Draft Decision Relating to Notification under section 49(4) of the Communications Act 2003

Schedule:

1. Whitley Wood/Basingstoke Road – 0118 9312172 – RG2 0SJ

It is considered that the 353 calls in the last year is a significant number, around one a day.

This phone box is on a main vehicle and pedestrian route adjacent to a well-used discount supermarket and close to strategic development sites allocated in the development plan. Surrounding housing areas include significant areas of social housing and the South Whitley Lower Super Output Area is within the top 10% of most deprived areas in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. It is reasonable to expect local residents to visit the location due to the presence of the supermarket. Possibly also to access public transport. It is considered that the level of use and the socioeconomic characteristics of the location indicate that the box remains important and should be retained for the benefit of visitors to the location.

Two objections have been received in response to public consultation, citing the clear demand for the box due to the numbers of calls made.

Decision: **Object**

2. Outside Tilehurst Station 0118 941 0738 - RG30 1AS

This box has a low number of calls – 16. The National Rail website indicates that a payphone exists within the station. There is also the standard 'help point' which can be used to summon help in an emergency.

The apparent low demand suggests that there are few casual calls made and alternative provision for emergency calls exists within the station. No objections to the removal of the phone have been received.

Although it is regrettable that the phone may be removed for the odd occasion it may be useful, it is not considered reasonable for the Council to object on that basis.

Decision: **Agree**

3. Usk Road, Tilehurst 01189419938 - RG30 4HG

This box is relatively well used with 135 calls per year.

It is located close to primary and secondary schools, with pupils being less likely to be in a position to make use of mobile phones.

The box is sited within Lower Super Output Area E01016394 which is within the top 20% of deprived areas in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Residents are therefore less likely to have full access to mobile phones and therefore more reliant on pubic phone boxes.

Two objections have been received in response to public consultation, citing the significant demand for the box due to the numbers of calls made.

It is considered that the level of use and the socioeconomic characteristics of the location indicate that the box remains important and should be retained for the benefit of residents and local school children.

Decision: **Object**

4. Junction Tylers Place and Pottery Road, Tilehurst RG30 6BA, - 01189453471

The postcode given by BT is inaccurate and relates to the other end of Pottery Road about 400m to the north west. The postcode more closely related to the site is RG30 6BQ.

The site is adjacent to Meadow Park Academy School and a doctors surgery at Tyler's Place.

The box has significant usage with 125 calls a year.

The area immediately to the east is within LSOA E01016396 ranked 4640 of 32,482 areas in England for Multiple Deprivation.

Two objections have been received in response to public consultation, citing the significant demand for the box due to the numbers of calls made.

It is considered on the basis of the siting of the phone box close to the school and surgery, which act as focal points for the community, and the objectively assessed

deprivation data, that the phone box remains socially important and should remain.

Decision: **Object**

5. Junction Ash Road and Corwen Road, Tilehurst RG30 4TH – 0118 945 5648

The postcode given by BT is inaccurate and relates to a point about 450m to the north west on Corwen Road. The postcode more closely related to the site is RG30 4SG.

This phone has low usage at 15 calls in the last year. The area is mid-range on the English Index of multiple deprivation and there are no notable community facilities or other focal points in the immediate area.

It is considered that the phone box is of less importance in socioeconomic terms and could be removed without harm to the public interest.

Decision**: Agree**

6. The Milestone Way Shops, Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green –RG4 8RZ – 01189461783

This phone is located within the Emmer Green District Centre as defined in the Development Plan and outside a parade of well-used shops which provide a focal point for the local community. A more accurate postcode is RG4 8XW.

The phone is well used with 214 calls recorded in the last year.

Two objections have been received in response to the public consultation referring to the significant number of calls made. One of these is from the Emmer Green Residents' Association.

It is considered that the significant existing usage and the location of the phone at a community focal point, within the District Centre are indications that the phone remains important to the local community and that it would be in the public interest for it to remain.

Decision**: Object**

7. Shoppers Car Park Farnham Drive, Caversham, RG4 6NY – 0118 947 0245

This phone has low usage at 52 calls in the last year. Although at a parade of shops, these are not a designated centre in the development plan and serve a smaller area than those at Buckingham Drive. The area is not classed as suffering from deprivation in the Index of Multiple Deprivation and is not closely associated with a school or other community facility.

On this basis it is considered that this phone could be removed without significant harm to the public interest.

Decision: **Agree**

8. Junction Clifton Park Road/Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7AN – 0118 947 2753

This traditional red box has very low use, with 5 calls recorded in the last year and is in an area of low deprivation. A local Councillor has indicated that the local residents' association (Caversham and District Residents' Association) wishes to adopt and retain the red box itself as a community resource, subject to being able to secure Public Liability Insurance.

Recommendation: **Adopt**

Prospective adopter: Caversham and District Residents' Association.

The CADRA Secretary: info@cadra.org.uk

http://www.cadra.org.uk/committee.php

The adopter will need to enter into suitable licence arrangements with the Council as Highways Authority as the box is sited on adopted highway land.

9. Junction St Barnabas Road and Grove Road, Emmer Green, RG4 8LN – 0118 947 3208

An objection has been received on the grounds that the removal application is based on flawed data.

The objector states that they checked this phone box on 12 November 2016 and that it was out of order and may well have been out of order for many months. They reason that the figure of zero calls is therefore not representative and request that the removal application is rejected.

The phone box is sited in a location where a number of community uses coincide, a surgery, church, youth and community centre, and primary school. The box is also

close to a secondary school and 6th form centre serving a significant proportion of the north of the Borough. Many pupils could be expected to pass the box between the school and main bus stops on Grove Road.

It is considered that insufficient information is available currently to justify removal of this box. This is on the basis that usage data cannot be reasonably relied upon and the box is sited within a significant grouping of community uses, many of which serve young or more vulnerable members of the community.

Decision: **Object**

10. Junction Peppard Road and Surley Row, Emmer Green, RG4 8LP - 0118 947 3255

This box was used 177 times in the last year. An objection to its loss on the basis of significant usage has been received.

It is located on the main Peppard Road (B481) which serves as the main routes from central Reading to Emmer Green and South Oxfordshire beyond. The box is also at the junction of Surley Row which serves as the most direct east-west pedestrian route linking housing areas to the south east of the site to Highdown School. The use by schoolchildren could explain the significant usage. A recent report to the Council's Traffic Management Sub-committee highlighted the east-west pedestrian flows along Surley Row (http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5500/item09/pdf/item09.pdf) and is considered to be sufficient to justify retention of the phone in the public interest, particularly for the benefit of young persons attending the school who are more vulnerable members of society and less likely to have full access to mobile phones.

The Emmer Green Residents' Association object to the loss of the phone as the usage suggests that residents still rely on it.

Decision: **Object**

11. Henley Road and Queensway, Caversham RG4 6RP - 0118 947 3455

Correct address – outside 298 Henley Road RG4 6LS

BT were advised that there is no phone box at Queensway (the postcode is consistent with Queensway). Henley Road is some distance to the south. The address is therefore inaccurate.

BT have since provided an accurate location plan, clarifying the location of the box, and the correct address which is outside 298 Henley Road. The low usage is

likely to result in a 'no objection' decision, however the public consultation period has not yet ended for this box (delayed while the address was clarified).

As it currently stands the draft decision must be to object to the loss of the box as the impacts of its loss cannot be properly assessed. This will be reviewed once the consultation period is ended.

Decision: **Object**

12. Junction Upper Warren Avenue and River Road, Caversham, RG4 7EH – 0118 947 4195

This traditional box is an attractive feature in the street, however it has no calls recorded in the last year. It is located in a relatively affluent area and is not close to public facilities which might draw a wider range of users. The box may be a better candidate for adoption, rather than retention, however no local groups have come forward. It is considered that there is not a compelling public interest argument to insist on the public telephone being retained in this location.

Decision**: Agree**

13. Junction Courtenay Drive and Peppard Road, Emmer Green RG4 8XH

Residents' comments received as follows:
"*Comment: We do not wish to see the removal of this phone box, in an emergency this phone can be useful. A traditional phone box is also a rare sighting these days and complements the area well by staying on Courtney Drive. It would be a great shame to have it removed.*"

"*Comment: I am reassured that this phone box is available to my family should the need arise to place a telephone call in an emergency. The box also serves as an important point of familiarity in the location which is extremely useful to those adults and young people with additional needs including those who suffer from dementia and associated conditions. The box is located near one of the main roads leaving Reading to the North and is therefore ideally situated to be utilised in any emergencies that may take place on this stretch of road.*
In addition my understanding is that this box has handled more than 12 calls in the last 12 months and that the population within 1km of the box is in excess of 500. This should serve as defining a reasonable need at this location."

Emmer Green Residents' Association have confirmed that they have applied to BT to adopt this box.

On the basis that the box is little used and in a relatively affluent area and not close to community facilities, which might draw a wider range of users from further afield, it is not considered to be in the public interest to insist on the box being retained. It is anticipated that the visual benefits of the box itself will be maintained once adopted by local residents.

Decision: **Adopt**

Prospective adopter: Emmer Green Residents' Association
22 Marchwood Ave
Emmer Green
Reading
RG4 8UN

The adopter will need to enter into suitable licence arrangements with the Council as Highways Authority as the box is sited on adopted highway land.

14. Junction of Brunswick Hill and Tilehurst Road, RG1 7TN- 0118 956 7862

A more accurate postcode is RG1 7YU – BT version inaccurate as 450m to the east

The phone is apparently not well used, with 45 calls recorded by BT last year. The area immediately to the north is classed as suffering from some deprivation, falling within the top 30% in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The phone is relatively close to the southern entrance to Reading West Station, although a significant walk from the actual platforms.

No public representations have been received.

On this basis it is considered that while some people will be affected by the removal of this phone, it is not well used currently and not in an area that is particularly notable in terms of deprivation. Stations users would be more likely to use facilities within the station itself and this would be the responsibility of the station operator to provide for their customers. It is therefore considered that this phone could be removed without significant harm to the public interest.

Decision: **Agree**

15. Outside Bus Stop at Tesco, Napier Road, RG1 8DF – 0118 956 8949

Representations have been received stating that the phone was missing on 10 November and had been during 2015 and 2016, so the zero calls usage figures quoted by BT is not representative.

This phone is located at a large superstore which serves as a focal point for a wide area and is well served by public transport. Based on the representations received, it is considered that insufficient information is available currently to justify removal of this box. This is on the basis that usage data cannot be reasonably relied upon and the box is sited at a significant community focal point.

Decision: **Object**

16. Outside Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Avenue RG1 8EQ - 0118 957 5740

This phone has relatively low usage with 22 calls recorded in the last year.

The phone is in a predominantly industrial area and located on the main road some distance from the leisure centre entrance.

It is unlikely that the surrounding industrial/commercial units would be dependent on the phone.

Leisure centre staff have confirmed that persons using the leisure centre can make essential calls via the centre reception, if necessary, in an emergency for instance.

Based on the location, the low call volumes and access to a phone at the leisure centre reception in an emergency, it is considered that it is not necessary to retain the phone in the public interest.

Decision: **Agree**

Head of Planning, Development

& Regulatory Services

A person authorised by Reading Borough Council to sign this Notification

Date: 1 December 2016