



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY DECISION MEETING</b>
Subject	<b>Response to British Telecommunications Ltd consultation on the removal of telephony from a telephone box in Guiting Power</b>
Wards affected	Bourton Vale
Accountable member	Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety Email: <a href="mailto:lisa.spivey@cotswold.gov.uk">lisa.spivey@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Andy Barge, Assistant Director, Communities Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: <a href="mailto:joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk">joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To determine the Council's response to a consultation led by British Telecommunications Ltd into the removal of telephony from a telephone kiosk in Guiting Power.
Annexes	Annex A: Email from British Telecommunications Ltd Annex B: Phone data Annex C: Copy of the site notice Annex D: Parish Response
Recommendation(s)	That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consider the response from Guiting Power Parish Council.</li><li>2. Agree the Council's proposed consultation response outlined in paragraph 5.1</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Supporting Communities</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO



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Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>The matter in hand is a consultation, run by British Telecommunications Ltd, in line with OFCOM regulations. The Council is a statutory consultee, which is expected to consider local comments in coming to its formal position. The general public, in the form of potential users of the telephone kiosk, have had opportunity to make representations, as has Guiting Power Parish Council, and the local Ward member.</p>



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to agree a consultation response to a consultation by British Telecommunications Ltd ('BT') into the removal of telephony from a telephone kiosk in Guiting Power.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** On 19 January 2024, the Council was notified by BT that it was launching a consultation into the decommissioning of a telephone kiosk in Guiting Power. The notification is attached at Annex A. The industry regulator for telecommunications, OFCOM, has set a process to be followed for the removal of telephone kiosks, whereby the Local Planning Authority must be consulted - although this is not formally a Development Management issue. In turn, the Local Planning Authority's position must be informed by representations received. The site notice, posted in the affected kiosk, is attached at Annex C. The Local Planning Authority has a power of veto, where it has reasons to object.

## **3 MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** BT has periodically reviewed the telephone kiosks across the district, and put forward those that do not meet its requirements for retention. In this round, only the kiosk in Guiting Power ('the Kiosk') has been identified. The Kiosk was also subject to a consultation in 2020, when an objection to its removal was put forward.
- 3.2** BT's figures, in Annex B, state that 3 calls have been made from the Kiosk in the last twelve months. This suggests that although a public telephone can be considered a public amenity, in this instance it is not currently providing real local benefit, and that its loss should not be impactful.
- 3.3** Social need, access to alternative facilities and matters of public safety are all factors that the Council is expected to consider in reaching a position. In this instance, no factors that support the case for retention have been identified. OFCOM data of mobile phone coverage shows good coverage, and there are no known public safety or social factors.
- 3.4** Where BT proposes the removal of telephony, it can be possible for the community to seek to 'adopt' the kiosk itself, which is then often put to other community use, such as to house a defibrillator a library or tourist information point. In this instance, as the Kiosk is built-in to an existing structure, it will not be removed, which in turn will limit any impact on the local street scene.
- 3.5** The Council notified Guiting Power Parish Council (GPPC) upon receipt of BT's letter, in line with the OFCOM process. GPPC submitted a response on 20 February, attached at Annex D, advising that the Parish Council has no objections to the removal.
- 3.6** Accordingly, the officer recommendation is to respond to BT with no objection to the removal of the telephony.



#### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Council could object but would require grounds to substantiate an objection. No such grounds have been identified.
- 4.2 The Council is neither obliged to take this decision nor to respond to the consultation. No response would be taken as agreement to the proposal. However, such an approach is not transparent, and does not exercise the Council's role in this matter.

#### **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The Council's response to consultation should reflect the position articulated by GPPC, and not object to the proposal.

#### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no known financial implications.

#### **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no known legal implications.

#### **8 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 There are no significant risks. There will be a minor diminishment in fixed line telephony access in the immediate locality, but it would meet the legal requirements on BT as the service provider.

#### **9 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1 This decision does not affect the delivery of Council services. The impact would be to the ability of BT to provide access to people with protected characteristics, a factor they should consider in decommissioning telephone kiosks.

#### **10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None identified.

#### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None

(END)