



**NEWS RELEASE FROM HAZLEDENE GROUP - THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2011 - FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

## **Hazledene's flagship office development secures energy giant as first tenant**

Leading property group Hazledene has secured energy giant Centrica as the first tenant of a prestigious, state-of-the-art office development in the heart of Europe's oil capital.

Hazledene chief executive Mark Shaw confirmed today that terms of agreement had been reached that will see Centrica lease the upper three terraced floors of the £45 million six-storey iQ building in Aberdeen.

Competition has been keen to secure space in the visually stunning, eco-friendly building in the heart of the city, reflecting a welcome upsurge in demand for high quality commercial office accommodation.

First Minister Alex Salmond, who launched iQ when he broke the first turf in September 2008, said the project was evidence of Scotland's resilience in the face of difficult economic challenges facing the country.

'This is a tremendously exciting development for Aberdeen and for Scotland,' he said.

The First Minister's comments were reinforced by joint letting agents Ryden and Donald Begg. A spokesman for the two companies said: 'Hazledene Group has proved that if you insist on the highest quality coupled with prime location, the demand is there. The widespread interest in securing accommodation in iQ reflects just how the market currently places a high premium on top-of-the-range, high quality offices and how businesses are keen to establish city centre bases.'

Centrica will occupy approximately half of the 125,000 square-foot office building, the centrepiece of a £75 million city centre regeneration project, including the 185-room Park Inn by Radisson hotel which opened for business last summer.

Mr Shaw was determined to deliver a development of the highest design and accommodation standard which was environmentally sensitive and blended with the city centre landscape. The hotel has already won a civic award and been praised as a 'masterpiece' of modern design and architecture.

Edinburgh-based Mr Shaw said: 'I am delighted that a company of the calibre of Centrica has identified iQ as place where they want to conduct business. There has been fierce competition to secure lease agreements at iQ and this is clearly good news for both the local economy in Aberdeen and for Scotland as a whole at a time when much of the news seems to be dominated by negative economic headlines.'

News of Centrica's long-term lease of some 60,000 square feet of the iQ building comes only days after principal building contractor Miller Construction formally completed the building.

The development, on the former site of the Satrosphere Science Centre, got underway in September 2008 when Mr Salmond broke the first turf.

The iQ was designed by Edinburgh-based Richard Murphy Architects, winners of 17 RIBA awards. Its vital statistics are impressive - 3,451 square metres of glass; 11,606 square metres of Grade A hi-tech office accommodation; a 2,700 cubic metre atrium housing a steel helical staircase and 722 square metres of high-level external terracing.

The low-energy air conditioning system uses fresh air when the outside temperature is below 19 degrees C, making it 40% more energy-efficient than conventional systems and providing a pleasant and healthy indoor atmosphere.

The designers have also ingeniously used exposed concrete ceilings to cool the air in the office spaces overnight, ready for the next day, while major emphasis has been placed on maximizing the use of natural light.

The development also incorporates 240 underground car parking spaces with more than a third of them available to the public.

Under Shaw's leadership, Hazledene has become one of Scotland's most go-ahead commercial and residential property development groups. It is part of a consortium which recently won planning approval for a £500 million new town centre at Stratton, east of Inverness. Also in the Hazledene portfolio are plans for an imaginative new waterside community at Torbothie in Lanarkshire as well as a number of other residential developments around the country.

Competition to lease the first three floors of the iQ building has also been keen. Negotiations on leasing agreements are at an advanced stage and an announcement will be made soon.