

SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EFFECTIVE PROJECT DELIVERY



The historic town of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire has always been prone to flooding, and improvements to the defences were a pressing and vital issue, that needed to be addressed.

The flood defences in Wisbech were outdated and failing in some areas, putting people and property at risk. EC Harris was appointed to work with the Environment Agency to manage the renewal of flood defences with a key focus on stakeholder engagement in activities.

The successful completion of the Wisbech Flood Defence Scheme during summer 2010 has seen the protection of 10,500 houses and 1,200 businesses against a 1-in-200-year flooding event.

Creating solutions

EC Harris helped to create a working environment that ensured minimal disruption to the local residents, businesses and the community, whilst delivering 8.6km of floodwall refurbishment.

When EC Harris joined the project at the beginning of the construction stage, there was a lack of integration on both key deliverables and strategic objectives. As part of the team, EC Harris took a lead role to instil a new way of working and approach; redrawing interfaces, redefining communication lines and embedding new behaviours.

In the leadership of the project team the focus was mainly on the key programme deliverables and outputs to:

- Encourage open and honest dialogue, with reasonable levels of challenge to create a harmonious, efficient and cohesive team
- Provide open and joint decision making process to the benefit of the project and business case
- Provide continuous improvement through targeted management of the team performance.

“Some fantastic work has been done and it is worthy of recognition.”

Andy Baxendale (Environment Agency Project Sponsor)

“EC Harris was an integral part of the completion of the flood defences to finish ahead of schedule and with substantial savings. Strong management and efficient working from the project team resulted in £7.3 million savings. This amounted to 35% of estimated outturn, more than three times the saving demanded by the government’s efficiency initiative.”

The Wisbech team explored every available opportunity to engage the community and was willing to learn from other schemes and take up suggestions from all parts of the community. The team’s efforts have been rewarded by the fact that there was no significant complaint or issue raised by the local community and the scheme was delivered to the devised programme, which is a significant achievement for a £12 million flood defence scheme in a major urban environment.

Adding value

EC Harris was able to co-ordinate the completion of the project ahead of schedule and within budget. During the construction phase(s) the Wisbech team received praise from businesses and members of the community.

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Teamwork was at the heart of the Environment Agency’s drive to improve efficiency and project delivery excellence. The Wisbech project is an exemplar of putting this strategy into practice and went onto win the Exemplar Award 2009.

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**£7.3
million
savings**
(35% of estimated outturn)