



Policing and Crime Reduction Group
Science and Technology Unit
Radio Frequency & Communication Planning Branch

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Daniel Storey
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Wyndham House
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Our Ref
Your Ref
Date 15 August 2001

Dear Daniel,

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF RADIO SPECTRUM
CONSULTATION PAPER JUNE 2001**

1. Thank you for sending us a copy of your consultation document and for our subsequent discussions, which we found of great interest.
2. You will be aware that the Home Office in consultation with the Radiocommunications Agency has been developing the regulatory framework for access to the emergency services allocation in the 380-400 MHz band. Our approach is similar to the Australian model mentioned in your paper.
3. Subject to justification, service providers are allocated blocks of spectrum in the band, which is self-managed within an agreed geographic area. The regulatory framework defines the user base, the interference environment within which services must operate and permitted levels of exported interference outside the agreed operational area.
4. Airwave is being developed to service public safety requirements in England Scotland and Wales with independent systems being planned and/or implemented in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland to service similar customer bases in their respective areas. The developing band plan also offers facilities for a limited number of other potential users.
5. In our view this strategy offers service providers the flexibility required to provide a high grade, professional, spectrally efficient and competitive service to a wide range of public safety users. There will be positive gains in terms of spectrum, with the Home Office releasing the majority of its allocations between 450 - 470 MHz on satisfactory completion of these projects.

6. Subject to review, spectrum in other bands may be released at a later stage. We consider that a small requirement for access to spectrum outside of the 380 - 400 MHz band will remain in order to support emergency services specialist applications and the requirements of services who are unable, for a combination of technical, operational or financial reasons, to subscribe to Airwave. Examples are the Fire and Prison services where an outsourced high capacity national system may not represent, for them, a best value solution.
7. The Home Office:
 - accepts the principles of spectrum pricing as an effective management tool and we are content with charges being calculated on a comparable basis to equivalent commercial use. It should be recognised, however, that the use of radio is an essential requirement for the Emergency services;
 - will seek to ensure that regulatory mechanisms are in place to meet the current and future spectrum demands of the Emergency and Departmental services.
8. Finally it should be recognised that spectrum for emergency services is allocated to meet specific operational requirements. Within this context we consider that there is limited scope for wide-scale sharing of current allocations outside the public safety community. We intend to continue our close working relationship with the Radiocommunications Agency and others to identify and exploit opportunities as they arise to share, rationalise and, where possible, broaden access to emergency services spectrum.
9. Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of these issues in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Vaughan Asque