

Huntingdon Nursery & Huntingdon Primary Federation Consultation

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We will release a list of frequently asked questions and answers during the consultation period and will also respond to specific or personal questions by email. If you would like any of the below answers to be further clarified, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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1.0 Finance									
1.1	<p>How much money does the proposed changes in the leadership structure save on the school budget and what further savings would need to be found once federated?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Budget Year</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2025/26 (Y1)</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2026/27 (Y2)</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2027/28 (Y3)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">Saving</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£59,241</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£47,194</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£38,117</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Y1 saving will be offset by redundancy costs. The saving decreases year-on-year as pay progression has been built into the new leadership structure compared to current funding.</p> <p>See Appendix 1 for Financial Modelling of the proposed Federation savings.</p>	Budget Year	2025/26 (Y1)	2026/27 (Y2)	2027/28 (Y3)	Saving	£59,241	£47,194	£38,117
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Saving	£59,241	£47,194	£38,117						
1.2	<p>What are the Terms & Conditions for the repayment of the debt? How will repayments be managed and is their interest attached to the debt?</p> <p>The repayment of the deficit will remain subject to the scheme for financing-maintained schools. Annex D – Licence deficit protocol (page 66) provides the most relevant detail on the requirements in relation to deficit license approval.</p> <p>Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools - V1.1 (cambstlearntogether.co.uk)</p>								
1.3	<p>What time horizon does the debt need to be repaid over?</p> <p>Schools will not be allowed to extend deficits indefinitely and deficits must be repaid within 3 years. Current federation proposals suggest a minimum 6-year repayment horizon and would need to be agreed with Local Authority Finance Teams.</p>								
1.4	<p>Where does the deficit budget sit once federated?</p> <p>The deficit budget will sit with the Federation</p>								
1.5	<p>Why won't the Local Authority write-off the Nursery debt to make the federation a more positive proposal?</p> <p>The Local Authority may not write-off the deficit balance of any school. Further detail is available in the Scheme for financing maintained schools (paragraph 4.7, page 19.)</p>								

	<p>Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools - V1.1 (cambstlearntogether.co.uk)</p>
1.6	<p>What negotiations have taken place regarding repayment of the debt once federated and can the decision be made contingent on an acceptable financial settlement on debt repayment?</p> <p>The debt will be subject to the Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools. Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools - V1.1 (cambstlearntogether.co.uk)</p> <p>The deficit recovery plan would need to be produced by the Executive Head Teacher working in consultation with finance colleagues at the Local Authority. Until the consultation process has concluded and a decision is taken on future direction a deliverable deficit recovery plan cannot be agreed with the Local Authority.</p> <p>This will have to balance the needs of the Federation against what is realistically achievable in regards to budget savings.</p>
1.7	<p>How will the costs of Senior Management be distributed between the two schools?</p> <p>This will be for the Federated Governing Body to decide. The Local Authority will calculate the allocated funding individually for Huntingdon Primary & Huntingdon Nursery but then transfer the lump sum to the Federation to decide how it deploys the funding available to it.</p>

2.0 Timeline & Decision Making

2.1	<p>How will the final decision on whether to federate or not be made by the Governing Body following consultation?</p> <p>The Joint Working Group will compile a report based on the responses to consultation to submit to the Governing Body of Huntingdon Nursery School & Huntingdon Primary School.</p> <p>Each Governing Body will need to consider the report from the working group independently and then vote on their decision. Each Board may vote to:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federate as proposed in the consultation • Federate with amendments based on feedback from the consultation • Cease to pursue Federation. <p>Both Governing Bodies must agree to Federate and on any amendments to the original federation proposal for the federation process to proceed. If one or both schools vote not to Federate the Federation process will cease. Additionally, if amendments to the consultation cannot be agreed upon the Federation process will cease.</p> <p>Should both Governing Bodies vote to Federate, the Joint Working Group would move to implement the proposals.</p>
2.2	<p>Can a decision to federate be made in opposition to the overall consultation response? Can the Governing Body force or prevent Federation against the wishes of a staff majority?</p> <p>Decisions relating to the Schools Structure are the responsibility of the Schools Governing Body. The Schools Governing Body should decide in the best interests of the school and take account of feedback through the consultation.</p> <p>The Governing Board has the authority to decide on the school's structure.</p>
2.3	<p>Is there an appeal process around the decision to federate?</p> <p>There is no appeal process as the schools structure is a decision for the Governing Body. The Governing Bodies are however keen to carry out meaningful consultation and gather feedback from all stakeholders in order to inform their view and ultimate decision making in regard to consultation.</p>
2.4	<p>Can the Local Authority force federation against the will of the Governing Bodies? Are the Local Authority proposing any ramification to Huntingdon Primary or Nursery if the schools do not federate?</p> <p>Huntingdon Nursery School are subject to a Notice of Concern as per the Local Authorities Schools Intervention Framework directing the Nursery's Governing Body to pursue Federation with Huntingdon Primary School.</p> <p>Huntingdon Primary School is not subject to a Notice of Concern.</p> <p>The Local Authority would not and will not sanction either school for deciding not to pursue federation if the Governing Bodies do not believe Federation is in the best interests of their School & Community. However, the Local Authority has statutory duties to fulfil in relation to Education Standards and Financial viability of schools. Should Federation not proceed then the debt held by the Nursery</p>

	<p>remains unsustainable and the Local Authority would be duty bound to intervene to minimise future losses if deficit recovery is not possible.</p> <p>Additionally, the Local Authority has statutory powers to intervene in schools subject to a notice of concern including the direct appointment of additional governors, directing a school to engage the services of a specific provider including directing to Federate or may dismiss the governing body and appoint an Interim Executive Board</p>
2.5	<p>Are there any other options in terms of school amalgamation that are not Federation?</p> <p>There are limited legal options in terms of school structure. Academy conversion is the other main option pursued by schools, but this is not available to Maintained Nursery Schools and the Department for Education has paused any further Academy conversions for the time being.</p> <p>Other less formal collaboration agreements have also been set up between schools.</p> <p>Federation is a separate legal entity that allows two or more maintained schools to form a joint governing body and benefit from potential economies of scale and efficiency from working together in a formal federation.</p>

3.0 Communication & Engagement

3.1	<p>What steps are being taken to ensure all parents and stakeholders are aware of this Consultation Process?</p> <p>The Federation Consultation Paper was circulated to Parents utilising the Schools digital platforms. The Paper has also been uploaded to both the Nursery & Primaries website so that it can be accessed by parents.</p> <p>Additionally, a Parent drop in was held on Wednesday 18th September in both settings.</p> <p>The Joint Working Group is proposing an additional Parental Drop-in session on Tuesday 15th October 2024 and will be requesting both School offices ensure this is shared with parents and they are invited to come along ask questions and express their views.</p>
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3.2	<p>Please explain in more detail how these proposals will benefit families in the Nursery & the Primary?</p> <p>The lifelong learning journey for pupil at Huntingdon Nursery & Huntingdon Primary can be seamlessly mapped across settings ensuring the most tailored support and provision can allows pupils to achieve as successfully as possible.</p> <p>Additionally, the combined approach to inclusion will ensure consistent support for disadvantaged and SEND pupil at both settings ensuring a smooth transition from SEN and EHCP application implementation of support to meet need.</p> <p>Federation will provide long term financial stability to both settings with a combined leadership structure. On current forecasting though the Nursery holds a signifincat deficit in Y2 and Y3 of the forecast Huntingdon Primary School moves into deficit while the Nursery continues to balance its budget position. By Federating this can pre-empt a deficit position for the Primary and ensure financial viability for both settings.</p> <p>Finally, by increasing the pool of stakeholders both settings aim to improve their ability to recruit and retain governors both in the parent and co-opted roles as parents will have a longer term vested interest in the success of the Federation.</p>

4.0	Staffing & Roles
4.1	<p>How will the demand for Nursery places be met if the Nursery closes?</p> <p>Local authorities are required by legislation to secure sufficient early years and childcare places to meet the demand from parents wishing to take up the entitlements they are eligible for. In doing this they encourage strong partnership working between providers from all sectors (maintained schools, academies and free schools, private, voluntary and independent providers and childminders) to ensure the market offers maximum flexibility for parents to access free hours to meet their needs and the needs of their child. Where providers close, the local authority responds to secure alternative provision to meet the demands for early years and childcare places in the area.</p>



Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

Appendix 1: Financial Impact of Proposed Federated Leadership Structure

	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	Notes
Leadership structure from 1/4/25. Ex HT, DHT, 2 xAHT, SENCO				
Revenue Expenditure	£514,315	£540,201	£561,042	
01001100-01 - Teaching Staff - Pay	£514,315	£540,201	£561,042	2023 + 3%
Existing Primary School leadership HT, DHT, 2 x AHT				
01001100-01 - Teaching Staff - Pay	£420,911	£431,011	£439,597	2023 scales + 3%
Existing Nursery leadership HT, DHT				
01001100-01 - Teaching Staff - Pay	£152,645	£156,384	£159,562	2023 scales + 3%
Total existing leadership	£573,556	£587,395	£599,159	
Total Saving	£59,241	£47,194	£38,117	



Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications



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