

8 July 2005

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

We have received a notice dated 7 July 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 5 July 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 5,636,941 shares.

Of these 5,636,941 shares:

- The interest in 5,093,407 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 543,534 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 previously notified that they no longer had a disposable interest in Countrywide plc shares reported on 10 February 2005. Their current shareholding of 5,636,941 shares equates to 3.15% of the total issued share capital of 178,755,635 shares.

Director/Company Secretary
Countrywide plc