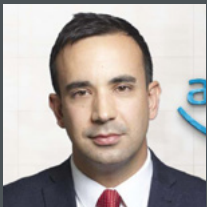


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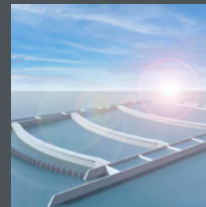
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## Message from the editor



Welcome to the first *Infrastructure Intelligence* magazine of 2022. Like last year, Covid continues to cast a shadow over all aspects of our lives and the Omicron variant of the virus has created more challenges for businesses, with many countries reintroducing lockdowns and restrictions in an attempt to reduce the spread of the virus.

The enduring effects of the pandemic will continue to be felt over the coming months, but we have to hope that the effectiveness of the vaccine roll-out programme will continue to reduce the severity of the pandemic and that slowly but surely our industry will adapt to the new ways of working that we have all had to get used to over the past two years.

It is clearer than ever before that the construction and infrastructure sector is crucial to the UK's economic recovery from Covid. In 2022 we need to see not just shovels in the ground but real and impactful projects taking shape up and down the country that make a positive difference to people's lives.

The value that our sector delivers to society will be centre stage over the coming 12 months and *Infrastructure Intelligence* will be looking to promote this at every opportunity. Social value will be a key theme for the industry in 2022 along with the enduring and vital issues of climate change, sustainable transport, the challenge to retain and grow talent and digital transformation.

As ever, *Infrastructure Intelligence* will continue to provide a voice for construction and infrastructure on all these issues and more over the coming year.

**Andy Walker,**

Editor, *Infrastructure Intelligence*

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# Balfour Beatty launches major HS2 recruitment drive

**H**S2's construction partner, Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV), is launching a major recruitment drive to bolster its workforce ready to deliver its huge programme of construction works into 2022 and beyond.

Around 1,700 staff are already working at construction sites and in satellite offices across Solihull, Warwickshire and Birmingham and the company is now looking to welcome more new recruits.

Balfour Beatty VINCI's expanding workforce is reflective of the scale of works ahead with 2022 shaping up to be a significant year in HS2's construction programme, with tunnel boring machine 'Dorothy' set to become the first TBM on the HS2 route to breakthrough.

BBV says the the broad scope of jobs on offer reflects the diversity that a career in construction can bring. Jobs for those seeking a site-based role include materials technicians, signallers, general operatives, traffic marshalls and engineering assistants. Office-based roles include opportunities in Balfour Beatty VINCI's procurement, transport planning, skills and education and finance teams.

In total, Balfour Beatty VINCI expects that it will support around 7,000 jobs to deliver its programme of work on HS2.

There are also taster opportunities, for those considering whether a career in construction is in fact for them. Linked to a dedicated programme of free-training, Balfour Beatty VINCI is investing in upskilling local people at its new skills academy based within South and City College's Bordesley Green campus. From here it offers a wide range of free training courses that provide students with the accreditation and skills they need to progress into entry-level roles.

Shilpi Akbar, head of stakeholders and communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI, said: "As we work to bring HS2 to the region, we have a monumental construction programme ahead of us. With thousands of career opportunities in the pipeline, across a multitude of disciplines, we are committed to giving people of all backgrounds the chance to develop and hone new and existing skills, while working to deliver one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects."

[Click here for details of all the latest and upcoming vacancies at HS2.](#)



# Cathy Travers steps up to join Mott MacDonald board

**M**ott MacDonald has appointed Cathy Travers (pictured right) to its executive board. She will also continue in her role as managing director of the consultancy's UK and Europe regional business.

Travers has spent her whole working career at Mott MacDonald, having joined Husband and Company after graduating from the University of Sheffield in 1988 with a masters in civil and structural engineering. As managing director of Mott MacDonald's UK and Europe region, she is responsible for a diverse team of 8,000 people who operate in the built environment, advisory, transportation, water, environment and energy sectors.

Prior to this Travers was managing director of the consultancy's buildings and infrastructure business in the UK and Europe where she was responsible for the control, direction and leadership of over 30 offices and 1,800 staff, operating in the built environment, advisory, transportation, water and environment and energy sectors.

Mike Haigh, Mott MacDonald executive chair, said: "I'm delighted that Cathy has been appointed to the group board. Cathy has been with Mott MacDonald for nearly her whole career, leading many teams and projects and so she is exceptionally well-placed to support the group's future development."

Travers has extensive experience in the coordination, management and technical design and supervision of many wide-ranging,



multidisciplinary projects. She is particularly passionate about people, particularly equality and diversity, promoting a culture of inclusivity across the business and continues to play a leading role in the development of consultancy's early career professionals.

Commenting on her appointment Travers said: "I can't wait to bring my skills and passions to work with the board, driving the business forward in areas such as technical excellence, digital and social outcomes."

# Engineer Max Fordham dies, age 88

**B**ritish engineer Max Fordham, widely seen as a pioneer of sustainable building design, died on 4 January at the age of 88.

Fordham founded the building services firm Max Fordham & Partners with his late wife Thalia 'Taddy' Fordham in 1966. The firm, which later became Max Fordham LLP in 2001, employs over 250 people and was the first business in the UK construction industry to become a Limited Liability Partnership. Today it is co-owned by 119 partners.

In a statement following his death, the firm

said that Fordham's work prioritised creativity and "ensuring human comfort by giving buildings heat, power, water and ventilation in a sustainable and elegant way. Max was an acclaimed engineer and pioneer of sustainable building design (who) resisted pigeonholing into the conventional boxes of mechanical or electrical engineering and was always interested in the whole building".

The legacy of Fordham's work and his vision will continue to inspire new generations of engineers and he will be sorely missed by all those who knew him across the industry.



# Transport for the North publishes Major Roads Report



Regional transport body Transport for the North has highlighted the importance of reliable, connected and sustainable highways in a major new report.

Transport for the North (TfN) has published a *Major Roads Report for the north of England*, setting out the important role the region's highways have to play as part of an efficient, effective and multimodal transport network.

The report takes a look at how the relative cost of motoring, bus travel and rail travel influences the choices people make across the north. TfN says that "only by looking at transport in the round will we be able to ensure that our investment choices are sustainable for the longer term."

The report's findings reveal that: -

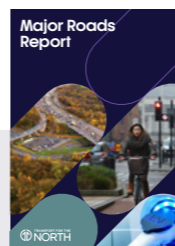
- 97% of personal journeys in the north of England use our highways;
- Of these, 61% are by car or taxi, 26% walking, 9% on buses and 2% cycling;
- Just under 90% of car trips are under 10 kilometres;
- 88% of freight movements in our region use roads;
- Commuting and business trips account for around one-third of carbon emissions from cars;
- In the north of England, more than 95% of the 26 million tonnes of transport-related carbon emissions per year are from road transport;
- On average, rural residents drive more than twice as far per year as people living in urban areas and are more dependent on private transport to access jobs, education, and other essential services.

The report also aligns to the recently published *Transport Decarbonisation Strategy for the North of England*. That strategy and the *Major Roads Report* state that policy measures to reduce travel by car, and future investment to make the use of roads less carbon intensive, will be vital in meeting ambitious emission reduction targets.

Martin Tugwell, chief executive of Transport for the North, said: "In the last century motorised transport revolutionised our way of life, and as we move towards the second quarter of the 21st century our highways will continue to be a fundamental part of our transport system.

"However, as we look to address climate change, we will need to make choices about how we use the available highway space, with greater priority given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. We will also need to consider and agree on how we will pay for investment and indeed on how we pay to use our roads. We need to do things differently, but at the same time ensure that our way forward does not disadvantage those for whom travel by car is the only practical option.

"As the 'one voice' for the north, TfN is committed to ensuring that our roads are fit for purpose. We will work with government and its agencies to identify a way forward that is fair and sustainable, as part of a multimodal transport system that is truly fit for purpose."



Click here to download the full Major Roads Report.

# ACE names Stephen Marcos Jones as new CEO

The director general of the UK Petroleum Industry Association will take over at the helm of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering when he starts his new role on 31 January 2022.

Stephen Marcos Jones has been appointed as the new chief executive of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) to replace Hannah Vickers who left ACE earlier in the summer. He will take up his new role on 31 January 2022.

Jones joins ACE after more than a decade in senior leadership roles representing the UK energy sector. He arrives at ACE following a four-year stint as director general at the UK Petroleum Industry Association (UKPIA), the business association for the UK's downstream oil sector. While at UKPIA, Jones led significant change across an important manufacturing sector, spearheading a cross-industry response on issues such as environmental regulation and promoting the sector's key role in delivering decarbonisation in pursuit of net zero and helping to articulate a vision for a sustainable future for the sector.

At UKPIA, he has led on issues such as the energy transition, the role of hydrogen, fuel quality, forging proactive and collaborative relationships with the UK government ministers and the devolved administrations. Most recently, he has promoted the concept of industrial clustering and is a strong advocate of the government's levelling up agenda.

Prior to his time at UKPIA, Jones held a number of senior leadership positions

at OGUK, the representative body for the UK offshore energy industry, where he grew commercial revenues for the association through a robust member engagement and events programme. He also led a campaign to promote efficiency across the sector, through better procurement practices across the supply chain.

Commenting on Jones's impending arrival, ACE chair, Dave Beddell, said: "On behalf of our membership, I would like to welcome Stephen to ACE. Having conducted an extensive search for our next CEO, the board was unanimous in its view that Stephen was the outstanding candidate to take our organisation forward in what is a period of both immense challenge and opportunity for the consultancy sector.

"Stephen's proven experience of executive leadership and impactful stakeholder engagement is extremely impressive and I look forward to working closely with him as ACE continues to promote the critical role consultants have in delivering government objectives

around economic recovery, levelling up and net zero."

Speaking about his appointment, Jones said: "The last few years have been incredibly challenging for the UK economy, but where there is challenge there is also opportunity. It is already clear to me that our members are critical partners for government and our industry is uniquely placed to turn political ambition into practical reality. I am delighted to have the opportunity to help ACE's members take a leading role in delivering a sustainable future for us all."

Jones will hit the ground running at ACE, with plans to meet many of the organisation's key stakeholders in his first months in post. "My aim is to meet at least 100 people in my first 100 days, kicking off an intensive induction programme during which time I will be listening to stakeholders to understand how ACE can continue to provide a compelling proposition and to prioritise the work of the association to maximise value for its membership," he said.



Stephen Marcos Jones, the new chief executive of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering.

# Book now for our 2022 online events series

A new series of online events will bring together key speakers and influencers from the construction and infrastructure sector during 2022, reports Infrastructure Intelligence editor *Andy Walker*.

Infrastructure Intelligence's new 2022 online live events programme will see attendees benefiting from another interesting and informative series of webinars, interviews and conferences during the next 12 months, all organised in association with events and communications strategic partner, BECG.

The new 2022 *Infrastructure Intelligence* Live programme highlights many of the key issues facing the construction and infrastructure industry and builds on many of the issues that have arisen from our very successful 2021 online events programme which saw thousands of industry professionals take part.



Click here to view the Infrastructure Intelligence Live 2022 events series and to book places.



The 2022 programme kicks off with a webinar on 11 February organised in association with ACE to launch a report looking at offsite manufacturing and its role in achieving the government's Project Speed aims. February will also see us shining the spotlight on US president Joe Biden's \$1 trillion infrastructure plans by interviewing a key player from the US construction industry. This interview is followed by events highlighting diversity and inclusion and the key issues of placemaking and its increasing role in regional development.

A Big Digital Debate in April will look at how digital transformation is changing the way the sector works. What are the key drivers to achieving digital transformation? What are the key barriers to change and what key developments should we be watching out for that will disrupt the industry going forward? This webinar will address these questions and more.

May sees a key event of the year – our latest conference looking at social value and levelling up. Following on from the successful *Infrastructure Intelligence* social value online conference in 2021, this year's event will explore what social value means in practice in a sector that is often seen as leading the way in demonstrating the social benefit of its work.

A webinar on housebuilding and why this should be seen as part of infrastructure takes place in June and this is followed up by a July webinar looking at the increasing importance of nature-based solutions and the promotion of an approach to infrastructure development that protects and restores ecosystems to provide human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.

In September we'll take another look at diversity and inclusion in the industry and October sees a webinar looking at how can construction address its skills crisis – a vital task given the amount of work the government expects it to carry out as it looks to 'Build back better'.

Our final In the Spotlight Interview of the year in November sees HS2 CEO Mark Thurston take the chair for an in-depth chat about all things major projects and a lot more besides and we round off the year in December with our customary look forward to what 2023 might bring for construction and infrastructure sector.

# Industry calls for public sector procurement change

Construction leaders have called for a radical overhaul in traditional approaches to procurement to help create a new approach to public sector construction focused on zero carbon.

Public sector procurement authority SCAPE and some of the UK's largest contractors and consultants including Arcadis, Ashe Group, Fairhurst, Faithful & Gould, G.F Tomlinson, Jeakins Weir, John Sisk & Son, Lindum Group, Mace, McLaughlin & Harvey, Morgan Sindall, Perfect Circle, Seddon, Sweco UK and Willmott Dixon have written an open letter to construction minister Lee Rowley, outlining how the public estate can achieve its ambitious net zero targets.

The letter's signatories argue that whole life carbon assessments should be made a statutory requirement for the delivery of new-build and refurbishment projects in the public sector, with decisions based on the lifecycle carbon of the building or infrastructure project, not cost.

Project teams basing decisions on cost alone are inhibiting low carbon construction, according to the group. Data gathered by SCAPE suggests that the payback period from the operational savings created by sustainable building design is as little as six years on average, with only a marginal increase in capital cost.

The letter added that carbon-led collaboration across the supply chain is pivotal to ensure the next generation of public sector buildings and infrastructure set new standards for achieving a sustainable future.

The firms involved act as delivery

partners for SCAPE and SCAPE Scotland's construction, consultancy and civil engineering frameworks, covering £18bn worth of public sector projects to be delivered in the next five years.

Mark Robinson, group chief executive at SCAPE, said: "Tackling carbon intensity across the public estate has become mission critical. As a leading voice for the public sector and in collaboration with our construction and consultancy partners, we have a duty to forge an industry-led response to tackle the environmental challenges we currently face.

"The Construction Playbook represents the first building block to achieving a low-carbon future and we want to work with the minister to help further its aims and ambitions by setting new statutory obligations within UK procurement legislation. Achieving this doesn't mean reinventing the wheel – a lot of the immediate answers are hiding in plain sight. We must work together as an industry to rethink our traditional approaches and ensure that net zero carbon is considered an integral part of our decision-making process.

"The government plays a huge role in delivering this change and by working together to share best practices, we firmly believe that we can deliver on the commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2050."

Click here to download the letter to construction minister Lee Rowley.



# BEI launches three new climate change reports

Three newly published British Expertise International reports highlight its members' work on climate change and how they can help clients achieve their aims.

British Expertise International (BEI) has published three new specially themed climate change reports, highlighting the specialist work of its members in the fight against climate change around the globe.

The three BEI climate change working group reports are based around the themes of Nature-based Solutions, Extreme Weather and Climate Risk, and the Built Environment, with BEI members with a broad range of expertise summarising what the UK offers in each area.

The reports provide a platform for practical discussion around the challenging issues of climate change and the solutions that are already available from UK based businesses to address them.

Having split into the three focused sub-groups, each group has produced a report that:

- Provides an overview of the theme and defines some of the key concepts;
- Informs and outlines some of the problems in these topics;
- Offers a unique framework that summarises to stakeholders the various problems and solutions on offer;
- Maps out where each member has certain expertise and services.

The three reports have been developed for a range of organisations including UK government agencies (DIT, BEIS, FCDO, Innovate UK, DEFRA), global governments, bilateral development agencies and multilateral development agencies.

The report, *Nature-based Solutions*, outlines the important role that such measures can play in tackling the interlinked climate and biodiversity crisis and help local communities to adapt to its impacts now and in the future. The *Built Environment* report looks at its key role in reaching net zero emissions as well as adapting to the existing impacts of climate change and mitigating against

future impacts. An *Extreme Weather Risk and Climate Resilience (EWCRG)* report is designed to meet the needs of a range of agencies seeking rapid insights into the service and advisory offering of EWCRG companies.

Derrick Sanyahumbi, British Expertise International CEO, said: "Many in the UK government can talk with confidence about examples like offshore wind, which has been a real success, but few can talk about the climate change expertise embedded in thousands of UK businesses of all sizes that is already being deployed around the world day by day. So, our ambition was to shed light on this expertise in our member base and help increase awareness amongst the stakeholders who sell UK expertise overseas and those who wish to buy it."

"These three reports help identify the challenges being faced, provide a guiding framework on how they might be addressed and provide practical examples of work already being undertaken globally. They illustrate the innovation and expertise our members are deploying on a truly global scale.

"Publishing these reports is the beginning of the journey. We now plan to engage with key stakeholders and share with them the expertise at their disposal to help make a real difference to communities around the world – both now and for the future. We will continue to develop new reports in key areas where our members have expertise and where there is a need for action."



Click here to download all three reports.

# Gold Standard to improve public sector construction

A new Gold Standard will have to be met by all future public sector construction frameworks, with action plans to improve existing frameworks.

An independent review creating a new Gold Standard in public sector construction frameworks has been published by the Cabinet Office. *The new Gold Standard* will have to be met by all future construction frameworks, with action plans to improve existing frameworks.

The review and subsequent development of the Gold Standard were led by professor David Mosey of King's College London's Centre of Construction Law. Mosey looked at public sector construction frameworks with a combined value of £180bn. Analysis found evidence of waste, confusion and duplication in processes as well as too strong a focus on achieving the lowest price, rather than best value.

Now, the Gold Standard puts in place 24 recommendations which must be met by both developers and the public sector. Ministers say these standards will help guarantee projects have

improved efficiency and innovation, increased safety standards, a focus on net zero carbon and social value targets.

The standard also sets out how both the government and the construction industry must work together to tackle waste, secure value for money and drive innovation to achieve better, faster, safer and greener outcomes.

Lord Agnew, cabinet office minister, said: "The new Gold Standard will make sure that vital public sector developments have rigorous measures in place to make sure public money is spent well and that projects are delivered successfully. The move will help to drive consistency across major government projects and support the whole supply chain, meaning major schemes do not fall behind and small businesses have a greater chance of securing government business."

Professor Mosey said: "The effectiveness of construction frameworks is hampered by duplication, inconsistency and adversarial practices, wasting large amounts of money and impeding essential progress. The new Gold Standard for frameworks and framework contracts drives the strategic actions that will improve value and safety, manage risks, meet net zero carbon targets and support a profitable construction industry."

In 2018, public sector works contributed £117bn to the UK economy, as well as supporting more than two million jobs. The review is a result of the Construction Playbook, which was launched by the Cabinet Office in 2020 with the aim of making sure the public sector and construction industry work together better to deliver key infrastructure projects.



Click here to download *Constructing the Gold Standard* – An independent review of public sector construction frameworks.

# Industry disappointed by Integrated Rail Plan

The construction industry expressed its disappointment with the government's Integrated Rail Plan, which failed to deliver HS2 in full and revealed a scaled back version of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Leading industry figures have expressed their disappointment with the government's long-awaited Integrated Rail Plan, which was published late last year. The plan failed to deliver HS2 in full and also outlined a much scaled back version of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

The consensus, if any could be found, was that the plan, although providing some much-needed certainty, was definitely not the plan that been both expected and hoped for.

This is an edited version of reaction that first appeared online at Infrastructure Intelligence on 22 November 2021. [Click here](#) to read the full version, which includes additional reaction.



**Sir John Armitt, chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, said:**

*"We now have a realistic plan for major long term investments to improve rail for the north and midlands in the face of public spending constraints. It is sensible that the Integrated Rail Plan takes an adaptive approach, setting out a core pipeline of investment that should speed up delivery of benefits for communities and businesses. Beyond that pipeline, if additional funding becomes available the focus should be on further improving connections between Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford and Hull which are the kind of regional links likely to enhance economic benefits."*



**Andy Bell, director at Ramboll in the UK, and chair of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering's transport group, said:**

*"Just 18 months ago the prime minister told Parliament in a statement following the Oakervee review, that it 'does not make any sense' to build Northern Powerhouse Rail without HS2 and the government's strategy was to do both 'simultaneously'. Clearly the pandemic has strained public finances since then, but another change of approach does not help an engineering sector scaling up skills and resources - at a time of global demand for rail expertise - around what appeared to be clear commitments and pledges."*



**Mark Southwell, managing director, civil infrastructure, UK & Ireland, AECOM, said:**

*"The decision not to deliver HS2 in full and a scaled back amount of new line for Northern Powerhouse Rail is a lost opportunity for the communities the lines would serve, as well as the rail industry which was geared up to deliver. However, there is much to welcome in the Integrated Rail Plan in terms of its ambition to rapidly strengthen connections between regional towns and cities, providing a catalyst for investment in areas that will bring in businesses, jobs and housing."*



**Louise Gittins, interim chair of Transport for the North, said:**

*"The government's announcement is woefully inadequate. Leaders from across the north and from across the party political divide came together to ask for a network that would upgrade the north for this century and in line with the rest of the country. Our statutory advice asked for an over £40bn network but the government has decided to provide even less than half of that."*



**David Whysall, managing director for UK infrastructure at Turner & Townsend, said:**

*"This is not the plan that some expected or hoped for and there will be justified disappointment. However, there are silver linings too. This is a £96bn plan for rail which in following advice from the National Infrastructure Commission moves away from the piecemeal planning of the past. For the first time we have a coordinated approach to investment, that follows the announcement earlier this year on the formation of Great British Rail. The government now needs to convince the communities of the north and midlands that it is the right plan."*



**Richard Hoare, UK managing director for rail at Arcadis, said:**

*"The need to decarbonise and update an ageing, under invested network inevitably means that some very difficult choices needed to be made. The strategic decision to prioritise connectivity within the regions while investing in the High-Speed network will give a strong chance of delivering improved services for the towns and cities that can most benefit and have been historically underfunded. We'll need to work together, across the sector, to focus on the positives and realise these benefits for stakeholders who may be disappointed by the plan the government has set out."*



**Paul Robinson, UK rail lead at Gleeds, said:**

*"The continuous adjustments to funding, priorities, and overarching policy in preceding years have created inefficiencies and cost the tax-payer millions while delivering very little, so we have all been waiting for a brave, integrated and above all consistent rail plan to shape the next decade and beyond. While the IRP does at least provide some direction, it is not the 'infrastructure revolution for this country' that Boris Johnson claimed would be coming."*



**Darren Caplan, chief executive of the Railway Industry Association, said:**

*"It is positive to see confirmation of some local and regional rail projects within the plan - throughout the north and midlands - and the speed at which the government aims to deliver them. However, it is difficult to see this IRP as anything other than a piecemeal approach to national strategic railway infrastructure development, given the abandonment of HS2 Eastern Leg and the scaling back of Northern Powerhouse Rail."*

# Helping UK infrastructure firms grow business through exports

Infrastructure Exports UK (IE:UK) is playing a key role in helping to boost UK firms' chances of winning large infrastructure projects overseas, says minister for exports and IE:UK co-chair *Mike Freer MP*.

Following COP26 and the agreement of the Glasgow Climate Pact, governments around the globe are turning their attention to sustainable infrastructure. UK companies lead the world in this space, and their expertise can help ensure that all countries are able to develop the high-quality infrastructure that is needed to both meet net zero and adapt to the changes that will happen over the coming decades.

It is no coincidence that the *UK's first ever International Trade Week* has followed immediately from COP. Throughout the week, there were a series of exciting events designed to help UK businesses sell globally and connect with trade industry experts. I also had the opportunity to join my first Infrastructure Exports UK (IE:UK) board meeting, a partnership between industry and government focussing on bringing companies together through a 'Team UK' offer.

IE:UK ensures the full range of UK expertise is available and boosts our chances of winning large infrastructure projects overseas. I hope International Trade Week has given UK infrastructure companies the inspiration, advice and confidence to take the next steps to grow their business and export, including through IE:UK.

## What is IE:UK?

IE:UK is a partnership between government and industry to help UK companies form consortia and improve their chances of winning major international infrastructure projects as one 'Team UK'. The IE:UK board provides a forum to discuss UK appetite and strength in markets with strong infrastructure pipelines, ensuring a joined-up national approach.

The companies engaging with IE:UK employ around 200,000 people from across the UK, have extensive experience working on the world's largest infrastructure projects and represent a range of professions from finance to construction.



**Mike Freer MP** is the minister for exports and IE:UK co-chair.

## Market-driven approach

IE:UK's renewed strategy introduces a market-driven approach, with increased industry participation and targeted support from government, identifying priority markets suited to UK capabilities. IE:UK seeks to position the UK as the delivery partner of choice for large and complex infrastructure projects. With a reputation for innovation, collaboration and quality, the UK is well placed to lead the way for clean, resilient and ambitious infrastructure solutions worldwide.

IE:UK is currently working in a handful of markets within Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Southeast Asia; exploring specific opportunities in future cities, railway stations, integrating quality of life solutions in education, healthcare and sport, with sustainability and resilience at its heart.

## Making a difference through international trade

The value of UK industry and government coming together on infrastructure is exemplified in the *Peru reconstruction programme*. Following severe damage caused by El Niño in 2017, the UK was chosen as Peru's partner to support the development and delivery of a

reconstruction programme which remains critical to Peru's economic recovery. This partnership recognises the UK's vast experience in the management of complex infrastructure projects and highlights the value of UK businesses collaborating with local supply chains.

The last year has seen significant progress in each of IE:UK's priority markets, with UK industry working in collaboration with government to unlock key opportunities, especially in the rail and sports infrastructure sectors. Close collaboration between government and industry will be essential in driving forward an export-led recovery, so I am delighted that DIT colleagues and the IE:UK board are working in partnership to deliver our ambitions.

## New era for 'Global Britain'

As we move into a new era for 'Global Britain', IE:UK will play a key role in helping us deliver our ambitious trade objectives, from building strong, robust, and mutually beneficial economic partnerships to backing up our trade agreement programme with tangible export wins that establish UK companies in new export markets. The government is committed to supporting UK businesses maximise their export potential. IE:UK brings the benefits of synergy and renowned global expertise to our partners, whilst making the most of local expertise and skills.

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*This article was written in collaboration with Mark Holmes, IE:UK co-chair and deputy chairman of Mace Group.*

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# Engineering firms struggling to retain diverse talent

A new report from Atkins shows that the engineering sector is falling behind most other professions in offering progressive opportunities for all.

Atkins has published a report highlighting the impact of 'career deflection' on the earning potential and progress of women, ethnic minorities and disabled employees within the wider engineering sector.

The report, *Career Deflection: Exploring Diversity, Progression and Retention in Engineering*, looks at how the impact of barriers to progress within a career in engineering are being distorted under an applied load over time.

The research, conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies, is based on fresh analysis of official labour market information sources, and highlights how engineering in some areas fares worse on diversity measures than other professions, with the gap with white male peers often no longer closing.

The report finds that assuming the

overall proportion continues to increase at its current rate:

- It could take until 2124 for there to be the same number of women as men working in engineering occupations overall;
- It could take 50 years for the proportion of ethnic minorities in engineering occupations to reach the overall proportion of ethnic minorities in employment;
- The proportion of Equality Act disabled workers in engineering occupations has consistently lagged behind the proportion of Equality Act disabled workers in all employment by around two percentage points.

The report also makes a number of recommendations which Atkins will explore and develop with industry peers and partners over the coming months:

- Enhanced policies to tackle alternative working patterns;
- Equal access to development opportunities;
- Increased promotion of inclusive workplace culture;
- Measures to address unconscious bias;
- Greater use of data, metrics and feedback.

Richard Robinson, CEO of Atkins UK and Europe, said: "Engineering will continue to be a critical part of how we create a better future for the planet and its people. A fundamental part of this will be attracting talent from a diverse range of backgrounds – and then retaining them by ensuring there are opportunities for all. We hope the findings of this report serve to accelerate the great work that has been happening over the past number of years and we call on the industry to work together to help affect that progress."

In addition to recruitment, 'career deflection' is identified as a key driver of overall representation in engineering. Over the course of ten years, career deflections such as stereotyping, isolation and bias result in women leaving the profession at twice the rate of men (70% v 35%), while more than half (55%) of

ethnic minorities abandon their career in contrast to (39%) of white people. This is significantly worse than other professions, and most worryingly unlike in other professional careers, the gap is not closing quickly enough.

Robinson continues: "There is no doubt that huge efforts are being made in our industry and beyond to tackle diversity of recruitment and eliminate career deflections but our report unveils some sobering findings. As an industry we bear a responsibility to act upon them. We commissioned this report because too often we acknowledge the challenges but struggle find tangible solutions to drive material change. This report is designed as a rally cry to the industry to work together to accelerate the progress that has been made over recent years."

Tony Wilson, director of the Institute for Employment Studies, which authored the report, said: "Despite decades of effort to address inequality and improve diversity in engineering occupations, barriers continue to be experienced by minority groups. More needs to happen to effect real change, for improvements to be seen and to narrow the gap. This is about so much more than giving everyone a fair chance, it is about preventing the wholesale waste of potential and talent.

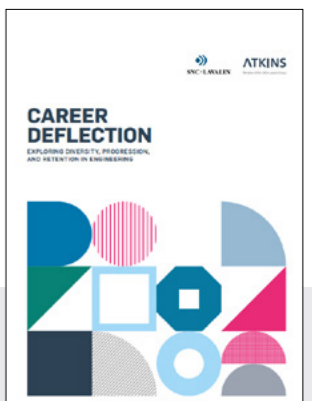
The whole sector needs to commit to tackle the pernicious influence of career deflection if the UK is to maintain its world-class standing in engineering and to meet the pressing challenges of delivering the UK's infrastructure strategy."

The report highlights that many women and ethnic minorities are inadvertently driven out of the profession through ill-targeted promotions and training by well-intentioned colleagues. Despite more female engineers securing managerial or supervisory positions in 2020, the annual retention rate was five percentage points lower (90% v 95%). The rate of outflow for women to other occupations outside engineering is more than twice the rate of men, and more than one in ten women aged 20-34 leave the profession to work elsewhere each year. Around a fifth of women leaving the engineering profession reported job dissatisfaction in the year before leaving.

In addition, the report says the lack of comprehensive workplace data relating to ethnic minorities, employees with disabilities and other intersectional groups across the engineering profession, means it is harder to develop policies and processes to affect meaningful change. There is a huge opportunity to accelerate change by coming together as an industry and sharing best practices, data and feedback.



Click here to read the full Career Deflection report.



# New social value partnership to give greater insights to readers

A new partnership with online software platform and consultancy Thrive is set to give *Infrastructure Intelligence* readers greater insights on social value.

**I**nrastructure Intelligence has teamed up with online software platform and consultancy Thrive on a new partnership around social value. This will give a greater profile to the social impact that the construction and infrastructure sector makes through its work.

The new partnership will see *Thrive sponsor the Social Value Hub on the Infrastructure Intelligence website* as well as working with the title on a range of initiatives including an annual online social value conference, a new social value panel as well as contributing to thought leadership pieces across the Infrastructure Intelligence's news and features output, giving our readers in depth issues to really consider.

Commenting on the new partnership, *Infrastructure Intelligence* editor Andy Walker said: "We are delighted to be working with a forward-thinking organisation like Thrive who are making an impact in our industry by helping to demonstrate the influence that construction and infrastructure companies are having through their day-to-day-work. The Thrive approach to evaluating social value has been designed in a way that emphasises the unique needs of construction businesses

Click here to find out more about Thrive.



and *it's clear from their recent link up with Kier* that they really understand the diverse set of needs the clients in our sector have.

"Social value is increasingly being highlighted as a crucial requirement on construction and infrastructure projects. More and more clients stipulate the companies they work with must quantify the social good they can deliver on projects. However, social value comes in many different guises and many organisations still do not understand what it is or how to create it, let alone how to measure it. Our partnership with Thrive will help *Infrastructure Intelligence* shed light on these issues for our readers and give added focus to our coverage on social value and related issues. We are really excited to be working with them."

Thrive chief executive, Neil Macdonald, said: "The construction and infrastructure sector has an important part to play in the delivery of social value at scale. The industry has a strong influence through the money it spends, the people it touches and the outcomes it can deliver and so it can be a voice of change and improvement for social value in our communities.

***"We are delighted to team up with Infrastructure Intelligence to support this journey, not only to support the sector with knowledge on social value requirements, delivery or reporting, but to also provide real guidance in how to navigate the social value path and implement real change that can make a difference."***

Neil Macdonald, Thrive chief executive.

# FIDIC launches new climate change charter

International engineering organisation FIDIC has launched a transformative climate change charter for the global infrastructure sector to influence the net zero agenda.

**I**nternational engineering federation FIDIC (the International Federation of Consulting Engineers) has launched a transformative plan of action for the global engineering industry to decarbonise as it sets about turning COP26 climate change ambitions into outcomes on the ground.

The engineers who design and deliver the world's infrastructure and built environment have a key strategic role in ensuring the world tackles climate change and achieves net zero by 2050. So FIDIC has launched a Climate Change Charter that sets out specific actions to be taken by individual engineers, companies, member associations and project teams and is calling on the engineering, construction and infrastructure industry to step up and commit to the charter.

Tony Barry, president of FIDIC, commented: "The world has been too slow to reduce climate change emissions. Even going into COP26, global leaders were still not yet in agreement about what needs to be done and how fast it can be done. As engineers, we work across the globe and we have the collective responsibility to inform and implement decarbonisation solutions and reduce other greenhouse emissions. This charter is a clear roadmap for ensuring we do that while eliminating our own climate impact during the process. I urge all organisations in the global engineering, construction and infrastructure sector to sign up to the charter."

Dr Nelson Ogunshakin OBE, chief executive of FIDIC, added: "Climate change is an existential threat to nature, to the built environment and to the future direction of human civilisation. The engineers that design and build the human world will be more crucial than any other sector to shaping the world's response and making a success of ending climate change and tackling the consequences of it. So, we have to lead by example."

The Climate Change Charter represents a significant new call to action by FIDIC, the global consulting engineering industry body which represents over 40,000 companies and more than one million professional engineers and consultants

Click here for further information on the Climate Change Charter and how to sign up.



operating in over 100 countries around the world. It sets out clear commitments and actions for reducing and eventually eliminating carbon and other climate emissions from the sector and has been drawn up with the support of experts from around the world.

FIDIC itself is also taking a lead in this process, including its own commitments in the charter. The charter also sets out specific roadmaps for each part of the industry so that individuals, companies, member associations and project owners have a dedicated plan to sign up to and implement. FIDIC sees this as vital to recognise the important differences in what each part of the industry needs to do as it sets about delivering a net zero infrastructure and built environment around the world.



# Making the most of the UK's rail plan

The government's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the Midlands and the north of England is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that future investment in rail connectivity is outcomes driven, says Jacobs' *Leighton Cardwell*.

Following its release, some viewed the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the Midlands and the north of England as the marker of greater investment in an integrated rail network across large parts of the UK. However, this is just the start in delivering the outcomes needed by the plan of regeneration, improvement and 'levelling up'. To realise these ambitions, the IRP has set out the investment framework for decades, which is why it has to be right. But what is 'right' in the context of the IRP?

While an obvious consideration is the connectivity they afford, railways are never just about timetables or simple A to B journeys. Railways are critical social infrastructure when designed and developed in the right way. We have the opportunity to harness this investment to great social effect – through the way we design our IRP investments with a conscious look beyond the railway. Consider the social transformation brought about by Stephenson and Brunel.

This investment is the largest of its kind since the Victorian era and we need laser focus on the five salient opportunities to realise its potential. A transformed delivery programme is designed with the challenges of the future in mind – ensuring the value of the delivery is not short-lived and ultimately safeguarding public and private investment.

## Creating a vision for unified outcomes

We should not assume because of its title that all outcomes in the IRP's delivery will be automatically integrated. The IRP is effectively a 'programme of programmes', requiring distinct skillsets across many areas of programme management. Ensuring there's consistency in the vision of the IRP at every level is a critical challenge – one to meet with strategically defined outcomes that unify all outputs.

The scope and ambition of the IRP goes beyond transport infrastructure and its delivery demands significant integration from dedicated development partners from across both public and private sectors, at both subnational and devolved local government levels.

## Cutting costs, not corners

The IRP contains proposals for both new and high-speed lines and while the £96bn planned investment is sizeable, history teaches us that often a planned budget is



insufficient. There is a critical challenge ensuring key components of the plan are not lost or rescoped in the face of budgetary restriction. Through collaborative working, enterprise delivery and efficient approaches to working using digital solutions, we can minimise bureaucratic elements of delivery, saving cost, staff time and ultimately speeding up the project.

It is critical for promoters and future IRP delivery organisations to understand that achieving speed need not be about short-cutting design, nor breaking projects up into many sub-regional parts. We can achieve greater programme certainty and pace through use of digital and a culture of enterprise, to accelerate governance and key decision making. In doing so, we garner the best input from all key areas, without the tedium that throws off delivery.

## Creating a green backbone

In line with the technologically innovative histories of the north and

Midlands, the IRP has the potential to catalyse wider green investment along its spine and should function as an enabler in the evolution of fairer, greener and stronger regional economies across the UK.

If developed and designed right, stations could function as green energy hubs, enhancing the environmental conscience of many local communities along the IRP's routes, while decarbonising millions of commutes. An efficiently designed infrastructure could offer door to door, unified travel – affording travellers the option to use public as their only mode of transport.

## Fast-forwarding and better integrating plans for hubs

The IRP's stations and hubs need to be developed and designed as integrated, modern, green and inclusively considered places. They must be fit for a 21st century arrival, capturing all visitors with their distinguishing experience and identity.

Future masterplanning and development work around these locations should look beyond traditional tools and techniques and consider innovative solutions to deliver something grounded in the sought local outcomes, while still being forward-facing and world leading.

## Beyond traditional funding sources

While delivery of the wider outcomes of the IRP is critically enabled, it is unlikely to be achieved by pure reliance upon



**Leighton Cardwell**  
is the cities director at Jacobs.

the Treasury. Several important steps to set-up the future materialisation of broader investment have already been made and need to be continued at all scales. The business case for the new IRP infrastructure must continue to be developed to consider a much wider 'value case' at all levels, ensuring it can become more dependent on the demonstrable social and environmental benefits of investments. This would attract wider private sector investment and offer an enhanced route to blended funding – ensuring the longevity and sustained growth of the IRP and its desired outcomes.

By focussing on these five issues, the IRP represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for making sure future investment in our rail connectivity is outcomes driven. Stephenson, Brunel, and Barlow were brilliant engineers of their time, but their works were not as conscious of environmental, community and social factors as we are today. The IRP is our exciting opportunity to use today's knowledge to challenge what rail can do.

Click here to download the Integrated Rail Plan, What Happens Next? report.



# Testing times ahead as Brexit plays out

As the effects of the UK's exit from the EU begin to take shape, *Clare B Marshall* considers the opportunities and threats in what are already testing times for the construction sector.

On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom formally left the European Union resulting in a 13% decrease in the EU population and immediate impact on UK economy. The agreement signed with the EU set out the rules on a new partnership between the EU and UK. The rules cover areas such as travel and border controls, trade in goods and security - including agreements on cooperation to combat crime and terrorism.

Many of those who campaigned to leave the EU spoke about “taking back control” and “becoming a sovereign nation again” -



**Clare B Marshall** is the founder of the business consultancy 2MPy.

emotive phrases which resonated with many of those who voted to leave in the referendum. It's arguably too early to say with any degree of certainty whether the UK has benefited in any real sense from leaving the EU. There have been a handful of trade deals signed and the prime minister has hailed the return of the crown stamp to pints of beer as a big gain. In truth, the past two years of the pandemic has meant that politicians' minds have rightly been focused elsewhere and not on realising a 'Brexit dividend'.

Nevertheless, Brexit appears here to stay for the foreseeable and there are some ongoing challenges and issues arising from the UK leaving the EU - and some opportunities too, with emerging and refreshed international relationships.

Exacerbated by the pandemic, UK construction skills shortages have been made more acute as a result of Brexit and tightened immigration rules. This situation has been placed into even sharper focus by Covid-19, with many EU workers returning to their homes in the EU to work during the pandemic - some not returning to the UK at all. This loss - of a diverse workforce, skills and cultures - has significant implications for UK business, in particular the lost (easy) access to high-calibre emerging professionals. It is these very people who have been fundamental to the success of UK construction over recent years.



The approach to the ongoing challenges provides many lessons for us all, including on negotiating styles and skills sets. If the negotiations do not see critical issues being resolved soon, this could amount to a particularly negative effect on emerging professionals. The UK is also no longer part of a collective 'EU perspective' on the world stage and given the dynamics of geopolitics and the changes in global leadership, there is a danger that the UK might be worse off for that, with a risk of becoming increasingly insular.

As someone who lives and works in the EU, I can appreciate the benefits of a pan-European outlook and know that others do too. For those aspiring professionals looking to gain the wealth of experience available from EU countries, and elsewhere internationally, a change of approach and negotiating style is critical. We otherwise risk damaging the prospects of emerging professionals in the UK construction industry, the UK's reputation in the world and the prospects of UK citizens more widely.

For many years, forecasters have predicted that Brexit brings big risk for business. What is clear - one year

on - is that big risks for business remain. New trade rules mean that there is an inevitable increase in bureaucracy. New immigration rules and approaches will mean that many companies will find it harder to recruit the trained staff they need. There are clearly ongoing implications for ACE members and emerging professionals in particular and an increase in uncertainty and challenges when planning for the future. We are already seeing this with some of the supply chain issues which have been widely reported and which are set to continue into 2022.

Another key area is working with European clients and the dominance of European contractors successfully delivering major infrastructure projects around the globe. Developing and maintaining these relationships will require even greater care and attention as a result of Brexit.

But we should also see new relationships and opportunities emerging from Brexit which UK businesses need to be ready to embrace. Firms will need to be ever more agile, flexible and open-minded in order to identify the opportunities which may be available, whilst navigating the ongoing challenges. They will also need to ensure that they are well informed about the latest rules, regulations and official guidance that may impact their business.

So, challenging times ahead in what are already testing times for the construction sector and UK businesses more generally. But with Brexit here to stay, it is important for ACE and other industry bodies, UK business - and emerging professionals - to identify, influence and embrace the opportunities presented.

• **Clare B Marshall is speaking at the ACE Emerging Professionals webinar, *Brexit: One Year On - Exploring the impact on the construction industry*, on Thursday 20 January 2022 at 12.30pm.**

Click here to book your place at this free online event.





Members of the new Emerging Talent Group set up by Gleeds. (L-R) Ellis Moore, Charly Short, Darcie Walbrook, Ryan Lester and Alexander Jones.

# Gleeds sets up talent group to encourage collaboration

A newly launched emerging talent group aimed at those in the early stages of their consultancy career is set to encourage more sector collaboration.

**P**roperty and construction consultancy Gleeds has set up an emerging talent group to bring junior staff members from construction consultancy firms together to collaborate, learn and network.

The group is the brainchild of Justin Moore, project director at Gleeds, who recognised the need to bring more of the younger member of Gleeds' own team together to nurture those future leaders, as well as collaborate with their peers and those in other disciplines within the sector.

The group is aimed at anyone within the early stages of their career, for example apprentices or trainees, recent graduates, assistant project managers, quantity surveyors or those at a similar level.

Moore said of the group: "This industry is growing rapidly and here at Gleeds we felt we needed to invest more into our younger team members to ensure that they are getting all of the career development opportunities we can give them.

"Covid restrictions have hindered the networking and learning opportunities

usually afforded to those new to the industry and so we thought it important to create a group where we can specifically give back to these new team members and allow them to learn from their peers, build their confidence, gain new ideas or perspectives, as well as gaining more knowledge at the same time."

Gleeds already has seven team members from its Cardiff office in the talent group and are looking for more to join them at the various events and seminars that will be held over the coming months.

Gleeds' project manager Ryan Lester is chair of the Emerging Talent Group (ETG) and has been helping to set it up: "Being a part of the group is a real privilege as it shows Gleeds' belief in our abilities as future leaders. It also provides us with a platform to develop and enhance relationships with our peers across the region, with the aim of targeting fellow future leaders in other disciplines."

Graduate quantity surveyor Darcie Walbrook joined Gleeds during Covid so has really benefitted from the networking and collaboration that the ETG offers: "Since the group has been established, we have developed our internal relationships with one another, which will support us in building and maintaining our external relationships.

"I feel the ETG has boosted my confidence and sets a good environment to develop and grow as a future leader at Gleeds.

I look forward to the progression of the group and building connections with other disciplines across the industry."

Gleeds is also working in collaboration with the University of South Wales and the University of the West of England to encourage more talented graduates to join their ranks.

As Justin Moore explains: "The skill shortage within the construction industry is well known and it is the same situation for us in construction consultancy. That's why it's important that we nurture the young team that we have here in Cardiff and we hope to do the same across the rest of the Gleeds group to ensure that we attract the best of the best to our ranks.

"I am proud to say that at our Cardiff office, out of 33 members of staff, seven are in this emerging talent group, which I think demonstrates how Gleeds is investing in bringing new talent into the industry and that we plan to do so for many years to come."

# ACE reveals 2022 board line-up

ACE has announced its board for 2022 which includes new appointments from Ramboll, Rybka, Troup Bywater + Anders and WSP.

The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) has shared details of its 2022 board, with Dave Beddell (AECOM) continuing in his capacity as chair.

Sarah Prichard (Buro Happold) is appointed vice chair representing the voice of consultancy workstream and also continues as chair of the net zero group. Craig Huntbach (Royal HaskoningDHV) remains vice chair of the future of consultancy workstream.

Elsewhere, Wojciech Szewczak (Ramboll) has been appointed chair of ACE Emerging Professionals, and there are new chairs in the nations with Kevin Yardley (Rybka) in Scotland, Kate Attwood (WSP) in Wales and Andrew Campbell (Troup Bywater + Anders) in Northern Ireland.

Steven Hale (Crofton Consulting) becomes treasurer for ACE with Piers Burroughs (Burroughs) replacing him as chair of the SME forum.

Dave Beddell said: "I am pleased to welcome new names to the board. Together we will ensure ACE continues to be a trusted and effective voice with policymakers – vital if we are to fully play our part in post-pandemic recovery – while supporting members to adapt to longer-term trends, such as shifting client demands and delivering our net zero future."

*"Together we will ensure that ACE continues to be a trusted and effective voice with policymakers."*

Dave Beddell, ACE chair



## ACE board members 2022

Chair 2022 – Dave Beddell, AECOM  
 Vice chair (voice of consultancy) – Sarah Prichard, Buro Happold  
 Vice chair (future of consultancy) – Craig Huntbach, Royal HaskoningDHV  
 Vice chair (membership and business support) – currently vacant, TBC  
 Treasurer – Steven Hale, Crofton Consulting  
 Chair of ACE Emerging Professionals – Wojciech Szewczak, Ramboll  
 Chair of SME forum – Piers Burroughs, Burroughs  
 Chair Legal and Commercial – Margot Day, Arup  
 Chair Global Forum – Richard Robinson, Atkins  
 Chair Net Zero – Sarah Prichard, Buro Happold  
 Chair Procurement and Pipeline – Neil Humphrey, Waterman group  
 Chair Future Markets – Paul Tremble, WSP  
 Chair Future Skills – Lara Potter, Arcadis  
 Chair of Scotland – Kevin Yardley, Rybka  
 Chair of Wales – Kate Attwood, WSP (from July 2022, Piers Burroughs to continue as interim chair until this date)  
 Chair of Northern Ireland – Andrew Campbell, Troup Bywaters + Anders  
 Chair ACE Midlands – Ruth Jeffs, Waterman group  
 Chair ACE North West – Sean Keyes, Sutcliffe

# New chair for ACE's Emerging Professionals group

Wojciech Szewczak of Ramboll will lead ACE's activity for the next generation of business leaders.

Following an open application process, Wojciech Szewczak of Ramboll has been appointed chair of ACE Emerging Professionals, the group for the next generation of industry leaders.

Reacting to his appointment, Wojciech, who is principal project manager at Ramboll in his day-to-day role, said: "I'm looking forward to working across the network to devise and deliver an ambitious and collaborative activity plan reflecting not only our unique professional needs, but also the passionate interests of the next generation of business leaders."

"Emerging professionals are vital for



the industry, not just in terms of skills and resource, but in providing the holistic approach necessary if we are to meet some of society's biggest challenges – whether that's devising solutions for climate change, building better communities which unlock social value, or delivering the built environment of tomorrow."

ACE's director of people, skills and culture, Claire Clifford said: "I would like to thank everyone who applied for this role. We were delighted so many expressed an interest which is, I think, a positive reflection of the group's impact to date. We're pleased to welcome Wojciech and are ready to support the group in reaching more emerging professionals and help to shape the industry for the better." [Find out more here.](#)

# Professor David Mosey to speak at ACE's policy forum

The author of the independent review of public sector construction frameworks is to speak to members at ACE's policy forum. Make sure you book a place today.

Professor David Mosey will join a meeting of the ACE's policy forum on Monday 21 February 2022 at 11am to discuss the findings of his independent review into public sector construction frameworks.

Constructing the Gold Standard, which was commissioned by the Cabinet Office and published in December 2021, made 24 recommendations demonstrating how 'gold standard' frameworks, framework contracts and action plans can help society to meet net zero ambitions, reduce risk and support a sustainable industry to deliver improved

value and efficiency.

Attendees at the policy forum event will learn about the failings in the current frameworks, their unrealised potential as the engine of the value agenda, the views of more than 100 contributors and how they can avoid the 'Groundhog Day' of lost learning.

The issues discussed will be relevant to anyone creating or advising on bids for construction frameworks, or whose company is a member of a framework supply chain.

Email Chetna Gorasia at [egorasia@acenet.co.uk](mailto:egorasia@acenet.co.uk) to book your free place now.



# Challenging times but much to look forward to

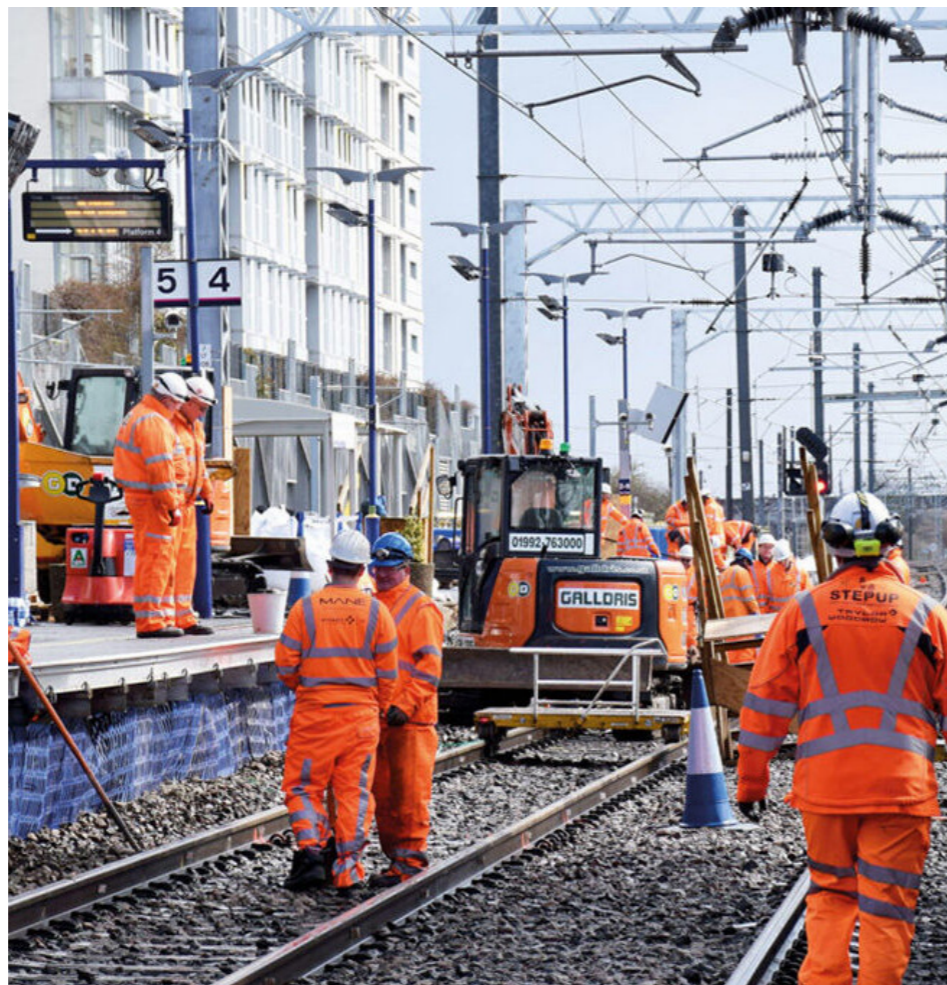
ACE's interim CEO *Laurence Brett* reflects on the health of the industry in his final column before new chief executive Stephen Marcos Jones arrives in February.

One of my final 'public' appearances last year was hosting a webinar with the participants of ACE's benchmarking project. The study is the definitive analysis of the performance of engineering consultancy firms working in the built environment.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given this was our first benchmarking study since 2019, the picture painted reveals the scars of the pandemic. Revenue growth was sharply down compared to two years prior – for both SMEs and large companies – and profit margins and headcount have also sadly shrunk. However, with the shift to home working following enforced lockdowns and members seeking to realise efficiencies, we have also seen overheads as a proportion of net-revenue falling.

We still have much to be thankful for – at least in comparison to other more public-facing industries which have borne the brunt of the pandemic – with members still winning bids for new projects and still reaching out to new clients.

There is also plenty for us to look forward to. The publication of the Construction and Infrastructure Pipeline and Integrated Rail Plan have brought more certainty. Furthermore, the recently released Construction Playbook and Value Toolkit have reinforced the desire for smarter procurement practices and longer-term partnerships focused on



**Laurence Brett**  
is interim CEO at  
the Association for  
Consultancy and  
Engineering.

value. These are areas where ACE members can naturally excel and help to reinforce our credentials as government's delivery partner of choice.

So, plenty for us to remain optimistic about as I reach the end of my term leading ACE. I know that the board, staff and members are looking forward to welcoming Stephen Marcos Jones at the end of the month, who brings with him a wealth of experience with a decade in senior leadership roles representing the UK's energy sector on the global stage.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their support and commitment to members and I look forward to engaging with ACE as a representative of a member firm.

Having witnessed first-hand how ACE supports its members and represents them by speaking with one voice to policymakers, I am more certain than ever of its critical role as we – hopefully – start to emerge from the recent challenging circumstances we have all faced.

# A missed opportunity for levelling up?

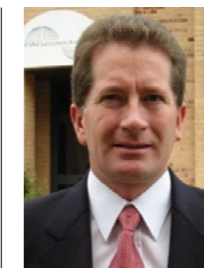
Development on brownfield land has real potential to meet the government's ambitions around housing and levelling up, says *Peter Atchison*.

Brownfield development was highlighted in speeches by both the prime minister and the then recently appointed secretary of state for levelling up, housing and communities, Michael Gove, at the Conservative conference last year. Following this, the government shared a plan for thousands of new homes to be built on underused and derelict land.

This recent political interest only strengthens arguments that the Environmental Industries Commission (EIC) has been making in this policy space for a number of years. In our 2018 report, *Building on Brownfield*, we put forward a series of proposals for more effective regulation of brownfield. Our latest research, released in the run-up to conference, *Brownfield First*, takes our thinking to the next phase, outlining how it is key to meeting ambitions around housing and levelling up.

Despite the many benefits of brownfield, developers are increasingly turning to greenfield sites. In 2014, 40% of new residential projects in England were on land that had already been developed. By 2018, this proportion had dropped by 20%.

Currently, more than 50% of sites listed as suitable for housing development on local authority brownfield registers



**Peter Atchison**  
is chair of the  
Environmental  
Industries Commission  
contaminated land  
group.

have not been awarded planning permission. These contain over 20,000 sites – enough for over a million homes – with another 30,000 hectares available for non-housing development.

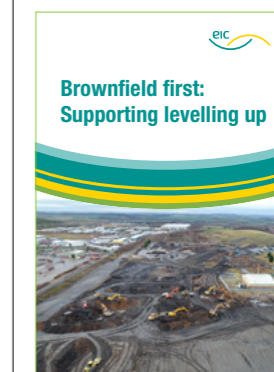
On planning, we want to see new local plans become a driver for targeted local development by implementing the Construction Leadership Council recommendation of a fourth regeneration zone and the addition of a greenfield surcharge to the proposed new infrastructure levy.

We would also like to see land remediation tax relief on sites with fewer than 25 units and the updating of the tax relief definition of derelict land to incorporate all sites abandoned for more than ten years.

Finally, we propose that the appraisal metrics for the National Infrastructure Bank and Levelling Up Fund and similar programmes in the future could proactively reward brownfield proposals.

The ideas EIC puts forward are, in many respects, pragmatic and simple, yet in terms of their impact they could be transformative. We are working hard to turn these into reality and have met, or will meet, officials from the Department for Levelling Up and HM Treasury.

We hope they will be well received, as to my mind levelling up simply has to start with finding ways of unlocking more brownfield development.



Click here to  
download the  
EIC's *Brownfield  
First* report.

# We need a new year revolution in tidal energy

Post-COP 26, with increasing interest in tidal energy, *Stuart Murphy* says the resource is the only way that the UK can guarantee 100% green base-load electricity in future and overcome intermittency issues associated with wind and solar.

**A**t the start of any new year, it's traditional for resolutions, both personal and professional, to be made and I'm currently reviewing my own business portfolio to see where we can grow, and make a difference, in 2022.

Against the backdrop of autumn's 2021 energy and fuel crises, my mind turns to our renewable energy infrastructure. Particularly, its real lack of diversity and, as we saw in September and October, security. Those events perfectly showcased the risks of being beholden to intermitted resources, primarily, offshore wind and a bit of solar, to green our grid.

It cannot go on like this. When the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, we're regularly falling back on fossil fuels (gas and coal) or expensive imports (from sources unknown). We need a new strategy for green energy generation - and fast.

The fact is, clean baseline [also known as base load] is the goal and yet we're still so far off achieving it. So, I'm now calling on all those in the civils, infrastructure and utilities sector to undertake a collective resolution to make 2022 the year this becomes a business priority.

With wind and solar inherently intermittent, we must explore systems which can operate reliably, consistently and perpetually, day-in-day-out. I believe we can only achieve this through further exploration and investment in tidal renewables, specifically tidal range energy [TRE].

We're at the high-water mark and it's time we adopted a better understanding of the crucial place tidal should have within our energy infrastructure, as it's the only truly reliable energy resource we have. And it's the only realistic,



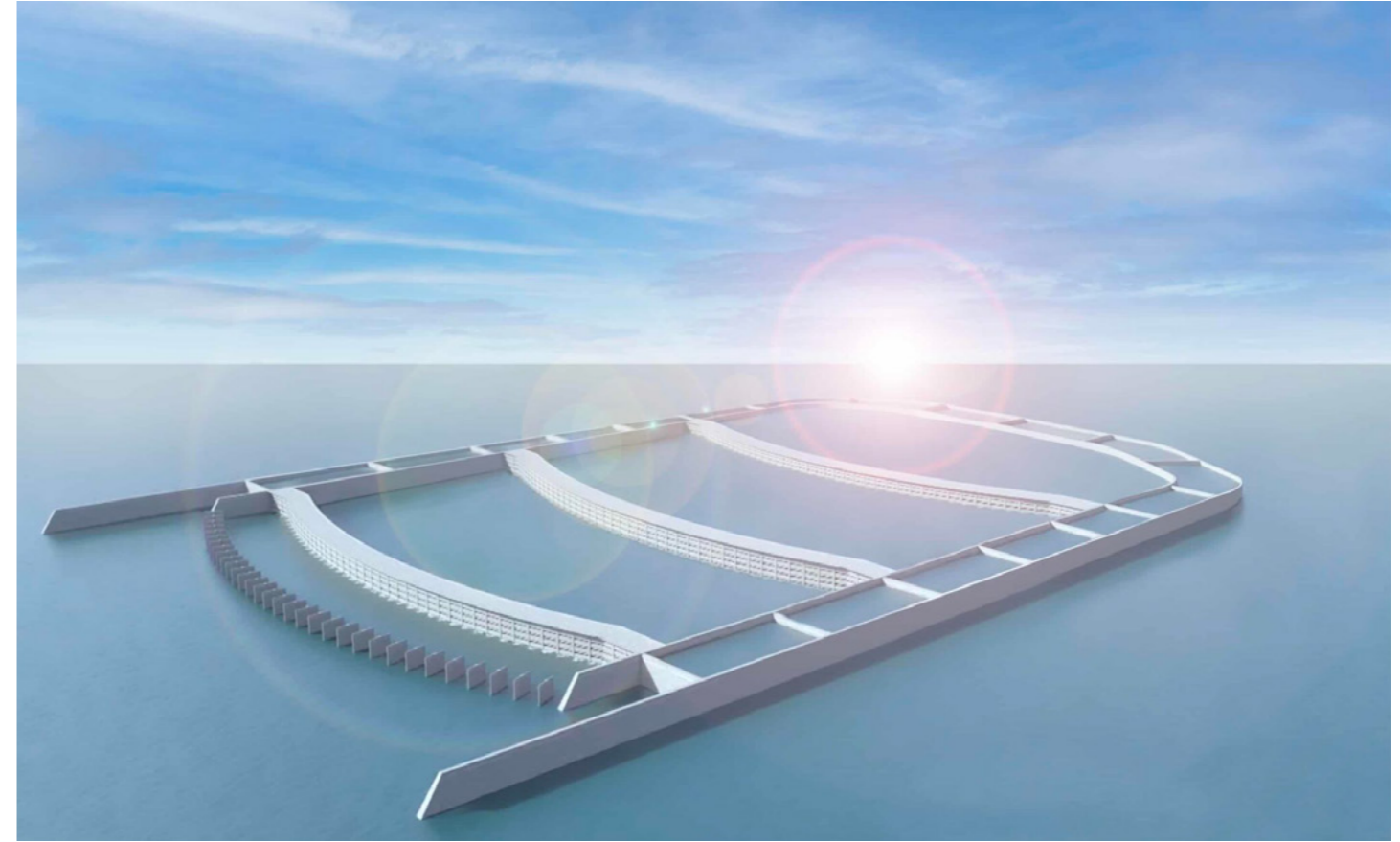
**Stuart Murphy** is the founder and inventor of the [tidal range project TGen24](#).

scalable solution for achieving green baseline. It will mean we will no longer be reliant on fossil fuels, or beholden to international government to prop up our supply when demand spikes.

Not only this, it will be integral for the development of another nascent, but equally ground-breaking innovation, hydrogen capture. One of the most exciting technological developments of the last 100 years, green hydrogen as an alternative to petrol, diesel and kerosene in transport will be revolutionary.

However, before we start getting too excited, there are a number of hurdles to jump, including challenges around sustainable capture and scalability. Currently it takes a huge amount of energy to produce this ancient element in large quantities.

Tidal range could potentially change all that as the offshore, off-grid power source for capturing facilities, with the energy generation system in-built and a ready access to the large amounts of water needed for production. It's the kernel of an idea, but one which could kick-start the industry and help phase out fossil fuels for good, by decarbonising vehicles and heavy machinery.



It's a massive opportunity for the UK civils and infrastructure sector. Tidal range and hydrogen will deliver more job opportunities, greater local investment, urban renewal and other socio-economic benefits across the UK, particularly in some of the most deprived coastal areas. This type of critical infrastructure can also provide a boost for housebuilding, destination creation prompting new transport links and utilities provision. We need to start realising these endless possibilities now.

Ultimately, we cannot afford to continue down the road we're currently travelling. A crossroads is coming up, beyond which there is no return. So, I urge Infrastructure Intelligence readers, as they start to plot out their resolutions for the coming year, to think long and hard about what's needed to achieve 100% green baseline and clean fuel, and the role tidal range and hydrogen can play to save our planet too. Who knows, it might be the start of a much needed and highly lucrative infrastructural investment programme, one which will pay huge dividends tomorrow and forever.





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