



Embargoed
- until Monday 28 February, 2005

Deputy Prime Minister visits Yorkshire's Millennium Community

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott today (Monday 28 February) announced the start on site for new homes at Yorkshire's Millennium Community and officially opened the Miners' Welfare Hall, redeveloped as part of the £24m scheme.*

Allerton Bywater Millennium Community, near Leeds, is one of seven sites in national regeneration agency English Partnerships' Millennium Communities Programme, which also includes Greenwich Millennium Village, at the edge of the Thames Gateway, and Manchester's New Islington Millennium Community.

The Deputy Prime Minister said, "It is great to see the good progress that is being made with the Millennium Communities Programme. The aim is that, in the near future, these developments will no longer be exemplars, but will be the norm".

The Deputy Prime Minister's visit marks the delivery of community facilities totalling £2m near the former mining community of Allerton Bywater, previously home to the last colliery in the Leeds area. Complex and extensive site remediation has been completed. Infrastructure works and new roads for the 60 acre (24 ha) brownfield site were completed late last year. Today sees lead developer Miller Homes officially start the construction of phase one, 197 new homes.

Margaret Ford, Chairman of English Partnerships, said, "Overall, the Millennium Communities Programme is already influencing practice in the mainstream housing market in terms of design excellence, new construction standards and community engagement practices. These new homes at Allerton Bywater mark a significant step forward and this milestone follows many others, achieved working in partnership with local people and both the public and private sectors".

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A committee of local people and partner organisations is established to directly manage the new community facilities – which include the Miners' Welfare Hall, a skate park, a memorial to miners, allotments, a redeveloped primary school building and a bowling green. Allerton Bywater Community Partnership will manage the shared facilities and open spaces for the long-term benefit of local people, searching out funding streams for their future stewardship.

In total, around 520 homes designed and constructed to the highest modern standards are planned for Allerton Bywater Millennium Community, as an example of best practice for future housing developments.

Stephen Hill, English Partnerships' Head of Millennium Communities and National Standards, said, "The Millennium Communities Programme already shows that, given the opportunity, house-buyers *will* buy into better environmental practices, more energy-efficient homes and modern construction standards. Selecting a Millennium Communities' home means new choices, innovative design, accessible community facilities, top quality schools and a more sustainable way of life".

The Millennium Communities Programme champions more environmentally friendly and energy conscious approaches to home-building in the UK. All Millennium Community homes must meet the challenging Eco Homes 'Excellent' standard and developers must reduce the energy used to build them by at least 50 per cent on industry norms.

In a first for Leeds City Council, Allerton Bywater Millennium Community has been granted planning permission that includes a green light for the area's first 'home zones' (12 January), a concept that gives equal weight to the needs of pedestrians and car-users in the planning process.

The Deputy Prime Minister today toured the site of the first phase 197 units being built, which has 20 per cent earmarked affordable homes, via the housing association Home Housing. He also viewed progress on the construction of 16 light industrial and workspace units by networkspace, due for completion later this year.

The Deputy Prime Minister proceeded to meet local people and unveil a plaque in the lobby of the refurbished Miners' Welfare Hall.

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Other community facilities include 30 allotments, disabled access to the local church and a refurbished Victorian primary school that serves as a community centre and a council-run library. The old school is also used to offer after-school childcare for local families and will shortly offer a pre-school nursery.

More information on the Millennium Communities Programme is available at www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

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Notes to editors

For more information contact English Partnerships Press Office. Kirsty Paterson on Tel: 020 7881 1624, or Ruth Johnson on 020 7881 1653. A media fact sheet with details on the seven Millennium Communities is available on request. To download images, for media purposes only, please visit www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/mediaimages

* **Photo Opportunity:** media representatives are invited to a photo opportunity where the Deputy Prime Minister will unveil a plaque to mark the official opening of the Miners' Welfare Hall at Allerton Bywater Millennium Community, on Monday 28 February, from 3.20pm. To attend, for directions and further details, please call the local PR office on Tel: 01977 669 435

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 brings together new ways of planning, designing and constructing new homes to enable a more sustainable way of living. It aims to encourage housebuilders to use modern methods of construction, utilise environmentally-friendly practices, adopt innovative standards of design quality and reduce the consumption of energy resources in new homes. It also demonstrates that challenging brownfield sites can be used for exciting new housing developments. The Programme was initiated in 1997 with the launch of the design competition for Greenwich Millennium Village. A range of different types of site have been chosen to demonstrate that energy efficient, environmentally responsible development is achievable regardless of geographic location. These are at Greenwich, on the edge of the Thames Gateway; Allerton Bywater, near Leeds; New Islington, Ancoats, East Manchester; South Lynn, King's Lynn, East Anglia; Telford, East Ketley; 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. The Programme aims to deliver 6,000 homes by 2010, and 9,000 in total. Each Millennium Community needs to meet environmental standards for its homes that are more exacting than current regulations.

Allerton Bywater was home of the last colliery in Leeds, which closed in 1997. It was also the location for the old National Coal Board Regional Headquarters, which has been demolished. The local primary school and the Miners Welfare Hall were also abandoned in recent years. Set on a former colliery site 10 kilometres east of Leeds, the 24 hectare (60 acre) site at Allerton Bywater Millennium Community will provide 520 new homes along with 25,000 square metres of business and leisure space. Extensive remediation of the site is complete. Infrastructure works to provide new roads, street lighting, drainage and gas supplies were completed in late 2004. Networkspace will finish constructing 16 office and workspace units in spring 2005. English Partnerships has already been invested £2m in new community facilities, including the refurbishment of the Miners' Welfare Hall and a former infants school. 30 allotments for local residents, a skate park and an enhanced bowling green have also been completed. Planning permission was gained in January 2005. Miller Homes is scheduled to start on site in February with the first phase of housing, 197 properties. Working with Home Housing, this will include 20% affordable homes.

Miller Homes

The Miller Group is the UK's largest privately owned, house-building, property development and construction business. With a focus on creating effective, long-term partnerships, we aim to deliver world-class levels of performance for all of our customers and stakeholders. www.millerhomes.co.uk

Home Housing Group

The Group traces its origins to 1935, as a Government response to very poor housing conditions in the North East. It is the only housing association in England set up by Government; the equivalent of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Scottish Special. Currently, it has 50,000 homes in management in England and Scotland, covering all tenures. It has one of the very largest Housing Corporation allocations in England, is a Corporation investment partner and has a strong reputation in regeneration having recognised many years ago that housing is only one element in the provision of sustainable communities. We seek to influence Government policy and to deliver on its priorities. The Group has a turnover in excess of £200m and employs over 4000 staff. www.homegroup.org.uk

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Networkspace

Networkspace was established in 1999 with the remit to develop 500,000 sq ft of high quality workspace accommodation for new and expanding companies in the former coalfield regions. Its overall aim is to regenerate coalfield communities and to increase investment and jobs. The Allerton Bywater Millennium Community scheme comprises 16 high quality office and workspace units. 5 of these 16 units are currently under offer. The scheme includes 4 self-contained single storey offices ranging from 1,075 sq ft to 3,230 sq ft and 12 workspace units ranging from 1,935 sq ft to 3,875 sq ft. Overall the scheme offers a total space of 42,200 sq ft. Allerton Bywater Millennium Community is also the only network space to meet a BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method) excellent standard – the highest standard achievable. (BREEAM minimises the adverse effects of building on the global and local environment creating buildings that are environmentally friendly and economically sound. <http://www.networkspace.co.uk/>