



CICRA media release

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Faster wireless services on the way

The Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities (CICRA) have published a consultation seeking views on how the next generation of spectrum-based telecoms services might be introduced in the Channel Islands.

CICRA is intending to make spectrum available in the 800MHz and 2600MHz bands in early 2013. The consultation is looking to assess how best the spectrum might be allocated and what criteria should be used to decide how best to make the most productive use of it in the Channel Islands.

The 800MHz spectrum has been made available as a result of the switch from analogue to digital television. This has freed up spectrum which CICRA is keen to ensure is used to respond to customer demand for more and better telecommunication services. The 2600MHz spectrum is seen as complementary to the 800MHz spectrum and CICRA is now looking for input from the industry and other stakeholders to help it decide on how best to make the spectrum available.

John Curran, chief executive of CICRA, said: “As customers we are increasingly using wireless technology for our communication needs and it is vital to the economic interest of the Channel Islands that we take maximum advantage of this resource. With advances in technology, radio spectrum has an increasingly important role to play in ensuring we as customers get leading edge services. Many countries are now looking to make this spectrum available and it is important that Guernsey and Jersey keep pace with developments in other markets.

“The growth in the use of smartphones and other mobile devices by both businesses and ordinary consumers will place increasing pressure on the existing wireless infrastructure. This spectrum, sometimes referred to as 4G – 4th generation – has the potential to allow broadband services over mobile networks that can rival certain fixed services. It will also allow for faster mobile data services, which is important for business customers. It is therefore important that the spectrum is utilised as efficiently as possible to ensure these benefits can be gained for consumers,” added Mr Curran.

CICRA has set out a number of areas in which it is seeking input including how the spectrum might be awarded – whether by way of auction or a comparative selection process – how the spectrum should be packaged and how the regulators should take account of the spectrum held by existing operators. In Jersey, CICRA is also considering whether it should review a previous recommendation concerning a potential allocation of 2600MHz spectrum for Clear Mobitel Jersey.

“This is one of the largest awards of spectrum in the Channel Islands and, as it will be in use for many years to come, it is vital for the economies in both islands that we get the award right. Technology has dramatically changed how we communicate over the past few years with the use of wireless devices, such as tablets and smartphones, to stay in touch and to conduct business. This spectrum has the potential to make this change accelerate even further,” said Mr Curran.

The consultation paper is available from the CICRA website - www.cicra.gg and the closing date for responses is the 6th June 2012.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

All enquiries should be directed in writing to CICRA Chief Executive, John Curran, in Guernsey at the Office of Utility Regulation, Suites B1 & B2, Hirzel Court, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2NH or in Jersey at 2nd Floor, Salisbury House, 1 - 9 Union Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3RF. Alternatively email info@cicra.gg.

About CICRA:

The Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities (CICRA) is the name given to the two Channel Islands regulatory authorities, the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA) and the Guernsey Office of Utility Regulation (OUR). A memorandum of understanding was signed in December 2010 to facilitate closer working between the two authorities. Both regulatory bodies were established in 2001. The JCRA was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001 and the OUR was established under the Regulation of Utilities (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001. In Jersey the telecoms and postal sector are regulated by the JCRA, which is also

responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition Law (Jersey) 2005. In Guernsey the telecoms, postal and electricity sectors are regulated by the OUR. The aim of both authorities is to ensure that consumers receive the best value, choice and access to high quality services while Jersey has the added responsibility of promoting competition and consumer interests.