

# News

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## First phase opens at Merchant Gate

English Cities Fund, the developer behind the £140m Merchant Gate development in Wakefield city centre, officially launched the first phase at a prestigious event hosted by Sir Michael Lyons today.

Sir Michael addressed invited guests in the impressive public realm area, Burgage Square, to celebrate the completion of a new urban quarter for the city - hailing it as a 'significant' event. The first phase will provide 66 contemporary apartments, 35,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space, 48,000 sq ft of grade 'A' office space based around a central courtyard, and a new multi-storey car park to provide much-needed parking to the city centre and commuters to Westgate station, adjacent to the site.

Today's event welcomed a number of property and commercial agents, key stakeholders, ECf representatives and local dignitaries, including The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District and Mayoress - Cllr Tony Wallis and Mrs Doreen Wallis - Bishop of Wakefield, Rt Rev Stephen Platten, and Mary Creagh MP, to showcase the state-of-the-art scheme.

The Merchant Gate development is being delivered by ECf, a partnership between Muse Developments, Legal and General and national housing and regeneration agency the Homes and Communities Agency, with financial support from Wakefield Council, Yorkshire Forward and the European Regional Development Fund.

Speaking at the event Sir Michael Lyons, chairman of English Cities Fund, said: "We are delighted to be officially opening the first phase of the Merchant Gate scheme. This is a really important first step in reshaping a key gateway site and creating a vibrant urban quarter in the heart of Wakefield. Our development will provide new opportunities for investors, businesses and residents alike.

"Whilst many other developments across the UK have been on hold due to the current economic climate, ECf partners have pressed on with the Merchant Gate scheme which now provides contemporary apartments, Grade 'A' office space, restaurants and retail for the people of Wakefield."

"This is a very significant moment for the Merchant Gate scheme and the wider regeneration of the city. Today's milestone is testimony to the commitment of all parties involved and demonstrates how effective a joint partnership can be in delivering a major regeneration scheme, which we are confident will trigger further opportunities for the city."

Wakefield Council Leader Cllr Peter Box, added: "The face of Wakefield is changing and the Merchant Gate scheme is one of the key regeneration developments driving this transformation. This scheme marks a change in the look and feel of the city centre, and what Wakefield can offer to residents, businesses and visitors."

Ends.