

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD COMMUNITY RADIO LTD

Redstone.fm

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Dear Sirs

Consultation on Amendments to the Community Radio Licensing Regime

Response from Reigate & Banstead Community Radio Ltd (Redstone FM)

We are a community radio station based in Redhill, Surrey. We have recently submitted an application to Ofcom for a community radio licence and are awaiting the outcome.

Question 1 To allow a one-off five year extension of existing community radio licences.

We agree that 5 years is too short a time to build a business and develop the full potential of a community radio service. Therefore there should be the opportunity for such a community radio station to be able to continue with a second five year term. However, the extension should not be automatic and should take into account the performance of the station and the fulfilment of its social gain commitments.

We support such a one-off five year extension but it should be earned and not be as a right.

Question 2 Restriction of 50% funding from any one source.

We have read the various arguments set out in the DCMS consultation document and elsewhere. We feel that each station is different and operates in different circumstances. Therefore we feel that stations themselves are best placed to make commercial and strategic decisions on funding sources. With regard to editorial control, there are safeguards in place, including the Ofcom Programming Codes. We see no difference in a commercial company owning a local commercial station and a trust fund providing capital or running costs to a community station.

We agree the 50% restriction should be removed.

Furthermore, **we are disappointed that the DCMS are NOT going to consider changing the restriction on income on advertising and sponsorship.**

Question 3 Remove restriction on licensing community radio stations where it overlaps with a local commercial service with 50,000 adults or less.

Many small commercial station offer very restricted local services. For example Yorkshire Coast Radio in Bridlington (MCA 28,405) broadcasts live programmes for only 8 hours a day on weekdays (4 hours at weekends). The remainder is largely automated. Likewise, Quay FM in Bridgwater (MCA 38,299) and West Somerset (MCA 19,826) share all programmes, either between themselves or with other stations within their group (South West Radio Ltd) and broadcast just 8 hours of local programmes on each station.

If a community radio group is able to offer a service which provides a more local service in terms of content and local broadcast hours, why should such a group be denied an opportunity to do this?

We therefore agree that this restriction be removed.

With regard to community stations taking advertising if in an area with a commercial station operating in an area with 150,000 adults or less, we think community stations should have the opportunity to derive an income from advertising and sponsorship.

In some instances, a commercial and community station will be broadcasting to different audience so there won't necessarily be a clash of advertisers. An example is Dream 100 in Colchester which offers a general local service, and Garrison Radio, targeting the local military population.

We hope this response is helpful to your consultation.

Yours faithfully,



Des Shepherd
Director,
Reigate & Banstead Community Radio Ltd