in Belfast, entered administration in March 2009 with one hour's notice to employees¹.
- There have been a series of job losses at the Bombardier factories in Belfast. Bombardier cut 300 jobs in February 2009² and a further 310 permanent employees and 665 temporary sub-contractors across its four sites in Queen's Island, Newtownards, Newtownabbey and Dunmurry in April 2009³
- Nortel announced it was shedding 87 jobs at its Newtownabbey plant in April 2009⁴.
- Hughes Christensen, an east Belfast company which makes drill bits for the oil and gas industry made 345 staff redundant in February 2009 and cut a further 90 jobs in April 2009⁵.

People & Labour Markets

There has been a significant rise in the number of Belfast residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance in light of the recession. Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of claimants rose from 5,969 to 9,428, an increase of 3,459 or 58%⁶.

Around 170 workers at the West Belfast Visteon plant staged a high profile seven week sit-in protest over the terms of the redundancy package they were offered. The sit-in received considerable public support, with a series of public rallies and marches^{7, 8} and support from members of Belfast City Council who wrote to parent company Ford re-iterating demands for fair redundancy packages⁹. The former Visteon workers successfully negotiated a much-improved redundancy package and the sit-in ended on 19th May 2009¹⁰.

Local Governance & Leadership

The economic downturn resulted in a fall of £2.6 million in external revenue for Belfast City Council, with losses stemming from areas such as Building Control and IT services and rates from vacant properties for FY 2009-2010¹¹.

Quality of Place

The recession has had mixed impacts on quality of place issues in Belfast. Tourism does not appear to have been badly affected, with strength of the Euro and the relative weakness of the Pound contributing to a record 7.1 million people visiting Belfast in 2008, generating £437 million in revenue¹².

However the number of empty shop premises in Belfast has increased markedly: of the 58 stores on Belfast's main shopping pitch, eight are currently vacant and Victoria Square, Belfast's newest and biggest shopping centre, has 24 vacant units out of a total 98 stores¹³. In addition, whilst 10 million people have visited Victoria Square since it opened in March 2008, this is 2 million less than

initial projections¹⁴. Furthermore a sharp rise in the number of burglaries and thefts across Northern Ireland has been blamed on the recession¹⁵.

Recession Responses

The Northern Ireland Executive announced a £70m economic aid package in mid December 2008 which included:

- A £150 cut in electricity bills for 100,000 households receiving income support and pension credit.
- A rates relief scheme for small businesses to follow a one year freeze of a planned increase in business rates
- Advancing building projects (including schools) worth a total of £115 million, to boost the construction sector
- £30 million investment in farms, school maintenance and roads
- £5 million investment to boost Dept of Social Development Housing programme
- A 10 day target for public sector bodies to pay small businesses

Belfast City Council and partners have also undertaken a series of measures designed to support local residents and boost the Belfast economy.

City Economy

- **Business workshops:** Belfast City Council has organised a series of 5 practical workshops aimed at helping businesses in the Belfast area survive the recession. Supported by ERDF funding, the free workshops will focus on:
 - helping small businesses design a sales and marketing strategy,
 - providing advice on good customer care and maintaining a customer base,
 - financial planning and funding opportunities,
 - the benefits of selling online,
 - an introduction to VAT related issues.Participants will be offered up to two days of one-to-one mentoring with a relevant expert to review and implement strategies for survival and growth¹⁶.
- **Local procurement:** as part of Belfast City Council's 'Local Sourcing Initiative' programme, the council and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce ran a successful 'Meet the Buyer' event for Belfast SMEs in June 2009. The intention is to give local suppliers the opportunity to meet with large buyers from the private and public sectors¹⁷. Initial feedback suggests that new connections were made as a result of the event.
- **Discounted retailing rates:** retailers in the Victoria Square shopping centre have been offered a 7% reduction in service charges to ease the financial burden brought about by reduced numbers of shoppers¹⁸.

People & Labour Markets

- **Employability fair:** in conjunction with the West Belfast Partnership, Belfast City Council organised an 'Enterprise and Employability Fair' in West Belfast in April 2009 which focussed on employment options in the area and providing advice on starting up a business¹⁹
- **Student support:** in May 2009 Belfast City Council and Queen University, Belfast hosted an 'E-Factor Fair', aimed at students and graduates from Queen's University, University of Ulster and Belfast Metropolitan College interested in starting their own businesses and improving their CVs²⁰.
- **Education and skills:** since March 2009, the Director of Development at Belfast City Council has been working with the Employment and Skills Board on improving the training and skills levels in the work force.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Efficiency savings:** Belfast City Council made efficiency savings of £7 million between 2005 and 2009 and has a plan in place to achieve further efficiencies over the next three years.
- **Coordinated responses:** at an emergency meeting in April 2009, Belfast City councillors unanimously voted in favour of a four-part motion which called for a co-ordinated ministerial response to job losses at Visteon, Bombardier Shorts, FG Wilson, Nortel and Hughes Christensen. The motion proposed working with Belfast's key training providers to offer hope and opportunities for the newly unemployed²¹. Councillors set up an 'Economic Downturn Task Group' that currently meets monthly to monitor progress in this area.
- **High level engagement:** Following engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive, Invest NI, and Queen's University Belfast, the Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) will stage a major conference in Belfast in October 2009. A delegation of senior US technology leaders and venture capitalists will engage directly with local software companies to identify emerging opportunities and innovate for future growth²².

Quality of Place

- **Titanic Quarter:** developers remain bullish about the planned Belfast Titanic Quarter, a major regeneration project which will involve nearly 1,000 luxury private flats at two riverside complexes; 16,000 full and part-time students at a brand-new college of further education; a three-star hotel; a banking centre; a multimedia hub and a Titanic museum²³. A legal wrangle which has delayed the start of the project is reportedly close to resolution²⁴, whilst work has already begun on the Belfast Metropolitan College's £44m campus²⁵.
- **'Renewing the Routes' programme:** The Council on securing additional funding has refined and enhanced an original £1.9m programme which covered target areas along 11 arterial routes completed in 2008. The Renewing the Routes programme covers areas in the West and Shankill where a package of physical and environmental improvements seeks to transform the physical environments along the radial routes of the city. Work totalling £2m from a combined £4.4m budget has been spent with the emphasis on enhancing the commercial centres that form the focus for the communities along these arterial routes. In addition to the wider improvements, in excess of 370 properties, including voluntary, commercial and retail businesses, will benefit from the targeted investment of over 50% of the available resources.

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Fruits of long term investment:** Belfast is reaping gains from its long-term strategy of investment in infrastructure and quality of place. A total of £500 million worth of new or re-developments will be unveiled in 2009, including City Hall following a £14 million refurbishment, the Ulster Hall following a £7.5m refurbishment and the Ulster Museum in September after a £17 million re-development²⁶. This is complimented by a diverse range of festivals and events, including the Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge in August 2009.

Birmingham

Overview

The UK's second city, Birmingham is the capital of the West Midlands region and the major driver of the regional economy. Following national trends, Birmingham's economy has undergone significant change over the past three decades with the service sector replacing manufacturing as the principal source of employment. Public and private investment has also wrought significant change to the city's urban fabric, with numerous developments and redevelopments either newly completed or ongoing. Nonetheless pockets of deprivation, low skills and worklessness remains as ongoing challenges.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The recession had hit the manufacturing industry in the West Midlands particularly badly, with significant consequences for the Birmingham economy. A number of local firms have made significant cutbacks, including:

- Bought by Tata in 2008, Jaguar Land Rover laid off 850 contract workers in November 2008 across its West Midland sites in Solihull, Castle Bromwich, Gaydon and Whitley²⁷, and a further 450 managers and agency staff in January 2009²⁸ following low demand. The company also halted work at its car plant in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, for two weeks in January 2009²⁹.
- The van maker LDV halted production in Birmingham in December after demand slumped and the company's Russian owner Gaz had problems finding financing. Following a series of abortive rescue deals, the company was finally placed into administration in June 2009 with the loss of the 'vast majority' of the 850 jobs at the plant and impacts down the supply chain³⁰.
- Engineering group GKN says it is cutting 564 jobs in the UK at plants in Birmingham, Walsall and Telford, and at its aerospace division sites in Burnley and Luton³¹.
- MG Motor UK Ltd (which bought the assets of failed car manufacturer MG Rover) warned that 30 employees were at risk of redundancy following a review and restructure of its business operations at the Longbridge site in April 2009³².
- The cessation of bmibaby flights from Birmingham Airport to five European destinations between March and October 2009 will result in the loss of 65 jobs at Birmingham Airport³³.

People & Labour Markets

As the largest UK local authority, Birmingham has witnessed the highest absolute rise in Jobs Seekers Allowance claims of all UK local authorities. Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of JSA claimant rose from 34,442 (5.5) to 48,082 (7.6%), an increase of 13,460. Over the same period the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies has more than halved from 9,868 to 4,859, so that there are now nearly 10 JSA claimants for every Job Centre Plus vacancy³⁴.

Local Governance & Leadership

The combination of lower revenue from tax and capital receipt revenue and higher spending costs have led to a series of budget pressures on Birmingham City Council that are likely to result in a £14 million overspend for FY 2009/10, including³⁵:

- a leisure budget overspend of £750,000 due to a sharp reduction in the number of people using municipal golf courses
- a £900,000 transportation budget overspend resulting from a collapse in the market for recyclable materials and a shortfall in car parking
- a deficit of £1.4 million in the planning committee budget as a result of fewer planning applications and reduced demand for land searches will put the in the red.

Quality of Place

The recession has had mixed impacts on quality of place issues in Birmingham. The value of real estate in Birmingham has dropped considerably, with knock on effects on some planned

developments. For instance Birmingham City Council's ambitious plan to build a further six care centres for elderly people fell through after the value of the land due to be sold to fund the developments collapsed from £22.3 million to just £4 million³⁶. Developers of the iconic V building development in Birmingham city centre announced that the project would be put on hold for at least a year due to changes in the performance of the local residential market in June 2008³⁷

Recession Responses

Birmingham City Council and partners are undertaking a range of activities designed to support local residents and businesses and the local economy and ensure that planned developments go ahead. In light of the substantial rise in unemployment, there may be opportunities to do more to support newly unemployed local residents.

City Economy

- **Swift payment of invoices:** Birmingham City Council pays the majority of invoices within 30 days and is willing to reduce payment turnaround times in return for early payment discounts or other benefits³⁸
- **Local procurement:** Birmingham City Council's website includes information and advice on doing business with the Council and advertises all contracts worth more than £50,000 on its website. A 'Find it in Birmingham' online portal, a series of seminars for local businesses and a Procurement Fair have also supported local procurement³⁹
- **Small business rate relief:** Birmingham City Council is supporting local small businesses to claim all the rates relief they are entitled to⁴⁰, and plans to use Working Neighbourhood Fund resources to provide formal relief to struggling SMEs, particularly those in areas with limited alternative employment
- **Bank of Birmingham:** Birmingham City Council is working with partners to explore opportunities that will provide additional liquidity in capital markets for local businesses through the use of its own borrowing facilities⁴¹. This includes investigating the feasibility of establishing a Bank of Birmingham to offer loans to businesses and other potential investors in the city⁴².
- **Flexibility for developers:** in a bid to keep the flagship £500 million Birmingham Arena Central development on track, Birmingham City Council agreed in June 2008 to allow the developers ACD to stagger a £5m payment towards transport improvements rather than pay the whole sum upfront, with the first payment being triggered by the start of construction⁴³
- **Support for retailers:** Birmingham City Council is using Working Neighbourhood Fund resources to widen its existing retail development programme to additional local centres to help existing independent retailers and attract new ones. The programme provides a grant award of up to £10K (50% of eligible costs) towards premises set up.
- **Business advice and events:** Business Link West Midlands is providing Birmingham companies with a dedicated credit-crunch hotline and running a series of free seminars, providing advice and support for local businesses facing financial difficulties⁴⁴. As part of 2008 National Enterprise Week: Birmingham City Council offered a week of free themed days for the which provided practical help to small and start-up businesses in Birmingham
- **Transition Loan Fund:** Advantage West Midlands (AWM) has set up a £9.2 million Transition Loan Fund for SMEs suffering short-term funding problems⁴⁵.

People & Labour Markets

- **Information and advice:** Birmingham City Council have produced a 'Coping with the Recession' leaflet for local residents⁴⁶. It contains information about available help and support, including the Birmingham City Council Debt Advice Team, Birmingham's Financial Inclusion Partnership and Abcul, the local credit union
- **Job Centre Plus funding expansion:** Job Centre Plus has recently announced an expansion of funding for its Rapid Response Service, a tailored package of support for individuals at risk of, or have recently experienced redundancy

- **Additional support for large companies making workers redundant:** Birmingham City Council will use Working Neighbourhood Fund resources to provide additional and dedicated help and support in terms of advice on benefits, housing and debt issues to the staff of large companies making significant number of staff redundant.
- **Support for deprived neighbourhood:** under a new scheme, Birmingham City Council is also providing additional financial help to people who start work in neighbourhoods with the highest unemployment rates in the city. For those who start work in these areas, and continue to qualify for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, the council will top up payments to the level received while an individual was unemployed, for up to 12 weeks⁴⁷.
- **Targeted Support Fund:** Birmingham is one of 50 areas in the UK that will receive money from the Government's £15.5m Targeted Support Fund which is designed to help local third sector organisations cope with increased demand. Recipient areas were chosen on the basis of high levels of vulnerability to the recession⁴⁸
- **Social housing:** Birmingham City Council intends to bid for the whole of the £100 million pot made available in the 2009 Budget for the construction of social housing⁴⁹. A new Municipal Housing Trust has been established with plans to construct around 500 new homes each year. The Birmingham City Council Budget for FY 2009/10 also includes £344m of investment for upgrading council housing stock⁵⁰.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Low council tax rise:** Birmingham City Council increased council tax by 1.9% for FY 2009/20, one of the lowest increases in the UK⁵¹
- **Efficiency savings:** Birmingham City Council embarked upon a major Business Transformation programme in 2006 that plans to save around £1 billion, increase efficiency whilst improving quality of service, provide exceptional value for citizens and businesses and improve employee job satisfaction over a 10 year period⁵². This process is ongoing.
- **Birmingham Dragon's Den:** Birmingham City Council has launched an internal scheme to encourage staff to be more entrepreneurial whilst improving council services to the community. Employees will form teams to pitch business ideas to a panel for between £1 and £1,000 of funding for community schemes⁵³

Quality of Place

- **Creative use of empty shops:** Birmingham City Council has asked art students from Matthew Boulton College to come up with eye-catching artwork to decorate empty premises in city council-owned shopping parades⁵⁴
- **Crime prevention:** following concern over the possible impacts of the recession on local crime rates, Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Police Commanders commissioned a report from the UCL Centre for Security and Crime Science to predicatively map potential increases in crime. The Safer Birmingham Partnership is using results for strategic planning purposes⁵⁵
- **Exploiting property market opportunities:** Birmingham City Council and its partners are actively exploring opportunities for strategic acquisitions of land and property as prices remain relatively low
- **Marketing the city:** Birmingham continue to market itself as a destination for private sector and public sector inward investment, particularly through Lyons Public Sector relocations from the South East; and through development of investor relationships with key partners in fast growing, global markets such as China, India and the Far East.

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Birmingham library:** Birmingham City Council unveiled plans for Britain's largest public library in April 2009. Set to open in 2013, the £193 million (the City Council will contribute £159 million) Library of Birmingham in Centenary Square is intended to be "the flagship for the regeneration of Birmingham" and there are plans to offer skills and interview training and language skills workshops to help people back into work⁵⁶

- **Birmingham Big City Plan:** the Birmingham Big City Plan is a masterplan intended to shape and revitalise Birmingham over the next 20 years to ‘create a greener, smarter, fairer and more appealing city centre, increasing the employment, training and leisure opportunities for future generations⁵⁷, and providing a framework to guide major investment and achieve Birmingham’s vision of being a top 20 global city on key quality of life indices. Birmingham City Council will invest £11 million over the next three years in the Big City Plan
- **Major developments:** the relocation and redevelopment of the Wholesale Markets site will support the regeneration of local areas through attracting investment, increased footfall to the area, and creating an additional 200 plus jobs. Other key infrastructure developments that will help attract investment include the Gateway at Birmingham New Street, and runway extension at Birmingham International Airport.
- **Area Investment Prospectus:** Birmingham City Council launched its revised Area Investment Prospectus (AIP) in March 2009. The AIP provides commercially relevant information on the key strategic development and investment opportunities around the city and outlines the framework that will guide the continuing transformation of Birmingham⁵⁸.

Bristol

Overview

Bristol experienced deep structural economic problems during the 1980s and was badly affected by the recession of the early 1990s, but has since successfully made the transition to become one of the UK's most successful and most 'knowledge intensive' cities.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

Oxford Economics forecast 6,800 jobs losses or 2.7 percent of the workforce in Bristol between 2007 and 2009, based on a scenario of 2 percent GDP contraction during 2009⁵⁹. Given the more severe than anticipated economic contraction, this forecast significantly underestimates total job losses. Significant cutbacks amongst businesses in Bristol include:

- The merger of the Western Daily Press and Bristol Evening Post which led to the loss of around 45 jobs⁶⁰
- Royal Sun Alliance has announced that it will close its Bristol office by 2012 as part of an efficiency drive to save £70m, resulting in the loss of 400 permanent jobs in Bristol⁶¹
- As a significant base for the Group Manufacturing division of RBS, Bristol is likely to suffer from the nearly 12,000 jobs losses that RBS has announced so far in 2009⁶²
- Similarly, there are likely to be negative ramifications for Bristol from the consolidation of the loss-making Global Services division of BT^{63, 64}
- The Co-operative Group (Co-op) is to close the Bristol headquarters of Somerfield after its £1.6bn takeover of the group in 2008, affecting 750 employees based in Bristol⁶⁵
- Standard Life is to cut 195 jobs across the UK, including 69 jobs in Bristol⁶⁶
- Up to 100 people who work in administrative roles with bus operator First Bus have been told their jobs are at risk⁶⁷.
- Staff at Bristol University have been warned that the recession may force a number of job losses amongst staff⁶⁸

People & Labour Markets

The number of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance in Bristol rose from 5,345 (1.9%) in September 2007 to 11,067 (3.9%) in April 2009, but the claimant rate remained below the national average of 4.1%. Over the same period, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies decreased (albeit variably) from 4,281 to 2,209, indicating a significant tightening in the labour market.

The average house in Bristol cost £189,046 in the first quarter of 2009, which represents a 7.3% decline on the first quarter of 2008⁶⁹.

Local Governance & Leadership

The recession has led to reductions to income from a number of revenue streams including parking, development control, local land charges, commercial property, and increased expenditure on benefits and housing commitments⁷⁰. Control of Bristol City Council changed hands in February 2009 when the Labour leader and her cabinet resigned following a dispute over a budget amendment⁷¹

Quality of Place

In January 2009, 13 of the 36 premises on Bristol Arcade were vacant⁷², suggesting that the recession has had some impact on quality of place in Bristol. In addition, Bristol City Council has shelved the tendering process to redevelop 549 pre-cast reinforced concrete homes across Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Lockleaze and Henbury, citing the recession. Solutions from developers failed to deliver the right number and type of council homes needed and were judged not to provide the necessary 'value for money'⁷³.

Recession Responses

City Economy

- **Sustainable procurement:** Bristol City Council launched a Sustainable Procurement Strategy in February 2009, to help local suppliers gain contracts for goods and services from the council⁷⁴.
- **Promotion of business rate relief:** Bristol City Council intends to actively promote small-business rate relief and deferred payments to help local business reduce overheads and ease cash flow. It is also offering flexibility around rent payments for the commercial property it owns⁷⁵.
- **Business events:** 76 people attended an event entitled *Growth Opportunities in the Recession* in September 2008 which was co-hosted by the Bristol Enterprise Network and the University of the West of England and explored strategies for success in an economic downturn⁷⁶.
- **Business support advice:** in partnership with neighbouring councils through the West at Work initiative, Bristol City Council has produced a leaflet for businesses which contains information about available support and sources of help⁷⁷.
- **South West Loans Fund:** As part of the drive for economic recovery, SWRDA has announced a new £10m South West Loans Fund to help growth-oriented business with viable business plans. Of the funds provided by SWRDA and ERDF programmes, £5m is available to South West businesses outside Cornwall⁷⁸.
- **Support for small manufacturing firms:** The SWRDA-run South West Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS-SW) SW has been offering smaller South West firms "downturn readiness reviews", modelling their finances and business performance to show the likely impact of changes in order books and cash flows and offering a range of training and support programmes⁷⁹.

People & Labour Markets

In February 2009, Bristol City Council announced its plans to invest £1 million of additional money, made available by Central Government, to address the impacts of recession. This includes⁸⁰:

- **Improved processes:** £310,000 to improve the speed with which Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims are processed and recruit additional staff to handle the large rise in benefit claims
- **Apprenticeships:** £190,000 for additional Apprenticeships with Bristol City Council. A programme is being developed, in partnership with City of Bristol College, which will see 100 new Apprentices by September.
- **Debt advice:** £170,000 for enhanced debt advice and benefit take-up campaigns, and recruitment of a Financial Inclusion Champion to combat loan sharks
- **Support for the Bristol Credit Union:** £30,000 support for the Bristol Credit Union to enable the credit union to increase the number of members, raise awareness of low-cost loans, promote financial inclusion and increase levels of activity across the city.
- **Support for deprived communities:** £300,000 for Bristol Partnership to tackle the social impacts of recession (such as health, crime, incidence of domestic violence, relationship breakdown and increased homelessness) on deprived communities, with the intention being that this will enable partner organisations to provide matched funding. Project funding decisions were taken in early May and funded projects will be running by the summer
- **Support for learning:** Supporting, in partnership with local colleges, the Bristol Festival of Learning in May 2009, a day long event highlighting the opportunities that learning can provide for residents of Bristol⁸¹
- **Housing market support:** Reducing land search fees, improved processing times and Homes Improvement Pack (HIP) refresh service to support the housing market⁸²

Working with partners, the University of the West of England has put together a package of nearly £1 million (including £500,000 from the HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund) to help

people and businesses of all sizes and sectors in Bristol City Region during the economic downturn⁸³.

- **Training vouchers:** The funding includes the introduction of new Enterprise and Training Vouchers (ETVs) with a nominal value of £235 for entry onto training or business support schemes. In line with HEFCE guidelines, priority will be given to the unemployed, people at risk of redundancy and those facing barriers to employment⁸⁴
- **Walk in centre:** partner schemes will include a new Walk-In and Referral service at Bush House Bristol, where skills brokers, career guidance counsellors and enterprise/business start-up mentors will deliver business support schemes and higher-level re-training within the regional framework of support⁸⁵.
- **Supplementary services:** In conjunction with Business Link and BusinessWest, UWE will also offer a range of services that supplement first level services offered by Jobcentre Plus, including advice on alternative routes to redundancy and access to sponsored UWE business support schemes⁸⁶

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Website:** Bristol City Council has launched a Beat the Recession website which contains links to useful organisations and sources of help and information⁸⁷
- **Efficiency savings:** Bristol City's Council's budget for FY 2009/10 budget includes a target of £1.7m in net savings from Business Transformation, otherwise known as efficiency savings and the streamlining of management structures and will entail some redundancies (costs will be met from the Transformation Reserve)⁸⁸.
- **Recession Action Plan:** Bristol City Council has put together a Recession Action Plan which sets out a series of measures designed to reduce the economic and social impacts of the recession⁸⁹. It has also started to produce a monthly Economic Bulletin and more detailed quarterly analysis of economic trends and impact⁹⁰

Quality of Place

- **Tourism marketing:** the Bristol city council budget for FY 2009/10 includes an additional £400,000 for national and international marketing of Bristol to encourage more business investment⁹¹
- **Call for ideas for vacant premises:** Kerry McCarthy, MP for Bristol East has asked residents to suggest uses for vacant shop premises in Bristol⁹²
- **Creative use of vacant premises:** Bristol City Council, Urbis Development and Bedminster Community Chest supported the Spring Forward event staged by illuminate, a creative arts group, in March 2009. The event saw the transformation of the windows of two disused Bristol shop fronts into 'dynamic picture frames' through the use of light and projected images⁹³

Cardiff

Overview

Cardiff and the neighbouring Vale of Glamorgan are major drivers of the Welsh economy, contributing a disproportionately high share of economic output in Wales. A former industrial city, Cardiff has since become service centre for the wider Welsh economy and invested heavily in its infrastructure. The transformation of Cardiff Bay (regarded as one of the most successful large-scale regeneration projects in the UK) and other regeneration investments stand Cardiff in good stead to weather the recession.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The recession has had a significant impact on St David's 2, the flagship retail and leisure development in central Cardiff which is due to open in autumn 2009, with nearly half (43%) of the retail space in, the £675m yet to be let in May 2009⁹⁴. The Hayes Apartments development of 304 apartments in 7 high rise towers above the St David's 2 centre has also been affected: in November 2008 it was reported that only 8 of the 304 apartments had been sold⁹⁵. The St David's Partnership announced that all seven of the high rise tower blocks would be externally finished, with one being fitted-out and the remaining blocks left empty until the property market recovers.

The recession has also impacted on local businesses, with significant cutbacks amongst a number of local businesses including:

- The closure of the Ventura call-centre in the Splott area of Cardiff resulted in the loss of 600 jobs⁹⁶
- Potential threat to 550 jobs in the Zurich Offices in the City Centre
- Car climate control system maker AB Automotive announced plans to close its Cardiff plant with the loss of 157 jobs in July 2008⁹⁷
- Barclays cut 300 jobs at Firstplus, its home loans division in Cardiff in July 2008 due to slowing demand⁹⁸ and a further 109 in December 2008 when a function was outsourced to a third party in Stratford-upon-Avon⁹⁹

People & Labour Markets

Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of Cardiff residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance nearly doubled from 4,486 (2.1%) to 8,759 (4.2%), an increase of 95%. Over the same period, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies more than halved from 3,522 to 1,498, so that by April 2009 there were nearly 6 people claiming JSA for every 1 vacancy advertised with Job Centre Plus¹⁰⁰.

Local Governance & Leadership

Reductions in the Bank of England Base Rate are predicted to bring about an estimated loss of interest on Cardiff Council investments of £3.2 million¹⁰¹.

Quality of Place

A Deloitte hotel occupancy survey showed that occupancy rates in Cardiff during the first quarter of 2009 stood at 59.6%, down from 64.8% last year largely due to reduced business bookings. The revenue hotels Cardiff made on each room fell more at 7.1%, although this was less than the national average of 10.3%¹⁰². There have also been some impact on planned developments, for instance house-builder Bellway halted construction of two blocks of flats in Cardiff Bay in summer 2008 due to lack of demand amongst buyers¹⁰³.

Recession Responses

Cardiff Council and partners are taking decisive action on a number of fronts to support local residents and the local economy in both the short and the longer term. The proposed Capital Cardiff Fund and the Cardiff Ambassadors scheme represent particularly innovative responses.

City Economy

- **Support for SMEs:** the Cardiff Council Budget for FY 2009/10 includes additional support of £750,000 toward existing packages of support for SMEs looking to raise funds for start-up or capital investment¹⁰⁴
- **Loans, grants and equity:** £650,000 of the £750,000 made available to SMEs will be used to create a Capital Cardiff fund that offers support including loans, grants and equity stakes (equity investment does not increase the debt burden of a business and can give businesses greater flexibility) to start up businesses and existing companies that need assistance to undertake investment¹⁰⁵. Authority has been delegated to the Corporate Director (Economic) to develop and implement the new Capital Cardiff Development Fund for businesses¹⁰⁶.
- **Supporting entrepreneurship:** working with local Enterprise Agencies, up to £100,000 will be used to create a new entrepreneurship/start up fund that grants between £500 and £5,000 to new entrepreneurs, sole traders and start-up companies, with priority given to businesses that are created as a result of redundancy.
- **Further revenue assistance to SMEs:** allocating Grants are available normally up to £5,000 based on a maximum 50% contribution¹⁰⁷.
- **Expansion of existing schemes:** an additional £62,500 has been allocated to existing SMEs revenue assistance schemes and Cardiff Council intends to expand the Business Diagnostic scheme to analyse finance, operations and strategy within companies and provide a detailed insight into how best to support businesses¹⁰⁸.
- **A new business network:** Cardiff Council is making progress on setting up a new Business Leaders Network following the demise of the Cardiff Chambers of Commerce¹⁰⁹.

People & Labour Markets

- **Redundancy support:** Cardiff Council, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus and the Benefits Agency have come together to offer a holistic redundancy support package named ReAct which provides a redundancy action fund to help people attain skills, overcome obstacles and identify employment opportunities following redundancy. Currently the ReAct team is contactable both day and night to inform companies in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan of the support available.
- **Improved access to training:** Cardiff Council has allocated an additional £62,500 to the Local Training & Enterprise centres that provide coordinated front end support across Cardiff to help people access training and work and work with employers and local job seekers to help minimise the impact of any job losses¹¹⁰. An additional £60,000 has also been approved for 1 year temporary staffing to assist the enhanced services at the Training and Enterprise Centres¹¹¹.
- **Targeting the disadvantaged:** Cardiff Council has recently signed a Local Employment Partnership agreement, which will target particular groups of disadvantaged job seekers. The aim is to place 100 people into work at the Council whilst offering intensive employment preparation training, work trials, work placements, and subsidised work places for people on the New Deal¹¹².
- **Credit unions and financial advice:** Adult Learners' Week in Cardiff included a course entitled 'Coping with the Credit Crunch' designed to help people through the recession and manage their money better¹¹³. Cardiff Council has provided £19,000 to support the creation of a Business Development Worker post for Cardiff Credit Union to help strengthen the role of the credit union in the city
- **Sector specific support:** building on the opportunities offered by the St David's' 2 development, the Cardiff Training and Enterprise Centres have worked with the St. David's 2 Construction Job Shop to place people into construction work throughout the city region.

Cardiff Council has also contributed £60,000 establish a Retail Job Shop capable of dealing with large scale recruitment in the city centre in FY 2010/11¹¹⁴.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Council Tax increase:** Cardiff Council imposed a Council Tax increase of 4.3% in 2009/10
- **University partnership:** Cardiff University is one of five Welsh universities that have pledged to work together to create an "innovative and dynamic economy" and drive the Welsh economy out of the recession¹¹⁵.

Quality of Place

- **Creative use of empty premises:** Should occupancy rates at St David's 2 not increase to the 80-% level anticipated by the joint developers Cardiff Council will work with partners and colleagues if required to support use of void space by community projects or for creative art¹¹⁶
- **Cardiff Commitment:** in April 2009, 21 South Wales hotels (including the Hilton) signed up to the Cardiff Commitment, a pledge to cap room rates during major events and conferences which it is hoped will encourage more visitors to come to the city
- **Regeneration projects under construction or recently completed include:** Cardiff Central Library, Cardiff City Stadium, Canoe Slalom Centre, Cambrian Marine Development, Cardiff Museum and Bute Park. The completion of these new developments will make a significant difference to the quality of the public realm in Cardiff and help the city see out the recession.

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Cardiff Ambassadors:** The Cardiff Ambassadors Programme, designed to promote the city's 'offer' to potential investors, was launched by the Cardiff & Co public-private partnership in partnership with Cardiff University, UWIC and the University of Glamorgan in March 2009. High profile ambassadors from the world of business, academia, sport and entertainment are tasked with positioning the city as a destination of choice for potential investors and conference organisers¹¹⁷
- **Ongoing development plans:** Cardiff Council intends to continue investing in regeneration projects in deprived communities. For instance plans for the redevelopment of Loudoun Square in Butetown are well underway and it is anticipated that work will start in 2010, subject to the planning process. The development will include a new community health centre, a new shopping parade, managed community space and a mix of social rented and low cost family houses and flats¹¹⁸
- **Place shaping and shielding:** Cardiff Council recognises that its long-term "place shaping" regeneration agenda needs to be matched by "place shielding" policies to reflect changing economic conditions¹¹⁹. The new support initiatives are contained within the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 strategic aim to establish measures to support the local economy.

Chelmsford

Overview

Located 31 miles north-east of London, Chelmsford is the major economic hub within Essex and has been identified as a Growth Area within the East of England Plan.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

Chelmsford has been relatively protected from the worst effects of the recession but some local companies have made redundancies. Following a reduction in demand for its products, e2v technologies (formerly Marconi) announced up to 80 redundancies across its three UK sites at Chelmsford, Lincoln and High Wycombe in April 2009¹²⁰. In addition, National insurance and Guarantee Corporation (part of the RBS Group) plans to close its Chelmsford office (which currently employs 32 people) in early 2010, as part of a plan to consolidate UK office locations¹²¹.

However Chelmsford is set to gain from consolidation activities being undertaken by other businesses. For example Visteon Engineering Services, the remaining part of the Visteon company in Basildon is considering moving its UK head office to smaller offices in Chelmsford¹²², and Northcliffe Media is to create a centralised design and production hub in Chelmsford for all titles in its South East weekly newspaper division as part of a major restructuring exercise¹²³.

People & Labour Markets

The number of Chelmsford residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance increased from 1,299 (1.3%) to 3017 (2.9%) or 132% between September 2007 and April 2009, but the claimant rate remained below the national average of 4.1% in April 2009. The labour market has become considerably tighter in Chelmsford, with more than 4 people on Job Seekers Allowance chasing each vacancy advertised by Job Centre Plus. Again though, the situation in Chelmsford is considerably better than both regionally and nationally.

Local Governance & Leadership

In Chelmsford, income from government grant, council tax, interest on investment and discretionary charges has reduced at a time when cost pressures including the equal pay review, concessionary travel, utilities costs and pensions, has increased, creating a gap in the budget for FY 2009/10 of about £5 million¹²⁴.

Similarly, the economic downturn has had an impact on Essex County Council finances, with reductions in capital receipts, Section 106 revenue, income from leisure spending and higher service costs¹²⁵.

Quality of Place

According to a survey by Cushman, Chelmsford has one of the lowest rates of unoccupied retail units outside London¹²⁶, indicating that retailing in Chelmsford remains healthy. However whilst the final stage of the 10 year Boarded Barns regeneration project was completed in February 2009¹²⁷, redevelopment of the St John's Hospital site (which was sold to developers for £18.2 million in 2007) was on hold indefinitely in July 2008 following the decline of the housing market¹²⁸.

Recession Responses

Chelmsford Borough Council, Essex County Council and other partners have introduced a range of measures to support local business, residents and the local economy.

City Economy

- **Banking on Essex:** in partnership with Santander, Essex County Council has set up the first council-run bank since the Birmingham Municipal Bank closed down in 1976¹²⁹. Banking on Essex is a special delivery vehicle which will act as an intermediary and release £50m of European Investment Bank (EIB) funding (via loans of up to £100,000) for small and medium-sized businesses based in Essex which have been trading for at least a year¹³⁰.
- **Local procurement:** all tender and grant funding opportunities on a dedicated electronic Supplier Portal¹³¹ and Essex CC is also reviewing its procurement processes to support local SMEs. Measures under consideration include¹³²:
 - Encouraging the selection of local businesses by requiring at least 3 quoting businesses to have Essex postcodes.
 - Reviewing the gearing and ratio modelling used in current auditing of suppliers' accounts, which can penalise smaller companies with small turnovers/larger overheads.
 - Reassessing required insurance levels at the Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) stage of the tendering process
 - Working with Business Link/Federation of Small Businesses to encourage bids from consortia of local SMEs
- **Rate relief campaigning:** Essex County Council is campaigning to increase rates of business rate relief take-up amongst small businesses¹³³
- **Swift payment of invoices:** Chelmsford Borough Council has committed to a target of paying 90% of invoices from small and medium sized enterprises within 10 days¹³⁴; Essex County Council is considering establishing a financial help desk to enable struggling companies to request early payment of invoices.
- **Business events:** Essex County Council have hosted a series of sector specific events where businesses can find out more about the business support and assistance available to help them through the recession¹³⁵
- **Expansion of investor development programme:** Essex County Council is increasing number of development visits to investing firms from 75 to 200 in order to increase Essex's prospects of retaining and growing investing businesses, and help secure funding for training and R&D, form partnerships with universities and receive support on planning issues and accessing new markets¹³⁶.
- **Support for advanced manufacturing firms:** Essex County Council is partnering with University of Cambridge's Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) to provide world class business support for innovation for up to 150 Essex advanced manufacturing companies over three years, through joint funding by Essex County Council, IfM and the Gatsby Foundation¹³⁷

People & Labour Markets

- **Redundancy support:** Chelmsford Borough Council launched a redundancy support scheme in June 2009¹³⁸ in partnership with Chelmsford College, Business Link, Mid Essex Enterprise Agency, Citizens' Advice Bureau. Under the "Redundancy Initiative: Supporting Enterprise" (R.I:S.E) scheme, advisers will provide advice and support to help people identify career options, improve professional skills, network professionally and for people interested in starting or buying a business every Tuesday via seminars and advice surgeries.
- **Council Tax relief:** Essex County Council has offered council tax relief of £100 to the 30,000 most vulnerable households, targeted at households with people over the age of 80 or children under the age of 16 that are receiving partial council tax benefit. The Council is looking to include other low income groups next year¹³⁹.
- **Increasing take-up of Council Tax benefit:** Chelmsford Borough Council is working to increase the uptake of council tax benefit by eligible households through information campaigns and additional signposting to existing grant pots¹⁴⁰
- **'Essex Apprentices':** Essex County Council is doubling the number of apprenticeship placements available at the Council and partner organisations and working with the private sector to support enterprises wishing to take on an apprentice¹⁴¹

- **Credit Union support:** Supporting the development of Essex's credit union 'Essex Savers' into a sustainable £2 million business, with the public sector providing start up grants, seconded personnel, collection points, payroll deduction facilities and publicity to increase awareness of the benefits of credit unions.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Local Government Act 2000:** Essex County Council is making use of the Local Government Act 2000, in particular the wellbeing power that councils have to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Many of the measures it is taking to ameliorate the impact of recession on individuals and communities in Essex relate to the wellbeing powers¹⁴²:
- **Efficiency savings:** to close the £5 million budget deficit, Chelmsford Borough Council has decreasing staffing costs by not filling vacancies, invited requests for voluntary redundancy and made some staff compulsorily redundant¹⁴³; efficiency programmes at Essex County Council have delivered savings of £42 million to date. Essex CC has committed saving £200 million over the next three years¹⁴⁴.
- **Increasing council tax:** the Chelmsford council tax precept increased by 4.4% for FY 2009/10, owing in part to increased spending on services¹⁴⁵; Essex County Council limited the increase in its share of council tax paid by Chelmsford residents to 1.9%, below the rate of inflation

Quality of Place

- **Creative use of empty premises:** the vacant space left by the former Woolworths store unit on Chelmsford High Street is now used to advertise the shopping facilities and attractions that Chelmsford offers, with a list of shops and attractions and a map of the local area¹⁴⁶. Empty shops are also being used to feature the work of local artists under the 'ART in Shops' scheme¹⁴⁷
- **Essex Post Offices:** Under the Essex Post Office Initiative, Essex County Council has set aside £1.5m to re-open up to 15 Post Office branches which had closed as part of a national closure programme

Long Term Strategy & Vision

- **Chelmsford Opportunities Guide:** updated in April 2009, the Chelmsford Opportunities Guide highlights the commercial development opportunities available to potential investors in the borough¹⁴⁸.
- **Ambassadors Leaflet:** the Chelmsford Ambassadors Leaflet highlights key facts that local people can use to promote Chelmsford¹⁴⁹
- **EssexWorks:** under its 4 year EssexWorks programme launched in 2008, Essex County Council aims to deliver the best quality of life in Britain. EssexWorks is based on three delivery programmes (spending for 2009-2010 in brackets)¹⁵⁰:
 - People: policies which enable people to reach their potential and enhance residents' quality of life. (£678.7 million plus a further £152.7 million capital investment).
 - Economy: policies that invest in key services, provide better value for the County's taxpayers and enhance the County's infrastructure (£94.1 million, plus a further £140.7 million capital investment).
 - World: policies which specifically promote sustainability and ensure the County's physical environment is protected (£68.6 million, plus a further £6.3 million capital investment).

Derby

Overview

The Derby economy underwent structural change in the 1980s and 1990s, following national trends. Nonetheless, Derby has maintained a significant manufacturing sector and developed a reputation as a centre of high tech manufacturing and engineering excellence, a function of the presence of high profile manufacturing businesses including Rolls Royce, Toyota UK, Bombardier and Alstom. However in an economic downturn marked by significant contraction in the manufacturing sector, this has left Derby vulnerable to the recession.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

As the home of Rolls Royce, which announced plans to cut 2,300 people from its global workforce in January 2008 and a further 2000 in November 2008¹⁵¹, it is no surprise that the recession has had a significant impact on Derby. Rolls Royce, which employs 12,500 people in Derby (10,500 at Sinfin and 2,000 at Raynesway) confirmed that it would cut 140 jobs at the Derby engine assembly and test facility in November 2008 and a further 240 shopfloor jobs in January 2009¹⁵². However the firm will take on 220 apprentices in 2009 and 2010¹⁵³.

A number of other local firms have also made significant cutbacks:

- Royal Crown Derby which employs 230 staff in Derby switched to a four-day week in January 2009 following a drop in demand for its china¹⁵⁴
- The Sitel call centre in Derby which currently employs 220 people will close in summer 2009, with jobs being transferred to other sites in Watford, Dundee, Exeter, Kingston-upon-Thames and Stratford-upon-Avon¹⁵⁵.
- Celanese, a chemical manufacturing firm, has announced that it will shed around 100 jobs from its Spondon plant workforce of 525 people in order to improve its efficiency and competitiveness¹⁵⁶.
- A small number of apprentices in Derby have also been laid off from their placements¹⁵⁷.

People & Labour Markets

The recession has led to an 81% increase in the number of number of Derby residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance. JSA claimant number rose from 4,080 (2.8%) in September 2007 to 7,374 in April 2009 (5.0%), with a higher claimant rate in April 2009 than the national average rate of 4.1%. Over the same period, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies decreased from 3,176 to 1,358, with a low of just 686 vacancies in January 2009.

Higher rates of unemployment have had a knock on effect on ability to pay for housing. Rent arrears for Derby Homes tenants rose from £739,738 in March 2008 to at £1,327,717 in September 2008, before falling to £1,127,407 in December 2008¹⁵⁸. House prices have also been affected, with a 6.3% year on year decline in average house prices between the first quarter of 2008 and 2009.

Local Governance & Leadership

The number of planning applications received by Derby City Council fell from 2,161 applications in 2007-8 to 1,592 in 2009-10¹⁵⁹, with a consequent loss in revenue for the council.

Quality of Place

According a Guardian article on the impact of the recession on Derby, 'one of the striking features of Derby city centre is the number of empty units and barely breathing high street ghosts'¹⁶⁰.

Recession Responses

Derby City Council and other partners are undertaking action on multiple fronts to support local businesses and residents. Most notable is the excellent 'Derby Bites Back' campaign which has been led by the Derby Evening Telegraph and supported by a large number of partners.

City Economy

- **Business networks:** on behalf of EMDA and other partners, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce organised a free Showcase, Market and Sell event designed to boost local trade during the recession. Representatives from major employers and more than 230 firms attended the February 2009 event¹⁶¹.
- **Small business support:** Derbyshire County Council have frozen rents in its small business centres, benefiting the 57 occupying businesses¹⁶²

People & Labour Markets

- **Support for Apprentices:** Construction Skills has unveiled measures to help the 204 apprentices it has identified as at risk of losing their jobs in the East Midlands. These include including an apprenticeship matching service to find new placements for unable to continue training with their original employer, mentoring, advice for employers about business support and help with paperwork¹⁶³
- **Enhanced innovation and entrepreneurship support:** a consortium involving the University of Derby, Derby College, Chesterfield College, West Notts College and North Notts College succeeded in securing £988,086 from the £27 million HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund. With matched funding, the £2 million strategy to promote entrepreneurship and innovation will entail¹⁶⁴:
 - Extending the University of Derby's successful Enterprise Scheme, with 20 additional incubator access grants and 12 enterprise bursaries offered to encourage new businesses start-ups.
 - Offering an extra 300 spaces on short-term training courses, along with 500 higher education free taster sessions and 250 fully-funded short courses for the unemployed.
 - The University's Careers Development Centre will also use a network of outreach facilities to offer skills workshops and one-to-one support from higher education career specialist advisors.
- **Financial advice:** the Derwent Neighbourhood Team organised a credit crunch roadshow designed to help people in the Derwent ward cope with issues such as redundancy, budgets, finding a job and debt which was attended by more than 50 people¹⁶⁵.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Increase in Council tax:** Derby City councillors approved a 4.25% rise in council tax in February 2009¹⁶⁶
- **Postponing remuneration increases:** Derby City councillors have agreed to postpone their increase in remuneration until after the recession¹⁶⁷.

Quality of Place

- **'Derby Bites Back' campaign:** with the endorsement of the Confederation of British Industry¹⁶⁸, the Derby Evening Telegraph launched a campaign on the recession entitled 'Derby Bites Back' for an initial 3 months toward the end of 2008. As part of the initiative, the Evening Telegraph has been¹⁶⁹:
 - showcasing local businesses and the products and services they offer (reports suggest that featured businesses have increase their sales by around 20%¹⁷⁰)
 - working with retailers to offer exclusive promotions to readers every Saturday
 - showcasing individual success stories
 - answering readers' questions about the economy, businesses and jobs
 - supplementing its weekly recruitment section by featuring available employment opportunities on a daily basis daily

The campaign has been supported by Derby City Council (which agreed to waive charges at a city centre car park for 3 months to support the campaign), Derby City Partnership, Marketing Derby, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, Westfield, the Cathedral Quarter Bid Company, the University of Derby and City Centre Management Derby.

- **Shopper Hopper bus:** Using £140,000 of Section 106 funding, City Centre Management Derby (an organisation funded by Derby City Council) introduced a free 'Shopper Hopper' bus to the city in February 2009 as part of the Derby Bites Back campaign¹⁷¹. The service is designed to attract customers from one end of the city centre to the other and runs every 20 minutes from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sunday.

Long Term Strategy & Vision

- **Invest in Derby:** the £300,000 Invest in Derby scheme which aims to persuade premium retailers, food and drink operators and office-based businesses to relocate to Derby was launched in September 2008¹⁷².
- **Domestic lobbying:** Marketing Derby staged a 'Derby Embassy' event in Westminster in April 2009 as part of the long term aim of attracting relocating Government departments to Derby. Attended by local MPs, the event was used to lobby Government officials and property agents charged with finding premises outside the capital and to launch a brochure detailing the large-scale office schemes that are being marketed in the city¹⁷³.
- **International marketing:** Marketing Derby and Derby Cityscape also held a Derby Embassy event at the Marche International des Professionnels de l'Immobilier (MIPIM) property summit in France in 2009 to promote the city to potential investors and senior agents¹⁷⁴.

Glasgow

Overview

As the largest Scottish city, Glasgow is a major economic driver within the Scottish and UK economies. The start of Glasgow's impressive physical and economic transformation is often traced back to the 1983 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign. Since this time, the city has benefitted from sustained public and private investment: it is now one of the UK's most popular tourist destinations and is set to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Glasgow's economic transformation, however, remains incomplete with significant challenges around such as low productivity, worklessness and derelict land.

Recession Impact

City Economy

Whilst the change in the rate of working age residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance has tracked the UK average, Glasgow as the largest Scottish local authority has witnessed the highest absolute increase in the number of people claiming JSA of the Scottish local authorities. A number of local businesses have been hard by the recession, including:

- A total of 700 manufacturing jobs are to be cut at the Hewlett-Packard plant in Erskine near Glasgow, with work being transferred to the Czech Republic¹⁷⁵.
- Trinity Mirror is cutting up to 70 journalists from the Daily Record and Sunday Mail, its Glasgow-based Scottish newspapers¹⁷⁶.
- The Glasgow-based Herald and Times Group, which publishes The Herald, Sunday Herald and Evening Times made all of its 250 journalists and publishing staff redundant in December 2008. Staff were invited to re-apply for their jobs, with around 210 rehired if they agree to new terms and conditions¹⁷⁷.
- Private equity-owned insurance company Pearl Group announced that it was scaling back operations at its Glasgow office in September 2008, with the loss of up to 270 jobs¹⁷⁸.
- The closure of a Thomas Cook call centre in Glasgow led to the loss of around 158 jobs¹⁷⁹.
- Following the announcement of 70 job losses at Scottish title owned by the Trinity Mirror group, National Union of Journalist members took three days of strike action in April 2009¹⁸⁰.

People & Labour Markets

The recession has led to a significant increase in the number of residents seeking advice from the Glasgow's Money Advice Services and claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of JSA claimants rose from 13,795 (3.6%) to 21,252 (5.5%). Over the same period, the number of vacancies advertised with Job Centre Plus decreased from 8,758 to 3,600, with a low of just 2,072 vacancies in January 2009.

Plans by Glasgow City Council to reduce its budget deficit by closing 13 primary schools and 12 nurseries throughout the Glasgow have led to the formation of a 'Save Our Schools' group and a series of public protests¹⁸¹.

Local Governance & Leadership

An updated Financial Forecast for 2009-11 identified a net spending gap of £22.2 million for Glasgow City Council in 2009-10¹⁸². A 'perfect storm' of rising costs and falling revenue resulting in part from the global downturn will reportedly force Glasgow City Council to break into its £144 million reserves to meet spending commitments over the next three years¹⁸³. Plans to meet spending commitments and infrastructure developments by creating a company to sell surplus property and land have been suspended in light of falling land values.

Quality of Place

Whilst the value of private sector development across Glasgow totals £4.3 billion (an increase of 2% compared to 2008) and much of the investment for major developments associated with the 2014 Commonwealth Games place at the time of the bid¹⁸⁴, a number of planned developments are set to remain in the pipeline until property market conditions improve. These include a number of office developments in the international financial services district, retail development in Central Easterhouse, and residential development in Tradeston, Blackhill, Oatlands and Garthamlock¹⁸⁵. There are also signs that developers in a range of property market sectors are withdrawing from, deferring or delaying proposed land purchases as a result of the lack of commercial finance available to fund land¹⁸⁶.

Recession Responses

Glasgow City Council and partners recognised the potential threats posed by recession early and have responded by introducing an impressive array of measures designed to support the local economy and ensure that Glasgow is well positioned for the recovery.

City Economy

- **Support for SMEs:** between April and September 2009, Glasgow City Council's Early Response pilot will offer struggling Glasgow SMEs an independent review of their business model. Brokers will assess a range of key business elements, including facilities, operations, sales, banking and financing arrangements, liabilities, and staffing, and viable businesses will receive advice and support designed to help them thrive¹⁸⁷.
- **Business Investment Fund extension:** as part of the West of Scotland Loan Fund, the Glasgow Business Loan Fund as offers small businesses access gap funding of up to £30,000 for new start businesses and £50,000 for existing businesses, with a fast-track decision process for applications of up to £15,000¹⁸⁸. In November 2008 Glasgow City Council announced that it intended to expand the scheme, offering repayment holidays and flexible interest rates where appropriate, and potentially taking equity stakes in companies in return for funding¹⁸⁹.
- **Local procurement:** the Glasgow 2014 Business Panel has been set up to ensure that value from the £1 billion due to be spent on the 2014 Commonwealth Games developments and projects remains in the local economy¹⁹⁰.

People & Labour Markets

- **Glasgow Living Wage:** Glasgow City Council introduced a 'Living Wage' of £7 per hour for its employees in April 2009, and is encouraging its arms length organisations and contractors to do the same¹⁹¹.
- **Apprenticeships:** Glasgow City Council's £10 million Commonwealth Apprenticeship Initiative guarantees an apprenticeship to every qualified 2009 school leaver. The Leader of Glasgow City Council called on local businesses to continue to investment in skills and training for their workforces and to take on apprentices in November 2008¹⁹², and the Council announced that it would provide up to £8,000 towards the cost of every apprenticeship place for organisations committed to creating new apprenticeship opportunities in April 2009¹⁹³. The Council itself will take on at least 500 apprentices in 2009¹⁹⁴.
- **Student support:** the University of Glasgow's Career Service website offers students advice on job hunting during the recession¹⁹⁵.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Team Glasgow approach:** Councillor Steven Purcell, Leader of Glasgow City Council, issue a rallying call for partners to pull together under the banner of 'Team Glasgow'¹⁹⁶.
- **Glasgow Economic Advisory Board:** Glasgow City Council is taking advice from an Economic Advisory Board made up of five senior figures in Scottish business. Set up in November 2008, the taskforce is intended to support the crafting and implementation of local policies to combat the recession¹⁹⁷.

- **Efficiency savings:** following the identification of a potential £22.2 million spending gap for FY 2009/10, Glasgow City Council identified proposed efficiency savings totalling £19.886 million. Around 425 posts from the workforce of 32,500 are likely to be scrapped¹⁹⁸.

Quality of Place

- **Better Glasgow Fund:** Glasgow City Council have created of a £36m Better Glasgow Fund to pay for capital projects designed to meet the regeneration needs of Glasgow. The fund will be used to pay public realm projects, lighting, heritage buildings, green space initiatives and new business and training centres¹⁹⁹.
- **Flexible land disposal policies:** Glasgow City Council intends to provide as much flexibility in its land disposal policy as possible through measures which give additional confidence to the market and reduce immediate financial pressures on developers. The Council is willing to look at staged payments over the period of a site development, deferred payments, increased use of base price and overage payment systems and increased use of joint venturing and profit sharing arrangements²⁰⁰.
- **Reducing up front costs for developers:** Glasgow City Council no longer asks developers for RES3 contributions - the payment they have to make to develop a site - at the planning stage. By deferring defer payment of RES 3 money until finance is in place and the project is underway, the intention is to reduce up front costs and hence barriers to development²⁰¹.
- **Flexible allocation of grants for social housing:** Glasgow City Council intends to be more creative in the use of its £83 million Housing Association Grant for social housing in order to enhance housing provision whilst also supporting the construction sector. Housing Association grant money will be used to buy land while prices remain low, aid development, purchase units that developers are unable to sell and complete units where development is on hold²⁰².
- **Free Christmas parking:** parking in all Council car parks and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport park-and-ride car parks was free on the last Sunday before Christmas 2008²⁰³. Glasgow City Council also suspended all roadworks in the city centre for the month of December²⁰⁴.

Long Term Strategy & Vision

- **A Step Change for Glasgow action plan:** A Step Change for Glasgow is Glasgow's ten year economic development strategy. After consultation with the public and private sectors, the Glasgow Economic Partnership launched an updated year action plan designed to translate the strategy into reality in November 2008. The action plan identifies seven areas where a "step change" is needed to grow the city's economy: building the metropolitan core; putting education at the heart of the economy; creating a culture of entrepreneurship; promoting the Glasgow-Edinburgh collaboration; being leaders in strategic area regeneration; creating work for those without; and improving the city's international positioning²⁰⁵.
- **Events Forum:** A Strategic Major Events Forum had been launched to strengthen Glasgow's competitive position in delivering global events, and
- **Tourism Action Plan:** a new tourism action plan had been designed to achieve targets of increasing tourism in Glasgow by 60% by 2016.

Liverpool

Overview

2008 is widely acknowledged to have been a good year for Liverpool. The combination of 7,000 Capital of Culture events and attractions, the opening of the Liverpool ONE development and a new arena and convention centre brought in record levels of investment and visitors, whilst reduced train journey times to London and accelerated broadband delivery increased Liverpool's connectivity²⁰⁶. Overall, the effect has been to increase Liverpool's ability to withstand recession.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The recession has forced a number of firms with significant local presences to make cutbacks amongst their workforces.

- The Jaguar Land Rover employs 2,200 people at its Halewood plant and supports an estimated 3,000 more supply chain jobs. A total of 450 people were made redundant in January 2009, and workers opted for a one year pay freeze and a shift to a four day working week in a bid to prevent job losses in March 2009 to guarantee no compulsory redundancies²⁰⁷.
- Production at the Getrag Ford plant in Halewood switched to an indefinite four day working week in January 2009²⁰⁸.
- Around 300 workers were issued notice of possible redundancy in October 2008 after their employer, Enterprise Liverpool, lost a contract to maintain the city's 15,000 ex-council houses²⁰⁹.
- Shop Direct are to shed 150 jobs at its headquarters in Speke and Aintree in Liverpool and sites in Preston and Manchester²¹⁰.
- Royal Sun Alliance, which employs 1,200 people in Liverpool, is to cut 1,200 jobs amongst its 8,800 strong UK workforce by the middle of 2010²¹¹.
- A major restructuring exercise by newspaper group Trinity Mirror North West led to the loss of 43 editorial jobs out of a total of 175 in Merseyside²¹².
- United Biscuits plans to axe 53 jobs at its Liverpool plant as part of a wider plan to outsource work for 110 staff to India²¹³. A petition launched in support of the United Biscuits workers had been signed by more than 4,000 people by May 2009.
- Around 200 jobs will be lost at HBOS in Speke by September 2009 as part of a national restructuring exercise affecting 985 full and part-time staff in HBOS's motoring finance division²¹⁴.
- With four Woolworth's stores in Liverpool, the national collapse of the chain led to the loss of 130 jobs²¹⁵.

The recession has also affected house sales and levels of business confidence in Liverpool.

- The results of the Q4 2008 British Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey, the UK's largest private quarterly survey of businesses, provide insight into levels of business health and confidence across Merseyside. Approximately 80% of Merseyside manufacturing businesses and 62% of service sector businesses are operating below capacity. In addition, 63% of manufacturing businesses and 50% of service sector businesses believe that their levels of profitability will reduce during 2009²¹⁶.
- House sales in Liverpool decreased by approximately 52% over the period September 2007 to September 2008, less than the national average of 67%²¹⁷.

People & Labour Markets

- Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Liverpool rose by 6,241 from 14,815 to 21,056.

- The claimant rate in Liverpool rose faster than the national average from 5.2% of the working age population to 7.4%, the fifth highest claimant rate of all UK local authorities in April 2009

Local Governance & Leadership

- Liverpool City Council anticipated difficulties in disposing of its real estate assets, less reliable capital receipts, reductions in investment income and fees from planning income, a static or contracting council tax base and increased demand for services from vulnerable groups in light of the recession²¹⁸.
- There was a marked 53% downturn in the number of major planning applications received by Liverpool City Council between April and December 2008, while planning applications for smaller developments fell by 21%²¹⁹.

Quality of Place

- The Liverpool Daily Post is to stop publishing its Saturday edition next year, becoming a Monday to Friday morning newspaper, though its companion website will remain a seven-days-a-week operation²²⁰.
- Kings Waterfront, previously the largest vacant site in Liverpool city centre, is now home to the £146 million Liverpool Echo Arena and BT convention centre which opened in January 2008, a public piazza, two hotels and some residential accommodation²²¹.
- However the original plan for 1,707 residential units, 18,000 square metres of offices and 9,000 square metres of retail/leisure use by 2015 has been delayed by the recession²²².
- The opening of the Liverpool Echo Arena, the BT Conference Centre and Liverpool One shopping centre in 2008 contributed to a significant increase in Christmas shopping footfall. Analysis by the Liverpool City Central Business Improvement District (BID) Company show there was a 17.1% increase in pedestrians in the city centre in December 2008 compared with 2007²²³.

Recession Responses

City Economy

- **Business conference:** Liverpool City Council hosted a high level conference that examined how Liverpool could best tackle the credit crunch in February 2009. Around 180 representatives from the public, voluntary and private sector attended the 'Building Communities through the Credit Crunch' event and five workshops which looked at the potential impact of the recession on economic development, enterprise, the environment, crime and disorder and health.
- **SME events:** more than 30 events took place in Liverpool in April 2009 to mark the first European Small and Medium Enterprises Week. They included a "Beat the Credit Crunch" session hosted by Liverpool City Central Business Improvement District and the "World's Biggest Marketing Clinic for Small Business" organised by the Merseyside Branch of the Chartered Institute of Marketing²²⁴
- **University support for businesses:** the University of Liverpool Business Gateway lists a range of types of support available to SMEs in the recession²²⁵
- **Federation of Small Businesses Accord initiative:** Liverpool City Council signed the Federation of Small Business new Accord initiative, a commitment to include small businesses in decision-making, in May 2009²²⁶
- **Rapid response consultancy:** in conjunction with Business Link North West Liverpool Vision ran a pilot programme which provided a rapid response consultancy service to businesses experiencing difficulties in February and March 2009. More than 20 SMEs took part in the project, receiving free intensive one-to-one advice from a team of 7 consultants. Liverpool Vision plans to invest £100,000 to roll the scheme out more widely in for an initial six months²²⁷

People & Labour Markets

- **Supporting students:** Liverpool John Moores Graduate Development Centre is running an intensive programme of workshops and support during May and June 2009 to help final year students find a job via its 'WoW' (World of Work) employer backed programme that aims to equip students with the skills needed for success²²⁸.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Information collation and dissemination:** the annual Liverpool Economic Briefing which was published in March 2009 draws together a variety of sources of information to assess the impacts of the recession on Liverpool²²⁹.
- **Council tax increase:** Liverpool City Council has imposed an annual council tax increase of 3.9%.
- **Economy Review Group:** Liverpool City Council has established an Economy Review Group. Led by the City Treasurer and the Executive Director, the Group has been charged with evaluating the effects of the recession on the local economy and the ways that the Council may contribute to alleviating or offsetting its effects locally²³⁰.

Quality of Place

- **Capital of free culture:** building on the success of Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008 which generated £800m for the regional economy, Liverpool City Council unveiled a programme of more than 100 free events and festivals in a bid to be the UK capital of free culture in 2009²³¹. Events will include a waterfront festival and a public art parade

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Business champions initiative:** in partnership with Liverpool Vision, Liverpool City Council and the two Liverpool universities, Liverpool City Council launched a 'business champions' initiative for selected employees in May 2009. The overall aim is to develop a long term strategy to make Liverpool City Council's corporate culture more business focused and ensure the highest standards of business care²³²
- **Shanghai World Expo 2010:** Liverpool Vision will represent Liverpool at the Shanghai World Expo 2010. The aim is to increase bilateral trade, trading relationships and tourism, increase interaction between Shanghai and Liverpool via research links and student exchanges and increase inward investment opportunities²³³

Manchester

Overview

Manchester is often hailed as the most successful example of city regeneration in the UK. Following a long period of decline, Manchester's city centre has undergone extensive redevelopment and regeneration over the past two decades, spurred on by the 1996 Real IRA bomb and the successful staging of the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The economy has also undergone significant restructuring. Whilst ongoing challenges such as pockets of deprivation and worklessness remain, Manchester has a growing national and international reputation as the UK's 'second city'.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The recession has led to a number of cutbacks amongst Manchester firms.

- Following a reported 40% decline in visits to Manchester's Chinatown, the upmarket Yang Sing Oriental hotel closed in March 2009²³⁴
- The Argos distribution centre at Trafford Park which employs 200 people is set to close, with work being transferred to Castleford, West Yorkshire²³⁵
- Following a decision by Wincanton, the haulage and logistics firm, to merge its chilled foods business with one of its rivals in a move to save costs, the Trafford Park distribution centre will close with the loss of 415 jobs²³⁶
- Up to 90 jobs are likely to be lost at Manchester Airport owing to falling passenger numbers and revenue. Manchester Airport has experienced a number of route cuts: BA scrapped its Manchester-New York service in 2008 and BMI has abandoned long-haul flights from the airport and reduced the frequency of flights to Dublin, Amsterdam, Brussels and Aberdeen; Singapore Airlines reduced its services to the Far East from five weekly flights to three in May 2009²³⁷
- MEN Media, the publisher of the Manchester Evening News and 22 weeklies based in the North West, is closing all editorial offices of its weekly newspapers and axing 150 jobs. Around 39 editorial jobs will be lost at the Manchester Evening News²³⁸
- Friends Provident announced plans to shut its main site at the Manchester Express Building and consolidate operations at its Spring Gardens site in November 2008, with the loss of up to 280 jobs²³⁹

People & Labour Markets

Following national trends, there has been a significant rise in the number of Manchester residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance in light of the recession. Between September 2007 and April 2009, the number of claimants rose from 10,924 (3.5%) to 17,174 (5.4%), a rate of increase in line with the national average. At the same time, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies decreased from 6,504 to 3,372.

Local Governance & Leadership

The recession has led to shortfalls in Manchester City Council's capital receipts, corporate rental income, land charges, development control and building regulation income²⁴⁰

Quality of Place

The value of commercial property in Manchester city centre has dropped significantly since the peak of the property boom, but the recession has had mixed effects on developments in Manchester. Five years in development, the £120m Pathfinder regeneration scheme at Broughton Green in Salford has experienced mixed fortunes. By May 2009, only 109 out of the 177 luxury homes that were finished in July 2007 had been sold, leading to local media characterisations of the area as a 'ghost town'²⁴¹. However the New East Manchester project, a partnership between

Manchester City Council, English Partnerships, the North West Development Agency and the communities of east Manchester which started fifteen years ago and has invested £2 billion into the area east of the city centre, is still progressing well²⁴².

Recession Responses

Manchester City Council and partners are undertaking a wide range of activities to support local businesses and local residents through the recession. The Timebank mentoring scheme and the introduction of a Manchester minimum wage are particularly notable responses.

City Economy

- **Helping Hands for businesses:** Manchester City Council is running a 'Helping Hands' campaign to highlight the huge range of services, advice and support available to individuals, families, and businesses during difficult economic times
- **Timebank:** as part of the Helping Hand campaign, Manchester City Council, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and a number of professional service companies have come together to launch 'Timebank', a scheme which allows small and medium sized Manchester organisations to get free business advice from participating professional consultancies and support agencies²⁴³. The "Big Four" accountancy firms, as well as large law firms such as Addleshaw Goddard and Halliwells, had pledged staff time worth an estimated £250,000 at the time of the scheme's launch, with advisers granting a free two-hour consultation on subjects such as finance, law, employment, pensions, supply chain, process improvement and sales. The scheme will run for an initial three months from May 2009²⁴⁴
- **Business events:** Manchester Junior Chamber of Commerce and Manchester Business School hosted a free event for local businesses entitled 'How to beat the recession' in June 2009²⁴⁵. A free event organised by New East Manchester aimed at helping businesses based in east Manchester survive the recession took place in March 2009²⁴⁶.

People & Labour Markets

- **Helping Hand website:** As part of the 'Helping Hands' initiative, Manchester City Council have created an easily navigable website which offers access to information about available help and support²⁴⁷. The website includes a section entitled 'Free Stuff' which highlights free activities, events and places to go in Manchester.
- **Information and advice:** as part of the same 'Helping Hands' campaign, the Manchester City Council 'benefits bus' undertook a tour of Manchester in May 2009 to provide advice for residents with concerns over income and benefits issues²⁴⁸. In addition, Manchester Advice organised a free event for people over 50 in April 2009 that included workshops on dealing with mortgage difficulties, managing on a budget, fuel poverty and energy efficiency, and coping with being out of work²⁴⁹
- **Manchester Minimum Wage:** In November 2008, Manchester City Council became the first local authority outside London to sanction a top-up to the minimum wage. At £6.75 an hour, the 'Manchester minimum wage' is worth £1.01 more than the national minimum wage of £5.74 and is benefitting 850 lower paid City Council employees²⁵⁰. The City Council intends to work closely with other public sector organisations to encourage take up across the city

Local Governance & Leadership

- **City Region pilot:** Greater Manchester was named as one of two city region pilots (along with Leeds City Region) in the 2009 Budget²⁵¹.
- **Support for innovative financing mechanisms:** Sir Richard Leese, the leader of Manchester City Council has backed the British Property Federation's 'regeneration manifesto' which calls for the introduction of innovative infrastructure financing mechanisms in the UK. The tax increment financing model is backed by eight major city councils, including Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool²⁵²

- **Efficiency savings:** in order to meet city requirements in a restrictive economic climate whilst sticking a pledge to keep Council Tax increases below the rate of inflation, Manchester City Council asked its officers to identify significant efficiency savings that could be made without cutting services. £22.5 million savings options have been identified within officers' business plans²⁵³.
- **Council tax increase:** Council tax in Manchester increased by 3.46% for the year 2009/10, with the council element making up 3% of that total²⁵⁴.

Quality of Place

- **City centre improvements:** plans for a £165 million refurbishment of Manchester's town hall complex through improvements in services to the public and investment in key civic buildings and spaces were given the go-ahead in February 2009. Work on the Town Hall Extension, Central Library and St Peter's Square is scheduled to start in 2009 and run until 2014²⁵⁵
- **International marketing:** Manchester again sent a major delegation of City Council representatives and 37 businesses to MIPIM (le Marche International des Professionnels de l'Immobilier), the annual global property convention and exhibition which takes place in France as part of ongoing efforts to promote Manchester as a global city to potential investors²⁵⁶

Long Term Strategy & Vision

- **Manchester Independent Economic Review:** the £1.35m Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) was commissioned in 2008 to provide a shared evidence base for future policy choices regarding and strategic investment. At the official launch of the MIER in April 2009, Sir Richard Leese, the leader of the city council stated that the findings of the report will be used to help Manchester plan for its long-term prosperity²⁵⁷
- **Airport City:** a scheme intended to transform Manchester Airport into a 'mini city' with extensive retail, leisure, conferencing and commercial activities across and nearby the complex was launched in March 2009²⁵⁸.
- **Next generation broadband:** Corridor Manchester will become the first area in the UK to pilot next generation broadband following a March 2009 launch. Supported by £500,000 from the NWDA and co-ordinated by the Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA), the scheme will provide 500 businesses and 1,000 homes in the Oxford Road area of Manchester with super fast broadband via fibre optic cabling²⁵⁹.

Newcastle

Overview

Newcastle, the regional capital of the North East, suffered a long period of deindustrialisation and decline during the economic restructuring period of the 1970s and 1980s. However sustained public and private investment has led to the physical and economic transformation of the city, as evidence by thriving leisure and tourism sectors. Newcastle is also a Science City with ambitious plans to make Newcastle a world class centre of science and innovation.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The headquarters of Northern Rock, Newcastle saw a substantial number of pre-recession job losses. Whilst many of the 1,500 former Northern Rock employees found work before the onset of recession, a number of other businesses with a local presence have subsequently laid off workers. These include:

- Newcastle Building Society which announced 150 job losses amongst permanent staff at its Newcastle head office in, following losses resulting from investment in failed Icelandic banks
- Ilva, a furniture retailer, went out of business in June 2008²⁶⁰
- Nissan, based in nearby Washington, cut production in January 2009 and announced plans to lay off 1,200 workers²⁶¹. A pay freeze was implemented in March 2009 amidst ongoing low global demand for new vehicles.
- Administrators were called into entertainment group Absolute Leisure in May 2009, with 50 jobs thought to be at risk
- Sage announced it would make 600 job cuts this year on top of 400 job losses last year, with around 200 of the cuts will be in the UK. This is likely to affect Newcastle, but the intention is to shed jobs via voluntary redundancies and non-replacement. All of Sage's 2,200 UK staff have been offered the chance to apply for voluntary redundancy²⁶²
- BAE is to shed 200 jobs in its UK land systems businesses, affecting sites at Newcastle, Leeds, Leicester, Barrow and Telford²⁶³
- Freedomdirect, a Newcastle holiday firm, is to close down with the loss of 108 jobs²⁶⁴.
- 359 workers at the Findus food plant in Newcastle lost their jobs when the firm went into administration in January 2009²⁶⁵

People & Labour Markets

The recession has led to an increase in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance, albeit to a significantly more limited extent than the other UK core cities. The number of JSA claimants rose from 5,591 (3.1%) to 8,689 (4.9%) between September 2007 and April 2009, whilst Job Centre Plus vacancies reduced from 3,576 to 1,749.

Local Governance & Leadership

Newcastle City Council is facing a number of budget pressures, resulting in part from reduced income from property and other fees and charges; reduced interest earned on investments owing to low interest rates; a reduced in the Council Tax base²⁶⁶. In addition, Newcastle's grant increase from the Government increased by 1.75%, the joint lowest level in the UK²⁶⁷.

It is estimated that reductions in income from capital receipts and market-induced delays in the disposal of assets will reduced capital receipt income over the next three years by over an estimated £20 million²⁶⁸.

Quality of Place

A number of shops in Grey Street, one of Newcastle's prime retail locations, have closed down, with more than 11 commercial premises to let and for sale in April 2009²⁶⁹. Other retail locations

have also witnessed closures, with Zavvi and Adams stores in Northumberland Street and Karen Millen (Market Street) and Coast (Grainger Street) all closing down and a number of restaurant closures in the so-called “diamond strip”, a prime location just north of the Tyne²⁷⁰.

Recession Responses

Newcastle City Council and other partners have introduced a very impressive range of measures designed to support Newcastle residents and businesses and ensure that the city emerges in as strong a position as possible post recession.

City Economy

- **Investment in capital infrastructure:** Newcastle City Council’s proposed budget for FY 2009/2010 includes an additional £21 million package of capital investment in infrastructure and regeneration projects over the next three years, with £10 million to be spent in 2009/10. The overall total includes²⁷¹:
 - £7 million extra spending on road and pavement repairs and improvements and a further £3 million on locally determined priorities over the next three years
 - £1.4 million extra on disabled facilities grants, to make improvements in the homes of people with disabilities
 - £75,000 extra on Newcastle WarmZone, helping people facing fuel poverty
 - £800,000 extra on works at Walker Quay
 - £4 million extra in a new regeneration fund, to support various regeneration schemes across Newcastle
- **Promotion of business rate relief:** Newcastle City Council intends to increase local take up of take up small business rate relief to a targeted value of £1 million over the next two years²⁷²
- **Speeding up invoice payments for small businesses:** Newcastle City Council has reduced invoice payment periods to small firms to 10 days²⁷³.
- **Business events:** Weightman Associates, Newcastle College and the Newcastle Journal organised the Revitalising, Restructuring and Reskilling Your Organisation’ conference in May 2009, which aimed to give businesses of all sizes the advice they need to overcome the realities of the economic downturn²⁷⁴
- **Business support:** Newcastle University launched a scheme which invited local SMEs to apply for a voucher worth up to £5,000 to use for training or advice from the university in January 2009²⁷⁵.

People & Labour Markets

- **Early interventions for the newly unemployed:** Newcastle City Council and partners¹ are opening 3 ‘Resource Centres’, which will provide early interventions on employability, skills assessment, mental health and debt advice to those made newly unemployed, between May and June 2009²⁷⁶. These will provide
 - Job search and job hunting techniques (including access to the internet for job searching)
 - Skills assessment with increased access to higher skills partners such as Newcastle University and Newcastle College
 - Mental health advice and well being
 - Debt advice
 - Access to other services (e.g. benefits maximisation) is being discussed.Newcastle City Council is underwriting the cost of the centres; with funding being made available from the flexible resources within the Council’s Area Based Grant. Other partners are redeploying existing services, or increasing capacity.
- **Debt advice:** Newcastle City Council has allocated £400,000 of funding for an extra four staff to provide expert debt advice to help people manage their way out of financial crisis and a debt prevention publicity campaign²⁷⁷

¹ Including the Job Centre Plus, the PCT, Northumbria University and Newcastle College, under the banner of the Newcastle Futures Partnership

- **Skills promotion:** at the start of national Adult Learners week. Newcastle City Council called on people to take on the current economic downturn by learning a new skill on an adult education course. Free taster sessions in more than 30 subjects were on offer at over 20 locations across the city and many discounts and free courses made available²⁷⁸
- **Help for first time homebuyers:** Newcastle City Council is in advanced talks with a housing developer and the Homes and Communities Agency about adopting the Government's "Homebuy Direct" shared equity scheme for properties, whereby eligible first time buyers are offered an equity loan of up to 30% of the purchase price, with the remainder funded between the Government and the developer²⁷⁹.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Increased borrowing & spending:** Newcastle City Council have increased borrowing to around £875 m gross and around £625 million net of external investments at end March 2009 to help alleviate the impacts of recession²⁸⁰.
- **Council tax rises:** council tax will rise at 2.8% (below the rate of inflation) to cover Newcastle City Council's spending plans. Of the increase, 1.2% will be used to fund borrowing to support additional capital investment of over £21 million on infrastructure and regeneration projects which are designed to help the city's economy²⁸¹.
- **Efficiency savings:** Newcastle City Council will operate with an estimated 510 fewer posts (primarily managerial and administrative) in FY 2009/2010, saving £19.5 million²⁸². This is part of a major transformation programme intended to deliver net savings of over £150 million over the next five years.

Quality of Place

- **Tourism promotion:** Newcastle City Council is contributing an additional £40,000 to joint tourism marketing campaign with Gateshead Council and the NewcastleGateshead Initiative that intended to increase visitor numbers and spending in the local economy²⁸³.
- **Housing market intervention:** to help shore up the local property market and avoid urban blight, Newcastle City Council has sought to purchase unsold houses previously intended for private sale and let them at affordable rates via its housing arm, Your Homes Newcastle²⁸⁴ and given Your Homes Newcastle £5 million to build new houses itself²⁸⁵. By providing developers with much needed cashflow, the intention is to ensure that housing developments are completed and the supply of affordable homes increased. Newcastle City Council is discussing proposed housing developments with developers on a case by case basis

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Investment in an iconic building:** Newcastle City Council has borrowed around £22 million to purchase the empty tower that was to become the new headquarters of Northern Rock, a purchase that is seen as a sound long-term investment. The environmental services firm Eaga will create 300 new jobs and take out a 25-year lease on the building, subletting one floor of it back to Newcastle City Council for the next five years²⁸⁶.
- **Further property investment plans:** An investment fund of £25 million has been agreed in principle by the Council to purchase further strategic sites to facilitate future regeneration projects²⁸⁷.
- **Innovative investment tools:** as a major Newcastle Science City partner, Newcastle City Council is bidding to CLG and the Treasury for a Newcastle Science City development site to be part of an Accelerated Development Zone pilot for tax incremental funding²⁸⁸.
- **Investment in young people:** Newcastle City Council is creating a fund of £0.5 million to support long term schemes including the promotion of youth training and apprenticeship schemes²⁸⁹.
- **Investment in deprived neighbourhoods:** Newcastle City Council has allocated a further £0.2 million to supplement the Area Based Grant funded programme of initiatives to tackle multiple deprivation²⁹⁰, and has increased packages of support for the longer term unemployed.

Working through the Newcastle Futures Partnership, the intention is to provide support to around 7,000 people over the next two years and help at least 2,400 into work²⁹¹.

- **Investment in enterprise:** Newcastle City Council will launch a £3.6million Enterprise Package in summer 2009 that will support business start-ups and provide direct help to businesses, additional to that provided by Business Link²⁹².

Oxford

Overview

Renowned for its university and historic 'dreaming spires', Oxford is one of the UK's most successful medium sized cities and a major hub within the South East region. With a world-class knowledge base, a series of science and business parks and a growing high tech sector as well as a vibrant cultural and retail offer, Oxford is positioned to weather the effects of the economic downturn well and help drive the UK economy in the recovery.

Recession Impact

City Economy

Oxford has been comparatively sheltered from the impacts of the recession. Nonetheless some firms have been forced to reduce the size of their workforces. Oxfam, for instance, shed 71 posts at Oxford Business Park²⁹³ and 21 people were made redundant when the Woolworths branch in the Templars Square shopping centre shed closed. Macdermid Engineering (Wantage) shed 40 workers in January 2009 and intended to lose another 22 in April 2009 to enable the factory to return to a five-day working week²⁹⁴

By far the most significant job losses have occurred at the BMW Mini plant in Cowley. A total of 300 agency workers at the BMW Cowley Mini plant were dismissed in December 2008 before the plant shut for an extended 4 week holiday over the Christmas period. A further 850 agency workers at the plant were dismissed with immediate effect in February 2009. The BMW plant closed for a week then moved from a three-shift to a two-shift pattern, operating five days per week instead of seven²⁹⁵.

People & Labour Markets

The recession has led to an increase in the number of Oxford residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance amidst a decreasing number of Job Centre plus vacancies. However whilst JSA claimant numbers rose from 1,451 in September 2007 to 2,914 in April 2009, the claimant rate of 2.7% in April 2009 was well below the national average of 4.1%.

Local Governance & Leadership

Both Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council had money invested in failed Icelandic banks, with £4.5 million and £5 million invested banks respectively²⁹⁶. This has had implications for spending in Oxford: loss of interest on the Oxford City Council's investments caused by the collapse of the Icelandic banks and low interest rates, coupled with concessionary bus fare costs has cost Oxford City Council around £7 million over two years²⁹⁷

Quality of Place

The recession appears to have had some relatively minor effects on quality of place in Oxford. The closure of a number of high street chains across Oxford (including the Early Learning Centre, clothing store USC, Land of Leather, Rosebys, Woolworths and JJB Sports²⁹⁸) has led to an increase in empty premises, whilst plans to refurbish the Westgate Centre have been delayed a number of times²⁹⁹. In addition, the Cowley Road Carnival has been cancelled for 2009³⁰⁰.

Thames Valley Police figures for Oxfordshire show a slight overall increase in total crime between April 2008 and April 2009, with acquisitive crimes such as burglaries, shoplifting and car crime increasing most³⁰¹.

Recession Responses

Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and other partners are undertaking a number of initiatives designed to support local residents, businesses and the city economy.

City Economy

- **Christmas trading support:** to boost the local economy in the lead-up to Christmas 2008, Oxfordshire County Council paid for free 'park and ride' buses into the city of Oxford on weekday evenings and parking free at three 'park and ride' sites previously run by Oxford City Council³⁰².
- **Business Link support:** Oxford City Council has worked closely with Business Link to offer support to local businesses. Business Link staged a 'Beat the Credit Crunch' event for small businesses in Oxford in January 2009 and offered firms a free 'health check' which could be held at Oxford City Council Offices³⁰³.
- **Other business support:** SEEDA and ERDF funds will allow eligible businesses in Oxford to participate in PLATO: Sustain, a two year programme which helps business to promote resource efficient business practices³⁰⁴.
- **Local procurement:** The Oxfordshire Federation of Small Business has launched a 'Keep Trade Local' campaign³⁰⁵. The campaign is supported by Oxfordshire County Council and the council has been praised by the FSB for buying 52 per cent of its services from SMEs and conducting 50 per cent of its trade with suppliers from Oxfordshire³⁰⁶. Oxford City Council procures 30% of its annual spend on good and services locally and intends to increase this percentage over time³⁰⁷. The two councils staged a well attended 'Meet the Buyer' event in April 2009³⁰⁸.
- **Prompt invoice payments:** Oxford City Council and Business Link have reduced the target time to pay invoice from small businesses³⁰⁹, with invoices now paid within 10 days³¹⁰.
- **Website:** Oxfordshire County Council has set up a webpage which directs local businesses concerned about the recession to appropriate sources of help
- **Partnership working on major redundancies:** in February 2009 it was announced that the Oxford Economic Partnership would join forces with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, Business Link, the Learning and Skills Council, and SEEDA to set up a task force to assess the effect of the BMW redundancies on Oxfordshire³¹¹. The Oxfordshire Task Force arranged two 'job clubs' in March 2009 for BMW workers³¹².

People & Labour Markets

- **Expanded training opportunities:** Oxford and Cherwell Valley College have launched a new programme of classes intended to help local people hit by the recession to get back into work. The 'Get That Job' programme offers more than 100 different classes ranging in length from one day to 30 weeks, with reduced fees for unemployed people and those claiming benefits³¹³.
- **Support for unemployed people:** Oxford Brookes University was awarded £473,680 by HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund to provide training for up to 2,000 unemployed people in Oxfordshire. The initiative will fund master-classes for start-ups and innovative businesses to improve efficiency by providing access to schemes by Jobcentre Plus, Train to Gain, Business Link and Oxford Innovation³¹⁴.
- **Support for people experiencing housing difficulties:** Oxford City Council have awarded a contract to provide independent housing advice in Oxford to Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity. Shelter will provide a dedicated advice telephone line for those experiencing housing problems in Oxford from 9.30am until 1pm from Monday to Friday³¹⁵.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Council tax increases:** Oxford City Council increased Council Tax by 4.5% for FY 2009/10 amidst a drive for £4.5m (approximately 15% of the council's budget) in efficiency savings³¹⁶; Oxfordshire County Council increased Council Tax by 3.75% for the same period³¹⁷.

- **Flexibility approach for businesses:** Oxford City Council is offering businesses that are experiencing financial difficulty and meet certain criteria a 12 month period to pay business rates rather than the statutory 10 monthly instalments, and adopting a flexible approach towards the payment of commercial rents on Council owned business units³¹⁸

Quality of Place

- **Flexibility for developers:** Oxford City Council has voted to cut contributions from developers towards major transport and infrastructure schemes by 50% in order to ensure that the regeneration of Oxford's West End goes ahead³¹⁹.
- **Creative use of empty premises:** three empty shop premises played host to a 10 day exhibition entitled 'construct/deconstruct' in May 2009 which featured the work of three up-and-coming artists³²⁰
- **Refurbishment of historic market:** Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are each contributing £50,000 pay for a programme of refurbishment work at Oxford Covered Market³²¹
- **City Centre Manager:** since April 2009 Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have redirected £105,000 of funding for not-for-profit city centre management company OX1 (90% of the total) to pay for a new senior city centre manager, who will coordinate a programme of improved services to benefit shoppers, visitors and businesses³²².
- **Smaller scale events:** a smaller carnival in Oxford's South Park has been planned for July 2009 in place of the Cowley Road Carnival, with Oxford City Council contributing £7,500 in seed funding³²³.

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Review of economic strategy:** Oxford City Council is reviewing its Economic Development Strategy in light of the recession³²⁴.

Swindon

Overview

One of the success stories of the boom period in the UK, Swindon has been hit particularly hard by the recession and its disproportionate impacts on the manufacturing sector.

Recession Impacts

City Economy

The woes of Honda, the Japanese carmaker which employs more than 4,000 people at its Swindon plant and supports a large number of local suppliers, have played a significant role in the overall impact of the recession on Swindon.

The Honda factory embarked on a 4 month shutdown February 2009 following the global drop in demand for cars. Workers were paid in full for two months and at 60% for the following two months³²⁵. Following less than anticipated take-up of voluntary redundancy, workers at the Honda plant were asked to take a salary reduction to safeguard against job losses. Workers voted in favour of taking a 3% pay cut (managers pay will be cut by 5%) for 10 months in an attempt to safeguard 490 jobs³²⁶. The factory reopened in June 2009 but at half its usual capacity.

Local suppliers dependent on Honda custom have been less fortunate with SDC, which handles Honda parts manufactured in Europe, cutting 135 permanent jobs and 100 agency jobs in December 2008³²⁷. Swindon has also been impacted by the demise of Woolworths: the Swindon Woolworths and a Woolworths distribution centre which employed together employed 430 people both closed in December 2008 following the collapse of the national chain³²⁸.

People & Labour Markets

From there being 1,935 people or 1.6% of the working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance in September 2007, a rate well below the national average, the number of claimants more than tripled to 6,574 or 5.4% of the working age population, a rate substantially higher than the national average of 4.1%. Meanwhile, the number of Job Centre Plus vacancies has more than halved from 1,879 to 861 over the same period, so that there are now more than 7 JSA claimants for every Job Centre Plus vacancy.

As a direct result of job losses and limited vacancies, Swindon's Food Bank, a charity which gives out food parcels to people in need, have reported increased demand and a change in the profile of people making use of the Food Bank³²⁹.

Local Governance & Leadership

Between the production of the draft and actual Swindon Borough Council Budget for FY 2009/10, a number of additional cost pressures resulting from financial, property and material market turmoil were identified. These amounted to £2 million and were made of up³³⁰:

- loss of Commercial Rental Income - £170k
- loss of Land Charges Fee Income - £330k
- loss of Planning and Building Control Fee Income - £330k
- reduction in the sale price of recyclable materials - £495k
- reduction in Interest Rates - £675k

In addition, the downturn in the property market has led to the drying up of capital receipts from the sale of surplus land and other assets and a potential shortfall of £20 million to support the planned 2010 Capital Programme³³¹

Quality of Place

Swindon has received much media attention owing to the scale of recessionary impacts, with feature articles in the Times, the Independent and across BBC and ITN news. Whilst reports have generally perceived to have been fair, they are unlikely to have improved external perceptions of Swindon.

The recession has had a variable impact on Swindon's ambitious development plans. Modus Properties committed to deliver Regent Place, a £215 million scheme, comprising 32,500 sq m of high quality retail, residential, leisure and car park spaces in September 2008³³². However Modus has experienced difficulties in securing funding and the scheme has been indefinitely delayed³³³. On the other hand, Muse Developments signed a formal development agreement to deliver Union Square, a £350 million high quality mixed-use development on a strategic town centre site which connects the station to the retail area of the town in November 2008³³⁴, Shearer Property Group and UK Commercial Property Trust received the green light from Swindon Council to develop a prominent site and build a replacement BHS store in May 2009³³⁵, and the Canal Walk redevelopment remains on track, with work due to begin in summer 2009

Recession Responses

City Economy

Under the umbrella of the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (SSEP) which includes Swindon Borough Council, SWRDA, Business Link, Learning & Skills Council, ACAS, and Jobcentre Plus), partners are undertaking a number of activities to support the Swindon economy³³⁶.

- **Swindon Action Force:** the Swindon Action Force supports local companies that are facing possible redundancies by providing information and a central contact number³³⁷.
- **Local procurement:** in conjunction with Swindon Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Business Link, SSEP held a procurement event entitled 'Doing Business with Swindon Business' in March 2009 to examine how to do business with Swindon Borough Council and how to trade locally, both sourcing and supplying³³⁸.
- **Swindon Business Networking:** the SSEP is working with SwindonWeb to compile an interactive, web based database of local businesses in order to encourage local sourcing and supplying³³⁹.
- **Interaction with banks:** the SSEP has been meeting with Lending Managers at major High Street banks to understand the issues they face in lending to businesses, and to encourage them to support local SMEs³⁴⁰.
- **Business needs surveys:** to enhance the effectiveness of business support measures, the SSEP is conducting monthly electronic surveys of business needs in Swindon³⁴¹.

People & Labour Markets

- **'Pulling Together' website:** Swindon Borough Council has launched the 'Pulling Together' website which acts as a very well designed repository for useful information and advice for residents and businesses³⁴². The Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership also offers a similar service.
- **Swindon Talent Pool portal:** the online portal helps tackle the problems facing individuals and businesses during the recession by providing a place for unemployed people to post their details and for employers to source potential employees³⁴³.
- **Retraining for Honda workers:** the union Unite worked with Swindon College, Filton College, Wiltshire College, City of Bath College and Norton Radstock College to provide a series of retraining courses for Honda workers during the plant's 4 month shutdown³⁴⁴.
- **Church response:** Churches in Swindon gathered to plan and co-ordinate action to collectively respond to the recession in April 2009³⁴⁵.

Local Governance & Leadership

- **Council tax increases:** the increase in Council Tax for budgets for which Swindon Borough Council is responsible averaged 3.5% for FY 2009/10.
- **Efficiency savings:** The Swindon Borough Council Budget proposals for 2009/10 include £8.4m of savings, generated primarily through more efficient working. Implementation will result in a number of redundancies³⁴⁶.
- **Reduced Capital Programme:** in light of the shortfall in revenue for the 2010 Capital Programme, Swindon Borough Council Cabinet members agreed to only recommend additions to the Capital that constitute Invest to Save schemes funded through prudential borrowing from the savings generated; unavoidable works required to address health and safety issues or other legislative requirements; schemes that will increase the efficiency of the organisation³⁴⁷.

Quality of Place

- **Driving Swindon Forward event:** 150 businesses and organisations attended the second annual SSEP Conference in November 2008 which included speeches from, Fionnuala Earley, Chief Economist with Nationwide and local entrepreneur, Jamie Murray Wells³⁴⁸.

Long Term Strategy and Vision

- **Ambassadors scheme:** the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership plans to launch an Ambassador scheme which will involve participants spreading positive messages to Swindon's residents and to visitors. Eight taxi drivers from V-Cars have already agreed to take part in the initial stages of the scheme³⁴⁹.

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