
Small-scale radio multiplex licence

Application form – Part A (public)

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

Switch Radio

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

North Birmingham

Public contact details:

Switch Radio, Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6BT

Email: info@switchradio.co.uk

Telephone: 0121 288 1075

Publication date: 1 September 2020

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1. Overview

You should complete this form if you are applying for a small-scale radio multiplex licence. You can find further information about small-scale radio multiplex services in the [Guidance notes for applicants and licensees](#).

This application form is divided into two parts – **Part A** (which we will publish on our website) and **Part B** (which will be kept confidential). This document constitutes Part A; [Part B of the application form](#) is available on our website.

If you encounter any issues using these forms, please contact broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk.

The purpose of this form

- 1.1 You should complete this form if you are applying for a licence to provide a small-scale radio multiplex service (a ‘small-scale radio multiplex licence’). A small-scale radio multiplex service is the means by which DAB digital radio stations (‘digital sound programme services’) are broadcast, and can transmit around ten stereo digital sound programme services (or a significantly higher number if the DAB+ standard is utilised). The application form is divided into two parts – **Part A** (which we will publish on our website) and **Part B** (which will be kept confidential). This document constitutes Part A; [Part B of the application form](#) is available on our website.
- 1.2 Small-scale radio multiplex licences are awarded by Ofcom in a competitive process. Applications are judged against specified criteria, and Ofcom awards the licence to the applicant which it considers best meets the criteria.
- 1.3 You can find more information about small-scale radio multiplex licences in Ofcom’s published [guidance notes](#) for licence applicants and licensees. This document also includes detailed instructions on how to complete the application form, and information on the next steps in the application process. Please read this guidance and the ‘frequently asked questions’ carefully before completing both parts of the application form.

Provision of information

- 1.4 Ofcom requires complete and accurate information to assess applications. In particular, we must be satisfied that those applying for a licence are ‘fit and proper’ to hold a licence and are not disqualified from participation in a licence.
- 1.5 It is an offence under the Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended) to provide false information or withhold relevant information during the application process, and may be grounds for revocation of a licence subsequently granted.

Publication of applications

- 1.6 Part A of the application form (i.e. this document) will be published by Ofcom on our website as soon as practicable following the closing-date for applications. Part B of the

application form will remain confidential. Non-confidential responses to any clarification or amplifications will also be published on the Ofcom website, alongside the Part A application form. Ofcom may take into account any comments received from the public, which can be made to it with respect to Part A of the application submitted.

- 1.7 In submitting Part A of the application, you agree that Ofcom may publish contact details for the licensee (as required on the cover of this application form), which may include personal data, on the Ofcom website and/or in other relevant publications. If you have any questions about the information we publish, or there are any changes to this information, you should contact the Broadcast Licensing team by email (broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk).
- 1.8 Ofcom considers issued small-scale radio multiplex licences to be public documents and copies of licences will be made available to third parties on request, noting that personal data apart from the name of the licensee may be redacted.

Data protection

- 1.9 We require the information requested in this form in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see Ofcom's [General Privacy Statement](#) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.

Keeping up to date with broadcasting matters

- 1.10 We strongly recommend that you sign up to receive Ofcom's regular email updates on broadcasting matters including notification when the Broadcast Bulletin is published.
- 1.11 Ofcom publishes a [monthly radio licensing update](#) which lists new services licensed, licences revoked, licence transfers, and changes to licensed services during the past month.
- 1.12 To sign up to receive these communications, please visit <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/email-updates> and select 'Broadcasting'.

2. Extent of proposed coverage area

About this section

Under section 51(2)(a) of the 1996 Act, we are required to consider the extent of the coverage area an applicant proposes to achieve within the area which has been advertised. This section therefore asks you to describe the coverage you are proposing to achieve. Further questions on the detailed technical arrangements for the proposed service, including questions on the transmission site(s) that you intend to use and your plans for how the multiplexing and distribution of your service will be arranged are contained in Part B of the application form.

Before completing this section of the form, you should read carefully the notes on 'Extent of proposed coverage area' in Section 4 of Ofcom's [guidance notes for licence applicants and licensees](#).

- 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):

Our coverage plan provides broad coverage across the advertised North Birmingham area. The plan provides coverage from Little Sutton in the North, Coleshill and Curdworth in the East, Chelmsley Wood in the South-East, Alum Rock/Ward End in the South, and towards Winston Green/Handsworth in the West.

We are not proposing to actively serve any areas outside of the advertised polygon. Our coverage plan provides coverage to almost 80% of the population within the polygon, with minor gaps in the north and the south. We will seek to address these where possible, but they are outside of the 18-month scope for this proposal.

- 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 dBµV/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.

The coverage prediction map is included as an appendix.

- 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+) which is included within ATDI's modelling software.
Have your predictions been generated by a commercial organisation? If so, by whom?	Our coverage predictions have been generated by Viamux using HTZ Communications software from ATDI. Transmission advice and guidance has been sourced from Viamux.

3. Ability to establish the proposed service

About this section

In Section 3, we are asking questions about the applicant company, its financial and business plan, the relevant expertise and experience of those who will be involved in providing the small-scale radio multiplex service, and the timetable for coverage roll-out. The answers to these questions will enable Ofcom to assess the application under section 51(2)(c) of the 1996 Act. Additional information will be submitted in Part B.

In the first part of this section we are asking for details of the applicant's officers (directors or, in the case of LLPs, designated members), its shareholders and participants. Where applicable, we are also asking for details of the officers of the applicant's parent and associated companies or LLPs etc.

If any of the individuals named in your responses are known by more than one name/version of their name, all names must be provided.

Certain persons are disqualified from holding a small-scale radio multiplex licence. This section asks the questions which enable us to consider this for those types of disqualification which apply specifically to bodies corporate. It also asks questions which are relevant to our assessment of the applicant's fitness and properness to hold a small-scale radio multiplex licence.

The response boxes and tables should be expanded or repeated where necessary, or provided in a separate annex.

'Officerships' in this section refers to: directorships of bodies corporate, designated memberships of LLPs, or membership of a governing body of an unincorporated association (including partnerships).

The remaining questions in Section 3 relate to the applicant's financial and business plan, the expertise and experience of those involved, and the planned timetable for launching the proposed multiplex service.

Applicant's details

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

Switch Radio

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

08438993

- 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:

Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6BT

- 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	Dean Philip John Kavanagh
Job title	Director
Address	Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Birmingham, B35 6BT
Telephone	0121 288 1075
Mobile phone	07739 323 449
Email	dean@switchradio.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
Dean Philip John Kavanagh	Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6BT	England	Qubene Ltd, Director: Information Technology Services Optimux Digital Ltd, Director: SSDAB management platform development	University of Birmingham, Postdoctoral Research Fellow

¹ This should be the same address as is held and published by Companies House.

James Fairgrieve	Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6BT	England	None	None
Stephen Malcolm Higgs	Lower Ground Floor, Topcliffe House, Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6BT	England	None	University of Birmingham: Management Information Systems Manager

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
N/A	

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		

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		

- 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		

- 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		

- 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 question 3.9				
Full name of >5% participant	Number of shares	Total investment (£s)	Total investment (%)	% of voting rights
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.

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	
A body whose objects are wholly or mainly of a political nature, or which is affiliated to such a body	No	
A body whose objects are wholly or mainly of a religious nature; ²	No	
An individual who is an officer of a body falling within (b) or (c);	No	
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	
An advertising agency or an associate of an advertising agency	No	

² Please refer to Sections 3 to 5 of [Ofcom's religious guidance note](#) for details on how we determine the eligibility of religious bodies to hold certain broadcasting licences.

Details of applications, licences and sanctions

3.14 Is the applicant a current licensee of Ofcom?

Yes

If yes, please provide the licence details expanding the table if necessary:

Licence number	Name of multiplex
SSDABWT007	Trial Birmingham

3.15 Has the applicant held an Ofcom broadcasting licence before?

Yes, both of which are currently active

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
CR000174	Switch Radio
DP101073BA/1	Switch Radio – Trial Birmingham

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

Only in connection with the active licences held by Switch Radio, as listed above.

If yes, please provide the details expanding the table if necessary:

Dates licence was held or dates of involvement	Licence number (if known)	Name of service or multiplex
N/A		

3.17 Does the applicant control an existing Ofcom licensee?

No

If yes, please provide the licence details expanding the table if necessary:

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex

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

If yes, please provide the following information, expanding the table if necessary:

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex

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

If yes, please provide the following information, expanding the table if necessary:

Licence number	Name of service or multiplex
N/A	

3.20 Is the applicant subject to any current or pending investigation by any statutory regulatory or government body in the United Kingdom or abroad in respect of any broadcast-related matter?

No

If yes, please provide the following details expanding the table if necessary:

Licence number (or equivalent)	Name of service or multiplex	Details of the investigation
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

If yes, please provide the following details relating to each sanction expanding the table if necessary:

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

- 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 to provide, please respond “N/A”.

Switch Radio has been operating a community radio service in North East Birmingham since 2010. In addition, Switch Radio has been the operator of the Trial Birmingham small-scale multiplex since 2015.

Over the course of the last ten years, Switch Radio has had an impeccable record of compliance regarding all the licences it has held and continues to hold. We have operated our SSDAB multiplex in North Birmingham in a successful manner, to the extent that our multiplex is now full, with additional services waiting. We believe this is a reflection of our reasonable and effective management of a SSDAB multiplex.

The majority (two-thirds) of the directors of the company have been in place since 2013 when the current entity took over the licence from the previous licence holder (Headline Media). All the Directors hold voluntary positions at Switch Radio and have significant experience in the operation of the station and live in the local area. We understand the needs of the locality and are well positioned to operate a service for the local area.

- 3.23 Has the applicant – or any person(s) controlling the applicant – ever been convicted of an unlicensed broadcasting offence?

No

If yes, please provide the following details:

Full name	Date of conviction/action (dd/mm/yy)	Penalty
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:

We estimate that, to deliver our transmission plan, we will need to make a capital spend in the region of £30,000. This capital investment is required for the purchase of the transmission equipment required to cover the North Birmingham area and deliver our proposed transmission plan. This equipment includes, but is not limited to, SDRs (with GPSDO boards), antennas, amplifiers, filters, and IT hardware. In addition, we will make use of our existing equipment to supplement our site rollout. In our business plan, we have included the headline equipment purchase cost in Year 1, although we may make purchases before award if the decision around award was to cross over an accounting period (as

discussed above). If we do purchase in advance, we will use existing funds to procure the necessary equipment. This makes best use of our current finances and ensures that we are in a heightened state of readiness should Ofcom make a licence award in our favour. In the case we should be unsuccessful, we will sell the equipment (unused) to other operators.

As the current operators of the North Birmingham Trial Small Scale multiplex, we intend to utilise our existing carriage fee revenue stream to underwrite our ongoing equipment spend. We will revise our carriage fees to reflect the increased costs in establishing and maintaining an SFN. As we are the current operators of the multiplex, we have real-world appreciation of potential carriage fee revenue. We propose to supplement this route of funding with grant applications for capital costs. In order to help maximise our chances of identifying successful funding, we have been successful in an application for support from the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council, who will help us identify the most appropriate source of funding for our applications. However, as evidenced from our business plans, the project is not dependent on our success in obtaining grant funding.

Our planning has sufficient flexibility to allow us to deliver on our plans if we are unable to secure grant funding. We project income (including carriage fees, our initial capital investment, and grants) of £74,408 in Year 1, £56,123 in Year 2, and £59,422 in Year 3. The higher level of income in Year 1 represents the additional funding required to offset the initial capital spend.

Expenditure is expected to be £56,373 in Year 1, £30,323 in Year 2, and £31,373 in Year 3. Much of the expenditure is recurring, so the above figures do not represent values which must be paid en masse at one time. The larger spending in Year 1 relates directly to the purchase of equipment required to establish the multiplex. If we were successful in our application, we would work with other successful bidders to build purchasing power and help reduce overall outlay. In Years 2 and 3, expenditure is driven by a variety of running costs, primarily transmission site rental, but also insurance costs, repairs and maintenance, and network costs.

Our projected levels of income and expenditure have a reasonable degree of buffer capacity such that we would be able to continue our delivery plan in the instance that our income projections turned out to be inaccurate. In a 'worst case' scenario, we would consider delaying the delivery of later transmission sites until later (but within) the 18-month window, reducing the financial pressure on the immediate period and allowing for the establishment of increased cashflow. We would then bring each site to air in order of their contribution to overall population coverage. We would stress that we consider this as a fallback option and not what we would expect to utilise in practice.

We believe that our proposals (which are based on our real-world experience of running a SSDAB multiplex) are reasonable and show that our plans for North Birmingham are sustainable in the long-term. While a four-site network is at the higher end of complexity for SSDAB network, we believe that North Birmingham is a highly competitive area for services, and as such deserves a robust SSDAB network that meets the needs of this region.

Switch Radio is a non-profit and none of the directors of the company are paid. Any revenue made by the multiplex will be used to support the running costs of Switch Radio, the applicant body.

- 3.25 Detail the sources of finance that will be used to fund the multiplex service, under the following headings:

Share capital

Switch Radio is registered without share capital.

Loan stock

Switch Radio cannot issue shares/stock in return for loans.

Leasing/HP facilities (capital value)

We do not propose to utilise leasing or hire purchase activity.

Bank overdraft

We do not propose to utilise overdraft or credit facilities.

Grants and donations

We will submit grant applications in order to offset some of the capital costs required.

Other

We will use our carriage fee revenue (from our existing multiplex) to build income to fund equipment purchases. We may make these purchases in advance of a decision from Ofcom depending on the date on which a decision is expected (see 3.24).

- 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.

Insofar as is possible, the funding from our existing revenue streams is confirmed. In addition, as our multiplex has a waiting list, we do not expect capacity to sit dormant on Trial Birmingham during either the application or installation window and therefore we are submitting plans based on these projections.

We have proposed to make some grant funding applications to offset capital costs. It is expected that, if we are successful, funders will require confirmation of a licence award before the funding is released.

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.)

Switch Radio has successfully operated the Trial Birmingham SSDAB multiplex since 2015 and therefore we have significant, real-world experience of running this type of network. Our experience in this domain is spread across both the technical and administrative requirements of running such a multiplex. Over the last five years, along with a bedrock of experience, we have built a number of tools and developed a range of processes that have allowed us to run the multiplex smoothly, whilst not impacting negatively on other operations within the station. To evidence our ability to operate a SSDAB multiplex successfully, we have attached uptime reports for the last three months up to the 1st November 2020. Our average uptime for this period was over 99.9% (see performance data addendum).

As part of our developmental work during the trial, we were instrumental in the development of Optimux, an online management platform for SSDAB multiplexes. This software platform incorporates financial, technical, and administrative management of multiplexes built on ODR technology. This tool allows us to manage the full workflow of SSDAB – from the management and delivery of contractual documents, monitoring and technical management, through to invoicing, reporting, and analysis. This tool has made the day-to-day administrative work of the multiplex relatively straightforward and we propose to use it to manage the North Birmingham multiplex. This tool has been made commercially available to the SSDAB community.

Within Switch Radio, Dean Kavanagh will act as the primary contact for services on the multiplex. He has been the primary manager of the multiplex over the last five years and has excellent working relationships with existing services on the multiplex and with other SSDAB operators. He has significant experience in the ODR platform and the Linux operating system, is the lead developer for Optimux Digital Ltd, has ported and wrapped the ODR encoder for use on Microsoft Windows, and has developed

a number of cloud encoding and multiplexing solutions to help deliver redundancy and flexibility on SSDAB networks.

So as to ensure Switch Radio is not entirely dependent on one Director, we have also provided training to the entire senior management team, so they are able to use our management tools to administer the multiplex should they need to. In the case that our directors need additional support, we have identified external contractors who can provide support (UK DAB Networks Ltd and Viamux Ltd).

- 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	Switch Radio (supported by external contractors as required)	The installation of existing TX site was performed in-house. This site passed commissioning by Ofcom in a single visit. We will utilise Viamux for any additional installation needs required. Viamux have a long history of successful SSDAB activity, supporting installations in Ireland and across the UK.
Ongoing maintenance of the transmission equipment	Switch Radio (supported by external contractors as required)	We have successfully maintained, monitored, and replaced our transmission equipment over the last five years. Should we need additional support, we will consult externally with Viamux.
Installation of the Multiplexing equipment	Switch Radio	We have successfully installed new version of the ODR-DabMux software over the last five years. In addition, we have built a number of multiplexers in the cloud. We have sufficient internal expertise to deliver this requirement.

Day-to-day technical management and maintenance of the multiplexing equipment (if different from response to question 3.28 above)	Switch Radio	We have successfully managed and maintained our multiplex service over the last five years. Over the last five years we have delivered updates and patches as required. We will continue to deliver the day-to-day management in house, assisted by the automated tools provided by Optimux.
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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:

We propose that we will bring the completed network to air near the end of 2021. We have provided a detailed Gantt chart in the appendix to delineate our plans. This gives us significant headroom against the legislated timeframe in the case of unexpected problems, difficulties, or delays.

Speaking broadly, we are proposing to have our current site, e.g. the Trial Multiplex TX site, as the first site to come to air on 8A. We have a range of equipment currently available at the site currently being used for the current trial multiplex, so we propose that this site can be brought to air quickly. We would, however, need to wait for some specific pieces of new equipment, such as a new filter and antenna. We will order these as soon as the licence is awarded. We will also need to wait for authorisation and clearances.

Following this, we would begin a programme of installation across the remaining three sites. We would seek to install the equipment in advance of a 'commissioning window'; a three-day period where we would use an external engineering contractor to help us generate and provide commissioning data.

Once the equipment is at the additional sites, has been commissioned, and subsequently approved by Ofcom for use, we will bring the additional sites into the network individually. This will allow us to ensure that the SFN operation is as we are expecting and allow us to make changes to the configuration such as adjusting timing offsets.

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

About this section

Section 51(2)(ca) of the 1996 Act requires Ofcom to take into account the desirability of awarding a small-scale radio multiplex licence to a body corporate that is providing – or proposing to provide – a C-DSP service in the locality being advertised (or involving such a person as a participant in the licence-holding company).

Section 51(2)(f) of the 1996 Act requires Ofcom to take into account evidence that the applicant has support from providers interested in having their existing or planned programme services carried on the proposed multiplex.

Note that we do not require applicants to provide us with a full-line up of services they intend to provide, or details about the content of those services.

Involvement of C-DSP providers

4.1 Is the applicant body proposing to provide its own C-DSP service on the multiplex?

YES

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:

We are proposing to apply for a C-DSP licence for Switch Radio.

Switch Radio, operating under a Community Radio licence from Ofcom (CR000174), is a community radio station in North East Birmingham, and we currently provide a community radio service to that locality. We aim to develop a positive sense of community and increase active involvement in community life. The station's programmes concentrate on the needs of the local communities and provide topical and relevant programming.

Our station aims to Engage, Education, and Empower. Through our programming, we cater for a broad range of people across north-east Birmingham. Our project work and volunteering positions provide opportunities for an equally diverse range of people; from those without qualification and skills, to those with experience who are looking to move into media.

As part of Switch Radio's project work, we are currently in the process of applying for funding to start a youth-led radio station across the region. If we are successful in this application, we would propose to supply a second C-DSP service as part of that project, should sufficient space be open and available. If there is exceptional demand for C-DSP capacity, in order to

ensure fair access we would be minded to use non-reserved capacity for this service (rather than having Switch Radio occupying two available slots).

- 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:

N/A

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:

Switch Radio has operated the Trial Birmingham multiplex for approximately five years, and in that time, we have carried a number of services. Demand for carriage on the multiplex continues to be high, evidenced by both the persistence of a waiting list and the fact that the multiplex is currently full to capacity (note: although there are 24 CUs available as of our application date, this slot has already been allocated to a service which is due to come to air). It is of note, that for four of the five years in which we have operated Trial Birmingham, we have held a waiting list for carriage, so we are confident there is sufficient demand from programme providers.

Not including ourselves, we have signed Heads of Terms agreements with 29 providers for 31 services. In addition, we have Letters of Interest from two further service providers each looking to provide a service on the multiplex. This goes some way to confirming that a small-scale multiplex for in this region would most likely have sufficient demand to operate on a stable footing. While a number of the services included in our discussions are currently carried on the existing Trial Birmingham multiplex, we have had positive discussions with a range of new services who have identified SSDAB as a fit for their future plans. Importantly, several services in our proposal originate within the North Birmingham polygon, and have given us an expression of their intent to explore C-DSP licencing. Therefore, we are also confident that we will see demand for C-DSP capacity early in the roll-out process. We have offered to provide application support to help local community stations apply for these licences.

A list of these services is provided, including a copy of the accompanying Heads of Terms document for each, in Part B of our application. As we have made clear to the signatories, these Heads of Terms do not represent a carriage agreement, are not legally binding, and if we are oversubscribed at the point of multiplex launch, we may not be able to offer capacity to all.

5. Fair and effective competition

About this section

Section 51(2)(g) of the 1996 Act requires Ofcom to assess whether, in contracting or offering to contract with programme service providers, the applicant has acted in a manner calculated to ensure fair and effective competition in the provision of community and local digital sound programme services.

In assessing applications, we need to have confidence that the prospective small-scale radio multiplex licensee has approached a wide range of potential service providers. Negotiations that have taken place between the applicant and potential service providers need to have been demonstrably fair, and the terms of any contract for service provision must be fair and non-discriminatory.

Applicants should note there are two further questions relating to fair and effective competition in Part B of the application form.

- 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:

Over the last five years, we firmly believe that Switch Radio has operated the Trial Birmingham multiplex in a way that is fair and transparent. As an existing operator, we have worked with over 40 services across five years to help enable radio services to access Small Scale DAB. During this time, we have offered fair contracts, pricing, and opportunity to all that apply.

During the terms of the licence, we would operate a simple rate card, with an additional charge based on the number of required capacity units. We are proposing to offer a 65% discount to C-DSP licence holders if they are using the reserved capacity on the multiplex. In line with the expectations of Ofcom and the legislation, we will make our rate card public. Our management platform, Optimux, has capabilities built into it that allow for public access to our rate card.

Prior to transition from Trial Licence to Full Licence, we will liaise carefully with the services currently on the trial multiplex. While it is not our desire to disrupt listener experiences by 'starting again', we are mindful of both the need to create capacity (in order to allow for the required C-DSP reserved space) and the need to ensure fair access for stations who have expressed an interest in carriage.

If we are successful in a licence award, we intend to ensure sufficient publicity to allow for potential service providers to come forward. If we have firm and binding interest from more services than we can carry, we will select services that provide the best range of programming from the local area. We will open a public consultation to help us ensure we meet the needs of the area (we have done something similar before to identify the first ten services to carry on the Trial Birmingham multiplex).

Once the multiplex is in its licence period, we will assess applications in chronological order. If capacity allows, we expect to accept applications provided they are legitimate and possess the correct

licencing and administrative documentation. However, if multiple enquiries arrive in quick succession and we are not able to accommodate them all, we may select services that better expand the range of programming available to the local area on the multiplex. We again would reserve the right to garner public opinion on how best to use the capacity and use this information to help inform our decisions.

We propose to make a clear carriage agreement and make this available on our website for not only services, but also the public to scrutinise. The terms and conditions in this carriage agreement would apply for all services joining the multiplex at a given time, and we do not propose to create, modify, or edit these agreements for each service beyond simple elements such as names, addresses, and technical parameters. Our proposed carriage agreement, as it currently stands is included as an Appendix to Part B of this application.

Under no circumstances would we auction capacity, nor would we consider a willingness to 'pay more' as a factor in making a decision on carriage. We will not charge or accept carriage payments at above what is illustrated on our public rate card.

6. Declaration

About this section

This form must be submitted by the body corporate which will hold the licence. The declaration must be certified by a company director or the company secretary, and covers all information provided by in the applicant in both Part A and Part B of the application form. The declaration must also be dated.

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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 (BLOCK CAPITALS) of the person authorised to make the application of behalf of the applicant:

DEAN PHILIP JOHN KAVANAGH

Date of application:

22nd November 2020

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

Company Director

You now need to complete the confidential section (Part B) of the application form.

