

PRESS RELEASE

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Fast track to first Academy

The first housing association to sponsor an Academy will now open the school a year earlier than planned.

New Charter announced its sponsorship of the 1350-place Academy in November 2005. The landlord is putting £2million into the new school which has been the catalyst for a £164m Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme across Tameside in Greater Manchester.

The New Charter Academy in Ashton-under-Lyne will bring together Hartshead Sports College and Stamford Community High School. It was originally set to open in September 2009, but will now open a year earlier.

The BSF programme nationally has been delayed, pushing completion of the new academy buildings back to 2010. And following a poor OFSTED inspection at Hartshead Sports College recently which placed the school in special measures, the local education authority and the Department for Education and Skills want to bring the schools together a year earlier than planned. So New Charter plans to open the academy in the existing buildings of Hartshead and Stamford from September 2008.

Extra funding has been secured to address the practicalities of opening the academy on two sites, and to pay for minor refurbishment to the existing buildings.

Consultation with parents, pupils and the public to gather views about what they would like to see as part of the new academy has now started. Parents' meeting and pupil meetings at the two schools are complemented by drop in sessions around Ashton, and meetings for primary school feeders. A website holds the consultation material and an on-line questionnaire.

A principal for the New Charter Academy will be appointed by the end of next month. He or she will take up the post in September 2007, to prepare for the opening a year later.



Group Chief Executive at New Charter, Ian Munro said: “Events outside our control have handed us a challenging timetable – but one which we will meet. The conclusions reached by the recent OFSTED report were a surprise to us, but have given us added determination to improve the life chances of young people in the Ashton area. The New Charter Academy is another example of our commitment to being **iN business for neighbourhoods** and changing the image of housing associations for the better.”

Public consultation on the New Charter Academy ends on 20th April 2007.

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 just under 15,000 homes.
2. New buildings for the New Charter Academy will be constructed on land to the north of Broadoak Community Centre in Ashton-under-Lyne. The New Charter Academy will be co-located with a new Samuel Laycock Special School and the project value is expected to be £38million.
3. **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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