

OFCOM CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

Station: 107fm The Bee
Dates Sampled: 18, 19 and 20 October 2007

CONTENT SAMPLING FINDING

The station's 25% speech commitment is achieved through news, traffic and travel updates, together with regular local information items and general presenter banter.

The two extended news bulletins at 13.00 and 18.00 provide an opportunity for local stories to be covered in more depth.

Sports information and the commitment to programming of interest to the Asian community were in evidence.

The music mix covered a range of genres and decades. The cap on current and recurrent tracks was not exceeded.

The station's public file outlines its obligations together with general information about the station.

This station is operating within its Format

Character of Service

A MUSIC AND INFORMATION STATION FOR 25 TO 54 YEAR OLDS IN THE BLACKBURN, DARWEN, ACCRINGTON AND SURROUNDING AREA, FOCUSING ON LOCAL ISSUES.

Format Detail

107fm The Bee will be a full service radio station for Blackburn, Darwen, Accrington and surrounding areas.

Its unique point of difference will be the high profile and significant resources it gives to local news and information.

Hourly news bulletins giving prominence to local stories will be aired seven days a week during daytime with national news featured at other times.

Daily features will include an entertainment guide, community action features and greater detail on the day's most prominent local news stories. Subject to negotiations, coverage of Blackburn Rovers F.C and the areas other local teams will be provided.

Weekend output will include a programme of up to three hours in duration for the local Asian community (containing a mix of appropriate music and speech). Speech will not normally fall below 25% of daytime output.

The adult contemporary music mix will comprise hits from the last four decades; current/recurrent hits will not account for more than 55% of the music played.

Format Obligations: Pre-sampling observations

107fm The Bee was awarded the licence for Blackburn and the surrounding area on 16 December 2004 and began broadcasting in October 2005. The output should

provide a strong commitment to the local area, with an emphasis on the coverage of local news stories together with community action items and information about the area. There is also a Format obligation to provide local sports coverage and a commitment for a weekend programme for the Asian community.

The station should provide an Adult Contemporary music mix from the last four decades, with a cap of 55% on current and recurrent material.

Localness and General Format Findings (excluding news)

Weekday breakfast programming provided general presenter banter, music-based competitions, dedications and an irreverent take on stories from the daily papers. Afternoon programming on the 18 October included an interview with rock artist, Jake Stigers, who talked about his new album and played live in the studio. This was a good humoured exchange in which an American from Idaho was encouraged to join in the station's initiative to identify listeners' favourite local sayings or phrases and repeat them in a convincing Lancashire accent.

In addition to regular weather, traffic and travel updates, there were clearly signposted points of information across the day alerting listeners to what's happening in the area. The 'Community Information Noticeboard', 'Bee List' and 'Bee Events' provided details about a range of events and activities happening in the area. On air appeals encouraged charities and voluntary organisations to make use of these slots.

Saturday programming included 'The Bee Sport Show', which provided match updates on Blackburn Rovers, Middlesbrough, Bolton, Derby and Wigan. 'Bombay Lounge' broadcast from 22:00 – 01:00 included a mix of music, dedications and discussion about the latest Asian film releases.

News

The station provides locally-produced news bulletins on the hour from 06.00 till 07.00 Monday to Friday, with headlines at 06.30, 07.30, 08.30, 16.30 and 17.30. There are two extended bulletins at 13.00 and 18.00 on weekdays. Weekend bulletins run from 08.00 to 14.00, with headlines at 08.30 and 09.30. At other times national and international news is carried on the hour.

The two extended bulletins were 10-12 minutes in duration and provided a range of local stories and issues, which were enhanced through the inclusion of relevant audio. Examples of local stories covered during this monitoring period included: trial begins for a Darwen man charged with manslaughter in France; plans unveiled for Accrington regeneration; report published on East Lancashire health care provision; Ribble Valley tenants' meeting is given an opportunity to comment on development plans; five local disability groups given additional funding; objection to local wind turbine proposals; four students from Clitheroe to participate in catering contest, and a police appeal to horse box vehicle owners to install tracking devices because of the increase in thefts.

Music

The Format requires an Adult Contemporary mix from the last four decades with a cap on current and recurrent tracks. Current and recurrent material was represented by artists such as, Amy Winehouse; Newton Faulkner; Mika; Leona Lewis; Scouting for Girls; Hoosiers; Foo Fighters; Kooks; Mutya Buena; Infernal; Kasabian and Plain White T's. Across daytime we also noted tracks from a variety of genres and

decades: Simply Red; Maroon 5; Toploader; Lighthouse Family; Prince; The Eagles; The Cars; Carly Simon; Scott McKenzie; Annie Lennox; Genesis; Doobie Brothers; Fleetwood Mac; Beach Boys; Paul Young; Small Faces; The Beatles; The Turtles; The Troggs; Blur; Oasis; Joe Cocker; Culture Club; The Commitments; KT Tunstall; Bob Marley; The Commodores; George Benson; Odyssey; Al Green; Bill Withers; Luther Vandross; Donna Summer and The Lightning Seeds.

The station applied in October 2007 for a change to its Format to include occasional syndicated programming – specifically, a syndicated three-hour chart show on a Sunday afternoon. As this amendment was not regarded as a substantial change, the request was agreed.

Notes on Content Sampling

Ofcom's Content Sampling Procedure :

In Ofcom's move of emphasis from input regulation towards output regulation, content sampling has become an important regulatory process. Ofcom has already published the methods to be applied when formally listening to local commercial stations to create a content sampling report. These methods and processes are published at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/contentssampling/>.

Background Information

Content sampling is a major Ofcom tool in judging the level of station compliance with regard to

- a) Public File*
- b) Localness*
- c) Music*

Content sampling may be carried out as part of an organised process, or may be as the result of a complaint.

Public File

Public File obligations are enshrined within each station's Licence. The Public File and/or station website will, in many cases, not only support the findings of content sampling, but signpost monitors to output that enhances specific aspects of localness and music, whether or not it involves the specific days being monitored.

Localness and Music

Localness guidelines are available on Ofcom's website at www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/car/localness/ and station localness and music obligations will vary considerably from Format to Format.