

A new bus for London - Substance over style please.

Last week the Mayor of London Boris Johnson, along with the Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy, launched a competition to design a brand new bus for London, inspired by the Capital's iconic Routemaster.

This project is tremendously exciting and one that I hope will showcase the importance of design and how it can touch and improve our everyday lives.

However, my fear is that it will simply become an exercise in style and will not deal with the fundamental issues at stake. Why do people use public transport in the first place, how much time do we invest in our daily journey's, how do we feel during this journey and what could be done to improve the service that we pay so dearly for?

To address these questions we need to design the bus 'from the Inside out' and let the form reflect its function. The design of a new bus should be focused on helping people to travel as easily as possible, It should not only embrace the aesthetic but must place the user at the core of its process.

Through intelligent design and the smart use of technology and materials the customer experience can become memorable and positive.

A successful design solution has the ability to enhance our day-to-day lives and become part of the fabric of the city. A new and improved bus solution would give people a sense of pride and ownership in their community and allow them, once again, to embrace public transport.

A solution that places the needs of the user at the forefront has enormous merit - but we must focus on the design of a great bus, and not, as the competition suggests, simply designing a new iconic Routemaster!

PW will be submitting our entry on 19th September 2008.



The iconic London Routemaster. Delivered people to their chosen destination as quickly and comfortable as possible.