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Council restates commitment to Hengrove leisure centre - but warns of possible delays due to recession

City Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Capital Projects Cllr Simon Cook has today moved to reassure residents and partner organisations that plans to build an exciting multi-million pound leisure centre at Hengrove Park are still being taken forward, despite concerns about the impact of the current economic downturn.

But he made it clear that the scheme would now proceed at a slower pace than previously expected.

He said: "The city council is working with all its partners and key stakeholders to ensure the leisure centre remains at the heart of the regeneration of south Bristol. We are determined to deliver this scheme and our commitment is as strong as ever. It will create tremendous opportunities for local people.

"The good news is that the infrastructure works to provide road access and utilities to serve the leisure centre and other elements of phase 1 of the Hengrove Park regeneration programme are on track and are continuing. And the Government has also confirmed that the current funding for the project in the form of PFI Credits is secure.

"However, the credit crunch and global downturn is kicking in - and major capital projects like the Hengrove leisure centre are caught in the middle.

"As a result, there will be some delay to the start of work on site and the projected date for the opening of the leisure centre is being revised and will probably have to be put back. There could be several months delay - but a precise timetable cannot be confirmed at this stage and the length of the delay is likely to be influenced by the depth of the recession.

"We will not have any further statement to make on this matter until some of the details become clearer but I felt it important to be honest and open with residents and partner organisations about some of the possible challenges we face in the months ahead."

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