

Consultation response form

Consultation title	Localness on commercial radio
Full name	Derek Smith
Representing (delete as appropriate)	Self

Your response

Question	Your response
Question 1: Do you agree that Ofcom's duty to secure 'localness' on local commercial radio stations could be satisfied if stations were able to reduce the amount of locally-made programming they provide? If not, please explain the reasons and/or evidence which support your view.	No. Since 2012 we have been virtually stripped of meaningful local commercial radio stations. KMFM has taken all of the local out of the local stations it 'absorbed' and turned it into just another Kent wide commercial station. Academy FM (the local community station in Thanet) does not have the money to promote itself or provide decent local programming, as it serves too small an area, whereas the station that was absorbed into KMFM (TLR) had a wider area and more potential advertising revenue to spend on local programming and news.
Question 2: Do you agree with our proposed amendments to the localness guidelines relating to locally-made programming? If not, please specify any amendments you think should be made instead (if any), and explain the reasons and/or evidence which support your view.	No. KMFM does not identify with any local community and has gradually reduced local programme until it is non-existent.
Question 3: Do you agree with our proposed new approved areas? If not, please specify any alternative proposals you think should be considered (if any), and explain the reasons and/or evidence which support your view.	No. I believe that many mistakes were made with the original local commercial stations. They were not far sighted enough to really see beyond the idea of off-shore radio setting up on land. I think that now with the experience gained via internet radio there is a good reason for dismantling organisations like KMFM and returning the stations to truly local.

Question 4: Do you agree with our proposed amendments to the localness guidelines relating to local material? If not, please specify any amendments you think should be made instead, and explain the reasons and/or evidence which support your view.

No. By definition local radio is aimed at local people. We have an enormous amount of talent amongst local communities to produce speech, drama and music that is not being given the audience it deserves. There will always be a place for recorded music in the mix but to be truly local the output has to be identifiable by the local community. There is very little local output now available on commercial FM, and large stations like KMFM, which shows up very badly in your consultation survey, are gradually strangling the life out of it. We used to have five local stations, two county wide commercial FM stations, and a split BBC station in Kent. We now have KMFM, Heart and BBC from Tunbridge Wells (a studio on the very edge of the County rather than in a central position). There are so many local issues these days, and so many people wanting to get involved that we need good local radio stations now more than ever.