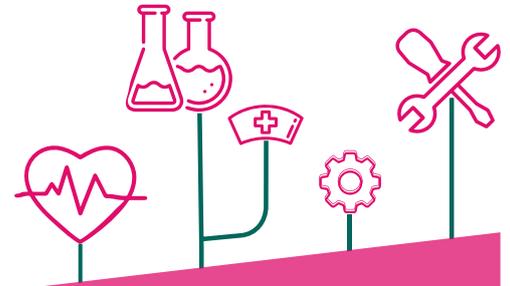




University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean  
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar



## Working in Partnership for **FORT WILLIAM 2040**

News update on our  
**CENTRE FOR SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH  
AND ENGINEERING**



**SEPTEMBER 2019**

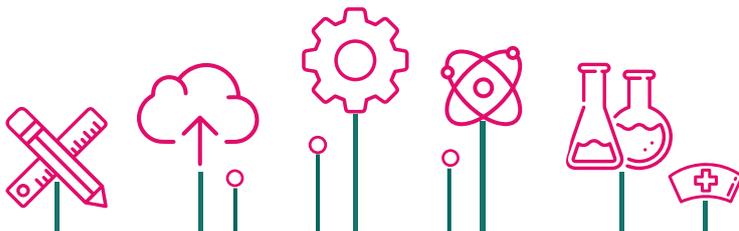
West Highland College UHI's exciting plan for a new Centre for Science Technology, Health and Engineering are now "shovel ready", with planning permission granted and building warrant applied for. It is a regional priority of the University of the Highlands and Islands and has the strong support of

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in relation to Economic Growth
- Local businesses, small, medium and large, and Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, (whose members include Liberty British Aluminium, BSW Timber Group, MOWI, Ferguson Transport, and Gael Force Marine)

## We're part of FW2040 and its growth for the future...

...because this major new campus development project is a key part of the FW2040 plan and supports the Scottish Government's "Place Principle" – a pilot, exemplar approach creating a centre of excellence in technical and professional learning to play a key role in enabling and supporting inclusive economic growth for the whole of the West Highland region. An independent economic impact report demonstrates that investment in the STEM centre will yield almost three times the return on investment.

Many future employees will benefit from new skills acquired and, in turn, businesses will become more productive. This will enable an acceleration in business growth, especially in key sectors that will benefit from STEM. The new STEM centre will also significantly enhance the attractiveness of Fort William and the Lochaber area as a place in which to live, work, study and invest.



## We've already started...

... to build a pipeline of STEM skills with new curriculum for primary, secondary and post-school opportunities which are based within our current campuses and through our staff delivering in local schools. But we want to develop further and have a plan to continue the growth (watch out for news updates on our website). A new STEM Centre would become a hub for linking primary, secondary and tertiary STEM education and offer progression to further study from school-based learning through to technician and degree levels.

A newly created Newton Room – one of only two in Scotland – has already been developed in Caol Primary School and will eventually move into the STEM Centre as the permanent home of the Science Skills Academy which enables productive partnership working amongst publicly funded initiatives including Developing the Young Workforce.

## Where we are now

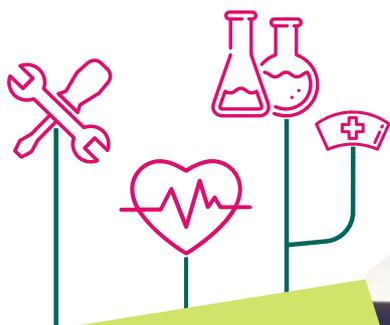
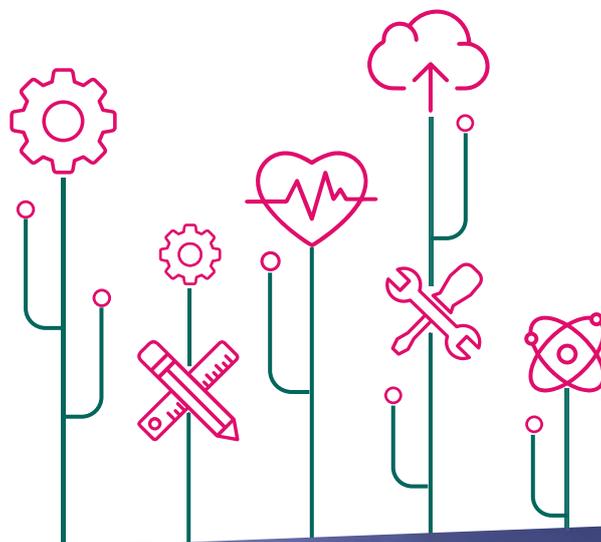
As we've said earlier, the STEM centre project is a regional priority in the large capital project category of the University of the Highlands and Islands. The University, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Funding Council have joined with us to co-fund the development of the project to this stage. Since last September we have submitted a full business case to the Scottish Funding Council and it was approved, subject to funding.

The College and its partner agencies are currently in close discussions with the Scottish Government with regard to funding and as soon as a suitable funding route becomes available, the project could proceed. If that funding was put in place today, our expected completion date would be March 2021. We're excited – we hope you will be too!



## We're continuing to work...

...with our industry partners to ensure that we can retain and attract new talent to an even wider range of apprenticeships and opportunities to re-skill and up-skill in areas such as health sciences, advanced manufacturing, industry 4.0 and advanced computing and digital specialisms as well as the more traditional routes of construction and engineering. We continue to work with the University of the Highlands and Islands, the NHS and other national partners including the National Institute of Manufacturing Scotland and IBM.





West Highland College UHI presents  
a new centre for

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING



**SEPTEMBER 2018**

West Highland College UHI has advanced plans for a major new campus development in Fort William to support technical and professional skills and workforce requirements in the West Highlands for Science, Technology, Health and Engineering.

The new state-of-the-art technology centre is part of our strategy to develop Fort William into a major hub for learning in the West Highlands, complementing our existing campus at An Aird. This strategic development aligns with the vision for Fort William 2040 and supports the exciting economic developments in Fort William and across the West Highlands, creating important new opportunities for all those who want to live, learn and work here.

The multimillion pound development will create a building of approximately 3400m<sup>2</sup> on a 2.5 acre site on the Blar Mor, adjacent to the planned new Belford NHS hospital. There will be new full-time and part-time learning opportunities for an estimated additional 350 learners, providing a wide range of courses equipping learners for the technological and digital future. The development will also create an estimated 20 new jobs.

West Highland College UHI is an academic partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands and one of the most successful colleges in Scotland. Each year, we are attracting more students from the West Highlands and further afield in Scotland, UK and rest of the world to study with us.

**This is our planning timeline subject to planning and funding approvals:**

We are working very closely with our partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Highland, Highland Council and key local employers to ensure this major campus development in Fort William meets the current and future needs of individuals, communities and businesses.

We hope you will be as excited as we are at the prospect of this major expansion for the college in Fort William and the significant benefits this will bring to the West Highlands.

## What will it mean for Lochaber and the West Highlands?

Our new centre will:

- ensure a skills pipeline of learners from schools, further and higher education and training through to employment
- meet the skills needs of employers in the area
- increase opportunities and choice for people to study and access training close to home
- create a specialist curriculum that will attract young people to study and work in the area
- allow for better accommodation and extended provision at the college's An Aird site.

○ Planning permission applied for

Oct 18

○ Funding agreed in principle

Dec 18

○ Contract award and start on site

Apr 19

○ Completion

Aug 20

○ Opening

Sep 20

# What will you be able to study at the new centre?

The new centre will be home for an expanded range of qualifications and training courses in:

Construction,  
Engineering and  
Manufacturing  
Technologies



Science  
and Maths



Health Studies



Computing and  
Digital Skills



The centre will include a range of flexible, wi-fi enabled learning spaces equipped with the latest learning technologies and industry standard equipment.

This will include laboratories, computing suites, a clinical simulation suite for health training as well as engineering, construction and manufacturing workshops.

Students will also benefit from being able to use a number of informal study areas, a dedicated learning resource centre and a student services hub providing guidance and support.

The expanded capacity at our new centre will allow us to offer:

- A completely new curriculum in engineering
- Modern and Graduate apprenticeships in construction, engineering and engineering manufacture
- New HNC and HND programmes in construction and engineering
- New degrees in computing, digital and robotics, engineering and nursing
- Significant provision of skills training courses for school pupils and professional development programmes for employers and people in work or seeking to upskill.

Our existing campus at An Aird will be able to continue to expand our delivery of other curriculum areas such as:

- Business and Administration
- Music
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Fashion and Textiles

An Aird will remain the home of our highly regarded School of Adventure Studies, offering specialist degree programmes in Adventure Tourism, Adventure Performance, Adventure Education and Marine and Coastal Tourism.

# Who will benefit?



## Full and part time students

Full and part time students will benefit from an expanded range of further education courses such as Access to Nursing, National Certificates in Construction and Engineering Operations, Computing and Creative Digital Media.

Higher National Certificate and Diploma courses in construction and engineering will be added to our existing HNCs and HNDs in the computing and health and social care areas. We will also be offering University of the Highlands and Islands degrees in the areas of engineering, engineering manufacture, computing, robotics and nursing.

## Schools

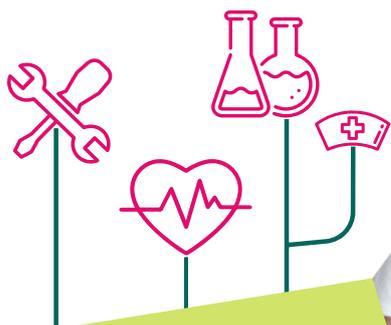
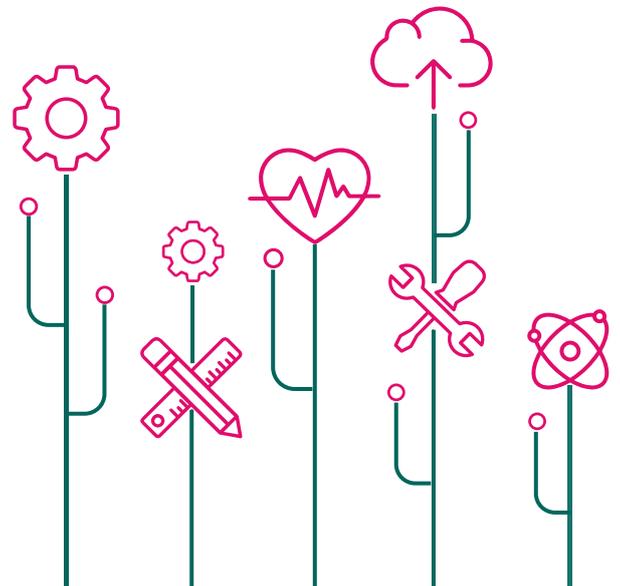
Schools will be able to access a range of vocational programmes at National 4, 5 and 6 as well as Higher courses in computing, science and maths. Pupils will also have progression opportunities to a range of further and higher education courses, including work-based learning, across the health, computing, construction and engineering areas.

## Employers

Employers will be able to attract new talent. For the first time they will be able to access locally delivered Modern and Graduate Apprenticeship programmes in construction and engineering as well as short skills training courses and facilities for upskilling and reskilling their workforce. In collaboration with the University of the Highlands and Islands and our partners in the NHS, we will also support delivery of professional development programmes and training for health care professionals in addition to our existing range of further and higher education courses and professional development awards.

# The Newton Room

We will create a Scandinavian style Newton Room which will include workstations, fully equipped labs and areas for demonstrations particularly aimed at pupils from P6 - S2. We will work together with schools, local employers and the Science Skills Academy (SSA) to provide specialist STEM and digital skills education so that local pupils and those travelling from remote areas will be able to benefit from the development.



# Why it's important...

This major new campus development will transform opportunities for young people, businesses and the communities in Fort William and across the West Highlands to access a wide range of learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Health and Engineering. The planned state of the art technology campus is the result of intensive multi-partnership working and engagement with key employers and stakeholders. It is part of our strategy to develop Fort William into a major hub of learning in the West Highlands. This complements our existing campus at An Aird, and working as a partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands, will build capacity for STEM-related learning opportunities as well as innovation across all our centres in the West Highlands. The development fully aligns with the exiting economic developments in Lochaber, providing new opportunities for all those who want to live, learn and work here.

## **Lydia Rohmer**

*Principal and Chief Executive  
West Highland College UHI*

Recognising the importance of science and technology subjects from a regional and national perspective, the Board of West Highland College UHI has been committed to achieving our vision of a campus delivering a range of science, technology, health and engineering curriculum at all levels. In our area, organisations in the public, private and community sectors have ambitious plans to grow their businesses and to deliver projects which will strengthen our economy, creating new jobs and opportunities. Underpinning many of these projects is a need for more people with skills in technology, health and engineering and our new Centre will go a long way to helping to address these needs.

## **John C Hutchison**

*Chair  
West Highland College UHI Board of Management*

As Deputy Principal of the University of the Highlands and Islands I am very pleased to give my full support for these plans. The University strives to make educational opportunities at all levels more widely accessible to learners close to their home or place of work right across our region. This new Centre with its focus around STEM subjects and close proximity to the Belford Hospital development will allow us to provide even more opportunities for learners across an expanded range of highly relevant curriculum with direct relevance to current and future employment opportunities in the West Highlands. Benefitting from the University's established expertise as an innovator in curriculum design and multisite delivery where necessary, and linking in to the breadth of academic expertise in many subject areas not just at West Highland College UHI but across our University's wider regional partnership, the Centre will be able to generate significant opportunity, benefit and impact for learners and employers. This is an exciting and timely initiative and I look forward to supporting colleagues at West Highland College UHI in taking this forward.

## **Crichton Lang**

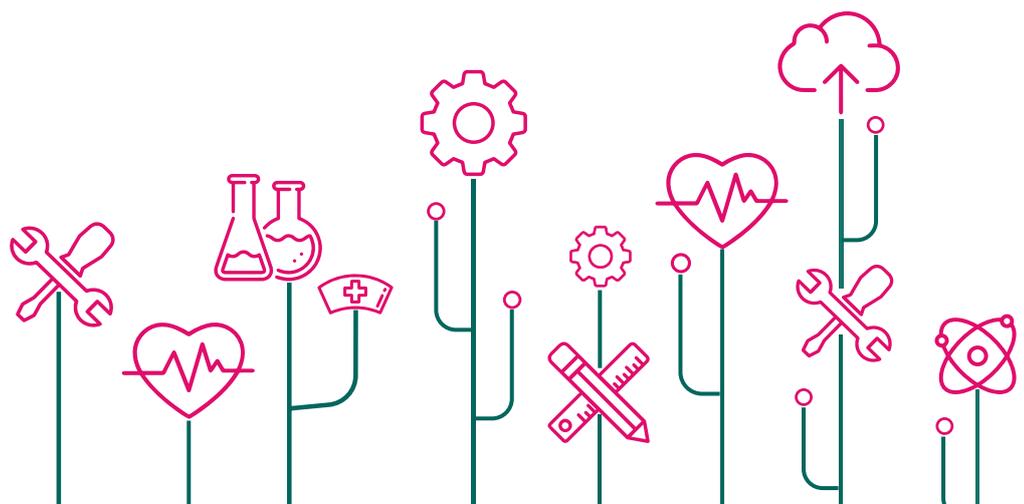
*Deputy Principal and Head of School of Health,  
Social Care and Life Sciences  
University of the Highlands and Islands*

With the availability of the fully accessible and serviced site on the Blar Mor the Science, Technology, Health and Engineering campus is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Lochaber to increase the educational potential of our youngsters, close to home, while also affording national and international students professional technical skills qualifications in the Outdoor Capital of the U.K.

I am proud to promote this integral part of the 2040 Vision for Lochaber which complements the existing Police Scotland and Health Centre facilities, Lochaber High School and is adjacent to the proposed affordable housing and new Belford facility with the added advantage of being close to Banavie station and trunk road network, as well as having connected active travel.

## **Councillor Allan Henderson**

*The Highland Council*



While the CEST plans had been developed prior to LBA's arrival, we have been pleased that the college is prepared to include us to help address our requirements. We understand that, though the UHI model, WHC can work with other member colleges where required which will make skills development easier for us. We very much hope that these WHC plans can come to fruition.

**Tom Uppington**

Power Operations Director  
Liberty British Aluminium

We think the new centre will offer a fantastic facility for the young people of Lochaber to access qualifications and training linked to the growing job and career opportunities of the area. We are excited at the inclusion of a Newton Room which will help to engage and increase the interest of pupils in the areas of health, science, engineering and technology – from Primary onwards – which we will build on throughout secondary school.

The planned new college curriculum will then provide more options and choice for those pupils to continue their studies in these key areas when they leave school.

**Scott Steele**

Head Teacher  
Lochaber High School

The Science Skills Academy (SSA) was set up to inspire children and young people across the Highlands and Islands to become interested in and excited by the core STEM subjects - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING and MATHEMATICS. Its aim is to encourage more young people to study STEM subjects in school and beyond, and to highlight STEM-related careers, particularly those available in the Highlands and Islands.

The focus of the SSA's efforts will be a network of five new, inspirational NEWTON ROOMS where classes of school children, in particular P6-S2 pupils, will take part in hands-on STEM activities. The first two Newton rooms in Highland Region will be located in Lochaber and Caithness. Future locations will include Easter Ross, Wester Ross & Skye and Inverness. Our aim is to have a Newton room located within one hour's travel distance of the majority of schools in the Highland Region.

**Dr Emma Robertson**

Project Manager  
Science Skills Academy

I am really excited about this innovative and ground-breaking development. Sustaining services across Highland is our number one challenge. I have every confidence that the new state-of-the-art centre will create fantastic opportunities and attract many more people to come and live, learn and work in Lochaber as well as other parts of Highland.

We are working very closely with our partners which includes building a replacement for the Belford Hospital on the campus. We already have outstanding staff, skills and experience now they will be able to work and train in outstanding facilities. Everyone working on the development should be applauded for their forward thinking.

**Elaine Mead**

Chief Executive  
NHS Highland

As the global economy is putting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills in the spotlight, West Highland College UHI is at the forefront of a revolution for Lochaber and the Highlands who are currently missing out on an important supply of skilled talent. A STEM centre in Fort William will ensure that the future workforce has the right balance of skills to take advantage of opportunities and be prepared to adapt to change - enabling the Highlands to maximise its economic competitiveness and productivity.

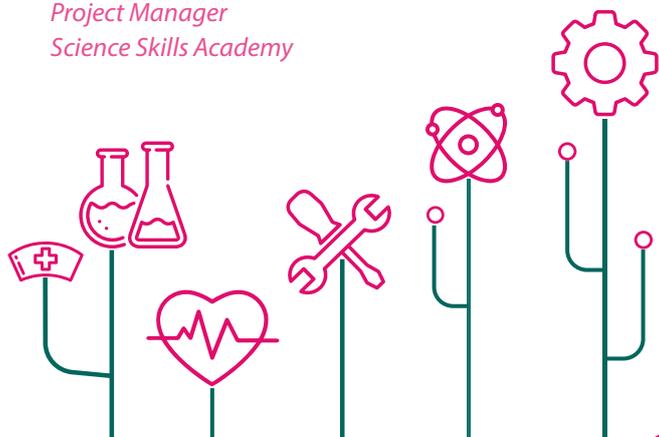
**Lesley Benfield**

Chief Executive  
Lochaber Chamber of Commerce

A new Science, Technology, Health and Engineering Centre will considerably enhance collective efforts to develop local skills, especially opportunities for young people. A new centre will also assist with attracting talent to the Lochaber area. HIE have been pleased to support the early stage works required to develop the business case to build such a significant and transformational new facility. The proposed Centre is a crucial part of the long term Vision for Lochaber and will enable businesses and students to access courses, some of which will be new, some of which they currently they have to travel some distance for.

**Stuart MacPherson**

Head of Strategic Projects  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise

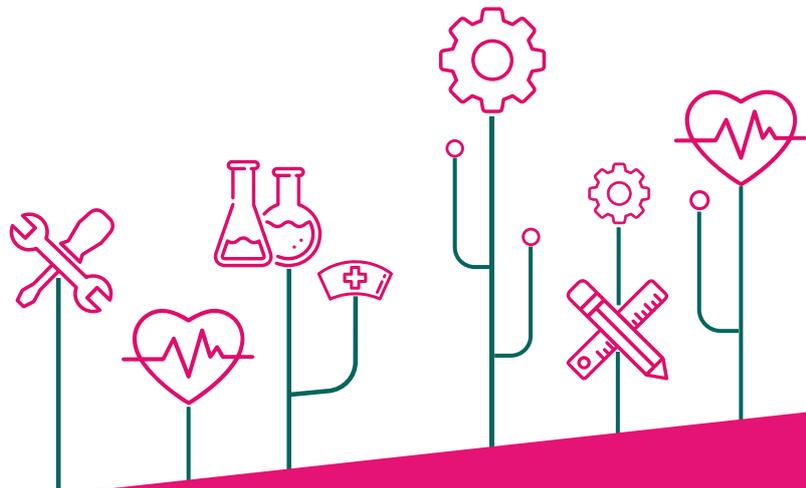




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[www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/stemcentre](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/stemcentre)