



Statutory proposal by Buckinghamshire Council to move Furze Down School's Sixth Form to the Short Breaks Day Service Building in Buckingham

Contact details

Proposal, published by Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF, to relocate the sixth form from Furze Down School Winslow, to the Short Breaks Day Service Building, Well Street, Buckingham.

Implementation

It is proposed to relocate the sixth form from 1st September 2024

Reason for the Proposal

A key priority within Buckinghamshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2022-27 (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

Over the last five years, the number of Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) has increased by 50% (1805 pupils). Current projections forecast a further 32% increase in the number of EHCP pupils over the next five years.

Children and young people with communication and interaction needs is increasing most (1424 or 64% over the last 5 years) with projections forecasting a further increase of 1533 pupils or 42% over the next 5 years.

The Council's SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy identified the need for additional places for children with autism in Aylesbury Vale resourced by Furze Down School.

As part of the SEND and Inclusion 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 made to relocate 40 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 additional 4-16 children.

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 which 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 & 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.

Project costs and an indication of how these will be met

The cost of the building works required to separate the two services will be funded using government funding that has been made available for providing new/expanding existing SEND provision across the county. Long term value for money will be achieved by educating children with SEND in local settings and reducing the need for costly out of county placements.

Statutory process for prescribed alterations

The Local Authority and Governing Board is required to publish statutory proposals when it seeks to make a significant change to a school. The statutory process is summarised below:

Stage 1: Consultation - Proposers must consult with the parents of registered pupils at the school and should consult with key stakeholders including:

- the governing board
- the diocese or relevant faith group of school's affected by the proposal;
- teachers and other staff at the school;
- any LA likely to be affected by the proposal
- the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected;
- parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected by the proposal;
- any trade unions who represent staff at the school;
- MPs whose constituencies include the school that is the subject of the proposal or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposal;
- any other interested organisation / person that the proposer thinks are appropriate

Stage 2: Statutory proposal published within 12 months of the initial consultation stage, this must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change.

Stage 3: Representation - once proposals are published there follows a four week statutory period during which representations (e.g. objections or comments) can be made. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals.

Stage 4: Decision – the Council must decide proposals within two months of the end of the

representation period, otherwise the proposal will be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.

Stage 5: Implementation – In general, proposals should be implemented within three years of their publication.

Outcome of the Consultation Stage

The first stage consultation process on the proposal to relocate the sixth form from Furze Down School commenced on 26th June 2023 and concluded on Sunday 6th August 2023. In line with statutory requirements the consultation letter was sent to the following consultees and also promoted via a dedicated webpage and survey on Your Voice Bucks.

In line with statutory requirements a consultation letter was sent to all parents/carers of children on roll at the School, governors and staff at the School, Short Break Centre Users, schools in the local area, all special schools and other statutory consultees. Copies of the consultation letter were also sent to the following stakeholders:

- Local residents;
- Local MP, Councillors, Town Councils
- Trade Union representatives;
- Church Diocese representatives;
- FACT Bucks

Two briefing sessions for parents/carers were held at the school on Tuesday 4th July 2023; 20 parents/carers attended the meetings in addition to staff from the school. In addition, a drop-in session for the wider public/local residents was held at the Short Breaks Centre in Buckingham on Wednesday 5 July 2023, so that people could drop in to look at the plans and ask any questions that they had on the proposal. A small number of parents/carers from both the school and the Day Centre attended. Cllr Warren Whyte also attended to view the facilities and to understand how the two services would operate from the building.

The Council received 48 responses to the consultation proposal. 44 of these came in via the Your Voice consultation page and 4 came to the consultation mailbox or by post to the School Commissioning Team.

In summary of the 48 who responded 35 (73%) were in agreement with the proposal to relocate the sixth form; 10 (21%) did not agree; and, 3 (6%) didn't know or didn't say.

Agree/Disagree to the proposal to open relocate Furze Down School's Sixth form to the Short Breaks Centre in Buckingham				
	Yes	No	Don't Know/Didn't say	TOTAL
No. of Responses	35	10	3	48

Of the 48 responses received 45 (94%) said they understood the proposal to move Furze Down School Sixth Form to the Short Breaks Day Service Building in Buckingham; 1 (2%) said they didn't understand; and, 2 (4%) didn't know or didn't say.

Understand Proposal to open relocate Furze Down School's Sixth form to the Short Breaks Centre in Buckingham				
	Yes	No	Don't Know/Didn't say	TOTAL
No. of Responses	45	1	2	48

Proposal to move Furze Down School sixth form FAQs and consultation responses:

A Frequently Asked Questions document was collated and updated throughout the first consultation stage a copy of this is available on the Council's website or can be requested by emailing:FurzeDownandBuckinghamConsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Timetable for these proposals

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

Date	Action
11 October 2023 to 7 November 2023	Publication of Statutory Notice and formal 4 week representation period
November 2023	Review consultation responses
November 2023	Works submitted for tender
December 2023	Leader of Buckinghamshire Council in consultation with Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services takes a decision on the final outcome
December 2023	Subject to the outcome above: Adults temporarily relocated from building / alternative provision put in place
January 2023	Subject to the outcome above: Contractor appointed
February 2024	Subject to the outcome above: Works commence on site
June 2024	Subject to the outcome above: Works complete
June - Sept 2024	Subject to the outcome above: Furze Down set up period
June/July 2024	Subject to the outcome above: Adults moved back into building

September 2024	Subject to the outcome above: Furze Down Sixth Form provision commences operation from the Centre
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Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks of the date of publication of this proposal, any person may agree, object to, or make comments on the proposal online via the Buckinghamshire Council consultation website: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/furze-down-statutory-notice

Alternatively, representations can be made by email to:

FurzeDownandBuckinghamConsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

or by post to:

The School Commissioning Team
Buckinghamshire Council
1st Floor
Walton Street Office
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire, HP20 1UZ

The closing date for comments is midnight Tuesday 7th November.