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What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing confidential

Comments:

?Small-scale radio?

As a licensed community radio station, in addition to the other proposals raised within ?Radio: the implications of Digital Britain for localness regulation?, we took great interest in section 8, which focuses significant discussion of the potential impacts on community radio services, due to the digital migration of larger services.

We fully agree that (8.12) there is a significant issue in the capacity to licence further community stations, particularly in areas of frequency congestion (such as London). It is also a shame that despite the early growth, and success, of the community radio sector such services are still only available to ?approximately 10% of the population?.

We fully support the initial proposals outlined in section 8.13 which point towards addressing the significant coverage problems faced by many community radio services. We have first hand experience of this and receive regular reports from listeners complaining about incoming interference, or poor reception, in areas where our signal should be more robust. For many stations issues of poor reception, and interference (exacerbated by transmission restrictions) can have additional detrimental effects in areas such as volunteer morale, and it is good to see the report has acknowledged the extent to which power restrictions imposed on community radio services are a serious problem.

It has always been our view that community radio services should not be seen as ?second class citizens? when it comes to power allocation and coverage restrictions, which is

currently the case. Whilst in certain urban areas we understand the implications, and problems increased power would raise due to the lack of frequencies, this is not the case in other areas (such as Norwich) so a 'one size fits all' rule is perhaps quite limiting where there are stations who could benefit from a power increase, without this impacting on the ability to allocate more FM services in the area.

We fully support the proposals (8.14) that with digital migration, there is the chance for a reassessment of coverage allowance for community radio services. However we also feel that in a number of areas (e.g. areas where frequency scarcity is not such an issue) this is something that could be looked at in the more immediate future, rather than waiting a number of years for digital migration to be completed. This would need to be assessed on a case by case basis by Ofcom, but given the lengthy period of time digital migration will take this must be considered as it will potentially benefit a substantial number of stations, and in turn increase the availability of community radio services around the UK.

We are pleased to see further acknowledgment of the success of the community radio sector (8.15) and also welcome additional highlighting of the funding challenges faced by the sector (8.16). It is worth drawing attention, again, to the lack of core funding currently available and in particular the Ofcom Community Radio Fund, which has stood at the same amount since its inception. With much documentation made of the growth, and success of community radio, it is implausible that this fund has not seen a year on year increase which at least attempts to keep speed with the growth of the sector. If we want the success story of Community Radio to be maintained it is essential that this fund, and additional core funding can be developed.

Proposal 1: regional stations allowed to share programming to become national stations:

Proposal 2: creation of a new national multiplex from existing regional multiplexes:

Proposal 3: co-location within a new set of defined areas:

Proposal 4: programme sharing within the newly defined areas:

Proposal 5: mergers of local multiplexes:

Proposal 6: an enhanced news option for local FM stations:

Proposal 7: AM stations:

Proposal 8: Limited redefinition of contemporary music Formats: