

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 7 JUNE 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 26 April 2016. This report covers the period 12 April to 23 May 2016.

1. LAND AND PROPERTY

1.1 Orchardbank Business Park

1.2 Over the last few months we have been in negotiations with two local companies interested in land at Orchardbank for expansion purposes and to build new premises. Both these proposed purchases have progressed and solicitors instructed to document the sales.

1.3 To address one of the problems facing current businesses at Orchardbank Business Park and to make the Park more attractive for new businesses a superfast Internet connection has been installed.

1.4 Working in partnership with Rapier Systems, a specialist in wireless technologies we can now provide high speed, low latency & low contention business grade wireless internet access for all businesses on the park. The highly controllable system is managed by Rapier Systems, providing speeds from 10 Mbps up to 100 Mbps, including the ability to turn on, upgrade or downgrade bandwidth, all within hours not months.

2. SOUTH MONTROSE REGENERATION

2.1 Rix Shipping (Scotland) has commenced site clearance works on its property between Barrack Road and Cobden Street – this will see a neglected, brownfield site prepared for development. The company has planning approval to erect a warehouse. This will be the third significant investment project undertaken in the area by Rix in recent times.

2.2 The design for section 1 of the spine road from Wharf Street to River Street to Caledonia Street is currently being refined. However, proceeding with the works remains subject to Scottish Ministers confirming the compulsory purchase order that was served in February 2016.

3. FUNDING AND ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

3.1 The following application was approved through the grant schemes available to businesses in Angus in 2015/16:

3.2 Angus Training Fund

Business	Grant awarded
Strathmore Foods, Forfar	£2,958.00

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

3.3 Business Grants for 2015/16 - Summary

3.4 Overall a budget of £30,369.25 was available in 2015/16, comprising Market Development Grant - £7,000, Training Fund - £6,476.25, Start up Grant - £8,447.00, and First Employee Grant - £8,446.00.

3.5 The total approved and in 2015/16 was £27,323.55, comprising Market Development Grant - £8,745.80, Training Fund - £5,327.75, Start up Grant - £7,500.00, and First Employee Grant - £5,750.00.

3.6 Business Gateway

Business Gateway Delivery 2016 and 2015 Year End Statistics for Angus

	2016	2015
Business Start Ups	235	226
Growth Start Up (40%) *	60	41
Growth Start Up completed action plan (60%) **	29	34
Start Up Workshops	31	37
Existing Business Workshops	11	10
Growth Advisory Service/Growth Pipeline Referrals #	14 GAS 3 GP	4 GAS 6 GP
Direct Relationship Managed (Account Managed) Referrals ###	0	1

* Potential higher value business start ups with an agreed action plan for growth.

** Higher value business start ups who have completed action plans and achieved VAT/PAYE status.

Businesses projecting increase in turnover of £200k+ over next three years.

Businesses projecting increase in turnover of £400k+ over next three years accepted by Scottish Enterprise for Account Management.

3.7 Volume Start Up target has been exceeded, with Potential High Value & High Value Start Up targets met. National targets are not expected to be met.

3.8 Start Up workshops are slightly behind target with existing business workshops exceeded. It should be noted that there were more workshops scheduled but subsequently cancelled as there were no bookings.

3.9 Growth Advisory targets have been exceeded. DRM is behind target with only three referrals accepted by Scottish Enterprise. Although there were several more referrals to DRM, less acceptances to Growth Pipeline by Scottish Enterprise over the last year to 18-24 months has resulted in fewer potential DRM candidates. Other areas have experienced similar issues with many feeling that SE have tightened the criteria for acceptance for both GP and DRM.

4. BUSINESS ANGUS

4.1 There was a 55.78% increase in visits to the Business Angus website in March compared to February. March had a total of 2,067 page views and the top 5 pages viewed were the homepage, events, funding, business development and news. 32.64% of visits came to the website via organic search i.e. Business Angus appearing high on in the first page of Google search results, and 24.78% of visits came via referrals from other websites including .gov, womanahead.co.uk, slaed.org.uk.

4.2 The website saw a peak in traffic as a result of the Dundee and Angus Opportunity Summit and another peak when the enewsletter was sent out – news was the most popular section visited by those clicking through from the enewsletter.

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

- 39% open rate in March.
- 42% open rate in February

4.4 Events held included Bill McKechnie from the Institute of Collaborative Working meeting with 33 attendees on 19 April 2016 at Piperdam Golf & Leisure Resort to discuss how to use collaborative working effectively for business. Collaboration is one of the drivers for success and this event was intended for those who are interested in, or already working with Collaborative Working practices and for those who see Collaboration as a growth strategy. This event was organised in partnership with Centre for Engineering Education & Development (Ceed).

5. FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

5.1 A new food network called 'The Food Life' has been formed by local businesses. This group, supported by Angus Council, consists of artisan producers, mobile caterers and anyone else who is passionate about local food and drink. In the first instance they are planning to organise a series of pop-up markets across Angus throughout the year.

6. GOLF SECTOR

6.1 Carnoustie Country exhibited at VisitScotland Expo which took place on 20th and 21st April at the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh.

6.2 VisitScotland EXPO is Scotland's primary business to business travel trade event. EXPO is the ideal opportunity to promote the wide variety of Scottish tourism products and services to potential buyers from all over the world. Angus Council has exhibited at the show since 2013 under the banners 'Visit Angus' and 'Carnoustie Country', Angus Council's golf destination brand.

6.3 Businesses were invited to partner on the stand and this opportunity was taken up by Malmaison Dundee and DP&L Golf Tours.13 appointments were made with Carnoustie Country staff over the 2 days.

7. TOURISM

7.1 Visit Angus Website

7.3 1st - 31st March 2016 had 18,163 visits, an increase of 14.55% compared to the same period in 2015. The website had a total of 56,669 pages views during March (17.45% increase on March 2015), with people viewing the Signal Tower, Glen Clova and Carnoustie Webcams, events, things to see and do. The directory of tourism businesses (accommodation providers, tourist attractions, eateries) received 18,177 visits in March 2016, an increase of 18% compared to March 2015.

7.4 66% of visitors arrived on the website via organic searches i.e. visitangus.com appeared on the first page of search engine results in Google with customers clicking on the visitangus.com link. 15% of visitors came from referrals and 14% came direct to the website.

7.5 The top 5 cities where people viewed visitangus.com include Dundee, London, Arbroath, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. This typically represents the day visitor who lives within a 90 minute drive of Angus, with the exception of London.

7.6 Working with the web team, a review document and action plan has been developed for visitangus.com to improve the customer journey and functionality including layout, imagery and search function in the directory and events.

7.7 Visit Angus Social Media

7.8 Visit Angus Facebook page has 1,291 likes. During April, Visit Angus partnered with Bonfest to give away 2 weekend passes in a competition which reached 15,757 people. This competition increased awareness of Bonfest which took place on 29 April – 1 May. The next competition be in May where there was 2 tickets to the Angus Show available to win.

7.9 Visit Angus top tweet was a re-tweet of Montrose beach which earned the highest impressions (9,561). Visit Angus took part in #ScotlandHour in March which was all about

Festivals and Events – Visit Angus highlighted BonFest, Angus Glens Walking Festival, MoFest, Real Ale Festival and Dragon Quest as well as how easy it is to get here and highlighted that Angus has a drier than average climate compared to the rest of Scotland. Throughout the hour, 8 tweets were posted, collectively receiving 2910 views.. Visit Angus took part in April's Scotland Hour on the subject of Outdoors and Active. Visit Angus highlighted summer outdoor events in Angus, food and drink experiences, and outdoor activities. Throughout the hour, 14 tweets were posted, collectively receiving 5900 views. The opportunity to participate in Scotland Hour will continue to be promoted to Angus tourism related businesses.

7.10 **Visit Angus B2C Newsletters:**

- March – 2950 delivered with a 33% open rate.
- April – 2944 delivered with a 26% open rate.

7.11 **Visit Angus B2B Newsletter**

7.12 A new newsletter, aimed at tourism and leisure businesses in Angus was launched in February. This will provide businesses with regular news and updates about what's happening in tourism locally and nationally, as well as opportunities or events which could benefit their business.

- February – 360 delivered with a 43% open rate.
- No enews was sent in March due to the Tourism Conference.

7.13 **Digital iSigns**

7.14 From January to March 2016, there has been a total of 13,178 visits to the Angus iSigns. Visits are recorded when people use the units at Peel Farm, Glamis Castle, Carnoustie Hotel and those accessing the information for other iSigns throughout Scotland. People are most interested in things to see and do, where to eat and what's on in Angus.

7.15 **New Visit Angus and Summer in Angus guides:**

- A new Visit Angus guide was produced and printed in April 2016. 20,000 copies were printed, 12,000 of which were distributed within a 90 minute drive of Angus by Direct Distribution. An additional 5,000 will be distributed internally with the remainder kept in stock for events and exhibitions.
- The 2016 Summer in Angus guide provides details of all major events in Angus from May to October. 20,000 copies of these will be printed in April, 12,000 of which will be distributed within a 90 minute drive of Angus by Direct Distribution. This will be accompanied by a social media campaign, including a monthly competition, on Visit Angus facebook. An online campaign will also be on What's On Scotland website.

7.16 **Visit Angus PR Campaign**

7.17 A Visit Angus PR campaign started in March and will run to October, targeting both local and national audiences. The local campaign will focus on key events and new developments and will aim to drive attendance and encourage visits to the website and social media. The campaign will also highlight key visitor attractions, things to do and places to visit, as well as the unique accommodation offering and range of places to eat, drink and buy local produce with the aim to raise the profile of Angus among a wider national audience.

7.18 **VisitScotland Expo**

7.19 Visit Angus exhibited at VisitScotland Expo which took place on 20th and 21st April at the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh.

7.20 Businesses were invited to partner on the stand and this opportunity was taken up by Glenesk Hotel in Edzell, Forbes of Kingennie Country Resort and Hospitalfield House in Arbroath. 39 appointments were made with Visit Angus staff over the 2 days.

7.21 **East Scotland Partnership**

7.22 Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth & Kinross councils are working collaboratively to raise the profile of the region in order to maximise the potential tourism opportunities in East Scotland arising from the opening of the V&A Museum of Design Dundee in 2018. A range of East Scotland suggested itineraries have been developed and were used at VisitScotland Expo. VisitScotland coordinated a visit to the region by group travel operator, Norman Allen. The itinerary covered Dundee, Perthshire, Angus and Fife over the weekend 6-9 May 2016.

7.23 **VisitScotland Marketing**

7.24 VisitScotland delivers specific marketing campaigns to promote Angus as a destination, as part of the MOA between VisitScotland and Angus Council. The recent Spring 2016 activity was a multi-touch-point advertising campaign to promote Angus, aimed at reinforcing the area's key strengths.

7.25 **Getting Ready for Events Workshop**

7.26 Events contribute significantly to the local tourism offering and provide local businesses with a variety of opportunities. A free workshop on 12 May at the Park Hotel in Montrose provided businesses with help and advice about how to get the most out of events in the area. It will cover various topics including the importance and benefits of using local produce, how to work with event organisers, and how collaboration can improve the visitor experience.

8. **DUNDEE AND ANGUS CONVENTION BUREAU**

8.1 Angus Council are members of Dundee and Angus Convention Bureau. The 2015/16 end of year report from Dundee and Angus Convention Bureau shows that it supported the following conference activity in Angus throughout the year. They supported one conference and 9 social events in Angus:-

- 2015 British Printing Society Conference, Park Hotel Montrose, 10-12 April 2015, 100 delegates, with an economic impact value of £154,794.
- 5 social events over the year: British Printing Society Convention Dinner, 100 delegates, Park Hotel.
- Medical Pilgrims Conference Tour, 20 delegates, Hospitalfield, House of Dun, lunch at Drovers.
- Medical Pilgrims Conference Dinner, 80 delegates, Glamis Castle.
- isamDUNDEE2015 Congress Dinner, 300 delegates, Guthrie Castle.
- British Society for Investigative Dermatology Conference Dinner, 100 delegates, Kinnettles.

8.2 The combined direct impact of these social events is £47,555. We continue to work with DACB to ensure that local produce is used where possible at conferences, dinners and events

9. **UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS**

9.1 The overall unemployment rate in Angus as of March 2016 was 2.0% which accounts for 1,460 people. This shows an increase in Job Seekers Allowance in comparison to the same time in the previous year (March 2015 1.8% 1295 (+165)), but a decrease in comparison to the years before that. (March 2014 2.2% 1,525 (-65); March 2013 3.0% 2170 (-710)). (Source: Nomis)

9.2 At present 71% (1035) of those claiming Jobseekers Allowance are males and 29% (425) 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 lower than the national average of 2.3% but higher than the UK Average (1.9%) (Source: Nomis).

9.3 The Overall claimants by Age Group for 18-24 year old as of March 2016 was 4.1% with Scotland at 3.4% and the UK at 2.8%. When compared to previous years the 18-24 age category has increased from 2015 (3.7%) but is still an overall reduction from 2014 (5%). (Source: Nomis).

- 9.4 The other age group 25-49 (March 2016 2.0%, Scotland 2.4 % and UK 1.9%) and 50+ (March 2016 1.5%, Scotland 1.7% and UK 1.5%) are showing lower figures against Scotland and Higher than UK.

10. SKILLS

- 10.1 New contracts from SDS confirmed the following targets for 2016-17 effective 1/04/16

PROGRAMME	STARTS	TARGET
Modern Apprentices	6	15
Employability Stage 3	0	6
Mainstream Clients	20	400
Scottish Recruitment Incentive	1	9

10.2 Modern Apprenticeships

- 10.3 There has been an excellent start to the new contract year with 6 new starts immediately and all other places requested and accounted for over the next 4/5 months. The majority of places have been taken up by Angus Council departments and the remainder by local employers.

10.4 Employability Fund

- 10.5 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%.

- 10.6 The Skills team were awarded a contract by DWP to deliver 3 Food Production Academies over 2016, April, August and November to 18 long term unemployed claimants who would be interested in this type of work.

- 10.7 The Academies will consist of training in GOALS (a motivational and goal setting programme) Job Search and Interview techniques as well as First Aid training, Manual Handling and Food Hygiene course. The following two weeks will consist of gaining practical work experience with two local employers: Strathmore Foods Ltd Forfar and Quality Pork Processors, Brechin. It is hoped that full time employment will be offered to the right candidates.

- 10.8 We are also delivering a Hospitality Academy May 2016 in time for the Senior Open Golf in Carnoustie. This Academy will be delivered in a similar fashion to that of the Food Production Academy but with the work experience taking place at Carnoustie Golf Hotel and aimed at both front and back of house roles, and hoping to attract 10 – 12 unemployed clients into this industry.

11. ANGUS LEADER PROGRAMME (HOSTED BY ANGUS COUNCIL)

- 11.1 The LEADER team are now working hard to generate expressions of interest (EOI) to the fund. To date the team have processed 15 EOI's with a number going on to fill out the full application. 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 For further information and to apply to LEADER contact ruralleader@angus.gov.uk

12. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FLOOD RELIEF GRANTS – ANGUS

- 12.1 The Scottish Government launched the flood relief grants following the severe flood events of December 2015 and January 2016. Funding was provided by the Scottish Government for Local Authorities to administer to each flood affected property and Business through the provision of flat rate grants of £1,500 and £3,000 respectively.

12.2 Breakdown of grants paid in Angus as follows:

	PROPERTY (£1500) GRANTS	BUSINESS (£3000) GRANTS
Duration of Scheme	Open for applications for 6 weeks between 18 January 2016 and 29 February 2016	Open for applications for 7 weeks between 28 January and 11 March 2016
Applications	123 Applications Received, of which: 101 Paid 22 Ineligible	25 Applications Received, of which: 23 Paid 2 Ineligible
Ward Breakdown	2 Arbroath East & Lunan 5 Arbroath West & Letham 55 Brechin & Edzell 9 Forfar & District 24 Kirriemuir & Dean 11 Monifieth & Sidlaw 17 Montrose & District	0 Arbroath East & Lunan 1 Arbroath West & Letham 14 Brechin & Edzell 2 Forfar & District 7 Kirriemuir & Dean 0 Monifieth & Sidlaw 1 Montrose & District
Payment	Total Paid £151,500	Total Paid £69,000 (to reclaim from Scot Gov)

13. **AWARDS**

Crowdfund Angus portal has been selected as a finalist at this year's MJ Local Government Achievement Awards in the category of 'Delivering Better Outcomes.' These awards have been running since 2004 and are open to all authorities across the UK. The Angus team are one of 105 finalists and have 7 other competitors in their category. It is a considerable achievement to have reached this stage. Judging took place on 14 April before the winners are announced at the awards night in London on 16 June 2016.

REPORT AUTHOR: Alison Smith, Service Manager – Economic Development
EMAIL DETAILS: ECDEV@angus.gov.uk