

Providing an integrated service

One of the more interesting corporate events in the rail world in 2006 was the acquisition by Amey of design consultancy Owen Williams. More than 12 months on, the two organisations are fully integrated and Head of Owen Williams, Damian McHale, describes what the coming together of the two companies has brought to both organisations and what, in turn, this means for Amey's clients in the rail sector.

A proven capability

There's no doubt about it, the acquisition of Owen Williams was an astute move on Amey's part. In its own right, Owen Williams was already a major player in the rail sector - the company delivered significant design and consultancy services to Network Rail for the major remodelling of the West Coast Main Line and was also involved in the rollout of the safety enhancing Train Protection Warning System (TPWS). In addition to its proven capability in rail, Owen Williams was also a leading player in other business sectors in which Amey also has a strong presence, so the fit was a very good one.

Since the acquisition, Amey has integrated its own professional services team into Owen Williams and ensured that it is positioned within Amey's business spectrum to bring design and consultancy support to the company's three major business streams - rail, highways and local government. This integration and streamlining of services means that the customer can now enjoy the many benefits of a truly end-to-end capability. Prior to the acquisition, Amey's design capability was relatively limited, but now it can offer clients the expertise of more than 650 rail consultants - a significant strength across all disciplines - as well as Amey's existing network of more than 800 plus rail personnel, spread across more than 100 locations. Amey is focusing its design capability in specific



areas and has recently opened a new rail design centre in Birmingham to strengthen its design and consultancy offering to clients across the West Midlands.

Other services

As well as design and consultancy services, Owen Williams has a strong presence in the examination and management of rail structures such as bridges, tunnels, gantries

and viaducts. Its multi-functional technical consultancy capability has also delivered a significant amount of design work to Network Rail for Milton Keynes/Bletchley rail services and it has also provided support to a number of switch and crossing design projects in southern England.

This may sound as if the consultancy side of the business only focuses on 'hard' rail infrastructure, but this is far from the





case. Amey offers a wide range of customer facing services and expertise such as information systems at stations. So far, the company has provided turnkey telecommunication solutions to more than 450 railway stations across the UK. This includes the provision of customer information systems, CCTV, help points and public address. Additionally, Amey has delivered maintenance and KPI management suites as well as

designed and delivered mobile and fixed wired networks. Locations included Birmingham New Street - a major hub for rail services reaching across the UK - and more than 300 stations covering the London commuter belt. The company has also introduced similar security systems at London Underground stations. Other clients included South West Trains, Virgin West Coast, First Capital Connect, First Great Western and Southern.

Support from the Group

The technical delivery capability is supported by Amey's 'Intelligent Transport' Consultancy services, where it sees potential for significant growth. Another area in which the company is active is the provision of advisory services to Train Operator Companies (TOCs). As new franchises are subject to aggressive bidding and large subsidies are no longer the basis of franchise operation, Amey believes it must find new ways to help TOCs to drive down costs and increase efficiency.

One way of doing this may be the bundling of services to reduce project overhead. Amey is ideally positioned to provide this kind of know how, as the company can combine track infrastructure and telecomms capability alongside its facilities management expertise. Already Amey helps TOCs with the provision of technical and strategic advice and works alongside them in relation to franchise management and franchise bids. The opportunities and possibilities are endless and will ensure that Amey remains at the forefront on both sides of the rail transport equation - rail network infrastructure and passenger service delivery.

Win-win for everyone

So the solution is there for all clients. If a complete end-to-end package is required Amey can deliver it; or if a client wants high quality consultancy services on a stand-alone basis, they can have that, too. Amey has the right people and the expertise. The acquisition of Owen Williams by Amey is a win-win for everyone, company and customer alike.