



NEWS RELEASE

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**Residents and dignitaries celebrate opening of
Eastleigh's newest social housing scheme**

Residents, business partners, dignitaries and staff from Atlantic Housing have gathered in Eastleigh to mark the official opening of one of the town's largest housing regeneration schemes called The Meadows.

To mark the occasion an Atlantic Housing tenant Board member, Jackie Davenport who lives at The Meadows, performed a ribbon cutting along with the Deputy Mayor of Eastleigh, Councillor Derek Pretty; Housing Corporation Chairman, Peter Dixon; and Atlantic Housing Chairman, Tony Boyle.

The event also saw the opening of Sam Ford Place – a block of 17 two-bedroom flats for keyworker rent and social rent. The flats were named after a former Atlantic tenant Board member who passed away in 2005. A plaque was unveiled by Sam Ford's widow, Pat Ford and their three sons.

Peter Dixon, said: "I am delighted to be present at the opening of this excellent example of regeneration of an unpopular estate in an urban area which over £3 million of our funding has helped happen. The scheme has a number of qualities that I hope will act as an example to other areas in the South East and outside. In particular, the significant role played by residents in the redevelopment, the high quality design and many energy efficiency features, and the significant proportion of larger homes to enable the needs of families locally to be met and to create a mixed, vibrant community."

The Meadows has transformed the area formerly know as The Gardens, with a total of 153 new homes consisting of 77 flats for social rent, 32 flats for sale, 43 houses for social rent and an Estate Office.

A programme of extensive consultation began with residents back in 1997 and throughout this process the community had the chance to comment, raise issues and concerns and have direct input into the way forward for the estate. In 2000 a survey by independent consultants concluded that the majority of residents wanted a redevelopment. Construction of the new homes began in 2003.

Jon Trill, Assistant Group Development Director at Atlantic Housing, commented: "We are delighted to have delivered a regeneration scheme which has enhanced the local area by involving and responding to the needs of the community at every step of the way. Residents are now benefiting from much higher quality accommodation and in such a prime location - close to the town centre, public transport links and the surrounding road, rail and air networks."

The works were carried out in partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council, Barratt Homes, Denley King Partnership and Coffin Mew & Clover.

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Photography

Photographs of the event are available on request by contacting Eva Lambert-Smith or Anne Lueken (contact details on previous page).

There are also a selection of 'before and after' photographs of the housing scheme available on request.

Notes to Editors

1. First Wessex Housing Group manages around 16,000 affordable homes primarily in Hampshire and with some activity in Surrey, Thames Valley and Oxford. The group comprises Atlantic Housing Limited, First Atlantic Housing, Pavilion Housing Association, Portsmouth Housing Association, Fernhill Care Limited and Wessex Property Limited.

Atlantic Housing and First Atlantic Housing: provide a full range of affordable housing including rented, supported, shared ownership and key worker housing. A large support portfolio includes housing for older people, extra-care housing, dementia care housing, housing for people with learning disabilities, people recovering from mental illness and some specialist accommodation.

www.firstwessexhg.co.uk

www.atlantichousing.co.uk

2. The Housing Corporation is the Government agency responsible for investing in new affordable homes and regulating over 1,500 housing associations across England. Its biggest ever investment programme of £3.9 billion for 2006-08 will fund 84,000 homes; 49,000 of these will be for affordable rent, and 35,000 will be for affordable sale through the Government's new HomeBuy initiative, helping people to get a foot on the property ladder.

The Housing Corporation and English Partnerships are working with the Communities and Local Government to establish the proposed new national housing and regeneration agency, Communities England.