

Name Withheld 3(b)

Question 1: Should local 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). :

I believe that Ofcom should reject this change. Should it be granted, it will result in the amount of specialist output being more than halved and the station will no longer specifically have to target the Afro-Caribbean community that it was originally licenced to serve.

In 2008, the licensee was subject to a Content Sampling Report by Ofcom which concluded that:

"the Birmingham station must retain its African, Afro-Caribbean and urban points of difference, which the information and speech output does help establish. However, we conclude that while the station is at present operating within its Format, that would no longer be the case if pop and dance tracks encroach further." -

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/radio-ops/sampling/galaxy1022.pdf>

However, since then, chart/pop/dance music has further dominated the playlist regardless and the current service is marketed as a "Hit Music Station" playing mainly chart music; a format which is assigned to other stations in the area (BRMB). There are only three hours of specialist output provided by Capital which specifically cover black/urban music. These are broadcast from 2am-5am on a Sunday morning when there is likely to be a very small audience.

With this in mind I believe the request should be rejected and a new Content Sampling exercise should be undertaken to ensure that the licensee is meeting its current character of service.

However, should Ofcom be minded to grant the format change, a requirement should be made for specialist programmes to be broadcast BEFORE midnight, as per the format of stations like Smooth.

Additionally, the '12 hours' should consist of urban/Afro-Caribbean music programmes, not dance remixes of mainstream chart hits overnight which is how Capital appears to fulfil most of its specialist hours at present.