



## **St Helena Government**

### **Electronic Communications Consultative Committee**

#### **Annual Report 2014**

##### **Introduction**

This is the first full year that the Electronic Communications Consultative Committee (ECCC) has operated. This report provides a review of telecommunications on the island and in line with the Telecommunications Licence and the Television Broadcasting Licence. The ECCC is an advisory committee whose duty is to report on compliance by the Licensee with the terms of the licence and to advise Government on matters of policy with regard to telecommunications and television broadcasting.

##### **Membership**

There are five members of the committee, three of whom represent Saint Helena Government and two represent the supplier, Sure South Atlantic. They are Colin Owen (Chair), Ian Smyth (Secretary), Morag Stevenson, Hensil O'Bey and Chris Durnell. Ian Smyth was replaced as a member and secretary of the committee by Thomas Holvey in October 2014. Whilst the licence mentions that the ECCC members will receive remuneration and expenses for their participation this has not been the case and there are no current plans to action this part of the licence.

##### **Meetings of the ECCC in 2014**

As per the licence requirement, two meetings of the ECCC were held in 2014. The first was held in March and the second in August. The first meeting was a general discussion about progress of the licences. The second meeting focused on the mobile phone network and its progress which will be mentioned at greater length later in this report. The notes from both meetings are appended to this report.

##### **Publicity**

There was an agreement amongst the committee that where possible the role of the ECCC should be publicised. Press releases were produced and subsequently there was an appearance by the Chair and Secretary on Saint FM.

##### **Performance**

The Broadband improvements were over and above those stipulated within the license. The speeds are now greater than those stipulated and the price up until the end of 2014 had come down at a greater level than the stipulated 5% each year. It was noted that as yet prioritisation of VoIP has not occurred but that Sure has until 2017 to do this. The free period trial from 12am to 6am each day had been seen as a success and was not a permanent addition to the service.

It was noted that Sure had provided the required channel content for TV since November 2012 and two new channels had also been introduced, primarily as a trial had since been made permanent in 2014. However local access to the local channels is still available for SHG.

There were not seen to be any issues with phone calls and Sure complied fully with the licence. The move from 4 digit phone number to 5 digits at the end of 2013 had gone relatively smoothly.

The introduction of a new mobile telephone service was an area where Sure did not comply with the licence. This service should have been established by the end of 2014. However Sure did notify the ECCC and SHG in July 2014 that this would not occur. The new date for the network to be live is September 2015 and the ECCC is monitoring this closely. The ECCC does note that Exco were made aware of the issue and accepted the explanation and that in the future a better service was expected than was stated in the licence.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

No key performance indicators were in place for 2014 however there was agreement that these should be taken forward in 2015. These should centre on:

- o Performance against Service Level Agreements;
- o Numbers and types of complaints;
- o Figures on service coverage; and
- o Figures on service uptake.

The indicators would be discussed further in 2015. It was also however noted that Sure does provide Saint Helena Government and the ECCC a range of statistics which are well received. It was agreed that these should continue as they are benchmarked and will be monitored in future by the ECCC. The statistics are also appended to this report and will be reviewed as part of the ongoing process during 2015.

### **Customer complaints**

Whilst the ECCC does not act as a regulator and therefore does not act on complaints it is something that is reviewed and discussed amongst the committee. The licence does state that an independent regulator should be in place to oversee complaints and that this should be within the Terms and Conditions for the service. It was suggested that the Chief Magistrate could fulfil this duty and whilst it was not in place during 2014 there were assurance made by Sure that it would be enacted in 2015.

### **Compliance with Licence**

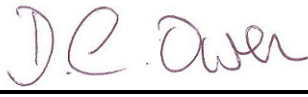
The ECCC concluded that Sure had complied with all elements of the licence apart from the installation of a mobile telecommunication service by the end of 2014. This issue was discussed by the ECCC in August and at a subsequent Exco meeting. Whilst there was disappointment at the delay to the service it was concluded that this was not necessarily due to Sure and that the proposed service was now better than stipulated within the licence.

### **Licensee accounts**

Sure have submitted their accounts to the ECCC.

**Costs of the ECCC**

There were no costs incurred as part of running the ECCC in 2014 and therefore the government did not invoice the Licensee to recover any costs.



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**Colin Owen****Chair, Electronic Communications Committee**

## Appendix

### Electronic Communication Consultative Committee

#### Notes of the meeting held on 4 March 2014 at Bishop's Rooms

##### 1. *Introductions*

In attendance: Colin Owen (Chair, SHG)  
Morag Stevenson (SHG)  
Ian Smyth (Secretary, SHG)  
Hensil O'Bey (Sure)  
Chris Durnell (Sure) – by phone.

##### 2. *Agree Terms of Reference*

- Terms of reference were agreed, apart from a question around the dates of meeting prescribed.
- The meetings are not timed in a way that best supported the production of the ECCC's annual report, which is supposed to be drafted by the end of February. It was felt that a meeting in January or February to consider the licensee's performance over the previous year would be more helpful. It was also agreed that some flexibility over dates, with a two month rather than one month window, would mean that annual leave arrangements could be factored in. **Ian agreed to speak to Gillian Francis (subsequently done and Gillian saw no problem in changing the dates as was helpful to the Committee).**
- Agreed the need to communicate the role of the committee to the public.
- All Committee members confirmed that, for now, they would not be recovering any costs associated with ECCC business, meaning that financial accounts would not need to be produced for the annual report.

##### 3. *Update on the services being provided and service developments/investments*

Sure had produced a report on progress against all obligations contained in both the Television Broadcasting and Telecommunications Licences, which came into effect on 1 January 2013 for a period of 10 years. The following areas were focussed on:

###### **Social Obligations**

- Given the lack of clarity in the licence, there was a discussion around the meaning of "social obligations". It was agreed that it centred around the need to provide services targeted at vulnerable people and, potentially, to provide such services on a non-commercial basis. No such obligations are currently in place.

###### **Television**

- Sure have provided the required channel content since November 2012.
- BBC Prime and National Geographic have been introduced on the two local channels in place of the Jamestown webcams. Local content is still broadcast as required which, as far as possible, Sure seek to transmit during scheduled advertisement breaks.
- The ECCC discussed the roll of Sure in monitoring and controlling broadcast content. Sure is responsible for ensuring that no material is rebroadcast that is "seditious, blasphemous, obscene or otherwise unlawful", or that would "endanger the security of St Helena or undermine public morals". The Committee was content that Sure currently meets this obligation.

- The issue of material not appropriate for children was raised. The Licence states that subscribers are responsible for controlling the viewing of such content and Sure consequently provides a parental control facility.

### **Internet Service**

- The ECCC discussed package enhancements to date. Sure see the data allowance improvements as a way to encourage more people to take-up services, particularly on the Lite package. They are looking at extending the overnight free window and other speed/capacity enhancements.

### **Mobile Service**

- The business case is in progress and Sure expect to deliver the service in Q4 2014, in line with the licence requirement.
- Sure are considering how to bundle and price the service. Customers may receive a discount if they subscribe to all three of Sure's services (TV, Broadband/Fixed Line and Mobile)
- As required, Sure will discuss prices for the service with ExCo.
- Mobile stations will co-locate with the existing TV sites, with some extra stations to bolster the service.
- Sure may be able to take advantage of schemes available to investors, for example, the Investment Tax Credit.
- The business case is expected by the end of March, with pricing structures available in May/June.

### **Licensee Accounts**

- Sure are required to present their accounts to Governor in Council (ExCo). The accounts for 2012/13 need to be presented and Sure expected to do this by end-April/May.
- Sure have changed their accounting date, so the next set of accounts would cover 1 April to 31 December 2013.

#### *4. Update on current and future prices*

- Changes since the licence started were discussed and it was noted that Sure had reduced prices by more than was required under the terms of their licence.
- Other smaller charges e.g. the per-minute charge for local calls, were being allowed to slip in real terms.
- Sure expected to review television charges in January 2015.

#### *5. Agree and review KPIs*

- No formal performance indicators are currently produced for ECCC purposes, although Sure monitor a range of statistics internally. Sure had shared these previously with SHG and **Hensil agreed to re-circulate the latest set (Done, 10/3/14).**
- It was agreed that indicators should cover
  - Performance against Service Level Agreements;
  - Numbers and types of complaints;
  - Figures on service coverage; and
  - Figures on service uptake.

#### *6. Summary of customer complaints and any significant issues that arise*

### **Complaints / Customer Issues**

- The ECCC is not, under its ToR, a body to arbitrate on complaints (not least because Sure and SHG are equal members). However the Committee will discuss issues relevant to its role in monitoring Sure's progress and performance against the requirements contained in the licence.
- Some customers are concerned about the loss of local (webcam) coverage, despite being replaced by other commercial channels, which are popular. All agreed that Sure's practice of interrupting coverage to broadcast significant local events (e.g. Festival of Lights) was appropriate.
- There has been an ongoing issue of international calls being correctly routed to St Helena (via the UK). The issue is substantially solved, but Sure is actively helping any customers still experiencing issues.
- There have been service interruptions in outlying locations such as Levelwood and Blue Hill. Sure reported that microwave radio links will solve the problem for broadband.

### **Complaints Policy and Process**

- The licence requires Sure to have a complaints policy. This has been overlooked by both Sure and SHG. **Sure to take forward to ensure a complaints policy and process is in place .**
- The license requires recourse to an independent person once Sure's internal process has been exhausted. It is unclear who can perform this role. **Morag agreed to speak to the Chief Magistrate to see whether this could sit alongside his other regulatory roles.**

### **7. Other issues**

- The ECCC is required to produce an annual report on its activities and, even though the ECCC was not established until September 2013, strictly the first report should cover the whole of 2013 (the first year of the new licences). Given that the ECCC did not meet during 2013, the report would be limited and likely to be produced late (given the sign-off procedures required). **Ian to produce and circulate a draft.**

## NOTES FROM MEETING OF THE ECCC HELD ON THURSDAY, 7 AUGUST 2014

Present:       Chairman       - Dax Richards, Acting Financial Secretary  
                  Members       - Morag Stevenson, Solicitor General  
                                  - Hensil O'Bey, Chief Executive, Sure  
                                  - Chris Durnell, Legal and Regulatory Director, Sure

Temporary Secretary – Gillian Francis, Assistant Chief Secretary (Support)

The meeting was convened to discuss the letter from Ian Kelly, CEO for *Sure South Atlantic and Diego Garcia*, dated 15 July 2014 addressed to the Governor, advising that *Sure* was unable to meet its Licence commitment to deliver mobile telephony during 2014 due to its vendor "Altobridge" declaring bankruptcy on 30 May 2014. It was noted that there had been no further changes to *Sure's* position since the letter had been written.

The Chairman raised the question as to whether *Sure* could offer, from a PR/good will perspective, any form of 'softener'/compensatory measure as there was an expectation within the general public that mobile telecoms would be introduced in 2014. Anything to help the business community and support economic development would be well received. In response, *Sure* pointed out that they had delivered beyond the licence requirements insofar as broadband was concerned. *Sure* also highlighted that whilst mobile services would now be delayed to June 2015, it would be launched with 3G rather than 2G, delivering faster and richer mobile data experience. However, the CE nevertheless agreed to discuss this further with Ian Kelly.

The question was raised as to whether there had been any advancement in telecoms generally that would benefit St Helena such as Global Ka-Band. The CE advised that they were keeping abreast of changes but that at the end of the day a lot would depend on the economics of different options. It was noted that he had been in discussions with the Government Socio-Economist and he was awaiting information that would help inform any further considerations in this respect.

It was noted that the Business Case to support 3G/larger network with an alternative vendor was still being developed and as such it was not possible to commit to price reductions for the launch of mobile services.

The meeting agreed in going forward, it would be good to issue a Joint Press Release to explain the reasons for the delay and in this regard, the SHG Chief Public Relations Officer would be asked to work on the draft already provided by *Sure*. Furthermore the Press Release should provide more detail on the difference between 3G and 2G mobile services.

It was noted that Executive Council would be informed about the delay at its meeting on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2014, with the Press Release issuing soon thereafter.

## ST. HELENA GOVERNMENT STATISTICS

## YEAR 2014

|  | Dec-13        | Mar-14         | Jun-14         | Sep-14         | Dec-14         |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Lines (As at)</b>                     |               |                |                |                |                |
| Business                                 | 317           | 324            | 335            | 342            | 345            |
| Residential                              | 2018          | 2,022          | 2,031          | 2,035          | 2,068          |
| Dual                                     | 83            | 82             | 81             | 82             | 81             |
| Government                               | 190           | 186            | 180            | 177            | 179            |
|  | <b>2608</b>   | <b>2614</b>    | <b>2627</b>    | <b>2,636</b>   | <b>2,673</b>   |
| <b>Broadband (Customers As at)</b>       | 1107          | 1,126          | 1,150          | 1,181          | 1,245          |
| <b>Minutes Domestic (YTD)</b>            | 6371744       | 2,358,609      | 4,727,549      | 7,126,284      | 9,553,874      |
| <b>International Outgoing (YTD)</b>      |               |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Minutes Total</b>                     | <b>362141</b> | <b>129,786</b> | <b>250,125</b> | <b>369,271</b> | <b>485,241</b> |
| 4 Top:                                   |               |                |                |                |                |
| Ascension                                | 111218        | 42,130         | 80,907         | 117,718        | 151,782        |
| United Kingdom                           | 134805        | 45,405         | 88,228         | 132,171        | 166,066        |
| South Africa                             | 80092         | 23,097         | 44,355         | 65,772         | 105,121        |
| Falklands                                | 20772         | 13,409         | 25,647         | 37,316         | 32,612         |
| <b>International Inpayment (YTD)</b>     |               |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Minutes Total</b>                     | <b>445897</b> | <b>125,100</b> | <b>125,100</b> | <b>375,300</b> | <b>500,400</b> |
| 4 Top:                                   |               |                |                |                |                |
| United Kingdom Ibasis                    | 0             | 71,100         | 142,200        | 213,300        | 284,400        |
| United Kingdom CW (UK)                   | 227462        | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| South Africa                             |               |                |                |                |                |
| United Kingdom MT                        | 51423         | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| United Kingdom BT                        | 167013        | 54,000         | 108,000        | 162,000        | 216,000        |
| <b>Television Geographically (As at)</b> |               |                |                |                |                |
| Half-Tree-Hollow                         | 283           | 281            | 289            | 291            | 309            |
| Jamestown                                | 207           | 204            | 206            | 209            | 215            |
| Alarm Forest                             | 106           | 106            | 109            | 102            | 105            |
| Longwood                                 | 180           | 180            | 183            | 186            | 193            |
| Levelwood                                | 72            | 73             | 77             | 78             | 79             |
| Sandy Bay                                | 45            | 41             | 43             | 45             | 45             |
| St. Pauls                                | 207           | 211            | 220            | 226            | 230            |
| Blue Hill                                | 37            | 36             | 37             | 38             | 38             |
|  | <b>1137</b>   | <b>1132</b>    | <b>1164</b>    | <b>1,175</b>   | <b>1,214</b>   |
| <b>Lines Geographically (As at)</b>      |               |                |                |                |                |
| Half-Tree- Hollow                        | 547           | 541            | 545            | 544            | 557            |
| Jamestown Lower                          | 458           | 455            | 457            | 460            | 461            |
| Jamestown Upper                          | 148           | 147            | 145            | 143            | 151            |
| Alarm Forest                             | 198           | 199            | 200            | 198            | 202            |
| Hutts Gate                               | 67            | 67             | 67             | 67             | 68             |
| Longwood                                 | 253           | 256            | 260            | 259            | 260            |
| Levelwood                                | 154           | 154            | 155            | 162            | 164            |
| Sandy Bay                                | 94            | 95             | 95             | 94             | 96             |
| St. Pauls (Scotland)                     | 139           | 142            | 146            | 148            | 149            |
| Sapper Way                               | 173           | 175            | 175            | 175            | 176            |
| St. Pauls/Blue Hill                      | 235           | 236            | 236            | 237            | 238            |
| Bottom Woods                             | 85            | 90             | 89             | 91             | 93             |
| Service lines                            | 57            | 57             | 57             | 58             | 58             |
|  | <b>2608</b>   | <b>2614</b>    | <b>2627</b>    | <b>2,636</b>   | <b>2,673</b>   |
| <b>Line Restoration of Service (YTD)</b> |               |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Business/Gov/Dual</b>                 |               |                |                |                |                |
| Commitment Time Wk hrs 8                 |               |                |                |                |                |
| No within Commitment                     | 48            | 13             | 26             | 49             | 62             |
| No Outside Commitment                    | 33            | 5              | 13             | 19             | 21             |
| <b>Total Faults</b>                      | <b>81</b>     | <b>18</b>      | <b>39</b>      | <b>68</b>      | <b>83</b>      |
| <b>Line Restoration of Service (YTD)</b> |               |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Residential</b>                       |               |                |                |                |                |
| Commitment Time Wk hrs 12                |               |                |                |                |                |
| No within Commitment                     | 268           | 104            | 184            | 294            | 389            |
| No Outside Commitment                    | 121           | 17             | 40             | 61             | 85             |
| <b>Total Faults</b>                      | <b>389</b>    | <b>121</b>     | <b>224</b>     | <b>355</b>     | <b>474</b>     |