

## Press release

11<sup>th</sup> December 2007

### **Locals build the future at Woodberry Down**

A construction training course is giving local people in the Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill area the skills to take advantage of employment opportunities stemming from the Woodberry Down regeneration and the 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Woodberry Works is a new construction facility that is currently offering an Introduction to construction training and Orthodox Jewish construction training course. A third course for Women in construction will begin in January 2008.

A vacant block at Woodberry Down has been transformed into a satellite construction training centre where students can get hands on experience needed to work in construction.

Trainees are working towards a City and Guilds Level 1 and a CSCS Card to enable them to work on site when they graduate in March 2008. And there is already a waiting list for the next intake.

Much like the regeneration programme, which is one of the largest single site regeneration programmes Europe, the training initiative brings together many partners who are committed to not only building new homes but providing opportunity and new jobs.

Woodberry Works is a partnership between Hackney Homes, Berkeley Homes, Circle Anglia, SRB6, London Development Authority (LDA), Woodberry Down, Hackney Community College, Access to Employment, Manor House Development Trust and Metropolitan Housing Trust. The centre has been funded by SRB6 Programme, London Borough of Hackney, Olympics Funding and the LDA.

Students and partners are today gathering to officially launch the Woodberry Works scheme and cut the ribbon on the purpose built training facility.

Patrick Crawford is a student at the recently opened centre and said:

“The centre is great because we can learn the theory here and we can also practice our new skills in the empty flats. There are lots of good jobs in construction in East London and I think this course will help me get into this industry.”

Woodberry Down Programme Director Robin Smith said the regeneration scheme would provide hundreds of jobs in the coming years.

“We are building more than 4000 new mixed tenure homes on Woodberry Down as well as re-building shops and community facilities. We believe Woodberry Works will give many local people a start in the construction industry,” Robin said.

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Our mission is to deliver excellent, responsive housing services with decent homes and estates. To help residents lead healthy lives in safe and sustainable communities.

Justin Tibaldi, managing director of Berkeley Homes, who will commence the first phase of building on the site in summer 2008, said Woodberry Works is an innovative programme.

“Offering local employment for construction projects is not unique. However, developing a training course on the site of the works specifically to meet the needs of the local community is something new. We hope this will just be the start as there will be a wide range of jobs, not just in construction stemming from the regeneration.”

David Geddes from Hackney Community College said the students will be ready for work or specialist training when they complete the course in March 2008.

“The course is a direct route into full time employment and there is no shortage of construction jobs available both with long-term regeneration projects and the 2012 Olympics. Some of the students might also want to continue specialist training in a trade of their choice and there is the flexibility to do this.”

Kim Wright, Corporate Director of Community Services at Hackney Council, said:

"Hackney Council and its partners are committed to ensuring residents have the best possible skills to apply for jobs created by the 2012 Games. At the peak of building work on the Olympic site in Hackney Wick and Stratford, it is estimated that 9,000 construction jobs will be required. The Woodberry Works construction centre is one way through which local residents can gain the qualifications and experience they need to compete for such jobs."

## **PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

Students of Woodberry Works will be available for photos from 10am on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December. The official ribbon cutting will be at 12.30pm.

## **Ends**

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