

2019.07.16

5 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the implementation of 5G in Jersey: (OQ.191/2019)

What estimate has the Minister made of the number of transmitting towers required for the Island-wide implementation of 5G in Jersey?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

None at present, is the short answer. But the Telecoms strategy, which was published in January 2018, clearly states that the Government will adopt policies that encourage network sharing for 5G. This will help to minimise the number of masts required. The number of new masts required will be dependent on how 5G is rolled out in Jersey. In the first instance, early iterations of 5G may need no new additional masts. Government is currently considering options for the longer-term rollout of 5G and, as part of this, we are working with regulators and the operators to minimise as far as possible the amount of new infrastructure required.

5.5.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given the options that are available to Jersey in terms of its implementation, or not, of 5G, given our fibre-optic capacity, would it not be sensible to have an estimate of the number of possible towers as part of the equation of making a decision in the end, in terms of its impact on the environment, *et cetera*?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I do absolutely agree and there will be an estimate of masts as we progress and as we understand more about how it is going to be rolled out. As I understand it, 2 of the operators, or at least one definitely, possibly 2, are planning to trial 5G. That might take place, for example, only in St. Helier initially, in which case it might be possible to use existing infrastructure. So, the reason why we have not estimated, we have some broad ideas, but the reason we have not looked for more accurate figures is we are still watching closely how, where and when, 5G will be rolled out.

5.5.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

When talking about the structure of a 5G network, does the Minister believe it is important to understand the difference between masts and antennas and, as I understand it so far, in the case of 5G there is likely to be a greater reliance on antennas, rather than masts, masts being 20-foot tall poles, antennas being small and discrete?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I absolutely understand that and ultimately this will be quite rightly controlled by the planning process and I trust that process to ensure that the rollout of the infrastructure remains sensible and environmentally acceptable.

5.5.3 Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

May I ask the Minister what measures have been taken to ensure that we have a common shared infrastructure across all the 5G providers? Clearly, there are inherent benefits of cost, coverage and others.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, we are having talks, as I said in my opening answer, with the regulators and the operators. It is part of the Telecoms strategy to share infrastructure, as much as possible, to lessen the impact on the environment, so we are having those conversations.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think you have answered everything. There is a debate coming up later on, anyway.