



Leeds

Leeds is the business capital of Yorkshire and the Humber, one of the largest economic regions in the UK. The economy of Leeds is robust and diverse – amply illustrated by the fact that it has the third largest financial and business services sector *and* the third largest manufacturing sector in the UK, in employment terms.

Leeds has a “24 hour city” policy aimed at making the city **the** place to work, rest and play. Bars and restaurants with their heated pavement cafes thrive all year round and the city boasts cultural attractions including Opera North and the award-winning West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Leeds’ traditional strengths lie in its industrial heritage and diversity. One of the UK’s largest financial, legal and business centres and home to the majority of e-commerce major players, Leeds’ prosperity lies not just with the “virtual” company, but with the depth of conventional industry. It is the existence of the quality media, legal, financial, software and business support services that are creating bespoke e-business solutions to enable and encourage the uptake of e-activities.

A major initiative is now underway to drive high technology growth in Leeds. Over 30 key private companies, as well as the academic and public sectors have joined forces to launch e-HQ Leeds, which aims to develop and promote Leeds as the location for e-business. An amazing 35% of all UK internet traffic already comes through Leeds and e-HQ is working to attract new

economy investment, ensure provision of an IT skilled workforce, encourage the use of e-commerce and deliver events to spread good practice and information.

Rockliffe, a Silicon Valley internet software developer, has recently selected Leeds for its European Headquarters. Director Alun Davis explains; “access to a large pool of suitably qualified potential employees was a critical factor. Leeds has two world class Universities and access to a workforce of over 2 million. Having experienced spiralling operational costs in Silicon Valley during the late 1990s, Rockliffe was keen to succeed within a sensible budget. Rockliffe’s research showed that Leeds offered very competitive operational costs



when compared with other major European cities, particularly London.”

In addition to increasing connectivity, a current e-HQ initiative is the creation of an Internet Quarter. This includes a flagship e-HQ Leeds building, ICT training centre, accommodation for business, facilities for related services, such as mentoring, and the opportunity for start-up businesses to share costs of, for example, connectivity. The Internet Quarter is part of the Holbeck Urban Village scheme, which will encompass a large mixed development scheme within the area, and is already home to a number of new economy businesses, notably at Marshall Mill.

Ananova is one such company that continues to invest in this area. Originally the new media arm of PA News, the company shortlisted London and Leeds as potential relocation sites. Deborah Tonroe, Business Development Manager explains, “PA News made the proactive decision to move to Leeds. It has a growing reputation in terms of e-business and has recently enjoyed a resurgence in investment, redevelopment and vision. The quality of life enjoyed in Leeds is exceptional.”



A free range of advice and assistance is available from Leeds Development Agency, including property and site searches from an extensive database to match company requirements to the prime site. For further information see www.leeds.gov.uk or contact Tel: +44 (0) 113 2474516 email: invest@leeds.gov.uk