

Manchester local commercial radio licence applications

Questions and responses: UK1 FM

These are the responses received from UK1 FM to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding its application for the Manchester local radio licence.

1. Please can you provide us with the missing part of the sentence on page 4 of the application document (third bullet point from top, “Application has been made....”).

The reference to “Application has been made” refers to our submission for qualification under the Chancellor’s Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) which has been made and is being processed by the authorities.

2. For the purposes of the Format document, please can you confirm the times each day that your local news service will operate, as this is currently unclear.

Main news bulletins, compiled in our News, Sport and Features room will run on the hour, every hour from 0600 to 2400 throughout the week.

Bulletins will be a minimum of four minutes in length on weekdays but will extend to six minutes at 0700, 0800, 1300, 1800 and 2200.

Breakfast, lunchtime and the evening drive time programmes will have a strong news and sport, as well as interview, agenda and will therefore have a very newsy and up-to-the-minute feel but there will be headlines (one minute in length) at 0730, 0830, 1730 and 1830.

Breaking news will be covered as it happens. There will be regular sport, business and travel features at breakfast and during the evening drive time programme.

Weekends will see news bulletins reduced to 3 minutes but there will be six minutes at 0700, 0800, and six minutes at 1300.

Weekend breakfast will have a different pace to weekdays but the agenda will remain newsy with interviews, features and strong sport content.

After midnight our main news will be supplied by Sky under agreement with UBC Media.

Since our application was made we have also decided that the station should have dedicated coverage at Westminster, especially as the North will be such an important battleground during the next General Election and is also home to so many senior UK Government and Opposition spokespeople.

This will strengthen our agenda and further distinguish us from our commercial rivals in the city.

3. Please can you clarify the meaning of the sentence on page 51, which states that UK1's music "has been compiled by one of the country's best and most successful music programmes".

UK 1 FM is working with one of Britain's best and most successful commercial radio consultants and a former managing director of a number of commercial radio stations to create a music mix which is very distinctive. This individual has enjoyed enormous success in re-programming the output of stations, most notably in London and the North to create sounds which make the next track difficult to predict. This approach has produced enormous benefits for both listeners and the stations.

If this bid is successful we will oversee the installation of specially adapted software which will provide the station with a musical universe which exceeds 5,000 tracks, will not be reliant on the top 20, and will mix current chart output with current album music and a mix of music from the decades since 1960. We will not repeat a song within eight hours.

Since production of "The Tube" which has enjoyed enormous critical and press acclaim, we have also strengthened our commitment to live and exclusive music.

"The Tube" has already enjoyed exclusive performances from the likes of New Order and we would wish to add some of these treats into our CAM mix to provide further delights and to surprise the audience with exclusives.

4. What is the difference, if any, between UK1's proposed "Contemporary Adult Music" and the more conventional radio industry term of "Adult Contemporary"?

In short, we believe that Adult Contemporary implies an over reliance on American soft-rock and does not capture the ambition of our range, which is wider and owes more to Britain and of course, to Manchester.

Within reason, we want UK 1 FM to be full of musical surprises. We wish to utilise our access and commitment to live performances from programmes such as "The Tube" and "Mind the Gap" to allow some specially recorded live tracks from these programmes to enrich our output in the peak schedule. This will make UK 1 FM even more distinctive from our competitors and offer a choice which is not currently catered for within the market.

We are deliberately attempting to be very distinctive from Key 103 and Galaxy which have a strong following in the TSA but, as our research demonstrated, have a 2-3 hour rotation policy for favourite tracks.

One of our starting points in creating our CAM mix was to play the type of music which Smooth FM, as the dominant regional commercial station cannot play, and which Century 105.4 will play rarely, if at all. This is particularly important at a time when both stations enjoy the same parentage. We even hear that both stations are deleting tracks which were designed to tempt audiences away from one another.

We were delighted when MLab's research revealed that 61% of men said they would like to listen to "The Tube". "The Tube" is and always was, from Malcolm Gerrie's original creation, a musical variety show where The Jam could play alongside Wham and somehow find a commonality.

Today, New Order and REM can turn up on UK 1 FM's "The Tube" and stand alongside lyrical bands such as Camera Obscura and Manchester's own Eskimo (which have been influenced by The Beautiful South).

We believe we can extend boundaries with our CAM mix and provide a commercial sound which will surely include Pink, Shakira and Razorlight but will add classic U2, Bowie, live performances (exclusive for UK 1 FM and Channel 4 Radio), as well as The Beatles and Kasabian within the same hour.

It will be a rich and surprising mix which will please a cross generational audiences and offer a range which will be wider than say BBC Radio 2, which has a remarkable share of the region's audience.

MLab's research showed that the public like UK 1 FM's CAM mix.

We will draw a panel together (drawn from a representative cross sample of the TSA) ahead of the launch to further validate our research.

We will commit to on-going research. We admire Smooth FM's "music panel" approach which is continually testing the station's output and keeping it fresh.

5. Please provide the base definitions and sizes for the subgroups in the charts on page 42 et al, and on page 45.

For all the charts the un-weighted base is all adults aged 16-64 and the detailed demographics are a subgroup of that.

Below are the un-weighted bases:

Total of all adults 16-64 (400)
Males (201)
Females (199)
All 35-54 (206)
All 30-60 (298)
30-60 Males (145)
30-60 Females (153)