

# Edge Debate 50 – 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## Setting the Conditions for Innovation

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**Jane Powell**  
Debate Secretary

SUPPORTED BY  
**Carbon Trust, CIBSE,  
ICE, RIBA  
RICS, IStructE**

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Built environment professionals, business leaders and politicians of all leanings all support the idea of innovation but the question of “How do you create the right conditions for innovation?” is often met with a blank. To date there has been more discussion about ‘push factors’ (how industry can encourage innovation) and very little about pull factors (how policy can create the conditions out of which a more innovative construction industry would emerge). If the construction industry is not clear about the policies that we want to see, how can we expect governments to implement them?

This debate will look at the pull factors necessary for the UK to achieve and apply successful innovation in the built environment sector. Some commentators have observed that the construction industry is becoming ever more conservative and risk-averse while the context (environmentally, socially, economically) is becoming ever more demanding of radical change – the long term implications of this are troubling in many respects. The UK has some of the best designers, engineers and innovators in the world and yet there has been very little collective, national effort to nurture the potential benefits

### The Edge Debate will discuss:

- How should innovation best be supported in SMEs?
- How can conditions be created for disruptive technologies to be launched rather than smothered?
- What are the economic conditions out of which greater innovation would emerge?
- How might the idea of a circular economy drive innovation?
- What policy initiatives should be implemented to drive innovation?

### Chair:

- Richard Miller, Head of Sustainability, Technology Strategy Board

### Speakers:

- Peter Head, Chairman of the Ecological Sequestration Trust & Chairman of the Institute for Sustainability
- Robert Webb, Energy Questions + Founder of Quiet Revolution)
- Michael Pawlyn, Exploration Architecture + The Sahara Forest Project

The Edge is an inter-institutional ginger group involving CIBSE, ICE, RIBA and the RICS and seeks to promote interdisciplinary co-operation between construction professionals. We seek to encourage change in the industry through intellectual debate, political lobbying and inter-institutional working. Synopses of previous debates are recorded on our website [www.edgedebate.com](http://www.edgedebate.com)

We would be delighted if you could join us in this by-invitation only debate. Please let Simon Foxell at [sf@architectspractice.com](mailto:sf@architectspractice.com) and Jane Powell at [jpo@dmagw.com](mailto:jpo@dmagw.com) know if you, or a colleague, can attend. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis.

**Venue:** Conference Centre, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET (to be confirmed)

### Timing:

Debate 6.30 - 8.30 pm  
Drinks and networking - 9.00 pm