

Dear Andrea Jackson

Vote No for DAB in North Devon.

I am writing to you in response to the consultation in the North Devon Area.

Having given local radio and the situation in this area much consideration, I do wonder who the regulator represents. Is it the interests of the local listeners, or the conglomerates that own the radio stations?

Local radio, broadcast in the area, and, not on a franchise with a watered down, and bland format is about the people, the area, and the minute detail. Our "local radio provider" heart does not fulfil its role. A letter in today's North Devon Journal quoted heart had broadcast 70 "local" stories, for North Devon, since the beginning of May. Big Deal, that is 1.5 a day. When Lantern / Heart were broadcasting from Barnstaple the DJ's were talking about, and going about the area all day. We knew what was happening. Our friends and children were getting mentions. We were aware of specific road problems, and holdups, and during the snow early 2010 the traffic, work and school updates were invaluable. Not so the snow late 2010. The bod in London doing the sanitised and networked show for Heart has no interest if Mullacott Cross is blocked on the road to Woolacombe.

Now Heart is broadcast from Exeter we have a sanitised station. No names are mentioned, and it is mainly Exeter and Plymouth that are having the mentions. Well quite frankly, I don't give a monkeys what is happening down there, it is the North of the County that interests me.

Local radio is often a life line and an indicator of an area. Visitors can get a flavour of the places they are going to, Find out about local events that are taking place, and can carry on with that link, when they return home, by listening via the internet, recapturing the enjoyable time they spent in the area.

Local radio should be an employer in the local area. Devon is the second biggest county in England, so it would be reasonable to have a Radio station broadcasting in the top half of the county. It should also be an incubator of local talent, who can cut their teeth in a smaller station before, maybe, going on to broadcast at a national station, without too much travelling expenses.

The North Devon Community should be offered a choice of listening to a radio station other than Heart, which in my opinion, and many others, is NOT a local radio station.

I then come onto the DAB concern. If we have an FM switch off, and only have DAB as an option we will not be able to access Digital radio, Heart, or BBC Radio Devon, as we fall in the no broadcast area. I would urge you to think carefully before you jump into this option, without offering the population hereabouts the ability to choose who they listen to.

For the last few months I have been listening to "the voice", when they have been able to broadcast with the 28 day licence. It has been refreshing to have local issues discussed with local people.

There is room for more than one “local” radio station. Will Ofcom stifle local broadcasting for global commerce, or will they show strength and independence as a regulator, and stand up for imaginative, local, entertaining and innovative radio broadcasting.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Homa