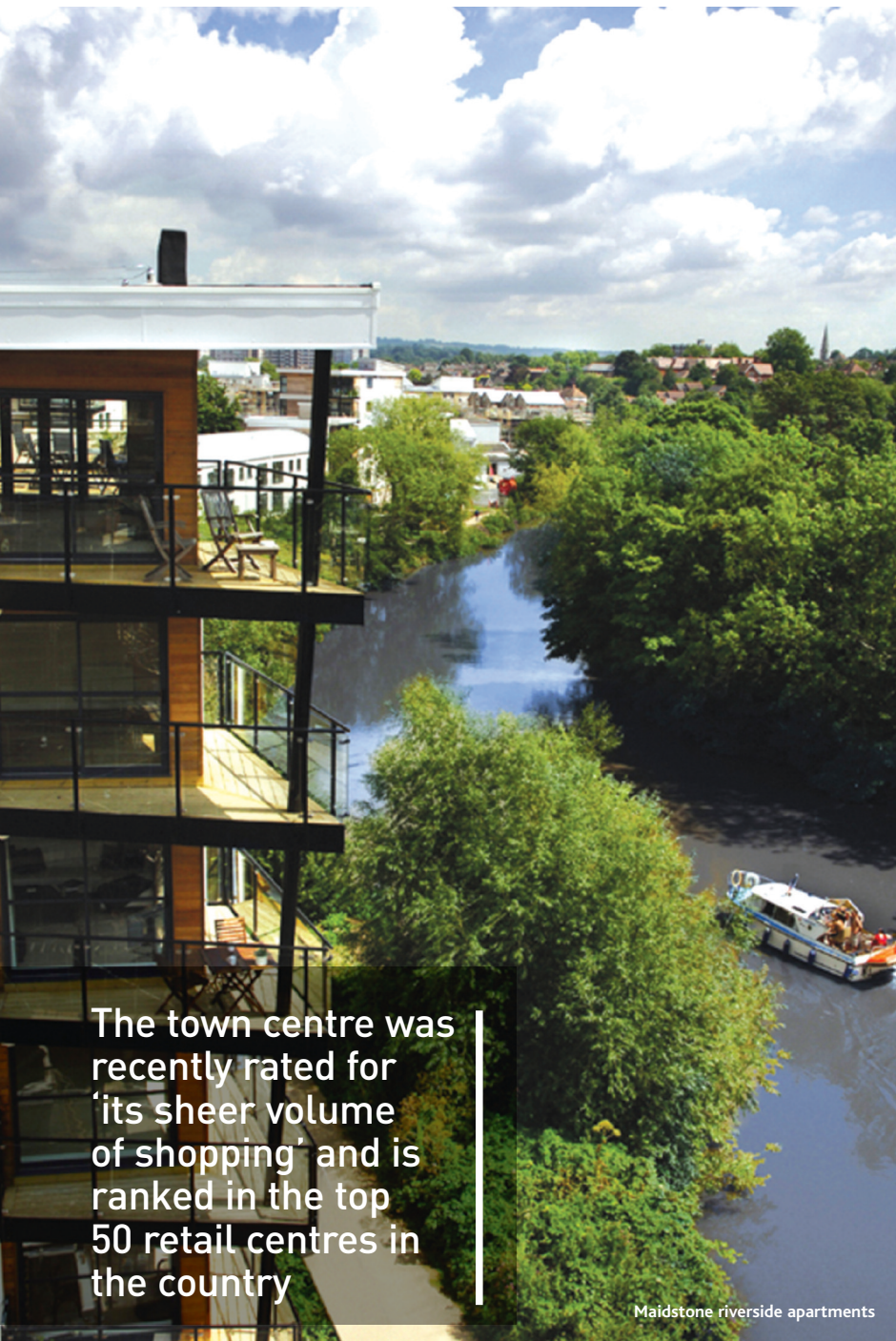


The business capital of KENT

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



The town centre was recently rated for 'its sheer volume of shopping' and is ranked in the top 50 retail centres in the country

Maidstone 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 one of the most important towns 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.

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

URBAN LIVING 24/7

Maidstone enjoys a night time economy worth £75m as it has 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 country. 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, has helped to attract 40% more visitors to the area during the past five years.

LOCALITIES
MAIDSTONE
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

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

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 few places in Kent that attracts speculative development.

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".

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 of its second phase of development. Max Carruthers, operations director of Towergate chose Eclipse Park for its new headquarters because of its strategic location: "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 into 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 comments: "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."

CENTRE OF BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

ASB Law is one of 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 on Eclipse Park represents a significant step in driving forward their ambitious development plans for the future. Madeleine Thomson, ASB Law's senior partner in Maidstone explains: "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."

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 a limited number of locations in Kent that can deliver a business park environment in a town centre location. It 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. The investment opportunities are considerable.

JOHN FOSTER



ASB Law