



sparkling water

United Utilities is a major organisation by any standards. A FTSE100 company with sales in the order of £2 billion, United Utilities is the biggest water company in the country, with some 20 million people depending on its services every day.

It's a company that invests heavily in infrastructure and planning – often decades ahead. We've come to look at the backdrop to a move to Grasmere House, a building facility in United Utilities' heartland near Warrington, and find a dynamic business model managing change, technology and environmental issues with a highly impressive blend of skills.

'Grasmere is a home to some 600 staff, spread over three floors,' explains Martin Paladino. 'There's a mix of functions and departments, but in particular it's the base for operations, legal and the human resources departments.'

'There was a recognition that a combination of the changing business environment and United Utilities' specific needs meant that Dawson House – about a mile away – was no longer supporting business objectives. Dawson House was a >>>>>>>>



case study



square '70s building, full of cellular offices that branched off corridors. The move to Grasmere has, at a stroke, improved communication, visibility and teamwork. This is about rationalising the real estate portfolio to provide a high quality contemporary working environment – which ultimately helps United Utilities provide a high level of customer service.

‘Furthermore, the move to Grasmere improves internal communications on a macro level. There are about 3,000 United

Utilities staff here on the Lingley Mere Business Park. This is about putting people together.’

Having moved away from a cellular layout, the three floors of Grasmere are planned in a space efficient open plan scheme. This is efficiency that has at its core some key considerations, as Martin explains. ‘United Utilities takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously, so it’s not surprising that office design has a particularly strong ecological emphasis. The

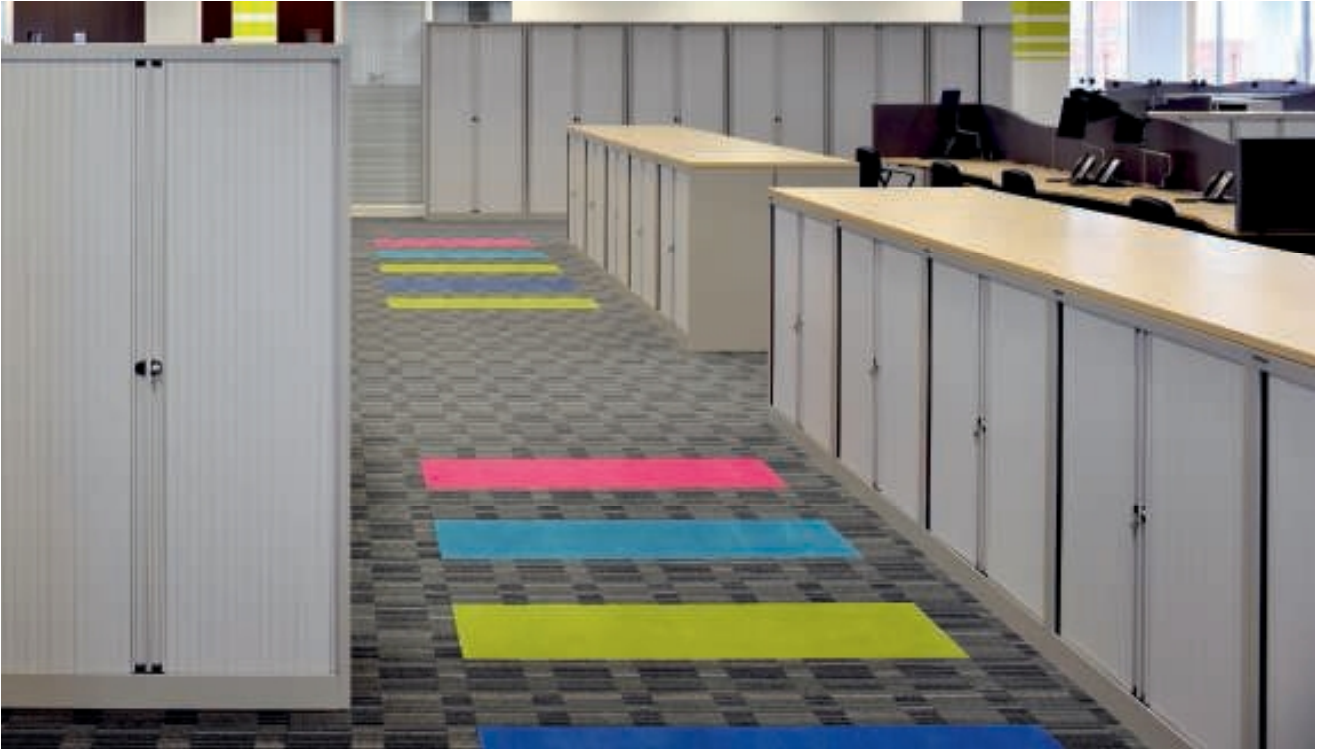
company is the UK’s largest listed water company, and it owns, operates and maintains utility assets, including water, waste water, electricity and gas. United Utilities sees itself as a steward of natural resources, so there’s a strong focus within the company on climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement. With that core mission, it was important to us to make sure Grasmere incorporates an advanced level of environmental design. Grasmere is rated BREEAM ‘good’, and includes a host of green features ranging from rainwater harvesting to waterless urinals.

‘This is naturally reflected in the way the working areas are planned. The EFG workstations are laid out to support the teams, with the groups having access to common breakout areas. We’ve introduced environmentally friendly hub stations which include shared printers and recycling bins. As a priority, we’ve got people thinking about waste.

‘The move to Grasmere was also seen as an opportunity to invest in technology in order to enhance efficiency. For example, we’ve introduced VOIP at Grasmere, which of course offers considerable savings for a large consumer-facing organisation like United Utilities. The investment in IT is reflected at the workstation, where we



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►►► specified the Rodney monitor arm from Colebrook Bosson Saunders. It is ergonomically adjustable, and easy to use – which is important for 600 staff of all shapes and sizes. And there was an environmental benefit too, because of its one piece, water minimising design.

‘Energy is a fast moving sector, and utilities companies have to be able to respond quickly to market changes. The business climate changes so it’s important to us that we can manage high levels of churn. The space planning incorporates all the necessary adjacencies, in workstations as

well as for storage, but beyond that Europa is responsible for all aspects of facility management. In essence, what that boils down to is that we are supportive, adaptable and responsive.

We have a framework agreement for furniture supply with EFG, and a massive reason for that is they are quick to respond.

It helps of course that EFG are local – with offices on Lingley Mere Business Park – but beyond that they know our business. That’s essential because when we’re involved in moves it tends to be in high volume.

‘The move to Grasmere was a case in point. The move from Dawson House was phased over two months in the autumn of 2009, and it was business critical that it was achieved on time. A key financial driver was the need to avoid double costs for leases. And we’re proud to say that, despite a considerable number of ongoing changes, the move was accomplished on time, on budget.’



essential ingredients

Client:	• United Utilities
Project Manager:	• Europa 01925 463663
Design & Planning:	• Claremont 01925 284000
Fit-Out:	• Preferred Office 0161 976 6400
Systems Furniture:	• EFG 0845 608 4100
Carpets:	• Milliken 01942 612777
Monitor Arms:	• Colebrook Bosson Saunders 020 7940 4266
Partitioning:	• Komfort 0115 926 4404
Lighting:	• AGP Electrical 0161 477 2411