

Echo takes a look inside new sports facility

Inside the new £11m centre



OPENING SOON: Washington's new leisure centre is now ready.

WASHINGTON'S new £11million leisure centre has thrown open its doors for the first time – and the Echo was there.

Council chiefs invited a select group of media in to take a look ahead of the centre's opening next month.

The new facility, which has been built next to the old centre, will open to the public on June 1.

It features two water flumes, together with a six-lane 25m pool and learner pool with leisure features, a multi purpose hall to accommodate trampoline training to an international standard, a soft play area across two levels and a gym twice the size of the existing one.

Other features include a four court sports hall, two glass backed squash courts, and sauna and steam rooms with an additional relaxation area.

Once it opens, the new centre will be demolished to make room for six state-of-the-art 3rd Generation (3G) artificial grass, five-a-side football pitches, allowing football to be played in all weathers, and a 100-space car park.

City council leader Coun Paul Watson said: "Since 2004, together with partners, we've invested more than £60million developing sport and leisure provision across the city - more than any other council outside of London – and that's something we're proud of."

"The new Washington Leisure Centre is testament to the council's commitment to sport and leisure and encouraging more people to be more active."

Deputy leader Coun Harry Trueman is himself a Washington councillor. He predicted the new centre would be a big hit.

"Generations of families have grown up with the old Washington Leisure Centre and will have very fond memories of

By KEVIN CLARK

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ON TRACK: Coun Paul Watson, seated, with centre manager left Craig Jobson and right Coun Harry Trueman.

●SUNDERLAND City Council is offering the chance to try out the facilities at the new pool before it opens to the public.

Winners will have the opportunity to try out the pool and flumes and other specified activities on Friday, May 29, as part of the centre's pre-opening testing programme.

To be in with a chance of winning tickets for a family of five, pick up and a complete a postcard at the free Active Sunderland Washington Area Festival in

it but it has reached the end of its natural life and the new centre has so much more to offer," he said.

"It really is a fantastic facility, with two water flumes compared with the one we have currently. We're doubling the size of the gym and we're going to have a trampoline hall that can be used to train trampolinists to an international standard.

"That's not to mention the soft play area across two levels and the car park people have been asking about for a long time, so it really will be a tremendous asset for the area."

The new centre has been built by Design and Build contractor Pellikaan Construction, which specialises in sports and leisure centres.

Director Gert-Jan Peeters said: "This is the third leisure project that we were allowed to deliver for the Sunderland community and once again, the cooperation with the council has been outstanding, just like it was with Watson Batty Architects and our other partners and subcontractors."

"We are especially pleased with the quality and design levels that we have delivered on this new centre, which we believe will set a new standard for our future developments."

Princess Anne Park on Thursday, May 28.

The Festival is being held on the Village Green (behind the leisure centre) from 11am – 3pm. Activities include – Tag Rugby, Martial arts, fun runs, just play activities including swingball, hula hoops, the opening of the new play area, mini golf, netball and volleyball.

More info is available on the Active Sunderland Facebook page.

Winners will be picked at random. The prize must be taken on the specified date.

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