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| REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE | | Report No. 17 |
| Date of Meeting | 24 th July 2008 | |
| Title of Report | British Telecom's proposal to re-align payphone provision in the District | |
| Portfolio | Built Environment | |
| Link to Corporate Priorities | | |
| Key Decision | No | |
| Executive Workplan Ref | N/A | |
| Public Report | Yes | |

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| <p>Summary of Report</p> <p>Members are requested to consider British Telecom's (BT's) proposals to re-align payphone provision within the district. The BT proposal will see the removal of 55 public call boxes from areas throughout the district. North Wiltshire District Council is required to submit a formal response by the 15th August 2008.</p> |
| <p>Officer Recommendations</p> <p>1) To object to the removal of those payphones where objections have been raised by residents and local parish and council members, on the grounds that the Executive has insufficient information from BT to justify their removal.</p> |

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| Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report. | | | | |
| Financial Implications | Legal Implications | Community & Environmental Implications | Human Resources Implications | Equality & Diversity Implications |
| None | None | Yes | None | None |

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 British Telecom (BT) originally wrote to North Wiltshire District Council on the 2nd April 2008 advising of the proposal to “re-align” payphone provision, with the deadline for a response set for the 2nd July 2008. The term “re-align” refers to the removal of certain public payphones in the district.
- 1.2 This deadline was subsequently revised to the 15th August 2008 to allow for a full 90 day consultation from the date that the last public notice posted on the affected payphones.
- 1.3 In addition to the site notices North Wiltshire District Council wrote to all Parish and Town Council’s advising them of BT’s proposals.
- 1.4 The proposals affect 55 public payphones within the district, the full list can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.5 At the time of this report objections have been received on the removal of 6 public payphones, as indicated in Appendix A. As well as objections queries have been raised regarding the retention of the kiosk once the telephone system has been removed.
- 1.6 In light of these responses officers have made requests to BT for further information. Appendix B shows the questions that have been raised by officers. At the time of this report the information gap that exists prevents officers from making informed recommendations.
- 1.7 Discussions with BT state that there is a considerable backlog and these questions will be dealt with as soon as possible.
- 1.8 North Wiltshire District Council is required to submit a formal response to BT by the 15th August 2008. Parish and Town Councils have been advised to submit any comments to North Wiltshire District Council by the 8th August to allow for sufficient time to collate the response.
- 1.9 It is expected that further responses will be received by officers up until the 8th August.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 **Option 1:** To object to the removal of those payphones where objections have been raised by residents and local parish and council members, on the grounds that the Executive has insufficient information from BT to justify their removal.

This will enable the Executive to defer the matter until the next Executive Meeting where a formal position can be reached based on all the responses received and full information from BT.

- 2.2 **Option 2:** Accept the proposals by BT to remove the public payphones identified in Appendix A.

3. Additional Information

Retaining kiosk by achieving listed status.

- 3.1 The possibility of retaining payphone kiosks by listing the structure has been highlighted in the responses received so far. Discussions between officers and BT conclude that it is the responsibility of North Wiltshire District Council to determine the “type” of kiosk and its potential for listed status.
- 3.2 Conservation Officers will be visiting the payphones to determine the “type” and potential for listed status on the week commencing 15th July 2008. The conclusions of this assessment will be presented to the Executive once completed.

The use of the Council's Veto Power.

- 3.3 Ofcom guidance states that the last Public Call Box (PCB) cannot currently be removed from a site if a local council objects – ‘the local veto.’
- 3.4 The use of the ‘local veto’ must be justified and officers have requested further information from BT in order to understand the arguments for removing public payphones. This includes information such as the usage of particular payphones. The holding objection as recommended in Option 1 will provide the time to consider the facts.

4. Community & Environmental Implications

- 4.1 The proposal to remove the last public call box will see the removal of a local amenity. BT are yet to provide information regarding the usage of the payphones, however it is the broad assessment by BT that all the public payphones contained with Appendix A are *little used by consumers*.

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| Appendices: | Appendix A – List of payphones up for removal Appendix B – Questions put to BT |
| Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report: | NONE |