

# Over three decades of innovation and engineering excellence

February 22, 2021



It is just over 30 years ago that **Spencer Group** formed. Fast forward to 2021 and the engineering specialist has become one of the UK's leading design and build businesses with more than 300 people working on vital infrastructure projects at home and abroad.

Over the past decade, the team has delivered some of the UK's most challenging yet successful rail projects.

From the 15-day blockade challenge that saw the complete remodelling and rebuilding of Gravesend station, the innovative civil engineering works within the £145m East Kent phase 2 programme to delivering a new railway chord in Ipswich, Spencer Group's ability to deliver a portfolio of infrastructure projects won high praise and awards from politicians and industry commentators alike.

Last year, one of the most challenging in living memory, **Spencer Group** completed a number of mainline and depot enhancement projects for Network Rail and train operating companies that have helped to cement the company's reputation for delivering innovative projects safely and collaboratively.

Stevenage was handed back a year ahead of the planned opening despite COVID-19 disruption and might just be one of the most efficient projects ever delivered by a principal contractor.

The company's agility and positive behaviours overcame the hurdles presented by the pandemic and enabled a collaborative approach to be formed with the Network Rail project team that transformed how the project was delivered.

But despite strong growth and an enviable reputation for its expertise in its sectors of industrial, rail and bridges, there are some things that haven't changed.



*Spencer Group was appointed by Network Rail to deliver the design and construction Turnback Facility including a new platform at Stevenage Station.*

## **Future plans**

Richard Watson, Spencer Group's Rail Project Director, has spoken to [railbusinessdaily.com](https://www.railbusinessdaily.com) about the company's ambitious plans for the future.

"It has been some journey, but one that has no intentions of slowing down," said Richard.

"The company was founded because our Chairman, Charlie Spencer, saw an opportunity to establish a business that is recognised for its engineering excellence and innovation. It was and still is vitally

important to listen to our clients' requirements and tailor our capabilities and the service we offer to deliver real value for them.

"Over the last 30 years he has led us to become a UK leader in engineering with a vision for creating a better future for us all to enjoy."

### **Making a difference**

Charlie still plays an active and daily role in the business today, driving the company forward with the same energy and desire to make a positive difference.

His legacy can be seen and felt right across the UK with a vast number of major infrastructure projects making a hugely positive difference to people's daily lives – a progressive impact that was recognised in 2016 with Charlie receiving an OBE for his lifetime contribution to business and community.

Richard continued: "Our projects help connect society, build communities and grow the country's future prosperity.

"Infrastructure plays such an important role in enabling the future. We specialise in large engineering projects ranging from the development of green power stations, enhancing the rail and road network, building distribution and storage facilities to maintaining complex suspension bridges.

"We also recognise our engineering heritage and are privileged to be engaged on some wonderful restoration projects that are preserving iconic and significant structures some of which were world firsts at their time of construction over 200 years ago.

"To remain a leader in delivering challenging engineering projects we must grow and adapt to new technologies and above all we must deliver.

"We invest heavily in stakeholder and community relations as these are vital ingredients to success in our sectors.

"We become part of the community of every project we undertake, even if only for a short period of time, however it is imperative that we recognise the complexities and sensitivities of these relationships in order for us to complement and enhance not create conflict during the delivery process.

"We try to add something whilst we are there and be seen as an opportunity to help support rather than be a negative experience – communicating positively with and caring for those who will see short-term impacts associated with our work.

"We thrive on innovation and being the first to find the best solution. This was our original goal from day one and we continue to do so three decades later.

"There is certainly a lot to be proud of and I think we have made a real and long-lasting positive difference to many communities up and down the country. But you are only as good as your last job, so it is



imperative that our standards never drop. Maintaining quality and consistency in our industry will always be challenging.”



*Spencer Group’s successfully completed work on the Port of Tyne renewable fuels terminal.*

## Safe foundations

It is this kind of drive and vision that explains the continuing success of the Spencer Group. Accounts filed for the business year ending 31 March reflected a period of significant growth.

In the year to 31 March 2020, **Spencer Group** increased turnover by £9 million, from £54 million the previous year to £63 million (an increase of 17.5%). Pre-tax profits also grew by 17.5% to £2.2 million, from £1.8 million in the year to 31 March, 2019.

That attention to detail and collaborative approach doesn’t go unrecognised.

**Spencer Group** reported an exceptional strike rate of almost 50% of tenders won and entered the current financial year with secured work with a value of £55 million.

Richard said: “At the forefront of everything we do has been the safety of our people, supply chain partners, customers and members of the public.

“We are advocates of the philosophy that safety performance drives business performance and it is no

coincidence that the improvement in our safety performance figures mirrors that of our growth and profitability.

“Better planning, project development and clarity of our expectations sets the standard that we expect from both ourselves and our supply chain partners on our projects and this performance has become a real differentiator for our clients at contractor selection stage.

“The last few years we have consolidated our expertise and industry leadership in fields such as infrastructure, rail maintenance depots and complex bridge renovations – an area which we see even greater growth potential in the years ahead.

“These industries are being challenged by the Department for Transport to deliver greater efficiencies at a pace they have never experienced before on projects such as Ashington to Blyth and it is those suppliers who can rise to this challenge that will succeed.

“One of our flagship projects last year was the major rail capacity enhancement project at Stevenage station.

“Our teams worked incredibly hard on the complex £30 million project which involved constructing a 130m-long platform, completed with approximately two kilometres of new electrified track and signalling, increasing East Coast Mainline capacity.

“It was completed a year ahead of the scheduled opening by working in close collaboration with our client Network Rail and other key stakeholders and this demonstrates what can be achieved when everyone is galvanised towards a common goal.

The company continues to support public and private organisations up, down and across the UK. The passion, energy and drive to do things better is clear to see at [Spencer Group](#) and we would like to thank their team for welcoming us and sharing their story.



*Spencer Group is an industry leader in the design and delivery of bridge projects, including the Union Chain Bridge, and has been applying that skill to the rail industry for more than 20 years.*

[Click here for more details.](#)