



NEWS RELEASE

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Plans underway to support enhanced mobile services in Jersey

The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (the JCRA) is proposing changes to local radio spectrum allocations that will pave the way for Jersey to benefit from faster, more reliable mobile telephone services.

Sure's recent acquisition of Airtel opened a dialogue on future plans for licensing Jersey spectrum. Spectrum is the invisible radio waves used to connect mobile phones and other devices to wireless telecoms networks. The merger has resulted in the former Airtel spectrum allocation being released for use by a potential new telecoms provider or reallocation among existing ones.

After consulting with interested parties, the JCRA is of the provisional view that the best approach is offering the released spectrum to existing operators, JT and Sure, on a conditional basis. Conditions attached may include ensuring service coverage and quality enhancement and allowing other operators to provide mobile services using JT's and Sure's networks.

The JCRA has set out plans in a published Draft Spectrum Strategy and is seeking comments and views before finalising them later in the year.

"We have carefully considered what the local market is telling us," commented JCRA CEO Tim Ringsdore, "and considered what's happening with the development of wireless services in the UK and elsewhere. It's clear that there's a move towards consolidation—like the acquisition of Airtel by Sure—along with a growing demand for high-speed, high-capacity mobile services.

“Allowing JT and Sure to apply for the former Airtel spectrum would recognise this, offering the potential to reduce the need for additional radio base stations and helping operators enhance mobile services across the Island. Our proposed plans aim to enable this through a structured application and assessment process that will be designed to support local operators, enhance services and ensure effective competition.”

The consultation document considers a range of spectrum matters, including the approach to the former Airtel spectrum, and examines a range of associated items. It also includes several provisional decisions on key spectrum bands for consideration. Responses received will help finalise the Spectrum Strategy which will be published before moving forward with implementation of the final strategy.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority:

The JCRA 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 JCRA 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.

About the local regulation of spectrum

Spectrum allows wireless connection between user devices and communication networks, supporting a diverse range of systems, services and applications from mobile phones to Bluetooth key fobs. Because of demand for this finite resource, access to spectrum is controlled through licensing arrangements and management policies.

UK communications regulator Ofcom has legal responsibility for licensing and managing Jersey's spectrum. By agreement, the JCRA supports this process through assessing interest and demand in local spectrum before making specific recommendations to Ofcom for the issuing of new licences or managing existing ones.