

Transforming Leisure in Reading with GLL

Ben Stanesby – Active Reading Manager

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Reading's Historic Provision



4 centres built in 1970's and 1980's and a pool in the early 20th Century. Condition and throughput reflected age.



Central Pool closed 2018 - originally 33m pool plus teaching and diving pools.



Arthur Hill Swimming Pool, operated 1911 - 2016.



Old Rivermead closed 2023 - leisure pool, gym, sports hall, bowls hall.



Meadway Sports Centre retained - Dual use, 20m pool, Sports Hall, Gym and Squash courts.



South Reading Leisure Centre - Swimming pool, Sports Hall and studio, gym and multi-use spaces.



Palmer Park Leisure Centre & Stadium - Athletic and Velo tracks and gym. Extended 2022 Swimming Pool, Softplay and larger gym.

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Historic Management

- Managed in house until 2021.
- Use reflected age and condition of facilities.
- Limited management information and unsophisticated out-reach programme.
- Contract started July 2021, building works commenced August 2021 and service delivery priorities were reset:
 - Deliver modern, financially and environmentally sustainable leisure facilities.
 - Increase physical activity and reduce health inequalities.
 - Contribute to the ambition of a net-zero carbon Reading by 2030.

Delivery of an ambitious £40m investment programme of modern leisure facilities

Rivermead Leisure Centre

- 25m, 8 lane competition pool.
- Teaching and diving pool.
- Splash pad fun zone for younger children.
- 120-station gym with 3 studios.
- 6-court sports hall with 250 spectator seats.
- Accessible toilets and changing facilities.
- Soft play, new reception area and café.
- Outside play area.



A large, modern building with a dark brown and light orange facade. The text 'PALMER PARK LEISURE CENTRE & STADIUM' is visible on the building's exterior. A statue of a man in a long coat stands on a pedestal in the foreground on the left. The sky is clear blue.

Delivery of an ambitious £40m investment programme of modern leisure facilities

Palmer Park Leisure Centre

- 25m community pool.
- 100-station gym and studios.
- Soft play, with party rooms.
- New changing rooms, toilets and accessible changing facility.
 - New café.



Delivering an ambitious £40m investment programme of modern leisure facilities: South Reading & Meadway

South Reading Improvements - 2023/24 £700k

- Swimming pool changing rooms
- Accessible change
- Pool tank structure
- RFCCT Intervention unit

Meadway Improvements - 2023 £300k

- Swimming pool changing rooms
- Sports Hall and changing
- Creation of large Studio

Low Carbon Leisure



Low carbon energy package worth over £2.5 million.


Rivermead - two air source heat pumps


- Reduce gas use by c.1,400,000 kWh/year.
- 80 per cent reduction in the carbon emission rate.
- Most of the additional electrical load offset by 770 new solar panels.

Palmer Park - one air source heat pump


- Reduce gas use by c.400,000kWh/year.
- 57 per cent reduction in the carbon emission rate.
- Active Travel.
- Key Performance Indicators:
 - 2.5% reduction pa in energy consumption.
 - 1% reduction pa in water consumption
 - Implementation of an Environmental Management System.

Improving Service Reach

 Clear contract outcomes to increase participation in physical activity and reduce health inequalities.

 Improved opportunities to promote local employment including new apprenticeships.

 Targeted physical activity programmes e.g. falls prevention, adult weight management.

 Community partnerships e.g. Reading FC Community Trust, festival of inclusion.

 Piloting activity in community centres.

 Monthly review between leisure, Public Health & GLL.

 Embedding Quest in contract management.

 Transparency through Committee assessment of contract performance.

This year onwards

- New and improved pools opened spring and summer 2024.
- Increasing active participants to over 1 million annually.
- Building on targeted work - increase physical activity and reduce health inequalities.
- Embedding evidenced performance management framework
- £1.9 million for lifecycle maintenance capital works to maintain energy improvements in future and ongoing decarbonisation of facilities.

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