



Sustainable Development Business News from MEBC

First established in 1992, MEBC is a business network run as a not-for-profit, limited liability company by Midlands regional business people to promote sustainable development as a sensible business proposition.

www.mebconline.com

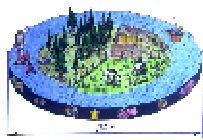
March 2008

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Carbon – zero? Low? Footprint – (or eco footprint)? Neutral? Offsetting?



MEBC members and invited guests assembled at the ARUP Campus, Solihull to debate the carbon economy where host Hon. Prof. Peter Braithwaite set the scene by highlighting the confusions on carbon but also asking is “zero carbon” a myth, climate change a fallacy and sustainable development nothing more than fluff.

The illustration above is from his PowerPoint show which can be seen and downloaded from the Document Library on www.mebconline.com. It supported Peter’s statements about our excessive use of resources.

Some issues arising from the event:

- How can a major city produce a climate change strategy that excludes transport?
- The terminology of sustainable development and carbon is often abused, misrepresented and often plain dishonest.
- We must find ways of retrofitting renewable energy into the existing housing stock. New build is just 5%.
- We need tax incentives to motivate commitment to renewable energy - to motivate cultural change.
- The issue of carbon has acted as a distraction from what should be our main focus – energy and heat efficiency.
- Procurement is an underused and very important tool – and we must stop chucking out sustainable development values and simply going for cheapest wins. It’s often false economy anyway.
- Compulsory processes are too slow in the UK. A community project on mainland Europe from idea to delivery took 2 years. It would take 5 or more in UK.
- We should have energy ratings on buildings that, unlike white

Sponsorship Opportunity for Success Dinner

The next will be the 6th and encouraged by the year on year success of previous events, we want the 2008 Business Success Dinner at the Banqueting Suite of Birmingham Council House to be the best yet.

goods, don't start with As and AAs but W, V or T so there's more incentive to achieve higher standards.

- We need more government support for demonstration projects.
- We need more schemes like Leicester where solar panels can be rented.
- VAT should have lower rate for "green" products
- There needs to be an independent assessor of "green products". There's now too much market and PR spin on "green" – it's been devalued.
- Our economic paradigm is wrong. It's not sending out sustainable development signals.

The above are some headlines from the event. To gain maximum output from MEBC events – attend!



With sponsorship help we can use both sections of the splendid Suite to almost double the numbers attending, using technology to ensure everyone sees what is going on. Keynote speaker will be passionate sustainable development business leader, Dr Stewart Davies.



Ambitions For Dinner

Last December it was a sell out. To make the Business Success Dinner bigger without moving from its delightful traditional home of the Banqueting Suite at Birmingham Council House we need to bring in technology to ensure everyone can see. Which is why we are seeking c£6,000 in sponsorship for what is becoming the focal point for the sustainable development year in the West Midlands.

To help encourage support, we have already secured one of the best business speakers on sustainable development. Dr Stewart Davies (above) is a former MD of Corus and Rugby Cement. Today he is Managing Director of Serco Integrated Services and Business Commissioner of the Sustainable Development Commission.

The 2008 event will again feature two now traditional elements – the presentation of the MEBC "Member of the Year" Award and the interview sequences by BBC TV News Presenter, Kay Alexander who will swoop on unsuspecting members of the audience to explore what successes they have had in the year.

For more information including the offer of any potential sponsor, contact davidm@ebc-info.co.uk.

Taskforce Launches Reports on Mobility and Energy

The Business Taskforce on Sustainable Consumption and Production launched two reports – **Mobility 2020** and **Decentralised Energy** – at an event staged in the library of the Science Museum.

Key speakers were Dr Stewart Davies on Mobility and Peter Jones of Biffa on the energy paper. Downloads of their presentations via:



- [SCP Taskforce Mobility 2020 Presentation 12 March 2008](#)

- [SCP Taskforce Decentralised Energy Presentation 12 March 2008](#)

The two reports can be downloaded via:

- [SCP Taskforce Mobility 2020 Report](#)

- [SCP Taskforce Decentralised Energy Report](#)

Birmingham Workshops

The findings from these important pieces of work will be the subject of two consultative workshops to be held on May 22nd in Birmingham Council's Banqueting Suite. This event, part of a series of three with others being held in Leeds and London, will be open to a limited audience. To book, e-mail katieh@ebc-info.co.uk.

FULL HOUSE ON TRIP TO LUDLOW

MEBC members filled all the available spaces at a location visit to see best practice in action at the Anaerobic Digester demonstration project in Ludlow.

Delegate Paul Mountain from Martineau Johnson said: "*Michael Chesshire's (Project Director seen above) depth of knowledge, his ability to convey clearly both the science and the economics of food waste and farm waste to energy CHP, and his sheer enthusiasm are inspiring. The model deserves wider application.*"

"It was a very well organised event and I got a great deal from it. As well as some interesting information, I managed to form some excellent networking contacts." - Scott Tamplin, ENER.G Combined Power.

Display boards from the event can be seen in the Document Library on www.mebconline.com and Michael Chesshire's presentation can be requested via katieh@ebc-info.co.uk.

Industry and Government Could Help UK Improve Use of New Technologies

We have technology and solutions to respond to many of today's energy and climate change challenges but deployment in the UK remains low. That was the headline output from the first Renewables Technology Audit held before a capacity audience in Birmingham where criticism was aimed at both Government and industry by speakers and delegates. Clearly the UK is not doing as well as it could and is being out-performed by other countries.

Speakers were Deane Flint, Divisional Sales Director, Mitsubishi Electric Living, Environmental Systems;

SPECIAL LOCATION VISIT GÜSSING Austria



Güssing is an exemplar to the rest of Europe of how a town and a region can abandon reliance on fossil energy. This Austrian town has achieved its objective using regionally available sustainable renewable energy sources.

MEBC teamed up with the Business Council for Sustainable Development – UK to take a delegation of members to hear from Peter Vadasz, the Mayor of Güssing, how this had been achieved.

He explained how they had developed the model. Energy saving measures and optimisation of all town centre buildings saved almost 50% of energy cost. Then numerous demonstration energy plants in the town and the region helped to gradually implement the overall plan. Energy self sufficiency was finally realised in 2001 when the biomass-steam gasification plant was installed.

Mike Froom, Business Development Director, Veolia Water Solutions & Technologies; Garry Albutt, Technical Sales Manager, Renewable Energy Products, Worcester Bosch Group. and Mike Ahearne of the Technology Innovation Centre of Birmingham City University who arrived as a delegate but ended up as a speaker when the biodiesel expert failed to arrive.

DIARY DATE

GREEN ROOF

At Birmingham University, Fort Dunlop and elsewhere. An educational tour.

APRIL 23rd 2008

For more information or to book a place contact jenniem@ebc-info.co.uk.

Güssing is now home to the “European Centre for Renewable Energy” where the Biomass gasification plant is sited and coordinates all demonstration plants, projects and research activities promoted in the plants. This has brought significant prosperity to an otherwise fast declining town and region, attracting new companies with high quality jobs and tourism.

In the town of Güssing this has meant:

- 50 new companies
- More than 1,000 new jobs
- Net 9 m. Euro/year
- Total sales volume of 13m Euro/year



Delegates also heard from Markus Koch who explained how the biomass plant worked and conducted a tour for delegates; Reinhard Koch who gave an insight into how the whole business model worked for Güssing, Dr Gunther Clauss who described the wind energy applications applied in the region by Austrian Wind Power – BEWAG; Alfred Moser who demonstrated the workings and economics of the Biodiesel plant. Delegate quotes include “Informative and Intensive trip”; “overwhelmed by amount and quality of information presented “Lively and helpful discussions”. For more information including speaker presentations visit www.bcsd-uk.co.uk.

Site visit to Accord Housing Development, Halesowen



Seeing is believing! As part of the MEBC’s programme of raising awareness about resource utilisation, funded through AWM from the BREW fund, MEBC members and guests enjoyed a grey March day location visit to the Accord environmental housing project in Halesowen.

Accord has over 40 years experience in the social housing sector and is one of the largest housing associations working in the Midlands. It has 6,400 homes in management and a further 3,100 planned by 2012. Accord provides a range of supported housing and care services to meet the needs of a diverse group numbering around 35,000 people.



Left. Roof top evidence of the fresh air ventilation system that runs through the homes.



Right. Closer view of the roof reveals green roof technology.



The delegation split into smaller groups, this one visiting the wood chip boiler house.



DIARY DATE

MEBC AGM

November 12th 2008

Hosted by Eversheds, Birmingham

Midlands Environmental Business Company

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www.mebconline.co.uk

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