

# **V4 Services and ABC Council celebrate successful end to 2020 with grand opening of £35m flagship leisure centre**

Submitted by: Bloom Services

Thursday, 5 November 2020

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Public sector consultancy V4 Services has worked in partnership with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) to develop and open Northern Ireland's new flagship leisure facility.

South Lake Leisure Centre, which opened this week, is the latest completion for V4 Services in the leisure sector and is the largest project in the council's ambitious capital investment programme. The new state-of-the-art facility offers a 50-metre pool, the largest gym in Northern Ireland, an 8-court sports hall, multiple studios, a health and wellbeing suite, a children's leisure pool, a soft play zone and Café IncredABLE, a social enterprise that creates meaningful opportunities for people with a learning or intellectual disability, including those with autism.

As specialists in the leisure sector, the consultancy was selected by ABC council in 2015 to provide consultancy advice and support throughout the entire project lifecycle, from preliminary concept and master planning to design, implementation, and aftercare. Over the course of the near three-year project, V4 Services delivered a number of services, including early-stage affordability, needs analysis, business planning support and procurement support and advice.

The business case developed by V4 Services was predicated on a rationalisation plan that involved the replacement of three older facilities in the Craigavon area with this world-class facility. After completing the business case and developing the investment strategy, the multi-skilled team also provided the strategic advice and support initially before moving to the necessary practical and operational inputs for the highly ambitious project. Whole life savings were generated to fund the capital costs and to reduce dependency on council funding in the longer term.

Mark Parkinson, Strategic Director People at ABC council, said:

"We've worked with V4 Services for many years and it has been a pleasure to work with them on this project. ABC council's vision was very ambitious and required a major cultural change and transformation programme, as well as an investment programme. We appointed V4S as our trusted advisors in 2015 and they have been our business partners throughout the lifecycle of the project, culminating in the opening of the South Lake Leisure Centre on Monday 2nd November.

V4S provided a total commitment to achieving our project objectives, and have been very hands-on, applying their wide-ranging sector knowledge across all aspects of the project and creating a real culture change in how people behave. The team were dedicated to the project and the timeline and wholly supported the council during the pandemic, ensuring safe and controlled management and support. I would have no hesitation in recommending the V4S team to any other authority that needs to turn their vision into reality".

## **ABOUT V4 SERVICES**

V4 Services has worked in partnership with over 120 public sector organisations across the UK including councils, NHS, social enterprises and trading bodies. The team provide hands-on delivery support to set

up new business structures, improve the efficiency of in-house services, encourage a commercial approach and generate savings and service improvements, and have successfully delivered over 230 projects for clients.

Find out more about V4 Services (<https://www.v4services.com/>)