



Delegated Report

Telephone Box Removal Application

Planning Application No: 20260236

Location: Telephone Call Box Junction Of Albion Terrace And Russell Road
Gravesend Kent

Description: Removal of public payphone.

Applicant: BT Group Plc

Site Visit Date: Desktop Application

Submitted Documents/Plans

Covering Email
Sample of Site Notice
Annex – Call date

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history.

Site Description

This telephone box is located in an urban area, at the junction of Albion Terrace and Russell Road. To the north of Russell Road there is the Canal basin and the River Thames. It is a short walk from Riverside. The majority of Russell Road and all areas to the north of Russell Road are in a Flood Zone 2 and 3, which this telephone box sits just outside of.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees & Neighbouring properties

BT have confirmed that they have placed notification of the intent to remove the public payphone in line with Section 49A of the Communication Act 2003.

Gravesham Borough Council have also placed notification near the site inviting comments. No comments were received from members of the public. The site is not within a parish area and so there was no consultation with a local parish in this instance.

Officer's Analysis

Ofcom guidance

Ofcom's guidance on public call boxes state the following:

BT (across the UK, except for the Hull area) and KCOM (in the Hull area) are required to provide public call

boxes to meet the reasonable needs of the public.

In June 2022, we [updated our rules](#) on public call boxes. BT and KCOM now cannot remove a box if it is the last remaining in an area (i.e. more than 400 metres' walking distance from the next public call box) and it meets one or more of these criteria:

- it is in a place without coverage from all four mobile network providers;
- it is located in an area with a high frequency of accidents or suicides;
- it has made 52 or more calls over the past 12 months; or
- there is other evidence that the box is reasonably needed at the site – for example if it is likely to be relied upon in the event of a local emergency, such as flooding, or if it is used to call helplines.

If a public call box that is the last at a site does not meet any of these four criteria, BT or KCOM can consult with the relevant local authority on removing it. BT and KCOM must take account of any views and evidence received from this consultation before deciding whether to remove the box.

Public call boxes that are not the last at a site can be removed by BT and KCOM without consultation.

Assessment

In this case the data provided shows a total of 47 calls placed from this phone box in the last 12 months. They also present that the site had no helpline calls in the last 12 months of pattern of serious accidents, nor is it in a high frequency suicide location.

Ofcom's mobile coverage checker indicates a good level of mobile coverage in this area, across the four main mobile networks.

They also state that there is no other evidence of reasonable need.

However, this payphone is located to the immediate south of a flood Zone 2 and 3, very close to the canal basin and River Thames. So, although there has been no recent flooding, should flooding occur, for which there is evidenced potential, then the payphone may very well be needed to contact emergency service. Given the proximity to large bodies of water, there is also potential for emergency service contact or helpline contact for suicide prevention. Although it is not explicitly stated it is assumed because of the submission of this application that this is the last remaining public call box within at least a 400 metre distance. Given the potential for flood and suicide risk, and the significant use of the call box over the last 12 months, it is considered that the public phone is reasonable needed at the site.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The public payphone is located in an area where there is risk of flooding and suicide. The public payphone has had a substantial amount of usage over the past 12 months and there are no other public payphone facilities within at least a 400m walking distance. It is considered that there is a clear and evidenced need for the retention of the public payphone, for which without it there would be significant social and practical hardship. Gravesham Borough Council object to the removal of this public payphone.

(see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	27th May 2026	Dated:	28th April 2026