

For the attention of OFCOM (for attention Andrea Jackson)

Dear Sir or Madam

Instow Parish Council is advised that a consultation is currently being held by you on an application to extend the regional South Devon DAB / Digital radio service to North Devon and Torridge.

This proposal could have HUGE ramifications for the long term future of LOCAL Radio – both BBC and commercial – in North Devon. The outcome of this public consultation will determine what radio services are available to North Devon listeners for a very long time to come. The issue is very important to this area for two reasons.

1. A successful application for a digital service will also mean **automatic continuation** of the area's FM licence currently held by Global Radio, broadcasting on 96.2 and 97.3 FM as Heart. Automatic renewal will mean there will never be any possibility of a true, comprehensive local radio service broadcasting from studios in the area specifically to North Devon.

2. As part of the Digital Economy Bill (DEB), once digital radio services are in place, subject to some provisos, most wide-area existing FM transmitters will be switched off. This could be as early as 2015.

The application before OFCOM to extend the South Devon Digital service proposes an initial coverage for North Devon of **ONLY 53%** of households, with eventual coverage of **only 70%** of households expected to receive a digital signal.

This would be devastating for North Devon and Torridge, because it means that when the FM transmitters are switched off, **30%** of those who currently listen to local commercial radio AND BBC Radio Devon will no longer be able to do so. In fact the regions largest seaside town of Ilfracombe and other areas along the north coast will receive no signal whatsoever.

In real terms we will mean a reduction in the coverage and service we have now on FM.

Councillors and parishioners alike believe this is a huge injustice and totally unfair to everyone who lives in or visits North Devon, which deserves its own **local** radio service and comprehensive, area-wide broadcast coverage.

Instow Parish Council and its parishioners particularly want to see a local FM service for the area, and do not believe the extension of the South Devon Digital multiplex into the North Devon area will provide both the service you prefer, and full and adequate coverage of our area.

I would be obliged if you could please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Clerk to Instow Parish Council