

## Supplementary written evidence submitted by Ofcom

Ofcom needs to make decisions on administrative priorities. We have decided to prioritise, for the time being, the rollout of small-scale DAB (SSDAB) over further rounds of analogue licensing. This is because it enables us to meet as much demand as possible from both community radio and smaller commercial radio stations, while making the most efficient use of finite radio spectrum. Our aim is to promote a diverse range of radio services, and SSDAB provides a low-cost route for community, local or specialist music services to broadcast on digital radio. We therefore consider it is currently in the interests of UK audiences as a whole to focus our resources on SSDAB as it will ultimately offer audiences more stations, more efficiently, and in more locations, than FM can.

To put this into context, one frequency for SSDAB will provide between 10-20 services for listeners in an area, whereas a frequency attributed to FM will only offer one service. SSDAB will provide opportunities for many new radio services, including very locally focused services.

We [reviewed this policy prioritisation in May 2022](#) and still consider it remains important to continue with our current approach given the level of demand we have seen for small-scale DAB to date. However, we plan to review our priorities, including plans for any future rounds of analogue radio licensing, as we approach the end of the rollout of small-scale DAB licensing.

To date, Ofcom has awarded 86 small-scale radio multiplex licences across the UK, 30 of which are now on air (small-scale radio multiplexes are required to launch no more than 18 months after the award of the licence). We have recently awarded a further three multiplex licences in Wales (Newport & Chepstow, North Pembrokeshire, and South Pembrokeshire), bringing the number of small-scale multiplex licences awarded in Wales to eight, with Cardiff DAB now on air, which simulcasts the analogue community radio services, Bro Radio and Radio Cardiff.

I hope that this information is helpful, but please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any further questions.

*14 August 2023*