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OREGA ON THE EXPANSION TRAIL IN NORTH WEST

Flexible office provider Orega, which operates a business centre in Three Piccadilly Place, Manchester, is looking to expand its North West portfolio in anticipation of a continued rise in flexible office space enquiries and strong growth in the region's business performance.

Orega, which moved into the region for the first time last summer, is in active discussions with landlords to open further business centres in the region.

Paul Finch, joint managing director of Orega, says: "We are confident that, with the recent reported pick-up in serviced office enquiries, there is sufficient demand from businesses in the North West to support additional flexible space, provided the offices are sited in accessible and high-profile locations."

Orega spotted just such a location in Three Piccadilly Place. Regarded as one of the best business addresses in Manchester, the striking 12-storey building is directly opposite Manchester Piccadilly railway station, providing fast access to the airport, and is close to all shops and amenities. Completed last summer by Argent and The Carlyle Group as part of their Piccadilly Place scheme, Orega became one of the first occupiers when it took 17,000 sq ft on the ground and eleventh floors for the Piccadilly Executive business centre.

Among Orega's serviced office clients at Three Piccadilly Place is the North West Joint Improvement Partnership, an alliance of agencies that work together to produce and implement policy on adult social care, health and wellbeing. It occupies 16 workstations on the eleventh floor and perfectly complements one of the conventional tenants in the building, namely the NHS, which occupies two and a half floors on a leasehold basis.

"The synergy between the serviced office and conventional office occupiers in the building is working very well," reports Jo Sexton, Orega's regional sales manager for Manchester and Birmingham. "Tenants like the NHS are making very good use of our meeting rooms which are being heavily booked."

To cater for the surge in demand, two new meeting rooms have been created at the business centre which can cater for up to 25 delegates. As well as the NHS, bookings have come from a wide range of companies in the area, ranging from recruitment to legal.

Orega has also introduced a shared office option at its business centre to match the demands of busy city executives who need the flexibility of a part-time desk. "Our location in the city centre and right next to the railway station provides the perfect base for professionals who only want the use of a desk for a short period of time," Jo points out.

The North West Joint Improvement Partnership described one of the main draws of Orega's business centre as 'the extremely convenient location of the premises' for trains, buses and taxis. "This is particularly beneficial for the day-to-day operations of the office, enabling the programme office staff/visitors and flexible workers to travel to Manchester knowing that the journey is very straightforward and more or less hassle free," says Carole Piddington, the Partnership's programme administrator.

The North West has recently been singled out as one of the best performing regions in the UK in indices produced by the Purchasing Managers and the Centre for International Competitiveness. In the latter, Manchester was ranked the third most competitive large city, based on its ability to attract and maintain firms with stable or rising market shares.

Research company Costar has recently reported that take-up of Manchester city centre offices in the first quarter of this year was twice that of the last quarter of 2009. And the Manchester Office Agents Forum said total take-up of city centre offices in the first quarter was 191,598 sq ft, eroding the existing stock by 15%. With new build set to fall this year to its lowest level for 10 years, the Forum predicts a rise in office rents and a hardening of terms. From an investment point of view, Drivers Jonas Deloitte said in its recent Manchester Crane survey that, despite spending cuts, the public sector will continue to be a driving force in the city's development, with the proposed Mayfield civil service campus near Piccadilly highlighted as a significant example of this trend.

“All the indications point to a healthy rise in demand and a sound foundation for further growth,” says Paul Finch. “We are keen to capitalise on that growth with further high-quality business centres in the right locations.”