

PRESS RELEASE

7th February 2003

CHANGING THE FACE OF ASHTON



**Photo opportunity – Monday 10th February at 11.00 am
on site at junction of Cavendish Street and Wellington Road,
Ashton-under-Lyne.**

**Present: Local children from Holy Trinity School, Chair of New
Charter Housing Trust Ged Cooney, and Group Chief Executive
Ian Munro.**

The skyline of Ashton is changing once more, as work starts on a new, exciting landmark. Terraced houses built in the 19th Century have made way for a 21st Century office building for Tameside's biggest landlord, New Charter Housing Trust Group.

New Charter is also one of the largest employers, but currently operates from 16 sites. Bringing the business together was an aim since transfer of former Council homes in March 2000. With no other office location available locally, New Charter has commissioned a new building. Moving to Ashton is the right opportunity for New Charter and will help regeneration in the Ashton Renewal Area.

Work on the new HQ started this month, and is a multi-million pound investment in the west side of Ashton. In conjunction with specialist office contractors, Williams Tarr & Co, local schoolchildren from Holy Trinity were invited to witness the start of this groundbreaking project. But it was the first and last time the children will be allowed anywhere near the site.

“As I work in the building industry, I know how attractive building sites can be for children, said Chair of New Charter Housing Trust, Ged Cooney. “We are working with the local school to reinforce the safety message that building sites are not playgrounds”.

This new headquarters has been designed with the environment in mind. Careful attention to detail has meant a reduction in traditional building products. When opened, it will produce far less waste than comparable office buildings. The headquarters will be the workplace for 375 staff and provide over 50,000 sq. ft of office space.

Chief Executive Ian Munro commented, “I am confident Ashton is the right place for our investment, and am proud to see the start on site. Our new location is next to the proposed Metrolink line as it terminates in Ashton, and will sit close to the new Sainsburys Superstore. I’m delighted at the prospect of bringing our workforce together, and the building will also provide tenants with a new resource centre”.

ENDS

Note to Editors

New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage nearly 16,400 properties transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. Until September 2000, it was Britain's biggest Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). With a turnover of £44 million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is the eleventh largest Registered Social Landlord (RSL), and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.

In October 1999, tenants voted two to one in favour of transfer, which took place on March 27th 2000.

New Charter inherited homes needing over £220 million of repairs and maintenance, and a 10-year improvement programme started immediately. New bathrooms, kitchens, windows, and central heating are being installed in many homes for rent. Already hundreds of tenants have benefited from this investment.

New Charter has a 5-year rent guarantee running until 30th September 2005. Tenant involvement is critical to New Charter, and tenants have a greater say on all matters that affect their homes.

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