
Small-scale radio multiplex licence

Application form – Part A (public)

Name of applicant (i.e. the body corporate that will hold the licence):

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd

Multiplex licence area being applied for (note this must be a small-scale multiplex area currently being advertised by Ofcom):

Sheffield & Rotherham

Contact details for Ofcom:

Name: Chris Hurst

Email: chris@sheffielddab.co.uk

Address: 68 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield, England, S7 2DX

Publication date: 1 September 2020

2 Extent of proposed coverage area

- 2.1 Provide a summary, fully consistent with the more detailed information about transmission sites supplied separately in Part B, of the coverage area proposed to be achieved by your technical plan. This should include a description of the target area you are seeking to serve within the advertised licence area, and also any areas you are aiming to serve outside the advertised licence area for this small-scale radio multiplex service. (You may refer to your coverage prediction in the response you provide):

Sheffield is the most geographically diverse city in England. It is roughly one third urban, one third rural and one third in the Peak District. The topography is famous for presenting challenges when it comes to broadcast coverage. Lying in the eastern foothills of the Pennines, the city nestles in a natural amphitheatre created by several hills and the confluence of five rivers. Accordingly, much of the city's urban housing is built on hillsides, with the city centre beneath, isolated by a ring of hills. At its lowest point the city stands just 29 metres above sea level at Blackburn Meadows on the Rotherham border, rising up to over 500 m in some parts of the city.

Our proposition is founded on three principles:

1. Delivery of a reliable, consistent and high-quality DAB service to as much of the indoor population of Sheffield and Rotherham (within Ofcom's defined Polygon area) as possible;
2. Working to the original DCMS/Ofcom objective to make DAB affordable for community radio, small independent commercial stations and start-up services.
3. Achieving the above within a sustainable, long-term business plan.

From the outset we recognised that this was not going to be easy in such a unique landscape and the imperative of serving both Sheffield and Rotherham was going to demand, at the very least, a two-site solution.

The densely populated suburbs of Sheffield, including Handsworth, Heeley, Sharrow, Crosspool, Attercliffe, Wadsley Bridge and Hillsborough will all receive excellent coverage. Critically, we have managed to agree a solution that will allow unbroken reception along the A6109 / A6178 corridor between Sheffield and Rotherham. Coverage throughout Rotherham and surrounds is also excellent.

Overspill is low in general and this is concentrated to the south east of the Polygon around Ulley, Flanderwell and Morthen. These are low-population density communities that have a natural affinity with Rotherham.

Sheffield city centre coverage is something we intend to review following launch. There may be a case for an additional lower-power relay to bring indoor coverage into line with the higher elevation surrounding areas.

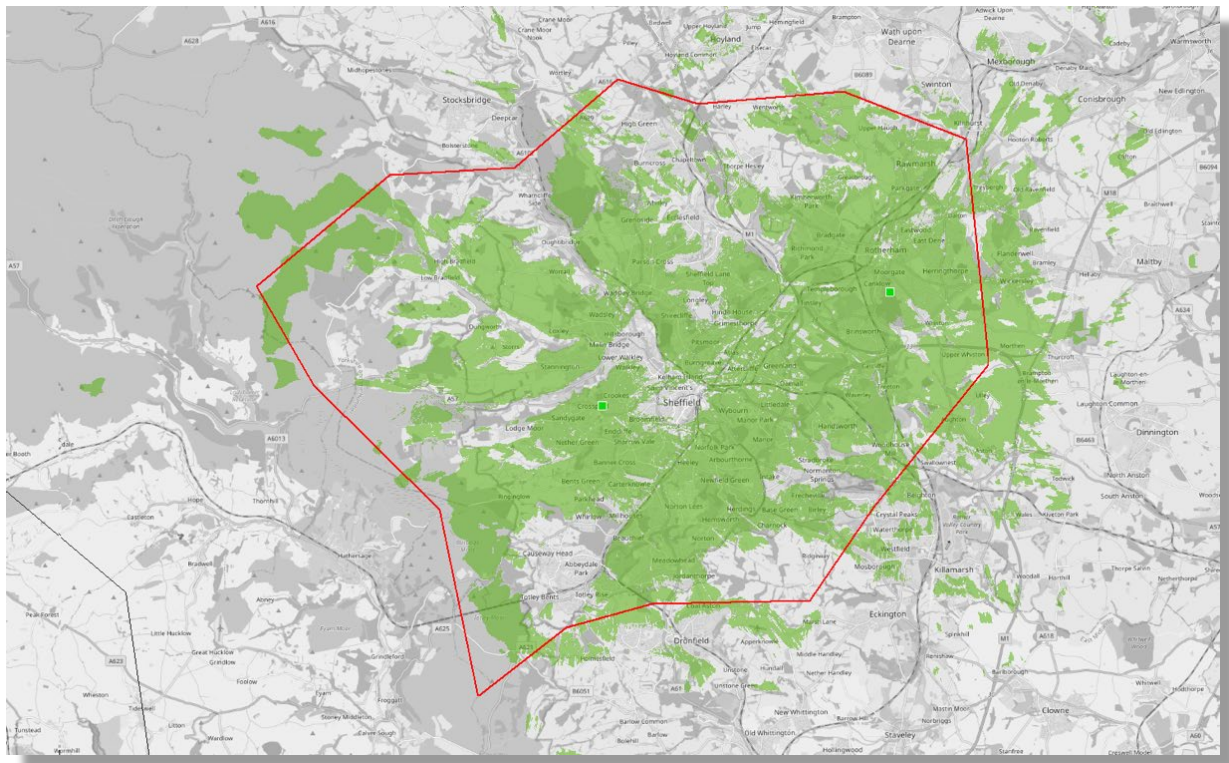
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- 2.2 Please provide a coverage prediction map for the whole transmitter network you are proposing to build within 18 months if you are awarded a licence. The map should show the 63 dB μ V/m field strength and the advertised small-scale DAB licence area contour. [Small-scale DAB licence areas in GIS format](#) are available on the Ofcom website.

A full coverage prediction map for the whole transmitter network is provided in a separate document. It shows the 63 dB μ V/m field strength (as well as the 54 dB μ V/m and 38dB μ V/m contours). The 38dB μ V/m contour does not indicate any significant co-frequency block interference in neighbouring polygons.

The ward-level tables indicate that at 63 dB μ V/m field strength;

- the number of people falling outside the polygon does not exceed 30% of the total population within the advertised licence area; and
- the proposed coverage does not overlap more than 40% of the population within the relevant local radio multiplex service's licensed area.



2.3 Please provide the following details of the prediction software used for your coverage assessments:

Provide the name and version of the prediction tool used.	ATDI HTZ Communications v22.6.9
Detail the terrain model used by the software and its resolution.	A digital elevation model (DEM) representation of ground surface topography or terrain. Also referred to as a digital terrain model (DTM). Resolution is a DTM step of 30mtrs with IMG (image) step of 0.022mtrs
Detail the ground cover (clutter) data used by the software and its resolution.	The height, extent, and location of groundcover elements ("clutter") are the factors which primarily govern the impact on radio signals. The RF planning tool reasonably locates the boundary between adjacent clutter types to 10m using the Holt UK clutter model
What propagation algorithm has been used?	ITU-R 370 (propagation model valid from 30 MHz to 1000 MHz)
Where multiple sites are proposed, describe what methodology has been used to assess the network (SFN) gain	The Monte-Carlo method
If these predictions have not used Ofcom-provided population data, state what population data has been used and its source.	2011 Census (adults 15+) ATDI included population data supplemented by Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
Have your predictions been generated by a commercial organisation? If so, by whom?	Coverage predictions have been generated by Viamux using HTZ Communications software from ATDI.

3 Ability to establish the proposed service

Applicant's details

3.1 Name of applicant (i.e. the body corporate that will hold the licence):

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd

3.2 Company registration number stated on Companies House (if applicable):

12953870

3.3 For UK registered companies, the address of the applicant's registered office stated on Companies House. For non-UK registered companies, the principal office address:

68 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield, England, S7 2DX

3.4 If a UK registered company, is the **current** Memorandum and Articles of Association document available on the Companies House website? **YES**

3.5 Contact details of the individual duly authorised by the applicant for the purposes of making this application. This individual should be the company secretary or a director.

Full name	Chris Hurst
Job title	CEO Dee Radio Group
Address	68 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield, England, S7 2DX
Telephone	0114 400 0136
Mobile phone	07899 842264
Email	chris@sheffielddab.co.uk

Ownership and control of company which will hold the licence

Details of officers, participants and shareholders of the applicant

3.6 Please provide the following details for each director or designated member of the applicant:

Full name of individual	Correspondence address ¹	Country of residence	Other officerships held (and nature of the business concerned)	Other employment
Akash Hashmi	68 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield, England, S7 2DX	UK	Director: Carousel Europe LTD; Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd Asian Radio Live (C-DSP license being applied for)	Digital Copywriter
Martin Sugden	Unit 7, 1 St. Marys Street, Penistone, Sheffield, England, S36 6DT	UK	Director: Penfm Media C.I.C. (11737308); Penistone Community Radio Ltd (06257320); Giant Radio Ltd (07102878); Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd (Small-scale DAB multiplex applicant)	Regional Technical Manager BMW UK
Chris Hurst	Archway House, Station Road, Chester, United Kingdom, CH1 3DR	UK	Director: Silk FM Ltd and Dee 106.3 Ltd (Commercial radio stations). Director: Muxco North East Wales and West Cheshire Ltd (DAB local multiplex operator) Director: Edinburgh DAB Ltd; Cardiff DAB Ltd; South Birmingham DAB Ltd; Leeds DAB Radio Ltd; and Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd (Small-scale DAB multiplex applicants)	None

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Infocus Digital Media Ltd	55 Leeds Road, Bradford, England, BD1 5AF	UK	Director: Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd (Small-scale DAB multiplex applicant)	N/A
Niocast Digital	20 Crewe Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 4NE	UK	Corporate Director: Edinburgh DAB Ltd; Cardiff DAB Ltd; South Birmingham DAB Ltd; Leeds DAB Radio Ltd; and Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd (Small-scale DAB multiplex applicants)	N/A

3.7 Please identify any entities with which the applicant is affiliated:

(If this question is not applicable to the applicant please respond "N/A" in the table.)

Full name of the entity	Address
Infocus Digital Media Ltd	55 Leeds Road, Little Germany, Bradford, England, BD1 5AF
Penistone Community Radio Ltd	Unit 7 No 1 St. Marys Street, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 6DT
Carousel Europe Ltd	68 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield, England, S7 2DX
Dee 106.3 Ltd	Archway House, Station Road, Chester, CH1 3DR
Niocast Digital Ltd	20 Crewe Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 4NE

3.8 Complete the following table, expanding it if necessary, to list all bodies corporate which are controlled by the applicant, and their affiliates:

Full name of entity	Address	Affiliates
N/A	N/A	N/A

3.9 Complete the following table, expanding it if necessary, to list all persons who control the applicant, together with their affiliates. If any persons or bodies control the applicant jointly because they act together in concert (e.g. because of a shareholder's agreement), each such person must be identified here:

Full name of individual or body	Address	Affiliates
N/A	N/A	N/A

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- 3.10 Complete the following table, expanding it if necessary, to list all officerships in other bodies that are held by any individual listed in response to question 3.9, and any affiliates of those bodies:

Full name of individual	Name of body in which officership held	Affiliates of that body
N/A	N/A	N/A

- 3.11 Complete the following table, expanding it if necessary, to list all bodies corporate which are controlled by any body corporate listed in response to question 3.9, and their affiliates:

Full name of body corporate listed in 3.9	Body corporate controlled	Affiliates of body corporate controlled
N/A	N/A	N/A

- 3.12 In relation to each body corporate identified in response to question 3.9, complete the following table, expanding it if necessary, to list all bodies which hold or are beneficially entitled to shares, or who possess voting powers, amounting to more than 5% in the body corporate concerned (“participants”). You may, but are not required to, exclude from this table any bodies listed in response to question 3.9. If you are unable to provide a complete answer to this question in relation to beneficial owners, please state whether you have any reason to suspect the existence of any beneficial owners.

Name of body corporate identified in response to Q3.9	N/A			
Full name of >5% participant	Number of shares	Total investment (£s)	Total investment (%)	% of voting rights
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comments				

Involvement of the applicant in specified activities

- 3.13 Please state below whether the applicant, or any of the directors, shareholders or other individuals named above, including their associates (i.e. directors of their associates and other group companies), is, or is involved in, any of the below, and the extent of that interest.

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Activity/involvement	Yes or No	Please state who is involved; the name of the body/individual/agency they are involved with; and the extent of their involvement
A local authority	No	N/A
A body whose objects are wholly or mainly of a political nature, or which is affiliated to such a body	No	N/A
A body whose objects are wholly or mainly of a religious nature; ²	No	Usha Parmar is a Trustee of Rishi's Vision (Charity) and a Trustee of Jai Maa Bhameshwari Kali Mandir (Charity)
An individual who is an officer of a body falling within (b) or (c);	No	N/A
A body corporate which is an associate (as defined in paragraphs 1(1) and 1(1A) of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Broadcasting Act 1990) of a body falling within (b) or (c);	No	N/A
An advertising agency or an associate of an advertising agency	No	N/A

Details of applications, licences and sanctions

3.14 Is the applicant a current licensee of Ofcom? **NO**

Licence number	Name of multiplex
N/A	N/A

3.15 Has the applicant held an Ofcom broadcasting licence before? **NO**

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
N/A	N/A

Small-scale radio multiplex licence: application form (Part A)

3.16 Has anyone involved in the proposed service, held an Ofcom broadcasting licence or been involved in an Ofcom-licensed broadcast service before? **YES**

Dates licence was held or dates of involvement	Licence number (if known)	Name of service or multiplex
Current	CR000153	Penistone FM 95.7
1990 - current	AL000037BA/2	Bradford City Radio T/A Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire)
June 2001	-	Mela FM (RSL in Manchester)
2002 - 2004	-	Club Asia London Ltd
2004 - current	DP000061BA	Bradford City Radio T/A Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire)
2004 - 2013	DP000061BA	Bradford City Radio T/A Masti Radio
2016 - 2020	DP000061BA	Glasgow Small-scale Multiplex Trial service
1991 - 2000	AL100192BA/2	Signal Radio Ltd
1992 - 2006	AL100192BA/2	Imagine FM Ltd
1996 - 2000	AL100806BA/2	Wire FM - Warrington
2000- 2009		Signal 1 Stoke on Trent
2000- 2009		Signal 2 Stoke on Trent
2000- 2009		Imagine FM Stockport
2000- 2009		Wish FM Wigan and St Helens
2000- 2009		Swansea Sound
2000- 2009		Wave Swansea
2000- 2009		Valleys Radio - S Wales Valleys
2000- 2009		Q96 Paisley
2000- 2009		Wave 102 Dundee
2000- 2009		Wire FM - Warrington
2000- 2009		The Wave Blackpool
2000- 2009		The Pulse Bradford
2000- 2009		Pulse Classic Gold Bradford
2000- 2009		Peak FM Chesterfield

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2000- 2009		The Wolf Wolverhampton
2000- 2009		Peak FM Chesterfield
2000- 2009		Tower FM Bolton and Bury
2000- 2009		Juice FM - Liverpool
2000- 2009		Talk 107 Edinburgh
2000- 2009		Central Radio
2006 - 2008	CR102895	Cheshire FM
2006 - 2008		Original 106 FM
2008 - 2010	AL203	Dune FM
2009 - 2017	CR000034BA/3	Pure FM - Stockport
2010 - 2011	AL323	Central Radio
2015 - 2016	DP101065	Manchester Business Radio
2015 - Current	SSDABWT005	Multiplex - Trial Manchester
Current	DL000094BA/5	Multiplex - NE Wales and W Cheshire
Current	AL100840BA/2	Silk FM
Current	AL000274BA/3	Dee 106.3
Current	DP000165BA/2	Dee on DAB and Love 80s – Liverpool & Manchester
2016 - current	DP000061BA	Manchester Small-scale Multiplex Trial service
2004 - 2009		Swansea and S Wales Local Multiplex
2002 - 2009		Bradford and Huddersfield Local Multiplex
2004 - 2009		Stoke on Trent Local Multiplex
2002 -2009		Central Scotland Multiplex

3.17 Does the applicant control an existing Ofcom licensee? **NO**

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
N/A	N/A

Small-scale radio multiplex licence: application form (Part A)

- 3.18 Is the applicant controlled by an existing licensee or by any person who is connected (within the meaning of Schedule 2 to the Broadcasting Act 1990) with an existing licensee (i.e. as a “participant”)? **NO**

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
N/A	N/A

- 3.19 Has the applicant made any other application to Ofcom (or its predecessor broadcast regulators – the Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority) for any licence which has since been surrendered by the licensee or revoked by Ofcom (or one of its predecessor regulators)? **NO**

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
N/A	N/A

- 3.20 Is the applicant subject to any current or pending investigation by any statutory regulatory or government body in the UK or abroad in respect of any broadcast-related matter? **NO**

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex	Details of the investigation
N/A	N/A	N/A

- 3.21 Has the applicant – or any person(s) controlling the applicant – ever been subject to a statutory sanction for contravening a condition of a broadcasting licence in the UK or any other jurisdiction? **NO**

Licence number (or equivalent)	Name of service or multiplex	Nature of the breach	Sanction imposed	Date sanction imposed
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- 3.22 In relation to any of the directors, shareholders or other individuals named in this application, please provide any information which you think may be a relevant consideration for Ofcom in determining whether or not the applicant is fit and proper to hold a Broadcasting Act licence. If you have no information, please respond “N/A”.

N/A

- 3.23 Has the applicant – or any person(s) controlling the applicant – ever been convicted of an unlicensed broadcasting offence? **NO**

Full name	Date of conviction/action	Penalty
N/A	N/A	N/A

Financial and business plan

- 3.24 Explain how the applicant considers it will be able to establish its proposed service. This should include an explanation of the costs required to establish the multiplex service, and how these costs will be met:

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd will establish a successful multiplex operation by providing existing community and commercial broadcasters as well as new entrants with a reliable digital broadcast platform on both affordable and flexible terms.

Low Cost

Our core ambition is to offer service providers a low cost, easy to access, high quality digital broadcast platform and to ensure its long-term sustainability. To achieve this we will offer reserved space to CDSP licence holders at a deeply discounted rate - just 33% of the equivalent rate of the unreserved space. Additionally, all carriage fees will be free from VAT as we aim to remain below the VAT registration threshold. Niocast's success in running the Manchester small-scale multiplex indicates that many service providers will not be registered for VAT. The addition of VAT would be a very real additional cost to them and could be a possible impediment to them participating in small-scale DAB.

Target Market

Our target market comprises existing Ofcom-licenced analogue community and commercial broadcasters looking for a digital future – who wish to simulcast existing services as well as develop and launch new brand extensions. The DAB platform will also appeal to existing internet radio stations as well as potential broadcasters who have been unable to obtain an Ofcom licence due to a lack of analogue spectrum.

Advertising and Promotion

In addition to outreach via email and telephone calls, we have already attracted prospective services to the multiplex via our website and social media presence. We have successfully published news releases in industry and local press, as well as through social media and digital networks which has further reinforced our message to service providers.

Service Providers

The number of confirmed services at this time gives us confidence in the financial stability of our plans to launch and sustain the multiplex. Several of the service providers that have expressed interest in joining the multiplex have worked with Niocast Digital on the Manchester small-scale multiplex or have had a positive experience of one of the other small-scale DAB trials. The 'ecosystem' approach that was devised by Niocast and implemented in the Manchester trial has ensured fair access for services and a broad spectrum of service provision which we would look to replicate.

Current interest indicates there is overdemand for DSP unreserved space. We expect some of these will consider providing a CDSP licenced service to access reserved space. Additionally, on award of the licence, we will welcome prospective CDSP licence holders who have engaged with competitive applications.

Objectives

Our aim is to launch with a full 24 services which will cover our running costs. However, our financial planning ensures that if we don't reach this level, or services fall away over time and we experience a delay in replacing services from our waiting list, there is sufficient head room to ensure our finances remain robust.

Commitment

Building on Niocast's successful track record in Manchester, we are committed to continually investing in our platform - whether that is additional relay transmitters to improve coverage or new research & development. Niocast's continued investment in R&D led to the creation of Viamux – a company which supplies professional services and solutions to the small-scale DAB sector. Working with Switch Digital, the Birmingham trial operator, led to the development of Optimux - a low-cost cloud-based control panel that simplifies the management and monitoring of a small-scale DAB network. Optimux has gone on to implement cloud encoding - making it quick and easy to add new services to a multiplex.

Funding

The company will be funded through a combination of equity and primarily a shareholder working capital loan of £36,000. The shareholders have provided proof of funds to cover this funding.

Financial Forecast

We have attached a confidential spreadsheet that sets out detailed income and outgoings with a 36 month cash flow forecast.

3.25 Detail the sources of finance that will be used to fund the multiplex service,

A. Share capital

The company is capitalised at £100 .

B. Loan stock

A working capital loan of £36,000 will be provided by the shareholders. We anticipate this loan being repaid within 3 years. Further funding is available, if required.

C. Leasing/HP facilities (capital value)

There is no requirement for Leasing/HP facilities.

D. Bank overdraft

There is no requirement for a Bank overdraft.

E. Grants and donations
There is no requirement for grants or donations.

F. Other (please specify)
None

3.26 Provide evidence that sufficient funds are available to each investing shareholder to cover their proposed investment. For incorporated investing shareholders, provide a copy of the most recent statutory accounts.

✂ This information has been redacted by Ofcom for reasons of confidentiality

3.27 All of the funding identified above should be confirmed. If any funding has not been confirmed, or if there are any pre-conditions before the funding is released which have not yet been met, provide an explanation of what needs to be done, the dates by which it needs to be carried out, and any steps the applicant needs to take to ensure the funding is confirmed and/or released.

All funding is confirmed.

Relevant expertise and experience

3.28 Please provide details of who will be responsible for the day-to-day general management of the multiplex service (for example, dealing with programme service providers and contractual matters). Please also briefly state their previous relevant experience. (Note that any individuals or contractors who cannot be identified at this stage can instead be included in the confidential section (Part B) of the application form.)

Collaboration

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd. is a strongly local applicant group with collaboration at the heart of its ethos. It brings together five partner organisations each of them making a unique contribution by way of relevant skills and/or knowledge:

- Penistone FM 95.7 – the long-established and successful community radio station for Penistone which is 14 miles to the north of Sheffield;
- Dee Radio Group – which runs two locally focused commercial radio stations – Chester’s Dee 106.3 and Silk FM in Macclesfield; two DAB-only services Love 80s Liverpool and Love 80s Manchester; and owns 33% of the North East Wales and West Cheshire Multiplex
- Infocus Digital Media, the digital arm of Yorkshire’s Sunrise Radio which, 30 years after launch, remains the only Ofcom licensed Asian station on FM;

- Niocast Digital – which has operated the small-scale DAB multiplex in Manchester, since 2015. Having also run successful trials in Dublin and Cork, Niocast is one of the most experienced operators of small-scale DAB.
- Carousel Europe, which runs Sheffield’s online station ‘Asian Radio Live’, currently gearing up for a wider audience when the new multiplex is launched.

General Management

With its experience, Niocast Digital will lead the day-to-day general management of the multiplex service - managing commercial, financial and operational matters.

Launching, establishing and maintaining a DAB multiplex requires technical competence, operational expertise, financial stability, and an aptitude to manage third party relationships successfully.

For the past five years, Niocast Digital’s day-to-day management of the Trial Manchester small-scale DAB multiplex has included, but was not limited to; supporting, maintaining and upgrading the multiplex system hardware & software; recruiting new services to ensure that the multiplex is always full; negotiating carriage agreements; invoice management and payment collection; and working with programme services to ensure DSPS and regulatory licence compliance.

Sector Participation

Niocast has also taken a leading role in advancing the aims and objectives of the small-scale DAB sector over the past 5 years - participating in DCMS and Ofcom DAB planning meetings as well as parliamentary consultations. During 2019 Niocast also ran a series of highly successful UK-wide small-scale DAB workshops in Belfast, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Sheffield, Watford and Cardiff. The 20 workshops were attended by over 180 people from 80 applicant groups.

Technical & Operational Experience

Niocast Digital also founded Viamux – which supplies professional services and small-scale DAB solutions. Niocast is co-founder of Optimux – a software platform specifically developed, in 2020, for the day-to-day management of small-scale DAB multiplexes. Coming out of our experience of running one of the first UK small scale trials, Optimux equips small-scale DAB licensees with an easy to use dashboard for managing, monitoring and reporting on all aspects of a multiplex network as well as providing invoicing and direct debit collection to simplify the payment of carriage fees. Every aspect of the day-to-day management of a small-scale multiplex has been incorporated into Optimux.

Viamux will be responsible for the launch of the multiplex and Niocast for its subsequent day to day operation; in particular:

- Overseeing bit rate variations, enhancements or projects required by service providers, such as EPG provision, temporary services and data developments.

- Working with service providers and the transmission subcontractor to maximise multiplex functionality and efficiency.
- Monitoring and fault reporting, ensuring that the output of all service providers is correctly logged and compliant with legislation and codes.
- Developing new revenue streams.

Niocast will oversee any multiplex re-configurations and these will be undertaken in line with our policies and contractual agreements with service providers. Niocast will provide ongoing financial management of the multiplex; accounts, IT, admin, legal, customer service and technical support.

Team

All members of the wider team share a track record of successfully establishing and operating radio stations as well as local and small-scale DAB multiplexes. The combined experience of the stakeholders as multiplex operators and service providers demonstrates these capabilities and give us an excellent understanding of what is required in Sheffield & Rotherham – good coverage, service reliability and easy access for programme providers at an affordable and realistic price.

Key Personnel

John Evington

John is a radio 'lifer' having started out as a presenter at Manchester's first commercial station, Piccadilly Radio in 1978. From there he developed his craft at Centre Radio in Leicester before joining Stoke-on-Trent's Signal Radio in 1983 as launch Breakfast presenter and Head of Music. After a stint as weekend Breakfast host for BBC Radio 2 John returned to his commercial roots at Signal, where he became Programme Director, leading his team to deliver unrivalled audience figures. John developed new community-focused concepts such as 'Signal Action', the 'Signal Walkathon' and 'Signal Comes to Town'. He also devised the UK's first adult alternative format, 'ECHO 96' and re-launched the core station as 'Signal 1' on FM and 'Signal 2' on AM. Ultimately, John was promoted to Group Director of Programmes for Signal's parent company, Wireless Group plc, with responsibility for 17 local stations in England, Scotland and Wales, remaining in that role for four years.

In 2006 John was head-hunted by the Canadian media giant, CanWest, to lead the launch team at the south coast's regional adult alternative station, Original 106. He later teamed up with David Duffy to form The Radio People consultancy and, in 2015, successfully applied for the small-scale DAB Trial licence in Manchester.

Most recently John has been focusing on the small-scale DAB opportunity providing a launchpad for new formats and innovative creative thought. He conceived and developed the concept of a formatic 'Ecosystem' for the new small-scale tier designed to enrich listener choice and grow the digital listening share whilst minimising any impact on existing national and local services.

John continues to work closely with David Duffy in running their joint companies.

David Duffy

David Duffy's involvement in radio dates back to 1981 working with independent commercial radio station Essex Radio. In later years he went on to be a founding director of Wire FM, the commercial radio station in Warrington. In 2004 he established community radio station Cheshire FM and served as its first Chief Executive from launch until 2008. In 2008 he led a group in the acquisition of Southport commercial radio station Dune FM. The station was returned to profitability and successfully sold to a local group in 2010. The group also acquired Preston's Central Radio which was successfully sold to UKRD in 2011.

In 2013 David established Niocom Associates to provide professional consultancy services to commercial and community radio stations. In 2015 Niocom was awarded one of the ten trial small-scale DAB trial licences (Manchester) which has now been running successfully for over five years. In 2017 he co-founded Viamux to develop low-cost DAB solutions for small-scale DAB operators. Viamux's first customer was the Irish State Broadcaster, RTÉ. Viamux went on to work with ComReg, Ireland's communications regulator, to operate a DAB multiplex in Cork - the first independent small-scale DAB multiplex trial in Ireland.

In 2019 Viamux ran a series of 20 workshops across the UK designed to provide practical help and advice to stations, groups and individuals interested in applying for and launching their own small-scale DAB multiplex. Viamux is increasingly recognised as the leading small-scale DAB solutions provider and is working closely with many applicants - bringing expertise and experience to their DAB projects.

Chris Hurst

Chris Hurst has worked in commercial radio for over 30 years. He's been a director and Ofcom licence holder for over 23 years. Chris was the Local Radio Managing Director of the LSE quoted Wireless Group PLC with responsibility for 10 local stations and 3 local multiplexes until it was acquired in 2002 by LSE quoted UTV Media PLC he continued in the position until 2009 at which point he had responsibility for 17 analogue radio stations, 7 digital stations and 4 local multiplexes. In 2009 he took a shareholding in Dee 106.3 Ltd and became its CEO a position he continues to hold. The Dee Radio Group went on to acquire Silk FM Ltd.

Chris is a strong believer and supporter of DAB and the Dee Radio Group has launched digital services Dee on DAB, Love 80s Liverpool and Love 80s Manchester. Love 80s Manchester broadcasts on the small scale trial multiplex in Manchester and is the only small scale service in the UK that publishes RAJAR. The Dee Radio Group co owns the local multiplex for NE Wales and West Cheshire and Chris is a director of the holding company Muxco NE Wales and West Cheshire Ltd.

Chris was a consultant general manager of community station Pure 107.9 between 2009 and 2017 during which time Pure successfully applied for a grant to establish the Great Manchester Community Radio Alliance which ran for a number of years.

Chris is actively engaged in the radio industry as a whole and sits on the RadioCentre Advisory Group.

Chris attended Harvard Business School in 2005.

Martin Sugden

Martin has worked in radio for around 30 years with the last 11 years as co-founder of Penistone Community Radio Ltd that broadcasts as Penistone FM 95.7. He holds the position of Station and HR Director there. The station employs two people to run advertising and training and the station covers the small town of Penistone plus West Barnsley and into edge of West Sheffield. They also have 30 volunteers involved in the station.

Martin is a great believer in local community radio and the benefits that it brings to people through cost effective advertising and rural promotion of the countryside and farming. Martin is also proud of the media training that the station brings to local people and has had great success with many young people going on to work in radio full time having had no previous experience.

Penistone FM is one of the successes of Ofcom's Community radio programme and is now into its third 5-year licence. The station has also successfully applied for numerous grant awards including ITV Yorkshire Television's regional People choice award for their work.

Martin is proud to be working with the other members of the group to establish a successful DAB service for Sheffield & Rotherham.

Usha Parmar

Usha originally qualified as a teacher, and then worked as a highly paid project manager for a computer company. Usha surprised her family and friends in taking up the challenge of leading Bradford City Radio Limited trading as Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire), a station which at that time was struggling badly. With her experience, professionalism and dedication to the task, Usha injected much lifeblood into the station which quickly returned to profitability.

Both Sunrise Radio and Usha Parmar have become well respected household names recognised for their hard work and commitment. In 1999 Usha was named Asian Businesswoman of the Year in the first ever Asian Women of Achievement awards. She was further recognised over subsequent years culminating in a special Lifetime Award from the Hindu Cultural Society of Bradford.

Sunrise Radio was named the Ethnic media of the year 2001, 2002 and again in 2004 which can be seen as testimony to Usha's skills and leadership driven by a self-belief she encourages in all her staff. The awards such as the 2004 Media Personality of the Year

Award at the Asian Jewel Awards recognised not only Usha's success with Sunrise Radio but also her commitment to raising the profile of the Asian business in the Asian Community.

Usha has instituted a training programme at Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire) in order to tackle the lack of opportunities presented in the world of broadcasting where Asian talent is often not nurtured or encouraged by the wider industry or by the Asian community. Usha strives to ensure that the Bradford station can be a flagship for the professionalism, quality of service and high entertainment standards currently being offered in Asian broadcasting despite the limited number of Asian stations nationwide.

Usha is a role model in every sense of the word for all women from all backgrounds with her determination to fight the limitations or prejudices in a business world which hardly holds out arms of welcome to the female owner of a commercial station in the UK or is shackled by the outdated prejudices from the male members of the Asian Community towards a single Asian mother in such a prominent position.

Raj Parmar

Raj started his career in media at the age of 13 hosting a weekly show on Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire).

In 2001 he opened and operated a restricted radio service – Mela FM – covering the Manchester, Rochdale and Oldham area for the Manchester Multicultural Mela 2001. This led to Raj being invited to host the breakfast show on London wide radio station Club Asia in 2002.

Raj has a strong belief in lifelong learning to learn new skills which as result has made him into a true all-round performer. He is an accomplished dancer and has been part of Signature, Independence and Spice Entertainment (which he heads).

Raj is an active member of The Yorkshire Society, a not-for-profit organisation that celebrates and promotes Yorkshire; its economy, history, heritage, beauty and unique culture. Non-political and charitable by nature, the society brings the people of Yorkshire and those with an interest in it together, and raises funds to help and support initiatives, individuals, communities and businesses throughout the county.

Akash Hashmi

Akash is an MA journalism graduate with experience working in local radio for the BBC as well as on 'Newsdays' at university in both production and reporting roles. He currently works in SEO and copywriting and has a bachelor's degree in Forensic Science as well as being NCTJ Gold Standard qualified as a journalist.

Akash works on both Carousel and Asian Radio live as well as numerous other social enterprises within Sheffield, including Sheffield City Breakers, a group looking to give dancers in the Sheffield community a space to train and Meditation 2.0, a biofeedback start-up looking to utilise the latest in biofeedback technology in workplace wellbeing during the pandemic.

We believe that this highly experienced team has all the relevant expertise and local knowledge to deliver all aspects of launching and running a successful small scale operation.

3.29 Please provide details of who will be carrying out the installation and on-going maintenance of your multiplexing / transmitter equipment (or the name of your proposed transmission and multiplex provider if you intend to use a third-party organisation for these services). Please also briefly state their previous relevant experience. (Note that any individuals or contractors who cannot be identified at this stage can instead be included in the confidential section (Part B) of the application form.)

Function	Responsible party	Previous experience
Installation of transmission equipment	Viamux Ltd	Viamux is a leading supplier of small-scale DAB solutions having installed systems in the UK & Republic of Ireland. Viamux was borne out of the Niocast Digital team that has successfully operated the Trial Manchester small-scale multiplex over the past five years. More info: www.viamux.com
Ongoing maintenance of the transmission equipment	Viamux Ltd	
Installation of the Multiplexing equipment	Viamux Ltd	
Day-to-day technical management and maintenance of the multiplexing equipment (if different from response to question 3.28 above)	Viamux Ltd	

Timetable for coverage roll-out

- 3.30 In no more than 250 words, please tell us how soon after licence award you expect your multiplex service to become operational and achieve the coverage you are proposing. Please provide an outline project plan with timeline (e.g. a Gantt chart or similar) showing the high-level activities and tasks leading up to the launch of your multiplex service:

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB intends to launch the multiplex in less than 6 months from award of licence.

Upon award Sheffield & Rotherham DAB will immediately advance negotiations regarding the proposed transmission site(s). Following the procedure set out in Ofcom's Technical Policy Guidance, we will also liaise with other radio multiplex licensees on any impact our proposed transmitters might have. Once completed, Sheffield & Rotherham DAB will seek agreement from Ofcom for the proposed technical plan – mindful that the coverage proposed in our application is an award criterion and that any change will need to deliver broadly equivalent coverage.

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB will send final site details to Ofcom for clearance and evidence of liaison and agreement with those other radio multiplex licensees. Given the time taken to co-ordinate services we recognise the importance getting the final transmitter plans to Ofcom as quickly as possible.

Our timeline then focuses on the following key stages:

- Building and installing the DAB multiplex and transmission chain;
- Finalising carriage agreements with the service providers;
- Commissioning and testing the transmitter equipment for compliance with Ofcom's Digital Radio Technical Code; and
- Providing Ofcom with evidence of compliance with the licence and the Digital Radio Technical Code

Viamux has confirmed the availability of all equipment and services to meet our timescales.

The attached GANTT chart sets out precisely the key stages in the implementation of the multiplex together with a timeline.

4 Involvement of C-DSP providers; demand or support from programme providers

Involvement of C-DSP providers

4.1 Is the applicant body proposing to provide its own C-DSP service on the multiplex? **NO**

4.2 If the answer to the above question is 'yes', please provide a name and brief details of this proposed service. If the service is already licensed by Ofcom, the licence number should be provided:

N/A

4.3 If the answer to the above question is 'no', please provide details of any participant in the applicant body that is proposing to provide a C-DSP service on the multiplex. If the service is already licensed by Ofcom, the licence number should be provided:

Carousel Europe Ltd will be launching Asian Radio Live on the new multiplex as a C-DSP and has started the process for applying for a C-DSP licence.

Demand or support from programme providers

- 4.4 Please provide any evidence which has been gathered of support for the provision of the proposed multiplex service among providers or prospective providers of community or local digital sound programme services in the area to be served by the multiplex service:

Sheffield & Rotherham DAB has proactively reached out and engaged with many prospective service providers on a non-exclusive basis. This process began on 27th August 2018 when we began writing via email to existing community and commercial radio services requesting expressions of interest in joining a new multiplex. This was in response to Ofcom's consultation on the core elements of a new licensing approach for small-scale DAB.

We have openly shared our transmission plans, headline terms of agreement and indicative carriage fees. This transparency has allowed us to win the confidence of many service providers and we are committed to continuing with this open style of operation for the duration of the licence term.

To satisfy GDPR requirements, a full summary of contacts and conversations is included as a confidential attachment to Part B.

We have been in contact with 52 potential service providers. At the submission date for this application we had received 39 expressions of interest from service providers. 32 have already signed our Heads of Terms agreement (attached at part B). This demonstrates a strong appetite for small-scale DAB in Sheffield & Rotherham and supports our decision to invest in the transmission infrastructure necessary to deliver a high-quality service.

We will continue to seek additional service providers for our 'waiting list' and will be delighted to welcome any organisations that have hitherto given exclusive support to alternative applicant groups.

Our draft carriage agreement is attached.

5 Fair and effective competition

- 5.1 Please detail the measures that have already been taken, and will be taken before and during the licence period, to demonstrate that, in contracting or offering to contract with programme services providers, the applicant has acted in a manner calculated to ensure fair and effective competition in the provision of such services:

The shareholders in Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd bring together a track record of successfully establishing radio stations and local & small-scale DAB multiplexes. Niocast Digital has successfully operated the Trial Manchester multiplex for the past five years providing a platform for existing community and commercial services as well as creating a 'launch pad' for a large number of new programme services.

Our unique approach has been to foster a healthy and vibrant radio 'ecosystem' – not only embracing existing commercial and community stations but also new entrants, pop-ups and experimental concepts. Niocast's experience of running the small-scale DAB multiplex in Manchester led to the introduction of a 'format matrix' which has proved to be highly successful in ensuring a balanced range of services rather than a preponderance of any particular genre. Sheffield & Rotherham DAB will deliver unprecedented choice for listeners in a carefully controlled, transparent way. Our ambition is to always ensure that our multiplex enriches the listener experience by complementing, rather than competing with, local and national ensembles.

An award of this licence to Sheffield & Rotherham DAB Ltd ensures that the multiplex is operated by a locally led community radio company supported by experienced individuals who have successfully implemented and operated DAB multiplexes. All stakeholders are committed to small-scale DAB and have the financial stability to support that ambition. Our team is hugely experienced and well resourced, with significant practical digital radio expertise.

Launching a small-scale DAB platform is a significant undertaking and we have been encouraged by the number of positive responses to our plans. We have openly discussed our transmission plans, carriage terms and indicative fees. All fees charged will be pro-rata to capacity contracted by each service provider.

6 Declaration

- I hereby apply to Ofcom for the grant of a licence for the small-scale radio multiplex licence described above and declare that the information given in this application form is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, correct.
- I further declare and warrant:
 - i) that the applicant is not a disqualified person within the meaning of that expression as defined in Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Broadcasting Act 1990, as amended, or as a result of a disqualification order under section 145 of the Broadcasting Act 1996;
 - ii) that having made all reasonable enquiries neither the applicant nor any person controlling the applicant, as result of the grant to me of the licence, breach any requirement of Schedule 14 to the Communications Act 2003 with regard to the accumulation of interests in broadcasting services or to the restrictions on cross-media interests;
 - iii) that the applicant is not disqualified by virtue of the provisions of section 143 (5) of the Broadcasting Act 1996 in relation to political objects and the provisions of section 144 (3) of the Broadcasting Act 1996 in relation to the provision of false information or through the withholding of information with the intention of misleading Ofcom; and
 - iv) that no director or person concerned directly or indirectly in the management of the Licensee is the subject to a disqualification order as defined by section 145 (1) of the Broadcasting Act 1996.
- I understand that Ofcom reserves the right to revoke the licence (if granted) if at any time any material statement made to Ofcom is found to be false and to have been by the applicant or any member or officer thereof knowing it to be false. I also understand that under sections 144 and 145 of the Broadcasting Act 1996, the provision of false information could incur a criminal conviction and a disqualification from the holding of a Broadcasting Act licence. I further certify that, to the best of my knowledge, any matters which might influence Ofcom's judgement as to whether the directors and substantial shareholders involved in this application are fit and proper persons to participate in a radio licence, have been made known to Ofcom.

Full name of the person authorised to make the application of behalf of the applicant:

CHRIS HURST

Date of application:

20 NOVEMBER 2020

I am authorised to make this application on behalf of the applicant in my capacity as:

COMPANY DIRECTOR