

23rd June 2010

NEWS RELEASE

A member of
Westward
Housing Group

Westcountry
Housing
provides 5,000
good quality
affordable
homes in the
south west

- ❖ Affordable
- ❖ High quality
- ❖ Rented
- ❖ Low cost
ownership

Housing advice
and services
provider

**“Your home
should be
somewhere
you want to
be”**

New affordable homes in Plymouth provided by market rescue scheme

*** Photo opportunity ***

**Launch of new homes: official opening at 5pm[event runs 4-7pm],
Thursday 24th June, at Columbus Close, St Budeaux, Plymouth**

Westcountry Housing's latest affordable housing scheme is to provide local people with 18 new homes for rent at Columbus Close, St Budeaux, Plymouth.

Chairman of Westcountry Housing, Mike Winwood, said: *"Every time we open another scheme I am struck by just how many people have been involved - from planners and land owners, professional suppliers, all the tradesmen, managers, housing officials, allocations staff, even the bin men who clear away move-in boxes and keep the area looking good.*

"Of course, my thanks go to Cavanna and the City and to our own investment team and housing staff. Westcountry Housing is dedicated to maintaining and extending our development programme since the need for affordable homes across all tenures far outstrips supply. These homes provide a solution for some families and we wish all of you a happy time here."

The six 3 bedroom houses, one 4 bedroom house and eleven 2 bedroom flats on the site have been allocated for rent through Devon Home Choice, the area's choice based lettings scheme.

The homes form part of Plymouth City Council, Westcountry Housing and their partners' response to the current housing and economic crisis by looking to acquire market rescue opportunities wherever possible.

Cavanna Homes who had bought the land, originally planned to build homes for the open market. Due to market collapse Westcountry were able to secure the land and fund the building work by Cavanna Homes to deliver affordable housing. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) invested £1,275,000 in the scheme, with Westcountry funding the remaining costs of the £2.7m development.

Councillor Ted Fry, Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development, said: *"The Council's housing department's market rescue programme has been important in supporting house builders to continue building through the recession. Not only has this helped to provide valuable affordable homes for Plymouth people but it has also secured employment opportunities. The scheme shows the importance of partnership working in securing good quality homes in places*

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people want to live, while also contributing to the creation of sustainable and inclusive communities."

The official launch of the scheme takes place on Thursday 24th June at Columbus Close, where Cllr Fry, Cllr Wheeler, and Chairman Mike Winwood will formally open the scheme by cutting a ribbon and saying a few words of acknowledgement.

All residents are invited and there will be music and refreshments from 4-7pm.

HCA director with responsibility for investment in the South West, Colin Molton, said: *"It's important that people in Plymouth are able to access high quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of their family.*

"This partnership with Westcountry Housing and the Council is a fine example of what can be achieved when organisations work together to meet local people's needs.

"I am delighted that this scheme has been completed and hope the new residents of Columbus Close are very happy in their new homes."

There is an ever-growing need for more affordable homes to rent in Plymouth and these will help improve housing choice in St Budeaux and provide good quality options for those in need.

Notes to editors:

As a social landlord, **Westcountry Housing** strives to work in partnership with local authorities to meet the needs of local people in the greatest need of housing. Westcountry Housing is a member of Westward Housing Group which provides more than 6,500 affordable, high quality homes and housing related services across Cornwall and Devon. Visit: www.westcountryha.org.uk

The **Homes and Communities Agency** is the single, national housing and regeneration agency for England. Our role is to create opportunity for people to live in high quality, sustainable places. We provide funding for affordable housing, bring land back into productive use and improve quality of life by raising standards for the physical and social environment.

For more information visit www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

Those attending:

Residents, Cllr George Wheeler, Councillor Fry - portfolio holder for housing from Plymouth City Council, Mike Winwood, Chairman of Westcountry Housing, Jill Gregg (Westward Housing Group director of investment and procurement), Neil Edwards (Westward Housing Group new business manager).