

Councillors Briefing Note

Briefing Note No. 23-25

Service: Economic Development and Planning
Further Enquiries to: Mary Moore
Date Prepared: 25/09/2023
Direct Line: N/A
Email: Mary.Moore@wiltshire.gov.uk

Payphones consultation

The council has received notification from BT regarding consultation on its current programme of proposed public payphone removals.

BT have identified **three public payphones** in Wiltshire that have very low usage levels and propose to remove them under the 90-day consultation process. Details of these payphones are shown on the attached sheet, which includes telephone numbers and addresses. BT has also placed consultation notices in the relevant payphone kiosks.

The following payphones kiosks have been listed for consultation:

1. Junction Brook Lane, The Ham, Westbury, BA13 4HD
2. High Street, Heytesbury, Warminster, BA12 0EA
3. Stockton, Warminster, BA12 0SE

As the local authority, we are required to carry out our own consultation process to canvas the views of the local community. Therefore, we are seeking the views of the relevant parish councils, Wiltshire councillors and other groups and organisations representing the community on the proposed removal of these payphones.

Please provide reasons for any objections to the removal of specific phones, as a blanket objection is unlikely to carry much weight.

BT has provided some examples of factors that may be relevant (guidance below):

- If there is predominantly privately rented or council housing in the area. This suggests people on a lower income without access to mobile and fixed telephones and supports the view that a public call box should be retained.
- There may be concerns about access to telephone services in areas with low population densities.
- The payphone may be sited in an area of poor mobile phone coverage.
- There may be a higher than average need to access emergency services, including breakdown services due to specific local factors for example, the call box is near a known accident black-spot.

BT offers the opportunity for parish councils and registered charities to adopt a kiosk for just £1, thereby protecting the heritage of the community.

Details about this can be found at <http://business.bt.com/phone-services/payphone-services/adopt-a-kiosk/>

The consultation period will close on Wednesday **11 October 2023**; please return your responses by Monday **9 October 2023**. All responses will be collated and directed to a single point of contact.

Your responses should be returned to Mary.Moore@wiltshire.gov.uk, Development Officer, Economic Development and Planning, who will co-ordinate the decision response to BT on behalf of the council.

If we have not received a representation by the end of the consultation period, we will assume that you have no objection to the removal of the payphone. Please be aware that once removed, kiosks cannot be re-instated. BT will remove payphones as soon as possible after the consultation period has ended.

Review of the telephony universal service obligation:

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0028/238555/telephony-USO-statement.pdf

Payphone removals:

https://help.business.bt.com/euf/assets/pdf/BT_Payphone_removals_2.pdf

Wiltshire Council will submit a response to BT on any proposed payphone removal by the **28 November 2023**.

All correspondence to BT should be addressed to:

BT Payphones, 4TH FLOOR, Monument TE, 11-13 Great Tower Street, London, EC3R 5AQ
or via email to btp.authorisation.team@bt.com