



HMRC: Birmingham Airport Inland Border Facility

In preparation for the UK leaving the EU, HMRC embarked on a strategy to create a series of Inland Border Facilities across England and Wales. Used for conducting customs checks on HGVs, these facilities aim to limit disruption and delays at the borders. To support this strategy, HMRC sought a trusted contractor able to convert Car Park 6 at Birmingham Airport into an Inland Border Facility with capacity for 198 HGVs by an immovable deadline of 31st December 2020.

The solution

The £9m contract was awarded to Building Solutions (the specialist building and refurbishment arm of VINCI Facilities), in recognition of the organisation having recently delivered similar works across 11 sites for HMRC.

Now complete, the works have enabled Birmingham Airport Inland Border Facility to run a 24/7 operation from 1st January 2021 onwards, with capacity to process up to 3,000 HGVs a day.

The following elements were vital to the project's success:

Efficient procurement

The procurement process saw Building Solutions submit a tender proposal for a model Inland Border Facility project via the industry-leading Pagabo framework. Having been successful with the bid, the team were then able to directly negotiate for the Birmingham Airport project along with a similar site in Warrington.

As a result of this approach, any subsequent Inland Border Facilities that the client may wish to utilise Building Solutions for can also be secured via direct negotiation without the need to tender, helping to fast-track the speed of future procurements while ensuring value at all times.

Speed of delivery

Establishing a strong partnership built on trust was key to fast-tracking the works. This saw Building Solutions commence design before the contract was formalised, and as works progressed HMRC had confidence in instructing variations before costs had been finalised.

The choice of building materials was also crucial in ensuring the client's strict deadline could be met. This saw a Smart-Space modular system used to construct the inspection sheds. Consisting of aluminium panels, double glazing and a PVC roof, the system enabled the buildings to be erected in just four days. Meanwhile, portacabins were used to provide office and welfare facilities for HMRC and its partners.

Additionally, to ensure a soft landing for HMRC and its partners, Building Solutions provided multi-phased handovers. This enabled key stakeholders to occupy the site early and begin training and familiarising their teams. Facilitating this required Building Solutions to expand its risk management strategies accordingly due to hundreds of additional personnel being on site during construction works.

Throughout the final month of the project, the team worked 24/7 via rotating shifts to ensure the project was delivered on time.

SCOPE OF WORKS

- » Construction of marshal stands by site entrance.
- » Construction of two 25sq.m modular inspection sheds, each large enough to hold three HGVs, including dock levellers and exhaust extraction.
- » Installation of 10 portacabin units to provide office and welfare facilities.
- » Fit out of two existing buildings.
- » Resurfacing and marking of roads, inc. creation of swim lanes, turning areas, 198 HGV parking spaces with power, and car parking spaces for staff.
- » Installation of security system, including perimeter fencing, CCTV and alarms.
- » Installation of fire-related systems, including alarms and water tanks.
- » Installation of three 500kVA generators, each of which runs at half load to provide resilience.
- » Installation of lighting, including flood lights.
- » Relocation of sewerage plant.
- » Installation of steel and concrete crash barriers.

KEY RESULTS

- » Completed on budget and on schedule.
- » Delivered via multi-phased handovers to facilitate occupation and soft landings process.
- » £4.931m spent with local suppliers from the Birmingham area.
- » Passed all H&S audits conducted by VINCI Facilities, Gleeds (project manager), HMRC and Birmingham Airport.
- » More than 600 personnel inducted.
- » Zero accidents and environmental incidents.



Flexibility

Demonstrating a flexible approach, Building Solutions' team accommodated additional works that saw the contract value rise from £3m to £9m without any extension to the time frame. A major aspect of the variations required eight additional portacabin units to be installed (increasing the total number from two initially to ten), which required significant ground works to accommodate a 10% gradient on the site.

Collaboration and communication

This marked one of Building Solutions' most collaborative projects to date, requiring close liaison with a diverse network of stakeholders, including HMRC, Border Force, Gleeds (project manager), Wincanton (logistics operator), Mott MacDonald (civil engineers), Birmingham City Council and the local fire department, to name just a few.

Supply chain management

Alongside its direct team of up to 25 key personnel, Building Solutions managed 20 supply chain partners, resulting in up to 140 people being on a site at any one time. Due to the risks associated with working in airport grounds, all personnel were required to complete inductions with both Building Solutions and Birmingham Airport.

To both support the region and reduce the spread of COVID-19, 80% of the supply chain were sourced from within Birmingham, resulting in an injection of £4.931m into the local economy.

Mitigating the risk of COVID-19

To minimise the impact of the pandemic, Building Solutions appointed a full-time manager to oversee COVID-19 safety and ensure exemplary standards at all times.

The scale of Building Solutions' commitment is evident from the fact that the company issued more PPE on this project than any other project to date.

Additional precautions included:

- » Establishing mobile hand washing and sanitisation stations throughout the site.
- » Conducting a COVID-19 briefing each morning to reinforce safe behaviours.
- » Utilising a specialist COVID-19 cleaning contractor.
- » Sourcing suppliers from within the same region as the site.
- » Conducting all meetings outdoors or remotely.
- » Introducing staggered breaks.

Supporting HMRC's wider strategy

Recognising that the Birmingham Airport site was just one of the many Inland Border Facilities that HMRC planned to create across England and Wales, Building Solutions collaborated with its supply chain to conduct a 'lessons learned' workshop. The outcomes were presented to HMRC in order to support its ongoing strategy for future sites.

"On behalf of Jim Harra, the Chief Executive, and all of us in HMRC, I would like to extend our fullest thanks and gratitude to you and your teams for the outstanding support you have provided over recent months in helping us prepare for, and deliver, the physical infrastructure for our new post UK Transition customs sites.

I know your teams have been working around the clock and around the country, often under difficult circumstances (given the impacts of COVID-19 and with a very tight delivery window) to ensure the sites were ready for service from 31st December.

We appreciate that it is not common place for such varied activities to be undertaken on sites in advance of construction completing, and particularly in an accelerated environment such as this one, and I would like to commend your teams on their resilience, tolerance and professionalism throughout.

Despite the significant challenges, our sites are now mobilised, and whilst our work together will continue at pace, I wanted to take the opportunity to register our immediate thanks to you and your teams for everything you have done to get us to this point."

Justin Holliday, Chief Finance Officer, HMRC.

"I just wanted to extend a massive thank you for your efforts in seeing this project over the line. I've thoroughly enjoyed being around the positive atmosphere on site. I've never witnessed such commitment and dedication on anything I've previously been involved in."

Jamie Havard, Senior Project Manager, Gleeds.



BUILDING SOLUTIONS



**HM Revenue
& Customs**

For further details, please contact:

Matt Hickman: 07711 597741, matt.hickman@vincifacilities.com
Steve Edgson: 07901 104415, steve.edgson@vincifacilities.com