

Statement on L-DTPS coverage area extension – Cambridge

On 17 March 2015, Ofcom's Broadcast Licensing Committee (BLC) considered a request from Comux UK limited and Cambridge Presents Ltd ('Cambridge Presents'), the successful applicant for the local digital television programme service for Cambridge,¹ to extend the 'Cambridge' coverage area by deploying a broader antenna pattern until 1 January 2018.²

The BLC noted that the proposed wider antenna pattern would result in an extension in the coverage area to the north of Cambridge and an increase to the predicted DPSA,³ and therefore the number of households able to receive the service, from approximately 83,000 to 95,000 households. The BLC considered that this would have a positive impact on the viability of both the local service and the local multiplex and noted that the extension would not result in any significant increase in overlap between the Cambridge local TV service and other local TV services.

The BLC considered that the requested coverage extension would not affect 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. The BLC was also satisfied that the requested extension would not impact on the ability of Cambridge Presents to deliver and maintain the Programming Commitments proposed in its application at the time of the licence award.

Taking these factors into account, the BLC 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 Cambridge coverage area and publish a variation note to this effect. Ofcom anticipates that the Cambridge Presents service will launch within two years from the original award date, i.e. by October 2015.

¹ Ofcom decided to award the L-DTPS licence for Cambridge to Cambridge Presents on 22 October 2013. 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/Cambridge.pdf>

² 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>

³ Digital Preferred Service Area – areas where we would expect viewers to be making use of a particular transmitter (and in this case able to receive the local TV services) rather than pointing their aerials at an alternative transmitter.