



## Press Release

### **No Congestion Charge at The Thames Innovation Centre**

At one time, Erith might not have been the trendiest place to have an office. However, times are changing. With the advent of both congestion and the congestion charge, out of city office space is set to become increasingly attractive and locations such as the stylish Thames Innovation Centre in Erith is set to be an ideal location for companies starting up, relocating or looking to expand.

The recent extension of the London congestion charge area and the reduced lanes in the Blackwall tunnel are causing companies to consider locating their companies outside of the main City. Valuable lost time to traffic, the inconvenience of alternative routes, congestion charge payment strategies and the cost to employees and clients is causing business people to take a long hard look at their operation and how best to move forward.

"With the development of the Thames Gateway area, Erith in the London Borough of Bexley is set to be one location that will now attract business," said Robert Key, Marketing Co-Ordinator at the Thames Innovation Centre. "The DLR line will reach Woolwich in 2009, which will mean it is only 5 minutes from City Airport. In addition to this, being close to the new Ebbsfleet EuroStar station means that this location offers fast access to Europe. From a business perspective, the commercial and logistical benefits of moving to this area are proving increasingly attractive and will be even more so, especially if the future economy gets tough and businesses need to sharpen up to survive."



*Robert Menzies, Able Services (Left), Robert Key, Thames Innovation Centre (Right)*

One such company that has made this decision is Able Services Ltd, a company that maintains plumbing and drainage systems and water usage control systems for organisations such as Green King, EAT and similar large organisations within the food and hospitality industry. Accessing customers within the City has been proving costly, both in terms of the congestion charge and also in terms of time and employee working conditions. Able have now set up offices at the Thames Innovation Centre and have decided on a radical approach to the future strategy of their business. They intend to locate electric vehicles within the City and have engineers travel in and out of the City by tube, using the electric vehicles during the day to undertake work.

"We provide UK coverage, so very often one of our engineers will need to drive from a customer outside London, right into the centre and it can be a demoralising and expensive two hour journey," said Robert Menzies, Managing Director of Able Services. "The new offices at Erith offer us a really nice working environment and good access to the City by tube. It now takes an engineer a consistent and relaxing 20 minutes, which is a big difference and will have a very positive impact on our productivity, the service we provide for our clients and how our engineers feel about their work. We are also pleased to be moving towards a more environmental operation and will be contributing to current effort to reduce CO2 within the City."

Able claim that the commercial argument for being based outside the City and running electric vehicles is very compelling. The electric vehicle can be recharged for 38p and often for free at a customer site. Their engineers can also park for free. In addition to this, Able save on petrol, engineering time, congestion charge and road tax.

"In terms of company performance, it also means that our engineers are under less stress and it's simply a better way to work," said Robert. "With our engineers better positioned to do a good job and our costs under control, we are able to provide our clients with the best possible value and quality of service."

In many respects Able is a hi-tech company. Able use electronic paper that automatically sends job details back to the Erith offices via GPS, they track all of their vehicles using GPS and can even send location data direct to the in-vehicle navigation systems. They also use the latest technology in drainage inspection systems and water monitoring systems. This makes them a good fit for the Thames Innovation Centre which focuses on innovative knowledge and technology companies and provides business support as well as stylish offices and workspaces.

"It's a very stylish building," said Robert Menzies. "Our clients tend to be large commercial organizations and we need to present ourselves as professional as possible. The Thames Innovation Centre lends us a good and professional image; it has smart well equipped meeting rooms, a modern IT infrastructure and a very impressive atrium. In addition this, we have really valued the quality of the business support that is available to us here. The TIC team have a very positive approach and are very interested in what we are creating and what we are doing, it's a breath of fresh air."

### **About The Thames Innovation Centre**

At a cost of £8.2m, the Thames Innovation Centre represents a new breed of commercial buildings. As well as housing stylish offices, conference rooms and a cafe area, the entire building has been built to address the environment. Using geothermic heating from the ground, solar panels for water heating and intelligent lighting systems that maximise the use of daylight, the Thames Innovation Centre represents one of the first buildings in Europe that will help technology companies address their impact on the environment. <http://www.thamesinnovationcentre.com>