

Response by Arwain to The Radiocommunications Agency Consultation Document: Use of Licence-Exempt Spectrum For Provision of Public Telecommunication Services (October 2001)

The following response to the Radiocommunications Agency consultation *Use of Licence-Exempt Spectrum For Provision of Public Telecommunication Services* is made by Arwain www.arwain.net a Cardiff-based non-profit wireless network.

Arwain was constituted as a non-profit organization in September 2001. Drawing upon international citizens' based networks in cities such as San Francisco, Seattle and London, our aims are to develop infrastructure to demonstrate wireless technologies and to educate people in its effective use. We see wireless as a breakthrough technology, enabling affordable broadband connectivity and access for individuals, small business and public access to the internet and advanced ICT services.

Network nodes have been developed in three parts of the city to date. One in a private residence in the northern suburbs, with a temporary connection to a local school; plus two in the Cardiff Bay area, a small media company and a digital media development program. In addition a number of members have used 802.11b wireless for LAN connectivity in their homes, with plans to become operational nodes on the wider network. We are currently engaged in development plans in Cardiff Bay, the city centre and across the city, working with individuals, local media companies and businesses, a local café, a university, a regional development agency, and a railway company. An official launch is planned for a few months time when network deployment has progressed, and we will establish a number of free public access nodes. Our work has already attracted international interest.

Our use of wireless has focussed on 802.11b radio in the 2.4 GHz band for "last mile" connectivity; additionally we envisage the 5.8 GHz band as a means of backbone and wider network development.

This submission is intended as a statement in support of the principle of the current review of no-licence spectrum use to allow open public networks and third party use of wireless technologies.

We note that the precondition of successful wireless networks in cities across the world- from San Francisco Bay, USA to Ulan Bator, Mongolia to Riga, Latvia- has been a positive regulatory regime to allow spectrum use for open public networks and commercial use.

Our development work to date has highlighted the potential of wireless as a platform for affordable broadband access. We urge government and the Radiocommunications Agency to follow the lead of other countries to put effective rules in place to allow the use of no licence spectrum to promote digital

opportunities for individual citizens', consumer and small business participation in the digital revolution.

Submitted by John Wilson, Secretary, on behalf of the Arwain membership

Arwain,
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Cardiff, 15 February, 2002