

**16 March 2005**

**Preferred developer announced for Ashford town centre**

Affinity and Moat Housing Groups have been selected by national regeneration agency English Partnerships as the preferred developer for a mixed-tenure housing scheme on the East/West Street site in Ashford, Kent.

Ashford has been identified as one of England's growth areas in the Government's *Sustainable Communities Plan*, and the Ashford Town Centre Masterplan, together with the Greater Ashford Development Framework, aims to influence and encourage high-quality development in the town.

English Partnerships is assembling the East/West Street site together with Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council as the first opportunity to deliver housing on a prominent site in Ashford town centre.

The scheme, proposed by Affinity and Moat and designed by Proctor and Matthews, will provide a development of 64 homes, incorporating excellent architectural and environmental design, fully utilising Modern Methods of Construction and achieving EcoHomes 'Excellent' rating.

David Ashworth, English Partnerships' Area Director – Southern England, East, said, "The proposals by Affinity and Moat demonstrate a firm commitment to our sustainability agenda and will ensure a sensitive approach is adopted to the delivery of first-rate housing on this key town centre site.

"The work we're undertaking with Ashford Borough Council to provide a mixture of much-needed affordable and private homes also includes a programme of public consultation to engage the local community. We welcome Affinity and Moat to that process and look forward to bringing this brownfield site back into productive use"

## **English Partnerships Announces Competition Winners for Ashford Town Centre/2**

Keith Exford, Chief Executive of Affinity said, "This housing association partnership is a great chance to set the standards for good design and environmental efficiency and to help realise the vision of English Partnerships and Ashford Borough Council for this important town centre"

John Barker, Moat's Chief Executive said, "We are really pleased to be working in partnership with Affinity, English Partnerships and Ashford Council, on this new town centre scheme. Ashford is an important area for us and there are elements of this scheme that set a benchmark for new developments in the wider ambitious plans for the area."

### **ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

**English Partnerships** is the Government's national regeneration agency delivering high quality, sustainable growth in England. We do this by developing our portfolio of strategic sites and acting as the government's advisor on brownfield land. We also ensure that surplus public sector assets are used to support wider government objectives, especially those contained in the *Sustainable Communities Plan*. English Partnerships helps create communities where people can afford to live and want to live. Information on projects and programmes can be found at [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)

#### **Affinity**

- We are one of the largest independent providers of affordable housing in England and parent company to two registered social landlords: Broomleigh Housing Association and Downland Housing Association plus Grange Management (Southern) Ltd.
- Our 28,000 properties, spread across 11 counties in the South of England and 10 London boroughs, include a range of accommodation including shared ownership and key worker homes.
- One of the Housing Corporation's preferred development partners our development pipeline typically runs at 2,000 homes with a commitment to start 1,000 new homes each year going forward.
- Financially robust, as demonstrated by our Standard & Poor's 'A stable' credit rating; we have assets valued at nearly £800m and an annual Group turnover of some £100m.

#### **Moat Housing Group**

- Moat Housing Group is a leading housing association working in the South East, providing high quality homes and services, including support services to people who need assistance to live independently.
- We are one of the Housing Corporation's preferred development partners.
- Moat leads the sector in delivering housing for key workers – we are the government's appointed Zone Agent for Key Worker Living in Kent, Essex, Sussex and, for NHS staff, in SE and SW London.
- We own and manage over 13,000 homes throughout the South East.
- We are developing around 1,000 additional new homes each year.

For further details please contact Lisa Louis (Affinity) on 01444 477969 or 0780 3512 657 or [lisa.louis@affinityhg.com](mailto:lisa.louis@affinityhg.com)