

**Blacks Gate - new homes at a gateway to the city**

Communities Minister reveals new name for Radius development on former Visteon site

Press release - 8th July 2020

Blacks Gate, the new name for Radius Housing’s 244 house development, has been officially unveiled today by the Minister for Communities, Carál Ní Chuilín. Construction of the homes on the site of the former Visteon factory is underway, and the new name marks a significant milestone for the project.

Located just off Blacks Road, the Blacks Gate name reflects the local area and the location of the housing development, at a key gateway point to the city of Belfast. The name emerged from an education outreach project undertaken by pupils at Malone College, who, working with Radius, developed naming suggestions, brand identity and plans for open space and community facilities. The project led to a number of suggested names, which were submitted to Belfast City Council, and Blacks Gate was chosen.

Blacks Gate is one of the largest mixed tenure housing developments to be constructed in Northern Ireland. The £30 million development will see the construction of 244 private and social homes, alongside community and workspace facilities, all set within extensive newly landscaped and open space on the former factory site. The regeneration of the site which has over 100 operatives working on it daily is making an overall contribution to the economy of some £86 million.

Radius Housing is one of the leading housing developers in Northern Ireland, constructing 400 new homes each year, and managing more than 13,000 social homes. Last year Radius secured a £105m investment from investors in the USA and UK to help support their ambitious ongoing development plans.

Launching the new name, Minister for Communities, Carál Ní Chuilín, said “Increasing housing supply is a key priority for my Department and I am delighted to be part of the naming event for this significant development. The provision of 196 new social family homes, 48 affordable homes for sale as well as the associated community and workspace facilities is a marvellous outcome for a site that has lain unused for some time. This is an area of high housing need and these new homes will make a huge difference to the daily lives of many.

“I am pleased to hear that Radius has involved local school children in identifying a suitable name for the new development. Radius is also to be congratulated for recognising the potential for this site despite its challenges. I look forward to seeing the first of the new tenants making this site their home later in the year.”

Speaking at the launch, Radius Housing Chair Diana Fitzsimons, said “We are delighted to launch the new name for this ambitious development today. Blacks Gate is an important project for the local area, as it provides new social and affordable housing, as well as community facilities for the wider area. We are grateful to the pupils of Malone College, whose work has helped ensure the new name reflects the local area.

“Blacks Gate is also an important project for Radius as a housing developer. This has been a challenging project, but we have had a clear vision and determination to see new, high quality homes developed on this site. Construction projects like this one are hugely important to the local economy, by creating jobs and apprenticeship opportunities, and our corporate plan will see Radius do even more to support the construction sector in the coming years.”

The former factory was demolished in 2014/15, with the contractor Kevin Watson Group beginning clearance and remedial work on site in March 2018. Construction of the new homes commenced in June 2019 and Radius plan to complete construction by the end of 2021, while the first completed homes are expected to be ready for handover in the Autumn of this year.

The £30 million scheme has been supported by £14.3 million HAG funding from the Department for Communities and over £16million private finance investment by Radius.

ENDS

Further info:

Brendan Scott

MW Advocate

07834422923

brendan.scott@mwadvocate.com