

Richard Ellis Owen  
Head of Education Services  
Education Department

Dear Mr Owen,

I am writing in reply to the Statutory Consultation to the Proposed Amalgamation of Ysgol Dolgarrog, Ysgol Tal Y Bont and Ysgol Trefriw. I am a parent governor at Ysgol Trefriw. I do not agree with this proposal for the following reasons:

- The loss of our community primary school would tear a hole in the middle of our village, damaging community cohesion as well as local business revenues, property prices and population retention (all of which would have a negative impact on local tax receipts). Already upwards of 80% of our working-age residents leave the area to go to work each day. If the children are also leaving the area to go to school, we will be a ghost village. **Conwy Borough Council ought to be supporting its rural communities and helping them to thrive; not tearing them apart.**
- This proposal would--according to our sources--see **children as young as four years old spending up to three hours per day on busses**; what a terrible way to spend a childhood.
- **Local children would miss out on the emotional and developmental support afforded by being embedded in their own community.**
- The proposed new building site in Dolgarrog is inappropriate, in that the road is inadequate for traffic from both a school and nearby Surf Snowdonia; and is dangerously near to high voltage power lines.
- Ysgol Trefriw is an Estyn rated GOOD school with GOOD prospects for improvement in the future. **Closing a good school is senseless; destructive.**

I would like to ask the following questions about the proposal:

#### **Regarding the impact on Trefriw community:**

- Given that this proposal will negatively impact upon Trefriw's ability to attract and retain families, have the council assessed the financial implications of this impact?
  - For example, have the council modeled the fall in council tax receipts? Of tax revenues from local businesses?
  - Have they modeled the increase in the cost of benefits payments if local businesses are unable to survive, and new businesses are unable/unwilling to establish themselves in a local area with no local school, resulting in a local decrease in job availability?
- Given that the council are also currently supporting a planning application for the construction of new homes in the Trefriw ward, have the council assessed the financial viability of the construction of these new family homes in light of the amalgamation, and have they provided the relevant developers and stakeholders to this proposed build with revised value estimates?

#### **Regarding Transport and Transport Costs:**

- Given that pupils from the Trefriw ward, as well as former pupils from recently-closed Ysgol Rowen will be entitled to free transport, has the cost of this transport now been calculated? When LEA representatives visited us in Trefriw in October, we were told that this information had not yet been collected, but that it 'didn't matter' because 'that money will come from the transport budget, not the schools budget'. As a taxpayer, I can assure

you that this cost matters to me no matter which budget it comes from--it is all our tax money, after all.

- The consultation document to this proposal indicates that pupils would have access to a wider range of extra-curricular and after-school activities in the new amalgamated school. Will transport be provided for pupils staying on after school for activities?
- The consultation document also indicates that parents will be better able to stay in contact with the school because it will provide 'a single point of contact'. Will parents like me--living miles away from the new school and not owning a car--be provided with transport ourselves to attend meetings with teachers, open evenings, school concerts and events, etc?
- The consultation document also states that there will be nursery provision at the new school. Most children in nursery attend for half days. Will nursery children living in the Trefriw area be provided with midday transport to return home after a half day of nursery?
- There are no safe footpaths between Trefriw and Dolgarrog; nor between Tal Y Bont and Dolgarrog. Given this, it is safe to assume that many parents will drive their children to and from school.
  - Have the council assessed the impact of this increased car travel on transport infrastructure?
  - Given that the road connecting the three villages is a dangerous road as it is (indeed, we've had an accident on that road that killed three people within the last week); and given that the proposed site of the new school building is on this dangerous road, will children be able to arrive to and depart from school safely? How will the council make this road safe, and how much will it cost?
  - If zebra crossings, no stopping zones, etc are installed (as is standard outside of primary schools), how will this effect traffic along the road, especially given that this is the main artery for travel along the West of the Conwy Valley? How will zebra crossings and the like affect parking for Surf Snowdonia?
  - Have travel assessments been carried out in light of the new Surf Snowdonia facility that lies in close proximity to the proposed new site? What will be the cost of improving the transport infrastructure to meet the needs of both this large tourist site and a local school fed from four different villages along the road?

#### **Regarding the proposed site for the new school building:**

- An eyeball survey of the site reveals that there are electrical pylons in close proximity to it. Cancer Research UK report that children living within 200 meters of high voltage power lines have an increased risk of developing leukaemia (see [www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancers-in-general/cancer-questions/does-electromagnetic-energy-cause-cancer](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancers-in-general/cancer-questions/does-electromagnetic-energy-cause-cancer) ).
  - Will the electric lines be rerouted? What will be the cost of this?
  - How many meters away from the lines will the new school sit?
  - Have the council modelled the increased healthcare costs associated with a regional spike in childhood cancers? What will this do to local Health Service budgets?
  - Does the council have a plan or trust in place, should parents of children who develop leukaemia claim damages against the Borough Council?

Thank you in advance for providing answers to these questions in your published proposal.

With Regards

