



Embargoed until 12 noon on September 6th, 2007

Major new scheme bids to Build Up North Staffordshire

- More than £450 million for local regeneration schemes
- New £1/4million scheme to help local construction firms bid for work
- Major firms give backing to innovative new network

An innovative £1/4 million project – Build Up North Staffordshire – is launched today to help local firms become key players in rebuilding and regenerating the city.

Hundreds of local firms working in the construction industry are being urged to help rebuild North Staffordshire and earn a slice of the £450 million being invested in regeneration schemes.

Any local plumber, joiner, plasterer, electrical contractor or construction industry firm – from sole traders to bigger businesses – can now sign up to the Build Up North Staffordshire scheme to give themselves the best possible chance of working with major contractors on local projects.

Explains Build Up North Staffordshire project manager Nigel Barrett: “There are more than £450 million worth of redevelopment projects in the final planning stages or currently underway across the area. We are committed to ensuring that local firms are a major part of these projects to ensure the wealth generated remains right here.

“However this doesn’t just happen. Our research has shown that local firms need help in securing work on high profile projects. The major construction companies are committed to using local labour but also need to know where they can find reputable firms. The Build Up North Staffordshire project will meet the needs of both.

“It will provide FREE advice and training to get companies into a position where they can quote for work with large contractors – with all the skills, training and certification necessary. When major firms need contractors they will be able to search the database to invite them to submit quotes.

“Build Up North Staffordshire will ensure we have the strong construction network that is vital to help local companies grow and help major contractors create the local partnerships they need to do the best possible job.

“We aim to make the scheme simple and effective and give the best possible advice and support to local firms. The first step for local contractors is to register on our web-based database, after which a construction specialist adviser will assess their needs.”

The project has the backing of major industry leaders including: Stoke on Trent City Council, the European Development Fund, RENEW North Staffordshire, Groundwork, the Learning and Skills Council, West Midlands Centre for Constructing Excellence and North Staffs Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Hazel Lyth, Cabinet Member for Business and Enterprise, Learning and Skills, explained: “The regeneration work across our city is much more than just bricks and mortar, it is an opportunity to create a flourishing local construction industry which truly benefits from the millions of pounds worth of building projects. Build Up North Staffordshire is a key element in making this vision a reality and ensuring local jobs are secured for the future.

Hardial Bhogal, director of Renew North Staffordshire added: “Renew North Staffordshire is committed to investing in the local communities and Build Up North

Staffordshire is an excellent example of what can be achieved when major agencies work together. Local construction industry workers will benefit from the project and in turn will create a healthier, stronger community which is the overall aim of Renew North Staffordshire.”

Dave Bullock, director of Compendium Group added: “One of Compendium’s key aims is to help local businesses and individuals to benefit from our investment in new development. We see projects like Build Up North Staffordshire as vital in helping us make contact with high quality local businesses which can work with us to achieve success. It’s a great foundation for local business development and a vital source of labour, and Compendium will be supporting it.”

Local firms wishing to sign up to Build Up North Staffordshire can register online at www.buildup-ns.org.uk or call 01782 224414 for more information.

Ends

For media enquiries contact Ivonne Scott or Julie Grant at Plink Fizz on 01782 377430

Notes to editors

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Thursday September 6th at 12 noon at Weston Heights Building Development, Main Street, Weston Coyney, Stoke on Trent – Hazel Lyth Cabinet Member for Business & Enterprise, Learning & Skills, Nigel Barrett of Stoke on Trent City Council, Jacqui Ginnane of Renew and Dave Bullock of Compendium Group launch the innovative Build Up North Staffordshire project.

Case studies of local firms which will benefit from the Build Up North Staffordshire project are available.

Examples of local projects currently searching for contractors include:

Warehouses and Offices in Stoke on Trent

Estimated Project Value: £12.6m

Start Date: October 2007

32 Flats and Shop in Shelton

Estimated Project Value: £2m

Start Date: November 2007

Primary Care Centre and Health Club in Stoke on Trent

Estimated Project Value: £6m

Start Date: 2007/08

221 Residential/Primary Care Centres in Newcastle-under-Lyme

Estimated Project Value: £14m

Start Date: Spring 2008

There are no restrictions on the size of company that can benefit from and register with Build Up North Staffordshire. The scheme will provide free specialist consultancy to all local construction companies that register on the database and will source helpful/targeted training to meet to businesses needs to enable it to compete successfully for new work.

Compendium is building 283 new homes and refurbishing other existing houses at the Coalville estate, Stoke-on-Trent, through a £55 million regeneration programme commissioned by RENEW North Staffordshire. The Weston Heights scheme will create homes for sale, shared ownership and rent for new and existing residents.