



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

10th July 2024

Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport – D.W.Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: Bryncoch North

GILFACH ROAD, BRYNCOCH, NEATH (REVOCATION) AND (30 MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2024

Purpose of the Report:

To consider the objection received following the advertisement of the Gilfach road, Bryncoch, Neath (revocation) and (30 mph speed limit) order 2024, as indicated in Appendix A.

Executive Summary:

The report outlines the proposed 30mph Speed Limit Traffic Regulation Order which was formally advertised resulting in the objection being received.

Background:

The Welsh Government have implemented a national roll out of a revision to the default speed limit of 30mph.

The new default speed limit in lit areas across Wales will be 20mph not 30mph as previously. This happened in September 2023 with the new default limits becoming operational.

Where roads have a new default speed limit of 20mph it has created a situation such as Gilfach road where you have a section of road that is national speed limit immediately dropping to a 20mph default speed limit. It is proposed to create a buffer speed limit of 30mph in advance of the existing 20mph default speed limit to deter heavy braking which could in turn lead to collisions.

Financial Impacts:

The scheme is to be funded by the Welsh Government.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix B, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below: -

A full impact assessment is not required as the proposed traffic regulation order will provide a safe environment for all highway users.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are 'No Implications' associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts:

There are 'No Implications' associated with this report.

Legal Impacts:

The proposal was advertised for a 21-day period between the 9th February 2024 and the 1st March 2024.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risk management impacts associated with this report.

Consultation:

This item has been subject to external consultation.

A consultation exercise was undertaken for a period of 21 days between 9th February 2024 and the 1st March 2024.

A letter and plan was hand delivered to the properties in the surrounding areas near to the proposed 30mph buffer speed limit.

We received one letter of objection to the scheme containing five individual points which are summarised below :-

Objection:- *Any officer observations/ comments are illustrated in italics in response to the points raised.*

- a) A resident states they cannot find anecdotal evidence that reducing your speed in a buffer zone before entering a 20mph area would help to reduce drivers speeding.

The Council has undertaken traffic surveys at these locations post the implementation of the Welsh Government's 20mph default speed limit national rollout and has received evidence of traffic entering the 20mph speed limit in excess of the legal speed limit. This may or may not be related to the interface of 60/20 mph terminal locations, however a lower speed limit some distance prior to the 20mph terminals may well assist drivers in reducing their speed in the interest of road safety.

- b) A resident has stated that the reduction of the speed limit will increase travel time throughout the area by 100%. The residents considers that poor decision making by NPTCBC in regards to the strategic highway network has led to longer journey times for drivers in particular allowing new developments along Neath abbey road.

The roads under consideration in the statutory consultation are country lanes and it would be inappropriate and contrary to the Highway Code for drivers to travel these sections of highway at 60mph. If they did then they may be open to prosecution by the Police for careless or dangerous driving. Therefore, most of the traffic would travel below the legal speed limit subject to the above and journey times would not increase by 100% .

- c) The resident states that industry wide standards for fuel efficiency require vehicles to travel at maintained speeds of around 55-56mph

Speed limits are reduced in the interest of road safety not based on fuel efficiency of various vehicles. No Driver can

maintain a speed of 55 – 56 mph across all the highway network.

- d) The resident states that most vehicles on the road are internal combustion engines that either have catalytic converters fitted on DPF's fitted (diesel particulate filter). In order for passive regeneration to take place a vehicle needs to supposedly maintain speeds in excess of 40mph for the process to begin. By reducing the speed limit to 30mph the resident believes that vehicles will not reach the optimum speeds in order for the regeneration process to be initiated and therefore lead to carbon build up on the catalytic converter or DPF filter which in turn causes damage to the vehicle and decreases fuel efficiency.

*The roads included in this statutory consultation are not suitable for safety reason to high speeds to be used as a method to clean or make engines more efficient.
The cleaning of engines is recommended on Motorway and trunk roads where high speeds can be safely attained.*

- e) The resident feels that reducing the speed limit to 30mph will increase emissions due to the above points having a cumulative effect.

The Council does not have any evidence that reducing a speed limit from 60mph to 30 mph will have a significant effect on vehicle pollution especially because most of the traffic will not be travelling at 60mph. If traffic chooses to by-pass the main routes due to congestion then this is not relevant to the proposal under consultation

The local member has been consulted and supports overruling the objection and implementing the scheme as advertised.

Recommendations:

Having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment it is recommended that the objection is overruled to the Gilfach road, Bryncoch, Neath (revocation) and (30 mph speed limit) order 2024, (as detailed in Appendix A to the circulated report) and that the scheme is implemented as advertised.

The objector will be informed of the decision accordingly.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Order is necessary to provide a buffer speed limit of 30mph in advance to the 20mph default speed limit on small sections of the highway that were previously national speed limit in the interest of road safety.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Appendices:

Appendix A – Plan – Buffer speed limits between 60mph and 20mph - Gilfach road, Bryncoch – Proposed 30mph speed limit extent.

Appendix B – Integrated Impact Assessment.

List of Background Papers:

None.

Officer Contact:

Mr Hasan Hasan
Engineering & Transport
Tel. No. 01639 636463
Email h.hasan@npt.gov.uk

Mr Martin Brumby,
Engineering & Transport
Tel. No. 01639 686013
Email m.brumby@npt.gov.uk

Mr Jonathan Davies,
Engineering & Transport
Tel. No. 01639 686494
Email j.davies11@npt.gov.uk