

## 12. Consultation – Review of BT Public Payphones

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### Purpose of the Report

To advise members about the review that could lead to the removal of 15 BT Public Payphones in Area West.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that members note and comment on the closure proposals as they affect communities in Area West.

### Review & Consultation

SSDC has received formal notice of a 90 day consultation period due to end on 2nd July 2008. Seventy-seven phone boxes in South Somerset have been identified as those “which are little used by consumers and therefore proposed by BT for removal under full consultation”. Fifteen of those identified are situated in parishes in Area West.

Part of Ofcom’s review of universal service in the Telecommunications market 2005 states that it is the responsibility of the local authority to initiate its own consultation process to canvass the views of the local community and that they would normally expect these consultations to involve other public organisations such as Parish Councils. Letters have been sent to all Parish Councils with a payphone identified for potential removal requesting their views so that these can be included in the SSDC response (attached at pages 29-31). Unlike arrangements in 2004 and as a result of the 2005 Ofcom review, the Local Authority has a local veto. Ofcom guidance states that “if the local organisation writes to BT within 90 days to object, setting out their reasons, BT cannot remove the call box”. It can, however, challenge unsubstantiated objections.

BT has placed notices in every phone box under consideration in order to notify all current users and the local community that the box may be removed. However, notices placed by BT were not dated which has caused some concerns at the Parish level. For this reason negotiations are taking place with BT to try to extend the consultation period.

### Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for Area West Committee

### Implications for Corporate Priorities

- Maintain above 80 per cent the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live.

**Background Papers:** *Notification from BT of Review of Pay Phone Provision*

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