

Case study: Kier Construction

Kier Completes for Sainsbury's Portishead, Regardless of Constraints



About Kier Construction

Kier Construction is part of the Kier Group, a leading property, residential, construction and services group which operates across a range of sectors including defence, education, housing, industrials, power, transport and utilities. The Group employs over 24,000 people worldwide.

Kier Construction encompasses the group's UK regional building, major projects, infrastructure and international operations.

Kier is driven to succeed, with a strong commitment to corporate responsibility and high quality standards. Being enthusiastic, collaborative and forward-thinking are its core values, and underpin its excellent record in delivering customer care and value.

Sainsbury's knows exactly what it wants and needs from its construction contractors – including on time delivery, with an assurance of excellent practice and compliance with its reporting requirements throughout the process. Timescales have been honed to perfection and it knows exactly what can be achieved within budgetary and time constraints.

Kier Construction won the challenge of building its new £10.2m Portishead store against stiff competition. It embraced a tight 22-week timeline and



successfully delivered on contract with zero defects, strikes, environmental issues or RIDDORs – but it took a laser-like focus on planning.

Project manager Stephen Brook's commitment to planning excellence played a significant role in winning the contract against the client's tier-one contractor. Then it was his fine project management and attention to detail which delivered on this exacting client's requirements not only on time, on budget and with a clean sheet, but having managed significant changes and challenges and delivered extra value and innovation throughout. For these reasons he was awarded a Gold Medal

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in the Construction Manager of the Year Awards 2015.

Firm foundations

The company was charged with creating a 30,000 ft² supermarket complete with café, distribution warehouse and offices, along with associated staff and customer car parking, services and delivery yard, surrounding walls and landscaping – all to be delivered in under 5½ months.

Powerproject provided the core planning and project management platform for the contract. “The programmes are fundamental to what I and my team have to achieve on site. Our main contract programme was created as an outline in Powerproject – but from there we must break down sections and build programmes in extreme detail leading up to our milestones or monthly work targets. From this I can see how I'm going to phase works and direct sub-contractors to perform around all aspects of building.”

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He continued: "I used Powerproject either directly or to break activities down into individual plans and Gantt charts that clearly outline the day-by-day, or week-by-week, process on site. On a 22-week programme, costing the client more than £10m, you cannot allow anything to slip. We used Powerproject to plan what had to happen, but we also needed a Plan B for when something doesn't go right – and that's what construction is all about."

Tight fit-out constraints

The tight timescale for the project was shorter than Kier's ideal duration of 26 weeks for building a superstore of this type – and thus created some specific project timeline challenges. Meeting the completion deadline was non-negotiable – but it would limit the time available for fit-out to 8 weeks. It drove a need for an innovative approach: rather than negotiating with each sub-contractor individually about what would be an unpopular time restriction, Stephen gathered all the fit-out sub-contractors together for a lively collaborative planning workshop "Each sub-contractor used coloured sticky notes to mark their essential activities on a day by day grid set up on posters around the room. Once everyone could see the activities all of them needed to achieve, then we could go around the room working out how to fit that into the

8 weeks available." Stephen was then able to capture all the information for the fit-out phase into the Powerproject programme.

Inevitable change and challenge

One aspect that earned Stephen the CMYA accolade was his smart approach to some challenging services requirements. He appointed a sub-contractor to use industrial-scale vacuum suction to 'hoover' up the ground and detect service locations without risk of damage or injury – and sought out elegant resolutions for some of the redesigns required. He said: "We encountered a lot of issues around relocating services, and Powerproject helped us to plan all the service diversions and lead-ins, so we could keep a clear view of the early groundworks programme and the disruption or delaying impact these issues would have."

Crystal clear communication

Communicating well with senior stakeholders within Kier is key on any major project, but was especially so for a strategic client like Sainsbury's. "We reported to the directors on a weekly basis throughout the build, using Powerproject to help us create a weekly summary report and a drop

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line programme for detailed discussion each month" explained Stephen. The software also helped him to maintain an up-to-the-minute view to help support communications with the client, although actual reporting was using Sainsbury's own detailed templates. "Although we didn't give the client a drop line report on the software itself, I had to be ready to report exactly where we were and to do that I would generate my own drop line on Powerproject."

Assuring transparency was prioritised with every sub-contractor – not just through weekly progress meetings, but even installing the design and build manager in the steel contractor's office to establish crystal clear oversight. The software also played an important role in assuring smooth sub-contractor communications during the build "On the main target programme we would pull out all the individual packages of work, such as cladding or groundworks, and could then monitor progress with each individual sub-contractor on their own work, and do drop lines of their works to support our progress meetings."

Stephen got full marks from Sainsbury's after establishing not just a culture of trust, collaboration and excellent communication, but also delivering numerous value additions and clever solutions to site and project challenges. The project demonstrated excellent planning, careful project management, and commitment to safety and community communications which won it very high Considerate Construction Scheme scores. All this, coupled with a smart approach to delivering commercial value to the client, added up to make this project's manager a clear CMYA Gold Medal award-winner.



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