

Key Commitments change request form

Community radio station name:	107 Meridian FM
Licence number:	CR000206
Licensee (company name):	Meridian FM Radio Limited
Contact name:	Richard Leader
Date of request:	12 July 2023

Details of requested change(s) to Key Commitments

A community radio operator may apply to Ofcom to have the station's Key Commitments amended.

Please complete the table overleaf by including your current Commitment in the left hand column and your proposed revised Commitment in the centre column. In the right hand column please give a brief explanation as to why you wish to make each change.

We also require you to complete a second table which asks you to explain your proposed changes with reference to the statutory framework.

If you do not provide an explanation for your proposed changes and a completed comparison table, Ofcom cannot consider a Key Commitments change.

Please complete this form and return it to: broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

Existing Commitment (as in your published Key Commitments) Please only include one commitment change per row, and add more rows as necessary into the table.	Proposed revised/new Key Commitment	Reason for proposed change
<p>The service provides original output for a minimum of 12 hours per day.</p>	<p>The service provides original output for an average of 70 hours per week.</p>	<p>The impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis have impacted on our presenters' availability. While we have recruited new volunteers, we operate in a rural community which is less well populated than many community stations and maintaining healthy volunteer numbers can be challenging. We wish to focus on continuing to bring innovative community content to our listeners and a more focused broadcast time, averaged over the week will enable us to do this.</p>

Statutory requirements

Under section 106(1A)(a)-(f) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as amended and modified¹) Ofcom must be satisfied that your proposed changes **meet at least one of the criteria referred to below**.

Please indicate which of these criteria you believe your proposed changes satisfy by deleting YES or NO as applicable and provide an explanation for why you consider a particular criterion is met in the relevant box. You should note that even if Ofcom is of the opinion that your explanation of your proposed changes meets one or more of these criteria, there may still be reasons why Ofcom is unable to consent to the change. When explaining your proposed changes, it is not enough to state that you believe one of the criteria is met. You must also demonstrate *why* you consider that at least one of these criteria is met.

In particular, if Ofcom is not satisfied that the changes would not substantially alter the character of the service (criterion (a) below), Ofcom cannot consent to the change without consulting on your proposals.² If this is the case, we will contact you to confirm that you are happy for us to consult on your proposed changes, and whether you wish to make any changes to your request in light of the need to make it public.

As part of our consideration of your request to make changes to your Key Commitments, we require applicants to provide an explanation for **at least one** of the criteria below.

(a) In your judgement would the proposed changes substantially alter the character of the service?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
Our aim is to focus on providing quality local community content for as much of the week as we can. Our differentiation is local content – from news to interviews, local sport and local music. Concentrating this over an average of 10 hours a day will provide better community content.	
(b) Do you consider that the proposed changes would narrow the range of programmes available by way of relevant independent radio services to persons comprising the relevant community?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
We actually consider the opposite – rather than ‘making hours up’, we can concentrate on better local radio,=.	
(c) Do you believe that there is evidence that, amongst persons comprising that community, there is a significant demand for, or significant support for, the changes that you have proposed?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
The feedback we have has been very supportive.	
(d) Do you consider that your proposed changes would be prejudicial to the access by members of that community to the facilities used	YES/NO (Please explain why below)

¹ As amended by sections 312 and 313 of the Communications Act 2003 and modified by the Community Radio Order 2004.

² Ofcom may approve a change under any of criteria (b), (c), (d) and (e) without consultation, or after a consultation of less than 28 days, if Ofcom considers that to hold a consultation at all, or for 28 days or more, would result in a delay that would be likely to prejudice the interests of the licensee. Ofcom may also remove for the purposes of consultation any confidential information submitted by the licensee.

for the provision of the service and for training in the use of those facilities?	
As above – we could even have more time available for these activities.	
(e) Do you consider that the proposed changes would be prejudicial to the delivery of social gain resulting from the provision of the service provided under your licence?	YES/NO (Please explain why below)
We don't believe these changes negatively impact our ability to deliver social gain	

<p>Please set out below any additional information and/or evidence you wish to provide in support of your proposed changes.</p> <p>In particular, you may wish to outline how you think your proposed change(s) fit(s) within Ofcom's published guidance on changes to Key Commitments (https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/31913/kc-changes-guidance.pdf).</p>

Data Protection

We require the information requested in this form in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see Ofcom's [General Privacy Statement](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/foi-dp/general-privacy-statement) (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/foi-dp/general-privacy-statement>) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.

Amended May 2018

Ofcom notes on the request

The request was AGREED, because Ofcom was satisfied in relation to Section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as modified by the Community Radio Order 2004, and further modified by the Community Radio (Amendment) Orders 2010 and 2015) i.e. that the change would not substantially alter the character of the service, and for the policy reasons given below.

The Licensee has asked to convert its original output requirement from a daily to a weekly requirement, and in doing so has requested a reduction of 17% in its overall requirement, from an equivalent of 84 hours per week to 70 hours per week. The Licensee has explained that changing circumstances have affected the availability of its volunteer base, which has in turn affected the amount of original output it is able to broadcast each week.

We are generally happy to approve requests to convert a daily original output requirement to a weekly requirement, understanding that this provides greater flexibility to stations in managing their resources over the course of a week without affecting the service provided to listeners. We are also satisfied in relation to the reduction requested here – this is a relatively modest reduction in the original output requirement over the course of each week, and we recognise that changing economic circumstances affect the amount of time volunteers can dedicate to a station. We are satisfied that a modest reduction such as this will not substantially alter the character of the service.

We have also considered these requests under our policy criteria, and consider that there are no policy reasons to refuse this request. As we are satisfied under Section 106(1A)(a) of the Broadcasting Act 1990, that the character of the service would be substantially altered by this change, we have decided to exercise our discretion to approve this change.

August 2023