



HMRC: Warrington 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 would aim to limit disruption and delays at the borders. To support this strategy, HMRC sought a trusted contractor able to convert a coach hub in Warrington into an Inland Border Facility with capacity for 69 HGVs by an immovable deadline of 31st December 2020.

The solution

The £7m 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 enabled Warrington Inland Border Facility to run a 24/7 operation from 1st January 2021 onwards, with capacity to process up to 250 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 Warrington project along with a similar site in Birmingham.

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

Building Solutions' main objective was to deliver the project by the client's strict deadline. 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.

Further efforts to fast-track the works included:

- » Team members working in shifts to provide a 24/7 operation. The team even volunteered to attend site on Christmas Day and Boxing Day if needed.
- » Utilising off-site manufactured components to maximise the speed of construction.
- » Appointing six managers to take responsibility for maintaining speed of delivery across specific areas of work.

Additionally, to ensure a soft landing for HRMC and its partners, Building Solutions provided multi-phased handovers. This enabled key stakeholders, such as Wincanton, 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 additional personnel being on site during construction works.

SCOPE OF WORKS

- » Refurbishment and fit out of terminal building to create offices and welfare facilities.
- » Refurbishment, extension and fit out of HGV inspection shed.
- » Construction of marshal stands by site entrance.
- » Demolition of existing lorry washing facility.
- » Resurfacing and marking of roadways, including creation of swim lanes, turning areas, 69 HGV parking spaces with power, and 71 car parking spaces for staff.
- » Installation of security systems, including perimeter fencing, CCTV and alarms.
- » Installation of fire-related systems, including alarms and 45,000l water tanks.
- » Improvements to drainage, power and ductwork.
- » Installation of lighting, including flood lights.
- » Installation of steel and concrete crash barriers.

KEY RESULTS

- » Completed on budget and ahead of schedule.
- » Delivered via multi-phased handovers to facilitate occupation and soft landings process.
- » c.85% of supply chain partners sourced from within the Warrington region.
- » Passed all H&S audits conducted by VINCI Facilities, Gleeds and HMRC.
- » Zero accidents related to Building Solutions' works.
- » Zero COVID-19 outbreaks.
- » Zero environmental incidents.
- » In a customer satisfaction survey, project manager Gleeds stated that it views Building Solutions as a leader in the sector and would recommend the company to others.



Flexibility

Demonstrating a flexible approach, Building Solutions' team were able to accommodate substantial amounts of unexpected works at short notice, all of which were delivered within the original programme. These included emptying all the buildings at the outset of the project, resurfacing roadways, installing CCTV, and delivering design works for the refurbishment and extension of the HGV inspection shed.

Minimising disruption to the surrounding area

A key aspect of the works required the entrance road to be remodelled to improve access for large vehicles. As the site is located in a busy logistics park, Building Solutions developed a strategy that would minimise disruption to neighbouring businesses. This saw the team create a rigorous traffic management plan and allocate resources for manned traffic lights throughout the day, which in turn resulted in the council granting permission for the adjacent road to remain open throughout the works.

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), Warrington Borough Council and the local fire department, to name just a few.

Building Solutions' senior team attended all stakeholder meetings, even when not required, in order to be as informed as possible and to minimise the risk of any issues arising that could slow down the speed of works.

Supply chain management

Alongside its direct team of 20 key personnel, Building Solutions managed 20 supply chain partners, resulting in up to 150 people being on a site at any one time. To support the region and also reduce the risk of COVID-19, c.85% of the supply chain were sourced from within Warrington, resulting in an injection of c.£2m into the local economy.

Mitigating the risk of COVID-19

Despite Warrington being in Tier 3 at the time, Building Solutions achieved zero COVID-19 positive cases throughout its workforce and supply chain. Key to this was the appointment of a full-time manager to oversee COVID-19 safety and ensure that all personnel were working to safe systems of work and wearing correct PPE at all times.

Additional precautions included:

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

Supporting HMRC's wider strategy

Recognising that the Warrington 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.

"Now that we have reached practical completion, I just wanted to record that it was a pleasure to work closely over the last six months with your team. Great personalities with a real client focus, always very helpful and always delivered for a very demanding client team. I would be more than happy to work with the whole VINCI site team again and hope we do in the future."

James Rees, Associate Director, Gleeds.



BUILDING SOLUTIONS



**HM Revenue
& Customs**

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