

**House of Lords Select Committee on Communications
Digital switchover of television and radio
20 January 2010**

Digital UK Submission

1. Digital Television Switchover – on track, on time and under budget

- a. 16 main transmitter groups, including 355 relay transmitters, in four TV regions – Border, West Country, Wales and Granada – have completed switchover.
- b. In total, 4.8 million homes have now completed switchover (18.2% of the UK).
- c. Switchover in Wales will complete on 31 March 2010 when the last analogue signals from the Wenvoe transmitter, near Cardiff, are turned off.
- d. The West TV region, home to nearly one million households, will complete switchover on 7 April 2010.
- e. STV North and Channel TV regions will switch over later this year – 11 main transmitters, 2.3 million homes.
- f. By the end of 2010 27% of UK households will have switched over.
- g. Digital UK's £201 million communications budget – funded from the Licence Fee – is currently projected to be £55 million under spent at the end of the project.
- h. Since 2005, the proportion of UK homes with digital TV has risen from 66% to 89%. In all regions post-switchover surveys have shown 100% conversion amongst those intending to convert.
- i. In every region switched to date, at least 90% of viewers have said they are comfortable with switchover, and at least three-quarters agree switchover is a positive thing. (source: Digital UK Switchover Tracker)

2. Granada (north west of England) switchover

- a. The Granada TV region, the second largest region in the UK with three million homes served by 70 transmitters, completed switchover on 2 December 2009 with no unexpected issues.
- b. There has been a predominantly positive press and stakeholder response though we have noted some adverse media coverage around the requirement to retune Freeview televisions and set top boxes and the predicted overlap of Welsh terrestrial TV signal into Granada at switchover (see below).
- c. The consumer communications programme consisted of television, radio, press and local outdoor advertising and provided more than 100 'opportunities to see' the switchover message in the six months before switchover. In Granada, 88% of those surveyed after switchover said that they had received enough information.

- d. The local community outreach programme conducted by Digital Outreach, a consortium of Age UK, Community Service Volunteers and Collective Enterprises Ltd, undertook 1,300 meetings in the voluntary and community sector and 30,000 meetings with charity clients. Digital Outreach also works for the Digital Switchover Help Scheme targeting its older and disabled audience as appropriate.

3. Risks and Issues

- a. Television switchover has seen a steady decline in the average level of risk over the past year as switchovers have moved from plans to concrete successes in the first four regions.
- b. The main issues which have attracted some viewer concern include:
 - i. The requirement to retune digital televisions and set top boxes at switchover. While viewer understanding of retuning improved significantly after the 30 September 2009 nationwide retune, retuning remains the primary driver of calls and queries at switchover.
 - ii. The reception of non-preferred regional services at or after switchover. For example in Granada, up to 4% of homes in Granada were predicted to see Welsh TV services at the top of the electronic guide. Most viewers are able to choose the relevant regional service and relegate the others. We would expect this figure in West where another 4% of homes are expected to see Welsh services at the top of the guide where switchover completes on starts on 23 March 2010.
 - iii. After switchover 98.5% of viewers will be able receive Freeview services. Nine out of 10 will get 40+ channels, the remainder served by relay transmitters will get 15 channels (this contrasts with 4 or 5 channels in analogue). Some viewers of relay transmitters have expressed their disappointment at not receiving the full Freeview service.
 - iv. From time to time the broadcasters make changes to the Freeview channel line-up. For example following a Freeview retune on 30 September 2009, viewers of relay transmitters could no longer receive ITV3 and ITV4. Some viewers expressed disappointment at losing these services.

4. Background on Digital UK and the Switchover Programme

Digital UK

- a. Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit company created in 2005 to lead the digital switchover. Our shareholders are the broadcasters and multiplex operators, which each have Charter or licence obligations to achieve switchover – BBC; ITV; Channel 4; Five; Arqiva and Teletext.
- b. Our objectives are to co-ordinate the roll-out of the high power digital terrestrial television network; to inform viewers about what to do and when; and to liaise with retailers, manufacturers, aerial installers, housing providers, local government and the Third Sector (via our contract with Digital Outreach).

- c. We are funded primarily from a ring-fenced portion of the Licence Fee. The communications budget of £201 million is fully funded from the Licence Fee. The operations budget of £31 million is funded by each of our shareholders in proportion to their shareholdings.
- d. We work closely with the Switchover Help Scheme which offers assistance for those 75 or over, on certain disability benefits, registered blind or partially-sighted, or living in a care home.

5. The Switchover Programme

- a. A regional conversion programme began with the Copeland pilot in 2007. The programme is running to the Government's 2008 to 2012 timetable.
- b. Each of the 67 transmitter groups switches at a different time.
- c. Digital Terrestrial Television (Freeview) currently covers 73% of UK households; TV switchover will deliver universal coverage of 98.5% (equivalent to analogue today).
- d. The TV Switchover Programme will also free 14 UHF channels of spectrum for re-use (managed by Ofcom).
- e. The Programme is reviewed annually by the Office of Government Commerce, and has also been examined in the past by the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and the National Audit Office. The programme is on track, will be on time and will be under budget.

Transmitter switchover status at 8 January 2010

Switchover Project	Transmitter Group Name	DSO 1 Date [as published]	DSO 2 Date [as published]	Households Served	Project Status	Cumulative % of homes switched
Copeland	Whitehaven	17-Oct-07	14-Nov-07	22,000	CLOSED	0.1
Scottish Borders	Selkirk	06-Nov-08	20-Nov-08	52,000	CLOSED	0.3
West Country A	Beacon Hill	08-Apr-09	22-Apr-09	132,000	CLOSED	0.8
	Stockland Hill	06-May-09	20-May-09	206,000		1.5
Border B	Douglas	18-Jun-09	16-Jul-09	38,000	CLOSED	1.7
	Caldbeck	24-Jun-09	22-Jul-09	286,000		2.8
West Country B	Huntshaw Cross	01-Jul-09	29-Jul-09	66,000	SWITCHED	3.0
	Redruth	08-Jul-09	05-Aug-09	122,000		3
	Caradon Hill	12-Aug-09	09-Sep-09	255,000		4
West Wales	Kilvey Hill	12-Aug-09	09-Sep-09	132,000	SWITCHED	5
	Preseli	19-Aug-09	16-Sep-09	83,000		5
	Carmel	26-Aug-09	23-Sep-09	110,000		6
North Wales	Llanddona	21-Oct-09	18-Nov-09	95,000	SWITCHED	6
	Moel y Parc	28-Oct-09	25-Nov-09	179,000		7
	Long Mountain	04-Nov-09	03-Dec-09	24,000		7
Granada	Winter Hill	04-Nov-09	02-Dec-09	3,041,000	SWITCHED	18
South Wales (+ Blaenplwyf)	Blaenplwyf	10-Feb-10	10-Mar-10	26,000	GREEN	18
	Wenvoe	03-Mar-10	31-Mar-10	649,000		21
West	Mendip	24-Mar-10	07-Apr-10	913,000	GREEN	24
STV North A	Bressay	05-May-10	19-May-10	9,000	GREEN	24
	Keelylang Hill	12-May-10	26-May-10	10,000		24
	Rumster Forest	02-Jun-10	16-Jun-10	23,000		24
	Eitshal	07-Jul-10	21-Jul-10	12,000		24
	Skriaig	14-Jul-10	28-Jul-10	8,000		24
STV North B	Angus	04-Aug-10	18-Aug-10	210,000	GREEN	25
	Durriss	01-Sep-10	15-Sep-10	221,000		26
	Knockmore	08-Sep-10	22-Sep-10	39,000		26
	Rosemarkie	06-Oct-10	20-Oct-10	70,000		26
STV Central A	Torosay	13-Oct-10	27-Oct-10	17,000	GREEN	26
Channel Islands	Fremont Point	17-Nov-10	N/A	50,000	GREEN	27
Anglia A	Sudbury	2011	2011	523,000	GREEN	29
	Sandy Heath	2011	2011	966,000		32
Central A	Bromsgrove	2011	2011	30,000	GREEN	32
	Lark Stoke	2011	2011	38,000		32
	Nottingham	2011	2011	74,000		33
	Ridge Hill	2011	2011	286,000		34
	The Wrekin	2011	2011	282,000		35
STV Central B	Darvel	2011	2011	197,000	GREEN	36
	Rosneath	2011	2011	44,000		36
	Black Hill	2011	2011	1,020,000		40
	Craigkelly	2011	2011	455,000		41
Yorkshire	Belmont	2011	2011	712,000	GREEN	44
	Chesterfield	2011	2011	34,000		44
	Olivers Mount	2011	2011	31,000		44
	Sheffield	2011	2011	119,000		45
	Waltham	2011	2011	815,000		48
	Emley Moor	2011	2011	1,756,000		54

Switchover Project	Transmitter Group Name	DSO 1 Date [as published]	DSO 2 Date [as published]	Households Served	Project Status	Cumulative % of homes switched
Central B	Sutton Coldfield	2011	2011	2,121,000	GREEN	62
	Oxford	2011	2011	415,000		64
	Fenton	2011	2011	128,000		64
Anglia B	Tacolneston	2011	2011	408,000	GREEN	66
Meridian	Hannington	2012	2012	481,000	NOT YET OPEN	68
	Midhurst	2012	2012	99,000		68
	Rowridge	2012	2012	733,000		71
	Whitehawk Hill	2012	2012	114,000		71
London	Crystal Palace	2012	2012	4,858,000	NOT YET OPEN	89
Meridian	Hastings	2012	2012	18,000	NOT YET OPEN	90
	Heathfield	2012	2012	216,000		90
	Tunbridge Wells	2012	2012	54,000		91
	Bluebell Hill	2012	2012	217,000		91
	Dover	2012	2012	231,000		92
	Margate	2010	2012	9,000		92
Tyne Tees	Bilsdale	2012	2012	595,000	NOT YET OPEN	94
	Chatton	2012	2012	33,000		95
Ulster	Limavady	2012	2012	104,000	NOT YET OPEN	95
	Brougher Mountain	2012	2012	37,000		95
Tyne Tees	Pontop Pike	2012	2012	790,000	NOT YET OPEN	98
Ulster	Divis	2012	2012	508,000	NOT YET OPEN	100