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## **THE PINES**

**by Bill Alexander**

**‘The Pines’ is a multi-agency centre for children on the autistic spectrum. The building is jointly funded by Highland Council and NHS Highland, and is a Private Finance Initiative.**

**The centre was planned in consultation with families and voluntary organisations, as a one-stop-shop. It acts as the hub for Highland’s multi-agency autism services, supporting local diagnosis and local provision, providing quality assurance and specialist advice.**

**The centre will accommodate health, education and social work staff, and the National Autistic Society. It has a large training room for work with families and professionals (where the Joint Committee will be held), clinical and diagnostic facilities and a specialist library.**

**It is not intended that the centre will become fully operational until after the summer, when the formal public opening will also be held. This provides an opportunity to hold the Joint Committee here today, and members will be able to have a look around the centre at the beginning of the meeting.**