

ANGUS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC POLICY – 3 DECEMBER 2013

ANGUS INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report seeks adoption of [Angus Council's International Framework 2013-2016](#) and approval for a trade mission to China in March 2014.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) agree the adoption and implementation of the “Angus Council International Framework 2013 – 2016”. Copies are available at the information hub
- (ii) agree to authorise the Chief Executive to seek First Minister approval for representatives of Angus Council to visit China with a group of companies in March 2014 as a trade mission; and
- (iii) authorise participation in the above trade mission of the Provost/Leader, one other elected member and two supporting officers.

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 In our work to grow, support and sustain the local economy, international markets and international profile are essential and are key components in our strategy to secure our common future. Employment, prosperity and quality of life will all be enhanced by our collective efforts to engage with the wider world.
- 2.2 To ensure Angus Council’s international activities are properly structured and coordinated, an International Framework has been prepared to encompass all of the Council’s international activities and aspirations. The Framework will define how we: will achieve an increase in trade and investment, will take advantage of European funding programmes, will develop global citizenship with our young people and will culturally engage overseas. It should be noted that the action Plan in Section 7 of the Framework is intended as a fluid document which will be amended on an ongoing basis to reflect Council and Partner priorities and opportunities.
- 2.3 In the development of the Framework consideration was given to which parts of the world the council should focus its attention on. Key drivers were identified to help define the primary markets we should consider – Northern Europe and Scandinavia, USA and Canada and China were identified as meeting these needs.

3. ANGUS IN CHINA

- 3.1 As outlined in a number of previous reports to Committee (most recently in reports 300/12 and 446/12), the Council has been active and successful in promoting trade with China for a number of years to the benefit of local businesses and the general economy of Angus. Indeed, the Council has been recognised by the Scottish Government and others as the leader amongst Scottish local authorities in this field and the deliverer of best practice.
- 3.2 A key ingredient to the success of the “Angus in China” Initiative has been the 14 year old Sister Area Agreement between the government of Yantai and Angus Council. This provides for reciprocal visits by representatives of the respective governments from each area, accompanied by business leaders, in order to foster business and economic development links. On the basis of the established pattern of exchange visits Angus Council would be

expected to visit Yantai to maintain and further enhance these ties. It is also anticipated that a small delegation from Yantai will visit Angus in January 2014.

4. PROPOSED TRADE MISSION TO CHINA

4.1 The Committee is asked to authorise the Chief Executive to organise a mission to China in March 2014 in order to support the Angus in China Initiative and the benefits it brings to local companies and the Angus economy.

4.2 The mission will visit Yantai and it is anticipated that as in the past it will also visit Beijing and Shanghai as part of a programme of up to but not more than, 10 days. The final itinerary will be subject to the interests of the mission participants and identified business opportunities. As in the past it is proposed that the Council will work closely with Scottish Development International and the China Britain Business Council as well as the Foreign Affairs Office of the Yantai Municipal Government.

4.3 The Council is required to seek the approval of the First Minister for such a visit to take place which will be sought if Council approval for the trade mission is granted.

5. MISSION OBJECTIVES

5.1 The activities of the Council representatives will be to:

- Enhance relationships with business and governmental contacts in Yantai.
- Enhance and develop relationships with other key contacts in other parts of China.
- Act as lead for the mission.
- Support the mission participants.
- Attend to mission administrative matters.
- Represent and promote Angus.
- Further development of the 'Carnoustie Country' brand in China.
- Promote golf tourism to prospective Chinese visitors and tour operators.
- Investigate business potential and opportunities for other Angus companies.
- Explore educational links between Angus and China.

5.2 The primary objectives of the participating companies are likely to be to:

- Undertake market research.
- Identify customers and business opportunities.
- Secure orders and supply contracts.
- Seek business partners e.g. agents, distributors and joint venture partners.
- Source investment.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The costs associated with the trade mission are estimated to be approximately £8,000. This will cover organisational costs, economy air travel and accommodation for the Council representatives. The costs will be met from the Economic Development revenue budget for 2013/14.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Human Rights implications directly arising from this report. However, the committee will be aware of continuing concerns over China's record on Human Rights. Council officials will continue to keep this in mind when engaging with people and organisations in China and in this way it is hoped that the council's International Framework 2013-2016 and related activities will contribute to the growing understanding between the people of China and Scotland.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

9. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 9.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus:

- Sustainable business growth is achieved.
- Growth in tourism in Angus is achieved.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Strategic Director Resources, Strategic Director Communities, Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services have each been consulted on this report.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 International activities can contribute to both the Community Planning Partnership and the Council's goal of increasing sustainable economic growth. The "International Framework" will help focus our international activities to ensure maximum cumulative impact both in economic terms and in articulating our identity and strengths as an international player.
- 11.2 China is now a global player on the world stage and its influence is forecast to increase in the years to come. It therefore makes sense for the Scottish Government, business support organisations and Angus Council to engage with the market for economic gain. The Angus in China Initiative has provided a number of Angus companies with support in their efforts to take advantage of business opportunities and the opportunity for the Council to promote Angus as a visitor destination and as a place in which to do business.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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 a material extent in preparing the above report.

ECDEV/NP/GO/LJP
14 October 2013