

Overview of ECCC Meeting held on 23 October 2024

The Electronic Communications Consultative Committee (ECCC) meeting held on October 23, 2024 covered a range of topics. The meeting was chaired by Dax Richards (Financial Secretary) with key participants including Susannah Nightingale (Technical Regulatory Consultant), Jeremy Roberts (Chief Digital Officer), Christine Thomas (CEO of Sure), Chris Durnell (Sure Legal & Regulatory Director), and Adam Yon (Sure Networks Manager).

The VDSL limited rollout was discussed, with Adam Yon reporting that Sure had completed extensive testing and rollout was expected in the Jamestown area within 2-3 weeks. Despite no marketing, three customers (primarily corporate and non-profit organizations) had already expressed interest. Whilst further roll out was desirable the limited time left on the Sure licence made making a business case for this investment difficult as projecting future revenues was difficult.

Network infrastructure was a significant topic, with Christine Thomas noting that some equipment was approaching end-of-life. Recent customer surveys indicated strong desire for faster internet speeds beyond the current packages. Adam Yon explained the difficulty in developing business cases for significant investments like moving mobile services to band 20 without clarity on the long-term future. The committee agreed that Sure should outline potential network upgrade scenarios, costs, and challenges to help ministers better understand the situation and address public perception that Sure is preventing upgrades.

On the regulatory front, Susannah Nightingale reported progress on drafting new legislation that would enact the Communications & Networks policy. Timescales for when a draft of a new Ordinance would be ready for consultation weren't available but it was anticipated that it would be in the first half of 2025.

Operational updates included changes to customer service support for Ascension Island, which will now be provided remotely from St Helena starting in November 2024, with additional technical resources coming in early 2025. Christine Thomas assured that this restructuring would not impact services to customers.