

Medway



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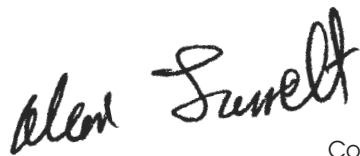


Medway appeal

A unique combination of location, rich history,
a vibrant cultural scene, great amenities and
continued progress ■

Medway is a thriving 21st century home for a growing population of over 275,000 people; one of the largest urban conurbation in the south-east outside London. Its major towns are Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Rochester and Strood, and the villages of the Hoo Peninsula.

With its unique combination of location, rich history, a vibrant cultural scene, great amenities and continued progress, we hope through this brochure to give you a taste of the rich opportunities Medway has to offer.



Councillor Alan Jarrett
Leader, Medway Council

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Location

On the banks of the River Medway from which it takes its name, Medway is the second largest conurbation (after Brighton) between London and continental Europe. This combined with its comprehensive transport links, makes it a gateway to the capital, the county of Kent and the continent for businesses and visitors alike ■

Road

Served by the M2, and less than 20 minutes to the M20 and M25 motorways.

Regular coaches from London Victoria.

Rail

Five mainline stations, with high-speed train (HS1) linking Medway to London as little as 34 minutes.

- Chatham
- Gillingham
- Rainham
- Rochester
- Strood

For European travel, Ebbsfleet International (Eurostar) is around 10 minutes by car/train, and around 40 minutes by car to the Eurotunnel at Folkestone.

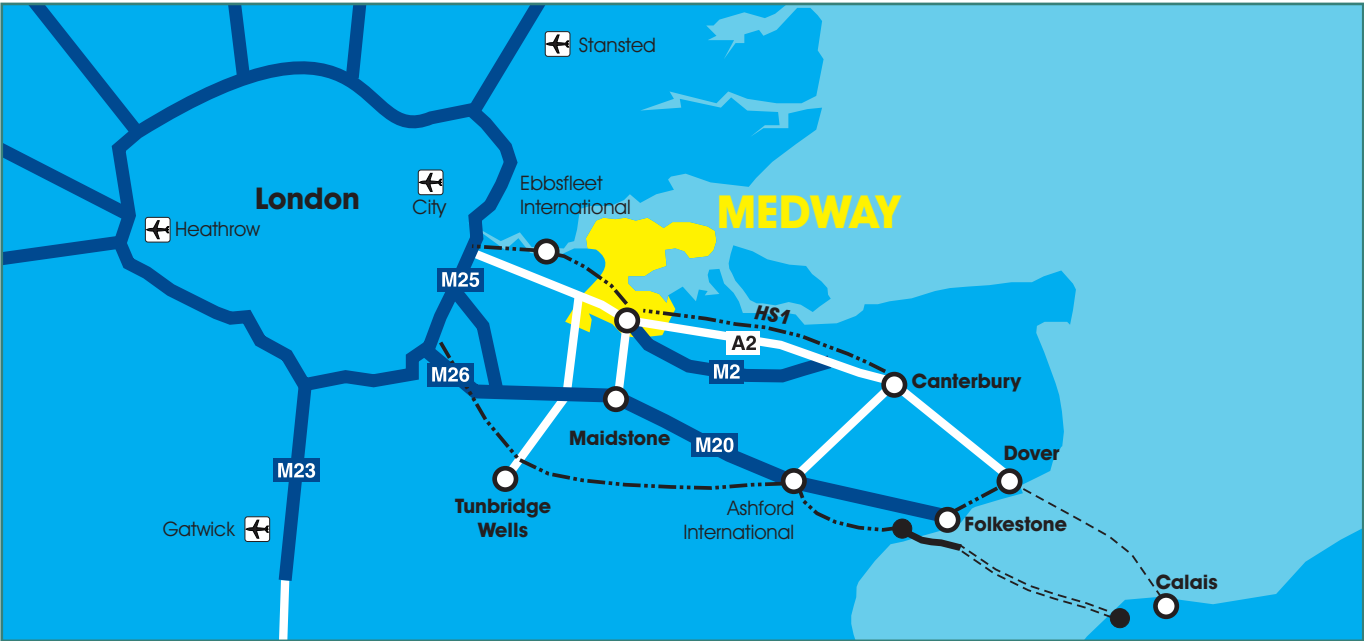
Air

One hour from international airports.

An hour from London's Gatwick and Stansted airports, and just over an hour from London Heathrow. Medway also has its own airport at Rochester, close to the M2 motorway, which is being improved to secure its long-term and profitable future and provide up to 1,000 local jobs.

Sea

40 minutes to the Channel ports including the UK's largest passenger port at Dover, and Ramsgate, providing ferry services to Calais and Ostend.





Heritage
Culture
Nature
Leisure



Enjoy Medway

One of the south-east's most dynamic places to live, work, learn and visit ■

This springs from its unique combination of location, rich history, a vibrant cultural scene, great amenities and continued progress - explored in detail over the following pages.

For visitors - be they day trip or residential, business or pleasure - these assets are made even more attractive with the addition of visitor facilities which have seen heavy investment.

Medway's heritage continues to shape its future with Heritage Lottery Funding for The Historic Dockyard Chatham's Command of the Oceans project, the transformation of Eastgate House, the exhibition of the Textus Roffensis at Rochester Cathedral plus future plans at the Royal Engineers Museum, the Huguenot Heritage Centre and the Guildhall Museum.

Tourism is a key sector of the Medway economy. With visitor spend increasing by 13 per cent[†] over the last five years, tourism in Medway is currently worth £290million per annum[†] to the local economy.

Historic Rochester including the renowned Rochester Cathedral and The Historic Dockyard Chatham are

focal points for visitors, with the Explore Medway open top guided tour bus operating between these attractions, and many others in between including Fort Amherst and the Royal Engineers Museum, to offer a fascinating and varied insight into the area.

There are an estimated 4million day trips made to Medway each year and visitors on overnight trips spend £88million[†]. Domestic visitors to Medway come mainly from London and the south-east. 20 per cent of visitors are from overseas - mainly from western Europe and the USA.

Business tourism remains a major element of the visitor economy and there are plans for a regional waterfront hotel at Rochester Riverside.

Medway and the surrounding area has branded and independent hotels catering for all requirements and budgets. There are currently 12 hotels in Medway with a total of 800 rooms concentrated around Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham. Accommodation is mainly branded three star and budget, as well as a number of bed and breakfasts and self-catering establishments. Brands

include Holiday Inn, Q hotels, Ramada Encore, Premier Inn and Travelodge.

Increasing investment and regeneration in Medway will in the near future grow the number of hotels, with a number of major hotel development sites planned in Rochester and Chatham, including a hotel and conference and events centre proposed at Chatham Waters.

Bordering Medway, there are a further 16 hotels in Maidstone with a total of 1,100 bedrooms across branded four star, branded and independent three star and branded budget hotels. Gravesend and Dartford to the north of Medway have a further 14 hotels with 1,100 bedrooms.

Medway's award-winning Visitor Information Centre is one of the largest in the country, and reflecting the area's popularity welcomes 300,000 visitors a year. Medway has won many awards for its coach park and its work with the travel trade, and has been voted the most coach-friendly destination in the UK Coach Awards.

[†] Tourism South East



Rich heritage

The heritage of Medway lies behind much that defines the area today ■

604 AD

Rochester Cathedral is the second oldest cathedral in England, and is bidding to house the Textus Roffensis, the priceless 12th century manuscript that contains the first written record of the English language and is said to have inspired the Magna Carta.

1088

Rochester Castle boasts the tallest Norman keep in the country, making it an iconic building in Medway's landscape.

1559

Upnor Castle was built on the orders of Elizabeth I to protect the Medway, and tested in 1667 when a Dutch squadron stole the English flagship, the *Royal Charles* and burnt the fleet.

1564

Will Adams, the first Englishman to reach Japan and the inspiration for James Clavell's *Shogun* was born in Medway. His legacy is celebrated annually at Gillingham's popular Will Adams Festival.

1590s

Eastgate House was built for Peter Buck, Clerk of the Cheque at Chatham Dockyard, and is an excellent example of a Grade I listed Elizabethan town house. It is referred to by Dickens in *The Pickwick Papers* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and has undergone an extensive programme of refurbishment as part of a £2.2million Heritage Lottery Funded project.

1667

The Dutch launch an audacious raid on our ships at Chatham. The Battle of Medway led to the rebuilding of our fleet and took England into the golden age of sail.

1765

The building of Rochester's magnificent Guildhall. Recognised as the finest 17th-century civic building in Kent, the Guildhall is now home to a fascinating museum showcasing Medway's unique local heritage.

1765

Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar, HMS *Victory*, was launched at **Chatham Dockyard** in 1765. Chatham was established as a Royal Dockyard during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and quickly became the largest refitting and shipbuilding dockyard in England. For four centuries, Chatham Dockyard was one of Britain's premier naval bases, defended by impressive fortifications. Today it is the world's most complete dockyard from the age of sail, and has the greatest concentration of listed buildings in the country. Part of the former dockyard now prospers as The Historic Dockyard Chatham visitor attraction.

1812

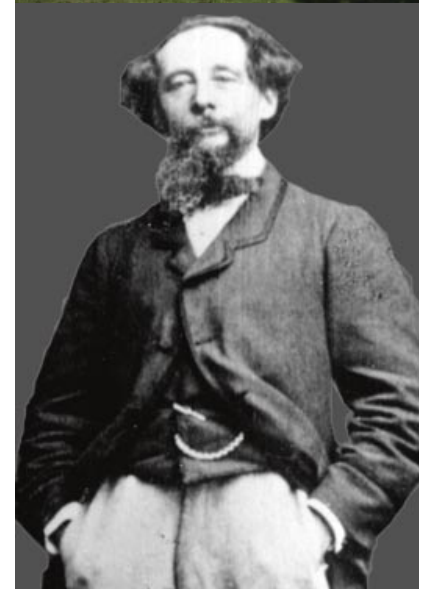
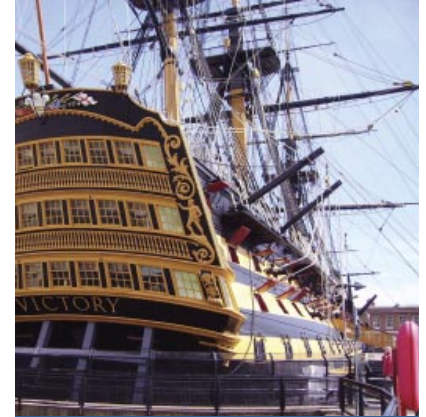
The Royal Engineers established their regimental headquarters in Medway in 1812, and Medway is proud to remain the home of the Royal School of Military Engineering, as well as the nationally designated Royal Engineers Museum. Links with the Royal Engineers continue to this day, recognised by the design and build of the RSME Bicentenary Bridge at Fort Amherst in 2012 in commemoration of the 200 years anniversary.

1817 - 1822

Charles Dickens spent his childhood in Medway while his father worked at the naval dockyard in Chatham. One of Dickens' most treasured possessions, the Swiss chalet in which he wrote while at Gad's Hill, can be seen in the gardens of Eastgate House in Rochester.

Did you know?

Grade I listed building Restoration House, named so because King Charles II stayed there on his way to reclaim England's throne, is Satis House in Dickens' *Great Expectations*.





More than 30 days of
free festivals and
events each year.



Cultural calendar

Renowned for arts, festivals and events ■

Dickens Festival

Held every June, this festival attracts more than 60,000 people to celebrate Medway's association with one of England's most respected and best-loved authors.

Sweeps Festival

Held over the weekend of the spring bank holiday, the festival attracts more than 100 Morris sides and 30,000 visitors each day, making it the biggest festival of its kind in the world.

Castle Concerts

One of the most successful open air music events in the regional calendar enjoyed by more than 15,000 people each year. Past acts include Will Young, Status Quo and a finale night featuring the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

English Festival

Enjoyed by more than 11,000 people, the festival celebrates St George's Day with events and activities traditionally associated with all things English.

Chinese New Year Celebration

One of the largest celebrations outside London, with hundreds of costumed characters, dragons and lions parading in Chatham.

River Festival

Celebrating Medway's maritime connections with exciting river displays and races, plus family entertainment, live music, exhibitions and food stalls on Chatham Waterfront.

Medway Armed Forces Day

Medway joins the rest of the country to honour the armed forces with a day of family events including parades, displays, music and competitions.

Will Adams Festival

Celebrating the area's association with the famous mariner who first established trade links with Japan. More than 5,000 people experience a mix of Japanese culture and traditions and Tudor life.

The Central Theatre

Top names in music and comedy, and touring drama.

The Brook Theatre

From intimate showcase theatre to a regular comedy club and a thriving arts centre.

The Historic Dockyard Chatham

Britain's leading maritime heritage destination and the world's most complete dockyard from the Age of Sail. Includes galleries, a ropery, historic warships and a number of special events.

Dickensian Christmas Festival

Held over the first weekend in December, more than 80,000 people enjoy a Dickensian view of Christmas with costumed characters, parades, carols and festive food.

Contemporary art and craft exhibitions at Rochester Art Gallery and Craft Case. Local artists at Nucleus' Art Centre Chatham and Rochester Shop.





Natural attraction

Wild estuary and marshland vistas framed by the dramatic chalk slopes of the Kent Downs ■

Medway enjoys a stunning natural setting. Wending its way between the hills of the downs and through Medway, the River Medway fans into a wide estuary and marshes that link to the River Thames. These varied views accompany people as they journey around the area.

The marshes and estuaries are of global importance and support around 300,000 wintering wetland birds, which feed on Medway's mudflats and saltings.

Riverside Country Park covers 100 hectares along the estuary, with mudflats, salt marshes, ponds, reed beds, grassland and scrub, all of which provide a haven for wildlife.

Medway's countryside supports numerous rare and protected species, including orchids on the chalk grassland and the corn cockle at **Ranscombe Farm Reserve**, one of British botany's classic sites. The farm is 229 hectares and with more than six miles of public footpaths, it offers excellent opportunities to enjoy tranquil walks in an attractive

rural landscape that is part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ranscombe Farm Reserve conserves and enhances biodiversity, while maintaining its working farm landscape and historic pattern of woods and fields.

Capstone Farm Country Park covers 114 hectares of former farmland set on the rolling landscape of the downs. Walking, cycling, running and horse riding routes track through the various habitats within the park, including ancient woodlands, old orchards, a freshwater lake, meadows and hedgerows.

The Great Lines Heritage Park exemplifies the link between Medway's historic legacy and its exciting future. The historic fortifications of Fort Amherst and the Chatham Lines have received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £1.8m to deliver 'Command of the Heights', a project that will be at the centre of Medway's archaeological exploration and heritage regeneration.

With the equivalent of 13.3 Hyde Parks -
from children's play areas to reserves you can
lose yourself in, with seven national
Green Flag Award sites - it's no wonder Medway's
green spaces are enjoyed by more than
1.5million visitors annually.

Medway's leisure centres
attract over 2.5million visits a year.



Leisure time

From workouts at state-of-the-art facilities to shopping on a picturesque historic high street ■

With so much on offer from Medway's leisure scene, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Medway is proud of its growing reputation as a sporting centre of international repute. Medway Park, Medway's £11million centre of sporting excellence, has played host to events including the Modern Pentathlon World Cup 2010 and European Championships 2011, the British Transplant Games 2012 and the Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup 2013. It was also an official pre-games training camp for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. These events are complemented by an annual programme of national and international events in sports which have included handball, badminton, basketball, judo, fencing, table tennis, and wheelchair rugby.

Beyond Medway Park, the Tour de France raced through Medway in 2007 on the first stage of its annual pilgrimage, and in 2012 thousands lined the streets to see the Olympic torch weave its way through Medway.

If you prefer to watch the professionals, Medway is home to Kent's only professional football club, Gillingham FC, as well as the Invicta Dynamos ice hockey team.

Medway has an extensive range of sporting facilities, with six council sports centres – including a £2m refurbishment of Strood Sports Centre

officially opened by Sir Geoff Hurst in 2016 - and numerous private gyms. There is also Chatham Ski and Snowboard Centre, outdoor activities at Arethusa Venture Centre and karting at nearby Buckmore Park international outdoor track, not forgetting Holcombe Hockey Club, home to Maddie Hinch as she won Olympic gold in 2016.

And of course, there is also the river. Home to a range of watersports clubs, it plays host to sailing regattas and an annual River Festival.

Shoppers will find leading national retailers in Chatham, enchanting independents and a monthly farmers' market in Rochester, and indoor comfort at Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre and Dockside Outlet Centre at Chatham Maritime; once Chatham Dockyard's boiler shop and now a regional shopping centre with restaurants and multiplex cinema. Plus it's quick and easy to get to Bluewater, the most innovative and exciting shopping and leisure destination in Europe, and the new Westfield Stratford City shopping centre just 30 minutes away by train.

Take a culinary trip around the world with Medway's vast array of restaurants and bars. Dine alfresco on Rochester's historic high street or waterside at Chatham Maritime, or seek out a cosy traditional pub with locally-brewed ales and home-cooked favourites.



Medway's business growth rate between
2012 and 2017 stood at **31.1%**
outstripping the south east rate of 19.5%,
and the national rate of 24.8%.

Medway is expected to create
17,000 jobs by 2035



Great future

Where regeneration is a reality ■

The Medway economy is worth in excess of £4.8bn per year, and is home to an estimated 13,705 businesses. With a population of more than 275,000, expanding to around 330,000 by 2035, Medway is expected to create 17,000 jobs by 2035.

Between 2012 and 2016 growth in median weekly earnings for full-time employees in Medway exceeded growth in regional and national earnings, resulting in the gap between earnings in Medway and the south-east narrowing in the past five years.

Medway's economy is built upon a strong industrial heritage, with Chatham Dockyard's ship building, Short Brothers' aeroplanes and Aveling & Porter steam rollers. Medway has also had a petrochemical industry on the Hoo peninsula since Victorian times. This industrial expertise resulted in a considerable modern manufacturing and engineering base. However, Medway is and will continue to be based on a broader and more diverse range of industry sectors.

By value, manufacturing and engineering is Medway's largest sector, standing at 19%. Employment in the construction sector exceeds the national level, representing 15% of jobs. Health, transport, accommodation and food services are also proportionately larger in Medway than nationally.

Power generation, financial and business services, ports and logistics and the creative industries and tourism sectors are all well represented in Medway. Creative industries grew in Medway by 76% between 2012 and 2017, outpacing wider business growth of 27% and reflecting the growing importance of the creative sector in Medway.

Medway's **major employers** encompass BAE Systems, Delphi Diesel Systems, Veetee Rice, Lloyds of London, BOSE, Jubilee Clips, London Thamesport, RBS, and Dovetail Games.



• Medway's economy is built upon a strong industrial heritage

Medway's **commercial property stock** is affordable compared to the south-east and there is a wide selection of properties available. Its main business estates are Medway City Estate - home to more than 500 businesses employing 6,000 people, Gillingham Business Park, and Lordswood Industrial Estate.

After the closure of Chatham Dockyard in the early 1980s, the area has been brought into the 21st century as **Chatham Maritime**. The skyline is dominated by new towers at the Quays (with 334 apartments and a 300-berth marina), which stand grandly over St Mary's Island, an award-winning housing development, luxury marina and shopping (Dockside Outlet Centre) and entertainment complex. Other large **retail centres** in Medway are the Pentagon Shopping Centre, Chatham and Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, Gillingham.

The Historic Dockyard is also home to a thriving business community with more than 140 small businesses employing more than 1,000 people, from wood carvers to high-tech design. More than 400 people also live within the site's walls - in properties that range from historic residences, large and small, to modern new homes.

St Mary's Island, the Universities at Medway, Medway Park, Innovation Centre Medway hi-tech business complex and Chatham Waterfront bus station are all **completed projects** that form part of the dynamic development of Medway.

There is an **active regeneration programme** in Medway spanning almost seven miles along the River Medway, including our flagship site, Rochester Riverside, where work is underway to create a community of 1,400 homes alongside schools, shops and other services. Further opportunities exist at the Chatham Maritime development and at Chatham Waterfront, where following public realm improvements there is potential for a new leisure and cultural quarter.

New employment land has been commissioned at Kingsnorth Commercial Park. The 280-hectare Isle of Grain site will provide 6,000 jobs. Grain Business Park will see the largest new release of commercial land in Europe for many years and will realise the development of 465,000m² of employment floor space.

Innovation Park Medway (formerly known as Rochester Airport Technology Park), received over £8m government investment, and will create 1,000 jobs through the development of managed workspace, advanced manufacturing research and prototyping workshops and industrial units.

The striking and ambitious Chatham Waters project at Chatham Docks, Gillingham will transform the area and create almost 3,500 new jobs, hundreds of homes, a hotel, a supermarket and a conference and events centre on the banks of the River Medway.

In addition to Medway's location, the burgeoning improvement in **education and skills** is a key

factor in the ongoing development of its economy.

In 1995, Medway had no university presence, and young people wanting to study at university had to study elsewhere. In 2002, Her Majesty the Queen inaugurated the new **Universities at Medway** campus at Chatham Maritime. Since then, thanks to the unique partnership between the University of Greenwich, the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and MidKent College at the shared campus, and the University for the Creative Arts campus at Rochester, Medway now has a student population of 12,000 and growing, offering a wide range of courses.

The development of the universities is complemented by the excellent education provision in Medway. In 2010, HRH The Princess Royal opened the **new MidKent College campus**, which has more than 2,800 students. It is the largest further education establishment in Kent and provides some of the best vocational training facilities in the country.

Apprenticeships are also an important part of improving the prospects of Medway's young people. The area currently has around 2,600 apprentices and more than 200 different types of apprenticeships in place.

Medway UTC Trust opened the **University Technical College** in Medway with an engineering and construction specialism. Medway UTC offers an employment-driven technical and vocational education to local students aged 14 to 19.



Medway,
rich heritage,
great future.







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