



18 June 2018

Channel Islands get ready for 5G

20 years ago mobile phones barely existed for the mass market, but with each new generation we have taken a step forward in usability and flexibility. With mobile devices now outnumbering the number of people on the planet, the next generation – 5G – will be the most significant leap forward yet, and the Channel Islands are in the race to be at the forefront of this revolution.

With estimates that 5G could account for as many as 1.4 billion connections with networks covering one third of the world's population by 2025, the impact on the mobile industry and its customers will be profound.

5G is more than a new generation of technologies; it denotes a new era in which connectivity will become increasingly fluid and flexible. 5G Networks will adapt to applications, and performance will be tailored precisely to the needs of the user.

For consumers, 5G will mean super-fast data download speeds of up to 10 gigabytes per second, more than ten times faster than the current best available speed in the UK with 4G of 16.51 megabytes per second. 5G will enable a vastly improved user experience for technology such as Virtual Reality, wearable tech (such as smart watches and fitness bands) and enable the retail sector to connect more intimately with its customers using beacon technology, which allows the store to send personalised messages to consumers encouraging more visits.

Working closely with the local mobile operators pioneering 5G, the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities are engaging with the States in both Bailiwicks and key stakeholders to develop a framework for the introduction of new licenses and spectrum for 5G. These are necessary to ensure that the local economy and particularly the digital sector can harness the power of 5G for the benefit of us all.

The Authority is working with the schools in both Islands to ensure the views of young people are considered. School representatives from both Islands will be asked to share their thoughts and ideas which we will publish, with the best being invited to present to government and operators at a 5G Summit being held later in the year.

The Authority has already held discussions with Ofcom (the UK telecoms regulator) to ensure that appropriate spectrum (radio frequencies) will be available locally, along with innovation licenses (available later this year), which will allow operators to test new applications and services locally, ahead of a full roll out of the technology.

The Authority has organised an industry forum in July to discuss all aspects of 5G, in particular how stakeholders will work together to ensure the Islands gain the most from this exciting technology, ahead of a 5G Summit in the autumn.

The Channel Islands are well placed to take advantage of this new technology, enhancing our digital sectors, providing new jobs and revenues to support the local economies.

Cliff Mason Spectrum Policy Manager Ofcom said, "Ofcom supports the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities by authorising spectrum licences across the Channel Islands. We will continue to work closely with the team to support local operators in making available the spectrum in bands likely to be suitable for 5G technology".

Tim Ringsdore, Director at the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities, said: "The Channel Islands have always been at the forefront of innovation and we are determined to provide the support the industry needs to be successful, working closely with the operators to build a world class network and solutions that will help businesses and residents enjoy the very latest technological developments".

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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.