

## Ofcom Advisory Committee for Wales

### UK preparations for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19). UK provisional views and positions for WRC-19

#### Introduction

The Ofcom Advisory Committee for Wales (ACW) is aware of the significant future implications for the citizens of Wales of the decisions to be made at WRC-19. In particular, the availability of sufficient and appropriate spectrum bands for the support of future services that will benefit the citizens, organisations and businesses of Wales. The ACW is aware that the innovation and technology transfer process of services referenced in this consultation, such as 5G / mobile broadband and M2M/IoT is at an early stage. However, the ACW believes this presents an opportunity to state some key principles that the development of all regulations relating to these services should follow.

The ACW agrees broadly with the prioritisation of agenda items as laid out in Annex 5. The following responses relate to WRC-19 agenda items that have a bearing on the specific needs of the citizens of Wales.

#### **Question 1: Do you agree with the prioritisation of the agenda items, as shown in Annex 5, and if not why?**

The ACW applies the principles laid out in The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015<sup>(1)</sup>. Whilst Ofcom is not a named public body in the Act, the ACW considers its role to include taking the Act's goals into account in our response. The Act has a number of goals which have a bearing on our response, two of the most relevant being:

- 'A prosperous Wales' that has the capacity to create an 'innovative, productive' society and,
- 'A Wales of cohesive communities, which includes those communities, wherever they are being 'well-connected'.

In particular, mobile broadband is and will remain a key service for the citizens and businesses of Wales. Point 1.2 in the Executive Summary references the significant impact decisions made at WRC-19 will have on businesses and homes in the UK in particular, given decisions that will be made in relation to spectrum for next generation Mobile Broadband services delivered by 5G.

#### **Question 2: Ofcom is supporting the following three priority bands for IMT identification in the RRs: 24.25 – 27.5 GHz<sup>[1]</sup>, 40.5-43.5 GHz (as part of a wider global 37-43.5 GHz tuning range) 66 – 71 GHz. If you don't agree with any of these bands, or think we should be promoting other bands, please provide justification for your views.**

The ACW broadly agrees with the prioritisation of additional bands. However, the economic opportunities are currently unknown, as are technicalities of use and deployment in these bands of the infrastructure and the commercial services that will use them. The ACW is keen to ensure that these bands are sufficient to support viable commercial services after the studies into use cases referenced in *Enabling 5G in the UK?* For example, the ACW notes that the 66 – 71 GHz band is suited to Fixed Radio Access services providing high-speed broadband connectivity<sup>(2)</sup>. Given the difficulties of providing broadband to rural areas over fibre the ACW is keen to ensure that decisions made in 2018 support the use of this spectrum to potentially resolve gaps in broadband coverage in Wales in the future.

**Question 4: What are your views on the bands within scope of Agenda Item 1.16 and their suitability for Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi like services? Do you agree that Ofcom should support the CEPT position of No Change? If not, please provide evidence to support your view.**

We welcome Ofcom's decision to secure adequate capacity for WiFi services in the 5GHz band by licensing 5.725 – 5.850 GHz. We agree that demand for Wi Fi capacity will continue to increase in future, particularly in urban areas. We note that in some areas, there is already considerable congestion regarding Wi Fi use, particularly given the limited number of channels available in the commonly used 2.4 GHz band.

**Question 6: Do you agree that UK support a position of not making changes to the Radio Regulations to reference specific bands for M2M/IoT usage?**

Yes, however it is critical for the bands to support rural use through a diverse range of frequencies that support rural, sub-urban and urban applications covering a range of bandwidths. We support Ofcom's view that there is no need to make changes to the Radio Regulations (RR) in this area, but we would advocate that in all RR decision-making that support for M2M / IoT for rural areas is a key consideration, including the aggregate bands that are used to deliver these services. Whilst urban areas have driven coverage requirements for 3G / 4G data services, the demand in rural areas for M2M / IoT is likely to be higher than anticipated, for example in agri-tech and other rural located business operations. In particular, decisions relating to the reallocation of bands that are currently used by these services such as GSM needs to be a key consideration.

**Question 20: What are your views on Agenda Item 1.11, and do you agree that no specific identification for rail communications is required in the Radio Regulations?**

We agree with Ofcom's proposed position regarding the use of existing EU wide GSM-R systems for Track to Train allocations, noting also that this issue does not concern services that are directly available to passengers.

**Question 21: What are your views on Agenda Item 1.12 and do you agree that there is no requirement for specific identification to ITS in the Radio Regulations?**

We agree that proposed 5G service and regulation developments already make adequate provision in this area and that there is therefore no need for specific RR.

## **Reference**

1. Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 available at <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf> (accessed August 2018)
2. Olofsson H, Ericsson A, Kronestedt F, & Hellsten S (2018) 'Leveraging LTE and 5G NR networks for fixed wireless access', The Ericsson Technology Review [online] available at <https://www.ericsson.com/en/ericsson-technology-review/archive/2018/leveraging-lte-and-5g-nr-networks-for-fixed-wireless-access> (accessed September 2018)