

**Okwadiibo, 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).**

No, they should not be able to reformat Capital Birmingham from a station that has a responsibility to serve people of African-Caribbean origin into a general rhythmic chart music station. BRMB already exists for this purpose in Birmingham, along with the national station BBC Radio 1.

The requirements for Reggae and Soul must be retained specifically as this is not provided locally by other stations and is the bread and butter of African-Caribbean oriented radio. The document refers to NewStyle Radio and BBC Radio 1Xtra as already providing a service for African-Caribbeans, however 1Xtra is only available digitally so is not a valid argument. Furthermore, NewStyle only covers a very limited area in Birmingham, only Winson Green and the West Central Birmingham areas are covered by this service, so again Capital have made an invalid argument.

The proposed format will reduce listener choice by taking away specialist programmes for African-Caribbean people carried on Sunday early mornings and also by taking away specialist dance programmes. The amount of specialist programmes must not be allowed to change as a result.

The proposed changes will lead to many people no longer being served by a radio station on FM that serves their needs, given the hugely diverse population of Birmingham.

Even the current output has limited appeal to the various communities in the area that were once adequately catered for on 102.2FM. The station has already been allowed to deviate too much from its original remit without any public consultation.

Capital must do more to better serve the diverse population of Birmingham rather than to alienate them with mainstream chart music all day long. They must be made to realise that it is not acceptable to try and merge and standardise the formats of different types of stations that were originally designed to compliment each other, e.g. in London, Capital and Choice were designed to compliment each other with very different formats. Similarly, in Birmingham, BRMB (ex-Capital network) and Capital (originally Choice) were designed to compliment each other with very different formats, they were not designed to be competing stations.

I do not think Capital Birmingham should be allowed to make any of the changes proposed in the consultation.