

Braintree District Council

Review of the Universal Service Obligations

Questions 1-6 No comment

Question 7

The removal of the 'local veto' from parishes is not supported. This would place further onus on the local planning authority to consult with parishes, making the process longer and less local. It appears to be against the principles espoused by the Government in its latest discussion paper, "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter".

Local knowledge of public call boxes is essential. Parish Councils are often better placed than District, Borough or Unitary Councils to comment on the patronage of such phones, and can bring local knowledge such as who the phone is used by and why.

The use of a revenue threshold is not supported. Again, local factors may mask the real reason why a phone has not been used. It may have been vandalised, be out of use, or located in the wrong place. Crude data can support local issues, but should not be used as a be-all and end-all.

Question 8

For similar reasons to above, the suggestion that the need to consult is abolished is not supported. Planning authorities and parish councils can add to the consultation process by informing the provider of information on new development, such as new housing being planned or a factory being re-opened.

Question 9

This would only be acceptable as a last resort- non coin boxes would restrict the amount of potential users, as the number of customers with credit cards and phonecards is low.

Question 10

Because this option allows emergency and freephone calls only, it is not felt that this would be in the interests of either the community or the phone company, as use would be virtually nil, important phone calls to relatives, etc., will not be able to be made, and the phone company will not receive any income for the calls.

Questions 11-21 No comment