

£27 million leisure expansion officially opened

4 years ago



The official opening of the £27 million [Sands Centre](#) redevelopment took place last week.

Local dignitaries – including the Leader of Carlisle City Council, Cllr John Mallinson and the Mayor of Carlisle, Cllr Mike Mitchelson – were joined by Chair of Sport England, Chris Boardman and partners.

The new Sands Centre building, funded by Carlisle City Council with support from a £2.2 million Sport England grant, is set across two storeys and accessed by a bespoke, internal street, the new build extension adds 40,000sqft to the existing building, with the redeveloped centre offering state-of-the-art facilities including a 25m main pool and a 20m learner pool complete with an innovative moveable floor.

There is a four-court sports hall with a spectator gallery, full equipped gym, and a spinning studio and dance studios. It also boasts a café and bar areas to be provided by Hickory's.

The improved facilities also include a range of sustainable features which will support Carlisle City Council's plans for reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and providing sustainable, healthy transport options.

Leader of Carlisle City Council, Cllr John Mallinson, said: "I'm delighted that work has been completed on The Sands Centre redevelopment and would like to pass on my thanks to our project team, partners and contractors.

"Massive improvements have been made to the site and it will provide huge benefits for the wellbeing of our communities. The project has had to overcome lots of challenges, but the benefits will last for many generations to come."

Chris Boardman MBE, Chair of Sport England, said: “Sport England’s mission is to make sure that everyone – regardless of background, bank balance, gender or where they live – has the opportunity to get active. And fantastic spaces like the Sands Centre can play a huge part in that. We’re delighted to have supported the Centre to give local people more opportunities to enjoy the physical, mental and social rewards of an active lifestyle.”

The project also consolidates the existing arrangements with the North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust (NCIC) Musculoskeletal (MSK) team. The MSK team already provide treatment services at The Sands Centre but will be able to expand their services and develop new joint/collective treatment and rehabilitation activities with GLL and other partners.

Joanna Manley, Head of Physiotherapy at NCIC, said: We are delighted that The Sands Centre redevelopment has provided us with the opportunity to deliver our Carlisle Integrated Musculoskeletal (IMSK) Physiotherapy service from a state-of-the-art health and leisure facility. Being located there rather than in a hospital setting can provide significant health and wellbeing benefits to our service users.

The service will be delivered in a non-clinical environment and promotes healthy lifestyle choices with shared use of the fitness suite and potentially the pool facilities in the future. This will also allow us to improve our rehabilitation provision for people with new or longstanding MSK conditions and disorders. We look forward to developing our services further in this fantastic facility.”

National contractor Wates Construction undertook the works on behalf of Carlisle City Council.

Dave Saville, Regional Managing Director, Wates Construction North said: “The Sands Centre has been carefully designed to support the long-term wellbeing of Carlisle communities and we’re proud to say the positive impact of this build goes even further than the end asset.

“We committed to making construction benefit the wider region through delivering Social Value, maximising local employment both through the supply chain and provision of training opportunities to young people as well as ensuring the build prioritised sustainability throughout. I, and all the Wates team, are thrilled the Sands Centre is now open and hope Carlisle residents enjoy it for years to come.”

The site is managed by Carlisle City Council’s behalf by GLL. Mark Sesnan, CEO of charitable social enterprise GLL which operates leisure facilities under the Better brand said: “We are delighted to be operating the new Sands Centre in Carlisle. Already a magnet of local health and wellbeing for many years, the new facilities offer a much-improved customer experience and we have been working closely with Carlisle City Council to get the details right.

As a charitable social enterprise, we exist to get more people more active more often and with so many activities to choose – from swimming to badminton to spin classes – we are sure we will do just that.”