

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 1 DECEMBER 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 13 October 2015. This report covers the period 28 September to 16 November 2015.

1. PROPERTY

- 1.1 Since the last report the occupancy rate of the property portfolio has increased slightly from 85.9% to 86.7%. In addition to this, having undertaken press advertising there are currently 3 new leases being progressed, that will lead to 5 more jobs being supported within the portfolio. The vacant units continue to attract viewings.

2. INDIGENOUS BUSINESS GROWTH

- 2.1 Over the last quarter the investment team have engaged with two prominent local businesses assisting with business growth plans, innovation and funding. As a result planning applications have been submitted for new space and in turn plant and machinery ordered which is estimated will attract an additional 50 new jobs to Angus together with in excess of £5million pounds worth of capital investment.

3. SOUTH MONTROSE REGENERATION

Section 2 of the spine road, funded by Scottish Enterprise, was completed in October. The works were primarily improvements to the existing road network from Caledonia Street to Ferry Road to Barrack Road.

GSK has recently completed works associated with the arrival and departure of HGVs near to its main entrance at the end of Caledonia Street.

Preparations are continuing in order to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to deliver Section 1 of the spine road.

Construction of the new 32,000 sq ft transit shed at Meridian Street by Rix (Scotland) Ltd is nearing completion. This replaces the old facilities on site and is a further step forward in regenerating the area.

4. BROADBAND

- 4.1 Broadband Connection Scheme

Officers have been active in promoting the Government's Broadband Connection Scheme to businesses across the county. Over 30 Angus businesses have been successful in getting funding for faster, better broadband through this scheme.

This scheme offered a grant of up to £3,000 to small and medium sized enterprises to help cover connection costs in accessing superfast broadband. This was a UK wide scheme with businesses in Angus able to access the scheme from April 2015. It was envisaged that it would run through to March 2016 however there has been such a high demand for vouchers that as of the 14 October the scheme was closed to new applications.

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 Business Start Up – capital grant

| Business | Grant awarded |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Midas Works (Arbroath) | £500.00 |
| Pavilion Ltd | £500.00 |

5.3 Angus Business First Employee Grant

Table below with 3 columns first column business second column amount approved third column status

| Business | Amount Approved | Status |
|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| Pavilion Ltd | £500.00 | Approved |

| Budget Available 2015/16 | Committed | Budget Remaining |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| £16,893.00 ** | £9,250.00 | £7,643.00 |

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

5.4 The Angus Council Crowdfunding Portal for local individuals, projects and businesses currently has eight active projects and continues to be a good alternative funding source in Angus.

6. EVENTS AND PROMOTION

6.1 Raising the profile of the local area and capitalising on PR opportunities is a key priority – capitalising on the opportunities afforded by hosting forthcoming major events - the Senior Open 2016 and The Open 2018:

- In partnership with the 5 East of Scotland regions, Carnoustie Country delivered a FAM trip for 10 European golf media from German speaking and Scandinavian markets, between 13 to 18 October. The week of visits ended with a networking event and dinner at Carnoustie Country member hotel, Malmaison Dundee. The itinerary for the 3 journalists who spent the 6 days in Carnoustie Country included 5 golf course visits (Carnoustie, Monifieth, Edzell, Montrose and Scotsraig) stays in Glenesk, Carnoustie and Malmaison hotels and visits to Glamis Castle and Arbikie Highland Estates. A similar event in October 2014 produced articles with equivalent advertising value of 387,000 euros. Articles from the 2015 trip will appear in print and online in Spring 2015.

- World Hickory Open

Carnoustie Country supported the World Hickory Open at Carnoustie from 19 to 23 October. 18 countries were represented including Switzerland, Sweden, USA, Canada, Germany, Denmark and South Africa, with 80 of the 120 players coming from overseas. The majority of the players stayed in Carnoustie Golf Hotel for a minimum of 5 nights with many also staying for longer and playing at other local courses. Local companies Arbikie Highland Estates and Fresh Food Express provided tastings at the prize giving and 135 people attended a gala dinner in the Carnoustie Hotel. Carnoustie Country supports with PR and marketing and media attendance. Last year the media evaluation was an estimated £50,000. The 2016 World Hickory Open has been confirmed to take place in Carnoustie Country for the 5th consecutive year.

6.2 Carnoustie Country exhibited at the International Golf Travel Market in Tenerife from 5 – 8 October as one of 20 partners on the ‘Scotland Home of Golf’ stand. Carnoustie Country partnered with Carnoustie Golf Links and had over 40 tour operator meetings on the stand.

The show also provides good networking opportunities with other industry partners. The level of interest in packages and tournaments was good and follow ups are ongoing.

7. BUSINESS ANGUS

7.1 The Business Angus campaign continues to gather pace and momentum. As of 30 September 2015, there had been 15,889 visits to www.businessangus.com since the site was launched. The website sees significant peaks in traffic as a result of the enewsletters and event activity.

7.2 The Business Angus enewsletter 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.
- 40% open rate in Sept.

7.3 In terms of social media presence the number of @businessangus followers in twitter continues to grow with 575 followers.

7.4 Courier Business Briefings

Business Angus negotiated a package rate to become the headline sponsor for two Courier Business Briefing events. The first event was with Sir Tom Farmer as the speaker on 8 September at the Apex Hotel in Dundee and the second was with Keith Cochrane (The Weir Group) on 28 October at Forbes of Kingennie. Further information on The Courier Business Briefing can be found at www.thecourierbriefings.co.uk.

The sponsorship package provided an opportunity to raise both the profile of Business Angus and Angus Business Week 2015, including significant promotional support both within the Courier newspaper and online presence, also representation at the events by way of a table for guests and a Business Angus representative on the panel.

Sponsoring these events supports our aim of positioning Business Angus amongst local businesses as a knowledgeable and responsive service and be seen as one of the 'main players' in the area. The association with these events and high profile speakers has raised the profile of Business Angus. It has given us the opportunity to discuss what support we can provide to businesses and highlight our key messages by being on the panel at these events; editorial content; and press ads. Importantly it has also supported our aim to build relationships with key businesses/organisations within Angus by inviting them to our table at each event with 15 businesses attending as guests of Business Angus.

8. FOOD & DRINK

8.1 To tie in with the year of Scottish Food & Drink, A Taste of Angus was showcased at the Angus Autumn reception in Brussels on the 12th October 2015. This was the European launch of the campaign for Protected Food Name (PFN) status for the Forfar Bridie. This would mean that only bridies produced in the Forfar area of Angus would be allowed to carry the name 'Forfar Bridie'. It would be the second Angus product to be awarded official PFN status after Arbroath Smokies. Other Angus produce including Arbroath Smokies, Bothy Gin, Ogilvy Vodka, and Aberfeldy Oatmeal oatcakes, along with promotional literature on Angus were featured the event. There were approximately 70 people in attendance including Scottish MEP Iain Hudgeon and Jillian McEwan of Fresh Food Express.

9. UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

9.1 The overall unemployment rate in Angus as of September 2015 was 1.6% which accounts for 1,175 people. This shows a reduction in Job Seekers Allowance in comparison to the same time in previous years (September 2014 1.7% 1,234; September 2013 2.3% 1,639; September 2012 2.9% 2,094).

9.2 At present 66.6% (783 people) of those claiming Jobseekers Allowance are males and 33.4% (392) are females. This trend of more males being unemployed than females has been consistent for the past several years. Overall the levels of claimants in Angus are lower than the national average of 1.9%. (Source: Nomis)

Contact for further information
Alison Smith, Service Manager – Economic Development
Email: EcDev@angus.gov.uk