

Developers Short listed for Hastings Millennium Community

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Five developers have been short listed for the delivery of housing at the Ore Valley site of the Millennium Community in Hastings, East Sussex, by Sea Space and national regeneration agency, English Partnerships. The five companies chosen to take part in the second stage of the process are George Wimpy UK Ltd, Crest Nicholson Developments Ltd, Persimmon Homes (South East) Ltd, Countryside Properties (Southern) Ltd and Bellway Homes Ltd.

From 43 enquiries, there were eight expressions of interest in stage one and developers were scored on several criteria, including track record in residential and long term strategic development, experience of environmental sustainability, innovation in construction and high-quality urban design. Stage two, which will take four months to complete, involves evaluation of sample designs from the developers against the Millennium Community standards and urban design codings and a financial bid from each company. The successful candidate will then be invited to join with Sea Space in a joint venture company for the development of 677 new homes in the Ore Valley.

Hastings Millennium Community, one of seven Millennium Communities managed by English Partnerships across England, plays a central part within the "Five Point Plan" developed by the Hastings & Bexhill Task Force - a partnership of public sector organisations - to regenerate Hastings and Bexhill. Implemented by the Task Force's development company, Sea Space, the plan aims to help the two coastal towns fulfil their potential.

Substantial private sector money has been secured to finance the programme in addition to £60m of government funds from English Partnerships, SEEDA, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and from Europe through the Government Office for the South East. The Five Point Plan covers education, business, urban renaissance, broadband and transport. English Partnerships is contributing to the urban renaissance strand of the programme through its involvement in the Ore Valley site where it has committed funding of £15.1m for land acquisition and infrastructure.

Henry Kennedy-Skipton, Senior Regeneration Manager at English Partnerships, said: "We are working with our local partner, Sea Space, to ensure the delivery of a quality development that meets the needs of Hastings' residents as well as the high standards required by the Millennium Communities Programme. The provision of sustainable homes is a core component of the work we're doing to create a mixed-use community in the Ore Valley."

James Saunders, Millennium Community Manager at Sea Space, commented: "The Millennium Communities Programme, and English Partnerships' funding, are central to our wider regeneration plans. Introducing good quality housing within a carefully planned development, guided by feedback from the community, will make an important difference to Hastings over the next few years. Getting the highest calibre of developer on board is an important step in making this critical project a success for local people."

"Hastings Borough Council Leader Jeremy Birch added, "I am very pleased at the standard of the bids that have been submitted. The people of Hastings deserve the best, and I am looking forward to seeing the work of the five chosen companies at the end of the second stage.

"The Millennium Community plans for the Ore Valley are central to the regeneration of Hastings. We are already seeing spectacular developments for the business sector elsewhere in the town, and I hope, and expect, to see the same high quality in the plans for new housing."

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For more information, please contact Abigail Gilbert, Sea Space, on 01424 781282 or Judith Hewitt, English Partnerships, on 0207 881 1089.

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

The Millennium Communities Programme was initiated in 1997 with the launch of the design competition for the Greenwich Millennium Village. A range of different types of sites have been chosen to demonstrate that energy efficient, environmentally responsible development is achievable, regardless of geographic location. These are Greenwich, South London; Allerton Bywater, near Leeds; New Islington, Ancoats, East Manchester; South Lynn, King's Lynn East Anglia; East Ketley, Telford; Oakgrove, Milton Keynes and Hastings, East Sussex. One of the main objectives of the Programme is to influence the house building industry and to encourage higher standards of innovation and energy efficiency. It also aims to deliver 6,000 homes by 2010.

Each Millennium Community Project will need to meet environmental standards for its dwellings that are more exacting than current regulations. For example, the aim is to reduce the energy used in constructing homes by 50 per cent; the amount of water consumed in them by 20 per cent and the levels of waste disposed in them by 50 per cent. House builders involved in the projects will be encouraged to use innovative and energy efficient construction methods and materials, so the programme can also deliver viable innovations that can be adopted by volume house builders in the mainstream housing market.