

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Christopher

Surname:

Mccallion

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:

You may publish my response on receipt

Additional comments:

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.:

Yes as it means that only a limited number of county wide services will serve the whole of Devon and this will deny the opportunity for any existing and new local services to continue

to serve local areas of Devon on DAB. It is also likely that most of these new county wide digital services will end up as nothing more than relays of national networks with regional adverts as in other parts of the UK. Heart has recently made a commitment to provide separate local news bulletins for North Devon - This would be impossible under the proposed new arrangements,

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.:

No because there will only be a handful of new digital stations, mostly relays of national networks broadcast from London. The rest of the world is embracing DAB+ which allows 4 times the number of stations on a single multiplex. Ofcom should stop the rolling out of DAB across the UK in favour of DAB+. Continuing to use DAB will put the UK radio industry at a serious and long term disadvantage compared to its counterparts in countries embracing DAB+

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 because North Devon has always been a separate licence area and until recently had its own local commercial radio service. These proposals would mean that North Devon is left permanently without the local radio service that it enjoyed from 1992 to 2010.

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.:

No. DAB is outdated technology already being replaced by DAB+ throughout the world. The UK is one of the only countries sticking with DAB. Also 4G mobile broadband is likely to negate the need for DAB within the next decade as most radio listening will transfer directly from analogue FM to 4G mobile broadband with unlimited choice for listeners. DAB is therefore likely to remain an unprofitable means of broadcasting.

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?:

n/a

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.:

Ofcom should only approve the request from Now Digital on the condition that the North Devon area is able to carry its own separate stations. There is also a strong desire amongst the local community for a new local radio station to replace the local service that was lost when Global Radio closed Heart North Devon formerly Lantern FM. As North Devon is a rural area far away from the continent there must be FM frequencies for one or more new local radio services in North Devon. As there is a proven and strong local demand for such a service, Ofcom should therefore advertise a commercial licence for a new local radio service or allow a community radio station to take advertising to cover its costs. The current economic climate means that not permitting community radio stations to take advertising is unsustainable as donations to keep the services running can no longer be relied upon. The current situation also means that Heart has a monopoly on local commercial radio advertising in North Devon, this gives Global Radio one of the largest commercial broadcasters in Europe an unfair advantage and denies local businesses a choice of services on which to advertise on.