

Key Commitments change request form

Community radio station name:	B Radio
Licence number:	CR102292BA/1
Licensee (company name):	B Radio Ltd
Contact name:	Ricki Lee
Date of request:	31st March 2023

Details of requested change(s) to Key Commitments

A community radio operator may apply to Ofcom to have the station's Key Commitments amended.

Please complete the table overleaf by including your current Commitment in the left hand column and your proposed revised Commitment in the centre column. In the right hand column please give a brief explanation as to why you wish to make each change.

We also require you to complete a second table which asks you to explain your proposed changes with reference to the statutory framework.

If you do not provide an explanation for your proposed changes and a completed comparison table, Ofcom cannot consider a Key Commitments change.

Please complete this form and return it to: broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

Existing Commitment (as in your published Key Commitments)	Proposed revised/new Key Commitment	Reason for proposed change
<p>Please only include one commitment change per row, and add more rows as necessary into the table.</p>		
<p>Music. The main types of music broadcast over the course of each week are: mainstream music from the 1980s to present day. Specialist music will also feature, including dance and urban music and music from the decades.</p>	<p>Music. The main types of music broadcast over the course of each week are: mainstream music from the past few decades to present day. Specialist music will also feature, including dance and urban music.</p>	<p>Our station targets an audience that is under 40. Music from decades like the '80s and '90s which are 40 to 30 years ago respectfully are less appealing to a younger audience. This change reflects the stations ability to 'move with the times' and to continue to serve its target audience without the request for repeated key commitment changes.</p>
<p>Speech. The main types of speech output broadcast over the course of each week are: local information including travel news, events information and interviews.</p>	<p>Speech. The main types of speech output broadcast over the course of each week are: local information and events.</p>	<p>With advances with mobile devices, maps, in car systems providing real-time travel information, we believe the removal of travel news wouldn't affect the listeners' experience. Interviews will continue to feature regularly on the station, but with B Radio being based within the grounds of the University of Reading and us relying heavily on student volunteers, this change would provide flexibility for the station at times when students aren't on campus (such as during summer and christmas holidays) and there are a reduced number of available volunteers.</p>

The service provides original output for a minimum of 84 hours per week.

The service provides original output for a minimum of 44 hours per week.

B Radio is based within the grounds of the University of Reading and relies heavily on student volunteers. This change would provide flexibility for the station at times when students aren't on campus (such as during summer and christmas holidays) and there are a reduced number of available volunteers. We are conscious that the commitment is an absolute minimum, rather than a target.

The service provides locally-produced output for a minimum of 42 hours per week.

The service provides locally-produced output for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

B Radio is based within the grounds of the University of Reading and relies heavily on student volunteers. This change would provide flexibility for the station at times when students aren't on campus (such as during summer and christmas holidays) and there are a reduced number of available volunteers. We are conscious that the commitment is an absolute minimum, rather than a target.

Statutory requirements

Under section 106(1A)(a)-(f) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as amended and modified¹) Ofcom must be satisfied that your proposed changes **meet at least one of the criteria referred to below**.

Please indicate which of these criteria you believe your proposed changes satisfy by deleting YES or NO as applicable and provide an explanation for why you consider a particular criterion is met in the relevant box. You should note that even if Ofcom is of the opinion that your explanation of your proposed changes meets one or more of these criteria, there may still be reasons why Ofcom is unable to consent to the change. When explaining your proposed changes, it is not enough to state that you believe one of the criteria is met. You must also demonstrate *why* you consider that at least one of these criteria is met.

In particular, if Ofcom is not satisfied that the changes would not substantially alter the character of the service (criterion (a) below), Ofcom cannot consent to the change without consulting on your proposals.² If this is the case, we will contact you to confirm that you are happy for us to consult on your proposed changes, and whether you wish to make any changes to your request in light of the need to make it public.

As part of our consideration of your request to make changes to your Key Commitments, we require applicants to provide an explanation for **at least one** of the criteria below.

(a) In your judgement would the proposed changes substantially alter the character of the service?	NO (Please explain why below)
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B Radio continues to serve the under-40s who live, work and study in Reading. The service continues to provide a voice to local young people and showcase their talents, and it continues to work with the community to find opportunities to teach young people new skills.

We do not believe these changes would substantially alter the character of the service. We believe it will enhance the listening experience and allow it to continue to be focused on serving the under-40s who live, work and study in Reading.

(b) Do you consider that the proposed changes would narrow the range of programmes available by way of relevant independent radio services to persons comprising the relevant community?	NO (Please explain why below)
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It is not our intention to make any changes to the current programming based on the changes requested. The changes simply provide greater flexibility during periods where there are less volunteers available, which is typically when radio listening is also lower.

(c) Do you believe that there is evidence that, amongst persons comprising that community, there is a significant demand for, or significant support for, the changes that you have proposed?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
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¹As amended by sections 312 and 313 of the Communications Act 2003 and modified by the Community Radio Order 2004.

² Ofcom may approve a change under any of criteria (b), (c), (d) and (e) without consultation, or after a consultation of less than 28 days, if Ofcom considers that to hold a consultation at all, or for 28 days or more, would result in a delay that would be likely to prejudice the interests of the licensee. Ofcom may also remove for the purposes of consultation any confidential information submitted by the licensee.

(d) Do you consider that your proposed changes would be prejudicial to the access by members of that community to the facilities used for the provision of the service and for training in the use of those facilities?

NO
(Please explain why below)

We do not consider these changes to have a negative impact on our provision of training

(e) Do you consider that the proposed changes would be prejudicial to the delivery of social gain resulting from the provision of the service provided under your licence?

YES/NO
(Please explain why below)

Please set out below any additional information and/or evidence you wish to provide in support of your proposed changes.

In particular, you may wish to outline how you think your proposed change(s) fit(s) within Ofcom's [published guidance on changes to Key Commitments](#).

Data Protection

We require the information requested in this form in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see Ofcom's [General Privacy Statement](#) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.

Amended May 2018

Ofcom notes on the request

The request was AGREED, because Ofcom was satisfied in relation to Section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as modified by the Community Radio Order 2004, and further modified by the Community Radio (Amendment) Orders 2010 and 2015) i.e. that the changes would not substantially alter the character of the service, and for the policy reasons given below.

The Licensee has requested to change its music output, from “mainstream music from the 1980s to present day” to “mainstream music from the past few decades to present day” and to remove its reference to “music from the decades” from its specialist music programming. The Licensee has argued that music from the 1980s and 1990s is less likely to appeal to its target audience of under-40s in Reading, and we agree with this assessment. By making this change the Licensee will be able to refresh its music policy over time to ensure it continues to be relevant to its target community.

The Licensee has also requested changes to its speech output requirements, removing requirements to broadcast travel news and interviews over the course of each week. In requesting the removal of travel news, the Licensee has argued that technological advances in the provision of real-time travel information mean that listeners are less reliant on radio travel news. Previous research undertaken by Ofcom has indicated that travel news remains important to listeners, but we recognise it cannot be said to constitute a key element of B Radio’s character of service and thus we do not consider its removal as a requirement to represent a substantial change. The licensee will continue to be under an obligation to provide local information, and we would expect this to include coverage of any major incidents which might have an impact on peoples’ ability to travel locally (e.g. getting to the B Radio studio for training).

We also do not consider a requirement to broadcast interviews to be a key aspect of the station’s output, and recognise the particular staffing challenges for a service based on a university campus which relies heavily on student volunteers such as B Radio. We are therefore satisfied that removing this obligation does not represent a substantial change to the character of the service. B Radio will remain under an obligation to “provide a voice to local young people”, and we also note the licensee’s statement in its request that “interviews will continue to feature regularly on the station”.

The Licensee’s proposed changes to its original and locally-produced output requirements would reduce its original output by nearly 50%, and its locally-produced output by about 30%. Given its reliance on student volunteers, it was open to the licensee to seek different requirements during and outside of term-time which would have allowed for flexibility during the latter, but in proposing instead to maintain consistent requirements throughout the year the licensee will need to ensure it can provide at least the new, lower, minimum levels of original and locally-produced output all the time. In this regard, we note the licensee’s statement that these commitments are “an absolute minimum, rather than a target”. Although the reductions, particularly to the original output requirement, are sizeable, we are satisfied that the requirements remain at a level sufficient to allow the station to meet the characteristics of a community radio service, and we do not consider the changes, taken as a whole, to be substantial.

We are satisfied, then, that these changes would not substantially alter the character of the service, and we are further satisfied that none of our policy criteria would require us to refuse this request. In particular, and as set out above, we do not consider these changes conflict with the community radio ‘characteristics of service’ set out in the legislation, and we judge the extent of the impact of the change on the character of the B Radio service to be low. Therefore, we are approving this request under section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990, and for these policy reasons.

June 2023