

Moser, Mr

Consultation question:

Should regional radio station Capital FM (Birmingham) be permitted to make the changes to its Character of Service as proposed with particular regard to the statutory criteria as set out in the summary? (The Broadcasting Act 1990 Section 106 (1A) (b) and (d) relating to Format changes).

Capital FM Birmingham should not be allowed to drop the requirement to play reggae and hip-hop or the requirement to specifically target Afro-Caribbean audiences, as a station that serves this purpose is not otherwise available on FM all over Birmingham.

The request will make the station's new format too different from the existing format and should not be allowed to happen. It is like licensing a new station without advertising the license publicly. The format change implies that the station will be a pop music station that focusses mainly on rhythmic genres rather than a station for fans of urban Black music which includes reggae and soul. It is a very abrupt change of format and should not be allowed to happen.

It will mean that pirate stations will once again need to occupy the airwaves of Birmingham in order to provide the music that fans of Black music want to listen to. Also not everyone can currently afford a DAB radio to listen to Choice and BBC Radio 1Xtra.

The new format also reduces the choice of distinctive radio in Birmingham as all the music played by the Capital FM network station is already available on various other FM local and national stations receivable in the area. There is therefore no demand for a change in format.