

24 October 2016

Policy Unit
The Highland Council
policy6@highland.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

Highland Council consultation on BT public payphone removal

Ramblers Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation by the Highland Council on BT's proposed closure of 178 public payphones. We are a Scottish governing body of sport and the representative body for walkers in Scotland with over 6,500 members. A large number of our members live in the Highland Council area, but a greater proportion of our members regularly go walking in the area, whether on day visits or longer trips.

We acknowledge that the use of some rural payphones can be very low, or even non-existent, over a period of time. However, given the difficulties in getting a mobile phone signal across large areas of Scotland we believe that it is important for some payphones where closure is proposed by BT to be retained, on health and safety grounds. We are particularly concerned over the potential for people who have experienced problems or injury while walking in remote country to be unable to call the emergency services without the existence of a payphone at the roadside.

We have seen the list of payphones which Mountaineering Scotland has proposed be retained, and we concur with their suggestions. In addition, for the remaining proposed payphone removals, we would suggest that mobile phone coverage for all networks should be checked to enable an informed discussion to be had, and agreement found on which payphones should be removed.

We would be happy to discuss this matter further at your convenience.

Yours faithfully

Helen Todd
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