

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 AUGUST 2017

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 14 March. This report covers the period 20 May 2017 to 28 July 2017.

1. INVESTMENT – PROPERTY AND LAND

- 1.1 The occupancy rate for the commercial property portfolio is 84.38% slightly down on the previous report as Howdens in Montrose have vacated their unit at Broomfield and are taking space in new purpose built accommodation elsewhere in the town. This unit is now being advertised for let.
- 1.2 One new tenant has taken occupancy at Brechin Business Centre - AKB Cabs who provide a private taxi hire and children's transport for schools in Angus. Two leases currently await completion in other properties across the portfolio.
- 1.3 As previously reported tenants of Economic Development's property portfolio are benefitting from a pilot project being conducted by Resource Efficient Scotland (RES) (a programme delivered by the Scottish Government) at no cost to the Council. This provides tenants access to energy efficiency advice and grants allowing a reduction in energy bills. Given our commitment to the green economy and making Angus businesses more efficient and competitive this project has been extended to include an offer to all businesses within the county and a promotion titled 'sustainable business week' in August this year. We have partnered up with Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce to maximise exposure and to make sure everyone that can benefit from this project does.
- 1.4 Following successful negotiation and work by council officers, Marston's have submitted a planning application at Orchardbank Business Park adjacent to their family restaurant for a 38 bedroom lodge style hotel.
- 1.5 Continued progress is being made at Orchardbank Business Park working closely with stakeholders and towards detailed proposals that will bring two national companies to the Park.
- 1.6 We are pleased to report for the first time in approximately 4 years Brechin Business Centre is fully occupied with the most recent tenant taking occupation being an innovative 3D printers. Development opportunities still exist at Brechin Business Park for any business looking to expand or locate in the immediate vicinity.
- 1.7 As part of our process of continued improvement and customer focus we have implemented a 'property search' function in the revamped Business Angus web site. This will provide a single point of reference for commercial property searches in Angus and promote the area nationally.

1.8 Montrose South

There were no challenges in the Court of Session to the compulsory purchase order notice that was issued in January. The next stage in the process was the serving of a General Vesting Declaration (GVD). This allowed the Council to take title to five properties on 31 July 2017 and gain servitude rights over a number of others. Regular contact has been maintained with all affected parties and compensation discussions are in progress. The GVD allows the Council to take title without having concluded the negotiation of compensation. Acquisition of the properties enables completion of the spine road which is required to improve access to the area.

A tender has been accepted for section 1 of the spine road. The works include the demolition of properties, road construction and improvements to existing sections of road. Works will commence 11 September and finish in the summer of 2018.

The private sector continues to take forward investment projects in the area. GlaxoSmithKline has been granted conditional planning approval to construct a 3-storey administrative building (approximately 27,000 square feet) at the entrance to its site. This will provide a welcome centre for visitors, staff facilities, an auditorium and offices. On the 19 July GlaxoSmithKline announced changes to its UK manufacturing network. It is understood this will lead to further investment of £29 million at its Montrose site. On 15 August First Minister Nicola Sturgeon opened GlaxoSmithKline's new £44 million aluminium salts facility, an investment first announced in 2012. Montrose Port Authority is about to go out to tender for the refurbishment of berths 7 and 8 on the north quay. This is estimated to be a £5.2 million project and works should commence in October. The project will provide a further heavy lift pad on the north quay and deeper berths, thus making the port a more attractive option for companies looking for an oil and gas decommissioning base.

2. BUSINESS SUPPORT

2.1 BUSINESS GATEWAY DELIVERY CONTRACT STATISTICS, APRIL 2016 - MAY 2017

	Angus	Dundee	Perth & Kinross	Total
Business Start Ups	30	42	56	128
Early Stage Growth*	3	8	5	16
Start Up Workshops	4	8	8	20
Existing Business Workshops	1	2	1	4
Growth Advisory Service Growth Pipeline Referrals [#]	6 GAS 2 GP	6 GAS 3 GP	4 GAS 1 GP	22

* *Early Stage Growth clients are start-up clients or businesses which have been trading for less than eighteen months, and plan to create additional jobs in their local economy.*

Businesses projecting an increase in turnover of more than £200,000 over next three years.

2.2 With reference to the figures above, start up targets are on target against a flat profile; early stage growth is almost on profile, start up and existing business workshop targets are on profile, and growth advisory service and growth pipeline targets have been exceeded.

2.3 **Business Gateway Workshops**

The number of attendees at Business Gateway workshops in Angus has been rising and is now in double figures (previously some workshops had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers). There are a high number of repeat attendees – where individuals had attended more than one workshop.

The above is as a result of continued and ongoing partnership working between Economic Development and Business Gateway. A link to the next series of workshops is provided here: www.bgateway.com/events?region=angus&keywords=

Business Gateway attended the Economic Development hosted Councillor Induction event, held on 22 May – they spoke with a number of Councillors, offering insight into business support services including the availability of workshops.

2.4 **Business Gateway National Review**

The 2016/17 national review of Business Gateway was published on 10 July. Some key results show that the service helped a total of 10,629 new businesses to start trading during the year. Of these, 8,983 were supported directly by a local Business Gateway office to whom they provided evidence that they had started trading. Research indicated that a further 1,646 started trading after they received support from a local office, accessed information and advice from the Business Gateway Enquiry Service or downloaded templates, guides, or market information from the Business Gateway website.

The service also supported a portfolio of clients who were looking to significantly grow their business, whether through taking on new employees, increasing their sales, or entering new international markets. There are currently over 5,000 businesses in this growth portfolio that received support from a Business Gateway Growth Adviser and accessed some additional support from the Enterprise Agencies. In 2016/17, a total of 2,648 new referrals were approved into the growth portfolio.

Demand for a place at one of the free business events continued to be high and over the last year saw a record number of 31,903 people attend one of 3,551 workshops (including the Digital Boost programme). These workshops were really appreciated by participants with 94% rating the trainer/facilitator's knowledge of the subject as good/very good and overall 94% of participants were satisfied/very satisfied with the workshop they attended.

Local Service Provision

The ongoing provision of a local service recognised that each region of Scotland has its own distinct economic dynamics and challenges and a better, more appropriate service geared towards the requirements of the business and the client's objectives can be delivered through their local office. In 2016/17, 12,669 local products were delivered to businesses, an increase of 37% on the previous year.

Overall satisfaction with contact with local offices rated highly, with those attending in person rating it highest; 93% visiting in person were satisfied/very satisfied with the services they received. The equivalent figures for those telephoning or emailing the office were 85% and 79% respectively.

Clients who had one-to-one meetings with an adviser also rated the experience highly, with many aspects being rated good/very good – in particular, the adviser's understanding of client's business needs.

A copy of the Annual Review can be downloaded from the Business Gateway website: www.bgateway.com/news/business-gateway-praises-ambition-of-scotlands-smes

3. FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

- 3.1 We have had one-to-one meetings with 4 local businesses to give business advice and support in the areas of grant funding, property/premises, skills development and collaborative opportunities. As a result one business has been referred to Business Gateway for start-up advice, one has been assisted in finding suitable premises and one has been referred to our skills team for assistance in recruiting and training staff.
- 3.2 A Taste of Angus experience was offered to two international conferences which had receptions at Glamis Castle. The Aberdeen Angus World Forum brought over 200 delegates to Glamis on 1 July to unveil a memorial to Hugh Watson, founder of the breed (which we supported). Soil Essentials brought around 100 delegates to Glamis on 20th July as part of the European Conference on Precision Agriculture. In both cases visitors were treated to tastings of iconic local food and drink.
- 3.3 A further two 'Angus Food Ambassadors' have been appointed to promote local food. These are Jillian McEwan of Fresh Food Express, and Kim Cameron of Gin Bothy. All four Angus Food Ambassadors helped launch the Taste of Angus Food Charter which is a local provenance scheme – any business, community group or individual can make a pledge to support local food.
- 3.4 A labelling workshop to help businesses understand the rules and legislation for food labelling was held on 20 June. Three businesses attended and feedback showed that this found this session very helpful.
- 3.5 As part of Business Angus International Month, we produced a short film at Mackays Ltd in Arbroath to show how the businesses is trading successfully internationally and how being in Angus has business benefits.

4. GOLF SECTOR

- 4.1 A new, more contemporary and more sales focussed Carnoustie Country website was launched at the end of June. The new site gives a better user experience and is the primary call to action for the Carnoustie Country marketing campaign, which has a more digital focus.
- 4.2 The Carnoustie Country Golf Leadership Group agreed a one year marketing plan at their last meeting in May. They have committed to spending £15,000 up to April 2018. The focus is on digital and the campaign is targeted at domestic and UK golfers.
- 4.3 402 golfers from all over the UK played in the Scottish Mixed Foursomes Golf Week from 3 to 7 July. The event is played over 5 Carnoustie Country Courses, including two in Angus. The average length of stay is 6 nights.
- 4.4 Carnoustie Country led on the delivery of a Carnoustie 2018 exhibition stand at The Open at Birkdale from 16-23 July. The aim was to promote The Open 2018 at Carnoustie and to raise the profile of the Carnoustie Country destination. The majority of visitors to the stand wanted information on where to stay, and how to get to The Open 2018. Over 3000 pieces of print were handed out which included Carnoustie Country Golf Maps and a Where To Stay guide. Tastings sessions of local spirits and ales took place on the 4 tournament days and proved very popular. A number of very informative meetings and discussions took place with stakeholders, Sefton Council and local area representatives as part of the learning experience. 7 local industry representatives attended as part of a learning experience to feed back to their sectors. The activity was supported by Carnoustie Golf Links and VisitScotland.
- 4.5 The Carnoustie Country social media campaign activity has been ramped up to capitalise on activity around The Open and to drive traffic to the new Carnoustie Country website. There were over 2000 new followers in the 2 weeks commencing 17 July, and the number of FB followers was expected to reach 10,000 before the end of July.
- 4.6 2 new businesses (Doubletree Hotel and Discovery Executive Travel) have recently joined the Carnoustie Country Industry Group. The total number of members is now 29.

5. TOURISM

- 5.1 Angus Council is working with a number of local tourism organisations to establish a leadership group to provide a collective voice for the industry. The group has decided to adopt a consortium cooperative model, an organisation run in a shared and equal way, with the aim; 'to work collaboratively to improve the tourism offer in Angus and to promote the area as a visitor destination'.

- 5.2 Angus Council is working with neighbouring local authorities - Dundee, Perth & Kinross and Fife to promote the East of Scotland as a region to maximise the opportunities presented by the opening of the V&A Dundee in 2018. We have collectively attended a number of travel trade events as 'East of Scotland' including TravMedia, a travel media event, in London in March. This event resulted in a recent media visit to the region, by Laura Lynch from Savored Journeys, a food-focused blogger, resulting in the following blog - www.savoredjourneys.com/one-week-in-east-scotland.
- 5.3 Angus Council, VisitScotland and Digital Tourism Scotland ran a joint event on 23 June at Dundee & Angus College in Arbroath about online booking for accommodation businesses. The nine businesses present benefitted from a presentation about the importance of online booking, followed by a business insight from a local accommodation provider about the benefits and challenges of online booking. The businesses now have the opportunity of one-to-one support from VisitScotland to help them to become online bookable and to integrate with www.visitscotland.com, which gives them access to a much wider audience.

6. BUSINESS ANGUS

- 6.1 The International Business Month campaign (June 2017) was a new approach for Business Angus, utilising a variety of online promotional platforms over the period of a month to highlight activity through a specific and integrated campaign.

The International Business Month campaign saw an increase on all online promotional platforms (website, Twitter, LinkedIn, Newsletter, Youtube) over June. The increase in traffic was significantly higher on the website, Twitter and Youtube.

Given the success of theming activity, this approach will continue this year, with Angus Business Week featuring in our next campaign.

7. SKILLS

7.1 Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprentices have begun their training for the 17/18 contract year with 3 starting at Level 2 and 1 at Level 3. A further 4 places are at the interview stage and there are 5 live enquiries. This is a positive place to be only 5 months into the contract year. This year we were also awarded a number of places open to the slightly older age group of 18-24 years.

7.2 Employability Fund

There has been an excellent start to this new contract with 9 out of the 10 allocated places already taken up and the final place about to be completed. Stage 4 is aimed at an older age group of 18+ long term unemployed. There may be an opportunity later in the year of potentially picking up additional places from Skills Development Scotland. This programme suits our team as most of the referrals come from our main partners of Job Centre +.

7.3 Mainstream Clients

Since 1 April 2017 the Skills team have assisted 93 clients through funding of training/assistance with childcare or sustaining the individual until they received their first wage since coming off benefits. From the 93 clients 28 have gone into employment, either part or full time. With continued assistance more of the clients will also gain some form of work. The aim of the team for this year is to work toward assisting approximately 400 clients by 31 March 2018.

7.4 Scottish Employment Recruitment Incentive

Skills Development Scotland awarded 14 Scottish Employer Recruitment places. All 14 places have been allocated to local employers throughout Angus who have recruited a young person with some form of barrier to employment. All 14 places were allocated very quickly within the first 4 months of the contract opening. We are hoping to hear over the next few weeks if there are any additional places to be offered.

7.5 World Host

The Skills Team continue to deliver this People's 1st Customer Service 1 day programme to a variety of groups and it is hoped that with The Open coming to Carnoustie in 2018 World Host

more local hospitality/retailers etc can be trained to ensure excellent customer service for the expected thousands of visitors to Angus.

7.6 Developing Young Workforce

Once again the Skills team are working with colleagues in People to deliver an employability unit to all school pupils who have successfully gained a work experience placement within a department of Angus Council. The pupils applied for and underwent an interview before being allocated the placement. This group is the second to take part in this new approach to young people gaining valuable work experience and will commence as soon as they return to school in August following the summer break.

8. FUNDING

8.1 Based on a series of surveys and our programme of continuous improvement the team a Facebook page has been launched to promote, encourage and support local communities and groups to source funding to deliver local projects. This can be found at: www.facebook.com/Angus-Funding-1880710398812820

8.2 Crowdfund Angus Delivering Angus Council Community Grant Scheme

Since the launch on 1 April there have been 24 expressions of interest for the match fund and 11 successful campaigns. In total £35,356 has been raised utilising £6,150 from the grant scheme. The aim of delivering the grant scheme through Crowdfund Angus was to encourage more activity alongside the Council funding in terms of marketing, community empowerment, skills development and added value.

On 29 June 2017 the team delivered a Crowdfunding information session, staff development workshop and lunchtime webinar in line with the partnership with Crowdfunder. In total through these engagement sessions the team reached over 140 businesses, community groups, social enterprises and Council staff.

8.3 Angus LEADER Programme (Hosted By Angus Council)

8.4 LEADER funding continues to attract interest from business and community applicants and LEADER staff continue to develop applications with likely applicants throughout rural Angus. Since the last report, there are 4 new expressions of interest being developed, and a number of basic enquiries. Two awards have been made -Grange of Berryhill received £48,112 towards development of self-catering accommodation, and Peel Farm received £79,206 for development of luxury glamping pods. A further two fast track awards have been made - £13,458 to Brechin Community Cinema for cinema equipment and accessories, and also Eassie and Nevey Kirkinch Community were awarded £2,743 for upgrade of IT equipment and website for a community resilience centre.

8.5 As part of the promotion of the LEADER fund a successful event was held in Kirriemuir on 18 July aimed at small rural micro enterprises and attracting a number of new contacts. This event was supported by Growbiz, Scottish Enterprise and staff from Economic Development.

8.6 An outline programme has been developed for 24 to 26 October 2017 when a party of 22 Estonians are now confirmed to be visiting Angus to look at rural development projects. This is an important event to establish further cooperation projects in Angus and opportunities for community groups to be involved will be maximised.

8.7 The Local Action Group (LAG) agreed an increase to up to 90% intervention rate for community projects at the June meeting to encourage and support community applications.

8.8 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

8.9 Angus Council are the accountable body in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council for the North East of Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) which has £1.437 million to distribute to Fisheries related projects up to December 2019. To date 4 expressions of interest have been submitted covering Arbroath and Montrose. These applications will be presented at the October assessment panel.

8.10 SEPA-Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Angus Environmental Trust

- 8.11 On 23 March 2017 SEPA carried out an assessment of the Angus Environmental Trust's (AET) running costs charged to the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF) up to 31 March 2017. AET was found to be in compliance with the regulations.
- 8.12 At their meeting on 15 June 2017 AET Directors approved applications to the value of £34,022.32 to the following Angus projects:

Applicant	Project	Award	Ward
Letham Hall	Supporting Wall Repair	£ 10,000.00	Arbroath West & Letham
D&A College	Arbroath Campus Composter	£ 21,315.00	Arbroath West & Letham
Carmyllie Hall	Roof & Fire Door Repairs	£ 2,707.32	Arbroath West & Letham

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