

## **AGENDA ITEM NO 4**

### **SCHEDULE 1 TO REPORT NO 150/15**

#### **ANGUS COUNCIL**

##### **DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – 14 APRIL 2015**

##### **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 20 January 2015.

#### **1. ARBROATH**

- 1.1 Point of Care Testing (POCT), a distributor of blood and urine test equipment, recently announced the acquisition of Analox Instruments, a manufacturer of analyser equipment. This will add to the product range offered by POCT and at the same time open up more international business opportunities. POCT was founded in 2002 and has leased business premises from the Council at Arbroath Business Centre for many years. It moved into larger, bespoke units at the Centre in June 2012.

#### **2. BRECHIN**

- 2.1 Further to the Information Report submitted to Committee 20 January 2015, the sale of plot 7A at Brechin Business Park to Carnegie Fuels has now been completed (0.77 hectares / 1.9 acres). The company has planning permission to construct a fuel storage and distribution depot with office accommodation. The company intends relocating its current operations and 18 staff from the Edzell Base. The investment will create an additional 2 new jobs.

#### **3. MONTROSE**

- 3.1 GE Oil & Gas is undertaking a £11 million investment at Brent Avenue, further extending the property it leases from the Council. The company has completed construction of a 1,000 sq metre heat treat and cladding workshop and work has begun on a new 600 sq metre administration block which is scheduled for completion in June. The business has also purchased six new machine tools and doubled the number of cladding stations on-site. In addition, GE Oil & Gas has invested £2.6 million at its Charleton Road site, creating a new high bay engineering workshop.
- 3.2 An information day was held at the George Hotel 21 January for local residents and businesses. It provided people with the opportunity to learn more about the South Montrose spine road proposals. Work has commenced on Section 2 of the road which leads from Caledonia Street to Ferry Road to Barrack Road. This will see improvements to existing junctions and changes to priorities. Officers continue with preparations to submit a Compulsory Purchase Order to the Scottish Government covering properties the Council need to acquire to deliver Section 1 of the spine road (as previously approved by Committee – Reports 359/13 and 44/14 refer).

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS SUPPORT**

##### **4.1 PROPERTY**

Economic Development has a total of 106 commercial properties available to let. At the end of February, 96 of the properties were occupied giving an occupancy level of 91%. There are 10 vacant properties, most of which are small offices or workshops (5 Arbroath, 2 Montrose and 1 in Brechin). The one larger property is being held vacant as it has the potential to support a development project.

##### **4.2 BUSINESS GATEWAY**

In the 10 months from 1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015, Business Gateway supported the creation of 226 new businesses in Angus. This remains a very encouraging figure and is ahead of total delivery over recent years – 201 in 2012/13 and 202 in 2013/14.

#### 4.3 FUNDING FOR BUSINESS

Employment Grants of £500 have been approved for the following companies:

Company Name	Location	Business Activity
Melgund Mill	Brechin	IT consultancy – data processing
The Carnoustie Fobel	Carnoustie	Hardware (retail)
Little Feet ...Pitter Patter	Carnoustie	Children's' footwear (retail)
B@R Montrose	Montrose	Public House
Fresh Food Express	Arbroath	On-line local food seller
McLaren Ales	Carnoustie	Ale brewing
MacPherson Construction Consultancy	Carnoustie	Construction
Wellbank Solutions	Monikie	Office leaning

In addition Little Feet...Pitter Patter received a small Market Development Grant and a Vocational Training Fund grant of £750. A Vocational Training Fund grant was also given to Mor Brewing (Kellas).

#### 4.4 TOURISM

The 3 year ERDF funded project 'Rural Tourism Business Support finished at the end of 2014. It supported 166 businesses through 72 marketing initiatives.

A survey of the golf clubs supported reported an 8% increase in business turnover over the duration of the project.

A Tourism Framework for Angus (2015 – 2020) is being developed in partnership with the sector with an ambitious target of growing visitor spend by 20% by 2020 to £220m. In 2013 tourism was worth £183.25m to the Angus economy. This has increased by a significant 25% in the past 5 years

As part of this Framework a new destination campaign is being implemented to promote the county's tourism strengths under one brand – Visit Angus. The main tourism website [www.angusahead.com](http://www.angusahead.com) serviced three channels – visitors, residents and businesses until it underwent a re-design in 2014. It now focuses on a 'visit' message. The domain name will change to [www.visitangus.com](http://www.visitangus.com) and consumer facing Visit Angus Facebook and Twitter page have also been launched to promote across golf, outdoor, food & drink, heritage and accommodation.

#### 4.5 EVENTS AND PROMOTION

An exhibition stand was taken at the 'Offshore Wind and Supply Chain Conference' organised by Scottish Renewables held in Aberdeen 27 and 28 January. The overall view is that there will be opportunities going forward but there needs to be more certainty about long term funding to give the sector confidence.

The third Business Breakfast - 'Funding for Growth' was held at Piperdam on Wednesday 18 March with 28 people attending from 23 businesses. Links to the information have been highlighted in [www.businessangus.com](http://www.businessangus.com). The next breakfast is on 10 June focussing on an Ask the Adviser session.

A public sector 'Meet the Buyer' event is being held at the Reid Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 14 April.

Exhibition space has been booked at two major energy events - 'All Energy' (renewables), Glasgow 6-7 May and 'Offshore Europe' (oil and gas), Aberdeen 8-11 September. This will provide support for local companies as well as promoting Angus as an investment location.

The dates for the 2015 Angus Business Week have been confirmed as 14-18 September. Consideration is being given to the programme of events.

The Best of Britain and Ireland (BOBI) exhibition was held at the NEC Birmingham on 11 and 12 March 2015. BOBI is the UK and Ireland's leading event for the domestic tourism and venues industry. Officers promoted Angus as a new destination to buyers on a 'Visit Angus' platform as part of the Experience Scotland stand.

Exhibition space has been booked at the VisitScotland EXPO which will take place at the AECC, Aberdeen on 22 and 23 April. It is Scotland's main business to business travel trade event, attracting buyers from all sectors of the industry and all corners of the globe. The 'Visit Angus' and 'Carnoustie Country' brands will be used to promote the area as a visitor destination with the aim of encouraging UK & international buyers to add Angus to their own programmes and itineraries.

E-newsletters were distributed to local businesses and support agencies at the end of January, February and March. They continue to report on business success stories in Angus, promote what's going on, present case studies, offer business advice and highlight any new business support initiatives.

The Business Angus website has been developed as a one stop shop for business support information - from advice and funding, to land & property, skills, events, news and case studies. From its launch on 28 August 2014 to 30 March 2015, the website has attracted 5,598 visits, viewing on average 3 pages per session, staying on the site for 2:20 minutes per session. 47% of visits are repeat visits and there is a significant increase in traffic following the release of the monthly enewsletter

#### 4.6 UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Information sourced from NOMIS

Indicator	Angus 2013	Angus 2014	Scottish Average
Rate of economically active in Angus	78.1% which accounts for 57,100 people	79.3% which accounts for 54,900 people	This is above the Scottish rate of 77.6%. this has been a positive trend for Angus since 2000
Rate of those in employment as part of the economically active	72.3%	74.9%,	Scottish average is 72.5%.
Rate of self employment. [percentage of those aged 16 – 64]	9.9% (8,000 people)	10.2% (7,600 people)	Continues to be a positive trend for the area showing a high level of entrepreneurship
Economically inactive in Angus	21.9% (15,600 people)	20.7% (14,700 people)	A high proportion are students (13.2%) or retired (23.4%) which is in line with the population profile
Rate of unemployment	2.2% (1,547 people)	1.8% (1,321 people)	Compares favourably with the Scottish level of 2.4%.  The proportion of males unemployed is considerably higher than females in the area at 2.5% males to 1.2% females. Within Angus the highest percentage of unemployment claimants are those aged 25 – 49 at 2.0%.

Please note that ward level data is no longer available through the Office of National Statistics. More information will be available once the census information has been analysed at Scottish Government level.

#### 4.7 BROADBAND

The UK Government established a Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme which offers financial assistance to small and medium sized enterprises to help cover connection costs in accessing superfast broadband. Vouchers covers connection costs of between £100 and £3000. The scheme has been running for a number of years but was only open to UK cities, 3 cities in Scotland have been involved with the scheme, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Perth. Going forward from April 2015 to March 2016 the scheme is being opened to additional participants. Officers have been working with Dundee and Edinburgh City Councils to become part of this scheme with Edinburgh being the administrative partner. A full programme of promoting the scheme will be developed to ensure Angus businesses become aware of this opportunity.

#### 4.8 ANGUS ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

The annual newsletter and statement of accounts have been received from Angus Environmental Trust in respect of the year 1 October 2013 – 30 September 2014. The balance sheet indicates that at 30 September 2014, Angus Environmental Trust had net current assets of £437,895 of which £368,239 has been committed to identified projects and £4,404 to pay other expenditure, leaving uncommitted funds of £65,252. The newsletter and statement of accounts are available in the Members' information hub.

#### 4.9 EXTERNAL FUNDING

The Angus Council External Funding Team provides funding to communities through the Angus council community Grant Scheme. For the year 2014/15 the Council funded 64 projects totalling £108,525.32 which included £28,562.83 that was focused on commonwealth games projects and activity. In addition to this the team supported communities to lever in £1,587,563.93 from external funders like Heritage Lottery, Foundation Scotland and Comic Relief.

The Angus Council External Funding Team also provides support to other Council services to lever in the funds they need to deliver projects and programmes throughout the area. For 2014/15 period Angus Council levered in £3,776,053.80 which supplemented existing budgets and supported the council priorities.

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