



MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION RESOURCES TRUST MEETING

Thursday 14 May 2026, 9.15am
Leeds, Harington

PRESENT

Liz Birchall, Rob Guthrie, Thomas Heath, Guy Magrath (Chair), Alex Mould, Clive Norgaard Morton, Mark Tinkler, Stuart Williams (Executive Principal)

IN ATTENDANCE

Oliver Teasel (Head of Harington School), Chris Wilson (Chief Finance Officer), Sheryl Wilson (Governance Professional).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Guy Magrath welcomed attendees. Apologies were received and accepted from Andrew Holt and Andrew Cross (Vice Chair). Thomas Heath and Liz Birchall were welcomed to the Resources committee, this was their first meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTEREST

No personal or pecuniary interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from Thursday 26 March 2026 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

The minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee on Harington Expansion from Thursday 26 March 2026 were signed as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. FINANCE REPORT

Current Financial Position

- Reporting period: Period 7 (just over halfway through the financial year).
- Income: Approximately 59% of the annual budget has been received
- Premises costs are currently over budget due to upfront payments early in the year and planned capital works, e.g. flooring in the Orangery.

Reserves Position

- Previous year carry-forward: £969k (approximate interpretation).
- Current projected position:
 - Reduced to £890k due to timing and commitments.
- Committed spend:

- New primary boiler (up to £60k)
 - Orangery flooring (completed but not yet paid)
 - IT equipment replacement programme
- These are not overspends but planned capital commitments, removed from projections to ensure accuracy.

Projected Year-End Position

- Current in-year position: £37k surplus (income vs expenditure).
- Adjusted projection after accounting for known commitments:
 - Estimated year-end reserves: £1 million
- Financial position remains controlled and flexible:
 - Non-essential spending can be delayed if required.

Key Financial Factors & Adjustments

- DFE Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid:
 - Submitted for boiler replacement at Catmose Primary, decision expected in May.
- National Insurance grant + core budget grant:
 - Approx. £120k received (not yet reflected in figures).
- Pension employer contribution reduction:
 - Reduced from 23.1% to 13.6% (from April).
 - Estimated saving: £80k over final 5 months.
- Pupil Premium timing differences:
 - Payments lag create apparent shortfall (£60k).
- Harington pupil number adjustment:
 - Expected positive adjustment - £137k (pending).

Risks & Uncertainties

- Boiler cost variation depending on funding outcome.
- Timing of income streams and grants.
- SEN income trending higher than expected (positive risk).

Financial Reporting Feedback (Committee Discussion)

- Some members found the reporting format unclear.
- Concern that:
 - Too much granular data reduces clarity.
 - Lack of intermediate summary between detail and headline figures.
- Suggestions:
 - Introduce clearer summary-level indicators
 - Potential for improved dashboards or alternative visual formats.
- Response:
 - Current reporting reflects full accounting extraction.
 - Will consider improving presentation format.
 - Offer made for one-to-one walkthroughs for clarification.

Utility Costs and Risk Management

- Long-term purchasing strategy implemented:
 - 93% electricity and 98% gas already secured for 2025–26.
 - High forward purchasing up to 2029.
- Purpose:
 - Protect against market volatility (e.g., geopolitical events).
- Utilities account for:
 - £350k–£400k annually (significant variable cost area).

External Audit Tender

- Three tenders were reviewed.
- Trustees and Members unanimously approved the appointment of Azets.

Central Cost Apportionment

- £502k distributed across academies.
- Covers shared services (e.g. leadership, HR, site, IT, catering, admin).
- Confirmed as:
 - Recently reviewed
 - Considered fairly allocated.

Overall Financial Risk Assessment

- No major financial risks identified.
- Variances considered:
 - Normal operational fluctuations.
 - Not structurally concerning.
- Committee reassured:
 - Strong financial control
 - Accurate forecasting historically reliable.

6. ACADEMY-LEVEL FINANCIAL POSITIONS

Catmose Primary

- Forecast: £24k surplus (vs expected £10k deficit).
- Positive drivers:
 - Higher catering income
 - Increased SEN income
- Risks:
 - Boiler funding outcome may impact final position.

Catmose College

- Forecast: £72k surplus vs £1k budget.
- Variances:
 - Catering income higher (demand-driven)
 - Food costs also higher (offsetting income)
- Premises costs:
 - £92k spent vs £43k budget
 - Includes:
 - Astro pitch lighting (£10k)
 - Fire panel replacement (£6k)
- Explanation:
 - Aging infrastructure increasing repair unpredictability.

Harington School

- Current outlook:
 - Slight positive variance vs budget.
- Factors:
 - Exam fees significantly higher than expected (£185k vs £166k budget)
 - Utilities and timing effects influencing position
- Exam fee increase identified as anomaly
 - Investigation to follow (possible cost inflation by exam boards)
- Performing in line with expectations
- Exam costs increased (approx. 4%) due to:
 - Exam board fee increases
 - Late entry charges (previous year impact)
- Forecast position expected to be close to break-even

7. RISK REGISTER

- Reviewed at high level.
- No new significant risks identified.
- Key points:
 - Focus remains on major strategic risks only.
 - IT and employment law identified as emerging areas for future review.
- Trustees agreed focus should remain on:
 - Identification of key strategic risks
 - Assurance that appropriate mitigation plans are in place

Catering

The Audit and Risk Committee will scrutinise catering as this area is considered an area of risk due to several factors: (1) the continual increase in food prices; (2) the Government's recent food consultation, with a survey to be completed by 12 June 2026, on proposed changes to school food standards; and (3) the appointment of a new catering manager.

Cybersecurity

- Confirmed:
 - Cyber insurance is in place (DfE Risk Protection Arrangement).
- IT resilience identified as key operational risk.

8. HR UPDATE

- Staffing remains stable.
- Key updates:
 - New Science teacher appointed (experienced biologist).
 - Transition of Exam Access Arrangements role at Harington with handover planned over 12 months.
- Staff attendance:
 - Overall strong (97%)
 - 42% of staff with 100% attendance, this will be reviewed, although could relate to coding inconsistencies for leave of absence requests.

*CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

- Noted outstanding financial approvals (>£50k).
- Transition to catering discussion scheduled next.
- Use of AI tools (e.g. Co-pilot) discussed for improving:
 - Recording
 - Risk analysis
 - Consistency of reporting

10. KEY ACTIONS

Action	Owner	Notes
Investigate exam fee increase	CFO	Compare exam boards and cost drivers
Review coding of staff attendance	HR Manager	Update HR Scorecard
Review financial reporting format	CFO/ Leadership	Explore clearer summaries/dashboards
Arrange finance walkthrough (new members)	CFO	Optional support session
Proceed with IT staff regrading	Leadership	Retention priority
Monitor CIF boiler funding outcome	CFO	Critical capital risk
Continue monitoring SEN income	Finance team	Positive variance

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Resources Committee: Thursday 2 July 2026 at 2pm (note change of usual time).
Members and Trust meeting will follow at 3pm.