

2011-2012: BSK

Annual Report



Chairman's Report



Robert Clewley, Chairman

The BSK-Group 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.

Clear Sense of Direction

Following a year of dramatic change to our business as a result of the anticipated reduction in publicly funded business support, we have conducted a strategic review of the direction our business should take going forward.

The BSK-Group through its subsidiary BSK-Direct has ambitious plans to triple the scale of its commercial activity in supporting the businesses and people of Kent over the next two years. This will be achieved by building on proven success.

BSK-CiC will continue to focus its publicly funded activity on supporting the aspirations of those businesses with high growth expectations and plans to achieve sustainable growth.

Strong management of costs

In last year's review the overarching focus was: **"knowing how to do more, with less, to compete tomorrow"**.

This has continued and we have been relentless in driving down our operating costs in a continuous drive for greater efficiency. However we continue to maintain the outstanding quality of our front line services and have been successful in securing new business contracts underpinned by our lower cost base.

continued

130 jobs

created through support by the Kent Innovation and Growth Team

4179

Delegates booking For Kent 2020 Vision

1400

companies intensively supported

£10.5M

of Investment into Kent

We are focussed, able and do what we set out to achieve.

Our clear plan ensures that we remain focussed without losing the ability to take new opportunities as and when they arise.

For example our High Growth Kent programme for Kent County Council helped to sustain the successful Innovation and Growth programme run from 2010. In the last year it has delivered exceptional results 'in difficult times'.

Whilst driving this programme across Kent we have also been able to apply our highly skilled business development team to directly assist in the commercial development of research and development, following Pfizer's announcement of plans to close.

Just one example of taking the opportunity but we will continue to search for more growth opportunities and enjoy the satisfaction of delivering our targets.

Chief Executive's Report

BSK continues to be seen as a leader and innovator in business support across Kent & Medway, the South East and northern Europe. This year we have helped even more people get their business off the ground, start trading into Europe, cut their carbon footprint and for those with the real ambition and scale-able products and services, fast track their growth.

We set some very clear strategic priorities for the year, to ensure a shared vision and mission for the BSK-Group, an effective cost base from which to grow and the profitability of the new commercial arm of the business, BSK-Direct – which were all met. The mission for BSK is very clear – use our insight, experience, connections and love of helping others, to deliver opportunities. Our Kent2020 Vision LIVE B2B event does this through bringing people together to share new opportunities and find new customers. Our coaching service provided by High Growth Kent does this by asking hard questions and solving problems that can then allow opportunities for rapid growth to come to life. Our start up service offered across Medway allows people to take the opportunity of starting their own business.



Jane Ollis, Chief Executive

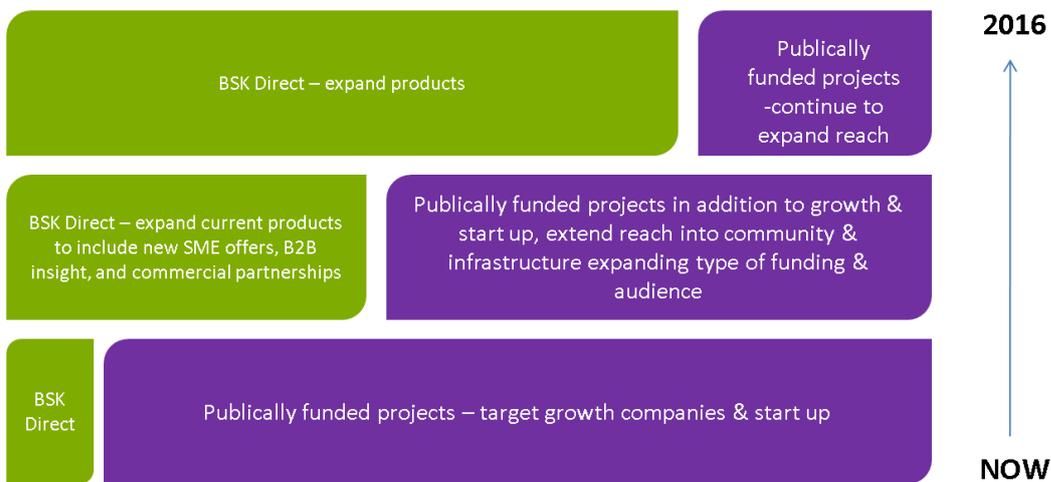
...our future

“We love what we do and are excited about the year ahead and the new opportunities we will be bringing to Kent. This includes our new Start-Up event planned for October 2012 and our service for high-flying businesses that we will be delivering for Oxford Innovation, as part of the UK Government’s national GrowthAccelerator programme”. Jane Ollis, CEO

The BSK-Group CiC

The Group continues to work to a clear 5 year plan with ongoing strategic reviews of short and medium term goals.

The BSK-CiC 5 year financial plan



...our people

BSK-CiC is the people working within the company. Currently 46 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.

For more information on the experience and skills of the BSK-CiC team please visit www.bsk-cic.co.uk.

The BSK-Direct offer

97% of visitors rated the overall value of the event good to excellent

90% of visitors expect to do business with an organisation they met at the event

93% of visitors plan to attend again in 2013

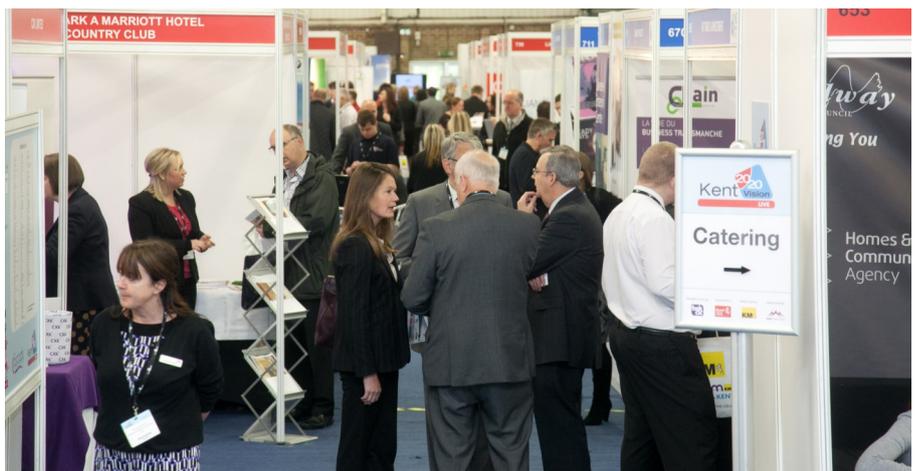
Doing Business at Kent2020 Vision LIVE

Kent 2020 Vision LIVE, which sits at the heart of the 2020 Vision Group, has gone from strength to strength in 2012 with many saying it was the best yet.

Pre-registrations were up 10% and despite the weather's attempts to dampen spirits. Attendance figures for the seventh Kent 2020 Vision LIVE matched those of the previous year.

The theme, Preparing for Growth, was designed to encourage Kent's business community to take action now in anticipation of the upturn and look for the many opportunities that exist today. Alongside practical keynotes from entrepreneurs with first hand experience, on the exhibition floor business was being done, new relationships were being forged, opportunities were being realised and Kent businesses and the Kent economy were benefitting. The growing success of this core event creates a platform on which the value provided to the business community can be grown through complementary activities.

"The fourth visitor to our stand placed a £3000 order, brilliant"



"We took 144 leads and have already had our first order"

The first of these is **Kent 2020 Vision START-UP LIVE** which was launched in April and takes place in October 2012. This new event, for new businesses, delivers the three key objectives at the heart of 2020 Vision; connecting businesses and prospective businesses with each other and opportunity; informing them of the opportunities and support available to them; and inspiring them to make the most of their potential.

The BSK-Direct offer

Consultancy

We have provided support for several major clients, including Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council, Investors in People and the Carbon Trust, on how to access funding streams and in writing specific bids. Our knowledge of European funding streams, as well as UK opportunities and our wide network of European wide partners has proved a valuable resource.

Delivering Enterprise and Start up

BSK are extremely pleased to have once again provided Start-up services for new companies in the Medway area on behalf of Medway Council. The service provides a mixture of workshops, 1:1 business advice and support for the Council loan fund.

226 people attending
START UP workshops

We also provide mentoring on behalf of the University of Kent to students looking to set up their own businesses.

Online Learning

Our many years of experience of change management and partnership working developing online platforms has seen the successful launch of three new major customer products this year.

Visit Kent's 'Welcome to Kent', launched in 2012, Kent County Councils major Gateway to Services platform and the University of Kent training tool for students wanting to develop practical work skills in the retail sector. This was an exceptionally exciting project as several departments supported the work and students from the drama unit filmed clips with a major department store in the city allowing them to film after store closure.

Currently the team working on online learning are part of a project team that includes Volvo, Syntra, Slyva and other partners in Finland, Belgium, Austria and Spain: working on online training to support staff on international trade.



The BSK-CiC offer

High Growth Kent



High Growth Kent, funded by Kent County Council, is now working with over 230 Kent companies to support their entrepreneurial drive and ambition. Our coaches have helped create 130 jobs this year and the team continues to be very successful in helping local businesses draw in investment funding. This continues to be a mix of venture capital, bank lending and awards from funding streams such as the Technology Strategy Board. The team have been heavily involved in supporting spin out companies at Discovery Park and instrumental in 8 of these being awarded Kent County Council Accelerator Grants.

In addition to this, BSK-CiC continue to provide an excellent service for companies wishing to work with partners internationally, especially in Europe, through the Enterprise Europe Network of which BSK leads the South East. We once again ran a major international match making event at Ecobuild with 300 companies involved from over 22 countries. The EEN team are also working closely with companies to support commercial partnerships and are heavily involved in knowledge transfer activity within high technology companies through FP7 collaboration.

£10.5M of investment raised to support Kent Companies 2011/12

130 jobs created through support by the Kent Innovation and Growth Team

Success for High Growth Kent Companies



Best Science and/or Technology Business - EMS Security Group Ltd, Herne Bay

Young Entrepreneur of the Year - Craig Harrison (Aquaread Limited), Broadstairs

BSK—Making a Difference.....“Shirley has been invaluable and inspirational. When we were at a particularly difficult position and felt overwhelmed in the forest, she opened up pathways of thought which has helped us to clearly define our business goals and direction. In recognising our business potential as an SME she has been instrumental in our successful growth ”

STOP PRESS—BSK –CiC part of winning contract to deliver the UK governments £185million premier business service.



The BSK-CiC offer

EU Project Management and Delivery of Business Support

Through our EU funded work we continue to support several thousands of companies each year. We work hard to focus on our core business mission of 'preparing businesses for tomorrow' and through projects such as KARIM and it's groundbreaking foresighting work for SMEs or CAP'EM, focusing on pan European guidance for Lifecycle Analysis in building materials we are supporting change. Increasingly we are working with world class universities as key partners and have been able to access, for local companies, the expertise at University College Dublin, Lancaster, Delft and Kent.

We also work hard to provide our local community of interest with new business opportunities, through supply chain development in the thriving Kent Offshore Wind sector to finding European Partners through the EEN partnerfinder or as one of 300 companies, across 22 countries, who were part of our match making event at Ecobuild.

We continue to help companies cut costs and carbon and to support the process of innovation and growth.

BSK-CiC is 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
Lifelong Learning Programme (LLF)

Enterprise Europe
 South East
 PRISME
 Ecofood
 2 Seas Trade
 New Deal for
 Innovation
 KARIM
 EcoMind
 Flash
 SMART
 Low Carbon Essentials
 Energy Grant 500
 CAPEM
 BPPE
 Itilee
 Netforce 2
 DIBS



For details on all
 these projects go to
www.bsk-cic.co.uk

Some of the Highlights of 2011-2012



AWARD WINNING

BSK nominated Neil Quinn, the young architect we worked with on the CAPEM project for the 'Duke of Gloucester Award for Architecture'and he won!! Neil (second from left) is pictured with the Duke of Gloucester and other award winners. Part of his prize includes a year of mentoring from a leading UK architect.



Kent2020 Vision LIVE Supports Apprentices

Paul Carter highlights the benefits of Apprentices to business at Kent2020. BBC South East are filming and apprenticeships make the regional news.



British Ambassador Presentation

At an event hosted by the British Ambassador to Belgium, the EU funded Itilee project partners from the UK, Spain and Ireland came together to highlight project achievements. Each country had successfully tested a series of "Shape Your Future", four day workshops. This intensive format had been developed by BSK-CiC over many years of working with start-up businesses and has been run with hundreds of UK potential entrepreneurs.

We have presented our work in :

Brussels, Dublin, Caen, Lille, Paris, London, Muenster, Berlin, Ghent

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

Telephone: 08457 226655

Email: info@bsk-cic.co.uk

Website: www.bsk-cic.co.uk

