

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 8 OCTOBER 2019

**OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 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 4 June. This report covers the period from 13 August to 23 September 2019.

1. INVESTMENT – PROPERTY AND LAND

1.1 The occupancy rate for our commercial property portfolio in August 2019 was 90% and we continue to maintain a high level of occupancy. Despite the relatively low number of available units, we are receiving a high level of enquiries with 52 enquiries, from April to August 2019. The demand remains high for industrial units (64% of enquiries) and in particular for properties in Montrose (29% of enquiries), Brechin (27% of enquiries) and Forfar (27% of enquiries).

1.2 Since April 2019 we have concluded, or are at an advanced stage, with leases for ten of our properties and should these be secured as planned, this will bring in over £111,000 in rental income, securing over 69 jobs, of which 33 will be new.

These 10 new leases include 5 Manufacturing & Energy businesses, 2 Business Services businesses, 1 trades/construction businesses, 1 tourism business and 1 retail business.

2. BUSINESS SUPPORT

2.1 Business Angus

Between July and August, the Business Angus website received 1,565 visits, an increase of 8% compared to the same period in 2018. The top five webpages viewed were the Homepage, Land & Property, Event Directory, News, and Property for lease.

Digital communication and campaigns is mainly via Business Angus Twitter which has a current following of 2,168 people/businesses pages. The page attracted 42.4k tweet impressions between July and August.

2.2 Business Gateway

The table below shows the Business Gateway delivery statistics by local authority area for July 2019.

Start-up delivery and workshops are ahead of profile, as are the Growth Advisory Service/Pipeline figures. Early stage growth is behind profile and is being closely monitored. This is mainly due to recruitment of new staff who are currently being trained, and the contractor is confident that the targets will be met. Existing Business workshops are on profile. Procurement for Digital Boost services concluded at the end of April, delivery began in May and is on profile.

Please note that Angus clients also attend events and meetings in Dundee as it can be more convenient. This accounts for approximately 20% of clients and will factor into the Dundee statistics and is not shown in the Angus figures.

**Business Gateway Delivery by LA area for July 2019
(June 2019 figures in brackets)**

	Angus	Dundee	Perth & Kinross	Total
Business Start Ups ◇	66 (44)	92 (61)	100 (82)	258 (187)
Early Stage Growth *	7 (5)	10 (7)	4 (4)	21 (16)
Start Up Workshops	10 (9)	16 (11)	15 (11)	41 (31)
Existing Business Workshops	3 (2)	2 (2)	3 (3)	8 (7)
GAS / GP Referrals #	3 (2 GAS) 2 (2 GP)	7 (4 GAS) 6 (3 GP)	14 (10 GAS) 5 (4 GP)	37 (25)
Digital Boost Events	1 (1)	3 (2)	3 (2)	7 (5)

◇ *Start-Up figures reflect businesses which have started up and which have received support from Business Gateway services. The start-up figure for Angus could be higher – this figure does not therefore reflect those businesses which have started up but which did not seek support from Business Gateway.*

* *Early Stage Growth (ESG) 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 increase in turnover of £200k+ over next three years.

Businesses projecting increase in turnover of £400k+ over next three years and meet the criteria for Scottish Enterprise Account Management will continue to be referred to SE. There is not a target for this but BG will report on any successful referral.

3. GOLF SECTOR

3.1 Between July and August, the Carnoustie Country (CC) website received 2.608 sessions which was a decrease in visits from 2018. During 2018, there were a number of paid advertisements around The Open which resulted in a significant increase in volume of traffic visiting the site. During July and August 2019, there was no paid advertising so all visits have been organic.

65% of online visitors to the Carnoustie Country website were from the UK and 14% from USA. The Carnoustie Country overseas target markets are Sweden (1.35% online visitors) and Germany (3.08% online visitors).

During this period, the top pages viewed by online visitors were the homepage (1,243pv), all courses (847pv), packages (498pv), Scottish Mixed Pairs Golf Week (210pv) and golf passes (192pv)

The total reach on Carnoustie Country Facebook for July and August was 246,736 people.

3.2 Media trips - Carnoustie Country hosted 2 media trips during the period to raise awareness of the destination in target markets

A group of social media influencers visited from 11 to 13 August as part of our regional activity. The collective reach of the campaign between 9 August and 2 September was over 9 million, with over 1.3 million YouTube views.

Another German media group visited Carnoustie Country from 21 to 24 September with a full itinerary including golf, food and drink and tourism experiences. Articles will appear in GolfPost.de which is the largest German speaking golf platform in those areas.

3.3 190 people participated in the Scottish Golf Pairs tournament staying 5 nights and playing 5 courses between 2nd and 6th September. The 5 participating courses are Forfar, Kirriemuir, Alyth, Strathmore and Blairgowrie.

- 3.4 A full industry golf group meeting took place at Carnoustie Hotel on 4 September. The 19 attendees participated in workshops in social media and product development. The industry group also held a Golf Networking Day at Forfar Golf Club on 27 September which was an opportunity to network with businesses, media and tour operators as well as showcasing one of our finest inland courses.

4. TOURISM

- 4.1 As part of the regional travel trade activity, the four local authorities Angus, Dundee City, Fife and Perth & Kinross, in association with UK Inbound and Visit Scotland, hosted a UK Inbound Discover Event on 22 - 24 September 2019. The event welcomed 25 global buyers, and was a great showcase for the region. The event provided an opportunity for tourism businesses from across the region to participate in a programme of familiarisation visits, as well as meet buyers in face-to-face meetings.

- 4.2 Between July and August, the Visit Angus website received 51,622 visitor sessions. 75% of UK visitors to the Visit Angus website were from Scotland and typically from within a 90 minute drive of Angus, which is the local target audience for the campaign. The event directory was the most popular pages on the site with 5,064 pageviews. Doors Open Day was the most popular event viewed with 3,483 pageviews recorded.

2,815 referrals to the website came from social channels, with a further 1,725 referrals from visitScotland.com.

The total reach on Visit Angus Facebook for July and August was 325,710 people and there are currently 10,922 page likes.

A Visit Angus consumer newsletter is sent each month to 1,257 people including information about un-missable experiences in Angus. The average open rate for this is 55% which is well above the industry average.

- 4.3 A World Host Customer Service Training workshop was held at Forbes of Kingennie on 27 August which was fully booked with 13 attendees from 3 tourism businesses.

5. FOOD AND DRINK

5.1 Angus Food & Drink Network Proposal

The feasibility study conducted in 2019 evidenced a strong industry call for developing an Angus Food and Drink (F&D) network that would have a positive effect on the local industry. A meeting was held on 26 August 2019 with local food producers and the Angus Tourism Co-operative to discuss creating a F&D sub group, which could work together to identify the priorities for the sector locally, as well as feed into regional activity.

5.2 Food and Drink Showcasing Scotland Event

Angus Council participated in the Food and Drink Showcasing Scotland 2019 on the 1 - 3 October at Gleneagles. This was a three day event where 150 international buyers attended to meet and network with other local food and drink export ready producers.

5.3 **Tay Cities International Trade & Investment Partnership**

On 27 August, the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce hosted the 'Doing Business in China' event which was delivered by the Tay Cities International Trade & Investment Partnership. Presentations were specifically aimed at food & drink and tech businesses that wish to take up the export advice and expertise of CCIC London. This was well attended with 20 attendees. Future events include Export Training sessions, an Ecommerce workshop in October and a multi-sector market visit to Dublin in November.

6. **SKILLS**

6.1 **Employability Fund**

The Employability Fund contract is split into Stage 3 and Stage 4 programmes and our contract numbers have increased four-fold compared with last year's targets. The Skills team continue to do well in delivering opportunities to young people in Stage 3 and all age groups over 18 in Stage 4.

The Skills Team have had 6 audits already this year between all the contracts and have passed all with flying colours.

Stage 3 – we have a contract to deliver 18 placements with the breakdown being 16 trainees aged 16/17 years and 2 aged 18 + years. We currently have eight candidates registered, with three leavers, two of which are to a positive destination with another pending. The team are actively working with employers, other training providers and Skills Development Scotland to identify suitable work experience placements to support the delivery of the Certificate of Work Readiness modules as part of the 10 – 12 week training programme. The team has developed the training which is delivered in house.

Stage 4 – the new contract is for 20 places all for ages 18+. We are already working with partners to fill these places. We currently have eight clients registered, 5 Leavers with 2 to a positive destination, three pending clients are at the moment. It historically takes longer for the EF4 clients to gain employment. Staff are attending surgeries at local Job Centres regularly to support anyone who is unemployed and meets the funding criteria for additional training to help them overcome barriers to get back to work.

No One Left Behind – Angus Council has a new contract with Scottish Government which is divided between Children & Learning for Activity Agreements and the Economic Development Skills Team for ERI which is an Employer Recruitment Initiative very similar to the SERI scheme which ran in 2018/2019. We have a contract for 17 grants to work with local medium sized businesses (less than 250 employees) to take on a new employee who has experienced barriers getting back into work. Barriers include homelessness, disability, lone parent situations, long term unemployment etc. There have been five places filled so far. One of them has progressed from an EF3 placement.

6.2 **Modern Apprentices**

The Skills Team Modern Apprenticeships contract for 2019/2020 (8 Level 3 vacancies and 2 Level 2 vacancies) is progressing well with 4 candidates now started, enjoying their work experience and working towards an SVQ in Business Administration. We are currently advertising, shortlisting and interviewing for three external organisations, with a view to them starting in the next month. We are actively engaging with employers and Skills Development Scotland to promote the MA programme to fill the remaining places.

We received very positive feedback from our SDS Quality Assurance Audit in June relating to service delivery of the Employability Fund and Modern Apprentice training programmes.

The Skills Team were Graded 2, Very Good: training provider has fully demonstrated meeting the standards at a high level with major strengths and a few areas of enhancement to demonstrate ongoing continuous improvement.

7. Angus LEADER Programme (Hosted By Angus Council)

The remainder of the £2,126,586 project fund was committed at the Local Action Group meeting on 18 June 2019, ahead of the deadline of 31 December 2019. This meeting also approved a project to develop the current programme's legacy into further recommended local actions to replace Angus LEADER, which will cease after BREXIT.

Since setting up in December 2015, the programme has exceeded the Scottish Government targets of £275,018 for each of the farm diversification and enterprise allocations and the 5% target of £137,509 for cooperation, with £1,265,253 awarded to other projects in the local community. An Angus waiting list of expressions of interest is now maintained, against any further funding that Scottish Government could reallocate between now and 31 December 2019, from other areas' underspends.

Since last report, cooperation projects led by other Scottish LEADER other areas successfully applied to the Scottish Government for further projects involving Angus. This has now released a further £48,794.99 for activities in Angus.

Four young people from Smaland, Sweden completed LEADER-funded work exchange 10 to 18 August at work places in rural Angus – Rossie Young People's Trust; DD8 Youth Music Project; Murton Trust and Angus Council's Forfar and Kirriemuir Communities Team. Preparations are underway for summer 2020, sending another Angus party to Smaland again, and hosting more Swedes.

'Our Rivers' LEADER cooperation project with Finland saw River North Esk Catchment Partnership working in Finland 24 to 28 August. Angus also hosted 'Flourishing Destinations' cooperation partners from Flanders and Romania 4 to 6 September, approximately 30 visitors hosted two nights at Kirriemuir and two nights at Montrose, for project workshops and study visits to tourism sites. Angus provided LEADER information to our Georgian (Caucasus) cooperation partner Mercy Corps, who are working with the UK's ambassador to Georgia, linking to rural and to international development, including support to community rugby development. From this, LEADER project Brechin RFC was selected to provide a Mascot at Murrayfield for the Scotland-Georgia international on 6 September.

Angus LEADER representatives attended the 19 September "Rural Enterprise Futures - Contributing to Scotland's Rural Economy" event, organised by the Chairs of LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGS) and Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGS) responsible for managing and disbursing more than £100m to rural enterprises, fisheries projects and communities. Angus LEADER project Angus Business Connections also attended, as a local practitioner.

8. FORTH & TAY OFFSHORE WIND SUPPLY CHAIN

The Forth & Tay Offshore Cluster was set up to drive forward supply chain opportunities from the emerging offshore renewables sector. This partnership is made up of Scottish Enterprise, Dundee City Council, Fife Council, Angus Council, East Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and Perth & Kinross Council, together with the offshore wind developers of Seagreen, Red Rock Power and EDF Renewables

Three working groups have been set up as follows:

- Supply Chain Opportunities (led by Angus Council)
- Governance Structure (led by Fife Council)
- Events & Exhibitions (led by Dundee City Council)

Four supply chain events were held in September - in Fife (18 September), East Lothian (20 September), Aberdeen (25 September) and Dundee (26 September).

The Action Plan is aligned with the five core themes of the Offshore Wind Sector Deal: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment, and places.

109 companies from the region including 27 Angus companies responded to the Offshore Wind Supply Chain Opportunities Survey 2019.

The survey initially shows supply strength where many businesses already established, what are their strengths and what we can build on; supply opportunities where many companies have capabilities to supply; supply gaps where there are no/limited established suppliers or capabilities.

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