DCMS priority work areas

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SPF Custer 2, 16 July 2019
Spectrum policy background

Spectrum is a critical national asset that the Government wants to ensure is maximised for its economic and social value.

In the UK, Ofcom is responsible for spectrum management under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2003 and Communications Act 2006. The Government can direct Ofcom on how to carry out its spectrum management functions.

The Digital Economy Act 2017 also gave Government the power to designate a Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP), which Ofcom must take into account when exercising its spectrum functions.

European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) transposition deadline is 21 December 2020.
Four priority areas:

1. Make it easier and cheaper to deploy mobile infrastructure and support market expansion;

2. Support the growth of infrastructure models that promote competition and investment in network densification and extension;

3. Fund beneficial use cases through the Government’s 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme that helps de-risk business models for 5G; and

4. Promote new, innovative 5G services from existing and new players, through the release of additional spectrum.
Government’s key objectives in relation to spectrum:

- ensuring the efficient use of spectrum (including preventing under-utilisation);
- improving mobile coverage;
- encouraging innovation and investment in new 5G services; and
- promoting competition in mobile markets.

Sharing is key to achieving these objectives

The introduction of flexible, shared spectrum models and the release of additional public sector spectrum are strategic priorities, and a means by which Government could secure its objectives.

Spectrum sharing models could enable new players, alongside existing mobile operators, to access spectrum and invest in new business models.

The draft SSP reiterated the importance of spectrum sharing.
Priority areas discussed with SPF

1. Possible innovative approaches to the 26 GHz priority 5G band
2. “Use it or lose it” conditions
3. General opportunities for different spectrum sharing/leasing models, including DSA and better indoor connectivity