

Dear Sir or Madam

An approach to DAB coverage planning: A consultation for the Government's Digital Radio Action Plan

The Communications Commission is the regulatory body covering radio broadcasting in the Isle of Man. While the allocation and administration of radio spectrum in the Isle of Man is undertaken by Ofcom, broadcasting licences on the Island are awarded and regulated by the Communications Commission.

The Isle of Man is, for the purposes of the relevant clauses of the UK Communications Act 2003, included in the national radio services undertaken by the BBC and Classic FM, administered by Ofcom. Ofcom also administers the spectrum allocated for local radio services on the island.

The Isle of Man also contributes significantly to the funding of the BBC's radio services through its full participation in the Licence Fee regime, and funds its own on-Island public service radio broadcaster. Furthermore, both Ofcom and the UK DCMS have recognised that the BBC is key to any switchover plan for the Isle of Man, that national DAB coverage must match national analogue FM coverage to achieve this successfully, and that the Isle of Man should indeed be included in the coverage planning of the BBC's national multiplex.

Ofcom's current consultation on DAB coverage planning seeks to explain how it will "replicate on DAB, as far as practicable, the editorial coverage of existing FM radio services". The Commission agrees that this is a commendable aim for Ofcom. However, the Commission would have expected to be consulted directly on the proposals contained in the current consultation, given the direct effect that the Consultation's propositions would have on the Island, and is disappointed that this did not happen.

The Communications Commission would appreciate a more continuous dialogue with Ofcom and the UK Government on these matters, and would wish to be involved fully in the planning and consultation phases of the Digital Radio Action Plan. We therefore look forward to engaging constructively in such a dialogue for the development of the plan in future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Begg
Head of Regulatory Policy