

CHAIRMAN'S SECOND QUARTER REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2023

Tommy Cubby, Chairman, CECA NW

Please find my second report as Chair of CECA NW, together with details of plans for the coming months. First, I would like to say thank you to the CECA NW team, Alison, Chris, Guy, Jacqueline and Joe; my fellow directors, Adam, Danny, David and Oliver; the Executive Committee for their support during my term in office; and most importantly, the members of CECA NW.

Our members continually go above and beyond in addressing net zero requirements, in protecting the environment, and in supporting communities, not only through the work we do, but also via the employment, training and time we provide. But none of that is sustainable without a commitment to investment in infrastructure, fair payment and margins, a rebalance of risk sharing, and a genuinely more collaborative approach to project delivery rather than giving it mere lip service.

While we can complain about the lack of appreciation by both local and national Government, the banks, and much of the public, it is because the bulk of civil engineering works are for the public good, as can be seen in the excellent projects featured in the new CECA North West flyer which I urge you to look at. The vital infrastructure which we deliver enhances the quality of everyone's life. We should not only be proud of that, but must sing about it in order to improve awareness of the critical role we play. We must also help everyone understand the detrimental effects of delaying and cancelling civil engineering projects and exacerbating the pressure that many civil engineering contractors operate under given the high risk/low return nature of our industry.

This is not simply a plea for more money, rather it is for a greater understanding that we are here to help our clients ensure that the public gets what it needs. The Procurement Bill will hopefully address some of that, but more is needed to improve the perception of the valuable role that civil engineering contractors play in the life of everyone.

So how are the CECA NW team going to help? We are working to develop a 3-5-year plan, to reflect the priorities of CECA NW members, hence the recent survey. That will enable us to produce a sustained programme of activity with measurable goals that flows into the forthcoming Chairs' tenures. While the Executive Team are truly grateful for the input of members who participated in the survey, our greatest concern is our relevance to the industry and the significant number of members that are not actively involved. We wish to understand all of our members' concerns and ensure the CECA NW is focused on the right strategic goals which we can deliver either regionally or by holding CECA National to account so that CECA NW remains truly representative of civil engineering contractors in our region.

We must continue to work hard to attract new people across all aspects of the industry from estimators to engineers, from QSs to operatives, as well as trades people and operators. While our Career CECA initiative is aimed primarily at encouraging young people to enter the industry we need to use it as inspiration for all that we are a great industry in which to work.

Later this year, we will also circulate details of a charitable foundation whose aim is to benefit the members and employees of CECA NW.

Our flagship events remain a core part of our activities. The annual CECA NW/CICES Golf Day took place on Thursday 29 June, and my congratulations go to David Davies of Peel Ports, winner of the Mark Fairclough trophy, and to PP O'Connor, winners of the team trophy.

We have received a whole host of impressive entries for our 2023 awards, and I look forward to the winners being announced at the CECA NW annual awards dinner at the Midland Hotel, Manchester on Friday 6 October 2023.

Geraldine Fleming of Driver Trett continues to run her excellent commercial and legal seminars and webinars for us, and we have broadened the range of training on offer, including a session on recruitment marketing, a mock trial on service strikes, and our participation in the Manchester Lecture in February - a collaboration between CECA NW and the Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors. Other training events are being planned, but please let us know of any topics you would like to have included in the programme.

The CECA NW team is here to assist you: Alison Shea looks after regional operations; Jacqueline Vail is our first point of contact on skills and links with the NW's five Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and universities; Joe Fitzgibbon leads on support for SMEs and mentoring; and Chris Jackson continues to lead on transport initiatives and research into the pipeline of workloads.

Your participation is essential to ensure we remain member-focused. After all, CECA NW is your Association and we rely on members to let us know what CECA's priorities should be. I would urge you to contact me or the CECA NW team with suggestions for us to implement on your behalf.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tommy Cubby, Chairman, CECA NW, June 2023.
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