

## **Bristol Schools Forum**

### **Finance Sub-Group - notes of meeting on 6th November 2019**

Present: S Erskine, C Pring, C Reynell, C Townsend, D Yorath

In attendance: G Booth, T Young

The Sub-Group noted updated information about 2020/21 DSG, including:

- confirmation of DfE requirements re: MFG, minimum funding per pupil and maximum transfers between blocks;
- DfE proposals to clarify the ring-fencing of DSG; and
- updated, but still provisional, estimates of High Needs and Central Services blocks.

The Sub-Group asked for the report to the Forum to include a baseline position of minimum change from 2019/20 distribution arrangements, with other scenarios illustrated by % gains/loses, school by school.

The Sub-Group concluded that it could not comment on the issue of transfers from the Schools Block in the absence of information about the projected position on the High Needs Block. It was suggested that it would be difficult for the Forum to agree to any transfer without such projections and a strategic plan for High Needs.

The Sub-Group noted the provisional projection of a shortfall on the Growth Fund, and asked for the report to the Forum to include the options of i) meeting the shortfall within the Schools Block and ii) containing Growth Fund commitments within the DfE Growth allocation by amending the Growth Fund policy.

The Sub-Group considered options for the funding formula and for MFG. It was agreed that the formula should be changed to further increase the proportion of the quantum that is allocated using AEN factors. Two options for achieving this were identified: i) simply increasing the weighting of AEN factors and ii) adopting the National Funding Formula, which would also involve changing the KS4 AWPU and lump sums. It was agreed that the pros and cons are finely balanced. ii) reduces the risk of future 'cliff edges' when the 'hard' NFF is implemented, but in so doing it brings forward a movement of resources from small schools. It was agreed that the report could include an intermediate compromise of a partial shift towards the NFF.

The Sub-Group agreed that an MFG of +0.5% should be recommended to the Forum, as this would bring allocations more closely into line with the new formula, while still protecting 'losers' with a positive MFG.