

# WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## EXECUTIVE

10 JANUARY 2017

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### Title:

## **CONSULTATION ON REMOVAL OF BT PAYPHONES IN WAVERLEY**

[Portfolio Holders: Cllr Andrew Bolton & Cllr Brian Adams]  
[Wards Affected: ALL]

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### Summary and purpose:

British Telecom has advised the Council of 48 payphones in the Borough on which it is obliged to consult about removal. They would like to remove the payphones on the grounds that they are used infrequently and are expensive to maintain. BT also has a Universal Service Obligation to ensure there are sufficient payphones for local need.

BT's deadline for response to the consultation is 30 January 2017. Officers have carried out a public consultation, and consulted all affected ward councillors and Town and Parish Councils. The information has been used to help inform Waverley's response. The Council needs to produce two legal notices to send to the Secretary of State and BT; the first setting out our initial position on the removal of the payphones after the consultation (23 December) and the second with the final position (end of January).

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### How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Access to a good range of communication options is important for *community wellbeing*, especially in the most rural areas of the borough. Waverley also has an important role as steward of the local *environment* and needs to consider the built heritage for future generations.

### Financial Implications:

The consultation will be conducted within existing provision, but advertising the legal notices may require additional funding depending on the requirements.

### Legal Implications:

The Council needs to ensure that the two legal notices of our draft (23 December) and final (30 January) position are posted within the timetable.

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### Introduction

1. BT has advised that there are a total of 77 BT payphones in Waverley (a few others are managed outside of BT's remit) which means that in this consultation, more than half are proposed for removal. Of the 48 BT payphones proposed for removal

in Waverley, 30 are traditional red boxes and 18 are glass boxes. Outside of the consultation, there are 10 Grade II listed red boxes in Waverley which are all safe from the removal list – one of these (Dyehouse Lane, Thursley) has been adopted so its telephone mechanism has been removed. A total of five payphones have been adopted so far in Waverley under BT's 'adopt a kiosk' scheme.

## Consultation

2. Officers wrote to all ward councillors to inform them of the consultation and ask for comments. All Town and Parish clerks were also asked for their Council's views and a public consultation was launched through a dedicated webpage, with press release and social media. The public consultation closed on 16 December.
3. The Council's 'initial' position on each of the 48 payphones is set out in the table at [Annexe 1](#). This has now been published on our website as part of the legal process. **We now need to decide whether it needs any changes before responding with our final position.**

## Responses received

4. Several responses have been received to the consultation. A few people have raised concerns about poor mobile phone signal in an emergency and the need for payphones in rural areas. However, most concerns have been raised about the traditional red boxes and potential loss from the street scene.
5. The Historic Buildings Officer has surveyed the location and heritage significance of the surviving historic K6 boxes (see [Annexe 2](#)). These payphones were commissioned by the General Post Office in 1935 to commemorate the silver Jubilee of King George V. Of the 48 payphones in the consultation, 27 of these are the K6 type. It is proposed that the following five are put forward for listing to add to the 10 which are already listed:
  - Brook Road, Wormley GU8 5UD
  - Churt Road, Hindhead, GU26 6NR
  - The Village, Ewhurst, GU6 7PB
  - Blackheath Lane, Blackheath, GU4 8QT
  - The Square Rowledge, GU10 4AA (not on consultation list)
6. The Council objected to the removal of all of these boxes during the last consultation in 2008. Whilst the remaining red boxes are of heritage value, they do not meet the criteria for listing. Depending on the strength of public feeling, we could object to their removal in our response to BT. We are also advising the public to contact their town and parish councils to consider BT's 'adopt a kiosk' scheme where communities can purchase the shell for a £1 and take on its maintenance.

## Conclusion

7. Waverley needs to reply to BT, giving the Council's final position on each of the affected 48 payphones, by 30 January 2017.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. determines whether the attached initial position needs any amendment; and
2. agrees that the final position be signed off by the Portfolio Holders, taking into account any outstanding representations received between 10 and 20 January, to enable the posting of the final notice by 30 January 2017.

## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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