

Firefighters play part in filling Washington's new swimming venue



ALL SET: Left to right ... Firefighter Ian Haskell, Ian Parkin, Craig Jobson, Jan Peeters, Neil Burnett, Cllr Dianne Snowdon, Cllr Harry Trueman, Dave Smith and Firefighter Bob Foster pictured before spraying water into the new Washington Leisure centre swimming pool for the first time today

Help pours in for new pool!

FIREFIGHTERS have helped put Washington's new leisure centre through its paces as they used their hoses to fill its 25-metre pool.

When full, the pool at the new leisure centre will hold nearly half-a-million litres of water so it is crucial to check that it is watertight.

And now a crew from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has stepped in to test that it is up to scratch, by starting to fill the pool as part of regular training.

Once checked and monitored for being watertight, 15,000 tiles will be cemented in place over the next few weeks.

The pool and its two water slides, together with a learner pool, are a key feature of the £11m replacement Washington Leisure Centre which is due to open in late spring next year.

By PETRA SILFVERSKIOLD

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Station Manager Steve Graham, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, said: "In addition to saving lives and property, our service is about helping the community," station manager Steve Graham said. "This morning's work has been slotted into part of our training programme. It's given us a fresh challenge and an opportunity to familiarise ourselves with this major new facility for the community of Washington."

The 475,000 litres needed to fill the pool to capacity is coming from the mains. The entire process of gradually filling and testing the pool structure takes eight to nine days with a seven day saturation period and a further seven

days of testing. Funding for the project was first announced as part of Sunderland City Council's £60m capital programme last year and work began in February. The new leisure centre is being built by Design and Build contractor Pellikaan Construction, which built the Hetton Community Pool and Wellness Centre and the Silksworth Community Pool.

The centre will also boast a soft play area across two levels and a four court sports hall and a gym twice the size of the existing wellness facility.

Coun John Kelly, portfolio holder for public health, wellness and culture, added: "There's still work to be done before the leisure centre opens in late spring but filling the pool for the first time is an important milestone in the construction of a facility that will be enjoyed by generations to come."

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