

Liverpool independent local radio licence applications

Questions and responses:

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

- 1. The application states that research showed the audience “...want a radio station which is entirely focussed on the city rather than being regional with selected information and news for Liverpool” (page 16). How in practice would your approach differ from, for example, Radio City?**

Two of our group (David Maker and Roy Saatchi) have at one time or another been responsible for the news output of Radio City. Although initially licensed for Liverpool and its immediate surrounding area, the station set about marketing itself as a regional station taking in the whole of Merseyside and parts of South Lancashire, North Cheshire and North Wales. With a news room staff of 16 this was achievable in editorial terms and highly successful. But with changes of ownership, the arrival of new stations in the area and the general erosion of format, this is no longer the case. Although now a highly successful music-led radio station, City's comparatively small newsroom cannot reflect the same editorial ambition. We believe there is now a great opportunity going begging.

Liverpool is a dynamic city that's changing fast with billions of pounds of new investment that can only benefit from a radio station whose editorial priorities are closely engaged in this transformation and are not distracted by trying to cover all the region all the time. The spectacular regeneration offers a vibrant and well funded speech-led radio station the opportunity to reflect, report and analyse the exciting developments at the centre, which inevitably filter out to affect the whole of Merseyside. There is one other very important matter that directly affects our editorial strategy. The government is currently considering the case for reorganising local government in England as part of a White Paper expected to be published shortly. Although early days, this may mean the introduction of a new tier of “city regional” local government. This proposal is the subject of much debate in Liverpool at the moment. If it comes to fruition Liverpool could become a “supercity” taking control of much of Merseyside and the surrounding area. Whatever changes lie ahead Liver FM would be a vital voice at the very heart of developments.

- 2. How will the six journalists from University be managed?**

Because of our close links with the North West Colleges, our six journalists recruited from the universities' broadcast media courses will be of the highest-quality and have graduated with distinction. Our commitment to permanent “training” means they will not be subjected to the kind of poorly supervised work experience sadly prevalent in UK radio. They will be bright young talent entering full-time employment for the first time, having been carefully selected for their suitability to adapt to this exciting and unique radio news format. Their performance, training and wellbeing will be the ultimate responsibility of the chief executive. On a day-to-day basis they will be under the direction of the senior news presenters as members of the small teams producing the hourly rolling news format, breakfast programme and other specialist programmes. We consider ongoing training to be a vital precursor for the success of this format. To that end Liver FM has entered into an agreement with Roy Saatchi Associates for the detailed and on-going training and assessment of our graduate recruits. Roy is a former BBC senior programming executive and now specialises

world-wide in broadcast news training and development. He managed our month-long RSL trial broadcast and is both a visiting professor in broadcast journalism at Liverpool John Moores University and a broadcast tutor at Salford University.

3. **Please clarify whether the sentence in parenthesis within the first paragraph of the draft Format is defining just the ‘classic hits’ music category, or both the ‘classic rock’ and ‘classic hits’ categories.**

The sentence should define *both* the classic hits and classic rock.

4. **Similarly, please provide a definition of the term ‘current’ (presumably in number of months post-release) for the purposes of the Format. (For example, “tracks that were released 3-18 months previously”).**

Our definition of current is tracks released in the past 18 months.

5. **Please provide a copy of the quantitative questionnaire and all materials used in the survey, including showcards.**

Please find attached a copy of our questionnaire. There were no showcards.

6. **What weighting factors were used?**

The sample was weighted for age and sex balance only. Small weights were employed as follows.

Completes	Weighted	Completes	Weight
Men 15-24	79	92	1.1645
Men 25-34	73	73	1.0000
Men 35-44	78	78	1.0000
Men 45-54	76	71	0.9342
Men 55-64	55	55	1.0000
Women 15-24	86	94	1.0930
Women 25-34	70	79	1.1286
Women 35-44	92	83	0.9022
Women 45-54	82	73	0.8902
Women 55-64	64	57	0.8507
	755		

7. **Which stations were covered in the station monitoring exercise?**

The stations which were monitored were Radio City, Magic, Juice, Smooth and Century.

8. **What were the recruitment criteria for the qualitative research following the RSL broadcast? Please provide details of the research, such as the report and/or discussion guide.**

Two groups were comprised of respondents under the age of 40, while members of the other two groups were 40 and over. Along with age, participants were recruited based on their current radio listening habits; all indicated an interest and/or preference for the more speech/news/information-orientated formats heard on BBC Radio Merseyside, TalkSport, BBC 5 Live, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 2.

All respondents were regular newspaper readers, indicating time spent reading the Guardian, Times, Telegraph and/or Independent. Participants also indicated a healthy interest in listening to local news items.

Respondents were recruited to the focus groups while the Liver FM RSL was still on the air. They were asked to spend as much time as possible listening to the station, at various times of day, between the time of recruitment and the day of the focus group.

Please find attached a copy of screening/recruitment questionnaire from the field service, CP Research's discussion guide outline and an expanded version of the outline to help the local, co-moderator.