

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting
Queen Emma School
Monday 24th November 2025, 5.30 p.m.
AGENDA

Present:

Sean Lang (GoG)
 Sarah Jarman (EH)
 Harriet Philips
 Anna Biard (Clerk)

Stanley Wilson
 Richard Wilson
 Richard Baldwin
 Cath Stubbs

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Actions
1	Apologies for absence		Apologies were received from Nicole Wilson and Julia Neal and were accepted.	
2	Declaration of Interest		None declared	
3	Agree Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes 06.10.2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correction – Stanley Wilson did send apologies for F&R meeting 06/10/25 P2 - SMER is the month end reporting process. (not document) P4 – Which Governor asked the question? It was Richard Baldwin. Based on the above amendments, the minutes were approved	3 x corrections to be actioned by Clerk
4	Matters Arising		Item 12 from F&R 06/10/25 Clerk to Amend wording; HP did contact PK and he confirmed that he is happy to be the named governor on the document once he has completed the training.	Document titled 'Audit for the first HR Committee Meeting' found in the F&R 06/10/25 documents. Phil Kirkman is to replace Steve Rothwell on the document once he has completed the training. ACTION – PK, Clerk

5	Personnel Update (SJ)		<p><u>QED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An early years teacher and foundation stage leader is long term sick receiving significant treatment for Cancer and is expected that will continue to remain away from work for an extended period. is a reception teacher, so to ensure consistency for the Reception class at QED, we have engaged a member of staff from QEM who typically covers PPA at Queen Emma. This arrangement required backfilling the gap at QEM, and the associated cost/insurance received will be allocated to cover the teacher at QEM. <p>Governor Challenge: What is the amount of the insurance we receive? Response: £230 a day. When agency staff are required, EHT ensures all arrangements are reviewed and approved by the Local Authority. HP confirmed that there is an impeccable paper trail in place, as verified during a recent visit to observe financial processes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A Teaching Assistant is relocating to Portugal. 3. A member of the office staff, who serves as school secretary and manages community lettings as well as the clerking role, will be leaving. The clerk element of this role will be discussed later in the meeting. There will be no reappointment of the community lettings or school secretary role, existing staff will be redeployed to cover these responsibilities. 	
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			<p>Governor Challenge: Does it leave a hole at the QED office? Response: We do need to cut admin staff across the Federation anyway. However this will be an opportunity to avoid a compulsory redundancy.</p> <p><u>QEM</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A teacher who is also a phase leader has also resigned. However, we have advertised for the position of a class teacher only. Despite advertising the position twice, no applications have been received. The EHT will seek guidance from the Local Authority, confirming all recruitment efforts which have been undertaken to date. Agency cover may need to be considered as an alternative. <p>Governor Challenge: How long have we advertised the vacancy for? Response: Since the day the resignation was given which was the last day before October half term.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: If we offer a start date of after Easter, would it make the vacancy more appealing and consequently attract more interest for the role? Response: This is not ideal and it was noted that appointing a temporary teacher for the interim period (January–April 2026) may lead to inconsistency for the children. Furthermore, reliance on an agency-supplied temporary teacher was considered less stable than assigning an existing member of staff.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A Teaching Assistant has also resigned, this has not yet been advertised. 3. The new FBM is scheduled to meet with EHT next 	
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			<p>week. Pre-employment checks, including the DBS process, are currently in progress.</p> <p>Governor Challenge/Observation: There are lots of people leaving? Response: It was noted that staff appear to be becoming aware of the Federation's current financial situation and some might be making decisions based upon that.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: How do we manage this? Response: The situation remains challenging, with staff absences contributing to increased pressure on our existing team members who are then required to provide internal cover. In addition, there are varying factors which have led to the recent resignations, particularly at QEM where we are finding that staff are leaving the education sector altogether. This is further compounding recruitment and retention difficulties.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Since we have limited choices about our financial situation, do we have to reconsider our timetable for any structural changes (currently for September 2026)? Response: No. The process was started in September 2025 and will take that long to implement changes in readiness for September 2026. The EHT is working closely with EPM and recently attended a Headteachers' Conference, where a significant focus was placed on the issue of redundancies that illustrated the timelines associated with this process.</p> <p>Our Local Authority Financial Advisor (Steph Kirbyshire) visited last week and a range of scenarios were discussed. These scenarios have now been referred back to the Local Authority for consideration of frameworks and potential financial outcomes. The results will inform future planning.</p>	
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			<p>Governor Challenge: The objective is not solely to repay historic debt, but rather to achieve a balanced financial position moving forward? Response: Yes, that is the first thing to be addressed – getting to a balanced position. The EHT also confirmed that EPM is providing support, advising us on HR matters to assist in reaching the objectives set out in budget recovery plan when it is decided.</p> <p>On 1st December at the FGB, a decision will be made about the future structure of the schools. Then on this basis, this decision will go out for consultation regarding one form entry.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: How does EPM know what an acceptable saving is? Are they in touch with the Local Authority? Response: EPM are guiding us solely through the HR process, including matters relating to trade unions, employment law, and the forthcoming legal steps. EHT added that EPM are not involved in identifying or delivering savings; only the Local Authority is responsible for estimating the financial savings.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Are things moving along? As last year it came to a bit of a standstill. Response: Yes, the process is definitely moving and will be dependent upon a governor decision about the future structures of the school that is due to take place on 1st December at the FGB.</p> <p>Clerking Role- EHT refreshed the governors with the current arrangement, which is that an existing member of staff is on the payroll for the clerking role. The current clerk AB will be leaving the</p>	
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			<p>Federation on 12/12/25 and EHT has sought advice from Governor Services regarding our options. To summarise, the options are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An ad hoc Clerk from the Local Authority will cost £320 per meeting for non subscribing schools (Queens' is a non subscribing school) 2. To become a subscribing school to the clerking service, which will cost £2310 for an in person clerk for 6 meetings. 3. To become a subscribing school to the clerking service will cost £2190 for a remote clerk for 6 meetings. Additional meetings cost: £270 <p>The cost of AB our existing clerk is £1932.08</p> <p>Governor Challenge: We have considered this matter in the past and the outcome was unfavourable. Response: EHT noted that she believed the service may have improved since the last discussion we had following the departure of the previous clerk back in March 2025.</p> <p>EHT invited governors to decide what they would like to do.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Is there anyone else in the school that we know of who may like to do take on the role? Response: It is possible and we will advertise. However, it is likely that we will need a LA clerk on a temporary basis.</p> <p>Governor Surmise: We shall use the non- subscribing clerking</p>	<p>Clerk to Contact JD for Clerking Job Description</p>
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			<p>service until April whilst advertising internally and externally at the same time. <u>DECISION AGREED BY THE GROUP</u></p> <p>AB to ask JD to send the previous Clerk to Governing Body Job Description and send it to EHT. It should then be advertised on Parentmail, newsletter and externally.</p> <p>It was agreed that for the January 2026 governor meetings, we will have to pay £320 per meeting for an ad hoc LA clerk until a new clerk is appointed and is on the payroll.</p>	
6	<p>School Business Management Report (SJ)</p> <p>Including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premises • H&S • Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget vs Actuals Report • School Business Management Report November 2025 	<p>EHT was advised by the SFA that it was not advisable to provide this information for this evening's meeting due to the current complexities around the anomalies in the current staffing information on SBS.</p> <p><u>STAFF</u></p> <p>EHT and the Finance Manager are in the process of carrying out a major overhaul of all staff lists and staff contracts. Renewed Job Descriptions, renewed contracts, honorariums are being reviewed to ensure that staff are not continuing to receive pay for tasks they no longer undertake.</p> <p>TLRs in particular are being continually reviewed and phase leader positions which may no longer be required or are appropriate.</p> <p>EHT understood that Jonty Holden has taken on a wider role at the Local Authority within the financial department.</p>	

			<p>Steph Kirbyshire has commenced her role as LA School Finance Advisor to Queens' Federation. In the absence of a Business Manager she has provided us with support on request, particularly with SMERs and CEAs. Work has focused on ensuring staffing databases are accurately reflected in SBS, which remains a priority.</p> <p>At the point of her departure from the Federation the previous FBM (NP) was at the point of extrapolating (with the LA) the nursery and extended care figures into two schools. They are still clumped together and shown in the budget snap shot (QED October SMER highlighted in yellow). This will be the next large piece of work that the new Federation Business Manager will have to undertake with the support of the LA.</p> <p><u>QED BUDGET MONITORING</u> Table 1 highlights the miscoding of extended care income/expenditure, this requires reallocating to fund 08 and the separation of nursery costs. A new code '09' will be introduced next year to split sites accurately which will impact the year-end forecast. Table 2 shows the adjusted forecast based on best-guess cost splits.</p> <p>When the two schools' extended care October SMER figures are adjusted and separated, it positively impacts the QED budget. Conversely when the QEM is corrected to reflect the correction, it places QEM further into deficit.</p> <p><u>QEM BUDGET MONITORING</u> EHT touched on the monitoring of QEM Holiday Clubs. The overview of the summer holiday club shows a £1672.72</p>	
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			<p>loss. Versus the October half term which shows a £1851.50 profit.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the ongoing income and expenditure closely. We need to consider what our profit margin realistically looks like and to work out if running the holiday club is financially viable.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Is it an option to not run QEM nursery over the Summer holidays? Response: This situation would not be ideal, as parents may make alternative arrangements and not return to the school. This could result in reduced pupil numbers, impacting reception places in future years.</p> <p><u>BENCHMARKING</u></p> <p>The Benchmarking Data 24-25, these are the figures we will use to confirm the areas of spending requiring action and are detailed in the financial recovery plan. The data also provides context as to why we are making the necessary changes.</p> <p>The QEM staffing changes will show in November.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Is the Nursery staffing particularly problematic? Response: At QEM nursery we accept 2 and 3 year olds which require a higher staff: pupil ratio, which we do not have at QED. We are in the process of looking at the staffing at both nurseries, as well as the extended care. We will use the austerity models to discuss the possibility removing a teacher in the Nursery.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: When will we have a decision on Model A or Model B? Response: A mandate for changes will be proposed to Governors at their Spring term FGB meeting.</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security Assessment 24 – Queen Edith 	<p><u>CAPITAL SPEND</u></p> <p>A number of staff laptops have been replaced due to being too old to accept the Microsoft update across the Federation. This has been planned for and is in our capital budget.</p> <p><u>GENERAL UPDATES/CONTRACT REVIEWS</u></p> <p>The tree risk assessments have been completed for both schools and the information has been shared with Site Officers. This is included in the Grounds Maintenance budget, however we will need to add/incur any felling costs.</p> <p><u>SITE ISSUES/ H&S- QUEEN EDITH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water pumps. Over half term, the school's water pumps at QED failed, and the inverters are obsolete. PCM recommends replacing all three pumps; without this, the school cannot open. A temporary bypass is in place but unreliable. PCM is working with the LA capital team on costs and funding. The Local Authority have an obligation to meet the funding of this work in order to keep the school open. <p>Governor Challenge: Is there currently water? Response: Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doors. The internal entrance doors by the office at QED are at the end of their life, prompting a safeguarding review. An LA representative Sam Halpin recommends adding a fence and security door as the first line of defence. She has provided the school with a report, and we've been asked to obtain quotes. Once received, the LA Health and Safety Lead advises applying for funding from the LA Capital Team. It was highlighted that this will impact the KS1 	
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			<p>playground and play equipment plan.</p> <p><u>SITE ISSUES/ H&S- QUEEN EMMA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating System. The ongoing heating replacement is nearing completion at QEM, including signing off by Building Control for the certification which is happening next on Thursday 27th November. The school requested a report from John Clayton (CCC) on completed work and Phase 2 plans for efficiencies. John Clayton is, aware of the school's financial position and will meet urgently with Alison Cramer (Assistant Director of Education). He noted that savings shared by Gareth Young (consultant engineer) had been over inflated. PCM added that the two recommended new units are 'gold standard' and likely unaffordable, but correcting BMS controls should still deliver efficiency through zoning. <p>Governor Challenge: "Over Inflated" - Please explain?: Response: EHT explained that for the below reasons John Clayton may feel that the savings by Gareth Young have been over inflated;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The heating is now working. 2. Working but with no BMS controls. 3. The recommendation that the two new units were not necessities, they were specified but were not built. <p>Governor Challenge (RB): Was the building built to the final spec? Did the plans include the two units or didn't they? Response: Governor SW believed that our original building plans and specifications are in what was known as "Penny's</p>	
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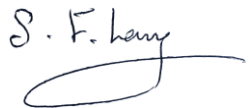
			<p>Cupboard” which is the cupboard in the now Finance Manager’s office.</p> <p>Governor Challenge (CoG): At what stage does the Local Authority pass current document to the Archive department? The response was that it may be worth a visit to the Cambridgeshire Archives in Ely to try and locate any Operations/Maintenance manuals which may be stored there.</p> <p>Governor Challenge (RB): Should we be concerned that there is too much going on without a Federation Business Manager in post? For example the QEM holiday clubs, should we forget about these as for the sake of 1K or 2K (mentioned above in the budget monitoring) this is not the best use of the time of EHT? And are we at risk of clawback by use of the capital budget (as the laptops are not on October SMER) Response: EHT would rather not forget about nurseries as we risk losing future pupils. RB responded and EHT agreed that the focus should be on the restructure and subsequent staffing, as well as the caretaker house which has been left with Alison Cramer and Chris Sutton to take away and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaking roof. Following significant rainfall a serious leak has affected the library and a KS2 classroom at QEM, an insurance claim has been submitted for the damage to the items in the library, we are currently waiting for an assessor to attend. The damage is mainly books, sofas and some cabling. • Solar panels. We are waiting to receive the income from the solar panels at QEM which aren’t yet 	
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			<p>reflected in the SMER. The contractor commissioned by the LA who installed the solar panels would like to inspect with solar panels with a drone as they would like a second opinion to verify the costs provided by the maintenance firm.</p> <p>Chair of the F&R committee HP thanked EHT for the informative report.</p>	
7	Policies for review and ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff-e-Safety Acceptable Use Staff Induction Policy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reorder the first 2 pages which are the wrong way round Change the word 'staff' to 'adult' on the cover page <p>This policy applies to any adult accessing e-materials in schools. There will also be a pupil version with age appropriate language displayed in classrooms. This policy includes AI and data protection. It is the model Local Authority, ICT version. Governor Challenge: What is best practice for the use of AI in our schools? Response: This has been covered by the reviewing of our AI policy in the Autumn S&I committee meeting.</p> <p>A further request was highlighted to all governors that Federation Email addresses must be used going forward, particularly as the clerking service which we are temporarily using will expect this.</p> <p>Policy accepted based on the amendments above.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The date on the front page, table date needs to be changed from 28th to 24th /11/25 Page 7 – correct 'Business Manage' to 'Business Manager. <p>This is an EPM derived policy</p> <p>Policy accepted based on the above amendments</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettings Policy 	<p>AB (Clerk and Community Lettings Administrator) informed governors of the addition of Item 18: 'School IT Infrastructure.' This follows recent enquiries assuming the School's WiFi is included in premises hire, which has led to challenging communication and administration.</p> <p>Policy accepted based on the above amendments</p>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV & Surveillance 	<p>This has been updated in line with advice we have received from the Local Authority.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Have we had any access requests from parents for access? Response: No not really, for example a missing scooter.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: re. Item 6.1- How is the governing body expected to ensure the CCTV is operated within the parameters of the policy? Response: By reading the H&S site visit notes submitted at committee meetings. The CCTV is checked on H&S site visits which can then generate questions from governors.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: How do we comply with legislation listed in the policy? Response: The DPO (Data Protection Officer) is the EHT for our schools. The governors could ask EHT how she is discharging those responsibilities, for example the discussion at tonight's meeting and review of the policy. In complicated cases, EHT would refer to LA for guidance. We have established this evening that we do take action by asking EHT questions and this ensures that we are adhering to the policy. EHT went on to explain that if there was a complaint, we would need to</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Policy (HB RH) 	<p>check compliant we have been in terms of adhering to the policy.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Is this reviewed annually? Response: No, it is reviewed biannually and typically the DPO will alert governors to any significant adaptations.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: HP asked RB what his particular concerns are about item 6.1 on the policy? Response: RB felt it leaves us quite exposed to everything. Solution suggestion from EHT that she could alert governors if something arises needing direct governor involvement. – Action – to be added to H&S site visits.</p> <p>P4 – reception “play area” not pay area.</p> <p>Policy accepted based on the above amendments</p> <p>To be tabled at the next meeting</p>	<p>Action: To be added to H&S Site visits; Clerk to check with EHT wording required for CCTV & Surveillance and governor involvement</p>
	Safeguarding		<p>Governor Challenge: HP to EHT; are you still having to check the filtering? Response: Yes this is done weekly.</p>	
9	What is the impact of decisions made during the previous meeting?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have identified a training gap for governors, and taken action. 2. We had a conversation about how PP funding is scrutinised, which was helpful to have this confirmed. 3. QED doors improvement is ongoing. 4. We confirmed arrangements arising from the FIG 5. A better understanding of our obligations towards trees on site. 	

10	Correspondence Circulated		None circulated	
11	Items to be reported to parents		The advertisement of the Clerk to the Governing Body Vacancy	
12	Any other business		<p>Governor HP was in school last week to perform a finance audit. She looked the new purchasing procedures with EHT and the school Finance Manager (MA). HP picked a few examples or financial processes we have in place and followed them through to completion of the task.</p> <p>HP felt that we have still good control processes in place.</p> <p>There are further control processes which need to be implemented. When the new Federation Business Managers starts, she will have to complete training at the earliest opportunity.</p>	HP to complete a governor visits report
13	Date of next meeting:	Monday 19th January 2026, 5.30pm		



Signed:
Dr Sean Lang, Chair of Governors and Acting Chair of Standards & Improvement Committee)

Date: 26/01/2026