



department for  
culture, media  
and sport

# The Community Radio Sector: Looking to the Future



improving  
the quality  
of life for all

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

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# 1. Executive summary

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- 1.1 Within the United Kingdom the birth of the community radio sector has been a relatively slow process. Unlike Australia and Canada where community radio has been a licensed tier of radio since the 1970s, the UK only made provision for the introduction of community radio in 2003.
- 1.2 While the BBC created an FM local radio service in 1967 with a community based ethos, the catchment areas were expansive and this inevitably influenced the dynamics of the service. Horizons began to expand with the Broadcasting Act of 1972, which introduced commercial radio and by 1980 nearly 30 independent local radio stations were in existence. Many of these stations were community based initially, but commercial considerations soon began to take the upper hand. The BBC recognising the competing force of the commercial radio stations began to align its local programming policies with the new independent stations thereby effectively severing the link with community development.
- 1.3 The 1990 Broadcasting Act encouraged the growth of commercial radio and established both short-term and long-term Restricted Service Licences (RSLs). Long-term RSLs are designed for hospital, student and military radio stations, while short-term RSLs run for a maximum of 28 days and individual groups may only receive up to two licences a year (one a year in London). Community groups soon recognised the usefulness of the short-term RSLs not only in terms of promoting and sustaining community life, but also for helping to build broadcasting skills and expertise.
- 1.4 The Community Media Association (CMA), which supports community radio and television and community based internet projects campaigned for a third community radio tier, but made little progress for several years. In 2000 however, the Radio Authority (whose duties are now subsumed within Ofcom) put forward a case to DCMS for an Access Radio experiment. In 2001 the Government gave the Radio Authority permission to undertake a pilot scheme to test the viability of Access Radio. The scheme was evaluated by Professor Anthony Everitt<sup>1&2</sup>. The evaluation helped to inform Government during its deliberations leading up to the Communications Act 2003. This Act allowed for the Secretary of State for Culture to introduce community radio by secondary legislation<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.5 One hundred and seven community radio stations have been awarded licences by Ofcom to date and this number is expected to increase to around 170 in the second round of licensing. It is only recently that legislative provision has been made for Ofcom to award grants to community radio service providers. DCMS is currently providing a Community Radio Fund (CRF), which allows up to £500,000 per annum to be allocated to the radio stations and this funding is in place until the financial year 2007/08. Next year, the Treasury's Comprehensive Spending Review will look at all public expenditure from first principles including the CRF.
- 1.6 Given the level of interest in the licensing of community radio stations, it was decided to undertake a study to gather available evidence on the impact of the sector. Particular attention was to be paid to social gain and economic impacts, efficiency outputs and sustainability. While it would not be possible to make any realistic assessments about the direct effect of the CRF on the sector since the first grants had

<sup>1</sup> New Voices – an evaluation of 15 Access Radio Projects by Professor Anthony Everitt, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> New Voices – an update – October 2003 by Professor Anthony Everitt.

<sup>3</sup> Community Radio Order 2004.

- not been awarded until late 2005, efforts would be made to look at whether the fund had done anything to increase confidence levels.
- 1.7 Thirteen stations were invited to be part of the DCMS research. Not all of these stations have yet moved to full-time broadcasting.
- 1.8 The findings of this study make clear that the community radio stations have delivered important social gains across a range of issues, but particularly in respect of volunteering, work placement and training opportunities. In some cases significant economic gains have also been achieved by people at an individual level.
- 1.9 Linguistic diversity has been embraced by several of the stations and specific programming and support systems for those without English as a first language have been put in place. Collaborative working with schools, colleges of further and higher education, local authorities and businesses represents an important part of the sector's activities. Some stations have been able to use these relationships to lever in funds to support their work, while others are still exploring the boundaries.
- 1.10 Several of the stations have made economic impacts at a local level. As well as employing several staff, small businesses have benefited from links with them. Businesses have been profiled on air, they have been given access to low cost advertising and as such they have been able to position themselves more effectively within the community.
- 1.11 All the stations recognise the part they can play in helping to foster social inclusion and active citizenship. They have discovered that *giving people a voice* can lead to some surprising outcomes. For example, truculent teenagers who begin to register that what goes around comes around and modify their behaviour accordingly. Similarly a 38 year old with literacy problems who with encouragement from a community radio station discovered he had considerable creative talent and now writes his own scripts and presents historical documentaries on air.
- 1.12 Some of the stations concentrate on the more vulnerable members of their community, the old and the young. They provide light hearted programming designed to boost feelings of well being.
- 1.13 No one can predict the future of the community radio stations and funding is likely to remain a key issue for many. The development of fund raising expertise within stations is becoming ever more important and at least one station that was struggling financially has been awarded a CRF grant for the recruitment of a full-time fund raiser. It will be interesting to see the impact such appointments have over the next 12 months.

**Moira Goatley**  
November 2006

## 2. Acknowledgements

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- 2.1 I should like to thank each of the community radio station representatives who assisted me with this research project. I am extremely grateful to them for their time, valuable contributions and insight. I hope that I have done justice to the information they kindly provided.
- 2.2 Grateful thanks are also extended to the individuals who made up the peer review group for this project.

## 3. Introduction

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- 3.1 Each community radio station is owned and controlled by a not-for-profit organisation which is structured in such a way as to provide for membership, management, operation and programming to be undertaken primarily by members of the community. In addition to broadcasting services the radio stations offer training opportunities, which in some cases cover a number of strands ranging from basic literacy skills through to comprehensive presenting, production and journalistic skills. Many also act as a central contact point for their local community, with a drop-in centre and free facilities such as access to the internet.
- 3.2 The community radio stations are rolling out across the UK and the sector is quickly gaining public recognition as a third tier of radio. Ofcom first invited applications for community radio licences in September 2004 and 107 licences had been awarded by May 2006 when the initial round of licensing was completed. Preparations are now in hand for the second round of licensing, when some 60 new licences are expected to be issued. Ofcom anticipates that the total number of community radio stations granted licences will be around 200. This rapid rate of expansion is to be commended particularly because the sector has evolved under its own steam with local people taking the initiative to build up a community resource. Until recently it survived without direct government funding although, because community radio has proved to be an attractive means of delivering various social objectives, many public sector organisations charged with promoting local community cohesion and regeneration have provided the stations with project funding. The Communications Act 2003 Section 359 made provision for Ofcom to award grants to providers of any community radio service and the DCMS is currently providing a CRF. The Fund allows up to £500,000 per annum to be allocated to the radio stations and this is in place until the financial year 2007/08 (funding issues and the use of the CRF are looked at in detail in section 8 of this report).
- 3.3 Given the level of interest in the licensing of community radio stations it was decided to set up a study to gather available evidence on the impact of the community radio sector to date. This study looked at a small selection of the community radio stations that had been licensed by the beginning of 2006. Of the 63 stations that had been granted licences at that time, 13 were invited to be part of the DCMS research. Not all of these stations had moved to full-time broadcasting at the point that the fieldwork was undertaken and some stations had not yet reactivated on-air broadcasting following their last RSL activities. Nevertheless, it was felt important to look at all three strands of the sector in order to make the coverage of the research as comprehensive as possible.
- 3.4 In undertaking this research project close attention has been paid to the work undertaken by Professor Anthony Everitt, who was appointed by the Radio Authority to conduct an independent evaluation of 15 access radio projects which ran between 2002 and 2003, and to make recommendations about the future licensing of the sector. His two reports (see footnotes 1 and 2) provided much valuable information on the sector during its embryonic stage and influenced the Government's decision to make provision for a new tier of radio under the auspices of the Communications Act 2003. The term access radio has now been replaced by the more familiar one of community radio, but we are indebted to the 15 pilot projects and the many other groups who operated RSLs over the years and whose efforts have directly contributed to the creation of the 107 licensed community radio stations we have today.

## 4. Methodology

4.1 It was thought important to include a good cross spread of community radio stations in the research with representation from each of the English regions and the nations as well as coverage of stations targeting special interest groups eg the young or older people, a particular faith group, cultural diversity, rural or urban etc. Some of the stations from the Radio Authority's 2001 access radio pilot scheme (see footnotes 1 and 2) were also included. This had looked at 15

radio projects at various locations across the United Kingdom with the aim of informing the future regulator, Ofcom, about the viability of such a sector and providing a basis for determining an appropriate regulatory regime. In the event 6 of the original access radio stations and 7 other stations participated in the DCMS study. The full list of the 13 participating stations is set out at Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

Station	Location	Broad aims
Afan FM	Neath and Port Talbot, Wales	To deliver a music-based information service specifically aimed at young people aged 11–25.
Angel Radio*	Havant, Hants	A service for older people to provide affirmation that they are still a valuable part of society. As a matter of policy it plays music recorded between 1900 and 1959 only.
BCB*	Bradford	To serve all those living in a complex multi-cultural city.
Cross Rhythms*	Stoke on Trent	A station which caters for Christians, but also seeks to attract the wider community.
Desi Radio*	Southall, London	The station exists to reconcile the different religious and social strands of Panjabi culture in Southall by serving the needs of all Panjabi Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians.
Down FM	Downpatrick, Northern Ireland	A service based in the local College of Further and Higher Education, which covers the immediate town and surrounding villages.
Future Radio	Norwich	A community station which forms part of the NR5 project, an inclusive arts and education project in the North Earham, Larkman and Marlpit communities of Norwich.
Gloucester FM	City of Gloucester	To provide a service targeted at black and ethnic minority communities and disadvantaged groups in Gloucester to encourage integration within the wider community.

Lionheart Radio	Alnwick, Northumberland	To serve an entire community in a rural area.
Radio Reverb	Brighton	To serve the deprived wards in central and Eastern Brighton targeting the economically disadvantaged including the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population.
Takeover Radio*	Leicester	To enable children aged between 8 and 14 years of age to run their own radio station with minimum adult supervision.
VIP on Air	Glasgow, Scotland	A service targeted at the blind and partially sighted population.
Wythenshawe FM*	Manchester	To serve the disadvantaged communities in the city.

\* Participants in access radio project.

4.2 While the award of a five year licence did not appear to have influenced the nature of the ongoing services offered by the long-standing community radio stations, three of the fledgling stations (Afan FM, Future Radio and Lionheart Radio) were not actually broadcasting at the time the fieldwork for this study was undertaken. One was waiting for a new frequency to be allocated by Ofcom before recommencing its service and the other two stations were building up capacity in terms of their accommodation, volunteer base and funding streams before reactivating their broadcasts.

4.3 Each radio station listed in Table 1 above was sent a detailed questionnaire for consideration (see Annex A) and this was later completed in a face-to-face interview between the DCMS researcher and one or more representatives of each participating station. The interviews took place between March and August 2006. The questionnaire was designed to draw out information on:

- social gain impacts;

- economic impacts (eg "economic" assistance given to local people, local businesses and/or the wider community);
- evolving impacts (social or economic) and the probable outcome in two to five years time;
- efficiency outputs; and
- Long-term ambitions including mechanisms for maintaining the credibility of the stations.

4.4 Given the different stages of development of the stations included in the fieldwork, the intention was to get an overview of what was actually happening in the sector rather than a detailed prognosis of the strengths/weaknesses and sustainability of individual stations as licensed broadcasters. There is considerable variation between the stations not only in terms of the needs of their audiences and the services they provide, but also in their infrastructures and ambitions for the future. This report seeks to draw out the diversity of the sector and the wider tendrils of its activities as well as taking a detailed look at the tangible benefits of having community radio broadcasters in our midst.

## 5. The 13 stations: an overview of the sector

### Social gain impacts – the challenge of moving to full-time broadcasting

- 5.1 Community groups have been quick to pick up on the opportunities presented by the new licensing arrangements for community radio stations. They recognise that the creation of five year licences provides stability for their broadcasting operations that could not have been achieved with RSLs. This means greater certainty for the listening public, more secure income streams to support the basic infrastructures of the stations and increased opportunities for training and retaining a skilled volunteer base.
- 5.2 Mary Dowson, Director of BCB is realistic about the rapid expansion of the sector. She explained that *“this station has been going for years and years. We’ve run about 30 RSLs and have been able to grow incrementally, to have crises and to learn the pit-falls before having a full-time licence. It will be a steep learning curve for some of the newly licensed groups to become full-time broadcasters”*. A degree of uncertainty about the long-term sustainability of parts of the sector is inevitable given that the stations exist to give *‘local people a voice’* and are dependent upon the creativity of the volunteer presenters every bit as much as the efficiency, effectiveness and imagination of paid staff. Karen Cass, Chair, Radio Reverb summed this up when she said *“we broadcast one day a week, which goes out as a student radio station. Things will be rather different once we go full-time. For example, the Chinese are the biggest grouping of the Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) population in Brighton. Within this group middle aged men are the hardest to reach. They don’t mix outside their immediate family/social groups. We will give Chinese people a voice, but it will be up to them as to how they use the programme slot”*.

### Training

- 5.3 The stations provide training in media skills either directly or in the case of Gloucester FM indirectly via a training partner and this represents an important part of their remit. Courses are linked to the needs of the individual as much as possible. In the case of Future FM, which is part of an education and training trust for young people who have dropped out of school, courses incorporate basic skills where appropriate.
- 5.4 Takeover Radio has a sophisticated three tier system of training for young people, which builds up skills in production and presenting with bronze, silver and gold certificates awarded at each stage of development. Wythenshawe FM offers two broadcasting skills courses both of which have been accredited by Mancat and lead to an NVQ level 2.



A training session underway in Manchester

- 5.5 BCB runs an extensive media training programme under which 161 people received training in 2005 alone. The station is now looking to create an additional tier with

refresher courses partly designed to rekindle the interest of former volunteers. BCB has also been responsible for developing an innovative scheme to train local people to become Community Reporters. Financed by the European Social Fund, it is regarded as a huge success. It has helped ten people between the ages of 18 and 50+, some of whom were on incapacity benefit prior to joining the scheme, to move into paid employment for 12 months. They are acquiring transferable skills which should enable them to find employment in the wider community. The first scheme was completed in summer 2006 and preparations are now in hand for a second round.

## Work placement

5.6 Work placement is viewed as a small, but important facet of the stations' activities. Cross Rhythms is probably the largest provider at present with on the job training for 15 people each quarter. BCB aims to offer 10 placements per annum and had already reached its target for 2006 in the first eight months of this year. The station also works in partnership with a local college to provide up to 25 undergraduate media studies students with experience of live-on-air broadcasts, which are assessed as part of their BA degree course. The students effectively provide a local news service for a solid five weeks of the year. Future FM is situated in an area with a high proportion of children with special educational needs which means that work placement is near the top of the station's agenda. Consideration is being given to the possibility of translating the existing media training course into a basic skills document so that learning is certifiable and more likely to be recognised and understood by others.

## Volunteering

- 5.7 There are many reasons why people become volunteers with a community radio station. For some it will be the sense of achievement gained from doing something different and acquiring new skills. Others are looking for a career in the media and want to gain direct broadcasting experience. At a more fundamental level the stations give people a focus, help alleviate loneliness and isolation and can enable them to regain confidence in themselves or other people following a personal crisis. Annex B sets out nine individual impact studies which illustrate some of the tangible benefits of volunteering.
- 5.8 The more established stations such as Angel Radio, Desi Radio, BCB and Wythenshawe FM each have over 70 people who are actively volunteering with them, with duties ranging from front of house and administrative tasks to production and presentation. Future FM anticipates that it will need around 500 volunteers once it is operating full-time and has been advertising for people to join the station in spring 2007. Handling large numbers of volunteers is not without its challenges, of course, and it seems likely that several stations will be looking to employ a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator in due course.

## Linguistic diversity

- 5.9 While the core of local communities may remain largely unchanged for generations, the margins will often be subject to frequent movement as refugees come in and form groups that expand and contract with the passage of time. Some areas attract transient populations more than others and it falls to the community radio stations in those locations to find a way of drawing in these new audiences. Bradford has seen large groups of Belarusian, Polish,

Lithuanian, Iranian and African refugees move into the community and BCB has run a number of projects to cover their interests and information needs. At the moment the City has a large concentration of people from the Philippines. BCB currently broadcasts in 12 different languages and is supporting a new European Community Network in the City. Wythenshawe FM works hard to attract a significant Malayalee (south Indian) population which has established itself locally as an economically active group predominantly employed in Manchester's hospitals. As well as publicising details of Malayalee festivals and events, programmes are broadcast to specifically raise awareness of the group and their culture.

- 5.10 One of the primary aims of Desi Radio is to raise awareness and understanding of the Panjabi language in Southall because people will often have no more than a rudimentary understanding of their native tongue. Looking to the future, the station hopes to be able to offer language training to help people improve their vocabulary and general knowledge of Panjabi. There are also plans to work with schools and colleges of further education on the impact of language since a shared language is one way of alleviating intergenerational differences and can help to prevent anti-social behaviour. Desi Radio said *"this is important with the young people who are born here and who have a "hybrid" way of life quite different to that of their parents"*.
- 5.11 Gloucester FM sits in one of the more diverse corners of Gloucester City where some 27 languages are spoken. Although the bulk of the station's broadcasting is in English, some speech programmes are aired in other languages including African, Romanian and Panjabi. The station recognises that this is a particularly effective way of getting official information to the hard to reach parts of the population. It has, for example, worked in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions to publicise new arrangements for job seekers allowance.

## Community relations

- 5.12 Some of the radio stations have embedded themselves within the local community they serve so well that they are able to attract both volunteers and a good part of their audience by word of mouth. Future FM has the added advantage of being part of an education and arts based trust, which is already engaged with the station's target group. A lot of the day-time programming broadcast by this station has been developed with the specific aim of getting local people involved.
- 5.13 Two of the stations – Wythenshawe FM and Desi Radio – have opted for direct participation by local people with live radio phone-in programmes. This is a particularly brave decision since they do not have the technology to edit out libellous or slanderous comments before transmission. Instead they must rely on the strength of individual presenters to steer conversations away from controversy. Christine Brennan, the manager at Wythenshawe FM believes that it is worth taking the risk, she explained that the station broadcast a particularly successful *Question Time* with a panel made up of their local MP, Paul Goggins, a representative of the local authority Regeneration Team and the Police. The aim had been to give local people the opportunity to ask questions of people in authority and once the questions started to flow they were difficult to stop.
- 5.14 Gloucester FM has made a pact with its listeners to deal with issues *"in our own way"*. Derrick Francis, the station's chairman explained that when gun crime become an issue in the locality, the station took the decision to make a public

information broadcast explaining the punishments people could expect if they were caught in possession of a gun. He felt it was hard hitting and made a real impact. The station also raised awareness about the pain and misery drugs can have on individuals, their families and the long-term health of all concerned. Interviews were held with prisoners convicted of possessing drugs. They gave accounts of the perils of prison life and the debt and confusion that can await them on release from incarceration. The community impact studies 10 and 11 at Annex B illustrate other ways in which community radio stations can help to strengthen community relations.

5.15 Afan FM is sited in the Aqua Dome on Port Talbot's seafront, which is designated the Local Action Centre and accommodates over 30 advisory and charity organisations, all working for the benefit of the public. Work will commence shortly on the development of a bowling alley, cinema complex and arts centre, new housing and schools just across the road from the Aqua Dome. The local council estimates that once the redevelopment is complete something like 300,000 people will pass through the Action Centre every summer. Afan FM fully expects to become the hub of the community. In preparation for this, plans are in hand to upgrade the existing station to provide state of the art studios and broadcasting equipment to more readily attract its target audience of 11 to 25 year olds. To assist with this endeavour, Afan FM works closely with the Neath and Port Talbot Youth Service which covers some of the most remote and socially deprived wards in Wales.

5.16 Angel Radio targets the older community in Havant and considerable efforts are made to run therapeutic strands throughout the programming including reminiscence therapy. Health officials confirm the beneficial effects of this type of

activity. Tony Smith, the Managing Director of the station summed up its effects when he explained that *"on hearing a record from days gone by people suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia will suddenly start singing along with the music and will remember all the words"*. This is despite them having difficulty remembering their own name and those of their close family members. The station also acts as a social hub for the elderly with around 50 people popping in each week for a chat, cup of tea and a copy of the local newspaper. The long-term aim is to secure more spacious accommodation to provide a resource and information centre for older people.



*Jeannie has recently fought breast cancer. She gave a day-by-day account of her treatment for Angel Radio listeners who may worry about going through the process. The photo shows her interviewing Esther Mullinger, one of Butlin's very first beauty queens.*

5.17 Takeover Radio believes that young people in Leicester are in a privileged position because unlike the rest of the UK they have a radio station that is specifically designed to address

their needs. Volunteers and listeners are largely drawn to the station by word of mouth, the station does not advertise, but people can make an on-line application to join the crew via the station's website. As befits a City with an ethnic majority, the station attracts a good mix of BEM youngsters, although black boys are difficult to engage. This community of interest station is thought to attract around 72% of young people in Leicester at some point<sup>4</sup>.

- 5.18 Cross Rhythms City Radio gets involved in a host of community events ranging from *Time for Healing*, a seven week event in Stoke on Trent, to the annual cultural festival which is held in the City's cultural quarter and the Blourton festival, which takes place in a suburb of the City. The station's target audience is 16 to 40 year olds, but it is increasingly reaching into the 50+ age bracket. In all it touches about 10 per cent of the City.

## Social inclusion

- 5.19 The stations were asked to comment on whether they felt their work was contributing to the Government's social inclusion agenda. Some felt very strongly that they were having a positive impact in this area while others were more circumspect. BCB believes that it is making a direct contribution towards promoting active citizenship with its twice weekly sessions with young offenders. These are people who, in normal circumstances, would be unlikely to have a voice in the media. The station also works with the *119 Project* for disabled people and social inclusion has been a key theme. Mary Dawson explained that one of the first things the station did was to get people out to places so that they could present live coverage of events, "*transport was (and remains) one of the biggest barriers for*

*this group of people*". Derrick Francis at Gloucester FM has recognised the benefits of tackling social inclusion issues "head on" too. In one case a disaffected 14 year old boy who had been excluded from school, had rekindled his enthusiasm for learning after attending a media training course and becoming involved with the station. His father commented "*he's a different boy now, still doesn't like school much, but is making progress*".

- 5.20 Down FM is situated within Down Patrick's College of Further and Higher Education and the college draws together a group of 14 and 15 year olds from local schools each Friday for occupational studies. These youths are referred to the college because they are regarded as presenting challenging attitudinal or behavioural patterns which are nevertheless thought likely to respond to learning opportunities outside the normal school environment. The students are from mixed religious backgrounds and quite often the College sessions represent the first occasion on which they have been required to work closely with people with differing religious beliefs. As part of their coursework the students work in groups to script, produce and deliver a 10 minute audio cassette within the community radio studio. Quite often the youngsters will be so impressed with this taster session that they subsequently enrol for full and part-time BTEC courses at the College.
- 5.21 Angel Radio has produced CDs for local schools promoting awareness of older local people, their lives and times with the aim of encouraging intergenerational discussion. Greater understanding here may make a difference in helping to prevent old people being neglected or in more extreme cases physically or mentally abused. Lionheart Radio in Alnwick,

<sup>4</sup>Figure derived from independent research sponsored by Unite.

Northumberland, recognises the pivotal role it could have in assisting greater understanding between the generations in a small rural community. This will be an important facet of the station's work once full-time broadcasting commences.

- 5.22 Afan FM has made a conscious effort to open up discussion about anti-social behaviour, including drug abuse and crime in a way which looks at the facts. Guests are always asked to tailor their presentations to focus on the needs of a young audience.
- 5.23 Desi Radio's programming includes regular features on drug addiction, alcoholism and related health issues. Considerable efforts are also made to encourage debate on the more difficult and rarely discussed social issues of racism, ageism and the caste system. Since Southall has a significant Somali population, where the women rarely mix outside their immediate group, Desi Radio has taken steps to attract these individuals to the radio station. They have pursued a number of strands including targeting the local health centres and food shops favoured by the Somali women. This continues to be a priority area for the station.
- 5.24 Radio Reverb sees its primary role as providing social glue for what may otherwise be disparate and isolated groups. The station is said to have a particularly strong following amongst the transgender population within Brighton.

## Arts and culture

- 5.25 Most of the radio stations will make efforts to support arts and cultural events and activities in their local communities, but there is considerable diversity in the way that the stations develop their own brand of arts and culture. This is sometimes a reflection of the management

structure and at other times it flows from the local people themselves. Wythenshawe FM has a soap opera called Parkway, which is broadcast in five minute episodes, three times a week with omnibus slots on Fridays and weekends. All scripts are written and produced by volunteers with around 30 volunteers working on the project at any given time. BCB has just started a radio drama. This is viewed as a particularly exciting project because it will have a number of tangible outcomes – it will encourage creative writing for which a new training course has been developed; it will enable volunteers to train in production skills which can then be utilised for a whole series of plays and other activities; and there will be direct input from other community groups such as the local writers circle and theatre company.

- 5.26 Lionheart Radio has plans to set up a touring drama group which will be used to draw attention to the radio station. A mini bus has already been made available for this purpose from a supporter. Desi Radio has plans to work with a local writer to develop a project to help engage a wider audience. The station is currently broadcasting a programme, financed in part by the Arts Council of England (ACE), which encompasses poetry reading and enables volunteers to perform their own work. Gloucester FM has broadcast black drama and hopes to do more of this in the future. Afan FM has plans to commission a series of documentaries which will look at the origins of classical music and how they have developed to inform today's popular rock bands and their music. The aim will be to concentrate on bands that have a particular resonance with the station's audience.
- 5.27 Future Radio hopes to be able to establish links with the "Garage" the regional arts hub situated in Norwich and Sainsbury's Arts Centre, which is

a stone's throw away from the station. The NR5 project, which acts as the umbrella organisation for this radio station, has already succeeded in securing funding in principle from ACE for a new project on visual art and the radio station feels this bodes well for its own future. The NR5 project has good relations with Norwich City Council and will become part of a new creative hub which will include the BBC, ITV and the local universities. Again, it is hoped that this will have a positive knock-on effect on the radio station.

- 5.28 VIP on Air provides reviews of the latest cinema and theatre productions in Glasgow and also covers the Edinburgh festival as well as the annual Book festival and Children's festival. As one would expect, Talking Books is a regular feature on the station and a very important aspect of the station's broadcasting output. Although the station has looked at the possibility of expanding its remit to include drama, resources are a stumbling block at present.

### Equal opportunities

- 5.29 Many of the stations have made special provision to enable disabled people to become volunteers. VIP on Air reserves its presenter positions for volunteers who are blind, although the bulk of its volunteers are in fact sighted. Wythenshawe FM has adapted the way volunteers are trained to encourage them to talk about their disability when on air thereby helping to dispel misunderstandings and myths about certain disabilities. One volunteer had multiple sclerosis and although his condition deteriorated over time and his speech, mobility and balance were affected, both he and the station were happy for him to continue to present a show until he was eventually admitted to a hospice. Desi Radio raises disability issues on air on a regular basis partly as a way of helping to dispel the widely held superstition within the Panjabi community that disability is a "punishment from god".
- 5.30 Cross Rhythms has close links with a local school which provides arts based learning for those with special educational needs. It has hosted visits to the station for up to 40 students at one sitting – a challenge certainly, but one that the station is happy to meet.

### Collaborative initiatives

- 5.31 All of the stations recognise the importance of collaborative initiatives. In some cases this may entail organisations simply using the stations to broadcast public service information, such as breast feeding awareness week or trading standards issues, in other cases organisations will actually attend media training courses with the radio station and then deliver their own programmes. Close links with local schools and colleges are widespread amongst the stations in the research group. This may entail outreach work such as VIP on Air's projects with the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh and Visibility Go! – a project for young blind children in Glasgow. Alternatively, it may constitute organised visits for school children to the community radio stations to encourage volunteering – Lionheart Radio has had considerable success with this approach. BCB has recently been successful in securing funding for a youth development worker for three years. Bradford City is looking at a growing youth population and it was thought important for the station to have a dedicated resource for young people. The intention is to work across age groups via local schools and colleges.
- 5.32 Takeover Radio is looking to spread its wings outside Leicester and hopes to set up and run a second community radio station at the Sutton Centre in Nottingham, although this is still

subject to negotiation with Ofcom and others. The Sutton Centre is a unique college in that it has a theatre, ice rink and fitness gym which are commercially run for the students during the day and are open to the public during the evenings and at weekends. The proposed radio station would be an important addition to the college.



*Youngsters hoping to go on air in Manchester*

5.33 Radio Reverb works in partnership with Earshot, a radio training organisation, and as such is able to benefit from the links that organisation has already established with Connexions, Southern Creative Arts Network, Skillset, the Oral History Society and others. The station is working with the Older People's Council on the creation of satellite radio stations.

5.34 Wythenshawe FM works closely with Manchester Council's Regeneration Team. At face value this appears a fairly bureaucratic partnership, but Christine Brennan, the station's manager explains otherwise. Recently the Regeneration Team set up a talent spotting competition for local people. All of the artists who got through the first round were broadcast on Wythenshawe FM and a voting system was set up on the station's website. The winning act, two girls, were able to

cut a track in a professional recording studio. The station has diversified its outputs in other ways too, for example, last year it linked up with the local BBC radio station on a "Learning for Real" project. Under this scheme twelve of the station's young volunteers attended a four week writing work-shop. The aim was to encourage the youngsters to write a radio play, produce it at the BBC studio and put it out on air on Wythenshawe FM. The project actually helped the individuals with their GCSE course work and was regarded as a very successful collaboration by all parties. Effective working with the BBC is on the agenda for Cross Rhythms City Radio as well. It is looking to develop a joint project with BBC Stoke on Trent called "Community Memories", which will bring together local communities of different backgrounds.

5.35 All of the stations work with their local police force to promote community relations and this can take several forms. Future FM broadcasts crime prevention shows which are presented by Norwich police, while Gloucester FM, amongst others, broadcasts regular discussion programmes with representatives from the local police force.

5.36 While each of the 13 stations in the research group have achieved social gain outputs, unsurprisingly the long established stations – Desi Radio, BCB, Wythenshawe FM, and Angel Radio – offer a more varied and in depth range of outputs than the developing stations. It would, however, be wrong to take a view about the successes and growth potential of the sector without taking into account the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations. The following two chapters explore these issues.

## 6. Efficiency

### Broadcasting output

- 6.1 The meetings with representatives of each of the community radio stations included a series of questions aimed at discerning the general levels of efficiency operating across the sector. The intention was not to map levels of activities and/or income with spending decisions and final outcomes, rather it was to gain a better understanding of the way in which the stations chose to present themselves to their local communities.
- 6.2 Of the 13 stations in the research project, eight are now broadcasting full-time (that is providing output each day over 24 hours). These are:
- Angel Radio, which broadcasts live or pre-recorded programmes between 6.00am and midnight every day. Overnight programmes are specially recorded 5 hour shows with a repeat play of the first hour. The aim is to provide a selection of material which entertains, informs and stimulates an audience aged 60 years and over. All styles of music from the years 1900 to 1959 are played. The station recognises that its overnight output has a particular resonance with its listeners. Independent research<sup>5</sup> has revealed that 13% of listeners have their radios tuned-in to Angel Radio 24 hours a day.
  - BCB broadcasts a diverse range of speech and music programmes. Daytime programming is approximately 70% speech and 30% music. Live broadcasting ceases at 10.00pm and recommences with a breakfast show the next morning.
  - Cross Rhythms City Radio broadcasts from 6.30am to 10.00pm Monday to Friday and from 6.30am to 8.00pm at the weekends. Part of the weekend output is automated. Speech content constitutes 25% with music making up the remaining 75% of output, of which 90% is Christian music, selected in such a way as to maintain a positive theme. Part of the schedule is retransmitted outside the live broadcast hours via a satellite channel.
  - Desi Radio offers 17 hours of live broadcasting with 7 hours of automated output each day. The station provides a mixed programme of music, poetry, arts and weekly Panjabi news bulletins. The station also live streams over the internet and is therefore accessible to a worldwide audience.
  - Down FM moved to full-time broadcasting in March 2006. Live broadcasting takes place between 7.00am and 8.00pm during the weekdays with automated output during the evenings, overnight and at the weekend. The music to speech ratio is around 85% to 15%. Music programming is both mixed and genre specific. Overall programming is designed to appeal to a wide section of the local rural population.
  - Gloucester FM began broadcasting full-time in July 2006. Live broadcasting is undertaken 24 hours a day over the weekend with pre-recorded output during the week from 1.00am through to 7.00am. The music to speech ratio is approximately 70%/30%. The only music played on the station is music of black origin and this is supported with news, discussion, information and advice programming throughout the day. The station also broadcasts over the internet to achieve a wider audience.
  - Takeover Radio offers automated output from 8.00pm to 7.00am weekdays, 8.00pm to 8am on Saturdays and 8.00pm to 9.00am on Sundays. The ratio of music to speech is

<sup>5</sup> Research findings by Research Works.

80%/20%. The station is aimed at a young audience so the music is predominantly top 40 chart.

- Wythenshawe FM broadcasts live from 7.00am to 1.00am every day, with automated output overnight, some of which is specifically recorded for this slot. Music content represents 70% of broadcasting output. The station provides an eclectic mix of programmes designed to appeal to a geographically isolated and deprived community.

6.3 The position of the five remaining stations is as follows:

- VIP on Air is broadcasting via the internet only pending a move to FM at a time to be determined. Once this move takes place the station intends to increase its live broadcasts from four hours per day to six hours per day. Live broadcasting currently takes place between 12 noon and 4.00pm and is then played on a continuous loop until the next live broadcast. Although the largest group of registered blind and partially sighted people is elderly women, the station aims to attract all age groups and both sexes. The unemployment figure for visually disabled people is running at around 80 per cent so the station focuses its live output at a time of day when it is likely to draw in a majority of those people.
- Afan FM, Lionheart Radio, and Future Radio have not yet reactivated broadcasting following their last RSLs although all three are aiming to move to full-time broadcasting within the next six months. Radio Reverb is broadcasting one day a week with coverage from 10.00am to Midnight each Saturday. So far, the station has not set a date for moving to full-time broadcasting.

## Collaborative links with service providers/grant makers

6.4 Section 5 provides a brief overview of the collaborative initiatives with local organisations undertaken by the stations, but another facet of this is the nature, frequency and durability of relationships with public service providers and grant giving bodies such as local authorities, Regional Development Agencies, Rural Development Agencies, ACE and others. The research revealed a wide variation between the stations in this area.



*Stanley Thomas, ex Salvation Army Bandmaster. Now in his 80s, he presents a weekly programme of vintage Sally Army band music for Angel Radio.*

6.5 VIP-on-Air currently receives 42 per cent of its core funding from Glasgow City Council and additional core funding from East Renfrewshire Council. As noted earlier BCB has been successful in securing grants from Europe. The European Regional Development Fund has provided the means for the station to move in to spacious new premises, while the European Social Fund has financed the innovative Community Reporters Project. Angel Radio has worked with Havant Borough Council to organise large open air music

events to entertain older people, while at the same time raising their profile amongst the public at large. It has also worked with Portsmouth City Council's Social Services Department to produce a series of programmes to promote awareness about falls: as seen through the eyes of the patient, the nurse, the aftercare provider, the physiotherapist and the council.

- 6.6 Afan FM regards Neath Port Talbot Council as its biggest supporter not only in terms of funding, but as an adviser, provider of accommodation and purchaser of advertising space. The Council has recently awarded the station £50k from its capital based inland project fund. The money will be used to build state of the art studios in 2006. It is hoped that the National Assembly for Wales will provide funding for the purchase of new equipment.
- 6.7 Down FM has benefited from funding from the Rural Development Council and hopes that it is now sufficiently educated about the grant application process to maximise its funding opportunities from this source. Wythenshawe FM has secured project funding from the Home Office for training refugees in media skills to help them find employment and for developing volunteers.
- 6.8 Takeover Radio is working with its Regional Development Agency on the provision of creativity, media and enterprise courses. Several of the stations have worked with the Prince's Trust, Young Offending Teams within local councils, the Learning and Skills Councils, Surestart and Connections on training projects.
- 6.9 The research has revealed the need for the community radio stations to devote significant resources to fund raising activities in order to secure a steady income stream. Funding issues are explored in more detail in section 7 below.

## Audience research

- 6.10 One of the most effective ways in which stations can assess their relative merit to their listeners and the wider community is via audience research. A small number of the radio stations such as Desi Radio and Angel Radio have benefited from independent research into their services, but some stations are wary of placing too much emphasis on research findings. As Mary Dowson at BCB noted *"if we just went by numbers then many of our programmes for minority groups would be wiped out. Our Ukrainian programmes are aimed at the 2000 Ukrainian people living in the area and we would get perhaps 10 per cent of them listening. A tiny audience in real terms, but an important service."*
- 6.11 Several of the stations have undertaken some basic qualitative research themselves. Future Radio did a web-based survey during its last RSL and will use the 150 or so responses to develop its programme schedule. Gloucester FM admitted that it had tried to undertake a paper based survey of its listeners, but had got a derisory response. Afan FM on the other hand had conducted face to face interviews in Neath shopping centre and secured around 80 responses, which the station found valuable. More robust research will be undertaken in the run up to the station moving to full-time broadcasting. Craig Williams, the station's chairman has also been thinking outside the box in research terms and sees merit in an in-depth study of people's listening habits and how they differ with the seasons. He said *"our schedule differs between winter and summer. Our music is upbeat and about love in the summer. My aim is to see what impact the weather has on listening habits and I think this could be of interest across the music industry"*.

6.12 For those stations seeking to maximise their income from sponsorship and advertising, it is natural for them to want to be able to have easy access to information on the size, type and nature of their audience. Audience research is the natural tool for collecting this data, but the cost is prohibitive. Given this, there is considerable support amongst the community radio stations for the Community Media Association taking the lead in this area. Nevertheless, Wythenshawe FM has utilised the skills of Manchester University students to develop a questionnaire which allows it to look at the needs of businesses and local organisations as well as the local residents who make up the audience.

6.13 In addition to using audience research to monitor customer satisfaction levels, the stations also rely on emails, telephone calls and personal visits. The recognition of a small community working together to provide support for one another came out strongly in this area. Ian McCormick, Chair of Down FM summed this up when he explained, *"no one has come banging the door down saying it's rubbish. We are not a big population down here so a lot of people know one another and respect what we are trying to do"*. VIP on Air, as a service provider for a community of purpose, is in a slightly different position to other stations and the RNIB has recently provided funding for a consultant to look at where the station is heading. The station already has a listeners panel and this is expected to become more significant as the station grows.

people seem enthusiastic about it. As we have already seen, BCB is beginning to change the landscape with its community reporters' programme and its work with Bradford University media studies students. Wythenshawe FM aims to develop a local media hub. It has applied for funding to set up a news room where local residents would be trained to become news journalists. In a similar vein Future FM is creating a journalism course with part of the training held at the local newspaper office.

## News services

6.14 Angel Radio and Cross Rhythms City Radio are the only stations in the research group that do not have regular news bulletins. At the moment most of the stations purchase regional/national news from third parties. The provision of local news is an emerging market however, and local

## 7. Effectiveness

7.1 The research also looked at the effectiveness of the sector in certain key areas including the development and use of branding, the provision of expert services and the impact of the stations on the local economy and wider community. The aim of this was to develop a clearer understanding of the sector's long term goals and objectives – whether the stations saw themselves as basic service providers whose role is in the “here and now”, and therefore time limited, or whether they had genuine long term ambitions over a period of five to ten years.

### Complaints handling

7.2 We have seen that there are a number of ways in which the public can influence their community radio stations, but what happens when things go wrong- when someone makes a comment that offends or a joke that backfires? While all the stations have arrangements for dealing with complaints, some appear more robust than others. In the case of Down FM, the station is able to tap into the complaints procedure that has already been established by Down Patrick College. Any complaints would go through the college principal who would act as a semi independent adjudicator. Similarly Future FM is able to benefit from the complaints procedure already in place for the NR5 Trust (the umbrella organisation for the radio station), which provides an external tier of authority for appeal purposes. In many cases however, the station manager must take on the role of investigating and determining whether a complaint should be upheld and corrective action taken. Any unresolved disputes can be passed to funding partners and/or Ofcom. While the stations appear to have had very few complaints between them, the fact remains that in an increasingly litigious society they need to be mindful of the potential drain on resources if events take an

unexpected turn. Desi Radio offered a particularly insightful comment here – “*a gentle approach to antagonism is found to be the most effective*”.

### Brand awareness

7.3 Questions about brand awareness produced a particularly mixed bag of responses from the station representatives. All the stations claimed to have a brand, but in some cases where they had been developed for short-term RSLs it was difficult to get a real sense of sustainability. Even some of the more established stations were considering the possibility of changing their name and relaunching themselves. In the case of two stations, work on raising their profile through branding had been deferred pending a change of broadcasting frequency. One of them was BCB which had had a difficult time over the summer of 2006 when their change of frequency was unexpectedly delayed despite an elaborate relaunch campaign having been set in motion. Lionheart Radio is considering a change of name before it becomes a full-time broadcaster because the name is in danger of being overused in the locality (a large number of small businesses in Northumbria already trade under the name). VIP-on-Air is considering whether their name is sufficiently catchy. Although the station has been on air for some three years there are concerns that it is not as well known as it might be.

7.4 Afan FM and Takeover Radio admitted that lack of funding for marketing was an obstacle to progress. While promotional events would remain the primary marketing tool for Afan FM, Takeover Radio would set up a dedicated marketing post in the short-term.

## Provision of expert services

7.5 One of the ways in which a community radio station can make a real impact with their listeners is with the provision of adjudicative, advisory or other expert services. Advice received in the comfort of one's own home may be more readily absorbed or acted upon. Mary Dowson of BCB noted that *"one of the real strengths of community radio is the off chance opportunity to learn something without deliberately sitting down to listen out for it"*. Most of the stations had a variety of advice slots ranging from estate agents and solicitors to Citizens Advice Bureaux workers and primary health care advisors. Gloucester FM tries to fully utilise the varied skills of its volunteers and committee members including one Justice of the Peace who persuaded a Judge to go on air to speak about the rationale for sentencing decisions. One wonders whether the Judge would have accepted an invitation to appear on national radio.

7.6 Not all of the stations viewed advisory services as an intrinsic part of their service however. Takeover Radio in particular was keen to ensure that the station was fun and entertaining and gave youngsters the opportunity to look at issues which interested them, this was more likely to be the latest ring tone for their mobile phone or fashion trends rather than personal finances or health concerns.

## Economic development

7.7 The stations were invited to comment on the economic impact they felt they were making in the local community. A couple of the stations were quick to respond in terms of their role as small employers – BCB is the largest employer within the research group with nine paid staff. Volunteering with the community radio stations is seen as a good way of helping people move

onto paid employment (the stations estimate that a sizable proportion will never have worked before). Those stations that accepted advertising also viewed themselves as having a positive impact on the local economy. In many cases small businesses would not have previously advertised on air, but low charges provided a suitable incentive. In general terms the stations that had only recently begun full-time broadcasting and those that had yet to make the move appeared the most positive about their relationships with local businesses. This not only covered the ability to secure advertising revenue, but also benefits in kind. Both Future FM and Lionheart mentioned that they regularly had gifts donated to the stations as prizes for competitions. Cross Rhythms City Radio is working in partnership with a networking company called Source Success. They envisage setting up a range of business events – the first is scheduled for Autumn 2006 and is being held in conjunction with Port Vale football club and should attract around 110 local businesses.

7.8 Radio Reverb fully expects to be making an economic impact in five years time. It recognises that the local wards covered by the station are prime targets for regeneration and that it will be giving a voice to the local people so that they can help to shape their environment, transport links and other public service infrastructures. Wythenshawe FM is working hard to develop its long-term future. It has secured funding for a development worker to negotiate and take forward Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to enable the station and their funding partners to agree objectives, milestones and targets to be achieved in a systematic way. One of the SLAs already in place is with the Willow Park Housing Trust, a development for older people. It is hoped that the SLAs will encourage repeat funding from partners and a more incremental form of community development.

## Maintaining credibility

7.9 In looking at the long-term durability of community radio stations it is inevitable that some will prosper as part of a developing community while others may well discover that they have served their purpose after a couple of years or so. Part of a station's longevity will inevitably be determined by its ability to maintain credibility with the community. Professor Everitt noted in his evaluation study that while community radio stations are obliged to have transparent governance arrangements, few actually had a structure which enabled local people to help determine strategy or to vote on decisions. In the time that has elapsed since the evaluation study was completed, some progress has been made in this area.

7.10 Wythenshawe FM is working towards establishing a Steering Group consisting of about 10 people from the community to look at accountability issues. Cross Rhythms City Radio has developed a close working relationship with 15 primary church leaders in the locality and these represent a board of reference. Stoke on Trent and the surrounding area has 226 churches and considerable efforts were made to identify the key churches which might assist with the development of the radio station. The board is expected to be closely involved in determining the future strategy of the station.

7.11 Desi Radio has a strong presence in its community and is seen as an important communicator for the largely silent Panjabi community that it serves. The station is a derivative of the Panjabi centre, a not for profit company and charity which runs cultural programmes and events. It is governed by a board of directors, but the day to day management of the radio station is undertaken by volunteers and decisions are taken collectively. Both the centre and the station are

well respected within the community.

Nevertheless, Desi Radio recognises that the radio station must adapt to meet the changing needs of its audience. One of the central drivers for change will be the growth of internet access at home. As this becomes more widespread the station's role as an information provider on life events such as births, weddings and funerals will inevitably diminish. Looking to the future, Desi Radio sees its role adapting to incorporate more fund raising events for local schools and charities and working to promote small businesses, particularly start-up companies.



*A live interview with Desi Radio*

7.12 In terms of the newer stations, Future Radio already has a Steering Group with local representatives serving on it, while Gloucester FM has selected its board members with care to ensure that they are representative of the community and also have the ability to network to maximise opportunities for the station and its listeners.

7.13 Governance arrangements are important, but there are other ways in which stations may build up and retain credibility with the communities they operate within. There is no doubt that a pre-existing infrastructure such as a college,

community centre or related charitable concern provides a sound base for the initial development of a station, but none of the projects could expect to survive without the support of a network of capable volunteers and a good understanding of what an audience is looking for at local level. Inevitably audiences are fickle and while presenters and a schedule of programmes may be well received at the start of the year they can quickly become stale. In this respect the stations with a community of purpose may be able to focus on outputs more readily than a community of place. It is, nevertheless, difficult to see how a community radio station that fails to engage with its community can be sustainable. Of course, there are other reasons why a station may have a short life span, one of which is a lack of funding. Funding issues are explored in section 8.

## 8. Funding

- 8.1 The community radio sector has evolved over many years and has been funded in a variety of ways. Some of the stations have benefited from public sector funding for specific projects such as training, but, as already noted, it was not until the Communications Act of 2003 that explicit provision was made for awarding central grants to the radio stations. The CRF was established in 2004 by DCMS to provide assistance with the core costs of running a community radio station. The Department recognised that while certain key activities such as media skills training attracted project funding with comparative ease, it was rather more difficult for stations to secure bids for core running costs such as management and administration, financial reporting, community outreach, and volunteer support. In September 2005 Ofcom appointed a Community Radio Fund Panel with responsibility for administering the CRF.
- 8.2 Grants can only be made to community radio licensees that are broadcasting under a community radio licence (ie not an RSL) and payment can only be made once broadcasting has commenced. The funding pot of £500,000 per annum is in place until 2007/08, but will be reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. To date there have been two rounds of grant awards and applications for a third round were invited in late October 2006. Details of the awards made in 2005/06 and the initial round in 2006/07 are set out in Annex C.
- What the research found**
- 8.3 There is a wide variation between the income levels of the stations included in this research and the way in which funds are generated. Some stations have paid staff and have devoted a full-time post to work up grant applications and make approaches to funding bodies. Most of the stations have, however, juggled fund raising activities with their day to day broadcasting operations and several of them have opted to boost their income by selling advertising space.
- 8.4 Of those that are broadcasting full-time, Angel Radio is probably struggling the most financially. At February 2006 the station's income from all sources was £62,000, but outgoings were higher. It has, however, recently been awarded £22,000 from the CRF to appoint a full-time fund raiser and this is expected to make a significant difference to the station. Takeover Radio had also faced financial difficulties, but over the four years of its broadcasting life the situation has steadily improved with income and expenditure growing from £6,000 to £138,000. Nevertheless, most of the funds come from non commercial sources and are essentially payments for training courses. A marketing Manager is expected to be appointed in 2006 to build up the commercial arm of the station. The station was granted £24,926 for the appointment of a Trust Manager (with responsibility for co-ordinating all non-commercial activities) in the 2005/06 round of CRF awards.
- 8.5 Cross Rhythms City Radio's total income for 2005/06 was around £250,000 and made up from donations from Christian business people (65%), CD sales (20%) and advertising (15%). The station's spending is subsidised by income from other activities such as festivals and outside events. The station has not yet made an application to the CRF.
- 8.6 Between 1 July 2005 and February 2006 Desi Radio had received £29,490 from donations and grants and £15,779 from fund raising activities with all direct income including advertising revenue totalling £96,558. The station has managed to generate significant income levels from advertising and has businesses on its "waiting list of advertisers". Not surprisingly then, it is particularly keen to maximise its

earning potential in this area and would like to see an end to the restrictions on advertising income that have been imposed on the sector by legislation. This issue is explored in more detail below. The station secured £19,250 from the CRF pot in 2005/06 for the employment of a Station Manager.

- 8.7 BCB has a guaranteed income of £266,284 for the current calendar year. It has been highly successful with grant applications to public sector organisations, the European Social Development Fund and the European Social Fund. This has gone some way to enabling it to uphold one of its fundamental principles, that of avoiding on-air advertising. Other funding applications were in the pipeline at the time of the research project. The station secured £16,776 for a station director from the CRF in 2005/06.
- 8.8 Wythenshawe FM's income and expenditure for the financial year to March 2007 is £122,312. Of this 9% is derived from programme sponsorship and advertising. The station was awarded £11,713 for a station manager and £4,903 for administration from the CRF in 2005/06.
- 8.9 Gloucester FM's total income in its first year of operation was £142,000 and this level of funding is being carried forward as the station moves to full-time broadcasting. Applications for additional funding are in the pipeline. It was granted £15,500 for a station manager from the CRF in 2006/07 (first round of awards).
- 8.10 Down FM expects to maintain an annual income of around £15,500 of which some 32% is derived from advertising and programme sponsorship. The station was awarded £6,500 for a community outreach worker and £3,500 for a station manager from the CRF in 2005/06.
- 8.11 Although VIP-on-Air has not yet moved to broadcasting on FM, the station is offering a 24

hour, 7 days a week service on the internet. Its income for the current financial year is £252,000, the bulk of which is derived from public sector sources. The CRF awarded the station £6,000 for technical support in 2006/07 (first funding round).

- 8.12 This report does not look at the funding details of the four stations that have yet to commence full-time broadcasting since their position could change significantly over the next few months. Interestingly, their current funding levels are not at the lower end of the spectrum for community radio stations.

## Looking ahead

- 8.13 Sustainability is a crucial issue for all of the stations irrespective of the length of time they have been operating. Anthony Everitt in his 2003 reports concluded that since most of the pilot radio stations had raised sufficient funds to set themselves up and operate for a period of time, community radio was sustainable in principle. He recognised, however, that radio operators lacking experience of, or aptitude for, fund raising would need access to appropriately skilled human resources. This was especially important for stations that were not backed by a larger, more established organisation. The CRF has, of course, sought to provide assistance here and, while the psychological impact of the Fund on station managers and volunteers is already being registered, it is too early to assess deliverables. Nevertheless, the successful bids for CRF grants cover a fairly narrow range of activities (see Annex C) and it should be relatively straightforward to draw up case studies which demonstrate good practice and value for money and also provide encouragement for others.

## Other funding bodies

### The Arts

8.14 The creation of a community radio station suggests a service which encompasses the arts and culture as a matter of course, but there appears to be some reluctance on the part of key funding bodies to award grants for arts based projects linked to social gain. Several of the stations included in this research project had applied for, but failed to secure, funding for arts projects. This may be attributable to several factors, including the definition of what constitutes an arts project, but there was a general feeling that funding officers needed to look outside the box. One community radio station manager summed up the rather bemused feeling of the radio stations on this point when she said *“radio is an art form – radio is a drama”*. The wider arts sector needs to be educated about the community radio stations’ ability to deliver art and culture direct, but it seems rather harsh to leave it to the stations themselves to take the lead here. DCMS, Ofcom and the CMA need to work together to find ways of overcoming this problem.

### European Union

8.15 As noted above, BCB has been extremely successful in securing funds from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. Mary Dowson admits that she has built up expertise in this area and now spends a large proportion of her time on fund raising activities. The ideas put forward for these grants have been innovative and in one instance has needed the support of other organisations and businesses within the locality. Down FM has recognised the potential gains to be made from bidding for grants as part of a consortium and is liaising with the other licensed community radio

stations in Northern Ireland on this point. There is a good case for other stations forming partnerships for funding applications too.

### Public sector funding other than the CRF

8.16 The stations that are already broadcasting full-time have all secured public sector funding for training purposes. Although this is project funding, it nevertheless provides a relatively stable income stream and acts as the backbone for many of the stations. This funding mechanism is not without its draw backs however, the need to agree objectives, meet targets and accommodate what can sometimes appear to be constantly changing processing and monitoring arrangements can create tensions (which are magnified when stations first move to full-time broadcasting and resources are over stretched). Frequent requests to attend meetings and seminars to give first hand accounts of the success of training schemes can also cut into valuable broadcasting time.

## Advertising revenue

8.17 Under the terms of the Communications Act 2003 Ofcom is required to include conditions in each community radio station licence which limit the proportion of income from advertising and programme sponsorship. Where the sale of spot advertising is allowed, there is an upper limit of 50% (or less at Ofcom’s discretion) on income from these sources taken together. Sponsorship of anything that is not broadcast is excluded from this limit and sponsorship for purposes that are “mainly or wholly philanthropic in nature” is also excluded from this limit. The legislation requires that community radio stations must be funded from multiple sources. A community radio station cannot receive more than 50% of its funding from any single source.

8.18 Several of the radio stations in this research group have decided not to take advertising or programme sponsorship. BCB are philosophically opposed to advertising, but even so the station recognises that in order to survive and develop new services it must regard itself as a business and that means there may be a time when it will have to accept advertising. Mary Dowson explained that this could make a difference to the station's role as a voice for the community. Recently the station started up a campaign to save the local Morrison's Supermarket from closure. The store is small with a limited range of goods, but is very important to the local population, many of whom are on low incomes, in poor health and without access to private transport. The station raised the store's future on air, got in touch with the management of the supermarket chain to discuss it and set up a petition against closure for local people to sign. Had BCB had any commercial interests in the locality, they would have prevented the station from acting in the way it did.

8.19 Desi Radio on the other hand has secured a significant level of funding from advertising and programme sponsorship over the years and is concerned to see the current restrictions in this area lifted. In some respects the limitations may actually be viewed as having an adverse impact on the local community. Small businesses in the radio station's catchment area are very keen to advertise with Desi Radio, not only because the rates are cheap, but because both parties share the same target audience. Desi Radio operates a rolling list of advertisers, but it is not unknown for companies to have lost interest in pursuing radio advertising or in some cases to have gone out of business altogether by the time their name rises to the top of the list. Desi Radio commented "*it's a lost opportunity for new business*". It is likely that Sunrise Radio, the nearest commercial radio station to Desi Radio,

would argue against any relaxations in the current restrictions on advertising income. It would be helpful to have some independent research undertaken to test assumptions in this area.

## 9. Conclusions

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- 9.1 The 13 community radio stations in the research group have delivered important social gain impacts across a range of issues. The volunteering, work placement and training opportunities help individuals with personal development. At a fundamental level this may simply mean confidence building measures. Increasingly though it means economic gain for individuals with employment opportunities flowing through to the attainment of better standards of living and life opportunities. Change of this magnitude is likely to make an impact beyond the individual participant, encouraging the aspirations of peers, siblings, extended families and the wider social network.
- 9.2 The movement of refugees into local communities is likely to be picked up by the radio stations, which will try to integrate the newcomers by offering some broadcasting output in their own language and encouraging them to go on air to talk about their traditions, festivals and general way of life. This serves the dual purpose of helping them to understand their new surroundings while educating the existing and indigenous community.
- 9.3 As the stations become more established they reach out to other parts of the community. Collaborative working brings benefits to all, in some cases the benefits will be economic. Local people start to pick up on proposed changes within their community. They are given the opportunity to influence the outcomes and they take it. They are not speaking as an individual any longer, they are now part of a collective and as such they can feel more confident that their views will be heard and acted upon. We are seeing the beginnings of active citizenship. The stations help to ensure that the more vulnerable members of their community learn about important changes in areas such as employment benefits and winter fuel payments in the comfort of their own home. If a listener fails to understand an announcement, a quick call to the friendly people at the radio station will give them the information they need.
- 9.4 Social problems may be amongst the issues highlighted and discussed by the stations in a way that local people can relate to – not only the likely offenders, but their peers and families too. Support may be offered for those who seek it on this and other issues such as health, debt management or even ways of coping as an empty nester when the youngest member of the family moves to university.
- 9.5 Not all the stations want to deal with the harsher side of life, escapism and “the feel good” factor are the driving force for the broadcasting output of three of the stations in the research group. Each one has established a significant audience share in the locality and two have sister stations in other parts of the country. Funding issues have been a concern for the three core stations, but they have survived to date and are now looking stronger than ever.
- 9.6 Long life for the community radio sector cannot be guaranteed, but there is a sense that the stations are only just beginning to scratch the surface in terms of the issues that they can help to influence or at least draw attention to. Funding is likely to remain a difficult issue for many. At least one station that was struggling financially has been awarded a CRF grant for the recruitment of a fund raiser and is hopeful that this will make a significant difference. It will be interesting to see how the stations shape up over the next few years.

# Annex A

## DCMS questionnaire: research into the impact of the community radio sector

### Fulfilment of social gain objectives

1. How are the station's social gain objectives measured?
2. What outcomes have been achieved to date?
3. How do you target local groups otherwise underserved by commercial radio and BBC local radio?
4. What proportion of broadcasting time is given to public discussion or other means of enabling expression of opinion by the audience?
5. What activities are undertaken to encourage volunteering/provide work placement/intern schemes/training opportunities for transferable skills?
6. What steps are taken to track the use of these transferable skills?
7. How does the station work to strengthen community links?
8. What non-core services do you provide for local people (e.g. free internet access)?
9. How many people actually visit the station for "community services"?
10. What type of activity is undertaken with the specific aim of promoting cultural and linguistic diversity?
11. How do the arts and culture help the station to achieve its social gain agenda?
12. How does the station contribute to social inclusion (eg reduction in truancy, lower crime levels and anti-social behaviour, active citizenship)?
13. What steps are being taken to promote equal opportunities across the community?

### Efficiency

14. How many broadcasting hours are transmitted per day/week/month?
15. Can you provide details of the number and type of collaborative initiatives undertaken with local service providers (eg local authority, schools, library services, etc)?
16. Can you provide details of the number and type of collaborative initiatives the station undertakes with organisations in the wider community (eg Regional Development Agency)?
17. Has the station undertaken audience research or other types of research in-house? If so please provide details. If not, are there any plans to do so?
18. How do you monitor levels of customer satisfaction (both station participants and listeners)?
19. How do you use the information (if any) obtained from customer satisfaction surveys?

### Effectiveness

20. How does the station monitor depth of customer satisfaction (enjoyment, appropriateness, acceptability and educational value)?
21. Does the station have a system for handling complaints and if so what is it?
22. What is the level of "brand awareness" and understanding of the station in (a) the local community and (b) the wider community – for example is the station used to promote local council accountability issues?
23. How frequently does the station provide advisory, adjudicative or other expert services?

24. Does the station have a direct impact on the local/regional economy and if so how does this manifest itself?
25. Is there more that the station could do to promote local economic development and social enterprise?
26. How does your station ensure that it is representative of the community it is aiming to serve?
27. What added value does your station give to other charities/voluntary sector organisations in the locality?

# Annex B

## The impact of volunteering

### INDIVIDUAL IMPACTS

#### Impact study 1

Sue, a nurse in her fifties, discovered that Havant had its own community radio station when she read about Ofcom's access radio pilots in the national press. She decided to tune in to the station and loved what she heard. Being a child of the sixties the music played by Angel Radio – big band music and the singers of the 1930s and 40s – were unfamiliar to her, but she was hooked from the outset. Now Sue rarely watches the television at home in the evening, preferring instead to listen to Angel Radio whenever possible. During the day she has the station playing gently in the background in her surgery at the local health centre and encourages her patients to listen in at home. She comments *"you'd be surprised by the number of elderly people who have come to see me for treatment for leg ulcers and have left with a new hobby – tuning into Angel Radio"* Her enthusiasm is such that Sue is now a regular presenter for the station and specialises in programmes about local history. Initially she lacked confidence and needed a technician to tweak the levers and help with production, but nowadays once she has chosen a topic for a programme and undertaken the necessary research, she simply books a session in the recording studio and produces a programme on mini-disc ready for broadcast later that week.

#### Impact study 2

Darren and Liam aged 13/14 began to visit Wythenshawe FM on a regular basis, helping out where they could. The impression they gave was of two rather hardened youngsters who would put their own concerns above others. When the boys had been volunteering for around 8 months, they happened to find £90.00 in cash on the floor of one of the offices at the radio station and handed it in to the manager. When she talked to them about it they said they

thought the money would belong to someone at the station and it would not be a good thing to keep it. Also it became apparent from the boys' conversations with other people at the station that they had begun to realise that what goes around comes around. Their attitude and general demeanour have improved beyond recognition since they became community radio volunteers.

#### Impact study 3

Parveen a Muslim and widow with three children has been involved with Desi Radio for over two years. She lives in Southall and became aware of the radio station as a result of passing the Panjabi centre on the way to the local shops. Feeling increasingly isolated following the death of her husband, she became a volunteer with Desi Radio and has benefited from the social contacts the station has provided. She completed a computer skills course run by Desi Radio and this encouraged her to broaden her horizons with English language classes at a local college. Parveen said *"Desi has given me the confidence to learn new things and to want to get more out of life"*.

#### Impact study 4

In her 70s and having lived on her own for some time, Jean decided to become a volunteer with Angel Radio to give her some company during the day. She approached the station with some trepidation, unsure of how she might assist the team. Although happy to help out answering the telephone and dealing with general reception duties, she had never used a PC before and was reluctant to use it to access dedication requests and to look up the station's databank of records. Following training at Angel Radio however, Jean soon gained confidence and now takes working with the computer in her stride. She comments *"I'm a different woman to the one who first walked into Angel Radio. I have so much more confidence and I feel part of a happy family now."*

### Impact study 5

George discovered the benefits of volunteering with Wythenshawe FM at the age of 38. At that time he had low self esteem and literacy problems, but he was interested in appearing in the station's soap opera. He could not read the scripts, but proved to be a real personality and simply made up his part in the drama as it went along. After a while he wanted to do his own radio show partly because he was beginning to enjoy the kudos that comes from being on air – *“when you walk outside the door people recognise your voice and your name”*. To help him fulfil his ambitions to become a radio presenter, George enrolled on a basic literacy course and made startling progress. Now he does his own radio show. He has broadcast documentaries including one on Henry VIII and has done several themed programmes with amazing scripts. He is now looking for work. It is hard for someone of George's age to turn everything around, but he did it over a period of three years. In addition to volunteering with the radio station he is now involved in a local drama group and serves on the management committee of a couple of community based organisations.

### Impact study 6

Simone is a young woman who has mental health issues and is a self harmer who has to take a lot of medication. Nevertheless, she did a two week training course at a community radio station and is now a daily visitor there spending time planning and undertaking research for a regular show which she presents. Significantly, during the time she has been engaged with the radio station, she has not been tempted to self harm. Furthermore, Simone's interest in the station has gone beyond broadcasting output – she recently did a sponsored swim to raise money for new microphones for the station.

### Impact study 7

Rather unexpectedly, four children from one family became volunteers on Wythenshawe's soap opera. Although they had severe literacy problems, after a little time and effort, they come on in leaps and bounds and their school commented to this effect. The eldest of the four, Kayla, has now left school and works as a supermarket checkout assistant. She does not volunteer anymore, but she comes into the studio to talk and to get some careers advice. The danger is that aspirations are so low in the local community that people do not develop. Kayla is very bright and the station manager is making personal efforts to raise her aspirations not just for the short-term, but beyond that – helping her to explore life opportunities. If this can be achieved, it will have a knock on effect on Kayla's siblings.

### Impact study 8

Andeta is in her 30s and had been working with young people for some time before she became a volunteer with Gloucester FM. She found the media skills training she received helped her to develop confidence in new areas such as interviewing people and the use of computers: both skills which she could pass on to others. She regularly presents a two hour show on Gloucester FM specialising in reggae music and acts as a mentor to one of the station's younger volunteers. Andeta said *“the station appeals to a wide audience – it can touch people in a way that other mediums can't. It's a really good tool for attracting young people. Once you get them on board you can talk to them and ask them about their interests. They might be looking for information and advice and we can help to trace relevant information or push them in the direction of professional bodies”*.

## Impact study 9

Philip, a partially sighted volunteer with VIP on Air, developed and fine-tuned his presenting skills by delivering a regular live two hour news programme. At that time the BBC had a Diversity Unit which offered a training scheme for people with disabilities which provided the opportunity to work on different programmes. From volunteering at VIP on Air, Philip applied to the BBC and got onto the scheme and then applied for a full-time position as a researcher in Inverness. He got the job, bringing a nine year period of unemployment to a welcome end.

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### Impact study 10

Ruby lost her 18 year old son in a car crash on Christmas Day 2005. He was her only child. A memorial service took place on 22 April; Ruby said it was to mark her son's 19th birthday and to help his friends grieve – *"the youngsters didn't know how to do that"*. Her son had been a huge fan of Gloucester FM so it was natural for Ruby to ask the station if they would perform at the memorial service. The station had said "yes" straightaway. There were two or three presenters there on the day – paying respects to a young white boy who had wanted to be a rugby coach and loved the music of black origin played by Gloucester FM- it was the least they could do.

### Impact study 11

*"People don't leave this area very easily, they don't travel and, when things go wrong, they have little hope."* One man was so disillusioned with the area and his life that he shot himself. His young son Joss was referred to the NR5 Trust and got involved in the radio project. Joss said *"this is all I've got now. It's the best thing that ever happened to me"*.

**Note:** In some cases the names of individuals have been changed to preserve anonymity.

## Annex C

### Community Radio Fund: summary of grants awarded for 2005/06

Station	Location	Purpose	Amount
103 The Eye	Vale of Belvoir	Administration officer Fundraising coordinator	£10,582 £4,368
All FM	Manchester	Administrator IT technician	£19,417 £4,392
Awaz FM	Glasgow	Project manager *Regional community radio project	£30,000 £6,300
BCB	Bradford	Station director *Regional community radio project	£16,776 £6,300
Desi Radio	Southall, London	Station manager Accountancy fees	£19,250 £6,000
Down FM	Downpatrick, Northern Ireland	Community outreach project Station manager	£6,500 £3,500
Express FM	Portsmouth	Sustainable income generation project Volunteer support and training	£28,085 £6,780
GTFM	Pontypridd	Station manager Finance assistant	£20,300 £15,400
Forest of Dean	Gloucestershire	Station manager *Regional community radio project	£30,420 £6,300
New Style Radio	Birmingham	Station manager	£25,000
Radio Faza	Nottingham	Fundraiser Finance manager	£19,625 £3,900
Resonance FM	London	Assistant manager Two station managers Programme director	£20,000 £8,000 £6,000
Skyline Community Radio	Hedge End, Hampshire	Station manager	£10,000
Sound Radio	Hackney, London	Station manager *Regional community radio project	£30,000 £7,539
Takeover Radio	Leicester	Trust manager	£24,926
Unity Radio	Southampton	Station manager	£20,000

Wythenshawe FM	Manchester	Station Manager	£11,713
		Administrator	£4,903
		*Regional community radio project	£11,750

\*The Panel awarded funding to five stations for a joint project to support community radio stations at a regional level. This pilot project will operate in 5 areas – Yorkshire, London, west of England, the north-west and Scotland – and will be run by the regional partners. It will encourage regional collaboration and facilitate networking, training and information sharing. Participation will be open to all stations in the region concerned. The regional working will then feed into a national working group for community radio broadcasters. This collaborative project will also aim to raise the profile of community radio amongst the general public.

Source: Ofcom

## Community Radio Fund: summary of grants awarded in the first round for 2006/07†

Station	Location	Purpose	Amount
Angel Radio	Havant, Hants	Fundraiser	£22,000
Angel Radio	Newport, Isle of Wight	Fundraiser	£15,000
Radio Ikhlas	Derby	Station manager	£15,000
Kemet Radio	Nottingham	Senior executive manager	£12,000
Vip on Air	West Glasgow	Technical support	£6,000
Sunny Govan Radio	Govan, Glasgow	Broadcast assistant	£15,000
Oldham Community Radio	Oldham	Sustainable business development manager	£16,000
Pure Radio	Stockport	Volunteer & community outreach co-ordinator	£16,000
Youth Comm Radio	Worcester	Project co-ordinator	£7,930
		Volunteer & community support worker	£10,940
Gloucester FM	Gloucester	Station manager	£15,500
Forest FM	Verwood, Dorset	Administration officer	£14,400
TGR Sound	Bexleyheath, Kent	Community liaison officer	£13,925
Leith FM	Leith, Edinburgh	Project manager	£18,368
Black Diamond FM	Dalkeith, Midlothian	Station manager	£15,000
Radio Teesdale	Barnard Castle, County Durham	Station manager	£16,000

Source: Ofcom

†Applications for second round of funding in 2006/07 sought in October 2006.





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