REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Abstract: This Report outlines the highlights and achievements of the Economic Development Unit for the period 29 April 2004 – 8 June 2004.

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 29 April 2004 – 8 June 2004.

3 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS – 29 APRIL 2004 – 8 JUNE 2004

♦ Property – 83% of the Council's industrial/commercial units are occupied (82 units occupied, 17 vacant). 86.54% of total possible rental income currently being achieved.

♦ AngusProperty.com - Between 7 April and 14 May 2004, AngusProperty.com has processed a total of 171 property searches, with detailed particulars for individual properties being viewed 122 times.

♦ Brechin Business Park - A programme of environmental improvements has been completed by the Council's Training Services team, including tree-planting, and manufacture and installation of benches.

♦ Call Centre Development - A new private sector led speculative call centre development has commenced in Arbroath. This building has the potential to create more than 200 jobs if a tenant can be identified.

♦ Carnoustie Country Classic - The third Carnoustie Country Classic golf tournament was held over the Montrose Medal, Panmure, Monifieth Medal and Carnoustie Championship courses. The event continues to attract solid support with many entrants returning every year. Outline details have been agreed for 2005 so that marketing can begin immediately.

♦ 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.

➢ External Funding liaison - meetings have been held with/re: Montrose Skatepark, Brechin Arts Festival, Kirriemuir Community Sports Association,
Saltire Leisure Centre, Edzell Village Improvement Society, Monifieth Area Partnership, Scottish Lottery Officer group, ESEC Project Development, Coastal and Rural Issues and Governance Working Groups and ESEC Officer Group.

- **External Funding applications approved where External Funding Section have assisted:**
  
  Montrose Air Station Museum Trust Direct Grants £14,500

- **Training** – The Marketing & Special Projects Manager attended the Council’s Effective Presentations course, the Economic Development Manager and External Funding Manager attended Risk Assessment training.

- **Staffing** – Linda Caston took up the post of External Funding Officer on Monday 10 May 2004 and Lynsey Ross commenced as Clerical Assistant on Monday 3 May.

- **Pictavia** - There were 611 visitors in April compared with 560 for April last year. North Tayside MP Pete Wishart visited Pictavia on Friday 19 April. Seven Pictish Arts Society members have completed a training programme allowing them to assist at Pictavia by giving information to visitors and helping to guide with large groups. Publicity has been gained from the Pictish Arts Society volunteers' training and Pete Wishart's visit. Interviews were held to appoint a Pictavia Support Assistant (Seasonal) and Steven Paton commenced on Monday 10 May. The Pictavia website has been updated and a promotional offer of one child goes free with every paying adult has been introduced. This offer will be promoted at local events taking place this summer eg Forfar Marafun, Arbroath Spectacular. The Planning and Transport Department have announced new bus services for Pictavia/Brechin Castle Centre. In addition to this, a considerable number of maintenance and repair tasks have been carried out at Pictavia.

- **Expo 2004** - The VisitScotland annual tourism exhibition took place at Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre on 21 & 22 April 2004. 1,039 travel trade buyers (travel agents, tour operators and specialist holiday agents) including a strong International presence of 479 buyers from sixteen European countries as well as Australia, Canada, Japan, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and the USA attended. Angus was represented at a display arranged in partnership with Angus and Dundee Tourist Board. The display featured Angus lifestyle, Carnoustie Country and Pictavia. Interest was shown in golfing breaks and Pictish history as well as other aspects of Angus. German, Dutch and Belgian visitors expressed an interest in Pictavia. Alongside the Council's display and under the Angus and Dundee Tourist Board “umbrella” were Dundee Heritage Trust (Discovery Point and Verdant Works) and the Carnoustie Golf Hotel and Spa as well as the Angus and Dundee Tourist Board's own display. Glamis Castle had its own display at the show. Three members of the Economic Development team staffed the display over the two days of the show. Follow-up work on enquiries and requests for further information is now complete.

- **Business Gateway Angus** – The Business Gateway Marketing Officer has been working on the following initiatives:
Angus Business Week - This took place between 26 and 30 April, in conjunction with Angus College, Angus Council, Business Gateway and the Chamber of Commerce. Seven events took place during the week (one in each town) including a future energy seminar, networking breakfast, retail seminar, tourism marketing lunch and charity auction dinner. Almost £3000 was raised at the dinner for two charities and a lot of PR was generated. Feedback from attendees at each event has been reviewed with the outcomes being extremely favourable (feedback available on request). A second business week is now being planned for May 2005.

Contact Lunches - After meeting with Thorntons WS in February, Business Gateway Angus staff were invited to join Thorntons at their offices. This shows the level of commitment by these intermediaries in keeping up relations and this is set to continue.

PR - Following a report from Scottish Enterprise regarding Business Gateway PR, Tayside came out on top for positive press coverage (by a large amount). This is largely made up of the high amount of PR being done in the Angus press. The report is available on request.

Angus Crafts Initiative - At the first meeting of the Steering Group on 21 April, the name "Angus Crafts Association" was adopted. The acronym "ACA" would be easily identifiable.

Angus Glens Walking Festival (AGWF) - Thursday 3 to Sunday 6 June 2004 - 20 individuals (10 representing businesses) attended the meeting of the Walking Festival Committee on Wednesday 12 May at the Airlie Arms, Kirriemuir. Bookings for the Festival opened on 4 February and by 13 May, 287 walkers (67 from Angus, 92 from Dundee) had registered. Almost all (sixteen) of the high-level walks had been fully booked.

Westmuir Community Futures - Westmuir Community Futures Steering Group opened its village doors on 22 April and invited many of the county's agencies and organisations with an interest in rural community development to join them in celebrating the launch of the Westmuir Community Action Plan. Since the meeting, joint funding has been secured from the Tayside Rural Development Facilitators Project and Scottish Enterprise Tayside, to establish a Westmuir Community Development Trust.

Rural Conference – Two officers from the unit attended a full day conference at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston entitled “A New Approach – The Way Forward for Rural Scotland”. Ross Finnie MSP was the keynote speaker.

The Angus Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) – and the Angus Ahead Champions, jointly hosted the Angus Futures Workshop at the Angus Digital Media Centre in Brechin to debate future opportunities for the development of the Angus Economy. The AEDP also held its second meeting of the year on 27 April.

ADMC - Angus Media Fund Awareness Event 12 May 2004 - This event, part funded by Angus Council, ADMC and the European Leader + Programme to raise awareness among community groups about a proposed Angus Media Fund
was very successful, with 22 attending the event and 19 community groups expressing interest in applying to the scheme. This will strengthen the case for a Phase 2 application being made to Leader+ for funding of the Angus Media Fund itself - with the scheme intended to commence before the Summer 2004.

♦ **The Future of Tourism** - This meeting on 19 May between Angus Council, the Chief Executive of VisitScotland and the Scottish Executive was positive both on the continuing role of Local Authorities and on the future potential for more productive partnership arrangements via the Tourism Hubs (replacing Area Tourist Boards) to come into effect in 2005.

♦ **China** - Building on the successful outcome of Angus Council's recent trade mission to Yantai, Beijing and Shanghai, a half-day seminar on trade and procurement opportunities for small and medium size businesses has been organised in conjunction with Business Gateway International Trade - Tayside and China-Britain Business Council. Details of the seminar, which will be held on Friday 11 June at the Carnoustie Golf Course Hotel have been mailed to all Tayside companies and a panel of experts will introduce practical issues such as: 'Building relations in China with a focus on Yantai' and 'China Today: Opportunities and Challenges'. Case studies from local companies will also be featured as well as workshop sessions to enable companies to source and sell products in China.

♦ **Enterprise in Education** - The Angus Enterprise in Education Strategic Partnership (sub-group), formed in response to the Scottish Executive strategy document "Determined to Succeed", aimed at achieving a more effective two-way dialogue between business and education has met twice in May to formulate its action plan for engaging business and the business events planned for September/October.

This sub group, made up of representatives from economic development, education, Careers Scotland and Business in the Community, also met with representatives from the Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (Lifelong Learning Group) to discuss the implementation of this national initiative at local level.

The group were commended on their progress to date and the Scottish Executive asked for permission to use the sub group’s local level strategy document as an example of best practice.

♦ **Angus Ahead:**

- **Calendar of Events** - A corporate Calendar of Events for 2004 has now been produced to give an at-a-glance guide to key events and festivals throughout Angus. This has been distributed to all Tourist information centres, attractions and accommodation providers in Angus and Dundee. The objective of this publication is twofold - to encourage inter-borough visitor numbers and to bring in new visitors to Angus from outwith the area. The Calendar will be supplemented during the summer months - from June to September - with flyers highlighting events across the county to be handed out in the various burghs and glens festivals.
Scotland's Tartan Day - Work has already started on the 2005 celebrations in Arbroath after the great success of Scotland's first-ever official Tartan Day. The week of events in Angus from 3 -10 April culminated in the re-enactment of the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath underneath the red sandstone walls of the Abbey, a Tartan Day dinner, a Business Networking Breakfast and a Golf Challenge Match at Carnoustie. The festivities attracted media coverage locally and nationally, including TV broadcasts on BBC and Grampian. The website www.scotlandsTartanDay.com is featured on both the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive website. Tartan TV filmed most of the events for broadcast to 89 million people across the USA and Canada as a half hour programme during the week commencing 17 May 2004.

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/MM/MM

19 May 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive