

 <p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING 16 June 2021</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM I</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>CONSULTATION ON THE REMOVAL OF TWO TELEPHONE BOXES</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>Sandywell, Grumbolds Ash with Avening</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Jenny Forde / Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing Email: jenny.forde@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Joseph Walker Community Partnerships Officer Tel: 01285 623146 Email: joseph.walker@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To agree the Council's response to a British Telecommunications Ltd. consultation.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A BT CONSULTATION email 01/04/21 Annex B Schedule of public call boxes</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>a) That the Cabinet Member agrees a response to British Telecommunications Ltd</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Help residents, businesses and communities to access the support they need to ensure a high level of health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>British Telecommunications Ltd launched consultation on the removal of the affected boxes. The Council has directly notified the affected parishes that this consultation is underway and invited comment, and advised ward members</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** On the 1st April 2021, the Council received an email (Annex A) from British Telecommunications Ltd (BT), advising that they were launching a consultation on the removal of the telephony from two telephone boxes, these being the kiosks in Ozleworth (Ozleworth Parish Meeting) and Brockhampton (Sevenhampton Parish Council). Under the telephone regulator OFCOM's procedures, the Council must be consulted, and is expected to consider any local representations in determining its position. The Council has a veto on the removal of telephony from public call boxes ('boxes'), but must only consider the social utility of retaining telephony in exercising this veto

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.** Under the process set out by the Ofcom, the regulatory body, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to initiate its own consultation process to canvas the views of the local community. They would normally expect these consultations to involve other public organisations such as Parish Councils and work within the terms of the Communications Act 2003. Accordingly, the host Parishes have been notified of BT's proposals.

- 2.2.** The Council has a veto on BT's individual proposals, but only where its position can be objectively justified. The two affected Parishes were invited to submit their views to the Council, initially by the end of April, extended to the end of May, to try to elicit a response. Neither Parish responded, However, a response from an individual resident in Ozleworth was received, as follows:

'Hello,

I'm writing as one of many people who would like to see the telephone box at Ozleworth remain in place. This and hundreds of others like it are now a treasured part of our heritage - valuable icons of the British landscape, both rural and urban. If we continue to remove them one by one then very soon there will be none left; a move we would all live to regret. I fully appreciate that it's original function is now redundant but local residents are keen for it to remain and would maintain it with great care and decide how best to put it to future use. Please do not allow such an act of vandalism to go ahead. Many thanks.'

- 2.3.** Clarification was sought from this respondent to determine whether the Parish or local people would be interested in adopting the kiosk, as the most common means of securing its future, but no response was received.

- 2.4.** While the Council is not privy to the full information BT have used to identify which boxes they are proposing for removal and which should be retained, some data behind this consultation has been provided. The Council has been informed of the volume of calls. BT is also obliged to consider social factors such as the type of housing, or whether the box is near an accident hotspot. These issues have been considered. The Officer judgement is that there are no relevant grounds to object to the removal of the boxes.

- 2.5.** As there are no grounds to object to the removal of the boxes, nor has a willing community adopter come forward, the decision to be made is whether the Council allows the removal of these boxes, or seeks to adopt them itself to preserve this part of our local heritage. The decision at this stage is a consultation response to inform BT. A decision to acquire the boxes would require a Cabinet decision in due course. No professional condition

survey has been undertaken at this point, although a desk based review using Google Maps indicates both boxes are in a poor state of repair. The box in Ozleworth is on a roadside location, at a distance from any dwellings, whereas the box in Brockhampton is more centrally located, on an triangle of land in the middle of a junction in the village.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1.** There are no financial implications for the Council from either the retention, removal or adoption of a box by a third party. Should the decision be taken that the Council should itself seek adopt a box, there would be some limited financial liability. However, the actual acquisition would require full consideration by Cabinet.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** The Council is fulfilling a role under guidance from Ofcom, so there are no legal implications arising directly from this Report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** There is no risk to Council business.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1.** BT, as the principal actor in this matter, is expected to review social factors in putting forward its proposals for the removal of public call boxes.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

- 7.1.** None. While the consequence of this consultation will be that some local facilities are being removed, there is clear evidence these are not being used, so their removal will have a negligible impact.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1.** None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1.** None