

Dear Sir,

I write with reference to the Ofcom FM consultation, currently as a listener, but possibly in the near future as a license applicant. I have answered each question, except for 6 and 15, as I have no opinion on the matter.

1. I agree in principle with Ofcom's objectives for the licensing of FM commercial radio.

2. The Ofcom proposal appears to be vague in the respect that currently it is licensing RSL stations outside of the 87-88 waveband. Does this mean that Ofcom will cease to license RSL stations outside of this waveband? If so will the frequencies outside be used for community and low power FM stations? If not, why not?

3. The interests of consumers will be hard to measure with a blanket policy of licensing just large or small scale stations. Ofcom should look at the existing radio stations and MCAs before deciding what size station to advertise.

4. The benefits of combining smaller frequencies to form a large scale license are that, in theory, it should enable more niche formats to appear on the radio. However, the limitation to this, is that what may work in one regional, may not be suitable for another area. For example, in the instance of a Solent license, a rhythmic hits station covering the Solent may not be of any extra benefit to Bournemouth, whilst a 'full service' station may not be of benefit to those in Portsmouth. Could it be feasible for Ofcom to advertise the adjoining frequencies together? For example by advertising two licenses at the same time, applicants can 'tweak' proposals in each region, and should they decide to have networking, can manage that accordingly. Applicants may also decide that bidding for a large area is not feasible and could concentrate on just one area. For example a full service station may bid for a Bournemouth license, but not a South Hampshire one, whilst a jazz station may decide to bid for both licenses, with each having a networked content outside of breakfast.

5. I agree with Ofcom's proposal regarding advertising two licenses per month.

7 & 8. It may be of benefit to vary questions asked, but within a set framework, which could vary depending on local population, or existing (if applicable) local radio choice.

9. I feel one follow-up letter should be appropriate, firstly to save

time wastage by the regulator, but also, because I feel an application should be clear and concise from the outset. By following up, follow-up questionnaires, this may put at a disadvantage those applicants that have been written clearly.

10. By allowing online applications this will be a benefit to the general public to decide which application they may wish to send support to for Ofcom. It will also benefit from being 'on demand', which is a big advantage over the Radio Authority Library!

11. I am not sure why short listing is a good idea. Not only may it slow down the licensing process, but the merit of all applications should be considered on the same basis.

12. By referring to unsuccessful applicants, whilst it may be considered embarrassing by some, I feel that it may help organisations improve on their weaknesses for future license applications. It may also help reduce criticism of the regulator, by appearing to be more transparent.

13. I feel happy with the proposals except for that of short listing.

14. A possible change may be, as I suggested in response to question four, the ability for applicants to decide whether or not to bid for a station as a regional license or two local licenses (creating a quasi-regional) at the same time, or just one station serving one area. My suggestion may serve the interests of listeners, but also advertisers, with the possibility of both regional, and local advertising.

Yours faithfully,

Ash Elford