Foreword: The Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon MSP – First Minister of Scotland

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I wish to thank the Institution of Civil Engineers for the honour of featuring the Queensferry Crossing, UK, in a themed issue of the prestigious journal *Bridge Engineering*.

The Queensferry Crossing was opened to traffic on 30 August 2017 and officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 4 September 2017, the 53rd anniversary of the opening of her neighbour, the Forth Road Bridge. This unique setting of three major bridges from the past three centuries clearly demonstrates how bridge engineering has developed over the years, while the fundamental structural principles remain unaltered. The Queensferry Crossing deck was constructed as three balanced cantilevers in a similar manner to the Forth Bridge in the 1880s. Its two flanking towers are founded on caisson foundations in the Forth and the centre tower is based on the solid outcrop of Beamer Rock, again reflecting the supporting structures used on the Forth Bridge.

The Queensferry Crossing has the highest bridge towers in the UK and is the longest three-towered cable-stayed bridge in the world. It also had the longest balanced cantilever ever constructed in the world at 644 m, albeit for only a few weeks until the centre tower deck fan was connected to its neighbours to the north and south.

The Forth Replacement Crossing project progressed from a concept in 2007 to a finished functioning transport corridor in

under 10 years and has been funded through the capital budget of the Scottish Government. It secures a vital link in the infrastructure of Scotland as part of the main north–south artery on the east side of Scotland from Edinburgh to Fife, Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen. The added resilience that it provides to the trunk road network through the addition of hard shoulders, wind shielding and a 22 km long corridor managed with an intelligent transport system is bringing huge benefits to the Scottish economy.

This magnificent achievement has been made possible by the dedicated site workforce who worked in the often inhospitable weather conditions of the Firth of Forth. Well over 15 000 workers have spent over 19 million working hours turning the initial concept design into a steel, concrete and asphalt reality. The new Queensferry Crossing has generated huge excitement in the local communities on either side of the Forth estuary as it has gradually appeared out of the water and then ‘spread its wings’ to connect to the new approach roads on either side. This impressive new crossing cemented its place in people’s hearts over the weekend of 2/3 September 2017 when over 50 000 people were given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk across the Queensferry Crossing and see for themselves this feat of engineering achievement.

My congratulations and admiration go to every person who has been involved in this record-breaking project.