

# Revocation of the Yorkshire Coast small-scale radio multiplex licence award

## Background

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Under section 51(6) of the Broadcasting Act 1996 (as modified by the Small-scale Radio Multiplex and Community Digital Radio Order 2019), Ofcom may revoke the award of a small-scale radio multiplex licence where the licence itself has not yet been granted and Ofcom has reasonable grounds for believing that the person to whom the licence was awarded will not provide the service within 18 months of the date of the award.

## Decision

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Ofcom has taken the decision to revoke the licence award we made on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to East Coast Digital Radio CIC ("ECDR") in relation to the Yorkshire Coast small-scale radio multiplex service.

This is on the basis that the statutory conditions for revocation as set out above have been met. Firstly, the awarded licence has not yet been granted. Secondly, we have reasonable grounds to believe the service will not be provided within 18 months of award (i.e. by 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024) as ECDR has asked that the award be withdrawn. ECDR has explained that it has reached the view that the project is no longer financially viable given changing economic conditions generally (in the context of a large advertised area requiring multiple transmission sites), and changes in the broadcast landscape that had led it to reassess likely levels of demand.

## Next steps

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In its request to Ofcom to withdraw the award, ECDR expressed the view that future advertisement of small-scale multiplexes in the area should not be ruled out, but that measures to improve coverage and capacity of existing local multiplexes should also be considered.

Clearly, the reasons given by ECDR for deciding not to proceed do not suggest that it is likely to re-apply for a licence for which it was the sole applicant last time, were it to be re-advertised imminently with a similar advertised area.

Ofcom will, however, consider whether to re-advertise the Yorkshire Coast small-scale multiplex licence at a later date should we receive expressions of interest following today's announcement. Should we decide in principle to do so, it may be appropriate to adjust the advertised area, noting ECDR's comments on the challenges of covering what is a geographically very large area compared with many other small-scale multiplexes. Any potential applicant expressing an interest may also wish to express a view on that issue, and on the timing of any re-advertisement.