



## Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

### Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023:

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and considered the following documents:

Cabinet Paper – Newtown Schools  
Appendix A – Newtown Options Appraisal  
Appendix B – Newtown Engagement Report  
Appendix C – Newtown Impact Assessment

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys and Finance and Corporate Transformation and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee requested that:
  - That a Powys-wide vision document be made available to all stakeholders to inform of the direction of travel for the whole schools transformation programme.
  - Further work be undertaken on the long-term sustainability, including the equality of provision and the high number of vacant places, of schools in Newtown prior to decision and implementation of plans.
  
- The Committee remained unconvinced about
  - Using the North Powys Wellbeing Hub as an argument for merging Treowen CP School into an extended Calon y Dderwen campus, given that the associated funding from WG for this significant development to take place, has not been secured.
  - Whether the site for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen is the best site for a new school, considering that only 11% of pupils currently live within catchment. In addition, has exploration of any other potential site been undertaken.
  - The rationale behind schools with smaller numbers not being considered within the current transformation programme.
  - Plans for the future potential use of the Treowen school site if the school were to close.
  
- The Committee expressed concern:
  - Of the large number of available places (286) within Newtown schools, Committee cannot see a justification for building a new school.
  - That the proposals as set out, could potentially leave Maesyrrhandir CP School, in terms of maintenance and educational attainment in a modern learning environment, far behind other schools in the town.

- Of there being no solid basis provided within the reports for a merger of Treowen CP School over Maesyrrhandir CP School with Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, other than similar pupil profiling through FSM (Free School Meals) and ALN (Additional Learning Needs).
- Of the access to Calon Y Dderwen, the traffic congestion in the area, active travel routes for children across busy main roads.

<b>Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet that:</b>	<b>Accept (plus Action and timescale)</b>	<b>Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)</b>	<b>Reject (plus Rationale)</b>
1 Assurance be urgently sought from WG in respect of secured funding for the North Powys Wellbeing Hub and subsequent extended build at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen.			
2 Assurance be given that the Cabinet will urgently address the high vacant places within schools in Newtown.			
3 Assurance sought for the dissemination to stakeholders of clear transport plans, given the current level of traffic congestion around Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, prior to any decision being made.			
4 The long-term sustainability of all schools in Newtown to be considered in the current plans, including the rationale behind schools with smaller numbers not being considered within the current transformation programme.			
5 The vision for the delivery of education in Newtown, and the whole of Powys, to be			

shared with all stakeholders.			
6 Assurance be given of equity of educational provision across all schools.			
7. Clarity is sought on the future potential use of the site.			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e., by 18/12/2023.

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 17/10/2023:

County Councillors:

R.G. Thomas, G.D. Jones, A.W Davies, B Davies, D. Meredith, G. Morgan, S McNicholas, L. Roberts, G Preston,

Co-Opted Members:

K. Chedgzoy, S. Davies, M. Evitts.