

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: **Schools Forum**

Subject: **Section 251 Benchmarking**

Report of: **Directorate Finance Lead – Children Services and Education and Skills**

Summary

In considering the Schools Budget, schools' forums are expected to consider benchmarking data concerning its Local Authority (LA). The latest benchmarking information published by the DfE on planned expenditure by LAs is based on 2018/19 Section 251 Budget Statement. At the time of writing this report, the 2019/20 Section 251 Budget Statement is not available.

This report outlines the DfE budget data collection return and provides a summary of the current benchmarking information produced by the DfE from returns submitted by each local authority.

Recommendations

Forum Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

Contact Officers:

Name: Reena Vandhna Kohli
Position: Directorate Lead Children and Families Finance
Telephone: 0161 234 4235
E-mail: r.kohli@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Samuel Russell
Position: Senior Finance Manager, Schools Finance
Telephone: 0161 234 1464
Email: s.russell@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Prior to the start of the financial year all councils are required to publish a statement showing their planned expenditure on children's services. The statement is prescribed by the DfE and requires councils to set out in a common format their planned spending on children's services for the forthcoming financial year.
- 1.2 Since 2003/04 this has enabled the DfE to publish comparative information. The latest S251 benchmarking information was published by the DfE in and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2018-to-2019>

2. SECTION 251

- 2.1 Electronic copies of the benchmarking data from LA Table of S251 are attached at appendices A and B of the School Forum reports.
- 2.2 Schools Forum's principal role is to focus on the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant, i.e. those lines up to 1.8.1 or Column 54. The other budget lines and columns beyond that will nevertheless be of interest to the Schools Forum, because they support schools and, more broadly, children's services across the City.
- 2.3 This report looks mainly at Manchester's geographical and statistical neighbours, due to the similar characteristics and proximity of these Councils. The report considers the key statistics within S251 and highlights a number of key issues relating to them.
- 2.4 Council spend relates to all children living in the Authority area, figures provided are per capita, not per pupil. Capita figures vary from dataset to dataset, but generally include all pupils aged 3 – 19 when analysing school only services, and total population aged 0 – 19 when analysing services provided to any child in the authority area.

3. COMPARISON TO STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS

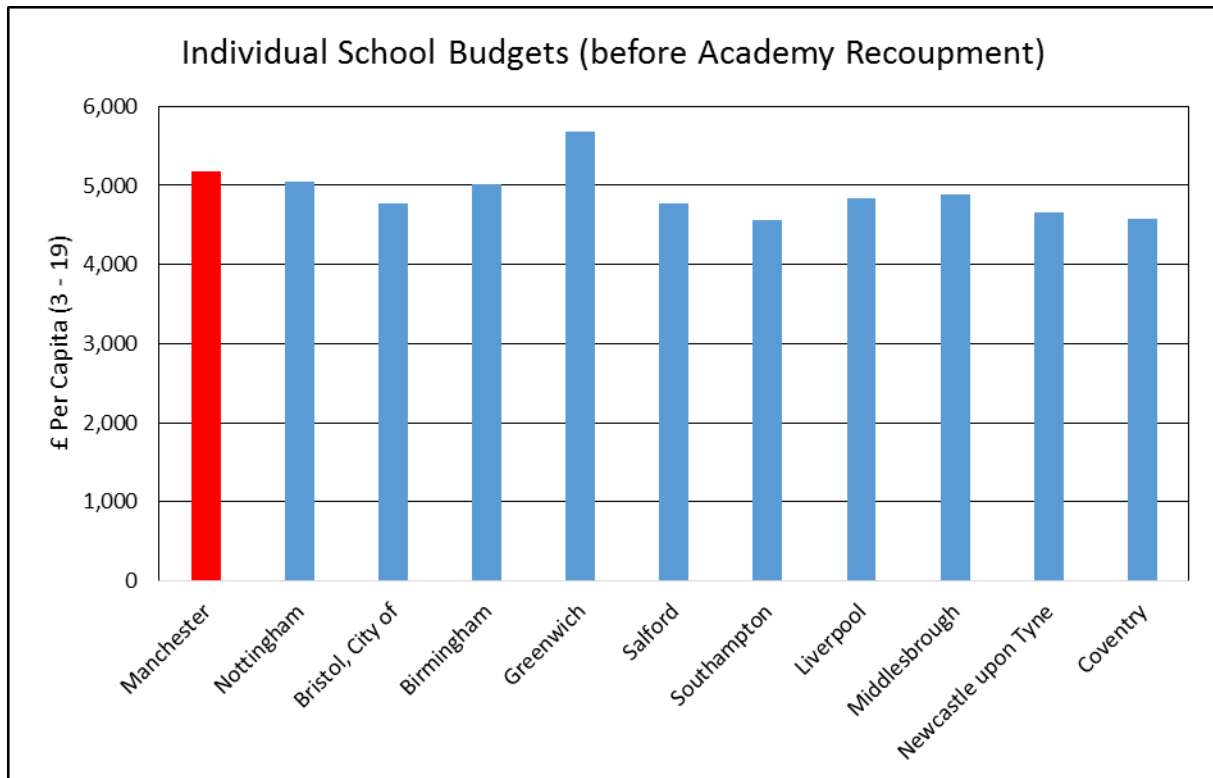
- 3.1 Manchester has ten statistical neighbours, chosen based on population, as follows:
- Bristol, City of
 - Birmingham
 - Coventry
 - Greenwich
 - Liverpool
 - Middlesbrough
 - Newcastle upon Tyne
 - Nottingham
 - Salford
 - Southampton

- 3.2 In 2018/19, Manchester City Council delegated more per capita to mainstream and special schools through the individual schools budget than any other statistical neighbour with the exception of Greenwich – a London Borough. Please see table one.

Table one: Individual School budgets, but excluding all high needs funding.

	Individual Schools Budget, but excluding all high needs place funding (B)	High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget including all pre- and post-16 place funding for maintained schools and academies	Individual Schools Budget (before Academy recoupment), including high needs place funding (B)
	£ (per Capita)		
England (avg.)	4,414	125	4,608
Manchester	4,876	184	5,176
Nottingham	4,871	95	5,046
Bristol, City of	4,552	126	4,771
Birmingham	4,748	173	5,017
Greenwich	5,502	103	5,682
Salford	4,604	99	4,767
Southampton	4,369	112	4,567
Liverpool	4,599	160	4,835
Middlesbrough	4,549	226	4,887
Newcastle upon Tyne	4,385	163	4,662
Coventry	4,401	115	4,585

Graph one: Individual School budgets, but excluding all high needs funding.

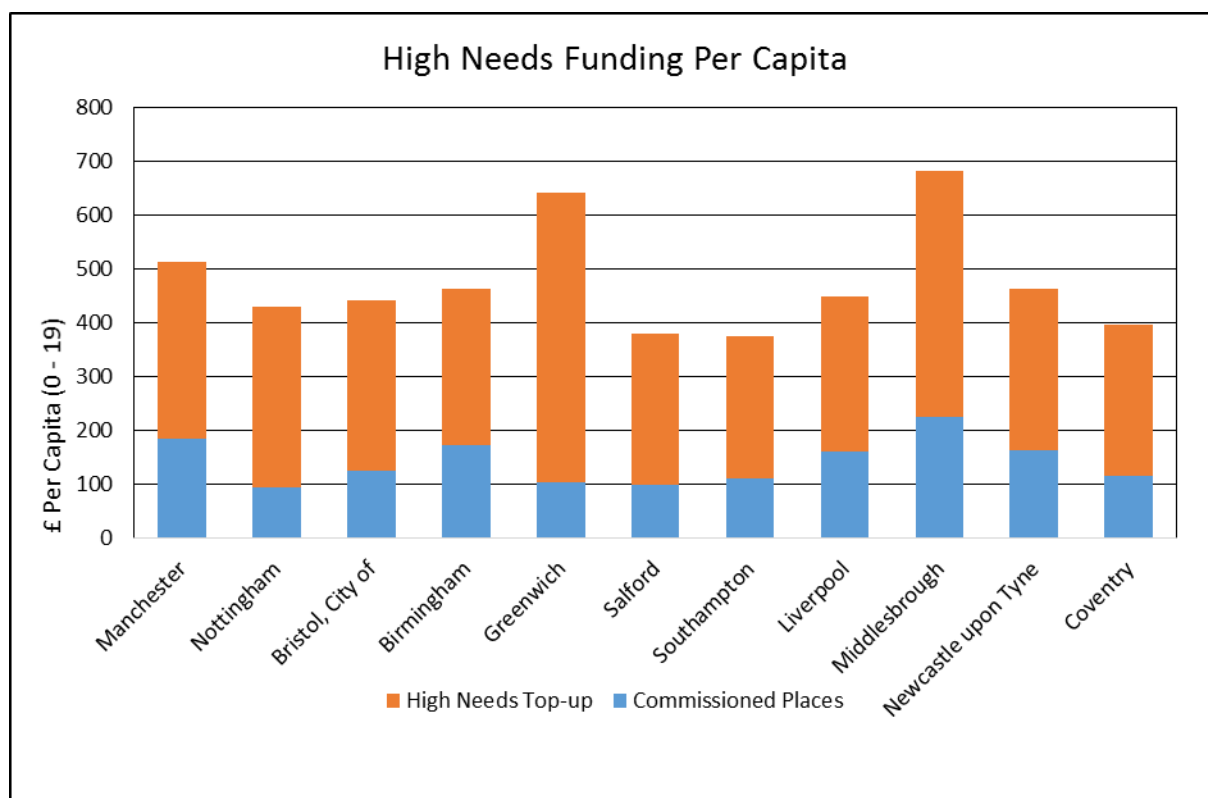


- 3.3 In 2018/19, the S251 centrally retained high needs budget figures do not include special school budgets, as these were included in the ISB figures. In 2018/19, commissioned place funding at special schools has been included in the ISB, but top up pupil funding has been included in the high needs budget figures.
- 3.4 In 2018/19, Manchester delegated the third highest combination of commissioned places and top-up funding for high needs per capita when compared to its statistical neighbours, please see table 2.

Table two: Per Capita Places and Top-up for High Needs

	Commissioned Places	High Needs Top-up	Per Capita High Needs Funding
	£ (per Capita)		
Manchester	184	£330	£514
Nottingham	95	£335	£430
Bristol, City of	126	£316	£442
Birmingham	£173	£290	£463
Greenwich	£103	£539	£642
Salford	£99	£281	£380
Southampton	£112	£263	£375
Liverpool	£160	£290	£450
Middlesbrough	£226	£455	£681
Newcastle upon Tyne	£163	£301	£464
Coventry	£115	£282	£397

Graph two: Per Capita Places and Top-up for High Needs

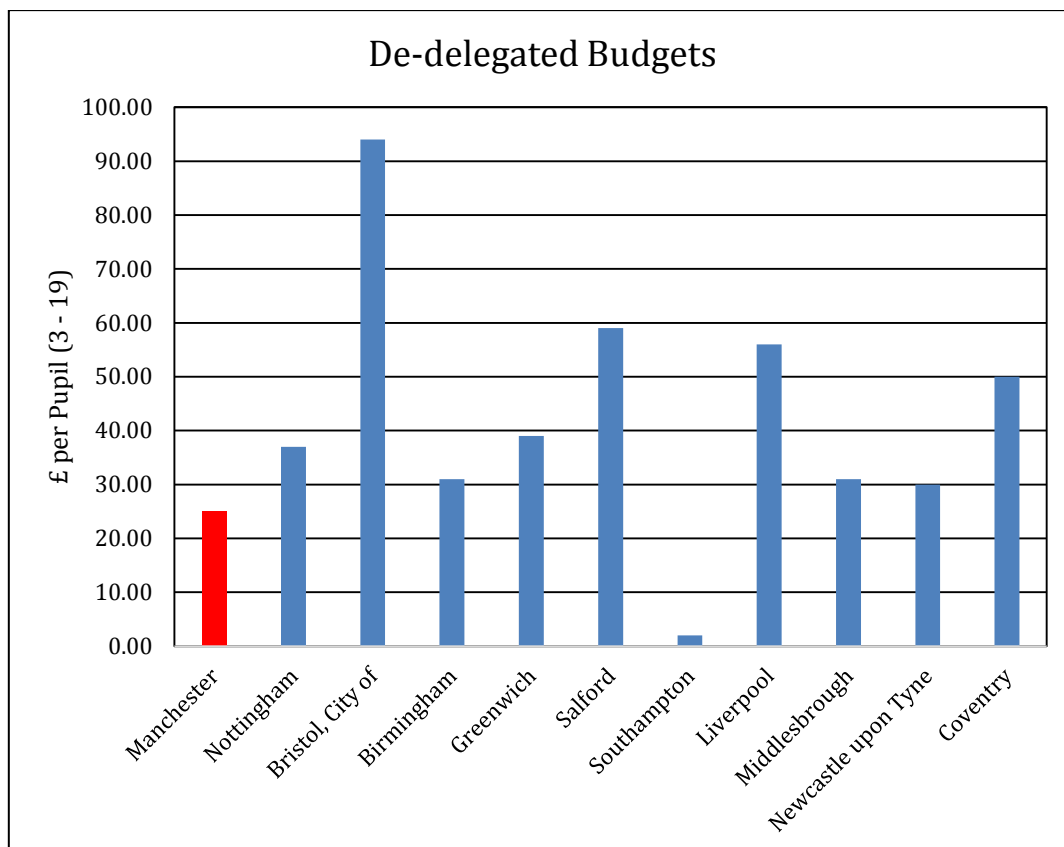


3.5 In 2018/19, Manchester's de-delegated budget was the second lowest per capita when compared to its statistical neighbours.

Table three: De-delegated Budget Categories and Education Service Grant

De-delegated budgets (detail – to nearest whole pound)	Contingencies	Behaviour support services	Support to UPEG and bilingual learners	Free school meals eligibility	Insurance	Museum and Library services	Licences / subscriptions	Staff costs – supply cover excluding facility time	Staff costs – supply cover for facility time	School improvement	Statutory/Regulatory Duties Mainstream	Statutory/Regulatory Duties Maintained Schools
Manchester	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£5	-	£14	£6
Nottingham	£9	£16	-	-	-	-	-	-	£5	-	£7	-
Bristol, City of	£15	£5	-	£1	£28	-	-	£26	£6	-	£13	-
Birmingham	£13	£3	-	-	-	-	-	-	£4	-	£11	-
Greenwich	£23	£12	-	£1	-	-	-	-	£3	-	-	-
Salford	£5	£2	£13	£2	-	£5	-	£21	£3	-	£8	-
Southampton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£2	-	-	-
Liverpool	£8	£15	£10	£1	-	-	-	£6	£4	-	£12	-
Middlesbrough	-	-	-	£3	-	-	£13	-	£7	-	£8	-
Newcastle upon Tyne	-	-	-	£2	-	-	-	-	£2	-	£7	£19
Coventry	-	-	£11	£1	-	-	-	£21	£4	£8	£5	

Graph three: Per Capita De-delegated Budgets and Education Service Grant



3.6 In 2018/19, Manchester delegated the third highest per capita budget when compared to statistical neighbours.

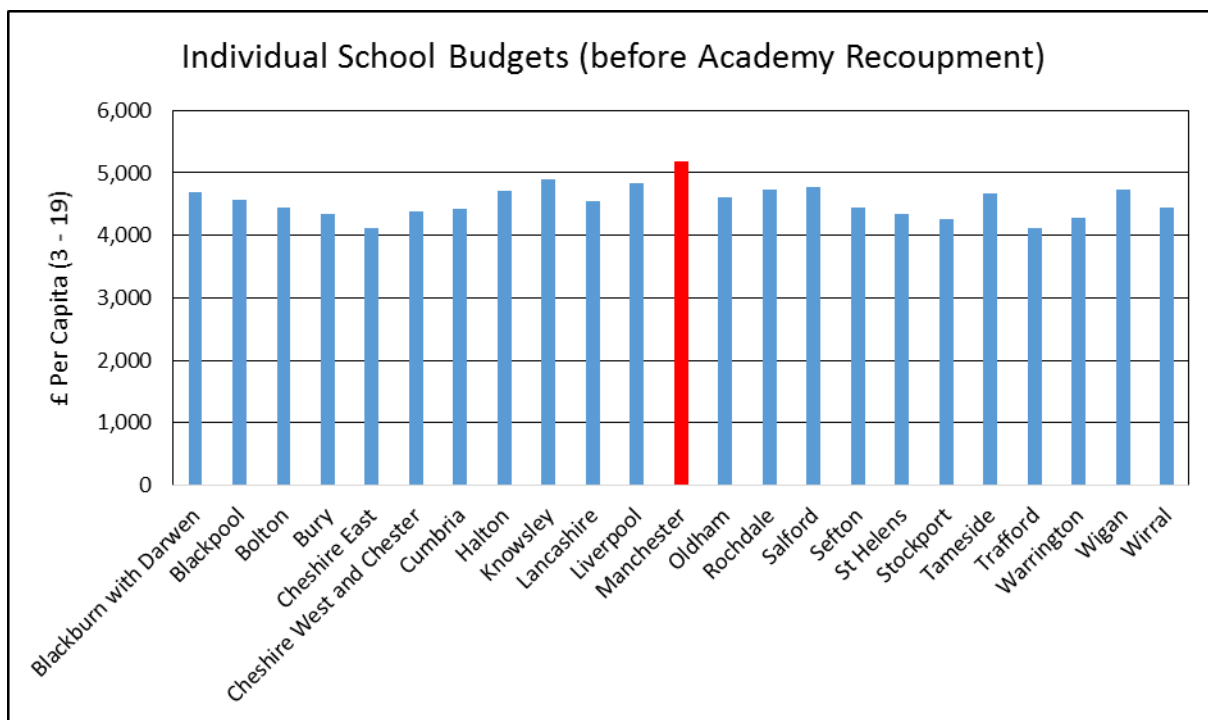
3.7 Other budgets:

- Per capital central expenditure on children on early years entitlement is in line with the mean average spend by statistical neighbours.
- School Admissions and Pupil Growth expenditure per capita remains significantly higher than all other statistical neighbours.
- Manchester's spend on SEN transport is broadly in line with the mean average spend by statistical neighbours.

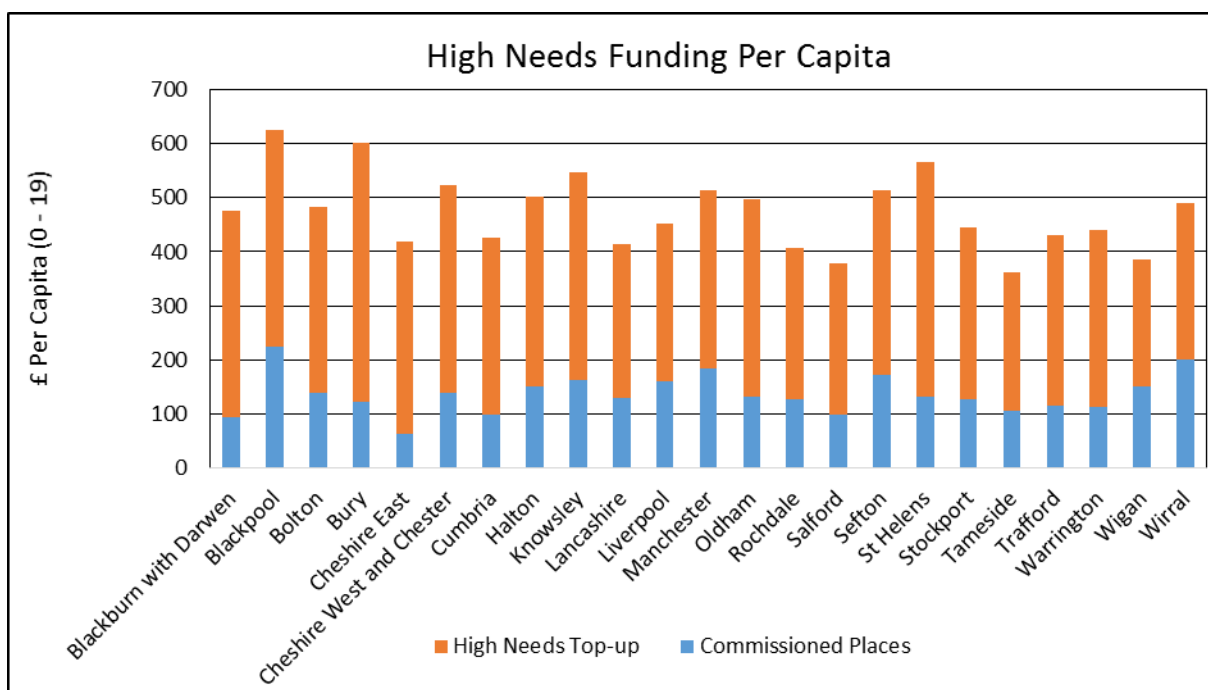
4. COMPARISON TO GEOGRAPHICAL NEIGHBOURS

4.1 Comparison to North West (NW) authorities identifies that Manchester de-delegates the fourth least from maintained schools. The corrected individual school budget remains the largest in the NW per capita, whilst the corrected high needs budgets has risen from amongst the lowest to the 4th highest per capita.

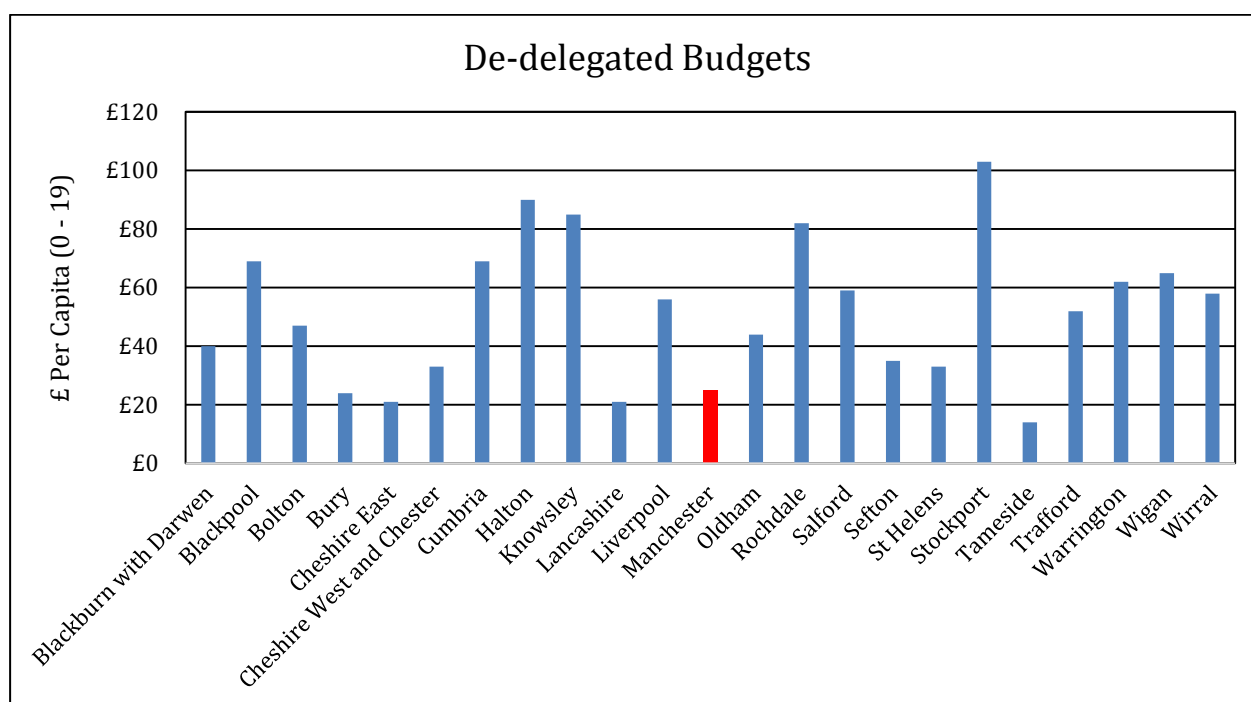
Graph Four: Individual School budgets, but excluding all high needs funding.



Graph Five: Per Capita Places and Top-up for High Needs



Graph Six: Per Capita De-delegated Budgets and Education Service Grant



4.2 Other budgets:

- Expenditure on admissions is the second largest per capita, after Halton.
- Expenditure on Pupil Growth is the highest per capita in the NW
- Contribution from DSG to SEN transport is the highest per capita in the NW.
- Manchester's total schools budget is the largest in the NW.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In 2018/19, Manchester appeared to be an outlier when compared to both statistical neighbours and NW authorities, as more money per capita is delegated to schools through the Individual Schools Budgets, and less is retained centrally when compared to neighbouring and statistical neighbours.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Forum Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.