

## BRITISH TELECOM CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC PAYPHONE REMOVAL

### Introduction

British Telecom (BT) has written to inform the council of its intention to remove a number of public telephone boxes in Crawley. BT advises that the use of payphones has declined by 90% over the last decade, and its consultation information sets out that as long as there is network coverage it is now possible to call the emergency services even when there is no credit on people's mobile phones, or no coverage from the users mobile provider.

It is therefore seeking to remove identified telephone boxes due to poor usage, and BT has placed posters in the affected phone boxes inviting residents to contact CBC if they have any comments on the proposed removal. Members views are therefore invited to inform the CBC consultation response, which must be submitted to BT by 5 February 2020.

### Which phone kiosks are identified for removal?

BT has advised the council that a total of 14 public telephone boxes have been identified for removal. Some of the boxes proposed for removal through this consultation are ones that were previously retained following BT's earlier consultation in 2016. The majority of telephone boxes proposed for removal are of a relatively modern design, and appear in reasonable condition. Only one telephone box is of a traditional red design, this being the kiosk located at Woodfield Road, which is not in a good state of repair. In full, the telephone boxes that are subject to this consultation are:

Location (as provided by BT)	Neighbourhood	No. calls in last 12 months	CBC Officer Comments
Outside Thomas Bennet School, Ashdown Drive	Tilgate	1	Adjacent to school and residential properties.
Junction of Warren Drive and Ifield Drive	Ifield	196	Situated at Ifield Parade.
Opposite No. 396 Ifield Drive	Ifield	108	Situated close to Ifield Railway Station.
Car Park adjacent to Windmill Pub, Gossops Drive	Gossops Green	205	Located at Gossops Green Parade.
Outside 17 Barnfield Road	Northgate	216	Located at junction with Oak Way, in a predominantly residential area.
Rear of 3 Wooding Grove, Creasys Drive	Broadfield	0	Next to bus stop on Creasys Drive, close to Chippendale Road. Part of 2016 consultation.
Outside 57 Bank Precinct, Gatwick Road	Northgate	15	Next to footbridge steps, by Gatwick Road (northbound), close to Natwest Bank. Part of 2016 consultation.
Outside No. 141 Woodfield Road	Northgate	8	At junction with Green Lane. Kiosk is not in a good state of repair. Part of 2016 consultation.
Near Supermarket and 1A and 2A Dobbins Place	Ifield West	1	Close to Tesco Express and multi-use games area. Part of 2016 consultation.

Rear of Waterside Close	Bewbush	0	Kiosk appears to be located on Waterfield Gardens. Area is residential in nature.
Near Numbers 2-12 Dorsten Square	Bewbush	490	Close to shops at Bewbush Neighbourhood Centre.
Near No. 1 Pound Hill Parade	Pound Hill	155	Opposite chip shop and bookies on Pound Hill Parade.
Outside No. 23 Wakehams Green Drive	Pound Hill	64	Situated in residential area.
Near to Tavern on the Green, Peterhouse Parade	Pound Hill	18	Situated at Peterhouse Parade. Part of 2016 consultation.

### **Options for the Council**

The council has the option to support or object to any of the proposed telephone box removals. If objecting, we must be clear in providing reasons as to why it is considered that the public telephone should be retained. If a public telephone box meets any of the 'overriding criteria' or all of the 'reasonable needs' criteria, BT has stated that it will not be proposed for removal.

BTs 'overriding criteria' for payphone retention are:

- No mobile coverage (from any provider)
- Suicide hotspot
- Accident blackspot
- Coastal location (not applicable for Crawley)

BTs 'reasonable needs' criteria are:

- The public call box in question is the only one within 800 metres
- There are at least 500 households within 1km
- At least 12 calls have been made from the public call box within the previous 12 months.

For traditional red telephone boxes only, the council or any community group has the option to adopt the telephone box for a fee of £1. Where a phone kiosk is adopted, the council would be responsible for its upkeep and ongoing maintenance. BT is not giving the council an option to retain any adopted kiosk for its original use as phone boxes, and if adopted, BT would remove the telecoms equipment, with the council becoming responsible for maintenance, and liable were someone to be injured as a result of a damaged kiosk not being repaired. For these reasons, when BT previously consulted on plans to remove the red telephone box on Woodfield Road, it was not considered expedient for the council to adopt the kiosk.

### **Next Steps**

Members are invited to submit comments to Anthony Masson, Senior Planning Officer by email at [anthony.masson@crawley.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.masson@crawley.gov.uk) by Friday 31 January 2020. Officers will inform the relevant Neighborhood Forums of the consultation.

All feedback received will inform a final council response that will be agreed with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and submitted to BT ahead of its deadline for comments on 5 February 2020. If you would like to view photographs of the telephone kiosks that have been identified for removal, or should you require any further information, please contact Anthony Masson on 01293 438761.