

May 2008

## News Release

### CO-OP BANK FUNDS COLLEGE UPGRADE

A college in North East Sheffield has invested nearly half a million pounds improving its teaching environment and is now expecting a record intake of students next September.

Work has completed on the retro-fit of a state-of-the-art ventilation and cooling system for classrooms at Longley Park Sixth Form College. The work further improves facilities at the high-performing college, with funding provided by The Co-operative Bank.

The Bank's South Yorkshire Corporate Banking Centre (CBC) provided a £400K development loan to assist with the work on 36 teaching rooms.

When it opens for its new college year in September 2008, Longley Park is now set to beat its 2007 intake of 1,190 students – up from 640 in 2004 when it was opened by local MP David Blunkett and the then Prime Minister Tony Blair. The purpose-built college offers a range of full time courses for 16-19 year olds and was designed by celebrated architect Ellis Williams, who also designed the Baltic Centre in Newcastle.

Trevor Wray, Deputy-Principal at Longley Park, said: "The college was established four years ago following both a government report into post-16 education, and intensive lobbying by local schools and parents. We have enjoyed considerable success in helping young people from a wide variety of backgrounds to stretch and fulfill their potential. Since 2004, we have doubled our yearly intake of students and last year enjoyed fantastic results – an A-Level pass rate of 97%, a BTEC national pass rate of 98% and ten of our top students awarded places at the Oxbridge universities, and at medical and dental schools.

“Due to the demand for places we continually look at ways of further improving the learning environment within the College. We identified a ventilation system that would benefit students and teachers alike, and working closely with The Co-operative Bank’s South Yorkshire team we were able to realise our plans and continue the college’s growth and development.”

Leah Dykes, Account Manager at The Co-operative Bank’s South Yorkshire CBC, said: “We have provided banking facilities for Longley Park since its inception and it has been great to see just how successful the college has become – as well as being proud to have played our part in its continued development.”

The Co-operative Bank’s South Yorkshire Corporate Banking Centre provides banking services for SMEs and MEs within the mid corporate market including acquisitions, refinancing and property transactions. The Bank is keen to build on existing relationships in addition to establishing contact with those companies in the £1m - £50m turnover bracket who feel they are not being provided with the service they deserve.

Anyone wanting to speak to a member of The Co-operative Bank’s South Yorkshire Corporate Banking team should call 0114 278 7077.

- Ends -

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