

Your response

Question	Your response
<p>Question 1: Should Ofcom exercise its discretion to consent to the application to vary the Winchester small-scale multiplex licensed area, with regard to the statutory and policy considerations set out in this document?</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/ N</p> <p>As the holder of FM community radio licence CR101262 (Winchester and surrounding area) and C-DSP licence for the Winchester multiplex CDP104361, Winchester Radio agrees that Ofcom should exercise its discretion to consent to the application from Winchester DAB Ltd to vary the Winchester SSDAB licensed area.</p> <p>It is evident that the business plan of the previous licensee was negatively impacted by the necessary late change in the location of the transmitter to ensure the multiplex launched on time, which resulted in higher-than-budgeted ongoing costs that were not matched by increased income. For the multiplex to be financially viable, costs must be reduced from those incurred by the previous licensee as, given the small population covered by the multiplex, the opportunities for additional income from further stations seeking carriage appear limited. As is stated in the consultation document, the real-world choice is between having a commercially viable multiplex with a slightly different coverage, or having no SSDAB multiplex in this area at all.</p> <p>There were no other applicants when the licence was originally advertised and, as far as we are aware, no other interest in acquiring the licence from the liquidators, so the chances of another applicant stepping forward at this stage appears vanishingly small – and if they did, there would be a significant delay (months/years) whilst the licence was re-advertised and the new operator, if awarded the licence, would be in a position to launch the service. By contrast, it is our understanding that Winchester DAB Ltd is in a position to re-launch the service within weeks of being given permission to do so.</p>
<p>Question 2: With reference to our impact assessment, do you agree with our assessment of the potential impacts of approving this application?</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/ N</p> <p>Winchester Radio agrees with Ofcom’s overall impact assessment.</p> <p>In terms of the impact on the social gain provided by Winchester Radio, the current lack of the Winchester SSDAB multiplex means that we have fallen-back to our</p>

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	<p>analogue 94.7FM coverage. In terms of broadcast reach – neglecting online listeners – this reduces reception of Winchester Radio (and thus the majority of the social gain we are able to provide) to the city of Winchester and the immediately-surrounding villages. Comparing the predicted coverage under the proposed technical plan against that under the previous technical plan, the reduced DAB signal strength within the city of Winchester, whilst unfortunate, will not have a huge impact on our overall social gain, because we have good FM coverage in this area. For those listening whilst travelling by car, our use of our RDS PI Code as our DAB SID allows for near-seamless switching between FM and DAB without user intervention, meaning that many listeners might not even realise that they have switched from digital to analogue reception. The additional coverage to the south of Winchester will be beneficial to our provision of social gain, as many of the residents in this area have an affiliation with Winchester, and will likely take advantage of the services, clubs, support groups and voluntary organisations in the Winchester area that we promote.</p>

Please complete this form in full and return to smallscaleDAB@ofcom.org.uk.