

metro

MAGAZINE

Why sustainable development
is more important than ever

CHP, District
Heating, Biomass
Boilers, Fibre
Broadband
& More

King's Cross Central Green Living in the City

British
Steel:
The Rise
of Corby

Meet Metropolitan
Technical Director Robert Clarke

A nighttime photograph of a city street. A street lamp on the left is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The sky is a deep blue. In the foreground, there are blurred light trails from traffic, creating a sense of motion. The overall mood is urban and serene.

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It's an exciting time here at Metropolitan – the revolutionary urban regeneration at King's Cross Central is one of the most thrilling sustainable developments in the UK, and our integrated utility and district heating solution is something we're very proud of. From sites as diverse as the reclaimed splendour of Little Stanion in Corby to huge inner city developments like King's

Cross Central, we're busy delivering sustainable utility solutions that are, in my humble opinion, unrivalled in the current marketplace – and you can read more about them in this very magazine. I hope you'll find it as enjoyable to read as we found putting it together.

WELCOME

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the first edition of Metro Magazine

Sustainable, low-carbon, eco-friendly – these terms are something that those of us working in the construction industry have been unable to avoid in recent times: in the news, from politicians and lobby groups, from consumers and increasingly in the legislation that controls planning permission and construction activity in the UK. The era where green issues were a fringe concern is now consigned to the history books; we all now recognise the need to safeguard the planet for future generations.

Thanks to the global recession, however, we're working in the toughest marketplace since the Great Depression. Simply staying in business can be a real challenge – let alone adapting to the demands of the low-carbon economy. The situation is not helped by a lack of clarity in requirements from the Government, rapidly moving goal posts, green technology that is still developing and a frustrating and protracted planning process.

So how can we overcome these challenges? Well, doing the right thing by the planet doesn't have

to be difficult, and can even be more profitable, offering a better value proposition than traditional construction approaches. That's what Metropolitan does: we can provide you with an integrated energy and utility answer that combines all of the utility assets with a low-carbon solution. A district heating network is part of the package, along with all of the other utilities, including an ESCO and a low-carbon energy design that meets Code 4 but has the flexibility to achieve Code 6 sustainability requirements. In other words, the Metropolitan solution is 'future proof'.

Metropolitan is a member of the Inexus Group which has the pedigree required to provide this solution: the Group entered the utility market in 1993, introducing competition and improved service to developers in gas, electricity and water connections. Today Inexus owns well in excess of 500,000 connected assets across the UK, and is committed to providing the best service to its customers. Metropolitan has evolved and expanded from the strategic projects team of our

sister company Connect. Connect remains the UK's leading installer of traditional on-site infrastructure to the house building community with Metropolitan now extending the Inexus business model into the new sustainable development market. We've added the design, provision and ownership of distributed heating systems with centralised heat and power generation to an already market-leading range of utility assets. Metropolitan brings together, at a strategic project level, the asset owner, asset manager and utility provider on large scale, Code 4 and above developments.

The Inexus Group has a distinguished heritage for bringing innovation and competition to the utility sector. The story began in the gas sector, as we became an Independent Gas Transporter in 1992 and taking independent ownership of gas assets. This effectively ended the British Gas monopoly and provided developers with real choice. Applying the same approach to the electricity sector, the Group became an Independent Distribution Network Operator



Graham Jenkins - Managing Director, Metropolitan & John Marsh - Development Director, Metropolitan



in 2004. In 2007, it gained an independent water inset license, adding the ownership of water and wastewater infrastructure to the portfolio.

The model evolved into an integrated asset owner/asset manager/utility provider approach, applied across the UK and covering gas, electricity, water and wastewater. In 2008, the 'fibre-to-the-home' product was added, providing triple-play voice, data and TV at unrivalled speeds. The development at Corby, featured on page 14, is a great example of this model in action. This is the largest multi-utility site in Europe where the entire utility infrastructure is provided by one company and is proving hugely successful for developers and residents alike.

Evolution in the market continues apace, with the drive to convert to a low-carbon economy the

latest challenge we all need to meet. The Climate Change Act 2008 makes the need to reduce carbon emissions a legal requirement. This is supported by the Code for Sustainable Homes and targets are being set as a condition of planning which we take a look at in depth on page 8. We recognise the need to future-proof our infrastructure so developments meet the increasingly stringent targets for carbon reduction. We do this with a modular build approach and innovation in the installation of a district heating network. Our solution delivers Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes now. To achieve Code Level 6, our solution is complemented by the sensible addition of the local micro-technologies that are currently used to meet Code Level 3. This approach enables developers to concentrate on building homes whilst Metropolitan lay

down the foundations of this future-proofed sustainable infrastructure by integrating low-carbon energy, affordable broadband and reduced water use. Therefore the focus for Metropolitan is in delivering a low-carbon solution for larger developments, typically over 500 plots.

As I write this, the first green shoots of recovery are beginning to show in the housebuilding industry; with Metropolitan, you can be sure your development's utility infrastructure will be in the hands of a co-operative partner who will be there to adapt to whatever the market throws at you. Meeting sustainability requirements will be one less thing to worry about, as will concerns over whether or not you've got the best deal on construction. While things are still tough, there are promising signs for the future. As we

enter the next upswing of the economic cycle and the pent-up demand for housing caused by two years of depressed sales is finally unleashed, I hope we'll be able to work together, providing sustainable homes for generations to come.

John Marsh
Development Director
Metropolitan



Bill Fox

METROPOLITAN PEOPLE:

Meet Bill Fox, Project Manager

CV?

I've had a varied career, starting off as an electrician fifteen years ago. Then I lived in France and Greece doing a variety of jobs, which included being a bar manager and water-skiing instructor. After returning to the UK, I moved into voice and data networks after undertaking a course at the Manchester Metropolitan University, which encompassed fibre-optic splicing, terminating and testing. I then joined a telecommunications company where I was a Cabling Engineer, before progressing to a Maintenance Engineer Service Delivery Manager. I left to run my own company offering voice and data cabling before I was head-hunted by Inexus. I joined the company in November 2007 as a Project Manager.

Tell us about your role at Metropolitan.

I work within the Metropolitan Construction Team working on various multi-utility sites and project managing each from start to finish. This involves a range of activities such as ducting installation, internal house wiring, material ordering and liaising with our infrastructure designer. Another important aspect is creating and maintaining a good relationship on-site with developers and contractors.

What's the working environment like at Metropolitan?

Everybody is really positive, even in these tough times we have a 'can-do' attitude. The company empowers people, and if there is more trust, there are better results.

Describe a typical day.

There is no typical day for me, but that's good because I enjoy spontaneity. I spend most of my time on-site, so I'm often dealing

with different developers, contractors and, sometimes, customers. I'm usually to be found coordinating the suppliers, contractors, checking the drawings and deliveries – but it varies a lot.

Tell us about your team.

It's a new team and everybody seems really switched on and up for the challenge from the word 'go'. I'm really looking forward to working with them.

Goals for the future?

I'd like to see as much fibre in the ground and as many people connected as possible. I'm also looking forward to the successful completion of our big projects and watching the company grow. On a personal level, eventually I'd like to retire to Greece; I speak the language and have lots of friends over there.

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THE COMPLETE PACKAGE



LOW-CARBON SOLUTIONS:

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On 26 June 2009, Gordon Brown launched the Government's manifesto ahead of the world conference on climate change in Copenhagen in December.

He said the conference must deliver on two goals: to cut emissions and agree a fair deal between developed and developing countries. This means that:

- › Global emissions must peak and start to decline after 2020
- › By 2050, global emissions need to be reduced by at least 50 percent (compared with 1990 levels)
- › In order to leave growth for developing countries, developed countries must agree to reduce their emissions by 80 percent by 2050

CRACKING THE CODE

Are you ready?

Brown said the manifesto 'sets out the kind of international agreement we believe the world needs,' and that the UK would be 'at the forefront of this effort'. He was confident that investment in new low-carbon technologies would drive down costs. 'The economics are clear,' he said. 'The immense costs of future climate change are matched only by the enormous growth potential and growth dividend of the new green revolution: in energy efficiency; in energy production; and in transport.'

Our homes account for approximately 27 percent of the UK's carbon emissions, presenting a serious challenge in the fight against global warming. The Climate Change Act 2008 sets legally binding targets on carbon reduction. To support these initiatives, the Department for Communities and Local Government introduced The Code for Sustainable Homes: an environmental impact rating system for housing that sets new standards for energy efficiency and sustainability.

The Code was officially launched in December 2006 and introduced as a voluntary standard in England in 2007. As of May 2008, all new homes in England are required to have a Code rating. EcoHomes 2006 is still used as a standard for

refurbished housing in England and for all housing in Scotland and Wales.

These standards for carbon reduction are now increasingly reflected in the planning requirements, making it part of the mandatory procedure developers must adhere to when building a house. The Code works by awarding new homes a star rating from one to six, based on their performance against nine sustainability criteria. These are combined to assess the overall environmental impact, forming the basis of a hotel-style star rating system. The planning permission for a development sets the actual target on reductions and tends to follow the Code.

One star is entry level above building regulations, with a six-star rating being the highest – indicating exemplary developments in terms of sustainability.

While most people concentrate on carbon savings from energy use, the Code is not just about energy, it is about a whole range of criteria. Reduced water use is equally as important as reduced energy. Building Regulations 2006 show that water consumption in a property needs to be less than 120l/person/day; this reduces to 105l/person/day under Code 4, and less than 80l/person/day under Code 6. The drive toward reduced water consumption makes the need for a combined utility strategy critical. Please note that the list below highlights the

reduction in carbon emissions as based on Part L of Building Regulations 2006.

- › Level 1 = 10%
- › Level 2 = 18%
- › Level 3 = 25%
- › Level 4 = 44%
- › Level 5 = 100%*
- › Level 6 = 100%**

* Zero emissions in relation to Building Regulations issues (i.e. zero emissions from heating, hot water, ventilation and lighting)

** A completely zero-carbon home (i.e. zero net emissions of carbon dioxide from all energy use in the home)

The sustainability criteria by which new homes are measured are:

- › Energy and CO2 emissions
- › Water H2O & surface water run-off
- › Construction materials
- › Waste
- › Pollution
- › Health and well-being
- › Management of environmental impacts
- › Ecology

So what does it mean for you?

The widespread impact of the Code is already directly affecting the planning



process, as there are only seven years until the targeted zero-carbon building regulations are enforced for private and public developers alike. According to leading industry experts, 2010 to 2012 may prove to be challenging years, as open market developers will have to meet enhanced planning standards. These will make Code 3 mandatory for private developers, while public developers have to navigate the significant leap between Code 3 and Code 4 standards. Post 2012, it is expected that planning will dictate Code 4 standards

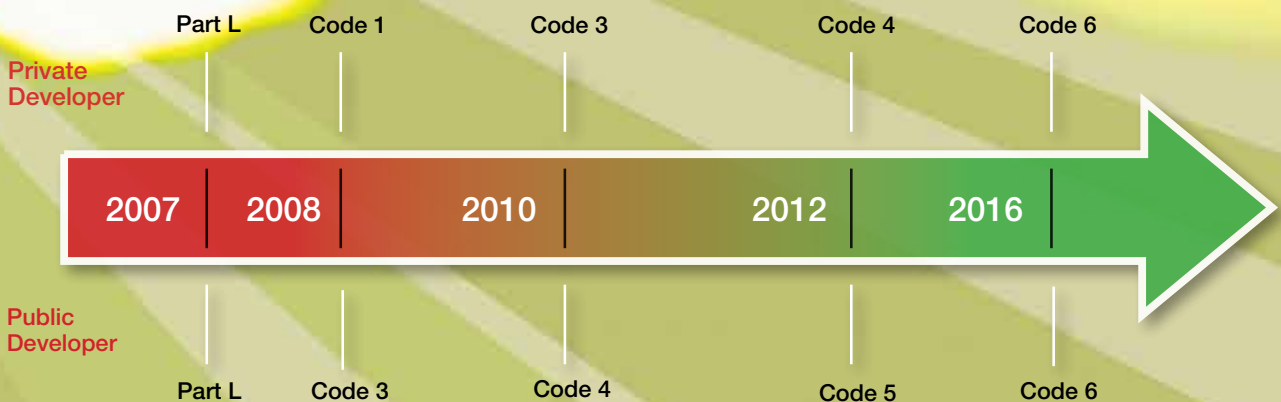
across all sectors, with ever-tightening regulation forcing developers to meet the elevated Code 5 and Code 6 standards as we move towards 2016 and beyond.

Metropolitan employs a range of proven and developing technologies that deliver a low-carbon energy solution. We'll create a bespoke design solution that will not only meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes, but delivers best value through a combination of lowest construction costs and maximum capital investment.

For more information on the Code for Sustainable Homes, visit the Planning Portal's website at www.planningportal.gov.uk.

The Code at a glance

The following diagram shows at what point in time the next level of the Code will be introduced in order to reach zero-carbon for new builds by 2016.



Hailed as the 'UK's first true new town in a 100 years', King's Cross Central is Europe's largest regeneration project, transforming one of central London's most run-down areas into an international gateway and archetype for highly sustainable design and construction solutions.

Driven forward by a partnership between DHL, London and Continental, and Argent, the 67-acre scheme will consist of 20 new streets, 10 new public places, three new bridges and enhancements to the Regent's Canal, providing an incredible public realm framework for nearly 50 new buildings and the refurbishment and reuse of 20 historic buildings.

REGAL REGENERATION:

The Rebirth of King's Cross Central

King's Cross Central will incorporate all the elements that make a model urban community: a two-form entry primary school, children's centre, bicycle interchange, sports hall, soft play facilities, public swimming pool, gym facilities, and two health centres. The transport links will be unrivalled, boasting two major rail terminals: St. Pancras International and King's Cross, which offer direct service throughout the UK and Europe.

Metropolitan will deliver a low-carbon energy solution while providing heat, fibre, electricity, water and waste water to up to 2,000 homes, serviced apartments, and more than five million square feet of commercial development utilising the installation of cutting-edge renewable technologies.

'We're excited to be involved

in a project as ambitious and innovative as King's Cross Central,' said John Marsh, Development Director of Metropolitan. 'Our use of district heating and other energy-efficient technologies will ensure that King's Cross Central sets the standard for sustainable home construction practices throughout the UK.'

When it comes to construction on-site, Metropolitan Operations Director Peter Whittaker believes that some aspects of their service will never change.

'Metropolitan's superior customer care, tried-and-tested single point of contact system, and simple work scheduling are industry-leading,' says Peter. 'We will remain focused on delivering the best service and the best value in utility infrastructure.'

Buildings throughout the development will be connected to a site-wide district heating network using a combined heat and power (CHP) plant, which uses natural gas to drive engines to produce heat and power. Metropolitan will also utilise

other sustainable technologies including roof-mounted wind turbines, photovoltaics (where sunlight is directly converted into electricity), ground source heat pumps and solar thermal systems for generating hot water. Employing this technology ensures that King's Cross Central will be one of the most sustainable and energy efficient developments in the UK.

'It's the first site of its kind,' said John. 'And it gives us an enormous sense of satisfaction to see this development come together, because it means we're getting somewhere – it means that people are starting to understand the sustainability message.'

'We welcome the continued commitment to helping create a sustainable future environment for King's Cross Central,' said Cllr Keith Moffitt, Leader of Camden Council. 'The new energy centre will play a key role in the overall development, bringing to life our shared vision of jobs, housing, leisure and community facilities for local people in King's Cross Central.'

Camden Council isn't the only government body backing the initiative. Mayor of London Boris Johnson published a 'Planning a Better London' report in July 2008, detailing his plans on how to improve the quality of life for Londoners through the capital's planning system. It stated that 'planning can promote energy efficient design and construction, greater efficiency in the use of resources (such as combined heat and power and the use of heat networks) and the use of renewable energy sources.'

One landmark structure that will stand as the exemplar of sustainable design and construction is the building known as 1 Goods Street. As the most energy-efficient large office building in Central London, the 386,000 square feet BREEAM assessed 'excellent' building aims to be 60% more efficient than the standard industry benchmark and feature almost half an acre of allotment on the roof to be used as demonstration urban food gardens.

Arguably one of the most attractive aspects of the King's Cross Central redevelopment is the eclectic mix of old and new architecture. A sensitive



King's Cross Central

constructive program was initiated in order to build iconic new structures while preserving the charm of the century-old buildings that dotted the site from the start.

The King's Cross Central partners plan to restore and bring back into use more than 20 historic buildings and structures, including the Grade II Listed Great Northern Hotel, The Granary Complex, the Eastern Coal Drops and four gas holder guide frames.

One wonders how the various buildings could withstand time so well in an area as populated

and developed as north London.

'It really is amazing,' said John. 'I guess you can say these buildings have been "preserved by neglect".'

Although the overall project won't be expected to finish until 2020, several sections of the site, including the refurbished Great Northern Hotel, The Central Saint Martins College of Art, and 1-3 Canal Street, will be completed in time for the 2012 Olympics Games.

1-3 Canal Street will house the site-wide energy centre (which

includes both the Combined Heat and Power and a primary electrical substation), in addition to 102 homes, cafes, bars and a multi-storey car park. The Central Saint Martins College of Art plans to move more than 6,500 staff and students to the centre of King's Cross Central by the 2011/2012 academic year.

With the extensive amount of planning, funding and consultation surrounding the regeneration of King's Cross Central, it will no doubt transform the life and economy of Londoners for years to come.

'It's just further proof that the UK is leading the way on large-scale, energy-efficient solutions,' said John.

'It's an honour to be a part of history in the making.'

Getting water connections to site can be a frustrating process for house builders. Poor service, slow responses and long lead times are a sadly familiar story. Despite attempts at industry deregulation, the pace of reform has been running at a disappointing trickle. Duncan Le Grice, Project Director, and Russell Ward, Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, explain how Metropolitan are bringing a tidal wave of change to the industry.

MAKING A SPLASH

Water is a key part of Metropolitan's total utility solution. In the past, multi-utility solutions had not been delivered effectively due to uncooperative partners, but Metropolitan is now in a position to do it efficiently and successfully.

'Metropolitan can offer a full utility design, construction and adoption package where our sister companies adopt all of the assets once they are installed,' says Duncan.

'By offering a full utility package there are obvious efficiencies; the co-ordination is much better, the price is competitive and the developer will see a smooth transition from an unserved site to a fully-served site.'

'We're proud to be the first company in the UK that provides this kind of service to house builders and developers,' he adds. 'And Metropolitan takes care of the end-user as well – we handle all of the billing, customer care and management.'

Metropolitan's adoption model, or 'independent asset ownership', works in favour of the developer and house builder.

'In terms of sewerage we are keen to adopt; we don't charge some of the adoption fees that the incumbent water companies have historically charged,' says Russell. 'They aren't incentivised to adopt sewerage networks, as they get the income stream whether they adopt the infrastructure or not. We're in a different position; we want to win sites, we want to work with developers and adopt the assets because the growth of our business depends on it.'

Housebuilders will reap the benefits as well.

'They will enjoy a better price,' says Duncan. 'We'll be providing solutions rather than obstacles to the installation and adoption process. Because we're providing a total utility package that includes project management, developers will be dealing with one company and one construction gang.' And it's Metropolitan's

construction team who play a critical role in the water infrastructure operation process. Just ask Peter Whittaker, Operations Director, who is responsible for every piece of equipment that is laid into the ground. Safety on-site, he believes, is of paramount importance to Metropolitan and its partners.

'We've got an excellent safety record within Metropolitan, and we've never had a major incident – ever,' he says. 'We have a number of initiatives going now, as we're always looking to improve our already stellar customer service.'

Peter explains that Metropolitan have a new operations centre and more managerial coordinators to conduct a pre-visit prior to construction. They are also using more IT systems to assist teams out in the field, like PDAs that enable managers to give clear job instructions to operatives on-site.

'Each one comes standard with



Russell Ward



Duncan Le Grice

a built-in GPS, and the teams also utilise its scanning tools to gain accurate meter detail information – critical information for an asset owner,' he says.

But are there any differences for end-users whose homes are connected to an independent network as opposed to one of the incumbent companies? 'The people living in houses on our network will see absolutely no difference at all. The actual product they receive will be exactly the same,' says Phil Joyce, Customer Operations Manager. 'The product doesn't change, only the ownership of it. It's similar to the competitive markets that already exist in both the gas and electricity industries.'

Metropolitan have a long-term strategy to deliver its dynamic vision. They have a statutory licence that can only be revoked by the Secretary of State after giving 25 years' notice – so it's clear – Metropolitan are in this for the long haul.

'We're a regulated water and sewerage company under an appointment from Ofwat,' says

Russell. 'We have a licence to own and operate assets throughout England and Wales and we're backed by a large financial parent that gives us access to efficient capital resources.'

For those developers who are unsure about how their developments will meet the Code for Sustainable Homes, Metropolitan provides an integrated utility and energy solution. This encompasses low-carbon energy, affordable broadband and reduced use of water.

'Metropolitan works with developers to look at long-term sustainability and reducing our carbon footprint – all the issues that are now very high on the planning horizon for developers,' says Russell.

'We're looking at various SUDS (sustainable drainage) systems, managing drainage, retention lakes and harvested water schemes. Run-off from hard areas is retained, harvested and treated on-site through reed beds and filtration. It's then chlorinated and returned to

the customers as an untreated water supply for garden watering or toilet flushing.'

Water consumption seems to be a hot issue in the industry at the moment – and Duncan agrees.

'Sustainability and water use, certainly in the south and south-east is becoming more of an issue. Metropolitan are looking at some of the practises adopted in Scandinavia, Australia and America in terms of water re-use, water cycling and how developments are using their urban run-off. That's where it is going in the future.'

Speaking of the future, what does he think it holds for the water industry?

'People in the future will have a choice of supplier, as they now have in power,' says Duncan.

And for Metropolitan?

'Owning all of the utility assets

within the Inexus Group enables us to play a significant role in delivering sustainable communities,' says Russell. 'We're committed to ensuring that all of our water and wastewater networks allow for innovation and complements our approach to affordable broadband and low-carbon solutions.'

'Our customer service is going to be much better than the incumbent water companies. The incumbents will recognise this and start performing better themselves, benefitting the developers and improving the all-round market,' adds Duncan.

'We live or die by our service to developers – we are in the business for the long term and we are determined to deliver the best possible service to our customers.'

Corby in Northamptonshire is an excellent example of how developments can beat the recession with clever planning, a clear vision and good design. A former steel town that suffered from a textbook case of post-industrial decline (including high unemployment, dilapidated housing stock, crime and urban decay) has now turned itself around by implementing careful long-term plans with residential and commercial development at the core of its vision.

CORBY: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Nestled in the rich countryside of Northamptonshire, Corby had been a site for iron ore extraction since Roman times. Its industrial beginnings date back to the early 1930s, a time when Corby attracted steel workers from all over the country.

Like other iron and steel generating towns throughout the country, Corby's unemployment rate soared in the late 1970s when steel production declined heavily, but a plan is now in place and being implemented to attract a new professional class and introduce world-class leisure, education and shopping facilities. It has already transformed Corby into a modern, desirable location with superb transport links that continues to benefit from easy access to some of the most beautiful countryside in the UK.

With the opening of the landmark Olympic-size swimming pool and the new Foster & Partners designed Corby Business Academy, investment in the new retail shopping centre, Willow Place, as well as its new civic centre – the stunning Corby Cube – things are looking very favourable for the town's future.

We spoke to some of the local leaders paving the way for Corby's regeneration and growth, starting with Simon Evans, chief executive of North Northants

Development Company:

'Corby began to drift in the '90s and the reason the urban regeneration project was devised was to give a new sense of direction, a new sense of purpose,' says Simon. He explains that Corby's regeneration strategy was formed around doubling the town's population from 50,000 to 100,000 over the next 30 years.

'And by doing that, we want to bring social diversity to the town to help it become more prosperous, to help it grow,' says Simon.

'Our focus on the regeneration and renewal of the town centre, by encouraging investment in the new railway station with direct links to London St. Pancras International, world-class leisure facilities and higher education has resulted in the improvement and growth of the town's housing stock. The opening of the railway station is expected to result in £200m of inward investment alone!' Simon adds.

The quality of the housing offer has already been enhanced through the construction of developments such as Little Stanion – a site that is standing out from other developments nationally and holding its value well in a tough market. Little Stanion and neighbouring development, Prior's Hall, will eventually add more than 4,500 first-class dwellings to Corby's housing stock, and on both sites, Metropolitan will be delivering

gas, water, electric and a state-of-the-art fibre optic telecoms network. It's a utility solution with benefits that extend beyond mere infrastructure networks.

'We have been working with various partners to promote business development in the area, too. Our vision is that people who come to live here will see opportunities to set up new businesses in Corby and expand them into the local economy. Corby already has significant national and international companies located here and we aim to provide local support and direction for any businesses looking to relocate and grow.'

Peter Whittaker, Metropolitan's Operations Director, believes that the landmark utility infrastructure offering is unrivalled.

'The work we've undertaken in providing a total utility solution for Corby was a first for us and the industry as a whole,' said Peter. 'It's a terrific vindication of the hard work that has gone into developing what I believe is the best package on the market.'

Most would agree that, in addition to premium housing developments, a superior educational system is a critical element in the expansion of a post-industrial town. Peter



The new Corby East Midlands swimming pool

Simon Evans

Simpson OBE is the Executive Principal of Brooke Weston Academy, which prides itself on being one of the most advanced schools in the UK in its use of technology.

Offering a broad curriculum as well as an ethos based on mutual respect and the best aspects of business culture, the academy is continually rated as one of the top five highest achieving state comprehensive schools in England – an accomplishment Peter attributes to the ‘independence to do things differently.’

Brooke Weston continues to top national performance tables, with this year seeing 100% of its students achieving five or more good GCSE passes. Peter Simpson hopes to continue this trend at the £30 million, Sir Norman Foster-designed Corby Academy, where he serves as the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Like Little Stanion and Prior’s Hall, the academy building is also supplied by Metropolitan’s fibre solution, bringing with it benefits that Peter is enthusiastic about.

‘Fibre optics has the potential to open up all sorts of exciting new possibilities to our students,’ he says. ‘Not only that, this technology will help to establish us as one of the country’s leading academies.’

He believes that Brooke Weston is a prime example of how academic excellence can build a solid foundation for Corby’s growth

and development.

‘I think if you have a town with poor schools, it’s hard to persuade people with children to move to those towns; but if you have a town with good schools, then it becomes a choice place to live,’ says Peter. ‘Our educational contribution to the regeneration of Corby is to establish schools which make it an attractive place to be.’

Peter is confident that Corby’s emergence from its post-industrial decline will continue and flourish as a modern town full of opportunity.

‘I think education in Corby will be very strong and that we’ll still be brand leaders in all sorts of areas – I can see a lot of things pointing the right way,’ says Peter. ‘It’s very optimistic, that’s the thing – Corby is not a place that’s examining its own woes.’

‘We’re set for a much-improved future. The thing I now notice most, compared to when I came, is that people of all sorts – whether a business leader, a leader in education, a member of the Council – are all driving regeneration forward together,’ he adds.

Corby’s community spirit is also evident surrounding the construction of a new £8.3m

railway station, which opened in February this year and runs an hourly service direct to London St Pancras. Since the late 1960s, Corby was the largest town in Europe without a railway station. Local petitioning and partner working, along with the local MP Phil Hope, resulted in more than 10,000 signatures of residents being handed into Whitehall to encourage the building of a new train station.

For those who may still need a bit of convincing, Simon suggests they come and see Corby’s transformation for themselves.

‘Take a look, because you can see the changes – it’s palpable now. If you talk to people, there’s a new self-confidence about the place that perhaps wasn’t there in the past. Look at the quality we’re building, enhancing people’s quality of life and making Corby a place where families want to come, set down roots and grow.

‘The old Corby – well, that’s all changing,’ says Simon.

HOUSING SOLUTIONS:

Now with added fibre!

In an increasingly competitive housing market, differentiating your next development is more important than ever before. But as everyone is feeling the financial squeeze, the big question is how to do it without adding to your bottom line. Fibre optics could be the answer you're looking for – and we have a package that will give any site some high-tech cachet at no additional cost. Read on to find out how...

The benefits of fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) for both the buyer and the developer are considerable to say the least. With fibre, broadband is more than 30 times faster than standard copper networks, so you can offer home buyers super-fast internet connections that meet their growing needs and superior telephone services using the latest technology to deliver higher-quality calls – even high-definition video chats are now possible.

Independent Fibre Networks (IFNL), Metropolitan's sister company, is offering a package that is unrivalled in the UK market, delivering technology that has been used

successfully in Japan and Sweden for years.

However, there are other fundamental reasons to choose fibre over traditional copper networks for your site's communication and entertainment needs.

'Copper networks are coming to the end of their life – it's Victorian technology that simply can't cope with modern demands,' said Andrew Robinson, Director of IFNL. 'Fibre is the solution to our present – and future – communication and entertainment needs.'

Consumer demand for bandwidth is soaring as an explosion of applications requiring greater capacity sweep the UK. Television-over-the-web services like BBC iPlayer, social networking sites like Facebook and online gaming platforms like Xbox Live and countless others are becoming standard features of modern living.

Unlike copper, fibre has the capacity to provide unlimited broadband to every house in the development, at any time of the day, no matter how many people are online. 'With our fibre networks, you'll get the fastest speeds in the UK and can expect the highest quality of service regardless of the distance from your local telephone exchange,' said Andrew. 'Fibre is truly a future-proof

technology.'

The benefits don't just extend to the developer and their customers – installing fibre networks on-site will make your next project more eco-friendly and sustainable. Fibre is considered a green technology: safe and efficient, it carries no electrical current and is more resilient than copper, reducing the amount of maintenance required, which lessens its impact on the environment.

It is this sustainable technology that plays a critical role in Metropolitan's low-carbon energy solution for the redevelopment of King's Cross Central – fibre will be the answer to the site's communication and entertainment needs, with networks reaching more than 2,500 residential customers and five million square feet of commercial development.

'Our fibre solution, along with the utilisation of other green technology, will undoubtedly cement King Cross Central's position as one of the most energy-efficient developments in the UK,' said Andrew. 'To say we're extremely proud to be a part of that would be an understatement.'

Another method in which fibre contributes to a more eco-friendly environment is by directly reducing the number of commuter



journeys. Travelling by car stands as one of the largest sources of carbon emissions for the average UK household; home working eliminates these trips, but it's only possible with a fast network connection, which fibre networks provide. Not only is this a stellar selling point, but it benefits the economy by raising productivity as well: nearly one in eight UK employees now work from home.

In countries where people enjoy fibre-to-the-home, fibre-equipped properties attract a significant premium, selling at a 10% higher price than those with standard copper cabling (according to research by the Yankee Group). Studies in the US found that consumers in the housing market would be willing to pay an additional \$4,318 for a fibre-connected home. That means extra money in your pocket, as fibre installation by IFNL is equivalent to that of copper and includes free ducting, materials and delivery directly to site.

'It's an ideal situation for developers. Easy to install and requiring no special skills on the part of the developer, fibre is reliable, long-lasting and easy to repair and replace. The ducting and fittings we deliver to site are identical to those developers have been using for years,' said Andrew. 'It's what we put inside that makes the difference.'

Developers can also rely on first-class customer service from both the Operations Centre and the construction teams on-site.

'Not only can you differentiate your next development at no additional cost, but you can rest assured knowing that you have constant support from the industry's best engineers, who are working to ensure installation is completed to the highest standard,' said Peter Whittaker, Operations Director for Metropolitan. 'Every single member of our team recognizes that it's a customer's satisfaction that is the most important thing to us.'

Fibre installed by IFNL has its advantages for the discerning home buyer as well, as it enables an open-access network, meaning that the network is open to as many services providers as possible – both traditional telecoms giants and new players – so buyers can shop around for the services they want at a competitive price.

'It's all about choice. Choose us and you'll give your home buyers an extra reason to choose you,' said Andrew.

So what exactly is fibre?

Fibre technology is the transmission of data via light waves. Fibre optic lines are strands of pure glass, as thin as a human hair, that carry digital information over long distances.

Fibre's roots date back to 1870 when Irish physicist John Tyndall demonstrated that a beam of light would follow the path of a stream of water. The light zigzagged down the water, proving that light used internal reflection to follow a specific path. This notion of 'bending light' forms the main principle of fibre optics.

Fast forward more than a hundred years, where most of the UK's long-distance communication involves fibre optic cables. It's commonly used in telecommunications networks to transport telephone signals and internet communication traffic between distributed sites. Fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) networks have been a tremendous success in countries like Japan, Sweden and the US, and are considered 'future-proof' by industry experts.

Next steps...

If you want to learn more about how fibre networks can benefit your next site, visit IFNL's website at www.ifnl.net. To book a demo in IFNL's fibre experience centre, call 0845 051 1669, or book online at www.comeandseethelight.co.uk

METROPOLITAN PEOPLE:

Meet Robert Clarke, Technical Director

Tell us about your role at Metropolitan.

I'm responsible for the team that specialises in the design of plant for heating, cooling and on-site electrical generation, as well as sustainable water plant design.

What kind of services do Metropolitan offer?

We take care of any planning and S106 sustainability requirements that the developer needs to comply with. Metropolitan will design, construct and adopt all of the site infrastructure across all utilities - which means all of the utility plant both above ground and underground is coordinated and deliverable; if it wasn't we couldn't operate it.

What demands are put on the developer to meet green planning criteria?

Ultimately developers must adhere to planning requirements and the Code for Sustainable Homes, which entails reducing carbon through measures like district heating, on-site heat and electricity generation, use of renewable technology and reducing water usage.

For a developer building houses now, how much more attention do they have to pay attention to sustainability issues than say 5 years ago, or 10 years ago?

For houses built now, not a lot, because under current Building Regulations, they have to meet a high degree of energy and water efficiency alongside other general sustainability requirements. The catch is in 2010 onwards, when developers really

have to think about it a bit more, because at that point, they will have to do something over and above what they normally do. Every new home that's built has to meet certain criteria; so by 2010, houses must have a 25% reduction in carbon; up to 2016, when there must be a 100% reduction in carbon.

Is that where Metropolitan can come in and help?

Yes, we offer a full energy and water design solution for developers. They connect into our district heating and water infrastructure enabling them to meet the Code and Planning standards without having to build properties to standards over and above Building Regulations. We utilise district heating, linked to biomass boilers, combined heat and power and other renewable sources as a way to offset what would otherwise have to be done within a house. Just looking for a local solution, a developer would typically pay £10,000 - £15,000 per property to offset Code requirements. Metropolitan develop a centralised strategy for them, at a fraction of the cost, to solve the problem.

Tell us what's happening at King's Cross Central.

They're calling King's Cross Central the 'first true new town in this country in the last 100 years'. It'll feature completely new infrastructure across all utilities, with 2,500 new properties, the University of Arts London, and 500,000 square metres of mixed office and commercial space. Metropolitan is delivering the entire utilities infrastructure, energy centre, combined heat and power, district heating, telecommunications, potable water and sewerage - we are providing a full, integrated



Robert Clarke



solution, delivered by one group, saving the need to coordinate multiple stakeholders all with their own requirements.

How can sustainable utility solutions help developers navigate their way through the credit crunch?

If we deliver utility solutions we make investment when we adopt, it means we're providing a level of external investment to offset the cost of the infrastructure. This investment, when combined with our unique energy model where we give developers the opportunity to retain all the value from the sale of heat, cooling and electricity, is a fantastic way for them to generate revenue streams that they normally wouldn't have the opportunity to.

Why should we care about green solutions, anyway?

It all goes back to the Kyoto Protocol – the world-wide requirement for climate change which has put legally enforceable targets on governments. I don't want to sound dramatic, but the ongoing general increase in the temperature of the atmosphere will cause a massive environmental effect.

If we don't reduce carbon emissions now, in 20 to 30 years' time the effects could be catastrophic, and I don't want my own children to have to live in that environment.

What do you like best about working for Metropolitan?

Having only been with Metropolitan for just over a year, it feels great to work for a proactive company that can genuinely make a difference. Having the ability to deliver a total utility package is industry leading and very exciting. Even more importantly I like all of the people I work with - it's a great working environment.

What are you most looking forward to over the next year?

With the recent positive upturn in both the economy and housing market, I think we'll have a lot of successful projects over the next year and it will be really rewarding to see these projects come to fruition. I'm especially looking forward to the further development of King's Cross Central. This is a project that will be used as the model for regeneration for the next twenty years – it's great to be a small part of the story.

With the credit crunch adding financial pressures to developers' bottom lines, they may be tempted to lose a bit of emphasis on environmental initiatives. What would you say to convince them otherwise?

Well, it's a short-term view. If they hold off now, then they're only offsetting a problem

for two or three years' time when it's going to cost more money. No one ever knows what the economic environment is going to be like, but we've now seen the start of recovery, and as Metropolitan have proven that sustainability solutions are affordable, my view is that environmental initiatives are a great way to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

So there's no future in ignoring it?

Developers can't ignore it. 'Low-carbon' and 'the environment' are not just buzz words. Solutions to meet the sustainable agenda have to be found now. If developers are not building immediately, have a phased build, or are bringing new schemes forward, they will be caught by the ever-tightening planning requirements. It is better to embrace these environmental challenges and use them to their advantage. If they don't, their competitors will.

For the developer who's aware they need to do something about the carbon agenda, but not exactly sure what, how Metropolitan can help them?

We offer an innovative, cost-effective, full utility infrastructure and sustainability solution. That's why we're commissioned by developers all over Great Britain - we're experts in what we do. Developers build houses - we design and build utilities.

The logo features a central white circle containing the word "metropolitan" in a black serif font. This central circle is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in various colors: light blue, dark blue, pink, red, orange, yellow, and green. The background is a solid black horizontal bar.

metropolitan

Carbon Neutral / Utilities / Sustainability / Strategy

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