

PRESS RELEASE

29th November 2005

First in class for New Charter

New Charter Housing Trust Group is the first Housing Association in the country to announce it is preparing to sponsor an Academy in association with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester.

As well as providing the best opportunities for their pupils, Academies have a key part to play in regenerating communities. New Charter is especially interested in helping to raise standards still further. A new Academy will be a significant focus for learning for the area's pupils, their families and other local people.

Each Academy is different, and draws on the expertise of sponsors to help develop its own distinctive ethos and mission. New Charter will be involved in building new premises for the Academy in Tameside. The new school will be innovative in design and built to high environmental standards – much like New Charter's own headquarters in Ashton-under-Lyne.



business for neighbourhoods

Ian Munro, Group Chief Executive at New Charter said “Our involvement is part of our response to the National Housing Federation’s **iN business for neighbourhoods** agenda. Housing Associations all over the country are doing innovative things to help make the communities they serve more sustainable. As well as being a landlord, we are also a big local employer which is here for the long term. We believe raising achievement and aspirations of the young will help to complement our investment in homes and neighbourhoods. At a recent meeting, I spoke with the Education Secretary, Ruth Kelly, and know she is very supportive of our proposals.”

A Tameside Council spokesman said:“As part of Tameside Council's Building Schools for the Future programme, we wish to ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of provision in the new schools to be built.

“A key feature of the programme is an Academy - a school which benefits from additional sponsorship funding and has more curriculum flexibility. In Tameside we have developed an innovative programme where the Academy would have local sponsorship from New Charter Housing Trust Group and would play a leading role in the Tameside Campus - our federation of all high schools.

“The plans - which are still subject to further consultation and approval - would see the establishment of an Academy in Tameside.

“This is an exciting programme but is still in the early stages of negotiation,” the spokesman concluded.

There are 27 established Academies and around 40 Academies in planning stages across the country. Other sponsors include the Church of England, Catholic Archdiocese, Universities, individuals and businesses as diverse as engineering (Perkins) and financial services (UBS).

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of almost £60million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the country’s largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. It owns just over 15,000 homes in Tameside, Oldham, Manchester and Bury.
2. Academies are a new type of school. They bring a distinctive approach to school leadership drawing on the skills of sponsors and other supporters. They give Principals and staff new opportunities to develop educational strategies to raise standards and contribute to diversity in areas of disadvantage. Academies are all ability schools established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working in highly innovative partnerships with central Government and local education partners. Sponsors and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provide the capital costs for the Academy. Running costs are met in full by the DfES.

The Academies programme aims to challenge the culture of educational underattainment and to deliver real improvements in standards. All Academies are located in areas of disadvantage.

3. Sponsors will contribute £2 million towards the costs of the new or refurbished school buildings, and the Government will provide the balance of the funding in line with the agreed budget. Academies have governors responsible for running the school in the interests of the pupils and community. Sponsors do not make a profit and the schools do not charge fees.
4. For more information on academies, see <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/>.



5. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project to improve housing associations' performance, and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. The project was launched at the National Housing Federation's annual conference in 2003. To date, 80 per cent of the sector's stock – over 1.5 million homes – is managed by associations who have joined the initiative and made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.

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