

General Comments

I have held an advanced licence for nearly 20 years. I am a member of the RSGB, UK microwave group and British Amateur Television Club. Bury St Edmunds Amateur Radio Club Secretary and Registered RSGB Tutor. My interests include the microwave bands and amateur TV. Home construction is my favourite activity.

I am very concerned that there will be very little spectrum left for TV operation soon. TV operation has become more difficult in the 1.3GHz band due to the primary user. TV is the one mode of operation I find that has interested the younger generation of amateurs along with data. It is well known that amateur radio is very popular in technical savvy countries and makes an important contribution to training younger engineers in this country.

Questions and Answers

The release bands (2350-2390, 3410-3475 MHz)

Q1. Do you agree that it is likely that the benefits to UK consumers and citizens will be greater from the MoD's release of spectrum in the 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz release bands than from retaining the current amateur use?

A1: I would have preferred that the amateur spectrum would be retained with a new primary user, however I understand the difficulties of this with paying customers and also with the current spectrum pressures above 400 MHz

Q2. Are there current uses in the release bands other than those detailed in RSGB's band plan and discussed in Section 3 of this consultation?

A2: Not that I am aware of.

Q3. Are there further consequences of removing the release bands from amateur licences that have not been considered in our analysis?

A3: No

The adjacent bands (2310-2350, 2390-2400, 3400-3410 MHz)

Q4. There is an option (although not preferred) to remove access to the adjacent bands, as well as to the release bands. What are the consequences of removing access to the adjacent bands from amateur licences?

A4:

The loss of the use of the 2.3GHz-3.4GHz spectrum would have a very negative effect microwave operation, self-learning and Amateur TV. The 2.3GHz part of the spectrum is unique as the modification of commercial equipment (such as Wi-Fi equipment and TV senders) is very possible to get on the bands with ease. Modification of equipment (also known as hacking) is very popular with the younger generation of engineers. The higher bands have more freedom from manmade interference.

Q5. Are there current uses in the adjacent bands other than those detailed in the RSGB's band plan and discussed in Section 3?

A5: Not that I am aware of.

Q6. Are there additional mitigation measures which would provide demonstrable proof that amateurs would not cause interference into LTE in the release bands following the release?

A6: Proper band planning with groups such as the RSGB and BATC in conjunction with the primary user. We have assistance available via specialist groups to measure output spectrum and help to design and find filters on the surplus market.

Cases of interference to Digital TV following the release of the 800MHz spectrum have been much lower than expected and I believe it would be in this case too.

Q7. Do you agree with the proposed process for varying licences following cases of reported interference and our proposal to vary licences should dealing with the number of reported cases become too onerous?

A7:

I would hope that before any blanket changes are made to amateur use of the shared bands is made, it is hoped that Ofcom will enter in to discussions with the RSGB, BATC and UK microwave group to try and resolve the problem.

Q8. Do you agree with our preferred option?

A8: It's not the radio amateurs preferred option, but I would rather have continued access to some spectrum rather than none at all.

Q9. Are there additional changes to the Amateur Radio Licence which would assist amateur in lowering the risk of causing harmful interference to new uses?

A9:

Ofcom already has the power to amend an individual amateur licence schedule should a station continue to interfere with other services and I see no reason why this cannot be used in the future.