

## Michael Speer | Transport for London

Second prize in Matchtech's sponsored competition:

### Martin Roach Development Report Writing



#### What inspired you to pursue a career in engineering?

Engineering appealed to me as I knew it would play to my practical side and would offer a healthy mix of office-based and site experience to keep things interesting. It certainly has rewarded my decision and I consider myself fortunate to be a part of the industry working for a company like TfL.

#### What are your future aspirations?

I have enjoyed the pace and pressures of working on a major tunnelling project but right now I'm looking forward to exploring other facets of engineering that TfL has to offer. My aim has always been to go for Chartership after finishing the graduate scheme and then to explore the possibility of working abroad to expand my experiences.

#### Can you please give us an overview of the project you entered for the competition? What aspects are you most proud of and what were the challenges?

Louis Watson and I both entered reports from our time at the Bank Station Capacity Upgrade, working within the principal contractors Temporary Works Design team. I spent just over a year on the project working within two teams and it was a fantastic personal and professional experience to get involved in a major tunnelling project. As a temporary works designer the most rewarding (and nerve-wracking) experience was seeing my designs being installed and used on site. It was fascinating and frustrating in equal measure seeing the divide between what gets put on paper in the office and what ends up in steel and concrete on site.

**What new engineering skills have you developed during the past year?**

My role in Temporary Works really challenged my technical design skills, especially within the context of a live major project where time constraints overshadow everything you do. Since then, I have moved to a project management role within the surface department of TfL, which has pushed me to improve my organisational and soft skills, two areas that I have struggled with in the past.

**Given the current drive for more young people to study STEM subjects to support the growing engineering skills gap, how would you inspire today's young people to enter the industry?**

One of the most visible issues the industry faces is its inability to attract and retain female engineers. I have been fortunate in my time at TfL to have worked with a number of incredibly talented and inspiring female engineers who have demonstrated the real value that diversity can bring to engineering. Ensuring that young women are given visibility of the success stories of these pioneering women excelling and enjoying working within engineering is vital to addressing gender imbalances.