



Awards 2013 Case Study

Award Winner

Integration & Collaborative Working

Harbour Way

The final section of the Port Talbot peripheral distributor road, known as Harbour Way, is the largest transport project for Wales since the building of the M4 motorway and a vital link not only to West Wales and the motorway network, but to mainland Europe.



With an overall value of £107m, this is a large and technically complex project requiring close liaison with multiple stakeholders including Tata Steel, Network Rail and client Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC). It was started in 2009 with completion due in December 2013, and involves the construction of 4.5km of new dual carriageway, two new site entrances for the Tata steelworks and the construction of a major road bridge over the main Swansea to London railway line.

Costain was appointed lead contractor and along with the Council, design consultants Arup and key supply-chain partners achieved a remarkable degree of integration. This has now been recognised by CEW with its 2013 Award for Integration and Collaborative Working.

"This is a great achievement for us, and testament to our on-going efforts in working together as one team focused on the successful delivery of Harbour Way," said Costain's Project Manager John Skentelbery.

The benefits of integration and collaborative working have long been championed by CEW. In construction terms, it means bringing together everyone involved in the delivery of a project so that they work in unison towards a common goal from the earliest possible stage.

With all evidence pointing to this approach delivering better results than traditional construction, the organisation itemises six essential aspects of collaborative working. They are: early involvement; focus on and selection by, value rather than lowest price; common processes and tools; measurement of performance; long-term relationships and modern commercial arrangements. All these criteria have been diligently met by the Harbour Way integrated team.

Costain was awarded the contract by the Client on the basis of an 80% quality score and average price. A project charter was produced detailing the vision, values and objectives of the integrated Harbour Way team, providing the basis for the project strategy and KPIs. Performance was reviewed monthly by the team; targets were updated annually and signed off by all involved. A partnering workshop was held at the start and regular 'health check' surveys monitored partnering performance. Any issues raised were addressed through action plans put in place by senior members of the team and everyone joining the team received a formal induction to the project.

Award Sponsored by



“It was a real eureka moment as soon as it clicked that Tata could have new stores and we had a much simpler access solution.”

John Skentelbery
Costain Project Manager

To help break down barriers between organisations, team members were co-located in an open-plan office. Common processes and tools were developed, such as a web-based portal allowing access to all documentation and a contract change management system accessible to client and contractor. The project used BIM to model structures in 3D which were shared between parties.

The collaborative one-team approach was invaluable in terms of managing change and solving problems. For example, to ensure project viability, a target of £15m of savings was set early on; the team worked together to achieve it by realigning roads, reducing the width of embankments and devising alternative construction methods.

Collaboration with key external stakeholders, particularly Tata and Network Rail, was also critical and led to innovative practical and sustainable solutions. Close liaison with Tata meant that an expensive diversion of cables delivering services to the steelworks was avoided. By providing land from the road construction site that would be suitable for a new stores building, the road could be built on the footprint of the old stores which could then be demolished.

“It was a win-win situation,” said John Skentelbery. “It was a real eureka moment as soon as it clicked that Tata could have new stores and we had a much simpler access solution. It was the only way forward: we just had to look closely at the logistics and timings so that neither project was negatively affected.”



There was an additional environmental impact from this collaboration, as slag from the blast furnace at the steelworks is sold as a by-product. It was used to provide more than half the 400,000m³ of material needed to build the embankment on which the road was being built. Apart from the recycling benefits, the proximity vastly reduced potential lorry

movements on the road network. Processed demolition waste, site-won material and the use of contaminated ground after remediation made up the rest of the embankment.

The local community also benefitted from dealing with one consolidated team, thanks to the appointment of a full time community relations manager and a communication and public relations strategy prepared by the Harbour Way team. Stakeholders, including local residents, were kept informed of progress and potential disruption from a single source. The project has supported more than 40 local initiatives, raised more than £12,000 for local charities and dedicated more than 2,000 man-hours in community benefits activities.

There has been an emphasis on employing local sub-contractors and SMEs, 40 local unemployed people gained full time employment on the project, whilst 17 students and 7 apprentices received work experience.

Ultimately, a clear strategy and commitment from key stakeholders made the considerable level of integration achieved on this project possible, encouraging everyone involved to buy in to the project's values and vision. Adopting a collaborative culture, behaviours, processes and tools were overriding factors in enabling and delivering change. These processes are being shared with all parties involved, as well as academic and professional bodies across Wales, to contribute to the drive for continuous improvement.