

The business location

THE regeneration of Thames Gateway London is well underway. The opportunity is huge, unquantifiable even, both socially and economically, and Inward Investment has a key role to play.

Thames Gateway London (TGL) surprises people, the bigger economic picture is much bigger than most expect.

The decline of traditional industries is now being recognised for the opportunity that it is. The ongoing rejuvenation of the area is clearly visible and the scale and scope is large enough to accommodate some truly inspiring new projects.

Gateway to London, the Inward Investment agency for the sub region, is turning this opportunity into reality for a vast range of new and existing businesses. The area already has so much to offer and behind some, albeit for now, unattractive doors, there are many thriving and diverse businesses, critical to London, which need nurturing and building upon. A balanced approach to investment is therefore vital, encouraging new and different businesses and sectors to come to the area and working closely with existing companies to encourage them to grow here.

Gateway to London is actively taking this approach, raising the profile of the area as a competitive business location and combating misconceptions. In securing new and re investment in the area it is imperative that all that TGL has to offer is fully presented to a wide range of potential investors from developers and pension funds to local, national and international companies.

Information is the key, not only in terms of vision, but the 'now' product. Key factors driving businesses to search for new locations offer both opportunities and threats. Legislation, costs, technology, labour and markets, are all contributing factors and by understanding how these factors affect businesses, Gateway to London is able to identify potential new projects and support affected businesses already in the area.

This was the case with a leading docu-

ment storage and retrieval service. This local professional service for leading City and West End clients is expanding, and has recently submitted a planning application for a site in Rainham. Expansion in the market - especially at Canary Wharf, changes in technology and the increasing expectations of customers were the drivers for relocation.

A USA headquartered company are also now in the area, developing alkaline fuel cell technology to offer alternative power sources for TGL developments where electricity shortfalls could arise. Renewable energy is clearly flagged as a future growth market and getting in at an early stage has put this business and TGL in an advantageous position.

These successes and others in the pipeline demonstrate that TGL is already a viable business location. Each new project educates, informs and brings success a little closer.

Gateway to London highlights the advantages of a TGL location, providing facts, figures and site and property options, allowing businesses to accurately appraise the area alongside other locations. This critical stage of the investment process was formerly the point at which many potential investments were lost; entirely due to lack of information and support. With this hurdle now overcome, the increase in firms seriously considering the area as a location is significant.

There are of course still other barriers to investment, however they are being addressed; the transport infrastructure is the fastest improving in the UK. Gateway to London is working closely with many partners in TGL to identify and combat them.

Thames Gateway London is moving forward from being a good business location to a leading one. The word is out, perceptions are changing, heads are turning and huge private sector investments are being made. Success is breeding success, the momentum is building and the future looks East.



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Winning Awards for Thames Gateway developments

TWO years ago ProLogis won the Industrial Agents' Society Award for the Best Speculative Industrial Development with a building at Twelvetees Crescent, Bromley-by-Bow, subsequently leased to Hayes (now part of Iron Mountain). At this year's awards ceremony ProLogis carried off the prize yet again - this time for a 270,000 sq. ft. warehouse at River Road, Barking.

"These Awards are a recognition of the consistent quality we put into our buildings" comments ProLogis developer Neil Dickinson. "That we have won the Best Development Award twice in three years, and against strong competition, is a really positive comment on the

ProLogis commitment to providing the best available for our occupiers."

ProLogis Park East London, at Bromley on the banks of the River Lea, was originally occupied by British Gas. Five years ago 9.5 acres of the site were sold for the construction of a 187,000 sq. ft. distribution warehouse. In 2001 ProLogis acquired the building, which was then leased back to the then occupiers, and subsequently purchased the remaining 30 acres on the site from British Gas.

"This is an excellent site for both logistics and manufacturers" adds Dickinson, "because it is very close to the inner London conurbation, just to the east of the City and Canary

Wharf, and off the A12 Blackwall Tunnel northern approach. As well as Iron Mountain in our award winning building, we also have Royal Mail, Pickfords, Maas Systems, John Menzies and Oldfield Quality Foods. We are currently also in negotiations over a seventh building on the site, a newly refurbished 187,772 sq. ft. building, and hope to be able to make an announcement shortly."

Further down river, on Barking Creek is this year's award winner, ProLogis' new 270,000 sq. ft. warehouse at River Road, the largest speculative warehouse to have been built in East London. Comments Dickinson, "The judges were impressed by the way the

design maximises space; the building also scored highly from an environmental point of view and it has breathed new life into a former saw-mill and timber yard."

The winning development beat off three other short listed developments, including another ProLogis development at Dartford. ProLogis was also runner up in two other Award categories including Developer of the Year which the company won last year and the year before.

The Awards aim to recognise the skill with which the property industry meets the demanding requirements of occupiers and funds in an intensely competitive market.



Paul Weston, centre receiving the award.



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Supporting London's Olympic bid

BRITAIN'S Olympic Bid received a massive boost recently as London 2012 revealed an inspirational film starring global icons of sport, stage and screen.

The pantheon of internationally-recognised stars who feature in 'Sport at Heart' include Sir Roger Moore, David Beckham, Amir Khan, Jeremy Irons, Kelly Holmes, Joseph Fiennes, and Matthew Pinsent. It includes five Gold medalists who won at the Athens Games.

The film was premiered as London 2012 spelled out in full detail its bid for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, which was delivered to the IOC recently.

The film demonstrates the support for London's bid from internationally recognised stars, and will help London 2012 Chairman Seb Coe and International President Keith Mills to start promoting the bid overseas.

The film follows Jo Anker, an up and coming middle-distance female runner, jogging through London, showcasing some of the city's most-recognisable sites from the Tower

of London and Tower Bridge, to the Globe Theatre, Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park.

As she passes, people are inspired by the power of sport - some breaking out into Olympic activities themselves, including a builder polevaulting with a scaffold bar, a mechanic becoming a weightlifter, street-cleaners changing into hockey players, and City gentlemen fencing and echoing the baton-changing success of the GB 4x100m relay team.

England football skipper David Beckham said the Olympic Games would provide a massive boost for sport across the UK, including east London, his childhood home turf and proposed location for the Olympic Park.

"I was born in Leytonstone in Waltham Forest, one of the host boroughs for the London Olympics, and I played football on Hackney Marshes as a kid, so I'm very keen to support the 2012 bid.

"It would be great if the Games came to Britain where the people really appreciate their sport."

Multi-million £ boost

THE University of East London (UEL) has been awarded £2.4m from the government's Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) to create new regional centre for enterprise, innovation and economic regeneration in East London and the Thames Gateway.

The funding will go towards the development of the Knowledge Dock Centre (KDC) at UEL's Docklands campus on the waterfront of the Royal Albert Dock in Beckton. £6.5m capital funding for the project has already been secured, subject to assessment, from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London Development Agency, EU and UEL.

HEIF has also announced a separate £1m funding package for the Innovation Thames Gateway (ITG) project. ITG is a collaborative partnership with Goldsmiths College, the University of Greenwich, London Metropolitan University, Ravensbourne College and Trinity College of Music including the Laban Centre, and UEL as the lead partner.

The project will establish a permanent partnership-based Innovation Thames Gateway Network to harness HE expertise to the stimulation of economic growth in London Thames Gateway. It will achieve this on the basis of integrated management of recognised centres of excellence, each targeting a key growth sector identified by the London Development Agency.

Both form part of a total £185m national funding package to enable universities to promote economic development and boost the UK's innovation performance and productivity.

Knowledge Dock Centre (KDC) will bring together all the main knowledge and technology transfer centres and activities that UEL provides. It will also create innovative new facilities and provide a high-profile, professional and user-friendly point of contact for local, regional and national business. It will enable the application of technological expertise, the exploitation of new scientific knowledge and innovation in public policy.

The 3,000 sq. m. KDC will house a number of Expert Centres and focus on strategic sectors identified by the London Development Agency including Creative Industry, Information and Communication Technology, and Environmental Technologies. New facilities for business will include the 'Hot Hatch' business generator units, a new facility to support the creation of new spin-off businesses by students, graduates and local entrepreneurs. This has also been awarded £320,000 funding from Government Office for London. There will be an additional 1,000 sq. m. of new Business Incubation space that builds on existing successful business units and which will operate on a self-financing basis

Building on success

WHEN the University of East London's dazzling Docklands campus was formally opened on 4 July 2000, by Mayor of London Ken Livingstone on his very first day in office, it won widespread acclaim for its iconic architecture and environmentally friendly design. Four years on, it has gained a reputation as a friendly, modern university campus, and with its clean lines, colourful circular student residences, DLR link and scenic waterfront location, has become a much loved local landmark and visitor attraction.

Now, a new phase of expansion is gathering momentum, aimed at meeting the needs of a rapidly growing student community, and creating a vibrant campus open all hours, seven days a week, accessible to local people and businesses and actively engaged in outreach and networking.

This summer, a new purpose-designed building for the School of Architecture and the Visual Arts was opened at Docklands by Turner prize winning artist Grayson Perry, and the School of Social Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies was created, bringing some of UEL's top-rated research and teaching areas together on campus.

In the New Year, work will begin on two large-scale new buildings for UEL's School of Computing and Technology, Business School, Learning Resource Centre and Knowledge Dock Centre. The exciting design, by Building Design Partnerships, features a dynamic curved roof forming a wing-shaped protective canopy, a central lecture theatre set in a tranquil garden overlooking the dock, surrounded by flexible teaching space, office accommodation, learning resource centre and a computer hall, with high-level bridges linking the two buildings and the faceted shape of the dockside elevations creating sunny spaces overlooking the water.

A similar transformation is also underway at Stratford campus, the historic heart of the University of East London. With the completion this autumn of the Great Hall lecture theatre and Café on the Green, work has begun

on a new Podiatry and Physiotherapy Centre to provide clinical training facilities as part of UEL's expanding School of Health and Bioscience.

Launch of European Learning Network

A PARTNERSHIP between five European cities to develop and implement policies to promote enterprise in deprived urban areas was launched recently at a conference in the Tate Modern, London.

Known as The European Learning Network (LNet), the partnership of five European cities - Amsterdam, Hamburg, London,

Milan and Prague - is a two year initiative funded by European Union's INTERREG IIIC programme. The programme is led by Greater London Enterprise, who will work in conjunction with the London Development Agency and development partners in the represented European cities.

The LNet launch conference, held at the Tate Modern, heard from the five European cities on the barriers to enterprise that current exist in the five cities, in particular the access to finance, insufficient business support, lack of skills and knowledge. Each city will also outline their experiences in how they have helped overcome these barriers.

Following conference the LNet programme will move on to agree common approaches to realising the economic and social potential of deprived areas, which will in turn be developed into practical toolkits and how-to-guides to support enterprise in deprived communities.

Speakers at the conference include John Healy MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Professor Tony Travers, London School of Economics, GLE, LDA, representatives from the five European cities, and a repre-

sentative from USA on the success of their programme.

Madeleine Williams of GLE said: "The challenges facing London are also being experienced in other cities. Increasingly enterprise is seen as an effective route out of unemployment and poverty, but barriers to enterprise such as access to finance, entrepreneurial skills and business support persists. The LNET programme will develop new tools that build on the combined experience of Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Milan and Prague that will help tackle these barriers."

New opportunity

HIGH-FLIERS within the Human Resource field of management of the NHS are to be given the opportunity to gain further expertise.

Middlesex University has signed a contract to run a post-graduate diploma course in Human Resource Management for the Modernisation Agency of the NHS. The pilot course will be run in partnership with the King's Fund, a London-based charitable health foundation.

"We are delighted to have been awarded this high profile opportunity to develop human resource skills in health care," says the programme director at Middlesex University, Professor Annabelle Mark. She said the NHS had been investing in training schemes for high-fliers in general management and finance for some time, and had now decided to invest in the pilot scheme for Human Resource Management.

Finalists announced

ENGLISH Partnerships, the national regeneration agency, has announced the selection of three consortia to proceed to the final negotiation stage to deliver its London Wide Initiative (LWI). This pilot phase is on track to deliver up to 4,000 homes of which 2,000 will be for key workers.

First Base Partnership, Key London Alliance and a consortium led by Countryside Properties PLC, were selected from a short-list of five bidders, each of whom was asked to submit proposals for creating a delivery vehicle for key-worker for sale homes in the capital.

Boost needed

A SURVEY carried out by researchers at Middlesex University and the London Chamber of Commerce finds that London based companies have limited awareness of the services offered by university business schools. Dr Paul Baines, Director of Business Development at Middlesex University, says: "These findings indicate that university business schools, including our ours, need to market

their services better and raise awareness of their usefulness and relevance to London firms."

A majority of respondents indicated that they were unaware of the services on offer to them or had never thought about using before. The most commonly used service was the hire of placement students, followed by research, staff training, management development and venue hire.