

Ofcom has clearly listened to the majority view of the UK Radio Industry in formulating its plans and Radio Pembrokehire Group is therefore able to fully support the licensing proposals in the consultation document.

We agree with the sentiment that, in the digital world, local listeners will want to hear their most popular local services; Ofcom's outline licensing plans appear to achieve this objective. We are pleased that Ofcom has balanced its local licensing objectives while, at the same time, recognising the potential and demand for second national multiplex. We believe that distinctive national services are a strong complement to the very clear characteristics of local services, such as those operated by our own group.

One important point we wish to make; in order to ensure fairness of access to local DAB Spectrum for operators of all size, we urge Ofcom to ensure that additional local multiplexes are made available in urban areas, and certainly to include Swansea, Cardiff, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester. We believe that the original licensing policy of the Radio Authority very clearly favoured the existing heritage operators, and thus perpetuated their original market monopoly on radio development in their franchise areas. Evidence clearly shows that in most UK urban areas, shareholders of local multiplexes have taken the majority of the available spectrum, blocking out potential new entrants and new, entrepreneurial local services. Directors of our Group have knowledge and awareness of such situations, and are keen to ensure that the UK's digital airwaves are opened up to real competition. This is a serious and significant issue that must be addressed by the Regulator in its future DAB Digital Radio licensing plans.