

**NOTE OF MEETING OF THE ANGUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP**

25 FEBRUARY 2009

PRESENT

Councillor David May
David Valentine
Neil Prentice
Richard Pinn
Peter Donald
Charles Goodall
Tom Black
Anne Mollison
Karen Ramsay

1. APOLOGIES

1. 1 Apologies were received from Alan Mitchell, Vivienne Smith, Susan Wilson and Marion Beattie

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed. Neil Prentice was asked to explain the background to the Fairer Scotland Fund. It was agreed that a copy of the report considered by the Community Planning Partnership in January should be circulated to the Partnership Members.

3. REMIT AND STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The need for a revised remit to respect the role of the AEDP as one of eight Thematic Groups within the Community Planning Partnership structure was explained. Clearly some partners have a duty to participate through the Community Planning Partnership process and others around the table had an interest in seeing this partnership work effectively. All eight Thematic Partnerships would be asked to adopt the Community Planning Partnership element of the remit.

David Valentine asked Neil Prentice to explain the background to two sub-groups which report to the AEDP those on Employability, and the Social Economy. Reference was also made to the Migrant Workers Group which, in future will also report to the AEDP and to the Workforce Planning Group chaired by Susan Wilson which reports to the Community Planning Partnership.

The revised remit was agreed. It was also agreed that each of the above mentioned sub group meeting minutes should be distributed to the main AEDP.

ACTION

NP

4 CREDIT CRUNCH – POTENTIAL ACTION

- 4.1 David Valentine outlined the background to the Survive and Thrive event held in the Carnoustie Hotel to inform the business community of the support available both publicly and privately in these difficult times. The event attracted over 100 attendees of which around 76 were business representatives. The meeting was opened by Councillor David May, David Valentine presented a background to the event and the meeting then heard presentations from Gary McEwen the Chief Executive of Enterprise North East Trust which delivers the Business Gateway on behalf of the Tayside Councils, Henderson Loggie and the Bank of Scotland.

Angus Council had now employed four Business Advisers two of whom were employed on a part time basis. These advisers would be working out of the former Angus Digital Media Centre facility which would be rebranded Brechin Enterprise Centre and would be operated by Enterprise North East Trust. This facility will provide office accommodation for small businesses as well as hot desk facilities. Angus Council viewed this as a year of engagement with the business community and had been represented at the Forfar Business Initiative dinner.

Charles Goodall referred to collaborative work between the Federation and Angus Council's Trading Standards officers on the development of a reputable trader's scheme and another initiative of the federation regarding "Keep Trade Local". Angus was the first Council in the UK to link this reputable trader's scheme with the service of the Institute of Arbiters. It was agreed to set up a meeting on the "Keep Trade Local" initiative. This would provide an opportunity to meet Mike Duncan the new FSB chair for this East Scotland Region.

NP/CG

A significant tourism event is planned for 24th April at the Carnoustie Golf Hotel. Richard Pinn confirmed that this was one of a number of conferences being held in different areas. Recent research shows that within Angus only 27% of the accommodation providers had VisitScotland or AA quality assurance. This compared to a national average of 80% and clearly there was a need to engage more effectively with tourism businesses in Angus.

Charles Goodall indicated that the FSB would likely be interested in taking a stand at this event. Information to be fed to Charles.

DV/RP

David Valentine also confirmed that a supplier development programme event was proposed for later in the year. This would be a follow up to the first event which Charles Goodall agreed had been very successful.

5. TOURISM STRATEGY

- 5.1 Copies of the Strategy and Action Plan which had been approved by Angus Council Infrastructure Services Committee in January were tabled. Consultations would now be held on this strategy up until June 2009. Initial emphasis being given to achieving buy-in within the Council by May. AEDP Partners and all relevant local groups would be consulted. An electronic copy of both the Strategy and Action Plan will be sent out to those who request it. Charles Goodall requested a copy.

AB

There followed some general discussion regarding the menu approach to the Strategy and the deficit of accommodation in Angus. David Valentine referred to an ongoing study by RGA consultants into the tourism accommodation sector within Angus. This study also included discussions with major tourism providers and investors to try to establish their views on Angus both perceptions and real. DV also referred to the Council's approval of additional funding for the establishment of a grant scheme which will help businesses through the quality assurance grading. Businesses benefiting from this funding will also have to agree to advertising within angusahead.com and to providing crucial data with regard to levels of bed night accommodation. Charles Goodall suggested that there may be a tie in with the reputable trading scheme. He also flagged up the need for affordable training for the service sector particularly in relation to customer care. There followed a fairly lengthy discussion on customer care experiences. Richard Pinn made reference to the 100,000 welcomes scheme which he believed was being delivered through People First or possibly Careers Scotland. This was effectively an update of the former Welcome Host initiative. He agreed to seek out details and to share these with the Partnership.

RP

DV agreed that Ann Butler Tourism Marketing Officer within Economic Development would contact Charles Goodall to discuss potential links with the reputable trader scheme. Karen Ramsay confirmed that the Job Centre Plus experience was that the perceptions of the tourist sector were that jobs were predominantly part time and of low pay. This was certainly not true for the management side however.

AB

6. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 6.1 Anne Mollison explained that the Scottish Government's agreement with the Local Authority and Partners was to be set out within the Single Outcome Agreement. Anne and Vivienne Smith had been working with Thematic partners to achieve a more strategic agreement for the period 2009/12. There are three key national outcomes of relevance to the

Angus Economic Development Partnership. Anne was seeking AEDP agreement to adoption of indicators which linked local outcomes with the national outcomes. It was accepted that the indicators given were predominantly contextual and that most partnership activity and the outcomes from these activities would be “below the waterline”. But it should be remembered that the Single Outcome Agreement was still work in progress and there would be opportunity to fine tune the indicators over the next few years. David May stressed the need for caution in setting targets and how we benchmarked. For example there was no point in benchmarking against Scottish averages if Angus was already either well above or below these averages. There was some discussion regarding the value of a consistent approach to monitoring which would allow comparison and trends to be identified. We have to be very wary of the use made of the information by civil servants who are very keen on league tables. Anne Mollison indicated that the programme for completion of the Single Outcome Agreement was that the first draft was to be submitted in February, the second draft would be informed by a Community Planning Partnership planning day on 20th March and final draft would be submitted by the end of May.

Anne Mollison suggested that the economic digest prepared in 2006 for input into the Economic Development Strategy should be revisited on a regular basis. This was agreed. Karen Ramsay suggested that in relation to national outcome 2 the second Angus indicator wording possibly needed to be revisited due to changes in regulation etc. Karen agreed to suggest revised wording to Anne.

7. ROUND TABLE

- 7.1 Charles Goodall confirmed that the main elements of the FSB work at the moment had already been referred to in relation to the reputable trading scheme and keep trade local.
- 7.2 Tom Black confirmed that the new engineering section in Angus College had now opened and had been very well received. A recent HMI of the college had resulted in glowing reports which had set the benchmark for all colleges in Scotland. Overall this year the college was seeing a slight increase in applications to college courses but increases in certain sectors such as land based with reduction in others such as construction. The new outreach facility in Brechin provided excellent facilities and Tom suggested that partners should visit if they got the chance. Tom’s own specific interests were related currently to the securing government contracts. The college proposals were now with Skills Development Scotland. There was concern that SVQ2 Modern Apprentiships were at risk if they could not find work placements. Finally Tom referred to the Health

and Social Care Academy course being increased from six to eight weeks to accommodate the volume of activity involved.

- 7.3 Job Centre Plus – Karen confirmed that the Angus offices had seen a January peak in jobseekers allowance applicants. This appeared to be levelling out now. There had been some success in placing former Woolworth employees recently, particularly the managers. Karen confirmed that the profile of applicants to the job centre had changed recently with far more professionals now while previously emphasis had been on the JC plus targets e.g. single parents. The recent press coverage regarding support for unemployed in Scotland had not been helpful as elsewhere in the UK subsidy of £2,500 was being offered per employee whereas in Scotland this would only be £1000.

One of the recent focuses of JC Plus had been the 16-19 year old age group in partnership with the Careers Service. Sixteen to seventeen year olds were not automatically entitled to benefit.

- 7.4 Councillor May – in trying to access information on the VisitScotland Homecoming website he had great difficulty in getting information on local areas. The site only appears to cover events funded by either VisitScotland or Scottish Government. Richard Pinn agreed to investigate. Partnership members were asked if they had any knowledge on what the criteria would be for the Governments recently announced regeneration funding. Nobody had any specific information.

- 7.5 VisitScotland – The main item regarding the forthcoming Tourism Event on 24th April had already been covered. Richard confirmed that he is very pleased to be involved with the Partnership.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

NP agreed to seek four dates for the remainder of 2009. Suggested dates will be circulated with the minutes.

NP