

Sanctuary in regeneration plans for Hereford



Artist's illustration of Blueschool street incorporating suggested extension to the Maylord centre to the right.

Edgar Street Grid (ESG) Herefordshire, a regeneration company established by Herefordshire Council and Advantage West Midlands, has chosen Sanctuary as their preferred partner to oversee the £900m regeneration of a new urban village in the city.

The board of ESG took the decision at the end of many months hard work by Sanctuary which involved staff and independent advisors.

The Chief Executive of ESG Herefordshire, Jonathan Bretherton, commented that ESG

were looking for a partner that could push the boundaries of modern housing development and help create a sense of community spirit for residents who will move into the village.

Sanctuary will form a joint venture with ESG to deliver Blackfriars Urban Village, managing the 1,000 new homes that will be built on the 100-acre site, of which 300 will be classed as affordable housing.

Work will now begin with the initial investment of

£20m on land purchase, engaging consultants, architects and engineers to prepare plans for the site, which is due to be completed by 2020.

Sanctuary's Group Chief Executive, David Bennett said:

"We are delighted to have been chosen to work with ESG and Herefordshire Council on this pioneering project and we look forward to helping them realise their vision for the area."



Wragge & Co named European Pensions Law Firm of the Year

Wragge & Co LLP is the European Pensions Law Firm of the Year. The firm saw off strong competition from UK and international firms to secure victory at the first European Pensions Awards ceremony last night.

Hosted by pension publications Pensions Age and European Pensions, the awards recognise excellence and innovation in European pension provision. According to awards organisers, the winning firm "stands out in its dedication to understanding the complexities of pensions legislation, and works with its clients to see them through the legal maze".

A panel of independent judges selected Wragge & Co from a shortlist comprising Baker & McKenzie, Cohen Milstein Hausfeld & Toll, DLA Piper, Eversheds, Lovells and Pinsent Masons.

Partner and head of pensions Glyn Ryland said: "This is another superb win for a team really making its presence felt in the pensions market. We have made it our mission to impress with excellent legal advice that comes off the fence and offers creative, commercial solutions delivered in plain English and by people who understand the sector. It is great to see the team's efforts recognised with this award."

Wragge & Co's 34-lawyer Pensions team operates as a single team of experts advising employers, trustees and institutional clients on a full range of non-contentious and contentious pension issues.

This win is the latest success in a period of sustained growth, client wins and ground-breaking work. Earlier this year the team advised the trustee of the Delta Pension Plan on one of the largest buyout deals on record. The £451 million deal between Delta and Pension Insurance Corporation followed the team's work on the landmark buyout deal between Emap plc and Paternoster.

Last year the team increased turnover by 19% and appointed Richard Lee and Paul Carberry as its newest partner and director. The promotions give the team additional senior resource and underline Wragge & Co's commitment to the pensions industry. New clients include the trustees of two Admenta UK plc pension schemes, two AMEC schemes, Britannia Building Society Pension Scheme and the Ashridge Pension Scheme.

Wragge&Co

Storage 'sans frontières'

A customer call for a pan-European business storage solution has led Hartlebury-based records management and storage experts Whitefoot-Forward to go international.



The client, a facilities management company, wanted to bid for some Europe-wide business and needed to establish a raft of in-country facilities service providers – including archive storage.

With the assistance of O'Neil Software Inc, who supply advanced records management software to Whitefoot-Forward, managing director Michael Whitefoot was able to identify business storage providers of a similar size and reputation in Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

The ten-country network, led by Whitefoot-Forward, has now joined forces to become part of the customer's pan-European contract bid, with the results expected later this year.

Michael Whitefoot, managing director confirmed: "Establishing links with similar, good quality counterparts across Europe means that every company involved now has quite an exciting growth opportunity. As a pan-European network we stand a good chance of successfully competing with some of the big names in international records management, especially since, as independents, we can generally offer better prices and more responsive service than most."

Whitefoot-Forward was established in 2001 and initially provided archive storage and retrieval services to locations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Since then new, nationwide clients have expanded the company's collections and deliveries to the whole of England, and occasionally Scotland and Wales. In May 2008 Whitefoot-Forward launched its pallet storage and logistics service from a new 60,000 sq ft location near Shenstone, to complement its similar sized, records management archive in Hartlebury.

Take on Technology

Each issue, Chamber patron Cantono takes a look at a key technical issue of interest to readers.

Systems for Small Companies (Software as a Service)

The IT needs of small and medium-sized companies don't differ very much from those of large organisations – they tend to centre around HR systems, an order system and back-office invoicing systems. You may also need stock-control and logistics systems. But you have fewer resources to meet these needs

For your key systems it probably makes sense

Cantono
we manage. you grow

to run them yourself, but what about those systems which aren't critical and are only used by a few employees? It is these which some companies are using on a Software as a Service basis. Hosting companies such as Cantono run these systems for you (accessible via a browser), and provide use on a rental basis.

On the face of it, some of these offers are not cheap (often £75 per user per month) but they can compare favourably with running the solution in-house because the charge covers

- cost of hardware and maintenance
- cost of software and maintenance
- applying service packs and fixes

You can also access the software from anywhere with internet access, including working from home, or on the move. Your service provider will also make sure that your data is backed up.

Medium-sized companies will probably want to retain close control of their enterprise systems, which must be secure, are probably tightly integrated with other company systems and maybe tailored for the business.

But for non-mission-critical systems such as sales-force automation and even marketing systems such as campaign management then SAAS may be an attractive option – an enterprise system at a guaranteed SME price.

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