

Title:

Ms

Forename:

Surname:

Representing:

Organisation

Organisation (if applicable):

Denham Aerodrome

Email:

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Additional comments:

Aviation is international and is globally regulated through ICAO. The UK has signed up to ICAO through the Chicago convention. Under ICAO aeronautical spectrum is required to be protected for aviation safety and efficiency. Therefore it is illogical to talk about opening it up to non-aeronautical users. Aircraft transiting the UK or landing/taking off expect to receive a service - there must be someone to provide it. Even if there were aeronautical spectrum unused, this must still be protected for future aeronautical uses.

There is already an international plan to reduce congestion in aeronautical spectrum

by gradually phasing in 8.33 khz spacing. This phase-in must be gradual because it requires that every aircraft that is to use an 8.33 khz frequency must buy an 8.33 khz radio, as well as the ground equipment being 8.33 khz. An aerodrome cannot simply change to an 8.33 khz frequency from their current 25 khz frequency since nearly none of the aircraft they are providing a service to are appropriately equipped! In any case 8.33 khz spacing must be brought in uniformly otherwise there will be breakthrough on the 8.33 khz frequencies from 25 khz frequencies. Therefore under AIP there is no element of choice, the only way to reduce congestion is by aerodromes giving up their frequencies and thus denying aircraft access to these frequencies. This runs a coach and horses through the UK's commitment to the Chicago convention. AIP is not compatible with ICAO.

Any moves to reduce congestion need to be internationally agreed and planned forward. Eurocontrol have phased-in 8.33 khz spacing above FL195 and are developing a plan to extend 8.33 khz spacing below FL195, in co-ordination with ICAO. Ofcom cannot safely accelerate this - an international solution is required. Even if all UK aircraft were magically equipped with 8.33 khz radios tomorrow, non-UK aircraft are not and 8.33 khz spacing could still not be introduced unilaterally.

Question 1: Do you consider that our proposed fee rates for licences in the aeronautical VHF frequencies are appropriate?:

No.

The DOC (designated operational coverage) of our aerodrome frequency is only 10nm/3000', this is to prevent interference on other frequencies. The DOC of other air traffic service frequencies is considerably greater e.g.:

Luton Twr DOC is 25nm/4000'
Liverpool Twr DOC is 25nm/5000'
Luton ATIS DOC is 60nm/20,000'

Clearly, the volume and area of our aerodrome frequency is much less than that of a Twr frequency and much, much less than that of an ATIS. Yet the proposal is that an A/G or AFIS frequency would cost the same as a Twr frequency (£2,600).

Not only do we have a small DOC, we are required to keep our transmissions relatively weak. The maximum effective radiated power of our aerodrome radio is limited to 5 watts to prevent interference on other frequencies. However, the effective radiated power of e.g. Luton's tower frequency is several times greater. This does not appear to have been taken into consideration at all.

We do not have sole use of our frequency. At least two other stations in the UK are permitted to use the same frequency - one is used by an oil field and the other user is the MoD.

Question 2: In devising our revised proposals, have we identified all of the aeronautical uses of VHF communications frequencies which require a distinct approach to fee setting, as set out in tables 5 and 6?:

TWR/FIS/A/G should be split up (see response to Q1) and there should be smaller charges for AFIS and A/G.

Question 3: Do you agree with our proposal not to charge any fees for Fire assignments?:

Yes. But the principle of not charging the fire or distress frequencies but yet charging air traffic service frequencies is illogical. Aerodrome air traffic services exist for one purpose only - safety. They do not bring in any revenue but already incur costs on the provider, eg staffing and equipment. Ofcom say the D&D frequency will not be charged, but why in principle is there any difference? ALL aeronautical frequencies are there for safety. What about LARS units, and Safetycom (clue in the name!)?

Question 4: Do you agree with our proposal to set a £75 fee for licences in any of the sporting frequencies?:

No. These sporting frequencies appear to have very similar characteristics to many AFIS and Air/Ground frequencies i.e. a designated operational coverage of 10nm and vertical use restricted to 3000'. Yet the AFIS and Air/Ground frequencies are expected to pay £2600 p.a.

Question 5: Do you agree with our proposal to set an annual fee of £19,800 per ACARS or VDL assignment, with no variation related to the number of transmitters?:

Question 6: Do you consider that our proposed approach to phasing in fees for use of the aeronautical VHF communications channels are appropriate? If there are particular reasons why you consider that any user or group of users would need longer phasing-in periods, please provide any supporting evidence for us to consider. Specifically, do you have any evidence for us to consider that would support either of Options 1 and 2 for the highest proposed fee in this sector?:

I do not consider that the fees are appropriate and I do not agree with the per annum increases.

Ofcom proposes to apply discounts to less congested areas of the UK (basically, the Highlands). Ofcom says it wants to reduce demand for spectrum in those parts of the country where there are more aerodromes. Most aerodromes have only one frequency and they cannot reduce demand for spectrum other than by giving up their frequency. Where there are more aerodromes and more air traffic it is inconsistent with safety to pursue a course intended to cause users to give up the frequency. Therefore each aerodrome should have an entitlement to at least one frequency in order to maintain safety and efficiency of aviation and only additional frequencies should be subject to charge.

Question 7: Do you have any further quantified information to contribute to the analysis of financial impacts of the proposed fees on

particular spectrum users, as set out in Annex 5? We would like to publish all responses, but will respect the confidentiality of any material which is clearly marked as such.:

The Helios report tries to argue that AIP charges would not have a large impact. However, our aerodrome licence fee rose by 43% in 2008 and by another 65% in 2009. A new fee was introduced in 2008 in the form of the ANSP fee which rose by 109% in 2009. Business rates have also become a much greater burden. The cumulative effect of increases such as these is extremely difficult to bear.

The report also says: ..."the vast majority of airfields hold appropriate licences for the operations that they conduct" meaning that most airfields do not hold excessive spectrum. How then can AIP be effective? Only excessive use of the spectrum should be targeted.

Question 8: Do you consider that our assessment of the impacts of our proposals has taken full account of relevant factors? If you consider that there is additional evidence that would indicate particular impacts we should take into account, we would be grateful if you could provide this.: