

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 23rd JUNE, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**WITH: Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received:-</p> <p>Managing Director Chief Officer Commercial Corporate Director Social Services</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June, 2021.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEM – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON AN INCREASE IN PEN-Y-CWM SPECIAL SCHOOL CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Education and Service Manager – Education and Transformation.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report provided a detailed overview of the statutory consultation undertaken by Education Directorate on the proposal to extend the capacity of Pen-y-Cwm Special School. Following the consultation, a determination was now sought from the Executive Committee in line with the proposal to proceed to Statutory Notice stage.</p>	

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and noted the elements of school reorganisation and stated that in order to increase capacity at Pen-y-Cwm Special School a formal consultation needed to be undertaken as the Council had proposed an increase in pupil capacity by over 10% (from 120 to 175). An overview was provided of the public engagement, written responses and the Corporate Director noted the data of the correspondence received in terms of the level of support for the proposal:-

- Fully support the proposal - 9 (82%)
- Partially support the proposal - 1 (9%)
- Do not support the proposal - 1 (9%)

It was further reported that the social media engagement had been extensive, which demonstrated the large degree of support. The Corporate Director also referred to the consultation undertaken with the Youth Forum, the School Council and Estyn. In terms of the thematic analysis, the Corporate Director outlined the primary themes which had arisen from the analysis of responses, as follows:-

- Specialist provision/facilities – 17
- Increased Demand – 16
- Long-term Impact –15

In conclusion, the Corporate Director recognised that there had been a relatively low response rate to the consultation exercise, however, the low response was not unusual where there are high levels of support. It was felt that the consultation demonstrated that there was widespread support to increase current capacity at Pen-Y-Cwm Special School.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the positive response received as there are a number of benefits in extending capacity, in particular the increased capacity would allow more children to be taught closer to their homes.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted with associated documents and agreed to proceed to Statutory Notice (Option 1).