

Your response

Question	Your response
	<p data-bbox="810 443 1018 477">Confidential? – N</p> <p data-bbox="810 517 1377 725">Do you agree that for the purposes of where locally-made programming may come from, Ofcom should approve the 'South of England (Bauer)' area in relation to the 12 local licences listed in Section 2 of this document? If you do not agree, please give reasons.</p> <p data-bbox="810 766 986 799">I do not agree.</p> <p data-bbox="810 840 1377 1294">The Western part of West Sussex, for which Spirit FM is licensed, identifies as a separate area from the larger towns and cities each side of it. Chichester is the county city of West Sussex and, by virtue of its historical character and its good shopping facilities, creates the gravitational pull for surrounding towns including Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Selsey, Midhurst and so on. It is therefore right that this area acquired its own local radio station 24 years ago, and this station is Spirit FM. It is much loved and appreciated by the community it serves.</p> <p data-bbox="810 1335 1377 1765">The station's success rests in the fact that its eyes and ears are based IN the community it serves. Local content is not simply a traffic report here and there and a couple of local news items during peak hours. More, the station INTEGRATES with the community through employing local news staff who KNOW the area inside out. Similarly, programme staff possess an in-depth knowledge of not only the local area but many of its features and events and are often out and about in the community and intimately involved with it on the ground.</p> <p data-bbox="810 1805 1377 2013">For many years the West Sussex community has enjoyed the output of Spirit FM. The music balance is unique and doesn't rely on a narrow selection of 'key' tunes that listeners are known to enjoy (or should I say DID enjoy until various other regional and national stations played the</p>

hell out of them to the point of audience apathy!).

Over the years Spirit FM has developed a set of programmes that has captured the spirit and the imagination of its transmission area, both through its varied music policy and its knowledgeable and entertaining speech output. It will not be possible to replicate this FEEL and SOUND, this real perception of the station being PART OF and INTEGRAL TO the community, if programme staff (both presenters and/or news staff) are based outwith the community.

The proposals for change advanced by Bauer demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of the VALUE and IMPORTANCE of Spirit FM to the local community here. We have another Bauer-owned station, Wave 105, our regional independent radio station, where there are plenty of greatest hits from the 70's, 80's and 90's when we want them. However, Wave cannot adequately cover off the local radio aspect due to its vast transmission area along the south coast. Neither can the entirety of its programming feature events, news and traffic from the Chichester catchment area. Frankly, there is no affinity, geographical or otherwise, between West Sussex and the Hampshire & Dorset cities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth, which together form the nucleus of the Wave105 operation.

I would very strongly suggest that, if Spirit FM is to retain and even enhance its audience share, it should remain operating from a reasonably central position within its broadcast catchment area. This means that news and programme staff should be based centrally in the reception area and operate from here on a daily basis. Only in this way can Spirit FM maintain and improve its community involvement and thus enhance its programming, to the benefit of all.