



Energy Agency Overview

Objectives

The Energy Agency's mission is to reduce CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, the mission is delivered through:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Transport
- Community Projects

Background

The Energy Agency is a registered charity. It was established in February 1999 as South Ayrshire Energy Agency. It began as an innovative project using a combination of European Union and Local Authority funding. The Energy Agency won a competitive bidding process to operate an Energy Efficiency Advice Centre for the Energy Saving Trust in 2000. It continued to operate the service for 7 consecutive years. This involved providing quality advice on energy efficiency and micro-renewables across the council areas of South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway. A contract has also been held for 8 years to deliver specialist renewables advice – this contract was originally with the European Commission and South Ayrshire Council; however, it expanded in 2002 to cover the 4 council areas and to include community renewables. Business advice has also been provided to small to medium sized businesses in the area. Renewable energy grants have been provided to businesses by the Energy Agency since 2001, as a result of Scottish Enterprise funding.

In order to help with the installation of measures in the area the Energy Agency set up a trading company – Warm Homes Energy Agency in 2000. This company manages grant and loan schemes and the referral mechanisms for customers, utility companies and installers. There is currently an agreement with Scottish & Southern Energy to spend a substantial budget through their Carbon Emissions Reduction Target.

In 2008, the structure of Energy Efficiency Advice centres in the UK changed. From a system of 52 centres, a new network of 21 'regional' centres was established. Five of these regional centres are in Scotland, and the Energy Agency was successful in winning the contract with the Energy Saving Trust (EST) to deliver advice services in the South West Scotland area – Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The contract is for an initial 3-year period (end March 2011) with the possibility of extension to March 2013. The service is funded by the Scottish Government.

The centres changed dramatically in 2008 with a step-change required in the number of individuals influenced to take energy saving advice. The centres are now known as 'Energy Saving Scotland advice centres' (ESSac). The role of the centre is to deliver advice on energy efficiency, micro-renewable technologies and sustainable transport. The target audiences for this advice are individuals, small and medium sized enterprises, public bodies and community organisations. The contractual targets for the new centre are high and, to help achieve these, the Agency employed additional staff to deliver the contract, including 3 senior managers. The Agency has delivered very well on the ESSac contract to date, with most targets exceeded quite significantly.

During 2008 and 2009 an increasing number of services were added to the ESSac contract. Additional high targets have been set for the provision of transport advice and micro-renewables. In April 2009, the ESSac network was charged with delivering the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package (EAP) which is targeted at the fuel poor.

A detailed Energy Planning Study examining energy use and the potential for renewables was produced by the Energy Agency with funding from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise. Figures have been updated on a regular basis and used as baseline information for the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. This has had a major impact on planning, housing and energy production plans for south west Scotland. A substantial amount of strategic input has been provided by staff of the Energy Agency to the development of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan (2000-2006) and the Energy Plan for Dumfries & Galloway (2007-2008).

Energy Agency staff has led the ongoing strategic work in development of the Code of Practice for Advice Providers across the UK with the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes (network of 425 organisations, incorporating sectors from industry, retail, manufacturing and suppliers.) The Code of Practice is designed to ensure that all providers are signed up to a baseline providing quality and independent advice to consumers.

The Energy Agency participates and actively responds to Scottish Government and National Government Consultations.

Two projects managed by the Energy Agency have been successful in gaining prizes in national and international award schemes. Hadyard Hill Community Energy Project received the top award from Energy Action Scotland's Energy Savers Award 2007, National Energy Efficiency Awards 2007 and EnergySavers Award 2009. The project was also a winner in the International Ashden Awards 2008 and ManagEnergy Awards 2010. The Private Rented Property Improvement scheme gained runner up in EnergySavers Award 2004 and first prize in the National Home Improvement Council Awards 2007.

Organisational structure

The Energy Agency has a Management Board of ten members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. The Management Board Members are from a variety of professional backgrounds and have relevant community experience.

Staff

Currently 34 staff are employed at the Energy Agency, providing a dedicated service to households, communities and businesses. There is a wide range of experience and expertise in the office, allowing us to offer general advice and technical expertise, as well as project procurement and management.

Area

Services mainly cover the 4 local authority areas of South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway although a number of projects are delivered throughout Scotland. These local authority areas have a population of over 500,000 and around 250,000 households. They are predominately rural with the main towns of Dumfries, Ayr, Kilmarnock and Irvine.

Tourism is an important industry, as are the manufacturing and service sectors, which are well developed in South West Scotland. There is scope, however, for developing the growth of small to medium-sized enterprises.



Related Parties

In so far as it is complementary to the charity's objectives, the Energy Agency is guided by both local and national policy. The Home Energy Conservation Act, the Scottish Energy Efficiency Strategy and the Climate Change Strategy for Scotland are all influential in the direction and type of activities undertaken by the Organisation.

The Energy Agency works in partnership with a wide range of organisations, in particular the NHS Trust, Scottish & Southern Energy, ScottishPower, Scottish Enterprise, Crichton Carbon Centre, Community Councils, the Chamber of Commerce, Strathclyde University, the Energy Saving Trust, the local authorities of South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Agricultural College and manufacturers and installers.

For more information on what we do, visit our website www.energyagency.org.uk