

ANGUS COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2020****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 28 January. This report covers the period from 14 January to 24 February 2020.

1. INVESTMENT – PROPERTY AND LAND

- 1.1 The occupancy rate for our commercial property portfolio in December 2019 was 91%. From April to December 2019 we received a high level of enquiries (92), with demand for industrial units accounting for 50% of enquiries, office enquiries accounting for 24%, land enquiries accounting for 15% and retail enquiries accounting for 11%. Demand for industrial space has remained consistently high throughout this year, however slowed down over November and December.
- 1.2 Businesses are mainly looking for properties in Forfar (24% of enquiries) and Montrose (24% of enquiries), with Brechin (23% of enquiries) coming close behind.
- 1.3 By far, the majority of our enquiries come through the online property search platform Nova Loca (66%), which we have embedded within our Invest in Angus (formerly Business Angus – see 2.1 below) website. So along with enquiries from word of mouth (15%), 81% of our enquiries are generated from these alone.
- 1.4 In January we secured a lease with a manufacturing and engineering sector business, bringing in an additional income of £41,000 per annum.

2. BUSINESS SUPPORT**2.1 Invest in Angus**

In December, the Business Angus website was rebranded as Invest in Angus. This was to align our Invest in Angus campaign with our competitors and to provide a stronger message that Angus is a go to place for business, to live, work and visit. The Invest in Angus campaign is delivered by our Business Angus team

In December, the Invest in Angus website received 649 visitor sessions which was a 9% decrease on the same time in 2018. However, those visiting the site viewed more pages per session, with an average of 3.21 pages viewed per session, spending an average of 2 minutes 27 seconds on the site.

The top five webpages viewed	December 2019	December 2018	% Change
Homepage	475	359	32.31%
Property for lease	79	22	259.09%
Land and Property	69	62	11.29%
Back Her Business news story	60	0	-
Event Directory	56	26	115.38%

Digital communication and campaigns are mainly conducted through Business Angus Twitter and LinkedIn. Twitter has a current following of 2,228 people/businesses pages. The page attracted 26.4k tweet impressions during December.

- 2.2 The Scottish Local Authority Economic Development Group (SLAED) published its 2018/19 indicators report in January. This report is published annually and uses a suite of indicators to showcase the contribution made to Scottish and local economies by local government economic development teams.

Councils' continued investment in direct economic development activities achieves significant outcomes. Scotland's local authorities supported over 13,850 businesses, supported just over 15,300 unemployed people into jobs and, through effective partnership working, levered in an additional £1.63 for every £1 of council funding spent on economic development projects.

In Angus, we levered in an additional £12.08 of external funding for every £1 spend. We supported 195 individual businesses across a wide range of sectors, and provided businesses with assistance on over 500 occasions - that is 2 businesses helped every working day in 2018/19.

Angus Council's Open Opportunities Plan 2017 -2019 and its outcomes was profiled as a case study in the report (page 65 – 66)

The full report can be found at www.slaed.org.uk/documents/SLAED-indicators-report-2018-19.pdf

2.3 **Tay Cities Business Month**

Angus Council, in collaboration with regional partners, delivered Tay Cities Business Month in February 2020 with various events taking place throughout the month for businesses.

A networking event took place on 5 February at Hospitalfield House, led by VisitScotland, to tell businesses about the plans for Arbroath 2020 and discuss how they could get involved with the celebrations.

The Tay Cities Annual Meet the Buyer event took place on 18 February 2020 at the Invercarse Hotel, giving SMEs the opportunity to talk informally about upcoming contracts and find out about tendering criteria. Angus Council procurement and economic development teams attended.

2.4 **Supplier Development Programme**

The SDP Fife and Tayside Reps Annual Meeting was held on 31 January 2020. This discussion was to discover working opportunities for the region and design a future events programme for 2020. Angus Council's Economic Development, Transport and Infrastructure Services teams are in planning to run their first event in March 2020 to focus on engaging suppliers who have limited or no experience engaging with Public Contracts Scotland on the School Transport Conveyance Contracts (Brechtin and Montrose).

MVV held their Meet the Buyer event on 30 January 2020 at the Best Western Invercarse Hotel in Dundee. The incinerator will burn around 110,000 tonnes of waste each year, most of which will come from Dundee City and Angus Councils. This event was a collaboration between Angus Council, MVV and Dundee Council offering a range of contracts to local suppliers of goods and services.

2.5 **Business Gateway**

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

Start-ups are ahead of profile, early stage growth is on profile, start up and existing business workshops are ahead of profile, growth advisory service/pipeline is ahead of profile and digital boost delivery is ahead of profile.

	Angus	Dundee	Perth & Kinross	Total
Business Start Ups	161	252	214	627
Early Stage Growth*	20	40	19	79
Start Up Workshops	26	32	31	89
Existing Bus Workshops	5	8	8	21
GAS	9 GAS	28 GAS	28 GAS	91
GP Referrals#	4 GP	14 GP	8 GP	
Digital Boost Events	6	7	6	19

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.

◇ *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 In December, the Carnoustie Country (CC) website received 1,295 visitor sessions, which was an 8% decrease on December 2018.

41.20% of online visitors to the CC website were from the UK and 48.63% from USA, with 78% visiting the website via a facebook referral. The CC overseas target markets are Sweden (0.85% online visitors) and Germany (1.62% online visitors).

During this period, the top pages viewed by online visitors were the homepage (597pv), the courses page (199pv), the packages page (143pv), the Carnoustie Hotel page (57pv) and the Dream Ticket page (55pv).

The total reach on CC Facebook for December was 337,564 people.

- 3.2 We supported the Golf Carnoustie Country Industry group to deliver a Business Networking Breakfast at Alyth Golf Club on 29 January. The topic was 'Digital' and it was attended by 25 representatives of 18 of the 24 member businesses. At the One to One member business meetings we supported in December, digital media was highlighted as a major weakness for the golf sector. Four further digital workshops over 2 days have been planned for March and

April and will be offered to staff and volunteers of all member businesses. Further business support workshops on understanding visitors and how to gather and analyse data are planned for later in the year.

- 3.3 Carnoustie Country exhibited at the Danish Golf Show in Herning from 21 to 23 February in partnership with Golf Fife and Perth based tour operator Morton Golf Holidays. Denmark has been a target market for us for a number of years and builds on previous work including a familiarisation trip for Danish media (also in partnership with Golf Fife) in October 2019. The Golf show forms part of a large travel fair attended by over 61,000 visitors over 3 days. Tastings of local gins and whiskies were offered on stand to attract visitors and to showcase local spirits. A bespoke landing page with tailored stay and play packages was developed on the Carnoustie Country website specifically for the show as the main call to action.

4. TOURISM

- 4.1 In December, the Visit Angus website received 13,910 visitor sessions, an increase of 19.7% compared to December 2018. 77% 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. Webcams, events, Santa's Grotto at Piperdam, the homepage and the Festive Fun weekends at Monikie were the most popular pages on the site during December.

752 referrals to the website came from Facebook, with a further 270 referrals from visitscotland.com.

The total reach on Visit Angus Facebook for December was 225,215 people.

A Visit Angus consumer newsletter is sent each month to almost 1,500 people including information about must-see experiences in Angus. The average open rate for this is 49% which is well above the industry average.

In December, Visit Angus worked with industry to create the 'Visit Angus Advent Calendar' 24 businesses provided competition prizes and this was shared on Visit Angus facebook and on the website. The facebook campaign reached a total of 187,197 people.

5. FOOD AND DRINK

- 5.1 Tay Cities Food & Drink Expo 2020

The newly established Food and Drink working group held a Business to Business event held at Strathmore Hall, Forfar on 13 February 2020. This introduced farmers, primary and secondary producers, and manufacturers in rural Angus, Fife, Dundee and Perthshire to city restaurants, hotels, cafes and bars to support 'buying local' and encouraging stronger, sustainable supply chains using local, seasonally available goods that promote provenance. This collaboration between Economic Development and the Angus Food and Drink Industry Group (under Angus Tourism Cooperative) delivers the aims of the Scottish Government Food Tourism Action Plan in the national strategy.

- 5.2 Forfar Bridie PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) Application

The Forfar Bridies Producer Association (FBPA) has submitted the final application to register the name 'Forfar Bridie' as a protected food name. The European Union framework gives legal protection to the name and stops inferior products being passed off as Forfar Bridies. With the support from Economic Development and Directorate for International Trade & Investment (Scottish Government), the application has gone through national consultation. It is currently at the European Commission scrutiny stage prior to them putting the application out to a three months EU Wide consultation. If no objections during this consultation then the product name would be registered giving it protected status throughout the EU and automatically recognised in the UK. At this stage we cannot inform of any impacts from BREXIT.

6. ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING

6.1 Tay Cities Engineering Project

A stakeholder meeting for the Tay Cities Engineering Project was held on 30 January 2020. The project is nearly ready for a Full Business Case to be submitted. An industry engagement event is proposed for April 2020 that will showcase the plans for the Centre of Excellence and provide a call to action for a working board of industry representatives.

7. SKILLS

7.1 The Skills Team deliver 4 Scottish Government contracts, Employability Fund Stages 3 and 4, Modern Apprenticeships and In Work Training Allowances through No One Left Behind. To date we have assisted 44 people into positive destinations, bringing in an income to date of £64,000.

7.2 Funding of £340,000 from Scottish Government has been made available to support the 3 year Scottish and Local Government's ambition to reduce child poverty through the delivery of activities. The Parental Employability Support Fund has offered Angus the opportunity to deliver a flexible, responsive and user-led model of employability support for people both in and out of employment. This support will help people to access or progress in employment bettering their and their families' circumstances, ultimately reducing child poverty rates.

7.3 The In Work Training Allowance has assisted 12 businesses to offer sustained employment to people under 29 residing in Angus who have one or more barriers to employment. The team continue to increase our key worker, person centred approach work to assist those looking for employment in Angus and will look to extend this provision to incorporate those over 29 moving forward.

8. Angus LEADER Programme (Hosted By Angus Council)

A project fund of £2,126,586 is now fully committed by Angus LEADER LAG.

The LAG will 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.

9. OFFSHORE WIND

Our Offshore Wind Capability survey has been updated to include more information on employment and turnover in offshore wind and also 2 case studies of previous contracts. This additional information has been requested separately from around 25 Angus businesses who previously responded to the survey in order to be shared with the offshore wind developers and their main contractors. However, based on the results of survey as of November 2019, 14 Angus businesses (out of 70 businesses in Forth and Tay) are currently active in the sector either already established suppliers with significant experience or having good capacity with some experience in supplying to the sector. Many of businesses are clustered in operations and maintenance (O&M) as well as manufacturing and supply services (tools, electrical system, fuel supply, transportation services, installation services, shipping and labour services).

A new Invest in Angus – Offshore newsletter was sent out in February 2020 to Angus-based Offshore Wind Businesses featuring news, events and funding & business opportunities in the offshore wind industry in the region.

As part of Forth and Tay Offshore Cluster, Angus Council participated in the Joint Cluster Networking Event in Glasgow on 28 January 2020 in addition to Scottish Renewables Offshore Wind Conference on 28-29 January 2020 in Glasgow. Both events were very well attended and our supply chain businesses have been further promoted.

In partnership with Montrose Port, Seagreen's selected Operations & Maintenance base, we organised an industry event at the Port on 27 February 2020. The event was aimed at port-base businesses and established suppliers with experience of supplying to the offshore wind. The event helped to further engage Angus businesses with Seagreen and NnG wind farm projects as well as providing a networking opportunity with like-minded businesses.

Angus Council also participated in the EDF Meet the Buyer event in March 2020 for its NnG wind farm project.

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