
1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this Report.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report outlines the Highlights and Achievements of the Economic Development Unit for the period 4 March 2004 – 29 April 2004.

3 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS – 4 MARCH 2004 – 29 APRIL 2004

♦ Property - 87% of the Council’s industrial/commercial units are occupied (86 units occupied, 13 vacant). 87% of total possible rental income currently being achieved.

♦ Orchardbank Business Park Extension - Interest in this development is extremely strong, with around 40 enquiries received to date. It is hoped that it may be possible to commence development in May 2004.

♦ New Access Road, Brechin Business Park - This £90,000 project has now been completed, with main contractor Tayside Contracts finishing the work on-time and on-budget. The new road provides access to 6 new plots totalling 3.5 acres.

♦ Broomfield Industrial Estate, Montrose - The upgrading strategy for Broomfield Industrial Estate, which has been carried out jointly by the Economic Development Unit and the Roads Department, has now been completed. The Director of Roads will now adopt the roads, pavements and streetlighting within the Estate. This represents the culmination of a five year investment strategy totalling over £300,000, to bring conditions within the Estate to the same level enjoyed by other industrial estates elsewhere in Angus. The project has involved renewal of the carriageway and streetlighting, creation of pavements and minor environmental works. The Council has also invested in excess of £400,000 in property at the Estate during this period, including the creation of Montrose Business Centre.

♦ AngusProperty.com - From 4 March 2004 to date, AngusProperty.com has processed a total of 121 property searches, with particulars for properties being viewed 108 times.

♦ The Annual Business Survey – The annual survey of all known Angus companies is currently being undertaken. Over 4,000 surveys and reminders have been sent to local firms on behalf of the Tayside Database Partnership, which compromises Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth and Kinross
Council and Scottish Enterprise Tayside. Abbeytext, an Arbroath based charitable training programme were employed to assemble the various elements of the mail shot. At present almost 60 % of businesses have responded, with the exercise due for completion by late April.

♦ **Property Marketing Campaign** – the Development Team is continuing to promote available properties. This has included a series of six advertisements in the local and national press, and an awareness raising campaign comprising ongoing targeted and sector specific direct mailing exercises and increased visibility through new and improved signage, at Broomfield and Forties Road Industrial Estates, Montrose, Brechin Business Park and Arbroath Enterprise Park.

♦ **Angus Ahead Campaign – Tartan Day** – The inaugural Tartan Day celebration was held successfully during a full week’s programme between 3 – 10 April. A new website has been launched scotlandstartanday.com with links to the Scottish Executive website. A full report on the outcome of the Council’s contribution is included on the agenda.

♦ **Angus Ahead Champions Committee** – The last meeting was held on 26 February. This meeting considered, amongst other things:

  ➢ Preparation of a calendar of events in Angus to be produced and distributed to accommodation providers and tourism gateways.

  ➢ The establishment of a Festival and Events Sub Group involving champion and community planning partnerships and businesses to set up a programme of events for 2005.

  ➢ The establishment of an Angus Ambassadors Fund providing monthly grants of £250 to group and individuals promoting Angus locally, nationally and internationally. This fund to be jointly funded by the Champions and Angus Council and run through the media.

Councillor Bill Roberton attended the meeting and has agreed with appropriate officials that a seminar on the activities being implemented under the Angus Ahead Campaign will be arranged for Elected Members and appropriate officers before the summer recess so that they can be made aware of the wide-ranging activities and potential benefits of this promotional programme.

♦ **Pictavia** - A variety of improvements and maintenance tasks have been performed at Pictavia after its closure since last October. The visitor centre was opened again at the beginning of April. During its closure to the general public, two meetings of the Pictish Arts Society have been held and there has been a visit by a class from Maisondieu Primary School, Brechin.

♦ **Angus In China IV Trade Mission** - The fourth trade mission to China was successfully undertaken on 6 - 16 March 2004. Seven representatives from six companies (two company representatives from Angus) and six Angus Council representatives participated in the mission to Beijing, Yantai and Shanghai. The companies - Texol Technical Solutions, Dundee, Lomax Mobility Ltd., Dundee, Global Golf Holidays, Dundee, Hole 18 Ltd, Crieff, Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Angus College comprised a wide variety of sectoral
activities including golf tourism, engineering, business and education. All participating companies were optimistic about the potential for future business in China particularly in light of China’s growth, culture of enterprise and enormous market potential.

♦ **Business Gateway Angus** - The Business Gateway Marketing Officer has been working on the following initiatives since 4 March:

- New Business Network - NBN events have been held and attendance has been good. Feedback is very positive. The Business Gateway Marketing Officer made a presentation to the Dundee NBN on 31 March.

- Broadband – The Business Gateway Marketing Officer attended a Rural Broadband Conference in Edinburgh and work is ongoing to try to secure Broadband throughout Angus.

- Young persons event – A Young Persons Event was held on 11 March which aimed at encouraging young people (21-30yrs) into self-employment. The event was attended by 16 people and the feedback from this was excellent. A follow up event is to be held in April.

- Angus Business Week - This will take place between 26 and 30 April, in conjunction with Angus College, Angus Council, Business Gateway and the Chamber of Commerce. Seven events will take place during the week (one in each town) including a future energy seminar, networking breakfast, retail seminar, tourism marketing lunch and charity auction dinner.

- Community Careers Evening - This took place at Arbroath High School, however it was not felt to be entirely appropriate for the Business Gateway as there were a lot of younger pupils present, therefore it is unlikely the Gateway will take part next year.

- Tayside Business Awards - These took place in Dundee on 26 March. Business Gateway sponsored an award for the most entrepreneurial young company and Angus Ahead sponsored the pre-dinner drinks reception which again proved to be a useful networking opportunity.

♦ **European Structural Funds 2000-2006** - A total of 53 projects have been submitted by Angus Council since January 2000 (the first rounds of applications for ESF and ERDF projects were opened for submission in September 2000 and February 2001 respectively). The total amount approved to date amounts to £3,211,405. A further 18 projects have received grant funding with Angus Council providing match funding. This brings the total amount approved in Angus to date to £4,940,426.

♦ **East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme 2000-2006** - The revised Arbroath CED and Rural Angus CED Plans have been finalised and will be submitted to the Programme Management Committee meeting on 30 April 2004. The Community Enterprise Workspace Pilot project has been approved.
♦ **Rural Tayside Leader + Programme** - Applications have been approved for Media Access Phase 1 project, Brechin Employability Study, Angus Glens Field and Visitor Centre Study and Forfar Community Environmental Path Network

♦ **Funding liaison** - meetings have been held with South Ayrshire Council, Criminal Justice, Carnoustie Golf Improvements, Oasis project, Arbroath Scouts, Kirriemuir Sports, Community Planning, Kirriemuir and Glens Partnership and Community Education. Meetings of the Rural Tayside Leader + Project Advisory & Assessment Group (PAAG) and Local Advisory Group have been held. A meeting of the ESEC Officer Group and Policy Board was held on 19 April 2004.

♦ **External Funding Officer** – Interviews were held for this post on 31 March and an appointment has been made. Linda Caston, the successful applicant is expected to commence work within the External Funding Team on 10 May 2004.

♦ **Training** – Conferences covering community Funding application procedures, rural broadband and Jobs in a Green Economy were attended by members of the unit in March. The majority of staff from the unit also attended briefing sessions relating to a new confidential counselling service offered by the council. The Business Gateway Marketing Officer attended a dreamweaver course at the Business Gateway Dundee which provided a basic knowledge of building websites.

♦ **Business In Parliament Conference** – In his capacity as Chairman of the Scottish Local Authority Economic Development (SLAED) Group, the Economic Development Manager has been invited to attend a Conference hosted by Scottish Executive Ministers and the Scottish Parliament on Growing Scotland’s Economy. This will be held on 22/23 April 2004 with each MSP having been invited along with a business representative nominated from his/her constituency or regional area. MSP’s have been invited to give up their seat in the Chamber for a day to their business nominee to ensure the views of business are the central focus of the day. However, the organisers are also keen to ensure a range of key views are represented and have the opportunity to contribute.

The aim is to discuss the key challenges facing business within the broad themes of Smart Successful Scotland (growing business, learning skills and global connections). There will be opportunity for open debate with Ministers who will respond to questions from delegates in question time format. The Conference will be broadcast live via the web and an official report of the proceedings will also be produced.

♦ **Arbroath Smokie** - The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development Allan Wilson MSP was guest of honour at a reception hosted by the Leader of the Council to celebrate the awarding of PGI (Geographical Product Name Protection) status to the Arbroath Smokie. The reception was held in the Training Restaurant at Angus College, being preceded by a presentation on the history of the Smokie given by Cllr Bob Spink. Angus Council commissioned Councillor Spink to carry out the long process of applying for protection in 2001 and official recognition was finally granted on 2 March 2004.

♦ **Angus Portal Web-site** - Invitations to Tender were issued in respect of the Angus Portal Web-site (www.angusahead.com <http://www.angusahead.com>)
to the 7 consultants who were short-listed from the initial list of over 100. These will submit their proposals by Friday 23 April with selection interviews taking place in May.

- **Rural Development Conference** - A one-day Conference to promote the Tayside Rural Development Facilitator Project was held at the Birnam Institute, Dunkeld on Wednesday 31 March 2004. The aim of the Conference was to stimulate project ideas and to launch the Project (TRDFP) leaflet (prepared/printed by Angus Council). The 60 participants included representatives from local business and community groups in rural Tayside, CED area Community Councils, and the public sector.

- **Angus Crafts Initiative** - The consultant, Sandra Macrae, presented the findings of the stage 1 report to craft-workers consulted during the study on the Angus crafts sector. The Networking Evening, attended by 46 crafters, was held on 23 March 2004 at the ADMC in Brechin. There was overwhelming support for an Angus Craft Association, and 12 crafters volunteered to form a Steering Group.

- **Angus Glens Walking Festival (AGWF)** - The Walking Festival Committee for the AGWF 2004 (Thursday 3 to Sunday 6 June 2004) have requested that businesses in Kirriemuir and the Glens be invited to the next Festival Committee meeting as an awareness-raising exercise. The meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 May at the Airlie Arms, Kirriemuir. Bookings for the Festival opened on 4 February and by 2 April, 518 walks (of 625 places) and 118 evening events (of 200 places) had been booked. Half of the 22 walks had been fully booked.

- **Farm Business Choices** - In conjunction with the Business Gateway and with funding from the SEERAD/SET Local Initiatives Fund, two workshops have been held in Angus. Workshop A was held at the Airlie Arms, Kirriemuir on Wednesdays (25 February 3 and 10 March 2004). Workshop B was held at the Panmure Hotel, Edzell on Thursdays (4, 11 and 18 March 2004).

- **Glenisla Group** - The inaugural General Meeting of the Glenisla Group was held at the Glenisla Hotel at the Kirkton of Glenisla on 5 April 2004. Membership is open to all persons living in the glen or outwith, whether business or community orientated.

- **Rural Tayside Grants** - The latest edition of the RTG Website ([www.ruraltayside.org](http://www.ruraltayside.org)) went live on 1 April 2004. The Website contains 108 entries, broken down into the following categories: Arts, Culture & Sport (9), Business (5), Community Development (35), Environment (9), Heritage (10), Housing (8), Land Use (2), Training & Education (15) and Information & Support (15).

- **The Retreat, Glen Esk** - On 10 February 2004, the old Glenesk Trust was dissolved and the assets transferred the new Glenesk Trust as a Company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Plans for the refurbishment of The Retreat have now been finalised and the Trust has applied for planning permission. If approved, work on The Retreat will start in September 2004, to be completed for Spring 2005.
♦ **Community Planning Partnerships** - Community Planning have held workshops in Kirriemuir (Town Hall) on 16 February and in Brechin (ADMC) on 18 February 2004. Both Partnerships place economic development (town centre regeneration and area marketing), high on their agenda.

♦ **Angus Angling Initiative** – The final report from Halliday Enterprises will be placed in the Members’ Lounge for information. The Angus Angling Initiative has devised an action plan derived from this report which includes:

- programme of Angling Instruction to youngsters;
- programme of Angling Instruction to offenders;
- staging an annual Angus Angling Competition (game/course and sea);
- support the Fishing in Angus Association website;
- issue a newsletter on the report to the Angling sector and hold a seminar in Autumn 2004; and
- investigate further opportunities for sea angling in Angus.

These developments should be viewed against the background of the Scottish Executive Report into “The Economic Impact of Game and Course Angling in Scotland ([www.scotland.gov.uk/00019079](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/00019079)) which estimates that anglers spend £31.7m in North East Scotland and £113m in Scotland.

4 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation made in this report.

5 **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Directors of Law and Administration and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The summary of key highlights and achievements given in this report outlines the wide-ranging workload of the Economic Development Unit undertaken with the support of various other departments and external agencies.

**NOTE**

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

DV/24/MM/MM
24 March 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive