



Proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form Frequently asked Questions (FAQs) and consultation responses

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 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.



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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.



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- 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 4 to 16 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



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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, which 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 opt for Council-arranged transport will be provided with transport assistance to the Winslow site only. Students will then be supported to make the onward journey where required, under the supervision of 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. 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.

Furze Down school will assess the transport requirements for each sixth-form student travelling from the Winslow site to ensure appropriate supervision/assistance is in place for students to make their way safely to the Buckingham site, in line with their daily timetable and suitable for their individual needs.

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

Q. It sounds like a done deal?

A. We and Furze Down School are clear that this is a proposal and all representations in response to the statutory notice will be thoroughly evaluated prior to Buckinghamshire Council making a decision.

Q. The Proposal feels rushed?

A. We are following the timescales of the statutory process set out by the Department of Education (DfE) which allows sufficient time to get the provision up and running for September 2024 – if the proposal is accepted.

Q. 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.



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A. 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.

Q. 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.

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

A. 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.

Q. What if this doesn't work for my child?

A. 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



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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.

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

A. 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.

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

A. 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.

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

A. 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.

Q. Why not expand the Furze Down Site more?

A. 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.



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Q. Is this a short term or long term proposal?

A. 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.

Q. What are the Satellite opportunities?

A. 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.

Q. Will pupils lose out with regards to support from Therapists?

A. 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.

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

A. 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.

Q. What medical / first aid provision will be in place?

A. 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.

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

A. 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.



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

A. 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.

Q. Will the school be taking on additional staff?

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

Q. What does Adult Social Care Provide?

A. 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

Q. Will the Adult Opportunities Centre stay?

A. 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.



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Q. Will school meals be provided?

A. 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.

Q. How will 19-25 provision become available?

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

Comments Submitted during the first stage consultation:

- *Furzedown school was built specifically to house the needs of the older children being in a separate part of the building it's all set up for them it seems a terrible decision to change this for children that thrive on the routine of their surroundings. We would not be happy with this decision we have a wonderful set up at Furze Down so why change it to accommodate 26 extra pupils.*

Response: 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.

It is acknowledged that for some pupils this will 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 very small number of pupils the School will continue to offer provision on the Furze Down site as part of the Evolve Programme.

- *Is this another holding pen? The kids have space to run around and let off energy, they might be 6th form but still young and with lots of needs. Being stuck in a building with no outdoor space makes no sense.*

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



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classroom learning which would take place at Buckingham, and an Enterprise and Enrichment day where the site will again be dependent on the activity. When at the Winslow site students will still be able to access the outdoor facilities.

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.

- *Children live locally so don't have to travel to school and can walk so seems a shame to change this for families that are local and are happy with the school as it is*

Response: The LA and School very much understand that parents have chosen the school for their child for many reasons including proximity to their homes. Any child that 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.

- *The additional travel time means some of these young people will be spending an excessive amount of time travelling which is a waste of valuable education time.*

Response: 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. 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.

- *I fully understand and support the Council's aim to provide more SEND spaces, however this must not come at the expense of existing children who attend the school. Furze Down is located on a large site and you should consider extending there instead.*

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



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space and facilities. The design of the building was very carefully thought through to ensure that the ethos of the school was maintained and that we didn't just build a "large square box" on the site that was imposing and unwelcoming. To build a sixth form centre on the site would take away valuable outdoor space and could start to make the site look over developed. The proposal being put forward is not just about creating more places, it is also 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 as well as making efficient use of underused accommodation.

- *If Buckingham Opportunity Centre loses over half of their space they would not be able to cater for many more people as there would not be enough room. I feel there must be more people with special needs etc who would benefit from this service.*

Response: There remains capacity within the building for additional adults to attend the centre if required.

- *Teaching support staff split across sites, how will they support the kids. e.g. social workers, speak and language etc.*

Response: 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. There will be a coherent 6th form team of teachers, LSAs and therapists who will work with students across both sites to maintain consistency.

- *I cannot imagine this option will be popular with staff and it is therefore likely to make it harder to get specialised staff in addition to losing access to specialist facilities.*

Response: Of the 15 staff who responded to the consultation, all were fully supportive of the proposal.

- *I disagree with the argument that the children need to 'move on' so that it will help them when they need to access education / employment post 19. I think it is much more*



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beneficial for young people to be in an integral supported sixth form in a familiar environment making use of all the available facilities to continue to grow and develop.

Answer: 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.

- *The answer to the Q and A about school dinners feels misleading - it states that school dinners will be available but then proceeds to say that pupils will make dinners in the kitchen - my child benefits enormously from a hot freshly cooked meal every day - appreciate that it will be useful for skills to be learnt around food prep but not every day.*
Response: The sixth form students will have a varied week which will include 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, and an Enterprise and Enrichment day where the site will again be dependent on the activity. Depending on where the pupil is on each day will determine the meal provision that will be put in place. If they are on the Furze Down site they will have a school meal if they are in the Buckingham Centre then they may prepare their own meal or have one prepared for them by others. The School will ensure that all pupils who wish to have a school meal are able to do so or to prepare one for themselves.
- *The first year of young people who have to move - the 'guinea pigs' of the new system - how will it impact on their education - these young people have already lost a couple of years of their education to covid - feels very unfair that they will be the first to go through a completely new and untested system - which will undoubtedly have issues and concerns when it starts - even with the best planning.*
Response: Preparation is already taking place to ensure transition to the new site will be as seamless as possible. Students will be prepared for the move, having regular opportunities to visit. Staffing will remain as consistent as possible before and after



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the move. The essence and ethos of the 6th form programme will remain the same, the new site will give better opportunities to enhance this.

- *How will bullying be managed in the new setting? –*
Response: Furze Down School values centre on respect for self and others and this will not change. The Buckingham site will continue to manage any incidents in line with current Furze Down School Policy and Values.

Of the respondents who agreed with the proposal to relocate Furze Down School sixth form the main comments raised were:

- *Would benefit the sixth formers by giving them more opportunities to engage with the community and would help accommodate more students at the initial school site.*
- *Anything that builds capacity is a good thing!*
- *The building is currently underused. The independence from the main school will help FD students feel that they are moving on from their primary/secondary school, without making them feel that they have totally left it behind.*
- *This would create more space for younger students and allow for an increase in capacity which is greatly needed.*
- *As stated in the proposal, older students are able to obtain life skills, whilst still feeling safe and secure.*
- *The building is much under-utilised, which after the massive amount of money spent some years ago, is a disgrace.*
- *This will be in an ideal location to support young adults with SEN in the community and vice versa. This will enable more space in the current site for younger children. With an increase in population there is an increase in need for children with SEN needing high quality provision. Furze Down is the only special school for primary and secondary North of Aylesbury in Bucks. The demand outstrips their current capacity.*
- *Currently it is a huge cultural shock when Pupils leave school at 19 and go out into the local area I feel this transition would greatly prepare them for adulthood as they would experience learning and working in the local community ahead of their final leaving the school*



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- *The increase in opportunities it will offer students to develop their independence and employability skills.*
- *I believe there are huge benefits to Adult Social Care and Furze Down School being 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 inclusion and as part of their preparation for adulthood and follow the Principles for Better Lives.*
- *Moving Sixth Form pupils onto a site in Buckingham would provide a sense of moving to the next stage in life . Buckingham is a larger town and currently has better transport links than Winslow. Based in Buckingham would provide Young People with SEND more opportunities to develop independent travel skills, access Work Related activities. Buckingham offers greater educational opportunities for sixth formers to integrate into society, work experience etc.*
- *The opportunities in Buckingham to students on the PFA pathway will be much wider than those available in Winslow. This year we have engaged the students in travel training and this has been quite limiting as the timing of buses has often restricted the time we can spend in Buckingham before needing to be back to school. The opportunities to engage in a range of shops, services such as the post office, library, more local businesses both in town and within walking distance plus access to the leisure centre and the large supermarket will open up daily opportunities to develop both life and skills for work. We know many of our students won't live in Winslow beyond school and even more so for employment or education so it feels vital to give students the opportunities to experience a wider network of opportunities and then easily return to the PFA base in Buckingham.*
- *It will be a great opportunity to build young people's independence in the community and offer closer links for them to engage with work experience, adult social care and other service providers. Students will continue to have sessions at the main school site to support relationship and learning whilst having a more rounded 'real world' experience.*
- *More pupils in Bucks in need of special school education would be able to be placed at Furze Down, which would be of real value as demand outstrips the number of available spaces across the county. Children and professionals in other schools could receive the benefit of our school's expertise, which would help promote better provision for a larger*



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number of children and families in the mainstream and Additionally Resourced Provision sectors.

- *There is no discussion in the document of how the views of the young people concerned have been sought.*

Response: Consideration was taken about raising anxiety levels of students in consulting with them about a change that might not occur. The decision was made to consult in the Autumn Term through visits and student focus groups. Feedback will be considered in a number of forms to ensure we get true student voice if the proposal continues to the next consultation stage.