

High number of pre-lets at new Innovation Centre in Canterbury

25 November 2009

Canterbury Innovation Centre is now open for business and its launch is marked today at a key handover ceremony. The Centre, funded by £7.3m from South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), has opened with over a third of space already let to innovative local businesses.

The Centre will connect high growth, high tech businesses with academic expertise to help drive innovation and entrepreneurship. 25,000sqft (2,300sqm) of office, studio and workshop space designed to support business start-ups is available. It is expected to create 2,000 jobs and support 800 new businesses in the future.

The Centre, which is managed by leading business centre specialist, Basepoint, is the first building on the wider science park based on the University of Kent campus. Developed in partnership with East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSDC) to the highest environmental standards, it has achieved an Excellent BREEAM rating. Sustainable design elements include photovoltaics, rainwater harvesting, SUDS and biomass boiler within a sensitive topographical site design.

Pam Alexander, Chief Executive of SEEDA said: "We are proud that our £7.3m investment has produced an exemplary building to connect local universities to innovative new high growth businesses. It will provide a superb hub in which technology-rich companies can establish, diversifying the business base in East Kent and benefiting from knowledge and skills transfer to enable them to go global fast. These are the types of businesses which SEEDA is supporting to drive the South East - and the UK - out of recession and back into sustainable growth and prosperity."

Cllr John Gilbey, Chair of EKSDC and Leader of Canterbury City Council, said: "It is vital that new business opportunities in sectors not sufficiently represented in East Kent are actively pursued and promoted. The location within and closely allied to the University of Kent combined with the expertise of Basepoint, provides the perfect launch pad for the development of new technology enterprise. This point marks a significant departure from our traditional business profiles and represents a fantastic opportunity. While gaining all these advantages we also have the opportunity to admire the practicalities of a magnificent building."

Professor Julia Goodfellow, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent, said: "The Innovation Centre is an integral part of the University's strategy to support the local economy and to encourage innovation and enterprise, making the region more attractive for graduates to stay and work locally."

Jo Clark, Basepoint's Centre Manager, said: "Although in its infancy, the Centre is already attracting a variety of businesses that fit the criteria of innovation and technology. Within the first month of opening, 35 out of the 85 units available have already been occupied, a huge achievement considering the current economic climate. We look forward to developing the Centre and creating an exciting new business community here."

For more information about taking space at Canterbury Innovation Centre, please contact Basepoint on 0800 197 3494 or visit the website: www.canterburyinnovationcentre.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

Photography available, please contact: Jessica Stewart (Media Relations Manager):
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- **SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency**, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.
- **SEEDA's support helped deliver the following** over the period 2005-2008:
 - o 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
 - o 32,500 people helped to get work
 - o 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
 - o 137,500 businesses assisted
 - o £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
 - o 200ha Brownfield land remediated
 - o 148,500 people assisted in skills development

Basepoint specialises in the development and operation of flexible business, innovation and enterprise centres. These centres provide comprehensive accommodation and support infrastructure packages to new and early-stage companies within a supportive and secure environment. The company operates both wholly - and part-owned centres as well as managing facilities on behalf of public sector bodies. Group operations currently extend across Southern England and the Midlands, with additional opportunities under assessment across the UK.

Basepoint is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the ACT Foundation, a leading grant-making charity dedicated to improving the quality of life of those in need. The ACT Foundation derives its income from a substantial and diversified property portfolio of which Basepoint is a major constituent.

www.basepoint.co.uk / www.theactfoundation.co.uk

University of Kent

The University of Kent, the UK's European University, was the first institution within the county to be granted a university charter. It has 17,000 students studying at Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels and Paris. It is a major educational, economic and cultural force throughout Kent, supporting innovation and enterprise across the region.

The University has consistently been rated as one of the best universities in the UK according to the National Student Survey. It was placed 24th out of 159 participating institutions in terms of the best, or 4* (star), research in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, with much of its research ranked as world leading. 80 per cent of research staff work in departments which contain research of national or international levels of excellence.

Times Good University Guide 2010 states that 'Graduates of all disciplines fare well in the employment market - the university regularly features among the top 20 for graduate starting salaries.' The 2009 Sunday Times University Guide again recognised the University's international reputation and impact.

In 2008, the University was awarded the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for the work of its Kent Law Clinic.

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