

# 2010-2011: BSK-CiC

## Annual Report



**“knowing how to do more, with less, to compete tomorrow”**

Robert Clewley, Chairman

### Chairman's Report

#### Being a CiC

BSK is a registered Community Interest Company (rather than a Limited Company or Charity) to provide financial security to its stakeholders and economic focus to its activity. As a CiC it reports to a Regulator that ensures that we continue to invest and serve our community of interest; the businesses and people of Kent.

#### Performance

As with many businesses the last couple of years have provided numerous challenges to BSK, the most notable being the transfer of the Business Link contract to a national provider, and the subsequent cessation of the ‘face to face’ business advice provided by Business Link from September 2011. At BSK we believe in helping businesses and individuals to make a real difference to their performance and profitability. To this end, for the last four years we have focused on running funded programmes in four key areas; sustainability, innovation and growth, competitiveness, and knowledge transfer. We have adapted our own business model whilst retaining the spirit, atmosphere, and enthusiasm of our outstanding people as we respond to change, and encourage change in our business community.

#### Governance

At BSK we continue to believe that in addition to the outstanding Executive Directors employed within the business our governance and direction is best served by having a majority of the Board represented by Non-Executive Directors who are business people from Kent. I continue to believe that this singular focus on what is best for business in Kent helps us to fulfil our Community Interest objectives. However to provide even greater transparency and clarity we have recently undertaken a corporate restructuring to create BSK Group CiC, which retains the existing governance provision, and two subsidiary companies BSK-CiC and BSK Direct Ltd. BSK Direct Ltd will be the operating company for commercial activity, and BSK-CiC will retain all of the publicly funded programme activity from both the UK and Europe.

Three senior members of our largest public sector organisations in Kent will join myself and the Executive Directors, as Board Observers. This structure will reinforce our commitment to be recognised as a ‘public equivalent body’ in seeking new funding opportunities to support the business community in Kent.

**156 jobs**

created through support by the Kent Innovation and Growth Team

**3700**

Delegates at Kent 2020 Vision

**469**

companies intensively supported

**5795**

Tonnes CO2 saved by companies taking part in Energy Grant 500

## The Future

There can be no doubt that downward pressure on availability of funding for business support for both existing businesses and the enterprise of those considering starting their own business will continue in the immediate future.

We will continue to grow the commercial activity of BSK Direct to provide funding to support the growth of our publicly funded programmes by knowing how to do more with less to compete tomorrow.

## Chief Executive's Report

BSK-CiC has been delivering support for over 15 years to businesses and those starting up in Kent and Medway, the greater South East of England and Europe. Funding for this support has primarily been provided by government both here in the UK and the EU. Since we started we have brought more than £30m in EU funding alone back into the South East of England and worked with over 20,000 small businesses.

In this work BSK-CiC is unique and valuable to everyone who want to see a vibrant and prosperous economy in Kent: over 50 people highly skilled in working with SMEs, many with languages and specialisms like sustainability procurement, international trade and innovation support; a range of programmes designed around the needs of business; Kent 2020 Vision; an Innovation and Growth Team; Enterprise Europe Network; a team of specialists in bidding for and managing public funds; a remit, as a Community Interest Company, to re-invest all profits back into the business community here in Kent and Medway.

Whilst we continue to use our expertise to draw down non-profit making funded support, changes in funding and the need to ensure our own future, demands that more of what we do will be on a commercial basis. As you'll see from our plans the sustainability of BSK-CiC and our ambitions for the Kent business community depend on this shift.

We are excited about the opportunities that are emerging and believe that organisations like ours, working with partners, will be a critical part of the change in direction.



“creating a world-class company that can make sure local economies thrive in tomorrow's world”

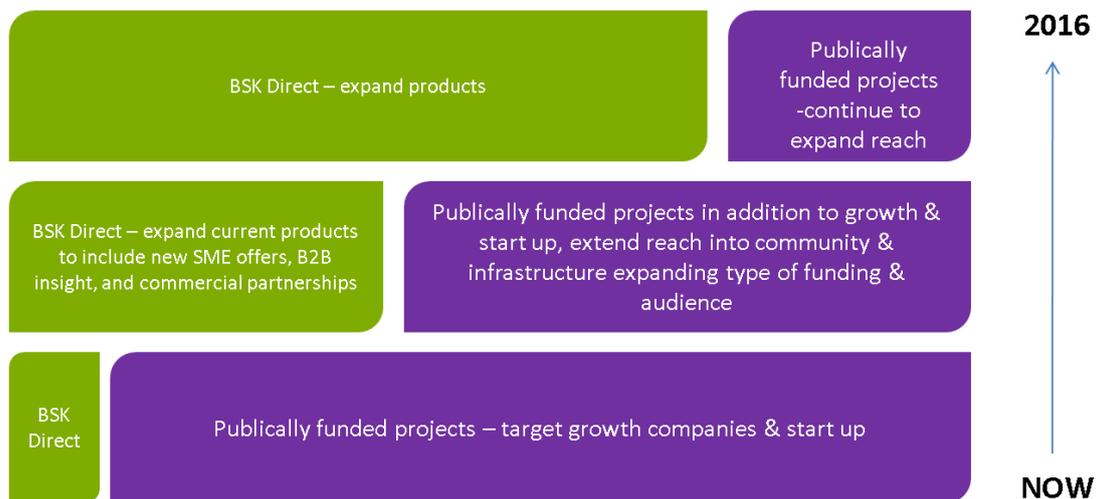
Jane Ollis, Chief Executive

## ...our future

### The BSK-CiC Group

The Group will continue to grow through a balance of publicly funded projects, managed within BSK-CiC, and the expansion of BSK Direct, our commercial arm.

## The BSK-CiC 5 year financial plan



## ...our people

BSK-CiC is the people working within the company. Currently 54 members of the team bring huge experience, ideas, enthusiasm and knowledge to the key areas of business change needed to support business growth, low carbon and increased jobs. Every member of this team thrives on intellectual and practical challenges and takes pride in supporting business change.

### Senior Management Team

**Jane Ollis**

Chief Executive

**Max Adam**

Head of Business Growth Services

**Erica Russell**

Head of Insight and Marketing

For more information on the experience and skills of the BSK-CiC team please visit [www.bsk-cic.co.uk](http://www.bsk-cic.co.uk)

# The BSK-CiC offer

## High Growth Business Coaching

The BSK-CiC Kent Innovation and Growth team support ambitious innovative and fast growth businesses at every stage. The team all have direct commercial experience of what growth companies need, are unbiased and impartial and offer companies 'thinking time and expertise' to develop robust plans to move them on. Through their commercial networks and knowledge they draw in the relevant financial, IP, market and technical support, that growth company or start-up need, and do it fast. Atypical innovation and growth company will ideally have the potential for 20% year on year growth, be scalable, innovative and has national or global aspirations and potential, plus a drive to make change. The Portfolio Directors have worked intensively with 84 such companies and start ups over the last year and 156 new jobs in Kent and Medway have been created by these businesses.

**£7,417,210**  
of investment raised to support Kent Companies  
(2009-2011)

**156 jobs**  
created through support by the Kent Innovation and Growth Team



Aquaread, an Innovation and Growth Team client wins "Start up Business of the Year 2011"

**299**  
staff now using Kent County Councils Gateway Taktix

**131**  
businesses helped to start up in Medway

## Business Start up, Mentoring and Consultancy

BSK-CiC has many years of experience in helping people start up and develop new businesses. During 2010-11 the Start up team have delivered a very successful programme for Medway Council and have been re-appointed to continue this in 2011-12.

The Start up team are also providing mentoring support for students at Kent University, helping them to develop new business ideas and giving them practical advice on how to get a company going.

The company continues to develop the Taktix knowledge transfer tool, and completed Gateway Taktix, the online training and information service, for Kent County Council during this year. Additionally new projects for Canterbury College, (supporting employability), Thanet District Council and Visit Kent were all commenced and completion is expected during 2011.

# The BSK-CiC offer

## EU Project Management and Delivery of Business Support

BSK-CiC continues to be one of the leading deliverers of EU funded business support in the UK. All projects currently being led or partnered by the company meet the key strategic goals of supporting pre start up, start up or Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) to develop and grow; to be able to create new jobs and be prepared for a low carbon future.

We have delivered support to over 20,000 companies in the last five years and are networked into partnerships across the South East, London, Belgium, France, Netherlands and Germany, and through the Enterprise Europe Network a further 44 country partners.

During 2010-11 companies were able to have 1:1 adviser help, attend a variety of fully funded workshops, access grants and web based information. For full details of all the BSK EU/UK Gov. funded programmes we lead or are partners in, please visit [www.bsk-cic.co.uk/programmes](http://www.bsk-cic.co.uk/programmes).

BSK-CiC are currently operating projects within the following European Union funding streams:

**Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)**  
**Interreg IVA 2 Mers Seas Zeeen**  
**Interreg France (Manche) - Angleterre**  
**Interreg IVB NWE**  
**Regional European Development Funding - South East England and East of England**  
**European Social Fund (ESF)**  
**Lifelong Learning Programme (LLF)**

**Enterprise Europe  
 South East  
 Kent Innovation and  
 Growth Team  
 London 2012  
 PRISME  
 2 Seas Trade  
 EcoMind  
 Flash  
 SMART  
 Low Carbon Essentials  
 EnviroSkills  
 Energy Grant 500  
 CAPEM  
 BPPE  
 Itilee  
 Netforce 2  
 DIBS**

For details on all these projects go to [www.bsk-cic.co.uk](http://www.bsk-cic.co.uk)

# The BSK-CiC offer

80

Apprentices taken on by companies, on the day, at Kent 2020 Vision Live



Max Clifford speaking at Kent2020

“Great day, we found 3 new customers and have 12 appointments”  
UK Vending Ltd

## Doing Business

Core to this area of the BSK-CiC business is the **Kent 2020 Vision Live** event, the largest B2B event in the South East. This one day exhibition attracts nearly 4000 visitors each year and 307 exhibitors. 88% of visitors surveyed on the day were from Kent but increasingly companies are coming from other adjacent counties and 6% were invited businesses from France and the Netherlands.

Kent County Council profiled their very successful apprenticeship programme and in addition to those companies who signed up there and then to take an apprentice, a further 480 expressed an interest.

Editorial coverage this year was noticeably higher with regional television news coverage, editorial coverage in the regional land local press and high levels of social media traffic on Twitter and Linked in.



Apprentices at Kent2020

“Our experience has been very good. Our contacts are very helpful and are always available for advice. I think they can see we are a young company going places and enjoy working with us!”

KEiBA Award winning Start-Up company Aquaread

# Building on Success

## Continued development for the BSK-CiC High Growth Offer

With the early closure of the SEEDA funded Innovation and Growth Programme, due to changes in UK regional structures, BSK-CiC are delighted that Kent County Council, in conjunction with Enterprise Europe South East have enabled us to continue to provide intensive guidance to the High Growth companies of Kent. BSK-CiC is also working closely with national partners bidding for High Growth Coaching funding from UK Government and look forward to being able to enhance the offer to local companies further.

Public  
funding

## Business Start up, consultancy and delivery of support

Now with over 15 years of experience in this area, an enormous understanding of successful engagement and outcomes developed by working with over 6000 people and a tried and tested suite of materials, workshops and delivery expertise BSK-CiC are increasingly able to offer a wide range of start up support. For some clients this is via syndicated use of materials and local training, for others it is the development and delivery of start up programmes both in the UK and in Europe. This will be a key development area for BSK-CiC in this coming year.

Commercial  
funding

## EU project management and delivery of business support

The company continues to build on its wide experience of EU project management and participation with several additional programmes being forecast to come on stream in 2011-2012. They will continue to focus on our key aims of supporting SME growth in areas of market failure, to test new interventions and feeding back the results to policy makers to help shape future business support offers. We will maximise our knowledge and expertise in project management, SME engagement, start up, sustainability and international trade.

Public  
funding

## EU Bid Writing, EU project monitoring, Strategic Funding

BSK-CiC has already secured several contracts for supporting partners with bid writing in 2011-12. This is an area the business will continue to look to grow, building on a recognised expertise. We are also working with several councils to support them with strategic funding reviews and opportunities to leverage external funding streams.

Commercial  
funding

## Doing Business

Kent 2020 Vision continues to grow and BSK-CiC are committed to a programme of further improvement and change for the show in Kent 2012.

Commercial  
funding

## BSK-CiC on the move!

A year ago, after the end of the Business Link contract, we moved to Chatham, to premises we had been leasing for several years. Now, at the end of the lease period BSK-CiC are excited to be moving to a permanent home on Rochester High Street.

Forod Annexe, High Street, Rochester, Kent. ME1 1EW



Eastgate House

...and for those that come to visit us, an unexpected sight: Charles Dickens' Chalet, where he sat and wrote many of his books, is in the back garden!

**We moved on 26th August 2011.**

**There will be no change to telephone numbers.**

# BSK-CiC

BSK-CiC is a Community Interest Company (CIC) with an outstanding track record of delivering UK and European funded programmes across the South East of England and Northern Europe. We are dedicated to supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to develop and grow, with a mission to inspire them about tomorrow's world and equip them to succeed.

### Contact Details

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