



Statutory Consultation Document: Proposal to Extend the Capacity at Pen-y-Cwm Special School

Consultation period:

Commencing on: Monday 8th December 2025

Concluding on: Sunday 18th January 2026

This consultation document complies
with Welsh Governments, School
Organisation Code 2018 (V2) guidance

Cymunedau **Dysgu** Cynaliadwy 
Sustainable Communities for **Learning**



What is this booklet about?

This booklet has been prepared for parents/carers, school staff, school governors and the wider community of Blaenau Gwent. The booklet provides an overview of the consultation process associated with the Council's proposal to extend the capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School. It will be of particular interest to parents/carers whose children are attending or looking to attend the current special school.

If you would like this information in any other format, please contact the Education Resources and Planning Team either via email or telephone, as follows:

- Email us: 21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or,
- Call us on: (01495) 311556



Glossary of Terms - Please note the following terms used throughout this document:

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	A learner has ALN if he/she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision (ALP).
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	Is a complex developmental condition that involves persistent challenges in social interaction, speech and nonverbal communication and restricted/repetitive behaviours. The effects of ASD and the severity of symptoms are different in each person.
Child Looked After (CLA)	Is a child in the care of a Local Authority either: through a Care Order made by a court, or voluntary agreement with their parent(s) to accommodate them.
Council	An organisation that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area.
Local Development Plan (LDP)	Sets out each local planning authority's proposals for future development and use of land in their area.
Numbers on Roll	The number of pupils at a school (not including nursery pupils).
Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)	PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained sector primary, middle, secondary, nursery and special schools in January each year (more information can be found on the Welsh Government website).
Resource Base RB	A small class in a mainstream school for pupils with significant ALN. Not all pupils attending an RB will have a statement of ALN. Pupils are taught by specialist teachers and learning support assistants. Sometimes RB pupils also have opportunities to attend mainstream classes.
School Assessments	When a school assess a pupils needs.
Special School	A school for children with an additional learning need or disability, whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream school. The pupils at a special school will often have a statement of ALN.
Statement of Additional Learning Needs	A child with a statement of ALN has additional learning difficulties which need special support. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the child has significantly greater difficulty learning than most children of the same age, or the child has a disability that needs different educational facilities from those that the school generally provides for children.
Statutory Notice	A statutory notice is the formal publication of a finalised proposal. This will only be undertaken if a decision is made by the Council's Executive Committee to proceed with a proposal, following consideration of all responses from the consultation process. This is a legal requirement as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).
Statutory School Age (SSA)	A Child who is over the age of 5 and under the age of 16 that is eligible to attend school

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Section 1: Introduction



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council reviews the capacity of its schools on an annual basis. As such, the Council is responding to the increased demand and growth noted over the course of the last 3 years, in line with pupil placement requests for Pen y Cwm Special School.

Pen y Cwm Special School caters for pupils (aged between 3-19 years) with a broad spectrum of complex special educational and medical needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school currently caters for Blaenau Gwent pupils, along with some pupils from Out of County (OOC).

The school mission is: ***To empower and support individuals to be independent and resilient and to develop skills to reach their potential.***

Pupils are taught in 21 class groups and a typical class would have 1 teacher and 2/3 teaching assistants, with approximately 8-10 pupils. However, the set-up in each class is entirely dependent on pupil need. The adult/pupil ratio ensures that the individual care and educational needs of the pupils can be met. The school is supported by health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy.

Pen y Cwm Special School is co-located with Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary Phase (both schools are housed in the same building). Facilities include: purpose built classrooms, a rebound room, a hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms, hygiene rooms, nurses office, a gymnasium and soft-play room. Externally the school has an outdoor sensory garden and adventure play area along with outdoor learning areas.

Furthermore, a temporary provision for post 16 learners has been established at another location in Ebbw Vale to meet the demand for this academic year 2024/25, this is now occupied as of May 2025.

Section 2: Consultation Process

Prior to any decision being made on the proposal to extend the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School, the Council is required to undertake statutory consultation with all interested and affected parties. This is necessary due to the fact that the proposal will see an increase in the number of pupils at the school, which when coupled with previous capacity increases, would increase the number of pupils by 10% or the relevant number of such pupils (whichever is the lesser). This section provides an overview of the consultation process.

This consultation, will provide consultees with the opportunity to learn more about, understand and express their views on the Council's proposal, which will inform the final decision as to how the proposal is taken forward. The feedback and comments captured throughout the consultation process will be collated, analysed and reported via the Council's political processes. The Council's Cabinet will then make the final decision based on the outcome of and feedback associated with the consultation.

Who we are Consulting with?

This Consultation Document will be distributed, in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code Version 2 (November 2018). **Appendix 1** details the full list of consultees who will be targeted during the statutory consultation period.

Consultation Overview

The consultation period for this proposal will commence on **Monday 8th December 2025**, concluding on **Sunday 18th January 2026**. Consultees can submit their views on the proposal; however, it should be noted that responses received during this period will not be counted as objections to the proposal. Objections can only be registered following publication of the notice. Should the proposal proceed, and consultees wish to make an objection, they will need to do so in writing during the statutory notice period outlined on page 15/16.

The Council would like you to consider the information set out in this document and provide your views on the proposal. If you have any questions or queries on the information contained within this document, or you wish to suggest alternatives to the proposal, please contact us either by using the email address below, or by calling us on (01495) 311556.



21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

You can provide your views on the proposal using the Consultation Questionnaire in Section 9. You are also welcome to complete the online survey using the following link - <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/dxns7v>

All consultation responses should be received by **5pm on Sunday 18th January 2026 at the latest.**

The Education Resources and Planning Team has planned virtual meetings with Trade Union and a drop-in session below for all affected School Governing Bodies, Staff, Pupils parents and the wider community throughout the consultation period. At all of the below events in **Table 1**, Council officers will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

Table 1 -Drop in Sessions

Location	Date	Time(s)	Session aimed at:
Virtual Teams meeting	10 th December 2025	9:00am - 10:00am	Trade Union Representatives
Ebbw Vale Learning Action Centre James St, Ebbw Vale NP23 6JG	10 th December 2025	3:00pm – 6:30pm	Governing Body, All Staff, Parents and Wider Community

Consultation with Children and Young People

There will be an opportunity for the pupils of Pen y Cwm Special School, along with other children and young people who are likely to attend the school, to participate in the consultation process. All information gathered from the consultation process will form part of the consultation out-turn report.

Section 3: The Proposal

In the last four years the Inclusion Service have been undertaken two consultations on proposals which affected the Capacity numbers in Pen y Cwm and a Borough wide review in Resource Bases in mainstream education. The outcome of these consultations and the resulting proposals which were implemented were as follows:

- September 2021 Increase in capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 120 places to 175 places with part 2 of the proposal involving the development of a long-term plan to secure additional capacity to facilitate sustained growth (“the 2021 Proposal”) and;
- September 2024 Increases in Additional Learning Needs Resource Bases in mainstream education for both primary and secondary schools.

This consultation builds on the consultation undertaken in 2021 to increase capacity in Pen y Cwm Special School from 175 to 205 learners in 2026 which is more than 10% of the overall capacity of the school. It also progresses elements of Part 2 of the 2021 proposal. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council propose to extend the capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School from 205 to 250 places, in the long term as detailed in part 2 below. In order to facilitate the extended capacity, the Council remodelled the existing learning environment to create additional classroom spaces and associated facilities i.e. toilets. In addition, and alongside this, the Council identified that post 16 provision would need to be removed from its current location on site and housed in Vision House Ebbw Vale which creates a more sustained provision less than half a mile from the existing building. The Council are committed to keep working with the school to develop a long-term plan to support sustained growth and development. Therefore, this proposal will be delivered in 2 parts:

- **Part 1**, to increase the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 175 to 205 places in preparation for the 2026/27 academic year. This will also involve:
 - Retrospectively acknowledging the Post 16 provision at Unit 4 Festival Site in Ebbw Vale (including 3 classrooms, sensory room, common room, life skills room, meeting room, catering/dining area, toilets and hygiene facilities)
 - Retrospective acknowledgement of additional classrooms developed in the main school building.
- **Part 2**, to further increase the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 205 to 250 places in preparation for the 2030/31 academic year. This will involve continuing with the development of the long-term plan to secure additional capacity including either a new build provision on the land adjacent to the school or remodelling the existing school building to accommodate the increased capacity.

The proposal would support the Blaenau Gwent's Vision for Education as follows:

'Empowering our communities to be ambitious, ethically informed, life-long learners who lead full and healthy lives.'

Investment Objectives

The proposal is in keeping with Blaenau Gwent's Sustainable Communities for Learning (21st Century Schools) investment objectives which are:

- **Investment Objective 1:** to raise standards and achievement in line with localised targets at Foundation Phase, KS2, KS3 and KS4; and secure improved transition into post 16 learning - The programme would allow for improved education and engagement facilities for pupils and parents alike, which will impact positively upon learning across the board.
- **Investment Objective 2:** to create a sustainable model for the school estate, along with the condition and suitability of buildings – The programme would decrease backlog maintenance costs and improve key areas of the school estate, and consequently, create a more sustainable school estate.
- **Investment Objective 3:** to establish effective management and provision of school places, by having the right schools of the right size in the right place – the programme would create schools that are better suited to the needs of current and the projected pupil population along with their families; this will ensure that the facilities are able to meet local and regional need.
- **Investment Objective 4:** to implement the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme in line with local, regional and national school organisation policy; – the programme would support the implementation of key strategic and policy developments, including the Community Focussed Schools agenda and the Welsh In Education Strategic Plan.
- **Investment Objective 5:** meeting the needs of vulnerable learners – the programme would address current and predicted needs in terms of the provision for pupils with ALN from both a learning and recreational/ play perspective. Additionally, the programme would assist engagement with parents and pupils who require additional on-going support in order to ensure consistent attendance and improved standards of learning and attainment.

Rationale and Background Information - Why Change is Necessary



Pen y Cwm is a Special School catering for learners across the 3-19 age range, with a wide range of disabilities and difficulties ranging from Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) to Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Visually Impaired (VI), and Hearing Impaired (HI) pupils. All pupils have an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The school also provides accessible accommodation and facilities for those who have a physical disability alongside their learning difficulty.

Pen y Cwm Special School opened in 2012. The new school was designed to be bigger, better and to provide many additional facilities including specialist rooms for Food Technology, Science and Design Technology, Art – specified as needed for effective delivery of the curriculum for Secondary learners by ESTYN, as part of the inspection process in 2004 and 2010 respectively. The school was built with a capacity of 120 places in 2012 and has since been remodelled to accommodate additional learners for 175 with the proposal ‘to increase pupils numbers to that level approved for implementation in September 2021. Over the course of the last 3 years’ demand for places has continued to increase considerably and, as at September 2024 there were 175 pupils on roll.

The school population has grown significantly since the last consultation undertaken in 2021. This means that the special school has already saturated the 10% margin. As a result, the Council needs to expand the capacity further to 205 places. Major investment by the Council in the form of ALN grants has already improved flexible space, and specialist areas. However, each of the phases (Foundation Phase/Primary/Secondary/Post 16) are still compromised in terms of flexibility and space. Hence the need to relocate the Post 16 provision.

Additionally, by moving Post 16 provision this has allowed the removal of timetabling conflict in each of the specialist facilities e.g. art, food technology, gym, hydro pool and outdoor fitness area which resulted from the additional numbers of pupils. The provision at Vision House includes; 3x classrooms, a common room, independent living area, ICT room, Art/Design and Technology facility and staff welfare facilities are also provided.

Pupil numbers and demand for places at Pen y Cwm Special School have significantly increased over the course of last three years, resulting in the school being oversubscribed, along with a waiting list, which as at August 2025, has 2 children and young people awaiting placement. There are a number of factors relating to this increase, including higher survival rates for children with complex disabilities, more cases and/improved diagnosis and an increase in complex medical conditions. Therefore, the Council is seeking again to increase the capacity (in terms of the number of places) at the school from 175 to 205 from the 2026/27 academic year and, from 205 to 250 for the 2030/31 academic year.

As at, September 2025, there were 189 learners in the school with 2 placement requests awaiting approval via the ALN panel. In August 2025 9 pupils have left. However, as detailed above demand continues to increase. Pen y Cwm Special School provides a highly specialist learning environment and curriculum for children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties. All those attending the school will have needs that cannot be met in a less specialised and/or mainstream school. Most pupil's also have a range of secondary needs which include medical, speech and language, physical or ASD needs.

The Council is projecting a continued upward trend in terms of demand/pupil numbers going forward. Demand for places at the school continues and is subsequently putting pressure on the Council to place pupils in Out of County, should we not be able to secure additional places locally.

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council seeks to address the aforementioned issues by increasing the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School to facilitate the increased demand for places and secure medium-term growth. In order to facilitate the increased capacity, the Post 16 Provision has been located at Unit 4 Gwent Court (Vision House), Ebbw Vale, within half a mile from the existing school building.

Demand for Places

Within Blaenau Gwent, the number of children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) has increased. As of September 2025, there are 841 statutory school age pupils with ALN, which equates to 9.9% of statutory school aged pupils (8,495) in the County Borough.

Figure 1 below provides both historic and predictive information relating to placement trends and anticipated future placement requirements at the school.

Figure 1 – Pen y Cwm Pupil Placement 6-year Trend and Projections (based on strengthened criteria for entry / exit).

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Prediction based on Six-year Trend based on strengthened criteria					
							2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Pupil numbers on roll (beginning of academic year)	140	146	160	162	168	175	189	200	205	201	201	199
Number of requests	28	23	22	28	32	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
Number of requests agreed	19	19	15	16	24	23	14	17	17	17	17	17
Number of leavers	13	5	13	10	17	9	3	12	21	17	19	12
Net Increase	6	14	2	6	4	14	11	5	-4	0	-2	5
Pupil numbers on roll (end of academic year)	146	160	162	168	175	189	200	205	201	201	199	204

Figure 2 – Pen y Cwm Pupil Placement Extended Projections 2031-39 (based on strengthened criteria for entry / exit).

	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
Pupil numbers on roll (beginning of academic year)	204	202	207	205	208	219	225	227
Number of requests	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
Number of requests agreed	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Number of leavers	19	12	19	14	6	11	15	3
Net Increase	-2	5	-2	3	11	6	2	14
Pupil numbers on roll (end of academic year)	202	207	205	208	219	225	227	241

NB please note, in **Figures 1 and 2**, the number of requests agreed has been reduced to 17 due to strengthening of the entry / exit criteria.

The projection of pupil numbers in relation to Special School Places are difficult to predict. However, a model has been developed, with the aim of predicting the number of places required, and the Council has used historic data and associated trends. The Education Resources and Planning and Inclusion Teams have considered the number of requests for special school placements over the last six academic years, along with the number of those requests which were agreed. It is anticipated that the number of special school placements agreed will reduce due to the strengthening of the criteria mentioned above. The model has also considered the number of special school leavers on an annual basis. By subtracting the number of leavers from the number of places agreed, the net increase on an annual basis is determined. Based on the current numbers on roll, and the information above, the expectation is that the capacity required in 2026/27 will be in the region of 205 pupils and it is anticipated that a phase 2 development will need to be designed for approximately 250 places into the longer term.

Demand has risen and is likely to continue to do so in line with inward migration, increased survival rates of children with complex needs and placement requests from other Local Authorities with sufficiency issues. Blaenau Gwent Council is aware that the growth and demand for specialist education placements is on the increase throughout Wales. Neighbouring Authorities have undertaken consultation upon growth of special school capacity to facilitate demand, or are considering doing so, due to insufficiency of places. If Blaenau Gwent Council does not secure sufficient places for its pupils, it is unlikely that neighbouring Local Authorities will have capacity to accommodate them, resulting in potentially very high Out of County placements, increased traveling time and decreased accessibility to local education options for the most vulnerable pupils with the highest level of need.

Early Years and Nursery Provision

There are no plans for the Council to create a separate facility to facilitate pre-school provision. Nursery children are currently accommodated at Pen y Cwm Special School. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any impact upon this provision, or changes to the current childcare arrangements or to the integrated approach which is in place. As the provision is specialist, there will be no impact upon mainstream, Welsh-medium and/or provision of religious character. Nor will there be any impact upon private or third sector provision of this nature.

Additional Learning Needs Provision

The proposal to extend the capacity and relocate the Post 16 provision whilst also developing a long-term growth and sustainability plan, would create equality of access to a high-quality, 21st Century learning environment for children and young people with severe and complex learning disabilities.

Options Considered

A detailed option appraisal was undertaken in order to explore ways in which the requirement for additional specialist education places could be addressed. Factors such as location, site and type of provision were considered.

The long list of options detailed within Figure 3 below, were later re-evaluated and a short-list drawn up, so that the benefits, risks, timelines, costs etc. could be explored in much greater detail.

The key factors are securing places in the short to medium-term, which can be delivered over the course of the next academic year, to secure additional places from September 2026 onwards

Figure 3 – Long List of Options

Options	Description	Conclusions
1	Business as Usual- maintain the status quo	This is a standard baseline comparator which must be considered, but not an option, as it does not address the identified need. Discounted
2	More internal refurbishing of existing school building.	This was carried out in 2021/22 therefore; there is no other options here. Discounted
3	Utilise Industrial Space at Unit 4 Gwent Court	This has been developed, and the space is being recognised as part of this consultation Counted and implemented retrospectively
4	Extension of the Pen y Cwm Special school into an existing building within the school estate.	This is an option for consideration; however, it will be down to numbers on roll and availability of a site. Counted for consideration longer term
5	Build a new small extension to the existing Pen y Cwm Special School.	This is an option for consideration; there is available land to the left which will be on the same site of existing building. Counted for consideration longer term
6	New build on the land adjacent with the specialist provision to support learners, this could also be a regional approach.	This option will meet the school's needs; however, this will create surplus places in the existing building in the short term. Counted for consideration for the longer term
7	New build of Pen y Cwm Special School (similar to option 6). with the additionality of a residential setting for the school to accommodate up to 10 pupils.	This option will meet the School's needs, however, this will create surplus places in the existing building which might not be filled with another education setting. Discounted

Option 3 has been implemented as the solution to address the immediate capacity issues in preparation for the 2026/27 academic year, and to increase the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 175 to 205 places as a short-term solution.

The short-listed options to be considered as part of Part 2 of the proposal under consultation in determining the long-term solution are as follows:

- **Option 1** (business as usual)- Maintain the status quo,
- **Option 2** More internal refurbishing of existing school building
- **Option 4** Extension of the Pen y Cwm Special school into an existing building within the school estate
- **Option 5** Build a new small extension to the existing Pen y Cwm Special School.
- **Option 6** New build on the land adjacent for with the specialist provision to support learners, this could also be a regional approach.
- **Option 7** New build of Pen y Cwm Special School (similar to option 6). with the additionality of a residential setting for the school to accommodate up to 10 pupils.

Options 1, 2, and 7 have been discounted as they would potentially:

- Not address the immediate and medium-term need
- Cause more disruption within the existing education system on both school sites
- Require extensive funding to create the right learning environments
- Impact on the school estate

Risks and Mitigation

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a proven track record of managing both school build and school organisation projects via school reorganisation and the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme– including the requirement to increase school capacity. The following risks can be managed and largely mitigated as follows:

Figure 4 – Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
If the proposal is not taken forward, there is both a placement and a financial risk in terms of securing suitable Out of County provision for learners	The Council is working closely with key colleagues to provide a local solution that is cost effective and reduces the number of pupils travelling to and accessing already limited Out of County placements. However, the Council has a proven track record of working to secure appropriate placements for learners throughout the region.
The consultation process does not address stakeholder perspective and understanding of the proposal. Therefore, the proposal is not supported and does not progress.	Blaenau Gwent Council's Education Directorate are experienced in and have recently undertaken consultation upon proposals, whilst being fully compliant with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code (Version 2, 2018).
The proposal to expand the school is delivered late and/or over budget.	Delivery plans are in place and can be facilitated at pace in line with outcome of the statutory processes associated within this proposal i.e. consultation and statutory notice. Capital funding has been secured to deliver the proposal.

Insufficient capacity for future demand.	The purpose of this proposal is to build extra capacity to meet future demand and to allow the Council to monitor and explore long-term options to secure sustainable growth.
The project capital/construction costs exceed the budget.	The site, services and facility are well known to the Blaenau Gwent Project team who built the school, and so the cost estimates are based upon actual knowledge and understanding, with contingency built in to address any potential unknowns. Budget monitoring is undertaken regularly, along with value engineering and change management processes.
Contributes high Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions.	Target cost effective low CO2 technologies that are compatible with the existing school technologies. Securing a localised solution will also reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Benefits of Proposal

This proposal would ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils - particularly those with the greatest level of need, to be educated locally. The proposal further facilitates inclusion and an inclusive approach within Education, ensuring access to high quality specialist education facilities and support for children with disabilities within the Borough. It will also go some way to addressing the barriers parents perceive in accessing specialist education and reducing the Council's carbon footprint associated with travel for education purposes but securing development on an existing school site.

Should nothing change, the Council will be unable to meet the needs of all learners particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties within Blaenau Gwent. Therefore, they would need to be placed Out of County at significant cost, with learners having to manage longer school journeys affecting families and socialisation for many pupils. This does not support the Additional Learning Needs Act (2018) or Blaenau Gwent's Vision for Education.

Expected Benefits and Advantages (when compared with the status quo):

- Creation of a local solution which will address the increased demand for special education provision
- Continuity and sustainability in terms of local education for learners with specialist and medical needs
- Easier transition arrangements for pupils transitioning from mainstream school, and resources bases in Blaenau Gwent
- Reduce the costs of out of county placements for learners, whilst securing local investment within the Blaenau Gwent school estate
- Improve access to and facilities for learners who meet the criteria for the specialist provision which Pen y Cwm offers
- Increased capacity and sustainability of placement
- Reduced travel time, travel costs, and carbon footprint for a local solution.

Disadvantages:

There are no disadvantages associated with this proposal.

Governance Model

There will be no changes to the existing governance model and structure within Pen y Cwm Special School.

Learner Travel Arrangements

The Council's Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2025/26 states that free home to school transport will be provided as follows:

The Council will provide transport assistance for pupils with ALN:

- if existing transport arrangements are deemed unsuitable in line with learners needs, alternative arrangements will be determined by the Inclusion Service;
- if it is not appropriate for the pupil to walk to school due to the nature of their additional learning need and/or disability; and/or,
- if it is determined by ALN Panel that there is no appropriate education provision within the County Borough suitable to meet pupil need.

The above arrangements will be subject to review in line with changes to circumstances relating to the pupil(s) transport requirements.

Pupils requiring Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transport who live:

- over 1.5 miles (for those under 8 years of age); and/or,
- over 2 miles (for those aged between 8-16 years of age)
from their nearest suitable ALN provision, will automatically qualify for free home to school transport. *Please note in instances where the school is a parental choice and not the provision determined by the ALN Panel, no transport will be provided.

The Council has established a process in order to assess the travel needs of children who may require ALN transport. Guidance on this can be found in the Home to School & Post 16 Transport Policy 2026/27.

Where transport has been agreed, the Transport Officer will contact the parent and inform them of the arrangements. In cases where transport requests are refused, parents/carers will receive notification from the ALN team, also indicating their right of appeal.

The current school location and infrastructure accommodates bus and taxi drop off and pick-up at the start and finish of the school day, with sufficient parking for staff and key partners to visit.

Section 4: Consultation Outcome and Next Steps

Consultation Report: Feedback from the consultation will be collated, analysed and presented in a Consultation Out-turn Report to the Council's Cabinet on the 23rd of February 2026. The report will be available on the Council's website 2 weeks prior to a decision being made to proceed or not to proceed to statutory notice. Hard copies can be obtained on request via the email addresses detailed above. Consultees can also register their wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report by the email address above.

Statutory Notice: Should this proposal be approved at Cabinet; the Council will then publish a statutory notice. The statutory notice period will run for 28 days **Wednesday 25th February 2026 – Wednesday 25th March 2026**. During this time, you will be able to make formal objections should you wish to do so, via the email address provided in this consultation booklet. Any issues raised by interested parties will then be summarised in an Objections report and presented to the

Cabinet for a final decision to be made in April 2026. Should the proposal proceed, a copy of the Statutory Notice will be displayed on the Council’s website and at Pen y Cwm Special School. Hard copies of the statutory notice will be available upon request.

Determination of the Proposal: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will determine the proposal taken into account the responses received to the statutory notice. This may lead to the approval, rejection or approval of the proposal with modifications.

Decision Notification: Once a decision has been made, an electronic copy of determination will be sent out to all interested parties and published on Blaenau Gwent’s County Borough Council’s website within 7 days of the decision.

Figure 5 - The Statutory Process Timeline

December 2025	December 2025 / January 2026	January 2026	February / March 2026	March/April 2026	September 2026
Consultation Period					
		Consultation report to Cabinet			
			Statutory Notice		
				Objections Report	
				Decision Notification	
					Implementation September 2026

Section 5: Details of Affected Schools



Pupil places and projections data
The school’s capacity is currently 175. At present, there are more pupils with significant needs who require a place within Pen y Cwm, than there are places available at the school.

There will be no direct effect on mainstream schools in the County Borough, neither will this proposal have any impact on The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community.

Section 6: Other Considerations

Finance

Revenue Costs

Pen Y Cwm Special School is funded in line with Blaenau Gwent Council's Fair Funding policy. Like all other schools in the area, its funding is determined by pupil numbers and the size of the school premises, however it also attracts funding in relation to special school category funding.

Accurately forecasting the financial impact of increasing capacity is challenging due to several factors:

- The potential reduction in funding for mainstream schools resulting from pupil transfers.
- The extent of cost avoidance achieved by placing pupils in Pen Y Cwm rather than in out-of-county settings.
- The level of income generated through recoupment from other local authorities placing pupils at Pen Y Cwm.

In the 2024/25 academic year, Blaenau Gwent had 23 pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) educated outside the authority, at a total cost of £703,533. As of September, projections for 2025/26 show 15 pupils being educated externally, with associated costs of £615,604.

To illustrate the funding requirements based on pupil numbers, the current allocation for 176 pupils in 2025/26 is approximately £4.45 million, which includes Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU), other factors and category-specific funding.

As pupil numbers increase in line with the proposed expansion, there will be corresponding rises in premises and staffing costs resulting in a cost pressure for the Council. The business case / options appraisal will detail the potential impact of each scenario on both the Council and other school settings. Cost mitigations to minimise the financial impact will need to be explored as part of the appraisal.

Capital Costs

The capital costs for Part 1 of the proposal, [namely the creation of the Post 16 provision at Unit 4 Festival Site ("Vision House")] was approximately £150,000 and was met from Welsh Government's ALN Grant. However, there are capital financial implications associated with Part 2 of this proposal for the Council, which is subject to Capital Programme approval, as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning – Rolling Programme. This is estimated to be between £8m – £15m dependent on the option chosen.

Transport Costs

Transport costs associated with Part 1, introducing Vision House as part of Pen y Cwm did not involve any additional cost for the school in academic year 2024/25 as pupils were dropped off at both sites using existing arrangements. However, for the 2025/26 academic year, two additional buses have been required to accommodate increased pupil numbers, with forecasted annual costs totalling £76,950

Despite this, a local solution—such as placement at Pen Y Cwm—offers better value for money compared to the transport costs associated with out-of-county provision. Transport costs are reviewed regularly and may change depending on pupil placements.

Admission Arrangements

Admission to Pen y Cwm Special School is managed via the ALN Panel, which is made up of representatives from schools, the Inclusion Service and wider Education representatives. Referrals to the ALN Panel are made via the ALN Team.

Impact of the Proposal on the Welsh Language

This proposal does not impact upon the number and availability of Welsh-medium school places within Blaenau Gwent. The Council does not expect any negative impact on the Welsh Language as a result of this proposal. Welsh is taught in English-medium and Special Schools in line with the National Curriculum. The proposal will therefore have no impact upon the Welsh Language Measure (2011).

Equality Impact Screening

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken in order to assess the impact of key proposals and decisions upon protected characteristics. The assessment determined that none of the protected characteristics will be negatively affected, whilst disability will be positively affected (Please refer to **Appendix 2** for more information). A full Integrated Impact Assessment undertaken by Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council can be found on our webpage. <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/consultations/proposal-to-extend-the-capacity-at-pen-y-cwm-special-school/>

Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

A community impact assessment has been undertaken in order to assess the impact of key proposals and decisions upon stakeholders and the wider community (Please refer to **Appendix 3** for more information).

United Nation Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Council in all its corporate responsibilities ensure that they will always engage positively with children and young people. If this proposal is implemented, it will realise benefits for children and young people in accordance with the seven core aims of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically:

Core aim 1 - have a flying start in life;

Core aim 2 - have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;

Core aim 3 - enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;

Core aim 4 - have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;

Core aim 5 - are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;

Core aim 6 - have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and

Core aim 7 - are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Engagement of Children and Young People in this Consultation

As part of this consultation process, the Council's Education Resources and Planning Team in partnership with school, will consult with pupils that are affected by the proposal, as well as engaging with both the Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum and Schools Grand Council.

Capital Costs/Capital Receipts

Should the proposal be approved, it will address the current shortfall in capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School. There will be a capital costs associated with the proposal. This will depend on the option chosen (e.g. new extension or remodelling of an existing school building). No buildings will be transferred as a result of the proposal. In this instance there will be no capital receipts.

Housing Developments

On average over the course of the last 5 years, 79 houses have been built in Blaenau Gwent each year. This level of growth is expected to continue. These potential homes either already have planning permission, are seeking legal agreement or are included in the Local Developments Plan. This is likely to have an impact upon pupil place planning. The Education Resources and Planning Team monitor the impact upon schools.

Figure 6 – Below illustrates the number of housing Developments which are currently in the Local Development Plan (LDP) for the next 5 years.

Figure 6

	According the Housing Land Availability Study which looks at a 5-year timescale the following figures are identified for Tredegar Valley .					According the Housing Land Availability Study which looks at a 5-year timescale the following figures are identified for Ebbw Fawr Valley .					According the Housing Land Availability Study which looks at a 5 year timescale the following figures are identified for Ebbw Fach Valley .				
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Housing Associations:	0	0	0	0	0	15	20	0	0	0	0	34	34	0	0
Private Sector Housing:	0	0	0	0	0	98	40	10	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	113	60	10	12	0	0	34	34	0	0

For more information please visit the following webpage: <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/planning/local-development-plan/ldp-allocations/>

The above data tells us that there are over 397 housing development planned between 2024 – 2029. There is a potential for this to increase demand within both mainstream and special schools going forward.

Human Resources

There are no significant HR implications arising from the proposal. The proposed increase in pupil numbers will require the Governing Body of Pen y Cwm School to plan for the workforce requirements in readiness for the proposed increase in capacity.

The Council's Organisational Development Team will provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Bodies for the workforce planning and consequential recruitment processes. Where the Governing Bodies have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of an increase in numbers on the role will provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Partnerships

The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) undertook a regional Well-being Assessment during 2021-22 which reviewed the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing in Gwent. The assessment used a wide range of qualitative and quantitative information including data, academic research, evidence, and people's views (engagement) to help understand Wellbeing in Gwent. The assessment took an asset-based approach, rather than focussing purely on need, to build upon and identify the strengths of both individuals and communities and it also identified problems and challenges that need to be addressed. The evidence and key issues identified in the assessment have been used to develop the Well-being Plan for Gwent.

The Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-28, published in July 2023, was the first actioned regional well-being plan for Gwent. It sets out the Gwent PSB's Well-being Objectives and the steps it intends to take to meet those objectives, in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Delivery of these will come via the Gwent PSB for regional at-scale activity as well as through five Local Delivery Groups in each of the Gwent LA areas.

Objectives:

- We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all
- We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations

Steps:

- Take action to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in the long-term
- Provide and enable the supply of good quality, affordable and appropriate homes
- Take action to reduce our carbon emissions, help Gwent adapt to climate change, and protect and restore our natural environment
- Take action to address inequalities, particularly in relation to health, through the framework of the Marmot Principles
- Enable and support people, neighbourhoods, and communities to be resilient, connected, thriving and safe

Local Delivery Groups (LDG) of the Gwent PSB exist in each of the five local authority areas to ensure the delivery of local actions and priorities that contribute to the PSB's well-being objectives. The Blaenau Gwent LDG, known as the BG Local Well-being Partnership, has developed a set of local well-being priorities, based on public and stakeholder engagement, to help deliver the Well-being Plan at a local level: -

- Reducing Inequalities amongst children, young people & older persons
- Integrated Travel and Transport
- Access to healthy, local, affordable food
- Climate Change and Nature

These well-being objectives and local priorities are ones we consider to have real power to bring about change, that are the most urgent and that the evidence tells us need the combined force of the PSB partners to deliver and improve local well-being.

Section 7: Present Arrangements

ESTYN

Schools are inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of an inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise standards achieved by their pupils (Estyn). Pen Y Cwm Special School's last Estyn inspection was undertaken in 2024. For a full copy of the inspection report, please use the link provided [Inspection report Pen-Y-Cwm Special School 2024](#)

Quality and Standards in Education

A summary of results of which are detailed below:

Learning:

- Most pupils settle well into the caring and nurturing environment at Pen y Cwm School and make suitable progress from their starting points and against their individual targets. Most pupils develop a range of worthwhile skills that help them to make progress during their time at the school and this prepares them successfully for the future.
- Many pupils develop and improve their reading skills at a level that is appropriate to their ability.
- Younger pupils practise and improve their letter formation and handwriting skills appropriately.
- Many pupils develop their numeracy skills suitably across the school. Younger pupils, for example, enjoy identifying single numbers using a range of multi-sensory approaches.
- Most pupils make strong progress in developing their physical skills
- Where appropriate, most pupils make strong progress in developing their independence skills during their time at the school.

Well-being and attitudes to learning:

- The relationships between staff and pupils are a particular strength of the school. Most pupils engage positively with staff and develop appropriate trusting and caring relationships.
- Most pupils make strong progress in the development of their social skills during their time at the school. Over time, most pupils learn to understand and regulate their emotions. As a result, overall, pupils behave well at school.
- Nearly all pupils feel safe whilst attending school and enjoy the wide range of engaging learning experiences that the school offers.
- Pupils have suitable opportunities to take risks in their activities where appropriate. These allow pupils to develop the skills of perseverance and resilience appropriately.
- Pupils across the school engage enthusiastically in a range of worthwhile leadership roles. As a result, they are fully involved in the life of the school.

Teaching and learning experiences:

- The school is beginning to develop a broad and balanced curriculum, which broadly aligns to the principles of Curriculum for Wales. However, leaders have not yet implemented a clear vision for the curriculum that enables effective planning and delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all pupils.
- There is significant focus on supporting pupils' well-being and independent skills. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Cynefin and real-life authentic learning experiences are variable.
- The school has effective arrangements for developing pupils' personal and social education (PSE).
- Overall, staff have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils in their class.
- Learning materials and support are well matched to the individual needs of pupils and build incrementally on pupils' understanding.
- Teachers celebrate pupils' progress throughout the day with high levels of verbal praise.
- The school provides an extensive range of enrichment opportunities that reinforce aspects of the curriculum and supplement pupils' wider experiences.
- The school has effective partnerships with a wide range of local organisations. These links provide pupils with valuable opportunities to apply and practise important skills outside the classroom.
- Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and achievements through the online digital communication platforms the school uses.

Care, support and guidance:

- Pen y Cwm is a highly inclusive school where staff make pupils feel welcome and valued, and where their successes and achievements are celebrated joyfully. There is an ethos of mutual respect and togetherness that permeates the school. In nearly all instances, staff use their good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and personalities to tailor their support and approaches accordingly. Nearly all staff develop positive relationships with pupils, which help pupils to feel safe, happy and proud whilst in school.
- Support for pupils' well-being is a strength of the school. Skilled and passionate well-being support staff provide invaluable and timely support to pupils.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture that meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.
- The on-site school nurse works efficiently to ensure that pupils and families receive the necessary support through administering prescribed medication, liaison with other health care professionals, providing signposting and supporting referrals to external agencies when appropriate.
- The school makes impressive use of a child-centred framework that enables pupils with significant physical difficulties to successfully gain independent movement.

Leadership and management:

- The headteacher has worked with staff to create a collective purpose, vision and values for the school.
- Leaders across the school are in the early stages of implementing a curriculum that aspires to meet the vision for all pupils.
- One of the priorities of the headteacher is to develop and secure meaningful relationships with staff, families, and other partners.

- Leaders, as part of self-evaluation arrangements, are beginning to gather evidence to help inform them about the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have identified broadly suitable improvement priorities. However, this is at a very early stage of development.
- The governing body are clearly committed to the school and passionate about the wellbeing of the pupils.
- The school has appropriate arrangements in place to over-see and manage its finances.

If a school is judged as adequate or unsatisfactory, they will be subject to monitoring by Estyn or the Local Authority until such time as they are judged to have made sufficient progress to be removed from the list of schools requiring improvement. Overall, this assessment is a good result for the school, only having 3 recommendations for improvements.

Recommendations for Improvement

- **R1** Improve arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning, including strengthening the role of governing body
- **R2** Review and develop the curriculum to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of pupils, including providing appropriate accredited learning experiences
- **R3** Improve opportunities for pupils, across the school, to develop their writing skills

Some of the comments from the inspection are below:

- Pen y Cwm is a highly inclusive school where staff make pupils feel welcome and valued, and where their successes and achievements are celebrated joyfully.
- The school provides a comprehensive range of strategies that support pupils' identified health needs well.
- Where appropriate, most pupils make strong progress in developing their independence skills during their time at the school.
- The governing body are clearly committed to the school and passionate about the wellbeing of the pupils

Impact of the proposal

Should the proposal be approved, it will continue to provide a high-quality learning environment in support of enhanced outcomes for all learners. The proposal will ensure that the already excellent standards will be maintained. The proposal will also deliver on the full curriculum from foundation phase through to Key-Stage 4.

Much research and ALN reform has demonstrated that learners achieve better outcomes when they are fully engaged in learning and in an environment that is suitable for their needs.

The likely impact of the proposals on the five areas of Estyn is:

- **Learning standards** – The impact of the proposal will provide pupils with more opportunities and spaces to carry out their learning
- **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning** – With the creation of additional spaces, this should further improve the relationships pupils have with staff, engaging in the life of the school

- **Teaching and learning experiences** – The additional capacity and spaces of the proposal will enrich the teaching and learning experience for the pupils at the school
- **Care, support and guidance** – Other areas of the school building can be utilised more effectively for partnership working
- **Leadership and management** – The proposal might create opportunities for additional responsibilities within the senior leadership team

Section 8: Overview of the Proposal

The table below details the category, language, age range and other relevant details relation to the proposed new school:

Capacity Proposal Overview	
Admission no and arrangements	Admissions to this school are co-ordinated by Blaenau Gwent's Inclusion team on the basis of need.
Age range	3-19 years
Pupil places	There are currently 189 pupils on roll as of September 2025 (including the additional 10% they are allowed), meaning that the school is already oversubscribed.
Capacity of the school	175 with the proposal to increase to 205 in September 2026 and 250 in September 2030/31
Location	Pen y Cwm Special School Strand Annealing Lane, Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent NP23 6AN Vision House Unit 4, Gwent Court, Victoria Business Park, Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent NP23 8AN
Category school and language	Special School English-medium
Schedule of accommodation	To be determined post consultation
Transport arrangements and policy	Transport will be delivered in accordance with the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2025/26. Please refer to Section 1 for more information.
Cost per Pupil 2024/25	£22,489
School Categorisation (2019)	Not applicable
Estyn Inspection Results	Inspection report Pen-Y-Cwm Special School 2024
Building Condition Categorisation	A
Building Suitability Categorisation	B

School Catchment Area

The School catchment area of Pen Y Cwm Special School is all of Blaenau Gwent as the only special school that caters for pupils aged 3 – 19 with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. This will not change as part of this proposal.

Transition Arrangements

There will only be change for post 16 pupils, currently located at the school. Pupils and staff would have visited the proposed temporary location prior to them moving in summer term 2025.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
When would building work start?	The post 16 provision (temporary location) has been completed as of summer 2025. A further options appraisal will be undertaken by the Education resources and Planning Team with a business case submission to Welsh Government for a permanent solution (e.g. new build or remodelling of existing school).
What about staff?	There will be some impact on post 16 staff as they will be on a temporary campus. As pupil numbers increase in the future, however, there will be new opportunities and any new appointments to the staff structure would have to be approved by the Governing Body and the Council through the formal Organisational Development (OD) arrangements as is presently the case.
How safe will the pupils and staff be on the temporary location? Subsequently, should the post 16 provision move back to the school site, this will be considered.	The Council has an exceptional record of coordinating the building of school buildings on “live” sites. Post occupation of staff and pupils at Unit 4 (known as Vision House) is an extension to the school and will be covered under health & safety. If the permanent solution is to build a new post 16 provision at the school, this would have no effect on the existing school. The construction areas will be completely separate from the day-to-day operation of the school, with safety of the pupils and staff of paramount importance.
How is my child going to get to school?	The existing arrangements under the home to school & post 16 learning policy 2025/26 will continue. The post 16 provision is less than half a mile from the main building.
How will my child access school dinners?	For post 16 learners, meals would be catered for at existing site and transported to Vision House which will be in line with catering standards and guidelines. There is a designated catering servery within the footprint of the building.

Section 9: Consultation Pro-forma

Consultation Questionnaire

Please provide your comment on the proposal to extend the Capacity for learners of Pen Y Cwm Special School <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/dxns7v>

You may also wish to indicate which of the following reflects your views:

I fully support the proposal	
I do not support the proposal	

Your comments:

Name: _____ Date: _____
E-mail: _____
Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Please indicate if you are:

Primary: Teacher/Non-Teaching School Staff / Governor / Parent / Pupil /Local Resident / Other (please state) _____

Secondary: Teacher/Non-Teaching School Staff / Governor / Parent / Pupil /Local Resident / Other (please state) _____

Thank you for your time and contribution to the consultation. Your views, comments and responses will be recorded and reported to the Council's Executive Committee in the Consultation Outcome Report.

Please detach this form and return by Emailing: 21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

All comments to be received no later than 5:00pm on Sunday 18th January 2026.

Appendix 1 - Distribution List for the Consultation Document

Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools affected by the proposals	The Welsh Ministers
In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school	Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MP's) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals
The maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals	ESTYN
Any other local authority (including those in England where appropriate) likely to be affected – including in the case of dedicated ALN provision, any authority placing or likely to place pupils with ALN in it to distribute to schools in their areas as appropriate	Teaching and staff trade unions (NUT; NASUWT; ATL; UCAC; UNISON; GMB) representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals
The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located	The relevant Regional Education Consortium
Any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals	The Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals
The Governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals	Any community or town council for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals
The Governing body of other schools which the proposer consider are likely to be affected by the proposal;	In the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin. Also all Registered Private/Voluntary Early Years Settings /Providers in Blaenau Gwent;
In the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present	In the case of proposals affecting ALN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest
In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school (Coleg Gwent)	In the case of proposals affecting Welsh Language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner

In addition to the above, the following are also included in the distribution:

The Headteacher of each school maintained by Blaenau Gwent LEA	Other Directorates of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
All Elected Members of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Blaenau Gwent Association of School Governors
The Careers Service	Libraries
RhAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education)	SNAP Cymru

Appendix 2– Equality Impact Screening

Screening Form

Service Area Contact Information: <i>(Please complete all fields)</i>				
Name of Person Completing Form: Sharon Rowlands / James Coleman		Department/Service Area: Education Directorate		Service Manager: Joanne Watts
Contact Details: sharon.rowlands@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk / james.coleman@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk		Date: 09/09/2025		
Policy Information		Name of Proposed Policy: N/A		
Are you screening for the Equality Impact on a new policy, or an existing policy: N/A Choose an item.		Comments: This EIA screening is in connection with the proposal to increase capacity at Pen Y Cwm Special School.		
What are the aims and objectives of the policy: There are no associated policy developments, however, the Council is consulting upon a proposal to increase Capacity of the Pen Y Cwm Special School within the Borough.				
Assessment of Impact of the Policy / Practice on Protected Characteristics				
Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	Provide reasons and any mitigation required
Age (children, young people, the elderly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The implementation of the temporary location will ensure improved access to a high-quality, fully accessible teaching and learning environment, in line with 21st Century School standards. The permanent solution (i.e. new site) will be fully DDA compliant and ensure the health and safety of, along with improved wellbeing for a greater number of pupils in need of specialist provision.
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy and Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Religion and Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Sex (male, female)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.			
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.			
<u>Additional Indicators of Equality Risk</u>							
Please indicate if you believe this policy / practice has a high, medium or low risk as follows (1 = No Impact; 2 = Minimal Impact; 3 = Potential Impact; 4 = Likely Impact; 5 = Inequality Impact)							
Children and / or young people up to the age of 16-19.	1	Please indicate any planned methods aimed at mitigating these risks Click here to enter text.					
<u>Meeting the Equality Objectives</u>							
Please indicate below if / how your proposal will contribute to the Equality Objectives							
Objective 1 – Making equality vital in decision making and service provision	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>					
Objective 2 – Be an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of and understands the equality agenda	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.				
Objective 3 – Do our best to engage, protect and support those people in our community that need it the most	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.				
Objective 4 – Promote understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>Evidence and Consultation</u>							
Have you undertaken any consultation and engagement activities with protected groups in order to mitigate any risks of discrimination	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please describe the engagement activities undertaken as part of this process This is a Formal consultation and will be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders in order to gather their views.				
Please highlight any additional evidence which might demonstrate consideration of the needs to protected groups in relation to this particular proposal							

Appendix 3 - Pen y Cwm Special School Community Impact Assessment

Community Impact Assessments are a structured way for the Council to fully understand the implications of our decisions and whether they are detrimental or discriminatory to certain groups or sections of the community. They help us to consider the impact of Council decisions and policies within and between communities more generally. The Community Impact Assessment process will ensure that our decision-making process is robust and impacts on all communities within Blaenau Gwent ensuring that they are fully considered in Council decision making processes.

By carrying out impact assessments, the Council is working to promote equality for all our service users, employees and the wider community that we serve.

Pen y Cwm Special School is located in the Ebbw Fawr South Ward, the ward profile can be viewed by clicking on the following link:

https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/wales/wards/blaenau_gwent/W05001263_ebbw_vale_south/

Ebbw Fawr South Ward has several areas of deprivation according to the Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation (2019)

<https://wimd.gov.wales/explore?lang=en#&domain=overall&z=12&lat=51.7770&lng=-3.2185>

Proposed Development

If approved, part 1 of the proposal would secure an additional 30 places for pupils requiring specialist education provision. The increase would bring significant benefits to current and new pupils to the school along with benefits for the wider community and families of pupils. Part 2 of the proposal will increase the number places by a further 45. Therefore, in total this gives the school a capacity of an additional 75 places overall.

Proportion of Pupils:

The Council's proposal seeks to ensure a continued high quality learning environment for pupils in our special school. By extending the capacity of the school the Council will be able to cater for many of the Borough's learners who are/or would otherwise be placed Out of County in line with their needs and/or availability and sufficiency of pupil places. The school building is co-located with Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community - Primary Campus and Little Stars Pre-school within the Ebbw Fawr Valley. It is surround by lush green mountains and woodland, whilst also being located near to the Enterprise Zone. The school building is 14 years old.

In 2024/25 academic year there were approximately 11 pupils from outside the County Borough being educated at Pen y Cwm Special School with an income stream for the LA of £284,905.99. This represents 7% of the total school population with the remaining pupils, residing within Blaenau Gwent. Future availability of places for "out of county" pupils will be subject to demand from within Blaenau Gwent in the first instance. However, for the academic year 2025/26, there are 7 pupils (3.4%) from out of county, with an estimated income of £228,844.47.

Current facilities and/or services offered

The following facilities are offered at Pen y Cwm School:

- Hydro pool
- ICT facilities
- Sensory Rooms
- Rebound Therapy Room
- Gym and Learning Bay
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Specialist teaching areas such as food technology rooms and art and craft room

The above provision/services will not be affected by the implementation of this proposal and can still be accessed by post 16 learners.

Travel Time

Given the implementation of the proposal there will be no / little impact on travel distances for existing pupils. As the catchment area covers the entire County Borough, the maximum distance likely to be travelled is no more than 8 miles, approximately 20 minutes by car/bus. Distances/travelling times will increase for those pupils with a placement from further afield.

How would parents and pupils engage should the proposal be agreed?

The Council recognises the importance of an effective and smooth transition process to ensure there is little if any disruption should the proposal to expand capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School be approved. The school will form part of the project team and will contribute to the overall development of the new provision.

Parents/carers and pupils will be provided with relevant information to aid their understanding of the proposal and the most appropriate support they can offer their children should there be a period of transition. The school will also work together with other services and where necessary, in identifying families who may need additional support. Parental and community engagement will remain a key priority throughout this process.

The wider implications the changes would have on public transport provisions.

The proposal is not expected to have any significant implications for public transport provision in the area given pupils' transport is largely provided by contracted vehicles. The temporary post 16 provision at Vision House is located next to the Ebbw Vale Parkway train station.

Wider community safety issues.

Part 1 of the proposal would have no direct impact on the wider community from a building perspective as:

- The school will remain in its current location. Post 16 provision will be located at Unit 4 (Vision House).
- It will benefit families of pupils with profound or multiple learning difficulties by their child having the education within the County Borough within which they reside.

- Will provide designated spaces in the school for key partners such as health care professionals to offer individual support for learners.

No significant safety issues are anticipated.

Part 2 of the proposal will have an impact on the wider community from a building perspective. This may be subject to change, depending on if an extension is added or if another building is to be remodelled.

- The school will remain in its current location, even if we provide an extension or add a location.
- It will benefit families of pupils with profound or multiple learning difficulties by their child having the education within the County Borough within which they reside.
- Will provide designated spaces in the school for key partners such as health care professionals to offer individual support for learners.

No significant safety issues are anticipated.

What would be the impact on health and well-being?

As a special school, the focus is on children with complex specialist needs, so the proposal is expected to have a very positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those who attend, who will have access to the highest standard in terms of facilities, education and care.

Transport Impact Assessment

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places a duty on the council to assess the travel needs of learners under the age of 19. In addition to those children who qualify for free transport provision due to meeting the eligibility criteria, the council is under a legal obligation to assess the travel needs of learners who walk to school. There will likely be an impact upon transport and travel, however, any implications on transport arrangements will be more positive than if the Council were to use provision from outside of the borough to meet the children's needs.

Staff Impact Assessment

There will be no impact on existing staff other than that of the Post 16 class teachers / support staff. albeit the increase in capacity in the main building may provide new and different opportunities not available in the school. Nevertheless, in addition to their role as statutory consultees, meaningful consultation will take place with any affected staff and recognised trade unions on the possible impact and outcome of the statutory consultation. Discussion will take place through agreed joint consultative processes with recognised trade unions (JCC) and collective consultation.

Additional Learning Needs Provision

This proposal specifically addresses sufficiency issues in relation to the number of places available for children with ALN in the Borough and will therefore, have a positive impact.