

NEWS RELEASE

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Birmingham's first sustainable housing development is given the go ahead

Black Country Housing is project leader for £12m 'green showcase' scheme

Black Country Housing & Community Services Group (BCH) is leading a pioneering project to regenerate a council housing estate in Birmingham by building a brand new development of high performance sustainable homes - featuring 'green' designs, building materials and technologies. When finished, it will become the city's first fully sustainable housing development.

The £12million 'showcase' scheme in Warstock, South West Birmingham, has been given the go ahead by Birmingham City Council. The plan is to provide 114 houses and apartments, two thirds of them for private sale and the rest occupied on a rented and shared ownership basis through BCH.

The Warstock Housing Showcase development is a partnership between BCH and the City Council, who will be selling 6 acres of land for this project, situated off Warstock Road. The demolition of five structurally defective multi-storey blocks of flats previously situated at the site, has already been completed. A private developer, soon to be appointed from a short list of four companies, will join the partnership.

The new dwellings in the mixed tenure development will share the same design specifications, although floor areas will vary. A major aim of the project is that the quality standards adopted will attract private homebuyers as well as people who prefer homes for rent or shared ownership. Energy efficiency and water conservation measures will be key to making the homes affordable for all.

"We are delighted to have been invited by one of Europe's foremost cities to apply our considerable experience of building sustainable homes which has been acquired during the last ten years," says Sandra Spence, Chief Executive of Black Country Housing Group (BCH). "The City Council's vision of sustainable development will be a beacon to other partnerships and we look forward to helping them to realise it."

BCH will be using its Green Futures holistic approach to achieving a sustainable development, now a proven success on several of its social housing schemes in the West Midlands.

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Architectural partner for the Warstock Showcase development is Associated Architects, responsible for designing the prestigious Mailbox and Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre schemes in the city. Other partners include: Arup as consulting engineers; Paul Mantle Partnership of Halesowen as cost consultants; Derek Lovejoy Birmingham Limited as landscape designers. BCH's in-house consultancy, e²S, will provide advice on sustainability.

Work is expected to start on site shortly and take about two years to complete. The design specifications will include: very high standards of roof, floor and wall insulation - combined with air-tight construction and managed ventilation, a combination known as super-insulation; highly fuel efficient heating, lighting and power systems; solar/photovoltaic and solar water heating systems; water efficiency technologies; Home working facilities; and storm-water recovery and 'grey' water recycling technologies.

An important feature of the development is the way local residents - both tenants of the homes proposed for demolition and those in neighbouring properties – are being consulted about the design of the new homes, using BCH's tried and tested 'Successful Tenancies' approach to local consultation.

"Residents and local councillors will continue to be consulted to ensure any proposals meet the needs of the whole community," says Councillor John Lines, Birmingham City Council's Cabinet Member for Housing. "We want to achieve the very highest levels of design, improve parking, accessibility and security, while creating a sustainable and popular neighbourhood."

Ends

Black Country Housing & Community Services Group Ltd. is a leading social housing provider in Birmingham and the Black Country providing quality homes for rent and shared ownership. We are delivering more services including, training, care, community development and business advice within a wider geographical area. Having achieved preferred partner status with Sandwell and Dudley, we continue to work with other local authorities and organisations on a range of projects and local initiatives.

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