

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2015**

**BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES**

**REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report provides an overview of business support and investment activities supported by economic development officers since the last information report presented to Committee 18 November 2014. Normally this would be presented for information but given the significance of the information, it is presented for noting.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the business support and investment activities support and investment activities supported by economic development officers since 18 November 2014.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome( contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- We have a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities.

**3. ACTIVITY UPDATE**

**3.1 ARBROATH**

The Journeycall contact and fulfilment centre at Kirkton Industrial Estate is now operational. The workforce, currently about 200, is set to rise to 300 by the summer of 2015. Economic development officers have continued to support the company as they look to recruit new staff.

**3.2 BRECHIN**

Carnegie Fuels submitted a planning application in December to develop plot 7A (0.77 hectares / 1.9 acres) at Brechin Business Park. The application is for a fuel storage and distribution depot with office accommodation. The company intends relocating its operations and 18 staff from Aberdeenshire. The investment will create an additional 2 new jobs. The site is owned by the Council.

Watt the Butcher Ltd has leased adjoining Council workshop units 1 and 4 at Brechin Business Centre, South Esk Street. This will see the initial creation of 2 new jobs.

**3.3 FORFAR**

The sale of plot 14 (0.32 hectares / 0.8 acres) at Orchardbank Business Park to Oilfast was concluded at the end of November. This will see the development of a fuel oil storage and distribution depot and the consolidation of the company's presence in the north east of Scotland.

An updated promotional leaflet for Orchardbank has been printed and a new marketing campaign has begun. This includes targeting the oil and gas sector around Aberdeen.

## 3.4 OTHER BUSINESS SUPPORT

### PROPERTY

Economic Development has a portfolio of 106 commercial properties available to let – this now includes the property occupied by Journeycall at Kirkton Industrial Estate for which the Council has the head lease and Journeycall is a sub-tenant of the Council. At the end of November, 96 of the properties were occupied giving an occupancy level of 91%. There are 10 vacant properties with 7 of these currently available to lease. One property is being held vacant as it has the potential to support a development project and 2 units are currently being prepared to put on the market.

### BROADBAND/DIGITAL

The importance of fast and reliable broadband coverage for businesses is becoming more and more critical. Therefore officers are currently assessing the costs and options to improve broadband coverage at the major business parks in Angus particularly where the Council retains an interest.

Digital Scotland has confirmed that 71.8% of Angus premises now have 'Next Generation Broadband' (as at the end of September 2014). The target is 93% of premises by the end of 2017. Without public sector intervention, including a £2m contribution from the Council, the commercial roll-out would have eventually only provided 68% coverage in Angus. To help broadband connection in "Hard to Reach Premises" across Angus that are unlikely to benefit from the Digital Scotland rollout, a number of events have been held where various companies that offer a range of broadband solutions were invited to promote their technologies. The turnout at these events was very healthy with quite a number of attendees now investigating these technologies. An officer from Economic Development, working in partnership with Community Planning and the Angus Broadband Cooperative are now in the process of applying to Community Broadband Scotland for assistance to help towards the cost of a feasibility study and capital costs to help find a solution to poor broadband coverage in some of the remote areas of Angus.

### BUSINESS GATEWAY

In the period 1 April to 30 November 2014 Business Gateway supported the creation of 188 new businesses in Angus. This remains a very encouraging figure and well ahead of performance over the same period in the previous year. Economic development officers recently met with the Angus Business Gateway team with a view to enhancing collaboration and joint working in terms of support for and better communications with Angus businesses.

### FUNDING FOR BUSINESSES

Ogilvy Spirits, at Ogilvy Farm near Glamis is now trading and selling its premium potato vodka. As part of the company's development the business received two Tayside Marketing Development Grants totalling £10,000 to help fund specialist expertise to create and develop the Ogilvy brand.

Over recent weeks officers have approved new business start-up grants of £500 for Ogilvy Spirits (near Glamis), Mac Café (Forfar), Aaron Bruce Autolocks (Forfar) and Turf & Amenity Solutions (Liff). This grant is available to 'high impact' new businesses and with forecasted turnover of over £81,000 in their first year (the VAT threshold).

### INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

Officers are part of an International Project Team promoted by the Scottish Enterprise Tayside Regional Advisory Board and supported by the three Tayside local authorities. The remit of the team is to develop a three year programme of activity to create an international mind-set across businesses in Tayside and support their engagement in exporting. A conference was held on 14th November at Michelin, Dundee to launch the programme. 25 companies from the region attended and heard case studies from local companies already exporting and also information on where to get help and advice.

### TAYSIDE ENGINEERING NETWORK

A number of local engineering companies supported by an officer from Economic Development have established a business forum called Tayside Engineering Network. The network is designed to exchange and develop innovative ideas within the Tayside engineering community. An inaugural meeting was held at the Angus Centre for Enterprise in Arbroath on 7th October where 35 engineers from across Tayside networked and listened to case studies by Angus based companies GE Oil & Gas Subsea Systems, Reekie Steeltec and RAM Engineering.

## MARKETING

E-newsletters were distributed to local businesses at the end of October and the end of November. These promote what's going on in Angus, present case studies, offer business advice and highlight any new business support initiatives.

Business Angus website [www.businessangus.com](http://www.businessangus.com) detailing the support available and profiling Angus as an area for investment, was launched in August and has received 2,761 visits since launch.

## EVENTS

The provisional dates for the 2015 Angus Business Week are 14-18 September. Partners have been invited to a meeting in January to take this initiative forward.

Economic development officers organised the second 'Business Breakfast' in Montrose on 10 December. The focus of the event was the use of social media to promote your business. Local companies Mackays, Forster Energy Solutions and Castleton Farm provided case studies and shared best practice and there were business advice stations available to delegates. It was attended by 41 businesses.

### 3.5 UNEMPLOYMENT STATS

Claimant count with rates and proportions  
Proportion of resident population aged 16-64 estimates

	August 2013	August 2013 %	August 2014	August 2014 %	% Change +/-
Arbroath East and Lunan	501	5.2	319	3.3	1.9
Arbroath West and Letham	274	2.6	183	1.7	0.9
Brechin and Edzell	237	3.1	183	2.4	0.7
Carnoustie and District	151	1.9	106	1.3	0.6
Forfar and District	319	3.3	224	2.3	1.0
Kirriemuir and Dean	135	2.2	113	1.8	0.4
Monifieth and Sidlaw	124	1.2	104	1.0	0.2
Montrose and District	273	2.7	213	2.1	0.6
Total	2,014	2.8	1,445	2.0	0.8

August 2014 (most recent figures available at ward level) saw the Angus claimant count (JSA – jobseekers allowance) sitting at 2.0% which was less than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

When comparing Angus against claimant count in August 2013 results demonstrate a positive decrease indicating a recovery in labour market. Arbroath East and Lunan remains at the highest level of claimant count (3.3%) with Monifieth and Sidlaw the lowest in Angus (1.0%).

## 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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