



media information

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CAMBRIDGE BROADBAND WELCOMES UK LICENSING OF BROADBAND WIRELESS ACCESS AT 3.4GHZ

20 June 2002, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Broadband Limited, the specialist in carrier-class broadband wireless access systems for the 3.4 to 3.8GHz band, has welcomed the UK government's drive to extend broadband availability in the UK by licensing broadband wireless access at 3.4GHz. In its response to the UK Radiocommunications Agency's 3.4GHz licensing consultation, Cambridge Broadband has welcomed both the progress and the licensing proposals overall, but recommended changes to specific proposals to improve the chances for the success of public fixed wireless access.



Peter Wharton, CEO of Cambridge Broadband, comments: “Fixed wireless access is crucial in providing affordable broadband access to UK businesses and rural areas, neither of which are well-served by DSL or cable modem services that don’t go fast enough or far enough. Now that the licensing process is finally underway we are keen to ensure that the process takes advantage of the latest technology and experience of fixed wireless deployments in regions as diverse as mainland Europe, USA and China.”

Cambridge Broadband supports many of the licensing proposals, in particular, the decision to award 2x20MHz radio channels to operators as a single block rather than splitting it into multiple smaller radio channels. This allows subscribers to be offered high bandwidth and high quality radio services. Within radio channels of this size, the company’s own VectaStar 3500 can deliver data rates of up to 60Mb/s to individual subscribers over distances up to 12.5 miles (20km) and support multiple broadband services ranging from high-speed Internet access to carrier-class E1, ATM and leased data lines.

However, the current licensing proposals restrict potential licensees from offering backhaul service to mobile cellular networks such as GSM and this may have the unwanted effect of restricting broadband services in provincial and rural areas. Les Shortall, Director of Marketing for Cambridge Broadband, explains: “Broadband service operators will be inclined to serve areas with the highest demand first in order to recoup their investments. For areas of the UK outside the major cities, broadband demand alone may not be enough to attract a service operator. However, allowing the operator to offer backhaul services to mobile phone operators in those same areas may make all the difference in justifying the investment in a broadband wireless network. This is certainly proving to be the case in many other European countries.”

He adds: "The government may be concerned that mobile networks could use too much of the broadband capacity to the detriment of other subscribers, but this worry probably arises from experience of previous generations of wireless technology that had limited capacity. Technology has moved on. Our own VectaStar 3500 system is capable of supporting up to 60Mb/s in a single base station sector, enough for 22 E1 circuits, or a mixture of E1 lines and higher speed IP or ATM broadband circuits. In short, old technology constraints no longer apply and we urge the RA to re-consider this decision."

Another key issue is the fact that the government is planning to award the licences via a 3G-type auction process. As Peter Wharton explains: "In an auction, there is the risk that operators end up unable to fund their businesses through having ploughed all their resources into their licences. Worse still, the spectrum could end up in the hands of the wealthiest operators, who have only acquired licences to prevent their competitors from doing so."

Since the decision to hold an auction appears to have been made, Cambridge Broadband is urging the government to keep the reserve prices low. Although in "hot spots" bidding is likely to accelerate, in other regions the licences will be affordable to less wealthy bidders, often representing community broadband groups. This will enable operators with innovative and well thought out business plans to acquire licences.

Cambridge Broadband is currently in discussion with potential licence applicants, and encourages the industry as a whole to lobby the government to ensure that the licensing is carried out fairly and appropriately, to make Broadband Britain a reality.

Earlier last month, Cambridge Broadband announced a \$12.5 million equipment contract with D&G Telecom of China. VectaStar was independently acknowledged as the world's fastest carrier-class FWA system in a report by the Strategis Group. Because of its fibre-like bandwidth and guaranteed quality of service VectaStar is ideal for extending the reach of existing backbone networks and for rapid deployment of new broadband networks.

The VectaStar 3500 equipment will be on show during at CommunicAsia 2002 (Hall 3, 3G3-12), Singapore, from June 18 to 21; and at WCA 2002 (Stand 704), Boston, from June 24 to 27.

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1. For more information about any of the issues in this press release, please contact Nicky Dibben, Invention Marketing Limited, e-mail nicky@invention-marketing.co.uk. Phone +44 (0) 1223 235399,
2. The full text of Cambridge Broadband's response to the Radiocommunications Agency consultative document on spectrum licensing at 3.4GHz is available on our [website](#)
3. Photograph, caption "VectaStar subscriber unit overlooking the City of Cambridge", is available electronically, please contact Nicky Dibben (as above).
4. 'Fixed Wireless: The Emerging Vendor Landscape' by independent US-based analysts The Strategis Group, was authored by Peter Jarich and Randall Haley. The Strategis Group's website is www.strategisgroup.com

About Cambridge Broadband

Cambridge Broadband has pioneered the development of carrier-class, point-to-multipoint broadband wireless access equipment for network operators wishing to deploy high-capacity, multi-service networks. The company is focused on delivering high quality multi-service networks with the best price-performance in the 3.5GHz band for license holders worldwide. Cambridge Broadband was founded in January 2000 by an experienced team with a strong record of successful innovation in broadband wireless equipment. For more details please visit www.cambridgebroadband.com.

About VectaStar 3500

Cambridge Broadband's 3.5GHz VectaStar 3500 system offers the most advanced combination of high bandwidth, high coverage and extended range on the market. It supports multiple carrier-class services simultaneously, each with robust QoS and has a 480Mbps (Megabits per second) base station capacity that can deliver up to 60Mbps full-duplex per customer. VectaStar has excellent non-line-of-sight capability and self-backhaul at ranges up to 20km, making it a compelling solution for network operators looking to deploy high-capacity multi-service networks.