

Title:

Forename:

Surname:

Representing:

Organisation

Organisation (if applicable):

Email:

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Additional comments:

Question 1: Do you think that allowing Now Digital to extend the coverage area of its Exeter & Torbay local radio multiplex licence to include North Devon would unacceptably narrow the range of DAB programme services available in the Exeter and Torbay area? Please explain the reasons for your view.:

It would not affect Exeter & Torbay.

Question 2: Do you think that allowing Now Digital to extend the coverage area of its Exeter & Torbay local radio multiplex licence to include North Devon would be calculated to maintain or promote the development of digital sound broadcasting in the UK otherwise than by satellite? Please explain the reasons for your view.:

The Now Digital proposal is predominantly negative to both the North Devon area, the area's listeners, and its businesses. This proposal should be blocked as the existing proposal will only serve to put the extension of DAB in a negative light, potentially hindering its expansion elsewhere in the country.

Question 3: Do you think that Now Digital's proposals for providing coverage of North Devon are satisfactory? Please explain the reasons for your view.:

The proposals are deeply unsatisfactory. This multiplex licence incorporates the area's sole local commercial service, with the proviso that they are awarded automatic renewal - this eliminates all competition which is completely unfair for business and consumers. In terms of physical coverage, the proposal to include Okehampton for transmission (which is currently not included in the existing North Devon Licence), but yet completely ignore Ilfracombe and a substantial surrounding area with a population in excess of 10k is unacceptable. Furthermore this proposal fails to recognise where the main business hubs of North Devon are.

Question 4: Do you consider that Now Digital has the ability to maintain its local radio multiplex service if its request is granted? Please explain the reasons for your view.:

Question 5: (For programme service providers on the Exeter & Torbay local radio multiplex only) Do you consider that there are sufficient safeguards in place to protect your rights and interests in the event that Now Digital is permitted to extend coverage to include North Devon?:

Absolutely not. As both a local radio listener, and also as representing a marketing agency, the current service offered by Heart/Global is completely unsatisfactory. Nobody in their right mind listening to their coverage would regard their content to be 'local', with their only genuinely local content being the commercial adverts in breaks. We want to see a proposal that allows for competition - something that OFCOM should be protecting. To propose any form of automatic renewal of the local licence is completely improper. It must be re-advertised. As a listener, I want to hear about local events, relevant advice for local businesses, local traffic and weather information, and to hear interviews with other people I can encounter in my local North Devon community. As a business, we want to see more competitive advertising and sponsorship packages, alongside genuine local programming, which we can target at local listeners and visitors. We cannot get this with Global/Heart, and we definitely will not get this through any of the other services proposed on the extended multiplex.

Question 6: Do you consider that there any other grounds on which Ofcom should approve, or not approve, the request from Now Digital? Please explain the reasons for your view.:

OFCOM should definitely NOT approve the request from Now Digital. The service North Devon is provided with by Heart/Global is appalling and is in no way whatsoever in the spirit of the requirements for a local radio licence. The proposal also provides unacceptable proposed coverage for the North Devon coast, - specifically Ilfracombe and its surroundings -

which is an important holiday area and business hub of the district.

Either OFCOM needs to completely turn down Now Digital and re-advertise the current local FM licence, or it needs to advise Now Digital to resubmit the proposal with improved coverage for Ilfracombe and (most importantly) the proposal for the local service to be automatically renewed removed. The proposal should also allow for the immediate readvertising of the current local service licence for the North Devon area.