

14 July 2006

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

1. We have received a notice dated 14 July 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 12 July 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 8,726,481 shares.

Of these 8,726,481 shares:

- The interest in 5,703,200 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 3,023,281 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 shareholding from 10,698,199 shares in Countrywide plc reported on 10 April 2006 to 8,726,481 shares. This equates to 4.97% of the total issued share capital of 175,440,700 shares.

Director/Company Secretary
Countrywide plc

c.c. H D Hill
M C Nower