

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION – 20 MARCH 2020

BRITISH TELECOM CONSULTATION ON THE INTENDED REMOVAL OF 34 PUBLIC CALL BOXES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has been consulted by British Telecom (BT) on a proposal to remove a total of 34 Public Call Boxes from within the District of which 7 are located within the National Park and 27 are located outside the Park. The Council is able to raise objection to the removal of any of these call boxes, provided such objections can be justified by reference to specified criteria and whilst having regard to the interests of telecommunication providers.
- 1.2 This report gives details of the consultation exercises that have been undertaken and provides an assessment for each of the 34 call boxes affected in light of the responses received. Approval is sought to issue a decision notice which identifies 9 call boxes which the Council wishes to be retained. Once issued, the decision notice is published and submitted to BT and the Secretary of State. BT has a right to challenge the Council's decision through an appeal process.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 A schedule of all the call boxes BT wish to remove is attached to this report at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 Each call box that BT has proposed to remove within the National Park is identified by numbers NPA 1 to NPA 7. Each call box proposed to be removed outside the National Park is identified by numbers 1 to 27.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 BT has displayed a notice on each call box to tell the public:
- i) that BT is planning to remove the phone box
 - ii) the name of the Local Planning Authority to whom people can send any comments (within 42 days)
 - iii) a Freephone number people can call to find out the next nearest phone box
- 3.2 In addition, all affected Parish Councils have been consulted on BT's list of proposed call boxes to be removed. The Parish Councils have also been advised of BT's scheme whereby individuals or community groups, including Parish Councils, may 'adopt' a call box for £1. The 'adopt a box' scheme is a matter for the individual or organisation that wishes to adopt the call box and BT itself. The scheme has no bearing on the recommendations in this report, however it has been mentioned under the 'Parish Council Response' section of the assessment if a Parish Council have informed us of their wish to adopt a box which is proposed for removal in this consultation. A consultation between some parishes and the New Forest National Park Authority has taken place, however the National Park consultation only refers to proposed adoption of PCBs. Councillor Mark Steele has suggested that a beneficial use of PCB's may be to accommodate defibrillators this issue is being explored independently of this process for the removal of call boxes.

3.3 In response to consultation the Council has received only one letter from a local resident in relation to the call box at Butlers Lane Gorley Road Ringwood BH24 1TJ (4). The following Parish Councils and Councillors have responded to the consultation:

Parish/Town Council	Payphone Reference	Comments
Ringwood Town Council	3 and 4	3. No objection 4. Objection: on the basis of the demographics of the area, it is in a well positioned and visible area close to local shops and serves areas of social housing.
Hordle Parish Council	8	8. removal welcomed
Copythorne Parish Council	NPA4 and NPA5	NPA5 no objection, wish to adopt. NPA6 no objection
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	16, 17 and 18	16: Object – object, number of calls demonstrate need to retain 17: Object - on the grounds of the demographics of the area – there is a large estate nearby with number of rented and social housing units. 18: Object - the number of calls suggest a need, mobile phone coverage is patchy, the PCB is located on a school route and it should be available for use by students in an emergency
Fawley Parish Council	25 and 26	25 – no objection 26 – no objection
New Milton Town Council	6, 7 and 9	6 – objection – demographic 7 – objection – lack of mobile coverage 9 – objection – demographic
Councillor Edward Heron	27	Objects – lack of mobile coverage, level of usage, demographic and the bus stop is used by the school bus
Councillor Jack Davies	14	Objects - demographic

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 The following factors are of relevance in assessing whether any of the call boxes should be retained:

- (i) Usage. How many times has the payphone been used in the last 12 months
- (ii) Emergency calls. What is the likelihood that the payphone may be required in the case of an emergency to contact services? Is the call box near a traffic accident black spot?
- (iii) The demographic of the area. Does the social composition of the area indicate that a payphone may be required for residents who cannot afford their own home phone or mobile phone?
- (iv) Mobile phone coverage. What is the quality of mobile phone provision for making voice calls?

4.2 All of the call boxes have been assessed using these criteria and the conclusions are set out in the document attached at **Appendix 1**. The assessment takes account of the consultation responses received.

4.3 In summary, the assessment **identifies nine call boxes** which it is considered necessary to retain as follows:

Box reference	Location	Reason for objection
4	Junction of Butlers Lane and Gorley Road Ringwood BH24 1TJ	Social composition, well positioned and visible being close to local shops.
6	Outside Ramsey Court Drake Close New Milton BH25 7DZ	Social composition
7	Junction of Barton Court Avenue and Marine Drive Barton-on-Sea New Milton BH25 7DZ	Lack of mobile phone coverage
9	Outside 14 The Parade Ashley Road New Milton BH25 5BS	Social composition
14	Efford Way Pennington SO41 8DA	Social composition
16	Fairview Drive Hythe SO45 3NQ	Level of usage
17	Outside 52 Netley View Cedar Road Hythe SO453PG	Social composition
18	Outside Post office North Road Dibden Purlieu SO45 4PG	Level of usage, lack of mobile phone coverage, located on a school route

27	Near Village Hall Damerham SP6 3HE	Lack of mobile coverage, level of usage, demographic and the bus stop is used by the school bus
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5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 There are no relevant financial considerations for this consultation.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 That the Council issues a decision for publication which raises objection to the removal of the 9 call boxes identified in the assessment at Appendix 1.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: CLLR E J HERON

Date: 20 March 2020

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

None

Date on which notice given of this decision – 20 March 2020

Last date for call in – 27 March 2020