

Planning & Environment Committee

Date:	5 November 2019
Title:	BT Public Payphone Removal Consultation
Contact Officer:	Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer
Action	

1. To consider making a formal response to the consultation.

Background

2. BT have commenced a formal consultation process regarding their current programme of intended public payphone removals. There are currently two public payphones identified in the Parish of Thame located at Churchill Crescent and Moreton Road in Moreton.
3. The same consultation took place in 2016, and at the Planning & Environment committee meeting on 20 December 2016 it was agreed that the Council responded to the consultation with No Strong Views. It is the Town Council's understanding that SODC subsequently asked for the payphones to be kept.
4. To ensure that local communities are fully informed, consultation notices have been placed on the relevant payphones. The consultation period will close on 12 December 2019.
5. The consultation process also gives the local community the opportunity to adopt a traditional red 'heritage' phone box, at a cost of £1, and make them an asset that the local community can enjoy. Neither of the phone boxes are of such a type.
6. There has been some discussion with Moreton Residents Association, that in the event of the Moreton phone box being decommissioned, then it could be re-used for a defibrillator. This will be subject to separate report / discussion at a future meeting.
7. Previous discussion / comments regarding the adoption of the phone box outside the Town Hall:

At the Planning & Environment Committee meeting on 19 August 2008 members made the following comments regarding a BT consultation on payphone removal - *i) retain Churchill Crescent ii) Chinnor Road already removed iii) those in town centre to be retained and, if possible, to remove the one located outside the Town Hall.*

At the Full Council meeting on 16 December 2008 the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 11 November 2008 were ratified as follows:

Minute No. 6 – BT Adopt a Kiosk Scheme:

The recommendation to Full Council that the Council should adopt the BT kiosk outside the Town Hall for £1 a year was now the subject of second thoughts. The reality of maintaining the box, even with a sealed door, now seemed daunting. No one had ever seen anyone actually using the telephone kiosk for its proper purpose and the consensus of opinion was that it should be removed.

Agenda Item: 6

RESOLVED that BT be informed that Thame Town Council would like the telephone kiosk outside the Town Hall to be removed.

The Planning & Environment Committee was once again asked to consider adopting the BT kiosk outside the Town Hall at their meeting on 27 October 2009. Members had differing opinions as to a solution and it was agreed to invite a representative from BT to the next meeting to discuss the options further. *Post meeting BT declined the invitation to attend.*

At the Planning and Environment Committee meeting on 25 November 2011 the Conservation Area Advisory Committee minutes were reviewed. Members discussed the suggestion therein that the red telephone box outside the Town Hall should be removed to the Museum courtyard "...as it would be the last remaining one in the town centre and worthy of retention." Members fully agreed that a solution was required about the box and asked that the matter be brought back to committee.

Action

The Committee is asked to consider whether to make a formal response to the consultation regarding the removal of payphones in Churchill Crescent and Moreton.