

OFCOM  
Office of Communication,  
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Riverside House,  
2a, Southwark Bridge Road,  
LONDON. SE1 9HA

23/6/07

Attention of Mr. Peter Davies, Director of Radio and Convergent Media.

Dear Mr. Davies,

Many thanks for the copy of "The Future of Radio". I am pleased to see that no fixed date has been set for the switch-off of analogue radio transmissions.

However, reading the document, I do get the impression that there is pressure from the radio industry and the commercial radio sector for a switch-off date.

You suggest in paragraph 5-75 that circa 2012 the Digital Listeners' take-up would be 50%. Yes, this may be the case, but much of that 50% would be one portable digital set per household. My concern is that a majority of households have a music-centre, normally consisting of a tuner amplifier with AM and FM frequencies, input for a C.D. player, an audio tape-deck, and often a vinyl LP turntable, plus loudspeakers that can be located in the room to take full advantage of the FM server transmissions, and this type of equipment is not cheap. Also, the introduction of the transistor, in radio equipment, has given a much longer life span to radios.

FM and AM frequencies have co-existed since the introduction of the FM frequency circa 40 years ago and I feel that the most satisfactory arrangement would be to run the Digital and FM frequencies side by side for, say, the next 25 – 30 years after which, a questionnaire could be sent out with the T.V. Licence renewals, to ascertain how many listeners have

completely switched to Digital Radio; the result of this could then determine the switch-off date for FM transmission.

In the meantime, the AM transmission could be switched off sooner, provided that areas of the country currently reliant on AM, are covered by Digital transmission. (I understand some hilly areas of the country cannot receive FM.)

To turn off the analogue without a long overlap would result in a situation described in paragraph 5-41 in your document, and would seriously affect motorists reliant on the FM local radio for road traffic information.

The switch-off of the analogue Television spectrum in 2012 is going to cause a great deal of hardship to many less affluent members of our society, but, as I said in my letter to Adam Holloway, something can be salvaged on TV by the use of the Set Top Box, but no such arrangement is feasible with analogue radio.

I hope you will consider my views and I apologise for not following the format in your 'Annex 1', but I regret I do not operate a computer.

You may use all or any of this letter as you wish.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hammond', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles Hammond.

Copy to Adam Holloway, M.P. for Gravesham.