



Office of Utility Regulation

Corporate Numbering: Oftel Consultation on New Options for Businesses

Information Notice and Consultation

Document No: OUR 03/11

April 2003

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1 Introduction

In Guernsey, telephone users are familiar with the fact that their telephone numbers are within the UK telephony numbering range, in other words anyone calling Guernsey from abroad (other than the UK) must dial 0044 to access the UK number range, followed by 1481 to access Guernsey, and then followed by the full telephone number to reach the telephone user.

Under the Telecommunications Act 1984 and the Telecommunications (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001, the numbers in the UK number range are allocated and managed by Oftel, the UK telecommunications regulator. Oftel and the Office of Utility Regulation (“OUR”) have a working agreement for the management of the numbers allocated to Guernsey so as to ensure that this is done in a manner consistent with the Guernsey and UK regulatory regimes.

Oftel has now published a consultation paper on a new use of specific number ranges within the 0044 range. The consultation considers the allocation of “corporate number ranges” for use by specific businesses on private networks and Oftel is addressing whether this new type of number allocation has the potential to bring benefits to business consumers by encouraging innovation and growth of new services.

As the UK numbering rules are applied in Guernsey, the Director General is calling on any interested or affected parties to participate in the Oftel consultation. In this paper the Director General is also asking interested parties to copy their responses to the OUR as well as responding to the questions raised in this paper, so that the OUR can ensure that the development of any new rules take into account any specific circumstances in Guernsey and are applied in a way that contributes to the overall social and economic wellbeing of the islands.

This consultation will be of interest to existing and potential new operators in the Guernsey telecommunications market as well as any large telecommunications users who might currently have or are considering installing private networks.

2 Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured as follows:

Section 3 - outlines the Oftel consultation procedure and timetable for the submission of responses to the consultation as well as requesting comments to OUR;

Section 4 - provides background information covering the relationship between OUR and Oftel;

Section 5 – Sets out the issues being consulted on by Oftel and asks some specific questions on corporate numbering in Guernsey.

Section 6 – Sets out the next steps.

This consultative document does not constitute legal, commercial or technical advice. The Director General is not bound by it. The consultation is without prejudice to the legal position of the Director General or her rights and duties to regulate the market generally.

3 Consultation Procedure and Timetable

3.1 Oftel Consultation

The Oftel consultation paper is titled “Corporate Numbering; a new option for businesses, consultation – 28 March 2003” and can be viewed in the Publications sector of Oftel’s website at www.oftel.gov.uk. The consultation is scheduled to run for 12 weeks and the closing date for the submission of comments to Oftel is 20th June 2003. Where possible comments are requested in writing and should be sent by e-mail to Elizabeth.greenberg@oftel.gov.uk. However, copies may also be posted or faxed to:

Elizabeth Greenberg
Corporate Numbering Consultation
Numbering Unit
Oftel
50 Ludgate Hill
London
EC4M 7JJ

Tel: 020 7634 8758

Fax: 020 7634 8784

OUR requests that commenting parties copy their responses to OUR at the same time that they are sent to Oftel. These can be sent by email or posted or faxed to the following address:

Office of Utility Regulation
Suite B1 & B2,
Hirzel Court,
St. Peter Port,
Guernsey GY1 2NH.

Email: info@regutil.gg

All copies of comments should be clearly marked “Corporate Numbering Consultation”.

Respondents should note that it is Oftel and OUR policy to make comments publicly available with the exception of confidential material and all confidential material should be put in a separate annex and clearly marked.

3.2 OUR Consultation

This document also invites interested parties to comment directly to OUR on whether they consider there are any issues raised by the consultation that are specific to Guernsey so that OUR can consider these in the context of the development of the regime for corporate numbering.

Comments on this aspect are requested by 20th June 2003 and should be sent, along with copies of any comments on the Oftel consultation to:

Office of Utility Regulation
Suite B1 & B2,
Hirzel Court,
St. Peter Port,
Guernsey GY1 2NH.

Email: info@regutil.gg

All copies of comments should be clearly marked “Corporate Numbering Consultation”.

Once again, parties are reminded that Director General intends to make responses to the consultation available for inspection. Any material that is confidential should be put in a separate Annex and clearly marked so that it can be kept confidential.

The Director General regrets that she is not in a position to respond individually to the responses to this consultation. If appropriate, she will publish a report or other document after all comments have been considered.

4 Background – Oftel and OUR

The country code allocated by the International Telecommunications Union (“ITU-T”) to the UK is “44”¹. The country code “44” is also used by Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Oftel is responsible for managing the Specified Numbering Scheme (which is used to allocate numbers) and issuing the Numbering Conventions in the UK. In addition Oftel is responsible for developing a numbering strategy in the UK’s national interest and developing the Scheme in recognition of the fact that numbers and codes are scarce national resource which need to be managed efficiently. The Conventions are revised from time to time by Oftel and the fourth issue of the Conventions² was issued in March 2002 to take into account (amongst other things) the arrangements for the implementation of codes for new Directory Enquiries (“DQ”) services.

¹ This code follows the international dialing prefix (00) on calls made from outside the UK.

² Numbering Conventions for the United Kingdom, Issued by the Director General of Telecommunications, Issue 5, March 2003 See <http://www.oftel.gov.uk/publications/numbering/2003/cons0303.htm>

In the past Guernsey Telecoms has been allocated numbers directly by Oftel, but Section 11 of the Telecommunications (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2001 allows the Director General of the Office of Utility Regulation to establish a numbering scheme in the Bailiwick which shall, so far as is practicable and in accordance with international best practice, take into account the needs of licensees and users in the Bailiwick and promote the efficient use of numbers in the Bailiwick.

In practice OUR and Oftel work closely together both in implementing the UK Numbering Scheme (i.e. the allocation of UK numbers to licensed operators within the Bailiwick) and enforcing compliance with the UK Numbering Conventions (i.e. ensuring operators adopt a Numbering Plan, for such numbers or codes allocated to them, in accordance with the Conventions).

This working relationship is essential to the smooth operation of Guernsey's telephone numbering arrangements within the UK Numbering Scheme. This ensures that there is minimum disruption to Guernsey business and residential telephony customers from possible number changes which can prove disruptive and costly to implement. It also ensures that the benefits of new and innovative uses of numbers can be maximized in the Bailiwick.

5 The Corporate Numbering Consultation

5.1 The Oftel Consultation Document

The Oftel consultation document is designed to examine the potential of the corporate numbering service, consider whether there is a reasonable prospect that it might be viable and bring benefits to business consumers and establish whether the lack of a dedicated number range would act as a barrier to its development.

The document describes the characteristics of a corporate numbering service that might be developed in the 05 number range, examines the potential demand for such a service and considers the possible benefits and viability of the service. Respondents are invited to provide feedback on all of these issues.

It then goes on to consider the development of a regulatory regime for any such service, including issues such as; who would be allocated numbers – operators or end users; the process for allocation of numbers; what terms and conditions might be attached to use of the numbers; retail pricing for corporate numbering; the complex area of interconnection arrangements and charging mechanisms; and routing and portability issues.

5.1.1 Extract from Oftel Document³

The summary of the Oftel document sets out clearly the issues being considered and is reproduced below as it provides a useful guide to the consultation. Interested parties should read the entire document for the fullest context:

³ <http://www.oftel.gov.uk/publications/numbering/2003/05nums0303.htm#1>

“Corporate numbering is a new type of service dedicated primarily to businesses with private telecoms networks. The corporate numbering range would allow businesses to have their own identifiable part of the Scheme to meet their telecoms needs and allow greater flexibility in the use of the numbers. It could also ease the integration of businesses’ public and private numbering schemes. The key elements of the corporate numbering service are:

- initially, allocations would be made to telecoms operators, with the possibility under the current regime of attaching specific conditions to allow businesses additional control over the numbers;*
- on the basis of the Communications Bill as currently drafted, it would be possible to allocate numbers directly to non-communications providers, such as businesses, allowing users increased ownership of their numbers. It would also be possible to impose conditions on non-communications providers relating to the allocation, transfer and use of such numbers;*
- under both the current and new regulatory regimes there would be specific eligibility criteria associated with the allocation and use of corporate numbers by businesses and other non-communications providers;*
- corporate customers could have an increased role in negotiating how calls enter their private (or virtual private) networks, generally resulting in earlier handover of traffic from public to private networks; and*
- it is anticipated that a common characteristic of corporate numbering services would be for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)/multimedia services for corporate customers. However, Oftel is not proposing that all corporate numbering services be used for VoIP or to limit VoIP to 05 numbers.*

“This consultation document contains important proposals for the regulatory framework for the corporate numbering service. As well as the aforementioned allocation criteria, the main points under consultation are:

- retail pricing: Oftel believes that the corporate numbering range should have a set tariff ceiling to ensure consumers have the confidence to telephone businesses at a reasonable cost. It is considered that the ceiling be set in the region of 10 pence per minute or less;*
- interconnection arrangements: the consultation includes four possible options for distribution of profit. At this stage, Oftel has not specified a preferred option and would particularly welcome comments on the options set out;*
- routing of calls to corporate numbers: it is envisaged that businesses with allocations of corporate numbers would negotiate an agreement with the service-providing operator(s) of their choice for the delivery of their corporate numbering calls;*

- *sub-structure of number range: in the interests of good husbandry, Oftel would limit the amount of numbers available in the 05 range for allocation as corporate numbers. Initially, it is proposed to open only the 055 subrange for allocation. Oftel has not proposed a substructure for the corporate numbering range;*
- *size of number block and allocation: it is proposed to allocate 055 numbers in multiples of 10,000. The size of allocation would take certain principles into account and generally be large enough to accommodate businesses' internal numbering schemes, whilst ensuring sufficient capacity remains available to satisfy demand; and*
- *the consultation also explores issues of service application, number length, Calling Line Identification (CLI) and its implications for emergency authorities, Carrier Pre-Selection (CPS) and number portability."*

5.2 Issues Specific to Guernsey

In considering the proposals set out by Oftel, the OUR is conscious that the regime in Guernsey should be tailored if necessary to best meet the needs of the Guernsey market and consumers. Therefore, the OUR is interested in receiving any views or comments from interested parties on how the Oftel proposals will affect the market in Guernsey or might be applied in the market here.

At this stage, the OUR would invite comments on the following questions:

Q1 Do you believe there is a demand for a corporate numbering service in Guernsey and on what do you base your opinion?

Q2 Do you consider that the introduction of a corporate numbering service could bring benefits to operators, to, business or in general to Guernsey and if so what benefits?

Q3 Do you consider that there are any issues raised in the Oftel suggestions on developing a regulatory regime for corporate numbering that might need to be tailored or adjusted for the regulatory regime in Guernsey and if so why? Please respond in relation to the following issues addressed in the Oftel consultation:

- *Allocation Criteria (question 11- 13)*
- *Application procedure (question 14)*
- *Services and Number Range structure (questions 15-21)*
- *Retail Pricing (questions 22-26)*
- *Interconnection – charging (questions 27-28)*
- *Interconnection routing, CLI, CPS and portability (questions 29-31)*

6 Next Steps

Interested parties are encouraged to read the Oftel consultation document in full and respond to the questions raised therein. For further information or clarification on the consultation, please contact the Oftel manager handling the consultation (contact

details in section 3 above). You are also requested to send copies of your responses to OUR at the contact details in section 3. At the same time, responses to the specific questions in section 5 above would be very welcome to assist OUR in determining the appropriate arrangements for Guernsey.

Following consideration of responses, Oftel intends to publish a statement of its conclusions. Having considered that statement and any comments received in response to the questions in section 5 above, the OUR will publish an appropriate report or other document on the next steps. The OUR will also continue to work closely with Oftel to ensure that the interests of the market in the Bailiwick are considered in the development numbering policy.

/ENDS