



PRESS RELEASE

21 MARCH 2007

Photocall and interview opportunities:

9am, 22 March, North Staffordshire Conference Centre, Hartshill Road, Hartshill. Partners will sign a scrolled charter.

PLEDGE TO BUILD LOW CARBON NEIGHBOURHOODS

Councils, regeneration agencies and property developers are pledging to work together to create low carbon homes and neighbourhoods in North Staffordshire.

They are to sign a "Sustainability Charter" at a keynote event that will set out what planners, architects and housebuilders need to do in North Staffordshire to meet the challenge of climate change.

The event, organised jointly by Sustainability West Midlands and RENEW North Staffordshire, will kick-start debate on the practical steps that are being taken to plan for sustainable homes in Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. The seminar will be repeated annually to review progress and learn about new techniques and flagship initiatives elsewhere.

Examples of ways to create low carbon homes to be highlighted include:

- using building methods that minimise use of energy and raw materials
- saving energy by making the most of natural light, using the best insulation systems and installing efficient heating systems

- designing housing developments so they are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling
- minimising the need for travel by supporting local centres and purchasing local products and services
- exploring the potential for local energy generation, recycling of rainwater and drainage systems that allow water to sink into the ground.

Speakers at the event will include Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, a range of experts on developing low carbon housing and two members of RENEW's developer panel, Countryside Properties and Urban Splash.

Hardial Bhogal, director of RENEW North Staffordshire, said: "Climate change means everyone involved in planning and building new homes must work to new ways of working.

"This means investing in new techniques and higher building standards. That will then reduce the impact of new housing on the environment and help regenerate the housing market by providing innovative and energy-efficient new homes."

Joan Walley MP said: "By attending this seminar and signing the Sustainability Charter partners in North Staffordshire's regeneration are showing their commitment to meeting the challenge of climate change.

"They recognise the need for urgent action and the benefits sustainable development will bring to the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle."

Ends

You are invited to send a reporter / photographer at 9am, 22 March, to the North Staffordshire Conference Centre (formerly the Medical Institute), Hartshill Road, Hartshill.

For further information contact or Michael Howard at Staniforth on 0161 919 8034, Michael.howard@staniforth.co.uk, or Linda Isted at Staniforth on 0161 919 8030, Linda.isted@staniforth.co.uk.

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.
3. Sustainability West Midlands (supported by the Energy Savings Trust and Energy West Midlands) has produced a major new report - Planning for sustainable homes: Meeting the low carbon challenge. This report offers practical guidance as to how the region can take the important step of using the planning system to deliver widespread low carbon housing. Critically, it identifies practical action that policy makers, planners, local authorities and commercial housebuilders must take if we are to achieve the Government's ambitious low carbon targets, and gives examples of actions already being taken.