

EDGE Report - to Sponsor Institutions for the year to April 2008

Edge activities

In the year since the last Edge report the group has continued to be busy on a wide range of fronts with a particular focus on the Edge Futures project and the five books being published as the immediate output from the project in June 2008.

The Edge has maintains its strong links with its sponsor institutions (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE, IStructE & RICS). The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is also trying on membership of the Edge to see if we are a good 'fit'. The funding and encouragement from The Carbon Trust has been essential in helping the Edge continue with our ambitious programme of activities. The Edge has also recently been exploring developing greater links with the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce) on projects of joint interest.

The core group of the Edge 'Committee' continues to meet on a monthly basis with several members achieving additional prominence:

- 1 Paul Jowitt becomes the President of the Institute of Civil Engineers in November 2008
- 2 Bill Bordass has been advising CLG on Display Energy Certificates, work in part arising from the Edge initiated VECD study. He is currently a visiting fellow at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California
- 3 Bill Gething has been appointed Visiting Professor of Sustainability at the University of Bath
- 4 Jan Hellings has joined the Olympic Delivery Authority as Project Sponsor for Enabling Works
- 5 Janet Kidner has been appointed Head of Sustainability at Lend Lease Retails & Communities.
- 6 Robin Nicholson has been appointed to the Board of the NHBC and will Chair a government study into Zero-carbon schools
- 7 The Scottish Building Standards Agency has published "A Low Carbon Building Standards Strategy for Scotland (The Sullivan Report)" by Lynne Sullivan

Other members of the committee continue their active involvement with the sponsoring construction and built environment institutions as well as other groups including; Constructing Excellence, the Strategic Forum, the British Property Federation, the Building Research Establishment, CABE, the Civic Trust, the Construction Industry Council, the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), the European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP), the Global Commons Institute (GCI), the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group (APPCCG), Good Homes Alliance, SPONGE, the Royal Society for the Arts and the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC). Members maintain regular contact with government departments, including; DBERR, DCLG, DEFRA, DCMS, OGC, DCSF and The Cabinet Office, as well as ministers and members of both houses of parliament. Members of the Edge teach and lecture widely, both in the UK and abroad as well as being active professionally in the design and delivery of significant projects across the world.

New recruits to the Edge committee in 2007-2008 include:

- 1 Paddy Conaghan, Hoare Lea
- 2 Bruno Reddy, Arup
- 3 Chani Leahong, Fulcrum
- 4 Rachel Fisher, RSA
- 5 Lynne Sullivan, Inbuilt

Edge Futures

The Edge Futures publishing collaboration with Black Dog Publishing is the currently the most important Edge activity. Five short books to be published in June 2008 will examine the social, environmental, political and professional changes that are likely to have occurred in the UK and the wider world by 2020-25. The books will be launched at a series of Edge debates throughout June (see below).

Living and community - by Geoff Mulgan (Director of the Young Foundation)
With an introduction from Edge members Adam Poole & Simon Foxell

"Do we live in a broken society, as claimed by both archbishops and opposition politicians? Or are the bonds of community and place much stronger than acknowledged by the persistent doom-mongers. Mulgan suggests that there is everything to work for in Britain's local communities and that they are more than capable of being re-energised by new initiatives. He proposes a new positive future for community life, if appropriate action is taken now. "

Education and creativity - by Simon Foxell (The Architects Practice) and William J Mitchell (Director of the MIT Design Laboratory).
With an introduction from Edge member Robin Nicholson.

"Two views on the future of education. An examination of the possible outcomes of the government's current policy for personalised learning in an increasingly stressed and competitive world and a case study of the education methodology developed for getting the best out of students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as a potential educational model for secondary level learning"

Transport and neighbourhood - by Hank Dittmar (The Princes Foundation)
With an introductions from Edge member Professor Bill Gething.

"The need to build more homes in the UK and the difficulty of achieving a sustainable transport network to serve them in a world where increased travel is a major part of our carbon footprint, are the twin themes of this assessment of UK planning thinking. Does the government's range of initiatives, including sustainable communities and Ecotowns, add up to anything unless a decent and workable transport system can be delivered?"

Work and the city - by Frank Duffy (DEGW)
With an introduction by Professor David Gann (Imperial College)

"A hard look at the damage office development has done to the fabric and life of our cities and an analysis of the theoretical approaches and development mechanisms that have led to urban sterilisation by commerce, becoming the norm across the world. In this book Duffy suggests ways to break out of this cycle and to develop offices in urban areas that bring benefits to both cities and the office users."

Globalism and regionalism by Jonathon Porritt (Foundation for the Future)
with introductions from Edge member Chris Twinn (Arup)

"The world is simultaneously approaching a number of crises; from climate change, to global inequity, unbalanced population growth, resource shortage and terrorism. Porritt in this well-argued book, recognizes the role that globalism plays as both part of the problem and as an essential part of the solution. He addresses different possible modes of globalism and challenges the world's leaders to reform the way business as we know it is done."

The books have been developed by an editorial team drawn from the Edge committee. Funding has been obtained from a number of sponsors including The Carbon Trust. The sponsors will be acknowledged in each of the books.

Debates

The Edge has run a series of debates through the year aiming at challenging the thinking of the professional institutes and others in the construction and property industry.

Debates held in 2007-8 continue to be focused on the broad issue of sustainability, energy and climate changes but continue to focus on the need for professionals in the industry to find ways to respond appropriately to these issues. The discussions and outcomes of debates have also been reported as articles in the industry magazine Building.

A series of five debates, coinciding with the launches of the five Edge Futures books are planned for the early summer of 2008 (see below) in addition to other Edge events.

18th June 07 Edge Debate #32
What did you do in the thaw Daddy?
 Held at the ICE and chaired by Scott Steedman, Vice-President ICE
 Speakers: Mark Whitby, ICE Past President
 John Armstrong, CIBSE Preseident
 Sunand Prasad, President elect

16th January 08 Edge Debate #33
Do we have the skills to deliver Zero carbon homes by 2016?
 Held at the IStructE and chaired by Keith Clarke, Chair CIC
 Speakers: Joe Isle, Taylor Woodrow
 Professor Phil Banfill, Heriot-Watt University
 Andy von Bradsky, Chairman PRP Architects

Planned future debates include:

- 1 If there is a zero carbon budget, how should it be spent?
- 2 Living within 20%: what is the built environment's carbon ration plan for the UK?

Debates linked to the launch of the Edge Futures book series are to be held as follows:

4th June 08 **Education and creativity**
 Simon Foxell with Robin Nicholson & Sylvia McNamara, Birmingham
 (to be held as Part of the Climate Change Festival)

9th June 08 **Living and community**
 Geoff Mulgan with Mark Whitby, NLA, London

11th June 08 **Work and the city**
 Frank Duffy, Haworth, London

18th June 08 **Transport and neighbourhood**
 Hank Dittmar with Bill Gething, Prince's Foundation, London

25th June 08 **Regionalism and globalism**
 Jonathon Porritt with Chris Twinn, CABE, London

Edge debates attract a high calibre audience including senior members of the sponsoring institutions, civil servants, academics and practitioners as well as politicians and influential public figures. The Edge committee plans the debates and reviews and follows up on the resulting outcomes Bruno Reddy of Arup acts as Minutes secretary, while Jane Powell continues to manage events and finances.

Debate Outcomes

Wellbeing & the Built Environment

The findings from the 31st Edge debate, on Obesity and the links with the Built Environment, held at CABE in October 06 has since developed into one of the strands of the DTI Foresight programme report 'Tackling Obesities: Future Choices' published in October 2007. The Edge maintains its links with this work and anticipates contributing further to both the programme and also the subject of wellbeing & the built environment in general.

Edge Column

Following an agreement with the weekly journal 'Building', the Edge has been contributing a regular column. The column provides space to report on the outcome of debates and to address issues and questions great and small.

ICE Journal

The Edge has been asked to contribute a regular feature, based around debates and other activities to the monthly ICE Journal

Voluntary Energy and CO₂ declaration (VECD)

The work carried out by the Usable Buildings Trust (UBT) with the Edge on the VECD has now reached out across the industry. The thinking developed through the VECD programme has been used to influence a number of ongoing initiatives, especially the government's proposals for Display Energy Certificates (DECs).

Two new projects have also approached UBT for assistance in reporting energy and carbon performance and coordinating their work with other activities:

- 1 A project within the Urban Buzz initiative funded by BERR and HEFCE and managed by UCL will provide technical support to architects wanting to report and compare the estimated and in-use energy performance and CO₂ emissions of their designs.
- 2 The London Climate Change Agency for their recently-launched Better Buildings Programme for improving the energy carbon performance of commercial buildings in London.

Carbon Counting – The Edge pledge

The Edge continues to promote the Edge Pledge Carbon counting tool. It now forms the basis of CIBSE's Carbon Counting tool

Edge workstreams 2008-9

1 Debates

The Edge will continue to arrange debates on a range of themes, including professional, wellbeing and sustainability issues. Future debates are planned on: flooding, sustainable urbanism, health and safety, quality of construction, water resources, drivers for innovation and intelligent infrastructure.

2 Future thinking

The Edge will use the launch of the Edge Futures books to develop new strands of work on future thinking, as well as maintaining and developing links with, amongst others, the Government's Foresight programme. The impact of climate change and demographic shifts will have such a significant impact on life and society within a very short period that the ability to plan effectively for the future will become an essential tool for the construction industry. This workstream may possibly include a stand-alone and separately funded conference on development in China, to be organized in conjunction with China Dialogue.

3 Publishing

Writing and publishing activities will continue to be a mainstream activity of the Edge. The column in Building will continue as a regular feature and it is the link with Black Dog Publishing will deliver a significant set of books this year.

4 Brokerage

Brokerage will continue to be an important activity of the Edge and the group will carry on developing useful linkages and relationships between external parties. The main focus will still be on the main professional institutes and their presidents and senior executives, but links will be maintained and developed with other groups and government bodies, especially including those in Parliament (including the All Party Climate Change Group) and leading public sector bodies such as the Greater London Authority and Government departments and agencies.

The Edge is keen to develop its role as an effective forum for debate and to make this available to a wide range of bodies concerned with issues affecting the built environment.

6 The Edge website

The current Edge website www.at-the-edge.org.uk now needs to be overhauled and refreshed with easier access to keep it up to date and to ensure it provides information on all the group's recent initiatives.

7 Policy thinking

The Construction Industry Council has described the Edge as the CIC's policy arm. The Edge will continue to focus on the built environment and in particular the potential policy agendas of its sponsor institutes. The Edge has the freedom to think widely and incisively, consulting experts and provocative theorists and practitioners as it does so. The Edge will use this freedom to help develop and influence the approach and policy development of the mainstream institutional bodies as well as to inform decision making processes amongst designers, built environment professionals, contractors, clients, regulators and many others.

Funding

The current funding from The Carbon Trust allows the Edge to maintain its programme of activities and events and to use them to influence and develop the thinking of our five sponsor institutes (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE, RICS and IStructE). The Edge committee is very grateful for this support.

The sponsor institutes provide support in kind through the hosting of debates at their premises along with the provision of refreshments and access to senior members and staff. In addition individual companies of Edge committee members generously host Edge committee meetings on a regular basis.

The Edge also benefits greatly from the time provided by a range of senior members of the construction professions including architects, engineers, surveyors, planners, social scientists and others, including several former presidents and vice presidents from the institutes who are active on the Edge committee.

The Edge May 2008