

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet**

**15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

### **Report of the Head of Education Development Chris Millis**

#### **MATTER FOR DECISION**

#### **WARDS AFFECTED – ALL WARDS**

#### **Neath Port Talbot Co-ordinated School Admission Scheme Arrangements 2027**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To obtain Cabinet approval of the Neath Port Talbot Co-ordinated Admission Scheme Arrangements 2027.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Council is the admission authority for community schools in its area.
3. The Co-ordinated scheme arrangements detail the procedures to be followed when allocating school places and is attached as Appendix A. It is these proposed arrangements that are to be approved.
4. For the admission year 2027/28, the local authority must inform the Welsh Ministers on or before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 whether or not it has adopted a co-ordinated scheme. Thereafter, for every subsequent admission year, each local authority must inform Welsh Ministers on or before the 28<sup>th</sup> February in the relevant determination year whether or not it has adopted a co-ordinated scheme. The Welsh Ministers must be notified that schemes are in place.

5. These arrangements conform to the legislative requirements and the good practice guidelines set out in The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024.

## **Background**

6. The local authority (LA), under The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024 is required to formulate and publish a qualifying scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all admission authorities, (local authority (LA) and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools) in the Neath Port Talbot local authority area, in relation to applications for the '**normal admission rounds**' at a maintained primary school (Reception), maintained junior school (Year 3) or a maintained secondary school (Year 7) in Neath Port Talbot.

## **Proposed Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements**

7. The co-ordination scheme is intended to simplify the 'normal admission rounds' process whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. It will also help to avoid pupils being offered multiple schools and parents/carers choosing to 'hold' offers for more than one school. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that every parent/carer of a child who has applied to a Neath Port Talbot maintained school using the common application form, is sent a single offer of a school place by the LA.

The co-ordinated arrangements applies to all Neath Port Talbot community-maintained schools for which the LA is the admission authority and to the admitting authorities for the following Neath Port Talbot VA Schools:

- Alderman Davies Church In Wales Primary School
- Bryncoch Church In Wales Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Infant School
- St Joseph's Catholic Junior School
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- St Therese's Catholic Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic School & 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre

**Parents/carers who wish to apply for schools in areas outside of Neath Port Talbot must apply to the admission authority for the school (the local authority/Council for that school).**

Co-ordinated schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria. Co-ordinated schemes are an administrative process to make school admissions easier, more transparent and less stressful for parents

**Consultation**

8. The Council, as local authority, has consulted on the proposed scheme. Consultation ended on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
9. The requirements of consultation are set out in The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024.
10. In the case of this Council, consultation took place with:
  - The School Admission Forum
  - All voluntary aided (i.e. Faith) schools
  - Neighbouring local authorities (Bridgend, Carmarthen, Powys and Swansea).

All consultees were supportive of the proposed scheme. No adverse comments received from neighbouring authorities. No adverse comments received from The School Admission Forum.

**Financial Impact**

11. There is no financial impact directly associated with this proposal. The admission arrangements support the efficient and effective delivery of education across the County Borough.
12. Administration of the admission process is within the Council's staffing cost envelope and is a statutory function that falls to the Council.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

13. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this Policy does not require an Integrated Impact Assessment.

## **Valleys Communities Impacts**

14. This impacts on all areas equally.

## **Workforce Impact**

15. As a statutory function of the Council, the admission process is administered centrally. The current staffing complement associated with this function will be maintained and there will be no change to the staffing arrangements consequent upon the implementation of the proposal.

## **Legal Impacts**

16. The Council, as an admission authority, has a statutory duty to act in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code, 2013.
17. In relation to the specific purpose of this report, there is a legal requirement that Co-ordinated School Admission Scheme must be reported to the Welsh Ministers on or before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
18. A co-ordinated scheme may be imposed by Welsh Ministers where a local authority has not notified the Welsh Ministers by 28 February each determination year whether or not a scheme has been adopted.

## **Risk Management**

19. There are requirements placed on the Council, as an admission authority, intended to ensure the admission system works for the benefit of both schools and pupils. The proposed Co-Ordinated Admission Scheme recommended for adoption in this report conforms to the legislative requirements and the good practice guidelines set out in The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024.

## **Recommendations**

1. To approve the Co-ordinated Admission Scheme attached as Appendix A.

## **Reasons for the Proposed Decision**

2. To enable the Council to meet statutory duties and good practice guidelines in respect of the admission of pupils to community and VA Schools.

## **Implementation of Decision**

3. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendix**

Appendix A: NPT Co-ordinated Admission Scheme

## **List of Background Papers**

- a. Welsh Government: School Admissions Code (No. 005/2013).
- b. Welsh Government: Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales
- c. Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006
- d. The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024
- e. Education (Objections to Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006
- f. Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999
- g. School Admissions (Common Offer Date) (Wales) regulations 2013
- h. The Education Act 2002 (Commencement No.8) (Wales) Order 2006

## **Officer Contact**

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