

08 February 2005

Developer Announced for Staff College, Bracknell

National regeneration agency, English Partnerships, today announced that George Wimpey has been chosen as the preferred developer for the former RAF Staff College site in Bracknell, Berkshire. The selection was made following an intense two-stage competition to reduce ten initial expressions of interest to a shortlist of six.

The shortlisted developers were required to submit design and financial proposals in November 2004 based on stringent criteria covering sustainability, urban design and public realm, community engagement and deliverability. All the received bids were remarkable for their quality and adherence to the standards imposed by the agency. English Partnerships will now work closely with George Wimpey to deliver a mixed-use development that provides affordable homes in an area of high demand.

Duncan Innes, English Partnerships' Regional Director, Southern England, welcomed the progress being made to deliver the site. "The appointment of George Wimpey is great news and we look forward to working with such a respected, experienced developer with a proven track record in community engagement.

"We will involve local people in every stage of our consultation process and are on track to create a first-rate development that provides the right combination of housing, open spaces and community, retail and leisure uses.

"We have a responsibility to deliver a sustainable community that limits impact on the surrounding environment and provides people with easy access to local amenities. Today's announcement sends out a clear message to the house building industry that the provision of the full range of housing choices in a mixed-use development is achievable without compromising design quality."

Graeme Dodds, George Wimpey Board Director said: "George Wimpey are delighted to be selected as the preferred developer to English Partnerships. We believe this is an exceptional site that provides an opportunity to build a high quality sustainable community for Bracknell."

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A programme of community consultation is already underway to engage local people in future plans for the 44 ha brownfield site. George Wimpey will participate in that process and assist English Partnerships with production of an overall masterplan that meets local needs and aspirations. English Partnerships is also collaborating with Bracknell Forest Borough Council to ensure the redevelopment of the Staff College site complements the existing regeneration proposals for the town centre.

The Staff College site was acquired by the agency from Defence Estates in February 2004 and currently has planning permission for 730 homes. English Partnerships is seeking to provide 38% affordable properties with 15% set aside for key workers. All homes will conform to English Partnerships' policies regarding the achievement of BREEAM Eco Homes Very Good, the use of modern methods of construction and the highest standards of urban design. A start on site is planned for later in the year.

ENDS

For further information on English Partnerships please contact Judith Hewitt on 0207 881 1089 or email judithhewitt@englishpartnerships.co.uk

For further information on George Wimpey please contact Liz Morley at Maitland on 020 7379 5151 or visit the website www.georgewimpey.co.uk

Note 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