

Issue 3 | June 2010

Low Carbon Construction IGT Newsletter

Minister for Business, Mark Prisk, made it a priority in his first week to attend the IGT Steering Group on 18 May to emphasise his support for both the Innovation and Growth Team process in general and the work on low carbon construction in particular. Following the meeting the Minister said:



"I will champion the industry at the highest level, flagging up the huge contribution the sector makes to UK GDP. I met with the industry led Low Carbon Construction Innovation and Growth Team which I found extremely interesting. It has assured me that the industry can be a leader in low carbon solutions."

Following this ringing endorsement from the Minister, the Steering Group agreed that the original framework for the IGT still held good and the intention to publish a final report at the end of the year should remain. Each of the workstreams would continue to work towards that goal.

For any further information about the Construction IGT, please go to www.bis.gov.uk/constructionigt or email constructionigt@bis.gov.uk

Buildings Workstream

The Buildings Group, chaired by Tony Douglas, is considering five key aspects for improving the energy performance of non-domestic buildings. Both new build and existing buildings are in scope, with an emphasis on refurbishment and operation of existing stock. Aspects being addressed include:

- finance in construction (including innovative business models);
- incentives and interventions;
- skills;
- improved data collection, reporting & use; and
- client objectives and outputs

Workshops have been held (and are planned) in some of these areas, and the Group is due to discuss its initial thoughts for recommendations at its next meeting - currently scheduled for mid-June.

Infrastructure Workstream

The Infrastructure Group, chaired by Keith Clarke, has a wide-ranging remit, covering energy, transport, water, ports and telecommunications. It is taking forward some specific propositions from the IGT's emerging findings including:

- looking at the statutory regulatory framework,
- codes and standards
- carbon discount rates



Each proposition is being considered in turn with members of the group leading on specific issues. The Group will next meet in mid-June to discuss progress towards its contribution for the final IGT report.

Housing Workstream



The group, chaired by Mark Clare, has continued to meet regularly, and there have been a number of meetings and further work by sub-groups focusing on developing the Existing Home Hub proposition, the Refurb Guide commissioned by CPA. There have also been a number of meetings with relevant partners, including the Energy Technologies Institute, IBM Smart Cities Programme, the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes, E.On and BRE. B&Q have also agreed to help the group understand better how retailers view this emerging refurbishment market.

Some twenty stakeholder bodies have been consulted on the emerging findings report and asked to suggest any other areas that merit consideration. The key areas of focus remain:

- Identifying how to encourage "customer pull" for low carbon refurbishment
- Reducing the cost of delivery
- Creating the industry supply-chain to deliver

With input from the Zero Carbon Hub, further work will look at any particular challenges faced by SME house-builders in delivering zero carbon new-build and the scope for innovation to help address those.

Photo: House refurbished under the TSB Retrofit for the future competition in Barnet. Energy efficiency decreased from 54 percent (Category E) to 81 percent (Category B), and CO² emissions were cut by 52 percent. Photo courtesy Apollo Property Services Group Ltd.

Major Projects Workstream

Major projects have a significant positive impact on industry practice. Following the Emerging Findings report, the Major Projects Group, chaired by John Armit, is continuing to explore the potential to use major projects to raise the bar of achievement in terms of low carbon practice.

The Group brings together a wide range of perspectives, including:

- client;
- design;
- engineering;
- construction products;
- contracts; and
- academia.

This has generated a productive and wide ranging discussion about options, and the related practical challenges.

The Group has agreed to draw together the common themes. They will also take forward an engagement plan with relevant opinion formers to ensure wider support for any ideas.



Photo: King's Cross Development - aerial image looking north © Simon Hazelgrove

Cross-Cutting Workstream

The Cross Cutting Group, chaired by Paul Morrell, is taking forward work on the following propositions from the IGT's emerging findings:

- a Green Book requirement on whole life carbon appraisal
- the use of public procurement as a test bed for the industry's low carbon transformation
- integration and what it means
- a zero carbon building for the same price as "business as usual"
- carbon targets for different building types

It is also looking at issues around carbon accounting and mapping the skills landscape.

The issue of carbon accounting was intrinsically linked with the Green Book proposition. Embodied carbon, and how to account for it, continues to be a challenge but it is clear that emerging carbon calculator tools would have to be consistent with CEN TC 350. The cross cutting group will be exploring this further.

In terms of the other activities, the Strategic Forum for Construction and Constructing Excellence is taking forward work on the integration proposition and the Construction Industry Council is looking at how professional competence and capability requirements may need to change on a cross-profession basis.

It is evident that the area of skills for low carbon construction is extremely complex, with a host of issues and initiatives. To help understand the full "landscape", a simple database has been created for IGT members and others to record and exchange views, and details of programmes underway to address particular issues. Email the IGT Secretariat on constructionigt@bis.gov.uk if you wish to contribute or would be interested in more information.

2050 Group

The 2050 Group consists of young professionals from across the range of built environment disciplines. The group has identified three very different scenarios for how they see the construction industry in the period 2020 – 2050.

The group is now exploring these three scenarios in more detail while starting to consider how each scenario will affect the following areas:

- Industry/ Leadership
- Housing
- Buildings
- Infrastructure
- Future Skills

The task from now until mid June 2010 is to “test” scenarios for each area with the help of major stakeholders in the industry, adding credibility to the work and challenging the industry in their way of thinking.

Exports Group

UK Trade & Investment's (UKTI) Construction Sector Team, working closely with its private sector advisory group, chaired by Terry Hill, has continued to focus its attention on helping market the UK construction sectors low carbon built environment solutions to international markets around the world. Over the last five years UKTI has organised 38 inward and outward missions focusing entirely or partially on low carbon construction as well as briefing its commercial staff from the UK's Embassies and Consulates in key markets. This year will see outward missions to:

- South Korea
- Brazil
- Qatar
- China
- Mexico
- Saudi Arabia

The Construction Sector Advisory Group and UKTI will continue to feed into the IGT work and propose to submit a paper in July looking at what more can be done to promote UK low carbon construction exports.

Anyone interested in contributing ideas for this paper should contact peter.cain@ukti.gsi.gov.uk before 18 June 2010.

Further information

This is the third in a series of regular newsletters to keep you updated on progress with the review.

To subscribe to future issues of this newsletter, [please follow this link](#)