REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Abstract: This Report outlines the highlights and achievements of the Economic Development Unit for the period 2 September – 14 October 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 2 September – 14 October 2004.

3 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS – 2 SEPTEMBER – 14 OCTOBER 2004

♦ Property - 84.76% of the Council's industrial/commercial units are occupied (83 units occupied, 16 vacant). 84.24% of total possible rental income is currently being achieved.

♦ AngusProperty.com - In the period between 1 August and 10 September 2004, AngusProperty.com has processed a total of 126 property searches, resulting in particulars for individual properties being examined 113 times.

♦ Pictavia – Events.

  ➢ Pictish Arts Society Winter Lectures - A series of lectures on subjects of interest has been arranged by the Pictish Arts Society over the winter months at Pictavia.

  ➢ Pictish-inspired Art Exhibition - The exhibition that opened on July 31, 2004 at Pictavia continues until the end of October. The exhibition showcases evocative felt wall hangings inspired by ancient Pictish stones which dot the Angus countryside.

  ➢ Pictish Volunteers Training Programme - Four more members of the Pictish Arts Society enjoyed a training programme at Pictavia on Saturday 17 September. They have volunteered to offer information to visitors to Pictavia and to provide assistance when large groups come to visit the Pictish heritage centre. The first of a two-part training programme was delivered, allowing the volunteers to enhance their knowledge of the Picts, Pictavia and Brechin and the local area. Their training adds another four to the seven volunteers trained in April, giving a total of eleven trained volunteers. Publicity for this event was obtained in the "Courier" and the "Brechin Advertiser."
➢ Group Visits - Now that the schools are back, a number of local schools have visited or plan to visit Pictavia. In addition, a group of Celtic enthusiasts from the USA visited on 4 October.

➢ Child Goes Free Voucher - The voucher allowing one child free entry with a paying adult has been distributed at various events as well as on the website at: www.pictavia.org.uk. In some cases, resulting in repeat visits. A total of 192 vouchers have been used.

➢ Retailing of Souvenirs etc. at Pictavia - Discussions have been initiated with Angus & Dundee Tourist Board, The Pictish Arts Society and Angus Council’s Cultural Services section are underway to identify a suitable selection of stock.

♦ The Hairst Arts Festival- Final attendance figures are not yet determined but early indications are that promotional work carried out by the EDU had a positive effect on the event.

♦ European Structural Funds 2000-2006 - A total of 59 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 £3,307,332. A further 23 projects have received grant funding with Angus Council providing match funding. This brings the total amount approved in Angus to date to £5,362,288.

♦ East of Scotland Objective 2 Programme 2000-2006

➢ Monitoring Visit from ESEP for Glensk Visitor and Heritage Centre Development
➢ Application submitted for Carnoustie Eco Business Centre

♦ Big Lottery Fund - Angus Council’s response to the Big Lottery Fund consultation has been submitted.

♦ External Funding Liaison - meetings have been held with/re: Saltire Leisure Centre, Angus Glens Walking Festival, Regenerate! North Arboretum, Muirhead Community Council, Angus Arts, African Drum Village, ESEC Officer Group, Project Development and Structural Funds Working Groups; Objective 3 AGM, Centre for Public Policy Conference –"Scotland’s Role in an Enlarged Europe"

♦ Angus Funding News - launch of monthly funding newsletter on Council Intranet and Internet for Council departments and community and voluntary organisations. (http://scorcountynt01/fundingnews/default.html) and http://www.angus.gov.uk/externalfunding/2004-09-issue1.pdf

♦ Development Manager – Mr Steve Wilson has been appointed to the post of Development Manager within the Economic Development Unit. Steve comes to the Council from the Regional Development Agency based in Newcastle, “One Northeast”. His particular background is in inward investment, specifically contact centres and trade development. Steve commenced work on 1 October 2004.

♦ Determined to Succeed - 7 business breakfast events were held across Angus by the Education and Enterprise Strategic Partnership to launch the Angus
response to the Scottish Executive strategy “Determined to Succeed”. Across
the burgh over 200 representatives from the business community and the
education sector came together to exchange their views as to how they can work
together more effectively in preparing young people for the world of work.
Locally the economic development unit, education department, Scottish
Business in the Community, the Dundee and Tayside Chamber of Commerce
and Careers Scotland, have lead the implementation if this strategy.

♦ **Angus Economic Development Partnership** – The partnership was
represented at a joint meeting with the Lifelong Learning Partnership and the
Montrose Area Seminar, both in September, by the Development & External
Funding Manager. The next meeting of the Partnership will be held in
November.

♦ **Capital & Revenue Programme** – Initial drafts of both the capital and revenue
budgets for 2005 – 2008 have been prepared.

♦ **Montrose Harbour Consultancy Study** – Tenders for undertaking the study
were submitted on 24 September. Interviews of a selected short list of potential
consultants were undertaken on 13 October.

♦ **Angus Crafts Initiative** - The Inaugural meeting of the Angus Crafts
Association, attended by 50 crafters, was held on 21 September 2004 at the
ADMC in Brechin. To further the aim of the Angus Craft Association, which is to
foster and promote contemporary and traditional craft practice in and for Angus,
the Association has short-listed two logos and artwork incorporating the Angus
Ahead design.

♦ **BIG Idea Workshops** – Rural businesses were invited in September to sign up
for “The BIG Idea Workshops” in Brechin, Kirriemuir and the Angus Glens. The
BIG Idea helps find new and profitable opportunities for existing businesses.
The format challenges the way rural businesses think about future opportunities
and it gives participants the knowledge and confidence to market those ideas. It
is aimed at those who want to expand but are not sure which idea offers the best
prospects.

♦ **Kirriemuir Townhouse** – As part of the Quatercentenary celebrations of the
Kirriemuir Townhouse, the two dramatic events were a sell-out success. 215
people including over 20 tourists from France, Australia and Canada, and many
youngsters, attended the promenades “Cronies “n” Closies in August and
thoroughly enjoyed them. It is now being suggested locally that these could
become an annual event, driven by the local amateur thespian groups. 240
people (full houses) attended “Common Threids” which was performed by a
comaply of 30 aged 4 to 74 drawn half from Kirriemuir and half from elsewhere in
Angus. Audiences comprised people likewise from all over Angus, Dundee,
Broughty Ferry, Dollar and Edinburgh, who came specifically to see this event.
The organisers, AKT4, claim that without doubt, they have given many local
businesses hundreds of pounds’ worth of business, and created a really palpable
“feel-good factor” in and around the community of Angus. AKT4 would like to
hold this kind of evocation of the past in each of the seven burghs in turn in a
seven-year cycle, making community theatre an Angus priority, a “Jamais
Arriere” trend-setter for other authorities to emulate.
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

15 September 2004

A B Watson OBE
Chief Executive