

THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT



Falkirk Council
Children's Services

Proposal Paper

That, subject to the outcome of this proposal:

- **The Inclusion & Wellbeing Service (IWBS) will be relocated from the Laurieston Campus, Bog Road, Falkirk to the Dawson Centre Campus, David's Loan, Falkirk from April 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter**

This document has been issued by Falkirk Council for proposal in terms of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1. REASONS FOR FORMULATING THIS PROPOSAL

The Inclusion and Wellbeing Service (IWBS) exists to support children and young people aged 3-18 with additional support needs from across the Falkirk Council area. These needs can be social, emotional and/or behavioural. The supports offered include advice, outreach support within mainstream and shared in reach support on campus. Allocated places at the Inclusion and Wellbeing Services are undertaken via a Placement Change Panel convened by Education. The number of pupils currently attending the IWBS is 32 (12 Primary and 20 Secondary) with some additional spaces retained for pupils currently out of authority and the service need to ensure capacity for 42 pupils at any one time. There are 30 staff currently based in the building including teachers, inclusion support workers, early years officers, support for learning assistants, family support workers, clerical staff and management staff. In addition, there are 8 outreach staff members who also use the building.

The existing campus consists of a number of disparate buildings historically used as business premises, a territorial army hub and most recently a private religious school. There are a number of issues including:

- The school facilities within the existing Laurieston Campus are considered Poor (“C” rated) in terms of overall Condition and Bad for Suitability (“D” rated).
- temporary modular units at the end of their life
- accommodation that is not fully accessible
- poor quality outdoor spaces and
- being in a mainly business / industrial location.

In short, the current premises do not meet the needs and aspirations of the service and is not considered a positive environment for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs, many of whom are vulnerable. It is also not conducive to providing a modern, effective and efficient working environment for staff and partners.

With the current poor condition and backlog in maintenance relating to the building, its poor suitability and its poor location, other suitable alternative properties were considered to provide an improvement of the service delivery environment.

An opportunity was identified to utilise two properties adjacent to each other for both primary and secondary pupils who attend the IWBS; the Dawson Centre and Excellence in Childcare Centre (Dawson Campus). These are considered compatible in terms of size, have locational benefits (next to Langlees Primary School) and can provide a modern fit for purpose facility compatible with the objective of providing good quality learning environments for our pupils and staff.

It is anticipated that the proposed Dawson Campus would be satisfactory to good “A/B rated” for suitability and satisfactory (“B” rated) for condition once the project is complete. This would represent a substantial improvement on the current campus.

The existing IWBS location is not considered fit for purpose and does not fulfil the ambition we have for positive learning spaces for our Children and Young People. The proposal will greatly improve the learning environment for pupils and staff.

In addition, to them being in better condition, accessible and more energy efficient they will be more suitable with access to quality external spaces including a playing field, garden area and MUGA pitch.

The enabling of separate primary and secondary classrooms located within separate buildings within a single campus environment will enable more easier transitions for pupils. Dedicated nurture and support areas and flexible support accommodation further improve the support to pupils, parents and staff.

A range of benefits relating to the project have been identified and these include:

- Improved learning experience for Children and Young People.
- Improved environment for staff within the IWBS
- Avoidance of backlog maintenance capital expenditure at existing IWBS Laurieston Campus of circa £2.4m and reduced risk of compliance and component failure
- Improvement of backlog maintenance required at Dawson Campus (approximately £800,000) through the proposed works
- Securing the future of the buildings that would form the Dawson Campus to provide continued community access which is currently uncertain due to the Strategic Property Review

The asset and educational outcomes of the proposals will in summary be to provide the IWBS with a school that is satisfactory or better in terms of both condition and suitability with good learning and nurture environments

2. PROPOSED PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAWSON CAMPUS

The existing IWBS location is not fit for purpose and does not fulfil the ambition we have for positive learning spaces for our Children and Young People. The proposals will greatly improve the learning environment for pupils and staff. In addition, to them being in better condition, accessible and more energy efficient they will be more suitable with access to quality external spaces including a playing field, garden area and MUGA pitch. The enabling of separate primary and secondary classrooms located within separate buildings within a single campus environment will enable more easier transitions for pupils. Dedicated nurture and support areas and flexible support accommodation further improve the support to pupils, parents and staff.

The Dawson Centre and the Excellence in Childcare Buildings are both identified in the Strategic Property Review (SPR) to close from 1 April 2025. It is therefore recognised that the opportunity for the relocation of the IWBS will enable the future beneficial use of the property.

Both facilities currently operate as a Community Hall/Centre with some training rooms, and it's recognised that these facilities play an important role in the local community which covers areas with high levels of multiple deprivation. The majority of existing use occurs in the evenings. It is proposed that community access will be available after the school day, weekends and school holidays (subject to demand).

The proposal enables the delivery of a quality learning environment for pupils and staff, together with enabling community access.

Based on the project key milestones, operational availability is planned February / March 2026 and school relocation after Easter (April) 2026.

3. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

Assessment of likely educational benefits on pupils

If this proposal is implemented, the Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits arising from this. These centre around:

- Learning and teaching.
- Meeting learners needs.
- Broadening the range of opportunities; and
- the environment for learning including curriculum.

The current campus has limited/little facilities in outdoor areas, sports and access to the community. The Primary and Secondary children have no ownership of the areas they use as these are all shared for the whole school. Moving to Dawson's centre campus enables the transformation of the education environment, setting and ethos for the entire school which will bring benefits as outlined below.

Learning and Teaching

The campus at Dawson's centre provides extensive outdoor grounds and a floodlit MUGA pitch to enable opportunities for outdoor learning, gardening and sports qualifications. Wider achievements and accreditation awards in health and wellbeing, life-skills, vocational awards as well as enterprise opportunities and community experiences will enable pupils to develop skills for life, learning and work.

The classrooms will be bright and modern to provide a more motivating and engaging learning environment and also greater opportunities for digital learning, particularly for learners who may be disengaged.

There will be improved ability to deliver alternative education qualifications from SQA such as national progression awards and courses that award SCQF points to enable young people to progress to a positive destination.

The Primary area has its own separate building and extensive outdoor play area that can be created to accommodate the play, health and wellbeing needs of primary aged children which enable the tailoring of the curriculum to meet the needs of learners in an age and stage appropriate way.

Meeting learners needs

The secondary part of the campus is a brick-built building in a harmonious setting with a large outdoor campus and modern facilities. Young people will feel valued with their education is being delivered in a campus developed specifically for their needs. There will be a greater focus on their health and wellbeing and readiness to learn in this environment.

This will further enable the development of the 4 capacities (curriculum for excellence) for our young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Broadening the range of opportunities

The environment, location and facilities will further enhance the range of educational opportunities that can be planned and delivered. This will ensure the curriculum is broad and bespoke and relevant to the needs of all the children and young people who access this specialist service.

Environment for learning including curriculum

Engagement in the curriculum can be strongly influenced by the learning environment. There is evidence nationally, that the more attractive the environment, the more engagement from learners and pride in their education. By accessing a range of classroom environments and flexible spaces, children and young people will be allowed opportunities to work in a variety of ways responsive to their needs which will impact positively on their attendance and engagement and attainment.

Assessment of likely educational benefits on any existing pupils and any children and young people who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

The relocation of the IWS enables a responsive setting to address the needs of any learners who require access to a bespoke, person-centred education setting whose barriers prevent them from thriving and learning in a mainstream setting. Barriers relating to neurodiversity and social anxiety are increasing and therefore it is envisaged this campus will begin to cater for young people whose distress arises from neurodiversity and sensory needs who are overwhelmed by large mainstream, unpredictable environments.

Assessment of likely educational benefits on the pupils of any other schools in the Council area

The outreach service at IWS and training offer will be of benefit to all other local council schools. The central location will make this a more efficient service. There will be more opportunity for shared placements with the local community so that more children can feel a sense of belonging and engagement with their education wherever it takes place.

Due to the improved campus and curriculum, placements are likely to achieve greater success whilst attending IWS which results in sustained placement support or greater success in transitioning back to mainstream placement.

Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal

Engagement with the local community and schools to develop a shared understanding of the use of the campus by IWS. Positive and timeous communications. Involvement of parents, staff and children to be involved in the development and transition of the campus. Consideration of access to the campus facility for the local community outwith school day/terms.

Summary of educational benefits statement

In summary, the life chances of children and young people attending the IWS will be improved as a result of this campus move with the expectation that the campus will enable an improved curriculum delivery and offer, which the pupils will engage with, and participate in. The focus on wellbeing for the pupils, families and staff. This will enable better skills development and attainment of alternative qualifications to enable them to move on from school successfully to a positive destination.

4. PROPOSED COMMUNITY USE OF DAWSON CENTRE

The Dawson Centre and the Excellence in Childcare Buildings are both identified in the Strategic Property Review (SPR) to close from 1 April 2025. Whilst there has been an expression of interest in the property this has not developed to a full Community Asset Transfer application. It is therefore recognised that the opportunity for the relocation of the IWBS will enable the future beneficial use of the property and continue to provide space to enable the majority of community activities currently being accommodated.

They both currently operate as a Community Hall/Centre and it's recognised that these facilities play an important role in the local community which covers areas with high levels of multiple deprivation. The majority of existing use occurs in the evenings. It is proposed that community access will be available after the school day, weekends and school holidays (subject to demand).

In relation to daytime use, the main user is a local foodbank who operate for a few hours one day per week and engagement will occur with the group to consider an

alternative community facility nearby or to alter the time of operation to mitigate the impact on this service to the community. Officers will be engaging with all groups who utilise the building to ensure they are aware of the proposals and disruptions to occupancy during works and arrangements following the relocation of the IWBS.

The MUGA located at the Dawson Campus is currently subject to a lease to a community group. Engagement with the group will occur and a new arrangement put in place that will enable the continued use of the MUGA whilst removing their maintenance and management liabilities.

5. RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

This Proposal Paper has been issued following a decision on 7th November 2024 of the Executive of Falkirk Council. This is to seek views on the proposal set out in this paper. This report is available here:

- <http://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/proposal-to-relocate-the-inclusion-and-wellbeing-service>

A formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is required for any proposal to relocate a school. This consultation is fully in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

A copy of this Proposal Paper is available on the Falkirk Council website: www.falkirk.gov.uk

A link to the electronic version of this document will be provided by letter to:

- Parents and carers of all IWBS pupils
- School staff and trade unions
- Community Councils
- The Community Planning Partnership
- The Dawson Centre and identified user groups
- Elected Members of Falkirk Council

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE
- Inclusion & Wellbeing Service, Bog Road, Falkirk, FK2 9PB
- Dawson Centre, David's Loan, Falkirk, FK2 7RG

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Children's Services, Suite 1A,

Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE by telephone on 01324 506600 or by email educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk

LENGTH OF CONSULTATION PERIOD

The consultation will take place between Monday 11th November and Monday 23rd December 2024.

PUBLIC MEETING

- There will be a public meeting held at Langlees Primary School, David's Loan, Falkirk, FK2 7RG on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 18.30. This meeting will be an opportunity for interest parties to:
- Hear about the proposal.
- Ask question about the proposal.
- Have their views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

A note will be taken at the meeting of questions and views. This note will be published in the consultation report which will be available on the Council website.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE PROPOSAL

Interested parties are invited to respond on the proposal:

- Online: <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>
- By email: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk
- In writing: IWBS Relocation Consultation, Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE

All responses should be provided by Monday 23rd December 2024.

CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Pupils will be consulted about the proposal in school and further information about this will be provided to parent/ carers.

FOLLOWING THE CONSULTATION

Education Scotland – When the proposal document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Education Authority. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations received by the Authority from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Local Authority at the public meeting which

will be held and, as available (and so far, as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation.

Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the Authority has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. The 3-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may enter the affected school and make such reasonable enquiries of such people they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Falkirk Council – the Education Authority will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a consultation report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available from the Council website and from Children’s Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE free of charge. Anyone who made written representations to the Authority during the consultation period will also be informed about the report.

The report will include:

- A record of the total number of written representations made to the Authority during the consultation period.
- A summary of the written representations.
- A summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting.
- The Authority’s response to the Education Scotland Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including detail of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled; and
- A statement explaining how the Authority complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

The consultation report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of at least 3 weeks.

This report together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by the Executive of Falkirk Council, who will come to a decision about the proposal.

NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or any person, the Council must investigate and decide what, if any, action is required.

If relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy, the Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a

correction notice, the publishing of a corrected Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised. The Authority must inform the person who made the allegation and what action it has taken.

7 November 2024

Jon Reid
Director of Education Services