

Delegated Report

Telephone Box Removal Application

Planning Application No: 20241076

Location: Telephone Call Box Junction Wrotham Road Huntingfield Road Meopham

Description: Removal of public payphone.

Applicant: BT Group Plc

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

- BT Covering Email / Letter;
- Sample BT Site Notice; and
- Phone Usage Spreadsheet – all received 20th November 2024.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history.

Site Description

The application site is the Junction Wrotham Road Huntingfield Road Meopham.

Consultation

Meopham Parish Council
No comments received.

Public Consultation

It is a requirement of BT and KCOM to carry out consultation by way of displaying of a site notice. This has been carried out. No letters of representation have been received.

Proposed Development

This is a 90 day notice application for the removal of a public payphone located at the Junction Wrotham Road Huntingfield Road Meopham. It is stated within the submission that the public payphone is not used enough and financially viable to keep in service by BT.



Analysis

As part of the Ofcom review of the telephone universal service obligation (June 2022), Ofcom exercised its power to make a direction affecting the operation of the universal service conditions in relation to public call boxes on 14 March 2006 (the “Direction”).

Direction

Modifications under sections 45, 67 and 68(3) and (4) of the Communications Act 2003 (the “Act”) of Universal Service Conditions contained in Ofcom’s notification under section 48 of the Act of 21 July 2003, and withdrawal under section 49 of the Act of the Public Call Box Direction dated 14 March 2006.

The following criteria for the removal of public call boxes is listed within the Ofcom Review of the Telephone Universal Service Obligation (2022);

Removal or relocation of Public Call Boxes including Last-at-a-Site PCBs

3.2 Subject to Conditions 3.3 and 3.4, BT may remove or relocate a Public Call Box.

3.3 BT may only remove or relocate a Last-at-a-Site PCB outside of the relevant Site where:

- (a) all UK-wide mobile network operators have coverage at the Site;*
- (b) the Site is not a high frequency accident or suicide location;*
- (c) fewer than 52 calls were made from the Last-at-a-Site PCB in the 12 months prior to the start of the relevant Representation Period; and*
- (d) there is no other evidence of a reasonable need for a Public Call Box at the Site.*

3.4 BT may only remove or relocate a Last-at-a-Site PCB in accordance with Conditions 3.5 to 3.14 (inclusive). Notification and Publication Requirements

3.5 Where BT proposes to remove or relocate a Last-at-a-Site PCB, BT must:

- (a) display a notice in a prominent place on that PCB setting out:*
 - i) the Proposal, including the proposed new location, if applicable; Review of the telephony universal service obligation 91*
 - ii) contact details of the Relevant Public Body;*
 - iii) the Representation Period; and iv) the location of the nearest alternative Public Call Box;*
 - and*
- (b) publish all of the information referred to in this Condition in an easily accessible place.*

3.6 Where BT proposes to remove or relocate a Last-at-a-Site PCB, BT must give written notice to the Relevant Public Body setting out:

- (a) the Proposal, including details of the location of the Last-at-a-Site PCB and any proposed new location, if applicable;
- (b) all relevant evidence and other information in relation to the Removal Criteria;
- (c) the date on which the Site Notice was first displayed on the Last-at-a-Site PCB;
- (d) the Representation Period;
- (e) an explanation that BT is required:
 - i) to take due account of representations relating to the Removal Criteria made by the Relevant Public Body in making its Decision; and
 - ii) to provide written reasons for its Decision;
- (f) details of the process applicable to a Review of the Decision, including the deadlines implemented by BT as part of that process, in compliance with these Conditions; and
- (g) a copy of the Site Notice.

3.7 BT must set a Representation Period which ends no less than 90 days after the day on which the Site Notice was first displayed or the Written Notice was sent, whichever was later.

In order for the removal of a telephone call box to be acceptable and in accordance with Ofcom's rules, the following criteria must be met. (Responses should be No in order for there to be no objection to the proposal);

No.	Criteria for Protection	Criteria for Removal Met Y/N
1	The box is in an area without coverage from all four mobile networks	N
2	The box in in an area with a high number of accidents or suicides	N
3	The box has had 52 or more call sin the last 12 months	N
4	There is evidence that the box is needed for emergencies, such as flooding	N
5	The box is used to call helplines	N

It is a requirement of BT and KCOM to consult local authorities, together with the displaying of a notice on the telephone box advertising it's removal to the public.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to comply with the parameters set out in Ofcom review of the telephone universal service obligation (June 2022).

Recommendation

No Objection

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
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Signed:	<i>A Cue</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	14 th February 2025	Dated:	17th February 2025