

To whom it may concern,

Cleddau Community Media response to DCMS Consultation on Amendments to the Community Radio Licensing Regime.

Cleddau Community Media is a community media organisation developing community radio, television and online broadcasting as well as media training opportunities in Pembrokeshire. Cleddau Community Media has been instrumental in developing community radio such as Cleddau Radio in west Wales.

1. Do you agree with the proposed criteria for Ofcom to apply when considering a 5 year extension?

Cleddau Community Media considers that the time is right to consider proposals to extend community radio licences for a period of a further 5 years.

We believe that community radio fulfils an important role in community development. Where a community radio station has worked hard to engage with a local area and , built a strong reputation and is clearly fulfilling its social gains objectives then a mechanism should be in place to allow the station to continue broadcasting.

The ability to allow a community radio licence holder to apply for an extension in a similar way to commercial operators is a step forward in terms of financial planning and the creation and sustainability of training and employment opportunities - particularly in rural areas.

Cleddau Community Media takes the view that this process should begin at least in year 4 of the first community radio licence period to allow time for securing funding and staff retention where applicable.

2. Do you think the 50% funding restriction from any one source should be lifted?

Cleddau Community Media believes that the 50% funding restriction from any one source should be lifted.

If not already in place, we believe that each station should adopt an editorial policy to ensure that no single funder has undue influence over station output. We believe that it is also a matter for the stations board of management to ensure that impartiality is maintained within in the management of the station.

3. i) Do you think that the rule prohibiting a community radio station from being licensed if it would overlap with an existing local radio service whose MCA is no more than 50,000 adults, should be lifted?

Cleddau Community Media fully agrees that the rule prohibiting the licensing of a station whose MCA is less than 50,000 should be lifted.

In our view and from a Welsh perspective we believe that the lifting of this restriction would allow for community radio development in rural areas which are generally underserved and lack local competition. We believe that community radio by its very nature compliments existing radio offerings by providing programme content not necessarily available on commercial stations.

ii) If so, should the advertising and sponsorship restriction be applied to community radio stations that overlap with local radio services of up to 150,000 adults?

Cleddau Community media does not agree with the proposal in point 19 of the consultation document which suggests that the advertising and sponsorship should remain on all community radio stations with an overlap of up to 150,000 adults.

Again, from a Welsh perspective this restriction has had a negative impact on the development of community radio stations. In the last two licensing rounds, the majority of successful applications have been limited to the south Wales and north Wales coastal areas where overlap is in excess of the 150,000 MCA. There have been no successful applications in the mid and west (electoral) region where commercial stations MCA are generally less than 150,000. Some of these commercial licensees also benefit from being part of a larger group.

Cleddau Community Media agrees with the Community Media Association that whatever rules are applied to community radio in terms of advertising and sponsorship restrictions, they be applied equally and fairly across the sector.

With that in mind, Cleddau Community Media feels it is important to point out that in the majority of cases, community radio offers lower cost advertising to support it's social gains objectives in terms of economic regeneration. Many businesses that have advertised with Cleddau Radio in the past (during RSLs or online broadcasts) have done so because they are sole traders or small retail, wish to support the community project or simply cannot afford the local commercial station.

Cleddau Community Media feels the current legislation places unfair restrictions on stations generally operating in rural areas and forces a reliance on grant funding.

Ends.

Marc Tierney  
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