



**Service Delivery**

Planning Policy  
Swindon Borough Council  
Wat Tyler House  
Beckhampton Street  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

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15 November 2019

Dear Councillors,

**Consultation on BT programme of intended public payphone removals**

BT has instigated a public consultation on their proposals to remove 24 payphone callboxes within the Borough. Notices have been posted in each of the relevant phone boxes to inform users and passers-by of the proposals and the consultation process. In addition, Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has been advised that as the 'local public organisation' it has a responsibility to consult local councils, community groups and residents.

Address	Post code	No of calls
Welcombe Avenue	SN3 2QW	80

We would be grateful if you would:

- publicise the proposal to remove the callbox(es) amongst local residents encouraging them to forward any responses to yourselves or to SBC (using the contact details below), and
- Consider the proposals as a Council and inform SBC of your recommendation.

We will also be putting the details of this consultation on the SBC website as soon as possible.

Responses should be sent to either [forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk) or Forward Planning, Swindon Borough Council, Wat Tyler West House, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Beckhampton Street, Swindon SN1 2JG.

BT offers 3 possible responses to the proposal to remove a callbox:

1. Agree to the removal
2. Adopt the callbox. Where the local callbox is a traditional red phone box, BT are encouraging communities to purchase for £1 in order to use the box for the benefit of the local community benefits eg as a library. Further information on this process can be found at: <https://bt.com/adopt>

3. Object to the removal. Ofcom Regulations state that BT has a duty to provide 'reasonable geographic access to public call boxes' and offer the following as relevant factors to consider in relation to each callbox:
- Whether the area in which the box is located has a relatively high proportion of people on low incomes or in rented properties who could be less likely to have access to mobile or fixed line telephones.
  - Whether the area requires a phone box for emergency calls, perhaps near an accident black spot or near to a community facility.
  - Whether the area has poor or sporadic mobile network coverage.
  - The level of call volumes made from callbox which can give an indication as to its usefulness or value to the community.

A case will need to be argued for each objection, backed up with evidence.

### **Proposed Timescales:**

We are proposing the following timetable:

By	Action
Friday 15 November	SBC notifies all parish councils, residents associations and community groups.
By Friday 13 December	Parish councils and community groups carry out local consultation and consider how they want to respond to the proposal to remove their local call box(es). SBC to be informed of the local responses to the proposal and of their recommendation.
By Tuesday 14 January	SBC's Planning Committee considers local responses and recommendations to the proposal and makes an initial draft decision on the future of each phonebox. SBC publicises the draft decision and invites further responses.
By Tuesday 11 February	Swindon Council to make final decision based on the responses received from parish councils and local community groups. SBC to make a formal response to BT.

We appreciate that these timescales are tight, however we did not receive notification from BT until after the notices in the callboxes had been posted. Your assistance and participation with this issue is very much appreciated.

Planning Policy