

## Appendix 7 Pen y Cwm Consultation analysis via Survey

Number of respondents 128

- 22 teachers 21 support the proposal, 1 does not support the proposal
- 4 Governors 3 don't support the proposal 1 not against proposal
- 31 Parents 29 support the proposal, 1 does not support the proposal and 1 no response
- 26 Local residents 25 fully support the proposal 1 no response
- 18 Non-teaching staff 14 fully support the proposal, 3 do not support the proposal and 1 no response
- Response
- 27 Other 23 supports the proposal, 3 do not support the proposal and 1 no response

Number of respondents via survey 128 out of which:

- 112 supported the proposal
- 11 didn't support the proposal
- 5 didn't not comment if they supported or didn't support the proposal

Out of the respondents via the survey of 128 who didn't comment:

- 33 supported the proposal
- 1 didn't comment if they supported or didn't support the proposal

### 11 Comments from respondents that do not support the proposal:

- I don't entirely support the proposal because there is no space at the site for a bigger building and the necessary parking - parking for the primary phase is already lacking and difficult so adding to that will make the situation worse and more dangerous.
- I support the Proposal of Plan 2- A New Build by 2030/ 2031. I ONLY support the notion of PYC having a new build on the adjacent ground. I do NOT support the remodelling of the existing school. PYC has already been stretched to capacity. Despite, the new building in the Garden Festival, offices and special rooms are still being used as classrooms. The strain on staff (sickness) and children's wellbeing is apparent. I believe a building adjacent to the PYC would support learners & staff to meet individual learning needs, medical needs & wellbeing. At current- not all classes provide hoists essential to wheel chair users. Also, the hygiene rooms are over stretched to capacity due to demand, learners hygiene needs cannot be met for periods of time. Plan 1- in my opinion would be an attempt at a 'quick fix'. Plan 2- I only agree with a new building adjacent to PYC. I believe this environment could potentially support learners to meet their full potential with correct facilities.
- I understand the need for the proposal however I think the document has several areas of inaccuracy which need to be addressed. School is already running at overcapacity and with skeleton staff. Learners, parents and staff have lost too many specialist resources to ensure all pupils ALPs/ODPs/Targets/Medical recommendations are met. I believe that support is needed to ensure we keep the 'special' elements of this school. Learners deserve an education setting which is suitable for their needs – currently there are rooms being used as classrooms which were designed as office spaces. Not all classes can have a gym/hall/sensory room/soft play/Community Cafe slot every week. Sensory room and soft playroom are both located upstairs, learners attend PYC because transitions are difficult for them - this needs to be considered for all options proposed. The Hydro pool is broken. The buzzer system is broken. There are not enough staff to run Rebound and Hydro (when Hydro is working). There are not enough break out rooms and spaces – 6 have been lost in the 5 years I have worked at PYC. During the meeting on Wednesday 10th December the projected numbers were questioned. We asked how many pupils were we expected to have now and the answer was significantly lower than the number

we have. If these projections are now incorrect, how can we know that the figures this time are more accurate? Here is a write up of collective teachers' response to the proposal. This was written during the staff meeting for Teachers on Tuesday 9th December - this has been emailed to addresses given during the meeting dated Wednesday 10th December. -Resources/areas we have lost Learning zone Immersion rooms Design & Technology room Science room PPA room Offices 2x Thrive/TIS/Motional rooms Library Alcoves were turned into cupboards Tracking system (PMLD) 2x common rooms Y11/P16 2 meeting rooms Weekly music therapy sessions Communication room and dedicated member of staff - Concerns Estyn recommended Primary classes no bigger than 8. Currently 1 class has 10 and the others are all 9 learners. Phase 1 currently don't have gym slots or swimming sessions at the leisure centre. No access to a playground – swing/roundabout etc. Hydro pool is broken/not enough staff trained/available. Rebound not enough staff trained/available. Avoid including targeted provision (hydro/rebound) as we know we are unable to fulfil the ALP. Learners are waiting for access to services – SALT/OT/EP/Physio/SPACE Doors have been removed from quiet rooms so no quiet spaces to work. A learner is unable to go to the current P16 provision due to access at Vision House. Corridors are already busy – this can be dangerous when pupils need somewhere to regulate/transitioning to the NEST/other areas. Buzzer system is not working. Nurses don't support at current satellite site – would this be different for plans suggested? Building not fit for purpose – glass panels/not all rooms are fobbed. Learners are queuing for hygiene rooms multiple times a day, these learners are not always able to wait. The hygiene room is not ventilated. Not enough showers. There is timetabling conflict for all current specialist provision. A learner has had to be moved to a different class away from their peers due to the new classroom (December 25) room not suitable due to lack of hoist. - Questions What is the plan for Vision House? Will it remain with all of the options? What will happen to P16 in September, not enough room at Vision House? Are any of these plans big enough? We need room to grow. Pen-y-Cwm is successful, and learners achieve because we have skilled staff and specialist rooms. How are we going to stay special – not just a higher ratio of staff than mainstream? We are currently running on a skeleton staff, illness and absence is high, this is not sustainable – more learners need more staff. Is there a budget for this? We are not mainstream provision so if the extension into the existing building comes to fruition what will the provision look like? What is the budget for this? Primary school have access to our resources – Soft play/Rebound. We have to share the hall, MUGA. This means Christmas is early for us which can cause behaviour in the last 2 weeks – what will happen when/if more pupils have to share? What are the figures for accidents and incidents since the numbers have been growing? Is this a trend we want to continue? Do the nursery need to stay on site? What will external provision look like? Already don't have enough slots at the leisure centre for swimming. 5G slots are already not enough for all learners to access who would benefit. Need more hygiene rooms now, how many should we have per number of learners? How many additional showers are planned? Why are projections planned to dip in numbers for 2030/31? Thank you for taking the time to read this. If any of it is unclear please contact padfield3@hwbcymru.net for clarification.

- The reason i don't support this is because kids have already lost a lot of rooms used for various treatment and therapies. The children struggle with lunch times and other areas with kids coming together. I agree Pen Y Cwm needs to provide more spaces for kids but to do so i believe it should no longer be a shared school. Sharing the lunch hall with the other school is already a lot on a day-to-day basis and being able to use the sports hall after three lunches has taken place. Kids with additional needs struggle to eat especially with places being busy loud etc. You need to think about the children's needs and what you would be doing. Pen y cwm having their own school would be most beneficial. Are all equipment and therapy rooms going to be increased? there is so much that needs to be

thought about, the kids already there. Every child should have a place i agree but a place where they feel safe should be number one but increasing numbers in classrooms and losing access to therapies and treatment is only harming the kids. Give pen y cwm their own school

- I currently do not support the proposal of expanding the number of learners although I accept it is necessary as more children need a place in a specialist school. I have concerns about the provisions being sufficient for the learners we already have at the school let alone the additional learners from 2026 onwards. Vision House is also an incredible provision for our post 16 learners however with a capacity of 30 there is not enough space for the September 2026 intake let alone any pupils subsequent to that. We have one staff toilet for 20 staff, one sensory room, no breakout spaces or a sufficient sized yard. The dining room is also not big enough to hold all learners simultaneously. I am concerned that the increase in capacity of Pen-y-Cwm school will mean stretching already limited resources and opportunities for the current learners let alone new learners who are due to start at the school. The negative impact on the staff with no space, larger classes and restricted access to such spaces as the main hall, gym, sensory rooms, hygiene rooms etc is already clear and with more learners this will only become worse. Staff leaving due to unsustainable workplace conditions will do nothing to improve staff retention and turnover which in turn has a negative impact on pupils. We have one rebound room and one hydrotherapy pool (which is often out of action) for over 180 pupils, which means there are surely pupils who are not accessing physiotherapy sessions as they should be according to their need. We also have two nurses on the main site but none at Vision House, there are several learners with medical needs who are tended to by Teachers and Teaching Assistants on the second site. With so many pupils who have healthcare needs it is unrealistic to expect to accommodate more learners with medical complications and expect the teaching assistants and teachers to become de-facto medical staff who are also not paid anything additional to take on that extra responsibility or stress. Whilst I want and understand the need for the school's capacity to be increased I cannot currently support such an action until we as staff can be shown how this expansion will improve the school overall rather than just allow for us to have more pupils and it be simply that.
- I understand the need to extend provision, however I feel this provision needs to be purposeful and have a positive impact on learners. specialist rooms, meeting rooms, living skills rooms have all been made into classrooms so children miss out on these provisions. Building is not fit for purpose – glass panels/not all rooms are fobbed, doors don't open automatically for wheelchair uses this is difficult if your on your own with a child in a wheelchair if you have to fob doors and get child through door. Learners are queuing for hygiene rooms multiple times a day, these learners are not always able to wait. There is timetabling conflict for all current specialist provision e.g. sensory rooms, rebound rooms, the gym, hall etc we need more rooms for these specialist provisions so children can access more regularly and when needed.
- Lack of planning for September 2026 onwards - no allocated funding for building work, no additional classrooms, spaces have just been reconfigured e.g. SLT moving office 3 times in 3 years to try and free up space that can be reconfigured. All "retrospective" but adaptations not fit for purpose. Serious health and safety concerns specifically the increase in number of incidents and accidents possibly due to overcrowding in classrooms and loss of specialist areas and outdoor space that would support emotional regulation necessary for learning Issues with current infrastructure of building meaning significant concerns in ability to offer best curriculum offer for all learners; eg access to soft play, food tech room, gym, sensory room, rebound, hydropool all time limited due to current numbers in the building. Some learners not able to access as various rooms/interventions as timetable already "full." Additional numbers mean more learners

going through the shared dining hall - already start providing lunch at 11.30am to be out by 12.15 for Ebbw Fawr children. Any noisier/busier will lead to significant concerns regarding access

- We struggling to meet the needs of our current learners - with each new intake, we lose space; specialised rooms that are essential for our learners to have an immersive and experiential access to education.
- With regards to the proposal, this is a very complicated way of wording this from the person(s) putting forward to proposal. of course, the expansion to Pen Y Cwm - HAS to happen, albeit many years too late, it is imperative , that this action is to be addressed in a manner of what is right for the children and staff alike, and for the council to realise that this is so important, that at present nothing in this school is for for purpose. Our learners, deserve to be treated like any other student and given the same thoughts to their education, because what i see as a parent governor, this has been ongoing for many many years, and there is zero changes, so the school is expanding in numbers, yet the space isn't growing - how can this be so??? this is a special needs school, and it should be addressed finally that there is no negotiation on this matter - it is to be arranged that Pen Y Cwm is expanded - however, provisions need to be put in place p[lease see below for many reasons why, matters need to be discussed: 1) Lack of planning for September 2026 onwards - no allocated funding for building work, no additional classrooms, spaces have just been reconfigured e.g. SLT moving office 3 times in 3 years to try and free up space that can be reconfigured. All "retrospective" but adaptations not fit for purpose.THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE 2) Serious health and safety concerns specifically the increase in number of incidents and accidents possibly due to overcrowding in classrooms and loss of specialist areas and outdoor space that would support emotional regulation necessary for learning Issues with current infrastructure of building meaning significant concerns in ability to offer best curriculum offer for all learners eg access to soft play, food tech room, gym, sensory room, rebound, hydro pool all time limited due to current numbers in the building. Some learners not able to access as various rooms/interventions as timetable already "full" - children attending Pen Y Cwm have statements - and they are not able to fully utilise because of the lack of space, facilities, and this as you know is a breach - Children attending Pen Y Cwm are already at a position in life where they need a school with facilities to nurture, educate and teach in a certain way - they are deprived of this due to the nature of the proposal - they should not have any more taken off them, this has to be addressed and fixed - our learners deserve this!!!! 3) Additional numbers mean more learners going through the shared dining hall - already start providing lunch at 11.30am to be out by 12.15 for Ebbw Fawr children. Any noisier/busier will lead to significant concerns regarding access - our children deserve to eat lunch in an environment where they are not rushed - you need to be fully understanding of each individual childs needs, if you did, you would see that Pen Y Cwm needs so much more than they have - the school is expanding, the staff need space as they face challenges , the children need safe spaces - they need calm, they need areas to regulate, at present, i feel that BGCBC are overlooking all the necessities that they should be providing. as a parent governor, my child has been here many years, and the facilities lost is awful - how is a child supposed to develop without the structure around them? i am all for the proposal, however there are certain things that need to be addressed as baove and now this has taken many years - it cannot go on any longer -
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- The current footprint of the school is too small for the number of pupils the proposal is putting forward. This means that both indoor and outdoor spaces will be compromised and will be detrimental to the development of the learners. We do not have adequate facilities for hygiene or specialist provision. The school is already cramp and the SEN learners needs will no longer be met by this proposal. Heating, ventilation and air con are already an issue with learners struggling with changes in temperature and the building not able to adapt. Vision House is already full and there is no consultation for this to increase. The provision is not accessible to all as there is no wheelchair facilities for access into the building, moving around the building, no hoists in hygiene room and only one hygiene room. There is no lift so the upper floor is unaccessible. Storage is a huge problem across both sites. Increase in staff leads to lack of car parking as well as rest areas.

### **83 Comments from respondents who support the proposal**

- I support the school extending the capacity due to I have a son with autism who I would like to attend this school
- I fully support this because i know the children would highly benefit from the work that will be done
- There need to be more provisions and support for a bigger school. Too many children are in unsustainable settings, and a bigger Pyc will lead to better support and fewer broken children with school-based trauma. And a bigger and better post 16 with more land so the kids can play sports and move and not just be stuck on paving!
- I support the need to extend spaces at pen y cwm but as a family that had to fight for a place there for our child thinking that the school place would be until the age of 19 to then finding out that post 16 was to be moved to a totally different building has filled us with dread. Our child finds changes to his routine extremely difficult and to now we have to prepare them that school will be in a different building has caused our child to become anxious about school in September where he will be then attending
- To many children with additional needs are being forced to go through main stream schools where they cannot have their needs fully met and putting extreme pressure on teachers and TA's who are not fully trained to deal with this situation or have to right funding to support the child, or are being home schooled putting even more pressure on already struggling parents.
- I think this is a fantastic proposal as there is a huge need for more spaces for ALN children in the borough
- As a SEN parent myself and auntie to a child who has finally been accepted to Pen Y Cwm after such a long wait, i fully support the proposal. Every child deserves the right to an education and only one school to be able to accommodate the needs of so many is unsustainable.
- With a little girl who is on the autistic spectrum and non-verbal this would give me a hope i wouldn't have to fight so hard for a space in future.
- I Believe that penny cwm should expand their capacity as myself of a parent of a child with non-verbal autism he struggles so much with main stream however no room for him

at pen y cwm I feel like my child should have a right to and education the same what mainstream would call it a 'normal' child and him having a reduced timetable for mainstream

- After working for 18 years in mainstream primary school where we had numerous ALN pupils who had to struggle whilst waiting for a place at Pen y Cwm, this is a welcome and much needed provision. I also did a few days' supply at Pen Y Cwm after retirement and applaud the work the staff there do.
- Children deserve the best opportunity to learn and thrive. Mainstream schools aren't always the best fit when classrooms are large and loud. Some Children who are ALN need individual specialist care tailored to their needs and space to feel safe.
- I work as a teacher in a local primary school. I have seen the need for Pen-Y-Cwm provision drastically increase over the last few years. The provision has been full and therefore this has led to many pupils having to stay in mainstream school while on a waiting list for PYC. Some for more than 1 year. If there were more spaces available this would hopefully ensure pupils will not be in this position in the future and there would either be immediate starts or waiting times will be drastically reduced.
- More places are needed, there is not enough space in Pen-Y-Cwm, and Main stream primary schools are saying they cannot provide safe and adequate provision or education children with additional and/or complex needs.
- This proposal is badly needed as soon as possible
- PYC is in desperate need of expansion and funding. My son goes here and over the years we've seen rooms taken away to make new classes. These rooms are essential for specialist facilities. There are children on long waiting lists being failed by the council when they need to be in a specialist school NOW.
- Pen Y Cwm school needs extra space and room for the vulnerable and disabled children and more facilities
- This is long overdue. The need for ALN provision is critical. Mainstream schools cannot cope with the demand as there is no money or support for children with ALN issues. This is having a huge impact on individual children, peers and staff wellbeing.
- There is not enough finance or expertise to cater for the entitlement of provision in local mainstream schools. I have a lifetime of being brought up and working with children with additional needs. The parents need support and the children need their entitlements to be fulfilled. My four-year-old grandson is non-verbal, autistic and delayed development. He needs to be educated for life skills with expertise they have in pen y cwm. It is false economy to think all of these children can be accommodated in local schools. Pen y cwm needs and must be expanded to fulfil the needs of these children.
- There is more expertise within the pen y cwm school, that will help children flourish. It is their right and entitlement to an education that will meet all of their needs. As much as main school tries these needs are not being met. I fully support the expansion for the benefit of Blaenau Gwent children.
- Mainstream schools are stretched to maximum capacity, with no money, very little TA support and increasing numbers of children with severe additional needs. This is not good for ALN children, their peers and staff wellbeing.
- I fully support the proposal as long as Post 16 remains at vision house
- There are too many children misplaced and waiting for an opening at Pen Y Cwm, it would support those locally who need access to the provision for more child centred support. Hopefully, local children will be given a priority.
- Whilst I fully support the proposal outlined above, I strongly believe that the plans do not go far enough fast enough or the capacities big enough to support the substantial need for the support offered by Pen Y Cwm in the county and beyond. I believe that with the outlined plans the school will quickly reach capacity and the need will be in the same position as before. I am also concerned that the financial support for the school will not be

met in totality by the local government and as such the school will be running at loss with much needed facilities like the hydro pool further running to disrepair and mandated therapy needs of the children continuing to not being met.

- I am a parent of an ALN child who is currently on the waiting list for a place at Pen y Cwm Special School. The demand for specialist provision clearly exceeds current capacity, leaving children without appropriate placements and families under immense strain. Expanding Pen y Cwm would ensure children with complex needs receive the specialist education, support, and stability they are entitled to, rather than being placed in unsuitable settings due to lack of space. Thank you.
- I fully support the proposed expansion. Specialist provision like this is vital for SEN children, giving them the tailored support, stability and opportunities they need to thrive. Increasing capacity will positively change lives and better meet growing local need.
- The school needs to be able to support all the children that need it! And for longer! Not all children are ready to leave school at 19! There needs to be a supportive college for the 19-25 young people
- I support the plans to improve and extend PYC. I worry that the plans for extension are looking at 2030/2031 when the over-capacity of the school is present at this moment.
- However, something needs to be done in preparation for September 2025 in our current building with rising numbers of learners.
- The new provision at Vision House can accommodate 30 learners. This summer 3 learners will leave Post 16. This only allows for 3 learners from the main site to transition to Vision House in September 2026. There are 17 learners in Year 11 this year. Where will the other year 11 learners be educated? The current learners in Post 16 at Vision House are thriving both independently and with social and emotional behaviours with a great reduction in incidents for a number of learners. Being offsite has allowed learners to actively look after their own building and grounds and learners show pride in their surroundings. Will there be plans to move Post 16 back to the main site when the provision is extended? I feel this would be detrimental to the wellbeing and independent living skills of the young people.
- I fully support the proposal to extend capacity in Pen Y Cwm school. Children with complex additional learning needs should be able to access appropriate provision and Pen Y Cwm is already above capacity. We also need to consider increasing capacity for resource bases for children with ALN who would thrive in the right educational environment - so many children are waiting for alternative placements in mainstream schools.
- I am a 1-2 to twins in a mainstream school. I love my job but it's not the place for them. They need specialist placements but there is no room. I fully support this proposal.
- Pen Y Cwm definitely needs to grow in order to support the children we have and to add any further capacity in to the school.
- We have lots of children in our school who are not receiving the right support in our mainstream school as is not suitable for their needs :(
- There need to be a lot more spaces as there is high demand
- There is not enough resource within local primary schools to support children with a variety of additional needs. They need additional support from staff and other members of MDT, they require additional equipment & larger classrooms with enough space for them to work, receive therapy and address their sensory needs. Local children & mainstream schools would benefit from a bigger special needs resource such as Pen Y Cwm.
- The increase of special education pupils has rapidly grown. Having an extension would benefit and cater for the ongoing growth of children in need of this education. Pen y Cwm has lost numerous specialist rooms (sensory rooms, immersion rooms, learning zones), due to the ongoing increase. This has meant that we struggle to meet the needs of the

pupils. Having an extension can mean that we can bring these specialist rooms back and meet the needs of the pupils again. Furthermore, it has been a lot more difficult to release staff for rebound and hydrotherapy, due to the demand of the increase in pupils. This has meant that we again, are not meeting the needs of the pupils due to the high demand on staff. In my opinion, the extension of capacity for Pen y Cwm is greatly needed to be able to meet the needs of all pupils and the cater for more pupils to attend Pen y Cwm to receive a person-centred education.

- I support the proposal to expand provision. My only concern is that access to some therapeutic activities in the school is already limited due to demand, for example access to rebound and soft play. Will additional facilities be considered as well as classrooms and additional staff?
- More diagnosis is resulting in more space needed in specialist schools. Let's give our children the education that they deserve
- As professionals are identifying needs with more knowledge than historically, the duty of care towards children who have greater additional learning needs will need an area where stimuli can be provided. Inclusive practice is for every child however MAT children may not get the time that they also need. The workforce is struggling with capacity to accommodate all children's needs and if mainstream education is not suited to children due to severe needs Pen Y Cwm expansion could provide specific care routines that all children have the right to under the UNCRC. The added extra stress for parents could be removed as a child with additional learning needs may not be developmental with toilet training and be further subjected to feel inadequate if schools insist they cannot change them too. There may also be an easier collective formed IDP which is regularly updated for both health and education, as allied health professionals could then hold regular contact space under one roof rather than multiple visits to a variety of settings to meet with parents/ carers/ child and staff. This could also reduce health inequalities that may be present and also quicker note any safeguarding issues as identifying needs with families and child to if intervention is needed.
- Provided that the expansion comes with a sufficient increase to staffing, space, specialist resources and funding. Without this, an expansion to the capacity will directly impact current learners' support, staff workload, and outcomes.
- Because there is clearly a need for more places. My son is currently in a mainstream School and has a diagnosis of Autism and he is looking for more support as he currently doesn't have a 1:1 in School or extra support. I think there needs to be more places for children with ALN within Blaenau Gwent.
- The demand for additional needs learning is increasing, and it would take some of the extra workload off school
- I strongly support the proposal. Working within a resource base myself, I see first-hand the positive impact that specialist provision has on pupils with additional needs. Expanding PYC would allow more children to access tailored support, specialist staff, and appropriate interventions within a supportive and inclusive environment. Increasing capacity would also help meet the growing demand for specialist places, reducing pressure on both mainstream classrooms and external provision. With the right space and resources, pupils are better able to develop academically, socially, and emotionally, enabling them to reach their full potential. From my professional experience, enlargement of PYC would be a highly beneficial and necessary step in ensuring high-quality provision for children with special educational needs.
- Pen y cwm needs to be extended or there needs to be another special school in Blaenau Gwent area. There are so many children suffering being in a mainstream setting as it's not meeting their needs.
- As a Mum of a now adult son with SEND it is imperative that BGCBC do all they can to offer ongoing provisions for individuals who have additional needs. Education is a lifeline

because once they are out of education there are fewer employment opportunities. This can then lead to isolation, additional stress on families/care givers potentially leading to more stress related illnesses etc for both parties life skills, independent living skills and a must if this provision goes ahead. Please make it happen from a parent who is really struggling to support my son right now

- Pen-Y-Cwm is a very special school. Over the years it has lost most of its specialised rooms that these special children really need to improve their quality of life and their futures. This needs to be a long-term solution for the growing number of children and young people that need this special school.
- I work as a Teaching Assistant at a Primary School in Blaenau Gwent and we have several ASD children who are waiting for a placement. We struggle to meet their needs daily.
- From my time as a teaching assistant and then as a PGCE student teacher I have seen many children with ALN in need of additional support which mainstream schools that cannot be provided to them like Pen-Y-Cwm can offer them. There is a large number of children in need of this school, and it is heartbreaking to see that many of these children are declined a place because they are already at full capacity. Additionally, with the growing number of children being diagnosed with autism and ADHD and in need of a specialist school to provide them with the right support to meet their needs, it only makes sense to make the building /capacity bigger for more children to be given a place in the right environment to meet their individual needs. I have always said Pen-Y-Cwm should have a space/building of their own as it was obvious that school was always going to need more spaces as the number of children with ASD/ADHD continues to grow. There is a definite need for more special schools in this area as I know there is already a forever growing waiting list for spaces in this school already.
- I support this plan if there is an increase in qualified teaching staff to cover the increase in pupil numbers. Preference would be for a new build alongside the current building as that is already at capacity.
- The pupils need more space to grow, and it be open to more pupils that need the amazing support the school do but staff need more help and funding For this to continue and thrive to be the best it can be
- I see many children in mainstream schools in Blaenau Gwent who need a place in a special school. If you the capacity could be increased, then these children would definitely benefit.
- I think it would be a better idea to have the ebbw fawr primary school and move those, as it would not upset the routine of the children already there
- There are so many children who will benefit from expanding provision at Pen-y-Cwm.
- Capacity must be extended as there are increasing numbers of children with Highly complex ALN that need support. It is vital that this is adequately funded so that staff and pupils can thrive not survive.
- We have lost so many specialist provision rooms that is desperately needed eg a working hydro pool, more sensory spaces, intervention rooms d&t room, ICT suite and interactive rooms. Classes have to stay as small as possible so we can keep learners and staff safe. We need all classrooms to be suitable classroom, some are small rooms with no sensory spaces. There is no suitable ppa room. There is no suitable space for meetings with parents and/ or professionals. There is no scope to invite parents in for support/ training/ social events. There is not enough provision for the new post 16 classes. Vision house must remain as a separate concept, the skills learnt and the chance to have a "soft" stepping stone into college/ community is vital in developing independence. There is not enough outside space for all learners, space is heavily timetabled but this is not always suitable for learners who need to take time out. We need a separate hall, sharing causes huge issues around dinner timetables and huge blocks booked out at times eg Christmas.

We need more hygiene and shower areas, they are heavily used and waiting can be long, this causes undue stress and behaviours. We need a new buzzer system to support with behaviour. I'm concerned that all the suggested plans will not provide for future numbers and we need to look at predicted numbers more carefully. This also does not help with September plans, the school is massively oversubscribed and this is having a huge effect on staff wellbeing, resulting in a large number of long term sick and also causes issues with pupil behaviour and support given.

- it would be fabulous as this would bring more space for children that need special school
- I completely understand the need to extend provision; however I feel this provision needs to be purposeful and have a positive impact on learners. I would question whether £15million is enough for any of the proposed changes! During my twenty years in PYC I have seen many changes, sadly many of which in my opinion have been detrimental to our learners learning experience. Due to the huge influx of learners and obvious financial constraints we have grown so much and sadly lost what I believe are vital resources that serve the very diverse needs of our learners. To name a few these are, immersion room, sensory room, pool, common room, quiet areas, library, time slots for the gym, use of the main hall (potentially due to having to share this facility with Ebbw Fawr), meeting rooms and loss of specialist resources. On a very positive note, the acquisition of Vision House has been needed for an extremely long time. This halfway house (a soft transition between secondary and college) is crucial for our Post 16 learners, not only to develop their self-awareness has young adults, but the absolutely critical ability to teach them desperately needed life skills which will impact their future adult lives. This provision must be kept separate to the main body of the school and expanded as part of the proposed £15million expenditure. The Welsh government states that ALN educational provision is 3yrs to 25yrs, we are currently falling very short of meeting these provisional needs, therefore, to advocate further, a larger Post 16 provision is more than required.
- The provision for ALN children is mainstream schools is very limited. Specialist teachers and education in a purpose-built environment/building is paramount for these children to reach their potential and learn where they feel safe. Parents and carers of these children at the least need to know their children are having the very best of care not simply being slotted into mainstream because there is nowhere else for them to go
- I think it would be an amazing addition to the school we need more facilities that are bigger and more space to help pupils with asd and other disabilities the space to learn and achieve goals
- It is vital for further provision for ALN children. The waiting list is currently three years, and the extension would reduce this.
- My youngest child has taysachs disease so needs a 1-1 to be able to attend preschool settings. At present because he is under three years of age the local authority will not fund him for the hours he has had previously unless I pay 16 pounds per hour ontop of his standard nursery fee. This is impossible for me as a single parent. Therefore, having a specialist preschool/nursery setting would massively benefit him to ensure he has the same opportunities as other children his age.
- I think it's a good idea to expand the school.
- As a member of staff at Pen y Cwm, I see every day how much our children can achieve when they are in the right environment. I fully support this proposal because, quite simply, we are overflowing. It is heartbreaking to see our pupils and staff struggling for the physical space they need to move, learn, and receive medical care safely. These children have incredibly complex needs, and they deserve a school that can breathe and grow with them. Mainstream schools—despite their best efforts—are simply not fit to provide the specialist sanctuary these families rely on. By expanding, we aren't just adding rooms; we are opening doors for more children who are currently waiting for a place where they

truly belong. We need this extra space to ensure every child in our care is treated with the dignity, safety, and specialised support they deserve

- I am a member of Staff at another local primary school. The need for supporting ALN children in mainstream settings and specialist schools has increased greatly. We need better and bigger facilities to accommodate and provide support for a variety of ALN children. Their needs vary greatly and it is essential to provide the correct support for them! I fully support the expansion, this school is essential to the community.
- I fully agree with the proposal of extending PYC capacity, as I think it is essential for Vision house/ Post 16 PYC to become a permanent building as I have been working in this area of the school since September 2025. Even though I have worked in Post 16 part of PYC about 7 years ago. Vision house has more room and is helping our learners to thrive and grow in everything that they learn. Is also a very positive environment to work in not just for our learners but also for our staff. I have worked at PYC for 15 years and I am thoroughly enjoying the Post 16 approach at Vision house. Please can we keep this as a permanent area/building for learners and staff.
- Being teacher, I see the daily struggles of specific learners when they are not in the right learning environment. Schools are doing all that they can to support these children, however, we are not always able to meet their needs. This has a huge impact on not just the individual child, but also their peers and teaching staff. As a parent, I see the other side where learners are being put in unsafe situations because they have a child in class that needs specialist one-to-one care and support.
- As parents we feel so lucky that our son was able to attend Pen-y-cwm and feel very strongly that no child that should have a place there may have to wait for a space. Hopefully with increased capacity this will not happen, children will receive the education and support they deserve
- This is much needed. The demand is significantly increasing for a provision to meet the complex needs of our young people. Pen y cwm is a fantastic provision enhancing the life chances for those who are unable to access mainstream school.
- I think the proposal of the new school is the best way forward to reunite all the school back together the idea of post 16 being else where is scary for the students and not inclusive
- I fully support this proposal as this gives more pupils the chance to thrive at this amazing school.
- As a teacher in the cluster of Pen-Y-Cwm I have seen that there has been a huge increase of children with special needs within the primary setting. Mainstream education is not the place for these children with their complex needs as very often the schools are struggling with staffing issues and cannot give these children the time and education they need. It is completely unfair to these children. Very often teachers are told that there is no space for these children in the LEA . Extending the provision at Pen-Y -Cwm would certainly decrease the demands on staff in mainstream schools and finally give these children a setting which will meet their needs
- The school provides a much-needed service in the area .
- There are children that need and would benefit in this school that are being denied the correct education in mainstream.
- I run the 5g immersive Room and PYC classes come in to me on a weekly basis. As such, I have had many dealings with the various staff from the school. It has been devastating to witness their positivity draining over the past few years as things become more and more difficult for them. They have told me their pool is broken and some of their special rooms are unstaffed as they have problems recruiting staff and with sourcing appropriate supply staff. They have lost various meeting rooms meaning they don't have rooms for private conversations that may be needed between staff or with outside agencies or parents. They are such a big school now that they cannot have enough

access to the pool in the sports centre - surely the benefits of water therapy should mean this school simply needs their own pool? I know the PYC pupils gain so much from their visits to the 5g room, but I cannot host all their classes. Firstly, this would severely limit other schools' chances to visit. Also, due to their staffing issues they often have to split classes to visit, and this causes its own issues. Finally, there are a few learners who are unable to access the building due to the entrance and the size of their wheelchairs. I would be very sad to lose the rapport I have built up with the staff and pupils but, they really should have their own immersive room. In all, it seems to me that the current PYC building is no longer fit for purpose and extending the capacity HAS to be accompanied by massively extending the building and its facilities.

- Although I support the proposal of the expansion, I strongly feel that it is relevant that during the previous 10 years of my employment and the continued increase in pupil numbers in this time, the school has accommodated learners by losing internal resources and space and creating make shift classrooms. My suggestion would be to think pro actively rather than thinking re-actively as is the case previously and re-install all of the pre-existing facilities such as common room, learning zone, immersion room etc however bearing in mind that both these and the current facilities need to be doubled due to the school's current capacity and the fact that all of these facilities existed when the school first opened comprising of under 120 pupils.
- I do support the proposal. However, I think something needs to be considered about the school parking situation. It hasn't been very good lately even on a good day it has been chaotic. More so finishing time from around 2:50pm until 3:25pm. Having work done could disrupt this further. I just hope there is a plan in place, or a temporary end of school time change to prevent anymore issues with parking and the safety of all children as they are leaving both schools.
- My son has attended pen y cwm for 7 years and this extension is greatly needed
- I fully support the proposed expansion of Pen Y Cwm. In recent years I have noticed a significant increase in the number of children with additional learning needs entering mainstream schools, many of whom have complex and unique needs that mainstream settings are not suitable or equipped to meet. There are children with formal diagnoses and IDPs who would greatly benefit from attending Pen Y Cwm but remain on long waiting lists for places. This has a direct impact on their wellbeing, emotional regulation, and ability to access appropriate learning, as well as affecting the wellbeing and learning of other pupils and staff in mainstream schools. Expanding Pen Y Cwm would allow more children to receive the specialist support they need to thrive in a setting designed for them.
- Sen schools are desperately needed especially a school with such a great reputation and staff .
- There is no option between 'fully' and don't support? I fully support the increased access for children with SEN. I do not support 'remodelling' without specific details. Therapy space is presently non-existent because of recent increased capacity- spaces have been turned into classrooms. My son has weekly SALT And often there are no rooms available for him to have this 1:1 time
- I fully support the proposal to extend the capacity for learners at Pen-y-Cwm Special School. Pen-y-Cwm is the County Boroughs flagship provision for Special Education. Demand for specialist placements has increased significantly in recent years, and current capacity no longer reflects the level of need within the local authority. Extending capacity is necessary to ensure that learners with diagnosed and emerging needs can access appropriate, high-quality education within their local community. Without this expansion, more learners may be placed out of county, which can be disruptive for families, costly for the authority, and less effective for learners' long-term outcomes. Additional reasons supporting the proposal include the rising diagnoses of ASD and complex need,

improved outcomes for learners when they are educated in a setting specifically designed to meet their sensory, communication, and emotional needs, reduced travel times and stress for learners and families and finally greater inclusion and continuity, allowing learners to remain within the county borough. It will also offer support for mainstream schools within the County Borough, by ensuring learners whose needs cannot be met in mainstream settings have local access to specialist provision. Overall, extending the capacity of Pen Y Cwm Special School is a strategic, necessary, and responsible decision that reflects current and future demand while prioritising the wellbeing and educational outcomes of some of the county's most vulnerable learners. Good Luck in the forthcoming consultation. Craig Presdee-Salathiel the River Centre 3-16 Learning Community

- From a health perspective, there needs to be a wider consultation with Aneurin Bevan Health board, as any proposed expansion would potentially impact the health provision.
- As a Governing Body we are not against the proposed expansion of Pen-y-Cwm and support the consultation. However, we need to stress the importance of some of the issues that are causes for concern: Over the last four years consultations led by Inclusion Services have meant that the capacity in Pen-y-Cwm has risen from 120 in September 2021 to 175. In January 2026, this rose again as the school is legally obliged to go 10% over capacity, so currently have 193 learners. In Part One, this consultation proposes an increase to 205 learners in September 2026. Pen-y-Cwm as it is now will not be able to accommodate 205 plus an extra 10% so 225 without significant extension work. It is worth noting that with 29 learners in Vision House, the PyC main site currently houses 164 learners in 20 classrooms. Only 12 of these classrooms are the original purpose-built classrooms. It is a real concern that with numbers increasing to 205, the school will then be expected to take 10% on top of that capacity, meaning 225. With 30 learners in Vision House that means housing 195 learners in the main school building built for 120 learners, that may have been remodelled but has not been extended to incorporate "additional classrooms". We would like to ask, on behalf of the school, what the immediate plan is for the school to be able to accommodate this number of learners in September. In order to facilitate the extended capacity of 175, the Council remodelled the existing learning environment to create additional classroom spaces and associated facilities i.e. toilets. This remodelling meant that the school lost breakout space, meeting and office space and facilities such as a Learning Zone and Immersion Room. The classrooms that have been created remain not fit for purpose with class teachers sharing with governors that they do their best to teach learners despite the classroom environment. In a facility that was purpose built only ten years ago, this feels like a travesty. Timetabling of shared areas such as Sensory Rooms and the Food Technology Room for example, need to be limited to pupils in certain phases as there is not enough time in the school day for all learners to have time in these shared areas. Interventions such as use of the rebound therapy room, originally built to be shared between 120 is now limited to a needs led period of intervention to ensure fairness. We would like to know if the council has any plans to reinstate some of these lost areas to ensure there is no detriment to the quality of education delivered to current learners. It has been reported to governors that there is a rise in the number of incidents, accidents and violence at work reports. Staff report that with little break out space, it is difficult to de-escalate behaviours and with the increase in pupil numbers, there is not enough time and opportunity for all learners to access the interventions they may need. Learners cannot even be taken for a walk in the corridor to deescalate as there are numerous learners working at desks outside of classrooms as they find the classroom too overwhelming. We would like to know how the council will support the school to ensure classrooms are not overcrowded due to pupil numbers. Having 164 learners in the main school building (as well as the fact that the school shares the dining hall with Ebbw Fawr Primary) means that PyC classes are in the hall for their lunch serving from before 11.30am. Please could you share with us the plans for when

pupil numbers in September rise to a potential 225. Governors have observed the transport at the end of the day and with only 8 purpose-built bus bays, additional buses and taxis are parking by the curbs on both sides of the road through the car park, causing many concerns. Observation has shown governors that this is very well organised by the school, but the addition of further buses would cause significant concern. School report that there are additional incidents of behaviour on the buses that result in school transport staff getting harmed. Our concern is that there are very few transport providers in the area that have ability to support school transport, so buses are becoming overcrowded and learners are finding it increasingly difficult to cope. This has led to more and more learners being transported to school in individual taxis or by their parents which causes even more risk at the beginning and end of the day. How do the council intend to support the school in making these transition times as safe as possible? The housing of the Post 16 provision in Vision House has created a bespoke environment that meets the needs of the 29 learners who are currently placed there. The school have had to keep 5 learners in the main school building due to concerns with the accessibility of the building. In September 2026, the number of learners in the Post 16 phase increases to 52 (to 58 in 2027/28). This many learners cannot all attend Vision House as it only has three classrooms so some Post 16 provision will have to be in PyC main site. There are many benefits and success stories to the new Post 16 provision which we, as governors, would like all learners to benefit from but Vision House was always described as a temporary fix to the "overcrowding" of PyC. We would like to work with the council to develop a long-term plan that would support sustained growth and development, ensuring all Post 16 learners have access to the same curriculum offer. We would like the building to be accessible to wheelchairs, safe for learners who exhibit behaviours that challenge and have on-site nursing provision, just as they do in the main PyC building. Please could the council inform us how they will work with Tech Services and NHS staff to ensure equality of provision for all learners. We also request recognition of the additional site in the budget due to the increase in staffing ie cleaning and caretaking, facilities management such as bin collection as well as electric, heating etc. and the necessary expansion of our senior leadership team to ensure all staff feel part of the school community.