
Community radio

Nine community radio licence awards: October 2017

Statement:

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About this document

This document announces the award of nine community radio licences.

The licences are for stations serving communities in Cannock and Rugeley (Staffordshire), Cinderford (Forest of Dean), each of Keynsham, Yeovil, and Minehead (all in Somerset), each of Swanage and Dorchester (both in Dorset), Newquay (Cornwall) and the Rhondda in south Wales.

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1. Licence awards

- 1.1 During October 2017, Ofcom made decisions to award nine community radio licences. The licences are for stations serving communities in Cannock and Rugeley (Staffordshire), Cinderford (Forest of Dean), Keynsham, Yeovil, Minehead (all in Somerset), Swanage, Dorchester (both in Dorset), Newquay (Cornwall) and the Rhondda in south Wales.
- 1.2 All community radio services must satisfy certain 'characteristics of service' which are specified in legislation¹ – Ofcom was satisfied that each applicant awarded a licence met these 'characteristics of service'. In addition, each application was considered having regard to statutory criteria², the details of which are described below. This statement sets out the key considerations in relation to these criteria which formed the basis of Ofcom's decisions to award the licences. Where applicable, the relevant statutory reference (indicated by the sub-paragraph number) is noted in brackets.

Applicants awarded a licence

- 1.3 Ofcom has made a licence award to each of the following:
- Cannock Chase Radio (Chase Media Training CIC), Cannock and Rugeley, Staffordshire
 - Dean Radio (Forest Community Media), Cinderford, Forest of Dean
 - Keynsham Town Community Radio (Keynsham Town Community Radio), Keynsham, Somerset
 - Ninesprings FM (Radio Ninesprings), Yeovil, Somerset
 - Purbeck Coast FM (The Swanage Pier Trust), Swanage, Dorset
 - Radio Newquay (Radio Newquay and Media Limited) Newquay and surrounding villages, Cornwall
 - Rhondda Radio (Rhondda Radio Limited), the Rhondda, South Wales
 - Ridgeway Community Radio (Ridgeway Community Radio) Dorchester, Dorset
 - West Somerset Radio (West Somerset Radio CIC), Minehead, Somerset
- 1.4 These services will be licensed for a period of five years from the date of their launch, on FM.
- 1.5 As required by law, Ofcom was satisfied that the new services would not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any local analogue commercial radio service.

Cannock Chase Radio

- 1.6 Cannock Chase Radio will broadcast to people in Cannock and Rugeley. Ofcom considered that the applicant, which has gained experience in offering a radio service to its target community via the internet, and already has studio and outside broadcasting equipment in

¹ Regulation 3 of the Community Radio Order 2004

² Section 105 of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as modified by the Community Radio Order 2004, as itself amended by the Community Radio (Amendment) Orders 2010 and 2015).

place, has the ability to maintain the service over the licence period (1a). In Ofcom's view the applicant put forward proposals for a service catering to the tastes and interests of the target community, which had been developed through its internet radio broadcasts (1b). Ofcom noted that the applicant has support from the local community (1d). Ofcom also considered that the service had the potential to bring clear social gain benefits to the target community, noting its experience in offering training in partnership with local organisations (1e).

Dean Radio

1.7 Dean Radio will be a community radio service for people in Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Ofcom took account of the fact that the group has gained broadcasting experience via an online radio service, temporary FM broadcasting licences (known as S-RSLs), and operating a community radio service in the past. It already owns studio and transmission equipment, and proposes a low-cost operation staffed by volunteers and with transmission operating costs covered by a third party. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a). The proposed service of music and local news will broaden choice in an area that is within the coverage area of only one local commercial radio station (1c). Ofcom considered that the applicant had made adequate provision to make itself accountable to the target community; this will include provision that all volunteers will be members of the company and eligible to vote on board appointments, and that bi-annual open meetings with partner organisations, volunteers and the public will be held (1f).

Keynsham Town Community Radio (KTCR)

1.8 KTCR will be a radio station for the people of Keynsham, Somerset. The applicant put forward proposals for a low-cost operation, and the directors have experience of working in radio, including community radio. As a result, Ofcom considered that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the proposed service (1a). The applicant has experience of producing local radio programmes about Keynsham and has developed its proposals using feedback about these programmes. Ofcom considered that its proposed output would cater to the tastes and interests of the target community (1b). The applicant has links with a range of local organisations and individuals, and provided evidence of demand and support for the proposed service (1d).

Ninesprings FM

1.9 Ninesprings FM will serve the population of Yeovil and the surrounding area. The applicant group members and volunteers have considerable broadcasting experience, which Ofcom considered would help enable Ninesprings FM to maintain its proposed service. (1a) Ofcom considered that the programming proposals would address the specific interests of the target community (1b). In Ofcom's view, the group's already established community links would enable the station to reach underserved members of the community (1c). The applicant group demonstrated considerable support for the service from the target

community (1d). Ofcom noted the applicant group's work with different organisations in the community, and its plans to provide access and training to community members (1g).

- 1.10 (In May this year Radio Ninesprings was awarded a licence to broadcast on AM. In accordance with ownership rules, it will need to surrender that licence offer should it decide to take up this FM licence offer.)

Purbeck Coast FM

- 1.11 Purbeck Coast FM will serve Swanage and the surrounding area. The applicant is a registered charity with experience of running a community resource, and in fundraising. It has already secured grants for the community radio project and has a fully equipped studio in place, as well as group members with broadcasting experience. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated its ability to maintain the proposed service (1a). The applicant has undertaken research and local consultation to inform the project and help it cater for the tastes and interests of its target community (1b). Its research showed demand for the service, and the applicant also provided evidence of support for the service from a range of local organisations, some of which will work with the station (1d).

Radio Newquay

- 1.12 Radio Newquay will serve Newquay in Cornwall, and surrounding villages and towns, broadcasting community news, information, and surfing-related content. The applicant group has considerable experience in radio broadcasting, engineering, journalism and fund-raising, with strong links to the local community. The group has secured premises, a studio and outside broadcast equipment, and has enough secured funding to cover its remaining pre-launch expenses. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the proposed service (1a). The applicant's proposed service has been developed through its experience of operating an online surfing news and music station, and through research conducted in the community. As a result, Ofcom considered that it would cater to the tastes and interests of the target community (1b). The applicant provided evidence of demand and support for the proposed service via the results of its research, quotes from numerous organisations and individuals in the Newquay area, and expressions of support via social media (1d).

Rhondda Radio

- 1.13 Rhondda Radio will serve the local community of the Rhondda valleys (the Fawr and the Fach). The applicant has been operating an internet radio service for some years, and has premises and equipment in place, as well as sufficient funding to launch the service. It proposes a low-cost volunteer-run operation. In Ofcom's view the applicant has demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a). The applicant's programme proposals have been developed following local research and build upon the group's internet service. Ofcom considered that the proposed service will cater to the tastes and interests of its target community (1b).

Ridgeway Community radio

- 1.14 Ridgeway Community Radio is for the over-50 age group living in Dorchester and surrounding areas of West Dorset. The applicant group has its roots in a local hospital radio station, and members have considerable relevant experience, for example in radio broadcasting and engineering, journalism, fundraising and training volunteers. It has studio equipment in place, as well as some secured pre-launch funding. Ofcom considered that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a). Group members have experience of delivering a radio service to people aged over-50, catering to their tastes and interests (1b), and broadening radio choice in the area (1c). Ofcom considered that the applicant had good experience of community engagement, and has many links and partnerships in place which will help it deliver social gain to its target community (1e).

West Somerset Radio

- 1.15 West Somerset Radio will broadcast a service to residents, businesses and visitors in Minehead and surrounding villages. Group members have experience of radio broadcasting in commercial and BBC stations, including in the Minehead area, and pre-launch funding for the station has been secured. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had the ability to maintain the proposed service (1a). The service will cater for the tastes and interests of the target community with a strong local focus (1b) and include interviews and opportunities for discussion on local issues, which will contribute to its social gain provision (1e).

2. Statutory requirements relating to community radio licensing

- 2.1 The following pages set out the statutory requirements relating to community radio licensing, and details of the licensing process. Further information about these, and detailed information relating to community radio, can be found at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/101860/Community-radio-guidance.pdf
- 2.2 In carrying out its functions, Ofcom is required to have regard to the general duties set out in section 3 of the Communications Act 2003. In addition, under section 85(2)(b) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (“BA 1990”), it is the duty of Ofcom to do all that it can to secure the provision within the UK of a range and diversity of local radio services.

The characteristics of a community radio service

- 2.3 All community radio licensees must satisfy 'characteristics of service' requirements which are specified in Article 3 of the Community Radio Order 2004. The characteristics of community radio services are:
- that they are local services provided primarily for the good of members of the public, or of particular communities, and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals involved in providing the service;
 - that the service is intended primarily to serve one or more communities (whether or not it also serves other members of the public);
 - that the person providing the service does not do so in order to make a financial profit by so doing, and uses any profit that is produced in the provision of the service wholly and exclusively for securing or improving the future provision of the service, or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the community that the service is intended to serve;
 - that members of the community it is intended to serve are given opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service; and
 - that, in respect of the provision of that service, the person providing the service makes himself accountable to the community that the service is intended to serve.
- 2.4 Article 2 of the Community Radio Order 2004 includes four mandatory “social gain” objectives. “Social gain” means the achievement, in respect of individuals or groups of individuals in the community that the service is intended to serve, or in respect of other members of the public, of the following objectives:
- the provision of sound broadcasting services to individuals who are otherwise underserved by such services;
 - the facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion;

- the provision (whether by means of programmes included in the service or otherwise) of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service; and
- the better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.

2.5 Article 2 also includes a number of other objectives of a social nature which may be considered to represent "social gain".

Matters to which Ofcom shall have regard

2.6 There are seven matters set out in section 105(1) BA 1990 that Ofcom must have regard to when considering whether to grant a community radio licence. In summary these are:

- The ability of each applicant to maintain its proposed service over the licence period (section 105(1)(a)).
- The applicant's ability to cater for the tastes and interests of the target community (section 105(1)(b)).
- The extent to which each applicant would broaden the range of local radio services available in the area, and have a content distinct from those services (section 105(1)(c)).
- The extent to which there is evidence of local demand or support for a proposed service (section 105(1)(d)).
- The extent to which the service would deliver social gain benefits to the public or relevant community (section 105(1)(e)).
- Provisions for making the operator of service accountable to the relevant community (section 105(1)(f)).
- Provisions for allowing access by members of the public or the relevant community to the station facilities, and the provision of training in the use of those facilities (section 105(1)(g)).

2.7 In considering whether, or to whom (and on what conditions), to grant a community radio licence, Ofcom must also have regard to the need to ensure that any service provided under that licence does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.

2.8 Furthermore, without prejudice to the generality of that economic impact requirement, section 105(4) BA 1990 requires Ofcom to impose conditions to ensure, in effect, that any community radio service is prohibited from taking any relevant income from paid advertising and sponsorship of programmes except in the following respects:

- A 'fixed revenue allowance' totalling £15,000 per financial year of the licensee for such relevant income - this exception applies to any community radio service where that service overlaps with any local commercial radio service serving a potential audience of no more than 150,000 persons who have attained the age of 15 years or older.
- A 'fixed revenue allowance' totalling £15,000 per financial year of the licensee for such relevant income plus a proportion of the total relevant income (specified by Ofcom in

the licence), but which must not exceed 50% of the total relevant income (disregarding the fixed revenue allowance) for the licence in question in that year - this exception applies to all community radio services other than a community radio service referred to in (i) above. It should be noted that a community radio service that overlaps with any local commercial radio service serving a potential audience of no more than 150,000 persons who have attained the age of 15 years or older, which has at any time been varied pursuant to section 106(1A)(e) BA 1990, is also covered by this exception.

- 2.9 For the avoidance of doubt, programme sponsorship includes station or channel sponsorship, and commercial communications.

Process for assessment of applications

- 2.10 The Ofcom Board has delegated the discharge of certain of its functions in relation to television and radio broadcast licensing to one or more senior executives from Ofcom's Content & Media Policy Group. Each of those individuals, on their own or together, have responsibility for deciding on the award of community radio licences.
- 2.11 The decision-makers for these licence awards were Ofcom's Director of Content, Standards, Licensing and Enforcement, Ofcom's Director of Broadcast Licensing and Ofcom's two Principals, Broadcast Licensing.

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