

REPORT

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Subject: UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES TO SEPTEMBER 1998	
From: CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
Date: 26 November 1998	Ref: CE/011/008/005	

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the current unemployment position in North Lanarkshire.

2 Background

- 2.1 Quarterly reports on unemployment have been produced by the Chief Executive's Department since the first quarter of 1997. These reports summarise the latest available unemployment figures and provide analysis of these figures at three levels: North Lanarkshire as a whole, the Area Committees and all Council wards. The reports are circulated within the Authority and to partner organisations. They are also made available to the public.
- 2.2 The present report, '**Quarterly Unemployment Report - Third Quarter 1998**', is the seventh in the series and covers the period up to September 1998.
- 2.3 In addition to the Quarterly Unemployment Reports, the Chief Executive continues to provide basic unemployment information, for each ward, directly to members on a monthly basis as the figures arrive

3 Key Findings¹

- 3.1 Total unemployment in North Lanarkshire in September 1998, as measured by the Government's claimant count, stood at 10,326 (8.5% of the workforce). Male unemployment was 7,899 (11.6%) with the number of female claimants being 2,427 (4.5%). The number of claimants fell by 159 (-1%) over the preceding month (August 1998 to September 1998) and by 189 (-2%) over the preceding year (September 1997 to September 1998)..
- 3.2 The decrease in the September jobless total in North Lanarkshire, although small, is the first monthly downturn since May this year. The number of claimant unemployed in North Lanarkshire is now lower than at any point since March 1998 and there are now (almost) 3,000 fewer claimants (-22%) than at Local Government reorganisation in April 1996.
- 3.3 North Lanarkshire's overall rate of 8.5% places it 5th highest of the 32 Unitary Authorities in Scotland. The rate for Scotland as a whole stood at 5.5% in September. The gap between the North Lanarkshire rate and the Scottish rate stood at 3 percentage points in September. This was down slightly (-0.3 percentage points) since August 1998 but up slightly (+0.6 percentage points) compared with September 1997.

¹ In the summary below the unemployment rates in sections 3.1 and 3.3 are calculated on a different basis from those in sections 3.8 and 3.9. The two different sets of rates cannot be compared with each other.

- 3.4 The overall trend in unemployment remains downwards. However, the North Lanarkshire rate appears to have levelled off while the Scottish rate has continued to decline. Over the last year, unemployment fell by over 9% throughout Scotland as a whole but by less than 2% in North Lanarkshire.
- 3.5 North Lanarkshire continues to have a high proportion of young people out of work. In July, 34% (almost 3,900) of the unemployed were under the age of 25. In Scotland as a whole 30% of all unemployed claimants were under the age of 25 for the corresponding period. Youth unemployment in North Lanarkshire has fallen by just over 60 (-0.5%) since July 1997.
- 3.6 The marked decline in the number of long term unemployed reported previously for North Lanarkshire appears to have stopped. Although the *proportion* of the unemployed who have been out of work for more than one year has remained static at 17%, the *number* of such claimants has increased from just under 1,800 last quarter to just over 1,900 this quarter. However, this is still almost 1,200 less than the figure for July 1997 - a drop of 38% over the year. The fall in very long term unemployed continued however, with just over 2% (243) of all claimants recorded as being jobless for more than five years, as at July 1998. This figure is down 5% over the previous quarter and down 68% over the previous year.
- 3.7 In July those who would be targeted by the 'New Deal' programme comprised 1,043 people under 25 who had been out of work for over six months, and 622 over 25 who had been jobless for two years or more - in total: 1,665 people or 15% of all claimants. The number of under 25s qualifying for the new deal rose by 162 (+18%) over the previous quarter but fell by 140 (-12%) in total over the previous year. This can be explained in part by the number of young people leaving full-time education who joined the unemployment register earlier this year and now appear in the September 1998 figures because they have been claiming for the minimum six month period.
- 3.8 Unemployment rates in the North Lanarkshire's Area Committees ranged from 8.8% in Wishaw & Newmains to 5.0% in Kilsyth & Villages. The biggest decline over the last year from September 1997 to September 1998 was in Airdrie, where unemployment fell by 145 (-7%). However, in the Wishaw & Newmains Area Committee area the unemployment total rose by 116 (+8%) over the past year.
- 3.9 Unemployment rates in the 69 wards in North Lanarkshire in September 1998 ranged from 15.3% in Pather & Gowkthrapple to 2.9% in Ladywell.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the key findings of the report.


 Chief Executive

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Graham A Reid, Information and Research Manager, on extension 2266.