

## BRITISH TELECOM TELEPHONE KIOSK REMOVAL CONSULTATION OCTOBER 2017 UPDATE

### **Background**

In Autumn 2016, British Telecom (BT) informed the council of its intention to remove several public telephone boxes across the town due to poor usage. BT placed posters in the affected phone boxes and invited residents to contact CBC if they had any comments on the proposed removal.

Members were notified of this consultation in a November 2016 Members Information Bulletin, and were invited to provide feedback. Feedback from Members, along with comments received from the public, were coordinated into a formal council response that was submitted to BT on 4 January 2017.

### **What did BT propose?**

BT identified a total of 12 telephone boxes that it proposed to remove. The consultation gave the council an opportunity to either support or object to the proposed removals. For traditional red kiosks, the council was given a third option; to adopt the kiosk for use as a community asset.

Based on the feedback received, the council asked BT to retain five telephone boxes, and requested to adopt the traditional red telephone box situated in St Peter's Conservation Area at the junction of Horsham Road and Ifield Road. The council did not raise any objection to the proposed removal of the remaining six telephone boxes.

Based on the council's response, BT has now confirmed the status of each telephone box as follows:

<b>Location</b>	<b>BT Decision</b>
Junction of Horsham Road and Ifield Road	Adopt
Rear of Wooding Grove, Creaseys Drive	Retain
141 Woodfield Road	Retain
Nr Tesco, Dobbins Place	Retain
Adj Jade Chemist, Northgate Parade	Retain
Peterhouse Parade	Retain
7 Southgate Parade	Remove
Bank Precinct, Gatwick Road	Remove
Outside 48 Kirdford Close	Remove
Adj Gatwick Concorde Hotel, Old Brighton Road	Remove
Rear of 22 Edrich Road, Broadwood Drive	Remove
Adj. 2 Admiral Road	Remove

### **Removed/Retained Telephone Kiosks**

Where a telephone box has been identified for removal, BT may have already removed the kiosk or will do within the coming months. BT has confirmed that the five kiosks that the council requested to keep will be retained as working kiosks with BT remaining responsible for their upkeep. Any issues around maintenance and serviceability would be handled by BT's dedicated Payphone Customer Service team - contactable at [customer.serv.payphones@bt.com](mailto:customer.serv.payphones@bt.com) or by calling 0800 661610.

## **Adopting the Horsham Road/Ifield Road Kiosk**

There was strong support for adopting traditional red kiosk at the Horsham Road/Ifield Road junction in West Green, including from local councilors and community groups including West Green Forum and Central Crawley Conservation Area Advisory Committee. The kiosk is located in St Peters Conservation Area, and makes an important heritage contribution to the setting and townscape of the conservation area, particularly given its placement next to the historic St Peters Church and the traditional red post box. As noted by residents, this provides one of the few "postcard views" in the town. As an important historic local asset, there was felt to be a clear historic and conservation case for its retention.

The council is now exploring the option to adopt the traditional red kiosk that is located at the junction of Horsham Road and Ifield Road in West Green. It will cost the council a fee of £1 to adopt the kiosk. If adopted, BT will remove the telecoms equipment, leaving the council free to use the kiosks as it wishes. Telephone boxes have been used elsewhere for a range of uses including emergency defibrillators, coffee kiosks and small-scale community libraries. The council will therefore seek to work with community groups to identify an appropriate future use.

Should it be adopted, the kiosk will become the property of the council, and CBC would take on responsibility for its refurbishment and future maintenance. The detailed costs of refurbishment are currently being investigated, and can be met through the council's Heritage Budget. The Forward Planning team is working with CBC Amenity Services and Facilities to identify the most appropriate approach to secure the longer-term upkeep of the kiosk.

The council is under no obligation to retain the kiosk, and if at a future point it is found that the costs of refurbishing the kiosk or its ongoing maintenance become prohibitive, or should there be other unforeseen issues such as anti-social behaviour, the council will be free to remove the kiosk should it wish to do so.

## **Next Steps**

The council is continuing to liaise with BT regarding the adoption process, and relevant ward members will be kept informed as this process moves forward. Should you have any questions about the BT consultation, please contact Anthony Masson, Senior Planning Officer by email at [anthony.masson@crawley.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.masson@crawley.gov.uk) or call 01293 438761.