

## Ipswich local commercial radio licence applications

# Questions and responses: Town FM

*These are the responses received from Town FM to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding their application for the Ipswich local radio licence.*

**1. On page 15 of the application, you say that Town FM would be “part of the proposed new Tindle Radio headquarters based in Ipswich.” Is it intended that any other radio station will share these premises?**

It is not intended that any other radio station will share Town FM's premises.

**2. We note in Town FM's proposed Format that the station is committed to local production/presentation for 12 hours per day. For the remaining 12 hours per day, which other station(s) would you envisage Town FM sharing output with, at what times, and from where would this output originate?**

Well spotted! This is a typo that must have been imported by accident. The service will be 24 hours per day locally produced/presented seven days a week. This is demonstrated by our sample programme schedule on page 34 of our application and the narrative in the final paragraph of page 33. This is also confirmed by our full-time staffing arrangements in the business plan. In particular the newsroom would be staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week, as shown in the business plan where there are 4½ full time journalists as opposed to two which is standard at all our other UK mainland stations.

The overnight journalist would be preparing and reading the latest breaking news and information for Ipswich as it happens. By using the Burli news system the same journalist would also be responsible for updating news and information for other Tindle Radio stations in the region overnight.

Also, the newsroom phones at these stations would be diverted to Ipswich so that if, for example, a large fire broke out in Lowestoft, the Ipswich newsroom could alert the local journalist on call at The Beach. The cost of the overnight journalist at Ipswich would be shared across several Tindle Radio stations hence the cost of only half a journalist.

**3. In what respects (if any) will Town FM's music policy be different to that of Dream 100?**

No two Tindle Radio stations have exactly the same playlist and the local programme controller would programme Town FM to conform to the Format and to reflect our thorough local research.

Dream 100 is a very popular (and profitable) station which is quite distinctive from SGR Colchester and Vibe FM. Town FM's music would be broadly similar to that of Dream 100 but “the touch on the tiller” would be slightly less current material and a few more classic songs. All Tindle Radio stations have playlists of well over 4,500 songs with at least 1,700 active at any one time, with the active list reviewed and changed on a regular basis.

The real meat in the sandwich is local speech and news content. This has been key to the success of Dream 100 which is confirmed by the enclosed letters from two of the local MPs. Tindle Radio stations have been running a “localness file” for many years now which is sent directly to me on a weekly basis to ensure that they are engaging the local audience; I enclose recent examples from neighbouring stations The Beach and Dream 100 (Appendix 4). These have not been changed or specially prepared for Ofcom’s consumption in any way and I would be pleased to provide further examples from any of our stations for any chosen week if required.

**4. Please could you clarify (presumably in months pre-/post-release) how you are defining 'current', in the context of your proposed music policy (i.e. as stated in your draft station Format).**

We define “current hits” as those songs in the pre-release, chart and recurrent phase of 0-18 months.

**5. Please could you indicate the process undertaken to identify the six music clusters to be tested in the quantitative research – in particular, providing reasons for the exclusion of a Rock or Classic Rock genre.**

In this application, where Tindle Radio is the sole shareholder, it was felt that the way we categorised music should reflect the approach taken by our Group as a whole. The names used reflect how we classify and programme our music at other Tindle Radio stations. The terminology used is also consistent with how the music format was presented in the application. In the consumer research study, respondents were asked to listen to music that represented each of these groups but the names of the groups were not conveyed since it was felt that the descriptions might confuse respondents.

I have taken a leading role in training our programme controllers and helping to set general programming guidelines alongside our Group Programme Controller, Mark Franklin. It is our belief and experience that it is better to programme by appeal rather than era. This tends to give us a good spread amongst each era and ensures that there is a variety of music styles which I note also scored highly among listener preferences in Ofcom’s own research recently undertaken by TKA. For example “Jumping Jack Flash” by the Rolling Stones and “Downtown” by Petula Clark are both sixties songs but both songs, at the time of release, and today, have quite different appeal. We did not include Classic Rock or Rock per se in the research. However “Jumping Jack Flash” and “Killer Queen” which were included in our research are examples of Rock from different eras and similar songs would be included. If awarded the licence we would be undertaking research separately from RAJAR as stated in page six of our confidential appendices and these costs have been incorporated in the business plan.