



Office of Utility Regulation

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Mobile operators' licences to be amended

Guernsey's utilities regulator plans to amend the licences of the Island's mobile phone operators to strengthen the requirement for them to co-ordinate their networks more effectively.

The Office of Utility Regulation (OUR) also intends to allow Guernsey Airtel Ltd more time to get its 2G and 3G networks set up. Currently, its licence requires the network to be in place by 15th September 2007, but Airtel has asked for a further six months following a significant change to the planning requirements for erecting masts. The OUR is proposing to allow a shorter extension through to 15th December instead. That three month period will allow Airtel to work with the Environment Department, the other operators and local residents to get the best solution for the Island longer-term.

“The Environment Department is trying to encourage the mobile phone operators to share masts wherever possible, and we think we can help that by amending the operators' licences to strengthen the requirement for them to do just that”, says John Curran, Director General of the OUR. “The operators themselves are also considering a voluntary code of conduct on mast sharing, and we think this proposed amendment will complement that initiative”.

“We fully understand why Islanders' have concerns about more phone masts, and have always encouraged mast sharing, where possible. We also know that the Environment Department requires as part of the conditions of granting planning approval that operators must share masts if they require facilities in the same area. By strengthening the licence obligations on all mobile operators to co-ordinate their plans better we believe this will help further this aim”.

Guernsey Airtel Ltd was granted its 2G and 3G licences in September 2006, and since then has been working to install its network, which it planned to do within a year.

“I'm disappointed that the Airtel network won't be in place on time, but given the wider issue of the need to arrive at a solution that meets the needs of the mobile companies in a way that minimizes disruption to the environment we believe an extension is a reasonable course of action. Equally, I think we need to get this

situation resolved as speedily as possible, and a six month extension is excessive. Therefore, I am proposing to grant an extension for Airtel until 15th December 2007. Airtel will however still be required to honour its performance guarantees which were linked to it launching its network on time and the company has committed to doing so”.

“I think a three month extension is a fair balance which will give Airtel enough time to work with the authorities, local residents and other operators to continue installing their network successfully, but also get this matter resolved as soon as possible”.

The documents, OUR 07/10 and 07/11 are published on the OUR website - www.regutil.gg. Comments on the OUR’s proposals can be submitted to the OUR by 30th August 2007.

Information for the Editor

- **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 three 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.