

Response to consultation – localness on commercial radio

Here in the Lake District, many people rely on local radio to stay in touch with what's going on in their area. The area is chucked into the large North West areas by both BBC TV and ITV where stories and events in Cumbria struggle to compete with news coming out of Manchester, Liverpool and the big Lancashire cities which have little or no impact on people's lives back home.

As a result, people in the Lake District listen to local radio primarily because it is just that – local. By significantly reducing the number of hours that concern news which affects them, or which sees a presenter talk about things they can identify with, local radio stations will just end up being an inferior version of national stations and so listeners will just change over and listen to the real thing instead of a substandard substitute.

Ofcom's proposals would not allow for a local breakfast and drivetime shows. These are well known to be the two most listened to slots of the day and by sacrificing one of the two to national programming, then the station will lose purpose, credibility and, as a result, listeners.

Seven hours of locally produced content per weekday must be retained, including provision at breakfast time.

The Ofcom proposals are based loosely on the ITV regions. As a result, the Lake District is thrown into the ITV Granada region. Such a large area simply could not be accommodated into local radio. As stated previously, news coming out of Manchester, Liverpool and the big Lancashire cities which have little or no impact on people's lives in Cumbria and vice-versa. Given that the proposals want to slash the number of local hours down to just 3, you would end up with a programme which wouldn't be able to please anyone as you would have to give such a small amount of time talking about things that matter to one particular area that you end up making no one happy and a huge drop in listeners. There's also with such a large area to cover for the presenter, the 'what's on guide' section of a show could take up the designated three hours alone!

The current area for Cumbria and Lancashire, which is producing great ratings and reviews, must be retained.