



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Question From:	County Councillor Graham Breeze
Subject:	Free use of Freedom Leisure Centres across the County by Powys County Council staff
Question To:	County Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader and Councillor David Selby Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys

Question:

At a time when the very future of centres run across Powys by the Freedom Leisure Group is in doubt and families throughout Powys have seen leisure centre costs spiralling it is extremely disturbing to learn that Powys County Council has accepted an offer for all staff to enjoy free use of the facilities for seven days during March. This offer of a free seven-day pass from Freedom Leisure has been extended to all Powys County Council staff including teaching and non-teaching employees at county schools.

It is only a few months since the Portfolio Holder For a More Prosperous Powys was announcing three-month closures of certain leisure facilities operated by Freedom Leisure due to pressure for additional funding from the company – a decision only reversed by a public outcry and a better than expected final settlement from Welsh Government. The residents in my ward, and I am sure across the whole of the county, are struggling to cope with rocketing heating and grocery bills and in recent weeks have seen the costs of using facilities at county leisure centres shoot up too.

Could the Council Leader and the Portfolio Holder for a More Prosperous Powys please answer:

1. If they consider it appropriate that a struggling organisation such as Freedom Leisure should be offering free facilities to Powys County Council staff at centres which were under threat of closure only months ago?
2. If they consider it appropriate that Powys County Council staff should benefit from a seven-day free pass to use facilities which residents from all across the county are struggling to afford?
3. Was the offer from Freedom Leisure discussed and approved at Cabinet Level or scrutinised by the council in any way?
4. If the answer to question 3 is “No” can confirmation be provided of who did approve and accept the offer?
5. Will they recognise that the acceptance of free use of the facilities for Powys County Council staff was ill-conceived and will not be permitted in the future?