

ANGUS COUNCIL**DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – 18 NOVEMBER 2014****INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 30 SEPTEMBER 2014 – 18 NOVEMBER 2014****REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

This report provides a brief overview of business support and investment activities supported by economic development officers since 30 September 2014.

ARBROATH

- 1.1 Journeycall is currently fitting out its 20,000 sq ft contact and fulfilment centre at Kirkton Industrial Estate. It should be ready to commence operations before the end of 2014. Economic Development officers have been supporting the company with their recruitment and initial training delivery.
- 1.2 Officers are currently working with a number of interested parties to try and bring the Keptie Water Tower back into use. It is a B-listed building in the ownership of the Council. A local businessman had a planning application approved in May 2014 to convert the property for use as a diving training centre.
- 1.3 At the end of August, the existing planning approval for an extension to Elliot Industrial Estate was renewed.

2 BRECHIN

- 2.1 The Council has now concluded the sale of a site (1.8 hectares / 4.5 acres) at Brechin Business Park to the Hydrus Group, a specialist engineering service company serving primarily the oil and gas sector. Work has commenced to construct an engineering workshop. It is anticipated that this investment will create 100 new jobs over the next 5 years. This development received significant local and national coverage in the press and on radio and TV.
- 2.2 Cairndene Ltd, a marine engineering and project management consultancy, has recently relocated from Dundee taking a lease on 3 Council office units within the Business Centre at Brechin Business Park.

3 FORFAR

- 3.1 Ground works commenced at the end of September on plots 12, 13 and 14 at Orchardbank. Oilfast, a Motherwell based company with an existing site in Forfar, has planning approval to develop a small fuel oil storage and distribution depot on plot 14.

4 SOUTH MONTROSE

- 4.1 An area of land at the corner of Caledonia Street and Ferry Road has been acquired from Montrose Port Authority for the sum of £1 (plus legal expenses). A second area of land at the corner of Ferry Road and Barrack Road has been acquired from Rix (Scotland) Ltd for the sum of £1 (plus legal expenses). This allows commencement of Section 2 of the spine road (Caledonia Street into Ferry Road and into Barrack Road) with the majority of works expected to be completed by the early part of 2015. Scottish Enterprise is funding this section of road and associated junction improvements.
- 4.2 There is no start date for Section 1 of the spine road (Wharf Street into River Street and new section of road linking to Caledonia Street) as there is still a need to acquire and demolish property. Officers are currently preparing documentation to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order as previously agreed by committee (reports 359/13 and 44/14 refer). It is anticipated the application for a CPO will be submitted to the Scottish Government before the end of

2014. However, it is still hoped that properties can be acquired by agreement without a need to enforce a CPO.

- 4.3 Rix (Scotland) Ltd has demolished old warehouses located between Barrack Road and Cobden Street. This is preparatory work in advance of a proposed new development.
- 4.4 Rix (Scotland) Ltd received planning approval in August to demolish offices and an old warehouse in Meridean Street and develop a new warehouse facility.
- 4.5 Origin Fertilisers (UK) has commenced the part redevelopment of its River Street facilities.
- 4.6 The new multi-million pound quayside on the north side of the harbour was completed and handed over to Montrose Port Authority in October.

5 OTHER BUSINESS SUPPORT

- 5.1 Economic Development has a portfolio of 105 commercial properties available to let. At the end of September occupancy level was close to 90% maintaining the very high level of the past 12 months. There are 11 vacant properties and officers are in discussions with a number of potential occupiers.
- 5.2 In the period 1 April to 31 August 2014, Business Gateway supported the creation of 126 new businesses in Angus. This is a very encouraging figure and well ahead of performance over the same period in the previous year. However, it should be noted that while this could signify a rising number of business starts in Angus it is also possible that Business Gateway is simply engaging with a higher % of business starts than last year. This in itself is no bad thing as there is evidence across Scotland that new businesses who engage with Business Gateway have a better survival rate than those businesses that do not.
- 5.3 A successful 'Angus Business Week' took place 29 September to 4 October. This was a first for Angus and comprised of 21 business events held across Angus organised by a number of partners. Topics covered included exporting, leadership, digital marketing, renewable energy and starting your own business. The programme received significant media attention, including TV coverage. At the time of writing this report officers are reviewing feedback from the businesses who attended the events.
- 5.4 The new website for businesses in Angus went live at the end of August www.businessangus.com. This is the main information portal for local businesses and potential investors hosted by economic development. It seeks to overcome some of the confusion businesses have expressed in knowing who to approach for assistance and it is a platform for better communication with businesses. A monthly e-newsletter was also launched in August informing businesses of what is going on in the area, offering advice and highlighting any new business support initiatives. A @businessangus twitter account was also launched, currently with 88 followers and a LinkedIn forum was also created. The first Angus Business Breakfast took place at Forbes of Kingennie in August and was very well received and plans are underway to repeat this.

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