

PRESS RELEASE

3rd October 2006

Trust's school interest approved



Visual impression of new Academy and portrait photograph of Group Chief Executive Ian Munro available

A key step forward in building a new £multi-million school for the area has been taken as Under Secretary of State Lord Andrew Adonis approved New Charter's status as Academy sponsor.

The approval follows the announcement last November that New Charter Housing Trust Group would be the first Housing Association in the country to sponsor an Academy.

Since then, we have presented an Expression of Interest; and the Minister has now agreed to release funding to prepare the feasibility report. We envisage the new school to open in 2009. It will incorporate a replacement for Samuel Laycock Special School in Stalybridge as well as replacing Hartshead and Stamford High Schools in Ashton-under-Lyne. The



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Academy unlocks over £130 million to invest in schools across Tameside over the next fifteen years. The total cost of the Academy is likely to be £24 million, with New Charter contributing £2 million over four years from 2007.

Group Chief Executive at New Charter, Ian Munro welcomed the news. ‘Sponsoring an Academy is an excellent opportunity for us to show what **iN business for neighbourhoods** can mean in this area. We believe raising achievement and ambitions of the young will help to complement our massive investment in homes and neighbourhoods. As well as providing the best opportunity for its pupils, this Academy will have a key part to play in regenerating our communities.’

Lord Andrew Adonis told us: ‘This is an immensely important project for Tameside. I will take a keen personal interest in its development, and send my best wishes to you in taking it forward.’

The next stage is for a project team to prepare detailed plans, including an educational vision and model, an outline building design, and formally consult the local community.

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 £48million 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. By incorporating Aksa Housing Association recently, the Group owns over 15,000 homes.

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. Academies are all ability schools established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working in innovative partnerships with central Government and local education partners. Admissions follow the normal criteria – there is no selection of students. Sponsors and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provide the capital costs for the Academy. DfES meet all running costs in full.
3. As sponsor, New Charter contributes £2 million towards the costs of the new school buildings, and the Government will provide the balance of the funding. Academies have governors responsible for running the school in the interests of the pupils and community. New Charter will have a controlling influence on the governing body, and the Academy will specialise in sport, with health and building construction important parts of the curriculum. Sponsors do not make a profit and the schools do not charge fees.
4. Next steps: once detailed plans for the new Academy and core documents (such as Memorandum and Articles for the new Company) are complete, they need to be submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. At this stage, the Secretary of State must also formally consult Tameside MBC in whose area the Academy is based and any other Local Authority if it is likely that a significant proportion of the pupils who might attend the new Academy live there. Once the Secretary of State is content with the proposals, the Funding Agreement is signed by the Academy Trust and Secretary of State. This document contains all the formal information necessary for the opening and funding of the new Academy - and is a binding contract between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust for an Academy to open on a specified date.
5. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project highlighting housing associations' performance. As social businesses, housing associations do not make profit. They offer homes for rent and sale at prices local people can afford. Housing associations provide more than homes - they help create places where people want to live. Wherever you see the **iN business for Neighbourhoods** sign, something great is happening in the area. Housing Associations who display this logo are committed to their customers, the neighbourhoods they work in and strive for excellence in everything they do.

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