

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 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 11 October 2016. This report covers the period 27 September to 28 October 2016.

**1. INVESTMENT – PROPERTY AND LAND**

**1.1 Property and Land**

1.2 The occupancy rate for the commercial property portfolio is 86.79 % slightly down from the last report. This is due to the fact that Absolutely Upholstery vacated the two properties they had occupied in Arbroath Business Centre. However there have been a number of enquiries in our empty properties especially in Montrose.

1.3 There has been one property let

Unit 9 Harbour Visitor Centre – Phillips Parry - This business has relocated from Dundee

**2. FUNDING AND ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES**

2.1 The following applications were approved through the grant schemes available to businesses in Angus in 2016/17.

2.2 INCLUSION Fund

Business	Grant awarded
Asset Coatings Ltd (Brechtin)	£1,000.00
The Wee Childcare Company (Kirriemuir)	£1,000.00

Table below with 3 columns first column budget available 2016/17 second column committed third column budget remaining:

Budget Available	Committed	Remaining
£7,000.00	£4,000.00	£3,000.00

2.3 INTERNATIONALISATION Grant

Business	Grant awarded
Panmure Golf Club	£1,000.00

Table below with 3 columns first column budget available 2016/17 second column committed third column budget remaining:

Budget Available	Committed	Remaining
£12,000.00	£7,000.00	£5,000.00

#### 2.4 INVESTMENT Grant

Business	Grant awarded
Mad Hatter Entertainment (Montrose)	£500.00
Blue Monkey Events (Carnoustie)	£1,000.00

Table below with 3 columns first column budget available 2016/17 second column committed third column budget remaining:

Budget Available	Committed	Remaining
£10,000.00	£7,500.00	£2,500.00

#### 2.5 BUSINESS GATEWAY DELIVERY FOR APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2016

	Angus	Dundee	Perth	Total
Business Start Ups	164	145	131	450
Growth Start Up (40%)*	33	34	36	103
Growth Start Up completed action plan (60%)**	23	19	16	58
Start Up Workshops	17	32	22	71
Existing Bus Workshops	2	7	6	15
Growth Advisory Service/Growth Pipeline Referrals#	GAS 4 GP 1	GAS 8 GP 3	GAS 14 GP 3	33
Direct Relationship Management (Account Managed) Referrals##	0	0	0	0

\* 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. BUSINESS ANGUS

3.1 From 1 August – 20 September, the Business Angus website received 2,622 visits. There has been an increase in visits to the website by 36.42% in August/September compared to June/July. The top 5 pages viewed were the Angus Business Week, events, funding, business development and financial support. The average visitor session was for 1 min 39 seconds, with 2.43 pages viewed per session.

- 3.2 The Business Angus e-newsletter saw the following opening rates (the industry benchmark is 21.73%):
- 31.6% open rate in September.
- 3.3 Business Angus now has over 1,150 followers on twitter. In August, 67 tweets were posted which generated of 41.1K tweet impressions (number of times the tweet appeared in the twitter feed).
- 3.4 Angus Business Week 2016 was a key focus of the Business Angus team in September. Working together with Business Gateway, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce, FSB, CeeD, Scottish Development International and Skills Development Scotland, events ran from 12 to 16 September. The programme included 9 business events, with over 210 attendees. These events were focused on topics of most interest to businesses and included advice and support on leadership, innovation, cybercrime and funding. The week was publicised widely and feedback from the participants was very positive.

#### **4. FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR**

- 4.1 Taste of Angus had a stand at the Rural Parliament in Brechin. Samples of local food were given out along with information. We worked with the organisers and caterers to ensure that the food offering included local produce and got excellent feedback from the caterers as to how good our local suppliers were to work with.
- 4.2 There were a number of food-related workshops at the Rural Parliament. The Food & Drink Sector Officer attended these and is working with the workshop leader to form local projects to meet the outcomes of these workshops to connect local people with local food.
- 4.3 Taste of Angus sponsored Angus Brewfest which took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October. This event is now in its second year and was sold out. We ran a competition on social media to win tickets.
- 4.4 We commissioned a study into the local dairy sector, which is struggling at the moment due to the closure of the Muller Wiseman dairy in Aberdeen. The survey report showed that there is scope for some of the local dairy farmers to have their own micro-processing facilities and we are working with them to support if they wish to do this.

#### **5 GOLF SECTOR**

- 5.1 Carnoustie Country hosted the World Hickory Open from 10-12 October at Panmure Golf Club. Over 100 golfers visited the area from 19 different countries to play in this tournament. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> year the tournament has been held in Carnoustie Country before moving to East Lothian next year.
- 5.2 Five Carnoustie Country businesses took part in the inaugural Scottish Golf Tourism Week 10 – 14 October at St Andrews where 64 international inbound golf tour operators were given the opportunity of 15 minute appointments with Scottish golf businesses – from clubs to accommodation providers. This culminated in the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards 2016 where Carnoustie Championship was recognised as the “Best Golf Course over £100”
- 5.3 As part of our international marketing activity a media familiarisation trip took place:
- The editor of Golfpiste in Finland visited Carnoustie Country and Dundee from 30 September to 5 October. Articles will be produced on and offline and reported later.

#### **6. TOURISM**

##### **6.1 Visit Angus Website**

- 6.2 Between 1 July – 30 September 2016, the Visit Angus website had 66,606 visits, an increase of 17.69% compared to the same period in 2015. There was a significant peak in visits to the website looking at content on Arbroath Sea Fest with people viewing the event page and the Arbroath Signal Tower webcam. There was also a peak in visits to Angus Heritage Week and Doors Open Days events pages as a result of Facebook advertising.

- 6.3 During this same period, visitors spent an average of 2 minutes 2 seconds on the website; this is an increase of 21.44% compared to the same period in 2015.
- 6.4 The top 5 destinations of visitors to the website came from Dundee, Arbroath, London, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. This typically represents the day visitor who lives within a 90 minute drive of Angus, with the exception of London.
- 6.5 The most popular page was the Arbroath Signal Tower Webcam which received 18,157 page views during this period, with a significant peak during Arbroath Sea Fest. Other top viewed pages include events and things to see and do which received a collective 15,905.
- 6.6 65% of visitors arrived on the website via organic searches as visitangus.com appeared high in search engine results pages i.e. Google, with customers clicking on the visitangus.com link. 16% of visitors came from referrals and 15% came direct to the website.
- 6.7 Desktop remains the most popular device used to access the website with 44.56% of visitors using this device. 31.14% access the website on a mobile and 24.30% use a tablet. But evidence suggests that the overall trend shows a change in behaviour with a slow decrease in desktop users and a slow increase in mobile users.

## 6.8 **Visit Angus Social Media**

- 6.9 Pavilion Cafe featured as the 'Spotlight On' for September, a digital campaign aimed at raising the profile of Angus tourism businesses. Pavilion Café in Montrose offered a competition prize and benefitted from exposure across Visit Angus social media channels. The campaign achieved a very successful organic reach of over 51,000 people on [www.facebook.com/visitangus](http://www.facebook.com/visitangus). This is the most successful Spotlight On campaign to date.
- 6.10 Visit Angus participated in #ScotlandHour, a monthly tourism twitter chat. The topic for August was "Towns & Cities" and content received over 10,416 views. Angus tourism businesses have been encouraged to participate via the Visit Angus e-newsletter.

## 6.11 **Visit Angus B2C E-newsletters:**

- September – 3041 delivered with a 27.8% open rate
- October – 3023 delivered with a 27.9% open rate.

## 6.12 **Visit Angus B2B E-newsletters:**

- September – 345 delivered with a 28.1% open rate.

## 7. **UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS**

- 7.1 The overall unemployment rate in Angus as of August 2016 was 2.2% which accounts for 1,575 people. This shows no change on last reporting period and but overall increase in Job Seekers Allowance in comparison to the same time in the previous years (August 2015 1.9% 1340, August 2014 2.0, 1445) and a decrease compared to 2013 (August 2.8% 2,015). [Source: Nomis]
- 7.2 At present 66% (1,045) of those claiming Jobseekers Allowance are males and 34% (530) 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 lower than the national average of 2.3% but higher than the UK Average (1.8%) [Source: Nomis]
- 7.3 The Overall claimants by Age Group for 18-24 year old as of August 2016 was 4.8% with Scotland at 3.9% and the UK at 2.8%. This shows a slight decrease in this age category in local figures compared to slight increase in both National statistics. When compared to previous years the 18-24 age category has increased from 2015 (4.1%) and slight reduction from 2014 (4.9%). [Source: Nomis]
- 7.4 The other age group 25-49 (August 2016 2.3%, Scotland 2.4 % and UK 1.8%) and 50+ (July 2016 1.4%, Scotland 1.7% and UK 1.5%) are showing lower/comparable figures against Scotland and the UK

## 8. SKILLS

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

PROGRAMME	STARTS	TARGET
Modern Apprentices	11	19
Employability Stage 3	4	6
Mainstream Clients	207	400
Scottish Recruitment Incentive	9	9

### 8.2 Modern Apprenticeships

Although the above figures do not reflect the programme being filled all places are spoken for and are currently at advert/interview stage with start dates due for October/November 16. Both council departments and local business are offering these final places.

### 8.3 Employability Fund

8.4 Four young people have now progressed and completed their training on this programme with two out of the four gaining employment and two achieving the Certification of Work Readiness qualification.

8.5 The second of three Food Production Academies has now taken place with 3 of the 6 candidates gaining full time employment and 1 taking a volunteering placement. Over the two academies six candidates have been successful in getting back into employment. 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.

8.6 The Skills Team have now been out and visited all 40 pupils who are spread all over Angus with a range of Angus Council Departments and local business. All pupils will be working toward the Employability Unit: Personal Development Self and Work. This is part of Angus Council's Developing Young Workforce where pupils will also gain valuable practical work experience from attending 1 day a week over a 22 week period throughout Angus Council services.

## 9 FUNDING

### 9.1 Angus Council Funding Bids - Low Carbon Travel & Transport Pre-Application Support Fund

9.2 Angus Council have been successful in securing £10k towards a feasibility study for an 'Angus Integrated Green Transport Hub'. The feasibility study will be complete by 31 December 2016 and will allow Angus Council to apply for further funding to take the project to the next level through the Low Carbon strand of the European Regional Development Fund.

### 9.3 INTERREG North Sea Region

9.4 Angus Council in partnership with Groningen municipality, Aalborg, Suffolk County Council, Province of Drenthe, Vechta University, Vechta municipality, Rotterdam municipality and Roeselare municipality have been successful in securing €4,251,964 (Angus budget is €533,000 of which 50% will be match funded) towards the 'Like! Building a Local Digital Innovation Culture' INTERREG programme.

9.5 Like! will significantly enhance the capacity of the public sector to facilitate and deliver innovation and result in the development of a wide range of services with innovative solutions for improved public service delivery. Local governments, citizens, universities and SMEs will come together to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services through 9 transnational pilots.

### 9.6 Angus LEADER Programme (Hosted By Angus Council)

9.7 Following a speech by Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing at the Scottish Rural Parliament event in Brechin, guidance from Scottish Government is being reviewed for LEADER funding, with the likelihood that the planned BREXIT-related suspension of the fund, due November 2016, will be lifted very soon, allowing LEADER to continue.

9.8 The LEADER team held the second assessment panel on 7 September 2016 at which three applications had fulfilled all of the requirements. The applications were awarded as follows

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
<b>Alinco Farms</b>	bunkhouse	£ 200,000
<b>Ashbrook Nursery</b>	shop and café development	£ 193,800
<b>Scottish Artisan Tea Producers</b>	growing artisan teas locally	£ 17,778

The applications listed below were approved through the fast track process

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau (Arbroath)</b>	rural advice services	£ 4,000
<b>Chief Executives Unit - Economic Development</b>	youth international cooperation development	£ 2,000

9.9 LEADER funding continues to attract interest from business and community applicants and LEADER staff are continuing to develop applications with likely applicants throughout rural Angus.

9.10 The team also recently supported the three day Scottish Rural Parliament event held in Brechin Community Campus.

9.11 Other activities have included successful representation at the international LEADER cooperation fair in Estonia – several leads from that event are being followed up for possible cooperation funding.

9.12 LAG members recently visited the ongoing Borjormi project and provided valuable advice and support about the assessment process and scoring of projects.

9.13 Angus Council, in the role as the Accountable Body for Angus LEADER, continues to manage the implications of the BREXIT vote on the LEADER European programme. The Council representatives have met to discuss risk with Angus Council auditors and will attend the Accountable Body meeting with Scottish Government in November 2016 to highlight any local challenges.

#### **9.14 SEPA-Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Angus Environmental Trust**

9.15 At the September meeting of Angus Environmental Trust Directors approved funding of:

- £5,500.00 to Eassie, Nevay & Kirkinch Community Association towards costs of installing energy efficient lighting to main hall and kitchen areas of Eassie, Nevay & Kirkinch Community Hall.
- £10,867.00 to Muirhead And Birkhill Millenium Hall Committee towards costs of installing new energy efficient system boilers and led lighting in Millenium Hall, Birkhill.
- £507.23 to Collace School Association towards costs of junior raised bed planters, nest boxes, balcony troughs, compost, assorted plants and seeds for their Community Eco Enterprise Project.

- £19,290.00 to The Broomhouse Centre towards costs of installing commercial kitchen for training and enterprise activities in new community centre.

## **10. Success and Achievements**

- 10.1 At the CoSLA awards on 5 October economic development team won Gold Award in the Strong and Sustainable Communities Category for Crowdfund Angus. The same project is also a finalist in the Guardian Awards on 29 November 2016.

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