[GB] White Paper on radio spectrum published

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Essential reforms to meet the communications needs of the UK into the next century and improve the management of the radio spectrum are being published as a White Paper by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It announces the Government's intention to bring forward legislation to permit the use of pricing as an aid to effective spectrum management in a context of (potential) spectrum congestion. According to the Radiocommunications Agency (RA), which is responsible for the management of most non-military spectrum in the UK, the current radio licence fees do not reflect the real value of spectrum. Therefore this White Paper presents detailed proposals for a regime of spectrum pricing encompassing both auctions and administrative pricing.

It will however not affect the licensing of independent broadcasters under the Broadcasting Act 1990 and the Broadcasting Bill currently before Parliament nor the BBC's position under its Royal Charter and Agreement. But spectrum pricing could play a role in promoting and accelerating the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting services. The adoption of digital broadcasting is key to the Government's long term spectrum strategy since it has the potential to generate new broadcasting use or other applications through the release of valuable spectrum. The use of spectrum pricing will also be considered in the review that has been announced to establish a timetable for the withdrawal of frequency channels used for analogue broadcasting.

Spectrum Management: into the 21st Century', Department of Trade and Industry. London: HMSO, CM3252, June 1996.

http://www.open.gov.uk/radiocom/rahome.htm

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