

INTERNATIONAL ECO-CITIES INITIATIVE

International Eco-Cities Initiative

May 2016

Welcome to the latest issue of the International Eco-Cities Initiative newsletter. The bulletin (published three times per year) provides information about our research, events and publications, and contributes to analysis and discourse on 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

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New publications

Research article: 'Eco-city development in China – addressing the policy implementation challenge'

China continues to be the site of rapid urban development, and its central government has acknowledged the importance of sustainability concerns with several ambitious eco-city policy programmes. This new article, which Professor Simon Joss co-authored, develops a typology of eco-cities in China and builds an approach to understanding what factors contribute to the "success" or "failure" of eco-city projects. A key finding is that a top-down approach adopted by central government overemphasizes a rational, technocratic planning mode while underemphasising interrelationships among actors. For a complimentary copy of the article please contact Simon Joss at josss@westminster.ac.uk.

- [View the journal article online](#)

Survey report: 'Smart cities UK 2016'

'Smart cities' are becoming a pervasive phenomenon both in the UK and internationally. But what is a

of King's College London. The survey forms part of the multi-centre SMART ECO research programme which looks at smart, eco and low-carbon cities across Europe and China. The International Eco-Cities Initiative has contributed to the survey of UK smart cities, including an ongoing case study of Smart London led by Professor Simon Joss. Smart Cities UK 2016 considers the types of programmes that fall under the 'smart' label and the emphasis of different themes across a variety of UK cities.

- [Download the Smart Cities UK 2016 report](#)
- [Visit our 'Smart Eco-cities' project page](#)

Policy report: 'The future of policy and standards for low and zero carbon homes'

How can we design ambitious, yet flexible policies for 'zero carbon homes' that support innovation and capacity building within the housing sector? A new report – co-authored by Dr Dan Greenwood and Martin King (University of Westminster) and Dr Alina Congreve (University of Hertfordshire) and funded by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) – addresses this and related questions. The findings are topical, not least given the decision by the UK Government to scrap the zero carbon homes target in their Housing and Planning Bill (2015), and the recent vote by the House of Lords to amend the bill and reintroduce the target. The report assesses the strengths and weaknesses of previous policies, highlights concerns with the Government's current approach, and provides recommendations for future policy.

- [View the full news item](#)
- [Download the report](#)

Doctoral thesis: 'Eco-cities – technological showcases or public spaces?'

Dr Robert Cowley's doctoral thesis, which he successfully defended last December, is now electronically available (open access). The dissertation takes a critical perspective on the conceptualisation of the 'city' within current planning practices and discourses around the 'eco-city'. It develops a new model of the 'publicness' of cities, as a varying assemblage of space and behaviour, in order to analyse some of the problems in the planning and implementation of existing eco-city projects, and as a basis for thinking about ways of overcoming these problems in future. The research project was supervised by Professor Simon Joss and Dr Dan Greenwood as part of the International Eco-Cities Initiative.

- [Download the thesis from the EThOS database](#)

People

New doctoral researcher: Jan Gerhards

We are pleased to announce that Jan Gerhards joined us earlier this spring to undertake doctoral research on 'One planet living: measuring the impacts of the One Planet Living framework'. This project is at the centre of our collaboration with Bioregional, a globally active social enterprise working in the field of sustainability. Jan's research aims to advance the conceptual and methodological development of measuring and assessing impact for sustainable urban development, with Bioregional's One Planet Living framework as a case study.

- [See full news item on our website](#)

Events

UK – China research symposium on urban sustainability and wellbeing

A three-day symposium on cities, sustainability and wellbeing was recently convened by Professor Nick Bailey and colleagues of the Centre for Urban Infrastructure at the University of Westminster. It was held as part of our growing research engagement with Chinese academics, including colleagues from Tongji University (Shanghai) and Peking University (Beijing). Professor Simon Joss presented his latest co-authored publication on eco-city programmes in China (see above). The meeting concluded with a commitment to consolidating comparative research on cities between the two countries, with special emphasis on exploring the links between urban infrastructure development and social sustainability,

- [Visit our 'Smart Eco-cities' project page](#)
- [See full news item on our website](#)

Recognition

Book review: 'Sustainable cities: governing for urban innovation'

Professor Simon Joss' book, first published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2015, has recently been reviewed in the *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*. Dr Matthew Cook, the reviewer, writes: 'This book takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the roots of sustainable city initiatives and associated governance processes. Joss opens the book with a penetrating critique of contemporary perspectives for understanding sustainable cities... [He] presents a rich, thought-provoking picture of sustainable city innovation and governance on multiple scales... The governance of sustainable cities, which hitherto has received insufficient attention, is thoroughly unpacked.' *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, vol. 9 (3): 311–312.

- [Download the synopsis of 'Sustainable cities'](#)
- [View the book on the publisher's website](#)

Encyclopedia article: 'Eco-cities and sustainable urbanism'

Elsevier Science and Technology Books recently announced that Professor Simon Joss' entry in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences* (2015) is among the top five most accessed contributions out of more than 3,900 chapters. The article discusses the growing significance of sustainable urban development in policy-making and public discourse within a context of global concerns about climate change and urbanisation. Earlier this year, the Encyclopedia was recognised with two PROSE awards (American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence) in the categories 'Excellence in Reference Works' and 'Multivolume Reference – Humanities & Social Sciences'. For a complimentary copy of the article please contact Simon Joss at josss@westminster.ac.uk.

- [View the article online](#)

LinkedIn Discussion Forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 560 members, including researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It invites contributions from around the world, aimed at discussing and sharing information, reflections and practical learning on sustainable urbanism in its various forms.

- [Join the International Eco-Cities Forum](#)

Further Information

Please see the [International Eco-Cities Initiative website](#) for further information and to sign up for news and events.

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