



PRESS RELEASE

20 NOVEMBER 2007

WELCOME FOR £2 MILLION FACELIFT OF HOMES

The start of a £2m project to give a facelift to hundreds of terraced houses in Stoke-on-Trent was celebrated on Monday, 19 November.

A total of 332 homes in the Harley Street, Hazlehurst Street, Parkhouse Street, Belmont Road and Chatham Street areas of Hanley, Shelton and Etruria are to be improved.

The start of the contract was marked at the home of Arthur Garside on Monday, 19 November.

Mr Garside's home in Harcourt Street, Shelton, will receive a new rear boundary wall. This will improve the appearance of the house and the street.

Mr Garside said: "There has been a lot of decline in the Shelton area over the 50 years I have lived here. Over the years, I have always kept up with repairs on my home, but as I'm getting older I have found it more and more difficult.

"It's good to see some money being invested and I am very happy it's taking place."

The facelift work is part of RENEW North Staffordshire's programme to help make run-down neighbourhoods attractive and popular places to live.

Beth Johnson Housing Association, RENEW's partner housing association in the City Centre South area, is managing the scheme and the work is being carried out by contractor Seddon.

Work to properties will include repair or replacement of:

- front windows
- front doors
- porch canopies
- boundary walls
- masonry and rendering
- gutters and downpipes
- paintwork.

A series of gateway sites will also be improved with work such as:

- new paving
- planting of trees and shrubs
- better road and pavement layouts.

These environmental works will also help to improve the overall impression of the area to residents and visitors.

Hardial Bhogal, director of RENEW North Staffordshire, said: "Local people have responded very positively to the offer of improvements for their homes and neighbourhood.

"This facelift for so many streets will make it a better place to live for existing residents and will help attract new people to live in these neighbourhoods."

Councillor Mervin Smith, Stoke-on-Trent City Council portfolio holder for regeneration, said: "Residents in these areas have been saying for years that their neighbourhood is run-down and needs investment.

"These renovations will improve neighbourhood conditions and help restore confidence in the area for existing and new residents."

RENEW North Staffordshire is funding the work after carrying out detailed surveys of housing conditions and asking local people how they wanted the area to be improved. The surveys considered options including the possibility of demolition or renovation for the properties.

A series of meetings and open days was held over the summer, to explain the improvements and to invite property owners to agree for the work to be done.

More than half the owners of homes in the eligible streets have already agreed to have the work done so far, and more are continuing to sign up for the scheme.

The improvements to properties are free to property owners. Private landlords must join the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme to benefit.

Ends

Photo caption: The attached photograph shows the start of refurbishment work in Shelton. (Left to right front row) are Tony Eardley of Seddon; local resident Arthur Garside; Rodney Leake, Seddon's project manager; (l-r back row), Nick Newman of RENEW North Staffordshire; Vic Rawlingson, chair of upper Shelton residents' association; and Mark Birkin of Beth Johnson Housing Association.

Notes to editors

1. RENEW North Staffordshire is the housing market renewal pathfinder for Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Biddulph East. Our aim is to help make North Staffordshire a thriving, diverse conurbation where people want to live, work, invest and study. We do this by working with communities and partners to:
 - balance housing supply and demand
 - retain and attract population
 - provide quality housing that meets the aspirations of existing and new residents
 - transform the environment and make the best of our heritage and green space
 - support economic regeneration.

2. The RENEW North Staffordshire team can be contacted by the public on 01782 232024 or renew@civic1.stoke.gov.uk. Further information can be found on the website: www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk.