

21 December 2005

Notification of Share Interest - Sections 198-203 of the Companies Act 1985

We have received a notice dated 20 December 2005 from an official of The Goldman Sachs Group Inc., the extract of which is as follows:-

"We hereby notify you that as at close of business on 16 December 2005, The Goldman Sachs Group Inc ("GS Inc") of 85 Broad Street, New York, NY 10004, USA, was interested, by attribution only, in a total of 11,048,253 shares.

Of these 11,048,253 shares:

- The interest in 7,270,654 shares arose from the interest held by Goldman Sachs & Co., a wholly-owned direct subsidiary of GS Inc., acting as custodian for its customers. These shares are, or will be, registered in the name of Goldman Sachs Securities (Nominees) Limited.
- The interest in 3,777,599 shares arose from a beneficial interest held by Goldman Sachs International, a wholly owned indirect subsidiary of GS Inc., these shares are, or will be, registered at CREST in account CREPTMP".

They have increased their shareholding from 10,619,094 shares in Countrywide plc reported on 12 December 2005 to 11,048,253 shares. This equates to 6.23% of the total issued share capital of 177,431,739 shares.

Director/Company Secretary
Countrywide plc

c.c. H D Hill
M C Nower