



37 Bear Street
Barnstaple
North Devon
EX32 7BZ

14 June 2011

Exeter and Torbay Consultation
F.A.O. Andrea Jackson
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southward Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

Dear Andrea Jackson,

We are writing in regards to the application to extend the regional South Devon DAB Radio service to North Devon and Torridge.

We here, at Be My Office, feel that in going ahead with the extended radio service will affect local businesses and everyone's efforts to bring back a local radio station.

With Ofcom's proposal to extend the service this means that the area FM licence holder will get automatic renewal, meaning that there will be little possibility of being able to have a local radio station.

Not only do we depend on advertising from The Voice FM, we and many of our customers depend on traffic reports and weather updates to help throughout our daily lives.

As a local business we have relied upon The Voice FM to help provide us with advertising, targeting some of our key demographic customers in our area helping the growth of our business.

We do not get this with the current FM license holder, Heart, as they are more focused to other areas, such as Exeter.

By extending the service, only 53% of North Devon will be able to receive digital signal and not all of them have digital radios. Eventually only 70% will be able to receive it, leaving more than ¼ without local radio and BBC radio Devon coverage. With the current FM transmitter a high percentage of people across North Devon are able to access the use of the local radio station and BBC radio Devon. This is key to our area because of the use of business and event advertising as well as local weather and travel updates.



Looking at the OFCOM website, you define local material for a radio station by “giving listeners a feeling of ownership or kinship, particularly at times of crisis (snow, floods etc)”. During the month of December 2010, Barnstaple benefitted immensely from the local weather and travel update in and around the Barnstaple area. This made travel a lot more accessible as we were given direct source information as to which bus routes were running and which roads were clear. Under section 314 of the Communications Act 2003 it classifies ‘local material’ as “material, which is of particular interest to those living or working within (or within part of) the area of locality for which the service is provided or to particular communities living or working within that area of locality (or part of it)”. Through having a local radio, the presenters are known by most of the community and are able to get more involved with local events, such as charities, schools and current news in the area. They will also be able to see more of the long-term benefits within the community and be more involved as they have more of a connection to the area through living here.

Having a local radio station will benefit our community hugely but extending the regional South Devon DAB Radio service to North Devon and Torridge is not in the best interests of North Devon. It leaves little possibility to be able to fight for a local radio, which has a substantial amount of support, whilst leaving a considerable area without local or relevant radio coverage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Pledge'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

(S. PLEDGE)