

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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New life for Ravensfield

Pictures available

Better housing and care provision is planned for one of New Charter's sheltered housing schemes.

Ravensfield on Gorse Hall Road in Dukinfield currently provides bedsits with communal facilities. But the homes prove unpopular with those looking for sheltered housing in the area.

The accommodation comprises bedsits, thought to be appropriate when Ravensfield was built in 1974. But the relatively small floor space and shared bathing arrangements increasingly do not appeal to prospective tenants. Despite investment in improved facilities by New Charter, Ravensfield is consistently the least popular of its sheltered schemes. Currently only 25 of the 35 bedsitters are occupied.

Although refurbishment was considered, it is not the answer. So the idea of a fresh start, demolishing the current building and replacing with an extra care scheme that caters for the longer term needs of the elderly, has attracted substantial support. The Tameside council strategy for housing older people in the borough highlights the pressing need for this specialist provision. Recognising this, both the council and the Homes and Communities Agency have promised financial help towards the redevelopment cost.

The first step is to carefully rehouse the existing tenants. Although there will be significant assistance and financial help for residents, their needs are individual and complex. Rehousing may take 12 months. New Charter is in discussions with other housing providers, as well as making its own stock available.

Managing Director of New Charter Homes Tony Powell said: "Initially we looked at converting bedsits to one bedroom flats but the structure of the building prohibits this. The split level site and the need to renew all services were further obstacles.



“To an extent, we’re victims of our own success managing and caring for our current tenants. Many of them are very old and have increasingly complex care needs. We know a key part of our work is to find the right accommodation for them to allow the rebuilding work to start. We have the support of Tameside council’s Adult Services to look across the borough to find the right places and the right support for all our tenants.”

Tameside council’s support for the proposals has been important and it will contribute £900,000, as well as encouraging the Homes and Communities Agency to award a grant of £700,000. New Charter will meet the remainder of the £3.8m cost.

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 £59million a year and a workforce of 840, New Charter is one of the region’s largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by the Tenant Services Authority, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Gedling Homes, the Group owns 18,600 homes. It was named in the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for in 2009.
2. The Homes and Communities Agency is the national housing and regeneration agency for England, with an annual investment budget of more than £5bn. It was formed on 1 December 2008 along with the Tenant Services Authority (the regulatory body for Registered Social Landlords). It took over the investment functions of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships. The Homes and Communities Agency is a non-departmental public body and its sponsor government department is Communities and Local Government.
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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