

Autumn 2018

For everyone at Willmott Dixon's
family of companies



WILLMOTT DIXON
SINCE 1852

A great account Our new
National Accounts Team is
off to a great start **P4**

Pilot project How we are
creating a facility at Gatwick
to train tomorrow's pilots **P30**

FANTASTIC FARNBOROUGH

LAUNCHING A NEW OFFICE, WINNING
NEW CUSTOMERS AND SMASHING TARGETS
- IT'S ALL IN A YEAR'S WORK FOR OUR
SOUTHERN COUNTIES TEAM

16 NEWS

FARNBOROUGH HITS FAST-FORWARD

Our new Farnborough office is finding its feet fast. Almost a year after becoming a fully-fledged LCO, the team is already breaking targets for new work and turnover, thanks to landing projects like the £38m Sport and Leisure Centre for Winchester City Council. Led by managing director Richard Poulter, the LCO is aiming to achieve a £60m turnover in 2018, up by £10m from original targets. It's now on course to hit £100m in 2019, a landmark not expected until 2020.

You can find out more in an exclusive interview with Richard on page 22.



CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>4 It's all NAT-astic!
Ambitious plans are afoot for our National Accounts Team, under the leadership of Scott Corey.</p> | <p>14 All Aboard
We meet three women in senior roles who have built their careers with us.</p> | <p>22 All Systems Go Farnborough
Our Farnborough LCO is now up and running, with a growing workforce and a bright future.</p> | <p>30 Pilot Project
Our Cobham team is flying high to create a facility for pilot training near Gatwick Airport.</p> |
| <p>10 Better Together
How we're working to improve relationships with our supply chain partners.</p> | <p>18 All Eyes on Birmingham
How Construction and Interiors are progressing after opening a new office in Britain's second city.</p> | <p>28 Total Wellbeing
Construction's new All Safe Minds campaign is reaching out to tackle mental health.</p> | <p>34 Leading the Line
Interiors is tackling the programme to fit out Twickenham's East Stand for the RFU.</p> |

INTERIORS' HOTELS SURGE

Interiors underlined its position as the 'go to' fit-out specialist for hotel operators after bagging £100m of work in just 12 months.

The latest project will see Interiors create the UK's first "nhow" hotel – a specialist hotel concept that will land in Shoreditch next year. It follows other contracts such as a boutique hotel refurbishment at St Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square; converting apart-hotels in the capital at Long Lane and Earls Court into the Residence Inn by the Marriott brand; the ongoing brand renewal programme for Travelodge; plus upgrades for Village Hotels in Newcastle, Dudley and Leeds.

Graham Shaw, managing director, explains: "There's a shortage of quality hotel space in urban areas and that's seeing more space converted into hotels instead of residential accommodation. Investors need specialists for these conversions and our reputation has never been better after a string of successful completions."

It comes as Interiors was named by *Construction Index* as one of the UK's top-five fit-out contractors as it pushes outside its traditional South East base with a new office in Birmingham that opened this summer. The team is led by operations director Tom McEvoy and you can read more on page 18.



MARCHING WITH PRIDE



There was plenty of colour on display as our team joined a huge march in Manchester to celebrate diversity and inclusion in construction. Operations directors Simon Butcher and Mike Lane led the line at the Building Equality event, where we walked with other contractors to highlight how inclusive our industry is for all people to work in.

Simon explained: "This was more than a parade; it is an important part of the city's identity and brought our industry in front of thousands of people who came to see the spectacle."

"This was more than a parade; it is an important part of the city's identity and brought our industry in front of thousands of people who came to see the spectacle."
Simon Butcher, director of delivery

Left: Interiors' Graham Shaw: "Market is growing for space to be converted into hotel accommodation."

Above: Pride in the job, from left: Matt Kershaw, Pearce Darnell, Ryan Cornick, Lauren Hallworth, Jill Guthrie, Simon Butcher and Mike Lane.

A GREAT ACCOUNT

Our new National Accounts Team couldn't have had a better start, landing Places for People's £2.5bn single-source Procurement Hub. That's just the start! 166 spoke to national accounts director Scott Corey to find out what comes next.



Scott Corey has ambitious plans for the National Accounts Team (NAT). He wants it to be a 'game-changer' in the national framework and accounts arena, which delivers between 60 and 70 percent of our workload.

There's more out there, and that's where the NAT team come in. Its role is to make sure we are in the best position to win and deliver, from tender stage through to customer management and re-winning it.

By providing consistency at national level, it gives our LCOs time to focus on the day-to-day: listening to customers, operational excellence and responding to new opportunities.

Scott explains: "We're here to find, win, operate and retain national accounts and frameworks. We want to take learning from key frameworks like Scape and SCF and turn that into a compelling national approach."

One challenge the NAT will solve is providing consistent resources to spot national frameworks and then bid for them. It's this seamless process that should start paying dividends within the year.

Trinity of Excellence

The NAT is split into three Centres of Excellence: the National Bid

"We want to take learning like Scape and SCF and turn that into a compelling national approach."

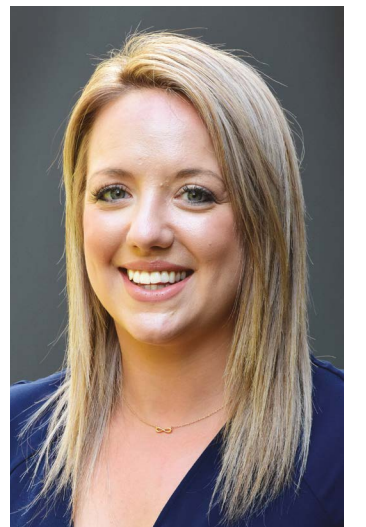
Scott Corey, national accounts director, National Accounts Team

Centre, headed up by Mark Burnley, who has come from Interiors where he was pre-construction manager; the National Operations Centre, headed by Naomi Stott, who has been the Scape framework manager for six years; and National Account Management Centre, currently headed up by Scott.

Just like Scape, the NAT's costs are split between the LCOs, an approach that creates "massive efficiencies," says Scott.

His longer-term ambition is to become cost-neutral. Money could be generated through partners using our frameworks to deliver their projects and accessing account management tools and training that we are developing.

So what does each part of the NAT do? (see box, overleaf). Apart from bidding, the Bid Centre ensures it engages early with organisations planning new frameworks, so they can provide



Left: Meet the NAT team.

Above: Mark Burnley heads up the National Bid Centre, while Naomi Stott runs the National Operations Centre.



Above: Scott Corey is heading up our National Accounts Team as we look to grow the number of frameworks we secure work under.

advice on structure to help make them fit for purpose. This early engagement will be 6 to 12 months before the tender appears.

"It's all about early influencing: ensuring the framework reflects what customers want," says Scott. "We're finding when we share our ideas and tools, framework providers listen. We want to play a positive role using our experience of delivering over £1bn of capital projects through frameworks."

The Bid Centre works with sector experts to design and write the best bid proposal possible, before handing over successful bids to the Operations Centre and a national account leader.

The Operations Centre supports national account leaders to ensure there is consistency and shared best practice by creating and refining a suite of processes and tools, from the way the framework is operated, to training, marketing, communications and commercial best practice.

"In the past, it could feel like our people, partners and customers were going from one planet to

another when you moved between national frameworks with tools being so different," says Scott. "The new set-up will bring huge benefits for everyone by ensuring continuous improvement from one framework to the next, so we don't retrain project teams and reinvent the wheel each time."

Scott also oversees our team of national account managers, who currently are Richard Sterling, responsible for

"We scoured the market to find someone who could train a new breed of account leaders, to help us deeply understand, empathise and deliver outstanding results for our customer every time."

Scott Corey, national accounts director, National Accounts Team

Sanctuary and Homes England's DPP3 framework, Chris Farr, Procurement Hub and LHC, plus Andrew Brookes, who looks after the ESFA framework.

Back to school

One key aspect of the National Account Leadership Centre is the School of Account Leadership. The idea dates back around two years, says Scott: "We scoured the market to find someone who could train a new breed of account leaders, to help us deeply understand, empathise and deliver outstanding results for our customer every time."

"We realised there was no such training, so we set up a tender, explaining our vision and goals, which went out to the UK's leading training institutions to support us as partners to set up our own school, bespoke, to Willmott Dixon's requirements and to world-class standards."

Hemsley Fraser won the tender and so the School of Account Leadership was born. To date,

22 full-time account leaders and directors are going through the 'Lead' and 'Strategic' programmes, with more to follow.

The school's account leadership programmes consist of a series of two-day customer-facing modules which complement our MDL (Management Development Level) programmes.

Having graduated, all alumni will attend a five-day 'personal leadership week' at the London School of Economics or the London Business School to give them a broader, more international perspective.

Ready for action

The NAT officially went live in June, with the four-year, £2.5bn Procurement Hub framework already secured.

There are two more bids coming over the horizon: the £30bn Crown Commercial Services framework, expected soon, and the £2.5bn NHS Shared Business Service (SBS) bid, due in the autumn. Adding to the existing national frameworks, the team could find itself responsible for 10 frameworks if all goes to plan.

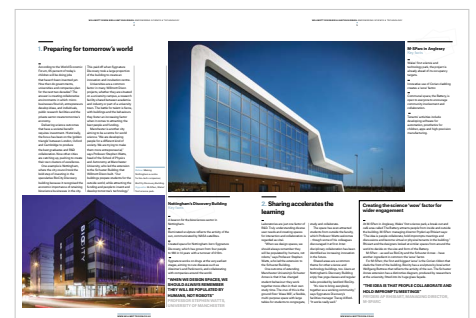
Winning is one thing, but the second challenge will be to make sure that customers are served to the highest standards, so that they never want to go anywhere else.

"It will always be about our LCO teams serving local customers; we are clear about our role," says Scott. The NAT is here to serve our people so they can better serve those customers with national efficiencies, consistency, best practice and a suite of industry-leading account tools starting out with verve and commitment."

The NAT team

Ian Beadles, commercial manager
Andrew Brookes, responsible for the Education & Skills Funding Agency
Jo Brown, strategic bid manager
Mark Burnley, national bid director
Scott Corey, national accounts director
Hayley Coe, knowledge manager
Beth Copping, framework coordinator
Chris Farr, responsible for Procurement Hub and LHC
Richard Fradley, commercial manager
Naomi Stott, national account operations manager
Richard Sterling, Sanctuary and Homes England - DPP3
Elliott Talbot, framework coordinator

IT'S SIMPLY BRILLIANT!



When you deliver so many exciting projects in different sectors, it can be difficult to fully appreciate their huge impact on local communities and the nation's prosperity. Also, our track-record really is making us stand out from peer companies.

So this year's launch of the *Brilliant Buildings* series is a timely way to show our impact in key sectors like science and technology, housing and iconic building restoration. The brainchild of communications head Andy Geldard, they have proved a hit among LCOs, with reprints already ordered after the first editions were quickly shared among customers. Andy explains: "They underline our expertise by offering the reader an insight into our experience of delivering 'brilliant buildings' in their chosen

sector. It also demonstrates a considerable track-record I am personally very proud about, whether it's as a leader in buildings for scientific research, giving a new lease of life to historic property or playing our part in housing the nation."

The books have already led to new project opportunities. That includes at the recent Chartered Institute of Housing conference in Manchester, where customers attending our events were sent copies beforehand of *Brilliant Buildings – meeting the housing challenge*. Midlands sales and marketing manager Stephen Corbett says: "The impact was immediate; one customer who'd read it was impressed with our work at Nottingham Basin and wanted to talk about a similar

"They underline our expertise by offering the reader an insight into our experience of delivering 'brilliant buildings' in their chosen sector."

Andy Geldard, head of communications

scheme we could do for them. This gives our teams a talking point when we meet customers by showing them our capabilities in a way they relate to."

More are planned, with universities and blue-light editions next on the horizon – areas where we have a big track-record of expertise. Also being rolled out are *Brilliant Building* city maps showing our footprint in major cities, which are being displayed in sites and offices.

Andy continues: "I want to give a big thank you to our sales and marketing teams who have really embraced the potential of *Brilliant Buildings* in their dealings with customers. I think by next year we'll be bidding several opportunities as a direct result of the impact made by *Brilliant Buildings*."

BACK TO SCHOOL

Our project to build the Anglia Ruskin School of Medicine brought together five alumni of the very same university, which helped the team to do their alma mater proud.

Many members of the Hitchin team working on the £20m Anglia Ruskin School of Medicine did not know one another before they began working on-site last April, but they soon discovered they had something very significant in common. Five of those involved in the construction project were all Anglia Ruskin University alumni.

The construction project, completed on 7 September, is hugely significant for the university, being the first undergraduate school of medicine in Essex (see box, opposite page). Procured through the Scape Major Works Framework, it is also very important for Willmott Dixon, both in terms of our ongoing work in

the university sector and our push to do more business in the East Anglia region.

For our former Anglia Ruskin students – Mark Christie, senior project surveyor; Lee Suffolk, senior site manager; Jacob Adams, assistant site manager; Luke Dennis, assistant project surveyor; and Tom Farrow, design coordinator, all having attended the university – being part of such a meaningful project on their old campus helped boost team morale.

“Getting to know one another in a short space of time was one of the biggest challenges on this job,” says Mark Turner, construction manager.

“The team came together at the point of handover – we had to pick up the project and run with it,” explains Mark, who was among a number of new starters on-site, having joined Hitchin just one week before work began.

However, learning to work together was not the only challenge the team faced. The Anglia Ruskin School of Medicine has been built on the site of a former ball-bearing factory, so parts of the old building had to be dug out – and the land had to be probed for World War II bombs.

Meanwhile, planners at Chelmsford City Council requested aesthetic changes to the black cladding that was to cover part of

the building, but with some mutual compromise, the team was able to press ahead.

The heavy snow and extreme cold we experienced over winter delayed the brickwork and roofing by a few weeks. “Works needed to be reprogrammed, but we were able to update the client and explain how we would revise our plans,” says Mark.

Throughout the development, the team built a strong relationship with Anglia Ruskin University, including with its Department of Engineering and the Built Environment – the school that trained so many Willmott Dixon colleagues in the East of England.

Mark presented a 60-minute

lecture on management techniques to final-year students completing a BSc in Construction Project Management, and hundreds of students on a range of built environment courses visited the site during construction.

During these visits, the team did our company and their alma mater proud, impressing the academic staff.

“Your construction site is one of the very few most well-organised construction sites we have visited,” wrote one lecturer. “[The visits] not only deepened my students’ understanding of structural design and detailing, but provided them with an excellent example of construction management.”

“Your construction site is one of the very few most well-organised construction sites we have visited.”

Lecturer, Anglia Ruskin University



Left and below: A stunning new lecture theatre is just one new aspect of the Medical School delivered by the Hitchin team, below.



BETTER TOGETHER

How we are working with our supply chain partners to strengthen relationships and improve the quality of products for customers.



Relationships are like gardens, goes the old cliché; they need constant care and attention in order to flourish.

And like most old clichés, it has a ring of truth. Since initiating the Building on Better strategy two years ago, Construction has been changing and growing in its quest to improve the way it does business.

Now the focus is turning towards one of the most important relationships: with our supply chain partners.

The new approach is called Better Together. And according to Construction's national supply chain director Steve Watson, the aim is to "work more closely with fewer suppliers to strengthen relationships, break down barriers and ultimately to improve the quality of the products delivered to customers".

Key to this is a new Supply Chain Partner Framework that will see Construction focus on a core

team of around 500 supply chain members to help them get better, so that they help us achieve our aims – like delivering 100 percent defect-free projects.

"We want our supply chain to feel part of our business," explains Steve. "We want to align our supply chain to our values and beliefs and we want to select a supply chain based on their attitude and behaviour, not just their expertise."

Talking about the new framework, Steve says: "We expect a defined level of service quality from members of the framework, while they benefit from better visibility of workload, regular access to our senior team, monthly feedback on performance, plus access to the best training through our unique Better Together academies – all aiming to help them grow, improve and plan for the future."

Steve continues: "For us, the framework will increase loyalty among a committed group of

"We want to work with a supply chain that cares about improving, with companies that genuinely want to get better at what they do."

Steve Watson, national supply chain director, Construction

companies who place working for Willmott Dixon as a strategic priority and are passionate about the quality of what they do for us (see interviews, overleaf).

"It will also help us work closer together on our huge programme to provide social value to communities – an area important for us and our customers – by helping to upskill people through work placements and getting involved in projects to improve local areas."

Becoming A Plus

Another key plank of this is a new category for supply chain partners called Category A Plus. As the name suggests, this will sit above the existing Category A tier – the category with which we spend around 75 percent of our money. "Category A Plus is about going to the next step," says Steve. "We want to work with a supply chain that cares about improving, with companies that genuinely want



Left and above: A packed Sadler's Wells Theatre heard about a supply chain strategy from Construction's Steve Watson.

“Willmott Dixon is all about their people, their customers and their supply chain, so we want to benchmark ourselves with them.”

Joe Sweeney, Falcon Green Personnel



Joe Sweeney, Falcon Green Personnel

“I set up my own company six years ago, but I’ve been working with Willmott Dixon for more than 10 years. I got in touch with Steve Watson and the supply chain team at the time and we have been on their preferred supplier list for about five years.

In comparison to other clients that we have, none have a supply chain conference every year. The first time was down at Chelsea FC – every year it gets better and better. The way they work with their supply chain, how they engage and embrace them – they are definitely the market leader.

Willmott Dixon is the benchmark in the industry for what they do. Their legacy work in regards to sustainability – we have bought into that ourselves and that has helped make us a better company. Willmott Dixon is all about their people, their customers, and their supply chain, so we want to benchmark ourselves with them. The new Category A Plus will be a step up for us, but it is a step we are willing to take.

It’s an education, it is a journey and they are bringing us along and making us an all-round better company.

Willmott Dixon is a step ahead of the competition. They are engaging with their supply chain from pre-construction stage, which is unusual. There is a bit of risk involved with that approach, but with Willmott Dixon and their pipeline of work, if you invest your time as a supply chain partner, the chances are the project will go ahead and the chances are you will be involved in that project.

They are enticing you in – fair enough – but the chances are you’ll get that project in the end. The market out there is very competitive. There are not enough subcontractors to keep going the way it is, so Willmott Dixon is bringing them in from day one of the journey and we can reap the rewards. If they win, we win.”

to get better at what they do. Category A Plus is going to help us identify those who want to come on this journey with us.”

To be awarded Category A Plus, a supply chain partner will need to meet the existing Category A requirements as well as earning accreditations such as ISO standards, silver status from the Supply Chain Sustainability School and a thumbs-up from the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Importantly, Construction will provide the resources and space its partners need to achieve these goals for free. “We want to go on the journey with them,” adds Steve. “If anyone is committed then we are as well, and we are going to support getting them to that standard.”

Big launch

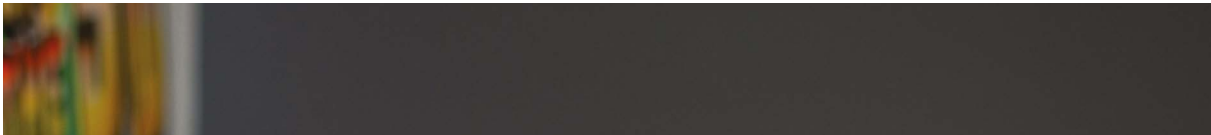
Better Together was launched at this year’s supply chain conference in July, but it represents

the culmination of years of groundwork. “We’ve been laying the foundations for two years,” says Steve. “Rather than jump headfirst we’ve been doing various things to prove to our supply chain that we are changing as a business.”

Much of that has been about bringing our people and supply chain partners together – at workshops and working lunches, for example, as well as by trialling hot desks at company offices around the country.

Achieving the standards necessary for this new category will benefit everyone, Steve argues. “We are future-proofing their businesses,” he says. “We are trying to see what the market will look like in five years’ time – and we want our partners to become more attractive organisations.”

The response from supply chain partners to these new proposals has been positive, but some are still to be convinced (see case studies).



Shaun Stevens, Stevens Construction

“I’ve been working with Willmott Dixon for six or seven years. It’s been good, and we are winning bigger contracts with them.

With Willmott Dixon they get us with what they call early engagement, so we get with the design teams before they have won the job and help to build the design. As groundwork specialists we can help identify problems that perhaps the structural engineer might not appreciate. So when we get to contract there are no surprises.

It’s not new to me, what they are talking to us about today. It’s all about team building and they want us as the supply chain to partner with them, which is great for us. We are not pricing for a main contractor where they might have gone out to five or six of us before going for the cheapest price; Willmott Dixon aren’t trying to do that. They want the best price, but they also want the best contractor for the job. Then they can sell that to their client, and we are working with Willmott Dixon to get the job over the line to a high standard of quality and on time. That seems like the obvious way to work, but it’s not how the construction industry has worked historically.

It can be confrontational with other companies, but Willmott Dixon is trying to change that. They are trying to make a better product for their clients, and the only way to do that is to embrace their supply chain. It would be nice if more companies took a similar approach towards their supply chain.

I’m not sold on Category A plus yet, but I don’t completely understand it. The conference was the first time I had heard about it. I’ll need to look a bit more into that.”

“I’ve been working with Willmott Dixon for six or seven years. It’s been good, and we are winning bigger contracts with them.”

Shaun Stevens, Stevens Construction

But that’s part of the point, as Steve highlights. Not everyone is going to want to come on this journey, and that’s fine too.

It’s not just supply chain partners who will be changed by this new way of working. “Most importantly for me, we have to get our people working closely with our supply chain and to realise they are responsible for managing our supply chain as much as the supply chain manager,” Steve says. “Because if you want real change, everyone has to be pulling in the same direction.”



“Within the main contractor realm, Willmott Dixon is probably way ahead on their supply chain journey with this cultural shift.”

Kerry Parker Wray, IKO

Kerry Parker Wray, IKO

“I would describe our relationship as like a team. Roofing is very difficult: there is a lot to overcome to get it defect-free, so I have needed a lot of support from them and vice versa.

We’re learning, they are learning, but the results show we are bringing defects down and we are all working better together and understanding each others’ needs.

All the things Willmott Dixon are asking [for Category A Plus], we already achieve as a mandated sole supplier. They came to us a long time ago with those requirements. But certainly upskilling the works partners to that level will standardise an industry and will bring us all in line with the professionalism we want to achieve.

We want to be aligned with that. That’s how I understand where we are going – we are all to be equals in what we believe and achieve, while making money!

Within the main contractor realm, Willmott Dixon is probably way ahead on their supply chain journey with this cultural shift. Needs must: Willmott Dixon manages a complicated process and is reliant on relationships, so the closer you are the sooner you get responses and commitments and value.

Our expectation for ourselves is to become more efficient, and to get earlier engagement so we can get the designs right before they get to Willmott Dixon, so it reduces their time on that phase of the work. We want to make sure everyone understands our products and services so it streamlines the whole process. That’s what we are trying to do. Reducing the supply chain making it more efficient.

If you are using the same products that are tested before they get on site, you don’t need to worry about any of it. It reduces risk for everybody really – that’s ultimately what we are all trying to do. I don’t know why anyone hasn’t thought of it sooner!”

Our vision is that working for Willmott Dixon is a career of a lifetime – you can enjoy an entire career with us where you grow, develop and reach your potential.

The bedrock of success is the longevity of people and our longest-serving 365 people have 5,933 years' service between them. This stability, and the knowledge retention it provides, is a key reason customers like working with us.

Alongside this is our long-term goal to meet the skills challenge by reaching out to under-represented groups, such as women, who comprise 24 percent of the workforce.

Our plans are that by 2030, it will be 50 percent, with more women in senior roles.

Three examples of women who have built their careers with us and grown into senior leaders are Gemma Welsher, Michelle Cotterill and Sarah Bastajian, who were all this year promoted to their LCO boards.

166 met them to find out about their careers with us and aspirations for the future.

ALL ABOARD

Women comprise almost a quarter of our workforce, and we aim to bring that to 50 percent by 2030. Here are three women in senior leadership roles who have built their careers with us.



MICHELLE COTTERILL, BOARD DIRECTOR, BIRMINGHAM

What roles have you had with us?

I joined in a HR role 12 years ago from outside the industry. My big break came when I became part of the Scape framework bid team and when we won the third framework I was promoted to national head of employment and skills as part of the delivery team. I then moved on to national account manager for Adjuto, our joint venture funding model, alongside becoming a local account manager. Then in 2018, I was appointed board director with responsibility for customers and account management.

Describe your journey

The company's support for development and for moving into other areas has been fantastic, and in Peter Owen, I had a managing director who believed in me and wanted to see me grow with the business. Becoming part of the bid team happened because I wanted to get involved and was encouraged to do so by Peter.

For my role with Adjuto, I volunteered to take it on. I was nervous at first as I had no financial expertise but the account manager role wasn't about being a tax expert. It was about the softer skills – being able to talk to customers and communicate well.

What are your key tips for career development?

Find a good mentor, talk to people in departments you are interested in and don't be afraid to ask questions. Be open to looking at areas different to your current job, and network professionally with people outside of your core team. My advice to women is have confidence in yourself, and remember how diverse this industry is and the huge range of opportunities that it offers.

What are the best things about working here?

The people we work with and how we are all contributing to changing lives, which is very meaningful. No other company I know gets its people to make such a huge contribution to strengthening society's wellbeing.

And the future?

I want to help others grow their careers, as I've seen how quickly you can be promoted here. Also I want to sustain our growth – for example in five years we've become the biggest contractor in Birmingham; I want to ensure we stay there.

"My advice to women is to have confidence in yourself, and remember how diverse this industry is and the huge range of opportunities that it offers."

Michelle Cotterill, board director, Birmingham

"There is genuine support and care, and I feel very lucky to work here. I'd love my children to come and work here too."

Gemma Welsher, board director, Wales and the West



GEMMA WELSHER, BOARD DIRECTOR, WALES AND THE WEST

Describe your career with us

I joined 12 years ago as project surveyor. I did have a career break by taking two years out when I had my second child but continued to do freelance work for the company. What was important is that the company were flexible and were happy for me to return when I felt it was the right time.

When I did come back, I became a commercial manager before further broadening my experience as pre-construction manager. Then, three years later, I went for the role of procurement director, where I was successful and joined the LCO board with responsibility for second-stage pre-construction.

What has your journey been like?

I've always been encouraged to develop and progress and I've consistently been offered training and personal development for both technical and people skills. I took up all the opportunities for learning as I wanted to progress and get better, and when the director role came up I was confident about applying for it and taking it on.

Any career development tips?

Have a flexible mindset and be open to other things. As we grow and diversify,

look at opportunities throughout the business and be aware of new roles when there are changes in the industry. Look to be the best you can, be prepared to feel challenged, and enjoy it.

What about careers for women?

My experiences as a woman in the industry have always been positive and women need to realise that it's for everyone, with a huge variety of roles and career opportunities. I'm surrounded by people who want me to succeed, and to me that is the key thing at Willmott Dixon; it's a business with a culture that encourages and breeds success among its people.

What are the best things about working here?

The people! We are a family-run business and the people feel like my extended family. There is genuine support and care, and I feel very lucky to work here. I'd love my children to come and work here too.

And the future?

I want to keep learning and playing a key role in our LCO's growth, building up strong relationships with customers along the way.



SARAH BASTAJIAN, BOARD DIRECTOR, FARNBOROUGH

What roles have you had with us?

I've been with Willmott Dixon for 13 years, starting as environmental manager at Cobham then becoming senior environmental manager.

My career then completely shifted and I moved into bid management, progressing to senior bid manager then to preconstruction manager at Farnborough. Then I was promoted to board director with responsibility for new business and for sustainability.

Can you outline your journey?

I wanted to better influence preconstruction in my environmental management role and I suggested a one-off project working in bid management. This was a crossroads moment as I'd hit the ceiling in environmental management but didn't want to

leave the company in order to progress. My managing director at the time, John Waterman, was fantastic and gave me plenty of support so that once the project was completed I moved into bid management – and I loved it! I've been supported by leaders like John, Roger Forsdyke and Richard Poulter who've helped grow my potential.

Any tips for career development?

You don't necessarily need technical expertise. It's primarily about attitude and behaviours, and showing you can do a role before you apply for it. I knew I had the potential to become a director so I worked hard to make sure I met the requirements before applying, including taking courses, having coaching and being mentored.

Careers are not always in a

straight line so be willing to take sideways steps. Be curious, take on new challenges, have a can-do attitude and don't be afraid to try.

What about careers for women?

Men and women have the same opportunities, and with so many types of careers available, the scope for everyone is huge.

What are the best things about working here?

The company feels like family and I love coming to work every day. The support is great and has always been there, including work flexibility around having children.

And the future?

If I could one day be a managing director, I would relish the challenge. You have to keep looking to improve, and by helping those around you, you also get better!

"I knew I had the potential to become a director so I worked hard to make sure I met the requirements before applying."

Sarah Bastajian, board director, Farnborough



This is the Hitchin team delivering the 22-storey residential tower and school on a tiny site in Paddington, central London – and winning rave reviews along the way for their work.

The Dudley House project is led by project director Mark Chamberlain. He and the team are at the centre of a hive of regeneration activity that is transforming the area beyond all recognition.

Here you will see all our mixed-use skills on a development for Westminster City Council that's a little different from the norm. Together with the 197 homes, you will soon find a bustling new school for 840 pupils, accommodation for locally employed medical staff, a church, social housing, community leisure facilities and retail space.

All within a small footprint no bigger than a football pitch. But while you won't see Premier League stars here, you will find a team at the top of their game of creating space for communities in which to thrive. Mark explains: "It is difficult to see how all this is going

to fit into a site that once featured a few low-rise blocks of flats. We've had to maximise every inch of space available, meeting the needs of many stakeholders who all have their own high expectations from our work."

The tragic events that occurred just a few miles away in the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 also brought some elements of the Dudley House design into sharp focus. "After Grenfell we went back to look at the design and the specification," Mark says. "We went through a full review, looking at everything we could. There are no combustible materials involved in the cladding and the checking system we have in place is extremely robust."

Next time you need to show a potential customer our high-rise track record, drop Mark a line to set up a tour of Dudley House.



Above: The 22-storey property provides 197 homes, a new school, accommodation for medical staff, a church, community leisure facilities and retail space.



ALLEYES ON BIRMINGHAM

Construction and Interiors opened new offices in the centre of Birmingham this summer – we find out why the focus is on Britain's second city.

One of the first things you notice arriving in Birmingham city centre is the volume of construction activity. The combination of building and infrastructure works means there are site hoardings and tower cranes everywhere.

"The activity level in Birmingham is huge," says Tom McEvoy, Interiors' operations director in the Midlands tasked with setting up its first local delivery office outside London. "The city is seeing a boom in construction and fit-out activity."

Perfect storm of opportunity

Why is this? Construction's deputy managing director in the Midlands, Nick Gibb, explains: "There's a perfect storm for Birmingham from three directions. Private investment money, looking for opportunities outside London, is flowing in, while the Commonwealth Games in 2022 requires a lot of investment and then there's the HS2 effect. All three are colliding."

We already have a big footprint in the city thanks to Construction's workload for several major customers. From a standing start just over five years ago, we are now one of the biggest contractors, and getting bigger (see box, page 21).

So opening up a base in the city centre, to complement the Coleshill office, is a natural step for Construction, and given Willmott Dixon's reputation in the local market, the timing was right for Interiors to follow suit. So this summer, Construction moved into its office at One Snowhill, followed by Interiors next door at Two Snowhill.

Big plans

It's an exciting next step for Construction, which has been in Coleshill for 30 years, and allows the team to be near customers and consultants. "When we looked at our customer base and at our peers around us, they are all in the centre of Birmingham," says Nick.

"If we want to collaborate and be accessible to our partners, we need to be close to them too."

A city centre location is also vital if we want to attract the best new talent, explains Nick: "Younger people want to live, work and play in the same environment which means there is a drive back to city centre living. There are many recent examples of key organisations, like ours, realising that they need to move back into the city to be part of this cultural shift."

For Interiors, Birmingham is about continuing the trajectory of growth that the business has achieved over the past five to six years under the leadership of chief operating officer Mike Hart and, more recently, managing director Graham Shaw.

"The opening of the Birmingham office is a fundamental next stage of our growth plan. It's an important step towards us becoming a truly national fit-out specialist," says Tom.

Birmingham is the ideal place to open your first base outside London. There's an Interiors-shaped gap in the fit-out and refurbishment market, where it will be tackling projects up to £30m and smaller construction projects up to £2m, which Construction would not usually tackle. And given the strong brand presence, doors are opening for Interiors.

"The strong opportunity for growth in a sustainable market is further matched by limited direct competition from our major competitors," says Tom. "There are not that many players in town, certainly not the medium

"If we want to collaborate and be accessible to our partners, we need to be close to them too."

Nick Gibb, deputy managing director

Main image: Ready to take Birmingham by storm – Nick Gibb and our team at the new Snowhill office.

or large players. Every time we meet a customer, they say they are delighted that we are here."

Building teams

In creating their teams from the new Snowhill bases, Tom and Nick have quite different challenges. Tom is starting from scratch, whereas Nick, managing director Peter Owen and the Midlands board have evolved their existing business to form three local teams – based in Coleshill, Nottingham and Birmingham – from a team which incorporates those that came over to Construction from Housing last year.

"That's been our priority," admits Nick, "making sure we have the right balance of teams, with the right combination of people to serve our customers in each of the three locations."

Meanwhile, Tom's team is busy recruiting on an almost-daily basis, hand-picking people who will fit our culture. "We have high standards, so the challenge is finding the right people," he says. "We don't want to dilute our culture and so are taking on people who we want to have a long future with us. That includes talking to our sister companies about people transferring in, as we think there

"This is an important first step towards us becoming a truly national fit-out specialist."

Tom McEvoy, Interiors' operations director

will be fantastic opportunities for development and promotion as we grow."

Tom plans to recruit 30 people in the next six months, with ambitions to continue growing beyond that. Key appointments so far include commercial director Phil Crowther, commercial manager Neil Adams, senior principal surveyor Jamie Brannigan, Phil Taylor as business development manager and Paula Hardiman as administrator.

"We are striving to be a diverse business," says Tom. "We hope that group policies, like the introduction of the new technical assistant roles which is aimed to attract more returners to work, will help us do that."

Collaboration's the key

Construction's new office has been designed with collaboration in mind. There are lots of different spaces which allow people to work together, from traditional meeting rooms to booths and interactive spaces such as the digital room, complete with BIM Cave.

It is already proving a hit with customers and partners. On the day we spoke to Nick, West Midlands Police – with whom construction has a £50m programme of works – was in the room next door and one of our project management partners was trialling some of the interactive technology to see if they could benefit from it in their offices.

The BIM Cave – three walls and a ceiling that allow a building to be projected in 3D – represents



a significant investment, at £70,000. It is the first one in central Birmingham. "It's been really successful," says Nick.

"We've been using it ourselves and we have offered it to our design partners too."

Construction already has contracts worth more than £100m underway in Birmingham, with others in the pipeline. Higher education and science and technology are thriving sectors – the team has recently secured two projects for the University of Birmingham worth £70m and there are more projects and customers on the horizon.

Interiors is looking forward to working with existing London customers who are also in Birmingham, such as Travelodge, the Department of Health and

Social Care, plus Barclays. With the Commonwealth Games approaching and Coventry's 2021 role as the City of Culture, Tom's team will be looking to replicate their London performance in the Midlands.

"We've had enormous success with hotels," says Tom. "We're something of an expert." Higher education and the commercial sector look hugely promising too.

Collaboration is the watchword for the relationship between Interiors and Construction, with Construction introducing Interiors to customers locally and each being alert to opportunities.

The two teams will also be looking for projects where they can work together, as they did on the Old Admiralty Building in London, where Interiors is working with

Above: The new School of Engineering is our latest project in Birmingham.

Left: Nick Gibb believes the city centre move will help attract more young workers.

Below left: Tom McEvoy, centre, is plotting West Midlands growth for Interiors with a team that includes senior principle surveyor Jamie Branningam, left, and administrator Paula Hardiman.

Hitchin. However, it's important that the two businesses have their own personalities, says Tom.

"As a fit-out company, we are busy establishing our own brand, distinct from main contracting," he explains.

"We have a different service offering, and we need to make people aware of that as customers in this market want to buy a specialist with people who have a proven track-record for fit-out. It is a very different challenge, with quick turnarounds, so requires a different skill-set."

One of Tom's most enjoyable tasks right now is networking. "I'm finding that Birmingham is a close-knit market," he says. "It's a lot more relationship-focused, which suits us because that's how we tend to do business."

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO BIRMINGHAM'S FUTURE

Green Heart for University of Birmingham

Creating parkland in the centre of the university, our Green Heart project opens up the campus for students, staff and the community to watch performances, socialise, meet and study, opening up views across the whole campus as envisaged in the 1920s.

Teaching and Learning Building for the University of Birmingham

This building is one reason why Birmingham is an international centre for learning. Located at the Edgbaston Campus, adjacent to the new library and Green Heart space, it will provide a state-of-the-art teaching and social study space at the university.

School of Engineering for the University of Birmingham

This new building will be home to specialist research in digital railway engineering, focusing on railway control and simulation, data integration, cybersecurity, condition monitoring and sensing, and improved methods for technology introduction.

The Lewis Building

A famous 1920s department store, the Lewis Building now provides some of the best Grade A office space in Birmingham. We worked with LGIM Real Assets (Legal & General) to bring the building back to its former glory as a popular new office location.

Curzon Building for Birmingham City University

The Curzon Building was phase two of the university's campus transformation at Eastside in the heart of Birmingham. As well as being a student support hub it's now home to more than 5,000 students who study business, English, law and social sciences.

National College for High-Speed Rail

This will play a key role in making the UK a world leader for constructing high-speed rail projects. Alongside its Doncaster counterpart, the Birmingham campus is a hub of learning that will power skills to build major infrastructure projects worldwide.

University of Birmingham School

We built Britain's first secondary school to be based in a university. The school accommodates 750 pupils aged between 11 and 16, with a further 400 places in the sixth form, and gives students at the university valuable work experience as teachers.

Cat Lane, Birmingham

Local residents complimented our project team on their considerate approach to building these 12 three and four-bedroom family homes in a wider series of projects for Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust.

Western Custody Suite

Our next-generation custody suite for West Midlands Police provides a 60-bed suite that does not have a police station attached – a first for the force. It also includes six cells for high-risk detainees who previously had to be monitored by officers sitting in the open doorway of their cell.

Lloyd House

Lloyd House has been West Midlands Police's headquarters since 1974. The refurbishment gave the force a bright, modern and IT-focused working environment fit for the 21st century, with open and flexible floor plans.

Curzon Building extension for Birmingham City University

Following the successful Curzon Building, our extension provides space for 3,000 students and features 650 rooms, a student hub, lecture theatre and mock courtrooms – in total, an extra 100,000 square feet for the Curzon Building.

Parkside Building at Birmingham City University

This landmark building is the university's new home for the Institute of Art and Design. This was the first phase of the university's campus transformation that saw it locate to the Millennium Quarter, with the Curzon Building added in phase two.



ALL SYSTEMS GO FARNBOROUGH

Our Farnborough LCO is now up and running, with a growing team and a promising future.

When we opened our Farnborough LCO, the brief was clear; to provide a dedicated base to grow our company in four counties: Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Dorset.

The initial aim was to generate a turnover of £50m in 2018 – in fact, it's likely to achieve £60m.

Previously, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Dorset were split between two LCOs: Cobham and Wales and the West.

Creating a new LCO in Farnborough means we can focus solely on customers in the new "Southern Home Counties region", explains Richard Poulter, Farnborough's managing director.

"After several years of working in towns like Southampton, Swindon and Bournemouth, we knew there were more opportunities in these areas," says Richard. "By creating a new office, we'd be able to apply even greater focus with a dedicated team."

Richard, and the rest of the team involved in setting up the LCO, took its formation a step at a time. All of 2015 was spent carefully considering the case for the new office before it opened its doors in October 2016. Throughout 2017, it remained part of Cobham before the 'big bang' this year as a fully-fledged LCO.

Paying dividends

The preparation is paying off. Initial indications for 2019 suggest that turnover is likely to hit £100m – a landmark the team was not expecting to achieve until the following year, explains Richard.



So, how have we got there? Richard puts the office's early success down to the support he and his team have received from colleagues in Cobham and Wales and the West.

"Cobham were superb in terms of the way they released people to come and work in Farnborough. Roger Forsdyke and the team there saw the bigger picture; they knew it was for the greater good.

"Likewise, Neal Stephens and

the team have been very generous, helping us to build relationships with their customers that are now looked after by Farnborough, such as Bournemouth University."

When it opened in 2016, there were 18 people in the office. Then more colleagues joined throughout 2017. And by the beginning of this year, numbers had more than quadrupled, to 80.

By autumn, there will be 100 colleagues, around 40 of whom

are long-standing employees who transferred from Cobham, Wales and the West, Homes and even Manchester.

"Existing people within the business have been able to grow into new roles – myself included," says Richard, who was previously deputy managing director at Cobham.

More than half the team are new to Willmott Dixon, though. Helping these new colleagues settle in,

while creating Farnborough's own working culture, is the "biggest challenge" the new LCO has faced, reflects Richard.

Judging by results so far, the new team is thriving. But Richard is not getting carried away.

"We're in no way complacent," he explains. "For us, it's about making sure our people achieve what they want to achieve, and creating a sustainable business for the long term."



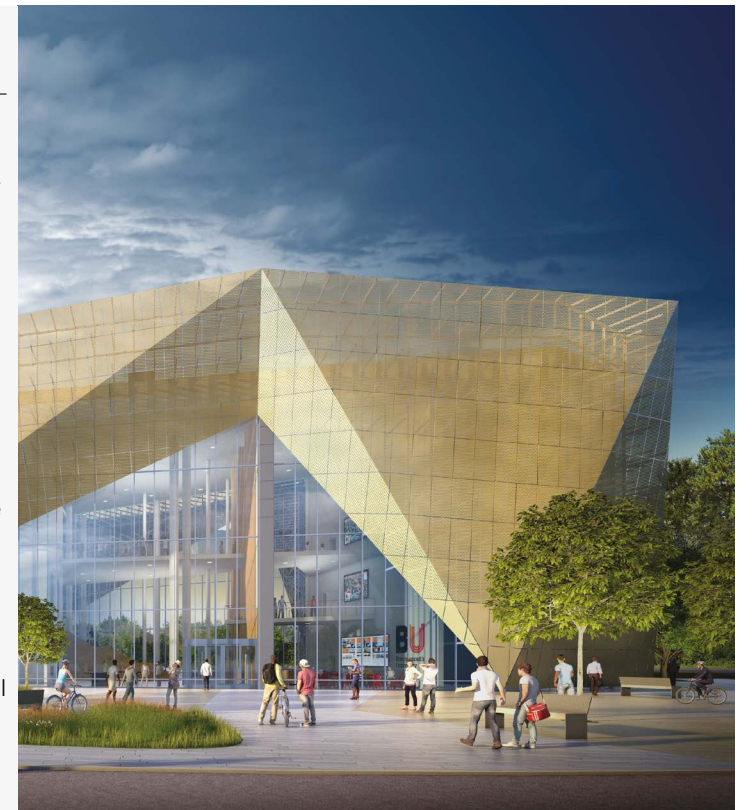
Above: Richard Poulter looks on as planning engineer Stephen Wilson points to where we can find more growth from our Farnborough office; **Below:** The £20m Poole Gateway project.

Helping hands for a smooth handover

Wales and the West handed its work with Bournemouth University over to Farnborough, with our Hampshire-based team working for the higher education customer on Poole Gateway, a £20m media, science and technology centre, due to be completed in June next year.

Cobham also passed Farnborough work with Hart District Council in Hampshire, and following the leisure centre there, our team secured and recently completed a £3m sports hall.

Now Farnborough is due on site at the £35m Winchester Sports and Leisure Park in April 2019 – with completion due in November 2020. The order book keeps getting bigger!



HITTING THE HIGH NOTES IN LIVERPOOL

We map out our achievements in the city, and how they've helped its people and communities.

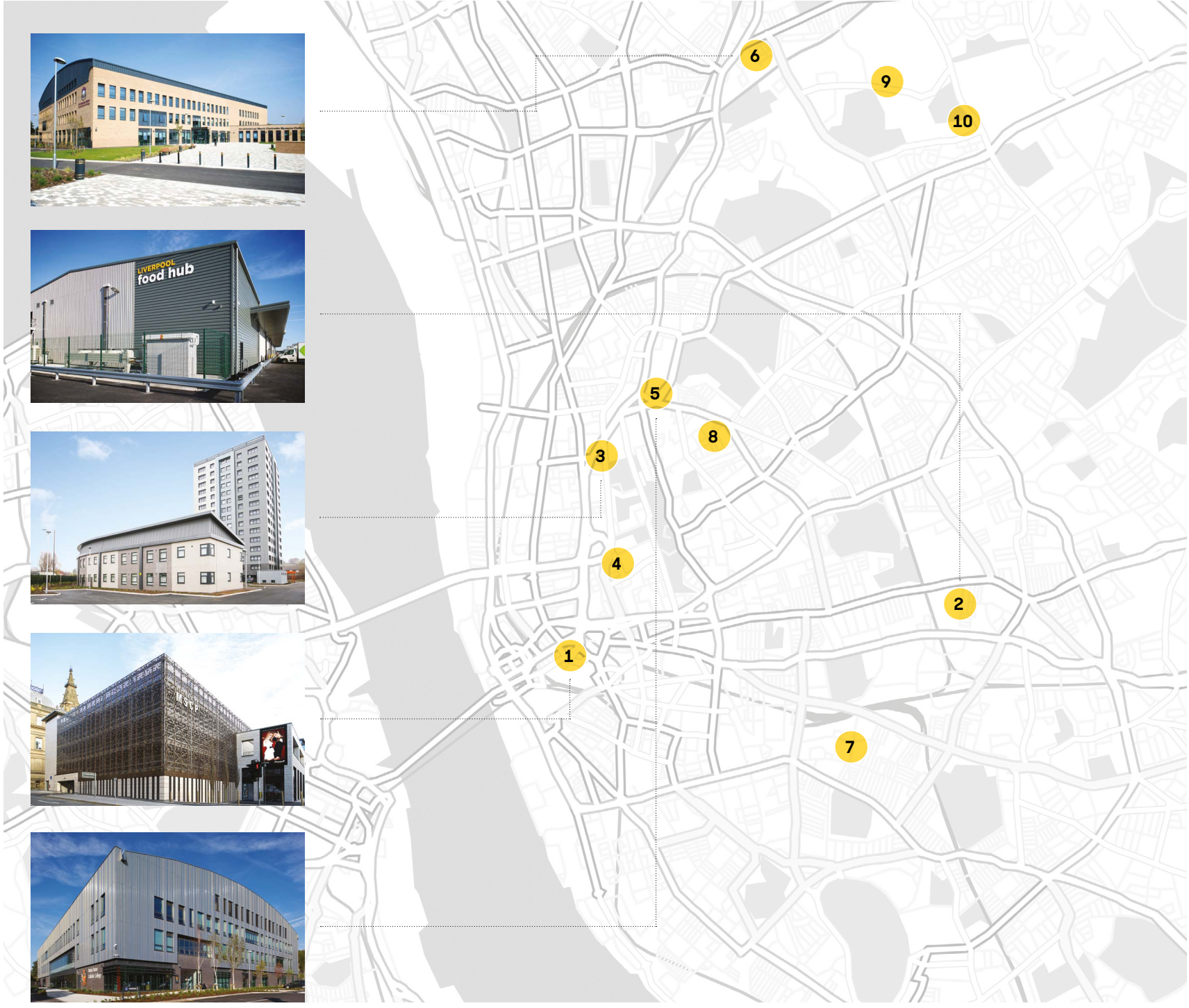
For a decade we've been having a huge impact in Liverpool. We have delivered more than £150m-worth of projects that improved the communities for thousands of people, and enhanced lives along the way through skills training, apprenticeships and work opportunities. This has been underpinned by our roles on the Scape framework and Liverpool Housing Partnership.

Our work covers almost everything, from new schools and academies, blue light and industrial to homes, healthcare and places to park securely.

Our map gives a glimpse of just how much we have contributed to the future of a city that gave us The Beatles. Where next? For our team, it really is a Magical Mystery Tour...



Above: Making us fab in Liverpool; director Mike Lane is leading our drive in the city.



- 1 Victoria Street Car Park**
We converted a former ground-level car park into a much-needed four-floor multi-storey version, providing 333 car spaces including 15 motorcycle spaces and 28 cycle spaces. The 24/7, 365-days-a-year car park also has three electric charging bays as more and more road users opt for electric.
- 2 Liverpool Food Hub**
This provides a new fruit, vegetable and flower market, which was great news for traders waiting for something to replace an existing market in poor condition. The 65,000-square-foot market includes parking, a café and public toilets, replacing the existing rundown building off Edge Lane in Old Swan.
- 3 Marwood Tower**
Marwood Tower was our first project for The Liverpool Housing Partnership that saw us restore a 1965 landmark building on the major northern route in and out of the city into 81 high-quality apartments, providing specialist accommodation for over-55s.
- 4 Merseyside Police Headquarters**
We're working on a new Merseyside Police headquarters, which will provide space for up to 1,175 staff across a four-storey building to fight crime. It will see Merseyside Police relocate from its current Canning Place headquarters to a bright new facility, which includes a single-storey annex, meeting rooms, lecture theatre and break-out spaces.
- 5 Notre Dame Catholic College**
This was the first of three big secondary schools we built in the city in three years that has transformed school learning. Completed in 2013, it was also the first of 16 Liverpool schools rebuilt as part of a £169m programme that saw the college relocate from a separate location to its new home.
- 6 Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College**
Our second of three secondary schools, this featured a sports hall with six courts, a 3G pitch, a theatre and recording and dance studios. Like other projects in the city, around 70 percent of the budget was spent with firms in the region, including contracts for mechanical and electrical engineering, tiling and fencing.
- 7 Archbishop Blanch Secondary School**
Our third secondary school in as many years was completed in 2015, providing a new campus including a new theatre, recording and dance studios. It followed Notre Dame Catholic College and Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College in being a calling card for our abilities in the city.
- 8 Venmore Dementia Hub**
This three-storey dementia facility created 60 en-suite bedrooms for the city's most vulnerable people, allowing them to live in safety with medical facilities when needed. It replaces an existing care home to create something more fit-for-purpose.
- 9 Birtenshaw and New Heights School**
We created Birtenshaw and New Heights Schools in Fazakerley on the site of a former detention centre. Birtenshaw is run by disability charity Birtenshaw to provide education for up to 40 children with autism, while New Heights School is for pupils excluded from mainstream education.
- 10 Leighton Dene**
We built 22 townhouses and 12 apartments for affordable rent on a neglected former nursing home that had been vacant for a number of years. Like Marwood Tower, we delivered it for long-term partners Liverpool Mutual Homes under the Liverpool Housing Partnership.

BRINGING THE IT FACTOR

Chief Information Officer Alan Ramsay has only been in his post for six months and already the business is seeing the benefits.

Alan Ramsay is overseeing a raft of initiatives to improve how we harness our IT infrastructure to work better. Alan explains: "We are a company that needs to be flexible in how and where we work. My aim is to create a modern technology environment that allows us to work and collaborate seamlessly anywhere – offices, sites, home, trains – without restraints."

"We are already on this journey, but you will notice profound change in the next 18 months as we introduce new ideas and technology so we can work even smarter."

Alan has been listening to LCOs to understand their challenges and needs. That has led to a number of actions to improve performance, including enhancing network and internet speed by upgrading the infrastructure to improve bandwidth and providing better speed and reliability for data-hungry workflows.

Another change is the re-introduction of an LCO-based field support team to work in collaboration with the Helpdesk in providing instant support for day-to-day IT needs. Alan says: "This came across loud and clear in my discussions with LCO teams – they need people on the ground too".

The IT team has also been remodelled and expanded to ensure it is better equipped to engage proactively with business projects. This has seen new roles introduced in areas like enterprise architecture



and portfolio management, security, procurement and asset management. They will be better positioned to support and collaborate with the business on new IT initiatives, with people who ensure we always get the best-value deal when procuring IT-related services and equipment.

Alan explains: "This is about being focused on delivering projects that enhance our performance while also making sure we are coordinated and don't

inadvertently duplicate efforts by introducing local-level initiatives that clash with other systems across the wider business."

Game-changer

Looking to the future, big things are afoot. That includes moving to the 'Cloud' rather than relying on our own hardware – something Alan says will be a 'game-changer' in terms of efficiency. "We have relied on in-house servers and our data centres for many years

"Putting our data on the Cloud means we get reliability and can focus on adding value in other areas."

Alan Ramsay, chief information officer

now and we are seeing increasing issues due to their age, and they consume huge amounts of energy. Putting our data on the Cloud means we get reliability and can focus on adding value in other areas rather than on maintaining these systems."

Also, Alan's team is examining whether there is a business case for introducing Office 365, which would bring huge benefits for team collaboration. Feedback so far has shown it will hugely benefit agile and flexible working, giving our people an engaging and collaborative working experience.

He also plans to help us differentiate ourselves from competitors with more efficient use of strategic 'Business Intelligence' technology, empowering the business to assure and optimise our performance. As he says: "We'll be focusing on harnessing our business-critical data in a new way and making sure it's readily available and accessible to analyse and interrogate."

So, exciting times for IT and more to come that will benefit us all – watch this space!

STARS LINE UP FOR OSCARS

This year we have 12 stellar candidates lined up for the Construction Manager of the Year Awards, the 'Oscars' of the industry.

This year's Construction Manager of the Year Awards again features a strong cast from our company, vying to be the 'best in class' for their roles managing projects to a successful completion.

We have 12 candidates lining up to find out on 24 October whether they walk away with either a gold or silver in their category. It is the culmination of a rigorous process that started with an online entry in March, followed by a judges' visit to their project in the summer and a quick-fire one-hour presentation to judges in London on why they should win.

Hitchin's project director Mark Chamberlain, who has been a judge for a number of years, explains: "The process is tough but this really is the gold standard for managers of construction projects. Just to be nominated by your LCO is a huge thing, so to be a finalist and then actually win a medal is huge recognition that you are one of the best in the industry."

Cobham director Ross Taylor is a former gold medal winner and says: "In Hollywood, the Oscars celebrate the best in the film industry. These awards do the same for construction." Another winner, operations manager Mike Walmsley, went on: "For me it was a rewarding process and the support you get from colleagues and customers is immense. A career highlight so far!"

Finalists also have the added bonus that they automatically



Above: Wales and the West's Darren Hancock, centre, has already tasted the winning feeling for his Ronald McDonald House project at the Building on Better awards this Spring. Now he's going for gold at the industry's Oscars.



Left: Sean McNicholas has won silver in the past and is aiming to go one better for his work at Darlington Civic Centre.

Our 2018 finalists

1. Phil Brooks, Waterside Drive/Xcel Sports
2. Adrian Coleman, Lincoln Transport Hub
3. Simon Cook, Sapphire Leisure Centre, Romford
4. Darren Hancock, Ronald McDonald House, Cardiff
5. Brian Hanlon, Glan Clwyd High School
6. Nigel Harris, University of Bristol Queen's Building
7. Matt Kemp, Portsmouth Village Hotel
8. Neil Locke, Heathfield School
9. Sean McNicholas, Darlington Civic Centre
10. Richard Molyneux, Wixams Academy
11. Richard Purcell, Department of Health and Social Care HQ
12. David Rowell, MK Council Museum

become MCIOB without needing to take extra exams – another quality mark for their careers. Although against stiff opposition from across the industry, we have one of the best track-records for gold medal winners, with five in the past four years.

Fingers crossed we can add to that in October!

The importance of physical wellbeing is a given, both at home and work. Yet it is only recently that society has taken the issue of mental wellbeing as seriously. Until then, people would often bottle-up mental health issues, and just 'get on with it' for fear of not being taken seriously.

That is changing across the workplace, and in Construction, we are taking the lead in tackling perceptions and making a positive contribution through our All Safe Minds campaign.

All Safe Minds was launched in 2017 in response to the frightening statistics surrounding depression and suicide amongst young people in the construction sector. HSE figures show that deaths from suicides are around 10 times higher than deaths from injury.

Standing up for support

At Willmott Dixon, the welfare of our people and suppliers is an absolute priority. So All Safe Minds is a step change in dealing with mental wellbeing by making it a mainstream issue, not niche.

Championed by HS&E chief Mark French, it aims to remove the stigma around mental health issues, encourage people to seek help if they need it and make sure that everyone can tap into a variety of help resources quickly, easily and confidentially.

"Attitudes are definitely changing, and from an internal viewpoint we are seeing people coming forward, asking for support either for themselves, or out of concern for a colleague", says Mark. "We want everyone to feel free to talk about personal problems, whether to a colleague, a line manager, a close friend or a professional counsellor."

"Our aim is to create a culture where we are all comfortable talking about issues that impact on our mental wellbeing and where getting help becomes the norm."

What we're doing

To support that, the company is delivering mental health awareness talks on all construction sites and in offices, as well as making sure that people know where and how to get help and support.

As part of this, we have trained more than 130 people, including line managers, as mental health first-aiders (MHFAs) on sites and in offices. Mark explains: "Their role is to listen and communicate non-judgementally, provide support and information, encourage external help if needed and signpost people to appropriate professionals and others." This is highlighted by campaign posters to show who the local MHFAs are and reinforce the key messages of All Safe Minds. "The MHFAs are an important



"We've had a very positive response to All Safe Minds, and we'll be continuing to provide talks and information to keep the momentum going."

Mark French, Group head of HS&E



route to support," adds Mark, "and we hope that their presence will eventually normalise the subject of mental health. We want it to become natural for people to seek help if they are struggling with their personal situation. Nobody needs to struggle alone, and we can and will support them."

The 3 Rs

We are working to instil the '3 Rs' into our daily work culture – a memorable three-step process encouraging all employees to:

Recognise: Be aware if they or someone they know is struggling to cope. Know the signs.

Reach out: Start the conversation. If you are struggling, start by talking to someone you trust. Or if you know a colleague is struggling, offer your support. Simply lending an ear can make all the difference.

Rebuild: Use the resources available to you to start taking back control.

"We've had a very positive response to All Safe Minds," Mark continues, "and we'll be continuing to provide talks and information to keep the momentum going. Hopefully the message will spread beyond our own company, which can only be a good thing for the industry."

Left: The latest in a series of All Safe Minds infographics is designed to keep our colleagues talking. It reinforces the message that we all need to be alert when it comes to our mental fitness and that of our friends, workmates and loved ones.

CHAMPIONING TOTAL WELLBEING

Perceptions of mental health are changing, not only in society in general but also in the workplace. We are no exception, with the All Safe Minds campaign providing a network of support to our people should they need it. Mark French, who is leading the campaign, explains how it works.



"It's perfectly normal to get first aid when we have physical health issues at work and it should be exactly the same for mental health. These issues happen to pretty much all of us and we want everyone to feel comfortable talking about them and asking for support."

Mental health first aider Kay Ortatepe, Group health, safety and environment trainee



"The All Safe Minds campaign and the presence of mental health first aiders is a huge help in breaking down the stigma of mental health issues. We want people to know that we care, we're here to support them and they can be open about whatever they are going through."

Mental health first aider Mel Abrook, Group human resources manager

PILOT PROJECT

Our Cobham team is on its second project for Surrey County Council in the town that's adjacent to Gatwick Airport. 166 met Joe Conway to find out how we are creating a facility in Crawley to train tomorrow's pilots.



Sitting on the runway, awaiting take-off, it's always relaxing to hear the calm, confident voice of our pilot. To get to that position, the pilot would have undergone 1,500 hours of training – probably using a flight simulator owned by L3 Technologies, a \$10bn American aerospace organisation.

As part of its global expansion, L3 commissioned a new £40m training and production facility on a site owned by Surrey County Council just a few miles from Gatwick Airport (see Onsite box, page 32).

Called the Nexus Training and Production Facility, it was ready for take-off once they had a trusted contractor on board. Our name was top of the list!

Two for one

The Nexus Training and Production Facility is critical for the UK's aviation industry, as it will attract huge amounts of inward investment.

Tasked with turning a vision into reality is a team led by construction manager Luke Page, reporting to operations manager Joe Conway.

The project involves creating two rather special buildings. The first is a global centre for excellence in airline training that opens in November and houses eight RealitySeven™ flight simulators, each costing £12m. It also includes a number of fixed-based simulators plus briefing rooms, classrooms, meeting rooms and a restaurant.

The second building, opposite, is a similarly sized facility to manufacture 30 simulators a year and be a base for more than 300 employees – this commences operation in January.

Joe explains: "Commercial airlines need to recruit and train new pilots and this will be a step change for L3 to supply them through its training facilities. Our brief was clear: they needed Nexus to be fully functioning as quickly as possible."

Surrey CC is the customer

Although L3 is the end-user, our actual customer is Surrey County

"Our brief was clear: they needed Nexus to be fully functioning as quickly as possible."

Joe Conway, operations manager

Opposite: Joe Conway leads the Cobham team in front of one of the two impressive high-tech facilities for L3.

Below: Joe Conway and Sandra Barnett from Surrey County Council talk tactics for achieving the two looming completion dates.

Council (SCC), so we manage a three-way liaison between L3, ourselves and SCC.

As developer, SCC set up the deal with L3 to deliver the new facility on a long-term lease. It then appointed Cobham to build it using the design services of the council-commissioned architects HGP.

Luke, Joe and the team then have to meet the end-user's needs (see box, below). L3 requires precise and exacting modifications to tailor the building to its requirements, and our team has had to lead on communications with SCC to make sure any requests for changes can be accommodated, at an agreed price, and fitted into a complex building schedule.

So what challenges has the team had to overcome?

Luke says: "We've had to



Cobham's 'flight crew' at Nexus

Russell Miller – operations director

Joe Conway – operations manager

Luke Page – construction manager

Myrddin Pollington – construction manager

Andy Mitchell – construction manager

Liam Noon – senior building manager

Joe Chandler – building manager

Jason Elphick – building manager

Chris Davis – assistant build manager

Dan O'Keefe – assistant build manager

Sam Alderson – designate commercial manager

David Youngman – senior project surveyor

Lee Garrett – senior project surveyor

Jack Oxtoby – assistant project surveyor

Tommy Eagle – technical trainee

Rachel Foy – project assistant

manage very complex discussions with L3 and SCC to ensure the 60,000-square-foot project is on schedule. We had turbulence along the way, with wet conditions at the end of last year turning the ground surrounding the two buildings into a quagmire."

Joe continues: "We had to think fast to overcome this. We began the work on a raised piling platform but weeks of rain created what we called 'Lake Nexus'. The mud was so bad that we just couldn't operate properly."

Decisive action

Action had to be swift. Joe took the decision to halt the project and lay a tarmac base for the outside areas. "We told our supply chain we couldn't ask them to operate in these conditions and could they come back in a fortnight."

"They were very understanding; so was our operations director, Russell Miller."

Luke adds: "We lost two weeks, but it was so worth doing. There was a new sense of purpose when we got started again."

Joe feels lessons can be learned from the experience of making a virtue of necessity. He created a video called "The Courage to Stop". In it, South Park cartoon-style construction characters talk about "making the environment we want" and how it's sometimes best to halt and reboot.

Recovering the lost time was made easier by team spirit, something Joe and Luke had worked hard to establish right from day one.

Joe says: "Before we started, our site team made a video with Surrey County Council and L3 about the project. We wanted to be able to show everyone what they were building – to really engage their emotions and provide inspiration. It was a bit like that famous story of the NASA floor-sweeper who

saw his job as helping put a man on the moon. We wanted everyone to feel they had a big part to play in making the project a success."

A culture of respect extended to the site conditions too. "We wanted the site office to look like our office at Cobham," says Joe.

Operating off-grid

Joe is looking at trialling new ideas to help the whole company. One of the most exciting ideas is to see if the site office can operate off the main electricity grid – "less Rover, more Tesla" as he half-jokingly puts it.

"We examined every aspect, and although we couldn't quite get there, we did pretty well. We've got £40,000-worth of solar panels on the roof, plus dehumidifier drying units, double doors at the office entrance and separate air-conditioning units for upstairs and downstairs."

Running costs are being

"I think we're the most energy-efficient site across Willmott Dixon."

Joe Conway, operations manager

monitored, reviewed and shared with Re-Thinking. "Sustainability is very important. I think we're the most energy-efficient site across Willmott Dixon and this is about learning how to handle energy supply in the future."

Peak team

Out on site, where 150 people were operating at peak, two steel-frame buildings have taken shape. Consistency is key; the supply chain was almost the same as the one used on the adjacent project called Gatwick Diamond, also for SCC, which is

Onsite: Nexus Training and Production Facility

Location – Crawley, Surrey
Facilities – Two state-of-the-art production and training buildings for Surrey County Council to let to flight simulator specialist L3
Value – £40m
Client – Surrey County Council
Willmott Dixon team – Cobham
Completion – February 2019
Framework – Southern Construction Framework
Architect – HGP Architects
Civil Engineer – Lyons O'Neill



Above: The two facilities provide a huge space for L3 to manufacture simulators and train the next generation of pilots.

Left: Solar panels on the roof are just part of the plan to help the site be self-sufficient in energy needs.

Right: Building manager Joe Chandler leaves nothing to chance as we zero in on a defect-free completion.



"We lost two weeks, but it was so worth doing. There was a new sense of purpose when we got started again."

Luke Page, construction manager

Joe and Luke are confident they can manage this and are equally determined to hand over the buildings defect-free. A few lucky team members have an added incentive: L3 has promised that team members can try one of the flight simulators when they're installed (the usual rate for trainees is £600 per hour).

Surrey County Council is happy with progress and is discussing its next project – putting a new office block where the site office and car park currently sit. It would be a very impressive hat-trick of negotiated projects on one site, proving once again that success breeds success. And for successful companies, the sky really is the limit.

now the home of South East Coast Ambulance Service. By next year, the L3 training centre will become a well-known local feature as passing drivers will be able to see into the building and view trainee pilots in their towering, cabin-size simulation pods.

Just behind it, the production centre's giant cranes will soon be used to move flight simulator components around. They were delivered from Doncaster on 45m-long flatbed lorries, with a rear-steering facility that was

essential to thread through the site's narrow access.

One major challenge remains for the production centre: getting delivery lorries to reach it for the final couple of months after the training centre has opened. Access to the site has been via just two routes throughout the project – which has necessitated very precise handling. But when L3's staff and visitors start using the main car park, lorry movements will need to be even more coordinated.



INTERIORS LEADING THE LINE

Interiors is digging deep to get the RFU's new East Stand fitted out for the Autumn Internationals. 166 found out how we are beating the clock.

When a rugby match gets tough, it's time to re-think tactics. And that is what has happened for Interiors on its £34m-contract to fit-out the new East Stand for the Rugby Football Union (RFU) at Twickenham in London.

Before the team even stepped onto the pitch, the original game plan had to be ripped up and replaced. Interiors' intended programme saw it arriving on site in January 2017 to a completed shell and core, hitting all six new floors at once to meet a tight

"Before we could buy in to the proposal, we sat down with all our supply chain, to make sure they could deliver what we need, which has happened."

Daryl Hardy, operations director, Interiors

programme in time for the 2018 Autumn Internationals. Changes to the design caused delays for the shell and core contractor, so Interiors is receiving the floors in a piecemeal fashion.

"We agreed to an accelerated programme based around increased labour, changing the order in which we tackled different areas and introducing different shift patterns," says operations director Daryl Hardy. "The original programme had 200 people at peak; we are now peaking at about 320, which shows the enormity of what we are doing."

The shell and core delays would have extended Interiors' 33-week programme to 49 weeks, taking completion towards the end of the year. The accelerated programme shaves eight weeks off to pull the end date back to late October.

With England due to kick off against South Africa for the first of five Quilter International matches on 3 November, hitting that deadline is crucial for the RFU.

The extension to Twickenham's East Stand is central to the RFU's new business model which will see it deliver all the hospitality at the stadium itself to optimise income on match days and through private functions all year round.

The new six-level building, which curves round the existing oval stand, will provide new facilities for debenture holders and corporate entertainers, with bars, dining areas and even a rooftop garden with a stage for live music performances. Level three will be home to a new conference space.

Debenture holders can access the existing East Stand directly from the bars on the lower two



Opposite: Lewis Blake and Anna Palmer are involved in fitting out Twickenham's new East Stand (above) so the RFU can deliver all the hospitality at the stadium itself. **Left:** Operations director Daryl Hardy.

it brings. And then there are sporting and music events to accommodate, some of them requiring works to stop for three days. "We have dedicated one full-time manager to overseeing logistics," adds Daryl.

Interiors has also been working cheek-by-jowl with the shell-and-core contractor on every floor. The team must also manage interfaces with a specialist kitchen contractor, employed directly by the RFU to fit-out nine kitchens of various sizes – a task which has been complicated by the piecemeal fit-out sequence.

The accelerated programme is a big ask, says Daryl. "Before we could buy into the proposal, we sat down with all our supply chain, to make sure they could deliver what we need, which has happened."

By the end of summer, the building was watertight with envelope glazing yet to be installed.

"It has been hard," he says. "We have to keep sprinting, all the way to the try line, but as Interiors we thrive on this and have some of the best people in the market."

As they near the end, every single player is giving 100 percent to make that final whistle without needing extra time.

floors of the extension. Corporate entertainment, previously delivered from a village of marquees, will have its own high-end home.

The finishes for each level vary according to use, explains Daryl: "Each area has a different set-up. It goes from a full-on debenture bar, to a steak restaurant, to high-end corporate hospitality and the Rose Garden on the open part of the fifth floor."

Team effort

The team on site is led by operations manager Philip O'Brien and principal surveyor Sheldon George. When Interiors bid for the contract, it saw that logistics and multiple stakeholders would add to the challenges created by the tight programme.

The stadium is situated in the middle of a large residential area, with all the challenges that

SOCIAL MEDIA CLIMBER

Our social media presence – which showcases the best of what we do – is rising, with a following topping 100,000.

100,000 AND RISING!

Our presence on social media is going from strength to strength.

In August we notched up 50,000 followers on Twitter, and with a similar amount on LinkedIn, we're one of the industry's most popular companies.

This is important as social media is about putting us in the shop window to attract new people and share successes with supply chain members and customers alike.

It is an effective way to post updates on project wins, milestones and completions, as well as community activities and our people's opinions on big issues, encouraging interaction and engagement with our followers. These channels, along with YouTube, showcase the huge variety and diversity of what we do that makes us the company we love to work for.

Our social media presence only really started in 2011 and was quickly embraced by many in the company, with our LCO communications managers now joining the Group team in making

"You can see from the examples on this page the highlights we have had with people like Lord Sugar (who follows us on Twitter) tweeting praise for one of our community initiatives."

Hannah Moss, Group communications manager

regular posts on Willmott Dixon's Twitter and LinkedIn feeds. You can see from the examples on this page the highlights we have had with people like Lord Sugar (who follows us on Twitter) tweeting praise for one of our community initiatives.

Sometimes there is so much going on across our company that there will be anything up to five or six posts a day, with customers also sharing praise for us on their channels too.

GET INVOLVED

Everyone can play their part in driving this further. Just send through pictures and updates on your project or office activities to your LCO teams or Group communications. This will ensure we continue to increase the number of people who want to stay informed about our company. Also, if you have LinkedIn and Twitter accounts, make sure you follow Willmott Dixon and where possible share our posts by either re-tweeting them or hitting the 'Like' button on LinkedIn.

Here's to hitting the 150,000 mark next year!



Making waves with some of our most popular social media engagements

