



News Release – 8 December 2009

**CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE CELEBRATES
SKILLS ACADEMY 'TOPPING OUT'**

Representatives from City of Bristol College, Bristol City Council, south Bristol secondary schools and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have gathered together to celebrate the 'topping out' of the £30m South Bristol Skills Academy.

Staff and students joined representatives from principal contractor Cowlin Construction to mark the important milestone just one year after work began on the new City of Bristol College centre in Hengrove Park.

The South Bristol Skills Academy will provide a state-of-the-art learning and working environment for City of Bristol College students and staff. It is the centrepiece of a partnership between the College, Bristol City Council, local schools and the LSC to drive up educational and vocational standards for young people and adults in the area.

The new Skills Academy will open to students at the start of the new academic year in September 2010. It will provide education and training for 4,000 students and will deliver a range of courses including brickwork and joinery; health and social care; hairdressing and beauty; catering; motor vehicle, motor cycle and engineering; and information technology.

"The South Bristol Skills Academy will play the leading role in helping young people and adults in south Bristol to gain the skills and qualifications they need to progress to higher education and employment," said Keith Elliott, City of Bristol College Principal. "We have been working with schools, community groups, government

departments, regional agencies and local employers to make sure that when the academy opens, it will offer the range of courses needed to equip local people for jobs in and around the city.”

Dawn Primarolo, MP for Bristol South, said: “The new Skills Academy is essential to the regeneration of Hengrove Park. It will make a real difference to many people in the area by providing them with fantastic new facilities in which to learn and gain the necessary skills and qualifications for employment.”

Moyra Pascoe, Partnership Director for the LSC, said: “The LSC is committed to helping learners to achieve their full potential. We are delighted to be involved with the Skills Academy, which will increase the opportunities available for learners in south Bristol to improve their skills, achievement levels and employability.”

Neil Sherreard, Cowlin’s Divisional Managing Director for the South West, said: “The topping out of this iconic building means that the regeneration of south Bristol is one step closer. It is an excellent example of innovative design and we hope that the students, staff and the local community will get as much out of the new building as we’ve put into it.”

A topping out ceremony is traditionally held when the construction of a building has reached its highest point. The ceremony saw City of Bristol College Principal Keith Elliott filling the final piece of glazing in the roof area.

ENDS

City of Bristol College

Over the last few years City of Bristol College has emerged as one of the region’s leading education providers. Major expansion and management restructuring has created a further and higher education college at the forefront of its field.

One of the largest further education colleges in the UK, City of Bristol College offers over 1,000 courses at all levels for both 16-19 year olds and adult learners. Currently catering for 30,000 students and employing over 2,000 staff, the College delivers a significant majority of the post-16 educational provision in the greater Bristol area.

Cowlin Construction Limited, part of the Balfour Beatty Group, is a leading building contractor with offices in Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, Plymouth and Truro, and a projected turnover of £250m. The firm has a wealth of experience that spans several sectors, from commercial and industrial, to education, healthcare, leisure and residential.

Cowlin Construction is a member of the Chartered Institute of Building and is fully affiliated to the Constructionline scheme. Health and safety is a key priority and Cowlin has won five prestigious RoSPA Gold Medal Awards in consecutive years since 2004 and holds the OHSAS 180001 and ISO14001 accreditation.

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.