London mayor expected to say city will rock 5G by 2020

July 29 2014, by Nancy Owano

London mayor Boris Johnson this week will pledge to bring 5G to London in the next six years, reported The Telegraph on Monday. The pledge is part of a more extensive plan for London's infrastructure between now and 2050. The scheme is also part of a collaboration with the University of Surrey. Mayors of cities typically like to underscore something unique or superior about their place and in Johnson's case, he is emphatic about showing off London's full promise vis a vis digital connectivity. The delivery of 5G would also make London the site of the world's first major 5G mobile network deployment.

The mayor, said The Telegraph on Monday, "will also promise that much more accurate information about broadband speeds at individual properties will be made available to prospective tenants or purchasers." What is more, Johnson wants to apply the date to developing a map of

where improvement is needed most urgently. He said that a mixture of new technologies and traditional broadband are likely to be needed.

The mayor's anticipated pledge over 5G follows news in March when UK Prime Minister David Cameron at CEBit announced a partnership involving the University of Surrey, Kings College and the University of Dresden to develop 5G connections,

Meanwhile, the 5G Innovation Centre at the University of Surrey, with ample funding from large organizations, is earmarked as a key facility for testing and optimizing advanced technologies. Founding members that have formally joined the Center include Aeroflex, AIRCOM International, BBC, BT, EE, Fujitsu Laboratories of Europe, Huawei, Rohde & Schwarz, Samsung, Telefonica/02 and Vodafone. The center is to be home to researchers and doctoral students working to develop 5G technology.

According to the University of Surrey, the 5GIC is the world's first dedicated 5G center with facilities and labs for network testing. The Center will become a research hub. A new building for the 5GIC is scheduled to open in January 2015, in the University of Surrey's main campus in Guildford. Researchers and PhD students will work with industry on innovations.

Some tech-watching sites were not as confident as Johnson, however, that the rollout will happen that easily by 2020. The standard is not yet defined,

"Johnson's pledge for a 2020 city-wide roll out of 5G in London is ambitious - indeed, it's not even clear how 5G will be defined, as standards aren't yet in place," said PC Pro on Monday.

Nonetheless, researchers and manufacturers are not looking back. In an

EE Community interview in January this year, Professor Andy Sutton, EE principal network architect, was asked," Are the mobile manufacturers already building hardware designed to take advantage of this kind of internet speed?" He answered, "Manufacturers are researching 5G. Several of them are members of 5GIC along with EE. Some early prototypes are being developed, however these are a long way from commercialization."

According to the Surrey University site, the program involving the 5G IC aims to make a "significant contribution to standardization, and regulatory bodies in the emerging 5G arena."

South Korea is also aggressive about 5G planning, and has invested £900 million in 5G, aiming to start trials by 2017 and start rolling it out across the country by 2020, said PC Pro..

More information: www.surrey.ac.uk/5gic/about/

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