

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **BT CONSULTATION ON THE REMOVAL OF A TELEPHONE KIOSK**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report sets out the details of BT's consultation on the removal of the telephony service to the telephone kiosk near Friary Villas on Sleaford Road in Newark and the District Council's proposed response.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 On 20 November 2019, Economic Development Committee endorsed the proposed approach to BT consultations on the removal of the telephony service to kiosks in the District. Where Town & Parish Councils and Meetings wish to adopt a kiosk and repurpose it, the District Council will support this. It was also agreed that the District Council will support Town & Parish Councils and Meetings, and District Councillors, where they object to the removal of the telephony service from a kiosk and are able to provide a valid basis for their objection. Where no comment is received from Town & Parish Councils and Meetings, or District Councillors, officers will use their judgement to make recommendations in line with Ofcom guidance (attached as **Appendix A**).

2.2 BT posted a notice in the kiosk on Sleaford Road on 11 July 2020 asking anyone who wished to comment on the proposed removal to contact the District Council by 22 August 2020. The number for the kiosk is 01636 610746 and it receives on average 16 calls per month. District Council Officers contacted Newark Town Council and the relevant District Councillors and made them aware of the details of the consultation. No comments have been received.

2.3 BT will not accept responses from any individual or body other than the District Council. BT will not remove a kiosk if it has received a written objection from the District Council by 9 October 2020 – this is known as the local veto.

#### **3.0 Proposed Response**

3.1 It is proposed that the District Council objects to the removal of the telephony service, which would mean that BT have to maintain it. The kiosk is in Bridge ward and the nature of tenures in this ward as well as other factors that the District Council is aware of lead us to believe that there is likely to be a relatively high level of dependence on the availability of a payphone. Also, given the ongoing pandemic and its economic consequences, this is arguably the wrong time to remove a cheap and reliable means of communication. The Town Council and Ward Members have been told that if no comment from them is received, it will be assumed that they are supportive of the proposed response.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 None identified, it is not believed that this issue will have different implications for different groups with protected characteristics.

## **5.0 Financial Implications FIN20-21/2195**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

6.1 The maintenance of telephony services in this kiosk could contribute to the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour and increase feelings of safety in the local community, by facilitating emergency calls.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the report be noted and the proposed response approved.**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

**So that the proposed response can be approved and the District Council response can be submitted to BT's consultation on the removal of the telephone kiosk on Sleaford Road, Newark.**

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Matthew Norton on Ext 5852 or Adrian Allenbury on Ext 5862

Matt Lamb  
Director – Planning & Growth