



CONSULTATION REPORT

Permanent Closure of the Wilton Centre, Hawick

Proposal Report (Appendix 1) Proposal for Permanent closure of the Wilton Centre, Hawick (currently temporarily closed).

We invite you to share your views or comments on the proposals by Tuesday 25th February at:

****Wilton Centre Consultation****

Education and Children's Services

Scottish Borders Council Headquarters

Newtown St Boswells

Melrose TD6 0SA

Email: schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk



Online:

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/wiltoncentreconsultationreport2025>

This Consultation Report has been issued by the Education and Children's Services of Scottish Borders Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended).

****SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS****

****Introduction****

1.1 This Consultation Report has been prepared as part of a Statutory Consultation process mandated by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (As Amended). The Act outlines the consultation procedures that Local Authorities must adhere to when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including school closures, relocations, or significant changes such as alterations to catchment areas.

1.2 The consultation process was initiated following a decision by Scottish Borders Council on 29th August 2024 to advance to a Statutory Consultation regarding the proposal for the permanent closure of The Wilton Centre. This decision followed a pre-consultation informal engagement review consultation which commenced on 8th May 2024 and closed on 28th June following approval and recommendation from The Education Sub Committee on 23rd April 2024.

1.3 This Consultation Report, along with the Proposal Paper (Appendix 1), provides a comprehensive account of the Council's adherence to the stipulations of the 2010 Act.

Proposal Paper

1.5 A Proposal Paper detailing the proposals and the Council's reasons for making the proposals was published on 30th September 2024 .

1.6. A copy of the Proposal Paper was made available free of charge in these locations upon request at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA and published on the Scottish Borders Council website at :-

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/wiltoncentreconsultationreport2025>

1.7 The publication of the Proposal Paper was advertised in The Southern Reporter, on the week commencing providing the dates for the consultation period and the public meeting. There were also press releases, group call announcements and social media postings at the start of the consultation process, before the public meeting and before the end of the consultation period.

1.8 Formal notice of the proposal was sent by Email and Groupcall to: The parents/carers of all primary and secondary school children within the Scottish Borders

Council region; the Parent Councils of all SBC schools; to include all parents and children who may have had two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper; any Trade Union which is representative of the staff; the staff (teaching and non-teaching) of IWS ; The Community Council of Hawick; Community Planning Partnership named partners; ; the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament; the constituency Member of Parliament; the List Members of the Scottish Parliament.

1.9 Length of Consultation period

The Statutory Consultation period for the proposal ran from 30th September 2024 until the 18th November 2024 inclusive. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 school days. There were 81 responses received in respect of the Statutory Consultation both online in the survey attached to the documents, and in writing by email to consultation email address. The responses are summarised as is a statutory requirement and responded to in Section 4 below.

Public meetings

1.10 A public meeting was held on: **Wednesday 23rd October 2024 at 6pm-8pm at Hawick High School, Buccleuch Road, Hawick TD9 0EG.** Five members of the public attended, Two Officers of the Council, Principal Teacher of Inclusion and Wellbeing Service, along with one representative of Education Scotland, HM Inspector of Education. Minutes were taken at the meeting, and views were sought following a presentation. Copies of the meeting minutes are included as **Appendix 2** (which includes a copy of the Power Point presentation given by Council Officers).

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

1.11 Discussions were held with pupils (considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) and staff in a broad selection of primary and secondary schools as per The Proposal Report detail as relevant Consultees. Details of these discussions can be found in Section 3.

Involvement of Education Scotland

1.12 Education Scotland was notified in advance of this Statutory Consultation process being approved. On completion of the Statutory Consultation period, a copy of the Proposal Paper was sent by Scottish Borders Council to Education Scotland. Education Scotland also received a copy of all relevant additional materials such as minutes of the public meeting, a full copy of the written representations in terms of the online survey responses and one email received to the School Estates email address during the consultation period, along with minutes of meetings with children, copies of all responses to the Informal Consultation Engagement Review survey and any other relevant documents including Power Point presentations at the Public Meeting and the

Pupil Engagement Meetings and any other relevant documents to document the Statutory Consultation Process.

1.13 Education Scotland prepared a report on the educational aspects of The Proposal, based on the representations and documents mentioned above as well as their own interviews with pupils, parents, staff, and several primary and secondary schools. In preparing their report, Education Scotland also visited the Wilton Centre building and made reasonable enquiries as they considered appropriate to The Education Service of Scottish Borders Council. Their report can be found at **Appendix 3** and on the Education Scotland Website under Education Scotland Consultation Reports- where it is published. Education Scotland state in their report that the proposal to close Wilton Centre permanently is of potential educational benefit.

1.14 The comments made by Education Scotland Report with regards to The Wilton Centre being permanently closed and the Council's response to that report are set out in Section 5 and Section 6 of this Consultation Report.

2.Preparation of Public Consultation Report

2.1 Council officers have reviewed the proposals having regard to the Education Scotland Report, the discussions from the public meeting, comments from pupils and staff and all the responses received during the Consultation period and the Informal Consultation period. This Consultation Report has been prepared by Scottish Borders Council Children and Young People's Services team as a result. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Council website and from Council Headquarters, including the public library in Hawick as well as all SBC schools (upon request) free of charge. All who made representations about the Proposal Report and provided their email address, will be emailed to be advised about the Consultation Report being published on the 28th January 2025 until 24th February for four weeks. This time period is to take into account the school's February half term holiday week of 14th February. The reasoning being that the Statutory Period for the Consultation report to be published is 3 weeks.

2.2 Background to the Proposal

The Proposal Report recommended the permanent closure of The Wilton Centre in Hawick, citing the educational benefits associated with the redesign of SEBN services to local cluster schools, now integrated under the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service. This took place in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the temporary closure of The Wilton Building due to Covid restrictions and the necessary need to re shape the service which was housed in part within the building. The building has remained temporarily closed. This transition to local cluster schools under the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service allows Scottish Borders Council to deliver a more inclusive and customised

service, within mainstream educational settings aligning with the fundamental principles of Inclusion in Education which is purported by the Scottish Government.

The existing design and condition of The Wilton Centre building render it unsuitable for contemporary learning, thereby eliminating its potential as a sustainable component of the school estate in the modern context without substantial capital investment.

Scottish Borders Council officers find this expenditure difficult to justify when the service changes to a more agile service within mainstream settings fits aligns with national priorities mandated by the Scottish Government. The proposal report therefore recommends permanent closure of the currently temporarily closed Wilton Centre and the report was submitted as part of the Statutory Consultation process mandated by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. This Act delineates the consultation procedures that local authorities are required to adhere to when proposing permanent modifications to their schools, including closures, relocations, or changes to catchment areas.

3.1 Pupil Focus Groups

Within the Statutory Consultation in October and November 2024, discussions were conducted with Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils from various primary schools, as well as secondary school students, across the Scottish Borders region. These focus groups were held in person or utilised on Microsoft Teams. The primary objective of these focus groups was to gather insights from less vocal participants, including children and young people who may have received historical or current support from The Inclusion and Wellbeing Service. Participants were presented with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Wilton Centre Proposal to close on a permanent basis, followed by an open discussion on the potential permanent closure of the building where the views of the children were noted. An email address for the officer conducting the Consultation was also provided at the end of the focus group, along with the link to a short survey online as well, in case any children or young people wished to reply or comment in a more confidential format and not in open forum. No survey responses or emailed comments were received by the officer conducting the Consultation.

Key points raised during the focus group discussions included:

- A general reluctance on the part of the young people to the idea of closing any school building while also acknowledging the limitations and restrictions of the facility, particularly concerning travel difficulties or length of travel times for young people attending placements.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the adequacy of an aging building to support a comprehensive curriculum, particularly in modern subjects

such as Information Technology and STEM subjects or physical Education which may have been restricted or entirely unteachable.

- The majority of young people engaged, expressed a preference against traveling long distances to a standalone building, fearing it would lead to isolation and social stigma. Many stated that those utilising might already be some degree isolated, and this could lead to further social stigma. However, many acknowledged the benefit of having an alternative space outside their classroom/ immediate school building for emotional regulation and support.
- The lack of positive peer groups and friendships, as well as the absence of a supportive local community if standalone building for IWS, were cited as reasons for not wanting to attend a separate unit outside their local area.
- Participants indicated a preference for nurture bases/ classrooms/ areas and support within their own community or cluster school area, rather than a standalone unit often many miles from home.
- Senior students emphasised the need for more accessible pathways to obtain assistance, advocating for self-referrals and easier access for secondary pupils. Many senior participants were unaware of the nurture pathways available to them in their school given Covid and the changes implemented post Covid 19 Pandemic.

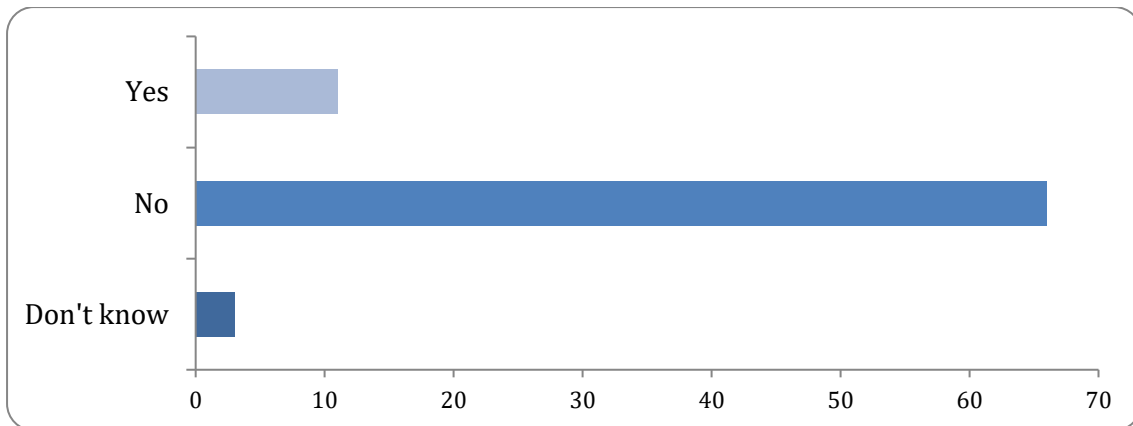
4. Responses To Statutory Consultation

4.1 There were 81 responses made during the Statutory Consultation period in respect of the proposal paper. 80 online survey responses and 1 email to the School Estates Email address. The main question within the online survey asked was: -

Do you agree with the proposal to permanently close The Wilton Centre, Hawick (currently temporarily closed) due to the reasons given within the Proposal Paper?

Yes = agree. No = don't agree, or don't know

There were 81 responses to this part of the question including 1 email response.



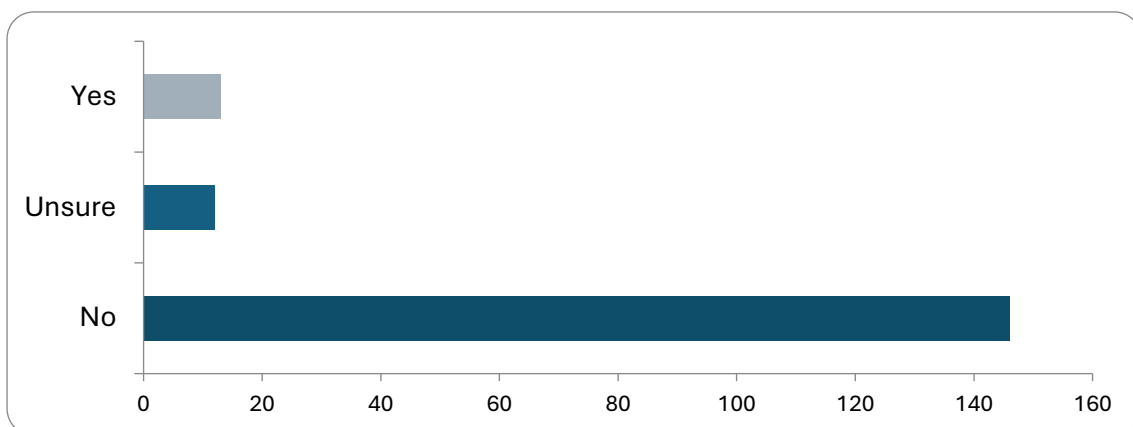
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	12	14.81%
No	66	81.48%
Don't know	3	3.70%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4.2 Responses to Informal Pre -Consultation Engagement Review

The main question within the Informal Pre- Consultation asked was: -

Do you agree with the proposal to permanently close The Wilton Centre, Hawick "The Arches"?

There were 171 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	13	7.60%
Unsure	12	7.02%
No	146	85.38%

4.3 The key points raised within the written and oral representations from the Statutory Consultation and Informal Consultation Review on the Proposal for permanent closure of The Wilton Centre, Hawick were: -

1. Opposition to Closure:

- A significant majority of respondents who opposed the permanent closure of the Wilton Centre argued that it would adversely impact children with behavioural and emotional needs in mainstream schools.
- They suggested that mainstream classrooms are ill-equipped to manage students under the IWS remit, resulting in disruptions, negative effects on other students, and teacher stress.
- Respondents argued The Wilton Centre provided tailored support to pupils on placements, helping students and families alike and that the Wilton Centre's absence, burdened schools and families.

2. Concerns About Inclusion:

- Many respondents had opinions on the Inclusion model and mainstreaming was not working and that it did not suit all children, especially those with severe needs or behavioural challenges.
- Without specialised and often separate environments, respondents argued that these children/ young people face sensory overload and distress, while others in the classroom situation suffer disruptions.

3. Impact on Staff and Schools:

- Some respondents cited increased violence, lack of resources, inadequate training, and mental health challenges among staff due to the inclusion model.
- Staff who responded against closure often cited escalating classroom challenges. Some were supportive of the building closure as not fit for purpose, supporting a more inclusive model supporting young people within their local areas to reduce stigma and isolation but with clear provisions needed and more support for nurture bases.

4. Suggestions from Respondents:

- Alternatives like cluster models within local areas or updated facilities at The Wilton Centre, were supported and championed by many consultation responders including those who stated they were staff members, but closure without an effective replacement model was cited as an important concern coming through most feedback in the survey.
- Some respondents criticised the closure as a cost-cutting measure.

5. Support for Closure

- The minority amount of comments and feedback in support of the permanent closure of the building agreed with the closure due to the

building's poor state and ageing facility being unfit for the modern-day curriculum, but they stressed the necessity of alternative services and increased investment into nurturing pathways within the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service. Several cited travel times to the Wilton Centre being problematic and raised concerns re social isolation and stigmatisation of pupils on placements.

- Some respondents cited the inclusion model as beneficial if properly implemented with adequate resources and training.

The overall sentiment from the Statutory Consultation and the Informal Consultation engagement review, was that Inclusion and Wellbeing provisions are to be widely supported as they are deemed essential for supporting vulnerable children, reducing concerns regarding disruption in mainstream education settings, and alleviating pressure on front line teaching staff. Whilst the Wilton Centre's infrastructure and condition warrants change and which was accepted by most, many responders argued for increased capital investment to improve the facilities at The Wilton Centre to modernise it, or use of an equivalent facility and to continue to have an outreach IWS placement centre, rather than outright permanent closure of the Wilton Centre building. There was also, some acknowledgement of the financial constraints facing local authorities. The minority standpoint to support the proposal cited importance of increased funding of alternative services and more investment and development into nurturing pathways within the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service in order to ensure no gaps from permanent closure of the Wilton Centre.

5 Education Scotland

5.1 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was provided by Education Scotland on the educational benefits of The Proposal as part of the Statutory Consultation process. Education Scotland's report is attached as **Appendix 3**

5.2 Issues raised and comments made in the Education Scotland Report are quoted below:-

5.3 Educational Scotland Comments:-

1. "Scottish Borders Council proposes to permanently close the Wilton Centre and transfer its functions to the IWS and individual establishments. This aims to provide children and young people with more flexible support through local universal, targeted, and specialist services and improved school-level pathways. The council highlights that Wilton Centre placements often required long travel, which can cause negative experiences. Local support would reduce transitions,

helping children and young people stay in familiar environments, lower travel stress, and build a sense of community. Localised services would also enhance understanding of community resources, creating more sustainable opportunities. Accessing local support would help children and young people to develop important life skills such as self-regulation, engaging with peers, and learning from positive role models resulting in improved outcomes. HM Inspectors agree that local flexible pathways have potential education benefits.

2. “The Wilton Centre’s building limitations are cited as restricting children and young people’s ability to fully participate in a curriculum tailored to their needs and strengths. Maintaining children in their local schools offers greater personalisation and choice through flexible and creative curricular pathways, enhancing educational and broader achievements. The council states that integrating the SEBN service into IWS at cluster levels would enable more agile and responsive support. In addition, offering system-wide training and resources to build capacity in mainstream schools will help to meet the needs of SEBN learners within their school cluster and community. HM Inspectors agree that the building poses limitations in how well children and young people can access a broad and balanced curriculum, suitable to meet their needs and aspirations.”
3. “HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined in the proposal. However, the potential benefits of both the proposed and current approaches at the secondary stages have yet to be fully realised. While staff have taken important steps to engage young people in more relevant and meaningful ways, further work is needed to enhance whole school’s understanding of nurturing principles. The aspirational aim of fully engaging young people through flexible, bespoke learning strategies within their local community has yet to be achieved. A number of young people have been supported well in transitioning more positively to secondary school, through effective support at primary school. However, staff report ongoing challenges in supporting all young people’s attendance and achievements. If the proposal is agreed, it is important that young people’s attendance, engagement and progress is systematically monitored and tracked more effectively, and appropriate action taken in a timely manner.”
4. “HM Inspectors engaged with primary children, parents, school staff, and headteachers as well as IWS staff. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of whole school nurturing principles and providing universal, targeted, and specialist support to address SEBN needs. They highlighted the need for effective partnership working and system-wide tracking to ensure appropriate nurture and support. Stakeholders see this as a strength of the current model. These flexible, tailored learning strategies delivered by skilled staff are helping children overcome barriers, fostering a sense of belonging, and improving their wellbeing and attainment. Stakeholders also noted the positive impact of high-

quality professional learning, training, and support provided by IWS staff on learners and the development of inclusive, nurturing school environments.”

5. “In the secondary sector, stakeholders, including young people, parents, staff, and headteachers, are committed to including young people in their local schools and communities. They strive to support learners at the cluster level, providing early identification and interventions to best meet needs. Transitions from primary to secondary school are viewed as a strength leading to improved attendance, resilience, and engagement. Whilst many young people benefit from these approaches, HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders that there are areas for improvement, refining referral processes, rationalising resources, and better utilising spaces have the potential to align better with the local authority approaches to inclusion and nurture. Staff would benefit from stronger connections with the IWS team to enhance collaboration and improve access to professional learning. Addressing gaps in support, has the potential to improve further the outcomes of part-time learners and school refusers, requiring significant SEBN support. The council should consider the comments made by stakeholders and work with them to address concerns.”

5.4 The Education Scotland summary stated that :-

“HM Inspectors support the potential educational benefits to permanently close the Wilton Centre and transfer its functions to the IWS. At the primary school level, well-developed whole-school nurturing approaches and individualised pathways align with the Scottish Borders Council's vision for inclusion and achievement within local communities. However, at the secondary school level, nurturing approaches currently require further development. For some young people there is a need for more enhanced support through SEBN services. Concerns relating to the needs of secondary school learners who previously attended full-time placements at the Wilton Centre were raised. Similarly, clarification on roles and responsibilities, improved referral processes, enhanced staff training, and improved system wide tracking, and monitoring were also identified as concerns. If the proposal proceeds, the council should work with stakeholders to address these concerns.

6. Scottish Borders Council Statement on Education Scotland Report

6.1 Scottish Borders Council acknowledges and accepts the report from Education Scotland, which highlights the educational advantages of permanently closing the Wilton Centre (currently closed) and transferring its functions to the IWS and secondary schools. The Report from Education Scotland supports the aim of the proposal to create more agile and flexible services for young people within their local communities. The council recognises that, at the primary level, Education Scotland identified well-developed, whole-school nurturing approaches and individualised pathways that align with the SBC vision for inclusion and achievement within local communities. However, it also notes that improvements are recommended and necessary at secondary level.

6.2 In response to Education Scotland Report, Scottish Borders Council commits to building on the very successful initiatives within the primary sector, and prioritising nurturing approaches and developing these further in secondary education and notes and commits to ensure that for some young people in the secondary sector there is a need for more enhanced support. Education Scotland emphasised the importance of cluster-level collaboration to provide agile and responsive support for children and young people who require assistance with emotional regulation. This includes implementing system-wide training and resources to enhance the capacity of schools and removing barriers associated with a single base model that restricts access to a curriculum tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people.

6.3 Scottish Borders Council commits to provide an undertaking (should the proposal to close the Wilton Centre on a permanent basis be supported by Elected Members on 27th March) to advancing the following key priorities therefore: -

1. Enhancing whole-school approaches to nurturing to further develop the ongoing plan regarding additional funding for enhanced nurture provisions.
2. Supporting the development and implementation of improved systems (post-secondary transition) to more effectively monitor and assist young people with their social and emotional well-being needs and attendance in school. To allow progress to be systematically monitored and tracked, and appropriate action taken timeously, when required.
3. Expanding professional learning, training, and support offered and available within the Council to cultivate nurturing and inclusive environments across all SBC schools.
4. Utilising available supports from SBC ASN services to address gaps in support and identify areas for improvement for young people in secondary settings as an urgent priority following concerns raised by some respondents with regards to young people who may have been eligible historically for full time placements at the Wilton Centre.
5. Review and create a significant plan with schools to further strengthen whole school approaches to nurture, particularly within the secondary sector as this was highlighted as an area of need. Close working partnerships are being set up with secondary schools to evaluate and identify areas of need and to address those as a matter of priority. This is to ensure more obvious signposting and to consider self-referral for senior pupils as suggested by pupils.
6. Utilising the support of the new Whole Family Wellbeing Team- the funding for this approved by Council on 24th October 2024. This team will provide holistic family support to identified families within the Scottish Borders focusing on issues such as health and wellbeing, school related difficulties plus parenting, financial pressures etc. The theory behind being that those presenting with

challenges, which if addressed and supported at an early point, will prevent escalation to referral to specialist provision. Additional funding in terms of this team, will enable clusters to make provision for increased nurture practices, bespoke learning programmes and support packages to ensure that the needs of young people at risk are met appropriately. Each cluster will evaluate the impact on a frequent basis to adapt and inform for future service design.

7. Additionality of funding for The Educational Psychologist Service- to allow for enhanced support. This will increase the capacity of SBC educational psychology service available to clusters further enhancing the provision and supports offered.

Scottish Borders Council- Response to Consultation Responses

6.4 Scottish Borders Council acknowledges the comprehensive feedback on the Proposal received from community members, staff, and young people during the Statutory Consultation and Informal Consultation engagement review. Council Officers appreciate the time and effort invested by all those sharing perspectives that all reflect the commitment and passion for the important services provided by the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service, as was housed in the Wilton Centre, Hawick. Honest feedback is instrumental in shaping decisions and guiding Scottish Borders Council's priorities going forward. The strength of feeling and number of responses received from across the Scottish Borders underlines how important this service has been and continues to be and how the building of The Wilton Centre was viewed by many.

6.5 Scottish Borders Council wishes to reassure responders that all comments, along with the report from Education Scotland will be integral in council decision-making processes going forward. Reviews are already underway and additional allocation of funding has been approved to further enhance approaches to nurture and wellbeing (particularly within the secondary sector) as highlighted by Education Scotland and the Council response to that report above in section 5 of this report.

6.6 Strategic meetings to evaluate, review and change practices are underway looking at developing further the nurture pathways, the importance of which have been reinforced by the findings. This ongoing work aims to implement the necessary improvements identified. Officers are committed to addressing the key areas identified in the Consultation responses and Education Scotland Report as a priority.

6.7 Officers have carefully evaluated and weighed up the Educational Benefits of the Proposal as outlined in the Proposal Report and considered all the comments and responses to the Statutory Consultation and the informal Consultation before that. The strength of feeling about Inclusion and the importance of the work of the IWS service being effectively supported to support mainstream teaching staff comes across very strongly within the Statutory Consultation Responses. Scottish Borders Council want to

reassure The Scottish Borders Community that the dedication to funding of, and commitment for that crucial service is robust.

6.8 Officers also feel it is worth reiterating that Scottish Borders Council has statutory duties relating to the provision of education in the Scottish Borders and must continue to adhere to the national principles of “Inclusion” and “mainstreaming” in education. This directive is based on the Scottish Government's Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting, published on March 26, 2019. This position aligns with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, which recognises the rights of all children and young people to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools, known as the presumption, to mainstream. The Scottish Government continues to promote mainstreaming as the priority and that higher level of needs requires prioritising the offering in universal settings rather than in standalone schools or settings. Thus, the Proposal to close the centre permanently and provide wellbeing and nurture at cluster level, it is felt sits firmly with Scottish Government direction.

6.9 Scottish Borders Council must also acknowledge the special significance that the Wilton Centre building holds for many families in the Borders (not just Hawick) whose children may have attended the centre on placements before the COVID-19 pandemic forced door closure. The Council acknowledges that those families may feel a loss of opportunity should the building be permanently closed. Scottish Borders Council therefore pledges to work alongside communities and families who feel the loss of the Wilton Centre building on a permanent basis could be detrimental to them, to continue to focus on developing inclusive practices and to provide appropriate, tailored support and assistance, to try to mitigate any negatives on future learners.

6.10 With regards to Community Interest in the centre this was addressed within the Consultation comments and in the public meeting, which was attended by five members of the public, some of whom represented a community interest group interested in repurposing the building should it close on a permanent basis. Should the decision be made by Elected Members to support the Proposal to close the Wilton Centre permanently, officers advise that options for the Wilton Centre's future will be considered by the Council's Asset/Estate Management team. Subsequently, these options will be reported to Elected Members for consideration, including any expressions of interest from community interest groups in terms of the Community Asset Transfer provisions.

7 Inaccuracies in The Proposal Paper

7.1 No errors were made or have been identified in the proposal papers or any survey or questionnaire.

8. Consultation Report- Next Steps

8.1 This Consultation Report will be published on Citizen Space on the Council Website on **28th January 2025 and is available for further consideration until 25th February 2025 inclusive**. This is to take account of the school holiday within the Scottish Borders of 17th – 24th February 2025 and the Consultation Report requires to be published for three full weeks in terms of the statutory requirements of The Act.

8.2 The intention is that interested parties should have time to consider the Consultation Report and if they so wish, to raise concerns and pose alternative solutions by making written or electronic submissions to: -

The Wilton Centre Consultation, Education and Children's Services Scottish Borders
Council Headquarters Newtown St Boswells Melrose TD6 0SA;

Or by email to :- schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

Consultation Site: <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/wiltoncentreconsultationreport2025>

If you wish to respond by letter or electronically, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Scottish Borders Council”.

Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. For any written or electronic response to be considered it must be received by the Council no later than the last day of the four-week Consultation Report publication period in line with the statutory requirements being 25th February 2025.

9. Decision

9.1 This Consultation Report together with all other relevant documentation and responses to the consultation will be considered by Scottish Borders Council who will be asked to make a decision on the Proposal Report at the full Council meeting on 27th March 2025.

10 Distribution

10.2 A copy of the Consultation Report will be made available free of charge for public consultation **from 28th January until 25th February** in these locations –

- Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA (at Reception);
- ALL SBC SCHOOLS and BUILDINGS (upon request to the School Estates team leading the Wilton Centre Consultation);
- Hawick Library, North Bridge Street, Hawick TD9 9QT and

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/wiltoncentreconsultationreport2025>

11. Scottish Ministers Call-In

11.1 If Scottish Borders Council, as the Education Authority, makes a final decision to implement the Proposal, it will notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision, and provide them with a copy of The Proposal Paper and The Consultation Report. This must be done within 6 working days of that decision. The Education Authority must also publish on its website that it has notified Scottish Ministers of its decision and of the period during which consultees have the opportunity should they wish to make representations to Ministers.

11.2. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. During the first three weeks of this period, anyone can make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called in. Within the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 8-week call-in process is known, the Authority cannot proceed to implement the proposal. Ministers may come to a decision sooner than eight weeks (but not before the three weeks for representations to be made to them has elapsed).

11.3 If Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. Scottish Borders Council as the Education Authority may not implement the proposal (wholly or partly) unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either the period for making an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.

11.4 The School Closure Review Panel may refuse to consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit the proposal back to Scottish Borders Council as the Education Authority or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.

11.5 The Act, as amended, gives Ministers and School Closure Review Panels the right to call on advice from Education Scotland in relation to a proposal at the call-in or determination stage.

12. Acknowledgement

12.1 Scottish Borders Council would like to thank all the members of all Scottish Borders Council Schools and the IWS Community that have participated in this consultation process and also invite them to make any further comments, observations or suggestions regarding the proposal prior to the final decision being made by the Councillors on 27 March 2025 at full Council Meeting.

12.2 Please take this opportunity to have your say and share your comments at: -

The Wilton Centre Consultation, Education and Children's Services, Scottish Borders Council Headquarters Newtown St Boswells Melrose TD6 0SA; or

Email Address: schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

Consultation Site: -<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/wiltoncentreconsultationreport2025>

By 25th February 2025.

LESLEY MUNRO, Service Director,

Education and Children's Services

28th January 2025

APPENDIX 1 THE PROPOSAL REPORT and plus Proposal Report Appendices (IIA, SURVEY REPORT)

APPENDIX 2 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES (including POWER POINT PRESENTATION FROM SBC OFFICER)

APPENDIX 3 – EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT