

回應工商及科技局通訊及科技科「無線電頻譜政策綱要」諮詢文件

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日期：2006年11月2日

感謝工商及科技局通訊及科技科的諮詢文件，讓香港市民可以跟政府分享對無線電頻譜的意見。這份諮詢文件寫得很有水準，有關的工作人員應記一功！

根據無線電頻譜政策檢討顧問報告行政摘要文件所載的資料，是次討論主要集中於 825MHz ~ 4.99GHz 的頻譜範圍。由於本人也是一位「業餘無線電¹」愛好者，所以也希望藉此機會分享一下對無線電頻譜政策的意見。

早前有一些熱心於「社區電台」的人士在未領有牌照前自行在空氣中廣播節目。由於「社區電台」的廣播跟無線電頻譜政策或多或少也有一些關係，所以本人亦希望在此回應的第二部分闡述自己的看法。這份回應也抄送到立法會的資訊科技及廣播委員會，給有關人士參考。

第一部分

諮詢文件	回應
"本港在制定頻譜政策和管理綱要時，應借鑑其他國家或地區的經驗，了解他們如何處理有關問題。.... 在頻譜管理方面，逐漸依賴市場力量，實屬大勢所趨。" (Para 21)	同意。
"如在個別情況下對市場作出干預的結果是可促成政策目標，則頻譜管理人可能有充分理據作出干預。頻譜政策綱要須保留頻譜管理人的酌情權，讓他在有充分理據的情況下，偏離技術中立的原則或完全以市場主導的方式管理頻譜。" (Para 24)	不知道意思是："讓他在有充分理據的情況下，偏離技術中立的原則，改為完全按照市場主導的方式管理頻譜" 還是 "讓他在有充分理據的情況下，偏離技術中立的原則或偏離完全以市場主導的方式，回復以「指令及控制」方式管理部分頻譜"？

¹ 有關「業餘無線電」的資料，可參考美國 ARRL 的無線電百週年紀念網站 <http://www.hello-radio.org>

諮詢文件	回應
<p>"由於本港與內地經濟日漸融合，本港的頻譜政策綱要應保留靈活性，以便顧及類似的策略性考慮因素，從而支持本港經濟的持續發展。" (Para 25)</p>	<p>香港應繼續給定位為一個國際城市，成為國內與國際接軌的窗戶，所以政策應該以國際化為首位。香港的國際視野將有助國內制訂相關的政策和標準，例如推動混燃車、數碼廣播等。</p>
<p>"頻譜是珍貴的公眾資源。有人可能會認為，使用頻譜作商業用途的一方，原則上須為使用這項資源而對社會作出補償。另一方面，如頻譜無人使用或不予善用，便不能為社會帶來任何經濟利益，故可視為浪費公眾資源。" (Para 26)</p>	<p>是的，應該有一個機制讓頻譜可以分配給能為社會帶來最大效益的營辦商。還有，在實際執行時也要考慮其他因素，例如無線電輻射污染的問題。舉例，道路是公眾資源，但道路使用者同時也會為其他非使用者帶來空氣污染的問題。使用道路所帶來的污染問題跟其經濟效益也要一併考慮，在無線電頻譜亦然。假若被投閒置散的頻譜可以有更佳用途時，理應重新分配，避免浪費資源。</p>
<p>"目前當局沒有既定的政策，規管頻譜使用費的適用範圍。" (Para 27)</p>	<p>訂定商用頻譜使用費的適用範圍是合理的。但對於非商用及非謀利的頻譜使用應否收費，便有待商榷。</p>
<p>"在考慮第二部分所述的考慮因素，並參考顧問報告的研究結果後，我們建議制定高層次的頻譜政策綱要，涵蓋以下範疇 —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 頻譜政策目標 (b) 頻譜管理的指導原則 (c) 頻譜使用權 (d) 頻譜供應（包括頻譜交易和放寬頻譜用途限制） (e) 用於政府服務的頻譜 (f) 頻譜使用費" (Para 28) 	<p>建議加入：</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (g) 用於非商用及非謀利服務的頻譜 (h) 對頻譜使用的監察及投訴機制

諮詢文件	回應
<p>"我們考慮顧問報告第4.1 部的意見後，建議香港採納下述的頻譜政策目標 —</p> <p>(a) 促進最具經濟和社會效益的頻譜運用，以期為社會帶來最大效益；</p> <p>(b) 達致技術上善用頻譜，以便引進先進嶄新的通訊服務，鞏固香港的電訊及廣播樞紐地位；</p> <p>(c) 履行香港在使用頻譜方面的地區及國際責任；</p> <p>(d) 透過推動業界在本港提供全球或內地所使用、或將會使用的主要服務，以鞏固香港作為國際城市及進入中國內地大門的策略性地位；以及</p> <p>(e) 確保預留適量的頻譜，供政府服務之用。" (Para 31)</p>	<p>建議加入：</p> <p>(f) 確保預留適量的頻譜，供非商用及非謀利服務之用。</p>
<p>"我們認為，本港在作出編配和發放頻譜的決定時，除了要防止發生干擾外，還須考慮在提供某些受歡迎的服務時，若能與內地使用一致的頻譜，可能會為社會帶來的更大利益。這意味着我們須向市場供應頻譜，讓某些具備策略性原因而使用某些技術標準的服務，得以在香港推出，而達至兩地使用一致頻譜的目標。" (Para 33)</p>	<p>無線電訊號是有地域界限的，使用一致的頻譜在某程度上或許帶來方便，但另一方面，基於市場上來自不同國家的開發商所採用的技術或有不同，劃一頻譜或許未必會為社會或營辦商帶來最大的效益。有需要時可以考慮 cross-band repeat 的方式與其他地方接軌也未嘗不可，技術細節應留待市場決定，但頻譜政策應具備彈性，為頻譜使用者預留技術空間。舉例，現在香港開放的市民波段有27MHz及409MHz，但在外國較先進的國家則為462/467MHz、446MHz、420-422MHz及479MHz等。基於市場因素，409MHz及27MHz的設備選擇不太多，在沒有自由市場的環境下，用戶的利益還沒有得到最優化。所以建議頻譜政策除了考慮營辦商的利益和其他策略性因素外，還要顧及消費者的選擇權和利益。</p>

諮詢文件	回應
<p>"在頻譜指配的範疇中，這項指導原則意味着，倘對頻譜出現競爭性商業需求時，當局須採用競投方式指配頻譜。至於非市場的機制，如由電訊局長直接指配頻譜，或按申請者所提交建議的優點來甄選最適合的頻譜受配者²¹等方式，只應在有凌駕性政策理據時才作考慮。" (Para 37)</p>	<p>基於香港的營商環境，競投方式在某程度上對資金充裕的營辦商較有利，但對資金短缺的新營辦商則缺乏了支持，它們可能未有得到 angel fund 或 venture capital 的支持而不能進入本地電訊業的門檻。缺乏資金，就競投不到頻譜；沒有頻譜在手，就沒有人會投資，這是雞與雞蛋的問題。建議在頻譜政策引入 incubation programme，撥出部分頻譜以抽籤方式分配給有誠意在本地電訊業務實發展的新進者。</p>
<p>"建議在頻譜政策綱要建議下，清楚說明電訊局長不會在頻譜指配期屆滿前，更改或撤銷已指配予持牌人的頻譜，除非出現公眾利益、政府政策或國際責任所需、或合法頻譜使用者之間出現互相干擾等等情況而令電訊局長須行使有關權力。我們也建議在頻譜政策綱要下，清楚訂明應給予頻譜受配者最低通知期限，讓受影響的頻譜受配者可預先作出規劃。" (Para 41)</p>	<p>建議通知期在競投時清楚列明，讓營辦商可以把相關的風險也一併列入考慮。具體通知期建議參考當時國際對某一技術平台的做法，因為我們無法預知技術的發展。</p>
<p>"我們認為，沒有迫切需要改變現行的安排（即當頻譜指配期屆滿時，頻譜使用者對頻譜使用權不應抱有合理期望），故毋須在這方面作出任何改變。不過，我們接納顧問公司的建議，就相關基礎設施作出重大投資的牌照（特別是傳送者牌照），若電訊局長擬改變頻譜指配安排或不予以續期時，應在頻譜指配期屆滿前給予頻譜受配者充裕的通知期。這項規定應在頻譜政策綱要下清楚訂明。電訊局長應參考其他國家或地區的做法和服務牌照的有效期，並制定不同種類的頻譜指配安排所適用的通知期。" (Para 46)</p>	<p>同意維持現狀。對重大投資的牌照，建議通知期在競投時清楚列明，讓營辦商可以把相關的風險也一併列入考慮。具體通知期建議參考當時國際對某一技術平台的做法，因為我們無法預知技術的發展。</p>

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<p>"因此，我們提議電訊局長評估不同方案所帶來的影響（包括「什麼都不做」方案），以便他考慮行使管理頻譜法定權力時，能有穩固而具透明度的基礎。" (Para 49)</p>	<p>頻譜是公眾資源，建議定期由公眾人士、學術界、業界及政府部門共同公開檢討頻譜是否需要重整，避免既得利益者或少數人士左右頻譜的使用。這類定期的公眾公開檢討，間接亦可向頻譜受配者發放訊息，讓它們得知消費者及市場的需求。形式可以是網上論壇、blog、問卷調查及檢討委員會等。</p>
<p>"我們建議現階段毋須在頻譜政策綱要建議下涵蓋此事。如社會上對為毋須持牌人士引入某種形式的頻譜使用權有強烈需求，電訊局長會考慮這項要求是否可行。" (Para 52)</p>	<p>建議不需要為毋須持牌人士引入任何頻譜使用權，但政府可提供平台促進這些人士之間的溝通和協作。</p>
<p>"我們建議在頻譜政策綱要建議下，電訊局長應公布頻譜供應表，說明未來三年透過公開競投程序向市場供應頻譜的數量。電訊局長在制訂供應表時，應考慮多項因素，包括可供指配的頻譜數量、國際頻譜編配情況、可用的技術和設備、業界的回應和建議、政策目標和策略等等。電訊局長須考慮最新的發展情況，並以滾動方式，每年更新供應表，讓業界經常知道頻譜的三年供應情況。" (Para 55)</p> <p>"然而，我們必須注意一點，就是供應表只供業界參考，在任何情況下均不會對電訊局長在實際編配和指配頻譜時行使酌情權有約束力。這是因為電訊局長可能因為有未能預見的發展，而須作出偏離供應表的決定。此外，電訊局長會就發放供應表中個別頻帶的詳情，另行諮詢業界。" (Para 56)</p>	<p>同意。</p>

諮詢文件	回應
<p>"我們須強調，容許進行頻譜二手交易，並非要讓頻譜受配者從獲指配的頻譜中得到經濟利益，而是要藉着這個框架，讓市場力量發揮作用，令屬公眾資源的頻譜的使用效率得以改善。" (Para 58)</p>	<p>但是如何鼓勵業界務實經營，不以炒賣頻譜作為營利的目標呢？務實經營者可為市民帶來就業機會，但頻譜炒賣對就業市場的幫助卻未可知，這方面可能需要平衡。</p>
<p>"如果營辦商可在二手市場取得額外頻譜，便可更有效率地使用現有的網絡設備，從而達至規模經濟，可以較低價格提供受歡迎的服務。" (Para 59)</p>	<p>在二手市場，頻譜的易手權在營辦商，如何避免 monopoly 呢？</p>
<p>"我們認為這個做法並不可行。首先，現有的頻譜受配者沒有誘因在頻譜指配期屆滿前自願把頻譜交回電訊局長。其次，頻譜受配者透過完全由市場主導的機制，並繳付競投費用，以取得在指定期間內使用頻譜的權利。電訊局長不應常常行使權力，撤銷已指配的頻譜，然後透過市場機制作重新指配安排。" (Para 60)</p>	<p>同意，這是尊重產權和合約精神的表現，是香港賴以生存的基石。不過，政府也可以考慮以往公屋和居屋的模式，讓部分頻譜可以在二手市場交易，部分就不可。這些可以在競投或前述抽籤分配時指定。</p>
<p>"我們建議，作為頻譜政策綱要建議的整體方向，當局可視乎有關頻譜二手交易可行性的研究的結果，考慮長遠是否在本港引進頻譜二手交易。" (Para 64)</p>	<p>建議政府先考慮無線電頻譜該定位為本港的公屋、居屋還是私人樓才作決定。</p>

諮詢文件	回應
<p>"基於可能出現的複雜情況，我們建議現階段不在頻譜政策綱要建議下放寬頻譜用途限制，但會密切注視其他國家或地區的相關發展情況，並考慮對在本港全面引入放寬頻譜用途限制這個課題，作進一步的研究。" (Para 69)</p>	<p>建議應該放寬頻譜用途限制。頻譜的分配 (band plan) 和使用頻譜的技術 (telecom technology) 應該分開來看，雖然兩者會有某程度的關係，但政策上不應將之捆綁在一起，這樣會阻礙未來服務的發展。建議政府分配頻譜後，只要營辦商沒有偏離起初的服務性質，便不應干預營辦商所使用的技術。無線電頻譜是公眾資源，但頻譜內的技術卻應由當時的技術平台及市場來決定。這好比道路是公眾資源，但政府不應限制使用道路的車輛的種類，車主該用混燃車還是石油氣車，可以留待市場來決定，當然政府可以推出適當的誘因作鼓勵。</p>
<p>"我們考慮這些方法後，建議在頻譜政策綱要下加入新的元素，為預留給政府頻譜使用者的頻譜，設立定期進行行政檢討的機制。在這個機制下，電訊局長將每隔三年，與預留作政府服務的頻譜的使用者進行檢討。在考慮技術發展和國際間最佳做法的基礎上，檢討所支配的頻譜是否有效地使用，以及如何改善使用效率和有關服務和使用者未來對頻譜的需求。" (Para 72)</p>	<p>同意。</p>
<p>"我們傾向建議，不論對頻譜有沒有出現競爭性商業需求，頻譜使用者均須繳付頻譜使用費，除非有其他公共政策因素。由於大部分頻譜使用者現時毋須繳付頻譜使用費，如當局實施這項建議，定會審慎考慮各項細節安排，並預留足夠時間，讓受影響的各方有充足準備。" (Para 77)</p>	<p>同意頻譜使用費適用於給商業及政府使用的頻段，但應用於非商業及非謀利的頻譜則應獲豁免。</p>
<p>"我們接納顧問公司的建議，在頻譜政策綱要下，如頻譜非經競投而取得，當局釐定頻譜使用費時，必須反映該頻譜的機會成本。當局可參考近期在本港或海外進行的同類頻譜競投的結果，或毋須使用頻譜而所涉成本最低的替代方法，以釐定機會成本。" (Para 78)</p>	<p>同意頻譜使用費適用於透過非競投方式發給商業及政府使用的頻譜，但應用於非商業及非謀利，透過非競投方式的頻譜則應獲豁免。建議以「社會福利」的概念來處理這類非商業及非謀利的頻譜。</p>

第二部分

自電訊管理局於 2003 年開放 409MHz 頻段供市民免牌使用之後，認識無線電通訊的朋友與日俱增。本人也是由 409MHz 開始，到現在取得業餘無線電台操作執照，合法地操作業餘無線電台，跟世界各地的業餘無線電朋友 (俗稱 Ham) 溝通和交流。

然而，本人發覺本港無線電頻譜部分的法規好像仍舊停留在殖民地年代，所以也希望藉此機會跟大家分享一下自己的看法，並把外國一些現行的資料轉給大家參考 (見附件)，希望拋磚引玉，讓有心人多一些參考，令本地的無線電法規更臻完善，與世界接軌。

(1) 建議允許業餘無線電台 (Amateur Radio Station) 透過互聯網設立個人中轉 (Internet gateway) 站台

在互聯網還未出現的時候，業餘無線電台需要倚靠中繼站 (repeater) 來作遠程通訊。但互聯網出現後，外國許多國家已允許個人透過互聯網設立無線電中轉站，讓當地的 Ham 群體可以隨時跟世界各地的業餘無線電台通訊。有關詳情可參考英國 OFCOM 的經驗 (附件一)。

(2) 建議允許設立「社區電台」

「社區電台」這個概念其實並不新鮮，在外國這是很普通的社區基建，讓市民可以自行成立小眾電台，分享和交流資訊。在貧富懸殊日益嚴重的香港，「社區電台」可以為無法接觸互聯網的人士提供一個學習和社交的平台。有關詳情亦可參考英國 OFCOM 的經驗 (附件二)。

謝謝大家!



Amateur Radio: Review of Internet Linking



November 2003

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1. Introduction

Since January 2000 it has been possible for amateur radio stations hosting message bulletin boards within the packet radio data service to be interconnected via the internet. However, in January 2000 the Radiocommunications Agency (RA) also granted permission on an experimental basis for amateur radio stations to be 'internet linked'¹ in order to pass voice traffic over the internet to other connected amateur radio stations.

As permission was granted on an experimental basis, RA stated that continued operation would be subject to a future review. This review was initiated towards the end of 2001 and is the subject of this report. The findings of the review will help RA and its successor, Ofcom, to determine ongoing policy in this area.

Since January 2000, around 420 Notices of Variation (NoVs) have been issued. An NoV allows an Amateur Radio licence-holder to 'establish a gateway' and connect his/her radio system to a 'non-amateur network' via an internet-connected computer. The NoV is issued by RA and effectively assigns the amateur a specific frequency channel for this purpose from within the normal amateur radio frequency bands; the channel will first have been cleared for use through the appropriate committee of the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB).² Currently the NoV stipulates that the amateur must continuously monitor the voice traffic through his/her station, and must be in a position to terminate the connection if inappropriate activity is heard.

The voluntary UK amateur band plans identify a number of frequencies in the VHF, UHF and microwave bands for internet linking. It is possible to connect an individual amateur station (simplex gateway) to the internet, or to attach a gateway to either an existing or a new amateur voice repeater station. Annex 1 details the key variants of internet linking.

Worldwide interest in combining amateur radio operation with the possibilities of the internet is growing sufficiently for well-known manufacturers of amateur radio equipment to be developing appropriate features and products.

¹ In the context of this activity, 'internet linking' involves using the internet as a transmission medium rather than a source of content.

² Currently the RSGB Data Communications Committee (DCC) processes NoV applications for simplex gateways. The RSGB Repeater Management Committee (RMC) deals with NoV applications attached to a voice repeater, either directly or via a personal station link.

2. The Review

The review process was publicised through the RA website. Inputs were solicited from interested parties including the RSGB, amateur repeater keepers and individual users. Seven key issues were identified and phrased as specific questions.

In addition, this report reflects discussion with representatives from a number of key bodies, including the RSGB DCC and RMC (see footnote 2), the Amateur Radio Observation Service (AROS)³ and RA.

Radiocommunications Agency concerns

RA is keen to facilitate new aspects of the amateur radio hobby, as long as certain key areas of concern are not compromised.

In evaluating the responses to the review, RA has considered the perceived benefits and opportunities while addressing the following areas of concern associated with internet linking:

- **Interference.** Gateway operation requires increased use of a specific frequency assigned from within the amateur band plans. When providing the gateway service, the station may be operational and transmitting for longer periods of time than may be expected for a typical domestic amateur radio installation; any interference issues will therefore be less transitory in nature. RA does not want to see any consequential increase in the number of interference complaints received.
- **Access by non-amateur users.** The possibility of direct computer connection could increase the potential for unlicensed, non-amateur users to make intentional or accidental transmissions.
- **Abuse.** This can take a number of forms including deliberate radio jamming, unnecessary activation of connections, and abusive or insulting messages. With the wide-area connections that are possible, inappropriate language or messages (whether initiated from within or outside the UK) can be relayed to many parts of the world simultaneously, especially if reflector sites are used. It is difficult to trace the origin and take appropriate action, and such abuse could tarnish the integrity and reputation of UK amateur radio operation. Being aware that a small minority of (licensed or unlicensed) users may be intent on disrupting this type of operation, RA must be confident that effective safeguards against these possibilities are in place.
- **Connection to a public telecommunications network.** This possibility is not currently allowed under the terms of the UK Amateur Radio licence.⁴

³ AROS is the RSGB body that deals with interference issues within the amateur service.

⁴ RA Booklet BR 68, Notes to Terms, Provisions and Limitations (revised July 2003), paragraph (g).

Respondents

The RA received 132 replies to the request for input, divided into:

- 93 UK respondents (including 14 NoV holders); and
- 39 overseas respondents (including three gateway operators).

Although these came mainly from individuals, group responses were received from:

- one repeater group;
- one amateur radio club;
- one user group (representing 15 members);
- one manufacturer; and
- two RSGB committees.

Summary of the responses

Responses to the specific points raised by RA for review are summarised as follows:

Has the experiment been a success, a critical analysis of good and not so good points?

Internet linking has proved popular. The RSGB DCC received around 170 applications for NoVs in the 15 months leading up to the review, and a total of around 420 by April 2003. A number of voice repeaters are operational with internet linking as a feature.

Whether activity took place through a simplex gateway or via a repeater, most respondents highlighted positive aspects for radio amateurs who have either physical or licence constraints. The ability to make clear contacts with remote stations that would normally be beyond the range of their installations was viewed as a major positive factor; it was cited as a means of promoting the hobby to newcomers and an encouragement for new entrants who may be starting out with restrictive licences.

Negative comments chiefly concerned intermittent or unreliable availability of the service; this was attributed to poorly located sites, the requirement for 'attended operation', internet connection costs and some interference issues. Some negative comments concerned audio quality degradation resulting from incorrect level settings and packet loss over the internet. Extra delays introduced by internet transmission were cited as a cause of operational confusion.

Internet linking to one specific voice repeater was strongly supported by a number of users, although there was an indication that not all internet-linked repeaters are so successful or accepted.⁵

⁵ Many users of UHF repeater GB3BN were very supportive. However, during the review period some other repeaters (e.g. the Clacton and Isle of Wight UHF repeaters) had the facility removed following pressure from traditional users.

Are the bands and frequencies chosen appropriate? Should changes be made?

Use of the VHF and UHF bands is strongly supported. The 432 MHz UHF band is a popular choice, with respondents highlighting that it has the most capacity available. Some respondents desired more frequencies in the 145 MHz VHF band; others stated that greater use of the 70 MHz band could be encouraged, and there were also those who sought use of 50 MHz and 28 MHz.⁶

Some respondents argued that, as simplex gateway operation can cause confusion (because inbound transmissions are not heard by all), half-duplex operation should be encouraged with 'personal wide-split repeaters' in the UHF bands. Half-duplex operation is currently possible by applying for two NoVs.

Some respondents argued that the smaller service areas associated with UHF repeaters made them more appropriate than VHF repeaters for internet-linked repeater operation.

A number of respondents indicated interference difficulties in the VHF 145 MHz band between gateway stations and other interests operating in adjacent frequencies. These difficulties can produce antagonism between proponents of different amateur radio interests, often resulting in interference complaints to RA.

Some respondents, although happy with the frequency bands in use, cited the need for improved frequency planning; they highlighted confusion over uncertain classification of the frequencies as data channels, repeater channels or FM voice channels, and the consequences for RSGB management of the spectrum.

Internet links must be constantly attended whilst active; what are the difficulties associated with that requirement? One link in Sheffield was granted an NoV allowing unattended operation; how has use of that link differed in practice?

Many respondents saw the requirement for constant attendance as the key cause of unpredictability regarding gateway station availability. They could see no reason why gateway operators should not operate under the same conditions as conventional voice repeater operators.

Some respondents felt that unattended operation should be supported for radio link access only, and not for the situation where PC access is possible. Many respondents promoted the possibility of remote control and shutdown, along with a team of 'nominated' monitoring stations, as a means of making unattended operation feasible. Constant attendance places constraints that some respondents felt were unnecessary given the availability of secure internet linking software features (see Annex 2) and especially IRLP, which does not support non-radio user access.

Some respondents felt that voice repeaters should not be dominated by internet linking, and that the requirement for attended operation provides a means of sensibly limiting availability of the service through voice repeaters.

Respondents indicated that the unattended operation in Sheffield has increased the internet link availability and therefore the confidence of users. It is accepted as an integral feature of the repeater operation. No specific difficulties were identified.

⁶ Since the time of the review, the RSGB has identified a number of new frequencies for internet linking in the 50 MHz, 70 MHz, 432 MHz and 1297 MHz bands.

The RSGB DCC commented that, in its view, unattended operation would require a more detailed and lengthy NoV application process, involving increased co-ordination with primary users in certain frequency bands including the UHF band. This is in contrast to the current 'light co-ordination' process, which results in a quick turnaround for attended simplex gateway NoV applications.

A number of overseas operators highlighted that attended operation is not a requirement in the USA and Canada.⁷

What abuse has been noted and what action was taken, e.g. by the link attendant?

Although respondents indicated a few instances in which abuse had been noted and/or deliberate interference had occurred, the majority of respondents reported the level of abuse and deliberate interference through either simplex gateways or voice repeaters as very low. Most reported a high level of operating discipline and courtesy.

Some respondents identified instances of annoyance rather than abuse, such as the speculative sending of DTMF tones, the relaying of automated time-stamp messages, non-identification by connected stations, and 'gimmick' tones used by remotely connected gateways. In cases where misuse was reported, technical measures (e.g. timeout) were implemented to counteract the nuisance.

Respondents were generally aware of the difficulty posed by the possibility of unauthorised access by unlicensed operators, but suggested that callsign-registration schemes provide adequate protection against non-amateur use.

Some respondents suggested that either 'non-radio' access could be restricted or the software should be secure from non-amateur users. Some indicated the ability of internet-linking software to bar undesirable or offending operators from gaining direct access via a computer connection.

What usage and demand has been noted?

A number of respondents identified the interest in these facilities as significant, with most activity during early evenings and at weekends. One example quoted up to 50 contacts a day being established through the gateway. Respondents indicated that activity on VHF and UHF frequencies has increased as a result of internet linking.

Some established gateway operators have applied for additional NoVs, so that they have extra frequencies to cater for demand.

However, some respondents noted that many NoVs are exercised infrequently (or not at all), and sometimes appear to be treated as a personal facility rather than a community facility. This was seen as a waste of frequencies that might be made available to 'serious' operators. The RSGB DCC has proposed a time-limited or annually renewable NoV.

⁷ The regulatory definition of attended operation differs between the UK and the USA. Interpretation of the FCC Code of Federal Regulations – Title 47 Part 97 indicates that remote monitoring with remote control falls within the definition of attended operation. This is not consistent with the UK definition.

What pressure has there been for the provision of new facilities in areas not currently served?

Indications are that, once interest in internet linking is aroused within an area, the initial demand for links and activity is high. This tends to drop back after a while as the novelty wears off. Some respondents considered that this may partly be due to the costs and commitment involved in providing hardware and a semi-permanent internet connection.

Repeater-linking proponents made the point that internet-linked repeaters can be a good means of providing optimum coverage (by creating a 'wide-area gateway'), as they are generally well sited for coverage and are maintained by groups that could be in a better position to bear the associated costs.

Most pressure seems to come from a need for more frequencies in areas already served, rather than for frequencies in areas that are currently not or poorly served.

What pressure is there for links with other countries, or is the usage predominantly inter-UK?

Although a few respondents cited inter-UK repeater linking to extend the range of mobile stations as the most useful application, the majority considered the possibility for contacts with overseas amateurs to be the most attractive capability. This was especially true for those with some limitation on normal amateur radio activity, and others who thought it an essential catalyst for attracting new Amateur Radio licence-holders.

Other issues raised in the responses

In addition to the points identified in the review, replies touched upon a number of other issues that help to illustrate the diverse views that exist on certain aspects of internet linking.

A variety of views were expressed concerning the use of voice repeaters for internet linking. While some supported these as the most appropriate means of internet linking, others stated that they stifle the opportunity for individuals. Some were concerned about capacity for traditional users being taken up by internet-linked contacts; others highlighted the encouragement for greater activity. Some said that repeaters should not be linked where a simplex gateway exists.

The RSGB RMC reported that voice-repeater keepers are generally unwilling to give up the requirement for them to sanction any internet link to their repeaters' stations.

Some respondents expressed the opinion that access should remain through a radio connection only, whereas others supported non-radio access.

Internet connection capacity has provoked some people to want to provide linking from locations other than their main station address (e.g. their office address).

Additional views from other bodies

RSGB DCC

Discussion with the DCC indicated that the demand for simplex NoVs has continued since the end of the review, with the number of NoVs cleared doubling in this period. However, there is no way of telling how many are active, so the DCC has proposed (with RA support) that NoVs become either time-limited or annually renewable.

The frequency clearance procedure is limited to a check of other NoV holders in the area, and does not take into account other interest groups who may use adjacent frequencies. This seems to have led to some difficulties in the 2 m VHF band; however, other users are at liberty to use any frequencies within the band plans, and adherence to the UK band plans is voluntary (although recognised as good practice and generally followed). To some extent these difficulties may have been exacerbated by assignment of the newer 12.5 kHz channels from the 2 m band plan while older equipment still aligned for 25 kHz channelisation remains in use.

The DCC reiterated the difficulty that co-ordination with primary users may pose to timescales if unattended operation is allowed.

The DCC also made it clear that, for this service, it viewed its area of responsibility as the efficient assignment of appropriate frequencies from those agreed with the RSGB for this purpose. Its interest rests solely in dealing with the limited frequency clearance issues and processing applications through to the NoV stage. It had no view regarding the adequacy of the main software systems used for internet linking.

RSGB RMC

The RSGB RMC reiterated its support for this facility but highlighted the minority nature of the interest, driven by a small core of amateur operators. This is reflected in cases where the facility has been removed from previously internet-linked voice repeaters as a result of pressure from local users. The RMC supported the voice-repeater keepers' concern over responsibility for monitoring any internet-link traffic, and maintained the view that this responsibility should remain in the hands of the NoV holder. The RMC had originally envisaged a network of repeaters for internet linking, separate from the main system of voice repeaters, but this had been disadvantaged by the requirement for attended operation.

RSGB AROS

The AROS co-ordinator had dealt with no specific cases of amateur service interference due to gateway NoV operation. He had passed on one notified instance of gateway abuse to the RMC.

RA

RA is generally supportive of internet linking. It agrees that there is no compelling evidence so far to suggest that abuse is commonplace, and is relatively comfortable with suggestions of unattended operation (as long as a means to monitor traffic and shut down promptly is in place).

Regarding radio interference to services outside the amateur service, it has no evidence of specific problems associated with the operation of stations under NoVs.

3. Conclusions from the Responses

The vast majority of responses to the review were positive and supported internet linking.⁸ Many cited the positive aspects, especially for encouraging new participants in the hobby, although it is difficult to see any specific evidence of this. However, there is clearly an opportunity for amateurs to establish communication with others who would normally be beyond the range of their radio stations. Especially attractive is the ease with which international contacts can be made. Although interest in internet linking seems to be increasing steadily, fuelled as more obvious amateur stations (like VHF/UHF repeaters) become linked, the overall impression remains that it is a key interest for only a minority. However, this is the nature of many aspects of the amateur radio hobby.

With the exception of some difficulties observed in the 145 MHz VHF band, most users seemed happy at the time of the review with the frequencies in use. The demand for more frequencies may be satisfied to some extent by the RSGB's recent announcements, which have made more frequencies available to the DCC for assignment. Some evidence indicated that, in frequency bands popular for a range of interest-group activities (e.g. the 145 MHz band), more care may be needed with frequency co-ordination to avoid difficulties with existing user groups; since this is difficult, a choice of frequencies away from traditional uses may be more appropriate. However, no interference issues had been highlighted to the AROS co-ordinator.

There was some evidence of difficulty regarding the positioning of internet linking by the RSGB; no concerted view had been developed within the radio amateur community regarding the new dimension introduced by the possibility of non-radio direct internet access via a PC.

Most responses viewed the requirement for attended operation as burdensome and unnecessary when the technological means for remotely controlling and shutting down a station exists. However, there was awareness of the requirement for monitoring, because of the possibility of non-amateur access to the network. The DCC highlighted the requirement for greater co-ordination between amateur stations and primary users of certain frequency bands, should full unattended operation become allowed. This would lengthen the NoV application timescales in certain frequency bands.

The majority of responses highlighted a very low level of abuse of the network and a high degree of courteous operation. There seems to be potential for a degree of nuisance, caused by automated tones and messages tolerated in other parts of the world being relayed to local UK gateways.

Although awareness of internet linking is limited, it appears that demand for gateways becomes established once it has been stimulated (usually through a demonstration). After an initial flurry of activity, use of the gateway stabilises, although it continues to promote greater use of the amateur frequency bands.

Therefore, although internet linking is a minority interest (like packet radio, amateur television, direction finding etc), it would seem entirely appropriate for RA to be facilitating and encouraging this activity.

⁸ However, the number of review respondents is small compared with the overall number of UK Amateur Radio licence-holders (less than 0.25%).

4. Options and Discussion

Unattended/attended operation

The requirement for attended operation is a key issue from the user's perspective, and stems from RA's concerns regarding the potential for abuse and the possibility of inappropriate traffic being transmitted through the gateway station. However, the evidence from users and representative bodies is that the level of abuse is generally low. NoV applicants and users find this requirement burdensome; they cite a number of technical and administrative procedures that can be used to monitor the station throughput, and to take action if required, in the physical absence of the licence-holder.

Unattended operation for internet-linked repeater stations

Voice repeater licences currently carry a requirement for remote shutdown and station monitoring. It might be possible for RA to sanction unattended operation for specifically licensed internet-linked repeater stations, either as an option on existing voice-repeater applications or through 'standalone' repeaters specifically commissioned for this activity. The more formal application process might help to focus the requirement for internet linking.

This approach might find support from the amateur community, as it would enable a better, more predictable service to be made available. It would allow groups (clubs) of like-minded enthusiasts to indulge their interest without upsetting traditional users of repeater facilities; local repeater groups would be free to decide the direction. Although some might express concern at the protracted application and clearance timescales, these should not differ from those currently experienced for voice repeater applications.

To avoid clashes of amateur interests (and consequential complaints), it might be prudent to encourage unattended activity in bands with a higher capacity only (e.g. the UHF 70 cm band).

Unattended operation of simplex (or personal) gateways

The demand for simplex gateway NoVs seems to be sustained, with some evidence suggesting difficulties in certain frequency bands (principally the VHF 2 m band) arising from the limited frequency co-ordination that is possible. Considering the location of most home/main station installations, and in order to ease the NoV application timescale issue, it might be more appropriate to continue the requirement for attended operation, supported by the proposals to make the NoV annually renewable.

Unattended operation for gateways attached to voice repeaters

This falls between the two options above. In certain cases, a voice repeater is linked through a radio connection to another personal amateur station. This may come about because facilities do not exist at the repeater site for internet connection, or because the repeater keeper is unwilling to carry the burden of attended operation for the internet link. To remain consistent with the advantages of unattended operation (mainly link availability), it would appear appropriate for these gateways also to be allowed to operate unattended solely for connection to the repeater.

Again it might be prudent to encourage this unattended activity in bands with a higher capacity only (e.g. the UHF 70 cm band or higher).

To avoid confusion, it might be appropriate to adopt clearer terminology with respect to the NoVs.

Frequency bands

Users were generally happy with use of the VHF and UHF bands. The co-ordination procedure for assigning simplex gateway frequencies is limited and does not take account of local frequency use. This can cause difficulties with clashes of interest, which could be avoided by encouraging use of less popular frequency bands for internet linking.

RA may want to consider allowing unattended operation for only those repeater links in bands that have more capacity and are more suited to localised operation (e.g. the 432 MHz and 1296 MHz bands).

Allowing connections to 'other networks' generally

Other countries have fewer constraints regarding the connection of amateur radio to other telecommunications networks. However, to remove this constraint completely in the UK may require wider consultation, which at present does not seem justified considering the degree of interest in this aspect of the amateur radio hobby.

5. Recommendations for Policy Direction

Internet linking generally

Although evidence suggests that internet linking remains a minority interest, there appears to be no compelling reason why RA should not continue to facilitate its use. However, at present the administration and realisation of internet linking is confused. This may in part be due to the 'experimental' nature of the current concession that enables internet linking, but may also be due to a lack of clarity about its general purpose within the amateur radio community. Nervousness on the part of RA continues regarding the opportunity for abuse.

Recommendation 1:

Continue to allow internet linking on an experimental basis, subject to further review.

Frequency bands/unattended operation and repeaters

It seems generally accepted that the greatest capacity for these links is in the UHF frequency bands. Potential problems with operation in popular VHF bands (principally 145 MHz) indicate that it may be better to discourage their assignment for this purpose. Unattended operation of repeater stations may encourage a service that imposes less on traditional users and develops into a more reliable and predictable service from both the user's and RA's perspectives.

Recommendation 2:

Allow unattended operation of internet-linked repeater stations at frequencies above 430 MHz. The amateur community should decide whether the facility is attached to existing voice repeaters or whether new specific repeaters are installed. Appropriate technical measures for remote shutdown will be a requirement. Simplex gateway operation in any frequency band should continue on an attended basis – no change is recommended.

Administration of internet linking

As observed previously, the administration of internet linking within the amateur community appears confused and lacks focus. Although the procedures for processing NoV applications are running relatively smoothly, there seems to be no common centrally derived policy or strategy from the amateur community beyond the identification of suitable frequencies within the band plans. This is an important issue considering that the introduction of the (barely regulated) internet into the amateur radio communication chain has the potential for 'non-radio components' to influence the amateur radio environment. It is clearly an issue that continues to support a degree of nervousness on RA's part when considering the full relaxation of constraints for allowing this activity as part of the Amateur Radio licence generally.

Recommendation 3:

Encourage the amateur radio community (through the RSGB) to crystallise the role of and requirement for internet linking as part of the hobby, and to define the necessary policy and guidance that may help to allay RA's concerns. For example, a specific committee or single co-ordinating group may be a useful start. Encourage a policy that reflects the desired balance between the acceptance of wider responsibilities and the individual freedom to experiment.

Time-limited/renewable NoVs

The current NoVs are not time-limited, and it is not possible to understand the true level of activity and the requirement for more frequencies without some means of testing the commitment of the NoV holder. Use of more frequencies, maybe unnecessarily, leads to pressure for assignments closer to other activities, with consequential complaints about interference coming to RA.

Recommendation 4:

Support the proposals for an annually renewable or time-limited NoV. This is vital for effective management and frequency clearance, to minimise the potential for unnecessary interference complaints and to understand the real demand for internet links.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to all the individuals and groups who took the time to respond to the review. Additional thanks are extended to the representatives of the DCC, the RMC, the AROS and RA for further discussion.

Annex 1: Internet Linking Configurations

Simplex gateway

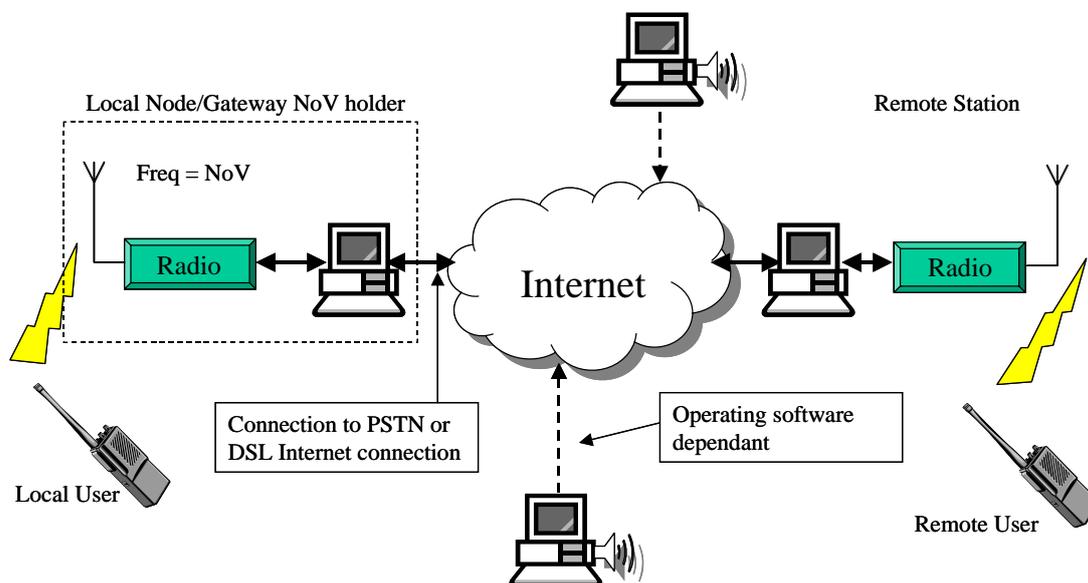


Figure A1: Simplex gateway

The local user connects (via the simplex frequency assigned by the NoV) to the local node/gateway and can 'call up' a specific remote node by entering appropriate DTMF tones. The remote station may be another simplex node/gateway, or may be connected to a repeater station and located anywhere within reach of an internet connection. The NoV gateway operator voluntarily provides the internet connection at the main station premises.

An issue with simplex operation is that local users cannot hear each other if they are blocked by a poor path. This requires good operating discipline. A variation providing half-duplex operation is possible if the gateway operator applies for two NoVs and operates as a 'wide-split repeater', giving users the ability to hear other local activity into the node.

The RSGB DCC administers applications and frequency assignments for simplex gateways before submitting them to RA for NoV issue.

Repeater linking

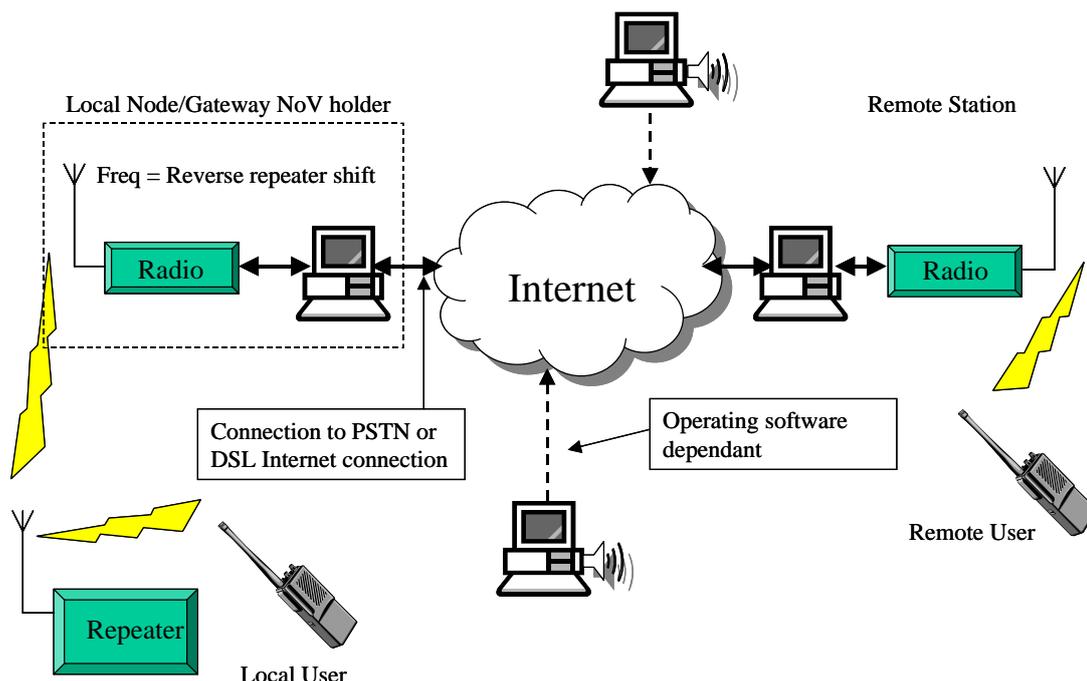


Figure A2: Repeater linking

The left-hand side of Figure A2 illustrates the case where an individual amateur operates an internet-connected gateway as an additional feature to the voice repeater. In this case the repeater keeper has given permission for the local node/gateway operator to operate in 'reverse repeater' fashion, providing a RF link to the standard voice repeater. The local user gains access to the repeater in the normal way, but is able to communicate with both local repeater users and remote stations connected via the internet and the gateway to the repeater input. As with simplex gateway operation, the remote station can be either another simplex node or another repeater station.

It may be possible to connect the repeater station itself to the internet if facilities are available at the repeater site; this will also facilitate the interconnection of specific repeaters (not unlike current repeater linking by RF).

The RSGB RMC administers applications for repeater linked gateways before submitting them to RA for NoV issue.

Internet access

Both the examples above indicate the possibility of access directly to the internet from a suitably equipped PC (software, microphone, sound card) without the need for a radio transceiver. In fact, the communication could be carried out without a radio at either end. This possibility depends on the software used by the gateway station.

Reflector operation

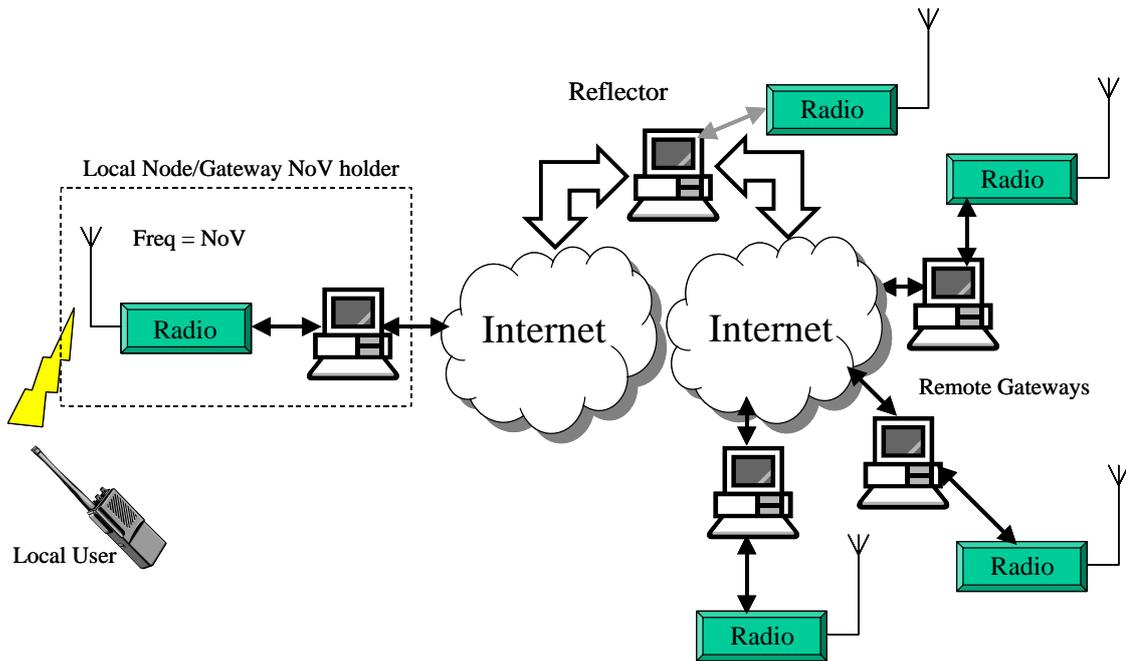


Figure A3: Connection to a reflector

This configuration is illustrated in Figure A3. It is entirely possible for a local user (who may be connected through a simplex gateway or a repeater link) to make a connection through the gateway to a reflector. This is connected on via the internet to a number of remote gateways simultaneously. These remote gateways may be located in vastly separated geographic locations, effectively enabling a single transmission to be heard in a number of places around the globe at the same time. The reflector may or may not be connected to a radio station.

Annex 2: Internet Linking Software

There are four dominant software systems in popular use for internet-to-radio linking by amateur radio operators in the UK. These are known as IRLP, iLink, Echolink and eQSO. All the software systems require a valid callsign to be entered or registered before connections can be established; in some cases the length of this process indicates that some checks are made before registration is completed.

Internet Repeater Linking Project (IRLP)

This software was developed with the principal aim of linking amateur repeater stations by means of the internet. There are extensive networks of IRLP-linked repeaters in some parts of the world, and around 18 IRLP gateways in the UK. Connections are initiated at the user radio by keying DTMF tones, which in effect 'dial up' a remote gateway.

IRLP is a 'radio-to-radio' system only, and does not support the possibility of user access directly from an internet-connected computer.

The software can support the barring of specific callsigns from the network.

iLink

This software, developed by a UK amateur, can connect gateways and individual amateurs by means of the internet. It has grown in popularity, with a number of overseas amateur stations citing its use. Again, specific connections from a user radio are initiated by the use of DTMF tones.

iLink includes the potential for a user to connect directly from an internet-connected computer. It is possible for there to be no radio contact involved at either end of the connection.

EchoLink

This software has been developed by a US amateur and can connect gateways and individual amateurs by means of the internet. It has quickly grown in popularity and offers direct internet access to remote gateways. The user must enter a callsign before operation is enabled. During use, the computer operator has visibility of all the stations available (simplex gateways, repeater gateways and computer-linked operators) in a regularly updated directory listing. PC connection simply requires a 'double-click' on the station callsign shown in the directory.

eQSO

This software, developed by a UK amateur, can connect gateways and individual amateurs by means of the internet. It uses the web concept of 'chat rooms' as the basis for operation. RF gateways connect to a specific room, and any users within radio range of the gateway can hear all the traffic in that room and join in. Traffic in the room can be initiated either by other connected gateway stations or by users connected directly via an internet-connected computer.

Users can only link with other remote users connected to the room, and do not specifically 'dial up' a remote gateway.

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Licensing Community Radio

A statement of Ofcom's strategy for the introduction of community radio in the UK, and the process by which licences will be advertised, awarded and regulated.

Statement published 02 August 2004

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Section 1

Introduction

This document sets out the policies that Ofcom (the Office of Communications) will implement in relation to the introduction of a new tier of local, not-for-profit, radio services, called community radio. Ofcom welcomes the opportunity to regulate this new tier of broadcast radio which allows a new range of opportunities for prospective broadcasters across the country.

The policies put forward in this statement take account of information and feedback from four sources:

- The Community Radio Order 2004. This was laid before Parliament on 15 June. It was approved by Parliament and became law on 20 July 2004. (www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/stat.htm)
- 139 responses to the public consultation which was conducted by Ofcom between 17 February and 20 April 2004. All non-confidential responses have been published on the Ofcom website (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/comm_radio/).
- Research into the pilot scheme. Ofcom commissioned research into four of the pilot community radio (then called access radio) services, which were first licensed in 2002. The research looked at the audiences for these services, as well as assessing the impacts on participants and agencies operating in the communities concerned. A summary of the findings from this research, produced by Research Works, is being published at the same time as this statement, and is attached (Annex 1).
- 'New Voices' and 'New Voices – an Update' by Professor Anthony Everitt (published in 2003, and available on the Ofcom website, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/comm_radio/com_radio/). Professor Everitt was appointed by the Radio Authority to conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot scheme referred to above, and to make recommendations about the future licensing of the sector.

Section 2

Summary

Ofcom's approach to licensing and regulating community radio

- Ofcom aims to facilitate the development of a distinctive new tier of radio.
- We have agreed to Government's request to conduct a review of the sector two years after the first community radio services commence broadcasting.

Spectrum and coverage areas

- We will aim to allocate FM spectrum, where possible, to support the introduction of community radio. We are seeking to identify frequencies which could not support commercially sustainable services but which should be usable for non- or partly-commercially funded stations. In general, community radio will have a higher priority for resources than potential improvements to the coverage of existing FM commercial radio stations. AM frequencies will be utilised when required, where possible.
- The maximum coverage in urban areas will generally be a 5km radius. In rural areas, where possible, we will aim to be more flexible, but in most parts of the UK it is unlikely that there will be sufficient FM resource to support services covering a larger area than 10km across.
- We shall consider, on a case by case basis, licensing a service on more than one transmitter if the terrain presents difficulties, there is sufficient spectrum available, and it is a technically efficient approach.

Inviting applications

- The community radio licence application form and accompanying notes of guidance are being published at the same time as this statement. The questions in the application form reflect the requirements of the Community Radio Order and other appropriate legislation.
- We will publish a notice inviting applications for community radio licences for the first time on 1 September 2004.
- There will be a twelve-week period between the invitation for applications and the closing date (23 November 2004).
- We will not specify where a service should be; instead applicants will identify the community they wish to serve.
- This general process will be repeated annually, although in future years specified parts of the UK may be excluded due to a lack of suitable available spectrum.

Potential economic impact on commercial radio

- The Community Radio Order does not allow Ofcom to license a community radio station which would have a coverage area that would overlap by 50% or more (in adult population terms) with the measured coverage area of a local commercial station which contains 50,000 or fewer adults.
- Although the Order does allow Ofcom to license a service which would overlap by 50% or more with a commercial station with 50,001-150,000 adults

in its measured coverage area, the legislation does not allow Ofcom to permit such services to gain any income from advertising or sponsorship of programmes.

- In all other cases Ofcom is required by legislation to include conditions in each licence which limits the proportion of income from advertising and programme sponsorship, and to ensure that a new community radio service does not unduly prejudice the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.

Funding

- Where the sale of spot advertising and programme sponsorship is allowed, there will be an upper limit of 50% (or less, at Ofcom's discretion) on income from these sources taken together.
- Sponsorship of anything that is not broadcast is excluded from this limit; the legislation also says that sponsorship for purposes that are "mainly or wholly philanthropic in nature" is also excluded from this limit.
- The legislation requires that community radio stations must be funded from multiple sources. A community radio station cannot receive more than 50% of its funding from any single source.

Submission of applications

- The application form and accompanying notes of guidance will be available on our website. Completed applications can be submitted electronically. All applications will be published on our website.

Assessment and award of licences

- We expect to receive a large number of applications this year, and will therefore seek to prioritise the order in which we consider them as follows: firstly, we shall aim to reach decisions involving frequencies currently used by pilot stations; secondly, we will look to award licences in areas of low demand and where award decisions would not impact on other areas (e.g. in terms of frequency availability); thirdly, we shall consider applications in all other areas.
- Licences will be awarded in batches on a rolling basis over several months.
- A group should commence broadcasting within two years of award.

Application fee and licence fees

- There will be a non-refundable application fee of £600 payable for each application submitted.
- The Broadcasting Act licence fee will be £600 per annum; in addition, relevant turnover (income from advertising and sponsorship) will be subject to the same tariff as that applied to commercial radio licences, which for the financial year 2004/05 has been set at 0.627%. Any amount due will be offset against the £600 already paid.
- The annual Wireless Telegraphy Act licence fees are as follows: for FM, £339 for measured coverage of fewer than 100,000 adults; £509 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered; for AM, £226 for coverage of fewer than 100,000 adults; £339 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered.

Regulation of community radio services

- Each licence will include details of the station's commitments to provide social gain, opportunities for participation in the operation and management of the service and accountability to the relevant community. It will also include a description of the programme output, as well as specifying a limit on income from advertising and sponsorship.
- An annual report will be required on progress in achieving the promises made, plus a financial report so that we may check that funding rules have been adhered to. Ofcom will aim to make some or all of this information available to the public.
- Licensees will be required to keep a file of relevant information relating to the delivery of their key commitments. If necessary Ofcom may check this to ensure licensees are complying with their licence conditions and the claims made in the annual report.
- Ofcom may impose a statutory sanction if it believes a licensee has repeatedly, deliberately or seriously breached the terms of its licence conditions or our Codes. The penalty must be appropriate and proportionate to the breach for which it is imposed.

Grants for community radio

- Government has confirmed a grant of £500,000 for community radio broadcasters for 2004/5 and for 2005/6, to be administered by Ofcom. Ofcom can make such grants as we consider appropriate to providers of community radio services. After we have invited applications for licences we will develop a more detailed structure for the fund, which we will publish in the Autumn.

Section 3

Background

1. The Communications Act 2003 allows the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to introduce community radio by secondary legislation. In February 2004 Government published a draft Community Radio Order and at the same time Ofcom published its consultation on the future licensing of community radio. The public consultation period for both of these documents ended on 20 April 2004.
2. Government laid the Community Radio Order 2004 before Parliament on 15 June. It has been approved by both Houses of Parliament and became law on 20 July 2004. The Order sets out a definition and some rules for community radio, as well as the framework for the advertisement and award of licences.

Section 4

Ofcom's approach to licensing and regulating community radio

3. There was general support from respondents to our consultation for the introduction of community radio in the UK. Some respondents feel it is long overdue. This was tempered with reservations expressed by some commercial radio operators, especially those operating small-scale services. These concerns are more fully explored later on (see paragraphs 32, 33, 36 & 38).
4. Many respondents argued for relatively close regulation to ensure that stations adhere to the promises made on application. While Ofcom's aim for light touch regulation is generally welcomed, the majority of respondents (including potential applicants, as well as commercial radio operators) expressed the view that Ofcom should monitor community radio operators more carefully than commercial stations, to ensure that community radio remains clearly distinct from the commercial sector and delivers social gains. (Regulation of the different requirements of community radio broadcasters, in terms of programme output, social gain, access and financial matters, is referred to in more detail in paragraphs 61-67 of this document.)
5. It is Ofcom's view that regulation of the sector needs to take account of the following factors:
 - the statutory requirements for community radio services, as set out by Government in the Community Radio Order, are much more detailed than for commercial radio (e.g. not-for-profit, and the delivery of social gain);
 - it is a new sector, and it would seem sensible to start off cautiously, with the option of changing regulation as necessary and appropriate at a later date, after a review of the sector has been carried out;
 - it is important that community radio services are distinct from commercial radio, both in terms of their on-air output as well as their off-air activities;
 - there was a clear message from respondents to the consultation that we should be a light touch regulator where we can, but that we should, for example, be 'hands on' in ensuring that groups deliver on their social gain promises.
6. We have agreed to Government's request to conduct a review of the community radio sector two years after the first services commence broadcasting. Amongst other things this may include the delivery of social gain and impact on the target communities, funding matters, including the level of advertising and sponsorship revenue, and the economic impact on the commercial radio sector.

Section 5

Policy on allocation of spectrum and coverage areas

7. In the consultation we set out our proposed policy for the allocation of spectrum and the anticipated size of coverage areas for community radio services.

Allocation of spectrum

8. There were a number of strongly held views on our proposals for the allocation of spectrum. On one side, the Community Media Association and others felt that new commercial services were being given a higher general priority than community radio, and they were opposed to this. On the other hand, some commercial operators disagreed with the suggestion that community radio should have a higher priority for resources than potential improvements to the coverage of existing FM commercial radio stations, arguing that some stations are currently unable to fully serve their areas due to poor coverage.
9. Aside from these views, however, there was a general acceptance from most respondents that Ofcom should strive to satisfy and balance competing demands for licensing commercial radio, RSLs and community radio. We therefore do not intend to change the policy on spectrum allocation that we set out in our consultation, and are seeking to identify frequencies which could not support commercially sustainable services but which should be usable for non- or partly-commercially funded stations. Ofcom considers that frequencies that cannot deliver a coverage area of more than a 5km radius are not likely to be able to support economically viable commercial radio services but however would be suitable for community radio services.
10. More clarity was requested on frequency availability, especially in metropolitan areas, where demand for community radio services is expected to be highest, and where spectrum is already most heavily used. We are currently conducting an exercise to identify suitable FM frequencies in major conurbations throughout the UK. It is expected that this exercise will be completed in the Autumn, at which time we intend to publish the findings. Frequencies are being sought in the BBC and non-BBC FM bands, consistent with proper protection of existing services. We are pleased to note that the BBC in its response said *"we support in principle the suggestion that some community radio services be accommodated within the sub-bands used for BBC services"*. We note also the BBC's concerns about possible impact on reception of existing services and that it intends to co-operate fully with Ofcom in reviewing the availability of frequencies in the sub-bands used for BBC services.
11. It should be noted however, that frequency clearance is a process which needs to take into account a number of site-specific factors and so we are unable to address every contingency and combination of applications we may receive. Furthermore, the exact extent to which applications will compete with

each other for frequencies will not be known until all have been received and collated by Ofcom.

12. There was one observation, made by a few respondents, that is worth airing: that the large number of illegal broadcasters in major cities indicates that spare spectrum exists. The existence of illegal stations may indicate some available spectrum, but as many radio listeners will agree, pirate broadcasters cause interference to the reception of many commercial and BBC channels because they are not planned or regulated. Illegal broadcasters often use what they think is a clear frequency, but they do not take into account that it may be used by a weaker station some distance away, the bandwidth required for their own transmissions or the need to protect other related frequencies (such as those used by emergency services).
13. We hope that the emergence of new community radio licences may encourage some members of the community, who might otherwise engage in illegal broadcasting activity, to seek a licence to broadcast to their community on a legitimate basis. We also note the observation that Ofcom will need to consider stepping-up its enforcement action against illegal operators as community radio stations operating at lower power levels than most commercial stations will be more vulnerable to interference from this source.

Coverage areas

14. In the consultation we proposed that:
 - Community radio stations on FM in urban areas will generally be licensed for a coverage radius of up to 5km.
 - For urban 'community of interest' services, where the target community occupies an area of more than a 5km radius, only AM frequencies will be allocated.
 - In rural areas where there is greater availability of suitable FM frequencies (such as parts of Scotland and Wales) and a coverage radius of more than 5km is proposed (because of the dispersed population, for example), we may license such services on FM.
 - In rural areas where the availability of suitable FM frequencies is poor and a coverage radius of more than 5km is proposed, only AM frequencies will be allocated.
15. There was broad agreement that a 5km radius was appropriate for most community radio services. However, some potential applicants urged Ofcom to consider, on a case by case basis, licensing services with larger areas on FM in rural locations, or that we consider allowing a service to broadcast on more than one transmitter, if appropriate. Notably, the latter argument was put forward by a number of respondents in South Wales. Some potential applicants for community of interest services argued that, on a case by case basis, we should consider agreeing to coverage over a larger area than a 5km radius for them too.
16. In the proposals outlined in the consultation we did not rule out coverage areas larger than 10km across, but this will be the exception rather than the rule. The limited availability of suitable FM spectrum in most areas will preclude consideration of service areas greater than this. We shall consider, on a case by case basis, whether licensing a service on more than one

transmitter might provide better coverage of the target community, for example, if the terrain presents difficulties. However, this will only be the case where there is sufficient frequency availability, and this approach is deemed to be the most technically efficient.

17. The research that Ofcom commissioned into four of the pilot services (management summary attached, Annex 1), showed that a service aimed at a community of interest can be very successful in attracting an audience (the elderly in Havant and Glaswegian Asians in the case of the two services researched). Some people from the target community who live outside the coverage area of these services would like to see the station coverage increased. However, in most areas we will not have the FM spectrum available to facilitate this. (For a full description of the pilot scheme, please refer to Section 5 of our consultation document 'Licensing Community Radio').
18. In conclusion, we intend to maintain the policy put forward in our consultation document (and set out in paragraph 14 above). In addition we may consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether to license a service utilising more than one transmitter, if this is a technically efficient way to serve the target community.

Section 6

The licensing process

Inviting applications

19. In the consultation we proposed an applicant-led process, where the applicant identifies the neighbourhood or community they wish to serve. Because of the nature of community radio we believe it would be inappropriate for Ofcom to decide the specific locations or target communities to be served by stations. We also proposed a twelve-week window each year within which anyone could apply for a community radio licence.
20. There was general support for the suggestion that the process should be applicant-led. Some respondents questioned the need for one closing date for all applicants, and suggested that we should consider advertising on an area-by-area basis. However, there are two problems with this. Firstly, we would need to prioritise some areas over others. Secondly, by awarding licences in one area, development may be restricted in an adjacent area because of the scarcity of suitable FM spectrum. If there are not sufficient suitable frequencies to offer licences to all those that appear adequately to satisfy the selection criteria, Ofcom will need to make judgements between applicants in the same area, or between applicants who wish to serve nearby areas but would be competing for the same spectrum. The same closing date for applicants throughout the country will help to facilitate such decisions. If demand for licences does not exceed the supply of frequencies then this will not be a problem. However, in our planning, we need to take account of the strong likelihood that there will be more suitable applicants than available frequencies, particularly in the major population centres. Therefore we believe there should be one closing date for all applicants.
21. There will be a twelve-week window for the submission of applications. Some have argued that the size of this window does not matter, as most will want to submit applications close to the closing date. This may be true, but the twelve-week period from the invitation to apply for licences to the closing date gives sufficient notice to applicants to prepare and submit their applications. We strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications well before the closing date. Applications received after this time will not normally be accepted. All applications will be considered together and not on a first come first served basis.
22. We intend that this process of inviting applications for licences will be carried out annually, with a twelve-week period between the invitation to apply for licences and the closing date. However, it may be that in future some parts of the UK may have to be excluded due to a lack of available spectrum. Some respondents asked that we avoid inviting applications during the Summer, when many organisations that may wish to apply for a community radio licence will not be adequately resourced to assemble their proposals. We think this is a sensible suggestion, and have therefore decided to delay inviting community radio applications this year until September. The closing date therefore will be in late November, and in subsequent years we shall aim to follow a similar pattern. We are publishing the application form and

accompanying notes at the same time as this statement, to enable groups to start preparing their applications well in advance.

23. As a consequence of this change to the licensing timetable, we have decided to extend the licences of the pilot scheme operators for a further six months (to 30 June 2005). We do not wish to disadvantage the communities served by the fourteen stations still in operation by allowing the licences to expire at the end of this year, as the operators of these services may want to apply for a community radio licence to continue broadcasting. The new timetable would not allow sufficient time for us to make licence award decisions in the areas where the pilot stations are broadcasting before the licences held by these stations expire. The change to the timetable also gives all potential community radio applicants more time to prepare their proposals, and avoids the summer holiday period.

Application and award timetable

24. As set out above, the timetable has changed from that which was set out in the consultation, when we anticipated that applications would be invited for the first time in June, on the assumption that the Order might become law in May. We now aim to:
- Invite applications for community radio licences for the first time on Wednesday 1 September 2004;
 - Allow a period of twelve weeks before the deadline for receipt of applications, which will therefore be on Tuesday 23 November.

Application procedure

25. The Community Radio Order establishes the legal framework for advertising and awarding licences. The changes that Government has made to the Order following its own public consultation are reflected in the application form and in our application and selection processes. The definition of community radio and the selection criteria that Ofcom must have regard to when selecting licensees are set out below. (Application documents may change in subsequent years as we develop regulation of the sector, but the latest version will be available on the Ofcom website throughout the year.)

Eligibility criteria

26. The 'characteristics of a community radio service' are set out in the Order. To be eligible for a community radio licence, a proposed service must:
- Be provided primarily for the good of members of the public or of particular communities and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals providing the service
 - Be intended primarily to serve one or more communities (a community is defined as either people who live or work or undergo education or training in a particular area or locality, or people who have one or more interests or characteristics in common)
 - Not be provided in order to make a financial profit, and uses any profit produced wholly and exclusively to secure or improve the future provision of

the service or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the target community

- Offer members of the target community opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service
- Be accountable to the target community.

27. In addition, the Order states that:

- Only bodies corporate (i.e. not individuals) can apply for community radio licences
- No group may hold more than one community radio licence
- There are ownership restrictions which prevent the holders of other broadcasting licences from holding community radio licences. These rules do not apply to holders of Restricted Service Licences (television or radio), Radio Licensable Content Services, Television Licensable Content Services, or Digital Sound Programme Service licences.
- Licences are for a maximum of five years.

Social gain

28. The delivery of 'social gain' is a crucial element of community radio. The draft Order was amended following Government's consultation earlier this year, and the definition of 'social gain' in the Order now sets out certain mandatory requirements, as well as examples of further social gain aims that stations might wish to work towards. Applicants must put forward proposals for achieving the following social gain objectives, in respect of individuals or groups of individuals in the community that the service is intended to serve:

- The provision of radio services to groups that are otherwise underserved by (analogue) commercial radio services in the area
- The facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion
- The provision (whether by means of programmes included in the service or otherwise) of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service
- The better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.

29. In addition, the Order sets out examples of further objectives of a social nature that community radio operators might achieve:

- The delivery of services provided by local authorities and other services of a social nature, the increasing and wider dissemination of knowledge about those services and about local amenities
- The promotion of economic development and of social enterprise
- The promotion of employment
- The provision of opportunities for the gaining of work experience
- The promotion of social inclusion
- The promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity
- The promotion of civic participation and volunteering.

Selection criteria

30. There are now eight criteria that Ofcom is required to take into account when deciding whether, or to whom, to award a community radio licence:

- The ability of each applicant to maintain the service they propose to provide throughout the licence period
 - The extent that the proposed service would cater for the tastes and interests of persons comprising the relevant community
 - The extent to which the proposed service would broaden the range of programmes on local services available in the area, and, in particular, the extent to which the service would be of a nature or have a content distinct from that of any other local (i.e. local and community) service which would overlap with the licence for the proposed service
 - The extent of local demand or support for the provision of the proposed service
 - The extent to which the proposed service would result in the delivery of social gain to the public or relevant community
 - Provisions for ensuring accountability to the relevant community
 - Provision for access by members of the relevant community to the facilities to be used for the provision of the service and for their training in the use of those facilities
 - Ofcom must also have regard to the need to ensure that any community service does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.
31. The application form for a community radio licence must reflect all of these requirements, as well as some additional requirements in the legislation, such as transmission details. The form and accompanying notes of guidance are being made available at the same time as this statement. The notes of guidance will encompass Ofcom's community radio policy, as well as requirements from the Order and other broadcasting legislation.

Potential economic impact on commercial radio

32. The consultation question which prompted the most feedback was that regarding our proposals to invite submissions from commercial radio operators if they considered that their economic viability might be affected by the provision of a community radio service.
33. Small-scale commercial stations, many of which operate at a very low margin of profitability, were concerned that community radio services were being allowed to compete with them for advertising and sponsorship revenue at all, and were also concerned that they would have insufficient staff resources to gather evidence of potential harm to present to Ofcom. Prospective community radio licence applicants were concerned that they would be expected to counteract any arguments put forward by commercial stations, when they had neither the expertise nor access to the necessary market information to do this.
34. The Community Radio Order requirements have changed in this area. The Order now sets out three rules that relate to this issue, as follows:
- There should be no community radio stations licensed with a coverage area which would overlap by 50% or more with the measured coverage area (MCA) of an existing commercial radio station which contains 50,000 adults¹ or fewer

¹ A list of the adult population figures for commercial radio MCAs can be found on our website, at http://www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing_numbering/radio_sound_broadcasting/commercial_radio/

- (the 'first tier');
 - Any community radio station with a coverage area which would overlap by 50% or more with an existing commercial radio station with an MCA which contains more than 50,000 adults and fewer than 150,000¹ adults will not be allowed to take any advertising or programme sponsorship (the 'second tier');
 - Ofcom should have regard to the need to ensure that any community radio service does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local service ('third tier').
35. It is important to note that Ofcom has no power to vary the first and second tier rules as they are set by the legislation, nor can we choose to be flexible in their application. ('Overlaps' refers to overlaps in population, not area. Overlaps apply both ways; that is a community service overlapping with a commercial service and vice versa.)
36. The first and second tier of rules require a straightforward assessment using adult population figures and checking for overlaps between commercial and community services. In all other cases Ofcom is required to include conditions in each licence regarding the proportion of income from paid-for advertising and programme sponsorship, with the aim of ensuring that a new community radio service does not unduly prejudice the economic viability of any other (non-BBC) local commercial radio service. We no longer intend to invite commercial radio operators to submit evidence of potential economic impact of proposed services; nor will we expect community radio applicants to provide input. Instead an assessment will be conducted by Ofcom and any decisions to vary the limit on advertising and sponsorship income to a level lower than that specified in the legislation (see paragraph 41 below) will be made by the Radio Licensing Committee (the Order gives Ofcom power to impose other licence conditions relating to advertising and sponsorship if it thinks it appropriate to do so, to avoid undue prejudice to the economic viability of another local radio service).

Funding

37. In the consultation we asked for views on whether there should be a general limit of 50% of annual income from the sale of advertising and sponsorship, or whether this should be decided on a case-by-case basis. There was a wide range of responses.
38. Many respondents were opposed to the principle of setting a rule, as it was seen as primarily being designed to protect commercial stations, and restrain the development of community radio services. Some commercial operators argued that community radio stations should not be permitted to sell advertising or sponsorship at all, while some prospective community radio operators suggested the complete opposite, i.e. that there should be no limit on how much income from advertising or sponsorship a community radio station is permitted to gain.
39. A number of other respondents argued that a case-by-case basis was the most sensible way forward as circumstances vary from area to area, although there was a concern that commercial radio operators would be able to

influence case-by-case decisions. It was also suggested that case-by-case decisions would lead to greater uncertainty for applicants.

40. Overall, however, there was a feeling that for a healthy community radio sector, there needs to be a diversity of funding. This chimes with Professor Anthony Everitt's recommendation, in 'New Voices', that: *"just as it would be wrong for community radio to be totally reliant on subsidy, a vision of full commercial viability should also be resisted. It is important that community radio retains its social orientation and does not risk diluting its community aspirations. Accordingly a ceiling should be set for commercial earnings."*
41. Government has decided to set some limits on funding, and introduced the following rules into the Order:
 - Where advertising and programme sponsorship is permitted there will be an upper limit of 50% of income that may be generated from these sources (Ofcom has the power to vary this limit downwards only).
 - A community radio licence holder should not receive more than 50% of its funding each year from any one source (i.e. from a company, organisation or person).
42. The restrictions on income from sponsorship refer to the sponsorship of programmes included in the service. This means that income from the sponsorship of anything that is not broadcast is excluded from these limits (for example, sponsorship of a station event, website or training scheme). Sponsorship "for purposes that are wholly or mainly philanthropic in nature" is also excluded from the restriction. We intend to classify such sponsorship as a donation, and as such it may be credited on-air but must be distinguishable from commercial sponsorship (and may not contain a sales message, for example).
43. In addition, Government has lifted the 1990 Broadcasting Act restriction that would disqualify the holding of a licence by an organisation which received more than 50% of its funding from public sources in the previous year.

Submission of applications

44. There was general support for our proposals on the submission of applications.
45. The application form and accompanying notes of guidance will be available on our website. Completed applications can be submitted electronically or as a paper copy. All applications received will be published on our website after the closing date. If requested, Ofcom may agree to keep some material confidential (for example some financial material or staff details, where appropriate).
46. Ofcom is required to take account of the extent to which there is evidence of local demand or support for the provision of a proposed service. It is for applicants to decide how they wish to demonstrate demand or support. However, Ofcom does not believe that generic support for the establishment of a new community radio station is as meaningful as evidence of considered support for an applicant's specific proposals. In addition, template-based letters or petitions will not generally be considered as substantial evidence of

support. Applicants may however wish to summarise evidence of such generic demand or support in their application form, and if they wish to submit such material, provide this separately, preferably in electronic form.

Assessment and award of licences

47. Judging from the volume of enquiries that we have received about community radio licences, we expect to receive a fairly large number of applications later this year. We therefore proposed, in the consultation, to prioritise the order in which we will consider applications. There were a fair number of respondents who agreed with the proposals set out in the consultation. Others felt it would be unfair to consider applications from the pilot areas first. Some took issue with our second and third priorities (considering areas of high demand, followed by remaining areas) and suggested that this be reversed, so that we look at 'uncontested' areas and areas of low demand before regions of high demand as they may be simpler and quicker to deal with. It was suggested that we should prioritise awards to those groups that can commence the soonest.
48. We have considered these suggestions and propose to change our priorities slightly. We expect to prioritise our considerations of applications submitted in 2004, as follows:
 - First, award decisions which involve frequencies currently used in the pilot scheme;
 - Second, applications for services in areas of low demand, where the award decision would not affect awards in neighbouring areas (e.g. in terms of frequency availability);
 - Third, applications in remaining areas.
49. We may need to vary these priorities if other unforeseen issues arise after the closing date for applications. In any case, we will confirm after the closing date how we intend to prioritise the consideration of applications. We expect that licences will be awarded in batches on a rolling basis. If the number of applications received is high, consideration of all applications is likely to take a number of months.
50. In addition to the above, we expect that any group that is awarded a community radio licence should commence broadcasting within two years of award. If they are unable to do so, the offer of a licence may be withdrawn, and the frequency considered for use in the same area or elsewhere in the next round of licence awards.

Additional selection criteria

51. Aside from the selection criteria that the Order directs us to have regard to when making licence awards (see paragraph 30), we asked for views on what, if any, additional criteria Ofcom should use if we need to decide between applicants. A large number of respondents felt that consideration should be given to previous experience, either in broadcasting, for example through restricted service licences (RSLs), or community development, especially with the target community. Aside from this there was no consensus on the suggestions made in the consultation on using the multiple deprivation

index, or on selecting services aimed at the whole neighbourhood rather than a community of interest.

52. Other suggested criteria put forward by respondents tended to be along similar lines to the requirements of the Order, particularly social gain factors.
53. However, as there are now eight selection criteria in the legislation, as well as the characteristics of service definition, and the mandatory social gain aims, it is our view that these will be sufficient to enable the Radio Licensing Committee to make its decisions. We therefore do not propose to use any additional criteria.

Application fee and licence fees

54. Each application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee of £600.
55. Before a service can commence broadcasting, it will require a Broadcasting Act licence and a Wireless Telegraphy Act (WTA) licence. The Broadcasting Act licence for services on FM or AM will be charged as follows:
 - A flat annual fee of £600; in addition,
 - A station's total commercial revenue will be subject to the same tariff as that applied to commercial radio licences, which for the financial year 2004/05 has been set at 0.627%. Any amount due will be offset against the £600 already paid (effectively this would mean that only relevant turnover of over £95,000 per annum will incur a higher tariff).
56. It should be noted that Broadcasting Act licence fees for all radio broadcasters (analogue and digital, commercial, community and restricted service) will be subject to a further Ofcom consultation during 2004, and therefore these fees may be subject to change from 2005.
57. The WTA annual licence fees are as follows:

For broadcasts on FM:

- £339 for a measured coverage area which includes fewer than 100,000 adults (aged 15+)
- £509 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered (any final group of fewer than 100,000 adults being disregarded)

For broadcasts on AM:

- £226 for a measured coverage area which includes fewer than 100,000 adults
 - £339 per (complete) 100,000 adults covered (any final group of fewer than 100,000 adults being disregarded)
58. Taking the Broadcasting Act and WTA licence fees together, the minimum annual licence fee for a community radio service on FM will total £939 (£78.25 per month).

Radio Licensing Committee

59. The consultation document stated that licence awards would be made by a standing committee of the main Ofcom board, to be called the Radio Licensing Committee. This committee has now been appointed, and its members are as follows:

Ian Hargreaves, Ofcom Board Member (co-chair)
Kip Meek, Senior Partner, Competition & Content (co-chair)
Kevin Carey, Content Board Member
Pam Giddy, Content Board Member
Peter Bury, Director of Strategic Resources
Neil Stock, Head of Radio Planning & Licensing
Peter Davies, Head of Market Intelligence
Martin Campbell, Head of Radio Content & Standards

60. Up to two additional members will be added to the committee when appropriate to provide particular expertise, for example, where there are important issues in the Nations and Regions.

Section 7

Regulation of community radio services

61. Respondents from both community radio and commercial radio backgrounds felt that social gain objectives were important. It was felt that the requirement to deliver social gain needed greater emphasis than was implied by the draft Order (which stated that social gain would be satisfied by the achievement of one or more objectives from a list). As already noted, the Order has increased the social gain requirements for applicants (see paragraph 28).
62. Respondents generally wanted to emphasise the difference between community and commercial operators, and the distinctiveness of the sector is seen as an important factor. It was suggested that we should be vigilant in ensuring the delivery of a station's licence commitments. This view was balanced by those who asked that we be sensible and flexible in our expectations and how we regulate, and that care is taken to ensure that the targets set by applicants are realistic and achievable. As Professor Anthony Everitt reported in his evaluation of the pilot scheme, in some areas operators may fall short of what they hoped to achieve, in other areas they may exceed expectations, unexpected challenges will arise and a degree of flexibility to take such things into account may be necessary.
63. There was general support for the consultation proposal that a station's key commitments should be set out in the licence, and that an annual report should be required to check whether stations were delivering on the promises they made. The key commitments will include: social gain (including the four mandatory social gain commitments set out in paragraph 28), access for members of the relevant community to opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service, accountability to the relevant community, a description of the programme service, and conditions regarding the proportion of income from paid-for spot advertising and sponsorship of programmes (where this is allowed).
64. We plan to develop a template for the annual report which all licensees will be required to complete. This will be made available in due course. We intend to make the report from each station available publicly. There will be a separate pro forma for the financial report that each station will need to submit. This will also be published, and will include information such as major sources of income and expenditure, but we do not expect to publish detailed confidential information such as individual salaries. We also intend to make public whether or not a licensee has stayed within the limits imposed by their licence for advertisement and sponsorship income, and the statutory limit of 50% maximum of income from any one source. As proposed in our consultation, Ofcom will work with stations to agree when it is convenient for them to prepare and deliver these reports. For example, licensees may wish to tie their reporting in with accounting schedules, or with the timetable for a report to a funding body.

65. We will require licensees to keep information on file for examination, should we need to see it. This should relate to the delivery of the key commitments (for example training records) as well as financial records. This file will help ensure that the station can justify its activities in case of complaint by ensuring that they hold a complete record of the work they have undertaken towards achievement of their licence obligations. Ofcom may check this file, if necessary, to ensure that it supports the claims made in annual reports, or as evidence in the investigation of specific complaints.
66. The News and Current Affairs Code and Programme Code, and the Advertising and Sponsorship Code, originally published by the Radio Authority, and the Code on Fairness and Privacy, originally published by the Broadcasting Standards Commission, represent Ofcom's current policy and will apply to all community radio broadcasters. Complaints will be dealt with in the same way as for other licensed radio services. All radio stations licensed by Ofcom are required to record their output and keep recordings for a period of six weeks.
67. The imposition of a statutory sanction against a broadcaster is a serious matter. Ofcom may, following due process, impose a statutory sanction if it believes that a licensee has repeatedly, deliberately or seriously breached the terms of its licence conditions, or Ofcom's statutory Codes. Where a station is found to be in breach, the degree to which any penalty is applied must be appropriate and proportionate to the contravention in respect of which it is imposed. In addition Ofcom must have regard to any representations made to them by or on behalf of the regulated station concerned.

Section 8

Grants for community radio

68. In March 2004, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport announced a £500,000 grant from Government for community radio. This grant is for 2004/05 and a similar amount has been allocated for 2005/06. The allocation of grants is to be administered by Ofcom. The Communications Act 2003 states that we can give grants only to licensed providers of community radio services.
69. We intend to put a structure in place for the administration of this Fund after we have invited applications for licences. The administration of grant applications will be dealt with separately from the licensing function. We will aim to publish a statement on the administration of the Fund in the Autumn.

Section 9

Future research and feedback on community radio

70. We invited suggestions in the consultation as to how we might research the impact of services on target communities. Most respondents acknowledged the need for feedback in two areas: informal feedback and formal research.
71. Getting informal feedback from listeners and participants in stations, as well as those in the target community who did not listen or participate, was seen as important for Ofcom in reviewing the impact of this new sector, as well as important for station operators. Several people suggested we might consider having a simple feedback form on the Ofcom website. The comments received might usefully be fed into our proposed review of the sector. (We have now set up an email address for community radio comments and queries: communityradio@ofcom.org.uk). There was also general agreement that stations need to explore creative ways of encouraging feedback from their community and researching their station's impact. For example using website polls, freephone telephone numbers, on-air forum sessions or linking up with local colleges to help design and conduct surveys.
72. Formal research by Ofcom into the impact of this new sector was felt to be essential by some respondents. It was suggested that this needed to look at a wide range of issues including audience, participation (e.g. trainees, volunteers), on-air and off-air impact on the target community, views of local organisations (e.g. councils, voluntary groups) and impact on existing commercial radio operators (economic viability, the effect on listening figures, and advertising revenue).
73. Government has asked that we conduct a review of the sector two years after the first stations commence broadcasting and we will consider further what research we will need to conduct to help make this a meaningful review. Preparations for such a review will begin soon after the first batch of community radio stations has been licensed by Ofcom.

Section 10

Ofcom's community radio role

74. In the consultation we asked for views on what role Ofcom might have in respect of community radio, beyond the licensing of new services. Many respondents asked that Ofcom provide information and advice for potential community radio applicants, and for groups after they have won a licence. There was concern that many operators would be inexperienced and need some support from Ofcom. As well as this statement of our policy, we will also publish detailed notes of guidance for applicants to aid them in completing the application form and planning their service. This will include reference to the relevant legislation as it will apply to community radio.
75. Some of the suggestions we received, for example, providing information on suppliers, best practice guidelines (including advice on staffing, business planning and technical issues), information on sources of funding and grants, training and mentoring schemes, would more appropriately be provided by an organisation such as a membership association or trade body for the sector. We will explore areas where it might be sensible to collaborate on some of the suggestions put forward with sector bodies such as the Community Media Association.

Section 11

Conclusion

76. A number of respondents expressed their appreciation at being given the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of our policy on community radio. We are grateful for all the input we received. The introduction of community radio in the UK has excited a lot of interest, and Ofcom is pleased to be given the job of licensing this new sector.

Annex 1

<p style="text-align: center;">'Research Works': MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS MAY 2004</p>
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1. BACKGROUND, METHOD AND SAMPLE

In 2001, the Radio Authority launched an experiment into Community Radio designed to test the sustainability of a separate tier of small-scale community services. Fifteen not-for-profit projects, aiming to deliver *social gain* to specific neighbourhoods or communities of interest, were offered one-year licences. The term of these licences was extended to December 2003 and was further extended to December 2004. There are currently fourteen stations broadcasting.

Each station has a 'promise of delivery' that sets out its programme promises, but also its aims in terms of *social gain* and access. These vary from station to station but might include:

- training opportunities
- work experience opportunities
- contribution to tackling social exclusion
- contribution to local education
- service to neighbourhood or interest groups
- access to the project for local people (some of the projects have recruited hundreds of volunteers; some are run entirely by volunteers).

Ofcom wished to build on its knowledge of Community Radio and, as part of a consultation exercise regarding how stations might be licensed and regulated, wanted to understand the opinions of listeners to the pilot stations currently on-air, as well as evaluating any impacts on the communities in which these projects are operating.

In January 2004, Ofcom commissioned research agency Research Works to conduct an in-depth piece of independent research into this area. The specific objective of this research was to assess the overall impact of Community Radio in terms of who is listening and what benefits these listeners feel are being delivered, both on a personal and social level. The findings were considered according to the needs of three distinct target audiences: listeners, station participants and community leaders.

The four stations chosen for this study were selected to represent a mix of Community Radio projects:

- two stations serving communities of place (Forest of Dean Radio and ALL FM in Manchester)
- two stations serving communities of interest: Awaz FM (the Asian audience in Glasgow) and Angel Radio (people over 60 in the Havant area).

Equally, the four stations chosen offered a range in terms of geographical location - Awaz in Glasgow, ALL in Manchester, Forest of Dean in the English/Welsh borders and Angel on the south coast of England – as well as a variety of socio-economic settings (Forest of Dean is rural/disadvantaged, ALL FM serves a diverse and disadvantaged area of urban Manchester, Angel serves a mainly retired/middle-class area, while Awaz serves the entire Asian community living in central Glasgow).

In terms of the research approach, there were two-phases - comprising both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research was conducted as in-street interviews in a range of relevant locations, while the qualitative research comprised a mix of individual depth interviews and focus group discussions. A pilot phase of qualitative research was conducted, in order to familiarise the researchers with the station areas and audiences.

The quantitative sample was made up of radio listeners in the areas covered by the community stations - quota controlled to reflect the target audience for the individual stations (i.e. people over 60 for Angel Radio and the Asian Community for Awaz FM). In each of the four station locations, the qualitative phase of research addressed the three audiences (listeners, station participants and community leaders) separately.

The fieldwork conducted for this study comprised the following:

	AWAZ	ANGEL	FODR	ALL
In-street interviews with				
Radio Listeners	325	304	428	685
Focus groups: listeners	3	2	2	2
Depth interviews: listeners	4	4	4	4
Focus groups: Participants	-	1	-	-
Depth interviews: Participants	6	-	6	3
Depths: Community Leaders	3	3	3	3

In more detail:

Awaz FM: 325 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: three focus groups and four depths with Indian and Pakistani listeners (Male and Female, aged 18-50). One depth, one paired depth and one triad with station participants (Male and Female, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders - from local charities, community development and the police.

Angel Radio: 304 quantitative in-street interviews plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, 60+) and one group with station participants (Male and Female, 60+). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders from local charities, social services and health services.

Forest of Dean Radio: 428 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, aged 25-45). A paired-depth and four depths with station participants (Male and Female). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders - from community youth project, historical society and local housing services.

ALL FM: 685 quantitative in-street interviews were completed plus qualitative research comprising: two focus groups and four depths with listeners (Male and Female, aged 25-45). Three depths with station participants (Male and Female). There were also three depth interviews with community leaders - from the police, community development and education services.

2. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

A summary of the research findings for **Awaz FM** follows:

Station Profile: Awaz FM serves all parts of the Asian community in Glasgow, which comprises approximately thirty thousand people. There are no other analogue radio broadcasters in the area specifically serving this target audience, although broad-based, national and local, Asian programming can be obtained through digital media (digital radio, Internet, Digital TV). The station is based in the heart of Glasgow and broadcasts twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, offering programmes in a variety of Asian languages and mixing speech and music. BBC local and national radio is also available to this audience, alongside a number of local commercial stations.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of Awaz FM was remarkable - 60% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 31% recalled Awaz after prompting. 73% of the total sample indicated that Awaz FM was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 59% of the sample stated that Awaz FM was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listeners to Awaz FM were extremely enthusiastic - 79% are listening every day, 62% of the sample listen for 3 hours + each day and 38% say that they listen throughout the day (weekdays and weekends). Favourite programmes were the breakfast, drive-time and early evening shows. A majority - 56% - have been in touch with Awaz FM: 47% have taken part in phone-ins and 17% have been to an event organised by Awaz. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station - 69% have never listened to Awaz FM, but there were some active rejecters: 20% did not like the variety of programmes, while 13% had tried it once and did not like it. This is, however, an exceptionally satisfied audience: 94% of listeners rated Awaz FM as very good or good. Awareness of Awaz's community status was very good - 98% of the listeners knew that Awaz FM is a community station, 98% that it is run for the benefit of the Asian community and 95% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: Amongst *listeners*, it was clear that radio Awaz is extremely popular across the Glasgow Asian community regardless of age, gender, religious group (Muslim, Hindu and Sikh) and ethnic group (Pakistani and Indian). This community is proud to have a coherent identity (Glaswegian Asian) which Awaz is perceived to champion.

Listeners were generally very knowledgeable about programmes (for example noting that there is currently no Hindu religious content) and presenters, tending to have favourites. Awaz was felt to be making a significant contribution to the community in terms of information and entertainment. Equally, respondents explained that Awaz provides a meeting place for all members of the community and therefore offers a unique space for listeners to articulate cultural and religious issues and to be informed about health and social issues. Parents reported that hearing Asian languages on the radio helped develop their children's language skills and contributed to their cultural education.

Station participants represented the diversity of the Glasgow Asian community in terms of gender, age, ethnic and religious background. All felt that they gained satisfaction from being part of a community enterprise and recognised (from the feedback provided by listeners) that they were making a valuable contribution. Volunteering is seemingly increasing in popularity and training is becoming more formalised, with participants attending training courses run by an external expert.

Community leaders reported close, on-going, links with the station, since it had first started broadcasting, centred on supporting, organising and promoting community initiatives, whether by advertising events or promoting health and social messages. Overall, initial expectations had been exceeded, with local organisers noting an increased sense of public confidence in terms of accessing services and overt pride in being part of a unique and distinct community.

A summary of the research findings for **Angel Radio** follows:

Station Profile: Angel Radio is based in Havant, a small town on the south coast of England, located close to Portsmouth. It is primarily a 'new town' with a centre developed in the 1950s and has a large retired population. Angel Radio broadcasts from its own town centre premises, which - apart from the station studios and offices - includes a shop and drop-in area. Listeners are encouraged to visit Angel at any time. The station broadcasts twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and offers a strong mix of music aimed at its target audience, adults aged sixty-plus (the station policy is that no music will be played which was recorded after 1959). Programming also includes a strong element of 'reminiscence therapy' during which presenters are encouraged to talk about their lives and experiences while playing music of their choice. BBC local and national radio is also available to this audience, alongside a number of local commercial stations.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of Angel Radio was good: 19% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 31% recalled Angel after prompting. 23% of the total sample indicated that Angel Radio was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 11% stated that Angel Radio was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listeners to Angel radio were enthusiasts: 51% are listening every day, 39% of the sample listen for 3 hours + each day, 35% say that they listen throughout the day (weekdays and weekends) - with 13% saying that they listen throughout the day and night! Favourite programmes were big band and old-time dance music. A majority - 68% - have not been in touch with Angel Radio, but those that have typically took part in phone-ins, while some have visited the station. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station - 80% have never listened to Angel Radio. Overall, this is a very satisfied audience: 95% of listeners rated Angel Radio as very good or good. Equally there was good awareness of Angel's community status - 96% of the listeners knew that Angel Radio is a community station, 93% that it is run for the benefit of the older community and 88% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative Data: A majority of *listeners* were firm fans of Angel, listening regularly on a daily basis. All supported Angel's focus on relevant music, which was noted as a clear point of difference with other radio stations - the idea of less chat and more music was positively endorsed. There was consistent praise for the style of programmes, particularly theme days, quizzes, phone-ins, requests; these were seen as good fun, "*involving*" and "*thought-provoking*". Angel was typically described as "*friendly*", "*nostalgic*", "*for me*", "*for my age group*", "*different*", and effective at "*bringing people together*". Most of the listeners were aware that Angel is a community station manned by volunteers and felt that it positively enhanced the

confidence of older people – “*other stations forget about us...*”. Listeners were very aware of the station’s financial problems and were keen to see improvements in the business footing of Angel Radio that will guarantee its survival.

The **station participants** were a strong, dedicated and enthusiastic group, ranging in age and background. All had been keen listeners to Angel prior to volunteering – and their decision to volunteer had typically been triggered by either a life change (bereavement, retirement) or specific enthusiasm for the station’s aims and output. All participants clearly felt rejuvenated by their involvement with Angel and highlighted specific gains such as learning new skills, meeting new people and “*engaging your brain...having a worthwhile focus in your life*”. This group strongly believed that Angel contributed to their community in terms of: help and support for older people, understanding of the needs of older people and providing an access point for information and support. Again, participants were extremely conscious of the precarious nature of the station’s finances.

Community leaders were very supportive of Angel FM, feeling that it has provided them with an opportunity to engage with the older community. They saw the station as tailored to the needs of the elderly and bringing the community together. A specific gain is that Angel reaches many excluded, vulnerable people. All respondents noted positive social gains, including more contacts from elderly people, enhanced confidence on the part of those making contact and improved access to relevant information on local services and issues.

A summary of the research findings for **Forest of Dean Radio** (FODR) follows:

Station Profile: The Forest of Dean is a predominantly rural area, located between Ross-on-Wye in the north and Chepstow in the south, with the Welsh border on its western flank and the River Severn forming its eastern border. There are a few large towns scattered throughout the Forest area, but these are rather isolated and public transport links are poor. The population has been affected by the decline of local businesses and industries – and unemployment is high. Forest of Dean Radio broadcasts irregularly and most programming is available at the weekends (during the course of this research a regular daily breakfast and early evening show was added to the schedule). When new programming is not available, the station typically broadcasts taped music output or ‘looped’ music. The programming is diverse, covering local issues, sport and music. There are significant reception problems throughout the Forest area, which affect national and commercial radio as well as FODR programmes (and also mobile phone reception). Reception can be particularly poor during the evening.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of FODR was reasonably good: 15% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 50% recalled FODR after prompting. 11% of the sample indicated that that FODR was one of the stations they ‘ever listen to’ - 1% of the sample stated that FODR was the radio station ‘most listened to’. Listeners were obviously affected by the inconsistent programming - 62% listen once a week or less often and 67% listen for one hour or less. 24% do not listen at all at weekends. Favourite programmes were local news and chat, the breakfast show and music shows. A majority - 73% - have not been in touch with FODR: of those that have, 9% have taken part in interviews and 9% have been to an event organised by FODR. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 72% have never listened to FODR, but there were also some obvious reception/programming problems: 17% of non-listeners said that they cannot find the station, while 9% said that FODR is not on enough or that they are not sure when it is on. This is, however, a relatively satisfied audience: 74% of

listeners rated FODR as very good or good. Awareness of FODR's status was good - 89% of the listeners know that FODR is a community station, 89% know that it is run for the benefit of the local community and 89% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: *Listeners* were typically 'Foresters' or had lived in the Forest of Dean for a long time (30+ years). They were principally from middle/lower socio-economic groups. The majority of respondents were listening to a range of other local stations. Respondents preferred to hear a presenter rather than repeated taped music - and therefore listened more frequently from Thursday to Saturday (although some were disappointed at the repetition quality at these times). Some were aware of the station schedule but most saw the programming as largely random. There was some recall of regular programmes e.g. 'Sit Down and Listen', 'Forestwide' and 'Classical hour'. Regular listeners were very enthusiastic about the station, seeing it as idiosyncratic and friendly. Listeners wanted better reception, more live shows, less repetition, phone ins, debates, requests and the continuation of a Forest of Dean focus for programming. FODR was seen as unlike any other radio station, reinforcing the listeners' sense of belonging and providing new understanding about the place in which they live. Listeners were typically aware that FODR is community radio and understood this to mean catering for small and isolated communities – bringing them together and celebrating 'localness'. Respondents felt that the station offered specific social gains and a sense of cohesion within the Forest (which is often ignored by more prosperous regional neighbours) specifically highlighting its issues, events and history. The most common complaint from listeners concerned the inconsistent nature of the programming, which effectively discourages regular listening.

Station participants were typically Foresters and had particular (often artistic) interests or talents i.e. poetry, art, history and music. Several volunteers were unemployed, while others worked part time and a small number were retired. All volunteers claimed to have gained confidence through the development of writing, technical, social and personal skills. Most appreciated the opportunity to promote local artists, writers and musicians as well as the chance to gain practical radio experience. Some station participants, however, reflected the concerns of listeners about the irregular nature of FODR's programming.

Community leaders had become associated with FODR through involvement with specific initiatives e.g. housing, and had been asked to produce shows covering local problems and offering relevant advice. Respondents felt that the community, through FODR, have been given a unique opportunity to address specific problems on air. Most believed that that traditional Foresters typically lack self esteem, confidence and suffer as a consequence of low aspirations – respondents felt that the station has been extremely successful at developing the talents of local people by making and delivering programmes.

A summary of the research findings for **ALL FM** follows:

Station Profile: ALL FM broadcasts to the Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme area of Manchester. These three communities lie along a main road (the A6) and represent a disadvantaged area of the city, comprising a wide mix of ethnic groups in a strongly urban setting, affected by high unemployment and poor housing/facilities. The station broadcasts twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, offering an eclectic mix of programmes serving many of the different communities living in the area. There is a mix of speech and music programming. BBC national and local radio, as well as local commercial radio, is also available in the area.

Quantitative Data: Spontaneous awareness of ALL FM was relatively low - 9% of the total sample were spontaneously aware of the station, while another 28% recalled ALL after prompting. 12% of the total sample indicated that ALL FM was one of the stations they 'ever listen to', while 2% stated that ALL FM was the radio station 'most listened to'. Listening seems sporadic, with only 17% listening every day and 38% listening once a week or less often. They typically listen for shorter periods, with 50% listening for between 1 and 3 hours daily and 30% listening for one hour or less. 32% say that they mainly listen in the evening (weekdays and less at weekends). Favourite programmes were music programmes, particularly garage music. A majority - 62% - have not been in touch with ALL FM, but those that have typically took part in phone-ins, have been interviewed, have volunteered to help or visited ALL. Non-listeners have typically never experienced the station – 87% have never listened to ALL FM. This is, nevertheless, a satisfied audience: 94% of listeners rated ALL FM as very good or good. Equally, awareness of ALL's community status was good: 95% of the listeners know that ALL FM is a community station, 93% that it is run for the benefit of the local community and 90% that it is there for the community to take part in.

Qualitative data: ALL FM *listeners* were diverse in terms of age (16-55 years old) and ethnicity (including white, African Caribbean and Asian listeners). There was a bias towards the C2DE socio-economic groups and students. Listening tended to be ad-hoc (e.g. in the car or in the background at home) with a minority tuning in to specific shows (e.g. Friday and Saturday evening for R&B / Funk shows, On Eire on Sundays). Detailed knowledge of the station was limited with listeners having very little knowledge of actual programming except a general perception of eclectic music and ethnically-specific shows. Feedback from listeners focussed on the music mix. There was no real knowledge of presenters or news programmes. In principle, respondents supported the need to appeal to the whole community - in practice, however, the diverse range of music on offer did not encourage consistent listening. Most were aware that ALL FM was a community radio station, but understanding of the term varied. Listeners felt that ALL FM was attempting to bring the range of cultures together, highlight local issues and promote local groups. ALL FM was considered successful in raising awareness of the range of different ethnic groups in the area and (for those that listened to ethnic programmes) encouraging interest in different cultures and styles of music. There were, however, doubts expressed about the coherence of the ALL community concept – while respondents certainly felt a sense of community towards their own particular area (i.e. Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme), they were much less sure that the three areas truly comprised a single community of place.

Station participants were predominantly young (18-30 years) and from lower socio economic groups, with several unemployed. There were also some older presenters and presenters from specific communities. Volunteers typically had an interest in a specific music type or issue. Reasons for volunteering included career progression as well as personal development, involvement in the community and issue specific roles. Participation resulted in increased confidence, increased knowledge and skills in media as well as a sense of involvement in the community.

Community leaders had typically been actively involved with the station, presenting programmes relating to their areas of interest e.g. housing and community development. Respondents used their shows to highlight relevant issues, interview guests, answer questions and play music. All felt that ALL FM has created a stage for facilitating and recognising the needs of the many ethnic groups in the area, and highlighted their culture and music. Additionally, they believed that the station has

included and developed local talent in the form of presenters, DJs and sound engineers.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The research data clearly indicates that the Community Radio experiment should be viewed as successful:

- significant numbers of the radio-listening population in the four station areas are aware of, and listening to, Community Radio
- both those listening to, and participating in, Community Radio generally say that it enhances their personal well-being and sense of community
- community leaders typically see Community Radio as delivering tangible benefits for their local communities.

Overall, the public typically perceives Community Radio as well-run, relevant and entertaining - and clearly different to the existing radio product offered by either commercial or public broadcasters.

It was, however, very apparent from the results of the research that the concept of community radio is easier to communicate amongst an audience of 'interest', rather than an audience of 'place':

- in the former instance, relevant groups quickly identified that the station is 'for them' and spotted that participation/involvement is being invited
- communities of interest expressed an emotional investment in their community, as well as very clear reference parameters for identifying relevance and meaning in broadcast content
- communities of place suffer from variable coherence in terms of their sense of community - some communities are more conceptual than actual, while others suffer from blurred boundaries and the absence of a core philosophy to bind the audience together
- consequently, listeners seemed to take much longer to recognise that the station is 'for them' and that participation/involvement is being sought.

A number of specific observations can be made as a consequence of the research:

Awaz FM can only be viewed as a phenomenal success in terms of reaching a majority of its target audience and encouraging high rates of participation, interest and reported social gain.

Angel Radio should also be viewed as hugely successful in terms of quality of delivery and social impact amongst a very vulnerable audience. Angel, however, clearly demonstrates that commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism are not enough - business experience and acumen are also required in order to run successful Community Radio. Both listeners and participants were well aware that it will be necessary to establish financial stability, if the station is to continue to operate (and the consequences of it ceasing to broadcast would be significant for many of the vulnerable, elderly listeners).

Forest of Dean Radio is obviously producing extremely popular output and is succeeding in creating a real sense of community for an area which typically sees itself as marginalised and forgotten. It is obvious, however, that lack of consistent programme output (along with, to a lesser extent, reception problems) is holding back the valuable work being undertaken. Both listeners and participants felt that the slow process of building community partnerships must not determine the quantity of programming produced. There was a consistently recognised need to make more programmes more speedily.

ALL FM is well-liked by listeners and produces a high standard of varied programme output. It suffers, however, from serving an area which often does not see itself as a single community. Many listeners felt that the station is trying to please too many audiences by providing such a diverse programme output that listeners felt they could never be certain 'what is going to be on'. Consequently, the station seems to have become primarily known for dance music, amongst a relatively small, young, audience. Its community outputs were not well recognised amongst listeners.

Research Works
May 2004

For a copy of the full report produced by Research Works, please contact the Community Radio licensing team (communityradio@ofcom.org.uk; Radio Planning & Licensing, Ofcom, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA).