



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

CABINET
8 July 2020

Report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration
Nicola Pearce

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

REVOKING THE RIGHTS OF WAY TEMPORARY CLOSURES DUE TO COVID-19

Purpose of the Report

To seek approval of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the Council”) to revoke the temporary closures on a number of public rights of way closed under the (Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 due to Covid-19.

Executive Summary

The Council currently has 17 Public Rights of Way (PROW) closed temporarily as a response to the introduction of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 in March 2020.

Following the publication of the 7th edition of the Regulations (The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 2020) on the 3rd July 2020, this report seeks to set out the Council’s response to address these amendments.

Background

With the introduction of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 and in order to enforce social distancing and to stem the spread of Covid-19 to protect the public health and safety of our

communities, the decision was taken to temporarily close a total of 17 Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the County Borough, where there was considered to be a heightened risk of the disease being spread. The decisions were taken in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainable Development and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection.

A list of the closed paths are detailed below along with the closure dates, all details of which were publicised on the Council's website.

PARISH	PROW REF:	CLOSURE DATE
Cilybebyll	Footpath 5	8 th April 2020
Cilybebyll (Ynys-y-Mond)	Footpath 6	8 th April 2020
Cilybebyll	Footpath 39	8 th April 2020
Cilybebyll	Footpath 33	21 st April 2020
Cwmafan	Footpath 13	7 th April 2020
Blaenhonddan	Footpath 20	30 th March 2020
Margam (Port Talbot)	Footpath 90	30 th March 2020
Margam	Footpath 55	30 th March 2020
Margam	Footpath 97	30 th March 2020
Margam	Footpath 77	30 th March 2020
Margam (Mid Glam)	Footpath 5	30 th March 2020
Margam (Mid Glam)	Footpath 6	30 th March 2020
Port Talbot	Footpath 2	30 th March 2020
Taibach	Footpath 36	7 th April 2020
Taibach	Footpath 41	30 th March 2020
Taibach	Footpath 42	30 th March 2020
Taibach	Footpath 43	30 th March 2020
Tonna	Bridleway 5	30 th March 2020

On the 3rd July 2020 the Welsh Government published The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 2020, which contained a number of amendments, including (*but not limited to*) revoking of the requirement in the principal regulations not to leave the area local to the place where the person is living unless there is a reasonable excuse; rationalising the different restrictions on gatherings indoors and outdoors; and clarifying that it is a reasonable excuse to gather together with others to participate in activities organised at outdoor visitor attractions.

Whilst noting that the Regulations relating to Public Rights of Way have not specifically changed, in light of the restrictions on movement being lifted and the push to open up the tourism industry, it is proving difficult to continue to justify and enforce the closure of those PROW currently closed

due to Covid-19. Furthermore, given that the 2 metre social distancing rule is also highly likely to be reduced shortly in Wales, this makes it more feasible for social distancing to take place within the PROW.

Consequently, it is therefore now proposed that the closure orders be rescinded and the aforementioned footpaths opened up for public use.

It is also worth noting that many other Local Authorities have started to revoke their orders as well and it is anticipated only a few temporary closures in Wales will remain in force by next week.

Financial Impacts

No implications.

Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment is not required for this decision.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications.

Workforce Impacts

No implications.

Legal Impacts

Requirement must be had at all times with the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020. On the 3rd July 2020 the Welsh Government published The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 2020, which contained a number of amendments, one of which was the revoking of the requirement in the principal regulations not to leave the area local to the place where person is living unless you have a reasonable excuse, rationalising the different restrictions on gatherings indoors and outdoors and clarifying that it is a reasonable excuse to gather together with others to participate in activities organised at outdoor visitor attractions.

Risk Management Impacts

No implications.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

That having considered the report, it is resolved to make the following recommendation for approval:

1. To revoke the temporary closures on all 17 Public Rights of Way (PROW) within Neath Port Talbot currently closed under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To enable the reopening of footpaths that were closed by the Council pursuant to the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately.

Appendices

None.

List of Background Papers

None.

Officer Contact

Ceri Morris, Head of Planning and Public Protection
Tel: 01639 686681 or e-mail: c.morris1@npt.gov.uk