

Proposals Paper

PROPOSAL

This Proposal is for the permanent closure of The Wilton Centre (otherwise known as The Arches) 36 Princes Street, Hawick (which is currently temporarily closed). This proposal is due to relocation of the Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Needs Service (SEBN) to local cluster schools following the Covid -19 Pandemic and the unsuitability of the building for continued use within the school estate.

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This proposal paper has been prepared by Scottish Borders Council's Children and Young Peoples Services to consult informally on a proposal to permanently close The Wilton Centre (The Arches) due to relocation of SEBN services to local cluster schools and the unsuitable condition of the building.

The paper aims to set out the proposal and to in-gather opinions from Scottish Borders Council Communities on the proposal prior to any formal consultation process taking place.

It also contains the Educational Benefits and any drawbacks in respect of the Proposal.

It is intended to take the form of pre-consultation community engagement review to kick start an open and transparent forum to obtain wide reaching views and opinions on the proposal and thereafter, to determine whether this engagement for views, requires to be followed by a formal Consultation process in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland Act 2010 (As Amended) and to make recommendations in terms of same.

OVERVIEW

The Wilton Centre also known colloquially as "The Arches" housed the SEBN (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs Service). SEBN was an in-reach and an out-reach support service to children and young people across the Scottish Borders region.

The SEBN service now known as the Inclusion and Wellbeing service is a responsive service which continues to give support to children today. The current service provides this in children's existing school settings as the Wilton Centre (The Arches) was not reopened following door closure in the Covid 19 Pandemic. The building was closed after the summer holidays of August 2021.

Historically (pre- Covid 19 Pandemic in 2020) The SEBN service provided placements within the building in Hawick mainly on a Part time and occasionally on a Full-time placement basis. The Covid 19 Pandemic resulted in the Wilton Building's doors being closed as all educational settings were. To ensure continuation of service the SEBN service was reformatted to provide that SEBN service within the service users mainstream schools. This was to be a more inclusive service providing children with SEBN support within their existing school set up instead of requiring them to travel (sometimes excessively long distances) across the region to attend SEBN placements within the Wilton building in Hawick.

The aim of this Proposal paper is to advise and inform Scottish Borders Communities across the region, about this background and to allow an informed approach to be taken to the proposal to

close the Wilton Centre building permanently following the reformatting of the services provided within to a more inclusive practice providing children with SEBN support within their existing school set up.

The concerns regarding the fabric of the building will be discussed in this proposal paper to explain “why” the closure of the Wilton Centre on a now permanent basis is proposed, and to invite comments from communities and stakeholders accordingly.

DETAIL OF PROPOSAL

The proposal has implications for all Scottish Borders Council primary and secondary school pupils current and future, who may have been in the past or will in the future be referred for SEBN placements. They may wish to have a view on the Proposal Document in so far as the closure of the Wilton Centre Building is concerned. Although the SEBN service has been redesigned, views are encouraged and welcomed to gather thoughts on the Wilton Centre building itself being disbanded. Scottish Borders Council recognises that the closure of this building will mean that placements will not be undertaken in The Wilton Centre and therefore seeks views on this from across the region. Historically, all children across the region may have had access to full time or part time placements by referral by their local mainstream school setting.

This is an informal consultation therefore it does not require to follow the processes of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, but aims to broadly follow the same principles, to fully engage communities and obtain as far as possible, a wide range of opinions and viewpoints. This is also to inform the decision as to whether it is necessary to proceed to a full consultation in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010.

SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL PAPER

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

PROPOSAL PAPER PUBLISHED

The proposal paper will be available for inspection, free of charge at

1. Council Headquarters, Newton St Boswells, TD6 0SA
2. All SBC primary and secondary schools within the Scottish Borders- upon request.

3. And published on the Scottish Borders Council Website:-

Link to be added when approved and published

4. Copies of the Proposal Paper are also available on request from: -

The Wilton Centre Closure Proposal
Children and Young People’s Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 0SA

Telephone: 01893 582 4000

E-mail:

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

Please state that you are looking for the Wilton Centre (The Arches) Closure Proposal Document.

5. This proposal Paper is available in an alternative format or can be translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to:-

The Wilton Centre Closure Proposal
Children and Young People's Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 0SA
Telephone: 01893 582 4000

E-mail:

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

6. Formal Notice of the proposal and relevant information will be given and made available, free of charge to

1 Parents/ Carers of *all* Primary and Secondary Schools in Scottish Borders Council (who may have in theory Children who could be referred to the SEBN service)– upon request- notification will be by Group Call notification and on SBC Social Media/ SBC website.

2. The Staff of the current SEBN service

3.Any trade Union which is representative of the SEBN staff

4. The Community Council of Hawick (and any Community Council of any further Borders area upon request)

5. Community Planning Partnership named Partners

6. The constituency member of the Scottish Parliament

7.The constituency member of Parliament

8. The List members of the Scottish Parliament

7. Advertisement in local Media

1. An advert will be placed on Scottish Borders Council website and social media to advise and provide a link to the Proposal Document inviting views and comments on the Proposal Document. A press release will be published in local media outlets.

8. Period for community views to be heard.

The proposal document will be published and therefore the informal consultation will begin on **Wednesday 8th May 2024 and will close on Friday 28th June 2024**. This is to allow a 6 week

consultation period (and therefore in excess of 30 school days) to allow as wide an opportunity as possible for communities to be able to air views and provide comment.

8. Public Meeting

Format of Public Meeting

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting on Teams digital link is invited to do so. The meeting, which will be convened by Scottish Borders Council will be addressed by the Director Children and Young People's Services, and other Senior Officers of the Council.

A date and Link for the meeting will be published alongside the Proposal paper.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to hear more about the Proposal to close the Wilton Centre.

It will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the Proposal to close the building. The public meeting will let you have your views recorded so that they can be considered as part of the Proposal process.

A note will be taken at the meeting of comments, questions, and officer responses. These notes will be published on the Council website and a copy will be made available on request. These will form part of the Council's decision as to whether to formally consult on the closure of the Building and proceed to a full Consultation in term of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 (as Amended) or proceed to accept the proposal as is.

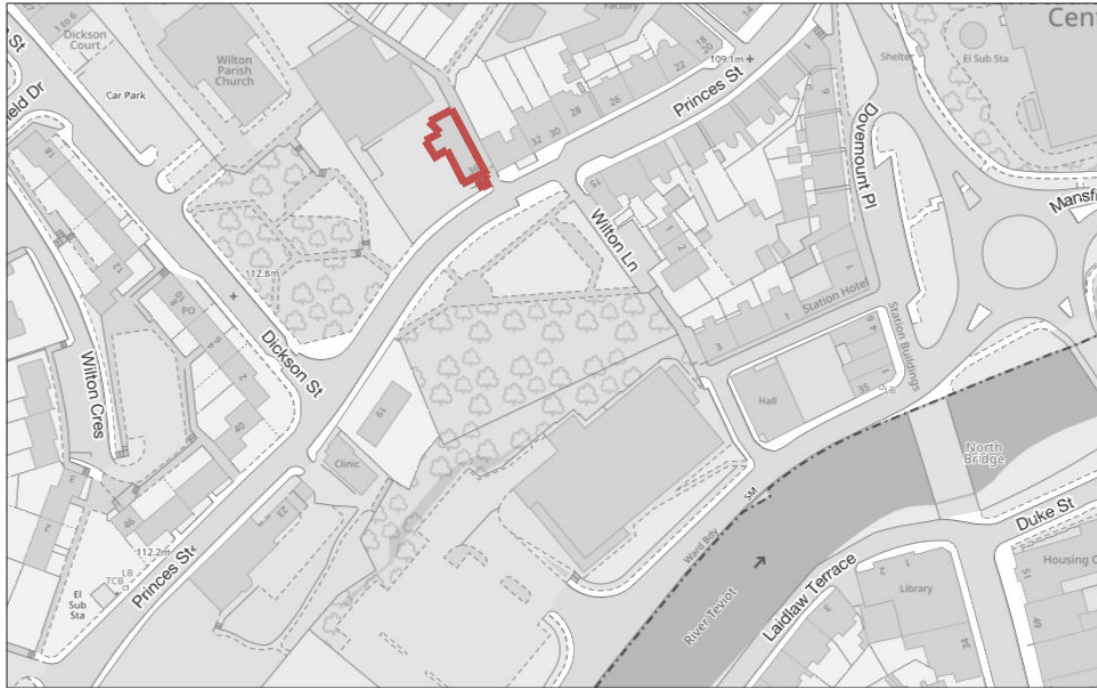
BACKGROUND

LOCATION and GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION



The Wilton Centre “The Arches” (pictured) is located at 36 Princes Street, Hawick.

ArcGIS Web Map



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Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS
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See above map in red outlining the building's position within the town on Princes Street, Hawick and further map on page 6, detailing the position of Hawick within the southwestern aspect of the Scottish Borders Region.

ArcGIS Web Map



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OVERVIEW

As advised, the Wilton Centre “The Arches”, Hawick historically housed the SEBN (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs Service) which is a support service to children and Young people across the length and breadth of the Scottish Borders. The service continues to be a responsive service to support children within the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service of Scottish Borders Council. It historically housed part time or full time placements within the Wilton Centre itself.

Following the pandemic when schools closed throughout Scotland, the Wilton Centre itself was not reopened due partly to the unsuitable condition of the building, and the fact that the service could be continued in a different re-designed format which did not require utilisation of the building. The Service is still in existence today.

The building was deemed no longer fit for purpose requiring significant capital investment to bring it up to an acceptable standard in terms of the school estate. This will be discussed in the section categorised as Building Suitability.

THE PROVISION AT THE WILTON CENTRE

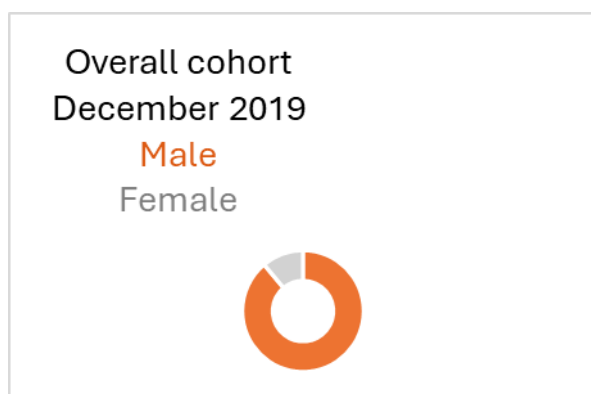
To understand the Service as was provided at the Wilton Centre “The Arches”, it is important to have an understanding of the number of pupils who were under the SEBN Service and in placements within the SEBN service at the building.

In December 2019 the data of the authority shows that there were eighteen pupils attending the SEBN service on placements. This does not include the number of pupils being supported on an outreach basis.

Total	18
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Gender breakdown

Male	16
Female	2



The Year group break down was as below: -

Year group	Number of pupils
P3	1
P4	3
P5	1
P6	3
P7	3
S3	2
S4	4
S5	1
Total	18

The suggestion from the data available was that the pupil numbers attending placements was reducing over the years.

Many pupils on SEBN placements were in the later stages of their school education. The SEBN staff noticed an increased demand to have greater and more flexible resources to meet the needs of these young people in their *own* communities rather than transporting them to the Wilton Centre as an outreach centre, and that this was becoming the norm. This was especially the case from secondary schools.

Attendance of pupils on placement was at times low, and the SEBN senior management team found it difficult to re allocate staff out to schools effectively at short notice due to the geographical location of the setting within the Borders region, when pupils did not arrive in their transport in the morning.

Hawick is situated within the southwest of the Borders Region. It is approximately ten miles southwest of Jedburgh and just under nine miles southeast of Selkirk. It is therefore in the most southerly section of the Borders region.

Many pupils were on part time placements only. Latterly two days shared placements for almost all primary pupils and secondary pupils attended for up to five days.

A consultation process had begun in 2019 with SEBN attending families along with Staff and Trade Unions where views and opinions were gauged about a remodel of the SEBN service. Post COVID it was suggested that a return to a model of extracting pupils from their cluster schools to travel great distances across the region to attend the standalone SEBN unit at the Wilton Centre would be a step backwards in working inclusively in and across local authority schools. Instead, it aimed to look to establish an intervention-based locality model to support all young people previously attending the SEBN. Optimising engagement in learning in their mainstream schools was felt to be far preferable and attractive to all consultees.

The covid pandemic forced the closure of the Wilton Centre's doors, this was the catalyst to begin this process in accelerating and advancing a new redesign of the SEBN service offered. The families of SEBN service attending children were very clear when they were asked about this and agreed with a new localised approach.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

It is generally accepted that transporting children to and from Hawick was in the main unhelpful to their educational and emotional wellbeing. There are no educational benefits of this outdated system. The feeling from the families was that children on placements in the service would be better served educationally and emotionally by reducing travel times. They did not feel the long commutes of some children were in any way beneficial. The feelings were that the stress on learners of long journeys to and from the centre – some pupils travelling up to two hours each way – was overwhelmingly negative. This was both tiring and distressing for them and this travel was often highly dysregulating. Families of the service users overwhelmingly agreed to a new approach when consulted and welcomed the reallocation of the resources from the service to their children's own cluster / catchment schools.

Staff also reported that the intensity of the commuter journeys made it increasingly difficult to support children and felt the travel was prohibitive to helpful learning. Essentially, leaving their community to travel long distances placed barriers around restorative processes being implemented successfully, essentially counteracting what the service was trying to achieve in the first place.

There was also the challenge of reintegration once the placements had come to an end. Questions were raised such as where did the child identify? Where was the child's community?

The idea what you remove a child for a placement in another unit, to then be reintegrated into their mainstream school (even if part time) does not sit naturally with updated and modern-day principles of inclusivity and integration. The provision in the unit also by its nature and set up, did not support the principle that positive role models are beneficial to learners. There needs to be inclusivity for this to be beneficial. There was also a lack of balanced peer cohort in terms of gender balance as is clear from the data of the attending children. There was a lack of female peers for girls within the unit with the numbers suggesting an overwhelmingly male cohort.

Overall, the new redesign of the SEBN service was felt to fit better to support the young people of the service in maintaining their position within, and accessing the help and support needed in their local community.

This position also sits in line with the Standards in Schools Act 2000, which recognised the rights of all children and young people to be in education alongside their peers in mainstream schools known as the presumption of mainstream. See Scottish Government Guidance *"Guidance on Presumption to Provide education in a mainstream setting"* (March 2019).

A further educational benefit to the SEBN service becoming more localised to children's mainstream schools sat on all fours with the 2018 Scottish Borders Council strategic approach to Inclusion, which led to key messages aimed at delivering high quality inclusion services promoting "Inclusion for all".

The commitment then, which was developed within engagement sessions with Staff and Head teachers, recognised that improving practice and following priorities were identified as part of an "Inclusion for all" commitment: -

These commitments were: -

- a) Create an ethos of achievement for all pupils within a climate of high expectation.
- b) Value a broad range of talents, abilities, and achievements
- c) Promote success and self-esteem by taking action to remove barriers to learning.
- d) Counter conscious and unconscious discrimination/ bias that may prevent individuals, or pupils from any groups, from thriving in their education.
- e) Actively promote understanding and a positive appreciation of the diversity of individuals and groups within society.

To adhere to the above commitment- the key areas for consideration were:

- A) Reduction in transport time for learners.
- B) Ensure flexibility and respond directly to all learners' needs.
- C) A 3-18 approach ensuring effective transitions and progression in learning, with early intervention.
- D) Enhanced provisions which facilitate a broad range of opportunities for learners – for attainment, achievement, and skills for learning. Life and work.
- E) Staff up skilled to meet the needs of learners.
- F) A Responsive model
- G) Holistic view of the child/ young person

Staff of the SEBN service previously based within the Wilton Centre, were to be re allocated to work in the families' mainstream cluster schools. It was felt that their role would be to build on the

success of delivering inclusive practice in localities during lockdown, support the outreach team to work with pupils and their families who were referred to the service previously and continue to build capacity in the mainstream schools and settings so that all learners' needs were met.

The Inclusion and wellbeing service took on a leading role to support nurturing approaches across the Scottish Borders to assist with this goal, ongoing commitment, and strategic approach to inclusion for all in terms of the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service redesign.

This approach sat in line with the significant culture shift generally whereby mainstream schools working collaboratively in their clusters are the focus now and in the future for inclusive practices.

THE WILTON CENTRE (THE ARCHES) BUILDING

The Wilton Centre/ Arches stands in the most southwestern part of the Borders. For over 20 years it was regularly reviewed and deemed to require significant investment to modernise it to make it fit for the modern age. Reviewed by the education architectural lead as part of an Estates Review which began in 2017, continued in April 2018 with a suitability review in May 2018 it was agreed that the building required significant capital investment to be fit as an education setting meeting reasonable standards for schools in terms of Schools for the Future, or in respect of Scottish Government guidance for school estates. Since closing its doors post covid 19 pandemic, maintenance costs are required to facilitate it in terms of maintenance to keep it wind, watertight and secure.

SUITABILITY SURVEY

The building was surveyed by Turner and Townsend for Scottish Borders Council as part of a Suitability Review on 29th January 2024. The report is annexed within **Appendix 1**.

The Suitability Report detailed the overall rating of the building to be a "D". This was the lowest rating in terms of suitability. "D" rated means that the building does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school buildings and grounds seriously impede delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)

Staff within the SEBN Service explained that accessibility was a main concern whilst the building was in use. There were two buildings with a tarmac playground to the front. The main building was accessed by several stairs and a separate annexe could be accessed from the playground. There was no accessible entrance. This led to "safety upon entry" concerns and regarding safeguarding also.

Due to the age of the building the building did not have the right balance of traditional and /or modern flexible working spaces although attempts had been made over the years to create a soft play area for younger children attending placements. Safe passage through the building or the ability to define safe spaces was compromised by the older building design. This in turn created curricular limitations according to staff, particularly for the secondary aged pupils on placements whose interest might have been gained better through a more diverse bespoke curricular offering. The building offered no access to Technology/science or quality Physical Education for example.

ALTERNATIVE USE OF WILTON CENTRE

The building is listed. Options for its future will be considered by the Council's Asset/ Estate management team and reported to elected members for consideration. There are suggestions that

community interest groups have expressed desire and interest in the Wilton Centre, and this is to be welcomed and ongoing dialogue encouraged. This could be encouraged in terms of the Community Asset transfer provisions once this proposal to permanently close has been considered and a decision made.

WILL CLOSURE OF THE WILTON CENTRE IMPACT FUTURE LEARNERS?

If the Wilton Centre is closed permanently this will mean that future SEBN service users, won't have the opportunity to attend the Wilton Centre in Hawick on placements, however the proposal details the reasons why this is felt to be preferable and, on the balance, more beneficial and inclusive to them in terms of the educational benefits.

The authority deems that there are little to no drawbacks to future learners to have access to much closer SEBN facilities and resources which best support their learning and emotional needs in a decentralised local cluster school, more in line with the educational benefits of inclusion and nurture approaches in their mainstream schools.

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 units and thus this approach sits firmly alongside Scottish Government directions.

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached to this Proposal as **Appendix 2**.

IMPACT OF CLOSURE

Has there been any disruption to the learning / teaching of the children referred to the SEBN services, apart from Covid lockdown?

It is felt that there was little to no disruption to families who agreed when consulted with the redesign of the SEBN service to a more localised inclusive service within the children's mainstream schools and although a transition period was required the service continues to operate and maintain high operational standards.

The council will pledge to work with communities affected to identify and overcome any issues which may arise from the proposal to permanently close the building of The Wilton Centre "The Arches" in Hawick. However the authority's view is that this is likely to be minimal given the reallocation of the resources to the referred children's own cluster / catchment schools within the redesign and the fact that the families of attending children within the service when the building was closed post covid, advised that they would prefer this more localised inclusive approach to cut down on commuting and promote inclusion within the mainstream schools. It is anticipated that any issues in terms of this therefore would be minimal as the overwhelming feeling was this was a far better approach.

However, it does need to be appreciated that some families or communities within the Borders region may feel that some children may have benefitted from spending time on a standalone

placement within the Wilton Centre itself, and therefore there could be feeling that the closure of the building on a permanent basis is a negative to those families who will no longer get that opportunity.

If this is the case then the SEBN services will pledge to work alongside those children/ families and communities who feel that they would have benefitted from spending time within the unit in The Wilton building, to continue to focus on developing inclusive practice and to provide appropriate support to those children to try to mitigate(as much as possible) any negatives regarding the loss of the building.

What does Scottish Borders Council intend to do to minimise or avoid adverse effects from permanent closure of the Wilton Centre/ Arches building in Hawick?

The building itself is currently closed and lies empty. Upkeep is required to keep it wind and watertight and to ensure it is kept locked and secure. As the building has not been occupied for several years, several areas in the building are in a state of poor disrepair and internally the building is in a poor state of repair particularly the west side of the building where upon areas of the ceiling and wall lathe plaster are badly crumbling. This information is available within the Suitability Survey in Appendix 2.

Any positive attempt to re purpose or an adaptive reuse of the building is thought will go some way to redress to some extent, the loss of the building to the local community and to lessen the affect of an empty building within the Hawick Community.

STAFF IMPLICATIONS

A benefit of the SEBN service redesign was that there was no reduction in staffing. The redesign looked to redeploy the staff, who were based within the building, to the local cluster schools of the children attending, and where possible for expansion additional staffing was recruited. This resulted in increased capacity of staff for the cluster schools. It was felt that this allowed for improved working environments for the SEBN staff, rationalising and providing clarity of roles across the cluster schools, reducing bureaucracy, providing staff with a sense of belonging with a local team, providing quality professional learning to support staff roles which allowed in turn the allocation of local authority resources more effectively- all with the aim and purpose to develop a better outcome for staff who had historically been based within the Wilton Centre.

All staff in post were allocated to bases in schools to work within a cluster-based model, remaining part of a centrally managed service. Staffing has been adjusted across the authority responsively according to changing need and referrals since the closure of the building.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Transport Costs per child

Scottish Borders Council had a significant outlay in terms of the costs of transport per child attending placements within the Wilton Centre.

The table below gives the breakdown for each child enrolled in the years 218-2020 prior to the Covid and the doors closing on the building along with the service redesign.

The below table provides the costs per child of taxi contracts for child transport to and from the Wilton Centre per year in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Expense of Taxis for each enrolled pupil for travel to and from the Wilton Centre, Hawick.

<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
£6,001.03	£951.43
£677.77	£0.00
£9,045.89	£564.38
£3,918.90	£616.97
£18,928.98	£7,893.32
£396.04	£0.00
£442.18	£31.85
£2,059.88	£909.35
£9,207.15	£2,917.58
£2,169.40	£1,386.97
£14,618.08	£3,776.50
£141.03	£0.00
£677.75	£0.00
£1,955.45	£1,853.45
£1,600.00	£0.00
£10,834.28	£2,852.68
£3,968.28	£2,392.20
£8,324.94	£6,810.80
£931.61	£1,528.86
£570.80	£2,120.69
£0.00	£284.88
£0.00	£1,263.59
£0.00	£1,879.00
£0.00	£0.00
£0.00	£170.94

TOTAL	
£96,469.44	£40,205.44

The above table provides the costs per child of taxi contracts for child transport to and from the Wilton Centre. Although the costs were substantially reduced due to the closure of the building during lockdown to £40,205.44 in 2019/20 this was still a substantial cost per year for transporting children to and from the Unit. There are savings therefore in terms of reduced travel costs due to the closure of the building and the redesign of the SEBN service in addition to educational benefits of same.

Revenue Budget Implications

The below tables from Scottish Borders Council Financial Services, shows the costs associated with the Wilton Centre rates and maintenance in the years 2017 to 2023 and demonstrate the costs associated with the building.

Account(T)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
Electricity			13,548.66	10,495.55	8,142.52	6,016.06	1,944.55	40,147.34
Gas			6,314.80	6,549.09	3,506.63	4,012.98	2,999.87	23,383.37
Business Rates			16,660.00	16,661.09	16,660.00	16,932.00	-20,835.29	46,077.80
Water Services			1,886.98	1,305.59	1,668.28	1,161.26	1,233.92	7,256.03
Other Hired & Contracted Services		268.10						268.10
Repairs & Maintenance of Buildings					360.00	600.00	1,300.00	2,260.00
Repairs & Maintenance of Buildings	7,739.40	1,184.40	5,168.86	1,861.29	1,188.50	431.78	-122.28	17,451.95
Vandalism Repairs	935.32	3,606.02	1,551.23					6,092.57
Repairs & Maintenance of Buildings	843.29	1,430.30	1,212.13	2,467.00	291.70	76.96		6,321.38
Vandalism Repairs			62.90					62.90
	9,518.01	6,488.82	46,405.56	39,339.61	31,817.63	29,231.04	-13,479.23	149,321.44

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown in terms of the Corporate landlord utilities, property management information and associated costs.

Sum of Amount			Account	Account(T)						Grand Total
Year	Cost Centre	Cost Centre(T)	R.2001 Repairs & Maintenance of Buildings	R.2101 Electricity	R.2102 Gas	R.2301 Business Rates	R.2401 Water Services	R.2002 Vandalism Repairs		
2019	RX067	Corporate Landlord Utilities		13,549	6,315	16,660	1,887			38,410
	RY276	Property Management - Statutory Repairs & Maintenance	1,212					63		1,275
	RY274	Property Management - Reactive Repairs & Maintenance	5,189					1,551		6,720
	RY328	Additional Support Needs - SEBN Wilton Centre	47					78		125
2019 Total			6,428	13,549	6,315	16,660	1,887	1,692		46,530
2020	RX067	Corporate Landlord Utilities		10,496	6,549	16,661	1,306			35,011
	RY276	Property Management - Statutory Repairs & Maintenance	2,467							2,467
	RY274	Property Management - Reactive Repairs & Maintenance	1,861							1,861
	2020 Total			4,328	10,496	6,549	16,661	1,306		39,340
2021	RX067	Corporate Landlord Utilities		8,143	3,507	12,552	1,668			25,869
	RY276	Property Management - Statutory Repairs & Maintenance	292							292
	RY274	Property Management - Reactive Repairs & Maintenance	1,189							1,189
	RY157	Property Management - Surplus Properties	360							360
2021 Total			1,840	8,143	3,507	12,552	1,668			27,710
2022	RX067	Corporate Landlord Utilities		6,016	4,013	205	1,161			11,395
	RY276	Property Management - Statutory Repairs & Maintenance	77							77
	RY274	Property Management - Reactive Repairs & Maintenance	432							432
	RY157	Property Management - Surplus Properties	600							600
2022 Total			1,109	6,016	4,013	205	1,161			12,504
2023	RX067	Corporate Landlord Utilities		4,998	3,380		1,694			10,072
	RY276	Property Management - Statutory Repairs & Maintenance	499							499
	RY274	Property Management - Reactive Repairs & Maintenance	(122)							(122)
	RY157	Property Management - Surplus Properties	1,740							1,740
2023 Total			2,116	4,998	3,380		1,694			12,188
Grand Total			15,821	43,201	23,764	46,078	7,716	1,692		138,272

Whilst it is temporarily closed, the building itself requires upkeep and insurance which are costs which require to be met. The cost of maintenance for the temporarily closed building to 2023, to include the corporate landlord utilities, statutory repairs, maintenance, and the property management surplus properties- approximately circa £12,000- £13,000 per year. Although the costs associated have reduced substantially it is still an outlay that requires to be met.

Staffing Costs

Operational costs of running the building as an educational base for 2018 -2019 was approximately £627 135.12. Within that, we understand that the total staffing cost for 2018 -19 for the Wilton Centre was £539,464 for the 18 pupils on roll which not including janitorial and cleaning services. Since temporary closure, those costs have reduced substantially – although calculating those savings is difficult to do as SEBN staff were redeployed to local cluster schools and where possible for expansion additional staff were recruited.

To summarise, the total costs including staffing, transport, maintenance, and upkeep of maintaining the SEBN service within the building of the Wilton Centre were significant each financial year whilst it was open. There is still a cost which is not insignificant associated with the temporarily closed building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To seek permanent closure of The Wilton Centre (The Arches),36 Princes Street, Hawick for the reasons above and as summarised below: -

1. The educational benefits of the redesign of SEBN services to children's local cluster schools following the Covid -19 pandemic and the removal of the travel requirement to the standalone unit in Hawick, enables Scottish Borders Council to provide a more inclusive and tailored service within service users' mainstream settings to sit firmly within the overriding principles of inclusion in Education.
2. The unsuitable design and state of the Wilton building for future learning, precluding the continuation of the building as a viable sustainable part of the school estate for the modern age, without significant capital investment and which, on balance, cannot be justified given the redesign of the SEBN service to the local cluster schools model thus removing the requirement to use the Wilton Centre, Hawick.

Options for The Wilton Centre's future to thereafter be considered by the Council's Asset/ Estate management team and reported to elected members for consideration to include any community interest groups expressing interest.

RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposal to close by making written or electronic submissions on the proposal to:

The Wilton Centre Closure Proposal
Children and Young People's Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 0SA
Telephone: ADD NUMBER

E-mail:

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

Please state that you are looking to make comment on the Proposal document for permanent closure of the Wilton Centre (The Arches).

Those wishing to respond are invited to state their relationship with The Wilton Centre " The Arches" for example " Parent/ Carer of a child under the SEBN service " or Teacher of SEBN service" etc.

Those sending a response, whether by letter or electronically should be aware that their response could be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. As such, if they do not wish their response to be publicly available, they should clearly make their response “confidential and for access to be restricted to elected members and council officers of Scottish Borders Council only”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - SUITABILITY REVIEW TURNER AND TOWNSEND REPORT 24.1.24

APPENDIX 2- IIA