



Riverside Plaza, Maidstone



High Speed 1 train



County Square, Ashford

while the journey to Ashford will take just 37 minutes (see page 8). The new services will also make the county much more accessible to key cities including Oxford, Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester.

Cost-effective

In the current economic climate, Kent is a particularly suitable choice for businesses. The county offers great quality of life and immediate access to the leading international financial centre of London, but with commercial property prices up to 60% lower than in the capital. Kent has a workforce of over 780,000 people, including 11,000 skilled university graduates every year, but again salary rates and labour costs are significantly lower than in London.

Financial Assistance

Businesses in or moving into the South East, including Kent, can take advantage of grants available through the Grant for Business Investment (GBI) scheme. Funded by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) (see page 10), GBI is delivered by Finance South East and is aimed at helping businesses moving into or

expanding within SEEDA's region. Companies looking to expand, increase their productivity or introduce new products could qualify for up to 20% of the eligible capital costs of their project. For more information about GBI in Kent, contact Locate in Kent.

Competitive Sectors

Locate in Kent has identified several key sectors where Kent and Medway offers significant competitive advantage. Connections to the City and Canary Wharf make it a great location for financial and business services, especially in insurance. Kent is also able to offer a range of new opportunities in environmental technologies, especially offshore wind, recycling and sustainable construction. Other key sectors are security, life sciences and production and media broadcasting.

Property

Kent has a wide variety of commercial property with premises in busy towns and cities, in the countryside and on the coast. From business parks like Kings Hill in West Malling (see page 119) - one of the largest and most successful mixed-use developments in Europe - and science parks like Kent

Science Park in Sittingbourne (see page 110), through to enterprise hubs, industrial units and individual offices, there is a property solution in Kent for all types of business.

Regeneration

Developments in Kent's two government-identified 'growth areas', Ashford and Thames Gateway, are set to create further opportunities for companies looking to move into the county. Ashford (see page 43) is expected to have 31,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs by 2031, while Thames Gateway Kent (see page 39) is set to benefit from 45,000 new homes and 58,000 jobs within 20 years.

With its exciting high-speed future, multi-million pound regeneration projects and investment in infrastructure and transport, Kent is proving it really is the place to do business.



Tel. 01732 520700
www.locateinkent.com