
Cabinet Member for Jobs & Regeneration

25/11/2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Property Services & Development

Ward(s) affected:

Woodlands

Title: Response to Petition Requesting the Adoption of a Phone Box in Sutherland Ave to House a Defibrillator

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition bearing 203 signatures which was submitted to the Council. The petition is supported by Councillor Gary Ridley. The petition requests that "the BT phone box near the shops at Sutherland Avenue to be repurposed to host a defibrillator and call on BT and the Council to work together to make this possible."

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is recommended to:

Agree to approach BT to request taking ownership of the telephone box for a £1 (One Pound) which will then be used to house a defibrillator subject to the petitioners forming a properly constituted group who shall be responsible for taking on the liability for the repair, maintenance, insurance and electricity costs incurred in relation to the telephone box after an initial 12 month period as well as indemnifying the Council against these costs by way of a legally binding agreement.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/aug/27/ringing-the-changes-how-britains-red-phone-boxes-are-being-given-new-life>

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Will this report go to Council?

No

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Report title: Response to Petition Requesting the Adoption of a Phone Box in Sutherland Ave to House a Defibrillator

1. Context (or background)

1.1 A petition has been submitted requesting the Council seeks the adoption of a BT phone box in Sutherland Ave to house a defibrillator.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 The Council is supportive of the principle of adopting the telephone box on Sutherland Ave for use proposed by the petitioners.

2.2 However, it is imperative that the Council does not take on the long-term liability for the repair, maintenance, insurance and electricity costs which are a condition of BT agreeing to transfer the phone box. This is because an increasing number of BT phone boxes are becoming redundant and may be proposed for similar uses throughout the city potentially creating a long-term financial liability for the Council.

2.3 Accordingly, the Council will only be prepared to adopt the phone box once the petitioners form a properly constituted group to take on the above liabilities. The Council will be prepared to fund these costs for an initial 12 month period to allow the group to fund raise, but the Council will require the group to indemnify it against these costs by way of a legally binding agreement between the parties. In the event that the petitioners aren't able to form such a group the Council will not finalise the adoption of the phone box.

2.4 It is understood that there are other examples of how this has been done successfully in other areas of the country. A link to an article showing how this has been done elsewhere is included in the Background Papers.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 No consultation has been carried out at this time.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 The Council will approach BT to commence the adoption process on receipt of written confirmation from the petitioners that they agree to form a group and take on the liabilities in accordance with the recommendations of this report.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

There will be some small minor costs of running, insuring and maintaining the box for a 12-month period, however it is expected that this will be minimal and can therefore be afforded from within existing property budgets

5.2 Legal implications

The decision to be taken in this report are consistent with the Council's Constitution. The adoption of the telephone box will ensure that it remains in situ thereby protecting the

heritage of the community which aligns with the principles of the Town and Country Planning Legislation.

It should be noted that once the Council adopts the telephone box, the ownership will transfer to the Council who will be responsible for ongoing maintenance and upkeep. However, the Council will seek to mitigate this liability after an initial 12-month period through a legally binding agreement with the group set up by the petitioners whereupon they will indemnify the Council in relation to these costs.

6. Other implications

There are no other implications within the recommendations above.

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Not applicable

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The financial risk of the adoption will be managed in accordance with the recommendations of this report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

This decision does not impact on equalities

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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