

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 OCTOBER 2015

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 1 September 2015 and includes a number of year end performance statistics.

1. PROPERTY

- 1.1 Since the last report the occupancy rate of the property portfolio has dropped slightly to 85.85%. This is due to a number of small office units being vacated. Demand continues for our business units with a few transactions currently progressing through the legal stages.
- 1.2 Demand for employment land continues to be focused on the north of Angus albeit we are currently pursuing 5 live interests at Orchardbank in Forfar.

2. INWARD INVESTMENT

- 2.1 In the last month we have engaged with a further Aberdeen company looking to expand in Angus, and assistance continues. Terms are to be issued for a relocation solution.

Economic Development continues to explore future strategies for the release of more employment land in a number of locations.

3. SOUTH MONTROSE REGENERATION

- 3.1 The sale of a redundant Council toilet block in Erskine Street to Montrose Port Authority was completed in August. It is the intention of Montrose Port to demolish the toilets and erect some small offices. This development will greatly improve the appearance of a corner site and provide quality accommodation for an international company.
- 3.2 Preparations are continuing in order to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire a small number of properties. This is to allow Section 1 of the spine road to be delivered. All property owners and occupiers directly affected by the CPO have been contacted and discussions are ongoing.

4 BUSINESS GATEWAY

Over the last year there has been an overall increase in the level of business support activities delivered in Angus by Business Gateway. Given the importance of supporting new businesses this performance is encouraging. The outstanding headline number is the 102 business start-ups for the first quarter of 2015. Although the first quarter is traditionally a strong one, to get into 3 figures for Angus is an exceptional outcome.

Table 1 – Business Gateway performance in Angus, Q1 2015:

Activity	Q1 2015	Q1 2014	+/-
Number of business start-ups assisted	102	78	+24
Number of 'Growth Companies' supported (companies predicting a turnover of above	2	3	-1

£200,000 within 3 years)			
Number of companies transferred to Scottish Enterprise for 'Account Management' * (companies predicting an increase in turnover of £400,000 or more within 3 years)	3	2	+1
Number of business start-up workshops	0	1	-1
Number of workshops for existing businesses	8	9	-1

* Account managed companies have a Scottish Enterprise account manager and access to a range of business support tools to help achieve growth aspirations. At the end of March 2015 there were 41 Angus companies account managed by Scottish Enterprise.

5. FUNDING AND ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

5.1 The following applications have been approved through the grant schemes available to businesses in Angus:

5.2 Angus Market Development Grant

Business	Grant Awarded
The Davidson Legacy Ltd	£1,000.00
Aberfeldy Oatmeal	£500.00
Fresh Food Express Ltd	£500.00
Aberfeldy Oatmeal	£500.00
South Powrie	£500.00
Gin Bothy	£500.00
Messers Finlay McGowan	£500.00

Budget Available 2015/16	Committed	Budget Remaining
£10,000.00	£7,245.80	£2,754.20

5.3 Angus Business Start Up – capital grant

Business	Grant awarded
AP/DC Auto	£500.00
Elite Personnel	£500.00
Biomaster Ltd	£500.00

5.4 Angus Business First Employee Grant

Business	Amount Approved	Status
Elite Personnel	£500.00	Approved
Kingston PI LTD	£750.00	Approved

Budget Available 2015/16	Committed	Budget Remaining
£16,893.00 **	£8,250.00	£8,643.00

** Budget to support Angus Business Start-Up & First Employee Grant.

5.5 Angus Training Fund

Business	Grant approved
Hydrus Energy Engineering Ltd (Brechtin)	£500

Budget Available 2015/16	Committed	Budget Remaining
£6,476.25	£2,219.75	£4,256.50

- 5.6 The launch of the Angus Council Crowdfunding Portal for local individuals, projects and businesses was held on 25th August at Park Hotel in Montrose. There were 76 attendees from public, private and third sector. For the initial week following the launch £53,000 was raised for the 4 pilot projects.

6. EVENTS AND PROMOTION

6.1 VKL Board Visit, 10 September 2015

Angus Council hosted a group of visitors from Västmanland, a province in central Sweden which has a great deal in common with Angus in terms of its demographic and economic profile. The Board of the Västmanland Association of Local Authorities and County Council (VKL) spent the day on 10 September in Angus, as part of a wider visit to Tayside. The delegation comprised Council Leaders and their Chief Executives who visited a number of different venues and businesses in Angus during their visit.

- 6.2 Carnoustie Country (CC) supported the Scottish Golf Pairs Challenge, a 5 night/5 round stay and play tournament played over 5 Carnoustie Country courses from 1 - 4 September, with PR and marketing support. The event attracted 100 players which was a 40% increase on the previous year and delivered an estimated economic impact of £70,000.

- 6.3 Four separate media familiarisation trips are being planned for European golf writers in September and October as part of our international golf marketing strategy, aimed at raising the profile of the Carnoustie Country golf destination. These trips include:

- 2 Writers from Golf Punk Germany visiting Carnoustie, Montrose and Panmure from 22-25 September;
- 1 Swedish writer visiting Carnoustie on 24 and 25 September;

- 10 European media visiting Carnoustie Country between 13 and 19th October as part of our partnership activity with the East of Scotland Golf Alliance. In 2014 this joint activity generated 300,000 euros of media coverage; and
- 2 German and 1 Swiss writer covering the World Hickory Open at Carnoustie from 19 – 21 October.

All itineraries feature only those courses and accommodation providers who are members of the golf industry group, and also include showcasing local food and drink and visits to other visitor attractions.

6.3 Carnoustie Country is sponsoring the 10th anniversary World Hickory Open taking place at Carnoustie from 18 to 23 October. This is the 4th consecutive time the event has taken place in Carnoustie Country, involving different courses each year. The event will attract 100 international visitors for a 6/7 night stay and is expected to deliver an economic impact of £130k, as well as media coverage of approximately £50k. The 2016 event has been confirmed at Panmure.

6.4 Carnoustie Country will be one of 20 partners on the Scotland stand exhibiting at the International Golf Travel Market from 5-8 October in Tenerife. CC will be representing over 20 local golf tourism businesses in over 40 meetings with UK and international tour operators. The show is aimed at developing tour operator relationships and increasing business from overseas.

7 Business Angus

7.1 The Business Angus campaign continues to gather pace and momentum. As of 7 September 2015, there had been 14,452 visits to www.BusinessAngus.com since the site was launched. The website sees significant peaks in traffic as a result of the newsletters and event activity. Monday 31 August saw the highest ever day for visits with 206 (the previous high was 164).

7.2 The Business Angus newsletter saw the following opening rates (the industry benchmark is 21.73%):

- 29% open rate in June;
- 27% open rate in July;
- 34% open rate in August.

7.3 In terms of social media presence the number of @businessangus followers in twitter continue to grow with 512 followers.

7.4 Angus Business Week 2015 - 14 – 18 September

Angus Business Week 2015 had a comprehensive programme of events covering important business issues aimed at highlighting opportunities, providing support and training and sharing information with businesses. Our objective is to ensure that businesses know that Angus is open for business and that there is support available to help businesses invest, work, grow and thrive.

This is a partnership initiative led by Business Angus and involving Business Gateway Tayside, Dundee & Angus Chamber Of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, Dundee & Angus College, the Tayside Engineering Network, Scottish Development International and the Centre for Engineering, Education and Development (Ceed). The week consisted of ten events, with XXX delegates attending the week overall. Of those attending xx% found the events to be of benefit to their business.

8. FOOD & DRINK

8.1 £15,000 of Community Grant fund money has been ringfenced this year for Year of Food and Drink Activity. So far there have been 8 successful applications. It is proposed to reduce this budget for the rest of the year to £10,000:

Organisation	Amount Approved	Ward
Easthaven	£997.00	Arbroath & West Letham
Drovers	£950.00	Brechin & Edzell
Sea Fest	£780.00	Both Arbroath wards
Angus Care & Repair	£1,000.00	Forfar & District
St Mary's Church	£1,000.00	Arbroath & West Letham
Seaview Diner	£1,000.00	Arbroath & West Letham
Peel Farm	£1,000.00	Kirriemuir & Dean
Angus Cycling Festival	£1,000.00	Forfar & District

8.2 Angus produce is appearing in a number of publications and campaigns to celebrate Year of Food and Drink, including the Scottish Berry Trail and VisitScotland's Food Trail which showcases Arbroath Smokies.

8.3 The application for Protected Food Name (PFN) status for the Forfar Bridie was launched at the Dundee Flower and Food Show in September in partnership with the Think Local Campaign, Saddlers and McLarens. Economic Development attended this exhibition from the 4th to the 6th September at Camperdown Park. On Friday 4th we attended with Jillian McEwan of Fresh Food Express was offered fresh food samples and promoted her business to visitors. Jillian also donated a hamper of fresh local produce for a prize draw which was to run over the weekend. On the 5th and 6th, we attended with freelance chef George Marshall who assisted in preparing samples of Forfar Bridies, Arbroath Smokies, oatcakes, jam and soft fruits to give to visitors. Approximate visitor numbers to the festival over the three days were XXX. Based on prize draw entries, it is estimated that there were approx. 700 visitors to the Taste of Angus stand.

9. TOURISM

9.1 Visit Angus is a new destination marketing campaign, using a variety of communication tools to raise the profile of the area.

The Visit Angus website (www.visitangus.com) will undergo a review to more effectively meet customers' needs. However, the analytics for the period Jan – Aug show an increase in traffic against the same period last year, although the figures are lower than 2013, due to a new site structure with much less content.

	Jan – Aug 2015	Jan – Aug 2014	% Difference
No. Visits	149,407	104,253	+43%
No. Page Views	426,378	354,151	+20%
No. Unique Visitors	96,984	71,964	+35%

Further Visit Angus activity includes social media (Facebook and Twitter) and newsletters. Statistics for the August Visit Angus newsletter were;

Number delivered	2769	98.3%
------------------	------	-------

Unique opens		36.11%
--------------	--	--------

9.2 We also work in partnership with VisitScotland to promote Angus, and there was a full page 'Angus' ad in the Sunday Post on 30 August 2015.

9.3 Angus Heritage Week

Angus Heritage Week 2015 ran from the 4th to the 11th September, with Doors Open Days taking place on the 5th and 6th. There were 24 events taking place during Angus Heritage Week, across 15 venues. Visitor numbers for these events were approximately XXX. There were 23 Doors Open Days venues this year, 5 of which were new additions to the programme. Visitor numbers for DOD were approximately XXX.

9.3 Scottish Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM)

STEAM figures measure the volume and value of tourism in Angus. In 2014, visitor days were up 6.5% from the previous year at 2,291,570. However, visitor numbers were only up 2.7% to 957,390. The economic impact of these visitors was up 10.1% to £201.75m, indicating that visitors are stayed longer and spending more.

10. TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT TEAM

10.1 Since the start of the new financial year to the end of September the team has registered 170 clients. Of the 93 clients who have entered employment, 76 clients are in full-time employment and 17 part-time employment. An additional 2 clients have started their own business, and 4 have entered further or higher education.

10.2 The team has continued to deliver the Modern Apprenticeship programme in Business and Administration with all vacancies currently in the process of being filled (12) with an additional 8 being requested from Skills Development Scotland following demand. There are currently 24 Modern Apprentices on the programme.

10.3 This is the first year that the team has become involved in the delivery of the Stage 3 Employability Fund programme with 8 young people gaining work experience for the first time and 1 entering into full time employment. The Skills team have also continued to deliver Stage 4 of the Employability Fund programme and have assisted 10 clients, with 2 going into full time employment and the others gaining a variety of qualifications.

10.4 The team is currently working with the Food and Drink sector to deliver a 'Tasty Jobs' Academy and working closely with the Scottish Food and Drink Association to promote opportunities in this sector.

10.5 Delivery of the World Host qualification (customer service) has started within the council and staff from Communities have been first to undertake the course. This programme is open to all council staff.

11. UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

11.1 The overall unemployment rate in Angus as of July 2015 was 1.9% which accounts for 1,336 people. This shows a reduction in Job Seekers Allowance in comparison to the same time in previous years (May 2015 1.8% 1,262; May 2014 2.0% 1,464; May 2013 2.8% 2,015).

11.2 At present 65% (869 people) of those claiming Jobseekers Allowance are males and 35% (467) are females. This trend of more males being unemployed than females has been consistent for the past year **and has led to focused support for client groups**. Overall the levels of claimants in Angus are lower than the national average of 2.2%. (Source: Nomis)