



News Release

10 November, 2016

Changing landscape for future telecoms

The landscape for future telecoms in the islands is changing beyond recognition and the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities (CICRA) is looking to business sectors, consumers and other interested parties to engage with its draft telecoms strategy to inform the shape of regulation in the future.

CICRA chief executive, Michael Byrne, said one of the regulator's responsibilities is setting the context for achieving a sound and healthy telecoms sector in the future.

He said the future context would be heavily influenced by the policy direction set by the States in both Jersey and Guernsey which was key to guiding what developments the islands should steer towards and which should be avoided.

"Use of portable devices already goes beyond voice, web and messaging and the amount and type of spectrum capacity to come is well beyond anything seen previously. With it will come new services; what we now receive through fixed wire networks could be matched or exceeded by what could be available wirelessly. The implications of that are profound," he said.

"The pace of change, the innovation involved and the support required to see these changes to fruition make predicting the future landscape difficult. What is clear is that there needs to be a willingness to view the changes as holistically as we can and to

be reasonably prepared and adaptable to take full advantage of fluid changes – avoiding a reactive, defensive response to each change in isolation.”

Mr Byrne explained that separate network technologies (each supporting single or limited telecoms services) were collapsing into single networks covering the breadth of all telecoms services.

He suggested these services could, in essence, become one technology product with distinctions driven by the app that’s pressed and not the technology, network or device.

“CICRA needs to take into account the implications for scale of investment and life cycles of products. How this is done will affect the prices consumers pay and the choices they have,” he said.

“For CICRA, the States of Guernsey and Jersey and the operators, there are questions that need to be addressed now to ensure the right regulatory framework is ready in the future.

“For instance: beyond download and upload speeds and latency (delays) what will the next level of demand be? What do technology developments mean for the type of competition that will thrive or wither in small island economies?

“In order to be open to this, what’s needed is a robust, future-looking regulatory plan in the face of uncertainty over product development and speed of technologies. It has to be accepted that trade-offs will need to be made. In making those trade-offs the size of the market and communities we live in, and their unique cultures and values, must influence our expectations and priorities.

“What is crucial is that all stakeholders communicate positively and often with each other. To support both this desire for communication and how we embrace these burgeoning technologies, CICRA has published a draft telecoms strategy website (http://www.cicra.gg/_files/Draft%20Telecoms%20Regulatory%20Strategy.pdf) and we welcome input from all,” he said.

CICRA is seeking views by Wednesday 30 November, 2016.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

All enquiries should be directed in writing to CICRA chief executive, Michael Byrne, in Guernsey at Suite 4, 1st Floor, Plaiderie Chambers, La Plaiderie, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1WG or in Jersey at the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority, 2nd Floor, Salisbury House, 1 - 9 Union Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3RF. Alternatively email info@cicra.gg.

In line with CICRA's consultation policy, it intends to make responses to the consultation available on the CICRA website. Any material that is confidential should be put in a separate annex and clearly marked as such so that it may be kept confidential. CICRA regrets that it is not in a position to respond individually to the responses to this consultation.

About CICRA:

The Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities or 'CICRA' is the name given to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA) and the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (GCRA) (formerly the Office of Utility Regulation). The JCRA was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001, and the GCRA was established under The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2012. In Jersey, the telecoms and postal sectors are regulated by the JCRA, which is also responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition (Jersey) Law 2005. In Guernsey the telecoms, postal and electricity sectors are regulated by the GCRA, which is also responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Guernsey competition law since it came into force on 1 August 2012.

By working together and sharing resources and expertise between the islands, CICRA strives to ensure that consumers in all the Channel Islands receive best value, choice and access to high quality services.