



Yorkshire Coast Radio

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14th August 2009

Dear Sirs

Consultation on Amendments to the Community Radio Licensing Regime

I am writing to you regarding the measures contained in the above consultation, which could potentially impact on the viability of the smallest Commercial Radio stations including Yorkshire Coast Radio.

The proposal that is of particular concern is the possible removal of the current rule prohibiting a Community Radio station from being licensed where it would overlap with an existing local radio service where the MCA is less than 50,000.

This current restriction formed part of the Community Radio Order 2004 and was seen as appropriate at that time as a measure to ensure the viability of small local radio services.

However, local Commercial Radio is currently facing an even more challenging economic position than at the time these restrictions were introduced. Revenues could fall by as much as 20% in 2009 and competition with other platforms has never been tougher. A recent report commissioned by Ofcom indicated that the smallest stations are finding it most difficult in the current climate, with the majority already being loss-making and even more likely to become unprofitable with the expected decline in revenues¹. In this environment it is simply not appropriate to increase competition for listeners in the smallest of radio markets.

The consultation document appears to accept the need for a continuation of the current restriction on taking advertising and sponsorship by community stations that overlap with local radio services up to 150,000 MCA. Indeed I believe that there is actually a case at this time for increasing this restriction to those community stations that are licensed in areas that overlap with local radio services of up to 200,000 MCA.

However, it is important to understand that this is not the only impact of Community Radio. The presence of an additional radio service can create confusion among listeners and fragment local audiences, meaning that small and community-focused commercial services become financially unviable, irrespective of the protection provided by a limitation on advertising by Community Radio.

Yorkshire Coast Radio has, for almost 16 years, been at the heart of the community in our broadcast area. We work closely with many local community-based charities and organisations, helping them with publicity for their events and appeals on our daily 'Action' feature. We broadcast a daily feature tackling crime in the

¹ Radio: Impact of regulatory relaxations, produced for Ofcom by Value Partners, May 2009

neighbourhood, and whenever possible get involved with as much as possible to help the various groups and organisation in the area. Just in the last couple of weeks presenters and promotions crew from the station have attended several community-based events, including Sneaton Fair, Scarborough Lifeboat Weekend, Mencap Summer Fair, Whitby RNLI fundraiser, Filey Lions Donkey Derby, and more.

Yorkshire Coast Radio is a truly local radio station, committed to community, and I feel such a change to the licensing regime of Community Radio would have an adverse effect on providing a service to the community.

Therefore I would urge the DCMS to resist any proposal to remove the existing restriction on licensing a Community Radio stations that would overlap with an existing local radio service whose MCA is no more that 50,000.

Yours sincerely

Chris Sigsworth
Station Manager
Yorkshire Coast Radio