



Walsall Regeneration Company

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WALSALL'S CANNES DO SPIRIT HELPS DELIVER WELL CONNECTED REGION

The Black Country's role in delivering a well connected West Midlands region will be spotlighted when Walsall Regeneration Company's chief executive Dr Peter Cromar addresses delegates at MIPIM 2008.

The town's resurgence as a place to do business is set to be taken to a new level with Walsall Gigaport, a £400 million scheme to create a dynamic office corridor with an advanced next generation broadband access platform that will help companies compete more effectively in the global marketplace.

Dr Cromar will detail the groundbreaking initiative when he takes centre stage at a conference on Thursday 13 March on 'Delivering a well connected region'. He will be joined by Antonello Madonna, chief executive of Telsey Telecommunications which is working with WRC on the Gigaport project.

Dr Cromar said: "The Black Country and the West Midlands is a region where things are happening and MIPIM is a chance put it on other people's radars. The region is moving ahead and focused on delivering major projects from the refurbishment of Birmingham New Street Station, to a proposed new runway at Birmingham International Airport.

"And in Gigaport we have a major outline planning application being processed. It shows our confidence in transforming the economy and providing the platform on which the dynamic businesses of the 21st century can develop and grow."

Through Gigaport companies will be able to do business over the internet at hundreds of times current broadband speeds. The big bandwidth, high speed, secure fibre infrastructure will attract sectors such as finance, health and the digital creative industries, along with shared services for the public sector.

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The 1.7 million sq ft scheme in Walsall town centre will be the first project of its kind in the UK. The first phase features a 121,000 sq ft Data Centre, a Business Incubation Centre and the prestigious One Gigaport office complex.

WRC is working with Telsey, an Italian-UK company with proven expertise in next generation broadband networks and services development and involved in the majority of IP broadband Triple-Play projects in Europe since 2000.

Telsey is leading and bringing together the necessary expertises and technologies from established implementers of broadband services delivery and of building managements infrastructure like Lyse, the Norwegian utility and telecommunications company, and FSG, the German company with leading experience in Data Centres, Control Centres and Building management.

Dr Cromar said: “We have some world leaders in technology on-side so investors and developers can be assured that what we are proposing is well thought out and well engineered. In Walsall we are 12 to 18 months ahead of what anyone else in the UK is doing.

“We have recognised the regeneration economic potential of it and while everyone else is talking about technology, we are talking about changing business practices.

“If the region is serious about wanting to raise its performance on an international stage then it needs the infrastructure we are proposing. More and more that infrastructure will be about broadband and fibre optics and doing better things rather than doing things better.”

He believes the message is clear – the Black Country is doing its bit to not only raise the profile of the region but also its productivity.

“Walsall is playing a leading role in demonstrating how to turn the Black Country’s aspirations into practical reality and through delivering big projects that meet the business needs of national and international players we are putting Walsall and the Black Country into other people’s capital programmes,” said Dr Cromar.

The world's biggest property summit at Cannes is a chance to showcase what the region can offer. The opportunity to spread the word will also be taken at networking events that include a cocktail reception, a lunch and a 'meet the leaders' dinner on Wednesday 12 March – dubbed Black Country Day.

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