

# Minutes



## Formal Council Questions and Responses

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Date: 27 January 2023

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### 1 Question to the Leader of the Council: 2023/02 - Newport Leisure Centre

#### **Councillor M Howells asked:**

In 2021 a council report stated that up to £2.5 million would be needed to reopen the Newport Centre pool area to the public, and an additional £9.1 million to maintain the building in the medium term. This is significantly less than the £19.7m new leisure centre (and no doubt given construction costs and inflation, that figure has now increased to circa 22m.)

Why has the council chosen to replace the leisure centre with a new one at a different location, given the financial position and the £27m funding black hole we currently face and would it not be more prudent to scrap the plans and use the money to balance the budget and reduce the increases in budget pressures and likely council tax increase to residents.

#### **Councillor Mudd responded:**

The reasons for replacing the Newport Centre are set out in previous Cabinet reports. The £9.1m referenced by Cllr Howells would only deal with maintenance issues and would not address current energy and accessibility requirements. Addressing such issues would necessitate significant, additional costs associated with a full redesign of the existing building.

I would also remind Cllr Howells that this project is not wholly funded by the Council. The development is also supported by a mix of Welsh Government grant, and savings derived as a result of delivering a more efficient operation, both of which would not be available for refurbishing the current site.

Cllr Howells will also be aware that this development is a capital not revenue project, therefore stopping the project would not significantly assist with the Council's challenging medium-term revenue position.

Finally, the leisure centre project is also part of a wider vision for the city, which facilitates the relocation of Coleg Gwent's campus into the City Centre, bringing footfall to support our retail and leisure businesses.