

Developments



Miller Homes encourages wildlife

■ New homeowners are being encouraged by housebuilder Miller Homes to welcome wildlife into their gardens and communities through collaboration with the RSPB. Under the initiative, purchasers at selected developments in regions across the country will receive a garden bird nest box along with a booklet of helpful hints and tips on how to encourage biodiversity by making their gardens a place where birds and nature's other creatures can thrive. Chris Endsor, Chief Executive of Miller Homes, said: "One of the very simple steps we can take is to encourage biodiversity in the communities we are creating, and we hope that the families moving into our homes will enjoy using the nest box to give nature a home in their gardens."



Scandia-Hus win new-home award

■ Westbrook, a bespoke timber frame home designed and built by Scandia-Hus in West Sussex, has won the Best Individual New Home category at the South East LABC Building Excellence Awards. The main fabric of the building was manufactured at the company's own factory in Billingshurst, West Sussex utilising the latest Swedish technology and timber frame techniques. The timber used was selected TR26 Stress graded Scandinavian slow grown timber from sustainable resources. Tandridge building control said of Westbrook "The Scandia design team has not only created an individual and unique home but one which blends with its surroundings and where attention to detail both internally and externally is first class".

NEW FUND TO PROVIDE 'BOOST' FOR SMALL DEVELOPERS, SAYS FMB

'Custom Build' fund launched

The government has announced a new £150m fund to help finance plots for custom build housing. The aim of the fund is to encourage sites that are ready to be developed, on which people can use a developer to build their custom-built home.

Reacting to the announcement the Federation of Master Builders believes this is good news for both homebuyers and the house building industry.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the FMB, said: "In recent decades the house building industry has suffered from the loss of too many small firms. The capacity of the industry and diversity of what it offers has suffered as a result. The government today released the prospectus for the £150m fund which will provide loans to developers to finance infrastructure provision for up to 10,000 serviced plots. Growing the custom build sector could better utilise the capabilities of many skilled small firms with experience of delivering one-off projects, but who have stopped building in recent years."

Berry added: "Different models will suit different businesses, but the model of taking

sites, putting in the infrastructure and then selling on as individual serviced plots to buyers wishing to commission their own home, often with the possibility of taking on that commission, is a model which will also have appeal to some small developers. While finance remains difficult to come by for smaller firms, this funding will act as a boost."

The fund can be used to cover eligible costs such as land acquisition costs, site preparation costs and the construction of supporting infrastructure and utilities.

Berry concluded: "The fact that this fund can apply to any site of five units or more is extremely important and shows that government has listened to advice from the FMB. Recent government funding initiatives, while welcome, have set a 15 unit threshold which effectively excludes the large number of small firms who do not build to this scale. The five unit threshold should enable the participation of a much wider range of firms and should help boost the capacity and diversity of the house building industry."

PJ Livesey Group plans for growth

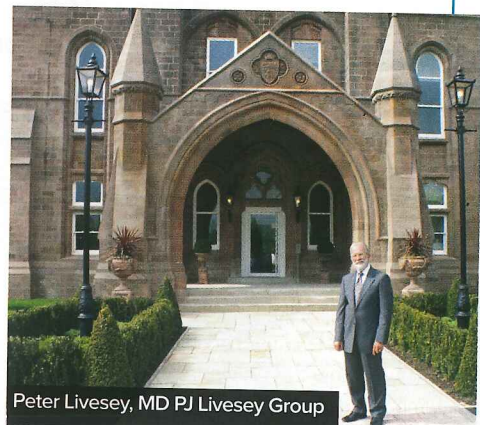
Trafford Park-based PJ Livesey Group, a family run residential development and conversion specialists, is to expand its portfolio and focus on growth following £10 million in funding from Santander Corporate & Commercial.

The PJ Livesey Group has been at the forefront of specialist property development and restoration for over 30 years. Founded in 1979 by Peter Livesey and employing over 100 direct staff and 200 via subcontractors, the firm has built its reputation for the skilful renovation and restoration of period and Grade II listed buildings across the UK.

Peter Livesey, Managing Director, PJ Livesey Group, said: "This funding deal allows us the security to move forwards and act swiftly when suitable sites become available. Having weathered the recession, we are now in a strong position to pursue controlled growth and are

eagerly seeking new opportunities."

The group is about to launch the conversion of Lancaster Moor, a £67 million project in Lancaster being carried out in partnership with the HCA (Homes and Communities Agency) and is opening new sites at Parkgate, Otley and Beverley.



Peter Livesey, MD PJ Livesey Group

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