



**For immediate media release**

**AHDC Plans unveiled to breathe new life into Anfield**

The future of one of Liverpool's most deprived housing areas has been secured following an agreement (yesterday / this week ) for the privately-owned Affordable Housing Development Company (Rockfield) Ltd to completely renovate and refurbish more than 240 houses over the next three years. AHDC has been selected as the preferred partner for the regeneration by Liverpool City Council after a European-wide tender process.

The contract which was signed between AHDC (Rockfield) Ltd and the Arena Housing Association, means victory for the local community in the Rockfield regeneration area of Anfield who have been campaigning for years to prevent the majority of the Victorian houses being demolished.

Work is already underway on the first of the five stages, which will see the renovation of twenty houses in Tancred Road where many of the three and four bedroom houses have been standing derelict and abandoned for more than five years. But less than ten years ago this street of Victorian terraced houses was a close-knit community, before families moved out leaving a virtual ghost town behind which has become a centre for crime and vandalism.

**Bill Richardson** who as **Chair of the Rockfield Residents Association** has been involved with the project for more than eight years says it's an important moment for the community. "The whole trend nowadays seems to be to demolish old houses and then build boring little matchbox houses which most people don't really want. We have got beautiful housing stock in this city: quality Victorian houses which are being pulled down every day and it's a real shame. Projects like this can stop that happening and that is why we have fought to get this scheme off the ground."

The contract to carry out the work was signed by Brian Cronin, Chief Executive Officer of the Arena Housing Association and Dr Derek Smith, Chairman of The Affordable Housing Development Company (Rockfield) Ltd, who said their aim was to help rebuild the strong and vibrant communities that existed in the area by providing quality homes which would encourage former residents to return to the area and encourage new homeowners to locate in Anfield.

"What we are offering is a chance to buy into a street where everyone has the chance not only to feel proud, but to share that pride, in where they live. By providing high quality houses, always giving first choice to local people and aiming only to sell to owner occupiers, we believe we can encourage former residents to return to the area."

AHDC (Rockfield) Ltd has already been responsible for carrying out a recent pilot scheme in Skerries Road within the Rockfield area. In just nine months, ten homes were completely modernised and all ten were reserved on the day they went on the market – seven of them bought by people who had previously lived in that area.

The houses in Skerries Road had been owned by **Liverpool Football Club**, and The Club's **Chief Executive Rick Parry** said the news that AHDC (Rockfield) Ltd was to follow up that work in other areas of Anfield was to be welcomed.

“It’s a mark of their confidence and their belief in North Liverpool because regeneration is all about action – it’s not about talk – it’s about going in and doing something, so all credit to AHDC for having the determination to step in to make something happen.”

**Cath Green, who is Assistant Executive Director for Regeneration for Liverpool City Council** said their relationship with AHDC was unique. “We’ve engaged a number of private sector organisations to help us with the regeneration, but actually to get one that is risk averse in terms of putting that private finance upfront is a real breakthrough for us, and we are hoping that we can use it as a template for other models of regeneration across the city.”

And **Pauline Davis of New Heartland Pathfinder** said the contribution of AHDC (Rockfield) Ltd was critical precisely because it was a private sector organisation investing private sector finance alongside the public sector work. “Although there are some absolutely wonderful Victorian houses in this area you only have to look at them to see what a dreadful state they are in, but the Skerries Road project has already shown what the AHDC team can achieve.”

**Reverend Shannon Ledbetter, who is Chair of Liverpool Habitat for Humanity** said the mix of public and private sector was crucial to the project. “It is vital that a variety of partners are involved in regenerating sustainable communities. AHDC has already shown itself to be dedicated to the people of Anfield and will ensure that Rockfield is restored in a way that not only the residents, but the wider area will benefit from.”

**Keith Watson, the Divisional Manager for Major Projects for Liverpool City Council** said he believed the success of the project was not just because of a “strong and vibrant local community” but also because there is a clear market demand for what is being done. “In a site like Tancred Road what people want is renovation not demolition so that their heritage is preserved.”

And **Andrea Titterington, Programme Director, New Anfield, at Liverpool Football Club** said what was being offered was precisely what the community had asked for. “They developed their own housing strategy which was incorporated into the Regeneration framework for the area. It is wonderful that their vision will now be fulfilled by AHDC (Rockfield) which has shown what can be achieved by doing such a terrific job restoring houses in Skerries Road,

“This is a great project for Anfield and the people who live here,” said **Dr Smith**. “It’s a boost for the city, it’s a boost for local employment, and it’s re-building a once thriving community. We are privileged and proud to be part of such a scheme and grateful for the opportunity that has been given to us.”

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