

Equality Analysis / Impact Assessment (EqIA) template

Name of decision, policy, procedure, project or service:

Low Carbon Across the South & East (LoCASE)

Brief description of policy, procedure, project or service

Low Carbon Across the South and East is an extension of the current LoCASE project, which will continue to provide a consistent, accessible business support programme across multiple Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas that helps SMEs optimise the use of resources and adopt eco-innovative and low carbon solutions in ways that improve business performance in terms of resilience, profitability and competitiveness, at the same time creating jobs and contributing to the protection of the environment. It will achieve this by bringing together 3 key requirements for the growth of a low carbon economy - “Stimulating Demand”, “Supporting Supply” and “Knowledge Transfer & Innovation”.

At its core, the Programme will continue to build on the success of the current LoCASE Programme through the grants offering to provide support for energy efficiency and low carbon product and service development. Additional support will be provided through specialist guidance, technical workshops and mentoring. An innovation scheme will provide the knowledge transfer offer and key sector cluster growth and supply chain development.

LoCASE, and its package of support, delivered through a flexible framework to ensure all Work Packages are delivered to a standard format, which offers SMEs a uniform level of support whatever route they are signposted towards, will be delivered over 3 years across multiple LEP areas. Through the utilisation of existing extensive networks operated by each of the proposed Partners, SMEs will be able to seamlessly access support through multiple routes. This will include local authority and Growth Hub referral, and engagement at awareness raising events and through peer-to-peer referral.

Aims and Objectives

The objective of the Low Carbon Across the South and East programme is to support businesses to become more sustainable, have less impact on the environment and deliver clean growth across the region.

The Programme will be run in line with each of the partner Equalities Strategy and Policies. As major employers and providers of services all the partners are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. Equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights and they all agree to demonstrate leadership and commitment in promoting these rights.

The following monitoring will be undertaken;

- Delivery partners will be required to report their actions and progress towards the activity noted in the action plan on a quarterly basis. This will form part of the ongoing Programme management process undertaken by the lead partner. Activity will be reviewed and any partners failing to integrate E&D into their delivery process or to evidence action and progression will be required to take corrective action.
- An annual report will be provided to the steering group for assessment
- The mid-term Programme evaluation will include an assessment of the progress of partners in delivering the E&D implementation. Any issues identified will be reviewed by the Programme management team and changes implemented.
- The assessment will review the E&D implementation.

JUDGEMENT

Set out below the implications you have found from your assessment for the relevant Protected Groups. If any negative impacts can be justified, please clearly explain why.

- No major change - no potential for discrimination and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken

I have found the Adverse Equality Impact Rating to be **Low**

GET Document Control

Revision History

| Version | Date | Authors | Comment |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| V0.1 | 02/09/2020 | Christopher Seamark | |
| V1 (this should be assigned to the version the Director signs off) | | | |

Document Sign-Off (this must be both the relevant Head of Service and the relevant Director)

Attestation

I have read and paid due regard to the Equality Analysis/Impact Assessment. I agree with the actions to mitigate any adverse impact(s) that has /have been identified.

| Name | Signature | Title | Date of Issue |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------|
| Christine Wissink | | Head of Service | |
| Stephanie Holt-Castle | | Director | |

Part 1 - Screening

Regarding the decision, policy, procedure, project or service under consideration,

Could this policy, procedure, project or service, or any proposed changes to it, affect any Protected Group (listed below) less favourably (negatively) than others in Kent?

Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group?

Please note that **there is no justification for direct discrimination;** and indirect discrimination will need to be justified according to the legal requirements

| Protected Group | You <i>MUST</i> provide a brief commentary as to your findings, or this EqIA will be returned to you unsigned | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|---|---|
| | High Negative Impact | Medium Negative Impact | Low Negative Impact | High/Medium/Low Favourable Impact |
| Age | none | none | We will use a wide range of media to ensure that as many people as possible will have access to the Programme information as it is possible older business owners may prefer physical documentation rather than digital. | High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area. The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--|---|
| | | | Accessibility will be assessed when choosing event venues. | age. |
| Disability | none | none | <p>People with learning difficulties or visual impairments may find it difficult to access information so we will use a wide range of communication types to ensure that this group has access to information needed. The team can send adapted documents on request.</p> <p>Accessibility issues at some venues so this will be assessed when choosing a venue.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of any disability.</p> <p>The team is mobile and can meet businesses face to face across the partnership so can arrange face to face contact if necessary.</p> |
| Sex | none | none | Business considerations will | High favourable impact by improving |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------|--|---|
| | | | <p>be based solely on the merit of the application.</p> <p>KCC must ensure that staff are aware of this and manage any contact regarding sex sensitively.</p> | <p>business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of sex.</p> |
| Gender identity/ Transgender | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on the merit of the application.</p> <p>KCC must ensure that staff are aware of this and manage any contact regarding gender identity sensitively.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of gender identity.</p> |
| Race | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource</p> |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|--|--|
| | | | <p>the merit of the application.</p> <p>There may be some translations needed for communications. If there is a request for translations the programme will ensure that the need is met.</p> | <p>and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>Face to face meetings and contact can include mediation/translation in majority of instances without legality issues.</p> |
| Religion and Belief | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on the merit of the application.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of religion or belief.</p> |
| Sexual Orientation | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on the merit of the</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency</p> |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|---|--|
| | | | application. | throughout the area. The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of sexual orientation. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on the merit of the application.</p> <p>Events may be scheduled when parents have care responsibilities.</p> <p>All event materials will be made available to those that cannot attend.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The team is mobile and can meet businesses across the partnership. Flexible working enables the team to take calls and offer support outside of the 9-5 working hours and to take into consideration child care arrangements.</p> |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------|--|--|
| Marriage and Civil Partnerships | none | none | <p>Business considerations will be based solely on the merit of the application.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> <p>The Programme is supporting SME businesses so there is the possibility to receive funding or advice regardless of marital status.</p> |
| Carer's Responsibilities | none | none | <p>There could be accessibility issues at some venues so this will be assessed when choosing a venue.</p> <p>Events may be scheduled when carers have caring responsibilities.</p> <p>All event materials will be made available to those that cannot attend.</p> | <p>High favourable impact by improving business resource and energy efficiency throughout the area.</p> |

Part 2

Equality Analysis /Impact Assessment

Protected groups

No protected groups will be directly or indirectly negatively affected by this programme.

Information and Data used to carry out your assessment

Previous experience of working with SMEs over a number of years has given the Sustainable Business Team the information needed regarding the needs and characteristics of the business community and the barriers they may encounter. We have also sent out a questionnaire to businesses who engaged in LoCASE to receive their feedback on different areas and have used this to assess what worked well and what needs to be done differently in the future.

This extension of the LoCASE programme collaboration represents a micro, small and medium sized business base of over 500,000 enterprises¹. Recent survey-based research by the Carbon Trust identified that more than 60% of SMEs are very or fairly concerned about their energy spend, up from 46% in 2016. No matter what the driver, some fundamental barriers continue to prevent SMEs from implementing energy efficiency measures. A lack of resources (time and money) is by far the biggest of these. Even for engaged SMEs that are planning to implement an energy policy, a lack of time and money was cited by 46% as a barrier. When asked what specific support they were looking for, access to funding and grants, training on how to become more sustainable and advice from local experts were top of the list². It is this clearly identified demand for support and grants that WP3 of LoCASE will undertake.

Who have you involved consulted and engaged?

The Service has engaged with all current programme partners which consists of tier one and unitary authorities as well as a university establishment. In addition, the private sector has been engaged thoroughly over an extensive period of time in terms of what they need to grow and develop. To close, consultation has taken place with other key stakeholders such as Chambers of Commerce, Growth Hubs and Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure a holistic approach is taken to shaping service delivery.

Analysis

From work of the Sustainable Business Team on LoCASE and the final survey we have found that no issues were raised concerning any protected characteristics. From the equalities and diversity form we send out to successful grant applicants we found that LoCASE helped a range of ages, people with disabilities and a variety of races. No businesses have made any negative comments

about the way they have been treated due to any protected characteristics. All of this data is reported to central government on a quarterly basis and is held on record.

Adverse Impact,

It is not envisaged that there will be any adverse long-term effects as a result of LoCASE delivery. In the short term, equalities data will be collected and reviewed throughout the programme's lifetime in order to identify any areas of concern. These will be mitigated as much as possible based on the provision of advice from Kent County Councils Equalities and Diversity Team.

Positive Impact:

LoCASE will be targeted at all sectors of the community and it will be easy to assess details on the programme. All SMEs who meet the criteria will be eligible for assistance. There are multiple referral routes reaching out to all in the business community. The programme has strict perimeters in which it can operate in terms of geographic location. This is a legal requirement and opportunities for addressing equality issues outside of area are restricted. The delivery team is in a good position to promote equal opportunities and can provide examples of good practice.

JUDGEMENT

No major change - no potential for discrimination and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. The LoCASE programme has low or no impact on the protected characteristics and will not be affected less favourably than others. The programme will collect equalities data and review regularly.

Internal Action Required ~~YES~~/NO

[1] Office of National Statistics, nomis: official labour market statistics, accessed 1.3.20
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1941962888/report.aspx#tabidbr>

[2] Carbon Trust, February 2020, Energy efficiency starts here: SME survey results: accessed 1.3.20 <https://www.carbontrust.com/news-and-events/news/energy-efficiency-starts-here-sme-survey-results>