

Meeting of:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 19 January 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Task and Finish Review Group Membership - What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets.
Purpose of Report:	To determine the membership of the Task and Finish Review Group considering the impact upon schools from making difficult decisions to balance budgets.
Report Owner:	Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Gareth Davies, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Director of Learning and Skills Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources Head of Standards and Provision
Policy Framework:	This report is in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit Wales (formerly Wales Audit Office) Democratic Renewal report and follows a review of the Council's scrutiny function.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At its meeting held on 7th July 2025, the Start Well Scrutiny Committee considered topics of investigatory group work (Task and Finish Review). • Two proposals were agreed for progression (refer to minute number 145): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Additional Learning Needs Resource Bases. 2. What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets. • It was determined that the review of the Additional Learning Needs Resource Bases would commence first and when completed the review into the impact on schools from making difficult budget decisions would then begin. 	

- The current membership of the Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group is 6, consisting of Councillors H. Payne (Chair), W. Hennessy (Vice Chair), A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, W. Gilligan and S. Hanks
- The Committee is requested to confirm and agree the size and membership of Group for the subsequent Task and Review Group to review - What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets. The suggested number of members on a Task and Finish Review Group is 6, but a lower or higher number can be accommodated based on the wishes of the Scrutiny Committee. Ideally the Task and Finish Review Group would have representation from all political groups and possibly from the Co-Opted Members.
- The Committee is also asked to determine if representation from any interested parties outside of the organisation would have merit.
- It is planned that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group will include appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair. The first meeting will also include consideration of a full scope of how the review will be completed. The Group will also be asked to consider the most appropriate time for it to meet and any expert witnesses that it would like to call to provide evidence, guidance and to answer queries.
- At the conclusion of the review, a subsequent report and recommendations would be fed back to the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for consideration.

Recommendations

1. That the size, composition and membership of the Task and Review Group - What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets, be determined.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To agree the size, composition and membership of the Task and Review Group of the Start Well Scrutiny Committee agree the Task and Finish Review Group activities for the Start Well Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 10th April 2025, Cabinet agreed proposals for new Scrutiny arrangements to take affect for the 2025/26 municipal year and which were aligned to the new objectives contained within the Council's new Corporate Plan – Vale 2030. A copy of the Cabinet report can be found in the following link:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf)

- 1.2 The new arrangements were subsequently agreed by Council at its meeting held on 28th April 2025. Which included a new Committee structure as follows:

Committee Name	Corporate Plan Objective	Remits
Start Well	Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life	Schools, Schools Improvement, Post 16 Education and Training, Skills, Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Youth Services, Flying Start/Families First, Play and Welsh (external policy).
Live Well	Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit	Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Libraries, Arts, Culture, Leisure, Sports, Community Learning, Homelessness, Public Protection and Equalities (external policy).

Committee Name	Corporate Plan Objective	Remits
Place	Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit Respecting and Celebrating the Environment	Economic Development and Regeneration, Tourism, Countryside and Parks, Waste management and cleansing, Highways and Engineering, Planning, Transportation, Climate and Nature Emergency, Placemaking and Public and Private Sector Housing.
Resources	Being the Best Council We Can Be	Corporate Policies and Performance, Communication and Participation, Customer Relations, Finance, Procurement, Digital, Property, Human Resources, Equalities (internal policy) and Welsh (internal policy).

- 1.3** At its meeting held on 7th July 2025, the Start Well Scrutiny Committee considered topics of investigatory group work (Task and Finish Review).
- 1.4** Two proposals were agreed for progression:
1. Review the Additional Learning Needs Resource Bases.
 2. What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets.
- 1.5** It was determined that the review of the Additional Learning Needs Resource Bases would commence first and when completed the review into the impact on schools from making difficult budget decisions would then begin.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The current membership of the Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group is 6, consisting of Councillors H. Payne (Chair), W. Hennessy (Vice Chair), A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, W. Gilligan and S. Hanks
- 2.2** The Committee is requested to confirm and agree the size and membership of Group for the subsequent Task and Review Group to consider - What has been the impact on schools having to make difficult decisions to balance budgets.
- 2.3** The suggested number of members on a Task and Finish Review Group is 6, but a lower or higher number can be accommodated based on the wishes of the Scrutiny Committee. Ideally the Task and Finish Review Group would have representation from all political groups and possibly from the Co-Opted Members.
- 2.4** The Committee is also asked to determine if representation from any interested parties outside of the organisation would have merit.
- 2.5** It is planned that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group will include appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair. The first meeting will also include consideration of a full scope of how the review will be completed. The Group will also be asked to consider the most appropriate time for it to meet and any

expert witnesses that it would like to call to provide evidence, guidance and to answer queries.

- 2.6 At the conclusion of the review, a subsequent report and recommendations would be fed back to the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for consideration.
- 2.7 The Committee should note that the review into Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Resource Bases is well underway and has met on 6 occasions and undertaken 5 review visits to Whitmore High School Resource Base, the Speech and Language Resource Base at Ysgol Y Ddraig, Jenner Park Complex Needs Resource Base and St. Cyres School Resource Base. Visits to a further 4 Resource Bases will be undertaken over the coming weeks.
- 2.8 The final report of the ALN review group should be presented to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 16th March, 2026.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 Task and Finish review activities undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees will form a key part of them meeting their Terms of References which are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan – Vale 2030, which in turn, is aligned to the Wellbeing Goals for Wales.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Employment

- 5.2 None as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3 None as a direct result of this report.

6. Background Papers

Cabinet report with new Scrutiny proposal – 10th April 2025:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf)

Scrutiny report – 7th July 2025

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-New-2025/Scrutiny-Start-Well/2025/25-07-07/Task-and-Finish-Review-Topics.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-New-2025/Scrutiny-Start-Well/2025/25-07-07/Task-and-Finish-Review-Topics.pdf)