



Construction project excellence at the Sewell Group 2008–2013

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Project success	5
3	Company culture	6
4	The ‘single team’	8
5	Project set-up.....	9
6	Customer satisfaction	10
7	Subcontractors and the construction site	11
8	Post handover	11
9	Conclusions.....	13
10	Causal maps	15
	Figure 1	15
	Figure 2	16
	Figure 3a	17
	Figure 3b	18
	Figure 3c	19
	Figure 4	20
	Figure 5	21
	Figure 6	22
11	Case studies	23
	1: Endike Primary School	23
	2: Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit.....	25
	3: Wilberforce Health Centre	27
	4: Malet Lambert School	29
12	Appendices.....	31

Construction project excellence at the Sewell Group: 2008–2013

1 Introduction

Sewell Group has carried out a number of construction projects in and around Kingston upon Hull in recent years under the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) programmes. These projects have generally been regarded as very successful. With these two Public Private Partnership (PPP) programmes coming to an end, the teams will start to be dismantled. Since these teams have been so successful, it seems a good idea to try to capture why, before the teams are scattered – what was the secret of these projects? Hull University Business School undertook a study with Sewell Group and this report contains a discussion of this study, which tries to distil the nature of the project performance and the reasons for success. It aims to capture and record best practice and the reasons for this halcyon period, to inform future generations and teams, both inside and outside the company.

Since the turn of the century Sewell has concentrated its business efforts into PPP programmes where the diverse nature of the company has been leveraged to best effect. From investing in the opportunity, through design development and construction of the facility and to facilities management (FM) of the final product, Sewell has created an environment where a project can be dealt with from inception to operation, with a 'friction free' approach, in an attempt to maximise value for money, buildability and customer satisfaction (*Appendix 1.1*). While opportunities exist in the BSF programme for facilities management of the schools, this isn't a part of the core offering from Sewell. However, all of the 12 completed LIFT buildings enjoy facilities management involvement to maintain them in a 'day one' state for the entire period of the 25-year concession (*Appendix 8.4*) so tenants, primarily from health and community services, can concentrate on delivering first class services for the people of Hull, safe in the knowledge that their facilities are managed and maintained by Sewell.

The main part of the study consisted of workshops in which teams of managers, carefully chosen with an appropriate mix of skills, together drew up 'causal maps' of effects in order to uncover chains of causality. The maps were projected on a screen by a facilitator so all the participants could see the causal structure being generated and contribute explanations. The beginnings of which sought to define 'project success', and then causality was built by asking 'why?' or 'what caused this effect?' (looking back in causality). Views in which possible root causes were suggested were subjected to looking forward in causality by asking 'so what?' or 'what would the implications of this be?'. These maps can be seen in the figures following, where arrows represent causality, and concepts shaded in yellow are those denoting the meaning of 'project success'. The concepts are numbered, but this is only for convenience and has no meaning other than as identification marks.

2 Project success

First of all, what does success in a project mean? There is a lot of literature on this subject, and certainly it is difficult to pin down exactly what 'success' means, but the study covered four related areas, which can be broken down into seventeen subsections:

Was the final product good?

- zero defects on building handover
- low defects in use
- better FM service and resultant increased lifecycle performance of the facility

Were the stakeholders satisfied with the project?

- happy customer
- happy users
- happy subcontractors
- happy Sewell team (which would of course lead to better project performance)
- good community relationships

Did the project meet its delivery objectives?

- on time
- on budget
- production of a legacy, not just a building

Was project management successful?

- good health and safety record
- projects set up better and better contract
- fewer changes
- few disputes
- smooth–clean–tidy site
- predictability and control of cost, time, quality and risk

So in these terms, why were the project teams successful? Given that project ‘success’ is quite a complicated concept, it’s not surprising that the secret of ‘success’ turned out not to be one particular magic bullet or ‘lesson learned’, but a multiplicity of factors coming together. In order to show how the various factors come together, the following shows diagrams of factors, with arrows showing causality.

3 Company culture

The start of the causality lies within the company culture and it is this that *Figure 1* tries to capture. Sewell has a family business ethos rather than one which might be associated with a big corporation. With a less layered structure (*Appendix 3.1*), lean form and a focus on delivering on promises, the company exhibits openness, patience and expedient decision making in a no blame environment (*Appendix 3.4*). The culture is noted as being how people act when the system and process does not apply and the boss is not around. The company culture starts with the leadership from the managing director Paul Sewell; but there are some other external factors at work here. One is the locality of the

company: it is based in the city, it is well-known in the city and the city knows it. A second is the size of the company: big enough to take on these projects but small enough that the management team all know each other and the workforce has a sense of intimacy. Finally, the project management team clearly have higher leadership skills (as distinct from project management skills) which they exhibited within the projects in the LIFT and BSF programmes.

From these factors follow many ramifications, as *Figure 1* shows.

One implication of the locality, as a fairly isolated city, is that the management of the company has been stable rather than transient. This combined with the size, culture and top-level leadership of the company has important ramifications. The company is less layered (*Appendix 3.1*), meaning that more trust is placed in the empowered site-based project managers. Managers can work flexibly, sometimes doing work that moves into each other’s territories. There is an internal culture of delivery on promises.

An important aspect of the culture arising from these factors – and the personal investment individual managers feel they have in the projects is a focus on delivery rather than systems and processes. This is backed up by a good system of personal performance management, with the use of performance agreements which go beyond the role profile, job description, and terms and conditions. While the company has over the years embraced quality systems, from BS5750, through ISO 9001 and more recently the application of Six Sigma principles, each employee has stated ‘Wildly Important Goals’ (WIGs) within their performance agreement which enables proper and agreed prioritisation. There is great concern for the company brand with individuals working for the company (*Appendix 3.2*), which leads to an important output of the culture: a continuous engagement with the customer throughout the project (*see case study 1: Endike Primary School*). The company has established ‘behaviours’ on which it hires, promotes, rewards and fires. These are noted as; Professional, Positive, Team player, Customer-focused and Do the right thing. All staff are required to buy into these behaviours and have them in mind in everything they do. In addition, the locality of the company means there is a particularly strong concern for the company brand amongst management (*Appendix 3.2*). A robust quality system is certainly a factor in producing an excellent product, but the culture of the managers in their approach to the delivery of that product far outweighs the process of merely ticking boxes for the sake of it.

Senior management is also important and there is noticeably more interest within the company board in project execution.

The culture is important externally. The client sees that Sewell delivers on promises and does its utmost in the project; the company engenders respect from subcontractors as they are seen to be delivering on promises and pays on time (*Appendix 3.3*). This in turn results in Sewell being able to demand a performance from subcontractors and their best operatives, sometimes allowing Sewell to request named individuals for their sites based on past performance.

The concept of the ‘Single Team’ is an important part of the culture as we will see later. This includes a close relationship between the construction and the facilities management teams (*see case study 1: Endike Primary School*).

The size and nature of the company enables everyone to have a view across Sewell Group leading to better communication throughout the company. All staff are encouraged to participate in top level business planning including the formation of divisional WIGs, a balanced scorecard and compass,

which ensures all relevant key issues are in correct balance for regular reporting. Weekly ‘huddles’ are held across the business units of the company to review details and progress on issues in order that such matters can be identified and dealt with quickly. These huddles encourage regular, informal but immediate feedback in team gatherings; members of each team are encouraged to attend other huddles to create cross-fertilisation of ideas and discussions across the entire business.

There is a ‘no blame culture’ (*Appendix 3.4*) leading to an open attitude to defects and a better ability to manage risk during projects. This doesn’t mean that mediocre performance is accepted. The company actively uses a vitality curve whereby those who consistently underperform, usually the bottom 10% or so in the company, are encouraged to improve by the use of personal improvement plans or, failing a demonstrable improvement, are exited from the company. In that way the average performers, usually the middle 70% or so in any company, consistently raise their level of performance so that they do not become one of the bottom 10%. At a site level, this is further borne out by the use of yellow and red cards to identify and record operatives not performing to the expected levels set out in the site induction. The use of yellow and red cards is immediate with a yellow card being a warning and a red card being a requirement to leave the site indefinitely (to be replaced by another operative if required).

Finally, the company culture leads to an important culture of site management, including skip level management with Paul Sewell, whereby each employee is encouraged to meet with him, without their line management in attendance, in order that Paul can see and hear for himself what is happening on the ground within the company. This is further supported by each of the directors participating in ‘back to the floor’ days (*Appendix 3.5*) and attending sites across the Sewell estate to actively work within the business at site level, effectively practicing Management by Walk About (MBWA) which is embraced by site management, who often request and embrace this rather than fear it.

It was with this culture that the company made a considered and carefully planned expansion with BSF and LIFT programmes.

4 The ‘single team’

The ‘single team’ as part of the Sewell culture covers a range of issues as shown in *Figure 2*.

The LIFT and BSF programmes allowed Sewell to live the ethos of the Latham Report and the Egan Report to create a superior product through greater collaboration (*see case study 2: Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit*). The single team approach covers subcontractors and their partnership with the company: subcontractors and designers stay from pre-project through project. It includes early engagement with the client (an example is shown in *Appendix 4.1*). It includes a close relationship between construction teams and those carrying out facilities management. It includes helping the client choose their architect (personality as well as company) and helping to get an architect culturally aligned with Sewell (and with the end-user) (*Appendix 4.2*). It involves not having a separate estimating department that prepares bids.

What might be considered normal projects are often ones in which a team is brought together, delivers the scheme and then is disbanded, often to go through a procurement exercise for the next scheme. Through this greater collaboration and consistency, ‘learning teams’ are developed. That is, teams that naturally gel together and improve the product, and which, when rolled from scheme to scheme based on performance, bring continuous improvement to a programme of work such as LIFT or BSF.

A specific example of this would be the team that delivered the Wilberforce Health Centre LIFT scheme (*see case study 3: Wilberforce Health Centre*) then went on to deliver the Elliott Chappell Health Centre LIFT scheme.

5 Project set-up

The culture enables a range of effects in the project set-up – always considered the most important part of a project. *Figure 3* (divided into three parts) shows some of these effects, but with two key concepts removed as this would make the diagram unreadable: number 92 (‘the Sewell culture’) removed in *Figures 3a, 3b and 3c*; and 71 (‘the single team’) removed in *Figures 3a and 3c*. However, the ramifications of these two concepts can be seen scattered throughout this diagram. There are also two other inputs to this diagram; specific policies pursued by the company as part of their stakeholder management:

- identifying all the stakeholders early
- work in finding out who are the actual decision-makers and stakeholders

The division into three parts helps readability. *Figure 3a* contains most of the material but interlinked with these are specific parts separated out into *Figures 3b* and *3c*.

This leads to many ‘causal chains’ feeding into the various project success criteria.

Engagement of all groups enables expectations to be managed and leads to better project set-up and better contracts.

The focus on delivery rather than systems and processes and the provision of project leadership as well as project management leads to a number of initial meetings (having established the right people round the table, often by initial representation of board directors and the like of those organisations at the earlier meetings): there are early workshops with all stakeholders with plans (and the results are communicated to everyone) and time and commitment is given to risk workshops, rather than doing paper exercises (*see case study 4: Malet Lambert School*). The significant pre-planning means that uncertainties and risks are either ironed out or well-allocated. This means that:

- stakeholders ‘buy into’ the process and timescale
- users and clients understand the final result before it comes
- there are fewer changes (*see Figure 3c*) as the project proceeds
- many issues are avoided rather than retrospectively addressed (with all the usual blame avoidance that comes with such occurrences)
- people are encouraged to do the right thing in resolving issues which might arise

In addition the consistency of personnel across the company, supply chain and client teams for the duration of the project, with minimal chopping and changing and all buying into the design, programme, financial position, risks and method of construction, helps lead to greater collaboration and a superior product.

The treatment of risk is important and has been shown separately in *Figure 3b*. Risks are identified early, properly allocated and managed resulting in them not becoming the subject of conflict and

uncertainty. Risks are acknowledged and identified early by the 'single team'. These are allocated on the basis of who is the most appropriate to accept or manage that particular risk and costed appropriately with the benefit of proper management, mitigation or removal remaining with the owner of the risk. This leads to a better project set-up with a better contract, and fewer disputes. Predictability and control of cost, time, quality and risk lead to delivery on bid and community promises.

The long-standing programme experience enables the company to point users to schemes it has done before so they can visualise the final output, which enhances engagement and helps the client choose their architect. The high user engagement early in the process awakens the client to different procurement possibilities.

Early engagement and the client seeing Sewell delivering on promises and doing its utmost, keeps the client satisfied and results in fewer disputes.

The locality and the individual concern for the company reputation leads to close community engagement; the combination of this and the high level of pre-planning all leads to good community relations (*Appendix 5.1*). Key site statistics are clearly displayed on the site board (*Appendix 7.5*) giving openness on key KPIs such as accident rates, recycling, position on programme, number of apprentices, local labour and local spend.

The fewer disputes; the significant pre-planning; the better project set-up and contract; the better communication and the better management of risk all help the project finish on time and on budget with certainty, control and confidence.

Investment in excellent site facilities (which might be seen by some as being indulgent) which are kept to top-class office standards create an experience and help set the tone of what is expected from anyone who enters the site. A happy project (Sewell) team (*Appendix 5.2*) is important to lead to better project performance and this is helped by other stakeholders being happy as well as various aspects of the company culture.

6 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction comes from a combination of factors (*Figure 4*):

- The consistent construction partner for LIFT, retained after market testing, enables an early engagement with the client and a better product (*Appendix 6.1*)
- Engagement with the customer throughout the project and the subsequent response times;
- Few disputes on the project
- The client sees Sewell delivers on promises and doing their utmost
- A product which functions better, for reasons we will look up later, but there is a round-table meeting 6-months before completion and a handover between construction and operations to provide a 'soft landing' and a continual involvement by the project team (rather than a snagging team) in the following 12 months after handover, all leading to very low numbers of defects on hand-over and a low defects in use (*Appendix 6.2*).

7 Subcontractors and the construction site

The way in which the company procures and treats its subcontractors, and indeed the way it keeps its construction sites, are an important part of the success of the projects. These concepts flow from many of the ideas described above and the set of factors are shown in *Figure 5*. Again, the concept of Sewell 'company culture' has been missed off this diagram to help readability, but the consequences of the culture can be seen throughout the diagram. Sewell puts a great deal of effort into relationships with subcontractors and utilises smart procurement with delivery and quality in mind, not just cheapest price as is seen so often throughout the industry. Sewell has a well-defined, robust subcontractor database and has been using the same supply-chain on multiple projects in each programme, enabling good relationships to be built and efficiencies to be realised. This is further reinforced by the use of the Government's procurement efficiency system Constructionline, and an internal web based portal that caters for online training and inductions (*Appendix 7.1*). With the locality of Sewell, there is also a 'look local first' procurement strategy. This helps to build close partnerships with subcontractors, with subcontractors and designers staying from pre-project through the project to provide continuity. The subcontractor is involved in the bidding giving a joint feeling of 'if we win it, you win it', helping to build shared goals with subcontractors. Even at the enquiry stage a document is presented to the subcontractor to help establish expectations (*Appendix 7.2*) and there is a post-tender meeting with the subcontractor commercial team (*Appendix 7.3*). For the subcontractor delivery team, there is a pre-commencement meeting (*Appendix 7.4*) and later site-specific induction meetings (*Appendix 7.5*), all helping build the 'single team', with the Sewell culture transmitted throughout the team.

This partnership leads to commitment from subcontractors, enhanced by respect from the subcontractor, as Sewell is seen to be delivering on its promises and paying subcontractors on time (*Appendix 3.3*). A satisfied subcontractor (*Appendix 7.6*) helps to give better subcontractor performance and this performance along with the ethos of Sewell, results in the subcontractor being ideally placed to continue working through the roll-out of the programmes of work linking back to using the same supply chain in the diagram.

One of the apparently small but indicative aspects of the Sewell site culture (which is enforced on its projects) is the '10 minute rule' (*Appendix 3.4*), whereby the last 10 minutes of the day are spent tidying the site. Sewell sites are notably clean and tidy sites, which both helps promote pride and commitment to the project but also makes work more efficient, giving a mutually reinforcing double benefit (*Appendix 7.7*).

The better subcontractor performance and the smooth, clean, tidy site, when combined with the particular interest by the board in execution and the empowered project management, all leads to better project performance: more on time, more on budget, a better health and safety record (*Appendix 7.8*) and fewer defects on the building (*Appendix 8.1*).

8 Post handover

The project is not complete at building hand-over and this is an important element in the performance of such projects, as illustrated in *Figure 6*.

There is no greater guarantee of design and build quality than a long term maintenance responsibility and obligation beyond completion. Sewell has become used to this responsibility and actually 'feels' like the end user does through facilities management (this team is part of the single team throughout

the process giving the client confidence and a 'buddy' with whom to discuss matters).

With its long-standing programme experience (for example on LIFT) leading to experience of defects in such programmes, plus the relationship between the construction teams and the facilities management teams (either because they both come from Sewell, or because they are the same facilities management subcontractors on earlier schemes due to their integrated use of subcontractors across projects (see above)), there are minimal if any defects on the building at handover (*Appendix 8.1*). The engagement with the customer throughout the project and the emphasis on keeping them satisfied all helps to minimise disputes during and after construction, aided in part by enhanced client training during the soft landing period (*Appendix 8.2*). Sewell has the philosophy of running towards any noted problems and issues that might be raised, instead of arguing it chooses rather to put things right and establish responsibility afterwards.

The locality Sewell and the management's concern for company brand means there is continual involvement in the project during the 12 months following handover, rather than sending in a 'snagging team' (*Appendix 8.3*). The honest attitude towards defects and the personal investment by the project manager, makes this process open and efficient, ensuring minimum disruption post handover.

We have already seen the importance placed on maintaining good community relationships; an important effect of this post-handover is that it leaves an engaged community valuing its asset and encouraged to look after it.

Success is considered to be a measure of how the client and end user feels after one year in their new building, and the low levels of contractual penalties incurred by Sewell is perhaps testament to how that manifests itself in reality. In the case of the LIFT buildings, the landlord (Citycare) carries out regular customer feedback surveys and, despite very positive feedback, the results of these surveys are used to further improve the service of the Sewell facilities management team (*Appendix 8.6*).

The use of an architect culturally aligned with Sewell (and with the end-user) helps produce a buildable design and also enhances engagement with the customer during the project. In line with the Government Soft Landings Policy, round table meetings are established six months before completion. A clean and tidy site enables end user visits for familiarity and a 'soft landing' between construction and operations rather than a sudden project break.

The 'soft landing' process, combined with the use of the local helpdesk throughout the construction phase, as well as the continual involvement of the facilities management team, all results in a better FM service (*Appendix 8.4*). In this company the internal helpdesk team helps to develop and preserve customer relationships, as oppose to using a distant, unknown helpdesk.

For each project to meet its delivery objectives, it is important a community is left a legacy, not just a building. In the case of these projects, Sewell applied a 'look local first' procurement strategy, ensured wealth was captured locally, apprenticeships were provided throughout the supply chain and engagement was coordinated with schools; this led to the formation of a Skills Academy (*Appendix 8.5*).

Sewell treats its completed facilities as business development, making them a marketing showcase for the company.

9 Conclusions

We started this study with a general observation that these teams had a better than average construction performance. But why? And what do we mean by 'performance' and 'success'? This study has defined more closely, ways in which Sewell has performed well and established some of the reasons for this. But first, we need to conclude that here we have outcomes that exceed the industry norm and there is solid evidence, beyond the initial 'feel good' of a city with new facilities, and a local contractor is proud to have provided them, to be able to consider use of the term 'excellence'.

Traditionally, project management 'success' has been seen as achieving cost, schedule and quality criteria. But project 'success' is much more than this. Additionally, project success can be broken down as; producing a good building, leaving a legacy, successful project management with fewer than average changes and disputes, higher than average predictability and control of cost, time, quality and risk, and, more intangible criteria such as customer and end user satisfaction, happy subcontractors and good community relationships. To achieve superior performance across all of these criteria, a number of differing factors will be in play, rather than any one 'big fix'. Whilst many practitioners know and talk of such ideas as total quality, predictability, customer delight, sustainability, legacy, economic and regeneration impact and so on, and may produce them spasmodically, here they are unusually all evident. Delivery was not found to be perfect, but when issues arose the team, with a no blame culture, appeared to confront them positively and, with awareness and input from the very top of the company, went about resolving them; they did not appear to deny and/or argue about them, as can often happen in the construction industry.

This achievement of success across a whole range of criteria naturally comes from a multi-faceted set of causes, which combine together in many ways. It is from the combination of these causes and their ramifications that success comes.

The first of these causes is around the area of the organisational culture. While performance is seen as adequately strong on the 'hardware' or management issues of systems, process, structure and contracts, it is unusually strong on the 'software' or leadership aspects of culture, communication and engagement of all stakeholders (*Appendix 9.1* shows Sewell's view of this). This leads to a good balance and hence delivery going beyond the basic legal and financial transaction, resulting in a long term benefit for all concerned. It would however, seem difficult to replicate this broadly, especially by way of initiative or policy. This is seen to be more likely in a less layered company, with a degree of 'intimacy', whereby patience and a longer term view prevails over the necessity for shorter term, more commercially orientated results.

This leads to the second area of cause: the sense of locality of the company. The Sewell company is large and sophisticated enough to pre-qualify and be appointed to these major national programmes, but small and local enough to care about the community served that it calls its own. This produces an acute sense of brand reputation and hence deep motivations to keep all promises and leave a legacy beyond the new buildings. This sense of 'place' and consequent ownership appears to be important, therefore a more holistic, long term approach by the company and its wider supply chain is evident.

The main aspects of the Latham Report 1992 and the Egan Report 1997, are undoubtedly present in first having the luxury of a pipeline programme of projects which encourages 'learning teams' to pursue demonstrable and continual improvement, earning the right to be kept together and appointed for the following project.

But a further cause of success is seen in the adoption of the 'single team' approach of Latham, commencing at project inception and carried on to the facilities management of the building once in operation. This expanded the definition of 'project' to a much wider, longer, and therefore healthier concept. The supply chain was procured on more than just commercial basis; cultural alignments, mutual respect, pride in the projects and a sharing of long term partnerships were also sought. Facilities management professionals were part of the 'single team' and ensured the clients and end users views were always represented; there is also no better guarantee of design and build quality than a long term maintenance responsibility. The normal and traditional construction industry fragmentation of design, build and facilities management, which produces a certain friction and therefore commercial opportunity at these interfaces, was pertinently absent here. This allows risks to be better managed by the team, rather than denied, or become the source of uncertainty and disputes; this improves predictability and control of time, cost and quality.

None of the individual successes or techniques are unheard of or uncommon in construction management theory or practical rhetoric. However, between 2008 and 2013 on the Sewell Building Schools for the Future and NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust programmes examined, the multiple good practices and principles have come together in a combination where the total effect is much greater than the sum of the parts: you might say a perfect storm of good practice, to good and uncommon effect, particularly to the benefit of clients, end users and the communities served.

10 Causal maps

Figure 1

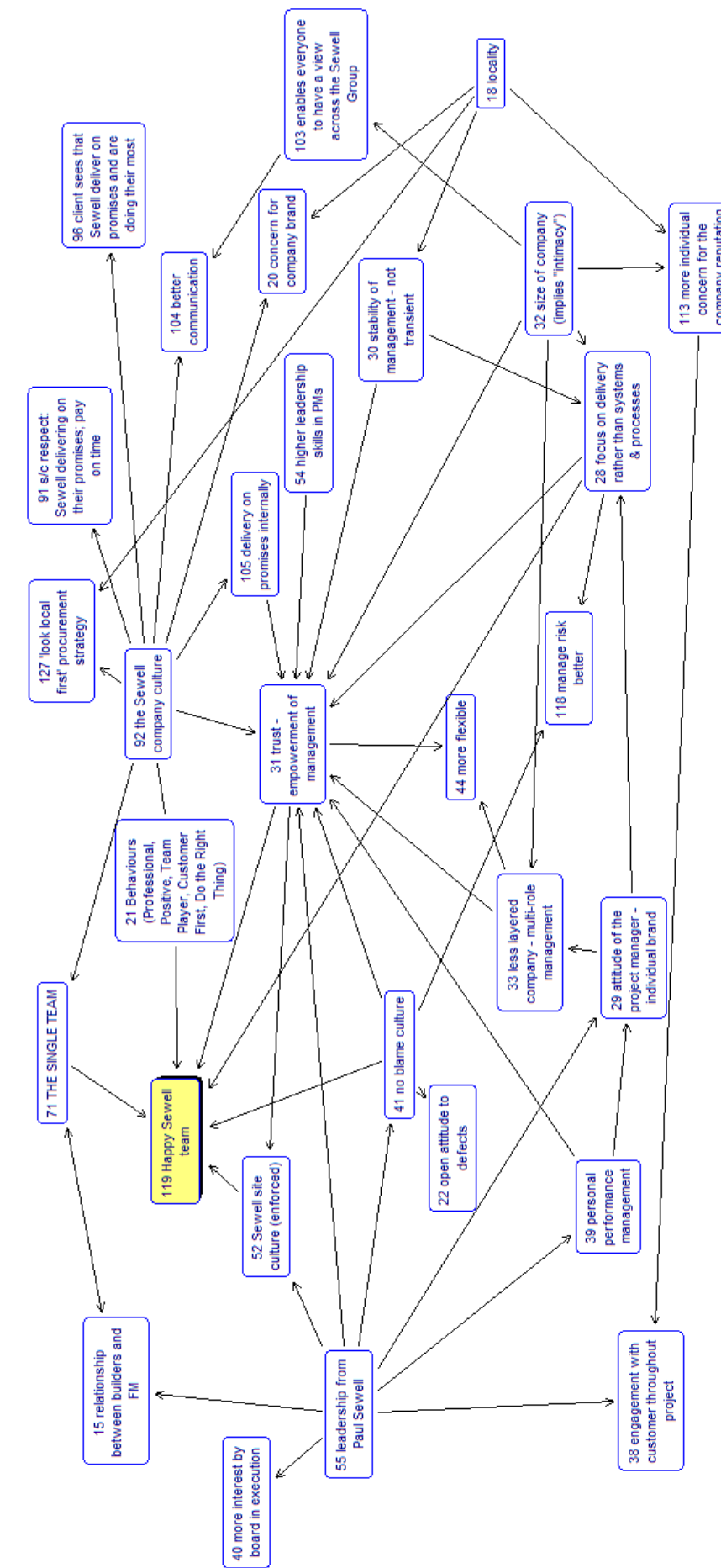


Figure 2

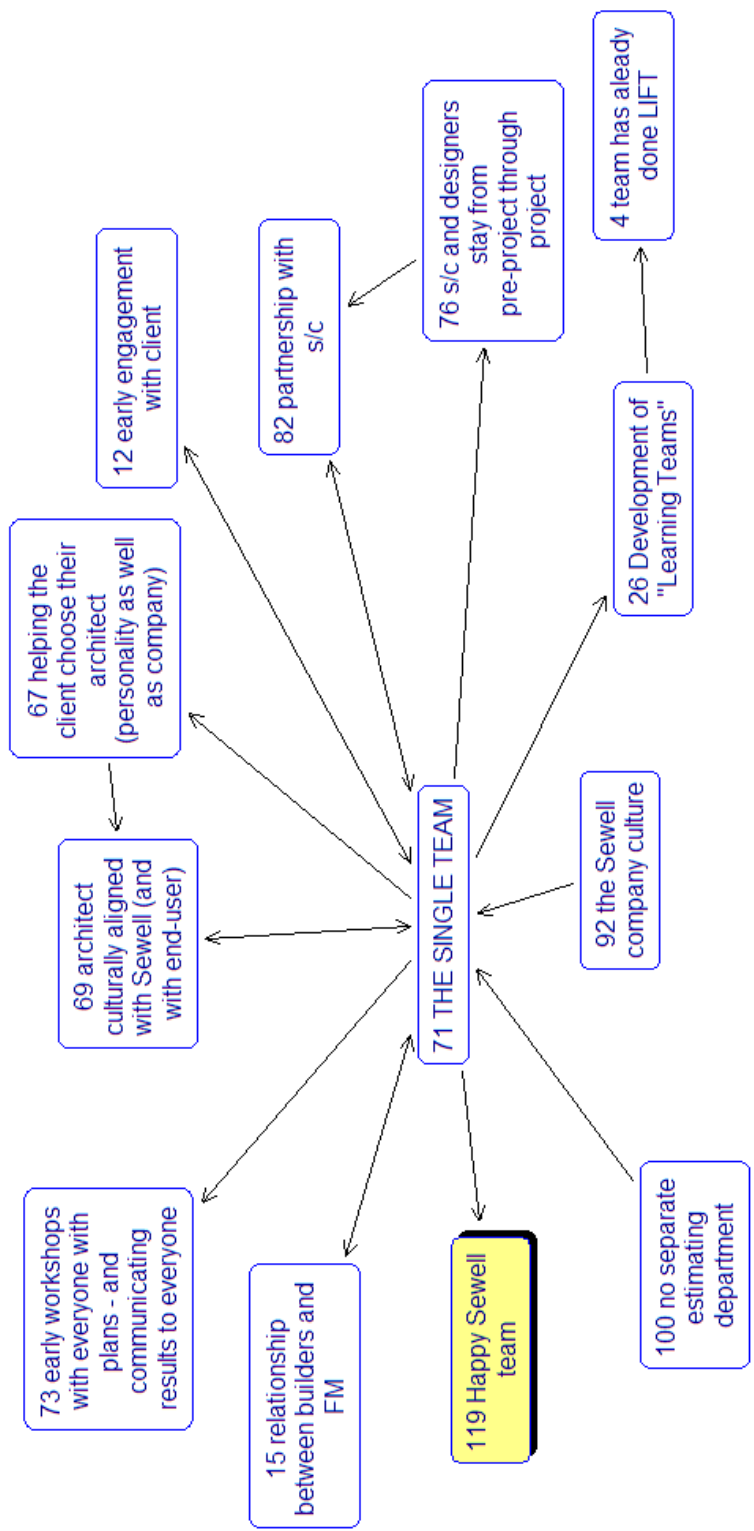


Figure 3a

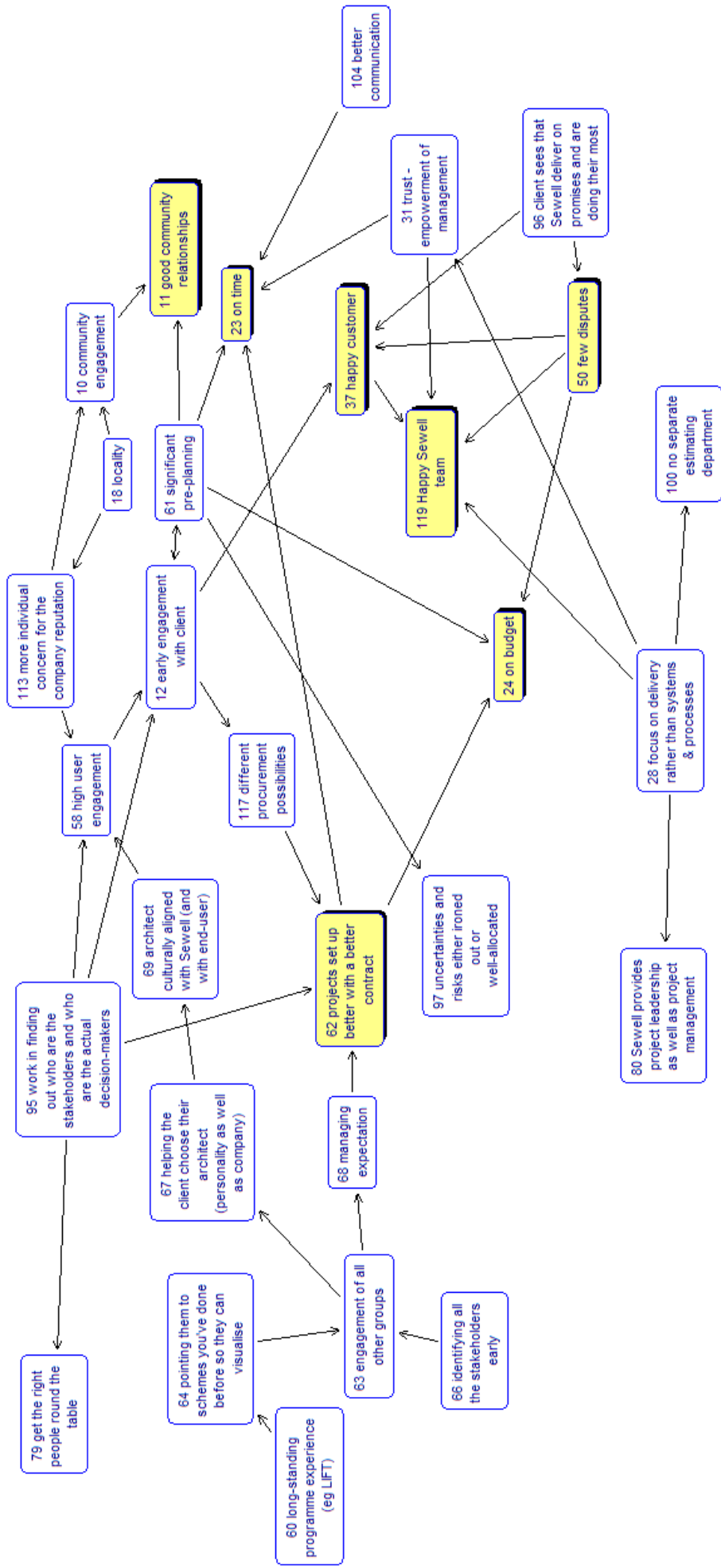


Figure 3b

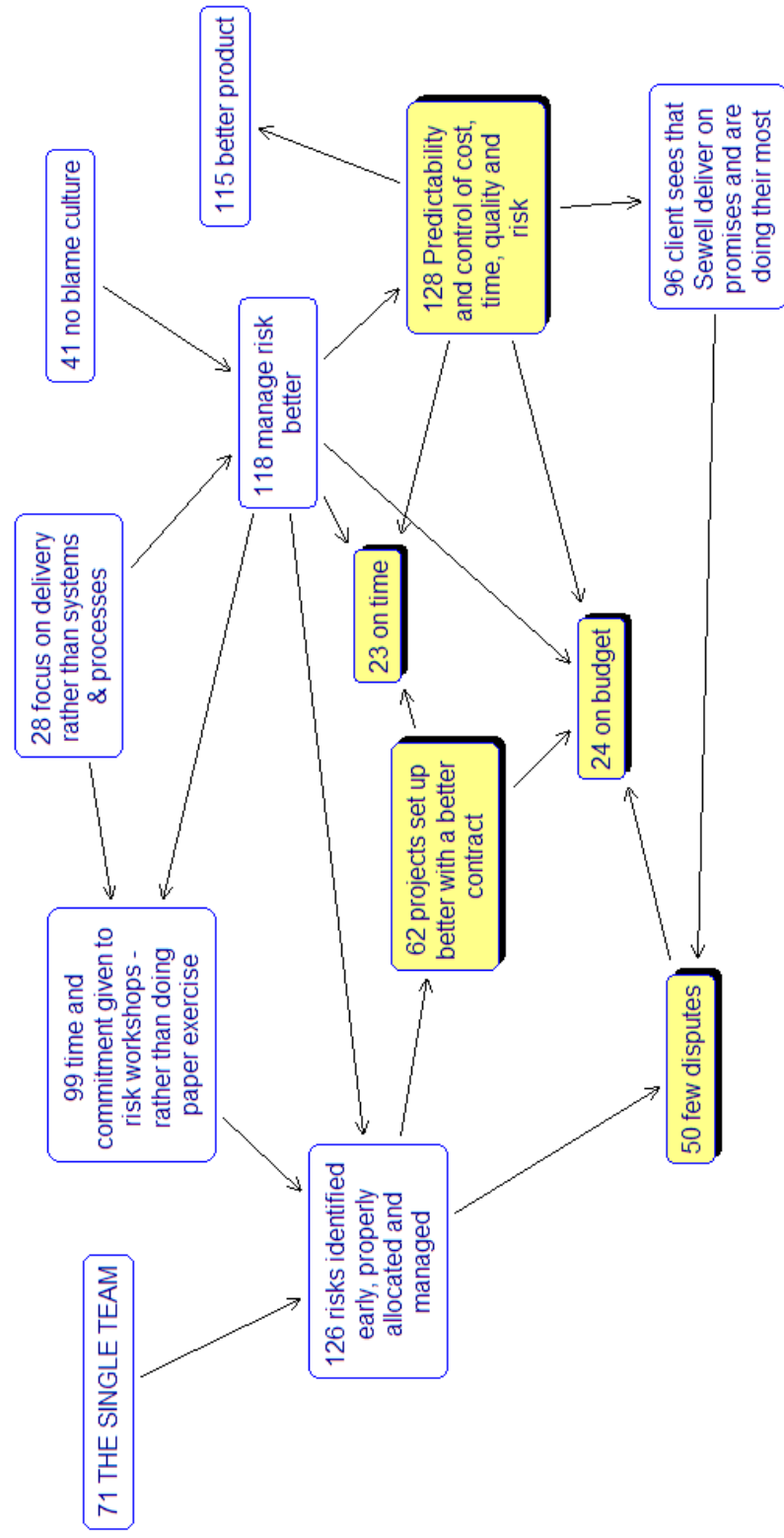


Figure 3c

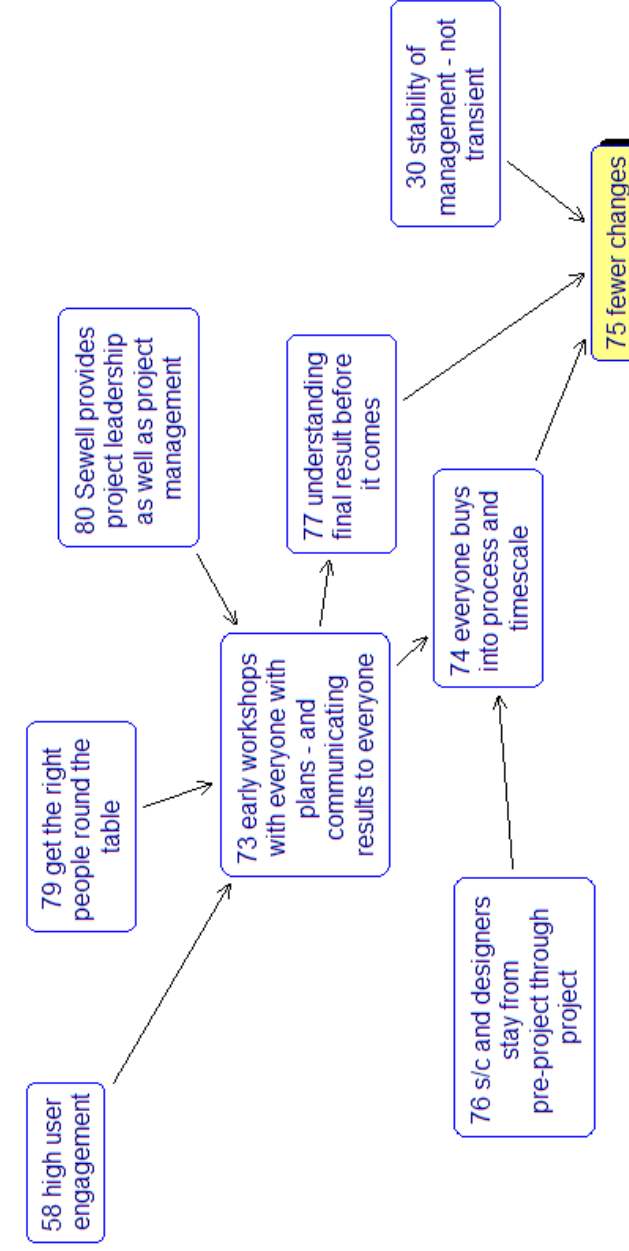


Figure 4

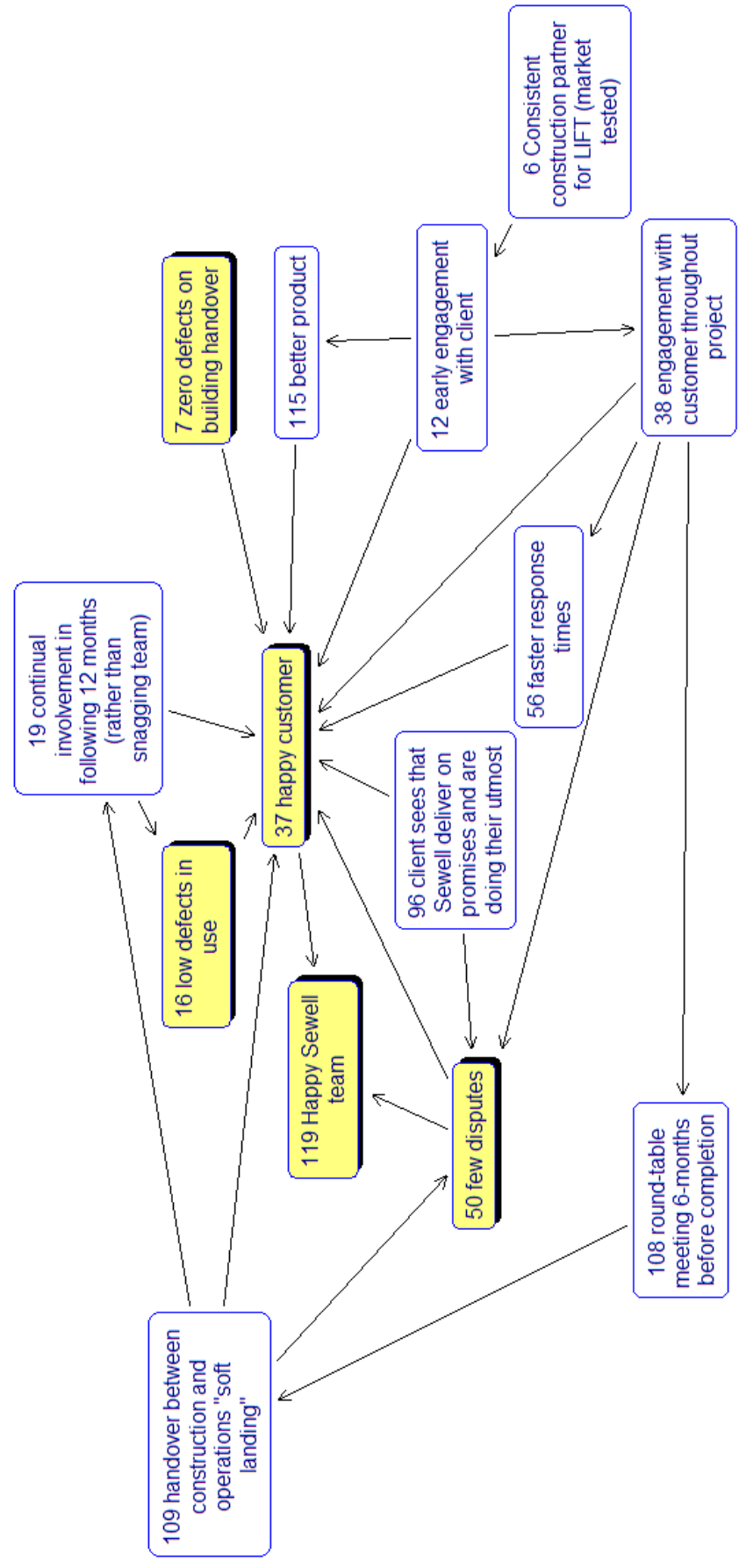


Figure 5

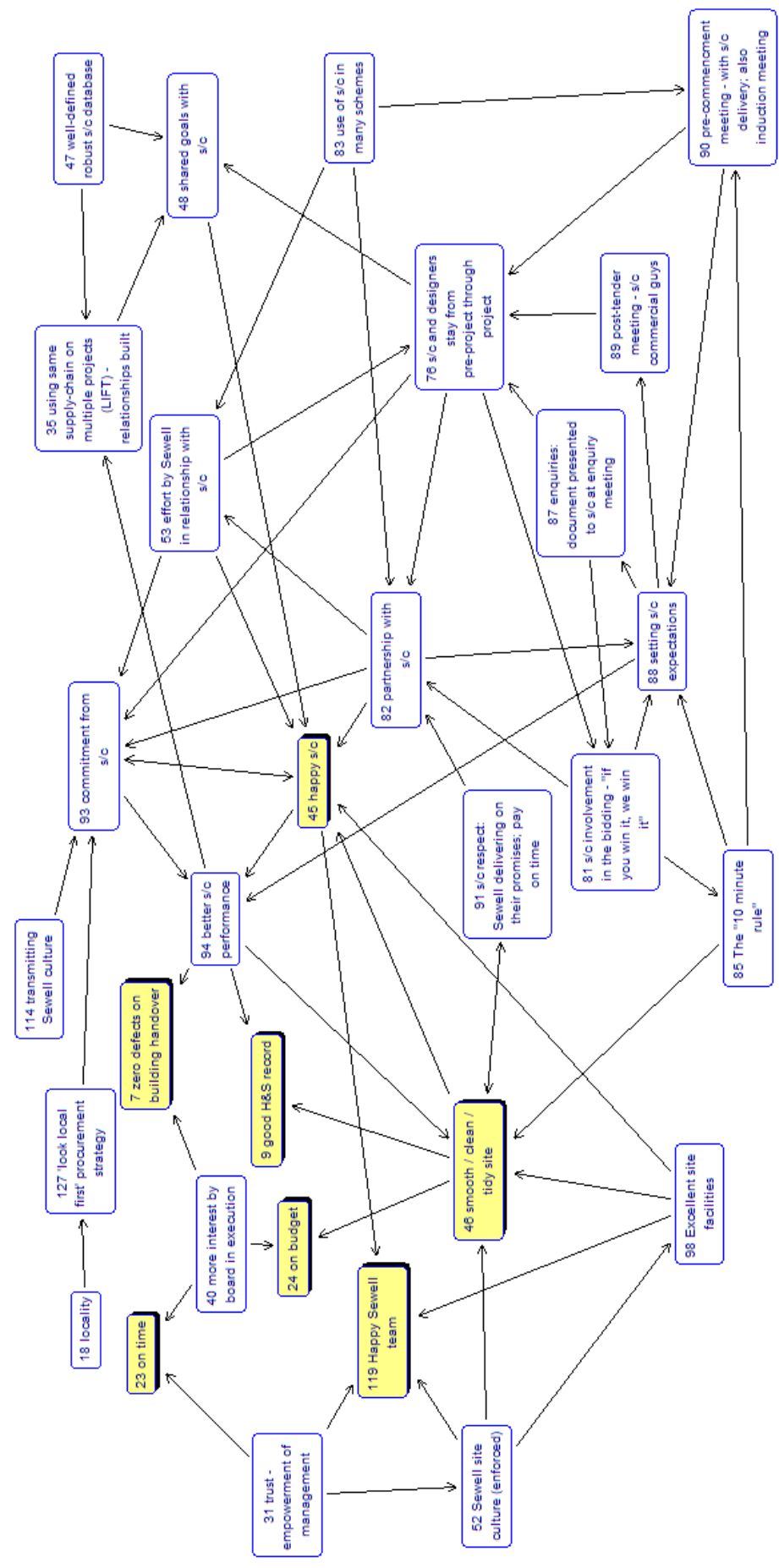
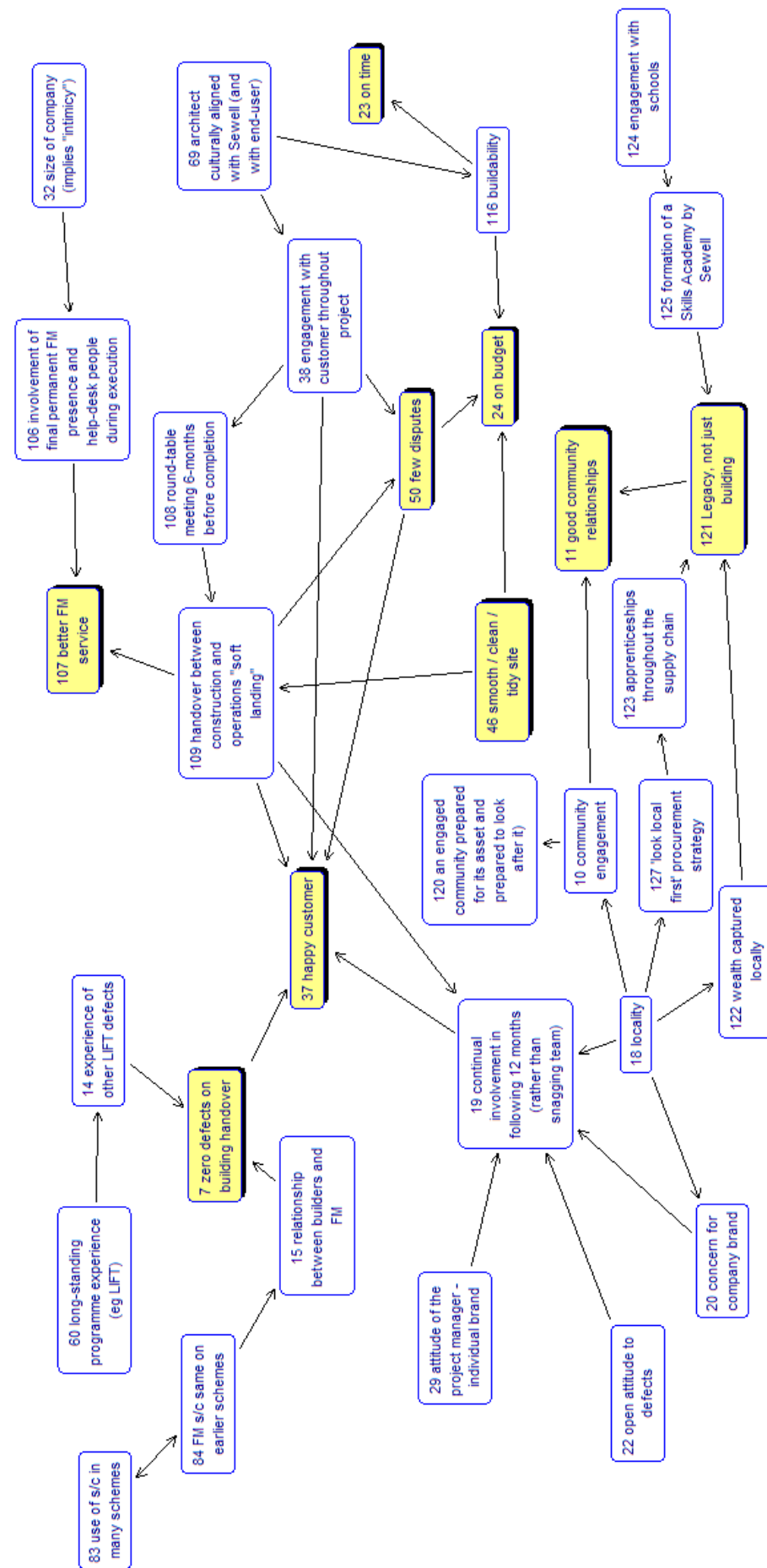


Figure 6



11 Case studies

1: Endike Primary School

Complete new build and refurbishment and demolition of existing buildings.

Awarded a Bronze Considerate Constructors Award.

Delivered

- ✓ On time
- ✓ On budget

Using

- ✓ Multiple trades
- ✓ Over 80% local contractors , 90% within the Yorkshire boundary
- ✓ 15 apprentices

‘Staff are over the moon with the building and their individual spaces, it truly is a one of a kind facility. Both of our organisations traditional values of community, caring and friendship have created an excellent relationship. We wanted to make this opportunity a learning experience for the children as well and Sewell really took that on board.’ Linda Burrows, Head Teacher, Endike Primary School.

Challenge

The local authority required a completely new facility to replace the 1930’s building that was no longer fit for purpose.

Solution

A project team of Sewell’s construction, design, commercial and facilities management experts was established fifteen months ahead of the construction phase of the project. The team worked collaboratively with the school to develop a building design that thoroughly considered their space requirements and pupil flow. This included retractable seating in the main hall to allow for flexible use of the space, and single ply membrane roofing on the structural deck allowing for easy, cost effective expansion, should the school wish to in the future.

As the new facility was being constructed extremely closely to the existing school and part of the original building needed to be demolished to allow for the new build, Sewell thoroughly considered the health and safety implications and possible avoidance measures to effectively manage the project’s risks. Sewell opted for continuous flight auger (CFA) piling for the foundations and safe removal of asbestos from the existing buildings prior to demolition.

Sewell applied facilities management expertise along with past product experience to ensure the best whole life costing and lower operating costs for the school. This included solar panels for water heating and photo voltaic panels for electricity generation.

Subcontractors from Sewell’s preapproved supply chain database that already met the nationally recognised Constructing Excellence Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were invited to submit a competitive tender. Tenders were scrutinised to guarantee the best team to carry out the works for the school. 80% of contractors selected for the project were from local companies, minimising the



carbon footprint of the project, as travel was reduced. Prior to the construction, Sewell met with subcontractors to reinforce the high quality expectations set out within the tender package.

Delivery

Parents and local residents were engaged from the very start of the project, through a variety of face to face forums, newsletters and notifications. The 24/7 helpdesk number was made available to all residents, allowing them to raise any queries, questions or complaints easily. The school, local councillors and community groups also received two weekly construction updates, featuring quality, safety, and local spend statistics.

As part of the delivery, a wing of the existing facility needed to be demolished to clear space for the construction of the new school. To enable this, Sewell refurbished the wing farthest away from the new building, out of term time, to allow the school to decant from the teaching spaces that needed to be knocked down. Asbestos removal was programmed ahead of the demolition and water suppression was used to reduce the dust as the buildings were pulled down.

This entire refurbishment, decant and demolition project was completed without interrupting the school's day to day teaching or operations. Local residents were also informed ahead of this process and were given car wash vouchers as a good will gesture.

As part of Sewell's commitment to the environment, the project team opted for a subcontractor that segregated waste into recyclable categories as oppose to simply landfill; this resulted in 91% of all site waste generated being recycled. The rubble from the existing building was also used in the foundations of a neighbouring school, Frederick Holmes; another Sewell education project.

Part way through the construction, Sewell held a topping out ceremony to thank the entire supply chain for their hard work and commitment up to that point; this instilled enthusiasm and pride for the final phases of the construction programme. Committed to developing a skilled workforce, fifteen apprentices also gained hands on experience on this project.

Results

Endike Primary School was delivered on budget and ahead of schedule allowing staff to move into their new facility with plenty of time before the start of the new term. The new 420 capacity school with a 26 place nursery effectively promotes a creative and fun environment, placing learning at its heart.

The environmentally friendly school has solar panels for heating hot water and photo voltaic panels for electricity generation. Natural ventilation is provided by wind catchers and openable windows, and natural sunlight through sun tubes. The external works have interactive focus on fun and learning; this includes an amphitheatre performance space and reading zones. Vegetable patches, a multi use games area, grassed sports pitches, a memory garden and a nature reserve also contribute to the outside transformation, which incorporates part of the old preserved landscape.

Continuing on from the established relationship with the Sewell construction team, the school opted to award the cleaning, reactive and planned preventative maintenance contract to Sewell Facilities Management.

Going the extra mile

To maintain and strengthen relationships with pupils, teaching staff and the local community Sewell held fortnightly site tours with trade demonstrations. As a result all pupils, staff and members of the Governing Body were able to safely tour the construction site. Sewell also arranged a Father Christmas and reindeer visit for the pupils and local community, and over 60 pupils experienced the Sewell Skills Academy.

2: Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit

Complex refurbishment of an operational education facility

Delivered

- ✓ On time
- ✓ On budget

Using

- ✓ Multiple trades (135 jobs protected)
- ✓ 97% local contractors, 100% within the Yorkshire region
- ✓ 4 apprentices

'It has been a pleasure to work alongside Sewell Group and see for myself how their unique blend of systems and passion, results in excellent outcomes for their customers and the local communities in which they work.' Richard King, Chair, Hull Esteem LEP.

Challenge

Originally built for primary school teaching, the Ashwell facility was in need of major works to create the ideal learning environment for pupils with behavioural difficulties and teaching staff. However the scheme had only been allocated a small budget for essential minor works.

Solution

Prior the programme of works getting underway Sewell appointed a building surveyor to gain a thorough understanding of the facility's structure and fixes, enabling the design team to design out any health and safety risks. As with any construction activity, Sewell firstly prioritised works that would ensure the facility was legally compliant, safe and secure. This included items such as fire detection, emergency lighting, CCTV and data installation. With leaks causing ongoing problems for the school, a resurfaced and insulated roof was also top of the list.

Sewell collaborated with the teaching staff, Hull Esteem Consortium and the local authority on several occasions to develop a list of additional deliverable activities within the remaining budget, prioritising items that would have the biggest positive impact for the school and importantly, would be sustainable. Sewell applied its facilities management and whole life costing knowledge to select items with durability, creating added value.

Using the business' tried and tested procurement criteria, subcontractors from Sewell's preapproved supply chain database that already met the Government's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were invited to submit a competitive tender. Tenders were thoroughly scrutinised to guarantee the best team to carry out the works for the school. Subsequently 97% of contractors were selected from Hull based companies; this minimised the carbon footprint of the project as travel was significantly reduced.

As the site teams would be working in and around a live facility that housed pupils with behavioural complexities, Sewell and subcontractors collaborated as a single team to develop a delivery programme



that considered building users and workflow, phased by areas to limit classroom disruption and the creation of potentially challenging situations.

Delivery

The works were managed by a local Site Manager who joined Sewell aged 18 as an apprentice. He gained his qualifications whilst being with the company and now, seven years later, is responsible for overseeing complex projects such as this one. Four apprentices also gained experience on this project.

As part of the site induction process, the workforce were given an intense induction, with a particular focus on conflict resolution should such an instance arise. However due to the continued engagement with the school and the programme structure, no disturbances occurred.

The Site Manager carried out quality spot checks and inspections throughout the works and held 'tool box talks' with his team. These talks enabled Sewell to reinforce the KPIs and key messages within the initial induction and gave operatives an opportunity to share different ways of working to improve quality and performance.

The Site Manager and his team further developed relationships with the teachers and staff that were established during the development phase, resulting with well managed expectations, a smooth delivery and a high quality finish throughout.

Results

The refurbishment work was completed on time, on budget and with zero accidents. It included:

- the creation of a safe, secure and legally compliant environment
- a new, welcoming and appropriately laid out reception
- adjoining office spaces and WCs
- a multi-use 'Heart Space', a unique, vibrant, social hub and adjoining kitchen
- area for teaching
- a resurfaced, insulated roof
- redecoration of key areas creating a fresher look and feel throughout
- the transformation of a playground into a relevant external space with football and basketball facilities.

Going the extra mile

In addition to the prioritised activity within the reception area, Sewell rewired and decorated the hallway between the reception and social space free of charge. With longevity at front of mind, Sewell used hard wearing, wipe-clean paint ensuring minimum upkeep requirements.

3: Wilberforce Health Centre

New build

Awarded a Considerate Constructors Gold

Delivered

- ✓ On time
- ✓ On budget
- ✓ Accident free

With

- ✓ Multiple trades
- ✓ 26 local contractors, 8 within the Yorkshire region
- ✓ Over 90% local operatives

'Pooling together such an assorted range of services into one multi-purpose facility, within such a high profile area, was a major challenge, but the team's vision and thorough understanding of individual tenant and client needs has led to the design and construction of a flagship building that serves the diverse range of clientele to an exceptional standard.' Chris Long, Area Team Director, NHS England.

Challenge

With two city centre based GP practices, as well as a range of other health services in need of more fit for purpose premises, the NHS felt it was essential that services were re-housed whilst remaining in a city centre location to best meet the needs of the residents they served. A new city centre facility was an integral part of both the NHS and Hull City Council's strategic plans to support the growing residential and commercial community of the area.

Solution

The new building needed to house a unique mix of services. Client groups were diverse, many were vulnerable and there were also potential conflicts between groups; future flexibility was a critical design consideration.

To ensure all of these challenges were fully considered, service providers were involved from the first stroke of the brief that accompanied the design competition; a set of patient vignettes accompanied the original brief to give the project team a deeper insight into patient and staff needs.

Using the business' rigorous procurement criteria, subcontractors from Sewell's preapproved supply chain database that already met the nationally recognised Constructing Excellence Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were invited to submit a competitive tender. Tenders were thoroughly scrutinised to guarantee the best team to carry out the works. Of the 32 subcontractors appointed to the project, 26 were local Hull companies and the remaining 8 were all within the Yorkshire boundary.

Delivery

Sewell engaged with 20 community groups throughout the design process to ensure the local community and businesses were supported; the 24/7 helpdesk number was made available to all



residents, allowing them to raise any queries, questions or complaints easily. Bi-monthly residents meetings were also held throughout the construction.

Promotion for the shop units was incorporated into hoardings and joint news stories also featured in the local media. Sewell held over 30 site tours and events, including a sod cutting, topping out ceremony and a time capsule burial with a local school during the construction.

As part of the environmental considerations for the development, the project team:

- Recycled 98% of the demolished building and 1.6 tonnes of pigeon guano
- Demolished the unsightly predecessor, by hand in parts, to protect the neighbouring terrace
- Invested 1% of the construction budget in arts in health interventions to create a more healing environment;
- Exceeded Environment Agency flood mitigation expectations;
- Created 2 biodiversity zones;
- Incorporated solar power and a building management system to monitor and manage utility usage
- Introduced grey water recycling to reduce water usage

To achieve excellence from the supply chain, Sewell inducted each and every operative onto site, carried out quality spot checks and site inspections throughout the works and held 'tool box talks'. These talks enabled Sewell to reinforce the KPIs in relation to the project and gave operatives opportunities to recommend different ways of working to improve quality and performance.

Part way through the construction Sewell held a topping out ceremony to thank the operatives for their hard work and commitment up to that point; this instilled enthusiasm and pride for the final phases of the construction programme.

Results

Wilberforce Health Centre was completed on time, on budget and safely. The building houses a unique mix of services; including:

- Journey to Recovery
- Improving Access to Psychological Therapy
- Health Hub
- 3 GP Practices and an 8am-8pm walk in centre
- Sexual Health Service and Young Persons Sexual Health Service
- Teenage Pregnancy Support Service
- Community Services

Sewell Facilities Management provides a front of house team to meet, greet and advise visitors to the building. The centre's Building Manager, who was on hand over three months before the construction was completed to assist with the 'soft landing', knows the building inside and out and acts as a caretaker, porter, informal security and building technician all rolled into one. This ensures the tenants have a consistent, high quality service and the building remains in peak condition.

4: Malet Lambert School

Complex project management of new buildings, remodelling and refurbishments within an operational secondary school.

Scored: 36/40 Considerate Constructors

Delivered

- ✓ On time
- ✓ On budget

Using

- ✓ Multiple trades
- ✓ 123 local contractors
- ✓ 1960 jobs protected
- ✓ 24 apprentices

'It has been a pleasure to work alongside Sewell Group and see how their unique blend of systems and passion results in excellent outcomes for their customers and the local communities in which they work.' Richard King, Chair, Esteem

Challenge

The school and local authority aimed to incorporate the original characteristics of the existing building with a state of the art facility. The project design needed to create better pupil flow around the school, replacing and bringing together a series of out buildings, to create a seamless link from old to new. The project also required the development of a rear extension sympathetic to the surroundings.

Solution

Sewell collaborated with the school from the initial stages of the design development to enable effective planning of the project. The team gained an in-depth understanding of pupil flow and timetables to effectively manage the logistical challenges of an operational site with 1700 users at the programming stage.

Utilising the business' wider expertise, Sewell incorporated systems and materials into that design to reduce ongoing operating costs; this included an ETFE roof to provide natural light and humidity controlled ventilation. Sewell also used the same finishes throughout both new and refurbished buildings to ensure a consistent, manageable lifecycle regime.

Subcontractors from Sewell's preapproved supply chain database that already met the nationally recognised Constructing Excellence Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were invited to submit a competitive tender. Tenders were thoroughly scrutinised to guarantee the best team to carry out the works for the school. Local contractors were selected for the project, minimising the carbon footprint from the project as travel was reduced. Prior to the construction Sewell met with subcontractors to reinforce the high quality expectations set out within the tender package.

Best value was also guaranteed through the cross checking of costs against National Benchmarking



data for value for money. A value for money statement was also included as part of the stage 2 submission to the developer and local authority.

As the site teams would be working in and around a live facility that housed 1700 people, Sewell, subcontractors and the school collaborated as a single team to develop a delivery programme that considered building users and workflow; this was phased by buildings, blocks and wings to limit disruption. An outcome of this collaborative approach was a dedicated site entrance to create a deliberate segregation between school and construction traffic and a foot bridge running above the construction site to enable building users to move safely around the campus.

Delivery

The construction phase of the project included the development of a new sports hall and a large extension block, whilst delicately refurbishing the 1930's existing building. The site team paid careful attention to the ongoing health and safety of everyone on the campus and continually catered for the delivery of teaching for the 1500 pupils.

Weekly coordination meetings and daily supervisor briefs enabled all trades to raise queries or suggest different delivery methods and ways of joint working.

A close working relationship with the school ensured annual exams and result collection could be held during the construction period, with the school able to boast an improved Ofsted report for the academic year. Sewell and the school excelled the partnership much further, pairing a variety of curriculum subjects with employability activities. This included employability classes and over 300 pupils passing through the Sewell Skills Academy. Several school leavers were offered apprenticeships with the Group, leaving more than simply a legacy of construction at Malet Lambert School.

As part of Sewell's commitment to low carbon and sustainable construction, 92% of waste on site was recycled. This was through the use of a waste contractor that segregated all waste and the reuse of the existing top soil on the site. Rain water attenuation was also implemented to relieve local drainage systems.

In consideration for local wildlife, Sewell built bird and bat boxes with the pupils to place on site, that were sympathetic to nesting seasons, and transported pond wildlife into temporary home during the works.

Results

Malet Lambert School's remodel and refurbishment, delivered on time and within budget, maintained the original 1930's feel whilst incorporating modern technology and state of the art features. The school retained its formal frontage, with connection through a covered courtyard to a new two storey building across the rear of the campus. The school has significant levels of community use and the development encourages wider participation. This includes theatre space, drama and dance studios, fitness suites, a sports hall and a floodlit all weather pitch.

Going the extra mile

Sewell held multiple engagement events with pupils and the local community throughout the programme. These included a Christmas light switch on, time capsule burial, Skills Academy sessions and curriculum activities.