

## **Statement on L-DTPS coverage area extension – Reading**

On 17 November 2015, Ofcom considered a request from Comux UK limited and That's Media limited ('That's Berkshire'), the successful applicant for the local digital television service for Reading,<sup>1</sup> to extend the 'Reading' coverage area by deploying a wider antenna pattern until 1 January 2018.<sup>2</sup>

Ofcom noted that the proposed wider antenna pattern would extend the coverage into geographical areas which are adjacent to, and have an affinity with, the existing coverage area and therefore the number of households able to receive the Reading service would increase by almost 60% compared to the existing coverage.

Ofcom also noted that as a result of this Reading coverage enhancement, there will be a reduction in the coverage footprint for the Oxford service (at the edge of the Oxford coverage footprint) of around 10% at the time when That's Berkshire launches, expected to be in July 2016. Ofcom decided that on balance the significantly larger increase in the coverage for the Reading service provided the overall greatest benefit for viewers. Ofcom considered that the enhancement of the Reading coverage would have a positive impact on the viability of the Reading local service and the local multiplex and noted that the extension would not result in any significant increase in overlap between the Reading local TV service and other local TV services outside of the That's Media Group.

Ofcom considered that the requested coverage extension would not have affected its assessment at the time of the licence award that the proposed service fell within the statutory description of an L-DTPS, and that it met the conditions for such services under the statutory scheme. Ofcom was also satisfied that the requested extension would not impact on the ability of That's Berkshire to deliver and maintain the Programming Commitments proposed in its application at the time of the licence award.

Taking these factors into account, Ofcom approved the proposed coverage extension request up until 1 January 2018.

### **Next steps**

Ofcom will vary the local multiplex licence to include the revised technical parameters for the Reading coverage area and publish a variation note to this effect. Ofcom anticipates that the That's Berkshire service will launch within two years from the original award date, i.e. by June 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Ofcom decided to award the L-DTPS licence for Reading to That's Berkshire on 3 June 2014. The service has a two year window to launch. Ofcom's award decision can be found here:

<http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/tv/local-tv/applicants/Reading.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ofcom's position on the availability of spectrum for coverage extensions and the use of additional frequencies for local TV is published online: <http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/tv-broadcast-licences/local/coverage/position-coverage-extensions>