

Your response

Question	Your response
<p>Question 1: Should Ofcom exercise its discretion to consent to the application to vary the Cheshire Mid small-scale multiplex licensed area, with regard to the statutory and policy considerations set out in this document?</p>	<p>We support any initiative to improve the quality of service offered to listeners by Small Scale DAB multiplexes.</p> <p>We agree that Ofcom’s consideration of this change request is in line with the statutory and policy considerations. We would support any approach that makes approving reasonable changes to small scale DAB licences as undemanding as possible, reflecting the nature of the market and the radio stations using small scale DAB.</p>
<p>Question 2: With reference to our impact assessment, do you agree with our assessment of the potential impacts of approving this application?</p>	<p>We understand that the licensee has made this request in order to improve coverage in their area, and to also protect the forthcoming Wigan & St. Helens multiplex from interference, as a result of Cheshire Mid and Wigan & St. Helen’s using the same frequency.</p> <p>We note that our multiplex area (Bolton and Bury) is directly adjacent to the Wigan & St. Helens area. In particular, Ofcom’s coverage map for Bolton & Bury shows coverage extending to Westhoughton.</p> <p>Whilst we understand that the original area definition for Bolton & Bury is now superseded by actual coverage, we note that the original proposed area extended further west with a reasonable overlap with Wigan & St. Helen’s area, including the town of Leigh.</p> <p>The licensee has proposed two changes in order to reduce the risk of co-channel interference to Wigan & St. Helens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A change to a directional antenna pattern * A change of frequency to Channel 10B <p>The details of the directionality aren’t available in the consultation, but it appears to introduce a 3-5dB attenuation towards Wigan & St. Helens. This would mostly counteract the proposed power increase (4.7dB).</p> <p>The planning guidance requires that licensees minimise any interference above 38dBµV/m into areas using the same frequency. We assume that the original licenced power (100W omni) was within the required limits for outbound interference to Wigan and St. Helens, and that</p>

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	<p>the intention of introducing directionality is to maintain outgoing interference at/below that level.</p> <p>We're therefore not sure why the licensee has also requested a change of frequency to Channel 10B, which now creates a co-channel situation with our multiplex. That would appear to be shifting the presence of any interference from Wigan & St. Helens to our multiplex area.</p> <p>We have done some modelling, which can't be entirely accurate because we don't have the details of the directional pattern proposed by the licensee. That indicates that there may be some risk to the western end of our existing coverage, where the noise floor will increase (and this signal/noise ratio will degrade). This puts <u>existing</u> reception at risk. This is contrast to the Wigan & St.Helen's multiplex, which has no existing listeners that can be deprived of service.</p> <p>Therefore, whilst we support the initiative to improve coverage in Cheshire Mid, we ask Ofcom to consider very carefully whether a change of frequency to channel 10B is necessary to achieve the aims, and the potential impact on <u>existing</u> listeners in the Bolton and Bury multiplex area.</p>

Please complete this form in full and return to smallscaleDAB@ofcom.org.uk.