

**Title:**

Mr

**Forename:**

Nick

**Surname:**

Moore

**Representing:**

Self

**Organisation (if applicable):**

**Email:**

**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:**

Yes

**Additional comments:**

Having read in my local newspaper (North Devon Journal) I was horrified to learn that a proposal to replace our FM transmitters with Digital service was being tabled by global radio, operating as Heart Radio in our region, and purporting to be 'Local' despite being very centred in Exeter, which would put pay to the mounting bid by our emerging truly local radio station to bring a fully fledged local service back in place in our community.

**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.:**

Unsure, however if station closure in Exeter is brought about by Global radio in the same manner as the Barnstaple studios, and others as originally owned by Gcap media prior to purchase by Global, all programming could originate from London with no regional content of worth from any community. This would be a devastating betrayal by a regulatory body to allow this.

**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.:**

Given their proposal is an initial 53% coverage, culminating in 70%, I should say NO. This would be short changing 30,000 people in the North Devon region alone if the FM transmitters are cut off.

**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.:**

No. This would mean the switching off of the existing FM transmitters that currently serve the North of the region and be the death knell of true local radio service in this area for good. Coverage by FM transmitter is far wider than Digital services and if switched off could lead to vast areas of radio blackout given the topography of the area. Some areas are unable to receive digital TV in this area and rely on satellite. Digital radio will be the same. I note that initial coverage proposal is 53% of homes in North Devon, raising to approximately 70% overall. This is in NO terms satisfactory for a community such as ours, or any other for that matter.

**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.:**

Currently the 'Local' service by Heart Radio and Radio Devon are streamed from Exeter and Plymouth respectively. Heart claims to be local to us in North Devon however it is evident by the news and traffic info each hour that it is very much centred around Exeter and the south of the region with Torpoint ferries and traffic in Exeter taking the majority time at each bulletin. There's is a token gesture of mentioning our local link-road (A361) occasionally, but with Barnstaple being know as 'the home of the traffic jam' for some years it clearly needs it's own truly local service to provide concise information when needed most. In our rural community up to the minute weather reports and bus/train info is vital to keeping our schools and healthcare/emergency services running. When we still had a studio in Barnstaple every individual show gave prominence in their broadcast to news and weather reports which was essential and appropriate during bad weather as was the case 2 years ago. Staff working at our local hospital commute from as far as Minehead to the North and from Holsworthy and

the like further south of Barnstaple. Without the excellent travel info we had our community hospitals and main hospital would have been devoid of numerous staff with obvious serious consequences. Again whilst Heart claim to be local only Breakfast and Drivetime shows originate in the county, with all other content being streamed from London by DJ's such as Jason Donovan and Emma Bunton. Their topics of conversation have no relevance to our local community and no difference is found between them or any other commercial radio station originating out of London or such like. As far as news goes, it took a double murder in Barnstaple for it to be featured and again most topic matter is based around events occurring in Exeter and the south of the region. We have a rich and abundant community here in North Devon and we are being neglected by the loss of a truly local service provider with the exception of several RSL licences which have taken place recently with amazing effect. We have a strong local music and arts scene which has again been given a voice albeit short in time. We were proud of our original station, Lantern FM, and will lament greatly if a replacement cannot be established by what is essentially a Monopoly strategy being force fed watered down content of no personal significance to our community.

**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?:**

**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.:**

Since the streamlining of Westcountry TV meaning the closure of several local studios with the obvious loss of jobs that goes with such a move, and the strategy taken by Heart Radio to follow suit the northern devon region is a virtual blackspot for news and local common affairs. Westcountry TV seem to centre most of their airtime to Bristol and surrounding areas with North Devon getting no mention of anything newsworthy unless its a serious crime, despite the wealth of things that take place locally each day. BBC spotlight is very Plymouth/Exeter centred and Rdio Devon following suit although there is a 5 minute spotlight link from the North of the region. The North Devon areas seem to be ignored by most mediums, and that therefore is why we lament so much at the loss of our local radio station that was based in Barnstaple and involved the whole community around us from the coastal towns of Ilfracombe, Woolacombe, Combe Martin, Bideford, Clovelly, to the Agricultural and rural areas of Holsworthy, Winkley, South Molton. When reviewing your own criteria of 'Localness' there is no service that fulfils your guidelines other than the recent RSL that have taken place. Listening to our supposed local radio by heart gives the impression we are living in Exeter and gives no sense of ownership to me. During the snow and bad weather during November/December last year there was little or no relevant help from Heart radio. Fortunately Festive FM was running on RSL from Barnstaple and again came to the rescue. Please, for the sake of over 100,000 people here in my immediate area, deny this monopolising application and keep our dreams of a local service alive. Remember that of those 100,000 people, the proposal will be ignoring 30,000 of them at full capacity. This cannot be right, can it?