

Tuesday 26th April 2016

Countrywide plc Trading Update

Countrywide plc (“Countrywide” or the “Group”) (LSE:CWD), the UK’s largest integrated property services group, issues its trading update for the quarter ended 31 March 2016.

As advised in February, we began 2016 with real momentum, following implementation of our transformation agenda at pace in 2015 as changes to people and structures were complete. Equally, the first quarter finished strongly as we saw acceleration in transactions on buy to let properties and second homes in response to the introduction of the Government’s new 3% stamp duty surcharge that became effective from 1st April 2016. House exchanges across the Group were ahead 30% compared to the same period last year when market transactions were depressed by concerns in the run up to the general election in May 2015. That 30% increase enhanced performance across the group and is reflected in the results of both financial services and B2B. Also, commercial continued to make good progress in the first quarter with the consultancy vs transactional split at 70:30 underpinning this result.

We expect the housing market to slow in the second quarter post the surge in buy to let activity in the first quarter and reflecting challenges from the political and economic uncertainty in the lead up to the EU referendum in June.

Our focus on aligning our portfolio to growth continues with both encouraging organic growth in lettings and investment in key acquisitions including our recent acquisition of ‘Finders Keepers’ with eight lettings branches in Oxford and ‘The Letting Bureau’ operating throughout the East Lancashire area. The addition of ‘Mortgage Bureau’, specialists in the land and new homes market, and ‘Buy to Let Business’, specialists in both the buy to let mortgage sector as well as the rapidly growing Private Rental Sector (PRS), builds on our clear goal to grow customer value in Financial Services.

Commenting on the Group’s performance, Alison Platt, CEO said:

“We are encouraged by the strong performance delivered in the first quarter and remain on track to pilot our customer focused multi-channel proposition in three brands during the second quarter. Mindful of the political and economic uncertainty surrounding the EU referendum we are taking a cautious view of the coming months. Notwithstanding this, however, we continue to expect to make strong progress in 2016 as we execute our strategy and maximise market opportunities and therefore maintain our current financial outlook for the full year”.

-Ends-

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About Countrywide plc

Countrywide is the UK's largest integrated property services Group, including the largest estate agency and lettings network. Countrywide’s network of expertise combining national scale and local reach helps more people move than any other business in the UK and is structured around four key business units: Retail, London, B2B and Financial Services. We are proud of our strong position:

- £19 billion worth of property sold in 2015 - More homes in the UK than anyone else
- £12.1 billion of mortgages completed - Largest single mortgage broker in the UK
- 74,500 properties under management - Largest player in a fragmented market

Countrywide plc's award-winning service has earned the business over 231 high-profile industry awards since 2008 with customers voting Countrywide Best National Agency Group at the 2015 ESTAS awards.

1. Forward Looking Statements

This announcement has been prepared solely to provide additional information to the shareholders of Countrywide plc in order to meet the requirements of the FCA's Disclosure and Transparency Rules. It should not be relied on by any other party, or for other purposes. Forward-looking statements have been made by the directors in good faith, using information available up until the date on which they approved this statement. Forward-looking statements should be regarded with caution, because of the inherent uncertainties in economic trends and business risks.

2. Next Results Announcement

The next trading update is expected to be the 2016 half year results, to be issued in July 2016.