

Head of Radio Planning and Licensing Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 9HA

Dear Mr Stock

Re: FM licensina consultation'

I am writing to express my interest in the Ofcom consultation document, on the future plans for FM radio, as published on the website.

These proposed plans have been very well thought out and I would agree with all the proposals put forward. Anything to speed up and simplify the advertisement and award of radio licenses would be very welcome. I have been involved with trying to get a new ILR commercial licence for Newry and surrounding area since 1998 and I realise of course, that this has been delayed because of various different factors including the transition from the Radio Authority to Ofcom, having responsibility for governing television and radio services in the UK.

I feel that Ofcom would benefit from answers to each individual question, however: this would be inappropriate on my behalf as some questions refer to the UK mainland only and I could not comment.

With reference to question 5:

Advertising two maybe even three licences a month would be preferred, depending on the administration capabilities of Ofcom, these could be a large scale, small scale and a community radio licence. I don't believe that either advertising approach will affect resource management; groups involved in applying for a radio licence should be aware and prepared for when a licence will be advertised and make suitable provisions during the lead-time.

With reference to question 6:

Each area is obviously different from the next and I feel that information should be relevant to the actual area being advertised. Generic guidance is not suitable for all, for example London and Belfast, two completely contrasting areas.

With reference to question 7:

Information requested should be relevant to the licence advertised and if the applicant is an existing operator, maybe not as detailed, for example, finance plans, but I think each application should be judged purely on its content, and not on previous experience or success. New single operators can be just as successful as huge corporations.

With reference to question 8:

Any additional information to assist applicants will be welcome although I feel that possible candidates will have lots of new ideas and proposals when considering a new service and should not necessarily be confined to listening patterns already established, but use these as guidance. This question may not be as applicable in Northern Ireland.

With reference to question 9:

A single letter of clarification would be the preferred method. The Radio Authority method was time and resource consuming. Trying to arrange dates and times for telephone interviews, is a hit and miss situation and can only serve to elongate the overall process.

With reference to question 10:

Twenty-five printed copies of a one hundred page application form seemed a little excessive. One electronic copy is less expensive and should be simpler to process, although electronic malfunction must be considered. I also agree that applicants will have their proposals well under way by the time a licence is advertised.

With reference to question 11:

A short-listing process will only serve to slow down licensing. I think that this area should be avoided.

With reference to question 12:

I don't see how information about unsuccessful applications would benefit me, I think I would prefer to have a reference to the winning applicant only.

Unfortunately due to time restrictions and current work commitments, I am unable to make any further comments.

Yours faithfully

Colum Walker