



# Darting Forward

Set on the borders of Kent, London and Essex, Dartford is uniquely placed at the heart of the Thames Gateway.

**W**ith a population of just over 90,000 and a land area of 73sq km, Dartford is the smallest borough in Kent yet has significant targets for commercial and residential growth as part of the Thames Gateway project. A former Roman settlement and market town, the borough is now the home of Bluewater Shopping Centre and Crossways Business Park, the largest mixed-use business park on the M25. Over coming years 17,000 new homes and 30,000 jobs are planned for the Dartford region, within the area north

of the A2 known in development circles as Kent Thameside (see page 84).

## A major hub

Alongside major development plans Dartford is extremely well connected as a transport hub. Besides the Dartford Crossing, the M25, M20 and A2 put Dartford central to through and destination traffic. The borough's commuters have access to six mainline rail stations providing services to Victoria, Charing Cross, Blackfriars and Cannon Street in less than 45 minutes. International services

at Ebbsfleet provide fast and efficient travel to the continent. High Speed 1 services from December 2009 will offer local journey times to London of just 16 minutes and give Dartford access to north, south and central London stations.

Local travel is epitomised by the Fastrack transport system, which links central Dartford to key locations in North West Kent. Two routes currently serve town centre residents and businesses, with access to Darent Valley hospital, Bluewater, The Bridge, Crossways, Princes Park and Ebbsfleet

Princes Tunnel opens up Brocklands Lakes as an extension to Central Park

