

Name of Consultation: Pen y Cwm Consultation

Log of Correspondence



	Date	Query/comment	Actioned
1	13.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I can't see anything contentious that would affect schools in our cluster. I fully support extending capacity at PYC</p>	Recorded
2	18.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I fully support extending the capacity – I believe it is what is needed in BG.</p>	Recorded
3	18.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I have no questions about extending the capacity of PYC; just a comment. I fully support extending the capacity of this provision.</p>	Recorded
4	18.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I agree, full support from me.</p>	Recorded
5	18.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I fully support extending capacity at PYC, We need that facility in BG.</p>	Recorded
6	20.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>I support all the comments made by my colleagues and strongly believe that the provision and the extension of its capacity is vitally important.</p>	Recorded
		<p>Local Authority Response:</p> <p>The Council welcomes the supportive comments and views shared by the above consultees.</p>	
7	28.5.21	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>As a cluster we understand and support the need for the expansion of Pen Y Cwm due to the increased need for special school placements. We agree that option 5 works best in terms of an immediate solution, however do feel that we need to give consideration to an extension, building another school if needed or relocating to a school with surplus capacity in the longer term.</p> <p>We hope that the expansion of Pen Y Cwm will support the development of inclusion to ensure that pupils have suitable placements from the start of their education.</p> <p>The changes to shared space in the bistro and the loss of the staffroom for Ebbw Fawr Primary Phase will have little impact in the short term. However, we are mindful that in future should EF numbers increase that a two form entry structure for each year can no longer be accommodated as one of the current classrooms will become a staffroom to allow the increased space for Pen Y Cwm. If numbers increase, then this change will need to be revisited to allow for a two form entry capacity.</p>	Recorded

		<p>Local Authority Response:</p> <p>The Council welcomes the views and support expressed by the Ebbw Fawr Cluster, and is mindful of both the pupil projections and associated impact upon both schools. The aforementioned considerations have heavily influenced the development of this proposal. The medium to long-term solution will seek to ensure sustainability for both parties going forward, in terms of growth and development.</p>	
8	28.5.21 14:52pm	<p>Correspondence (Email):</p> <p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>RE: Proposal to extend the capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School</p> <p>Following careful consideration of the consultation document, I wish to make comments on the preferred options indicated. I write by email, as I believe the survey sheet limits the options available to me.</p> <p>I do not support the proposal as is presented in the consultation document. (Option 5)</p> <p>Whereas, I fully support the need to expand the capacity of Pen-y-Cwm Special School and applaud the good work of all staff, pupils and families over the years, I truly believe that to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>remodel the existing school site in order to create an additional 55 places, within the existing footprint of Pen y Cwm Special School...</i></p> <p>is not the correct course of action, but I do agree that the authority should be:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>working on the development of a long-term plan to secure additional capacity to facilitate sustained growth and development...</i></p> <p>and this should be the priority at this time.</p> <p>From experience, I know that the short term fix will remain the long term outcome and, as priorities change, the chance to revisit this will be overtaken by the needs of other facility development in the years to come.</p> <p>Opinion</p> <p>Option 5 – Initially a long awaited, but short term catch up, quick fix with further limiting consequences for long term development and sustainability, led by a financial argument and projected numbers. It is clearly the cheapest positive option, but shows the LA has a predetermined outlook, uncertain commitment for future development that is prepared to limit potential support to an expanding and required facility, that will lack room to continue to support pupils with ever changing needs as they grow. This is a short term fix that will need fixing again.</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>As I have witnessed over the last 30 years, remodelling has often been the short term action taken at previous sites for this school. It has also been a temporary fix in many other BG schools in that time, but especially in the last 10 years with significant and detrimental short term impact, lacking the long term improvement as hoped for.</p> <p>Bringing back OOC pupils is a priority, for the wellbeing of both children and families, and economic sense within budget constraints. Providing much needed specialist facilities for SEN and ALN pupils across Gwent is also needed, as many SEN schools in Gwent do not support physical need to the same extent.</p> <p>Squeezing in extra provision on the current site would be detrimental to the goals of the school, staff, pupils and community it serves. Having more pupils on the limited site in the same space would affect pupil interaction, especially the stability and wellbeing of pupils across this ALN/SEN provision, especially</p>	Recorded

those with ASD, behavioural, medical and physical needs, and social disparity. Having less space per pupil in this Special School will advertently affect the children it is trying to support, even in the short term.

The current proposal also admits that this recently new school site, whilst being so needed, was obviously not suitable for any future development of this expanding, developing provision from the start. Within a decade of its existence, it is already too small and limited by its site and location. This expansion is not necessarily a result of its success, but an indicator of increasing need across SE Wales, not provided for in other boroughs.

The adaption of specialist practical classroom areas to increase standard provision limits curriculum options and interests for pupils with technical ability is a concern. Compromising crafting, food technology, and physical activity areas will continue to affect progress of pupils that require and enjoy these life skills. Science and Technology remain separate disciplines. More room is needed for practical activity and opportunity.

Pupil places

The numbers indicated in the consultation document are confused. Were only 3 classrooms and supporting facilities asked for by the school's staff and senior management team?

It is understood that current provision is 120 based on original design. Although capacity of 150 is suggested, 141 are on roll, 19 are from OOC. Does this mean that 21 pupils are being accommodated in corridors?

There seems to be 2 possible ways of looking at this:

- This average class size is currently 8, (typically 10) allowing for sufficient supporting staff, but individual needs fluctuate and supported needs can change dramatically. So, increasing provision from 120 to 175 should equate to 55 extra places as per the original design of this new building. This would mean an average of at least 6 or 7 extra classrooms and services, breakout areas, support areas and required facilities are needed. With some classes with only 5 pupils in it, this would suggest 11 extra rooms and support facilities are needed, not 3.
- If teaching and support space is sufficient for current numbers, increasing capacity from 141 to 175 would be a planned increase of 34 on roll. This equates to at least 4 classrooms, not 3. Again, with some supported classes of only 5 pupils, many having wheelchairs and require extra space and support at present, it is obvious that 7 classrooms and associated facilities would be required, not 3.

Following in the reported and continuing upward trend, increasing numbers of pupils and staff will also require increasing travel and transport arrangements, drop-off points, staff parking, long term family waiting areas and specialist pickup points within the already limited site.



Remodelling the school to adequately accommodate the oversubscribed 21 pupils already on role should be essential before September, but arguing this could be done for 55 extra places on the current site with appropriate facilities, on a strictly limited budget and within the timescale is ludicrous and unimaginable.

In Summary

Option 2 must be the recommended option here. It may not be the cheap, short term fix wanted by officers, but it provides scope for facilities that allow pupils space and support for staff that can encourage pupils **to be resilient and independent and to develop skills to reach their potential**, the aim of any good school. It also bolsters the borough's reputation showing a real commitment to the ALN community, long term investment for the region and visible, physical support for the school, staff and pupils.

Maybe, changing the unused housing allocation of the land adjacent would also provide more suitable expansion possibilities for long term development of the currently "hemmed in" school facilities and even playing/sporting areas for both schools, something clearly lacking in the past development of EFLC sites.

With regards to the financial aspect, I note that 20 out of county pupils cost approximately £890,000, whilst 19 OOC pupils bring in approximately £522,000. Therefore, since this means an annual cost saving of above £350,000, this could equate to £3.5m over a 10-year development planning period,

		<p>enough to justify long term expansion with projected numbers. (Again, the reports are confused as the consultation document states that transport costs for OOC was actually £134,000 (£95,000 in 20/21 due to Covid-19), but the other £200,000 is unaccounted)</p> <p>Lastly, I suggest that the image showing the whole shared building on P5 should be changed as to those who do not know the area, it gives a false impression of the school's size. A layout of the present building would also help interested parties to consider the potential for remodelling before considering the best course of action.</p> <p>I trust that these comments and opinions are added to the consultation for consideration.</p> <p>Local Authority Response:</p> <p>The Council is proposing to take a two-phased approach to the development of Pen y Cwm, and as such, has had to work with the school to find a suitable solution to address short-term growth, whilst also being fully committed to the development of a medium to long-term solution. The short-term growth proposal has not been chosen due to cost, but due to the fact that it will allow for expansion in line with the current projections via the remodelling of key areas, to improve suitability and create additionality. In addition, it can be programmed, managed and delivered within the required timeframe without significant constraints which have the potential to delay the process.</p> <p>Option 2 will certainly be explored as a medium to long-term solution, but will have a more extensive timeline due to the associated implications such as design development, drainage design, planning etc. A change of use in terms of the land adjacent to Pen y Cwm will be explored as part of the medium to long-term planning process. The longer term financial impact of the growth model will be determined as part of this process. The consultation document had been published prior to this response being received, therefore, it was not possible to change the images.</p> <p>All responses to the consultation process are presented and considered as part of the Council's decision making processes.</p>	
9	4.6.21	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  4.06.21 Estyn response to the pro </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  4.06.21 Estyn response to the pro </div> </div> <p>Local Authority Response:</p> <p>Please refer to paragraphs 2.1- 2.3 of the report.</p>	Recorded