



Consultation on a proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form to the short breaks day service building in Buckingham

Background

A key priority within Buckinghamshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-23 (https://buckinghamshire.gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/GD000712_SEND_Education_Sufficiency_Strategy_v5_web.pdf) is to ensure there are sufficient educational placements for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

One of the key areas of the Strategy sought to provide additional SEND places so that the Council can meet its statutory duty.

In parallel to this Adult Social Care has reviewed the use of their day services building in Buckingham and found that it is underused with significant additional space and capacity which could be made available for wider use.

Proposal

As part of the SEND Strategy and the Adult Social Care review of the use of Buckingham Day Services building, Buckinghamshire Council officers have been exploring the possibility of the two services working together using surplus space in the Buckingham Short Breaks Day Service to provide space for Children's SEND Provision.

As a result of these discussions a proposal is being considered to relocate the sixth form pupils from Furze Down School in Winslow to the building currently used by Buckingham Short Breaks Day Service.

This proposal would in turn free up capacity on the Furze Down school site in Winslow to accommodate 26 additional children aged 4 to 16 years old.

We appreciate that this proposal may raise a number of questions, we have therefore prepared the attached Question and answer document which we hope may answer some questions.

In addition, we will be hosting two events to find out more about the proposals:

Tuesday 4 July 2023:

Presentation for parents / carers – Tuesday 4 July 2023, 4pm to 6pm at Furze Down School, Verney Road, Winslow, Buckinghamshire, MK18 3BL

Furze Down School can supervise current pupils if their parents / carers want to attend this presentation – please let the school know if you need to use this supervision by emailing: office@furzedownschool.org.uk

Wednesday 5 July 2023:

Drop-in session for parents / carers / short break service users and residents – Wednesday 5 July 2023, 4pm to 6pm at Buckingham Opportunities Centre, Well Street, Buckingham, MK18 1EN

Decision making process

Subject to the outcome of this consultation process, officers will review the feedback and a decision will then be taken as to whether to formally publish a Statutory Notice to take forward this proposal.

The proposed timetable below, which may be subject to change, sets this timeline and next steps out:

Date	Action
26 June 2023 to 6 August 2023	Initial consultation Stage 6 weeks
4 July 2023	Public Meeting at School for parents / carers 4 to 6pm
5 July 2023	Drop-in session at Day Opps Centre 4 to 6pm for parents / carers, service users and local residents
Aug	Review of consultation responses
June / July 2023	Works specification drawn up for capital works to separate building
11 Sept 2023 to 8 October 2023	Subject to the outcome of the initial consultation stage. Commence a 4 week statutory consultation on the proposal
Oct / Nov 2023	Review consultation responses
Oct 2023	Works submitted for tender
Dec 2023	Leader / Cabinet Member decision
Dec 2023	Adults decanted from building / alternative provision put in place
Dec 2023	Contractor appointed
8 Jan 2024	Works commence on site
24 May 2024	Works complete
May to Sept 2024	Furze Down set up period
3 June 2024	Adults moved back into building
September 2024	FD Sixth Form provision commences operation from the Centre

Questions and answers

Is there sufficient space for two services to operate from the same site?

Yes. On average 3 to 6 adults currently use the site for accessing adult social care day services in Buckingham with much of the space not being fully used or needed.

It has been assessed that the same quality service provision for adults can be provided within a smaller area with no compromise on the Most the safety, effectiveness and quality of the current provision.

How will safeguarding be addressed?

In order to do this, the building will be divided to release approximately 70% of the current footprint for the use of Furze Down's sixth form.

It is proposed that each service would have its own separate entrance and secure areas to ensure safeguarding can be maintained for all users of the site.

Users will have their own external areas and there will be no areas of the site that will be shared. In the event of a fire alarm staff will ensure that all users of the site are closely supervised and escorted.

Are you proposing to stop providing Adult Services from the site?

No, there is no proposal to cease providing Adult Services from the site and services will continue from the site.

The number of people needing adult social care support is increasing, how will you ensure that there is sufficient adult social care support for Buckingham and the surrounding villages to meet future needs?

Adult Social Care are confident that there would be sufficient space at Buckingham Short Breaks Service to meet any increase in demands in the future.

Where will existing users go whilst the building works are being undertaken?

Adult social care will continue to offer day services for all existing adults accessing Buckingham Day Service whilst the building works take place.

Staff from Adult Social Care will meet with existing service users of Buckingham Short Breaks Day Service to discuss and agree what alternative services can be accessed during the building works.

The alternative offer will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the person. This might be an offer of support within the Buckingham locality or alternatively support at an alternative day service site.

Will any staff be made redundant / put at risk as a result of this proposal?

No, there will be no staff redundancies as part of this proposal.

What are the benefits of this proposal?

Furze Down School, working alongside Adult Social Care in Buckingham Short Breaks Day Service, would be mutually beneficial for several reasons:

- Pupils who have attended Furze Down may benefit from some elements of this provision experiencing their own tailored Better Lives Outcomes Programme as part of developing and promoting their independence, such as key skills and independence programmes at home and in the community.
- Adult Social Care and Furze Down School, would also be able to develop an integrated supported employment and learning / Internship provision beyond Post 16. This would provide young adults with SEND a sense of purpose, community and belonging into their preparation for adulthood and would be underpinned by Better Lives Principles.
- Moving sixth Form pupils onto a site in Buckingham would provide a sense of moving on. Buckingham is a larger town and currently has better transport links than Winslow. Being based in Buckingham would provide Young People with SEND more opportunities to develop independent travel skills. They would also have more opportunities to independently access Work Related activities.
- Currently over a third of Furze Down Post 16 pupils end up moving onto provision outside of Buckinghamshire. This is a mixture of day provision and residential provision. Day provision involves pupils travelling either to Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire or Milton Keynes. This travel rarely supports the development of independent travel skills. Residential provision results in pupils being educated outside their community this can lead to difficulties with reintegration back into their home community once a young person reaches 25. Shared occupancy with Adult Social Care would enable staff at Furze Down to liaise with adult social care providing seamless 16-25 pathways that prepare young people for adulthood. The development of these pathways would enable more young people to be supported within their community.
- The Centre in Buckingham could also support the school to forge links between mainstream settings in relation to Satellite Provision. It could also provide space to develop an Outreach Offer.
- Outreach: Furze Down have a large multi-professional team and with the right funding, they could grow this further to support sufficiency issues in relation to the delivery of Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Mental Health and Wellbeing. The School would be interested in piloting new ways of working with schools within the Buckingham and Winslow Liaison group. The Centre in Buckingham could provide a base to provide high quality SEND training for mainstream colleagues. This offer could be led by Furze Down teachers, Therapists and other Allied Health professionals.

- There are future plans for a partnership between Furze Down School and Buckinghamshire Adult Learning to provide supported internships for young people from 18-25 years old. Supported internships will enable young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending Furze Down School to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need for work through learning in the workplace.

How will this proposal allow Furze Down to expand provision on the Winslow site?

Moving Furze Down's sixth form pupils to Buckingham would enable the School to expand the number of pupils aged 16 to 19 that they could accommodate on the Winslow site by 26 pupils.

The school is currently having to use specialist teaching areas such as science as general teaching spaces so the proposal would enable these space to revert back to specialist rooms.

Further information about Travel to Furze Down School sixth form in Buckingham

How will Furze Down School pupils travel to and from sixth form in Buckingham?

Under the law, there is no automatic entitlement to home to school transport assistance for students with SEND aged 16-19 (i.e. of sixth form age), but the Council does make arrangements as necessary to facilitate their attendance.

The criteria for eligibility for transport assistance for sixth form aged students with SEND is set out in the Council's [Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 to 2024](#). The Post-16 Statement is reviewed annually and transport provision for young people aged 16-19 with SEND is detailed on the [Local Offer](#).

Under our current Post-16 Statement, sixth form aged students with SEND who are eligible for home to school transport assistance can apply for a [Personal Transport Budget](#), to allow families to make their own travel arrangements, or they can apply for [Council-arranged transport for a fee](#).

Those who use Council-arranged transport will be required to make a contribution to the cost of the transport the Council provides. The contribution is based on the number of days travelled per week. The Post-16 SEND transport [contribution costs for the 2023 to 2024 academic year](#) are set out on our website and these fees are reviewed annually.

Eligible students who live closer to the Buckingham centre, north of the Winslow site, will have their transport needs assessed on a case by case basis and it is expected that pupils who live locally to Buckingham and who can travel independently will use public transport and / or will walk to the centre.

Students who can travel by public transport could apply for [a disabled person's bus pass](#), which may require a payment to travel before 9am on weekdays.

Eligible sixth form students who live close to and to the south of Furze Down School in Winslow, regardless of how they arrive at the Winslow site (e.g. by family car, public bus, or on Council-arranged transport), are expected to be supported to make the onward journey, supervised by Furze Down School staff, to and from the Buckingham centre either by school minibus or public transport. Currently it is planned that the school would cover costs for the school minibus from the Winslow site to the Buckingham site.

Additional questions and answers following events on 4 and 5 July 2023

It sounds like a done deal?

We and Furze Down School are clear that this is a proposal and this is the first stage in the decision making process. All responses from the initial consultation stage will be thoroughly evaluated prior to Buckinghamshire Council and Furze Down School together deciding whether or not to proceed to the next stage of the consultation process.

The Proposal feels rushed?

We are following the statutory process set out by the Department of Education (DfE). The first stage of the consultation process is being launched late in the summer term to allow time to get the provision up and running for September 2024 – if the proposal is accepted.

Some parents moved to the locality for their children to stay all the way through and therefore their children won't be able to walk to school for sixth form.

We and Furze Down School understand that parents have chosen the school for their child for many reasons – including proximity to their homes.

Any child who lives close enough to the Winslow site to be able to walk to school will still be able to walk to the Winslow site and then they will make their way from there to the Buckingham Centre either by mini bus or public transport.

Sixth Form pupils will no longer have access to the outside space at the Winslow site.

What outside space is there at the Buckingham site?

The Sixth Form curriculum is an active one that involves working across a range of environments. Students usually have:

- one day of external work experience (this may be supported or unsupported)
- two Vocational Days – which may take place at the Winslow or the Buckingham site, depending on the activity
- one Pathways day of classroom learning which would take place at Buckingham
- one Enterprise and Enrichment day where the site will again be dependent on the activity

There is a small amount of outdoor space at the Buckingham Centre, including an enclosed courtyard and an outdoor area that will be fenced in with a Poly Tunnel provided for horticultural activities.

Is this proposal being forced upon Furze Down School by Buckinghamshire Council to add additional SEND places?

No. Furze Down School have been looking to put in place an offsite sixth form provision for a number of years, but until now the opportunity has not arisen. Whilst the proposal will allow the school to accommodate more younger children on the Furze Down site, that is not the driving force behind this proposal.

The proposal is an opportunity to provide an aspirational sixth form offer for all pupils – Furze Down School and Buckinghamshire Council would not be considering this proposal if it were not going to be in the best interests of the pupils. Bespoke packages will be put in place around each child.

What if this doesn't work for my child?

For some pupils this may not be the right provision. There will be pupils who need a qualification based sixth form provision and those pupils, as they do now, will leave the school and go on to college. In addition, there will be pupils for whom the Buckingham Centre offer will not work.

For what is envisaged to be a small number of pupils the school will continue to offer provision on the Furze Down site as part of the Evolve Programme. We currently have six pupils accessing the Evolve programme, they have personalised timetables some of which is delivered on the Winslow site and some of which is delivered off site.

Why can't we just wait until our child is 19 for them to leave the Winslow site?

If Post 19 provision is to be successful, pupils need to be increasingly confident to access community facilities, supported or independent work placements as well as being able to use public transport as independently as possible. The Buckingham site will provide greater opportunities to develop these skills and promote independence.

What will the transport provision look like from the Winslow site to the Buckingham Centre?

A personalised package will be put in place for each child. This may range from a child that will always need to be escorted by staff from the Winslow site to the Buckingham Centre to those pupils who after an initial supported phase may be able to travel unaccompanied to the Buckingham site as part of their independent living training.

What is the timeline for getting work placements in place, will there be time to set up?

Work placements are already in place and planned. The school has a programme already based on life skills and employability skills. The opportunities for work placements are much greater in Buckingham than in Winslow given the greater provision of retail and commercial businesses and this is integral to the planning process.

Why not expand the Furze Down Site more?

When we and Furze Down School took forward the rebuild of the former Furze Down school buildings, we were specific that the plans for the site were to create a building that sat well within the landscape and provided pupils with excellent outdoor space and facilities.

The design of the building was carefully thought through to ensure that the ethos of the school was maintained and that we didn't build a structure on the site that was imposing and unwelcoming. To build a sixth form centre on the site would take away valuable outdoor space.

The proposal being put forward is not about creating more places, it is about providing sixth form pupils with a bespoke provision that is aspirational, gives them a greater range of opportunities in regards to work placements and community engagement and most importantly prepares them for adulthood.

Is this a short term or long term proposal?

Furze Down School and Buckinghamshire Council are clear that this is a long term proposal.

Investment could not be made in the Buckingham Centre if the proposal was only going to be short term.

What are the Satellite opportunities?

The school has been considering how it may be able to support mainstream schools with SEND pupils who may not require a permanent special school place but perhaps need some more support than is currently able to be provided by the mainstream school setting.

School leaders would like to look at what support the school could offer to other local schools to support the needs of SEND pupils, however this is not part of this current proposal and is a long term project that may or may not come to fruition.

Will pupils lose out with regards to support from Therapists?

No. Separate Therapists are attached to each key stage at the school. Therapists will therefore be moving with children and children will continue to have the support they require as they do now.

If my child is travelling from Winslow to Buckingham and back every day how will the time lost travelling be made up?

The sixth form provision is about providing real life opportunities. Travelling time will provide students with essential life skills preparing them for adulthood. Travel time is learning time.

What medical / first aid provision will be in place?

We will plan for this to ensure that all necessary facilities, equipment are in place at the Buckingham Centre. There will be works undertaken to the Buckingham Centre to ensure that the facilities meet the needs to the pupils. We will provide the funding necessary to adapt the building to meet the needs of the students.

How will my child be transported to after school clubs in Winslow?

As staff will be returning to the Winslow site at the end of each school day pupils will be able to travel back with them.

How are we planning on communicating the move to students and what language we will use when we do so?

The Head of Sixth Form is working on a proposal to communicate this to students and will also aim to undertake some transition visits if possible.

Consideration will also be given, if possible, to hosting some drop in sessions for pupils and parents at Well Street if this proposal does move forward and when the building is ready for occupation.

Will the school be taking on additional staff?

We review staffing regularly to ensure staffing ratios meet the needs outlined in pupils' EHCPs.

What does Adult Social Care Provide?

Adult social care covers a wide range of activities to help people who are older, or living with a disability or physical or mental illness, live independently and stay well and safe. It can include:

- 'personal care', such as help with washing, dressing and getting out of bed, as well as wider support to help people stay active and engaged in their communities
- support in people's own homes
- support in day centres, care homes and nursing homes
- supporting young people in planning their transition from children's services into Adult Social Care
- services that help people to retain or regain their skills and confidence so they can learn to manage again after a period of illness
- providing aids and adaptations for people's homes
- providing information and advice
- providing support for family carers
- supporting people to engage in work, training, education or volunteering
- support to socialise with family and friends, and maintain personal relationships

Will the Adult Opportunities Centre stay?

Yes, there are no plans to close the provision at the Buckingham Centre. There remains capacity within the building for additional adults to attend the centre if required.

Will school meals be provided?

Yes. There is a catering kitchen at the Centre and students will also be encouraged to prepare food. It is also hoped that a Community Café can be set up and run by the students providing key skills and work experience.

How will 19-25 provision become available?

Furze Down School will work in an advisory role with Adult Learning and Adult Social Care.

Have your say

We want to hear your views on this proposal.

The views of parents, pupils and the wider community will be considered by the Governing Board and Buckinghamshire Council when determining whether to publish a Statutory Notice stating the intent to expand Furze Down School and to relocate the Furze Down Sixth form to the Short Breaks Day Service site in Buckingham.

You can complete this survey online at yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com

1. Do you agree with the proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form to the short breaks day service building in Buckingham?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Please tell us the reasons for your answer:

2. Do you understand why the proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form to the short breaks day service building in Buckingham has been made?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

If 'No' or 'I don't know', please tell us why:

3. If you think there is anything we haven't considered when developing the proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form, please tell us here:

4. If you have any other comments about the proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form, please tell us here:

About you

We will use the information you provide here only for the purpose of this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details.

5. Which of the following describe you?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- I am a parent or carer of a student at Furze Down School
- I work at Furze Down School
- I am a Governor for Furze Down School
- I am a student at Furze Down School
- I am a service user at the Buckingham short breaks day service

More answer options on the next page

- I work at the Buckingham short breaks day service
- I live near Furze Down School
- I live near the Buckingham short breaks day service
- I work at another local school in the area
- I represent or own a business in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a community or voluntary group in Buckinghamshire
- I am an elected representative in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a Parish / Town Council or Town Committee in Buckinghamshire
- I work for Buckinghamshire Council
- Other (please give details below):

6. How did you find out about this consultation?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Letter from school
- School staff briefing
- Drop-in session at the short breaks day service in Buckingham
- Local media (newspaper, radio or TV)
- Buckinghamshire Council website or Your Voice Bucks website
- Buckinghamshire Council newsletter
- From Buckinghamshire Council staff
- Through working at Buckinghamshire Council
- Word of mouth
- Local Community Board
- Local Councillor
- Local Parish / Town Council or Town Committee
- Other (please give details below):

7. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation (e.g. a business or a voluntary group)?

Please tick (✓) one option

- As an individual (go to question 9)
- On behalf of an organisation

On behalf of an organisation

8. Please provide the following details:

Name of organisation:

Your job title:

End of survey if responding on behalf of an organisation

More about you

We want to hear from as many people as possible to understand the views and needs across Buckinghamshire. The following questions help us see if the communities we serve have had the opportunity to be heard through this activity.

All questions are optional. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer, or you can skip all the questions.

9. What is your postcode?

We want to understand the views of people living in different areas. You don't have to provide your postcode, but it helps us plan and make considered decisions.

10. What is your age?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different age groups.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- Over 85
- Prefer not to say

11. Are you:

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different sexes.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

12. Do you consider yourself to have a disability / disabilities, impairment(s) or long term health condition(s)?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of disabled people, people with impairments and people with long-term health conditions.

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Disability / disabilities
- Impairment(s)
- Long term health condition(s)
- No
- Prefer not to say

13. How would you describe your ethnicity?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different ethnicities.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Asian - British
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Pakistani
- Any other Asian background - Please give details below
- Black - African
- Black - British
- Black - Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background - Please give details below
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black British

More answer options on the next page

- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - Mixed or Multiple Ethnic backgrounds British
- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background - Please give details below

- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or English traveller
- White - Irish Traveller

- White - European
- Any other White background - Please give details below

- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Other ethnic group - Arab British
- Other ethnic group - Please give details below
- Prefer not to say

Please give other details here:

End of the survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Your comments are important as we do not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals.

Please return your completed survey by midnight on Sunday 6 August. You can:

- Email it to FurzeDownandBuckinghamConsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Post it to The School Commissioning Team, Buckinghamshire Council, 1st Floor, Walton Street Office, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UZ
- complete this survey online at yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com