



## **MONTHLY BRIEFING FOR PATCH VOLUNTEERS AND STREET REPS**

**SEPTEMBER 2006**

### **Residents help choose lead developers**

- Residents on the lead developer selection panels for *City Centre South, Middleport, Meir and Knutton Cross Heath* have made their recommendations.
- The panels asked a series of questions to the companies who have applied for lead developer status. The panels then marked the bidding companies on their responses.
- Their recommendation will now form part of the final selection process.
- Two or three representatives from each panel will now form part of the final selection panel.
- Residents will also pay visits to new housing schemes developed by the bidding companies to see how they have worked in other areas.
- The final decision over which lead developers to appoint is likely to be taken in October.

### **Information day in *Knutton and Cross Heath***

- Residents of *Knutton and Cross Heath* are being invited to attend an information day to find out about the refreshed masterplan for their neighbourhood.
- The draft masterplan for *Knutton and Cross Heath* was developed together with residents during 2004-05. Seventy per cent of residents supported the proposals at open days in May 2005.

- Since then RENEW North Staffordshire and its partners have reviewed the draft masterplan. This was part of a standard process to ensure that plans in the areas of major intervention are realistic and offer value for money.
- As a result a refreshed masterplan has been prepared, together with detailed proposals for 2006-08 and outline proposals for 2008 onwards. These will be explained to residents at the information day Saturday, September 16.

### **Warning issued to householders**

- Householders in areas where surveys (Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments) are taking place have been warned about the risks of selling their homes to property speculators before a decision is reached about the future of their homes.
- These areas are *City Centre South* and *Middleport*.
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council and RENEW have written to householders in the *Wellington Street* area after reports that private companies are offering to buy homes in the area.
- Property companies are buying property speculatively in the hope of making money later, whether the homes are retained or cleared.
- However, the council and RENEW have warned home owners that if they do sell to a private company they will not be entitled to any extra compensations or other support.
- If the council recommends clearance after the NRAs are complete then a range of financial help is available to help owners buy a new home.
- If homes are recommended for retention then financial support to renovate homes may also be available.
- Residents are given full information about the support available when the council decisions over whether to retain or clear properties are made.

### **Regular surgeries to begin in *Middleport***

- Regular drop-in surgeries for residents *Middleport East (Slater Street)* have begun at the Community Hub, Newcastle Street.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau residents' friend will be there on Tuesdays, the city council's housing standards team will attend on Wednesdays, and the Home Options team will be there on Thursdays.
- Residents in the area are also being sent an information pack to remind them of the background to the decision, the support on offer and their options for finding a new home.
- So far nearly 50 owners have agreed terms with the council and a further 40 have offered their homes for sale. Most of these are owner-occupiers.

### **Community engagement officer appointed**

- Imran Hussain has joined RENEW's communications team. He will lead work to engage with communities and help them shape the plan and changes in their areas.
- Imran will also work to engage with hard-to-reach groups, to ensure everyone's views are heard.

### **For further information**

- Please contact RENEW North Staffordshire team on 01782 232024 or see [www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk).