



Plans for Newtown Schools

Engagement Report

July 2023



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Meetings with Governors	4
3. Meetings with Staff	7
4. Questionnaire	10
Part 1 – About You	10
Part 2 – The Council’s plans for Newtown schools	10
i) Ysgol Calon y Dderwen	10
ii) Treowen C.P. School	16
iii) Maesyhandir C.P. School	21
iv) Other schools	27
Part 3 – Equalities	32
5. Conclusion	34
Appendix A – Meetings with Governors	35
Appendix B – Meetings with Staff	41

1. Introduction

On the 7th June 2023, the Council announced that it was considering expanding the new building currently being planned for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, to also include pupils attending Maesyrrhandir C.P. School and Treowen C.P. School. To help the Council understand the possible impact of this, a period of engagement was undertaken with the three school communities from the 7th June 2023 until the 23rd July 2023.

As part of this, an engagement questionnaire was issued, to provide an opportunity for members of the three school communities to let the Council know their views on the possible plan. In addition, meetings were held with staff and governors at the three schools.

This report summarises the feedback received during the engagement period.

Draft

2. Meetings with Governors

During the engagement period, officers attended meetings with the governing bodies of the three schools.

The meetings were attended by the following Council officers:

- Lynette Lovell, Director of Education
- Marianne Evans, Service Manager, Transforming Education
- Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education

Notes were made outlining the issues / concerns / comments raised at these meetings. These are provided in [Appendix A](#), however a summary is provided below:

Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, 8th June 2023

- Concerns about further uncertainty for staff who have already been through a merger process recently.
- Concern about the impact on space for playing and outdoor activities if there were more pupils attending the new school.
- Concerns about the availability of adequate car parking facilities to accommodate the increased number of students and staff.
- Concern about the ability of a larger school to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Concern about congestion in the area surrounding the new school if more pupils were attending, and the impact on traffic flow and safety. The health campus would add to this.
- Questions about the reference to "south of the river" in the press release that was issued.
- Queries about why other Newtown schools haven't been included in these plans.
- Concerns about pupils from the most deprived parts of town having to travel longer distances to school and its potential impact on attendance and participation.
- Concern that it would not be possible to accommodate any future increases in pupil numbers on the site.
- Queries about the possibility of an all-through Welsh-medium school being established in Newtown.
- Concern about the potential loss of the unique identities of the individual schools involved in the merger
- Concern that Ysgol Calon y Dderwen's strengths would be lost

Treowen C.P. School, 22nd June 2023

- Pupil numbers at Treowen have increased slightly, as new pupils have joined the school from other Newtown schools.
- Concerns about congestion, space, and safety at the site of the new building.

- A leaflet has been circulated by Cllr David Selby which suggests that decisions to move forward with these plans have already been made.
- Concern about access to the Calon y Dderwen site and road safety for pupils from the Treowen estate – there may be an impact on attendance.
- The news not well-received in Treowen, 'Treowen Action Group' formed on Facebook.
- Concerns about the ability of a larger school to meet learners needs compared to Treowen.
- Concern about a Headteacher having to manage such a large school
- Concern about potential job losses.
- Uncertainty about the future of the current Maesyrrhandir and Treowen buildings if the merger doesn't happen when Calon y Dderwen's new building opens.
- Concern about impact on Treowen School's identity and name if the merger happens.
- Concern that pupils / parents would choose other schools, not the new building, meaning that the big new building would be empty.
- Everyone knows each other at Treowen
- Concern about the ability to support children with additional needs in a larger school.
- Concern that pupil numbers in Newtown might increase in the future but there wouldn't be enough school places

Maesyrrhandir C.P. School, 28th June 2023 (via Teams)

- Concern that the school's unique focus on nurture and well-being would be lost in a larger school.
- Worries about preserving Maesyrrhandir School's ethos and support for its pupils, and that pupils would be lost in a bigger school.
- Concern about families from Maesyrrhandir accessing the Calon y Dderwen site – getting pupils to school would be difficult.
- Maesyrrhandir School is unique due to its higher levels of ALN and deprivation.
- Concern about pupil transition to a larger school environment.
- Concern that it wouldn't be possible to give pupils the attention they need in larger classes due to the many different types of needs
- Concern that there could be an increase in pupil numbers in the future and there would be insufficient school places to accommodate these pupils.
- Reference to the importance of community links and safety for pupils.
- Concern that space would be limited in the proposed new building – additional space is needed for well-being and support.
- Concern about the ability to meet pupils' needs in a larger school.
- Concern about transport to the proposed new site – transport would need to be provided

- Concern about the walk to school for pupils from Maesyrrhandir – they would need to travel along a number of main roads, under the railway bridge, with high school pupils also using the path.
- Concern about staff well-being in a larger school
- Comments about the claim that "no children would be left behind" if the proposed merger were to go ahead – we're doing our best at Maesyrrhandir to ensure that no pupils are left behind now.
- It will be very difficult to bring the three school communities together.

Draft

3. Meetings with Staff

During the engagement period, officers attended meetings with staff at the three schools.

The meetings were attended by the following Council officers:

- Marianne Evans, Service Manager, Transforming Education
- Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education
- Sarah Christoforou, HR Manager

Notes were made outlining the issues / concerns / comments raised at these meetings. These are provided in [Appendix B](#), however a summary is provided below:

Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, 4th July 2023

- Questions about the timeline and decision-making process.
- Concern about impact on the well-being / morale of Calon y Dderwen staff who have already experienced a merger recently.
- Concern that there wouldn't be enough space and facilities for the proposed number of pupils on the site, given that part of the site will be occupied by the North Powys Well-being Programme.
- Would additional car parking, playground space, well-being areas also be provided if there was an increase in pupil numbers?
- It's possible that Calon y Dderwen's new building would impact on pupil numbers in other schools anyway.
- Concerns about the impact of one larger school on the community in Newtown.
- There are difficulties filling Headteacher and Deputy positions in Newtown.
- Calon y Dderwen would become a very different school if the proposed changes were to happen.
- Concern that there would be limited options for students having difficulty in a particular schools if the other schools were to close.
- Concern that staff wouldn't know the pupils and their families as well if the school increased in size
- Concern about the impact on the communities in Newtown
- Potential difficulties in accommodating pupils from future housing developments should pupil numbers in the area increase in the future.
- Comments about the importance of maintaining a nurturing and community-oriented environment.
- Need for infrastructure support and road safety for students from the other estates accessing the site.
- Concern that there would be an impact on attendance as it would be more difficult for pupils to get to school.

Meeting with Treowen staff – 6th July 2023

- Concerns about pupil behaviour in one larger school.
- Would there be enough space in the new building to accommodate all pupils, and what would the impact be on playgrounds etc?
- Concern about traffic, car parking, and access to the new site.
- There would be challenges in meeting the diverse needs of pupils in a larger school.
- Concern about what would happen if there was an increase in pupil numbers in Newtown in the future.
- Concern about pupils being able to access the new site – lots currently walk to school.
- Potential impact on staff and job security.
- Concerns about divisions among parents from different communities.
- Questions about what would happen to the current school buildings and community groups using the premises.
- Concerns about the transition and the impact on pupils and families.
- Request for fair treatment of the staff at all schools as the process moves forward.

Meeting with Maesyrrhandir staff – 3rd July 2023

- Concerns about safe routes and accessibility to the new building if the school was located further away.
- Worries about traffic and car parking at the site of the new building.
- View that Maesyrrhandir School is unique and should be retained.
- Request for examples and evidence of successful similar plans.
- Queries about staff numbers and the support that would be required in a larger school.
- Questions about what would happen to nursery provision.
- The school has worked hard to build relationships with families, this would be lost.
- Concern about the walk to school for pupils
- Concern about any increase in pupil numbers in Newtown in the future.
- Worries about the impact on well-being in a larger school setting.
- Request that all schools are treated fairly in the decision-making process.
- Concern that pupils would be lost in a larger school.
- There aren't currently any suitable bus routes to enable parents to access the town centre site.
- Concern that there would be a negative impact on pupil attendance if the school was further away.
- It's vital that pupils' needs and the impact on them is considered.
- Concern about the impact on staff well-being from having to teach larger classes.
- Concern about loss of community engagement and support.
- Emphasis on the importance of relationships and personalized care at Maesyrrhandir.

- Concern about the financial situation of families currently attending Maesyrrhandir School and how any change to the school could impact on this.

Draft

4. Questionnaire

As part of the engagement exercise, an online questionnaire was issued, which was available on the Council's engagement website throughout the engagement period.

A total of 301 responses were received.

The following section summarises the feedback received in the response forms which were completed.

Part 1 – About You

1. Please indicate how you are responding to this questionnaire:

Response	Calon y Dderwen	Treowen	Maes-yrhandir	Other	Total
Parent, carer or guardian	81	67	35	3	186 (62%)
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	2	4	1	5	12 (4%)
Pupil	0	2	3	0	5 (2%)
Governor	3	2	1	2	8 (3%)
Member of staff	13	6	5	0	24 (8%)
Member of the community	5	14	7	22	48 (16%)
Other	7	6	3	2	18 (6%)
Total responses	111 (37%)	101 (34%)	55 (18%)	34 (11%)	301

Part 2 – The Council's plans for Newtown schools

The responses provided to this part of the questionnaire have been broken down by the school the respondents indicated they were associated with.

i) Ysgol Calon y Dderwen

4. What do you think would be the benefits if the Council was to move forward with the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrhandir and Treowen schools?

111 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

Benefits

15 of the 111 responses outlined potential benefits associated with the Council's plan. These are as follows:

i) Improved facilities

- Improved facilities and equipment in a new, larger school

ii) Benefitting a wider population of children

- Potential benefits associated with having a diverse pupil population attending one school

iii) Potential reduction in costs

- Potential reduction in staffing costs
- Potential reduction in administration

iv) School funding / financial motivations

- The plan would save money for the local council
- Financial benefits for the council, including land for sale and cost savings
- Potential better funding allocation for a larger school

Other comments

Although the question asked respondents to outline the potential benefits associated with the plan, many respondents responded to this question by outlining concerns related to the plan. These are summarised below:

v) Negative impact on pupils

- Concern about disruption to children's learning
- Larger class sizes would affect individual attention and support
- Potential reduction in resources and provisions for pupils with additional learning needs
- Concerns about children getting "lost" in a larger school

vi) Negative impact on the community

- Reduced green space and land for the community
- Negative impact on the heart of the community (local schools)
- Increased traffic and congestion in the area
- Belief that the merger would not benefit anyone

vii) Concern about the possible impact on the provision at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen

- Fear that the quality of teaching at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen would be affected
- Worries about losing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen's unique approach

viii) Other concerns

- This is just a cost cutting exercise for the Council

5. What concerns do you have about the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrhandir and Treowen schools?

111 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Concern about the impact on pupils of attending a larger school

- Larger class sizes would impact on the support provided to individual pupils.
- Negative impact on pupils with additional learning needs.
- Reduced access to outdoor learning spaces and green areas.
- Loss of the personal care and support pupils receive in a smaller school environment.
- Potential for children falling through the system and not receiving adequate support.
- Possible negative effects on children's wellbeing in a larger and more overwhelming school environment.
- Potential difficulty in meeting the diverse needs of all pupils with larger class sizes.

ii) Traffic and parking issues

- Congestion and lack of parking in the area, leading to traffic problems.

iii) Concern about the impact on staff

- Impact on staff mental wellbeing due to the merger process and potential job losses.
- Concerns about increased stress on teachers and staff due to larger class sizes and increased workload.

iv) Community identity

- Loss of identity and the close-knit community feeling of individual schools.
- Fear that a larger school would lose its family and nurturing environment.

v) Land and facilities

- Concern about the amount of land available for the new school building and the impact on outdoor learning opportunities.
- There needs to be adequate green space for children's development and wellbeing.
- Uncertainty about the proposed health hub.
- Potential loss of green spaces and negative effects on children's exposure to nature.

vi) Location and access

- Concern about the distance some children would have to walk to reach the new school.
- There would be a negative impact on the community's ability to access the school conveniently.
- Safety concerns related to children's commute to and from school.
- Potential issues with traffic and transportation due to the location of the proposed school.

vii) Other concerns

- Dissatisfaction with how the process has been handled and communicated to staff and the community.
- Perceived focus on cost-saving rather than considering the wellbeing and needs of pupils and staff.

6. Are there any other local issues the Council will need to take into consideration when considering whether or not to move forward with increasing the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

111 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Traffic and parking concerns

- Traffic on Park Street will be horrendous, causing issues for work, doctors, medical centre, and family centre access
- Unsafe roads for children, especially with increased traffic and walking routes

ii) Impact on students and learning

- Need for smaller classes to accommodate children with learning disabilities.
- Concerns about bullying, students getting lost in the system, and pupil safety
- Concerns about ALN (Additional Learning Needs) provision and children with medical needs

iii) Impact on communities and families

- Impact on families who can't drive and would have to walk long distances, especially in bad weather.
- Concerns about breaking up communities.
- Impact on staff and potential job losses due to school consolidation.
- Concerns about elderly residents, care home, and private homes in the vicinity.

iv) Concerns around the North Powys Wellbeing Programme

- Concerns about the proposed health hub being on the same site as the school
- Safeguarding issues with a facility catering to a wide range of people being located near the school.

v) Green Space and Playground

- Concerns about loss of green space and playground for adequate exercise
- Reduced outdoor space due to the school expansion and the health hub

vi) Size of the school

- Concerns about the size of the school and impact on teachers and pupils
- Doubts about the viability and practicality of a "super" school

vii) Access and transport

- It would be difficult for parents to get their children to school, especially working parents.
- Impact on parents and children from Treowen and Maesyrrhandir in terms of travel distance and transportation options
- Need for improved transport options, such as free buses, for children coming from different estates.

viii) Other concerns

- Impact on house prices around Park Lane
- There is a lack of support for the proposal from staff, parents, and the local community
- Concern about the impact on play, and after-school activities

7. Do you have any other comments?

73 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Concerns about the impact on pupils

- Concern that there would be a negative impact on children's learning outcomes and experiences.
- Concern about larger class sizes.
- Concern about the impact on pupil well-being
- Concern about the negative effects on children's educational needs and experiences.
- Concern about anxiety and stress associated with transitioning to a new school and potential loss of familiar environments, teachers, and friends.

ii) Concern about the impact on staff

- Concern about possible job losses
- Concern about staff well-being

iii) Concerns about traffic

- Concern that existing traffic issues and congestion could worsen.

iv) Land related concerns

- Concern about the reduction in outdoor space and the impact on the new curriculum that emphasises outdoor learning.
- Concern that there isn't enough land to accommodate the increased number of pupils and provide proper play areas.
- Issues with the location and size of the proposed site for the new school.

v) General opposition to the proposal

- Many respondents would prefer to keep the schools separate rather than merging the schools

- Disagreement with the idea of combining three schools into one "super school."
- It is not in the best interest of the students, staff, or the community.
- Concern that the plan is being driven by cost savings rather than the needs of staff, pupils and the local community.

vi) Support for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen

- Positive feedback about Ysgol Calon y Dderwen's current environment, staff, and education.
- Support for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen's headteacher and the school's unique and positive atmosphere.
- Ysgol Calon y Dderwen should have a new building without any other changes.
- Ysgol Calon y Dderwen have recently been through a merger and could have the new building that was promised taken away without explanation.

vii) Criticism of the Council

- Criticism of the council's decision to pursue the merger without adequate information or community input.
- Disagreement with the council's priorities and perceived lack of consideration for staff, children, and families.
- Objections to the council's management, financial decisions, and focus on saving money.

ii) Treowen C.P. School

4. What do you think would be the benefits if the Council was to move forward with the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

101 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

Benefits

9 of the 101 responses outlined potential benefits associated with the Council's plan. These are as follows:

i) Potentially more resources

- Pupils may have access to more resources.

ii) New building with modern facilities

- Acknowledgment of a potential benefit of having a new building with modern facilities.

iii) Potential cost-saving for the Council

- References to a potential cost-saving for the council.

Other comments

Although the question asked respondents to outline the potential benefits associated with the plan, many respondents responded to this question by outlining concerns related to the plan. These are summarised below:

iv) Impact on pupils

- Concerns about the detrimental impact on pupils
- Worries that merging schools may lead to a loss of quality education and support for struggling students.
- The proposed plan would mean that staff and teachers would not be so familiar with the pupils.

v) Impact on the community

- Fears that Treowen school's closure would negatively impact the community.
- Emphasis on the importance of community connection and accessibility.

vi) Smaller schools are preferred

- Smaller schools should be maintained.
- Belief that smaller schools are beneficial for children's development.

5. What concerns do you have about the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

101 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Impact on pupils

- Concern that children's needs would not be met in larger school and that children with additional needs will not get proper support
- Concern that children with autism or social anxiety will struggle in bigger settings
- Concern that larger class sizes would mean that pupils would get less attention from teachers

- Concern that pupils that need additional help would not get the help and support they need
- Concern that pupils would have a less personalised education
- Concern that bullying would go unnoticed in larger classes
- Concerns that there would be a negative impact on children's education
- Concern that students would not receive the same level of education and attention
- Concern that learning experiences would be affected in larger schools
- Concern that there would be an impact on children's mental health and well-being
- Concerns about how children with behavioural issues may struggle in bigger schools
- Concern about how children with social anxiety, autism, ADHD, or other mental health problems would cope in larger environments
- Impact on the sense of belonging and familiarity for pupils

ii) Impact on the community and local identity

- Concerns about a loss of community spirit and local identity if schools are merged
- Smaller schools are important for community bonding and relationships
- Concerns about loss of community spirit and bonding within the local area
- Worries about the effect on parents and the community if the school is closed
- Fears that the community would fall apart if the school is moved or closed
- Concern about the loss of smaller school culture and the supportive family environment provided by smaller schools

iii) Accessibility and transport

- Concerns about walking distances for students living further away from the new school
- Issues with traffic, parking, and safety during school pick-up and drop-off
- Accessibility challenges for children with physical disabilities or health issues

iv) Impact on staff and jobs

- Concerns about staff job losses and increased workload
- Staff would potentially be less satisfied in larger school environments
- Queries about how staffing will be managed in a larger school

v) Finances and funding

- Worries about the financial motive behind the possible merger of the schools

- Concerns about budget cuts affecting the quality of education

vi) Infrastructure / new facilities / buildings

- Concerns about the new building's size, location, and lack of space
- Worries about the inadequate infrastructure and surroundings for a larger school
- Concern that there would be a lack of green space and outdoor areas

6. Are there any other local issues the Council will need to take into consideration when considering whether or not to move forward with increasing the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

101 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Impact on pupils

- Concerns about class sizes and the quality of education in larger schools.
- Worries about the well-being of children transitioning from small schools to larger ones.
- Implications for children's mental health and possible increased stress or anxiety.

ii) Accessibility and transport

- Difficulties for parents and children with disabilities to access the new school.
- Concerns about increased travel time, especially for those without cars or with mobility issues.
- Issues with public bus transport, particularly for those living on hills with mobility challenges.
- Safety concerns related to busy roads and hazardous conditions in winter.
- Concern about the cost of transport.
- Concern about increased pollution and increased carbon emissions due to more car usage.

iii) Impact on the community

- Worries about losing the sense of community and relationships between families and neighbours.
- Impact on local community spaces, like the community centre and access to multi-agency work.
- Fear that the closure of the school will lead to more housing development and potential negative consequences for the area.

iv) Traffic and parking

- Concerns about increased traffic congestion, especially in town areas.
- Challenges with parking around the new school site and the impact on safety.
- Worries about traffic accidents and risks for pupils and the public during school hours.
- Worries about potential hazards, such as traffic accidents, along busy roads near the new school site.

v) Other suggestions

- Suggestions to merge different schools or consider other options like merging Penygloddfa with Calon y Dderwen.

vi) Other concerns

- Worries about losing the link between Treowen Flying Start and the school, impacting transitions for younger children.

7. Do you have any other comments?

76 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Impact on pupils

- It will be more difficult to meet the needs of individual pupils in a larger school.
- Concern about the impact on children's well-being.
- Concern about the impact on children's education and development.
- Belief that a smaller school offers a more supportive environment for children's development.
- Smaller community schools are better suited to meet children's needs.
- Doubt that merging schools would result in a better education, with concerns about larger class sizes and issues going undetected.

ii) Concern about the impact on families

- Concern that merging the schools would cause stress for families
- It would be more difficult for parents to deal with longer commutes and crossing dangerous roads

iii) Comments about Treowen School

- Pupils / the school community have an emotional attachment to the school
- The school plays an important role in fostering a strong sense of community

iv) Criticism of the Council

- The council's focus is on cost-saving rather than considering children's interests.
- Accusations of incompetence and lack of understanding from those proposing the merge.
- Suspicion that the council is prioritizing financial gain over the well-being of students.

v) Other comments

- Reference to negative experiences with school mergers in other areas, suggesting that similar outcomes may occur in this case.

iii) Maesyrrhandir C.P. School

4. What do you think would be the benefits if the Council was to move forward with the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

55 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

Benefits

7 of the 55 responses outlined potential benefits associated with the Council's plan. These are as follows:

i) Larger school may have better resources

- Potential for better resources in a larger school.
- The idea that a bigger school might offer more opportunities, classes, and equipment.

ii) Communities will mix together

- There is potential for greater integration and mixing of communities in a larger school.

iii) The proposal could lead to more funding

- Merging schools could lead to more funding for a single larger school.

Other comments

Although the question asked respondents to outline the potential benefits associated with the plan, many respondents responded to this question by outlining concerns related to the plan. These are summarised below:

iv) Negative impact on pupils

- There would be no benefits to children from merging the schools.
- Negative impact on children's well-being and transition to high school.
- Concerns about disruption for children receiving ALN support.
- Fear that merging schools would negatively affect ALN services and care.
- Concern about children having to walk longer distances to school.
- Concerns about the well-being and emotional impact on children and families.
- Concern about children having to move to a different school.

v) Negative impact on the community

- Belief that closing the smaller schools would be a loss to the community.
- Worries that merging would ruin the unique and special atmosphere of smaller schools.
- There would be a negative impact on the community.

vi) Comments about funding / finance

- The perception that the council's motivation is to save money through merging.
- Suggesting that the council sees the proposal as a cost-cutting venture.
- Criticism of the lack of renovations and improvements in current schools.
- Fears of funding cuts for smaller schools due to declining student numbers.
- Investing in existing schools would be a better approach.

5. What concerns do you have about the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

55 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Impact on pupils

- Concern about the ability to meet the needs of every child attending the school.
- Concern that there would be less individual attention / support for children in larger classes.

- Concerns about attendance and engagement of pupils in a larger school.
- Concern about stress and anxiety for pupils due to changes to their routine.
- Concern about the ability of children to cope in a larger school environment, especially those with autism and ADHD.
- Concern about the ability of a larger school to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs

ii) Community and sense of belonging

- Concern about losing the sense of community and family support that exists in the current schools.
- Concern that merging schools could lead to a loss of community spirit and identity in parts of Newtown.

iii) Traffic and access issues

- Concerns about traffic congestion and limited access points to the new school.
- Difficulties for parents with limited mobility to take their children to the new location.
- Distance and safety concerns for pupils walking to the new school.

iv) Impact on teachers and staff

- Fears of staff redundancies.
- Worries about job losses and the potential reduction of support staff, affecting students with additional needs.

v) Bullying and behavioural issues

- Concerns that larger class sizes may lead to an increase in bullying incidents and behaviour problems.
- Concern that it would be difficult to manage social issues that may arise from bringing together pupils from different schools.

vi) Impact on small schools

- Worries about losing the benefits of smaller schools, which offer a close-knit community feel and personalized attention for children.

vii) Green space and facilities

- Concerns about the availability of sufficient space and green areas in the new school.
- Worries about the adequacy of facilities to support students with additional learning needs.

viii) Impact on parents and loss of choice

- Concern about the impact on parents' work schedules and time spent with their children due to longer travel distances.
- Concern that the merger limits parents' options for choosing the best school for their children.

6. Are there any other local issues the Council will need to take into consideration when considering whether or not to move forward with increasing the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrhandir and Treowen schools?

55 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Impact on pupils

- Concerns about maintaining the quality of education in a larger school setting.
- Concern about the impact on teacher-student relationships and emotional support.
- Concerns about the ability to provide personalized attention and intervention programs.
- Concern about the impact of the merger on children's mental health and well-being.
- Anxiety and stress for children dealing with change.
- Concern about the provision for children with additional needs and neurodiversity.
- Concern about support for children with disabilities and learning difficulties in a larger school.

ii) Distance and Travel

- Concern about the distance between schools and the proposed new building.
- Travel time and safety issues for children and parents.
- Traffic congestion and road access to the new school site.
- Traffic management issues in the town centre, especially during school hours.
- Impact on roads and infrastructure with increased traffic.

iii) Community and social impact

- Loss of community identity due to the merger of schools.
- Impact on the social cohesion of the estates served by the existing schools.

- Importance of smaller schools in providing a family-like atmosphere.

iv) Facilities and accommodation

- Concern about the capacity of the new building to accommodate all students.
- Questions about what would happen to the existing school buildings.
- Access to facilities like parking, car parking, and breakfast clubs.

v) Impact on parents and working families

- Effect on parents who may need to travel long distances or change work schedules.
- Consideration of work entitlements and support for working parents.
- Impact on parents' mental health and stress due to changes in routine and uniform.

vi) Financial and economic considerations

- Concerns about the cost of building a new school in the current economic climate.
- Questions about the financial motives behind the proposal.

vii) Other comments

- Concern about the suitability of the proposed school location
- Consideration of the need for schools in growing residential areas.

7. Do you have any other comments?

45 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Concern about the impact on pupils

- Worries about the impact of merging the schools on the children's education and well-being.
- Concern about disruption to pupils
- Concern about children's safety when walking long distances, especially in adverse weather conditions.
- Concerns about bullying and conflicts between high school and primary school students during travel.
- The importance of considering children's perspectives and allowing them to have a say in the decision.

ii) Comments about support for pupils with ALN

- Calls for better support for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and neurodiverse children.
- Concerns that merging schools could negatively impact support for children with disabilities.
- Suggestions for training staff to understand and support children with ALN and diverse needs.

iii) Concern about the impact on staff

- Concern about job losses and the welfare of staff affected by the changes

iv) Impact on the local community

- Concern about the loss of a sense of community and the disruption caused by uprooting children from their familiar schools and teachers.
- The significance of schools as community hubs and their importance to the local area.
- Concerns about the loss of community identity with the merger of schools.
- Potential negative effects on businesses and homes in the surrounding area.

v) Impact on parents

- Concerns about the increased burden of transportation costs for parents without cars.
- Worries about the difficulty for parents in getting their children to the new school.
- Impact on parents' work schedules and job opportunities due to the changes.

vi) Alternative options

- The Council should invest in existing schools to improve facilities and support services.
- Comments about creating an all-through Welsh school in Newtown.

vii) Comments about Maesyrrhandir school

- Positive experiences and testimonies about the current schools, especially Maesyrrhandir.

- Opposition to the idea of changing the schools based on personal experiences of Maesyrrhandir School.

viii) Other comments

- Calls for more funding to be invested in the existing smaller schools.
- Questions about the allocation of funds and resources for the proposed merged school.

iv) Other schools

4. What do you think would be the benefits if the Council was to move forward with the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

34 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

Benefits

20 of the 34 responses outlined potential benefits associated with the Council's plan. These are as follows:

i) More funding would be available / cost benefits

- More funds available for better opportunities in one school.
- Benefit in terms of cost savings for the council.
- One site, one location for reduced building and running costs.
- Economies of scale in education spending.

ii) One school would be easier for parents

- Easier for parents with children attending different schools.

iii) Better facilities and resources

- Better facilities and resources for students to learn.
- Improved infrastructure and outdoor space for enhanced learning.
- Consistent approach to teaching and resources.

iv) Potential to create a dedicated unit for additional needs

- A unit for additional needs could be created in the new school.

v) Potential to create a consistent approach to teaching

- Consistent approach to teaching and resources.

vi) Positive experience for pupils

- Larger friendship groups and more experiences for children.

Other comments

Although the question asked respondents to outline the potential benefits associated with the plan, many respondents responded to this question by outlining concerns related to the plan. These are summarised below:

vii) Traffic and parking concerns

- Fear of increased congestion due to more students and staff.
- Negative impact on nearby residents.

viii) Perception around financial motive / cost savings

- Perception that it is a cost-saving measure for the council.
- Doubt about the real benefits for children and educators.

ix) Lack of benefits for the community

- No perceived benefits for the community or affected families.
- Limited benefits for the children, educators, and community.
- Uncertainty or lack of conviction about potential benefits.

5. What concerns do you have about the idea to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrhandir and Treowen schools?

34 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Traffic and transportation

- Increased traffic on roads, especially around the new site.
- Insufficient pavements and safe foot and cycle paths.
- Concerns about safety and congestion in the town centre.
- Difficulty in transportation for children living on the outskirts of Newtown.
- Potential impact on emergency response times due to traffic bottlenecks.

ii) Impact on current pupils

- Disruption to pupils.
- Potential dilution of relationships between students and staff.

- Negative impact on children with special educational needs (SEN).
- Concern about the level of support that would be provided for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).
- Concerns about larger class sizes and less individual attention for students.
- Worries about the school becoming too big and impersonal.
- Fear of overwhelming pupils in a larger school.

iii) Impact on staff

- Concerns about losing jobs and staff cuts.
- Concerns about potential job losses due to the merging of schools.

iv) Community and identity

- Loss of community-driven schools and community hubs.
- Potential loss of community events and bonding between families.
- Negative effects on crime rates, mental health, and community strength.

v) Comments / concerns about the site

- Questions about the capacity of the site to accommodate a larger school.
- Worries about insufficient outdoor space and grounds for physical activity.
- Questions about the maximum capacity the council would allow on the site.
- Uncertainty about whether future expansion would be possible and potential need for temporary buildings.

6. Are there any other local issues the Council will need to take into consideration when considering whether or not to move forward with increasing the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools?

34 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Traffic and transport

- Impact on road infrastructure and potential safety issues.
- Concerns about traffic bottlenecks and road capacity.
- Safety implications for children walking or cycling to the new site.
- Concerns about the long-term impact on traffic and transportation in the area.

- Concerns about the area's capacity to handle more traffic.
- Consideration needs to be given to pick-up areas and buses as potential solutions to congestion.

ii) Impact on current pupils

- Concerns about taking pupils out of their community and current place of education.
- Concern about the welfare of children.

iii) Impact on staff

- Concern about staff well-being.
- Concern about the loss of jobs for teachers and staff.
- Concerns about finding appropriate staff for the new school.

iv) Impact on the community and local residents

- Impact on local residents, particularly regarding increased traffic.
- Potential alienation of residents due to the new school's location.
- Negative impact on the existing community ethos.

v) Other comments / concerns

- There is a need to ensure that there are well-equipped facilities and outdoor areas for learning and play
- Request for more transparency in the council's proposal.

7. Do you have any other comments?

20 respondents provided a response. The responses received are summarised below:

i) Concern about the future use of the current buildings

- What will happen to the existing school buildings if they are no longer used as schools?
- Worries about leaving the current school buildings to rot or be vandalized.

ii) Comments about the impact on the community

- Concerns about removing the heart of the community and the impact on younger people.
- Concerns about the rise in anti-social behaviour due to the removal of community spaces.

iii) Queries / comments about the process

- Questions about why Maesyrrhandir and Treowen were chosen for the possible merger.
- A far-reaching and thorough consultation process is needed before making any changes.

iv) Other comments

- It's important that each school's unique ethos, vision, and policies are preserved.
- Why try to change something that isn't broken?
- Concern that there would be a social divide and stigma based on which school children attend.
- Concern about loss of choice of schools in the future.
- Reference to the importance of smaller schools for families in deprived areas.
- Need for careful consideration of traffic management, particularly at pick-up/drop-off times.
- Reference to the Welshpool school merger and its reception in the community.

Part 3 – Equalities

8. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	6	2.0%
16-24	11	3.7%
25-34	105	35.6%
35-44	91	30.8%
45-54	37	12.5%
55-64	19	6.4%
65-74	10	3.4%
75-84	1	0.3%
85+	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	15	5.1%
Total responses	295	100.0%

9. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	42	15.1%
Female	235	84.5%
Gender Fluid	1	0.4%
Non-Binary	0	0.0%
Gender Neutral	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
Total responses	278	100.0%

10. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	80	27.4%
No	161	55.1%
Prefer not to say	51	17.5%
Total responses	292	100.0%

11. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?

Response	No.	%
Yes	89	30.4%
No	103	35.2%
Prefer not to say	27	9.1%
Not applicable	74	25.3%

Total responses	293	100.0%
------------------------	------------	---------------

12. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?

Response	No.	%
Yes	63	21.5%
No	124	42.3%
Prefer not to say	35	11.9%
Not applicable	71	24.2%
Total responses	293	100.0%

13. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	30	10.2%
No	232	78.6%
Prefer not to say	33	11.2%
Total responses	295	100.0%

14. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	265	90.4%
Asian	4	1.4%
Black, African or Caribbean	2	0.7%
Mixed	3	1.0%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	19	6.5%
Total responses	293	100.0%

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the responses, it is evident that there are various concerns and opinions among the community regarding the proposal to increase the size of the replacement building for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to also accommodate pupils from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen schools.

Whilst some possible benefits were identified by some respondents, the proportion of respondents that identified possible benefits was fairly small in comparison with the number of respondents that identified concerns.

The possible benefits that were identified included the following:

- Ability for more pupils to benefit from the new facilities
- Improved resources
- More funding
- The ability to provide education more efficiently

Whilst slightly different concerns were raised by respondents associated with the different schools, many of the concerns raised were similar across the three schools. The concerns raised included the following:

The concerns that were identified included the following:

- Concern about the impact on pupils
- Concern about the impact on staff attending the three schools, due to uncertainty and potential job losses
- Concern about the impact on the local communities within Newtown
- Concern that the proposed new school would be too big and would be unable to meet the needs of pupils, particularly pupils with ALN
- Concern that it would be more difficult for pupils currently attending Maesyrrhandir and Treowen to access the new site, which could impact on attendance
- Concern about the impact on traffic in Newtown and congestion in the area around the school site
- Concern that the site wouldn't be large enough to accommodate all pupils, particularly as the North Powys Well-being Centre will also be located on the site

Appendix A – Meetings with Governors

Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, 8th June 2023

The following is a summary of the comments made by Calon y Dderwen governors on the Council's possible plan:

- Concern about more uncertainty for staff, job security
- Heads and deputies jobs in Newtown not being filled – that's concerning
- Concern about the impact on space for playing
- Concern about car parking
- Concern about congestion in the area
- Concern about the wording of the press release – reference to south of the river
- There were other schools that could have been considered – why is it only these three schools?
- Concern about pupils from the most deprived parts of town having to travel the furthest – what about the impact on attendance etc?
- What happens if there is an increase in pupil numbers in the future and there is no more room to expand on this site?
- All-through Welsh-medium – is that still on the cards? If that happened that might mean the Dafydd Llwyd building would be empty.
- Could an all-through school be located on the college site as they are asset stripping?
- Pupil numbers are up in Calon y Dderwen – this is thanks to the pre-school, the team at the school, the energy
- Concern about the schools losing their identities
- Could there be a middle ground? Shared management? Campus feel?
- What would happen in terms of early years provision? It's currently a strength for this school that the early years is located in Trehafren, Maesyhandir
- Concern about how the changes that need to be made to the design would work within the same footprint.
- Funding – would there be more funding for a bigger building?
- Congestion is a massive concern – footpaths and active travel etc might be needed
- Well-being centre will bring even more traffic
- Would one ALNCo be enough to cover 420 pupils? Particularly if the pupils were on different sites.
- Concern about the other schools – how would the teachers, staff at the other schools feel about potentially losing their identity?
- Headteacher roles aren't currently being filled in Newtown – that sends a message.
- As a school we have a track record of successfully creating a new school. There are massive strengths in the other schools though and it's important that these would be able to continue

- As a governing body, we'd be looking for certainty that our staff would have certainty beyond any date when the schools merge, if this was to happen
- Concern about parents having to buy new uniforms if there was a new uniform
- A request for the Portfolio Holder / Cabinet member to visit the 3 schools
- Can there be a discussion about the size of the health hub etc?
- Concern that if Ysgol Calon y Dderwen was expanded, it may not feel / look like Ysgol Calon y Dderwen any more

Treowen C.P. School, 22nd June 2023

The following is a summary of the comments made by Treowen governors on the Council's possible plan:

- Current pupil numbers at Treowen are slightly higher than the latest numbers you have – some new pupils have joined the school recently, most of these are from within Newtown
- Concern about congestion around the site of the new building
- Concern about squeezing so many children on to the site, as well as the Health Board development
- You say that no decisions have been made, however a leaflet has been sent out by Cllr David Selby which makes it sound like it's a done deal
- Concern about access to the site from Treowen
- Concern about safety getting to the site – road safety measures will need to be put in place
- Some pupils already struggle to get to school on time when they live on the estate
- The news has not been very well received in the local community. A meeting for the community was held last night, and a 'Treowen Action Group' page has been set up on Facebook
- Concern that the new school would be too big and wouldn't be able to meet the learners needs – their needs are met at Treowen
- Concern that it would be a lot for a Headteacher to take on a school of that size
- Concern about the impact on school staff – they could lose their jobs. Do you know how many jobs would be lost?
- If there is going to be a new building in the centre of town, the other schools may lose pupils anyway. If the plan to bring all three schools into the new building doesn't go ahead, what does that mean for the existing buildings at Maesyrhandir and Treowen? They still need investment.
- Concern that the plan has been presented to us as a 'merger', but it's been reported in the press as 'closure'
- What would happen to Treowen School's identity if this went ahead? Would the school name still be Calon y Dderwen?
- Treowen School is a close, nurturing community, everyone has a rough idea about every child, even if they don't work closely with them. Children feel safe at the school, and so do the parents. Lots of the parents came to school here

themselves. We pull families who live across town into this community. 'Team Treowen' ethos.

- What happens if parents choose for their children to go to other schools, not the new, big school, and you end up with a big empty school?
- We're very lucky to have a community centre across the road. We work well with them, we have very good links with them.
- We have quite a lot of children that have additional needs but don't qualify for extra funding. They need small groups – how are you going to ensure these needs are met in a larger school? We haven't got the money to provide 1:1 support now.
- Isn't this discriminatory to those north of the river?
- Pupil numbers in Newtown might be decreasing now, but what happens if demographics change in the future and there are more pupils in Newtown? Or if some of the schools in nearby villages close?
- There were conversations a few years ago about merging Maesyrrhandir and Treowen, this wasn't a very popular idea then, so why are you now thinking about adding another school in?
- Need to ensure that the process isn't dragged out
- Concern that no meeting is being held for parents – although they can give their views via a questionnaire, they won't get responses to their queries.
- Concern that the news that this is being considered will put parents off coming here, and that we will have difficulty filling posts we need to fill
- Concern about the timing of sharing this information – Headteachers were told just before half term
- Concern about the well-being of staff at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen as they have already gone through a merger process where they have been concerned about the future of their jobs
- Concern about additional money being spent on exploring this idea when it could be put into school budgets
- We have close links with the community, we hold a school fair where people from the community come in and do stalls, children can go over the road to the farm to learn about animals, we visit Bethshan. The children will miss out on things like this if you move the school.
- Queries about accessibility in the new building – is there disabled access throughout?

Maesyrrhandir C.P. School, 28th June 2023 (via Teams)

The following is a summary of the comments made by Maesyrrhandir governors on the Council's possible plan:

- The school has worked hard on nurture, well-being because of the level of need in school – the staff have had to do this because of who the children / families are that attend the school – this makes the school unique. Concern that this would be lost if the schools were merged to create a larger school

- Concern that children would be lost because you can't have the same ethos across a big school as there currently is at Maesyrrhandir
- The pupils that come to this school are Maesyrrhandir children. Getting families out of the locality – Maesyrrhandir – would be a battle
- Maesyrrhandir School is more unique than others – high level of ALN, deprivation, skilled staff managing / meeting the needs of pupils
- Concern about pupils moving to a larger school environment
- Whilst pupil numbers at the school have dropped, there are houses due to open across the road which could impact on this.
- It's very difficult to project pupil numbers in Maesyrrhandir, however numbers do seem to be increasing with the introduction of Flying Start
- We are a community school – parents feel safe coming to us for other things, not just education
- We attract pupils that struggle elsewhere
- Concern about what would happen to the community of Maesyrrhandir if the school wasn't there.
- Concern about attendance if the school was further away from where pupils live
- Many safeguarding issues need to be dealt with on a daily basis, keeping on top of this in a larger school would be a concern
- Concern about pupils being in larger classes – it's not possible to give pupils the attention they need in a large class of 30 due to the many different needs we have to meet
- Many of the pupils need more specialist provision after leaving Maesyrrhandir – they go from Maesyrrhandir to Cedewain.
- The school provides a unique role in the cluster and the community – pupils have transferred here because of the support provided here, when they haven't managed in a mainstream school.
- Concern about how well Maesyrrhandir pupils would do in a larger school / larger classes without the support they get here.
- Concern about the distance to the proposed location – our family liaison officer often has to go and pick children up from their homes. Many children bring themselves to school – there are safety implications if the school was further away
- The school is a safe place for the community as well as the pupils
- Since the community centre was lost, the school has become somewhere the community can come for advice. It's taken a long time to build those relationships, to build trust
- If the proposed merger is going to happen, we would want to know that the needs of all pupils are going to be met.
- If a bigger building, other spaces as well as classrooms would need to be thought about – is there enough space for wellbeing, nurture etc?
- Even though there are surplus places in this school, all the space is being used – even with the pupil numbers we've currently got, we use all the space to provide well-being areas, areas to meet pupils needs

- Space is a big concern – space is vital to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.
- If the move is going to happen, transport must be provided – not just for the first year or so, this would have to continue
- Currently, not many pupils are having to cross main roads to get to Maesyrrhandir – this would change, it would be more dangerous to get to the other site
- Concern about pupils with ASD, ADHD, behaviour issues in mainstream provision – there is a higher level of need since the pandemic
- Concern that pupils' needs won't be met in a larger school – some thrive in a smaller school / classroom. How are the needs of pupils going to be met in a huge school?
- The quality at Maesyrrhandir is excellent, why would you want to lose that?
- The journey to school would change – pupils would need to travel along a number of main roads, under a narrow railway bridge, with high school pupils also using the same path – it will be really busy just at the time they will also be travelling to school – currently pupils have a safe journey to school, that may not be the case in the future.
- Some form of transport would need to be provided for families from this area, this would have to be funded from somewhere – our parents would not be able to afford to pay for transport to school
- Concern that the journey to school / a lack of transport would have an impact on attendance
- Concern that people are coming into the school and telling staff that the school will be flattened within 5 years – this makes it sound like it is a done deal, and also has a negative impact on staff morale
- Concern about staff and headteacher well-being in a bigger school – how will they cope with the amount of extra duties they will have to cope with when there are less staff?
- Being a teacher / member of staff in Maesyrrhandir is different to other schools – the teachers don't get an ALN allowance because we're not a special school, but the workload here is very different to any other school – the staff love working here, and they work really hard with the children
- The school's curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of the community – we worked really hard on this
- The press release that was sent out said that 'no children will get left behind' – we are ensuring now that pupils don't get left behind, the concern is that they would get left behind in a larger school
- Maesyrrhandir families are isolated from the rest of Newtown – concern that combining all the communities would do more harm than good, that the Maesyrrhandir families will be starting on a lower foot. Ensuring no one gets left behind will be impossible when trying to cater for three communities at the same time.
- Concern about the vast differences between the communities in Newtown, and how these could all be brought together.

- Concern about moving forward by closing Maesyrrhandir and Treowen and expanding Calon y Dderwen to protect Calon y Dderwen who have already been through a merger – wouldn't want Maesyrrhandir or Treowen to lose their identity. It would be difficult for two school communities to join an already established school – Maesyrrhandir or Treowen shouldn't come second to Calon y Dderwen.
- Will you be speaking to pupils as part of this process?
- Parental questionnaire – many of our parents don't have online access. Can we provide a list of concerns raised by parents?
- What happened to the Welsh-medium secondary idea, and the idea to move Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd out to a new all-through school, and move Maesyrrhandir and Treowen into that building?

Draft

Appendix B – Meetings with Staff

Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, 4th July 2023

The following is a summary of the comments made by Ysgol Calon y Dderwen staff on the Council's possible plan:

- What is the timeline? When will we know if any proposals will be taken forward?
- If nothing goes forward, what would that mean for the timeline for the build?
- As you are talking about increasing the size of Calon y Dderwen's new building, does that mean Calon y Dderwen would stay?
- What would it mean for Calon y Dderwen staff who have already been through a merger process?
- We've been through this process before, staff at the other schools haven't, so why should they be protected, particularly when the decrease in pupil numbers might mean that their schools would close anyway?
- We know that you understand what we have already been through with the merger that has already happened, but do the politicians that will be making the decisions? Can you ensure that this is conveyed to them?
- A lot of work has already gone into establishing this new school, developing the new logo, values etc – it would be a total waste if this school was to close so that another new school could be established.
- Concern about the well-being and mental health of staff – can't imagine the impact that going through this again would have on staff in what's a challenging job anyway.
- Has there been a calculation on how many square metres of space are needed for the number of pupils you are planning for? The size of our site is already being cut in half, I can't imagine another 150 pupils at breaktimes.
- Would additional car parking, playground areas / space, well-being areas also be provided if the building's capacity was increased?
- Concern about the plan to bring all children south of the river together in one school – this would mean all the children from the more deprived areas coming together in one school. Concern that this would result in massive behavioural issues.
- Some of our children haven't had a successful time and have been moved either to this school or from this school to a different school and they have had a second chance – however if this plan happens, there won't be any other options for pupils.
- When a new school building opens, it attracts pupils so potentially there would be a significant decrease in pupil numbers in other schools anyway.
- We are struggling to fill headteacher and deputies roles in Newtown and beyond. The proposed plan would help to address this.
- Calon y Dderwen staff have chosen to work here because of the school, however if the plans happened, it would become a very different school.

Would the staff that are currently working here still want to work here? Would people want to send their children to that school?

- There are some big housing developments in Newtown – I don't know if 420 will be big enough to accommodate all pupils, I think it would need to be nearer 500 pupils.
- If the plan to close the other two schools does happen, there would be space available in Maesyrrhandir and Treowen. Couldn't one of these sites be used for the Health development, which would mean that more of the Calon y Dderwen site would be available for the school?
- If the two sites were sold off to build more housing, where are pupils going from these houses going to go to school as there wouldn't be enough places.
- Penygloddfa is too small for the amount of children that want to go there, but it seems that we aren't learning from this, and are now planning to do the same again and build a school that is too small for the number of pupils.
- Is there potential for the Health development to move from the site to a different site out of town?
- Wouldn't want the school to have to move to a site out of town to be able to accommodate more pupils.
- We know the pupils at this school and their families. Concern that if there were 420 pupils at the school, this wouldn't be the case. It would be less personal, more clinical, like a high school.
- Currently the Headteacher of this school knows every pupil, their names, their family – this means that they are approachable. If the school was bigger, they wouldn't be able to have this type of relationship with every family in a larger school.
- Concern that moving forward with this would destroy three communities
- We did a lot of work and research when we were establishing the new school, when we were considering the school name, the logo etc. We did a lot of work with parents, which kept them on board. Parents feel warmth, because of the experiences they and their children have had through Ladywell and Hafren, and now Calon y Dderwen.
- We are a nurturing school – we nurture the children and the families.
- We have excellent teachers, TAs, support staff here. They are all great leaders. If the plan was to move forward, there is no doubt that the team of staff we have here would be more than capable to do it.
- Concern about job security is what's overriding everything at the moment. If that was overcome, then we'd start to be able think about other things related to the plan. Job security is dictating a lot of our feelings at the moment.
- Concern about increased traffic, car parking, congestion, concern that there would be no choice for pupils / parents
- Some parents don't have the privilege of being able to drive to an alternative school, so wouldn't be able to choose.
- Concern about the walk to school – what infrastructure will be put in to support this? High school pupils already use the same path and would be going in the opposite direction at the same time. A lot of children make their

own way to school, but there would be roads to cross from Maesyrrhandir and Treowen

- Maesyrrhandir and Treowen are on the doorstep for pupils living on those estates. It may be that the only reason they get to school is because it's so close
- Concern about impact on attendance if pupils had to go further to get to school
- The other schools were built in the estates because this school became too big
- If you go ahead with this, more behavioural units will be needed as some pupils won't cope in school
- The police are struggling already with behaviour issues in Newtown – this would result in more issues.
- Maesyrrhandir provide specific support to a particular group of families. This is a strength, it would be difficult to replicate this here.
- In many ways, Treowen and Calon y Dderwen are more similar – the two schools have a similar level of FSM.
- Concern about the level of need within the classrooms – a large number of TAs would be needed classes given the level of need.
- Maesyrrhandir teach very differently to Calon y Dderwen to meet the needs of the pupils in their school.
- What happens if the school is built for 300 pupils as is currently planned but more pupils than that want to come here?
- Is there an option to build a bit bigger but not the whole way? E.g. build for 350/360?
- What about the impact on the learners? They've already been impacted by Covid, the process that has already happened. The learners are already suffering because of this – teachers are attending meetings which means they can't be focussing on planning, teaching and learning.
- What is the process for making a decision? Who would make the decision?
- If the overriding sentiment is negative, can a decision still be made to proceed?
- One set of parents have already decided their children are going to Penygloddfa not Calon y Dderwen, as they don't want their children to go to the 'superschool'.
- One of the strengths of this school is its diversity – we have professional parents and also parents living in deprivation. Some parents on one end of that have said that they wouldn't want their children to go here any more if this plan was to happen.

Meeting with Treowen staff – 6th July 2023

The following is a summary of the comments made by Treowen staff on the Council's possible plan:

- Is saving money the main reason for this?

- There are quite a lot of schools in Newtown, so it makes sense to think about this.
- Pupil behaviour would be a concern if the plan was to go ahead
- We have experience of pupils running away from school during the school day – in a bigger school, there would need to be a lot of staff to keep an eye on pupils
- Concern about how the pupils would get along with each other – there have been fights between pupils from different schools / estates when they have gone to high school together
- Pupil from this school moved to Maesyrrhandir but the behaviour there was overwhelming so they came back here
- Having all the pupils in one school would be a challenge due to behaviour challenges
- Would the class sizes be bigger than they are now?
- Would there be enough space? If adding more classrooms to the building, would that take away from the playgrounds?
- Concern about traffic, car parking – would there be a one way system?
- Is there an opportunity for any other changes to schools in Newtown? E.g. is there an opportunity to move the Welsh school to a different building and move in there?
- Concern about pupils getting down to the site – buggies, lots currently walk to school. Some year 5 and 6 pupils walk themselves to school so would potentially have to walk further
- What about staff? Would there be more or less staff at the new school?
- What if pupil numbers in the area increase in the future and the Council ends up not having enough places?
- If a new health hub is going to be built, what will happen to the hospital? Would the hospital site then be surplus?
- Concern that the new school would be part of a building site for a number of years whilst the health buildings are completed.
- There are lots of children with additional needs across the three schools. How could one larger school cater for all of them, and ensure that all of their needs are met?
- Concern about impact on staff that would be affected.
- Would the Headteachers of the other schools be treated the same as the Headteacher of Calon y Dderwen?
- Whilst understanding that it wouldn't be nice for Calon y Dderwen in particular as they have already been through this type of process, we would prefer for everyone to be treated fairly
- Concern that families would have to go and buy a new uniform – the current uniform is passed down and reused
- Concern that if the plan were to go ahead, there could be divisions between the parents based on the different communities
- Community groups currently use Treowen School outside school hours – where would they go if the school wasn't here?

Meeting with Maesyrrhandir staff – 3rd July 2023

The following is a summary of the comments made by Maesyrrhandir staff on the Council's possible plan:

- Concern about safe routes to school if there was no school in Maesyrrhandir – pupils come to school on their own or bring their younger siblings to school, concern about the safety of this if the school was further away
- Concern about car parking at the new building – it's already congested
- Maesyrrhandir School is special – we don't want to lose this
- How do we know the plan would work? Where is the example where this has happened already? How many form entry would the new school be?
- Concern that access to the site is not good.
- How many staff would be needed on the site?
- What will happen to nursery provision?
- It's already dangerous around the Calon y Dderwen site. The police are horrified about the idea of having more pupils on the site.
- If anything is going to happen, it should affect all three schools the same – it wouldn't be fair if it only affected one school
- If you were to bring only one school into the plans, how would you decide which school?
- Would you take distance into consideration when deciding which school to bring in?
- Calon y Dderwen have only just been through a merger process – can understand that they don't want to go through another one.
- Would staff at Calon y Dderwen have more assurance that staff at the other schools because they've already been through the process?
- The site has a lot of green space in the centre of town – will that all be tarmacked over? That wouldn't be very good in terms of well-being etc.
- Can't see any benefit to the plan it at the moment – Maesyrrhandir is on the edge of town, we serve an economically deprived area. At the moment, it seems that by throwing everyone into one site, more would be lost than would be gained
- From the Council's perspective, I think this is just about saving money
- Concern about the children that come to Maesyrrhandir School, and about this part of town becoming the graveyard part of town. Some pupils don't leave the estate, they don't go on trips unless the school takes them – concern that no-one will come to this part of town if the school isn't here
- The school has worked hard to build relationships with the families that come here, this has taken a long time
- Most of the staff are Thrive trained, so give the same message
- The trust that we have built up with our pupils and their families might be watered down if the school was further away.
- Before Maesyrrhandir School was built, people living on the estate went to school in the centre of town. The community was really pleased when the

school was built, as taking the little ones to school in the town centre was along way

- Concern about pupils having to go to town under the railway bridge
- If the plans are going to happen, it's important that there is enough space on the site and in the building to meet the pupils' needs
- If the plans do go further, Maesyrrhandir staff will need to be able to feed into the design process so that we can ensure that the design meets our pupils' needs
- What happens if pupil numbers increase in the future and there aren't enough places? You need to have the infrastructure in place so that pupils / families can come and live in Newtown if they want to
- Parents choice will be limited if there are no other schools in town – there is currently quite a lot of movement between schools
- Currently we are catching certain things at Maesyrrhandir with regard to our pupils' home life. The concern is that in a bigger school, the relationships won't be as strong, we won't be catching as much – how much of that will be pushed on other services e.g. GPs, the health service, social services, CAMHS, police.
- We are an important cog in the wheel in Maesyrrhandir. We are well trained, we catch lots of other things in terms of the well-being of our pupils and their families.
- Whatever happens, it's important that the provision continues to meet the needs of our pupils. The pupils here deserve the best, but is this the right answer for them?
- Concern about pupils getting lost in a larger school.
- You say that pupils will be able to benefit from the latest facilities, latest equipment in the planned new build, but this isn't what our children need. They need the small groups, the support they don't get at home.
- There's nothing you can create in a brand new school that can't be provided here
- If you can find money for the new building, why can't that money be spent here?
- Our children won't gain anything from moving to a new building that we can't provide here, but our families could lose a lot
- Concern that our pupils won't cope in a larger school – is there space in special schools for any children that won't cope?
- How would the Little Stars provision for 2 and 3 year olds be affected?
- Currently parents are backwards and forwards to school to drop off children – this would be difficult if further away
- There aren't currently any bus routes – how would parents get into town, particularly in the winter?
- Concern that if buses would available for parents to use to get to school, parents would have to pay for this
- In the winter, we often have to phone parents to see if pupils are coming to school – they won't even walk to Maesyrrhandir School in bad weather, so it's

unlikely they would walk to town in bad weather – there would be much more absence.

- Children will miss school because their parents can't afford a bus, especially in bad weather
- We are dealing with families who are making a choice as to whether to use electric or buy food – they would have no money to pay for a bus.
- The current arrangement works for Maesyrrhandir – families live near to the school.
- Some of our parents are dealing with mental health issues – some of them can't bring themselves out of the house. If the children were to miss more school, EWOs would need to be involved, so it would add to their workload, also mental health services etc.
- The decision makers only see numbers – the decisions will be made based on numbers, not on the people / the impact on the people.
- What qualifications do the people that will be making the decisions have that qualifies them to make a decision on what is best for the pupils in our town? When were they last in a classroom?
- What are the estimated savings? We would like to know about the estimated savings and costs associated with this. I expect we would be able to blow any savings out of the water with the additional costs that would arise if there was no school here e.g. health services, EWOs, police...
- We hold on to a lot of pupils here when they haven't been able to settle in other schools.
- Many pupils stay here throughout primary school, but then transfer to Cedewain instead of a mainstream secondary school.
- Concern that Maesyrrhandir pupils wouldn't cope in a bigger class of around 30 pupils?
- When we had larger class sizes in this school, there was much more staff sickness due to the difficulties associated with managing these classes. We were having to pay staff costs twice, as we were also having to pay supply costs.
- Where do pupils from other schools go at the end of year 6? How many pupils from other schools transfer to Cedewain etc, and how does this compare with Maesyrrhandir?
- Parents who have transferred to other schools go there but their needs aren't met.
- We have quite a lot of late arrivals at school – even if you put crossings etc in place for pupils to help with travel to school, what about pupils that arrive late?
- We already have plans to benefit from the new build that is happening at Cedewain, such as sports facilities, forest school, so our pupils will already be able to access new facilities.
- We have good links with the community. Hope Church do a lot for our community, they use the school as a base. The Oaks care home come to us and we go to them.
- The school is very aware of the financial situation of many of the families that come her. Our breakfasts club is free, because we understand the level of

need, and we have a high PDG. We've had pupils turning up that haven't had breakfast, so we know how important this is.

- A lot of us put our own money into the school because we are so passionate about it. We try and help with school trips etc so that children don't miss out.
- A lot of us have been here many years, we're on our second generation of pupils. We have such a connection with these pupils because we taught their parents.
- Concern that in a larger school it becomes more of a numbers game and pupils would get lost.
- The relationship the school has with the community here has taken years to build up – this would be destroyed overnight by moving to town.
- Childrens Services often speak to school staff to get to the parents, as we have a better relationships with them
- The current arrangement works at Maesyrrhandir. The school is a centre of excellence that should be replicated across Powys.
- The reality is that if this happens, and public transport is available, free transport won't be provided. In Welshpool, the bus from Oldford to the school is 75p a journey per child, that's £1.50 a day. Our families wouldn't be able to afford this.
- What happens in the future if the numbers do increase in the area? Where will they go?
- What is the Council doing to try to encourage younger people to come and live in the area to reverse the decrease in pupil numbers?
- Cllr Pete visited the school, however this was at the end of the school day, and was at short notice. Some staff felt that during the visit, he made judgements about the school that he wasn't qualified to make.
- Hope Church are working with the school. They chose to work with the school because this is the area that has the highest level of need in Newtown. This has been happening for 2 years now. Building up relationships is the hardest thing. They went door to door around the estate – over 200 houses – and are starting to get the trust of the community. Hope Church are holding a fun day on the estate this weekend, the children are so excited about this.
- Pupils at the school are very constrained in terms of what they can do because of finance.
- Money is very tight for lots of our families. We only use Parent Pay for school meals, we don't use it for trips etc because parents can't afford it – think we are the only school still doing this. We still operate mainly using cash.
- If the plans do go ahead, when would the changes happen?