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JFMG Response to the Ofcom consultation:

The future licensing of FM commercial radio

JFMG is contracted by Ofcom to manage that part of the radio spectrum designated for Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE). Commercial radio stations use this spectrum for a variety of purposes including:

- radiomicrophones
- studio and outside broadcast talkback
- presenter cues
- news-gathering links from vehicles and aircraft
- outside broadcast links (e.g. concerts and events)
- studio to transmitter links
- contribution links from remote receiver sites

The programme format and the size of the station determines the applications used. For example those which are particularly speech based may rely heavily upon news-gathering, talkback and presenter cue channels.

Demand for spectrum already exceeds supply for some types of application in certain parts of the country, particularly for news-gathering. Additionally it is proposed to expand the number of commercial radio stations within some of these areas, reflecting 'localness' and choice.

In awarding licences for these new commercial radio services Ofcom will therefore need to consider the spectrum impact of their PMSE requirements. It will be particularly important for new stations which rely upon local news-gathering as part of their programming.

JFMG is ready to advise in further detail, as required, and facilitate the aims of Ofcom for the future of commercial FM radio.