

CIBSE unveils transformative “Building Performance Reimagined” project

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CIBSE has unveiled a transformative project titled “Building Performance Reimagined.” This pioneering report, commissioned by CIBSE and researched by Arup, diverges from typical CIBSE publications, focusing not on system sizing, maintenance, or controls, but on a holistic and future-oriented perspective on building performance.

Exploring new horizons

The core aim of the Building Performance Reimagined project is to push the boundaries of traditional engineering practices and prepare CIBSE members for future challenges. It delves into the dynamic and evolving landscape of building performance, extending beyond the familiar realms of energy efficiency and carbon reduction. It prompts engineers to consider future forms of ‘value’ in the built environment, and the major cultural and systemic shifts required to unlock that value.

Four performance metrics for future challenges

The report proposes four key performance metrics to guide the shift towards health and resilience:

- **Variety:** How might building services optimise space, promote adaptability and diversity of use and user?
- **Readiness:** How might building services reduce risk and harm, and build anticipatory capacity to respond to unseen threats?
- **Connectedness:** How might building services better respond to the building context and its contents, and integrate with local and wider systems?

- **Emergence:** How might building services contribute more than they consume, and learn as structures age?

Expanding the role of building services engineers

The project reframes the role of building services engineers in wiser systems and society. Their responsibilities now extend beyond ensuring basic functionality and energy efficiency to enhancing all forms of life within and around a site, promoting biodiversity and social equity through design decisions and interactions. Moreover, engineers are increasingly tasked with influencing the broader urban context, shaping how buildings interact with local and city infrastructures, communities and resources.

Embracing futures and systems thinking

CIBSE invites industry professionals to join this exciting journey, leveraging futures and systems thinking methodologies to anticipate changing needs, explore potential futures and identify opportunities to shape the built environment. This forward-thinking approach aims to redefine “high performance” in buildings, considering not just individual benefits but also collective social value and multi-species stakeholder interests.

The Building Performance Reimagined project is a bold step towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future, setting a new standard for the engineering profession and the built environment.