

## **Brief Summary**

### **Project Legacy Note November 2023**

The Clean Growth South East project (CGSE) pilot activity concluded at the end of September 2021 with the October report revised and reissued in December, in order to encompass the 2020 BRES employment figures (published 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021) thus enabling further conclusions to be drawn on wider economic impacts which were beginning to be seen from COVID.

KCC and our SELEP partners were keen for this CGSE work to realise wider ambitions in terms of 'green sector support' with its legacy key to SELEP's Clean Growth Working Group's own. With the report findings, recommendations and insight taken onboard by the Low Carbon Across the South and East programme steering groups, KCC as lead partner continued to place sector support front and centre to its programme focus, whilst partners such as Essex County Council sought to further enhance their [strategic delivery](#) for and with firms in this area.

Having [re-launched LoCASE](#) in conjunction with Tri-LEP energy strategy support in Canterbury as part of the COP26 'battle bus' tour, the partnership set out to not just stimulate demand for but support supply of and investment in SELEP-based suppliers outlined in the CGSE work. Reaching out to and engaging as many of the highlighted supply chain database as possible across the Low Carbon Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE) and Environmental Goods and Services Sectors (EGSS) meant not just offering significant grant support to these firms (over 200 receiving a combined £1.8M of ERDF funding) but wider needs assessment reviews and opportunities to network with and learn from peers across a range of synergistic projects co-delivered across the SELEP. This included the likes of the CRF pilot [Growing Green](#) (decarbonisation plans for food and drink firms to include re-use and deposit return schemes) the ERDF project [South East New Energy](#) (covering topics such as green industrial estate clusters and retrofit) and the extended scope of Inn2POWER into [green hydrogen](#) (work led by Opergy and Hydrogen East ensured SELEP representation in cluster development).

As a follow on to the 21 seminars and workshops which were included as part of the CGSE series (covering the full spectrum of sectors included in scope) LoCASE then ran 35 Steps To Environmental Management workshops (STEM) and enabled development and delivery of University of Brighton's sustainability resource [Net Zero 360](#). This backed up one of the key learnings from the 440 SMEs directly feeding into CGSE feedback that the sector itself needs to address its own aspects and impacts and to deliver 'sustainable' growth in both meanings of the term.

Added to this, the likes of [BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy](#) (led by Essex but KCC were active with our own pilot activities) and [Upcycle Your Waste](#) (where 50 'waste exchange' business cases were established) continued to raise the profile across the SELEP the value and co-benefits to our communities and economy of moving away from a linear to a more circular system. The coupling of training programmes tailored to a range of audiences as well as inspiration and support in realising opportunities to establish new business activity from 'surplus' resource and materials. KCC has partnered with Social Enterprise Kent in delivering a series of workshops to run through Kent-based examples of what's worked to date and how jobs can be created in this sector going forward. The creation of two new posts in what was the waste team at KCC (now Resource Management and Circular Economy) is indicative of a refreshed approach as informed by some of this work in highlighting, championing and growing the sector in Kent and beyond.

The 'green buildings and retrofit' topic again shown as a key emerging opportunity was the topic of a LoCASE-sponsored [South East Retrofit Summit](#) to discuss, formulate and outline plans to meet the work and skills challenges we face in the retrofit sector. Not only did this help inform a [pioneering focus](#) on retrofit skills in Essex but also enabled SELEP and GSENH to help recruit firms to regional frameworks to deliver much-needed retrofit work locally. Partners from South East New Energy once more came together to deliver a [call to arms](#) at Anglia Ruskin University. This focused on developing projects to scale-up net-zero new-build and low carbon retrofit across the SELEP and beyond.

In terms of the wider development of the supply chain and database, we managed to retain 3,864 unique contacts on the newsletter list (GDPR 'opt-in' requirements mean that we need to remain cautious in approaching the original 6,282 companies highlighted by Opergy's initial work. 525 regional contacts are now also part of the Inn2POWER [mapping tool](#) which serves to identify opportunities in offshore wind, green hydrogen and infrastructure works. We also worked with two ERDF legacy projects (iConstruct and TALE) to look at opportunities to partner and further reach out to our SMEs in major capital projects across SELEP. This included giving an overview of green sector opportunities in an event in Harlow and led to featuring in Lower Thames Crossing supply chain engagement sessions (both sides of the Thames). There remains a further piece of work with our CRM providers in data cleansing and refreshing these contacts for re-energising the brand. We will be working closing with Michael Veasey, Tom Day and their teams in Essex to ensure the best legacy impacts of all of the great work to date in offering the best level of additionality for those engaging.

In short, never has the sector been more critical in delivering clean growth to the region, with sustainable practices making unequivocally sound business sense

across the board. As such, the past few years since publication of the report and delivery of the pilot has certainly served to catalyse the transition to a low carbon economy. The challenge remains now for each 'functional economic area' across the South East to realise the full potential of continuing to work together in partnership. We know that businesses don't work in discrete geography so we will use the closedown and reporting of LoCASE as a further opportunity to sell the virtues and co-benefits of supporting 'green sector development' in realising our wider Net Zero aims and align local and national strategy in realising clean growth ambitions.