



Office of Utility Regulation

November 29th 2005

Media Release

Guernsey's utilities regulator is asking for comments on the current licensing system to see if there are ways it can be improved. The Office of Utility Regulation (OUR) has written to all ten licensees in the electricity, postal and telecoms sectors asking for feedback to help make sure the system is as simple as possible for them to use.

The OUR also plans to formalize the current system of publishing decisions in draft form first, to allow all interested parties, consumers and business groups to comment on them before they are finally implemented. That system has been operating on a trial basis since June.

“The licensing regime has been in place for four years now and both the OUR and the licensees have gained a lot of experience with it in practice”, said John Curran, Director General of the OUR. “We are now asking for comments from the licensees on how the system works for them, to see if there are improvements we can make. For example, under the law some very small operators have to go through the same process as the larger operators, and there may be ways we can make the process simpler for them. If we can find a way to make sure all licensees meet their requirements, while reducing the workload necessary for some of them to do that, this will have been a very useful review”.

Companies will have until the 31st January 2006 to submit their comments. Any changes to the licensing regime will take place after the review of commercialisation and regulation has been considered by the States early in 2006.

“There is a lot of work required to change a licensing system so that all of the necessary controls are maintained, particularly on dominant operators, but at the same time the system is proportionate to the needs of the market and the ability of operators to respond” said John Curran.

Since June this year the OUR has been using a system of draft decisions for key issues in which interested parties, consumer groups and individuals have the opportunity to comment on a decision before it is finalized. This system has worked very well, and will now become part of standard OUR procedure, and will apply to all consultations from 2006 onwards.

“The system of draft decisions allows us to publish what we intend to do, and listen to comments and feedback from those actually affected by it, before deciding finally to go ahead. It has been very useful so far this year and so we have decided to make it standard procedure from now on”.

The revised consultation procedures (OUR 05/28) are available on the OUR website – www.regutil.gg – or from the OUR office at Suite B1&B2, Hirzel Court, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2NH, Tel 01481 711120.

**ENDS/
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Information for Editors

About the OUR

The Office of Utility Regulation was established in 2001 to regulate the three utilities of post, telecommunications and electricity in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. The Office is headed up by Director General, John Curran and has four staff.

The role of the OUR is to protect the interests of Guernsey consumers and the economy. It does this by ensuring that customers receive the best in price, choice and quality services in the three regulated sectors, while at the same time ensuring that those sectors are vibrant and robust so that they can positively contribute to and underpin a successful Guernsey economy.

The OUR licenses and regulates telecommunications operators, Guernsey Electricity Ltd and Guernsey Post Ltd. Wherever possible, the OUR promotes the introduction of competition by ensuring that there is fair play and a level playing field between the operators. Where competition is not yet effective or where it is not feasible, the OUR regulates prices and quality of services to end customers.

More information is available from the OUR website www.regutil.gg, or by contacting the Office of Utility Regulation on 01481 711120.