

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Stephen

Surname:

Lawton

Name and title under which you would like this response to appear:

Castledown Radio

Representing:

Tidworth Development Trust

What are your comments on these proposals?:

Castledown Radio is a community radio station and whilst we are users of radio as well as operators, we consider that our expertise does not allow us to express an opinion on a great deal of this consultation. We therefore restrict our response to community radio (section 6).

We only comment on those areas that to us seem important issues at this stage.

Community Radio is a new tier of broadcasting and the majority of stations on air have been so for only a year or less, so we believe that it is too early to commence changing the law now or in the near future and that such consideration should be made after a number of years of 'bedding in'.

Community Radio is based on small geographical areas and is supposed to be for the community or 'community of interest' in that area, Servicing a 'community of interest' cannot, in our view, be properly achieved via a network of small geographically based community radio stations - DAB multiplex or other wider reach would seem more sensible.

6.6 We agree that 'social gain' (or community benefit) criterion should be retained.

6.7 We consider that some form of accountability to the local community it serves should be retained. This is an important aspect of community radio, in that the community should be involved and 'own' the service.

6.8 To allow access, etc., may not need to be a mandatory requirement, but should be seriously considered during the appraisal of any application.

6.9 We could easily agree that there should be no limit on single source funding, but feel strongly that this rule is appropriate and that 50% is the correct level. The organisation operating the service retains ownership and control as a result.

6.10 We welcome this proposal and consider that such volunteer time should be accounted for.

6.12 We strongly advocate that no change should be made. If the ownership rule is altered it would destroy the whole reasoning behind community radio being very local. Working in partnership with other community radio stations, or other organisations, is the way forward. Creating networks owned by one is would put us on a par with many local commercial radio stations and we are not convinced that has benefited them as much of their localness has been lost.

6.14 We wish to see renewal of licences allowed, providing the service has been well provided during its existing licence period.

6.15 We welcome a review of restrictions on economic impact.

6.16 We understand the issues concerning frequency availability and the restrictions in place. This matter is of great importance in the urban areas, but in the rural areas may not be so restrictive. We would like to see a relaxation of the 5 kilometre rule and allow increase in power in order to effectively cover a sensible (and reasoned) wider area, especially where planning constraints often restrict the height of the mast.

It is our belief that community radio stations are effective because of the small geographic areas covered, thereby relating to that immediate local community. We cannot see an alternative to FM frequency at this present time and would caution against attempting to move such services to other platforms that are not local and probably a lot more expensive!