



CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER  
PLANNING & STRATEGIC TRANSPORT

12 SEP 2019

Chief Planning Officer  
Cheshire West and Chester Council HQ  
Sarah Dobbins, Localities HQ  
Nicholas House, 1 Black Friars  
Chester  
CH1 2NU

12 September 2019

**TIME SENSITIVE** - 90 Day Consultation period end date: 11 December 2019

Dear Chief Planning Officer,

Further to our previous letter, we are writing to you as part of a formal consultation process regarding our current programme of intended public payphone removals. This letter formally starts our consultation with you and the local community.

There are currently 45 public payphones in your area which have been identified and proposed for removal by BT under the 90-day consultation process and details of these payphones are shown below.

To ensure that the local community are fully informed, we have placed consultation notices on the relevant payphones, and a sample notice is enclosed. We have also included the date we posted these notices on the payphones. The consultation period will close on 11 December 2019. Unless you contact us to agree otherwise, responses received after this date will not be accepted.

This consultation process gives your local communities the opportunity to adopt a traditional red 'heritage' phone box and make them an asset that local people can enjoy. It's really simple to do and it costs just £1 - <http://bt.com/adopt>

Overall use of payphones has declined by over 90 per cent in the last decade and the need to provide payphones for use in emergency situations is diminishing all the time, with at least 98 per cent of the UK having either 3G or 4G coverage. This is important because as long as there is network coverage, it's now possible to call the emergency services, even when there is no credit or no coverage from your own mobile provider.

You may also want to consider the recent Ofcom affordability report which found that most people do not view payphones as essential for most consumers in most circumstances -

[http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/affordability/affordability\\_report.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/affordability/affordability_report.pdf)

On the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2006 the Office of Communications (Ofcom) published a statement following their 2005 review of universal service in the Telecommunications market, which includes a requirement for payphone provision to meet reasonable needs. Part of that statement amended our obligations with regard to the

removal of payphone service

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0021/34266/statement.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/34266/statement.pdf)

As stated in Ofcom's 2005 review, 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 the Parish or Community councils and work within the terms of the Communications Act 2003. This means that you must be able to objectively justify your decisions.

Full guidance on the removal process can be viewed at:

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/removals.pdf>

and a summary is available at:

[http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/removing\\_callboxes.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/removing_callboxes.pdf)

The guidance also details the appeals process we must follow in case of unreasonable objections.

### **What you need to do next**

Please complete and return the attached annex with your decision on each payphone.

If the decision is that the local community wish to 'adopt', please provide their contact details and we'll do the rest.

If you wish to 'object', you'll need to complete the last column with your reasons, having reviewed all of the factors set out in Annex 1 of Ofcom's guidance (see link above), and the information sent to you in our previous letter.

If the information is incomplete for any payphone in the list, then we'll assume you have no objection to its removal and also that you do not wish to adopt it.

The best way to respond to us is by email at [btp.authorisation.team@bt.com](mailto:btp.authorisation.team@bt.com). Please retain proof that the email was sent or apply a read receipt. If you would prefer to respond by post please use the following address and allow at least two days for postal delivery:

**BT Payphones**  
pp 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Monument TE  
11 – 13 Great Tower Street  
London  
EC3R 5AQ

You will need to obtain proof of postage from your local post office and be aware that we are unable to receive mail that requires a signature.

If you've got any questions then please get in touch with us by emailing [btp.authorisation.team@bt.com](mailto:btp.authorisation.team@bt.com).

Yours sincerely

**Rick Thompson**  
**Payphone Planning Officer**

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