This government has made it clear that it relies on infrastructure to stimulate and sustain economic growth. Which puts the construction industry under the spotlight, providing great potential to shine. Of course, in return for the opportunity, the industry is still asked to pitch in, particularly during these straitened times, by doing more for less. Yet, while many are quick to point out this is a doomed strategy, the industry seems determined to perpetuate the approach by continuing to bid for lowest-cost contracts and agreeing to some overly-ambitious targets.

Collaborative working brings benefits. It works. If done to a plan, it ensures alignment of expectations and objectives, creates a level of agility to respond to the unknowns, and provides serious risk mitigation measures and capabilities when programme and budget fall out of line. It builds a solid framework on which high performing teams can deliver what they say they will deliver. Projects come in on-time, on-budget and on-spec, no matter what changes, challenges or unexpected external events happen during the delivery phase. While some in the industry are congratulating themselves, deservedly, on a change of approach, there is more evidence of wishy-washy leadership commitment and an inconsistent approach that means true collaboration will never be achieved.

While some in the industry are congratulating themselves, deservedly, on a change of approach, there is more evidence of wishy-washy leadership commitment and an inconsistent approach that means true collaboration will never be achieved. Anglian Water’s Dale Evans honestly reports how difficult and long the journey has been for the @OneAlliance, revealing the hidden truth that collaborative working is not easy. But the results are not just tangible but long-lasting. It’s been 21 years since Latham and its time the industry has a more honest approach to collaboration. It starts with clients who are genuinely signed up to the challenge, rather than just expecting their supply chain partners to make the necessary changes.
It continues with ambitious and visionary leaders who recognise that failure to meet delivery targets is not an option (or even a given) and who really know what it takes to meet them, building teams with the right behaviours and mindsets to get things done. And it means putting together high performing teams who are willing and eager to work out of their comfort zone to achieve something momentous, whatever personal hardship that may take.

That’s a tall order. We need to build on today’s progress but not stand still. There is still much to be done if we are to make Latham’s vision a reality.

“It’s been 21 years since Latham and its time the industry has a more honest approach to collaboration. It starts with clients who are genuinely signed up to the challenge.”