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## Substantial Progress Made at the New Islington Millennium Community, Manchester

The New Islington Millennium Community in East Manchester has gathered momentum at an event today to reveal the first schemes, bringing the Strategic Framework Plan for New Islington to life.

The partners, Urban Splash, English Partnerships, New East Manchester, Manchester City Council and Manchester Methodist Housing Association will showcase the designs for the first phase of social housing along with an event to mark the completion of the construction of the first section of the new waterway. The detailed proposals for the public realm landscaping designs together with Alsop Architects and Ian Simpson Architects new buildings at the former Ancoats Hospital Site will also be unveiled. Urban Splash will also launch the competition to find a development partner for one part of the site.

Alsop Architects ambitious strategic framework plan for New Islington was launched by the Minister for Regeneration, Jeff Rooker eighteen months ago.

Welcoming today's developments, he said:

"It is great to see real progress being made at the New Islington Millennium Community with such an exciting range of new projects which really demonstrate how new ways of planning, designing and constructing communities can help to promote a more sustainable way of living. We are creating a quality community environment where people will want to live and work.

"We also welcome the announcement that work will start on the first phase of social housing at New Islington later this year and look forward to visiting the development in the near future."

Paul Spooner, regional director for north west and west midlands, English Partnerships added:

More follows

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"We are delighted with the progress made so far on the New Islington Millennium Community and the plans are starting to become a reality. The New Islington Millennium Community will have an important role in demonstrating the benefits of utilising both the best environmental practice standards and the most efficient building methodologies in housing construction. We are looking forward to New Islington becoming a great place to live, work and visit, a sustainable new urban community on the doorstep of Manchester's dynamic city centre."

"Our ambition from the outset was to create an "expo" of world class architecture and I believe this marks the first step towards realising that vision," said Nick Johnson, development director, Urban Splash. "But our agenda is much broader than architecture, New Islington's status as a Millennium Community allows us greater latitude – we aim to show that working with the support of the community, working with a progressive environmental strategy and being driven by uncompromising ambition, generates greater dividends for all."

The new buildings showcased at the event include:

- Alsop Architects new "Chips" building and the innovative Urban Barns
- Ian Simpson Architects refurbishment of the Listed Dispensary building at Ancoats Hospital and two buildings at the former hospital site
- FAT Architects plans for the first 23 social housing units
- Andrew Grant's public realm proposal for the whole site and Stephenson Bell's designs for the new health clinic.

"New Islington will link the vibrant City Centre with Sport City, the City of Manchester Stadium and beyond and is a key component of the regeneration of East Manchester," said Tom Russell, chief executive, New East Manchester. "Already, the first part of the waterway which will flow through New Islington has been completed as this exciting development – which will substantially increase the choice and quality of housing in the area for both existing and new residents – begins to take shape. Alongside this, the right mix of ingredients will be present to create a successful community – a new school, new jobs in the area, good shops, parks and public spaces, transport provision and community facilities."

More follows

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A dedicated website [www.newislington.co.uk](http://www.newislington.co.uk) was launched at the event together with a book, titled, Cardroom Voices by leading Manchester photographer Len Grant containing

images and stories about the original residents of New Islington, who have been working with FAT Architects on the design of their new homes.

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### **Notes to Editors – Background Information on New Islington**

Just a stone's throw away from the heart of Manchester City Centre and in the shadow of the City of Manchester Stadium, two great canals – the Ashton Canal and the Rochdale Canal border New Islington, formerly known as the Cardroom Estate. Once a densely populated and industrialised area of the city, it now reflects too many city centre areas seen in the country – streets of boarded up houses and a lack of facilities – such as a school, a health centre or shops!

The Cardroom Estate, which is a 12.5 ha site, was renamed New Islington at the choice of the residents. Historically the area was known as New Islington before it became Cardroom, there was a canal arm called New Islington and there is still a street in the area called New Islington.

Following consultations with local residents, reviews of the lessons learnt from previous Millennium Communities and briefings with a series of experts, lead planners Alsops were provided with the key ingredients for a successful new community: employment, education, health care, good quality homes, schools, transport facilities. Sustainability was added into the mix too, to develop an environmentally sound community – not just paying lip service to recycling initiatives but tackling utility provision, waste disposal and imaginative traffic calming measures.

At the heart of New Islington are the two canals, the Rochdale and the Ashton. The plan is to link the two canals with a new waterway creating a focal point and six new inlets, from where all the activity unfolds.

From the new waterway, the inlets will spread like fingers creating 3,000 metres of canal side along which 1,400 new homes, new offices, new facilities including shops, cafes, a chippy, restaurants, a bookie, will flourish. With a million square feet of parks and gardens in which a new primary school and a new health clinic will be located, New Islington has addressed the key requirements for what makes a sustainable community.

The framework received planning consent in 2002, and work started on the first section of the new waterway in February 2004. It is envisaged that work will commence on FAT social housing, subject to planning, later this summer with Alsop's Barns on stilts set to be marketed by Urban Splash towards the end of 2004.

### **For Further Information Please Contact**

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