



<b>MEETING</b>	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
<b>DATE</b>	13 February 2025
<b>TITLE</b>	Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation Brief
<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b>	To adopt the investigation's brief and to elect members
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1. Safeguarding arrangements in schools were scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 18 July 2024. There was an informal discussion after the meeting as to the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field. It was concluded that further discussion should take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 5 September 2024 where concern was expressed by members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools.
2. At the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025, a draft brief was considered for the scrutiny investigation. A scrutiny investigation looks in depth into a subject and gathers evidence which includes listening to people's experiences over a period of around 6 to 9 months.
3. The Scrutiny Forum (a meeting of scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs) has a role to advise on the prioritisation of scrutiny investigations within the context of the resources available. At the meeting of the Forum on 29 January 2025, consideration was given to the draft brief and the investigation was prioritised.
4. See the draft brief of the investigation attached to the report, as an appendix.
5. The main question that the investigation will address is:  
  
'Are the safeguarding arrangements in the county's schools appropriate and implemented consistently?'
6. The investigation will consider the authority's current arrangements in terms of safeguarding in schools and the arrangements in a sample of schools. It is intended to decide on the schools which will be included in the sample at the first meeting of the investigation, considering factors such as different sizes, different areas and a mixture of urban and rural schools. Consideration will also be given to the schools' Estyn inspection schedule when choosing schools for the sample, especially in terms of whether they have been recently inspected.
7. It is intended to share the school visits between the investigation members. Should a member of the investigation be a school governor, they would not visit that school or influence the findings of the members who have visited the school.
8. At the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025, members were invited to express an interest in terms of being members of the investigation. It was concluded that an e-mail should be sent to all Committee members asking the members to note which school governing bodies they are a part of. It was emphasised in the e-mail

that members must ensure that they have completed the 'Safeguarding Children and Adults Training' to be a member of the investigation.

9. A maximum of five members can be part of the investigation and, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the membership must include representation from no less than two different political groups. Given that this matter is in the field of education, it is believed that it would be appropriate for one co-opted member with a vote on education matters only, to also be part of the investigation.
10. **The Committee is asked to:**
  - (i) **adopt the brief.**
  - (ii) **elect members to undertake the work of the investigation.**