

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2016

OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of business support and investment activities supported by economic development officers since the last information report presented on 2 February 2016. This report covers the period 18 January to 29 February 2016.

1. PROPERTY

1.1 Since the last report the occupancy rate of the property portfolio has dipped to 85.85%, however this does not raise undue concern as it is down to timing where one business leaves and another comes in. We have a number of submitted offers for the vacant properties so hope to report increased occupancy by the time of the next report.

2. SOUTH MONTROSE REGENERATION

2.1 As previously reported the construction of a spine road to assist traffic movements to, from and within South Montrose is considered a key ingredient in the regeneration of the area. An important step was recently taken in progressing delivery of the road with the serving of a compulsory purchase order (CPO). The CPO is seeking approval from Scottish Ministers to purchase a small number of commercial properties and obtain temporary servitude rights over a number of other properties. The full Council approved the serving of a CPO at the meeting held 18 June 2015. The final date for submitting objections was 14 March 2016.

2.2 To date the private sector has committed £85.5 million of capital expenditure to the area and in the process created 140 jobs. The investors include Certex UK, GlaxoSmithKline, Origin Fertilisers, Rix Shipping (Scotland) and Montrose Port Authority. There are further investment projects in the pipeline that could see expenditure exceed £100 million and the total new jobs rising to over 200.

3. FUNDING AND ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

3.1 The following applications have been approved through the grant schemes available to businesses in Angus:

3.2 Angus Market Development Grant

Table below with 2 columns first column business in receipt of grant second column amount awarded.

| Business | Grant awarded |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Premium Products (Edzell) | £500.00 |

The budget is now fully committed for the Market Development Grant for 2015/16.

3.3 Angus Business Start Up – Capital Grant

| Business | Grant awarded |
|--|----------------------|
| Sacred Grounds Coffee Company, Arbroath | £500.00 |

3.4

| Budget Available 2015/16 | Committed | Budget Remaining |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| £18,893.00** | £10,250.00 | £6,643.00 |

** Budget to support Angus Business Start Up & First Employee Grant

3.5 Angus LEADER Programme

The LEADER team are now in post and working on promoting the programme. The team held a successful launch event on Wednesday 3 February at Eassie and Nevay Hall with over 100 representatives from communities, businesses and organisations attending. The event featured some short presentations on projects awarded from the previous programme, information on how to apply to the fund and an opportunity to meet the team and some of the LAG members as well as some networking opportunities. The team are now inviting Expressions of Interest and will work with groups and businesses on potential projects.

3.6 ENPARD Georgia Rural Development Programme

As part of the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) representatives from Angus LEADER programme attended a series of meetings in Tblisi and Borjomi to support with the development of the Georgia programme. Presentations were given at the Ministry of Agriculture on the progress made to date which was well received

3.7 A group of 18 from the Local Action Group (LAG) and Ministry of Agriculture visited Angus in February and had a series of meetings with the Angus LAG, Scottish Government and EU Rural Network representatives, visited LEADER funded projects in Angus and met with Angus Council elected members.

4. EVENTS AND PROMOTION

4.1 Dundee & Angus Tourism Conference and Opportunity Summit

The Dundee & Angus Tourism Conference will take place at the newly restored Verdant Work's High Mill in Dundee on 15 March. Local tourism businesses will find out about what's happening in the tourism sector nationally and regionally. The conference will be followed by a unique Opportunity Summit which aims to encourage businesses to focus on the commercial opportunities presented by the opening of the V&A Dundee in 2018.

4.2 East Scotland Tourism Partnership

The East Scotland Tourism Partnership is made up of four local authorities – Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth & Kinross. The partners are working collaboratively to maximise the impact of the tourism opportunities in East Scotland arising from the opening of V&A Dundee in 2018. The partnership is currently investigating the possibility of a joint regional marketing campaign.

4.3 VisitScotland Expo

The VisitScotland Expo event will take place in Edinburgh on the 20 and 21 April. Expo is the primary business to business travel trade event in Scotland and Angus Council will have a Visit Angus and Carnoustie Country exhibition stand. The key aim for exhibiting at Expo is to promote Angus as a destination. A number of Angus tourism businesses will have the opportunity to partner on the Visit Angus stand including Forbes of Kingennie and Hospitalfield House.

4.4 Interactive iSigns Piloted in Angus

Angus Council has invested in three interactive touch screen iSigns as part of a pilot project, to help provide visitors with information about leisure and tourism businesses in the local area. The iSigns are located at Glamis Castle, Peel Farm by Kirriemuir and Carnoustie Golf Hotel and are networked throughout Scotland providing national coverage for the Angus information. At present leisure and tourism businesses in Angus benefit from a photo-listing, however it is possible to enhance listings on the iSign at their cost to provide more dynamic information and to help improve visibility.

From May to December 2015, the iSign in Carnoustie Golf Hotel had the highest number of clicks (46.6%) followed by Peel Farm (38.34%) then Glamis Castle (15.06%). It should be noted that Glamis Castle is a seasonal attraction therefore user number will decrease during off peak season. Things to See and Do and Food and Drink were the most popular areas on the iSign. Fife, the Borders and Glasgow generated the highest number of referral visits to the Angus iSign pages.

4.5 Visit Angus

Visits to www.visitangus.com increased by 23.5% in January 2016 compared to the same period in 2015. Webcams saw a significant increase in page views throughout January as well as things to see and do and what's on. There were 236 referrals from the Visit Angus newsletter in January with visitors mostly interested in what's on in Angus. Throughout January, the highest number of visitors by location were from London (10%) followed by towns/cities within 2 hour drive of Angus.

In 2015, two webcams were installed in Angus at Glen Clova and Carnoustie Golf Course. Since the installation of these webcams, and featuring the webcam section on the top line navigation, visits to the website to view these cameras have increase by 129.4%.visitors to the area. A variety of channels are used to highlight what is on offer for visitors to Angus; the website www.visitangus.com, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and monthly newsletters, which are issued to over 3,000 contacts.

The Visit Angus newsletter saw the following opening rates:

- 33% open rate in December
- 32% open rate in January

Industry open rate benchmark for newsletters for 'Entertainment and Events' is 21.50%. Visit Angus newsletter has an above average open rate of 34%.

- There are currently 891 likes on Facebook and 222 followers on twitter.

4.6 Carnoustie Country

A trial 6-month intensive social media campaign was launched in January across Carnoustie Country's Facebook and Twitter channels to increase engagement and raise awareness of the golf destination. From 1 to 27 January, likes have increased by 37.2% (1552 page likes), and has a current reach of 44,003.

www.carnoustiecountry.com saw an increase in visits by 118% in January 2016 compared to the same period in 2015. A one week Facebook advertising campaign for the Carnoustie Country Classic, which takes place in May 2016, was launched on 21 January which directed people to the website. This campaign generated over 1,000 visits to the Classic events section and the page views increased by 273% in January 2016 compared to the same period in 2015.

Throughout January, the highest number of visitors by location were from London (9.39%) followed by towns/cities within 2 hour drive of Angus. The UK remains the highest in terms of users per country, however it should be noted that Germany, Denmark and Sweden also appear within the top 10 countries who visited the website during January which reflects the current target audience for the Carnoustie Country campaign.

- 4.7 The Taste of Angus Festival will be held from 19-27 March 2016. Angus is renowned as an area rich in local produce, from quality Aberdeen Angus beef to delicious soft fruits, from healthy fish including the famous Arbroath Smokie to flavoured gin and vodka.

The Taste of Angus Festival will offer the perfect opportunity to sample the delicacies with a packed programme of foodie events held throughout Angus. To view the full event schedule and to download the festival guide, visit www.visitangus.com/tastefestiva

5. BUSINESS ANGUS

- 5.1 January 2016 saw an increase of 45% in visits to the website compared to the same period in 2015. 28.6% of visits to the website were from organic searches (i.e. from Google) and were directed to the various landing pages – homepage, funding, modern apprenticeship programme and financial support were all featured in the top 10 landing pages. The homepage and events section were most popular.
- 5.2 The monthly e-newsletter generated 125 visits to the website with most visitors clicking on events and news.
- 5.3 The Business Angus e-newsletter saw the following opening rates (the industry benchmark is 21.73%)
- 40% open rate in September.
 - 40% open rate in October.
 - 33% open rate in November.
 - 37% open rate in December.
 - In terms of social media presence the number of @businessangus followers in twitter continues to grow with more than 674 followers.
- 5.4 A manufacturing sector Operational Skills Clinic was held on 19 January at The Links Hotel, Montrose –the first in our new series of quarterly networking events held in partnership with the Centre for Engineering Education and Development (CEED). This event was to support the sector in embedding leadership skills, process improvements and operational excellence by showcasing industry best practice. This clinic was delivered by Colin Andrews from the department of Design, Manufacturing and Engineering Management at the University of Strathclyde.

6. UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

- 6.1 The overall unemployment rate in Angus as of January 2016 was 1.9% which accounts for 1,340 people. This shows a marginal increase in Job Seekers Allowance in comparison to the same time in the previous year (January 2015 1.9% 1321 (+19)), but a decrease in comparison to the years before that. (January 2014 2.2% 1,568 (-228); January 2013 3.1% 2,211 (-871)). (Source: Nomis)
- 6.2 At present 69.5% (931) of those claiming Jobseekers Allowance are males and 30.5% (409) are females. This trend of more males being unemployed than females has been consistent for the past several years. Overall the levels of claimants in Angus is now Higher than the national average of 1.8% and higher than the UK Average (1.5%) (Source: Nomis).

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRAL DATABASE

- 7.1 Economic Development Central Database (Hanlon Software Solutions) currently records and tracks:
- Client journeys for Mainstream, Employability Fund, Modern Apprenticeship and 16+ of Activity Agreements.
 - Skills Development Scotland Contracts (SDS) (Modern Apprenticeships and Employability Fund).
 - Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive programme (SERI).
 - Business Interactions.

- Business Profiles.
- Grant Allocation – (Reports are in development for monitoring these) this includes the new Angus LEADER Programme and Angus Environmental Trust.
- Business Angus Events (In Development).
- Various Reporting indicators including SLAED (First SLAED Draft Report received. Programme Registration and Outcomes now in development)

7.2 We are also currently working with Clackmannanshire Council to share best practice and processes for using Hanlon. The recent presentation given to Clackmannanshire Council, demonstrating our use of Hanlon with regards to our Skills Development Scotland Contracts, has proved successful and they are now implementing the system/processes on their system.

8. SKILLS

8.1 The following results are reported for the period from 1 April 2015:

| PROGRAMME | STARTS | TARGET |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Modern Apprentices | 20 | 24 |
| Employability Stage 3 | 11 | 17 |
| Employability Stage 4 | 16 | 18 |
| Mainstream Clients | 309 | 400 |

8.2 Modern Apprenticeships

There have now been 20 apprentices recruited since 1 April 2015 with start dates in place for another 1 and adverts placed for the remaining 3 places. Contract will be completed for 15/16. The proposal for 16/17 contract has been lodged and confirmation of an outcome will be announced March 2016.

8.3 Employability Fund

The proposal for 16/17 contracts has been lodged and confirmation of an outcome will be announced March 2016.

8.4 Food Production Academy

In partnership with Department of Work and Pensions the Skills Team are developing 3 separate short 2 week training course incorporating, Job Search/Interview Skills, First Aid, Manual Handling and Food Hygiene. In addition to the short course candidates will also be given the opportunity of 2 week work experience placements with local food production employers.

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