Agenda Item No: 6

Meeting of:	**Start Well Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**Thursday, 19 November 2026**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I) **(If yes, why)**	**Not applicable**
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (15.14 of the Constitution) **(If yes, why)**	Not applicable
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Additional Learning Needs Resource Base Task and Finish Review – 6 month update report
Portfolio Holder:	Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Learning and Skills
Lead Officer:	Liz Jones, Director of Learning & Skills

1.0 What is this report about?

1.1 A Task and Finish Review of ALN Resource Bases was commissioned by Start Well Scrutiny Committee in May 2025 and was concluded in March 2026. The scope of the review examined staffing, funding, quality, access and value for money across the Vale of Glamorgan's ALN Resource Bases, outreach and sensory services. This saw Members conducting site visits and meetings with parent/carers, learners and officers.

1.2 The overall findings of the review were positive highlighting the high quality, nurturing provision. However, the review did highlight the systemic pressure points in the system and associated calculated risks around funding and staffing. A series of eight recommendations each with aligned actions were made in the concluding report that were endorsed by Scrutiny and Cabinet.

1.3 This report provides the Start Well Scrutiny Committee with a six-month progress update on the recommendations that were endorsed as part of the ALN Resource Base Task and Finish Review.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	That Scrutiny consider and endorse the 6 month progress made in implementing the recommendations from the ALN Resource Base Task & Finish progress update report.	To enable Members to monitor progress against the Task and Finish Group recommendations, assess the effectiveness of actions taken to date, and fulfil the Committee's role in providing oversight and scrutiny of their implementation.
2.2	That the Committee refer any comments and recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration.	To enable the Committee to discharge its scrutiny responsibilities by reviewing progress, challenging performance where appropriate and making recommendations to support continuous improvement in line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

3.1 New Scrutiny arrangements were agreed in April 2025, that took effect for the 2025/26 municipal year. This allows for greater alignment of the Scrutiny work programme with the Council's new Corporate Plan Vale 2030 objectives. The Task and Finish Review of ALN Resource Bases was commissioned in May 2025 under these new scrutiny arrangements.

3.2 The overarching objective of the review was to assess the use of ALN Resource Bases to ensure that they provide value for money and are meeting the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

3.3 The scope of the review examined staffing, funding, quality, access and value for money across the Vale of Glamorgan's ALN Resource Bases, outreach and sensory services. This saw Members conducting site visits, meetings with parent/carers, learners and officers.

3.4 The Task and Finish Group found that the Vale of Glamorgan has developed a broad and well-established network of specialist Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, comprising 9 Local Authority Resource Bases, two satellite bases and a range of specialist outreach services supporting learners across primary and secondary sectors. Member visits to provision identified high-quality provision, committed staff and positive outcomes for learners, with evidence that the existing model supports inclusion and enables many learners to access mainstream education successfully. However, several strategic, operational and financial challenges were identified that could impact the long-term sustainability and equity of provision.

3.5 However, rising demand, funding uncertainty/cost pressures, ALN transport entitlement, pressures on health and education budgets, Welsh medium provision, managing parental engagement/expectations and enhanced outcome measurement were identified as areas requiring development and strategic attention.

3.6 In response to the review findings eight recommendations and 22 associated actions were identified and endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee in April 2026 and then referred onto Cabinet for consideration and approval to then be taken forward by the Director of Learning & Skills.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the monitoring report of the Task and Finish group Review of ALN Resource Bases. The appendix outlines the main progress made at the six-month stage of monitoring. The monitoring report contains details of performance across the eight recommendations and their associated actions arising from the review.

4.2 Overall, progress against the ALN Task and Finish Group Recommendations Action Plan is positive, with the many actions either completed or progressing in line with expectations. Of the 22 actions identified, 2 actions (9%) are complete, 16 actions (73%) are rated Green (In Progress/On Track) and 3 actions (14%) have not yet commenced and just one action a RAG status is not applicable. This indicates there has been positive momentum in implementing the recommendations, with activity underway across all key themes including funding sustainability, resource base consistency, strategic planning, performance monitoring, transport and parental engagement.

Status	Number	Percentage
🟢 **Green (In Progress / On Track)**	16	73%
🟢 **Green (Complete)**	2	9%
🔴 **Red (Not Started)**	3	14%
⚫ **Not Applicable**	1	4%
Total	**22**	**100%**

Key Highlights

4.3 Good progress has been made in enhancing the strategic oversight and consistency of ALN provision across the Vale.

4.4 Notable achievements include:

- Reviews of staffing structures, staffing ratios and resource base provision have been completed with detailed data analysis that will inform aligning provision more closely to learner need. This will inform new iterations of SLAs with schools. Increased accessibility for face-to-face contacts with parents/carers to promote greater engagement and to support

resolution of issues at the earliest opportunity. Options are being explored to introduce a parent app to further strengthen information sharing, enhance communication channels, and improve signposting to relevant support and services for parents/carers.

- The successful establishment of the new Welsh-medium secondary ALN Resource Base at Bro Morgannwg, became operational in September 2026.

- Progress has been made in reviewing transport arrangements, including the establishment of an ALN Transport Working Group responsible for reviewing evidence and requests for transport to specialist schools. The impact of this change has begun to filter through to reducing the cost pressures on the ALN Transport budget, improve equity and work has also begun on improving travel independence. There has also been the implementation of transport solution, that has seen the allocation of an electric vehicle to Whitmore High School to support learner transport to the resource base.

- Continued progression of secondary school provision through the rebranding satellite bases as Inclusion Centres, with three further secondary schools allocated funding to establish centres, Llantwit, Stanwell and St Cyres. The focus going forward is progressing the establishment of Inclusion Centres across all secondary settings. Taking this approach will support the longer-term aim of reducing pressure on specialist placements and strengthening inclusive practice within mainstream schools.

- Data collation continues to inform the strategic planning and case for change to ensure learners needs are met.

Areas Requiring Improvement

4.5 Whilst overall progress is positive, four actions remain outstanding and have not yet commenced:

- Establishment of regular parent forums for resource bases.
- Inclusion of parent voice as a standing element of future scrutiny activity.
- Introduction of learner journey case studies as part of annual service reporting.
- Developing procurement approach for specialist equipment for cost efficiency and standardisation across bases.

Rationale for actions requiring improvement

4.6 The actions yet to commence are principally focused on strengthening parent/carer engagement, capturing qualitative outcomes and ensuring that service evaluation incorporates the experiences of learners and families. Whilst these actions have not started yet, they are planned for later in the year. Work on progressing parent forum and parent voice has not commenced as the focus so far has been on increasing accessibility to face to face contacts for parents/carers. Capacity restraints across the teams have contributed to the ability to commence all remaining actions. Work to establish parent forums and strengthen parent voice has not yet commenced, as efforts have focused on improving accessibility to face-to-face contact for parents and carers.

4.7 With the groundwork for enhanced parent/carer engagement now in place, the next phase will focus on developing parent forums and learner journey case studies to capture learner progress and outcomes.

4.8 Work regarding procurement framework for specialist equipment has not yet progressed. Activity to date has focused on completing the review of provision across resource bases. The completion of this review over the summer provides an evidence base to inform the specific requirements of each resource base and will support the next phase of work. This will include undertaking a mapping exercise of specialist equipment to ensure provision is aligned to identified learner needs. These developments are expected to strengthen parental engagement and parent voice, inform service development, and support greater efficiency and effectiveness across the resource bases.

Overall performance assessment

4.9 Overall assessment of performance to date is strong, with most recommendations progressing as planned and at pace with some key priorities already delivered. There has been proactive work to improve consistency, strengthen strategic planning and develop provision.

4.10 The focus will now be directed towards taking forward the remaining actions relating to parental engagement, learner voice and outcome reporting to ensure that the full benefits of the Task and Finish Group recommendations are realised and that future service development is aligned to learner needs and puts provision on a sustainable footing.

5 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

5.1 This report draws on the professional judgement of lead officers to assess progress against actions they are responsible for. Any areas of improvement have been clearly identified and defined, with appropriate pathways in place to support progression.

5.2 A RAG rating has been applied to performance assessments to provide a clear mechanism for monitoring progress against actions and supporting effective oversight of delivery.

6 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

6.1 That committee refer any comments and recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration. Activities contained within the ALN Task and Finish Recommendations Action Plan will continue to be progressed and monitored, with further update to committee at year end.

7 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

7.1 The actions outlined in this report directly support the delivery of Vale 2030 and the Council's Transformation Agenda. A Key objective within Vale 2030 is 'Giving everyone a good start in life'.In the context of ALN provision this is about ensuring that our provision

meets needs and we can enhance learner outcomes. Actions contained within this monitoring report directly contributes towards the Vale 2030's priority to 'Improve the availability, consistency and quality of local provision for learners with complex Additional Learning Needs and for Social, Emotional and Mental Health'. The review and development of ALN provision, will strengthen the Council's ability to meet current and future leaner needs, promote inclusion and ensure that resources are targeted effectively to respond to rising demand for specialist provision, particularly in the context of Autism Spectrum Conditions and Social Emotional and Mental Health conditions.

7.2 This work also closely aligns with the Council's Reshaping programme in relation to the themes of service transformation and strengthening communities. By reviewing existing delivery models, strengthening engagement with parent/carers and developing more sustainable approach to delivery of specialist provision this will help to reshape service delivery so that it is high quality, person centred and is sustainable model of provision that can respond to future demand and changing needs.

8 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 The five ways of working are integral to the delivery of actions within this progress report. These activities focus on delivering sustainable change to ALN provision that will be responsive to current and changing needs in the long term. These actions are centred on prevention in the context of escalating needs, where the emphasis is on ensuring learners access the right level of support in the right provision. Taking this approach ensures that improvements to ALN provision are integrated across our services and delivered in a collaborative way with key stakeholders and involves the voice of parents/carers and learners to shape learner journeys and achieve positive learner outcomes.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 There are no additional budgetary implications arising from this report, although officer time is required to deliver actions outlined in this report and maintain monitoring updates.

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no direct employment implications associated with this progress report. However, if service developments and changes arising from these activities are subject to employment implications these will be taken forward by the relevant lead officer in consultation with all key stakeholders before implementation.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? If not, why?

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed, because this is monitoring report and does not require a new decision or policy change. However, any service developments, changes to service delivery, or proposals emerging from the activities outlined in this report will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The relevant lead officer will ensure that equality implications are fully considered and assessed as part

of the decision-making and implementation process, in accordance with the Council's statutory responsibilities.

12.0 Key Contacts

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

Lead Officer: Katy Williams Head of ALN katwilliams@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709138	Democratic Services Officer: Gareth Davies Democratic Services Officer gjdavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709249

Appendix

Appendix A – ALN Task and Finish Recommendations Action Plan

Background Documents

Task and Finish Review-Additional Learning Needs Resource Base

Corporate Risk Q1 Update 2026-27- ALN Corporate Risk

ALN Task and Finish Group Recommendations Action Plan

Recommendation	Action	Updater	RAG Status	Commentary update
Strengthen Funding Stability and Reduce Grant Dependency	Seek a multi-year funding commitment from Welsh Government for ALN resource bases and associated outreach services, to reduce annual uncertainty and enable sustainable staffing plans.	Liz Jones	In progress/On track	Ongoing conversations with WG to lobby on funding. Funding is cyclical with no commitment currently to multi-year funding.
Strengthen Funding Stability and Reduce Grant Dependency	Develop an exit risk strategy identifying posts vulnerable to grant loss—particularly roles currently funded only until April 2026—and prepare mitigation options.	Katy Williams	In progress/On track	Key internal core staff have been exited from being grant funded (ALN manager and IDP officer) Initial conversations around mapping for provisions over a longer period of time. Will include the development of an Exit Strategy over a 3-year period for grant funded bases.
Clarify Roles and Responsibilities Between Education and Health	Engage Welsh Government and Health Board regarding funding responsibilities for therapies and medical interventions currently falling to schools, especially in PMED, SLCN and ASC bases.	Katy Wiliams	In progress/On track	Conversations and partnership working continues with Health Board regarding sharing responsibilities particularly regarding Post 16 provision.
Clarify Roles and Responsibilities Between Education and Health	Clarify roles and establish a joint Education–Health protocol for expectations around: • clinical responsibilities • attendance at IDP meetings • data sharing • therapy provision - this aims to reduce ambiguity and prevent therapy costs shifting onto education budgets.	Sarah Redrup	Completed	This is now embedded practice through close relationship with the DECLO (Designated Education Clinical lead Officer) .
Improve Consistency Across Resource Bases	Introduce a uniform line management structure for all resource base staff to reduce variation, improve accountability and ensure equitable support across bases.	Leanne James/Sarah Redrup	In progress/On track	Work undertaken over summer considered staffing structures across Resource Bases and ratios of staff. SLAs have been drafted with schools to ensure equity. This is ongoing

Recommendation	Action	Updater	RAG Status	Commentary update
Improve Consistency Across Resource Bases	Review comparative staffing ratios, including alignment of LSA deployment across bases and ensuring equity with Ysgol Y Deri where appropriate.	Leanne James/Sarah Redrup	In progress/On track	Comparative staffing ratios and bandings have been reviewed and is still ongoing across the LA and the region. This will enhance consistency across provision.
Improve Consistency Across Resource Bases	Develop a consistent, authority wide procurement framework for specialist equipment to ensure cost efficiency and standardisation across bases.	Leanne James	Red- Not Started	Not started. Work to progress later in the year that will map equipment across bases to establish the merits and feasibility of standardising/centralising procurement activity. However, work has begun regarding assessment tool -B Squared.
Improve Consistency Across Resource Bases	Continued investment in physical and digital resources.	Leanne James	In progress/On track	Enhanced planning with capital grants for prioritising of physical and digital resources for resources bases.
Improve Consistency Across Resource Bases	That close collaborative working arrangements that the Resources Base have are strengthened to ensure that the Bases are aligned to the service needs and they continue to support each other.	Leanne James/Katy Williams	In progress/On track	Review completed over the summer that analysed data to review provision to ensure they were aligned to the needs of the service and the learners and wider community. This will inform iterations of new SLAs with schools.
Enhance Data Collection, Monitoring and Performance Measures	Ensure that there are uniform data tracking systems across bases with similar functions (e.g. BSquared, Seesaw, Motional) so that progress data is standardised and comparable.	Leanne James	In progress/On track	Mapping exercise undertaken to better understand the strengths and barriers to learning of learner and applying the most appropriate assessments to measure progress of learners in relation to their needs. Data shared at ALNCo days and work progressing to look at B squared across the LA
Enhance Data Collection, Monitoring and Performance Measures	Develop a Key Performance Indicators framework for resource bases including: • progress against IDP targets • reintegration rates to mainstream • attendance trends • wellbeing indicators • qualitative case study evidence.	Sarah Redrup/Leanne James	In progress/On track	Work has commenced on collating data as part of strategic plan and case for change. Looking to use MRI (ONE) to collect IDP targets for pupils in resource bases and progress against these.

Recommendation	Action	Updater	RAG Status	Commentary update
Address Access and Capacity Issues	Create a standardised system for monitoring sufficiency of spaces, including monthly reporting on - numbers waiting, need type, school of origin and capacity pressures.	Sarah Redrup	In progress/On track	Work has commenced on collating data as part of strategic plan and case for change.
Address Access and Capacity Issues	Prioritise expansion of SEMH capacity, where demand remains disproportionately high.	Katy Williams	In progress/On track	SEMH has been prioritised as part of the review of provision including identification of gaps in current provision to meet increasing needs.
Address Access and Capacity Issues	Ensure timely development of the Welsh medium secondary ALN base at Bro Morgannwg, ensuring alignment of entry criteria and transition planning with Welsh medium primaries.	Leanne James	Completed	Resource Base now operational from September 2026
Strengthen Parental Engagement and Support	Introduce a structured parental support programme, offering guidance on: • supporting communication • understanding the ALN process and IDPs	Sarah Redrup	In progress/On track	Updated communications to parents for email responses and including sign posting them to new resources and information. Increased our accessibility for face-to-face contacts with parents to ensure issues can be resolved at earliest opportunity. Currently exploring the opportunity to make use of a parent app/AI to enhance information offering for parents.
Strengthen Parental Engagement and Support	Establish or encourage regular parent forums for each resource base to feed into evaluation and service planning.	Leanne James	Not started	Work not yet commenced but planned later in year. Take learnings form Early Years forum parental group and regional progress to inform future steps. Parent group to be formed to explore next steps and what this needs to look like.
Strengthen Parental Engagement and Support	Include direct parent voice as a standing element of future scrutiny reviews of ALN provision.	Sarah Redrup	Not applicable	Work not commenced. This action is dependent on the nature of Scrutiny's forward work programme and future reviews. Any future scrutiny reviews encapsulating ALN will include parent voice as standard. New modelling of

Recommendation	Action	Updater	RAG Status	Commentary update
				provision as part of strategic plans will include engagement/consultation with parents/carers.
Improve Transport Consistency and Value for Money	Review ALN transport policy to ensure consistency of entitlement and alignment with mainstream policy while avoiding duplication (e.g., where families receive mobility benefits).	Katy Williams with Transport	In progress/On track	ALN Transport policy has been reviewed. ALN Transport Working Group and Panel established reviews evidence/requests for transport to specialist schools to ensure equity.
Improve Transport Consistency and Value for Money	Explore flexible fleet options, such as the potential use of under-utilised electric vehicles, considering cost, staffing and safeguarding requirements.	Katy Williams with Transport	In progress/On track	Transport team have progressed this work. Whitmore have been allocated an electric vehicle to support transport of learners to base. Attendance remains strong throughout the change.
Strengthen Strategic Planning for Future Provision	Develop a long-term ALN accommodation strategy, addressing issues such as • inequitable building quality • space deficits • accessibility requirements • future demand growth • mapping of the current ALN need in Primary schools to feed into Secondary Bases.	Katy Williams/Liz Jones/Matt Curtis	In progress/On track	Incorporated as part of the summer review. Data collated and being analysed to inform next steps.
Strengthen Strategic Planning for Future Provision	Ensure all secondary schools progress toward establishing satellite bases, reducing pressure on need for specialist provisions and strengthening locality-based inclusion.	Morwen Thomas	In progress/On track	Satellite bases now rebranded as Inclusion Centres. Three further secondaries allocated funding to establish centres- Llantwit, Stanwell and St Cyres. Further cost pressures requested to ensure roll out continues with a view of all secondaries having an Inclusion Centre.
Strengthen Strategic Planning for Future Provision	Introduce “learner journey” case studies as part of annual service reporting to capture developmental progress, wellbeing and transition outcomes.	Leanne James	No started	Work not yet commenced, planned later in year.