



**ARCH PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ARCH members ready to start building**

The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) has welcomed announcements that work can get under way on 2,000 new council homes. ARCH member authorities featured among councils that were successful under the first round of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Local Authority Newbuild programme.

Construction will begin on the first sites before the end of the year and the councils involved will match the funding provided by HCA.

ARCH secretary John Bibby, director of housing and community services at Lincoln City Council, said: 'We are delighted that the biggest council house-building programme in two decades is now going live. ARCH has lobbied to overcome barriers to council building and our member authorities are leading the way in taking up new opportunities.'

Ted Czerniak, director of housing and leisure at Broxtowe Borough Council, whose authority secured £490,000 from HCA to build nine new council homes, said: 'We managed to build eco-friendly, high quality council homes from our own funds recently and will be drawing upon lessons learned from that in this new programme.'

Bob Livermore, executive manager of housing at West Lancashire Borough Council, whose authority was awarded £807,500, to be matched by prudential borrowing, for new homes in Skelmersdale, said: 'We are delighted to be one of the successful schemes in the North West which will deliver 17 homes to help meet need in this area.'

Exeter City Council's successful bid will enable work to begin on a project of £1.5 m overall to build 21 new council homes on two small in-fill sites on council-owned land at Merlin Crescent in

Beacon Heath and Sivell Place in Heavitree. Steve Warran, head of housing services, said: 'This is a chance to show what local government can achieve. We hope councils will have full access to Social Housing Grant in future – so that this is just the start of a larger local authority building programme.'

Other ARCH member authorities to have won first round funding include: Birmingham City Council, Bristol City Council, Cambridge City Council, London Borough of Croydon and the London Borough of Southwark. ARCH members are also bidding for the second round of the HCA programme, the results of which will be announced later in the autumn.

Housing Minister John Healey gave the go-ahead for 47 councils to build over two thousand new council homes on 9<sup>th</sup> September. They will receive a share of £127million Government funding to help build these homes, which will be matched by prudential borrowing.

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1) The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) represents councils whose tenants and residents have chosen for their local authority to be their landlord.

2) ARCH has been campaigning for the housing finance system and opportunities for council to fulfill their potential to build new homes. For further information on ARCH visit: [www.arch-housing.org.uk](http://www.arch-housing.org.uk)

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION;**

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