

Symes Avenue redevelopment moves closer

The demolition and redevelopment of Symes Avenue moves a step closer next week with the submission of the full planning application to redevelop this run-down area in Hartcliffe.

This exciting multi million regeneration project is scheduled for completion by Spring 2007. It results from a partnership of Bristol City Council, the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (HWCP), South West Regional Development Agency (South West RDA) and retail giant Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc.

Commenting on the redevelopment, Dawn Primarolo MP said "I've lost count of the number of times local residents have told me they want something done about Symes Avenue. Together with local councillors, we've pressed for urgent action, so I'm sure everyone will welcome this significant step forward. With other projects in the pipeline, to bring new jobs, homes, education, health and leisure facilities to the area, I hope today's announcement is a taste of things to come."

Anton Bantock, local resident and Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership director said; "This is a fantastic opportunity to regenerate the area. The plans provide a much-needed shopping centre that puts local people first along with special facilities for young and elderly people. Local residents have waited a long time for this to happen. It will really put the heart back into Hartcliffe."

"We are delighted to have submitted a planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of Symes Avenue. We look forward to providing a high quality shopping experience for all residents of Hartcliffe, Withywood and the surrounding areas." says James Brook, development surveyor for Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc.

Symes Avenue, a run-down district shopping centre, is generally regarded as one of the city's most visually depressing areas. In recent years the appearance of the centre and the quality and variety of retail facilities has deteriorated significantly.

"I have shared the frustration of local people that the much needed redevelopment of Symes Avenue has taken such a long time. However, today's planning application for the new store and community facilities and the site clearance in preparation for the new buildings are a real milestone and evidence that the project is moving forward. Working with Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership, Morrisons and the RDA show that successful regeneration schemes improve with local input, where the council, the community and the private sector share the benefits of schemes tailored to local circumstances," said Cllr Helen Holland, local councillor and deputy leader of the council with responsibility for external affairs and partnerships.

Plans are now being submitted to develop a new district centre that will boast:

- a Morrisons superstore, other new retail units and petrol filling station
- a new specially designed community building and public library
- landscape improvements to the adjoining housing area
- a new children's play area
- improved car parking.

"Currently the centre, located in the heart of Hartcliffe and Withywood estates fails to provide a basic level of good quality local shops and services for local people. As a consequence local people have been forced to travel long distances to access facilities that meet day-to-day needs. The project will transform the area by providing new public realm spaces, attractive retail and public buildings, improved food and local authority services and significant employment opportunities for local people." said Peter Holloway, regeneration manager, South West RDA.

The project will create 350 new jobs in the Morrisons store and money is also being set aside for employment training, community transport, off-site youth facilities (a new scout building for the 81st Scout Group will be built on Bishport Avenue) and public art.

The Symes Avenue redevelopment is also an example of best practice in terms of sustainable development and will be one of the first retail developments nationally to meet a 'Very Good' standard under the BREEAM Retail Assessment Scheme.

Notes to editors:

Bristol City Council, Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (HWCP), South West Regional Development Agency (South West RDA), and Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc are working together to create high quality retail facilities, new jobs and training opportunities and an improved and sustainable environment for the people of Hartcliffe and Withywood.

This is a joint private and public sector initiative to redevelop the Symes Avenue area as part of the wider regeneration of South Bristol.

For all media enquiries, contact Bristol City Council Corporate Communications on 0117 922 2650.