



PRESS RELEASE

27 MARCH 2007

Photocall and interview opportunities:

12.15pm, 28 March, Lichfield Street, City Waterside (meet at the Jet petrol station)

ARCHITECTS TO HELP RENEW SHRINKING CITY

Young architects are to visit a high-profile site in Stoke-on-Trent where they are competing to design innovative housing and help reverse the decline in the city's population.

Entrants to the European 9 housing design competition will tour the 2.29 hectare area of cleared land in the new City Waterside neighbourhood, five minutes' walk from Stoke-on-Trent city centre.

The site visit is being organised by CABE, which is promoting European 9 in England; and site sponsor RENEW North Staffordshire, the housing market renewal pathfinder.

Around 1,000 people a year are leaving Stoke-on-Trent because of poor housing conditions, a lack of housing choice and the loss of traditional industries.

RENEW North Staffordshire and its partners plan to use the European 9 competition to bring innovative housing to one of the neighbourhoods worst

affected by falling population. The new homes will attract new residents, provide replacement homes for existing residents and set the highest standards for new development in other areas.

Hardial Bhogal, director of RENEW North Staffordshire, said: "Our place in the European 9 competition means we will have some of the best young architects in Europe working in Stoke-on-Trent.

"That is a considerable coup for North Staffordshire and it demonstrates how we aim to use good architecture and design to attract people back to live in central parts of the city.

"Our message to the architects is that we are absolutely committed to building the winning design. The land is in public ownership, considerable funding is available, planning policies are in place, we have developers in place and the full support of a strong partnership. We want to see this site built within a couple of years."

Stoke-on-Trent elected mayor Mark Meredith said: "We need to bring the best creative minds to Stoke-on-Trent to find the solutions that will make our city an attractive and dynamic place to live.

"This site is our top priority for new housing development in our flagship City Waterside neighbourhood. Through this competition it will become very high profile for North Staffordshire and nationally. The winning designs will show just how high our ambitions are in Stoke-on-Trent."

Matthew Turner, of CABI, said: "Cities like Stoke-on-Trent need to build well-designed and innovative new housing as part of their regeneration. The European 9 competition offers the city a way of bringing the best creative ideas to build great new homes."

The site off Lichfield Street, five minutes' walk south of Stoke-on-Trent city centre, is currently mostly vacant, having previously been a housing clearance area.

It is also next to the historic Bridgewater Pottery which has been recently acquired by RENEW and close to the Caldon Canal. It is set on a south-facing hill overlooking the Trent valley, the green expanse of Berryhill Fields and the Peak District in the distance.

The European site is part of City Waterside, a new neighbourhood to the south of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre where up to 1,600 new homes are planned over the coming 10-15 years.

City Waterside is promoted by national regeneration agency English Partnerships, together with RENEW North Staffordshire, the housing market renewal pathfinder, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone, the Housing Corporation and British Waterways.

The entry into the European 9 competition has been co-ordinated by RENEW North Staffordshire, together with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Beth Johnson Housing Association (RENEW's partner housing association for City Centre South) and Sustainability West Midlands.

The competition closing date is June 2007 and the results will be announced in January 2008.

Ends

You are invited to send a reporter/ photographer to Lichfield Street, City Waterside, at 12.15pm, 28 March (meet at the Jet petrol station).

Representatives from CABA and RENEW will be available for interview.

For further information please contact:

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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. CABE is the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. As a public body, we encourage policymakers to create places that work for people. We help local planners apply national design policy and offer expert advice to developers and architects. We show public sector clients how to commission buildings that meet the needs of their users. And we seek to inspire the public to demand more from their buildings and spaces. Advising, influencing and inspiring, we work to create well-designed, welcoming places. www.cabe.org.uk