

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 26 APRIL 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 15 March 2016. This report covers the period 1 March to 11 April 2016.

1. PROPERTY

1.1 Since the last report the occupancy rate of the property portfolio has risen to 86.79%. We have a number of submitted offers for the vacant space so hope to report further increased occupancy next report.

2. SOUTH MONTROSE REGENERATION

2.1 There were no objections to the compulsory purchase order which was served 15 February 2016. The order will now be considered by Scottish Ministers and it is hoped a decision on whether to confirm the order or otherwise will be received around September time.

2.2 In the meantime activities continue to encourage and support private sector investment in the area. A meeting was held with Historical Environment Scotland to discuss the listed buildings in the area and possibilities for development. This included exploratory discussions on the future of the old Customs House in Meridian Street.

2.3 Further information on the South Montrose Regeneration project can now be found on the council website.
http://www.angus.gov.uk/info/20432/regeneration/741/south_montrose_regeneration

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 Business Start Up – Capital Grant

Business	Grant awarded
Asset Coatings Ltd, Montrose	£500.00

3.3 Angus Business First Employee Grant

Business	Grant awarded
Macpherson Construction Services Ltd, Carnoustie	£750.00

Budget Available 2015/16	Committed	Budget Remaining
£18,643.00**	£12,000	£4,893

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

3.4 Angus Training Fund

Business	Grant awarded
Steve Rennie Plastering (Tealing)	£200.00
Hydrus Energy Engineering Ltd (Breachin)	£50.00

Table below with 3 columns first column budget available 2015/16 second column committed third column budget remaining

Budget Available 2015/16	Committed	Budget Remaining
£6,476.25	£2,369.75	£4,106.50

3.5 Business Grants

A Proposal is submitted for changes to the Business Grants. Schedule 2 refers to the specific changes and provides background information supporting the amendments.

4. BUSINESS ANGUS

4.1 February saw a decrease in visits to the Business Angus website by 22.43% compared to the same period in 2015. This is an exception to the increase in visits recorded in every other month over the past year. 42% of visits to the website were from organic searches i.e. Google, and were directed to funding, events, property and business development pages which featured in the top 10 landing pages. 89.46% of visits were from Scotland, typically from within a 2 hour drive of Angus with the exception of London which had 7.31% visitor traffic.

4.2 The website saw a peak in visitors as a direct result of the enewsletter. From the enewsletter, most visitors clicked on Business Breakfast, John Lawrie (news), Ella Drinks (news) and Adding Value to Our Farm (event).

4.3 The Business Angus enewsletter saw the following opening rates (the industry benchmark is 21.73%)

41% open rate in January.
42% open rate in February.

4.4 In terms of social media presence the number of @businessangus followers in twitter continues to grow with 69 new followers in Feb, 680 profile visits and 19,400 tweet impressions.

4.5 Angus Business Breakfast – Inspiring Success was held at The Park Hotel Montrose on 23 March 2016. 46 people from businesses attended the event featuring inspiring stories from successful local businesses demonstrating that success is achievable no matter the size of your business.

- Jillian McEwan from Fresh Food Express related how this relatively new company has used online tools to promote their local and seasonal produce inspired business.
- Ashley Meston from Journeycall explained how this industry leading contact centre has invested in the local area, focusing on customer service and staff development to grow the business.
- Anne Petrie from the Business Angus team discussed crowdfunding and highlighted the support available through the Angus Crowdfunding Portal.
- Fiona Cameron from the Business Angus team led a general networking workshop where businesses had the opportunity to discuss their own business and highlight examples of good business practice.

5. FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

- 5.1 A closed Facebook group has been formed for businesses in the food and drink sector to share opinions and views.
- 5.2 As members of the Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau <http://www.conventiondundeeandangus.co.uk> we have been working closely with them to maximise the potential of conference activity in the area. More social events arising from large conferences in Dundee are happening in Angus, using venues such as Glamis Castle and Hospitalfield House. We are also working to encourage conference venues in Dundee to use Angus produce in their food offering. As a step towards this we have organised a trip into Angus for representatives from these venues to see what produce is on offer and to encourage collaboration between them and Angus suppliers.
- 5.3 The Taste of Angus Festival took place on 19-27 March. This was collaborative project with a group of local businesses working together to put on a joint event promoted under the Taste of Angus banner. Participants included Forbes of Kingennie, Brechin Castle Centre, East Haven Together, Artisana, Murton Trust and Sacred Grounds Coffee Company.
- 5.4 A Taste of Angus showcased three farm diversification businesses as part of the first Scotland Food & Drink network tour on 23 March. 14 businesses from across Fife, Aberdeenshire, Perth & Kinross and Angus heard of the innovation and collaboration behind Peel Farm and its Gin Bothy, Ogilvy Vodka, Glamis Castle and the Go Rural support to help drive new diversification projects in the area.

6. GOLF SECTOR

- 6.1 Industry Group - 25 local golf tourism representatives attended the Carnoustie Country Golf Industry Group meeting at Panmure Golf Club on 17 February where the topic was "Marketing and Social Media". There was a strong willingness for more collaborative activity a number of people put themselves forward to form an industry leadership group.
- 6.2 9 golf clubs/course attended a Scottish Golf (SG) Business Planning workshop at Forfar Golf Club on 9th March. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive and follow up meetings between SG and clubs are ongoing.
- 6.3 5 Carnoustie Country Golf Group members attended an "International Marketing Workshop" for East of Scotland partners on 11 & 18 February. The workshop was supported by Scottish Development International and was tailored to the golf tourism industry.
- 6.4 Promotions - In partnership with the East of Scotland Golf Alliance, Carnoustie Country exhibited at the Helsinki Travel Fair from 4-6 March, which had over 50,000 visitors. A new Finnair flight route between Helsinki and Edinburgh commences on 1st April. The level of interest was very high.
- 6.5 Carnoustie Country exhibited at the Scottish Golf Show on 18-20 March which was an opportunity to showcase the new Carnoustie Country brand to the 18,000 visitors. The exhibition was also an opportunity to show off the Senior Open trophy and to promote the event taking place at Carnoustie from 21 - 24 July.
- 6.6 A new business to business newsletter has been launched, tailored specifically to businesses in the food and drink sector. This covers relevant business news, events and business opportunities as well as headline news from Scotland Food & Drink for those businesses who are not members.

7. TOURISM

- 7.1 Collaboration and new opportunities were the themes of the Dundee and Angus Tourism Conference at the newly restored 1833 Highmill, part of Verdant Works in Dundee on 15 March where 140 delegates heard from Business, Tourism and Energy Minister Fergus Ewing; Stephen Leckie, chair of Scottish Tourism Alliance and Yvonne Corbett of House of Turin in Angus. The conference was supported by four workshops on digital, using local food & drink, creating new tourism experiences and exploring transport to encourage businesses attending to consider what opportunities could be maximised by the opening of the V&A

Dundee in 2018. This was followed up by a support session held by Business Gateway on 31 March to offer practical help to bring new ideas into a business reality.

8. UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

8.1 The Overall claimants by Age Group for 18-24 year old as of January 2016 was 3.7% with Scotland at 2.1% and the UK at 1.8%. When compared to previous year the 18-24 age category is still decreasing year on year and only the 50+ category increasing in the latest figures.

8.2 The other age group 25-49 (January 2016 1.9%, Scotland 2.0 % and UK 1.7%) and 50+ (January 2016 1.3%, Scotland 1.5% and UK 1.4%) are showing comparable figures against Scotland and UK percentages.

9. SKILLS

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

PROGRAMME	STARTS	TARGET
Modern Apprentices	24	24
Employability Stage 3	16	17
Employability Stage 4	18	18
Mainstream Clients	379	400

9.2 Modern Apprenticeships

All Modern Apprenticeship places have now been filled for the 2015/16 contract.

Our bid for 2016/17 Modern Apprenticeship contract was successful and we have been awarded 15 places.

9.3 Employability Fund

Our bid for 2016/17 Employability Fund contract was partially successful. We have been awarded 6 places on Stage 3. For this contract year (2016/17) Skills Development Scotland has reduced all contracts across Scotland by 41%.

9.4 Scottish Modern Apprenticeship Week - 29 February- 4 March 2016

As part of the above event the Skills Team arranged a full week of presenting information to over 300 pupils over all eight secondary schools in Angus.

Information was provided from current Modern Apprentices relating to their experiences and choices.

Local employers who offer Modern Apprenticeships explained the range of skills and experience an MA would receive, Information relating to the Shared Apprenticeship Programme was also provided alongside a general presentation of all Modern Apprenticeships and providers who offer these opportunities throughout Angus.

The message for prospective trainees was that anyone aged 16-24 or over can become a Modern Apprentice, from day one they will have a real job, with a real employer that earns real pay, will be gaining skills and hands-on experience that employers value and will work towards an industry-recognised qualification.

10. FUNDING BIDS SUBMITTED

- 10.1 A bid has been submitted as part of a transnational European Interreg project to further enhance our digital innovation culture. Our lead partner, Gronigen in the Netherlands, is known as a centre of innovation, as runner up in the 2014 European Smart Cities competition. There are a further six partners from the North Sea Region who all bring skills and specialisms from which Angus Council will benefit hugely through knowledge exchange and sharing of good practice. The aim is to improve and accelerate our journey to becoming a digital business. By providing smarter government services, this will allow our citizens to have greater and improved access to services, as well as allowing for greater participation in the co-creation of more tailored services. Our part in the project is being led by officers in Resources with input from Communities and People. If successful, this will bring a grant award of €266 500 to Angus Council.
- 10.2 A bid is also being developed to submit to the Interreg Programme called REVIVE, (formally OpSi4SuSi). The focus is on regeneration in Brechin and would lever in £77,000 of grant.
- 10.3 Both these bids have been supported by the Policy officer from the the East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) of which we are a member. Angus Council currently host the officer and secretariat.

11. ANGUS LEADER PROGRAMME (HOSTED BY ANGUS COUNCIL)

- 11.1 Following the successful launch event held in February the team have now received 10 expressions of interest from applicants. The team are currently working with these applicants providing guidance on project plan completion. A deadline date of 20 April has been set for the first round of applications which will be assessed at the 1 June meeting.
- 11.2 The team recently attended the North East of Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) launch event held on 7 March at the Maritime Academy in Peterhead. This is a partnership with North and South Aberdeenshire. Angus has an allocation of £114,960 for projects in Arbroath and Montrose.

For further information and to apply to LEADER contact ruralleader@angus.gov.uk.

For further information and to apply to North East of Scotland Fisheries Fund go to nesflag@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

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