

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 03 February 2020

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Adoption of BT Telephone Box in Sarisbury Green
Report of:	Director of Leisure and Community
Corporate Priorities:	Protect and Enhance the Environment

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to adopt a traditional red BT telephone box in Sarisbury Green.

Executive summary:

The growth of the mobile phone industry has inevitably meant that telephone box usage has dropped dramatically, and nearly half of the telephone boxes in the UK have been removed.

BT are currently offering local authorities the opportunity to adopt traditional red telephone boxes in their area under the BT Adopt a Kiosk programme, to be either kept as a heritage feature or to be used by the community for an alternative use. If the telephone box is not adopted, then it will be removed at some point in the future by BT. (Please see Appendix A)

The red telephone box in Sarisbury Green is located on a small area of grass, on Bridge Road that sits within a protected conservation area. (Please see appendix B)

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive agrees that:

- (a) the Council adopts the red telephone box in Sarisbury Green in accordance with the conditions outlined in the report; and
- (b) an allocation of £3,650 to bring the telephone box up to a good state of repair and secure it, and £500 per annum for maintenance and repair is set aside in the Community Funding Budget.

Reason:

To retain the iconic red telephone box as a heritage feature in a protected conversation area.

Cost of proposals:

£3,650 one off cost and £500 per annum to be funded from the existing Community Funding budget.

Appendices:

A: Table of telephone boxes listed for removal by BT

B: Images and location of Sarisbury Green telephone box

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	03 February 2020
Subject:	Adoption of BT Telephone Box in Sarisbury Green
Briefing by:	Director of Leisure and Community
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The growth of the mobile phone industry has inevitably meant telephone box usage has dropped dramatically, and nearly half of the telephone boxes in the UK have been removed.
2. On 12 September 2019, the Council received a list of 14 telephone boxes that were identified for removal due to the low number of call usage, including one in Sarisbury Green that had only 15 calls made from it in the past 12 months.
3. Rather than simply removing the traditional red telephone boxes, BT are offering local authorities the opportunity to adopt them to be either kept as a heritage feature or to be used by the community for an alternative use.
4. From the list provided at appendix A, the Council were given the opportunity to either object to the removals with a valid reason for keeping them or to express an interest in adopting any of them. Only the red telephone boxes can be adopted as part of the BT Adopt a Kiosk programme.
5. The telephone box in Sarisbury Green is located within a conservation area and is the only red telephone box that has been listed for removal.
6. A list of all telephone boxes listed for removal by BT, and the 3 which have been requested to remain by the Council, can be found in Appendix A to this report.

BACKGROUND

7. The Adopt a Kiosk programme is run by BT. Since the programme was launched in 2008 more than 5000 communities across the UK have taken the opportunity to turn their telephone box into something different including mini libraries, art galleries or a defibrillator station.

ADOPTION PROCESS

8. A telephone box can only be adopted by a local authority, parish/town council, a registered charity or a private landowner in the position where the telephone box sits. It is not available to individuals or community groups such as residents' associations or commercial organisations.
9. The cost of adopting a telephone box is £1.00, and it is purchased with any and all physical defects. Once it has been adopted, all maintenance and repairs are transferred to the authority.
10. However, if the Council were to adopt the telephone box, the responsibility and maintenance for it can be transferred to a willing community group and an agreement would be drawn up between the Council and the community group.
11. In the past, Sarisbury Residents Association have painted the telephone box to help maintain it. However, when approached to establish whether or not they would be willing to take over the responsibility from the Council to maintain the telephone box on a permanent basis, they declined. The reasons for declining were that they have limited resources in terms of funding and personnel.
12. St Paul's Church in Sarisbury Green were also approached to see if they would like to take on responsibility for the telephone box, however they also declined.
13. Locally, Warsash Residents Association have turned their red telephone box into a defibrillator station with the aid of community funding, however the association applied for the funding on behalf of an individual who was willing to take on the responsibility of it.
14. If the telephone box was to be adopted by the Council, the telephone would be disconnected and removed by BT. BT would continue to be responsible for the electrical supply to power the lighting, and for the payments to the electricity company for that supply. However, BT have the right to disconnect the electricity supply at some point in the future, but they would contact the kiosk owner should this become necessary. Alternatively, the electricity supply can be taken over by the adoptee of which the cost would vary depending on the electricity company.
15. If the telephone box was to be adopted by the Council, the door would be permanently locked to help minimise future maintenance and damage and the would be maintained as a heritage feature.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The cost to the Council to adopt the telephone box from BT is £1.00.
17. The Council's Property Services team have assessed the maintenance liabilities, and the cost to bring the telephone box up to a good standard of repair, including painting, cleaning, replacing the glass panels with toughened glass or clear perspex and locking it would be £3,650. To maintain the telephone box on an ongoing basis is likely to be up to £500 per annum, depending on damage and weathering.
18. These costs could be funded from the existing Community Funding budget of which there is currently £118,657.

CONCLUSION

19. This report seeks approval to adopt the traditional red telephone box in Sarisbury Green and to fund all repairs and maintenance from the Community Funding budget.

Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact Becca Bennett, Leisure and Community Officer. Ext. 4593