

# Michèle Dix CBE



## Managing Director, Crossrail 2

Michèle started her career at the Greater London Council (GLC) after completing a Civil Engineering degree and then went on to complete her PhD in Transport and Land Use Planning at Leeds University. Michèle eventually became a chartered civil engineer through the GLC's transport planning graduate scheme. After six years she moved to consultants Halcrow Fox where she became the Board Director of Urban Transport Planning. In 2000, she joined TfL as co-director of Congestion Charging, later developing the Low Emission Zone. In 2007, Michèle became the Managing Director of Planning, leading TfL's strategic thinking on the future transport needs of London.

Michèle was recently recognised with a CBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list for her services to transport in London.

### **How did you get into transport?**

When I studied civil engineering at university I particularly enjoyed the human aspect of the traffic engineering module and how transport and land use affects people and communities. I set out with the intention of becoming a university lecturer, and so when at the GLC I also taught night classes part-time at the Thames polytechnic in Woolwich. I quickly realised that I found my day job much more rewarding and could see that the energy I was putting in had tangible results.

### **What are you most proud of in your career?**

I'm very proud of the congestion charging scheme as I've worked on it at various points throughout my career. I really wanted the job at TfL as Director of Congestion Charging but I also wanted to work part-time so I could spend time with my family. Malcolm Murray-Clark and I decided to apply for the job together and we were successful. A job share - especially between a man and woman and at such a senior-level - was extremely rare and TfL was revolutionary in this regard. I'll always remember waking up on the morning of the charge introduction and it all going smoothly.

### **What do you think is the best thing about a career in transport?**

Transport enables people to live the life they want and can make all the difference to the direction someone's life will take. Whenever I come into work I feel I am making a difference.

### **What are your secrets for achieving a successful work-life balance?**

I did it by going part time as I wanted to further my career but I also needed to be there to support my family. I felt I was still contributing as much as I could do to both areas of my life and therefore I felt at peace with myself. I know many women in senior positions who have children and it is all down to achieving the right balance. If you get the balance right then you can achieve it all. I have two children; a son and a daughter but sadly neither is in transport!

### **What are your top tips for women in transport?**

1. Work hard
2. Be nice to people and thank them for their help
3. Be honest. If something works, great. If not, use it as a learning point
4. Surround yourself with friends and family. When life gets tough, these are the people who will re-fuel you and make you feel human again
5. Try not to take things personally. Sometimes, especially if you are working on a controversial project, people can attack you but it is about what you are promoting and not about you as a person.