



NEWS RELEASE

15th February 2023

Telecoms regulator launches consultation on spectrum allocation

The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (the Authority) has launched a consultation on proposals to review the allocation of radio spectrum as part of its programme to enable the introduction of next generation mobile technology to the Island.

The consultation seeks views from interested parties on the option of moving the existing radio spectrum allocations of some telecoms operators or potentially recommending the cancellation of their radio spectrum licences.

These steps may be necessary to allow Islanders to access future mobile data services that are as high quality and efficient as are available elsewhere.

Radio spectrum is the invisible but essential resource needed to wirelessly connect the devices of users to the networks of telecoms operators. International standards bodies have designated the 3.4-3.8 GHz spectrum band for the provision of new 5G services and encouraged national regulators to make large blocks available within it for allocation.

In Jersey, this spectrum band has previously been licensed for the provision of earlier wireless services. These existing historic allocations prevent the creation of

large blocks for new 5G services without changes in allocations – a process termed ‘defragmentation’.

After carefully examining this local situation and considering the approach taken in other comparable locations, the Authority is consulting on provisional plans to defragment the local 3.4-3.8 GHz spectrum band. In a document issued on 15 February, the Authority explains the background to its plans, the reasons for considering changing the spectrum allocations of existing licensed operators and proposed options for doing so.

Tim Ringsdore, CEO of the Authority said, “One of our important duties as Jersey’s telecoms regulator is ensuring Islanders can access and rely on high-quality next generation mobile services in the future. Providing new 5G services that meet this expectation will require additional radio spectrum, some of which has been historically allocated to existing licensed telecoms operators. After carefully examining the situation, we believe it right to consider requesting these operators move to an alternative part of the spectrum band, or to give-up their allocation. Our consultation explains the reasoning behind our provisional proposals – we’re looking forward to engaging through this process and determining the right approach.”

The proposals for defragmenting the 3.4-3.8 GHz spectrum are available on the Authority’s website at <https://www.jcra.je/cases/> with comments welcomed before 31 March 2023. Following this date, the Authority will assess responses to arrive at a final determination.

Ends

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About 5G spectrum

5G is a next generation technology standard specified by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and developed by the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) as radio access standards. Based on these standards, the European Union recommended that member states adopt a coordinated approach to developing new 5G services using harmonised spectrum bands, including allocations in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band. In line with these recommendations, UK communications regulator Ofcom has made the spectrum bands below available for the development of 5G services, which are also the bands being allocated for Jersey.

About The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority:

The Authority was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001. It is responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition (Jersey) Law 2005 and also regulates the telecoms and postal sectors and the Ports of Jersey.

The Authority strives to ensure that the markets work well for the benefit of all stakeholders, including Government, business, citizens and consumers facilitating best value, choice and access to high quality services.