

Demolition of run down shops marks progress with Symes Avenue redevelopment

Demolition of the run down shopping centre at Symes Avenue gets underway this week, making way for a brand new district centre in Hartcliffe.

The demolition and redevelopment of what is generally seen as one of Bristol's most visually depressing areas is being greeted with relief by local residents.

Councillor Barbara Janke, Leader of Bristol City Council, said: "The disused shops along Symes Avenue have been an eyesore that has blighted this part of Bristol for too long. The first work on the Symes Avenue site started in September this year. Now, the demolition of the derelict shops, marks a long awaited milestone in our effort to regenerate the area and a visible sign of change."

"As a council we are determined to ensure the people of South Bristol start to share in the kind of regeneration and investment enjoyed by other parts of the city. The project is a positive example of how the public, community and private sectors are working successfully together to bring about redevelopment, which will benefit thousands of residents in Hartcliffe, Withywood and the neighbouring areas. Through our C21 planning process we hope to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the growth that the south of the city is now beginning to attract."

The multi million pound scheme being developed by Morrisons is supported by Bristol City Council, the South West Regional Development Agency and the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership. The main contractors are Carillion.

The scheme will provide a new 83,000 square foot Morrisons supermarket, which will be the centrepiece of the £20 million redevelopment. The new supermarket, which will employ 350 people, is expected to be open by the end of 2007.

A community building and new library are also planned as part of the development. They will include meeting areas for visiting community advice services, a crèche, meeting and function rooms for hire, and space to train local people in office and IT skills.

Other benefits from the scheme include more than 12,300 square feet of other new retail units; a new play area; improved landscaping; new public art and a replacement scout building in nearby Bishport Avenue. Investment from the project will also support new community transport provision, new community-run youth projects in the local area and new training schemes for local residents.

Peter Holloway, Development Manager, South West of England Regional Development Agency, said: "It is very encouraging to see that the months of hard work behind the scenes are finally coming to fruition. Symes Avenue is a vital regeneration project for the neighbourhood and one of a series of major investments in South Bristol by the Agency designed to make substantial improvements to the whole area."

Tracy Edwards-Brown, Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership Chair and local resident, said: "At last, all the campaigning and time that residents and others have put into the scheme is finally going to paying off. We can't wait to see the final version. We are looking forward to the day when Morrisons is open and we can buy decent affordable food, when the community building is finished and local services will be at our finger tips, and when new library facilities are on offer."

James Brook, Morrisons Project Manager, said: "We are delighted to begin work on site and are looking forward to delivering shoppers in south Bristol with their new Morrisons store in late 2007, offering customers an unrivalled shopping experience."

Work is being phased so that existing shops can continue to trade until the new retail units are ready. They are expected to move to the new premises in the summer of 2007.

Further information can be found at www.symesavenue.com

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For further media information, contact Katharine de Lisle on 0117 922 2732.