



Realignment of 2100MHz Spectrum Allocations between Guernsey and Jersey

Invitation to Comment

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Radio spectrum is a scarce resource and thus maximizing efficient distribution and usage for the benefit of the consumer is a regulatory aim. The issuing of spectrum licences for the Channel Islands is managed on behalf of the States in both islands by the UK communications authority, Ofcom, under the extension of the Communications Act (2003) and the Wireless Telegraphy Act (2006) (WTA) to the islands under Order in Council.

With regard to the usage of such spectrum, however, there is a requirement to hold a telecommunications licence issued either by the Office of Utility Regulation (“OUR”) in Guernsey or the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (“JCRA”) in Jersey. The OUR and JCRA (“the Authorities”) are required under the respective telecommunications laws¹ to ensure that the interests of consumers in each island are fully met and that telecommunications systems are developed to ensure the long term and short term demands of business.

The allocation of spectrum for mobile services in each island has proceeded at a different pace partly as a consequence of the timing of the introduction of the new telecommunications laws and differences in the licensing structures. However, the development of telecommunications providers in each island has produced quasi-single network systems as a consequence of the same providers operating in both islands. This now presents an opportunity to improve spectrum efficiency and usage which is a requirement under all the relevant laws.

It is proposed that the Authorities will request Ofcom to revise the WTA licences for the UTMS 2100 MHz band so that operators with interests on Jersey and Guernsey are assigned the same frequencies for both territories. This will permit continuous radio planning across the Islands and enhance the overall spectrum efficiency.

The new allocation will re-assign spectrum in the 2100 MHz band resulting in a total allocation of a single block of 2 * 10 MHz to each of:

Jersey Telecom and Wave Guernsey,
Cable & Wireless Jersey and Cable & Wireless Guernsey
Airtel Jersey and Airtel Guernsey

These assignments, totalling 2*30 MHz, will be the same in Guernsey as in Jersey.

The JCRA also notes that Marathon Telecom has an allocation within this band, but as it has no equivalent allocation in Guernsey it is unaffected by these proposals.

It is envisaged that this new alignment would be completed in stages over a period of 3 to 6 months such that each operator would be able to operate its old and new allocations simultaneously in order to ensure that no breaks in service are necessary.

Subject to agreement by all operators that currently have 2100 MHz licences, Ofcom will provide a suitable migration plan and work with each operator to ensure a smooth transition and will also provide updated licenses reflecting this move.

¹ Telecommunications (Jersey) Law, available at: <http://www.jcra.je/pdf/080101%20Telecommunications%20Law.pdf> ; and the Telecommunications (Guernsey) Law, available at: http://www.regutil.gg/docs/telecoms_law.pdf

Written comments on this Paper are invited, to be received no later than **5PM on Friday 20 May**. Submissions should be clearly marked “Invitation to Comment – 2100MHz” and may be supplied either in hard copy or electronically, addressed (as appropriate) to:

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N.B. The Authorities intend to publish full non-confidential texts of any submissions received in response to this consultation. Thus, respondents to this invitation to comment should provide a non-confidential version in their responses.

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