

## **PRESS RELEASE INFORMATION**

26<sup>th</sup> October 2007

### **STOURBRIDGE SCHEME SNAPPED UP FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Barteak Developments' scheme of 28 houses and apartments on Hungary Hill in Stourbridge has been pre-sold in its entirety to Bromford Housing Group in a multi-million pound deal that will provide much-needed quality affordable homes for local people.

Four houses and six apartments are being constructed for affordable rent, and the remaining 18 apartments will be matched to shared ownership customers making their first steps onto the property ladder.

The residential scheme is currently under construction on a one acre brownfield site that has been painstakingly remediated at the site of the historic former Hungary Hill colliery, which closed in 1920.

The 28 new homes will be completed in late spring 2008, and have been designed in accordance with the principles of the Code For Sustainable Homes Level 3. Enhanced features that will contribute to the scheme's 25 per cent energy efficiency rating - compared to a new home built in 2006 - include gas central heating and timber windows. The scheme has been designed by Anthony Ricketts Architects, which has a strong track record for producing quality residential designs.

David Back, managing director of Barteak Developments Ltd said: "We are delighted to have entered into a partnering relationship with Bromford Housing Group for our Hungary Hill site in Stourbridge.

"When submitting the planning application earlier this year, this was a site that we had identified for a high allocation of affordable homes – far more than the local planning policy stipulates – but it is rewarding to have signed a deal which means that this development will become a new small community of people who may have otherwise struggled to have found accommodation of this quality in their local area.

"We are working with Bromford Housing Group on all aspects of the specification for the homes, both on the features that will ensure the scheme meets or exceeds Level 3 of the Code For Sustainable Homes, and style and comfort features based on Bromford's knowledge of its customers. Having developed residential schemes for close to 30 years, we have been able to offer Bromford a 'turn-key' arrangement, having removed planning risk and providing guaranteed delivery of a quality product that achieves their specification requirements.

"We believe that this is a template for working in partnership with RSL's, where the skills of the private and voluntary development sectors can be combined for mutual benefit."

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The lead-in time for the delivery of the Hungary Hill site has enabled Bromford Housing Group to bid for government grant to subsidise the delivery cost of the home ownership and rented homes for households in need. However, in order to secure the development in its entirety, the RSL has been able to draw on its liquid assets to front-fund the construction programme.

Prior to striking the deal with Bromford, Barteak undertook an intensive remediation programme on the one acre site, costing in the region of £200,000. It included the removal of asbestos and contamination from oil spillages, the demolition of former buildings, and the capping of the two mining shafts. In addition, remediation specialists have injected cement into the former coal seams and compacted the ground to prepare for the construction of the new homes.

David Back added: "Barteak is committed to promoting quality affordable housing through the planning process. We are working on a number of large mixed-use sites throughout the Midlands region, where we are proposing that the residential element of the scheme consists of a nursing home, assisted living accommodation and an allocation of affordable housing units. We have identified strong demand for this type of mixed tenure approach, catering for a range of community needs in sustainable locations."

Helen Collins, group executive director for Bromford Housing Group said: "In conjunction with partners such as Barteak, we currently develop around 800 new homes every year. The requirements of the Code For Sustainable Homes, and our commitment to consistently review specification requirements in line with changing customer needs have resulted in residential development being an extremely complex part of our service.

"Working with development partners that come to the table with a highly flexible approach is exactly what we need to ensure we continue to deliver quality affordable housing within the Midlands and beyond."

Barteak, which has acquired 15 sites during the past 12 months, is undergoing a significant expansion plan across the East, South and West Midlands. Having increased annual turnover by 30 per cent in the last financial year to £26million, the company aims to increase turnover to £40million for the 07/08 financial year.

**ENDS**

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