



# ••• Maidstone Borough Council



Maidstone is Kent's commercial centre and a thriving business capital with abundant investment opportunities.



Contemporary riverside apartments

Already home to 140,000 people, Maidstone is recognised as a natural growth point in Kent with a planned £320 million investment programme supporting 10,000 new homes and 6,500 new jobs by 2026. Maidstone is the most important town in the largest county in the south east.

### Modern day reality

Nestling amongst the Kent Downs and with the River Medway running through the town centre, business in Maidstone is buoyant. It plays host to Kent's largest Millennium project, a six-mile river park of high quality landscaped open space and public art, showcasing luxury riverside apartments and contemporary sustainable developments.



Fremlin Walk, award-winning shopping centre

Greener living is a reality, right in the heart of this dynamic town centre. Moreover, housing remains accessible to its growing population - 40% of all new buildings will be affordable. Maidstone is setting the standard for being the best place to live, work and relax in a modern, urban environment.

### Urban living 24/7

Maidstone enjoys a night time economy worth £75m. It is the largest late-night retail and leisure hub in Kent, providing 4,000 jobs for local people. The town centre was recently rated for 'its sheer volume of shopping' and is ranked in the top 50 retail centres in the UK. The £100 million Fremlin Walk retail development (voted one of the top ten south east shopping centres in 2006) and the town centre's one million sq ft of retail space, together with ample and easy parking, have helped to attract 40% more visitors to the area during the past five years.

### Best of Kent

Voted the most attractive business location in Kent, Maidstone has the largest office market in the county and space costs up to 60% less than in London. And with over 500,000 sq ft of office space planned, Maidstone is one of the few places in Kent that attracts speculative development.

St Peters Bridge at night



# Case Study

## Centre for business excellence

**asb law** is one of the largest regional law firms in the UK. Employing more than 250 people across its offices in the south east, it has a 100-year connection with Kent. Their new operation at Eclipse Park represents a significant step forward in driving forward their ambitious development plans.

Madeleine Thomson, asb law's senior partner in Maidstone explained: "We wanted a better quality office space and environment. At asb law we are very much part of Maidstone's knowledge-based economy and enjoy working with other strong professional services in this area at a time when Maidstone is growing its reputation for business excellence."

Nick Threlfall, managing director of chartered surveyors Watson Day, has seen particular growth in commercial development: "The trend is for a healthy demand in readily available office space in purpose-built office parks. From corporate headquarters to smaller premises, Maidstone has a commercial offering to suit all businesses". Maidstone offers the best in Kent.

## Capital for investment

At Eclipse Park in Maidstone, Gallagher Properties is developing the site in three stages to deliver more than 400,000 sq ft of office space. Towergate, Europe's largest insurance intermediary, will occupy the first building during its second phase of development. Max Carruthers, operations director of Towergate, which chose Eclipse Park for its new headquarters because of its strategic location, said: "The excellent road and transport links from the site provide fast access to the rest of Kent and London."

By road, the nearby M20 provides direct access to the M25 – Maidstone is 37 miles from the City of London (under one hour by train), 35 miles from the Channel Tunnel and 30 minutes drive from Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations. And with an award-winning park and ride scheme, it offers quick and easy access to the town centre.

## Making the connection

Accessible to a 790,000 strong workforce, Maidstone's businesses have a highly-skilled workforce to draw from. Towergate wanted to be part of a knowledge-driven environment where there is opportunity for business-to-business interaction. Max Carruthers

commented: "The new HQ will give us room to expand. Plus, Maidstone is a commercial catchment area for readily available, quality skilled employees. This will be vital when we recruit 250 new members of staff."

## Driving growth forward

Maidstone is driving commercial growth in Kent. It has proved a magnet for media companies – a growing sector attracted to the stylish blend of hi-tech culture and heritage. Maidstone also offers investors a choice of development. The £75 million Springfield Business Park will provide offices of exceptional quality and be one of a limited number of locations in Kent that can deliver a business park environment in a town centre setting. Due to open in 2010, the business park is positioned in a natural environment benefiting from open green space and countryside views. This type of offering is set to transform the commercial landscape of Maidstone.

### Maidstone key facts

- £320 million investment programme
- 500,000 sq ft planned office space
- 60% lower than London (office rents)
- £100 million retail development
- 1,000,000 sq ft retail space
- 10,000 new homes by 2026
- 6,500 new jobs by 2026

### Contact:

John Foster,  
Economic Development Manager  
Maidstone Borough Council  
Tel: 01622 602394  
Email: [johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk)  
[www.locateinmaidstone.com](http://www.locateinmaidstone.com)