



department for
**culture, media
and sport**

Local TV: Pioneer locations

A consultation seeking views on potential local TV licence locations and the order in which they could be awarded

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the quality
of life for all

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

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Summary

The Government is committed to enabling the emergence of local TV in the UK. Utilising spectrum which can broadcast to the digital terrestrial television (DTT) platform means that many localities across the UK will receive local TV services. This document sets out a list of the possible towns and cities for these services. However, not all locations will be able to receive local TV on DTT and the Government anticipates that these locations should instead be able to receive local services distributed through internet protocol television (IPTV) technology in due course.

Following a detailed technical assessment by Ofcom of the coverage of geographic interleaved spectrum at the main transmitter sites across the UK, this document presents a list of 65 locations where there is the potential for local TV services to be licensed and broadcast on digital terrestrial television (Freeview). This list is at Annex A and illustrated in map form at Annex B.

The list gives the main conurbation that can be served using the local geographic interleaved spectrum in each area. In many cases, more than one town or city will be covered by each spectrum footprint and these are also indicated in the list.

Ofcom's website contains more detailed local site-by-site coverage maps and further technical information¹.

Local TV licence locations

In July 2011, the Government published a new framework for local TV which set out proposals to create a number of local TV content licences supported by a single multiplex

¹ <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/localtv>

operator (a 'MuxCo')². That document explains in detail the nature of the proposed framework, the legislative provisions the Government proposes to implement and how the licensing process will be developed following publication of a range of potential local TV locations.

Set out at Annex A is a list of towns and cities across the UK covered by good geographic interleaved spectrum from existing television transmitters. These locations have the potential to receive a local TV service under the Government's proposed framework.

In due course, subject to the necessary legislative provisions coming into effect, Ofcom will run the licence award process and will determine the order and tranches for licence release. Given the range of potential licensable locations, it is expected that some content licences will be issued before others. Content licences are likely to be awarded in tranches as this ensures a more manageable process for Ofcom and will allow the infrastructure build to commence once the first licences have been awarded.

The final determination of the pioneer towns and cities that will receive a licensed local TV service and in which order will depend on the following factors:

- (a) the level of demand for a service (from potential audiences, service operators and multiplex operators); and
- (b) the population covered in the given area which will in part determine the long-term viability of that service.

Given the factors listed above, it is highly likely that the largest conurbations will be licensed in the first tranche; we anticipate this will include London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast.

Other locations for local TV will vary depending on demand and responses to this paper which will help to inform Ofcom's determination on which localities are licensed first and the order of licence release.

² <http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/8298.aspx>

Making the case

To help inform the order of licence release, the Government is now seeking views on the level of demand from local TV service providers, audiences and potential multiplex operators (known as 'MuxCo', which will bid to hold the single multiplex licence that will be used to carry the local TV services). Responses should be limited to 2 pages.

Local services: You can make the case for your town or city to receive a local TV service by answering the following question:

- *Question 1: Why do you think your town or city (as listed at Annex A) should be among the first of those selected to bid for a local TV licence?*

MuxCo: We are also interested in hearing from those who might consider bidding to become the multiplex operator for local TV, known as the 'MuxCo'.

- *Question 2: We would like to understand what approach potential MuxCo bidders would take to the locations in this paper in order to make their business models work. Which locations are necessary to ensure a successful MuxCo model?*

This process is being run in parallel with the wider consultation exercise on the legislative framework the Government is putting in place for local TV. This paper should be considered in conjunction with the Government's recent local TV framework publication³.

How to respond

Responses to the above questions should be limited to two pages. Please send your responses by **23 September 2011** to: local.tv@culture.gsi.gov.uk or in writing to:

Peter Bakewell
Media Team
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

³ <http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/8298.aspx>

Please see Annex C for information on the consultation process. We intend to publish the responses we receive, produce a summary and share all of the information received with Ofcom. Ofcom will use this information to help inform the decision on which locations should be licensed first. We expect the locations for the first tranche of licences to be announced later this year.

Background

1. Local TV framework

In July 2011, DCMS published details of its proposed framework for local TV⁴. This set out the specific measures the Government intends to introduce including three statutory instruments (secondary legislation) to be laid in Parliament later this year.

The Government's intention is for a block of geographic interleaved (GI) spectrum to be awarded to a single licence holder which will be obligated to build the multiplex infrastructure required for local DTT services to be broadcast. This licence holder will become the multiplex company (or 'MuxCo') that will operate the multiplex infrastructure to which the local licensed services will have guaranteed access. The local TV services will be separately awarded local content licences.

The award of the licences will be a matter for Ofcom, subject to the provisions proposed through the local TV framework.

2. Locations

Through detailed planning work and analysis of areas with good GI spectrum coverage, Ofcom has identified 65 locations available for local TV broadcast services. These locations are set out in the attached list at Annex A. In total, if all locations supported a local TV service, over 60% of the population would be covered. Annex B provides a map of the primary locations listed in Annex A.

⁴ <http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/8298.aspx>

The locations listed at Annex A represent the largest towns and cities within the transmitter area. In most areas the spectrum coverage is likely to reach across more than one town or city. The list makes clear which major towns and cities fall within each licence area.

Ofcom is providing additional information on the number of households that may be able to receive the services based on the list at Annex A and is producing more detailed maps showing indicative coverage that might be achieved on a site-by-site basis alongside further technical information⁵.

The questions in the 'making the case' section above ask for views from potential MuxCo bidders on the pioneer locations desirable for a successful MuxCo model and will also help to gauge the level of demand from individual locations to receive a local TV service.

3. Will all the locations that have good GI coverage get local TV?

The determination of which locations will get local TV under the Government's framework depends on the demand from bidders for both the local TV service licences and the bidders for the MuxCo licence. These demands in turn will be informed by audience demand for a service in their local area and the strength of commercially viable local service propositions.

The licences for the local TV services and the licence for MuxCo will be awarded by Ofcom following enactment of the relevant secondary legislation. The MuxCo licence award process will be designed in a way that seeks to maximise the incentives on the licence holder to build as many local multiplexes as possible.

However, there are limitations on the amount of local infrastructure that can be built with the available capital funding from the BBC. Further, not every location will necessarily be able to support a DTT-based television station on a commercially sustainable basis. Therefore, the Government does not anticipate all locations at Annex A will get a licensed digital local TV service on the digital terrestrial television platform (DTT) in the first instance. Both the pioneer locations and areas which do not have adequate spectrum coverage should be able

⁵ For further information, see Ofcom website: <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/localtv>

to receive local services distributed through internet protocol television (IPTV) technology in due course.

The Government's presumption is that the locations with the largest populations will be among the licences awarded in the first tranche. The reason is that these locations are likely to be more attractive to potential local TV service providers (to maximise advertising revenues through population reach) and to help sustain the commercial viability of MuxCo so that in turn MuxCo can help to support local TV.

4. What about the locations not listed here?

Appropriate geographic interleaved spectrum is not available across the whole of the country. Restrictions due to topographical barriers and interference with other TV transmitters mean that not everywhere in the UK will be able to receive a local TV service licensed under the proposed framework.

The Government recognises this and sees its local TV strategy as being in two stages. The first stage is encouraging local TV on DTT services where possible (as outlined above) and the second is for local TV to be available through internet protocol television (IPTV). IPTV has the potential to carry a huge number of broadcast services, often at relatively low cost. More and more set top boxes and television sets are capable of receiving IPTV services and this will continue as YouView is rolled out from 2012 and the non-DTT providers expand their IPTV offers. The Government is committed to rolling out superfast broadband to at least 90% of the UK and 2mbps to the remainder, which will mean that most households will have the opportunity to receive IPTV services in due course. However, the Government expects that it will take some time before households routinely use IPTV to fulfil all of their television needs.

In the interim, DCMS is in discussion with the main platform operators about EPG prominence for all local TV services (including video on demand services and IPTV services). It is expected that the main providers will offer a front-page way of accessing local TV through an application, button or tab. Sky has already offered the 'yellow button' for its Anytime+ users to access local TV and Virgin is considering the most appropriate way, perhaps through applications, to provide local services with prominence.

Active consideration is being given to other ways in which the emergence of local TV on the IPTV platforms can be encouraged. DCMS is committed to ensuring the long-term and sustainable future of local TV and this includes ensuring that a smooth transition to IPTV is possible. As part of its communications review, DCMS is considering the potential for promotion of local content across all platforms.

5. What happens next?

DCMS will collate the information it receives in response to this document and publish a summary in due course. The information received will also be passed to Ofcom to inform its overall licensing and award process and potential bidders for the licences will need to have regard to this.

Annex A: Locations with the potential for a licensed pioneer local TV service

The list of 65 primary locations below has been obtained by considering around 70 terrestrial television transmitters that serve the largest number of people in the UK. For each of these transmitters, Ofcom has assessed the available spectrum, trying to identify a frequency that could permit the broadcasting of an additional digital television multiplex without causing undue interference to the other television multiplexes. Where a suitable frequency was found to be available, coverage maps were produced. These are available from Ofcom.

The largest settlement in each location that is shown to be served by the transmitter has been taken as the ‘principal’ settlement for that area (shown under the ‘primary location’ column). The list also details other sizeable settlements which are served by a single transmitter (shown in the ‘coverage also includes’ column).

Primary location	Coverage also includes
Aberdeen	
Ayr	Kilmarnock
Bangor	
Barnstaple	
Basingstoke	
Bedford	Sandy
Belfast	Lisburn
Birmingham	Greater Birmingham area, part of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley
Brighton and Hove	
Bristol	
Bromsgrove	
Burnley	Nelson, Colne
Cambridge	
Cardiff	Newport, Bridgend
Carlisle	
Carmarthen	
Derry / Londonderry	
Dover	Parts of Folkestone
Dundee	Arbroath, Perth
Edinburgh	Dunfermline

Elgin	
Falkirk	Stirling
Glasgow	East Kilbride, Motherwell, Paisley
Gloucester	Cheltenham
Greenock	Dunoon
Grimsby	Parts of Kingston upon Hull
Guildford	Parts of Woking
Haverfordwest	
Haywards Heath	Heathfield, Uckfield
Hemel Hempstead	Parts of St Albans
Hereford	
Inverness	
Keighley	
Kidderminster	
Lancaster	Morecambe, Heysham
Leeds	Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield
Limavady	Parts of Ballymoney, parts of Coleraine
Liverpool	St Helens, Widnes, Wigan, Wirral
London	Greater London area
Luton	
Maidstone	
Malvern	
Manchester	Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport
Middlesbrough	Hartlepool, Stockton on Tees
Mold	Denbigh, Ruthin
Newcastle	Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland
Norwich	
Nottingham	
Oxford	Abingdon, Didcot
Plymouth	
Poole	
Preston	Blackpool
Reading	
Reigate	Parts of Crawley
Salisbury	
Scarborough	
Sheffield	Parts of Rotherham
Shrewsbury	
Southampton	Eastleigh, Fareham, parts of Isle of Wight, parts of Portsmouth, Winchester
Stoke on Trent	Newcastle under Lyme
Stratford upon Avon	
Swansea	Llanelli
Telford	Telford
Tonbridge	Parts of Tunbridge Wells
York	

Annex B: Map with potential pioneer local TV licences by primary location



Annex C: Information on the consultation process

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes, these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”), the Data Protection Act 1998 (“DPA”) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

The consultation is guided by the Government’s Code of Practice on Consultation which is available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/better-regulation/consultation-guidance>

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