Harrogate BOROUGH COUNCIL

Working for you

Economic Overview of Harrogate district

2009/10
May 2010

TREND: ☺ Positive · Neutral · Poor · Very poor

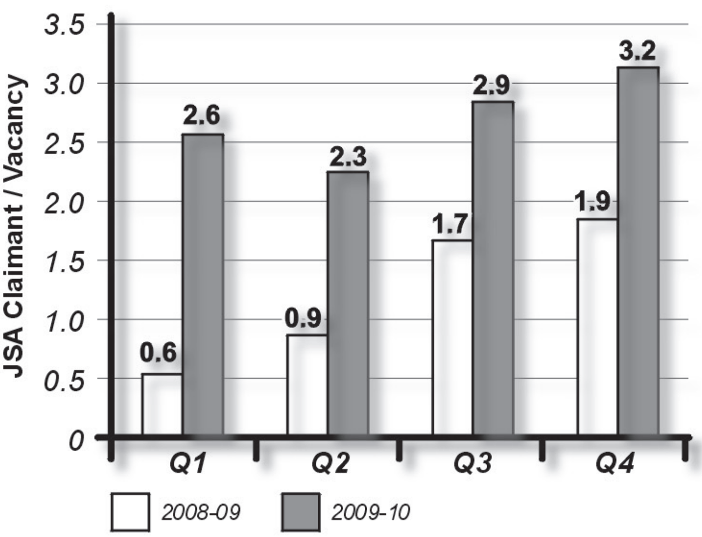
Position at end of Quarter 4, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 2010, and annual comparison 2008/9 v. 2009/10

	Quarter 4 2009/10	Quarter 4 2008/09	Trend, 08/09 v 09/10	Narrative
Labour Market and Benefits				
Unemployment – JSA claimant* rate, March 2010	2.2 % (2,153)	2.1 % (2,030)	Poor	Across North Yorkshire the rate for March 2010 ranges from 1.9% in Richmondshire to 5.2% in Scarborough, with a County average of 2.9%. During the year 2009/10 the district's claimant rate has varied only slightly, between 2.1 - 2.4%, and remained at approximately half the national average, of 4.1 - 4.4%.
Job vacancies / JSA claimants per vacancy, March 2010	674 / 3.2	1,074 / 1.9	Very poor	Whilst the JSA claimant rate has seen little annual variation, the number of job vacancies has decreased significantly, by 37%. Notwithstanding seasonal variation in job vacancies, time series data shows a concerning downward trend throughout 2009 and into 2010.
Highest / lowest ward JSA rate, March 2010	4.2% (155) / 0.8%(17)	4.2% (161) / 0.6 % (12)	Poor	Reflecting the district claimant rate, the ward rates and variation between them have varied only slightly throughout the past year. The Woodfield and Low Harrogate wards continue to experience the highest claimant rates, equal to the national rate, with the Nidd Valley ward having the lowest rate.
Council Tax Benefit claimants, at Quarter end	8,892	8,189	Very poor	The annual increase of 8.6% (703 claimants) continues the rise seen throughout the previous three quarters of 2009/10.
Housing Benefit claimants, at Quarter end	6,953	6,408	Very poor	Annual comparison shows a rise of 8.5%, or 545 claimants. The Council's Benefit Services team forecast customer loads will continue to grow in 20010/11, with an approximate 10% increase in claimants by year end.
Development Activity				
HBC Sites & Premises enquiries received in Quarter 4	158	180	Poor	A quarterly comparison shows a 12% (22) decrease in enquiries, between the years. The 540 total enquiries received in 2009/10 is an 11.8% (72) decrease on 2008/09 (total of 612). The decline in enquiries is most noticeable in the second half of the year, from October 2009, and suggests businesses are 'holding-fire' on any relocation plans.
Total number of planning applications received in Quarter 4	512	487	Positive	The 5% (25) increase in applications, comparing the two Quarters, is a positive economic indicator. The total for Quarter 4, 2009/10 is only two less than the preceding three months (Quarter 3, 514 applications). However, comparing the last two financial years, there has been a 13.6% decline in the total number of planning applications received, from 2,385 in 2008/09 to 2,060 in 2009/10.

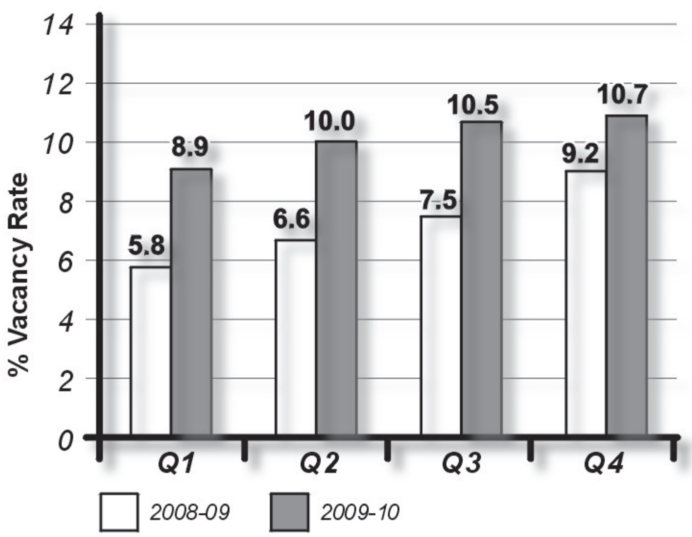
	Quarter 4 2009/10	Quarter 4 2008/09	Trend, 08/09 v 09/10	Narrative
HBC workspace vacancy rate, at the end of Quarter 4	20.2 %	20.7 %		The Council's economic policy has been of continued investment in the provision of quality workspace in 20090/10 has created 2 artist workshops in Pateley Bridge and 5 refurbished units in Ripon (a net gain of 1 unit, to 83 in total.) The sustained level of near 80% occupancy, despite the economic downturn, is encouraging.
Vacant retail premises (average across district at Quarter end)	10.7 %	9.2 %		Whilst the district average had increased by 1.5%, the rate varies widely across the district's centres. Masham has seen a decrease, from 16.1% to 12.9% (1 unit) but Ripon and Pateley Bridge a noticeable increase (10.1% to 13.1% in Ripon (=7 units) and 4.8% to 9.8% (=2 units) in Pateley Bridge).
Residential property sales (total in Quarter) *data is provisional*	710*	352		A positive economic indicator has been the substantial increase in residential property sales over the past year – more than double at 102%. Anecdotal evidence suggests this has been led by owner occupiers returning to the property market, having sold in the previous two years (when prices were at a peak) and renting in the interim. Another influencing factor may have been purchasers taking advantage of the uncharacteristic 4.6%* decrease in mean house price experienced between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 of 2009/10 (an annual comparison shows a 6.6% increase in house prices).
Visitor Economy				
Total TIC visitor numbers: Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon and Pateley Bridge.	22,877	24,890		Quarter 4 saw an 8.1% (2,013) decrease in visitor numbers, compared to the previous year. The severe weather conditions experienced in early 2010 are likely to have been a major contributor to this. Despite the downturn in Quarter 4, total numbers in 2009/10 show a 9.4% increase on 2008/09, with an additional 16,659 visitors.
HBC Sport and Leisure facilities - total number of visitors in Quarter 4.	217,251	233,956		Visitor numbers in Quarter 4, 2009/10 reduced by 7.1% (16,705), compared to the previous year. This is partly due to the severe weather of January 2010, when some facilities were unavailable. The total number of visitors in 2009/10 was 838,997 - an 8.6% reduction (78,729) from 2008/09.
HBC Museums and Arts - total number of visitors in Quarter 4.	10,609	10,665		Despite the adverse climate of January 2010 visitor numbers remained healthy in Quarter 4, with only a 0.5% (56) reduction from the year before. Total visitor numbers in 2009/10 of 71,508 show a growth of 12.2% (7,777), compared to 2008/09.

Source: EDU, Department of Development Services, Harrogate Borough Council, May 2010 *JSA – Job Seekers' Allowance

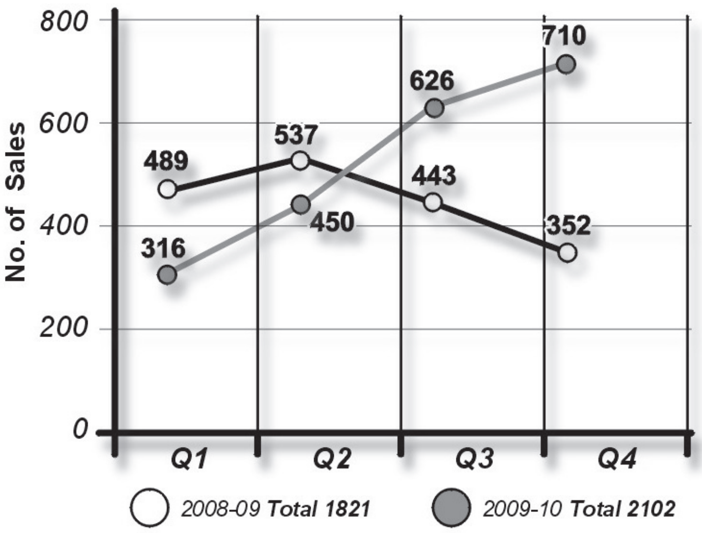
1. The Harrogate district, JSA Claimants per Vacancy (quarter end) 2008/09 and 2009/10



2. The Harrogate district, Vacant Retail Premises district average 2008/09 and 2009/10



3. The Harrogate district, Residential Property Sales
2008/09 and 2009/10



4. The Harrogate district, TIC Visitor Numbers
2008/09 and 2009/10