

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 invited to inform the CBC consultation response, which must be submitted to BT by 3 November 2020.

Which phone kiosks are identified for removal?

BT has advised the council that a total of 3 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 earlier BT consultations. In full, the telephone boxes that are subject to this consultation are:

Location (as provided by BT)	Neighbourhood	Average No. calls per month
Near Numbers 2-12 Dorsten Square	Bewbush	31
Opposite No. 396 lfield Drive	lfield	6
Opposite Maidenbower Place, Maidenbower Drive	Maidenbower	6

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 as to why the public telephone should be retained. If a 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.

Next Steps

Members are invited to submit comments to Anthony Masson, Senior Planning Officer by email at anthony.masson@ Crawley.gov.uk by Friday 23 October 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 Sustainability and submitted to BT ahead of its deadline for comments on 3 November 2020. Should you require any further information, please contact Anthony Masson on 01293 438761.