

thought leadership 2009

an inspiring programme



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MIND THE **SKILLS** GAP

London Transport Museum's inaugural Thought Leadership business breakfast will launch with a subject of increasing concern to industry: the growing gap between the need and the availability of key sector skills like engineering and planning. This skills gap is particularly alarming when considering the significant requirements of planned major infrastructure projects including London 2012, Crossrail and London Tideway Tunnels. Representatives at this first session will be drawn at senior level from industry, government institutions and industry bodies and will be chaired by Peter Hendy.

This skills gap is increasingly the focus of government consideration, with recent legislation (February 2009) published by Skills Secretary, John Denham and Children's Secretary, Ed Balls, entitled the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill. This legislation provides the first complete overhaul of Apprenticeships legislation for nearly 200 years.

The legislation sits within the context of the publication in July 2007 of 'World Class Skills' by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, which implements recommendations coming out of the independent Leitch Review of Skills in England. The Leitch Review demonstrated that our nation's skills are essential to a successful economy and that the UK's skills are not world class. This affects both our

productivity and the competitive advantage of our industries. Although education and training opportunities have improved in recent years, it is recommended that much greater investment is needed to reduce social disparities and improve this country's skill levels.

Industry, government, institutions, charities and industry bodies are all undertaking their own initiatives, but there is a sense that a more collective vision, more collaborative work and investment at key points within the skills pyramid could be more effective long-term in inspiring the next generation of young people to take up careers in engineering and planning. Stronger links between training providers (schools, universities, institutions) and industry are needed to encourage a more joined up and strategic approach to the problem.

Chairing the breakfast, Peter Hendy Commissioner of Transport for London, will reflect on progress since the Leitch review and will discuss with representatives what can be done within our industry to address the skills gap. The session will also seek opinion on how to change the public's perception of engineering and consider what can make specialist skills training attractive to young people, focusing particularly on schools and universities and other vocational training. Attendees will draw upon their own training initiatives and partnership work to contribute to the lively discussion.

The breakfast starts at London Transport Museum's Cubic Foyer at 08.00 on 13 March 2009.

Eversheds LLP is an international law firm, with specialist groups of lawyers from every discipline, experienced in advising across the transport sector – dealing with passenger and freight modes and including rail, road, aviation, airports, ports and shipping. Eversheds is delighted to be working in partnership with the London Transport Museum to establish the Thought Leadership Programme as part of the firm's engagement with and commitment to the sector and its future.

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