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NORTHWEST UNVEILS NEW 12 MONTHS FREE OFFICE SPACE FOR BUSINESS INVESTORS

The Northwest is rolling out the red carpet to investors with a new 'soft landing' scheme offering free office space in serviced accommodation for 12 months, across the region.

The new scheme, 'Hello Northwest', officially launched today, has been developed in partnership between the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), investment and development agencies for Manchester and the Liverpool City Region, MIDAS and The Mersey Partnership, and leading serviced office providers - Avanta, Bruntwood, Orega, Manchester Science Park, Liverpool Science Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.

Hello Northwest offers new overseas investors to Manchester (Hello Manchester), Liverpool (Hello Liverpool) and the Northwest (Hello Northwest), free desk space for the first 12 months of their relocation to the area as part of the region's continued drive to attract investment and jobs. The scheme will allow investors to test out ideas before a major investment.

The offer is focused on attracting foreign-owned businesses and is designed to promote and maintain the Northwest's status as a fast-growing, vibrant region combining a dynamic business base with cosmopolitan urban centres and an international recognised creative and cultural scene.

The scheme offers one free desk per investing company, 12 months rent free in fully serviced accommodation in key locations throughout the Northwest.

The free rent offer is supported by the full spectrum of business development services provided by the NWDA, MIDAS and TMP including an extensive, free and confidential package of advice and assistance to companies looking to relocate to the Northwest.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a very important part in the Northwest economy. A study by DTZ for the NWDA in 2008 highlighted the value and significance that FDI has in our region. The report found that over 17% of regional gross value added (GVA) is accounted for by foreign owned companies operating in the Northwest and that economic output (GVA) per worker is almost 50% higher in foreign owned companies compared to the regional average.

Mark Hughes, Executive Director of Economic Development at the NWDA, said: "The Northwest is well known for its friendly hospitality and welcoming population and we are also one of the best performing regions for foreign direct investment. The Hello service brings these two important characteristics together and should help us secure even more investment in future years which in turn will help grow our economy."

Colin Sinclair, Chief Executive of MIDAS, said: "We're delighted to announce the launch of Hello with our partner organisations. Manchester has always given businesses a warm welcome and believe this excellent service will prove to be one more compelling reason for businesses to bring their investment and jobs to the City Region."

Lorraine Rogers, Chief Executive, The Mersey Partnership (TMP), said: “This innovative, private sector led scheme will allow foreign owned companies to get a low cost initial foothold in the Liverpool City Region on which TMP and partners will help them to build. We have already drawn up a target list of companies to promote this scheme to and aim to expand it across the City Region as the pilot proves successful.”

The Northwest is already the UK’s leading region for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) outside of London and the South East and the Hello scheme will help to build on this success.

In 2009, figures released nationally by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) showed that the number of inward investment projects secured in the Northwest over the last financial year had risen to the highest recorded number for the region, despite the difficult economic conditions. The number of FDI jobs created/safeguarded is strong too, higher than anywhere else in the UK outside of London.

Bruntwood Sales Director, Andrew Butterworth said: “We’re delighted to be an integral part of the Hello Northwest initiative. With a broad range of flexible and fully serviced office space across the region, Bruntwood is well placed to provide overseas businesses a convenient workplace from which they can successfully establish a meaningful base.

From there, our extensive north of England office portfolio also enables these companies to expand seamlessly with us, should it be required in the future. As well as the choice and service provided by everyone involved in the scheme, the Northwest offers an incredibly rich commercial and cultural destination for foreign investors; somewhere that many global businesses are already happy to call their UK home.”

Chris Taylor, Director of Corporate Development at Avanta, said: “Avanta has a history of wholeheartedly supporting initiatives to help attract and support foreign investors to the UK and, having supported a similar scheme in London for the past two years, we’ve found them to be highly successful in attracting new businesses. Therefore, we are 100 per cent behind the Hello Northwest scheme.

We know that new investors in Manchester will appreciate the reduction in cost of initial market entry together with the enhanced speed to market that we can provide and we shall therefore look forward to providing them with a soft landing.”

Jessica Cox, Marketing Manager for Orega, said: “We look forward to providing a warm welcome at our new Piccadilly Place business centre which provides flexible and stylish serviced offices, meeting rooms and virtual offices directly opposite the main railway station in the city and only a 15-minute train ride from Manchester airport. This is our latest new opening and is part of a selective expansion programme that includes major cities in the UK and on mainland Europe. We’re thrilled to be part of such an exciting initiative as Hello Manchester that will give overseas companies the opportunity to have a soft landing in one of our finest business centres.”