

# **Report of the task group on business energy efficiency advice and support**

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December 2006



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Improving energy efficiency is becoming a priority for more and more businesses. Businesses can turn to a number of public and private sector sources for assistance in implementation measures. Private sector organisations involved in providing advice and support on energy efficiency range from specialist consultancies providing tailored advice on improving production efficiency to that of trade bodies. Examples of Government funded initiatives include the Carbon Trust, which was set up in 2001 to help business and the public sector reduce carbon emissions. One of the main ways it achieves this is through helping business with their energy efficiency. In 2005–06, the Trust worked with 3,700 companies to identify savings of 3.9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> that could save a total of £390m of their annual energy bills. Strategic energy efficiency services were provided to 175 high-energy user organisations. Of the 3,700 companies the Trust worked with, 55% were small and medium enterprises. Other organisations, such as Business Links, also play an important role. The scope for further improvement is large and many organisations are still not taking advantage of the savings available.

Budget 2006 announced that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Richard Ellis, Chair of the East of England Development Agency, would jointly chair a task group comprising representative business organisations, Regional Development Agencies and the Carbon Trust, to consider the scope for improving existing ways of providing information and support on energy efficiency to business. Business organisations on the group included CBI, Engineering Employers Federation, British Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.

## The task group's approach

Members of the group examined how information and support is currently provided. In assessing this issue, they also examined whether existing resources are being pooled effectively and whether they could be restructured to ensure that businesses are aware of energy efficiency and can effectively access information and support. The task group also briefly considered whether there are mechanisms to minimise the compliance costs for businesses who have their energy or emissions regulated.

## Key findings

The work of the Carbon Trust and RDAs uncovered a large number of organisations providing advice at different levels and aimed at different audiences. These organisations provided overlapping services and were not always demand led. Through discussions with their members, the business organisations identified a greater role for their organisations in signposting their members to resource efficiency advice services. However they are concerned that the current large number of initiatives makes signposting confusing and difficult. Rationalising the advice streams could make their own signposting activities easier and produce more reliable results for members of their respective organisations. They also suggested that advice and support should allow companies to become more self-sufficient in resource efficiency.

### Recommendations

Building on this work, the recommendations of the task group are:

1. Government to use its influence to a) streamline resource efficiency advice initiatives to encourage clarity and therefore uptake by the business community, and b) ensure that such services are needs driven. This is consistent with the drive for de-proliferation in business support initiatives generally. The Government will outline actions in this area in 2007.
2. The Regional Development Agencies to promote streamlined resource efficiency advice services through Business Link at a regional level, as well as signposting national programmes for larger companies and more specialised advice. They should work with the Government, the Carbon Trust and others to develop and implement common metrics for assessing the impact of resource efficiency advice services.
3. Business organisations are committed to playing a more active role in promoting energy efficiency to their members. They will do this through various activities including signposting, developing their websites, use of their networks and by working with organisations, such as the Carbon Trust.

# FOREWORD

Recent energy price increases have focussed many businesses on the need to improve their energy efficiency. In parallel, the Government has introduced a number of measures to help provide information and advice to business on energy efficiency. The combination of these has led to significant improvements in energy efficiency across the business sector. But more can be done. To examine the underlying reasons why more companies are not introducing measures and suggest how the current system could be more effective, the Chancellor asked us to convene a small group including the Confederation of Business Industry, Engineering Employers' Federation, Federation of Small Businesses, British Chambers of Commerce, Carbon Trust and RDAs to examine provision of energy efficiency advice and support to business.

Through the work of these organisations, we have established that:

- Proliferation of Government sponsored advice services is prevalent in the energy efficiency field, as it is elsewhere. In a brief mapping exercise, the Carbon Trust and the RDAs identified 70 national and 96 regional bodies providing energy efficiency advice services to business – the vast majority of which are funded by the Government.
- The use of these services by business is hindered by 3 main factors, which are:
  1. Lack of awareness of these services, especially among SMEs;
  2. Lack of understanding of costs and benefits of energy efficiency measures;
  3. Services not tailored to different business needs (lack of breadth and depth in advice and support offered).

There is a role for Government in ensuring that service provision is fit for purpose. Through the existing processes, such as the business support simplification programme and Comprehensive Spending Review 07, the Government will seek to refine business support provision and ensure that RDAs via Business Links are capable of ensuring the right level of advice and support is available to businesses clearly.

The business organisations recognise the increasingly powerful role they can play in helping their members improve energy efficiency, and realise long-term financial benefit. Each organisation has committed to doing more with their members through a series of activities, such as seminars, conferences, specific website pages and better signposting.

Together, these actions will help stimulate further improvements in business energy efficiency and put UK companies, and the UK more broadly, on a stronger footing to meet future economic and environmental challenges. We would like to thank the organisations involved for their time and effort in delivering this work.



**John Healey MP**  
Financial Secretary to the Treasury



**Richard Ellis**  
Chair, EEDA



# INTRODUCTION

**1.1** Energy Efficiency has a key role to play in helping businesses to respond to variable energy prices and contribute towards emissions reductions in the long term. Progress on energy efficiency requires all parts of society to act. Many companies have already made significant progress in improving energy efficiency. Over the past few years, these companies have implemented energy efficiency measures and practices, and made these a core part of their response to climate change.

**1.2** The Energy Review recognised this important role and placed energy efficiency at the heart of Government energy policy. Government has already put in place a number of measures to promote energy efficiency. Many of these measures are aimed at incentivising energy efficiency in the business sector. For example the Carbon Trust was established in 2001 to help business move towards a low carbon economy by helping business and the public sector reduce carbon emissions now and capture the commercial opportunities of low carbon technologies. In 2005–06, the Trust worked with 3,700 companies, 55% of which were SMEs, to identify 3.9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> that could save a total of £390m on their annual energy bills. Strategic energy efficiency services were provided to 175 high-energy user organisations and 266 interest free loans were made to SMEs for energy efficient equipment. Other measures which have stimulated business to improve energy efficiency include Climate Change Agreements, Enhanced Capital Allowances and loan funds for small and medium-sized enterprises.

**1.3** As the Carbon Trust has noted, the scope for further cost effective energy efficiency savings from business is significant. Provision of information and support is an important aspect of removing barriers to greater energy efficiency uptake by business. As well as Government measures to assist companies with energy efficiency, there is also a growing private sector market aimed at improving company performance through improved energy efficiency. In this context, the Chancellor asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Richard Ellis, Chair of the East of England Development Agency, to examine the existing suite of services, assess whether they matched the needs of their customers and suggest how they could be improved further within the context of CSR07 and other Government processes.

## Scope of the Group's Work

**1.4** The Group was convened as requested in the 2006 Budget Statement. Key Business Organisations (Confederation of British Industry, British Chambers of Commerce, Engineering Employers' Federation, Federation of Small Businesses) were represented at a senior level, as were the Carbon Trust and the RDAs. The agreed Terms of Reference are attached as Annex A.

**1.5** The Group met twice with the first meeting establishing a work programme, the results of which were considered at the second meeting. The Group's remit included associated resource efficiency advice services as well as energy efficiency advice services in the work programme given the close links, particularly at the SME business level. Following these meetings, the Carbon Trust and the RDAs were asked to consider how to ensure the most effective provision of Government sponsored advice. The Business Groups were asked to consider how they could further assist their members in improving their energy efficiency.

**1.6** The findings of the group and recommendations on a way forward are set out in this report.



# 2

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE AND SUPPORT - EXPERIENCE OF BUSINESSES

**2.1** To gain a better understanding of the experiences of a range of businesses, business organisations agreed to conduct surveys of their members and seek feedback on the provision of energy/resource efficiency advice services. The surveys were carried out in summer 2006 and business organisations tailored surveys to their membership. As part of this exercise, business groups also examined their own roles in providing information and advice to their members on energy efficiency.

### British Chambers of Commerce

**2.2** BCC identified a greater scope / need for engagement with SMEs, who account for over 50% of energy use. Within their membership, there is sometimes a lack of awareness of the organisations that exist to help business on the resource efficiency agenda. As a result, many businesses cited cost as a reason for not investing in energy efficiency for example, yet those respondents who had invested have realised savings.

**CBI 2.3** The CBI undertook a brief electronic survey in September 2006 focussing on members' experiences of private and public sector energy and resource efficiency information/advice and support. The survey elicited responses mainly from large companies in the manufacturing, utility, retail, financial and HE sectors who had implemented measures. Members sought advice from an array of private sector sources as well as the public sector. A significant proportion of these larger companies had used the Carbon Trust in some way (86%) and their experience was reported to be largely positive. Uptake of other public sector sources of resource efficiency advice was lower and the experience was positive, although less so than with the Carbon Trust.

**2.4** Common themes reported were:

- the lack of breadth and depth of advice available;
- overlaps in advice 'in spades' and a need for advice services to be streamlined;
- a perceived limit to the financial support available and the payback achievable;
- the cumbersome nature of application procedures for some support measures.

**EEF 2.5** EEF members felt that energy efficiency has an important role to play in reducing carbon emissions, but a range of other measures is also required. Energy efficiency policy needs to overcome a number of barriers, including the fact that the costs to the firm will often outweigh the benefits or be sufficiently uncertain as to prevent the investment from going ahead. Four key influences were found to drive or hinder a company's response to energy efficiency:

1. The energy intensity of its activities and processes;
2. Whether it is subject to compliance requirements such as EU ETS or CCAs;
3. Its participation in voluntary initiatives environmental management systems, such as ISO14001, and the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda;
4. Its size.

**2.6** Smaller companies are less likely to implement efficiency measures, mainly because they lack the time and skills to support a sustained drive on this front. Participation in CCA's makes a substantial difference to whether small firms take action on energy efficiency.

**Federation  
of Small  
Businesses**

**2.7** Energy costs have moved up the agenda for many small businesses, and the main focus of the FSB has been to work with Ofgem, Energywatch and suppliers to improve the small business experience in the energy market. An npower survey, cited by the FSB, suggests that 77% of SMEs have experienced lower profits as a result of increasing energy costs.

**2.8** The FSB found that lack of clear advice and information together with the constraints faced by SMEs, has prevented most small businesses from taking steps to improve energy efficiency. 60% of SMEs have taken some steps to increase energy efficiency, but notably 40% have taken no action. The impression that the FSB had received was that members were unclear about what advice was available, and the FSB has launched regional awareness campaigns together with Energywatch, called 'Make the Connection', that addresses energy efficiency issues.

# 3

## WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO BUSINESS AND WHO FUNDS IT?

**3.1** To establish the breadth and depth of energy efficiency services available to businesses, the Carbon Trust and RDAs undertook a mapping exercise of existing government funded programmes to promote energy and resource efficiency. This examined all forms of advice from websites to dedicated consultancies or grant programmes.

### A mapping study of existing initiatives

**3.2** This exercise revealed 70 significant National and 96 Main Regional and Sub-Regional advice services (examples of these are set out in Annex 2). These were dominated by Government funding (52/70 National and 79/96 Regional and Sub-Regional services). Despite this number of providers, a lack of standardised reporting and datasharing makes it difficult to assess the overall effectiveness and resource savings delivered.

**3.3** It is not clear that the provision of advice is always tied to real and specific customer needs and in some cases, it appears to reflect the availability of funding, rather than evidence of need. Experience shows that actual needs vary by size of business, business sector, geographic reach and environmental focus. Some businesses, largely SMEs, see resource efficiency as a single issue but others see it as separate energy, water and waste issues. It would appear that many bodies offer such broad resource efficiency support that overlap becomes inevitable.

**3.4** There are broadly three different types of service provision - information dissemination, bespoke consultancy and grants - either for capital investments or training. There are no standardised impact assessment techniques and therefore, it is difficult to compare services; there is limited sharing of data across services.

**3.5** Where consultancy services are provided, these are limited in scope by the skills and availability of the consultancy 'pool'. There is also a range of bodies providing an umbrella service, coordinating the work of others. Many bodies have been launched in the last couple of years, in response to both growing concerns about environmental sustainability and the availability of related funding. Although in many cases, an effort is made to assess demand during fund allocation, this is by no means universal. Most bodies rely on multiple sources of funding, diversifying the risk of any one source being cut, but creating multiple "owners" of the activities being pursued.

**3.6** The mapping exercise identified a number of good examples of advice and support provision, characterised by:

1. Being led by a dedicated 'champion';
2. Being driven by demand and customer needs;
3. Being provided through an experienced business support organisation (e.g. Business Link);
4. Having a clearly communicated and well co-ordinated offering, through strong external communications and/or use of co-ordinating bodies.

**3.7** The activity of the RDAs has increased through the BREW funded co-ordination role to act as a conduit for transfer of best practice between regions and programmes. There appears to be some regional variance in the effectiveness of these co-ordination

and information transfer roles, but this has nonetheless raised the profile of resource efficiency within the regional business community.

# 4

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK GROUP

- Improving Future Provision** **4.1** The mapping exercise and the business organisations' surveys identified clear scope to improve energy/resource efficiency advice to business. There is an important need to provide clearer remits to organisations, bring in a more unified set of standards and metrics for assessment, stem the proliferation of initiatives and begin to rationalise delivery towards more market driven approaches, addressing the funding-driven nature of some organisations.
- Providing Clearer Remits** **4.2** National organisations have gained significant experience in the business market and have achieved economies of scale in developing and delivering a portfolio of appropriate cost effective products for businesses. The RDAs are well placed to continue to signpost the national delivery programmes locally through organisations such as Business Links (for which they have had responsibility since 2005) and regional business networks. By working closely with regional and business-focused networks, national organisations can share knowledge and learn across regions and sectors to improve their know-how and products.
- 4.3** National programmes benefit from scale and experience, whereas regional programmes provide local knowledge and add value through local relationships, augmenting national programmes. Any assessment of cost effectiveness should be on a fully costed basis against clear, measurable objectives.
- Delivering consistent, high quality advice** **4.4** The market for delivering energy efficiency to business using public funding is now sufficiently mature to support the development of a more market-based rather than funding-led structure. This structure should aim to provide a more consistent level of quality service to businesses, following demand, and rapidly improve the cost effectiveness of carbon reduction.
- 4.5** Currently, the allocation of funding to programmes for business does not ensure consistency in delivery or cost effectiveness. Funding comes from a number of sources (for example, DTI, DEFRA, BREW programme) that have slightly different objectives, and therefore different ways of measuring impact. The key to creating a market structure will be to establish a clear set of national objectives and absolute comparable standards against which funds could be competitively allocated.
- 4.6** Standards for and impacts of funding energy efficiency advice provision need to be quantified using clear and consistent metrics, primarily lifetime cost of carbon saved (£/tonneCO<sub>2</sub>) and absolute CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction. Funders should look to ensure that bids for funding are assessed on a consistent basis, and contribute to key objectives and are additional to, or at the very least, performing better than, existing programmes.
- 4.7** It would be useful to achieve a closer level of co-ordination amongst key Government Departments, in particular DEFRA and the DTI, to align energy efficiency cost effectiveness and carbon reduction targets.
- Delivering Advice, Support and Improvements for Business** **4.8** The mapping showed that in general, SMEs tended to seek advice on reducing their resource use and impacts across the range of energy, water and materials resource use/waste. Larger companies, however, were more likely to seek separate, specialist advice for each resource stream. This points to a need for different levels of tailored delivery. In the interests of simplification and clarity, companies wishing to engage at a regional level could use Business Link as a single point of access, which would signpost

national programmes for larger SMEs and corporates, and broker broader resource efficiency support to SMEs.

**4.9** Based on the work above, the group recommends that:

- The Government use its influence to a) streamline resource efficiency advice initiatives to encourage clarity and therefore uptake by the business community, and b) ensure that such services are needs driven. This is consistent with the drive for de-proliferation in business support initiatives generally.
- The Regional Development Agencies promote streamlined resource efficiency advice services through Business Link at a regional level, as well as signposting national programmes for larger companies and more specialised advice. They should work with the Government, the Carbon Trust and others to develop and implement common metrics for assessing the impact of resource efficiency advice services.

**Business organisations have an important role**

**4.10** The responses to the surveys highlighted the role business organisations can play in improving energy efficiency of their members. Business organisations have agreed to play a more active role in promoting energy efficiency to their members. In the first instance, they have agreed to signpost their members to streamlined resource efficiency advice services available through the Business Links brand and actively encourage their members to take advantage of them. In addition, they will work with Government, the RDA's and national organisations such as the Carbon Trust to improve their members' understanding of the business benefits of resource efficiency as well as the range of support and advice available to help them improve their performance.

**British Chambers of Commerce**

**4.11** The BCC is very willing to do more signposting to members as the complex array of delivery organisations and initiatives currently in place is simplified. In particular, they have agreed to:

- Run two local seminars in the Q1 2007 with the Carbon Trust. These will be run by chambers and supported by the Carbon Trust as a prelude to a roll out to more chambers later in the years. The aim is to see how the Carbon Trust can best serve companies that spend less than £50,000 on energy (i.e. fuel bills). Below this figure the general opinion is that face-to-face energy efficiency consulting support has not been cost effective in carbon terms. However, the aim of this exercise is to change this mentality and assist SMEs;
- Highlight this issue at their Annual Conference in April;
- Set up a section of their website to offer advice to the SME community.

**CBI 4.12** The CBI is already committed to raising member awareness of energy efficiency and signposting members towards those organisations which are able to provide appropriate advice and support. They are undertaking a number of activities in this regard, including:

- Developing the CBI website to include an energy efficiency webpage which signposts members toward key private and public sector providing energy efficiency advice and support. They continue to develop and update the website in response to the proposed rationalisation and improvement of the national and regional energy efficiency support network;

- Distributing a brief ahead of winter to all relevant members (including their SME members) providing practical advice on managing their energy needs this winter, including energy efficiency improvements to save costs;
- Advertising specific Carbon Trust events and services to members where useful;
- As part of CBI work on climate change over the next year, they will be looking to collect and share examples of good carbon practice amongst business, including improvements in energy efficiency.

**EEF 4.13** Looking forward, as part of their work on climate change over the next year, EEF will be looking to collect and share examples of good carbon practice amongst business (more focused on carbon than energy efficiency per se, but there will be cross-over). Apart from signposting, the EEF sees the key as helping firms become more self reliant. They can play a role in two areas:

- Improving awareness and use of software to help companies monitor and report on their energy efficiency - including helping to assess the standard of what is available, and if necessary, improve it;
- Skills - an accredited module is required to ensure that firms have the skills required to report and monitor energy efficiency, calculate ROI, paybacks etc, and business organisations can help develop and improve these as well as raising awareness.

**4.14** Additionally, they will continue to deliver low carbon workshops for their members. These help companies to assess the energy efficiency of their activities, identify potential measures to improve this, demonstrate their return on investment, implement them and monitor their effectiveness. EEF will also ensure all their environmental advisors are equipped to offer this service to members.

- EEF are also committed to 'carbon clubs' to communicate with their members on energy efficiency. External speakers will share information with companies about how they can improve their processes and energy efficiency and other issues such as micro-generation opportunities.
- EEF will also be putting together information on their website on energy efficiency, providing links to existing guidance and a bulletin board where members can paste queries or examples of best practice.

**Federation of Small Businesses 4.15** The FSB has already promoted energy efficiency through its magazine and other sources. In association with Energywatch, they have launched the regional awareness campaign 'Make the Connection'. It is willing to do more signposting and already generally works closely with the RDAs.



# 5

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

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**Acknowledgements 5.1** We would like to thank members of the task group; David Frost (British Chambers of Commerce), Michael Roberts (CBI), Martin Temple (EEF), Carol Undy (Federation of Small Businesses), Tom Delay (Carbon Trust) and Graham Tubb (South East England Development Agency) for their participation in these meetings and the work of their organisations in helping to deliver this report. We would also like to thank the RDAs for their assistance in compiling various elements for this report.

- Related documents 5.2** Work in this report drew on a number of reports, including :
- *Energy Efficiency: The Challenge for Government and Small Businesses, British Chambers of Commerce Survey, October 2006.*
  - *EEF Annual Energy Survey, 2006.*
  - *Npower Business Energy Index 2006*
  - *AEA Technology report on Business Resource Efficiency Services Mapping study, Carbon Trust and RDA commission, 2006.*



# A

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GROUP'S WORK

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**A.1** The primary objective for the group will be to consider the scope for the improving the use of existing channels and resources to business, such as business links and chambers of commerce, to provide information and support on energy efficiency.

**A.2** In order to achieve this objective, the group may also wish to examine:

- how information and support is currently provided;
- whether existing resources are being pooled effectively and whether they need to be restructured to ensure that businesses are aware of energy efficiency and can effectively access information and support;
- whether there are mechanisms to minimise the compliance costs for businesses who have their energy or emissions regulated.

**A.3** This work should be performed in the context of the Government's overall aim to reduce the number of business support channels and the ongoing value for money review of RDA spend and activities.

**A.4** This group will be co-chaired by Richard Ellis and Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and is expected to meet twice between May and October. There will also be meetings of working groups who will consider the evidence based on the detailed project plans provided.



# B

## EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL & REGIONAL BUSINESS RESOURCE & ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERVICE PROVISION

**Publicly funded services:** **B.1** Many publicly funded services are now supported through the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme. This programme has appointed specific co-ordinators within some of the Regional Development Agencies charged with the co-ordination of BREW-resourced activities. The following organisations are involved in services funded by the public sector:

- Department for Trade and Industry
- Defra
- Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue (HMRC)
- The Carbon Trust
- The Energy Saving Trust

**B.2** Each of these organisations run one or more schemes or programmes with specific aims. Some organisations, for example the Envirowise programme or the Carbon Trust, employ a network of regional managers to assist in the implementation of the national services. Some examples of these schemes include:

- The Carbon Trust
- Envirowise
- WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme)
- Enhanced Capital Allowances (Funded by HMRC/Defra)

**Private sector funded services:** **B.3** These services tend to be funded through corporate sponsorship, membership subscriptions or the existence of a charitable trust, established by a corporate body. Services offered include information consultancy and grants. Specific examples of private sector funded schemes include:

- Recycle More (funded by ValPak Ltd.)
- The Renewable Energy Association
- The Pilkington Energy Efficiency Trust – PEET

**NGO Funded Services:** **5.3** A limited number of services are funded through NGOs. No grant funding is available from any of these services, rather information and in a few circumstances consultancy services are preferred. Selected examples of services provided by NGOs include:

- National Energy Foundation
- Forum for the Future

**'Paid for' and profit making services:** **5.4** At the National level, the EDIE survey was used to identify the top ten Resource Efficiency consultancies (by reputation). These consultancies provide direct support to businesses on a one-to-one contractual basis, but also support businesses across the UK through programmes and publicly funded schemes. The six largest utility companies, making up 98% of the utilities market, provide businesses with some general Resource Efficiency advice and other services. Typically the general advice and

information services are available to customers on a 'free' basis. One of the utilities provide additional consultancy services at a charge to users.

### **Examples of services split by region**

#### **The North West**

No. of Regional schemes=4

No. of Sub-regional schemes=5

#### **The North East**

No. of Regional schemes=3

No. of Sub-regional schemes=1

#### **Yorkshire and Humber**

No. of Regional schemes=3

No. of Sub-regional schemes=2

#### **East Midlands**

No. of Regional schemes=4

No. of Sub-regional schemes=3

#### **West Midlands**

No. of Regional schemes=7

No. of Sub-regional schemes=1

#### **The East of England**

No. of Regional schemes=9

No. of Sub-regional schemes=11

#### **London**

No. of Regional schemes=4

No. of Sub-regional schemes=7

#### **The South East**

No. of Regional schemes=7

No. of Sub-regional schemes=19

#### **The South West**

No. of Regional schemes=3

No. of Sub-regional schemes=3

