

21st July 2009

Community Radio Consultation
Media Directorate
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
5th Floor 2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sir,

Consultation on amendments to the Community Radio Licensing Regime re: Proposal 4.7

On behalf of Warminster Town Council, I write in very strong support of Proposal 4.7 to allow Community Radio to hold a full 5 year Community Licence in commercial areas of less than 50,000 MCA.

Warminster Town Council have financially supported and encouraged our local community radio group, WCR, since they began in 1996, working toward a local service for the town in an area without local radio reception other than some national stations with a weak signal. We exclusively supported their application for a licence in 2000 and we were dismayed that the Radio Authority only awarded one licence available at that time to a National Company. We have continued to support WCR's broadcasts using the expensive RSL system proving that the people and this local council still wanted a community service. With the advent of the Community Radio Order, hopes were again dashed by the spoiler clauses pushed through by the commercial sector and those MPs supporting them, without any evidence and without any concern for the rural areas like ours marginalised by the action.

This report by John Myers and the subsequent DCMS consultation document at last shows some realistic thought to the problem and the lifting of the outright ban in certain areas as suggested in Proposal 4.7 is most welcome. However, the continued ban on small stations carrying advertising and sponsorship must also be reviewed as this would place an additional financial burden on the station and possibly this council. There is no evidence to suggest that small community stations carrying adverts from small sole traders or companies that cannot afford commercial prices would have any significant effect on the commercial station's revenue. We feel there must always be a way to allow a certain amount of local advertising and sponsorship for all stations without undue damage to the commercial sector.

In answer to the following questions;__

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

Yes

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

Yes

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?

Yes

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?

Yes.

Yours faithfully,

Heather Abernethie

**Heather Abernethie
Town Council**

cc B Mole