

19 December 2006

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

We have received a notice dated 18 December 2006 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 13 December 2006, 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 6,811,233 shares.

Of these 6,811,233 shares:

- The interest in 4,392,598 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 2,418,635 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 decreased their holding from 7,371,610 shares in Countrywide plc shares, as reported on 18 December 2006 to 6,811,233 shares which equates to 3.987% of the total issued share capital of 170,849,865 shares.

Director/Company Secretary
Countrywide plc

c.c. H D Hill
 M C Nower
 G Turner
 J Pleumeekers)
 J Coddington) Hawkpoint
 M Luen)
 M Franklin)