

Foreword

Kent is a place of outstanding opportunity, offering a great future for anyone working, bringing up a family and/or investing in one of the many initiatives now springing up across the region.

With its easy links to Europe and the ever-improving links to the rest of the UK, Kent has a unique economy in the south-east of Britain, and is attracting an increasing number of knowledge-based and traditional companies. This, combined with a rich cultural heritage and outstanding coastal and rural landscapes, means Kent offers the best of all worlds for both work and play.

Over the years, I have seen Kent meet the challenges of new and changing market conditions head-on and find it particularly gratifying to see the economic impact of the ever-expanding network of SMEs as well as the results of the last 15 years of investment in infrastructure including substantial improvements to the motorway system, and a rail service that you can set your watch by.

The county is poised on the brink of economic miracles. The recent opening of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link station at Ebbsfleet and the nearby Thames Gateway development allows for a growth in employment of over 20,000 jobs over the next two decades; by 2030 Ashford is predicted to double in size. Both East Kent and the coastal towns are now developing masterplans to attract regeneration and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by

tourism and the creative industries among others.

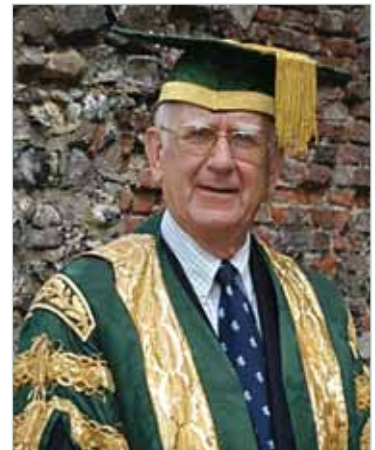
And, of course, the 2012 Olympics will bring a wealth of opportunities. Remember too, it's not called the "Garden of England" for nothing. With golf, fishing, pub crawling, Canterbury Cathedral, England's oldest, and Rochester Cathedral, and more castles than any other English County, you'll find Kent's got it all.

As Chancellor of the University of Kent, you'd expect me to point out how crucial the University is to the economic and cultural vibrancy of Kent. As one of the most dynamic universities in the UK, Kent is playing a key role in supporting enterprise and regeneration in the county. In addition, the Kent Business School offers a range of initiatives such as an online management forum and an 'employer-friendly' executive MBA.

Kent's outlook is undoubtedly bright. Whether you are a newcomer to the county or a long-term resident like myself, I am sure you will agree there is nowhere else in the UK with such a wealth of possibilities and which is so firmly on track for success.



Sir Robert Worcester, KBE, DL.



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