

Hengrove Park Leisure Centre - work begins with synchronised swimmers making a 'splash'

Swimmers in Bristol and the southwest can really set their sights on Spring 2012 when the region's stunning state-of-the-art swimming pool is set for completion.

Building work is now underway and instead of the usual turf cutting ceremony by civic dignitaries, synchronised swimmers from the Bristol Central Senior Squad performed a walk through of their impressive, pre-competition routine to mark the occasion

Renowned for their creative style and technical direction, the Bristol Central Senior Squad are also on the England Talent Programme. Their attendance at the start of building works underpins the ambitious new-build project, which will not only double the swimming capacity in the city, but which will also promote competitive swimming at the highest level across the region.

The city council and its partner - Bristol Active Limited (BAL), are now focusing on the delivery of the new multi-million pound leisure development, incorporating a 50-metre swimming pool with two vertical booms and moveable flooring and a learner pool with a moveable floor. The leisure centre will also boast a 'dry' sports site, including fitness suit, courts, studios and changing facilities; healthy living zone and meeting rooms.

Councillor Simon Cook, Bristol's deputy leader and cabinet member for capital projects, said: "The start of building working on the leisure centre is another key Hengrove milestone. Thanks must go to the many people have worked incredibly hard to get to this stage of the project's development.

"The new leisure facility will be the city's and region's flagship pool and sports facility. It will attract swimmers of all ages and abilities - and best of all, its design and high specification will inspire adults and children to take to the water and make a real splash."

Fabio D'Alonzo of Bristol Active Limited, added: "A lot of hard work has gone into reaching this state-of-the-art leisure centre and we look forward to delivering excellent sports and leisure facilities for the city of Bristol as well as making significant contribution to the regeneration of South Bristol."

As well as making a difference to swimming in the city, the leisure centre will also be a key element in the wider Hengrove Park and south Bristol's regeneration scheme. Overall, the Hengrove Park development will see a new South Bristol Community Hospital, a new Skills Academy to help local people gain vital skills and qualifications, and new business opportunities, with the potential to create hundreds of local jobs.

City of Bristol College will be the first occupier of the Hengrove Park site, when its new South Bristol Skills Academy opens to students in September. The College recently received the keys for the Skills Academy after construction work was successfully completed earlier this month.

Keith Elliott, Principal at City of Bristol College, commented: “The College's new Skills Academy will transform learning and educational achievement in south Bristol and we are delighted to be playing a key role in the area’s regeneration. The building is creating a real buzz in the local community and our staff are looking forward to welcoming the first students into the centre next term.”

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 already completed

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Image 1 shows Bristol Central Senior Squad in a classic synchronised swimming pose as they launch the start of building works on the Hengrove Park Leisure Centre site. Please credit Kier Western with the photo.

Image 2 shows Bristol Central Senior Squad in a classic synchronised swimming pose set with the building works in the background. . Please credit Kier Western with the photo.

The Hengrove Leisure Centre will feature:

- A ten-lane 50 metre swimming pool, suitable for family, fitness and competition swimming making Hengrove the focus for the development of Bristol’s swimming stars of the future. The pool would be designed so it has two vertical booms to provide flexibility of programming, enabling a mixture of fitness and fun activities to be accommodated at the same time.
- More than two and half times the swimming capacity of the area’s existing, outdated facilities
- Leisure and learner pool, providing fun swimming and enjoyable days out for the whole family. Both pools would have moveable floors, making them fully accessible for Disabled customers or to adjust the depth to accommodate learn to swim lessons and different age groups.
- Health and Fitness suite with 150 stations offering running, rowing, cycling and other fitness machines, and a free weights area
- Three aerobics studios, one will be dedicated to spinning classes
- Four court sports hall for badminton, basketball, athletics training, five a side football (is this correct - Stuart to advise), and netball.
- Healthy Living Zone with a café and crèche with an indoor landscaped area connecting the centre to the surrounding parkland. Visitors to the Zone will be able to access advice on healthy living

- Modern and attractive changing facilities, and meeting rooms
- An environmentally-friendly Biomass boiler to provide 'green' power and a low carbon footprint.
- In addition to the new Hengrove Leisure Centre, the swimming strategy currently envisages:the retention of the South Bristol Pool in Bedminster and its potential for future refurbishment.
- PFI: A private finance initiative (PFI) project provides a way for the public sector to fund major capital investments without immediate recourse to the public purse. Private consortia are contracted to design, build, and manage new projects on contracts, which can typically last for 25-30 years, during which time the building is leased by the public authority
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