

# East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership



East Midlands  
Improvement and  
Efficiency Partnership

## New Red Lion Quarter Builds on Food Heritage in South Holland ▾



Local children were involved and engaged with the project

## Multi-functional building in Spalding built with true commitment to the community ▾

Led by South Holland District Council through the East Midlands Property Alliance (empa) a £5.75 million mixed-use building in Spalding, Lincolnshire has been built that uses local contractors, employs local people and ultimately benefits the local community. Through the local recirculation of money it is estimated that the South Holland District has benefited by over £18 million.

*“The development of the Red Lion Quarter is a fantastic example of using local engagement, employment and expenditure, which have all benefited the local area. A great deal of work was involved in pulling together the funding for this project, which ultimately gave financial reassurance to the local authority.*”

*The Red Lion Quarter includes retail units, a food court, a training kitchen used by Boston College, a restaurant*

*and a range of meeting spaces. Through the empa Framework this project has demonstrated a commitment to the community from the outset. At a practical level the project was delivered on time and on budget and there is now another*

*building we can all be proud of in Spalding.”*

Alan Coole  
Business Development Manager  
empa

## The vision for the Red Lion Quarter ▾

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South Holland is a flat fenland district in Lincolnshire with a heritage in the agriculture, horticulture and food processing. According to the University of Lincoln, 20% of the nations’ food touches South Holland every year and a quarter of the local population is employed by the food industry, which is the major contributor to the local economy. It became recognised that this heritage in the food industry was not benefiting the local community in as many ways as it possibly could and was not celebrated in the area in any way.

It was also recognised that there were other requirements in the South Holland, and in particular, the Spalding area.

- South Holland did not have a recognised College of Further Education or vocational college in the area. The obvious focus for a vocational college would be the food industry.

- In Spalding itself, there were no meeting room or conference facilities in the town centre, of which many of the large, local food businesses were in need.
- There was also a shortage of small business offices in the town centre.

To respond to these differing needs South Holland District Council created a scheme to develop a food centre in Spalding, which would include facilities for further education as well as managed office space and meeting rooms.

From the project’s conception in 2003, South Holland District Council had a clear vision about what it wanted to achieve with the Red Lion Quarter.

- A key priority was that the focus was on food and that it reflected the major industry of the area.
- That it should include a further education facility to improve local skills.

- It should provide new employment opportunities in the community.
- That it would be benefit and support local businesses.

South Holland District Council successfully applied for external funding and delivered its vision for the Red Lion Quarter, with the end result being a vibrant three storey building including:

### Ground Floor:

A Food court, which delivers local produce to customers; a restaurant

and training kitchen run by apprentices from Boston College.

### First Floor:

Used by Boston College to deliver catering, food, IT and business courses. The first floor also provides public meeting rooms available for hire.

### Second Floor:

Twelve managed office spaces available for rent.

## The benefits of empa ▾

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The Red Lion Quarter site was identified and purchased in 2004 by South Holland District Council and the £6.5m funding required was sought from local organisations on the agreement that it could be designed and built within 18 months. The funding came from a combination of:

- The East Midlands Development Agency.
- Lincolnshire Enterprise.
- Boston College.
- Lincolnshire County Council.
- Section 106 planning monies from the local power station (South Holland District Council).

The deadline was set by the varying funding arrangements in order to ensure funds had been spent by the end of March 2011.

The Red Lion Quarter project was done through empa's Intermediate Framework, which applies to projects with a value of between £2m - £7.5m. Willmott Dixon was allocated as the key contractor. This was the first time South Holland District Council had used the empa Framework and the benefits were soon realised:

### Speed:

By procuring the project through the Framework it was possible to be on site within six months.

**Risk Mitigation:**

All major risks were covered within the Contract including Planning, Highways and Boundary Wall legalities.

engagement and local employment targets: The local expenditure targets were: 75% of the project value to be spent within 60 miles of the site, 50% within 40 miles and 25% within 20 miles.

**Commitment to the Community:**

Willmott Dixon was committed to achieving empa local spend, local

	YEAR 1 Base Commitment	YEAR 2 Improvement on YEAR 1	YEAR 3 Improvement on YEAR 1	YEAR 4 Improvement on YEAR 1
local spend withing 20-miles of site	25%	3%	6%	9%
local spend withing 40-miles of site	50%	4%	8%	12%
local spend withing 60-miles of site	75%	4%	8%	12%

**A successful commitment to the community ▾**

**A community project**

It was fundamental from the beginning of this project that the local community not only accepted it, but was committed to its success. A number of different activities took place to engage the local community:

end of 2008 during the critical period in the project planning, this increased to monthly. The meetings were planned in line with key decisions and milestones which had to be made on the programme. The board was made up of representatives from all of the funding bodies for the project and members of South Holland District Council including planning, building control, environmental health, finance, communications

**Creation of a project board:**

When established in 2007, the project board met on a quarterly basis, however towards the

and marketing and the major professional consultants.

### **A public consultation day:**

A public consultation event was held at the South Holland Centre on 28 July 2009 from 9.00am until 7.30pm. This day was specifically selected because it fell on a market day in Spalding, which would help to boost attendance. Boston College marketing team organised the day and invited councillors, media and the general public to attend. Representatives from Willmott Dixon attended as well as project board members and Boston College staff. Eight hundred leaflets were distributed in the market place outside the venue and throughout the day members of the public were able to ask questions about the project. Two hundred people attended the event and it also received coverage on the local media including BBC Look North, BBC Radio Lincolnshire and Lincs FM.

### **A building naming competition:**

A panel was organised to decide on a suitable name for the new building including representatives from Boston College, South Holland District Council and a local newspaper, the Lincs Free Press. SHDC marketing team prepared a list of forty conceptual names from which the panel selected their five top names. The Lincs Free Press then ran a competition for members

of the public to vote on their favourite names and the Red Lion Quarter was the chosen name.

### **Consistent communication:**

As part of the communication with the local community, several open days were held, newsletters and consultation letters were sent out to local residents and businesses and press releases were distributed to the local media.

The project won an award for “Considerate construction” and the client has received letters from neighbours indicating their satisfaction at the way construction and development was completed.

### **Liaison with schools:**

Using an empa School Agreement, which defines the objectives for collaboration, the project group had ongoing involvement from Spalding Grammar School and Boston College.

### **Engaging the local education community**

The Red Lion Quarter has provided a new educational base in Spalding and, as a key funder and tenant, Boston College staff and students were heavily involved from the outset. Over 160 students from Boston College have visited the site and benefited from real construction experience and students from the college attended the Design Team meetings to ensure their thoughts were taken

into account throughout the process. Furthermore, apprentices from the college spent a total of eight weeks on site constructing brickwork columns in the restaurant.

The restaurant has also been supported by celebrity chef Jason Atherton, known for his take on Spanish cuisine, who is also a patron of the project and a former student of the College.

Additional engagement activity has also taken place with the local education community including:

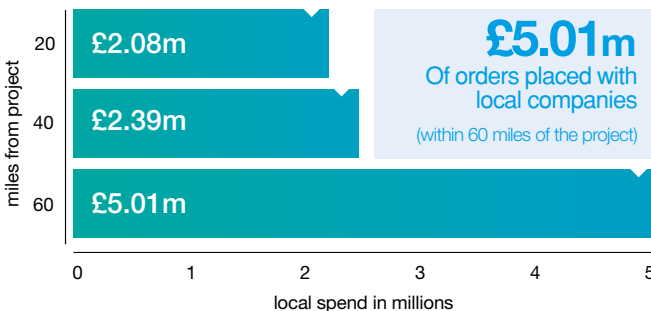
- Four local primary schools were involved in designing the site hoardings.
- Willmott Dixon were proactively engaged with Spalding Grammar School and had a presence at two Career Fairs, ran “Dragon Den” events and organised visits to the site.

- Work experience students sat within meetings of the subcontractor and design teams.
- Time capsule burial.

### Local expenditure in the community

The empa Framework sets strict targets on expenditure in the community and local business are encouraged to register as empa contractors at regional “Meet the Buyer” events and to register on the Build East Midlands website (the empa portal). For the Red Lion Quarter project all the subcontractors were registered on the empa portal. The project delivered excellent value for money exceeded targets for local expenditure. £5.01m was spent within 60 miles of site, which exceeded this target by £0.8m and £2.09m was spent within 20 miles of site, which exceeded this target by £0.6m.

### Local spend profile (miles from project)



## Local employment in the community

The empa Skills Academy was set up to develop the skills culture and infrastructure within the construction industry. The Red Lion Quarter has made several important contributions to the Academy targets, for example:

- 27 Further Education site visits.
- 18 Curriculum support events.
- Engagement with the Job Centre.
- Upskilling of the local work force.
- Delivering health and safety training.

*“This project has been highly successful despite the challenge of spending the funds in such a tight timescale. However we believe we have shown a true commitment to the*

*community at every level, providing local employment and education opportunities and delivering local expenditure. A large factor in the success of this project has been our close working relationship with Willmott Dixon who worked very collaboratively to ensure that the project could commence on time. It is clear that the empa Framework brings immediate construction and problem-solving benefits with additional involvement and engagement with the local community and with appropriate use of local contractors.”*

Richard Baggaley  
Economic Development Officer,  
Capital Projects  
South Holland District Council



The new Red Lion Quarter building

## Contacts ▾

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<http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk/emiep-tv/1/52/empa-project-red-lion-quarter-lincolnshire/>

## East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.



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