

Multi-million Symes Avenue re-development reaches completion

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The multi-million re-development of Symes Avenue in south Bristol is finished, marking the latest milestone in the ongoing regeneration of south Bristol.

A Morrisons superstore and a purpose-built community building containing a library will open for business on November 12 in a move that will benefit thousands of residents in Hartcliffe, Withywood and neighbouring areas.

The re-development will create 350 new jobs on the site of the former shopping centre. The Symes Avenue shopping centre was built in the 1950s, but in recent years its appearance and the quality of the retail outlets deteriorated significantly, forcing local residents to travel further afield to shop.

The opening of the community building and superstore mark the completion of the major project which is a partnership between Bristol City Council, the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (HWCP), the South West of England Regional Development Agency and Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC.

The community building, as well as accommodating a new library, will provide 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 of the scheme include a new children's play area; better car parking; landscape improvements; public art and a petrol station. Investment from the project will also support new community transport provision the Community Action on Transport and Training (CATT) bus; new community-run youth projects in the area, as well as new training schemes for local residents.

The Leader of Bristol City Council, Councillor Helen Holland, said: "This is a landmark day for people in the Hartcliffe area and a real milestone in the ongoing regeneration of south Bristol which is going from strength to strength.

"Bristol City Council with its partners have put in a place a programme of re-development which is attracting new business to the area and creating jobs, while other major projects, such as new schools and the planned Hengrove Park scheme, will also deliver health, leisure, education and training facilities and employment opportunities for South Bristol."

Tracy Edwards-Brown, Chair of HWCP, said: "The opening of Symes is fantastic news. It has taken a long time and a lot of hard work, but we will now have the shopping and community facilities that local residents deserve.

"The redevelopment of Symes sends out a strong and very positive message about the future of Hartcliffe and Withywood. It is possible for dreams to come true".

Peter Holloway, development manager at the South West RDA, said: "This heralds a new era for Hartcliffe. New jobs, training and community facilities will help generate a renewed interest and buzz in the area. This is a chance to create a more positive identity and a better future for a place that has faced significant difficulties."

Kevin Jelf, South West Area Manager at Morrisons said: "We're really excited about the Bristol store and the work we've put into regenerating the area. It's made a dramatic difference to the local community and we look forward to welcoming shoppers into our brand new store."