



Awards 2014 Case Study

Award Winner

Integration & Collaborative Working Award

A477 St Clears to Red Roses Improvement

Effective partnership and collaboration has been a central feature of the construction of this Welsh Government's A477 Road Improvement Project in West Wales, for which SRB Civil Engineering were appointed as main contractor under an Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) form of contract.



The joint venture company, SRB Civil Engineering, formed by two leading civil engineering contractors, Roadbridge and John Sisk & Son, has extensive experience in delivering major road works in the UK, Ireland and overseas, experience that was fully drawn upon to deliver this successful project.

On their appointment in 2009, a partnership charter was signed between the key parties involved in the project construction, which enshrined a non-confrontational approach and open door policy that set the culture of effective sharing of information and responsibility throughout all stages of the construction project.

The CEW judges were impressed with the positive and professional culture engendered by this charter, the proactive approaches to working in partnership with key project stakeholders and the opportunities for the wider industry to learn from this exemplar scheme, led to the CEW judges awarding the 2014 Integration and Collaborative Working Award to the A477 Team.

The 9.3km, £47M A477 St Clears to Red Roses Improvement, incorporates 15 new structures and provides key improvements to this crucial stretch of trunk road, a strategic route linking the rest of the UK and Europe to West Wales and Ireland, via the ferry port at Pembroke Dock.

The project was designed to overcome major operational and maintenance shortcomings of the existing road, and include enhanced overtaking opportunities using a single 2+1 lane layout to improve reliability, journey time and road safety. The route bypasses the villages of Llanddowror and Red Roses, crosses the River Hydfron and passes through several environmentally sensitive areas such as the Taf Valley.

Early contractor input under an ECI contract was considered essential in delivering the scheme on time and budget, but SRB's commitment to this arrangement helped cement the 'one team' ethos that pervaded all elements of project delivery.

An example of the benefits of close collaboration with the A477 Team and within the ECI process, achieved a £500,000 saving by replacing a proposed underpass with an overbridge structure, and thus balancing the earthworks. This value engineering proposal was developed in a Technical Working Group and provides a clear example of ECI working to enable the contractor to bring his experience to the table, and make a valuable

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Deputy Project Manager



contribution to the best and most cost effective outcomes for the scheme.

The project benefitted on many levels as a result of the integrated and collaborative approach, ensuring all stakeholders were involved from an early stage, working together to find sustainable solutions and ultimately raising the standard across the board.

The A477 Team planned and implemented a proactive approach to building effective working relationships with the local communities affected by the construction project, and also sought to create opportunities to ensure that the project left a lasting local legacy.

Proactive steps were taken to maximise the use of local labour and to upskill and train this workforce to enhance their future prospects of employment. Local sourcing of material and services was also embedded in the operational culture within the project team. 55% of labour used on the project was from the Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Pembrokeshire area and 76% of all supplies were sourced from within Wales. Working in partnership with Trac Employment Services, the team took on five long-term unemployed people from the local community, giving them experience, training and careers advice.

SRB partnered with more than 140 local SMEs to create a sustainable, expert supply chain with benefits to all parties. Hydro Industries, a Llanelli-based developer of water treatment units, was used in the treatment of surface water management which otherwise could have caused serious delays to the completion of the project. Surface water management became one of the most challenging aspects of the project during the wettest weather conditions on record. The use of Hydro-

Industries' state of the art electro-coagulation process, more commonly used to deal with waste water, was deployed for the first time on a linear road construction project in the UK with great success and with on-going benefits for both the business and the construction industry.

A local bi-lingual Public Liaison Officer was employed to deal sensitively with local issues. In fact, integrating the local community into the project as far as possible, rather than keeping them at arm's length for fear of them creating issues, proved to be extremely beneficial to the project. Local authorities, the NRW and other relevant stakeholders were included in site training courses so that everyone could learn from each other and plan together to manage challenges. One important result of this proactive approach from the project's inception was that no objections were presented by the statutory bodies involved at Public Inquiry stage.

An information room was opened on the site early during the construction phase. This was used to present information to local people about the project and timelines. A 3D 'drive through' graphic was developed in order to give interested parties an impression of how the road would look upon completion. This and other proactive meetings were used to establish working relationships with local landowners affected by the project, a key stakeholder group in the construction phase. Relationships were built at many levels, for example a local ground contractor, known to many within this group of stakeholders, was used for site clearance which made a considerable contribution to gaining their trust.

Michael Gallagher, the Deputy Project Manager for the project and Roadbridge Director said "We viewed the Welsh Government as an integral part of the team as well as our client. We were all based on-site at the A477 Project Offices with an open door policy, so there were no barriers. It meant we were able to mitigate for foreseeable generic problems before they arose and there was greater understanding across the board when something unforeseen occurred. Our efforts to get the community and statutory bodies on board early in the process, and the deployment of a local PLO, worked to great effect."

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