

## **Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with Staff and Governors**

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## Consultation meeting with Staff of Ysgol Calon y Dderwen

5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Present:

#### **Staff:**

**Rebecca Smith** – Teaching Assistant  
**Sam Hyde** – Teaching Assistant  
**Hannah Gittoes** – Teacher  
**Emma Jones-Clements** – Teaching Assistant  
**Laura Jones** – Teaching Assistant  
**Martin Copy** – Teaching Assistant  
**Charlotte Foulkes** – Teacher  
**Lynne Roberts-Wakins** – Deputy Head Teacher  
**Margaret Allen** – Teacher  
**Lauri Griffiths** – Teacher  
**Caroline Orden** – L.S.A.  
**Katie Harris** – Teacher  
**Iris S-J** – Teacher  
**Julie Warmington** – Teacher  
**Kate Orehawa** – Administrator  
**Carl Hyde** – Headteacher  
**Lisa Bridges** – Teacher  
**Jess Williams** – Teaching Assistant  
**Caroline Hutek** – Teaching Assistant  
**Sarah Smout** – Teacher

#### **Officers:**

**Marianne Evans** – Service Manager for Schools Transformation  
**Helen Hinton** – HR Business Partner (Schools)  
**Sarah Astley** – Transforming Education Strategic Programme Manager  
**Eurig Towns** – Service Manager for School Improvement  
**Amy Radford** – Transforming Education Programme Officer

Sarah Astley welcomed all to the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

SA explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions to the officers afterwards. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes, but the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed.

SA gave a short PowerPoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposal, and explained that in October 2023, Powys County Council's

Cabinet gave approval to proceed with consultation on proposals affecting Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen School.

The proposals are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1 September 2025

**Phase 2:** Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the Treowen site closes.

The consultation period started on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and runs for 6 weeks, ending on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

After the consultation period ends, a consultation report will be prepared which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If they decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, and there would be 28 days for people to submit any objections they have. An Objection Report would then be prepared, and Cabinet would consider this report and make a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

The indicative timeline included in the document was shared, however it was explained that this can change due to circumstances or the number of responses. The intention was that the Consultation Report would be considered in April, however there is a complication with this due to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May, which means there will be no Cabinet meeting in April, so the Consultation Report will either be considered in March or May.

**Member of staff:** How does it stand with jobs for us?

**Marianne Evans:** In the first phase there would be no impact on you, the impact would be on Treowen staff. We wouldn't expect to see any massive changes to the Treowen staff either as the school would operate over two sites during that period.

When we get to the position where there's a new build, we would then have to look at the staffing structure. But we can't say now what that structure will be or what it would mean for you. That will be taken through the HR Management of Change process. But that would be at the time when the new build is ready.

**Sarah Astley:** In terms of the impact on you, we are very aware that we've recently had a process to merge Ladywell Green and Hafren to establish Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, which has meant that you have already been through a merger process recently. We heard very strongly from you in the engagement held before the summer that you were concerned about being part of another merger process, and we have taken that into account in terms of the current proposal. The option could

have been to close both schools and open a new school, which would have had more of an impact on you during the first phase.

**Marianne Evans:** We don't want to put you through that again having only recently come out the other end of a previous merger. I'm sure there will be different views from Treowen about that though – the impact on them and whether they are being treated fairly. However, in the situation we are in, with you only recently having opened, I don't think it would be right to do that again.

**Member of staff:** I think what you're saying though is that when the new build is created and we're ready to move in, there will be redundancies then. Then we'll all be on the same level playing field, so we will go through it again, I think.

**Marianne Evans:** When the new build is there and you know the number of classrooms and the pupil numbers and what the configuration is, yes, the school would have to look at staffing again.

**Helen Hinton:** The governing body would have to look at the staffing structure and they would have to look at how many classes they need. Then if changes in staffing were needed, they would have to consult with you again, like it was for you before, with all the staff of Calon y Dderwen.

**Member of staff:** So really, we're not secure at all then, are we really? We're secure for a limited amount of time during Phase 1.

**Marianne Evans:** With every school proposal we've done, where there are schools on separate sites until there is a new build, this has always been the case. It was a similar situation in Welshpool. When the new building was due to open and they knew how pupil numbers looked, the governors and the Head had to look again at what was required.

**Member of staff:** What about the wellbeing of the staff during those two redundancy periods? How did that look?

**Marianne Evans:** In the first phase when the schools merged, we were really involved and worked closely with the schools. HR were in full support throughout the whole process. But it was challenging, taking four schools into two was pretty challenging at that time. However, what's important is that there is support for staff as you go through the process.

**Helen Hinton:** It's also worth noting that what the schools will need to do is look at potentially planning for that time and looking not to go through any permanent recruitment going forward. So as people move on, you could look at offering fixed term contracts, so that the people who are employed now have a better chance of securing jobs as we go through the process.

**Marianne Evans:** It's an ongoing, evolving thing. You do that every year; you look at your pupil numbers and you do that planning. It's a natural part of planning for the future. What's different here is that it's linked to moving to a new build.

**Member of staff:** I don't believe that being made redundant should be a natural path for any teacher, or anyone working in a school, as part of their career.

**Marianne Evans:** I don't think we're proposing a natural path to redundancy here. What we are looking at is to ensure that as many Newtown children as possible have the opportunity to be in a brand-new facility under the banner of Ysgol Calon y Dderwen.

[Nancy Owen joined the meeting.]

**Marianne Evans:** That's the number one rationale or reason for taking this proposal forward. And what we are saying is, during this first phase, there won't be any impact on current staff at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen. But even if we weren't proposing that Treowen were going to come in, even if it was just Calon y Dderwen moving into a new building, you would still have to look at pupil numbers and plan for the staffing requirements at that point.

**Member of staff:** What's the reason for Treowen school staying there during Phase 1? Surely for our staff, if you moved those pupils here to start with, that would mean we wouldn't have to go through that process because they would already be here not on two sites, so there would be no doubling up on staff.

**Marianne Evans:** I think the reason is, do we have enough space in Calon y Dderwen to take pupils from day one from Treowen and I don't think we have. That's the reason for that. But also having the Treowen site open as part of Calon y Dderwen does provide that transition into a new model, particularly as we already know that there are concerns from the Treowen community, we've heard them already. So this would help with the transition process. But ultimately, have we got enough space on this site to bring Treowen children in from day one, and I think the answer is no.

**Member of staff:** How many children are there in Treowen?

**Marianne Evans:** 110.

**Sarah Astley:** It was also around the use of the site. At some point the site will be a construction site, so there was concern about maximising the number of pupils on the site whilst that construction is period is happening, which can be difficult to manage.

**Member of staff:** For the Heads, Deputies, SLT, are you saying that they would carry on as they are? Are you saying that there would be a Head on both sites? A Deputy on both sites? Is that what you're proposing if there's no change?

**Marianne Evans:** That would be up to the governing body of Calon y Dderwen in terms of how it manages leadership across both sites. That would be done in discussion with the governors and the Heads.

**Member of staff:** So potentially people's jobs could change there?

**Marianne Evans:** Potentially, that's something that would need to be worked through.

**Member of staff:** Can I just ask, you just said 110 pupils. I don't know if I've got it wrong but I thought I heard 360 places when looking at numbers for the new school?

**Member of staff:** At the moment we're 251, so if they're 110, and the number is going to be 360, we're already over capacity.

**Marianne Evans:** But if you look at the projections for both schools, numbers are dropping. They're dropping very rapidly in Treowen and in are projected to go from 100 to 60 in 2 years. If you look at the whole of Newtown, with the number of schools in the town and what's happened over the last 5 years in terms of pupil numbers, particularly at Maesyrrhandir and Treowen where they've basically halved and are projected to drop even lower, in a few years' time Maesyrrhandir and Treowen could be 3 teacher schools because they are dropping below the 90 pupil mark. Taking that into account and looking at the projections, with yourselves and Treowen, you are still below the 350 mark.

**Member of staff:** How much below? Do you know?

**Marianne Evans:** Roughly about 30?

**Sarah Astley:** Looking at the projections that are in the consultation documents. These are based on PLASC and live birth information, and they are projections so there is always a bit of a caveat around them. Based on this data, in January 2028 we are looking at 229 at Calon y Dderwen, and 78 at Treowen, which takes us to around 310 pupils altogether.

**Member of staff:** It's hard because we know the people at Treowen, they're not just faceless people, and the children, they are friends. On one level, if this wasn't happening, pupil numbers there were going anyway, so they'd have redundancies there, but we wouldn't. So, it does seem a little unfair on us to be lumped in with those redundancies. But on the other hand, because they're our friends there's a human side to it. Not just thinking about your own self but thinking of them. It's fairer

for them. But having just been through it, being put in a situation that nobody's asked to be in, it's quite hard. That's what I'm picking up from the staff anyway.

The money for the new build, am I correct that we have funding for a build for a 270 place school from the Welsh Government? However we don't have funding for a build for 360 pupils? If that isn't approved, where are we then?

**Marianne Evans:** You're right. We submitted our first business case for this project to Welsh Government in 2020, so quite a long time ago now. However, it is on the Council's programme, and is on the Welsh Government's capital programme. We've already had discussions with Welsh Government to explain what's going on here, and the reasons why we are consulting on this possible change. What we'll need to do, because the cost will be higher than the previous costs put in, we would need to submit another business case with the new costs in. It's in the Council's programme and on the Welsh Government's programme, but with all new builds, there's never any guarantee of the funding until you're ready to put the spades in the ground, that's when you get the final approval from Welsh Government. Anything up to that is an approval in principle, however we are confident that funding will be available, particularly because the development is part of the development of a health hub as part of the North Powys Wellbeing Programme, and Welsh Government is supportive of that.

**Sarah Astley:** Also we would have needed to submit further business cases anyway. The Business Case that was prepared in 2020 is the first of a series of three. There have been situations before where things have changed as the business case process has moved forward. But there would have needed to be further business cases anyway before that money was absolutely certain. Do you want to mention the rolling programme as well?

**Marianne Evans:** Yes. The Welsh Government are expecting all County Councils to put in new capital programmes for school builds. They've changed how they are doing it now, so instead of going with what was previously five-year bands, they're going on what they call a nine-year rolling programme. It's far more flexible and you can plan for a longer term, which is always helpful anyway. Councils are expected to submit their new programmes by the end of March. Ysgol Calon y Dderwen is in that programme, so we'll be taking that through our Cabinet and submitting to Welsh Government over the next few weeks. You do have a lovely space here, but there is no denying that the buildings need some investment, and there are issues with older buildings, as we know, across the county.

**Member of staff:** What happens if there are more children in the future? I know nobody can look into the future, but it's not beyond the realms of possibility that another 30 children could arrive in a couple of years. What happens then? We can't make it any bigger then, can we?

**Marianne Evans:** That's a question for the architect, I think. For every school build, we do request that they future proof it in some way so that something could be done if pupil numbers grow. They're always designed with that in mind. The other thing we have to look at in Newtown is the number of surplus places already in the town. And again, if the pupil numbers dropped then if things stay the same, surplus places are going to increase. But the last thing we want is to not have any available places in Newtown, so we would need a buffer. So, by keeping Maesyrrhandir, there's surplus places, and there are also surplus places in St Mary's and some in Penygloddfa and Dafydd Llwyd.

When you're looking at a town with so many schools, it's a different consideration to some of the more rural areas we look at as there are already a number of schools within a small area.

**Member of staff:** It's a possibility that parents at Treowen could decide to move their children to other schools now, and instead of coming all the way over here, they might go to Maesyrrhandir, so we just don't know what could end up happening.

**Member of staff:** What would happen, for instance, in September 2025, if Treowen numbers were really low and our numbers really high, would staff move between?

**Marianne Evans:** Potentially.

**Member of staff:** Because we'd all be Calon y Dderwen staff by then.

**Marianne Evans:** You'd remain Calon y Dderwen staff. The Treowen staff would have new contracts and become Calon y Dderwen staff.

**Member of staff:** Would they be permanent contracts then?

**Helen Hinton:** If they're permanent now then yes, they'll be ringfenced to permanent jobs.

**Marianne Evans:** You'll be one staffing body by then. You have to think, it's a 360 pupil school, it's larger than you are now, which is currently 251, so obviously the staffing structure is dictated by the pupil numbers and how the classes are configured. It's something to be aware of, but it may have happened naturally anyway.

**Member of staff:** It will happen naturally to Treowen if their numbers drop but if the pupils choose not to come here, then we're going to be made redundant as one whole staff. So, if pupils from Treowen go to Maesyrrhandir, we'll have less pupils so the staff structure will need to change, but it will because we've got two sets of staff team but not enough pupils.

**Marianne Evans:** You'd be one body of staff if this proposal went ahead.



**Member of staff:** But if it doesn't go ahead then all our jobs are safe.

**Eurig Towns:** Not necessarily because pupil numbers generally are dropping, as we've seen with the numbers that came through here now, your numbers as a school are dropping. So that doesn't mean you're safe.

**Member of staff:** But that is a natural thing, merging isn't natural. You can't guarantee that those 360 children will actually come to this school.

**Eurig Towns:** We can't guarantee. Numbers go down or they go up. All we can use are the figures that we have.

**Sarah Astley:** The flip side of course is that more pupils might want to come here so yes, some may choose to go somewhere else, but others that are somewhere else, may choose to come to Calon y Dderwen as well. We don't know, do we?

**Member of staff:** But one thing that is guaranteed is that if this goes through, we've got to merge two staff groups and one group, as we all know, are not over the moon at the prospect. So, will we get support? I'm on the senior management team, I'm not doubting our own abilities, but I think that's going to be potentially quite difficult. Are we going to be supported in any way to do that? It needs to be successful from the beginning and I think, we've never done that before. Is there any support from the county or from other schools who have done that before that could help us out?

**Marianne Evans:** The School Improvement Team will always be supportive, as will HR, as will Finance. There's learning to be gathered from some of the other mergers that have happened, so there are teachers who have gone through this.

**Member of staff:** Have they merged or have they expanded?

**Marianne Evans:** We had an expansion in Newtown / Presteigne. That's going back a few years now. But I think what we're hearing from you is that there is going to be quite a difficult transition period.

**Member of staff:** We don't want that to be a personal thing.

**Marianne Evans:** If this goes ahead then you're going to potentially have one body of staff thinking they're the underdog. And you're in an uncomfortable position, because you don't want to be seen to be taking over. So that's something we're going to work to.

**Sarah Astley:** Similar themes came up this afternoon when we were talking with the pupils, they were concerned about one school being seen as taking over the other, and they had some suggestions about how we could work through that, what could be done to ease that and support that transition.

**Marianne Evans:** If this goes forward then the leadership of this school, working closely with the local authority, working closely with the governors, this is something that needs to be carefully planned out and managed because it is difficult. We're not trying to say this is easy. It's going to be challenging for sure.

**Member of staff:** On the figures, the projections, it's difficult when you're talking 3 or 4 years in the future. Children haven't been born yet, but the figures in there from January 24 are 236. We've just had it confirmed that our intake in September '24 is 37. We've got 36 children Year 6 now. So, we are actually going to be 252 in September rather than 236.

**Marianne Evans:** You're right, we've published the current projections, but when you're in a town like this where pupils move around, that forecasting is slightly more challenging. And that's why it's good to work with you to understand what's happening next year so we can map out from there.

**Member of staff:** That will have consequences for future years.

**Sarah Astley:** And the question then is what's happening elsewhere, in the other schools. Because often if there's an increase in one school, in a situation like Newtown where we've got a lot of schools in quite a small area, if there's an increase in one school the likelihood is there's a decrease somewhere else. So, what does that look like across the whole town?

**Member of staff:** How realistic is it that we will move to a new build in 2026/27? That does seem quite quick considering how long it's taken so far.

**Marianne Evans:** I'm going to be honest. I think there is a risk that it will be pushed further.

**Member of staff:** Would it be longer than a year or two?

**Marianne Evans:** Potentially. When all this raised its head last summer we were frustrated because we were going really well along the build. And what's challenging is how much work can we do on the design whilst we're in this period? There is work currently happening, reviewing the designs based on an increased number of pupils, but no decisions have yet been made to move forward with this change, so we can't pre-empt any decisions. But it is a risk.

**Member of staff:** When will this process end?

**Sarah Astley:** If Cabinet decide to move forward with the process, we're hoping to finish the process before the end of the school year. However, it obviously depends on the level of responses and how long it takes to work through everything. So if it's

not possible to have a final decision in July, then we would be looking at the first Cabinet meeting back in September.

**Member of staff:** What happens with the upkeep of the buildings we're currently in? When we merged as Ysgol Calon y Dderwen we thought we'd be in pretty quickly, however the field's exactly the same as it was then. So, we're having to maintain the upkeep of at least those that are deemed core. And then there's Treowen as well. So, if we were to become one school, how do you maintain the upkeep of the buildings while all these decisions are being made and possibly pushed on?

**Marianne Evans:** Well, the Council don't have a choice. They have to make sure that buildings are safe and well maintained, so there would be an additional cost to the authority of supporting these schools whilst we're in this interim period. But I don't think there's any getting away from that because we can't have schools falling down and not able to open because of issue related to the condition of the buildings.

**Member of staff:** That currently comes out of our school budget.

**Marianne Evans:** We'd have to provide over and above funding if that was the case.

**Member of staff:** Why don't we get it now then?

**Marianne Evans:** The Major Improvements Programme has supported you over this last year, hasn't it?

**Headteacher:** Once the budget is run on March 20<sup>th</sup>, I think, we'll then see what the new formula means for us. And then from that we will look to see what we can afford ourselves. Already we put £14,000 a year into the building and we'll see if that's enough or whether or not we need more. And then we'd get in touch with Marianne, David Thompson would then probably be sent in and then we'll see where we go from there. We generally have had, a significant amount of support from the transformation process when we've asked for it.

**Sarah Astley:** We have had some conversations recently about some of the needs around the building and how we can support you with that.

**Marianne Evans:** I think the Council has a duty because it's the Council putting the proposal forward. Therefore, if the proposal does go forward and we delay the new build because of this then obviously there's a duty to support the school in terms of its condition.

**Member of staff:** You mentioned before about future-proofing, and looking at the plans to ensure they could be extended, but what about the grounds? We're already concerned about the grounds, the hall is barely going to be big enough for the number of pupils we will have. How do you future-proof that? You can't just stretch the hall and add on more land.

**Marianne Evans:** That's a question for the architects. But you're right, we're constrained by the site and we're constrained by the fact that the health hub is coming in. But, as I said, it's an architectural question and I'm sure the architect would be able to give an answer. The key thing here for us is, as every local authority, we have to design our schools within certain guidance. And if we're not within that guidance we get questioned by Welsh Government. We've had one case recently with another school where we'd gone over the guidance or the benchmarks and this was questioned by Welsh Government. So, at that design stage we have to be very mindful that we're within the boundaries of the Welsh Government guidance.

**Member of staff:** The guidance that's been put in place, the children we get now, there's a lot of need, and outdoor learning is huge. It's a concern that the outdoor space is being taken away.

**Marianne Evans:** The guidance is interesting because we are challenged, and we challenge as well. The building bulletin guidance is fairly old by now. Welsh Government recognise that, and they are developing new standards for schools and new guidance, and they're looking at things like ALN, Curriculum for Wales, Community Focussed Schools, that's another big driver. So hopefully by March or April we'll see this new guidance from Welsh Government and that will help us.

**Member of staff:** So we could end up with more space then?

**Marianne Evans:** It depends what that is what the guidance is. But actually we have to be really careful because Welsh Government scrutinises these business cases. It's not an open door and you can just put it in your business case and the funding comes.

**Member of staff:** I am concerned that the classrooms we are going to get are going to be based on the old building bulletin, and that the changeover would happen whilst the building work was going on. I think the classrooms are too small for the foundation phase of the new curriculum and it's not fair because there may be a new building bulletin which changes things. So what I hope is that it does get delayed because then we might have more space.

**Marianne Evans:** Our understanding with regard to the new guidance is that we'll know something within the next couple of months.

**Member of staff:** I recognise the building is not in a great shape and it needs to be replaced. But what's actually being proposed is to halve our site, add a huge amount more extra children, and take away a significant amount of grass and space. So, you then start to question, yes, we need a new build but is this going to be any further forward in terms of worth to the new curriculum, or actually is it a step back? And I think that is the concern, it seems that everything is being taken away. I appreciate the building can't carry on as it is, but then you're throwing more children in. So it's a

very difficult thing to look ahead and future-proof and say, yeah, we can see how that's going to work out. If we're going from classrooms that are maybe a bit cold, a bit draughty but are massive into nice, warm but too small ones, that's not necessarily a great swap. Financially it is for the people who are paying for it, but we need space. The children need space.

**Marianne Evans:** We do have discussions about this, very strong discussions sometimes. However, as we manage the funding process, making sure that we get the right thing for what we want, sometimes there is a compromise needed, or maybe there are different viewpoints. We're having those discussions with the design team, but what we can't do is build something that's too big. Welsh Government will just say 'no'.

**Member of staff:** Just sufficient though would be a good start. A hall you could get everyone in, and parents can come in and the whole school could get in it.

**Member of staff:** It just seems ridiculous that you would want to build a school that's too small. It feels like Welsh Government needs to make it a priority to understand what the new curriculum proposes, because as a school we deliver an excellent provision here as it stands now. With the new building we won't be able to deliver excellent provision because every foundation phase class needs a literary area, a maths area, a health and wellbeing area.

We need all the areas in every single class and the foundation phase now. We can't do that with box-shaped classes, we can't deliver it. And then Estyn will come and say why aren't you delivering this provision? But we physically can't in the classrooms being proposed.

I think Welsh Government has to look at it really seriously because we're passionate about our school and our children, really passionate, and we really want to deliver the best, but we can't. We actually can't do it in the building currently being proposed. It can't happen.

**Member of staff:** Do you evaluate? You've built the buildings in Welshpool. Do they get an opportunity to actually say, after it being there for so many years, this is what works well and this is what doesn't. Does that happen?

**Sarah Astley:** We are actually doing a piece of work at the moment which Jim is leading on, which is doing exactly that. It's reviewing some of the more recent builds, and he has been out to speak with the heads of those schools to gather feedback on what's worked well, what hasn't worked well. Most of the time the buildings are an evolution of the previous ones and the team learn and develop and change and amend. So, the purpose of this is to look back. He's been visiting some of the heads of the Gwernyfed schools and he's been to the schools in Welshpool to speak to the heads there as well.

**Marianne Evans:** What we're keen on doing as well, Welsh Government have been developing their standard, and Jim has been part of the group developing that. But we're also developing a Powys standard as well so that we know the basics our schools need.

**Member of staff:** In all seriousness, it might be really good for him to see one in use, to see if that changes his mind on anything. There are 37 Year 6 children in this classroom.

**Sarah Astley:** It's not just about him. There are many different elements to pull together. Input from the School Improvement Team, ALN Team etc.

**Member of staff:** On the ALN point. We already have a lot of outside agencies coming in and part of my Monday involves trying to find places for everybody to go. With an increase of potentially 110 pupils coming in, there would be a need for that provision for the additional pupils too. We are really struggling for space to put people, to the point that it's embarrassing. We've had some pupils outside in huts in the summer because there is literally nowhere for them to work. I've had people saying that the areas aren't private enough and that they can't work properly with children. It's really logistically hard to manage.

So initially when we were looking at the design there were enough rooms, potentially, but even then, it wasn't probably quite enough. We talked about streets and things like that, but there has to be spaces for these people to come in and work, otherwise it's a nightmare. People are fighting for rooms, people are trying to do interventions. It just disrupts the day. ALN is huge. We should be providing for these children, and a lot of time is wasted trying to sort out places for people to go.

Now, if the hub is going to become that, then fine, but if it's not then I don't know where people will manage to work. Physiotherapists need space. Outside is sometimes wet. Where is all that going to happen with an added 100 pupils?

**Marianne Evans:** That is the challenge, isn't it? But, as I said earlier, the Welsh Government's drive for community focussed schools is now a key part of the programme going forward. It wasn't quite as strong previously. So, they will be looking at how will this new school provide those spaces for multi-agency, how will it provide for the community? How will it provide for ALN. That's something they'll be focussing on much more strongly, I think. So again, a challenge. I'm not saying it's not going to be a challenge, looking at the space you have, more children and your requirements and the school's requirements and the needs of the community. But again, it's something we need to continue to work through.

**Sarah Astley:** There was a question earlier about responding after the meeting and yes, you can certainly respond after the meeting if there's anything else you want to tell us. The consultation period ends on the 26<sup>th</sup> February. All the information is on our website and there's a response form there too. We've brought some copies of

the documents to the school as well, they include all the information. If there's anything else you want to say then please do.

**Marianne Evans:** I think the important thing to say is everybody's views will be reflected in the consultation report. It's really important that Powys' Cabinet, the people making the decision, hear the views of and understand the Council's responses to those views. The issues on the ground need to come through the consultation and it's important that Cabinet and the politicians hear the points you are raising. I'm grateful to you for your candid views today because I think that's what we need to relay back to the politicians.

**Member of staff:** Would a general election have an impact on this?

**Marianne Evans:** Not in terms of the Council's Cabinet.

**Member of staff:** It won't change their views?

**Marianne Evans:** The make-up of the Cabinet is the make-up of the Cabinet. They were voted in the local authority election last year.

**Sarah Astley:** In 2022. So, they'll be there for another few years yet.

**Member of staff:** All of the points that have been raised now, are they going to be automatically part of the consultation?

**Sarah Astley:** The notes of this meeting will be reflected in the consultation report. But if you want to submit written responses too that reflect the same points, that's fine.

**Member of staff:** Thinking of our children here, the building was first talked about in 2020 and very selfishly, I think of my daughter who was born in 2020. In September she starts here and realistically, is she going to benefit from anything that we're talking about? Possibly not? By the time she leaves, realistically, is she? What she's going to experience is a whole lot of turbulence from all of this going on. Teacher wellbeing being affected because they're facing redundancy because they're working across two sites, because they're having to go to extra meetings that don't then leave any time for them to plan for her, mark for her, provide for her as well as all the building and everything else that goes on. Are we really thinking about the children in all of this? And the impact on the children we have now, not just those for the future?

**Marianne Evans:** I think you make a strong point which will be noted in the minutes.

**Headteacher:** I think it's an appropriate time to end. We have an incredible and exceptional group of professionals who I've had the pleasure of working with at Calon y Dderwen and I know you maintain your high standards regardless of everything and all the other complications going on. It's that togetherness we need

through this part of the journey and then beyond and I think we will come out stronger as we have done in the past.

There is a sense of déjà vu in some ways but let's keep on working together and also share your views on that consultation online. Thanks for the opportunity to engage and also for your openness as well. Hopefully, we'll give some more feedback to the documentation.

**Meeting ended.**

## **Consultation meeting with Governors of Ysgol Calon y Dderwen**

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

### **Present:**

#### **Governors:**

**Carl Hyde** - Headteacher

**Luke Orehawa** – Chair of Governors

**Maggie Preece** – Governor

**Dan Rowlands** – Governor

**Lynne Roberts-Watkins** – Deputy Head Teacher / Teacher Governor

**Andrew Davies** – Governor

#### **Officers:**

**Lynette Lovell** – Director of Education

**Marianne Evans** – Service Manager for Schools Transformation

**Sarah Astley** – Transforming Education Strategic Programme Manager



**Eurig Towns** – Service Manager for Schools Transformation  
**Helen Hinton** – HR Business Partner (Schools)  
**Nancy Owen** – Finance Manager  
**Amy Radford** – Transforming Education Programme Officer

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments and questions to Officers afterwards. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes but that the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed and agreed.

Sarah Astley gave a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposal and explained that in October 2023, Powys County Council's Cabinet gave approval to proceed with consultation on proposals affecting Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen School.

The proposals are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1 September 2025

**Phase 2:** Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the Treowen site closes.

The consultation period started on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and runs for 6 weeks, ending on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

After the consultation period ends, a consultation report will be prepared which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If they decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, and there would be 28 days for people to submit any objections they have. An Objection Report would then be prepared, and Cabinet would consider this report and make a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

The indicative timeline included in the document was shared, however it was explained that this can change due to circumstances or the number of responses. The intention was that the Consultation Report would be considered in April, however there is a complication with this due to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May, which means there will be no Cabinet meeting in April, so the Consultation Report will either be considered in March or May.

**Governor:** The Council had an independent review board when it was put to Cabinet, that happened before Christmas.

**Sarah Astley:** Do you mean the Scrutiny Committee?

**Governor:** Yes, Scrutiny. They came up with some questions and proposals, are they reflected in the consultation?

**Marianne Evans:** In terms of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee, they scrutinise the proposals when they're at the start of their journey, basically to test if the case for change is strong enough or if there is anything wrong. This is slightly different to what they did in the past, where the Scrutiny Committee used to scrutinise the consultation report to ensure that we'd carried out the consultation correctly. This is a better way because they can get involved at an earlier stage and question the proposal. This proposal was considered by Scrutiny quite a long time ago, October time. We had a few queries from them which we would have responded to. I can't actually recall what the queries were at the time, but we have responded.

**Governor:** That Scrutiny was around how have we got to this proposal. Why have we got a Treowen and Calon y Dderwen merger? Why not Maesyrrhandir and Treowen?

**Marianne Evans:** The starting point for all of this was the question of can you increase the build? This process has been about the new build, and whether more children could be brought in so that more children can benefit. That was what we were being asked to look at. We came out and looked at Maesyrrhandir and Treowen and we did the engagement and heard what everyone had to say at that point.

When we did our optioning, it was felt that Calon y Dderwen and Treowen had more similar profiling in terms of your pupils than Maesyrrhandir and there are other issues, such as there's no permanent headteacher in Treowen currently. There is in Maesyrrhandir – she is on a secondment, but there is a substantive head there.

That is the reason why it was Treowen and not Maesyrrhandir.

**Governor:** A merger between Maesyrrhandir and Treowen would sort the Headteacher situation. Although you are saying there's a difference in pupil make-up, it's not that different. The issues that have been brought up in earlier engagements and the scrutiny committee were around people's safety and travel. For me we're talking about travel across the railway line although it's not a trunk road now but the infrastructure that we have is a trunk road which has been degraded. Whereas, to go laterally, people moving to Treowen from Maesyrrhandir is safer. I know we're in consultation, but I wanted to focus on the fact that the Scrutiny Committee did bring up issues and I don't know where they've been addressed.

**Marianne Evans:** I think we have responded to them in the Cabinet paper.

**Sarah Astley:** I've just bought up the papers now and the points raised by Scrutiny are listed and there's a response then to those points in the minutes.

**Marianne Evans:** I think going back to the starting point of this, this was about the building. We weren't asked to look at the whole of Newtown. Although the Learning and Skills Committee did suggest looking at the whole of Newtown, our response was that there was a lack of available sites and space. That's why we haven't really looked at Maesyrrhandir and Treowen coming together, because the starting point was slightly different.

If we'd have been asked to look at the schools in Newtown, maybe that would have been where we would have landed. But because the starting point was different then that's why we have ended up with this proposal.

**Governor:** I can see the reasoning but there's a lack of strategy beyond the current new build on this site here. You've already identified in the reports and the consultation the issues with the buildings at Treowen and Maesyrrhandir, so they are not such a high priority as this site in terms of their building condition. This site has got some funding allocated to progress a new school but that's not to say they're going to be left to rot. It just means there's no immediate plan to merge them. I just feel that the plan B not being discussed here is a Treowen / Maesyrrhandir merger in a new build within a defined timeline. I just feel that's not been recorded, we're going down Plan A and there's no Plan B.

**Lynette Lovell:** You have got a point. I think the other issue which is also relevant is that in those schools, the numbers have decreased significantly. Maesyrrhandir is currently down in the eighties I think, but I can remember when it was in the two hundreds. Similarly, with Treowen the numbers have dropped there and when we've got such a drop in numbers, we have to look at what's the best for the town. The new build that's coming here, I've been very clear and I've said in Scrutiny and in other public forums, my ideal is that the children of Newtown are together in one building and that all of the children have really good facilities. They have the benefit of the Community Focussed Schools and from an education point of view and as Director of Education, that was my advice to Cabinet and to Scrutiny. The ideal for me would be that we could fit all of those children on this site, because with all of them it would have been around four hundred odd pupils, it wasn't an excessively large school, and where we want to go as an authority is to have larger schools. That's where the starting point was and really the steer for it came from Cabinet, who asked us to look at the Newtown area. When we looked at it, the fact is that at this point we can't build the school large enough to include Maesyrrhandir, Treowen and Calon y Dderwen children, we can't physically do it. But we will have to ensure that children at Maesyrrhandir have facilities for them as well. There's a backlog maintenance there, we recognise that, that's all part of what we looked at.

**Marianne Evans:** I think if we had the whole site then it may be that we would be proposing that – to bring the three schools together.

**Governor:** I think that would be a nice prospect if we had all of that space.

**Governor:** It's central and it's at the heart of the town. It's how it used to be, when I was in this school there were about 500.

**Governor:** I think now the frustrations we have as a governing body and as a school is that we're talking about a site constraint that to this point was for a new Calon y Dderwen building to service the needs of the catchment area of Calon y Dderwen and we were also pressured into a new build where we were making concessions, we weren't happy with the spaces and the volumes and the shape and were concerned about what this would mean in terms of our ability to meet the needs of pupils, and how we want to teach the pupils. Now we're just chucking another 100 pupils into the mix, and the building is already constrained in shape and size and

volume to reflect the site that we have. Something's got to give – you can't have everything.

**Sarah Astley:** Just to go back to the Maesyrrhandir/Treowen option. It's not an option that has been considered and as has been explained it's because of where we started, the starting point was the build. However, the consultation is an opportunity to suggest alternative options. Any alternative options that come through the consultation will need to be listed in the report and we'll need to consider them. So there is an opportunity for you to feed that in through the consultation.

**Marianne Evans:** The concerns around the building and the site came up in the staff meeting earlier too. We know that it is really important to Calon y Dderwen.

**Governor:** Also, the new curriculum in Wales.

**Marianne Evans:** I know you've been very involved in developing the design for the new building to date. We've had this debate before. We have to work within the building guidance and I think you're slightly over it in some areas at the moment. The architects deal with the design, however the majority of the funding comes from the Welsh Government. If we don't provide them with a business case that shows that the design is reasonable and within the guidelines, then they will refuse funding. We've already had one business case back in the last 18 months because we were over the Welsh Government's benchmarks. We have to challenge the design all the time.

**Governor:** We also have to challenge the benchmarks, because Building Bulletin 99 is now 25 years old or maybe even older because the data that's gone into producing Building Bulletin 99 is older still and then there is an additional requirement for it to be carbon neutral, to have it zero carbon because it's self-producing. Just like we've had to make concessions, something has to give, and for me, Building Bulletin 99 isn't always fit for purpose to meet the new education requirements that the government has set out.

**Marianne Evans:** The Welsh Government have been working on a new standard for new school designs. We're hoping to hear something about this in the next couple of months, taking account of the fact that the current building bulletin is based on England. Education in Wales is changing and has changed so much, so they're looking at the new guidance, new standard taking into consideration the curriculum for Wales, looking at the Carbon Zero agenda, ALN and looking at Community Focussed goals, that's a big, big push. We're hoping that something will come through that may have more flexibility in it than what we currently have.

In terms of if we were further down the design routes when the new guidance came out, it might be more difficult so we're looking into that.

The other thing as well is we are looking at developing a Powys standard for Primary Schools. Jim Swabey has been out visiting the schools we've built recently asking them how they're operating. We know how the build went, we know how the design went, but we need to know is the school now working for them. That's the piece of work that Jim is leading on and hopefully that'll help us as well. We hear your

concerns about the design and about adding another hundred children into the constrained site. We'll look at these other things that come through the Powys standard, the Welsh Government guidance and hope that will give us some flexibility. We absolutely sympathize with you and where you are and the journey you've been on. Obviously, these kind of things need to be fed back then through this consultation process.

**Headteacher:** What you said about the space, it's reassuring to hear that because these events that we hold in the hall, one example we presented dance in the Eisteddfod this morning and we didn't have enough room for the whole school to be there. Some were standing in the back because we had to create an area for the children to dance in. We've got our Eisteddfod at the end of the month. We can't invite parents in and that's a huge part of our school. Parents can't afford tickets for the events, so we need to have these community events in the hall with the whole school there. We are restrained currently and I feel that we do need that extended space. You look at today, the hall is being used for dance and for karate tonight, we do have that community focused element here.

**Marianne Evans:** For us, we have to make the case to Welsh Government for the finances. Not only Welsh Government, the Cabinet as well as the Council funds 35% of it. There's sometimes a perception amongst people who aren't close to this programme in that we build gold plated schools. We aren't allowed to build gold plated schools, and we never have built gold plated schools, but actually it's a value for money issue for us. We need to make sure we have got the best building, but actually it has to provide value for money. You can see a little bit into our world in terms of the difficulties and the challenges and the complexities around all of it as well.

**Governor:** A couple of years ago there was talk about a Welsh-medium all through school in Newtown. Is there still talk of that? At the time there was talk of using Dafydd Llwyd's building for other schools.

**Marianne Evans:** That's where things were a few years ago. There was a plan, there was a vision, then things changed politically. We've recently been consulting on changing Ysgol Bro Caereinion to a Welsh Medium school from a dual stream school. If that goes forward, we need to make sure that becomes the designated Welsh medium school for the whole area. However, that decision hasn't been made yet. If that proposal doesn't go ahead, there would still be a need to look at establishing designated Welsh medium secondary provision to serve the area, so we would still have to look at it, but at the moment that's where we are at.

**Governor:** As a teacher governor here, I know it's been mentioned already but there's been a lot of questions asked from our staff today regarding job security. I think that does need to come through the governors as well. I think there were a few that were surprised by Phase 2, people are nervous about job security, so I think that needs to be touched on.

**Marianne Evans:** Phase 1 is when Calon y Dderwen becomes a two sited school and includes the Treowen site and Phase 2 is when you all move to the new build. In terms of the impact on staff from the first phase, what we've said in the consultation

document is that there would be no impact on Calon y Dderwen staff. Calon y Dderwen staff aren't going to be made at risk of redundancy, so wouldn't be affected by any changes that affect Treowen staff. The staff have just come through it, the school has just come through that when the school was established.

However, when we get to Phase 2 with all staff then coming into a new build, that's when the staffing structure would need to be looked at again and that's when potentially some changes would need to be made. However, this is part of the normal planning process, managing your staffing, managing your budgets going forward. It's something that happened in Welshpool and is happening in Brecon at the moment where we're looking at merging three schools into one, so we're having the same conversation about what happens when we get to the build and planning for that next step.

**Governor:** In terms of Phase 1, if this was to go ahead, the governing body would be taking on an additional site for Calon y Dderwen, but the existing Treowen governing body would dissolve. We can ratio and increase the headcount within the ratios permitted to include some governor representatives from that site, which of course we should do, but that might be dependent on governors' terms of office. If we've got governors still sitting here and we can't quite do that within the period, that means a Calon y Dderwen based governing body would need to make decisions on staffing on another site. That isn't going to go down well. If there has to be a reduction and there's talk of ringfencing jobs to the Treowen site staff, and again we've been through the ringfencing process ourselves, but if we have to make a reduction, that's not going to build bridges.

**Governor:** Correct me if I'm wrong, but because we were all brought in under a new governing body when we established Calon y Dderwen, we'll all still be within our current terms of office in 2025.

**Governor:** Immediately, the first action of a new governing body for this Phase 1 would be to potentially make redundancies to a staffing body. Then Phase 2, we're going forward some years because we're talking about 25 to 28. In between Phase 1 and Phase 2, the expectation is that the transformation team will be supplementing the school budget, which will only be representative of the pupils on roll. So, account for the multiple sites that we're operating under and the increased head count associated with running on multiple sites and in Phase 2 that will be gone. So, between Phase 1 and Phase 2, we already know there's potential job losses because we would be moving to a one site, one school approach. The pupil numbers could be exactly the same between Phase 1 and Phase 2, but we would have one site to deal with, so that would be one administration team, maybe the logistics of having a combined 5-6 class on Treowen and the numbers there and here mean now we don't need that extra class and that's going to be hard to take. We're not constructing a new school from Phase 1, we're constructing a temporary school until we're in Phase 2.

**Governor:** I think it's a little bit different having been through it with Maesydre and the initial stage, as there were foundation phase sites and one junior site. This is quite different because will still be years 5-6 there initially and years 5-6 here too.

There's no proposal to make it that there's different age groups on each site, is there? We're not asking some pupils to move before others, are we?

**Marianne Evans:** We'd expect the schools to remain the same, we wouldn't be expecting different age groups to move.

**Headteacher:** I'll give you a real example that happened recently. We've got two classes in years five and six, one of 36 and one of 37. Some children moved to the area, one came into year 6 and has joined a class of 37, making it a class of 38. We suggested they went to Treowen, but they didn't want to go there. It is now going to be a class of 38. We did know the risk when we set the class up of course.

Would we be able to have the security from transformation to support with arrangements during the transition period? I've said before that the funding support we've had from transformation has been really helpful, particularly as we manage the early stages of this. Would we have some support in that?

**Marianne Evans:** We would need to look at that because obviously if the proposal goes forward, it is the Council's proposal and you know the ideal would be that you're on two sites for a year or two at the most, but I will say to you, it's a building project and everything you know there is risk with every building project, so we'll just have to be mindful of that as well. We wouldn't want to put any school at a disadvantage because of a proposal the Council is making, so it is something we have to look at.

**Eurig Towns:** I'm supporting Brecon schools now, there's three schools there coming together into one. They're still going to be on three sites initially. The question that governors there asked was 'What about if we decide to transfer children from one of the sites into one of the other sites?' But you could then put that other site at risk because you could then say, 'Oh well, when you got 28 in this school, transfer another 2 over' - what will be the impact on that? They're trying to think of them as separate sites at the time.

You're thinking at the moment could we transfer them there, but Treowen governing body and parents at the moment, they are probably thinking, well, what happens if they decide you've got spaces down here and you decide to transfer them down here without it being their choice. Where the parents are choosing for the children to go to school is very important. They've chosen to go there, your parents have chosen to come here, it would be their decision or your decision if they moved.

**Governor:** The proposal has taken that choice away, in respect of where we make those decisions if the proposal goes ahead.

**Eurig Towns:** It's the parent's choice where they can go to school, rather than the school choosing.

**Governor:** As a parent, if my child was starting school knowing that it's going to close in 12 months or 2 years' time, I wouldn't be sending my child there anyway. So, it may be that they lose pupils anyway.

**Governor:** Come September, or once this has happened, we may see this happen anyway, and we got to be ready for that.

**Eurig Towns:** It will be different then as it will be the parents making that decision, not the school. Yes, it puts added pressure on you, I'm not disagreeing with that.

**Governor:** What I meant as well, you could decide your year 5-6 children were up there, so that it may add to a year and your year reception to year four down here say and it worked in numbers, but you can't do things like that.

**Marianne Evans:** We're not proposing that. What we're saying is that all year groups remain on both sites. If this lasted for a longer time, it would be up to the governing body how it wanted to manage its pupil numbers. There is that option there, but we're not advocating it because we feel that the short-term measure until we get into the one site.

**Governor:** There'd be no option to bring it in for it to run from one site sooner? By bringing in cabins or something? Would that never happen?

**Marianne Evans:** I think the cost of bringing anything on here would be problematic.

**Governor:** Just to go back to redundancies, the decision for Phase 1 will be for the governing body to structure the school in such a way that it can operate with the numbers at the time and some roles may be redundant. The question I have is, at that point are all members of staff which are progressing through that merger, are they temporarily permanent members of staff? The governing body needs to make a decision regarding staffing levels across the two sites to make the budget balance for the three years, and that may include some redundancies, but are all the positions which are filled, are they temporary or permanent positions?

**Helen Hinton:** We wouldn't be able to change someone's terms and conditions of their current employment. If they're currently permanent, then they would remain permanent, and if they're fixed term, the same process potentially would apply depending on how long they've been in that post for. If someone has been in post for four plus years, they will have permanency rights.

It will absolutely depend on individuals and how long they've had those posts for and what their current contract is.

**Governor:** So that means in Phase 2, we would be looking at operating under a budget for a school on the same site. We won't have any concessions for being split across multiple sites.

**Helen Hinton:** Yes.

**Governor:** The arguments that we have heard today are that we've been through this process, we've had two schools merging. There have been redundancies, we have had a turnover of staff because of the knock-on health effects that the processes put them under. Will they have that again in 26/27?



**Helen Hinton:** There is a potential as you would be one staffing body. I think Marianne used that phrase earlier, which is really useful to understand that you would by that point be one staffing body, so the pot would incorporate the both the current sites. What we do have though is an opportunity to be forward thinking going forward if this is agreed. What we would do is we would advise you to look at not making any permanent appointments where possible, and to manage the workforce, by planning very tightly, to reduce and limit the potential for redundancies in the coming years. So whenever anyone leaves, you would look at whether that needs to be a replacement to start with, and if it does, what could that look like in terms of a fixed term contract? Looking at redeployment opportunities from now going forward through the years, and in the run up to any potential merger change.

**Governor:** The cost of redundancy at the point of Phase 2, if there were redundancies, would that be incurred by the school budget or from the transformation fund, because we would be one school operating at that point. Is that a cost we would have to absorb?

**Nancy Owen:** At the moment when we go through any transformation process, or any other situation where schools have to change their structures due to general pupil number changes where the savings attached to that mitigate the financial position, the authority currently has a corporate pot and I would foresee as long as that stays there that this would be applicable to that as it is for the rest of our schools. As long as that corporate pot stays there and it's still there at the moment, that pot would be eligible to be accessed by the school should it change its structure.

**Governor:** Just for clarification and if we as a governing body come up with a structure to set us off on September the 1st 2025 and I'm thinking leadership structure, would they be permanent beyond Phase 2?

**Eurig Towns:** You could put a temporary position in while you're on the two sites, which is what has happened in other schools that have operated over multiple sites, so that this can be reviewed when the school comes together on one site. This allows you the flexibility to ensure leadership across all sites in Phase 1, and this can then be reviewed. But any permanent positions you already have now wouldn't be affected because you are permanent whether you're on one site or two sites.

**Governor:** In terms of a school of 360, what would a typical management team look like then? A head, deputy and how many senior management are we looking at?

**Eurig Towns:** In Brecon at the moment they are looking at one head, one deputy and one assistant head, but they're also looking at putting in an additional assistant head whilst they are on three sites because they want a member of senior leadership on each site, but also the flexibility with one other person.

If you're looking at this now, you would probably think three members of the senior leadership team would probably be appropriate.

**Headteacher:** But we're already on two sites here, so we're officially on three sites.

**Eurig Towns:** You could have three then and then the possibility of four.

**Governor:** My other point is about staff wellbeing. If we look forward to 2027 potentially when we will be opening at the end of Phase 2, between 2019 and 2027, for 5 1/2 years out of these 8 years, staff have been part of a process, an uncertain time, and that's likely to have a low impact on their wellbeing. We felt it earlier in the meeting. I just think that needs to be in our minds as the staff of Calon Y Dderwen and now obviously Treowen will go through their process in the next four years.

We need to look at our staffing structure that we have at this school today because we're not business as usual. We're stressed at every possible point and it's a challenge to keep delivering this provision for the pupils that we have on roll, given the financial position, in the site that we're operating in. We're still not in one school site, we're still having communications issues of you're going from one side of the school to the other side of the school to access a senior leadership team member, you know trying to get there and we've still got issues with the ALN and the needs for the outside bodies to come in. We still haven't got enough provision for them to access the pupils that they're attempting to access on this site and yet in our new school build for the provision that we had originally for the new school, we've got two or three community rooms and now we want to chuck another 100 pupils.

These outside bodies, the community spaces aren't enough for the school build that we were planning, let alone to have another 100 pupils. It's always said that we have got a similar pupil mix between Treowen and here, we know the challenges that they have getting to school when they can walk along the river and for the report to say that there's low impact if they are travelling from Treowen to here. I think is a low impact if you have a car, if you're from a working family. If you're outside of that bracket, there is a high impact. This is a group of pupils that Calon y Dderwen are good at providing provision for, yet we can't because logistics means that Treowen can't move here, it's there where it is. My personal opinion is that the best thing for Treowen is to have a school that meets the needs that they have.

**Governor:** Just picking up on the transport around this. I don't know what the town loop does, but would that be part of this process? So the bus route could include an 8.15, 8.30, 8.45 loop around Treowen and the town centre?

**Sarah Astley:** It is something we could look at as we move forward and as we approach that new build. Also things like active travel and so on, those sorts of things would be part of what we would look at when developing the new building, but obviously that's a couple of years away.

**Governor:** Is the Maesyrrhandir building in a good state?

**Marianne Evans:** No, is the answer.

**Governor:** Would there be a new building for them?

**Marianne Evans:** Given their pupil numbers, it would be unlikely that there would be a new build. However, we're aware of the condition of the building and we know what is needed. We would have to look at how we address those going forward.

**Governor:** Potentially in the future they could end up coming here as well. If their pupil numbers start getting lower again.

**Marianne Evans:** Theoretically, if you've moved into a new build and there are still spaces. Parents could apply from wherever in Newtown or even outside of Newtown, and if there is a place pupils can have that place. So theoretically, yes. Before this proposal came along, we always thought that the new building at Calon Y Dderwen would have some impact on numbers at other schools. What we were going to do was look at the impact that would have over the next few years on pupil demographics around town, as things could change. This would be Phase 1 to monitor pupil numbers, we'd need to see what would happen and then there may be changes so we would take it from there, but this has come in a little bit sooner.

**Governor:** We weren't informed of that information from the outset. It would have been really handy for us to have known that was your strategic plan all the way through. If we would have known that information then we could have fought harder about what information we were looking at when we were designing plans, looking at pupil numbers, it would have helped us.

**Marianne Evans:** When we're looking at towns, this town has got six primary schools in a very close proximity. In a town environment, things change in a different way to a rural environment. So quite rapidly, school numbers can change in an urban environment. When there's a new build, the pupil numbers in a town with a number of schools would automatically change. It's not as if we did not share this with you, but that was sort of where we were going.

**Governor:** We always wanted to look at increasing pupil numbers at Calon y Dderwen in the planning stage. If you're a parent and you see a lovely brand new all singing, all that school and your school building is looking pretty dilapidated, as a parent you'd be wanting to send them to the new building.

**Marianne Evans:** Interesting though that when Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd opened, pupil numbers went down, and they've only recently started increasing again. It doesn't always follow that a new build will attract because it's always the quality of provision that attracts.

**Governor:** Was it understood as to why the numbers went down? Was it accessing the education provision now which was on this site and as soon as it moved to the next to the high school? What was the reason for the reduction?

**Marianne Evans:** I don't really know why because it was the same headteacher. I think maybe what's happened now in terms of Welsh medium is that there is more visibility in this area around Welsh medium provision than there was maybe at that time and the numbers are growing in Dafydd Llwyd.

**Lynette Lovell:** We've seen that to be the case in Welshpool now as well, with the new build on the old site. The numbers through the Welsh medium have significantly increased.

**Governor:** When you look at Calon y Dderwen numbers in the consultation document, what we see is a stable projection. We built that as a governing body and as a senior management team, we've been building that well for the past 5 years. Now the proposal is to add variability to our structure, to add in more risk of having to manage the fluctuations in numbers. We were designing a school that services one need, now the needs would change which would add more continual uncertainty to the to the staffing structure.

**Lynette Lovell:** What we want to do as a local authority strategically is to build up our schools, so that we have schools with larger cohort sizes, so a two-form entry school for example.

**Governor:** I think a larger school is the way forward and I would be more excited for an even bigger school, but it's the space.

**Governor:** In terms of the balance of workload, in a smaller school, teachers are having to do everything aren't they? It does work, having been to Welshpool there was two 5 classes, so it works. My concern is the space.

**Governor:** We're losing half of our site, that is the issue. I do have a concern with larger schools in primary provision, we've seen it with post Covid. I've heard very good reports on how we prepared those children and how we engaged with Calon y Dderwen pupils during that that period because our staff have a responsibility, they look at our pupils and they say, well they're my responsibility. However, it wasn't the same for children in the high school. In secondary they have responsibility for an area of learning, not per pupil. What I saw was that from the secondary view in a larger school, they worry about their area of responsibility i.e. the subject, not the pupil as much. I'd be concerned about this if we become a big primary school where we have the capability of having experts or leaders of learning in different areas.

**Lynette Lovell:** I think that's more of a primary/secondary thing rather than a size thing. I inspected schools in Cardiff with 750 in primary and it came out excellent. I know the children here and I think this school does a really good job. The provision that you provide here is not about the numbers, it's about the team that you've got. I actually think a bigger school can provide that larger team with more expertise and a bit more flexibility. I mean where you see it acutely is where we have small schools where they haven't got the expertise to be dealing with those pupils and their individual needs. I think the size it is irrelevant in primary, I actually think the larger the school the better.

**Eurig Towns:** It's the approach isn't it – you're talking about secondary schools where you still looking at subjects or delivering through subjects and you don't get that same connection.

**Governor:** I think it's responsibility and accountability, it always comes down to that. People need to be held accountable for the responsibility they're given, and the responsibility needs to be reflective of what we're trying to achieve, and here at Calon y Dderwen teachers and the staff have responsibility for the welfare and learning of that pupil. My worry would be that a super primary would lose that.

**Governor:** I'm just worried if we don't plan for further forward, we could be chockablock. Unless we really know a picture of what is likely to happen down the line, we could be in a sticky situation. Numbers at Treowen might drop faster than we think.

**Lynette Lovell:** The building will reflect that won't it.

**Governor:** Would we be able to stop them coming in?

**Governor:** There are going to be changes to catchment areas too. The only catchment Calon y Dderwen have got now as it stands is Trehafren and Vaynor. We've lost Mochdre and Dolfor.

**Governor:** But under the proposal we will be gaining Dolfor.

**Lynette Lovell:** You couldn't have a situation in Newtown where one school can keep taking and taking and taking, there is a limit. It would be addressed through the admissions process, applications could go to appeals, but initially you couldn't go over the pupil admission number. We've had quite a lot of issues with some schools where parents want their children to go to a certain high school, but they are oversubscribed and they can't get in. That's how it would be, and that's how it is in a lot of schools in England – in Shrewsbury if you live in a certain place you can't get into the school.

**Headteacher:** In the proposal here about savings. Between Phase 1 and Phase 2 when we open on two separate sites, would we have two separate budgets which aren't too dissimilar to what they are now?

**Nancy Owen:** You'll be funded to acknowledge the two sites. It's funded basically as two separate schools in Phase 1.

**Governor:** We had a clarification regarding fuel because today at Calon y Dderwen we have two different primary fuel mixes. We have gas on one site and oil on the other one. Although we are classed as one site, we're really two sites regarding funding for the building provision. I would hope that if this goes forward, we have a budget that reflects running a separate site on another fuel mix.

**Nancy Owen:** We've just consulted with all schools on changes to the premises elements. When the Cabinet paper comes forward, we would update all the figures, rerun it through the updated funding formula. We've also consulted on additional learning needs changes, that can have that could have a positive or negative impact on you.

**Governor:** The last one for me that you can see in the figures here. The surplus for Calon y Dderwen in March 24 is projected to be at £61,000 in the document. I don't know if that's right or still accurate, and if we do expand and take on Treowen is our budget wiped clean as they were with Ladywell/Hafren?

**Nancy Owen:** No, because Treowen will physically close but Calon y Dderwen will still remain open in terms of carrying forward reserves and surpluses as they are, but as Treowen is physically closing that's a different matter.

**Governor:** Would we have their reserves added to our pot?

**Lynette Lovell:** No, but you wouldn't get their deficit added either.

**Governor:** You touched then about the new revised formula and working with SEN and ALN. We'd been working with pupils identified by another senior management team where we know there's no head in place currently. I look at the numbers for free school meals, ALN and English as an Additional Language, and I don't quite believe Treowen's numbers. They seem a little low, and that would impact our budget going forward if, once the proposal in Phase 1 goes ahead, and their identified numbers impact our numbers. Could this be re-evaluated?

**Nancy Owen:** In the regs, the authority has got flexibility, the scheme for financing schools. Ultimately most of it is determined by school funding regs. 2010, they give us that flexibility when we're opening a new school. I'll need to take advice on how that applies to Calon y Dderwen in this instance, so I'd need to come back to you on that.

**Governor:** It's the transition phase, once we've done a full 12 month period where we can make sure that we're happy with the numbers on PLASC it would be different.

**Nancy Owen:** I completely understand the point, but you'll have to let me take that away. I'll need to double check in terms of the legality of these funding regs.

**Marianne Evans:** There are lots of concerns about this proposal, but I would like to ask you as governors, can you see it working? Can you see the benefits in it? Because all we hear about are the concerns. There are benefits to it from an education perspective, it's the implementation of it that's tricky.

**Governor:** We can see the financial benefit for the Council, we know that there are budgetary issues and we've got to go for efficiency. For our own sake, it's our money coming out of our pocket so I can see the budgetary sense and I can see the argument for the provision. There's always a triangle of things if you're taking from one and you're giving to another and I do worry that the proposal will affect those of greatest need. I know families who are living in Treowen, in houses, flats with no cars. They are constrained in terms of where they shop even because they're on foot, let alone accessing education. None of them are working because they're full time caring for their children at the moment. These are the families of the future of Treowen and they will be accessing provision that's there today, but in the future it might be a struggle.

**Governor:** Also we need to think about the buildings that are all going to come up needing to be renewed at the same time. We're lucky because Calon y Dderwen has got a real opportunity and we've always been excited about the opportunities that we've got for our children. I would like to be excited about the opportunities for all the

children in Newtown. Those in Treowen would have to walk at least 10 minutes down the hill, which I would do myself, but I'm not so sure that everyone would. However, if I was in Maesyrrhandir and there was a lovely new school here, I would want my kids coming here.

**Governor:** Everything we're saying and bringing up has obviously been listened to. There are easy fixes and there's little bit more challenging fixes like the bus loop and so on, making it affordable. But you asked the question if you can see it working, it will work if that's what the decision is. I mean, there are people here that are passionate about Calon y Dderwen and also are good at managing change.

**Headteacher:** It will work if the decision is to move forward. This will be not just because of a new building because but it will also be the provision inside and everything that will happen there. And this isn't just about Calon y Dderwen, I know that Treowen can bring so much to the party too. I'd be really excited about what they could bring as well because they are struggling maybe, but for them to come into here and show that they have strengthened, they have something to give. They're probably feeling a little bit like victims at the minute, but they can offer a lot of strengths as well, they need to realise what they can bring to us as well.

**Marianne Evans:** We met with the Learning Council this afternoon, and even the youngest ones were so aware of the potential impact of change on the children of Treowen school that they were saying they were saying things like we need to share things with them and when they come here we need to help them, maybe they'll be scared because they'll be too many children. They were really aware that they didn't want this to be seen as a takeover. That came from the youngest member of the Learning Council.

**Governor:** The fact that we're moving in at the same time as well, there's a fairness with the timescale.

**Lynette Lovell:** I just wanted to come in as well about governance, because you're strong governors here, and it would be fair to say it's really difficult to get governors across all the different schools. The level of need in Newtown requires good leadership, a good set of governors who really, really want to see the best for those children. I think in terms of what Calon Y Dderwen gives and what Treowen gives currently and what Maesyrrhandir gives, it's about making sure that we get the right provision for those young people going forward, that the leadership is right and the governance is right.

**Governor:** It's nice to think we will be the first to do this, if this happens. However being the first does require effort. The learning continually of the failures that that we all make and collectively being the first worries me.

When we talk about the issues around transport, the health hub, it's all linked. Let's make it succeed and to make it succeed, we can't just think about this plan here and you're going to deliver that and you can deliver, it's really got to be aligned. Why can't we have a free transport system around Newtown? Remove the cars from the equation. Why are we talking about building car park provision taking space, when that could be used for learning?

**Marianne Evans:** I think you're onto something there. The North Powys Wellbeing Programme and the linkage there come in because that is forcing people to look at something pretty big in the middle of the town, which is complex. It could change things, couldn't it? That's potentially the lever to change a lot of things within Newtown to the infrastructure such as the transport.

**Governor:** When I'm looking at the town as a whole, we're situated in the centre, we've got a Health Hub planned but may not be executed. We're talking about transport problems, but equally we're talking about a Town Centre which has problems. We're talking about revenue problems for the Council, for business rates because there's no businesses no longer there to pay the business rates. The solution has got to be joined up. When we're talking about car parking with health, we're in Wales so you're not going to have someone pay for Back Lane Car Park. Make it free or whatever we need to do.

**Governors:** Linked to the new build of the school. Even though we have places left at Calon y Dderwen, I think efficiency is quite high for the expenditure we have on pupils compared to other schools. When we have a new build site, if we're building for a capacity of 360 and the year on year reduction in population is 4%, I think it's predicted at the moment, if that is the case then the cost of running that school is going to increase year on year. The school's built, we have a static overhead to run the school. So, our efficiency is going to decrease year on year, but again choosing to put so many pupils in one site isn't our own doing. I don't know how that works out in the future finance model, but I think it needs to be considered that some things are just a static overhead of we've got this provision for this area and it's not based on pupil numbers. We wanted a super primary school, we've got one. This is the static cost, and then thereafter there's a per pupil budget to account for staffing needs.

**Nancy Owen:** I think the new formula that we've got in place at the moment actually is really clear and more transparent than it's ever been before because it shows the cost of different sites. If you take for example the saving whenever it's updated for this current proposal we're discussing this evening, the main saving will come from the site element because we're providing top ups on top of the per pupil elements you get to keep the site running to a large extent, so having to fund so the formula will deliver a set number, set amount of funding per pupil for the premises element. However, if it's then costing X to run, we've got top up elements in there as well. The other element of saving then comes from any teaching and learning top up and class size protection top up we provide. So, I think it's really clear more than it ever has been before about what it costs for the current estate that we have in Powys.

**Governor:** Part of the new school build programme and it's not linked with Treowen specifically, but there's a cost to having a green building, for example, in that it's made of wood. In 20 years' time the roof needs recladding. Or you've got solar panels galore, but in 7 years' time, I guarantee you parts will need replacing, so you've got a bill for £10,000, but you're requiring those to meet the budgetary needs of a new school build. Where is this funding coming from? And if you don't have it, the work is not done, so we're not operating at the efficiency level anymore that we



should be operating under, and so fuel costs go up because the solar panels aren't working and producing back to the grid.

**Marianne Evans:** That's a national conversation with Welsh Government, they're setting the standard and they're saying they expect net zero by 2030, however at the moment there's funding per square meter that recognises the fact that we have to look at the energy elements. The question then to Welsh Government is around the cost of maintaining the stuff that makes them eco-friendly. Going forward, this is where Welsh Government need to have that longer term plan of who meets that cost. Because that could be a massive cost to authorities, or it could be a massive cost to schools if authorities pass it down to schools.

**Governor:** If the local authority is funding it then schools that are in older buildings will be saying hang on a second, they've just had a brand new school five years ago and now you've just given them a load more money to fix the stuff that you just put in.

**Governor:** Having more than one storey makes sense from an energy provision point of view, but what about lift, what happens when they go wrong? Who's servicing them? What's the maintenance contract? Who's paying for that? That's a static overhead to running a multi-level building for the teaching provision. I am worried that we're going to be pushed from a two storey to a 2 1/2 storey too, because we've only got the footprint we've got.

**Marianne Evans:** This is I think a conversation for future formulas, because the new builds will have different requirements.

**Nancy Owen:** I agree completely. We do work closely with the corporate energy management officer. But we need to probably make representations in terms of any pressures that are coming through from that. So you need to make sure any governors here are getting that into the school's forum arena as well and raised in that forum. It's something we need to look at and consider. I think it's just at the moment the financial climate is, as we all know, really challenging, but that doesn't mean to say that we can't make representations in any future finance resource models when the authority looks at the budget set in each year. But we do need that input from head teachers and governors.

**Lynette Lovell:** Thank you very much, lots of really interesting thoughts here. They will feed into the consultation. All of this will form part of the consultation but it's open to anybody to put any additional views in as well individually.

**Meeting ended.**

**Consultation Meeting with Staff of Treowen C.P. School**

**8<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Present:**

**Staff:**

**Debbie Swan** – School Cleaner  
**Marie Whiffen** – School Cleaner  
**Kelly Williams** – HLTA  
**Lisa Bound** – 3+ Assistant / Midday Supervisor  
**Samantha Cartwright** – LSA  
**Angela Williams** – Teacher  
**Liz Jones** – Teacher  
**Laura Green** – Teacher  
**Kirsten Amor** – Teacher  
**Nadia Davis** – LSA  
**Lily Mitchell** – LSA  
**Sam Davies** – 3+ Leader / Midday Supervisor  
**Olivia Allport** – LSA  
**Rob Picken** – Acting Headteacher

**Officers:**

**Marianne Evans** – Service Manager for Schools Transformation  
**Sarah Astley** – Transforming Education Strategic Programme Manager  
**Ffion Evans** – Transforming Education Programme Co-ordinator  
**Mari Thomas** – Deputy Head of Finance (Strategic Finance)  
**Rachel Hudson** – HR Manager (Schools)  
**Fiona Jenkins** – HR Advisor (Schools)  
**Eurig Towns** – Service Manager for Schools Improvement

Lynette Lovell welcomed all to the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation, followed by an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions to the Officers. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes, but the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed and agreed.

Sarah Astley gave a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposals and the process.

The proposals are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1 September 2025.

**Phase 2:** Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the Treowen site closes.

The consultation began on 15 January 2024 and will end on 26 February 2024.

After the consultation period ends, a consultation report will be prepared which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If they decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, and there would be 28 days for people to submit any objections they have. An Objection Report would then be prepared, and Cabinet would consider this report and make a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

The indicative timeline included in the document was shared, however it was explained that this can change due to circumstances or the number of responses. The intention was that the Consultation Report would be considered in April, however there is a complication with this due to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May, which means there will be no Cabinet meeting in April, so the Consultation Report will either be considered in March or May.

Following the presentation, staff were given the opportunity to ask any questions or to make any comments in relation to the matter.

**Member of Staff:** One of the things that's going to come through strongly in the governors' meeting tonight is that there's quite a lot of confusion as to why Maesyrrhandir is not included. That would be worth covering in some detail, as that's not been understood very well as yet.

**Marianne Evans:** When we first started looking at this last year, we looked at whether we could accommodate all three schools on site or whether it would be two schools, and if so which two schools. In the end whilst the current Calon y Dderwen site is big, we only have half the site for the school development going forward, because the North Powys Wellbeing Health Hub are planning to build a health centre on the other half of the site, so that will affect how many pupils could actually be accommodated without having that pressure on space on the outside space etc. Having looked at this and carried out the engagement exercise, we concluded that only one other school could be accommodated.

We then looked at both Maesyrrhandir and Treowen, and the data suggested a better match between Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Ysgol Treowen in terms of your ALN profile and your FSM profile in particular. Also, the fact that there's an acting headship here whilst there is a substantive head in Maesyrrhandir – the head is on secondment, but there is a substantive permanent Head there. That makes a difference as well and that's the reason why the preferred option is to bring Treowen and Calon y Dderwen together.

**Member of Staff:** Our numbers are higher than Maesyrrhandir, and we have more of an intake of pupils throughout the year. We were led to believe that would be taken into account here.

**Marianne Evans:** Your numbers are dropping and Maesyrrhandir's numbers are dropping too.

**Member of Staff:** Ours were higher than Maesyrrhandir's and we had a higher intake of children coming in, we had children constantly coming in, from different schools across the town.

**Marianne Evans:** We saw and met some of the pupils today, and yes, they were from different parts of the town. We understand that. However, the reasoning behind Treowen being chosen not Maesyrrhandir is as I explained. We're here to hear your views though.

**Teacher:** The condition of our building is better than Maesyrrhandir, so surely there's going to be some cost involved in maintaining the Maesyrrhandir building.

**Marianne Evans:** Yes, there will be a cost but both schools have condition issues. Whichever one was staying open, there would be a cost associated with making sure that the buildings were maintained.

**Member of Staff:** One of the comments we touched on briefly is the SLT situation in both schools, and it's worded in the report that there is a permanent SLT in Calon y Dderwen but not in Treowen. I think it's fair to say that we haven't got a permanent SLT at the moment in Treowen because we're in this situation.

**Marianne Evans:** I acknowledge that, and thought this would be raised. However, we have to look at things as they are, and this is one of the reasons for Treowen coming in and not Maesyrrhandir. Another thing I would say, if we had the whole site available to us, and the Health Hub was not being built there we could have a different proposal being put forwards which would probably include all three schools, so we are constrained by the space that we have.

How do you feel about the current proposal as a staff body?

**Member of Staff:** We could lose our jobs; we don't know what's what do we?

**Marianne Evans:** Rachel, could you talk through the impact on staff in terms of how it would happen if it happens?

**Rachel Hudson:** At the moment we are in a situation where we don't know if any change is going to happen. In the event we do get to the point where there is a decision that Treowen will close, we would then need to have a different kind of consultation with you as staff. This current consultation is about the proposal around

this school and Calon Y Dderwen. If a decision is eventually made to move forward with implementing that proposal, we would be talking to you about what that means for you as individuals, how we can support you as individuals, in the same way as we do with any consultation that affects members of staff when we are talking about making changes that would affect those members of staff.

This would include talking about opportunities to do something different, to undertake a different role and think about redeployment to other Powys schools or other roles within Powys, if we were in a position where there weren't enough positions.

**Member of Staff:** Will there be the same conversation with Calon y Dderwen staff, is it equal in this respect? When this was proposed, we were told that if we close, they would also close.

**Marianne Evans:** There is a difference...I don't think we said that.

**Member of Staff:** We're feeling a little bit as though we're not being treated fairly – they get to keep their school, their jobs, their name, we're feeling as though we are the poor relation, we've already drawn the short straw compared with Maesyrrhandir, and now we're drawing the short straw in that we will lose our school, our name, our identity, in the short straw with Maesyrrhandir and we lose our school, our name, our identity, it looks like we are the poor relations, like we need rescuing by Calon y Dderwen. That's just where I am.

**Marianne Evans:** When we were here last, we did explain that there were different ways of merging schools, and you're right, one way of doing it would be to propose to close both school and reopen a new school, so both bodies of staff would be treated in the same way. However, we did have to think really carefully about this one because Ysgol Calon y Dderwen have only recently come through that process when Ladywell Green and Hafren schools were merged.

**Member of Staff:** We've just gone through redundancies here, so we've had that process ourselves.

**Marianne Evans:** That's noted, but the issue here is that Ladywell and Hafren merged to establish Calon y Dderwen, and the whole staff went through that process as the school was only recently established, so we felt that we had to take that into consideration.

**Member of Staff:** You knew this though the last time you came to meet with us, because we talked about this last time, but you led us to believe that we would both close, because we talked about having a new name and uniform. So we were all led to believe that would happen. That's not exciting for us, but at least we would all be treated equally, it wouldn't be Treowen being taken over. But then we read in the consultation that none of that is happening, and we're just being pushed into them. I think it's a real upset for the kids.

**Marianne Evans:** I understand your views but just to explain, that's the rationale that we've put it forward like this as the model currently. I understand your concerns. Rachel, do you want to carry on explaining what would happen from a staffing point of view?

**Rachel Hudson:** Because there's a two phased approach, and assuming that it all does happen, come 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 in theory there would be a school over two sites, so there would be a more limited impact on staffing, however we don't know exactly what that would look like and that would need to be worked out after the decision is made. One of the first things that would need to happen is we would need to look at the school budget and the staffing structure and all of those things, and that then would form the basis of the consultation, the employment consultation I was talking about a minute ago.

We would have to do that twice because there would be one consultation to move to one school on two sites and then once you've got the new building in place there would need to be another consultation to move the two sites to one site. I know it's hard anyway, but it is especially difficult when you are looking at that process happening twice.

**Marianne Evans:** It's really important that you feedback what you have fed back today, because we may not have got it right in our proposal. If you feel very, very strongly that both sets of staff need to be treated in the same way, that needs to come through in the consultation feedback. From our perspective, Calon y Dderwen staff had recently gone through the whole process, being at risk of redundancy etc, which is the reason for the current proposal.

**Member of Staff:** We've also been through processes though, and that was not mentioned in the report at all. It was mentioned how they've gone through processes, but we've faced redundancy in the last couple of years and people in the room that have faced redundancy.

**Marianne Evans:** And it's important again that comes through.

**Member of Staff:** What is the situation for Calon y Dderwen? In Phase 2? Isn't it the same for all staff from both sides? So everyone is impacted as everyone is Calon y Dderwen staff? But in Phase 1 there's a difference there isn't there? But in that Phase 2 it's slightly different again, isn't it in terms of the staff groups from both sides? So, at the second stage everyone is impacted as everyone is Calon y Dderwen. However, in the PowerPoint it says to close Treowen and extend Calon y Dderwen.

**Sarah Astley:** That's the wording in the proposal. When we consult on something, we have to be quite clear about what it is we are proposing. So, in this case that's what we are consulting on. That's not to say that when we come to the end of the

process, we could consider all of the responses and views, and it might be that the decision is to look at a different option. It might be that the outcome is not to proceed with anything, it could be to proceed with the proposal as it is, or it could be to look at something different. And again, some other options came through in the meetings with Calon y Dderwen earlier in the week which will need to be considered. So it definitely isn't the case that a decision has been made to move forward, but we have to be quite specific about what it is we're proposing in the documentation.

**Member of Staff:** This has been years in the making, and I can't see all that money being wasted.

**Eurig Towns:** It has been done before when proposals have been put forward and County Councillors have decided that it's not in the best interest. That's the whole point of being transparent.

**Member of Staff:** Are the people who proposed this in the beginning and the Cabinet who will decide on the outcome completely neutral? I've heard that there are some people who wanted this to happen, which does not seem fair to me.

**Marianne Evans:** They are neutral on the Cabinet. This all started quite a number of years ago with all the changes. Calon y Dderwen was established, and that decision was taken by the last Cabinet. We were on the journey, we were designing a school for 300 pupils.

**Member of Staff:** When you say that this has been in the planning for years, that was a new build for Calon y Dderwen. Bringing in other schools in the area had not been in the plan, had it? That's quite a new development.

**Marianne Evans:** We were very surprised when we started showing the designs for a 300 place school to people within the Council including the Cabinet, as we were challenged straight away about whether we were building it big enough. Our job is to take on those instructions and look at whether we can act on them, so that's why we've ended up here.

The Cabinet are neutral, and what they have to do is consider all the consultation responses that come back, and they have to make their decision based on what they hear. So, the consultation aspect is very, very important.

**Member of Staff:** Thinking of the site then, the thought is that it's going to be a two-storey building. With regards to the new curriculum and classrooms needing access to outside areas, to me it doesn't sound as if it's going to work as the classrooms upstairs won't have direct access. Maybe it's going to fit, but all the wonderful lovely new things that we're supposed to be able to do with the new curriculum, if you're in a two-storey building stuck at the top, your outside space is going to be limited. Obviously, you're not going to build something that won't fit, but we have beautiful outdoor spaces at the moment. We've got access to the outdoors really easily. I'm

just trying to imagine letting the children have the freedom of going out and using an outdoor space when you can literally open the door and go outside. And if you're in a two-storey building, I don't see how that fits with all the plans you've been working on.

**Eurig Towns:** We have two storey school buildings, it can be done.

**Member of Staff:** There's also been that new school in Welshpool and teachers have been to see it. Do teachers have an input into the design? I hope they do have an input in the design and it's not just down to an architect that doesn't have a clue about the new curriculum and what is needed.

**Marianne Evans:** The architect works closely with the school as the design develops. When we were talking with Calon y Derwen about the designs, there were concerns about it being on two storeys. Lots of discussions happened, so that they could then see how it would work. The design always evolves and there is discussion with staff as part of this, so it can work.

**Member of Staff:** I know it might have been done before, but the people to outdoor space ratio would be very different down there on a school site with 300 or 400 pupils compared to what we've got here.

Access is a massive thing with that amount of pupils on the site. You've got the police station as well, and it could block the road for emergency vehicles. Getting your children in and out would be a nightmare – we try to avoid that part of Newtown already.

**Marianne Evans:** We picked up last time the issues around congestion, parking etc, especially with the Health Hub being developed on the site. What I can say is that work has been going on, on the master plan for the whole campus, which is looking at traffic flows, parking and safer routes to school. We're not building a school and then the Health Board are building a Health Hub, we have to look at the whole campus. However, if things go ahead the school will be built first.

**Sarah Astley:** The concerns we heard last time about congestion and the number of people on the site and so on, those are part of the reasons why the proposal is to move forward bringing two schools together and not three.

**Member of Staff:** So, are you building new roads? At the moment there's just that one narrow road, surely there has to be some sort of new traffic arrangements?

**Marianne Evans:** They're looking at it as a whole campus, the health element as well. It's a central part of town isn't it, and at the moment it's very congested.

**Sarah Astley:** As well as the roads and access there's active travel as well and walking routes and cycling routes.



**Member of Staff:** There's also just a little bit that needs mentioning in the risk section of the document. It mentions the risk that staff would get a bit wobbly and would leave. The risk is quite high, however the impact is noted as low. I don't think that reads particularly well for staff wellbeing – the impact of a professional leaving because of the situation was considered low impact. I think that was poorly judged in your report.

**Marianne Evans:** I'll take that on board. This did come up with Calon y Dderwen as well.

**Member of Staff:** What about the 3+ and early years?

**Marianne Evans:** Facilities for early years would be developed in the new building as well. However, there is already provision here. Here are facilities for early years being developed as well but we already have provision here.

**Eurig Towns:** At the moment the provision here will not change, we need the provision across Newtown. I also know the issues and support that you need at the moment. There is potentially when it moves to the one site, that could help the situation you've got now, such as when you need additional members of staff and things like that. If you were in a bigger provision, there would be more staff to help. But at the moment there's no change to 3 plus.

**Marianne Evans:** We've heard a lot on social media about the impact on the community of Treowen and Treowen being a strong community with its own identity. Is it worth elaborating a bit on that?

**Member of Staff:** It's difficult to elaborate when we've expressed our concerns on all these forms and things that you've asked us to do, but we haven't been heard. I know we are here to get our points across, but we've already been very detailed in the forms and questionnaires you've asked us to fill out. What we're telling you now is no different to what we filled out on the forms.

**Marianne Evans:** We understand where you are come from. From the Council's point of view, we have to look at Newtown as whole. If you look at Newtown and the number of primary schools it has got in a relatively small space, the Council has to look at if it can afford to keep them all running. is there a better way of providing education? Do we need to have larger schools? That's the Council's duty, but absolutely we hear about the community, about Treowen and the school being a strong part of the community. The Council also has to look at the wider perspective though, about how it manages its schools to fit within the financial challenges it has got.

**Member of Staff:** I think it's fair to say as a community there's a strong feeling that perhaps the voice has not been heard. People feel that they have let you know their

views and have responded, but how many more forms can they fill in. If they feel that they haven't been listened to, it's difficult to encourage them to continue to respond. Am I right in saying that there was more engagement from the Treowen community?

**Member of Staff:** School is not just the heart of the community; it is the community. I was on the sidelines when my boys were at football last night and one of the other mothers I didn't even know, went to Treowen, and she remembers and asked me how's it going. But it's the memories and bringing together of Treowen and that's what the school does along with the community hall. But the people that we deal with on a day-to-day basis, they'd be lost without us. We are like their anchor, and the thought of them walking down the hill to Calon y Dderwen it would have that impact on the community. It would just be awful for a lot of them we are their lifelines.

**Member of Staff:** They send their children to a smaller school for a reason. They don't want their children getting lost in a big school.

**Member of Staff:** We go to a house sometimes to get a child to school.

**Marianne Evans:** We heard that from the pupils themselves this afternoon. They're concerned about being part of a larger school and about little things like well, how do we find our way around. These things are important to the children.

**Member of Staff:** We've got the kind of children who struggle socialising, struggle around this many children. They struggle to be able to get into class or, you know, their anxieties are high, but they feel loved by the teachers. They feel comfortable, they feel a part of the school that they want to be here daily, even in their struggles. There is no way those children would be able to flourish if they were in a larger school because it's too much for them. There are too many people. We've got a high number of children like that. What are you expecting them to do? Just get on, or will they misbehave down there? Will their behaviours change because they can't cope? They'll be lost.

**Eurig Towns:** Our role is to collate the information to inform Cabinet. That's why we need to make sure you get those points across.

**Marianne Evans:** Ysgol Calon y Dderwen would also have a similar profile of children and the same behaviour issues.

**Member of Staff:** I know my child, for example, really struggles with too many things going on and too many noises. Put him in a school with another 200 children on top of the number of pupils in Treowen, if you have an assembly all together or lunch all together, suddenly that triples in noise, and he's not anywhere near what some of the children in this school are like. So, I just think, you know, they might have the same level of need, but then you're putting them all together and that's going to make it a lot harder for them.

**Member of Staff:** Some of our pupils don't live on the estate, they come to this school because it is safer and it is better. For others that do live on the estate, they don't have cars. You are stopping them from having a small school because they won't be able to walk that much further to be able get to small schools like St. Mary's, drive to Abermule or elsewhere. I'd just like to give an example of a lovely benefit of a small school, one of the boys in my class had his birthday a few weeks ago. Everybody knows each other in this school, you know every single person, and every teacher knows every pupil's name – you don't get that in a big school. And the boys started singing him to him in the corridor on his birthday. You would not get that in a super school, that would be lost.

**Eurig Towns:** I can't agree with you on that, when I was a head teacher at a school of 326 pupils I knew every single pupil. I'm talking from personal experience. I knew every single one of them.

**Member of Staff:** But everyone wouldn't know everyone else. Yes, the headteacher would know everyone's name, but here all the pupils know each other.

**Member of Staff:** I still struggle with the fact that Treowen is referred to as a small school. A smaller school to me is a school with 15 to 20 kids, not a school with 100 with the potential to get more in. We had an influx throughout the year until now because people know what's happening and it's putting them off. If this hadn't been announced, there's a good chance we would have had more pupils. This has impacted our numbers. I struggle with that term small school

**Marianne Evans:** The Welsh Government definition is that anything below 91 is classed as a small school. When you speak to colleagues from some other authorities though, they consider anything 200 to be a small school.

**Sarah Astley:** Just going back to the engagement and the responses from the school communities. We had 111 responses from the Calon y Dderwen community, 101 from the Treowen community, 55 from the Maesyrrhandir community and 34 were unspecified.

**Marianne Evans:** Any other comments to raise, or queries? We fully understand your concerns. I know somebody has suggested as well that Cabinet Members come to the school for a visit and I think it wouldn't be a bad thing. The Cabinet Members couldn't visit these schools before they make a decision, but that does normally happen after the consultation ends, so that they can come and see and have a feel for the schools. It's really important that they see and hear.

**Member of Staff:** Yes, I would say that should have been the first action to be honest with you, it should have happened before the plans moved forward.

**Sarah Astley:** Councillor Pete did come and visit the school during that first engagement period.

**Member of Staff:** I'd say that anyone involved in that position will need to visit the schools and spend time chatting with some of the children. That would be nice. We've had a lot of visitors lately that just can't say enough positives about the school.

**Marianne Evans:** I know you've said you completed the questionnaires, but if you do have anything else that you want to say then please write to us, fill in the forms, or e-mail us. Everything will be taken into account.

**Meeting ended.**

## Consultation Meeting with Governors of Treowen C.P. School

8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Present:

#### **Governors:**

**Keileigh Jones** – Chair of Governors  
**Angela Williams** – Teacher Governor  
**Holly Roberts** – School Business Manager  
**Kelly Williams** – Non-Teaching Governor (HLTA)  
**Kerry McBride** – Parent Governor  
**Olivia Allport** – Community Governor  
**John Barker** – LEA Governor  
**Nicole Harding** – Clerk to the Governors  
**Rob Picken** – Acting Headteacher  
**Natalie Havard** – LEA Governor  
**Janne Titcombe** – LEA Governor

#### **Officers:**

**Lynette Lovell** – Director of Education and Childrens Services  
**Marianne Evans** – Service Manager Schools Transformation  
**Rachel Hudson** – HR Business Manager (Schools)  
**Sarah Astley** – Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education  
**Eurig Towns** – Service Manager for School Improvement  
**Mari Thomas** – Deputy Head of Finance (Strategic Finance)  
**Ffion Evans** – Transforming Education Programme Co-ordinator

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments and questions to Officers afterwards. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes but that the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed and agreed.

Sarah Astley gave a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposal and explained that in October 2023, Powys County Council's Cabinet gave approval to proceed with consultation on proposals affecting Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen School.

The proposals are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1 September 2025

**Phase 2:** Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the

Treowen site closes.

The consultation period started on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and runs for 6 weeks, ending on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

After the consultation period ends, a consultation report will be prepared which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If they decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, and there would be 28 days for people to submit any objections they have. An Objection Report would then be prepared, and Cabinet would consider this report and make a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

The indicative timeline included in the document was shared, however it was explained that this can change due to circumstances or the number of responses. The intention was that the Consultation Report would be considered in April, however there is a complication with this due to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May, which means there will be no Cabinet meeting in April, so the Consultation Report will either be considered in March or May.

Governors were then invited to ask questions on the proposals.

**Governor:** My first question is why was Maesyrrhandir taken out of the running for this proposal?

**Marianne Evans:** Thank you for the question. It was raised in the staff meeting as well. When we engaged with the three school communities in the summer, we looked at the responses that came back and considered everything in the round and we felt that the pupil profile between Treowen and Calon y Dderwen was closer than it was with Maesyrrhandir, particularly in terms of ALN and free school meals. One of the other big factors that we had to take into account was, yes Calon y Dderwen have a big site currently, but half of that site is going to be used for the North Powys Wellbeing Health Centre. When we considered the feedback that had come up through the engagement around the impact on the space of bringing all three schools together on that site, that was a factor. One of the other factors that was looked at was staffing, the leadership here not being permanent, whilst in Maesyrrhandir there is a substantive Head who is on secondment, so that was another factor. These were the main reasons, as outlined in the consultation document. Whether we're right or not, who knows, however that was where we ended up.

**Governor:** I'm under the impression that Maesyrrhandir still actually only have an Acting Headteacher like we do?

**Marianne Evans:** They have a Head. The headteacher is away on secondment. So they have the Deputy acting up, I think. So, it's a similar situation but not quite.

**Governor:** So the one that's substantive, she's only part-time, isn't she? They don't have a full-time Headteacher.

**Marianne Evans:** No she's full-time.

**Governor:** She manages two schools.

**Eurig Towns:** The substantive role is actually headteacher at Maesyrrhandir full-time.

**Governor:** It was a cost saving measure for her to only be Headteacher part time.

**Eurig Towns:** Not necessarily a cost saving measure. That was an agreement between their governing body and another governing body that she would support that other school as well. However her substantive role is Headteacher of Maesyrrhandir, full time.

**Governor:** The other thing is that we actually wanted to put out an advert for a full-time headteacher when our previous Head handed in her notice, however we were informed that this wouldn't be a good idea because of the current situation. So actually you've put us in a worse situation, a now you're using this against us.

**Governor:** I agree, this is a good point.

**Marianne Evans:** I think it would be up to the governing body to decide whether they wanted to go out and recruit. I think the timing then maybe, you know, affected whether to recruit.

**Governor:** I think we took advice as well.

**Eurig Towns:** Based on what we know from other schools which are going through a similar situation, that have gone through that, they've tried to recruit at that time. As soon as candidates have found out there is a consultation process there, they've found they've had very few, if any, candidates. So that's why the advice has been given. It's difficult to appoint a permanent Head to a school that's going through any form of consultation.

**Governor:** We understand that. I think the point is that it is now working negatively against us. And that's put us on the back foot.

**Marianne Evans:** It's coming back to the pupil profile and similarities between Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen, also that Maesyrrhandir has a significant FSM and ALN percentage. It's difficult because actually if we had the whole site available to us at Calon y Dderwen, it may well have been a different proposal, and we could be thinking that we would put all three schools in. However, we don't have the whole site available, and that's why it's a difficult call. But we have to look at everything in the round.

**Governor:** It's quite hard for us to accept, because when you look at other facts, with the surplus spaces, the quality of the buildings that are there, there's quite a lot that goes against them as well and in favour for us. There was a little bit of an issue with our PLASC count that didn't have our ALN right, but we'd asked for help and were told don't worry, it won't be used against you, but then, of course, it happened. So, we have got more stated pupils than actually was first stated.

**Sarah Astley:** The point is noted, however the PLASC figures are the PLASC figures, aren't they? And the information in the documentation is the latest PLASC figures that were available.

**Governor:** We're still saying we don't want that to be used against us because it is wrong. And we did ask for a bit of help but it's like, don't worry, don't worry. We don't want that to be used against. I'm going by the County Times article that put surplus spaces, they were classed over 50% surplus. We haven't. The state of building repairs. The ALN pupils. When you look at that. Free School meals, I don't think we're that far off.

**Marianne Evans:** When you look at everything in the round, it's a difficult decision, whether to include Treowen or Maesyrrhandir because we can't include both.

**Governor:** But I think that's what we're feeling. It's not fair. Once you look at the facts it just seems a little bit unfair.

**Marianne Evans:** I know the concerns you have, I know the concerns the staff have, but in terms of looking forward, there are benefits this proposal can bring, you know. I know though that obviously in a difficult position because you're feeling it's a negative thing against Treowen.

**Governor:** And it has that knock-on effect. Now you've started it, we are going to see a reduced amount of people wanting to come to the school, people will be looking at other schools instead because it's the unknown. They don't want their child to start and then be two years down the line and they have to move to a different school. So it has had a detrimental effect by just having the conversation.

The question I have is what are the benefits for having a new school and what is that financial saving you're going to make by closing this one and opening a new school?

**Marianne Evans:** As you know, the proposal initially is for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen to become one school. And we can discuss how that's going to be done. Then the plan is to build a new school, with all the pupils to move into the new building. So, in terms of going to a bigger school, the intention is that we build it for 360. We were planning for a 300-place school, so we've increased the capacity to 360 plus Early Years' provision plus the ALN provision within the building. And it's all part of the North Powys Wellbeing Hub, so there will be benefits from integrating the school with that health hub.



It will be a larger school, so I'm going to hand over to Lynette or Eurig to speak about the benefits of that.

**Eurig Towns:** Looking at the staffing there, and leadership, there would be more opportunities in terms of leadership at a bigger school.

**Governor:** How would that be different from this school? By being a bigger school, how will the staff have more opportunities?

**Eurig Towns:** Well, there are more opportunities for teachers, you could have Deputy Heads, you could have Assistant Heads as well. You'd have curriculum leads too and TLRs would come in as well. So more opportunities for people to lead. In terms of working with staff, you've got a larger staff body, but in the smaller schools perhaps you're leading across two or three areas whereas there you could have other people leading, you've got both Key Stage 2 and Foundation Phase, and opportunities to work together across the phases too. The opportunities to do that have increased at that time.

**Governor:** Is that an increased salary, though, for those people?

**Eurig Towns:** If they had taken on some TLRs or are Assistant Heads. There are opportunities for increased salaries.

**Governor:** So that's going to increase, that's going to add to the cost.

**Eurig Towns:** No because that would be part of the school's funding. If you've got a 360 school, you're then funded for a Headteacher, a Deputy Head and Assistant Head. That comes into your pot. So, it doesn't necessarily take additional money to do that. It just means you've got additional funding for those posts.

**Governor:** What's the minimum number of pupils you'd have to have? You say there would be space for 360 but as we know, in all these schools, there's always surplus. So what's the number when you start getting Assistants?

**Eurig Towns:** You're over 300 by the time you get Assistant Heads.

**Governor:** I think Penygloddfa got to about 300 and they didn't get funded for an Assistant Head. How many pupils are in Calon y Dderwen?

**Sarah Astley:** I'll open the document up to confirm the numbers.

**Governor:** There's about 230 in Calon y Dderwen, and there's around 100 here but I can't imagine all 100 would go.

**Marianne Evans:** But if you look at the projections, Calon y Dderwen stay fairly stable, although I do know they're having a larger reception group coming in next year. But then your projections were going down, even before we started this consultation.

**Governor:** We had a few big years at Treowen.

**Marianne Evans:** But to be honest that's the same across Newtown. And that's one of the issues the Council has to try and tackle with transformation. At the moment, by the time the new build opens, not earlier than 2026/2027, numbers would probably be around the 320 mark. However, with new builds there are risks. There are all kinds of things that can happen. But the issue I think we have though, and this is something we're going to have to think about if this goes forward, a new school could be attractive. Is 360 going to be large enough? So that's another dilemma.

**Lynette Lovell:** The issue with that is, as we said at the beginning about the engagement, when we were looking at Maesyrrhandir, Treowen and Calon y Dderwen, we're looking for that site to actually be able to have 400 odd children on the site, and that's where we looked at the space and what we could do with the building. 360 is as far as we can go at the moment with that building but it will probably attract children from elsewhere in town, that's what happens initially when you have a new building. But there will obviously be a cap on the pupil admission number.

**Sarah Astley:** Can I just come back in on the numbers? So, the numbers in January were 251 at Calon y Dderwen and 105 in Treowen, so 356 altogether. However, if we look at the projections for January 2028, and I know they're just projections, but the projections are 229 at Calon y Dderwen and 78 in Treowen. So that's about 300 across the two. But they are just projections at the moment, and anything can happen, particularly in a town environment where there are a number of schools in a small area.

**Governor:** The benefits we have at the moment is that there are more opportunities for staff. But then if the numbers are not high enough then you're not going to get the funding for those opportunities for the staff.

**Eurig Towns:** There are benefits too in terms of the curriculum, from the staff working together.

**Governor:** How does this mean that the curriculum is better?

**Eurig Towns:** Because you're working together as staff. You don't have so many staff leading on so many areas. You're taking the skills of each staff member and using that rather than staff having to lead on two or three areas in most schools.

**Lynette Lovell:** What we'd be looking to develop is a community focused school, you've got a lot of it going on here, there's a lot of it going on in Maesyrrhandir, a lot of it going on in Calon y Dderwen. We'd be looking at the new build to be a community focussed school. So, you've got wraparound, you've got Early Years facilities there. You've got a state-of-the-art building for the children to have that learning environment that will be a community focussed school. There'll be the facilities to enable them to have that multi-agency approach which I know you do here. You have the health board coming in too, that will be a feature of the school. It'll be a community focused school so they'll learn this multi-agency approach. Initially, until that build is ready, we're looking at retaining the school on two sites. We know the build is going ahead anyway for Calon y Dderwen, but if this proposal goes ahead, it would be at that point that the children would come together on the one site in the new building, with the facilities so that the children have those good facilities going forward. Personally, I've been very clear all along, I would like Maesyrrhandir to be there as well because I think all of the children in this town deserve the best facilities going to ensure you've got that multi-agency community focussed school because research proves, that to get children out of deprivation, that community focussed, multi-agency approach is the way to do it. That's what I would prefer but we are constrained by the site currently.

**Governor:** I just picked up a couple of things from the consultation document. First of all, I'm sure you're aware of the error on page 51 with the finance, the figures should be the other way around.

Projected numbers worry me, in that essentially Calon y Dderwen stay the same, Treowen due to fall. They have fallen in the past but there's been no analysis to say what has caused that fall. We know that school numbers go up and down. I can think back to schools the Council was going to close 15 years ago which are now thriving. So, I wouldn't put too much emphasis on those projections. But one of the things that isn't in the document is an analysis of current travel. Where are the children who are going to Calon y Dderwen currently, travelling from? Are they coming from Treowen? So, is it already drawing from Treowen? Where is Treowen pulling pupils from? There's bound to be children travelling across the town from one side of the river to the other. And I think that's a big risk here. The projections are based on live births and I thought, well, isn't there something about why there are fewer live births on Treowen. Why are these numbers here projected? Is it just on a historic trend that might happen or is there something else? Have there been other developments?

There's no mention of all the building developments in the town. There are a lot of things going on that perhaps haven't fed into this. So that's the first thing about some of the data that is missing.

**Sarah Astley:** I'm just going to come in on the travel, on the home locations of the pupils. This information is included in the documentation, it is in the community impact assessment. It isn't in the full document but there is information in the community impact assessment. If I can just scroll down to the appropriate bit.

**Marianne Evans:** And before you go there, projections are tricky to understand as well, particularly when there are so many schools in a small area. I don't know the answer to why there's been such a dramatic drop in terms of Maesyrrhandir and Treowen, so if you know why please tell us.

**Governor:** Sometimes when you're in an area their children have gone, their children are older, but they stayed in their house. So, you've not got a fresh, new family moving in.

**Governor:** The distance from here to travel to Calon y Dderwen is a major issue that needs to be looked at. What has happened in some of the surrounding schools? Are their numbers falling similarly? So, what is happening in Kerry and Abermule for example? Are they seeing them still drop or are they attracting as well?

**Governor:** Penygloddfa is the other side of town. Their numbers have gone down as well. When I started it was 300 and they're down to 270 now. So, it has dropped.

**Marianne Evans:** Interestingly, some of the schools outside town, such as Caersws and Llandinam. Llandinam basically stayed the same, so very small numbers, 20's and 30's. Caersws was around the 40 mark but now they're up to about 70 and predicted to grow. So that change has happened in very recent years.

We get these projections from the statisticians, they are based on live birth data and the pupils currently within the school. But we also look at the November counts projections which the Finance team take from Teacher Centre and get from schools as part of their 3-year budget projections.

However, we are required to put five-year projections in by Welsh Government. So, we use the one we get from the statisticians, but we also consider the Finance count information, which may be a bit more realistic.

**Governor:** You can't know the numbers in five years' time, they're not even people who are pregnant at the moment.

**Governor:** We've had 3 new starters this half-term, which sounds small but when you look at the numbers...

**Marianne Evans:** The live birth projections that we get from the statisticians are pretty robust when you look at a whole catchment, when you look at the county because they're at that level. When you get down into the smaller, individual schools that model may not be as accurate.

**Sarah Astley:** It's also why we regularly look at the live information which is on Teacher Centre. PLASC is the standard data set, but we do try to include live data as much as we can, but again that can change daily, weekly.

**Marianne Evans:** The other thing is that the projections don't take account of any changes in the local area such as a housing development, or even refugees, or things along the lines of the pandemic.

**Sarah Astley:** In the Newtown area there is a lot of choice available in a small area.

Do you want me to come back on the pupil locations? The information is in the document as a percentage rather than individual pupils because sometimes it's a low number of pupils and to avoid the risk that individual pupils can be identified. The information is based on pupils attending the school in June 2023, and at that time, Treowen was the closest school for 63.7% of pupils attending Treowen. Then Maesyrrhandir was the closest school for 16.9% of Treowen pupils, Penygloddfa for 9.7%, St Mary's for 8.9% and Calon y Dderwen for 0.8%.

**Governor:** You're saying about the live birth rate, and I know you've just covered a bit of it, but I've never lived on Treowen, not since I was a child. I live in the Maesyrrhandir catchment area, and all my children went to Treowen because that's where I chose to put them because I didn't want them to go to Maesyrrhandir. I also know that there are at least 6 other children that live on Maes-y-Dail that come to Treowen school so they chose that school because of that, not because of where they live. You're basing facts on where people are and what their closest school would be for their catchment but that's not actually how people do it. They go and look at the schools.

**Sarah Astley:** And obviously that pupil location data is reflective of that.

**Governor:** But what about wider places? You've only said about people in Maesyrrhandir, Treowen nearer to Penygloddfa area. One of the governors lives in Llandinam but brought her son to school in Treowen.

**Governor:** I know of someone who lives in Bwlch y Ffridd who was going to apply for a place for their child here, but since this consultation started they've changed their minds. Would I send my son to a school for 2 years to all of a sudden up-sticks and move into another school? No. So, it's going to have a wider knock-on effect than what's actually on paper.

**Marianne Evans:** Every time we start reviewing a school it does introduce a period of uncertainty and there's no getting away from that. Parents make decisions based on all kinds of things, don't they? The quality of the school, the convenience, because it's on the way to work, is it English-medium, is it Welsh-medium. There's a lot of parental choice, particularly in a town where you have got quite a number of primary schools in a very small area. So, we take all that into account, but parental preference is something you can't really measure.

**Lynette Lovell:** In terms of parental preference, parents do have the choice to go to whichever school they choose, although they may not get the transport. But it's interesting because you were mentioning that 60% of pupils here live closer to Treowen, but does that mean that 40% from Treowen go elsewhere?

**Sarah Astley:** No that's just the pupils coming here. We have the information for Calon y Dderwen but it's a bit different because of the school's location. It's not as close to housing. So 54% of pupils attending Calon y Dderwen are closest to Maesyrrhandir, but that could be pupils in areas of town like Vaynor or along Llani Road. Treowen is the closest school for 11.9% of pupils at Calon y Dderwen.

**Governor:** From Treowen 11%. That's 20-odd pupils. So if they came here that would be another 20 pupils in this school.

**Governor:** Forgetting catchment areas now. Going back to the parental choice, and pupils, because pupils are the most important thing in all this. And the parents are choosing for pupils, for their children, to come here for a reason. If they want to be in a larger school, would they not be choosing that now? What is it that makes them want their children to go to Treowen? I personally know what it is, and that's the reason I send my children here.

**Governor:** I didn't grow up on Treowen, I grew up on Trehafren but my mum decided on Treowen. I asked why I didn't go to Ladywell and her straight honest answer was because I like the feeling of Treowen School and I like the feel of the staff and the environment.

**Governor:** And that's why I sent my kids there.

**Governor:** They do have a choice, but I think a lot of the time parents that come here walk into the school and get a feel the minute they come in here.

**Governor:** I presume there's space there in Calon y Dderwen, so why are the pupils coming here now and not Calon y Dderwen?

**Marianne Evans:** Is it because this school feels more like a village school? It's on top of the hill.

**Governor:** Would you lose that in a large school? I know you say you would prefer for all 3 schools to be included, and I appreciate the multi-agency thing because I would want the best for my children in that sense and for the children I work with now. But when I send my child here knowing they've got whatever issues, health issues or whatever, I'm confident that every member of staff in this school is aware of who those children are. They can spot in an instant if they are not themselves. They know when to take them off for little chats. And I mean that for any of the children here. Would you get that in a larger school? If a child walked past the Headteacher, he instantly knows their name, what class they're in, their

temperament, if they're out of sorts. How can a Headteacher or any teacher be able to do that with a school of over 300?

**Eurig Towns:** I can answer that. I mentioned earlier when we met the staff, my history has been as a Headteacher of a school of more than 300 pupils. I knew all the children there. I knew them instantly. I talked to them, their families at the gate in the morning, but I would also say the staff knew those children very well because they have to. It's part of your role as a teacher, as a teaching assistant. You know your children very, very well. So I would say, yes, they can. It's how you build it up. The school is only as good as the staff that are inside it. OK, I can't say every single school is like that, but you can make a school a community. It doesn't matter what size it is as long as you've got the people there who are driving that.

**Governor:** And have you got, I don't want to say proof of that, but from other schools, have you got proof of that?

**Eurig Towns:** We've got schools right across Powys that are doing that. My role is going into schools with the School Improvement Team to go and have a look at those. We work with some of the largest schools and we work with some of the smallest schools. It's not how many pupils but how are you teaching those pupils. Are they getting quality education? That's what we look at when we go into schools. That's what we said to you in Treowen, you provide a good quality education to your pupils, but we can also go into Calon y Dderwen and then go, hey, you're doing it as well. You do it in a different way, but you're still able to provide that quality education.

**Governor:** I think that's what worries me, that if we are doing those things, we're showing that we are providing a high level of education, we're providing the pastoral care of our children. We're bringing in multi-agencies. We've got all that going on. What are we doing wrong?

**Eurig Towns:** The reason for the closure is not because of the quality of education. That's not the reason why it's closing. We recognise that and that's in the report as well. We're not saying you're doing anything wrong.

**Governor:** But I just think it's Treowen staff and pupils that are losing out.

**Eurig Towns:** I think that's why it's important to state, we're not saying you're doing anything wrong educationally, that you're not supporting pupils. You're actually doing a good job. We can also say that at Calon y Dderwen.

**Governor:** But I still feel it's us that are missing out in this new proposal. Originally it was proposed to us that we would merge together under a new name, new uniform, new school. In this new proposal we are just joining them and everything about Treowen is gone and there's going to be an imbalance in the staff because of that.

**Lynette Lovell:** This is a consultation and, as we said earlier, there are times in the past where things have changed following the outcome of the consultation.

**Governor:** We've spoken about how we are feeling because it looks like Calon y Dderwen will carry on but it's us going to have to walk downhill, our pupils that will have to change their uniform and be the newbies. It's almost like starting a new school. And it's us that's going to have to fit in the way that they're doing things instead of it being a collective joint enterprise.

**Governor:** My child is in Year 6 and came home tonight and said, 'Oh my God mum, you want to hear what I've just heard today in school. We're going to have to have a new uniform but their uniform, not our uniform.' How sad is that for kids to come home and say we've got to have their uniform?

**Marianne Evans:** That's if it happens, and no decisions have been made at this stage. We had a really good session with the children today where we explained to them that this is just an idea at the moment and no final decisions have been made.

Going back to the point about staffing, I explained in the staff meeting, when we came to meet with you in the summer, that there are different ways of doing this. One is to close both schools and open a new school. I'm going to have to explain here because I think it is important. The reason we proposed it this way is because Ysgol Calon y Dderwen is only newly established and has recently gone through the merger of Hafren and Ladywell, so have gone through all that upheaval. The staff quite rightly pointed out that you've also gone through upheaval here in terms of redundancies in the last few years and I think we may not have made that explicit in the consultation document. But in the report that goes back to Cabinet, we will explain that you have already gone through similar issue and challenges.

I'm going to have to say here that we met with staff at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen on Monday, and they're not happy about it either, let's put it that way. And one of the issues for them is the perception that they will seem to be 'top dogs'. So, I think if this goes forward and during the transition period before it all happens, a lot of work will need to be done to make sure all staff feel involved in the development of this new proposal. A lot of work will have to be done with both groups of staff and pupils for parts of it, and the Calon y Dderwen governors were also extremely mindful of the delicate nature of this going forward. They've got change fatigue, that was what we had from them because they've already managed a number of years and they've been in the development of the design of the new building. So, Calon y Dderwen have serious concerns about this as well.

**Sarah Astley:** It came through in all of the meetings. It came through with the pupils who themselves were concerned about Treowen Pupils, potentially feeling like they were being taken over. It came through with staff and it came through with the governors too. So, it's something that already they're very mindful of.



**Governor:** You mentioned that they have had input into the building, should this all go forward, we would have as much opportunity as them?

**Governor:** Has it ever been considered that the Calon y Dderwen site just becomes a Health Hub, and that a new school is built here on this site? So, keep that as a Health Hub, make that a centre of town Health Hub, then the Super School built on this site. Has that been considered?

**Marianne Evans:** It hasn't been considered.

**Sarah Astley:** The current Treowen school site probably wouldn't be big enough for a school of the size needed though.

**Governor:** You were thinking previously about having a Welsh all through school on a field near to the school. So there is a potential of still keeping a school here.

**Governor:** I was just thinking really in regard to the discussion around decreasing numbers and considering the impact that that potentially could have on staff and teacher retention, and also obviously if numbers are dropping would that have an impact on funding for Treowen prior to anything happening? And just thinking about stability for the current teachers who are there if the transformation were to go ahead. What would that look like really for staff? Have there been any assurances, is that something that's been thought about? Basically, if numbers are dropping would there be pressure on the school if the budget wasn't as much because the pupil numbers are lower. Would they have pressure then to make redundancies prior to any transformation if it were to go ahead?

**Lynette Lovell:** Mari, do you want to come in on this? About the dual sited school and how they're funded during the transition period if this were to go ahead, and if numbers did drop here in terms of teacher retention and staff retention here during the transition period? How the budget works.

**Mari Thomas:** The current funding formula is largely based on pupil numbers. But there are top ups then for smaller schools. So, you would still get the same top up in terms of premises and the small class top up as well, so those pupil numbers will affect the budget. And I think maybe it's something that we would need to consider if the impact of this proposal, if it goes ahead, was to have a significant impact on learner numbers, and then therefore your budget, that is something we would have to take into consideration. We know that budgets are extremely tight at the moment across the board. There are a lot of difficult decisions being made both within the Council and across Powys as well. We'll have to take it step by step really and obviously within all those budget discussions, be mindful of the situation the school's in if it is decided to go ahead with this proposal.

**Lynette Lovell:** Rachel, can I bring you in on that one, in terms of if the proposal goes ahead and on one site the numbers go down? In terms of staff retention, if the

proposal goes ahead to be one school, it would be one school so everybody would be in the same pot?

**Rachel Hudson:** Yes, that's my understanding of how it would work. I think that part of the question was around what if numbers drop regardless of whether this proposal were to go ahead. I'll just echo what Mari said around the funding being based on pupil numbers and, if the school were to find itself in the position where I know it's been previously, of having to consult on redundancies then that could happen regardless of whether this proposal was to go ahead.

If the proposal did go ahead, and there was one school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and the numbers were lower after that point then it would be one school, a collective. So, any risk, I can't think of a nicer way of saying it, any risk would be across the staff group of the new, enlarged Calon y Dderwen.

**Governor:** I think what I was referring to as well, is if there was a drop in numbers between now and January from PLASC say, for example, if that had an impact because obviously there's been talk in the community around what's going on and already governors are saying, parent governors are saying, that there are people who are not choosing to come to Treowen irrespective of whether or not it does go ahead. I think that must be a concern for the staff currently in school. So, what can happen to safeguard them really? And I understand there's budgets, and I understand there's funding formulas, but you know staff, parents potentially, are voting with their feet because they don't want to uproot children. So, I do think that's a worry for the staff. It absolutely must be and through no fault of their own. It isn't because Treowen isn't a good school. It's because of the uncertainty that they don't want to put their child through that uprooting later down the line even though nothing's been confirmed yet.

**Lynette Lovell:** It is the case that it's a pupil led funding formula and the number of pupils does make a difference to the budget that you get and the staffing, and Treowen has been through it...

**Governor:** I'm here tonight as a member of staff. Obviously, I know what's going on but we put a brave face on. We come to school and our main focus is the wellbeing of children and ensuring they still get the same learning opportunities, regardless of whether our jobs could be at stake or whether we're going to have to reapply or merge. Tonight, I'll probably leave this meeting feeling completely deflated, thinking OK it's time to really start thinking about what's going to happen as a member of staff.

**Governor:** If an opportunity comes up, they might think about going because will that opportunity come up for them again.

**Governor:** Sorry to jump in but the points that were made in the staff meeting, are we repeating ourselves?

**Eurig Towns:** It's fine to repeat because obviously the governors are here, and they didn't hear earlier on. So, we're happy to answer those questions again. Don't feel you can't say it again. We'd prefer you said it again, covered it twice, than to feel it's only been said once so perhaps the governors haven't heard the answer.

**Governor:** We'd have to apply for our jobs when we're Calon y Dderwen staff because that school, they're safe, and we're not. That was the main point, wasn't it?

**Marianne Evans:** I think, as well, it's worth pointing out here because it's in the documentation that there are staff implications twice with this proposal. If this proposal goes forward as it currently stands in the way we're proposing, there is an impact on Treowen staff during the initial joining with Calon y Dderwen because you have to go through the management of change process. However, there would still be a site here, there would still be education delivered here during that first phase, so that would need to be staffed.

But it's really worth pointing out that when the new school, the new building opens there would need to be a review of staffing structure again because, at that point, it's all of the staff going into the new building. The governing body would, by then, have had to look at not only the school, but how many classes, what the class structure would be, how many staff would there need to be and so on. So, there'd be a double staffing review needed.

But at Calon y Dderwen, even though they're not directly impacted in the first stage, they were very concerned about the second stage because they've just come through it as well. So, it's not to say everything's great for the staff at Calon y Dderwen, because it would be one staffing body and everybody's in the pot as you go into the new building. With all the new buildings, Welshpool Church in Wales, there were 2 restructures. Brecon Primary School – we're setting up a new primary school in Brecon, merging three schools into one, first on the three sites and then into a new build – we're going through exactly the same conversations there. So there will be two lots of staffing reviews, I just needed to put that out there.

**Eurig Towns:** Your point is there'll still be a school here on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025. You will still need staff here. Whatever number of children you have in 2025, you will need to staff that, whether you are part of Calon y Dderwen or whether you are Treowen.

**Governor:** At the rate children are going to look at other schools we might not need them. We might not need all the staff in 2025 because the amount of children might not be here because they're seeing their education threatened.

**Governor:** As a parent, I can honestly say if this does go ahead as of September, my child will move from here. And I'm not the only parent. I've been to all the schools in Newtown now. I don't want my child to go to a big school, I don't think he'll cope,

so St Mary's is a school I'm looking at and I know that school can't get affected by merging. I don't want my child's education to be affected, so I'm acting before it can get affected.

**Governor:** I wouldn't send mine either. I agree, if this was to go ahead, I wouldn't put my children into Calon y Derwen because I know full well that my children wouldn't cope in a bigger school. It's one of the reasons I chose Treowen. It had a nice family feel without being a big school. It had the feel of a small village school while it's not. Obviously when I put my children into school, they were closing most of the village schools, so there wasn't the risk of the school closing. But it still had the nice feel of a village school where there wasn't a lot of people. My children weren't going to fall through the net of we've got so many children. There's a lot of demand because it is a smaller school so the staff have the ability to be able to help those children in a better way that they wouldn't have in a bigger school.

**Governor:** I have to echo what has been said. I brought my son to Treowen school. There were nine schools closer to me but Treowen was the only school that I felt could actually provide what my son needed because of his medical conditions. As soon as he went to high school, that fell apart very quickly. He was in High School for, I think, two terms before he was declared medically unfit because neither the school nor he could deal with his medical conditions. So there are a lot of children that being in a bigger school isn't going to be a better thing for them. Everybody likes to say, oh yes, there are going to be all of these facilities, but in actual fact, generally bigger schools don't work well for children who have a lot of needs. And they do fall through the net.

Also, we've discussed decreasing pupil numbers but in the documents you've put together, have you considered all of the new developments? There are a lot of new developments in Newtown right now. There are 38 houses being built a couple of hundred yards away from Ysgol Calon y Dderwen. Have you considered how many children are going to be going to Ysgol Calon y Dderwen from that development because that is going to be their closest school? There's another big development by the by-pass. Have you thought about how many families are going to be coming into those properties and going to this school?

**Marianne Evans:** In terms of housing developments, the projections don't include housing developments, but this is something we've been pushing for a while in terms of any housing developments need to be factored into pupil projections. So that's an ongoing discussion that we're having. There is a ratio for housing developments that the planning department use. One new house yields 0.45 of a child. That's the calculation used. However, that's not an exact science because it depends on the type of houses being built. If you have one-bedroom houses versus houses with 3 or 4 bedrooms for example, or if it's social housing. There are a different range of permutations within that, but we do look at what's happening in Newtown. It's difficult to factor in the impact of the estates towards the bypass because I think that would be closer to Maesyrrhandir from there.

**Sarah Astley:** That's part of the whole Newtown picture as well. Although housing may have an impact on overall pupil numbers, there is capacity elsewhere in Newtown, in Maesyrhandir, Dafydd Llwyd, St Mary's, as you mentioned.

**Governor:** Is Newtown one of the towns that has the highest amount of primary schools in Powys? Because we have got quite a lot.

**Marianne Evans:** You are. If we look at the four main towns. Welshpool had four primary schools, three infants and one junior which we amalgamated into one English school and one Welsh school.

**Governor:** What's the success rate of that Welshpool?

**Lynette Lovell:** In terms of Welshpool Church in Wales School and the Welsh Medium School, they are very successful schools. Welshpool Church in Wales School is around 300 pupils, with very good provision for ALN, and a case study with Estyn for young carers. They've got something like 25 young carers going into that so it's really a good multi-agency school, working effectively.

**Governor:** Have you got statistics of the pupils that come in, start and then go because maybe it's not for them. Is there a statistical figure of that?

**Lynette Lovell:** We'd be able to get that. I think it's pretty much when they go there, they stay there, there's not a huge drop off.

**Marianne Evans:** The situation previously when we had the four Schools, and John will probably remember this, there was a draw out of Welshpool to the neighbouring village schools: Leighton, Guilsfield and so on. What we see now is that children in Welshpool tend to stay in Welshpool, so they're not choosing so much to go out to the village schools because of the success of Welshpool Church in Wales. And the Welsh school as well. That's growing too.

Jumping down into the next town, Llandrindod, two large primary schools, one English medium, one dual stream. Both large.

Then Brecon has quite a few – six - but three are being merged to create one new school. Ystradgynlais went from ten or eleven to four across quite a large area.

**Governor:** Based on population and number of schools, we're quite high in Newtown.

**Eurig Towns:** In Ystradgynlais, there is deprivation in that area, and there is strong evidence that the larger schools there are meeting the needs of pupils. Again, case studies from Estyn have come in and looked at their provision for pupils, to support

the daycare to their families as well. So, there's some evidence that that can work OK.

**Governor:** Just a general comment really. I'm not a stranger to school closures, but this is different because unlike other schools that actually close, it's not a small school, it's not in a deficit budget, it would have had a headteacher, and standards are good. These have been the reasons in the past mainly why schools have been closed. I think this proposal is just an opportunity. I think it's short sighted and it doesn't address the Maesyrrhandir position, and you should have really considered Newtown as a whole and said what does Newtown need? You mentioned Ystradgynlais which was a big reorganisation and has been successful, you mentioned Welshpool, how that was done to the whole town. You're just looking at this one bit here because you have a chance to. There's an opportunity for one school between us and Maesyrrhandir. That would be my preferred option if there was land and funding about. And that's why I'm saying I'm against this. I think you're missing an opportunity. There is a community here in Treowen, you risk losing that. I have no problem with a larger school and the advantages you talked about I fully support. But this isn't the right solution for Newtown.

**Sarah Astley:** It's very interesting, that option came up in the Calon y Dderwen governors as well and there were questions as to why that wasn't considered. And the reason it wasn't considered now was because, as you say, the starting point was Calon y Dderwen and the new building. However, the consultation is an opportunity to suggest alternative options.

**Governor:** Option 3B could have said close Maesyrrhandir and increase the numbers here. Or 3C, two schools together. That's not going to happen overnight. It's still going to be upsetting in terms of things that goes on. I still think there's a better solution.

**Marianne Evans:** I wouldn't disagree with you, and that is probably where we were a few years ago. I'll be completely honest, as you know we reviewed Newtown years ago and the first plan, first phase of that was Hafren and Ladywell, let's sort that out, let's build the building let's see how numbers in Newtown pan out, what happens then. And then obviously there is the North Powys Wellbeing development. Would that potentially release the hospital site? You can't do Newtown all in one fell swoop because we're relying on space being available. So, we were going down this route looking at developing the plans for Calon y Dderwen and were asked to look at this increase in size, and if we had the full site, I would probably say that would be the solution for these three schools. We haven't got the whole site though so this...

**Governor:** It's a half solution.

**Governor:** Before Covid there was talk, like I said before, about an all-through school possibly being put over here, which would then free up Dafydd Llwyd with the possibility of Maesyrrhandir and Treowen moving in there. That would have been a

better option I think because you've got Maesyrrhandir coming so far and Treowen only going to the bottom of the hill as well. You could give them what they needed in the building.

Can I just ask on class sizes? If this goes ahead what are the predicted class sizes in the new build because, now I haven't read it in detail, but I've had a flick through, I'm sure I came across something that said there could be class sizes of up to 60 with the main teacher but more support in general. That then, for me, flags up issues. Are we cutting down on teachers, increasing TAs?

**Marianne Evans:** The new build is currently being designed. The building bulletin guidance, which is the basis for any school design, says classes need to have 56 square metres. That's the minimum. Calon y Dderwen is being designed with classes that are slightly bigger than that, which is an issue because we have to justify to Welsh Government why we're building them bigger. Ysgol Calon y Dderwen would like them to be even bigger. So we're looking at classes of 30, but it could be because of the numbers at the two schools combined, you could have a Year Group of 60.

**Governor:** So one teacher for 30 and another teacher for 30.

**Sarah Astley:** Just to go back to the documents, there is no reference to classes of 60, however 60 is the total number of pupils currently in year two across the two schools. That is the largest year group of pupils across the two schools. But it does not say that pupils would be in classes of 60 pupils.

**Governor:** Could you guarantee two classes being here? Because with the numbers we support that would be an issue. Single year group classes would be the ideal, that's what you should be planning for. That's why I'm a bit concerned over the numbers, and because the numbers are due to fall, it's difficult to plan. I would hope, if you're going to build, you would build for 12 classrooms plus office so that you could do two classes.

**Governor:** I'm just backtracking a bit. When you were talking about the new builds, one of the comments was that the new builds that are being built just outside of Newtown by the bypass would come under Maesyrrhandir area, well there's a new build that's being built right by the train station and that would fall under Treowen catchment.

**Marianne Evans:** Point taken. Noted.

**Governor:** We've got fab relationships between the schools in Newtown, and with Calon y Dderwen and Carl as well. We said from the very beginning we certainly didn't want to put us against them, so there's no hard feelings whatsoever between the personnel at the schools, we don't want to damage that.

**Marianne Evans:** We know there are sensitive situations here. The minutes will be written up, and we'll make sure that you're happy with them.

**Governor:** If we think about the way forward, and about positions. Should the proposal go ahead, when could we expect to learn more about positions, opportunities for leadership, TLRs, AOEL Leads, TA, 1-1s?

**Rachel Hudson:** As with most things in HR, it depends. In the event that the decision is made on the timescales we're looking at, the next step would be to work out what the budget is for the combined, bigger Calon y Dderwen. From that, it would then be for a staffing structure to be worked out and to be proposed and consulted upon. So, we would have 12 months before the before go-live date, if the timeline works as it is anticipated. I would expect that to happen around spring 2025 in preparation for the September 2025.

**Governor:** In the document it says that this school would cease to exist, so the governing body would cease to exist and Calon y Dderwen governing body would continue as they are. There needs to be some representation from governors currently at Treowen school as well.

**Marianne Evans:** Calon y Dderwen were mindful of this as well. Interestingly Calon y Dderwen opened in 2021 so by 2025 it'll be four years, and four years is the term of the governor. So, there would be vacancies in terms of governors by then, for example parent governor positions would come up, staff governor positions would come up. But I think what's important is that we make sure that there is representation from both schools on the governing body in some way, even if the structure of the governing body means that, for example, you can't have a staff governor from the two schools.

**Eurig Towns:** Calon y Dderwen are keen on that because they want to work together. You're also saying that you would want to make sure that everyone works together. It's not pitting one against the other.

**Governor:** I do have a comment about the terminology for this process? Merger - are we all agreed on that it's not merging?

**Marianne Evans:** Technically it's extending the capacity of Calon y Dderwen to include another site. So, what we're trying to explain, is that it's about merging with Calon y Dderwen. What we are all keen to avoid, including Calon y Dderwen, is the word takeover. It's similar to the situation we had with Newtown High and John Beddoes back in the day. So it was extending the capacity of Newtown High to include the Presteigne site. But basically, it's joining together. Joining is the right word.



**Governor:** What would be the outside space? What green area would there be? Obviously, some space would be lost because of the campus being shared, so the green space will be gone.

**Marianne Evans:** That's a big concern for Calon y Dderwen, as you'd expect, with the amount of space that they have currently. On the plans there's outside space, there's green space, there's multi use games areas. And all of that is within the guidance for building new schools of that size. But what's difficult is Calon y Dderwen have been used to much more space, but the space is within the guidelines.

**Governor:** How's it going to work with Calon y Dderwen having a bigger school, having an extra 100 children, if you take into account that most of these siblings could be single children households, and then you've got the Healthcare Hub that they're wanting to put hospital facilities in as well and a police station and a nursery nearby, plus then the three plus children. That's going to cause a lot of congestion on that road, that's going to have an impact on emergency services because obviously if there's a Healthcare Hub there then ambulances might need to turn up, police might need to get out, and if there's then going to be an additional 100 possible parents down there then that's just going to cause a lot more problems.

**Marianne Evans:** In terms of the North Powys Wellbeing Hub, it's being looked at as a joint project, the school and the Health Hub. However, the school is the first element. There's a big piece of work going on at the moment looking at the master plan for the overall campus, looking at things like traffic flows, looking at car parking, looking at walking routes, all of this taking into account the size of the overall campus.

A lot of these issues would need to be considered as part of the planning process when it gets to it, so there's a fair way to go.

**Governor:** The health hub, what type of things will be there? Won't there be safeguarding issues with the kind of people that would go to the Health Hub? I'm thinking addicts...

**Marianne Evans:** Even though the campus development is being considered as one project, the safeguarding element is key in terms of the design of the school, this comes first.

**Lynette Lovell:** Thank you so much everybody for your contributions tonight there's really valid points that really need to be taken into consideration as we move forward.

As we said earlier, everything that's been said tonight will feed into the consultation report. All these conversations tonight will all be available for Cabinet to read before they make their decisions. As you can see it is complex, there's a lot to consider. It is a proposal at this stage, and it will be the proposal the Cabinet will have to consider

and make their decision on. And they will make the decision based on everything that is provided through the consultation process. If there are other things that you haven't said tonight and you think, I'd like to make that point, the consultation is open to everybody to make their views known, including parents.

**Governor:** About parents' views. Are you still going to be using the letters that the parents all wrote and gave in hand copies of as well as the documents they filled in online? Because a lot of parents wrote at the very start when this was proposed, I think there were over 100 letters that went in.

**Marianne Evans:** Yes, we have those. We will include them.

**Lynette Lovell:** Thank you very much everyone. Thank you for your time.

**Meeting ended.**