



MEDIA RELEASE

27th July 2010

**WATES AND CONSTRUCTION SKILLS LAUNCH
FIRST NATIONAL SKILLS ACADEMY PROJECT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND**

Wates Construction today launched the National Skills Academy for Construction in Luton.

Andrew Wates joined over 100 invited guests representing the construction industry, education providers and training organisations to officially open the Academy, which is forming a major part of Wates added value programme in Luton.

The event, held at one of Wates Construction projects, Lea Manor School, highlighted the significant contribution that the National Skills Academy for Construction Project (NSAfC) will make to the area over the next four years - creating jobs and apprenticeship opportunities whilst tackling skills shortages and driving up the standard of training in the industry.

Steve Geary, Skills Strategy Director at ConstructionSkills, spoke at the event, explaining: "Over the next five years the prognosis for the construction industry in the East of England is among the best in the UK with projected growth significantly higher than the national average (1.7%) at 3.8%.

"Focussed, on-site, employer-led training, through enlightened companies like Wates Construction and NSAfC Projects like this, is a highly effective way of delivering training to local people and will help ensure that the industry will be able to deploy the right skills, in the right place at the right time in the future.

The National Skills Academy for Construction is a new approach to learning – harnessing the training opportunities that are provided when the whole construction supply chain (clients, professional services, contractors and sub-contractors) come together on a major construction project³ – in this case the renewal and rebuilding of schools across the region which Wates is delivering as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Andrew Wates said: "This event supports two of Wates core objectives. It is creating a training place for the future of our industry, and is leaving a lasting legacy to the communities in which we work in. I am absolutely delighted to be at this event and that Wates are funding such an important project in Luton."

During the four year project the NSAfC will see: 80 jobs advertised locally, 120 apprentices recruited (26 having already been placed across Wates' supply chain), 8 graduates recruited, 40 training plans produced through engagement with

subcontractors, plus 48 individuals undergoing courses supervisor courses and 16 individual leadership & management courses delivered.



Notes to Editors

Wates is one of the UK's largest family-owned construction services and development companies. Established in 1897, it remains privately owned by the Wates Family. Wates employs over 2000 people and had a turnover of £945 million in 2009.

The company works across a range of sectors, including education, prisons, affordable housing, retail fit out and refurbishment, office interiors, land development and commercial buildings.

Wates has three areas of Corporate Responsibility focus: to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions from our activities; Target Zero of eliminating all non-hazardous waste to landfill by 2010; and boosting skills and employability in areas of most need. Wates was awarded Gold status in the Business in the Community Responsible Business index in 2009.

Safety is a top priority within the Wates Group, and the excellent safety record has resulted in RoSPA Gold Awards for Occupational Safety and the British Safety Council Awards for the past seven years.

Wates has been recognised externally in a number of ways this year:

- Major Contractor of the Year by Building Magazine for the second year running
- Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work For index
- BiTC Corporate Responsibility Index Platinum status
- RoSPA medal for safety and health for the seventh year in succession
- Housing Excellence and Sustainable Contractor of the Year awards
- Two CIOB gold awards for Construction Manager of the Year

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