

Dear Colleagues,

I have been made aware this morning that the briefing document that was discussed on Saturday has in some cases been directly passed to clubs without any background discussions taking place.

Now I am aware that it was the wish to have our concerns raised as wide as possible but the idea was for the Regional Teams to get mobilised and around the clubs discussing with the clubs the Society's concerns. Just distributing the briefing document electronically to clubs will not achieve the aim and could cause more damage than good.

I have also seen a couple of E-mails from DRRM's saying that we are scaremongering. Again I don't want us to be seen as scaremongering I want the facts to be put forward. The clues are there for amateurs to decide if we are scaremongering or not.

These are the facts.

Ofcom's preferred option (actually it is not an option it is a proposal) as written in the draft consultation document is to introduce a free 'licence for life' This may seem to be a very sweet pill indeed. However the sting in the tail is the clues that Ofcom themselves are giving out about de-regulation not just amateur radio but total deregulation of the radio spectrum.

Just with regards to amateur radio. De-regulation of the amateur radio service has been mentioned twice in the Spectrum Review document which has now been accepted as Ofcom policy following the consultation period. As far as I am aware no changes were made to that document following the consultation despite reservations raised in inputs received from commercial users of the spectrum and inputs from the amateur radio community. In fact Prof William Webb, the author of that document has published a statement saying that "no major issues were raised during the consultation", which I would suggest is a little economical with the facts. Ofcom have chosen to ignore the issues raised.

De-regulation of amateur radio was the first option listed in the initial draft of Ofcom's 'Future of Amateur Radio Licensing' consultation document and although in the final draft of the document that proposal had been removed, a reference to de-regulation in 3-5 years still remains in the body of the paper.

And I think the strongest clue of all is a quote from Stephen Carter the Chief Executive of Ofcom who is on record as saying that Ofcom's preferred model for all spectrum users is 'self regulation' which basically means a free for all in a few years time. De-regulation is one of the most fashionable words in 'Government' speak at the moment. It underpinned last week's Budget statement and any continued talk of de-regulation of amateur radio within Ofcom is a real threat to the future and wellbeing of our hobby.

Please get out and about and engage in debate, don't just distribute the document and wait for the questions and questioner's to come to you. That will not work and it will not be helpful.

Thank you Warm regards. Peter