RUTLAND AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS' FEDERATION

MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION RESOURCES MEETING

Thursday 2 July 2026, 2pm
The Gallery

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Oliver Teasel (Head of Harington School), Kelly Jackson (Head of Catmose Primary), Chris Wilson (Chief Finance Officer), Sheryl Wilson (Governance Professional)

1. WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Guy Magrath welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Alex Mould. This was Rob Guthrie's final Resources Committee meeting following his resignation as Trustee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Andrew Holt and Clive Norgaard Morton declared interests relating to the agenda item regarding staff pay awards.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2026

The Resources Committee minutes from the last meeting were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5. FINANCE REPORT

Overall Position

Trustees were advised that the Federation remains in a strong financial position. Income levels continue to be positive and expenditure is well controlled. Despite several unplanned costs during the year, confidence remains that the Federation will finish the financial year at, or close to, break-even whilst maintaining approximately £1 million in reserves/capital balances.

Income

Trustees were made aware of several positive income variances:

- Additional Teachers' Pension Grant funding has been confirmed.
- SEN income continues to exceed budget expectations.
- Catering income remains significantly above forecast due to increased student demand.
- Overall income for 2026/27 is expected to increase by approximately 5.8%.

Trustees discussed the loss of the Pupil Number Adjustment (PNA) funding for Harington School for this year. Although pupil numbers increased significantly, changes to the funding calculation meant no growth funding would be received this year. The increase will instead be reflected in future funding allocations.

Expenditure

There are several areas where expenditure exceeded budget:

Repairs and Maintenance

Expenditure had reached approximately £140k due to:

- Mechanical and electrical works within the Sports Hall plant room.
- Repairs at Catmose College plant facilities.
- Re-bulbing works for the Astro turf and car park lighting.
- Ongoing issues with the Catmose Primary boiler.

Trustees noted that many of these costs were one-off and should reduce in future years.

Utilities

Electricity costs had increased due to rising infrastructure and non-commodity charges despite favourable energy contracts. Water and sewerage costs had also risen because of increased usage and inclusion of the sports hall facilities.

Examination Fees

Examination costs were higher than budgeted, which can be attributed to more students taking examinations with CNAT exams taking place in Year 10. Awarding body costs have also increased.

Trustees commented that examination entry trends should be reflected more accurately in future budgeting.

The Chief Finance Officer will review examination projections with the senior team to ensure future forecasts are reflected in the budget.

Staffing Costs

Staffing costs remains well controlled and teacher salary costs remain within the budget. Support staff costs are benefiting from a significant reduction in LGPS employer contribution rates with savings of approximately £80k anticipated by year-end.

Cashflow and Reserves

Cash reserves continue to remain stable at approximately £1.04 million throughout the year. The Committee was reassured that despite fluctuations caused by trip balances and other timing differences, the underlying financial position remains strong.

Catmose Primary Boiler Quotes over £50K

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Federation's Condition Improvement Fund bid had been unsuccessful and therefore external funding would not be available for replacement of the Catmose Primary boiler. Three quotations had been obtained, with the lowest being approximately £61k. Trustees were advised that the existing boiler was

nearing end of life, and there is a significant risk of failure during winter. Installation could be completed during the summer holiday period.

Trustees agreed that delaying replacement would expose the school to unnecessary operational risk.

Action: Trustees approved the replacement boiler project and authorised the chair to sign the necessary documentation.

6. PAY AWARDS 2026/27

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report outlining the proposed pay awards for both teaching and support staff and the financial implications for the Federation. Trustees considered the proposals alongside the Federation's current budget position and future funding expectations.

The Department for Education has announced a proposed 6.5% increase in teachers' pay over two years, comprising:

- 3.5% from September 2026
- 3.0% from September 2027

Trustees were advised that schools are expected to fund approximately 1% of the increase each year, with Government grant funding expected to cover the remainder. While details of the 2026/27 pay grant had not yet been confirmed, previous years' arrangements suggest the Federation could receive funding broadly equivalent to 2.5% of the pay award, representing an estimated grant of around £130,000 based on the current teaching pay bill of approximately £5.2 million.

Trustees were informed that support staff had been offered a 3.3% pay increase across all pay points together with the removal of spinal column point 2, meaning employees currently on that point would move to point 3 and receive an additional salary increase of approximately £400, in addition to the 3.3% uplift.

The Federation proposed applying the 3.3% increase across all support staff pay scales up to Scale Point 55. Unlike the teaching award, no additional Government funding is expected to support this increase and the cost will therefore need to be met from existing Federation budgets.

The Chief Finance Officer advised trustees that although the national negotiations had not been fully concluded, it was considered highly unlikely that the final settlement would be below 3.3%.

The Committee considered the pay awards against the wider budget position presented earlier in the meeting. Trustees noted that:

- Overall Federation income is expected to increase by approximately 5.8% in 2026/27.

- Teacher salary costs had originally been budgeted on the assumption of a lower increase and would require updating in the Budget Forecast Return.
- Savings generated through the reduction in LGPS employer contribution rates were helping offset pressures within support staff budgets.
- An updated Budget Forecast Return would be circulated once the final pay and grant assumptions were confirmed.

Trustees agreed that the Federation should adopt the national pay awards for both teaching and support staff, and that the amended pay scales would take effect from 1 September 2026. Trustees with declared interests did not participate in the decision

7. BUDGET FORECAST RETURN (BFR)

The Chief Finance Officer presented the draft Budget Forecast Return.
Key points included:

- The Federation remains forecast to achieve a balanced position.
- Updated assumptions concerning teacher and support staff pay awards will be incorporated.
- The DfE submission deadline has been extended until September.

Action: The Board approved the Budget Forecast Return subject to the agreed amendments and updated pay assumptions being incorporated. An updated version will be emailed to Trustees.

8. CATERING UPDATE

The Resources Committee received a catering position update showing that the Federation's catering service is performing strongly and is forecast to end the year with an overall surplus of approximately £35,165. The surplus is largely being driven by higher-than-expected meal uptake across the Federation, particularly at Catmose College. At the end of May total catering income was forecast to reach £745,838 with overall expenditure forecast at £710,673. The projected surplus would be reinvested into the catering service. The primary proposal is to purchase two new ovens for Catmose College in preparation for expected Government food standards changes due in 2027. The new equipment would support greater use of oven-baked foods and reduce reliance on frying.

The report also noted that catering funds had already contributed towards improvements including the replacement flooring in the Orangery.

Trustees sought assurance regarding equipment and provision at Catmose Primary. Kelly Jackson reported that catering equipment was operating effectively and the school has moved towards healthier food preparation methods, with fried food limited to Fridays, most meals are oven-baked.

Looking ahead, the catering budget for 2026/27 has been set to broadly break even after allowing for significant planned investment in equipment and repairs. The budget includes:

- Approximately £40,000 - £50,000 for replacement catering equipment and repairs

- No planned increase in meal prices
- Continued monitoring of Free School Meal policy changes and their potential impact on uptake
- Expected growth in demand from increasing student numbers, including an additional 30 students joining Catmose College Year 7.

The Committee noted that funds would only be committed to major equipment purchases once it was certain sufficient surplus had been achieved.

Trustees were pleased with the strong financial performance of the catering operation. They welcomed the planned reinvestment of surpluses into equipment upgrades, recognised the move towards healthier food preparation methods, and supported the aim of maintaining a cost-neutral service while continuing to improve facilities for students.

9. SPORTS BOOKINGS

The Committee received an update on the Federation's first year of hiring sports facilities to community groups. The report highlighted a positive start, with local football, badminton, pickleball and netball clubs regularly using Federation facilities.

To avoid significant increases in staffing and operating costs, bookings are currently restricted to: 5.30pm - 7.30pm Monday to Thursday during term time and 9.30am–4.30pm during school holidays.

Facilities available for hire include:

- The floodlit Astro turf pitch
- The floodlit MUGA
- The old sports hall
- The main sports hall
- Dance studios within the sports hall complex

The Astro turf has been the most successful facility, particularly during winter months when local football clubs require floodlit training facilities. The main sports hall is regularly used by local badminton, pickleball and netball clubs.

The report showed that sports bookings are forecast to generate: total income of £16,277 with costs of £15,194 and an overall surplus of approximately £1,083.

Costs include administration, site staffing, energy usage and a significant one-off cost relating to floodlight re-bulbing. Trustees noted that the floodlight refurbishment had been funded from sports lettings income and would support future use of the facility.

Trustees questioned whether the Federation could generate greater income from community use of the facilities in future and if the Sports Hall operation should ultimately move beyond breaking even and generate a meaningful contribution while still supporting community engagement. The Chief Finance Officer explained that opening hours are currently the biggest barrier to growth. The report notes that the most popular booking

periods are between 6.00pm and 9.30pm and at weekends, but extending access would require significant staffing investment and nearly 1000 additional booking hours required to break even.

Conclusion

Trustees agreed to maintain the current arrangements for a further year while monitoring demand and recording any missed booking opportunities. Trustees generally agreed that the Federation's primary purpose is education rather than operating as a leisure centre, and therefore any growth in commercial lettings should be proportionate and carefully managed.

10. HR MATTERS

HR Scorecard

Oliver Teasel presented the HR Scorecard. Key highlights included:

- Staffing remains stable.
- The Federation expects to employ approximately 223 staff in September.
- Recruitment remains strong and key vacancies have largely been filled.
- New staff induction arrangements are in place and focus on safeguarding, staff conduct, organisational culture and behaviour management.
- Staff attendance remains exceptionally strong at approximately 98.3%.

In response to trustee questions, Oliver reported no significant staffing concerns at present. Trustees queried succession planning and the age profile of staff; senior leaders confirmed this was being actively considered. The Committee welcomed the positive position.

Proposed addition of STA/TA Roles

Stuart Williams presented a proposal to create an additional Senior Teaching Assistant post and Teaching Assistant (TA) post in response to the significant growth in SEND need across the Federation. The proposal was supported by increased SEN funding and changing national expectations regarding inclusion within mainstream schools

Trustees heard that SEN demand has increased substantially in recent years and continues to grow. SEN income is forecast to increase, as additional pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including out-of-county placements, join the College.

Stuart explained that recent government announcements indicate a continued policy direction towards supporting more children within mainstream settings while reducing reliance on specialist provision and, over time, reducing the number of formal plans. Trustees noted that schools are therefore expected to meet increasingly complex needs within their own provision.

The Committee was advised that the profile of SEND need is also changing. Increasing numbers of pupils are presenting with social, emotional and mental health needs, ADHD and barriers to attendance and engagement in learning.

Trustees heard that the College had already introduced targeted social and emotional support interventions, including the use of a Senior Teaching Assistant role focused on attendance and emotional wellbeing. This work had been effective and had demonstrated the value of early intervention and specialist support.

The proposal included developing a new programme for a small group of students whose needs cannot be fully met through traditional mainstream classroom approaches but who do not require placement within a Designated Specialist Provision (DSP).

The programme would:

- Initially support approximately 15 Year 7 students.
- Provide a more personalised curriculum pathway.
- Include access to forest school activities and outdoor learning.
- Utilise the Hub as a base for support.
- Deliver accredited life-skills opportunities.
- Provide emotional literacy and wellbeing support.
- Strengthen literacy and numeracy provision.
- Remove the requirement to study Modern Foreign Languages where appropriate.
- Continue through Years 7, 8 and 9 to address barriers to learning and engagement.

The new Senior Teaching Assistant post would complement existing Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provision, therefore expanding the Federation's capacity to support vulnerable learners.

The proposal was fully supported by increased SEN funding.

The report estimated annual costs of:

- Teaching Assistant: approximately £22,861–£24,426 including on-costs.
- Senior Teaching Assistant: approximately £34,505–£36,390 including on-costs.

The combined annual cost would be between £57,366 and £60,816, which had already been built into the Budget Forecast Return.

Trustees unanimously supported the proposal and agreed that the additional roles would enhance the Federation's ability to meet rising SEND needs while making effective use of increased SEN funding.

Confidential minutes*

11. CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

Teachers' Contracts

Stuart Williams reported on the development of updated teacher contracts.
Changes have been necessary due to:

- New employment legislation
- Legal advice received by the Federation

- The need to provide greater clarity regarding employer and employee responsibilities
- The revised contracts now run to approximately 24 pages
- Trustees acknowledged the substantial work undertaken and praised the quality of the revised documentation
- The Committee supported prioritising implementation of the new contracts for recently appointed teachers. Andrew Holt abstained from voting.

Staff Probation Record

Stuart Williams presented proposed changes to probation procedures.

The revised process would:

- Shorten formal probation review timescales
- Ensure issues are addressed early
- Allow decisions to be made before statutory deadlines are reached

The changes are intended to strengthen management oversight and improve support for new staff.

Trustees approved the revised probation process and associated record-keeping arrangements.

12. POLICIES

Trustees reviewed the following policies:

- Federation Staff Family and Parental Leave Policy
- Federation Staff Leave of Absence Policy
- Federation Staff Induction and Probation Policy
- Federation Staff Sickness Management Policy
- Federation Academy Staff Pay Policy
- Federation Teachers' Pay Policy
- Federation Leadership Pay and Appraisal Policy

Key discussion points included:

Pay Policies

It was agreed that updates to pay policies would be revisited following confirmation of national pay arrangements.

All listed policies were approved and ratified, with updated pay policies to return to the committee in October if required.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 8 October 2026, 8.15am