

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Michael

Surname:

Moore

Name and title under which you would like this response to appear:

Mr Michael Moore MP

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

Email:

N/A

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing 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

Question 1: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposal to license digital self helps for areas currently served by a self help relay, and how we propose to make available licences? If not, please give your reasons.:

I agree with Ofcom's approach to the licensing of digital self-help relays for areas currently served by analogue self-help relays. I fully support the decision to provide detailed advice for current operators beginning from autumn of this year, and I encourage Ofcom to prioritise those operators who will be affected by digital switchover first.

In my constituency of Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, there is currently one self-help relay, near Yetholm. The households that are served by this self-help relay are within the Border TV region and will therefore have their analogue signal switched off during the last quarter of 2008. In order for this community to make an informed decision about whether they will need to replace their current self-help relay with a digital one, they will need to be provided with information about whether they are likely to be able to receive digital terrestrial television without a relay, and will need sufficient time to consult and make their decision.

Question 2: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposal to license digital self helps for areas not currently served by a self help relay, and how we propose to make available licences? If not, please give your reasons.:

I recognise that digital self-help relays may prove useful in providing digital television to remote communities once switchover has taken place and the exact coverage of the digital signal has been determined. I therefore support Ofcom's approach to make such licences available to new areas provided there is spectrum availability.

However, I am concerned that the figure of 98.5% coverage of digital television that is used widely does not adequately explain the fact that the map of digital coverage will not be the same as that for analogue coverage, and therefore some households who are currently able to receive terrestrial television will find themselves without a signal after switchover. I am further concerned that a greater proportion of the 1.5% who will not be able to receive a signal may reside in my constituency, due to its geography and remoteness in some parts.

I am pleased to see in the consultation document that, 'Ofcom is currently involved in detailed planning for digital switchover and can predict digital terrestrial coverage to a relatively high degree of accuracy.' I should like to see the results of the research that has been carried out to date and, specifically, whether there are any areas within the Scottish Borders that have been identified as possible candidates for not receiving a digital signal after switchover.

I would also have liked to see information provided about how Ofcom will publicise the possibility of digital self-help relays to areas that might be affected by signal loss after switchover, and an estimate of the length of time it will take for licence applications to be approved.

Question 3: Do you agree with how Ofcom proposes to deal with the frequency planning for self help relays? If not, please give your reasons.:

Yes, I support Ofcom's approach to frequency planning.

Question 4: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed fee for WTA licences for self help relays? If not, please give your reasons.:

I am pleased to see that Ofcom does not propose to make communities that are relying on existing self-help relays pay the £1,500 - £2,500 planning costs of the new digital self-help relay, and I agree that £75 is an appropriate level of fee for a five year licence.

Additional comments:

This is an important consultation which will ensure that households in rural communities such as those in my constituency are not completely left out of the digital revolution