

Consultation Responses from Scottish Government:

Question 1

Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed overall approach to improving the management of public sector spectrum holdings and, in particular, with Ofcom's conclusion that it will generally be preferable for public sector bodies to interact directly with the market?

Since the majority of emergency and public safety services have committed to migrating their main communications systems to the Airwave managed service, it has been the intention the Scottish Government that legacy spectrum would be returned to Ofcom, at least in part.

The Scottish Government are content to interact with the market where appropriate but would note that our prime function is not market trading.

Question 2

What factors do you consider Ofcom should take into account in determining the programme of reform in the framework for managing public sector spectrum holdings?

It is vital that the integrity of communications systems for the emergency and public safety services should not be prejudiced.

There needs to be greater engagement between the various parties concerned on the proposed and substantial price increases to the AIP rate for bands especially those above 470MHz. It would be helpful to have an agreed way forward prior to Ofcom imposing change.

Question 3

Do you consider that the proposals should be phased in?

This is essential, especially in view of any increased costs. A 4 year phasing-in period was deployed in 2001 when AIP (spectrum pricing) was introduced.

Question 4

Do you agree with Ofcom's proposals about the frequency bands that offer the greatest potential benefits from band sharing? Are there other frequency bands where the facility to trade or lease spectrum from public sector bodies would be particularly attractive?

The emergency services are likely to require higher bandwidth services in the future, yet it is not clear what spectrum will be on the market to satisfy these demands.

Question 5

Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed approach to awarding public sector licences and RSA?

We see significant advantages in end-users holding licenses as it places upon them the responsibility for use of the band, and enables them to fully appreciate the value of that licence as they are paying the associated cost.

Question 6

Should public sector spectrum trading be introduced at this stage in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man?

Bearing in mind that radio signals do not recognise political boundaries, the administrations in these Crown Dependencies should be fully involved in the discussions.

Question 7

Should there be additional grounds, eg safety-related, for Ofcom to refuse consent to a proposed trade in certain frequency bands or for certain applications?

Yes, in cases where the operational integrity of emergency service communications would be adversely affected.