

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 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 8 October. This report covers the period from 24 September to 26 November 2019.

**1. INVESTMENT – PROPERTY AND LAND**

- 1.1 The occupancy rate for our commercial property portfolio in September 2019 was 90%. From April to September 2019 we received a high level of enquiries (63), with demand for industrial units accounting for 60% of enquiries, office enquiries accounting for 21%, land enquiries accounting for 17% and retail enquiries accounting for 2%. The low level of retail enquiries is understandable as there are only 11 retail units in the portfolio, of which only two are currently vacant.

Businesses are mainly looking for properties in Forfar (29% of enquiries), Montrose (25% of enquiries) and Brechin (24% of enquiries).

- 1.2 From September to November, we have secured, or are at an advanced stage with, leases for seven of our properties and should these be secured as planned, this will bring in over £90,000 in rental income, securing over 62 jobs, of which 28 will be new.

These seven new leases include two manufacturing & energy businesses, two trades/construction businesses, one tourism, one business services and one retail business.

- 1.3 We are currently pursuing two new commercial interests at Orchardbank Business Park, and pre- planning applications are ongoing.

**2. BUSINESS SUPPORT**

**2.1 Business Angus**

In September, the Business Angus website received 1,000 visits, an increase of 21% compared to August 2019. The top five webpages viewed were the homepage (770 page views), The Courier business awards (216pv), the event directory (168pv), the land and property page (138pv) and the Tourism page (122pv).

Digital communication and campaigns are mainly conducted through Business Angus Twitter and LinkedIn. Twitter has a current following of 2,184 people/businesses pages. The page attracted 29.7k tweet impressions during September.

**2.2 Business Gateway**

The table below shows the Business Gateway delivery statistics by local authority area for August 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 August 2019 (July 2019 figures in brackets)**

	Angus	Dundee	Perth & Kinross	Total
Business Start Ups ◇	90 (66)	119 (92)	124 (100)	333 (258)
Early Stage Growth *	8 (7)	18 (10)	5 (4)	31 (21)
Start Up Workshops	13 (10)	18 (16)	19 (15)	50 (41)
Existing Business Workshops	3 (3)	3 (2)	4 (3)	10 (8)
GAS / GP Referrals #	3 (3) 2 (2)	10 (7) 7 (6)	17 (14) 6 (5)	45 (37)
Digital Boost Events	2 (1)	4 (3)	3 (3)	9 (7)

◇ *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.*

### **2.3 Business Gateway Events**

Angus Council's Business Angus team worked with Business Gateway and the Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce to deliver a programme of activity in Angus during October and November.

A Women into Business event 'Empowering Women for Business Success' took place at Forbes of Kingennie on 24 October. The event hosted three local, female entrepreneurs and attracted an audience of around 85.

From 4-15 November a 'Rural Roadshow' took place across Angus, offering businesses a programme of workshops and 1:1 drop in sessions, with a range of advisers. The event was aimed at rural cross sector businesses and focused on a range of topics including starting a new business, recruitment, the future, digital, international trade, HR & business growth.

## **3. GOLF SECTOR**

- 3.1 In September, the Carnoustie Country (CC) website received 2,486 sessions which was a 195% increase in visits from August 2019. In September, two competitions were run: one for tickets and hospitality for the Dunhill Championship and one for a stay and play prize of a 4-ball at Montrose and Monifieth and an overnight stay at the Park Hotel, Montrose. This was part of the #SpotlightOn campaign. This resulted in increased traffic to the website and increased sign ups to the newsletter database.

85% of online visitors to the Carnoustie Country website were from the UK and 5.3% from USA. The Carnoustie Country overseas target markets are Sweden (0.32%% online visitors) and Germany (0.92% online visitors).

During this period, the top pages viewed by online visitors were the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship (1,083pv), homepage (479pv), Competition - Dunhill Ticket (402pv), Competition - Stay and Play (376pv) and all courses (350pv).

The total reach on Carnoustie Country Facebook for September was 180,653 people.

- 3.2 Much of the activity in September and October has been focussed on trade engagement to raise destination awareness which is a priority in the 3 Year Economic Development Open Opportunities Plan.

Media trips - Carnoustie Country participated in a joint familiarisation trip with Fife Golf from 30 September to 5 October. 6 golf and travel writers from Germany, France, Denmark and Holland spent 3 nights and 3 days in each area visiting golf courses, hotels, restaurants and other visitor attractions including Montrose Links, Panmure Golf Club, Monifieth Links, Carnoustie Hotel, Links Hotel, Gin Bothy, Ogilvy Vodka, Glenesk Hotel and its 360 Bar, and Arbroath Abbey. Visit Scotland assisted with the cost of flights and transfers. The outcome will be extensive coverage in print and online articles in target markets across Europe. Features will appear over the next few months and into 2020 and all articles published and digital analytics will be shared with partners. This work supports our focus on promoting the area as a great value first choice destination for European golf travellers and underpins other marketing and PR activities.

Carnoustie Country partnered with the Carnoustie Country Industry group (represented by tour operator member DP&L Golf) to attend the International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) from 14 to 18 October in Marrakesh. IGTM is the world's biggest golf tourism travel trade fair. We had 40 prescheduled appointments with selected buyers over 3 days. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year we have attended this event. The volume and value of tour operator business into Carnoustie Country has increased over this time with some businesses reporting significant increases in tour operator business. Accurate data is challenging and data collection has been highlighted as one of the 4 priorities within the 2018-2022 industry business plan. The aim is to have sufficient data at the end of 2019 to establish a baseline of booking trends.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Scottish Golf Tourism Week (SGTW) took place from 26 October to 1 November. SGTW is Scotland's largest global golf tourism trade show which brings together over 100 buyers and 100 suppliers. 8 Carnoustie Country businesses exhibited, each having over 30 Buyer appointments over 2 days. Carnoustie Country hosted 8 Buyers on a 3 day familiarisation trip visiting all 8 businesses including Carnoustie Golf Links, Montrose Links, Monifieth Links, Panmure Golf Club, Scotsraig, Carnoustie Hotel, Apex Hotel, Doubletree Hilton Hotel and the Woodlands Hotel.

- 3.3 190 people participated in the Scottish Golf Pairs Challenge stay and play golf tournament staying 5 nights and playing 5 rounds at 5 different courses between 2 and 6 September. The 5 participating courses were Forfar, Kirriemuir, Alyth, Strathmore and Blairgowrie. This is a 39% increase on the number playing last year. 50% of competitors come from Scotland with the remainder coming from the rest of the UK. Over 90% stayed in the area for a minimum of 5 nights.
- 3.4 The organisers of this event also run the hugely successful Scottish Mixed Pairs Golf Week which attracts 400 participants (selling out every year) staying for an average of 6 nights every July.
- 3.5 A sub group of industry members was formed at the recent industry meeting in September to discuss developing a Carnoustie Country Golf Week in 2020/21 in an attempt to capitalise on the success of our stay and play golf weeks and the reputation of the area as a great value option for all golfers.

## 4. TOURISM

4.1 The Tay Cities Region Tourism strategy has been endorsed by industry, and work has started to identify how to deliver against the priorities. The strategy aims to grow to volume and value of visitors in the Tay Cities region.

4.2 In September, the Visit Angus website received 20,819 visitor sessions. 76% 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. Doors Open Day event, webcams and the international sheep dog trial event were the most popular pages on the site which contributed to a total of 36,360 page views.

2,156 referrals to the website came from social media channels, with a further 591 referrals from visitscotland.com.

The total reach on Visit Angus Facebook for September was 155,015 people and there are currently 10,920 page likes. Ogilvy Vodka was September's #SpotlightOn tourism business and the campaign reached 27,048 people.

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

4.3 Doors Open Days took place in Angus on 14 & 15 September. 28 venues opened their doors, and attracted approximately 3,150 visitors over the two days. Doors Open Days is an annual event which is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust and provides free access to a diverse range of buildings. It has been coordinated locally by Economic Development since 2015.

4.4 An 'Enhancing Our Visitor Experience' event aimed at the tourism sector took place at the Webster Memorial Theatre, Arbroath on 30 September. The event was part of the activity aligned to the Angus Tourism Framework, and was led by the Product & Experience Development industry working group. There were 22 workshop participants representing 13 different tourism organisations as well as Angus Council and Scottish Enterprise who supported the event. Participants explored the key market segments for Angus and the end-to-end customer journey, and focused on creating new visitor experiences and itineraries based on the Angus's assets that would appeal to these markets and attract additional visitors to the area. The feedback has been very positive; 100% of participants found the event of benefit to their organisation and 100% are going to make changes, or progress ideas covered during the workshop.

4.5 The Angus Tourism Framework Pride of Place industry working group are proposing to run an Angus Residents Week in March 2020, as a way to involve local communities in tourism, to celebrate all that Angus has to offer, and to provide a unique opportunity for local residents to discover what's on their own doorstep. An event was held at the Reid Hall in Forfar on 29 October, to allow interested businesses and organisations to find out more and have their say about how to make the event as successful as possible.

4.6 A programme of industry familiarisation drop-in sessions have been organised between September 2019 and March 2020, aligned to the tourism framework action plan. The purpose of these sessions is for businesses to find out more about what is on offer for visitors to the area, so they can pass this knowledge on to visitors. The first of these took place in the Brechin/Edzell area in September, with four businesses arranging drop-in sessions. There was very limited engagement with this, and a review will take place following the next session for Carnoustie/Monifieth in October.

## **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 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. The Angus Tourism Co-operative held their AGM on 14 October 2019 and have co-organised a workshop at the Hub, Friockheim in November with Scotland Food and Drink targeting suppliers, producers, retailers, hospitality outlets and industry supporters. An interim steering committee with representatives from each of the four groups, will be charged with establishing the Network with a view to having an entity and elected board as part of the ATC up and running by January 2020.

### **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 international trade event where 150 international buyers attended to meet and network with other local food and drink export ready producers. Tuesday 1 October saw mixed sector "Field to Fork" tours which offered buyers an exclusive insight into people, products and places throughout Angus covering Farming & Innovation, Distilling, Meat and Primary Produce (fruit & vegetables). The tour element was designed for businesses to engage with buyers with the potential to generate sales and new business. The buyers and businesses attended a formal welcome dinner hosted by Fergus Ewing, MSP and an introduction by video from Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, who endorsed the event.

The Angus business that took part were Arbikie Distillery, Mackays and The Gin Bothy.

## **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 7 audits already this year between all the contracts and have passed all to a high standard.

Stage 3 – we have a contract to deliver 18 placements with the breakdown being 13 trainees aged 16/17 years and 5 aged 18 + years. We currently have 8 candidates registered, with 6 leavers, all of which are in a positive destination. 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 currently have 10 clients registered, 7 leavers with 3 in a positive destination, and 1 pending client 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 – 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. There have been 6 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 5 candidates now started, enjoying their work experience and working towards an SVQ in Business Administration. We are actively engaging with employers and Skills Development Scotland to promote the MA programme to fill the remaining places.

## 7. **Angus LEADER Programme (Hosted By Angus Council)**

A project fund of £2,126,586 is now fully committed by Angus LEADER LAG. A further application was made to the Scottish Government for a reallocation from the national underspend to cover a further potential award of £26,315. We await decision on this.

The LAG will currently spend the remainder of the programme monitoring live projects, processing claims, gathering evidence of programme targets and contributing to developing arrangements for post BREXIT rural development.

## 8. **ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING**

Tayside Engineering Network organised their annual AGM Dinner hosted in Arbroath at the Dundee and Angus College Restaurant 56 on 23 October 2019. The main speaker was Paul Sheerin from Scottish Engineering. The dinner was attended by 23 members and non-members. A member's site visit event is being planned for in December 2019 with GE Oil and Gas in Montrose.

## 9. **FORTH & TAY OFFSHORE WIND SUPPLY CHAIN**

9.1 Angus Council is a member of the Forth & Tay Offshore Cluster, set up to drive forward supply chain opportunities from the emerging offshore renewables sector. This partnership is made up of Angus, Borders, Dundee City, East Lothian and Fife Councils working together with Scottish Enterprise and the offshore wind developers (SSE, EDF and Red Rock Power). An action plan has been developed and Angus Council leads the Supply Chain Development element of this plan.

An offshore wind supply chain capability survey of Angus business was undertaken, and the main results show that Balance of Plant and Operations & Maintenance is a key area where Angus businesses offer a strong service to this emerging sector. This information will be used to highlight our strengths and skills to the offshore wind developers and their Tier 1 contractors as part of their "Meet the Supplier" events. It will also support the recent announcement by SSE Renewables of Montrose Port being selected as the Operations & Maintenance base for its Seagreen offshore wind farm.

9.2 As part of collaborative work of the Fourth & Tay Offshore Cluster four business breakfasts took place in September:

- 18 September – Fife, North Queensferry, DoubleTree Hotel
- 20 September – East Lothian, Queen Margaret University
- 26 September – Dundee, Scottish Enterprise Office
- 27 September – Aberdeen, ONE Tech Hub

These events were promoted to relevant Angus businesses and provided an insight into the emerging opportunities and offered a networking opportunity for businesses in the offshore wind sector.