

Council appoints developer for Pennywell housing project

The council has now approved Urban Union Ltd as the preferred bidder for the regeneration project planned for Pennywell. 700 affordable and private homes in the north of the city might now be built in a multi-million pound development there.

The new houses will include 356 council homes and an attractive outdoor space comprising a park with private and shared gardens.

Urban Union Ltd is a joint venture partnership bringing together three established construction firms; [McTaggart Construction](#), [Keepmoat](#) and [Robertson Group \(Holdings\)](#).

The new homes will form an important part of the regeneration of Pennywell and follow extensive community engagement in the development of the master plans.

The whole development also has the potential to create opportunities for community enterprise and a 'Co-operative Edinburgh' that will stretch well beyond the duration of the construction project.

The progress of the project will be reported to the Improving Muirhouse and Pennywell Group to ensure that local residents remain an integral part of the process.

✘ Housing Leader, Councillor Cammy Day, said: "This is fantastic news for the local community and will help us towards meeting the pressing demand for affordable homes across Edinburgh.

"Pennywell will be a substantial development and deliver a high standard of modern, energy efficient homes as part of our commitment to make sure our residents are well housed and to

regenerate the local area.”

The project is also expected to deliver further benefits by generating employment as part of a commitment to develop community enterprise. The construction will create 36 apprenticeships, 24 new entrant construction jobs and additional work placement opportunities.

Janice Belshaw, Urban Union’s project manager said: “This is a major opportunity to move forward with one of Scotland’s largest and most significant housing led regeneration projects.

“We look forward to building on the high level of community engagement which has already taken place in the development of the masterplan for the area. There will be opportunities for the community to be involved in the project particularly in terms of jobs and training opportunities, as well as creating a community enterprise.

The consortium has an established track-record in community led regeneration programmes. Urban Union is currently delivering the £90 million transformation of the Laurieston area in Glasgow with the first phase of affordable housing due to complete Summer 2014 and the next phase of houses for sale due to commence in Spring 2014.

Janice continued: “Our track record, most recently in Glasgow, demonstrates we are fully committed to community engagement and we look forward to developing strong local partnerships which will form the cornerstone of our development strategy.”

From the outset Urban Union work in partnership with the local community, ensuring their views and needs are reflected in the regeneration of their area, as Jimmy Mutter, chair of the Community Council said: “We have been consulted in the process every step of the way.”

“It is vital for a developer to listen to the local community

and build something which fits the needs of the people, which is exactly the approach Urban Union has taken with us in Laurieston.”

Pennywell is the largest development to be undertaken by the ambitious 21st Century Homes programme, which aims to address the need for affordable housing in Edinburgh, regenerate brownfield sites, support jobs and deliver community benefits. It is anticipated that the programme as a whole will deliver more than 1,300 new homes for rent and sale throughout the city.

The first homes to be delivered by 21 Century Homes were in Gracemount in the south of Edinburgh, where 87 Council homes have been created, along with 12 shared equity properties. Phase two of this project has now begun with housing for sale currently under construction.

This coincides with the development of 94 new council homes now underway on West Pilton Crescent in the Muirhouse / Pennywell area and Greendykes in Craigmillar. Our photo below shows Councillors Bridgman, Child and Housing Convenor Cammy Day at the turf cutting ceremony in Craigmillar earlier this year.

