

Harnessing the dance of diversity

In April 2024, the BBC published a headlining grabbing article on a survey undertaken by the National Skills Academy for Rail which showed that only one in ten is non-white with even fewer being women. It was an opportune moment for Adeline Ginn MBE to speak about the benefits of a diverse workforce at a Railway Study Forum event held at Rail Delivery Group on 30 April 2024.

Adeline, the founder of Women in Rail, is a long standing rail industry champion for gender balance, diversity and inclusion. She is currently the Legal Director UK & Ireland at Egis, a global consulting, construction and engineering company leading and supporting projects in transport in over 120 countries worldwide.

The challenges faced by the rail industry were keenly felt by the seasoned rail industry attendees at the event. Reports from workforce analysts such as Deloitte and Glassdoor have identified that 47% of millennial job applicants actively look for diversity and inclusion policies when assessing potential employers, and 2 out of 3 job applicants seek companies that have diverse workforces. Diversity (whether by gender or ethnicity) contributes to the financial performance of a company by 25% to 36% according to McKinsey and Co.

In order to attract younger entrants to the rail industry and secure a greater financial return, Adeline provided a framework for rail companies who wanted to create a diverse workforce throughout all grades and roles including from under represented groups.

Adeline argues that Equality Diversity and Inclusive (EDI) should be implemented as a strategic business objective, driven by the leadership team, backed up by a robust EDI Action Plan. The EDI Action Plan would be based on a critical inwards assessment of EDI and articulated around an EDI vision bespoke to each business. She argued that the key drivers of a successful EDI strategy were the board of directors, as EDI Champions and EDI Advocates, each being given SMART objectives to progress the EDI Action Plan and implement inclusive leadership. She saw the board Champions and Advocates working closely with the EDI Team who would be independent from the HR Team, whilst working closely with it, and report directly to the CEO. She saw the employees as supporters of the business EDI efforts.

The EDI Action Plan should deliver on:

- Creating a culture and expectation of inclusion

- Identifying and addressing obstacles or potential barriers to attracting talent
- Assessing and remedying any equality gaps
- Considering and fostering initiatives to add real value to the company

Taking inspiration from Verna Myers, Adeline rounded off the event by helping the attendees to understand that:

- Equality is being invited to the party
- Diversity is being on the planning committee
- Inclusion is being asked to the dance

And that ultimately if business are committed to EDI, they need to put in place a structure that creates a diverse workforce and generates an expectation of inclusion.

Diversity and inclusion will be essential for rail industry to thrive in the changing political and financial environment. To overcome these challenges, the rail industry needs to take a holistic approach and more importantly develop a strategy that ensures that EDI is woven into the fabric of each business within our sector. ■

SCOTTISH REGION

The new Clyde bridges will both swing for ships

The first section of a new bridge connecting Renfrew with Yoker has arrived in Glasgow. The Renfrew Bridge will be the first opening road bridge across the River Clyde, which will open for passing ships. It is a two-lane road bridge for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The bridge is being delivered in two parts – with the second section due to arrive in late-May – and will open to the public later in the year, replacing the Yoker-Renfrew ferry which is the last survivor of over a dozen that once plied across the river's upstream stretch.

Built in the Netherlands, the south section of the 603ft (184m) bridge arrived 24 April on the River Clyde after travelling for seven days on a barge across the English Channel and Irish Sea. It is part of the £117m Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside project, which aims to reconnect the communities across the water.

The south bridge span has been moored on Meadows Street in Renfrew, before being installed, ahead of the north section of the

bridge arriving in May. It has a twin-leaf design, with each leaf opening and closing horizontally, and uses a cable-stay system similar to the Queensferry Crossing. In addition to the new bridge the project will create connecting roads, cycling and walking routes which will link Inchinnan Road in Renfrew with Yoker railway station, using the new Renfrew North Development Road.

The project is jointly funded by the UK and Scottish Governments through the £1.13bn Glasgow City Region, a partnership of eight councils working together. Nearer completion is another opening Clyde crossing funded by Glasgow's City Deal, the Govan-Partick close to the Riverside Museum. To allow ships past, its swing bridge main span built in Belgium will rotate to align with the south shore. The 110-metre bridge will carry pedestrians and bicycles, and the V-shaped pylon design is inspired by the historic cranes at the riverside. It will be one of the largest opening footbridges in Europe. The work

is intended to improve the economic conditions in and is linked to the Glasgow University and Glasgow City Council-led 'West End Innovation Quarter', landing at Water Row in Govan where a mixed use development of housing and commercial space is planned.

The Scottish City Region Deals have come in for criticism in new data uncovered by the Scottish campaign for sustainable transport Transform Scotland which has found more than 70% of their transport infrastructure investment – equivalent to nearly £1 billion – is funding high carbon road projects which they say directly undermine Scotland's 2045 net zero strategy, increase congestion and damage public health. However the Glasgow Deal also includes a new railway station at Balgray in East Renfrewshire to serve a development of affordable housing. ■

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