

**Ashford**  
best placed in Britain

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37  
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28000  
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Ashford. Make the numbers work

**Ashford**  
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2 million sq ft planned office space  
 37 minutes to London  
 650 million pound investment  
 28000 new jobs and 31000 new homes



## Ashford. Be part of it

**Ashford is now the fastest growing town between London and the Continent.**

Perfectly positioned to give business a powerful competitive edge, it offers one of the leading investment opportunities in the UK. With a population expected to double by 2031 and a highly developed infrastructure supporting an existing 5,000 businesses and a predicted 28,000 new jobs, there's no doubt that business benefits from being in Ashford. Ashford offers 2 million ft<sup>2</sup> of planned office space and there are available sites on expanding business parks. With growing retail and residential opportunities, more and more businesses are reaping the rewards of investing in Ashford.

**It figures. Now is the time to invest. Count on Ashford to make your business grow.**

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# 37 minutes to London

## Ashford. Better connected

Ashford's location is key to its success. Its excellent rail, road, air and sea links provide businesses with easy access to over 360 million consumers across Europe. With a phased multi-million pound investment in transport infrastructure and the introduction of a new high speed rail link in 2009, connections are set to get even better.

**Rail** Domestic services on the high speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link 'CTRL' will connect Ashford with London in just 37 minutes from 2009, cutting travel time in half. Now, the Eurostar passenger service to Paris takes just two hours, while Lille is 57 minutes away. Freight and passenger traffic passes through Eurotunnel's departure point at nearby Folkestone.

**Road** Road links connect businesses to most European cities within a day. Two major

motorways, the M20 and M2, provide easy access to continental Europe and beyond through the Channel Tunnel and via The Port of Dover. With significant improvements underway to Junction 10 of the M20, the town will benefit from faster access to UK and overseas markets.

**Air** Ashford offers ready access to London's two main airports - Heathrow and Gatwick - within 90 minutes. London Ashford Airport (Lydd) and Kent International Airport (Manston) are both

improving their excellent facilities by investing in phased multi-million pound redevelopment programmes.

**Sea** The Port of Dover is within easy reach of Ashford - some 25 minutes. The world's busiest roll-on, roll-off ferry terminal, Dover handles up to 2.3 million freight vehicles per year.

**Telecommunications** Ashford is developing a fibre optic network to ensure world class telecommunications for both businesses and residents in the area.



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# 650

## million pound investment programme



*"ING identified the opportunity to invest in Ashford and its growth potential early on. With an increase in the residential and business population creating new demand, we consider the investment of some £65 million to develop County Square shopping centre a logical decision and we anticipate strong growth from this retail asset in the future."*

Sarah Hayward, Director,  
ING Real Estate.

## Ashford. It's time for growth

The £650 million investment programme for Ashford is on track to create a great place to work, live and shop. Plans for the future will make Ashford a town that has life and energy - before, during and after work. Count on Ashford to get even better.

Ashford's growth, supported by the Council's pioneering approach to planning will provide attractive commercial opportunities for developers and investors. Ashford is on track to become a vibrant and sustainable town for residents and businesses. Its improved retail, commercial, education, leisure and transport facilities are set to invigorate the area.

2007	2008	2009	2010
Completion of the £15 million Stour Leisure Centre extension.	Completion of the 200,000ft <sup>2</sup> (18,581m <sup>2</sup> ) extension to County Square shopping centre.	Introduction of high-speed rail services to London reducing the travel time to 37 minutes.	Development of new commercial office space around Ashford International and domestic railway station.
Completion of £7 million improvement to Junction 10 of the M20 motorway.	Completion of the first phase £11.3 million remodelling of Ashford ring road.	Completion of the £50 million Ashford Learning Campus.	Development of large-scale residential neighbourhoods (5-6,000 homes).
Completion of the first 50,000ft <sup>2</sup> (4,645m <sup>2</sup> ) of a proposed 1,250,000ft <sup>2</sup> (116,129m <sup>2</sup> ) space at Eureka business park.	Opening of the new 90,000ft <sup>2</sup> (8,361m <sup>2</sup> ) Debenhams department store in Ashford town centre.	Development of Elwick Road, a 7.5 acre (3 hectare), town centre, mixed use scheme.	£24 million investment to improve the supply of water.

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# 31000

## new homes by 2031

Ashford has one of the widest selections of new houses in Britain. With house prices 7% cheaper than the South East average and around 30% cheaper than in London, it's no wonder that demand is strong for everything from starter homes to executive detached properties. Whether it's contemporary urban living, historic market towns or picturesque villages, Ashford is an attractive and accessible location. Developers such as Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey and Berkeley Homes are all building houses in Ashford and the surrounding area.



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Business parks are set to take off. Eureka Park is expanding fast. The 1.25 million ft<sup>2</sup> (116,129m<sup>2</sup>) development just off Junction 9 of the M20 offers a range of office properties from small office solutions to large corporate headquarters. Orbital Park is now well established and is one of the busiest and most successful commercial centres in Ashford, offering a number of sites available for development for office, light industrial and distribution use.

**Ashford office rents are around 70% lower than in London and 40% less than in competitor towns in the South East.**

## Ashford. Time to invest

Ashford's commercial property market is set to change. From corporate headquarters to start-up premises, Ashford offers a wide range of workspace for all types of business. There is a significant investment opportunity. The redevelopment of 140 acres (56.7 hectares) of land in Ashford town centre and the 200,000ft<sup>2</sup> (18,581m<sup>2</sup>) extension to the County Square shopping centre are leading the way. County Square

alone will double in size, offering over 60 stores by 2008. Plus, with the development of the 7.5 acre (3 hectare) Elwick Road site into a retail/leisure led mixed use development, and with the potential for 500,000ft<sup>2</sup> (46,452m<sup>2</sup>) of commercial development around the international and domestic station, Ashford offers ongoing investment opportunities.

### Ashford office rents / South East England (Source Cluttons, 2006)

Ashford	<b>£178/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£17/ft <sup>2</sup>
London South (Croydon)	<b>£215/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£20/ft <sup>2</sup>
Maidstone	<b>£242/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£23/ft <sup>2</sup>
Reading	<b>£258/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£24/ft <sup>2</sup>
London (Chiswick)	<b>£323/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£30/ft <sup>2</sup>
London (Docklands)	<b>£431/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£40/ft <sup>2</sup>
London (City)	<b>£646/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£60/ft <sup>2</sup>
London (West End)	<b>£941/m<sup>2</sup></b>	£87/ft <sup>2</sup>



# 2 million

sq ft of planned commercial development in Ashford



## Ashford. Where business counts

80% of investors anticipate that Ashford will become more attractive as a business location, citing its growth potential and high speed rail connections as particularly significant.

Ashford is already home to 5,000 businesses. From micro-businesses right through to major global and European corporations such as Quest International, Coty Inc and Hitachi - the Japanese manufacturer of the new high-speed domestic trains. Ashford attracts a wide range of sectors including food processing, manufacturing and engineering as well as service industries including contact centres. Some small and medium sized companies are eligible for financial assistance.

Considerable redevelopment of the town is underway and is creating a magnet for local and national businesses and research and development occupiers. And with 2 million ft<sup>2</sup> of planned commercial development in Ashford, there are significant opportunities for businesses to develop and expand.

Businesses can count on the availability of skilled, loyal employees at cost-effective salaries. Kent's contact centres enjoy a staff turnover rate of just 14%; significantly lower than the

national average of 25%. Eurostar has recognised these benefits through its continued commitment to its contact centre in Ashford.



*"Started nearly 50 years ago in Ashford, Brakes is now the UK's leading supplier to caterers. The large majority of our 600 plus employees based in our Ashford offices live in the area and have been an intrinsic part of Brakes success and growth."*

Sharon Black, Group HR Director, Brakes.

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# 28000

new jobs over the next 25 years



Ashford has excellent and expanding education facilities. It has higher than national average level of A\* to C GCSE passes. Students progress to higher education at Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Kent in Canterbury, the University of Greenwich and Imperial College London (Wye Campus). Higher education within Ashford itself is set to develop further. The £50 million Ashford Learning Campus is due to open in 2009, providing both vocational training and educational facilities for up to 14,000 full and part-time students. This means businesses will benefit from state-of-the-art employer led training opportunities.

## Ashford. At its best

Ashford's population is expected to double over the next 25 years. And quality people count for business. Already home to a working population of around 45,000 employees, Ashford has up to 70,000 workers within a 20 minute drive of the town centre. 45% of working age residents are qualified to NVQ level 3 or above, compared to a national average of 40%. Average salaries are 20% less than in London, and 10% lower than the rest of the South East - an attractive cost-benefit for growing businesses.

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## Quality of life

One of the most attractive aspects of living and working in Ashford is the quality of life it has to offer. Opportunities to enjoy town centre and outdoor pursuits are fast developing for both residents and workers. Europe's leading designer outlet centre in Ashford already attracts over 3 million visitors per year. Ashford provides some of the best sporting facilities in the South East. The Stour Leisure Centre has undergone a £15 million redevelopment and offers the community a superb sports centre, gym and leisure pool facilities. The Julie Rose Centre is an international standard athletics stadium. In addition, Ashford has Kent's largest combined cinema and leisure complex and an 18 hole golf course at Chart Hills, which plays

host to the English Ladies Open. Beyond the town centre, the area has a wealth of countryside, natural heritage and woodland areas waiting to be explored. It offers everything from charming villages to hopfields and vineyards that stretch as far as the coast.



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# Ashford. The future



There is a significant opportunity for investors to benefit in Ashford now and in the future. To find out the best solution for your business visit [www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk](http://www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk)

Ashford's growth potential is built on affordable low land prices, readily available development opportunities and improving fast rail links. Ashford ensures businesses a return on their investment. There's never been a better time to invest in Ashford.

*"With substantial investment already underway, Ashford is now best placed to provide businesses with realistic and competitive solutions. The opportunities created by improved fast transport links and the redevelopment of the town will continue to transform its attractiveness as a place to do business."*

Linda Doran, Economic Projects Manager,  
Ashford's Future.

**Ashford best placed in Britain.  
Make the numbers work. Be part  
of it today. There's never been a  
better time to invest in Ashford.**