

Exeter independent local radio licence applications

Questions and responses:

These are the responses received from Exeter FM to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding their application for the Exeter licence.

1. On page 7, you state that the RRL investors “have all been hand-picked to add value to the business”. Please provide more information on the background of the investors in RRL

RRL brings together a strong group of locally-rooted investors, with complementary skills and a real interest in and commitment to the City and broadcast area. They will not only contribute capital to Exeter FM but also bring strong business acumen, practical radio experience and prime involvement in the local economic and social environment. The investors in RRL are:

Peter Lacey (Director -15%)

Peter is a leading local architect and, following his recent retirement he remains non-executive Chairman of the large practice he developed. He now has more time to dedicate to his long-standing involvement at all levels in building and advancing the partnerships that are actively reshaping Exeter as a major centre in the Southwest. In particular, he is Chair of the Exeter Vision Partnership, that has established objectives for the City and plans for their implementation up to 2020, covering the whole of the first licence period of the new station.

Peter is also Chairman of Exeter FM and further details are provided in the Application.

Robert Pockock (Director - 15%)

Robert is a successful local businessman with particular strength in sales and service-led businesses with strong branding. He has substantial experience of local radio management, in particular in Exeter and the Southwest with Orchard Media and Gemini Radio. He has also worked closely with the Council as a long-standing member of the Exeter Marketing Partnership and has extensive contacts with other local media providers.

Robert is also a Director of Exeter FM and full details are in the Application.

Roger Richards (Director - 20%)

Roger is the founding partner of Roger Richards Solicitors and has also established a business specialised in property ownership and development. He is non-executive Chairman of Palm FM and will provide the top-level link that will enable Palm and Exeter FM to co-operate in the best interests of both stations.

Further details were provided in Palm FM's application or can be forwarded on request.

Tom Hunter (20%)

Tom is Managing Director of Palm FM, that launched successfully at the end of May under his management. He will take on the same responsibilities for Exeter FM on award of the licence. He is a highly-experienced radio manager, with a significant track-record of success. Full details are provided in the licence Application. It is a mark of Tom's commitment to and confidence in Exeter FM that he is making a significant personal cash investment in the company.

Mark Browning (10%)

Mark is an accomplished radio professional with programming and management experience in both large and small-scale stations. He is currently Programme Director of London's highly-successful Heart 106.2. Moving to East Devon in his teens, he started his radio career in Exeter in 1996 as a journalist with Gemini Radio where he won a Sony award for his work. He moved on to become Head of News at the launch of The Bear in Stafford, after which he became Managing Director of Neptune Radio in Dover/Folkestone. He joined Chrysalis Radio group in 2001.

Bruce Priday (10%)

Bruce, aged 49, has lived almost all his life in Exeter. Initially a schoolmaster, he trained and worked in tax, commercial and corporate finance and regulated investment before setting up his own full-service financial consultancy in Exeter in 1991, where he specialises in corporate finance and tax matters. In addition to his prominence within the business and professional community, Bruce is keenly involved with local sports and charitable organisations. He played rugby for Exeter, for Devon and the Southwest and is Devon Chairman of Wooden Spoon, rugby's charity supporting disadvantaged children and young people. Besides Exeter Chiefs rugby club, who are now pushing for the Premiership, Bruce also has strong connections with Exeter City FC. He is an experienced broadcaster and has presented weekly local sports and local business programmes on Gemini Radio.

Garvis Snook (10%)

Garvis has over 30 years experience in the construction business in the Southwest. His family home is just outside Exeter and in 2000 he joined Exeter Building Company as Chief Executive, one of the few listed companies emanating from Exeter. Renamed Rok Property Solutions plc, Garvis has led a transformation in the business from its traditional base in contracting and development into a full property solutions provider. Rok has recently been recognised by the Sunday Times as one of the Top 100 companies for which to work. Garvis has a mission to modernise his industry and business practices, which he has shared by founding and involvement with regional Training & Enterprise and Business Link bodies.

Bruce Priday and Garvis Snook are both involved in current efforts to found a Civic Trust for Exeter, aimed at bringing all members of society into prosperity and dealing with disengaged youth.

2. In your Format, you state that “music variety [will be] a key feature” of output. Please clarify, for the purposes of your Format, how “music variety” should be quantifiably defined.

All of our research points to a frustration among listeners with what they feel is a limited and repetitious music selection on existing services. Our plan is to respond to this demand with a mix of focused local content and wide “music variety”. This is perhaps more a qualitative feature than quantitative, though we understand that Ofcom would perhaps like a simple measure by which this could be judged and reported in the station's Public File.

Exeter FM will have a significantly larger active record library in regular programming than is generally the case with ILR stations, particularly heritage stations such as GWR/GCap's Gemini FM or Magic AM. A large library is a pre-requisite for variety, but not necessarily a measure of varied output.

If a numerical measure of “variety” is needed, we feel this would probably best be addressed by defining repetition – the corollary of varied output is necessarily

reflected in low repetition of individual tracks, which can more easily be quantified. We would suggest the following quantitative definition:

“In general, current tracks will be repeated no more than 4 times a day, recurrent and recent tracks 4 times a week, classic tracks (over 5 years old) twice weekly and album tracks once a month.”

This, of course, represents the maximum repetition of titles. It does not take account of slower repetition of many titles and therefore does not reflect a lower average turnover that will also contribute significantly to variety.

3. Please confirm that your Format should read that news will be broadcast “at least hourly” (so as not to make the broadcasting of additional bulletins a technical breach)

We are entirely happy with the suggestion.

4. How were businesses identified to take part in the “advertiser demand” research?

We set out to interview a range of local businesses, including in particular a selection of large and smaller businesses as well as large and smaller advertisers. We did not set any specific quotas on the sample, but you will have seen from the sample data that a good spread was achieved with interesting and pertinent results.

In our view and experience, this type of research requires face-to-face discussion with the businesses concerned and is less satisfactorily achieved by indirect means such as telephone cold-calls or anonymous approaches. Identifying and selecting local businesses to contact for this research in Exeter was fortunately a relatively simple affair.

The local members of our Board have been involved with Exeter FM's plans for some time and were naturally able to provide appropriate leads and introductions in addition to LMC's local efforts. We were also significantly helped by Helen Barnett, Sales Manager of Palm FM, who previously worked for the Exeter Directory, a directory of businesses in the Exeter area. Indeed, we have also developed a relationship with Rod Major, MD of the Exeter Directory, who kindly provided additional leads and introductions.